



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 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 Wednesday, February 12th, 2025, at 5:38 p.m., the Recreation, Forestry, and Wildlife subcommittee met in the NRD Large Conference Room (and virtually). Subcommittee members present: Seth Hawkins- Chair, Christine Lamberty, Suzanne Mealer, Stephanie Matejka, Don Jacobson, Anthony Schutz, and Melissa Baker. Directors Bob Andersen and John Yoakum were also present. Other attendees were Mike Sousek, David Potter, Eric Zach, and Will Inselman. There were four items on the agenda for consideration.

The first item on the agenda was the consideration of a Little Salt Creek Watershed Agreement between NRCS and LPSNRD for the Little Salt Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Plan and Environmental Assessment. This agreement is the final phase of the planning stage for the Little Salt Creek WFPO Plan-EA. This plan, which has been in development since 2020, has finally met the benchmarks necessary to receive authorization from the Chief of NRCS and move into the design/engineering phase. This project, in a nutshell, aims to restore saline wetlands, reconnect the floodplain, and create new habitat shelves for the endangered Salt Creek Tiger Beetle. The project has identified approximately 120 ecosystem restoration projects that will restore and protect the saline and freshwater wetland ecosystems of Little Salt Creek. Once this is signed by the LPSNRD and NRCS, staff will proceed to request funds from NRCS for the design and engineering phase. NRCS will cover 100% of the fees for that phase. Construction will follow that phase which is covered 75% by NRCS. The total cost-share anticipated from NRCS for this project will exceed \$7.5 million.

It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Matejka, and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to sign the agreement with NRCS for the Little Salt Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations Plan.

Motion Passed: 7-0

The second item on the agenda was the consideration of a Scope of Work Agreement with The Flatwater Group for Saline Wetland management support and saline groundwater pumping evaluation. LPSNRD staff and the Saline Wetland Conservation Partnership (SWCP) recently contacted The Flatwater Group (TFG) to conduct some follow-up monitoring on the Marsh Wren restoration sites and identify other sites that may be conducive to

saline groundwater pumping. TFG was the firm that was responsible for carrying out the original restoration project and collected post-project data in 2016/2017. Since then, LPSNRD staff have been carrying out pumping activities and various other management actions that have greatly improved the saline wetland habitat. However, all of this is largely anecdotal and does not have much scientific evaluation. This agreement with TFG would have them collect data to compare pre- and post-construction site characteristics and help LPSNRD staff determine if pumping efforts and other management actions positively impact the site. Likewise, it will help create a guide for staff to use to meet Salt Creek Tiger Beetle habitat requirements through pumping. The project will also look to examine other properties with existing wells that could be used to pump water to create a similar setup to Marsh Wren. Directors asked questions on the type of work being performed and what it will bring to the District. There was also discussion on more outreach and education on the work completed and continuing out on our saline wetlands. Staff shared links with the subcommittee for the Marsh Wren informational video and the Wetlands of Nebraska series produced by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

It was moved by Hawkins, seconded by Baker, and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to sign the Scope of Work Agreement with The Flatwater Group for \$65,000.00 for saline wetland pumping evaluation and management support.

Motion Passed: 7-0

The third item on the agenda was the consideration of an agreement with the Village of Elmwood for the use of District property as a tree/yard waste disposal site. For several years, through a verbal agreement with the LPSNRD, the village of Elmwood has been using a lot owned by the NRD as a site for village residents to dispose of tree debris. The lot is adjacent to the MoPac East Trail at 2nd and West A Streets on the west edge of Elmwood. The village recently cleaned out the lot and it is currently closed. The village would like to continue to use the lot for tree debris and a compost site for yard waste. The village is planning to install a fence and gate at its own expense and draft regulations to better manage the lot. Staff worked with the village clerk to come up with parameters that are part of the agreement between the village and LPSNRD. Staff recommend the approval of the agreement that would allow the village to continue to use the lot. Staff answered questions regarding the previous use of this property and what the termination clauses were. Staff expressed that this agreement would make them more comfortable with the situation and give the NRD more flexibility in working with Elmwood. The Village Clerk has indicated that they are continuing to look for a better solution for a tree/yard waste site because of the costs they incur to move the material offsite to process.

It was moved by Hawkins, seconded by Lamberty, and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to sign an agreement with the Village of Elmwood for the use of District property as a tree and yard waste disposal site.

Motion Passed: 7-0

The fourth item on the agenda was the consideration of an amendment to the construction agreement for the 310th Street bridge on the MoPac Trail. The 310th Street bridge on the MoPac Trail requires additional repair or replacement following the discovery of rotten wooden piles. This bridge is part of a larger contract with JMN construction for repairs on another MoPac bridge and a bridge on the Homestead trail. After digging down well below grade, JMN construction discovered that many piles below grade were rotten and could not be repaired as originally intended. After much discussion between LPSNRD staff, Olsson engineers, and JMN construction, it

was determined that the recommended course of action for repair is to install concrete footings to install the new pile. This change order is a significant departure from the original plan to repair the bridge. This will add \$209,164 to the contract and the total cost to repair this bridge increases from \$165,435 to \$374,599. This increase will push this project over the budgeted amount and will likely require a budget overrun later this fiscal year. The bridge will also require a redecking post repair which we plan to do in-house which will cost \$30-40,000. Considering the now new cost of ~\$400,000, staff asked Olsson for a probable cost estimate to replace the entire bridge. Olsson’s estimate to replace the bridge with a different structure (box culvert or other pedestrian bridge) was ~\$675,000 (including engineering and construction oversight). The consideration before the subcommittee is to accept the change order and continue with the repair or pull the bridge from the existing agreement and proceed with the replacement option. The process to replace the bridge may take up to a year due to permitting, engineering, etc. Olsson has determined that the bridge can remain open to pedestrian traffic only and will take minimal work to get it back to its pre-construction state. Staff fielded questions regarding keeping the bridge open and the amount of work required to do so. There was a conversation regarding other bridges that may need work in the future and the extent of repairs. Director Jacobson commented that if we continue to own property and trails then we need to make sure we budget accordingly to maintain these areas/trails. There was a question on what the replacement should be and staff indicated that a box culvert would be the ideal solution here rather than a pedestrian bridge. A comment was also made that we would not need a budget overrun for this project this fiscal year and we can budget accordingly for a replacement in next year’s budget. Staff anticipates a draft of the change order will be available to the Directors prior to the Board meeting.

Original Cost of Bridge Repair	Proposed Change Order (Additional)	New Total Cost of Repair	In-House Bridge Deck Repair	Total		
\$165,435.00	\$209,164.00	\$374,599.00	\$30,000.00	\$404,599.00		
					Difference	<u>\$220,401.00</u>
Estimated Cost of Replacement Option	Engineering and Construction Oversight			Total		
\$500,000.00	\$125,000.00			\$625,000.00		

It was moved by Schutz, seconded by Matejka, and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to submit a change order request to Olsson for the deletion of the remaining work on the MoPac Trail 310th Street Bridge to JMN Construction and have JMN Construction return the bridge to its pre-construction condition.

Motion Passed: 7-0

Staff also provided an update on the status of the ATIP Rails with Trail grant that was submitted a few months back. The LPSNRD and Nebraska Trails Foundation were not successful in receiving the grant. The Nebraska Trails Foundation is exploring other grant opportunities to fund this work and will be reaching out to the NRD in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

PC: RF&W subcommittee file