



Stay Connected to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project

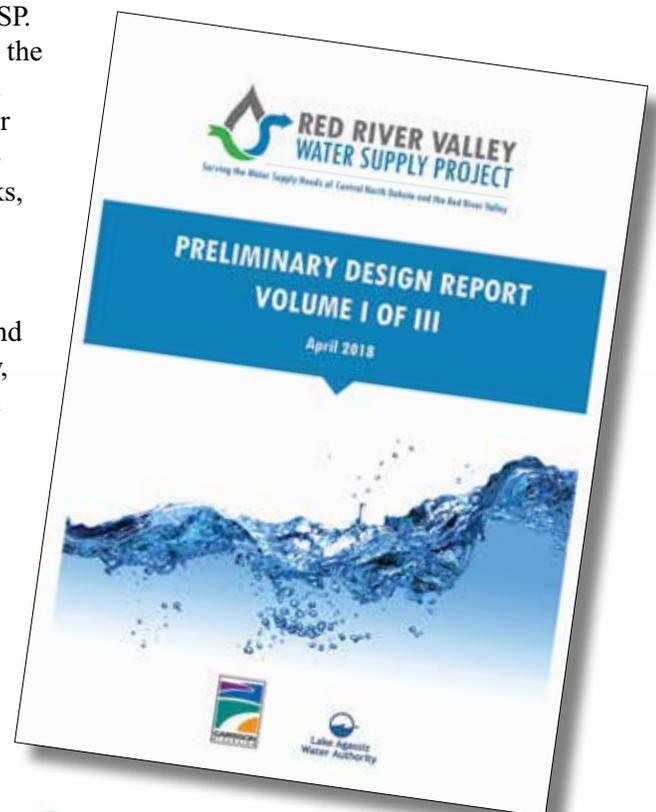
By Kimberly Cook

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) is a plan to safeguard water for North Dakota communities and rural water systems in times of drought by delivering water from the Missouri River to central and eastern North Dakota through a buried pipeline. Upon its completion, RRVWSP will benefit about half of North Dakota's population by providing a supplemental water supply during droughts and will also provide opportunities for industrial development. RRVWSP is needed to mitigate against drought conditions that would cause costly shortages, foster economic development by meeting municipal, rural and industrial water demands, and promote environmental stability.

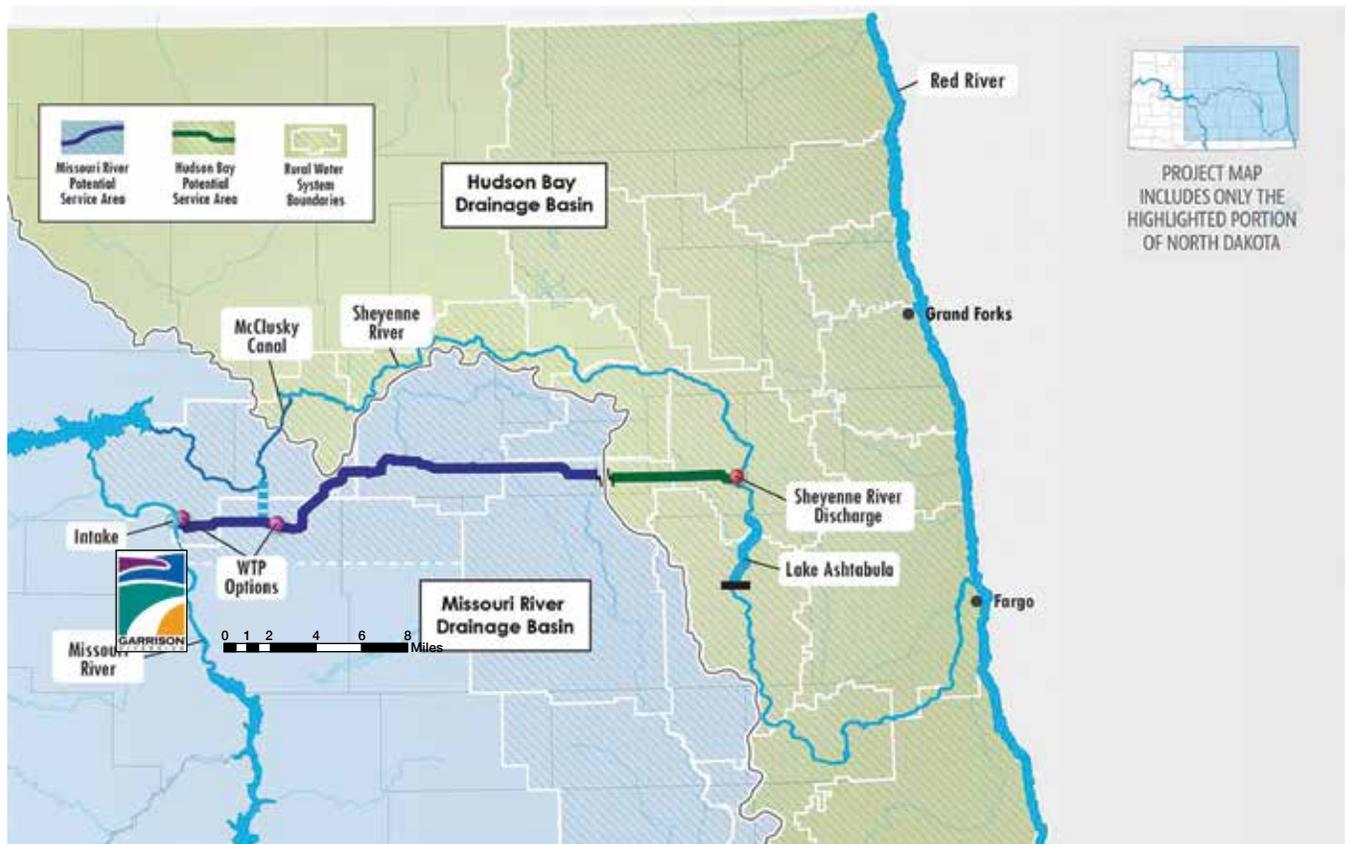
The state lead for RRVWSP is the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion), while the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) represents the local users in the project. Together, the two organizations are continuing the forward progress on RRVWSP and work together to keep you informed. A quarterly newsletter is distributed to keep interested parties up-to-date on the latest project advancements. See the latest articles from the third quarter newsletter and sign up to receive future newsletters at www.rrvwsp.com. You can also follow the project on Facebook and Twitter; just search Red River Valley Water Supply Project or @RRVWSP.

RRVWSP Preliminary Design Completed

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project's (RRVWSP) engineering team recently passed a major milestone – the preliminary design of RRVWSP is complete. “The completion of the preliminary design is a critical step for Garrison Diversion and Lake Agassiz Water Authority as the co-sponsors of the RRVWSP. This marks the completion of a number of mission-critical tasks, including identifying the project demands and design flow, finalization of the pipeline alignment – both horizontal and vertical,



Red River Valley Water Supply Project



and securing land access,” explains Kip Kovar, deputy program manager for RRVWSP engineering.

In addition to meeting the requirements laid out in the legislation for the current biennium, the completion of the preliminary design means the systems and logistical tools that are necessary to manage construction on a water project of this magnitude are ready to be implemented.

Completion of the preliminary design also allows for the updated overall project costs to be used in financial models. There are 35 communities and water systems involved with the development phase of RRVWSP.

“Completing the preliminary design and all of the progress associated with its completion are absolutely the key to the Red River Valley Water Supply’s stakeholders being well positioned to successfully engage with the North Dakota Legislature in the upcoming session. We need to secure the financial mechanisms and commitments that will enable construction to begin and the project to become a reality within a reasonable timeframe,” says

Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion general manager.

The next steps for RRVWSP include finalizing the financial plan, acquiring easements and completing the final designs of the pipeline, discharge structure and intake.

Garrison Diversion Focuses on Positive Landowner Relations

Since the preliminary design of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) is now complete, right-of-way acquisition will soon begin on segments of the project. “All affected landowners will be compensated for the use of their land. It’s important to remember that since this is buried infrastructure, farmers will be able to continue using the land prior to and after construction is completed,” says Kip Kovar, deputy program manager for RRVWSP engineering.

Landowners along a 28-mile portion of the project's pipeline that will be constructed first will receive packets of information from Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion), a sponsoring agency of the state of North Dakota authorized project. "We already have existing option agreements with many of the landowners we'll be reaching out to or have already contacted. In some cases, this will be the first time we're reaching out to discuss the option to purchase a permanent easement for a 150-foot wide corridor across a property," says Kovar.

Each landowner packet will contain the following materials:

- Letter identifying the tract of land
- RRVWSP map with project information
- Garrison Diversion Conservancy District overview
- Agreement to be signed with a return envelope
- Crop damage payment policy

Garrison Diversion will manage the easement process with the help of land agents from KLJ, who will be making further contact with landowners to discuss easement requests and compensation after the initial information packets go out.

"We want to provide as much information to landowners as possible to help them understand the process and be assured that we will return their land to its original condition after construction is complete," says Kovar.

Meet Merri Mooridian

Work keeps Merri Mooridian very busy these days. Since the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) took off, she has split her time as the administrative officer of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and deputy program manager of RRVWSP administration. In her RRVWSP role, Merri oversees the administrative, legal, financial, and communication considerations of the project, while coordinating those efforts with RRVWSP engineering and land management activities. She celebrated her 15-year anniversary with Garrison Diversion this year, where she started as the assistant communications director.

Due the size of RRVWSP, it's no surprise that much of her time is now spent focused on the project. When she talks about it, you can tell Merri is passionate about creating a successful project that will help protect communities and water systems from the effects of future droughts.

"A long-term drought would be devastating to central and eastern North Dakota. Many people don't realize a 1930s style drought is expected to occur again by 2050. We can avert this crisis with the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Just last year, western North Dakota experienced an extreme drought. A long-term drought in the Red River Valley would have an estimated economic impact of \$25 billion – the entire state would be impacted by that," she says.

"The need for this project has been known for decades. After many setbacks, the project now has broad support across the state and is progressing

forward. In fact, 35 communities and rural water systems in central and eastern North Dakota committed to the development of the project," says Merri. "My current focus is developing a solid financial model that will allow communities and rural water

systems to participate in the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. This project is unique because it is supplemental water, not a replacement. Each water system will continue to operate and maintain existing facilities, and this project will be an additional cost for each water system."

When she's not diligently working on Garrison Diversion and RRVWSP initiatives, Merri says one of her passions is traveling and exploring new places. Fitting for a person who has devoted much of her career to water, Merri also loves summers at the lake where she spends time with family and friends, as well as water skiing. Merri and her husband, Jeff, have been married for 29 years. The couple has two grown children, Mike and Chelsi.

