

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 27, 2015  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

### **“Local Watershed Receives Update from River Keepers”**

At their regular meeting held on Monday, February 23, 2015, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), received an update regarding the work being done by River Keepers in the Fargo-Moorhead (F-M) area from Christine Laney, Executive Director. The BRRWD has been involved with River Keepers since 1989, when a study was done in the F-M area that pointed out the need for an organization to care for the Red River of the North in the urban area. The goal of the effort was to use the river to unite the two communities rather than divide them. Laney pointed out that since 1989, 7 of the 8 low head dams on the Red River have been retro-fitted. Prior to that time, these dams were dangerous. Laney also said that River Keepers hosts the Annual Water Festival with approximately 2,000 Fourth Grade students from the area attending the week-long event. Their budget for 2015 is \$205,300 and includes 2 full-time staff. The BRRWD has supported River Keepers financially since 1989. The level of support for 2015 is \$45,000. Other contributors include Clay County, Cass County, the City of Fargo, and the Southeast Cass Water Resource District. Laney thanked the BRRWD for their support.

Other business included:

- Considerable discussion took place regarding the status of Project No. 77, Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3. At the 02/09/15 meeting, the Board made an order to continue the project development after the preliminary hearing. Next steps will include completion of the detailed survey report by Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. Once his study is done, Viewers will be appointed to look at the benefits and damages. Once the Viewers' Report is filed, the Board will need to schedule the final hearing. Attorney Zenas Baer, who represents a landowner involved with the project, spoke about the project and why his client feels there are other alternatives that could remedy the drainage problems in Section 28, Kragnes Township, Clay County, that would be more feasible. A preliminary hearing for the project was held on 01/05/15 at Moorhead City Hall. Since then, Mr. Jones has also filed a subsequent report regarding the existing drainage in Section 28.
- Discussed the status of the Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration Project. An informational meeting was held on 02/17/15 at 2:00 PM in the Watershed office. However, due to problems with the mailing of the meeting notice, including the fact that the Post Office was closed on President's Day, many of the landowners did not receive their notice until the day of the meeting. Bruce E. Albright, Administrator, BRRWD, said that another informational meeting will hopefully be held in the next 6-8 weeks. At the meeting, the Board discussed possible Natural Resource Conservation Service funding that could be used to do part of the channel restoration work. Affected landowners in "Phase 1" will also be contacted.
- Approval of a permit to Don Dittus for pattern tiling of 100 acres on the east side of County State Aid Highway No. 52 in the SE1/4 of Section 18, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County, with an outlet into Wilkin C.D. No. 42.
- Reviewed a drainage complaint pertaining to the SE1/4 of Section 23, Manston Township, Wilkin County, where tile was installed in 2014 without a BRRWD permit. The downstream landowner would like to see the outlet relocated. A field review will be conducted by BRRWD Managers.
- Approved a motion to increase the bond for Project No. 77, Clay C.D. No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3. The petitioner will be asked to increase the bond by an additional \$10,000 in accordance with M.S.A. 103E.202, Subd. 6.

02/27/15 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Noting that a hearing will be held by the Wilkin County Environmental Office regarding a conditional use permit needed for the restoration of Whiskey Creek in Section 14, Connelly Township, Wilkin County. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 8:30 AM in the Wilkin County Environmental Office, Breckenridge, MN. The office is working on mailing easements to the affected project landowners that will be needed to complete the channel restoration work.
- Reviewed correspondence from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) pertaining to funding for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation. The BRRWD currently has a balance of \$147,205.86 of unpaid expenses associated with this project. The DNR would like to write a new grant to partially pay off those expenses. Any new funding (approximately \$5.46 million is needed to complete the project) would start with a new grant. The BRRWD accepted the offer.
- Discussed problems and possible solutions regarding the acquisition of one remaining property in the City of Georgetown needed to complete the Flood Control Levee. Corey R. Elmer, Attorney, Vogel Law Firm, continues to work on the situation.
- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 1:30 PM in the Watershed office. Agenda items include review of the Barnesville Township Area Study, a possible comprehensive project for Stony Creek, the Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration Project, and a Phase 1 project for the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County.
- Authorized the advertising of bids for approximately 70 acres of native grass seeding associated with the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The bids will be opened at the 03/23/15 BRRWD meeting.
- Received a repair request for work in the SE1/4 of Section 11, Audubon Township, on Becker C.D. No. 15. The office is currently working with the Hamden Sough National Wildlife Refuge and the United State Fish and Wildlife Service regarding work that is needed in this same area on their property. Perhaps the same contractor could do both projects.
- Due to the length of the meeting, the BRRWD Managers did not have time to discuss their “special” agenda topic regarding an update of their short and mid-term goals, and a possible update of their Rules, Bylaws, and policies. Albright did distribute several Rule examples that he had obtained from other Watershed Districts in the Red River Valley.
- Approved the payment of bills, totaling \$51,992.18.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2015 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](http://www.brrwd.org).