

BACKGROUND SHEET

Basin Water Supply: Drought Scoping Document Drought: Processes and Conservation/Soft Path

RRBC EX-OFFICIO DISCUSSION
4 SEPTEMBER 2008
FARGO, ND

Drought Scoping Document:

The Drought Scoping Document was completed in January 2008. The Red River Basin Commission funded this Red River Basin Drought Preparedness Strategy Scoping Document ("Scoping Document") to outline what a fully developed basin-wide drought strategy could include and the resources needed to prepare such a strategy.

The "Scoping Document" is presented in two main sections. The first section examines existing water laws and drought management approaches in the basin. The second section provides an outline and detailed work plan for developing a Red River Basin Drought Preparedness Strategy.

The overall work plan consists of 7 sections: Process for the Immediate Future; Conservation Approaches; Refine Goals, Approach Form Working Groups; Background Technical Information and Models; Model Development and Evaluation of Baseline and "No-Action" Scenarios; Strategy Development; Drought Preparedness Strategy.

Jurisdictional Process:

The Water Supply Working Group (WG) has been working on the first two sections of the work plan. The Process for the Immediate Future will be described in the context of various forms or types of drought. The coordinated efforts between jurisdictions and water users that occurred as historic drought developed will be reviewed in the context of various phases of drought. The strengths and limitations of past experiences will be used to develop a proposed, formalized inter-jurisdictional coordination for future droughts that illustrates what actions are taken as drought unfolds.

The Water Supply WG has recently completed the final outline for the Jurisdictional Process section of the work plan. The outline covers several key topics: Drought Definition, Types of Uses, Water Demand/Amount – permitted & actual taken out, Water Availability and Sustainability, Current Water Drought Management Systems, Dealing with Past Droughts: Cooperation, Defining the Drought Process, and Recommendations for Jurisdictional Consideration. HDR Engineering is currently gathering data on the first two parts of the outline, Drought Definition and Types of Uses. This data will then be presented to the committee for discussion.

Conservation/Soft Path:

A review of existing conservation measures will be conducted. Based on current water use, soft path and traditional approaches will be applied to determine possible strategies for additional conservation practices in an effort to increase the resilience of the basin to various types of drought.

The "soft path" approach will be evaluated in the context of conservation. It emphasizes examination of water use practices and determination of means to achieve the same or similar outcomes with reduced water use. Public perception and appreciation of the value of water are also emphasized to encourage interest in voluntary conservation.

The Water Supply WG is currently working on a final outline for the conservation/soft path section of the work plan. The process of this section will be similar to the Jurisdictional Process in that once the final draft is completed HDR Engineering will be able to begin the data collection process for discussion from the group.