



NEWS & VIEWS

RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD

RED RIVER COORDINATOR LOOKS BACK AT 33-YEAR CAREER

For 33 years, Dan Thul has been an invaluable resource for the Red River Watershed Management Board and its members. As Red River Coordinator for the RRWMB and Beltrami County Area Hydrologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Thul has answered lots of questions about county, city and township administered floodplain and shoreland management; made sure several dams are safe and operated responsibly; and issued plenty of permits for work in the bed of public waters, as well as appropriations of water from surface/ground water sources.

Before his more than three-decades-long career began, Thul almost chose to pursue a different direction. "I was originally planning to go into a fisheries or wildlife management career, but the councilors at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul talked me into a new program they had just started: Soil and Water Resource Management," said Thul.

"My first job out of college was with BARR Engineering out of the cities," Thul continued. "I worked with their engineers on flood insurance studies modeling watershed runoff and river flood flows. That's where I received the experience needed to become a hydrologist."

When asked what his favorite projects have been when working with the RRWMB, Thul could think of several, but one in particular: the Moose River Impoundment Project in the Red Lake Watershed District. "This is a fantastic project which included coordination with the DNR, Section of Wildlife to achieve, since it is located entirely on a State Wildlife Management Area. Charlie Anderson was the engineer on the project and he taught me how to work with people to get good multipurpose projects

developed," Thul said.

"In the early years, I spent much more time working directly with all the individual Watershed Districts and got to know most of the Managers during that time. I have developed a real appreciation for the work they do on behalf of their constituents. They are one dedicated group of individuals," said Thul.

In June, the RRWMB held a retirement party at the Evergreen Eating Emporium in Thief River Falls to celebrate Thul's career. Among those in attendance was Don Ogaard, the first chairman of the RRWMB. "Don was an inspirational leader and because of his direction and support, I owe my successful career mostly to him," said Thul.

Thul is happy to state that his choice of career has been an ideal fit for him, and has truly appreciated working with a wide range of water professionals. As he put it, "I wouldn't have traded my career for any other. I grew up in the cities and always wanted to 'Get Out!' and work in the rural countryside. As it turned out, it was a great move... especially because of the great people that live in the Red River Valley."

PROJECT UPDATE: NORTH OTTAWA IM- POUNDMENT PROJECT COMPLETE

The North Ottawa Impoundment Project, developed by the Bois de Sioux Watershed District, is officially complete. The impoundment controls 75 square miles of the 320 square mile Rabbit River Watershed in Grant and Otter Tail Counties



Pictured from left to right are Daniel Wilkens, Dan Thul and Don Ogaard.

by storing the excess runoff on 1,920 acres of land.

Dikes constructed around the perimeter of the impoundment form a holding area, and partitions within the interior provide a complex of sub-impoundments. Waters carried by existing drainage ditches are intercepted by diversion channels, and brought into the impoundment through a diked inlet channel.

The impoundment has 100% of its storage capacity available for the spring runoff. After spring runoff, the water is released as quickly as possible to restore about 80% the impoundment's capacity. The remaining 20% is drawn out slowly over the balance of the year while providing the secondary benefits.

In addition to flood control, the impoundment is being used for multiple purposes including natural resource enhancement and water quality improvement.

"We're very pleased by the flood protection and other benefits provided by North Ottawa," said Jerome Deal of the Bois de Sioux River Watershed District Board of Managers. "We think this work will provide valuable information on how impoundments in other parts of Minnesota can be built and operated to maximize their use for multiple purposes."



FREE COMPUTER AND WEB TOOL INFORMS NUTRIENT REDUCTION STRATEGIES



An innovative technology solution is allowing water quality professionals to develop water quality plans and prioritize projects more accurately to receive state funding.

The tool, called the Prioritize, Target & Measure Application, or “PTMApp”, developed by the International Water Institute and Houston Engineering, is a LIDAR-based prioritization, target, and measure application that helps identify down to an individual field scale (40-120 acres) where the highest sediment and nutrient exports are occurring within a watershed.

PTMApp also gives the user the ability to monitor and estimate benefits that would occur at any location downstream from conservation practices that are placed on the ground.

This tool is being used in many of the watersheds in both Minnesota and North Dakota locations of the basin.

The PTMApp has the potential to greatly enhance work done by other basin organizations such as the Red River Basin Commission as they develop their nutrient management plan.

“Many entities are struggling to reduce sediment and nutrients in surface and groundwater. Those issues can continue even after decades of conservation efforts,” says Engineer Mark Deutschman, with Houston Engineering, Inc. “The PTMApp is a desktop toolbar and web interface designed to develop information that informs nutrient reduction strategies.”

The PTMApp tool can help identify specific field-scale practices leading to the most cost-effective improvements in water quality. Users can find the most efficient best management practices (BMPs) relative to a resource of concern (a specific location - e.g. a lake, stream reach or wetland complex). Outputs from PTMApp are agile enough to use in internal or public plan development meetings, or during one-on-one conversations with landowners.

PTMApp-Desktop has been publicly released and is available for download upon submitting registration information. The PTMApp-Web component allows users to access some of the PTMAP-Desktop data products. Simply request access to the public dataset (Root River) using your registered user information.

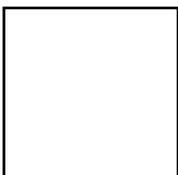
Chuck Fritz, IWI Executive Director, noted, “The Red River Watershed Management Board serves as the fiscal agent for PTMApp and has been a great partner in the development of this, and other, innovative water and natural resource management tools to help make better, more informed resource management decisions.”

The PTMApp for Desktop and Web is available at: <http://www.rrbdin.org/prioritize-target-measure-application-ptmapp>



UPCOMING EVENTS

Go to
www.RRWMB.org
to see our complete list
of upcoming events



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