"BRRWD Discusses Drainage Complaints"

At their 11/23/15 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), heard concerns from a landowner in Section 20, Humboldt Township, Clay County, regarding area erosion/siltation entering "east tributary" of Whisky Creek. The landowner felt that area drainage practices are causing the waterway to spread out and hold water in the trees around his farmstead. The Board authorized a field review of the area to identify the possible causes of the erosion and to offer some solutions to remedy the situation. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI), will contact the landowner to schedule a field meeting.

The Board also discussed a complaint regarding the removal of a dry approach (no culvert) in the NE¼, Section 10, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County, off County Road (C.R.) No. 32. Historically, this approach was kept in place by agreement as a split for drainage to Project No. 2, Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13 and Project No. 30, Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1. BRRWD staff conducted a field review and found that part of the approach was removed and the water was ditched to drain back to the east and north through C.R. No. 32. The downstream landowners in this area are concerned about possible increased drainage. The Board authorized BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright to send a letter to the landowner who did the work, advising him that he is in violation of the BRRWD Rules, and that he will need to restore the dry approach.

The Managers also reviewed another ditching concern regarding a landowner who farms through a natural waterway that crosses County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 26 on the line between Sections 27 and 34, Manston Township, Wilkin County. The work could possibly restrict the natural flow of water from the upstream property on the south side of CSAH No. 26 in the NW1/4, Section 34, Manston Township. The Board authorized HEI to conduct a survey to determine if the work will actually affect upstream drainage, which would be a BRRWD Rule violation.

Other business included:

- Approval of permits to: Flowing Township to install two approaches with 30” dia. corrugated metal pipes in the SE1/4, Section 22, Flowing Township, Clay County; Paul Aaberg to install random tiling in the E1/2NE1/4, Section 18, Oscar Township, Otter Tail County, to tie into his neighbor’s existing tile system; Kirk Watt to install up to eight inlet culverts with flapgates in existing ditches in the NW1/4, Section 16, Oakport Township, Clay County; and Tri-T Farms to widen an approach in the SE1/4SW1/4, Section 7, Barnesville Township, Clay County, replacing the existing 24” dia. x 24’ long culvert with a new 40’ long pipe.

- The Wilkin County Highway Department has completed repairs for Project No. 75, Wilkin C.D. No. 31-Lateral. Seeding and mulching are also finished. HEI staff will install the right-of-way (r-o-w) stakes and signage.

- Riley Brothers Construction, Inc., has completed the Project No. 61, Clay C.D. No. 11 slope repair and the installation of the new outlet pipe to the Red River. Some minor cleanup items are still left to be completed next spring. The Board approved Pay Request No. 1 in the amount of $203,417.80.

- Vogel Law Firm has reacquired seven of the eleven construction easements needed for Phase 4 of Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation. Ulteig Engineers, Inc. has scheduled the preconstruction meeting with the contractor, R.J. Zavoral and Sons, Inc.,

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 17, 2015
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710
for 12/01/15. The contractor might attempt some work on the stormwater pond lift station this fall, but major work on the project will begin next spring.

- Olson Construction of Lake Park, Inc., should be finished with the ball diamond repairs this week to complete the construction for Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has indicated that there should be funding available to cover most of the final costs to close out the project.

- BRRWD staff will schedule meetings with the six candidates for potential 2016 ringdikes to determine interest and to complete some preliminary survey work.

- The Board approved Pay Request No. 1 for William Nichol Excavating, Inc., in the amount of $28,247 for the outlet control structure stabilizations on Wilkin C.D. Nos. 5A, 26, and 22. Bufferstrips for all the noted ditches have been staked and new r-o-w posts installed. Seeding will be completed next spring.

- The next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2015, in the BRRWD's Barnesville office, at 1:30 PM.

- The F-M Diversion Authority (DA) approved the BRRWD's funding request for $86,000 for the Stony Creek Comprehensive Project, which is 5% of the potential total request ($1.8 million) for project development from monies the DA has available for upstream retention projects through the City of Fargo. The DA also funded four other upstream retention projects from other Watershed Districts, including the Bois de Sioux Watershed District. The Board also agreed to submit DA funding applications for preliminary engineering costs for the Barnesville Township Area Study and the Upper South Branch of the Buffalo River Study.

- A public informational meeting has been scheduled for the Upper Red River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study on January 7, 2016, at 1:30 PM in the Barnesville office. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) comments are completed for the TMDL and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS), and MPCA will distribute the studies for public comment. MPCA plans to have the Study approval process completed by June 30, 2016.

- The Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts' (MAWD) Annual Meeting and Trade Show is scheduled for December 3-5, 2016, at the Arrowwood Conference Center, Alexandria, MN.

- Sellin Brothers, Inc. has started working on Phase 2 of the Hawley Buffalo River Restoration project. The BRRWD hopes to have the project completed by the end of the year with only cleanup left to do next spring. The grant funding must be spent by 06/30/16.

- The Board approved an expenditure of $5,000 to pay the BRRWD's share of the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Halstad Upstream Retention (HUR) Study expansion. The COE is extending the mainstem modeling for the HUR Study downstream along the Red River from Halstad north to the confluence of the Red River with the Roseau River in Canada. The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) is covering the additional Study costs ($100,000), except for the BRRWD's share because we are not RRWMB members.

- The next Lower Otter Tail River Restoration Steering Committee meeting will be held on December 8, 2015, at 12:30 PM at the Fergus Falls DNR office. The BRRWD's 319 grant funding for the project should be available by April 1, 2016, and the Wilkin Soil
and Water Conservation District should be notified by the middle of December regarding the status of their Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Clean Water Fund funding application.

- The Board's Special Agenda items included discussion of the proposed 2015 MAWD Resolutions. Managers Anderson and Fjestad discussed their attendance at the recent RRWMB meeting in Ada. The Board also briefly reviewed recent Drainage Law changes that will need to be considered during the Rules and By-Laws revision process this winter regarding buffers.

- The Board approved the payment of bills, totaling $273,656.57.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, December 14, 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.