

Lake Agassiz Water Authority Bulletin

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ND Legislature Passes Red River Valley Water Supply Project Legislation

During the Sixty-first Legislative Assembly of North Dakota, two Senate bills regarding the Red River Valley Water Supply Project were introduced and passed. The bills further show the state of North Dakota's commitment to this important project.

Senators Gary Lee, Arden Anderson, and Terry Wanzek along with State Representatives Rick Berg, Scott Kelsch, and Chet Pollert sponsored Senate Bill 2298. The bill gives Garrison Diversion Conservancy District the authority to issue and sell revenue bonds to finance the cost of constructing projects.

The new bonding authority may be used to bond the local users' (water systems) share of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Governor Hoeven signed the bill on April 8, 2009.

Senate Bill 2317, regarding the state's cost-share of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project was introduced by Senators Tom Fischer, Tim Flakoll, and Carolyn Nelson, and State Representatives Kathy Hawken, Curt Hofstad, and Lee Kaldor.

The bill reinforces the need to provide the Red River Valley with a reliable water supply. The bill states "it is declared necessary and in the public interest that the state by and through the state water commission provide a one-third share of the cost of constructing the Red River Valley Water Supply Project."

The bill also states that any general funds appropriated for the construction of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project may be carried over to future bienniums.

Governor Hoeven signed SB 2317 on April 22.

The passage of these two bills reaffirms the state of North Dakota's commitment to providing the Red River Valley with a reliable water supply for generations to come.

Red River Valley Water Supply Project Update

The ND State Water Commission approved partial funding to proceed with development of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. The funding will be used to help develop the operational plan, work on obtaining Project permits, options for right-of-way easements and preliminary design. In addition to the State Water Commission funding, Lake Agassiz Water Authority and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District will provide funds to complete this work.

On January 15, 2009, the Secretary of the Interior signed a memorandum regarding the Red River Valley Water Supply Project that disclosed the following:

The project selected to meet the needs of the Red River Valley is the GDU Import to Sheyenne River Alternative, a pipeline from the McClusky Canal to Lake Ashtabula; and,

The identified treatment of Missouri River water is adequate to meet the requirements of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

RRVWSP Engineering Progress

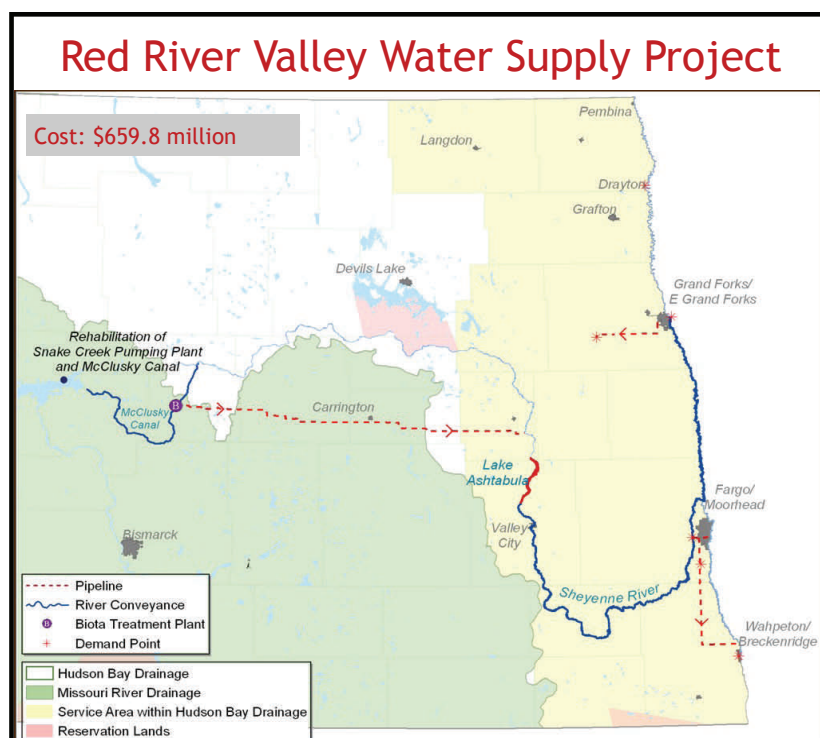
Below is a summary of the progress on the engineering task orders. These task orders were included in the 2009 Red River Valley Water Supply Project work plan.

Right-of-Way—Property owner information along the proposed pipeline right-of-way (from the McClusky Canal to Lake Ashtabula) has been collected. There are approximately 264 parcels of land that will need to be negotiated. Initial contacts with the landowners are expected to begin the first week in May.

Permitting and Environmental Services—The wetland information along the proposed pipeline route has been forwarded to the Corps of Engineers, and they are currently completing a determination of jurisdictional wetlands. Other activities that will begin in May are collecting data on historic properties, utility crossings, road crossings, and other components requiring permits.

Operational Plan—The first workshop to gather input on the issues that will affect the operational plan was held on April 14. Due to the input from participants, additional meetings with smaller groups of systems and agencies will be conducted in May in preparation for the next workshop.

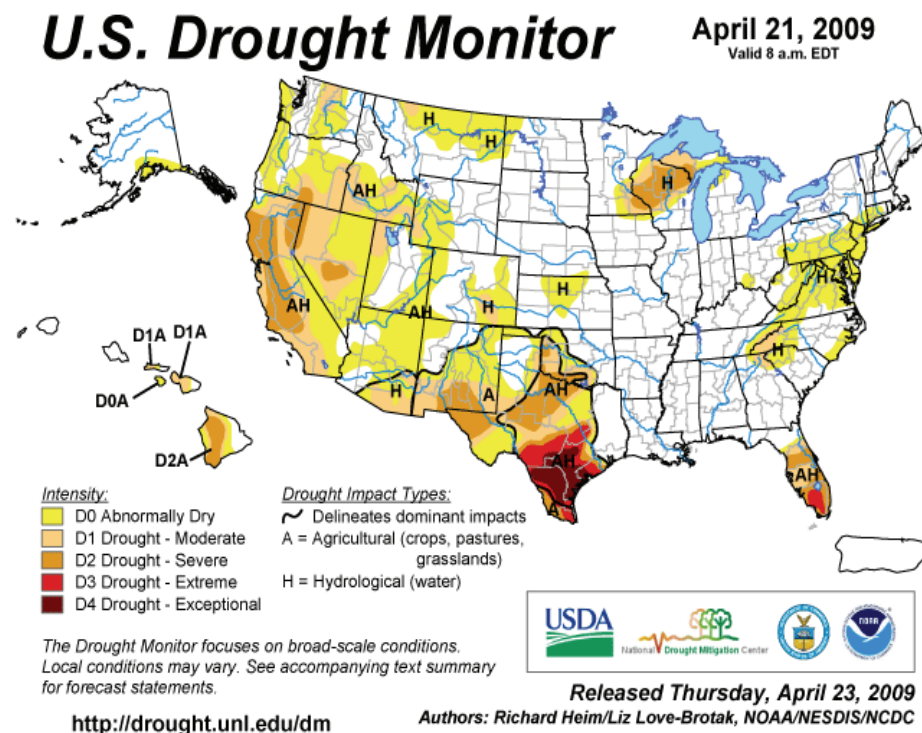
Preliminary Design—Work has begun on the following engineering evaluations: pipe cover depth, leak detection and monitoring, pipe material and wall thickness, selection of trenchless crossings methods, and discharge structure location and configurations.



Regional Drought Conditions

North Dakota has been officially relieved from the drought conditions that plagued the state for months. March's record snowfalls and below normal temperatures throughout most of North Dakota led to the drought relief. The southwest corner of North Dakota was the last portion of the state to see drought conditions improve.

Abnormally dry conditions are present in the west central and northwest portions of the state due to growing 30-90 day precipitation deficits. Lack of snowfall, increasing temperatures, low humidity, and windy weather have led to the dry conditions, far different than what was seen throughout the remainder of the state.



Below normal temperatures were present in North Dakota through March and April. According to the Climate Prediction Center, below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation will likely be present throughout the spring months due to the lingering effects of La Nina in the region.

Flood conditions were seen across the state throughout March and April. Record floods were impacted by record precipitation events across the state, along with heavy precipitation in the fall of 2008. Though major precipitation events led to flood conditions throughout the majority of North Dakota this spring, it is important to remember that drought and wet cycles are constantly changing and drought conditions may occur again at any time.

Operational Plan Work Group Recap

After being delayed in February and March due to poor winter weather conditions, the Operational Plan work group met for the first time on April 14. The focus was to gather information and define the issues relating to the operation of the Project.

The work group consists of federal and state agencies, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and Lake Agassiz Water Authority members. Federal agencies participating in the work group include the Bureau of Reclamation, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Geological Service. State Agencies participating include the ND State Water Commission, ND Department of Health, ND Game and Fish Department, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The next meeting of the Operational Plan work group will be June 9.



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Upcoming Meeting

Lake Agassiz Water Authority Board of Directors

May 12, 2009, 10:00 AM, Doublewood Inn, Fargo, ND
