

New Year Brings Changes to Garrison Diversion Board of Directors

By Kimberly Cook

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) Board of Directors has 28 members representing each of the 28 counties within the district. Each county supports Garrison Diversion’s operations by issuing a one-mill levy and electing a citizen to serve a four-year term on its board of directors. The board works collectively to fulfill Garrison Diversion’s mission to provide a reliable, high quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota.

Each January, the board welcomes new electees to the organization and holds elections for leadership positions. This year, several new faces are visible at the regular meetings and the board is under new leadership.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Garrison Diversion’s board of directors is pleased to welcome several new individuals elected in November’s general election to replace three long-time directors who retired at the end of 2020. Larry Kassian, Burleigh County; Don Zimbleman, Dickey County; and Brian Orn, Sargent County, were sworn into office at the January quarterly meeting of the board of directors.

“We are happy to welcome the new board members to our organization,” says Chairman Alan Walter. “These individuals are now involved in getting our state ready for the future and have an opportunity to make a huge difference for future generations.”

Larry Kassian was elected by Burleigh County constituents to serve on Garrison Diversion’s board. After receiving his degree in civil engineering from NDSU, Larry was employed at Bartlett & West Engineers where he stayed for more than 20 years. A career move led him to become the executive director for the South Central Regional Water District. Larry resides in Bismarck with his wife Connie.

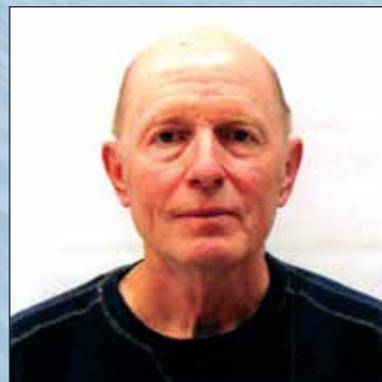
Don Zimbleman is a farmer/rancher representing Dickey County on Garrison Diversion’s board of directors. Don is the current president of the Dickey County Water Board and is a committed member of many community organizations. Don and his wife, Rosemary, live in Fullerton.

The new Sargent County representative elected to the board is **Brian Orn**. Brian received a degree in agricultural economics from North Dakota State University and has worked in the insurance business his entire career. Brian now owns, and is an agent with, the Bjorn Crop Insurance Agency in Stirum. Brian lives in Stirum with his wife Lindy.

Each director will serve a four-year term on the Garrison Diversion board.



Larry Kassian



Brian Orn

NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP

The board is also under new leadership for the new year, as the executive committee will now be led by Alan Walter, Ward County; Jay Anderson, Ransom County; and Roger Fenstad, Cass County, each serving a two-year term in their new leadership positions.

Alan Walter, Ward County director, was elected to serve as chairman of the board and replaces Ken Royse, Burleigh County, who retired from the board at the end of his second term as chair. Walter, a long-time director serving since 2002, has been heavily involved in the water industry for many years and is an invaluable resource to the board of directors. He is a civil engineer and the former public works director for the City of Minot. He currently works at the Ackerman-Estvold engineering firm in Minot. He lives in Minot with his wife Judy.

“Being elected Garrison Diversion’s chairman is an awesome responsibility,” says Alan. “To lead this board forward toward the continuance and eventual completion of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project is a huge step for our state and for North Dakota’s economy. This project prepares our state for continued growth we are seeing in the Red River Valley and also establishes our right to the use of Missouri River water. The board is looking forward to the successful completion of several parts of the project in the next few years and to continue planning for future projects to get the system ready to deliver the water to central and eastern North Dakota.”

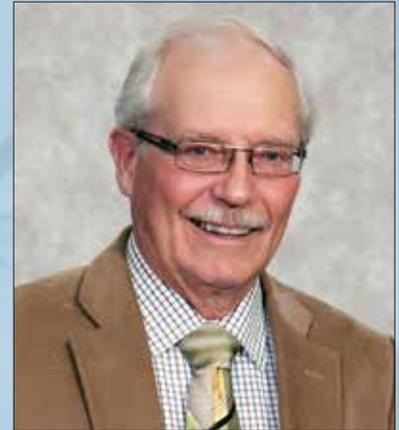
Next in line is **Jay Anderson**, Ransom County, elected as vice chair. He has served the board since 2008 and will continue to serve on the Red River Valley Committee in addition to the executive committee. Jay also serves on the Southeast Water Users Board of Directors. Jay works as the senior vice president of BankNorth in Lisbon and lives on a farm near Lisbon with his wife Terese.

“Having good, reliable water is crucial to the state, for economic development and the well-being of our citizens. I started with rural water in 1994, and being a part of Garrison Diversion’s board leadership allows my continued involvement and the ability to provide input to the direction of water projects in the state,” says Anderson. “It takes a considerable amount of time and effort to help steer the political, economic and social direction on water demands and needs in the state, and I’m up for the challenge.”

Roger Fenstad, Cass County director, was elected as second vice chair. Fenstad has been a board member since 2011; however, his career in the water industry began many years before when starting his career as a civil engineer for Moore Engineering in 1974, working until his retirement in 2018. Fenstad is also a member of the Red River Valley Committee. Roger lives in West Fargo with his wife Jan.

“I am humbled and appreciative of the board’s confidence in electing me second vice chair. My main goal is to help keep the Red River Valley Water Supply Project moving forward, as it is so important for over 50 percent of the residents of North Dakota,” says Roger.

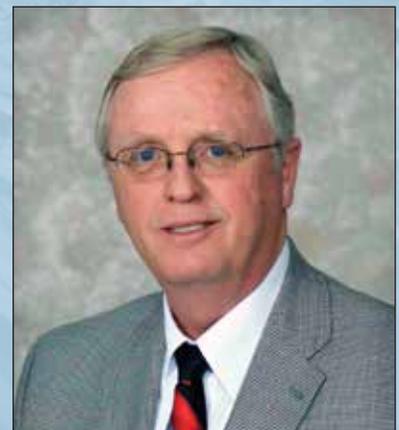
Walter Anderson and Fenstad will also serve on Garrison Diversion’s 10-member executive committee, which monitors the financials, federal matters and overall operations of the Garrison Diversion. The committee consists of 10 members, each serving a two-year term, and is headed by Alan Walter, board chairman.



Alan Walter



Jay Anderson



Roger Fenstad

BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January's quarterly board meeting was a busy one, as elections were also held for executive committee members. Greg Bischoff, Barnes County; Geneva Kaiser, Stutsman County; and Bill Ongstad, Wells County, were each elected to serve a two-year term as an executive committee member.

Greg Bischoff has been a representative for Barnes County since 2016. He serves as chair of the Red River Valley Committee, focusing on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Greg graduated from Valley City State University with a bachelor of science degree in business administration and is the owner of Allard Trophy Co in Valley City, where he also resides.

Geneva Kaiser has been dedicated to Garrison Diversion's board since 2015, representing Stutsman County residents. In addition to serving on the executive committee, Geneva will chair the MR&I Committee, focusing on municipal, rural and industrial water concerns across the district. Geneva has worked for the Stutsman Rural Water District since 1989, serving as the general manager since 2007.

Bill Ongstad has represented Wells County constituents since 2008. He chairs the Missouri River Committee, addressing topics related to the Missouri River, and also serves on the Public Relations Committee. Bill is a farmer, raising certified spring wheat seed, pinto bean seed and soybean seed, as well as corn. Bill lives in Harvey with his wife Anne.

Garrison Diversion board members recognize the importance water plays in North Dakota's future. We are a leader in building North Dakota's water supply infrastructure and managing the water, focusing on irrigation, recreation, municipal, rural and industrial water supply and the operations and maintenance of Garrison Diversion Unit facilities.



Greg Bischoff



Geneva Kaiser



Bill Ongstad