



Monthly Report for December 2009

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** The scoping work for the next phase of the CIS continued to be one of the priorities for the month of December. Planning for the conceptual modeling workshop to be held at LPSNRD on January 28th escalated. We selected HDR as the facilitator for the workshop and have had several planning meetings with them to develop the agenda and format for the workshop. We will have an agenda ready to be sent to the invited attendees—which include representatives of the USFWS, USGS, Corps of Engineers, Platte River Recovery Program, NRDs, DNR, UNL, NGPC, NDEQ and others—sometime during the first two weeks of January. I have continued to do research into similar type of efforts as well as hold weekly coordination meetings with the Corps of Engineers. Additionally, towards the end of December we began discussing the in-kind accounting more specifically again. I will need to return more attention to that in January and February.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** The Technical Advisory Committee for the Land Suitability Analysis component of the ESA met on Wednesday, December 2nd to finalize the weights for each factor and feature in the LSA. It was a very productive meeting and we should be able to finalize the LSA data during January. HDR will then be working more closely on the technical development of the tool and placing the ArcGIS on the Mapmaker site.

I will be meeting with HDR in early January to discuss the initial steps of the expanded outreach effort agreed to during November. We attempted to meet in December but the weather seemed to intrude each time we had scheduled a meeting. Following that meeting, Stephanie White and Theresa Baker from HDR and I will be contacting representatives of the LPRCA as well as other partnering organizations to gather input on on-going programs and efforts to be included within the workshops that are part of the outreach effort. We will also be asking for input on stakeholders to invite or include within the workshops.
- **River Obstruction Removal Project:** During December, the contract with Olsson Associates for the design and permitting portion of the removal of obstructions from the Platte near Two Rivers State Recreation Area was signed. OA had planned on doing the survey during December but the weather played havoc with that as well. They plan to complete the survey as soon as the weather will allow—which with this winter, it could be awhile!
- **Nebraska Land Trust:** The Nebraska Land Trust's Lower Platte Working Group selected 4 additional conservation focus areas (CFAs) within the lower Platte. All of the areas include important agricultural, natural, and historic resources. The Land Trust will continue evaluating and pursuing properties within these areas. The Lower Platte Working Group will be meeting again in the upcoming months primarily to learn more about the Land Suitability Analysis which will be another tool used in selecting potential easements.
- **Davis Prairie Data Shack:** Dr. Alan Kolok (UNO) submitted a proposal to the EPA for expanded water quality education through the Davis Prairie Data Shack near Waterloo. The "shack" is currently being developed through National Science Foundation funds, funds from UNO, and from P-MRNRD. I provided some assistance in the development of the proposal as well as a letter of support and collaboration. If the grant would be awarded, I would provide assistance in education and serve on the review committee for a high school research competition where students from area high schools would utilize the data and technology at the Shack to study and understand critical water quality issues. Additionally, data from both the USGS Water Quality Monitoring Network and the NDEQ will be utilized by the students. We are very hopeful that this type of effort could be replicated at other monitoring stations throughout the lower Platte River.
- **NARRP/RMS Conference:** The abstracts that I submitted (with collaborators) for both a presentation and a poster at the joint River Management Society (RMS) and National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) conference in May 2010 in Portland, OR were accepted. I look forward to working with Ariana Kennedy, Dan Schulz, Tim Montgomery, and Gerry Bowen on both developing and presenting the poster—focused on existing and planned

recreation resources and improved boater safety through the obstruction removal. I also look forward to the opportunity to work with Matt Pillard (HDR) on the oral presentation focused on the Environmental Suitability Assessment project with particular attention placed on the Land-use Suitability Analysis. This will be a great opportunity to showcase the important efforts we are engaged in, receive feedback and ideas, and better understand management issues in river basins across the United States.

Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:

- January 21: LPRCA Quarterly Meeting, 9:30 a.m., LPSNRD
- January 26-27: NARD Legislative Conference, Lincoln, NE
- January 28: Lower Platte Conceptual Modeling Workshop, LPSNRD
- May 15-21: RMS/NARRP Conference, Portland, OR