

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 5, 2010
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

"Concerns Expressed Regarding Highwater"

At the 1/26/10 meeting of the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), another concern was filed regarding highwater problems east of Barnesville. A series of lakes located on the north side of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34 was the topic of discussion. Several years ago, when the BRRWD was exploring an outlet for Grove Lake in northwestern Otter Tail County, discussions also took place regarding some additional lakes to the north. There is series of lakes in this area, including Helgeson, Businger, Seim, Randkler, and Pete that would all need to use Grove Lake as an outlet. At the time, the BRRWD felt that an outlet for Grove Lake had to be established first. That outlet has now been running for a year and has taken Grove Lake down approximately 3 feet. Houston Engineering, Inc., was asked to investigate potential outlets and costs for the area along T.H. No. 34. A report is expected at the next meeting.

Other business included:

- Approval of a permit to the Clay County Highway Department for the possible repair of County State Aid Highway No. 52 from Sabin to County Road No. 21. The County is seeking Stimulus Funding to hopefully do this work in 2010.
- Discussed a request for 2010 bonding from the State Legislature. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, has been working with local Legislators. The BRRWD had requested \$3.5 million for Oakport, \$1 million for Manston Slough Restoration, \$200,000 for a study on the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County, \$400,000 for various lake outlets, and possibly \$1.5 million for reconstruction of the Georgetown Flood Control Levee. Given the State's economic condition, there will be limited funding available. Albright said Legislators are asking for projects where the money could be spent by 12/31/10.
- Noting that the cleanup work regarding the Manston Slough Restoration project on the former Donald Holubok property in the SE1/4, Section 30, Manston Township, Wilkin County, has been completed, including well sealing and septic system abandonment. This clears the release of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Reinvest in Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources payments to the BRRWD.
- Noting that the geotechnical work for the Georgetown Flood Control Levee improvements has been completed. It appears that portions of the existing levee may need to be moved further away from the Buffalo River. A complete report should be filed at the next meeting.
- Noting that last fall, the BRRWD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conducted an aerial survey to locate logjams on the Buffalo River. The BRRWD qualified for an Emergency Watershed Protection Grant. To date, the NRCS has not released those funds. It would be nice to have the work completed before spring runoff.
- Noting that the BRRWD will meet with Clay County Commissioners on 2/09/10 to discuss petitions required to use taxing authority under Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd. 3. Two levies will be requested. One for general flood damage reduction/natural resource enhancement projects, and the other for providing the local cost share required to match State/Federal funding for buyouts of homes/properties either affected by the 2009 spring flood, are located in a floodplain, or are along riverine areas where erosion slides are occurring.

2/05/10 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Discussed attendance at the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Breakfast, scheduled for March 10-11 in St. Paul. All Managers plan to attend. This is an opportunity to work with our local Legislators regarding BRRWD needs.
- Discussed possible options for either relocating or building a new Watershed District office in Barnesville. The current office does not have enough work and storage space.
- Discussed upcoming meetings the first week of February involving the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Fargo-Moorhead Flood Control project. At that time, the general public should learn if a North Dakota option for diversion is feasible. Local leaders and the COE are on a very tight timeline to get the study details finished in 2010 so that they can qualify for federal funding.
- Agreed to donate \$150 to the Wilkin County Soil and Water Conservation District Envirothon.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$141,880.90.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 8, 2010, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.