"Local Watershed Addresses Landowner Concerns"

It took the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), approximately three hours to get through their meeting agenda on Monday, October 27, 2014. Several area landowners attended the meeting and their concerns were addressed by the Board.

Drainage concerns were brought to the Board by a landowner in regards to property in Section 27, Skree Township, Clay County. The landowner would like to remove two culverts along his property on 110th AVE S. The landowner has obtained the approval of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to clean out the 110th AVE S road ditch. Copies of the approval letter were given to the Board. The BRRWD Chairman questioned what would happen to the wetland in Section 27, which is protected under the Wetland Conservation Act. Possible impacts to the noted wetland are going to be investigated by the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District. An extended discussion followed. Board members ultimately decided to wait until the 11/10/14 meeting to make any decisions on this matter in order to gather more information and continue the discussion.

Another landowner brought forth concerns with flooding and erosion on the South Branch of the Buffalo River in the NE1/4, Section 6, Manston Township, Wilkin County. An extended discussion followed. An informational meeting will be scheduled this winter to discuss a comprehensive project for the area.

At the meeting, the Board approved four permits, as follows: Dan Bradow to clean the north road ditch along 260th ST and the east side of County State Aid Highway No. 169, and to straighten out a curved ditch on the south end of the property in the NE1/4, Section 19, Akron Township, Wilkin County; USFWS to restore wetlands on the Ackerson tract at the Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge in the NW1/4 and S1/2, Section 14, Hamden Township, Becker County; Clay County Highway Department to remove an existing 18 inch diameter corrugated metal pipe (CMP) approach culvert and install an 18 inch diameter CMP centerline culvert on CSAH No. 37 southeast of Hawley in the N1/2, Section 14, Eglon Township, Clay County; and Minnesota Department of Transportation to mill four inches of the existing bituminous roadway surface and repave with four inches of bituminous, and replace 17 centerline pipes at the exiting invert elevations on Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34, between T.H. Nos. 9 and 59.

Other business included:

- Noting an update on Permit Nos. 13-173 and 13-174. Clay County has approved Spring Prairie Colony’s proposal to improve and realign the ditch along County Road No. 54. The Colony has agreed to install a grassed buffer strip along the ditch.

- Noting that Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) will present the Preliminary Engineers’ Report regarding Project No. 77, Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 51, Proposed Lateral No. 3, at the 11/10/14 BRRWD meeting.

- Noting an update on Project No. 75, Wilkin C.D. No. 31 - Lateral. A conference call was held on 10/16/14 with agency representatives regarding the Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee and the Whiskey Creek Projects, concerning possible wetland impacts. The wetland delineation report will be completed within the next week or two. HEI is working with Wilkin County to submit the conditional use permit applications for both projects.

- Noting that Gladen Construction, Inc., the contractor for Project No. 71, City of Moorhead, 50th Ave S Flood Mitigation, investigated the 48 inch diameter sluice gate leakage. They will remove the gate and remount it. HEI anticipates project completion in November.
Noting that Gladen Construction, Inc., the contractor for Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration, has a few final punch list items to complete, including temporary seeding, installation of erosion control, and reinstalling some signage. Dakota Fence needs to install two permanent gates on a portion of the dike near a farmstead. Commissioners have been appointed to look at the land in question for the Kent Rod and Gun Club easement condemnation. A hearing will be held in Breckenridge on 10/28/14 at 10:00 AM.

Noting that HEI continues to work with permitting agencies regarding Project No. 54, Whiskey Creek Tributaries. They are seeking approval to do the channel cleanout through the impoundment in Section 14, Barnesville Township.

Noting that the Board approved a revised grant agreement until 12/31/15 to that will extend the grant for Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee. Project completion is being delayed due to complications with a house demolition.

Noting that William Nichol Excavating, Inc. will begin work on the Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1 repair once work on their current project is complete.

Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting will be held on 12/11/14 at the BRRWD office in Barnesville. Information will be presented on the Barnesville Township Area Study and the Stony Creek Comprehensive Project.

Noting that kick-off meetings for the Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP) will be scheduled after the crops are harvested. Completion deadline for the RWMP update process in 05/31/15.

Noting that handouts were distributed at the 10/14/14 meeting for the Board’s review regarding a possible outlet fee for the use of Becker C.D. Nos. 5 and 15 for the Detroit Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility.

Noting that Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., has requested that the BRRWD send Right-of-Entry letters to the local landowners to obtain permission for the Army Corps of Engineers to enter five cemeteries on the Minnesota side of the Red River impacted by the proposed staging area for cultural resources surveys. Board Managers felt comfortable sending the letters, as long as the recipients understand that the BRRWD is only a “pass-through” agency, and our participation does not reflect support or non-support for the Diversion project.

Noting that the 32nd Annual Red River Basin Commission Summit will be held in Winnipeg on January 20-22, 2015. The office will arrange reservations for any Managers planning on attending.

Noting that the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts 2014 Annual Meeting and Trade Show will be held in Alexandria on December 4-6, 2014. The office will arrange reservations for any Managers planning on attending.

Noting that Ziegler Construction, Inc. is almost finished with work regarding the Elkton Township Wetland Restoration. There are a few minor punch list items to complete, along with finishing the native seeding. The project is anticipated to be completed in the next two weeks.
Noting that the contractor is nearly finished with road improvements for Rodeo Drive on the east side of Hawley in conjunction with the Buffalo River Restoration.

Approved Pay Request No. 6 to Gladen Construction, Inc., and their work involving the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The amount due on this request is $495,698.84.

Approved the payment of bills, totaling $579,625.45.

Approved a landowner request to remove sediment from Wilkin C.D. No. 41 in the NE1/4, Section 13, Atherton Township.

Approved a landowner request to remove sediment from portions of Becker C.D. No. 15 in Section 21, Hamden Township.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, November 10, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.