

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2014
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"Local Watershed Supports AIS Research Project"

At their 04/14/14 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed a proposal for local funding support for the "Northwest Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Project." Joe Courneya, Project Development Coordinator, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC), presented the project. The RRBC was able to get a grant in the amount of \$219,000 from the Legislative/Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resource to do the project. Courneya said their approach will be to coordinate outreach and engagement activities; develop materials that are contemporary and effective for the region; facilitate meetings and discussions with local partners in the project's watershed; and provide administrative oversight to current and emerging aquatic invasive species (AIS) activities within the Red River of the North Watershed. The RRBC has selected the Wild Rice, Otter Tail/Pelican, and Buffalo-Red River Watersheds for their pilot areas. Courneya said that RRBC is soliciting an annual renewable contribution of \$5,000 from various partners within the pilot areas. Courneya said to date, there has been very little research work done on AIS involving waterways. The Board of Managers approved the \$5,000 contribution. Gerald L. Van Amburg, Chairman, BRRWD, said it is just a matter of time before the BRRWD is going to have to get more involved with AIS. The Board's action tonight should be a positive step in that regard.

Discussion took place regarding the status of the redetermination of benefits for Becker County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 10 and 19. The hearing was continued on Tuesday, April 8, 2014, in Callaway. The hearing was a continuation from the earlier hearing held in Callaway last fall. Since that time, the Viewers have gone out and made several suggested changes to their report. Primarily, they took out lands along the outside boundary that drained in another direction. At the hearings, the Board heard testimony from area landowners who felt that Becker C.D. No. 19 should be abandoned. The Board noted that this is a separate process in accordance with Minnesota Drainage Law. In fact, the Board cannot consider abandonment of the ditch system until the balance in the account is paid off. A motion was approved to adopt the redetermination of benefits for each ditch system. This action will start the 30-day appeal period.

The Board also met with a landowner regarding erosion occurring on the outlet of Clay C.D. No. 39 in Morken Township. The mile of channel before the ditch system outlets to the Buffalo River is degrading and slumping. The landowner questioned if there was grant funding available to assist with the repairs. Some possible options include the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The Board authorized Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering Inc. (H.E.), to work with the landowner to develop a plan to correct the problems and to seek grant funding to assist with the cost of the repairs.

On April 3, 2014, the Board held a hearing in Moorhead to discuss the inclusion of property to Clay C.D. No. 20. The property in question is located in the NW¼, Section 21, Kragnes Township. The landowner applied for a BRRWD permit last year to tile the property west of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75, which is approximately 117 acres. At this time, only 80 acres of the parcel is assessed to drain west into Clay C.D. No. 20. There is a private ditch system between the tiling project and Clay C.D. No. 20. The Board has met with those landowners. The Board approved a motion allowing the subsurface drainage of the 37 acres of unassessed property to Clay C.D. No. 20. They also approved the BRRWD permit for the tiling and they agreed to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding operation of the tile. If a downstream culvert, approximately one mile from the tiling project, is over half full of water, the tile should be stopped. They also agreed to work with the private ditch system landowners and the applicant to periodically review the MOU should changes in the operation plan be needed.

Other business included:

- Receipt of a petition to add the N½SW¼, Section 5, Prairie View Township, to Wilkin C.D. No. 41. The BRRWD will schedule the required hearing.
- Approval of permits to Skolness Inc. for 311 acres of pattern tiling in the W½, Section 23, Moland Township, Clay County; the Clay County Highway Department to replace a structurally deficient bridge on 3rd ST S, between Sections 7 and 8, Kurtz Township; Oberg Farms for pattern tiling in the SW¼, Section 13, the W½, Section 36, and the N½, Section 25, Glyndon Township, Clay County; Deal Brothers Farming Partnership for random tiling of low areas in the NW¼, Section 23, Akron Township, Wilkin County; Larry Hang for pattern tiling in the E½, Section 30, Skree Township, Clay County; the Minnesota Department of Transportation to remove and replace three centerline culverts in T.H. No. 9 in Elkton Township, Clay County; Doug Danielson for random tiling in the NE¼, Section 23, Akron Township, Wilkin County; Maier Farms for pattern tiling in the NW¼, Section 17, and the NE¼, Section 18, Atherton Township, Wilkin County; Kohl Skalin for a Wetlands Reserve Program project in Section 28, Audubon Township, Becker County; John Nord for a Natural Resources Conservation Service designed water and sediment control basins in the W½, Section 2, Eglon Township, Clay County; the City of Moorhead to make improvements to their existing Sanitary Lift Station No. 13., which outlets into Clay C.D. No. 47; and Brian Dunham for random tiling to low areas in the NW¼, Section 32, Parke Township, Clay County.
- Approved payment of temporary right-of-way payments to landowners along Clay C.D. No. 10. The Board intends to repair this ditch system in the summer of 2014. A one rod (16.5') temporary strip will be acquired in 2014 so that the work can be completed.
- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville Office.
- The Board discussed applying for a project acceleration grant through the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group for completing a survey of a waterway associated with the Barnesville Township project. The survey will be done on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) protected watercourse.
- Authorized H.E. to conduct an analysis of the one-rod grassed buffer strips and side inlets needed on Wilkin C.D. Nos. 5A, 22, and 26. All three drainage systems outlet into Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee. The DNR is preparing to issue a permit to restore the Coulee channel. Buffering of the drainage systems that inlet into the channel will be a permit requirement. The BRRWD plans to apply for grant funding later this fall to assist with the legal drainage system work.
- Noting that the BRRWD will wrap up their Strategic Planning with a workshop scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, 2014, at 4:00 in the Watershed Office. Donna Rae Scheffert, Leadership Tools, was hired to assist in that regard. The strategic planning looks at immediate, one year, and five year goals.
- Noting that plans and specifications have been sent out to approximately 12 local contractors for the Hough channel erosion repair located in Section 30, Tansem Township, Clay County. Bids will be opened at 10:00 AM on April 28, 2014, at the Fargo H.E. Office. Work is being done in conjunction with the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$200,725.77.

04/17/14 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, April 28, 2014, at 7:00 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.