

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

John Finney-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-Ada

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

May 20, 1997

Norwest Bank, Barnesville, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, May 20, 1997, at the Norwest Bank, Barnesville, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

Ron Osowski	Curtis Nelson
Vernon Johnson	Jerome Deal
Sanford Moen	Farrell Erickson
Harley Younggren	Daniel Wilkens

Others present were:

Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
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
Jeff Lewis, MPCA
Bob Beduhn, Red Lake WD, HDR Engineering
Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering
Bob Wright, Wild Rice WD
Steve Zaiser, River Keepers of Fargo-Moorhead
Bruce Albright, Administrator, Buffalo-Red River WD

Minutes of the March 20, 1997, meeting were read and approved. **Motion** to approve the minutes by Manager Erickson, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's reports for March and April were presented by Manager Wilkens and they were approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

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

Ogaard Report - Don Ogaard

Don commented on the devastation that occurred with the 1997 flood in the Ada area and stated that perhaps one of the hardest things to lose was his slide collection that had accumulated over a 45 year period. Don stated that he had on file a collection of the Minneapolis Tribune articles focusing on the 1997 flood should anyone be interested. He also discussed interviews he had given with regard to the 1997 flood. Dateline NBC had visited with Don via telephone for nearly one hour but since he refused to place blame on any one party for the cause of flooding, his interview was not aired. KARE from the Twin Cities area flew in by helicopter and interviewed Don. Don discussed the success stories relative to the Wild Rice WD's projects and stated that, once again, Becker dams had paid for themselves in one year's time. In many area and regional newspapers, articles have appeared relative to the 1997 flood damage and Don stated that Jay Leitch and Jerry Van Amburg had been contacted to respond to these articles.

The 1996 audit was discussed. Don noted his dissatisfaction with the auditor's anticipated completion date of June 1997 and suggested retaining a new auditing firm for the 1997 fiscal year. Don stated that he had received the portion of the Annual Report prepared by Dan Thul and he would review for clarification.

Several handouts were distributed. The first being a memo from Susan Gilbert reviewing the public information activities that had taken place this last month. Secondly, a letter from a southwest Minnesota farmer addressing his concern about the lack of flood control infrastructure the Army Corps of Engineers had planned for the Red River Basin and the need to improve and promote this infrastructure. Next was a copy of a letter to Dean Rebuffoni, Star Tribune Staff Writer, from a retired Soil Scientist with S.C.S., stating his opposition to the article that appeared in the April 23, 1997 Tribune issue. And lastly, a copy of the corrections/additions/deletions to the RRWMB's Policy Manual was distributed.

The renewal of the insurance policy for individual manager liability was discussed. Don stated that he had received an insurance renewal application stating that the policy was up for renewal the end of May. Due to the fact that last month's regular meeting was canceled and an immediate response was needed, Don went ahead and completed the application for renewal. **Motion** to renew the policy by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**

To facilitate the drive for holistic water management, the need to develop better and more descriptive information into press releases to increase public awareness of the RRWMB's goals and objectives was discussed. Manager Johnson noted the importance of educating the public. After discussion, it was decided that copies of the articles prepared by Susan Gilbert be also mailed to watershed district offices, as well as to the local newspapers for publication. Watershed district personnel and managers can then follow up and make sure these articles are being published in local newspapers. Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering, suggested that perhaps this fall a summit could be organized in order to discuss the facts of the 1997 flood and bring some real issues on the table. Don stated the importance of getting the localized flooding situations transformed into a larger, more holistic form.

Red River Coordinator Report - Dan Thul

Dan commented on the DNR Red River Basin Issues Team. He stated that the team addresses issues relevant to the Red River Basin and meets on a monthly basis. The possibility of a joint meeting with this group and the RRWMB was discussed in order to open up lines of communication.

Dan stated that he had been in contact with Brad Moore who represents the Commissioner's and Governor's office. He stated that with regard to the flood damages, these offices are showing a much stronger awareness and interest in issues within the Red River Basin and that more direct involvement can be expected.

During the legislative session, Dan stated that \$100,000 had been appropriated for the mediation process relative to water management issues in the Red River Basin. Dan noted that Ron Harnack of BWSR is offering assistance at least during the initial convening phase.

Dan discussed the "Minnesota Recovers" Disaster Task Force. He stated this organization was developed in an effort to coordinate recovery efforts and lay out financial needs for consideration during the special session scheduled for July.

