

# RRVWSP Construction to Begin in 2021

By Kimberly Cook

Construction on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) will begin in 2021, thanks to support from the North Dakota State Water Commission and the Interim Water Topics Overview Committee. In October, the State Water Commission approved the release of \$5.75 million dollars to fund the Missouri River Intake Pumping Station Wetwell construction south of Washburn, as well as \$1.13 million for property acquisition and project planning.

“This is a giant step forward in the progress of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project,” says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion general manager.

The decision from the State Water Commission comes after Garrison Diversion reported in September to a joint meeting of the State Water Commission and the Interim Water Topics Overview Committee that all the criteria in last legislative session’s Senate Bill 2020 were met. The State Water Commission and Budget Section’s approval



of the SB2020 conditions paved the way for funding availability. Bid notices were published in mid-October, and a bid opening was held Nov. 12, when ICS was selected from a pool of three bidders with a bid of \$4.89 million.

The Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board of Directors approved a “Notice to Proceed” at a special meeting on Nov. 19 to approve the bid from ICS. The Garrison Diversion Board of Directors followed suit at a special board meeting held the next day. Construction is scheduled to begin on the wet well in January.

“Garrison Diversion board members and staff, as well as LAWA board members, have been working towards this for several years. Getting the project to this point is truly worth celebrating,” says DeKrey.

## Release of Final EIS for ENDAWS is Major Step Forward for Water Project

On Dec. 4, the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) released the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply (ENDAWS) Project’s Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

ENDAWS is an alternate bulk water supply to the State Red River Valley Water Supply Project, a municipal, rural and industrial water supply project being developed to meet the water needs of central and eastern North Dakota. The state project, led by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion), is designed with an intake on the Missouri River. Garrison Diversion estimates that using the proposed alternate water source of Reclamation’s McClusky Canal could save millions of dollars in construction and operations and maintenance costs.

“Utilizing existing facilities such as the McClusky Canal would make the project much more affordable for the end water users,” says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion’s general manager.

The EIS evaluated multiple alternatives, from which a preferred alternative, the McClusky Canal and Missouri River Alternative, was chosen.

“We are grateful for Reclamation’s thorough assessment of the alternatives in the environmental impact statement and for staying on task to maintain the timeline for this important project,” says DeKrey.

A cooperating agency team was established to assist Reclamation with the preparation of the Draft EIS, which included federal and state agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise.

A decision will not be made on the proposed alternatives until a 30-day minimum waiting period has passed, at which point a Record of Decision can be issued for the project and will state the alternative selected.

For additional information on the ENDAWS EIS, visit [www.garrisondiversion.org/news](http://www.garrisondiversion.org/news).

# Dedicated Individuals Receive

*Each year at the Joint North Dakota Water Convention & Irrigation Workshop hosted by the North Dakota Water Users Association, a number of individuals are recognized for their service to North Dakota's water industry. This year, at the Virtual 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, several recipients with Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) ties were presented water awards.*

The **WATER WHEEL AWARD** is given to someone who demonstrates a commitment to protect and manage North Dakota's water resources. Kip Kovar, Garrison Diversion district engineer; Merri Mooridian, Garrison Diversion administrative officer; and Jeffrey Breker, Sargent County Director for Garrison Diversion Board of Directors, were awarded this honor.

**Kip Kovar** has been part of Garrison Diversion's team since 2001. Most of Kip's career has been devoted to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), and he currently serves as the deputy program manager for RRVWSP engineering, overseeing the project's engineering, right-of-way/easement efforts and construction. He was instrumental in bringing renewed life to the McClusky Canal through the McClusky Canal Irrigation Project nearly 10 years ago. Kip also assisted with the facilitation of the recent Oakes Test Area Title Transfer.

"It's been very rewarding to work on North Dakota water issues and is an honor to be selected for the Water Wheel Award," says Kip.

**Merri Mooridian** came to work for Garrison Diversion in 2003, swiftly rising to the position of Garrison Diversion's administrative officer. Merri's dedication to the RRVWSP earned her appointment to deputy program manager for Red River Valley Water Supply Project Administration in 2014. In her RRVWSP role, Merri oversees the administrative, legal, financial, and communication considerations of the project, while coordinating those efforts with the RRVWSP engineering and land management activities.

