

# Red River Watershed Management Board

705 Fifth Street West Ada, MN 56510 Phone: (218)784-4156, Fax: (218)784-2015

## Board of Managers

John Finney-Humboldt Farrell Erickson-Badger Harley Younggren, Secretary-Hallock Ron Osowski, Chairman-Oslo Vernon Johnson-Clearbrook Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Robert Wright-Felton Curtis Nelson-Barnesville Jerome Deal-Wheaton Don Ogaard, Executive Director-Ada

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

February 16, 1999

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, February 16, 1999, 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  
Farrell Erickson Jerome Deal  
Vernon Johnson Robert Wright  
Harley Younggren

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  
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD  
Warren Seykora, Wild Rice WD  
Kathy Ross, Roseau River WD  
Gale Mayer, Department of Natural Resources  
George Dailey, Red Lake WD

Additional items were added to the agenda. Curtis Nelson inquired whether any funding assistance was available from the RRWMB regarding log jam removal. Ogaard stated that historically the individual watershed districts have assumed the responsibility for log jam removal without funding assistance from the RRWMB. Farrell Erickson stated that the Roseau River WD would be submitting a funding request under item #11.

The minutes of the January 13, 1999 meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. **Motion** to approve the minutes as written by Manager Johnson, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

Manager Wilkens stated that due to the 1998 audit, no report was prepared for the month of January. He explained that two issues were identified during the audit which are awaiting clarification from the auditor prior

to the proper correcting entries. The first issue identified was regarding an investment. Wilkens explained that a certificate of deposit which should have been listed in the account of the RRWMB, was incorrectly listed as a Sand Hill River WD investment. The error was identified when the investment matured, however, quarterly interest checks had been forwarded to the Sand Hill River WD throughout the year and improperly credited to their account. The second issue identified by the auditor was regarding the data and acquisition account of the Sand Hill River WD. The SHRWD had received funds for this account throughout the year, however, since they were not specifically identified on the documents forwarded by the counties, the funds were deposited into the administrative, construction, and RRWMB on a pro rata basis. This resulted in an overpayment to the RRWMB by the Sand Hill River WD by an undetermined amount. Wilkens stated that once the exact figures are obtained from the auditor regarding the two issues identified, the proper corrections would be made to the accounts.

Ogaard reviewed the monthly bills received. A **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Younggren, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Early Coordination Conference**

Ogaard distributed a draft agenda of the Early Coordination Conference sponsored by the RRWMB and the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group scheduled for March 18-19, 1999 at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN. He explained that distributing the notice of the meeting is the responsibility of the RRWMB. He added that an invitation could be developed and distributed along with a draft agenda by the same firm that distributes the monthly newsletter. He noted that the alternative would be to select individuals from the mailing list of the newsletter which is in excess of 1,200 names and forward the invitations only to those individuals selected. He stated that a committee comprised of himself, Don Buckhout-DNR, and Cheryl Miller-Audubon Society were designated to develop an invitation for distribution.

Wilkens stated that distributing an invitation to all the individuals on the newsletter mailing list would be beneficial. He added that the draft agenda should be included in the meeting notice as well.

Ogaard referred to a handout from January 27, 1999 meeting conducted at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN. He stated that the early coordination conference should include 1-3 problem areas from each district, along with maps or slides for discussion. He added that he attended some of the individual watershed district discussions that were conducted following the public presentation on January 27<sup>th</sup> and noted that several of the participants should keep in mind that the Early Coordination Conference is a watershed district program that will discuss potential projects that could be constructed by watershed districts. A process should also be identified to further the ongoing initiatives already begun by watershed districts since the Early Coordination Conference is intended to review problem areas from start to finish and not address those projects already initiated.

Johnson added that the RRWMB could determine that in addition to the annual meeting, more than one conference would be needed on an annual basis. Ogaard noted that there is no questions that funding would be made available to watershed districts based on their participation in the Early Coordination Conference.

Ogaard added that the individual watershed districts should forward a list of potential funding requests for the upcoming year to the Treasurer in order to ensure that proper funds will be available from the RRWMB.

Wilkins inquired whether a meeting should be scheduled with the engineers from the individual districts to discuss preparations for the Early Coordination Conference. After discussion, the engineers determined they could visit with each other informally regarding the preparations needed.

