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STRATEGIC PLAN

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Red River Retention Authority

Background

The Red River Retention Authority, herein referred to as the “**Authority**” was created through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) on May 26, 2010, between the Red River Joint Water Resource District, a North Dakota political subdivision and joint water resource district (RRJWRD), and the Red River Watershed Management Board, a Minnesota political subdivision and joint watershed management board (RRWMB).

Authority

The RRWMB is authorized by the Minnesota legislature to "cooperate with water management and flood control authorities in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the province of Manitoba, and may enter into contracts, compacts, and agreements which may be necessary to insure integration of its projects, to control the effects of flooding or to insure the beneficial use of water in the Red River basin," Laws 1976, Ch. 162, Sec. 3; as amended by Laws 1991, Ch. 167, Sec. 3; and further, Article VII, subdivision 5 of the RRWMB's Joint Powers Agreement provides that the RRWMB "may cooperate or contract with any state or subdivision thereof, the Province of Manitoba, Canada, the Dominion of Canada, federal agencies of the United States or Canada, private or public corporations or cooperative associations."

The RRJWRD has authority under N.D. Cent. Code §§ 54-40.3-01 and 61-16.1-12" to enter into contracts or other authorized agreements for water conservation, water supply, flood control, or other authorized projects with the United States government or any department thereof, with the Canadian government or any department thereof or any of its provinces or municipalities, with persons, railroads, other corporations, or limited liability companies, with public corporations, and state governments of this or other states, with drainage, water resource, conservation, conservancy, or improvement districts, or other such districts in this or other states," including the authority to enter into this Agreement with the RRWMB.

The RRJWRD and the RRWMB entered into this Agreement for purposes of prioritizing and coordinating flood retention efforts in the Red River of the North Basin. Here in referred to as the “Basin” and their member watershed districts in Minnesota and water resource districts in North Dakota.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Agreement is to ensure cooperation and joint coordination of retention projects in the Basin. A copy of the [signed agreement](#) can be viewed by clicking on this link. The Agreement addresses in more detail the Executive Committee Organization, Executive Committee Meetings, Comprehensive Planning and Prioritization, Project Funding, Federal Role, Project Management, Permitting Coordination, Agents and Employees, Costs and Expenses and other agreement administrative items.

Member Watershed Districts and Water Resource Districts

The Authority is currently made up of seven watershed districts in Minnesota and fourteen water resource districts in North Dakota. See site location map on page 3 for the “Authority Area”.



Black River Dam construction in Red Lake Watershed District, November 2020



MANITOBA

MINNESOTA

Barnes County WRD
Grand Forks County WRD
Maple River WRD
Nelson County WRD
North Cass WRD
Pembina County WRD
Ransom County WRD
Richland County WRD
Rush River WRD
Sargent County WRD
Southeast Cass WRD
Steele County WRD
Traill County WRD
Walsh County WRD

Bois de Sioux River WD
Joe River WD
Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD
Red Lake River WD
Roseau River WD
Two Rivers WD
Wild Rice River WD

NORTH DAKOTA

SOUTH DAKOTA



NAD 1983 UTM Zone 14N

Map Source: IWI 2019

Watershed Districts and Water Resource Districts

Minnesota watershed districts (WD) are based on hydrologic units or sub-basins within the Basin. A WD may be in multiple counties.

North Dakota water resource districts (WRD) are based along county boundaries within the Basin, with the exception of Cass County which has four individual WRDs within its county boundary. When a watershed project extends beyond a county boundary the watershed project is administered through a joint water resource district to cover the hydrologic unit.

Member Districts

Minnesota	North Dakota
Bois de Sioux WD	Barnes County WRD
Joe River WD	Grand Forks County WRD
Middle-Snake-Tamarac WD	Maple River WRD
Red Lake WD	Nelson County WRD
Roseau River WD	North Cass WRD
Two Rivers WD	Pembina County WRD
Wild Rice River WD	Ransom County WRD
	Richland County WRD
	Rush River WRD
	Sargent County WRD
	Southeast Cass WRD
	Steele County WRD
	Traill County WRD
	Walsh County WRD

Strategic Planning

2021

This strategic plan document identifies priorities for water resource needs and coordinating watershed flood damage reduction projects in the Authority area for the next 5-years. Prioritization of water resource needs and watershed projects is necessary to convey needs to the States of Minnesota and North Dakota and current and potential future water resource partners such as the federal government. This plan will be reviewed annually by the Authority to assure it is addressing the highest retention priorities of the Basin.

