



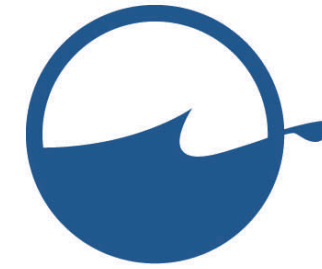
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Water Authority**

# Bulletin

Volume VI, Issue I

January/February 2008

## LAWA Board of Directors

Chairman Bruce Furness—City of Fargo

Vice Chairman Keith Burley—Cass Rural Water Users

Secretary/Treasurer Dave Koland—Garrison Diversion

Curt Kreun—City of Grand Forks

LaVonne Althoff—Southeast Water Users

Clark Cronquist—Agassiz Water Users

Kenneth Evenson—City of Valley City

Rick Bigwood—North Valley Water District

John Drees—Grand Forks-Traill Water District

Kelli Poehls—City of Moorhead

Kevin Burg—City of Hillsboro

## Upcoming Meeting

Lake Agassiz Water Authority Board of Directors

March 11, 2008 10:00 AM

Doublewood Inn - Birch Room, Fargo

### In this issue:

- Preferred Alternative is the Best Option for the RRVWSP
- Comparison of Two Alternatives
- Regional Drought Conditions
- LAWA Update
- Upcoming Meetings

## Preferred Alternative is the Best Option for the RRVWSP

Garrison Diversion and the Bureau of Reclamation have spent the past five years developing the Environmental Impact Statement for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP). Through this process, the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River Alternative was identified as the preferred alternative. This determination was made by working with stakeholders, agencies and experts within the state and across the country.

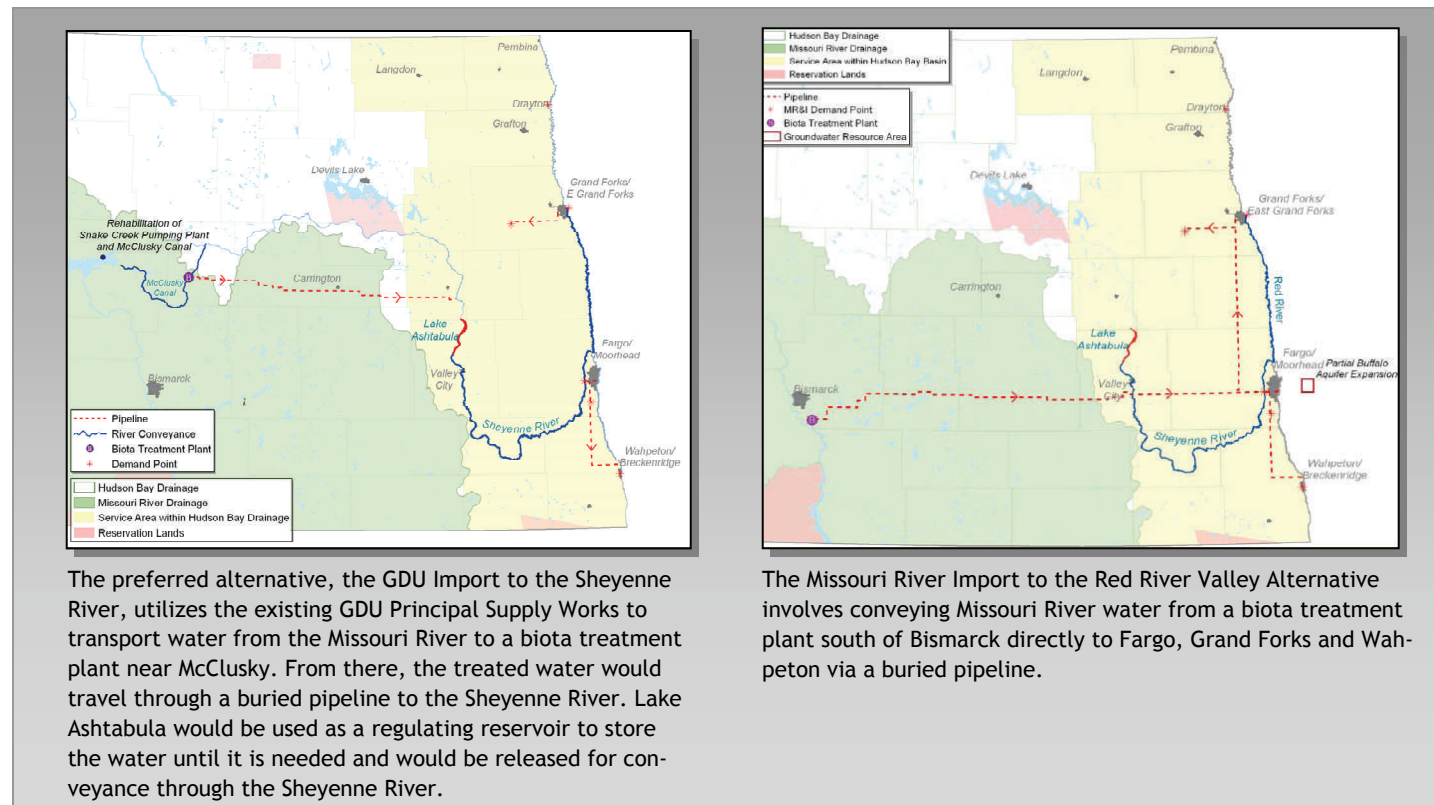
The GDU Import to the Sheyenne River Alternative involves utilizing the existing GDU Principal Supply Works to transport water from the Missouri River to a biota treatment plant near McClusky. From there, the treated water would travel through a buried pipeline to the Sheyenne River. Lake Ashtabula would be used as a regulating reservoir to store the water until it is needed by city and rural water systems in the Red River Valley. At that point, it would be released for conveyance through the Sheyenne River and flow into the Red River.

Comprehensive processes on the federal, state and local levels were key in determining the preferred alternative for the project. A Cooperating Agency Team was created as part of the federal process, which included 13 agencies that met for four years. In addition, over 52 resource meetings were held with various agencies. The state process involved coordination with the State Water Commission, 11 state agencies and the State Legislature. The Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) represented the local water systems throughout the federal and state processes and created a Technical Advisory Committee and an Ad Hoc Committee to study the project.

After developing and evaluating the alternatives, a number of entities concurred that the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River Alternative is the best alternative for the project. The LAWA Board of Directors, Garrison Diversion Board of Directors, State Water Commission, the Governor of North Dakota and the Bureau of Reclamation all declared it to be the preferred alternative.

Recently, there has been interest in a different alternative, the Missouri River Import to the Red River Valley Alternative. There has been speculation that it may be a better option for the RRVWSP. This alternative consists of a pipeline from Bismarck directly to Fargo, Grand Forks and Wahpeton. A comparison of this alternative and the preferred alternative is included on page two of this bulletin. The comparison clearly shows that the preferred alternative remains the best option, as it provides the most benefits to the environment, meets the water needs of the Red River Valley and is the least costly of the Missouri River import alternatives to construct and operate.

## Comparison of Two Alternatives



**Environmental Impacts:** The operation of the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River Alternative will benefit the Sheyenne Delta Aquifer, fish and mussels in the Sheyenne River, fish in the Red River and other protected areas. The Missouri River Import to the Red River Valley would not provide any of these environmental benefits and would have adverse impacts on mussels in the Sheyenne River.

**Construction Costs:** Construction of the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River is estimated at \$659.8 million. This is 38% less than the cost of the Missouri River Import to the Red River Valley, which is estimated at \$1.065 billion.

**Annual Operations, Maintenance & Replacement Costs:** Annual operations and maintenance of the GDU Import to the Sheyenne River is estimated to cost \$1.116 million. The Missouri River Import to the Red River Valley is expected to cost 62% more each year to operate and maintain, with annual costs of \$2.979 million.

**Life Expectancy:** Both alternatives use similar design criteria and materials, and are expected to operate for at least 100 years. The Principal Supply Works, consisting of the Snake Creek Pumping Plant, Lake Audubon and the McClusky Canal, have been properly maintained since their construction. They are expected to continue to operate for at least 100 years.

**Lake Ashtabula:** The GDU Import to the Sheyenne River utilizes an existing reservoir, Lake Ashtabula, for storage. This reservoir has the capacity for 69,000 acre-feet of water storage.

**Missouri River Usage:** The annual usage of Missouri River water for each of the alternatives:

	GDU Import to Sheyenne River	Missouri River Import to Red River Valley
<b>Minimum</b>	1,192 acre-feet	21,382 acre-feet
<b>Maximum</b>	86,469 acre-feet	68,769 acre-feet
<b>Average</b>	31,686 acre-feet	28,111 acre-feet

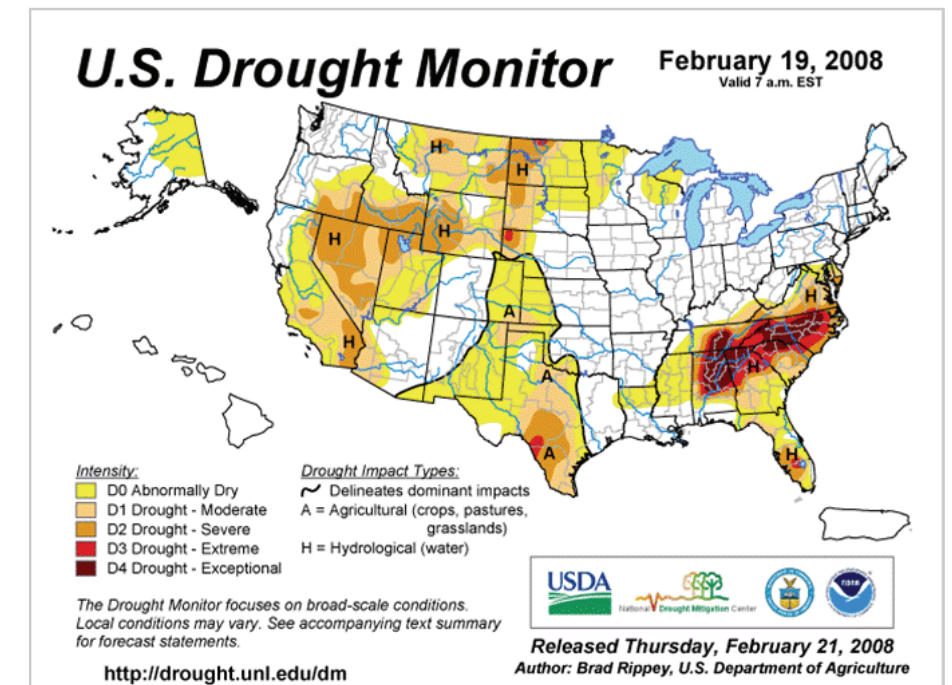
## Regional Drought Conditions

The entire state is now classified as at least abnormally dry according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The most serious conditions are in the western half of North Dakota, where there is a moderate to severe drought, and in the extreme north-central part of the state, which is in an extreme drought.

The central and southern Red River Valley had been the only part of the state not in a drought classification, but that changed in the past month as the entire Red River Valley is now considered abnormally dry.

According to information recently released by North Dakota State University's Soil Science Department, State Climatologist Adnan Akyuz considers southwestern North Dakota to be so dry that if it were the growing season, the area would be classified as exceptional drought, the worst drought category. The average precipitation in southwestern North Dakota for the 90-day period ending February 7 was only 24% of normal, making it the worst 90-day period in the state's history.

The state climatologist expects that current La Nina conditions will last into spring, which may continue to impact the drought conditions. According to Akyuz, spring precipitation is typically above normal during La Nina years, but that hasn't always been the case.



## Lake Agassiz Water Authority Update

- At the January LAWA Board meeting, the group received comments from ND Senator Tim Mathern and former Governor William Guy about the preferred alternative for the RRVWSP. They suggested that further consideration be given to the Missouri River "Pipeline" Alternative, the alternative consisting of a pipeline from the Missouri River directly to Fargo, Grand Forks and Wahpeton. In other business, Chairman Bruce Furness appointed a work group to advise Garrison Diversion as the operational plan for the project is developed.
- At the February LAWA Board meeting, a presentation was given outlining the decision-making process for the RRVWSP, explaining the federal, state and local efforts in identifying the alternatives and determining the preferred alternative. A comparison of the preferred alternative and the Missouri River "Pipeline" Alternative was also conducted.