



## Monthly Report for September 2009

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### Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** I continued to work closely with the project managers from the Corps of Engineers (COE) to further refine the scope of work for the scoping phase of the CIS and determine preliminary goals for Phase III. I had a very positive conference call with the COE Project Managers, representatives of the regulatory arm of the COE, and a representative of the USFWS. The call assisted us in finding opportunities for both supplemental data that will better position us to develop a predictive tool at the end of Phase III as well as assess other research and efforts on-going on the lower Platte. I will be having a similar call with USGS representatives at the first of October to continue to compile data sources and refine the scope of work. I will be sharing summaries of both calls with the larger project group following the USGS call.

I have also spent time beginning to work with the COE to account for all in-kind time and cash throughout all amendments and projects conducted under the existing Lower Platte River & Tributaries authority. This task seems a bit daunting as there are over 12 years worth of projects to account for; however, I will be working closely with the three NRDs and other project partners, as well as the COE over the up-coming months and am sure we will be able to compile all necessary data.

- **2009 Water Quality Open:** Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate on September 3, and after watching rivers of water flow down several of the fairways with personnel from Quarry Oaks, we had to reschedule the afternoon and evening portions of the event for Tuesday, October 6. There will not be another presentation but all those registered for golf will be able to complete their rounds and we'll still plan to have the evening dinner. Almost all teams that were originally scheduled to play were able to make the new date. I also had a fairly sizeable waiting list so I was able to find teams that could fill the slots of the few that won't be able to join us on October 6. We are in process of refunding money to those who had to withdraw. I really appreciate the patience of all the participants, the people providing the demonstrations on the course, the staff of Quarry Oaks, and all others who have helped me with the event. I look forward to having a great and very dry day on the 6<sup>th</sup>!
- **Water Quality Monitoring Network:** Together with USGS, I submitted a grant proposal to the Nebraska Environmental Trust on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Again if we would receive the grant, we would be able to expand the capacity and capability of the current water quality monitoring program funded by the LPRCA, LPNNRD, and USGS. Suspended sediment, e- coli, and possibly 2-5 other chemicals would begin to be monitored at the established gage sites. Additionally, we would hopefully be able to predict the concentrations of those chemicals and provide that data to stakeholders and the general public in real-time. The NET is currently accepting public comment on the 142 grant applications submitted. Recommendations of the NET will be made public on February 4. I am very hopeful that this effort will be funded.
- **LPRCA Retreat:** The LPRCA Retreat was held Wednesday September 9, 2009 in Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland. It was a very good day overall with very positive discussion on the LPRCA and its current and future directions. All members of the LPRCA were represented except UNL. I did meet with representatives of SNR and CSD at UNL prior to the retreat and will be sharing the outcomes of the retreat with them and all members shortly. I am currently working on both a summary and a draft long range implementation plan. I hope to have the draft completed prior to the next LPRCA Quarterly meeting scheduled for October 27.
- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** During September, I worked with HDR on continuing to review the draft final report and refinements to the Land Suitability Analysis component. Additionally, we continued to refine and scope out the outreach component of the ESA project. We are currently working to schedule a follow up meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee for the Land Suitability Analysis component. We hope to hold the meeting within the next month to 6 weeks.

- **River Obstruction Removal:** I met with Olssons Associates to get the next river obstruction removal effort started through the design and permitting phase. They are providing me some preliminary plans, information and costs within the next week. We had identified the next removal project to be at Two Rivers State Recreation area but they are also providing me information and numbers for the removal of the obstructions at Highway 64.
- **Drought Ready Communities:** Plans continue to roll along with the Drought Ready Communities program. I have had several planning meetings during September and have also been reviewing other public certification programs, drought and hazard mitigation plans, and federal, state and local legislation. We are using that information as the basis for the development of the Drought Ready Communities certification process and “kit” of materials to be presented to and reviewed by the communities in Nebraska, Illinois, and Oklahoma during full day workshops over the next month to six weeks. The Nebraska City workshop will be held on November 5. I look forward to that day and to the outcomes of this process as I hope it can be included in future LPRCA and NRD efforts dealing with hazard mitigation.
- **Nebraska Trails Council & Nebraska Recreation & Park Association Conference:** The conference was held in Ponca, NE on September 13-16. Attendees included city parks and recreation personnel, personnel from federal and state agencies and members of the Trails Council as well as others. It was a very positive experience and helped me gain more insight and ideas into expanding people’s awareness of the resources of the lower Platte and access to the river. I plan to meet with Nebraska Game and Parks personnel over the next month to further explore the possibility of a development of a water trail on the lower Platte, additional access points, and grant opportunities to provide education on the existing resources and opportunities.
- **Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:**
  - October 14—Western Water States Council Tour of the lower Platte River
  - October 15—Platte River Symposium, Kearney NE;--poster presentation with HDR on the ESA project
  - October 21—PACE, Central Platte NRD
  - October 27—LPRCA Quarterly Meeting
  - October 30—UNL Sustainability Forum