NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:    July 6, 2017
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

"BRRWD Makes Wolverton Creek Restoration a Priority"

At their 6/12/17 meeting, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed issues related to a tiling project, located in Section 28, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County. The current pump location on the east-west quarterline was not acceptable to the downstream landowners and was not in compliance with the applicant's Permit No. 12-165. The landowner then filed Permit No. 17-028 to move the lift station to the northwest corner of the section, which also met some resistance from the downstream landowners north of the project. The Board invited the affected landowners to the meeting to discuss the current proposal to drain the tile water north along 180th AVE, eventually to Wolverton Creek. The applicant stated that he would be willing to delay his project until an adequate outlet is available to avoid any impacts to his neighbors. To provide improved drainage for the landowners downstream of the outlet, the Board agreed to make the Wolverton Creek Restoration project the BRRWD's top priority for this year. According to Watershed Law, the BRRWD will need to hold a public hearing to formally start the project development, followed by a 30-day appeal period. The Board also must decide how to assess the watershed district management fees needed to raise the local project cost share. The BRRWD is in the process of searching for potential project funding from a variety of State and Federal agencies and programs, including the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which would require landowner participation. After more discussion, the Board approved Permit No. 17-028 to move the tile pump, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer that states if there is downstream flooding, the system must stop. There will be some temporary discharge flowing south to drain the system before the relocation.

Pete Karlsson, First Congregational Church, requested that the Board consider a larger contribution to their rain berm project to address runoff from their parking lot in Moorhead. The City of Moorhead denied the Church’s permit application for their rain berm in the boulevard because of underground utilities concerns. The Church solicited a new design and bid from Holland's Landscaping and Garden Center to accommodate the City's regulations, which doubled their project cost. At their 3/13/17 meeting, the Board agreed to contribute about 25% of the projected costs, estimated then at $3,472, plus monitoring and a descriptive educational sign for a total BRRWD contribution of $1,250. The new total project estimate is $7,942. The Board agreed to increase their contribution to $2,000 for the Church's water quality project.

Other business included:

- Received a 2017 Legislative Session Wrap-Up report from Pete Waller, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), regarding this year's Environmental and Natural Resources funding allocations and clarifications to the 2015 Buffer Law language.

- Discussed a possible blocked outlet on a joint 2012 neighborhood tiling project in Section 3, Akron Township, Wilkin County. The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) to investigate the issue and prepare a report for the Board's review.

- Discussed a landowner's request for assistance regarding modification of a Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) contract on 40 acres in Section 22, Barnesville Township, Clay County. The landowner would like to parcel out a 4-5-acre tract for a building site. The landowner also suggested that the
BRRWD could purchase the entire tract for the current property tax value ($18,500). The BRRWD will eventually need additional right-of-way (R/W) in this area for our Barnesville Township Comprehensive project. The Board deferred a decision regarding the proposal until their next meeting. Pete Waller suggested BRRWD Administrator Bruce Albright discuss the issue with the BWSR RIM Specialist, John Voz.

- Reviewed the BRRWD's monthly financial statements. Cash on hand is $2,064,162.26, and year to date income is $1,198,671.68. The past month's income totals $848,819.03. We received $202,060.77 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation, and $25,573.65 from Clay County as the final payment for the Wall ST NW overlay. The other income was 1st half county property/ditch tax proceeds from Becker ($108,594.37), Otter Tail ($387,163.84), and Wilkin ($472,915.01). Clay County has not yet forwarded their collections. Administrative disbursements for the month are $38,482.66 and for the year total $222,832.34. Current account receivables total $5,122,434.27.

- Approved permits to Moorhead Public Service for directional boring on the inside of the Oakport dike R/W to provide electric service to the NW¼, Section 17, Oakport Township, Clay County, subject to the BRRWD's standard utilities disclaimer; Magellan Midstream Partners for a fence around the existing pipeline valve site in the NW¼, Section 34, Elmwood Township, Clay County, with a gate, and a new graveled driveway with 24" dia. culvert off 110th AVE, subject to road authority approval to work within their R/W; Riley Brothers, Inc., to install an outlet pipe 3' below the current runout elevation of a borrow pit along Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75 in the NE¼, Section 3, McCauleyville Township, Wilkin County, to regulate flows out of the borrow pit, to prevent possible breakouts across cropland, to install riprap at the pit inlet and outlet to address erosion concerns; Mike Yaggie to improve the east ditch of County Road (C.R.) No. 19 in the W½, Section 35, Akron Township, Wilkin County, and lower two approaches/curvert to the new grade; James Taves to install pattern tiling for a 10-acre tract in the NE¼, Section 9, Riverton Township, Clay County, outletting via gravity flow to the Buffalo River; KTM Farms to lower the south end of a 24" dia. inlet pipe approximately 12"-15" to Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 7 in the W½, Section 31, Andrea Township, Wilkin County, subject to road authority approval to work within their R/W; Parke Township to install one 15" dia. x 45' centerline culvert in 86th AVE S and one 15" dia. x 20' culvert in a driveway off 86th AVE S in the SE¼, Section 15, Clay County; Arvig Enterprises for fiber optic cable installations in various locations in Otter Tail and Clay Counties, subject to road authorities' approval to work within their R/W and the BRRWD's standard utility disclaimer; John W Waglar to install an approach with a 12" dia. x 30' corrugated metal pipe (CMP) in 43rd AVE S in the NE¼, Section 25, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County, subject to Township approval to work within their road R/W; Kevin Kuehl to install pattern tiling in the SE¼, Section 35, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County, outletting via gravity flow to C.D. No. 21 through C.R. No. 72, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer and county approval to work within their road R/W; Austin Nieland to install a driveway/curvert to access his property in Section 18, Skree Township, Clay County, off a minimum maintenance road, subject to Township approval to work within their road R/W and a field review to verify the culvert size; and the City of Comstock/Ed Askgaard to install one line of 8"-10" dia. drain tile on Askgaard's property in the SW¼NE¼, Section 21, Holy Cross Township, Clay County, to provide an outlet for the Comstock lagoon directly to Wolverton Creek.

- Authorized Erik Jones, Engineer, HEI, to conduct a site investigation and prepare recommendations regarding a landowner's concerns associated with Permit No. 17-039, Parke Township, for two culvert installations in 86th AVE S.
• Discussed an ongoing drainage issue in Section 27, Manston Township, Wilkin County. A waterway there has been recommended for cleaning, but other agencies said there are wetlands along the waterway, and it can't be cleaned. 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 T.H. No. 9 in Section 4, Manston Township, Wilkin County. HEI completed a drainage investigation, which identified 1.5' to 2' of sediment in the road ditch. The report will be forwarded to the landowners with the suggestion that the neighbors should work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to clean the ditch.

• Discussed a field meeting that Albright and Manager Hanson conducted regarding a complaint about blocked tile outlets in the W1/2NE1/4, Section 13, Audubon Township, Becker County. The Board agreed to send a letter to the affected landowner directing the individual who blocked the outlets to repair the driveway culvert and to submit a BRRWD permit application for any future drainage projects.

• Noting that the BRRWD's Motion for a Summary Judgement regarding the Project No. 77, Clay C.D. No. 51-Proposed Lateral No. 3 lawsuit was denied. Vogel Law Firm is preparing an appeal. The trial has been temporarily postponed.

• Noting that the contractor, R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Inc., is working on the cleanup items for Phase 4 of the Oakport Flood Mitigation project. Ulteig Engineers, Inc. is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the levee certification process. The additional $10,000 certification fee has been paid. The Board authorized HEI to prepare an advertisement for bids to remove two spoil stockpiles, totaling approximately 61,000 yards of material. About 7,000 yards of the excess material could be used to restore borrow sites for three ringdikes the BRRWD built several years ago in the Oakport area.

• Reviewed results from a bid opening HEI held on 6/07/17 outlet stabilization on Clay C.D. No. 53 and Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1, both outletting to Wolverton Creek. The Board awarded the contract to Sellin Brothers, Inc., Hawley, MN, for their low bid of $45,829. The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District received BWSR funding for erosion control work along the Red River, including the installation of side inlets and 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. The repairs will not begin until the BRRWD obtains landowner permission to enter their property.

• Approved a billing for $36,000 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. The Board reviewed Jones' preliminary report regarding Bradley Nelson's request for the replacement of his texas crossing the SW¼, Section 23, Deerhorn Township. Jones estimated cost for the crossing was approximately $25,000. He will submit a final report regarding this crossing at the 6/26/17 Board meeting.

• Authorized Albright to hire an appraiser to conduct an evaluation of a farmstead associated with the Stony Creek Comprehensive project area in the NE1/4, Section 5, Barnesville Township, Clay County, in regards to a possible acquisition of the property for the project.

• Discussed a landowner concern in Sections 33 and 34, Foxhome Township, regarding jurisdiction over Wilkin C.D. No. 8 to which their land is assessed. The Bois de Sioux Watershed District
(BDSWD) is the drainage authority. A small lateral of C.D. No. 8 along his property actually drains west into the Otter Tail River and the BRRWD. The BDSWD is planning a possible repair of this system, and redetermination of benefits. Matt Jennen doesn't want to get assessed for repairs that won't benefit his property. The Board discussed possible options. Albright will work with Wilkin County and the BDSWD on this issue. One option would be to abandon that part of the drainage system within the BRRWD.

- Noting that States Border Construction plans to have the earth work done on the Wilkin C.D. No. 7 repair project this week. All culverts have been installed, and the contractor is working on the spoilbank leveling in areas where the spoil elevation needs to meet the County's road elevation standards. The contract deadline is June 30, 2017.

- Discussed a drainage violation in Section 33, Meadows Township, Wilkin County, where a landowner cleaned 0.5 miles of C.D. No. 1B. Wilkin County just repaired the ditch about 18 months ago. The landowner lowered the established gradeline by 1.5'-2' and piled the spoil on the grass buffer and ditch slope. The Board discussed possible enforcement options to require ditch and seeding restoration.

- Noting that the Wilkin County Highway Department had Lawn & Driveway Service complete the seeding for the Wilkin C.D. No. 6A repair project. The next step will be to conduct a redetermination of benefits, which will require the Viewers to determine the project benefits and damages. The Board hired William Austin as a BRRWD Viewer to replace Lauren Peterson, who recently retired. A retirement party for Peterson will be held on July 13, at 2:00 PM, Farmstead Estates, Moorhead.

- Authorized Chairman Van Amburg to sign the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 1135 Grant Agreement for the Otter Tail River Restoration project. The COE will contribute the first $100,000 and then split the remaining costs 50/50 with the BRRWD.

- Noting that an informational meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2017, at 8:00 PM at the Kent Community Hall, to discuss the proposed Whiskey Creek restoration project.

- Approved the 2016 Annual Report and Audit and authorized Albright to schedule meetings with the Counties to present the reports and to discuss BRRWD activities with the County Commissioners. The office will post both documents on the BRRWD Website and notify BWSR that they are available.

- Discussed bank erosion occurring on the Buffalo River in Hawley just downstream of a City storm water outlet. Ted Rud, HEI, investigated this issue and determined that this issue is not a warranty item because we didn't work directly in this area with our previous channel restoration work. Albright will notify the City that their Engineer should investigate and then come back to the BRRWD with possible solutions.

- Noting that the Wilkin County Board of Commissioners has scheduled a meeting on 6/21/17 at 7:00 PM, in the Wilkin County Community Room at the County Recycling Building in Breckenridge to discuss the proposed remapping of the floodplain in Wilkin County.

- Discussed the possible purchase of a Wetlands Reserve Program tract in Section 5, Meadows Township, Wilkin County. This parcel should be part of the Manston Slough Waterfowl Production Area. Albright will discuss this issue with United States Fish and Wildlife Service and DNR representatives in Fergus Falls.
- Noting that the next Mediation Project Team Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 20, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the Watershed Office, Barnesville.

- Discussed the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts 2017 Summer Tour and special meeting on June 21-23 in Bemidji. Managers Van Amburg and Hanson were appointed as the BRRWD's delegates, and Manager Fjestad as the alternate. MAWD scheduled a special meeting on their By-Laws, specifically to consider increasing their annual dues.

- Approved payment of bills totaling $311,315.40.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, June 26, 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.