

# SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Minutes-March 2,1993 Regular Meeting

**1. Attendance:** Roland Gullekson, President, called the March 2, 1993 meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. District Managers present were Roger Hanson, Orley Jevning, Francis LaVoi and Dan Wilkens. Robert Nelson; Don Ogaard-Chairman, Red River Watershed Management Board; Terry Wolfe~MN DNR Area Wildlife Manager; Wayne Goeken-SHRWD Executive Secretary; and Lawrence Woodbury-SHRWD Consulting Engineer were also in attendance.

**2. Minutes:** Motion by LaVoi and seconded by Hanson to adopt the minutes of the February 2, 1993 Sand Hill River Watershed District Board meeting as mailed. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Treasurer's Report:** Wilkens handed out and reviewed the SHRWD's February financial reports which included the checking account transactions, investment portfolio and current fund balances. Wilkens explained the breakdown of SHRWD expenses as displayed graphically in pie charts. Wilkens reviewed and presented for payment the current month's bills. Motion by Jevning and second by LaVoi to accept the Treasurer's Report and authorize payment of the current month's bills as presented below. Motion carried unanimously.

Fertile Journal-meeting notice	3.17
Harry's Red Owl-cleaning supplies	3.24
Mac's Cafe-meals	46.44
Eide Mercantile-cleaning supplies	9.66
Garden Valley Telephone Company	61.58
Fertile Sand & Gravel-snow removal	30.00
Tony Dom-copier maintenance	54.67
Otter Tail Power Company-monthly electric charge	329.41
Non-Point Source Conference-registration fee	50.00
Environmental Energy Study Institute-reports	40.00
Business Agency, Inc.-Workmen's Comp Ins.	2,116.00
Business Agency, Inc.-General Liability Ins.	1,918.00
Agassiz Environmental Learning Center-development support	10,000.00
Lois Plante-Custodial	18.47
Wayne Goeken-Secretarial expenses	399.11
Roland Gullekson-Meetings & expenses	518.40
Roger Hanson-Meetings & expenses	771.44
Orley Jevning-Meetings & expenses	59.93
Francis LaVoi-Meetings & expenses	62.68
Daniel Wilkens-Meetings & expenses	405.00
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b><u>\$16,897.20</u></b>

Discussion followed regarding transferring funds into SHWD project accounts that have a negative balance to provide for a positive balance to cover projected future expenses. Motion by LaVoi and second by Hanson to transfer \$20,000 to the Bear Park Project and \$1,000 to the Verdell Olson Project with funds being transferred from the construction account. Motion carried unanimously.

Gullekson reported that the Minnesota Assn. of Watershed Districts is holding a legislative breakfast in St. Paul on March 25. The intent of the breakfast is for representatives from each watershed to visit with their legislators regarding watershed issues affecting their local area. The cost per participant is \$10.00.

Motion by Wilkens and second by LaVoi to invite Representative Bernie Lieder and encourage any other SHRWD personnel who can make it to attend.

Gullekson reviewed an offer for purchase of two publications regarding water quality that have information that should be useful to the SHRWD. Motion by LaVoi and second by Wilkens to purchase the two books which cost a total of \$40.00. Motion carried unanimously. Gullekson also noted a nonpoint source pollution conference that will be held in LaCrosse, Wisconsin on March 17-19, 1993 which appears to have many useful sessions on natural resource issues and on generating grass roots involvement. Motion by Wilkens and second by LaVoi to authorize Gullekson to attend this conference if possible. All Board members and staff of the SHRWD were also authorized and encouraged to attend the Watershed workshop to be held in Thief River Falls on March 19-20.

**4. Maple Creek Diversion Project:** Terry Wolfe, MN DNR Area Wildlife Manager brought up for discussion options regarding providing more water to Chicog Lake (aka Melvin Slough). Wolfe noted that Chicog Lake was dry a few years ago during the drought. Cattails continue to encroach further towards the center of the lake which is detrimental to multi-purpose use of the lake by waterfowl and other species. Water that used to go to Chicog L. was diverted many years ago to go through the nearby Spring Gravel wash plant. Since that time the Red Lake Watershed's Burnham Creek project to the northwest of Chicog L. was developed for flood control with water now being diverted to that area.

Wolfe inquired as to whether water that is now going through the Burnham Creek system could be diverted to Chicog L. for a few days each spring to bring the lake level up. Wilkens proposed an option whereby a control structure would be built between Chicog L. and Maple Creek to hold water in the spring and release it over the course of the summer. Water levels would be lowered in the fall to allow for holding water in the spring for flood control related to the downstream area of Maple Creek. If more water is needed in Chicog L. there may be an option to divert Ditch 65 overflows that now go to Burnham Creek. However, this source of water can be kept closed with all of its water going through the Burnham Creek area as the Burnham Creek project was designed to handle those water flows.

Some preliminary site survey work and engineering was done related to this project in 1977 when a flood control project was being considered. This data will be reviewed and additional engineering analysis done as needed to determine project options.

**5. Agassiz Environmental Learning Center:** Wayne Goeken, Executive Director of the Agassiz ELC reviewed the status of the AELC including funding being provided locally by Lutheran Brotherhood County Committees and programs that are now being offered to area schools for delivery this spring. A grant proposal is also being submitted to the U.S. Forest Service for program development and delivery. It was noted that the article that appeared in the Fertile Journal which explained the SHWD funding of the Agassiz ELC had generated some discussion, most of which concerned keeping taxes down-not against use of the funds for the Agassiz ELC. Hanson had also visited with three Polk County Commissioners regarding this matter, with the Commissioners being neutral regarding the SHRWD supporting the Agassiz ELC.

Discussion followed regarding how the Agassiz ELC fits with the purpose of the SHRWD and whether to provide further funding for development of the Agassiz ELC. Discussion as presented in the February SHRWD minutes was re-emphasized, noting that the programs and services to be offered by the Agassiz ELC help advance the watershed's purpose of land and water stewardship. Improved awareness of natural resource issues by residents in the SHRWD will help avert conflicts over these resources in the future. The Agassiz ELC will also eventually serve urban audiences which is very important as residents

of urban areas need to better understand how natural resource issues facing rural areas impacts urban areas. Motion was made by Wilkens and seconded by Jevning to provide \$10,000 to the Agassiz ELC for program development and delivery. In further discussion, Hanson questioned whether the Agassiz ELC would be self-sufficient or if it would be approaching the SHRWD on a regular basis for additional funding. It was noted that this is a special request and there is no plan for regular, on-going support to the Agassiz ELC from the SHRWD, although future requests for specific projects may or may not be advanced which would be approved or denied by the SHRWD Board on a case by case basis. The above motion by Wilkens to provide \$10,000 to the Agassiz ELC was voted on and passed unanimously.

**6. Red River Valley Environmental Assessment:** Don Ogaard, Chairman of the Red River Watershed Management Board reviewed a possible response to the Army Corps of Engineers plan that an environmental assessment be done of the Red River Valley before any water related projects can proceed. It is proposed that a task force be formed to guide the Environmental Assessment process. Three attorneys have been interviewed, one of which will be hired by the RRWMB to help coordinate the task force. It is felt that the RRWMB needs to take a proactive position throughout the entire process. It is also important that all entities at the federal, state and local level be kept involved so that all accept and abide by the final results. Ogaard drew a tentative flow chart on the blackboard of where the various entities fit and what role they may play in development of the environmental assessment.

The scope of the project and the outcome is still uncertain. The end product as perceived by the Corp may be that a process for doing an environmental assessment for the Red River Valley is defined whereas the RRWMB is interested in going beyond defining the process and more so defining an Overall Plan for the Red River Valley. The analysis and results must be thorough, covering all issues required <sup>^^</sup> by the National Environmental Policy Act so that the final product can be defended against inadequacy claims that may be later mounted by agencies or environmental groups. On March 4, the RRWMB will be meeting to discuss the above proposed response. The Board will also discuss payment for the project, of which the total cost is difficult to project at this time. This issue will be further discussed and defined at the March 19-20 Watershed workshop in Thief River Falls,

**7. Other Activities and Business:**

- a.) Sand Hill River Tree Snagging. Wilkens reported that a two person crew based in Ada has been hired to work along the Sand Hill River over this next year to cut up tree snags in and along the Sand Hill River. Robert Nelson visited with the Board regarding what was happening with this operation as the workers were cutting along the river on his property. Gullekson explained the project and apologized for not letting Nelson know ahead of time of the work that was to be done. Wilkens noted that the workers were having some trouble working in the Fertile area because of thin ice which they were breaking through as they tried to work from the river. It was also noted that the Minnesota Conservation Corp will do one more week of tree snagging from the Sand Hill River in the Climax area.
- b.) Wilkens reported on a meeting that Ogaard and himself had with Tim Loesch of the Land Management Information Center office when in St. Paul regarding use of GIS to generate maps and information for watersheds. It appears that the system is useable as shown by Loesch. However, staff at The International Coalition who are supposed to be providing this service to members of the RRWMB don't seem to know how to make the system useable to watersheds in the Red River Valley.
- c.) Gullekson noted that a letter has been received by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources accepting the outline of the SHRWD Overall Plan. Goeken will proceed to draft an update of the SHRWD Overall Plan with goals and objectives for the District which will be reviewed by the Board.

**8. Permits:** No permits came before the Board for review. .

**9. Adjournment:** The next regular meeting of the SHRWD was set for Tuesday, April 6, 1993. As there was no further business to come before the Board, motion by Hanson and seconded by Wilkens to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.