



For the period of January 14th, 2003 through April 27th, 2004

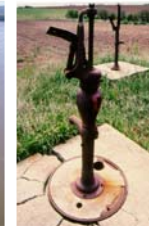
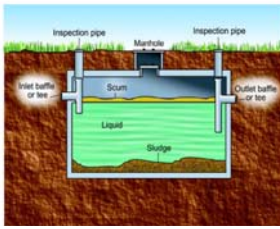
One-Year Anniversary

April 14th marked my one-year anniversary with the Alliance and it seems as though it sped by so fast. I think we've covered a lot of ground, but there is so much more ahead to do. A few items I foresee as priority issues in the next year and beyond: (1) environmental carrying capacity/land-use planning; (2) river obstruction removal; (3) water supply/wastewater issues and projects; (4) creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the LPRCA; (5) water quality informational meetings; and (6) consistent updating of multimedia sources such as our website and publications. Diversification of our funding sources is another issue I have been tasked with. To address this need, we are currently looking into affiliation with the Nebraska Community Foundation in order to use the Foundation's nonprofit status to accept grants and donations. I look forward to the next year and continued success in managing and protecting the Lower Platte River.

[Corridor Connections Newsletter](#) I am in the process of putting together the spring/summer editions of *Corridor Connections*, the newsletter of the Lower Platte River Corridor alliance (LPRCA). If you have some project or information you feel would be of interest to Lower Platte River Corridor stakeholders, then please contact me so we can discuss putting something in the newsletter. Submissions will be accepted until May 31st, 2004.

[Cumulative Impact Study](#) This project is moving forward and the group continues to meet on a monthly basis. A small working group of several primary partners meets in the interim to come up with recommendations for the entire group to consider. Recently, the working group met to discuss the GIS and what time periods we would like to include and which method of determining changes over time to consider. Recommendation/options will be presented to the entire group at the April 27th meeting. A small grants committee met recently to look into an EPA grant to cover cost associated with development of the GIS and data acquisition. **DON'T FORGET: Next Meeting - - Tuesday, April 27th, 2004 at the LPSNRD starting at 1:30 p.m. (following LPRCA quarterly meeting).**

[Sand and Gravel Working Group - P.A.C.E.](#) P.A.C.E. met April 7th at the Aurora City Library. The group discussed the administrative history document that is nearly ready. Another agenda item was public relations and press coverage. The group feels it is ready to do some press releases to reach a broader audience and illustrate the cooperative spirit that P.A.C.E. is all about. There has been some recent negative press about planned mining operations and the perception they are dirty and noisy. John Heaston with TNC said he served in an informal capacity to mediate a potential conflict related to this issue. The group felt P.A.C.E. could continue to serve in this capacity in the future. Two members of the Land Committee for the Platte River Cooperative Agreement were in attendance and gave their support for the efforts of P.A.C.E. Attendees also chose a general logo format and discussed creating a brochure for P.A.C.E. UN-K students are currently working on these items. The PMRNRD has pledged to pay for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cost of the brochure, which is needed by June 9th for the UN-L Water Tour. Carl Roberts will be taking members of the tour to a reclaimed and an active mine near Linoma Beach. I mentioned that I am on the UN-L Water Tour planning committee and feel that this is a grand opportunity to showcase our area of the Platte River and our efforts to manage and protect the area. The next meeting will be sometime in July at the UN-L East Campus Union in Lincoln.



Water Quality/Resources Meetings The "Water Wellness" water quality workshop dates, times, and places have been finalized and are listed below:

Meeting Date	Day of Week	Meeting Time	Meeting Location
May 8, 2004	Saturday	9:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Gretna
May 12, 2004	Wednesday	6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	Maria's Lighthouse Tavern in Cedar Creek
May 18, 2004	Tuesday	6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	Papillion Gun Club - S. of Papillion by river
June 1, 2004	Tuesday	6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	Yutan Community Center
June 15, 2004	Tuesday	6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	City of Valley Office
June 16, 2004	Wednesday	7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Dodge County Extension Office - Fremont
June 19, 2004	Saturday	9:00-11:30 a.m.	VFW Hall in North Bend
June 23, 2004	Wednesday	6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	Schuyler City Office Bldg.

Topics to be covered at the workshops will help residents of the area better understand their drinking water and septic systems. Invitations were sent out to nearly 2,000 people in and near the Lower Platte River Corridor and others with a vested interest. We hope for about 30-35 attendees at each meeting.

Lower Platte Weed Management Area (LPWMA) As I mentioned in my last quarterly report, the LPWMA just finished putting together a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Foundation "Pulling Together Initiative" or PTI grant to get some additional summer help and the necessary biological and chemical supplies for noxious weed control in the 10 corridor counties. The grant application was successful and the LPWMA will be receiving around \$55,000 shortly to carry out its activities. Congratulations! Information on this group can be found at "www.lowerplattewma.org"

