

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

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**CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION**

- Omaha Field Office (FO) received one sodbuster request.
- Blair FO has received 73 HELC/WC/569 requests for FY2005.
- Omaha and Blair FO staff assisted representatives from Ag Statistics in compiling information for NRI, Natural Resource Inventory.
- Burt County received five wetland and four HEL requests.
- Walthill FO completed two terrace projects.
- Walthill FO, Blaine Gaer, assisted Washington County staff with terrace layout.
- South Sioux City FO reported one water and sediment control basin with supporting grass waterways under construction.
- Conservation plans were updated on 18 tracts in South Sioux City.
- South Sioux City FO received three tree orders for 225 trees.

**CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)**

- Blair FO has received 53 CAP applications (\$285,000) for conservation practices in Washington County. 90% of the practices have been laid out and designed, 18 applications processed for payment.
- Blair FO has received ten orders for the FY2005 TREE program in Washington County.
- Burt County FO has completed ten of the 21 terrace projects approved.
- Walthill FO completed one well abandonment.
- South Sioux City FO received one application for tree planting cost share assistance.

**EQIP**

- Blair FO technical staff advises that Robert Toebben EQIP contract has been modified and is being processed for payment. Thomas Van Dyke EQIP grade stabilization structure will be built in Spring 2005. Sibbernsen Farms EQIP grade stabilization structure is in the design, planning and approval stage. Troy Wakefield EQIP diversion/waterline is under construction. Linda Ciurej EQIP grade stabilization structure will be constructed in Spring 2005. Kriete Farms EQIP ag waste system is being designed by a TSP. Hidden Acres/Cottonwood Creek's grade stabilization structure is in the planning stage and their engineer is considering a breach study suggested by Washington County officials. Potadle Farms EQIP pivot/irrigation waterline/flow meter is being processed for payment.
- Omaha FO received one EQIP ground and surface water conservation, GSWC, application.
- Walthill FO surveyed two grade stabilization structures.
- A Water and Sediment Control Basin is being designed in Dixon County under a Dakota County contract.

- South Sioux City FO reports that seeding, pipeline installation and fence installation are underway on a pasture system.
- EQIP workgroup meeting was held in Tekamah on November 30th. No significant program changes were presented or proposed.
- Contract reconciliations and modifications are underway in all offices.

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

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

- Blair FO, Les Smith, has been contacting landowners in the WREP Missouri River corridor to explain the program and generate interest.
- Blair FO, Neil Jensen, has been working on wetland determinations in Burt County.
- Walthill FO completed one certified wetland determination. Two other determinations are pending.
- South Sioux City FO sent Option Agreements to Purchase to owners of eleven WREP parcels.

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

##### **CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)**

- Blair FO has completed payments on 6 CRP contracts.
- Blair FO, Les Smith, has been working with three landowners that have approved CP33 Buffer Habitat contracts in the Continuous CRP.
- Walthill FO completed one general CRP seeding and one Continuous CRP seeding.
- South Sioux FO has completed contracts for three Continuous CRP applications.

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

- Mitch Keebler, Omaha CET, completed design on Pigeon/Jones 4 and is in the process of getting checked.
- Archeological site investigations are underway on sites 4, 5, and 9. Stan Riggles, Gary McCoy, and Neil Dominy have conducted soil borings in search of findings of historical significance.

#### **SILVER CREEK WATERSHED**

- Fencing and seeding has been completed on Silver Creek Site 32 and 33.

#### **PERSONNEL**

- Janet (Sam) Thomas has been selected to fill the vacant Civil Engineering Technician position in South Sioux City. Also, Dave Bedlan has been selected to fill the Resource Conservationist position in Tekamah. They will report for duty on December 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **INFORMATION/EDUCATION**

- Omaha FO processed a level 2 account activation request for potential TSP, Technical Service Provider.

- The South Sioux City FO staff provided items and photos for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of November. The news items were: Time to Prepare Windbreak Sites, Tree Prices Announced, Tree Planting Assistance Available, an editorial by Neil Stockfleth entitled Is Ditch Erosion Acceptable, and Annual RC&D Meeting. Photos with captions were included of Lynn Heng, the new District Conservationist, Mitch Keebler and Dennis Cady surveying the dam, and 2005 Officers for the Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D.
- The South Sioux City staff assisted a private contractor to gather 2004 NRI information.
- Walthill FO, Rod Kinning, NRD FR, assisted Washington County staff with terrace layout for three days.
- Walthill FO staff, Rod Kinning and Denny Piper, NRD FR, cleared brush and seeded part of the Pigeon Creek dike.

#### **DAKOTA COUNTY SERVICE CENTER**

- Footings have been completed and walls are going up at the NRC site.

#### **TRAININGS/MEETINGS**

- Robert Hall, Omaha RC, attended the Cunningham Lake Watershed Council meeting.
- Robert Hall and Ralph Puls met with Jason Fransworth, Olsson & Associates, to discuss NRD/NRCS cost-share programs and practices that may be utilized in the Cunningham Lake Watershed.
- Blair FO, Terry Schumacher FR, attended the RC&D Annual meeting in Scribner.
- Blair FO, Terry Schumacher FR, attended the EQIP Local Work meeting in Tekamah.
- Walthill FO, Don Atkinson, attended the Civil Rights committee meeting.
- South Sioux City FO, Neil Stockfleth, participated in the EQIP teleconference on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### **DC COMMENTS**

- FY05 program funding is anticipated to be allocated at level similar to FY04.

Reported by: Lynn Heng, District Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, December 3, 2004.

**COMPARISON OF FY 04 AND FY 05 BUDGETS FOR NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY04</b>
Conservation Operations	\$837,360,000	\$853,004,000
Watershed Survey/Planning	\$7,083,000	\$10,562,000
Watershed Program (PL566)	\$75,576,000	\$87,000,000
Watershed Rehab	\$27,500,000	\$29,805,000
RC&D	\$51,641,000	\$51,947,000
WRP (acres)	154,000	189,000
EQIP	\$1,017,000,000	\$975,000,000
WHIP	\$47,000,000	\$42,000,000
FRPP	\$112,000,000	\$112,044,000
EQIP GW/SW	\$51,000,000	\$51,000,000
CSP	\$202,411,000	\$41,443,000



## From the Coordinator...

**\*Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the period of Nov 1 - Nov 30, 2004\***

**Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator**

### **LPRCA MEMBER RETREAT**

Don't forget that there will be an LPRCA member retreat on Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005 at Camp Kitaki starting at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 3:00 p.m. followed by a short tour of the Lied Bridge. Please let the Alliance office know by December 31<sup>st</sup> if you plan to attend so we can get a heads count for meals. I hope every member organization can send at least one representative so we can evaluate the direction and accomplishments of the Alliance.

**LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** The Alliance met for a quarterly meeting on Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at the LPNNRD in Wahoo. Minutes will be available shortly and posted on our website at [www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org). In addition to updates on current and planned LPRCA projects/programs, the group discussed several specific items including: LPRCA Member Retreat scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004 at Camp Kitaki, progress on establishing an affiliated fund with the Nebraska Community Foundation, and presentations on the 2004 airboat tour and golf tourney. The group discussed the format of the airboat tour for next year and decided to go with two smaller tours - - the first targeted to the local decision-makers, and the second open to a broader audience. The golf tourney was also discussed and the group tentatively decided to hold the event at Quarry Oaks this year and have a mini-conference prior to the golfing. More details are in the minutes.

**Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)** The CIS partner group met following the LPRCA quarterly meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup> at the LPNNRD in Wahoo. The primary focus was to review the Scope of Work (SOW). The group decided to set December 31<sup>st</sup> as the deadline to finalize the SOW and finish up Phase I of the project. Partners were also asked to submit cost estimates for Phase II - Data Acquisition and Trend Analysis, which needs to be added to the SOW. Many partners will start the budgeting process soon so estimates for Phase II costs and local matching costs will be needed early in 2005 to make funding/contribution requests.

**Vencil's Island Tour** On November 12<sup>th</sup>, I participated in a tour of the Vencil's Island area along with W. Don Nelson of Senator Nelson's office, Steve Oltmans of the PMRNRD, and Marlin Petermann of the PMRNRD. We toured areas where conservation measures will soon be implemented

including the creation of channels cut into the island to create backwater habitat for fish such as the pallid sturgeon among others. These measures are a part of the larger "Western Sarpy-Clear Creek Project" which will build new levees and upgrade existing levees to the 50-year flood level. We also looked at current and proposed development and a location for an Elkhorn River public access site.

**Collaborative Watershed Management** I recently met with a representative of the City of Lincoln to discuss collaborative watershed management efforts. The Alliance was asked for input since we have proven successful in cooperative ventures. Watershed management for the City of Lincoln area can have an impact on the lower Platte River since a major stream in the area, Salt Creek, runs from the Lincoln vicinity to the Platte River near Ashland.

**Website** We plan to re-do the LPRCA website this winter and we kicked off the effort with a meeting between the all NRD employees who will help in this venture. Additionally, LPRCA intern Craig Wacker will be assisting as a part of his M.S. program at UNL. Ideas for design and content are welcomed. The website is [www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org).

**Water Quality Monitoring Network** One of the primary issues the Alliance deals with is water quality. As a result, I have been meeting with the USGS to look at a water quality monitoring network that could be integrated with existing gauging stations operated by the USGS. This idea is also being considered as a part of the CIS project. There is some 50/50 costshare funding available from the USGS to undertake this project but the funding is available for only a short time.

### **Next LPRCA Quarterly Meeting**

Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 \* 9:30 a.m.  
Lower Platte South NRD in Lincoln

## From the Coordinator...continued

### Upcoming Meetings and Activities

- PMRNRD Board Meeting - Thursday, Dec 9th, 2004 \* 8:00 p.m. - Nat Res Center @ Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- LPNNRD Board Meeting - Monday, Dec 13th, 2004 \* 5:30 p.m. - Platte Center Community Center - Platte Center\*
- LPSNRD Board Meeting - Wednesday, Dec 15th, 2004 \* 2:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street\*
- Ice Jam Cooperative Agreement Meeting - Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 9:00 a.m. \* PMRNRD
- Lower Platte Weed Management Area (LPWMA) Group Meeting - Wed, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 9:30 a.m. \* LPNNRD
- Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan Presentation - Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 5:00 p.m. \* Sarpy Co. Offices
- 60-Mile Radius Study Committee Meeting - Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 3:30 p.m. \* JCI - Omaha
- MapMaker Partner Update Meeting - Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 10:00 a.m. \* LPNNRD
- NARD Legislative Conference - January 25 & 26, 2005 \* Embassy Suites \* Lincoln

\*NOTE the winter meetings times are in effect for the next several months

### Newsletter - Your Submissions Needed!

The Fall/Winter Newsletter is a work in progress, but we need your ideas and submissions. Anything you would like us to discuss related to the Lower Platte River Corridor, water quality, septic systems/private wells, NRD programs, upcoming events, etc, please submit to the LPRCA via e-mail at [rverhoeff@lpsnrd.org](mailto:rverhoeff@lpsnrd.org) or call us at (402) 476-2729.



Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator

### Meet the Coordinator

**Hometown and State:** Hickman, Nebraska.

**Other Places Lived:** O'Neill, NE; Wichita, KS; Haven, KS; Topeka, KS; Valentine, NE; Lincoln, NE.

**Currently Resides:** Lincoln, NE.

**Education:** B.S. in Natural Resources, major in Water Science; M.S. in Agronomy, specialty in Soil & Water Science.

**Positions Held:** Currently - Coordinator of LPRCA; Executive Director - Niobrara Council; Natural Resources Specialist - KS Dept of Ag; Environmental Scientist - Burns & McDonnell WCI; Water Resources Manager - Upper Elkhorn NRD; Graduate Research Assistant - UNL; UST/ER Protocol Intern - NDEQ.

**Hobbies:** Playing guitar; Bicycling; Weightlifting; Music; Sports; Outdoor activities and nature.

**Parting Words:** "We are just the caretakers of the earth and you have to ask yourself what legacy you want to leave."

Happy Holidays!