

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT Minutes for Informational Meeting Alliance Township July 26, 2011

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held a landowner informational meeting regarding drainage issues in Section 11, Alliance Township, on Tuesday, July 26, 2011, at 9:00 PM in the Barnesville Office. BRRWD Managers present were Gerald L. VanAmburg, Curtis M. Nelson, John E. Hanson, Breanna L. Kobiela, and Roger G. Ellefson. Others attending included: Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator; and landowners: Alvin Hanson, Shane Thompson, Rick Thompson, Mary Lou Thompson, Steve Thompson, Randy Johnk, Mark Rustad, Jerry Butenhoff, Doug Butenhoff, and John Butenhoff.

BRRWD Chairman Gerald VanAmburg called the meeting to order at 9:00 PM. The group introduced themselves. BRRWD Administrator Bruce Albright announced that the proceedings were being recorded to aid in the preparation of minutes.

Albright gave a brief history of the area drainage issues in Alliance Township. He explained that landowner Rick Thompson applied for a permit to install an approach in the southeast corner of his property in order to access his field. The BRRWD Board performed a field review and discussed several issues and potential modifications to correct some concerns within Section 11, Alliance Township. The Board approved Thompson's permit in the fall of 2009. Albright recalled that during the field review, the Managers had noted that the ditches along Section 11 could be cleaned to help improve the area drainage. Albright informed the group that a permit is not required to clean a ditch to its original grade. He stated that the ditch was also cleaned in the fall of 2009. Albright stated that a concern was noted in the spring of 2010, regarding a spoil bank that was created during the ditch cleanout. This spoil runs along the south side of the W½, Section 11, and varies in height from 12" to 18".

Albright informed the group that Rick Thompson has applied for two more permits to complete work in the W½, Section 11, Alliance Township. The first is to install a small culvert on the south side of his field. Albright explained there is a low area where the berm crosses. A gated culvert placed here would allow the water to flow into the ditch system. The second request proposed to increase the culvert size along County Road (C.R.) No. 15, south of Whisky Creek, from a 24" diameter (dia.) pipe to a 30" dia. pipe, and to increase the culvert size in the approach located in the intersection north of C.R. No. 15 from an 18" dia. pipe to a 30" dia. pipe. The BRRWD tabled a permit for this same work, which was applied for last summer.

Albright restated the issues to be resolved during tonight's meeting. The first concern is the small berm that was created in 2009 during the ditch cleanout. He noted there was no permit issued for this work. The second problem is whether or not the BRRWD Board would allow Rick Thompson to install a culvert through the berm and to change the culverts along C.R. No. 15.

Manager Ellefson thought that it would make the most sense to keep water in the ditch, rather than flowing across the field, causing erosion. He explained that the water is likely restricted on the west end where there is a 30" dia. pipe. Ellefson explained that there are approximately three culverts which might be undersized within Section 11, Alliance Township. He felt that these three culverts could be increased to help relieve some of the drainage issues in this area.

Alliance Township Supervisor Alvin Hanson stated that he thought the 18" dia. culvert in the south approach in the west corner was supposed to be removed. Thompson stated that Manager Nelson had asked him if he would remove the other approach if the Board approved the installation of the approach across the road from Jerry Butenhoff's property. Thompson said that at that time he would think about it. Since then, he has decided he would not be willing to remove that approach.

The group briefly discussed natural landscape features that could affect the area drainage.

Manager VanAmburg redirected the group to the concerns at hand. He questioned if Ellefson's proposal would be a potential solution. Albright asked Butenhoff if the 18" dia. culvert on his land drains sufficiently or if a larger culvert is necessary at this location. Butenhoff confirmed that it drains well. A landowner stated that lands to the east of Whisky Creek have constant water problems. He suggested Thompson's approach be moved around the corner. He also expressed concern with downstream flooding due to the larger culverts potentially being installed upstream.

Albright asked the Thompsons if they would consider moving the approach off of C.R. No. 15. Thompson stated that he is not interested in relocating the approach to a narrower road. He said C.R. No. 15 is wider than C.R. No. 57, and the wider road is necessary for the large farm machinery and trucks.

Thompson suggested directing water towards Butenhoff which would eventually empty into the Buffalo River. Butenhoff questioned what would happen if it got really wet. He noted that the Buffalo River already crosses his land during high water events.

The group had a discussion regarding the height of a gravel road. Albright also told Butenhoff that currently, there have been no permits submitted by the County requesting to raise the road in Sections 14 and 15, Alliance Township, where his new bins are located.

Albright commented that the BRRWD Board is considering a comprehensive study for this area to determine if retention would be beneficial. He said this has been put on hold for now.

Thompson asked how many permits have been issued upstream of Section 11, Alliance Township. He questioned what has been done to help protect downstream landowners. Another landowner commented that there have only been bigger culverts installed which sends more water downstream. Thompson requested information pertaining to the size of every culvert and bridge, on both Whisky Creek and the Buffalo River, five to eight miles upstream of Mark Rustad's place.

Ellefson stated that some culvert sizes have been increased in places. He explained that the Board is faced with a difficult decision: if it is better to install a larger culvert or to have several roads wash out due to an insufficient culvert(s). VanAmburg also commented that some culverts have been increased, but there have also been ditch improvements made downstream in an attempt to get better drainage.

Albright recalled a comment made by Ellefson regarding issues along Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9 involving the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County. The area landowners have notified the BRRWD for many years about their drainage issues. Albright stated a major concern regarding the South Branch is the significant sediment that has settled in the river over the years. He explained that there have been a series of meetings held to discuss solutions to the landowners' concerns. Albright has informed these landowners that any potential project in Wilkin County would have to show no impact or a positive impact at the Clay-Wilkin County line, meaning that the water levels and/or flows have been decreased. Albright stated these landowners are ready to complete a flood damage reduction (fdr) project, since they cannot successfully farm the land next to the South Branch. Albright explained that the BRRWD's main goal is flood damage reduction. He listed a couple successful fdr projects, including the Whisky Creek Tributaries runoff reduction project in Clay County and the Deerhorn Creek Flood Control Levees in Wilkin County. He noted that these are comprehensive projects that were completed over several years.

Albright discussed a controversial culvert on Five Mile Hill on Whisky Creek. Clay County Engineer Jack Cousins completed a study that showed the need for two 6' dia. pipes rather than only one 6' dia. pipe. The BRRWD Board questioned why there was a need for this because the road had never washed out, and water never flowed over the road. Cousins explained that he supports retention, but a county road is not designed to be a dam. Cousins noted that he could be liable if someone were to get hurt due to a washed out roadway.

Ellefson commented that the wetlands are typically our natural storage, but they are full and are also contributing water.

Landowner Mark Rustad questioned if the BRRWD has established goals. Albright explained that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recently approved the BRRWD's new Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP) with our new goals on 6/23/10. Rustad felt that the BRRWD has not been providing sufficient fdr benefits for the landowners. Ellefson explained that some wetlands have been lowered, but not during a flood. Albright gave several examples of fdr projects such as the Whisky Creek Tributaries, the wetland restoration by the Galaxy Supper Club, and the Grove Lake Outlet. VanAmburg explained that the BRRWD is trying to make the best decisions possible with any given project and/or permit. He said there is only so much the Board can accomplish. Manager Nelson supported VanAmburg by mentioning a project that was attempted on Whisky Creek along C.R. No. 31. This project was dismissed due to the fact that it would be classified as a high hazard dam.

Landowner Randy Johnk redirected the group back to the issues at hand. Ellefson stated that the rational solution from a water perspective would be for Thompson to leave the approach where it is and install a 30" dia. culvert in the approach. He said this would be better than what is currently there. Thompson agreed with this. Ellefson also felt that Butenhoff should increase his culvert to a 24" dia. pipe. Butenhoff questioned who would provide/install these culverts. Ellefson commented that the County would likely do this. Butenhoff asked what would happen if the County doesn't furnish the culverts. Ellefson thought they would be supportive of the culvert in the road but was unsure about the approach culverts.

Ellefson stated that he feels the berm and inlet pipe are ok.

Albright asked Ellefson for a motion to approve Thompson's permit applications for the gated inlet pipe on the south side of Thompson's field, and the replacement of the two existing pipes with 30" dia. culverts. **Motion** by Ellefson to approve Permit Nos. 10-023 and 10-140. **Seconded** by Nelson. **Approved.**

There being no further business to come before tonight's meeting, Chairman VanAmburg adjourned the meeting at 10:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted and prepared by,

Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator