



**Missouri
River
Futures**

**Missouri River Futures
P.O. Box 46
102 E Elm St.
Hartington, NE 68739
402-254-6858 ext. 114**

www.missouririverfutures.com

Quarterly Activities Report for July – Sept. 2009

Submitted by Theresa M. Smydra - Coordinator

Events/trainings organized/attended:

USACE/USFWS visit – July 15, Ft. Randall
MS Outlook Training – July 19, Office
Conservation Buffers – July 21-23, Nebraska City
SD NRCS & GF&P visit – July 24, Huron
Endangered & Threatened Species Training – August 6, Hastings
Conservation Stewardship Program mtgs. – Aug. 19, Vermillion & Hartington
MRERP scoping meeting – August 20, Vermillion
River Tour and GIS – Sept. 10, Vermillion
Lower James RC&D Tour – Sept. 28, Yankton
Clay County Commissioners Mtg. – Sept. 29, Vermillion

Events/trainings planned:

Tour with Regional Conservationist – Oct. 1, Lower Missouri
USD River Class talk – Oct. 19, Vermillion
MRF Full group Meeting – Nov. 19, Ponca State Park

WREP/WRP progresses in Nebraska

The application process continues as the pending contracts move through to the acceptance of terms and into the surveying stages. Nearly all of the applications are perpetual and we only had one back out of 42 applications. We are also very encouraged at the responses we have gotten from the tribes for which NRCS have designed 30-year agreements. It's gratifying to be able to offer a program like this to those who really would like to protect and enhance their properties. We still struggle to complete with recreational values, NRCS easement offers are based on agricultural markets.

Efforts focused in SD

With the WREP/WRP efforts in Nebraska taking up the majority of my time the past 6 months, I decided it was time to spend more of my efforts in SD which I fully enjoy. I have found new opportunities for easements prohibiting developments yet allow for the farming/grazing practices to continue as they have been. We sorely need funding for these types of opportunities, the 39-mile segment being particularly troublesome as it doesn't receive the focus the 59-mile stretch receives below Gavin's. I also continued work in SD with cost-share programs.

Other Landowner Assistance

I continued to pursue avenues of assistance to help a landowner than approached me to help them clean up their bank line. Due to the likely presence of hazardous materials, this has dried up (pardon the pun) a lot of possibilities.

I also started a comprehensive listing of all landowners along the Missouri. I nearly missed an opportunity to help landowners who did not know about their options by only sending out newsletters etc. to those I had made contact with. It made me realize that I need to get information out faster than I can physically achieve out in the field (though I like that much better). Being NRCS gives me an advantage in that I can again access to records in the USDA system and create a complete list of these individuals tracking any changes on an annual basis. As with any federal agency, I very carefully protect any personal information. This was larger than expected undertaking but increased my mailings from 120 to almost 350 individuals in South Dakota and Nebraska.

I have been encouraging the direct notifications of landowners in the vicinity of sandbars that are slated to be constructed. I assisted the Corps by helping identify and contact the correct people for the fall construction season which commences once the terns and plovers have concluded their nesting activities. The required public notices go out in the local papers but I had found they often go unseen. This gives the landowners an opportunity to ask questions and better understand the activity.

Submitted another Cottonwood Tree application for the Big Tree Registry in Clay County SD but having difficulty getting on site as harvest begins. Also, I was sad to find out that a strong Siberian Elm contender in Charles Mix did not quite make the grade. What an awesome tree!

Agency Assistance

I still remain involved with the Cottonwood Management Team which is wrapping up their project and provided input as the wishes/concerns of the landowners along the MNRR. I completed the bio on myself for the report which I encourage all to read once it is out on public review. It is a top-notch effort led by the Corps that been underway 4-5 years. I also helped with landowner notification of soil-and-seed efforts by the Corps which is the placing of soil over bank stabilizing structures and seeding the area for a more natural appearance to river admirers.

MNRR Promotional Activities

Some of these categories can arguably be cross-referenced in others but I think can place the upcoming visit by the NRCS Regional Conservationist Tom Christensen as promotional. I spent a great deal of time with Don Doty to prepare for his visit Oct. 1 by preparing an update of MRF activities and identifying resource concerns. This included a preliminary visit to head Corps officials to better coordinate the event as they are intricately involved with many projects that NRCS is conducting along the river.

Missouri River Futures Recognition

I was honored to be asked to submit an article to be placed in the Fall Missouri River Recovery Program newsletter. MRF was identified as a key partnership activity in the recovery efforts on the Missouri River. You can find this on: www.moriverrecovery.org.