



## Red River Watershed Management Board

### *Board of Managers*

John Finney, President-Humboldt Steve Lee-Badger Dan Money-Hallock Ron Osowski-Oslo  
Orville Knott, Vice President-Red Lake Falls Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Robert Wright, Secretary-Felton Jerome Deal-Wheaton  
Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 16, 2008

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, December 16, 2008, at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

Steve Lee	Dan Money
Ron Osowski	Orville Knott
Daniel Wilkens	Joe Spaeth
Jerome Deal	

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
- Keith Mykleseth, The Nature Conservancy
- Mark Meister, CR\*CS
- Don Buckhout, BWSR - Performance Review and Assistance
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Todd Miller, Roseau River WD
- Stephen Green, Minnesota Association of Townships

No additional items were added to the agenda.

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

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Osowski 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 Knott,

**Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Public Information Initiative**

Mark Meister discussed the public information monthly report. He reported on the five applications received for the position of Communications Intern. He explained that during follow-up phone calls to the applicants, it was determined that only one applicant was eligible for the internship since they were currently enrolled in a college or university. He contacted members of the Public Information committee who discussed the following recommendations: (1) extending the deadline for applications until January 15, 2009 and continue recruiting efforts, (2) reviewing the qualifications of the eligible applicant for board approval at the December 16, 2008 meeting, and (3) consider establishing an "on-going" application process, without a deadline, until an appropriate candidate emerges. Following discussion, the board agreed the application deadline should be extended. **Motion** by Manager Money to extend the application deadline of December 1, 2008, to February 1, 2009 for the Communications Intern position, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Meister stated that funding has been secured by JOR Engineering, Inc. for printing a 2009 watershed calendar. JOR Engineering will be the primary sponsor of the calendar with appropriate publicity on the front, back, and on monthly displays of the calendar.

Meister reported that he conducted a presentation session at the Minnesota Association of Watershed District's (MAWD) Annual Meeting & Trade Show in December titled "Open Communication with Watershed Stakeholders: The RRWMB's Public Information Initiatives." The presentation discussed the research project that led to the establishment of the RRWMB's public information initiatives.

Meister noted that following the MAWD presentation he received invitations to attend various meetings to further discuss communication strategies. He also previously received several invitations from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to present at their Basin Team meetings. Following discussion, the board agreed that Meister's primary obligation is to serve as the board's Public Information Officer and noted their concern relative to other agencies trying to utilize his expertise to further their own efforts.

Jim Ziegler referred to the board decision at the October 21, 2008 board meeting where a request was forwarded from the MPCA by Molly MacGregor to N. Erickson requesting approval for Meister to meet with the MPCA Basin Team. He explained that MPCA was interested in obtaining information about the public information initiatives of the RRWMB. The board declined approving Meister's participation due to concern that his involvement could be perceived as receiving endorsement from the RRWMB regarding MPCA's communication efforts in the Red River Basin. Following the clarification provided by Mr. Ziegler, the board agreed to authorize Meister's attendance at a future Basin Team meeting. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize Mark Meister's to attend a future Basin Team meeting to discuss the board's public information initiative, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

### **Water Quality Project Monitoring Committee**

Members of the Water Quality Project Monitoring Committee met on December 10, 2008 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, MN. Members present included Daniel Wilkens, Orville Knott, and Mark Meister. Minutes prepared by Mark Meister who agreed to serve as recording secretary were distributed.

Meister reported that Manager Wilkens provided background on the history of the RRWMB's water quality efforts including the board's funding of the River Watch program. All members of the committee agreed that the RRWMB provides a valuable service through funding and staffing water quality and River Watch programs.

The committee discussed the various roles played by RRBC, IWI, MPCA, and ND water groups in supporting River Watch and water quality programs of the RRWMB. Manager Knott suggested that collaboration between various stakeholders throughout the basin could assist with funding to further the River Watch program.

The committee agreed that water quality and the River Watch program is vitally important to the RRWMB, but that a leadership committee should be established from various groups who may provide leadership and direction related to future staffing, funding, and logistical support to water quality issues and River Watch programming. The committee suggested that a meeting be scheduled with representatives from the RRWMB, RRBC, and IWI to gauge interest in future funding, staff sharing, and River Watch planning/coordination and that Meister contact representatives from the above-mentioned organizations to coordinate meetings to discuss the initiative. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize Mark Meister to coordinate with various stakeholders in the basin to discuss future funding, staff sharing, and River Watch planning/coordination, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Manager Wilkens added that following the board meeting, he would be meeting with Jim Ziegler to discuss the Water Quality Project Monitoring employee reviews and possible pay increases.

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

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet this month. The *Project Schedule and Reporting Procedures* document developed previously by the TAC was distributed.

Thul explained that in 2005, due to an increased concern regarding projects not being constructed in a timely manner, several individuals met at Houston Engineering, Inc. to discuss the various impediments to project construction. It was agreed that watershed district administrators have time constraints and do not have the time to devote to full-time project management with all of their other responsibilities. As a result, some projects are not proceeding as quickly as they could. An outcome of the discussion was that it would be helpful if districts would prepare/submit a timeline for project implementation when applying for funding assistance from the RRWMB. The Board of Managers authorized the TAC to develop a timeline to include a work plan, a list of permits needed for the project, a schedule for project implementation, and an assignment of responsibilities.

Thul further noted that discussion also occurred whether the board should offer funding assistance to procure a project manager for member districts in an effort to expedite project implementation. The board agreed that member districts should complete the *Project Schedule and Reporting Procedures* document, a project manager should be named and included in the project schedule, and costs incurred with project management should be added to the cost of the project.

Don Buckhout, BWSR, added that detailed guidelines were also developed for the individual watershed district Project Teams regarding project implementation. A step outlined in the guidelines provides for the Project Team to convene a meeting of the regulatory representatives as soon as a defined alternative has been selected to discuss any permitting concerns of the proposed project.

### **Project Coordinator Report**

Ron Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Advisory Committee adopted a recommendation to the board that the Red River Valley RIM Reserve Pilot Project be implemented with a commitment of \$3,000,000 and a deadline for landowner sign-up of June 1, 2009. Watershed districts submitting applications for the program should receive endorsement from their respective project teams and forward the applications to the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group. The Work Group will forward recommendations to BWSR regarding which projects should be considered.

The ring dike assessment for 2009-10 has been updated. A total of fifteen ring dikes have been requested by member districts for a biennial request for fiscal years 2010-11 of \$236,500/yr. (\$473,000). **Motion** by Manager Money to proceed with a biennial request for fiscal years 2010-11 for a total of \$473,000, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

Representative Lanning is proposing to introduce new watershed/basin legislation as he discussed at the recent MAWD Annual Meeting & Trade Show. The first draft of the proposed legislation was distributed.

Harnack reported that he continues working with individual watershed districts to develop funding projections for the 2009 construction season. The funding projections for the projects currently under construction are as follows: Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD / Agassiz Valley – Phases 2-3, \$1,470,000; Roseau River WD / Hay Creek – Phase 1, \$2,400,000; and Bois de Sioux WD / North Ottawa – Final Phase, \$3,000,000.

N. Erickson distributed the revised contract for the position of Project Coordinator. The current contract between the RRWMB and R. Harnack expires on December 31, 2008. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to renew the contract with R. Harnack for the position of Project Coordinator for a two-year term, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) Funding Commitments Worksheet**

N. Erickson distributed a revised funding commitments worksheet.

#### **B) Governing Documents Review**

Discussion occurred at the November board meeting regarding the next scheduled update to the Governing Documents. The last revision to the publication was authorized in March of 2004. At that time, a revision to Section 1 - Policy Manual included that the Governing Documents should be revised every five years. Therefore, the next revision should occur in 2009.

**C) Agricultural Tile Drainage Study**

N. Erickson reported that in April of 2005, members of the TAC met with Dr. Gary Sands of the University of Minnesota to discuss the RRWMB utilizing a model for developing tile drainage systems and retaining the services of a graduate student from the university to develop various design criteria for tile drainage systems for the Red River Basin.

The board agreed to retain the services of a graduate student, not to exceed \$20,000, to participate with the TAC in developing a model for tile drainage. A cost estimate of \$9,567 was received from Dr. Sands for the proposed budget for the study. In June of 2005, the board disbursed \$10,000 to the University of Minnesota.

At the previous monthly meeting, the board directed D. Thul and myself to develop a letter requesting the results of the study. Please refer to handout. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize forwarding the letter to Dr. Sands of the University of Minnesota, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

**D) Vacation Accrual**

The unused vacation days for Naomi Erickson, Wayne Goeken and Danni Halvorson have been calculated for calendar year 2008. N. Erickson and D. Halvorson elected to be paid for their unused vacation days for 2008. Wayne Goeken elected to carry over the maximum of unused vacation days (5) to 2009 and be paid for the remaining unused days.

**E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. **Red River Basin Commission's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference**, January 20-22, 2009, Hotel Fort Garry, Winnipeg, MB.
2. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, February 17, 2009 (?), Kelly Inn, St. Paul, MN.

**Red River Basin Commission**

Manager Wilkens requested the Board of Managers to consider the appointment of delegates and alternates to the RRBC. The current board members representing the RRWMB on the RRBC are as follows: Daniel Wilkens and John Finney delegates; and Ron Osowski and Robert Wright alternates. **Motion** by Manager Deal to reappoint Daniel Wilkens and John Finney as delegates, and Ron Osowski and Robert Wright as alternates to the RRBC for the term 2010-2012, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

**Water Quality Project Monitoring Report**

In the absence of Wayne Goeken, the project monitoring monthly report was distributed. A meeting has been scheduled for January 15, 2009 with the Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Alice Seagren to discuss options for the development of the River Watch program.

**Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Report / MSTRWD**

Don Buckhout, BWSR - Performance Review and Assistance, discussed the PRAP report prepared by BWSR for the MSTRWD.

Buckhout explained that based on a recommendation from BWSR field staff and requests from both the Marshall County board of commissioners and the RRWMB, BWSR conducted a Level III review of the MSTRWD. The purpose of the review was to determine if the MSTRWD is able to make decisions and carry out planned actions effectively and efficiently.

Manager Finney noted that although the report addresses issues relevant to the performance of the district's daily administration, it fails to consider the effect that intra-board litigation has had on the board, especially when applied to decisions affecting flood damage reduction projects.

Buckhout referred to the letter dated November 18, 2008 forwarded from the RRWMB to BWSR for consideration. He agreed with the Board of Managers that further review to address factors that may be causing internal conflict for the MSTRWD is needed. He noted that a recommendation in the PRAP report suggested that either BWSR, or another entity, conduct a survey of MSTRWD watershed managers and staff, randomly selected citizens of the watershed district, and selected public officials to obtain feedback from internal and external sources to assist with implementing organizational improvements. He added that a written response to the concerns addressed in the letter dated November 18<sup>th</sup> would be prepared by BWSR.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek / Norland Project. The District is currently working on obtaining the last parcel of land in the acquisition process along the corridor and connecting channel of the project. HDR Engineering, Inc. is completing the permitting, final engineering and wetland delineation of the project. Beginning construction is planned for 2009 for Phase 1 of the project.

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

#### **1. Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD / Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project / Funding Projections**

Nick Drees discussed the funding projection for Phases 2 and 3 of the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project. R. Harnack noted that in January he would have a better understanding of the bonding that would be available for project construction.

#### **2. Roseau River WD / Loan Advance / Hay Creek / Norland Project**

Rob Sando distributed a request for an advance on committed RRWMB funds to assist with financing the final design and permitting requirements for the Hay Creek / Norland Project. The quarterly *Project Schedule and Reporting Procedures* worksheet for the project was distributed.

**Motion** by Manager Deal to approve a project loan of \$100,000 and proceed with the development of a loan agreement for the Hay Creek / Norland Project of the RRWD, contingent that the project progress to a Step II submittal within three years from the date of approval of the Step I submittal (November 21, 2006), **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on January 20, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. at the Two Rivers Watershed District, Hallock, Minnesota.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Wright  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator