

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD
FEBRUARY 2005

CONSERVATION PLANNING/CONSERVATION

- Blair field office (FO) has completed 12 Highly Erodible Land (HEL)/wetland determination/non-compliance requests resulting in updated compliance plans on 310 acres.
- Walthill FO completed 60 HEL determinations.
- Burt County has received 3 new requests for HEL determinations; 6 determinations were completed this month.
- Burt County has received 1 new wetland determination request.
- South Sioux City completed HEL determinations on 9 tracts.
- Blair FO has received 5 Conservation Assistance Program (CAP) applications for spring conservation practices and 4 cropland conversion applications for 45.4 acres of native grasses to be planted.
- Blair FO has received 56 orders for 12,625 trees to be planted in Washington County.
- Omaha FO has received 4 CAP applications for spring conservation practices and 1 cropland conversion application for 12 acres of native grasses to be planted.
- Omaha FO has received 34 orders for 7,450 trees to be planted in Douglas/Sarpy Counties.
- South Sioux City FO has taken tree orders for 1,525 trees for spring planting.
- Walthill FO completed 3 CAP terrace projects and processed for payment.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

- Blair FO has received 12 EQIP applications: 3 grade stabilization structures, 1 livestock waste facility, 1 cross-fencing and 7 terrace and tile systems.
- Blair FO completed an EQIP payment on a contract for a conversion from gravity irrigation to pivot.
- Burt County is in the process of ranking 17 EQIP applications: 2 confined animal feeding operations, 1 ground surface water conservation, 9 grade stabilization structures and 6 terrace projects.
- Walthill FO contacted Dr. Richard Ferguson, UNL, regarding acceptable parameters for site specific soil sampling for nutrient management.
- Omaha FO received 3 EQIP applications, all for ground surface water conservation.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Burt County is in the process of ranking 8 WREP applications totaling 757 acres.
- Walthill FO staff analyzed and the wetland bioengineering team reviewed 1 WRP and 1 WREP application.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- Blair FO staff completed a CRP contract for a field border.
- Burt County completed 31 CRP revisions and received 2 requests for burn plans on 70 acres of CRP lands.

- Walthill FO received 1 application for a grassed waterway.
- Omaha FO completed 3 continuous CRP contracts: 1 grass filter strip and 2 quail buffers.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- South Sioux City FO staff members completed a list of all landowners in the watershed and are preparing GIS maps of each sub-watershed.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Blair FO donated 400 packets of wildflower seeds to Huntel Communications for an employee spring program.
- Blair FO, Neil Jensen, designed fliers for mailing and posters for display in the USDA Service Center promoting the EQIP/NRD 90% cost-share for terrace, tile and waterway systems.
- The South Sioux City staff provided new items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of February. The news items were: Pigeon/Jones Creek Watershed Project Update; Order Trees for Spring Planting; Cooperative Extension Offers CNMP Class; and Recycler of the Year. Photos with caption were included of the conservation contractors' meeting in Homer; Christy Jacobsen of the P-MRNRD assisting elementary students in assembling birdhouses; Denny Piper receiving the 2004 Recycler of the Year award.
- Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, presented information on Civil Rights/EEO at the contractors' meeting held in Homer.
- Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist at Omaha, and Chuck Leinen, Civil Engineer at Omaha, presented power point presentations at the Erosion & Sediment Control Seminar held at the County Extension auditorium in Omaha.
- Julie Jonsson, Technical Service Provider at Omaha, mailed out approximately 400 letters promoting the Wetland Reserve Program.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- Walthill NRD FO staff finished sandblasting and painting one trailer and 2 drills; they also performed maintenance on drills and trailers.
- One buffer strip contract in Thurston County was reenrolled in the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Robert Hall, NRCS Omaha, attended the Cunningham Lake Council meeting.
- Neil Stockfleth, South Sioux City, attended a Crystal Lake restoration meeting hosted by the Corps of Engineers at Dakota City on February 1; topic was restoration options for the Missouri River oxbow lake.
- Neil Stockfleth presented information on NRCS programs and the Pigeon/Jones Watershed project at a Sierra Club sponsored meeting on February 3, with 50 people in attendance.
- Neil Stockfleth assumed additional duty of Acting District Conservationist for the Lewis and Clark NRD on February 7; detail concludes on May 27, 2005.
- A conservation contractors' meeting was held for P-MRNRD and surrounding counties on February 8, in Homer. Topics were programs and cost-share review, safety and paperwork procedures; 46 people were in attendance.

