

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

John Fiiuiev-Humboldt Farrell Erickson-Badger Harley Younggren. Secretary-Hallock Ron Osowski, Chairman-Oslo Vernon Johnson-Clearbrook Daniel Wilkens. Treasurer-Fertile Sanford Moen-Garv Curtis Nelson-Barnesville Jerome Deal-Wheaton Don Ogaard, Executive Director-Ada

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

June 17,1997

Sand Hill River Watershed District Office, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, June 17, 1997, at the Sand Hill River Watershed District Office, Fertile, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

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

Others present were:

Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Paul Suomala, TIC
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Willis Eken, U.S. House of Representatives, Seventh District,
Congressman Collin Peterson's office
Willard Brunelle, Outreach Worker, Rural Life Outreach of NW MN
Brian Dwight, BWSR Ron Shelito, BWSR

Minutes of the May 20, 1997, meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. **Motion** to approve the minutes by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Moen, **Carried**.

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

A **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Finney, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **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 a report prepared by the Sierra Club and Clean Water Network and distributed copies to Board members. Don noted that often times publications such as these are viewed as credible and seem to develop into legislative initiatives.

A tour for those legislators with an interest in viewing the flood damages that occurred in the Red River Valley this spring was discussed. Jon Roeschlein stated that he had been trying to contact state legislators to request their attendance but was not having much success. Don said that originally this tour was being developed through Senator Moe's office but had somehow gotten switched over to Senator Morse's office, who is Chairman of the Finance Committee. It seems that the Finance Committee was planning a tour of this area to assess projects that would be eligible for bonding. Don stated that he offered the bus he had reserved for the tour hosted by the RRWMB to the Finance Committee, if they would also include points of interest selected by the RRWMB for review. A brochure was prepared highlighting the areas to be toured which include Warren, Alvarado, Crookston, and Moorhead. The tour will be held on June 19, 1997 and the bus will be leaving out of Grand Forks. It is the goal of this tour 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. Kent Lokkesmoe, DNR, will be the main guide on the tour and those who plan on attending include Maynard Pick, U.S. House of Representatives, Seventh District, Congressman Collin Peterson's office, Don Ogaard, Jerome Deal, Jon Roeschlein, and Ron Osowski.

The Minnesota Recovers Task Force was discussed. Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD explained that this team is made up of both legislators and private individuals. Jerry said that typically watershed districts focus on projects such as flood retention but that feedback from citizens is desired regarding such flood control measures as levee assistance, ring dikes, and acquisition. An assessment needs to be done to determine the funds needed prior to requesting FEMA assistance or an FDR grant. Jerry noted that a meeting involving the watershed districts and this team would be very beneficial. Don stated that often times local and rural areas seem to fall through the cracks in the system and noted the need to pull initiatives together to help remedy this problem. Manager Johnson asked what role should the RRWMB take and suggested that perhaps a committee should be developed to address this issue. Jerry said that after an assessment is made, then funding sources would need to be identified. Charlie Anderson added that, at this point in time, the RRWMB is at a fork in the road. Charlie stated that there are two ways to remedy flooding which include flood control, or building a defense against the flood. He noted that economically, it's not feasible to do both. Chairman Osowski added that with regard to the Warren Diversion, if the diversion is installed, the City of Warren would be saved but that it would move the problem downstream. Dan Thul stated the need to keep in perspective that watershed management will have local benefits, along with some benefits to the mainstem, but that local initiatives will not alleviate the problem. Jerry Bennett stressed the need for a system approach to address flood control. Jerry stated the need to recognize that flood control will be beneficial in certain circumstances but that perhaps a combination of things to reduce damages such as ring dikes or acquisitions, in some cases, should be discussed. Jerry noted the importance of watershed districts taking a proactive approach after the 1997 flood due to the timeliness of discussions. **Motion** to participate in the Minnesota Recovers Task Force by Manager Johnson, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Don discussed his meeting with Commissioner Sando and Colonel Wonsik. Don stated that these individuals stated their desire to be involved in the mediation process relative to water management issues in the Red River Basin. A handout detailing the \$100,000 appropriated for the mediation process was distributed. Don stated that these officials have a definite mistrust of local government. With regard to the mediation process, Don stated that the first meeting would primarily involve identifying this issues to be mediated and that this initial

phase could take anywhere from 9 months to 1 year. Don noted that regarding the Marsh Creek permit, the Colonel indicated he would be making a decision by the end of this month. The Minnesota Dispute Resolution Group identified by Becky Comstock of Dorsey & Whitney was explained by Don. Don recommended organizing a delegation of this Board to meet with this group to discuss the implications of mediation. Don noted that the technical outcomes of mediation could be addressed but not legal outcomes. Dan Thul stated he strongly advocates meeting with a consultant to better understand the mediation process before getting involved. Don added that the Corps is putting a lot of weight in the mediation process and suggested organizing a meeting of the entire Board with a consultant to discuss the implications of the mediation process and to determine if the first phase should be initiated. **Motion** to organize a meeting in Grand Forks on the 24th or 25th of June with the RRWMB and a consultant by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Moen, **Carried**. The Board decided to select members of a team for the mediation panel at that time.

A report on the flood disaster effects on the public was given by Willard Brunelle from Rural Life Outreach of NW Minnesota. Brunelle stated that this is a Catholic/Lutheran rural life organization and is funded by grants. His primary responsibility is to help the flood victims cope with the stress associated with the flood devastation. He stated that he predominantly works with farmers who typically fall through the cracks in the FEMA system. He stressed the anger felt by the farmers not only due to the flood damages, but in particular to the lack of uniformity of agencies in addressing solutions to remedy these damages. Brunelle offered his help in any way to this Board and noted the desire of many individuals, particularly in the Oslo area, to meet with the RRWMB to discuss their concerns. Of particular interest to these farmers, are the consequences of constructing a diversion project in the Grand Forks area. Don Ogaard asked Brunelle if he would be able to compile a short presentation of individual losses sustained in the flood rather than water surface problems. Brunelle indicated this would be possible and could be presented at a future meeting.

Willis Eken, U.S. House of Representatives, Seventh District, Congressman Collin Peterson's office, commended the Board of Managers for the leadership role they have taken in aiding in the flood control efforts in the Red River Valley. He stated that he would communicate the concerns addressed at this meeting to the Congressman.

Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD, noted the importance of getting agencies and citizens involved at the ground level. Jerry stated that the WRWD has organized a strategic team to present proposed ideas to the public and if any WD was interested, they would be willing to share their plan upon request.

Several handouts were distributed by Don. The first one being an editorial published in the May 27th issue of the Grand Forks Herald titled, "Why the floods? A long wet cycle." The next article was from the Fargo Forum titled, "Rural Minnesota not an environmentalists' park." And finally, a memo from Rod Headrick, HDR Engineering, that reported the progress on the Flood Damage Assessment.

Red River Coordinator Report - Dan Thul

Regarding Flood Damage Reduction applications, Dan stated that if a watershed district had submitted any, they should review the applicable project and resubmit the application. Dan noted that some of these applications are 3 or 4 years old and that designs and cost estimates need to be updated. These revised applications should be forwarded directly to Kent Lokkesmoe at the DNR with a copy sent to Dan.

Dan explained he had the opportunity to take an aerial tour of several of the RRWMB's projects with Randy Bradbury, a reporter from the Grand Forks Herald. Dan stated this was an excellent informational opportunity

and that Randy would be featuring this story in a special section in the Grand Forks Herald. Dan also noted that Randy would like to include a profile of Don Ogaard in this segment as well.

A handout describing the 1997 aerial photography pricing list was distributed. The Corps makes these photos available to serve as a source in assessing flood damages. Charlie Anderson stated that the Corps feels responsible to document these damages, but that if organizations such as the RRWMB don't use them, they probably won't get used. Dan noted that there is additional imagery available which is prepared using radar-sat technology which involves using satellite technology with radar. Dan said that once this data is obtained, it needs to be tied in with land-sat technology to permit interpretation.

A DNR office memorandum was handed out. The memo outlined proposed gaging sites regarding the FEMA-funded Flood Forecast/Warning System project. Dan asked the Managers to review the memo relative to the gaging sites proposed in their watershed districts and direct any questions or suggestions to Judy Boudreau, DNR-DOW Surface Water Unit.

