



Monthly Report for March 2011

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study:** On March 23, Jeff Greenwald (USACE) and I held a conceptual modeling meeting at LPSNRD. We met with a select group of representatives of UNL, USFWS, USACE, USGS, NGPC, and the NRDs to continue to identify components of the conceptual model. We made significant head way in alliterating the basic components of the river's system and how they are related to one another. We will be holding another meeting in the next couple of months and in the interim are working as a group to identify "knowns" and "gaps" as far as research is concerned.
- **USGS Sandbar Monitoring Proposal:** During March, LPSNRD agreed to conduct a 1-year pilot sandbar monitoring from Salt Creek to Highway 75 with USGS and in partnership with the Tern & Plover Partnership and the LPRCA. Additionally P-MRNRD has preliminarily approved an additional segment of the pilot study dependent upon a final decision in the river obstruction removal project.

The one-year pilot study funded by LPSNRD will identify the following characteristics of sandbars on the lower Platte River: frequency/abundance; location; area; height; bank attachment; and vegetation density through three separate surveys as well as some use of time lapse cameras to observe stage change. Most of the data related to the characteristics will be collected only on bars 2.0 acres or larger in size with the exception of frequency/abundance & location. Sandbars of 2 acres or larger are generally considered to be what is needed for Tern & Plover nesting habitat. The initial survey would be conducted following "ice-off" in April/early May, the second would be following the high flow period in late June or July and the final survey will be at low flow this fall.

The pilot study would comprise a baseline data set for an expanded 3-year study to be included within a Nebraska Environmental Trust proposal and/or the next phase of the Cumulative Impact Study. Additionally, this data set will help further the sediment budget analysis currently being developed as part of Phase III of the Cumulative Impact Study and get to the end goal of developing a predictive model to understand how land use changes are impacting the river. Finally, the proposed work would continue to support the investigation and understanding of Tern & Plover habitat on the lower Platte River.

- **River Obstruction Removal:** The discussions with USFWS and USACE regarding permitting issues continued in March. We were given some indication that the USACE and USFWS were willing to discuss the issue further to see if there was a more feasible option other than building a temporary bridge. We will continue to discuss options during the next month and hopefully reach a final conclusion so we all know how to proceed.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** The Land Use Suitability Analysis is all but completed. I will be meeting with HDR in early April to go over the final product and then we will distribute it to the TAC and continue to work with Chris Poole at LPNDRD to incorporate it and the ESA Viewer into the MapMaker site.
- **LPRCA Kiosks:** The construction of the kiosks was finished during March. LPSNRD staff and I will be going out to the identified sites during the first part of April to GPS their locations. Our hope will be to finish the installation of the kiosks in late April or the beginning of May. Thanks to Frank Albrecht of the NGPC for his assistance in coordination the installation at the NGPC properties.

- **Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:**

- **UNL Water Seminar Series:** Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m., Hardin Hall east campus. More information: watercenter.unl.edu
- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting:** Wednesday, April 20, 2011. 9:30 a.m., NGPC, Lincoln
- **Water for Food Conference:** May 1-4, Cornhusker, Lincoln, NE. Registration opens, February 1. More information available at waterforfood.nebraska.edu
- **UNL OLLI Tour of the Lower Platte River:** May 10-11
- **National Association of Recreation Resource Planners:** May 22-26, Breckenridge, CO
- **UNL Water Tour:** July 12-14, based from Ainsworth and Valentine. Contact Steve Ress (472-9549) for the latest information!
- **LPRCA Kayak Tour:** July 19th TBD
- **LPRCA Water Quality Open:** September 1st, Quarry Oaks