



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 18, 2012

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, December 18, 2012, 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
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
- Charlie Anderson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute
- Mark Meister, CR*CS
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, USDA-NRCS
- Pat Downs, Executive Director, RRRRA
- Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, RRBC
- Henry VanOffelen, MDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Wayne Goeken, Special Projects Coordinator
- Blake Carlson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
- Rob Sip, MDA - Environmental Policy Specialist
- Rep. Deb Kiel, (R) Minnesota House of Representatives, District 1B

Motion by Manager Deal to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve 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 Osowski, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Public Information Committee

M. Meister reviewed the public information monthly report. Activities for the month included writing a feature article for the upcoming newsletter and coordinating the printing and distribution of the 2013 board calendar.

N. Erickson stated that a contract was developed by Louis Smith of Smith Partners and forwarded to M. Meister for consideration. **Motion** by Manager Deal to execute the contract with M. Meister, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

Water Quality Project Monitoring

C. Fritz distributed a handout regarding flood damage reduction, condition, watershed, Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) projects and the River Watch program. Staff finished installing frost tubes and reviewing procedures with River Watch Snow Study participants. Eighteen schools will be participating in 2013 collecting frost depths, snow water equivalency, and infiltration rates.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

P. Downs distributed a handout of the Red River Joint Water Resource District's (RRJWRD) response to the RRWMB's subsurface drainage management recommendations. Following review of the RRWMB's recommendations, the RRJWRD supports and encourages the following:

- installation of control structures on gravity systems and implementation of reasonable pump operating plans as potential flood mitigation measures;
- installation of control structures on gravity systems as a method of conserving water for landowners and ag producers for future use under dry conditions;
- continued education efforts for landowners, ag producers, and tile contractors regarding the benefits of control structures on gravity systems and implementation of reasonable pump operating plans as potential flood mitigation measures;
- general basin-wide education efforts regarding the potential flood mitigation benefits of including control structures on gravity systems and implementation of reasonable operating plans on pump systems; and
- general basin-wide education efforts regarding the benefits of tile drainage in the Red River Valley.

P. Downs added that the modeling that is currently being conducted in the Red River basin is very important for developing retention projects. Manager Finney referred to the local cost-share for retention projects and inquired about how the costs would be allocated. P. Downs responded that the RRRRA continues to await plans for drafting a new farm bill.

P. Downs stated that discussion occurred at the last RRRRA meeting regarding the need to reconvene the original Drainage Committee that met prior to the establishment of the RRRRA. Manager Finney stated that the board selected D. Wilkens and R. Osowski as board representatives on the committee, with G. Holmvik substituting for R. Osowski in the interim. D. Thul noted that the aforementioned individuals are members of the Project Prioritization Committee of the RRRRA which is a separate committee from the original Drainage Committee. Following discussion, Manager Finney appointed D. Wilkens, G. Holmvik, and D. Thul to represent the board on the Drainage Committee facilitated by the RRRRA.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. He reported that the Drainage Work Group (DWG) endorsed the final amendments to the drainage law. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Minnesota Legislature with authors to be secured for the proposed legislation. As no funding requests are associated with the amendments, only the policy committees should be involved.

R. Harnack discussed FY14-15 bonding needs for current projects endorsed by the board and the Work Group. One page summaries for projects seeking bonding have been submitted by the respective watershed districts. The following projects will seek bonding in FY14: SHRWD - Climax/Nielsville, \$4.340M; BdSWD - North Ottawa, \$1.625M and Redpath, \$6.500M; and, RRWD - RRWMA, \$1.900M. R. Harnack noted that the TRWD will also be seeking bonding in FY14 for a project to be added to the list.

N. Erickson referred to the consulting agreement between R. Harnack and the RRWMB and reported that the contract expires on December 31, 2012. She reported that the Human Resource Committee met via conference call to discuss the consulting agreement and agreed to recommend the board approve the contract for another two-year term. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to execute the contract with R. Harnack for the position of Project Coordinator for another two-year term, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Proposal for Expanded Distribution Detention Strategy in Member Watershed Districts

J. Bents reported that the TAC met to discuss plans for completing an Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy utilizing the International Water Institute's (IWI) project planning tool (PPT) and additional engineering analysis using the updated Hydrologic Modeling System (HEC-HMS) modeling. A presentation explaining the details of the Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy was conducted. D. Thul added that the goal would be to develop information similar to that created for the 20% mainstem flow reduction strategy relative to the LTFS plan for the Bois de Sioux WD for each member watershed district.

J. Bents explained that the PPT includes a permit complexity feature which would provide preliminary data for consideration when conducting engineering analysis, site identification,

and hydrologic analysis and/or benefits. He noted his concern regarding posting actual locations for potential retention sites on a map and instead suggested identifying general areas where runoff could be controlled.

Previously the board agreed to provide 50% of the cost for the Project Planning Acceleration Effort which involved C. Fritz, R. Harnack, C. Anderson, and H. VanOffelen meeting with each member watershed district to review the 20% flow reduction plan developed by the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) with plans to accelerate efforts in one subwatershed of each member district. C. Fritz added that meetings have been conducted with all member watershed districts, except for the BdSWD which is scheduled for Thursday, December 20th.

The estimated cost to expand the PPT in its current form to the entire Minnesota side of the Red River basin is ~ \$190,000.00. J. Bents noted that in addition to the aforementioned cost to complete the PPT, an estimate to complete the proposed Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy including additional engineering analysis using the updated HEC-HMS modeling in individual watershed districts is \$450,000 allocated approximately as follows: BdSWD, \$20,000; BRRWD, \$40,000; WRWD, \$70,000; SHRWD, \$30,000; RLWD, \$80,000; MSTRWD, \$70,000; TRWD, \$50,000; RRWD, \$70,000; and, JRWD, \$20,000.

R. Harnack noted that by completing the proposed Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy, it would provide for accelerating the development and deployment of the data and tools needed to accelerate FDR projects in each Minnesota watershed district. The data would also provide documentation for securing legislative support for bonding requests as well as identifying the need for federal funding for retention projects.

Manager Holmvik inquired whether the recommendation from the TAC to expand the retention strategy included the board funding the expansion in the Buffalo-Red River WD (BRRWD). R. Harnack responded that since the RRWMB is a member of the RRRRA, an obligation exists to the entire Red River basin. J. Bents added that by developing data to store water in the BRRWD, other watershed districts in the basin benefit.

Manager Knott inquired whether the data developed through the retention effort would persuade the MDNR to allow for temporary storage on public land. H. VanOffelen responded that the PPT can be utilized on state and federally owned lands to review potential opportunities for storage. R. Harnack added that following the tour on September 17-18, 2012 to promote efficiency and responsiveness for flood damage reduction (FDR) projects in the Red River basin the commissioners indicated a renewed interest in retention projects.

Manager Finney inquired whether the PPT was adequate to provide for accelerating the development and deployment of the data and tools needed to propose projects in each individual watershed district. C. Fritz responded that the PPT effort and the Hydrologic Modeling System (HEC-HMS) modeling which would be completed as a result of Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy could work cooperatively to identify locations for potential retention sites as well as areas to control runoff.

C. Fritz noted the importance of local watershed districts conducting public engagement in order to obtain support from their constituents. Manager Money concurred.

Manager Deal stated that following the development of the 20% mainstem flow reduction strategy in the BdSWD, the citizens in their watershed district had concerns but eventually recognized the benefits of implementing the strategy. C. Anderson noted that by developing the strategy for each individual watershed district, the potential storage capacity for the entire watershed can be identified.

C. Fritz added that as part of the RRBC's LTFS plan, each watershed district has been charged with developing a 20% flow reduction strategy. To do so effectively, all the available tools must be utilized. He noted that the Expanded Distributed Detention Strategy in the Red River basin will also assist with developing the data and tools needed to get projects in the queue.

B. Carlson stated that an updated HEC-HMS model would provide data that would be easier to present to the public. D. Money inquired whether the data developed would assist individual watershed districts with meeting the requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Points of Concurrence (POC) process. H. VanOffelen responded that he and B. Dwight had discussed this issue with the USACE and positive comments were received regarding the data generated by the PPT to address the POC.

H. VanOffelen added that T. Cameron and K. Urbanek from the USACE will be in attendance at the Work Group meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 19, 2012 in Detroit Lakes, MN to further discuss this issue. Manager Finney noted his disappointment with a comment from a USACE representative in Omaha, NE participating via conference call at the previous RRRRA meeting during which he suggested the need for another Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be conducted in the Red River basin.

J. Bents referred to the BdSWD and stated that in order for their watershed district to be eligible to receive funding for retention projects from either the RRRRA or the Diversion Authority, additional modeling will need to be conducted. Consistent models on both the Minnesota and North Dakota sides of the Red River basin are needed in order to determine the hydrologic analysis and/or benefits of a proposed project.

N. Dalager added that sufficient technical information as well as public engagement is necessary for successful project implementation. R. Harnack agreed with N. Dalager and further noted that utilizing the PPT and also the data resulting from the Expanded Distribution Detention Strategy will be required in order to get projects in the queue.

Motion by Manager Deal to approve the proposal for the Expanded Distribution Detention Strategy for member watershed districts only for an estimated \$450,000 plus the cost to expand the PPT, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**.

C. Fritz noted that the original estimate of \$190,000.00 to expand the PPT included costs to conduct the effort in the BRRWD. He stated that the total cost for the remaining watershed districts (excluding the BRRWD) would be \$180,000.00.

Manager Finney inquired about which engineering firms would conduct the modeling effort. J. Bents responded that this effort would be similar to a previous proposal received from the USACE to form a third party quality assurance (QA) team which consisted of representatives from engineering firms designated by each individual watershed district with an amount appropriated to each watershed

district for expenses incurred. N. Erickson requested that these costs be billed directly to the RRWMB for reimbursement.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator – RRBC, distributed an itinerary for the 30th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference, *Uniting the Red River Basin for 30 Years*, January 22-24, 2013, Alerus Center & Canad Inns, Grand Forks, ND.

Administrator Report

A) MDNR Roundtable

N. Erickson reported that an invitation was received to participate in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Roundtable scheduled for January 4-5, 2013, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Saint Paul Riverfront. The DNR Roundtable brings together stakeholders who are concerned about Minnesota's fisheries, wildlife, and ecological and water resources. It allows stakeholders to learn from one another, voice their perspectives, and build important relationships. To accommodate the size of the facility, each organization is requested to limit their attendance to three (3) attendees. Following discussion, the Board of Managers requested D. Wilkens and J. Deal to attend the meeting.

B) 15th Joint Annual Conference

N. Erickson stated that plans to schedule the 15th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference) have begun. The meeting is co-sponsored by the RRWMB and the Work Group. Last year the two-day conference began the afternoon following the regular monthly meeting of the RRRRA which for 2013 is March 12th. She stated that if it's decided to conduct another two-day meeting, the proposed dates would be as follows: March 12, 2013 (2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and March 13, 2013 (all day). Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed to forward a recommendation to the Work Group at the December 19, 2012 meeting to conduct the 15th Joint Annual Conference on March 12-13, 2013 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN.

C) River Watch Forum

N. Erickson noted that the 2013 River Watch Forum has been scheduled for March 20, 2013 at the University of Minnesota - Crookston Campus which is the day following the regular monthly March board meeting. Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed to reschedule the March 19, 2013 board meeting to Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at UMC to coincide with the River Watch Forum.

D) Vacation Accrual

N. Erickson reported that her unused vacation days for calendar year 2012 were calculated. She elected to be paid for unused vacation days rather than carry them over to 2013.

E) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Work-in-Kind (WIK)

N. Erickson stated that a meeting has been scheduled on January 9, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. at Houston Engineering, Inc., Fargo, ND with Nan Bischoff, P.E., St. Paul District USACE / Project

Manager for the Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS). Invitees include N. Erickson, D. Thul, C. Fritz, and R. Gjestvang-NDSWC.

F) Amended Joint Powers Agreement

N. Erickson distributed the Amended Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) of the RRRRA that was approved at the previous monthly meeting. She stated that she would email copies of the document to board members.

G) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Commission's 30th Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference**, *Uniting the Red River Basin for 30 Years*, January 22-24, 2013, Alerus Center & Canad Inns, Grand Forks, ND.
2. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**. The January and February meetings will be combined to one meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 2:30 p.m. at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, ND (during the RRBC annual conference).

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul reported that the TAC met and discussed the subsurface drainage management recommendations developed for the board. The TAC has not been able to reach consensus on the recommendations for uncontrolled tile systems. The unresolved issue relates to whether to use the basin timing map (Early, Middle, or Late) or the timing maps of the Red River mainstem locations. The TAC has determined that this issue is policy-related, rather than technical in nature.

C. Anderson stated that he supports the position that the RRWMB should focus on basin-wide impacts while the individual watershed districts should consider maps pertaining to the local level. He noted that when referring to subsurface drainage, the concept of Early, Middle, or Late is irrelevant. D. Thul supported C. Anderson's recommendation.

Manager Money noted that the subsurface drainage management recommendations are only guidelines and that decision-making occurs at the local watershed level. J. Bents suggested that the TAC reconsider the proposed recommendations following further discussion by the individual watershed district administrators. Manager Wilkens stated that he will schedule a meeting of the District Administrators to discuss this issue.

K. Weston distributed a Drainage Water Management (DWM) fact sheet. DWM is an NRCS conservation engineering practice. It's a combination of structures and managements designed to hold water in the root zone when crops need it and release it when there is excess. DWM manages the timing and amount of water discharge from agricultural drainage systems.

R. Sip stated that in addition to incentives available from NRCS, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has cost-share programs available for tile installation.

District Reports

- The Red Lake WD reported on the Grand Marais Creek Cut Channel Stabilization Project. The contractor has completed the original phase of the project in accordance with the plan. Due to the fact that construction and engineering costs are considerably lower than anticipated, the District decided to expand the project to better address erosion areas that were omitted from the original design. A new USACE permit was submitted for approval on November 1, 2012 and has been received. Construction on this project was substantially completed on December 14, 2012. Final payment for the project is expected to be approved at the January 24, 2013 board meeting.
- The Wild Rice WD reported on the Olson-Agassiz Project. A meeting was conducted with landowners, MDNR, and the District regarding the operating plan for the project.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

Rep. Deb Kiel, (R) Minnesota House of Representatives, District 1B

Rep. Kiel addressed the Board of Managers and stated that she's a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives who represents District 1B, which includes portions of Marshall, Pennington, Polk and Red Lake counties in the northwestern part of the state. She encouraged individuals to attend legislative hearings regarding issues relating to their respective watershed districts.

The next meeting will be on January 15, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator