



2019 Issue III



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

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE STATE ENGINEER & WATER COMMISSION

Starting in mid-March, the Water Commission along with several other agencies and organizations began responding to flooding concerns throughout the state. The Department of Emergency Services (DES) activated the Unified Command and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to address these concerns. The Governor's Office, the State Water Commission, DES, and the National Guard formed the Unified Command.

In February, before the mobilization of the EOC and the Unified Command, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued the first outlook briefing for potential flooding to impact locations along the mainstem of the Red River. The communities of Drayton, Grand Forks, Fargo, Halstad, Oslo, Pembina, and Wahpeton were predicted to see significant flooding.

With this potentially ominous forecast, the NWS promptly increased the frequency of their flood outlook discussions and the Water Commission started closely monitoring elevation levels and gage data throughout the Red River Valley. Fortunately, much of the eastern part of the state encountered less severe impacts than anticipated. Most areas did however experience overland flooding and other minor implications, but the outcome was remarkably better than expected.

Beaver Creek near Linton, and Cottonwood Creek Dam, Lake LaMoure, were other notable areas of interest that were closely monitored. Luckily, the runoff volume at Beaver Creek barely reached a moderate flood stage, which based upon the snowpack, was extremely unusual. In previous years, levels at Cottonwood Creek Dam exhibited very high runoff and ultimately allowed water to flow through the auxiliary spillway causing considerable erosion and near failure of the dam. Even though the auxiliary spillway has since been armored with articulated concrete block mats to prevent issues, it was closely monitored to quickly identify problems if they arose.

(continued)

Can You Find The Water Drop?



This water drop is hidden
somewhere in this issue.

NEW HIRES

HEIDE DELORME

Administrative Services Division Director



In April, Heide Delorme officially began working as the Director of the Water Commission's Administration Division. Heide comes to the Commission from the Department of Human Services, where she served as an Assistant Chief Financial Officer, and has previously worked for the Mandan Park District. She is also involved with the Bismarck Public Schools system as a member of the school board.

Heide grew up in Dilworth, Minnesota and attended college at Minnesota State University Moorhead, where she received her degree in Accounting. Her husband Gary works as a federal prosecutor for the Department of Justice, and together they have two daughters and two dogs. Their oldest daughter, Hayley, is a senior at NDSU, while their youngest, Madison, will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota in the fall. Their adorable dogs, Burt (a Golden Retriever), and Ernie (a Border Collie), are prominently displayed in her office. Heide would like to be clear that her husband named the dogs.

MARK POTUCEK

Hydrologist II - Water Appropriations



In May, Mark Potucek was hired as a Groundwater Hydrologist II in the Appropriations Division. He will work with water permits, make recommendations, and analyze how water use may affect other users in a given area. Mark comes to the Commission from the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Before that, he served as a research tech during his undergraduate studies, and teacher's assistant during graduate school.

Mark is originally from Sierra Vista, Arizona and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Geosciences from the University of Arizona. He earned his Master of Science degree in Geology from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Mark has one brother, and most of his family resides in the Phoenix, Arizona area. He enjoys hobbies such as sports, camping, hiking, and video games. Finally, when asked how he feels about winter in North Dakota, Mark said even though he's experienced cold in Ohio and Philadelphia, he knows North Dakota winters will be a new thing, and he's looking forward to the experience.

SARAH FELCHLE

Accountant & Budget Specialist



Sarah Felchle has been hired as the SWC's Accounting and Budget Specialist. She worked for Ducks Unlimited for four years straight out of college, and then for the North Dakota Department of Human Services for over nine years, performing accounting duties for both agencies. Sarah received degrees in both Accounting and Business Administration from a combination of Bismarck State College and the University of Mary.

Sarah and her husband Craig live in Bismarck with their two daughters, Brynn and Emma, ages seven and four, respectively. They also have a miniature Schnauzer named Murphy, who can sometimes be difficult. Sarah enjoys curling, and has curled around the world to include Italy, Canada, and the United States. Finally, her family is looking forward to visiting Disney World this October.

LOW HEAD DAM SURVEY REMINDER

In early May, the Water Commission reached out to cities and water resource districts to collect information about low head dams that are located throughout the state. The information will be used to more adequately assist with the challenges associated with the long-term management of this aging infrastructure. If you are aware of a low head dam in your jurisdiction and have not completed our survey, please contact one of the following staff members:

Jared Huibregtse
701.328.4967
jjhuibregtse@nd.gov

Chance Nolan
701.328.4786
cnolan@nd.gov

Low head dams are usually simple concrete or rock masonry structures that span the width of a river or stream, raising the water level behind them until it reaches a height sufficient to flow over the dam. They are also known as "run-of-the-river" dams, and are generally less than 15 feet high.



COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



Commissioner Matthew Pedersen
Upper Red River Basin

I am honored Governor Doug Burgum appointed me in 2017 to a 6-year term on the State Water Commission serving the Upper Red River Basin, while truly representing all of the people of North Dakota. It has been a wonderful experience filled with new learning, friendships, and responsibilities. I am someone who thrives on continuous learning and have found it interesting to be more informed about the local water needs across our fine state.

My experiences with water primarily relate to battling floods in my community of Valley City. It was the record-breaking flood of 2009 on the Sheyenne River that compelled me to run for City Commissioner of Valley City. The focus of my local campaign was to secure permanent flood protection for our community. The residents of Valley City, including myself, thought it was a very lofty and likely unattainable goal. Nevertheless, I continued to pursue this much needed investment, working collaboratively with the Legislature and State Water Commission.

Through my 8 years as City Commissioner for Valley City, driving our permanent flood protection task force, I was able to work closely with the State Water Commission. I developed a deep sense of respect for the State Water Commission team, its mission, and its positive impact on North Dakota communities. It's filled with a talented team of professionals who strive to find solutions - supporting so many water projects statewide.

Given the significant impact the State Water Commission has had on Valley City and enabling my dreams of flood protection, I felt the need to give back to the agency that has done so much for my friends and family. As a result, I applied to serve as a Commissioner of the State Water Commission, and was fortunate to be selected.

I am fascinated by the magnitude of the FM Area Diversion Project, Red River Valley Water Supply Project, and Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project. I am supportive of these long-term investments to benefit current and future generations. And, I empathize with the families impacted by the property acquisitions necessary to accomplish these projects. Thanks for your participation and sacrifice.

I am impressed by North Dakota's level of investment in water development, and I look forward to making progress on many of the projects identified as part of the long-term State Water Development Plan. Mostly, I am excited to play a role in positively impacting the lives of North Dakotans through water-related projects.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES



The State Water Commission would like to send its sincere condolences to the family of Jack Olin. Jack admirably served as a Commission member for 20 years. He provided significant guidance, leadership, and devotion throughout his esteemed term.

Jack had a deep love and commitment to the community. He represented southwest North Dakota in the State Legislature for eight years in both the House of Representatives and Senate respectively. Water was a special passion for Jack as he served on several water boards and water-related organizations. Jack will be greatly missed.

continued from first page



The Unified Command gathers to discuss potential flooding concerns across North Dakota and to implement a possible plan of action.

This spring marked the 10-year anniversary of the near failure of the dam. But this time around, the armored auxiliary spillway prevailed and safely passed water and functioned properly. Water started flowing through the spillway on April 4 and reached a max depth of about 15 inches during the course of just a few weeks. We are exceedingly pleased with how well the spillway functioned and vastly helped to improve dam safety for the citizens of North Dakota.

During the potential flood risks, Water Commission staff provided technical support and participated in vital operations, planning, and decision-making related to the Unified Command and EOC efforts. More specifically, staff members:

- Engaged in meetings of the Unified Command, Joint Information System, and its various sub-groups.
- Staffed the State Emergency Operations Center for about one week.
- Assisted in interpreting information, such as river gage readings, National Weather Service forecasts, and Civil Air Patrol imagery.
- Gathered drone footage, photos, and other observations of flooding conditions at various locations throughout the state.
- Entered observations, intel, and other information into DES's central database, and WebEOC, in order to document conditions and response.
- Funded the installation of one of our rapid deployment gages on the James River at Adrian, at the request of the LaMoure County Emergency Manager.

The Water Commission played a prominent role in the 2019 flood response efforts along with the Unified Command, local jurisdictions, county emergency managers, and various other agencies. All of the personnel who collaborated on this endeavor should be commended for their diligence, exceptional expertise, and notable hard work.

Garland Erbe

COMMISSION MEETING APPROVALS

April 9, 2019

Valley City Permanent Flood Protection Erosion Sites Project	\$480,283
Minot System Wide Improvement Framework	\$214,279
Devils Lake Outlet Operations	\$2,500,000
Karey Dam Rehabilitation	\$971,325
Goschke Dam Spillway Gate Retrofit	\$44,010
Upper Maple River Dam Spillway Repair	\$82,320
Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP) Transfer of Ownership Study	\$176,579

June 19, 2019

Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection	\$82,500,000
Cass County Drain #40 Improvement	\$192,600
Sargent County Drain #7 Cost Overrun	\$114,227
Larimore Dam Rehab Study	\$91,800
Fordville Dam Rehab Study	\$122,595
Bylin Dam Rehab Study	\$131,370
Senator Young Dam Rehab Study	\$129,210
Lincoln Water Supply Main	\$329,100
Mandan Raw Water Intake	\$10,977,000
Bismarck Lockport Pump Station	\$2,280,000
Mapleton Water Storage Tank	\$840,000
WAWS Phase VI Preconstruction	\$5,476,000
Dakota Rural Water Expansion	\$461,250
McLean-Sheridan Rural Water Expansion	\$327,075
Northeast Regional Water, Devils Lake	\$1,328,000
Stutsman Rural Water Phase 7	\$1,812,000
South Central Regional Water, N. Burleigh WTP	\$920,000
Red River Basin Commission	\$200,000
Assiniboine River Basin Initiative	\$100,000
USGS Cooperative Monitoring	\$533,575
Aerial Electromagnetic Surveying	\$425,000
Atmospheric Resouce Operations & Research	\$875,722
Aerial Imagery Collection	\$790,000

— LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS —



A number of bills were introduced to the 66th Legislative Assembly as part of the Water Commission and State Engineer's continuing efforts to support sustainable water management and development in North Dakota.

HB 1085 – Allows the Water Commission to raise the cost-share limit of the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Program from \$3,500 to \$4,500 per project. The \$3,500 threshold was in place since the early 1990s – without adjustments for inflation and rising drilling/construction costs. This program is administered to provide emergency funding to farmers and ranchers experiencing impacts from severe drought conditions. The purpose of the program is to provide state cost-share toward the development of drought-resilient water supplies for livestock.

HB 1087 – The purpose of this bill is to ease regulations on agricultural dikes two feet in height or less – removing the requirement to have them designed by a professional engineer. This provides cost-savings, and a more efficient permitting process for producers working toward protection of agricultural lands from floodwater.

SB 2091 - This bill will allow structures within a flood fringe to be constructed on piers, columns, or other methods of construction allowed by FEMA, rather than only allowing construction on fill. This provides additional options to landowners who are working to achieve a desired elevation of a structure for which they are trying to acquire flood insurance.

SB 2020 – This is the Water Commission and State Engineer's budget bill. Water project funding made available through SB 2020 will support the advancement of critical water infrastructure throughout the state. This includes support of flood control projects in our largest population centers, and water supply infrastructure for rural and municipal systems, as well as dozens of other smaller general water management projects. The total appropriation of new funding for water development, including a \$75 million line of credit, is just over \$500 million during the 2019-2021 biennium.

BEST WISHES



P A M
J A H N E R

On behalf of the Water Commission, we would like to thank Pam Jahner for her commendable years of service to the people of North Dakota. Pam was employed with the Water Commission for twelve years, and worked as an Account/Budget Specialist in the

Administrative Division.

Throughout her career with the agency, Pam has consistently demonstrated impeccable attention to detail, maintained exceptional organizational skills, and exhibited diligent efforts to follow policy and guidelines.

We wish Pam all of the best in her future endeavors!



C R A I G
O D E N B A C H

Craig Odenbach has served as the Water Commission's Director of the Water Development Division for four years. He has over 35 years of experience in the civil engineering field. Craig has a wide-range of experience in the private sector and was also

previously employed at the Water Commission as a hydrologist and section chief during the early part of his career.

Craig has an extensive list of credentials and expertise in the water resource field. He has played a pivotal role in our agency and will be missed.

The Water Commission would like to wish Craig prosperity and success in his future plans.

900 East Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505-0850



A NEWSLETTER FROM THE STATE
ENGINEER & WATER COMMISSION

The Current

Find us on 

Become a Water Commission
Fan on facebook

And get access to exclusive content

Like us on  Facebook

www.facebook.com/NDStateWater

- Up Coming Meetings
- Current Agency Efforts & Activities
- News Releases
- Policy & Program Updates
- And Much More!

Get Up To-Date Information On: