

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

July 16, 2002

Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, July 16, 2002, at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

Chairman Ron Osowski called the meeting to order.

Members present were: John Finney Farrell Erickson
Harlan Solberg Vernon Johnson
Roger Hanson Robert Wright
Curtis Nelson Jerome Deal

Others present were: Don Ogaard, Executive Director
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator
Naomi Erickson, Associate Director
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle River-Snake River WD
Wayne Goeken, Water Quality Project Monitoring
Harry Farris, Administrator, Red Lake WD
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD
Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
Bob Kloubec, Buffalo-Red River WD
Warren Seykora, Wild Rice WD
Gerry Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River WD
Bruce Albright, Administrator, Buffalo-Red River WD
Jeff Baird, The Fargo Forum
Lance Yohe, Executive Director, Red River Basin Commission
Joe Spaeth, Wild Rice WD
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
Roger Ellefson, Buffalo-Red River WD
Nathan Redland, Wild Rice WD
Jim Wagner, Wild Rice WD

No additional items were added to the agenda.

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

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Deal to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**. Manager Osowski referred to the disbursement pages in the Treasurer's Report and noted that significantly more funds are expended on project construction than administrative costs. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Nelson, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Ring Dike Survey

Manager Nelson stated that at the previous monthly meeting Ogaard presented the ring dike survey results obtained from the individual watershed districts, however, no information was included from the Buffalo-Red River WD (BRRWD). Nelson further noted that he discussed this issue with Bruce Albright, Administrator-BRRWD, who indicated that he did not receive the survey. Ogaard stated that the survey was faxed to each watershed district and he was not aware that the BRRWD did not receive the transmission.

Manager Nelson noted that the BRRWD received three requests for ring dikes that should have been included in the survey. Manager Erickson inquired about how the additional requests would be considered since the number of ring dikes that could be funded by the RRWMB for each watershed district had been previously calculated and approved. Ogaard noted that using the same formula that had been previously utilized, the BRRWD would qualify to receive funding for one ring dike.

Motion by Manager Johnson to include the BRRWD's request for ring dikes in the original survey and approve funding for one ring dike from the RRWMB, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

Individual Watershed District Activity Relative to Recent Flooding Events

Ogaard requested the managers to discuss the activities of the individual watershed districts with respect to the recent flooding events.

Manager Finney stated that he attended a meeting in Kittson County regarding disaster assistance offered by FEMA. He noted that FEMA is reluctant to offer assistance for damages incurred to drainage systems.

Manager Erickson reported that conditions are still very wet in the Roseau River WD. He stated that the river corridor is up to 8 miles wide in some areas with road overtops occurring throughout the District. Rob Sando, Administrator-Roseau River WD, added that during the Flood of 1997 the Roseau River crested at 21.1 feet and that, in comparison, the river crested at 24 feet during the recent flooding event.

Jerry Bennett, Administrator-Wild Rice WD, stated that road damages were severe throughout the District. He added that a number of public informational meetings have been conducted in response to the recent flooding events and noted that there has been a renewed interest in on-channel storage.

Manager Johnson stated that Ditch No. 20 was flooded and Ditch No. 83 incurred severe erosion. Harry Farris, Administrator-Red Lake WD, commended the Thief Lake and Agassiz Wild Life Refuges for controlling the flow of floodwater thereby minimizing downstream damages.

Manager Deal reported that the Bois de Sioux WD received approximately 8 inches of rain which caused the stream level to rise. The Lake Traverse dam remains open in an effort to keep Mud Lake empty.

Roger Hanson stated that the majority of the damages incurred in the Sand Hill River WD were on the main stem relative to sloughing on the river banks. He added that the City of Beltrami has submitted a request for a ring dike to be constructed around the city.

Manager Solberg noted that the Two Rivers WD is still receiving water from the north. He added that Juneberry Road was overtopped for over 4.5 miles.

Bruce Albright stated that he met with a mitigation officer from FEMA and that they are emphasizing a change from providing disaster assistance to funding mitigation efforts.

D. Nelson reported that he also met with the mitigation officer from FEMA who discussed an all-hazard plan which was passed a few months ago at the federal level. The plan states that, by law, after 9/30/02 FEMA will not pay any public or private damages for non-compliance with an all-hazard plan. He noted that the City of Warren has hired an engineering firm to develop a plan. He added that developing these plans is a significant undertaking and suggested that one agency should take the lead to ensure uniformity among the plans.

Discussion of Buffalo-Red River WD Issues

Manager Nelson referred to the article that was published in the Fargo Forum regarding the BRRWD's decision to withdraw from the RRWMB and explained that he was misquoted as saying the RRWMB was "too heavy," and noted that it should have stated too *top* heavy. He added that the entire Board of Managers from the BRRWD was in attendance to address their issues of concern.

