

District Reports

- The Joe River WD reported that bids have been let and construction has started on three farmstead ring dikes. Dry weather in the District is providing favorable conditions for the rapid completion of these dikes.

The annual budget hearing was held with the 1999 budget approved.

- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District has received close to a half-dozen repair petitions. Engineer's reports have been completed and construction will begin shortly.

Working conditions have been ideal the latter part of the summer and all the EDA projects are essentially complete except for some minor details. A tour of the facilities with local officials will be conducted on September 23, 1998.

- The Red Lake WD reported that landowners continue to be enrolled for buffer strips on the Clearwater Nonpoint Project. The District also continues to work with wild rice operators to develop sediment collection areas.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that at the September regular board meeting, the Board of Managers moved to go forward with the development of preliminary findings and a recommendations report for individual sewage treatment systems on Roy Lake and North and South Twin Lakes in Mahnomen County. The Board received requests from residents who live on Roy Lake, as well as the Lynwood and Pinehurst areas of Twin - Lakes to assist the lake shore residents with planning and finding a solution to updating their sewage systems.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that investigations are continuing into the feasibility of constructing two separate impoundments, both located in the vicinity of ditch systems under the administration of the District. Both ditch systems have histories of flooding and/or erosion problems. One is located upstream of State Ditch #49, and the other near the outlet of Kittson County Ditch #10. The District is currently conducting field investigations and compiling preliminary design information. Landowners in the vicinity of these two areas will also be contacted to obtain their input regarding the projects.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported that a meeting was conducted on September 4, 1998 at the East Polk Soil & Water Conservation District office in McIntosh regarding the high water situation on Union Lake - Lake Sarah. The DNR authorized \$15,000 to conduct a feasibility study for an outlet and the Union Lake-Sarah Improvement Association will provide matching funds. The main concerns for the DNR include fish passage between the two lakes and also water quality issues.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that FEMA repair work is approximately 1/3 complete. The balance will wait until after harvest.

The flood control planning effort has been progressing quite well. The committee has reviewed 15-20 flood control methods and favors more of storage type methods. At their next meeting, the District will present any new information on potential impoundments identified. New locations for flood control structures will be discussed and prioritized.

- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that the Marshall County Board has appointed Doug Sorenson of Warren to replace Tom Yutzenka of Viking on the Board. Yutzenka was on the Board since 1989 and

chose not to be re-appointed. Sorenson is an elementary teacher at the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School and will take office at the September Board meeting.

Roseau River WD "Raised Elevation Issue" - Charlie Anderson

Anderson stated that three sites in the District inquired about ring dikes in order to protect their farmsteads. Upon further investigation, it was determined a more practical alternative for flood protection would be to raise the houses rather than construct a ring dike. Anderson noted the Roseau River WD inquired whether funding assistance could be obtained through the RRWMB. Osowski stated that at the previous monthly meeting, the RRWMB encouraged the District to contact Dave Johnson at the Department of Natural Resources regarding potential funding sources. Anderson stated that he was notified that Kathy Ross, Administrative Assistant-Roseau River WD, had been in contact with Johnson. Thul noted that he had discussed the situations in the District with Johnson as well and he added that Johnson had indicated that funding should be available through a state program. Anderson stated that an approximate cost would be \$10,000 - \$15,000 per site. Wilkens inquired whether the same cost share percentage for ring dikes would apply to these situations. Thul offered to prepare a letter to Dave Johnson requesting participation in the general funding needed to complete such construction. The Board indicated that once state funding is secured for such construction, a funding request could be submitted for consideration.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report - Dan Thul

Minutes of the TAC meetings conducted on 7/14 and 7/15 were distributed.

The TAC met earlier this morning and reviewed the updated USGS proposal to study wetlands and different land use effects on flooding. Thul reviewed the highlights of the proposal. He explained that individuals from several agencies met in Fargo last may. Following the meeting, Greg Wiche and Kevin Vining of the USGS met with members of the TAC to review the proposal. The TAC recommended focusing the study on more of a research initiative rather than developing a basin model. The USGS then modified the study to include a more detailed monitoring of small watersheds. A meeting has been scheduled for September 30, 1998 with individuals from agencies that are potential funding sources for the proposal.

