



Monthly Report for November 2009

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** The scoping work for the next phase of the CIS continued to be one of the priorities for the month of November. We continued to discuss the CIS and conceptual modeling workshop with a variety of scientists, consultants, Corps of Engineers, and others to better define the scope of the workshop. Additionally, we continued to identify facilitators, review other conceptual models done in other river basins, and assemble information. We will be meeting with the selected facilitator in early December to finalize the date, invitee list, and develop a more specific agenda. I continue to hold weekly calls with the Corps and will be scheduling a project update conference call or meeting with the project partners once the plans for the workshop have been finalized.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** The Technical Advisory Committee for the Land Suitability Analysis component of the ESA will be meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd to finalize the weights for each factor and feature in the LSA. We hope to conclude the development of the LSA, finalize the ESA report, and launch the ArcGIS site by early January. Following the completion of those items, we will begin the outreach portion of the ESA.

We held a conference call between the three NRDs and HDR to discuss the scope of services for the expanded outreach portion of the ESA. The proposal was finalized and accepted. As discussed previously, the new proposal condenses the number of workshops from five to three while shifting their purpose to include presentation and discussion of LPRCA programs such as the CIS, Water Quality Monitoring Network, the River Obstruction Removal Project, Nebraska Land Trust partnership and others as we identify them. We will also be developing consistent branding for the LPRCA, conducting small surveys that can be used as the pilot of the larger public opinion survey, and gaining opportunities to identify emerging issues, collect information, and identify potential partnerships or collaborations. I will be meeting with HDR during the first part of December to begin laying out the plan specifics.

I also spent time going back through the financials related to the Nebraska Environmental Trust to ensure that we are on target for both the in-kind as well as the reimbursable expenses. I met with Lisa Beethe of the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) to review the records and discuss the planned outreach proposal. Following that meeting, I will be submitting a request for a 6 month grant extension during December. The NET is very supportive of the expanded approach for the outreach effort.

- **River Obstruction Removal Project:** I continued to work with Olsson Associates on a scope of services for the design and permitting portion for the removal of obstructions from the Platte near Two Rivers State Recreation Area. The scope of services is pending and will be considered by LPSNRD during December. If the proposal is accepted, Olsson Associates will begin permit application and design immediately and will hopefully have that work completed by mid-spring 2010. Actual removal would begin during late fall or early winter 2010. I also met with NGPC to discuss needed easements for the actual removal and the timeline for submitting the boater safety grant that has historically funded a sizeable portion of the removal projects.
- **Drought Ready Communities:** We held our community workshop in Nebraska City on November 5. The range of participants at the workshop included representatives from: Nemaha NRD, UNL Extension, Nebraska City water and utilities, NPPD, rural water districts, Nebraska City Chamber of Commerce, banks, golf courses, agricultural lenders, navigation, and many others. The day provided us a good deal of feedback on what steps a community the size of Nebraska City can reasonable take to plan for and mitigate drought. We will be working with a select leadership team throughout the winter and will hold a follow up workshop in the spring. Again, I hope this process can be included in future LPRCA and NRD efforts dealing with hazard mitigation.
- **NARRP/RMS Abstracts:** During November, I also worked with collaborators on the submission of an abstract for presentation and for a poster at the joint River Management Society (RMS) and National Association of Recreation Resource Planners conference in May 2010 in Portland. Matt Pillard (HDR) and I submitted an abstract for an oral

presentation on the Environmental Suitability Assessment project with particular attention placed on the Land-use Suitability Analysis portion of that project. Ariana Kennedy and Dan Schulz (LPSNRD), Tim Montgomery (NGPC), Gerry Bowen (P-MRNRD), and I submitted an abstract for a poster presentation focused on existing trail and recreation resources, with particular focus on the lied bridge, improvement of access and boating safety through the river obstruction removal project, the development of a water trail and overall coordinated recreation use plans. We should be notified of acceptance sometime in December.

- **Nebraska State Irrigation Association/Nebraska Water Resource Association Conference:** I attended the joint NSIA/NWRA conference in Kearney on November 23-24. The conference was extremely well done and provided me a great opportunity to continue to get more educated on the challenges facing water managers across the state as well as opportunities to meet those challenges.

Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:

- Dec ember 10: Leopold Conservation Award Ceremony—Kearney
- January 21: LPRCA Quarterly Meeting