

# Red River Watershed Management Board

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## Board of Managers

John Finney, Vice Pres.-Humboldt Farrell Erickson, Secretary-Badger Harlan Solberg-Greenbush Ron Osowski, President-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

November 21, 2000

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, November 21, 2000, at the Red Lake Watershed District Office, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: John Finney Farrell Erickson  
Harlan Solberg Vernon Johnson  
Daniel Wilkens Robert Wright  
Curtis Nelson

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director  
Naomi Jagol, Administrative Assistant, Sand Hill River WD  
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Rick St. Germain, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Ron Adrian, Administrator, Middle River-Snake River WD  
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering  
Brent Johnson, Engineer, Houston Engineering  
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering  
Dave Lanning, Administrator, Red Lake WD  
Chuck Fritz, Program Manager, Red River Basin Board  
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD  
Lowell Smeby, Red Lake WD  
George Dailey, Red Lake WD  
Roger Love, Red Lake WD  
Molly MacGregor, MPCA  
Wayne Goeken, River Watch Coordinator

Ogaard requested that review of a letter received from Todd Stanley, Grygla, MN be added to the agenda.

**Motion** by Manager Erickson to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the October 17, 2000 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried.** **Motion** by Manager Wright to approve the minutes as written, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried.**

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Finney, **Carried**. Sando inquired about the Roseau River WD's project team reimbursement funds for the previous year. Manager Wilkens responded that he would review the records to determine whether these funds had been disbursed. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Johnson, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Progress Report on Projects Named in 75/25% State Funding**

#### **North Ottawa Project**

Ogaard reported that he and Manager Wilkens attended the preliminary resolution hearing to initiate the North Ottawa Project on November 16, 2000 in Wendell, MN. He noted that the Board of Managers of the Bois de Sioux WD (BdSWD) approved, by resolution of the board, to initiate the project.

Ogaard inquired about whether projects that are funded through the RRWMB should receive endorsement from the Red River Basin Board (RRBB). Ogaard requested Chuck Fritz, Program Manager-RRBB, to comment on this issue.

Fritz distributed a flow chart developed by the Guiding Principles task force. He explained that the review procedure is voluntary and that project sponsors are asked to submit projects only if they wish to receive RRBB support. He noted that he would assist Dick Nelson with submitting the four named projects for 75/25 state funding to the RRBB for consideration. He added that the RRBB developed a questionnaire which must be completed prior to submitting it to the board for consideration.

Fritz discussed a letter forwarded to Governor Ventura requesting support for the North Ottawa Project of the BdSWD. He stated that following presentation to the RRBB and the Guiding Principles review team, approval was obtained for the project. He added that although the RRBB does not have any statutory authority, they have great political influence due to the membership.

**Motion** by Manager Erickson to submit projects receiving funding from the RRWMB to the RRBB for endorsement, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried**.

#### **Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project**

Manager Osowski stated that the first public hearing on the project was conducted on October 26, 2000. He noted that the comments received at the hearing were generally favorable. A Step II submittal will be prepared and submitted to the RRWMB for consideration at the December 19, 2000 meeting.

#### **Thief River Flood Damage Reduction Project**

Ogaard stated that the Step I Submittal would be acted on during today's meeting following a tour of the project. Manager Johnson noted that the project would be constructed in three phases with a total estimated project cost of approximately \$7.8 million.

Ogaard added that he is developing a projection in conjunction with Dan Wilkens and Dick Nelson which would be utilized when funding projects that would be constructed in phases.

### **Hay Creek Project**

Manager Erickson stated that the engineering for the project would not be completed in time for presentation at the December 19, 2000 meeting. He noted that the project would be presented to the RRWMB for consideration sometime in the spring of 2001.

Manager Wilkens inquired about U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) funding for the project. Manager Erickson responded that the USACE indicated that funding assistance is available for the project and added that the project could not be constructed without funding assistance from the USACE.

### **Financial Coordinator Report** – Dick Nelson

D. Nelson reported on the status of the PL 566 project. He stated that the project was included in the law signed by the President with \$4,000,000 designated for the project in the bill.

