

# Red River Watershed Management Board

1298 South Shore Drive Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 Phone: (218)844-6166, Fax: (218)844-6167

## Board of Managers

John Finney, President-Humboldt Farrell Erickson, Vice Pres.-Badger Dan Money-Hallock Ron Osowski-Oslo  
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Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

April 20, 2004

Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, April 20, 2004, at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

Chairman John Finney called the meeting to order.

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

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Ron Adrian, Administrator, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD  
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD  
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office  
Kevin Scheidecker, Basin Coordinator, RRBC  
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD  
Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD  
Don Buckhout, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Robert Zimmerman, Engineer, City of Moorhead  
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering  
Pete Waller, Board of Water & Soil Resources

An additional item was added to the agenda. Manager Deal requested adding an update regarding the Bois de Sioux WD North Ottawa Litigation under item no. 11. Don Buckhout requested to be added to the agenda under item no. 13 to report on the revised CREP application.

**Motion** by Manager Deal to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the March 16, 2004 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**. **Motion** by Manager Deal to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **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**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Money, **Seconded** by Manager Erickson, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Financial Coordinator Report**

In the absence of D. Nelson, a handout was distributed on his behalf. The Capital Investment Bill in the House will be released on April 21<sup>st</sup> with flood damage reduction included as a high priority item. The Senate position seems favorable at this point.

A compromise on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has been reached. Although the permanent easement acres have been reduced, the program is still very beneficial.

The budget deficit was handled without any negative impacts to the Work Group funds or Farmstead Ring Dike Program.

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

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet prior to the board meeting. He reported that a meeting is scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup> with the H & H and Flood Damage Reduction committees of the Red River Basin Commission. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a strategy for an overall plan for water management in the basin.

Thul reported at the previous monthly meeting that the DNR completed a survey of Minnesota agricultural levees in the basin. The survey addressed concerns that certain portions of the levees were not in compliance. The only watershed district affected by the survey is the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD.

Thul stated that restructuring has occurred within the divisions Fish and Wildlife in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The fish and wildlife divisions were previously two separate entities, however, they have been consolidated into one division. The new director for the Fish & Wildlife division is John Gunther.

### **Red River Basin Commission**

Kevin Scheidecker, Basin Coordinator-RRBC, reported that a planning effort is occurring in Canada regarding the Roseau River watershed. The plan will coordinate with the efforts currently conducted in Minnesota.

Scheidecker distributed handouts relative to the compromise reached with CREP. The revised application includes restoring a total of 120,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land in three targeted watersheds. Enrollment goals are 51,000 acres in the Red River Watershed in northwestern Minnesota, 51,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi Watershed in southeastern Minnesota, and 18,000 acres in the Missouri River Watershed in southwestern Minnesota.

CREP will be administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Board of Water & Soil Resources in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Districts. Local work groups for each watershed will include representatives from the Watershed District and representatives from each SWCD, County, NRCS and FSA office. The local work groups will select targets and priorities within each watershed.

Don Buckhout added that the members of the Funding Committee discussed the implementation of CREP at their meeting conducted last week. The members of the committee agreed that measures proposed under CREP that are within approved projects of the watershed district should be designated as high priority.

Scheidecker stated that CREP is scheduled to begin implementation by July and suggested conducting an informational meeting with the project teams prior to that date. Buckhout added that he would coordinate with Scheidecker to schedule meetings with project teams.

Maynard Pick inquired about drafting a letter from the RRWMB to the agencies listed on the Mediation Agreement encouraging their attendance at meetings relative to CREP. Following discussion, the board agreed that it would be more appropriate to discuss this issue at the next Work Group meeting.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fargo-Moorhead and Upstream Feasibility Study**

Robert Zimmerman, City of Moorhead Engineer, discussed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) feasibility study. The USACE published the *Reconnaissance Study; Red River Basin; Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota* in September 2001. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the potential for Federal interest (i.e. funding) in implementing solutions to flooding, ecosystem degradation, and other related water resource problems and opportunities in the basin.

The report identified three feasibility studies to address planning needs at the basin and sub-basin level. The Fargo-Moorhead and Upstream (FMUS) Feasibility Study will consider the cumulative impact that multi-purpose detention facilities upstream of Fargo and Moorhead can provide in the reduction of flood stages and restoration of aquatic ecosystems.

In January 2002, the USACE St. Paul District distributed a preliminary draft project management plan (PMP) for the FMUS feasibility study. Because of the current fiscal situation in Minnesota, state agencies have been unable to commit funds. As a result, the USACE has been working with potential cost-sharing partners to revise the PMP and secure commitments for non-Federal funding (i.e. cash and work-in-kind contributions).

The City of Moorhead has tentatively agreed to serve as the Minnesota non-federal sponsor. The study will be cost-shared 50% Federal and 50% non-Federal. The City of Moorhead has agreed to contribute \$42,000 of cash in addition to work-in-kind contributions. There are no specific cash or work-in-kind contributions identified or requested of the RRWMB at this time.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) Funding Committee**

N. Erickson stated that the Funding Committee of the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group met on April 14, 2004 in Alexandria, MN. The committee discussed the reallocation of FY02 and FY03 funds remaining in the RRWMB account. The FY04, FY05 and proposed FY06 budgets were also discussed. The budgets of FY04 and FY05 which have been adopted each contain \$210,000. These budgets include funds to implement overall plan updates, project teams, TSAC, Communications and Outreach, and meeting expense.