Ogaard stated that several agency representatives are scheduled to participate with the individual watershed district discussion groups at the Early Coordination Conference. Deal added that individuals that participated in the mediation process should be dispersed among the discussion groups as well.

Ogaard noted that since the Early Coordination Conference is essentially the responsibility of the RRWMB, the meeting expense would be incurred by the RRWMB. He added that he has contacted Paul Swenson-DNR to inquire on the possibility of sharing the meeting expense as had been done with the mediation proceedings. Gale Mayer added that he would discuss the mailing list and also the possibility of sharing in the meeting expense with Paul Swenson.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that the board met with Nolan Baraton, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), to discuss the efforts being made at the monthly Water Quality Planning meetings. It was reported that segments of the Roseau River are included on the MPCA's list of "Impaired Waters." Testing has shown areas north of the City of Roseau and at the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area have low levels of dissolved oxygen. Baraton suggested that in addition to Farrell Erickson's participation on the North Committee, the board might want to be more involved in the process to improve the river's water quality.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that the District held a meeting with a group of petitioners who had submitted a ditch petition to make an existing coulee system into a legal ditch system. The coulee currently serves as an outlet for an upstream county ditch and it outlets into a downstream judicial ditch. In addition, the coulee is listed on the DNR protected waters inventory. The petition, known as the Springbrook Ditch, has incurred expenses exceeding the original bond amount and requires that another bond be filed by the petitioners. The meeting was to update the petitioners as to what has been done and to go over potential design options. The petitioners will now decide whether or not to move forward with the project and will then inform the District of their intentions.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that the District and the City of Warren are in the process of developing a joint resolution which will provide for the District to implement the PL-566 project on the Snake River.

The District continues to work with representatives of the Audubon Society and others to develop a multi-purpose project for the Helgeland Site (Snake River #2). At the present time, various alternatives are being evaluated. The next planning meeting for this project has been set for early in March.

- The Red Lake WD reported that the Sentence to Serve Program of Pennington County is cleaning and snagging trees on State Ditch 83.

The board also approved water quality testing of the Ice Dusting Program on the Thief River that is scheduled to begin prior to the spring thaw. The Department of Emergency Management and the DNR will be providing the funding to conduct the testing.

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that at the regular monthly meeting, Manager Wilkens updated the Board of Managers on the progress of the Union-Lake Sarah situation. Wilkens stated that the Lake Association was recently given two options to consider. The first option would involve pumping the water out of the SW corner of Union Lake, and the second option would involve constructing a channel out of the north side of Lake Sarah. Wilkens stated that a final recommendation would be presented to the Lake Improvement District on February 25, 1999 by Nate Dalager-HDR Engineering. Following the recommendation by HDR Engineering, the Lake Improvement District will present their decision to the District for possible presentation at the Early Coordination Conference. Wilkens reported that Polk County has estimated that over \$800,000 has been lost in devaluation of property along the lakefront of Union Lake. The property devaluation will result in over \$17,000 in lost tax revenue each year in Polk County.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the District is close to wrapping up the final purchases in the rural acquisition program. Approximately 30 homeowners in the District have taken advantage of the program to sell damaged homes since the 1997 flood. Project work is beginning to focus on the demolition of the purchased homes. It was reported that rules in the program would necessitate doing asbestos inspections in each home slated for demolition. It is anticipated that the first phase of demolition will begin in the spring.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that a petition was received for the impoundment of water on Bisson Lake from Mike Murphy, Refuge Manager-Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge, on behalf of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). Studies of Bisson Lake have been ongoing for the past couple of years with the completion of survey work by Ducks Unlimited (DU), and a seepage analysis conducted by Dr. Jimmie Richardson, North Dakota State University (NDSU). Murphy presented the preliminary engineer's report for review by the BRRWD engineer, Rick St. Germain. The USFWS plans to complete the 100-acre restoration in 1999. A structure is planned on Becker County Ditch No. 15-Main.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the Red River Basin Board has reconsidered its decision to request the USACE to do a reconnaissance study on enhancing the flood control capabilities of the Lake Traverse Project and the addition of an additional structure downstream from the White Rock Dam at the village of White Rock, SD. This decision came upon receipt of the BdSWD opposition.

**Red River Coordinator/TAC Report** – Dan Thul

Thul stated that regarding the 1997 Flood report, Brent Johnson is scheduled to meet with the Red River Basin Board Flood Damage Reduction team to give a slide presentation of the results of the TAC efforts.

Thul discussed the funding proposal regarding updating the overall plans of the individual watershed districts in the Red River basin which would include the preparation of HEC 1 models. St. Germain stated that he is developing a draft regarding the proposal to be submitted to Ron Harnack-Executive Director of the Board of Water & Soil Resources. St. Germain added that he would discuss the proposal with Harnack regarding the level of detail to include in the proposal.

Thul noted that the current proposal consists of approximately 12 pages, and inquired whether a summary version should be prepared. Ogaard concurred that a condensed version should be developed, but noted that both long and short versions are needed in order to adequately describe the process.

St. Germain added that Harnack had indicated an emphasis on natural resource goals should be included in the overall plan updates. St. Germain noted that participation would be requested from other agencies regarding the updates.

Ogaard inquired whether the DNR has developed an internal process for assisting with the overall plan updates. Mayer stated that the DNR has determined the staffing needs for participating in the overall plans.

St. Germain inquired about the timeframe for submitting the proposal for the overall plan updates to the DNR for review. Ogaard responded that funding must be secured prior to pursuing the proposal to update overall plans.

Thul inquired whether the proposal would be forwarded from the TAC or the RRWMB. Ogaard stated that the RRWMB would endorse the proposal, however, all the activity outlined in the proposal would be the responsibility of the individual watershed districts.

Thul explained that the current proposal allows for cost share funding by the individual districts through the RRWMB in the amount of \$150,000 - \$200,000 per watershed district to develop HEC 1 models. The proposal also includes coordination meetings with various state agencies in order to incorporate natural resource goals into the next generation overall plans.

Anderson stated the need for the proposal to be flexible so that each district could use the system according to the needs of their district. Ogaard agreed but noted that each district needs to comply with an umbrella policy in order to ensure uniformity.

Erickson inquired whether each district would submit for funding to the RRWMB regarding the overall plan updates. Ogaard stated that the state agencies have indicated their preference to work through the RRWMB rather than each watershed district on an individual basis.

**Motion** by Manager Erickson to authorize the application to the Board of Water & Soil Resources for the systems approach grant application, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

Ogaard stated that another link in the modeling effort would be with the International Joint Commission (IJC) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) initiatives. He added that the end product must be usable with other entities.

Brent Johnson explained that while developing a plan for each watershed district in the valley in response to the mediation process, he noted his concern regarding the potential for upcoming Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). He noted that if unified plans were developed throughout the valley, perhaps the state agencies would be more supportive. He added that he had hoped the mediation process would have eliminated the need to prepare EIS's or at least make the preparation of an EIS a less adversarial process.

Thul stated that Brent Johnson had been contacted by an engineer from the Maple River Dam project in North Dakota regarding an environmental review comment period. Thul stated that the TAC determined a positive comment would be submitted due to the benefits of the project to the Red River mainstem.

Wilkins inquired on the non-gated structure and whether the benefits of a gated structure had been discussed. Thul responded that the engineers had indicated that a non-gated structure proved to have substantial impacts on the Red River.

Ogaard inquired whether the RRWMB should offer support of the Maple River Dam project. After board discussion, a determination was made to forward a letter of support regarding the Maple River Dam project to the engineer in charge of the project. **Motion** by Manager Nelson to forward the letter of support, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Thul stated that a meeting had been scheduled with the USACE in cooperation with the IJC for Thursday, February 11, 1999 to discuss how the modeling proposals for the individual watershed districts would coordinate with the various agencies. Due to poor weather conditions, the meeting had to be postponed to Friday, February 19, 1999. Several state agency representatives attended the meeting including Mel Sinn and Jim Solstad of the DNR. Others in attendance included Randy Gjestvang, Rick St. Germain, and Brent Johnson. Thul explained that the individuals attending the meeting seemed interested in coordinating the modeling effort, however, representation was still lacking from the USACE. Thul stated that another meeting would try to be scheduled in St. Paul with the USACE to discuss the modeling effort.

