

# Red River Watershed Management Board

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## *Board of Managers*

John Finnev-Humboldt Farrell Erickson-Badger Harley Younggren, Secretary-Hallock Ron Osowski, Chairman-Oslo Vernon Johnson-Clearbrook Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Sanford Moen-Gary Curtis Nelson-Barnesville Ralph Christensen-Campbell Don Ogaard, Executive Director-Ad

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

March 20, 1997

Best Western, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The **RRWMB** met on Thursday, March 20, 1997, at the Best Western, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Chairman **Ron** Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

Ron Osowski	Ralph Farrell Erickson	
Christensen	John Finney	Curtis Nelson
Rudee Anderson	Daniel Wilkens	
	Sanford Moen	

Others present were:

Don Ogaard, Executive Director  
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Jerry **Paul**, DNR  
**Ron** Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD  
Lowell Enerson, Administrator, Red Lake WD  
Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Steve Mikkelson, MPCA  
Paul Suomala, TIC  
Julie Goehring, TIC  
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD  
Charlie Anderson, JOR Engineering  
Gerhard Ross  
Wallace Jorgenson, Red Lake WD  
Jeff Lewis, MPCA  
Mark Brigham, USGS  
Susan Gilbert, Loyd-Gilbert Associates  
Ken Donughue, MN-DOT  
Todd Vonasiek, MN-DOT, Bemidji  
Bob Beduhn, Red Lake WD, HDR Engineering  
Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering  
Roger Hanson, Sand Hill River WD  
Bud Anstadt, City of Glyndon  
Bud Lundberg, Wild Rice WD

Chairman Osowski discussed the Lower Valley Study Group meeting he attended. He noted that FEMA is proposing to buy out homes in Kittson County and relocate them away from the river. The cost share breakdown would be as follows: 75% FEMA, 12 1/2% State, and 12 1/2% landowner.

Minutes of the February 18, 1997, meeting were read and approved. **Motion** to approve the minutes by Manager Moen, **Seconded** by Manager Finney, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Manager Wilkens and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**

A **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Moen, **Seconded** by Manager Finney, **Carried**. For further reference, a copy of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Ogaard Report** - Don Ogaard

A handout was distributed entitled, "Officials pursue talks on managing Red River basin's water resources." The article, written by Dean RebufFoni, appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on Sunday, March 16, 1997. Don noted that he had been misquoted and that a response, which was also distributed, was in the process of being published. The need for proactive public relations was discussed and it is the intention of Susan Gilbert of Loyd-Gilbert Associates to assist the RRWMB in achieving this goal.

The review of County Water Plans was discussed. Don stated that he had reviewed nine water plans to date and discovered that one had used an ecosystem approach and two others had ignored ditch systems. But overall, they were well written with good content.

Regarding the status of the Wild Rice WD Project #11, Site #6, Don stated that he had heard that the DNR was going to deny the permit. He was under the impression that the DNR would rather be sued by a watershed district than an environmental group, since the public perception of this alternative would not be as negative. Don stated that the RRWMB needs to decide if support will continue for the WRWD should this case go to trial. The current status of litigation is that a continuance is in effect which means that the case will not go to trial unless the permit is denied. Don noted the irony of a permit being denied based on an outside threat.

### **Red River Coordinator Report** - Dan Thul

Dan updated the Board on the DNR's position relative to the litigation on the Wild Rice WD Project #11, Site #6. He stated that he had discussed the case with Kent Lokkesmoe and Jerry Paul who both indicated that the decision of whether or not to grant the permit would be based solely on the merits of the Project. He reiterated the possibility of obtaining a mediator to resolve this issue.

The Wetland Policy was discussed. Dan stated that the DNR will review and prepare formal comments on the policy. He noted that he will rely on Don Buchout to achieve a unified response from DNR.

The progress of the Roseau Flood Control Committee was discussed. He also noted that Charlie Anderson from JOR Engineering had discussed some ideas for a new proposal. Dan stated that he is working with John Finney from the Joe River WD to contract with U.S.G.S. to obtain flow measurements at St. Vincent, MN.

### **TIC Report** - Paul Suomala

The Red River Basin Board was discussed. Paul noted that currently eight members have been designated. Four from Minnesota, three from North Dakota, and one from South Dakota. They are also in the process of obtaining four or five more individuals.

Regarding the litigation on the Wild Rice WD Project #11, Site #6, Paul commented on the aspects of mediation. He noted the three components present in mediation are the following: political & personal persuasion, emotion & opinion, and initiation by the weaker party.

### **District Reports:**

- The Roseau River WD reported that at the March 4th meeting, the Board was approached by two individuals who are interested in having a retention project built on their property in Reine township. The proposed site is located south of Roseau and is an area where the Beltrami Forest drains into the district. The District continues to make plans for the strong possibility of flooding through the City of Roseau and areas downstream. One emergency measure discussed was installing a box culvert through Highway 310 and cutting any additional roads that will allow floodwater to follow its natural water course to the old lake bottom. The Board has directed Engineer Anderson to contact the various agencies that would be involved in such a decision.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the Wilkin County Ditch #9 Survey and Engineer report has been reviewed with the board. It has been found that the ditch is not as far out of repair as once indicated. The board directed staff to instruct Viewers to sit tight for a month or so. Land owners will be invited to next Staff meeting to discuss same. A re-determination of benefits may not need to be done unless land owners feel that additional lands need to be brought into system.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District is waiting for EDA approval to advertise for bids on the Moorhead/Dilworth projects. The Corps of Engineers permit is expected to be issued shortly. The right-of-way has been acquired for the Hawley project with the exception of one landowner. NRCS is reviewing wetland impacts on this project.
- The Joe River WD reported that the snow depth in the St. Vincent, MN, Pembina, ND, and Emerson, MB area stands at 28 inches. This compares with 27 inches of snow at this time in 1996. The water content is approximately 6.4 inches. This is comparable with the moisture content at this time last year.

