

# *Upper Minnesota River Watershed District*

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## **2017 Annual Report**



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1-2
2.	MISSION STATEMENT.....	2
3.	FINANCIAL REPORT.....	3
3.1	2017 Audit.....	3
3.2	2016 Budget.....	3
3.3	2017 Budget.....	3
4.	ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT.....	4-9
4.1	Board of Managers, Staff, Consultants, Committees.....	4-5
4.2	2017 Annual Work Plan.....	6-9

### APPENDICIES

- A. 2017 Water Quality Testing Data
- B. 2017 Annual Audit

# 1. Introduction

The Upper Minnesota River Watershed District was formed by Order of the Minnesota Water Resources Board on September 7, 1967. The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners signed a nominating petition for the District on September 8, 1966. The first overall plan was developed in 1970 and the Watershed District Board of Managers adopted it on December 15, 1970. The Minnesota Water Resources Board, as part of the state review and approval process, conducted a public hearing on the plan on March 11, 1971. On July 14, 1971, the Minnesota Water Resources Board approved the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District's first Overall Plan. The Watershed District encompasses approximately 505 square miles primarily in Big Stone County, with smaller areas in Traverse County, Swift County, Lac Qui Parle County, and Stevens County.

The District continued operation under the policies identified in the first overall plan until approval of a Revised Plan, initiated in 1984 and adopted and approved on November 30, 1988. The District operated under the policies identified in the revised Overall Plan from 1988 through 1999. In November of 1999 the District submitted their third generation plan, approval of the plan was granted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in August of 2001. In July of 2013 the District submitted their fourth generation plan, approval of the plan was granted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in September of 2013.

The organizational structure of the Board of Managers remains unchanged since inception. The County Board of Commissioners for Big Stone appoints three of the District's Board of Managers, the County Board of Commissioners for Swift County appoints one Board Manager and the County Board of Commissioners for Traverse County appoints one Board Manager. Each Manager must be a resident of the District. Managers are prohibited from being a public official of the county, state or federal government. Each Manager serves a three-year term, which is renewable by approval of the County Board of Commissioners.

The Watershed District is located in west-central Minnesota. Big Stone Lake and the South Dakota border form the western boundary of the District. The continental divide and Traverse County are located to the north. Areas south of the continental divide contribute runoff southerly to the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and north of the divide northerly to the Hudson Bay via the Red River of the North. Generally, the watershed district includes all of the land east of Big Stone Lake draining into Big Stone Lake and into the north side of the Minnesota River above the Marsh Lake Dam.

Approximately 80% of the land area of Big Stone County is in the District. The small area of north central and northeast Big Stone County, not in the District, casts its runoff northward through the west branch of the Mustinka River. In Stevens County the few acres in the District are along the west line of the township situated in the southwest corner of Stevens County. Most of Shible Township in southwestern Swift County is in the District.

On the south, southwest of the Minnesota River, the District includes the northern part of Agassiz and Yellow Bank Townships in Lac Qui Parle County west of State Highway 75. The territory of the District in northwestern Lac Qui Parle County includes the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge.

Subwatersheds within the District flow to the Minnesota River, some through Big Stone Lake and

others directly to the Minnesota River. Subwatersheds flowing into Big Stone Lake include Little Minnesota River, Hoss Creek, Fish Creek, Salmonsens Creek, Lindholm Creek, Meadowbrook Creek, direct drainage area in or near Ortonville and a number of small-scattered direct tributaries to Big Stone Lake. Subwatersheds which are tributary on the northeast of the Minnesota River include: Stony Run, Upper Stony Run, County Ditch No.4, Five-Mile Creek, Shible Lake and a few areas that contribute runoff directly to the Minnesota River. On the southwest side of the Minnesota River there are about 18 square miles that contribute runoff to the Minnesota River.

Like many early water management agencies, the original goals and objectives of the District focused on managing water quantity. The early goals and objectives of the District included: To slow down weed and algae growth in the District's Lakes. To reduce the pollution of the water in the lakes and water courses within the District. To intelligently regulate the water levels of the various lakes within the District. To keep adequate records of the water levels, the chemistry, and other useful data. To enhance the recreational facilities and scenic beauty of the District. To improve the needed drainage, prevent excessive runoff or seepage, and provide needed soil and water conservation in the District. To provide funds to accomplish these objectives and to engage technical assistance and advice. Investigate the possibility of securing additional watershed area to supplement the present water supply. To preserve, maintain, and improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Board of Managers understood the plan's purpose as providing a framework for operation of the District, rather than identifying all possible future projects. As technology, societal attitudes and economic conditions changed, the Board of Managers understood plan review and revision might be needed.

The District has undertaken and completed a number of activities in an effort to achieve their original objectives. The District has initiated and completed many projects since formation. Past District projects have included surface and groundwater quality studies, flood control, surface water level management, wetland restorations, natural resource management, ag BMP implementation, education and erosion control projects.

## **2. Mission Statement**

The mission of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District is to serve the residents of the District by wisely and judiciously managing water, in a manner that sustains and enhances the social, economic and natural resources of the District. The District prefers the use of innovative water management methods, which recognize the unique agricultural, community, lake and stream, and natural resources within the District. These innovative approaches as reflected by the policies of the District should be oriented toward ensuring the economic viability of the District's agrarian community.

### 3. FINANCIAL REPORT

#### 3.1 2017 Audit

3.1.1 A complete copy of the 2017 Audit is included in Appendix B of this report. The following tables illustrate the funds and approved levies for 2016 and 2017.

#### 3.2 2016 Budget

Breakdown	2016		Change from Previous Year (+/-)
	Budget	2017 Budget	
Implementation	\$44,000.00	\$44,000.00	0%
Programs	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	0%
Projects	\$99,000.00	\$99,000.00	0%
Capitol Improvements/Maintenance	\$54,000.00	\$54,000.00	0%
Administration	\$28,000.00	\$28,000.00	0%
Totals	\$245,000.00	\$245,000.00	0%

#### 3.3 Budget Summary

Year	Budget	Change from Previous Year
Proposed 2018	\$246,000.00	.41%
2017	\$245,000.00	41%
2016	\$174,000.00	-3.6%
2015	\$180,500.00	0%
2014	\$180,500.00	0%

## 4. ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

### 4.1 Board Manager's, Staff and Consultants

Manager	Position	Term Expires	County
Robert Toelle 320 E. Broadway Browns Valley, MN 56219	Chairman	08/09/2019	Traverse County
Wanda Holker U.S. Highway 75 Ortonville, MN 56278	Secretary	08/09/2019	Big Stone County
Gary Haugen 30453 710 <sup>th</sup> Street Clinton, MN 56225	Vice-Chairman	08/15/2018	Big Stone County
Terry Gillespie 30787 660 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Clinton, MN 56225	Treasurer	08/09/2020	Big Stone County
Gene Meyer 2411 60 <sup>th</sup> St. SW Appleton, MN 56208	Manager	8/15/2018	Swift County

Employees	Position	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Dianne Radermacher	Administrator	211 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE Ortonville, MN 56278	320-839-3411	dianne.radermacher@midconetwork.com
Amber Doschadis	Administrative Assistant	211 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE Ortonville, MN 56278	320-839-3411	amber.doschadis@midconetwork.com
Consultants	Services	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Houston Engineering	Engineer	6901 East Fish Lake Road, Suite 140 Maple Grove, MN 55369	763-493-4522	www.houstonengineer ringinc.com
Rinke Noonan	Attorney	Suite 300, US Bank Plaza P.O. Box 1497 1015 W St. Germain Street St. Cloud, MN 56302	320-251-6700	www.rnoon.com

**Technical Advisory Committee:**

Dianne Radermacher, UMRWD Administrator  
Amber Doschadis, UMRWD Administrative Assistant  
Beau Peterson, Big Stone SWCD  
Brooke Hacker, MN DNR  
Darren Wilke, BS County Environmental Officer  
Chris Domeier, MN DNR Fisheries  
Jay Gilbertson, East Dakota Water Development District  
Luther Aadland, MN DNR  
Todd Larson, BS County Highway Engineer  
Ryan Bjerke, MN DNR Area Hydrologist  
Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering

**Citizens Advisory/WRAP Committee:**

Dianne Radermacher, UMRWD Administrator  
Amber Doschadis, UMRWD Administrative Assistant  
Chessa Frahm, LqP SWCD  
Trudy Hastad, LqPYB Watershed District  
Darren Wilke, BS County Environmental Office  
Swift co. SWCD  
Jennifer Breberg, LqP Environmental Office  
Beau Peterson, Big Stone SWCD  
Ryan Bjerke, MN DNR Area Hydrologist  
Jay Gilbertson, East Dakota Water Development District, SD  
Dennis Skadsen, Day County Conservation District, SD

## **4.2 2017 Annual Work Plan**

### **4.2.1 Water Quantity**

The Browns Valley Flood Mitigation Project:

- The annual bridge inspections were completed.
- The annual inspection of the weir structure, box culvert and floodway were completed.
- Rip-rap and channel bottom were sprayed for weeds and trees.
- Haying of the diversion channel continued in 2017.

The UMRWD Administrator worked with the District's state representative to put together a bonding bill for the 2017 legislative session for the Toelle Coulee and Whetstone River Projects. The City of Browns Valley received \$750,000 for the Toelle Coulee Project and the City of Ortonville received \$1,800,000 for the Whetstone River Project.

The Whetstone River Restoration Project moved forward during the year. The District worked with the landowners POA to try and finalize the land purchase.

The annual inspection of the Beardsley Dry Lake Flood Control Project and the Highway 12 Flood Mitigation Project were performed. The outlet to the Highway 12 Flood Control Project needed to be repaired in the fall of 2017.

The new weir structure on County Ditch #2 was operated according to the agreed upon operating plan.

### **4.2.2 Drainage Systems**

The district acted on 61 individual drainage permit applications and 3 DNR general permit applications for ice heave removal.

The annual inspection of the inlet and outlet of Branch #3A to County Ditch 13 was performed.

The District Board and staff worked with several landowners throughout the year to help resolve drainage issues.

Staff documented all new tile drainage permits approved by the District including lengths and permits approved.



Township	2016 Feet	2016 Miles	Permits Approved
Akron	6,082	1.2	4
L.Akron		0.0	
Almond	125,969	23.9	7
Artichoke		0.0	
Arthur		0.0	
Big Stone	27,190	5.1	10
Browns Valley		0.0	
Foster	400	.1	1
Malta	42,550	8.1	5
Moonshine		0.0	
Odessa		0.0	
Ortonville	5,000	0.9	2
Otrey	195,825	37.1	5
Prior	57,080	10.8	7
L.Prior		0.0	
Toqua	3,600	.7	2
Swift		0.0	
Traverse		0.0	
Stevens		0.0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>463,696</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>43</b>

#### 4.2.3 Lake Level Management

District staff performed daily lake level readings and submitted them to the North Central Rivers Forecast Center, and USGS.

Daily gate adjustments to the Big Stone Lake/Whetstone River Flood Control Structure were performed by staff along with maintenance.

#### 4.2.4 Water Quality

Arrowhead Environmental Consulting completed the fifth year Wetland Restoration Monitoring Report for the Kleindl Wetland WCA Wetland Bank in December. The Application to Deposit Credits in to the Minnesota Wetland Bank was completed and submitted to BWSR in 2015, the district is still working with the local tech. committee to get the credits banked.

The District received a BWSR Clean Water Fund Accelerated Implementation Grant in the amount of \$123,000.00. The grant is for the development and creation of hDEM (and derivative products) and PTMApp products. Houston Engineering was hired by the District to create the products. The District staff

worked closely with the engineers by doing the ground trothing for the project.

The District continued to work on the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) Project which is in partnership with the Pollution Control Agency. Local Partners including Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Traverse Counties Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Lac qui Parle/Yellow Bank Watershed District, Big Stone and Traverse Environmental Offices, East Dakota water Development District, Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Soil and Water Resources.

Using the framework established from Phase I of the Project, the District continue to lead Local Partners in realizing the work plan goals. Those goals include: conducting inventories, development of tools, strengthen landowner relationships, implementing Best Management Practices, maintenance and improvement of local water quality. The District held 1 local partner meeting and 1 CNG meeting in 2017, wrote and submitted semiannual reports as required and updated all partners of progress. Overseeing the disbursement and reimbursement of grant funds was completed by the Watershed Coordinator as well.

The District intensively monitored Stony Run creek, taking both lab samples, and elevation readings. An education event was held for local government units to learn more about the Prioritize Target Measure tool that is currently under development for the District. The District produced on behalf of the local partners a Local Agency Electronic Newsletter for the public which has 100 + recipients and is posted at various sites and on social media online.

The District worked with the City of Ortonville on the dilution of their wastewater discharges to the Minnesota River. District staff coordinates releases from the Big Stone Lake dam during the times that the city is discharging their effluent.

Water quality monitoring continued on Big Stone Lake during the year.

#### **4.2.5 Erosion and Sedimentation**

The District Administrator worked with 3 individual landowners on the installation of shoreline stabilization and ice ridge projects on Big Stone Lake. A total of 400' of shoreline was stabilized during 2017.

#### **4.2.6 Intergovernmental Relations**

The District Staff worked with DNR, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Citizens for Big Stone Lake, the Cities of Ortonville and Big Stone City, Big Stone and Roberts Counties and the East Dakota Water Development District, on the Whetstone River Restoration Project.

The District staff worked with the MN DNR and US Army COE on the Marsh Lake Ecosystem restoration Project.

The District Administrator is a member of the Local Water Plan Technical Advisory Committee, and lead technical staff on the BWSR One Watershed One Plan Committee.

#### **4.2.7 Public Information and Education**

The District Administrator gave presentations to several organizations during the year.

The District Administrative Assistant/WRAP Coordinator presented water quality information at the Bonanza Environmental Learning Center.

The District posted several articles on their website concerning the Whestone River Restoration and other projects completed or under construction.

#### **4.3.8 Implementation of Goals and Objectives**

The long term Maintenance Fund for the Browns Valley Flood Mitigation Project had a balance of \$210,000 for the floodway channel and control structure and \$130,000 for the County Highway 24 and 4 bridges. Additional funds will be contributed to the accounts from an annual levy against the City of Browns Valley and payments from the District's haying contract.

The UMRWD was reimbursed \$29,701.85 from the MPCA for funding of the Minnesota River Headwaters WRAP.

Contracting with DNR for a pass through grant in the amount of \$2,630,000 started in the winter of 2013 and is expected to be completed in 2019.

During 2017 the Board of Managers held 11 Regular Meeting and 1 Public Hearing.

The Board of Managers approved the 2018 Annual Work Plan and Budget.

The District completed the 2016 annual audit and workman's comp. audit.

District staff submitted the 2018 levy information to Big Stone, Traverse, Swift and Stevens Counties.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **2017 Water Quality Testing Data**

**APPENDIX C**  
**2017 Annual Audit**