

GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

10:00 AM
AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Public Comment Period
- IV. Consideration of Minutes
 - A. **>July 17, 2025**
- V. Strategic Communications Task Order
 - A. **>2026 Strategic Communications Services**
- VI. Public Relations Activities
 - A. Submitted Articles
 - 1. >ND Water December 2025
 - 2. >ND Water November 2025
 - 3. >ND Water October 2025
 - B. Submitted News Releases
 - 1. >Matching Recreation Grant Program
 - 2. >Water Supply Assistance Grant Awards
 - C. Garrison Diversion & RRVWSP News Articles
 - 1. >12-11-25 Minot Daily News
 - 2. >12-5-25 Bismarck Tribune
 - 3. >12-3-25 Jamestown Sun
 - 4. >12-3-25 Minot Daily News
 - 5. >11-14-25 Bismarck Tribune – Ken Royse
 - 6. >10-28-25 Bismarck Tribune
 - 7. >10-24-25 Bismarck Tribune
 - 8. >10-20-25 Inforum
 - 9. >10-8-25 Bismarck Tribune
 - 10. >9-2-25 Valley City Times Record

11. >9-2-25 Jamestown Sun
 12. >8-16-25 Jamestown Sun
- D. RRVWSP Newsletter
1. >2025 Newsletter Analytics
 2. >4th Quarter 2025
 3. >3rd Quarter 2025
- E. Upcoming Conferences and PR Events
1. RRVWSP Education Session – Dec. 17, Fargo
 2. >Red River Basin Commission Conference – Jan. 13-15, Winnipeg
 3. ND Rural Water Expo – Feb. 10-12, Fargo
- F. Other Business

The following minutes are in draft form subject to review and approval by the Public Relations Committee at its next meeting.

25-12

GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Carrington, North Dakota
July 17, 2025**

A meeting of the Public Relations Committee of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District was held on July 17, 2025, at the Garrison Diversion headquarters in Carrington. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Boote at 9 a.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Board Chairman Jay Anderson
Committee Chairperson Nikki Boote
Director Greg Bischoff
Director Steve Forde
Secretary Kimberly Cook

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Director Margo Knorr
Director Brandon Krueger
Director Alan Walter

OTHERS PRESENT

A copy of the registration sheet is attached to these minutes as Annex I.

The meeting was recorded to assist with compilation of the minutes.

ADDITION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER

Jay Anderson, Board Chairman, announced he is adding Director Bischoff as a member to the Public Relations Committee.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Director Forde to dispense with a reading of the January 9, 2025, Public Relations Committee minutes and approve them as distributed. Second by Director Bischoff. Upon voice vote, motion carried.

DRAFT CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Kimberly Cook, Communications Director, Garrison Diversion, called on Andrea Boe, Advanced Engineering & Environmental Services (AE2S), to present the Draft Crisis Communications Plan. She was part of the team from AE2S instrumental in preparing the draft plan.

Media Protocol

Ms. Boe first reviewed the general guidelines and protocols in the Draft Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) Crisis Communications Plan for responding to media inquiries. A copy of the document is attached to these minutes as Annex II.

The formalization of the plan aims to manage the increasing visibility of the RRVWSP and ensure consistent communication as the project grows.

Ms. Boe said the intent is to distribute the Draft Crisis Communications Plan to all entities involved with the RRVWSP.

Ms. Cook added the current Draft Crisis Communications Plan has not yet been shared with Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA). Today's presentation serves as an initial discussion point for committee feedback prior to broader dissemination.

Ms. Boe said the last portion of the protocol for responding to media inquiries is crisis communications, and that is where it transitions into a crisis communications plan.

Draft Crisis Plan

Ms. Boe referenced the Draft Crisis Communications Plan for review and input. The plan, encouraged by Black & Veatch, is more detailed than a previous draft from a couple of years ago. It aims to address the increased risk associated with higher project visibility.

The plan focuses on the composition and responsibilities of the crisis management team. She outlined the six-step crisis communications response process, emphasizing the importance of situation verification using the PEAR (People, Environment, Asset, Reputation) analysis. The plan is intended as a guideline, with the possibility of creating handouts listing communication tools and tips, along with best practices for wider distribution.

Ms. Cook confirmed the team spent quite a bit of time ensuring the right people are on the crisis management team, including representatives from LAWA and Garrison Diversion.

The committee discussed the draft plan, agreeing it looks good and comprehensive, with contacts readily available. It was suggested a workshop be held in the future to familiarize team members with their roles and responsibilities in case of a crisis. The plan's importance, as a precautionary measure, was acknowledged with hopes it will never be needed but appreciating its value as a guideline to follow in emergencies.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

Submitted Articles - - Ms. Cook reviewed copies of articles submitted to the *ND Water* magazine for the months of March through July on behalf of Garrison Diversion.

News Releases - - Ms. Cook also reviewed news releases prepared by Garrison Diversion and submitted to local and daily newspapers relating to Garrison Diversion's Recreation Grant and Water Supply Assistance Grant programs.

News Articles - - Ms. Cook called attention to various news articles published in state and local newspapers relating to Garrison Diversion and the RRVWSP. The next article, scheduled for October, in the *ND Water* magazine will cover the golf scramble and grant programs.

RRVWSP Newsletter - - Ms. Cook next referenced the first and second quarter RRVWSP newsletters for 2025. She also reviewed the 2025 newsletter analytics, noting the newsletter has consistently high open rates of nearly 50%, which is significantly above the industry average of 32%.

The committee discussed strategies to increase the newsletter's reach and engagement. Emails are currently delivered to about 570 recipients. Suggestions for expanding the mailing list included adding county commissioners, city councils, and economic development committees. The group also considered tracking clicks from social media shares and potentially adding a newsletter sign-up option on these links, while being mindful of spam concerns.

Meetings and Conferences - - The committee discussed upcoming events, including Water Day at the State Fair on July 24th and the Irrigation Appreciation Supper on August 5th in Underwood. They considered expanding their presence at other fairs and events to promote Garrison Diversion and the RRVWSP, particularly in the eastern half of the state.

OTHER

Motion by Director Anderson to adjourn the meeting. Second by Director Forde. Upon voice vote, motioned carried.

The meeting concluded at 9:33 a.m.

(SEAL)

Nikki Boote, Chairman

Kimberly Cook, Secretary

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Carrington, North Dakota
July 17, 2025

6

Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) Crisis Communications Plan

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I. Introduction

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) Crisis Communications Plan was developed to define the structure for communicating with internal and external stakeholders in the event of a crisis. This Crisis Communications Plan should be utilized for any crisis scenario that affects the people, environment, assets, and reputation of the RRVWSP.

The communications staff intends to conduct tabletop practices on this plan once a year to keep the protocols top-of-mind and provide an opportunity to update the information as needed.

Goals for every response should be specific to each situation, but some general overarching goals can be good starting points for a crisis response.

- Minimize the impact on operations and people.
- Minimize the amount of time spent focusing on the crisis.
- Regain control of the situation and conversation around the RRVWSP.

This Crisis Communication Plan outlines the following steps:

- Defines the potential crisis situations.
- Defines and assigns the crisis team.
- Details the six steps to take in a crisis event.
- Advises proper crisis follow-up.
- Provides templates and resources for a variety of situations.

II. Recognizing a Crisis

What is a crisis?

A crisis is any event or situation that is expected to create an unstable or unresolved situation. We have identified the following scenarios that could adversely impact the operations, financial stability, and/or reputation of the Project. Potential crises may include, but are not limited to the factors listed below:

Examples of crisis categories:

- General accident
- Workplace or construction accident
- Negative press or social media
- Landowner conflict
- Employee-misconduct
- Physical injuries
- Malevolence (intentional injury)
- Issues with facilities
- Technology-related
- Natural disaster
- Violence or vandalism
- Coordinated external campaign (online campaign to injure brand)

Preparing for a Crisis – PEAR Model

Before any incident or crisis occurs, utilize the PEAR model (People, Environment, Asset, Reputation).

- People
- Environment
- Asset
- Reputation

These steps will take some of the uncertainty out of the unforeseen crisis.

- Identify a crisis communication notification system including all means to reach people.
- Up-to-date phone/email numbers for media, boards, regulatory agencies, legal and others. Keep both electronic and hard copy formats.
- Determine individuals in departments that would serve on the crisis team.
- Designate and train spokesperson for specific incidents.
- Prepare the spokespeople in advance with media training.
- Anticipate questions associated with each situation and prepare spokespeople.

The PEAR process can be continuously used as the Project progresses into different phases and as situations arise.

III. Crisis Management Team

The following core team will be instrumental in managing crisis communications. The individual(s) assigned to these roles may vary from situation to situation and may change as the Project progresses.

Category	Name / Title	Responsibility	Contact
Communications & Media Relations	Kimberly Cook GDCD Communications Director	Leads development of public response to crisis through creation of talking points, FAQs, news releases, internal messaging, coaching spokespeople, etc.	Cell: 701.652.5470 Office: 701.652.3194 kimberlyc@gdcd.org
Leadership	Duane DeKrey GDCD General Manager Dr. Tim Mahoney Mayor, City of Fargo; LAWA Chair	Oversees operational response during a crisis, ensuring continuity of essential Project functions. Coordinates with team to assess disruptions, implement contingency plans, and restore normal operations.	Cell: 701.652.5170 Office: 701.652.3194 duaned@gdcd.org Cell: 701.212.2134 Office: 701.241.1310 TMahoney@FargoND.gov
Engineering	Kip Kovar GDCD District Engineer / Deputy Program Manager	Works closely with operations and construction teams to develop solutions, mitigate damage, and communicate technical details to stakeholders in an accessible manner.	Cell: 701.652.5736 Office: 701.652.3194 kipk@gdcd.org
Administration	Merri Mooridian GDCD Administrative Officer/Deputy Program Manager	Ensures internal processes run smoothly, including documentation, resource allocation, and team coordination. Manages meeting logistics and post-crisis evaluations to improve future responses.	Cell: 701.320.1904 Office: 701.652.3194 merrim@gdcd.org
Construction	Kip Kovar GDCD District Engineer/Deputy Program Manager Vance Miller Black & Veatch Contractor Liason	Manages on-the-ground response for active construction sites, ensuring safety and assessing potential delays or damages. Works with engineering and operations to develop response strategies and communicate realistic timelines for Project adjustments.	Cell: 701.652.5736 Office: 701.652.3194 kipk@gdcd.org Cell: 713.202.3374 millerve@bv.com
Government Relations	Terry Effertz GDCD Representative Brent Bogar LAWA Representative	Primary point(s) of contact for elected officials, regulatory agencies, and policymakers. Ensures compliance with government regulations, provides timely updates to public officials, and coordinates responses to inquiries or concerns from government agencies.	Phone: 701.833.7224 terry@effertzlegal.com Cell: 701.202.7814 Office: 701.221.0530 brent.bogar@ae2s.com
Landowner Liaison	Kip Kovar GDCD District Engineer Scott Mehning GDCD Field Services Supervisor	Engages with affected landowners to address concerns, provide updates, and mitigate any negative impacts of the crisis. Facilitates resolutions and maintains positive relationships with property owners involved in the crisis.	Cell: 701.652.5736 Office: 701.652.3194 kipk@gdcd.org Cell: 701.527.4169 Office: 701.652.3194 scottm@gdcd.org
Legal	Tami Norgard GDCD Representative John Shockley LAWA Representative	Reviews crisis response strategies to ensure all communications and actions comply with legal and regulatory requirements. Advises on risk mitigation, liability concerns, and public disclosures, while coordinating with external legal counsel if necessary.	Phone: 701.237.6983 tnorgard@vogellaw.com Phone: 701.282.3249 jshockley@ohnstadlaw.com
Project Users	Large/Small	Appointed by LAWA Board	

*Crisis team will also consist of Project consultants and contractors, as well as necessary advisors to be called upon depending on the crisis.

IV. 6 Steps for Crisis Communication Response

The following six steps for crisis communication protocol are important for communicating in a thorough and organized way during a crisis. These steps should be utilized for working with the media, staff, and stakeholders. Depending on the intensity of the situation, these steps may need to be taken within the first few hours of a crisis and then repeated as needed.



6 Steps Graphic

1. Verify the Situation
2. Notify and Assign Responsibility
3. Assess the Level of Crisis
4. Develop Plan and Messaging
5. Message Approval and Release
6. Monitor and Provide Feedback

1) Verify the Situation

The Communications Director is responsible for beginning the initial steps of determining what happened, and if a situation rises to the level of “crisis.” The Communications Director should immediately identify as many facts as possible to create an initial fact sheet.

Initial Fact Sheet | Answer the following questions if you are able:

- WHAT happened and where?
- WHEN did this happen?
- WHO is involved?
- HOW did it happen?
- WHAT is currently being done?

Consider these follow-up questions:

- Do you have all the facts (to the best of your knowledge)?
 - If not, do you know when more information will be available?
- What other information is needed to get a more complete picture of the situation?
- Has the information been confirmed by a credible source(s) or from multiple sources?
- Is there an ongoing risk to life, property, or general safety?
- Will there be an emotional response to the situation? This may indicate the virality of the crisis. (See Step 3)

Important Note

The media may be alerted to the situation before all the facts can be confirmed. If contacted by the media before you have all the information, it is a best practice to provide a statement indicating that “We are gathering information about the situation and additional details will be provided when they are available.”

It is important not to speculate as this can create a chain of misinformation. It is also important to respond to media inquiries as quickly as possible, even if your only answer is “We will let you know when we have information.”

2) Notify and Assign Responsibility

Once a situation is identified as a potential crisis, the Crisis Management Team (CMT) should be notified. This will efficiently alert the necessary members of the CMT, as well as other stakeholders, who should be informed of the situation. Depending on the specific situation, this list may be adjusted. The CMT should be trained to contact emergency responders immediately in case of life-threatening situations, prior to working down the following list. In most instances, the list may include:

Create list of Chain of Command

Legal counsel and additional experts should also be brought in as needed.

Important Note

Even if the situation does not seem like it could attract attention from the media or the public, it is important that the CMT be informed because situations can escalate quickly.

3) Assess the Level of Crisis

Based on the level of communication required as listed in the criteria below, the CMT should determine the crisis level of the situation.

Level	Intensity Indicators
Minimally Intense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis attracts little or no attention. • Media requests information prior to the situation occurring – CMT has time to plan response. • Public and/or media are virtually unaware of crisis.
Moderate Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis situation is developing and attracting slow, but steady media coverage. • External stakeholders (cities, county, State of ND) receive media inquiries. • The public at large is aware of the situation, but it is attracting very little attention.
Intense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing attention from local and regional media. • Media contacts RRVWSP parties who are not on the Crisis Communication Team for information. • The media, RRVWSP stakeholders, and community partners are present at the site of the crisis. • Affected and potentially affected parties threaten to talk to the media.
Extreme Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media has immediate and urgent need for information about the crisis. Spokesperson may need to provide statement of empathy/caring. • Media appear on-site for live coverage. • Groups or individuals publicly express anger or outrage.

4) Develop Plan and Messaging

The Communications Director is responsible for organizing the public response to the crisis, with input from the rest of the CMT. The Communications Director and their assignee(s) are responsible for creating materials such as news releases and statements for the media, organizing news conferences, and crafting social media posts.

The Communications Director and their assignee(s), upon consultation with the CMT, should:

- Record confirmed facts that the CMT can review and approve to prevent rumors or misinterpretations from spreading within RRVWSP, to media outlets, and the public.
- Develop news release and/or talking points for spokesperson to convey key information.
- Develop or refer to a list of questions that could be asked by landowners, residents, city, county, and the state about the crisis, and develop answers in line with talking points.
- Modify pre-scripted messages or develop new messages.
- Identify the best methods to reach key audiences. Key audiences may include:
 1. Landowners
 2. Residents
 3. Consultants & Contractors
 4. City/County Leaders
 5. State Leaders
 6. Media
- Determine the appropriate channels and disseminate information as necessary. Channels could include the RRVWSP website, social media platforms, statements released to the media, news releases, news conferences.
- Respond to media inquiries and coordinate time/location of media response, interviews or press conference.
- Assist spokesperson in presenting or providing key information and answering media questions.
- Prepare to address RRVWSP's record for the relevant crisis situation, e.g., project safety, integrity, treatment of employees and contractors, etc.
- Identify main on-site contacts and provide them necessary information.
- Schedule regular updates with external stakeholders such as emergency responders, cities, counties, State of ND, etc.
- Schedule regular internal communication updates.
- Monitor crisis and update messages based on the crisis.

Important Note

Depending on the level of crisis, it is a best practice to “unschedule” social media posts, newsletters and other previously scheduled communications that may come across as out of touch, insensitive, or confusing to the public during the crisis.

5) Message Approval & Release

Once messaging is developed, it should be reviewed and approved by the following individuals:

1. Leadership - GDCCD Chair/LAWA Chair
2. Subject Matter Expert dependent on specific situation (engineering, construction, etc.)
3. Legal Counsel – GDCCD/LAWA
4. Lead Contractor if necessary

Once reviewed, the Communications Director will work with the CMT to finalize for release. Messaging may be released through a variety of methods and timeframes, depending on the crisis. In “Extreme Intensity” or “Intense Crisis”, the main statement or overarching message should come from the Communications Director and, if deemed appropriate, include a message of empathy and caring.

All messages should be coordinated with the Communications Director and channeled through the approval processes to make sure that they are in line with the overall messages and approved by the CMT before being disseminated.

6) Monitor and Provide Feedback

During and after the crisis the Communication Leader will coordinate with the CMT to:

1. Review crisis coverage:

- Identify the media outlets that have inquired about the situation.
- Review local, regional, national, and other media coverage and determine whether coverage was positive, negative, or neutral in tone.
- Conduct regular internet searches for key words, such as Red River Valley Water Supply Project, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, and words describing the incident, specific people's names who are involved, locations, etc.
- Monitor social media, blogs, comment boards or chat sites to assess public comments. Remember, all communication can be pulled for legal purposes.

2. Identify trends:

- What is the focus for the media?
- Is the focus changing?
- Are there patterns that indicate RRVWSP messages should focus on or respond to?

3. Identify public and key stakeholder issues:

- What are the major issues being addressed through the media?
- What questions or concerns are being posed?
- Incorporate lessons learned into updates to the crisis communications plan.
- During the crisis and afterward, lessons learned (e.g., what types of messages are needed, what approach the media takes to a certain type of story, what the media, public and shareholders are asking, etc.) should be noted.
- Ask friendly external stakeholders for feedback about how the RRVWSP handled the crisis to gain additional insight about what worked, what didn't, and lessons learned.

V. Crisis Follow-Up

Following the crisis, when the Project has returned to operational, the communication team should revisit actions. This will occur immediately after the crisis to accurately reflect upon the responses and timing.

- Are there any reputational issues that will require actions following the crisis? The Project communication team and leadership will need to evaluate how reputational, safety, and/or environmental messages are delivered post crisis.
- All statements, media notes and updated contacts will be updated by the crisis communication team and handed off to the Project communication team and leadership.
- A final report will be issued to the crisis team by the crisis communication team for filing and any future needs.

Evaluation Includes

1. Response Timing:

Was the Crisis Communication Team Lead notified by an appropriate person? Did the team come together in a manner that helped communicate to the crisis team, media and employees? Were the other companies involved in the situation identified quickly and the responsible parties notified in a manner that allowed them to prepare responses in a timely manner?

2. Media Response and Notification:

Was the press statement prepared within the first hour? Did the follow-up occur with the correct messages and correct people? Did the social media monitoring pull all data that was required to answer questions?

3. Staffing:

Were the correct communication people involved or are there additional resources that will be needed to manage a future situation?

4. Cooperation:

Did the other crisis team members understand the role of the communication team members? Was it clear who was doing what?

VI. Communication Tools and Tips

Communication Tools

Media Tools for Immediate Response	
<p>Newspapers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs detailed information. Must be news. Graphics and photographs can be helpful. May require subject matter experts. <p>Television</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs video, preferably active. Best with engaging spokesperson who can give interviews full of sound bites and quotes. Message must be precise. <p>Radio Talk Shows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be prepared to answer questions about many topics. Best when an engaging and trusted spokesperson. Must reinforce key talking points. Best with a spokesperson who is well-spoken, engaging, and visibly interested in the topic. <p>Radio News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information should be to the point. Best with an engaging spokesperson who can speak clearly and with inflection. <p>Facebook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A social networking site based off individual and organizational pages. <p>Direct Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive but can be effective at reaching remote audiences or audiences that are asking for specific, extensive data. Best with a subject-matter expert. Effective with targeted and specific groups. <p>Direct Mail (Post-event)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive but can be effective at reaching remote audiences. 	<p>X (Formerly Twitter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A social micro-blogging site requiring posts to be 280 characters or less. A Twitter account is useful for the Project, used to post story links to website, meeting updates, and engage with other social groups about the Project. <p>YouTube</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video sharing site that can allow or not allow comments on videos. Useful in sharing video content across other platforms. <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content posted and maintained by the organization. Hopefully the first line of information. The official location for all information related to the Project. Website includes reference documents, fact sheets, FAQs, and the ability to sign up for the newsletter. <p>Newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A direct delivery service bringing information to subscribers through email. Information is typically news or educational materials. This platform does not typically garner any response. It is a one-way flow of information to readers. <p>Magazines (Post-event)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically requires a personal aspect to the information. High-quality photos and graphics are a plus. Must have an angle.

Best Practices for Media Communication

The following are best practices for communicating with the media, whether during a crisis or a standard interview. All designated spokespeople should study and utilize these best practices. They should also be shared with any RRVWSP representatives who interact with media.

Never say, “No comment”

This sounds evasive. It is better to say, “We are currently gathering information about the situation and will get back to you once more information becomes available.” Remember to follow through and provide the requested information if/when it can be shared.

Take a Moment to Prepare

If you are not ready to speak with the media but they are present and requesting an interview, it is acceptable to ask for a few minutes to prepare. It is also okay to pause to collect your thoughts before answering a reporter’s questions.

Don’t Speculate

Only answer questions pertaining to what you know. Answer as briefly and accurately as possible. Never speculate about the cause of an incident. Reporters may try to coerce you into speculation. Don’t feel compelled to fill silences. To redirect the questioning, you may say, “I can’t speculate on that. What I do know is....” You don’t need to go into specifics, even if you’re pressured to do so. You may say, “We are currently evaluating the extent of the situation, and we will provide additional information as we learn more.”

Don’t Discuss Liability, Cause or Fault

In many cases, an investigation determines the initial reasons suspected to be the cause of an incident were not correct. The most difficult questions to answer are “why” and “how.” You may have opinions about why or how something happened, but your role is not to offer personal opinions. Always stick to confirmed information.

Nothing is “Off the Record”

Assume everything you say in front of a reporter or in a public meeting is “on the record” even if a camera is not recording. You should never tell a reporter something and request that it be “off the record.” It is entirely up to them what they report once you provide information. Don’t say something that you don’t want repeated.

Do Not Be Afraid to Ask for Clarification

A reporter may attempt to bombard you with rapid-fire questions. Feel free to decline to provide an answer if you do not know, it is fine to admit that. If it is something you feel comfortable answering after doing some research, tell the reporter that you will get back to him/her when you have time. Feel free to respond with your own questions if you want to better understand where the interview is headed. Ask questions such as, “What have you

heard?” “Can I confirm this information?” “What is this story about?” “Who else have you contacted?”

Stay Calm

If a reporter puts you on the defensive, remain calm. Don't give angry or defensive responses. Correct misinformation and get back to your key message. Remember, reporters always have the last word in the editing room so it's important to not give them any material that can be taken out of context.

“Be Human”

It can be difficult to control your emotions when tensions are running high. It is better to show some emotion through care, concern, and empathy than it is to be robotic. For this reason, interviews can sometimes be better than providing a written statement to the media, because an interview provides an opportunity to show human connection.

Find a Quiet Interview Spot

When selecting an interview location or news conference location, find a controlled area that is quiet and away from the scene of the crisis.

Stay Within Your Area of Responsibility

Only answer questions pertaining to what you know. For instance, if you are an expert on the technical side but a reporter is asking an administrative or outreach question, you should refer the reporter to someone on the team who knows more about those topics.

Instruct Staff How to Direct Media Inquiries

All media inquiries must be directed to the designated Media Liaison, Kimberly Cook, Garrison Diversion Communications Director, at the time they are received.

Kimberly Cook, Communications Director

kimberlyc@gdcd.org

701.652.5470 (cell)

Protocol for Responding to Media Requests document available in appendix.

VII. Appendix

Short text blurb explaining contents.

Templates for team

- Crisis communication checklist - One page template of steps
- Protocol for responding to media requests

DRAFT



Black & Veatch Corporation

Professional Services for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project
Under General Agreement dated January 17, 2008

Task Order GF 1.50 – 2026 Strategic Communications Services

Effective Date – January 1, 2026

Content of this Task Order (TO) is as follows:

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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (Project) will provide an emergency and supplemental water supply to central and eastern North Dakota (ND) in the event of moderate or severe drought conditions providing resiliency for the communities and economy in the Red River Valley. The Project, as envisioned by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion, Owner), will also supply additional water to support industrial development as well as provide an environmental benefit to local rivers during drought conditions by augmenting natural stream flows. The source water will be withdrawn from the McClusky Canal west of the City of McClusky, ND, treated at a nearby biota water treatment plant. A 125-mile, multi-county pipeline will then convey flows from the plant east to the Sheyenne River. Lake Ashtabula, located downstream, will provide storage allowing for controlled releases to the Red River Valley when flow augmentation is needed.
2. Professional services to develop, implement, and support the overall Project's communication program are being accomplished through the execution of annual task orders. The approach in this Task Order is similar to previous Task Orders undertaken since 2021. Black & Veatch's (Engineer's) Consultant, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC, will be primarily responsible for the execution of this Task Order working with Garrison Diversion's in-house staff.

II. TASK ORDER OBJECTIVES

1. With the RRVWSP project under construction and seeking significant funding from the State of North Dakota in the 2027 legislative session, this Task Order will assist Garrison Diversion in the development of a consistent and reliable communications strategy for project sponsors, community leaders, legislators, state leaders, and strategic partners.
2. Coordinating communications outreach during the 2026 legislative interim, which will include working with staff, LAWA, and public affairs consultants to develop messaging in support of the 2027 legislative request from the State of North Dakota.
3. Assisting Garrison Diversion staff with the efforts of education, advocacy, and outreach to provide up to date and accurate information about the Project.
4. Planning and support for events that elevate the status of Garrison Diversion and the Project, including presentations, industry conferences, and special events.
5. Tracking and reporting of project media coverage as well as quarterly newsletter and social media analytics.
6. Provide website maintenance as requested for the RRVWSP, Garrison Diversion and LAWA websites.

III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Under this Task Order, Engineer through its Consultant will provide services in accordance with the Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services dated January 17, 2008 (Agreement).
2. General Description of Activities. The Basic Services to be performed by the Engineer's Consultant consist of professional services associated with the project development and communications for the Project.
3. Work outside Basic and Special Services. Engineer through its Consultant agrees to provide the Basic Services and Special Services identified herein. Work not specifically discussed herein as part of Basic Services or Special Services is considered Additional Services. Additional Services will only be performed with proper separate authorization such as an amendment to this Task Order or a new separate Task Order.
4. Explicit Responsibilities. Basic Services and Special Services explicitly set forth the services Engineer's Consultant will perform and do not implicitly put any additional responsibilities or duties upon the Project Team and Communications Team. Deliverables to be provided are explicitly identified in the Deliverables paragraph of this Task Order.
5. Explicitly Identified Quantities. Engineer's Consultant in development of this Task Order estimates the level of effort required to provide the services discussed. Where specific information is listed as to the quantity of service to be provided, those quantities listed are considered Basic Services or Special Services and are, therefore, included in this Task Order scope of service and associated fee estimate. Services exceeding the written quantities shown below in Basic Services or Special Services are considered Additional Services.

IV. BASIC SERVICES

Basic Services of this Task Order are organized into major tasks as follows:

Communications

- Task 1 – Strategic Communications Planning and Management
- Task 2 – Content Development
- Task 3 – Graphic Design
- Task 4 – Videography
- Task 5 – Website Maintenance

1. Task 1 – Strategic Communications Planning and Management

Task 1 includes overall management of Project Development related to communications and public outreach, the strategic development of and deployment of communication efforts for various audiences, Communications Team meetings with Garrison Diversion staff, and analytics report development for the newsletter, social media, and websites.

2. Task 2 – Content Development

Task 2 includes working with Garrison Diversion staff and LAWA members to plan, coordinate, strategize, and create communications materials to be disseminated as articles, news releases, handouts, mailers, presentations, and website content to educate and engage stakeholders, end users, affected landowners, legislators, the media, and the public on key areas of the project. This includes the quarterly RRVWSP newsletter, weekly social media posts, as well as on-call communications assistance. This task includes working with Garrison Diversion staff, LAWA members, and public affairs consultants to respond to requests for information during the legislative interim, in support of the current biennium and the upcoming 2027 legislative session.

Media monitoring and strategic message development to respond to media inquiries, misinformation, and media coverage opportunities are also included in this task. Additionally, the task includes the annual costs of the Constant Contact email marketing account utilized to send the newsletter, event invitations, and other Project updates, as well as Meltwater, a program that tracks traditional media and social media sentiments about the Project, Garrison Diversion, and LAWA.

3. Task 3 – Graphic Design

Task 3 includes the development of graphic illustrations in support of the RRVWSP in presentations, maps, flyers/handouts, videos, websites, invitations, poster boards, and conference booths. This task also includes graphic design services as described above to provide an extension of staff on an on-call basis.

4. Task 4 – Videography

Task 4 includes the development of videos in support of the RRVWSP for placement on websites, presentations, social media, and the RRVWSP newsletter. This task also includes videography services as described above to provide an extension of staff on an on-call basis.

5. Task 5 – Website Maintenance

Task 5 provides on-call website maintenance services for the Garrison Diversion, Lake Agassiz Water Authority, and Red River Valley Water Supply Project sites as needed. Services include fixing issues that may develop with the three sites, as well as aiding Garrison Diversion staff with creating, removing webpages, or adding new functions to the sites on an as-needed basis. The annual cost of website hosting services and fees for the RRVWSP, Garrison Diversion, and LAWA websites is included.

V. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be furnished under this Task Order. Documents or deliverables not included in the list below will be provided as Additional Services as authorized by the Owner.

1. Quarterly newsletter creation, dissemination, and analytics reports.
2. Quarterly social media content development, scheduling on Facebook and X, as well as analytics reports.
3. Content, video, and graphics development for owned media such as website, handouts, newsletters, social media, posters/signage, and presentations.
4. Development, media relations, and promotion of earned (traditional) media.
5. Development of standardized talking points for consistent messaging by Garrison Diversion, stakeholders, community leaders, and other interested groups.
6. Hosting services and on-call website maintenance for three websites associated with the RRVWSP – Garrison Diversion, LAWA, and RRVWSP sites.

VI. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNER

1. Interim Deliverable Review Requirements. Owner commits to review periods for interim deliverables of no more than 14 calendar days after receipt of deliverables from Engineer's Consultant.
2. Provide Relevant Information. Owner agrees to provide relevant information and content regarding requirements for the various tasks. The Engineer's Consultant shall be entitled to use and rely upon all information provided by the Owner or Owner's consultants in performing services under this Task Order.

3. Advertising and Rental Fees. Owner agrees to pay directly to publication(s) or venues the fees of all public advertisements or in relation to conferences and events.

VII. FEE

The total fee for Basic Services provided under this Task Order is seventy thousand ninety-three dollars (\$70,093).

A worksheet showing the fee and level of effort by task is included in Attachment A.

VIII. PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

This scope and schedule start on January 1, 2026, with anticipated completion on or before December 31, 2026.

IX. DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services dated January 17, 2008, is incorporated by reference.
2. Attachment A – Fee Estimate Worksheets

X. ACCEPTANCE

If this satisfactorily sets forth your understanding of this Task Order, please print and sign this document. You should retain one copy for your files and return an electronic copy via email to Paul Boersma (BoersmaPM@BV.com) with Black & Veatch Corporation.

By: _____
Duane DeKrey, General Manager
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

By: _____
Paul Boersma, Associate Vice President
Black & Veatch Corporation

Dated:

Dated:

NDSU Recognizes Garrison Diversion's Partnership



Duane DeKrey accepting the partnership award with Garrison Diversion former board member Norm Haak, former board member Dennis Wendel, Director Kenny Rogers, Director Greg Bischoff, Mike Ostlie, CREC Director, and Director Brian Orn

By Kimberly Cook

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) was the proud recipient of the Partnership Award presented by North Dakota State University (NDSU) at the Oakes Irrigation Field Trials in August. Garrison Diversion has supported the Oakes Irrigation Research Site (OIRS) since it was founded in 1970.

NDSU's Partnership Award recognizes the long-term commitment between NDSU and Garrison Diversion, and its vision for supporting producers in the area.

When the OIRS was established, it was a 20-acre research site operating under a cooperative agreement between Garrison Diversion, NDSU and the Bureau of Reclamation. Garrison Diversion provided most of the financial resources and NDSU faculty and staff conducted experiments at the site. The NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center (CREC) has been administratively

responsible for implementing the research program at Oakes.

Due to the outdated nature of the site, the OIRS was in serious need of major upgrades and improvements in order to continue irrigation research at the high level expected from the site. Over the past 10 years, there has been a major effort to modernize the OIRS.

"It was a big lift to put this package together," SBARE (State Board of Agricultural Research and Education) representative Mike Clemens said.

In 2013, Garrison Diversion and the CREC set a plan in motion to update the facilities for the OIRS, and in time, for NDSU to take over full funding of the site.

A proposal was developed, which included Garrison Diversion's assistance in constructing a new building at the site, a six-year funding exit plan and passage of the land lease onto NDSU. Several individuals and agricultural organizations worked together for the improvements to



Pictured are Garrison Diversion General Manager Duane DeKrey, CREC Director Mike Ostlie, multiple Garrison Diversion former and current board members with NDSU-CREC staff.

come to fruition. New equipment was procured, additional staff was added and expanding the acreage became a reality through a generous land donation by Robert (Bob) and Elsie Titus.

The final piece of the puzzle was the construction of a new building to house offices, a research laboratory and equipment storage. Garrison Diversion committed to funding the insulated shell of the building, with NDSU completing the inside of the facility.

“This partnership is awarded to Garrison Diversion because, as a state entity, we can’t do it alone, and we need support from other entities. Everything we do is a service to our community. They have been with Oakes since the site was founded in 1970,” said Mike Ostlie, CREC director. “Garrison Diversion chose to invest in the shell of the building, which is a capstone project in the overhaul of the OIRS.”

“It’s not a stretch to say this place was on life support 10 years ago, but to now come and be in a building like this and see the crops, the research and the progress that’s been done here is totally amazing,” Garrison Diversion General Manager Duane DeKrey said. “Thank you to the



community, NDSU and a great Garrison Diversion board who believed in moving forward with this initiative. Today we’re celebrating a lot of success!”

The OIRS is a highly effective irrigation research facility in southeast North Dakota. The data procured from the OIRS has been invaluable to southeastern North Dakota and throughout the remainder of the state for over 50 years, and now, with the facility upgrades, it will continue to benefit farmers and irrigators for years to come.

Matching Recreation Grants Awarded

The enhancement of one of North Dakota's most treasured resources – our recreational opportunities – is a key initiative for Garrison Diversion, and this spring, the Recreation Committee awarded matching recreation grants to 12 projects, totaling \$282,138.

Garrison Diversion staff and directors are proud to invest in the promotion, development and enhancement of recreation facilities and opportunities within the district.

Garrison Diversion established a Matching Recreation Grant Program dedicated to returning mill-levy funds within the 28-county member district in 1990, enabling communities of all sizes to enhance their recreation facilities or develop new opportunities through this beneficial program.

The Matching Recreation Grant Program distributes 20 percent of Garrison Diversion's one-mill levy to eligible projects within the district. Projects are eligible to receive up to 25 percent of the non-federal share of the project. Garrison Diversion's Recreation Committee meets twice a year, in the spring and fall, to award money to applicants.

More than \$9 million in matching recreation grants has been awarded over the life of the program, enabling the completion of valuable recreation projects around the state. Through the years, projects have included boat ramps and docks, picnic facilities, restrooms, campgrounds, bathhouses, playground areas, and recreational trails.

The following counties received Matching Recreation Grant funds in fall 2025:

- **Barnes County** – \$15,404 to Valley City Parks and Recreation for the Chautauqua Park project; \$6,250 to the city of Rogers for the Rogers Park playground project
- **Benson County** – \$40,175 for the city of Maddock to assist with service upgrades at the Maddock Campground
- **Cass County** – \$17,000 to the Argusville Park Board to purchase playground equipment
- **Foster County** – \$9,720 to the Foster County Fair Board to purchase bleachers for the fairgrounds
- **Grand Forks County** – \$50,000 to the Grand Forks Park District for the Ryan Lake Trails and outdoor classroom
- **LaMoure County** – \$12,515 to the LaMoure Park District for the completion of the Sunset Park Swim Center's final phase
- **McLean County** – \$13,830 to the Riverdale Parks and Recreation to make improvements at the Lakeside Park Tennis Courts
- **Ransom County** – \$32,742 to the Lisbon Park District to make improvements to the Sandager Park Baseball field
- **Ward County** – \$25,729 to the Rice Lake Recreation District/Ward County Parks for the Rice Lake pickleball courts; \$50,000 to the Minot Park District to develop the South Hill Complex inclusive playground; \$8,773 to the Ward County Parks for park improvements at Old Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land disc golf

The spring deadline of March 1 is the next chance to apply for grant funds.



2025 RRVWSP Construction Progress

Crews started the 2025 construction season early thanks to a mild spring. Now they are hoping the weather will hold out this fall so they can continue pipe installation as long as possible. In 2024, construction wrapped up in November. If conditions cooperate again this year, the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) could enjoy an almost unheard of seven-month construction season. As of mid-October, 28 miles of the 125-mile buried pipeline are in the ground.

“We are making good progress,” says Kip Kovar, deputy program manager for RRVWSP Engineering and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District engineer. “We currently have 33 miles of pipeline under contract to construct, plus more than 40 miles of shovel-ready pipeline installation.

Carstensen Contracting Inc. focused on contracts 5D and 6A this year. Contract 5D includes 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek

in western Foster County and eastern Wells County while Contract 6A involves the installation of a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County. So far, 9.2 miles are installed on 5D and 2.0 miles are in on 6A.

Meanwhile, Garney Construction worked on land restoration, structure build out, hydrostatic testing, and soil haul off for Contract 5B, east of Carrington, where the entire nine-mile stretch of pipeline is in the ground. Oscar Renda Contracting installed 6.3 miles on the eight-mile Contract 5C pipeline thus far.

When the RRVWSP transmission pipeline is complete, it will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River, about six miles south of Cooperstown. The Missouri River intake pumping station wet well, intake screen structure, and tunnel are complete. The outfall discharge structure on the Sheyenne River is also already constructed.

Aerial view of Contract 6A in Foster County, where Carstensen Contracting is installing a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County.





Garrison Diversion General Manager Looks Back on 10 Years of Progress

The past 10 years have flown by according to Duane DeKrey. This year marks a decade since his promotion to general manager of Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion). Over the past decade, Garrison Diversion has seen a lot of success, especially with the beginning of construction on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) and a drought mitigation project co-sponsored by Garrison Diversion and the Lake Agassiz Water Authority.

“I feel extremely lucky to be sitting in the general manager chair currently. I think back to some of the previous managers, who became North Dakota Water Hall of Fame awardees, who had the same dreams and goals of fulfilling the promise of water to central and eastern North Dakota,” DeKrey says. “They worked just as hard and, in many ways, laid the foundation that I have been able to capitalize on to get the Red River Valley Water Supply Project started.”

Prior to working for Garrison Diversion, DeKrey served in the North Dakota House and Senate for 20 years and served on the Natural Resources Committee where he became more familiar with Garrison Diversion. “When members of the Garrison Diversion board of directors asked me to put in an application for the general manager position, I thought it would be a very good fit. I was a project engineer in the North Dakota National Guard for many years, which I believed would be valuable for the management of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project,” DeKrey says.

Garrison Diversion’s mission to provide a reliable, high-quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota resonated with DeKrey because he grew up on a farm without an adequate supply of water. The work of Garrison Diversion was well known in North Dakota at that time due to the high-profile Garrison Diversion Unit (GDU) effort that was underway. The GDU included plans to provide municipal and industrial water, fish and wildlife development, recreation opportunities, flood control, and irrigation of 250,000 acres.

“As a young boy, Garrison Diversion was in the news just about every day – from the all-out effort of North Dakota lawmakers at home and in DC trying to get the full promise of the project out of the federal government and environmental struggles with Canada to low commodity prices and over-production at the time which made all the irrigation seem irresponsible. I always felt any project that relieves a water shortage should be pursued,” DeKrey explains.

Though the GDU concept was not fully realized, the RRVWSP began to take shape around the turn of the century. Five years into DeKrey’s tenure as general manager, construction on the state portion of the RRVWSP began.

“The biggest accomplishment of the last 10 years is getting the federal government to approve a record of decision (ROD) on the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply (ENDAWS), which made the project eligible for federal funds,” DeKrey says. “This enabled us to use the McClusky Canal for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. It will save the taxpayers and project users a minimum of \$280 million in construction costs. That is in addition to federal funding for the project.”

Federal approval of the McClusky Canal as an alternate bulk water supply for the RRVWSP allows the long-underutilized federal asset to be developed for municipal and industrial water supply, which is an authorized purpose of the original GDU feature. When construction is completed on the RRVWSP, a buried transmission pipeline will span from the McClusky Canal to the





discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River. Ultimately, the RRVWSP is projected to provide an emergency and supplemental water supply to nearly half of North Dakota's population, from the central part of the state to the Red River Valley. It is projected to be completed in 2032.

"Beyond the Red River Valley Water Supply, Garrison Diversion continues to benefit the state of North Dakota. We facilitate 8,000 acres of irrigation and our staff operates and maintains Garrison Diversion Unit facilities. We're just finishing up a six-year \$16 million repair of the McClusky Canal," DeKrey says. "Garrison Diversion has provided over \$300 million over the last 25 years to water projects in North Dakota with our partner, the North Dakota Department of Water Resources." Garrison Diversion has

also provided \$9.2 million via matching recreation grants throughout the 28-county conservancy district. It also provides grants for residents to hook up to rural water and assists cities with emergency water system repairs.

Though he doesn't have a retirement date in sight, DeKrey does have a few goals he would like to reach before he wraps up his career. "My goals for the end of my tenure are to see the Red River Valley Water Supply Project progress as far as possible and fully investigate the potential title transfer of the rest of the Garrison Diversion Unit facilities from the Bureau of Reclamation to Garrison Diversion. Ultimately, I want to leave Garrison Diversion with a cohesive group of people who will have no problem continuing the organization's mission."



Top O' the Day Tee-Off Celebrates 21 Years of Supporting Water Education Foundation

For over 20 years, the North Dakota Water Education Foundation (NDWEF), in partnership with the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, has proudly hosted the annual Top O' the Day Tee-Off at CrossRoads Golf Course in Carrington, N.D.

This exciting event raises funds for the Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship Endowment, which honors two of North Dakota's most influential water leaders – Russell Dushinske and Warren Jamison – recognized for their distinguished service, visionary leadership, and lifelong commitment to water development across the state.

Each year, four \$1,500 scholarships are awarded to students attending a North Dakota college or university whose families have played an active role in state water resource management.

This year's scramble featured 145 golfers on a beautiful summer day. Participants competed for top finishes and prizes, while enjoying contests and giveaways provided by 19 generous sponsors who helped make the day memorable.

The event concluded with a dinner and awards ceremony at the CrossRoads clubhouse, where the first-, third-, and 21st-place teams were recognized, along with winners of various hole contests.



With a tournament-best score of 54, the team of Wayne, Jayden and Grady Shipman and Steve Erickson claimed first place and earned well-deserved bragging rights.

The third-place team, comprised of Bob Gustafson, Steve Bietz, Chuck Mischel and Dean Glatt scored a 56, and the 21st-place team of Joe Zauner, Duane DeKrey, Cory Chorne and Representative Don Vigesaa, scored a 66.

Hole contests scattered on the course provided a bit of additional friendly competition for the day. The lucky winners are as follows:

- Men's Shortest Drive – Seth Zink
- Closest to Pin 2nd Shot – Arick Scherr
- Women's Longest Drive – Betsy Seaver
- Chipping Contest (sponsored by Burian & Associates) – Chris Harris
- Men's Longest Drive – Tanner Sperling
- Luck of the Draw (sponsored by Vogel Law) – Tom Erdmann
- Closest to Pin 2nd Shot – Hayden Schmitz
- Women's Shortest Drive – Gail Roberts
- How Many Tees Guess (sponsored by ND Irrigation Association) – Dan Perez
- Longest Putt – Taylen Mehning
- Putting Contest (sponsored by Apex Engineering Group) – Alex Belquist

A genuine thank you goes to the generous sponsors of the 21st Top O' the Day Tee-Off, as their participation is vital to the success of the scramble. Many of these sponsors also provided door prizes or games of chance out on the course.

Thanks to the continued support of sponsors, golfers, and the community, the legacy of Dushinske and Jamison continues to inspire and empower the next generation of water leaders in North Dakota.

- Advanced Engineering & Environmental Services, LLC
- AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company
- Apex Engineering Group
- Bank Forward/Insure Forward
- Bartlett & West
- Besette Motors
- Black & Veatch
- Burian & Associates, LLC
- Carstensen Contracting, Inc.
- Dakota Central
- Dwyer Law Office
- First International Bank & Trust
- Gate City Bank – Carrington and Jamestown
- ND Irrigation Association
- ND Rural Water Systems Association
- Oscar Renda Contracting
- David & Connie Sprynczynatyk
- Ulteig
- Vogel Law Firm

Jay Anderson Elected to the NWRA Board of Directors

Jay Anderson, Chairman of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District board, has been elected to an individual member seat on the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) board of directors. The election took place during NWRA's Summer Conference in Park City, Utah, last July.

In his new role, Anderson will represent the state of North Dakota and serve in an advisory capacity on water policy issues at both the state and federal levels. His appointment underscores North Dakota's commitment to advancing water resource management and ensuring a strong voice in national discussions.

Anderson brings decades of experience in water and agriculture to the position. He has served on the Garrison Diversion board since 2013 and currently leads as chairman. His leadership has been instrumental in projects such as the Red River Valley Water Supply Project, which aims to secure long-term water solutions for the region.

"It is an honor to be elected to the board and to be involved in the organization supporting and shaping national water policy," Anderson says. "My background in the North Dakota water industry has prepared me to advocate effectively for the interests of state and local water users, and I look forward to helping drive meaningful progress."

The NWRA board of directors comprises representatives from across the country who collaborate to promote responsible water resource policy and infrastructure development. Anderson joins other individual members and state representatives in shaping the future of water management nationwide.

Jay's term runs through the end of December 2025, with the seat up for election for a full two-year term at the NWRA Annual Conference in November.



Jay Anderson

For more information:
 Kimberly Cook
kimberlyc@gdcd.org

Garrison Diversion Matching Recreation Grant Program Awarded \$282,138

CARRINGTON, ND - The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) Recreation Committee recently met and awarded matching recreation grants to 12 projects, totaling \$282,138.

"Garrison Diversion's Matching Recreation Grant Program is an immeasurable benefit for participating communities," says committee Chairman Bruce Klein. "We are always happy to help out with so many deserving recreation projects."

The following counties received Matching Recreation Grant funds in the fall of 2025:

- **Barnes County** –\$15,404 to Valley City Parks & Recreation for the Chautauqua Park project; \$6,250 to the City of Rogers for the Rogers Park playground project
- **Benson County** – \$40,175 for the City of Maddock to assist with service upgrades at the Maddock Campground
- **Cass County** - \$17,000 to the Argusville Park Board to purchase playground equipment
- **Foster County** - \$9,720 to the Foster County Fair Board to purchase bleachers for the fairgrounds
- **Grand Forks County** - \$50,000 to the Grand Forks Park District for the Ryan Lake Trails and outdoor classroom
- **LaMoure County** - \$12,515 to the LaMoure Park District for the completion of the Sunset Park Swim Center's final phase
- **McLean County** - \$13,830 to the Riverdale Parks & Recreation to make improvements at the Lakeside Park Tennis Courts
- **Ransom County** - \$32,742 to the Lisbon Park District to make improvements to the Sandager Park Baseball field
- **Ward County** - \$25,729 to the Rice Lake Recreation District/Ward County Parks for the Rice Lake pickleball courts; \$50,000 to the Minot Park District to develop the South Hill Complex inclusive playground; \$8,773 to the Ward County Parks for park improvements at Old Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land disc golf

The spring deadline, March 1, is the next chance to apply for grant funds.

For additional information regarding the Matching Recreation Grant Program, please visit www.garrisondiversion.org, or contact Garrison Diversion at 701.652.3194.

For more information:
 Kimberly Cook
kimberlyc@gdcd.org

For Immediate Release:

Garrison Diversion Awards \$65,694 in Water Supply Assistance Grants

CARRINGTON, ND (August 26, 2025) --- The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

"Rural water enhances the quality of life for North Dakotans and strengthens our communities," said MR&I Committee Chair Larry Kassian. "Garrison Diversion is proud to support this vital program and contribute to the well-being of our district."

In August, the MR&I Committee awarded a program high \$65,694 to eight rural water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

- **Barnes Rural Water District** - \$5,900 for one customer hookup
- **Central Plains Water District** - \$4,213 for one customer hookup
- **East Central Regional Water District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup
- **South Central Regional Water District** - \$16,281 for two customer hookups
- **Southeast Water Users District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup
- **Stutsman Rural Water District** - \$19,300 for two customer hookups

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is **May 1**, although emergency requests are considered as needed. There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects for municipalities, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less. Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.

Minot, Ward County parks receive Garrison Diversion grants

Rice Lake Recreation District, Ward County Parks and Minot Park District are among recipients of funds for park improvements from Garrison Diversion's Matching Recreation Grant Program. The Garrison Conservancy District's Recreation Committee announced matching recreation grants to 12 projects, totaling \$282,138.

The awards included \$25,729 to Rice Lake Recreation District/Ward County Parks for the Rice Lake pickleball courts; \$50,000 to Minot Park District to develop the South Hill Complex inclusive playground; and \$8,773 to Ward County Parks for park improvements at Old

Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land disc golf. The park improvements include trash containers at Old Settlers Park in Burlington and new picnic tables at Old Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land, which is the disc golf area next to Old Settlers.

Among other grants are \$40,175 for the City of Maddock to assist with service upgrades at the Maddock Campground; \$9,720 to the Foster County Fair Board to purchase bleachers for the fairgrounds; and \$13,830 to Riverdale Parks & Recreation to make improvements at the Lakeside Park tennis courts.

— MDN STAFF

ALERT TOP STORY

Burleigh County begins process to withdraw from Garrison Diversion

Zachary Weiland 14 hrs ago 0

Burleigh County has officially begun the process to leave the **Garrison Diversion Conservancy District**, setting in motion a process that could be lengthy and may ultimately land in court.

On Monday, the County Commission narrowly passed a resolution to petition for the county's removal from the district. Commissioners that supported the move say the county pays more than what it receives from the district. One commissioner against the move said comparing the county's membership in that way is unfair.

"The money we (pay) to the district, we're comparing that with what we receive monetarily," Commissioner Jerry Woodcox said. "I think that's the wrong attitude."



Members of the Burleigh County Commission in May 2025. From left to right are Jerry Woodcox, Wayne Munson, Brian Bitner, Steve Bakken and Steve Schwab.

ZACHARY WEILAND, TRIBUNE

Commission Chair Brian Bitner and Commissioners Steve Bakken and Steve Schwab supported the move. Commissioners Wayne Munson and Woodcox dissented.



With the vote, the petition will now go to the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Board of Directors. The board will decide whether to accept it. If denied, the county may appeal the decision to district court, according to [state law](#).

In a statement to the Tribune, Garrison Diversion General Manager Duane DeKrey said the district will follow the legal process for holding a hearing and determining the petition's merits. A hearing date has not been discussed because the district has not yet received the petition, he said.

"Garrison Diversion has been engaging in discussions with Burleigh County to provide further information on the water supply, recreation, irrigation, economic development, water funding and water leadership benefits that accrue from being part of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District," DeKrey said.

The district was created in 1955 by the state Legislature to manage the **Garrison Unit Project**, which diverts water from the Missouri River to other parts of the state. There are 28 counties in the district, and each is responsible for levying one mill of property tax to support the district. Burleigh County has been a member since 1988.

Commissioners for the past two budget cycles have considered leaving the district as they look for ways to trim what they view as unnecessary spending. Already, the Commission has **ended a joint powers agreement** with Bismarck Parks and Recreation that funds riverfront amenities as part of those cuts. The County Commission also has routinely clashed with Bismarck officials over public health funding.

In October, the Commission asked Burleigh County State’s Attorney Julie Lawyer to draft a resolution and petition to withdraw from the district. In the petition, the county argues it has not been “sufficiently benefited” from being a member of the district.

According to the petition, the county has paid around \$9.9 million in property taxes to the district since joining, while only receiving around \$825,500 in grants between 1993 and 2022. The county says the one-mill tax rate will likely produce another \$9.6 million over the next decade which is “likely not enough of a return on the investment to warrant a whole or in part benefit to Burleigh County, based on previous benefits.”

While the county has always been obligated to pay one mill of property taxes to the district, the dollar value of that mill has changed over the years because of increased property values. County Auditor Mark Splonskowski said the value of a mill in 1989 — the first full year the county was a member of the district — was \$58,200. The county in 2026 will pay \$736,900.

Bakken said the Commission needs to take into consideration how the value of the mill has increased and the burden it has placed on county taxpayers.

“When it comes to budget time, we all sharpen the pencil and cut as much as we can,” Bakken said. “For us not to look at this, we’re not doing Burleigh County residents a service.”

In the petition, the county also argues it has not benefited from being in the district because many of the grants awarded fall outside the district’s “original intent” when it was created. The district operates the **Matching Recreation Grant Program**, which dedicates 20% of the district’s tax levy for recreational facilities such as playgrounds, walking paths and campgrounds.

During a November meeting, Schwab said he objects to the district collecting money from the county and giving it out in grants — something the county itself does not have the legal authority to do.

“We don’t approve the grants. We don’t know where the hell this money’s gone,” he said.

Tami Norgard, an attorney for Garrison Diversion, said the district is legally authorized to award grants and has dedicated funding for them. She added that Burleigh County could secure more funding by collaborating with the district on matching-grant opportunities.

“It’s not up to Garrison to say, ‘What can we do in Burleigh County?’” she said. “It’s up to people in Burleigh County or entities to come to us and say, ‘We have this great idea. We’d love to have some funding for it. Can you help us with design work? Can you get your engineers to help us? Can you help us develop a plan to facilitate it?’”

Woodcox, who once supported leaving the district but later changed course, said the county benefits from the district in ways beyond direct dollars, including its lobbying for state and federal funding for major water projects.

“You got to look beyond the money. And that’s what I’m hanging my hat on,” he said.

Reach Zachary Weiand at 701-250-8264 or zachary.weiand@bismarcktribune.com.

Minot Daily News

[Minot, Ward County parks receive Garrison Diversion grants | News, Sports, Jobs - Minot Daily News](#) Dec 3, 2025

Minot, Ward County parks receive Garrison Diversion grants

Rice Lake Recreation District, Ward County Parks and Minot Park District are among recipients of funds for park improvements from Garrison Diversion's Matching Recreation Grant Program. The Garrison Conservancy District's Recreation Committee announced matching recreation grants to 12 projects, totaling \$282,138.

The awards included \$25,729 to Rice Lake Recreation District/Ward County Parks for the Rice Lake pickleball courts; \$50,000 to Minot Park District to develop the South Hill Complex inclusive playground; and \$8,773 to Ward County Parks for park improvements at Old Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land disc golf. The park improvements include trash containers at Old Settlers Park in Burlington and new picnic tables at Old Settlers, Eastside Estates and No Man's Land, which is the disc golf area next to Old Settlers.

Among other grants are \$40,175 for the City of Maddock to assist with service upgrades at the Maddock Campground; \$9,720 to the Foster County Fair Board to purchase bleachers for the fairgrounds; and \$13,830 to Riverdale Parks & Recreation to make improvements at the Lakeside Park tennis courts.



[Garrison Diversion recreation committee awards grants to Barnes, Foster and LaMoure counties - Jamestown Sun | News, weather, sports from Jamestown North Dakota](#)

Garrison Diversion recreation committee awards grants to Barnes, Foster and LaMoure counties

They were among 12 counties receiving funds.

CARRINGTON, N.D. — The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) Recreation Committee recently met and awarded matching recreation grants to 12 projects totaling \$282,138.

"Garrison Diversion's Matching Recreation Grant Program is an immeasurable benefit for participating communities," said committee Chairman Bruce Klein. "We are always happy to help out with so many deserving recreation projects."

The following counties in the Jamestown region were among those receiving Matching Recreation Grant funds in the fall of 2025:

- Barnes County: \$15,404 to Valley City Parks & Recreation for the Chautauqua Park project; \$6,250 to the City of Rogers for the Rogers Park playground project
- Foster County - \$9,720 to the Foster County Fair Board to purchase bleachers for the fairgrounds
- LaMoure County - \$12,515 to the LaMoure Park District for the completion of the Sunset Park Swim Center's final phase

Grants were also awarded in Benson, Cass, Grand Forks, McLean, Ransom and Ward counties.

The spring deadline, March 1, is the next chance to apply for grant funds.

For additional information regarding the Matching Recreation Grant Program, visit www.garrisondiversion.org , or contact Garrison Diversion at 701-652-3194.

Ken Royse Letter to Editor – Bismarck
Tribune 11-14-25

County should support Garrison Diversion

Recently the Burleigh County Commission started an action to withdraw from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District. This is not a well advised action.

Garrison plays a valuable role in water development in our State. The District was instrumental in the passage of the Dakota Water Resource Act of 2000, which provided \$632.5M of federal funds to water projects of our State. Garrison was also instrumental in the establishment of the State funding programs, which for this past biennium alone, has dedicated over \$600M for statewide water development projects.

Are you a resident of Bismarck or Wilton, or Wing, or any of

the other communities of our County? If so, then thank Garrison for their leadership in the water funding programs our State now has available. The City of Bismarck itself has identified near \$200M of funding needs for this biennium from programs that exists largely due to support of Garrison and other water groups.

Do you receive your water from the South-Central Regional Water District? If so, you again should be aware of the good work done by Garrison in the support of programs that has made that possible.

Do you enjoy the recreation, fishing and boating on the river and of Lakes Sacajawea and Oahe? Again, thanks is due to Garrison for their efforts in pursuing programs which allow and encourage such activities.

Are you aware of aggressive downstream State efforts to deplete our River and limit North Dakota use of the river? If you are, then you would be aware and appreciate the efforts of Garrison to safeguard our use and access of that water.

To our County Commissioners. Please reconsider this action; please allow Burleigh County to continue to have a local voice in water development funding and programs which affect our entire State.

Ken Royse, Bismarck



Zeke Lee, legislative director for the National Association of Counties, sits next to Barbara Frydenlund, administrator of Rolette County Public Health, during a panel discussion in Bismarck.

*Bismarck Tribune
10-28-25*

\$1.1 billion water project sees progress

Red River Valley
Water Supply Project
work is in fourth year

APRIL BAUMGARTEN
The Forum

FARGO — A pipeline project that will bring water from central North Dakota to the Red River Valley is 20% complete.

Crews have finished 27 miles of the 125-mile Red River Valley Water Supply Project after construction started in 2021, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District General Manager Duane DeKrey told The Forum. The project is on track to make its 2032 deadline, he said.

"I think it's going pretty good," he said of the project's progress. "We still think we are on a 10-year build track."

The \$1.1 billion project will have water flowing from the Missouri River through the pipeline along State Highway 200 to the Sheyenne River at Cooperstown, about 65 miles northeast of Jamestown. The Sheyenne feeds into the Red River north of Fargo.

During phase one, engineers will use the McClusky Canal, about 60 miles northeast of Bismarck, to funnel Missouri River water to the pipeline. A second phase will connect



CONTRIBUTED, GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

The outlet structure for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project will empty water carried by pipeline and canal from the Missouri River into the Sheyenne River, which flows into the Red River, south of Cooperstown.

Please see **WATER**, Page A4

early Saturday.

The incident happened around 3 a.m. on Eighth Street Southwest near a golf

state and serve as liaisons between the department and the public.

Meetings begin Tuesday

information, go to <https://visionzero.nd.gov/>.

— Bismarck Tribune staff reports

Water

From A3

the pipeline directly to the Missouri River near Washburn, about 40 miles southwest of McClusky.

Climatologists forecast the Red River Valley could see a 1930s-style drought by 2050, DeKrey said. The Red River had zero flow for five months during one year of the decade-long drought, he said.

"If we had a '30s-style drought now, we would really be in big trouble trying to get water to the eastern side of the state," he said.

Such a drought could cost the area \$33 billion in economic impact over a decade, he said. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project also likely would have been used at least once each decade since 1950 to help battle drought conditions, he said.

Local, state and federal leaders are working to secure funding for the project. North Dakota has agreed to

cover up to 75% of the funding.

That leaves the rest to local residential and commercial water users. U.S. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., is working to secure \$454 million in federal funds for the project.

That money could come in partial payments as Congress approves its annual budget, he said. This year, efforts to secure funds were halted by the federal government shutdown, Hoeven said.

Democrats and Republicans have failed to reach a budget agreement, resulting in the shutdown that began Oct. 1. Lawmakers are still working on a water appropriation bill in committee, Hoeven said.

Once out of the shutdown, Congress can work to pass a water infrastructure bill, he said.

"That's one that we're still working on, but obviously it's been impeded by the government shutdown," he said.

DeKrey said he is working with Hoeven to try to get part of the \$1 billion dedicated to water infrastructure funds in President Donald Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" to help contribute to some of the \$454 million.

"I think there is better than a 50/50 chance that we'll be able to get some federal funds," DeKrey said.

The North Dakota Legislature this year approved \$205 million for the project for the 2025-27 biennium, which DeKrey said could cover another 25 miles of pipeline, depending on how bidding goes.

The Red River Valley's population will continue to see significant growth, which will require more water for homes, businesses and agriculture, Hoeven said. The area is a dynamic region not just for North Dakota and Minnesota, but for the country, as well, he said.

"There's no question that there's going to be a need for more water," he said.

economies are seeing some strains. In Cass County, home to Fargo, the Veterans Service Office has seen slowdowns in getting veterans appointments, County Administrator Robert Wilson said. He attributed this to the Department of Government Efficiency efforts at the beginning of the year. Thousands of Veterans Affairs workers have left their jobs this year.

It's not just social services. Up until early 2025, Cass County received daily assessments on cyber threats, Wilson said. Those have since gone away.

"It probably takes about half a day for a (cyber threat) to run across the state if we don't have a good security posture," Wilson said.

There has been some talk about Congress providing funding to specific programs, but that would not fix the overall issue, according to Zeke Lee, legislative director at the National Association of Counties.

"There's blood on both sides, no one wins, and counties still have to provide those services," he said.

Reach Joey Harris at 701-250-8252 or joseph.harris@bismarcktribune.com.

Burleigh County wants out of Garrison Diversion District

Burleigh County wants to leave Garrison Diversion District

By [Zachary Weiland](#)

Burleigh County is taking steps to withdraw from the [Garrison Diversion Conservancy District](#), with commissioners saying the move could save residents money by cutting a tax they see as unbeneficial.

The County Commission voted 3-1 on Monday to direct State's Attorney Julie Lawyer to draft a letter of intent for the county to withdraw from the district. Commissioners said the county pays more than what it benefits from its membership in the district, which works to ensure water supply needs are met in North Dakota.

"We're not getting much of a return on the money we're giving them," Commissioner Steve Schwab said. "That kind of money should be going into the economy, not to what I feel is a scam outfit right now."

Commission Chair Brian Bitner and Commissioners Steve Bakken and Schwab supported the move. Commissioner Wayne Munson opposed it, and Commissioner Jerry Woodcox was absent.

County Commissioners for the past two budget cycles have considered leaving the district as they look for ways to trim what they consider unnecessary spending. Earlier this month, commissioners [voted to end a joint powers agreement](#) with Bismarck Parks and Recreation that funds riverfront amenities as part of those cuts. They also have routinely clashed with Bismarck officials over public health funding.

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District was created in 1955 by the state Legislature to manage the [Garrison Unit Project](#), which diverts water from the Missouri River to other parts of the state. Much of this water is then used for irrigation or water supply through the state's [Municipal, Rural and Industrial Water Supply Program](#).

The district also operates the [Matching Recreation Grant Program](#), which dedicates 20% of the district's tax levy for recreational facilities such as playgrounds, walking paths and campgrounds.

There are 28 counties in the district, and each is responsible for levying one mill of property tax to support the district. Burleigh County has been a member since 1988.

Commissioners say the main reason for leaving is financial. They argue that Burleigh County residents pay far more into the district than the county receives in return. Withdrawing, they said, would eliminate the district's property tax levy -- about \$736,900 in this year's budget - - and provide residents with a tax break.

County Auditor Mark Splonskowski on Monday said political subdivisions in Burleigh County received about \$825,500 from the district between 1993 and 2022. In comparison, the county has levied about \$9.9 million in property taxes since joining the district and is projected to collect another \$9.6 million over the next decade.

"That's the conservative number. It'd probably end up higher than that," Splonskowski said.

Garrison Diversion officials have defended the district's value in Burleigh County. During a Commission meeting in October 2024, Burleigh County Director for Garrison Diversion Larry Kassian said the district maintains the McClusky Canal, about 8 miles of which moves through northern Burleigh County. The district also maintains recreational facilities on the Chain of Lakes -- a group of four lakes along the canal.

He added that some farmers in Burleigh County benefit from irrigation along the canal.

"Garrison diversion assists farmers with developing irrigation along the canal. We would like to irrigate all the land along the canal," he said. "We just work with the farmers and help out the best we can."

Leaving the district will require the Commission to pass a resolution directing the county auditor and commission chair to file a petition with the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Board of Directors.

The petition must outline the specific reasons the county believes it has not benefited from membership in the district. The board will then decide whether to accept the petition. If the petition is denied, the county may appeal the decision to state district court.

Lawyer said she will work with Splonskowski and Schwab to have a draft ready in time for the Commission's next regular meeting scheduled for Nov. 3.



\$1.1 billion Red River Valley Water Supply Project more than 20% complete

The pipeline could help a 1930s-style drought, which could hit the Red River Valley by 2050, experts say.



The outlet structure for the Red River Valley Supply Project will empty water carried by pipeline and canal from the Missouri River into the Sheyenne River, which flows into the Red River, south of Cooperstown, North Dakota.

Contributed / Garrison Diversion Conservancy District



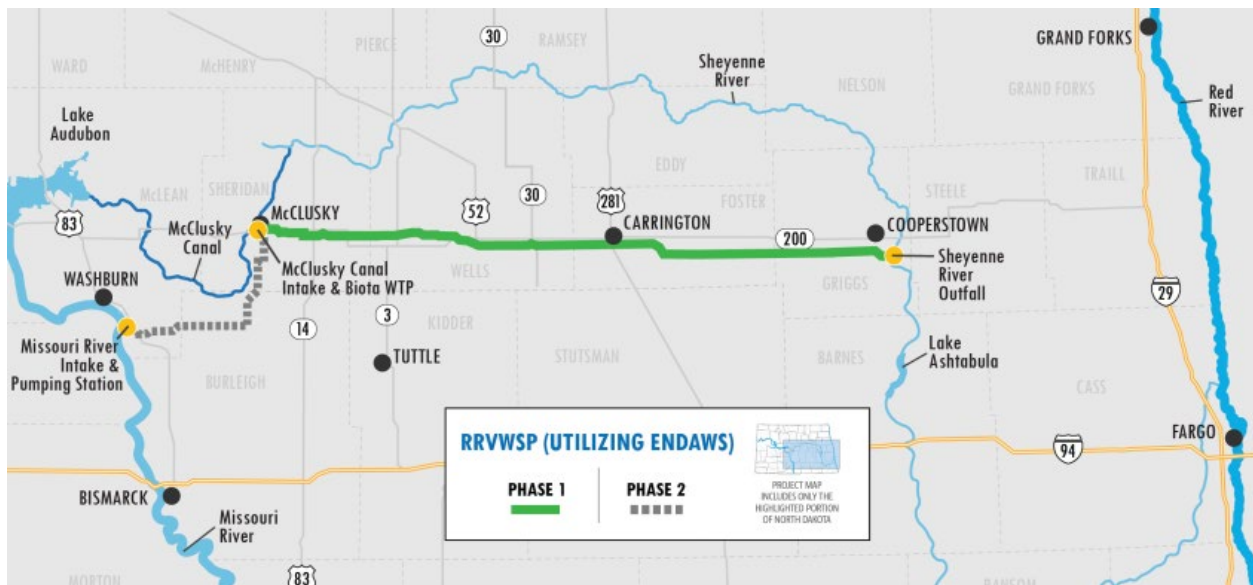
By [April Baumgarten](#)

October 20, 2025 at 5:45 AM

FARGO — A pipeline project that will bring water from central North Dakota to the Red River Valley is 20% complete.

Crews have finished 27 miles of the 125-mile [Red River Valley Water Supply Project](#) after construction started in 2021, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District General Manager Duane DeKrey told The Forum. The project is on track to make its 2032 deadline, he said.

“I think it’s going pretty good,” he said of the project’s progress. “We still think we are on a 10-year build track.”



Map of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

Contributed / Red River Valley Water Supply Project

The \$1.1 billion project will have water flowing from the Missouri River through the pipeline along State Highway 200 to the Sheyenne River at Cooperstown, about 65 miles northeast of Jamestown. The Sheyenne feeds into the Red River north of Fargo.

During phase one, engineers will use the McClusky Canal, about 60 miles northeast of Bismarck, to funnel Missouri River water to the pipeline. A second phase will connect the pipeline directly to the Missouri River near Washburn, about 40 miles southwest of McClusky.

Climatologists forecast the Red River Valley could see a 1930s-style drought by 2050, DeKrey said. The Red River had zero flow for five months during one year of the decade-long drought, he said.

“If we had a ’30s-style drought now, we would really be in big trouble trying to get water to the eastern side of the state,” he said.

Such a drought could cost the area \$33 billion in economic impact over a decade, he said. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project also likely would have been used at least once each decade since 1950 to help battle drought conditions, he said.

Local, state and federal leaders are working to secure funding for the project. North Dakota has agreed to cover up to 75% of the funding.

That leaves the rest to local residential and commercial water users. U.S. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., is working to secure \$454 million in federal funds for the project.



North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven speaks in August in north Fargo.

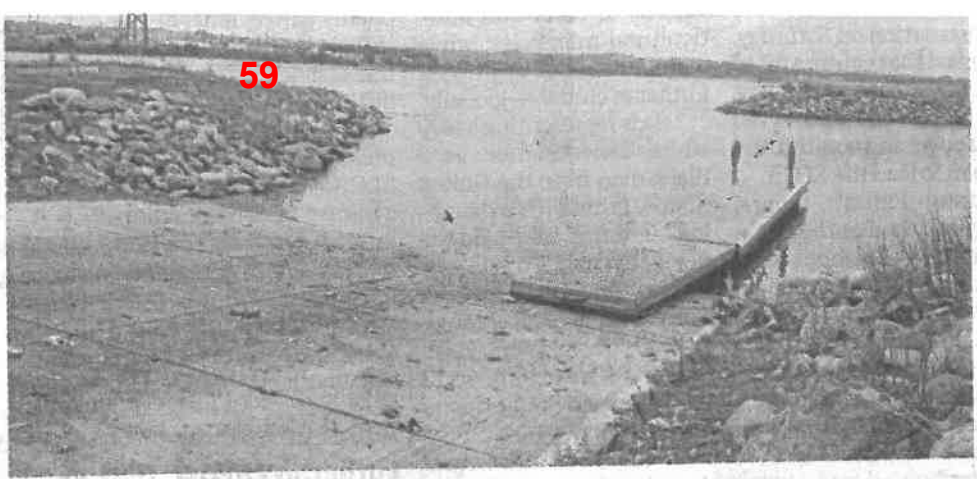
Alyssa Goelzer / Forum file photo

That money could come in partial payments as Congress approves its annual budget, he said. This year, efforts to secure funds were halted by the federal government shutdown, Hoeven said.

Democrats and Republicans have failed to reach a budget agreement, resulting in the shutdown that began Oct. 1. Lawmakers are still working on a water appropriation bill in committee, Hoeven said.

Once out of the shutdown, Congress can work to pass a water infrastructure bill, he said.

“That’s one that we’re still working on, but obviously it’s been impeded by the government shutdown,” he said.



TANNER ECKER, TRIBUNE

The Kniefel Boat Landing on the Missouri River.

Bismarck Tribune
10-8-25

County to end decadeslong tax deal with city Park District

ZACHARY WEIAND
Bismarck Tribune

A decadeslong partnership that helped fund riverfront amenities in Bismarck will end next year after the Burleigh County Commission voted to dissolve a joint powers agreement with the city's Park District.

The Commission on Monday voted 3-2 to end the arrangement, which directs 0.65 mills in property taxes each year to Bismarck Parks and Recreation for riverfront improvements. Commissioners who supported the change said the Park District should levy its own taxes while those opposed argued the



Klipfel

agreement has been good for both governments. The agreement will end at the close of 2026.

Commission Chair Brian Bitner and Commissioners Steve Bakken and Steve Schwab voted to end the agreement. Commissioners Jerry Woodcox and Wayne

Munson dissented. Munson, while casting his vote, said he was "absolutely" a no.

Please see **BURLEIGH**, Page B2

Shutdown could stall disaster aid for ND

MARY STEURER
North Dakota Monitor

North Dakota won't get federal disaster relief for communities affected by the June 20-21 storms until after the government shutdown ends, according to the state Department of Emergency Services.

President Donald Trump last month approved Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster relief to help communities damaged by the severe weather repair and replace public infra-

structure. The storms included several tornadoes, as well as large hail and heavy wind, which caused significant damage to the state's agricultural industry.

The state will not be reimbursed for any damages while the shutdown is ongoing, but officials will continue working on reimbursement requests to submit to the federal government in the meantime, DES told the North Dakota Monitor.

Please see **SHUTDOWN**, Page B2



DAN KOECK, FOR

A tornado on June 20, 2025, bent signs and destroyed shelterbelt along N.D. Highway 46, about 3 miles e Enderlin.

Burleigh

From B1

"Personally, I like the process. I have no issue with it. I know the money is being well spent on those Park District properties along the river," Munson said. He holds the County Parks portfolio and is a former member of the Bismarck Park Board.

Monday's decision comes as county officials look for ways to trim spending they deem unnecessary. Commissioners have also considered removing the county from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District — which works to ensure water supply needs are met in North Dakota — and have pushed back against Bismarck officials over public health funding.

The joint powers agreement dates to 1998, when the County Commission agreed to levy 1 mill from Bismarck residents only. Since then, the agreement has been changed so the county only collects 0.65 mills, equal to about \$356,025 in the county's 2026 budget. The funding has supported facilities along the Missouri River

owned by the city, Burleigh County or Bismarck Parks, such as Sibley Park, according to a Commission memo.

Bismarck Parks and Recreation Executive Director Kevin Klipfel said the Park District likely won't see major impacts to its finances or operations from the agreement's cancellation. He said the district will review possible adjustments to replace the lost funding when budget discussions begin next spring.

"I think it was a beneficial agreement for all the citizens of Bismarck and Burleigh County, and we're disappointed to see that it's canceled," Klipfel said.

The Commission has been considering leaving the agreement for the last few years. During last year's budget cycle, the Commission discussed withdrawing from the arrangement to reduce spending in the 2025 budget but ultimately was forced to keep the funding because the agreement requires a one-year notice before termination.

The issue was revisited during this year's budget discussions but ran into the same obstacle as it had not yet provided the Park District with the required

notice.

Bitner said Monday it's not the County Commission's role to collect taxes for city parks when the Bismarck Park Board has its own taxing authority. He said it makes more sense for the entity using the funds to levy them directly, especially under the new 3% property tax caps passed by state lawmakers earlier this year.

"I think this is almost like a hidden tax within our budget," Bitner said. "I just think it's outlived its usefulness."

Munson, arguing to keep the agreement in place, said he supports continuing to collect the tax if it helps maintain local parks. He said people move to and stay in the community because of amenities such as parks, and any opportunity to improve them is one he will take.

"I hear you," Bitner responded. "But that seems to me that you got no bottom to the amount of money you're willing to spend to do that, and that's a concern I have."

Bismarck Park Board President Mark Zimmerman defended the agreement at Monday's meeting,

saying the Park Board views it as a cooperative effort that benefits all county residents, not just those living in Bismarck. He noted that while county residents also use Bismarck parks and facilities, only city residents pay property taxes to fund them.

Zimmerman told the Commission the funding for riverfront improvements has been "money well spent" for the entire community.

Bakken disagreed, questioning what the Park District considers a riverfront improvement. He said such projects should include safe access to the river, such as public marinas and boat ramps, not just trails for viewing the river.

"I can stand on the rooftop of the State Capitol and look at the river. I can be at a park and look at the river. I can be at my house and stand on the roof and look at the river," Bakken said. "It's the accessibility to me and that's where I've got (an issue). I just don't see the accessibility as part of this for the waterfront."

Reach Zachary Weiland at 701-250-8264 or zachary.weiland@bismarcktribune.com.

LOCAL

Garrison Diversion Awards \$65,694 in Water Supply Assistance Grants

CARRINGTON, ND --- The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid mu-

nicipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

"Rural water enhances the quality of life for North Dakotans and strengthens our communities," said MR&I Committee Chair Larry Kassian. "Garrison Diversion is proud to

support this vital program and contribute to the well-being of our district."

In August, the MR&I Committee awarded a program high \$65,694 to eight rural water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

• **Barnes Rural Water District** - \$5,900 for one

customer hookup

• **Central Plains Water District** - \$4,213 for one customer hookup

• **East Central Regional Water District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup

• **South Central Regional Water District** - \$16,281 for two customer hookups

• **Southeast Water Users District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup

• **Stutsman Rural Water**

District - \$19,300 for two customer hookups

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is May 1, **although emergency requests are considered as needed.** There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects for municipalities, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements

state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less.

Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.

BUSINESS NEWS

with independent dealers to offer rental equipment to do-it-yourself movers since 1945. More than 21,000 dealers across the U.S. and Canada are generating supplemental income through their U-Haul affiliation.

Garrison Diversion awards Water Supply Assistance Grants

CARRINGTON, N.D. — The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties. Recently, grants were awarded in the Jamestown area.

In August, the MR&I Committee awarded a program high \$65,694 to eight rural water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use. Those receiving grants in the Jamestown area were the following:

- Barnes Rural Water District - \$5,900 for one customer hookup
- Stutsman Rural Water District - \$19,300 for two customer hookups

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if

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AROUND THE AREA

Garrison Diversion awards \$65,694 in water supply assistance grants

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's Municipal, Rural and Industrial (MR&I) Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary Operations, Maintenance and Repair (OM&R) projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastruc-

ture if not repaired.

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Work on well field near Stutsman Rural Water District treatment plant to finish this year

BY KEITH NORMAN
For The Jamestown Sun

Work on a new well field near Stutsman Rural Water District's existing treatment plant is wrapping up this year. Work



Kaiser

on the well field began last year and is an effort by the water district to improve its capacity, according to Geneva Kaiser, general manager of the district.

"We seem to add 40 or 50 new locations every year," she said. "Our last major expansion was about 10 years ago. At that time, we had a lot of extra capacity."

Kaiser said anyone

connecting now to Rural Water can apply for a grant from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, which offers grants of up to \$10,000 to defray connection expenses.

"It helps," she said. "It doesn't always cover all costs but there is nothing else like it in North Dakota."

Stutsman Rural Water sees its heaviest water usage in July when farmers are filling spray tanks for chemical applications in fields, Kaiser said.

"Now, we have to juggle our resources during spray season," she said.

This past July, Rural Water provided about 25 million gallons, less than 1 million gallons of water per day.

During that peak,

Stutsman Rural Water provided an average of 11,000 gallons of water per customer per month. During the winter, the average drops to about 4,000 gallons of water per month per customer location.

For comparison, the city of Jamestown's water system is geared to provide about 7 million gallons of water per day.

Stutsman Rural Water provides water to about 6,500 people in Stutsman County and five surrounding counties. It provides water to the small communities in Stutsman County with the exception of Medina and Streeter and industrial water to the Spiritwood Station Power Plant and Dakota Spirit AgEthanol Plant in the Spiritwood

Energy Park.

Future enhancements for Stutsman Rural Water District could include expanding capacity at its water treatment plant. Kaiser said the district has purchased land for the expansion when it is needed. A booster station to improve flow and water pressure to the Streeter area is also in the planning stages, Kaiser said.

The new well field that is just now being completed could also improve that capacity.

"For now, things are going well," Kaiser said.

Eric Volk, executive director of the North Dakota Rural Water Association, said many of the state's 32 operating districts are in a similar situation to Stutsman Rural

Water.

"A lot of systems are looking to expand capacity," he said. "Many of the large territorial expansion projects in North Dakota have been completed."

Volk said during the last North Dakota Legislature, 18 rural water systems presented 35 projects for funding consideration.

The total cost of the projects was \$289 million, with a request to the Legislature for \$172 million in grant assistance. The Legislature appropriated \$70 million in assistance.

Water systems around North Dakota are still sorting out which projects might be viable given the lower level of grant assistance available from the state, Volk said.

"There are rural water systems in every county of the state," he said. "They reach 167,000 rural residents with 42,000 miles of pipe. They also serve 268 of the 355 incorporated cities in North Dakota."

Those systems serve close to 300,000 people, Volk said.

The 2020 U.S. Census placed the population of North Dakota at 804,000 people.

However, 464,000 of those people live in the state's 10 largest cities.

Roughly 88% of the remaining population of 340,000 people living outside the 10 largest cities in North Dakota are served by a rural water district.

Reach Keith Norman at news@jamestownsun.com

RED RIVER VALLEY WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

2025 NEWSLETTER ANALYTICS



AVERAGE INDUSTRY RATES FOR E-NEWSLETTERS

32%
AVERAGE OPEN RATE

2%
AVERAGE CLICK THROUGH RATE

0.2%
AVERAGE UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

The quarterly RRVWSP Progress Report typically receives more engagement with recipients than an average industry newsletter. The Open Rate is the percentage of people who received the newsletter in their inbox and opened the email. The Click Through Rate measures the percentage of people who clicked on each article. The Unsubscribe Rate measures the percentage of people who received the newsletter and decided to opt-out from receiving future newsletters.

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 1

EMAILS SENT: 567

OPEN RATE: 49.9%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Assurance Policy Spurs More User Signups- Click Rate 21.5%
- Legislative Session Update - Click Rate 20.5%
- Mayville, Hillsboro & Traill County Support RRVWSP: 16.9%
- Garrison Diversion Board Welcomes New Chairman - Click Rate 16%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 0

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 2

EMAILS SENT: 568

OPEN RATE: 49.5%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Earliest RRVWSP Construction Start to Date - Click Rate 31.9%
- 2025 Legislative Wrap Up - 28.6%
- Introducing Alan Idso, LAWA Board Member - Click Rate 23.1%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 1

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 3

EMAILS SENT: 567

OPEN RATE: 52.4%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Garrison Diversion General Manager Looks Back on 10 Years of Progress - Click Rate 36%
- 2025 RRVWSP Construction Progress - Click Rate 34%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 1

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 4

EMAILS SENT:

OPEN RATE:

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

-
-
-

UNSUBSCRIBES:

Wrapping Up 2025, Looking Ahead to 2026

The crews working on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) enjoyed a longer than typical construction season thanks to mild spring and fall weather in 2025. Construction activities continued into December with a total of 12 miles of transmission pipe installed to date this year. That brings the total amount of pipe in the ground to 29.75 miles of the 125-mile pipeline.

Carstensen Contracting Inc. worked on installing 72-inch transmission pipeline for Contracts 5D and 6A this year. Contract 5D includes 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek in western Foster County and eastern Wells County. All 10 miles are installed on Contract 5D. There are 7.1-miles of pipeline in Contract 6A, and 2.65 are in the ground. This portion of the project runs from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County. Carstensen Contracting crews will return in 2026 to finish restoration on 5D and continue pipeline installation on 6A.

Oscar Renda Contracting will return in 2026 to install the one mile remaining on the eight-mile 5C contract and initiate the land restoration process. Garney Construction finished the restoration on Contract 5B this year.

“We were blessed with weather that cooperated this year, which allowed us to make a lot of progress on the transmission pipeline,” says Kip Kovar, Deputy Program Manager for RRVWSP Engineering and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Engineer. “Now we’re looking ahead to awarding Contracts 6B, 6C, and 7A.”

The three projects will extend the buried transmission pipeline east. Contract 6B includes a 9.2-mile stretch of pipe from McKinnon Township to Sutton Township in Foster and Griggs Counties. It involves one 96-inch diameter trenchless crossing of a jurisdictional wetland. Contract 6C runs 8.4 miles from Sutton Township to Revere Township in Griggs County. 6C also incorporates two 96-inch diameter trenchless crossings of jurisdictional wetlands and one 96-inch diameter trenchless crossing of a BNSF railroad. Contract 7A is 6.5 miles of pipeline from Revere Township to Cooperstown in Griggs County, including three 96-inch diameter trenchless crossings of jurisdictional wetlands. The results of the bid process will be announced in the first quarter of 2026 RRVWSP newsletter.

LAWA Election: Lisbon Secures Seat on Board of Directors

Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) held elections in September during the North Dakota League of Cities conference. Under state law, the LAWA Board of Directors includes one seat for a city located east of Highway 1 with a population of less than 5,000. The City of Lisbon won the seat previously held by the City of Mayville. Mayor Tim Meyer was officially appointed to represent Lisbon on the LAWA Board in October. City Council member Benjamin Gemar was named Lisbon’s Alternate on the LAWA Board.

Also during the LAWA election at the League of Cities conference, the Board of Directors seats held by the Cities of Fargo, Grand Forks, West Fargo, Valley City, and Carrington were reelected. In February 2026, LAWA will hold elections for the Board’s water system members at the North

Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's 40th Annual Water Expo in Fargo. The following water systems currently hold seats on the LAWA Board: Southeast Water Users District, Northeast Regional Water District, East Central Regional Water District, Cass Rural Water Users District, Walsh Rural Water District, Moorhead Public Service, and McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District. The Cities of Wahpeton, Devils Lake, and Hunter are Associate Members of LAWA.

Introducing Tim Meyer, LAWA Board Member

There is a new face on the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board of Directors. Lisbon's Mayor, Tim Meyer, knows his city's needs very well. He has spent the past 20 years serving on the Lisbon City Council – 8 as a councilman and the past 12 as Mayor. Tim's involvement in LAWA is a natural progression in his regional water initiatives involvement.

“The City of Lisbon and Southeast Water Users have a partnership with the water treatment plant in Lisbon. The raw water currently is supplied to the treatment plant by three rural wells and three wells within the City of Lisbon. The City serves as the operator of the water plant. I serve on this joint board as Mayor of Lisbon,” he explains. Tim also previously served on the Devils Lake Outlet Advisory Board.

“As a LAWA Director I look forward to being a voice for the smaller communities. Finding solutions for financial challenges smaller users face to remain part of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project, learning more about the long-range plans for operating the project once it's complete and finding solutions for these issues by working with all entities involved,” says Tim.

The Lisbon Mayor says once the RRVWSP is completed, the supplemental and emergency water supply will provide domestic and industrial opportunities for current and future generations. “I have seen the Sheyenne River here down to a trickle, to a level you could walk across. I have also been involved in the farming industry for years, and I have seen the effects of drought. The RRVWSP is a very wise investment for the State of North Dakota with the State Legislature taking the initiative to fund the project,” he says before adding, “This project gives the State of North Dakota the rights to the Missouri River water before downstream entities claim this water.”

Outside of his LAWA and mayoral duties, Tim has worked for Titan Machinery for 42 years as a Service Manager. He and his wife of 38 years, Elise, have twins named Justin and Abbey who turned 30 this year. Abbey and her husband, John, have provided Tim and Elise with two wonderful grandchildren named Vernalee and Nolan. Aside from spending time with his family, Tim enjoys woodworking, house projects, and being outdoors in his yard.

2025 RRVWSP Construction Progress

Crews started the 2025 construction season early thanks to a mild spring. Now they are hoping the weather will hold out this fall so they can continue pipe installation as long as possible. In 2024, construction wrapped up in November. If conditions cooperate again this year, the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) could enjoy an almost unheard of seven-month construction season in North Dakota. As of mid-September, 25 miles of the 125-mile buried pipeline are in the ground.

“We are making good progress,” says Kip Kovar, Deputy Program Manager for RRVWSP Engineering and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District Engineer. “We currently have 33 miles of pipeline under contract to construct, plus more than 40 miles of shovel-ready pipeline installation.

Carstensen Contracting Inc. is focused on Contracts 5D and 6A this year. Contract 5D includes 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek in western Foster County and eastern Wells County while Contract 6A involves the installation of a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County. So far, 8.3 miles are installed on 5D and 1.3 miles are in on 6A.

Meanwhile, Garney Construction worked on land restoration, structure build out, hydrostatic testing, and soil haul off for Contract 5B, east of Carrington, where the entire nine-mile stretch of pipeline is in the ground. Oscar Renda Contracting installed 5.4 miles on the eight-mile Contract 5C pipeline thus far.

When the RRVWSP transmission pipeline is complete, it will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River, located about six miles south of Cooperstown. The Missouri River intake pumping station wet well, intake screen structure, and tunnel are complete. The outfall discharge structure on the Sheyenne River is also already constructed.

Garrison Diversion General Manager Looks Back on 10 Years of Progress

The past 10 years have flown by according to Duane DeKrey. This year marks a decade since his promotion to General Manager of Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion). Over the past decade, Garrison Diversion has seen a lot of success, especially with the beginning of construction on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), a drought mitigation project co-sponsored by Garrison Diversion and the Lake Agassiz Water Authority.

“I feel extremely lucky to be sitting in the General Manager chair currently. I think back to some of the previous managers, who became North Dakota Water Hall of Fame Awardees, who had the same dreams and goals of fulfilling the promise of water to central and eastern North Dakota,” says Duane. “They worked just as hard and, in many ways, laid the foundation that I have been able to capitalize on to get the Red River Valley Water Supply Project started.”

Prior to working for Garrison Diversion, Duane served in the North Dakota House and Senate for 20 years and served on the Natural Resources Committee where he became more familiar with Garrison Diversion. “When members of the Garrison Diversion Board of Directors asked me to put in an application for the General Manager position, I thought it would be a very good fit. I was a project engineer in the North Dakota National Guard for many years, which I believed would be valuable for the management of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project,” says Duane.

Garrison Diversion’s mission to provide a reliable, high quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota resonated with Duane because he grew up on a farm without an adequate supply of water. The work of Garrison Diversion was well known in North Dakota at that time due to the high-profile Garrison Diversion Unit (GDU) effort that was underway. The GDU included plans to provide municipal and industrial water, fish and wildlife development, recreation opportunities, flood control, and irrigation of 250,000 acres.

“As a young boy, Garrison Diversion was in the news just about every day - from the all-out effort of North Dakota lawmakers at home and in DC trying to get the full promise of the project out of the federal government and environmental struggles with Canada to low commodity prices and over production at the time which made all the irrigation seem irresponsible. I always felt any project that relieves a water shortage should be pursued,” explains Duane.

Though the GDU concept was not fully realized, the RRVWSP began to take shape around the turn of the century. Five years into Duane’s tenure as General Manager, construction on the state portion of the RRVWSP began.

“The biggest accomplishment of the last 10 years is getting the federal government to approve a record of decision (ROD) on the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply (ENDAWS), which made the project eligible for federal funds,” says Duane. “This enabled us to use the McClusky Canal for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. It will save the taxpayers and project users a minimum of \$280 million in construction costs. That is in addition to federal funding for the project.”

Federal approval of the McClusky Canal as an alternate bulk water supply for the RRVWSP allows the long-underutilized federal asset to be developed for municipal and industrial water supply, which is an authorized purpose of the original GDU feature. When construction is completed on the RRVWSP, a buried transmission pipeline will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River. Ultimately, the RRVWSP is

projected to provide an emergency and supplemental water supply to nearly half of North Dakota's population, from the central part of the state to the Red River Valley. It is projected to be completed in 2032.

"Beyond the Red River Valley Water Supply, Garrison Diversion continues to benefit the State of North Dakota. We facilitate 8,000 acres of irrigation and our staff operates and maintains Garrison Diversion Unit facilities. We're just finishing up a six-year \$16 million repair of the McClusky Canal," Duane says. "Garrison Diversion has provided over \$300 million over the last 25 years to water projects in North Dakota with our partner, the North Dakota Department of Water Resources." Garrison Diversion has also provided \$9.2 million via matching recreation grants throughout the 28-county conservancy district. It also provides grants for residents to hook up to rural water and assists cities with emergency water system repairs.

Though he doesn't have a retirement date in sight, Duane does have a few goals he would like to reach before he wraps up his career. "My goals for the end of my tenure are to see the Red River Valley Water Supply Project progress as far as possible and fully investigate the potential title transfer of the rest of the Garrison Diversion Unit facilities from the Bureau of Reclamation to Garrison Diversion. Ultimately, I want to leave Garrison Diversion with a cohesive group of people who will have no problem continuing the organization's mission."



43rd⁷¹ Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Tuesday

Time	Session	Speaker(s)	Location
1:00 - 1:30pm	Introduction & National Anthems	Ted Preister	Midway/East Ballroom
	Honouring the Traditional Lands	Wayne Manningway, Peguis First Nation	
	Welcome from the City of Winnipeg	Jeff Browaty, City of Winnipeg	
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Keynote	Gordon Goldsborough, University of Manitoba & Manitoba Historical Society	Midway/East Ballroom
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Break & Exhibits		West Ballroom





43rd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Tuesday

3:00 - 3:20 pm	Greetings from the Province of Manitoba	Mike Moyes , MB Minister of Environment & Climate Change	Midway/East Ballroom
3:20 - 4:30 pm	Watersheds Across the Red River Basin	<p>Moderated by: Lynda Nicol, Manitoba Association of Watersheds</p> <p>Joey Pankiw, Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District</p> <p>Nicole Bernd, West Polk Soil and Water Conservation District</p> <p>Dan Money, Two Rivers Watershed District</p> <p>Jennifer Klostreich, Richland County Soil Conservation District</p> <p>Justin Johnson, Richland County Water Resource District</p>	Midway/East Ballroom
5:00 - 7:00 pm	Social, Hors d'oeuvres, & Exhibits Please join us for a networking social that includes a wonderful spread of hors d'oeuvres and an opportunity to meet representatives from around the Red River Basin.		West Ballroom & Foyer
7:00 - 9:30 pm	The Summit Social, Cash Bar		Wellington Ballroom



43rd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Wednesday

Time	Session	Speaker(s)	Location
7:00 - 8:30 am	Breakfast		Midway/East Ballroom
8:30 - 9:30 am	Agricultural Perspectives Moderated by: Armand Bélanger	Ron Kostyshyn, MB Minister of Agriculture	Midway/East Ballroom
		Thom Petersen, MN Agriculture Commissioner	
		TBA	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Invasive Agricultural Weeds	Kim Brown, Manitoba Agriculture	Midway/East Ballroom
10:00 - 10:30 am	Break & Exhibits		West Ballroom
10:30 - 11:10 am	Moderated by: Gwen Crawford		Midway/East Ballroom
	2025 Year in Review & 2026 Outlook	Amanda Lee, National Weather Service	
	Stream Restoration in the Red River Basin	Erik Jones, Houston Engineering	
11:10 - 12:00 pm	The Lake Winnipeg Basin Project: Learnings and Outcomes from On-Farm Water Stewardship	Mike Nemeth, Lake Winnipeg Basin Project	Midway/East Ballroom
		Russell Jonk, Swansfleet Alliance	
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch: Buffet Style		
1:00 - 3:00 pm	Break Out Sessions		



43rd Annual Red River Basin
Land & Water International Summit Conference
Agenda

Wednesday

Break Out Sessions 1:00-3:00 pm

Wellington Ballroom Moderated by: Sandra Strang		York Moderated by: Molly Costin		Harrow/Essex/Canterbury Moderated by: Mandar Nangare	
Session	Speaker(s)	Session	Speaker(s)	Session	Speaker(s)
Flood Hazard Mapping of the Red River Valley	Kibreab Assefa & Andrew Weiss, KGS Group	BRRWB South Branch Buffalo River Project	Bennett Uhler, Houston Engineering	Navigating Tomorrow's Models: Collaborating with AI in the Red River Basin	Karen Ryberg, Barr Engineering
Gimli Wetland Initiative: A Living Legacy in the Making	Armand Bélanger, East Interlake Watershed District	Implementing Temporary Water Retention in a Low Gradient, Mixed Use Landscape	Chris Randall, Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District	Flooding in Peguis Off-Site Storage Solution	Ian Halket, Halket Environmental Consultants Inc.
	Tim Arnason, Gimli Wetland Steering Committee				
Improving Flood Resiliency in the Red River Basin: A Case Study for St. Mary's Road in the RM of Montcalm	Parsa Aminian & Mark Edgar, Stantec Consulting Ltd.	Fargo Drought and Water Service Management Planning	Emily Nelson, AE2S	Natural Infrastructure Systems Planning for the Roseau River	Hank Venema, Strategic Systems Engineering
Ditch the Drama, How to Keep Slopes From Losing It	Nate Dalager, HDR Engineering Inc.	Water Retention Beneficial Management Practices	Joey Simoes, IISD	Flood Damage Reduction Work Group 5 Year Monitoring Program Overview and Initial Results	Jeff Madejczyk, Moore Engineering Inc.



43rd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Wednesday

Time	Session	Speaker(s)	Location
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Break & Exhibits		West Ballroom
3:30 - 5:00 pm	Moderated by: Larry Johannson		Wellington Ballroom
	Mark Fisher , President, Canada Water Agency		
	Atmospheric Sediment and Phosphorous Deposition to Lake Winnipeg	Masoud Goharrokhi , University of Manitoba	
	Forget Fiscal Cliffs! What About Riverbank Cliffs?: Transformational Change by Design - Perspectives from a Civil Geotechnical Consultant	Bruno Pierre Arpin , KGS Group	
	Drainage Water Management in the Red River Watershed: A Look to the Future	Chad Engels , Moore Engineering	
5:30 pm	Social, Cash Bar		Midway/East Ballroom
6:30 pm	Awards Banquet hosted by: Jeff Browaty <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebecca Molinoff, U.S. Consulate, Winnipeg, Canada• Aaron Annable, Consul, Consulate General of Canada, Minneapolis• Leadership Award Presentation• Silent Auction Prize Draw		Midway/East Ballroom
8:00 - 9:30 pm	The Summit Social, Cash Bar		Midway/East Ballroom



43rd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Thursday

Time	Session	Speaker(s)	Location
7:00 - 8:30 am	Breakfast		Midway/East Ballroom
8:30 - 9:00 am	Annual Meeting	Ted Preister & LeRoy Ose	Midway/East Ballroom
9:00 - 10:00 am	Moderated by: Ted Preister		Midway/East Ballroom
	Soil Health Project	Cassie Setter & Kim Melton, Red River Basin Commission	
	Red River Absorbent Boom	Duncan Burnett, Manitoba Hydro	
		Manitoba Transportation & Infrastructure	
10:00 - 10:30 am	Break & Exhibits		West Ballroom





43rd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Thursday

Time	Session	Speaker(s)	Location
10:30 - 11:15 am	Moderated by: Ted Preister		Midway/East Ballroom
	The City of Winnipeg North End Wastewater Treatment Plant (NEWPCC) Upgrades	Alison Weiss & Linda McCusker, City of Winnipeg	
11:15 - 12:15 pm	International Red River Watershed Board & International Joint Commission		Midway/East Ballroom
	Meeting and Public Input Session		
12:15 pm	Lunch: Buffet Style		Midway/East Ballroom
	Conference Wrap Up & Grand Prize Drawing		