



**Title:** Developing Water Management Strategies for the Red River of the North Basin

**Name:** Daniel Stepan

**Email:** dstepan@undeerc.org

**Organization:** Energy & Environmental Research Center

**State:** ND      **Region:** Northern Plains and Mountains

**Year of Funding:**

**Theme:** Watershed Management

**Situation:** The Red River of the North Basin drains 49,000 square miles in the northern Great Plains, covering parts of the Province of Manitoba, Canada, and the states of Minnesota and North and South Dakota. Extreme fluctuations in the regional climate cycle make both flooding and water shortages common. This, coupled with the complex political makeup of the basin, makes effective water management particularly challenging. Yet water is critical to the sustained development of agricultural, industrial, and municipal activities in the region.

**Objectives:** The overall goal of the Red River Water Management Consortium (RRWMC) is to develop a long-term watershed management strategy that addresses key technical issues of its members, representing industry, municipalities, counties, and other interested entities, as well as state and federal governments.

**Methods:** The approach taken in the formation of the RRWMC was to invite major municipal, industrial, and rural entities throughout the region with a vested interest in water resources issues to join together in directing a technology-based research and planning effort that encompasses the entire basin. Yearly work plans are developed based on pressing issues in the basin and input from the RRWMC members.

**Partnerships:** In March 1996, the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) established a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), state and local agencies, and several of the municipalities and industries that rely on the water resources of the Red River Basin to prosper and grow. The members (currently 15) direct the development of annual work plan activities. A regulatory-based advisory group provides advice and input on consortium activities.

**Research:** The RRWMC is distinguished from many other water management groups in that the RRWMC provides its members with the information they need to make individual decisions in the context of the latest scientific data and a basin wide perspective. Annual reports, quarterly newsletters, workshops, and semi-annual meetings provide RRWMC members and others with a forum that is structured toward the broader sharing of data, information, experience, technology, and perspectives on key water issues targeted by members.

**Resources:** USDA provides base funding for the RRWMC. Consortium members invest in the program with annual cash membership fees. Projects complementary to RRWMC activities are occasionally funded through commercial funding sources, as well as other federal agencies.

**Results:** Because RRWMC activities address a wide range of water management topics, outputs and outcomes can vary significantly. An important measure of success of RRWMC activities will be the degree of collaboration achieved between individual members on integrating their water management strategies. A major outcome will work toward a common goal: the wise and efficient use of the basin's water resources and protection against climate extremes.



*The mission of CSREES is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the Environment, human health and well being, and communities.*

