



Monthly Report for April 2010

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** The Corps of Engineers has been working with USGS to finalize the scope of work for a portion of the Phase III study. The initial portion of the Phase III study includes two components. The first is inputting river transects and associated components into the GIS system. The transects have mostly been completed through another USGS project but will be refined and then attempted to be input into the existing GIS viewer for the CIS. The second component is sediment sampling. USGS will conduct this sampling during late summer. The analysis will then be completed in an additional portion of Phase III by another contractor.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** We continued to move forward on several areas of the ESA project during April. The LSA report is nearly final and will be available soon. Additionally, HDR began inputting the ESA and LSA data layers into an ArcGIS viewer for use on the MapMaker site. Related to that, we accepted a proposal from HDR for the full deployment of the LSA model. The Land Preservation feature will be the first portion of the model to be attempted to be run and placed within the ArcGIS system. We will then conduct field visits to verify that the model is showing the correct land use as well as specific factors. We also plan to present this information to the Nebraska Land Trust's Lower Platte Workgroup and compare it to their more qualitative metrics that were developed to evaluate areas to pursue for conservation easements. HDR is currently considering what it would take to alter the model to allow users to change components of the model to display the impact of proposed/potential land use changes.

A small survey was sent to landowners, organizations, city and county officials, and a select group of other individuals such as LPRCA project partners. The survey will help us in identifying how aware people are of LPRCA and our efforts, their primary concerns or interests, and also help us identify the appropriate format and schedule for the planned seminars. The survey can also be used as a very small pilot of the larger planned public opinion survey.

Another portion of the outreach effort was to "brand" the LPRCA as well as its efforts. During April we selected a tagline for the LPRCA which will be included under the logo. The tagline is: "*Lead. Organize. Inspire. The Voice of the Lower Platte.*" I feel that this represents goals of the LPRCA as well as some of the outcomes of our Strategic Planning Retreat in September. The brand will also include templates for promotional materials, publications, and presentations. We continue to plan for the seminars to be held during June & July.

- **Kiosks:** NGPC designers completed a revised draft of the kiosks during April. We are currently making small adjustments to some of the text and pictures but hope to have a final draft in the next several weeks. I also plan to work with LPSNRD maintenance crew on purchasing the materials for the kiosks before the end of this fiscal year. Frank Albrecht and I will be finishing scouting locations for the kiosks in early May.
- **LPRCA Summit:** In early April, I met with the individuals who have agreed to serve on the steering committee for the LPRCA Summit to continue the early planning for the Summit. Those that are serving on the committee are W Don Nelson of Prairie Fire, Mary Hanson of the National Park Service, Dave Sands of the Nebraska Land Trust, and Matt Pillard of HDR. The date for the Summit will be Thursday, October 21st and it will be held in the Riverview Lodge at Mahoney State Park. The theme that the committee discussed was focusing on how private and public partnerships can promote the preservation of critical resources in an urbanizing area. The tentative schedule will be:

9 a.m. Plenary;

10 a.m. panel discussion;

11 a.m. second panel discussion and/or discussion of LPRCA projects and programs;

12 p.m. bus tour of sites within that area of the Lower Platte with boxed lunches;

4 p.m. reception

I spoke with a potential keynote speaker at the end of April and will meet with the steering committee again in early May.

- **River Obstruction Removal:** Olsson Associates was scheduled to begin conducting the survey of the river obstructions near Two Rivers State Recreation Area on April 28th. From April 28th-30th they plan to Survey Concrete Piers and survey access routes as well as conduct site Reconnaissance for Environmental Permitting. They hope to have the entire design and permitting phase completed during fall or early winter of this year depending on the type of permit that is determined to be required.

- **Water Quality Monitoring Network:** USGS began collecting real-time data the first week of April. Also we approved a 3-year agreement for the Water Quality Monitoring Network sites at Salt Creek near Ashland, on the Elkhorn at Waterloo, and on the Platte near Louisville. The 3-year agreement includes the following:
 - 1) Collecting 9 samples (plus 1 additional QA/QC sample) per year at Salt Creek at Ashland. The samples would be analyzed for suspended sediment, e-coli, and nutrients including dissolved ammonia, dissolved nitrate/nitrite, dissolved phosphate, total phosphorous, and total kjedahl nitrogen.
 - 2) Collect 9 samples (plus 1 additional QA/QC sample) per year at the Louisville and Waterloo gages. These samples would be analyzed for e-coli and suspended sediment. Existing sampling programs from the USGS and NDEQ will be leveraged at these two sites as well.
 - 3) Continue continuously monitoring temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, and turbidity at the Louisville, Waterloo, and Ashland gage sites from April 1 to mid-September each season.Additionally, LPNNRD entered into an agreement for similar data collection on Shell Creek.

- **Quarterly Meeting:** The quarterly meeting was held on Thursday, April 22nd at 930 a.m. at LPSNRD. Thirty-two people attended the meeting. Dave Sands provided an update of the Nebraska Land Trust efforts and many other on-going or proposed projects were discussed including UNO's Davis Prairie Data Shack and a proposed Hormel Park Nature Center in Fremont. The Draft FY2011 LPRCA Budget was discussed and was approved by consensus. I will be finalizing the budget and presenting it to the NRDs during May and June.

- **Canoe/Kayak tour:** This year in place of the Airboat Tour we will be planning a Canoe/Kayak Tour of a segment of the Lower Platte. Nebraska Game & Parks Commission staff will be assisting greatly with the planning for this event. We will continue finalizing plans for the tour in early May and hope to hold the event during mid to late summer.

Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:

- May 2-5: UNL Water for Food Conference, Lincoln
- May 15-21: RMS/NARRP Conference, Portland, OR
- July (tentative): Canoe/Kayak Tour
- July 26: LPRCA Quarterly Meeting, LPSNRD, Lincoln
- September 2: Water Quality Open, Quarry Oaks Golf Course
- October 21: LPRCA Summit, Mahoney State Park