

**RED RIVER WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**2017 ANNUAL REPORT**



**APPROVED ON OCTOBER 16, 2018**

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## Letter from the President

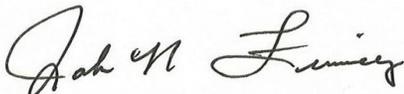
Welcome to the 2017 Annual Report! 2017 was a year of transition that brought the past, present, and future together to celebrate successes of the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB). As we begin our 42nd year as a joint powers board, we note that the RRWMB has funded over 40 major projects to eliminate flooding and improve water quality.

I'd like to start out by dedicating this annual report to the memory of Don Ogaard, who was the impetus behind the creation of the RRWMB. He was a Norman County farmer who felt it was necessary to stem flooding that was devastating the Red River Valley. Finding a way to stop the flooding became his passion. Through a little used provision in MN Statutes 103D, Don formed the RRWMB to assist in funding flood damage control projects. Since that time, projects in the Red River flood plain have promoted a basin wide perspective for water management.

Ron Harnack, our legislative liaison and project coordinator, has retired after ten years of leading the RRWMB on the path it is on. Ron led the RRWMB through its legislative initiatives as well as counseling the RRWMB on project management during the last decade. We had the good fortune of having Ron come to the RRWMB after his tenure as Executive Director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources. His expertise and knowledge of water quality issues and water management guided the RRWMB.

Our new Executive Director, Robert Sip will lead the RRWMB into the future. Robert comes to us with over 20 years of combined experience at the local and state level. He came to us from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) where he represented MDA on various state, federal, regional, and international boards, committees, and other stakeholder groups in the Red River Basin regarding agricultural water management, wetland and drainage issues, conservation programs, and others as the MDA designate or alternate. He coordinated and provided policy direction and program development to MDA leadership for several years in relation to agricultural water management issues. Robert is a native of Norman County and grew up on a crop and livestock farm.

Sincerely,



John N. Finney  
President  
Red River Watershed Management Board

**2017 Red River Watershed Management Board of Managers**

<p><b>Joe River Watershed District</b>          John Finney, President          1101 Rice Street, Box 13          Humboldt, MN 56731          218-791-1296 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:finney@invisimax.com">finney@invisimax.com</a></p>	<p><b>Roseau River Watershed District</b>          LeRoy Carriere          504 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast          Roseau, MN 56751          218-242-4275 (Cell)          Email Unavailable</p>
<p><b>Two Rivers Watershed District</b>          Roger Anderson          1561 110<sup>th</sup> Street          Drayton, ND 58225          218-455-6269          Email Unavailable</p>	<p><b>Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District</b>          Ben Kleinwachter, Vice-president          22160 420<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest          Strandquist, MN 56758          218-686-4119 (Cell)          Email Unavailable</p>
<p><b>Sand Hill River Watershed District</b>          Roger Hanson          24112 440<sup>th</sup> Street Southwest          Beltrami, MN 56517          218-926-5770  <a href="mailto:hansonr@gvtel.com">hansonr@gvtel.com</a></p>	<p><b>Red Lake Watershed District</b>          LeRoy Ose          15115 229<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast          Thief River Falls, MN 56701          218-689-6675 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:leroyose@gmail.com">leroyose@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Wild Rice Watershed District</b>          Greg Holmvik          401 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue West          Ada, MN 56510          218-766-5271 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:gholmvik@loretel.net">gholmvik@loretel.net</a></p>	<p><b>Bois de Sioux Watershed District</b>          Jerome Deal, Secretary          1501 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South          Wheaton, MN 56296          320-815-2296 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:jeromeadeal@gmail.com">jeromeadeal@gmail.com</a></p>

**2017 Alternates - Red River Watershed Management Board**

<p><b>Two Rivers Watershed District</b>          Dan Money, Adminsitrator          PO Box 751          Hallock, MN 56728          218-689-2023 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:dan.money@tworiverswd.com">dan.money@tworiverswd.com</a></p>	<p><b>Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District</b>          John Nelson          23796 495<sup>Th</sup> Avenue Northwest          Oslo, MN 56744          701-741-1624  <a href="mailto:john.nelson@mstrwd@gmail.com">john.nelson@mstrwd@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Bois de Sioux Watershed District</b>          Allen Wold          5950 720<sup>Th</sup> Avenue          Wheaton, MN 56296          320-563-8743  <a href="mailto:abwold@frontiernet.net">abwold@frontiernet.net</a></p>	<p><b>Roseau River Watershed District</b>          Jason Braaten          36576 270<sup>Th</sup> Street          Roseau, MN 56751          218-469-0749  <a href="mailto:j.braaten@roseauriverwd.com">j.braaten@roseauriverwd.com</a></p>
<p><b>Wild Rice Watershed District</b>          Raymond Hanson          4333 County Highway 29          Twin Valley, MN 56584          218-584-5545  <a href="mailto:raynmargo@gmail.com">raynmargo@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Red Lake Watershed District</b>          Les Torgerson          27312 Pine Island Road          Leonard, MN 56652          218-776-3019  <a href="mailto:lestorgerson@yahoo.com">lestorgerson@yahoo.com</a></p>
<p><b>Joe River</b>          No Alternate Listed</p>	<p><b>Sand Hill River Watershed District</b>          Daniel Wilkens, 2017 RRWMB Treasurer          15115 229<sup>Th</sup> Street Northeast          Fertile, MN 56540          218-280-0934 (Cell)  <a href="mailto:daniel.wilkens@sandhillwatershed.org">daniel.wilkens@sandhillwatershed.org</a></p>

**NOTE:** The Buffalo Red River, Cormorant Lakes, and Pelican River Watershed Districts are located within the Red River Basin of Minnesota but are not currently members of the RRWMB. However, these Watershed Districts are eligible for support through the Red River Basin Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Work Group for flood damage reduction projects that meet the goals and intent of the 1998 Flood Mediation Agreement. In addition, weblinks to annual reports for RRWMB member watershed districts are included in Appendix A.

## 2017 Contact Information and Staff

The RRWMB employed one full-time employee for 11 months in 2017. The new Executive Director was hired and started on November 29, 2017. This Executive Director oversees daily operations of the RRWMB. The RRWMB retained the services of a project coordinator, a public information consultant, a computer/accounting consultant, and legal counsel to assist with board activities in 2017. The Board contracts with an accounting firm to perform its annual financial audit, which can be found in Appendix C.

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**Red River Watershed Management Board**  
**Mission Statement, Principal Objective, and Supporting Objectives**

**Mission** - The mission of the Red River Watershed Management Board is to institute, coordinate, and finance projects and programs to alleviate flooding and assure the beneficial use of water in the watershed of the Red River of the North and its tributaries.

**Principal Objective** - The principal objective of the Red River Watershed Management Board is to assist member Watershed Districts with the implementation of water related projects and programs. The purpose of these projects and programs is the reduction of local and mainstem flood damages, and also to enhance environmental and water resource management. Projects and programs must be of benefit to the Red River Basin and its member watershed districts in order to qualify for RRWMB funding.

The principal objective of the RRWMB, as stated above, is derived from legislation passed in 1976 and 1991. This objective is also in direct support of the RRWMB's Mission Statement. In addition to the RRWMB's principle objective, the Board has adopted several supporting objectives. Taken as a whole, the principal and supporting objectives form an overall policy for the Red River Watershed Management Board.

**Supporting Objectives:**

**1. Coordination** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to provide leadership for the coordination of projects and programs related to water management. The RRWMB accepts this leadership role as a matter of policy.

**2. Financial Support** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to participate in funding initiatives which include projects and related programs that encourage consideration of mainstem benefits and enhance environmental and water resources. It is current policy of the RRWMB to participate in funding of projects initiated by a member watershed district-initiated projects meeting RRWMB established criteria for financial support and other initiatives beneficial to the basin.

**3. Basin Planning** - The RRWMB assists private, local, state, interstate, federal, or international water management and natural resource activities within the Red River Basin, through coordination and assistance with implementation. The RRWMB assists planning efforts at all levels within the Red River Basin and is committed to supporting basin planning efforts as a matter of Board policy.

**4. Water Quality** - The RRWMB supports projects and programs for the alleviation of damage by floodwater, with an additional emphasis on maintaining low flow conditions for the aquatic environment and providing water supply for public use. It is Board policy to support flood control and water conservation projects.

**5. Water Quality** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to provide assistance for studies, programs, initiatives and projects to improve water quality. It is a policy of the RRWMB to support ongoing studies, initiatives, and programs for the improvement of water quality.

**6. Erosion and Sedimentation** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to provide assistance for studies, programs, and initiatives, including cooperative efforts with other agencies, to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. It is a policy of the RRWMB to support studies, programs, and initiatives conducted by federal, state and local agencies for the reduction of soil erosion.

**7. Education** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to support development of informational and educational programs related to water and natural resource management concerns. It is a policy of the RRWMB to utilize education as a tool to inform the public on issues related to the conservation of water, soil, and the preservation and enhancement of natural resources in the basin.

**8. Research** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to provide assistance for basic and applied research related to natural resources management within the Red River Basin. It is a policy of the RRWMB to commit to an administrative and financial role in supporting and sponsoring relevant research related to water and natural resource management within the Red River Basin.

**9. Public Information** - It is a supporting objective of the RRWMB to inform the public of water management activities and concerns. It is a policy of the RRWMB to promote a strong public information program to educate the public regarding its operations and initiatives.

**10. Conflict Resolution** - The RRWMB shall work toward the resolution of conflicts regarding water management. The RRWMB is committed to the resolution of conflicts and methods to reduce conflict include, but are not limited to negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or legal action. It is a policy of the RRWMB to commit itself to the speedy and efficient resolution of any conflicts related to managing the basin's water resources.

**11. Policies, Rules, and Regulations of Other Entities** - The RRWMB will comply with the policies and regulations of other governmental entities. Where inconsistencies in policies and regulations exist, the RRWMB will cooperate with the appropriate governmental entities in resolving the inconsistencies. It is a policy of the RRWMB to adopt policies and regulations which are consistent with policies and regulations of other governmental entities, and to comply with the regulatory programs of these agencies.

## Services Provided to Member Watershed Districts

- 1. State and Federal Lobbying Efforts** - The RRWMB contracts with Frenette Legislative Advisors to provide coordinated lobbying services at the direction of the Managers and the Executive Director. These critical services provide member watershed districts with a unified voice during legislative and congressional sessions.
- 2. Financial Resources for Flood Damage Reduction Projects** - Levy authority is used by the RRWMB as one funding source for its member watershed districts to construct regional flood projects that can provide multipurpose benefits.
- 3. Coordination of Legal Services** - The RRWMB retains legal counsel as directed by the Managers. These legal services can be used to address regional water management, administrative, and organizational issues that affect all its member districts.
- 4. Water Quality Studies, Research Initiatives, Modeling, and Engineering Efforts** - Several projects, studies, and initiatives have been funded by the RRWMB that benefit its member districts and the Red River Basin. While this list is not exhaustive, the RRWMB has funded LIDAR, agricultural tiling and wetland economic studies, distributed detention modeling and engineering efforts, and several GIS mapping efforts. The RRWMB utilizes a Technical Advisory Committee to advise on technical and engineering issues.
- 5. Unified Voice for Northwest Minnesota Watershed Districts** - The RRWMB participates on statewide and regional groups such as the Minnesota Drainage Work Group, State Technical Committee for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Red River Basin Commission, International Joint Commission, Red River Retention Authority, and several other local, state, federal, regional, and international boards and committees. Participation builds trust, fosters new relationships, and enhances communication.
- 6. Tracking of Permit and Regulatory Processes** - Another role of the RRWMB is to track the activities of state and federal agencies regarding water quality, wetland, and environmental permitting, rules, and regulations. The RRWMB shares information with its member watersheds and is becoming more involved with these issues.
- 7. Regional Planning Efforts** - Several water quality planning efforts are underway or have been recently completed. The RRWMB participates in the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program, USDA Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (PL-566), and the comprehensive watershed plan for the Red River Basin. The RRWMB has also assisted member watershed districts with the development of comprehensive watershed management plans.

**8. Education and Outreach** - The RRWMB supports several activities in the Red River Basin including:

- RRWMB Annual Conference
- Host Watershed Tours
- Communication Plan
- Red River Basin Commission
- Red River Retention Authority
- Flood Damage Reduction Work Group
- International Waters Institute Program - River Watch

**9. 1998 Mediation Agreement** - The RRWMB is involved with and supports efforts of the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group to guide implementation of the 1998 mediated settlement. This agreement calls for the protection of agricultural lands from 10-year summer storm events. A Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee has developed several technical guidance documents since 1998 to provide technical guidance to the Work Group. The Mediation Agreement can be found at the following weblink:  
<http://www.rrwmb.org/FDRWG/FDRAGMT.pdf>

**10. Stream Gauging** - The RRWMB provides financial resources to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to fund regional stream gauge stations. This information is critical to water managers during flood events and the RRWMB augments USGS funding to provide water level information to member watershed districts.

## **Strategic Plan**

The RRWMB initiated a phased strategic planning process in 2017 to guide its efforts in 2018 and the coming years. The RRWMB started to address transitional and reorganizational issues in 2017, which will continue in 2018. Phase 1 was to hire an Executive Director and Executive Assistant and to establish an office in a public setting. Phase 2 is to develop a strategic plan. The RRWMB looks to forming new partnerships with local units of government, agricultural stakeholder groups, and policy makers on the local, state and federal level in the future.

