



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the month of February 2005

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

LPRCA Quarterly Meeting

The LPRCA held a quarterly meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2005 at the LPSNRD in Lincoln. With 23 attendees, the Alliance pushed through a lofty agenda including the following items: USGS water quality monitoring of the Lower Platte River area; Summary of the retreat; Selection of airboat tour and Water Quality Open dates; River access ideas; FY06 budget discussion; Outreach and education idea; and program/project updates including the CIS, Environmental Carrying Capacity Study, and River Obstruction Removal Project. The minutes will be available soon with more details. Check our website at www.lowerplatte.org for updates and reports.

LPRCA Retreat A summary of the LPRCA retreat is available in both paper and electronic form via our website. Out of this gathering, two important ideas emerged - among others: (1) Need to get local officials and decision-makers involved to a greater degree, and (2) the need for continued educational projects/programs. Attendees felt the Alliance is doing a good job of addressing LPR issues and that there is a future need for the existence of the Alliance.

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) The CIS partner group met on Thursday, March 3rd at the PMRNRD to go over the draft final scope of work (SOW) for Phase II of the project. After much discussion, the COE agreed to revise the SOW and distribute to CIS partners via e-mail. Once finalized, a copy will be available for everyone to review and consider for financial support in FY06.

River Obstruction Project I met with the NG&PC recently to see if we may qualify for funding through several grant programs including those aimed at sports fish and boating safety. The outlook is not great for these programs but we can still ask via a letter and get an official decision on funding. The partner working group for this project met on March 1 to discuss progress on the project. Gerry Bowen with the PMRNRD gathered info on the 404 permit process and I made contact with the both the UP Railroad to bring all stakeholders to the table. We started to summarize estimated costs to formulate a budget for this first pilot project at Hwy 50. Our plan of attack is to use a process similar to the one used for the Lied Bridge rehabilitation where a causeway is built out into the river to reach the obstructions, which are then pulled out or broken off. The PMRNRD is helping to get the 404 permit put together and submitted to the COE. We decided to also bring either the BNSF or UP Railroad, the NG&PC, and the Nebraska Dept of Roads (DOR) to the table to serve on the working group.

Environmental Carrying Capacity Project Phase I of this project should be completed by early May and will give us an indication of what data we have, what we need, and an estimate of costs to proceed into the next phase.

PACE Meeting February 17th was the date of the latest PACE gathering at Crane Meadows. The brochure for the group is finalized and there are copies available to give out - just let me know since I have a box. The group did not receive recommendation for an NETF grant to do a demo site showing how a mining operation progress from beginning to end including reclamation efforts. However, the group is still going to go forward with the demo and look for other funds.

Fundraising and Grant Writing Workshops Recently, I attended fundraising and grant writing workshops. The instructor was a former UNL professor who now consults with businesses to help find grant money. He stated that the competition is fierce today in the grant world and grantors are very selective. Many organizations have grant writers on staff or they consult for these services. Many times you need to be invited to even apply for grants particularly those given through foundations.

LB 546 This proposed legislation would create an I-80 Innovation Zone Commission to promote and plan for economic development along the I-80 corridor particularly focusing on the area from Omaha to Lincoln. We all can acknowledge that development is coming to the area and this bill may provide an opportunity to be involved since the LPSNRD and the PMRNRD would each have a seat on the commission. Being involved may be one way to assure that development is appropriate and does not negatively impact the resources of the Lower Platte River Corridor.

Next LPRCA Meeting

**Tuesday, May 24th, 2005
9:30 a.m. * PMRNRD in Omaha**

Upcoming/Recent Meetings and Activities

- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, March 7th, 2005 * 5:30 p.m. - LPNNRD Office - Wahoo
- **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, March 10th, 2005 * 8:00 p.m. - Nat Res Center @ Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005 * 2:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street
- **NARD Annual D.C. Trip** - March 13th - 16th, 2005 * Washington D.C.
- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** - Tuesday, May 24th, 2005 * 9:30 a.m. - PMRNRD - Omaha

***NOTE the winter meetings times are in effect**

2005 Water Quality Open

The place and date are set for the 2005 Water Quality Open golf tourney. This year the event will be held at Quarry Oaks near South Bend and on the banks of the Platte River on Thursday, September 1st. There will be a presentation prior to the event at around 10:00 and tee-off is at 1 p.m. More details will be forthcoming in future reports.

LPSNRD Office Temporarily Moving

Starting May 28th, the LPSNRD office now located at 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln will be closing and moving to the former Gallup Campus Building near 68th and O Street just south of ShopKo. This move is due to remodeling and enlarging of the current office space and should last around 6 to 9 months. There is a meeting room at the new temporary location for meetings, but we probably won't be up and running until around April 4th or so. The phone number and mailing address will remain the same along with the fax number. Please call the office at (402) 476-2729 for directions or to find out if the meeting space is available.