"BRRWD Discusses Ditch Repairs"

At their April 10, 2017, meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed several landowner requests for waterway and ditch system repairs.

The Board authorized BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright to send a letter to a landowner in Section 22, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County, explaining that he will need to clean out high spots on two natural waterways through his Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage by the 06/01/17 Farm Service Agency deadline for CRP maintenance. The blockages potentially obstruct drainage from the upstream cropland in Section 23. The landowner has the option of hiring his own contractor to do the cleanout and reseeding, or the BRRWD will hire someone. Either way, the upstream landowner has agreed to pay for the work. The repairs will be done according to Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) survey recommendations.

The Board also discussed the proposed repairs for Project No. 2, Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13 and Project No. 21, Wilkin C.D. No. 13-Lateral. Landowner Terry Czichotzki advised the Managers that there might not be enough right-of-way (R/W) along the channel alignment to complete the repairs. BRRWD Engineer Erik S. Jones, HEI, estimated that we will need approximately 30 acres of temporary construction R/W along the ditches. The Board approved a motion to offer the ditch system landowners $250/acre for the additional temporary construction R/W. The land rental is only good for the 2017 construction season, which will revert to cropland in 2018. Czichotzki also asked the Board to consider constructing a permanent dike for his house along C.D. No. 13-Lateral. Since the Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration, was built, he feels that the project is causing higher water levels on C.D. No. 13-Lateral at his downstream farmstead and cropland. The Board approved Czichotzki's request for a permanent dike along his farmstead. Landowner Carolyn Swenson also discussed problems with breakouts from the South Branch of the Buffalo River across her property, which drain to C.D. No. 13-Lateral. The Board discussed Swenson's concerns and authorized HEI to investigate a limited river channel cleanout on Swenson's property as a temporary solution to the river breakouts entering C.D. No. 13-Lateral and to help control the erosion damage on her land.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's monthly financial report. Income since the last meeting is $20,758.48, and the total for the year $349,064.48. Cash on hand is $1,790,906.50. Administrative disbursements for the month are $39,834.46 and $116,919.59 for the year. Current accounts receivable for 2017 totals $5,949,683.55.

- Approved permits to Marlin (Pete) Ackerson to install a 15" dia. x 30' long culvert in his farmstead driveway in the SE¼, Section 7, Humboldt Township, Clay County, subject to Township approval to work within their road R/W; Howard Pender to install an approach with a 24" dia. x 52' corrugated metal pipe to access a future grain bin site off from County Road (C.R.) No. 10 in the NW¼, Section 16, Skree Township, Clay County, subject to County approval to work within their road R/W; Thomas Jacobson to install a 12" dia. culvert in his driveway in SE¼, Section 7, Audubon Township, Becker County; and the Deal Brothers to install tile in the N½, Section 16, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County, as a continuation of an earlier tile project by the former landowner, pending confirmation that the previous project was permitted.
Discussed the status of the Robert Yaggie's tile project in Section 28, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. At their 03/27/17 meeting, the Board approved an order to stop Yaggie's tile pump operation until he identifies an adequate outlet and goes through the BRRWD permitting process. They also discussed the status of HEI's preliminary drainage study for a potential legal ditch system along 220th ST, one mile south of C.R. No. 26, starting in approximately Section 32, Mitchell Township, running west to the Red River.

Noted that the City of Moorhead signed the Project No. 71, 50th AVE S Maintenance Agreement, and HEI submitted the online levee certification application and the Letter Of Map Revision to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for their review and approval.

Noted that the contractor, R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc., plans to start this week on the final cleanup items for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. The Fischer family has accepted the Board's final offer for their spoil pile easement payment. FEMA received our levee certification application and will begin work on their review and approval process.

Noted that HEI is working on a formal maintenance agreement for Project No. 39, Georgetown Levee, between the BRRWD and the City of Georgetown for the City's review and approval.

Noted that HEI has scheduled the annual ditch inspection for Project No. 30, Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 1.

Noted that HEI has submitted the Barnesville Township Area Drainage Investigation Concurrence Point #2 to the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for their review.

Discussed potential summertime project operation scenarios regarding the Stony Creek Retention project so that landowners could still farm a portion of the temporary pool.

Approved a resolution to request that Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) waive the amendments to their 04/25/12 Order, which gave the BRRWD two years to update our existing Revised Watershed Management Plan (RWMP) to include the new area, or to commit to the One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) process with the understanding that if the BRRWD does not receive BWSR funding for their 1W1P effort, we will complete our RWMP updated by November 2018, as noted in the BWSR Level II Performance Review and Assistance Program recommendations.

Noted that work has started on installing the new M-Files computer software for data retention. Marco, Inc. has scheduled an all-day training session for the staff on 04/18/17.

Noted that the contractor, States Border Construction, started on the second mile of the north-south portion of the Wilkin County Ditch No. 7 repair.

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.

Adopted the MPCA Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) enforcement response procedures and standard operating procedures requirements for the MS4 area within the BRRWD.

Discussed problems with the Wolverton Creek Restoration project's eligibility for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Enhancement program. Albright will work with NRCS on this issue.
Noting that the COE held a two-day workshop regarding their Section 1135 Project on the Lower Otter Tail River on April 11-12 in the BRRWD’s office and a landowner informational meeting on 04/11/17 in Breckenridge.

Discussed the possible acquisition of two parcels of land where the Oakport Town Hall is located. The land could be used as additional R/W for future Clay C.D. No. 41 outlet maintenance and ditch realignment on the American Crystal Sugar property. HEI will investigate our R/W needs before the Board considers making an offer for the property.

Noted that a log jam and river bank slumping was reported on the Minnesota side of the Red River in Section 7, Holy Cross Township. BRRWD staff investigated the complaints.

HEI staff completed the annual inspection of the dams associated with BRRWD projects. Repairs will be done as needed, and the reports will be placed on file.

Authorized HEI to advertise for bids for erosion control outlet repairs on Clay C.D. No. 53 and Clay/Wilkin J.D. No. 1, which outlet to Wolverton Creek. The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District received BWSR funding for erosion control work along the Red River, including the installation of side inlets or grade control structures. The grant would cover 75% of the repair costs, and the remaining 25% of the costs would be paid as ditch system expenses. The repair plans for these two ditches are part of the Wolverton Creek channel restoration project design.

Approved payment of bills totaling $177,875.53.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, April 24, 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.