"I'm honored and humbled to receive this award. I look forward to many more years at Garrison Diversion and advancing and keeping water needs at the forefront. Together, we will keep our success moving forward," says Merri.

**Jeff Breker**, Sargent County director, has been a valuable asset to the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District since 2009, as well as the Southeast Rural Water District since 1989, and an active proponent to secure



Kip Kovar



Merri Mooridian



Jeff Breker

reliable water supplies for residents in Sargent County and across North Dakota. Jeff is retiring from the Garrison Diversion Board of Directors on Dec. 31, 2020.

"Thank you for this award presented to me. It was a great accomplishment getting our water systems going so well in southeast North Dakota and being a part of that on the Southeast Water Board. I also hope we've worked hard enough as a Garrison Diversion board and with many other people in North Dakota to now finally say that we have wheels turning to get water through the Red River Valley Water Supply Project," says Jeff.

# Water Awards

The **COMMODORE AWARD** is presented by the Governor of North Dakota, and winners hold the rank of commodore in the North Dakota Mythical Navy.

**Ken Royse**, Garrison Diversion board chairman, was presented this honor. Ken has served as the Burleigh County Director for Garrison Diversion since 2005. Ken has gleaned a wealth of experience and knowledge from his heavy involvement in water boards and water interests throughout his career. In addition to his



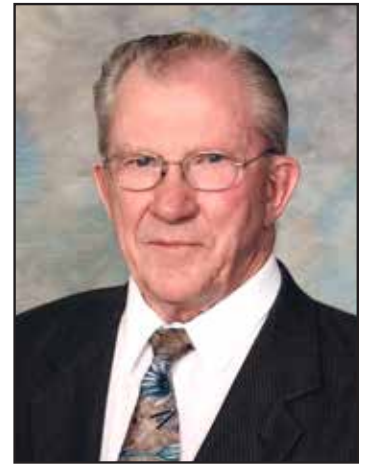
Ken Royse

role on the Garrison Diversion Board, Ken also served 22 years on the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board, was appointed by Gov. John Hoeven to serve on the Missouri River Task Force, serves on the North Dakota Water Education and North Dakota Water Users boards, Missouri River Joint Water Board, and is the North Dakota representative to the Upper Missouri River Association.

When accepting his award, Ken stated, "I do appreciate it, this award, and I recognize that it symbolizes involvement and long-term effort in water development issues. I think it's an award that a lot of people in the water community deserve, because to be involved in water in North Dakota is always a long-term involvement. It's about having an interest and wanting to make a difference in things such as water supply, surface water management, irrigation, those type of things. It's nice to be involved and nice to get this award. I'm especially pleased to be included in a class of inductees with Senator Gary Lee and Past Chairman of Southwest Water Authority Board Larry Bares, two gentlemen that certainly made a difference in the water community. Thank you very much for this nice award. I very much appreciate this."

The **HALL OF FAME AWARD** is the highest honor presented and is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated an extended commitment to develop, manage and protect North Dakota's water resources.

Former Eddy County Director **Charlie Richter** was presented the Hall of Fame Award. Charlie has the honored distinction as the longest serving director in the history of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, representing Eddy County from 1969 to 2012.



Charlie Richter

In his 43 years of service to the district, Charlie proved himself to be an effective leader, serving two terms as chairman of the board. Charlie generously devoted himself to strengthening North Dakota's water industry and his community, earning a reputation for leadership and participation as he tirelessly promoted water projects and irrigation development within North Dakota.

Charlie was a faithful, hard-working advocate and constantly promoted the cause of Garrison Diversion and a Missouri River water project for the people of North Dakota, continuing to believe that development of Garrison Diversion lands will ensure quality of life for future generations of North Dakotans.

A true statesman, Charlie was devoted to North Dakota and his community and earned a reputation for leadership and participation as he tirelessly promoted water projects and irrigation development within North Dakota.

"Charlie's presence is ingrained into North Dakota's water development history, and, therefore, Charlie Richter is a deserving recipient for North Dakota's Water Users Association Hall of Fame Award," says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion's general manager.

*Garrison Diversion is proud to have each of these dedicated and deserving individuals on our team. Congratulations to you on receiving these honors!*