Thul stated that the TAC discussed a USGS proposal regarding a wetland land use study. Brent Johnson stated that the USGS had proposed a study in conjunction with various federal and state agencies regarding a wetlands study on both sides of the Red River in basins of approximately 10-15 square miles. Johnson added that the goal of the study is to get an idea of the hydrologic realm and noted that the study would begin sometime this spring and include sites in both Minnesota and North Dakota. Johnson stated that the agencies that have been approached for funding include the North Dakota State Water Commission, the Red River Joint Water Resources Board, and the RRWMB. The study would involve approximately \$15,000 per year for a five-year period.

Thul stated that the TAC recommended that the board consider support of the study in the amount of \$15,000 per year for five years with technical representation from the TAC. Ogaard inquired whether a formal request would be submitted to the RRWMB at the next meeting. Thul responded that the RRWMB could expect such a request.

#### **Executive Director Report** – Don Ogaard

Ogaard stated that he received a letter from MnDOT relative to the installation of boundary signs between the watershed districts. He explained that the RRWMB had discussed a proposal in September of 1998 to install boundary signs between watershed districts that would signify that motorists are leaving one watershed and entering another. The total number of signs needed throughout the jurisdiction of the RRWMB would be approximately 55 signs. The response received from MnDOT stated that they would not be interested in participating in the installation of any signs and, in addition, would not allow any signs to be installed. The letter noted that any watershed district interested in installing signs could do so only at the rest stops located within the watershed district.

Ogaard noted that as a result of the mediation process, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers forwarded an invitation to participate in a meeting scheduled for February 19, 1999 in St. Paul. The participation of the USACE relative to the mediation agreement will be discussed.

The Flood Damage Reduction Team of the Red River Basin Board was discussed. Ogaard explained that he proposed consolidating with the North Dakota Consensus Council initiative which was developed to coordinate recommendations for FEMA. He noted the importance of flood damage reduction initiatives proceeding from one basic set of information.

The USGS water retention study was discussed. Ogaard explained that a representative from EPA was in Fargo on February 11, 1999 to discuss the water quality initiatives conducted throughout the Red River basin. Ogaard noted that he discussed the proposal with Mark Brigham of the USGS who has been responsible for coordinating all water retention initiatives. Ogaard added that he informed Brigham that a formal request would need to be forwarded to the RRWMB prior to consideration of funding.

Ogaard updated the board regarding proposed legislation for flood damage reduction and natural resource benefits throughout the Red River basin. He stated that an additional 1.3 million is being sought from the governor's budget. The original proposal includes \$2,000,000 for the first year, and \$1,000,000 for the second year. He added that separate legislation is being sought for the Red River Basin Board for \$200,000 for administrative costs.

Bennett discussed the legislative breakfast scheduled for March 10, 1999. He stated that meetings have been scheduled with LeRoy Stumpf, Roger Moe, Bernie Lieder, and Keith Langseth. He encouraged district board members to attend the meeting and requested those interested in attending to contact him at the Wild Rice WD office in order to reserve a meeting room of adequate size.

**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 intent is to undertake a detailed technical review of various flood damage reduction alternatives and to evaluate how various alternatives can be used in combination to achieve a technical defensible concept necessary for a long-term solution to flooding in the Wild Rice Marsh River Basin.

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>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$ 267,297</u></b>

Ogaard stated that Ron Harnack-Executive Director of the Board of Water & Soil Resources had indicated that he would consider it beneficial should the RRWMB approve funding in order to further the efforts of the Wild Rice WD. Harnack also noted that should the funding be approved to update the overall plans of the individual watershed districts in the Red River basin, the Wild Rice WD would be included in the proposal.

Bennett stated that the Wild Rice WD developed a budget of \$267,297 which was to be used for developing a comprehensive plan. He stated that the modeling efforts conducted by the Wild Rice WD could be used as a guide for other watershed districts to follow.

Wilkins inquired whether the Wild Rice WD would require the total amount of funding needed to update the overall plan including the preparation of a HEC 1 model, and if so, would the state match half of the costs with the other half absorbed equally by the RRWMB and the Wild Rice WD. Bennett responded that the Wild Rice WD has invested a considerable amount of funds thus far. Bennett added that these costs have been absorbed entirely by the Wild Rice WD, however, this effort proved to be very valuable to all the watershed districts as evidenced in the mediation process.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkins to authorize the funding request of \$70,148, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

2. **Bois de Sioux WD / North Ottawa Project-Pay Request #3:** Jon Roeschlein discussed the pay request submitted by the BdSWD on the reverse side of the District's monthly report. The North Ottawa Project received the following receipts in 1998:

03/06/98 RRWMB	\$ 378,298.25
12/14/98 Cash CD	25,000.00
12/31/98 Total 1998 Interest	4,040.59
1998 Rental Income	<u>132,377.32</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$ 539,716.16</u></b>

Receipts less expenses	\$ 126,653.95
Beginning Balance 1998	<u>93,002.33</u>
Balance on hand 12/31/98	<b><u>\$ 219,656.28</u></b>

Contract for Deed Payment 1998	
Principle \$297,816.75	
Interest 62,541.52	\$ 360,358.27
Less Balance on hand	<u>219,656.28</u>
Net RRWMB Funding Request	<b><u>\$ 140,701.99</u></b>

Roeschlein stated that the funding request for 1999 was less than the amount requested in 1998 due to several factors. The reduction in principle resulted in a decreased amount of interest due, and also the availability of liquid assets (certificates of deposit) that were not available to the District last year, were available to use this year. Roeschlein noted that the average amount to be requested on an annual basis from the RRWMB would average approximately \$250,000.00.

Roeschlein explained that when the project was approved for funding by the RRWMB, the agreement included that should the land acquisition show a profit from rental income received, the RRWMB reserved the right to request a partial payback of funds from the BdSWD. He further noted that since the land acquisition has not been completed, no funds would be sought from the RRWMB until the purchases were completed.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkins to authorize the funding request of \$140,701.99, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

3. **Roseau River WD / Grant Application**: Manager Erickson discussed a proposal for a grant application to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding preliminary engineering costs. Charlie Anderson explained that the grant application would involve costs of \$25,000 and, if received, would assist in the preparation of a preliminary engineering study for the Hay Creek area. Anderson added that this is a stream restoration project which would include set-back levees coupled with off-channel storage.

**Motion** by Manager Younggren to approve funding the grant application in the amount of \$25,000, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

**Lake Traverse Task Force Update** – Jon Roeschlein

Roeschlein explained that he was co-chair of the Lake Traverse task force appointed by the Red River Basin Board (RRBB). The task force was developed to identify and prioritize issues for the lake and its watershed. He stated that in September the task force agreed to recommend to the RRBB to request the USACE to review the following three areas:

1. The feasibility of adding more storage to the Mud Lake/Lake Traverse complex.
2. Installing an additional structure at White Rock, MN.
3. Request the COE to investigate and identify potential impoundments in the Lake Traverse drainage basins.

Roeschlein noted his concern that those projects identified by USACE as not feasible to construct under USACE criteria, would be considered by the residents of the BdSWD as not feasible to construct under any circumstances. He stated that he encouraged the task force to not pursue USACE involvement but was overruled. He explained that should the USACE determine that installing an additional structure at White Rock be feasible, then financial and political support would be lost downstream. He noted that he would prefer to explore the possibilities of constructing projects upstream, prior to constructing an additional structure at White Rock.

Roeschlein stated that the task force recommended that the RRBB request a reconnaissance study from the USACE regarding raising the level of Lake Traverse. He noted that the RRBB endorsed the request to proceed with the reconnaissance study without fully exploring all the consequences of such actions. Following the endorsement received from the RRBB, the BdSWD forwarded a letter to the chairman of the RRBB stating their opposition to the proposed study. Roeschlein stated that upon receipt of the opposition letter from the BdSWD, the RRBB determined that the reconnaissance study should not proceed until further information is obtained.

**Potential Projects for 1999**

Ogaard stated that the individual districts should forward information to the Executive Director regarding potential projects that would need to be funded in the upcoming year. He explained that an additional 1.3 million for flood damage reduction projects is currently being sought in the legislature, and that these funds would be available to the individual watershed districts through the RRWMB on a cost share basis similar to the apportionment of funds through the ring dike program.

Alternative meeting dates were discussed in order to coincide with the Early Coordination Conference scheduled for March 18-19, 1999. **Motion** by Manager Deal to reschedule the regular monthly meeting of the

RRWMB for March 17, 1999, at 2:00 p.m. at the Northland Inn, Crookston, Minnesota, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

E. Harley Younggren  
Secretary

---

Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant