



## LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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### MEMORANDUM

Date: August 15, 2025

To: Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board of Directors

From: Will Inselman, Resources Coordinator *WI*

Subject: Minutes for Recreation, Forestry & Wildlife Subcommittee Meeting

On Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:02 p.m., the Recreation, Forestry, and Wildlife subcommittee met in the NRD Large Conference Room. Subcommittee members present: Seth Hawkins- Chair, Christine Lamberty, Suzanne Mealer, Don Jacobson, Anthony Schutz, Mark Spangler, Stephanie Matejka, and Melissa Baker. Director Bob Andersen was also present. NRD staff present were David Potter, Eric Zach, and Will Inselman. Andrew Wilshusen from JEO Consulting Group was also in attendance. There were four action items for consideration.

The first item on the agenda was the consideration of a scope of work agreement with JEO Consulting Group (JEO) for design and engineering of a trail segment in the Prairie Corridor. District staff requested a scope of work from JEO for the design and engineering of a segment of trail from Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center up through approximately one mile of existing easement. This comes after JEO recently completed a concept design for the segment last year. This work would be leveraged as a match for a Recreational Trails Program Grant that we will be applying for this year to cover the eventual construction cost of the project. The trail would travel north from the existing trailhead on Spring Creek Prairie, through our newly acquired Bowman conservation easement with Audubon, up through the Samani conservation easement (see attached maps). There will be a turnaround where the easement ends, and a parking lot trailhead and spur will also be designed/engineered as part of this project. The City of Lincoln will cover 50% of the cost of this agreement. The fee for this project is \$76,800. Staff recommend approving the scope of work with JEO. Andrew Wilshusen from JEO was present and fielded questions from the Directors regarding the design of the project and waterway crossings.

**It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Matejka, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the Assistant General Manager to approve the Scope of Work Agreement with JEO Consulting Group for design and engineering of a trail segment in the Prairie Corridor for \$76,800.**

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

The second item on the agenda was the consideration of a resolution to apply for a Recreational Trails Program grant for construction funding assistance with a trail segment in the Prairie Corridor. The District would like to apply for federal assistance to help construct a 10-foot wide, 1.2 mile long, crushed limestone trail as part of the Prairie Corridor Trail project near Denton. This trail, which will include an access road and trailhead off Kolbrook Rd., will connect to a 2,000-foot-long trail at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Combined, these trails will provide an approximately 3-mile out-and-back trail through native tallgrass prairie and riparian areas. It will also further the plans of the Haines Branch Prairie Corridor Trail, which will connect Pioneers Park Nature Center to Conestoga Lake, to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. The Resolution authorizes the Assistant General Manager of the District to sign the application for the Recreational Trails Program and any project documents required to obtain the funding. The District currently has a written commitment to provide 42% of the local match for the project. The District would request the maximum amount from RTP (\$250,000) with a total estimated construction cost of approximately \$450,000.

**It was moved by Matejka, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors approve a resolution to apply for a Recreational Trails Program grant for funds to construct a trail segment in the Prairie Corridor.**

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

The third item on the agenda was the consideration of a Recreational Trail Assistant Program application from the Revitalization Association of Weeping Water (RAWW). The RAWW, in partnership with the City of Weeping Water, is requesting \$25,000 from the District's Recreation Trails Assistance Program (RTAP) for their East-West Bridge Project. The project will refurbish a donated bridge, which will be placed over a small tributary of Weeping Water Creek, and build a new 1,000-foot concrete trail connecting an existing trail with a recently built depot. The completed trail will offer a one-mile loop around Day Memorial Park, campgrounds, and ponds for visitors. The total project is estimated to cost \$117,000. RAWW will be providing \$45,000 in cash match and will be applying for a Recreational Trails Program grant with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for an additional \$47,000. The application for RTAP assistance is attached. RAWW has demonstrated success partnering with several local organizations to secure this match and will continue to seek funds for future improvements. Staff indicated that this request would expend the remaining dollars in the program. Staff also fielded questions on the number of applicants and whether or not this group intends to apply for more funds next fiscal year.

**It was moved by Matejka, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors approve the Recreational Trail Assistance Program application from the Revitalization Association of Weeping Water for \$25,000 to assist in the development of a city trail.**

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

The fourth item on the agenda was the consideration of an agreement with Theisen Construction Inc. for a bridge repair project on the Oak Creek Trail. LPSNRD staff are requesting approval of a sole-source agreement with Thiesen Construction for timber bridge repairs on one Oak Creek Trail bridge. The bridge, Road 31 West #2, was identified by Theisen Construction in the fall of 2023 during invasive bridge inspections of nine trail bridges as a bridge in need of repair. They are the only company in Nebraska that we know of that specializes in railroad timber bridges. Theisen Construction is a reputable contractor, and the District has utilized them as a sole source contractor multiple times from 2013 to 2023 for timber bridge repairs on our trails. They are a reputable

company and have done great work for the District in the past. Theisen has indicated they would be able to complete these repairs this fall/winter for \$153,000. Staff recommended that this is the best course of action for repairing our old timber bridges rather than the bid process.

**It was moved by Mealer, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the Assistant General Manager to sign an agreement with Theisen Construction Inc. for the repair of a bridge on the Oak Creek Trail for \$153,000.**

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

The last item on the agenda was a discussion item regarding e-bike/bicycle regulations on our trails and promoting trail etiquette. LPSNRD staff recently fielded complaints and concerns from trail users regarding e-bikes or other motorized use on trails. Staff were contacted by Director Andersen, who also provided a report of an incident involving a walker and an e-bike. Currently, our regulations broadly define what is considered an illegal motorized vehicle and use the federal definition of a bicycle and e-bike when asked by constituents. Currently, we do not define what an e-bike is within our regulations, primarily because the federal definition has evolved many times in recent years with the evolution of e-bikes. This discussion is to consider adding an e-bike regulation and discuss a marketing campaign focused on trail safety/etiquette. The City of Lincoln is currently working on a trail etiquette campaign that they hope to roll out soon. Our hope would be that we could tie into their campaign and use/modify their messaging and signage for our trails. It was suggested that staff work on wording for our current regulations and post speed limit signs on our trails.

Lastly, staff provided updates about purchasing cargo e-bikes to facilitate more efficient and frequent trail inspections. Staff also provided an update regarding subdivision requests to build trail access and a request from Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning to consider allowing access to better meet their zoning requirements. It was suggested that the subcommittee will visit about this further next month with staff from Lincoln/Lancaster Planning Department.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

PC: RF&W subcommittee file