



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of January 2006

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance - Summit

"Investing in the River of our State and the state of our River - - The Lower Platte"

Don't miss the first Lower Platte River SUMMIT on Tuesday, September 19th, 2006 at the Ferguson Retreat Center located at Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland. This event will provide a forum to discuss the variety of issues facing the Lower Platte River ranging from water supply to habitat to land use to recreation. Be prepared to learn a lot, engage in active discussions, and have a great time. Not your typical meeting, this one will include engaging presentations, displays, hands-on activities, and plenty of time to interact with other attendees. Mark your calendars NOW since space will be limited. More details to come in the near future.

GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

The LPSNRD held an open house in January to showcase the new "green" addition to the office. Nearly 160 people stopped in to see such advances as dual flush toilets (still on boat from Aussie), sorghum board, geothermal heating/cooling, and a rain garden to name a few of the advances. Our condolences go out to the LPNDRD and the family of NRD Director Ron Larson, who passed away recently. Ron was truly a great NRD director and all-around great person. The Outreach & Education Committee met for the first time and discussed among other things the Public Service Announcements (PSA's). The LPRCA has agreed to assist the Groundwater Foundation with a water quality program focusing on pathogens in drinking water. This will entail holding a series of meetings in various communities around the Midwest including the Corridor. A lot of attention has been given lately to the concept of a lake near Ashland - Lake Linoma - that would be larger than Lake Mac. Senator Pam Brown introduced LB 1121, which was not advanced by the Appropriations Committee this past Monday. However, the senator vows to continue to pursue this and other economic development ideas in the area.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

OUTREACH & EDUCATION – No formal meeting scheduled at this time.

BUDGET & FUNDRAISING – Mid February 2006 – Date, Time, and Place TBA. Discussion of FY07 Budget and status of FY06 Budget.

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS –Mid-February 2006. Date, Time, and Place TBA. Discussion of current projects and FY07 programs and projects.

EXTERNAL ADVISORY –March 2006. Date, Time, and Place TBA. Discussion of current and future projects.

PROJECT & PROGRAM UPDATES

★ FEATURED PROJECT ★

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)

What impacts (both good and bad) do our activities have on the Lower Platte River Corridor its ecosystems? What changes have resulted over the past hundred years to the river itself? These are the questions the CIS study is looking to try and answer. Individually, it may seem that activities and projects have little if any impact, but cumulatively these can add up to a detectable effect. The CIS is examining aerial photos for five time periods (1850's, 1938, 1950's, 1970's, 1993, and 2003), combining them with 1850's transect data and throwing in a USGS-run hydrologic study of stream gage data to look at changes, determine trends, and make predictions of impacts for planned activities. Phase I (scoping) finished up in August of 2005 and the project is now in Phase II where all data is gathered, digitized and entered into a GIS system available on-line.



PROJECT & PROGRAM UPDATES

Environmental Carrying Capacity Project

We will be scheduling a meeting of the project team to review the PHASE I Report and scoping out the scope and cost of PHASE II by the end of February.

Outreach/Promo Items As mentioned in my opening remarks, the Outreach & Education Committee met for the first time ever and discussed a variety of outreach & education items. The list for this next year includes 4 public service announcements, 8 kiosks, a fold-out map, a traveling display, several giveaways, and a variety of items for kids including a comic book and trading cards. I met with our consultant for the PSA's recently and we picked a voice talent and background music for the spots. We also worked on getting the scripts refined. The goal is to have 4 - 30 second PSA's each focusing on a different issue including Water Supply, Land Use, Fish & Wildlife Habitat, and Recreation & Tourism. Out timeframe is to have them ready for airing in late March and April. We will be focusing on the larger markets for this round to hit the biggest number of listeners but plan to pursue the smaller markets next.

Newsletter The latest edition (VOL 3, NO 2) of the LPRCA newsletter, "Corridor Connections" was distributed in January to over 1,700 people. Features include the Hwy 50 River Obstruction Removal Project; Recaps of the 2005 airboat tours and golf tourney; Updates on the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study and Cumulative Impact Study; an article from Larry Angle of the LPNNRD on the Mead Superfund Site, and photos from several of the events (you might see yourself). We still have copies available if you would like more.

NE Airboaters Association Meeting On February 4th, I attended the NE Airboaters Association annual meeting in Council Bluffs. I spoke on the recently-completed Hwy 50 River Obstruction Removal Project and answered questions regarding future obstruction removal. The group was very appreciative of the project and give great input into future projects including the Hwy 77 area where there are two sets of obstructions. We discussed the need for signage on bridges for safe travel routes but the problem with liability associated with placing these signs. I recommended the association create a map of safe passage and distribute to their members. Herb Angell with the NG&PC was also in attendance to discuss boating rules and regulations.

Lower Platte Weed Management Area (LPWMA) Conference The LPWMA group is working on putting together a noxious weed/invasive species conference for this fall. I've been asked to sit on the planning committee for this event which will be a statewide conference bringing together weed management groups from around the state, agencies, resources managers, landowners, and legislators. The focus will be on raising awareness of existing and emerging weed issues. NO date, place or time has been set yet but most likely, the event will be sometime in September or October of 2006. Partial funding will come from a US Fish & Wildlife Foundation PTI (Pulling Together Initiative) grant.

Other Activities

In addition to our programs and projects, the LPRCA continues to be involved in a number of other important activities:

- Ⓡ **I-80 Innovation Zone Commission** - The NIZC met twice since my last report on Jan 19th and Feb 2nd. As you might imagine a lot of discussion revolved around the Lake Linoma legislation that was proposed and now has died in committee. An Executive Director has now been hired and the group is working on developing its mission and goals. Since this commission is set to expire after two years, time is of the essence. The group is also proposing to conduct a study to develop a strategy for growth and sustainable economic development. Next NIZC meeting is March 2, 2006 at Mahoney State Park - 7:00 p.m. - Cedar Room.
- Ⓡ **NE/IA Metroplex Indicators Conference** - The Metroplex group met on January 19th at the Joslyn Castle in Omaha. Over the past several meetings, each of the partners has taken a turn at describing activities and future outlook for the 60-Mile Radius area between Omaha and Lincoln. At the Jan 19th meeting, Paul Mullen with MAPA gave his take on current activities and future planned activities for infrastructure and transit projects. Next meeting is February 16th, 2006 at Quarry Oaks Golf Course - 2 p.m. I am scheduled to talk about water resources.
- Ⓡ **P.A.C.E.** - P.A.C.E. is an acronym for Planning - Aggregate - Community - Environment and is a group of mining interests, government agencies, and environmental groups to assist with planning post-mining reclamation activities. Rather than just a mine-scarred landscape following active mining, we can have wetlands, recreation, open space, and appropriate development tracts of land. P.A.C.E. meets on a quarterly basis.

Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

PMRNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Thursday, Feb 9th 2006 * 8:00 p.m. * Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154th St. * Omaha.

LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Monday, Feb 13th, 2006 * 5:30 p.m. * 511 Commercial Park Rd in Wahoo

LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Wednesday, Feb 15th, 2006 * 2:00 p.m. * **Permanent Office** located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting - Tuesday, February 28th, 2006 * 9:30 a.m. * LPSNRD at 3125 Portia in Lincoln.