



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

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Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

May 21, 2013

Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

LeRoy Carriere	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
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator, USDA-NRCS
- Pat Downs, Executive Director, RRRRA
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Jeff Lewis, Assistant Executive Director/Policy, RRBC
- Wallace Sparby, Congressman Peterson's office
- Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute
- Torin McCormack, Roseau River WD
- Brian Dwight, Clean Water Specialist, BWSR
- Rob Sip, MDA - Environmental Policy Specialist
- Keith Mykleseth, Asst. Regional Manager, MDNR
- Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor-MPCA
- Joe Belford, Ramsey County Commissioner

Manager Money requested adding discussion regarding the meeting concerning the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Public Waters Permitting requirements to the agenda under *Other Issues*.

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

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

N. Erickson reported that M. Meister was unable to attend today's meeting due to unforeseen family health issues. She added that M. Meister is developing a recommendation regarding a funding request submitted from the Bois de Sioux WD to cost-share on producing a video to promote a watershed district perspective.

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

P. Downs distributed a monthly report of activities. He reported that he visited several districts relative to retention planning including: Cass County Joint Water Board, Pembina County, Two Rivers WD, Joe River WD (area tour), Roseau River WD (project team meeting), and the Maple River WRD meeting.

P. Downs stated that the RRRA and the RRBC continue to conduct outreach meetings regarding the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion contract. Meetings have occurred with L. Yohe and J. Lewis.

P. Downs reported that office location site visits continue regarding the potential co-location for the offices of the RRBC, IWI, RRRA, and River Keepers. Additional meetings are planned in the near future with the RRBC to determine their space requirements.

Water Quality Project Monitoring

C. Fritz distributed the IWI Monitoring and Education Activity Report. On-site water quality sampling training was provided to the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD and the Kittson County SWCD staff in early May. The staff from these organizations will collect water quality data for the Snake River and Two Rivers Assessment Monitoring project in 2013-14.

C. Fritz reported that he recently met with the Sand Hill River WD Board of Managers to discuss the status of their project team. Several project teams in the Red River basin are struggling and unable to progress projects due to facilitation issues. He inquired about the possibility of implementing an accelerated facilitation initiative to assist struggling project teams in identifying alternatives for project development.

Manager Wilkens noted that the Sand Hill River WD project team is one of several that are experiencing difficulties progressing projects. He noted that when the mediation process was adopted in 1998, he was supportive of retaining an individual to provide facilitation services to all the project teams.

N. Drees inquired whether the problems exist with local participants or with agency staff members. Manager Wilkens responded that there seems to be a lack of guidance provided by upper management to agency representatives on project teams.

C. Fritz noted the importance of project teams developing alternatives in order to have projects in the queue. He referred to his previous experience as a watershed district administrator and noted that a project manager must identify clear objectives in order for project team members to be accountable.

B. Dwight stated that the project team process has been discussed at interagency meetings. The project team handbook adopted by the Work Group outlines the process for the project proposer to progress a proposed project through the project team. He suggested that project teams should review the handbook to become familiar with the process.

J. Ziegler concurred with B. Dwight regarding the need for all project team members to review the handbook. He added that MPCA has tried to ensure that their agency representatives on project teams fully understand the process.

C. Fritz referenced the Flood Damage Reduction Project Planning Acceleration Project that was co-sponsored by the RRWMB and Work Group last year to accelerate the development of data and tools in each watershed district in order to progress project development. A team comprised of himself, R. Harnack, H. VanOffelen and C. Anderson met with each member watershed district. He suggested that a similar group could be designated to assist project teams that are having difficulties progressing projects.

Manager Finney inquired about the success of the Bois de Sioux WD project team. Manager Deal responded that board managers are not represented on the project team as the board did not want to influence the alternatives developed in the project team process. R. Harnack stated that C. Anderson often develops concepts of potential alternatives for consideration by the project team. Manager Deal added that specific tasks are also assigned to project team members for discussion at the next meeting.

B. Dwight noted that often project team members are defensive when a specific project is proposed rather than following the process of developing various alternatives for consideration by the project team. D. Thul added that when project team members suggest various alternatives they should be viable options for obtaining permits. K. Mykleseth agreed with D. Thul and suggested that in order to begin making progress, project teams should begin with implementing straightforward projects before beginning discussion on potentially controversial topics.

C. Fritz added that the issue of implementing an accelerated facilitation initiative for project teams will be discussed further at the Work Group meeting tomorrow in Detroit Lakes, MN.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. Legislative updates include:

1. **Bonding**: The pre-conferred bonding bill included \$20,000,000 for FDR grants. The bill required 3/5's vote to pass (81 votes) and failed as it only received 76 votes on the House floor. Legislators voting against the bill included Rep. Fabian, Rep. Green, Rep. Kiel and Rep. Nornes while those voting for the bill included Rep. McNamar, Rep. Lien, Rep. Marquart, and Rep. Erickson. As the bill didn't pass the House there was no bill for the Senate to act on. An effort is underway to bring a smaller, more focused bonding bill back for consideration.
2. **Drainage Work Group**: Includes funding of \$166,000 the first year and \$166,000 the second year to provide technical assistance to local drainage management officials and for the cost of the DWG.
3. **Red River Mediation**: Includes \$264,000 the first year and \$264,000 the second year for grants up to 50% of the cost of implementation of the Red River Mediation Agreement.

4. Red River Basin Commission: Includes \$100,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year for water quality and floodplain management including the administration of programs.
5. Clean Water Legacy: Includes \$100,000/year for River Watch. These funds are required to be matched 50/50.
6. Conservation Easement Property Tax Evaluation: The tax bill included provisions preventing local governments from reducing property evaluations for conservation easements, except for riparian conservation easements.

Administrator Report

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

N. Erickson stated that for fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013), the Work Group allocated each project team \$11,875 for project team expenses. Eligible expenses are reimbursed at 50%.

The following table depicts the project team reimbursement requests submitted to date:

Project Team	Total Funds Available this Fiscal Year	Expenditures	Amount Remaining to Allocate
Bois de Sioux WD	\$11,875.00	\$6,469.67	\$5,405.33
Buffalo-Red River WD	\$11,875.00	\$7,756.66	\$4,118.34
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	\$11,376.45	\$498.55
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 reported that the end of the fiscal year for these funds is **June 30, 2013** and funds that have not be expended will be considered for reallocation. She requested the watershed districts to submit reimbursement requests as soon as possible.

M. Jesme stated that the Red Lake WD submitted a reimbursement request in April for project team expenses, however, these expenditures were not included in the table depicting the requests submitted to date. N. Erickson responded that she would research the funding request and make the necessary revisions.

B) Governing Documents Committee Meeting

N. Erickson reported that a meeting was conducted on Thursday, April 25, 2013 at the Red River Retention Authority office to review the Governing Documents publication. The committee suggested scheduling a meeting in July with legal counsel prior to the regular monthly board meeting to review the suggested changes and develop a board recommendation for approval.

Members of the Governing Documents Committee include: J. Deal, D. Money, G. Holmvik, R. Osowski, and N. Erickson.

N. Erickson added that discussion also occurred regarding the possibility of coordinating another meeting of the Rules and Regulations Committee with legal counsel in conjunction with the aforementioned meeting. Members of the Rules and Regulations Committee include: J. Finney, D. Wilkens, R. Osowski, R. Harnack, and D. Thul.

N. Erickson suggested inquiring whether L. Smith would be available to attend the July 9, 2013 RRRRA meeting in West Fargo, ND. She noted that typically the meetings adjourn by 12:00 p.m. and the Governing Documents Committee could meet following the RRRRA meeting on July 9, 2013. She added that since the Rules and Regulations Committee meeting could possibly require more discussion than the aforementioned committee meeting, that committee could meet the following day for an all day meeting on Wednesday, July 10, 2013. Following discussion, the board agreed to direct N. Erickson to make the arrangements for the two meetings.

N. Erickson also stated that the Governing Documents Committee requested that the Board of Managers request the TAC to review the following sections of the Governing Documents publication to determine whether any revisions are needed: Section 5 - The STar Value Method, and Section 9 - Prioritization Worksheet. **Motion** by Manager Wilkens to direct the TAC to review Sections 5 & 9 of the Governing Documents and develop recommendations for board consideration, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

C) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, May 22, 2013, MnDOT, Detroit Lakes, MN.
2. **2013 MAWD Summer Water Resources Tour**, Thursday, June 20 & Friday, June 21, 2013, Minnesota River - New Ulm Area. Hosted by MAWD, Minnesota River Board, Minnesota River History Center, and the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River. Register online at www.mnwatershed.org by **June 14, 2013**.

