



## 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

April 20, 2010

Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

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

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Mark Meister, CR\*CS
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Lance Yohe, Executive Director, RRBC
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute
- Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD
- Joe Belford, Ramsey County Commissioner
- Andy Martin, Senator Klobuchar's office
- Valerie Gravseth, Senator Franken's office
- Sharon Josephson, Congressman Peterson's office
- Danni Halvorson, Monitoring Specialist

**Motion** by Manager Money to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

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

### **Proposed Federal Authority**

Manager Finney reported that representatives from the Red River Joint Water Resource Board (RRJWRB) and the RRWMB have conducted meetings to discuss the establishment of a compact between the two states regarding the development of an organization to receive federal funds for flood damage reduction efforts in the Red River basin. A draft of the Red River of the North Watershed Compact was distributed.

Manager Deal noted that the attorneys for the two respective boards have worked collaboratively on the development of the document to ensure that the interests of both states are represented. Manager Ista stated the importance of inviting the Minnesota federal delegation to participate in the discussions with North Dakota.

Manager Finney introduced representatives from the Minnesota federal delegation including Sharon Josephson of Congressman Peterson's office, Valerie Gravseth of Senator Franken's office, and Andy Martin of Senator's Klobuchar's office.

Ms. Josephson reported that Congressman Peterson has indicated that the current local and regional watershed organizations are sufficient to generate local funding and secure property for project construction through eminent domain, if necessary. Manager Deal added that current projections for the Minnesota side of the basin include requesting \$50 million in federal funds that would require local match.

Ms. Gravseth stated that Senator Franken has assured downstream interests that he would not support the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion project should it result in negative downstream impacts. She further noted that the Senator is a proponent of including upstream storage components in the proposed diversion to assist in mitigating downstream impacts.

Manager Ista referred to previous statements from Senator Dorgan's office in North Dakota which discussed the establishment of a federal authority should the current local units of government be unable to reach an agreement relative to the implementation of collaborative flood damage reduction efforts. Manager Osowski responded that both the RRJWRB and the RRWMB agree that current local authority should be retained by the respective boards but that significantly more projects could be implemented in a timelier manner with the assistance of federal funding.

Manager Finney inquired of Mr. Belford whether the establishment of a similar authority has been discussed to address Devils Lake. Mr. Belford responded that retention efforts have been discussed regarding flooding in Devils Lake, however, the topography no longer provides for retention as any potential storage areas have already been inundated.

Manager Finney stated that discussions will continue regarding the establishment of a proposed federal authority in the basin and it's the intention of those involved to adopt a formal document in the near future in order to leverage state funds with any potential federal funds that may be forthcoming.

Following discussion, the Board of Managers directed N. Erickson to work in conjunction with M. Meister, R. Harnack and legal counsel to revise the draft letter to Senator Dorgan regarding the

proposed federal authority. **Motion** by Manager Osowski to revise the draft letter to Senator Dorgan's office regarding the proposed federal authority, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

### **Finance Committee Report**

Manager Deal, Finance Committee Chair, reported that the Finance Committee met prior to today's board meeting.

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 identify other funding sources, in addition to utilizing their borrowing authority, prior to requesting a financial commitment from the RRWMB.

Manager Deal further noted that other revenue sources are currently being considered including the addition of watersheds and/or watershed districts that are located in the Red River basin but not contributing members to the RRWMB.

### **Public Information Initiative**

M. Meister reviewed the public information monthly report. Activities for the months of March and April included writing two feature articles on flood retention efforts. Mike Williams, Fargo City Commissioner, was interviewed regarding the City of Fargo's support for the retention efforts of the Bois de Sioux WD's Redpath Project.

Information regarding the operating procedures for the RRWMB was also distributed at flood meetings conducted in the Fargo-Moorhead area regarding the impacts of a diversion on downstream communities.

M. Meister reported that a survey has been developed to evaluate the public information initiatives and is in the process of being converted to a web-format for distribution.

### **Project Coordinator Report**

In the absence of R. Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requested information regarding the funding priorities for flood damage reduction projects for 2010 to ensure the availability of matching state funds.

The following projects should be considered for priority funding: Hay Creek/Norland (75/25), \$3.9M; Brandt-Angus (50/50), \$500,000; Upper Becker (75/25), \$2.01M; and Redpath (75/25), \$4M. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize the above-mentioned respective projects for prioritized state funding, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**. Projects to be considered for secondary priority status include: Two Rivers WD, Springbrook (50/50); Bois de Sioux WD, North Ottawa (75/25); and Red Lake WD, Grand Marais (75/25).

