

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2014  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

### **"Local Watershed Cooperates with SWCD"**

At their regular meeting on June 9, 2014, held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), received a presentation from Peter Mead, Administrator, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The SWCD is working with landowners around Boyer Lake to correct drainage area water quality problems. Typically, the SWCD would also use Federal funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which is currently not available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A major erosion control project is planned for the southwest corner of the lake to repair an eroding field ditch. Mead's presentation included a summary of the benefits regarding water quality improvements. The erosion control project is designed and the landowner is willing to cooperate to have it installed. The Becker SWCD is currently short \$37,658.00 to make the project happen. The BRRWD approved a motion to contribute the \$37,658.00 from their Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Sub. 3, account. The BRRWD has over a 20 year history of working with the Becker SWCD to maximize benefits and to work with the landowners to install water quality type improvements. The Board commented that they would like to see this relationship continue well into the future.

Other business included:

- Approval of permits to Mike Nelson for pattern tiling in the NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 8, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County; the Greater Minnesota Gas Company for a 26 mile pipeline that will run from Hawley to Barnesville, no BRRWD projects are impacted; Russell Henderson for pattern tiling in the SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 1, Meadows Township, Wilkin County; John Pender for 500' of tile in the south ditch of County Road No. 10, to address standing water problems in Downer; Matt Halverson for random tiling in the SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 14, Elkton Township, Clay County, to drain directly into Hay Creek; and Andrew Leedahll to replace an existing 30" dia. corrugated metal pipe with a 36" dia. HDPE pipe along County State Aid Highway No. 2 in Section 21, Alliance Township, Clay County. The Board also approved a form that will be sent to downstream landowners/road authorities when required seeking their permission for certain types for upstream activities.
- Noting that the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the repair of Whiskey Creek in Section 14, Connelly Township, Wilkin Township, will expire on 06/11/14. To date, comments have been received from the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). After the comment period ends, the Responsible Government Unit will have 30 days to make a decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering Inc. (H.E.) will draft a response for the Board to review at the upcoming 06/23/14 meeting. The EAW process should clear the way for the DNR to issue the necessary permit to work on protected waters.
- Discussed costs relating to a petition filed by Clay County for an outlet to Swede Grove Lake in Highland Grove Township. The petition was filed in 2004. The Board discussed various options with their Mediation Project Team (PT). The Board approved a motion on 06/10/13 to dismiss the petition because of lack of landowner interest. At issue is what project costs are related to the various "alternative analysis" that were conducted to look at project options versus those costs directly related to the petition. The office will prepare a list of the chronological events associated with Swede Grove Lake Outlet Project for the Board's review at their next meeting. The County has expressed concerns that the project did not follow Minnesota Watershed Law regarding the development process.

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- Discussed the status of the Manston Slough Restoration Project. Gladen Construction Inc. continues to make good progress. They are currently working on the south side drainage improvements and south embankment. A meeting of the various partners is scheduled for June 18, 2014, at 9:00 AM, in the Barnesville office to discuss the project status. Approximately 75% of the estimated \$6 million project costs have been funded by state partners including the DNR and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The Board approved Pay Request No. 2 to Gladen Construction Inc. in the amount of \$209,968.52.
- Authorized the BRRWD's Attorney, Tami L. Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, to contact landowners on Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation regarding a stockpile of material that is located on their property and will be used to complete Phase 4 when funding is available. The stockpile lease expired on 12/31/12 and repeated attempts to negotiate a new lease with the family have not worked. An option would be for the BRRWD to use eminent domain. The DNR only received \$12 million in the 2014 Bonding Bill for Flood Damage Reduction projects. It appears that there will be no funding allocated to Oakport in 2014. H.E. will provide some recommendations for the Board's review to address several landowner issues associated with the project.
- Noted that a house mover intends to finish moving a house onto the new basement in the next several weeks that will allow the project contractor, Reiner Construction Inc., to come back in and complete their levee work.
- Reviewed bids opened earlier in the day for the repair of Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 10. The project was broken down into three phases. Phase One was awarded to JBX LLC. and their bid of \$87,150. Phase Two was awarded to William Nichol Excavating Inc. and their bid of \$52,550, and Phase Three was also awarded to Nichol and his bid of \$46,430. An August 31, 2014, deadline was set.
- Noting that the next Mediation PT Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 26, 2014, at 7:00 PM, in the Barnesville Office. Ongoing projects include discussion of a comprehensive plan to address problems associated with Stony Creek downstream of Trunk Highway No. 9 and the Barnesville Township Area Study. On 05/21/14, the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group awarded \$5,000 to help with the project survey.
- Discussed a request for proposals from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency which would provide financial assistance for researching, developing, or implementing projects and practices related to the encouragement of environmentally sustainable practices and approaches to pollution prevention and conservation. The BRRWD would be interested in Focus Area F, which is communities adapting to climate change and extreme weather. Grants would vary between \$25,000 and \$40,000 and would require a 25% match. Linda Kingery, Executive Director, University of Minnesota Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, has talked to BRRWD Chairman, Gerald L. Van Amburg, about the opportunity. The BRRWD authorized Kingery to develop a proposal. Applications are due on July 16, 2014.
- Received a report from H.E. regarding the Stakke Lake preliminary investigation. Landowners around Stakke Lake attended the 04/28/14 BRRWD Meeting. Some landowners would like to see a more stable lake outlet created, that might raise water levels. Others are concerned about access from a bay located in the northwest corner of the lake. The report discusses the impacts of raising the lake runoff elevation. It also discusses dredging a channel between the main lake and the northwest bay. It also details the procedures that the landowners would need to follow in accordance with Watershed Law regarding project development. The report will be forwarded to the Lake Association.
- Noting that the Viewers are continuing their work regarding the redetermination of benefits on Clay C.D. Nos. 9, 32, and 33. It appears that their map work is now completed. The report will

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be tabulated. An informational meeting will be scheduled prior to the hearings for landowners to come in and review the findings.

- Noting that the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices questionnaire will be mailed to landowners in the Whiskey Creek drainage area located in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties later this week pertaining to the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program. Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be in the area on June 11, 2014, to hopefully certify our first producers.
- Noting that H.E. is looking at options regarding creation of a "water management district" for the Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee drainage area. The process would determine fees to help raise local funding to match grants regarding the channel's restoration.
- Discussed scheduling of a special meeting in mid-July to continue the strategic planning completed by Donna Rae Scheffert, Leadership Tools. The next step will be for the Board and Staff to start setting some short, mid, and long term goals.
- Awarded the construction bid for the repair of the Clay C.D. No. 5 outlet work to Northern States Excavating Inc. and their bid of \$85,038. Work is being done in conjunction with the Clay SWCD, who has a grant through the BWSR. The funds must be spent by 08/31/14.
- Approved signing of a grant with the DNR for channel restoration of the Buffalo River as it runs through the City of Hawley. The grant amount is \$496,000 and has a completion date of 06/30/15. Plans are to start the actual construction later this fall.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$359,656.00

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, June 23, 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).