



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING POINTS WAY FORWARD IN RED RIVER VALLEY RETENTION EFFORTS

After more than a year of fruitful effort, the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) held a formal signing ceremony marking their agreement to collaborate on Red River basin water retention projects. The signatories included the St. Paul and Omaha districts of the USACE, the three states of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota represented by the NRCS in the Red River basin, and the respective watershed organizations in Minnesota and North Dakota that comprise the RRRA.

The signing ceremony was held May 8th at the beginning of the regular monthly meeting of the RRRA.

Congratulations, gratitude

and optimism going forward set the tone for the meeting. After giving a brief overview of the beginning of the RRRA, board member Rodger Olson said "this is great to bring these three organizations together; this has been a tremendous effort."

Tamara Cameron, USACE Branch Chief St. Paul and Mary Podoll, NRCS State Conservationist for North Dakota offered their thanks to all who were a part of making the effort successful. Podoll said that they "looked forward to the partnership."

Don Baloun, NRCS State Conservationist for Minnesota added that "the stars are lining up. We're thrilled for this opportunity for us to do what's right in the Red River basin."

The RRRA was created through a joint powers agree-

ment between Minnesota's Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) and North Dakota's Red River Joint Water Resource District

(RRJWRD). One of the priorities of the group has been to significantly streamline the permitting process for water impoundment projects.



*First row: Tamara Cameron - USACE Branch Chief, St. Paul District; Don Baloun - Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist; and Martha Chieply - USACE Branch Chief, Omaha District. Second row: Jerome Deal - Board Member RRRA / RRWMB; Keith Weston - Red River Basin Coordinator, NRCS; Jim Lyons - Co-Chair RRRA / RRJWRD, and Paul Flynn - Acting South Dakota NRCS State Conservationist.*

## WATERSHED DISTRICT SUPPORTS KIDS, CAMPING AND OUTDOOR LEARNING

The Middle Snake Tamarac Watershed District, together with the Agassiz Audubon Society hosted the 2012

Spring Camporee of The Voyageur Trails and Lake Agassiz District Boy Scouts. The May event, held on the



*Lynda Knutsen of the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge shares information on mammals*

beach of Glacial Lake Agassiz just east of Warren, Minnesota, included a number of programs to educate scouts in a variety of areas.

The weekend included programs led by experts on wildlife, plants and water conservation - and an evening owl prowling and bat watch. Cubs, Webelos, Boy Scouts and Venture Crews worked on a number of service projects at the Audubon Center of the Red River Valley - including planting shrubs to attract wildlife, removing invasive plants and monitoring bird nest boxes.

Other programs included:

- Water Management (Nick Drees, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed

District)

- How to Attract Purple Martins (Perry Vogel, Purple Martin Association of the Dakotas)

- How to Identify Birds (Shelley Steva, Agassiz Audubon Society)

- How to Photograph Wild Birds (Terry & Joanne Johnson, wildlife photographers)

- Mammals and How to Spot them (Lynda Knutsen, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge)

- Prairie management (Dave Bennett, Rydell National Wildlife Refuge)

- Native Plants (Alice Sather & Diana Morkassel, Agassiz Audubon Society)

- Owl Watch (Bill Blackburn, Audubon Minnesota)

## WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

### ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

The Hay Creek/Norland Impoundment Project will be completed this Spring. The RRWD has been in contact with the USACE on the proposed adaptive management plan for wetland mitigation requirements on the project and now awaits a decision.

The RRWD had a May meeting with the project team regarding dam replacement in the Beltrami Island State Forest (BISF) area. In addition the group discussed two possible impoundment sites within the BISF.

HDR Engineering continues to work on preliminary engineering plans for the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA). The USACE has indicated they will be performing the geo-technical aspects for the RRWMA, and a project team meeting is scheduled for May 22nd.

The RRWD is currently reviewing, amending and modifying their current watershed district rules.

### RED LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

Phase I of the Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction/Red Lake Watershed District Ditch #14 is progressing well with approximately 6,000 feet of channel construction on the Improvement portion of the project completed. Phase II of the project will consist of laying two lines of reinforced concrete arch pipe which is part of the storm sewer plan within the city. Phase III consists of completing 4.5 miles of the improvement channel. Construction is expected to be completed in August.

County Ditch #20/State Ditch #83 Erosion Control Project is a joint project of the Marshall County Ditch Authority, Marshall County Soil & Water Conservation District and the RLWD. The project will reduce sediment being delivered into the Thief River Tributary via stream bank and field erosion and is being funded by a grant approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Bids for the project were opened in March, with the low bid provided by Taggart Excavating and Septic Service.

### WILD RICE WATERSHED DISTRICT

The Project Team for the Moccasin Creek Operation and Maintenance Plan met near the end of April and recommended support to the Board for expanding the Spring opening procedure; in addition, a discussion was held regarding the addition of a second dam in the area.

Verbal agreements have been reached on the community ring dike with the majority of landowners surrounding Shelly. The process now moves to determining the local share of funding for the project.

The public hearing for the City of Hendrum community ring dike was held in April and those in attendance showed support for the proposal allowing the WRWD to use additional bond funds for another project.

Zavoral Construction has started on Project 30 FEMA repairs with mitigation; Gordon Construction has been awarded the contract for FEMA repairs to Clay County Ditch #4.

## RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled May meeting, the RRWMB:

- Discussed the recent Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, an operating agreement that includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the RRRA, and the desire that the agreement will lead to more streamlined flood prevention efforts in the Red River basin.
- Held a debriefing of the recent RRWMB District Administrator meeting on the watershed management response to Briefing Paper No. 2 of the Basin Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (BTSAC) of the RRRA and considered next steps for guideline or policy options of the RRWMB.
- Received a report from Project Coordinator Ron Harnack that included a Legislative Update. The bonding bill has \$30,000,000 appropriated for Flood Hazard Mitigation grants to be allocated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). No specific projects were listed, as the DNR proceeds according to their priority list and project readiness. However, given this level of funding Mr. Harnack noted that the February 2012 DNR listing of RRWMB impoundment projects indicates that \$1.5 million will go to Brandt-Angus in the Middle Snake Tamarac WD; \$200,000 to complete Hay Creek in the Roseau River WD; \$50,000 to Roseau River Wildlife Management Area in the RRWD; \$500,000 to the Redpath Project in the Bois de Sioux WD; and \$160,000 to the Spring Brook Impoundment in the Two Rivers WD. Also included were community projects in Felton, Climax, Nielsville, and Shelly that did not have specific dollar amounts.

### EVENTS

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, June 19, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. at the Red River Retention Authority office, 1405 Prairie Parkway, Suite 311, West Fargo, ND 58078.

### NEWS & VIEWS

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