



Red River Watershed Management Board

Board of Managers

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RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING September 16, 2014 Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at the Red Lake Watershed District, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were: LeRoy Carriere Dan Money
 Ben Kleinwachter Orville Knott
 Daniel Wilkens Greg Holmvik
 Jerome Deal

Others present were: Naomi Erickson, Administrator
Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
Heidi Hughes, Public Information Officer
Nick Drees, Project Coordinator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
Pat Downs, Executive Director - RRRRA
Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator - USDA-NRCS
Sharon Josephson, Congressman Peterson's office
Riley Maanum, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Charlie Anderson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
Darrel Johnson, Two Rivers WD
Jim Ziegler, Unit Supervisor - MPCA
Jerry Bents, Engineer - Houston Engineering, Inc.
Kevin Ruud, Administrator - Wild Rice WD
Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Inc.
Ron Adrian, Engineer - Houston Engineering, Inc.
Tracy Halstensgard, Administrator - Roseau River WD
Myron Jesme, Administrator - Red Lake WD
Nate Dalager, Engineer - HDR Engineering, Inc.
Chuck Fritz, Director - International Water Institute
Chad Engels, Engineer - Moore Engineering, Inc.
Brian Dwight, Clean Water Specialist, BWSR

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

Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)

P. Downs distributed a monthly report of activities. He reported that the Technical Sub-Committee appointed by the Co-Chairs to rank priority projects from the \$50 million allocation was established. D. Thul was selected to participate on the committee.

P. Downs stated that the draft proposal for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) application was sent to a consultant for review prior to the October 2, 2014 due date.

Motion by Manager Knott to authorize the Request for Proposal for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) application to be submitted to USDA, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**.

Public Information Initiative

H. Hughes, Public Information Officer, reported on the Pine to Prairie (p2p) International Birding Trail meeting conducted on August 20, 2014 at the Chamber of Commerce, in Detroit Lakes, MN. At the previous monthly meeting, Manager Finney asked her and N. Drees to develop a board recommendation for the September board meeting on whether to pursue a collaborative effort between the p2p birding trail and the Tallgrass Aspen Parkland (TAP) Birding Trail.

H. Hughes said she's attended meetings with the p2p birding trail marketing group since 2011. They are looking for funding (from the RRWMB and other sources) to help publish a new p2p birding trail brochure - to market sites along the US 59 and MN 11 corridor, and tourism amenities (motels and restaurants) in the cities of Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, Pelican Rapids, Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad.

H. Hughes recommended the Board of Managers, along with the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, support the development of visitor infrastructure, publicity materials and programs that support outdoor recreational activities associated with the TAP birding trail that specifically connects RRWMB member watershed districts and many smaller, relatively under-served communities within these member watershed districts along the US 75 corridor - known as the "King of Trails Scenic Byway" and east on MN 11 to Greenbush and north to Roseau.

H. Hughes explained the two goals of the TAP birding trail. The immediate goal is to create a concept plan for a birding trail connecting 12 impoundments in northwestern Minnesota and the 3,000-acre Agassiz Valley Project site in a way that recognizes these sites as regional and national treasures. The long-range goal is to create a world-class destination in northwestern Minnesota by celebrating the natural history of our region, as well as our human history, agricultural heritage and our response to flood damage reduction challenges.

Projects constructed throughout our member watershed districts have coincidentally created opportunities for nature-based recreation where previously there were none. Wildlife viewing is one of the unexpected benefits of flood control projects throughout the Red River valley.

More nature destinations are needed throughout Northwest Minnesota, not just in the vicinity of the p2p birding trail along the US 59 corridor. The economic impact of nature-based tourism can be spread throughout the region. What's good for one community is good for all of us. The TAP birding trail will encourage spending in the smaller communities in northwestern Minnesota - not just the cities of Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, Pelican Rapids, Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad.

The key to success of our TAP birding trail is engaging local residents in what we do at the impoundments. That's also what sets the TAP project apart from other birding trails. People who live here (in these small communities near our impoundments) are actively involved in "building" and supporting outdoor recreational opportunities along this trail.

