NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 18, 2013
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“Landowners Bring Concerns to Local Watershed"

At their meeting held in Barnesville on Monday, July 8, 2013, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) met with several groups of landowners. Some of the concerns pertained to the heavy rainfall event that fell in the Comstock and Wolverton areas on June 25th.

Landowners from Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1 (J.D. 1) estimated that close to 4,000 acres of crops were lost due to flooding with the recent rainfall event along the ditch system. Landowners were anxious to talk about possible solutions when a similar event happens again. Some of the concerns discussed included possible cleaning of the ditch, sizing of culverts in Clay County, possible upstream retention, the operation of drain tile within the project’s watershed, and a possible high water diversion that could be placed on the Clay-Wilkin County line. The office will look into these issues, and the Board agreed to schedule an informational meeting this fall with the affected landowners.

Landowners from Akron and Meadows Townships were invited to the meeting to discuss the sizing of area culverts. Several years ago, the Wilkin County Highway Department replaced a washed out pipe in 290th AVE between Sections 5 and 6, Akron Township. Three downstream crossings in a field approach, 230th ST, and County Road (C.R.) No. 15 all have smaller pipes. The landowners would like to see the culverts enlarged to match the sizing of the pipe in County Road No. 169. After a lengthy discussion, an agreement was made to have two lines of 42” diameter (dia.) culvert installed in each of the downstream referenced crossings.

A homeowner in Oakport Township discussed his concerns regarding drainage along 2nd ST. With the recent rains, they have standing water in the area. Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, viewed the area after the rainfall and took pictures. There are 18 entrances that cross the ditch on the west side of 2nd ST and 11 entrances on the east side. A part of the problem may be that none of the culverts were laid to grade and some are partially plugged. The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) to conduct a culvert/grade line survey of the area. Once the data is tabulated, the Board will schedule an informational meeting with the affected parties.

Landowners in Section 27, Skree Township, attended the meeting to review concerns regarding the designated wetland on their property. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had them install an 18” dia. culvert in an approach along 110th AVE S. The landowners were concerned about the volume of water that drains on to their property, which they feel adds to the wetland problem. The office is planning to meet with NRCS to see if culvert sizes in the area can be changed.

Landowners expressed concerns regarding the sizing of pipes in the Sabin Coulee near the east end of Clay County Ditch No. 53. With the June rainfall event, there was serious flooding along the coulee. The Board did an extensive study of the area in the 1980s. An investigation will be conducted.

A landowner filed a repair petition for the clean out of Clay County Ditch No. 41 along the west line of Sections 19, 30, and 31, Glyndon Township, south of Interstate 94.

Other business included:
- Approval of permits to the Wilkin County Highway Department to increase the sizing of two 18” dia. pipes to 24” dia. pipe in Sections 23 and 24, Tanberg Township, along C.R. No. 52 where Dan Swedlund, Wilkin County Highway Department, said the water drains along the edge of the road creating a hazardous situation; Skree Township to install a new culvert through 70th AVE S between Sections 3 and 10 where high water currently drains over the road; Trevor Sorby to install an approach and culvert off County State Aid Highway No. 26 in the W½, Section 3, Oakport Township, Clay County; United States Fish and Wildlife Service for three wetland...
restoration projects in the S½, Section 33, Tansem Township, Clay County, the SE¼, Section 3, Elkton Township, Clay County, and the W½, Section 11, Elkton Township, Clay County; Larry Heng for pattern tiling in the S½, Section 35, Elkton Township Clay County; Steiner & Sons, Inc. for 150 acres of pattern tiling in the S½, Section 4, Andrea Township, Wilkin County; and Charles PiekarSKI for random tiling in low areas in the S½, Section 21, Carlisle Township, Otter Tail County.

- Received a report from Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E., regarding two new laterals we have been authorized to work on in Wilkin County. The first lateral involves Wilkin County Ditch No. 3. The second lateral petition involves Wilkin County Ditch No. 31 and Whisky Creek. Once the preliminary Engineer’s reports are filed, the preliminary hearings can be scheduled.

- Approved Pay Request No. 1 to Steven Johnson Excavation for his work on Project No. 73, Country Heritage Drainage Improvements in the amount of $32,496.65.

- Approved Pay Request No. 5 to William Nichol Excavating for his work associated with the improvement of Lateral No. 3 to Wilkin County Ditch No. 22 in the amount of $13,748.85.

- Discussed additional funding needed to start the Manston Slough Restoration Project. Bids for the project were opened on 6/10/13. The low bidder is Gladen Construction Inc., LaPorte MN with a bid of $2,479,442.45. The contractor is anxious to know whether or not he has the work. Albright has contacted the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) about additional funding assistance.

- Discussed a $100,000 State funding shortfall involving the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project. Albright has relayed the concerns to the DNR.

- The next Project Team (PT) meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 18, 2013 at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office.

- Awarded construction contracts for repair of Clay County Ditch Nos. 9 and 33 to William Nichol Excavating and Clay County Ditch No. 32 to JBX, LLC. The work is being done in conjunction with a BWSR grant the Board received earlier this year. The project will also install side inlet controls and the required one-rod grass buffer strips.

- Discussed possible plans for a ring dike to protect the City of Wolverton. Approximately 9” of rain fell on June 25th in 3 hours. The City can be affected by flooding along the Red River of the North and overland flows.

- Discussed the status of repair items pertaining to the new office construction. A meeting will be scheduled with the project contractor to finalize the work items.

- The office is currently seeking quotes from several nurseries for landscaping around the building. The information will be presented to the Board at an upcoming meeting.

- Discussed a meeting Albright attended in West Fargo on 7/08/13 with other Minnesota Red River Valley Watersheds to discuss an update of local district rules as they pertain to tiling. Louis Smith, Attorney, Minneapolis, was in attendance and is assisting the Red River Watershed Management Board with the process. More information should be forthcoming.

- The Board approved payment of bills totaling $225,469.55.

- Scheduled a special meeting for Tuesday, July 16, 2013 to discuss a number of issues including technology concerns, website update, and Human Resources. The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM.
The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, July 22, 2013, at 7:30 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.