

Annual WD Award Nomination

Nominee:

Roseau River Watershed District

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I am pleased to nominate the Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) for consideration of the annual MAWD recognition award. The RRWD has been a key player in managing water and protecting water quality through partnerships and programs at the local, state, regional, national and the international level since 1964. This 3 person staff and 5 member board are open minded, cooperative and effective partners in water and natural resource management.

Water Regulation: RRWD is an effective partner working with the DNR on public waters work permits. They provide technical analysis and often assist landowners, townships and other LGU's throughout the DNR permitting process. The staff is very active in early coordination and reaching out to DNR staff to look at potential project before applications come in. They assist in pre-construction and reviewing with permittees the authorized permitted project and conditions associated with those permits.

Watershed Planning: RRWD is the sponsor agency for the Roseau Watershed Restoration and Protection (WRAPs). In addition to providing data and information to the process they are coordinating the development of the WRAPs study, provided technical expertise and guidance for the WRAPs. To further inform the assessment and planning processes underway, the RRWD had just completed a PTMApp project for the Roseau Watershed which will help target implementation efforts to provide the best return in the watershed. The RRWD and their partners are already reaping the benefits of the PTMApp by using it to refine the already planned conservation efforts to ensure they are sited on the landscape for maximum return for water conservation, reducing sediment and phosphorus loads to the Roseau River.

Flood Damage Reduction: The RRWD is actively developing new projects that provide flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement. The RRWD currently has three project teams (Roseau Lake, Whitney Lake and Beltrami Area Project) that are developing flood damage reduction projects that incorporate natural resources and water management within each project. The project teams meet frequently during the development of each project to discuss funding, regulatory aspects and optimization in relation of the mediation agreement of the proposed projects. The success of this project team collaboration is illustrated in completed FDR projects such as the Hay Creek-Norland, Palmville Impoundments, the Roseau River WMA outlet project and the City of Roseau West Interceptor project.

Water Quality Improvement: Through sound and a better water management of drainage systems, the RRWD has worked to improve the quality of the water being delivered to the Roseau River. The RRWD, with funding from a Clean Water Grants, has been aggressively retrofitting many miles of legal drainage ditches with water quality BMPs such as

side inlet structures, water control structures and buffer strips. These improvements to the landscape and the drainage systems are a result of good coordination with the RRWD's local partners and efficient utilization of Clean Water Funds.

Education efforts: The RRWD works with other LGUs to promote water conservation and water quality to younger citizens through Water Festivals, Education days and River Watch. Through strong coordination with the Counties, SWCDs, DNR and other State and federal agencies, they are getting out the message of conservation to citizens in the District. The RRWD provides their conservation message through their website, informational brochures, public presentation and one on one interaction with the landowners with the district. An example of their education efforts is the RRWD's role as stakeholder in the Roseau River Trail Project. As a stakeholder the RRWD is increased awareness of our precious water resources and providing better recreational opportunities on the Roseau River.

Stream Stabilization and Stream Restoration: The RRWD has promoted stream bank stabilization and restoration work where needed in the district. They advocate project designs that are beyond traditional hard armoring and promote incorporation of native plantings, floodplain reconstruction, j-hooks, rock vanes, rock riffles and toe wood sod mats. The RRWD is taking the approach that watercourses need to be in a more natural state. The RRWD moving forward with a natural channel concept by incorporating this philosophy in to project designs where ever possible. Just this past year the RRWD reached out to the DNR to pursue restoration of the Roseau River (State Ditch 51) channel by looking at reconnecting ten oxbows to reestablish natural sinuosity and reconnect the channel to its natural flood plain. Channel restoration is also showing up in the designs of their FDR projects also, the plans for the Roseau Lake FDR project propose reconnection of the Roseau River to not only provide a flooding benefit but also to maximize Natural Resource Enhancement.



From left: Torin McCormack, Watershed Specialist; Tracy Hastensgard, RRWD Administrator; Theresa Ebbenga, DNR Representative