



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

March 20, 2012

Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, 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
- Rob Sando, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, RRBC
- Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Wayne Goeken, Director – Center for Watershed Education, IWI
- Jeff Nyquist, Public Information Officer
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Diane Ista

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

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Miller 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 Money,

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

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study

N. Dalager referred to the USACE Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) and stated that, in the past, the USACE has considered providing matching federal funds in the form of services performed toward local initiatives at the request of the sponsor. The Roseau River WD's Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA) Project which received Step I approval at the December board meeting, requires geotechnical information to complete the engineering feasibility study. N. Dalager noted that the District discussed requesting the USACE to conduct the geotechnical work, including soil borings, in order to reduce local project costs.

N. Dalager explained that a joint Minnesota/North Dakota Advisory Committee was formed relative to the USACE WFS to facilitate better discussions and coordination of work activities between the two boards (RRJWRD and RRWMB) sponsoring the study. The RRWMB committee members include: D. Thul, R. Harnack, C. Anderson, J. Bents and D. Money.

J. Bents stated that previously the joint MN/ND Advisory Committee has been hesitant to endorse watershed district specific projects and have traditionally approved more basin-wide initiatives such as LiDAR collection and HEC/HMS modeling.

D. Thul added that he discussed the proposal for the USACE to conduct the geotechnical work needed for the RRWMA project with Nan Bischoff, WFS Project Manager. Ms. Bischoff responded that USACE staff includes geotechnical engineers that could be assigned this task, however, since staff with this expertise is limited she was unsure of the timeframe for completion. N. Dalager suggested discussing the proposal with the joint MN/ND Advisory Committee and request consideration to conduct the initiative as a pilot project to determine the merits of pursuing watershed district specific projects.

Manager Miller stated his support for requesting the joint MN/ND Advisory Committee to consider the proposal. D. Thul stated that he would further discuss the proposal with N. Bischoff and inquire about scheduling a committee meeting in the near future to determine whether to pursue the request. Manager Money suggested that the Board of Managers direct the committee members to make the final determination on whether to proceed with the District's request. D. Thul added that following the committee meeting, their recommendation will be presented to both the local district and the RRWMB for consideration.

Public Information Initiative

J. Nyquist reviewed the public information monthly report. He met with J. Roeschlein of the BdSWD to discuss a strategy to revise their advisory committee process and suggested that after the strategy has been finalized, the process could be used as a template for other watershed districts considering renewal of their advisory committee process.

J. Nyquist reported that he continues conducting the communications audit with watershed districts and recently interviewed K. Ruud and J. Roeschlein. The purpose of the initiative is to develop an effective communication plan for the RRWMB.

J. Nyquist added that he assisted Keith Weston with completing the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) exhibit for the Joint Annual conference. In addition, he assisted with the live KFGO broadcast during the conference. The individuals invited to speak on the radio included J. Finney, J. Deal, D. Wilkens, M. Carroll, K. Weston, J. Ziegler, M. Jesme and C. Fritz.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. He reported that the House and Senate bonding bills will be introduced this week, however, there has been no indication regarding what will be included for flood hazard mitigation. He added that he and J. Finney met with legislators last week who expressed their support of a modest bonding bill.

The consolidated local water planning bill provides for voluntary integration of water plans among counties, watershed districts (WDs), soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), and cities. The bill has strong support in both the House and Senate as well as with the Governor.

The Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) has scheduled the public hearing regarding the petitions to adjoin the Lower Otter Tail Watershed within the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) and to establish the Upper Red Lower Otter Tail Watershed District for Wednesday, April 11, 2012. A meeting location has yet to be determined. N. Erickson distributed a letter to BWSR she prepared in cooperation with R. Harnack for the public record reaffirming support for the establishment of the originally proposed Upper Red Lower Otter Tail Watershed District.

R. Harnack referred to P. Wannarka's transfer within the MDNR from the Division of Ecological and Water Resources to the Division of Forestry and suggested the board consider providing cost-share funding for the position of Red River Basin Coordinator with the MDNR, MPCA and BWSR. He stated that he would request a position description from M. Carroll.

