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"BRRWD Submits MOU to BWSR"

At the September 24, 2018, meeting of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), the Managers authorized signature of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to use the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for easement acquisition for a future restoration project on Whiskey Creek near Kent. The agreement would establish a framework supporting the cooperation of the two entities in planning, implementing, and managing the project with the goal of restoring and maintaining a natural prairie stream habitat corridor along Whiskey Creek. Other potential funding opportunities include the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 319 Small Watersheds Program that could provide up to 16 years of dedicated funding ($150,000-$300,000 per year). The BRRWD's application for this funding is under review. The National Water Quality Incentives Program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and their Environmental Quality Incentives Program could also provide funding. The BRRWD application for this program is still under review at the federal level. This program requires that landowners agree to install best management practices on their land within the focused watershed. The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has also applied for a Clean Water Fund BWSR (CWF) grant for this project.

The Board also approved a partnership with the Wilkin SWCD to provide engineering services to conduct surveys, and to prepare designs and cost estimates, starting with approximately 30 erosion sites in the northern part of the County within the BRRWD. Don Bajumpaa, District Manager, Wilkin SWCD, received a CWF grant for this project, which requires a certified engineer to oversee their projects. The BRRWD would use their Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd. 3, levy proceeds for the funding assistance. Bajumpaa noted that the CWF, Riparian Aide funds, plus state cost-share funding should cover about 20% of the engineering costs.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Cash on hand is $2,701,629.62. Income since the 8/13/18 meeting was $842,326.94 from Clay County for their 2017 November-December delinquent ditch/project tax collections and 2018 first-half collections, Ottertail County for Wilkin/Otter Tail County Judicial Ditch No. 2 cost share reimbursement ($44,364.32), and Western National Insurance Company for our office building claim ($411.10). The Board approved the payment of the bills, totaling $106,096.76.

- Withdrew a permit application for the installation of a gate on a culvert through County Road (C.R.) No. 55 in Section 21, Barnesville Township, Clay County, due to neighboring landowner concerns; and postponed action on a different permit application to install surface drainage for low spots in the NW¼, Section 10, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, to drain northwest to the property line and then west via an existing ditch across neighboring property to a natural waterway, pending receipt of the downstream landowner notification form.

- Approved permits to Terry Czichotzki to clean and/or improve surface drainage in the E½SE¼, Section 28, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County, outletting to an existing wetland area in the middle of the section; Shane Thompson to install 28 acres of random tiling in the NW¼ and the SE¼, Section 8, Barnesville Township, Clay County, and Dennis Butenhoff for 10 acres of tiling outletting via one lift station in the northwest corner of the NW¼ to the east ditch of C.R. No. 21, then draining north along Section 5, Barnesville Township, eventually to Stony Creek, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Steve Thompson to install a 24” dia. culvert/flaggate at the outlet of their field ditch and the east ditch of C.R. No. 21 in the SW¼, Section 5, Barnesville Township, Clay County, subject to our standard...
tiling disclaimer, office staff setting grade for the outlet culvert, and for the landowners to work together to clean the east ditch of C.R. No. 21 and potentially reset an approach culvert in question; David Yaggie to install pattern tile in Section 3, Manston Township, Wilkin County, outletting via a lift pump in the southwest corner of the property to the South Branch of the Buffalo River, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer, and the results of a landowner meeting; Donald Yaggie to install pattern tile in the NW¼, Section 26, Nilsen Township, Wilkin County, outletting via a lift pump in the southwest corner of the property to Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 3-Branch 3, for which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to restore 14 wetlands on two properties by removing sediment from the basins and filling in the drainage ditches in Section 7, Lake Park Township, Becker County; Jerry Butenhoff to install an 18" dia. culvert in a new approach to access his pasture in the NE¼, Section 11, Elkton Township, Clay County, subject to township approval to work within their road right-of-way; Detroit Lakes NRCS for a wetland restoration on the Deutsch Family, LLC, property in Section 11, Manston Township, Wilkin County, and a wetland restoration on the Sletmoen/Grieser property in Sections 4 and 5, Audubon Township, Becker County; Brent Ellefson to install an east-west surface drain in the middle of Section 10, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, to drain a low area on the east section line to the west across a minimum maintenance road into an existing ditch in Section 9, Atherton Township, with a 10"-12" dia. culvert in the minimum maintenance road or to grade the road to allow water to cross; and Todd Klein to install pattern tile in the W½, Section 15, Meadows Township, Wilkin County, outletting via a lift station into Wilkin C.D. No. 23 to which the property is assessed.

• Authorized staff to schedule the Preliminary Resolution Hearing for the proposed Stony Creek Restoration project. Hearing notices will be sent to area newspapers.

• Approved a Clay SWCD request to contribute $2,166 to fund their Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position, whose duties includes the promotion of CREP and buffer installations. The SWCD received a grant from BWSR for 90% of the total cost ($65,000) of the salary with 10% to come from the SWCD and local partners.

• Discussed the BRRWD's comments for the Diversion Authority's Plan B Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

• Discussed an Executive Session for the 10/09/18 meeting to discuss potential contract negotiations regarding HEI office staffing.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. The meeting date is changed due to the Columbus Day Holiday. All meetings are open to the public. For more information about the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.