



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

3125 Portia Street | P.O. Box 83581 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3581
P: 402.476.2729 • F: 402.476.6454 | www.lpsnrd.org

Memorandum

Date: November 15, 2024
To: Water Resources Subcommittee
From: Dick Ehrman, Water Resources Coordinator
Subject: Water Resources Subcommittee Meeting Minutes – November, 2024

The Water Resources Subcommittee met on November 14, 2024 at 5:30 PM. Subcommittee members present included Susan Seacrest (Chair), Bob Andersen, Melissa Baker, Deb Eagan, Gary Hellerich, Luke Petersen, Larry Ruth, and Mark Spangler. Other Board members present included Don Jacobson and John Yoakum. NRD staff present included Mike Sousek, David Potter, Maclane Scott, and myself. In addition, Doug Holle from Schemmer Associates was in attendance. Director Seacrest called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, and a quorum was present for the meeting.

A. Consideration of the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act Program (ACTION)

Dick Ehrman provided a review of the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NRIA), which was enacted by the Legislature in the 2024 session. NRIA provided \$1 million to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR), to be passed through to the NRDs in order to promote the reduction of nitrogen applications to farm land in order to protect ground water quality. The NRDs were provided with target funding amounts according to such factors as crop land acreage, amount of irrigation, etc., and as a result of that formula, LPSNRD was allotted \$26,089.64. The program is constructed so that NRDs will provide cost-share to participants, and then be reimbursed by NeDNR. In other words, there is no direct cost to the NRD for this effort. NRDs have developed priority areas for providing this funding; LPSNRD's priorities include Community Water Supply Protection Areas (CWSPAs), Phase 2 and 3 management areas, and irrigated land in the District.

Discussion centered around how baseline nitrogen applications for farmers would be determined. The NRD will accept any documentation farmers can provide as to how much nitrogen they've applied, and the target reduction of 40 lbs. of nitrogen per acre or 15% reduction will be based on that information. The question of enforcement and monitoring was also discussed; since this is a first-year project with modest funding, and future funding is not guaranteed, it is anticipated that NRD staff will work with participants to ensure that the target reductions are achieved on a case-by-case basis. Mike Sousek also noted that this effort is designed to promote new and developing technologies in precision agriculture, and also revision of the UNL nitrogen formula.

It was moved by Eagan, seconded by Baker, and approved 8-0 by the Subcommittee to recommend that the Board of Directors approve the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act Cost-Share Program.

B. Consideration of the Lower Platte River Consortium Interlocal Cooperative Agreement Amendment (ACTION)

Ehrman provided a brief background of the Lower Platte River Consortium, which was established in 2016 via an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement (ILCA) with the Lower Platte South, Lower Platte North and Papio-Missouri River NRDs, Lincoln Water System, (LWS), Metropolitan Utilities

District (MUD), and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR). The general purpose of the Consortium is to study the long-term water supplies available to the Lower Platte River sub-basin to enhance stream flows and aquifer storage to support the availability of water during times of drought. The Consortium cooperated to develop a Drought Contingency Plan for the sub-basin, which was approved by all members in 2019, and has been operating via the ILCA, which has been reauthorized on an annual basis since that time. The Plan is undergoing revision at the present time.

In recent meetings, Consortium representatives have expressed the desire to extend the length of the ILCA to avoid the necessity of re-authorizing the Agreement on an annual basis. In addition, although the approved name of the organization is the "Lower Platte River Consortium," most involved entities have informally referred to it as the "Drought Consortium," since the most important purpose of the organization has been to deal with drought conditions and circumstances in the Lower Platte River sub-basin. Therefore, it is proposed to formally change the title of the Agreement from "Lower Platte River Consortium" to "Lower Platte River Drought Consortium."

It was moved by Baker, seconded by Hellerich, and approved 8-0 that the Board of Directors approve the General Manager to sign the Second Amendment of the Lower Platte River Consortium Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, extending the Agreement for a five-year period through December 4, 2029, and changing the title of the Consortium to the "Lower Platte River Drought Consortium."

C. Consideration of Bids for the Construction of the Piening Water Quality Basin (ACTION)
David Potter overviewed the design completed by Schemmer Associates for the Piening Water Quality Basin. The design, permits, and easements are now complete, and the bids for construction were opened on November 6. Four bids were received, and the low bid was from Tim Sisco Construction LLC for \$428,153.85. Schemmer has recommended acceptance of the bid from Tim Sisco Construction, which has successfully completed projects for LPSNRD in the past. With the recent moisture, it is anticipated that construction activities can begin in January 2025.

It was moved by Andersen, seconded by Hellerich, and approved 8-0 that the Board of Directors accept the low bid from Tim Sisco Construction for \$428,153.85 for the construction of the Piening Water Quality Basin.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:13 PM.

Enclosures

cc: Dave Landis
Corey Wasserburger