



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 February 15, 2011

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, February 15, 2011, 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
Orville Knott	Daniel Wilkens
Greg Holmvik	Jerome Deal

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute
- Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, RRBC
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS

Manager Miller requested adding discussion relative to the loss of tax base in Roseau County under *Other issues*. Manager Wilkens suggested adding an update regarding the Minnesota Association of Drainage Inspectors (MADI) under *Other issues* also.

Motion by Manager Miller to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **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 Money,

Seconded by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Public Information Initiative

The public information monthly report was distributed for review. Activities for the month of January included writing a feature article and distributing a press release on behalf of the RRWMB and the Red River Retention Authority (3RA).

The report referenced the Red River Valley Flood Preparedness Forums hosted by Governor Dayton and Senator Franken in Crookston and Moorhead. M. Meister indicated in the report that he attended the forum hosted in Moorhead along with J. Deal and N. Erickson. A feature article will be developed regarding the various presentations conducted at the forum.

M. Meister indicated in the report that he's also been meeting with Mikkel Pates of Agweek regarding the development of an upcoming feature article.

N. Erickson added that M. Meister has offered to assist member district Administrators with developing poster board presentations for display at the 13th Annual Joint Conference and noted that recommendations for the presentations are included in his monthly report.

Red River Retention Authority (3RA)

Manager Deal reported on activities of the 3RA. He stated that he is Co-Chair of the Retention Committee along with Bill Hejl, a North Dakota Water Manager. The following subcommittees of the Retention Committee are nearing completion of final recommendations to be forwarded to Congressman Peterson: Permitting Subcommittee (Chair – Chad Engels), NRCS Programs Subcommittee (Chair – Rob Sando), PL566 Subcommittee (Chair – Dan Money), FSA Programs Subcommittee (Chair – Jon Roeschlein), and Water Management Subcommittee (Chair – Gary Peterson). The various committee reports will be distributed for review at the next meeting of the 3RA scheduled for March 8, 2011.

Manager Deal added that discussion occurred at the previous 3RA meeting regarding the establishment of a USACE position based in the Red River basin to assist with permitting. The discussions are preliminary at this point but would involve a position funded jointly by the 3RA and the USACE. Manager Deal further noted that he has a conference call scheduled with the North Dakota Department of Transportation who established a similar position with the USACE.

Manager Wilkens inquired why the 3RA would need to provide funding assistance and office space for a USACE position. Manager Finney stated that the USACE should be committed to streamlining the regulatory requirements in the Red River basin and designate a person dedicated to permitting issues without requiring funding assistance from the 3RA.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. The bonding requests of member watershed districts for the upcoming session are as follows: Two Rivers, Springbrook - \$130,000; Roseau

River, Hay Creek/Norland - \$1,500,000; Red Lake, Grand Marais - \$575,000; Middle Snake Tamarac, Brandt/Angus - \$1,680,000; Sand Hill River, Climax & Shelly \$4,620,000; Wild Rice, Shelly & Felton \$5,100,000, Home Acquisitions \$935,000, and River Stability Acquisitions \$500,000; and Bois de Sioux, North Ottawa - \$3,000,000 and Redpath - \$4,300,000. The total bonding funds requested is \$22,340,000.

R. Harnack stated that the Governor's budget will be released this week. As reported from House and Senate leadership, no new taxes will be imposed but instead reductions to existing programs will be implemented to assist with balancing the budget.

R. Harnack reported that he met with Tamara Cameron, Chief Regulatory Branch – USACE, to discuss the Points of Concurrence process. He noted that Ms. Cameron is committed to assisting with pursuing revisions to ensure an efficient federal permitting process.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul reported that at the previous monthly meeting, the board of managers directed the TAC to review the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC) Paper No. 14 (TP No. 14) and develop a recommendation for board consideration at the next monthly meeting. N. Erickson added that she developed a task list to be utilized in order to determine the estimated number of project team meetings required to complete the natural resource enhancement (NRE) development process proposed within the paper.

D. Thul stated that the TAC completed the task list and also forwarded it to individual watershed district administrators to obtain their feedback. The TAC determined that the average number of meetings to complete the required tasks identified in TP No. 14 was ~10 meetings. Manager Finney responded that as not every project team meets on a monthly basis, adopting TP No. 14 could potentially add at least one year to the project development stage.

Manager Finney noted his concern relative to adopting the document as it could increase the length of time required for a project to progress through the project team process at a time when the Red River Retention Authority (3RA) and its various committees are developing recommendations to streamline permitting requirements in an effort to construct flood damage reduction projects in a timelier manner. He added that the mediation process was established to implement *flood damage reduction* projects in a manner to provide for the most effective and environmentally friendly alternatives. He further stated that a goal of the board is to coordinate and finance retention projects to achieve flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements other than incidental to the project should be funded by other sources.

R. Harnack explained that TP No. 14 was prepared to assist in developing natural resource enhancement (NRE) criteria to be used in conjunction with securing 75:25 state cost-share funding for flood damage reduction (FDR) projects. He concurred with Manager Finney that achieving FDR goals are the primary consideration for RRWMB funded projects and NREs should be funded through other sources.

D. Thul noted that no one was available from either the TSAC or the Work Group to clarify TP No. 14 when the TAC conducted their review. P. Wannarka reported that the paper has not been adopted by the Work Group but is merely a draft document.

D. Thul stated that the paper could be utilized as a tool in obtaining 75:25 state funding. Manager Finney expressed his concern relative to endorsing the paper since following its adoption the procedures would no longer be optional but required.

Manager Finney referenced TP No. 14 where it states that setting NRE objectives high will provide for fair and meaningful evaluation of project alternatives in an NRE planning area and will maintain consistently high objectives throughout the Red River basin. He questioned how to determine "fair and meaningful" and based on what values (environmental, monetary investment, planning time expended, civilian protection, cost/benefit, etc.). He suggested that "high objectives" should instead read "reasonable objectives." He added that should FDR projects not meet the "high objectives" specified in TP No. 14, it could impede the permitting process.

Manager Finney stated that the mediation agreement was not intended to facilitate an equal expenditure of planning and development and construction funding for NREs within a FDR project. He noted that when the mediation agreement was adopted, NREs within a FDR project were not intended to receive equal funding, only due consideration to prevent adverse project-related impacts and to create enhancements where and when possible over existing conditions.

Manager Deal added that one of the purposes of the natural resource goals included in the mediation agreement is to provide specific information about resource management objectives for incorporation in watershed district overall plans. He noted that these plans already incorporate NREs in FDR projects without having to adopt TP No. 14.

N. Dalager noted that TP No. 14 provides for a process to incorporate NREs into FDR projects, however, other sources should be identified to fund NREs. R. Adrian added that incorporating NREs into the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project increased the project cost by ~40%.

Following discussion based on the TAC's review of TP No. 14, the Board of Managers directed the RRWMB Work Group members to convey the board's concerns at the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group meeting scheduled for the following day.

D. Thul reported that the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Project of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) continues to progress through their various committees. He stated that the RRBC has contracted with Barr Engineering utilizing funding received from the USACE to develop a map with regard to implementing a flood flow reduction strategy to reduce flows on the mainstem by altering the hydrology of the contributing watersheds as a basin wide effort. The RRBC has developed a mainstem model which can now be used to simulate the mainstem response to reduced flows from tributary areas. He added that following a review of the information developed by Barr Engineering, the TAC questioned how the process relates to the early, middle, and late flow contributions of tributary sub-watersheds to the mainstem.

D. Thul referred to the Drainage/Technical Committee of the 3RA. He reported that he and Randy Gjestvang, Engineer for the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) and the North

Dakota State Water Commission (NDSWC) have been directed to develop criteria for project prioritization in order to allocate potential future federal funding.

Administrator Report

A) Flood Coordination and Preparedness Forum

N. Erickson reported that she attended a flood preparedness forum sponsored by Senator Al Franken and Governor Mark Dayton in Moorhead, MN on Friday, February 11, 2011. Mark Voxland, Mayor of Moorhead, welcomed attendees with Senator Franken and Governor Dayton conducting introductions and opening comments. Other panelists included Mark Frazier – National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Kris Eide – MN Dept. of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Adjutant General Richard C. Nash – MN National Guard, Lt. Colonel Kendell Bergmann – USACE, and Andrew Velasquez – FEMA Region V Administrator.

Ms. Eide of the MN Dept. of Homeland Security and Emergency Management reported that for every dollar spent for mitigation, \$4 is saved in damages, or \$10 is saved in total cost of the fighting the flooding effort (including volunteer hours, etc.). N. Erickson stated that she confirmed this statistic with Ms. Eide who noted that the statistics are an approximation but will be re-calculated following this year's flood.

B) Phase 2 Hydrologic Modeling; HEC-HMS Model Development

N. Erickson stated that at the January board meeting, she was directed by the Board of Managers to revise the draft letter developed by D. Thul and R. Harnack regarding the Phase 2 Hydrologic Modeling for Red River of the North Tributaries in the northern part of the basin. The board agreed to revise the letter to include a proposal to form a third party quality assurance (QA) team comprised of representatives from engineering firms designated by northern basin watershed districts (Sand Hill River, Red Lake, Middle Snake Tamarac, Two Rivers, Roseau River and Joe River) and authorize funding in the amount of \$120,000 for QA team expenses. A handout was distributed.

C) Five-Year Plan Updates

N. Erickson noted that she's requested updated five-year plans from member districts. The following WD's have submitted the updates to date: Two Rivers, Middle Snake Tamarac, and Red Lake. For those WD's that have not yet submitted the updated plans, please forward them as soon as possible in order to update the comprehensive master spreadsheet.

D) Project Team Support

N. Erickson reported that she participated on a conference call of the Funding Committee of the Work Group on Friday, February 4, 2011 regarding the budget for fiscal year 2011. She noted that during the conference call, R. Harnack indicated that a proposal in the legislature is to reduce this year's fiscal budget of \$264,000 by \$259,000 leaving a balance of only \$5,000. The current spreadsheet of funds expended to date depicts that ~\$108,180 in expenses has been disbursed. A funding request will be submitted to the MDNR for reimbursement soon to indicate that these funds are being expended.

For fiscal year 2011 (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011), the Work Group allocated each project team \$15,000 for project team expenses. The following project team reimbursement requests have been disbursed to date: Bois de Sioux WD - \$15,000; Buffalo-Red River WD - \$12,590; Middle Snake Tamarac WD - \$15,000; Red Lake WD - \$4,387; Roseau River WD - \$1,950; Sand Hill River WD - \$4,734; Two Rivers WD - \$2,848; and Wild Rice WD - \$7,003.

E) 13th Joint Annual Conference

The annual conference has been scheduled for March 15-16, 2011 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN. The RRWMB regular monthly meeting will be conducted from 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 15, 2011, with the conference to begin at 1:00 p.m.

The first day of the conference will highlight activities of the Red River Retention Authority (3RA), and conclude at ~4:15 p.m. The following day of the conference will include Project Team reports with each Project Team requested to conduct a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation of past achievements as well as current activities.

F) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, Wednesday, February 16, 2011, Red Lake WD office, Thief River Falls, MN.
2. **13th Joint Annual Conference (the “March” Conference)**, Tuesday, March 15 - Wednesday, March 16, 2011, Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN.
3. **MAWD Legislative Reception & Day at the Capitol**, March 23-24, 2011, Kelly Inn, St. Paul, MN.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

C. Fritz stated that the River Watch Forum has been scheduled for Thursday, March 17th at UMC. Forum preparations are underway including presenters, sponsorships, school displays, etc.

Interviews were held for the MN/ND/IWI Water Resources Extension Educator position and an offer has been extended to Dr. Annette Drewes who has experience with water resources and curriculum development.

C. Fritz reported that the next meeting of the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) of the 3RA is scheduled for March 10-11, 2011.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The Spruce Valley Corporation continues work on Phase 2 of the project. Work is discontinued when the temperature falls below -10 degrees.

A meeting is scheduled for February 24, 2011 regarding the Palmville Flood Damage Reduction & Fen Restoration Project. Plans are to finalize the remaining details included in the operation and maintenance agreement between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Roseau County and the District.

- The Red Lake WD reported on a petition submitted to the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to amend the District's existing 10-year Comprehensive Overall Plan approved in May 2006. The petition is intended to allow the District the authority to establish a Water Management District (WMD). If the amendment is approved, the District would establish a WMD for the Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction Project which would pay for 30% of the proposed project. The District has scheduled a hearing for the plan amendment on March 10, 2011 at the Engelstad Arena located in Thief River Falls. Upon approval of the amendment, the District will conduct a hearing to establish the WMD sometime in June or July.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project. Following board approval at their previous monthly meeting, an informational meeting has been scheduled for February 23, 2011 in Ogema for landowners impacted by the footprint of the project as well as other members of the public. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be discussed with effected landowners regarding the amount of acres to be purchased or those requiring a flowage easement.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator – RRBC, distributed Information on the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Project and a Flood Status Report.

J. Goehring reported that \$1.9 million is available in financial assistance to Red River basin projects through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and the RRBC. AWEP projects are implemented by NRCS entering into partnership agreements with eligible entities. NRCS works with these partners to help landowners plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through the agreements.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

Other Issues

Manager Miller referred to Consolidated Conservation (Con-Con) lands in Roseau County and noted his concern regarding the loss of tax base for the watershed district. Manager Deal noted that although payments in lieu of taxes (or PILT) from the federal government to local units of government are submitted to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal or state lands within

their boundaries, these funds are submitted directly to the county and not forwarded to the watershed district.

Manager Miller inquired whether the Finance Committee could address this issue. Manager Wilkens noted that this issue mainly affects the Roseau and Red Lake watershed districts as they have significant state-owned lands located within their boundaries. M. Jesme stated that the loss of tax base is primarily a legislative issue rather than an item to be addressed the RRWMB. Manager Miller responded that he will suggest that the Roseau River WD address this issue on a local basis.

Manager Wilkens reported that the Minnesota Association of Drainage Inspectors (MADI) has recently developed a drainage manual. The organization retained the services of Adam Ripple of Rinke Noonan to complete the manual and a draft document has been developed for review. Manager Wilkens further noted that when the manual has been finalized, it will be posted on the internet.

The next meeting will be on March 15, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, Minnesota in conjunction with the 13th Annual Joint Conference scheduled for March 15-16, 2011, Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, Minnesota.

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