



## Red River Watershed Management Board

### *Board of Managers*

John Finney, President-Humboldt LeRoy Carriere-Roseau Dan Money-Hallock Ben Kleinwachter-Strandquist  
Orville Knott, Vice President-Red Lake Falls Daniel Wilkens, Treasurer-Fertile Greg Holmvik-Ada Jerome Deal, Secretary-Wheaton  
Naomi Erickson, Administrator-Detroit Lakes

## RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING July 15, 2014 Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota

The RRWMB met on Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, Fertile, Minnesota.

President John Finney called the meeting to order.

Members present were:

LeRoy Carriere	Roger Anderson
Ben Kleinwachter	Orville Knott
Daniel Wilkens	Greg Holmvik
Jerome Deal	

Others present were:

- Naomi Erickson, Administrator
- Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator
- Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator
- Heidi Hughes, Public Information Officer
- Nick Drees, Project Coordinator, Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD
- Pat Downs, Executive Director - RRRRA
- Keith Weston, Red River Basin Coordinator - USDA-NRCS
- Sharon Josephson, Congressman Peterson's office
- Jim Zeigler, Unit Supervisor - MPCA
- Jeff Lewis, Executive Director - RRBC
- Henry Van Offelen, Red River Basin Coordinator - MDNR
- Jerry Bents, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Blake Carlson, Engineer, WSN Engineering, Inc.
- Kevin Ruud, Administrator, Wild Rice WD
- Morrie Lanning, Barr Engineering, Inc.
- Ron Adrian, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Torin McCormack, Roseau River WD
- Myron Jesme, Administrator, Red Lake WD
- Nate Dalager, Engineer, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Rob Sip, Environmental Policy Specialist - MDA
- Brian Dwight, Clean Water Specialist - BWSR
- Roger Hanson, Sand Hill River WD
- Phillip Swenson, Sand Hill River WD

**Motion** by Manager Kleinwachter to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as written with minor corrections, **Seconded** by Manager Knott, **Carried**.

The Treasurer's report was presented and it was approved as read. **Motion** by Manager Knott to approve the Treasurer's Report, **Seconded** by Manager Kleinwachter, **Carried**. A one-page handout of monthly bills to be approved was distributed. **Motion** to approve and pay bills by Manager Deal, **Seconded** by Manager Carriere, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

### **Budget and Tax Levy Rate Determination**

Prior to discussion, Manager Wilkens requested his alternate, Roger Hanson, participate in the discussion and vote.

N. Erickson reviewed the 2015 proposed annual budget. A draft budget was developed for discussion which included projected expenses for 2015 based on the previous year's expenses incurred.

Following discussion, the Board requested that N. Erickson revise the 2015 proposed annual budget for consideration at the August board meeting to include a comparison of the previous years' actual vs. budget amounts.

Manager Deal stated that following the April 15, 2014 board meeting, the Finance Committee met and discussed reducing the 2015 tax levy rate from 100% to 75% in response to the 2014 increase in local property tax assessments.

The Board discussed the tax levy rate determination. It was moved by Manager Deal and seconded by Manager Kleinwachter to reduce the levy to 75% (.0003627) for FY 2015. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Roger Hanson returned his position to Manager Wilkens.

### **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**

P. Downs distributed a monthly report of activities. Meetings occurred with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Representatives Peterson and Cramer, and Senators Hoeven, Heitkamp and Klobuchar relative to targeting conservation funding of up to \$50 million over the next five years in the Red River of the North Basin to minimize flooding, boost soil health, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat in the watershed.

P. Downs distributed the RRRA preliminary 2015 budget for review. **Motion** by Manager Deal to approve the preliminary 2015 budget of the RRRA, **Seconded** by Manager Holmviik, **Carried**.

P. Downs reviewed the draft letter from the RRWMB to the RRRA in response to a request for documentation confirming a commitment of resources as a Contributing Partner to be included with the application to be submitted with the Request for Proposal for the RCPP. The Board of Managers directed N. Erickson and P. Downs to finalize the letter.

### **Water Quality Project Monitoring**

In the absence of C. Fritz, Manager Finney discussed the River Watch Citizen Monitoring Program funding request of \$100,000.00. N. Erickson explained that the board had a two-year agreement with the International Water Institute (IWI) to provide payments to IWI for the River Watch program in the amount of \$100,000 per year for a two-year term for a total of \$200,000 which expired on May 24, 2014. Following discussion, the Board of Managers agreed to table the request until next month in order to clarify the issue with C. Fritz.

