

Missouri River Futures Q3-2007

Quarterly Activities Report for 06/07 through 09/07

Submitted by Theresa Smydra

- 1) What a year this has been! I've learned so much and have met so many cool people of all kinds. This last year has meant a momentous change in my personal and professional life and has passed so quickly. I appreciate everyone's efforts in helping and guiding me in this new position and feel very privileged. I now feel that I can properly contribute to the efforts of Missouri River Futures and be relatively comfortable doing so as a resource. I am spending more and more time helping with projects and sharing information.
- 2) Meetings attended during Q3 learning about current and future activities and projects. These include:
 - a. Wetland Delineation Training – July 18
 - b. NRCS Regional Assistant Chief Visit – August 8
 - c. Cedar clearing @ Bow Creek – August 10
 - d. Met with IWL coordinator – August 15
 - e. Grant Writing Workshop – August 16,17
 - f. Cottonwood Mgt. – August 21
 - g. Missouri River Corridor - August 23
 - h. MNRR Regulatory & boat trip – Sept. 5,6
 - i. WRP procedure review – Sept. 19
 - j. Interagency Float trip – Sept. 20
 - k. MRNRC – Sept. 27
- 3) Notice grant writing class above? I need your help spotting appropriate grants that we can apply for. Unfortunately, we found out that the popular Private Stewardship Grants Program administered by the USFWS has been discontinued. With this class came a free year of application reviews which have had high degree of successes. We may as well take advantage of this.
- 4) Attempt to keep track of all contacts whether agency or landowner. Often get calls from those looking for phone numbers, emails, etc. Also record landowner personal information as this is important to establishing trust and relationships. This also helps remind me of when/whom to follow-up up with which is becoming a larger part of my job.
- 5) Made approximately 50 landowner contacts associated with 17 different properties. This includes 28 contacts with 7 new landowners this quarter. In addition to the contacts were various research and follow-up activities for a number of reasons. I will have a summary prepared of this last year's efforts prepared for the full-group meeting.
 - a. Still continuing work on the same two fee-title projects. With improving real estate markets, prospective new economic impacts of the proposed refinery, and impeding but unknown budgets, everything has come to a standstill as appraisal and asking prices stay too far apart.
 - b. Seeing more interest on easements as more sloughing and perpetual easements are investigated. I feel easements will be our best opportunity

to protect river frontage. More is learned all the time as to the tax benefits, capital gains, land exchanges, IRA's. My previous training and personal experience in real estate has been very helpful here. I can then add that to what the agency folks have taught me and applying this information to the MNRR area.

- c. Becoming more exposed to real estate issues with accretion ground. As lawsuits ensue, we can get better definitions as to where these laws stand.
- 6) Spent time working on new MOU, getting new commitments, and getting annual agreements signed. It is hoped by all that this process becomes more streamlined this year. I appreciate your patience as these "bugs" are worked out.
- 7) Continued to working closely with USACE on the ESH projects and landowners associated with access road issues, staging areas, and lease offers. Work has started in certain areas and question are arising so the better I am informed as to the progress, the better I can answer questions as a resource person to these landowners
- 8) Continued assisting with the cottonwood research studies with USD Mark Dixon and sharing GIS and property owner information as it is discovered.
- 9) Working much more with SD agencies to better represent their interests and goals along the MR. Have been encouraging more participation and sharing more information as it comes across. Inviting a larger group of participants as we going along so that everyone understands each other.
- 10) Prepared for and attended a meeting with the NRCS Regional Assistant Conservationist. This included a briefing report, summary of activities and coordinating with the state soil personnel to create resource maps for Nebraska's portion of the Niobrara watershed. Knowing the sedimentation issue would be forefront to discussion, I wanted to be prepared. I was careful to explain the other many issues encountered on the MR.
- 11) Continue to update and add to toolbox versions. Beginning to work with many of these programs in various areas which help familiarize me with them.
- 12) Have drawn up initial web page organization with Tim Cowman and have passed along some information to have posted. Determined what additional information is needed. Will try to create links to information already posted instead of recreating. Will have template presented at full group meeting.
- 13) Speaking of which, I have made the appropriate reservations and started gathering presentation ideas and contacting speakers. It's looking as though we will have a good turn-out once again with some new attendees which is exciting.
- 14) Interest in the WRP program increases and applications continue to come in. Steve and the B teams spend a significant amount of time on planning and I have started to take a bigger role and securing additional applications. Have interest in two more applications.
- 15) Maintain close contact with partners and monitor current needs for MRF activities on the MNRR. Spend considerable time corresponding through email, phone calls and visits at meetings.
- 16) I continue spend time keeping up to date with NRCS programs as I feel these are a key part of the 'toolbox options' I discuss with landowners.