

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

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Naomi Erickson, Associate Director-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

May 20, 2003

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, May 20, 2003, at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

Chairman John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Farrell Erickson Dan Money
Ron Osowski Vernon Johnson
Daniel Wilkens Robert Wright
Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Associate Director
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
Julie Goehring, Communication Specialist, RRBC
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office

Additional items were added to the agenda. Manager Finney requested adding the joint funding agreement between the U.S. Geological Survey and the RRWMB be added to the agenda. Manager Wilkens requested that the permitting issue regarding Badger Creek in the Red Lake WD be added to the agenda.

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

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

Financial Coordinator Report

D. Nelson reported that the environment bills passed from both the House and Senate with the outcome resulting in \$210,000 per year for the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group and \$125,000 per year for ring dikes. An attachment to the City of Roseau bill was added including \$2 million for FDR projects so funds can be replenished from their original source.

D. Nelson noted the importance of funding projects that are currently progressing including Ross No. 7, Hay Creek, North Ottawa, and the Agassiz Valley Water Management Project. He added that he will contact the administrators from the districts that have projects moving forward to inquire about timeframes for funds needed since he will need to inform Kent Lokkesmoe-DNR.

The Bois de Sioux WD (BdSWD) commended Dick Nelson for his hard work during the legislative session. Jon Roeschlein, BdSWD Administrator, forwarded a letter to the board stating that due to Nelson's knowledge and expertise the North Ottawa project has attained the best position possible in regard to state funding. Roeschlein also noted in the letter that Nelson is a tremendous asset to the RRWMB.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting. He distributed a handout of recommendations from the TAC regarding their review of the Governing Documents publication.

The TAC determined it was improper for their committee to make recommendations on issues dealing with funding policies of the RRWMB. Items that the TAC determined they could provide technical assistance with would be updates of certain sections of the Governing Documents including: adding a new section to include the Mediation Agreement, revising of the Star Value Method, clarifying the Project Prioritization Worksheet, and updating the language in the Step Process under Funding Procedures.

The Board of Managers directed the Technical Advisory Committee to proceed with reviewing the Governing Documents publication and provide technical recommendations for the sections they indicated were in need of revision.

Red River Basin Commission Report – Julie Goehring

Goehring distributed the *Around the Basin* newsletter and also highlights of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) activities. She referred to the *Basin View* article in the current newsletter whose guest editor for the month was Don Ogaard. Ogaard discussed his perspective regarding 30 years on the water management scene. The next RRBC meeting is scheduled for August 7, 2003 in Roseau, MN.

Associate Director Report

A) RRBFDWRWG Transition / Governing Documents Review

The individual watershed districts were notified regarding the RRWMB review of the Governing Documents publication. The letter requested that comments regarding revisions to the Governing Documents be sent to the office of the RRWMB by June 1st.

Members of the work group, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC), and the Red River Basin Institute (RRBI) met on April 23rd to discuss the possibility of a coordinated effort among TSAC and the RRBI. Several alternatives were discussed including TSAC providing a practitioner-type role with the RRBI, independent of the work group; or TSAC utilizing the RRBI as a technical resource. Following discussion, the group agreed that TSAC utilizing the RRBI as a technical resource would be the most feasible option since TSAC is not a separate organization but operates only at the direction of the work group.

The transition between the work group and the RRWMB was also discussed. The issue of the work group functioning as an advisory committee to the RRWMB was discussed, but there was concern that this type of relationship could compromise the independence and credibility of the work group. After further discussion, it was agreed that the work group should continue functioning as an independent entity, with the RRWMB financially supporting the administrative needs of the work group.

B) 1st International Water Conference

Erickson attended the conference sponsored by the Red River Basin Institute on April 23-24, 2003, in Moorhead, MN. A detailed report on the conference will be featured in the next *News & Views*.

C) Upcoming Conferences

The Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group is scheduled to meet Friday, June 6, 2003, Northland Inn, Crookston, MN. The 2003 MAWD Summer Tour will be conducted on June 19-21, 2003, hosted by the Clearwater River WD, St. Cloud, MN. For reservations at the Holiday Inn & Suites, call (320) 253-9000.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Wayne Goeken distributed the project monitoring monthly report. Condition monitoring in the Minnesota portion of the Red River Basin is being conducted at 6 sites on the mainstem of the Red River and 17 sites representing major Minnesota tributaries to the Red River. There was very little early spring runoff from snowmelt or spring rains thus initial turbidity readings were relatively low. Turbidity levels rose considerably at several sites in late April and into May as rain events occurred throughout the Basin. As soils become saturated, further rains will likely result in more runoff which combined with exposed soil in the early planting season will probably push turbidity levels higher. As expected, upstream sites away from the mainstem (Roseau and Clearwater) have the lowest turbidity levels.

District Reports

- The Two Rivers WD reported on the status of the Ross No. 7 Project. Notification has been given by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that \$1 million in funding will be released which constitutes 50% of the funding needed for the project. Other potential funding sources for the project include the District, the Red River Watershed Management Board, and the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group. The Preliminary Engineer's Report was submitted to the Board of Managers on March 3, 2003. A public informational meeting will be held on May 28th in the City of Badger to discuss the project and receive input. Approximately 2/3 of the land has been purchased, with the remaining land needed to be secured shortly. The permitting process has begun with construction anticipated in 2004.

- The Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD reported that a proposed boundary change has been developed by the District and the Two Rivers WD. A petition has been prepared for both Districts to submit to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for consideration.
- The Red Lake WD reported that the second round of water quality sampling for the District in 2003 will be completed in May. Water quality samples will also be taken at Cameron Lake in Polk County beginning this summer in response to public interest in water quality improvement projects in the lake's watershed.
- The Sand Hill River WD reported that the District is considering updating their rules and regulations. The Board of Managers expressed an interest in developing a set of rules and regulations that are uniform for all member districts of the Red River Watershed Management Board. The District will contact the BWSR to inquire about the possibility of a seminar being conducted on this subject.
- The Wild Rice WD reported that the District is in the process of finalizing the professional services contracts relative to the Wild Rice River Feasibility Study. It is anticipated that a public informational meeting will be held during June to kick-off the study and get public comment.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that after considerable efforts in St. Paul, the District was able to stifle yet another attempt to defeat the North Ottawa Project. Opponents to the project convinced Rep. Westrom to introduce an amendment to essentially require what has already been completed through the project team process. Thanks to Dick Nelson, Ray Bohn, Senator Langseth, Rep. Marquart and many others, the amendment was defeated in conference committee.

District's Funding Requests

1. Two Rivers WD / Ross No. 7 / Step II Submittal

A Step II submittal funding request was presented to the board for consideration. Dan Money, Administrator, distributed the preliminary engineer's report. The proposed impoundment site is located in the northeast corner of the District. The engineer's report determined that there would not be an adequate outlet for a new ditch and that other alternatives should be considered for addressing the flooding problems. The estimated total project cost is \$1,997,352.00.

2. Red Lake WD / Flood Storage Easement Project / Step II Submittal

Myron Jesme, Administrator, distributed the Step II submittal funding request to the board for consideration. At the recommendation of the TAC, the District separated Site 1 and Site 2 in terms of determining the individual Star Values and funding requested for each site. The estimated RRWMB cost share is \$50,000 for Site 1 and \$50,000 for Site 2.

U.S. Geological Survey

Manager Finney stated that a letter was received from the U.S. Department of the Interior regarding funding arrangements for the Red River wetland monitoring and modeling project. He noted that although the letter refers to the wetland monitoring and modeling projects, the joint funding agreement that was included refers to the stream gaging contracts between the RRWMB and USGS. Following discussion, the board requested N. Erickson to inquire with USGS regarding the documents.

Badger Creek Permit

Manager Wilkens explained that the Red Lake WD received permit approved last year from the DNR regarding the Badger Creek Project. Although the permit was approved and issued from the Division of Waters, the Division of Wildlife has indicated that they are against the project. The Board of Managers agreed that this issue be referred to the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group for discussion.

The next meeting will be on June 17, 2003, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District office, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Wright
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Associate Director