



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

John Finney, President-Humboldt Todd Miller-Warroad Dan Money-Hallock Ron Osowski-Oslo
Orville Knott, Vice President-Red Lake Falls Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Diane Ista-Ada Jerome Deal, Secretary-Wheaton
Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

March 17, 2010

Northland Inn, Crookston, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, March 17, 2010 at the Northland Inn, Crookston, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

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| Todd Miller | Dan Money |
| Ron Osowski | Orville Knott |
| Daniel Wilkens | Jerome Deal |

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, RRBC
- Shawn Balstad, Resource Conservation & Development Coordinator
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute
- Keith Mykleseth, The Nature Conservancy

Manager Finney requested that the establishment of a federal authority in the Red River basin, the discontinued funding of stream gages by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Drainage Sub-Committee be added to the agenda under *Other Issues*.

Motion by Manager Deal to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **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 Deal, **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 Money, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Finance Committee Report

Manager Deal, Finance Committee Chair, reported that the Finance Committee met prior to today's board meeting. The committee agreed by consensus to recommend to the Board of Managers to propose a moratorium on the authorization of exceptions to the Governing Documents relative to *Funding Procedures*. The committee agreed that criteria must be developed regarding RRWMB cost-share funding for project construction, as well as a policy directing member watershed districts to secure other funding sources in addition to utilizing their borrowing authority prior to submitting requests to the RRWMB that require a deviation from funding procedures outlined in the Governing Documents.

Motion by Manager Deal to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to establish a moratorium on authorizing exceptions to the funding procedures in the Governing Documents, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. prior to the April RRWMB meeting.

Public Information Initiative

In the absence of Mark Meister, the public information monthly report was distributed. Activities for the month of February included writing two feature articles, attending flood meetings in the Fargo/Moorhead area, and drafting a letter of support for the Cass County letter forwarded to Senator Dorgan.

Manager Finney reviewed the letter drafted by Meister in response to the letter forwarded previously from the Cass County Joint Water Resource District emphasizing the importance of maintaining flood damage reduction efforts at a local level. He reported that discussions have occurred between representatives from the Red River Joint Water Resource Board (RRJWRB) and the RRWMB regarding establishing a compact between the two states to not only work cooperatively in the Red River basin towards flood damage reduction but also to develop an organization to receive federal funds to be utilized toward attaining this goal.

Manager Finney stated that he directed the board's legal counsel to draft a Red River of the North Watershed Compact for review by the two aforementioned boards. Manager Deal inquired whether it would be beneficial for the President to meet with the federal delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss the development of the compact regarding the proposed federal authority. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the President to meet with the federal delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss the establishment of a federal authority in the Red River basin, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Manager Finney directed N. Erickson to work in conjunction with Meister and legal counsel to revise the draft letter to Senator Dorgan regarding the proposed federal authority.

Project Coordinator Report

In the absence of R. Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. The bonding bill for the RRWMB and Work Group authored by Rep. Eken and Sen. Langseth was revised and adopted by the conference committee. The bill includes \$63.5M for flood damage reduction and authorizes up

to 75% funding for projects that are consistent with the mediation agreement and are approved by the Work Group. Rep. Eken also incorporated language in the bill relating to the downstream impacts of the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion. The language prevents the state from cost-sharing on the construction of a diversion until a plan is developed to provide upstream storage to eliminate downstream impacts.

A supplemental budget spreadsheet developed by the Environment & Natural Resources Finance Committee was distributed. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Division of Waters is slated to take a significant reduction to their administrative funds. Stream gaging cost-share with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will be significantly reduced. Paul Wannarka noted that unexpended Work Group funds from FY09 could potentially be utilized to subsidize the shortfall in stream gage funding from the DNR. Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed to draft a letter to the DNR to encourage their continued cost-share partnership with the RRWMB and USGS for stream gage operation in the Minnesota portion of the Red River basin.

Pembina Trail Resource Conservation & Development Association

Shawn Balstad, RC & D Coordinator, distributed the Pembina Trail RC & D 2009 Annual Report. She stated that the Pembina Trail RC & D is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program that helps people in rural areas plan and carry out activities that increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development, and enhance the environment and standard of living in local communities.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator – RRBC, distributed a letter sent from the RRBC to DNR Commissioner, Mark Holsten requesting their continued funding support for stream gages in the Red River basin.

A funding request for the 2010 spring stream gaging effort was submitted. Goehring explained that a similar effort was funded in 2009 with the RRWMB, RRJWRB, and RRBC each contributing \$10,000 to contract with Houston Engineering to manage additional stream gaging sites that provided useful information. The cost of the effort expended in 2009 was ~ \$28,000.00. The RRBC is proposing the RRWMB and the RRJWRB each contribute \$15,000 to support a similar effort in the spring of 2010.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to authorize the RRWMB to cost-share with the RRJWRB for the 2010 spring stream gaging effort not to exceed \$15,000 and disbursed upon receipt for expenses incurred, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul reported that the TAC met yesterday and discussed the reduction in cost-share funding from the DNR to the USGS for the stream gage program. He concurred with the board's previous decision to forward a letter to the DNR to encourage their continued cost-share partnership.

The TAC also discussed the issues addressed by the Metro Flood Study Work Group relative to the potential downstream impacts from the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion. The group

contracted with Moore Engineering, Inc. and Houston Engineering, Inc. to identify the potential downstream impacts relative to the various proposed diversion options. Similar strategies were developed by the engineering firms as those utilized by the RRBC implementing the MIKE 11 model. The contributing drainage areas were identified, as well as various options for reducing flows at the gaging site. Estimates of \$400 million to \$1 billion were approximated to mitigate (through upstream tributary detention) the increases in downstream levels back to a zero stage impact. Other options considered were relocating residences, constructing additional farmstead ring dikes, and raising current municipal ring dikes which were estimated at ~ \$29 - \$35 million for these alternatives.

The TAC developed several conclusions regarding the mitigation of downstream impacts. The first conclusion was that buyouts and improving structural measures (measures to protect property from impacts) can't be compared to providing upstream storage (measures to actually mitigate impacts). Second, the TAC strongly agreed that downstream impacts should not be mitigated with buyouts and structural measures since these measures aren't considered mitigation. Actual mitigation would return stage and flow increases to pre-project levels. Third, the USACE should identify the true project cost, including the costs to mitigate increased flows and stages. Fourth, the TAC estimates the cost for implementing mitigating storage should be estimated closer to the \$400 million estimate than the \$1 billion estimate. Fifth, the buyout and protection estimate was too low as it didn't account for protection from all impacts such as to roads and/or costs of flood easements. Sixth, as the RRWMB's goal is flood flow reduction, RRWMB funding should not be used to provide storage designed solely for mitigation. Local funding could be obtainable for projects providing mitigation purposes if reductions to local flood flows or damages are also achieved.

Thul reported that Charlie Anderson discussed his concerns regarding the final draft of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Study with Dr. Gary Sands of the University of Minnesota. Thul suggested that Anderson incorporate the proposed revisions into the model and forward it to Dr. Sands for review.

Administrator Report

A) Funding Commitments Worksheet

A revised funding commitments worksheet as of February 28th was distributed. N. Erickson distributed an updated projections worksheet as well.

B) CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project - Wild Rice WD

N. Erickson reported that at the February 16, 2010 board meeting, the Board of Managers authorized sending a letter to the Wild Rice WD to confirm the status of the above-mentioned project and their plans for repayment of the funding advance received from the RRWMB. The letter was sent from the RRWMB to the Wild Rice WD, with a response received dated March 10, 2010. Handouts were distributed.

N. Erickson explained that as both the RRWMB and the Wild Rice WD rescheduled their regular monthly March board meetings for today's date, Manager Ista requested that in her absence discussion regarding repayment of the funding advance from the Wild Rice WD to the RRWMB be tabled until the April board meeting. A resolution to consider a funding advance for the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project will be distributed for review later today under *Project Funding Requests*.

C) RRB Flood Damage Reduction Work Group / Funding Committee

N. Erickson attended the Funding Committee meeting of the Work Group on February 24, 2010 at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources office in Bemidji, MN. Budget management, reimbursement procedures from the DNR to the RRWMB, and Project Team reimbursement procedures were discussed.

N. Erickson also attended the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group meeting on March 02, 2010 in Detroit Lakes, MN. The joint letter from the RRWMB and Work Group addressed to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) regarding concerns of recent appropriations was discussed and it was agreed by consensus to send the revised letter. A copy of the letter was distributed.

D) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **River Watch Forum**, Wednesday, March 17, 2010, University of Minnesota, Crookston campus.
2. **New LiDAR Applications Workshop**, Wednesday, March 31, 2010 in Fargo, ND.
3. **Joint Annual Conference**, Wednesday, June 23, 2010, tba.

District's Funding Requests

1. Wild Rice WD / Funding Advance / Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project

N. Erickson reported that a funding advance for the above-mentioned project was discussed at the January 19, 2010 board meeting. The Step II application for the project was authorized at the May 19, 2009 board meeting with an approved RRWMB commitment of \$3.3 million.

A resolution was developed based on the discussion at the January board meeting whereas the Board of Managers agreed to disburse a funding request of \$1.15 million when submitted by the District. J. Bents, Houston Engineering, Inc. noted that the Wild Rice WD Board of Managers reviewed the proposed resolution at their board meeting earlier today. He explained that the requirement in the resolution to submit a Step III application by the September 2010 board meeting may be difficult to attain as its unknown at this time whether all required permits will be received.

Manager Finney referenced the CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project of the Wild Rice WD and the letter received from the District regarding the status of the project. He suggested that since the Board of Managers previously authorized a funding advance of \$600,000 to the District for land acquisition and it's been determined that the project will not proceed, upon repayment of the advance for the Goose Prairie Water Management Project the board could authorize another advance for the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project. The Board of Managers also discussed revising the proposed resolution to require a Step III application to be submitted for approval within one-year of the District receiving the funding advance.

Motion by Manager Deal to approve the resolution contingent upon incorporating the above-mentioned revisions, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Drainage Committee

Manager Finney reported that a committee consisting of himself, Dan Wilkens, Ron Osowski, Ron Harnack and Dan Thul have been meeting with members of the RRJWRB to discuss drainage issues. The Drainage Committee is planning to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain an engineering firm to conduct an independent study to identify drainage problems in the Red River basin. Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed to cost-share 50% of the billable costs with the RRJWRB to develop an RFP.

The next meeting will be on April 20, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:20 p.m. following lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator