



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for December 2007

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

- **Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal Project – PHASE II:** The project is essentially completed with the exception of a few clean-up items and grass seeding that will need to be completed in the spring. You can log onto a special website we developed for this project at http://oaprojects.com/platteriver_obstruction/index.htm and enter “Ashland531” for the user name and “w2j95mx\$” as the password. If you select the “PHASE II” link, it will take you to weekly photologs and reports. Below are a few photos. The first shows how the contractor built a coffer dam around the obstructions, pumped out the water, and then used a cutting torch to cut the metal casing before removal of the concrete pier. The second shows one of the additional pieces that had to be removed to continue. This piece weighed in excess of 18,000 lbs. The third photo shows the wooden pilings also removed. Notice the pencil sharp points still in-tact.



Overall in PHASE II, we removed 6 large (4' diameter) concrete and steel obstructions that were former road supports to 6' below the riverbed along with 11 additional wooden pilings. Last year, we removed 6 concrete and steel obstructions in PHASE I. Original cost for PHASE II was estimated to be \$268,000 by our consultant, but the low bid for deconstruction plus engineering fees came to \$309,949 (Valley Corp out of Valley, NE and Olsson Engineering). This increased the contribution request per NRD from \$28,000.00 to \$34,991.50 - a \$6,991.50 increase. This situation was discussed with the 3 NRDs prior to accepting the low bid and moving forward. As we began to remove obstructions, we also discovered several additional pieces of the supports that were buried next to the obstructions. To complete removal, we had to remove the additional pieces since they were lying against the supports. We were able to negotiate fees down to time and materials. This situation was brought to the attention of the 3 NRDs administration, who all agreed to move forward if costs could be kept to a minimum. This additional removal resulted in an additional \$12,505.00. Half of this, we will request from the NG&PC Boating Safety Program. This leaves \$6,252.50 to split between the 3 NRDs or \$2,084.17 per NRD. In total, we are requesting \$37,075.67 from each NRD (11.5% of project cost and an increase of \$9,075.67 over the original request). We have received \$100,000 from the NE Military Department and will request \$111,227 from the NG&PC. The change request represents 4% of the total original project cost, which is less than the typical 10% contingency amount normally reserved for major projects.

- **3 NRD Meeting to Discuss LPRCA: REMINDER** - - Don't forget to mark your calendars for the **3 NRD meeting on Jan 22** to discuss LPRCA programs, projects, and direction. The meeting will take place at Mahoney State Park from 3 pm to 8 pm and includes a dinner at 5 pm. **The registration deadline is Tuesday, January 15th, 2008**. A "bad weather day" has been reserved for Jan 29 at the LPSNRD from 3pm – 8 pm. One-day park permits are available at the gate.
- **WQ Monitoring Network – Shell Creek Site:** At my request, the USGS attended the January 3rd LPNNRD Projects Committee meeting to present a proposal to add Shell Creek (tributary of the Platte River) to the LPRCA WQ Monitoring Network yet this year. The USGS found some additional funding through their NAWQA program that can be used to add Shell Creek to the LPRCA WQ Monitoring Network this upcoming season even though it was not scheduled to be sampled until 2009. This proposal comes on the heels of many discussions of priorities regarding water quality problems in the LPNNRD area and a willingness by the LPRCA and the USGS to address these priorities. Shell Creek has suffered considerable negative impacts from both nonpoint source contamination and point source "dumping" of manure and lagoon effluent over several years. Attempts have been made by NDEQ and local authorities to identify the sources of the illegal dumping with little success. A Shell Creek Watershed Group has been formed and students at area schools have monitored the stream for the past several years. Even with all of these great efforts, there still exists a need for an intensive monitoring effort. This project will provide for one sonde (monitor) to be placed along Shell Creek for the 2008 season (April to Sept/Oct) along with some additional sampling. Temperature, pH, turbidity, and specific conductance can all be samples with this one sonde and additional parameters can be estimated using relationship curves. The USGS has \$10,000-15,000 available if local sponsors can come up with \$15,000-\$25,000 (depending upon level of monitoring desired). The LPNNRD Projects Committee voted to participate including providing the required matching funds and will forward this recommendation to the full LPNNRD Board for review on January 14th.

