STATUS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED RIVER BOARD

Prepared for the
International Joint Commission
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1.0 Introduction

This status report provides highlights of current International Red River Board (IRRB) activities and basin issues. The report reflects the deliberations and decisions of the IRRB in implementing its work plan, and continues upon previous reports including the Board's sixth annual progress report dated October 2005.

2.0 Water Quality and Water Quantity Conditions

Water Quantity

Spring flooding in 2006 occurred throughout the basin, being most severe in the upper reaches. Flood levels in Fargo and Grand Forks, for example, ranked 3rd highest since 1900. It has been estimated that emergency operations comprising levee construction, sandbagging and pumping, served to prevent over $290 million in flood damages in this part of the basin.

Although there was significant agricultural flooding throughout the basin, the flood threat to communities in the lower reaches was less severe. Peak flows at the international boundary have been estimated to have a 1:20-year return period, approximating the 1996 flood. Six ring-dike communities in Manitoba were closed off and the Winnipeg floodway was operated primarily to prevent basement flooding and to avert damages that could have been as high as $130 million.

The overall success in flood response is attributed to improvements to flood forecasting and to flood protection measures implemented since the 1997 flood.

Currently, soil moisture conditions are generally dry except for the upper basin. Streamflows in July and August were also generally below normal throughout most of the basin. However, recent substantial rains upstream of Fargo have caused significant increases in streamflow in this region.

The longer-range forecasts issued by the National Weather Service indicate above normal temperature trends for the basin and an equal chance of normal, above normal, or less than normal precipitation.

Water Quality at the International Boundary

For the period April 1 to September 28, 2006, no unusual deviations or exceedances were observed for total dissolved oxygen or fecal coliform bacteria. However, total dissolved solids exceeded the IJC objective (500 mg/L) in 9 of 16 samples. The exceedances ranged from 501.8 to 559.0 mg/L and many of the other observed values were elevated ranging from about 380.6 to 453.1 mg/L. Both sulphate and chloride were within their respective water quality objectives (250 mg/L and 100 mg/L) with sulphate ranging from 48.1 mg/L in April to 203.0 mg/L in May. Chloride ranged from 7.9 mg/L in April to 97.2 mg/L in August.

The automonitor operated more-or-less continuously with some non-scheduled maintenance interruptions. The latter are attributable to the high sediment content of the Red River and ingestion of sediments by the intake lines. Plans to upgrade and augment monitoring capability at this location are being finalized. The upgrade would include real-time monitoring capability of three additional parameters (turbidity, phosphorus and nitrate).

3.0 Initiatives and Activities

3.01 International Red River Board Work Plan

In 2005, the IRRB updated its 3-year work plan to reflect the current status of its activities and to affirm consistency with the International Watersheds Initiative and the IJC Directive to the IRRB. The work plan priorities include a continued effort to expand the existing scientific knowledge of aquatic ecosystem dynamics and current conditions. The activities encompass assessment of fish and macroinvertebrate

communities, distribution and abundance of exotic species, as well as plant community structures and trends. A recent undertaking is implementation of a sampling program for parasites and pathogens in light of the Devils Lake outlet project and The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) multi-lateral agreement with respect to filtration and monitoring requirements.

The priority activities also include development of recommendations for the establishment of apportionment/flow targets at the international boundary, and reassessment of flood mitigation efforts in the basin.

Further discussion follows with respect to the current activities of the IRRB.

3.02 Parasite/Pathogen Sampling Program

Construction and operation of the Devils Lake state outlet connects a closed basin in North Dakota with the Hudson Bay drainage system. The outlet could potentially transfer fish parasites and pathogens into the Hudson Bay watershed to the detriment of fish populations, especially to commercial and sport fish populations in the Red River and in Lake Winnipeg.

In 2005, negotiations involving diplomatic levels, federal, state and provincial authorities, and The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) resulted in the installation of a temporary gravel filter at the outlet to act as a barrier against the transfer of fish and some plants into the Red River system. The barrier does not protect against viruses and other foreign organisms smaller than about two millimetres in diameter that may exist in Devils Lake. The negotiations also resulted in a 4-day sampling project coordinated by the CEQ from July 25-30 involving scientists from Minnesota, North Dakota, Manitoba and Canadian and U.S. federal agencies. The purpose of the limited sampling project was to provide additional information regarding the presence of targeted aquatic biota and fish pathogens and parasites of concern in Devils Lake. None of the target aquatic invertebrates or macrophytes were recorded or collected during this survey. Except for *R. salmoninarum,* none of fish pathogens listed in the *National Wild Fish Health Survey* were detected, and none of the prohibitive fish pathogens found in most state or federal regulations or policies were recovered during the survey. However, the CEQ final report provides a number of caveats to ensure scientific integrity under which the survey results must be viewed and evaluated. These include the caveat that "due to the fact the present survey represents results from a single time period, the survey results should inform, but not be the sole determinant of the process to design and construct a more advanced filtration system and/or disinfection system for the Devils Lake outlet that may be required to prevent the potential transfer of biota of concern from Devils Lake to the receiving water through the operation of an outlet." Subsequent CEQ-led follow-up negotiations resulted in a multi-lateral agreement regarding further biological monitoring and advanced permanent filtration.

Stemming from these negotiations, oversight for post-diversion monitoring was assigned to the IJC and IRRB. In June 2006 the AEC completed an assessment of the monitoring needs with consideration of: i) Devils Lake diversion, ii) current ND permit monitoring, iii) basin-wide bio-assessment needs, iv) watershed perspectives, and v) knowledge and information gaps. This initial assessment resulted in a number of recommendations and further refinements towards a monitoring proposal, which was completed including budget requirements in July 2006. The AEC proposal was developed in consultation with experts from the United States and Canada to ensure a scientifically defensible undertaking. A 3-year sampling program, with consideration of a longer term effort, was subsequently approved by the governments of the United States and Canada and the participating agencies.

In summary, the objective of the sampling program is to: determine the presence and prevalence of fish parasites and pathogens in resident fish from Devils Lake, the Sheyenne River, Red River, and Lake Winnipeg, and; to address the risks associated with transfer of such parasites and pathogens from the Devils Lake outlet to aquatic ecosystems downstream. A further objective is to use the comprehensive fish survey

data to support the overall framework for biological monitoring in the Red River basin as identified in the IRRB work plan.

The 3-year program comprising 7 sampling sites and 13 target fish species was initiated in September 2006. A report on the 2006 data collection will provide the basis for any necessary refinement of the program for the following 2 years. Further, the results of the 3-year sampling program would be used to establish a focused long-term monitoring program for fish parasites and pathogens in the Red River basin, including select tributaries to the Red River and Lake Winnipeg.

The project plan assigns technical and financial responsibility to Canada for the collection and analysis of the biological data in the Canadian portion of the basin, and to the United States for like work carried out in the United States. Consistent methods, as confirmed in a workshop of experts in August 2006, are being applied to both streams of work. The project is being coordinated and managed by the Canadian and United States Co-Chairs of the AEC, with implementation and technical management of the project assigned to Fisheries & Oceans Canada and US Fish & Wildlife Service. The project design allows for peer review of the interpretive reports.

The project cost for 2006-2007 is estimated at $286,000 and $383,000 respectively for the United States and Canadian components. To-date, Environment Canada has committed $306,000, and Fisheries & Oceans Canada $77,000 to the project cost. The IJC (US Section) is providing funding for the US component of the project.

3.03 Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Plan

In 2003, at the request of the IJC, the IRRB completed a basin-wide survey and analysis of actions taken by governments at all levels in implementing the recommendations contained in *Living with the Red*. The final survey report titled *Flood Preparedness and Mitigation in the Red River Basin - October 2003*, indicated that while considerable progress had been made in increasing preparedness for major floods and in mitigating potential harm from future floods, there was a need for continued and concerted effort to address those IJC recommendations entailing multiple objectives and inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Further to this report, the IRRB indicated that a comprehensive flood mitigation plan as proposed by the IJC in January 2003 would provide an appropriate mechanism to mobilize the multi-jurisdictional co-operation and commitment necessary to assure cohesion on flood management and long-term resiliency in the basin.

In 2005 the document titled *Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Plan* (CFMP) was prepared by the IJC in consultation with the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) and the IRRB, and advice regarding preferred options for advancing the document to the political level was sought from senior officials in the three jurisdictions (North Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba). The proposed CFMP is intended to build on the Memorandum of Understanding for Flood and Drought Mitigation on the Red River that was signed by the governors of North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota and the Premier of Manitoba in April 2004. Further, the Plan recognizes current efforts led by the RRBC to develop a Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP). The CFMP would contribute to and become an integral part of the NRFP.

Support for the CFMP was discussed further at the IRRB annual meeting in July 2006. It was concluded that while members do not all have the same interpretation of the priorities for flood mitigation in the basin or on follow-up approach, the components under a CFMP, or Flood Mitigation Strategy as the suggested name-change, need to be determined. Integral to this task is a [current] documentation of the accomplishments and the positive benefits that have accrued to the basin and communities. The latter represents an important communications document reflecting the actions and achievement of many agencies, including the IJC and IRRB. This undertaking would also provide insight into how the IRRB and others might support or influence continued preparedness and mitigation activities in the basin.

As agreed at the 2006 annual meeting, the IRRB Co-Chairs prepared a Terms-of-Reference for the Hydrology Committee (HC) to develop a detailed project proposal that outlines the scope of work required to document the flood mitigation accomplishments to date and to identify the remaining mitigation priorities for the basin. The individual and collective capacity of participating agencies, and options to engage Committee members, IRRB members, and/or independent consultants, to complete the task is to be explored. The project proposal is to be available for review and approval at the January 2007 IRRB biannual meeting.

3.04 Water Quantity Apportionment

Factors such as climate change, or increases in water use causing much larger departures from the natural regimes to occur, would prompt action to set flow targets at the international boundary. The IRRB considers it prudent to consider establishment of such targets before they are needed.

In July 2006, the HC was asked to prepare a detailed proposal to establish the 'process' for undertaking development and implementation of apportionment procedures. A number of factors are to be considered , including identification of the project elements, participating agencies, related capacity issues, and timelines. Given the complex technical and administrative challenges associated with such procedures, the HC was asked to consider engaging appropriate experts, internal and external to the basin, in a workshop. The project proposal is to be available for review and approval at the January 2007 IRRB biannual meeting.

3.05 Lower Pembina River Flooding

In 2003, the Pembina River Basin Advisory Board (PRBAB) formally requested the assistance of the IRRB to resolve the long-standing flooding/drainage issue along lower Pembina River and the international boundary. In response to this request, the IRRB assembled a three-person Team comprising an independent team chairperson and one IRRB member from North Dakota and one IRRB member from Manitoba to work with the Advisory Board. The Team was tasked with providing a situation analysis of the issue and to recommend actions that would lead to resolution of the problem. Figure 1 depicts the Pembina River basin.

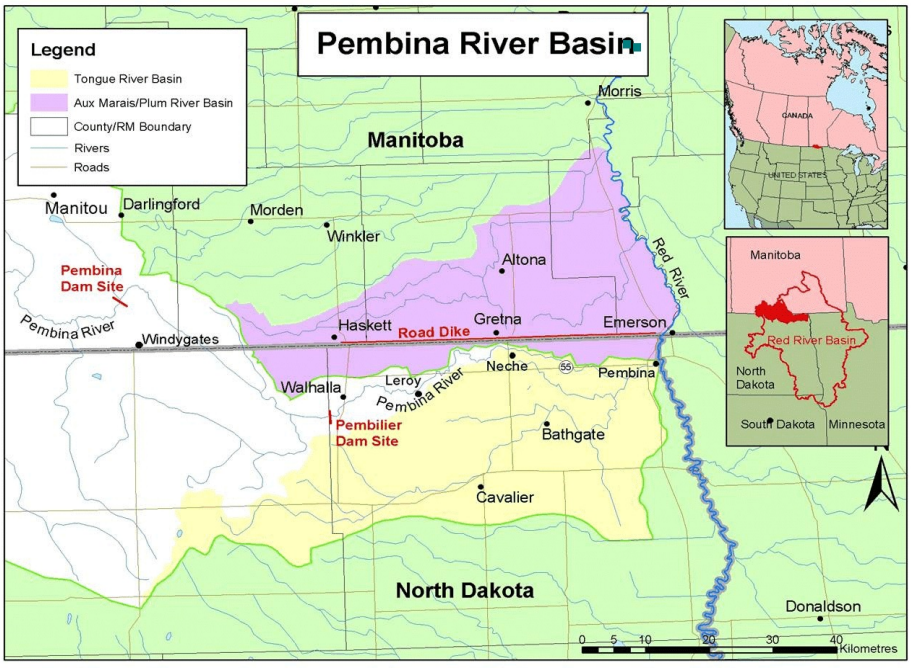

Figure 1. Pembina River Basin. The yellow and white areas comprise the Pembina River Basin.

In September 2004, the Study Team submitted its final report to the IRRB containing conclusions and recommendations toward a long-term solution to the flooding/drainage issue. The conclusions and recommendations were fully endorsed by the Board. The Board also agreed that the suite of Study Team recommendations represent a significant undertaking that encompasses a number of elements, including the determination of acceptable agricultural flood risk, development of watershed elevation models, development of hydrological models and reassessment of drainage patterns, design of set-back levees and drainage infrastructure, and implementation.

In the near term, the IRRB identified specific projects that would greatly advance progress in this matter. These projects include:

i) hydraulic modeling of bridge crossings on the Red River at the international boundary. This modeling effort would confirm the hydraulic effect of the structures on water levels upstream;
ii) inventory of culvert structures and their conveyance capacity along the boundary road-dike and County Road 55; and
iii) Lidar mapping of lower Pembina River basin to facilitate hydrological model development and determination of drainage patterns and overflow requirements.

With [US] IJC funding, the RRBC has undertaken to complete projects i) and ii).

In April 2006, the US Army Corps of Engineers began a reconnaissance study of the Pembina River basin toward a long-term solution. The objective of the reconnaissance study is to document water resource problems in the study area and to determine whether the problems warrant additional federal study. The reconnaissance effort must identify non-federal partners willing to participate in more detailed studies as needed. Over the summer of 2006, US Army Corps representatives gathered existing information and met with several stakeholders, including the Pembina County and Cavalier County Water Resource Boards, the Pembina River Basin Advisory Board, representatives from the North Dakota cities of Pembina and Neche, RRBC members, and the North Dakota State Water Commission.

Flooding in the lower Pembina valley from Walhalla, ND to Pembina, ND is the primary problem identified by stakeholders. Other issues include erosion, sedimentation and impaired water quality. The existing road/dike along the international boundary is the subject of ongoing litigation; uncertainty regarding the future of that dispute has complicated the study efforts. While the focus of Army Corps investigations is on potential solutions that lie within the United States, more creative and beneficial solutions to flooding in the lower Pembina basin would be possible with a cooperative US-Canadian planning effort. Constructive public involvement and technical evaluations on both sides of the international boundary are needed to identify the best solutions for the basin.

The reconnaissance report is scheduled to be completed in November, 2006. If the study defines a federal interest and identifies a non-federal (US) cost-sharing partner, scoping for additional feasibility studies could begin early in 2007. No US federal funding to begin feasibility studies is currently available or anticipated.

Discussion at the July IRRB meeting culminated with agreement that the IRRB would continue to gather technical information that could contribute to a cooperative transboundary solution. In this vein, Members were informed that Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada would provide technical and financial support to undertake Lidar mapping of the lower basin. The mapping is planned for leaf-off period this fall.

4.0 Red River Basin - Activities and Issues

4.01 Devils Lake Sub-Basin

Devils Lake water levels reached a recorded high of about 1449.2 msl in May 2006, which is about the same maximum elevation as in 2005. The elevation as of September 25, 2006 was about 1447.4 msl. At its peak, the area of the lake was about 140,200 acres, with a volume of 2.72 million acre-ft. Stump Lake was at an elevation of about 1444.0 msl on September 25, 2006. This lake covers 12,640 acres, with a volume of 399,488 acre-ft.

