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# NEWS & VIEWS

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD

## PROPOSED FARGO-MOORHEAD RED RIVER DIVERSION

This is a wonderful time of year. Harvest for many crops is underway, the air is crisp, and the days are filled with hard work, pride, and appreciation. As harvest season continues, please know that the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) remains committed to the values and ideals of agriculture as the fundamental economic impetus in the Red River basin.

The RRWMB, since its inception by the Minnesota state legislature in 1976, has provided important water retention and storage solutions. In fact, the board prides itself in “getting things done” and “moving dirt” for water storage and retention projects. Why? Because, as producers and rural citizens ourselves, we understand the frustration associated with flooded fields and towns.

This is why the RRWMB is consistently challenging the designers, planners, and

authorities supporting the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion. We believe that Fargo-Moorhead needs permanent and long-term flood protection. But we also believe that the system designed to protect Fargo-Moorhead, should in no way threaten the downstream communities and the agricultural and social interests of these communities.

The RRWMB does not support the currently proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion because it's present design and implementation threatens downstream communities and interests. The board's own Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consisting of some of the best civil engineers and hydrologic experts in the basin, has studied the proposed diversion plans and specifications, and have publicly stated their opposition. So what is the RRWMB doing to ensure that the proposed diver-

sion is not only good for Fargo-Moorhead, but for the basin as a whole?

We are working closely with our water retention colleagues in North Dakota to help make water retention a vital part of the next federal Farm Bill. Potential funding from the Farm Bill could be utilized to construct retention projections associated with the Fargo-Moorhead diversion which would facilitate basin-wide flood protection. In fact, Minnesota Congressman Colin Peterson, chairperson of the Congressional Agricultural Committee, has asked representatives of the RRWMB along with various water management organizations in North Dakota to join him in making specific recommendations for permanent and basin-wide flood protection for inclusion in the next Farm Bill. In short, we continue working with all local, state, and federal authorities to help secure the necessary funding to move

dirt and obtain permanent flood protection for the entire Red River basin.

Supported by the work of our TAC, the board hopes that a water protection system – one that includes all viable options, not only large scale diversions – will protect all citizens of the Red River basin. Be assured that we work on your behalf and share your concerns about the proposed diversion. Fargo-Moorhead needs flood protection, but it should be part of a basin-wide flood protection system, and should in no way threaten the livelihoods of any citizen living downstream.

Finally, as the days shorten and you continue your harvest, please know that we are working for you. Like you, we understand the frustration that flooding brings to our rural communities and we are working hard to advocate lasting flood protection. Please have a safe and plentiful harvest.

## WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

### ROSEAU RIVER WD

The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The Spruce Valley Corporation has begun Phase 2 construction (impoundment and inlet structures). The weather has been cooperative so far with the outlet structures nearing completion.

The District continues planning for two new ring dikes through EQIP and the rural ring dike programs with construction planned for this year. Estimates for both dikes are ~ \$120,000 - \$130,000 for each dike. A completion date of November 15th is anticipated for both dikes.

### BOIS DE SIOUX WD

The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the Tiger Grant proposal for the Upper Mustinka Transportation Improvements Project. Grant County has taken the lead on the development of this project. The District is a partner in the project and will discuss their potential financial commitment as well as additional funding sources at their next board meeting. This project is a prime example of using the road network over a river valley to meter the flows of large flood events while keeping the roadways open for travel.



[WWW.RRWMB.ORG](http://WWW.RRWMB.ORG)

## RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

*At its regularly scheduled August meeting, the RRWMB:*

- \* Received a report from Mark Meister, Public Information Officer.*
- \* Received a report from Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator.*
- \* Discussed the Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) project with Lance Yohe, Executive Director - Red River Basin Commission (RRBC).*
- \* Authorized N. Erickson to draft and forward responses to the letters of opposition received by the board regarding the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion project.*
- \* Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.*
- \* Reviewed the written report distributed by the International Water Institute (IWI) regarding water quality project monitoring and River Watch activities.*
- \* Received a report from Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator.*
- \* Authorized a letter of support to the Bois de Sioux WD regarding the Tiger Discretionary Grant Application.*

## EVENTS COMING UP

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lake Watershed District, 1000 Pennington Ave. S, Thief River Falls, MN.

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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.