



Missouri
River
Futures

Missouri River Futures
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Quarterly Activities Report for July-Sept. 2008 **Submitted by Theresa M. Smydra - Coordinator**

Events/trainings attended:

Ponca State Park, Erosion issues – July 2
NRCS net meeting, Steams – July 9
NRCS net meeting, Brush/Forest – July 16
MRBSA – July 28
NRCS Wetland Training, Norfolk – August 13
MNRR Geological Tour – August 21
HWY 12 scoping meetings, Niobrara – August 28
Riparian Forest Summit, Sioux Falls – Sept. 9-10
MRNRC Fall Mtg, Missouri Valley, IA – Sept. 23-25

Events/trainings planned:

WREP, West Point – Oct. 9
MNRR Regulatory, Omaha – Oct. 16
Cottonwood Mgt. Team Conf., Vermillion – Nov. 18-20
MRF Full-Group Meeting – Dec. 10

New Coordinator for Missouri River Futures!!! Up until Sept. 28, 2008, Steve Grube was the official coordinator devoting 20% of his time to river efforts and 100% of my time was spent on river activities at the planner level. NRCS, realized the coordinator position and its responsibilities operated as a higher GS level. The position was re-advertised and several fine candidates applied. I am fortunate to be able to continue my efforts with Missouri River Futures now as coordinator. I feel very lucky to represent so many fine agencies and landowners along the MNRR and believe wholeheartedly that we can accomplish so much by working together.

WREP is here!!!! More good news, WREP was just recently authorized for the MNRR, extended up river in Nebraska from Ponca in Dixon County to the South Dakota border in Boyd County. This has been discussed for several years but delayed due to the need to prioritize activities in the area first approved nationwide for WREP, Ponca to Rulo, NE. I will have more on this in the future but I will likely be the team leader for this effort in Nebraska since it fits so nicely with the goals set forth by the Missouri River Futures steering committee.

WRP in Nebraska

12 new WRP applications have been submitted within the Lewis & Clark NRD and keeps area office busy with other farm bill programs, especially in Knox County where many of the applications have been along the Niobrara River. With WREP now authorized, my time with these applications and those recently approved will be limited but will still be active in this program.

Landowners:

Have continued to develop and pursue programs with current contacts therefore limiting to a small extent new contacts. I feel the follow-through is critical in keeping pending projects on the forefront of agencies attention demonstrating the need to address/fund projects. I also realize that the more interest there is, the more likely these programs will be funded. But as I continue to work through a few scenarios, the better I can proceed with future requests. Staging areas and other ESH related projects have been basically finalized by now and work has commenced in some places and hung up still in others. Each location brings its own unique set of circumstances. As erosion and sedimentation continues due to dam construction, more and more call for remedial action is seen.

MNRR Promotional Activities

Continuing work with the water trail and associated photos for website development. Participating in river festival activities and utilizing my experience with similar programs already successful in Nebraska. This is a totally new venture and is scheduled for May 8, 2009 but still early in the planning stages. This will be based on past festivals put on associated with Missouri River Relief and their clean-ups increasing awareness of our youth of our precious resources. Plans for full-group meeting and topics are well underway, always great for reconnecting with other agencies on the MNRR whether or not the interest coincide.

Natural Resource Projects

The Cottonwood Management team has really gained momentum and has progressed past the initial inventory stage but is proceeding carefully. This has become quite involved and the attention to detail has been quite extraordinary. The Gunderson backwater project continues to be monitored as it develops and responds to river conditions. The geology of the area has been recently gained new emphasis with tours and studies ongoing. Being active in the MRNRC opened my eyes to associated projects on the river in other states and the varying interests and concerns are interesting with yet a lot of similarities.

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 other as a source of information and assistance.

New Farm Bill Programs

New programs and many changes are coming with the new 2008 farm bill. NRCS has played the biggest role in offering financial assistance for and implementation of resource projects so the interest is high on how the programs may change and how they will be funded.