

**Table 1. Goals with objectives for the Natural Resources Framework Plan, Red River Basin Commission, 2005**

<b>Basin-Wide Goals</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
1.0 Manage natural resources in the RRB by watershed boundaries rather than political boundaries	1.1- Raise awareness of the benefits of basin-wide planning for decision makers and the public; increase coordinated and comprehensive watershed planning 1.2
2.0 Integrate natural resource management	2.1- Conduct integrated, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary planning efforts, policies, projects and programs that accommodate a balance in resource preservation, conservation and consumption; apply conservation criteria in the review and approval of all land-use plans, projects and programs 2.2
3.0 Increase applied research and data management to support decision-making	3.1- Distribute data and research to decision makers; standardize collection, storage and sharing of data; develop and use technical models to support decision making; develop and use GIS for data management and planning 3.4
4.0 Improve stakeholder participation and awareness of land and water issues	4.1- Develop a stewardship ethic in the RRB; provide comprehensive watershed education and outreach; provide opportunities for early involvement of project stakeholders; increase awareness of economic and environmental benefits of assistance programs 4.4
5.0 Maintain state-of-the-art flood forecasting tools for the Red River Basin	5.1 Increase data availability and level of coordination between jurisdictions for flood forecasting and planning
6.0 Reduce risk of flood damages for people, property and the environment in the main stem floodplain and in tributary waters	6.1- Implement flood mitigation measures that reduce risk to individuals and communities on the main stem and tributaries; implement flood mitigation strategies in the upper basin that reduce risk locally and downstream 6.2
7.0 Ensure that flood (natural disaster) response and recovery programs meet the needs of all RRB residents	7.1 Increase availability of response and recovery programs that are adequate and equitable to residents in all jurisdictions
8.0 Manage urban and agricultural drainage systems to enhance productivity, while minimizing impacts to others	8.1- Manage drainage systems to protect agricultural land and minimize environmental impacts; design and improve drainage systems with consideration of local, sub-watershed and main stem effects; design and implement urban and rural storm water strategies that minimize environmental impacts 8.3
9.0 Maintain, protect and restore surface and ground water quality in the Red River Basin	9.1- Develop a common approach to assessing water quality goals and conditions; develop water quality restoration goals for impaired waters; reduce point- and non-point source pollution to protect surface and ground water; develop strategies to reduce nutrient loading to Lake Winnipeg by 10% in 5 years; encourage respect for water quality standards; develop programs that prevent the spread of non-native aquatic species and prevent the introduction of new species to the basin 9.6
10.0 Ensure the appropriate use and sustainability of the Basin's surface and groundwater	10.1- Develop a basin-wide strategy for future water supply needs; develop water supply emergency programs; develop an understanding of minimum in-stream flow criteria to protect all users 10.3
11.0 Increase soil conservation efforts within the basin	11.1- Increase availability of conservation programs to landowners; use Best Management Practices to minimize runoff and maintain soil on site 11.2
12.0 Conserve, manage and restore diversity and viability of native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats	12.1- Maintain, enhance and protect aquatic and terrestrial populations; enhance, protect or restore natural systems (floodplains, stream functions, riparian areas, wetlands, grasslands); enhance or develop corridors between habitat blocks; identify and protect rare and unique species, habitat types and plant communities 12.4
13.0 Enhance and develop recreational infrastructure and access to the Basin's natural resources	13.1- Increase awareness and participation in outdoor recreational opportunities by the general public; promote unique RRB habitats to enhance economic development and quality of life 13.2

# RED RIVER BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES FRAMEWORK PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) is a non-profit organization that works across the political boundaries of Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, in the United States and Canada, to create a shared vision for action with regard to land and water issues. We are an organization with broad representation throughout the Red River Basin. We can be contacted online at [www.redriverbasincommission.org](http://www.redriverbasincommission.org), at P.O. Box 66, Moorhead, MN 56561, USA, 218-291-0422, or 410 283 Bannatyne Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 3B2, CAN, 204-982-7250.

**RRBC Mission Statement**

To develop a Red River Basin integrated natural resources framework plan; to achieve commitment to implement the framework plan; and to work toward a unified voice for the Red River Basin.

**RRBC Vision Statement**

A Red River Basin where residents, organizations and governments work together to achieve basin-wide commitment to comprehensive integrated watershed stewardship and management.

## INTRODUCTION

The Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP) was developed as a tool that contributes to developing a **unified voice** for the basin. This Executive Summary was prepared to provide a brief synopsis of the Plan for ease in dissemination. A full copy can be provided upon request from the above address, or on the RRBC website.

The Red River Basin encompasses 45,000 sq. miles (116,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of flat valley and outer escarpments that were formed by the advance and retreat of glacial Lake Agassiz. The Red River flows northward from its beginning at the Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota boundaries, terminating some 300 miles (480 km) north at Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. The basin is recognized as an agriculturally productive area in the upper midwest. It also supports the ecologically abundant prairie-pothole region. Because of its geomorphology and hydrology, flooding is a major concern for residents in the basin. The largest recorded flood occurred in 1997 and resulted in the greatest recorded amount of damages - over \$5 billion USD (\$6.85 billion CDN).

Not only is the Basin's geography complex, but so are the economic/social and governmental aspects of the region. The population is shifting from rural to urban settings, creating strain not only on rural areas that are losing their citizens, but also to growing cities that need to find ways to provide water and services to a growing populace. Jurisdictions within the basin have differing laws and policies that make it difficult to create consistency in managing land and water resources. Especially difficult are the differences in water law and institutional water management, established at the time of European settlement.



The Red River Basin Commission reflects the multi-jurisdictional nature of the basin. It is made up of a board of 41 members, each representing the principal federal and state/provincial governments, as well as Tribes, First Nations, local elected officials (towns, cities, counties, rural municipalities), and subdivisions of governments representing soil and water management districts or agencies. Landowners and citizens of the basin are also represented by their constituents and environmental advocates. The Commission's broad membership represents the wide range of interests in the basin.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The complex nature of the Red River Basin has resulted in challenges to effective, integrated land and water management. As such, the Red River Basin Commission has developed the “Natural Resources Framework Plan” to aid in achieving a basin-wide approach to integrated natural resource management and to provide a framework for overcoming political barriers.

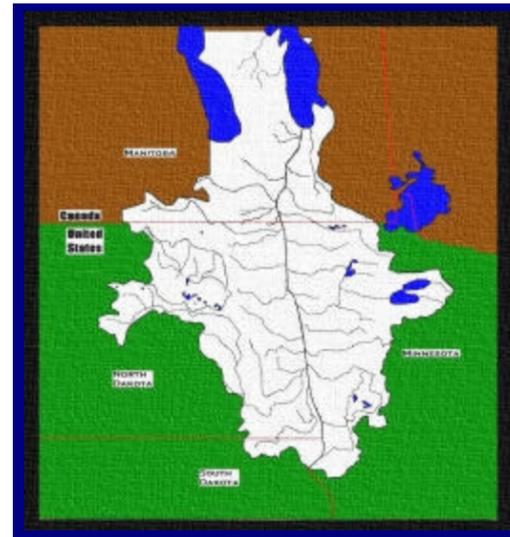
The three main barriers identified are:

- 1) Solutions to local problems may have unintended consequences in other areas of the basin; therefore, a **basin-wide approach** is needed.
- 2) There are diverse natural resource issues and challenges that are of concern to basin residents. **Integrated natural resource management** is a tool that will help address this issue.
- 3) The existence of multiple political jurisdictions at federal, provincial, state and local levels complicates decision-making and cross-boundary cooperation. **Overcoming political barriers** to water management will take continual work on the part of all stakeholders.

### Developing the Plan

The plan was developed over a period of years, beginning with an intensive inventory of basin resources. The following inventories were researched and compiled: 1) drainage, 2) hydrology, 3) flood damage reduction, 4) water quality, 5) water supply, 6) water law, 7) water institutions, 8) conservation and 9) fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation. Numerous agencies provided personnel to accomplish this enormous task. The public was involved through a series of “face to face forums” around the basin. In 1997, the board developed a set of “Guiding Principles” to enable its approach to pursuing its vision, mission and goals. The guiding principles, inventories and public participation provided the background material to develop the Natural Resources Framework Plan, its goals and its processes for action.

The Natural Resources Framework Plan outlines thirteen goals and objectives for each goal relating to natural resources in the Red River Basin (*Table 1, back page*). They describe areas of improvement, identified by many stakeholders in the basin, necessary to move the Red River Basin toward *comprehensive, integrated watershed stewardship and management*. In November of 2005, the Board will finalize and adopt the plan, incorporating the comments from agencies and the public. In addition, the plan includes a “Red River Basin Action Agenda,” a preliminary



list of activities, projects and programs that further the goals and objectives in Table 1. The Action Agenda will be developed during the first year of implementation of the NRFP, in consultation with the basin stakeholders that are conducting the work (i.e., the activities, projects and programs) that will move us toward achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the NRFP.



## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The RRBC readily acknowledges that as an organization it lacks legal authority to compel compliance with its plan and programs. Therefore, the success of the NRFP will be due to the actions of various organizations within the basin, and a willingness to inherently want to work in a complementary way with one another. The RRBC will serve as a convener and coordinator for the Basin water and resource management activities; however, it is the agencies and local governments that have the real authority, skilled staff and financial resources to get the majority of the work done. Real progress toward achieving these goals can only be realized if all jurisdictions do their part to contribute to the vision of *comprehensive integrated watershed stewardship and management*. The RRBC, agencies and non-governmental organizations working in the basin share in the responsibility for plan implementation.

The RRBC has three primary responsibilities to achieve the goals described in the NRFP:

- 1) Pursuit of the objectives listed in Table 1;
- 2) Preparation of an annual work plan; and,
- 3) Review and critique of RRB plans and projects for consistency with the NRFP goals and RRBC Guiding Principles.

As the goals listed in Table 1 are comprehensive and far-reaching, so also are the objectives that are listed with them. However, these objectives cannot all be achieved at the same time, or by one authority or stakeholder. In some cases, the objectives are written as a sequence of steps that must be taken over time. In any case, it will be the responsibility of the RRBC each year to establish its priorities from among the objectives and Action Agenda. The RRBC will also examine outside groups’ programs, plans and projects for consistency with the NRFP. It is hoped that as the credibility of the NRFP grows, member jurisdictions will freely volunteer their plans for review by the RRBC in this manner.

In order to achieve NRFP goals, as RRBC’s NRFP credibility and usefulness grows, it will become common practice for RRB jurisdictions to:

- 1) Participate in RRBC sponsored inter-jurisdictional issue forums;
- 2) Participate in implementation of the NRFP by sharing objectives and actions from their respective workplans that address basin goals; and,
- 3) Submit plans, projects and programs affecting RRB resources to RRBC review.

This plan is not a regulation to be enforced by the Red River Basin Commission. It is a **GUIDE** to be used by any or all entities in their decision-making processes. It is a guide to use when making choices for activities on the land and in making decisions that have an impact on our water. **It is a guide to move the Basin forward with a unified purpose and a unified voice.**

In conclusion, the NRFP is fully intended to be a living document that will remain relevant to the real needs and priorities of the citizens of the Basin and will serve as an effective guide to the application of the public’s resources to achieve *comprehensive integrated watershed stewardship and management*.

