



Sand Hill River Watershed District

2 0 0 7 A N N U A L R E P O R T

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 encompasses 475 square miles, almost wholly in the south part of Polk County, with a small part in Mahnomen 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

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POLK COUNTY # 46

The final hearing was held February 5, 2007. Bids for the project were opened May 1, 2007 and the project was awarded to Zavoral Construction. By the beginning of July, the project was underway. The low bid for completing the project was \$1,021,355.90.

The goal of the improvement project was to provide landowners with a 10 year design drainage ditch. The plan offered 4-1 side slopes on both the road and the field side with piped inlets and grass filter strips.



Completed section of project # 20



Upper reaches with multiple drop structures

Adequate grade and rock drop structures were installed to provide additional drainage and eliminate erosion proving to be an added bonus to the landowners.

The weather was in the contractors favor and the project was completed according to plan.

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 project team members consist of area agencies such as MN DNR, US Army Corp of Engineers, BWSR, MPCA, just to name a few. The project

team is currently researching the feasibility of the Garden Slough Project and is waiting for the district modeling to be completed.

UNION LAKE EROSION CONTROL



The watershed managers coordinated with the Lake Improvement District

creating an agreement for, construction, maintenance and up-keep for the project know as Union Lake Erosion Control. The project's goal is to minimize erosion near Union Lake by creating

rock drop structures and converting highly erodible tillable land into permanent cover. The watershed decided to proceed with the project and looks forward to purchasing the land and finalizing the easements to build the project in 2008.

RUSSIA TWP./SEC. 23 BOUNDARY ISSUE



Outlet

During the preliminary assessment of project # 17, it was brought to the district's attention that a correction was needed on the boundary between the Red Lake Watershed District and the Sand Hill River Watershed District. Water was entering and exiting across the boundaries. Both districts agreed to share the containment of the water in their respected district.

In the spring of 2007, the JC & J Trucking, Inc. hired to establish a grade to the west and remove the offending culverts.

OVERALL PLAN UPDATE

The kick off meeting was held May 3, 2007. The district held various meetings in all four of the planning regions asking for local input on the overall plan. A report based on those meetings with a detailed listing of the findings were given to the managers. The overall plan is expected to be completed in 2008. To coordinate with the Overall Plan, a complete hydrologic model of the district is being created to assist the district in the project planning and mediation 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-Nielsen
DeWayne Engelstad-Nielsen	Gerald Jacobson-Fertile
Jan McWilliam-Winger	Jeff Voeller-Climax

BOARD OF MANAGERS

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

STAFF

Daniel Wilkens—Administrator
April Swenby—Administrative Assistant

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

- Twenty—three permits were presented to the Sand Hill River Watershed District managers in 2007.
- The district again participated in the annual Polk County Fair.
- 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 by the project team for the proposed Garden Slough Project.
- All historical permits have been entered and can be searched on line by visiting the district web site at www.sandhillwatershed.org
- The Riverwatch Program is continuing it's efforts and has multiple sites that are monitored. Accurate reports are periodically distributed to the district.
- The district applied for a challenge grant for putting the ditch systems and their assessments into GIS format.
- 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, Drainage Work Group, MN Drainage Inspectors, International Red River Board, just to name a few.

VISIT US ON THE WEB!

WWW.SANDHILLWATERSHED.ORG