"BRRWD Has Performance Review"

At their meeting held in Barnesville on March 27, 2017, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), received a report from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regarding the BRRWD's Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) Level II review. Dale Krystosek, BWSR, presented their findings, and noted that the BRRWD scored high ratings on all the standards. Of the 13 Level I basic standard practices BWSR requires for Watershed District operations, the BRRWD scored 13 out of 13, and of the 15 high performance standards (Level II), the BRRWD scored 12 out of 15. BWSR noted only one Action Item that the BRRWD will need to address, which was to complete our amended Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP) to incorporate the 2012 district area expansion. Krystosek noted that the Order also included the addition of two new Managers from Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties, which the BRRWD has done. Compliance can be accomplished by either completing the RWMP or initiating a One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) for the entire BRRWD, including the new area. The BRRWD is currently working on a 1W1P with our partner local government units (LGUs) and held a meeting on 04/04/17 to discuss the process. BRRWD Engineer Erik Jones, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) is working with the BRRWD staff on a 1W1P application for funding from BWSR, which is due by 04/19/17. If for some reason we don't secure the 1W1P funding needed from BWSR this year, the Board plans to move forward with updating our existing RWMP by November 2018 to include the expanded areas. The BRRWD's Level II Report will be presented to the BWSR North Region Committee on April 12, 2017, in Detroit Lakes.

The Board heard downstream landowner concerns about a tiling project in Section 28, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. They discussed options for the project and the condition of the two possible outlets. The landowners who installed the tiling had a permit that was approved in 2012, but the work wasn't completed until last fall. The outlet was moved from the original approved location, which prompted complaints from the downstream landowners. A landowner meeting was held on 03/21/17 to discuss a possible solution for this issue, but the project landowner did not attend. One suggestion brought forward at the meeting was for the BRRWD to authorize HEI to conduct a study for a new legal ditch system to drain excess area water straight west along 220th ST to the Red River. Because of concerns about the potential outlets and the expired permit, the Board directed the landowner to cease operation of the tile pump until he can identify an adequate outlet. They also authorized HEI to conduct a preliminary study for drainage in Mitchell, Roberts, McCauleyville, and Nordick Townships that would drain west to the Red River.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Income since the last meeting was $20,009.86 from the Greywind house condemnation proceeding, associated with Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee. Total income to date is $350,319.86, and cash on hand is $1,981,232.62.

- Approved permits to the Deal Brothers to fill a natural waterway in the NE1/4, Section 10, Andrea Township, Wilkin County, and to install a ditch along the east and south lines of the NE1/4, outletting to Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 31; Wilkin County Highway Department for a County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 3 improvement project between CSAH No. 24 to CSAH No. 26 from the northeast corner of Section 7, Nordick Township, north to the northeast corner of Section 31, Mitchell Township; Moorhead Public Service for the installation of new underground cable to refeed a lift station in the NE1/4, Section 19, Moorhead Township, Clay County, associated with the Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation; BHHS Premier Properties to install three approaches with culverts in the center of Lots 1, 2, and 3, in the NE1/4, Section 31, Riverton Township, Clay County, in the south ditch of County Road (C.R.) No. 12; Richard's Storage, LLC, for a new subdivision for approximately 80 homes in the NE1/4, Section 14, Glyndon Township, on the south and west sides of town with the requirement that the low opening of the houses should be built to elevation 925, and the
basements are floodproofed; Steve Mohs to install spot tiling in the N½, Section 32, Norwegian Grove Township, Otter Tail County, outletting to natural waterways with downstream landowner approval; and Kurt Krueger to install a field approach with a 24” dia. x 40’ long culvert in the northwest corner of the S½, Manston Township, Wilkin County, along C.R. No. 176.

- Discussed a complaint regarding possible blocked drainage on the north side Trunk Highway No. 10 in Section 5, Hawley Township, Clay County. The project is backing up water from a natural waterway onto the upstream landowner’s property. Albright and a Manager will conduct a field review.

