

# Red River Watershed Management Board

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## Board of Managers

John Finney, President-Humboldt Farrell Erickson, Vice Pres.-Badger Dan Money-Hallock Ron Osowski-Oslo  
Vernon Johnson-Clearbrook Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Robert Wright, Secretary-Felton Jerome Deal-Wheaton  
Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

September 16, 2003

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, September 16, 2003, at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, 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, Administrator  
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD  
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD  
Dennis Nikolayson, Red Lake WD  
Kevin Scheidecker, Basin Coordinator, RRBC  
Paul Telander, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office  
Jim Ziegler, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Dan Olson, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD

An additional item was added to the agenda. Manager Finney requested adding the excerpt from the Clay County minutes relative to legislative action for the Buffalo-Red River WD under item no. 13.

**Motion** by Manager Osowski to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **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 Deal, **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 Wright, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Financial Coordinator Report**

D. Nelson reported that the funding committee of the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group has requested watershed districts to submit quarterly billings to the work group for project team expenses as well as other approved funds. The committee agreed that implementing procedures for submitting timely funding requests would provide for a more accurate accounting of budgeted fiscal year legislative funds.

A panel discussion group sponsored by FEMA was conducted to discuss methods to avoid flood damages and also procedures for mitigation. D. Nelson participated on the panel along with representatives from the Wild Rice WD.

Meetings regarding the Governor's Clean Water Cabinet were conducted in Mahanomen to select pilot projects that demonstrated different ways of achieving the goals of reducing flood damages. The criteria adopted by the Clean Water Cabinet included: value, achieves measurable results within 3 years, local support and readiness, alignment of local and state priorities and resources, transferability, and scale. Additional local criteria included: potential for reducing damages, located in the valley floor or has a positive effect on reducing flood damages in the valley floor, uses an existing project or problem area, and project area should lend itself to demonstrating or evaluating new or emerging technologies.

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

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting. He stated that the TAC is reviewing a draft of the USGS wetland study regarding simulation of runoff storage. He added that an additional meeting of the TAC will be scheduled to finalize comments on the draft to be forwarded to USGS.

Thul added that the TAC is finalizing their recommendations to the Governing Documents publication. Charlie Anderson is developing hydrographs needed for the Star Value update. A draft of the revised Star Value Method section will be distributed to the Transition Team members prior to their next meeting.

### **Red River Coordinator Position**

Thul discussed the contract with the State of Minnesota for a cost share with the RRWMB relative to the renewal of the Red River Coordinator position. The coordinator position is funded by the two agencies as follows: 70% DNR and 30% RRWMB. The RRWMB's 30% cost share is \$24,000 per year. Thul added that the position facilitates communication between the two organizations.

**Motion** to renew the Red River Coordinator position contract for a two-year term with a 6-month cancellation provision by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) Governing Documents Review**

The *Transition Team* met on September 5, 2003 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District office to review the Governing Documents publication. Another meeting will be scheduled to finalize the revisions needed to the documents.

**B) Website Proposal**

A proposal to update the website of the RRWMB was obtained from an independent contractor from Fargo, ND. The consultant estimates the amount of time to revise the website and also the training involved to maintain the website would be approximately 20 to 25 hours at the rate of \$50.00 per hour (\$1,000 to \$1,250).

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to approve revising and the training to maintain the website, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

**C) Farmstead Ring Dikes**

A meeting was conducted on Monday, August 25, 2003 hosted by Senator LeRoy Stumpf, Senator Keith Langseth, and officials from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources which outlined the proposed floodplain ordinance language for counties. Counties must adopt revised language to issue permits for farmstead ring dikes which fall under an exception approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The exception recently granted by FEMA allows counties in NW Minnesota to issue permits for internal waterproofing of agricultural structures within the confines of ring dike systems funded by the DNR or watershed districts. This exception was the result of extensive discussions between the DNR and many individuals over the period of several years.

**Water Quality Project Monitoring Report**

Jim Ziegler, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), discussed the Water Quality Project Monitoring Program. He stated that the program has been primarily funded through the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group with contributions from MPCA relative to staff and equipment, however, funding has severely diminished due to budget cuts.

The value of monitoring is realized during the permit approval process. Water quality data obtained either above or below a project area can be the basis for obtaining and/or expediting permit approval. It also demonstrates to the legislature that public dollars are achieving results by showing that project objectives are being met.

The commitment of MPCA involves staff, equipment and money. Approximately 50% of the staff time in the Detroit Lakes office is devoted to flood damage reduction. These funds are not reimbursed from flood damage reduction funding, but rather come from the MPCA budget.

Ziegler explained that funding assistance is needed in the interim to continue the Water Quality Project Monitoring program until other funding options can be pursued. D. Nelson suggested scheduling a meeting with the Commissioner of MPCA to discuss funding options for the program.

**Motion** by Manager Money to authorize the RRWMB to continue funding the program in the interim through December 2003, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

**District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported on the status of the proposed West Interceptor and Mud Lake Restoration Project. Preliminary engineering work continues on the proposed project west of the City of Roseau with JOR Engineering performing the engineering duties. A public informational meeting will be conducted on September 24<sup>th</sup> at the Roseau County Courthouse.
- The Two Rivers WD reported on the continuation of a culvert inventory. At the last monthly board meeting, the Board of Managers authorized entering into a contract with the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) for the year 2004 to continue developing a culvert inventory. Under this program, the District and MCC will work together to locate all culverts within the District and record their location, size, type of construction and other pertinent data. The information is being entered into GIS and will be utilized in conjunction with the hydrologic model during permitting and various other aspects of watershed analysis.
- The Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD reported on the status of the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) Project. Work on the structure on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 15 is essentially completed. Strom Contracting Services started work on Phase 3a and it appears the excavation will be completed by the end of September. The construction of Phase 2 (Off Channel Floodwater Storage Site) has also been progressing well. The placement of fill is expected to be completed this fall with the seeding and other finishing work completed next summer.
- The Red Lake WD reported on the development of a set of Standard Operating Procedures for water quality sampling. When completed, these procedures will be used as a guide for the entire Red River Basin. A final review of the procedures will be conducted on September 17<sup>th</sup> prior to distribution of the completed document.

Sampling for the Clearwater River Habitat/Bioassessment Project has been conducted by water quality staff. Processing macroinvertebrate samples has also begun.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the Voluntary Flood Storage Program. Following the 2002 summer flood, the Board of Managers have been working with local residents in the development of a voluntary flood storage program. Under the new program, the watershed district is providing technical and financial assistance for landowners who are interested in storing water on their land. The first project to be implemented through this program will be constructed during 2003 on the Lawrence Pollock property in Ulen Township, Clay County. The project is on agricultural land that is being volunteered for storage with the watershed district paying the costs of the structural modifications to allow for water storage on the property. The new program promotes the concept of landowners being a part of the solution by storing water where it falls. The voluntary flood storage program is being evaluated for its effectiveness in achieving flood storage that can be a feasible alternative to traditional storage methods.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the proposal to amend the agreement between the North Ottawa Township Board and the District was rejected at the board's August board meeting. The board accepted the Final Engineer's Report. A public hearing will be conducted following the completion of the final viewer's report for both reports. The board expects to have appeals to these reports and will attempt to address them over the winter months.

Kevin Scheidecker, Basin Coordinator-RRBC, discussed the changes in staffing at the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). He stated that Chuck Fritz, former Program Manager, is now working full-time with the Red River Basin Institute (RRBI), and that a new person has been hired for the vacant position.

Scheidecker stated that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has been discussed at the local project team levels with regard to riparian buffers and wetland restorations. A recommendation has been made from the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to the Governor regarding the initiative. A press release from the Governor regarding the initiative will be scheduled in mid October.

### **Two Rivers Watershed District / Nereson Project**

Paul Telander, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), discussed the proposed amendments to the Joint Powers Agreement regarding the Nereson Project of the Two Rivers WD between the State of Minnesota, Roseau County, the Two Rivers WD, and the Red River Watershed Management Board. The original agreement outlined the responsibilities of the parties to the agreement relative to project construction, operation and maintenance.

The revisions to the Joint Powers Agreement included an amendment to the contract amount contributed from the DNR from \$50,000 to \$60,000, and also an increase in total project costs from an estimated \$400,000 to \$717,000. Additional language was also added regarding the state funding. The State's funding will be used to construct a Texas crossing for the diversion inlet into the sub-impoundment, and also to install a 36-inch bypass culvert west of the Texas crossing.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize the amendments to the Joint Powers Agreement for the Nereson Project, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

### **Buffalo-Red River Watershed District**

An excerpt from the January 28, 2003 Clay County Committee minutes was distributed. The minutes include a request for support of legislative action for the Buffalo-Red River WD to levy an ad valorem tax as a result of the District's decision to withdraw their membership from the RRWMB.

### **Governor's Clean Water Cabinet**

Manager Deal commented on the Governor's Clean Water Cabinet discussed previously in the Financial Coordinator Report. He stated that the following project areas were considered by the group: Roseau River (RRWD), Felton Ditch (WRWD), Manston Slough (BRRWD), Grand Marais River/Project 60 (RLWD), Springbrook (TRWD), Kittson County Culvert/Waffle (TRWD), and Moonshine Lake (BdSWD).

The two project areas that the group is considering selecting include the Grand Marais River/Project 60 of the Red Lake WD and the Manston Slough Project of the Buffalo-Red River WD. Due to the controversy associated with the BRRWD since their withdrawal from the RRWMB, the group is concerned about endorsing the Manston Slough project.

### **Red Lake Watershed District / Badger Creek Permit**

Myron Jesme, Administrator-RLWD, addressed the permit delay for the Badger Creek area. The Board of Managers discussed forwarding a letter to Congressman Collin Peterson to request his assistance in resolving the permit issue.

**Motion** by Manager Johnson to authorize forwarding a letter to Congressman Peterson requesting his assistance regarding the Badger Creek permit issue, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

**District's Funding Requests**

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on October 21, 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 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Wright  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator