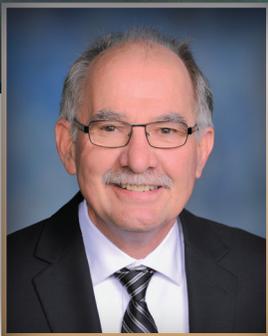




The Current

2018 Issue IV



Garland Erbele, P.E.
State Engineer &
Chief Engineer-Secretary

A NEWSLETTER FROM NORTH DAKOTA'S OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER & STATE WATER COMMISSION

In 2013, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 1206 (NDCC § 61-02-01.3), requiring that the State Water Commission schedule commissioner-hosted meetings within the state's major drainage basins, including the Red River, James River, Mouse River, upper and lower Missouri River, and Devils Lake. The 2017 Legislative Assembly then separated the Red River basin into the upper and lower - specifying seven major drainage basins.

I spent a good portion of July traveling throughout the state attending the 2018 basin meetings with Water Commissioners and members of the State Water Commission staff. At each meeting, local project sponsors provided presentations highlighting upcoming water projects that will be submitted to the Commission as part of the 2019 Water Development Plan and budgeting process.

Numerous water boards, rural and regional water supply systems, cities, counties, citizens, engineering firms, Legislators, and other organizations were welcomed at the meetings and encouraged to have face-to-face discussions with myself, Commission members, and SWC staff. This open-dialogue meeting format was deemed highly beneficial to attendees, but also awarded me the opportunity to interact with members of the water community. And I was able to hear first-hand the issues and obstacles they are confronting in their specific basins.

It was extremely encouraging to see the notable attendance and prominent participation within the various areas we visited. Project sponsors not only expressed their concerns and challenges regarding water projects, but they also conveyed considerable gratitude and acknowledgment for the financial assistance that the state has provided to them.

(continued)

Can You Find The Water Drop?



This water drop is hidden
somewhere in this issue.



COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Commissioner Dick Johnson
Devils Lake Basin

It is my pleasure to launch the inaugural article for the new feature in *The Current* called “Commissioner’s Corner.” It is the hope of the Commissioners that we can provide readers of our articles with a perspective on important water issues that affect citizens across North Dakota from a Commissioner’s point of view.

To begin I would like to introduce you to the seven appointed members of the State Water Commission that were sworn in and had our first meeting in August 2017. Hard to believe a year has already passed since our first meeting. The members of the Commission are appointed by Governor Burgum from seven major drainage basins. The appointed members are: Katie Andersen, James River Basin; Michael Anderson, Lower Red River Basin; Richard Johnson, Devils Lake Basin; Dr. Leander McDonald, Lower Missouri River Basin; Mark Owan, Upper Missouri River Basin; Matthew Pedersen, Upper Red River Basin; and Jason Zimmerman, Mouse River Basin. Governor Burgum is Chairman of the Commission and Doug Goehring, Agriculture Commissioner, is an ex-officio member. It is important to note that although the Commissioners are selected from the seven basins, we represent all the citizens from the entire state of North Dakota, not just the basin from which we were selected.

We, as Commissioners, soon learned that we had taken on a huge task and responsibility. We got our first packet of information that was contained in a thick three-ring binder with information on several projects. A number of projects were large with big ticket price tags and had been ongoing for many years. Others were much smaller, but were as important to those project sponsors as the big projects. It quickly became obvious that we needed to take action to get the Commissioners more engaged and involved with the process. The idea of a governance model was put forward and the Commission voted to create three subcommittees to help with the process and be more involved. The subcom-

mittees that were created are: finance, planning and budget; water supply; and flood control. Commissioners agreed to, and were assigned to, each subcommittee. The members of each subcommittee are outlined on the agency’s website.

Some major items we are currently working on are the Cost-share Policy, Project Prioritization Policies, as well as the Life Cycle Cost and Economic Analysis policies. These are very important efforts we have been working on for some time. The Commission has been taking input from our own Commission members, SWC staff, water users, project sponsors, and developers to ensure we will end up with quality policies for future water development in the State of North Dakota. In addition to the aforementioned policies, the Commissioners and staff have started work on a long-term water development plan. This plan will give us a look into the future to determine funding needs and wants for the next several biennia, not just one biennium at a time. The Commission realizes that there are growing needs as our state expands, and we have an issue of aging infrastructure that must be planned for in all areas of water development. This project is also very important, so the Commission can look at the needs and balance that with projected revenues over the next several years.

I could go on for pages, but space is limited. The Commission is hopeful that we can build a strong, positive relationship with our state legislators, the administration, SWC staff, and all the citizens of North Dakota.

In closing, the readers can look forward to an article in each quarterly issue of *The Current* written by one of the Commissioners. Hopefully, we can give the readers a perspective from the Commission’s point of view. Please feel free to contact any of the Commissioners regarding comments, questions or concerns you may have. We are here to serve you and are committed to that end. The contact information for all the Commissioners is on the SWC website.

Water Day at the ND State Fair



The State Water Commission participated in Water Day at the North Dakota State Fair in Minot on July 26. SWC staff members Jessie Wald, Cheryl Fitzgerald, and Ashley Persinger hosted the booth where numerous publications, maps, and information regarding water projects across our state were discussed and distributed.

Participating in Water Day at the North Dakota State Fair provides the State Water Commission with the opportunity to engage and interact with the public as well as other organizations while promoting the most valuable resource, water. Sponsoring a booth at the Fair allows the agency to generate public awareness and provide updates on several projects, policies, meetings, and safety campaigns.

Several water organizations participated in the event: Ackerman-Estvold, Assiniboine River Basin Initiative, Bureau of Reclamation, City of Grand Forks, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, Lake Agassiz Water Authority, ND American Water Works Association, ND Atmospheric Resource Board, ND Department of Health, ND Irrigation Association, ND Rural Water Systems Association, ND State Water Commission, ND Water Education Foundation, ND Weather Modification Association, Southwest Water Authority, and Western Area Water Supply Authority.

Register For The NFIP Workshop

There is a National Flood Insurance Program Workshop being offered this fall. The MT-1 and MT-2 Forms and Process training will be presented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Grand Forks on October 23 and in Minot on October 25. This FREE, one-day workshop is pre-approved for 6 Continuing Educational Credits for Certified Floodplain Managers.

For more information and registration: www.swc.nd.gov.

Recap of the 2018 North Dakota Cloud Modification Project



Photo courtesy of Intern Pilot, Will Poirier.

On September 8, the North Dakota Cloud Modification Project (NDCMP) concluded operations for the year. District One, including Bowman and part of Slope Counties, elected to extend their program for an additional eight days past August 31; while District Two, including Burke, McKenzie, Mountrail, Ward and Williams Counties, ended their program on August 31. Eight aircraft flew a total of 544.53 hours including hail suppression, rain enhancement, reconnaissance, and repositioning. This was almost identical to the 10-year average of 541.02 flight hours. True to storm climatology, June was very busy operationally, the frequency of storm days weaned off in July, and August was relatively slow.

For District One, there were 100.05 flight hours (including the project extension) this season. This is below the ten-year average of 118.20 hours. Of those hours, 64.74 were flown for hail suppression, 12.68 for rain enhancement, 13.72 for reconnaissance, and 8.91 for aircraft repositioning. There were 31 operational days out of a possible 100 project days (including the project extension) when hail suppression, rain enhancement, and/or reconnaissance flights were flown in the district. Hail suppression operations were flown on 17 of the operational days, rain enhancement on 5 days, and reconnaissance operations on 12 days.

For District Two, there were 444.48 flight hours flown this season. This is above the ten-year average of 422.82 hours. Of those hours, 317.55 were flown for hail suppression, 66.98 for rain enhancement, 12.53 for reconnaissance, and 47.42 for aircraft repositioning. There were 37 operational days out of a possible 92 project days when hail suppression, rain enhancement, and/or reconnaissance flights were flown in the district. Hail suppression operations were flown on 27 of the operational days, rain enhancement on 17 days, and reconnaissance operations on 10 days.

Planning meetings for the 2019 NDCMP will be held this coming January with the county authorities. Next year's seeding operations are scheduled to begin June 1.

State Water Commission Approves Policy Updates

Cost-Share Policy Modifications

At the June and August State Water Commission meetings, a number of changes to the agency's Cost-Share Policy, Procedure, and General Requirements were approved. Notable changes require:

- Local sponsors requesting cost-share to be present at Commission meetings.
- Ongoing projects to provide progress reports to the SWC every four years.
- "Rural Flood Control" and "Bank Stabilization" projects to be sub-categories of "Water Conveyance," as directed by statute.
- Cost-share applications under the Flood Protection Program to include the return interval or design flow for the level of protection. Assistance will be based on protection against:
 - The 100-year event as determined by the federal Government
 - The NED alternative; or
 - The local sponsor's preferred alternative
- Cost-share applications for drain reconstructions to include a sediment analysis.
- An addition was made under Irrigation to clarify that the SWC will not enter into a cost-share agreement with individual producers.
- The threshold for requiring an engineering selection process to be raised from anticipated cost-share of \$25,000 to \$1,000,000.

- Pre-construction engineering costs, eligible for 35% cost-share in the past, to be eligible at the same cost-share percentage as the resulting construction work.
- A further clarification that storm water management is not an eligible cost-share item for water conveyance projects.

Water Project Prioritization Guidance Modifications

At the August State Water Commission meeting, the agency's Water Project Prioritization Guidance was approved in full. By approving the changes, the Commission:

- Removed reference to the population growth factor that gave higher priority to service areas or cities that had a three-year average population growth of greater than 3%. The new language offers more flexibility, referencing "rapid population growth."
- Included language throughout the Guidance that directly mirrors that used in the cost-share policy to maintain consistency.
- Differentiated between new rural flood control projects, and improvements or extraordinary maintenance to existing systems.
- Added "extraordinary maintenance" related to water supply and rural flood control within the "Low Priority Projects" section.

Please note: Changes made to the Cost-Share Policy become effective immediately after passage by the Commission, while changes to the Water Project Prioritization Guidance will be applied to those projects seeking funding after July 1, 2019.

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Over the years, the State Water Commission has had the opportunity to support and contribute to an abundance of projects; from major water supply, to flood control, to general water management, and various other projects. As part of the budgeting efforts for the 2019-2021 biennium, the Water Commission has identified about \$1.3 billion in financial needs for water projects around the state. Of that total, an estimated \$846 million could be eligible for cost-share assistance.

Funding challenges continue to be a harsh reality. But with collaborative efforts amongst the Water Commission, Governor's Office, Legislature, and the water community, financial allocations can continue to be successful as the Water Commission strives to support water projects throughout the state.

On behalf of the North Dakota Water Commissioners, the Water Commission staff, and myself, we would like to express our appreciation to everyone who attended and participated in the Commissioner-hosted meetings. Your cooperation, commitment, and passion about North Dakota's water development and management efforts will continue to benefit future generations for years to come.



Commission Meeting Approvals

At the Commission meeting held on August 9, 2018, the State Water Commission approved multiple cost-share requests.

East Central Regional Water District, Phase 3	\$232,795
McLean-Sheridan Rural Water, Water Storage System	\$2,271,000
Tri-County Rural Water, Phase 4	\$2,700,000
Barnes County Water Resource District, Kathryn Dam	\$754,875
McLean County Water Resource District, Painted Woods Lake Flood Damage Reduction	\$284,768
Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Survey Funding	\$425,000

NEW HIRE

COLBY FARVER
Engineering Tech II



In August, Colby Farver accepted a full-time position as an Engineering Tech in the State Water Commission's Water Development Division. As part of his job responsibilities, Colby will be working closely with the agency's cost-share program, the MR&I program, and will be conducting future inspection work.

He was born and raised in Bismarck, ND and is a graduate of Century High School. After graduation, he attended Bismarck State College and North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton. Colby is currently pursuing his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering via UND's online and distance education program. Prior to working at the State Water Commission, he was employed with Braun Intertec and Holly Beck Surveying and Engineering.

Colby recently married his wife, Marete, on July 4 and shared the special day with their three-year-old son, Sammy. In his free time, Colby enjoys hiking, biking, camping, reading, and spending time with his family.

NEW HIRE

BASSEL TIMANI
Hydrologist II



Bassel Timani was hired in June by the State Water Commission as a Hydrologist II in the Water Appropriations Division. His job duties include, managing ground water resources by reviewing water permit applications in his assigned project areas, assessing legal compliance, conducting technical analyses, submitting recommendations on permit conditions to the State Engineer, and helping to collect field data via test drilling.

He was born and raised in the Country of Lebanon and spent most of his time on the family farm. In Lebanon, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering from the American University of Beirut. Bassel later moved to the United States to further his education and attend Utah State University (USU). He received several degrees at USU including a Master's Degree in Ground Water Management and Simulation and he earned his PhD in 2016. Bassel was also employed with the University as a Research Assistant.

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He spends many weekends and holidays traveling to Utah to visit his family who currently resides there. Bassel enjoys spending time with his daughter Liliana 5, son Alexander 2, and his wife Michelle.



NORTH DAKOTA STATE WATER COMMISSION

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