



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of July 2005

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

Next LPRCA Quarterly Meeting

Next meeting will be **Tuesday, August 16th, 2005** at the **PMRNRD** in Omaha. The meeting will begin at **9:00 a.m.** and we hope to conclude in a couple of hours. We will be working on agenda items soon, so please contact the LPRCA if you have any ideas.

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) We've been working to get several agreements together to utilize currently available federal funding for this project. We have nearly all signatures but two and should know within days whether we have all potential partners signing on for the project. For the federal fiscal year 2005 (ends Sept 30, 2005), there is \$25,000 available and for federal fiscal year 2006, there is \$100,000 available. All federal funds must be matched by an equal local share or \$125,000 in this case.

Bellevue Bridge Project I recently attended a meeting at the NG&PC HQ in Lincoln on a bridge project to replace the existing Bellevue Bridge with a new one north of the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. Basically, the bridge would connect I-29 on the Iowa side to Hwy 75 in Nebraska. A majority of the discussions focused on the impacts both on the species of the area and on the land use. Attendees included NG&PC, USF&WS, TNC, NRCS, American Rivers, Iowa DNR, the COE, and the LPRCA. The bridge project is still in the planning stages and there is sufficient time to get involved and be proactive. There are also a tremendous amount of opportunities to look into for habitat enhancement and protection, economic development, wetland protection and restoration, and recreation. The group decided to form a smaller "working group" to further discuss and develop strategies to address the opportunities discussed above.

River Obstruction Project This project continues to move forward after our recent issuance of a 404 permit by the COE. This week, our consultant and LPRCA staff will be making a site visit to Hwy 50 to get detailed info on the site, the obstructions, and project requirements. Solicitation for bids should go out in early fall with obstruction removal scheduled to begin in late fall to early winter of this year.

Environmental Carrying Capacity Project We will be holding a status update meeting soon on the project to determine what info we still need from our partners. Our consultant is also looking at how we can work in conjunction with other parallel programs such as the 60-mile Radius Project and the Innovation Zone Commission. The PMRNRD and the LPSNRD both sit on this commission which is tasked with identifying opportunities for economic development along the I-80 Corridor between Omaha and Lincoln.

PACE On July 8th, the PACE group met at a sand pit near Hwy 79 on the Lower Platte River. The owners want to work with the PACE group to develop a reclamation and conservation plan for the area. They currently have a couple of houses along a portion of the pit, but they aren't looking to develop many more residences. They would like to do some cedar removal and restore native grasslands. The PACE group will meet on August 9th in Columbus to discuss the project further. On the recent July 29th airboat tour, the owner of the sand pit described above let the tour group stop at the site to observe an operating sand pit. We also used the location as a place to have lunch.

Project Management Training I've been attending an intensive project management training over the past week. Since we are kicking off several new projects, I thought it would be helpful to have some formal training in project management principles and techniques.

2005 Water Quality Open Golf Tourney
Join us Sept 1, 2005 at Quarry Oaks Golf
Course near South Bend. So much fun, you
won't know you're learnin'

