

# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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Office of the Commissioner  
651-259-5555



February 3, 2015

Senator Richard Cohen  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
301 Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Senator LeRoy Stumpf  
Chair, Senate Capital Investment Committee  
G-12 Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Senator John Marty  
Chair, Senate Environment &  
Energy Committee  
323 Capitol  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Representative Jim Knoblach  
Chair, House Ways & Means Committee  
453 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Paul Torkelson  
Chair, House Capital Investment Committee  
381 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Denny McNamara  
Chair, House Environment and Natural  
Resources Policy & Finance Committee  
449 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senators and Representatives:

In accordance with Minnesota Session Laws 2013, Chapter 114, Article 3, Section 4, Subdivision 3, attached is a report on the accomplishments achieved with grants in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 for implementation of the Red River mediation agreement. The Red River Watershed Management Board was awarded \$264,000 in general fund grant monies in each of the fiscal years for costs associated with implementation of the agreement. The state funds are matched with local funds.

The attached report submitted to the DNR highlights a number of efforts partially funded with state assistance, including project team support, project monitoring, project acceleration, Technical & Scientific Advisory Committee, Communication & Outreach, work group meetings and annual conference.

If you have questions about information contained in the attached report, please contact Red River Watershed Management Board Administrator Naomi Erickson at 218-844-6166, or at [rrwmb@arvig.net](mailto:rrwmb@arvig.net)

Sincerely,

Tom Landwehr  
Commissioner

cc: Bob Meier, Assistant Commissioner  
Kent Lokkesmoe, Director of Capital Investment  
Barb Juelich, Chief Financial Officer  
Luke Skinner, Director, Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
Pat Lynch, Floodplain Hydrologist  
John Finney, Red River Watershed Management Board  
Naomi Erickson, Red River Watershed Management Board



## **REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE- RED RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION WORK GROUP FISCAL YEAR 2014 & 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Red River Flood Damage Reduction Work Group (FDRWG or Work Group) was originally formed in 1998 to address issues related to the development of flood damage reduction projects in that portion of the Red River of the North Basin in Minnesota. The Flood Damage Reduction Work Group works to ensure the full implementation of the 1998 Red River Mediation Agreement. Minnesota Session Laws 2013, Chapter 114, Article 3, Section 4, subdivision 3 requires the Commissioner of Natural Resources to submit a report to the Legislature on accomplishments achieved in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 with state funding (\$264,000 per fiscal year) granted for implementation of the Red River Mediation Agreement.

### **FY 2014-15 Accomplishments**

The FY 2014-15 spending plan approved by the Work Group allocated \$264,000 each fiscal year to support collaborative watershed-based efforts to implement the 1998 Mediation Agreement. For all expenses incurred, an equal match is provided by expenses incurred by individual watershed districts or the Red River Watershed Management Board. Funds were allocated and expended to plan and implement projects to achieve flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement goals in the following categories:

**Project Team Support.** This budget item includes activities that directly support activities of watershed-based project teams to develop and implement projects. In FY 2014-15 funds were provided to eight watersheds project teams investigating the following projects:

- Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (Roseau River Watershed District)
- Beltrami Island Forest Impoundment (Roseau River Watershed District)
- Big Swamp Project (Two River Watershed District)
- Tamarac River Watershed (Middle, Snake, Tamarac Watershed District)
- Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration Project (Red Lake Watershed District)
- Garden Slough Project (Sand Hill River Watershed District)
- Moccasin Creek Dam Operation Plan Amendments and Subwatershed Planning (Wild Rice Watershed District)
- Goose Prairie Wildlife Management Area Enhancements (Wild Rice Watershed District)
- Lower Wild Rice River Rehabilitation (Wild Rice Watershed District)
- Manston Slough Restoration (Buffalo Red Watershed District)
- South Branch of the Buffalo River Restoration (Buffalo Red Watershed District)
- Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration (Buffalo Red Watershed District)
- Redpath Project (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)
- Brandrup 9 Problem Identification (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)
- Western 32 / Rabbit River Problem Identification (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)
- West Branch 12 Mile Creek Project (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)
- Doran Creek Project (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)

**Project Monitoring.** This budget item primarily supports water quality monitoring of mediation projects. Water quality monitoring is based on a monitoring plan which often includes monitoring before and after project construction and upstream and downstream of projects. In FY2014-15, funding was used to monitor 16 projects as well as assist in development of project monitoring plans. In FY 2014-15, additional monitoring funds were invested in monitoring wetlands at project sites to begin to develop appropriate methods to assess the effects of projects on wetland community conditions.

**Project Acceleration Grants.** This budget item funded engineering efforts to supplement the project team process for the following projects:

- Roseau Wildlife Management Area Enhancement (Roseau River Watershed District)
- Beltrami Island State Forest Assessment (Roseau River Watershed District)
- Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration Project (Red Lake Watershed District)
- Swede Grove Lake (Buffalo Red Watershed District)
- Redpath Project (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)
- Western 32 Project (Bois de Sioux Watershed District)

**Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC).** The TSAC provides technical and scientific advice to the Work Group primarily through development of technical papers. TSAC membership includes a range of disciplines from hydrology and engineering to ecology, wildlife, soils, wetlands, and water quality. In FY2014-15, TSAC conducted one full meeting and a project monitoring committee meeting.

**Facilitation Grants.** Funds traditionally are allocated to this budget item to fund a third-party professional facilitator to assist project teams when internal issues are encountered that could significantly impede the project team process. No funds were used for this purpose in FY 2014-2015.

**Communications and Outreach** funds were used toward public outreach including distribution of a newsletter and meeting notices for the annual conference.

**Work Group Meetings and Conference.** The Work Group and Red River Watershed Management Board host an annual conference where watershed districts, state and federal agencies, local governments and citizens review accomplishments, increase their understanding of ongoing flood damage reduction and natural resource issues, and discuss future projects. Approximately 120 people attended the FY2104 conference. The FY2014 conference included a special session on the project development to meet regional flood damage reduction goals through distributed storage. In FY2015, funds supported costs incurred to plan the meeting.