### **Project Coordinator Report**

R. Harnack reviewed the Project Coordinator Report. He reported that he attended a meeting conducted with NRCS, the EPA, the USACE, D. Money, B. Carlson to review the Interpretive Rule (IR) of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) as it applies to the Springbrook, Wild Rice River Corridor, and Redpath projects. Following discussion, it was determined that the rule was intended for individual landowners implementing conservation projects consistent with specific NRCS project standards and *not* watershed district projects. A key factor for the rule to apply is that it must be considered part of "normal farming practices." At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that D. Money would proceed with developing the Springbrook project while considering the IR application, and R. Harnack would continue discussions with NRCS regarding applying the IR to a specific project.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **A) RRB Flood Damage Reduction Work Group / Finance Committee Meeting**

N. Erickson reported that a conference call of the Finance Committee was conducted on Friday, June 20, 2014. Discussion occurred regarding the unexpended balance of ~ \$135,000 of the original \$264,000 budget for fiscal year 2014. The committee agreed that it was likely they would recommend to the Work Group the balance of funds be carried forward to fiscal year 2015 following the disbursement of project team reimbursement requests through June 30th.

N. Erickson stated that for each project team that received funding for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014), P. Lynch has requested a short narrative (one paragraph is adequate) explaining the specific activities that utilized these funds. A provision in the grant agreement requires bi-annual reporting summarizing the accomplishments achieved through the funding provided by the grant. The report also provides an opportunity to justify continued legislative support for the Work Group. She requested that the individual project team narratives be forwarded to both H. Van Offelen and herself by August 15, 2014.

#### **B) 3rd Annual - Red River Valley Ag Water Issues Forum**

N. Erickson distributed a handout on the above-referenced series of forums. The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation is sponsoring the forums to include discussion on the Red River Basin 20% Flow Reduction Goal; Conservation Partnerships - What's been accomplished & future opportunities; and the Farm Bill & Federal Funding.

The forums will be conducted in three locations throughout the basin including Strathcona, Gary and Rothsay and will be conducted from July 16 - 18, 2014.

N. Erickson distributed a spreadsheet depicting floodwater detention projects that received funding from the RRWMB. She stated that Manager Finney requested that the information be distributed at the forums. She thanked the Member District Administrators for their assistance in finalizing the document.

### **C) Clean Water Council**

N. Erickson reported that Doug Thomas, Acting Assistant Director Field Operations - BWSR, forwarded an invitation to the Board of Managers to join the Clean Water Council on Sunday, August 17, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. in Moorhead, MN for a welcome reception. The reception will be followed by a presentation on the Red River Basin Decision Support Network and the Water Quality Decision Support Application by Chuck Fritz. Following discussion, the Board of Managers determined that due to previous commitments no one was available to attend.

### **D) Upcoming Meetings/Conferences**

1. **Red River Retention Authority (RRRA)**, August 12, 2014, Kittson County Courthouse in Hallock, MN.
2. **Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group**, August 20, 2014, MnDOT, Detroit Lakes, MN.

### **Project Implementation Strategy**

H. Van Offelen conducted a presentation on the Green Meadow Project Team Process of the Wild Rice WD. He explained that he along with C. Fritz, K. Ruud and J. Bents had been asked to discuss the process currently being followed in the Wild Rice WD in order to determine whether this model could be utilized by other project teams.

The strategy to establish, support and manage a formal planning process using the Mediation Agreement and the USACE Points of Concurrence (POC) included the following:

- Fully engage the Project Team
  - Mediation Agreement: Project Team Handbook
  - USACE POC Guidance
- Actively manage the process:
  - Develop effective and acceptable solutions to solve water/natural resource problems

The goal of the Green Meadow Project Team is to develop a viable strategy/options to solve the known problems within the Upper Green Meadow Subwatershed for the Wild Rice WD Board of Managers' consideration.

H. Van Offelen explained that the planning steps identified in the Project Team handbook must be followed in order. These steps include: 1. Problem Identification, 2. Assess Watershed Conditions, 3. Establish Project Purpose, Goals and Identify Appropriate Strategies, 4. Evaluate Alternative Strategies, and 5. Select Site Alternative(s).

H. Van Offelen added that the USACE's POC Guidance document must also be followed in order. The POC include:

1. Establish Purpose and Need (Planning steps 1 - 3)
2. Identify Range of Possible Alternatives Subject to Detailed Analysis
3. Identify Preferred Alternative
4. Permit Application, Impact Mitigation During Design and Documentation of 404 (b) (1) Analysis

The Green Meadow Project Team has conducted five meetings to date. The progress to date includes:

1. POC No. 1 - Purpose and Need / Submitted
2. POC No. 2 - Identify Range of Possible Alternatives Subject to Detailed Analysis (Strategy Elimination) / Submitted
3. POC No. 3 - In Process

H. Van Offelen explained that the success of the of the Green Meadow Project Team can be attributed to several outcomes: the Project Team is driven by stakeholders who have ownership in the process; the District staff and other facilitators maintain a neutral position; and the Board of Managers remain neutral until required to act on the Project Team's recommendation.

J. Bents added that C. Fritz facilitating the Project Team has been vital to its progress. He stated that unbiased leadership is essential to ensure an effective process.

M. Carroll suggested that the individuals providing facilitation to the Green Meadow Project Team develop a proposal to establish a *Project Implementation Strategy* model that could be utilized by other project teams to accelerate project development. Manager Finney stated that possibly the RRWMB and the Work Group could provide a 50/50 cost-share for this service to interested project teams as was done similarly with the Project Planning Acceleration Effort. Manager Finney requested that this issue be discussed further at the August board meeting.

### **Red River Basin Commission**

J. Lewis, Executive Director - RRBC discussed the annual International Legislative Forum conducted in Moorhead, MN. The meeting involves legislators on both sides of the border from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Manitoba who discuss issues related to flood mitigation and economic and workforce development. The forum has been meeting since the 1997 Red River flood and plans to hold next year's meeting in South Dakota.

### **Red River Coordinator/TAC Report**

D. Thul discussed Phase 2 of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Red River Basin Watershed Feasibility Study (WFS). The Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority (FMDA) provided \$500,000 to the RRBC for a Halstad Upstream Retention (HUR) modeling project to determine the impacts/benefits of retention sites identified upstream of Halstad (southern 1/3 of basin).

D. Thul explained that previously a recommendation was forwarded from the TAC to the USACE to utilize federal funding to extend the modeling effort to the Canadian border to encompass the entire Red River basin. He added that he and J. Bents are developing an RFP for the USACE which they can utilize for the effort or contract with another firm to complete the project.

D. Thul reported that at the press conference hosted by Congressman Peterson on July 2, 2014, the Congressman referenced the proposed Winger Dam project in the Sand Hill River WD. At the conference, the USDA announced plans to target conservation funding of up to \$50 million over the next five years in the Red River basin which could include the construction of projects formerly considered infeasible. D. Thul noted that the Commissioner's office had requested him to research

the previously authorized permit for the Winger Dam project and it was determined that a permit had been issued for a dry dam, however, by law it expired after five years.

Thul noted that the TAC discussed the Roseau River WD's Step II Submittal for the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA) Project and recommended the Board of Managers to authorize the Step II Submittal for the project.

### **District Reports**

- The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported that the MDNR invited the District to participate in a conference call with their staff, Dave Bergman of Explore Minnesota, the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail marketing committee and Audubon Minnesota to discuss nature tourism projects in NW Minnesota.

The Watershed District also plans to meet with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to discuss creating a pollinator habitat demonstration at Agassiz Valley's soybean and cattle grazing fields.

- The Red Lake WD reported on the Burnham Creek legal drainage system. Bids were opened on June 26th for a project located approximately 8 miles south and 5 miles east of Crookston for the legal drainage system within the Burnham Creek sub-watershed which is part of Red Lake WD Project No. 43A. The project will address maintenance on a portion of the legal drainage system, erosion control bank stabilization and installation of fish passage structures. Low bid was received by Wright Construction of Thief River Falls in the amount of \$374,900.50. The bid has not yet been awarded to the contractor due to pending review by the District's legal counsel, staff and project engineer.

Funding for this project is part of a cost-share between the District with matching funds from a BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant applied for by West Polk SWCD. The project will be constructed in four phases including an erosion control phase, with MDNR and USFWS funding for a portion of fish passage structures and maintenance of a portion of the legal drainage system using local ditch funds. Permit applications have been submitted to the MDNR, USACE and WCA. It is undetermined whether an MPCA permit is required at this time. Plans are to have construction completed by fall of 2014.

- The Wild Rice WD reported that the Green Meadow Project Team will meet the end of August to finalize Alternatives and Strategies for the project. A site visit and environmental assessment review will be held at the end of July. The goal is to present a project or a ranking of project options to the Board of Managers at their September meeting.

### **District's Funding Requests**

1. **Roseau River WD / Step II Submittal / Roseau River Wildlife Management Area Project**  
The information required for a Step II submittal was previously distributed. The total estimated project cost is ~ \$2,523,900 with the following proposed cost-share: \$1,892,925 - 75% State of

Minnesota; and for the remaining local split of 25%, \$420,650 – RRWMB (2/3) and \$210,325 – RRWD (1/3).

**Motion** by Manager Wilkens to authorize the Step II submittal of the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area Project, **Seconded** by Manager Deal, **Carried**.

The next meeting will be on August 19, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, Minnesota.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerome Deal  
Secretary

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Naomi L. Erickson  
Administrator