Water Quality Project Monitoring Report

W. Goeken discussed the Minnesota Legislative Clean Water Fund grant of \$200,000 that the RRWMB agreed to sponsor with lead coordination and project management provided by the International Water Institute (IWI). The proposed project will engage citizens in local watershed monitoring, work with regional partners to promote understanding and protection of watersheds, and organize and facilitate gathering of scientific data for the benefit of water quality in the Red River basin. W. Goeken requested that the board authorize N. Erickson as the agent to sign the grant agreement. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize N. Erickson as the agent to sign the grant, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

Manager Finney thanked W. Goeken for the recognition the RRWMB received at the Joint Annual Conference for their support of the River Watch program. W. Goeken stated that the RRWMB was presented with the *River Watch Partnership Award* which goes to individuals or organizations that support and advance the River Watch program through technical or financial assistance.

Red River Basin Commission

Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator – RRBC, distributed information on the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) plan and a handout titled *Celebrating Successes in the Red River Basin: Contributions to the Red River Basin Natural Resources Framework Plan*.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul reported that interviews were conducted for the Area Hydrologist position in Thief River Falls, MN and the MDNR plans to extend an offer. He further noted that as part of the integration of the former Divisions of Waters and Ecological Resources, other new positions within the new Division of Ecological and Water Resources are in the process of being filled.

Administrator Report

A) Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

N. Erickson reported that on March 9, 2012, the Personnel Committee (G. Thompson, R. Olson, W. Hejl, J. Deal, C. Lewis, S. Fredricks, K. Weston, and N. Erickson) interviewed 10 applicants for the position of Executive Director. A recommendation was submitted to the RRRA at their March board meeting. The board members agreed that further discussion was needed prior to extending an offer to the selected candidate.

A conference call was conducted by the Executive and Personnel committees on Friday, March 16, 2012 to discuss the position. On Saturday, March 17, 2012, members of the Executive Committee, including Managers Finney and Osowski, met with the selected candidate to discuss the position. Manager Osowski stated that the candidate has an extensive background in economic and business development as well as strong communication skills.

Manager Finney added that in addition to receiving applications from individuals for the position of Executive Director, the RRRA also received a proposal from IWI to contract with the organization to provide Executive Director and other administrative services necessary to plan and implement floodwater retention strategies for the RRRA. N. Erickson explained that in addition to selecting the preferred candidate for the position of Executive Director to the RRRA, the Personnel Committee also suggested contracting with IWI to continue providing leadership for the organization's Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC).

N. Erickson stated that at the September 2011 RRWMB meeting, the board authorized \$80K on an annual basis as matching funds to retain an Executive Director and secure office space for the RRRA. Manager Finney requested N. Erickson to distribute a copy of the RRWMB's year-end financial statements that indicated the current administrative costs for the board are ~ 11% which Manager Finney noted seem realistic for a public entity. Manager Osowski noted that although providing funding for the operation of the RRRA has increased the RRWMB's administrative costs, hopefully the situation will be temporary as Congressman Peterson is leading the effort to secure federal farm bill resources for the RRRA. Manager Deal added that Congressman Peterson has stated the funds will likely be available by October 1st.

Manager Money referred to the motion made at the September board meeting and inquired whether the board could revise the motion to include a cap of \$80,000 for all administrative expenses of the RRRRA. Manager Wilkens inquired whether there is dissent on the RRRRA about retaining the services of an Executive Director and noted that if the two joint boards had reservations these issues should have been addressed prior to proceeding with advertising for the position and conducting interviews. Manager Finney responded that the RRRRA agreed to hire an Executive Director and although he personally has no concerns about the selected candidate, he wanted the Board of Managers to be fully aware of the financial implications of doing so.

Manager Miller inquired whether the RRRRA should consider waiting to retain an Executive Director until the federal resources has been secured. Manager Deal urged the board to proceed with hiring the individual as both the Minnesota and North Dakota delegations have encouraged the RRRRA to progress in this direction. Manager Osowski concurred.

Motion by Manager Miller to amend the motion previously adopted at the September 20, 2011 board meeting to reauthorize a maximum of \$80,000 annually for administrative expenses of the RRRRA, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

B) Farmstead Ring Dikes

N. Erickson stated that at the previous monthly board meeting, the remaining balance of the \$250,000 grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) of \$39,729.62 was discussed. She was requested 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 existed. Also, the board requested that the RRWMB/NRCS combined cost-share of 75% be included with the documentation.

A handout was distributed. Following discussion, the board agreed to reallocate the remaining balance of \$39,729.62 as follows: Joe River WD, D. Finney \$3,258.83; Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD, L. Pikop \$1,702.02; Buffalo-Red River WD, Wang \$3,759.25; and Bois de Sioux WD, Deal \$6,445.79, Korinek \$3,377.41, and Schander \$1,598.23. The Board of Managers agreed that the remaining balance of \$19,588.09 should be prorated among the RRWMB cost-share provided to thirteen NRCS/EQIP ring dikes. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to approve the aforementioned reallocation, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

C) 14th Joint Annual Conference

N. Erickson reported that the 14th Joint Annual Conference was conducted on March 13-14, 2012 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN. The first day of the conference highlighted the RRRRA. She stated that she was contacted by KFGO who inquired about retaining Joel Heitkamp Live to broadcast from the conference as was done in previous years. Mr. Heitkamp conducted several interviews with RRRRA board members, Work Group members and the Minnesota congressional delegation throughout the afternoon. Topics during the second day included individual project team reports, an update on project team management, project monitoring protocols, and the watershed restoration and protection (WRAP) study. She thanked the conference presenters and attendees for making this year's conference a success.

D) RRB Flood Damage Reduction Work Group / Project Team Support

N. Erickson stated that for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012), the Work Group *originally* allocated each project team \$15,000 for project team expenses with eligible expenses reimbursed at 50%. Subsequently, the Work Group established a new category called *Monitoring*

- *Other* and reallocated \$25,000 of project team funds to the new account which reduced the project team allocation to \$11,875 per project team.

She added that a detailed report is being prepared for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 on the accomplishments that were achieved with the grant funding received from the legislature. For each project team that received funding for that time period, please submit a short narrative for each year explaining the specific activities that utilized these funds.

E) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**, April 10, 2012.
2. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, Wednesday, April 18, 2012, 9:30 a.m., MnDOT, Detroit Lakes, MN.

District Reports

- The Red Lake WD reported that as part of the Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction/Improvement to Pennington County Ditch No. 1, the low bid was awarded to Spruce Valley Corporation for construction of both the RLWD Ditch No. 14 and the Thief River Falls FDR Project.

The Board of Managers approved by unanimous vote to establish the project referred to as Grand Marais Creek Cut Channel, RLWD Project No. 60 FF and directed legal counsel to prepare appropriate Findings of Fact and Order. In addition the board voted to authorize Engineer Jeff Langan of Houston Engineering, Inc. to prepare the plans and specifications for the project. Bids are expected to be open in late April with construction being completed late fall of 2012.

- The Roseau River WD reported that at their March board meeting, the Board of Managers directed Administrator Sando to install stop logs at both control structures of the Palmville Project.

On March 15th officials from the District met with representatives from the City of Roseau, Roseau County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota DNR, Congressman Collin Peterson's office, and Senator Al Franken's office to discuss the management plan for the Land Utilization Program (LUP) lands in Beltrami County as well as to address issues related to water structures in Beltrami Island State Forest.

- The Wild Rice WD reported that the District is awaiting the engineer's report on the petition from the City of Ada for moving a portion of Judicial Ditch 51 (JD 51). It has been determined that JD 51 is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project. Before responding to the City of Ada, an opinion from the Corps will be needed.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

Other Issues

J. Ziegler stated that the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (the "Work Group") discussed Technical Paper No. 14 (TP14) at the February 22, 2012 meeting. He explained that at the January 5, 2012 Work Group meeting, a committee was formed to address the concerns expressed in the resolution adopted by the RRWMB and forwarded to the Work Group regarding TP14. The following individuals were requested to participate on the committee: J. Ziegler (Chair), P. Wannarka, D. Wilkens, H. VanOffelen, B. Dwight, and O. Knott. Following discussion at the February meeting, the Work Group requested that the committee develop a letter to the RRWMB to be reviewed by the Work Group. A draft letter was distributed for review.

The next meeting will be on April 17, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, MN.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator