



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of June 2007

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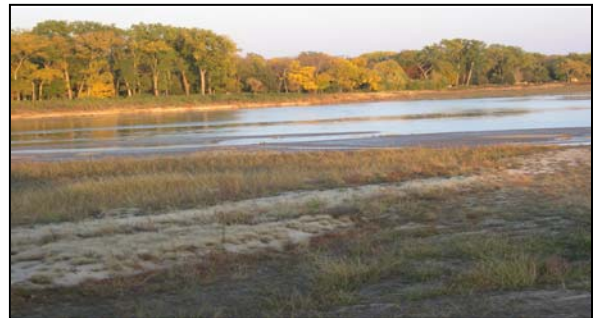
*Project Updates

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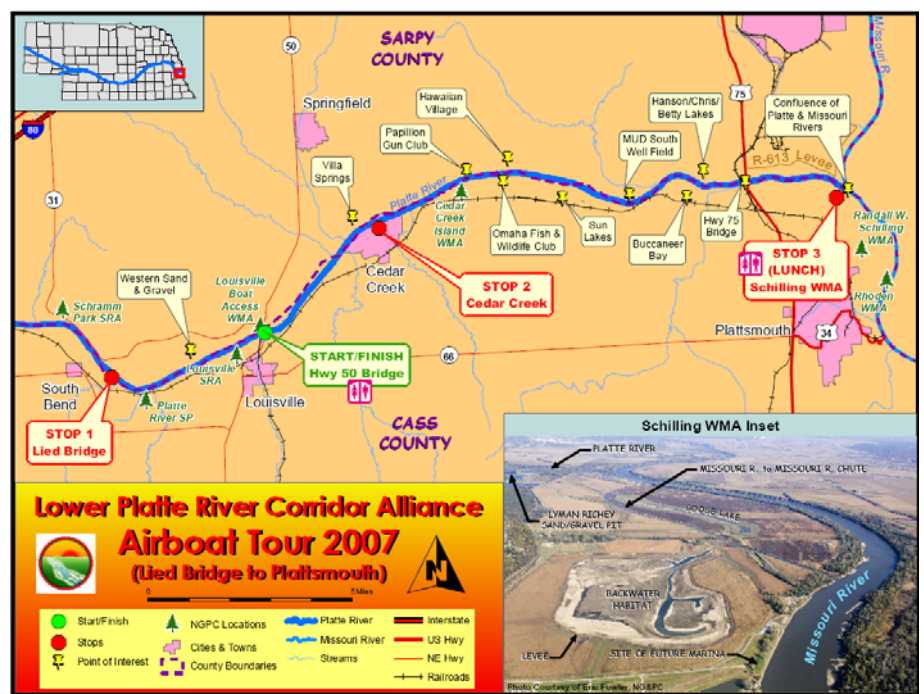
*Next LPRCA Meeting - July 24th, 2007 - P-MRNRD



FEATURED PROJECT

LPRCA Airboat Tour - July 20th, 2007

We are booked to the brim for this year's airboat tour. Seems that each year, we have more people than we have seats. Keeping the attendance to a reasonable and controllable number means limiting the number of attendees to around 45, but that number usually creeps closer to 50+ because of the interest. We certainly don't want to turn anyone away who would like to know more about the river. This year, we will be touring the section of the Platte River from Hwy 50 (near Louisville) up to the Lied Bridge (near South Bend) and then back downstream to Schilling WMA (near Plattsmouth) - - about 31 river miles (see graphic below). Each year, we rotate portions of the river that we tour. Most likely, we would head up to the very upper stretch - Columbus to Fremont - for next year assuming we have enough water to get that far. In fact, even as much water as we had this spring, we are almost high and dry at the Hwy 50 launch point (see photos below). As a result, airboat operators are looking for alternate locations to get their boats in the water. For those of you attending, we hope to help you gain a better understanding of the complex issues and diverse resources along the Lower Platte River. Itineraries will be sent to all attendees in the next week or so.



Sources: Lower Platte South NRD; NE Dept. of Natural Resources; NE Game and Parks

Map Created: June 2007 - By: Shaula D. Ross, LPSNRD

PROGRAMS / PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES - Updates

NE Land Trust (NLT). The NLT held a board meeting on June 1 and a strategic planning effort on June 2. As a board member for the past two years, I've seen this organization continue to gain tremendous ground in the land protection arena. There is a lot of landowner interest in protecting land either for conservation reasons or to maintain the rural/agricultural characteristics. As this interest has grown, so has the need for more capacity in terms of funding and staff. The NLT now operates with just one staff member and several volunteers. This summer, Dave Sands, the Executive Director of the NLT, has hired on a student intern to help develop a landowner database. The LPRCA is also assisting in this effort so we can share the database information. At the strategic planning effort, several issues came to light: we need to find long term funding; there is a need to consider not just donated easements, but also purchased easements; the NLT needs to consider more paid staff; there is a need to have formal policies regarding the "conservation fee" required for donated easements; and there may need to be a priority system to help qualify the best easement options. Board members present at the planning session developed a vision statement. It reads as follows - ***The Nebraska Land Trust will be the premier organization for the protection of private land and special sites in Nebraska, by partnering with landowners and others, providing education, and achieving long-term sustainability, while maintaining an impeccable reputation through transparency, accessibility, and execution of our fiduciary duty.*** Additionally, the group decided to create a Stewardship Committee to accomplish the following: (1) Assess each individual easement prospect and then decide how much will be needed for a Stewardship Fee, to bring a measure of flexibility to this important requirement that takes into account the various factors and merits of each prospect; (2) Allocate Stewardship Fees when they get them, between the annual budget to cover expenses associated with the easement, permanent funds for monitoring and defense, and possibly an Operating Reserve; and (3) Make recommendations to the Board on whether or not to pursue various projects. The planning session was a great effort but will require more time. Please visit the NLT's website for more info at: www.nelandtrust.org.

River Summit. Our river summit in 2006 was such a rousing success that we will be holding the next edition in the fall of 2008. I have begun planning the event with the National Park Service, the NRCS, and several other steering committee members. Although it seems to be more than a year off, the time will go fast and we are deciding on a theme and ideas for discussions. Land use and water resources seem to be the hottest topics at this time, so most likely, we will base the summit around those themes. We will also be expanding the steering committee to include local governments, developers, and members of the public in an effort to have a balanced event with a variety of perspectives.

W. Don Nelson Retires and then Doesn't (Again). W. Don Nelson, who served as Senator Ben Nelson's State Director since the senator took office, retired earlier this year...and then came out of retirement (again) to start a new venture - a newspaper called, ***Prairie Fire***. The first edition came out just last week and the tag line is "the progressive voice of the Great Plains." The paper promises to be "neither reactionary nor radical, nor will it ascribe to a particular political philosophy or creed." In the inaugural edition, articles range from immigration to the arts to trails to a great article on Spring Creek Prairie and another on Ernie Niemi's report on natural resource amenities. Recall, Ernie Niemi was one of our featured speakers at the 2006 LPRCA River Summit. This monthly paper will be available at no cost at various outlets and can be ordered for home delivery. Look for my contribution in the August edition.

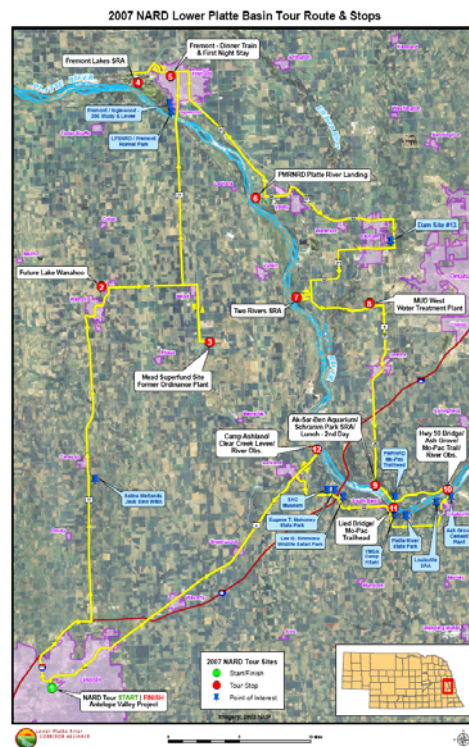
NARD Annual Basin Tour – Lower Platte River. June 18 & 19 were the dates of the NARD Basin Tour. This year, the tour was held in the Lower Platte River Basin and the LPRCA and 3 area NRDs helped to plan and execute a great tour with a tremendous amount of work from NARD staff. Starting in Lincoln on the 18th with a tour of the Antelope Valley Project, the tour bus headed north on Hwy 77^h towards the LPNNRD in Wahoo. Following a short break at the NRD, there were presentations on the Lake Wanhoo Project (a project that emerged out of the Lower Platte River and Tribes Feasibility Study several years back) and the Mead Superfund site including a tour of the water treatment plant. The tour then headed north to Fremont with a drive through the LPNNRD/City of Fremont Hormel Park and into the Fremont State Lakes area for a presentation on water quality issues related to toxic algae. That evening, tour attendees were treated to an evening on the Fremont Dinner Train and a role-playing game of mystery and intrigue with some pretty darn good acting by several NRD staff and directors.





Day 2 started off with a stop at the P-MRNRD Platte River Landing boat ramp, and a drive by Dam Site #13 - a public-private flood reduction and recreation partnership. The tour then headed over to Two River SRA for a presentation by me on LPRCA projects. We then headed past the new MUD wellfield in Sarpy County to the MUD water treatment plant. This treatment plant is huge but will only take 11-12 people to operate when it goes online due to the high level of technology and automation. The next stop was at the Schramm SRA and Aksarben Aquarium south of Gretna. After a

BBQ lunch cooked on site and a tour of the aquarium, the tour headed past the P-MRNRD Mo-Pac Trailhead near the Lied Bridge and onto Hwy 50, where I spoke about the Hwy 50 River Obstruction Removal Project and future improvements to the Hwy 50 Bridge to include a pedestrian lane. We then crossed the Platte River into the LPSNRD and over to the Lied Bridge, where participants walked out onto this unique hiking/biking bridge and heard about the trail networks in the P-MRNRD and LPSNRD. Other topics discussed along the way included regional water supply/wastewater projects/studies along with land use planning in the Bluffs area. The final stop of the tour was at Camp Ashland where Larry Vrtiska with the NE Military Department spoke on recent improvements to the camp such as a new parade ground, a new levee, and updates to Building 20 along the banks of the Platte River. We also got to tour an old boxing arena that is today used only as an inclement weather shelter and equipment storage area. The tour made a complete circle back to Lincoln around 4:00 p.m. on the 19th. This tour really showcased the diversity of issues in the Lower Platte River Basin including how much development is really taking place. However, it also illustrated how beautiful the area really is and the many projects the NRDS are undertaking to ensure sustainability of the resources. With over 60 attendees, several from western Nebraska, this tour was a great opportunity to let others know what we are up to in eastern Nebraska.



Important Events Coming Up

Airboat Tour. Friday, July 20th, 2007 * 9:00 am start time * Touring the lower stretch from Hwy 50 to the confluence with the MO River. Besides several stops, we will take an extensive tour of Schilling WMA.

WQ Open Golf Tourney. Wednesday, Sept 5th, 2007 * Quarry Oaks Golf Course * 10:00 am presentation by UNL Professor Roch Gaussoin on turfgrass, water conservation, and water quality issues related to golf courses and lawns * 12:30 tee-off * Cost will be \$65/person including all fees and a burger/brat buffet. This year, we will feature the "8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River" by having one demo for each reason on various tees.

Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Monday, July 9th, 2007 * 7:00 p.m. * LPNNRD Office - 511 Commercial Road * Wahoo.
P-MRNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Thursday, July 12th, 2007 * 8:00 p.m. * Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154th St. * Omaha
LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Wednesday, July 18th, 2007 * 7:00 p.m. * 3125 Portia Street * Lincoln.
LPRCA Quarterly Meeting - July 24th, 2007 * 9:30 a.m. - noon * P-MRNRD * 8901 S. 154th * Omaha