Thul explained that the TAC recommends the study include one watershed with drained wetlands and another with several restored wetlands. Changes that occur within the watershed would be monitored for comparison purposes. Finney inquired on the size of the study area. Thul responded that the watersheds would be approximately 10 square miles. Thul recommended that the RRWMB and the TAC be involved in the selection of the watersheds to be included in the study. He noted the desire for a detailed study on evapo-transpiration. Ron Adrian agreed to research background data for such a study.

Thul stated that, in general, the proposal is aimed at asking the right questions, however, the study needs to be monitored to ensure that the questions get answered. He encouraged members of the RRWMB to attend the meeting and get more actively involved and recommended that at least one TAC member should be on the liaison committee. The meeting is scheduled for September 30, at the Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND, at 9:30 a.m.

Wilkens inquired whether this study would be a useful tool for the mediation process. Thul responded that it would provide excellent information. Ogaard inquired of Anderson and St. Germain whether the TSAC of the mediation panel were reviewing the same issue. St. Germain noted that the TSAC was studying similar issues

and noted that the study would be useful in the mediation proceedings. Ogaard asked whether the study was structured as such to produce a pre-determined outcome. Anderson noted that a pre-determined outcome was not the goal of the study. Thul added that the USGS is unbiased in their desire to do the study. Anderson stated that currently the USFWS is the most active partner in the study. Anderson also added that the SCS did research years ago and they possibly could give a preliminary answer on land use and wetland runoff contribution. Anderson speculated a funding package would be presented in the future to the RRWMB for consideration.

Thul explained that at the TAC meeting earlier today, St. Germain updated board on the Flood of 1997 model. He stated that Johnson will have more data available next month to utilize in the model.

The TAC is awaiting the results from the mediation process regarding wetland guidelines. Thul stated that Anderson updated the TAC on the preliminary results obtained from the TSAC on a "bounce" paper for multi-purpose impoundments. Anderson explained that 2-feet of bounce was allowable for a 10-year event. The 100-year event would require greater bounce with a 14-day drawdown. Anderson stated that the TSAC had been struggling with stricter bounce criteria but added a breakthrough was reached with this criteria. The agreed upon criteria makes multi-purpose flood control projects more feasible.

Anderson noted that a number of papers are being prepared by the TSAC regarding issues such as land use changes, impoundments, set-back levees, river restoration, and culvert sizing. Anderson stated that the main effort includes utilizing the Houston Engineering model of the Wild Rice WD in order to compare the effectiveness of alternatives. Anderson noted that this process is proceeding quite well, and added that the TSAC members are very open, unbiased, and cooperative.

Johnson added that the bus tour of the Wild Rice WD was very informative for the mediation participants. He added that the tour addressed environmental concerns quite well and demonstrated that watershed districts are as interested in water quality and environmental issues as they are.

St. Germain noted that questions were posed by the TSAC members regarding the HEC 1 model. He stated that once these questions have been answered, the results will be provided to the Board for review.

USGS "Water Quality Initiative" - CO-OP Funding Request

Ogaard distributed a letter regarding a joint funding agreement for the updating of the high-streamflow characteristics in the Red River Basin. The total cost for the update is \$90,000, with non-federal partners providing 50 percent of the funding (\$45,000). The RRWMB's share of the cost is \$13,300 which will be billed on an annual basis. Motion by Manager Wilkens to sign contract, Seconded by Manager Wright, Carried.

Another letter was received from the USGS regarding participation in a nutrient, pesticide, and suspended sediment study which was reviewed at the previously monthly meeting. The requested cost for the RRWMB is \$7,075. The study is co-funded by the MPCA, ND Department of Health, and the ND Joint Water Resource Board. Ogaard noted that at the previous meeting, Thul had indicated the study was worthwhile and encouraged the RRWMB to participate. Motion by Manager Deal to submit a letter authorizing participation by the RRWMB, Seconded by Manager Wilkens, Carried.

'Mediation' Committee Report

Ogaard stated that the mediation panel met on September 9-10, 1998 at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN. He commented on the proposed modifications to the current permitting process. He stated that MCEA indicated their desire **to** enter the permitting process at the Commissioner level, however, support for this request was not given from other participants. Intervention at some level by the environmental groups in the permitting process was agreed on.

The process of early involvement by agencies would be obtained through participation in the March Conference sponsored by the RRWMB. The conference would include round-table discussions where individual districts could bring forth projects to be implemented during the year. Assigning a DNR contact person and also a team to review the permit was recommended and accepted by the mediation panel. Ogaard noted that minimal participation was received from the agencies in the past regarding the March Conference and added he was encouraged by the interest shown among the agencies.

The goal of revising the DNR's current permitting system is to develop a communication system in order to identify projects that would easily receive a permit and also projects that would require additional information. Ogaard stated that in order to satisfy environmental concerns, it was agreed to analyze the impacts of proposed projects on the watershed district as a whole and review all the possible alternatives. The possible alternatives such as diking, wetland restoration, and set-back levees would be published once identified.

Deal added that although several alternatives for potential projects were identified in the past, they were never documented and, therefore, made watershed districts appear as single-focused organizations. The new permitting process would allow for early involvement of the DNR prior to watershed districts committing significant funds to a proposed project.

Executive Director Report - Don Ogaard

Ogaard prepared a letter and distributed it to the Board regarding the probable upcoming selection of a new DNR commissioner. He requested the Board to review the letter to determine whether it was appropriate to forward to the candidates for governor. Osowski inquired whether forwarding the letter would influence the selection process. Ogaard stated the importance of the RRWMB in showing an interest in the upcoming selection process. Johnson stated that it would be worthwhile to forward such a letter, however, noted that it should be sent to *all* of the candidates for governor. Deal concurred with Johnson and added that the letter would also facilitate in updating the legislators of the mediation process. Finney recommended modifying the last sentence of first paragraph to read that throughout the mediation process it has become increasingly obvious that stated policy needs to be modified. Ogaard inquired on the appropriate signature needed to forward the letter. Finney recommended using both titles of Executive Director and Chairman to close the letter. **Motion** by Manager Johnson to forward the letter to all three governor's candidates, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Ogaard stated that an invitation was received from the COE regarding the 57th Meeting of the Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board (EAB). The conference this year is scheduled for October 21-23, 1998 in Vlexandria, VA. He noted that the COE is requesting a watershed perspective. He explained that at the previous EAB meeting, the COE communicated their desire to be educated on what a watershed is and what activities they are involved in. Johnson stated the importance of authorizing a representative of watershed districts should there be someone who is willing to attend. **Motion** by Manager Johnson to authorize Don Ogaard to attend the meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

A progress report on the Red River Basin Board (RRBB) was given by Ogaard. He stated that the next meeting scheduled for September 30th and October 1st will be in Fargo, ND at NDSU. The meeting will utilize a retreat format that will include using a computer lab at NDSU to allow the members to complete a questionnaire. The North Dakota Consensus Council will facilitate the meeting in an attempt to focus the members on various ideas to assist the planning process in moving forward. The Board of TIC is scheduled to meet on Saturday, September 26, 1998 in order to accept or reject the proposal to share office space with the RRBB. The TIC Board has requested Paul Suomala's resignation and voted to request Milt Arneson to accept interim CEO of TIC. The intent of the proposal is to use 75% of the office space for the RRBB and 25% of the office space for TIC. Johnson inquired whether the RRBB would eventually assume the duties of the TIC organization. Ogaard stated that such a decision could not be made at this time. Wilkens stated that the RRBB has an Information/Education Task Force that could work well in cooperation with TIC. Johnson inquired whether the RRBB includes a broader representation than the TIC organization. Ogaard responded that it does include very broad representation.

Ogaard stated that some time ago the Board had discussed the possibility of installing boundary signs between the watershed districts. The signs would signify that the motorist is leaving one watershed and entering another. Such a measure would achieve public relations as well as providing information. Ogaard noted that he could research to get an approximate number of signs needed and a proposed cost for review at the next meeting. Nelson explained that the Buffalo-Red River WD had contacted MnDOT several years ago and they were not interested in such a process. Ogaard responded that he had contacted an individual in the Detroit Lakes MnDOT office and stated that they were very interested in such a proposal. He stated he could forward a letter to the Detroit Lakes office indicating the desire of the watershed districts. He noted that approximately 55 signs would be needed. Johnson agreed that it would be beneficial to coordinate with MnDOT in order to promote a partnering relationship. Motion by Manager Wilkens to authorize Ogaard to forward a letter to MnDOT, Seconded by Manager Wright, Carried.

Ogaard stated he had received a newsletter prepared in a cooperative effort by the Kittson Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Two Rivers Watershed District. He noted that this joint venture showed a positive step in improving relationships between the two organizations.

District's Funding Requests:

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on October 29, 1998, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice WD office in Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Harley Younggren
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant