



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 Greg Holmvik-Ada Jerome Deal, Secretary-Wheaton
Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

July 20, 2010

Courtyard by Marriott & Conf. Center, Moorhead, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, July 20, 2010 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conf. Center, Moorhead, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were: Todd Miller Dan Money
 Orville Knott Daniel Wilkens
 Mike Christensen Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator
Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Mark Meister, CR*CS
Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, RRBC
Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
Sharon Josephson, Congressman Peterson's office
Lance Yohe, Executive Director, RRBC
Ann Manley, Mayor of Perley
Ray Bohn, MAWD Coordinator
Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD
Duane Erickson, Wild Rice WD

Motion by Manager Wilkens to approve the minutes as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **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 Knott, **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 Deal, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Tax Levy Rate Determination

The Board discussed the tax levy rate determination. **Motion** by Manager Money to maintain the levy at 100% for FY 2011, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

Myron Jesme noted that he meets with several county boards within the Red Lake watershed. County officials within Polk County requested that he convey their concern regarding the RRWMB maintaining the maximum levy for 2011. Manager Knott added that maintaining the levy at 100% would be easier to justify should all eligible watershed districts participate in the RRWMB levy. R. Harnack stated that others have expressed concern regarding the Otter Tail and Buffalo-Red River watersheds receiving incidental benefits from the RRWMB without contributing financially to flood damage reduction efforts in the Red River basin.

Public Information Initiative

M. Meister reviewed the public information monthly report. Activities for the month of July included writing two feature articles for distribution and attending flood meetings in the Fargo-Moorhead area related to the impacts of a diversion on downstream communities.

The Annual Review of the RRWMB Public Information Officer and initiatives was distributed. M. Meister explained that in 2007 he was retained by the RRMWB doing business as (dba) CR*CS Communication Research and Consulting Services to design and implement a study of public perceptions associated with watershed issues and management. A written report was presented to the RRWMB in 2008 and revealed the following:

- a general lack of knowledge about the mission and objectives of the RRWMB and its affiliated watershed districts,
- a general sense of distrust of those working on watershed issues,
- a general belief among landowners, specifically, that the RRWMB and its affiliated watershed districts are not doing enough in terms of flood protection,
- a general sense of cynicism toward how landowner taxes are being used by the RRWMB and its affiliated watershed districts, and
- a general sense of frustration among all stakeholders regarding flood protection.

Subsequently, the RRWMB designated M. Meister as its public information officer to coordinate public information initiatives. Survey data was distributed, collected and reviewed from citizens in affiliated watershed districts about public information. The public opinion survey was designed to evaluate the public information initiatives included in the report developed in 2008 and also of M. Meister's performance in implementing the recommendations. A total of 369 participants were invited via email to complete the survey, and of those invited 243 participated.

Nick Drees thanked M. Meister for developing press releases and providing other public information assistance to the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD. Manager Deal commended M. Meister on fulfilling the responsibilities of public information officer and suggested that the Board of Managers continue to retain his services. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize a continuation of services with CR*CS, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. A meeting was conducted by Congressman Peterson on Tuesday, July 6, 2010 in Moorhead, MN to discuss securing funding for future flood damage reduction initiatives in the 2012 Farm Bill. The Congressman indicated at the meeting that he intends to include a \$50 million annual appropriation in the next farm bill for flood water storage projects in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The goal is to achieve 1,000,000 acre-feet of storage to reduce flooding on the mainstem of the Red River. Congressman Pomeroy was also in attendance and supported the proposal as well.

Sharon Josephson of Congressman Peterson's office explained that the Congressman requested that a task force be established to review existing USDA-NRCS programs and provide specific details how the programs could be modified to facilitate the implementation of flood water storage projects. R. Harnack suggested that both short-term and long-term funding options should be addressed by the task force and further noted that committee membership should be discussed at the joint meeting of the RRWMB and the Red River Joint Water Resources Board (RRJWRB) scheduled this afternoon.

R. Harnack reported that he attended the TAC meeting and participated in the review of the Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Draft comments on the report were prepared by the TAC with written a comment period ending on August 9, 2010. Following discussion, the Board of Managers directed N. Erickson to finalize the draft letter and submit the written comments to the USACE.

