



## From the Coordinator...

**\*Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of April 2005\***

**Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator**

### **Two-Year Anniversary**

In April, I celebrated my 2<sup>nd</sup> year as coordinator of the LPRCA. It's been a great learning experience and I've really enjoyed the opportunity. The Alliance is really making strides in educating people on the value of the Platte River's resources and the need to manage and protect these resources. We've also begun implementing programs and projects to address the issues identified in our many studies. We have also built a better understanding of "what the Alliance is" with the public and have taken the opportunity to look well into the future to help guide our direction. Congratulations to all involved with the Alliance! Here are just a few highlights of the past two years:

◆ WQ Open Golf Tourney - 144 participants in 2003; 136 in 2004 ◆ Airboat Tour - Putting People on the River - 60+ participants in 2003 & 2004 ◆ New Brochure and Newsletter ◆ LPRCA Video Produced ◆ Kicked-off Environmental Carrying Capacity Study, River Obstruction Project, and Cumulative Impact Study ◆ Water Wellness Program- 8 Meetings Throughout Corridor; Received DEQ mini-grant ◆ Began Construction on WRDA Flood Reduction/ Env. Restoration Projects ◆ Completed Pallid Sturgeon Study ◆ Prepared and Requested Federal Legislation for LPR Environmental Restoration ◆ Strategic Planning Retreat - 2005 ◆ Affiliated with Nebraska Community Foundation - Created the "Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Fund" ◆ Participated and Collaborated with LPWMA, P.A.C.E., 60-Mile Radius Study Steering Committee, UNL ARDC Nature Trail, UNL SNR Curriculum External Advisory Committee ◆ Numerous Presentations to Civic Groups, the Public, Other Organizations, Government Agencies, College Classes ◆ Hired Intern to Assist in LPRCA Activities ◆ Increased Visibility and Information Outreach Through Reports, Website, Newsletters, Personal Communications, Presentations, Video, Posters, Other Publications ◆ Created LPRCA GIS ◆ Continued to Support MapMaker ◆ Attended 3 NRD Monthly Meetings ◆ Organized Tours or Portions of Tours for UNL Water Tour, NRD Subcommittees, Governmental Officials ◆ Participated in Various Water and Environmental Education Programs ◆ ..and so on....

**Presentations** This past month, I gave two presentation on LPRCA activities - one to the Lincoln Executive Club and one to the City of Valley. The reception was very good at both with many good questions about what we do and who we are. I hope to make the rounds in the coming months to many of the Corridor communities and counties.

**Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)** This project continues to crawl forward with some final discussions on the scope of work (SOW). Just last week, I attended a presentation by USGS on a companion hydrology study. Shortly, the CIS group will be making rounds to the NRDs and other partners to give updates and request financial assistance.

**River Obstruction Project** Just awaiting word on the status of the COE permit to proceed on the Hwy 50 obstruction removal pilot project. We are hoping to start removal later this summer/fall if we can secure the funding.

**Environmental Carrying Capacity Project** I just met with HDR and turned over all of the comprehensive planning and zoning plans we have gathered over the past year to them. Looking for a summer completion of Phase I - data gathering and compilation.

**New WS/WW Project Coordinator** The LPSNRD Water Supply/Wastewater Project in northern Cass County has its first Project Manager - Todd Skoog. Formerly, with the Omaha COE District Office, Todd started the last week

of April and has been busy getting up to date on the project and has already spearheaded a couple of meetings of project partners. This project addresses the issues of drinking water supply needs, poor water quality and inadequate waste management (septic systems/lagoons) - - all issues the Alliance has a stake in.

**Nebraska Wellcare Workshop** The Groundwater Foundation along with the water Systems Council sponsored a "wellcare workshop" on April 14<sup>th</sup> focusing on private wells, pollution prevention, and education. I was asked to present info on the Water Wellness program we did last year. Other participants included NE Well Drillers Assoc, USGS, NH&HSS, City of Hastings, the Groundwater Foundation, Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Dept, and reps from the Water Systems Council. The day before, I attended a demo by the Water Systems Council on a new software program they've developed for entering well data and housing it on-line called "Well Census."

**Next LPRCA  
Quarterly Meeting**  
Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
9:30 a.m. \* PMRNRD

Agenda is available on-line  
at [www.lowerplatte.org](http://www.lowerplatte.org)

**2005 WQ Open Golf Tourney** Craig Wacker, LPRCA Intern, and I visited Quarry Oaks to prepare for the Sept. 1 Water Quality Open Golf Tournament. We took a trip around all greens with a golf cart to gauge our locations for displays and trivia signs. We also toured the new much larger meeting room in the clubhouse. It is quite impressive and will accommodate us quite nicely. If I can fill all slots for the tourney - 144 people, Quarry Oaks will give us a reduced cost. So, I need you help to recruit people who not only would enjoy golfing, but have a stake in protecting the Platte River and water resources in general. WE STILL HAVE ROOM FOR HELPERS AND PARTICULARLY ACTIVITIES AND PRESENTERS. CAN YOU HELP US OUT??

**FEMA Floodplain Maps** I met recently with DNR to discuss setting up public meetings to present the new FEMA floodplain maps. Once completed, the LPRCA will be helping DNR organize and facilitate these public forums designed to address questions, comments, and concerns the public might have with the new maps. Since Douglas and Sarpy County maps are already completed and meetings were held previously, we will be focusing on other LPR counties. Looking at a fall 2005 timeframe.

**Lower Platte Weed Management (LPWMA) Group** The LPWMA has been meeting monthly and met most recently on April 21<sup>st</sup> in Wahoo at the LPNNRD. The group worked out a deal with a billboard company in Omaha to put a display on open billboards throughout the Omaha area to support Public Service Announcements (PSA's). "Spike", a cartoon purple loosestrife plant, has been developed and adopted as the evil weed mascot for the display and for other LPWMA campaigns. The LPWMA is looking for more stable funding and will be approaching the NRDs for future support. They will also be on the LPRCA agenda at the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at the LPNNRD starting at 10:00 a.m.



**Spike**

**River Network River Rally 2005** I will be attending the River Network's "River Rally" in Keystone, Colorado starting on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> and returning on Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. The theme this year is highlighting ways to overcome the water-related impacts of new development and how human health is impacted by degraded water quality. In addition to plenary speakers, workshops, and special sessions, there is an opportunity to attend a field trip to see much of the ideas presented at the rally in action. I am hoping to get on the Blue River Watershed Restoration field trip. More details when I return.

## **Upcoming/Recent Meetings and Activities**

- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 7:00 p.m. - LPNNRD Office - 311 Commercial Park in Wahoo
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 8:00 p.m. - PMRNRD Office at the Nat Res Center - Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 7:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 285 S. 68<sup>th</sup> Street Place, Suite 200 - - The former Gallup Bldg near Shopko.
- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** - Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 9:30 a.m. - PMRNRD Office at the Nat Res Center -Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- **LPWMA** - Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005 \* 10:00 a.m. \* LPNNRD Office - Wahoo
- **River Network River Rally** - May 20 - 24, 2005 \* Keystone, Colorado.