



## MAWD SUMMER TOUR 2011

(Thief River Falls, MN)

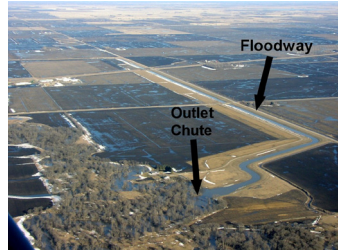
The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTRWD) and the Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) hosted the summer tour and meeting of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) June 16-18, 2011 at the Best Western, Thief River Falls, MN. Highlights of the tour included the Grand Marais Outlet and Cut Channel Restoration Project of the RLWD and the PL-566 Diversion Structure & Richard P. Nelson Floodway Project of the MSTRWD.

The Grand Marais Outlet Restoration Project of the RLWD is a single component of a comprehensive flood damage reduction project of the District. In 2003, Governor Pawlenty announced his vision for a Clean Water Initiative. As part of this initiative, the Grand Marais Subwatershed Project was selected by the Governor's Clean Water Cabinet as a pilot project for the Red River basin. The objective of this project component focuses on restoring riparian and aquatic characteristics along the lower six miles of the Grand Marais Creek to its confluence with the Red River.

In December of 2010, the RLWD was approved for a grant totaling \$662,000 which will be used on a portion of the Grand Marais Outlet Restoration referred to as the Grand Marais Creek Cut Channel. These funds, along with matching funds, will be used to construct a project



*Grand Marais Outlet Restoration Project of the Red Lake WD, looking west at erosion area upstream of the Red River of the North.*



*PL-566 Diversion Structure & Richard P. Nelson Floodway Project of the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD.*



*Jerome Deal (left), RRWMB Secretary (Bois de Sioux WD), Dick Nelson (center), and John Finney (right) RRWMB President (Joe River WD) view the Snake River PL-566 project site on August 16, 2005.*

that will reduce sediment loads that are presently settling into the Red River of the North. The proposed project consists of stabilizing the existing channel and stream banks, establishment of buffer strips, along with installation of side water inlet culverts. The District hopes to complete final engineering on this project in 2011 with construction occurring late 2011 and completion in 2012.

The PL-566 Diversion Structure & Richard P. Nelson Floodway Project of the MSTRWD represents the fruits of the late Richard Nelson's labors. The City of Warren endured numerous

floods throughout its history. In 1996 and 1997, the city suffered 3 major floods that caused an estimated \$12.7 million dollars in damages. The late Mayor had a dream to spare his City from more years of ravaging floods from the Snake River. Mr. Nelson recognized the opportunity provided by the USDA/NRCS Small Watershed Program, and set out to make his dream a reality.

Richard P. Nelson did not witness the benefits that this project would provide to the citizens of the City of Warren and the surrounding areas, due to his untimely death from cancer on January 19, 2006,

at the age of 46. Although the project was not totally complete, it was operational in the spring of 2006 and saved the City of Warren from flooding of an NRCS estimate of approximately \$8.7 million in flood damages to the immediate area. (Insert photo of Phase 1, page 11 Annual Report.)

In addition to touring the Grand Marais Outlet and Cut Channel Restoration Project and the PL-566 Diversion Structure & Richard P. Nelson Floodway Project, the nearly 100 conference attendees from all over Minnesota, received a presentation from Jim Graham, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, "Water Quality and Quantity Impacts to Wildlife Impoundments." Congratulations to the staff and administration of the RLWD and MSTRWD for hosting an informative, enjoyable tour.

The MSTRWD was established by an order of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources on August 28, 1970 to address water resource management issues and to alleviate flooding in the Red River Valley. Since its establishment, the District has worked primarily to develop projects that manage surface water. The RLWD covers an area of approximately 5,990 square miles in northwestern Minnesota and includes all of Red Lake County, most of Pennington County, and parts of Mahanomen, Polk, Itasca, Marshall, Clearwater, Beltrami, Roseau, and Koochiching Counties.

**TWO RIVERS WD**

The Two Rivers WD reported on the Springbrook PL566 Project. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working on the plans and specifications for the construction of setback levees, stream bank protection and rock drops. In addition, they've completed wetland delineation field work and will incorporate the information into the project plan. Upon receiving the completed information from NRCS, the District will submit permit applications to the USACE, DNR, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and others. The plans are expected to be received by the end of July. The District will then proceed with obtaining land rights.

In addition to the PL566 work, the District has named Widseth, Smith and Nolting (WSN) as the project engineering firm to complete the remaining information for the project to be declared a legal ditch and also prepare the engineer's report. The viewer's will be retained this fall to determine the benefitted area. The District plans to secure the permits in 2011, with construction to begin in 2012.

**ROSEAU RIVER WD**

The Roseau River WD reported on the Hay Creek/Norland Project. The Spruce Valley Corporation continues work on Phase 2 of the project. The Hay Creek setback and levees replacement plan is currently being reviewed before letting bids in July. Monitoring the fen in the project area will continue this summer.

**MIDDLE SNAKE TAMARAC RIVERS WD**

The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers WD reported on the Brandt/Angus Flood Control Project. The District is awaiting permits and additional bonding money to begin construction. Land acquisition still remains for the inlet and outlet channels, as well as the coulee rehabilitation.

**RED LAKE WD**

The Red Lake WD reported on the Grand Marais Creek Cut Channel Project. The District was notified by the Polk County Commission that they approved local cost-share in the amount of \$253,000 which will

be used for the engineering and construction of the project. The funding breakdown is as follows: Red Lake WD - \$253,000, Polk County - \$253,000, and BWSR Clean Water Competitive Grants Program - \$662,000. The final engineer's report is currently being completed, with plans to let bids for the project this fall.

**WILD RICE WD**

The Wild Rice WD reported that construction has begun on the community ring dikes in Hendrum and Perley with plans to complete the projects by August 31, 2011. The City of Shelly is progressing with their project's conceptual phase.

**BOIS DE SIOUX WD**

The Bois de Sioux WD reported on the Redpath Project. The data submittal has been conducted for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). Randall Dooneen of the MDNR will develop the EAW. The District continues to progress with land acquisition for Pool 5.

**RRWMB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

*At its regularly scheduled June meeting, the RRWMB:*

- *Received a presentation from Louis Smith regarding the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources' (LCCMR) Drainage Law Project.*
- *Received a report from Naomi Erickson, Administrator.*
- *Discussed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) developed by the NRCS regarding the proposed USACE Regulatory Branch position.*
- *Received a report from Ron Harnack, Project Coordinator.*
- *Received a Water Quality Project Monitoring report from Wayne Goeken, Director - Center for Watershed Education.*
- *Received an update from Julie Goehring, South Basin Mgr/Communications Coordinator, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC).*
- *Approved the Step I submittal for the Upper Becker Dam Enhancement Project (Option D) of the Wild Rice WD.*

**EVENTS COMING UP**

The next meeting of the RRWMB will be on Tuesday, July 19, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District, 219 N Mill Street, Fertile, MN.

