

**RED RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION WORK GROUP
MEETING NOTES**

August 16, 2017

MN DOT Lower Meeting Room, Detroit Lakes, MN

These meeting notes are provided as a record for this meeting. **Action Items are indicated in bold italicized text.**

Work Group members present: Rita Albrecht, Eddie Bernhardson, LeRoy Carriere, Jerome Deal, Greg Holmvik, Brian Lacey, Stephanie Miranowski, Matt Fischer, Gerald Van Amburg, Jim Ziegler

Guests present: Henry Van Offelen, Naomi Goral, Chad Engels, Nate Dalager, Dan Money, Tony Nordby, Erik Jones, Peter Karlsson, Jim Courneya, Ron Harnack, Julie Goehring, Heidi Hughes

Introductions and Review Agenda. Meeting agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and approve June meeting notes. Highlights of the June meeting notes were reviewed and approved. Henry provided an update on the action items from the meeting and the FY18 objectives.

FY17 Budget closeout update

- Naomi and Henry reviewed the current status of line items in the FY17 budget. A couple of Quarter 4 expenses have not finalized but will be soon. There are approximately \$69,357.97 to be reallocated. **Henry and Naomi to finalize FY17 expenditures, reallocated funds to project teams, complete FY report, and close out the grant with Pat Lynch as soon as is possible.**

Project Update and request for FDRWG support

Dan Money and Nate Dalager presented an overview of the Kondike Clean Water Retention Project #11 and requested work group support for their step 2 application to the Red River Watershed Management Board (slides and handouts attached). There was good discussion of the project and the work group approved a letter of support. **Henry to draft a letter of support for Rita and Jerome to sign and send to the Two Rivers Watershed District.**

Committee updates and reports

- Communications – A communication committee meeting will be held in October. Planning for the March Conference will be a focus of the meeting. Naomi handed out an example save the date postcard and the group thought it was a good idea to send out soon. There was discussion of topics for the 2018 March Conference which will be the 20th Anniversary Conference. Topics for consideration include something related to the Governor's 25 by 25 efforts, a review of mediation history, invitation to LSOHC staff and committee members, discussion of EQB related rulemaking process. Henry

provided an update on efforts to plan mediation training sessions for agency staff and SWCD staff and similar outreach to each Watershed District Board. These outreach efforts could build to a productive session at the March Conference. **Work group members send March Conference ideas to Henry and Naomi. Henry to continue to develop agency and SWCD outreach efforts.**

- Wetland Plant Community Monitoring - Henry provided an update on the status of wetland plant community monitoring. The IWI staff has contracted with a local wetlands specialist to conduct the work. Four project sites were evaluated in June and 3 or 4 more will be completed this summer. This information will be used as a basis for a TSAC meeting to be scheduled this winter. There was general discussion of this project and what other monitoring is needed. In particular, monitoring projects for wildlife use and not just wetland plant community condition to get the overall context of the effects of impoundment projects. **Henry to schedule a TSAC meeting that will include a discussion of best ways to conduct additional monitoring.**
- Legislative update - Ron highlighted portions of his report to the RRWMB. Key issues are planning for next year's bonding session where \$20-25 million for the FDR program is the goal. He stressed the importance of individuals and organizations to contact their legislators to increase awareness of projects and their benefits. There was some discussion of the 25 by 25 event planned for Crookston September 5th. Everyone present was encouraged to attend this event. Ron mentioned the current status of the IWI LiDAR viewer on RRBDIN which is offline due to unfunded maintenance needs. The group recognized the value of the RRBDIN and supported efforts to fund annual operations and maintenance. **Henry to craft letter to the RRWMB to be signed by Rita and Jerome that supports funding of the RRBDIN.**

Red River Watershed Management Board request for support of letter regarding Environmental Review Rules

Ron provided an overview of the issues that the RRWMB included in a letter to EQB in June, 2016. Their primary concern is that the EQB rules related to mandatory thresholds for Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAW) are 30 years old and do not take into account the changes in permitting processes and the mediation process. There was discussion of the key issues which basically include a two-track option. One track is a blanket exemption for projects developed using the mediation process and/or requests for changes to specific thresholds. The option of pursuing an "alternative project authorization process" currently authorized in rule was also discussed. **Henry to review past record to determine whether the FDRWG has ever weighed-in on rulemaking efforts. Henry to work with Ron to review the issues and identify potential areas where the work group could support the changes being requested by the RRWMB.**

Project Acceleration Requests

Swift Coulee Watershed Project. Tony Nordby provided an overview of the issues and concerns in the Swift-Coulee watershed in the Middle, Snake, Tamarac Watershed District. The District requested a project acceleration grant to offset costs associated with additional modeling work needed to move through the project team process. The work group approved \$5,000 for this project team effort.

Black River Watershed Project

Tony Nordby provided an overview of the issues and concern in the Black River Watershed in the Red Lake Watershed District. The District requested a project acceleration grant to offset costs associated with additional work needed to move through the project team process. The work group approved \$5,000 for this project team effort.

Watershed District Project Team Updates

The watershed updates were provided by representatives present from each watershed district.

Agency and Organization Updates

The agency and organization updates were provided by agency representatives.

Other Items

No other items were presented.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:00