



## From the Coordinator...

**\*Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of Sept 2006\***

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

### RIVER SUMMIT IS A HUGE SUCCESS!

The LPRCA River Summit held on Tues, Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006 was a huge success. Over 90 people attended the event which featured short concurrent sessions, panel discussions, and 2 keynote speakers - - all focused on pertinent Lower Platte River issues. The event kicked off with a thought-provoking photo presentation by Joel Sartore, a renowned Nat'l Geographic Magazine photographer. Following this presentation, there were several concurrent sessions covering topics on: tribal history, comprehensive planning, ecotourism, the Mead Superfund Site, drought, and flooding. The Summit also included two panel discussions with one on water use and the other on land use in the Corridor. Ernie Niemi, environmental economist with ECONorthwest out of Oregon, capped off the event with a great presentation on the value of "amenity-driven" or quality of life issues and the value of natural resources to local economies. We are currently following up the event with an evaluation/survey to keep the momentum going. More details on the event can be found in our soon-to-be-released newsletter. If you would like more info in the meantime such as the schedule and booklet for the Summit, you can log on to our redesigned website at [www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org).



#### GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

Wow, what a year so far! An airboat tour, a golf tourney, and recently a River Summit. These events are as important as our "brick & mortar" projects such as the CIS Project, River Obstruction Removal Program, and the Environmental Carrying Capacity Study. Outreach & education really is our strong point and one of the best ways to bring stakeholders together and disseminate information. Now, it's time for a little R&R as I head out for two weeks of vacation in Europe. I will be returning October 23, but will not be checking any messages or e-mails. Please contact the LPRCA/LPSNRD office at (402) 476-2729 for immediate attention. See you in November.

#### Featured Project

##### Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal

After many months of planning, this project is finally getting underway. Bids are due next week and we just finished up a pre-bid meeting on Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>. Access to the obstructions will require building a causeway, and a preliminary sonar assessment determined that the concrete & metal portion of the pilings generally run from 9 to 14 feet below grade. Most likely, removal will be done by digging around the pilings and breaking or cutting off. We think the concrete portion of the pilings sit atop several wooden pilings. Work is scheduled to begin sometime in November with completion slated for the end of December.

## Programs & Projects

**2006 WQ Open Golf Tourney** On August 22, we were back at Quarry Oaks Golf Course for the 2006 WQ Open. This course is located along the banks of the Platte River near South Bend and has scenic views, preserved natural areas, and remnants of the former rock quarry. The WQ Open allows us to educate attendees on water resources issues while having a great time. I always say that it's so much fun, you won't know you're learning. With 141 players making up 34 teams this year, it made for a competitive, yet enjoyable atmosphere. To emphasize the educational component, we had 8 demos and 10 trivia signs on the holes. We also added some awards for those who participated in the educational activities and we threw in some twists with requirements to use a rope-handled putter and second-hand driver on special holes. NEBCO, owner of the course, had agreed to sponsor the event including marketing assistance, fielding teams, and providing other assistance for the event. Quarry Oaks employs a number of conservation practices and exemplifies how to fit a recreational use into the existing natural landscape rather than making the environment fit the development. A burger and brat buffet along with awards ceremony followed the event.



**LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** The Alliance held a quarterly meeting on Wed, Sept 6<sup>th</sup> at the LPNDRD in Wahoo. We had a huge agenda but managed to get through it in 2 hours. Several new items were discussed including a Water Museum, the "Bluffs Region" and planned development in the area, the NE Environmental Trust Fund Grant received for the CIS project, a request for endorsement of the "Teaming with Wildlife" Coalition, and an upcoming strategic planning meeting. We also had the traditional program and project updates and a special presentation by Rick Schneider on the "Natural Legacy" program. Minutes will be made available on our website soon. The next meeting will be sometime in December of 2006 or January of 2007.

**Other Activities** In addition to monthly NRD board meetings, the LPRCA is involved in a myriad of other activities. The first Thursday of each month is a meeting of the NE Innovation Zone Commission. This group is looking at economic development between Omaha and Lincoln along I-80. On Sept 14<sup>th</sup>, I also attended a charrette conducted by the Joslyn Castle Institute for Sustainable Communities, which focused on land use and sustainable development ideas for the Omaha-Lincoln metro area. The Army Corps of Engineers (COE) conducted a demo of our Cumulative Impact Study GIS on Sept 15<sup>th</sup>. This "tool" will help resources manager assess land, river, and habitat changes over time. On Fri, Sept 22, I accompanied the three Lower Platte River NRD managers to D.C. for seven meetings with our Congressional delegates and agency representatives. We discussed LPR Feasibility projects and the LPR Restoration language in WRDA. This entire trip all took place in one day - whew! Sept 25 and 26 was the annual NARD conference in Kearney. As always, there were many interesting sessions with many focusing this year on water resources management and integrated management. The NRDs also discuss proposed legislation for the upcoming session. During Sept, I also gave a project management presentation to a nonprofit education group. Finally, I had the privilege of presenting to a UNL Land Use Planning class on "collaboration" and the Alliance.

**LPRCA Strategic Planning Retreat** Every two years, the LPRCA holds a strategic planning retreat to go over accomplishments, needs, and direction of the Alliance. This year, the event will be held at Camp Kitaki on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 3:30 pm. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. This event is open to LPRCA members and partners who would like to be involved in guiding the direction of the Alliance.

### Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

- LPNDRD Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, Oct 9, 2006 \* 7:00 p.m. \* 511 Commercial Park Rd in Wahoo
- PMRNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, Oct 12, 2006 \* 8:00 p.m. \* Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> St. \* Omaha
- LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, Oct 18, 2006 \* 7:00 p.m. \* Spring Creek Prairie Education Center near Ceresco.
- LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – Dec 2006 / Jan 2006 - TBD