



## Monthly Report for February 2011

Meghan Sittler, Coordinator

### Programs / Projects / Activities

- **Cumulative Impact Study:** On March 23, Jeff Greenwald (USACE) and I will be holding a conceptual modeling meeting at LPSNRD. We will be meeting with a select group of representatives of UNL, USFWS, USACE, USGS, NGPC, and the NRDs to continue to identify components of the conceptual model. A portion of this process will be to identify available research as well as “unknowns” to further guide future steps of the CIS or other projects and studies.

Throughout February I discussed potential next steps and priorities for both the LPRCA and USACE. Items identified as priorities for the next phase of the CIS include: the 3-year Sandbar Monitoring study with USGS; a full reconnaissance study of bank stabilization along the Lower Platte; and continued development of the conceptual model. I will be continuing to work with USACE on outlining the scope for each of these efforts and for hopeful federal appropriations.

- **USGS Sandbar Monitoring Proposal:** During February, each of the NRDs at least preliminarily reviewed the 1-year pilot sandbar monitoring study developed by USGS and in partnership with the Tern & Plover Partnership and the LPRCA. The one-year pilot study would identify the following characteristics of sandbars on the lower Platte River: frequency/abundance; location; area; height; bank attachment; and vegetation density through two separate surveys. Most of the data related to the characteristics will be collected only on bars 2.0 acres or larger in size with the exception of frequency/abundance & location. Sandbars of 2 acres or larger are generally considered to be what is needed for Tern & Plover nesting habitat. The initial survey would be conducted following “ice-off” in April/early May and the second would be following the high flow period in late June or July.

The pilot study would comprise a baseline data set for an expanded 3-year study to be included within a Nebraska Environmental Trust proposal and/or the next phase of the Cumulative Impact Study. Additionally, this data set will help further the sediment budget analysis currently being developed as part of Phase III of the Cumulative Impact Study and get to the end goal of developing a predictive model to understand how land use changes are impacting the river. Finally, the proposed work would continue to support the investigation and understanding of Tern & Plover habitat on the lower Platte River.

Existing funds from the banked river obstruction removal effort could be utilized to fund this single year study. LPNNRD did not elect to participate in the study and P-MRNRD will be formally considering the proposal in March. However LPSNRD has approved the study unanimously. I am currently working with USGS on some potential revisions to the scope of the project if only one or two of the NRDs agree to go ahead with the proposal.

- **Environmental Suitability Assessment:** HDR and I met with the Technical Advisory Committee for the Land-use Suitability Analysis. We reviewed the model outputs following the ground-truthing done last fall. We will make a few adjustments to several different features but the LSA model should be ready for final review in late March. I will work with Chris Poole at LPNNRD to have the viewer and model on the MapMaker site by the end of June when the NET grant expires.
- **LPRCA Kiosks:** The kiosks that have long been planned are very, very close to being finished and ready to go in the ground this spring! The Lower Platte South maintenance crew has been constructing the kiosks over the past month and the design has been finalized. I will be coordinating with the NRDs and NGPC in March to identify times for installation of the 10 kiosks at NGPC and NRD properties throughout the corridor.

- **Water Budget:** Dana Divine (ENWRA coordinator) and I met with representatives of DNR as well as UNL and the NRDs to discuss the water budget idea as well as DNR's current work to construct a state-wide water budget. We will continue to evaluate our appropriate next steps to developing a water budget at a second meeting in March.
- **Water Quality Monitoring Network:** In September the LPRCA and USGS submitted a grant application to NET to expand the number and type of contaminants monitored by and displayed through the water quality monitoring network. In February we were given notice that it has been preliminarily fully funded. Barring any changes between now and the final funding notice in April, the grant will begin in April and run through 2013.
- **Upcoming meetings/conferences/events:**
  - **UNL Water Seminar Series:** Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m., Hardin Hall east campus. More information: [watercenter.unl.edu](http://watercenter.unl.edu)
  - **NARD Annual DC Conference:** March 12-16, 2011, Washington, DC
  - **LPRCA Quarterly Meeting:** Wednesday, April 20, 2011. 9:30 a.m., NGPC, Lincoln
  - **Water For Food Conference:** May 1-4, Cornhusker, Lincoln, NE. Registration opens, February 1. More information available at [waterforfood.nebraska.edu](http://waterforfood.nebraska.edu)
  - **National Association of Recreation Resource Planners:** May 22-26, Breckenridge, CO
  - **UNL Water Tour:** July 12-14, based from Ainsworth and Valentine. Contact Steve Ress (472-9549) for the latest information!
  - **LPRCA Kayak Tour:** July 19<sup>th</sup> TBD
  - **LPRCA Water Quality Open:** September 1<sup>st</sup>, Quarry Oaks