



WATERSHED BOARD FOCUSES ON FLOOD PROTECTION

The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) is pleased that this year's Red River basin flooding is minimal. Still, the RRWMB is preparing for future spring thaws and runoffs that threaten livelihoods. "We are thankful that this year's thaw went so well, but the board is preparing for those years when flooding will become a major issue," says RRWMB president John Finney of Humboldt.

In fact, the RRWMB continues to provide funding for flood protection projects up and down the Red River basin of Minnesota. The work of the RRWMB is so important that it survived Gov. Pawlenty's line item vetoes. Jerome Deal, RRWMB member from Wheaton, says the board's work has a lot of support in St. Paul. "I think I speak on behalf of all board members, when I extend a big thank you to all state legislators representing basin citizens for lobbying for flood protection," says Deal. By surviving the line item veto process, the RRWMB can expect approximately \$10 million dollars to go toward projects directly associated with flood protection.

The key to long-term flood protection is planning and cooperation. By

working with local watershed districts, the RRWMB has provided cost sharing for an impressive list of flood protection projects already completed. The Grand Marais Project in the Red Lake Watershed District provides protection to the city of Euclid and other rural properties, while the Horseshoe Lake Impoundment located in Kittson County, completed in 2006, are examples of completed flood protection projects.

Planning for flood protection is a constant priority. The work of watershed districts from Joe River, Two Rivers, Roseau River, Red Lake, Middle Snake Tamarac, Wild Rice, Sand Hill, and Bois de Sioux all benefit from the cost sharing made available from the state to the RRWMB. By working together, local watershed districts and the RRWMB, guarantee that the mission of flood protection and reduction remains a top priority.

"We work on behalf of everybody threatened by flooding," says Deal. In fact, all proposed projects requesting funding from the RRWMB must benefit the entire basin. For example, the North Ottawa Impoundment Project located in the Bois de Sioux Watershed District will

provide 16,000 acre-feet of gate-controlled water storage once completed. "That's water that without the impoundment would flow north and threaten landowners and citizens," notes Deal.

Other flood damage reduction projects are in the works throughout the basin. Some like the North Ottawa Impoundment Project, the Brandt Impoundment of the Grand Marais Project in the Red Lake Watershed District, and the Ross No. 7 Impoundment Project in the Two Rivers Water-

shed District are under construction. Others like the Agassiz Valley Water Management Project in the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District and the Hay Creek / Norland levee project in the Roseau River Watershed District are all proposed for funding.

In all, the completed projects and those proposed all have the same goal; to protect citizens from flooding. "Our work funds flood control projects that benefit landowners, producers, and all citizens of the basin," says Finney.

RRWMB HIRES PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

At the April 2008 board meeting, the RRWMB agreed that Mark Meister should serve as its public information officer. From July 2007 to March 2008, Meister coordinated a research project on behalf of the RRWMB to identify key ideas and perceptions of watershed issues in the Red River basin.

His new role involves informing the public about the work of the RRWMB and its affiliated watershed districts. To do so, Meister will work closely with area newspaper reporters and editors, aid in the coordination of citizen

advisory boards, work with the River Watch educational program, and coordinate long-term communication initiatives of the board.

Meister is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and affiliated faculty member in the School of Natural Resource Management at NDSU. He teaches courses in agricultural communication, communication campaigns, and media ethics. He resides in Moorhead, MN with his spouse Ann, daughter Carolina, and golden retriever, Nichols.

EVENTS COMING UP

The next scheduled meeting of the RRWMB will be held at the Wild Rice WD, 11 5th Avenue East, Ada, MN, on May 20th, starting at 9:30 a.m.

WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

ROSEAU RIVER WD

The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek / Norland Project. The District is currently seeking land acquisition along the Hay Creek corridor. Soil borings are being conducted throughout the project area. A meeting was conducted in April with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss permitting requirements.

TWO RIVERS WD

The Two Rivers WD reported on the Ross No. 7 Impoundment Project. The project is 85% complete and is expected to be finished early in the upcoming construction season. The main dike, ring dikes, outlet structure, and inlet ditches have all been completed while a portion of the ridge dike needs to be finished. Seeding also remains to be completed. Although the project

is not complete, should a summer flood occur the impoundment could be operated in order to provide some flood control.

RED LAKE WD

The Red Lake WD reported on the Brandt Outlet Restoration Project 60E. The District received a \$50,000 grant through the "Working Lands Initiative" to continue with Phase 2 of the project, downstream of the Brandt Impoundment. This project will complete the restoration of approximately 2 miles of a coulee including the planting of buffer strips, installing inlet pipes and construction of setback levees.

BOIS DE SIOUX WD

The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the North Ottawa Impoundment Project. Two open contracts remain for the project. Barry Construction of Fergus Falls, Inc. has approxi-

mately 25% of their contract left to complete, with Riley Brothers Construction has only 15%.

Additional work was added to the Riley Brothers Construction contract in February to include the building of a base at the center road intersection of the east dike, diverting lateral 2 north to lateral 3, and raising a road for North Ottawa Township by placing extra dirt from the diversion channel on the road alignment located on the west side of Section 10. These additions will extend the anticipated completion date to June 1, 2008.

Barry Construction will finish the intersection on the west dike and is expected to complete their portion of the south dike by a substantial completion date of July 3, 2008. The balance of the south dike will be let under a new contract this spring.



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RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled April meeting, the RRWMB:

- Designated Mark Meister of CR*CS as the board's Public Information Officer.
- Authorized N. Erickson to proceed in conjunction with board's attorney to prepare the necessary contracts for the Project Management Plan (PMP) of the Red River Basin Watershed Specifically Authorized Feasibility Study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the board agreed to sponsor at the previous monthly meeting.
- Reviewed the maximum cost share per Star Value with Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator.
- Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.
- Discussed the Water Quality staffing position funded by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency with Wayne Goeken, Monitoring Coordinator.

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NEWS & VIEWS

Your comments and contributions are always welcome. If you are receiving this newsletter and are not currently a member of a governing unit in the Red River Basin, please notify us and provide the name of the appropriate person to be added to our mailing list. News & Views, c/o RRWMB, P.O. Box 763, Detroit Lakes, MN 56502-0763, Phone: (218) 844-6166; Fax: (218) 844-6167.