Vision

In the early, formative years of the Authority, the Board of Managers adopted a vision statement to “reduce Red River mainstem peak flood flows by 20 percent”. This vision is modeled on the Red River Basin Commission’s Long-Term Flood Solutions study report. The Authority’s new vision, although similar, is intended to be more encompassing to the Red River’s tributaries and specify through retention. The Authority’s vision is:

Reduce Red River mainstem and tributary peak flood flows by 20 percent through flood water retention.

Mission

To ensure joint, comprehensive, and strategic coordination of retention projects in the Basin and its tributaries to alleviate flooding.

Goals

1. **Coordination** - Ensuring joint, comprehensive and strategic coordination of retention projects in the Basin.
2. **Project Construction** - Facilitating implementation and construction of retention in the Basin.
3. **Permitting and Environmental Review** - Advocating and fostering a regulatory environment that is conducive to construction of retention projects in the Red River of the North watershed for the benefit of the States of North Dakota and Minnesota.
4. **Funding** - Soliciting and accepting funding from federal, state, local, and private sources for purposes of constructing retention.
5. **Communication** – Educating the public and cooperating with the respective Congressional delegations and state governments, as well as federal and state agencies.



Brandt-Angus Impoundment inlet in the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District

Objectives

Goal 1. Coordination - Ensuring joint, comprehensive, and strategic coordination of retention projects in the Basin

Objective	Action to be taken
1.	Develop metrics and prioritization process for Basin retention projects
2.	Update status of WD and WRD non-Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) retention projects
3.	Update status of WD and WRD RCPP retention projects
4.	Prioritize Basin watershed projects by preparedness for design and construction
5.	Annually approve a ranked list of priority projects for the next 5-years

Goal 2. Project Construction - Facilitate implementation and construction of retention projects in the Basin

Objective	Action to be taken
1.	Attend at least one member WD/WRD meeting annually to receive project status updates
2.	Annually participate in Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG), Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts, ND Legislative Water Topics Committee, and ND Water Resource District Association meetings and workshops to facilitate implementation of priority retention projects in the Basin
3.	Annually coordinate with RRWMB and RRJWRD staff to develop and provide priority retention project fact sheets to federal and state legislators
4.	Provide Authority quarterly project status reports to RRWMB and RRJWRD board managers

Goal 3. Permitting and Environmental Review - Advocate for and foster a regulatory environment that is conducive to construction of retention projects in the Basin

Objective	Action to be taken
1.	Attend project team meetings with priority retention projects
2.	Participate in FDRWG meetings and RRWMB March conference
3.	Meet annually with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Area 1 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD/SWD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality and North Dakota State Water Commission to inform and educate regulatory agencies about the Authority's priority retention projects
4.	Provide Authority quarterly project status reports to RRWMB and RRJWRD board managers

Goal 4. Funding - Solicit and accepting funding from federal, state, local, and private sources for purposes of constructing retention projects in the Basin

Objective	Action to be taken
1.	Attend project team meetings and make project sponsors aware of possible funding sources for priority retention projects
2.	Meet with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationists to recommend new watershed planning starts using Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations and RCPP funds.
3.	Meet annually with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Area 1 SWCD/SWD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality and North Dakota State Water Commission to inform and educate regulatory agencies about the Authority's priority retention projects and the need for technical and financial assistance.
4.	Provide Authority quarterly project status reports to RRWMB and RRJWRD board managers

Goal 5. Communication – Inform and educate respective Congressional delegations and state governments, as well as federal and state agencies of the Authority’s efforts to plan and construct retention projects in the Basin

Objective	Action to be taken
1.	Provide quarterly progress reports on the planning and implementation of priority retention projects
2.	Utilize RRWMB and RRJWRD staff and/or consultants to modify RRRRA website and update it at least quarterly with new items of interest in the Basin
3.	Authority Co-chairs meet annually with Basin Federal Congressional members to inform of priority retention needs in the Basin
4.	Reach out annually to the four Native American Tribes located in the Basin to make them aware of RRRRA flood retention activities
5.	Continue to utilize radio ads and public service announcements along with mailings to promote “Retention, a part of the Basin-wide solution”
6.	Form a Legislative Committee to promote Basin retention activities and develop a communication plan
7.	Highlight and disseminate Authority board meeting results to Basin legislators, agricultural commodity groups and water retention partners
8.	Develop and disseminate Authority fact sheet on available services and support

Services and Support

The Authority provides watershed planning and flood retention services and support to member watershed districts and water resource districts, as well Basin residents, partnering agencies and organizations in the Basin. Click the link to a [fact sheet](#) for more information about Authority support services.

Financial Support

The RRJWRD, the RRWMB, the Red River Basin Commission, and the States of North Dakota and Minnesota will be responsible for all per diem, compensation, travel, supplies, salaries, administrative and overhead costs, and other expenses of its own Directors. With regard to the Authority's Secretary, Executive Director, and any other employees, the RRJWRD and the RRWMB will be jointly and equally responsible for any costs or expenses regarding those employees, unless otherwise agreed by the respective joint boards. Each individual joint board is responsible for its own insurance and liability.

The RRJWRD and the RRWMB will be responsible for all costs and expenses regarding the technical representatives appointed by the Authority Board. Similarly, the RRJWRD and the RRWMB will be responsible for all costs and expenses regarding their own engineers, attorneys, or other consultants.

For all other costs and expenses incurred by the Authority, the RRJWRD and the RRWMB will be jointly and equally responsible, if approved by the Authority and each respective joint board. The following table provides the 2021 annual operating budget for the Authority.

Item	2021 Budget
Administration	
Office expense - travel	5,000
Office expense - meals	300
Office expense - lodging	1,000
Office Supplies	1,060
Office Postage	20
Conventions / Seminars / Education	200
Executive Director Telephone	800
Miscellaneous expenses	500
Office equipment / furniture / computers	1,000
Liability Insurance	920
Total Administration Costs:	10,800
Staff	
Executive Director Services	65,400
Support staff	3,500
Total Staff and Consultant Costs:	68,900
Professional Fees:	
Legal Fees	500
Engineering Fees	500
Auditing Fees	800
Total Professional Fees:	1,800
Projects:	
Outreach and education	10,000
Total Projects:	10,000
Total	\$ 91,500

Staff Support

The Authority currently has a part-time Executive Director. This position is funded through a consultant agreement.

The Authority utilizes the services of staff through the RRJWRD and Cass County Joint Water Resource District to serve as the Authority Secretary/Treasurer.

When necessary the Authority utilizes legal and other technical services through consultants working for the RRWMB and RRJWRD.

Project Funding

In Minnesota, project funds may be received through the State of Minnesota via the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, Flood Hazard Mitigation Program, and other applicable local, state, or federal sources.

In North Dakota, project funds may be received through the State of North Dakota via the Water Development Plan set-up through the North Dakota State Water Commission and other local, state, or federal sources.

Currently, Natural Resources Conservation Service is a primary partner in Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program and RCPP activities (flood retention dam rehabilitation and watershed planning).

Outreach and Education

The Authority uses education as a tool to inform the public on issues related to flood retention in the Basin. Outreach and educational materials are provided to the public through attendance at farm shows, water conventions and sponsoring WD/WRD and SWCD/SCD workshops in the Basin. The water resource management information developed and provided is intended primarily for distribution to landowners, farmers and ranchers in the Basin. Extra effort is made to provide this information to federal and state legislators.

The Authority recognizes historically underserved landowner and land user populations and limited resource farmers and ranchers in the Basin. There are four Native American reservations that are wholly or partially located in the Basin. They are the Red Lake, White Earth, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and Spirit Lake Nations.

The Authority will continue to utilize radio ads and public service announcements along with mailings to promote “Retention, a part of the Basin-wide solution.”