- Neil Stockfleth attended an updated version of Toolkit/ArcGIS training in Lincoln on February 15-17. Toolkit/ArcGIS is the NRCS database on producers that they use to develop conservation plans and contracts.
- Vernon Dean, South Sioux City, attended a Forestry and Buffer Workshop in Lincoln on February 24.
- Mitch Keebler, Omaha, was in South Sioux City providing engineering training to field office staff on February 8-9.
- Chuck Leinen, Omaha, provided irrigation system training to Sam Thomas, South Sioux City, and Don Atkinson, Walthill, on February 16.
- Don Atkinson and Dennis Cady, NRCS Walthill, attended a storm water control planning session for the Village of Macy.

Reported by: Lynn Heng, District Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, March 8, 2005

Oltmans, Steve**From:** Dean E. Edson [dedson@nrdnet.org]**Sent:** Monday, March 07, 2005 4:22 PM**To:** Yvonne Austin; Taylor, John; Tesar, Richard; Orval Gigstad; Mosel, Michael L.; Ken Peitzmeier; Keith Rexroth; Joe Anderjaska; Jim Meisner; Jim Johnson; Gerald Dillman; Doug Dickinson; Dean Rasmussen; Dean & Sharron Jochem; Dan Steinkruger; Lyle Heinrichs; Tom Moser; Oltmans, Steve; Stan Staab; Ron Cacek; Ron Bishop; Rod Horn; Richard Beran; Teer, Pat; Mike Onnen; Mike Murphy; Mike Clements; Lyndon Vogt; Lower Niobrara NRD; Leon Butch Koehlmoos; Kent O. Miller; John Turnbull; John Thorburn; John Miyoshi; Helen White; Glenn Johnson; Duane Filsinger; Dennis Schueth; Deb Hayes; Dave Clabaugh; Dan Smith; Bob Hilske; Jasper Fanning**Subject:** NARD Board Meeting Items

Attached is the first budget draft for FY 05-06, 06-07, including a cover memo, a spreadsheet and an explanation for each line item.

The fiscal planning and budget committee reviewed it this morning and the NARD Board agreed to forward it to NRDs for consideration. Final action will be taken on the budget at the June 20th meeting in York. There are no dues increases or changes in the tree program.

Also, the Board approved the increases in the retirement contribution levels. The proposed 2-year phase-in is as follows:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Starting 7/1/05</u>	<u>Starting 7/1/06</u>
Employee%	4.6%	5.0%	5.5%
Employer %	5.1%	5.5%	6.0%
TOTAL	9.7%	10.5%	11.5%

Finally, the NARD Board approved the review of the retirement program as proposed by the managers. I have attached the resolution for your information.

Dean E. Edson
 Executive Director
 Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
 402/471-7670
 fax 402/471-7677
dedson@nrdnet.org
 Check out the NRDs at www.nrdnet.org

March 7, 2005

TO: NRD Managers

FROM: Dean E. Edson

RE: FIRST BUDGET DRAFT

Attached is the first budget draft for FY 05-06, 06-07.

The fiscal planning and budget committee reviewed it this morning and the NARD Board agreed to forward it to NRDs for consideration. Final action will be taken on the budget at the June 20th meeting in York.

There are no dues increases or changes in the tree program. A spreadsheet with the budget follows, including an explanation for each line item.

The total budget numbers are as follows:

	<u>FY 05-06</u>	<u>FY 06-07</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,029,223	\$1,095,223
less		
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	<u>\$1,018,900</u>	<u>\$1,087,600</u>
Addition to		
CASH RESERVE	<u>\$10,323</u>	<u>\$7,623</u>
Cash Reserve		
as a Percent of Expenses	<u>1.01%</u>	<u>0.70%</u>

Income:

District Dues (Account #601)

Dues from NRDs -- No increase. (No change. \$268,098 total for each FY)

Affiliate Dues (Account #602)

Contributions from partners - (No change. \$1,000 total for each FY)

Foundation Programs (Account #600)

The Foundation Account is estimated to generate \$3,000 interest annually. Other sub accounts are for general operating fund donations & contributions to the Washington D.C. Internship program, scholarships and Nebraska Envirothon. An expense account is also created to match any income received. (\$8,000 total for each FY)

Conferences (Account #603)

Conference registrations, vendor fees and other – Increased due to increased participation from all sources, including vendors, and reflective of last years income. (Increases for both fiscal years to meet participation. For FY 05-06 and 06-07, \$111,000 and \$112,000 totals respectively)

Includes the following accounts:	<u>FY05-06</u>	<u>FY06-07</u>
Annual	\$54,500	\$55,000
Legislative	\$45,500	\$46,000
Basin Meetings (Platte R. CA, Rep)	\$2,000	\$2,000
NACD	\$2,000	\$2,000
Other	<u>\$7,000</u>	<u>\$7,000</u>
Total	<u>\$111,000</u>	<u>\$112,000</u>

Washington, D.C. Meeting (Account #613)

Income from billing participants for motel rooms, working luncheons and facility equipment rental – Increased due to higher costs for this trip and increased attendance. We also receive some funds for cooperators for co-sponsorships of the receptions. (Increase \$1,000 each FY. \$48,000 FY 05-06, \$49,000 FY 06-07)

Grants (Account #605)

NARD/DEQ Liaison position -- Not to exceed \$100,000. We are working with NRCS to develop a Special Projects Grant to be used for promotion of NARD and NRCS activities. These would include Husker Harvest Days, Envirothon, Buffer Strips, etc. The NARD President will approve any agreement. Also, the Buffer Strip Promotion grant of \$5,000 has ended, reducing the total grant income to \$10,000. (No change, \$100,000 for each FY)

NRCS Grant (NEW) – This is the NRCS TSP Grant that will pass through NARD to the NRDs to pay for locally hired Technical Service Providers to assist with implementing the Farm Bill Conservation Programs. Estimates are for \$436,000 in FY 05-06 and \$500,000 in FY 06-07. Corresponding line items are on the expense line item. NARD receives 9% for processing the grant.

Information & Education (Account #608)

NARD will be working with NRD I&E Staff committee on special projects for next year. Other line items include the Envirothon, NACD Poster Contest, Husker Harvest Days contributions, and other various payments and reimbursements. (No change, \$16,125 for both FY)

Investment Income (Account #609)

Interest income. Two sub accounts, which one is for the Nebraska Public Agency Investment Trust (NPAIT) interest income from NARD reserves and the other is NPAIT Sponsorship Income. NARD Reserves have increased, but interest rates have declined. Sponsorship income has increased because of increased NRD participation. (Increased slightly for interest rate increases to \$15,000 total for each FY)

Miscellaneous Income (Account #610)

Other refunds/contributions. (No Change, \$500 total for each FY)

Special Projects - This is to finish up on the Water Conservation Commercials on NTV and any other special projects identified with NRDs group purchases (\$3,000 each FY)

NRD Tree Program (Account #612)

In FY 01-02 NARD took over the tree program from UNL for the NRDs. We will estimate orders of 785,000 trees in both FY. NARD will add 3 cents/tree margin to run the program and cover promotion and administrative costs. (Net \$23,500 for each FY)

Benefit Administration (Account #616)

Payment for insurance administration equals \$1,250/month and remain the same for both fiscal years. (\$15,000 total for each FY)

	<u>FY 05-06</u>	<u>FY 06-07</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,029,223	\$1,095,223

Expenses:

Salaries (Account #811)

Actual

<u>Actual 04-05</u>	<u>Position</u>
\$74,500	Executive Director (\$73,000 Base, plus \$1,500 deferred)
36,200	Office Manager
32,100	Information/Education Director
<u>3,000</u>	PT Secretary/Receptionist
\$145,800	

For FY 05-06, four percent for salary adjustments allowance for the Executive Director (77,500), six percent for the Office Manager (38,400), ten percent for the Information/Education Director (35,200) and maintain the same for the PT Sec/Reception (3,000), totaling \$154,100. For FY 06-07, four percent for Salary Adjustments (\$154,100* 1.04 = \$160,264) rounded to \$160,300.

Employee Benefits (Account #815)

Insurance (health, life, dental and disability), retirement match. – Increased 10% per FY. (\$55,000 and \$60,000 totals respectively per FY)

Payroll Taxes (Account #819)

Unemployment and Social Security. Increased to reflect salary changes and rounded up. (\$17,000 and \$17,500 totals respectively per FY)

Contract Labor (Account # 812)

Funds for computer networking, upgrades and service work. (No change - \$1,500 total for each FY)

Foundation Programs (Account #816)

The Foundation Account is estimated to generate \$3,000 interest annually, so an allocation of that amount is needed. Other sub accounts are for the Washington D.C. Internship program, scholarships and Nebraska Envirothon. (\$8,000 per FY)

NARD Officers Expense (Account #820)

President's and/or designated officers expenses for the NACD Legislative Conference, NACD Annual Meeting and NACD Regional Meeting expenses. (No change, \$5,000 for each FY)

Information & Education (Account #826)

Sub account for special projects including tree promotions, Envirothon & Newsletters, Husker Harvest Days, Awards, PSA's and I & E other. (No change -- \$27,350 for each FY)

Staff Expense (Account #840)

Staff mileage, lodging, meals, and other business related expenses. (Increased \$1,000 increase to \$15,000 in each FY)

Office Furniture (Account #842)

Any office furniture or computers that need to be replaced (\$2,000 for each FY)

Office Rent (Account #851)

Increased \$1,000 for each FY (\$27,500 for each FY)

Equipment Rent (Account #853)

Copier, service contracts, and support for new copier contract in January 2005. (Increased to \$6,700 total per FY)

Insurance (Account #856)

Liability, workers compensation, property; retirement fund fiduciary liability. (No change - \$4,500 total each FY)

General Taxes (Account #858)

Personal property, sales tax and other misc. income tax charges. (Slight increase, \$600 total per FY)

Telephone/Internet/Cable (Account #860)

State of Nebraska phonesystem. Time Warner Cable/Road Runner used for internet, web hosting for NRDs, other use and equipment upgrades. (No change -- \$10,000 in each FY)

Unicameral (Account #861)

Used to keep the law books up to date and final legislative reports (\$500 total each FY)

Professional Services (Account #880)

Lobbyist - Bruce Cutshall and Trent Nowka, Legal Counsel for any legal review needs, and \$3,000 budgeted for other services to be determined by the board. (No change -- \$28,200 per FY).

Repairs & Maintenance (Account #871)

Office cleaning services have been dropped. NARD staff handles cleaning, but we do need an account for any repairs to personal property. (No change -- \$500 total per FY)

Accounting & Audit Services (Account #881)

HBE Accounting Services. (No change, \$3,500 total)

Postage (Account #882)

Postage meter, other postage costs. (No change, \$7,500 per FY)

Office Supplies (Account #883)

General office supplies. – (Increase \$300 to \$5,000 per FY)

Dues & Subscriptions (Account #885)

NARD Corporation registrations, week-day newspaper subscriptions (Lincoln & Omaha), Soil & Water Conservation Society, Groundwater Foundation, NE Water Resources Association, NACD, NE Tax Research Council, NE Society of Association Executives, and NARD bulk mailing permit. (No change, \$4,000 total per FY)

Miscellaneous (Account #887)

Miscellaneous expenses. (No change \$500 total per FY)

Grants (Account #886)

NARD/DEQ Liaison position - Not to exceed \$100,000. We are reimbursed for salary, benefits, and all related expenses. (No change - \$100,000 for each FY)

NRCS Grant (NEW) – This is the NRCS TSP Grant that will pass through NARD to the NRDs to pay for locally hired Technical Service Providers to assist with implementing the Farm Bill Conservation Programs. Estimates are for \$400,000 in FY 05-06 and \$455,000 in FY 06-07. Corresponding line items are on the income line item. NARD receives 9% for processing the grant.

Conferences (Account #890)

Includes the following:	<u>FY 05-06</u>	<u>FY 06-07</u>
Annual	\$31,000	\$31,000
Legislative	\$29,000	\$29,000
NACD Meetings	\$2,000	\$2,000
Canon Envirothon	\$1,500	\$1,500
Platte River CA	\$3,000	\$3,000
Other	<u>\$7,000</u>	<u>\$7,000</u>
Total	\$73,500	\$73,500

Meeting room charges, breaks, meals, facility equipment, Board meeting costs.
 -- Increased to reflect actual costs and inflation. Other includes billings for NARD Board meetings, NRD managers meetings and other conferences. (Increase to \$79,000 and \$80,000 per respective FY)

Washington, D.C. Meeting (Account #893)

Costs for meeting room charges, breaks, meals, facility equipment. –Increased by \$1,000 per FY (\$48,000 and \$49,000 per respective FY)

NRCS Expenses (Account #902)

Expenses related to promotion of NRCS and NACD. (Maintained at \$5,000 per FY)

Special Projects (Account #895)

New account for a reserve to be built annually for any special project, conference or other as approved by the board, i.e., NTV Water Conservation Commercials. (Maintained at \$3,000 per FY)

	<u>FY 05-06</u>	<u>FY 06-07</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,018,900	\$1,087,600
Addition to		
CASH RESERVE	<u>\$10,323</u>	<u>\$7,623</u>
Cash Reserve		
as a Percent of Expenses	<u>1.01%</u>	<u>0.70%</u>

EXPENSES	Sub Account	Account	Sub Account	Account
	2005-2006		2006-2007	
Salaries		\$154,100		\$160,300
Employee Benefits		\$55,000		\$60,000
Payroll Taxes		\$17,000		\$17,500
Contract Labor		\$1,500		\$1,500
Foundation Programs		\$8,000		\$8,000
Interest Allocation	3,000		3,000	
Internships	3,000		3,000	
Scholarships	1,000		1,000	
Envirothon	1,000		1,000	
NARD Officers Expense		\$5,000		\$5,000
NACD Legislative Conf.	1,500		1,500	
NACD Reg. Meeting	2,500		2,500	
NACD Leadership Meeting	1,000		1,000	
Information & Education		\$27,350		\$27,350
Special Projects	8,000		8,000	
Nebraska Envirothon	5,400		5,400	
Newsletter	1,750		1,750	
Husker Harvest Days	8,000		8,000	
Awards	1,000		1,000	
I & E Other	1,700		1,700	
Public Service Announcement	1,500		1,500	
Staff Expense		\$15,000		\$15,000
Office Furniture		\$2,000		\$2,000
Office Rent		\$27,500		\$27,500
Equipment Rent		\$6,700		\$6,700
Insurance		\$4,500		\$4,500
General Taxes		\$650		\$650
Telephone/Internet/Cable		\$10,000		\$10,000
Unicameral/Law Books		\$400		\$400
Professional Services		\$28,200		\$28,200
Cutshall/Lobbyist	24,200		24,200	
Other	3,000		3,000	
Legal Services	1,000		1,000	
Repairs & Maintenance		\$500		\$500
Accounting & Audit Services		\$3,500		\$3,500
Postage		\$7,000		\$7,000
Office Supplies		\$5,500		\$5,500
Dues & Subscriptions		\$4,000		\$4,000
Miscellaneous		\$500		\$500
Grants		\$500,000		\$555,000
NARD/DEQ Liaison	100,000		100,000	
NRCS TSP	400,000		455,000	
Buffer Strip	0		0	
Conferences		\$79,000		\$80,000
Annual Confemence	29,000		29,500	
Legislative Conference	36,000		36,500	
NACD Meetings	2,000		2,000	
Canon Envirothon Expense	2,000		2,000	
Platte River Coop Agreement	3,000		3,000	
Other	7,000		7,000	
Washington, D.C. Mtg.		\$48,000		\$49,000
NRCS Expenses		\$5,000		\$5,000
Special Projects		\$3,000		\$3,000
<i>Total Expenses</i>		<i>\$1,018,900</i>		<i>\$1,087,600</i>
Cash Reserve		\$10,323		\$7,623
<i>Percent Reserve to Expenses</i>		1.01%		0.70%

NRD Managers Meeting, March 3, 2005.

Motion for Review of the NARD Retirement Plan.

Motion by CPNRD. Second by UNWNRD.

1. That NARD adopt a policy to periodically, as determined necessary by the Retirement Committee, but never less than every 8 years, conduct a search of retirement & 457 program funding agencies and to make recommendations as appropriate.
2. To carry out this policy we move that NARD hire an independent professional consultant to work with the NARD Retirement Committee & NARD to:
 - a. Gather background information in order to provide each bidder with a clear picture of the pension and 457 program needs of this organization.
 - b. Write and prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) document including specifications. (RFP draft must be submitted to NARD & the Retirement Committee for review and comment prior to finalization).
 - c. Prepare a list of potential carriers/providers.
 - d. Develop an outline of how the specifications in the RFP compare with the NARD's current program and what improvements are being sought.
 - e. Work with NARD and NRD representatives to assist them in review and evaluation of the proposals received, with Retirement Committee recommendations for the pension and 457 programs, which will best meet the needs of the NARD & NRDs.
 - f. Review of the proposed contracts from the selected companies and make a recommendation by no later than the September 2005 Annual Conference.
3. The selected consultant will not be allowed to offer a bid/proposal relative to providing the NRD pension or 457 programs.
4. The fees for the selected consultant shall be assessed to the NRD with ½ the fee being split equally among the 23 districts and ½ the fee being assessed to the NRDs based upon number of employees in each District carried by the pension program.

Motion carried unanimously.

As a follow-up, newly elected Chairman Butch Koehlmoos appointed the Chairs of each Managers Subcommittee to serve on a committee to assist Dean Edson to select a consultant. These are: John Turnbull, Stan Staab, Ron Bishop, John Miyoshi, Bob Hilske and Steve Oltmans. Ron Bishop is to chair the special committee.

Approved by the NARD Board 3-7-05



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the month of February 2005

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting

The LPRCA held a quarterly meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2005 at the LPSNRD in Lincoln. With 23 attendees, the Alliance pushed through a lofty agenda including the following items: USGS water quality monitoring of the Lower Platte River area; Summary of the retreat; Selection of airboat tour and Water Quality Open dates; River access ideas; FY06 budget discussion; Outreach and education idea; and program/project updates including the CIS, Environmental Carrying Capacity Study, and River Obstruction Removal Project. The minutes will be available soon with more details. Check our website at www.lowerplatte.org for updates and reports.

LPRCA Retreat A summary of the LPRCA retreat is available in both paper and electronic form via our website. Out of this gathering, two important ideas emerged - among others: (1) Need to get local officials and decision-makers involved to a greater degree, and (2) the need for continued educational projects/programs. Attendees felt the Alliance is doing a good job of addressing LPR issues and that there is a future need for the existence of the Alliance.

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) The CIS partner group met on Thursday, March 3rd at the PMRNRD to go over the draft final scope of work (SOW) for Phase II of the project. After much discussion, the COE agreed to revise the SOW and distribute to CIS partners via e-mail. Once finalized, a copy will be available for everyone to review and consider for financial support in FY06.

River Obstruction Project I met with the NG&PC recently to see if we may qualify for funding through several grant programs including those aimed at sports fish and boating safety. The outlook is not great for these programs but we can still ask via a letter and get an official decision on funding. The partner working group for this project met on March 1 to discuss progress on the project. Gerry Bowen with the PMRNRD gathered info on the 404 permit process and I made contact with the both the UP Railroad to bring all stakeholders to the table. We started to summarize estimated costs to formulate a budget for this first pilot project at Hwy 50. Our plan of attack is to use a process similar to the one used for the Lied Bridge rehabilitation where a causeway is built out into the river to reach the obstructions, which are then pulled out or broken off. The PMRNRD is helping to get the 404 permit put together and submitted to the COE. We decided to also bring either the BNSF or UP Railroad, the NG&PC, and the Nebraska Dept of Roads (DOR) to the table to serve on the working group.

Environmental Carrying Capacity Project Phase I of this project should be completed by early May and will give us an indication of what data we have, what we need, and an estimate of costs to proceed into the next phase.

PACE Meeting February 17th was the date of the latest PACE gathering at Crane Meadows. The brochure for the group is finalized and there are copies available to give out - just let me know since I have a box. The group did not receive recommendation for an NETF grant to do a demo site showing how a mining operation progress from beginning to end including reclamation efforts. However, the group is still going to go forward with the demo and look for other funds.

Fundraising and Grant Writing Workshops Recently, I attended fundraising and grant writing workshops. The instructor was a former UNL professor who now consults with businesses to help find grant money. He stated that the competition is fierce today in the grant world and grantors are very selective. Many organizations have grant writers on staff or they consult for these services. Many times you need to be invited to even apply for grants particularly those given through foundations.

LB 546 This proposed legislation would create an I-80 Innovation Zone Commission to promote and plan for economic development along the I-80 corridor particularly focusing on the area from Omaha to Lincoln. We all can acknowledge that development is coming to the area and this bill may provide an opportunity to be involved since the LPSNRD and the PMRNRD would each have a seat on the commission. Being involved may be one way to assure that development is appropriate and does not negatively impact the resources of the Lower Platte River Corridor.

Next LPRCA Meeting:
Tuesday, May 24th, 2005
9:30 a.m. * PMRNRD in Omaha

Upcoming/Recent Meetings and Activities

- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, March 7th, 2005 * 5:30 p.m. - LPNNRD Office - Wahoo
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, March 10th, 2005 * 8:00 p.m. - Nat Res Center @ Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005 * 2:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street
- **NARD Annual D.C. Trip** - March 13th - 16th, 2005 * Washington D.C.
- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** - Tuesday, May 24th, 2005 * 9:30 a.m. - PMRNRD - Omaha

***NOTE the winter meetings times are in effect**

2005 Water Quality Open

The place and date are set for the 2005 Water Quality Open golf tourney. This year the event will be held at Quarry Oaks near South Bend and on the banks of the Platte River on Thursday, September 1st. There will be a presentation prior to the event at around 10:00 and tee-off is at 1 p.m. More details will be forthcoming in future reports.

LPSNRD Office Temporarily Moving

Starting May 28th, the LPSNRD office now located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln will be closing and moving to the former Gallup Campus Building near 68th and O Street just south of ShopKo. This move is due to remodeling and enlarging of the current office space and should last around 6 to 9 months. There is a meeting room at the new temporary location for meetings, but we probably won't be up and running until around April 4th or so. The phone number and mailing address will remain the same along with the fax number. Please call the office at (402) 476-2729 for directions or to find out if the meeting space is available.

LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE RETREAT 2005

Friday, January 21, 2005 * 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. * YMCA Camp Kitaki near South Bend

SUMMARY



PREFACE

The 2005 LPRCA Retreat was held at beautiful Camp Kitaki tucked into the Lower Platte River Valley near South Bend. This gathering was intended not to be an in-depth planning exercise, but rather a way to look at the accomplishments of the LPRCA, assess the strengths, look at the future direction, and then determine contributions LPRCA members can make. The weather was cold with a little bit of snow on the ground and trees. The location provided LPRCA member attendees with a glimpse of the Lower Platte River area and the resource we are working to protect and manage. Camp Kitaki is located adjacent to the Lied Bridge (Platte River Connection), which LPRCA members were instrumental in getting rehabilitated into a hiker/biker bridge. The retreat room was the "Fireplace Room" and, as its name implies, contains a wood-burning fireplace, which provided a cozy atmosphere for some strategic planning. Overall, the location was ideal for informal interactions and focus on the Lower Platte River.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

After introductions, Rodney Verhoeff, LPRCA Coordinator, started off by giving a quick synopsis of what the Alliance has been working on and accomplished this past year. Rodney passed out handouts listing everything the Alliance is currently working on. Retreat attendees included: Tom Mountford (LPNNRD), Mike Jess (UNL C&S Division), Ralph Pulte (HHSS), Dorothy Lanphier (PMRNRD), Dave Saafeld (LPNNRD), Frank Albrecht (NG&PC), Gerry Bowen (PMRNRD), Ervin Bull (LPNNRD), Jack Daniel (HHSS), Steve McMaster (NDNR), Kirk Nelson (NG&PC), Steve Gaul (NDNR), Ron Zelt (USGS), Steve Oltmans (PMRNRD), John Miyoshi (LPNNRD), Glenn Johnson (LPSNRD), Marlin Petermann (PMRNRD), Elaine Hammer (LPSNRD), Rich Jansen (PMRNRD), Craig Wacker (LPRCA/LPSNRD Intern), and Rodney Verhoeff (LPRCA) - - 21 total.

MORNING SESSION

Facilitator Sheila Kepler started the day off with an amusing story to get us laughing and then went into a fun activity to build teamwork and get our minds thinking outside the box. We had the objective of getting as many paper airplanes across the room in a certain amount of time without crossing a taped line. Some chose to make traditional airplanes, while others made balls to throw. The point was that we could have done a multitude of things such as tear the paper into many pieces and wad into balls that could be thrown; or we could have carried the planes around the line to the other side. The point was to show that there are many nontraditional ways to get things accomplished - - some of which may be outside the box of traditional thinking.

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BREAK

We took a short break, which allowed for a lot of informal discussion.

MORNING SESSION –continued-

Synergy – The objective of this exercise was to work together as a team and combine resources, talents, and abilities to increase efficiency and effectiveness. We were instructed to build and recreate an object made of colored disks. On the first attempt, the model was located in another room and only one team member could view it. Additional limitations were in effect that didn't allow for much teamwork. On a second attempt, most limitations were lifted and we could use teamwork to recreate the model. There was much greater success the second time around even though the model was still located in another room.

Group Discussion – Following the Synergy exercise, we broke into teams of two and interviewed each other about experiences we have had when a team worked well together and what it was that allowed that to happen. We then got together with another group and combined the information to give short presentations on the findings to the group at large. Some of the common themes related to successful experiences were: Diversity of team members; Willingness to commit to the project and be involved, Collective agreement on what was to take place; Good communication among all members; Good leadership; Public involvement; Having a plan; Flexibility; Utilizing of individual strengths; and Networking.

LUNCH

AFTERNOON SESSION

Dialoguing WHAT SHOULD BE?

We broke into small groups and discussed what the Alliance could be in the future and what we as people and agencies could do to get it there. These ideas were presented to us in a gallery style setting to look at and discuss amongst our groups and then discuss all of them as a full group. The full group engaged in a discussion on the topic of managing as opposed to selling. Some felt that selling was a major part of what the Alliance needed to do while others hoped the Alliance could do more managing of the corridor and not have to spend so much time selling. In the end, the group came to the conclusion that the Alliance will always have to do some work "selling" itself but as it becomes more well known, less time and energy will have to go to "selling" it and more could go into "managing" it. There was also a focus on getting local governmental officials involved with the Alliance. The point was brought up that many of these officials have full time jobs as well as serving on their respective governments and may not have time to engage in Alliance activities. However everyone was in agreement that a greater continued focus needs to be made to bring local officials in and give them a sense of ownership in the projects the Alliance is carrying out.

Envisioning WHAT MIGHT BE?

The entire group discussed and proposed what the Alliance could do in the future to ensure protection of the corridor and keep the public informed and involved. Ideas listed were: A public opinion survey coupled with a reevaluation of the goals and strategies of the Alliance; Maintain the Alliance but expand it to include local governments; Form a "Friends of the Platte River" group or an advisory group, which would include people from the local communities and

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government; Continue the process of developing an affiliated fund with the Nebraska Community Foundation and use the affiliated fund status to apply for grants and other funding; Support local projects that coincide with the Alliance's goals; Stay involved in other efforts - i.e. tributary studies/projects/monitoring, legislation, appropriations; Continue and step up public information efforts including holding a conference to bring people together; Long-term planning and updating - - where do we want to be 50 years from now; Promote Alliance success stories; More education of the public on Alliance issues and all around environmental issues - - i.e. groundwater, pollution, wildlife habitat, etc; Be involved in the land-use planning of the local governments; Create a planning model for counties and communities to follow; Get some corporate buy-in; Utilize the window of opportunity we have NOW and be proactive.

Pledged Contributions

The final exercise of the retreat was to assess what each LPRCA member could contribute both individually and as an organization. These ideas are merely suggestions and do not constitute any concrete contributions. They can serve as a guide for making the Alliance stronger and determining what each member has to offer. The results follow:

LPNDRD - Collect or create material dealing with water issues for elementary students. Be involved with water issues in the community. Help develop a "Friends of the Platte River" organization. Proactive and positive approach to problem solving. Environmental knowledge and experience. Assist with and lead programs. Arrange public meetings with communities. Inform the local schools and local organizations - - i.e. church, Am Legion, etc. Assist in talking with county and city officials about the LPRCA. Assist in putting together any written agreements or documents that may be needed

PMRNRD - Stay educated on Platte River Corridor issues. Use the knowledge of the Platte River issues when voting on policies or projects. Network and encourage others to become involved with the Platte River. Assist with comprehensive planning efforts of the Alliance, counties and cities. Provide technical assistance to individuals and groups to solve resource related problems.

NDNR - Hazard mitigation planning. Vulnerability and risk assessments. Grant writing assistance. Work on Floodplain management and insurance. Be a conduit for state funding. GIS expertise and data. Letters of support for specific projects. Limited computer/technical support.

LPSNRD - Networking with county and municipal boards. Represent the LPRCA in meetings other than LPRCA meetings. Find funding opportunities. Find cooperative projects with communities, counties, agencies and private sector. Land use analysis of existing and future land use within the corridor. Assist in educating the public about the natural resources in the corridor. Research possible grants and other funding opportunities. Put projects, ideas, and programs into motion (Implementation). Serve as the Representative for the LPRCA and work with stakeholders to get involvement. Keep the members of the Alliance informed of all pertinent information. Generate ideas and approaches to achieve goals.

USGS - Focus science on questions that matter to the Corridor and impact policy, management and public safety. Be a resource for public outreach events and educational activities. Source for information regarding the Platte River, the Alluvium, the valley, and riparian areas.

UNL Conservation and Survey - Keep up personal affiliation with the Alliance. Encourage support of the Alliance to others.

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HHSS - Give water quality talks to educate the public. Long term planning. Meet with local decision makers to discuss the issues of delivering safe drinking water to the public. Collaboration with others on goals and strategies for the Alliance.

NGPC - Help organize a "Friends of the Platte River" group. Assist with funding a public opinion survey. Spread the word about the LPRCA and its mission. Continued support and participation in LPRCA meetings and events. Use the NGPC staff knowledge and experience as needed. Stay educated and up to date on activities in the corridor.

Regroup at Lied Bridge for Final Thoughts and Ceremony

The final activity of the retreat was to regroup at the Lied Bridge to showcase one of the greatest cooperative efforts to date for the LPRCA and its member organizations. Just as the Lied Bridge is the "Platte River Connection" connecting trail networks, the Alliance is also a "bridge" connecting diverse stakeholders, common ideas, and the Lower Platte River ecosystem. To commemorate the day's activities and what the Lied Bridge represents, several attendees tossed a handful of sand into the river as a gesture of commitment.