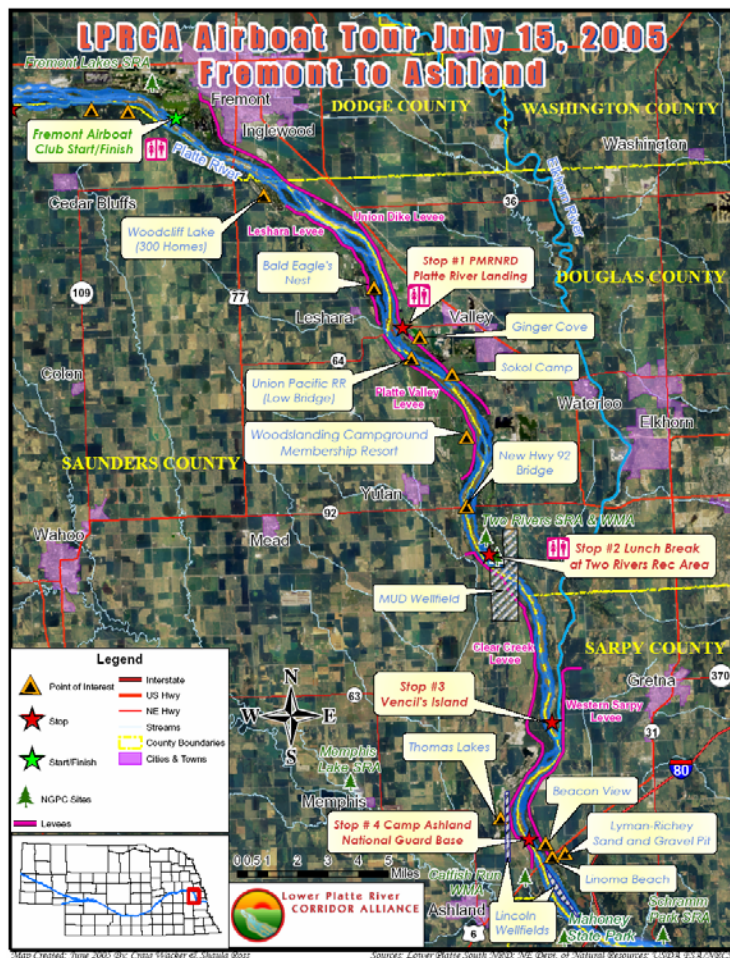


Presentation – 10:00 a.m.
Shotgun Start - 12:30 a.m.
Awards & Banquet – 5:30 p.m.

2005 Airboat Tours

The LPRCA held two airboat tours this year and each went extremely well. A summary and photos of each are provided below:

July 15th - Targeted For Local Officials. We toured the portion of the river from Fremont to Ashland. Topics included: PMNRD projects and public access on the Elkhorn River; Cumulative Impact Study; Pallid Sturgeon Study; LPRCA projects; Lower Platte Weed Management Area group; PACE; LB 962 - Integrated Water Resources Management; NRD-COE Feasibility Projects; Camp Ashland Levee Project; and Lincoln Water System wellfield and future plans. We had 36 attendees packed onto 12 airboats. Of those: 11 were from communities or counties; 2 were members of the public; 2 were federal agencies; 2 were staffers with congressional members; 11 were from NRDs or the LPRCA; 5 were with state agencies; 2 were with nonprofits; and 1 was with UNL. Several other people joined us at various stops through out the tour. A copy of the itinerary and map are included below:



Lower Platte River
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

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AIRBOAT TOUR 2005

ITINERARY & SCHEDULE

July 15th, 2005

★ START: Meet at the Fremont Airboat Club with 9:00 a.m. check-in. Refreshments served. **BATHROOMS AVAILABLE.** This will also be the first presentation with the Nebraska Airboaters Association giving a talk on their activities. The LPRCA and LPSNRD will talk about their programs and upcoming tour stops. Leave 10:15 a.m. and head downstream for Hwy 64 (20-25 minutes). View points of interest.

★ POINTS OF INTEREST: The bluffs on the south side of the Platte River; Woodcliff Lake housing development (west side); Leshara Levee (west side); Union Dike Levee (east side); and a bald eagle's nest on the west bank just upstream of Leshara.

★ STOP 1: Arrive at Hwy 64 - PMNRD Platte River Landing at 10:45 a.m. **BATHROOMS AVAILABLE.** Presentations by PMNRD on new public access points and other projects; NDOR on infrastructure projects; and NG&PC on the Cumulative Impact Study and Pallid Sturgeon Study findings. Leave 11:30 a.m. for Two Rivers State Rec Area. View points of interest.

★ POINTS OF INTEREST: Ginger Cove development (east side); Sokol Camp (large building on east bank); Union Pacific RR low bridge (blue-green - may need to float under); Woodsliding Campground Membership Resort (west side); new Hwy 92 bridge construction.

