



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

October 19, 2010

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, October 19, 2010 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

Todd Miller	Dan Money
Ron Osowski	Orville Knott
Daniel Wilkens	Greg Holmvik
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
- Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, RRBC
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Wallace Sparby, Congressman Peterson's office
- Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Wayne Goeken, Director-Center for Watershed Education (IWI)
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS
- LeRoy Ose, Red Lake WD

An update from Manager Wilkens regarding developing various levying options for member watershed districts relative to the RRWMB levy was added to the agenda under *Other Issues*. Also Manager Miller requested adding discussion relative to the handout he distributed titled *Strengthen the Clean Water Act?* under District Reports.

Motion by Manager Miller 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 Deal to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Osowski, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Public Information Initiative

M. Meister reviewed the public information monthly report. Activities for the month of October included writing a feature article and distributing a press release.

Bids were solicited for printing the annual calendar from printing companies in Thief River Falls, Roseau, Wheaton, and Crookston. Brandner Printing of Crookston provided the lowest bid and also offered 10 hours of free design consulting. A draft calendar will be prepared for distribution at the November board meeting. Plans are to print ~ 300 – 350 calendars.

M. Meister reported that he plans to attend monthly watershed district board meetings as follows: December – Bois de Sioux and Wild Rice; January – Red Lake, Middle Snake Tamarac, and Roseau; and February – Sand Hill, Two Rivers and Joe River.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. He discussed the status of the rural ring dike program and noted that based on information received from member districts, nearly all of the state funding received should be expended prior to year end. He encouraged final billings to be forwarded to N. Erickson in order for the state reimbursement request to be submitted prior to the beginning of the legislative session.

R. Harnack stated that subcommittees of the Farm Bill Task Force have been conducting meetings to review the basic elements of the various NRCS programs. Discussions are focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the individual programs for both the short-term and long-term. Minutes of the Easement Subcommittee chaired by Jon Roeschlein were distributed for review.

The bonding needs for the upcoming legislative session were discussed. Member districts were requested to review the five-year plans and update as needed to reflect the final design, acquisition and construction requirements for the July 2011 – June 2012 time period.

The lack of contribution to the RRWMB levy by the Buffalo-Red River WD and the Otter Tail Watershed to provide funding assistance for upstream retention projects was discussed. Manager Deal added that he was requested by Jon Evert, Clay County Commissioner, to attend board meetings of the Buffalo-Red River WD in order to keep them informed.

R. Harnack referred to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) stream gaging program and indicated that due to continued state budget constraints, additional funding reductions may be proposed. D. Thul noted that the MDNR established an internal stream gaging program that operates at a significantly reduced cost from the program administered by USGS. Manager Finney requested the TAC to review the current stream gaging program and develop recommendations for board consideration prior to the first of the year.

Manager Knott stated that he attended a meeting of the Red River Diversion Downstream Impact Group that was formed to unite communities and counties in the Red River basin that may be adversely impacted by the proposed diversion. Manager Money added that townships and municipalities are being invited to join their membership.

R. Harnack noted that the City of Hendrum has filed an appeal against the Wild Rice WD regarding the modifications to the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project and stated that the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) has been invited to mediate the dispute. R. Harnack inquired whether the RRWMB should participate in the mediation proceedings. Manager Finney responded that should the board receive a request to participate, consideration would be given at that time.

Administrator Report

A) CD No. 18 – Goose Prairie Water Management Project

N. Erickson reported that at the regular board meeting conducted on January 19, 2010, Jerry Bents explained that the District was no longer pursuing this portion of Project No. 42 and that land previously acquired for the project using the funding advance from the RRWMB is currently for sale. On February 16, 2010, a letter was sent from the RRWMB to the Wild Rice requesting the District to confirm the status of the above-referenced project.

A letter dated March 10, 2010 was received from the Wild Rice WD stating that as a result of local opposition, the WRWD Board of Managers ceased further development of the project. During the project development stage, several tracts of land were purchased that needed to be resold. However, prior to listing the property for sale the District indicated they would prefer to offer it for trade to local property owners for land needed for the Upper Becker Project site.

As discussed at the September 21, 2010 board meeting, significant changes have occurred to the original project design of the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement project which was also a component of Project No. 42 and would require submitting revised Step I & II applications to the RRWMB. Therefore, pending funding advances as well as previous Step I & II approvals of the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement project were rescinded. Repayment of the loan advance of \$600,000 for CD No. 18 was received by the RRWMB from the Wild Rice WD on October 11, 2010.

N. Erickson inquired about the status of the CD No. 18 portion of Project No. 42 and also the Felton Ditch Storage Project. Manager Holmvik responded that neither of these projects are being pursued by the Wild Rice WD. **Motion** by Manager Holmvik to rescind the step application approvals of the Wild Rice WD's Felton Ditch Storage Project and the CD No. 18 portion of Project No. 42 of the Wild Rice WD, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

B) Farmstead and Rural Ring Dike Programs

N. Erickson discussed the following revised policies of the board:

- The Farmstead Ring Dike 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 0-25% of the total project cost not to exceed a combined EQIP and RRWMB cost-share of 75% of project costs upon request of the local watershed district).

- The Rural Ring Dike cost-share is 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.

C) Congressman Peterson Tours the Bois de Sioux WD

N. Erickson stated that Manager Deal was contacted by Congressman Peterson's office in Washington D.C. with a request to conduct a tour for the Congressman of the North Ottawa and Redpath projects of the Bois de Sioux WD.

In his efforts to assist with securing federal funding for future projects within the Red River basin, the Congressman toured the North Ottawa and Redpath projects on October 13, 2010. N. Erickson added that those in attendance were Jerome Deal, Jim Lyons (Co-chair of the Red River Retention Authority), Ron Osowski, Charlie Anderson, and herself.

D) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, Wednesday, October 20, 2010, Detroit Lakes, MN.
2. **Governing Documents Committee**, Friday, October 22, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN.
3. **Red River Retention Authority**, Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator – RRBC, distributed Information on the Upstream Water Retention Tour conducted on October 13, 2010. The purpose of the tour was to illustrate both operational and potential water retention projects in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota for Red River basin public officials and community leaders, the media, and interested members of the public.

An update was distributed regarding the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Project. The project continues progressing through RRBC's committees and working group structure as they discuss such issues as impediments, funding, governance challenges, and economic impacts of the basin. The end result will be a report to legislators with recommendations on long term flood solutions for the Red River basin.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul reported that an update regarding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) was received from Aaron Snyder, former Project Manager. Mr. Snyder indicated in the update that the USACE met with the Metro Flood Study Work Group in September and discussed methods for determining the benefits of upstream storage as well as how to determine funding contributions based on achieved benefits.

Mr. Snyder explained that tools would be developed in conjunction with the WFS which could assist in determining the benefits achieved from individual projects within a watershed. At the meeting, Mark Bittner – City of Fargo, inquired about the timeframe the tool would be available for use by

municipalities. Mr. Snyder replied in the response that the tool would be completed in about one year.

D. Thul stated that in order to complete the proposed tool in a timelier manner, the municipalities of Moorhead and Fargo agreed to fund the modeling effort of \$975,000 and contract with local engineering firms. A conference call was conducted by members of the TAC who agreed to recommend that the RRWMB accept the \$975,000 authorized by the cities of Moorhead and Fargo as work-in-kind for the USACE WFS with the following conditions: local watershed district engineer's retain an active role in determining the scope of the modeling effort; existing models would be updated using LiDAR data to develop a set of criteria for various hydrographs for each watershed as well as the mainstem; and the local sponsors would have full discretion relative to determining how to utilize the match. **Motion** by Manager Money to accept the \$975,000 authorized by the cities of Moorhead and Fargo to contract with local engineering firms as work-in-kind for the USACE WFS with the aforementioned conditions, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

