

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

August 20, 2002

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, August 20, 2002, at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

In the absence of the President and Vice President, Farrell Erickson-Secretary called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Harlan Solberg Vernon Johnson
Daniel Wilkens Joe Spaeth
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
Harry Farris, Administrator, Red Lake WD
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD
Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
Molly MacGregor, Red River Basin Coordinator, MPCA
Ken Pazdernik, Coordinator, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Chuck Fritz, Program Manager, Red River Basin Commission

An additional item was added to the agenda at the request of Manager Johnson to be included following item no. 16 regarding calling an executive session.

Motion by Manager Wilkens 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 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 Solberg, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Report on Red River Basin Commission

Manager Wilkens distributed a handout from the August 1, 2002 Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) meeting conducted in Devils Lake, ND. Chuck Fritz stated that a draft CREP proposal has been prepared with regional meetings conducted with ND Soil Conservation Districts, Watershed Districts, NRCS, and others to obtain feedback. The final proposal will be presented to the Board of Water & Soil Resources this fall. The CREP proposal will need support from the Governor's offices. Each Governor has to sign the agreement with the Department of Agriculture. Both North Dakota and Minnesota also need to have in place the state match that is required, which will move both CREP efforts into next years legislative sessions.

Discussion on 2003 Funding for the Red River Basin Commission

Ogaard stated that the executive committee of the RRBC is scheduled to meet on August 22, 2002 to discuss the issue of funding for 2003. He explained that previously when the RRWMB increased the levy to 100%, a decision was made to fund \$100,000 for the RRBC on behalf of the residents in the Minnesota portion of the basin. He added that the Joint Powers group was very pleased with this decision as it alleviated the need for counties to levy an additional amount for the RRBC. He noted that due to the withdrawal of the Buffalo-Red River WD from the RRWMB, a 24.7% decrease will occur in the \$100,000 forwarded to the RRBC. He informed the board that a decision must be made whether the RRWMB will continue to fund the \$100,000 for Minnesota's portion, or less the amount of the 24.7% deficit due to the lack of tax levy funding received from the Buffalo-Red River WD. The RRBC will need to be notified of the RRWMB's decision prior to year end.

Manager Wilkens suggested that since the counties included in the BRRWD are no longer contributing to the RRWMB levy, the amount forwarded from the RRWMB to the RRBC should be reduced by this amount with the RRBC collecting funds from those individual counties.

Manager Erickson noted that the counties in the BRRWD are still served by the RRBC whether or not the BRRWD is a member of the RRWMB, therefore, they should still be contributing to the RRBC.

Manager Deal concurred with Manager Wilkens' suggestion that the amount remitted to the RRBC should be reduced by the amount of the deficit created by the withdrawal of the BRRWD. Manager Wilkens responded that he would calculate the exact amount of the deficit for discussion at the next monthly meeting.

Financial Coordinator Report

D. Nelson reported that a meeting was conducted with BWSR this past month regarding the possible opportunities to match the RRWMB objectives in flood damage reduction in the Red River Basin. He stated that he was in attendance as well as Ray Bohn whom he invited. Agencies represented at the meeting were BWSR, DNR, and NRCS. The purpose of the meeting was to develop new ideas to utilize existing programs and how to use existing allocations to better implement projects.

D. Nelson stated that he was invited to testify before the House Flood Recovery Task Force in St. Paul. The intent of the hearing was to gather information prior to the committee conducting hearings in the flood affected areas and communities in northern Minnesota. The information will most likely be used to make a case for the Governor to call a special session.

D. Nelson noted that he has also attended several political fund raisers this past month. He added that a wide-based support network is needed going into the coming year and political contributions are one of several ways

to get this accomplished. He stated that several key political figures and allies from Northwest Minnesota will be lost due to their retirements or running for other offices.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet prior to the board meeting. He discussed the proposed budget cuts of 10% for state agencies and noted that a request was received from the Commissioner to develop a budget cut of 12.5% throughout all divisions of the DNR since some divisions are unable to absorb a 10% reduction and the remaining funds would need to be found in other divisions.

Thul noted that he received a letter from Bud Johnson regarding the UNET model developed for the Red River. He explained that a proposal is being developed to hire Arctic Engineering to determine the feasibility of developing a dike protection at an estimated cost of \$140,000. An application has been submitted to the DNR for a FDR grant, with tentative approval obtained to fund 25% of the cost. He added that Johnson inquired about the possibility of funding from the RRWMB. Thul responded that the RRWMB only accepts funding requests submitted through member watershed districts. Adrian added that a letter was received by the Middle River-Snake River WD from the Marshall County Board of Commissioners stating that the District was expected to support the UNET study.

Executive Director Report – Don Ogaard

A) BWSR “Position Proposal”

Ogaard stated that a letter was received from Ron Harnack-Executive Director of BWSR proposing that Brian Dwight’s position with BWSR be similar to that of Dan Thul’s position with the DNR with regard to receiving partial funding assistance from the RRWMB. He explained that state employees work under a job description with so much time assigned to job duties. Currently, this is not the case with Brian Dwight’s position, however, should the proposal be approved his time would be reallocated to spend approximately 30% of his time with the RRWMB and individual WD’s.

Manager Deal stated that he would like to review the proposal. Ogaard responded that he would obtain the final proposal from Harnack and distribute at the next monthly meeting.

Associate Director Report

N. Erickson reported that she has been working with the Bremer Bank in Detroit Lakes regarding the transfer of accounts from the Crookston branch to the Detroit Lakes branch. Updates are needed for the signature cards for the two accounts currently maintained by the board. Signatures are needed from the current board officers as listed in the Treasurer’s manual.

She stated that during the past month, an investment matured for \$250,000 with another scheduled to mature on September 4, 2002. Dan Wilkens requested that a rate survey be conducted to obtain rate quotes. Currently, the highest rate obtained is 2.80 APY.

She noted that she assisted Wayne Goeken in compiling information needed for the Water Quality Monitoring Project. He requested information regarding expenses paid during the past year in order to ensure that project costs do not exceed budget.

She added that she discussed with Dan Wilkens how the duties associated with the Treasurer's position should be carried out relative to her recent relocation. Previously, all tax levy funds from the individual watershed districts were forwarded directly to the Treasurer in Fertile, MN who then forwarded the information to her for proper deposit and recording. They agreed that in order to expedite the process, all tax levy funds and bills should be forwarded directly to her office in Detroit Lakes, MN.

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

Ken Pazdernik, Coordinator-Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, discussed the Northwest Partnership program with the University of Minnesota. He stated that the mission of the partnership is to connect and enhance resources of the region and the University of Minnesota to develop a sustainable regional community by educating and empowering citizens to explore and act on their ideas. He explained that the partnership encourages and supports ideas that build partnerships involving citizens, businesses, communities, organizations, or agencies; seek a balance among environmental, economic and community priorities; or address regional needs in agriculture, natural resources, farming, forestry and/or tourism.

Pazdernik noted that for further information on the work of the partnership, please contact Linda Kingery-Executive Director at (877) 854-7737 or visit the website at www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

MPCA Basin Information Document Update

Molly MacGregor, Red River Basin Coordinator-MPCA, distributed a handout regarding the update to the MPCA Basin Information Document. She explained that the goal of the initiative was to update the 1997 Red River Basin Information Document by examining selected issues in depth and setting up an electronic version to provide assistance to water resource managers and stakeholders regarding information relative to water quality conditions in the Red River Basin and its tributaries.

MacGregor discussed how information would be selected to be included in the document. The primary focus of the document is the condition of the basin's surface water bodies, including: assessment of current conditions; concerns or threats to the health of the surface waters; needs for achieving healthy surface water bodies; and strategies to achieve healthy surface water bodies. She added that the first draft document will be completed in September of 2002, to be reviewed and revised in the fall of 2002, with a final draft prepared in January of 2003.