A draft letter has been prepared in response to comments received in relation to the Wetland Restoration Guidelines. Dan stated that Don Buckhout will review and the letter should be ready in a couple of weeks.

Three new DNR positions for Region I were funded during the legislative session. An eco-services position which will provide education and coordinating services, a fisheries position that will deal with river restorations and protective flows, and a community outreach position that will respond to the flood disaster and damages experienced with the flood of 1997. Dan noted that the community outreach position would be directly involved with watershed districts as this position will offer technical assistance to local governments. Dan added that a PCA position was also approved during the legislative session. He stated that this position would probably be based out of Detroit Lakes and would continue to carry on the efforts of Glenn Skuda.

The Commissioner's Management Team will be conducting a tour in the valley on July 16 & 17. This tour will focus on the cities of Breckenridge and East Grand Forks and will address the flood fighting efforts that occurred.

The Red River Coordinator position was discussed. The contract between the RRWMB and the State of Minnesota is due for renewal July 1st. Dan stated that the contract would be similar to the previous one except that it's drafted for one year increments. The terms of the contract include \$24,000 to be paid in semi-annual installments and this would account for Dan prorating his time as follows: 30% to the RRWMB and 70% to the DNR. Dan indicated that a copy of this contract would be forwarded to Don Ogaard for review and action would be required at the next monthly meeting.

TIC Report - Paul Suomala

Paul stated that legislative members have been requesting information highlighting the flooding event. TIC has also been providing information to local and regional news media.

The Interim Planning Group has scheduled a meeting for May 29, 1997 in Grand Forks at the Ramada Inn. The Minnesota delegation will meet at 8:00 a.m., at 10:30 a.m. all the board members named thus far will meet, and after a noon lunch the IPG will convene. Members to date total 13. Minnesota has named four members and an alternate, North Dakota has named 4 members with a 5th to be named, Manitoba will have three members with one tribal representative yet to be named. With regard to funding, LCMR has funded \$50,000 and legislative funding of \$200,000 has been approved to help in the planning process. Paul stated that Governor Carlson

officials to encourage funding. Lowell Enerson added that he has been approached by County Commissioners who have stated their dissatisfaction with the appropriation of the \$200,000 and he suggested that Paul should investigate to determine where these funds are coming from. Paul stated that to his knowledge, the \$200,000 was suppose to be new money, but apparently there seems to be some question that these funds were taken from an appropriation that was to be used for county purposes.

District Reports:

The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that with regard to the Moorhead, Dilworth, and Hawley EDA Projects, authorization was given to open construction bids on Contract Nos. 1 and 2 on 6/5/97 Inspections are being completed on the 260 miles of drainage ditch under the District's authority. Inspections will also be completed of other projects. The FEMA site visits have not started at this time. Estimated damages to all of the District's projects and ditch systems are \$500,000. Flooding has increased the number of permit applications being reviewed by the District.

The Red Lake WD reported that bids were opened on the Parnell Impoundment Project No. 81 and awarded the job to Davidson Construction from Newfolden. The District is very busy with high water complaints by area landowners and the number of requests for ring dikes continues to increase. Several board members and staff attended a training session on "Understanding Minnesota Public Drainage Laws", held on April 30, 1997, at the Best Western in Thief River Falls.

The Bois de Sioux WD reported that Survey and Engineer reports have been reviewed with the landowners for Wilkin County Ditch #9. In regards to the North Ottawa Project, the BdSWD Board has completed the paperwork on property in the SW 1/4 of Section 17, North Ottawa Township. After the CFD is recorded, the deal will be complete. The RRWMB legislation has not passed this year but is not dead. The Board was informed that the bill is still on the table when the legislature reconvenes in January 1998. RRWMB assistance and participation is requested in relation to hosting a tour for those legislators with an interest.

The Wild Rice WD reported that with some of the most extensive flooding since the flood of 1897, the WRWD is taking a proactive approach by involving community leaders in seeking long term solutions to the flooding within the District. The community of Ada's downtown business district suffered extensive damaging as floodwaters rushed through the city from the Wild Rice and Marsh Rivers. Especially hard hit was the Ada-Borup High School, the Ada Nursing Home and Municipal Hospital, the Dekko Center and Marcussen Accounting. Plans are already underway for the building of a new seven million dollar Ada-Borup High School. Numerous homes within the community of Ada and rural areas suffered extensive damage. The WRWD's office was also in the path of destruction with damages estimated somewhere around \$40,000. Th WRWD has set up temporary offices in Borup at the Community Center.

The Roseau River WD reported that approximately 40 people attended the Board's May 6th meeting. The majority were landowners who are effected by the flooding north of Roseau. There was a lengthy discussion on the need to implement a flood control plan that will reduce the impact to ag lands and farmsteads. A final draft of the Flood Control Committee's survey was approved. The surveys will be mailed the first week in June.

- The Two Rivers WD reported that the District has experienced extensive damage with regard to the flood of 1997. The District is monitoring its gaging stations.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported that the District was very fortunate this year with respect to the extensive flood damage that was realized in the Red River Valley this spring. Only one case of flood damage to a home in the Climax area was reported to the District. This home is located one mile from the Red River and is requesting assistance from the District for a buy-out. Regarding the Project #12, Co. Ditches 98 & 148 appeal, notification was received on April 15, 1997 reversing the original decision and stated that the Project was free to move forward after the appeal period had expired. On May 15, 1997, the District received notice that the opponents had filed an appeal with the Minnesota Supreme Court. Since the Supreme Court only hears a few select cases, they will conduct a review and determine whether or not this case merits a hearing.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that in April, the district was hit with an unusual blizzard which started with freezing rain. The wind and the freezing rain caused widespread power outages in the District. Warren was without external power for approximately four days and the surrounding area was without power for upwards of a week or more. As a result of the blizzard, the water content in the snowpack went from about 3 inches to 5 inches of water. In addition, the rainfall caused the snowpack to solidify blocking portions of the Middle River, the Snake River, and most of the channels in the district. Estimated damages to the City of Warren exceeded six million dollars and were aggravated by a breakout from the Snake River immediately upstream. In the rural areas, there are extensive damages to roadways and extensive erosion from overland flooding.

Activating a "Technical Advisory Committee" was discussed. Don stated that a need exists to be more technical with funding requests that come before the Board. The McCombs/Knutson study recommended that all funding requests be reviewed by a technical advisory committee (TAC). A means of evaluating the flood control capabilities of potential projects such as the star method was discussed. The Board stated that a structured means of evaluation should be developed since any dissension among member watershed districts should be avoided and this would be one way projects could be funded on a more impartial basis. It was decided that the Board Managers would bring this idea before their individual boards for discussion and report back at the next monthly meeting.

Jon Roeschlein visited with the Board regarding the BdSWD legislation and requested the RRWMB's participation and assistance in hosting a tour for those legislators with an interest, namely the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, all authors, and Red River Valley legislators. Jon felt it would be appropriate to begin in Grand Forks and work southward over a period of 1.5 to 2 days and really spell out the need for this legislation. Don Ogaard added that smaller communities should be visited as well as there is a need for a rural perspective. Jon noted that he would keep in contact with Don and that once dates have been decided upon, Board Managers would be notified. **Motion** to plan a tour of the Red River Valley focusing on projects developed through the RRWMB by Manager Wilkens, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. This tour would be an attempt to educate legislators on the need for including the four counties in the Bois de Sioux WD in the RRWMB legislation so the BdSWD would have the same opportunities as the other WD in the valley to develop much needed flood control projects. The Board instructed Don to plan the most cost effective tour based on accommodating the legislators busy schedules. This would include the possibility of flying the parties up to the Grand Forks area and then taking a bus tour of the area.

District's Funding Requests:

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

At the March 1997 meeting, copies were distributed of the Engineer's Report for the Angus Oslo Site #4 Impoundment. This report contains sufficient information for a step 2 approval by the Board. The MRSRW1 hereby requests step 2 approval and a payment of \$54,868.29. Total projects costs expended to date are \$344,550.93 of which a \$238,000 (85% of the \$280,000 purchase price for 480 acres) advance was received from the RRWMB. This leaves a difference of \$64,550.93 (\$344,550.93 less \$280,000). The pay request of \$54,868.29 is 85% of \$64,550.93. Chairman Osowski turned the meeting over to Secretary Younggren in the absence of John Finney, Vice Chairman. Secretary Younggren requested a motion be made. **Motion** for Step Two approval and payment in the amount of \$54,868.29 by Manager Wilkens, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**. Secretary Younggren then turned meeting back over to Chairman Osowski.

2. Buffalo-Red River WD - Step III Submittal and Request for Payment for EPA Projects for Moorhead

Dilworth, and Hawley: The Buffalo-Red River WD hereby requests step 3 approval and payment in the amount of \$38,526.52. Expenditures to date are \$476,577.44 of which the local share is \$192,632.60. The RRWMB share is 20% of the local costs which is \$38,526.52. **Motion** for Step 3 approval and payment in the amount of \$38,526.52 by Manager Wilkens, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

3. Red Lake WD - Step One Submittal for Louisville/Parnell Flood Control Impoundment:

At the March meeting of the RRWMB, the RLWD distributed information on this project for review. MnDOT is interested in this project for wetland banking. Due to the high original cost estimate, the RLWD re-evaluated this site last week. The same amount of wetland banking and storage was retained but the land requirements were reduced. The District stated that this project is totally separate from the Parnell Impoundment Project. The storage in this project will be gated. The total RRWMB request for participation is \$71,474. MnDOT will be purchasing 180 acres of the 280 acres needed for the project. This will give 360 acre feet of flood storage and 37 acres of wetland credits. Locally it will reduce road washouts and crop damages. Advisory comments from DNR included ways to improve wetland bank, and BWSR stated this project was technically feasible and gave suggestions on how to make it a better project. This project meets the criteria in WCA. Senator Stump and Representative Finseth have initiated legislation and Lowell is very hopeful for a 50% state cost share. Lowell stated that this project will be built strictly for the wetland banking and without any type of flood control if the watershed districts do not become involved. The watershed districts need to start focusing on prevention. Lowell added that the Polk County Commissioners are very supportive of this project. Lowell was asked that if the 50% cost share does not come through, would the RLWD then ask the RRWMB to make up the difference. Lowell stated that the district would not drop this project if the 50% state participation was not received and that he felt the district could absorb the difference. The RRWMB share is calculated at \$200 per acre foot which falls within the parameters of the McCombs/Knutson Study. **Motion** to approve the Step 1 submittal by Manager Johnson, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**

Jerry Bennett of the Wild Rice WD discussed the Memorandum of Understanding Agreement that the Minnesota Department of Transportation has requested all watershed districts sign. Jerry gave a brief history by stating that in 1995, MnDOT issued a policy statement that they would no longer obtain watershed permits. In 1996, MAWD got legislation passed that required MnDOT to obtain watershed district permits. After this legislation was passed, MnDOT developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and sent copies to all watershed districts for signatures. This MOU states how watershed districts and MnDOT will coordinate permitting activities. Jerry stated that watershed districts could individualize these agreements but that he felt it was very important to maintain consistency as well. He felt that a determination needs to be made to see where the

anything away from individual districts. He also felt that getting this legislation passed was a major breakthrough and that the watershed districts should not have any problem following the MOU. Lowell Enerson stated that he felt it was a major accomplishment by MAWD in getting this legislation passed, but that each WD should review this document closely before signing. Lowell suggested that maybe individual agreements need to be revised rather than having all the watershed districts sign a blanket document. Jerry Bennett stated that the WD's should be somewhat uniform in how this issue will be addressed. Lowell Enerson suggested that MAWD should organize a statewide meeting for all 42 watershed districts to address this issue. After further discussion, it was decided that due to the common interests among WD's in the Red River Valley, this group should address this issue on a regional basis rather than bringing in the entire state. Manager Wilkens was appointed to facilitate a meeting sometime in early July to discuss the outcomes of the individual watershed district concerns.

A handout was distributed from Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering, and Rod Headrick, HDR Engineering regarding the Flood Damage Assessment Program. It highlighted project goals and the difficulties encountered, April and May work progress, requested changes in scope, remaining tasks and schedules for completion, and project budgets to date.

The 1997 Local Water Planning Conference scheduled for June 8-10, in Two Harbors, MN was discussed. Don Ogaard stated that since the 1998 Conference is scheduled to be held in Crookston, it is important to have a delegate at the 1997 Conference to represent the interests of the watershed districts and take part in the 1998 planning process. **Motion** to appoint Manager Wilkens as the RRWMB's representative by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be held on June 17, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. possibly at the Holiday Inn in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. (Sand Hill River WD office is scheduled as an alternate.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Harley Younggren
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant