

***NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE***  
***ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD***  
***JULY 2004***

---

---

**CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION**

- Burt County received 14 new requests for HEL determinations and 4 requests for certified wetland determinations; 1 HEL determination was completed and 4 certified wetland determinations were completed.
- Burt County received 25 ASCS-569 reports of possible non-compliance during the month of July. A field visit made to one reported potential wetland violation determined that no violation had occurred and that minimal effect provisions applied. Burt County Committee granted good faith variances to 7 tracts found to not be following conservation plans; NRCS state conservationist granted variances to 3 tracts; Don Doty granted 1 variance with 3 still pending approval. Revised conservation plans will be written for all fields granted variances, and they will be added to the 2005 status review list for Burt County.
- Blair field office (FO) has received 85 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY2004.
- Blair FO has received 10 applications for fall conservation practices and 15 requests for FY2005 Tree Program.
- In Dakota County an application for a water and sediment control basin system was prepared for CAP cost-share assistance.
- Omaha FO has processed 420 tract updates.
- Omaha FO has received 3 applications for fall conservation practices and 5 requests for FY2005 Tree Program.
- Burt County has received 12 new terrace applications and has processed payments for 3 terrace projects that were completed.
- Burt County had 4 applications for grass seeding that were approved, seeded and payment applications completed.

**EQIP**

- Blair FO staff completed 15 EQIP/SWCA status reviews.
- Construction has begun on Teager's EQIP erosion control structure located in Washington County; Lee Appleby is the site inspector. The project also includes a small diversion.
- In Dakota County, 3 water line systems were surveyed and designed for pasture management projects.
- Planning was finalized for 7 EQIP contracts in Dakota County and landowners interested in additional projects have been in contact with office staff.
- In Dakota County an outstanding 1999 EQIP contract was modified and is scheduled for completion this fall.
- Burt County reviewed all existing EQIP contracts; 1 contract cancellation has been requested, 1 request for additional funds was made, and all other contracts are on schedule.
- One grade control structure (non Silver Creek) was started in Burt County; the structure is scheduled to be completed the first week of August.

## **WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)**

### **WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)**

- Burt County has received 7 WREP applications and several requests for information regarding the program. The new applications will be reviewed by the wetland team on August 9-11.
- Four WRP applications previously submitted from Burt County were approved for appraisals; 1 of these applications has since been cancelled by the landowner. Appraisals have not yet been completed.
- Omaha FO conducted field review for a potential WREP site.
- Forty five people attended the WREP meeting held in Dakota County on July 6. Interest has been high in the program. Six applications encompassing approximately 950 acres have been received to date.
- Don Atkinson (Walthill) was involved in WREP meeting with Omaha tribal council and public meeting.

### **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)**

- Blair FO has completed Continuous CRP payments for 90 acres of native grasses and filter strip seedings.
- Landowners interested in the wetland portions of the Continuous CRP have been contacting the Dakota County office. A number of contracts will be developed for fall application.
- Dennis Cady, Walthill FO, revised 20 CRP plans.
- Burt County completed payment applications for 9.6 acres of CRP wetland and 16.0 acres of grass filter strips.

### **WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (WHIP)**

- Blair FO received 1 WHIP application.

### **PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED**

- Sites 4, 5 and 14 will be combined into a bid package to be let this fall by the NRD. Land rights maps for all 3 sites have been developed by field office staff. DNR permits for site 14 were prepared and submitted on behalf of the landowner by the staff and COE 404 permits are being prepared for submittal.
- Landowner contacts are ongoing within the watershed; sites for next year's work are being identified.

### **SILVER CREEK WATERSHED**

- Blair FO staff sent out 14 packets to interested persons and contractors bidding on Silver Creek sites 32 and 33; the site showing was held on July 14.
- Blair FO held the bid opening for sites 32 and 33. Terry Schumacher and Mitch Keebler conducted the meeting and tabulated the bids. The apparent low bidder is Craig Glup Construction. Construction is scheduled to begin in September.
- The final cross sections were surveyed on structures 15 and 19; final quantities are currently being calculated for both projects.

### **WATER QUALITY**

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties have 10 applications pending.
- Washington County has 15 applications pending.
- Dakota County has 1 application pending.
- Burt County has 2 applications pending.
- Thurston County has 4 applications pending.

## **INFORMATION/EDUCATION**

- The South Sioux City staff provided new items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of July. The news items were: Importance of Grassed Waterways, Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program and Soil Quality is Key to Water Quality. Photos with captions were included of a well-established and maintained grass waterway, a map of the Lower Missouri River WREP area, and of a pesticide container collection and recycling project in Dakota and Thurston counties.
- Staff from Thurston and Dakota Counties (NRD, Rural Water and NRCS employees) staffed a booth at the county fair, July 21-25.

## **DAKOTA COUNTY SERVICE CENTER**

- Plans for the NRC have been finalized; the NRD will advertise for construction bids during July with bid opening to be held on August 31.

## **DISTRICT INFORMATION**

- Denny Piper and Rod Kinning (NRD Walthill) conducted maintenance activities on Silver Creek, Tekamah Mud and Pigeon Creek structures.

## **TRAINING/MEETINGS**

- All field office staff completed NRCS Sexual Harassment Training.
- Kelly Fravel attended the South Sioux City Tree Board Meeting on July 20.
- Robert Hall, NRCS Omaha, attended UNL-Extension Crop Clinic, Cunningham Lake Watershed Council meeting, Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership meeting and reviewed and provided recommendations to the COE for Camp Ashland seeding project.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

- Blair field office, Ralph Arauza SCT, has completed his second 3-year term as Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager for the State of Nebraska. Rafael Ricaurte, NRCS Lincoln, has assumed the volunteer position.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, August 6, 2004



## From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report from the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the period of JULY 1 through JULY 31, 2004

*Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator*

### **NEXT LPRCA MEETING - - TUESDAY, AUGUST 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2004** **9:30 A.M. PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD**

#### Water Quality Open- Wednesday, September 1, 2004

The date for the 2004 Water Quality Open is coming up fast. It will be held this year on Wednesday, September 1st, 2004 at Arbor Links golf club in Nebraska City. TO register, contact the LPRCA at (402) 476-2729 or go on-line and download the registration form. We still have space, but it fills up fast. The event starts off at 11:00 a.m. with a presentation by Steve Merkel, who is the Manager of Agronomy for all courses constructed by Landscapes Unlimited - - the organization that built Arbor Links. Cost for registration is \$55/person and includes all green fees, cart use, range balls, prizes, t-shirt, and dinner. The tournament is a four-person team scramble with a shotgun start. We have several activities and displays planned. Single golfers are welcome - - we can find you a team to play on. Deadline for sign-up is August 23<sup>rd</sup>. See you there.

Agro-Environmental Trail Project formerly Nature Trail Project) The group just received notice that they have been awarded a 5-star EPA grant to implement the Grazing Wetland Project I mentioned last month in my report. I don't have all of the details yet, but it sounds as though an educational program will also be developed in conjunction with design of the grazing wetlands system.

Cumulative Impact Study The CIS group will be meeting on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. following the LPRCA quarterly meeting. The meeting will be held at the Papio-Missouri NRD office located at the Chalco Hills Recreation Area. Take the Sapp Brothers exit on I-80 and go north to Giles Road. Take a left (west) and continue until you see the entrance gate to the recreation area (top of hill). The group has defined the boundary area for the study - - the Lower Platte River area that includes the 100-year flood plain (1-meter resolution) or 5 miles (2.5 miles on each side from the center of the river), whichever is greater. Also, where the floodplain is very wide near the Elkhorn River confluence, it was agreed upon that north of the Douglas County line, only the Platte River drainage would be included. Grant opportunities, development of an internet-based GIS mapping system, and which time step (aerial photos) to acquire will be discussed at the August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. We did just receive word that the grant from EPA we submitted was not funded. They had tremendous response to the call for applications and ended up having much less money to give out than originally thought.

Affiliation with the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) Last time, I mentioned that this was proceeding forward with the approval of all three NRD boards. We have run into a snag. Because of the nature of the LPRCA, we cannot sign any agreements including an agreement with the NCF to create a fund to utilize their nonprofit status to accept grants and donations. As a result, we are exploring other ideas such as having the LPSNRD serve as the party to the agreement with the NCF to create the "Lower Platte River Corridor Fund." We could then have an amendment in the interlocal to ensure all parties have input into how money in the fund would be used. This is only one option and we are the early stages of this process.

### **Bit 'O' Trivia**

Answer to last month's question

**What % of human blood is water?**  
a. 18% b. 55% c. 99% d. 83%

**ANSWER - d. 83%**

This month's question:

**What is the world's longest river?**  
a. Amazon b. Mississippi c. Congo d. Nile

**Answer in next month's report**

**60-mile Radius Committee** The 60-mile Radius Project is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year. As a part of the project, there will be a "Flatwater Metroplex Conference" on September 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the results of the project survey on land use and public perception/attitudes along with a summary of land use planning issues and alternatives. The conference is \$10/person including lunch and will be held at the Scott Conference Center located at 6450 Pine Street in Omaha. You can sign up by calling (402) 595-1902 or download the registration form at [www.ecospheres.com](http://www.ecospheres.com). If you are interested in development issues between Lincoln and Omaha including the Lower Platte River area, you will find this conference very interesting.

**New Brochure** The new LPRCA brochure is here and looks great! Get yours today. If you would be willing to let us put a few in your brochure rack, please let us know and we'll send some over.



**2004 Airboat Tour Highlights** Wow! What an event. It all turned out great for this year's tour including the weather. The event was held on Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 and covered the area of the Lower Platte River from South Bend to Plattsmouth. With nearly 60 people in attendance and 23 airboats, the tour commenced at 9 a.m. at the Hwy 50 landing north of Louisville. The tour headed upstream to the Lied Bridge for a presentation on the Platte River Connection, housing developments, the Lower Platte River Utilities Board (LPRUB) infrastructure project, and trails projects. The tour then headed downstream to the Omaha Fish & Wildlife Club to talk about their operations and levee systems. The members of the club were very accommodating and provided a very nice tent set-up for our stop. Our third stop was at the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers at the Schilling WMA. There we heard from NG&PC representatives Frank Albrecht and Mark Brohman on the wildlife management area and a river chute restoration project. Bob Diffendal, a retired UNL Conservation & Survey Division Professor Emeritus, gave an interesting presentation on Lewis & Clark and the geology of the area. Following a great BBQ lunch, we headed to the Hanson Lakes area for several presentations including one by John Lund of NDEQ, Kyle Hoagland of UNL, and Jim Sitrick of Cass/Sarpy County Health Department on recent algae bloom problems in area lakes. The second presentation was given by Jeff Kohn of the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) on their operations and proposed wellfield near Ashland. Rene Nelson wastewater operator for Hanson Lakes, spoke on the wetland wastewater treatment plant for the Hanson Lakes area. Following this last presentation, we loaded up and headed back to Hwy 50 for departure. Thanks to everyone who helped and those who attended. Here are a few photos:



## **Upcoming NRD and Alliance Meetings:**

- **NEXT LPRCA QUARTERLY MEETING** - Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004\* 9:30 a.m. \* PMRNRD Office near Omaha.
- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 7:00 p.m. - LPNNRD Office - Wahoo @ 511 Industrial Road
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 8:00 p.m. - PMRNRD Office - Omaha @ Chalco Hills Rec. Area
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 7:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street