



Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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Monthly Report for July 2012

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River Obstruction Removal

In late July representatives of the NRDs met with Olsson Associates and me to discuss an alternate design that had been developed by OA in June. This redesign was in response to the latest round of comments from the Corps of Engineers and USFWS. The redesign utilizes shorter temporary bridges from each bank to locations over deeper channels where sand platforms can be constructed to reach the piers. The overall cost of this effort is less than the previous alternate designs but still is over \$1.4 million. OA prepared estimates for conducting the removal in phases. Phase 1 would focus on removing the 5 piers on the east side of the river—those nearest to Two Rivers State Rec Area. It also includes an alternate cost to remove the buried piers in the middle of the river (estimated at 5). The second phase would then remove the piers from the west side—a total of 5 standing and estimate of 3 buried.

At the meeting it was decided that we would submit this design for permit approval from the Corps. The LPRCA will fund the removal of the 5 piers closest to Two Rivers and submit a Nebraska Environmental Trust grant application for funding of the alternate pier removal of the buried piers in the middle of the channel. The NET grant will be submitted in early September and we will hope to hear from the Corps regarding the approval in the next few months.

Public Opinion Survey

Lukas Partners delivered the copies of the final results of the public opinion survey in mid-July. A pdf copy of the report is not available on the LPRCA website. Lukas Partners will be at the August Quarterly meeting to present the results and I will have hard copies to distribute to LPRCA representatives.

Thermal Imagery for Nonpoint Source Pollution Detection

A full flight of the length of the entire lower Platte River, with focused imagery on 50 feet onto the bank and 50 feet into the river, was conducted in May. After preliminarily processing the data from the original flight two additional flights were conducted in June to try additional instruments and angles. While we have some “useable” data from the original flights additional flights will be conducted to try to capture more refined data. The flights will occur after leaf off and when the water temperature has dropped. The very warm and dry weather increased the temperature of the water to a point where it is difficult to identify clearly the points where there may be warm water discharge. The next flights will be done with a helicopter at a lower and slower speed to refine the data even further.

I began working with Pat O’Brien on a 319 grant proposal to continue the education and potential cost-share program as a “next step” in this effort. The proposed work will be discussed more at the August Quarterly meeting with the final grant submission being due on September 4th.

Events

I continued to place much of my focus on planning the Kayak Tour, Water Quality Open and the LPRCA Summit.

Kayak Tour: A decision was made at the very beginning of July to postpone the tours until September 19 & 20. We began notifying the participants and attempting to get them registered for the day in September that would work for them. Now, all that is left is to hope for rain for this and many, many more reasons.

Water Quality Open: The event is scheduled for Thursday, August 30th at Quarry Oaks. Registration information was mailed out at the beginning of July and registration filled up on July 27th! Fast as usual! Mike Archer of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Surface Water Unit will be providing the keynote presentation on sturgeon distribution throughout during the high flows and floods of 2011.

Lower Platte River Summit: I continued planning for the Summit during July which is set for all day October 18th at the historic Fremont Opera House.. We held a second steering committee meeting in June and began lining up more tour stops, presentations and sponsorship and publicity items. Mike Forsberg has agreed to be the keynote presenter and will begin the Summit at 9:30 a.m. He will be followed by two shorter presentations and then an afternoon of touring project sites and unique resources in the Corridor. We drove the proposed route in later July and it will include stops at Hormel Park, Fremont State Lakes, Schuyler's Colfax Theater for discussion of the Loup Power Return & Shell Creek, then to Pahaku and back to the Opera House. Registration will be open in late August or early September. I look forward to another great day focusing on the many efforts and issues within the Lower Platte River Corridor. Look for more details soon!

Upcoming Events:

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting: August 21, LPNNRD

LPRCA Water Quality Open: August 30, Quarry Oaks

LPRCA Kayak Tour (rescheduled): September 19 & 20

LPRCA Summit: October 18, 2012, Fremont Opera House, Fremont, NE

UNL Water Science, Policy & Law Conference: November 13 & 14, Lincoln