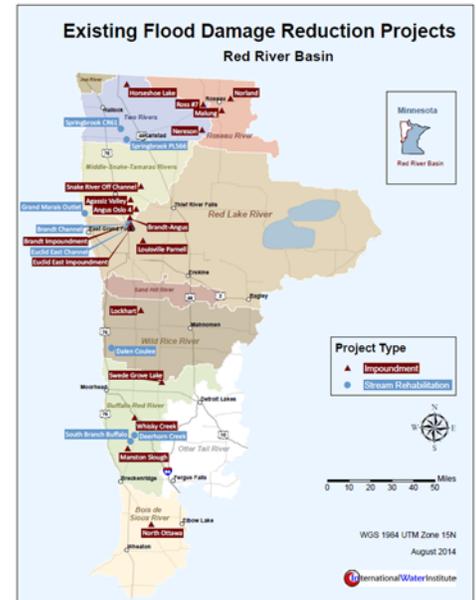


REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE- RED RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION WORK GROUP FISCAL YEAR 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG or Work Group) was originally formed in 1998 to address issues related to the development of flood damage reduction projects and natural resource enhancement projects in the Minnesota portion of the Red River of the North Basin. Watershed-based work under this agreement has led to development of numerous projects that provide local and regional benefits to help reduce flood damages, improve habitat, and improve water quality.

The Flood Damage Reduction Work Group works to ensure the full implementation of the 1998 Red River Mediation Agreement. This report to the Legislature provides an overview of the accomplishments achieved in fiscal year 2016 with state funding (\$264,000) granted for implementation of the Red River Mediation Agreement.



FY 2016 Accomplishments

The FY 2016 spending plan approved by the Work Group allocated \$264,000 each fiscal year to support collaborative watershed-based efforts to implement the 1998 Mediation Agreement. For all expenses incurred, an equal match is provided by expenses incurred by individual watershed districts or the Red River Watershed Management Board. Funds were allocated and expended to plan and implement projects to achieve flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement goals in the following categories:

Project Team Support. This budget item includes activities that directly support activities of watershed-based project teams to develop and implement projects. In FY 2016 funds were allocated to seven watersheds project teams investigating the following projects:

- Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (Roseau River WD)
- Roseau Lake Rehabilitation (Roseau River WD)
- Klondike Water Retention Project (Two Rivers WD)
- Tamarac River Watershed (Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD)
- Pine Lake Watershed Project (Red Lake WD)
- Four-legged Lake Watershed Project (Red Lake WD)
- Lower Wild Rice River Rehabilitation (Wild Rice WD)
- Goose Prairie Wildlife Management Area Enhancements (Wild Rice WD)
- Manston Slough Restoration (Buffalo-Red River WD)
- South Branch of the Buffalo River Restoration (Buffalo-Red River WD)
- Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration (Buffalo-Red River WD)
- Redpath Project (Bois de Sioux WD)
- Doran Creek Project (Bois de Sioux WD)

A total of \$91,526 was disbursed to seven watershed districts in project team support at a 50% match. Total requests for project team support was \$510,247.

Some of the project team support funding helped enable development of proposals which secured project specific Clean Water and Outdoor Heritage Legacy funds.

Project Acceleration Funding. This budget item typically funds engineering efforts above and beyond those that are routinely expected in the project team process. In FY 2016, \$74,283.44 in project acceleration funds were disbursed to supplement project team support funding.

Project Monitoring. This budget item primarily supports water quality monitoring of mediation projects, water quality monitor training, reporting, and monitoring coordination. In FY2016, \$75,000 in funding was used to prepare water quality reports for 6 projects, develop a nutrient and sediment load monitoring strategy at 3 projects, to develop a map based reporting strategy/method to encompass all project monitoring efforts (e.g. habitat establishment, water quality, floristic quality), hold quarterly Red River Basin Monitoring Advisory Committee meetings, and train 31 (professionals + volunteer) water quality staff that collect data at sites around the basin. Also in FY 2016, additional monitoring funds were invested in monitoring wetlands at 5 project sites to begin to develop appropriate methods to assess the effects of projects on wetland community conditions. These funds also leverage \$75,000 in funding from the Red River Watershed Management Board.

Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC). The TSAC provides technical and scientific advice to the Work Group primarily through development of technical papers. TSAC membership includes a range of disciplines from hydrology and engineering to ecology, wildlife, soils, wetlands, and water quality. In FY2016, TSAC conducted one full meeting and two project monitoring committee meetings.

Facilitation Grants. Funds traditionally are allocated to this budget item to fund a third-party professional facilitator to assist project teams when internal issues are encountered that could significantly impede the project team process. No funds were used for this purpose in FY 2016.

Communications and Outreach. The Work Group created a Communications Committee approximately four years ago to address specific communication needs and issues. This committee meets four to six times a year and is comprised of Work Group members and their staff. Funds for communications and outreach typically cover costs incurred to plan and host the annual conference each March, develop fact sheets and other basic communication materials, and to develop and administer surveys to gain insight into specific communication issues as requested by the Work Group.

In 2015, the Communication Committee developed a communication needs survey that was administered to watershed districts in the Red River Basin to determine communication resources and assistance needed. This information was shared with the Work Group as well as other entities in the Red River Basin.

In 2016, the Communications Committee was instrumental in creating a joint communication committee with the Red River Watershed Management Board and the Red River Basin Commission. This joint committee met twice in FY2016.

In March, 2016, the Work Group and Red River Watershed Management Board hosted the 18th annual conference in Moorhead. The conference agenda provided an opportunity for watershed districts, state and federal agencies, local governments and citizens to review accomplishments, increase their understanding of ongoing flood damage reduction and natural resource issues, and discuss future projects. Approximately 120 people attended the conference. The conference included special sessions on the project development to meet regional flood damage reduction goals through distributed storage, a drainage seminar, and on using conservation funding for project development.

In December 2015, the Work Group met in conjunction with the Prairie Grains conference in Grand Forks for the second time. This December meeting will continue to be an annual event to provide a forum to engage leaders in the agricultural community on water management issues in the Red River Basin.

Work Group Meetings. The Work Group held six meetings during FY 2016. Work group meetings include a review of finances, discussion of pertinent issues and projects, and review of ongoing projects in development.

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