A slow decline (after May 9, 2006) in the elevation of Devils Lake continues due to evaporation and flows to Stump Lake. The current lake level is about 0.8 ft lower than it was a month ago, 1.8 ft lower than the high point this spring, and about 0.8 ft lower than this time last year.

Stump Lake has risen 21.1 ft since September 2004, and about 6.6 ft since this spring. Flows from Devils Lake are slowing with current flows around 100 cfs versus the maximum of greater than 400 cfs this summer. The volume of Stump Lake has risen about 46,000 acre-ft since this spring.

State Outlet Project

In August 2005 the state-constructed outlet was operated intermittently for about 10 days. Operation was halted when permitted sulphate levels in the Sheyenne River were reached. The outlet did not operate in 2006, to date, due to continuing high sulfate levels in the Sheyenne River.

The North Dakota State Water Commission requested and was granted a modification to the North Dakota Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit ND-0026247 on August 17, 2006. Justification for the modification is based on monitoring data in the upper Sheyenne River that indicate that natural background sulfate concentrations in the River are increasing. The significant changes contained in the permit modification are:

- Remove the time frame (specific months per year) the outlet could be operated. The permit still only allows discharge under no- ice conditions.
- The permit modification allows for a 15% increase above base conditions of sulfate in the Sheyenne River, not to exceed the 450 mg/L. More specifically:
  - A 300 mg/L limit is in place when the background concentration is <260 mg/L,
  - The 15% increase is allowed when the background concentration is >260 mg/L and <390 mg/L,
  - The upper limit of 450 mg/L is allowed when the background concentration is >390 mg/L.

Court action has been launched to appeal the decision by the North Dakota state government to change the operating permit for the outlet. Manitoba, the US Wildlife Federation, People to Save the Sheyenne, and the Peterson Coulee Outlet Association have joined in the court action. The appeal was filed in North Dakota District Court on September 14, 2006.

Tolna Coulee

The issue of clean-out, or lowering of the present Stump Lake outlet channel (Tolna Coulee) was first raised at the July 2005, IRRB annual meeting. The clean-out, presently being investigated by the Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board, would lower the natural Stump Lake outlet below its present elevation of about 1459 ft msl, allowing outflow to occur and hence, eliminate or reduce further water elevation rises in Stump Lake and the subsequent flooding of the surrounding area. The prevailing concern regarding the clean-out

project is that it would allow uncontrolled discharge of highly saline water into the Sheyenne and Red River systems and possible transfer of non-native biota and pathogens to the Hudson Bay watershed.

Some residents of the area have also contended that with the lake levels continuing to rise and with some water observed in the Coulee, that seepage could trigger a series of events leading to an uncontrolled discharge. The State Water Commission installed monitoring wells this past summer to monitor seepage. Preliminary indications are that the water observed in the Coulee is not lake water.

In 2005, the Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resources Board had initiated plans to acquire property and right-of-way for the excavation The IRRB was advised that once the right-of-way and necessary approvals are obtained, the excavation can proceed. Although discussions within the Joint Board continue, consensus amongst the participating counties regarding the project has not been reached. To date, no construction or clean-out actions have taken place.

4.02 Garrison Diversion Projects

Dakota Water Resources Act

The Dakota Water Resources Act (DWRA) of December 2000 amended authorizing legislation for the Garrison Diversion Project. The legislation outlines a program to meet Indian and non-Indian water supply needs in North Dakota and authorizes water uses including municipal, rural and industrial, fish and wildlife, recreation, irrigation, flood control, stream flow augmentation, and ground water recharge.

Red River Valley Water Supply Project

Authorized in the DWRA, the purpose of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project is to identify the comprehensive water quantity and quality needs of the Red River Valley in North Dakota and options for meeting those needs.

As required in DWRA, the Bureau of Reclamation prepared an engineering report, the *Report on Red River Valley Water Needs and Options* (Needs and Options Report), to address the following categories of need: municipal, rural and industrial water supply; water quality; recreation; aquatic environment; and water conservation measures. The final *Report on Red River Valley Water Needs and Options* (Needs and Options Report), was completed by Reclamation in November 2005.

