

LOWER PLATTE DROUGHT CONSORTIUM MEETING MINUTES

April 24th, 2023, 10:00 a.m. (Central Time)

Lake Wanahoo NRD Recreation Area

1655 County Road 16, Wahoo, Ne 68066

1. Welcome and Introductions

A. Meeting start at 10:04

B. Attending:

- Daryl Andersen
 - Lower Platte North
- Eric Gottschalk
 - Lower Platte North
- Dick Ehrman
 - Lower Platte South
- Gene Siadek
 - MUD
- Rick Kubat
 - MUD
- Tyler Martin
 - NeDNR
- Jack Mensinger
 - NeDNR
- Madeline Johnson
 - NeDNR
- Steve Owens
 - LWS
- Corbin Harms
 - LWS
- Philip Paitz
 - Papio-Missouri River NRD
- Mike Sousek
 - Lower Platte South NRD

1. Approval of November 14th ILCA Minutes (Attachment 2A)

- a. Motion to approve by: Mike Sousek
- b. Seconded: Phil Paitz

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2. Update from State Climate office

- Potential expansion of Drought outlook
 - Drought perspective looking dry for spring
- Vegetation outlook better than last year at same time for central nebraska, edges of state below average
- Water year for the northern area looking a little wet. Very dry February, eastern and south has been ok, but dry since late winter
- Power vortex impacting temps
- Top 5 warmest winters in the Midwest
- Last 90 days have been dramatically below average precipitation
- Western Nebraska received regular snow in some regions, but most of state below average snowfall over winter. With some areas being near 0
- SNE looking a little below average reaches of the Basin
- Looking at potential for another Hot dry summer
- Could be in false spring at moment
- NOAA outlook for next few weeks is intermittent rain.
- Seasonal outlook states persisting drought through Eastern Nebraska with parts of country showing very dry

3. Condition Updates

a. NRDs: Static Water Levels Data

- i. LPS - Water levels down. Down about 2 feet some levels are up a few inches to a few feet from last fall
- ii. PMT - Platte side is split 50 50, some are down, some are up a few inches to a few feet in relation to where it is to the river. On the Missouri side, almost all monitors are down a few feet across the area. Spring to spring it is very slightly up in a few wells. Potential for a negative turn
- iii. LPN - Levels are down, in some areas 3/4 to a foot in the Platte valley as compared to last spring

- b. LPS - levels are down, but as compared to 30 years ago things aren't that different from historic conditions.
- c. LPN - Platte river has a lot of flow at the moment which will hopefully contr
- d. Municipalities
 - i. LWS - Remaining operational values show historic lows for 2023, but this year it is showing great improvement with well fields showing near or at full. After 2023 we have learned about the

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impact of previous years conditions and their effect on well field recharge.

1. October - February 22-23 and 23-24 20% more water has come down the river than in the previous year.
2. Outlook optimistic, especially compared to last year
3. Voluntary restrictions possible, but with current conditions it is hopefully going to be unlikely.
- ii. MUD - Missouri stream flow expectations as compared to last year aren't expected to be concerning, snowpack upstream was around average
 1. MUDs service area is experiencing drought conditions, but the missouri is looking good currently

4. NeDNR: Dashboard

- a. PDSI showing extreme drought
- b. But other indicators are showing lessening and reduced drought the majority of state.
 - i. Much better place as compared to last year
- c. Platte river flow expected from north platte to be as good or better than last year
- d. South Platte looking average but colorado received substantial precip in late spring
- e. Loup is average
- f. Current conditions / Administration updates
- g. Game and parks and central Platte putting out closures
- h. Water Supply from the North Platte River in terms of water-in-storage is expected to be as good or better than last year.
- i. Water Supply in the South Platte River is similar to this date one year ago; about 150 CFS. However it was in June last year that Northeast Colorado experienced several rounds of precipitation that added over 1,000 CFS to the South Platte entering Nebraska from late May through July.
- j. In the Central Platte, closing notices have been issued for Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Instream flow permits above Grand Island. 500 CFS is required and average daily discharge has been only 850 CFS.
- k. Discharge in the Loup River Basin are on par with long term averages
- l. Discharge in the Elkhorn basin is running a little over long term averages.

5. ILCA Renewal

- a. Previous agreement was only one year. So we are bringing the topic back to the table to extend the length of the agreement. Ideally 5 to match the update window of the plan, but other options are on the table.
- b. LWS - Should be able to agree on a longer term ILCA
- c. The periods of 3 and 5 years have been proposed

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- i. LPS - 5 years is just as easy as 3 for us
- ii. LWS - We will do our best to match the plans of the consortium
- iii. LPS - we continue to have this conversation before, and we have the conversation that the short turn around allows for adaptations of the ILCA, but that may have been more on the financial side.
- iv. DNR - we will begin discussions with legal to extend the ILCA term

6. Proposed Plan update

- a. Communication Plan Trigger discussion (Attachment 6A)
 - i. LPS Is going to implement some drought coverage into their infrastructure.
 - ii. Media releases
 - iii. Do we want to release a media publication to address D3 drought readings
 - 1. Yes, if we do get to d3 conditions
- b. The highlighted portion is the amended language,
 - i. The proposed change is that when 30% of the State or Basin is covered in at least D2 conditions, we would put forth a press release, and subsequent press releases if the conditions worsen. As well as press releases for abnormal or special scenarios as decided by the LPDC.
 - ii. LPS - Are we ok with the numbers (30%) (D2 - Severe drought)
 - iii. LWS - the concern is relevant with D2 drought, good for us
 - iv. MUD - the last sentence about agree to send out joint press releases is a good addition
 - 1. PMT - allowing any member to start that process helps
 - v. LPS - How big of an area do we really want to include in consideration of triggers
 - vi. LPS - If most of the drought conditions are in the upper basin, but Lower is wet, do we want to be putting out press releases to the cities without the upper basin NRDs being a part of the conversation
 - vii. LPS - Any kind of changes that the districts or Municipalities make are their own, the LPDC press releases would be more of a general awareness publication
 - viii. MUD - that is why the last sentence is helpful, allowing the group to initiate a notification to the general public to make them aware of potential upstream impacts that could effect the public downstream
 - ix. DNR - we have draft press release for a few situations, but can be expanded on for individual circumstances

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- x. PMT - and those can be tweaked based on specific issues or notifications that can be sent to stakeholders upstream to see if they would like to have input into the publications.
- xi. LPS - we agree on the numbers, but lets include language to include upstream stakeholders to invite them to the conversation.

7. Upcoming Meetings: May, discuss calendar

- a. Potential Spring meeting to discuss municipal water source levels
- b. Wednesday May 29th (remote option) – 9:30 AM

8. Adjourn - 10:56.