

Red River Watershed Management Board

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Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

November 16, 2004

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, November 16, 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
Alvin Nybladh Vernon Johnson
Daniel Wilkens Robert Wright
Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator
Dick Nelson, Financial Coordinator
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, RRBC
Brian Dwight, BWSR
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD

An additional item was added to the agenda. A review of the contract with RPN Consulting, Inc. was added to the agenda under the Financial Coordinator Report section.

Motion by Manager Erickson 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 Deal 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 Money, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **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 budget for the House of Representatives has gotten much tighter which will require cooperation from those individuals to work together. He added that a bonding bill will also be discussed again during the upcoming session which will be identical to the one that was proposed last year.

D. Nelson distributed a news release regarding USDA's Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). WREP will be administered through a partnership between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The targeted restoration funds will focus on approximately 7,250 acres throughout Minnesota.

D. Nelson discussed the Farmstead Ring Dike Program. He noted that historically, the state ring dike funding was as follows: 1997 Special Session, \$900,000; 1998 Regular Session, \$1,500,000; 1999 Regular Session, \$468,000; 2000 Regular Session, \$300,000; 2001-2002 Biennium, \$500,000; and 2003-2004 Biennium, \$250,000.

The Board reviewed the contract with RPN Consulting which expires November 2004. A copy of the current contract was distributed. **Motion** by Manager Deal to renew the contract with RPN Consulting, Inc. for another two-year term, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet prior to the board meeting. He reported that at the previous TAC meeting, discussion occurred relative to reviewing a framework plan for flood flow reduction. The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) used a paper developed by the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) of the Work Group to formulate a basin framework plan. The MIKE 11 model that was developed by the RRBC will be used in conjunction with the plan. The TAC agreed that they should be involved with the development of the plan in order to maintain consistency with initiatives throughout the basin.

Thul also suggested scheduling a meeting with Al Kean-BWSR and Dr. Gary Sands-University of Minnesota in order to follow up on previous meetings that were conducted by an interagency group formed to address drainage issues.

Leadership Program for Local Water Management Partners

Brian Dwight, BWSR, thanked the board for approving a financial contribution of up to \$15,000 to be used toward offsetting the costs of the program. A brochure was distributed regarding the specifics of the program.

Dwight reviewed a contract to be signed between the University of Minnesota-Extension and the RRWMB regarding the costs incurred with conducting the program. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize Naomi Erickson to finalize the contract with the University of Minnesota-Extension Service regarding the funding commitment authorized for the Leadership Program for Local Water Management Partners, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, RRBC distributed a handout of board meeting highlights of the November 4, 2004 RRBC board meeting. Chairman Bud Oliver welcomed new board members Melissa Hoitan and Allen Pemberton at the November meeting. Melissa will represent the Manitoba First Nations and Allen will be the Minnesota Tribal representative. Executive Director Lance Yohe updated the board on the Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP). The NRFP is nearly complete and there was general consensus to have the plan completed by the Annual Meeting scheduled for January 12-14, 2005.

Administrator Report

A) RRWMB Web Page

N. Erickson reported that following the presentation conducted at the previous monthly meeting relative to the update of the RRWMB website, discussion occurred relative to the motion passed by the RRWMB authorizing funding for the creation of a webpage for each individual member watershed district.

The following motion was passed at the May 19, 1998 board meeting: ***Motion** by Manager Wilkens to fund the creating and maintenance of a web page for the Red River Watershed Management Board and each individual member watershed district, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.*

Following discussion, the board agreed that a cap should be put on expenditures incurred by individual member districts to be reimbursed by the RRWMB for the creation and maintenance of a webpage. **Motion** by Manager Erickson to authorize for each member district a 50% cost share reimbursement from the RRWMB not to exceed \$3,000 for the creation of a webpage and a 50% cost share reimbursement from the RRWMB not to exceed \$1,500 per year for maintenance, **Seconded** by Manager Johnson, **Carried**.

B) Digital Elevation Modeling

N. Erickson stated that she attended a meeting conducted on November 12, 2004 on the North Dakota State University campus regarding a digital elevation modeling (DEM) proposal. The goal of the DEM is to create a tool for water managers. The scope of the project is the 13 counties along the Red River on the U.S. side of the basin. The estimated cost of the project is ~ \$5 million dollars. The steering committee agreed by consensus that a plan should be developed at the state level (Minnesota and North Dakota) for a proposal to develop a basin-wide DEM. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for December 10, 2004. Following discussion, the board authorized Dan Thul to represent the TAC at meetings regarding the DEM proposal.

C) Administrator's Meeting

A meeting was conducted at the Sand Hill River WD office on November 9th to discuss the process of project implementation in individual member watershed districts. Several issues were addressed that could effect the progression of projects including landowner involvement, permitting issues, coordination among project team members, and funding sources.

The attendees agreed that it would be beneficial to schedule a conference regarding the procedures to be followed for project implementation, specifically with attorneys of member districts in attendance. Items to be addressed at the conference would include watershed district obligations under watershed law, implementation of the mediation agreement, forming a cooperative basin-wide legal team, establishing criteria for legal assistance from the RRWMB, and the development of procedures for litigation occurring in the basin.

D) Leadership Program for Local Water Management Partners

N. Erickson referred to the Governing Documents “Section 4 – Funding Procedures.” Under Section III – Procedures for Review and Approval, the procedures for submitting funding requests for projects and programs are addressed. The funding request for the Leadership Program would fall within the guidelines established under the procedures for funding programs. Discussion occurred whether a variation from these requirements is necessary. The board directed N. Erickson to research the procedures for amending a motion in Roberts’ Rules of Order and discuss this issue at the December board meeting.

E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, November 17, 2004, at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.
2. Legislative Meeting, November 23, 2004, Days Inn, Moorhead, MN.
3. Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD), December 2-4, 2004, Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center, Alexandria, MN.
4. 22nd Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference, “Shared Resources, Shared Responsibilities,” January 12-14, 2005, Ramada Plaza, Fargo, ND.
5. Red River Basin Institute, Second International Water Conference “Research and Education in an International Watershed: Implications for Decision-Making” at the Ft. Garry Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 6 –7, 2005.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan update has been completed. The plan has been submitted and accepted by the Board of Water & Soil Resources.
- The Middle-Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported on the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) Project. The contract for the installation of the box culverts on Trunk Highway No. 75 over the floodway is in the process of being finalized. The Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) railroad has begun the construction of their bridge. Based on earlier estimates, the bridge should be completed in two weeks. The construction of Phase 3b by KGM Construction is underway. This phase is the portion of the floodway east of Trunk Highway No. 75. Construction of Phase 3b should be completed next summer. The District is also working with Canadian Pacific (Soo Line) Railroad and MnDOT concerning the structure under Trunk Highway No. 1.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is planning Phase 4 of the project which involves mitigation features. The details of the project are expected to be developed this winter.

- The Red Lake WD reported that the District was among five watersheds selected to participate in a new program designed to reward farmers for long-term stewardship. The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working land. The District is in the process of determining their role and the necessary steps to implement this program.

- The Wild Rice WD reported that concerns related to main stem flood storage were discussed at the November project team meeting including a request for legislative assistance to look at options on the Wild Rice River.

The project team discussed the Twin Valley Dam project. The last cost estimate developed for the project was in the \$50 million range (without considering mitigation costs). These costs are out of reach for local resources and would necessitate seeking federal and state assistance. In order to implement the Twin Valley Dam project, Congress would need to reauthorize the Twin Valley Lake project, along with providing a source of funding to take a second look at the project.

Under a General Reevaluation Report (GRR), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) could review the original project along with alternative flood storage measures to meet the original purpose and intent of the original project. The Board of Managers passed a motion to request legislative assistance in seeking a federal appropriation to begin a GRR and have the USACE conduct an investigation of alternatives to the Twin Valley Dam project for flood control purposes.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that construction is progressing well on the outlet structures for the North Ottawa Project. Comstock Construction has poured 3 of the 6 bases needed for the project. Diversions of the legal ditch systems have been completed to route the water around the worksites on the north end of the project.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Wayne Goeken- Monitoring Coordinator conducted a review of the condition monitoring season. Late October rains and runoff triggered a late fall sample run at condition and FDR project sites. Approximately 15-19 samples were conducted in 2004 from the main condition monitoring sites. Annual loads of sediment and nutrients will be estimated when final flow data is made available from USGS.

The Detroit Lakes office of MPCA has submitted the Red River Basin TMDL work plan to St. Paul for approval. This is expected to result in \$100,000 which will be used for CY05 monitoring activities, inclusive of TMDL monitoring. This will be a contractual agreement with the RRWMB to perform this monitoring. The RRWMB staff will coordinate monitoring with MPCA being involved with analysis and writing the final reports.

Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group

Manager Wilkens stated that approval of the FY05 budget was tabled at the previous Work Group meeting but will be discussed at the November 17, 2004 meeting. He explained that the FY04 budget included \$140,000 for watershed district support of which \$20,000 was allocated to each project team (7) functioning within the RRWMB. Although the Buffalo-Red River WD (BRRWD) was not allocated project team funding for FY04, they submitted expenses for reimbursement by the Work Group and objected to passing the FY05 budget since their project team was not included in the project team allocation.

At the September Work Group meeting, it was agreed that \$140,000 for Project Team Support would be expended on an ongoing basis by the Work Group as invoices for eligible expenses are received, with a cap set at \$15,000 for total payments to any one project team. Funds would not be automatically distributed to seven project teams (excluding BRRWD PT) as in the previous fiscal year. Following discussion, the board agreed

that project team funds should not be allocated until after the mediated negotiations between the RRWMB and the BRRWD have occurred.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on December 21, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Wright
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator