

# 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

June 15, 1999

Bremer Bank, Warren, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, June 15, 1999, at the Bremer Bank, Warren, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Shane Stewart Allison Frislie  
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  
George Dailey, Red Lake WD  
Chuck Fritz, Red Lake WD  
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office

No additional items were added to the agenda.

The minutes of the May 18, 1999 meeting were read and approved with minor corrections. Manager Nelson noted his concern about the RRWMB authorizing the hiring of a consultant to fulfill the mediation agreement without allowing the managers to discuss this action with their respective boards. **Motion** to approve the minutes as written by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Younggren, **Carried**. Manager Nelson inquired on the balance of the debentures from the Winter Shows. Manager Wilkens responded that a balance of approximately \$265,000 remains on the note.

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

Ogaard referred to an insurance renewal notice received from ICS Agency for Director's liability insurance. He explained that proposals were forwarded to several companies for comparisons with the low bid received from

ICS Agency for a premium of \$2,070 per year guaranteed for three years. **Motion** by Manager Johnson to authorize the insurance renewal of \$2,070, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Ogaard presented a request received from The International Coalition for a membership renewal of \$500.00. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to renew the TIC membership at \$500.00, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

### **RRWMB Proposed "Liaison Position"**

Ogaard stated that at the previous monthly meeting the issue of obtaining an individual to pursue available grant funds was discussed. He noted that he further investigated the available grant funds and determined that the funding assistance provided through grant programs are all developed within agencies. He explained that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has programs for planting a grass greenbelt, such as those described in Dalen Coulee and Deerhorn Creek, however, the applicant must first apply and fit within a specific category.

Ogaard noted that the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG) developed for the mediation process has decided to continue meeting on a regular basis in order to implement the mediation agreement. Don Buckhout from the DNR is conducting the meetings. Ogaard added that state funds received to implement the mediation agreement are of a temporary nature and noted the importance of securing new funds.

Ogaard explained that the proposed consultant could pursue funds from non-traditional sources. The contract with the consultant could include language that would specify that 5% of the funds secured would be remitted to the consultant in addition to the negotiated salary. He added that he has contacted an interested individual from within a state agency for the consultant position.

Manager Johnson inquired whether this would be a full-time position. Ogaard responded that the consultant would be needed on a full-time basis for the first two years of implementing the mediation agreement.

Ogaard distributed a financial projection for June 15, 1999 through June 15, 2000. Thul also distributed a summary of projects within the step process of the RRWMB.

Shane Stewart inquired about an estimate of funds that could be obtained by the consultant. Ogaard responded that he anticipated the consultant could secure funds of approximately \$1,000,000 per year and could possibly obtain \$400,000 during the second half of this year.

Ogaard stated that a proposal could be developed and distributed for the liaison position. He noted that by doing so several applications would need to be filtered through.

Wilkens added that another issue that could be addressed by the consultant could be to change the traditional 50/50 match required for state funds, to a 75/25 matching requirement which would significantly reduce the financial burden of the RRWMB. Ogaard noted the importance of securing funds in order to implement flood damage reduction projects, as well as natural resource enhancements.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to establish the position of consultant to act as a liaison to implement the mediation process and also to authorize the Executive Director to pursue the means necessary to obtain the consultant, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

Deal noted that a 30-day termination clause should also be included in the contract since should the resources not be available from agencies, the position would no longer be needed. He added that the consultant should also be available to offer guidance to watershed districts regarding the use of the funds obtained.

Johnson suggested that the managers should discuss the issue of obtaining a consultant with their respective boards in order to receive input. Ogaard stated that should individual boards need further clarification regarding the liaison position to contact him.

### **BWSR Challenge Grant/Red River Valley River Watch Program**

Manager Wilkens explained that grant funds of \$100,000 are being provided by the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to establish the River Watch program throughout the Red River basin as a sustainable partnership between schools and resource managers. The program is designed to provide useful water quality data for natural resource management based on scientific, standardized methods. Wilkens stated that the RRWMB was named as the fiscal agent to administer the grant funds. Wilkens distributed a resolution authorizing the local match and signature of the challenge grant documents to the board for consideration.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to adopt the resolution as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

### **District Reports**

- The Two Rivers WD reported that public hearings are scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 17<sup>th</sup> by the Kittson County Board of Commissioners regarding the turnover of Judicial Ditch #3, Judicial Ditch #10, and Kittson County Ditch #7 to the Two Rivers Watershed District. Svea Township in Kittson County has passed a resolution supporting the transfer of these systems from the County to the District.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Angus Oslo Site #4 project. The contract was awarded to Strom Construction of Moorhead, MN and the "Notice of Award" has been delivered to the contractor. The contract will be delivered and the "Notice to Proceed" will be issued as soon as the payment and performance bonds are received. The technical evaluation panel for the Wetland Conservation Act is scheduled to view the project area to determine the effects on the state regulated wetlands. Preliminary work has begun and the project is scheduled to be completed by mid-summer of next year.
- The Red Lake WD reported that engineers have started surveying for the Thief River Falls reservoir dredging. The engineers have also been monitoring stream and impoundment water levels due to the large amount of precipitation received during the last couple of weeks. The District is currently dealing with numerous permit concerns and continues to receive new permit applications.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the flood prone structure acquisition program is in its final phase with three files currently open pending resolution of title problems. The first phase of demolition has started with the advertising for bids to remove hazardous materials including asbestos, fluorescent tubes, ballast, etc. Well sealing will begin in June for properties on the first phase demolition list.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that the District declared an emergency project in accordance with Minnesota State Statutes regarding the high water levels on Turtle Lake. Soil borings have been conducted

and due to the nature of the soils and the groundwater levels, a siphon system is being designed. A public hearing is scheduled for July 6, 1999.

The District has scheduled a meeting the week of June 28<sup>th</sup> to meet with landowners concerning the Deerhorn Creek project in order to obtain easements.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that substantial amounts of rain were received in the District during the last two weeks ranging from 1.5 to over 6 inches from three primary events and many widespread showers. Flooding is localized in the vicinity of the heavy rains. Gage readings on Lake Traverse are 976.6 with White Rock Dam at 973.17 and discharging at 750 cfs as of June 14, 1999.

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

Thul stated that the TAC had met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in St. Paul, MN on June 11, 1999. Individuals present at the meeting included Dave Loss-International Joint Commission (IJC) representative for the USACE, Scott Jutila-USACE Engineer, Jim Solstad-DNR, and Randy Gjestvang-North Dakota State Water Commission (NDSWC). Thul stated that Loss reviewed the USACE process in the Red River basin with the IJC in a response to deal with flooding issues which includes the identification of causes and recommended actions for flooding. Thul added that three sub-groups have been developed within the USACE to address these concerns. The groups include: 1. Database, 2. Tools, and 3. Flood Strategies. Thul noted that as part of the Tools sub-group, the USACE hopes to develop hydrologic and hydraulic models for the Red River basin. The purpose of the meeting was to influence the direction of those models so that they would be utilized in conjunction with local watershed districts. Thul stated that three mainstem models are being utilized which include: 1. Mike 11 – A Canadian model used for flood forecasting for the City of Winnipeg, 2. Flood Wave – A National Weather Service (NWS) model which is used for flood forecasting, and 3. UNET – A USACE model which will reach from Lake Traverse to the Canadian border. Thul noted that a proposal is being developed for the next biennium regarding ways to utilize storage within the basin to reduce flooding and also to identify the downstream impacts of the dikes to be constructed in Grand Forks. The USACE is also re-evaluating the 100-year flow discharge and has agreed to meet with the TAC to keep them updated.

Thul stated that the TAC had also met earlier this morning and further discussed the meeting with the USACE. He noted that the Mercury Study was also discussed. The TAC would schedule a meeting with Mark Brigham of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in order to continue to monitor the USGS effort.

The TAC had discussed the two most important initiatives which requires their involvement. The initiatives included watershed district modeling and wetland restorations. In regards to these two initiatives, the TAC will proceed with continued involvement for watershed district modeling by meeting with the USACE and the TAC will develop guidelines for funding wetland restorations.

The TAC discussed land going into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which includes the installation of ditch plugs. Thul explained that opportunities exist to work with counties, which could involve ensuring that ditch plugs are of a temporary nature, and removed after the contract expires. He stated that usually the contracts are for a 10-year period. The TAC is developing a cost sharing formula so that when ditch plugs are designed, funding assistance could be provided.

Thul stated that the TAC also discussed the Policy Evaluation Committee. He noted that the TAC discussed the importance of this committee to meet and move forward in order for the districts to understand which type of projects could be built with funding assistance from the RRWMB.

**Executive Director Report** – Don Ogaard

Ogaard reported that he had obtained reservations at the Best Western Motel in Thief River Falls for a “Retreat/Seminar” for Watershed District Managers, personnel and other interested parties for December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999. Ogaard also requested guidance from the board on the make-up and content of the retreat and was advised to have a suggested format for consideration at the July meeting.

Ogaard informed the board on the content of a recent meeting of the IJC held in Detroit Lakes, which included:

1. A discussion of the potential for the development of a Red River Basin Watershed Board to address issues that are directly related to federal agency initiatives on future flood damage reduction mitigation efforts.
2. Suggesting a reorganization of the present IJC pollution control and engineering boards into one cohesive operating unit.
3. A definite interest in the structure and duties of present organizations in the Red River Basin. They were furnished all pertinent reports and documents for the RRWMB.

Ogaard also discussed with the board what the position should be on the annual summer ND/MN tour usually held in July. Due to the lack of anything new to show off this year it was decided by consensus to not hold a tour in 1999.

**District’s Funding Requests:**

**1. Middle River-Snake River WD / Public Law 566 Project** –

**Motion** by Manager Nelson to authorize the Middle River-Snake River WD to submit a Step I proposal to the RRWMB for consideration, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Bob Kleiner, flood committee coordinator for the City of Warren, reported on the chronological history and flood control capability of the proposed PL 566 Project that is co-sponsored by the City of Warren and the Middle River-Snake River WD. The project includes a by-pass channel for the Snake River around the city and a water retention area upstream. Kleiner explained that the project’s flood control capability has increased substantially since the first potential design was proposed in December of 1998. He stated that gated control was incorporated into the design at the request of the sponsors which required approval by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. He noted that the project is close to receiving the final required agency permits.

A bus tour of the PL 566 project area, potential Helgeland water retention site and the Angus Oslo Site No. 4 project was conducted.

The restoration segment of the Snake River where the water currently flows in a township road ditch, adjacent to the PL 566 project was viewed. Ron Adrian, Middle River-Snake River WD engineer, explained the topography, land use and technical function of the project.

The Helgeland water retention site would be an off-channel diked enclosure that is currently in agricultural production and would involve diverting water from two upstream drainage systems into the proposed project. A portion of the site is currently owned by the Audubon Society and they are very interested in the possibility of a joint venture to accomplish the project.

The participants of the bus tour observed the contractor beginning the initial dirt moving for the Angus Oslo Site No. 4 project. This site includes a 1-½ square mile agricultural production area which is nearly all currently in CRP. This project is anticipated to be completed by July of 2000.

**Motion** by Manager Osowski to approve the Step #1 submittal for the PL 566 Project, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

**Turtle Lake Update**

Manager Nelson described the flooding situation that has developed on Turtle Lake in the Buffalo-Red River WD. A proposed 3,000 foot, 30” pipe is being proposed to siphon the excess water off and move it downstream.

Nelson inquired whether this type of project could be considered for potential funding by the RRWMB. Following board discussion, the managers concurred that this type of project would not meet the requirements of the RRWMB for funding.

The next meeting will be on July 20, 1999, at 9:30 AM at the Wild Rice Watershed District office, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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E. Harley Younggren  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant