

Red River Watershed Management Board

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

February 19, 2002

City Council Chambers, Warren, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, February 19, 2002, at the City Council Chambers, Warren, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: John Finney Farrell Erickson
Roger Anderson Daniel Wilkens
Robert Wright Curtis Nelson
Jerome Deal

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Naomi Erickson, Associate Director
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
Dan Money, Administrator, Two Rivers WD
Molly MacGregor, River Basin Coordinator, MPCA
Brian Dwight, BWSR
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD

An additional item was added to the agenda by Manager Deal regarding an appellate court decision relative to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

Motion by Manager Erickson to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Nelson to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Finney, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

River Watch Program Update

Molly MacGregor, River Basin Coordinator, MPCA, reported on the status of the River Watch Data Management and FDR Project Monitoring projects. She noted that since January 14, 2002, Wayne Goeken and Danni Halvorson have been working on data management, interpretation, and reporting of River Watch data. Each participating school was visited with the data results reviewed and interpreted on an individual basis. Each school is in the process of preparing displays and reports for River Watch Forums which will be hosted by the watershed districts. These forums began on February 6, 2002.

MacGregor discussed FDR project monitoring activities. Goeken has been working with the Bois de Sioux WD on developing a monitoring program for the North Ottawa Project. He also attended a project team meeting hosted by the Middle River-Snake River WD and discussed monitoring. He is working with MPCA to help project teams use the TSAC monitoring document to identify monitoring needs and help establish monitoring plans to fill those needs.

Financial Coordinator Report

In the absence of D. Nelson, a handout was distributed on his behalf. The report stated that ring dike funds remain at \$250,000 in the Senate. The funds allocated to the RRBFDROWG are at \$650,000 for the upcoming year in the Senate Budget Bill. The importance of spending previously obtained funds was noted as it is difficult to obtain additional funding from the legislature if funds have not yet been exhausted.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting and discussed a USGS Wetland Study meeting conducted on January 24, 2002 in Fargo, ND. The study is in its third year of collection and a cost share of \$12,000 will be requested from the board. The funds are expected to complete data collection this summer and develop tools (model) to answer questions and draw conclusions on how wetlands in the two study watersheds respond to flood flow reductions. The intent is to seek peer review of the final report internally within USGS and from the TAC.

The final version of the TAC recommendation for the Felton Ditch Off-Channel Storage Project was distributed. A final draft of the 2001 annual report was also distributed.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) Draft RRBFDROWG/RRWMB March Conference Agenda

Ogaard reported that the March Conference is scheduled for March 7-8, 2002 in Crookston, MN. He noted that changes have occurred with the agenda regarding the state legislative panel. He explained that panelists from the House of Representatives are not available at this time, however, the committee is still trying to obtain Senate participation.

B) Red River Basin Agriculture Modeling Study Report

Ogaard stated that he attended a meeting conducted on February 5, 2002 regarding the “Alternatives to Crisis” project. The project is administered through the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and has been funded under a grant from the National Science Foundation’s Biocomplexity Research Program. The project seeks to build understanding of recurring agricultural and rural economic crisis in the region through an interdisciplinary stakeholder workshop and modeling process that focuses on linkages among social, environmental, and economic systems. The goal of the project is to help identify sustainable and resilient policy alternatives, while building understanding of dynamics of and linkages between systems.

C) RRBB Flood Damage Reduction Initiative Progress

Ogaard reported that the FDR committee is ready to distribute proposals to engineering firms requesting them to compile existing data. He noted that the information would be used to update the McCombs-Knutson and other reports.

Ogaard discussed the newsletter *Around the Basin* distributed by the RRBB and noted the excellent content and presentation of the information included. He stated that the information can be accessed through their website at www.redriverbasinboard.org.

D) USACE Feasibility Study

Ogaard stated that the report has been completed for the reconnaissance study and the USACE is now considering moving into the feasibility phase. He stated that the feasibility study will cost over \$2 million dollars to prepare and would need to be funded half by local taxes. He noted the importance of North Dakota initiating similar planning activities. The study is expected to begin in June of 2002 and be completed by June of 2005.

E) Financial Analysis

Ogaard stated that a projection of funding commitments was prepared for FY02 which included project funding commitments for the individual watershed districts, and well as various programs. He distributed a handout for board review. Manager Deal noted that he would like to see this report prepared on a quarterly basis.

F) Senator Roger Moe / Announcement for Governor Candidate

Ogaard noted that Senator Roger Moe has scheduled a meeting for February 24, 2002 at the High School Auditorium in Crookston, MN. It is anticipated that he will be announcing his plans to run for Governor Candidate in the upcoming election.

Associate Director Report

N. Erickson reported that letters were forwarded to individual watershed districts inquiring whether any employees or managers would be interested in obtaining group health insurance sponsored by the RRWMB as a member of the Minnesota Service Cooperative. The following watershed districts responded that they would be interested in obtaining rate quotes: Roseau River WD, Two Rivers WD, Wild Rice WD, and the Bois de Sioux WD.

The 2001 audit was conducted the week of January 28th, in Fertile, MN, with Mark Hatton of Dahl, Hatton, Muir & Reese of Hallock, MN. Upon receiving the completed financial report, the 2001 Annual Report will be prepared in conjunction with Dan Thul.

N. Erickson stated that she assisted Don Ogaard and Dan Wilkens with preparing a projection of funding commitments for FY02. Project funding commitments for the individual watershed districts, and well as various programs including stream gaging, wetland monitoring, and comprehensive watershed plan developments were included in the projection.

Watershed Planning / Potential Partnerships in FDR Initiatives

Brian Dwight discussed the progress of the comprehensive watershed management plan updates. The Wild Rice WD is in the final phase of the Systems Approach Planning Process (SAPP). This project was engaged in before the implementation of the mediation agreement. The SAPP has met all the expectations of the mediation agreement as it relates to the planning process. The results of the SAPP will be the major framework for the WD's comprehensive watershed management plan. The initial cost for the plan development portion of this effort was \$95,000, but due to additional investigative work requested by the TAC and CAC into the alternatives in the SAPP cost estimates have been amended by an additional \$82,000. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has approved this budget amendment and has funded 50% of this increase. Plan completion is expected to be in July 2002.

The Bois de Sioux WD has completed an extensive natural resource enhancement (NRE) and flood damage reduction (FDR) issue identification process by sub-watershed. The plan will consist of watershed wide goals as well as sub-watershed goals. The hydrologic modeling effort is progressing with JOR Engineering coordinating its modeling efforts of the WD with a travel time study being conducted by the DNR and a rough main stem modeling effort conducted by the USACE. Plan completion is expected in July 2002.

The Roseau River WD has completed an extensive NRE and FDR problem identification process. This process was done on a sub-area basis of the watershed rather than a sub-watershed breakdown. The hydrologic modeling has been completed. The BWSR has just granted an extension for plan completion until December 2002.

The Two Rivers WD has completed the NRE and FDR issue identification process. The WD is now in the process of prioritizing the NRE and FDR issues by sub-watershed. The hydrologic model of the Two Rivers WD and the Joe River WD is just getting underway.

District Reports

- The Two Rivers WD reported that the Technical and Citizen's Advisory Committees are in the process of ranking issues within each sub-watershed relative to the comprehensive watershed management plan update. The flood damages have been ranked according to priority and the next step is to rank the natural resource issues for each sub-watershed. After all issues have been ranked, watershed goals and objectives will be addressed. The plan update is expected to be completed by August of 2002.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 Project. Phase I of the project which includes the lower end of the floodway began on November 19th. Although work has been halted for the season, in terms of the value of the contract, the work is approximately 75% completed. This phase should be completed early in the summer of 2002.

- The Red Lake WD reported that work is underway removing fallen trees and debris on State Ditch No. 83. The District has been meeting with landowners on the lower diversion part of the proposed Thief River Storage and Diversion Project.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on the Systems Approach Planning Process (SAPP). The District addressed the project team's comments related to the "Alternatives Development and Implementation Plan" portion of the SAPP Report in February. A public informational meeting is planned for March 18, 2002 to present findings of the Report and obtain public input prior to selecting the strategies to be incorporated in the final implementation plan and comprehensive watershed management plan update.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported that a preliminary hearing has been scheduled for March 14, 2002 regarding the Clay County Ditch No. 59 Improvement/Lateral. A group of downstream landowners on the Buffalo River are opposed to these projects. Based on the conservative design, the engineer's analysis shows that the outlet is adequate.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the next meeting regarding the comprehensive watershed management plan update will focus on discussing natural resource enhancements. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will conduct presentations regarding their respective agency goals to be incorporated into the plan update.

Board of Water and Soil Resources Update

Manager Deal explained that a bill was introduced in Hennepin County to change board members from elected to appointed for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He stated that, in doing so, the issue relative to whether watershed managers should be elected rather than appointed is generating discussion.

Manager Deal discussed proposed Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) revisions. He explained that public meetings will be conducted in order to ensure that controversial language is eliminated.

Manager Deal stated that the 25-year rule is being upheld in appellate court. He indicated that there is a chance the court will not hear the case. He added that he anticipates in 2003 ditch law being more closely scrutinized.

District's Funding Requests:

1. Two Rivers WD / Nereson Project

Dan Money, Administrator, Two Rivers WD, distributed handouts regarding the Nereson Project. He explained that the original cost of constructing the project was approximately \$400,000, however, due to several cost adjustments over the years a cost overrun of \$223,646.26 occurred. He stated that within the next few weeks, the project engineer will begin to draw up plans and specifications for the emergency spillway, wildlife weir, and sub-impoundment outlet. The construction on these items will begin this summer. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to authorize the RRWMB's share of the cost overrun of \$83,867.35, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

2. Buffalo-Red River WD / Clay County Digital Imagery and Topographic Mapping

The Buffalo-Red River WD, Clay County, the City of Moorhead, the City of Dilworth, Kragnes Township, and Oakport Township, have partnered through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to do Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) aerial mapping along the Minnesota side of the Red River to complete a high resolution digital elevation model (DEM). The mapping will be done this spring in conjunction with a City of Fargo project, which is being partially financed by FEMA. The partners feel that Fargo's project presents an opportunity to gather data on the Minnesota side of the Red River and will also provide a cost savings in having to only mobilize the airplane once.

A funding request was submitted for 50% funding for the Buffalo-Red River WD's portion of the Clay County study. The total study costs are \$149,323. The Buffalo Red River WD's portion is \$134,397.70. A 50% RRWMB share is \$67,195.35. **Motion** by Manager Nelson for the RRWMB to fund the study in the amount of \$67,195.35, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on March 19, 2002, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District office, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Associate Director