NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 2, 2016
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

"Local Watershed Reviews Permits"

At their regular meeting held on July 25, 2016, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), reviewed several permits, approving permits to: Nevis Shulstad for wetland restorations and tall grass prairie restoration in Sections 35 and 36, Humboldt Township, Clay County; Mick Siems, Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club, for a wetland restoration in Section 5, Orwell Township, Otter Tail County; Century Link for the installation of fiber optic cable in the NW1/4, Section 1, Breckenridge Township, Wilkin County. The Board also discussed a permit for Douglas Etten to install 230 acres of pattern tiling in the S1/2, Section 26, Meadows Township, Wilkin County. The Board discussed the outlet route and will request that Etten notify downstream landowners before the permit is approved.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD’s financial status. Cash on hand is $1,170,375.15. Since the 07/11/16 meeting, we have received $1.4 million (50%) of the $2.8 million Targeted Watershed Program grant for the Wolverton Creek Restoration Project from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), $89,073.74 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation, $3,746.50 from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the Upper Red River Total Maximum Daily Load Study, and a $75 reimbursement from John Hanson for the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Summer Tour spousal expenses. We're still waiting for the 1st half tax settlements from Clay County for their ditch/project collections. The Board has scheduled the 2017 Annual Budget Hearing for 08/22/16 at 9:00 PM. Notices have been mailed to the area newspapers for publication.

- Discussed the status of a drainage complaint over a tiling project installed in 2013 in the SW1/4, Section 21, Sunnyside Township, Wilkin County. Water from the tiling project needs to drain approximately 3.5 miles before reaching a grassed, natural waterway that drains directly into the Red River. Downstream landowners are concerned that the ditches along the tile outlet path are now full of cattails, saturated, and that their areas cannot handle the additional flows. The Board discussed who should be required to maintain drainage areas downstream of tile outlets and if this should be part of their permit requirements.

- Discussed the status of Project No. 77, Clay County Ditch No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3. The Board received a copy of the complaint that was filed by Robert Norby via his attorney, Zenas Baer. Erik Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. noted that he had completed his deposition on July 21. Additional depositions have yet to be scheduled.

- Discussed the status of Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. The office met with a local landowner who had concerns with how slowly water was draining from his field and into the project following the recent heavy rains. Elevations of the water levels within the project boundaries were checked and found that they were lower than the water draining from his field. This area has had drainage problems in the past before the project was completed. Erik Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. will review the area drainage and make recommendations to the Board. Mowing within the project area will be done this week to help control weeds and promote vegetation growth. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture will have staff in the area on Thursday, July 28 and will tour the project with Jones and Manager Van Amburg.

- Discussed the status of Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation. The office has been working with a project landowner who has had concerns with the easement that was signed...
in 2010 for completion of the project. They also reviewed another ongoing easement negotiation with a project landowner. The Board approved a change order for R.J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. to remove a large brush pile that was left over from trees that were removed by the township during the 2009 spring flood.

- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 18, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Watershed Office. The Fall Tour is tentatively scheduled for September 8, 2016, and will begin at 1:30 PM at the Watershed Office.

- Approved submitting a 2017 BWSR Clean Water Fund competitive grant application for work on the South Branch of the Buffalo River east of T.H. No. 9. This would require a 25% local cost share. The office will hold an informational meeting on August 16, 2016, with agencies and affected landowners to discuss the project.

- Noting that meetings with county commissioners regarding the Revised Watershed Management Plan are scheduled with Clay County on August 9 and Becker County on August 16. Meetings have already been held with Wilkin County and Otter Tail County.

- Noting that Manager Cathy Affield was reappointed by Wilkin County for another three-year term.

- Noting the completion of mowing on the Elkton Township Wetland Restoration Project. Wetland monitoring will be completed in the next few weeks.

- Approved submitting an Accelerated Implementation Grant (AIG) BWSR application, which will be used to develop data that will be needed when the One Watershed One Plan is completed. The AIG application will also evaluate geomorphic stability of District rivers and streams.

- Approved upgrades to office computers and monitors which are getting outdated and discussed improvements to monitors and cameras that are used in the board room.

- Approved repairs to a crossing on Hay Creek, downstream of the Stinking Lake Project in the NW1/4, Section 36, Highland Grove Township, Clay County. The landowner will provide some of the installation work as a cost share.

- Noting that the BRRWD Board of Managers reviewed Sections 1, 2, and 3 of their updated Rules, making several adjustments. The process will continue at subsequent meetings.

- Noting that the Board accepted the Engineer's Design Report for Wilkin County Ditch No. 7-Improvements.

- Approved payment of bills totaling $107,557.80.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, August 8, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Watershed Office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN 56514. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.