

Red River Watershed Management Board

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

Board of Managers

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Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

May 18, 2004

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, May 18, 2004, 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, Administrator, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Don Buckhout, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Alvin Nybladh, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD

An additional item was added to the agenda. Don Buckhout requested to be added to the agenda under item no. 13 regarding the Project Team workshop meetings scheduled for June 7th and June 8th.

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

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Money to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Osowski, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Assessment and Watershed Protection Program Grants

Manager Wilkens discussed the proposed grant for the RRWMB regarding the Water Quality Project Monitoring initiative. The EPA's Assessment and Watershed Protection Program grants have two purposes: 1. Support a watershed approach to better address water quality problems in the U.S., and 2. Build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for watershed protection, restoration and management.

The proposed grant is for a Red River Basin Sediment Reduction Project which would involve a state and local partnership to design and test a pilot project to manage sediment and to enhance the capacity of local governments to attain water quality standards for sediment. The project will support condition water quality monitoring; provide for interpretation of monitoring and assessment by local units which also link sources to flows; design and test a tool assessing the sources of sediment, establishing a runoff index and sedimentation susceptibility index for each watershed; identify best management practices to reduce sediment; work with projects in selected watersheds to implement methodology; and monitor and evaluate results.

The proposed grant leverages the following activities of the which the board is a participant or partner: Red River Basin Monitoring Network; Flood Damage Reduction and Natural Resource Enhancement Planning; Local Water Planning and Watershed District Planning; and the Red River Basin Buffer Initiative. The project costs are \$100,000 (\$50,000 for salaries and \$50,000 for equipment, meetings and project support) which matches MPCA's \$100,000 grant for TMDL work. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens that the RRWMB sponsor the U.S. EPA's Assessment and Watershed Protection Program grant, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

Financial Coordinator Report

D. Nelson reported that although the Flood Damage Reduction and Farmstead Ring Dike funds were unscathed in the legislature, the final numbers have not been locked in so changes could still occur. Proposed state agency cuts of 3% have also been suggested.

D. Nelson noted that a CREP meeting is scheduled for May 19th in St. Paul regarding obtaining support in Washington D.C. The current concerns with the program include not allowing prioritization, no allocations by watershed district, or allowing CRP acres to rollover.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet prior to the board meeting. A funding request was distributed regarding the installation of an additional gaging station in the Wild Rice Watershed District. The request was to provide one-half of the local cost-share (\$11,495) for the installation of a stream gage on the South Branch of the Wild Rice River. **Motion** by Manager Wright for the RRWMB to provide one-half of the local cost-share or \$11,495 for the installation of a stream gage on the South Branch of the Wild Rice River, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

Thul noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be initiating a project to identify wetland basins that have been drained or partially drained. The purpose of the project is to determine whether the primary benefit of restoring wetlands is to increase wildlife habitat. Procedures for prioritizing wetland restorations will be developed in conjunction with the project.

Charlie Anderson has been invited to participate in the USFWS project. He is a member of the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) of the Work Group. Several products developed by TSAC could possibly be utilized in conjunction with the project. Thul estimated that the project would involve monthly meetings with Anderson utilizing ~ 20 days of time and inquired whether the board would consider funding Anderson's participation with the project.

Manager Deal suggested that the board authorize Anderson's attendance at three meetings and provide an update to the board at that time to determine whether additional participation is needed. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize Charlie Anderson's attendance at three meetings, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

Thul stated that the TAC has a meeting scheduled for June 2nd at Houston Engineering, Inc. in Fargo, ND to meet with representatives from the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) regarding drainage issues. Developing criteria for drainage will be discussed.

Thul reported that he met with the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District (MSTWD) Board of Managers regarding ag dikes located on the Minnesota side of the Red River. In response to concerns expressed by North Dakota regarding the ag dikes located along the river, a compliance survey was conducted in Minnesota by the DNR. Based on the survey, a number of areas were identified in the MSTWD that were not in compliance. The District agreed to commit staff time to assist the affected landowners with removing the dikes should it be necessary.

Thul added that he attended a meeting at the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) with the Flood Damage Reduction and Hydrology task forces to discuss the Red River mainstem model. The RRWMB assisted with partial funding for the MIKE 11 model and also funds to develop the HEC-RAS model. The task forces agreed to proceed with the MIKE 11 model for planning.

Red River Basin Commission

Naomi Erickson distributed highlights from the May 6, 2004 board meeting. Presentations on water supply issues were conducted at the RRBC Board meeting by the Bureau of Reclamation-Red River Valley Division and also Southern Manitoba. Following the presentations, the RRBC board discussion focused on conservation, in-basin and out-of-basin solutions to the water supply problem, including: a basin strategy that could be recommended to policy makers; drought as the biggest problem for the basin; drought management practices to link drought (supply needs) and flood retention strategies; and some projects (such as North Ottawa) could be multi-purpose for water supply and flood protection if more funding were available on the water supply side.

There was unanimous agreement by the RRBC board on the following issues:

- There is a current water supply need in the Red River Basin;
- There will be a water supply need 25 years into the future based on growth;
- There is not enough water available in the RRB for an extended drought; and
- Population growth and economic development will increase water demand in the future.

Administrator Report

A) Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group

N. Erickson attended the RRBFDROWG meeting conducted on April 22, 2004 at the Holiday Inn – Lakeside, Detroit Lakes, MN. Status reports on several projects that are under development were presented. Regarding the Badger Creek proposed cleanout project, it was agreed that Paul Swenson and Dan Wilkens will work together to determine what can be done. General discussion about attendance, or lack thereof, at project team meetings was also discussed. The Work Group agreed on the importance of regulatory agencies attending project team meetings due to their key role in project permitting.

The Work Group approved a \$10,000 project acceleration grant for Project 60 of the Red Lake WD. An application for a project acceleration grant for the Riverton Township Impoundment Project in the Buffalo Red River WD was tabled until the June meeting. Brian Dwight reported that Ron Harnack would like to encourage discussion about the Buffalo-Red River WD rejoining the RRWMB prior to considering the funding request.

B) U.S. Geological Survey

A new paper from the long-term study conducted by the Canadians on mercury cycling and bioaccumulation in an experimentally created reservoir (similar to Good Lake) was forwarded from Mark Brigham, USGS. A handout was distributed for review.

C) Farmstead Ring Dike Program

A funding request for \$4,595.82 was submitted at a previous board meeting by the Buffalo-Red River WD for reimbursement for 25% cost share under the farmstead ring dike program. Since the BRRWD was not a member district during the time period indicated on the funding request, Ed Fick-DNR was contacted to discuss the issue. Erickson reported that following further discussion among her, Ed Fick, and Bruce Albright, a revised funding request for \$1,653.89 was resubmitted. The revised funding request is representative of the approved cost-share (25%) from the RRWMB and represents the final billing from the BRRWD to the RRWMB regarding this program.

D) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, June 9, 2004, Crookston, MN.

District Reports

- The Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD reported that they are in the process of awarding bids for the structure on Minnesota Trunk Highway No. 75 regarding the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) project. Work on phase 3B is primarily the Floodway Channel upstream of Minnesota Trunk Highway No. 75. The District is working with Canadian Pacific (Soo Line) Railroad and MnDOT concerning the structure under Trunk Highway No. 1. It is expected that work on phase 2 (Off Channel Floodwater Storage Site) and phase 3A will be completed this summer/fall with work on the Floodway to be completed next summer.

The District received comments from the Board of Water & Soil Resources concerning the proposed revised rules. A hearing on the proposed rules has been scheduled for June 30, 2004. An amendment to the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan will be prepared this spring.

- The Red Lake WD reported that areas of the watershed received 4-6 inches of precipitation in a 12 hour period last week. Flooding occurred in various areas and roads were overtopped and washed out despite impoundments storing excess runoff. Prior to the precipitation event, impoundment levels were at their normal summer elevation. Excess water will be released when downstream conditions are acceptable.

The permitting process has started for the Red Lake WD Ditch No. 10 project. Plans are to have the permits submitted within the next few weeks. Three viewers were appointed and started the viewing phase on May 4th. The Viewer's Report will be completed within the next few weeks.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the South Branch Wild Rice River Flood Storage Investigation. The District in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be conducting an assessment of potential storage sites within the South Branch of the Wild Rice River sub-basin. Work to be conducted includes providing the necessary engineering, environmental and mapping for the South Branch of the Wild Rice River to evaluate potential project locations. Outcomes of the analysis will include the development of a series of concept plans with combinations of projects (i.e. Plan A, Plan B, Plan C,...). Hydrologic modeling will be conducted to determine potential flow reduction at the outlet of South Branch Basin. It is anticipated that a maximum of 15 sites will be identified and analyzed. Work will be starting this month with an anticipated completion date planned for early 2005.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the Stevens- Traverse project team is assembled, awaiting appointment by the Board at their regular meeting on May 20, 2004. There is significant interest of project team members and the District anticipates the members to be progressive. The project team members have been invited to attend the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee / Project Team Workshop scheduled for June 8, 2004 in Moorhead.

Project Team Workshops

Don Buckhout stated that project team workshops have been scheduled for June 7th at the Best Western Hotel in Thief River Falls, MN and for June 8th at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, MN. The purpose of the meetings are to update project team members on the role of TSAC and the products developed by the committee as well as the implementation of the CREP program.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The possibility of canceling the June board meeting was discussed since several of the managers are still doing fieldwork. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to cancel the June board meeting of the RRWMB, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on July 20, 2004, 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 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Wright
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator