

# 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

February 15, 2005

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, February 15, 2005, at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Chairman John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Rob Sando Alvin Nybladh  
Dan Money Vernon Johnson  
Daniel Wilkens Robert Wright  
Jon Roeschlein

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD  
Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice WD  
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering  
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, JOR Engineering  
Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, RRBC  
Kelly Nelson, Assistant Engineer, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD  
Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office  
Blake Carlson, Engineer, JOR Engineering

No additional items were added to the agenda.

**Motion** by Manager Johnson to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **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 Nybladh, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Wright, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**. The Bois de Sioux WD submitted project team expenses for FY05 in the amount of \$11,228.42. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize payment of project team expenses for the Bois de Sioux WD for FY05 not to exceed the \$15,000 cap set by the Work Group, **Seconded** by Rob Sando, **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 Senate passed the bonding bill the end of January which included \$3.9 million for flood damage reduction projects in the Red River Basin. The projects included in the bonding bill are as follows: City of Warren, \$400,000; Grand Marais, \$2.6 million; Roseau River WMA, \$367,000; Palmville, \$323,000; Malung, \$110,000; and Ross No. 7, \$100,000.

Committees are beginning review of the budget recommendations from the Governor, however, there is no indication at this time whether or not farmstead ring dike funding or the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group allocations will be affected.

Discussions have occurred with Ray Bohn, MAWD, regarding the strategy and authors of bills that include proposals to increase the per diem for board managers. The bills have been drafted but not yet introduced.

### **Erosion Control Seminar Partnership**

Rodger Hemphill, Emmons & Olivier Resources, discussed a partnership between the RRWMB and Emmons & Olivier to conduct an erosion control seminar in the basin. He explained that their organization received a grant to conduct the above-mentioned seminar in the basin, therefore, sponsoring the seminar would be at no cost to the RRWMB. The target audience would be watershed districts, township officials, and contractors. Following discussion, the board agreed to sponsor the seminar and Manager Money volunteered to assist Mr. Hemphill with coordination of the seminar.

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

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met prior to the board meeting. He noted that members of the TAC met last week with a professor at the University of Minnesota – Crookston (UMC) to discuss tile drainage. Hans Kandel, an Extension/Educator professor at UMC, works with landowners discussing the advantages of tile systems relative to crop production including a decrease in planting delays, minimal nutrient loss, better root growth and crop quality, and reduction of erosion/sediment losses. Thul explained that the TAC is interested in design coefficients and potential storage within drainage systems. Anderson added that the key factor with regard to tile drainage is obtaining the smallest drainage coefficient while maximizing crop production.

The TAC discussed the cost share grant from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation for a Farm to Stream Project for the Red Lake WD. The proposal consists of a two-year study to comprehensively investigate how water quality affected by agricultural drainage and best management practices relates to drainage in several different locations in the District. The TAC reviewed the District's monitoring plans and recommended that measurements should be taken to determine how fast the fields are drawn down from the tile drain.

The revised operating plan for the operation of the dam at Moccasin Creek in the Wild Rice WD was discussed. The District has applied for a Dam Safety permit from the DNR to possibly change the operation and maintenance of the dam. The present plan operates based on a trigger flood level at Halstad and is only operated for spring runoff. The District is proposing identifying two new trigger locations (Twin Valley and Hendrum) and also operating the dam for summer runoff. Following discussion, the board agreed that the TAC should further review the proposed changes to the operating plan to determine whether the benefits of the project to the RRWMB would be affected.

Thul reported that Manager Finney requested the TAC to discuss potential repairs to projects that originally received funding from the RRWMB and develop a recommendation to the board in terms of reviewing the applications. Following discussion, the TAC determined that reviewing the following information was necessary prior to making a determination whether approval would be given on a funding request: a copy of the original engineer's report, the star value calculation, the specific work that is proposed, the project prioritization worksheet, and the original cost share funding. The TAC recommended that their committee review the aforementioned information to determine how potential repairs to projects meet the goals and objectives of the RRWMB prior to receiving board approval.

Thul stated that the TAC addressed the issue of protection versus prevention with regard to flood damages. Protection measures include farmstead ring dikes and setback levees, while prevention activities include upstream water retention and reducing runoff through land use practices. The committee discussed an exercise of estimating how flood hydrographs would look should all flood protection efforts, including preventative measures, be implemented. Following discussion, the board requested the TAC to develop a preliminary scenario regarding defining a Red River hydrograph without the existing storage effects for review at the next monthly meeting.

### **Red River Basin Commission**

Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) reported that a series of public meetings are being scheduled to present the completed Natural Resources Framework Plan. She stated that should any organization wish to receive a presentation regarding the plan, a request should be forwarded to the RRBC.

### **Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) / Review of Statement No. 34**

Kim Durbin – Drees, Risky & Vallager, Ltd. discussed the reporting and publishing requirements relative to audits prepared on the cash basis of accounting. The objective of the revised requirements is to provide an easily readable analysis of governmental financial activities based on currently known facts, decisions or conditions.

Elements to be included in the annual audit to assist the reader in understanding the information are: discussion of basic financial statements; condensed comparative financial information; analysis of government's overall financial cash position and results of cash activities; analysis of balances and transactions of individual funds; analysis of significant budgetary variations; and discussion of currently known facts, decisions or conditions.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) Member District Meetings**

N. Erickson reported that meetings have been scheduled with member districts on the following dates: Bois de Sioux WD, 02/17/05; Wild Rice WD, 03/09/05; and Red Lake WD, 03/10/05. She added that she and Dan Thul have attended member district board meetings to address the foundation of the board, the board's mission, objectives and policies, and how the board has evolved from prior to signing the mediation agreement to the present.

#### **B) Web Services**

N. Erickson stated that she inquired about moving the RRWMB website from the current server at Garden Valley Telephone Company to Houston Engineering, Inc. The scope of services from Houston Engineering would include hosting and maintenance of the RRWMB's website. An agreement has been forwarded from Houston Engineering that includes website hosting and hourly service fees for website maintenance.

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to move the RRWMB website from the current server to Houston Engineering and authorize Naomi Erickson to sign the contract which includes website hosting and hourly service fees for website maintenance with Houston Engineering, **Seconded** by Manager Wright, **Carried**.

**C) Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Agreement Amendment**

N. Erickson reported that at the January 11, 2005 Work Group meeting, a recommendation from the Funding Committee was approved regarding a reallocation of unexpended project acceleration grant funds to support the development of watershed plans. The result of this reallocation is that the RRWMB will receive only \$120,000 for project team support in FY05. The approved contract amendment for FY05 reduces the contract amount from \$145,000 to \$125,000 with the \$20,000 reduction going to BWSR for accelerated watershed planning.

**D) Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**

N. Erickson stated that she attended the Work Group meeting conducted on February 9<sup>th</sup> in Crookston, MN. A detailed presentation on the final draft of the TSAC technical paper, On-channel Storage Assessment was presented. A second presentation regarding the Water Retention Grant Pilot Project in the Wild Rice WD was also conducted. This project seeks to identify landowners who are willing to provide localized runoff storage using a variety of land dedication tools. A 319 program/CWP grant, as well as state legislation, is currently pending. A third presentation related to the Red River Basin Commission's Natural Resources Framework Plan was also conducted. An overview of the plan's purpose and content was presented by Sam Schellenberg and April Kiers-North.

**E) Fargo-Moorhead and Upstream Feasibility Study**

N. Erickson reported that an update on the progress and funding status for the Fargo-Moorhead and Upstream Study (FMUS) was forwarded via email. Progress is being made on all fronts. The Hydraulics and Hydrology Team and the Environmental and Water Quality Team have both met, and the economic analysis is under way. There is a lot of technical work and coordination that still needs to be completed, however, it is on track with the Project Management Plan.

The public meetings that were originally scheduled for late February will be postponed to the end of March (firm dates have not been selected yet). It was decided it would be better to wait until better information is available to share with the public.

There is both good news and bad news with regard to funding. The good news is that sufficient funding is available in Federal Fiscal Year 2005 (through September 30, 2005) to complete Phase 1 and begin Phase 2 (if it is decided to proceed). Unfortunately, the President's budget for FY 2006 did not include any funding to continue Phase 2. Congress could still provide funding for the study, but the Administration is not requesting any.

Non-federal funding and sponsorship will be needed for Phase 2. If it is decided to keep moving forward, matching non-federal funds will need to be in place as early as possible--probably July 2005.

**F) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. 2005 River Watch Forums, Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Concordia College, and Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the University of Minnesota – Crookston.
2. MAWD Legislative Breakfast, Tuesday and Wednesday, March 22-23, 2005. (*Please note these are the new dates.*)
3. Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, March 30, 2005, Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.
4. March Conference, Thursday, March 31, 2005, Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.
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.

### **Water Quality Project Monitoring**

In the absence of Wayne Goeken, the project monitoring monthly report was distributed. Nearly all the USGS flow data from 2004 has been received which will allow loading estimates to be prepared from each contributing watershed for the 2004 monitoring season. Preliminary results will be presented at the next Red River Basin Water Quality Team meeting.

The International Water Institute (formerly the Red River Basin Institute) is proceeding with plans to develop a training and certification process for all schools participating in River Watch in 2005. Plans are to emphasize training and certification of the teacher advisor with each school as the students turn over quickly.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that the Board of Managers have been working with JOR Engineering on the revised plan for the West Intercept Project. The board is in the process of purchasing necessary fee title acres for the construction of the project as well as temporary construction easements. Three appeals from private landowners regarding the purchase price of the land have been received by the district. The district plans to bid the project in March or April.
- The Two Rivers WD reported that the final engineer’s report for the Ross No. 7 Project has been filed by the Engineer and accepted by the Board of Managers. Changes to the project include constructing a clay core barrier to address seepage instead of the exterior seepage ditch described in the preliminary report. A few smaller changes were also made. The new cost estimate for the project is \$2.28 million.

Land rights have been nearly secured for the entire area to be flooded. Wetland and environmental permitting is being pursued, with permits needed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Roseau Soil & Water Conservation District, Roseau County, Department of Natural Resources Dam Safety, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. A project team meeting is scheduled for March to discuss the details of the final engineer’s report, permitting, monitoring, and natural resource enhancement issues. The district plans on submitting a Step II submittal to the RRWMB in the near future.

- The Middle-Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported that the district has begun work on the mitigation plan for the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) Project. Actual construction on the project will resume as soon as conditions permit.

In addition to the mitigation plan (phase 4), work remaining on the Federal portion of the project includes phase 2 – finishing up the seeding and stabilization; phase 3 – the diversion structure and the upper portion of the floodway, and phase 4 – the planning and implementation of the mitigation measures.

The work remaining on the non-federal portion of the project includes finishing the placement of rip rap and seeding on the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) Bridge and other work; and planning and installation of the box culverts on Trunk Highway No. 1 and the Canadian Pacific (Soo Line) Railroad.

The planning for this project will continue this winter. The project should be essentially completed during the 2005 construction season.

- The Red Lake WD reported on the Parnell Impoundment Project. A meeting was conducted with advisory committees of JD No. 60 and Polk County Ditch No. 126, and county commissioners regarding the operation of the project operating plan. Discussion occurred regarding the operation of the impoundment during last spring and also during the rain events at the end of May and early June of 2004. There was also some discussion regarding adding a gauge at the intersection of Polk County Ditch No. 126 and Polk County Highway No. 66 in Sullivan Township. The committees agreed that the gate operator did a great job of monitoring downstream events and operating the gate. The district, as well as the county commissioners, was also commended by the committees for their assistance with implementing the operating plan.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on the status of the Wild Rice River Feasibility Study. The board was updated on the study from Nan Bischoff, who is the new project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Bischoff reported that the USACE headquarters is interested in formulating the project related to ecosystem restoration criteria. She noted that environmental staff will be assigned to visit the district in the near future to better assess this portion of the study that will be forwarded to USACE headquarters. The board authorized Manager Jim Wagner to assist the USACE staff members with reviewing the ecosystem restoration needs on the river and also approved the assistance of Mark Deutschman of Houston Engineering if this effort is required.
- The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the status of the North Ottawa Project. The third control structure has been poured. The contractor is proceeding to work on the fourth of six structures. The good weather has facilitated progress during the past three weeks. The primary outlet structure in JCD No. 2 is one of the last two structures that are left. The district plans to have one completed prior to spring runoff or the coffer dams may need to be removed during the snowmelt in order to accommodate the flows.

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

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on March 15, 2005, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Wright  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator