

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 15, 1998

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, December 15, 1998, at the Sand Hill River Watershed District Office, Fertile, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

Daniel Wilkens	Curtis Nelson
Vernon Johnson	Farrell Erickson
Jerome Deal	Robert Wright
Harley Younggren	John Finney

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
- Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering
- Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
- Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
- Lowell Enerson, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Loren Sanderson, Engineer, Red Lake WD
- Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering
- Nolan Baratono, MPCA-Basin Coordinator
- Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
- Rudy Andersen, Two Rivers WD
- Wayne Goeken, River Watch Coordinator

Additional items were added to the agenda. Jerome Deal stated his desire to discuss the coordinated efforts of the Bois de Sioux WD with the mediation proceedings. Robert Wright added that Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD, would be presenting two funding requests on behalf of the Wild Rice WD. Vernon Johnson noted that a funding request would be submitted from the Red Lake WD as well.

Minutes of the November 17, 1998, meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. Motion to approve the minutes by Manager Johnson, Seconded by Manager Finney, Carried.

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

Ogaard reviewed the monthly bills received. He stated that an annual membership renewal billing had been received from The International Coalition (TIC) in the amount of \$500.00. He explained that the previous

Executive Director of TIC had resigned and Milt Arneson had been selected as his replacement. A Motion to authorize the TIC annual membership renewal of \$500.00 by Manager Younggren, Seconded by Manager Johnson, Carried.

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

Water Quality "Cost/Benefit" Report - Jerry Bennett

Bennett discussed the background that preceded the "Water Quality Cost/Benefit Scoping Study" conducted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). He stated that in 1998, the Governor appropriated money from the general fund to conduct the study. He explained that the need for the study involved the costs and benefits associated with environmental regulations.

Environmental regulations related to discharges from wastewater treatment facilities were considered to be too high by the municipalities they were imposed upon. He stated that legislators determined a need existed for a scoping study to develop water quality standards. He explained that the study was the result of 5 months of work. He added that the task force that participated in the study represented both industries and municipalities.

Bennett distributed the scoping paper that was developed to the Board of Managers for review. He stated that the handout included a general description of the study as well as the framework, the scope of the analysis, and the legislation that provided the funding. He added that the report also described the purpose of the model in addition to the methods of evaluating costs and benefits. He explained that the framework of the study intends to build upon existing watershed models and also study resource conservation goals.

Bennett added that he believed the scoping study should have included a peer review with a watershed application incorporated into the work plan. A case study for watershed districts was discussed by the task force that would have included a 200-square mile watershed. Bennett noted that the study was developed to aid in the planning efforts of larger sub-basins, rather than smaller watersheds. The study would also aid in the development of watershed management plans that would include documentation, training, and technical assistance.

The final part of the report related to the cost estimate and timeline of the study. Bennett stated that the cost estimate to complete the model is approximately 3.5 to 4.5 million dollars, with the timeline to complete the model of 2 years, with an additional 2 years for training with the model. He added that the task force was quite concerned with the approximate cost of preparing the model.

He stated that legislature intended the study to develop water quality standards, however, it could also be used for other purposes such as a decision-making tool. He added that the study does not provide the "end-all" answer, but would be beneficial for resolving various issues. He noted that based on the work that had been conducted to date, the task force intended to recommend to the legislature that the study be continued. He added that the study could be a useful tool for informed decision-making, but should not be used for policy decisions.

He explained that the economic component was critical, since the task force determined that the study had to be conducted right or not at all. The sensitivity analysis was to ensure the integrity of the model, since a policy maker could use different inputs to generate different outcomes. He added that an on-going advisory group

should be established to monitor the progress of the study. He noted that each time the model is applied, careful Consideration of the results should be given in order to avoid misinterpretation.

He stated that individuals on the task force representing environmental groups were very concerned with the cost of developing the model. He added that the League of Minnesota Cities encouraged the completion of the study.

Ogaard inquired on the role of the MPCA in the task force. Bennett responded that MPCA was the state agency that was responsible for administering the state funds.

Wilkins questioned whether a study such as this one had ever been conducted anywhere else in the nation. Bennett responded that various studies similar to this one have been conducted nationwide. Wilkins inquired whether a model developed in a previous study could be utilized in various parts of the nation. Bennett noted that it could be possible.

District Reports

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that at the regular monthly meeting, Manager Wilkins updated the Board of Managers on the progress of the Union Lake-Sarah situation. He explained that the Lake Association is developing an options package in order for an engineering firm to submit a bid. After a firm is selected, the options would be studied and recommendations to the Lake Association board would be given regarding which options should proceed. This process should be accomplished by the early spring of 1999.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that construction was completed on a number of ditch repairs in Clay and Wilkin Counties. The District has received three petitions for laterals to existing systems in Clay County. A meeting was held last week on another possible lateral in Clay County (Ditch 34). The District has received a petition for the improvement of an urban ditch in Moorhead (Ditch 30). The estimated costs are over \$1 million. Another petition has been received for the establishment of a small ditch on the north side of Moorhead (Ditch 67). This existing ditch has become an erosion problem and the NRCS has been involved in the preliminary design. The proceedings for these projects will be held through the winter and spring months.
- The Red Lake WD reported that a final hearing for a ditch improvement project on Polk County Ditch 63 has been scheduled for December 17th.

The District also reported that Lowell Enerson, Administrator, has resigned from the Red Lake Watershed District and will be taking a new job out of the Red River Basin. The District wishes him well in his new career.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the District has taken an opposing position to the action approved by the Red River Basin Board to request a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (US ACE) study to investigate the possibilities of an additional flood control structure in conjunction with the Lake Traverse project.

The Wild Rice WD reported that the staff and managers have been recognized with a Partnership Minnesota Special Achievement Award signed by Governor Arnie Carlson for recognition of the District's outstanding leadership and effective cooperation with numerous stakeholder organizations in support of the 1997 flood recovery efforts.

- The Two Rivers WD reported that the District continues to build its Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Various data is being collected which includes culvert inventories, locations of water quality and stream gaging sites, legal ditches and their benefited areas, locations of current water control structures, and the data bases associated with each. Once completed, the information will be used in making management decisions and also in the update of the District's overall plan.
- The Joe River WD reported that the District has completed four farmstead ring dikes during the 1998 construction season. Dry weather provided ideal conditions for the rapid completion of these projects. Several ring dikes have been scheduled for construction in 1999.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that a request was submitted under the Flood Damage Reduction Program (FDR) to fund the Helgeland Site on the Snake River. The cost of construction is estimated at 3.8 million dollars. The topographic survey of the proposed impoundment has been completed and the evaluation of the various alternatives has begun.

The Board of Managers is working with representatives of the local Audubon Chapter to develop this project. The next meeting with representatives of the Audubon Chapter has been scheduled for the last week in January 1999. A revised Step 1 Submittal will be prepared and presented to the RRWMB as soon as possible.

- The Roseau River WD reported that a meeting was conducted with the landowners included in the proposed Hay Creek project area. District Engineer, Charlie Anderson, explained that the project would involve restoring a ditch with a meandering channel. The proposed project would provide a storage area that would flood less frequently than what is recognized currently.

Red River Joint Water Resources Board/RRWMB Annual Meeting - Don Ogaard

Ogaard stated that the Annual Meeting of the Red River Joint Water Resources Board and the RRWMB was rescheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 1999, at the Doublewood Inn, Fargo, ND.

Ogaard requested a single sheet report from each district within the RRWMB that highlights the past year's activities and also the projected activity for 1999.

He added that an update on the mediation proceedings is scheduled for the meeting as well. He inquired whether members from the mediation work group should be invited to participate in the presentation. Manager Wright noted that the managers of the Wild Rice WD were very impressed by the panel presentation at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts. Manager Wilkens recommended inviting Cheryl Miller-National Audubon Society, Ron Nargang-DNR, and Ron Harnack-Board of Water & Soil Resources to participate in the meeting. Ogaard noted that he would make the suggested contacts.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report - Dan Thul

Minutes of the TAC meeting conducted on October 29, 1998 were distributed.

Thul stated that the TAC discussed the modeling efforts that should be conducted in the Red River basin and the involvement of the RRWMB. He explained that a HEC 1 run-off model could be developed that would analyze

the impacts of various projects within a watershed. He added that this same type of model was utilized in the mediation process, which was very effective in evaluating the different alternatives available within a watershed. He explained that Ron Harnack, Executive Director of the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), proposed to sponsor a modeling effort through BWSR in order to develop HEC 1 models for each watershed district in the Red River basin in conjunction with updating the overall plans. He noted that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducts timing analyses that use basin models to link together all the gaging stations. For a historic flood, a hydrograph could be developed for a particular gage and routed downstream to the mainstem. He stated that this strategy would be utilized for the development of the basin-wide model. Thul added that he had contacted Bob Engelstad, a hydrologist with the USACE, and he was very interested in pursuing this concept. Engelstad recommended scheduling a meeting with the USACE to discuss the development of the model. Engelstad added that he would review the minutes of the TAC with Chuck Spitzack of the USACE who would be involved in the development of the model. Thul stated that Spitzack was also a member of the work group involved in the mediation process. Thul stated that he had also met with Kent Lokkesmoe of the DNR to discuss the modeling effort. Lokkesmoe had indicated that the IJC has discussed this concept and would possibly have available funding sources for the project. Lokkesmoe had suggested that the RRWMB and the DNR should discuss the development of this process. Lokkesmoe had noted that Jim Solstad is the IJC representative for the DNR and added that perhaps Solstad and his supervisor, Mel Sinn, could pursue joint funding at the state and local level.

Ogaard inquired on the responsible entity for developing the model. Thul explained that the modeling effort would be comprised of two separate parts. He stated that watershed districts would be responsible for developing the HEC 1 model with funding assistance through BWSR, and then the HEC 1 models would be linked to routing models. Thul added that he intended to pursue obtaining IJC funds or other federal funding for this effort.

Thul stated that each individual watershed district could utilize their own engineering capabilities at their discretion. Anderson added that the model is developed over time and noted the need for continuity. St. Germain recommended utilizing the TAC for information when developing the modeling effort.

Roeschlein inquired on the timeline to complete the modeling for each watershed district. St. Germain responded that it would take approximately one year, depending upon the information readily available from each watershed district. Thul added that the modeling efforts would all be linked to the overall plans.

Thul stated that a joint meeting would be scheduled with the USACE, the DNR, and the TAC. He added that Engelstad suggested contacting Dave Loss from the USACE since he is currently their representative to the IJC. The technical representative from the DNR would be Jim Solstad. St. Germain indicated that he would develop a proposal to forward to Ron Harnack regarding the modeling effort.

Thul explained that Brent Johnson presented the final draft of the modeling effort of the flood of 1997. The model involves a routed, stacked hydrograph of the flood. Thul added that Johnson would comment on the model at the next monthly meeting.

Thul noted that Charlie Anderson updated the TAC on the mediation process. Anderson discussed the final agreement developed by the mediation work group. Anderson explained that although mediation accomplished a significant amount of progress, a focus on larger floods was lacking from the discussion. Wilkens noted that a majority of the mediation participants will continue to meet in the future and added that the process would continue to be refined. Deal concurred with Anderson regarding the lack of focus on larger

floods, but stated that the mediation group needed to focus their discussions on one single area, which was the 10-year summer storm event.

Thul stated that since natural resource goals have been identified in the final agreement of the mediation process, wetland restorations would be a major consideration in the future. He added that several papers were developed by the technical and scientific advisory committee (TSAC) during the mediation proceedings and noted the need for individuals to understand the content of the papers.

Anderson explained that the environmentally beneficial alternatives would be selected as the highest priority items, and should the problem not be solved then the next most desirable alternative would be selected.

"Mediation" Committee Report - Don Ogaard

Ogaard stated that the final agreement developed through the mediation process is essentially complete. He explained that draft copies would be available for review within the next couple of weeks. He added that he has attended nearly all of the nine watershed districts in the RRWMB to discuss the outcome of the mediation proceedings. He stated that a common response received from the districts regarded the changes that would take place within the current process. He explained that the success of the newly developed permitting process would depend upon the effort put into it.

