



from the Coordinator...

Monthly Report from the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the period of February 1 through 29, 2004

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COE Feasibility Projects – D.C. Trip

On February 29th (leap day), I flew out to Washington D.C. along with the managers and staff from all three NRDs in the LPRCA to present information and request funding for 3 COE feasibility study projects. These three projects are designed for flood control/reduction and environmental restoration and include: 1) Sand Creek (Lake Wanahoo), 2) Antelope Valley (Antelope Creek), and 3) W. Sarpy/Clear Creek. The LPNNRD is working on the Sand Creek Project; the LPSNRD on the Antelope Valley Project, and all three NRDs on W. Sarpy/Clear Creek Project with the PMNRD taking the lead.

I prepared a PowerPoint presentation, which included info from each of these projects and the LPRCA. Since each of these projects is cost shared with the federal government, the release of this federal money is important to keeping the projects moving forward. At this time, each of the projects is awaiting money that must be signed off by OMB (Office of Management and Budget). One project, the Sand Creek project has been there for nearly a year, while Antelope Valley has been there 5 months and W. Sarpy just a few weeks. The point of our presentation was the necessity to get the funds released to keep on schedule. Each of these projects is multi-dimensional and has a variety of partners and other related projects all inter-dependent upon each other. Slowing down one component slows the entire project down and could lead to a loss of funding for other portions if criteria are not met including deadlines. We also presented ideas for an amendment to the 2004 Water Resources Development (WRDA) to frame future activities of the LPRCA and NRDs in the Corridor including showcasing the many cooperative efforts we currently are working on and those we plan to pursue.

Our schedule was rather ambitious starting with a meeting on the night of the 29th at the home of our political advisor/lobbyist (Bob Weaver) to strategize for meetings the next two days. I also gave a dry run of the PowerPoint presentation. The next day (March 1st), we met with John Paul Woodley, Jr who is the Assistant Secretary of the Army (oversees the COE), Congressman Bereuter's office, Senator Hagel's staff, Ken Cooper with the Omaha District COE, and then finally with M. G. Strock, Director of Civil Works for the COE and Fred Caver, Deputy Director of Civil Works for the COE. We ended the night with dinner at a nice French restaurant of the NRD group along with Congressional staffers, COE representatives, and Bob Weaver. Yes, some of the group did eat escargot (snails). This dinner provided a nice informal setting to discuss a lot of projects and funding issues.

The next day we started off by having a meeting with Diane Regas, Director of EPA's Office of Oceans, Wetlands, and Watersheds along with other EPA staffers. We gave the standard PowerPoint presentation along with additional information on future needs for water sampling, watershed-based efforts, water supply/wastewater projects, and funding needs. We also discussed projects that the LPRCA has been involved with including the recent water quality study on septic systems and the upcoming water quality meetings. Our next meeting was with Congressman Lee Terry's office where we primarily focused on the W. Sarpy Project since it is the only one in his district. Finally, we met with Senator Nelson's office to discuss all three projects. The Senator stopped in briefly for a quick hello and picture on his way to a committee meeting. We met with his staffers who have been very helpful and resourceful for the NRDs in the past.

We left D.C. at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday and arrived back home around 11:00 p.m. that night. It was a very productive trip with a lot of good ideas and information exchanged. We took the opportunity to thank all we met with for the past support and asked for their continued help in the future. Bob Weaver was incredibly helpful in arranging meetings and supplementing our discussions.

Cumulative Impact Study Meeting On February 19th, 2004, the cumulative impact study partners met at the LPSNRD to discuss priorities and desired information for the GIS we hope to develop during this study. There was considerable on "what" everyone wants answered by this study. In order to move forward, we need to determine what direction to go and then we can discuss how we get there. The NG&PC had met earlier in the week and had Jim Parham with UN-L facilitate their meeting to determine "what" they wanted. Jim was present at the Cumulative Impact Study meetings and was asked to also facilitate this meeting to help the rest of us do the same. The focus of the exercise was to determine common themes between our information needs. Each partner present gave their top three information needs and any questions they might want to have answered by this project. Jim Parham consolidated common ideas and the resulting questions were : **What are the changes over time in... 1) Infrastructure, 2) Land use, and 3) Hydrology? ...and how do each of these affect or are affected by the River, the Floodplain, and the Bluffs Corridor?** Several questions were posed to the partners to consider: **WHAT IS OUR TIMELINE?** - - 1) What date to start and stop with?, 2) What time intervals/frequencies to provide data for (i.e. 5, 10, 20 years)?, and 3) What are earliest aerial photos from?; **WHAT IS THE SPATIAL EXTENT AND AERIAL PHOTOS?;** and **WHAT ARE THE DEFINITIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING: Infrastructure, Land use, Hydrology, and Habitat?** The next meeting for the group was scheduled for Wednesday, March 17th, 2004 starting at 9:30 at the Lower Platte North NRD in Wahoo. All interested parties are invited to attend.

Lower Platte River Utilities Board (RUB) The Lower Platte River Utilities Board (RUB) created to address water supply and wastewater issues for the region from Ashland to Louisville along the Platte River will plan to meet for the first time sometime in March or early April. There have been several pre-planning meetings to discuss options for water supplies, wastewater facilities, funding/financing, and O&M issues. When the date is set, I will let everyone know.

Sand and Gravel Working Group – P.A.C.E. P.A.C.E. will be meeting on Wednesday, March 10th starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Plainsman Museum in Aurora. The group will be discussing public information efforts, a logo, and design of multi-media such as a website, brochure, and other printed materials. Several members of P.A.C.E. including me, are available to talk to interested groups. Just let us know.

Annual UN-L Water Tour This year the UN-L Water Tour will be looking at the Lower Platte River area from Columbus on down to Plattsmouth. I've been asked to help set-up the itinerary and I plan to meet with other members of the planning committee next Tuesday to tour prospective sites. We hope to have some information on the P.A.C.E. group with a tour of a reclaimed mining operation and another stop to hear about land use issues from the Joslyn Caste Institute for Sustainable Communities. The dates of the tour are June 7 - 9, 2004. Mark your calendars.

**LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – Tuesday, April 27th
9:30 a.m. at the LPSNRD**

Upcoming NRD and Alliance Meetings:

- **NEXT LPRCA QUARTERLY MEETING** - Tuesday, April 27th, 2004 * 9:30 a.m. * LPSNRD Meeting Room located in Lincoln.
- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, March 8th, 2004 * 5:30 p.m. - Wahoo @ 511 Industrial Road
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, March 11th, 2004 * 8:00 p.m. - Omaha @ Chalco Hills Rec. Area
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, March 17th, 2004 * 2:00 p.m. - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street

Future Meetings - Meetings and Events in the Not-So-Distant Future:

- **60-Mile Radius Committee** - Thursday, March 11th, 2004 * 2:00 p.m. * Joslyn Castle Institute in Omaha
- **Cumulative Impact Study Meeting** - Wednesday, March 17th, 2004 * 9:30 a.m. * LPNNRD in Wahoo
- **Earth Wellness Festival** - March 19th, 2004 * Southeast Community College in Lincoln * Starting at 9:00 a.m.