

State Water Commission Approves \$3 Million in Funding

The State Water Commission showed its continued commitment to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (Project) by approving \$3 million on June 23, 2009, granting funds to continue planning and preparations for the Project. The State Water Commission approved the \$3 million to be released within the 2009-2011 biennium to complete several tasks for the Project.

The funds will be used for the following tasks:

- Operational Plan
- Right-of-Way Acquisition Services
- Landowner Payments for Right-of-Way Options
- Permitting and Environmental Services
- Pre-final Design
- Financial Planning

An experienced team of designers, environmental consultants and right-of-way agents has been mobilized to complete the work.

The funding enables the Project to move forward, while awaiting the Record of Decision. This is important as the Project cannot wait until a severe drought occurs; by then, it could be too late for residents of the Red River Valley. Once the planning and preparations are complete, Project construction will take an additional three years.

Though Fargo and most of the Red River Valley suffered through a devastating flood this spring, drought continues to be a threat to the Valley. It is important to note that wet and dry cycles change frequently and it is possible for them to occur in the same year.

For example, in 2006, the Red River Valley experienced a flood which now ranks as the sixth worst on record. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that on April 5, 2006, the Red River flows in Fargo were 19,800 cubic feet per second (cfs). Within a few short months, river flows dropped drastically, to a mere 275 cfs on August 7, 2006. Water restrictions were in place throughout several communities, as water resources were running low.

Wet and dry cycles come and go, and it is important to be prepared, not only for major floods, but for extreme droughts as well. That is why we continue to move forward with this important Project.