

Water

Review

A Perspective On Western Water Issues Prepared By The Family Farm Alliance And Its Members

NORTH DAKOTA

An Evolutionary Project

Garrison Diversion's history dates back over 60 years, and its purpose has evolved significantly throughout that time. Garrison Diversion's focus has changed with each of the three pieces of federal legislation governing its authority. What was once only an irrigation project is now a multi-purpose project that includes municipal, rural and industrial water supplies, recreation and natural resources.

BACKGROUND

In December of 1944, Congress authorized the Flood Control Act, later known as the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program. Of five million acres initially designated for irrigation development in seven states, more than one million acres of land were designated in North Dakota. This legislation also aimed to provide flood control, navigation and hydropower facilitated by the construction of main stem dams on the Missouri River.

Results of studies performed between 1944-65 concluded that soil in northwestern North Dakota was not suitable for irrigation according to federal standards. Those findings rendered nearly all of the authorized 1.2 million acres unfit for irrigation.

Changes to the original legislation and the language in a 1964 appropriations act resulted in reauthorization of all

Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program units. Project proponents at this time pointed to the need to compensate the state for land inundated by construction of Garrison Dam and Reservoir. Reservoir construction affected 300,000 acres of prime agricultural land that could no longer be farmed, thus resulting in a significant loss of future economic activity. In 1965, Congress enacted legislation that created the Garrison Diversion Unit. Passage of this legislation reduced the number of acres for irrigation development in North Dakota from 1.2 million to 250,000. This new plan also added a new focus on municipal and industrial water, fish and wildlife development, and recreation.

Until 1984, construction progressed on several of the Garrison Diversion Unit's principal supply works. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, issues such as the environment, private land acquisition and economics of irrigation arose.

Construction halted in 1984. The Secretary of the Interior appointed a high-level commission to evaluate the Garrison Diversion Unit project. Ultimately, the commission recommended that the irrigation development be reduced to 130,940 acres. The Garrison Diversion Unit



Welcome Back To Our 'Water Review'

The Family Farm Alliance is pleased to restore the *Family Farm Water Review* to its roster of publications on Western water.

"The *Water Review* was always an important means of focusing on regional and local Reclamation projects and their issues," said Dan Keppen, Alliance Executive Director. "That's what we intend it to again become, with an occasional look at a broader Reclamation concern."

Each issue will have the assistance of the Alliance's grassroots network of members and leaders who will suggest topics and provide basic information. Photos and illustrations are also welcomed. Please call the Alliance office, (541) 850-9007, or e-mail kep@cvcwireless.net with any suggestions or information.

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Reformulation Act of 1986 authorized this reduction in irrigation acres. In addition, this new act authorized a \$200 million grant program to facilitate municipal, rural and industrial water service for as many as 130 towns and cities, rural areas and three Indian reservations. Water treatment, wildlife mitigation and recreation also constituted a portion of the act.

In 1993, North Dakota's congressional delegation requested that the Bureau of Reclamation initiate a collaborative process to define a new direction for meeting the state's water development and stewardship needs. A common thread surfaced among the many agencies involved in this process: the state's need for reliable, high-quality water for domestic and industrial use. In contrast with the 1965 legislation, which focused on irrigation, North Dakota identified its priority as municipal, rural and industrial water.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

The Dakota Water Resources Act of 2000 authorized \$200 million of federal appropriations to provide reliable, high-quality water to eastern North Dakota. Currently, over 40% of the state's population lives in the Red River Valley where water shortages are the most critical.

This act also designated an additional \$200 million for the Municipal, Rural and Industrial fund, \$200 million for Native American Indian water needs and \$32.5 million for

GARRISON DIVERSION CHANGES FOCUS TO MR&I PROJECTS

recreation and natural resources. This legislation also authorized irrigation development on 28,000 acres in areas of North Dakota that are not in the Hudson Bay/Devils Lake drainage basin or the James River drainage basin.

Throughout Garrison Diversion's history, irrigation development has been drastically reduced from the original 1.2 million acres as promised in 1944 to the 59,700 acres now authorized. As a result of the reduction in irrigation development, Garrison Diversion has focused on MR&I projects.

Some municipal, rural and industrial projects of note include the Southwest Area Pipeline and the Northwest Area Water Supply Project (NAWS). The Southwest Area Pipeline is a regional system of pipelines constructed to bring a clean, reliable source of water from Lake Sakakawea to areas of arid, southwestern North Dakota. Also using Lake Sakakawea water, NAWS aims to supply the dry, west-central region of the state with high-quality drinking water.

In 2004 and 2005, Garrison Diversion's statewide MR&I program distributed over \$15 million and \$5.6

million, respectively, for water supply projects throughout the state. Garrison Diversion is continually building North Dakota's water supply infrastructure, a vital component to North Dakota's economic development.

Garrison Diversion's mission to provide a reliable, high-quality and affordable water supply for the benefit of North Dakota remains firm. The project is committed to supplying a clean, reliable water supply to North Dakota residents, farms, schools, hospitals and industries and recognize the growing need for high-quality drinking water in the state.

SOURCE: Information for this article was supplied by Norman Haak and the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District.

TO LEARN MORE: Please visit the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's website at www.garrisondiv.org, telephone (800) 532-0074 or send an e-mail to gdcd@daktel.com.

Plan To Attend The
Family Farm Alliance's
18th Annual Meeting
And Conference

March 2-3 In Las Vegas!

Complete details and registration
information are on our website:

www.familyfarmalliance.org

We're looking forward to seeing you!

FAMILY FARM ALLIANCE

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