#### **B) Insurance Quotes**

N. Erickson reported that she is in the process of obtaining quotes regarding the insurance that is purchased by the RRWMB. The current insurance agent is ICS Agency, Inc. of Edina, MN. Quotes have been requested from both ICS Agency, Inc. and the Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust.

#### **C) Streamflow Gaging Program**

N. Erickson explained that at the previous monthly meeting, James Fallon, USGS Supervisory Hydrologist explained the potential changes to the current network relative to the Buffalo-Red River WD no longer being a member of the RRWMB and also the redistribution of funding sources within the program. A handout of the proposed changes was distributed and reviewed by the board. Funding requests will be forwarded to the individual member watershed districts for reimbursement.

**D) North Ottawa Litigation**

N. Erickson stated that a conference call was conducted on Friday, April 16, 2004 to discuss the case. Mr. Smith, with the consent of the Tom Athens, BdSWD attorney, recommended that the RRWMB intervene as a party respondent to the litigation with the BdSWD. The recommendation was based on the fact that RRWMB interests in the lawsuit are distinct from those of the BdSWD with regard to ensuring that the RRWMB obligations under the Mediation Agreement can be fulfilled. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the RRWMB to intervene as a party respondent in the litigation of the Bois de Sioux WD regarding the North Ottawa project, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

**E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, April 22, 2004, Detroit Lakes, MN.

**District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that a rough draft of the District's updated Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was distributed for 60-day review.

The Board of Managers have been working with JOR Engineering on the revised plan for the West Intercept project. The Board is considering conducting a hearing on the project in late May. Rob Sando, Administrator, and JOR Engineering met with the Roseau County Engineer to discuss the CR 120 bypass road to be constructed this summer and to coordinate efforts between the two projects.

- The Two Rivers WD reported on the Ross No. 7 project. The District has applied for permits from Roseau County (impound water along County Ditch No. 13), Ross Township (zoning), the State Historic Preservation Office, and various agencies regarding wetlands. Wetland permitting in particular has been extremely difficult. Federal, state and local agencies have been slow to reply. Land acquisition has been proceeding quite well, with most of the land needed to be acquired within the next few months. The final engineer's report will be prepared within the next two months. The District anticipates construction will begin in 2005.
- The Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD reported on amending the watershed management plan and also rules. The District has received comments from the Board of Water & Soil Resources concerning the proposed revised rules. A hearing on the proposed rules is expected to be scheduled early this summer. An amendment to the District's Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan will be prepared this spring.
- The Red Lake WD reported on State Ditch No. 83. The District is reviewing the Preliminary Engineer's Report for the project, which Brent Johnson presented at the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. A public hearing will be scheduled upon their approval of the Report.

The District entered into an agreement with "Sentence to Serve" to clear and snag debris along a 5.5 mile stretch which is located north and south of the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. This project was completed by the first week in April.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the litigation regarding the North Ottawa project. The District attorney, Tom Athens, is working with Louis Smith of Smith Parker on the appeal process regarding the North Ottawa project. Judge Hoff has been re-assigned the case as a result of the District's request for a change in judges. A scheduled conference is set for May 10, 2004. A motion was also filed to compel the appellants to respond to interrogatories since they are past the 30-day time limit to respond.

### **District's Funding Requests**

#### **1. Wild Rice WD / Updating Existing HEC-1 and HEC-RAS Model**

Jerry Bennett, Administrator-Wild Rice WD, distributed handouts regarding the above-reference project. Jerry Bents, Engineer-Houston Engineering, Inc., presented a report on the current activities within the Wild Rice WD. With regard to developing projects, the Board of Manager's vision includes establishing clear goals for flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements. Economic feasibility must be considered along with obtaining measurable results. Future activities anticipated by the District include evaluating setback levees, channel restoration and off-channel storage along the Wild Rice River.

The modeling proposed will be to update the existing HEC-1 and HEC-RAS model. The present HEC-1 model consists of 54 sub-basins including the Wild Rice River and its tributaries, the South Branch Wild Rice River, Felton Ditch and the Marsh River. The updated HEC-RAS existing conditions model will be calibrated to recent spring and summer floods of 1997, 2000, 2001 and 2002. The existing conditions model will also be updated using the recent LIDAR and channel cross-section data collected as part of the Wild Rice River Feasibility Study.

The cost for updating the model is \$159,700. Fifty percent of the cost will be covered by the USACE, with the remaining cost to be covered by the local sponsor(s). The Wild Rice WD requested the RRWMB provide one half of the local cost-share, or \$39,900. **Motion** by Manager Wright to authorize one half of the local cost-share to update the model, or \$39,900, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

#### **Standard Mileage Rate**

Manager Erickson inquired about the current maximum IRS limit for mileage. N. Erickson responded that the current rate is .375 per mile.

N. Erickson explained that the Board of Managers authorizes the maximum IRS limit for mileage during the Annual Board Organization each January. She noted that typically the rate does not change during mid-year. Following discussion, the board requested N. Erickson research the current IRS maximum mileage reimbursement. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the maximum IRS limit should it fluctuate, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on May 18, 2004, 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 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Wright  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator