



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

March 17, 2009

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, 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
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Mark Meister, CR*CS
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Wayne Goeken, Monitoring Coordinator
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Mike Carroll, MNDNR Regional Director
- Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's office
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Roger Hanson, Sand Hill River WD
- Janeen Stenso, Outreach Coordinator, RRBC
- Brian Dwight, Board of Water & Soil Resources
- Gary Lee, East Polk Soil & Water Conservation District

Motion by Manager Wilkens to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **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 Osowski, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Deal, **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. A feature article titled "*Using Farmland for Flood Control Benefits Everyone*" was developed and appeared in several newspapers.

The Public Information Committee met via conference call on March 10th, and agreed to submit a recommendation at today's meeting that the proposed internship program be tabled until meetings with each member watershed district are conducted to provide insight on public information needs.

Dr. Meister explained that he has been coordinating the calendar project with JOR Engineering, Inc. who originally agreed to sponsor the initiative. Costs were incurred for the design layout of the calendar, however, JOR Engineering indicated that they would not reimburse the board for costs incurred to date for the calendar and requested that it be redesigned for distribution in 2010.

Manager Finney distributed a handout developed by the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) regarding the Waffle Plan. Several pages in a spiral-bound format were circulated outlining the Waffle Plan concept. The idea behind the Waffle Plan is that existing flood control measures be augmented through the temporary storage of springtime runoff in existing depressions within the basin until major flood crests pass. Finney suggested that perhaps a similar format could be prepared and distributed to highlight projects funded by the board rather than developing an annual calendar.

Mike Carroll, MDNR Regional Director, added that the development of such a handout can be quite costly and noted that should the board decide to proceed with the project, a specific audience should be targeted for distribution. Dr. Meister agreed to obtain estimates for the development of a spiral-bound handout highlighting the projects constructed with funding from the board.

Project Coordinator Report

In the absence of R. Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. A bill was introduced regarding the Farmstead Ring Dike Program for a biennial request for fiscal years 2010-11 of \$236,500/yr. (\$473,000). Due to the budget deficit, it's unlikely that any new funding will be appropriated for this effort.

Senator Langseth has included \$26M for flood damage reduction and \$2M for dam renovation and removal in the proposed bonding bill. The following projects currently under construction are included in the bill: 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.

Red River Basin Commission

Janeen Stenso, Outreach Coordinator – RRBC, reported on the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) Proposal.

The proposal includes a request of \$5 million in funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a pilot project that would be a model for the Red River Basin funds under AWEP to be utilized for the duration of the current farm bill. At a previous board meeting, the RRWMB agreed to co-sponsor the AWEP proposal of the RRBC. Ms. Stenso requested that comments on the proposal be forwarded from the board by Monday, April 1st.

Consolidated Conservation Lands

Mike Carroll, MNDNR-Regional Director, discussed the Consolidated Conservation (Con-con) Ditch Rule Update. The DNR intends to adopt rules that govern the criteria and procedures for determining drainage benefits to state-owned lands in con-con areas administered under Minnesota state law.

On March 3, 2009 members of the MNDNR Con-con Overhead Team met with representatives in Lake of the Woods County. Points of discussion included how positive impacts are accounted for under rule 84; review of the Con-con Evaluator's Manual to be used for MNDNR assessments; potential project alterations to reduce impacts on water quality; consideration of project location with the ditch system and specific agricultural needs for vegetation in order to avoid interfering with local commercial grass seed production, and also a request from the MNDNR to acquire the original viewer's report of 1963.

Following the meeting with Lake of the Woods County, the team evaluators met and evaluated a total of ninety-three 40-acre parcels within the County Ditch No. 1 assessment project to determine the MNDNR benefits. The most recent draft Evaluator's Manual was followed to assess the second pilot area in Lake of the Woods County. The first pilot project was conducted in Beltrami County.

On March 4, 2009 the team evaluators met with the Board of Water & Soil Resources to discuss the Wetland Credit Banking system and its relationship to Con-con lands.

Mr. Carroll indicated that the MNDNR plans to have completed the Con-con land evaluations by this fall, with a recommendation submitted to the Commissioner in December. He added that the purpose of the Evaluator's Manual is to provide guidance for staff in determining benefits for each affected state-owned 40-acre parcel, when new drainage project proposals are submitted for review and implementation.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Wayne Goeken reported that he continues to work with the International Water Institute and others in making final preparations for the 2009 River Watch Forum to be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2009 at the UMC campus.

Goeken also reported that he attended the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee meeting in St. Paul on March 2nd to provide testimony regarding the River Watch bill, along with a contingent of advocates from the Red River Basin.

Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD Overall Plan Update

Brian Dwight, Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), distributed the work plan for the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD (MSTRWD) Overall Plan Update. The work plan includes an extensive public input process from federal, state, and local agencies as well as local landowners and the general public. The MSTRWD Board of Managers will review, approve, and are ultimately responsible for the implementation of the goals and objectives in the plan.

The estimated cost of completing the plan update is \$217,070.00, with a funding breakdown as follows: Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group - 50%; RRWMB – 25%; and MSTRWD – 25%.

A signature page was distributed relative to the funding commitment between the State of Minnesota and the RRWMB. The financial support will be disbursed to the MSTRWD as funds become available with the following guidelines: the first installments will not be greater than the 55% of the individually agreed to grant amounts, with parties making the first payments following the execution of the grant agreement. Subsequent installments will be paid as work progresses with the final 10% of the grant being paid when the plan update receives state approval. **Motion** by Manager Money to authorize the RRWMB 25% funding commitment (\$54,268.00) for the MSTRWD Overall Plan Update, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Red River Basin Mapping Initiative

Chuck Fritz, International Water Institute (IWI), discussed the status of the Red River Basin Mapping Initiative. To date, three data blocks have been delivered with approximately 54% of data acquisition completed. Preparations are underway for the Spring 2009 acquisition, with a kick-off meeting scheduled for April 25, 2009 in Fargo, ND. Application development continues with \$200,000 remaining to be secured from the State of North Dakota.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul distributed the TAC recommendation regarding the Wild Rice WD's Step II submittal for the CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project. He explained that the RRWMB's cost per Star Value for the project is currently \$24.79 in 2009 dollars which results in a ranking score of 16. Therefore, the TAC supports Step II approval for the CD No. 18 Project.

Manager Finney inquired whether more storage could be available in the project area. Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering, Inc. noted that more storage is available, however, the location is currently occupied by a residence.

Nate Dalager reported on the Red Lake WD's Field to Stream Tile Drainage Study which received partial funding from the RRWMB. Previously, the board agreed to reimburse the RLWD for Corey Hanson's participation with Nate Dalager for completing the report of the drainage study. The study

has been completed with a final report available on the District's website – www.redlakewatershed.org. The net result of conversion to tile drainage from surface drainage appears to be less sediment and phosphorus loss due to water erosion, but increased total nitrogen loss due to excessive leaching of nitrates.

Administrator Report

A) Spring Flood Outlook Meeting

N. Erickson attended a meeting at the Fargo City Council Chambers on Monday, February 23, 2009 to discuss the spring outlook for flooding with the National Weather Service. The head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) weather forecast office in Grand Forks said the outlook is a moving target that will change as weather conditions within the Red River Basin evolve in the coming months.

B) ICS Agency, Inc.

A copy of the Commercial Package renewal policy was forwarded from ICS Agency, Inc. A recommendation to increase the auto liability to \$1,500,000 for an additional premium of \$50.00 per year was received from the agent in order to satisfy the tort limit set by the State of Minnesota. **Motion** by Manager Deal to increase the auto liability to \$1,500,000, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

C) Maynard Pick Bids Farewell

Maynard Pick representing the office of Congressman Collin Peterson of Minnesota's Seventh Congressional District plans to retire as of the end of the month. N. Erickson thanked Mr. Pick for his participation with the RRWMB for over 18 years.

D) March Conference – Project Team Reports

N. Erickson stated that Project Teams have been requested to present a summary of activities and/or accomplishments from the past year at this year's March Conference. She requested that presentations be forwarded to Paul Wannarka at – paul.wannarka@dnr.state.mn.us.

E) Houston Engineering, Inc.

N. Erickson reported that the headquarters of Houston Engineering, Inc. in Fargo, ND have relocated to the following address: 1401 21st Avenue North, Fargo, ND 58102.

F) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **River Watch Forum**, Wednesday, March 18, 2009 ~ University of Minnesota, Crookston campus.
2. **MAWD Legislative Breakfast & Day at the Capitol**, Wednesday, March 18, 2009 to Thursday, March 19, 2009.
3. **March Conference**, Tuesday, March 31, 2009, Northland Inn, Crookston, MN.

East Polk Soil & Water Conservation District

Gary Lee, East Polk Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), stated that the SWCD plans to partner with the University of Minnesota – Morris to develop a research plot to study the various growth stages for areas of land that are of a slope 60% or greater. He inquired whether the RRWMB

would be interested in providing funding assistance for the research plot. Following discussion, the board agreed that the results of study would be more beneficial for the local rather than regional watershed.

District's Funding Requests

1. **Wild Rice WD / Step I Submittal / Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project**

The information required for a Step I submittal was distributed to the board for review at the February board meeting. A tour of the proposed project area is planned for the April board meeting.

2. **Wild Rice WD / Step II Submittal / CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Mgmt. Project**

The information required for a Step II submittal was distributed at the previous monthly meeting. The estimated total project cost is currently \$4,285,000, with a RRWMB commitment of \$750,000.00.

The flood control goals for this project are to work in concert with other proposed measures identified in the Project No. 42, South Branch Storage Project. The primary purpose for the project is to reduce flood damages within the South Branch of the Wild Rice River subbasin as well as downstream along the Wild Rice and Red Rivers. Secondary purposes include new wetland creations, wetland enhancements, and permanent stream buffer strips. The TAC supports Step II approval for this project.

Motion by Manager Spaeth to authorize the Step II submittal of CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on April 21, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Wright
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator