NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 29, 2015
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"Watershed Secures Funding to Finish Oakport Project"

At their regular meeting held in Barnesville on Monday, June 22, 2015, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), learned some good news regarding their Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. Through the 2015 Bonding Bill, passed by the Legislature and approved by the Governor, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has forwarded a resolution for the Board's signature that would award $5.53 million to finish Phase 4. This project started with the Oakport Township residents following the 1997 spring flood. Actual construction of the project began in 2008. No work has occurred on the project since 2012 because of a lack of funding. The final phase includes work on Broadway or County Road (C.R.) No. 1. Once all of the necessary paperwork is signed, hopes are that construction of the project could begin around Labor Day and would be finished in approximately one year. Total project costs are estimated at $36 million. The project provides flood protection to approximately 400 residents. The levee system is built to the 100-year flood elevation with 3' of free board. Upon completion, the dikes will be certified, reducing costs for protected landowners regarding flood insurance.

The Board visited with Jared Nordick, a farmer in Meadows Township, Wilkin County. The Nordick's have a tract of land that is currently involved with Discovery Farms. Mr. Nordick is also working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on some additional research projects that will start later this summer. The Nordick's were the first producers in Minnesota to be certified under the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). That certification took place approximately one year ago. Mr. Nordick said that these types of "demonstration" projects are good educational tools and allow neighboring landowners an opportunity to see firsthand how conservation can be incorporated into current modern day farming practices. In conjunction with the upcoming demonstration projects, the Board approved permits to Mr. Nordick for tiling in the NE1/4 of Section 24; tiling in the SE1/4 of Section 16; and installation of rip-rap, as designed by the NRCS, to protect a natural waterway from erosion in Section 23.

Other business included:

- Continued discussion regarding a flooding problem along C.R. No. 55 in Section 18, Humboldt Township, Clay County. The homeowner was flooded following a rainfall event on June 6, 2015. An informational meeting was held by the BRRWD on 06/19/15. Unfortunately, the homeowner did not receive his notice in time to attend. The Board recommended that the homeowner needs to clean his ditch on the property line. The upstream landowner will look at conservation measures to repair a washout in his field. The upstream landowner also needs a field approach culvert replaced along C.R. No. 55. The BRRWD felt that the landowner should consider a ring dike for his property. The BRRWD does not know at this time whether or not there is funding in the 2015 Bonding Bill for the ring dike program.

- Approval of permits to: Curt Brendemuhl for pattern tiling in the SW1/4, Section 22, Kragnes Township, Clay County; Split Rock Construction, LLC, for the construction of a multifamily housing development, including a storm water retention pond, in the NE1/4, Section 4, Moorhead Township, Clay County; Chris Noben for drain tile installation in the SE1/4, Section 17, and the SW1/4, Section 16, Cuba Township, Becker County; the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for wetland restorations in the NE1/4, Section 18, Audubon Township, the NE1/4, Section 28, Lake Park Township, and the N1/2, Section 1, Lake Park Township, all in Becker County; Mark Blaufuss for pattern tiling in the N1/2, Section 18, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County; Robert Olson for pattern tiling in the S1/2 and the NW1/4, Section 21, Hawley Township, Clay County; and Bayer Crop Science to install a canal gate on a culvert in 80th ST S, located in the SE1/4 of Section 8, Elmwood Township, Clay County.
• Discussed an agreement reached at the 06/08/15 meeting regarding a plugged drain tile inlet in the NE1/4 of Section 23, Hamden Township, Becker County. The tile was allegedly plugged with concrete last fall. The Board ordered that the tile plug be removed. The landowner telephoned the BRRWD office on 06/22/15 and indicated that he would like to harvest the hay from the field and install a downstream erosion control structure before opening the tile. The Board amended their previous order by granting an extension until 07/13/15 for the obstruction removal.

• Reviewed the BRRWD's current financial status. Current cash on hand totals $1,729,407.85. Bruce Albright, Administrator, said the office is working with Midwest Bank regarding an operating loan for 2015-2016. Four checks totaling $176,604.42 also need to be deposited.

• Noting that the first meeting of the Viewers pertaining to Pj. No. 77, Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 51-Lateral No. 3 was held on 06/12/15 in the Watershed office. Landowners were invited to that meeting to relay their thoughts to the Viewers. The Viewers hope that their report will be filed by the 07/13/15 meeting. The next step will be to schedule the final hearing.

• A homeowner has an idea to address standing water problems associated with Pj. No. 73, County Heritage Outlet Improvements, located in Oakport Township. The homeowner would like to bury drain tile that would outlet into an underground culvert. The proposed project will be field reviewed by BRRWD personnel.

• The Board reviewed and approved Pay Request No. 7 to Gladen Construction, Inc. and their work associated with the Manston Slough Project. The Pay Request totals $151,519.37. A change order was processed to install aprons on several road centerline culverts in the amount of $2,612.15. A Pay Request was also processed for B&J Landscaping, the company handling the native grass seeding on the DNR and USFWS lands. Because of the wet conditions, the seeding has not started. The partial Pay Request will cover some of their inventory costs regarding the seed purchase.

• Noting that JBX, LLC has been hired to clean Clay C.D. No. 69 located in Sections 33, 34, and 35, Glyndon Township.

• Discussed channel bottom repairs for the outlet of Clay C.D. No. 41 in Section 4, Moorhead Township, and Section 33, Oakport Township. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) feels that if the down cutting is not repaired, slope stability could become an issue resulting in slope failures. To correct the problem, the engineers are proposing to restore the channel to the as-built gradeline. The opinion of probable cost is $70,000-$80,000 for material, installation, and seeding. The Board approved the repairs. Bids for this project, and another project in the area on Clay C.D. No. 41-Lateral No. 1, will be open by HEI in mid-July.

• Noting that we now have a court date (07/23/15) for the condemnation proceedings pertaining to a property located in Georgetown needed for construction of the flood control levee. BRRWD representatives will attend the 07/06/15 Georgetown Council meeting to give them a project update.

• Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 2015, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD office, Barnesville. Active projects include: Stony Creek Comprehensive Study, Barnesville Township, and Phase 1 of the South Branch of the Buffalo River. Terracon has completed the preliminary soil investigation for Stony Creek.

• The Board approved the following drainage system repairs: sediment will be removed from the ditch bottom and several field inlet culverts replaced on Clay C.D. No. 36, in the NE1/4, Section 9, Holy Cross Township; a berm will be raised in several low areas to help contain water in Whisky Creek and the outlet end of a culvert draining through the berm will be cleaned with possible gate
replacement on Clay C.D. No. 34, Section 21, Barnesville Township; and an existing field crossing along C.R. No. 30 will be replaced with a new 78' diameter corrugated metal pipe that is approximately 80' long on Wilkin C.D. No. 43, Section 29, Prairie View Township.

- Noting that work continues on the Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP). Jones has been drafting the sections which are being reviewed by Albright. Completion of the "draft" RWMP remains a top priority.

- Noting that a draft of the Fargo-Moorhead Flood Risk Management Program preliminary Environmental Impact Statement is now available for review and inspection as completed by the DNR.

- Nothing that Manager Fjestad and Administrator Albright attended the MAWQCP meeting in Winona last week.

- Noting that Managers Hanson, Van Amburg, Affield, and Fjestad, along with Administrator Albright, plan to attend the Minnesota Association of Watershed District’s Summer Tour on June 24-26, 2015, in Duluth.

- Approved the payment of bills, totaling $193,915.26.

- Spent considerable time discussing possible future Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) membership. The BBRWD has not been a member of the RRWMB since 2002. Membership would approximately double the BRRWD's taxation. Half of the RRWMB funding remains with the local Watershed District and the other half is sent to the RRWMB to be used for Flood Damage Reduction projects. The BRRWD is currently working on several potential large-scale retention areas. The big question remains is how the BRRWD would fund those projects if they became a reality. The BRRWD intends to meet next month with the Commissioners of Clay, Becker, Wilkin, and Otter Tail Counties to present the 2014 Annual Report and Audit. Discussion will take place at that time with each of the four counties regarding their thoughts about possible RRWMB membership.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 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 about the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.