



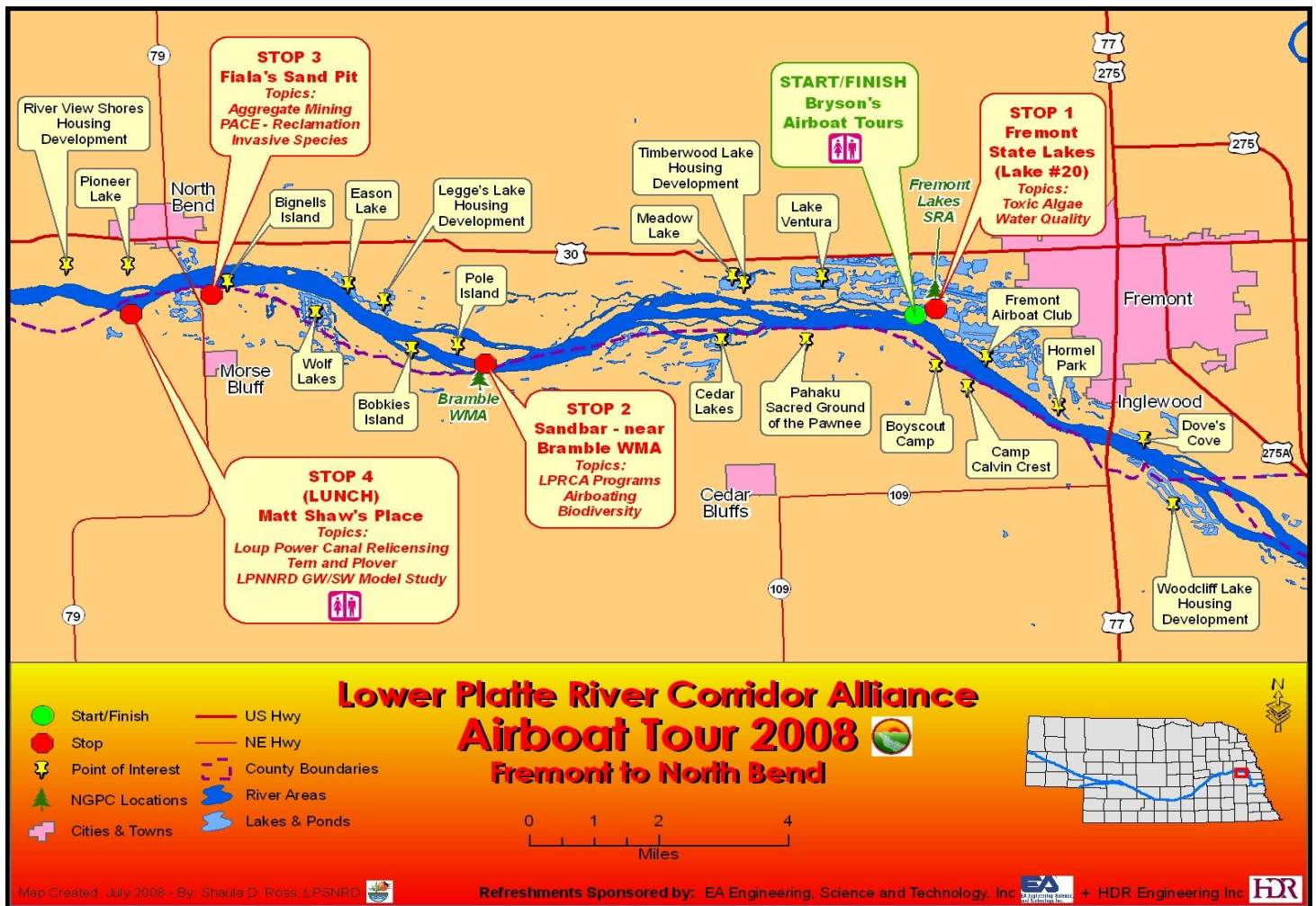
The Coordinator's Corner...

Quarterly Report from the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance * Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

For the period of May through July 2008

Airboat Tour - July 18th

Friday, July 18th is the date of the 2008 LPRCA Airboat tour. Covering nearly 15 miles from Fremont to North Bend, we will discuss topics such as toxic algae, biodiversity, T&E species, LPRCA programs, invasive species, aggregate mining, surface water /ground water studies, recreation on the Lower Platte, and relicensing of the Loup Power Canal system. Currently, we are full to the brim with 53 signed up to ride 19 airboats for this exciting tour. Below is a draft map of the tour route along with projected stops:



Upcoming Events & Meetings

- **Airboat Tour** – Friday, July 18th, 2008 * 9 am – 4 pm. Will cover the stretch of the Platte River from Fremont to just west of North Bend – approximately 15 miles. HDR, Inc and EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc will be providing the water and sodas for this event.
- **WQ Open Golf Tournament** – Thursday, September 4th, 2008 at Quarry Oaks Golf Course near South Bend * Presentation by Headwaters Corp on the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program at 10 am & Tee-off at 12:30 pm. This year we will feature the LPRCA members on the demos.
- **Lower Platte River Summit** – Thursday, November 6th, 2008 at Camp Calvin Crest near Fremont. We have tentatively scheduled two tours in the morning: (1) Tour of Pahaku – the sacred Pawnee site, and (2) a ‘science’ walking tour of the Calvin Crest property to include recreation trails issues, forestry, geology, and water quality demos. The summit will be held from noon to 8 pm. We plan to have two meals similar to last time – one at noon and one in the evening with featured speakers for each meal and a series of concurrent sessions and panel discussions in between. Contributing partners for this event include: Nat’l Park Service, USDA-NRCS, USGS, *Prairie Fire* newspaper, and the UNL School of Natural Resources. We also have a sponsor for the breaks: Olsson Associates. Thank you to all of these entities for planning, in-kind, and funding support.

Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA):** Task orders for completing this project have been reviewed and signed. Supplemental to Task Order #2 amends the original Phase II task order to add suitability model research and development. Task Order #3 is to complete the Needs Assessment and McHargian-style Analysis for the area from Fremont to Columbus (Phase II of the project). Recall, the Needs Assessment and McHargian-style Analysis is nearly completed for the other portion of the corridor from Fremont to Plattsmouth (Phase II). Task Order #3 is to assist with development of the IMS and for future data layer updates.
- **WQ Monitoring Network:** I met with the USGS on June 16th to discuss progress and any issues with the WQ Monitoring Network. The heavy rains and subsequent high flows along with radio transmission problems have resulted in some lost data. However, these issues have now been resolved or will be shortly. However, silting in of the monitors (sondes) still remains an issue. On the positive side, we are gathering a lot of continuous data and beginning to develop relationship curves with sampling data. After a couple of sampling seasons, we should have adequate data to complete the relationship curves to determine contaminant loads at various locations. The USGS is working on a notification system for the Shell Creek monitoring network and will be working in conjunction with NDEQ to install additional monitors throughout the watershed. They are also still working on writing a grant to install some additional monitors. I made several recommendations to the USGS for data display and distribution including changes to the project website to include more data and both monitored data as well as sampled data. Additionally, I suggested that all USGS gages on the Lower Platte River be shown with links to stage data even for gages not included in the WQ Monitoring network. This makes it easier for those visiting the site to get all data available from gages in the basin without having to locate it somewhere else on the USGS website. Many of these suggested changes are already in place and the USGS has been extremely responsive. The USGS will make a presentation at the Oct LPRCA quarterly meeting.
- **Cumulative Impact Study:** The COE is nearly complete with data gathering and compilation. The remaining data needed is levee info and we are working on gathering that info from the NRDs and the USF&WS. We had hoped to have the COE present a live demo of the CIS project at the upcoming July 8th LPRCA quarterly meeting, but the project is not quite that far along and instead the COE will present at the October LPRCA quarterly meeting. I did request a 3rd grant extension from the NE Environmental Trust to extend our grant period and just received confirmation we received an additional 6 mos.

- **Hello to our New Intern – Ryan Bjerke:** We just bid farewell to Doug Vrana, our most recent intern and are saying hello to our newest addition to the fold – LPRCA Intern Ryan Bjerke. Ryan is a graduate student at UNL working on his MS in Natural Resources with a specialization in Human Dimensions and a minor in Water Resources Planning & Management. He hopes to graduate in December 2008. Hailing from Volga, South Dakota, Ryan grew up on a farm and has a real love for nature and the connection between people and the environment. His experience includes working as a Research Assistant for the National Drought Mitigation Center at UNL, in maintenance for a residential apartment complex, and farming with his family.



- **Coffee Shop Meetings:** We completed 9 of the 17 meetings this spring. Additionally, we met with a lake community as a result of a homeowner seeing us at a coffee shop meeting. We will complete the remainder of the meetings this fall and winter. All of the remaining meetings are downstream of Fremont. We had the most success when board members helped us host the meetings and spread the word. I hope we can have the same success with the downstream meetings.
- **River Management Society (RMS) Symposium:** From May 11-16, 2008, I attended the 2008 RMS Symposium in Portland, Maine. RMS is one of the two biggest river organizations in the nation and they hold a symposium every two years. The 2006 event was held in South Sioux City, Nebraska. Located along the southern coast of Maine, Portland is the largest city in Maine with 64,249 residents and has capitalized on the tourism industry. Portland, Oregon, which is the site of the 2010 RMS Symposium, was named for Portland, Maine. I delivered 2 presentations at the event: (1) Using Project Management to Protect Rivers, and (2) River Management Across Multiple Jurisdictions Using the 3 C's: Collaboration, Creativity, and Communication. Both went very well and generated a lot of follow-up discussion. A large majority of sessions centered on the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, which turned 40 this year. I estimate there were nearly 200 attendees, which is a smaller crowd than usual and the majority were agency personnel from NPS, USF&WS, and BLM. I took advantage of the field trips offered and kayaked the harbor to visit lighthouses, civil war forts, and various rock outcroppings. Overall, the symposium was a great way to discover how others manage rivers in other parts of the country, meet old and new colleagues, and share LPRCA successes with other river managers. Below are a few photos from the trip:



- **Other Activities:** Other recent activities include:
 - ✓ Working on the grant application to NG&PC for reimbursement through their Boating Safety Grant Program for the Phase II Camp Ashland River Obstruction Removal Project
 - ✓ Participating in an interview with a UNL student on drought
 - ✓ STATEMAP Committee Meeting – Review priorities and progress for C&SD map activities
 - ✓ Adobe Photoshop software training
 - ✓ Meeting to discuss RC&D Conference set for October 7-9 – Request for assistance with tour
 - ✓ WS/CC Project plan review meeting
 - ✓ Airboat Tour planning
 - ✓ LPRCA intern job description/paperwork/interview
 - ✓ LPR Summit planning meeting
 - ✓ LPR Summit tour of Camp Calvin Crest
 - ✓ Meeting with NE Community Foundation as NLT board member to create fund account for conservation easements
 - ✓ Podcasting training
 - ✓ UNL Mentor Program tour of the LPR Corridor
 - ✓ Meeting with UNL SNR Outreach Coordinator on mutual projects/programs
 - ✓ Meeting of UNL SNR External Advisory Committee – serve as member
 - ✓ LPNNRD Projects Committee Meeting
 - ✓ LPSNRD Platte River Subcommittee Meeting
 - ✓ LPRCA budget/fiscal review and administration
 - ✓ Website update