



## Monthly Report for February 2009

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

### Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Environmental Suitability Assessment (ESA):** I continued to work with HDR on assembling the technical review committee for the Land Suitability Analysis portion of the ESA project. HDR provided me with the draft report on the model development and selection for the Land Suitability Analysis. I am in process of reviewing the draft. Once I have reviewed the report and any necessary revisions are made, we will be distributing the report to members of the technical review committee and then assembling a meeting to finalize the model development.

We also continued to schedule meetings with communities for the Phase III area. We have several meetings set for early next month including a presentation to the Bellwood Village Board on March 2.

- **LPRCA Outreach Plan:** In conjunction with HDR and the ESA project, I have been beginning to lay out an outreach plan. The ESA project was developed to include a number of workshops with stakeholders throughout the Corridor to provide feedback on the IMS while it's being developed and also to demonstrate the completed project to those that have provided input through the needs assessment portion of the project. We will still be doing those workshops but will be changing the number and format of them to serve as not only an opportunity to increase awareness and use of the ESA IMS but also to increase awareness and understanding of the LPRCA and how our efforts can benefit stakeholders throughout the basin—and vice versa. I am very excited about the timing of this and the prospects it has to elevate the connection LPRCA has with stakeholders throughout the basin.

Additionally, I am also working with HDR to develop a template for LPRCA materials so that all factsheets, brochures, etc., have a similar look and feel. The design will work off of the new web design created by Troy Thompson at LPNNRD and I think will help to bring consistent recognition to the efforts of the LPRCA.

- **Cumulative Impact Study (CIS):** We are in process of rescheduling the demonstration and review of the CIS project. The meeting was originally scheduled for February 26 but will most likely now be taking place during the last few weeks of March.
- **UNL Environmental Studies Program:** I have begun working with a team of three UNL Environmental Studies and Fish & Wildlife students as part of the UNL Environmental Studies Program Senior Seminar course. The students will be researching public access availability and opportunities throughout the Corridor. They will be developing a presentation to be given at the April LPRCA Quarterly Meeting and also a written report and/or web page for the LPRCA. They are a great group of students and I look forward to working with them throughout this semester and to seeing their ideas.
- **UNL Water Science Honors Class:** I presented to the UNL Water Science Honors Class titled: Water, Society and the Future. The presentation was given in conjunction with Ron Case, LPSNRD Board Chair and highlighted the history and purpose of both the NRDs and the LPRCA. The students have funding to do individual, long-term research on critical issues so I will continue to work with them and their instructor on the possibility of the students assisting LPRCA.
- **Ducks Unlimited:** I also met with Steve Donovan of Ducks Unlimited's Nebraska program office. We discussed the possibility of the LPRCA and the three NRDs to partner with Ducks Unlimited on a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant they are submitting to acquire, reestablish, or protect wetland habitat on the Lower Platte River. The invasive species effort undertaken throughout the past year or year and a half is one such complimentary project that can be used as support for the NAWCA grant. Supporting this effort through providing match dollars will assist Ducks Unlimited in leveraging funds and can also potentially assist future NRD and LPRCA efforts. Ducks Unlimited has successfully obtained similar grant funds for other reaches of the Platte.

- **LPRCA Budget:** I have begun the process of reviewing the existing LPRCA budget and developing the FY2010 LPRCA budget. In addition to developing an overall budget for this year, I will also be developing a “Long Range Implementation Plan” for LPRCA. The Long Range Plan will identify target points for projects, efforts, and overall goals for the next 3 years. I feel this will be a great tool in helping keep the momentum of the LPRCA efforts going forward while also ensuring that we are meeting programmatic goals. It will also serve as an asset in communicating the goals, directions, and opportunities of programs and efforts to the various members of LPRCA. I will look forward to working with the members on the development of the budget and implementation plan.