



From the Coordinator...

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

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Water Quality Open - Sept 5th, 2007

NARD Tour of LPR Basin - June 18 * 19, 2007

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



FEATURED PROJECT

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)

We have made tremendous headway on this project in the past several months. GIS representatives from the partners met and developed a QA/QC plan, which was then presented to CALMIT for input. This plan will serve as a baseline for our QA/QC analysis. We've also finalized the draft workplan and have contracted with UNO to rectify the 1950's and 1970's aerials photos. The NE Environmental Trust (NET), which partially funded PHASE II of the CIS study, attended the May 31st, 2007 partner meeting to see how we are progressing. Timelines have been delayed somewhat due to deployment of key COE personnel working on the project, so we have asked for an extension of our NETF grant for 6 months. Our new deadline for completion of PHASE II is December 31, 2007. However, this is a very optimistic deadline assuming no further delays occur. Deliverables for this phase include a GIS with 6 time steps and multiple resources layers, geodatabase, a trends analysis, an internet mapping system component, and a hydrologic analysis.

PROGRAMS / PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES - Updates

Water Quality Monitoring Network. Hard rains this year delayed the start of monitoring and sampling for this program, but sondes (monitoring probes) were installed on the Hwy 50 Bridge on the Platte River and at the Elkhorn River Bridge near Waterloo. Monitoring and sampling will continue through the fall.

Projects for UN-L Honors Water Class. Two UNL students are working on a project to conduct a resources inventory for properties in the Schramm Bluffs area (near I-80 and Platte River). The students, Marco Floreani and Nicole Hosman, are also working with the Nebraska Land Trust on this project, which is funded by UNL through a new program called U-Care. This new program encourages students to get involved with solving an existing problem/issue in their field. Expectations are to wrap the project up by this fall (2007).

Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA) Project. We have signed the Phase II task order with HDR to complete PHASE II of this project (formerly titled "Environmental Carrying Capacity"). The first step is development of a questionnaire for local zoning jurisdictions and subsequent one-on-one meetings to assess their needs. We really want to have input from local jurisdictions and help them by developing resources for making land use decisions that include considerations giving to the natural environment.

NE Natural Legacy Plan. This past Friday (June 8th), I gave a brief presentation to the NE Natural Legacy Committee on the LPRCA and what types of needs we have. We also discussed how we could partner and the steps to receive funding through this program. In the next couple of months, I will be working on development of a proposal to hire a coordinating biologist with funding from the NE Natural Legacy Program (NNLP). This person would help us address habitat and species issues - one of our 8 Reasons.

PROGRAMS / PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES - Updates

Presentation to NE Society of Professional Engineers. On May 4th, I made a presentation on project management at the NE Society of Professional Engineers (NeSPE) annual meeting in Columbus. I used several examples of projects on-going at the LPRCA. I was asked to present as a last minute fill-in for another speaker.

LPNNRD Spring Sensation. Along with Doug Vrana, LPRCA/LPSNRD Intern, I participated in the LPNNRD's annual Spring Sensation youth educational program at Czechland Lake. This program is geared for 5th grade students in the LPNNRD area and presents them with info, challenges, and activities relating to various natural resources topics. We helped out with "Wildlife CSI" which asks students to evaluate a variety of "scenes" that yield clues to what happened. Troy Thompson with the LPNNRD deserves a great amount of credit for overseeing such a great event again this year.

PCS Nitrogen Plant. A collaborative group of resources managers and local jurisdictions are cooperating on clean-up of a former nitrogen plant located at the confluence of the MO and Platte Rivers in Sarpy County. There are some on-going negotiations with the owners to determine how the area might be cleaned up using Brownfields money (federal money to clean up contaminated sites that do not meet the level of "superfund" status). Hopes are to clean-up the area to allow for economic development in a portion of the site and manage the remainder for wildlife habitat and recreation. The owners are headquartered in Canada often making it difficult to communicate and continue the negotiations.

Schilling WMA Tour. On Friday, May 25th, I toured the Schilling WMA along with several NG&PC and COE representatives. A Missouri-to-Missouri River chute was constructed about a year and a half ago along with some backwater habitat. The changes at the WMA are quite remarkable and they have really improved fish and waterfowl habitat. Plans are still underway to do some additional backwater work and build a bridge over the new chute to reach Goose Lake. A large portion of the 2007 LPRCA Airboat Tour will be spent at Schilling so this tour gave me the opportunity to check out the area ahead of time.

Pflug Road Panel Discussion. On May 24th, the Joslyn Castle Institute for Sustainable Communities (JCI) held a panel discussion on the Pflug Road Interchange issue that has been getting a lot of press lately. This area is in the Schramm Bluffs area near I-80 and the Platte River. A new interchange is being proposed along with a lot of talk of new development. This area is one of the most visually appealing in the LPR Corridor and contains diverse and important habitat. I was asked to be a panelist along with the developer in the area - Ted Seldin, Marlin Petermann with the P-MRNRD, Toby Churchill with the Sarpy County Economic Development Association, Paul Mullen with MAPA, and Jerry Obrist with Lincoln Water System. All of these stakeholders have a vested interest in the area with ours, of course, being the natural environment. W. Don Nelson facilitated the discussion. Don was involved with helping Sarpy County get the funding to build the new Pflug Road Bridge. There was a great deal of talk of collaboration and building within the natural environment rather than making the environment fit the development. Often, the difficulty is translating these ideas into action and following through on stated intentions. Hopefully, this event made all stakeholders think about all aspects including the natural elements.

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. Details will be posted later on our website at www.lowerplatte.org. We will limit the number of attendees to 45 and will give priority to communities & counties.

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, June 11th, 2007 * 7:00 p.m. * LPNNRD Office - 511 Commercial Road * Wahoo.
P-MRNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Thursday, June 14th, 2007 * 8:00 p.m. * Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154th St. * Omaha
LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting - Wednesday June 20th, 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