



# Meeting Summary

Project: Loup River Hydropower Relicensing FERC Project No. 1256	
Subject: June 2008 Public Open House Meetings	
Meeting Dates: June 10, 2008: 4 – 6 pm and 6 – 8 pm June 11, 2008: 6 – 8 pm	Meeting Location: June 10, 2008: VFW in Columbus, NE June 11, 2008: Genoa Senior Center in Genoa, NE
Notes by: HDR	

## Staff Attendees:

Loup Power District	Jim Frear Theresa Petr Neal Suess Ron Ziola
Loup Power District Board Members	Robert Clausen Chuck Gonka Tom Kumpf Don Pearson
HDR	Emily Buss Dennis Grennan Lisa Richardson George Waldow Stephanie White

## Meeting Overview:

Public open houses for Loup Power District’s Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing Project (FERC Project No. 1256) were held on June 10 and June 11, 2008. There were two open houses held on June 10, 2008 at the VFW in Columbus, Nebraska from 2:00 to 4:00 pm and then from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The June 11, 2008 open house was held at the Genoa Senior Center in Genoa, Nebraska from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public that the existing license for Loup Power District’s hydroelectric project will expire in April 2014. The process for relicensing begins this year as mandated by the FERC. The goals for the meeting were to provide information about Loup Power District’s hydroelectric project and to describe the licensing process necessary for continued operation of the project.

The meetings were attended by a total of 41 people including members of the public, Loup Power District Board Members, District employees, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). There were no members of the news media in attendance at the meetings. These notes document the comments expressed at the meetings.

**General Comments:**

- ▶ The majority of attendees at the meeting expressed their general support for the project and its operation. They were pleased to hear that the District is not proposing any changes to the hydro facility or its operation.
- ▶ Several attendees asked why they received the letter and what exactly constitutes the project.
- ▶ There was one question about whether the cost of relicensing would be assessed to adjacent property.
- ▶ There were several questions from people who use the canal for irrigation regarding how relicensing would affect their water rights.
- ▶ There were a few comments expressing interest in dredging Lake Babcock to provide better aesthetics and utilization as a lake.
- ▶ The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership noted that the North Sand Management Area at the Settling Basin provides excellent habitat for those species that would otherwise not exist. They noted this as a positive attribute of the project.
- ▶ There was a comment speculating that diversion of Loup River water for power generation may have allowed the downstream channel segment to become constricted by sand and encroaching shoreline vegetation. The commenter believes this reduced flow capacity and may have contributed to the recent flooding problems in the Lower Loup segment.
- ▶ The Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance noted that some of the key issues they deal with along the Platte River are related to water quality and they asked whether or not the silt and sand removed from the canal is being tested for toxins.
- ▶ The Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance also noted that sand management area provides good habitat for terns & plovers and noted that they are not finding very many nests for these species in along the Loup & Platte Rivers. They noted that the fluctuations from peaking may be beneficial to keep vegetation off of sandbars in the river.
- ▶ There was some confusion by the public about whether relicensing and the public meetings were associated with Loup Power District's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.
- ▶ There were questions about hydrocycling and the frequency of flow pulses into the Platte River.
- ▶ There were several questions for the District related to specific local drainage issues (from recent heavy rains) not related to the hydroproject or relicensing.
- ▶ The Nebraska Off Highway Vehicle Association commented that their membership was very appreciative of the access and hospitality provided by the District at the South Sand Management Area.

**Summary of Written comments:**

Five comment forms were received at, or immediately following the meeting; only two of these forms included a written comment, the others provided information related to the mailing list or meeting notification methods. Below is a summary of the two written comments received at the meetings.

- A property owner along the canal expressed they would like to keep updated regarding the potential for dredging sediment from Lake Babcock.
- A landowner expressed how much people love to use the trails, camping and parks. They also mentioned that campers appreciate the no-fee improved campsites and electrical hook-ups.

19 people asked to be added to the project mailing list and one person expressed an interest in being contacted for further participation in the relicensing process.

**Information Requests:**

There were no requests for additional information.