The DWRA also requires completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that evaluates environmental impacts of the alternative ways to meet the water needs of the Red River Valley. As directed by the DWRA, Reclamation and the State of North Dakota are jointly preparing the EIS. The Governor of North Dakota has designated the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District as the state entity responsible for serving as co-lead with Reclamation in the preparation of the EIS.

Three groups of alternatives are being studied for inclusion in the EIS: a No Action Alternative, required by the National Environmental Policy Act; in-basin alternatives that propose use of water sources within the Red River; and import alternatives that propose moving water from the Missouri River to the Red River Valley. The State of North Dakota has identifed the GDU Import to Sheyenne River Alternative as its preferred alternative in the draft EIS; however, final selection of the preferred alternative will be made by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the State of North Dakota in coordination with local affected communities, as required by the DWRA.

The DEIS for the Project was released for public review and comment on December 30, 2005. Nine public hearings were held in Minnesota and North Dakota and on Red Lake Nation, Fort Berthold, and Standing Rock Reservations. The original 60-day comment period was twice extended to April 14, 2006, at which time

it was decided to leave the comment period open while further analysis is done on substantive issues that have been raised to date. Additional analyses are underway, and the final EIS is scheduled to be completed in early 2007.

Northwest Area Water Supply Project

The MR&I component of the Garrison Diversion Project also includes the Northwest Area Water Supply Project (NAWS). The NAWS Project, now under construction, will carry pre-treated water from Lake Sakakawea to the City of Minot where it will be fully treated to drinking water standards and distributed to surrounding communities and rural areas in the Souris River basin. Potential international issues related to NAWS are the responsibility of the International Souris River Board. However, the IRRB will continue to be interested in activities associated with the NAWS project because the project is an interbasin water transfer from the Missouri River basin to the Hudson Bay basin.

On March 6, 2006 Reclamation published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to complete an EIS for the NAWS project. The scope of the EIS is focused on additional evaluations of treatment methods to further reduce the risk of transfer of non-native biota. A formal 60-day scoping period was initiated on this date. Public scoping meetings were held the last week of April and the first week of May. Work is proceeding on the EIS.

4.03 Lake Winnipeg

Lake Winnipeg is the 10th largest freshwater lake in the world. The Lake's watershed spans an area from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains to the Winnipeg River system and Lake of the Woods. The watershed extends into four provinces and four U.S. states as illustrated in Figure 2.

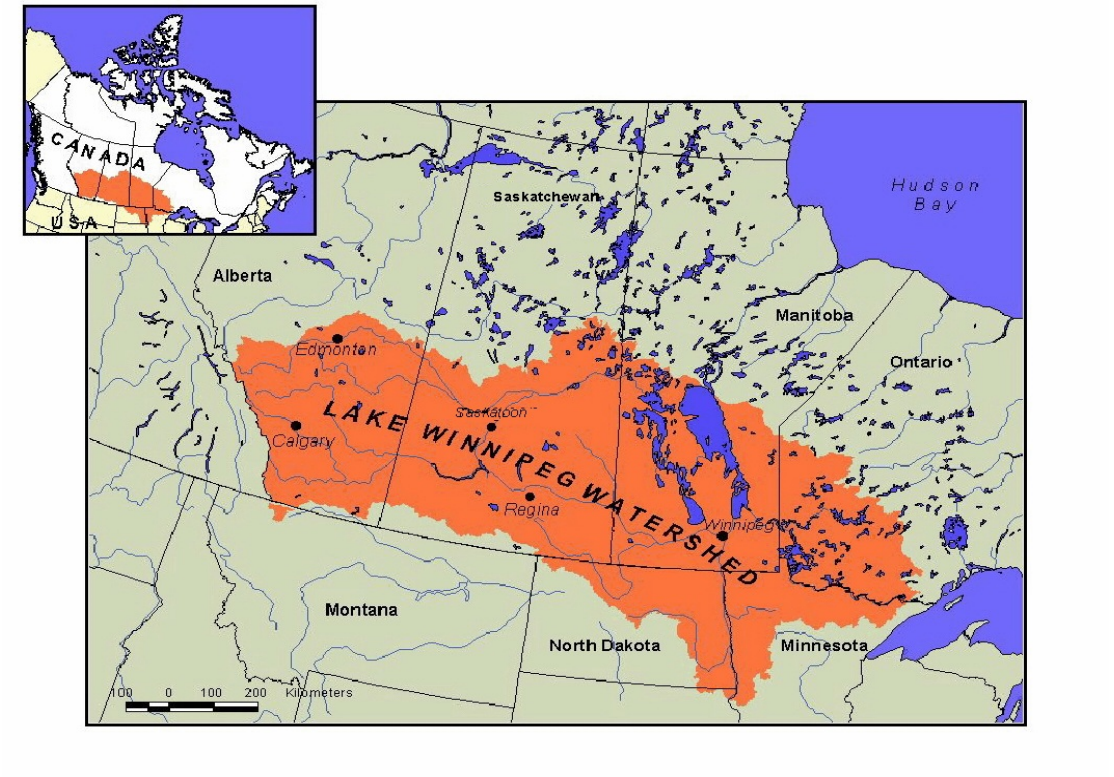

Figure 2. Lake Winnipeg Watershed (Map provided by Manitoba Water Stewardship)

Lake Winnipeg has been deteriorating in quality for the last several decades due to activities from within its international and interprovincial watershed. The Lake is threatened by increasing eutrophication, habitat loss, aquatic invasive species and climate change. In February 2003, the provincial government announced The Lake Winnipeg Action Plan to help protect Lake Winnipeg.

One of the most urgent lake quality issues relates to nutrient enrichment, and in March 2003, Manitoba requested the IRRB to consider setting water quality objectives for nitrogen and phosphorus in the Red River at the international boundary. Also, as part of the Lake Winnipeg Action Plan, the provincial government established the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board to help the public identify and implement actions needed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus levels in Lake Winnipeg to pre-1970s levels.

As identified in the IRRB work plan, the AEC met to consider the Manitoba proposal regarding nutrient objectives and recommended that participating jurisdictions and water management agencies work towards reducing the nutrient loading into the lake by 10% over the next five years, and towards replacing this interim goal with science based goals/targets. The IRRB accepted the recommendation, which was also endorsed by the IJC in a letter to governments. Further, given the current knowledge of the factors contributing to the trophic state of Lake Winnipeg and the technical challenge of establishing meaningful long-term nutrient objectives, the AEC devised a two-phase strategy entailing i) a comprehensive assembly of nutrient and related data in the basin, and ii) data analysis and interpretation of the nutrient dynamics that could be used to develop objectives at appropriate sites in the basin. With [US] IJC funding, the data assembly was undertaken by the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) and the data analysis and interpretation by the International Water Institute (IWI). These projects are presently being completed.

In support of the Lake Winnipeg Action Plan, a workshop organized by Canadian federal and provincial agencies was held in November 2004 to identify the science required to develop an effective long-term management plan for the Lake. The workshop was attended by Manitoba and Canadian federal agencies, as well as members of the AEC from both Canada and the United States. In 2005, the Canadian federal Environment Minister announced a $1.1 million dollar investment per year in the future of Lake Winnipeg.

The funds will be used to enhance the scope of water quality monitoring efforts on the Red River and the south basin of Lake Winnipeg, and provide ongoing assessment of the biological health of these systems. The monitoring and assessment programs are currently under development.

The Water Protection Act passed by the Manitoba Legislature in 2005 requires preparation of watershed management plans and allows for water conservation programs to be established. Concurrently, incentives programs, such as for buffer zones, are being established to go with the regulatory process under the Act. Additional technical and consultative support is being provided by the recently established Watersheds Process Committee and Tile Drainage Expert Committee under the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board.

The AEC will continue to work toward establishment of science based goal/targets for nutrients and to engage in the development of a science agenda for Lake Winnipeg.