Coordinator Position - Renewal of Contract with State of Minnesota

Don Ogaard explained that the contract with the State of Minnesota for a cost share with the RRWMB relating to Dan Thul's position was up for renewal. Don gave a history of this position and indicated it was formed as a method of overseeing the expenditures of state funds. The coordinator position is funded by the two agencies as follows: 70% DNR and 30% RRWMB. The RRWMB's 30% cost share is \$24,000. The contract is to be reviewed on an annual to determine if any changes need to be made before renewal. Dan Thul stated that the job description did change as a percentage of the funding changed. Dan stated that this position is to serve as a liaison in an effort to establish a better understanding among the two agencies. **Motion** to renew the Coordinator position contract by Manager Wilkens, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

TIC Report - Paul Suomala

The mediation process was addressed. Paul stated that the rules are established before mediation begins. He said that a good mediator wants to dissatisfy as many people as possible so that no one goes away a winner, and no one goes away a loser.

Paul commented on the Interim Planning Group meeting held in Grand Forks on May 29, 1997. He stated that the primary goal of the meeting was for the delegates to get acquainted. He noted that to date, 14 members have been named. Paul added that the goal of this Board was not to be in the emergency management business, but rather to bring appropriate individuals together to address flooding on a broader basis.

A handout was distributed outlining a meeting to be held on June 18, 1997 at the Moorhead City Hall regarding regional impacts of flood mitigation projects.

The next Red River Basin Board organizational meeting will be held on July 24, 1997 in Pembina, North Dakota.

District Reports:

- The Joe River WD reported that much like most of the watershed districts in the Red River Valley Basin, the Joe River WD was inundated by the spring flood of this year. Starting with the severe winter ending ice and snow storm, and ending with the worst flood ever witnessed in the district, the damage was unimaginable. Local government units in the district are still assessing the damage. There are miles and miles of township and county roads that could be classified as nearly non-existent. Culverts are gone and road beds have been washed almost to ditch levels. The clean-up continues daily. However, it may be years before all the public domain is back to pre-flood condition.
- The Red Lake WD reported that the construction season has been very busy. The Scott Baatz Ditch Improvement Project, RLWD Project #123 is in it's final stages of completion. RLWD Ditch Improvement Project #119-Polk County Ditches 104, 61, 47, and 94 have moved into final stages of construction on June 13th. RLWD Ditch Improvement Project #115-Equality/RLWD Ditch 1, Lateral C will begin construction this week. The final plans and specifications on RLWD Ditch Improvement Project #113-Winsor Hangaard will be completed at the July 10th Board meeting. The District hopes to have final plans and specifications for bids sometime in August for RLWD Ditch Improvement Project #122-Challenger Ditch.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that regarding the EDA grant for the Moorhead, Dilworth, and Hawley Projects, bids were opened and contracts awarded for the concrete liner projects and the diversion around Dilworth. The concrete liner project was awarded to Municipal Industrial Contracting from Fargo with a bid of \$2,284,871. The diversion project was awarded to Strom Construction from Moorhead with a bid of \$1,009,600.50. The right-of-way has been acquired for the Hawley project. The bid opening for this project and Lateral 2 of County Ditch 41 (just south of Highway 10) will be held in July.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the land purchase is complete for the North Ottawa Project. A CRP contract is being transferred at this time. A tour date has been set for June 19, 1997 beginning in Grand Forks for those legislators with an interest in viewing the flood damages that occurred this spring.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that a meeting was held with the DNR and locally affected landowners regarding the Twistal Swamp near Karlstad. This area, also including Twin Lakes, is managed by the DNR for waterfowl. Problems include seepage through the ridge on the northwest boundary and inability to manage the water level and marsh vegetation. The area is also ineffective for flood control. A joint project is being considered and preliminary monitoring and other activities have begun.
- The Roseau River WD reported that letters were sent to Ross area landowners requesting their assistance. The letter asks them to let the Board know when they felt the Roseau River had receded enough so it was confined to its banks. The information will be useful in determining the amount of flow that can be put through this area without impacting their drainage. The Roseau River Flood Control Committee's survey has received a 10% response in its first week. Approximately 2,600 surveys were mailed on June 5th. The committee hopes to have a return rate of 70% or better.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that this past month the District has been busy with flood recovery efforts as a result of the record flooding along the Wild Rice and Red Rivers. Reconstruction of the District's office is in progress with a completion date scheduled for the end of July to early August. The WRWD is still awaiting a final damage assessment by FEMA, on its projects, ditches, and office. The City of Ada is moving forward with construction of a \$700,000 permanent building which will temporarily house the Bridges Medical Services clinic and hospital. The city is awaiting final determination of damages to the medical facility for

funding assistance through FEMA. The City of Ada is also awaiting damage estimates at the Dekko Community Center. Plans are moving forward for building the \$ 10 million dollar high school, with temporary facilities for the high school to be constructed at the Norman County Fair Grounds.

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering, presented to the Board an outline of key points he prepared regarding the SHRWD's Overall Plan. Mark discussed the concept of sustainability and noted the need to document the watershed district's holistic approach to water resource management. The Union Lake Sarah Improvement Association is requesting the watershed district aid them in finding solutions to the extremely high water in their two lakes. The Board discussed the wide array of problems and roadblocks that potentially could occur and concurred that the best possible course of action would be to arrange a meeting with all the parties that could potentially be involved. This meeting was held on June 12, 1997 at 9:00 a. m. in the district office. With limited surveying, it appears technically possible to establish a high water outlet going north into the Red Lake WD, Maple Lake system. A meeting will be scheduled with the RLWD to discuss the options available.
- Middle River-Snake River WD reported that the Board of Managers and the Council for the City of Warren met with representatives of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) concerning the PL-566 application for flood control on the Snake River. The NRCS presented several alternatives for the proposed diversion along with estimates of cost. The estimated cost of the preferred diversion is 5.6 million dollars and the estimated cost of the off-channel impoundment is 2.3 million dollars. The Board of Managers and the City Council requested the feasibility be determined of expanding the storage in the off-channel impoundment and the construction of an additional off-channel impoundment. This project is being put on the "fast track" with construction on the impoundment(s) scheduled to begin in fiscal year 1999 and construction on the diversion scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2000.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources - Proposed Intern Position

Ron Shelito-Regional Supervisor, and Brian Dwight-Board Conservationist addressed the Board concerning the internship positions they are proposing for the Red River Valley. Ron stated that these positions were created to assist the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Watershed Districts in addressing problems associated with this year's flood. Ron noted that two positions will be created with one intern serving the SWCD's, and one intern serving the WD's. Candidates were interviewed at UMC and two students majoring in natural resources were selected. Brian stated that the goal of these internships is to give these students meaningful tasks to aid in preparing them for careers in natural resources. Ron inquired of the Board if they had any special tasks in mind that an intern could be involved with. Don Ogaard stated that he could not think of a specific task in particular for the RRWMB, but that perhaps the intern could specialize tasks to conform to the unique projects within each district. Don questioned what would be the responsibility of local watershed districts to supervise the intern. Brian stated that the intern would be placed in the hands of the RRWMB, and time would be divided between the individual watershed districts accordingly. The watershed districts and/or the RRWMB would be responsible to delegate tasks but should any situation arise where disciplinary action is required, the matter could be referred to BWSR.

Don Ogaard commented on the strained relationship between BWSR and watershed districts, and specifically between SWCD's and watershed districts. Don stressed the need for having a better working relationship among these agencies. Brian Dwight stated that he has been in contact with Ray Bohn from MAWD and discussed the need for bringing together field people from BWSR and watershed districts. Brian stated that BWSR has always

maintained a close working relationship with SWCD's due to the fact that BWSR provides financial overview for SWCD's. Brian noted that in the past, BWSR has worked with watershed districts only on a limited issue basis. Brian added that BWSR would be available to assist watershed districts if they could be informed where their help is needed and suggested that perhaps the intern could aid in researching the underlying causes of the animosity felt between the SWCD's and WD's. Brian discussed establishing a "Blue Ribbon Committee." This committee would be comprised of representatives from BWSR, MAWD, and MASWCD and would meet on a quarterly basis to address concerns within each of these agencies. The next monthly board meeting for BWSR will be held in Crookston on August 27-28, 1997, and the RRWMB was invited to attend to discuss these issues.

Technical Advisory Committee - Discussion on activation

After Board discussion, it was decided that input is appropriate at the Step 1 Phase since it provides for the establishment of better projects. Motion to activate the Technical Advisory Committee by Manager Erickson, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**. Charlie Anderson suggested that Dan Thul could be the coordinator of this committee.

Memorandum of Understanding Agreement

Manager Wilkens was appointed to facilitate a meeting sometime in early July to discuss the outcomes of the individual watershed district concerns relative to signing the MOU. A memo was distributed indicating that a meeting will be held on July 11, 1997, at 10:00 a.m. in the Sand Hill River WD office, Fertile, MN. Wilkens added that he had contacted Ray Bohn of MAWD and he indicated that he and Woody Love, President of MAWD, would be available to attend the meeting to answer any questions.

District's Funding Requests;

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be held on July 15, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River WD office in Fertile, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Harley Younggren
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant