

Upper Minnesota River Watershed District

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2015 Annual Report



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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 2015 Audit

3.1.1 A complete copy of the 2015 Audit is included in Appendix C of this report. The following tables illustrate the funds and approved levies for 2014 and 2015.

3.2 2015 Budget

Breakdown	2014	2015	Change from Previous Year (+/-)
	Budget	Budget	
Implementation	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	0%
Programs	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	0%
Projects	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	0%
Capitol Improvements/Maintenance	\$54,500.00	\$54,000.00	0%
Administration	\$40,000.00	\$33,500.00	-16.25%
Totals	\$180,500.00	\$174,000.00	-3.6%

3.3 Budget Summary

Year	Budget	Change from Previous Year
Proposed 2016	\$245,000.00	42.5%
2015	\$174,000.00	-3.6%
2014	\$180,500.00	0%
2013	\$180,500.00	.45%
2012	\$180,000.00	-6.2%

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	Vice-Chairman	08/09/2016	Traverse County
Brent Hasslen 562 Park Avenue Ortonville, MN 56278	Chairman	08/09/2016	Big Stone County
Gary Haugen 30453 710 th Street Clinton, MN 56225	Treasurer	08/15/2018	Big Stone County
Terry Gillespie 30787 660 th Avenue Clinton, MN 56225	Secretary	08/09/2017	Big Stone County
Gene Meyer 2411 60 th St. SW Appleton, MN 56208	Manager	8/15/2018	Swift County

Employees	Position	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Dianne Radermacher	Administrator	211 2 nd Street SE Ortonville, MN 56278	320-839-3411	dianne.radermacher @midconetwork.com
Vanessa Meyer	Administrative Assistant	211 2 nd Street SE Ortonville, MN 56278	320-839-3411	vanessa.meyer @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
Vanessa Meyer, UMRWD Administrative Assistant
Blayne Johnson, Big Stone SWCD
Brooke Hacker, MN DNR
Darren Wilke, BS County Environmental Officer
Charlie Moeller, Citizens for Big Stone Lake President
Chris Domeier, MN DNR Fisheries
Jay Gilbertson, East Dakota Water Development District
Kevin Mixon, MN DNR
Luther Aadland, MN DNR
Nick Anderson, BS County Highway Engineer
Ryan Bjerke, MN DNR Area Hydrologist
Skip Wright, MN DNR Regional Hydrologist
Pat Dwyer, BS County Resident
Mark Deutschman, Houston Engineering

Citizens Advisory/WRAP Committee:

Dianne Radermacher, UMRWD Administrator
Vanessa Meyer, UMRWD Administrative Assistant
Terry Wittnebel, LqP SWCD
Mary Homan, LqP/YB Watershed District
Trudy Hastad, LqPYB Watershed District
Darren Wilke, BS County Environmental Office
Justin Boike, Swift co. SWCD
Jennifer Breberg, LqP Environmental Office
Blayne Johnson, Big Stone SWCD
Alice Hanley, BS National Wildlife Refuge
Ryan Bjerke, MN DNR Area Hydrologist
Charlie Moeller, Citizens for Big Stone Lake
Jay Gilbertson, East Dakota Water Development District, SD
Dennis Skadsen, Day County Conservation District, SD

4.2 2015 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.

The annual Inspection of the Beardsley Dry Lake Flood Control Project and the Highway 12 Flood Mitigation Project were performed. 2 Beaver dams were removed and 6 beaver were trapped from the area.

The Whetstone River Restoration Project moved forward during the year. The Public Hearing to adopt the project was held on February 23. The Purchase agreement for the property where the restoration will take place was signed. The District Administrator and Engineer met with DNR staff from the Fergus Falls Office to establish the final design for the project weir structure.

The UMRWD Administrator worked with the District's state representative to put together a bonding bill for the 2016 legislative session for the Toelle Coulee and Whetstone River Projects.

The new weir structure on County Ditch #2 was completed during the fall of 2015.

The District Administrator participated in several meetings with local agencies on the update to the Big Stone County Flood Mitigation Plan.

4.2.2 Drainage Systems

The district acted on 80 individual drainage permit applications and 3 DNR general permit applications for shoreline stabilization 2013.

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 drainage permits approved by the District including lengths and permits approved.

Township	15 in Feet	15 in Miles	Permits Approved
Akron	13,000.00	2.5	2
L.Akron		0.0	
Almond	24,400.00	4.6	4
Artichoke	14,703.00	2.8	3
Arthur	2,000.00	0.4	1
Big Stone	36,946.00	7.0	6
Browns Valley	148,650.00	28.2	9
Foster		0.0	
Malta	120,230.00	22.8	6
Moonshine		0.0	
Odessa	16,585.00	3.1	5
Ortonville	10,620.00	2.0	1
Otrey	5,250.00	1.0	1
Prior	20,800.00	3.9	4
L.Prior	3,649.00	0.7	1
Toqua	2,227.00	0.4	
Swift	93,390.00	17.7	2
Traverse		0.0	1
Stevens			
Totals	512,450.00	97	46

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 fourth 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 convened a Local Partner work group as a joint effort for Phase I of the WRAPS project in partnership with the MPCA. In this first phase, a framework was established that the local government will use to guide our involvement as the MNRH Watershed Project progresses over the next four years. We have identified needs and developed a plan to see that these needs are met and

will enhance the success in developing strategies that will protect or restore the waters in the MNRH watershed.

Agreement and understanding among all local partners was necessary for this project to be successful. A total of four meetings were held to define roles of partners, gather available information and identify what is necessary for a successful project, and to develop a community education plan. The information concluded from these meetings was the main component in forming a plan for moving into phase II of the WRAPS project.

A plan was developed by the Watershed Coordinator that describes the roles and responsibilities of the local entities in completing the major watershed project.

The District staff organized and oversaw the work that was completed in this project. Staff submitted the required semi-annual report and final report. Fiscal management of this project which included tracking of all expenses, payroll, and submittal of reimbursement requests was also completed.

Funding requirements to complete this work were also identified. This plan will be utilized throughout the Minnesota River Headwaters watershed by all local partners.

In the fall of 2015, Phase II of the WRAPS project kicked off with the District being awarded a grant in the amount of \$228,013.00 to carry out the plan developed in Phase I. This began with the Local Partner Group meeting to develop goals and begin develop a plan to form a Citizen Networking Group which will promote awareness of the Local Partners progress within the WRAPS project and offer input where appropriate. Local Partners also created a survey that was posted online and mailed to various stakeholders throughout the District. The information gained through these responses is considered thoughtfully as the project moves forward.

Staff prepared a display board and a brochure which have been used at various meetings to educate and engage at a local level and bring awareness to agency activities. Monitoring and sample collection took place at 10 sites throughout the watershed. As part of the WRAPS process staff also began multiple inventories to track and later convert to GIS on tile inventory, this inventory includes: intakes, pumps, size and approximate length and placement of tiling lines throughout the District. Other inventories include permitting applications, shoreline and buffers.

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 9 individual landowners on the installation of shoreline stabilization and ice ridge projects on Big Stone Lake. A total of 1100' of shoreline was stabilized during 2015.

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 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 posted several articles on their website concerning the Whetstone 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 \$205,000 for the floodway channel and control structure and \$127,000 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.

One grant application, in the amount of \$34,000, was submitted to 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 2018.

During 2014 the Board of Managers held 12 Regular Meeting and 2 Public Hearing.

The Board of Managers approved the 2016 Annual Work Plan and Budget.

The District completed the 2015 annual audit and workman's comp. audit.

District staff submitted the 2016 levy information to Big Stone, Traverse, Swift and Stevens Counties.

APPENDIX A

2015 Water Quality Testing Data

APPENDIX B
2015 Annual Audit