## **2017 RRWMB Funded Programs, Studies, Testing, and Monitoring**

The RRWMB Governing Documents establish procedures for the review and approval for funding programs, studies, testing and monitoring of projects throughout the Red River Basin. This is in addition to providing funding of member watershed districts. Please follow the weblink for more information on how this process is implemented:

<http://www.rrwmb.org/Policies.html>

### **RRWMB Funded Programs:**

1. River Watch Program - The International Water Institute River Watch program works with partners to develop and deliver quality watershed education programming that engages local communities, provides hands-on, experiential learning for youth, and contributes to our understanding of watershed health. The RRWMB provided a partnership contribution of \$100,000 towards this effort.
2. Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) - The RRRA is comprised of members of the Red River Joint Water Resource District, a North Dakota political subdivision, and the RRWMB. The primary objective of the RRRA is to ensure joint, comprehensive, and strategic coordination of retention projects in the Red River of the North watershed and facilitating implementation and construction of retention in the Red River Basin. The RRWMB provided a partnership contribution of \$57,000 to this partnership.
3. Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) - The RRBC was formed in 2002 to help shape a transboundary vision for the Red River Basin. RRBC membership includes entities from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Winnipeg, Canada. The RRWMB contributed \$90,000 in 2017 for its share in the partnership.
4. United States Geological Survey (USGS) - The RRWMB provides funding to the USGS for stream gauge monitoring and has for several years. This data is critical to watershed districts, floodplain managers, and other decisions makers during times of flood but also for trend analysis. The RRWMB contributed \$70,000 to the USGS for this program in 2017.

### **RRWMB Funded Projects:**

Redpath Project - The RRWMB allocated \$2,371,693.10 to the Redpath flood impoundment project being developed by the de the Bois de Sioux Watershed District. This impoundment site is located alongside a reach of the channelized Mustinka River (JD14). It will be an off-channel storage site designed to take high water off JD14. The project is in the design engineering stage. Site development will require 2,600 acres. It will include approximately 11.5 miles of dike, spillway connections to and from JD14, and 5.5 miles of Mustinka River restoration.

A collection channel could also be included that would bring an 11 square mile local drainage area and divert about half of the water from a major county ditch into the impoundment from the southeast to provide local flood relief to agricultural lands, farmsteads, roads, and bridges. The project will provide about 24,000-acre feet of flood control storage of which 19,000-acre feet will be gate controlled. For further information, please go to the following link: [http://www.bdswd.com/Project\\_RedPath.html](http://www.bdswd.com/Project_RedPath.html)

Ring Dike Program - The goal of existing regulations and programs for flood damage reduction is to minimize the threat to life and property from flooding. The efforts of local governments to enforce their zoning ordinances and to sponsor projects and acquire or relocate flooded buildings have helped to reduce risk to lives and flood damages. The Ring Dike Program reduces flood damages and flood fight risks, and protects the life-long investments of farms, homes, equipment, facilities and animals. The RRWMB funded the following Ring Dike Programs in 2017:

- Wild Rice Watershed District - \$40,310.45
- Red Lake Watershed District - \$7,083.95
- Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District - \$10,440.63

## 2017 Legislative Accomplishments

The RRWMB was able to help secure funding for the following initiatives:

- \$11.5 million in bonding money in 2017 for statewide flood damage reduction funding.
- Flood Damage Reduction Work Group - \$264,000 was dedicated for each year of the 2017/2018 fiscal biennium.
- River Watch - \$250,000 was dedicated for each year of the 2017/2018 fiscal biennium.
- Red River Basin Commission - \$100,000 was secured annually for the 2017/2018 biennium for water quality monitoring for the RRBC.

A map is included in Appendix B that illustrates flood damage reduction projects that have been constructed since 1995. The RRWMB is in the process of updating this map as several projects prior to 1995 are not included. In addition, a number of community projects are not included but will be illustrated in future maps.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Weblinks to Member Watershed District Annual Reports**

Bois de Sioux Watershed District  
<http://www.bdswd.com/Annual%20Reports.html>

Joe River Watershed District – No Report Available

Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District  
<http://mstrwd.org/wp-content/uploads/Audit-Report-Final-December-31-2017.pdf>

Red Lake Watershed District  
<http://www.redlakewatershed.org/Annual%20Reports/2017%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Roseau River Watershed District  
<https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/1e456213-ee82-49a2-8139-d928a743cf2b>

Sandhill River Watershed District  
[http://www.sandhillwatershed.org/Annual\\_Reports.html](http://www.sandhillwatershed.org/Annual_Reports.html)