Devils Lake Update

Joe Belford, Ramsey County Commissioner, reported on the status of Devils Lake. In March 1993, Devils Lake had a surface area of 44,230 acres. At its spill elevation, Devils Lake covers more than 261,000 acres. The combined operating capacity of both the west-end and East Devils Lake outlets is 600 cfs.

W. Sparby inquired whether the State of North Dakota requires landowners to continue to pay taxes on submerged land that generates no income. J. Belford responded that the tax base for farmland has been reduced to wasteland taxes. J. Belford added that nearly every farmer continues to pay taxes on flooded farmland otherwise when the water eventually recedes the property would go into foreclosure.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul reported that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on May 14-15, 2013 at Houston Engineering, Inc. Discussion occurred relative to finalizing board recommendations for tile drainage. The TAC agreed with the conclusions and recommendations put forth in the RRRRA Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee Paper (BTSAC) "*Water Management Options for Subsurface*

Drainage Briefing Paper No. 2." A handout was distributed. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize D. Thul to coordinate with N. Erickson to develop a formal document for Tile Drainage System Recommendations for review at the next monthly meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Osowski, **Carried**.

D. Thul stated that J. Bents lead discussion at the TAC meeting regarding the progress of the Distributed Detention Strategy (DDS) effort. A basic format of the final reports will be coordinated with the watershed districts.

D. Thul explained that K. Weston - NRCS discussed the recommended operation of controlled subsurface tile outlet design. Current NRCS brochures regarding controlled tile systems conflict with the TAC recommendations. N. Dalager agreed to coordinate with K. Weston to develop a letter outlining the desired operational changes.

D. Thul reported that also during the two-day TAC meeting, a meeting with Nan Bischoff, St. Paul District USACE / Project Manager for the Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS) occurred at Houston Engineering, Inc., with the WFS technical committee. The agenda included an update on the WFS Project Management Plan (PMP), the USACE "Non-structural Assessment" study update, a hydrologic modeling update and a Decision Support System update.

Red River Basin Commission

J. Lewis, Assistant Executive Director/Policy - RRBC, distributed a report from the RRBC. Model adjustments have been completed for the HMS model developed for the Halstad Upstream Retention (HUR) Project. A standardized melt progression event analysis was developed and includes the following:

- Standardized Storm Runoff Event to account for Melt Progression.
- Developed for the 100 year/10 day events.
- The grid has been developed and tested.
- Grid has been sent to all sub-watershed modeling efforts upstream of Halstad.

Customized Training & Continuing Education

Manager Finney distributed a handout regarding a proposal to develop a program to train professional ditch viewers. Following discussion, the Board of Managers requested Manager Wilkens to forward this proposal to the Minnesota Joint Powers Board for consideration.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Public Waters Permitting

Manager Money reported that meetings continue with watershed district representatives and MDNR staff to address permit requirements for ditch maintenance and cleaning. Guidelines have been developed to establish uniformity and assist in project planning.

District Reports

- The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The District has begun to release water from the impoundment. A list of maintenance issues have been identified. Localized trigger stages are being developed and a local operating plan is being reviewed by staff and consultants.

- The Two Rivers WD reported on the Springbrook PL566 Project. The low bidder on the project was R.J. Zavoral. Plans are to begin construction as soon as the weather permits and to complete the project during the 2013 construction season. The survey crews from NRCS and the TRWD have begun staking of the project limits. A pre-construction meeting will be scheduled in the near future. The project is funded by NRCS, a flood damage reduction grant from the MDNR, RIM funding through BWSR, and by local funds from the project benefitted area. Project components include set back levees, side water inlets, streambank stabilization, road culvert installations, and over 400 acres of RIM and CCRP.
- The Red Lake WD reported on the Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration Project. Securing one landowner easement remains but no problems are anticipated. Permits from the MDNR and MPCA have been received and the District is presently awaiting permit approval from the USACE. A pre-bid meeting for contractors is scheduled on May 23, 2013 with bid opening to be held on June 13, 2013. Plans are to award the contract shortly thereafter with construction to begin in July. Revised budget estimates are higher than originally expected, however, the District is hopeful that bids for the project will offset some of the cost overruns.

District's Funding Requests

No requests for funds were submitted this month.

The next meeting will be on June 18, 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 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator