



From the Coordinator...

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

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Educational & Outreach Efforts

One of the primary responsibilities of the LPRCA is to help kids and adults learn more about the Lower Platte River and gain an appreciation for its importance. We do this through a number of ways including classroom presentations, public meetings, newsletters, reports, special events such as the airboat tour and the Water Quality Open, public service announcements, videos, and most recently the first Lower Platte River Summit. Below are a few recent and upcoming educational & outreach activities:

- **LPSNRD Earth Wellness Festival (EWF)** - The LPSNRD puts on an annual festival for 3,000 5th graders in Lancaster County. Students participate in activities and games related to various natural resources issues. Each year, the LPRCA participates by hosting "Flatwater Plinko" where kids roll balls down the plinko board (similar to the one on "The Price is Right") and then answer various river-related questions to earn points. This event is held at Southeast Community College in Lincoln
- **LPNRND Spring Sensation** - This educational event for 350 5th graders from Butler, Saunders, Dodge, Platte, and Colfax is similar in format to the EWF above in that students engage in activities related to natural resources. At this event though, the location is outdoors at Czechland Lake near Prague. Activities range from fishing to tree planting to wildlife species.
- **UNL Classes** - In addition to two UNL Sociology classes - Environmental Sociology 446/846 & Sociology 415/815 that I presented to in January, I also presented to a UNL Honors Water Class on two occasions and may be working with students on projects related to the Lower Platte River Corridor.



GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

This year has started off with a bang or should I say a "break" as in my mother broke her ankle in two spots and tore some ligaments. She was taking her new pup outside and slipped on that dreaded ice hidden under newly fallen snow - ouch. Now, she is off work for 4-6 weeks and has several months of therapy ahead of her. Ice can create problems for people along the Platte River too as we saw Feb 21-23 of this year. A 2-mile long ice jam on the Platte River near Vencil's Island forced water to overtop the Clear Creek Levee in one area. Fortunately, it did not break through and eventually broke loose without the use of explosives. Some cabins on Vencil's Island did get inundated with flood waters and people had to evacuate. Luckily, no one was hurt. According to Marlin Petermann with the P-MRNRD, the Vencil's Island area is a recognized bottleneck for ice jams and the energy needed to push ice through often dissipates as the flow moves over the island area. Spring is on its way (we hope) and ice jams can be forgotten until next year.

Featured Issue

Lower Platte River Ice Jam

Here are a few photos of the most recent ice jam:
(courtesy of the P-MRNRD)



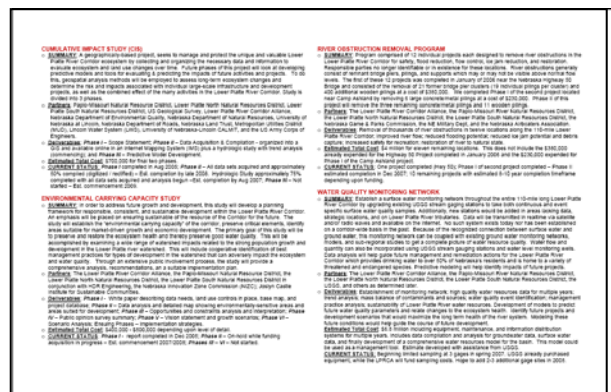
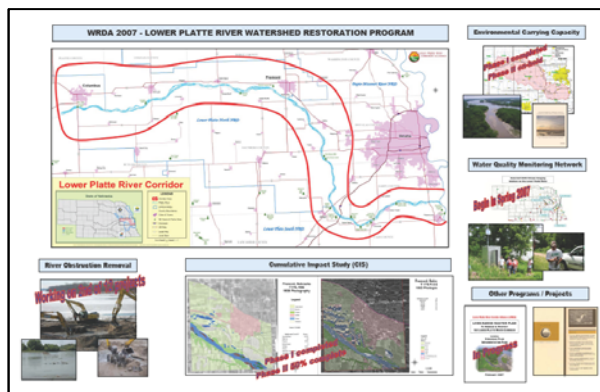
PROGRAMS / PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES

Water Quality Monitoring Network. I've been working with USGS to craft a sampling plan for this spring/summer. The USGS already purchased equipment for three gaging sites - Waterloo, Venice, and Louisville. We tentatively plan to measure temperature and conductivity at all sites and add e. Coli at Louisville. However, we are still working out the details and this is subject to change. Our limiting factor is funding. This first year will be a trial run to tweak for future sampling. I've also asked if we can work on development of a separate website to house the data specifically for this on-going project.

UN-L Honors Water Class. In February, I presented to a UNL Honors Water Class along with Paul Zillig of the LPSNRD and Dick Ehrman with NARD. I talked about the LPRCA and the main issues including water resources and land use in the corridor. Students in the class meet with different resource management professionals each week and write about their ideas/observations/thoughts in a class journal. They will also be working on individual projects shortly and I've received some interest in working on a project related to Lower Platte River issues. I did make a return appearance on March 5th to talk specifically on LPRCA projects and answer some follow-up questions.

New Partnerships. I've meeting with several groups lately to help build capacity and increase our ability to achieve our objectives. One such potential partnership is with the NG&PC on implementation of the NE Natural Legacy Plan. This plan outlines a basic framework for managing and protecting wildlife habitat in Nebraska. As a part of implementing this plan, NG&PC is looking for partners to establish flagship initiatives in identified regions known as "biologically unique landscapes" or BULs. The Lower Platte River Corridor is listed as one of these BULs and we are currently discussing details of a flagship initiative in the area. I've also been talking with UN-L School of Natural Resources representatives about developing a partnership to help us meet our research/study/funding needs as related to our "8 Reasons to Protect the Lower Platte River." Both of these discussions are in the early stages and more details will be forthcoming.

Washington D.C. Meetings. February 27th was the annual pilgrimage to DC for meetings with our Congressional delegation and the Corps of Engineers. We had a series of great meetings update everyone on the 3 WRDA-authorized projects (i.e. Antelope Valley, W. Sarpy-Clear Creek, and Sand Creek) and current LPRCA activities. I produced a sheet showing the major LPRCA projects currently underway. Recall, we have been working to get new federal authorization to the tune of \$12 million in a new WRDA bill. This funding would help support the current projects.



UPDATED - - WQ Open Golf Tourney. Our original date of September 6th for the WQ Open was not available at Quarry Oaks so we will be going with **Wednesday, Sept 5th, 2007**. We will confirm this date.

Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

- LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, March 8th, 2007 * 5:30 p.m. * LPNNRD Office – 511 Commercial Road * Wahoo. **NOTE NEW DATE !**
- PMNRRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, March 8th, 2007 * 8:00 p.m. * Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154th St. * Omaha
- LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, March 21st, 2007 * 2:00 p.m. * 3125 Portia Street * Lincoln.
- LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – April 24th, 2007 * 9:30 a.m. – noon * Valley City Office * 230 N Spruce * Valley **NOTE NEW LOCATION !**
- UNL Water Law, Policy, and Science Conference – March 26 & 27, 2007 * Embassy Suites in Lincoln * Go to <http://snr.unl.edu/waterconference>