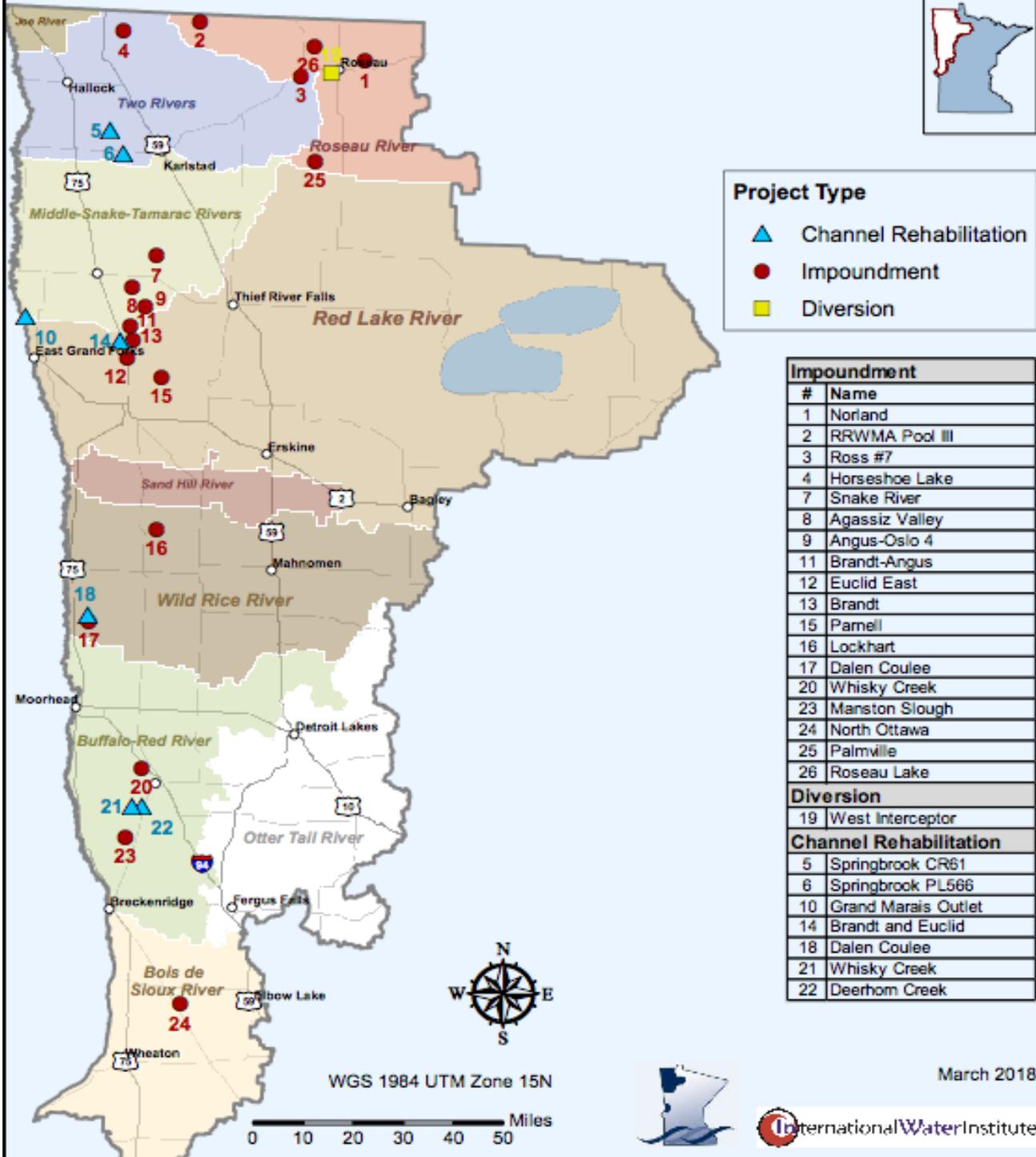
Two Rivers Watershed District  
[http://www.tworiverswd.com/Annual\\_Reports.html](http://www.tworiverswd.com/Annual_Reports.html)

Wild Rice Watershed District  
[http://www.wildricewatershed.org/index.php/download\\_file/536/158/](http://www.wildricewatershed.org/index.php/download_file/536/158/)

APPENDIX B

# Flood Damage Reduction Projects 1995 - 2018

## Red River Basin



**APPENDIX C**  
**2017 Annual Audit**

The full Red River Watershed Management Board audit was performed by Brady Martz and Associates, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants. The audit was presented to the full Board and accepted by the Managers on August 21, 2018. The audit is posted at the RRWMB website at: [www.rrwmb.org](http://www.rrwmb.org)