

# Red River Watershed Management Board

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## Board of Managers

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

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

April 20, 1999

Norwest Bank, Barnesville, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, April 20, 1999, at the Norwest Bank, Barnesville, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Farrell Erickson Harley Younggren  
Vernon Johnson Daniel Wilkens  
Robert Wright Curtis Nelson  
Jerome Deal

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director  
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD  
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering  
Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD  
Ginny Imholte, Pelican River WD  
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD  
Susan Pender, Buffalo-Red River WD  
John C. Anderson, Certified Mapping Scientist, EnviroData, Inc.  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office

An additional item was added to the agenda. Don Ogaard requested that an additional issue be discussed during the Executive Director Report.

The minutes of the March 19, 1999 meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. **Motion** to approve the minutes as written by Manager Erickson, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Manager Wilkens inquired whether clarification was needed regarding the motion passed at the previous meeting regarding the original funding request of the Bois de Sioux WD for the North Ottawa Project. He explained that discussion had occurred at the December 1998 meeting of the RRWMB regarding the original intent of the motion, but that no documentation was retrieved at that time for clarification. He further noted that since excerpts from the meetings on January 16, 1996 and February 20, 1996 were provided and discussed at the board meeting today, any misunderstanding of the original motion should be accounted for.

Motion from March 19, 1999 board meeting: “**Motion** by Manager Finney to reaffirm the original intent of the funding request of the Bois de Sioux WD for the North Ottawa Project to include the stipulation stating that construction must begin within a five-year period or the funds would be returned to the RRWMB, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.”

Manager Osowski stated that at the time of the original motion, the stipulation for the return of funds to the RRWMB should construction not begin within a five year period, was based on the uncertainty of whether the Bois de Sioux WD would become a member of the RRWMB.

Manager Johnson inquired that should the property acquired for the North Ottawa Project be sold, would any excess funds be remitted to the RRWMB. Ogaard responded that since the Bois de Sioux WD is the landowner, the excess funds would remain with their watershed district.

The Board has currently passed two motions regarding the North Ottawa Project. The original January 16, 1996 motion which states "if no project is forthcoming, the RRWMB at its discretion may request the funds be returned" and the March 19, 1999 motion which states "after five years the funds shall be returned." After discussion, the Board agreed that the original motion should prevail.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to reaffirm the original motion which included the following: *"If a water control project cannot be built within five years, the RRWMB shall at that time determine if the land should be resold and the RRWMB reimbursed fully for all funds forwarded to the BdSWD up to that time."* **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **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. A **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

#### **Report on Accounting Training Seminar** – Dan Wilkens/Naomi Jagol

Manager Wilkens distributed a handout outlining the training seminar. He explained that the following watershed accounting/bookkeepers attended the seminar: Joe River- John and Maureen Finney, Roseau River- Kathy Ross, Middle River-Snake River-Connie Kujawa, Red Lake-Arlene Novak and Tammy Audette, Sand Hill River-Naomi Jagol and Daniel Wilkens, Buffalo-Red River-Bruce Albright and Susan Pender, and Bois de Sioux-Jon Roeschlein.

Deb Sletmoen, Solutions Center, Fargo ND, conducted the seminar at the Sand Hill River WD office. Ms. Sletmoen stated that the objective of the seminar was to provide assistance with the implementation of QuickBooks. She stated that after installing the QuickBooks program, the following objectives could be accomplished: create a new QuickBooks company; add information to company lists, or edit information in company lists; modify the preset chart of accounts to suit their needs; invoice customers; customize a QuickBooks sales form; write a letter in Microsoft Word using QuickBooks data; receive payments from customers and make bank deposits; write QuickBooks checks and assign amounts to specific expense accounts; enter bills into QuickBooks accounts payable; pay bills; open and use registers for any QuickBooks balance sheet accounts; reconcile a QuickBooks checking account; track credit card transactions; work with asset and liability accounts in QuickBooks; create and customize QuickBooks reports and graphs; export a QuickBooks report to Microsoft Excel; track and pay sales tax; set up inventory with QuickBooks; set up and do payroll in QuickBooks; create estimates and do progress invoicing in QuickBooks Pro; and do time tracking and pay nonemployees for time worked in QuickBooks Pro.

The seminar encouraged discussion among those attending the training session. The attendees agreed on the need to develop a unified accounting system among the districts in order to provide for an internal support

system. The attendees also determined that technical support from Solutions Center would be very beneficial for each district during the implementation phase of the QuickBooks Pro program.

Manager Wilkens recommended to the Board of Managers that the RRWMB continue to fund the initiative of providing internal support to each of the watershed districts within the RRWMB for the implementation of QuickBooks Pro program. He suggested that Sletmoen could convert the RRWMB's accounting system to QuickBooks Pro and develop a sample program tailored for the watershed districts. He noted that once the sample program has been developed, this could be used for implementing QuickBooks Pro in each watershed district office.

Roeschlein concurred with Manager Wilkens' recommendation. He added that while attending the training session, he was impressed that the program would integrate so many parameters of the various accounting procedures. Susan Pender added that the software, although quite inexpensive, has numerous capabilities.

Manager Johnson noted that he had visited with the Red Lake WD accounting staff following the seminar and they strongly supported the implementation of the QuickBooks Pro program for the watershed districts.

Manager Osowski inquired on the amount needed to fund the implementation of the QuickBooks Pro program for all the watershed districts. Manager Wilkens responded that Solutions Center charges \$70.00 per hour for the trainer's time, with travel time billed at half that amount. Roeschlein added that the trainer had estimated that it would require approximately 8 hours per district to convert the current accounting system to the new program. Roeschlein further suggested that each District could be responsible for purchasing the program, but that limited technical support should be available to each District for a specified time period following the conversion funded by the RRWMB.

**Motion** by Manager Johnson to authorize the RRWMB to fund the implementation phase of the QuickBooks Pro program for each watershed district. Each District would be responsible for purchasing the software with limited technical support available to each District for a specified time period following the conversion funded by the RRWMB. **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that a second informational meeting is scheduled with the landowners of the Hay Creek Project on Tuesday, April 27, 1999. Items to be discussed include the changes in land use resulting from the 1999 CRP sign-up, concerns with the backwater affects that the project may have upstream, and the possible involvement and funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that the provisional Corps 404 permit has been received for the Angus Oslo Site #4. The details of the "restrictive covenant" for the wetlands involved in the mitigation are being finalized. The section 401 certification has not yet been received by the District, however, it is expected shortly. Once the necessary permits have been received, the District will proceed with a step III submittal. The District is currently advertising for bids and plans to open the bids on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

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, a variety of alternatives are being evaluated.

- The Red Lake WD reported that the District has received numerous requests for assistance in the construction of ring dikes during the last few weeks. The staff has also been very busy monitoring the current spring run-off event.

The District has hired a new Administrator, Chuck Fritz, who will begin his employment on May 13, 1999.

- The Sand Hill River WD reported that the District has forwarded a grant application to the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to assist in developing a GIS based ditch mapping system for the District. This project was started several years ago, however, based on the increased need for mapping information that has occurred within the District, this project has moved to a priority status.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Board of Managers discussed the proposed guidelines for the flood storage easement pilot program at their April regular meeting. In 1998, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation for a pilot program to establish easements on agricultural land for the purpose of floodwater storage. The pilot program legislation called for the program to be implemented by two different local units of government. The Wild Rice WD and the Red Lake WD were selected to implement the program.

Proposed guidelines for the pilot program were discussed with the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) at their March meeting. The objective of this project is to implement relatively minor structural improvements and flood storage easements that will reduce potential flood damages while enhancing the environment. This program will result in local flood damage reduction through the use of small-dispersed detention sites.

The flood storage easement provides a method to purchase limited property rights on relatively small parcels of land. Landowners will be able to retain ownership of his/her property and the public receives flood storage, resulting in a win-win for both parties.

