

Abstract Submission for 5th Canadian River Heritage Conference

Title of Presentation:

Red River Basin Commission: Natural Resources Framework Plan

Category: River Management

Presenters:

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Abstract

The Red River Basin encompasses 45,000 sq. miles (116,000 km²) of flat valley and outer escarpments that were formed by the advance and retreat of glacial Lake Agassiz. The Red River flows northward from its beginning at the Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota boundaries, terminating some 300 miles (480 km) north at Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba. The basin is recognized as an important agriculturally productive area, as well as supporting the ecologically abundant prairie-pothole region.

There are many challenges to integrated land and water management in the Red River Basin. Because of its geomorphology and hydrology, flooding is a major concern for residents in the basin. Jurisdictions within the basin have differing laws and policies that make it difficult to create consistency in managing land and water resources. Especially difficult are the differences in water law and institutional water management.

The Red River Basin Commission's Natural Resources Framework Plan (NRFP) is based on stakeholder comments, review, and feedback from around the basin. It outlines thirteen goals relating to natural resources in the Red River Basin, focusing on flood damage reduction; drainage; water quality; water supply; soil conservation; fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation; and the overriding concept of integrated natural resource management based on watershed boundaries.

Although the NRFP was developed by the Red River Basin Commission and helps direct the activities of the Commission, it is widely acknowledged that real progress toward achieving these goals for the Red River Basin can only be realized if all jurisdictions do their part. The RRBC will use the 13 basin goals outlined in the NRFP to track and celebrate the work of Red River Basin residents, organizations and governments, as it is through their actions and willingness to work in a complementary way with one another that real progress can be made.

Presenter Biography:

An aquatic ecologist by training, April Kiers North has worked for the Red River Basin Commission since 2003 as Director of Plan Development and most recently, Basin Coordinator for Water Quality. Prior to settling down into her career, she enjoyed three summers of mucking around Delta Marsh on the southern shore of Lake Manitoba. She received her BSc (with distinction) and MSc degrees from the University of Manitoba.