



## 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 21, 2012 Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, 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
- Nick Drees, Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Glen Kajewski, USDA- NRCS
- Paul Wannarka, MNDNR Red River Basin Coordinator
- Danni Halvorson, Monitoring Coordinator
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute

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

### **Public Information Initiative**

In the absence of J. Nyquist, the public information monthly report was distributed. Activities for the month of January related to the Joint Annual conference and included working on the display board for the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) with Keith Weston, preparing copy for the postcard invitation, and writing a press release to be forwarded to media outlets.

### **Project Coordinator Report**

In the absence of Ron Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. Several flood damage reduction bills have been introduced from Red River basin legislators including:

1. HF2196 Fabian; Kiel (SF1938 Stumpf; Skoe): Appropriates \$17,000,000 for the following flood hazard mitigation projects - Brandt/Angus, Climax, Felton, Nielsville, Oslo, Roseau, Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA), Springbrook, and St. Vincent.
2. HF2215 Eken; Kiel; Lanning; Howes / SF Skoe: Appropriates \$13,000,000 for flood hazard mitigation for the following projects - Bear Park Retention, Climax, Felton, Nielsville, Shelly, and Upper Becker Retention.

The Governor's bonding proposal is estimated in excess of \$700 million. An estimate of RRWMB and member district bonding needs for FY13 - FY14 was distributed totaling \$12,356,000 and \$16,132,000 respectively. The MDNR developed a list of statewide projects with their recommendations for priority funding. Communities and cities that are construction-ready will receive first priority. Projects nearing completion such as Springbrook, Brandt/Angus, and Hay Creek/Norland will also receive priority consideration.

Consolidated local water planning bills that promote the integration of water plans among watershed districts (WDs), soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), and cities will be heard this week. The objective is to develop one plan with defined roles and responsibilities for each respective unit of government.

The public hearing regarding the petition to enlarge the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) and increase the number of managers is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2012, in Barnesville, MN. The petition was filed by Wilkin County, Otter Tail County and the BRRWD. Correspondence regarding discussion of the BRRWD rejoining the RRWMB was distributed. The BRRWD voted **not** to rejoin the RRWMB. The board directed N. Erickson to develop a letter to BWSR for the public record reaffirming support for the establishment of the originally proposed Upper Red Lower Otter Tail Watershed District. Following discussion, the board agreed to request R. Harnack to attend the hearing.

### **Water Quality Project Monitoring Report**

C. Fritz reported that a Monitoring Advisory Committee was conducted on January 27, 2012 in Fertile, MN. Final planning for the spring training session was done, changes and updates to the Basin Standard Operating Procedures were noted and upgrades planned for the River Watch data site and the new template for the IWI website were reviewed.

C. Fritz discussed the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) FY12 Clean Water Fund grant that was approved for \$194,000. He added that since the RRWMB agreed to sponsor the grant submitted by IWI, BWSR would prefer to disburse the funds directly to the board. He requested that

the board authorize N. Erickson as the agent to sign the grant agreement. Following the execution of the agreement between BWSR and the RRWMB, a contract between IWI and the RRWMB would be developed. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize N. Erickson as the agent to sign the grant, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

### **Red River Basin Commission**

Manager Wilkens referred to the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) plan and suggested that the board consider officially endorsing the document. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to adopt the LTFS plan developed by the RRBC, **Seconded** by Manager Miller, **Carried**.

D. Thul stated that the LTFS Project Advisory Committee continues to meet and requested that the board consider authorizing continued participation by himself and C. Anderson. Following discussion, the board agreed that D. Thul and C. Anderson should continue their participation on the committee.

### **Administrator Report**

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

N. Erickson reported that she attended the RRRA meeting conducted on Tuesday, February 14, 2012. Aaron Snyder, USACE discussed a proposed Red River Basin Non-structural Assessment. As part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Feasibility Study, a non-structural analysis was completed to determine if and where non-structural measures would be feasible for counties downstream of Fargo-Moorhead. In order to initiate the study, a non-Federal sponsor needs to be identified. The feasibility costs would be shared 50/50 between the Federal Government and non-Federal sponsor. The cost of the anticipated study is \$800,000.00 A handout was distributed.

D. Thul explained that the USACE is proposing to provide \$400,000 for the study with the 50% remaining cost-share divided equally between Minnesota (RRWMB) and North Dakota (Red River Joint Water Resource District). Following discussion, the board agreed not to cost-share in the study since as a result of the farmstead ring dike program the majority of structures have been protected on the Minnesota side of the Red River basin.

N. Erickson further stated that following the RRRA meeting on 02/14/12, she met with Nan Bischoff, St. Paul District USACE / Project Manager for the Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) at Houston Engineering, Inc., Fargo, ND. Others in attendance were Dan Thul and Randy Gjestvang. Budgeted amounts included in the Project Management Plan (PMP) for the WFS were reviewed. Expenses incurred for work for approved expenditures in the PMP performed after June 04, 2008 can be contributed as WIK. Of the \$8,756,254 approved budget, expenses of \$3,821,573 have been documented to date.

#### **B) Farmstead Ring Dikes**

N. Erickson stated that following the January 17, 2012 board meeting, a reimbursement request of \$30,431.13 was received from the Buffalo-Red River WD for the construction of two ring dikes. Following approval of the request at today's meeting, the remaining balance of the \$250,000 grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) is \$39,729.62. A handout was distributed.

The board discussed various alternatives for the reallocation of the surplus. Several watershed districts stated that landowner shortfalls occurred for NRCS/EQIP funded ring dikes due the difference between the original NRCS landowner estimate and the final project costs. Discussion occurred regarding reallocating the surplus to reimburse landowners for the deficiency between the original landowner estimate and the final landowner cost-share; and/or reimburse the RRWMB for the cost-share amount allocated for a combined EQIP/RRWMB cost-share of 75% of the final project cost.

Following discussion, the board requested N. Erickson to compile a spreadsheet of NRCS/EQIP funded ring dikes comparing the original NRCS contract amounts, the original landowner estimates, and the final project costs to determine whether a landowner shortfall exists. Also, the board requested that the RRWMB / NRCS combined cost-share of 75% be included with the documentation. The board agreed to determine the surplus reallocation once the above-referenced information has been compiled.

**C) 14<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Conference**

The Joint Annual Conference is scheduled for March 13-14, 2012 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN. The RRA regular monthly meeting is scheduled from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2012, with the conference beginning that afternoon at 2:00 p.m. A draft agenda was distributed.

**D) Red River Watershed Coordinator Contract**

The State of Minnesota Income Contract between the MDNR and the RRWMB to jointly fund the Red River Watershed Coordinator position (Dan Thul) for the State to provide ~ 25% of the full time equivalent to assist the RRWMB to coordinate activities between the MDNR and the RRWMB was distributed. The total obligation for all compensation and reimbursements to the State under this contract is \$32,000 as follows: \$8,000 (03/01/12 - 06/30/12); \$12,000 (06/30/12 - 12/30/12); and, \$12,000 01/01/13 - 06/30/13). **Motion** by Manager Miller to renew the contract between the State of Minnesota and the RRWMB for the Red River Watershed Coordinator position for FY12-13 in the amount of \$32,000, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

**E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, February 22, 2012, Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, MN.
2. **MAWD Legislative Reception Breakfast & Briefing**, March 7-8, 2012.
3. **14th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference)**, March 13-14, 2012, Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN.

**Red River Coordinator/TAC Report**

D. Thul reported that he attended a WRP meeting along with watershed district administrators on February 13, 2012. He stated that although the program may provide for land acquisition within a WD project, revising the current criteria may be necessary in order to fully expend the anticipated \$10 to \$12 million available this year through the program for flood damage reduction projects.

Glen Kajewski, Assistant State Conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), referred to the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) which is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The

program provides technical and financial support to help landowners and although not perfect, the program is currently the only available federal program with significant funding available.

Following discussion, the board requested the district administrators to develop recommendations for NRCS regarding how the WRP program could be modified to best implement flood damage reduction projects. Manager Wilkens suggested meeting on Friday, March 2, 2012 at the Sand Hill River WD. G. Kajewski stated that he would request K. Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator - NRCS to attend the meeting.

D. Thul stated that he co-chairs the Prioritization Committee of the RRRRA with Randy Gjestvang of the NDSWC. The committee has developed a conceptual agreement for a process to be used by the RRRRA to prioritize federal funds for floodwater detention projects. The agreement includes the following two categories: 1. PL566-type projects, and 2. WRP program projects. A draft project ranking sheet used by the NRCS for program applicants was distributed.

D. Thul discussed the Upper Red River Watershed Retention Plan proposed to the RRRRA by Moore Engineering, Inc. The estimated cost of the proposal is \$1 million dollars to update the 1997 modeling completed by the RRBC for the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) plan. This modeling was completed by Charlie Anderson to evaluate the potential to reach a 20% flow reduction goal on the main stem by implementing upstream retention.

Manager Finney suggested that the board wait to consider funding the proposal until Phase 6 (Project Planning Tool) of the USACE Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) is completed. C. Fritz explained that the Project Planning Tool will enable users in two pilot areas (Moccasin Creek and North Branch Park River) to identify areas on the landscape (most appropriate places and places to avoid) to apply established flood damage reduction strategies and to assess the likelihood that a project proposed for an area will meet permit requirements. The identification and assessment process created within this application will be consistent with the USACE's 404 permitting and Points of Concurrence process, the Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Mediation Agreement, and other local government and state and federal agency permitting and decision making processes in Minnesota and North Dakota. Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed not to cost-share the proposal at this time.

D. Thul added that in addition to attending the meeting discussed previously by N. Erickson with Nan Bischoff, St. Paul District USACE / Project Manager for the Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) at Houston Engineering, Inc., Fargo, ND, he attended a meeting the following day of the entire WFS technical committee. The agenda included an update on the Drainmod model, a presentation on the LTFS plan, an update on the Fargo/Moorhead Diversion project, the USACE "Non-structural Assessment" proposal discussed previously, the Upper Red River Watershed Retention Plan, and additional work-in-kind projects that could be added to the WFS Project Management Plan (PMP).

### **District Reports**

- The Roseau River WD reported that the Board of Managers sent a request to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for consideration of a proposed adaptive management plan for wetland mitigation requirements on the Hay Creek/Norland project. The three main areas of

concern include overall mitigation feasibility, short and long-term maintenance costs and objectives of the District. The District is awaiting a reply.

- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Board of Managers awarded contracts to R.J. Zavoral Construction (East Grand Forks) on Project 30 and to All Seasons Construction for bridge removal and replacement (JD Lateral 1).

The District continues to have ongoing dialogue with NRCS staff on both WRP applications and potential use of that program in retention projects.

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

#### **1. Roseau River WD / Funding Advance Agreement / Roseau River Wildlife Management Area Project**

N. Erickson stated that at the January 17, 2012 board meeting a resolution to approve a funding advance for the above-referenced project was adopted.

The funding advance agreement between the RRWMB and the Roseau River WD was distributed. The agreement states that the RRWMB commits \$70,000 to the RRWD for the purpose of facilitating the timely completion of project design, permitting and preparation of a Step II submittal. **Motion** by Manager Knott to authorize the funding advance agreement, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

#### **2. Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD / Funding Advance / Brandt-Angus Flood Control Project**

N. Drees explained that due to the uncertainty of receiving state bonding funds of ~ \$1.6 million to complete the above-reference project, consideration of a funding advance between the RRWMB and the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD was requested. Upon receipt of the state bonding funds by the district, the RRWMB would be reimbursed for the funding advance. Following discussion, the Board of Managers reaffirmed the RRWMB commitment to the project.

### **Other Issues**

P. Wannarka reported that he accepted a new position with the MDNR Division of Forestry as a Fixed Wing Coordinator Specialist for the fire protection program. He will work at the Minnesota Fire Center located in Grand Rapids, MN and will be responsible for managing the contracted fixed wing fire suppression aircraft, the tanker bases and the operation staff statewide.

P. Wannarka also referred to the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group's budget requirements and discussed the 50% match required for the state funds disbursed by the Work Group. The board of managers acknowledged the requirement and their continued support to provide documentation to meet the 50% match requirement.

The next meeting will be on March 20, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, MN.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerome Deal  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator