



## From the Coordinator...

**\*Monthly Report for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the Month of May 2006\***

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

### "Pathogens in Drinking Water" Workshop

Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> was the date for a "Pathogens in Drinking Water" workshop held by the Groundwater Foundation with help from the LPRCA. The workshop was held at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Schramm Park State Recreation Area. Focusing on pathogens or "bugs" in water supplies, the workshop covered ways to prevent pathogenic contamination of both surface and groundwater and included short presentations by experts and small group exercises. Pathogens include a variety of bacteria, viruses, and protozoa that come from many sources including wastewater, stormwater, and natural sources. Major outbreaks have occurred even recently including the 1993 *Cryptosporidium* outbreak in Milwaukee causing 400,000 illnesses and 50 deaths, and the 2000 *E. Coli* outbreak in Walkerton, Ontario with over 600 illnesses and 7 deaths. Closer to home, we have been working to address the problems with poorly-constructed or noncompliant septic systems along the Lower Platte River. The 20+ attendees at the workshop received information and participated in discussions on:

- The nature, sources, and effects of pathogens in drinking water
- Successful pathogenic contamination prevention
- Case studies about strategies that have worked
- Resources available locally to prevent pathogenic contamination in one's own backyard

The LPRCA was asked to introduce the workshop and talk about some of the strategies we have used to deal with pathogenic contamination from septic systems. I discussed the "Water Wellness" programs we put on in 2002 and 2004 along with our recent collaborative research with the USGS that found a connection between septic outflow and contamination in nearby wells. This workshop was one of several the Groundwater Foundation is putting on throughout the Midwest and represents only a beginning. Plans are to develop strategies and a toolbox to assist water operators, communities, landowners, resource managers, and the general public to take both preventive and corrective action.

#### GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATOR

The last month has been a very busy one and June is shaping up to be even more hectic. I'm just coming off one of those summer colds and trying to get back into the swing of things. It made me think of how taking a few preventive measures - plenty of rest, exercise, healthy eating, and washing your hands can prevent many ills including the dreaded summer cold. The same is true when protecting a resource such as the lower Platte River - doing a little planning and collaboration now can make life a lot easier later. Although planning sometimes seems to be time-consuming, restoration is much more costly in terms of time and money. We've always tried to be proactive when we can here at the LPRCA, but have to realize we do have existing problems that require some corrective actions too. It's off to chug some OJ and do a little exercise.

#### Committee Meetings

**LPRCA SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE** - Wed, June 21, 2006 \* 10- Noon \* LPSNRD \* Lunch Included \* RSVP required.

**EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** - TBD

## 10 YEARS OLD

### LPRCA Turns Ten this year

It was back in 1996 that the interlocal agreement for the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) was inked by (at the time) 7 state entities and 3 NRDs to protect and enhance the 110-mile long Lower Platte River Corridor, stretching from Columbus to Plattsmouth. Originally the Lower Platte South NRD, Lower Platte North NRD, Papio-Missouri River NRD, NE Dept of Env Quality, NE Game & Parks Commission, NE Dept of Water Resources, NE Nat Res Commission, NE Military Dept, NE Dept of Health & Human Services, and UNL Conservation & Survey Division signed on as members of the Alliance. Later, the NE Nat Res Commission and NE Dept of Water Resources merged into the NE Dept of Nat Resources and reducing the members to 9 total. So, this year marks ten years of collaboration, cooperation, consensus-building, and tremendous success in managing and protecting the lower Platte River and associated resources. We still have many challenges ahead but look forward to the next ten years. Thank you to all of our members, partners, and supporters!

## Programs & Projects

**Cumulative Impact Study (CIS)** Having signed a cooperative funding agreement with the USGS and officially receiving notice of a 2006 Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (NETF) grant, the hydrologic study component of the CIS project is now well underway. Using decades of stream gaging data, we hope to look at trends and patterns in streamflow data and parameters over the past several decades. Once again, this project highlights the importance of fostering partnerships to address natural resources issues effectively and efficiently.



**Kiosks** This coming Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> is the date for a tour of potential kiosk sites. Frank Albrecht with the NG&PC and I will be touring parks, rec areas, wildlife management areas, and other potential sites to install one of our 8 Kiosks.

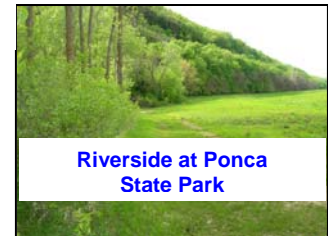
### **River Obstruction Removal Program**

Along with the NE Military Department, we plan to do a preliminary assessment of the Camp Ashland site in July to see what the twelve obstructions are comprised of. We will be contracting with a company out of Denver that uses a non-intrusive methodology to determine obstruction composition and depth. While the company is here, we intend to have them assess two or three additional sites.

**Conferences** I recently attended the 2006 River Management Society (RMS) biennial symposium in South Sioux City, Nebraska from May 9-11, 2006 at the Marina Inn. The symposium was a joint conference with the Missouri River Natural Resources Annual Conference in its 10<sup>th</sup> year. I've attended several RMS symposiums prior to taking my current position as LPRCA coordinator and have always found them very interesting and beneficial. Since coming to the LPRCA, I have attended the River Network's annual river rallies. Those events were primarily comprised of watershed management groups, whereas the RMS symposiums tend to have a higher concentration of governments representatives. Nebraska is very lucky to land the symposium this year since it is a real privilege to host such a conference and you generally only get one shot to do it and do it well. Attendance was a little down from typical years and I was a little surprised that Nebraska was not all that well represented in terms of river, watershed, and natural

resources organizations. I couldn't make the beginning of the symposium which actually began on Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, but I arrived mid-morning on Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. A large amount of info concentrated on the Missouri River and the politics of river management as opposed to past symposiums which tended to focus more on management issues. However, the Mighty MO certainly has an interesting story to tell. In

addition to the presentations, we took a field trip to release pallid sturgeon fish and canoe the Big Sioux River.



Overall, this was a very interesting symposium as it had a real focus on the legal and political side. Typically, there is a much greater emphasis on the management end. However, it was great exposure for those who don't normally dabble in these areas. The efforts on the Mighty MO and the precedents being set will surely impact other river systems so people are taking note throughout the country. I would like to thank the LPSNRD and the LPRCA partners for allowing me to attend this great event.

**REMINDER - - Newsletter** The next edition of the LPRCA newsletter, *Corridor Connections*, will be coming out in early July. We are in need of your submissions. Deadline for submission is June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

### Upcoming/Recent Meetings & Events

PMRNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 \* 8:00 p.m. \* Nat. Res. Center 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup> St. \* Omaha.  
 LPNNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 \* 7:00 p.m. \* 511 Commercial Park Rd in Wahoo  
 LPSNRD Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006 \* 6:00 p.m. \* 3125 Portia Street in Lincoln.  
 LPRCA Quarterly Meeting – TBD \* 9:30 a.m. \* LPNNRD in Wahoo. **NOTE – NEW DATE WILL BE DETERMINED – Previously set for August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006.**