- Discussed ditching being conducted along CSAH No. 52 and C.R. No. 30 near Lawndale around the Wilkin County shop. Albright will contact the Wilkin County Highway Department.

- Noted that HEI is working on the levee certification process for Project No. 71, City of Moorhead 50th AVE S.

- Noted that the two miles of 230th AVE between Sections 19, 20, 29, and 30, Manston Township has been regraded/re-crown on Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. The office will arrange a meeting with the Manston Township Board of Supervisors to discuss future maintenance of this area. In regards to soft spots along the road/dike, the road embankment may have to be opened this summer and some additional compaction work conducted.

- Noted that the contractor, R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc., plans to return as soon as conditions permit to do the final cleanup items for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. The Board agreed to extend our final offer to the Fischer family for their stock pile lease settlement until the 04/10/17 meeting with the understanding that after that date, the Board will go to condemnation, if necessary. The Board approved Pay Request No. 10 for $124,794.86 for R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc. and a Change Order regarding their claim for liquidated damages based on alleged delays outside of their control for $96,924.00. The office has prepared landowner notices regarding the status of the levee certification process for the west part of the Oakport Levee and a certification resolution with cover letter to be forwarded to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) along with all the certification documentation from Ulteig Engineers, Inc. with the application fee.

- Noting that the Greywind buyout has been completed in association with Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee. HEI is working on a formal project maintenance agreement with the City of Georgetown for their review and approval. HEI is also working with two homeowners in Georgetown regarding Letter of Map Revisions requests to FEMA in regards to their property flood insurance requirements.

- Approved a repair for Project No. 02, Wilkin C.D. No. 13 in Sections 11, 14, and 23, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County, with an estimated cost of $20,000-$25,000.

- Noted that an informational meeting to update landowners regarding the Stony Creek Retention project development was held on 03/28/17. The staff is working with the Minnesota Department of Transportation regarding the installation of new diversion culverts on Stony Creek and Interstate-94, and HEI has submitted Concurrence Point No.1 to the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for review. Hopes are to start the landowner easement option acquisition this summer.

- Approved the hiring of Steven J. Taff, Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, to conduct a study to look at the value of easements on flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement projects. For a fee of $5,500 plus $500 for travel expenses, Taff will estimate financial costs and sketch administrative procedures to acquire easements, and given enough data, he could also possibly provide a summary tracking framework to understand the economic costs/benefits of a proposed project based on water quality factors.
Noted that the contractor, States Border Construction, has about 0.75 miles of the Wilkin C.D. No. 7 repairs completed on the north-south portion of ditch.

Held the annual Advisory Committee meeting on 03/31/17.

Held a River Watch meeting on 03/31/17 to discuss the regional assessment locators monitoring/coordination with International Water Institute, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Noted that erosion control/bank stabilization measures and seeding will be completed this spring on the Wilkin C.D. No. 6A repair site as soon as conditions allow.

Authorized HEI to conduct a repair investigation for Wilkin C.D. Nos. 43 and 44 in response to a landowner complaint about road safety concerns. HEI will also place flag markers along both ditches where slides are located and make repair recommendations.

Received the Engineer's Report for the Wolverton Creek Restoration project. The BRRWD plans to hold a hearing to address the project development and the proposed water management district process in the near future.

Noting that the COE has scheduled a two-day workshop regarding their Section 1135 Project on the Lower Otter Tail River in the afternoon of April 11 and the morning of April 12, 2017, in our Barnesville office. The COE will also attend a landowner informational meeting to be held on 04/11/17 at 7:00 PM in the Breckenridge City Hall.

BRRWD Managers attended the Minnesota of Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Reception and Breakfast in St. Paul on March 29-30.

Noting that work has started on installing the new M-Files computer software for data retention. HEI has started work on the necessary server upgrades.

Approved payment of bills totaling $189,074.38.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, April 10, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD 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.