D. Thul reported that he has been discussing the work-in-kind documentation needed for the USACE WFS with Nan Bischoff-USACE who replaced Aaron Snyder as Project Manager. She indicated that matching funds can be documented beginning on June 1, 2008 and would include the following expenses incurred by the RRWMB: River Watch/Water Quality, Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, and Comprehensive Watershed Plan Updates. D. Thul stated that he would coordinate with N. Erickson to develop the documentation.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Keith Weston introduced himself as a District Conservationist with NRCS serving Cass County North Dakota and also as the Red River Basin Coordinator for the three states in the basin.

He reported that he will be assisting the co-chairs of the Farm Bill task force (Ron Harnack-Minnesota and Bill Hejl- North Dakota) with the various subcommittees that were formed to review existing federal programs to facilitate the implementation of flood water storage projects.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

Wayne Goeken, Director-Center for Watershed Education (IWI) reported that staff provided instruction to elementary students at Water Festivals in Warren, Fertile, and Moorhead. Over 1,700 students in grades 3 – 4 participated.

A research project is underway on the Sand Hill River exploring the use of biological monitoring of macroinvertebrates and toxicity assays using earthworms, lettuce seed and rotifers. Science professors at the U of M – Crookston and Valley City State University are assisting with the study design, training, and analysis. This is undertaken as a pilot project with standard operating procedures developed to allow additional schools to be involved next year.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The Spruce Valley Corporation continues work on the impoundment and inlet structures. The District recently signed a settlement agreement with Wagner Construction allowing Spruce Valley to finish work that Wagner Construction was contracted to finish.

The District is working on two new ring dikes through EQIP and the rural ring dike programs with construction anticipated to be completed by November 15, 2010. LaValla Construction from Baudette started the week of September 27th and Olson Construction from Thief River Falls started the week of October 11th. Both are progressing although wet soil conditions are hindering the compaction and moisture of the dike materials.

Manager Miller referenced an article he distributed titled *Strengthen the Clean Water Act?* The article was written by Reed Hopper, principal attorney with the Pacific Legal Foundation. The article refers to a letter developed by U.S. Representative Jim Oberstar which claims his new bill to restore, but not expand, the Clean Water Act would provide for the federal government to regulate virtually all waters of the United States.

Levying Options for Member Watershed Districts

Manager Wilkens explained that the original authorizing legislation of the board included an ad valorem tax not to exceed two mills on each dollar of assessed valuation of all taxable property within the district. Subsequently, the legislation was revised to include an ad valorem tax not to exceed a percentage (.04836) of taxable market value. The proceeds of one-half of the RRWMB levy remain with the member watershed district, with the proceeds of the remaining one-half to be forwarded to the RRWMB.

Manager Wilkens stated that when preparing the most recent Sand Hill River WD levy, a noticeable increase in land value was recognized. A comparison was developed of previous years and it was calculated that an increase in excess of 30% occurred in a one-year period.

R. Harnack referenced the proposed 2010 MAWD resolution forwarded from the Wild Rice WD suggesting limiting the RRWMB levy at the 2010 level so as to limit the amount of future tax burden on area landowners.

Manager Finney noted that the Finance Committee met earlier this year and discussed developing various levying options for member districts. One option discussed included not requiring the local watershed districts to increase their share of the RRWMB levy.

Manager Deal added that all funding sources need to be considered in order to obtain the local match necessary for the potential federal funding forwarded to the Red River Retention Authority for projects benefitting the entire Red River basin. M. Jesme suggested considering long-term funding needs of the Red River basin as a whole while maintaining flexibility among individual member watershed districts with regard to the RRWMB levy.

Manager Finney directed the Finance Committee to further discuss this issue and develop a recommendation for board consideration. Manager Deal responded that he would schedule a committee meeting in the near future.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on November 16, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator