NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2013
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“Watershed Reviews Status of Projects Before Winter”

At their meeting held in Barnesville on Tuesday, October 15, 2013, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed the status of several construction projects. Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said that William Nichol Excavating, Inc. and JBX LLC are continuing to work on the installation of side inlets pertaining to Clay County Ditches (C.D.) Nos. 9, 32, and 33. It’s expected that they will be able to complete their work and possibly seed the buffer strips yet this fall. Reiner Contracting, Inc. continues to work on the Georgetown Levee Improvements. The recent rains have delayed progress. A goal would be to finish the levee work yet this year, and they will come back in 2014 for clean up and seeding. Gladen Construction, Inc. recently started work on the Manstom Slough Restoration Project. However, because of the government shut down, no work can occur on United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) property. The weather is also going to delay their progress. The Board also discussed the status of the Elkton Township Wetland restoration project. Ziegler Construction, Inc. was awarded that contract in November of 2012. Due to health reasons and wet weather conditions, progress has been very minimal. Given the current wet conditions, the Board realized that any further work on the project would now have to wait until 2014. They will reassess the situation with Ziegler next spring.

Other business included:

- Furnished an update to Zenas Baer, Attorney, regarding the status of Project No. 74, Clay C.D. No. 51–Lateral No. 3, near Kragnes. The matter had been tied up in District Court earlier this year. Recently, the Appellant Court ruled that they would not hear the case. The Engineer’s Detailed Survey Report has been completed. Viewers have been appointed to determine benefits and damages. To date, they have not started their work. The Viewer’s Report will be needed before we can schedule the final hearing, which could be held sometime later this winter.

- Concerns were expressed regarding clean up items pertaining to Project No. 73, Country Heritage Outlet Ditch. Homeowners in attendance at the meeting also expressed concerns regarding their costs. The project contractor was Steven Johnson Excavation, Otter Tail, MN. Ulteig Engineers, Inc. is currently working with the contractor to finish the cleanup issues. Albright will work with the homeowners regarding review of the project costs.

- Approval of permits to Chad Jetvig for pattern tiling in the NW¼, Section 14, Moland Township, Clay County; Chad Jetvig to lower a culvert in the NE corner of Section 15, Moland Township, Clay County, which will be done as a C.D. No. 3 expense; Craig Runck to install a larger culvert in a field approach along the north line of Section 34, Skree Township, Clay County, subject to landowner and township approval; Lynn Brakke for pattern tiling in the S½, Section 25, Holy Cross Township, Clay County; and Danny Wilm for the installation of a driveway and 24” dia. culvert along the east line of Section 33, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County, subject to County approval to work within the road right-of-way.

- Noting that the preliminary hearing for Project No. 76, Wilkin C.D. No. 3–Lateral, located in Sections 31 and 32, Akron Township, Wilkin County, will be held later this fall after freeze up.

- Noting that representatives from Houston Engineering Inc. (H.E.) are working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wilkin County Highway Department to gather survey information regarding the possible clean out of Whiskey Creek, which is DNR protected waters in Section 14, Connelly Township, Wilkin County. Initially, landowners petitioned for a lateral to Wilkin C.D. No. 31. The DNR would like to explore other options.
• Discussed the local share of landowner costs to be assessed for the Manston Slough Restoration Project. Wilkin County erroneously took the total amount of funding raised in the bond sale, $1,320,421.00, and assessed this amount to the benefitted parties. In reality, part of those costs was to be assumed by the BRRWD, and the amount to be assessed is actually $255,043.63. The County will send out amended notices.

• Authorized repairs for the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project on Wall Street where part of the road shoulder on the top of the levee has cracked away from the driving lane. It is thought that some type of heavy equipment may have caused the damage. An estimate of $8,920.00 to make the repairs was furnished by Border States Paving, Inc. The Board authorized the work as project maintenance. They also authorized Northern Technologies, Inc. to install monitoring wells for the wetland creation sites associated with the Oakport Project. The monitoring wells are required by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The estimated cost of the work is $6,150.00.

• Adopted the redetermination of benefits for Project No. 46, Turtle Lake Outlet. The hearing was held on October 7, 2013, at the Cormorant Town Hall. The procedure basically updates the benefitted landowners’ market values, including a provision that the market values can be adjusted at three-year intervals.

• Approved two pay requests to Reiner Construction, Inc. for their work associated with the Georgetown Levee Improvement.

• Discussed concerns expressed to the BRRWD this summer regarding flooding on Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 1. The Board intends to hold an informational meeting with the affected landowners sometime this winter.

• Noting that the next meeting of the BRRWD’s Mediation Project Team is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 2013, at 1:30 PM in the Barnesville Office.

• Authorized three miles of ditch repairs for a part of Clay C.D. No. 41, south of Interstate 94, in Sections 19, 30, and 31, Glyndon Township. Completion of the work will depend on upcoming weather conditions.

• Discussed possible repairs for Clay C.D. No. 28 in Sections 16 and 17, Kragnes Township. A survey reviewing the culverts in Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75, Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) grade, and a downstream township road were discussed. The culverts in the railroad tracks and township road will need to be changed. H.E. will discuss the project with BNSF, who may be able to do their share of the work in 2014.

• Discussed a grant opportunity to receive help from the Conservation Corps Minnesota for 2014 fieldwork. The Board has discussed starting a culvert inventory. The application deadline is December 15, 2013.

• Now that the boundaries for the new watershed area in Wilkin and Otter Tail counties have been defined through the hearing process, and an order will be filed with the Secretary of State listing the property as part of the BRRWD. Plans are to start the update of the BRRWD’s Comprehensive Plan sometime this winter to include the new area.

• Discussed reservations for the upcoming 2013 Minnesota Association of Watershed District’s Annual Meeting and Tradeshows to be held on December 5-7, 2013, at the Arrowwood Conference Center, Alexandria, MN.
Approved the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Wolverton Restoration and Sediment Control Project. The document will be filed with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board. There will be a public review and comment period.

Discussed possible upcoming grant opportunities with BWSR for a targeted watershed demonstration program and soil erosion and drainage law compliance program. The Board felt the Wolverton Creek Project would be a good fit for the demonstration program. The application deadline is expected to be December 13, 2013.

Noting that the landscaping work around the new office has now been completed. The contractor is awaiting ideal conditions to finish the seeding. An open house will be scheduled later this fall.

Discussed the status of strategic planning for the BRRWD. Earlier this summer, the Board decided to take advantage of a BWSR grant application for 50% funding to do the planning study. Four consultants have now submitted proposals. The Board authorized the executive committee to narrow the list of applicants to two, and interviews will be conducted.

Approved payment of bills totaling $1,766,352.52.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2013, 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.