



The South Central Regional Water District received \$5.85 million in state MR&I funds in 2009.

2009: Garrison Diversion's Year in Review

By Kimberly Cook

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) has been at the forefront of many changes over the past five decades; however, one thing that remains unchanged is the continual support Garrison Diversion provides to North Dakota. Residents of North Dakota see the benefits as Garrison Diversion helps expand municipal, rural and industrial (MR&I) water supplies, improves recreation opportunities, advances agriculture initiatives, moves the Red River Valley Water Supply Project forward, and maintains the Garrison Diversion Unit (GDU) facilities.

Municipal, Rural and Industrial Water Supply

Garrison Diversion and the State Water Commission jointly administer the state's MR&I Program. This program helps fulfill Garrison Diversion's mission to provide a reliable, high quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota.

As chairman of the Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Committee, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.)

secured nearly \$70 million for the Garrison Diversion Unit last year, and nearly \$50 million of that was for water supply development. The state MR&I program and the tribal MR&I program both saw benefits – each receiving approximately \$25 million.

The following projects were approved for funding through the state MR&I Program:

- Southwest Pipeline Project – \$7.8 million
- North Central Rural Water Consortium – \$3.905 million
- Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) – \$7.6 million
- South Central Regional Water District – \$5.85 million

Last year, Garrison Diversion disbursed \$24.7 million in MR&I funds to previously awarded grants, showing tremendous progress in “on-the-ground” construction.

In addition, the following projects were selected to receive



funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 through Garrison Diversion Unit funding:

- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe – \$19 million
- Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe – \$1.5 million
- Three Affiliated Tribes – \$6.5 million
- Southwest Pipeline Project – \$12 million
- South Central Regional Water District – \$20 million

The allocated MR&I and stimulus funds help expand North Dakota's water infrastructure and create a positive impact on the state. Because of this funding, many residents will experience clean, reliable, and high quality water for the first time in their homes and businesses.

"Thanks to the efforts of Sen. Dorgan and Garrison Diversion, a significant amount of MR&I work was completed last year, making a difference in many communities," says Alan Walter, the 2009 chairman of Garrison Diversion's MR&I Committee.

The North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association also received funding from Garrison Diversion, enabling the completion of 30 drought management plans for water systems in the Red River Valley.

Recreation Program

While recreation opportunities are abundant in North Dakota, communities continue to seek out ways to improve these opportunities. Garrison Diversion is proud to assist with recreation development within member counties through its Matching Recreation Grant Program. In 2009, \$257,470 was awarded to 20 projects across the state.

In partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation, Garrison Diversion enhanced recreational opportunities in the Chain of Lakes area along the McClusky Canal, which consists of East Park, West Park, Heckers, and New Johns lakes. In 2009, developments were made at East Park Lake, including the installation of a handicap fishing pier, sidewalk, concrete parking pad, and a handicap accessible fish cleaning station and RV dump site. Parking and access to restrooms were also made handicap accessible. Garrison Diversion's O&M staff constructed 200 feet of beach line at East Park Lake as well.

Agricultural Irrigation

Agriculture and irrigation have been objectives of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District since its inception nearly 50 years ago, and Garrison Diversion continues to invest in these initiatives today. Funds dedicated by Garrison Diversion's Agriculture and Natural



Garrison Diversion awarded \$257,470 in 2009 to recreation projects in its member counties through its Matching Recreation Grant Program. The Aneta City Park was one project that benefited from this program.

Resources Committee are used to help North Dakota farmers and ranchers continue to experience the growing opportunities that irrigation provides. The North Dakota Irrigation Association received funds to assist in its mission to strengthen and expand irrigation to build and diversify the state's economy.

In 2009, Garrison Diversion provided funding to the NDSU Oakes Irrigation Research Site, a demonstration project that tests plant varieties under different growing conditions. The research site provides information that contributes to the successful planning and operation of irrigated agriculture throughout North Dakota. Financial assistance was also provided to the NDSU Extension Service's Irrigation Research and Outreach Program and its irrigation specialist to deliver research data and educational programs to farmers and other interested parties.

Garrison Diversion provided water to 4,382 acres of land within the Oakes Test Area during the 2009 growing season. A variety of crops, including onions, potatoes, corn, and beans were grown in the test area using advanced irrigation techniques.

"Research originating from the Oakes Irrigation Research Site is critical to the future of irrigation in North Dakota," says Kenny Rogers, the 2009 Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee co-chairman. "This research enables farmers to expand their knowledge on alternative crops that can be successfully grown in North Dakota."



Red River Valley Water Supply Project

For several years, Garrison Diversion has been involved in an effort to provide the Red River Valley with a supplemental water supply to meet the needs of the people and industries of the Red River Valley during times of drought. Residents of the Red River Valley rely on the drought-prone Red River for their primary water supply, but studies show a drought similar to that of the 1930s will likely repeat by the year 2050. In the 1930s, flows were at extreme lows and sometimes at no-flow levels in the Red River. For example, in 1934, there were nearly five consecutive months of zero flow in the Red River at Fargo.

In 2009, progress continued on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (Project). In January, the Secretary of Interior signed a memorandum that stated the identified treatment of Missouri River water for the Project was adequate to meet the requirements of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

Last year, the right-of-way acquisition process began to secure the 150-foot-wide right-of-way along the proposed pipeline route. The 123-mile proposed pipeline runs through four counties – Sheridan, Wells, Foster, and Griggs. Approximately 264 parcels of land are being negotiated with 173 landowners. To date, 71 percent (123 of 173) of landowners have signed option agreements.

Currently, 18 water systems in the Red River Valley have signed Agreements of Intent to enter into a water service contract for a supplemental water supply when the Project is completed.

Operations and Maintenance

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's Operations and Maintenance (O&M) staff works year-round to keep the Garrison Diversion Unit facilities, including the McClusky Canal, New Rockford Canal, and Oakes Test Area, properly maintained for current and future use. The highly skilled O&M staff is responsible for completing a variety of specialized projects, along with routine maintenance.

The most time-consuming effort for the O&M staff this past year was fighting the flood of 2009. Efforts were made at Fargo, the Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge in east central North Dakota, and the Jamestown Dam to prevent record flood waters from damaging or destroying critical



The most time-consuming effort for Garrison Diversion's Operations and Maintenance crew was fighting the 2009 flood.

structures. Crews began battling flood waters in March when they were deployed to Fargo and ended their flood fighting efforts in June when waters at the Jamestown Dam returned to normal operating levels. After flood waters receded at Arrowwood and the Jamestown Dam, Garrison Diversion's O&M staff also helped remove raised dikes and rebuild roads damaged by high waters.

Routine maintenance projects were completed in addition to special projects. Water operations, painting and coating structures, road maintenance, vegetative management, and building and equipment maintenance are all operations at the Garrison Diversion Unit facilities that must be performed on a regular basis. Garrison Diversion also provides assistance to the State Water Commission with water sampling, mowing, spraying, and intake work for the Devils Lake Outlet. And, Garrison Diversion also repaired levees that were damaged due to spring flooding at Painted Woods Lake for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

"The O&M staff provides a great benefit to the State Water Commission and other organizations through cooperative agreements," says John Peyerl, the 2009 Engineering and Operations Committee chairman. "The work Garrison Diversion's O&M department is able to complete with its staff and equipment is very impressive."

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District works continually to benefit the communities it serves. From MR&I water supplies to recreation opportunities, communities across North Dakota have been positively impacted by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District.

