



HEIBERG DAM REPAIR DEDICATION INCLUDED RELEASE OF STURGEON

A ceremony to mark the renovation of the Heiberg Dam on the Wild Rice River was held Tuesday, June 19, 2007 at the recently repaired and reconstructed ice control dam site, located just north of Twin Valley on state Highway 32.

Along with restoring the ice control project and the river channel, the project now provides fish passage. Gerry Jackson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service notes the project now allows 120 miles of fish passage on the river.

The dam repair project restores a stretch of river rapids, creating fish habitat and allowing sturgeon being stocked in White Earth Lake to migrate back to the Red River, increasing the

odds of re-establishing the species to the watershed.

Several state, federal and tribal dignitaries attended the celebration, which included the ceremonial release of 160 lake sturgeon. The fingerlings were hatched by the Rainy River First Nation hatchery in Canada, and it was noted the fish are a genetic match to the fish that originally spawned in the Wild Rice River. Sixty thousand of the fish have been restocked in the upstream lakes. The ceremonial release took place at the new boat landing just downstream of the dam.

The day included Native American blessings from Joe Blush with tribal drums by the Eagle Spirit Drum group, who did a victory song for the fish released at the dam.

Other speakers included Larry

Kramka of the Department of Natural Resources, Erma Vizenor, chairperson of the White Earth Tribe, Warren Seykora, chairman of the Wild Rice Watershed District, Representative Kent Eken, and a representative from Senator Coleman. Representative Morrie Lanning was also present.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency was also a major partner in the repair, providing two-thirds of the funding required for the \$1.1 million Heiberg Dam repair project.

Representative Kent Eken noted that many agencies worked together to restore fish passage, and he hoped to see continued partnerships as work continues on seeking solutions to flooding and other issues related to the river.

(This article was reprinted courtesy of the Norman County Index.)



Norman County Commissioner Steve Bommersbach of Twin Valley releases one of the young sturgeon following the dedication at Heiberg.



Gerry Jackson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service introduced the guests at the dedication of the Heiberg Dam project, which now allows fish passage in the Wild Rice River.



Representative Kent Eken noted the importance of seeing water resource groups continue to work together in enhancing natural resources and flood protection.



There were 160 sturgeon fingerlings released into the Wild Rice River at the Heiberg Dam following the dedication ceremony.

WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

RED LAKE WD

The Red Lake WD reported that the District received four quotes for the construction of a ring dike located in Section 27, Esther Township of Polk County. The low construction quote in the amount of \$34,589.01 was submitted by T.S. Holte Construction of Oslo, MN. The engineer's estimate on this project was \$41,097.20. Notice was received from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) concerning the approval of the General Storm Water Permit with construction scheduled to begin the week of June 18th, weather permitting.

Due to the wet conditions expe-

rienced throughout the District, the completion of the Brandt and Euclid East Impoundments have been delayed. It was hoped to have the final payment hearing by the last week of June, but it appears that mid-July will be more likely. To date, based on the 2004 estimate, the District has billed the RRWMB a total of \$1,915,075.18 of the \$1,929,694.00 authorized for this project.

MIDDLE-SNAKE-TAMARAC RIVERS WD

The Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD reported on the Public Law 566 (Snake River Watershed) project. The District received the signed Mediation and Mitigation Agreement from the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the project. Implementation and monitoring of the project will begin this summer.

The public comment period for the Agassiz Valley Water Resource Management Project (Helgeland Site) for the USACE 404 permit has closed with only one response received. The response was received from MSTRWD Board Manager Elden Elseth requesting a hearing on the permit. The request may delay the project for an undetermined length of time. Construction is still expected to begin in the 2007 construction season.

RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled June meeting, the RRWMB:

- Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.
- Prepared for the meeting scheduled with Commissioner Brad Moore of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to discuss alternatives to provide for sustainable funding for the River Watch program.
- Received a report from Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator.
- Received a report from Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator.
- Received a report from Mike Carroll, Regional Director of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regarding the proposed rules governing drainage projects impacting state-owned lands in Consolidated Conservation (con-con) areas.
- Toured the Brandt/Angus Flood Control Project following the board meeting.

The next scheduled meeting of the RRWMB will be held at the Wild Rice Watershed District, Ada, MN, on July 17th, starting at 9:30 a.m.

NEWS & VIEWS

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