★ STOP 2: Arrive at Two Rivers State Rec Area 12:00 p.m. **BATHROOMS AVAILABLE.** Presentations by Lower Platte River Weed Management Area (LPWMA) group on noxious weeds; P.A.C.E. on sand/gravel mining in the area and cooperative planning efforts; Two Rivers SRA Staff on the rec facility; and NE Dept of Nat Res on LB 962 - the integrated water resources management legislation recently passed. **LUNCH - BBQ** at 12:45 p.m. Leave 1:30 p.m. for Vencil's Island area. View points of interest.

★ POINTS OF INTEREST: MUD wellfield and new placement of lines under river using directional drilling (north and south of river); Clear Creek Levee (west side); and Vencil's Island (east side).

★ STOP 3: Arrive at Vencil's Island area at 1:45 p.m. Presentations by the Corps of Engineers on Feasibility Projects for flood reduction and conservation measures. Head downstream at 2:15 p.m. for Camp Ashland.

★ POINTS OF INTEREST: Confluence of Platte and Elkhorn Rivers; Western Sarpy Levee (east side); Thomas Lakes development (west side); Beacon View development (east side); Hwy 6 Bridge; Linoma Beach (east side); Lyman-Richey sand/gravel pit (east side behind Linoma Beach).

★ STOP 4: (Last Stop) Arrive at Camp Ashland area at 2:30 p.m. Presentations by the Corps of Engineers, and NRDs on Camp Ashland Levee Project; and Lincoln Water System (LWS) on their wellfield, water quality sampling, and future plans. Head upstream for Fremont Airboat Club at 2:45 p.m.

★ POINTS OF INTEREST: Enjoy the many sights of the Lower Platte River on your way back upstream to Fremont. Take note of the many, many interests - development, habitat, recreation, agriculture, infrastructure, and industry. **LET YOUR AIRBOAT OPERATOR KNOW IF YOU NEED TO MAKE A BATHROOM STOP AT THE LOCATIONS LISTED ON THE MAP SINCE NO SCHEDULED STOPS ARE PLANNED ON THE WAY BACK TO FREMONT.**

★ FINISH: Arrive at the Fremont Airboat Club at approximately 3:30 to 3:45 p.m. Tour is completed. **THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING. WE HOPE YOU LEARNED A LITTLE ABOUT THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER!** Y'all come back now.



2005 Airboat Tours

July 29th - - Open to Everyone. For the second tour, we toured the portion of the river from Fremont to Schuyler. Overall, we covered nearly 2/3 of the Lower Platte River this year with our airboat tours. Topics for this tour included: the Cumulative Impact Study; the Pallid Sturgeon Study; LPRCA projects; LPNNRD on Rural Water District projects and an update on the Sand Creek Project; Feral Pigs; River Otter Program; Lower Platte Weed Management Area group; PACE; Sand/Gravel Mining; LB 962 - Integrated Water Resources Management; NG&PC Conservation Officers; Historical Fluctuations of the Lower Platte River and the Influence of the Loup Canal (USGS); and NPS Cooperative River Programs. We also observed many eagles and caught a blue catfish in a shallow channel. Overall, we had 40 attendees packed onto 10 airboats, where one particular boat could hold 9 people. Of those: 5 were from communities or counties; 1 was a member of the public; 5 were with federal agencies; 2 were staffers with congressional members; 11 were from NRDs or the LPRCA; 6 were with state agencies; 2 were with nonprofits; and 2 were with UNL; 3 were with Sand/Gravel Companies; and 3 were with private companies. Several other people joined us at various stops



Lower Platte River
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AIRBOAT TOUR 2005

ITINERARY & SCHEDULE

July 29th, 2005

★ START: Meet at the Fremont Airboat Club at 9:00 a.m. for check-in. Refreshments served. **BATHROOMS AVAILABLE.** This will also be the first presentation with the Nebraska Airboaters Association talking about their activities. The LPRCA will talk about current programs and upcoming tour stops and give a few safety pointers. Finally, the NG&PC will discuss the Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) and the Pallid Sturgeon/Sturgeon Study findings. Leave 10:15 a.m. and head upstream for a stop on a Platte River sandbar. View points of interest.

POINTS OF INTEREST: Bluffs (south side); Boyscout Camp (south side); Sacred ground of the Pawnee (look for cross on south side of river); Variety of wildlife including bald eagles; Cedar Lakes development (south side - note sign for nude beach); Former bridge supports - concrete (north and south sides - note that the LPNNRD had removed several of the supports formerly in middle of river by demolition).

★ STOP 1: Arrive at Platte River sandbar at 10:30 a.m. Presentations by LPNNRD on new rural water district projects and other current projects; and NG&PC on feral pigs/hogs & the river otter program in NE. Leave 11:15 a.m. for the Tiala Sand Pit near Hwy 79. View points of interest.

POINTS OF INTEREST: Bramble Wildlife Management Area (south side); Legge's Lake development (north side); Variety of wildlife; NOTE - recent reports indicated large numbers of dead shovelnose sturgeon floating in river.

This stretch of the river is less developed than areas further downstream and affords the opportunity to see a variety of wildlife and natural settings.

★ STOP 2: Arrive at Tiala Sand Pit near Hwy 79 at 11:45 p.m. **BATHROOM AVAILABLE.** Presentations by Lower Platte River Weed Management Area (LPWMA) group on noxious weeds; P.A.C.E. on sand/gravel mining in the area and cooperative planning efforts; and NE Dept of Nat Res on LB 962 - the integrated water resources management legislation recently passed. **LUNCH - Pizza at 12:30 p.m.** Leave 1:30 p.m. for Schuyler area (Hwy 15 bridge). View points of interest.

POINTS OF INTEREST: Hwy 79 bridge; Former bridge pilings east of Hwy 79 bridge (south half); McGinn's Lake (north side); Community of Rogers (north side); Poule Island cable car (north side); Variety of wildlife.

★ STOP 3: Arrive at Platte River sandbar near Hwy 15 bridge at 2:00 p.m. Presentations by NG&PC Conservation Officers; and USGS on current and historical Platte River flows and fluctuations and impacts from Loup River Canal releases. Head downstream at 2:30 p.m. for McGinn's Island. View points of interest.

POINTS OF INTEREST: Former bridge pilings west of Hwy 15 bridge; Whitetail WMA west of Hwy 15 bridge (south side); Variety of wildlife.

★ STOP 4: (Last Stop) Arrive at McGinn's Lake development at 2:45 p.m. **BATHROOM AVAILABLE.** Presentation by Nat'l Park Service on cooperative river programs including the UNL-ARDC Nature Trail project. Head downstream for Fremont Airboat Club at 3:15 p.m. and completion of tour.

★ FINISH: Arrive at the Fremont Airboat Club at approximately 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. Tour is completed. **THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING. WE HOPE YOU LEARNED A LITTLE ABOUT THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER! Y'all come back now.**

Safety & Comfort

- NEVER walk behind the back of an airboat when it is running.
- NEVER stand up in an airboat while it is moving.
- If wearing a brimmed hat, please turn it around so brim is in back since the wind can catch it and blow it off.
- Always wash feet/shoes off before getting into airboats since sand and rocks can fly off and damage the propeller.
- When wading be aware that currents, uneven river beds, and mud can make it more difficult to walk.
- Secure all loose items since you will be travelling 30 to 50 mph and items will fly out if not secured.
- Hearing protection is required. Over-the-ear protection is supplied, but ear plugs are also encouraged.

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One of our participants, Ken Dewey with the UNL High Plains Regional Climate Center, took a variety of photos and notes which can be viewed at the following site: <http://www.hprcc.unl.edu/nebraska/platte-river-alliance-tour2005.html>