



Red River Watershed Management Board

Meeting Highlights – May 21, 2019

- 1. Funding** – The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) Managers approved the Step 2 application for the Goose Prairie WMA Enhancement Project of the Wild Rice Watershed District. The Step 1 application of the Roseau River Watershed District for the Whitney Lake Subwatershed Project Retention Area C was approved by the RRWMB Managers. A funding agreement for the Thief River Falls Westside Flood Damage Reduction Project of the Red Lake Watershed District was approved by resolution. In addition, a funding agreement for a loan advance of \$135,000.00 for engineering assistance for the Whitney Lake Subwatershed Retention Project Areas A and C was also approved by the RRWMB Managers by resolution.
- 2. Ring Dike Contract Extended** – The existing contract with the State of Minnesota expires on June 30, 2019 and the RRWMB Managers approved a contract extension until June 30, 2020. The RRWMB discussed a possible contract extension earlier in the spring with State officials due to the potential impacts of 2019 spring flood conditions upon the ability of survey, engineering, and design work to be completed for individual ring dikes. Watershed districts in attendance at the meeting provided information to the RRWMB Managers about local needs for the funds.
- 3. Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG) Update** – FDRWG Co-chairs Rita Albrecht (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources) and Dan Money (RRWMB) provided an overview to the RRWMB Managers of the process being used to review the 1998 Flood Mediation Agreement. An FDRWG Strategic Plan Subcommittee comprised of several FDRWG members has been reviewing the Agreement, with recommendations to be brought forth to the full FDRWG later in 2019. The update also included discussion about possible adjustments to the Project Team Handbook and Project Readiness Form.
- 4. RRWMB Strategic Plan Facilitation Services** – Morrie Lanning Consulting LLC has been secured to assist the RRWMB with developing the strategic plan and to facilitate discussions with the RRWMB over the coming months. A proposed timeline was discussed, with two to three half day meetings being needed to complete the entire process. The first half day meeting will be the afternoon of June 18, 2019 as part of the RRWMB regular board meeting. At the end of the process, the RRWMB will have a strategic plan to guide its future efforts.
- 5. Flexibility in Conducting Economic Analysis** – Keith Weston of the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) discussed new flexibility that has been approved by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for conducting economic analysis. Decisions were made earlier in 2018 by USDA for use of new flexibility for project sponsors requesting federal funds. This flexibility can now be used for projects that are conducting watershed planning through the RRRA via USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding. Ecosystem services and other environmental benefits may now be given additional consideration during the economic analysis process.
- 6. Legislative Update** – The RRWMB Legislative Liaison provided an update via conference call to discuss 2019 RRWMB legislative initiatives related to per diems, River Watch Program Funding, FDRWG annual base funding, and changes to watershed district project levy caps. Until the special session is over, and the 2019 legislative session concludes, no final information is yet available.
- 7. New Forms** – The RRWMB Managers were presented a new form related to funding requests based on urgent need or hardship. A new application form was also presented for funding requests related to programs, studies, testing, and monitoring initiatives. An updated Project Evaluation Form was also presented to the Managers. These forms will be finalized and distributed to member watershed districts in the coming weeks.
- 8. Next RRWMB Meeting** – Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at the Wild Rice Watershed District Office at 9:30 AM in Ada, MN. This location is tentative based on the timelines of the office remodeling project. The alternative location is planned for the Ada Area Event Center in Ada, MN.