R. Harnack discussed the Flood Damage Reduction Grant Assistance Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources specifically with regard to community setback levees. Funding assistance at 2% of household median income for a 100-year plus one-foot flood will be provided by the State of Minnesota with higher protection funded at only 50%.

Diane Ista, Wild Rice WD, introduced Ann Manley, Mayor of Perley. Ms. Manley stated that the City of Hendrum is increasing their community levee an additional two-feet, however, the City of Perley is unable to do so due to budget constraints. R. Harnack noted that the board has discussed funding community flood control projects similar to the board policy for farmstead ring dikes, however, presently community setback levees are ineligible for funding assistance.

R. Harnack stated that Congressman Oberstar has introduced a bill for amendments to the Clean Water Act (CWA). A letter sent to the Congressman to discuss the board's concerns related to previous proposed amendments to the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 2007 with regard to how the amendments could be interpreted by the USACE during their wetland permit review process was distributed for review. R. Harnack suggested that the previous letter be revised and requested that comments be forwarded to him for consideration.

R. Harnack explained that at the April board meeting, the following projects were authorized for priority funding from the State of Minnesota: Hay Creek/Norland (75/25), \$3.9M; Brandt-Angus (50/50), \$500,000; Upper Becker (75/25), \$2.01M; and Redpath (75/25), \$4M. Manager Christensen explained that the Wild Rice WD may not be able to utilize state funding for Upper Becker as the project is being appealed. R. Harnack stated that the board may want to consider reallocating the amount previously designated for Upper Becker to another project currently progressing. Manager Finney requested clarification on the status of the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project from the Wild Rice WD.

Local Water Management Summit

Ray Bohn, MAWD Coordinator, discussed the conference hosted by the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts on July 12, 2010 in St. Cloud, MN. The forum was an opportunity for County Commissioners, Soil and Water Conservation Boards, and Watershed Managers and staff to discuss both present and future involvement of local units of government in water activities around the state.

Bohn reported that he attended the dedication ceremony of the PL 566 and Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Projects of the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD on Monday, July 19, 2010 in Warren, MN. He inquired whether any member watershed district would consider hosting next year's MAWD Summer Tour. Following discussion, the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers and Red Lake Watershed Districts agreed to discuss the possibility of jointly hosting the 2011 MAWD Summer Tour with their respective boards.

Red River Basin Commission

Lance Yohe, Executive Director – RRBC, distributed a handout on the *Long Term Flood Solutions Project*. The project continues progressing through the RRBC's committee and working group structure addressing such issues as impediments, funding, governance challenges, and economic impact of the basin.

The RRBC is nearing completion on securing watershed partners throughout the U.S. portion of the basin on modeling efforts to reduce flows on the mainstem. The various watershed districts and their modeling coordinators will be further enhancing the MIKE 11 model to help in the development of criteria for water retention site selection, review of flood reduction goals, development of stage storage discharge relationships for potential sites, and the identification of potential storage sites similar to the 26 sites already identified in the Bois de Sioux WD. The goal is to reach a basin-wide 20 percent mainstem flow reduction upon implementation of all water retention project sites identified.

Administrator Report

A) Joint Powers Agreement

N. Erickson reported that she attended the meeting conducted by Congressman Peterson on Tuesday, July 6, 2010 in Moorhead, MN to discuss securing funding for future flood damage reduction initiatives in the 2012 Farm Bill. Congressman Peterson and Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-N.D., conducted a press conference prior to the meeting to discuss current planning efforts.

She reported that representatives from the RRWMB including Managers Finney, Osowski and Deal, as well as R. Harnack and herself have been meeting with the Red River Joint Water Resource Board (RRJWRB) regarding the establishment of the Joint Powers Agreement. The Joint Powers Agreement states that an Executive Committee will be designated consisting of three board members from each joint board. **Motion** by Manager Knott to designate Managers Finney, Osowski and Deal as the RRWMB representatives identified in the Joint Powers Agreement, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

An official signing ceremony of the Joint Powers Agreement between the RRWMB and the Red River Joint Water Resource Board is tentatively planned with members of the Minnesota and North Dakota federal delegations for August.

B) Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion

N. Erickson reported that letters of concern relative to the proposed aforementioned diversion have been received from residents in the Red River basin. She suggested that the Board of Managers may want to consider developing a position statement that could be forwarded in response to citizens expressing concern relative to the proposed diversion project. M. Meister offered to develop a response letter in conjunction with N. Erickson.

C) Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group FY10 Funds

N. Erickson explained that for FY2010, \$7,500 was allocated to each category of Alternative Analysis and Support (Administrative) expenses for a combined budget allocation of \$15,000 per project team. Upon review of unexpended funds for FY10, the Funding Committee of the Work Group requested watershed district administrators to forward funding requests to the RRWMB for **all** project team expenses incurred during FY10, including those already submitted for reimbursement as it appears that there may be a surplus of funds available to reimburse watershed districts for project team expenses in addition to the original FY10 allocation of \$15,000. Following the receipt of all project team expenses, the Funding Committee will develop a recommendation to reallocate the remaining fund balance.

D) 12th Annual Joint Conference

On Wednesday, June 23, 2010 the 12th Annual Joint Conference was conducted at the Holiday Inn on the Lake, Detroit Lakes, MN. Several positive comments were received regarding the content of the conference. The conference planning committee has discussed the possibility of continuing to conduct the conference in Detroit Lakes, MN, however, reverting back to hosting the meeting in early March to avoid other scheduling conflicts.

E) Email Marketing Service

N. Erickson reported that quotes for providing an email newsletter subscription for the board's monthly newsletter publication were solicited. The website currently offers an option to receive an electronic version of the newsletter, however, it has been problematic and unable to provide reliable circulation. The pricing quotes are as follows: 0-500 contacts is \$15/month, or \$153/year; and 501-2000 contacts is \$30/month, or \$306/year. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the email marketing service for 0-500 contacts for \$15.00 per month, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

F) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, Wednesday, August 18, 2010, Red Lake WD office, Thief River Falls, MN.
2. **Red River Basin Commission Board Meeting**, Thursday, September 2, 2010.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

Thul stated that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met this month and reviewed the Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Please refer to the Project Coordinator Report for further details.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Flood damage reduction (FDR) water quality sites continue to be monitored on a monthly basis. The International Water Institute (IWI) staff will be developing and leading a water quality team that will be charged with developing consistent, standard water quality reports for FDR projects. The charge for the effort was directed from the Red River Basin Monitoring Advisory Committee which met on June 25, 2010.

District Reports

- The Red Lake WD reported on the Thief River Falls Diversion/Project No. 171A Project. A public hearing was conducted on June 30, 2010 in the Imperial Room located in the Engelstad Arena in Thief River Falls, MN for a flood damage reduction project that consists of a diversion channel to Pennington County Ditch No. 1. The two-mile diversion channel is a project that was established by the District to assist with local flooding problems caused by legal drainage system, Pennington County Ditch No. 1, which outlets into and through the City of Thief River Falls. The two-mile diversion channel will allow 100% of floodwaters to be released in a westerly direction upstream of the City of Thief River Falls thus outletting downstream of the city.

On July 8, 2010 at the District's regularly scheduled board meeting, the Board of Managers adopted by motion to proceed with Option No. 3B as presented in the preliminary survey report for the Thief River Falls Diversion Project and to also add the Urbanization portion of the report to the portion of the legal drainage system that flows through the City of Thief River Falls. The estimated project cost for the diversion is estimated at \$1,200,000 with an estimated cost of the urbanization to be \$775,000.

If completed, these projects will address the annual flooding that occurs to 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 thus outletting into the Red Lake River.

Myron Jesme, Administrator, inquired whether the Board of Managers would consider sending a letter of support to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regarding the District's request for funding assistance towards the diversion portion of the project. Following discussion, the Board of Managers directed the TAC to review the project and provide a recommendation to the board at the August monthly meeting.

The next meeting will be on August 17, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. at a location to be announced.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:00 p.m. following lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator