"BRRWD Discussed Drainage Concerns"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed landowner drainage issues at their meeting held in Barnesville on May 22, 2017. The Board authorized Erik Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) to investigate options in response to a landowner's request to replace his Texas crossing on Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13-Lateral with culverts as part of the current ditch repair project. Manager Mark Anderson also agreed to contact a landowner in Section 22, Prairie View Township, to discuss the BRRWD's request that he remove blockages in a natural waterway in his Conservation Reserve Program acreage downstream of the culverts through County Road (C.R.) No. 19.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Cash on hand is $1,486,784.05, and income this year to date is $577,487.07. Current income for the month totals $227,634.42 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation ($220,060.77) and Clay County for the Wall ST NW overlay in Oakport ($25,573.65). BRRWD Administrator Bruce Albright noted that we should start to receive the 1st half property tax proceeds by the first week in June.

- Approved permits to Kevin Lunde to install water and sediment control basins and underground tile in the NE1/4, Section 5, Lake Park Township, Becker County; Chad Oberg to install pattern tiling in the E1/2, Section 34, Georgetown Township, Clay County, outletting to Clay C.D. No. 5 and the Buffalo River, subject to the BRRWD's standard tiling disclaimer; Philip Rogers to install random tiling in the E1/2, Section 5, Humboldt Township, Clay County, outletting into a Wetlands Reserve Program pasture area on his property; Kevin Fellbaum to replace an open cut channel in the SE1/4NW1/4, Section 33, Oscar Township, Otter Tail County, with a 20” dia. smooth wall pipe to be used as a future emergency outlet for Lein Lake; Kirby Hamre to install two approaches with 36” dia. x 50’ long culverts in the SW1/4, Section 18, Riverton Township, Clay County, along C.R. No. 72 and 28th AVE to access a new construction site, subject to Township and County approval to work within their road right-of-way; Troy Goltz to install tiling in SE1/4, Section 28, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County, outletting north to Deerhorn Creek, subject to downstream landowner approval to cross his Reinvest In Minnesota easement acreage, and approval from the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Board tabled approval of a permit to Robert Yaggie to relocate his project tile outlet to the east side of 180th AVE Section 28, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. The water will drain through an existing driveway via a closed conduit to a lift station in the northwest corner of the section, then along 200th ST, eventually to Wolverton Creek. The current pump location on the east-west quarterline of Section 28 was not acceptable to the downstream landowners and was not in compliance with the applicant's approved Permit No. 12-165. Before the BRRWD can issue the permit, a downstream landowner meeting will be held to discuss adequacy of the proposed outlet.

- Discussed an ongoing drainage issue in Section 27, Manston Township, Wilkin County. A waterway there has been recommended for cleaning, but other agencies requested a wetland delineation. HEI has completed the delineation, and Jones is analyzing the information.
• Discussed a complaint regarding a tile pump that is outletting into the ditch along Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9 in Section 4, Manston Township, Wilkin County. Jones is working on a drainage investigation, including a review of the Minnesota Department of Transportation drainage plan for T.H. No. 9.

• Authorized HEI to investigate a proposal to improve an existing dry approach in Section 14, Elkton Township, Clay County, to provide better access to landlocked property and to prevent Hay Creek from breaking out to the south. Before moving forward with the proposal, the Board wants to be sure the project is feasible.

• Agreed to schedule a field meeting to discuss complaints in the W1/2NE1/4, Section 13, Audubon Township, Becker County. Manager Hanson and Albright will meet with the affected landowners to discuss an alternate outlet proposal.

• Noting that issues have still not been resolved regarding Project No. 77, Clay C.D. No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3. A lawsuit filed in that regard was scheduled for trial the week of June 12, but was recently postponed. A mediation session was uneventful.

• Noting that the office has received complaints about weed infestation on the Phase 4 of the Oakport project area. The contractor, R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc., will be contacted as they are responsible for establishing the grass cover. HEI has hired a lawn service to spray the dandelions on the east dike where the grass is already established. A family located outside of the diked area has requested a buyout of their house. During the initial buyout phase of the project, they refused an offer, but now some of the family members appear to be interested. The Board won't move forward with this proposal until all the family members agree.

The Board also denied a request from a person who is interested in planting 10-15 acres of strawberries along the south side of Wall ST NW where the BRRWD has an Audubon contract for native grass seeding. The area was acquired for the project with DNR funding, and according to our grant agreement, the land can't be used to generate income.

• Noting that representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) met with City of Georgetown officials on May 19, 2017, for a community assistance visit. The purpose of the visit is to maintain periodic contact with communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and to assess the effectiveness of the community's implementation of its flood plain management regulations. FEMA found 20 potential floodplain violations within the City. FEMA has not decided how to handle the new houses with basements, but FEMA officials and the DNR do plan to work with the City of Georgetown regarding the administration of the NFIP. According the FEMA, incorporated Cities are their own floodplain administrators by default, and Georgetown would need a written agreement with Clay County to transfer that authority.

• Approved a billing for $33,862.50 to William Nichol Excavating, Inc. for his work to date on the repairs for Project No. 2, Wilkin C.D. No. 13 and Project No. 21, Wilkin C.D. No. 13-Lateral.

• Noting that a landowner informational meeting regarding repairs for Wilkin C.D. No. 15 will be held on Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 7:30 AM in the Wilkin County Environmental Office, Breckenridge. Notices were mailed to affected landowners.

• Noting that the Wilkin County Highway Department has completed the channel repairs on Wilkin C.D. No. 6A. The next step will be cleanup and seeding. HEI has hired B&J Landscaping to complete the seeding.
Discussed violations regarding the BRRWD's wetland restoration easements in Elkton Township. The BRRWD's attorney prepared some enforcement options to have the damages repaired at the violator's expense.

Noting that the next Mediation Project Team Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 20, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the Watershed Office, Barnesville.

Appointed Managers Van Amburg and Hanson as the BRRWD's delegates to attend the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) 2017 Summer Tour and special meeting on June 21-23 in Bemidji. Manager Fjestad will be the alternate delegate. MAWD has scheduled a special meeting to vote on their By-Laws, specifically to look at their dues structures.

Noted that BRRWD Viewer Lauren Peterson has announced his retirement after 28 years of service. The Board plans to recognize his service by presenting Peterson with a plaque commemorating his contributions to the BRRWD. In the late 1950s, Peterson was instrumental in organizing the South Buffalo Watershed District, which was the precursor to the current Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Received the 2016 Annual Report and Audit for review and approval at the next BRRWD meeting.

Authorized Jones to submit a funding application to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Conservation Partners Legacy Grants Program for the South Branch of the Buffalo River stream restoration project near Barnesville. The application deadline is 5/31/17, and the proposed funding request of $1.7 million would be used for engineering and construction costs. The project would restore 4.6 miles of South Branch of the Buffalo River channel with 100 acres of associated riparian habitat corridor and additional stream restoration of the straightened stream/river channel along the South Branch. Clay and Wilkin County SWCDs have provided letters of recommendations for our application.

Received a Thank You letter from the Area I Envirothon Committee for the BRRWD's financial support of their event. Albright served as a judge for the oral presentations.

Noting that a bid opening is scheduled for erosion control outlet repairs on Clay C.D. No. 53 and Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1 on 6/7/17 at 10:00 AM in the Fargo HEI office.

Authorized HEI to expand their contract with the Minnesota Soybean Growers to include the work being done in the BRRWD to provide more resources for our study associated with our 2017 Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Clean Water Fund Accelerated Implementation Grant program for Prioritizing Targeting Marketing Application and the Streambank Geomorphic to determine how to manage hydrology for improved water quality benefits. The Managers agreed to partner with the Soybean Growers and acknowledge their participation in return for their collaboration in the study.

Approved a request from homeowners on Buffalo and Rice Lakes for cattail removal in the channel between the two lakes to be paid as a ditch system expense on a trial basis for the 2017 season.

Approved payment of bills totaling $43,806.40.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, June 12, 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.