




# 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](http://www.lpsnrd.org)

---

## Memorandum

**Date:** June 14, 2022  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** David Potter, Assistant General Manager   
**RE:** Platte River Subcommittee June 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes.

---

The Platte River Subcommittee met in person at the District office on Monday, June 13, 2022. Subcommittee members in attendance included Ken Vogel, Gary Aldridge, Gary Hellerich, Christine Lamberty, Ron Nolte, Anthony Schutz, and Ray Stevens. Directors absent included Don Jacobson. Others attending the meeting were Deborah Eagan, Paul Zillig, Mark Lindemann and myself. The meeting was called to order by Chair Vogel at 5:00 p.m. and the agenda was reviewed. The one action item on the agenda for consideration was a **request by Papio-Missouri River NRD (PMRNRD) for cost-share assistance on engineering services related to an evaluation of Platte River railroad obstructions.**

I described the obstruction situation and cost-share request as presented in the memo and information packet sent to the subcommittee members. The following information was obtained from PMRNRD and Cass County. The 2019 floods substantially damaged the railroad bridges on the Platte River north of Plattsmouth and west of the Highway 75 bridge. The quick and necessary repair process on these railroad bridges required a levee to be built for access. This emergency action to save the bridges was done without any permits. The levee caused the Platte River to form a sandbar downstream several hundred yards. Aerial photos provided to the subcommittee of pre-flood (2014 and 2018) and post flood (2020) clearly show that the new channel caused by the sandbar is pinching the river along the south bank. Cass County sent a letter to the Nebraska Attorney General in February 2022 with concerns that this pinch point will not only cause significant damage to both railroad bridges, but also the Hwy 75 bridges, and could also cause floodwaters to push southwards throughout the residential, recreational and commercial areas east of Hwy 75. Cass County received direction from the Attorney General's office to the NRDs and Department of Natural Resources.

Up to this point, Schmidt Liquid Trucking located in Cass County just downstream of the Hwy 75 hired FYRA Engineering to do some modeling to determine the future issues and concerns from the new channel caused by the sandbar. The trucking company had a lot of damage in 2019 and is concerned about future flooding. Schmidt Liquid Trucking has paid for all the modeling work done by FYRA up to this point.

With the modeling completed and future problems determined, Hanson's Lakes Sanitary Improvement District (SID) 101 in Sarpy County, with input from PMRNRD, directed FYRA to do the necessary potholing services to verify the issues/concerns. The potholing determined the riprap used for the levee was still in place, even after the railroad has indicated everything had been removed. FYRA does not currently have a contract to do any of the work on the Platte River Railroad Obstruction issue. In discussions with the SID they felt that this work has generally benefited the public as well and asked PMRNRD to see if other entities involved were interested in sharing in the cost of the unpaid professional services work. PMRNRD requested FYRA to put together a list of all work done to determine the outstanding balance and has reached out to LPSNRD, Cass County and Sarpy County to determine if they would be interested in splitting the cost or contributing to the payment of the services rendered so far. A spreadsheet showing services and costs was

provided. PMRNRD has indicated that they will be contributing to assist in paying for these services and their level of contribution will be contingent upon if others can assist.

Cass County is working on a letter of violation to the railroad and is also considering a declaration of life safety from the Board of Commissioners based on the modeling data that was done. Sarpy County is also considering the same actions. The information gathered from the modeling and the potholing services will hopefully provide a case for the railroad to take action on removal of the material causing the obstruction.

The subcommittee had much discussion and many questions on who might be at fault, who was responsible, how the findings from potholing might help, who will benefit, who might have the biggest concern or threat, whether it was a levee or more of a jetty that was constructed and for what purpose, whether this work and cost-share was needed since the obstruction has been in place for a few years now, and whether the problem would ever get corrected. Zillig, Lindemann and I answered questions of the directors based on the information gathered from PMRNRD and Cass County.

**It was moved by Stevens, seconded by Lambertv, and approved, with Vogel, Hellerich, Lambertv, Schutz and Stevens voting yes, Nolte voting no, and Aldridge not voting, to recommend the Board of Directors agree to provide equal funding with PMRNRD for the Platte River Railroad Obstruction Evaluation, not to exceed \$8,815 of LPSNRD cost.**

With no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Note: After the subcommittee meeting, I reached out to the PMRNRD General Manager to clarify whether it was a levee or a jetty that the railroad(s) constructed. He stated it was more of a causeway built to repair the bridges after the 2019 flooding. It was basically a temporary road built out in the river in which they could drive heavy trucks and equipment on.