Manager Osowski stated that the RRWMB would be setting their annual levy at today's meeting and noted that the maximum levy is needed in order for the RRWMB to continue to provide funding assistance for upcoming projects. He inquired whether the BRRWD had any projects moving forward at this time. Manager Nelson responded that the Whiskey Creek and Manston Slough projects were progressing.

Manager Johnson suggested that a committee be established to address the concerns of the BRRWD along with a recommendation developed for the board to consider at the next monthly meeting.

Roger Ellefson, Chairman of the BRRWD, stated that the RRWMB levy is one of the concerns of their board of managers. He stated that the BRRWD does not receive as much funding from the RRWMB for project funding as they remit from their tax levy.

Ellefson also referred to a resolution submitted by the BRRWD at the last Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) annual convention that was not supported by the RRWMB. He inquired why D. Nelson did not lobby for the resolution. D. Nelson responded that the resolution was a MAWD resolution and he only lobbies for issues as directed by the RRWMB.

Manager Nelson noted that D. Nelson's contract states that he is an employee of the RRWMB, however, he has lobbied for individual watershed district projects in the past. D. Nelson reiterated that he only lobbies for projects assigned by the RRWMB.

Manager Osowski stated that should the BRRWD have wanted an endorsement from the RRWMB for the resolution presented to MAWD, it should have been presented to the board for consideration. Ellefson noted

that the proposed resolutions were distributed a month before the meeting for review by the individual watershed districts.

Manager Deal noted the importance of each member watershed district having a basin-wide perspective. He added that the levy is based on an ad valorem tax not to exceed a percentage of the taxable market value of all property within the individual watershed district. Half of the levy remains with the member watershed district to be used for projects of benefit to the district, while the other half is forwarded to the RRWMB to be used to fund projects and programs of benefit to the entire Red River basin.

Ellefson disagreed with Manager Deal and stated that the RRWMB levy does not include the entire Red River basin, since the Otter Tail watershed is excluded. Ogaard responded that discussion has occurred relative to the establishment of a watershed district in the Otter Tail watershed, however, one has yet to be established.

Ellefson stated that the current projects under development in the BRRWD have only local benefits and would not be eligible for funding from the RRWMB. Manager Osowski noted that when the BRRWD requested funding assistance for the high water problems associated with Turtle Lake, it was not approved since the benefits were local. Ellefson responded that the funding request for Turtle Lake should have been approved since the residents of Turtle Lake have been contributing to the levy collected on behalf of the RRWMB. Manager Deal stated that the portion of the RRWMB levy that remains with the individual watershed district is meant to be used for projects with local benefits which include projects such as Turtle Lake.

Gerry Van Amburg, BRRWD board member, stated that the Board of Managers has had numerous discussions regarding maintaining their membership with the RRWMB. He noted that one reason the board has considered withdrawing was the fact that the current projects under development in the BRRWD have only local benefits and would not be eligible for funding from the RRWMB. He added that another concern is the cost of salaries paid by the RRWMB. He stated that should a regional search been conducted for the employees retained by the RRWMB, a cost savings might have been recognized.

Bob Kloubec, BRRWD board member, suggested that the RRWMB should revisit the STAR value method so that more projects that deal with erosion control could be implemented. He added that the RRWMB should also consider lowering the tax levy rather than levying the maximum amount.

Manager Wright referred to the issues of concern to the BRRWD and noted that these issues have also been discussed by the Wild Rice WD Board of Managers. He stated that improved communication is needed between the individual watershed districts and the RRWMB and noted the importance of the administrators of the member watershed districts to be in attendance at RRWMB meetings.

Manager Osowski stated that he would be a member of the committee to address the concerns of the BRRWD and requested other volunteers. The following managers agreed to be on the committee: Curt Nelson, Roger Ellefson, John Finney, Vernon Johnson, and Bob Wright. The board agreed that should the board members not be able to attend the committee meetings, an alternate would be acceptable. The first meeting date was scheduled for Monday, July 29th, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake WD office in Thief River Falls, MN.

Joe Spaeth, Wild Rice WD board member, agreed that the issues of concern of member watershed districts should be addressed by the RRWMB. He commended the RRWMB on the assistance offered to member watershed districts and added that it was important for all the watershed districts to remain united as members of the RRWMB.

Motion by Manager Johnson to authorize the committee to address the concerns of the BRRWD, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, **Carried**.