Annual UN-L Water Tour As a reminder, the UN-L Water Tour will be touring at the Lower Platte River area from Columbus on down to Plattsmouth. The dates of the tour are June 7 - 9, 2004. A rough itinerary is as follows: Tour buses leave Lincoln and Kearney and rendezvous at Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's Jeffery Island wildlife restoration project near Overton. There will be a presentation on habitat restoration efforts for Piping Plover and Least Tern nesting, Lunch will be at the Audubon Society's Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon. The tour will continue to Columbus for a BBQ near the river and an overnight stay. On the way to Columbus, the tour will stop at the Central Platte NRD in Grand Island for a presentation by NDEQ on efforts to contain and clean-up groundwater aquifer contamination that has threatened both private and municipal water wells since last fall. The second day begins with a breakfast presentation on goals of the LPRCA by coordinator Rodney Verhoeff before the tour proceeds to Schuyler. There, the East-Central District Health Department will outline opportunities and challenges presented by immigration and increasing ethnic diversity in the Platte, Colfax, Boone and Nance County area. Later that day, there will be a presentation on control of algae blooms in sand pit lakes near Fremont and the geology of the Platte River's bluffs in regard to suitability for development. Prior to an overnight stay near Omaha's Old Market, the buses will stop at the city's historic Joslyn Castle for a presentation on the Joslyn Castle Institute for Sustainable Communities. The tour's final day begins with a presentation by HDR Inc. providing insight on water and wastewater planning in the Lower Platte River corridor at the Papio-Missouri NRD. Next is a stop at Schramm State Park, where UNL fisheries biologist Ed Peters will detail research to track the movements and spawning activities of Pallid Sturgeon. A final stop near Ashland looks at sand and gravel mining and sand pit reclamation efforts by Lyman-Richey Corp. real estate broker Carl Roberts. The Tern and Plover Partnership

will also talk about their work to enhance and preserve nesting habitat for Least Terns and Piping Plovers. After lunch, buses proceed to Lincoln and Kearney. Registration includes all food, (except on-your-own dining in Omaha), motel, and motor coach expenses. Registration details are available through the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce at (800) 652-9435. Registration deadline is May 10 and participation is limited to the first 85 registrants. CONTACTS: J. Michael Jess, associate director, UNL Water Center, (402) 472-7570, email mjess3@unl.edu or Steve Ress, communications coordinator, UNL Water Center (402) 472-3305, email sress1@unl.edu.

[National Association of Recreational Resource Planners \(NARRP\) Conference](#) May 16th-20th, I will be assisting the PMNRD on several tours of area trails and a classroom presentation for the NARRP Conference to be held in Omaha. My contribution will pertain to the Lied Bridge/Platte River Connection. I will also have the opportunity during the classroom presentation to discuss the LPRCA and our projects. On the first night of the conference, I will be displaying a poster presentation on the Lied Bridge/Platte River Connection. Log on to www.narrp.org for more information.

[Earth Wellness Festival](#) On Monday, March 19th, I participated in the earth wellness festival (EWF), which is a fun, educational festival for fifth graders in the Lincoln area to learn about their natural environments. This event is similar to the Children's Groundwater Festival in which the kids have a chance to see demonstrations, participate in activities, and play educational games related to a range of natural resource issues. I built a Plinko board and developed a companion water trivia game for my activity. I would be more than happy to bring the board to other venues for students/kids. Just give me a call.



[2004 Water Quality Open](#) Wednesday, September 1st, 2004 is the date for the 2004 LPRCA "Water Quality Open" golf tournament. This year the tourney will be held at the beautiful Arbor Links course in Nebraska City. Exact details are still being worked out, but it looks like an 11:00 a.m. briefing on conservation measures, the course itself, and social time, followed by a 1:00 p.m. shotgun tee off. We will again be using a scramble format and 4-person teams. Following the 18-hole round of golf, there will be a cookout buffet dinner and social time while we hand out awards. Last year, we filled up, so keep your eyes peeled for registration forms - - including on-line. Entry fees will run somewhere around \$55/person including all green fees, cart rental, driving range balls, and the evening meal. Lunches will also be available at the clubhouse "on-your-own." A block of rooms has been reserved at the nearby Arbor Lodge for a reduced rate of \$69/single or \$79/double. Rooms must be reserved no later than August 31st for the reduced rate. Tell them you are requesting a room in the "Corridor Alliance" block.

[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 the 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 in 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 all criteria are not met including meeting 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.

[USGS/LPRCA Publication](#) The USGS has published a fact sheet for the water quality study conducted in 2000 to look at whether septic waste affects drinking water. This collaborative study between the USGS and the LPRCA focused primarily on shallow domestic wells along the lower Platte River and whether they were impacted by septic contaminants such as hormones and pharmaceuticals. You can view the fact sheet on-line at: <http://water.usgs.gov/pubs/fs/fs07203/>. The map below shows the extent of the study area:

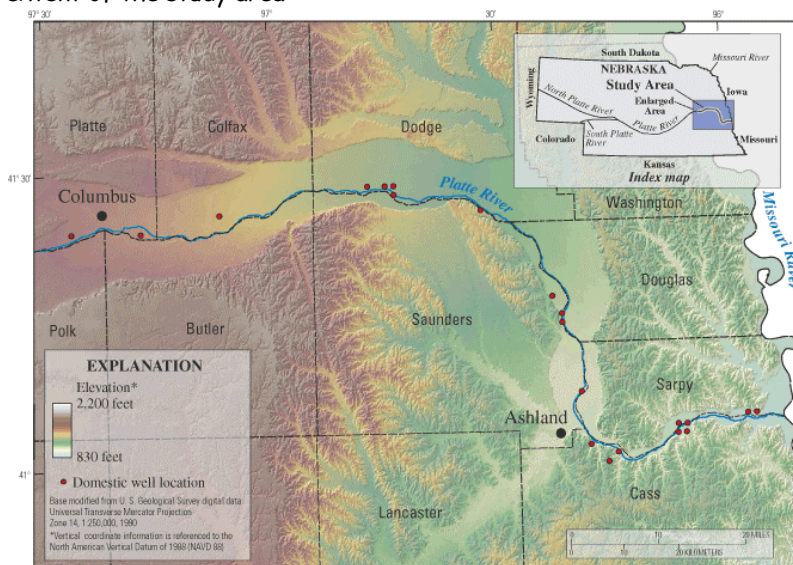


Figure courtesy of USGS

[Don't forget our website](#)

you'll find a great deal of information on the LPRCA and its activities including reports, newsletters, history, and a variety of other interesting information.

www.lowerplatte.org