



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of March 2006

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)

At the Alliance, we continue to look for new funding sources to conduct our projects, studies, and activities. One such source is WRDA. This federal legislation has helped us get 3 very important projects going in the past - Western Sarpy/Clear Creek, Antelope Valley, and Sand Creek. As Congress looks to pass a new version of WRDA, we work to get language included to help us do watershed restoration efforts. These efforts include existing projects such as the Environmental Carrying Capacity Project, the Cumulative Impact Study, and the River Obstructions AND proposed projects like the development of a basin-wide water quality monitoring network. We've been able to get some funding for phases of many of these projects, but we need to find larger amounts to complete and certainly to develop a water quality monitoring network. Along with the 3 LPRCA NRDs, I traveled to DC to meet with our congressional delegation and their staff along with visits to many of our federal partners. Overall, it was a very successful trip and gained us some visibility. Our DC legal counsel, Bob Weaver, always does an excellent job of arranging these trips and the subsequent meetings. He also works tirelessly while we are back in Nebraska on our behalf to keep our information moving through the long and arduous congressional process or getting authorization and appropriations.

GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

We now head into the spring/summer season with a tremendous amount of activities including our airboat tour, golf tourney, and River Summit. We are also very busy putting the final touches on the budget. I just returned from DC where we met with our delegation and federal agency personnel to discuss continued funding for existing WRDA projects and gain support for our proposed \$12 million new authorization in the new WRDA bill - if passed - for watershed restoration efforts. Other projects in the hopper include design of the kiosks, pathogen education project with the Groundwater Foundation, a seminar on conservation easements with the Nebraska Land Trust, refinement of the LPRCA database and GIS, and a multitude of others. I've also been busy preparing for and delivering "Flatwater Plinko", an educational game for 5th graders for the Earth Wellness Festival. It's based on the Price is Right plinko game and has kids answer river-related questions to earn points.



SAVE THE DATES



LPRCA AIRBOAT TOUR

TENTATIVE July 14th, 2006 * 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Touring Hwy 50 (Louisville) to Sokol Camp

Tour the Platte River from Hwy 50 near Louisville to Sokol Camp near Hwy 64. Topics/stops TBD. Tour limited to 40 total participants and 2 per organization. No cost, but registration will be required. Invitations will be sent and inquiries can be directed to the LPRCA.

WATER QUALITY OPEN GOLF TOURNEY

August 22nd, 2006 * 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Quarry Oaks Golf Course near South Bend

We're back again at Quarry Oaks where they employ a number of conservation practices. This event allows us to educate attendees on water resources issues while having a great time. Holes will feature displays and trivia. A burger and brat buffet along with awards ceremony follow the event. Format will be four-person scramble so you need not be a great golfer. Registration will be available soon! Check online.

LPRCA SUMMIT

Sept 19th, 2006 * Noon to 8 p.m.

Swanson Retreat Ctr -Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland
"Investing in the River of our state and the state of our River - The Lower Platte." That's the theme of this interactive summit featuring displays, presentations, and hands-on activities. Come learn how you can help protect the Lower Platte River

Committee Meetings

OUTREACH & EDUCATION May 2006 –TBD

BUDGET & FUNDRAISING AND PROGRAMS & PROJECTS Combined Meeting – APRIL 2006 – TBD. Unfortunately, this meeting was postponed because of the one-day snow storm we had. The topic will be programs/projects and budget issues.

EXTERNAL ADVISORY –MAY 2006. *Date, Time, and Place TBA. Discussion of current and future projects.*

Programs & Projects

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)

The group met on April 5th, 2006 at the LPSNRD in Lincoln. The COE gave an update on activity and status of funding availability. We are still collecting data and getting it into the proper form to add to a GIS. I mentioned that we are preliminarily approved for a NE Env. Trust Fund grant in the amount of \$115,000 to finish up PHASE II and carryout the USGS hydrologic analysis component. April 17 is the date we hear if we get final approval for the grant. The next CIS meeting is after the LPRCA quarterly meeting on May 23rd starting at 1:30 p.m. at the LPSNRD.

Kiosks We have reviewed a preliminary design and will now be incorporating photos of the "8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River." Design of the frames will be completed by the LPSNRD including construction of a prototype. Plans are to have these in place in 8 locations throughout the Corridor by mid-summer.

PSA's Our four new public service announcements (PSA's) are currently airing on a two-week on, two-week off rotation on KFOR (Lincoln/Omaha market) and KJSK (Columbus market) for the next three months. We would like to play in smaller markets also so if anyone is familiar with the radio markets in your area, please contact the LPRCA at 476-2729.

River Obstruction Removal Program

We have been looking into using a sonic echo methodology to do a preliminary investigation on the obstructions at Camp Ashland. The device is attached to the obstruction, which allows determination of depth and material make-up for the obstruction. We've located a company out of Denver who can do this non-intrusive determination and while they are here, they will look at several other sites. Because of restrictions with our 404 permit issued by the Corps of Engineers (COE), we cannot poke around with a backhoe or any other similar equipment. This leaves few other options unless we wait until the permit allows us to poke around, which isn't until August. Making a preliminary determination will also allow for better planning and more precise removal bids. Partners for this project will include the LPRCA, the NE National Guard, and the NG&PC.



Camp Ashland Obstructions.



Helping at the Earth Wellness Festival with the "Flatwater Plinko"

Other Activities

- Ⓜ **I-80 NE Innovation Zone Commission (NIZC)** - The NIZC met on April 6th, 2006 at the P-MRNRD in Omaha. Severe weather hampered the meeting and there were not enough members present to constitute a quorum. Presentations were given by Omaha, Douglas County, and the P-MRNRD on land use, economic development, and natural resources. I spoke to the group about the many LPRCA studies available to help the NIZC while developing a growth strategy. The next monthly NIZC meeting is May 4th, 2006 at Mahoney State Park near Ashland - Time to be determined since they may combine the meeting with a bus tour of the region.
- Ⓜ **NE/IA Metroplex Indicators Conference** - This group met March 23rd, 2006 at Quarry Oaks near South Bend. We continued with our presentations from various counties and communities on land use in the 60-Mile area. The next meeting will be held on April 20th from 9 to noon at Quarry Oaks and will feature Ted Knowlton of Envision Utah, a nationally recognized model for regional consensus building.

Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

- LPNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Monday, Apr 10th, 2006 * 7:00 p.m. * 511 Commercial Park Rd in Wahoo
- PMRNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Thursday, Apr 13th 2006 * 8:00 p.m. * Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154th St. * Omaha.
- LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Wednesday Apr 19th, 2006 * 7:00 p.m. * **Permanent Office** located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln
- LPRCA Quarterly Meeting - Tuesday, May 23rd, 2006 * 9:30 a.m. * LPSNRD at 3125 Portia in Lincoln.