Additionally, the USGS approached the LPRCA about serving as a sponsor for an another project on Shell Creek that would add two more sondes (total of 3) and increase sampling and source identification for contamination. It would also look at indicator parameters that could be related to waste dumping into Shell Creek; include pharmaceuticals and personal care product (PPCP) sampling; and model the fate and transport of bacterial components – many of which can be related to ag wastes such as those seen in Shell Creek. This project is dependent upon receiving grant funding through the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) program and would include other entities like K-State and UNL. The following link describes this grant program in detail: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/waterandwatershedsnri.cfm>.

The USGS will do a large share of the legwork on the grant application and will also provide some match. The LPRCA would provide the coordination and grant administration oversight as well as serving as the sponsor. This proposal was first presented to the LPNNRD Projects Committee, on Jan 3rd since Shell Creek lies within their jurisdiction. The committee voted to serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of the LPRCA, dependent upon approval of the full board on Jan 14th. Other LPRCA members were also notified and solicited for input via e-mail. A copy of the USGS proposal for this projects is attached.

- **NRD MapMaker Partner Meeting:** We held a meeting of the NRD MapMaker partners on December 12 at the LPNNRD. We had a great discussion on items to fix and new features to add. Chris Poole has done a great job of jumping on these items. Please check out www.nrdmapmaker.org to see what has been changed and added.

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** The next CIS partner meeting will be January 30 starting at 10 am at the LPSNRD in Lincoln. We hope to review a draft of the final report. Unfortunately, over the life of the project, we have been slowed by the COE's schedule and availability often due to deployments to Iraq and Hurricane Katrina duty. One item we need to discuss is moving onto a PHASE III – Predictive Modeling in the near future. It seems premature to do this particularly in light of the constant delays we have encountered, but we will be going through an additional budget cycle soon and need to at least discuss. Just a reminder to not shoot the messenger as the LPRCA is not the sponsor of this project - - it is a NG&PC effort along with a whole host of local partners. I have just stepped up to help coordinate the effort and keep order.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA):** The holidays delayed some of our meetings for the needs assessment portion of the project, but we are working on scheduling the following meetings: Cass County - mid-January, NEBCO - end of January, Fremont/Inglewood – mid-January, and Saunders County – end of January. We recently held meetings with LWS and the City of Plattsmouth. Along with HDR, I plan to present info from the ESA project at the APA/NPZA Conference in February and a regional Wetlands and Watersheds Conference in KC later this spring.
- **Harvard Innovation Award:** After being asked to apply, I just received word that we did not make the cut from the 1000 applicants to the next round of 100 quarter finalists. The award program is a multi-step process that requires vigorous application submissions. Although disappointed that the LPRCA was not chosen to move on (because we are very innovative – no bias here), I am a little relieved to not have the intense work required to move on.
- **LPRCA Website – www.lowerplatte.org:** The LPRCA website has been updated and includes info and documents related to the NG&PC Biological Opinion and NDNR's basin determination for the Lower Platte River Basin. Check it out.
- **Other Items/Meetings of Interest:**
 - NARD Legislative Conference – Feb 5 & 6, 2008 * Embassy Suites * Lincoln, NE
 - Budget Process to begin following 3 NRD meeting in Jan.
 - American Planning Association (APA) Institute / Nebraska Planning & Zoning Association (NPZA) Annual Conference - *Source Water Protection: Planning to Protect Your Water Supply* – February 20, 2008 * 8:30 am – 5:00 pm * GI Holiday Inn Midtown
 - River Management Society Conference – May 12-15, 2008 * Portland, ME

Upcoming NRD & LPRCA Meetings / Events

P-MRNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, Jan 10th, 2008 * 8:00 p.m. * 8901 S. 154th St - NRC * Omaha.

LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, Jan 14th, 2008 * 5:30 p.m. * LPNNRD Office – 511 Commercial Road * Wahoo. ①

LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, Jan 16th, 2008 * 2:00 p.m. * 3125 Portia Street * Lincoln. ①

3 NRD Meeting to Discuss LPRCA – Jan 22nd, 2008 * 3 – 8 p.m. * Dinner at 5 p.m. * Mahoney State Park – main lodge. Bad weather date is Jan 29th, 2008 at the LPSNRD in Lincoln – same times and dinner included.

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – Feb 7th, 2008 * 9:30 a.m. – noon * LPNNRD * 511 Commercial Park Road * Wahoo, NE.

① Note – Winter meeting times have changed.