

Meeting Summary
Lower Platte River Consortium Meeting
Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at 1:30 pm
Lower Platte South NRD
3125 Portia Street, Lincoln Nebraska

Consortium members present included the following:

LPSNRD – Paul Zillig & David Potter

P-MRNRD – Marlin Petermann

LPNNRD –Daryl Andersen

NeDNR – Jennifer Schellpeper

City of Lincoln – Steve Owen

MUD – Rick Kubat

Other attendees included John Engel (HDR), Simone Rock (HDR), Nick Walsh (NEMA), Dick Ehrman (LPSNRD), and Gary Aldridge (LPSNRD)

Paul Zillig providing an update to the group on the budget through May 4, 2018. Approximately 53% of the budget is spent.

HDR led the group through the agenda for the upcoming Consortium Workshop #2 and Public Open House #1. The purpose of the workshop is to gather input on vulnerabilities/monitoring/mitigation from technical professionals in the industry. The purpose of the public open house is to education the public on drought, the planning process, and Consortium activities to date. Draft boards and handouts were presented to the group for review. Much discussion centered on whom to invite to either the Workshop or the Open House. They are open to the public but the purpose of individual invitations is to target specific technical professionals or elected officials the group feels would be beneficial to attend.

HDR updated the Consortium on long-lead forecasting efforts to date. Reviewed plots of various hydro climate indices (HCI) evaluated to attempt to predict flow in the Lower Platte River. Many factors affect the ability to use Upper Platte HCI to predict Lower Platte River flow. These include upstream reservoirs and the regulated system of the Upper Platte River as well as the disconnection of the Upper Platte from the Lower Platte during dry periods (river goes dry at Duncan). Equally influential on Lower Platte River flows is the Loup and Elkhorn Rivers. The Loup River is characterized by the Sandhills with little runoff and provides a steady baseflow to the river at North Bend. The Elkhorn River is more variable and had a direct impact on the flows at Ashland in 2012. For these reasons, not only was Upper Platte HCI evaluated, but also was HCI in the Elkhorn River Basin. It was determined that the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) is the best HCI to predict drought on the Lower Platte and will be recommended moving forward. Other indicators such as snowpack, streamflow, etc. will be evaluated to complement this indicator as we begin to look at triggers.

Next Steps:

- Consortium Workshop #2 & Public Open House #1 on June 19th
 - LPSNRD to send out legal notices
 - HDR to send out press release for Open House only
 - Expect media.
 - John Engel will field questions about the Drought Plan.
 - Paul Zillig will field questions about the Consortium.
 - Each Consortium member will field questions about their respective agencies.
 - HDR to send out draft invitation letters for review by May 14.
 - Consortium to send back any edits to invitation list by May 24.
 - HDR to send out invitations by May 29th
 - HDR to reach out to NDMC, UNL School of Natural Resources, HPRCC or others to invite key staff to be present to field technical questions (such as climate change) at the Workshop/Open House.
- HDR to send out a Doodle Poll for July Consortium meeting.

LOWER PLATTE RIVER CONSORTIUM

PURPOSE: To study long-term water supplies available to the lower subbasin for enhancing streamflows or aquifer storage to support sustainable public water systems.

PARTIES TO THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT:

- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
- Lower Platte North NRD
- Metropolitan Utilities District
- Papio-Missouri River NRD
- City of Lincoln-Lincoln Water System
- Lower Platte South NRD