

250

OFFICIAL FILE COPY RECEIVED		
APR 24 2007		
REPLY:	YES	NO
INFO. COPY TO:		
DATE	INITIAL	TO
CLASSIFICATION		
PROJECT		
CONTROL NO.		
FOLDER I.D.		

Date: April 22, 2007

To: U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Dakotas Area Office
Box 1017
Bismarck, ND 58502

From: Richard Betting
11630 39 ST. SE
Valley City, ND 58072

Re: Comments of the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Dakotas Area Office and the State of North Dakota Garrison Conservancy District
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Red River Valley Water Supply Project

In one of the original draft documents "Alternatives Studied in the Phase II Report" (January 2000) taking water from the Spiritwood Aquifer was mentioned in at least two alternatives: Alternative 3: In-Basin, Enlarged Lake Ashtabula and In-Basin, Groundwater Alternative. Later documents studied part of the Spiritwood Aquifer underlying parts of Sargent and Ransom Counties

The size and quality of the aquifer in Sargent County—850,000 acre/feet of water under 175 square miles of land—are mentioned, but the aquifer runs north from there almost two hundred miles, at least to the Canadian border, as it shows on the map. As the drafts progressed through stages, this option got less and less attention, apparently without any further studies being done. Certainly, the Final EIS should contain analyses of the quality and availability of the rest of the aquifer. In the economic analysis of alternatives, the costs of the In-Basin alternatives actually went down over time, making them seem more attractive. But there is no detailed analysis of all of the options offered by the size and quality of the Spiritwood Aquifer, facts that are necessary before any decision not to select this option can be made.

While the Draft EIS concludes that the Sheyenne River and Lake Ashtabula contain water "suitable for most designated uses," there does not seem to be any analysis in the document of how the water quality in the river and the lake will be affected by other water projects. For example, the Devils Lake outlet was already put into operation in the fall of 2005. Water from West Bay contains over 500 mg/L sulfates, 1500 mg/L total dissolved solids and many other contaminants that will flow down the Sheyenne River and end up in Lake Ashtabula, described as a "nutrient and sediment trap." According to the North Dakota SWC the total inflows to Lake Ashtabula could be over 17,000 acre/feet per year. The EIS needs to explain and analyze the effects of Devils Lake water on the lake and then on the Missouri water intended for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. How will the river and lake ecosystems, as well as water treatment, be impacted by water from Devils Lake?

I saw no responses to this issue in this document. And the outlet is set to run again this year.

The Final EIS could also explain why Devils Lake water itself is not a possibility. After all, if West Bay water can flow down the Sheyenne and not negatively impact downstream users, it should be good enough for Red River Valley users.

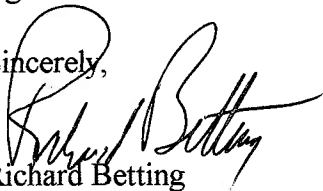
In my last letter about this project, I also suggested that North Dakotans be told how much the water supply project would cost. I wrote:

The Final EIS should also contain a detailed explanation of what communities will pay for the project. That is, what communities have agreed to and expect to pay for, how and when. Who will pay when no water is running or whether the supply will operate even when no water is needed in the Red River Valley. For example, Valley City is listed in some places as part of the RRVWS project. Is Valley City a recipient of water benefits—even when it may not need Missouri River Water? Has Valley City agreed to participate?

When I asked people who live in Fargo how much their monthly water bills would increase as a result of this water supply project, they did not know. Those in Valley City said they should not even be part of such a project, nor should they have to help pay for it.

There are many more problems with the proposed project. I hope some of the answers to these questions are adequately addressed in public before any decisions are made about continuing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Betting". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Richard Betting