District Reports

- The Two Rivers WD reported on the status of the Ross No. 7 project. The project team will be making a site visit the end of August to view wetlands on the site and the potential for wetland restoration and creation. From this site visit, the project team will develop a formal recommendation to the Board of Managers regarding the environmental benefit aspect of the project. Land acquisition is moving forward and the District is negotiating with several landowners. A preliminary engineer's report is expected by early December.
- The Middle River-Snake River WD reported that a hearing on the petition of the Marshall County Board of Commissioners to enlarge the District by adding the Tamarac watershed area was held on July 22, 2002, in

Stephen, MN. The hearing was well attended and the testimony given was generally favorable. The Board of Water & Soil Resources is expected to consider this issue at their next meeting. If the petition is granted, the Board of Managers will increase from 5 to 7 managers, the name of the District will be changed to the Middle, Snake and Tamarac Rivers Watershed District, the area of the District will increase by approximately 44% (440 square miles), and the valuation of the District will increase by approximately 30%.

- The Red Lake WD reported on the status of the comprehensive watershed management plan update. The Board of Managers passed a resolution to proceed with the plan update. Notification to all townships and cities have been forwarded. The staff, in conjunction with the Board of Water & Soil Resources, is working on the work plan, budget and request for proposals (RFPs).
- The Sand Hill River WD reported on the Polk County No. 41 Rebuild project. A meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2002 with landowners along this road to determine whether they want to proceed with an improvement project in this area. The drainage area of the project is approximately 75 square miles and should the project be constructed in conjunction with the road rebuild, a substantial cost savings could be realized.
- The Buffalo-Red River WD reported on the Manston Slough Restoration project. Information is needed from the LIDAR mapping project prior to contacting the landowners. Project development will include flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements for the 15-17 square mile area. The area has an approximate watershed of 27 square miles. The LIDAR mapping is expected to be available later this fall. Funding partners for the aerial mapping include the Red River Watershed Management Board, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and the District.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the North Ottawa Impoundment project. Survey and design continues on the project. Petitions are being drafted to initiate the process of realigning laterals 1, 2, and 3 of Judicial Ditch No. 12. A hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible, and depending on the outcome of the hearing the realignments may begin yet this fall. A meeting is scheduled with the USACE on September 23-24, 2002 to discuss their involvement in the internal construction of the natural resource enhancement features. Other activity will include the acquisition of right-of-way for the dike alignment and the ditch realignments.

District's Funding Requests

1. Wild Rice WD / Digital Imagery and Topographic Mapping

Jerry Bents, Engineer-Houston Engineering, stated that the proposed mapping project is intended to provide high-accuracy elevation mapping and ortho-rectified imagery to support future hydraulic modeling and flood plain analysis. He stated that he discussed the project with Chuck Fritz, Program Manager-Red River Basin Commission, who indicated that LIDAR mapping has a six-inch accuracy which would be adequate.

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

Charlie Anderson suggested that the RRWMB consider referring this topic to the TAC for discussion. Manager Deal agreed that the TAC should review the results obtained from the mapping and that this initiative be a "pilot project."

As there was no further discussion a vote was taken. Those voting in favor of the motion included: Erickson, Solberg, Johnson, Wilkens, Spaeth, Nelson, and Deal. None were opposed. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Manager Deal that the results be reviewed by the TAC, **Seconded** by Manager Solberg, **Carried.**

Call for Executive Session

Manager Johnson stated that a closed executive session should be called by the board. Manager Erickson noted that it was not appropriate to have a closed session when regular board members were not in attendance. Manager Wilkens cautioned the board regarding calling an executive session since these discussions are usually limited to personnel issues.

The next meeting will be on September 17, 2002, 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 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Farrell Erickson
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Associate Director