



From the Coordinator...

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

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

Would you like the LPRCA to present to your civic group?

The LPRCA is available to talk about what programs and projects are planned and currently underway. I would be happy to speak to your group on general information or a specific topic related to our activities. Please contact the LPRCA at (402) 476-2729 with your request.

LPRCA Retreat On January 21st, the LPRCA retreat was held at Camp Kitaki near South Bend for LPRCA members and partners. We had a great turn-out and the facilities created an environment conducive to an enjoyable and relaxing retreat with a crackling fire and a view of the Platte River valley. Our facilitator was also excellent and led us through several activities including building paper airplanes and designing models with plastic discs in order to help uncover our strengths and highlight our past efforts. We also had group discussions to funnel everything down into what we can do to keep the momentum going, improve the Alliance, and determine what contributions members can make. Overall, it was a wonderful experience with great food and a setting that really emphasized the beauty of the Platte River area. I have a summary of the event that will be going out soon - - so stay tuned.

WE NOW HAVE AN AFFILIATED FUND & CAN ACCEPT CONTRIBUTIONS & DONATIONS TO ASSIST WITH PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT OF THE LOWER PLATTE RIVER. Call (402) 476-2729 for more details.

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) The CIS partner group met recently at the PMNRD to finalize details of Phase I - Scope of Work (SOW). The SOW was originally scheduled to be completed by January 1, but details of some data costs were difficult to determine. Final assignments were given to CIS partners with hopes to complete the SOW within a week. Following the meeting, all assignments were completed and the SOW is now in final form. The next phase is to acquire the data and do trend analyses. Additionally, hydrologic data and other water resources information will be compiled. The end product of the CIS project is a GIS that is accessible via the internet to all partners and the development of a predictive model.

River Obstruction Project For the past several months, this project has been focusing on determining ownership and responsible parties along with an assessment and inventory of river obstructions. The Nebraska Airboaters Association helped prioritize the obstructions with those north of Cedar Bluffs as the highest priority and those near Hwy 50 a close 2nd. The LPNNRD is currently working on the area north of Cedar Bluffs since it consists of large chunks of cement pilings left from a previous demolition done in 1998. The LPRCA has decided to use Hwy 50 obstructions as a pilot project in order to get an idea of effort and cost to remove obstructions for the entire corridor. There are 2 sets of pilings and we will focus on the westernmost set, which often lurks just beneath the water surface and can cause considerable damage to boats and trap debris. The pilings consist of wood, cement and rebar and extend across the entire reach of the river. Our preliminary plan is to build a causeway to reach them. However, details are still being worked out including sources of funding.

Environmental Carrying Capacity Kick-off On February 9th, the LPRCA held the kick-off meeting for this project, which will look at land use and sustainability of resources in the corridor. HDR will be conducting this study using a similar methodology employed with the N. Cass County Infrastructure Feasibility Study. Their approach is both comprehensive and includes a significant public input process. For this project, we have a cooperative agreement between all NRDs since the LPSNRD is serving as the sponsor for the project. The agreement lays out responsibilities and initial funding issues. Additionally, the LPSNRD has a general services agreement with our consultant to undertake the study. Right now, we are just working on Phase I - Data Identification, Collection, Evaluation, and Organization. This phase includes initial stakeholder meetings, collecting comprehensive and zoning plans, acquisition of land use and suitability maps. We hope to have this phase wrapped up in several months so we can plan Phase II and look for funding.

MapMaker Update Meeting January 4th was the date of a meeting of MapMaker partners. The meeting was held at the LPNNRD in Wahoo, where the Internet Mapping System (IMS) is housed. MapMaker allows anyone with internet access to create a layered map. The site has

recently undergone a re-design and it looks and functions even better than before. At the partner update meeting, the group discussed inviting additional members including the Lewis & Clark NRD. The site can be accessed through the LPRCA website at www.lowerplatte.org.

Nebraska Agri-Business Club On January 10th, I attended a meeting of the Nebraska Agri-Business Club in Lincoln and gave a presentation on the LPRCA. As a thank you, I was given a one-year membership to the club. As a result of the interest at this presentation, I have been asked to speak to the Lincoln Executive Club in March. If you know of a group that would be interested in hearing the message of the LPRCA, please let me know.

UNL - School of Nat Res (SNR) External Advisory Committee I was asked to sit on an external advisory committee for the newly-established UNL School of Natural Resources. The committee met for the first time on January 20th at the East Campus Union. As the SNR undergoes changes, they are looking for input from people in the business arena on skills needed for students to have success in natural resources careers. They are also looking at changing curriculum and degree requirements and need ideas to improve and make UNL competitive with other schools. We plan to meet again in another six months. I'm excited to be a part of the group since I received both my degrees from UNL and really want to see the university and its graduates be successful.

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

- **PMNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, Feb 10th, 2005 * 8:00 p.m. - Nat Res Center @ Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha
- **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, Feb 14th, 2005 * 5:30 p.m. - LPNNRD Office - Wahoo*
- **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, Feb 16th, 2005 * 2:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street*
- **CIS Partner Meeting** - Monday, Feb 14th, 2005 * 1:30 p.m. - LPSNRD - Lincoln
- **PACE Meeting** - Thursday, Feb 17th, 2005 * 10:00 a.m. - Crane Meadows Nature Center
- **UNL ARDC Nature Trail Partner Annual Meeting** - February 18th, 2005 * 1:00 p.m. meeting/3:00 p.m. tour* UNL ARDC near Ithaca
- **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting** - Tuesday, Mar 1, 2005 * 9:30 a.m. - LPSNRD - Lincoln

***NOTE the winter meetings times are in effect for the next several months**