



# From the Coordinator...



Monthly Report from the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the period of MAY 1 through MAY 31, 2004

**Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator**

## Meetings, meetings, and more meetings

The past several weeks have been the era of meetings, conferences, and tours. Since my last report, I have attended two conferences, and a tour in addition to normal meeting activities. What do we get out of these events? A lot. We get exposure to new ideas, perspectives, funding connections, project partners, and the opportunity to rub elbows with colleagues. In the same manner, I get the opportunity to expose others to the activities of the LPRCA. When I first arrived, one of my objectives was to promote the great we are doing - - and that is what I have been working hard to do. It takes time to build understanding, support, and credibility, but we are certainly gaining. So, I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to attend and participate in these events.

National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) Conference I attended and participated in the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) annual conference May 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>. The conference was held in Omaha at the new Hilton Hotel adjacent to the Qwest Center. If you haven't visited the new Qwest Center, it is a very beautiful facility and a nice welcoming landmark for Omaha and those coming into Nebraska. The NARRP is a group of recreational planners from around the country who work to enhance recreational opportunities. This is the only recognized formal association of its kind in the country. The first day included a tour I helped co-lead, which stopped at the "Platte River Connection" - Lied Bridge. Recall, that the Lied Bridge was constructed across the Platte River near South Bend as a connecting bridge for the Lincoln and Omaha trail networks. It includes viewing and fishing piers along with trailhead parking areas on both sides of the river. I had the opportunity to not only talk about the bridge project, but also the LPRCA itself. We repeated this tour the next day, which also showcased the Omaha trail network. The first night of the conference also included a poster session. For this session, I prepared a poster presentation on the "Platte River Connection" and LPRCA activities. On the final day of the conference, Gerry Bowen of the PMRNRD, and I made a presentation on the "Platte River Connection" and I added some information on the LPRCA. The conference wound down with an all-conference tour of PMRNRD projects along the Missouri River including a riverboat tour. The NARRP conference was a great opportunity to expose recreation planners from around the country to programs, projects, and issues of the lower Platte River and Missouri River areas. I just received a nice thank you commending the LPRCA for helping out and exceeding their expectations.

Water Wellness Workshops/Meetings We've passed the halfway mark with these meetings. Our next one is scheduled for the Valley City Hall. If you can attend, please drop by. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. and should be over around 9:00 p.m. There'll be free cookies. I would really encourage you to spread the word to anyone living along the Platte River who has their own septic and drinking water well systems to attend one of the four remaining meetings.

### **UPCOMING WATER WELLNESS MEETINGS:**

Tuesday, June 15 <sup>th</sup> - 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	<b>Valley City Office - 210 N. Locust Street</b>	Valley
Wednesday, June 16 <sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	<b>Dodge County Extension Office - 1206 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street</b>	Fremont
Saturday, June 19 <sup>th</sup> -9:00 To 11:30 a.m.	<b>VFW Hall - 7<sup>th</sup> and Main Street</b>	North Bend
Wednesday, June 23 <sup>rd</sup> - 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.	<b>City Office - 1103 'B' Street</b>	Schuyler

Recent Water Wellness mtng



River Network's River Rally 2004 I attended the River Network's "River Rally 2004" in Wintergreen, Virginia from May 21 to May 25, 2004. The chosen location is a resort community nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the highest mountains in

the eastern states. Although my trip there didn't start out too good with a cancelled flight, lost baggage, no rental car, and gridlock D.C. traffic, the rest of my time there was much more productive. This conference was designed to present information on building healthier watersheds through grassroots effort. There were a variety of topics and sessions so it was difficult to decide which to attend during the concurrent sessions. Topics to choose from included: Watershed Protection, Assessing the Impacts of Growth, Conserving Natural Areas, Source Water Protection, Ecosystem Flow Prescriptions, Basics of Land Development, Changing Development Rules in Your Community, Assessing Watershed Health, and Looking at Behaviors of Watershed Residents. I chose the track given by the Watershed Protection Institute (WPI), which entailed 9 sessions designed to give an overview of watershed protection issues. Of particular interest were the sessions on land development issues where they covered land use planning, land protection, and community involvement. Because I attended this track, I have access to some reference materials from the WPI along with some FREE consultation time, if desired. A majority of the conference was held over the weekend and on Sunday, conference attendees attended various field trips. I went on a hike through the Blue Ridge Mountains with author Tim Palmer, who has written countless books on various rivers throughout the nation. The six-mile hike was through rough and steep terrain, but the rewards of seeing a beautiful stream, numerous waterfalls, and ending up at a swimming hole made it worthwhile. Funny how you think you are in shape until you climb in the thin mountain air. As with the NARRP conference I discussed above, there were plenty of opportunities to meet with colleagues and exchange ideas with people from all around the country. We also had the opportunity to display materials from our organizations and I did just that. I met a couple who grew up on the Platte River near Bellevue (now living in Virginia) and had heard about the recent algae problems in some sand pit lakes near there. Surprisingly, there were only three of us from the Great Plains states and I was the only Nebraska representative. I will have a more detailed conference report if you would like to read more details about the conference.

**Problems with LPRCA Website** We experienced some difficulties with the LPRCA website recently, but it will be back on-line within the next few days. Check it out at "[www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org)".

**Nature Trail Project** This project is still underway. Some of the funding sources we were pursuing did not pan out, so we are looking into different options. We hope to put together a regular schedule of informational meetings for project partners including an annual partner update meeting. Currently, the design of the trail portion of the project is nearly completed and we should be able to move forward with implementation later this year. We will also be working on getting a website on-line with the assistance of the LPNND. The steering committee for this project decided to tackle the project on a piece-by-piece basis depending upon ideas submitted and funding instead of having a set master plan with a set timetable.

**Affiliation with the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF)** At the last LPRCA quarterly meeting, the group voted to affiliate with the NCF to create a "Lower Platte River Corridor Fund." This would allow the Alliance, which is not officially designated as a 501 (c)(3) - nonprofit organization by the IRS, to accept donations and grants. All 3 NRD boards on the LPRCA have also given their approval to proceed. Thus, we are awaiting the final contract from the NCF to finalize the creation of such a fund. If you want to contribute to the cause and support Alliance efforts, feel free to send your extra pennies to this fund.

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## **Upcoming NRD and Alliance Meetings:**

- **NEXT LPRCA QUARTERLY MEETING** - Tuesday, August 17th, 2004\* 9:30 a.m. \* PMRNRD Office near Omaha.
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, June 10th, 2004 \* 8:00 p.m. - Omaha @ Chalco Hills Rec. Area
- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, June 14th, 2004 \* 7:00 p.m. - Wahoo @ 511 Industrial Road
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, June 16th, 2004 \* 7:00 p.m. - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street

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

- **60-Mile Radius Committee** - Thursday, June 17th, 2004 \* 2:00 p.m. \* Joslyn Castle Institute in Omaha
- **Lower Platte Weed Mgmt Area (LPWMA)** - Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004 \* 9:30 a.m. \* UN-L ARDC facility in Ithaca

### **Bit 'O' Trivia**

What animal does not drink water?  
a. snake b. camel c. koala bear d. bat

*answer in next month's report*