Costs associated with the Flood Storage Easement Program will primarily be shared between the State of Minnesota and the local government unit. The state share is envisioned to be administered by BWSR. BWSR will be reviewing cost-share guidelines at their April regular meeting.

In addition to flood damage reduction, the project will provide many other benefits including: water quality improvements; wildlife habitat enhancement; erosion control; as well as opportunities for recreation and aesthetic appreciation. The WRWD feels that the Flood Storage Easement Pilot Program is a worthwhile project and may become a beneficial flood damage reduction tool throughout the Red River basin, as well as throughout the State of Minnesota.

- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District met with a group of about 75 property owners on Turtle Lake on April 17, 1999. Turtle Lake is a 200-acre lake located at the eastern edge of the District. The lake does not have a natural outlet. The District will discuss whether or not to consider an emergency project at their meeting next week. If the project moves forward, the technical staff will look at the feasibility of pumping or constructing an outlet.

The District along with the City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, Fargo Park District, MN DNR and the Southeast Cass Water Resource District received the 1999 RiverKeepers Partnership Award for their involvement in the refurbishing of the Midtown Dam in Fargo/Moorhead. The project involved augmenting the existing low level dam with a rock slope spillway. The projects main focus was to eliminate a dangerous undertow that has been linked to 19 deaths since 1960. A secondary benefit is that the project will improve fish migration. Two other dams in the metro area are being considered for the same treatment.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the District is planning to develop modeling within the District. A small sub-watershed has been selected so that some questions may be answered regarding a bridge replacement project. The information generated will be used in the overall modeling effort of the District. The Board of Managers determined that the modeling effort should be considered a priority item of the District.

### **Report on Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) Project Team Meetings**

Manager Wilkens inquired about the responsible party for providing funding for the costs incurred by the FDR project teams. He stated that since the meeting for the Sand Hill River WD (SHRWD) project team occurred at the District office, the District absorbed the meeting expense. He noted his concern for the funds expended thus far by the District, and added that the next scheduled meeting of the project team will include a tour of the District which involves renting a tour bus. He added that the first SHRWD FDR project team meeting went very well but noted the need for the participants to become more familiar with the District. Manager Wilkens inquired whether funding the FDR project teams were of concern to the other watershed districts. The managers from the various watershed districts responded that it was of great concern due to their limited operating budgets.

Ogaard explained that the FDR work group had agreed that it would be beneficial to have himself and Don Buckhout-DNR attend each of the first FDR project team meetings in order to insure that they are proceeding in the right direction and also to field any questions about the mediation agreement. He further noted that he had attended 3 of the 4 FDR project team meetings that have occurred to date.

Roeschlein reported that the FDR project team of the BdSWD had met yesterday and that Don Buckhout was in attendance. He stated that the team is focusing on the North Ottawa Project and is specifically trying to identify natural resource alternatives. He added that Buckhout had indicated the project team should continue in the direction they are pursuing.

Manager Osowski inquired of Roeschlein on the membership of the BdSWD FDR project team. Roeschlein responded that the project team includes representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Ducks Unlimited (DU), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and local landowners/citizens.

Manager Wilkens inquired on whether the project teams include the entire board of managers or just a representative. Ogaard recommended that a high percentage of board representation would be desirable. Roeschlein added that the BdSWD considers the board of managers as part of the committee and encourages the entire board to attend the FDR project team meetings.

Manager Wright stated that the Wild Rice WD (WRWD) FDR project team has met and the meeting went very well. He noted that it involved more general discussions which included a pilot project on flooded ag land. He added that the first meeting included a tour of the District which provided good background information from which the project team can proceed.

Manager Nelson noted that the Buffalo-Red River WD (BRRWD) had scheduled the first FDR project team meeting for April 14<sup>th</sup>, however, had to postpone it due to the unavailability of Bob Merritt-DNR.

Manager Johnson stated that the first Red Lake WD (RLWD) FDR project team meeting is scheduled for April 21, 1999 to coincide with the District's regular board meeting.

Manager Deal stated that several representatives from the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) met with Cheryl Miller-National Audubon Society regarding the flood storage easement program administered by BWSR. He noted that the group discussed the amount of funds needed to pay for the easements. He further added that the environmental interpretation of the program was quite different than the watershed district interpretation. Ogaard added that some environmental groups believe there are a number of low-cost alternatives available, however, this is not always the case.

Manager Erickson stated that Roseau River WD (RRWD) FDR project team is scheduled to meet again on April 27, 1999 and will assign co-chairs at that meeting. He noted the need for the project team to review problem areas instead of only specific projects.

Ginny Imholte, Pelican River WD and BWSR representative, commented on the meeting conducted at the WRWD regarding the flood storage easement program. She stated that she intended to attend the meeting in order to understand the watershed district perspective and to discuss the various alternatives. She noted her surprise to learn that the environmental groups were unaware of the costs incurred by the watershed district for various projects.

Ogaard stated that he had been contacted by an individual from the WRWD regarding whether the meeting conducted relative to the flood storage easement program was representative of how the mediation process was going to work in the future. He noted that he explained that the mediation process would operate on the basis of consensus.

Manager Wilkens inquired on how to obtain adequate representation from the environmental groups on the project teams. Ogaard responded that he had visited with the local chapter of the Audubon Society and apparently there is virtually no contact with the National Audubon Society based in the Twin Cities.

Imholte noted the difficulty that the participants in the flood storage easement program had in keeping flood damage reduction initiatives as their top priority. Deal added that BWSR is concerned about the political connections of the environmental groups in the legislature. Imholte noted that she is concerned with the association of the Audubon Society to the Re-invest In Minnesota (RIM) funding.

#### **Red River Coordinator/TAC Report** – Rick St. Germain

In the absence of Dan Thul, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) report was presented by Rick St. Germain.

St. Germain stated that the TAC discussed the opportunities for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands to be used for wetland mitigation. He noted that more opportunities exist in the northern portion of the Red River basin. He added that the willingness of environmental groups to agree to the two-foot bounce criteria as outlined in the mediation agreement is partly responsible for these opportunities.

Anderson suggested that Dan Thul could evaluate the proposed sites for wetland mitigation utilizing the STAR value method. St. Germain added that incentives could also be developed to encourage landowner participation.

Ogaard stated that regarding farmland storage proposals, it is difficult to reach agreement on landowner compensation since environmental groups believe the land should be donated by the landowners, and the

landowners believe that the cost of storage should be shared by the agencies involved. St. Germain noted that the land value should be determined based on a flood value perspective.

St. Germain inquired about the data collected with regard to CRP land. Manager Wilkens responded that the state determines the guidelines for the program.

Anderson stated that there is significant interest in the CRP program in Kittson, Roseau, and Marshall counties. He noted that problems arise when determining how to classify the present value of a 10-year sign up versus a perpetual sign up.

Manager Johnson inquired whether the TAC could determine a method for valuing the proposed sites. Anderson noted that the workload in determining a valuation would be significant but that economic formulas could be used.

St. Germain stated that the TAC also discussed culvert sizing with regard to flood damage reduction alternatives. He noted that the TAC would encourage culvert sizing from the upper reaches in a watershed all the way down to the lower end in order to realize significant benefits.

Ogaard inquired whether the TAC discussion was based on natural or legal ditch systems. St. Germain responded that it would vary among watershed districts. He further noted that in order for culvert sizing to be effective, the natural systems would need to be included.

Anderson suggested that the TAC could demonstrate a modeling effort at the next RRWMB meeting in order to determine the benefits of culvert sizing. He noted that a brief presentation of approximately 30 minutes could do an adequate job.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize the TAC to conduct the STAR value method for proposed wetland mitigation, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

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

Ogaard reported that the Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) work group is scheduled to meet at 9:00 a.m. on May 7, 1999 at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.

**Legislative Funding:** The legislative funding to be sought for flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements was discussed. Ogaard explained that 1.3 million has been added to the Governor's budget of \$3,000,000.00 and is intended to be dedicated to the completion of the permits already in progress. He added that should the legislature approve the 1.3 million, matching funds would be required on behalf of the watershed districts. He noted that prior to the introduction of the legislation, he met with Cheryl Miller and Don Arnosti of the National Audubon Society who indicated that the FDR work group should review each of the projects currently progressing through the permitting system. He stated that after discussion, a concession was agreed to that the funds should be used to finalize those permits already in progress, but that a presentation to the FDR work group would be necessary prior to obtaining approval from the work group.

Ogaard stated that on May 7, 1999 the Districts that currently have projects within the step process of the RRWMB should conduct a presentation to the FDR work group in order to obtain approval for moving forward.

Ogaard stated that he presented testimony in both the House and the Senate regarding the proposed legislation. He explained that questions were received regarding whether or not the RRWMB was taxing at full capacity

prior to seeking state funds. He noted that the legislators were concerned with the fact that the RRWMB is currently only taxing at  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their capacity. He added that the legislators urged the RRWMB to levy at the maximum amount prior to seeking state funds in the future.

Manager Johnson inquired whether the RRWMB currently has sufficient funds in the treasury to match the funds being sought from the legislature. Ogaard responded that after the RRWMB funds the projects currently within the step process, no funds would remain to provide a match.

Prioritizing Future Project Proposals for Funding: The prioritization of future project proposals for funding was discussed. Ogaard stated that should the levy be raised to the maximum amount, the RRWMB could levy just under \$1 million for this board. He explained that the legislature must have the funding proposal by August 15, 1999 in order to include the funds in the bonding bill. He noted that projections would be needed from individual districts in order for the RRWMB to prioritize the projects that would require funding assistance. He added that he has forwarded correspondence to Don Buckhout-DNR to request that these items be included on the agenda for May 7, 1999.

Ogaard noted his concern over not obtaining state funds due to the fact that the RRWMB is not levying at maximum capacity. He explained that even with obtaining state funds, only \$900,000 could be levied within the individual watershed districts and \$900,000 within the RRWMB. He inquired about the process to prioritize the various project applications received from the various watershed districts.

Manager Wilkens noted that each project has been evaluated on an individual basis, rather than determining basin-wide benefits. Ogaard recommended that the Project Evaluation Committee should begin its reviewing procedures.

Ogaard added that he would forward a letter to the watershed districts that currently have projects within the step process of the RRWMB and request that a presentation be given at the May 7, 1999 meeting in Crookston, MN to the FDR work group.

Year 2000 Legislative Bonding: Ogaard noted that direction is needed regarding the Year 2000 legislative bonding funding requests for flood damage reduction initiatives. He stated that currently \$1.5 million is in the budget for Area II flood control, which is composed of counties and watershed districts in southwest Minnesota. He noted that traditionally approximately 75% of state funds were provided for these initiatives, however, the environmental groups have indicated a desire to eliminate this percentage and request a 50/50 cost share. He suggested developing a process to obtain bonding on a 75/25 cost share basis.

Manager Johnson stated that the RRWMB should seek the maximum cost-share allowed in order that sufficient funding would be available for future projects.

Ogaard suggested that problem areas should be identified and given a project name in order to process them through the system in conjunction with the funding initiative. He noted the importance of obtaining agency participation while securing funds from the legislature.

Proposed Grant Writing for Natural Resource Project Enhancements: The Board of Managers discussed proposed grant writing for projects including natural resource enhancements. Ogaard explained that throughout the mediation process, individuals referred to funds that were available for such projects for those interested parties submitting a grant application. He inquired whether this issue would fit into the mediation process initiative. He noted that a system would need to be developed that would offset the negative environmental aspects with the positive aspects of flood damage reduction.

Process/Fund Natural Resource Enhancement Projects: The method for funding natural resource enhancements was discussed. Ogaard stated that he has been in contact with several individuals within the DNR and they are promoting a number of natural resource projects that do not include a flood damage reduction component. He noted that a belief exists on the environmental side that the watershed districts are expected to fund the natural resource enhancements as a condition of constructing flood damage reduction projects. He added that a value system is needed to insure that if negative environmental factors are involved, they would be offset with natural resource enhancements.

Requests for Flood Damage Reduction funding from other Governmental Entities: Ogaard discussed whether policy is needed regarding requests for flood damage reduction funding from other governmental entities. He noted that currently, only BWSR is available for watershed districts to forward funding requests.

Ogaard inquired whether a coordinator is needed during the interim period of implementing the mediation agreement. He suggested obtaining the services of Ron Nargang, retired Deputy Commissioner of the DNR, to implement the mediation agreement on behalf of the RRWMB. Manager Johnson inquired about the public perception should the RRWMB hire a retired DNR representative to implement the mediation agreement. Ogaard responded that an individual is needed in order to insure that the terms of the mediation agreement are carried out, and Nargang would be an extremely knowledgeable individual to fill this position. Johnson concurred with Ogaard that Nargang would be a very qualified candidate.

Adrian inquired whether obtaining the services of Nargang to represent the RRWMB would be considered a conflict of interests and could possibly be an obstruction in implementing the mediation agreement. Ogaard responded that Nargang has a real desire to make this process work and could be very beneficial to both the RRWMB and the environmental groups. Deal concurred with Ogaard and noted that Nargang is very committed to the watershed districts and flood damage reduction initiatives. Ogaard noted that Nargang's services would be obtained solely as a consultant to implement the mediation process, not as a political lobbyist.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to direct the Executive Director to negotiate to hire Ron Nargang as a consultant for a 12-month period with a 30-day notice to terminate contingent that he would be employed solely as a consultant for the RRWMB, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

**MPCA Special Report** – Stephen Mikkelson

Mikkelson reported that a series of meetings are scheduled throughout the state to gather citizens to discuss what they consider priority issues for MPCA. He invited any interested members of the RRWMB to attend the meetings.

Mikkelson explained that the goal of the Forum is to involve a broad cross-section of individuals from the communities. Participants will use an electronic keypad to anonymously respond to questions posed by the moderator. Results of the keypad voting will be tabulated by a computer and immediately displayed to the group. He stated that the Detroit Lakes Forum is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, 1999, with a buffet from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m. and the Forum to be conducted from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Holiday Inn, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Manager Wilkens inquired about what types of questions would be presented. Mikkelson responded that the questions were developed in St. Paul based on a survey that was distributed during the last several months.

Mikkelson noted that the results obtained from the Forums would be used to guide future decision making within the MPCA.

Manager Nelson inquired on the area where the Forums would be conducted. Mikkelson responded that the Forum is intended to include the entire Red River basin on the Minnesota side, with a concentration in Becker, Norman, Clay, and Otter Tail counties.

**Wetland Evaluation Methodology** – John C. Anderson, EnviroData, Inc.

John C. Anderson, a certified mapping scientist with EnviroData, Inc., discussed the benefits of conducting a restorable/existing wetlands inventory. He explained that knowing the rules and standards set by the Wetland Conservation Act and the Clean Water Act can mean the difference between success and failure in a project. He stated that EnviroData, Inc. provides not only professional site evaluation, but also guides permit applicants through the maze of federal, state and local compliance and regulations.

Anderson stated that trend analyses are conducted that utilize a set of statistical data that comes out every 10 years. These analyses determine how much wetland area has been lost and how much has been drained or tiled, and then extrapolates the information into dollars per acre for mitigation. This process allows for a determination to be made regarding the value of each restoration. He explained that each type of wetland as seen on an aerial photograph is compiled into mapping conventions that have data sheets which are tied to a specific location on the ground.

Ogaard inquired whether the information provided by EnviroData, Inc. could be used for the development of wetland banking. Anderson responded that the mapping provided could assist in identifying potential wetlands.

Ogaard inquired on the types of methods currently used for determining banking credits. Anderson responded that usually only groundwork has been utilized in the past.

Ogaard stated that the RRWMB would forward the information on EnviroData, Inc. to the watershed districts within the RRWMB. Ogaard also inquired about whether the expertise of EnviroData, Inc. would include determining the damage of a particular project to a wetland. Anderson noted that the extent of damage to a wetland would be an engineering application.

St. Germain inquired that from a cost point of view, how much would it cost to develop an aerial map of a wetland. Anderson responded that the cost would depend on how many wetlands were involved. Anderson further noted that after the aerial photography has been completed, interpretation of the data needs to occur along with digitizing the information. Anderson stated that it costs approximately \$120.00 per square mile to interpret the data.

**District's Funding Requests:**

1. **Middle River-Snake River WD / Angus Oslo Site #4 – Step 3 Submittal** – Ron Adrian  
Osowski distributed a Step 3 Submittal, Angus Oslo Site #4 to the Board for review. He explained that the necessary land rights to construct the project have been acquired and the District is proceeding with the advertisement for bids.

Adrian stated that the current estimated cost of the project is \$2,520,000. The cost share that had been approved for the project is 85% RRWMB and 15% MRSRWD. The RRWMB's portion of the cost share is \$2,142,000, with the MRSRWD's cost share at \$378,000.

**Motion** by Manager Osowski to approve the Step 3 Submittal for Angus Oslo Site #4, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

2. **Buffalo-Red River WD / Georgetown Flood Control Levee Project** – Rick St. Germain

St. Germain explained that the City of Georgetown received extensive damage as a result of flooding from the Buffalo River during the spring of 1997. Most of the homes within the community received water in their lower level. Their main lift station malfunctioned, and various streets were inundated with several feet of water. Many of the businesses and public facilities also needed sandbagging in order to prevent flooding.

The main function of the project is to provide adequate flood damage protection for floods equal to or less than the Flood of 1997. The total cost of the proposed City of Georgetown Flood Control Levee Project is estimated to be \$395,000. The Department of Trade and Economic Development and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have furnished a grant of \$274,000 for the project which leaves an estimated \$ 121,500 to finance the total project.

The Buffalo-Red River WD proposes that amounts in excess of \$274,000 be shared equally between the City of Georgetown, the Buffalo-Red River WD, and the RRWMB. The estimated amount for each party would be \$40,500. Exact costs would not be available until after the project is bid and constructed.

Manager Wilkens stated that the RRWMB does not usually provide funding assistance to communities for flood damage reduction initiatives, although it has occurred in the past. Ogaard noted that it would be beneficial to review the policy manual to insure that funding the proposed project would be within the parameters of the RRWMB.

St. Germain referred to the RRWMB providing ring dike funding to individual landowners and compared this request to funding two ring dikes. Osowski noted that with regard to ring dike funding, this project would affect several families rather than just an individual farmstead. Osowski recommended that this funding request should be independent of the step process of the RRWMB and reviewed as a policy issue.

**Motion** by Manager Nelson to refer to the policy used to fund the City of Alvarado's funding request, which would include the matching basis as outlined in the BRRWD's funding request without utilizing the step process, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**.

Manager Osowski inquired whether a \$40,500 limit could be placed on this funding request. Manager Wilkens noted that should the RRWMB's portion exceed \$40,500, the BRRWD should inform the Board.

**Policy Manual Review Committee**

Manager Wilkens noted that the Policy Manual review committee is comprised of Osowski, Nelson, Younggren, and himself. He inquired whether Jerome Deal could be added to the review committee. He stated that he would also like to have technical representation available on an as needed basis with Rick St. Germain and Charlie Anderson. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to include Jerome Deal on the Policy Manual review committee and also to have technical assistance provided by Rick St. Germain and Charlie Anderson on an as needed basis, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on May 18, 1999, at 9:30 AM at the Red Lake Watershed District office, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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E. Harley Younggren  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant