"BRRWD Approves Order for Wolverton Creek Restoration"

At their meeting, held on Monday, September 11, 2017, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), approved an Order to establish Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, to restore over 26 miles of channel in Clay and Wilkin Counties, incorporating both natural resource enhancement and flood damage reduction benefits. The site has a drainage area of 104 square miles and is located in Sections 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 21, 22, 27, and 34, T137N, R48W (Holy Cross Twp.), Sections 1, 2, and 12, T135N, R48W (Roberts Twp.), and Sections 1, 2, and 12, T137N, R48W (Wolverton Township). The Order also includes language to establish a water management district (wmd) in the project area to be used to generate fees up to approximately $100,000/year to help fund the local share of the project construction costs beginning in 2018 and could also provide funding for future maintenance. The wmd could be levied on an annual basis for a period of 10 years. The Order is subject to a 30-day appeal period, expiring on 10/10/17. The total cost of the proposed project is estimated at $10,400,563. Of this amount, $5.7 million is for construction, $3.18 million for land easements, and the balance for engineering, legal, and contingencies. The project costs will be financed by the BRRWD from their Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd. 3, account ($2 million); the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and a Targeted Watershed Demonstration Program Grant ($2.8 million); a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant ($1.877 million), an Enbridge Ecofootprint Grant ($100,000); wmd fees, and possible funding sources yet to be identified including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program, or Minnesota’s Water Quality & Habitat Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. It is anticipated that the project will be constructed in phases as funding becomes available. The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) to advertise for construction bids for Phase 1, which starts near the Clay-Wilkin County line and proceeds upstream to County Road (C.R.) No. 30.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's monthly financial reports. Cash on hand is $2,235,580.07. Administrative disbursements for the month are $36,446.70, and for the year total $346,707.32. Current 2017 accounts receivable totals $3,961,096.22. Total income for the year is $1,721,162.03. Income since 8/14/17 is $799,201.85, primarily from Clay County for their first half 2017 ditch/project taxes ($598,118.73), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation ($180,254.41), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the Ottertail River Planning 319 Grant reimbursement ($9,249.63), and Otter Tail County for 1st half 2017 Waterfowl Production Area tax settlement ($413.51). The balance of the income came from bank interest, office rentals, and a credit from Wilkin County for a ditch billing discrepancy ($10,103.18). The Board approved bill payments totaling $199,832.35.

- Agreed to investigate a landowner's request to relocate a Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13-Lateral crossing on his property from the NW1/4 of the SW1/4, Section 23, Deerhorn Township, to the east line of the SW1/4 to provide better access to his field from the south via an existing approach off 140th ST. His neighbor could also use the crossing.

- Noted that a meeting with State and Federal agencies is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 8:30 AM in the BRRWD Barnesville office to discuss easement issues for the Wolverton Creek Restoration project.

- Approved permits to: City of Barnesville to complete the third phase of a project along 13th ST SE, which includes regrading approximately 2,000' of a ditch to drain north, and the removal of an 18" dia.
centerline pipe; United States Fish and Wildlife Service for the Axton wetland restoration site in the N1/2SW1/4, Section 14, Holmesville Township, Becker County, consisting of seven wetlands, subject to neighboring landowner approval for one site on the west side of the property; Nate Thompson to install NRCS designed water and sediment control basins in the SE1/4, Section 22, Humboldt Township, Clay County; Wayne Krump to install 2-3 field laterals along C.R. No. 3 in the SE1/4, Section 30, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County; Century Link to install buried fiber optic cables along C.R. No. 10 east of Sabin in the N1/2, Sections 22, 23, 24, Elmwood Township, and Section 19, Elkton Township, Clay County, following the C.D. No. 55 alignment, subject to our standard utility disclaimer, road authority approval to work in their road right-of-way (R/W), and the required restoration of any disturbed areas; Kevin Etzler to install pattern tile the S1/2SW1/4, Section 27, Andrea Township, Wilkin County, outletting via a main tile line to be installed by their neighbors across his property, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Wilkin County Highway Department to install a 24” dia. corrugated metal pipe inlet pipe through the existing dike into Wilkin C.D. No. 22-Lateral 1, with a flapgate on the outlet end in the SE1/4, Section 34, Deerhorn Township; Jerry Janssen to install two NRCS designed sediment control basins in the SW1/4, Section 24, Humboldt Township, Clay County, connected by tile, and outletting via gravity flow to the Trunk Highway No. 34 ditch; Jerry Janssen to install a main tile line, outletting west to Stony Creek, in the W1/2, Section 35, Skreek Township, Clay County, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Harmon Tande to install 80 acres of pattern tiling in the W1/2NW1/4, Section 25, Oakport Township, Clay County, outletting in the northwest corner of Section 25, eventually to C.D. No. 35 to which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer and downstream landowner approval; Pheasants Forever to install wetland restorations in the SE1/4, Section 21, and the SE1/4, Section 28, Skreek Township, Clay County, subject to neighboring landowner notification; Brian Piekarski to install random tile in the SW1/4, Section 22, Carlisle Township, Otter Tail County, outletting through C.R. No. 11 to a natural waterway, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer, and road authority permission to work within their road R/W; NRCS for a Wetlands Reserve Program restoration site in the SW1/4, Section 16, Prairie View Township; and Paul Daugherty to install 78.5 acres of pattern tiling in the S1/2SE1/4, Section 15, Holy Cross Township, Clay County, outletting via gravity flow through 150th AVE S in two locations to Clay C.D. No. 53 for which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer.

- Noted the Wilkin C.D. Nos. 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44 ditch system hearings are scheduled for Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD's office to discuss the proposed incremental installation of buffer strips and side inlets. Notices have been sent to the newspapers and affected landowners.

- The BRRWD Fall Tour is scheduled for Thursday, September 28, 2017, with the bus leaving at 1:30 PM from The 34 Club Bar and Grill (former Galaxie Supper Club) east of Barnesville.

- Noted that a meeting regarding the One Watershed, One Plan has been scheduled with the other agencies for 9/25/17 at the BRRWD Barnesville office from 8:30 AM-12:30 PM. The agenda will include developing a draft Memorandum of Agreement, bylaws, and setting up a variety of project committees.

- Authorized HEI to apply for BWSR's a new grant program for Drainage Records Modernization to offset some of the administration costs to transfer our records into the new M-Files data management software program, which includes a public portal feature to allow the public access to selected documents. The grant is capped at $75,000/entity with a 50/50 match, and the deadline for submitting applications is 10/02/17.

- Authorized HEI to prepare responses to comments from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture regarding our Upper Red River Total Maximum Daily Load/Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies final studies.

- Approved repairs for a ditch located north of the Oakport Township dike in the southwest corner of the SE1/4, Section 7 for approximately one mile along C.R. No. 1, as a project expense per a previous project agreement.
• Approved Pay Request No. 2-Final and Change Order No. 1 for a total of $8,580.40 to Sellins Brothers, Inc. for the outlet repairs on Clay C.D. No. 53 and Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1.

• Authorized HEI to investigate a proposed dam repair in Section 6, Lake Park Township, and Section 31, Cuba Township, Becker County, for a damaged outlet structure. The contractor is requesting design and repair assistance, and possible cost sharing.

• Discussed a notice from the NRCS announcing a request for proposals for the Fiscal Year 2018 Implementation Phase of their National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) to be submitted by 9/18/17. The NWQI is a program to address agricultural sources of water pollution in priority watershed throughout the country. The Board thought that this program could be a possible funding source for the Wolverton Creek project and authorized HEI to submit an application.

• Reviewed a repair investigation for Clay C.D. No. 55, which runs along the south side of C.R. No. 10 from Downer to Sabin. The investigation found that channel centerline sediment depths are up to 1.8' with more sediment along the toe slopes. The opinion of probable cost for the repair is $45,000-$65,000. A ditch system landowner meeting could be held this winter to discussed the proposed work.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, September 25, 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.