Deal added that the final agreement should prove to be a good working document, but noted that all nine watershed districts would need to coordinate their efforts. He stated that all overall plans would need to be uniform and suggested that modifications could also be expanded to include rules and regulations.

Wilkens stated that the mediation process has been the most beneficial activity for watershed districts for quite some time. He noted that watershed districts have been limited to a narrow scope of activities during the last 10 years. He stated that the final agreement should form a commonality among agencies and create a spirit of cooperation. He concurred with Deal's recommendation to expand the overall plan revisions to include a review of rules and regulations.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to direct the Executive Director to prepare a letter to the Board of Water & Soil Resources to plan a forum prior to the spring conference dealing with modifying the rules and regulations for watershed districts, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

Ogaard discussed the 10-year protection standard. He explained that the agricultural land effected in the Red River valley was determined to be approximately 975,000 acres. He explained that by providing a reduction of 550,000 acre-feet, a significant reduction in flooding would occur. He added that the mediation group had discussed pursuing approximately \$250,000,000 from the legislature for flood damage reduction measures in the Red River valley over the next 15 years. He stated that the DNR has suggested a \$9,000,000 total appropriation including natural resource enhancements. He inquired on the capability of watershed districts to provide matching funds for implementing future projects. He explained that watershed districts should not be in the position of having state funds available for projects, but not having any individual funds to contribute for project development. Ogaard stated that he could prepare a letter and distribute to the individual districts explaining the need to evaluate projects in an effort to move forward. Nelson concurred with Ogaard that he should draft a letter and forward to the individual districts explaining what needs to be accomplished.

Ogaard stated that a meeting has been scheduled for January 27, 1999, at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN, in order to update the Red River basin on the mediation proceedings. He added that the meeting is also intended to lay the groundwork for the upcoming March Conference. He stated that the expenses associated with the mediation proceedings have been shared on an equal basis between the RRWMB and the DNR. He inquired whether the costs associated with the January meeting should be prorated in the same manner. **Motion** by Manager Deal to share in the costs associated with the January meeting equally with the DNR, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

Executive Director Report - Don Ogaard

Ogaard stated that a "forum" has been sponsored by the North Dakota Consensus Council to discuss flood damage mitigation measures in the Red River basin. Ogaard added that he and two other members of the mediation panel have been invited to participate.

He stated that a proposal to progress the Marsh Creek Site No. 6 lawsuit was discussed by the mediation panel. Several members agreed that the project should be reviewed by the TSAC and develop a recommendation. Thul inquired whether the DNR was in favor of proceeding with a TSAC review. Ogaard responded that the DNR agreed it could be an option that would resolve contentious issues.

"River Watch" Progress Report - Wayne Goeken

Goeken updated the Board on the progress of the River Watch program. A handout was distributed which reviewed existing and emerging programs. He stated that the program has expanded from the Sand Hill River WD to include schools within the Red Lake WD, and the Two Rivers WD. He stated that an annual forum is conducted each year at the University of Minnesota - Crookston, where training sessions introduce students to new concepts. He noted that he has also visited with the River Keepers in Fargo, which is developing a program in conjunction with Concordia College.

He stated that a goal of the program is to provide a consistent method of data collection. He explained that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is conducting a data assessment in the Red River valley in order to provide a comparison of acceptable methods. MPCA is also pursuing a grant to provide statewide coordination of data collection procedures.

Wilkens agreed that standardization is needed with current water quality initiatives. He stated that he would like to encourage MPCA's involvement in the River Watch program in an effort to obtain their endorsement of the program in the future. Baratono added that the River Watch program is emerging as a top priority item in the development of a basin wide plan. He noted the MPCA does not currently have a comprehensive plan of obtaining data, but stated that the committees associated with the development of the basin wide plan would assess the criteria necessary for data collection.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to fund the third year of the River Watch Program in the amount of \$20,000, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

Additional "Gaging Stations" Request - Lowell Enerson

Enerson discussed the possibility of installing a gage within the Burnham Creek Project of the Red Lake WD as an additional precautionary warning measure for the City of East Grand Forks, MN.

Ogaard inquired whether a backwater effect is experienced in this area. Charlie Anderson responded that a shift could occur in the rating curve because of backwater.

Loren Sanderson, Red Lake WD engineering assistant, stated that the closest gage to the site in question is located at Fisher, MN, which is 10-12 miles from the Red River. Brent Johnson added that the problem with gaging sites located near the Red River is that they are inaccessible during a flood event.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to authorize the installation of an additional gaging station in the Red Lake WD, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

Lowell Enerson used this opportunity to thank all the members of the RRWMB for the support given to the Red Lake WD in the past. He stated that he had accepted a position as the City Administrator in Arlington, MN, and would be leaving the Red Lake WD by month-end. He added that he hoped with the developments of the mediation process, the districts would be able to pursue the installation of flood control impoundments and also to expand water quality initiatives.

District's Funding Requests:

1. Wild Rice WD / System Approach to Water Management - Jerry Bennett

Bennett explained that the objective of the systems approach is to develop comprehensive and innovative concepts for reducing flood damages within the watershed district. The concepts developed using the systems approach would be oriented towards achieving flood damage reduction and natural resource goals.

The Wild Rice Watershed District requested funding assistance from the RRWMB in the amount of \$70,148 to assist with the implementation of this project. A breakdown of proposed project funding sources is as follows:

PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
MN Board of Water & Soil Resources	\$ 61,000
Department of Natural Resources	66,000
RRWMB	70,148
Wild Rice WD	<u>70,148</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 267,297</u>

Wilkens inquired whether the funding request included the development of a HEC 1 model for the district. Bennett responded that a model had already been developed by the district, however, they decided to pursue obtaining state funding in order to absorb some of the initial costs associated with the development of the model. He added that the model developed by the Wild Rice WD could be used to guide other districts when developing HEC 1 models.

Ogaard stated the importance of all entities working from the same set of standards and information. He added that this lesson was learned in the mediation process when the Wild Rice WD's HEC 1 model was utilized by the work group.

Wilkens noted that the systems approach is similar to the natural resource goals developed in the mediation process. He suggested that the RRWMB should implement the final agreement developed in the mediation process and by doing so, could assess what measures should be followed in each individual watershed district. He added that whatever course of action is adopted by the RRWMB would be setting a precedent for each individual watershed district to follow.

Ogaard stated that he believed the systems approach is a prototype, and that the Wild Rice WD is the district that was responsible for implementing it for the first time.

Wilkens added that the systems approach, as proposed by the Wild Rice WD, needs to contain all the attributes identified in the mediation process prior to receiving endorsement by the RRWMB. Deal concurred that it would be to the benefit of the Wild Rice WD to include all the natural resource goals identified in the mediation process.

After discussion, the board decided to table the funding request until the next monthly meeting.

2. Wild Rice WD / Wild Rice River Pilot Ice Control Project - Jerry Bennett

Bennett explained that the proposed project would involve the installation of two pilot ice control structures. One of the proposed pilot structures would be located upstream of the existing Heiberg Dam site near Twin Valley, and the other located downstream approximately four miles, in Section 14 of Lake Ida Township of Norman County. Implementation of the proposed project would alleviate erosion and tree destruction along the river, as well as reduce flood frequency and severity. Bennett added that monitoring these pilot projects would provide invaluable information to other watershed districts with similar problems.

The Wild Rice Watershed District requested funding from the RRWMB in the amount of \$42,000 to assist in the implementation of this project. A breakdown of proposed project funding sources is as follows:

PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
Division of Emergency Management	\$ 60,000
MN Board of Water & Soil Resources	33,000
RRWMB	42,000
Wild Rice WD	<u>42,000</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	S 177,000

Motion by Manager Nelson to authorize the funding request of \$42,000 for the installation of two pilot ice control structures, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on January 13, 1999, at 9:00 AM at the Doublewood Inn, Cedar Room, Fargo, North Dakota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Harley Younggren
Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol
Administrative Assistant