



## THE “SPRINGBROOK PROJECT” IS OPERATIONAL

THE LAST PROJECT IN THE U. S. FUNDED BY THE PL-566  
“WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION PROGRAM”

The Two Rivers Watershed District has announced that their newest flood control project, Springbrook PL566 Project #10, was substantially completed during the summer 2013 construction season.

Located in Kittson County's Springbrook and Davis Townships, the project consists of over 10 miles of “setback levees” that will reduce flood damages to adjacent cropland and public infrastructure, improve the health of the stream channel by preventing erosion and sedimentation, and provide considerable wildlife habitat along the stream. The project includes the installation of more than 29 side water-inlet culverts, numerous diversion ditches, three rock drop structures to control erosion and more than 400 acres of grass buffer-strip.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided all of the \$1.3 million construction costs through the USDA's PL-566 program. As local sponsor, the Two Rivers Watershed District is responsible for inspection, operation, and maintenance, and the local share of project costs.

The federal Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566) authorized the NRCS to help local organizations and units of government plan and implement watershed projects. PL-566 watershed projects were locally led to solve natural and human resource prob-



lems in watersheds up to 250,000 acres (less than 400 square miles).

PL-566 program worked through local government sponsors and helped participants solve natural resource and related economic problems on a watershed basis. Projects included flood prevention and damage reduction, development of rural water supply sources, erosion and sediment control, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, wetland creation and restoration, and increased recreational opportunities. Technical and financial assistance available through NRCS provided for plan development and the implementation of projects.

The Springbrook Project started when local landowners petitioned the Two Rivers Watershed District. Landowners identified flooding problems along an existing stream that could not handle high flows entering the channel. This caused water to breakout and flow overland, erosion, sedimentation, township road wash-

outs, losses to cropland and public infrastructure.

To prevent breakout flooding, the Springbrook project constructed levees on both sides of the stream, set back between 100 feet and 300 feet. This allows water to enter the stream, but as floodwater rises and starts to breakout of the channel, it can be contained between the levees, and prevented from flowing overland and washing-out infrastructure. The levees have been designed to contain water for up to a 10-year flood event. If a larger event occurs, the levees will overtop in designated areas. Twenty-nine culverts were installed through the dikes to provide agricultural drainage. “Flap gates” installed on the ‘wet side’ will prevent backflow into cropland.

The Springbrook project will also help prevent the flow of sediments that cause water quality issues downstream. The land between the levees will be taken out of agricultural crop production, enrolled in the State of Minnesota's

“Reinvest in Minnesota” (RIM) program and seeded with native grasses. Eroded and washed-out areas have been stabilized and set aside as part of a grass buffer strip which landowners then enrolled in the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Just prior to the termination of the PL-566 program in 2011, the Minnesota office of NRCS received authorization to construct the Springbrook project. This makes Springbrook, a project that's been in the making since 1998, the last in the country to be built using PL-566 funds.

Watershed Districts in northwestern Minnesota received funding from the PL-556 project for four other flood control projects. Back in the 1960's, three were constructed in Kittson County – one in the Joe River Watershed District and two in the Two Rivers Watershed District. The fourth project, the flood diversion and upstream impoundment that protects the City of Warren was completed in 2006. Several projects on the west side of the Red River - funded by PL-556 - were put to the test during the summer flooding of 2013 in North Dakota.

“The finishing touches on the Springbrook Project #10” will be completed by December 31, 2013,” said Dan Money, Two Rivers Watershed District Administrator. “The project will be fully operational this spring – and ready for future flood events.”

## WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

### ROSEAU RIVER WD

The Roseau River WD reported on the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area project team. Comments have been received on the first draft of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). The watershed district staff will coordinate with the Wildlife Manager to further revise the worksheet and provide additional information. The Purpose and Need Statement is currently under revision.

### TWO RIVERS WD

The Two Rivers WD reported that long-time manager, O'Neil Larson retired from the Board of Managers. Manager Larson began his term on July 2, 2002 and retired from the board on October 31, 2013. He represented the south-eastern area of Kittson County, including but not limited to portions of the townships of Arveson, Deerwood, Springbrook, Jupiter, Norway and Pelan.

### WILD RICE WD

The Wild Rice WD reported that the Green Meadow project team met and discussed problem areas. Input was received from local landowners and state agencies. A consensus was reached to continue exploring various alternatives to alleviate the problems within this area.

## RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled December meeting, the RRWMB:

- Received a report from RRWMB Administrator Naomi Erickson that the proposed revisions to the Governing Documents publication will be distributed to the Board of Managers for review prior to the January board meeting.
- Received a presentation from Jerry Bents, Houston Engineering, Inc. and Jeff Lewis, Red River Basin Commission regarding a report given to the Diversion Authority on the preliminary results of the upstream retention studies completed in the Red River basin.
- Heard a report from Brian Opsahl, CPA - Brady, Martz & Associates regarding the 2012 Annual Audit.
- Authorized the draft model rules developed by the Rules and Regulations Committee as presented by Louis Smith, attorney - Smith Partners. The model rules were developed to be used as a template for revising current watershed district rules.
- Received a report from Red River Coordinator Dan Thul regarding a meeting he attended on November 21, 2013 hosted by the Northwest Regional Development Commission and the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD to discuss the flooding concerns at Oslo and the surrounding area.



## EVENTS

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, 11 5th Avenue East, Ada, MN.



Ron Osowski (left) is presented with a twenty-four year service award for his devoted service given to the Red River Watershed Management Board by John Finney (right), President.

## RED RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION CONFERENCE

MARCH 25-26, 2014

The 16th Joint Annual Conference of the Red River Watershed Management Board and the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group will be held at the Holiday Inn Detroit Lakes - Inn on the Lake, Detroit Lakes, MN on March 25-26, 2014.

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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.