RRWMB Levy

The Board discussed the tax levy rate determination. **Motion** by Manager Deal to maintain the levy at 100% for FY 2003, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg. As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. Those voting in favor of the motion included: Deal, Erickson, Hanson, Solberg, Wright, and Osowski. Those opposing the motion included: Johnson and Finney. Manager Nelson abstained from voting. **Motion carried.**

Financial Coordinator Report

D. Nelson reported that he met with a representative from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and discussed high hazard dams. He noted that the DNR is strongly opposed to high hazard dams, however, lower hazard on-stream storage is receiving consideration.

Ogaard inquired about the flood damage reduction measures should a special session occur in the legislature. D. Nelson responded that the additional funding could be sought from the state for ring dikes but cost sharing would still be needed between the individual property owner and the local watershed district.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting. The TAC utilized the Project Funding Evaluation Form for projects that had been previously funded by the RRWMB and compared the results with the minimum recommended scores developed previously. He noted that only four projects exceeded the recommended minimum score of 16 for the cost per STAR value and added that the TAC continues to support the minimum score of 16.

Thul discussed the Red River Basin Water Quality team that was formed a few years ago relative to the water quality plan developed for the Red River basin by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The team has developed several information documents that address water quality concerns in the Red River basin. Membership consists primarily of agency representatives, with no individuals from the TAC attending representing the perspective of the RRWMB. Previous monthly minutes were reviewed and it was noted that Wayne Goeken and Danni Halvorson have attended these meetings in the past. The TAC discussed whether an active participant representing the RRWMB should be attending these meetings, whether it be a member of their committee or either Goeken or Halvorson.

Wayne Goeken, Water Quality Project Monitoring Coordinator, reported that the team has prepared documents relative to issues such as mercury and drainage projects. He added that Molly MacGregor, MPCA, has been conducting the meetings of the water quality team.

Thul inquired about the intent of developing the information documents. Goeken responded that the documents were developed in order to provide an update to the information included in the original water quality plan developed by MPCA.

Lance Yohe, Executive Director of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC), stated that Chuck Fritz regularly attends the meetings of the water quality team and is very familiar with the process. He suggested that he attend the next RRWMB monthly meeting and report on the intent of the team in order for the RRWMB to

determine whether a representative should be in attendance. Following discussion, the board agreed to have Chuck Fritz conduct a presentation at the next monthly meeting.

Thul stated that Charlie Anderson updated the TAC on the activities of the TSAC. Anderson reported that the work group had requested the TSAC to address the issue of on-channel vs. off-channel storage. Anderson further noted that although three drafts were developed in response to this issue, the work group remains unsatisfied with the results. Anderson added that in order for the TSAC to operate effectively, they need to interact on a more informal basis in order to reach consensus.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) Review Section 9 / Project Prioritization Worksheet

Ogaard distributed the updated handout which was approved at the previous monthly meeting. He stated that the form would be added to Section 9 of the Governing Documents manual and noted that copies would be forwarded to the individuals who received the Governing Documents manual and completed the registration form.

B) On-stream Flood Damage Reduction Storage Issue

Ogaard stated that the TSAC is addressing this issue at the request of the RRBFDWRWG. He noted that several members of the TSAC are not familiar with retention projects which creates a problem when trying to reach consensus.

C) FSA / NRCS / SWCD / Potential Coordination/Cooperation with Watershed Districts

Ogaard noted that currently meetings are being conducted among the above-referenced agencies in order to evaluate the recent flood damages. He added that the coordinated effort is being conducted in counties throughout the Red River basin.

Report on the July 8th RRBFDWRWG Meeting

Manager Deal stated that the work group reviewed the recommendations developed by the Funding Committee regarding the reallocation of unexpended funds. He added that the work group also approved the development of a handbook by Jody Horntvedt to be utilized by the individual projects teams.

Associate Director Report

N. Erickson reported that she attended the Funding Committee meeting of the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group on June 24, 2002 in St. Paul, MN at the DNR. Recommendations were developed for consideration by the work group at their meeting conducted on July 8, 2002 in Detroit Lakes, MN.

N. Erickson stated that, in conjunction with her upcoming relocation to Detroit Lakes, she checked into transferring the bank accounts currently maintained at Bremer Bank in Crookston, MN. Proposals were obtained for providing services to the RRWMB from Wells Fargo and Bremer, the two financial institutions in Detroit Lakes that offer the “sweep” investment account. Bremer Bank also offered the option of utilizing an electronic payroll system which is accessed via the Internet. Fees for this access are \$10 per month and \$1.00 per transaction. For the three employees paid twice a month including the access fee, the monthly cost would be \$16.00. It was her recommendation that the RRWMB continue their relationship with the Detroit Lakes

branch office of Bremer Bank since they offered the widest variety of services along with the lowest monthly fees and authorize utilizing the electronic payroll system.

Motion by Manager Deal to authorize the transfer of funds between the Crookston branch of Bremer Bank to the Detroit Lakes branch and also the utilization of the electronic payroll system, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

District Reports

- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) Project. The construction on the lower end of the floodway (Phase I) and on the off-channel floodwater storage site (Phase II) has, for all practical purposes, been halted due to wet conditions. The contract for the railroad and roadway crossings for Phase II has been awarded and these are expected to be installed in the next couple of weeks. The plan for the Phase III portion of the project is expected to be completed early in September.
- The Red Lake WD reported on the Parnell Impoundment Operation Plan. The joint engineers' report from JOR Engineering and HDR Engineering has been filed with the Red Lake Watershed District Board of Managers. A public hearing has been scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on July 31, 2002, at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on the June 2002 flooding events. The District has been working to inspect its projects and ditches damaged from the recent flooding. The process of developing an inventory of the damages has been delayed by a second and third round of flooding caused by continued rainfall in the weeks following the initial rainfall/flood event. The windshield surveys are to be completed this week ahead of the meetings with FEMA inspectors. The District has also been busy working with new applicants interested in the Rural Ring Dike Program and for the acquisition of homes that were damaged by the June flood waters.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported on the Clay County Ditch No. 59 – Improvement/Lateral. Viewers are currently working on assessment of benefits and damages. A tentative date of 8/12/02 has been set for filing their report. The Final Hearing would be held in early September. Pending appeals, it is still doubtful if construction could begin yet this fall. Downstream landowners on the Buffalo River continue to express concerns regarding adequacy of the outlet.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the North Ottawa Project. The North Ottawa township board has signed the agreement with the District to allow the use of their road alignments for the construction of the dikes for the impoundment and inlet channel. It was also agreed to develop an additional agreement for the construction of the collection channel in the future. The final designs are in the process of being developed, as well as acquiring additional right of way for the footprint of the impoundment. The District will also be going through some drainage law proceedings to realign two laterals on JD No. 12. The realignment is intended to occur this fall.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Wayne Goeken distributed the project monitoring monthly report. He stated that the primary activity during the past month involved actively monitoring sites throughout the region. Wide variances in results were found throughout the basin due to record rainfall and runoff events during June and into July. The highest turbidity

levels that have ever been recorded via the River Watch program for the past eight years were found during the past month. To try to better comprehend and understand the magnitude of sediment and nutrient loads being carried down the rivers in the basin, loading calculations on selected sites with readily available USGS flow data were developed.

District's Funding Requests

1. Wild Rice WD / Digital Imagery and Topographic Mapping

Jerry Bennett, Administrator-Wild Rice WD, distributed handouts regarding the above-reference project. The mapping proposed is intended to provide high-accuracy elevation mapping and ortho-rectified imagery to support future hydraulic modeling and flood plain analysis. Horizon's, Inc. will complete the imagery work with assistance from Houston Engineering, Inc. establishing the necessary ground control and field surveys. LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology was chosen because it offers the best value due to its ability to provide a high density of elevation data in an efficient timeframe at a lower cost as compared to other traditional methods.

The proposed mapping is part of a larger flood damage reduction feasibility study currently underway in cooperation with the USACE. The estimated cost of the proposed mapping is \$258,000. Fifty percent of the cost will be covered by the USACE, with the remaining cost to be covered by the local sponsor(s). Thus far the local sponsor is solely the Wild Rice WD (WRWD), however, other sources of funding are being investigated including the DNR and the RRBFDROWG. The WRWD requests that the RRWMB provide half of the local share, or \$64,500.

Thul inquired whether a funding request had been submitted to the DNR under the flood damage reduction program. Bennett responded that the timeline would not be feasible at this time since all general fund dollars have been dedicated.

D. Nelson suggested that the WRWD should inquire with the Canadian firm that conducted similar mapping in the Red River basin with LIDAR technology since significant costs savings were incurred rather than having the mapping completed by a U.S. firm.

Motion by Manager Finney to table the funding request for one month pending further investigation of the costs associated with the proposed mapping, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, discussion followed.

Bennett stated that the WRWD would support retaining the most inexpensive firm for conducting the mapping. He added that since the proposed mapping has been slated for contracting, the WRWD is more interested in obtaining a cost-share commitment from the RRWMB at this time. **Motion withdrawn.**

Motion by Manager Wright to authorize 25% of the cost of the proposed mapping up to \$64,500, **Seconded** by Manager Nelson, discussion followed.

Manager Erickson noted that no step submittal can be acted on at the same meeting at which the request was submitted. **Motion withdrawn.**

The next meeting will be on August 20, 2002, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District office, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Associate Director