

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 27, 2011
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

"Renewed Interest in Watershed Outlet"

Landowners involved with a previous study conducted by the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) attended the 1/24/11 meeting of the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), to discuss the project's status. Several years ago, the BRRWD studied a highwater outlet for an area called the County Line project, east of Barnesville. The project had been tabled because of several concerns. The BRRWD has been extremely busy and constructed three outlet projects in 2010. The County Line project water had reached an elevation where it was starting to drain out naturally. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) had also expressed concerns about installing an outlet into their Waterfowl Protection Area (WPA).

The landowners felt that something still needed to be done to lower the water levels and expressed concerns about what might happen this spring with the runoff/melt. The Board agreed to schedule a meeting with the USFWS to review their concerns. Earlier, the USFWS had indicated that they might be interested in exploring a project that would restore their WPA. The BRRWD also agreed to contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for potential funding.

Other business included:

- The Board discussed the appraisal status regarding buyouts in the City of Georgetown. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said that 15 landowners have responded requesting an appraisal. The next step will be to complete a Request for Proposals and send it to area appraisal services.
- The Board reviewed the status of easements and land acquisitions needed for the Oakport Flood Mitigation project. At this time, only two easements are left to sign. One will start condemnation this week. The DNR was sent a letter indicating the project still needs \$8.7 million in State funding to complete.
- The Board approved a permit to David Kragnes to pattern tile the NE1/4, Section 25, Kragnes Township, Clay County. The water will outlet to Clay County Ditch No. 59, for which it is assessed.
- The Board discussed scheduling a meeting to review drainage issues in Section 27, Skree Township, Clay County. Some suggested meeting dates were mailed to affected agencies. If a date cannot be agreed upon, the office will look at scheduling the meeting in early March.
- The Board discussed the status of the Manston Slough Restoration project. The office is working with landowners to obtain the necessary easement options. The BRRWD would like to hold the project hearing in April 2011. The DNR has been asked for 75% funding because of the natural resource enhancement (nre) features associated with the project.
- A meeting will be held with landowners in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties involving the South Branch of the Buffalo River on 1/27/11 at 2:00 PM, Hildebrand Hall, Assumption Catholic Church, Barnesville. The project has been discussed with the Mediation Project Team (PT) over the past two years. Ideas/suggestions to meet both flood damage reduction (fdr) and nre goals will be discussed.
- The next meeting of the Mediation PT is scheduled for 2/17/11 at 1:30 PM, MSUM Science Center, east of Glyndon.

1/27/11 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- The Board Reviewed proposals from four architectural firms regarding development of plans and specifications for the BRRWD's new office building to be located in Commercial Park. The contract was awarded to YHR Partners, Moorhead.
- The Board discussed suggesting that Clay County adopt an ordinance similar to the one adopted by Cass County, North Dakota, regarding river setbacks due to stability and flooding concerns along the riverbank. The Managers felt an ordinance in Clay County would be beneficial. In Cass County, the setback is typically 450 feet, but may vary by development. More information regarding the ordinance will be obtain from Cass County before discussing this issue further with Clay County officials.
- The Board approved payment of bills totaling \$62,399.61.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 14, 2011, 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.