



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

March 20, 2013

University of Minnesota – Crookston campus, Crookston, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Wednesday, March 20, 2013, at the University of Minnesota - Crookston campus, Crookston, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

LeRoy Carriere	Dan Money
Alvin Nybladh	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
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Mike Carroll, MDNR Asst. Commissioner
- Tracy Halstensgard, Administrator, Roseau River WD
- Torin McCormack, Roseau River WD
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, USDA-NRCS
- Pat Downs, Executive Director, RRRRA
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Danny Omdahl, Asst. Administrator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Tony Nordby, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Jeff Lewis, Assistant Executive Director/Policy, RRBC

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

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

Water Quality Project Monitoring

W. Goeken distributed the IWI Monitoring and Education Activity Report and the 2013 Red River Basin River Watch Forum program. A River Watch proposal is being developed involving schools in North Dakota in the Pembina River area and Larimore. All IWI staff is assisting with the proposal with Kingery being the lead. Plans are to complete the proposal in April.

W. Goeken invited RRWMB board members, staff and attendees to lunch in Brown Dining Hall. Following lunch, an invitation was extended to board managers to view the River Watch poster displays in Bede Ballroom and vote on the *Manager's Choice Award*.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

P. Downs distributed a monthly report of activities. He reported that he met in March with the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD). Discussion occurred regarding a response to correspondence received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Omaha District. No further discussion has occurred regarding conducting a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Red River Basin.

P. Downs stated that the RRJWRD also discussed the proposal previously addressed by the RRWMB regarding requesting the RRRA to direct a study to be conducted by the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) involving surface drainage. The RRJWRD concurred with the RRWMB's recommendation to authorize the RRRA to forward a request to C. Fritz to develop a scope and cost estimate for the study.

Public Information Initiative

In the absence of M. Meister, the public information monthly report was distributed. Activities and services provided for the month included:

- Planning for the 15th Joint Annual Conference including conference call participation and coordination of the KFGO broadcast on March 27, 2013.
- Distributing a press release for River Watch and conducting phone calls to encourage media coverage.
- Developing a press release and media kit for the annual conference and forwarding to Fargo-Moorhead and Grand Forks media outlets.
- Contacting the production company to follow up on Bois de Sioux WD proposal to develop a documentary video.

Manager Deal added that continued discussion is planned regarding the proposal from H2O videos between M. Meister, J. Roeschlein and R. Sip. A response whether the Minnesota Department of Agriculture may provide funding assistance for the initiative is expected shortly.

Project Coordinator Report

In the absence of Ron Harnack, the Project Coordinator Report was distributed. Legislative updates include:

1. Drainage: The legislative drainage recommendations developed by the Drainage Work Group (DWG) have been passed in the legislature and signed by the Governor.

2. Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) Budget: Funding of \$100,000/year for the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) was included in the Governor's base budget.
3. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Budget: Funding of \$256,000/year for the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (Work Group) was included in Governor's base budget.
4. Bonding Bill: The House/Senate/Governor are all supportive of a bonding bill. The statewide bonding bill includes flood damage reduction projects of the RRWMB/WDs in the Red River Basin.

The grant application period for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) was discussed. The LSOHC was established by the legislature with the responsibility of providing annual funding recommendations to the legislature from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The Outdoor Heritage Fund, one of four funds created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, receives one-third of the money raised by the tax increase.

R. Harnack noted in his report that currently a project in the final design stages that would likely be eligible to receive consideration for LSOHC funds is the Mustinka River Restoration portion of the Redpath Project in the Bois de Sioux WD. M. Carroll added that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) supports the project. **Motion** by Manager Deal to support the grant application submitted by the Bois de Sioux WD as project sponsor to the LSOHC for the Mustinka River Restoration of the Redpath Project, **Seconded** by Manager Money, **Carried**.

The Conservation Drainage Grant program available through BWSR was discussed. The current bill requests an appropriation of \$1.7 million to BWSR. R. Harnack stated in his report that funds awarded to grant sponsors could be used to leverage equal amounts from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and used towards initiatives such as installing controls for drain tile in order to enhance water management and water quality.

Manager Money stated that he has discussed the grant program with landowners interested in installing tile. The landowners indicated that the grant program requires conservation plans be developed which have proved to be time-consuming and cumbersome.

D. Thul added that he has assisted in the development of conservations plans which have, in some cases, conflicted with maximizing crop production. K. Weston added that certain components must be included in the conservation plans. Manager Money suggested referring the issue to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to develop a board recommendation regarding how to proceed with the grant program.

Manager Finney inquired whether MPCA should be involved in the discussion. J. Ziegler responded that MPCA would assist with implementation of the conservation plans rather developing the components to be included in the plans. J. Lewis added discussions have occurred between C. Fritz and J. Courneya regarding the development of guidelines for surface drainage. J. Lewis further emphasized the importance of state agencies assisting with implementation of conservation plans instead of only plan development.

Manager Finney concurred with Manager Money's suggestion to refer the discussion to the TAC to develop a board recommendation. Manager Money requested that NRCS be invited to participate in the discussion with the TAC. Manager Deal noted that P. Downs and C. Fritz should also be invited to participate. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize the TAC to develop guidelines for the

conservation plans required by BWSR relative to the Conservation Drainage Grant program, **Seconded** by Manager Holmvik, **Carried**.

Administrator Report

A) 15th Joint Annual Conference

The Joint Annual Conference is scheduled for March 26-27, 2013 at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN. Please refer to the agenda included in the Public Information Initiative Report.

B) Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group / Project Team Support

N. Erickson reported that for fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013), the Work Group has allocated each project team \$11,875 for project team expenses with eligible expenses reimbursed at 50%. The following project team reimbursement requests have been submitted to date:

Project Team	Total Funds Available this Fiscal Year	Expenditures	Balance Remaining
Bois de Sioux WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00
Buffalo-Red River WD	\$11,875.00	\$5,444.56	\$6,430.44
Middle Snake Tamarac WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00
Red Lake WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00
Roseau River WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00
Sand Hill River WD	\$11,875.00	\$4,658.60	\$7,216.40
Two Rivers WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00
Wild Rice WD	\$11,875.00	\$0	\$11,875.00

N. Erickson explained that FY13 funds must be expended prior to **June 30, 2013** or will be considered for reallocation by the Work Group. She encouraged watershed districts to submit their project team expenses as soon as possible to avoid having the funds reallocated to other categories.

C) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **River Watch Forum**, Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at the University of Minnesota - Crookston Campus.
2. **15th Joint Annual Conference (March Conference)**, Tuesday, March 26, 2013 - Wednesday, March 27, 2013, Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead, MN.
3. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**. July 9, 2013, 10:00 a.m., 1405 Prairie Parkway, Suite 311, West Fargo, ND.

Red River Basin Commission

J. Lewis, Assistant Executive Director/Policy - RRBC, discussed the modeling efforts of Phase I of retention site modeling for mainstem and regional impacts and prioritization upstream of Halstad, MN. The Phase I effort will begin with a review of the current models. Phase I modeling will utilize retention sites that have been identified in sub-watersheds by local watersheds in Minnesota and local water resource districts in North Dakota. The retention sites will be modeled to show mainstem and regional benefits upstream of Halstad that can be considered for engineering and construction. Prioritization of the Phase I modeled sites will be achieved by guidance and input from the local watershed districts in Minnesota, the local water resources districts in North Dakota, the MN and ND

Joint Water Boards, the RRRRA, and the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Implementation Committee.

J. Lewis stated that the RRBC is also developing a proposal relative to a water quality jurisdictional project. Modeling conducted will assist in providing target nutrient load reductions by sub-watersheds in the basin. Manager Finney inquired whether MPCA is assisting with the effort. J. Ziegler responded that currently MPCA is awaiting the results of a study conducted by Environment Canada regarding the flow of nutrients to the Red River and determining the level of reduction needed. J. Ziegler further noted that implementing flood damage reduction efforts on the Red River mainstem provides water quality benefits since when peak flows are reduced, nutrient loads are reduced as well.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul distributed a spreadsheet depicting federal and local tasks included in the updated Project Management Plan (PMP) of the USACE Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS). Approximately \$9.9 million of proposed Work-in-Kind (WIK) is included in the PMP. Currently, ~ \$8.5 million in WIK requests have been submitted by local sponsors with ~ \$5.24 approved to date. Plans are to finalize the PMP in the next couple of months.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported that at the March meeting, the board accepted the Preliminary Engineer's Report for the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA) Project. A public hearing is scheduled for April 3rd during the regular monthly meeting. A project team meeting has been scheduled for April 17th to further discuss the project.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

Other Issues

- Manager Wilkens distributed information on the Minnesota Environmental Congress conducted on March 15, 2013, at the Ramada Inn in Bloomington, MN. The goal of the conference was to engage a group of citizen leaders with diverse viewpoints and backgrounds to help the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) shape a vision for the future that addresses Minnesota's environment and energy challenges and opportunities.

The mission of the EQB is to lead Minnesota environmental policy by responding to key issues, providing appropriate review and coordination, serving as a public forum and developing long-range strategies to enhance Minnesota's environmental quality. The board consists of a Governor's representative (by law the board chair), nine state agency heads and five citizen members. Currently, the Chair is Dave Frederickson, Commissioner of Department of Agriculture and the Vice Chair is Brian Napstad, Chair of the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Manager Wilkens reported that representatives from environmental, conservation, and agricultural organizations, chambers of commerce, scientists and other experts, representatives from all levels of government, tribal leaders, as well as leaders from the business, student, and faith communities were invited to attend the conference. He noted his concern regarding the issues discussed at the conference and specifically those items included in the summary of the conference proceedings.

M. Carroll explained that the EQB conducted several citizen forums around the state in November and December of 2012 in order to engage Minnesotans in constructive public dialogue about our state's environmental and economic health. He added that Tom Landwehr, Commissioner of the MDNR serves on EQB and that the MDNR was in attendance at all the citizen forums.

Manager Deal noted that he also attended the conference in addition to Manager Wilkens. He indicated that should some of the items discussed at the conference be incorporated into long-range planning efforts, the results could negatively impact state agency goals.

Manager Wilkens added that conference attendees will be forwarded online surveys. Following discussion, the board requested Managers Deal and Wilkens to submit comments.

The next meeting will be on April 16, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, 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