

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2014  
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### **"Local Watershed Handles a Variety of Issues"**

At their regular meeting on April 28, 2014, held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), dealt with a variety of issues. Nate Strand, Science Teacher, Barnesville High School, presented the 2014/2015 River Watch Budget. The total budget is \$5,152.56. At the 2014 River Watch Forum held on March 18, 2014, at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, the Barnesville River Watch students won the Judges' Choice Gold Award. Strand will have a couple of the students give their presentation at the next BRRWD meeting. The Barnesville River Watch Team helps collect water quality samples for the BRRWD at the regional assessment locators identified in the Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP). The Board approved the proposed budget and thanked Mr. Strand and his students for their participation.

Representatives from the City of Detroit Lakes attended the meeting to discuss a possible new wastewater outlet. The City is looking at making improvements to their wastewater treatment system. While they have approximately eight years to design and implement their new treatment system, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has asked them to look at all options regarding possible outlets. Several of the options being considered include taking the water north to the Buffalo River or outletting west into the BRRWD. Along this route, the water would eventually drain through Becker County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 5 and 15 before reaching the Buffalo River. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, and Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering Inc. (HEI), met with the City and their representatives back on March 13, 2014, to discuss their plans. Currently, their treatment system uses Lake St. Clair as an outlet, but because the lake is impaired, they would need to meet very strict discharge standards. One of the City's concerns would be what the BRRWD would charge for an outlet fee. The BRRWD and City representatives agreed that the next step should be a field review of potential outlets into the BRRWD. Albright said that ditch hearings would be required to use both systems as an outlet. A field meeting will be scheduled to look at potential outlets with representatives of Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc., the City's engineers, City representatives, BRRWD Becker County Manager, John Hanson, and Jones.

A large group of landowners from Stakke Lake in Lake Park Township, Becker County, attended the meeting to discuss options for stabilizing the lake's outlet. On 07/23/13, the BRRWD hosted an informational meeting in Lake Park to discuss their concerns. Since then, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has conducted an ordinary high water level (OHWL) survey of Stakke Lake. Stakke Lake has an outlet on the northeast side, which is the beginning of Hay Creek. The DNR set the OHWL at elevation 1366.1. The DNR has also installed a gauge on the lake so that the lake levels throughout the year can be recorded. Landowners located on a bay of Stakke Lake in the northwest corner said they have trouble accessing the main lake when water levels are low. The BRRWD suggested that a channel could possibly be excavated in this area to provide access. Neighboring landowners around Stakke Lake are concerned that if the elevation becomes too high, it could start to affect crop land and various drain tiles that use the lake as an outlet. Stakke Lake is also listed as impaired waters. The Board authorized Jones to use LiDAR to come up with several scenarios regarding lake elevations to determine what those impacts might be. The landowners were furnished with a list of the procedures that would need to be followed if they petition the BRRWD for a project in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.705.

Harold J. Rotunda, Certified Public Accountant, presented the 2013 audit. He said it is a cash basis report. In 2013, the District's total revenue was \$9,248,511 and the total expenses were \$8,434,122. The year end fund balance was \$1,026,981. He pointed out to the Board that the only things they have control over are assessments and levees for the various projects/ditch systems. The annual budget hearing is usually held in late August or early September, and the Board has one chance per year to address the "red ink" regarding these projects. The BRRWD currently has over \$2 million of "red ink" on the books. Rotunda noted no problems in the 2013 audit. He felt the financial accounts of the BRRWD were being

managed very well. The Board will review the audit and place it on their 05/12/14 meeting agenda for approval.

Other business included:

- Approval of permits to David Hasbargen for pattern tiling in the N½, Section 10, Sunnyside Township, Wilkin County; Lynnford Dau for tiling of his farmstead located in the NW¼, Section 29, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County; L.E. Hanson Farms for tiling of low areas in the NE¼, Section 21, the SW¼, Section 22, and the SW¼, Section 27 Hamden Township, Becker County; Mike Hasbargen for pattern tiling in the W½, Section 15, Sunnyside Township, Wilkin County; and M.B.N. Engineering for an addition to the existing elementary school, new parking lot, and regrading of the football field, Section 1, Hawley Township, Clay County.
- Reviewed a complaint about a possible plugged culvert in 140<sup>th</sup> ST S, between Sections 28 and 29, Elkton Township. A field review will be conducted.
- Noting that the office is working with Cromwell Township regarding the replacement of culverts on a DNR protected water course between Sections 14 and 15 in 220<sup>th</sup> ST N.
- The Board signed the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the repair of Whiskey Creek in Section 14, Connelly Township, Wilkin County. The work is being done to provide an outlet for Wilkin C.D. No. 1-C.
- Noting that the contractor (Gladen Construction, Inc.) plans to be on site in the next several weeks, weather permitting to continue their work concerning the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The completion date is 9/30/14. The office continues to work on securing the remaining easements. Agreements will also be sent to affected road authorities for work associated with the project.
- Noting that landowners have contacted the office pertaining to drainage concerns on Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1. Albright will conduct a field review with the landowners tomorrow morning. Similar complaints were filed last summer after a heavy rainfall event on June 25, 2013. An informational meeting was held with the landowners this past winter. The Board has authorized HEI to look at a history of the ditch system, conduct test pits to determine whether or not repairs are needed, and to look at a possible county line outlet. It is expected that that information will be available later this summer.
- HEI is soliciting bids from area contractors for the repair of Clay C.D. No. 10. At the last meeting, temporary right-of-way checks were mailed to all landowners to provide a work area. The ditch is approximately 14 miles long. It is anticipated that the work will be split between three contractors.
- The Board reviewed a revised schedule prepared by HEI pertaining to the addition of the newly added areas in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties to the RWMP. Initially, the Board of Water and Soil Resources gave the Board until 04/25/14 to complete this work. The new schedule would have the work starting in the next several months with a completion date of May 31, 2015.
- Reviewed bids opened this morning for the Hough channel erosion repair. The low bidder is Steven Johnson Excavation with a bid of \$29,325.00. Four other bids were received. The Board approved awarding the work to Steven Johnson Excavation. The work is being done in conjunction with the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District who has some left over funding from the 2009 flood. Other potential projects being reviewed include repair of the multi-block wall on the Buffalo River north of Glyndon, possible outlet repairs to Clay C.D. No. 5, side inlets

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on Clay C.D. No. 59, and repair of a road ditch in Glyndon Township. The funds need to be spent by 09/01/14.

- Discussed reservations for the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed District's Summer Tour which will be held on June 18-20, in Stillwater. Several Managers are planning to attend.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$22,984.52
- Approved signing of the EAW for the Hawley Buffalo River Restoration Project.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, May 12, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4<sup>th</sup> AVE NE, Barnesville. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at [www.brrwd.org](http://www.brrwd.org).