



## 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 September 20, 2011 Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota**

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, September 20, 2011, at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:    Rob Sando                      Dan Money  
   Ben Kleinwachter        Orville Knott  
   Daniel Wilkens            Greg Holmvik  
   Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator  
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator  
Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD  
Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.  
Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice WD  
Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator  
Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA  
Molly MacGregor, Red River Basin Planning-MPCA  
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS  
Jon Roeschlein, Administrator, Bois de Sioux WD  
Valerie Gravseth, Senator Franken's office  
Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute  
Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.  
Mike Bakken, JMB Engineering, Inc.  
Blake Carlson, Engineer, WSN & Assoc., Inc.  
Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.  
Jeff Nyquist, Public Information Officer

Manager Knott requested adding discussion on individual county participation within a watershed district under *Other issues*. Manager Finney requested adding Jim Ziegler to the agenda to discuss incorporating monitoring into flood damage reduction project design under the *Water Quality Project Monitoring Report* section.

**Motion** by Manager Money to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Sando, **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 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.

### **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**

Manager Finney stated that he attended a meeting along with J. Deal, N. Erickson, and R. Harnack convened by Rep. Collin Peterson on August 31, 2011 in Moorhead, MN. As Co-chair of the RRRA, Manager Finney reported that he updated the attendees on the progress to date.

Manager Finney requested N. Drees to comment on the Brandt/Angus Project relative to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) special wetlands initiative in the Red River basin. N. Drees stated that the criteria for consideration for this initiative is landowner and land eligibility and noted that discussion is occurring whether to utilize a 30-year or perpetual easement for the project.

Manager Kleinwachter inquired whether existing federal programs could be modified to better facilitate the implementation of projects similar to the aforementioned project. Manager Finney responded that the RRRA developed several sub-committees under the Retention Committee to review current federal programs and develop recommended modifications. Manager Finney added that the sub-committees have completed their reviews and submitted recommendations to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for consideration.

Manager Finney stated that in July, a letter was authorized to NRCS requesting that the board's TAC participate on the Minnesota NRCS State Technical Committee to provide input on future efforts consistent with the goals of the RRRA. N. Erickson noted that a response has not yet been received regarding the request. Manager Money reported that he represents the Two Rivers WD on the State Technical Committee which meets approximately 6 times a year by conference call. C. Fritz added that the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) of the RRRA could also provide technical assistance regarding federal programs.

Manager Finney discussed the status of retaining an Executive Director for the RRRA. He reported that the RRRA requested C. Lewis, S. Fredricks, N. Erickson and L. Smith to develop a job description for the position. N. Erickson added that, in addition to developing a job description, the committee members also agreed to recommend to the RRRA to pursue developing an MOU with NRCS to cost-share Keith Weston's position as his current role has been an unofficial acting interim Executive Director.

N. Erickson stated that at their September board meeting, the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) authorized its Executive Committee to work with the RRWMB to hire an Executive

Director with authority up to \$80K from the RRJWRD for hiring and securing office space (\$40K for the ND share for an Executive Director, and \$40K for the ND share for space). Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed that the preferred option would be to pursue developing an MOU with NRCS to cost-share Keith Weston's position with him serving as Executive Director but also match the RRJWRD's \$80K appropriation. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize \$80K on an annual basis as matching funds to retain an Executive Director and secure office space for the RRRRA, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

K. Weston, District Conservationist – NRCS, stated that the request to enter into a contribution agreement with NRCS to cost-share his position with the RRRRA should be directed to Don Baloun, NRCS Minnesota State Conservationist. He added that whether or not NRCS would be interested in entering into such agreement, they would like to lease office space from the RRRRA for his current position.

Manager Deal added that he is on a committee of the RRRRA to secure office space in the Fargo-Moorhead area. **Motion** by Manager Deal to retain office space for the RRRRA, cost-share with the RRJWRD and sub-lease to NRCS, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

### **Public Information Initiative**

N. Erickson reported that on September 13, 2011 an offer was extended to Jeff Nyquist for the Public Information Specialist position. A contract was developed by Louis Smith of Smith Partners, presented to Mr. Nyquist for consideration and later accepted. Manager Finney introduced Mr. Nyquist and congratulated him on his new position. **Motion** by Manager Deal to formally execute the contract with Jeff Nyquist, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**. Following discussion, the board agreed that the Public Information Committee should meet on a quarterly basis to provide guidance for the position.

### **Project Coordinator Report**

In the absence of R. Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. The special session concluded with a \$50 million bonding bill for flood damage reduction (FDR) projects. Although most of these funds will go towards community flood control projects, the following projects currently under construction will receive funding in order to complete construction: Hay Creek/Norland, Brandt/Angus, Springbrook, and North Ottawa.

N. Erickson referred to the farmstead ring dike program included in the report. She reminded the individual watershed districts to submit their billings for any remaining costs incurred as these funds must be expended by year-end.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) Becker County Commission**

N. Erickson stated that she attended the regular meeting of the Becker County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, August 23, 2011 at the Becker County Courthouse, Detroit Lakes, MN. J. Deal was on the agenda to discuss the RRRRA. A handout of a local news article regarding the presentation was distributed.

**B) U.S. Representative Collin Peterson**

N. Erickson reported that Rep. Collin Peterson invited leaders from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota to attend a breakfast meeting on August 31, 2011 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead, MN. Also attending the meeting was Dave White, Chief of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Rep. Peterson has been trying to secure \$500 million for flood control projects in the 2013 federal farm bill. The current bill expires in 2012. He explained that the harsh reality of federal spending constraints, may require him to scale back his plans. He now hopes to secure ~ \$300 million for flood mitigation efforts to provide permanent flood protection in the basin. Following the breakfast meeting, a bus tour was conducted that included visiting the North Ottawa Impoundment Project of the BdSWD.

**C) Upper Red Lower Otter Tail Watershed District**

A public hearing was conducted on September 7, 2011 in Rothsay, MN regarding the petition for the establishment of the proposed Upper Red Lower Otter Tail Watershed District.

The proposed area affects Wilkin and Otter Tail counties, bordered on the south by the Bois de Sioux WD and on the north by the Buffalo-Red River WD. The proposed watershed district would encompass ~ 430 square miles and would include the towns of Breckenridge, Kent, Rothsay and Foxhome.

N. Erickson stated that written comments were accepted by BWSR until Wednesday, September 14, 2011 and following discussions between Managers Deal and Finney and herself, a letter of support from the board was forwarded to BWSR for consideration. A handout was distributed.

**D) Northern Plains Railroad**

N. Erickson reported that she was contacted by Northern Plains Railroad regarding obtaining a letter of support from the board for a grant application to implement modifications to a railroad bridge located in Oslo, MN.

Manager Kleinwachter stated that the MSTRWD authorized a letter of support to Northern Plains Railroad for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Tiger Grant application at their board meeting yesterday. He stated that the existing bridge is an obstruction and the District supports an improvement project to increase the hydraulic capacity of the Red River of the North near Oslo, MN.

N. Dalager stated that although a bridge improvement project could provide relief for recurring spring ice jams, the board should encourage a project design to reduce flood damages upstream without increasing flooding downstream.

**Motion** by Manager Knott to forward a letter of support to the Northern Plains Railroad for the MnDOT Tiger Grant application, **Seconded** by Manager Sando, **Carried**.

**E) Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Agreement**

N. Erickson stated that the grant agreement with the MDNR in the amount of \$264,000.00 was received regarding funding for fiscal year 2012 for the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize John Finney to sign the grant agreement, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

**F) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. **Red River Basin Commission Board Meeting**, September 22, 2011, 9:00 a.m., Fargo, ND.
2. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**, October meeting cancelled.
3. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, October 19, 2011, Thief River Falls, MN.
4. **Red River Basin Commission's 29th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference**, *Water, Water! Finding Solutions to Our Challenges*, January 24-26, 2012, Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, MB.

**Water Quality Project Monitoring Report**

C. Fritz reported that the first edition of the River Rendezvous, a new e-newsletter to promote watershed education and awareness in the Red River basin was issued in August. In the inaugural edition, the Wheaton River Watch team is featured, snow study contributions are noted, data connections are explained, and sturgeon stocking in the Red River basin are among the news items included.

C. Fritz discussed the Red River Basin Integrated Water Quality Decision Support Tool (WQDST). The WQDST will integrate state-of-the-art geospatial analysis, Light Detecting and Ranging (LiDAR) data, and watershed modeling in a web-based decision support system that will empower local land and water managers to plan and implement effective actions to achieve water quality goals. The WQDST will develop and refine LiDAR-derived geospatial data products based on hydrologic and water quality model output and integrate results into a web-based project planning tool that will prioritize and target implementation activities for water quality restoration and protection. The resulting water quality planning tool will be aligned with a flood damage reduction planning tool already in development for the Red River Basin.

The WQDST will be included in the Red River Basin Decision Information Network being developed as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Watershed Feasibility Study sponsored by the RRWMB.

C. Fritz requested the board to consider sponsoring a grant application from the International Water Institute (IWI) to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for an FY 2012 Clean Water Fund grant in the amount of \$194,490 to develop the web-based project planning tool. He added that the board could sponsor the grant application while the IWI would be responsible for administration. He noted that the 25% match requirement for funding will be provided by NRCS. **Motion** by Manager Money to sponsor the grant application submitted by IWI to BWSR for \$194,490, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

J. Ziegler discussed incorporating monitoring into flood damage reduction project design in conjunction with the objectives outlined in the Mediation Agreement. He explained that TSAC has developed protocols to be used for both pre and post project monitoring. A meeting has been scheduled with Watershed District Administrators following the conclusion of today's board meeting to discuss the protocols.

### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

D. Thul reported that the TAC met prior to the board meeting and discussed TSAC Paper No. 14 (TP14). He stated that one of the benefits of TP14 recognized by the TAC was that it requires agencies to define natural resource enhancement (NRE) goals for a particular area. In addition to defining goals, it also involves developing options to achieve the goals identified. The documentation of NRE goals, along with various options to implement the goals, provides for specific information that could be utilized when trying to secure other funding sources to incorporate NRE's into FDR projects. Based on these benefits, the TAC developed the following recommendations to the board:

1. Endorse TP14 as an *optional* tool for project teams to utilize in project development.
  - a. Require definitive NRE funding strategies for the NRE components identified.
2. Not fully endorse TP14 until the 50-75% criteria for the FDR spreadsheet has been finalized by the Work Group.
  - a. Recommend that the Work Group direct the TSAC to finalize the 50-75% spreadsheet which would include a definition of *incidental* NRE benefits with a set of guidelines for the project teams.
3. Revise Section II a. of the Prioritization Worksheet when the 50-75% criteria for the FDR spreadsheet has been finalized.

J. Bents added that the TAC is recommending that when a project team develops goals for a project site, funding and evaluation strategies should be included. He concurred with D. Thul that the board should not endorse TP14 until the criteria for determining the FDR funding percentage has been developed.

D. Thul reported on the Project Prioritization Committee of the RRRRA. The committee met following the RRRRA meeting last week. The board members represented on this committee are D. Wilkens and R. Osowski, with G. Holmvik substituting for R. Osowski in the interim. Items discussed at the meeting included developing procedures for utilizing federal funds received through programs such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) of NRCS. Questions regarding acquiring 30-year or perpetual easements and establishing a specific federal funding percentage (e.g. 65%) were discussed.

### **District Reports**

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the status of the community ring dikes in Hendrum and Perley. Construction is nearing completion for the City of Perley dike, with only minor details and seeding remaining for the City of Hendrum dike.

The Norman County Commissioners were notified by Manager Diane Ista that effective November 10, 2011 she will be resigning from the Wild Rice WD Board of Managers. The county has begun the process of selecting her replacement.

### **Other Issues**

Manager Knott inquired about whether an individual county could withdraw its membership from a watershed district. Manager Deal responded that an individual county could not withdraw from a watershed district, however, a petition could be submitted to BWSR for consideration to dissolve the entire watershed district.

Manager Wilkens added that the development of a uniform tiling permit was discussed with Polk County. He requested that a meeting of the District Administrator's be scheduled in the near future to further review current rules and regulations.

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

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on October 18, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, MN.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerome Deal  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator