



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of August 2007

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

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FEATURED PROJECT

LPRCA Water Quality Open Golf Tournament - Sept 5th, 2007

Once again this year, we had a very successful Water Quality Open golf tournament and educational excursion. I emphasize the word "educational" since we provide so many learning opportunities during the entire event. How can a golf tourney be educational? We provide presentations, demonstrations, and trivia all on natural resources topics such as conservation, water quality, rivers, endangered and threatened species, and erosion to name just a few. We also, have these learning opportunities in the clubhouse as well as ON the holes. This year, we had 144 players on 36 teams - two team per hole, which is the maximum we could have. Looking at the roster of teams and players, we had participants from government (all levels), environmental consultants, private business, LPRCA members, and several members of the public. The day started off prior to the tournament with a presentation by Roch Gaussoin, UNL Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, on types of turfgrass and their water use characteristics. He discussed appropriate types of turf for both golf courses and homes and dispelled some common myths about certain types of grass such as bluegrass and tall fescue. His presentation was entitled, "Turfgrass Water Use: What you think is true, probably isn't!" If you have an interest in this topic, you can access the following website for more information:

<http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu>. Golf participants were "encouraged" to attend this educational presentation with an incentive that gave teams 2 strokes off their golf score if all team members attended. We had seven team stake us up on this offer, which proved to be the deciding factor in the final score. Overall, 39 people attended this presentation. *(continued on next page)*

Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

WATER QUALITY OPEN 2007
September 5th, 2007

Quarry Oaks Golf Club
Near South Bend, Nebraska

www.lowerplatte.org
So much fun, you don't know you're learning
about water quality and conservation

Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE **Water Quality Open 2007**
Sponsored By NEBCO

Demonstrations
This year, we have added even more demos on the course in to showcase the many issues and topics important in the Lower Platte River Corridor. The theme of these demos is the "6 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River." Please take time to visit the demos remember one of them will be the "Land Shark" demo. Below is a list of the Demonstrations you will see and who is sponsoring them.

- **Public Water Supply**
McKenzie Barry & Ariana Kennedy
Lower Platte South NRD
- **Recreation & Tourism**
Rachael Herpel
NE Groundwater Foundation
- **Fish/Fishing/Aquatic Habitat**
Andrea Cade
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission Aksarben Aquarium
- **Housing/Development/Land Use/GIS**
Troy Thompson
Lower Platte North NRD
- **Mining**
Mary Bomberger Brown/Chris Thody
Tern & River Partnership
- **Wildlife Habitat**
Russ Schultz
Lower Platte Weed Management
- **Agricultural Production/Rural Lands**
Christine Jacobsen, Jolene Kohout, Sonya Carlson
Papio-Missouri NRD

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Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE **Water Quality Open 2007**
Sponsored By NEBCO

Thank You to our Sponsor & Donors:

Tournament Sponsorship
NEBCO, Inc.

River Milestone Level - \$1,000 or more
Union Bank & Trust Company

River Guardian Level - \$250 to \$500
CDM
HDR Engineering, Inc

Social Time Sponsorship - Open Bar
Olsson Associates

Hole Sponsorships - \$100
HGM
DATASTOR INC.
Nebraska's NRDs (NARD)
BIZCO Technologies
JEO Consulting Group, Inc
Miller Seed Company
Lamp Rynearson & Associates
Midwest Right of Way Services, Inc.
Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD)
Kelly & Weaver, P.C.
Fleischman Farms

Door Prizes - Various
Diggers Hotline * Lower Platte South NRD
Lower Platte North NRD * Papio-Missouri River NRD

This educational event would not be possible without the support of these organizations and individuals. Please, thank them!

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FEATURED PROJECT -continued-

LPRCA Water Quality Open Golf Tournament - Sept 5th, 2007

As was the case last year, NEBCO sponsored our tournament this year and provided a nice donation, marketing of the event, and they fielded a team. We also had over \$3,600 in additional donations from 15 separate organizations (see graphic on previous page for names). Without these generous donations, this event could not happen since it is funded ENTIRELY by donations, sponsorships, and registration fees. The 7 demonstrations we had this year featured the "8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River" (recreation and tourism were combined) and were strategically located throughout the course to catch golfers as they waited to play. Once again, the 3 NRDs came through by each developing and delivering a demo activity. Other agencies such as the NE Game & Parks Commission, the Tern & Plover Partnership, the Lower Platte Weed Management Area (LPWMA) group, and the NE Groundwater Foundation, also provided us with a demonstration (see graphic on previous page for specific demos and organizations who delivered them). In addition to the demos on holes, there



were 17 trivia signs on various holes, each asking various river, water resources, and other natural resources questions. These trivia signs were all individually sponsored by our donors and sponsors. In the clubhouse, the LPRCA and NRDs had displays on programs, projects, and current issues. LPSNRD staff helped snap photos that were printed and posted for players to view and take home as a memento of the event. Once golf play ended around 6 pm, we held a burger and brat buffet dinner followed by the awards ceremony.

Thanks to generous donations of golf balls, hats, jackets, and shirts from a variety of donors, we drew for door prizes. As has been the tradition for the past four years, we then awarded the "Landshark" award given to a player who took the time to visit our demos and as a way to promote the educational component of the event. It was a very tight race this year for first place, but after factoring in the 2 strokes off for attending the educational presentation at the beginning of the day, we had a repeat winner with the Pedon Boys taking home the honors. Last year, all but one of these players also took first place under the N.E.W.S. team name. All players



received a booklet, the official WQ Open hat, and a variety of info on the LPRCA programs. We have received nothing but positive reviews for the event. The LPRCA will be conducting strategic planning efforts this fall and winter and this program will be examined to see if we will continue with it in the future. From what I saw regarding participation in the educational components, I think the blend of recreation and learning works very well.

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PROGRAMS / PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES - Updates

Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA) Project. PHASE II of this project is well underway as HDR, our consultant, is setting up meetings with local land use jurisdictions to get input as part of a Needs Assessment. This info will be used to help us develop a land use tool for natural areas comprised of a Geographic Information System (GIS), geo-database, and McHargian-style analysis that looks at environmental features of the Corridor. We are asking NRD staff and directors help the LPRCA set up some of these small group meetings. Several are already scheduled or completed. Additionally, the LPRCA submitted a grant to the NE Environmental Trust for funding of PHASES II & III of the ESA project in the amount of \$100,000. Word on whether the grant will be awarded will occur in February of 2008.

Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal Project – PHASE II. Along with the NE Military Dept and Olsson Associates, we are working on preliminary work plans for this phase of the project. Final plans are scheduled to be completed by mid-September so we can begin the project in late November or early December of this year. We need to overcome some access issues since the 6 obstructions are located on the east bank near Beacon View where the main channel flows. This makes it more difficult to reach the obstructions because of the rapid currents and deeper water. The USACE 404 permit also restricts us to 50% or less of the river channel blocked at any one time. The biggest hurdle is finding a sandbar / source of sand nearby that can be used to build the causeway or a diversion dam. We will develop several access options for contractors to consider in their bids and have contingency plans should bids come in too high.

NE Alliance of Conservation and Environment Education (NACEE) Conference. NACEE held its annual conference near Scottsbluff this year at Trails West YMCA Camp. This beautiful setting was a great backdrop for the theme of this conference, "Pioneering the Spirit of Conservation." Highlights included presentations by: North Platte General Manager Ron Cacek on the Platte River Recovery Plan; Heather Haberman, teacher with Scottsbluff High School on getting kids involved in natural resources by supplementing curriculum with field trips, afterschool clubs, special projects, and involving environmental professionals in activities; Travis Miller, Director of ESU #13, on the book *Last Child in the Woods* and how we can use the ideas in this book to reconnect kids to nature; Harry Haefer, Keep Lincoln/Lancaster County Beautiful, on Stormwater issues; Kathy Kropuenske, Keep Scottsbluff/Gering Beautiful, on a unique program to collect old pharmaceuticals instead of flushing them; Buffalo Bruce, Western NE Resources Council, on Nebraska's aspen communities and how rare they are; Dr. Pat Reece, Platte River Basin Environments, on the Wildcat Hills; Mike Sarchet on a program to control invasive species such as Russian olive trees and salt cedar along 9-Mile Creek; and Todd Nordeen, NG&PC, on the NE bighorn sheep introduction program in Nebraska. We also had several fieldtrip opportunities including: a bird walk through the badlands and a prairie dog town; tour of 9-Mile Creek to see areas where invasive species have been removed and have not; a walking tour of Scottsbluff National Monument; and a drive out to view re-introduced bighorn sheep in the Wildcat Hills. Although there was a relatively small number of attendees (20), the conference was an excellent chance to see a very different landscape, yet hear about issues that are common to all of us.



Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, Sept 10th, 2007 * 7:00 p.m. * LPNNRD Office – 511 Commercial Road * Wahoo.

P-MRNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, Sept 13th, 2007 * 8:00 p.m. * Dakota County Service Center * Dakota City, NE

LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, Sept 19th, 2007 * 7:00 p.m. * 3125 Portia Street * Lincoln.

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – Oct 30th, 2007 * 9:00 a.m. tour * 9:30 a.m. – noon meeting * UNL Hardin Hall – East Campus * 33rd & Holdrege Streets * Lincoln, NE. TOPICS: NG&PC Biological Opinion for Lower Platte River / WQ Open / Airboat Tour / WQ Monitoring Network