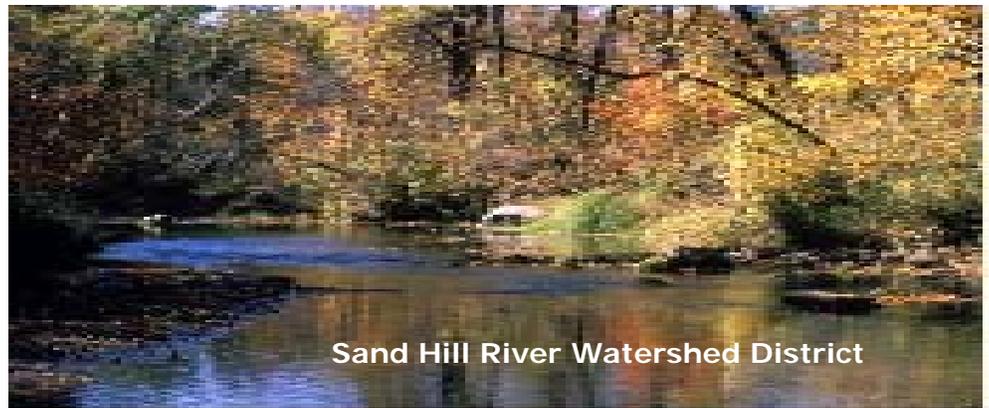


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Sand Hill River Watershed District

Watershed Formation and Characteristics

The Sand Hill River in its natural state passed north of the City of Beltrami in a poorly defined channel and dispersed into marshes which extended westerly for over ten miles before reappearing as a river which flowed into the Red River of the North. In an effort to confine the Sand Hill River in a fixed channel, two state ditches were constructed during 1894-1898, substantially along the course now occupied by the present channel. The improvements were not adequate and additional construction was completed in 1917.

As drainage and flood problems persisted, the Corp of Engineers began a study of the river in 1942. As a result the Sand Hill Drainage and Conservancy Board was established by an order of the District Court of Polk County, State of Minnesota, on the 18th day of May, 1949 to carry out the Corps project to improve the main channel. The overall purpose of the Board was for "flood control and improvement of the Sand Hill River channel." Construction work was completed in the fall of 1954.

The process to establish the Sand Hill River Watershed District was a Court Hearing at Crookston, MN on August 28, 1974. The place of business of the Sand Hill River Watershed District was determined to be at Fertile, MN. The duties and responsibilities of the old Sand Hill River Drainage and Conservancy Board were given to the new District on May 28, 1975 in accordance with the Minnesota Watershed Act.

In 1976 the Sand Hill River Watershed District signed a joint powers agreement with six other watershed districts to form an organization now known as the Red River Watershed Management board. In 1980 the Buffalo Red Watershed District joined and in 1994, Boise De Sioux also joined.

On March 8, 1978 the Sand Hill River Watershed adopted the Rules and Regulations pursuant to Minnesota Statutes. They were later amended on October 3, 1978.

The District's south boundaries were hydrologically determined and established at a hearing at the Fertile Community Center June 26, 1984. The north boundaries were established from the old Sand Hill Drainage & Conservancy District. The District encom-

passes 475 square miles, almost wholly in the south part of Polk County, with a small part in Mahnomon and Norman County. The area includes the entire drainage basin of the Sand Hill River.

The average width of the basin is 8 miles and it is approximately 55 miles long. The Sand Hill River originates in Sand Hill Lake, located about four miles south of the City of Fosston and outlets two miles west of Climax into the Red River of the North. Elevation at the eastern end of the watershed is nearly 1,350 feet above sea level with an elevation of 850 feet at the western end.

Approximately 90 percent of the land in the District is used for agricultural or agriculturally related purposes. The watershed can be divided into three areas as follows:

a.) West End: This is the Red River Valley area, which was the bed of Glacial Lake Agassiz. It is nearly level and almost all cultivated. It extends easterly from the Red River of the North to a point about 6 miles west of the City of Fertile.

b.) Central Region: This area is located from 6 miles west of the City of Fertile to a point about 3 miles east of the City with a major drop of nearly 300 feet in elevation from east to west. This area has considerable wetlands, gravel ridges and scrub tree growth.

c.) East End: The upper reaches of the watershed are glacial in origin and its soils support agricultural uses. It is mostly gently rolling terrain with numerous potholes, the majority of which have been drained

Polk County # 41 (Project # 17)

Polk County and the Sand Hill River Watershed District coordinated their efforts to design and construct a new ditch in conjunction with a major road upgrade along Polk County # 41.

The district held an open house in January of 2005 and by March, the final hearing was held.

Kern and Tabery were awarded the contract and construction began in June of 2005.

The project was let in two phases: Phase I consisted of the lower 6 miles and Phase II consisted of the upper 5 miles, two miles of diversion and



Before Construction

two and a half miles of ditch # 9.

Kern and Tabery sub-contracted Phase I to Zavoral Construction of East Grand Forks, MN. The construction season began wet and turned dry giving the contractor optimum opportunity to complete the work.

Phase II was completed in 2006 and the project was considered a huge success!



Project Completed!

Polk County # 46 (Project # 20)

Project # 17 inspired the completion of project # 20. Local land-owners petitioned the district to continue the ditch rebuild along Polk County # 46.

By the end of 2006, the viewers completed their work and a final hearing was held. The final engineer's report was accepted in December of 2006.

The final hearing and construction is planned for the spring of 2007.



Fish Passage

In 2003, the Sand Hill River Watershed began preliminary investigations to address alternatives that could make the Sand Hill River a viable fishery. It was discovered that two culverts and four drop structures impede fish move-



ment on the Sand Hill River. The Project Team met and have discussed several options.

The USCOE has requested funding for a Section 1135 study

focusing on modifying the old Corps' project to restore fish passage. A Preliminary Restoration Plan was devised.

The DNR fisheries grant was awarded to the district to begin the project. It was decided to begin with the Texas Crossing (West of Beltrami) and the West Mill site. In September of 2006, the project was awarded to Davidson Construction and Ready Mix of Newefolden, MN. The two sites were completed and ready for seeding in the spring of 2007.

Overall Plan Update

The initial meeting to kick off the overall plan was held July 6, 2006 with Lawrence Woodbury and Mark Aanenson from Houston Engineering and Dan Wilkens from the Sand Hill River Watershed attending. The meeting was held at the district office. Aanenson prepared a notice which was distributed and prepared a draft of the planning zones which were later approved by the board. He was given copies of all water related plans prepared by the counties, state, etc. to use in the planning process. Aanenson coordinated the work plan with the Board of Waters and Soil Resources, BWSR. The district approved the resolution to authorize Houston Engineering to update the district's overall plan.

The overall plan and hydrologic model is expected to take up to two years to complete.

Project Team

The Sand Hill River Watershed District Project Team is scheduled to meet the second Tuesday of each month, depending on the availability of it's members. The current member list is as follows:

Adam	Woltjer
Jenny	Burrack
Dan	Thul
Brian	Dwight
Larry	Stortroen
Jerry	Jacobson
Maynard	Pick
Tom	Groshens
Lawrence	Woodbury
Bruce	Johnson
Wayne	Goeken
Jody	Horntvedt
Danny	Grunhovd
Rolland	Gagner
Greg	Bengston
Don	Buckhout
Gary	Huberty
Terry	Wolfe
Bob	Merritt
Luther	Aadland
Mike	Vavricka
Randy	Huleskamp
Gary	Lee
Penny	Doty
Tom	Raster
Les	Peterson
Roger	Hanson
Harold	Vig

The Project Team is currently focusing on the Fish Passage, Union Lake Flood Control and Erosion, Garden Slough, Section 17 of Sletten, and Melvin Slough. These projects are in the very early stages, in fact, much of their research will determine if these projects are feasible. The project team is awaiting modeling and the Overall Plan to assist in their decision making process.

Sand Hill River Watershed District

Advisory Committee Members

John Balstad-Fosston	Rory Hamre-Beltrami
Helmer Homme-Winger	Rich Johnson-Fosston
David Johnstad-Beltrami	Allen Stromstad-Beltrami
Steve Taylor-Fertile	Jim Todahl-Fertile
Scott Tollefson-Beltrami	Steven Vesledahl-Winger
Roger Ulseth-Crookston	Douglas Burd-Nielsville
DeWayne Engelstad-Nielsville	Gerald Jacobson-Fertile
Jan McWilliam-Winger	Jeff Voeller-Climax

Board of Managers

Chairman Roger Hanson—Beltrami
Vice-Chair Harold Vig—Fosston
Secretary Bill Brekke—Nielsville
Treasurer Stuart Christian—Erskine
Manager Gordon Sonsteli—Erskine

Staff

Daniel Wilkens—Administrator
April Swenby—Administrative Assistant

District Activities

- Forty-five permits were presented to the Sand Hill River Watershed District managers in 2005.
- Union Lake Erosion Control Project is still underway and the district continues their efforts to build structures to minimize erosion near Union Lake. The district began the permit process by applying for the necessary permits to begin construction.
- The district has hired a consultant to enter historical permits into our data base to be accessed via www.sandhillwatershed.org.
- A Purpose and Need Statement was drafted for the proposed Garden Slough Project.
- The district continues to maintain and update their website and it has been deemed a successful tool that increases the functionality of the district.
- The Riverwatch Program is continuing its efforts and has multiple sites that are monitored. Accurate reports are periodically distributed to the district.
- Houston Engineering continues their efforts on completing the district model and overall plan.
- In addition to the scheduled activities, one or more representative from the district attends various conferences like MAWD and meetings such as Red River Basin Commission, Red River Watershed Management Board, Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, MN Drainage Inspectors, International Red River Board, just to name a few.