### **Red River Basin Commission**

Lance Yohe, Executive Director – RRBC, reviewed the *Building Capacity for Multi-Purpose Land and Water Investments in the Red River Basin Project*. The project is being undertaken through a partnership between the RRBC and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

The main objective of the project is to develop and implement basin-wide strategic management planning tools that will provide decision-makers with the capacity to assess the costs and multiple benefits of projects aimed at maintaining and restoring natural environments. The project consists of two phases (Phase I and Phase II). Phase I is currently underway and consists of the following key project activities: Building Partnerships, Data Gap Analysis, Modeling Workshop, and Selection of Case Studies. Phase II will consist of the development and implementation of the decision support tools/models and will include scenario investigation (i.e. case studies) and capacity building through hands-on instruction, communication and outreach activities. Funding for Phase II is currently being sought through various grant organizations including Environment Canada and the National Science Foundation. Mr. Yohe requested a letter of support from the board to assist with obtaining funding for Phase II of the project. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to draft a letter of support to the RRBC in support of Phase II of the project, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

Yohe provided an update on the *Long Term Flood Solutions Project*. Last year's spring's floods served as the impetus for the 2009 MN and ND legislatures to each appropriate \$500,000 for the RRBC to develop a comprehensive, basin-wide plan to address flood solutions in the basin. The project includes generating first-hand information for basin leaders and policy makers; leveraging funds for cooperation, better tools, and models; developing goals and principles that will provide guidance for basin-wide comprehensive flood damage reduction decisions and strategies; and implement projects and strategies that produce results.

Yohe distributed the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) proposal. The goal of the proposal is to provide funding assistance for the following activities: Sugar Beet Cover Crop Strategy; Beach Ridge Erosion Reduction Strategy; Restricted Flow Sediment Pool Strategy; and Water Flow Retardation Strategy.

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

Thul reported that the TAC met on April 12, 2010 in Fargo, ND with the ND/MN Joint Advisory Committee. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Watershed Feasibility Study was discussed including modeling efforts, Fargo/Moorhead Metro Study Work Group recommendations, status of the feasibility study work contracts, Phase 6 – Project Prioritization/Permit Tool, and future feasibility study work items and local matching alternatives.

Thul explained that with regard to Phase 6 of the feasibility study, an oversight committee was selected including Charlie Anderson and Dan Money from Minnesota as well as three representatives from North Dakota. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize Charlie Anderson and Dan Money's participation on the oversight committee, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

Thul stated that one of the components of the modeling efforts of the feasibility study is to develop a HEC-RAS model from Halstad to Emerson. This effort would include updating the existing steady state model by extending the cross-sections utilizing the LiDAR data. A proposal developed to be submitted to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) was distributed by Chuck Fritz regarding a project to improve natural resource conservation with value-added LiDAR. The project team funded to lead the project includes representatives from IWI, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), and other consulting engineering firms with LiDAR and web-GIS expertise. The RRWMB was identified as one of several interested partners in the project. Mr. Fritz requested a letter of support from the board to LCCMR to assist with securing funding for the project. **Motion** by Manager Osowski to draft a letter of support to LCCMR in support of the project, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

Thul added that at the meeting conducted on April 12, 2010, the TAC discussed the development of questions with representatives from North Dakota for a proposed study to address drainage issues. A final list of questions hasn't been finalized, however, representatives from North Dakota indicated they would bring their suggestions to their board for review. The RRWMB's TAC recommends that the primary question to be addressed in the study is as follows: "How should drainage systems be designed to maximize benefits while minimizing adverse impacts?"

Thul reported that a shortfall exists in the stream-gaging effort due to a diminished cost-share contribution from the MDNR. The following gages are slated to be discontinued by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS): Doran - Wilkin County, Wild Rice - Norman County, Oslo - City of Oslo, and Malung - Roseau County. Manager Wilkens suggested that should the individual member watershed districts wish to continue the operation of the above-mentioned gages, notification should be forwarded to the office of the RRWMB to be considered for a local match between the watershed district and RRWMB.

## **Administrator Report**

### **A) Proposed Federal Authority**

N. Erickson reported that a committee meeting was conducted on Friday, April 2, 2010 in Moorhead, MN to discuss the proposed Federal Authority with members of the Red River Joint Water Resource Board. A draft outline of the Red River of the North Watershed Compact was reviewed. A handout was distributed.

Another meeting has been scheduled for Friday, April 23, 2010 in Moorhead, MN to further discuss the proposed Federal Authority and draft outline of the compact with members of the Minnesota federal delegation.

### **B) Water Quality Initiative / River Watch Program Transfer**

N. Erickson explained that Chuck Fritz, Director – International Water Institute (IWI) and Wayne Goeken, Program Coordinator met with Jon Schauer who provides accounting consultation services to the RRWMB on April 13, 2010 to discuss the transfer of the water quality initiatives from the RRWMB to the IWI. A target date of May 16, 2010 (the date immediately following the May 15<sup>th</sup> payroll) is planned for the transfer.

Mr. Fritz explained that a meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2010 to discuss a separation of duties between the Tri-College University (TCU) and IWI in order for the IWI to accommodate the water quality initiative. Manager Wilkens suggested extending the target date of the transfer from May 16, 2010 to May 31, 2010 in order to provide additional time to finalize the details.

### **C) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, Tuesday, June 22, 2010, Holiday Inn on the Lake, Detroit Lakes, MN.
2. **Joint Annual Conference**, Wednesday, June 23, 2010, Holiday Inn on the Lake, Detroit Lakes, MN.

### **Farmstead Ring Dike Program / EQIP**

Manager Finney requested Dave Jones, USDA-NRCS to discuss ring dikes funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) of NRCS. Mr. Jones stated that EQIP was reauthorized in the Farm Bill to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

N. Erickson referred to the RRWMB's policy included in this month's *Administrator's Report* for farmstead and rural ring dikes regarding cost-share funding adopted by the Board of Managers at the 06/16/09 board meeting. The farmstead ring dikes cost-share is as follows: EQIP Engineering 100%, EQIP Construction 75%, Watershed District 0-12.5% as determined by the local watershed district, and landowner 12.5-25% (RRWMB 0% unless there are special/unique engineering/construction issues, then up to 12.5% upon request of the local watershed district). The rural ring dikes cost-share as follows: BWSR/DNR Construction & Engineering 50%, RRWMB Construction & Engineering 25%, remaining 25% to be divided between the individual watershed district and landowner as determined by the local watershed district.

M. Jesme noted his concern that often there are discrepancies regarding the construction costs reimbursed by NRCS to landowners for farmstead ring dikes. Mr. Jones explained that NRCS uses cost estimates for ring dike construction for reimbursements to landowners whereas watershed districts use actual project costs.

The Board of Managers discussed how to address the increased engineering costs of soils stability investigations for those projects located close to rivers which often result in special/unique engineering/construction issues. Following discussion, the board agreed to modify the policy for farmstead ring dikes to include funding up to 12.5% of the *actual* cost-overrun upon request of the local watershed district. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the modification of the board's farmstead ring dike policy as previously stated, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

N. Erickson reported that R. Harnack plans to schedule a conference call with district administrators, engineers and NRCS staff within the next two weeks to further discuss farmstead and rural ring dikes.

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The impoundment construction and inlet structures of Phase 2 have been let for bids with a bid opening date of May 5, 2010. Seeding on Phase 1 is anticipated to begin in mid May.  
  
The District is working on two new ring dikes through the EQIP and rural ring dike programs with construction slated for this summer. Estimates for the ring dikes range between \$120,000 - \$130,000 per ring dike. Meetings have been conducted with the NRCS and landowners.
- The Red Lake WD reported on the Pennington County Ditch No. 1 (Proj. 171) / Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction Study (Proj. 171A) Project. The preliminary engineer's survey report for the projects was filed with the District on April 8, 2010. A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for both of the projects on June 30, 2010 in Thief River Falls, MN.

If completed, the projects will address the yearly flooding that occurs in the southern portion of Thief River Falls in the vicinity of the Galaxy Twin Theatre and Meritcare Clinic continuing in a northerly direction under Trunk Highway No. 59 by the Holiday Station and outletting into the Red Lake River.

- The Bois de Sioux WD reported that the North Ottawa Impoundment Project is operational. This spring all the water was captured from the drainage area and held until the crest in Fargo/Moorhead. A total of 8,500 acre-feet was stored (about half the capacity) with a little over 2" of runoff. Due to late seeding of the cover grasses, some erosion problems occurred but repairs have already begun. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have expressed a renewed interest in Phase 5 (the natural resource enhancement component) and the ability to provide funding.

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

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

### **Devils Lake Update**

Joe Belford, Ramsey County Commissioner, reported on the status of Devils Lake. A map of the Devils Lake Basin was displayed. The basin is a 3,810 square-mile sub-basin of the Red River of the North. At current water levels, the lake itself has no natural outlet.

On April 2, 2010, Devils Lake crept to a new record level, surpassing the previous record of 1450.73 feet above mean sea level (amsl), set on June 27, 2009 and it continues to rise. In March 1993, Devils Lake had a surface area of 44,230 acres. At its current elevation, Devils Lake covers ~ 177,100 acres - an increase of 132,870 inundated acres, or about 208 square miles. During this same period, the volume of water in Devils Lake has grown by more than six times.

In response to the increasing lake levels, the installation of a spillway on the eastern portion of the lake is currently being discussed.

The next meeting will be on May 18, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerome Deal  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator