



## From the Coordinator...

**\*Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of June 2006\***

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

### Water Quality Monitoring Network

June was a busy month for this new project that is just in the conceptual stages. For several years, the LPRCA has looked into establishment of a surface water quality monitoring network along the Lower Platte River by upgrading existing USGS stream gaging stations to take continuous, realtime water quality measurements. As a result, we have been informally talking with the USGS regarding what it would take to do this. The idea behind this project is to gather baseline surface water quality data for an extended period of time, couple this with data from existing NRD groundwater monitoring networks to get a comprehensive picture of water quality for the Lower Platte River Basin. Why is this important? First, there is no such program in place now that looks at surface water specifically in the entire basin. Second, no one has yet taken surface water quality measurements and paired this data with groundwater quality measurements to get a complete picture of water quality in areas known to be interconnected. Finally, identifying water quality issues will help us target our outreach, education, and other assistance programs to the type of contaminant and location allowing us to be most efficient and effective. Since we are not a regulatory entity, we can address the problems in ways that are not punitive but rather informative and provide incentives to correct the problem. Typical water quality parameters that can be measured include pH, specific conductivity, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. Several other parameters are available including chlorophyll and various nutrients. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the three NRDs and USGS took a site visit to Ponca State Park to view a USGS stream gaging station equipped with water quality probes. We also rode on a monitoring boat used to take transects along a river to measure the riverbed profile and determine flow velocities. The experience really opened my eyes to the sophistication the USGS has in data collection for rivers. It also reinforces my confidence in working collaboratively with USGS to develop this water quality monitoring network.



#### GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

The busy time is upon us. There are three big LPRCA projects coming up: Airboat Tour on July 14<sup>th</sup>, Water Quality Open Golf Tourney on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the biggie - the first ever LPRCA Summit on Sept 19<sup>th</sup>. Hope all of you can make either one or more of these as all have a heavy emphasis on education and empowering individuals and organizations to help protect the Lower Platte River Corridor. Call us for details or to participate in a project. The next *Corridor Connections* newsletter will be out soon. If you have a contribution, let us know. Enjoy the summer!

#### Committee Meetings

**LPRCA SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE** – Sometime in August 2006. TBD.

**EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** – Fall 2006.

### FEATURED PROJECT

#### Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal

Looks like things are coming together for this project. The NE Military Dept has pledged around \$105,000 towards removal of the 6 piling groups (12 total pilings), while the 3 NRDs have pledged \$61,000, and the NG&PC is being asked to contribute a matching \$61,000 from its Boating Safety Grant Program. This same program provided \$190,000+ for the Hwy 50 River Obstruction Removal Project. This week, a company out of Denver will be doing a preliminary assessment on the pilings to determine compositions and size using a non-intrusive radar device.



## Programs & Projects

**Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)** The CIS partner group will be meeting on Wed, July 12, 2006 at the LPSNRD starting at 10 a.m. to go over the status of the project and finalize the workplan including QA/QC parameters. The USGS is working hard on the hydrologic study component of the project, while the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is taking on the task of collecting and assembling aerial photos and transect data for 5 time steps from the 1850's to today. Ultimately, we will create a Geographic Information System (GIS) accessible from the internet showing the changes in the river and surrounding area over time. This will be coupled with results from the hydrologic component, which will compile stream gaging data since data was first collected in the early 1900's. Launch date for the GIS is projected for early 2007.

**Kiosks** After taking a tour of potential sites, we have settled upon the following locations pending permission: 2 kiosks at the Lied Bridge, 1 at Platte River State Park on the tower, 1 at Mahoney - location not yet determined, 1 at the Hwy 50 NG&PC Landing, 1 at Two Rivers SRA, 1 at Fremont Lakes SRA, and possibly one near the Loup River/Platte River confluence. The LPRCA has begun working with Big Muddy Workshop out of Omaha to refine the kiosk design and help produce the panels and frames. We are looking to install in September or October of this year.

### **Airboat Tour – July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

Wow, this year's tour is about upon us. Last year, we held two tours and filled each up to the brim. This year, we reverted back to one tour since we are planning several other events including our first ever LPRCA Summit on Sept 19th and the annual WQ Open Golf Tourney on Aug 22. The 2006 tour begins at Hwy 50 and travels upstream to Sokol Camp for lunch and then back down again. We are full once again with nearly 60 people and a waiting list around 10. Fuel costs



have impacted even the airboat tour making it more difficult to get enough airboats and has proven much more costly. Topics to be covered include: RR expansion, bridge work, education, river obstructions, T&E species, boating regulations, land use, stream gages, the cumulative impact study, and more!

### **River Obstruction Removal Program**

In addition to the Camp Ashland project, there are 10 additional identified sites on our obstruction removal list. As we begin one new project, we prepare for future projects by taking site visits. One such visit recently was to a set of obstructions just upstream of the Lied Bridge and another just adjacent to Two Rivers SRA. The site upstream of the Lied Bridge looks to consist of a multitude of wooden pilings closer to the south bank, which typically stick just a few inches above water at lower flows and are hidden under high flows. This looks to be a relatively easy removal barring any unforeseen issues. We will be looking into surveying either this year or early next year.



At Two Rivers SRA, it is a very different story. Mirroring the complexity we observed at the Hwy 50 location, we have a former RR bridge that has five clusters on the east bank comprised of rebar and steel pipe encased in concrete and capped with cement. The large bridge supports normally found on top of these are removed so they only extend a few inches above the water. The west bank had 4 of these clusters but with the supports still on top and extending 10 feet high. Between the clusters on the banks we observed 33 sets of 7 wooden piling groups.



### Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, July 10th, 2006 \* 7:00 p.m. \* 511 Commercial Park Rd in Wahoo  
 PMNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006 \* 8:00 p.m. \* Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> St. \* Omaha.  
 LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, July 19th, 2006 \* 6:00 p.m. \* 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln.  
 LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – Wed, Sept 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 \* 10:00 a.m. \* LPNNRD in Wahoo. **NOTE –**