



## Monthly Report for April 2009

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### Programs / Projects / Activities

- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting:** Approximately 30 people attended the April 28 LPRCA Quarterly Meeting at the Lower Platte South NRD office in Lincoln. A special presentation was given by UNL Environmental Studies students Elyse Watson, Jessica Shortino, and Kim Tomczak. The presentation was an outcome of their semester-long examination of the current and potential public access on the Lower Platte River. The presentation highlighted what other states have been able to do—both traditional and nontraditional measures—to increase public access and recreation opportunities within river corridors and basins. It was an outstanding presentation that resulted in a lengthy discussion by the Alliance members and others in attendance. Other agenda items included updates on ongoing projects (described below) and the LPRCA Budget (described below).
- **FY 2010 LPRCA Budget:** Much of my month of April was spent on the LPRCA budget. I continued to revise the budget based on program priorities, new efforts that are proposed and old efforts that have been in the budget but have not been implemented. I have been working to identify past contributions and program-specific banked funds within the LPRCA finances so that I am able to adjust the next year's budget accordingly. I also spent time working on revising the LPRCA account and program codes within the LPSNRD budget and finances so that we will be better able to track both revenue and expenses as we continue to increase both the number and complexity of our programs and efforts. Draft 2 of the FY2010 budget is complete and was approved by the LPRCA members (contingent upon each entity's funding) at the LPRCA Quarterly Meeting on April 28. I will be working on further refining the budget over the upcoming weeks.

I completed a federal audit training on April 21, 2009 so that I will be able to assemble a more complete set of records and improve the file organization for all projects where we receive federal funding. It will also allow me to potentially generate more regular financial reports for Alliance members if desired or needed.

- **LPRCA Long Range Implementation Plan:** We will be holding a retreat on Tuesday, July 28 (tentative) for Alliance members. The purpose of the retreat will be to develop a "Long Range Implementation Plan (LRIP)" for the LPRCA. The development of a LRIP for the Alliance will help us identify programmatic and organizational goals for the next 3-5 years. The LRIP will serve as an opportunity for members to set priorities, evaluate where we are, and to increase transparency and understanding both within and external to the LPRCA.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA):**

The Needs Assessment portion of the ESA project is complete. Overall the meetings we conducted with the cities and counties throughout the corridor were very successful. I also feel that the process has served to either strengthen the connection with or reconnect the Alliance to communities and stakeholders that we are serving.

I am currently reviewing both the Phase III report and the Land-use Suitability Analysis report. I hope to have comments on both back to HDR next week and once finalized both reports will be available. Additionally, I am still hoping to hold the Technical Review Committee meeting for the Land-use Suitability Analysis portion of the project in May. I have just a few more potential members to contact before setting the meeting date.
- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** On April 2 a demonstration and review meeting was held for all the CIS partners. Chris Poole gave an in-depth presentation on how to use the CIS ArcIMS site and Ron Zelt and Daniel Gintig provided comments on the USGS components of the CIS project.

A good deal of the meeting time was spent discussing the proposed Phase III of the project. A federal appropriation of \$167,000 was given for FY2009. The appropriation would require a 50% match from the project partners. Currently, I am working the Corps of Engineers and project partners on identifying what an appropriate next step for Phase III would be. Given time constraints, the considerable sum of money required, and at this point the lack of a

clear direction or goal for a Phase III, we may take a step back and spend more time evaluating and clearly defining a goal for Phase III. I will continue working with the Corps and project partners in the next week or so and am attempting to set up a meeting to discuss Phase III options further.

- **Water Quality Monitoring Network:** We entered into an extension of the current agreement between LPSNRD, PMRNRD, LPRCA, and the USGS to add the 2009 growing season for collection of water quality data at three gage sites within the LPR Corridor. We also hope to expand the scope of data collection with additional funding during this fiscal year by increasing the data collection capability to include a predictive component to identify suspended sediment and e-coli.
- **2009 Water Quality Open:** A “save the date” card was mailed out to past participants and others on the Alliance mailing list this week. My next step will be to identify a key note speaker, organizations that are willing to provide demonstrations along the course, and other logistics for the day. Please let me know if you have suggestions or ideas for speakers and demonstrations! We will be offering on-line registration for the event this year. Again, the event is scheduled for Thursday, September 3 at Quarry Oaks Golf Course.
- **Coffee Shop Meetings:** We will be holding our first Coffee Shop Meeting of 2009 at “Cherri-O’s” in Ashland on Tuesday, May 12. Dave Sands of the Nebraska Land Trust will also be joining us at the Coffee Shop Meeting to provide information on the Land Trust and connect with individuals that may be interested in conservation easements. We are looking to hold a second Coffee Shop Meeting in Gretna during mid-June to hopefully miss planting season for agricultural producers. Dave Sands will be joining us in Gretna as well as potentially a representative of UNL or the Tern & Plover Conservation Partnership. We will also be continuing to schedule meetings in other communities throughout the late summer and fall.
- **Airboat Tour:** The 2009 LPRCA Airboat Tour has been scheduled for Thursday, July 16. We are planning to utilize the same route that was planned last year. As you remember, severe weather and sizeable rains prior to the scheduled date did not allow for the Airboat tour to be held last year. While that was a disappointment, it’s made this year’s plans a bit easier for us! We will begin the tour in the morning at Bryson’s Airboat Tours west of Fremont, travel up-river near North Bend for lunch and then return to Bryson’s by 3:30. Participation will be limited to 55-60 people and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. We are working to contact potential speakers but are interested in any suggestions for topics and speakers.

A “save the date” card will be mailed out to previous participants and the LPRCA mailing list within the next week to 10 days. Ryan Bjerke, LPRCA Intern has been a big help in getting the ball rolling on plans for this year’s Airboat Tour. We also would like to thank Tim Bryson, Matt Shaw, and the Nebraska Airboat Association for their assistance all ready!

- **Waters of Nebraska Educational booklet:** The first draft of the booklet was reviewed by our advisory committee and was sent back to Project Wet for revisions. The next draft should be available for my review in the next month and we still hope to have it finalized during early fall.
- **Presentations:** I presented to a Lincoln chapter of PEO, a women’s public service organization. I also gave a presentation to a UNL Oschler Life Long Learning Institute. Both presentations were very well received and created a good deal of interest in the LPRCA and issues on the Lower Platte River.
- **Meetings/ Conferences Attended:**
  - UNL Water Law, Policy, Science Conference: April 29 & 30, 2009 at the Embassy Suites, Lincoln.