

Testimony to North Dakota Legislative Management
Water – Related Topics Overview Committee
By
Greater Ramsey Water District

Greater Ramsey Water District is a provider of potable water to its rural members located in nine counties in east central North Dakota. The district also owns and operates a rural sewer system located south and west of the City of Devils Lake. This area includes Lakewood, Frison and the West Side of Creel Bay. The district distributes treated water to 1658 water accounts, several towns, other water districts and Camp Grafton. The district collects sewage for treatment by the City of Devils Lake from 613 accounts and Camp Grafton. The district is approximately 7000 square miles and employs a manager, 2 operators and 2 office staff.

GRWD has been battling the flooding of Devils Lake which has been occurring over the past 17 years mainly by abandoning infrastructure, rerouting lines to high ground and raising existing manholes and lift stations which cannot be rerouted. This approach has been very costly and time consuming with countless man hours dealing with emergency measures to continue service to the affected areas.

GRWD cannot continue to implement this strategy due to the record levels the lake is continuing to set. Simply put, our backs are against the wall and the only option available to continue service to the members not affected by the flooding is to abandon parts of the system which cannot be moved.

GRWD once had 75 lift stations in its service area now only 15 are left. The sewer system is experiencing major infiltration due to hydraulic pressures being put on the system. The sewer flow graph along with the lake levels shows that if the lake continues to rise the system will become so costly to operate that it will not be a viable system.

GRWD has miles of water and sewer lines under the lake which we continue to use because it is the only option; this is not the way to manage a system. The lake is a system also and it is not being managed properly to protect the health and safety of the members of GRWD.

Recently after the major high wind event in May, GRWD was forced to shut down another sewer line which served a fish cleaning in Lakewood. The local fishing club asked the State Game and Fish for funds to relocate the service line which serves the station. The first question asked was what is the elevation? The anglers replied 1460; the state said it's too low, find a place behind the dike. **We cannot all relocate behind the protection of the dike; lower the lake so we can live our lives without fear of the next rain storm or spring melt.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.