D. Nelson stated that the Hay Creek project was included in the Energy and Water Bill and contains \$500,000 for the remainder of the feasibility study which needs to be completed in order for the project to progress with USACE funding under the Section 206 program. He added that the Red River Reconnaissance Study was also passed with the above-mentioned bill with a \$200,000 allocation to the USACE.

D. Nelson noted that, with regard to future legislation, an estimate of funds that could be expended in the upcoming year for the construction of ring dikes should be developed by the RRWMB. He requested individual watershed districts to submit photos of ring dikes protecting property during flood events which could be used when lobbying in St. Paul.

D. Nelson discussed the emergency bonding bill and noted that normally it would be extremely difficult to obtain funding for construction under this bill. He added that he did discuss the issue with various representatives who did not discourage him from applying for these funds. He noted that Governor Ventura has committed to helping solve the flooding problems in the Red River basin. He stated that obtaining funding in the upcoming year under this bill would present the greatest challenge he has undertaken thus far.

D. Nelson stated that there is support for revising the current program regarding the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR). He added that unless a member from the Red River basin is appointed on the commission, he does not foresee obtaining any funds from the current process.

### **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency River Watch Program**

Molly MacGregor, Principal Planner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), discussed a proposal to establish a Red River Water Quality Consortium. She explained that the consortium would be an informal organization of agencies and organizations interested in management of water quality of the Red River basin, dedicated to organizing, performing, storing and evaluating water quality information about the Red River and its tributaries.

MacGregor requested that the RRWMB consider representation on the consortium. She noted that the RRWMB has been the fiscal agent for administering the River Watch grant and inquired about the possibility of the RRWMB becoming the fiscal agent for the consortium as well. Manager Osowski noted that should the RRWMB agree to be the fiscal agent for the consortium, this would be a significant effort which could be considered in lieu of a financial contribution to the effort.

D. Nelson noted that understanding the scope of the effort would be beneficial in determining whether the RRWMB could be the fiscal agent. Ogaard stated that the scope of activity could be discussed at the next monthly meeting.

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

#### **A) Final IFMI Meeting/Report**

Ogaard distributed an executive summary of the IFMI meetings conducted during the past year. He stated that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by representatives from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba which stated that individuals from these jurisdictions would agree to meet on an annual basis regarding issues pertaining specifically to water management in the Red River basin.

He stated that other IFMI strategies include establishing a broadcast media partnership and a print journalism partnership, creating a Red River basin institute for research, mapping and watershed education, and establishing a center for watershed education through the Tri-College University.

#### **B) Discussion on Future of Executive Director Position**

Ogaard stated that the future Executive Director position should be considered relative to his succession. He noted that he would like to continue in his current capacity for an additional two years.

#### **C) Projected Funding Needs by Member WD's 2001**

Ogaard encouraged member watershed districts to provide this information in order to determine the amount of legislative funding that would be needed for the upcoming year.

#### **D) WRWD "Ice Control Boom Project"**

Ogaard distributed a letter from the Wild Rice WD regarding the Ice Control Pilot project. He noted that discussion on the project would occur at the next monthly meeting.

#### **E) Project Team Guidelines / RRBFDROWG Action / Proposed Response**

Ogaard stated that the RRBFDROWG did not adopt two of the guidelines included in the project team guidelines adopted by the RRWMB. The two guidelines that were not adopted are as follows:

- Decisions of the project team (PT) shall be on a consensus basis. If no consensus can be attained on the alternative solution preferred by the majority of the PT members, a report shall be made to the WD, containing the option that was agreed upon by the majority, the preferred option of the minority and the rationale for the lack of consensus. The PT facilitator shall present a report of all the issues to the RRBFDROWG for mediation.
- The WD and PT shall follow procedures detailed in the attached document.

Following discussion, the board agreed that the above language should remain as is.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that the project team met on November 1, 2000. Jody Horntvedt was in attendance to observe the procedural operations and evaluate the facilitation of the meetings.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that heavy rains fell throughout the District once again bringing the river up to well over flood stage. During a 1 ½ to 2-week time period beginning on October 29, 2000 the entire

District received 6" to 7" of rainfall. This prompted the National Weather Service to issue a flood warning for areas along the Two Rivers. The river crested in Hallock at 807.7, which is three feet below the record elevation, and 7.7 feet above flood stage. The District is very saturated with sustained flow in the ditches and rivers going into the winter season. On November 20, 2000 the Two Rivers in Hallock had fallen below flood stage to 799.25.

- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 project. Federal funding for the construction of phase one and a portion of phase two has been approved. The preparation of the plans and specifications for the project continues by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The District will be proceeding with the preparation of the appraisers report and obtaining the necessary permits. The next hearing on the project is tentatively scheduled for sometime in February or March 2001.
- The Red Lake WD reported that due to the excessive rainfall, gates on the impoundments within the District have been operated in order to bring them down to winter levels.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported on the status of the update on the north boundary between the Red Lake and the Sand Hill River watershed districts. Minimal works needs to be completed and the proposed boundary will be updated to the Maple Lake area. Loren Sanderson and Daniel Wilkens have been working on this issue during the summer and will try to complete it this winter.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that land rights have been secured for a mitigation site to be used for the Marsh Creek Site No. 6 project. Engineering will be developing a proposed mitigation plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for their consideration. The District has authorized investigation of an off-channel storage project on the South Branch of the Wild Rice River. This is a potential solution being explored that was identified by the Systems Approach.

Approval was received in November by the USDA to allow lands enrolled in CRP on the Lockhart Flood Storage Project to be used for flood control. The District feels that this will provide an opportunity to work with a federal agency in reducing flood damages within the basin.

- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that due to the weather, the contractor has halted work on the Deerhorn Creek Levees project. The project is approximately 90% completed with essentially all the levee work accomplished. Seeding and clean-up will be done next spring when conditions allow. Final easement payments will be made to the landowners before the end of the year. The District is pleased with the contractor's work and progress.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the Board of Managers conducted a preliminary resolution hearing to initiate the North Ottawa Impoundment project on November 16, 2000 in Wendell, MN. Approximately 65 people were in attendance. Following the conclusion of the hearing, the board opened their regular monthly meeting. Considerable discussion was held regarding the comments heard at the hearing. A resolution to initiate the project was authorized.

### **Red River Coordinator/TAC Report**

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had met earlier and discussed the Agassiz Valley Water Management Project of the Middle River-Snake River WD. He distributed a handout with a recommendation from the TAC regarding the Step I submittal presented at the previous monthly meeting. He added that the proposal was consistent with the project prioritization worksheet. The RRWMB cost per STAR value was calculated at \$4.84. Scoring for the project was calculated as the following: Item A – Downstream

peak flow timing analysis, 20. Item B – Design storage volume, 19. Item C – Location of proposed project, 20. Item D – Outlet design, 20.

Thul distributed a handout for the Thief River Flood Damage Reduction project. He stated that an updated cost estimate had been prepared for the project of \$1,300,000. The RRWMB cost per STAR value is \$3.25. Scoring for the project was calculated as the following: Item A – Downstream peak flow timing analysis, 20. Item B – Design storage volume, 8. Item C – Location of proposed project, 16. Item D – Outlet design, 20. Item E – Gated drawdown storage pool, 20. He added that the TAC calculated the STAR value for the project based on the storage available in the Ditch 20 impoundment site. The TAC emphasized that the diversion portion of the project would result in a lower STAR value since it would tend to reduce the storage time within the existing upstream impoundments. In addition, the diversion is designed to eliminate the flood plain storage on private agricultural lands along State Ditch 83. However, gates located on the diversion will be operated to minimize these effects.

Manager Finney inquired whether the Thief River Flood Damage Reduction project was designed assuming that State Ditch 83 would not be cleaned. Anderson responded that the project was developed as an alternative to cleaning State Ditch 83. Manager Johnson added that cleaning State Ditch 83 would provide 3-year protection, while the construction of the Thief River Flood Damage Reduction project provides 10-year protection.

Thul stated that the TAC also discussed when the watershed districts should be utilizing the prioritization worksheet. He noted that originally it was determined that the worksheet should be prepared in conjunction with a Step II submittal, however, after further discussion the TAC agreed that the worksheet would be helpful if completed in conjunction with the Step I submittal.

#### **Red River Basin Board Report** – Dan Wilkens

Manager Wilkens stated that the Red River Basin Board (RRBB) met prior to the International Flood Mitigation Initiative (IFMI) meeting on November 14, 2000 in Fargo, ND. He noted that a retreat is being planned for board members in March of 2001 to discuss such issues as the strengths of the board, the opportunities that should be pursued, and constraints that could limit the board's ability to respond to important needs.

Manager Wilkens also discussed a meeting that was conducted at the Sand Hill River WD regarding the North American Wetland Conservation Act. Adrian explained that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has a grant program available which the National Audubon Society is considering applying for in order to provide funding assistance for natural resource enhancements.

#### **District's Funding Requests:**

##### **1. Red Lake WD / Thief River Flood Damage Reduction Project, Step I Submittal:**

Brent Johnson conducted an overview of the project prior to lunch. A tour of the project was conducted following lunch. At the previous monthly meeting, Lanning distributed copies of the Step I submittal to the board for review.

**Motion** by Manager Johnson to approve the Step I submittal for the Thief River Flood Damage Reduction project, **Seconded** by Manager Finney, **Carried**.

##### **2. Two Rivers WD / Ross 32 Impoundment Project, Step I Submittal:**

At the previous monthly meeting, Manager Solberg distributed copies of the Step I submittal to the board for review. He stated that the Two Rivers WD Board of Managers agreed to fund the project and also to submit a funding request of \$200,000 to the RRWMB for consideration. The Board of Managers stated that should the project not be constructed, the funding received from the RRWMB would be returned.

Manager Wilkens noted that a similar situation existed with funding received from the RRWMB for the North Ottawa project of the Bois de Sioux WD. He stated that he could prepare copies of the original motion for the North Ottawa project and distribute to the board for consideration at the next monthly meeting.

D. Nelson suggested that without making an official commitment, the board could be queried to determine whether there were any objections to the projects.

**Motion** by Manager Solberg to poll the board to determine whether the RRWMB would be supportive of approving the \$200,000 funding request, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**. The Board poll was unanimously in favor of the project. The following member districts did not have representation at the meeting during the poll: Buffalo-Red River WD and Bois de Sioux WD.

#### **Angus Oslo Site #4 Update**

Adrian discussed the status of the Angus Oslo Site #4 project. He stated that it appears that the project will incur cost overruns and that there is also a threat of litigation by the contractor, Dennis Drewes. He stated that although the project has not yet been completed, the attorney for the District would be making an offer to the contractor to relieve him of any further responsibility for the project.

Manager Osowski explained that when the District originally advertised for bids for the project, the low bidder couldn't provide a bond, therefore, the project was awarded to the second-lowest bidder which was Dennis Drewes.

Adrian stated that additional costs have been added to the project which are primarily due to supervising the work of the contractor. He added that only 85% of the work completed has been acceptable.

#### **Personnel Meeting**

Manager Osowski recessed the regular board meeting and convened the personnel meeting. The board conducted a closed session to discuss personnel issues. At the conclusion of the personnel meeting, Manager Osowski reconvened the regular board meeting.

**Motion** by Manager Johnson to approve increasing the Financial Coordinator's contract to \$6,000 per month plus expenses, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**.

**Motion** by Manager Erickson to establish a committee consisting of Wilkens (Chair), Johnson, Erickson, and Wright to discuss a strategy for the future personnel requirements of the RRWMB, **Seconded** by Manager Finney, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on December 19, 2000, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District office, Fertile, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Farrell Erickson  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Jagol  
Administrative Assistant