

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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"Highwater Problems Plague Local Watershed"

At their meeting held on 4/26/10, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed highwater problems involving several area lakes/wetlands. A hearing regarding an emergency project for LaBelle/Boyer Lakes will be held on 5/03/10 at 7:30 PM in the Lake Park High School Theater. Notices have been sent to affected landowners. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is very anxious to see something done as water levels on Boyer Lake are starting to affect Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 10. A homeowner east of Barnesville attended the meeting to discuss highwater problems on Ranum Lake along T.H. No. 34. An informational meeting was held with affected landowners last fall, but there didn't seem to be much interest in establishing an outlet. Another option for the homeowner might be a buyout. The BRRWD office will check with various agencies regarding funding. Once the LaBelle/Boyer Lakes project is under construction, the BRRWD intends to focus on a County Line Outlet east of Barnesville. Rising water levels are affecting area roads and a homeowner's barn.

Another issue that surfaced at the meeting pertained to homeowner concerns about County repairs/road raising near the line between Wilkin, Otter Tail, and Clay Counties. The road washed out the week of April 10. Clay County did the repairs and raised the road. Allegedly, there was a culvert in the road that was plugged. The road raise has backed up water to the south, affecting the homeowner's fields and property access. The BRRWD will recommend to the Clay County Highway Department that they apply for a permit to install a culvert in the road.

Other business included:

- Discussed a diking complaint in Alliance Township, Clay County. A neighboring landowner feels that the work completed last fall will affect area drainage. A meeting between the affected parties will be scheduled.
- Approved the final pay request to Nanik Construction for their work on the Riverton Township Retention project. The project was operational this spring during the flood. The amount of the pay request was \$13,849.57.
- Noting that the Army Corps of Engineers has issued a Jurisdictional Determination regarding the wetland permit needed for the Manston Slough Restoration.
- Authorized a redetermination of benefits for Project No. 32, Hawley EDA Diversion. The project was built in approximately 1998. At that time, only the City of Hawley was assessed. Since then, it has been determined that other landowners are using the project as an outlet, and the project provides protection benefits for landowners on the west side of County Road No. 33. The redetermination is being done so that hopefully, landowners north of Hawley might be able to establish an outlet that could use the Diversion project to alleviate highwater problems affecting area roads and homes.
- Noting that sixteen houses and associated outbuildings will be sold at auction on 5/11/10 by Pifer's Auction and Realty, Moorhead. The buildings were obtained through the Oakport Flood Mitigation project.
- Noting that the office is ready to close out the 2006 Federal Emergency Management Agency paperwork.
- Noting that meetings continue with the City of Georgetown regarding possible levee improvements. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has asked that the project cost about \$1 million.

5/03/10 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Noting that the office plans to use recent aerial photographs, obtained by the DNR through their high resolution low elevation aerial surveys of various waterways within the BRRWD, to locate logjams on the Main Stem and South Branch of the Buffalo Rivers. The office has received Emergency Watershed Protection funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to remove logjams. The work was to have been done last fall, but funding delayed that project. The work will need to be done by mid-September 2010.
- Authorized cleanout of an inlet channel to the Stony Creek detention project east of Barnesville.
- Discussed a Working Lands Initiative proposal for the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties. If approved by the DNR, the program could bring additional funds to landowners for wetland restorations and bufferstrips.
- Noting that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will hold a hearing on the BRRWD's Revised Watershed Management Plan on 5/05/10 between 5:00-7:00 PM, Hildebrand Hall, Barnesville.
- Authorized the acquisition of 2-3 lots in the Barnesville Commercial Park for the building of a new Watershed office. An architectural firm will be contacted to begin the building design.
- Made reservations for three Managers to attend the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Summer Tour to be held on June 24-26, 2010, in Bloomington.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$344,451.15.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 10, 2010, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.