



RED RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD ASSESSES FM METRO FLOOD STUDY WORK GROUP ON DOWNSTREAM IMPACTS OF PROPOSED DIVERSION

The Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Study Work Group recently studied the potential downstream impacts from the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Red River Diversion. The recommendations have been reviewed by the Red River Watershed Management Board's (RRWMB's) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

In March, the Metro Flood Study Work Group contracted with Moore Engineering, Inc. and Houston Engineering, Inc. to identify the potential downstream im-

pacts relative to the various proposed diversion options. Contributing drainage areas upstream of Fargo-Moorhead were identified in the study, as well as options for reducing flows at tributary gauging sites.

The Metro Flood Study Work Group estimates that \$400 million to \$1 billion is needed to mitigate downstream impacts. Other measures identified in the study are intended to protect property and infrastructure from the increased flood flows down-

stream. These measures included relocating residences, constructing additional farmstead ring dikes, and raising current municipal ring dikes between Fargo and Halstad. Costs were estimated at \$29 - \$35 million for implementation of these additional measures.

The TAC reviewed the FM Metro Flood Study Work Group's recommendations regarding mitigation of downstream impacts resulting from a diversion project at Fargo-Moorhead. The Board supports the conclusions its TAC developed in its review of the study:

- Measures intended to protect property from downstream impacts such as buyouts and the improvement of structural measures cannot be compared to measures that actually mitigate those impacts such as upstream storage of flood waters.
- Downstream impacts cannot be mitigated through buyouts and structural measures since these measures are not considered mitigation. Mitigation can only be achieved by returning flood stage and flood flow increases to pre-project levels.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) should identify the true project cost, including the mitigation costs to return flood stages and flood flow increases to pre-project levels.
- The TAC estimates the projected costs for implementing upstream storage mitigation would be closer to the \$400 million estimate than the \$1 billion estimate.

• The buyout and protection cost estimates are too low as they failed to account for protection from all impacts such as costs to protect/raise all roads and costs of flood easements. Since the study only included downstream impacts to Halstad, further downstream impacts were not accounted for.

• Since the RRWMB's goal is Red River flood flow reduction, the Board cannot provide funding for projects designed solely for flood mitigation.

RRWMB President John Finney points out that the proposed Fargo-Moorhead diversion project does not take a holistic and systematic look at flood mitigation. The Fargo-Moorhead diversion, to date, contradicts the basin-wide perspective of the RRWMB. "Without a clear vision of how the Fargo-Moorhead diversion will impact the entire Red River basin, including its impact on downstream communities like Halstad, Ada, Warren, Hallock and others, the proposed diversion process is incomplete," says Finney.

As reported by the Fargo Forum on April 24, after a recent meeting with RRWMB members and North Dakota water management officials, U.S. Congressman and Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson, agrees with the RRWMB perspective of basin-wide mitigation that includes water retention. According to Peterson, "We're not talk-

Continued on Next Page

RED RIVER BASIN COMMISSION / DEVILS LAKE BASIN TOUR



The Red River Basin Commission sponsored a tour in conjunction with their June board meeting conducted on June 02-03-2010, in Devils, Lake, ND. Those attending the tour included John Finney (left), President - Red River Watershed Management Board, Gary Thompson (center), Vice Chairman - Red River Joint Water Resource Board, and U.S. Senator Byron L. Dorgan (right) - North Dakota.

RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At its regularly scheduled June meeting, the RRWMB:

- Welcomed Greg Holmvik to the Board of Managers. Mr. Holmvik was designated as the RRWMB representative from the Wild Rice WD Board of Managers.
- Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.
- Received a report from Dan Thul, Red River Coordinator.
- Directed the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to review the Fargo-Moorhead Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Received a report from Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator.
- Received an update from Julie Goehring, Communications Coordinator, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC).

EVENTS COMING UP

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, July 20, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott & Conference Center, Moorhead, MN.

A joint meeting of the RRWMB and the Red River Joint Water Resource Board will begin at 1:00 p.m. following the conclusion of the RRWMB meeting.

From Page 1

ing one or two big projects, we need to take all these resources and make them fit together.”

“The RRWMB and its TAC are not opposed to a Fargo-Moorhead diversion,” says Finney. “We just want the proposed diversion to work in a comprehensive process that includes upstream water retention so that downstream impacts are mitigated.” Finney noted that several past meetings of a variety of water management organizations

have concluded a need for a comprehensive view of the diversion that includes retention.

In all, the RRWMB’s basin-wide perspective means that it is obligated to ensure that downstream impacts of any water management project, even the proposed \$1 billion Fargo-Moorhead diversion, are included in the proposed diversion’s plan. “What is good for Fargo-Moorhead must also be good for the entire basin,” says Finney.

WATERSHED DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

ROSEAU RIVER WD

The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The rebid for Phase 2 (impoundment construction and inlet structures) was opened on June 2, 2010 with Spruce Valley Corporation of Middle River providing the low bid of \$5.8 million. The engineer’s estimate for Phase 2 was \$5 million. A pre-construction meeting has been scheduled for June 18, 2010. Ground water monitoring continues on the project as identified under special conditions no. 11 on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit. The anticipated date to begin construction is June 15, 2010 with a completion date of July 15, 2012. The state funding has been applied for and the grant is in the process of being completed.

The District is planning construction for two new ring dikes through EQIP and the rural ring dike programs with construction planned for this summer. Estimates for both dikes are ~ \$120,000 - \$130,000 for each dike. Although the District anticipates construction yet this summer, the recent wet conditions have hindered construction.

RED LAKE WD

The Red Lake WD reported on the Clearbrook Stormwater Retention Pond. A public hearing is scheduled for June 21, 2010 at the Clearbrook City Council Chambers for the development and construction of stormwater retention ponds in the city of Clearbrook. Plans include constructing at least one pond in mid July with completion anticipated for late August.

WILD RICE WD

The Wild Rice WD reported on the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project. On May 12, 2010, the Board of Managers voted 4 - 3 against proceeding with the project as originally proposed. An alternative design was considered and a vote was passed 4 - 3 in favor of proceeding with the alternative design (Project B).

On June 8, 2010, a meeting was conducted with landowners to determine whether they supported Project B. Following discussion, Project B was revised to Project D which would increase the storage from 3,280 acre-feet to ~ 5,500 acre-feet. On June 9, 2010, the Board of Managers voted to direct the engineer to cease designs for Project B.

NEWS & VIEWS
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