



FROM THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE WATER COMMISSION



## Mouse (Souris) River Flood Protection Improvements Underway



The 2011 Mouse River basin flood, which devastated numerous communities along its path, including the city of Minot, inundated over 4,100 homes in Ward County alone, and caused the evacuation of more than 11,000 people.

Coming off this last summer of record-breaking and unprecedented flooding, local and state officials, along with a highly qualified engineering consulting team, are moving forward with project concepts to provide improved flood protection for the basin. In another

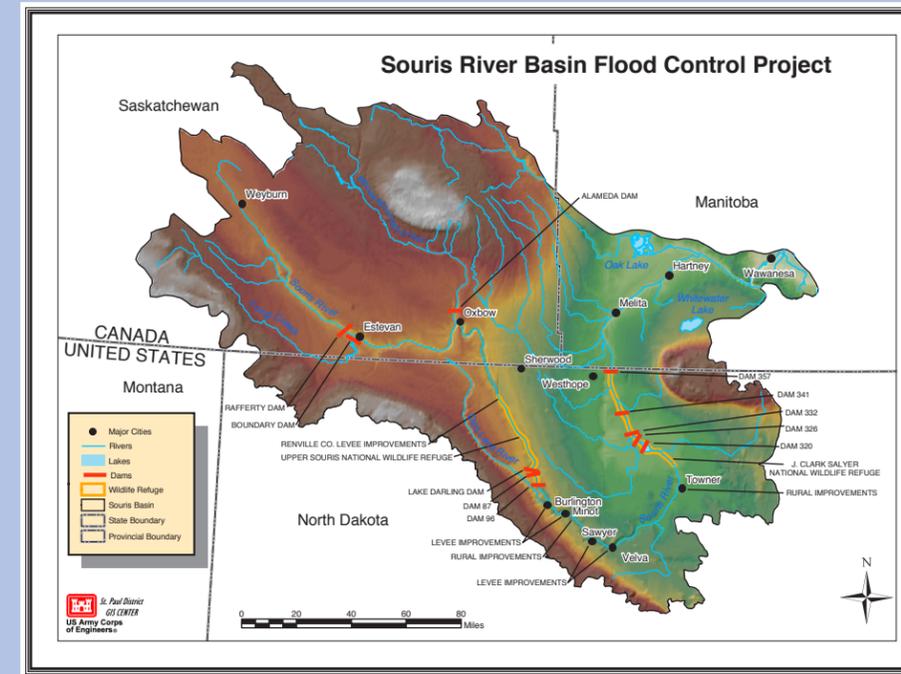
effort, a proposal is being submitted under the International Watershed Initiative to move forward with a study that will review, and likely recommend operational changes to upstream dams in North Dakota and Saskatchewan.

### *Mouse River Basin Enhanced Flood Protection Project*

The North Dakota State Water Commission and Governor Jack Dalrymple presented the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project Initial Concept Alignment to the Souris River Joint Board

during their special meeting in Minot, November 3. The Initial Concept Alignment included maps showing the approximate location of project features, and critical transportation routes that will remain open during a flood event. It also shows likely and uncertain project limits throughout the Mouse River Basin from Burlington to Velva and Mouse River Park.

The objectives of the project are to protect as many homes as possible, minimize the project footprint and adverse effects to unprotected features, and maintain



The above map shows all elements of the Souris River Basin Flood Control Project, as it exists today, including Rafferty, Alameda, Boundary, and Lake Darling Dams.

consistency with long range objectives of impacted communities and stakeholders, all for the lowest practical cost. The Initial Concept Alignment represents a protection level of 27,400 cfs from Burlington to Velva and 29,700 cfs through Mouse River Park, with an additional three feet of freeboard. These flow rates represent the peak flow rates experienced during the 2011 Mouse River flood.

The Initial Concept Alignment was available for review via the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project website at [www.mouseriverplan.com](http://www.mouseriverplan.com), and on Facebook and Twitter pages at Mouse River Plan. Printed versions of the Initial Concept Alignment could also be viewed at the Minot Public Library. The Initial Concept Alignment through the cities of Burlington, Sawyer and Velva were available at each city's respective City Hall, and the Mouse River Park Initial Concept Alignment was at the Renville County Courthouse in

Mohall. Comments were accepted through November 18.

State Water Commission representatives and members of the engineering team emphasized the importance of the public input phase of the Mouse River Basin Enhanced Flood Protection Project. This would ensure progress to continue towards the next phase of the flood protection plan.

Public Input meetings were also held in November. The meetings were conducted to provide residents the opportunity to view the Initial Concept Alignment, listen to the summary of the plan, and ask questions and provide feedback regarding the proposed plan.



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For more information about the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Plan, visit the project website at [www.mouseriverplan.com](http://www.mouseriverplan.com).

### *International Watershed Initiative Study Proposal*

In addition to the Mouse (Souris) River Enhanced Flood Protection Project that is underway, the International Souris River Board has developed a three-step process to address the concerns raised by the 2011 floods.

Rafferty, Alameda, Boundary, and Lake Darling Reservoirs flood operations are governed by the 1989 Canada-United States Agreement for Water Supply and Flood Control in the Souris River Basin. One outcome of the 2011 flood has been a call for a review of the 1989 Operating Plan.

The first step is to document the 2011 flood event, the second step is to gather agency and public input on issues and concerns related to the 2011 flood and operation of the reservoirs, and the final step is to review and update the 1989 Operating Plan.

Work on addressing the first step is underway. The hydrologic conditions of the 2011 flood event will be documented in a post-flood report by the US Army Corps of Engineers, with input from water management agencies in Saskatchewan, North Dakota, and Manitoba. This summary report is expected to be completed as early as February 2012.

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The second step would require a team approach with engineers from Canada and the United States. The objective would be to gather information on the effect of the 2011 flood and place this information in context with other flood years since the control structures came into operation and for the entire period of record available on the Mouse River. Non-flood years must also be considered.

The information gathering phase would include both the review of available watershed plans, post-flood reports, interviews with water management agencies active in the basin, and public meetings. The result would be a comprehensive summary of desirable objectives for water management in the basin, which at times may represent competing interests. This element of the proposal will proceed in parallel with the Corps' post-flood report, and could be completed as early as March 2012.

The third and final phase would be led by water management agencies in the basin to develop options of potential revisions to the 1989 Operating Plan. This step will likely involve the development of a hydrologic model of the basin in order to evaluate the potential impacts on certain aspects of the 1989 agreement. It is expected that funding support from the International Joint Commission (IJC) and International Watershed Initiative will be required.

A tentative completion data for developing options for any proposed revisions to the 1989 Operating Plan is March 2013. Any new options would be presented to both federal governments for consideration via the IJC. The final outcome will be either a revised Operating Plan and/or guidance to the board in the administration of its responsibilities in non-flood and flood years.



The unprecedented flood events of 2011 in Minot changed the way future flood events will be planned for, and managed in the future in that basin.

# Tom Fischer Will Be Missed



Then Gov. John Hoeven, Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker, and N.D. Sen. Tom Fischer (right) at the Maple River Dam dedication.

If there was one last thing the water community could say to Tom Fischer, I can't help but think – "thank you," would be right up there at the top, along with "you will be missed."

We, the members of North Dakota's water community, join family and friends of Tom Fischer in mourning his sudden and unexpected passing.

Since being elected to the North Dakota State Senate in 1996, there have been few if any greater advocates of water management and development efforts at the state level than Tom. And what made Tom so special, was his broad knowledge of water issues – from the local farmer's ring-dike, to massive flood control or water supply projects.

In working with Tom over the years on statewide water issues, Water Commission employees developed a tremendous amount of respect for his no nonsense approach to complicated water management challenges, and his ability to bring people together toward a common cause.

On behalf of the State Water Commission and its staff, I would like to express our heartfelt sympathy to the Fischer family for their loss.

Sincerely,

Todd Sando  
N.D. State Engineer