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that the SHRWD hosted a supper and informational meeting for the Advisory Committee on 2/27/97'. The topics presented by Dan Wilkens included the advisory board job description, history of the district, rules and regulations, finances of the SHRWD, and the RRWMB including it's history and the Sand Hill River's membership. Other topics discussed were the upcoming summer tour, office maintenance, project updates, public relations, and upcoming manager appointments. Jim Todahl, Chairman of the Sand Hill River Advisory Committee noted at the regular monthly board meeting that Dan Wilkens did an exceptional job of explaining the topics of discussion in identifiable terms and inspired the committee with a motivational, positive outlook on the future operations of the District.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that staff gages have been erected at selected stream gaging sites for the upcoming spring melt. Approximately 25 sites will be gaged by District personnel along the mainstem Two Rivers, coulee systems, and ditch systems using a flowmeter. Volunteers are being lined up to read staff gages daily.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Board of Managers authorized sending a letter to the Corps requesting that they take action on the project permit application. The letter is in response to a mediation proposal received from the Corps and MNDNR to address issues related to water management in the Wild Rice District. The response letter from the District notes that although the District believes mediation or some other process may be appropriate on a basin-wide level to address limited issues common to all watershed districts, the District does not agree to mediation associated with the pending permit application for the Marsh Creek Site No. 6 Project. The letter notes that although communication from the Corps and DNR does not address the Marsh Creek Project specifically, the District believes that not only has the permit application been pending too long, but that mediation of any permit decision is not appropriate. The permit application for this flood detention project was submitted to the Corps nearly five years ago.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that going into the 1997 spring snowmelt, the water content in the snow pack above the City of Warren has increased from 3 to 3.5 inches at the end of January to slightly more than 5 inches by the end of last week. The water equivalent ranges from about 17% in CRP areas to approximately 28% in open areas. There is now sufficient water on the ground to cause significant flooding throughout the district. The first flood event in Warren in 1996 was caused by 4.5 inches of water equivalent in the snow pack. The second flood event was caused by an average of 5.8 inches of rainfall in sixteen hours. The residents of the district are concerned with the flood threat potential.
- The Red Lake WD reported that bids were opened on the riprap project in East Grand Forks, Project No. 108, with a very acceptable bid from Davidson Construction of Newfalden. Bids will be opened at the next Board meeting for a ditch improvement project near Oklee, Project No. 115. The Board will be reviewing the final Plans and Specifications for Project No. 81, Parnell Impoundment, and hopefully opening bids in April, 1997.

### **District's Funding Requests:**

#### **1. Middle River-Snake River WD - Step Two Submittal for Angus Oslo Site #4 Impoundment Project:**

The Board of Managers of the Middle River Snake River WD hereby requests step 2 approval for the construction of the Angus Oslo Site #4 Impoundment Project. A copy of the Engineer's Report has been distributed for review with no official request being made this month.

**2. Red Lake WD - Preliminary Engineer's Report Louisville/Parnell Flood Control Impoundment:**

The Preliminary Engineer's Report was submitted for the Proposed Louisville/Parnell Flood Control Impoundment Project. Bob Beduhn, Engineer for RLWD distributed to all Board members the report and gave a brief review of the Project. The step one submittal will be discussed at the next monthly meeting.

**U.S.G.S. Methyl Mercury Study;**

Mark Brigham from U.S.G.S distributed a handout summarizing the mercury study proposal. Methyl mercury was a significant factor brought up in the EIS relative to the RRWMB's flood storage projects. In order to obtain accurate information, the U.S.G.S. consulted with the DNR, the COE, and MPCA to design a study that would attempt to answer the questions posed in the EIS.

Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering, stated that agencies have reviewed the study and find it favorable but for the first year, have no ability to fund it. Charlie Anderson of JOR Engineering stated the importance of the RRWMB finding answers to these issues and recommended moving forward. Jerry Paul noted that the DNR's funding possibilities for 1998 appear favorable. Jeff Lewis, MPCA, stated that his agency is interested in participating in this study for 1998 and indicated that the results obtained would be viewed as credible.

Mark Brigham reviewed the two phases of the Project.

PHASE I - GOOD LAKE IMPOUNDMENT: This phase provides opportunity to study mercury cycling in a new (1996) impoundment in the region. Make use of data and sampling efforts from the Red Lake Watershed District's water-quality study of Good Lake.

PHASE II -- EXISTING IMPOUNDMENTS AND NATURAL WETLANDS: This phase compares mercury levels in three types of water bodies: dry-dam impoundments, permanent-pool impoundments, and natural wetlands. The impoundments will be at least ten years old.

The estimated costs are as follows:

	<u>FY1997</u>	<u>FY 1998</u>	<u>FY1999</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cooperator share:	\$38,400	\$77,000	\$40,769	\$156,170
U.S.G.S. share:	38,400	77,000	40,769	156,170

**Motion** to fund the Cooperator's share for the first year in the amount of \$38,400 based on the contingency that the RLWD, DNR, and MPCA will also bear funding responsibility for the remaining two years of the study by Manager Wilkens, **Seconded** by Manager Christensen, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be held on April 15, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. at the Norwest Bank in Barnesville, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. Respectfully submitted,

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E. Harley Younggren  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant