



Final EIS on NAWS Treatment Released

The long-pursued dream of supplying areas in northwest North Dakota with abundant Missouri River water is now one step closer to reality. On Dec. 5, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) released the final Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Water Treatment.

The specific purpose of the EIS was to focus on the potential environmental impacts associated with various proposed biota water treatment options for the NAWS project. The final EIS indicates “the risk of a

project-related transfer of an invasive species is very low compared to other existing and competing pathways.”

Building on comments received after the completion of the Draft EIS, the Final EIS looked at the potential environmental impacts of four alternatives, including a no action alternative. The alternative that BOR identified as the preferred alternative involves a combination of treatment processes that were looked at in the Draft EIS.

As described in the BOR’s final

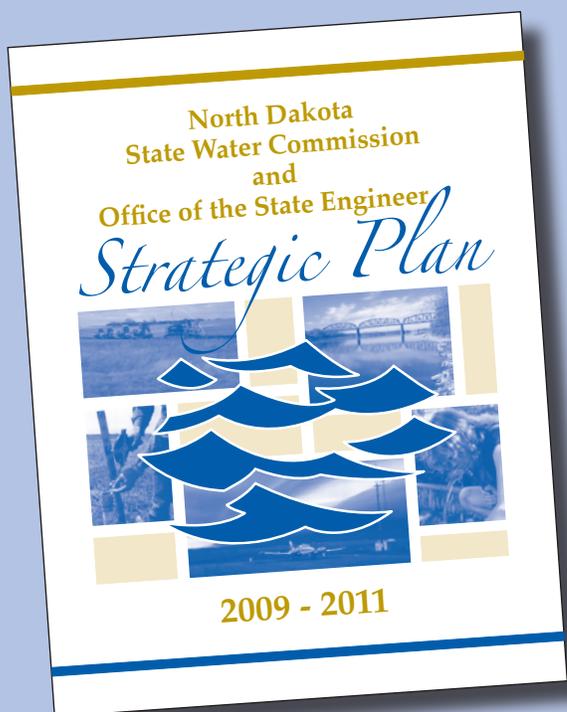
report, and as illustrated in the adjacent figure, “This combination of treatment processes includes the chemical disinfection process evaluated as part of the No Action Alternative and the UV [ultraviolet] disinfection process evaluated as part of the action alternatives.” The upgraded Minot water treatment plant will then filter the water as required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

The EIS provides the agency with a recommendation. However, the decision on which option to choose will ultimately be provided in a Record of Decision, which may be signed by the BOR in early 2009.

Although the preferred alternative will provide a greater level of treatment than what was determined to be necessary in the original Environmental Assessment, both the state and City of Minot are pleased with the recommended preferred alternative. But, both also realize that the Province of Manitoba may still have

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New 2009-2011 SWC and SE Strategic Plan Now Available



The 2009-2011 State Water Commission and Office of the State Engineer Strategic Plan has been completed.

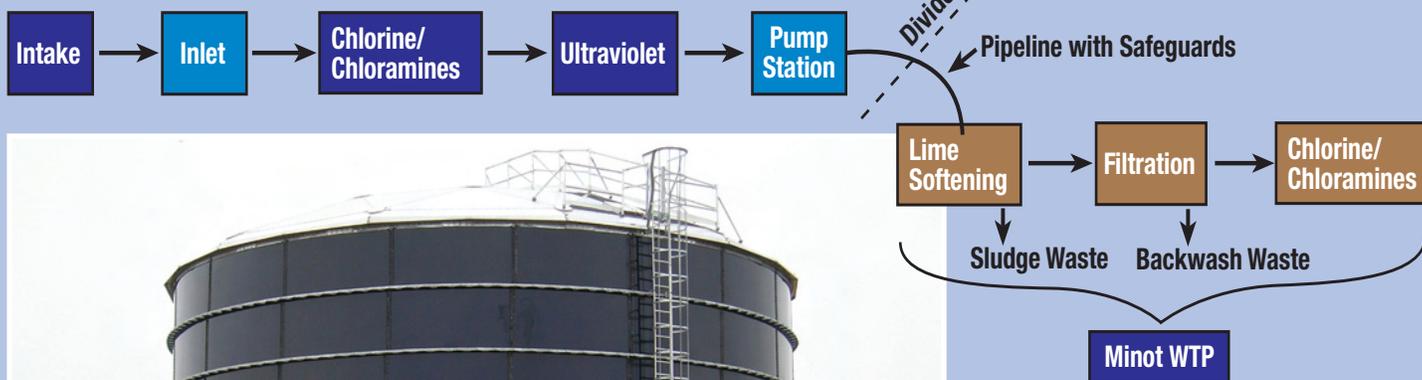
The new Strategic Plan contains descriptions and overviews of the agency’s major projects and programs. To develop the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan, project and program managers were asked to provide input regarding their expectations for future progress through June 30, 2011. As part of that effort, they were asked to provide project and/or program objectives that they will strive to accom-

plish during the strategic planning timeframe, as well as specific tasks that will be completed to achieve their objectives.

It should be noted that the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan does not comprehensively cover all efforts pursued by the Water Commission and the Office of the State Engineer. Rather, it includes the majority of key projects and programs pursued and administered by the agency.

The new plan is available for download from the Commission’s website at www.swc.nd.gov, or a paper copy may be requested by calling 701-328-4989, or by sending an e-mail to dschock@nd.gov.

Northwest Area Water Supply Preferred Alternative Treatment Process



Construction of the Burlington Storage Tank.



Open cut placement of pipe across the Souris River in Minot.

concerns with the project, as they filed a lawsuit challenging the original Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) back in 2002 that ultimately resulted in the development of the current EIS. However, project sponsors are hopeful that confirmation in the Final EIS that the risk of transferring unwanted biota via the NAWS project is extremely low will ease Manitoba's concerns.

Despite the project's legal challenges, the federal court allowed construction to continue on non-treatment-related project components. As a result, the 47-mile main NAWS transmission line between Minot and Lake Sakakawea has been completed. And in August, construction was also completed on 24 miles of pipeline, four pump stations, and two storage reservoirs that provide water service to Berthold, Minot's South Hill region, and North Prairie Rural Water District, with an interim supply from Minot's WTP.

After the Record of Decision is signed, the federal court will be asked to remove the injunction. At that point, the project sponsors can resume building facilities to move water from Lake Sakakawea to Minot, and other project areas.

The total cost to develop the preferred alternative is estimated at \$17.5 million. And, annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated at just over \$300,000.



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SWC Completes 2009 State Water Plan

The Water Commission recently completed a new 2009 North Dakota State Water Management Plan (SWMP). The last time a full update of the state's water plan was completed was back in 1999. However, several updates, or supplements—known as Water Development Reports, were completed in 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007 to keep water project development information current for planning and budgeting purposes.

The overall purpose of the new SWMP is to:

- Provide information regarding current and projected water use;
- Identify areas where water is generally available for new beneficial uses;
- Identify goals and objectives for water resource management and development;
- Identify potential water resource management and development projects and programs;
- Provide current information regarding the Water Commission's revenue sources for water project development;
- Serve as a formal request for funding from the Resources Trust Fund; and
- Broadly identify water resource management and development opportunities and challenges, and provide recommendations to address them.

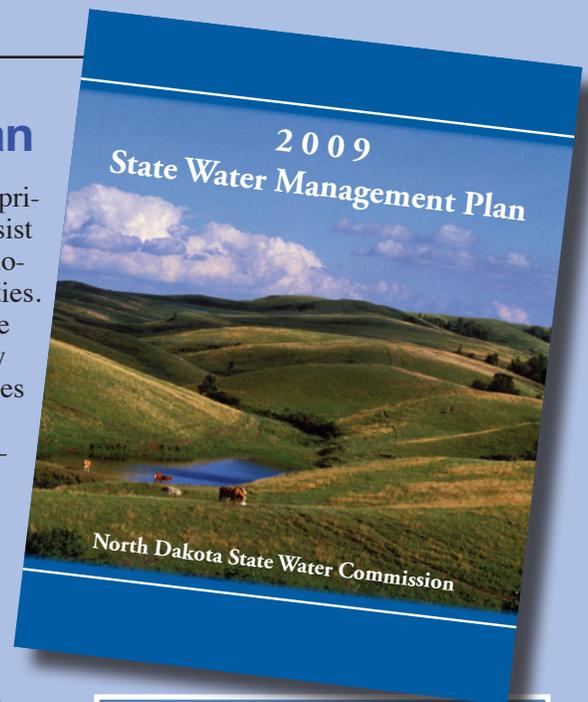
As part of the new 2009 SWMP, a primary focus was to place special emphasis on water appropriation issues, including current water use, and future water needs. Currently, some of North Dakota's aquifers and surface water sources are on the brink of becoming fully appropriated; meaning that much of the state's available water resources, with the exception of the Missouri River, have already been permitted for beneficial uses.

As such, it was deemed important

to provide general water appropriation-related information to assist development interests in their locating of large water use facilities. By making them aware of these issues, we are hopeful that they may avoid unnecessary expenses or delays because of problems with water availability. By contacting the Commission early on, many of these problems can be avoided.

As in the past, the new SWMP also includes, among other things, a list of potential water projects for development. The potential projects list for the 2009-2011 biennium was developed by contacting water interest groups, including water resource districts, joint water boards, state and federal agencies, cities, and other water user groups, to request their input into the planning process. As a result, project sponsors from all corners of the state submitted projects that they would like to see advance during the 2009-2011 biennium and beyond. In total, about 200 water projects were submitted to the Commission, and of those, about half could be eligible for Commission cost-share during the 2009-2011 biennium.

With that information, and in cooperation with the North Dakota Water Coalition, the Commission developed a priority project budget. This inventory/budget lists all of the state's priority water development projects and project categories for the 2009-2011 biennium – based on projected revenues and the Executive budget. The adjacent table from the 2009 SWMP includes the state's priority projects and project categories for the 2009-2011 biennium. It is important to recognize, however, that the priority project list is one course of action for water development in North Dakota that could change during the upcoming



2009-2011 PRIORITY PROJECT FUNDING

Cloud Modification	\$ 0.7 M
Devils Lake Outlet	2.0 M
Fargo Southside Flood Control	20.0 M
General Water Management	11.3 M
Irrigation	1.0 M
MR&I	10.0 M
Northwest Area Water Supply	12.0 M
NW Oil Impact MR&I	5.0 M
Red River Valley Water Supply	30.0 M
Southwest Pipeline	12.0 M
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	\$ 104 M

Legislative Assembly, or later in the upcoming biennium, depending on the availability of funds.

The new 2009 SWMP also includes a special topics section, which covers a vast array of issues that have a substantial impact on water management and development efforts in North Dakota. In addition, updated Commission cost-share policies were included in the appendix for project sponsor reference.

The SWMP is available for download from the Commission's website at www.swc.nd.gov, or a paper copy of the full plan or executive summary may be requested by calling 701-328-4989, or by e-mailing dschock@nd.gov.