



FEDERAL FUNDING FOR FARMSTEAD RING DIKE PROGRAM

This spring's narrow escape from flood damages of record magnitude in the Red River Valley has called attention not only to the valiant efforts of the region's flood fighters but also to those who've experienced first-hand the benefits of the State of Minnesota's Farmstead Ring Dike Program.

Administered through the Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) Grant Assistance Program created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1987, the state uses the Farmstead Ring Dike Program to provide cost-share grants to local units of government for up to 50 percent of the total cost of qualified projects.

Under this program, 240 farmstead ring dikes have been constructed in nearly all of Minnesota's major tributary watersheds to the Red River of the North and several to the Mississippi River. The standard design consists of a ring dike constructed around a farmstead to an elevation higher than historical floods. Costs for farmstead ring dike construction vary with size but typically range from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Typical cost share funding for ring dike construction

has been State (50%), Red River Watershed Management Board (25%) and the remainder split between the local watershed district and landowner.

The Farmstead Ring Dike Program is very effective at reducing flood damage and flood fight costs while protecting the regional economic base by saving farm homes, facilities, equipment, livestock and stored harvest, fuel and chemicals. In fiscal years 2008-2009, the legislature appropriated \$200,000 each year for ring dikes and the entire \$400,000 has been committed to projects.

After another spring of significant flooding, local government units have received many more requests from farmers for ring dike funding assistance. As a major funding partner, the Red River Watershed Management Board responded by requesting a greater appropriation for the program from the state but was told the program faces severe funding shortfalls due to the state's budget constraints.

It is expected that the base appropriation of \$206,000 over the next two years will be available from the state

but nothing more. Even when equal match dollars of cost share partners are included, only a fraction of the requests for this vital protection can be met.

The total estimated cost over the next two years to protect these farmsteads is estimated at \$1,874,000. The Red River Watershed Management Board is requesting federal assistance to secure

\$1,500,000 which, when leveraged by state and local dollars, will adequately fund the Farmstead Ring Dike Program over the next two years.

Investing today in the Farmstead Ring Dike Program provides protection against inevitable flood damage while promoting economic recovery in a region dependent on its agricultural base.



Tim Anvinson farmstead, Section 16, Higdem Township, Polk County, Minnesota.



Aerial view of spring flooding in Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District, Tim Anvinson farmstead, April 2009.

RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled April meeting, the RRWMB:

- Received a report from Mark Meister, Public Information Officer and scheduled a meeting with the Public Information Committee prior to the next board meeting.
- Received an update regarding the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) proposal of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) from Lance Yohe, Executive Director.
- Authorized \$10,000 to calibrate stream gaging information regarding the MIKE 11 model of the RRBC.
- Received a report from Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator and authorized the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to review a report developed by the International Joint Commission (IJC).
- Authorized funding utilized to develop the MIKE 11 model to match funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the Red River Basin Feasibility Study.
- Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.
- Discussed the proposed Red River Valley Authority.
- Authorized the Step I submittal of the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project of the Wild Rice WD.

WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

TWO RIVERS WD

The Two Rivers WD reported on the Ross No. 7 Impoundment Project. The gate was closed on March 23, 2009 and the impoundment was operated for the first time ever. Due to the nature of this year's flood, the gate remains closed as areas at Drayton and Pembina are not showing low enough water elevations. The impoundment was filled and is flowing about a half foot over the top of the principal spillway. At its current level, the impoundment is storing 3,100 acre-feet. Most of the local runoff is on the downswing, however, if needed the impoundment has storage for another 260 acre-feet before water would flow over the emergency spillway.

BOIS DE SIOUX WD

The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the North Ottawa Impoundment Project. The project held 5,700 acre-feet from 19 square miles of drainage area this spring. The District delayed any discharge from the site until after the crest in Fargo-Moorhead on April 16, 2009. On April 17th the gates were opened to begin discharging. The gates were adjusted throughout the day to ensure that the channels would run full but not cause flooding on any neighboring lands. At one point, all six structures were open and operating as intended. The project should be fully operational for next spring's runoff.

EVENTS COMING UP

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, May 19, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, 120 E Bridge Ave, Warren, MN. Following the board meeting, the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group will meet at 1:00 p.m.

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NEWS & VIEWS

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.