NEWS RELEASE

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“Local Watershed Discusses Proposed Kragnes Project”

At their meeting held on Monday, March 9, 2015, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), heard opposing views from two attorneys regarding a potential drainage project near the City of Kragnes, Clay County. The petitioner is asking for drainage in Section 28, Kragnes Township. The process is following Minnesota Drainage Law. The preliminary hearing was held on January 5, 2015, in Moorhead. On February 9, 2015, the Board of Managers, BRRWD, made an order to continue the project development. Next steps include preparation of the detailed survey report, which will be done by Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. After Mr. Jones files his report, Viewers will be appointed to determine the projects benefits and damages. Following completion of the Viewers’ report, the next step will be to schedule the final hearing. Any decision made by the BRRWD at that point could be appealable to district court.

Attorney Roger Minch, who represents the petitioners, talked about the history of the area and a number of illegal activities that have occurred since the 1990s which have installed a number of dikes that prohibits water from the S1/2 of Section 28 from flowing north in a natural waterway. Other options for drainage, such as taking the water through the railroad tracks and along Trunk Highway No. 75, in his opinion, do not work. Attorney Zenas Baer, who represents the downstream landowner, claimed that the existing drainage system could work if the ditches were properly maintained. He questioned why the BRRWD was looking at a $150,000 project when some limited cleanout work could solve the problems.

The BRRWD has a long history regarding drainage issues in and around Kragnes. The Board is intent on letting the process play out in accordance with Minnesota Drainage Law.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD financial status. Current cash on hand is $1,224,076.64. Account receivables for 2015 total $3,636,280.

- Approval of permits to: Jeff Halvorson for pattern tiling in the SE1/4, Section 18, Carlisle Township, Otter Tail County, outletting directly into a lateral of Wilkin-Otter Tail Judicial Ditch No. 2, for which it is assessed; the City of Moorhead for the development of the Prairie Meadows 5th Addition Residential Subdivision, located in the NW1/4, Section 28, Moorhead Township, Clay County; Kevin Hanson for random tiling in the E1/2, Section 27, Hamden Township, Becker County, outletting into the Becker County Ditch (C.D.) No. 15, to which it is assessed; Clay County Highway Department for the reconstruction of approximately 3 miles of County State Aid Highway No. 52, in Barnesville Township; and Dale Binde for 70 acres of pattern tiling in Section 33, Lake Park Township, Becker County.

- Noting that a Conditional Use Permit hearing was held by the Wilkin County Environmental Office on March 4, 2015, regarding the proposed restoration of Whiskey Creek in Section 14, Connelly Township. The office has mailed easement agreements to the four affected landowners. Intentions are that the work would be completed in 2015.

- Noting that bids will be opened at the March 23rd BRRWD meeting for approximately 70 acres of native grass seeding associated with the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The office has submitted the natural resources award application to the Minnesota Environmental Initiative.

- Noting that Bruce Albright, Administrator, BRRWD, testified at a House Subcommittee hearing regarding funding needed to complete the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. Estimates are that the BRRWD will need approximately $5.66 million to finish Phase 4. The Board talked about
2015 hunting on BRRWD properties associated with the Oakport Project. The permission form will be slightly modified to include a statement that hunters need to carry the signed permission form with them when in the field and they must comply with the City of Moorhead’s hunting regulations.

- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2015, at 1:30 PM in the Barnesville Watershed Office. Active projects include the South Branch of the Buffalo River, Barnesville Township Area Drainage Study, Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee restoration, and a comprehensive project for Stony Creek. The Watershed was the recipient of a $12,598.87 acceleration grant from the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group for the Stony Creek Project. A proposal from Terracon Consultants, Inc., to do preliminary soil investigations at the proposed Stoney Creek Detention Area was reviewed and accepted. The estimated cost of the work is between $17,500 and $19,500. The investigation is expected to begin later this month.

- Noting that representatives from the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority plan to attend the March 23, 2015, BRRWD meeting to continue discussions regarding the Fiscal Year 15 budget. They are currently looking at a revised budget that could be submitted to the BRRWD for approval, which would take out some of the work items that have been questioned by the State of Minnesota while the environmental process is ongoing.

- Received the Viewers’ Reports for the Redetermination of Benefits on Clay C.D. Nos. 9, 32, and 33. The hearing will be held on April 9, 2015 at 7:30 PM in the First Floor Councils Chambers, Moorhead City Hall. The Viewers will be available to meet with landowners on Tuesday, April 7, between the hours of 1:00-4:00 PM at the Clay County Courthouse.

- Noting that Albright and BRRWD Managers John E. Hanson and Peter V. Fjestad plan to attend the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Reception and Day at the Capitol on March 11-12, 2015.

- Scheduled a meeting with the Advisory Committee for Tuesday, March 1, 2015, at 2:00 PM, Galaxie Supper Club, Barnesville, MN.

- Approved the payment of bills, totaling $105,276.63.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2015, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at [www.brrwd.org](http://www.brrwd.org).