

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 17, 2011
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“Local Watershed Prepares for 2011 Spring Flooding”

At their meeting held on 2/14/11 in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed preparations for the projected spring flood. A landowner in Kragnes attended the meeting to discuss the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan for the Kragnes Ringdike, should water levels overtop the roads surrounding Kragnes. The BRRWD constructed the ringdike project in 2008, but it has some limitations regarding elevations. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc., said an O&M Plan was developed. A copy was given to the landowner.

Other flood preparations include stopping all lake lowering outlets in advance of any spring flooding, and operating the BRRWD's flood control projects, including Stony Creek, Stinking Lake, and Hay Creek. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said the office has taken a number of calls recently regarding the possible flood. Landowners are interested in buyouts and ringdikes.

The Board met with Margaret Follingstad, Architect, YHR Partners, Moorhead, regarding their new office building, which will be located in Commercial Park. YHR Partners was hired on 1/24/11 to design the building. The building committee consists of John E. Hanson, Becker County, and Roger G. Ellefson, Wilkin County. A meeting will be scheduled with Follingstad to start the design process. The Board indicated they would like to start construction around May 1, 2011, so that possibly they could be in the new building before winter. The new building is needed to operate the District more efficiently and add staff.

Other business included:

- The Board approved a permit to Red River Valley Co-op Power Association to bury a high voltage power line under Clay County Ditch No. 9 in the NW1/4, Section 5, Kurtz Township.
- An informational meeting will be held on 3/08/11 at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office with Skree Township officials, state and federal agencies, and neighboring landowners to discuss drainage concerns in Section 27, Skree Township. Affected parties have been notified.
- BRRWD representatives met with Norwegian Grove Township regarding possible routes to lower high water on Lake Annie, which is also affecting Trunk Highway No. 108 west of Pelican Rapids. Lake Annie, Grenna Lake, and Gandrud Lake are not in the BRRWD boundaries. One potential outlet would bring the water back into the BRRWD. The landowners would need to petition the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to enlarge the District. Two other possible routes would drain east to the Pelican River.
- The Board reviewed elevations of various lake outlet projects. The valve on the Long Lake siphon has been removed. Long Lake has come down approximately 1.79' in two weeks after the repairs. The Turtle Lake siphon is also running. As noted, all lake outlets will be stopped in advance of any spring flooding.
- An agency meeting will be held on 3/07/11 at 1:00 PM in the Barnesville office to discuss a possible outlet for an area located on the Clay/Wilkin County line east of Barnesville. Part of the property affected by the project is either owned or under easement by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Neighboring landowners attended the 1/24/11 BRRWD meeting to voice concerns about the rising water and to see if the Board could develop an outlet project.
- The Board discussed State funding assistance needed to complete a number of BRRWD projects, including Manston Slough Restoration (\$657,736), Oakport Flood Mitigation (\$8.7 million),

2/14/11 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

Georgetown Levee Improvement (\$3.2 million). The BRRWD will work with their Lobbyist and local Legislators.

- A Request for Proposals will be sent for appraisals of 15 homes in Georgetown.
- A meeting will be held with the City of Hawley on 2/22/11 at 5:30 PM in their Council Chambers. The City would like to discuss a number of projects including the Buffalo River Restoration, operation of the Cromwell Township Highwater Outlet, and repairs for the Hawley Diversion.
- The Board reviewed the 1/27/11 South Branch of the Buffalo River meeting held with landowners in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties. Some landowners would like to see certain features of the project developed in phases, including the setback levees. The project will be discussed further at the next project team meeting on 2/17/11.
- The Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for March 23-24, 2011, Kelly Inn, St. Paul. The BRRWD will invite local Legislators.
- The Board accepted the Revised Viewers' Reports for the Redetermination of Benefits on Clay County Ditch Nos. 36, 40, and 60. A hearing date was tentatively scheduled for 3/22/11 at 8:00 PM in the Comstock Community Center.
- The Board signed a grant application from BWSR totaling \$388,592 for Clean Water Legacy projects on the South Branch of the Buffalo River and Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee. An informational meeting will be scheduled with landowners on Wolverton Creek.
- The Board approved payment of bills totaling \$159,467.27.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 28, 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.