There are sites in smaller communities along the p2p birding trail too. However, only the cities along the US 59 and MN 11 corridor with staffed tourism offices (who pay the \$1,000 a year membership fee) have a vote on p2p group decisions.

N. Drees presented his view of the p2p International Birding Trail meeting (August 20, 2014). He explained that Cleone Stewart - Detroit Lakes Chamber of Commerce, contacted N. Erickson to inquire about potential funding from the RRWMB for the p2p birding trail. N. Erickson had informed Ms. Stewart that she would have to submit a proposal to the Board of Managers for consideration.

N. Drees noted that at the August board meeting, R. Harnack indicated that Ms. Stewart had invited him to attend the p2p birding trail meeting to discuss the possibility of the two birding trails working together collaboratively. N. Drees reiterated that at the August board meeting Manager Finney requested that he and H. Hughes attend the August 20th meeting and develop a board recommendation.

N. Drees stated that following the August 20th meeting, he and H. Hughes concluded that it would be in the best interest of the RRWMB and their member districts to support the development of the TAP birding trail independently from the p2p International Birding Trail. He further noted that since developing the concept of the TAP birding trail, members of the p2p International Birding Trail appear to be "threatened" by the development of another birding trail in northwestern Minnesota.

Following discussion, the board agreed to follow the recommendation of H. Hughes and N. Drees to support the development of the TAP birding trail independently from the p2p International Birding Trail. Manager Finney reiterated that the board will proceed with promoting the TAP birding trail.

Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee - Surface Drainage Study

C. Fritz conducted a presentation on the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee's (BTSAC) Briefing Paper (BP) No. 3 - Water Management Options for Surface Drainage. The study was designed to conclude the following:

- Determine how to best manage the existing surface drainage system to increase or maintain drainage benefits and reduce flood flows.

- Determine best strategies for future surface drainage system improvements/modifications to maintain or improve drainage benefits and reduce flood flows.

C. Fritz explained that for study purposes, the BTSAC defined agricultural surface drainage as the current system of man-made artificial ditches and altered natural waterways in the Red River Basin that convey water from the land surface for the purposes of agricultural production. The study scope focused on hydrology and hydraulics including general physical principles and associated cause and effect relationships of agricultural drainage system components. The primary audiences for the report included the RRWMB, the RRJWRD, their member watershed and water resource districts and technical advisors.

C. Fritz stated that BTSAC developed a Uniform Surface Drainage Design Guidance (design guidance) document for the Red River Basin (BP No. 3 - Appendix C) that includes consistently balanced design capacities of both channels and culverts. The BTSAC design guidance includes the following recommendations:

- The design guidance should be considered when permitting or improving both public and private surface drainage systems in agricultural areas of the Red River Basin.
- Every available opportunity should be utilized to retrofit existing Red River Basin drainage systems using this design guidance.
- Where the design guidance cannot be applied, other means to mitigate flood damages should be implemented in the watershed.

C. Fritz noted that comprehensive adoption and implementation of BTSAC surface (and subsurface) water management options requires voluntary action by the respective local watershed districts (MN), water resource districts (ND), and other local and state drainage jurisdictions in the Red River Basin. Garnering participation and cooperation will require an aggressive, targeted, and sustained outreach campaign by the RRWMB and the RRJWRD.

C. Fritz added that the BTSAC recommends the RRJWRD and the RRWMB establish and fund an outreach strategy that promotes comprehensive water management practices in the Red River Basin through the adoption of the BTSAC recommendations for surface (and subsurface) drainage. The outreach strategy should include efforts to engage the respective audience groups:

- Local Water Managers (watershed and water resource districts, and counties)
- Landowners
- Drainage Engineers
- Local and State Road Authorities and Engineers
- Public/Media

Local water managers, landowners, engineers, local and state road authorities, the public, and the media must have a comprehensive understanding of the BTSAC recommendations along with information products (e.g. brochures, presentations) supporting their implementation.

C. Fritz explained that landowners must be engaged and informed by their local watershed and water resource districts or some designated entity (or individuals) of the underlying rationale and logic of BTSAC recommendations. Engineers (public and private) and road authorities must understand, embrace, *and apply* the uniform design standards when working in the Red River Basin. Drainage and road engineers are critical advisors to water managers for implementations of this design guidance. The public and the media should be informed and engaged whenever possible with a

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consistent and comprehensive message regarding BTSAC surface and subsurface drainage
recommendations.

Manager Finney directed the TAC to review BP No. 3 and develop a board recommendation for the
October board meeting.

Water Quality Project Monitoring

C. Fritz distributed the IWI Monitoring and Education Activity Report. He reported that he and D.
Halvorson met with members of the Work Group's Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee
(TSAC) to review completed water quality reports and discuss future monitoring strategies.
Upcoming monitoring will focus on trying to determine loads entering and exiting a project area as
well as receiving waters. IWI will be developing a detailed 2015 monitoring plan and budget for TSAC
review and approval at their October meeting 2015.

Project Coordinator Report

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. He reported that he attended the Drainage
Work Group (DWG) meeting which included discussion of topics to be addressed during the next
year. A prioritized list of discussion topics was distributed. Some of the high priority items identified
included:

- Provide options in drainage law for runoff-based drainage system assessments.
- Drainage system assessments to road authorities.
- Intersection of state public waters statute and rule with drainage law.
- Update of the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual (MPDM) and Understanding Minnesota
Public Drainage Law documents project.

R. Harnack distributed draft comments developed by Rinke-Noonan related to the U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed rule defining "waters of the
United States." The draft comments identify specific parts of the rule that fall short of statutory
authority under the Clean Water Act, or contradict Supreme Court precedent. After incorporating any
feedback received from the draft comments, a letter will be finalized and submitted to the agency's
docket in advance of the October 20, 2014, deadline.

Administrator Report

A) RRB Flood Damage Reduction Work Group

N. Erickson reported that following the Work Group meeting on August 20, 2014, the Finance
Committee met and finalized the budget for fiscal year 2015. The following Project Acceleration
Grants were approved in the amount of \$10,000 each, prior to reallocating the unexpended
balance from FY 2014 to FY 2015: WRWD - Lower Wild Rice River Corridor; BdSWD - Doran
Creek; and BRRWD - Barnesville Twp.

N. Erickson explained that although the base budget for FY 2015 is \$264,000 (the same as FY
2014), the unallocated balance of \$73,273.36 was transferred in from FY 2014 which resulted in a
total FY 2015 budget of \$337,273.36. She distributed a spreadsheet depicting the FY 2015
budget allocation.

B) Project Implementation Strategy

N. Erickson stated that at the July and August board meetings, discussions occurred whether the process currently being followed by the Green Meadow Project Team of the Wild Rice WD could be utilized as a model in other project teams.

N. Erickson added that at the Finance Committee meeting of the Work Group on August 20, 2014, further discussion occurred regarding developing a proposal to establish a *Project Implementation Strategy* model that could be utilized by other project teams to accelerate project development. It was suggested that the RRWMB and Work Group consider providing 50/50 cost-share for this service to interested project teams as was done similarly with the Project Planning Acceleration Effort.

N. Erickson reported that at the committee meeting, H. Van Offelen explained that the success of the of the Green Meadow Project Team was attributed to the project team being driven by stakeholders who have ownership in the process. N. Erickson added that H. Van Offelen stated the District staff and other facilitators maintain a neutral position as does the Board of Managers until required to act on the project team's recommendation. H. Van Offelen further noted at the committee meeting that implementation of the proposed Project Implementation Strategy would involve his participation representing the MDNR, R. Harnack participating on behalf of the RRWMB, with facilitation services provided by C. Fritz of IWI. N. Erickson added that the cost breakdown would be as follows: H. Van Offelen (MDNR); R. Harnack (RRWMB); C. Fritz (50/50 cost-share between MDNR/RRWMB); and Project Team Support (50/50 split between the FDRWG/Local WD).

T. Halstensgard noted that she and Manager Carriere attended the Finance Committee meeting on August 20, 2014 and discussed the need for additional project team funding. She also stated that she submitted a budget to the Work Group outlining the anticipated project team expenses for the Roseau River WD for FY 2015.

J. Ziegler suggested that each watershed district prepare a budget estimating project team expenses for FY 2015 for submittal to the Work Group in order to develop a recommendation regarding funding allocations. Manager Knott concurred with J. Ziegler and noted the importance of accelerating project development. Manager Knott suggested that J. Deal and M. Carroll as Co-Chairs of the Work Group conduct a conference call prior to next month's board meeting to discuss whether both organizations are in favor of cost-sharing the proposed Project Implementation Strategy.

C) Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

N. Erickson stated that at the August board meeting, a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT) discussed saving sudden cardiac arrest victims in the workplace. The NREMT explained that a ventricular fibrillation sudden cardiac arrest can be reversed if the victim is treated with an electric shock to the heart within a few minutes. The electric shock can stop the abnormal rhythm and allow a normal rhythm to resume. This process, called defibrillation, is done using a defibrillator. Rescuers can be trained to operate portable, automated external defibrillators (AEDs).

Board members were requested to query their respective boards relative to their interest in obtaining an AED with discussion to continue at today's board meeting. The following responses were received from member watershed districts: Joe River, N/A; Roseau River, N/A; Two Rivers,

N/A; MSTRWD, Yes; Red Lake, Yes; Sand Hill, N/A; Wild Rice, N/A; and Bois de Sioux, Yes. T. Halstengard reported that the Roseau River WD applied for a grant to receive an AED through LifeCare Medical Center and offered to forward the information to N. Erickson for review.

D) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences

1. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, October 22, Red Lake WD, Thief River Falls, MN.
2. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**, November 12, 2014, location TBD.

Red River Coordinator/TAC Report

D. Thul discussed the Halstad Upstream Retention (HUR) modeling project conducted by the RRBC to determine the impacts/benefits of retention sites identified upstream of Halstad (southern 1/3 of basin). A recommendation was forwarded from the TAC to the USACE to utilize federal funding to extend the modeling effort to the Canadian border to encompass the entire Red River basin. The final draft of the RFP being developed by Houston Engineering will be forwarded to the USACE to be utilized for the effort or for contract with another firm to complete the project.

D. Thul noted that he participated on BTSAC for the development of Briefing Paper (BP) No. 3 - Water Management Options for Surface Drainage. He added that a TAC meeting will be scheduled prior to the October board meeting to develop a board recommendation.

D. Thul explained that TAC membership is comprised of engineers representing the individual member watershed districts. The Bois de Sioux WD recently retained the services of Moore Engineering, Inc. in addition to those currently being provided by WSN, Inc. D. Thul stated that in addition to extending an invitation to C. Engels of Moore Engineering, Inc. to join the TAC, he would like to request board consideration for C. Anderson's continued involvement. **Motion** by Manager Deal to authorize C. Anderson of WSN, Inc. to continue TAC participation, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens, **Carried**.

District Reports

- The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported on the possibility of their project team exploring options for a potential new project. During the August hearing process on the redetermination of benefits for Judicial Ditch No. 14, flooding issues were discussed. Landowners expressed concerns about localized flooding along the Snake River near Rosewood and there is an interest in requesting the project team to address the area known as "Lilac Ridge."
- The Red Lake WD reported on the Brandt Channel Ditch Establishment/RLWD Ditch No. 15. The contractor has once again started work on the project but did not complete the project by the September 15, 2014 deadline. At the request of the contractor and engineer, because of a one-month delay in starting the project due to spring rainfalls and various abnormal rainfall events through June and July, the Board of Managers granted a 30-day extension to the contractor. It is expected that the project will be completed by October 15th and the contractor has guaranteed the establishment of the grass buffer into the 2015 growing season.

- The Wild Rice WD reported on the Lower Wild Rice River Project Stream Restoration Project. A presentation was conducted for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to request funding to be used towards land acquisition for the project.

District's Funding Requests

1. Two Rivers WD / Step I Submittal / Klondike Clean Water Retention Project No. 11

The information required for a Step I submittal was distributed. Manager Money explained that the Board of Managers conducted a public hearing on September 12, 2014 and approved a project resolution initiating the project and appointing a project engineer.

Manager Money stated that the proposed impoundment project is located in Sections 1, 2, 10-15, and 22-24 of Klondike Township, and Section 31 of June Berry Township. A portion of this area is owned by the District with negotiations currently underway to acquire the remaining land needed for project construction. In addition to presenting a Step I submittal, the TRWD requested a loan of \$5.6 million from the RRWMB for the additional land acquisition.

Manager Finney asked whether the TRWD is considering loaning a portion of the funds needed for the remaining land acquisition. Manager Money responded that the District is considering various funding options which includes the provision in MS 103D.335 Subd. 17 which states that a watershed district may loan up to \$2 million from counties and financial institutions at any time.

The total estimated project cost is ~ \$34,133,970 with the following proposed cost-share: \$25,600,477 - 75% State of Minnesota; and for the remaining local split of 25%, \$5,688,995 – RRWMB (2/3) and \$2,844,498 – TRWD (1/3).

S. Josephson inquired whether federal cost-share programs could be utilized toward the project. Manager Money responded that although NRCS has indicated that PL566-like programs are available for land acquisition, specific criteria hasn't been developed to determine whether or not this project is eligible for federal cost-share funding. K. Weston noted that NRCS hasn't evaluated the proposed project to determine funding eligibility.

N. Erickson added that she and R. Harnack discussed the loan with L. Smith. R. Harnack explained that L. Smith advised the RRWMB that the loan agreement should be contingent upon authorizing the Step I submittal following a tour of the proposed project.

N. Erickson reported that following the August Work Group meeting, discussion occurred regarding the proposed project between M. Carroll, H. Van Offelen, D. Wilkens and herself. During the discussion she referred to plans to submit a Step I application for the Klondike Clean Water Retention Project No. 11 at the September board meeting with the board planning to tour the project at their October board meeting.

N. Erickson stated that the MDNR inquired whether or not the proposed project had received project team endorsement. She added that D. Wilkens requested her to follow up with M. Carroll regarding this question in order to ensure the project continues to proceed as planned. She reported that M. Carroll said the MDNR has scheduled a meeting on Friday, September 19, 2014 to review the proposed project. M. Carroll stated that items to be addressed will include the large scale of the proposal, and whether water will be stored on a protected species (i.e. fen).

N. Erickson noted that M. Carroll also suggested the TRWD conduct a project team meeting prior to the October 21, 2014 RRWMB meeting so any issues identified by the MDNR at their September 19, 2014 meeting could be addressed.

Manager Kleinwachter inquired about the consequences of the RRWMB authorizing a loan to the TRWD to acquire the remaining land should they be unable to secure a MDNR permit. Manager Money responded that the loan agreement includes a provision that the District is obligated to repay the loan to the RRWMB should the project not proceed within a certain time period.

It was moved by Manager Deal and seconded by Manager Wilkens to authorize a loan agreement of \$5,000,000 for the Klondike Clean Water Retention Project No. 11 contingent upon the project receiving Step I approval. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Other Issues

- N. Drees reported that H. Hughes will be leaving her position with the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD to pursue other interests, however, she plans to continue working with the District on a part-time basis.

N. Erickson added that H. Hughes also offered to continue her services for the board on a limited basis.

- Manager Deal suggested that the Board of Managers consider requesting either a board manager or staff to attend future member watershed district board meetings. He explained that when new board members are appointed, it would be beneficial to inform them about the operation of the RRWMB.

The next meeting will be on October 21, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. at a location to be determined by the Two Rivers Watershed District in order to facilitate a tour of the Klondike Clean Water Retention Project No. 11.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Deal
Secretary

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator