



Missouri  
River  
Futures

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## Quarterly Activities Report for April-June 2008

Submitted by Theresa M. Smydra

### Events/trainings attended:

Emergent Sandbar Habitat – April 1-2, Yankton  
Missouri River Institute Symposium – April 9, Vermillion  
Prescribed Burn Training/Certification – April 15-16, Hartington  
Actual Prescribed Burn – April 18, NW Hartington  
Missouri River Bank Stabilization meeting – April 22, Newcastle  
Missouri River Corridor – April 24, Yankton  
Northeast Nebraska Weed Mgt. Area - May 6, Plainview  
MNRR Water Trail Development – May 15, Vermillion  
MRF Steering Committee Mtg. – June 4, Vermillion  
Forest Legacy Tour/Preview – June 10, St. Helena area  
ESH boat trip – June 11-12, 39 & 59 mile (limited)  
Northeast Nebraska Weed Mgt. Tour – June 18, Newcastle area

### Events/trainings planned:

NRCS net meetings  
Wetland training and updates  
Riparian Forest Summit – Sept. 9-11  
MRNRC – Sept 23-24

**Turns and Plovers Arrive – Emergent Sandbar Habitat (ESH) Projects Highlights.** It is this time of year that the T&E species really become the focus of river activities both in the present and future. ESH efforts in the past can pay off big as the target bird species start arriving and monitoring commence at a harried pace. Newly constructed sandbars and their inhabitants are intensely studied and plans for newly constructed habitats are strongly pursued. Determining sandbar locations and coordinated staging areas and the sharing of information can be quite time consuming and important to landowners neighboring the sandbar locations on either side of the river. These also are high priority areas for possible real estate actions or restoration efforts. This is the focus of a large share of my efforts during this time period.

### Landowners:

Erosion, sedimentation, and loss of recreational and productive farm land continue to highlight my discussions with riverfront owners. There are tales and memories associated

with areas forever washed away and farms from whose children were forced to move away from to make a living elsewhere. The Real Estate program with the Corps and other agencies continues to evolve but lacks funding. However, the more names I include on my request list, the more the need is shown and given notice by hopefully those that can assist with these efforts. Flowage easements are being requested on the Niobrara and 39-mile segment of the MNRR, while sloughing easements are requested on both the 39-mile & 59-mile segments. While a shift is happening in landowners from local to absentee recreational ownership, other easement are becoming of interest.

### **Promotional Activities**

I try to stay involved with these types of activities since there is no better way to share how special our area is and portray the needs and values of the Missouri River. Recently work had been underway for an educational river festival for school age children in May and water trail development on the 59-mile segment. The MRF website development continues and has received many positive comments. The newsletters are also popular judging by the positive letters and comments I have received along with those notifying me of address changes to be sure they don't miss an issue.

### **Funding Research and Status**

Continually review grants/funding sources for availability, applicability, deadlines, and in general for ideas. Forest Legacy is underway in Nebraska and beginning in South Dakota. It may have opportunities for future projects and partnering. I keep in touch with legislative personnel who have been attending many functions in the areas (to their credit). Regularly discuss funding gaps and needs in the area as related to me by landowners and agencies.

### **Missouri River Futures Recognition**

My contact and stakeholder lists continue to grow. We are growing a reputation as a real resource out here on the land in several aspects. Often getting calls where my number has been passed along by others as a source of information and assistance.

### **WRP in Nebraska**

6 WRP applications have been supplied to the NRCS state office. With the new farm bill, many changes are coming including required long term land ownership of 7 years and a much improved land valuing system for more reasonable easement offers. WREP is still being reviewed as a possible opportunity for this area but funding is still a limitation. WHIP funding has also increased and works nicely in this area for valuable wildlife habitat enhancement opportunities along the riverfront.

### **CRP in SD & NE**

With additional funding available for both states for various upland bird species, many acres have been enrolled. Enrollment areas are still available so work continues promoting this worthwhile and financially feasible program.