

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 1, 2014  
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### **"Local Rains Cause Watershed Problems"**

With the heavy area rainfall over the past few weeks, several landowners attended the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) regular meeting held in Barnesville on Monday, June 23, 2014.

The first issue discussed pertained to Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 2, which is located on the line between Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties. A landowner in Sections 7 and 18, Orwell Township, stated that the water overtopped the ditch berm on the east side, causing flooding in his fields. He had a series of photographs documenting the damage. Dan Swedlund, Wilkin County Highway Department, said that the County was aware of the problem. He felt that, even though the ditch is still jointly administered by the Wilkin and Otter Tail County Commissioners, the solution would eventually involve the BRRWD. Swedlund also announced that Wilkin County plans to transfer their ditch systems in the new watershed area in the next several months. A motion was approved to authorize Houston Engineering Inc. (H.E.), subject to notification with Otter Tail County, to analyze the problem and to make recommendations for the repair.

Swedlund also discussed recent flooding problems along Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) Nos. 1-C and 34. Both projects drain into the ditch along Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9 and use Whiskey Creek as an outlet. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E., stated that the 30 day comment period regarding the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) to clean Whiskey Creek across Section 14, Connelly Township, has expired. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board rules require that the BRRWD make a decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) within 30 days after the comment period ends. The EAW process is part of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permitting. Based on the comments received, Jones has drafted an order indicating that an EIS was not needed for this project. The Board approved a motion on the record of decision. The decision will be distributed to the EAW distribution list and anyone else who submitted timely and substantive comments. This should clear the way for Julie Aadland, Area Hydrologist, DNR, to issue the permit. The next step will be to contact the affected landowners for easements to construct the project. Hopes are that the work could be done yet this fall. Swedlund said that once the outlet is repaired west of T.H. No. 9, the Wilkin County Highway Department can do the needed repairs to the referenced drainage systems.

A landowner questioned the Board's decision to issue a permit for a new culvert along County State Aid Highway No. 2, between Sections 20 and 21, Alliance Township. He said they already have drainage problems in Section 20, where all the water has to drain south to Clay-Wilkin J.D. No. 1. Bruce Albright, Office Administrator, will furnish the landowner with the new culvert hydraulics.

The Board discussed the use of a form that will be used to notify downstream landowners/road authorities when permits are issued that could affect them. The form will indicate that if downstream parties have issues, they should attend the next BRRWD meeting.

Other business included:

- Noting that the final petitioners' payment (\$10,000) has been paid to the BRRWD regarding Project No. 76, Wilkin C.D. No. 31 – Proposed Lateral No. 8. The petitioners asked to dismiss the petition after concerns were voiced regarding the project's cost. The project would have been located on the south line of Sections 31 and 32, Akron Township. With the petitioners' reimbursement of the development costs, the Board approved a motion to dismiss the petition and to issue Permit No. 14-019 for construction of the project in accordance with the Engineer's design.

07/01/14 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Discussed the status of a proposed lateral to Clay C.D. No. 51, Section 28, Kragnes Township. Last fall, Viewers could not find enough benefits to cover the project costs. The petitioner is considering a new petition that might add additional lands.
- Noting that the contractor is awaiting better weather conditions pertaining to the City of Moorhead's 50<sup>th</sup> AVE S Flood Control Project to finish his work. Once the project is completed, local landowners will be assessed their share of the project costs.
- Reviewed the construction status of the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The Board discussed the status of the easement negotiations. Albright said all easements have been voluntarily obtained, except for two easements that are waiting for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to finish up Wetlands Reserve Program easements. A third landowner will be contacted this week as to whether or not he will voluntarily sign the easement or the Board will use eminent domain. Vogel Law Firm is ready to file the eminent domain procedures pertaining to the Kent Rod and Gun Club property with the Wilkin County Court. A meeting was held last week with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and they are now ready to issue the permit for work along T.H. No. 9 associated with the project.
- The Board discussed the status of Project No. 39, Georgetown Flood Control Levees. The office has contacted the DNR for an additional \$190,000 that will be needed to finish the project. Through the Median Household Income, the local share of the project costs (\$72,400) has been met by the benefitting landowners. The remaining costs are the State's responsibility. The DNR has indicated they may not have the funding available in 2014. The Board approved a motion to finish the project. The BRRWD will then have to work with the DNR to collect the remaining funds.
- Authorized H.E. to investigate repairs of Project No. 37, Clay C.D. No. 1 – Lateral No. 1 along the south side of 15<sup>th</sup> AVE, between T.H. No. 75 and the outlet with C.D. No. 41. This 1,000' stretch has been eroding, and the banks are starting to cave in. Some thoughts are that we may need to install a concrete channel liner.
- Discussed recent concerns from the Clay-Wilkin J.D. No. 1 area in regards to flooding and poor drainage. Earlier, the Board authorized H.E. to conduct a repair analysis, analyze a potential diversion ditch on the county line, and put together a time line for the development of the drainage system. Jones noted that the survey work was to begin on 06/19/14, but had to be delayed because the ditch was full of water. The Board and H.E. recognize the need to get something done as quickly as possible. Hopes are that we could hold the landowner informational meeting sometime in August 2014.
- Authorized Key Contracting Inc. to demolish a house located at 6108 N Broadway ST, for their bid of \$18,500. The house is associated with Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation.
- Noting that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Red River Valley Ag Water Issues Forum, titled "Building Grower Awareness and Local Engagement" will be held on July 18, 2014, at the Gerald Nordick Farm, located at 2675 250<sup>th</sup> ST, Rothsay, MN. The Forum will begin at 8:00 AM and is open to the public.
- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 26, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville Watershed Office.
- The Board approved the record of decision regarding the need for an EIS pertaining to the Hawley Buffalo River Restoration project. The order indicates that an EIS is not needed. The Environmental Review process was needed to process the DNR permit.

07/01/14 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Authorized H.E. to investigate repairs petitioned for on Wilkin C.D. No. 42 and Clay C.D. No. 31.
- Approval of permits to: the Clay County Highway Department to replace a bridge over C.D. No. 10, between Section 13, Morken Township and Section 18, Flowing Township with two lines of 12'x5' reinforced concrete box culvert; Ivan Nelson for random tiling in the SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 22, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, with outlets to Deerhorn Creek; Burlington Northern-Sante Fe Railroad to replace a culvert in their grade on Clay C.D. No 28, in the NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 17, Kragnes Township; Leland Thomas for pattern tiling in the NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 17, Morken Township, with three outlets directly into Clay C.D. No. 10; Allen and Mark Yaggie for pattern tiling in the S<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, Section 8, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County, with an outlet into C.D. No. 4, to which the property is assessed; Allen Yaggie for pattern tiling in the SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 22, Nilsen Township, Wilkin Township, with an outlet directly into C.D. No. 3; and Duane Stuehrenberg for pattern tiling in the NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 10, Meadows Township, with an outlet to Wilkin C.D. No. 6-A.
- Approved payment of bills totaling \$73,763.66

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, July 14, 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).