5.0 International Red River Board Membership

There has been one recent retirement and one new nomination to the Canadian Section of the IRRB. In July 2007, T. Shortt, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, gave notice of his retirement from the Board and concurrently announced the nomination of S. Cosens as replacement. Membership is as follows with one vacancy remaining in the Canadian Section.

United States

Michael Ryan
U.S. Chair
Regional Director, Great Plains Region
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Col. Michael F. Pfenning
District Engineer, St. Paul District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Will Haapala
Regional Manager, Northwest Region
Detroit Lakes Office
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Dennis Fewless
Director, Division of Water
North Dakota Department of Health

Randy Gjestvang
Red River Water Resources Engineer
North Dakota State Water Commission

Gregg Wiche
District Chief, Bismark Office
U.S. Geological Survey

Max. H. Dodson
Assistant Regional Administrator
Office of Ecosystems Protection
& Remediation, Region 8
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Daniel Wilkens
Administrator
Sand Hill River Watershed District, Minnesota
(Red River Basin Commission)

Don Buckhout
Red River Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Michael Collins
U.S. Secretary
Resource Management Coordinator
Great Plains Region
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Canada

Wayne Dybvig
Canadian Chair
Executive Director
Transboundary Waters Unit
Environment Canada

Dwight Williamson
Director, Water Science & Management Branch
Manitoba Water Stewardship

Steven Topping
Director, Infrastructure & Operations
Manitoba Water Stewardship

Phil Adkins
A/Director, Ag Water Directorate
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

Herm Martens
Red River Basin Commission

Dr. Kevin Cash
Chief, Ecological Science Division
Environmental Conservation Branch
Environment Canada

Dr. Joseph O'Connor
Director, Fisheries Branch
Manitoba Water Stewardship

Terence Shortt (retired)
Susan Cosens (nominated)
Manager, Environmental Science Division
Fisheries & Oceans Canada

One vacant position

Michael Kowalchuk
Canadian Secretary
Senior Engineer Advisor
Environmental Conservation Branch
Environment Canada

6.0 Summary of Priorities

The IRRB work plan had identified a suit of activities in response to the IJC Directive and in support of the International Watersheds Initiative. These activities are being undertaken as resources and capacity of the participating agencies allow. For the near term, the IRRB and its Committees will focus on the following.

1. Compliance monitoring at the international boundary with respect to IJC objectives and Devils Lake outlet effects.
2. Provide oversight for the pathogen/parasite sampling program. The first year of the program 2006-2007 is funded. Funding support for the following years of the program need to be secured.
3. Continue work to develop recommendations for the establishment of apportionment procedures for the Red River basin. Although there is strong support for such a mechanism, effective progress on this initiative may be beyond the individual and/or collective capacity of the appropriate participating agencies. External funding support may be required.
4. Continue work toward development and implementation of a CFMP for the basin. Members and/or geographical areas of the basin do not share the same interpretation with respect to flood preparedness and mitigation priorities for the basin. The two part Hydrology Committee proposal to be reviewed in January may identify need for external funding support.
5. The IRRB Aquatic Ecosystem Committee, and participating agencies, have taken key steps forward with respect to establishing comprehensive biological monitoring procedures and reporting in the basin. A coordinated effort to apply the concepts from the 2004 reference conditions workshop and 2005 sampling procedures workshop is required. Significant external funding is required.

Funding support for the Red River basin as identified in IJC's second report to governments under the International Watersheds Initiative reference of November 1998 would enable the IRRB to advance progress on many of the priority activities.

7.0 Schedule of Biannual Meetings

The traditional meeting format comprising annual and interim meetings (2 ½ and ½ day duration, respectively), was discussed with respect to current basin issues and the ongoing needs of the IRRB. It was decided that biannual meetings each of two days duration would better serve the IRRB to maintain effective dialogue on current and emerging issues and to facilitate steady progress on Board initiatives. The biannual meetings would also improve public access to the IRRB and its deliberations.

The first biannual meetings are scheduled as follows.

January 22-23, 2007, Fargo, ND. The meeting is co-located with and immediately precedes the annual conference of the Red River Basin Commission.

July 17-18, 2007. Meeting location to be confirmed.
