



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 12, 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, September 11th, 2025, at 5:34 p.m., the Recreation, Forestry, and Wildlife subcommittee met in the NRD Large Conference Room. Subcommittee members present: Seth Hawkins-Chair, Christine Lamberty, Don Jacobson, Anthony Schutz, Mark Spangler, Stephanie Matejka, and Melissa Baker. Director Suzanne Mealer was not present. Others present were Directors Bob Andersen and John Yoakum. NRD staff present were David Potter, Eric Zach, and Will Inselman. There were four action items for consideration.

The first item on the agenda was the consideration of a cooperative agreement between the Lower Platte South NRD and Audubon. District staff and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon staff are requesting approval of a cooperative agreement for the support of activities carried out within the Prairie Corridor. The NRD currently holds an interlocal agreement with the City of Lincoln, but not with Audubon. Spring Prairie Audubon is a key partner in the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project, and this agreement would better facilitate our ability to share resources with our partner and vice versa. The District and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center have had a long-standing relationship, and we would like to see this more formally recognized. This agreement mirrors the interlocal agreement the District currently has with the City of Lincoln for the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch.

It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Baker, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the Assistant General Manager to sign a cooperative agreement with Audubon for the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project, pending legal counsel review.

Motion Passed: 7-0

The second item on the agenda was the consideration of a request to build a home and a Lower Platte South NRD conservation easement. In 2024, Ralph Belter purchased the Sabatka conservation easement east of Ceresco. Ralph Belter and partner Tina Holmes had planned on converting an existing barn on the property into a home for Tina. After working with the county, it was determined that converting the existing barn was not feasible. Tina would like to build a new house for herself approximately 100 feet directly east of the current house. The easement allows for the construction of a house for an immediate family member within a 7-acre area. Ms. Holmes is requesting our approval to build the new house. Saunders County Zoning has signed off on

the permit for them to build the house. The bulk of the conversation focused on whether the language within the original conservation easement would allow them to build the house. Some of the Directors were supportive, and some expressed concern with allowing them to build. The original easement did stipulate that a house could be built for a family member within a specific area. Staff indicated that a house built in the allowed area would not contradict the original intent of the easement, which is intended to protect the saline wetlands on the property. The conversation shifted to amending the language of the original easement to allow this house to be built within the allowable area.

It was moved by Schutz, seconded by Lamberty, and approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors approve the request of Tina Holmes and Ralph Belter to build a home in the allowed area described in the Sabatka conservation easement, subject to amending the language in the easement to allow such construction.

Motion Passed: 4-2 (Spangler and Hawkins voting NO; Matejka not present)

The third item on the agenda was the consideration of an agreement to perform inspections on all timber trail bridges by Theisen Construction, Inc. District staff requested an estimate from Theisen Construction to perform visual inspections on all timber bridges on each of our trails. The District has contracted with them multiple times in the past to conduct visual and invasive inspections on our bridges. The last visual inspections were completed by Theisen in 2019, and staff would like to maintain a five-year inspection interval to keep up on maintenance and/or repairs. Staff mentioned that this company specializes in old railroad timber bridges and recommends we continue to use this company for these specialty surveys.

It was moved by Baker, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors waive Operating Policy G-5 Competitive Bidding and authorize the Assistant General Manager to sign an agreement with Theisen Construction, Inc. for visual inspections of timber bridges on the MoPac, Homestead, and Oak Creek Trail.

Motion Passed: 6-0 (Matejka not present)

The fourth item on the agenda was the consideration of bids for the Timber Point WMA grassland improvement project. Bids were received for the tree removal/grassland renovation project on 31 acres at Timber Point WMA. The project would include the removal of invasive eastern redcedar and autumn olive trees. Some areas will remove other undesirable hardwood species to expand grassland buffers extending from existing high-quality oak woodlands. Bid packets were sent to six (6) contractors, and three (3) bids were received. The low bid of \$20,150.00 (\$650/acre) was received from Morrissey Enterprises of Lincoln, NE. Staff have worked with this company on other types of projects, but not tree clearing; however, all past experiences have been very positive. This project is part of a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission grant agreement that was previously approved by the Board. NGPC will provide 75% share of the cost for this project. Staff recommended accepting this bid.

It was moved by Hawkins, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend that the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors approve the low bid of \$20,150.00 submitted by Morrissey Enterprises for the grassland improvement project on Timber Point WMA.

Motion Passed: 6-0 (Matejka not present)

Lastly, staff provided updates about Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning discussion regarding trails, trail etiquette and signage, and the 310th Street bridge replacement status update.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

PC: RF&W subcommittee file