



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Flood Risk Management: Fargo-Moorhead Metro, North Dakota and Minnesota



Thousands of residents from the region assisted with building miles of sandbag levees in 2009.

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Location/Description

Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, are on the west and east banks, respectively, of the Red River of the North approximately 150 miles south of the Canada/United States border. The Wild Rice, Sheyenne, Maple and Rush Rivers in North Dakota and the Buffalo River in Minnesota also cross the study area.

Background

The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area is a major health, educational, cultural, and commercial center. The area is prone to flooding; the Red River has exceeded flood stage in 46 of the past 107 years and every year from 1993 through 2009. A 500-year event would flood nearly the entire city of Fargo, a large portion of the city of Moorhead, and several smaller communities in the area. Flooding occurs not only from the rivers, but also from large rainfall events that overwhelm storm drainage systems. Average annual flood damages are estimated at more than \$73 million.

Although emergency flood fights have been very successful, the area is significantly vulnerable to flooding. Both the 1997 and 2009 flood events came close to overwhelming the emergency levee systems.

Status

The Corps and the cities of Fargo and Moorhead are jointly conducting this study. The primary goal is to develop a regional system to reduce flood risk in the entire metropolitan and surrounding area and assess the feasibility of Federal implementation. An array of potential alternatives were considered, including nonstructural flood proofing, diversion channels, levee/floodwall systems, and flood storage. Only the diversion channel concept survived initial screening. Preliminary results of the diversion optimization were released at public meetings in February 2010. Agency Technical Review of the draft feasibility report and environmental impact statement will be completed in March 2010. The study is scheduled for completion in December 2010 to allow the possibility of receiving a contingent authorization in WRDA 2010. The feasibility cost share agreement was signed on September 22, 2008.

Authority

This specifically authorized study originates from a resolution of the Senate Committee on Public Works, September 30, 1974.

Fiscal

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|----------------------|-------------|
| Federal cost | \$4,120,000 |
| Non-Federal cost | \$3,880,000 |
| Total estimated cost | \$8,000,000 |

Fiscal year 2010 Federal funds: \$2,500,000*
Total Federal funds through 2010: \$3,970,000*

Non-Federal funding is being provided by the cities of Fargo and Moorhead, the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District in Minnesota, and Southeast Cass Water Resource District in North Dakota.

*Includes \$600,000 proposed reallocation