NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 9, 2019
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"BRRWD Continues Diversion Permit Review"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed various issues related to the Fargo-Moorhead (FM) Diversion Authority's (DA) permit application at their regular meeting held on April 22, 2019, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville. The Board forwarded their draft permit conditions to the DA and the Army Corps of Engineers for review. The DA has a few questions they plan to submit to the Board. BRRWD President Leitch presented a list of questions to the DA about the Diversion project benefit-cost analysis. The DA will prepare a written response. The group talked about Minnesota's share of the Diversion costs, which is set at 2% of the median household income threshold for the City of Moorhead, assuming the State of Minnesota provides the funding. Landowners’ concerns about crop loss compensation was also addressed. Under their Supplemental Summer Crop Loss program, the DA would work with one of the counties participating in the Joint Powers Agreement to sell bonds in the event of a catastrophic crop loss in the upstream growing areas.

The Board held a special public meeting on 4/23/19 at the Dilworth Community Center to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the DA's permit application. Approximately 200 people attended. Individuals representing both sides of the Diversion commented on the application and the contested case that the BRRWD filed regarding the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Diversion permit. The Board hired a professional video company to record the meeting so that the proceedings could be viewed by the public. A link for the meeting video can be found on the BRRWD Website or by searching for "FM Diversion" on YouTube.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's current financial status. Cash on hand is $2,687,017.61. Total income since the 4/8/19 meeting was $514.64 from Otter Tail County for 2018 delinquent taxes. Total income this year is $1,145,279.03. The Board approved the payment of bills in the amount of $73,612.67.

- Approved permits to Audubon Township to replace a washed out 18” dia. culvert under the township road (185th ST) in Section 7, with the recommendation for a 36” dia. replacement; Kevan Nelson for water and sediment control basins with surface intakes and underground outlet in the NE 1/4, Section 29, and NE 1/4, Section 33, Lake Park Township, Becker County; Curtis Stubstad to remove and relocate a driveway approach on County Road (C.R.) No. 17 and to clean the ditch going north to grade in the NE 1/4, Section 10, Elmwood Township, Clay County, subject to County approval to work within their road right-of-way (R/W); Wilkin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the installation of 15 grade stabilization projects with side inlet structures on DNR protected waterways throughout the County; Bryan Albertson for a water and sediment control basin in the NW 1/4, Section 36, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County; Dan Rosenfeldt to install a new approach with an 18” dia. culvert on the west side of 28th ST S in the NE 1/4, Section 28, Moorhead Township, Clay County, subject to township approval to work in their R/W; Bob Hansen to install a 30’ or 36’ wide approach with an 18” dia. culvert on the west side of 220th ST S in the NE 1/4, Section 34, Hawley Township, Clay County, subject to township approval to work within their road R/W; Andrew Maier to install random tiling for 27 acres in the NW 1/4, Section 28, Deerhorn Township, Wilkin County, with downstream landowner permission to cross the NW 1/4, Section 28, and the northeast corner of Section 27, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; and Wilkin County Highway Department to repair a flood site in Section 25, Manston Township, by replacing an existing 36” dia. centerline corrugated metal pipe with a 36” dia. reinforced concrete pipe, according to County policy, subject to matching the downstream culvert sizing.

- Discussed an ongoing ditching complaint in Section 29, Riverton Township, Clay County, on a natural waterway along the north side of C.R. No. 12. Staff will schedule a Manager field review.

- Discussed a 2019 flooding concern along Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 55. The Board will discuss a ditch repair at their next meeting.
4/22/19 BRRWD News Release (cont.)

- Noted that the Blilie/Bixby closings, associated with Phase I easement acquisitions for Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, is tentatively scheduled for 5/6/19.

- Discussed waterway drainage concerns upstream of the Wolverton Creek project, which the Board will deal with once the restoration project has been completed.

- Noted that Dennis Drewes, Inc. plans to start Project No. 78, Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 1-Improvement, in the next few weeks as soon as conditions allow. Landowners have been asked not to plant in the staked temporary R/W. Staff will meet with the affected landowners during construction to discuss their side inlet preferences. The Clay County Commission approved the 15-year bond sale at a 3% interest rate to finance the project.

- Approved changes to the BRRWD's Oakport public hunting boundaries to limit hunting to areas south of Wall ST and west of Broadway. The Board also agreed to work with the Clay SWCD to enroll the remaining Oakport hunting areas in the Minnesota DNR Walk-In Access program so that the BRRWD staff is no longer responsible for managing the hunting permit program.

- Noted that the Wilkin-Ottertail J.D. No. 2 bid opening is scheduled for May 10, 2019, 10:00 AM at the Houston Engineering, Inc. Fargo office. BRRWD Engineer Erik Jones submitted a copy of the plans and specifications for the Board's review.

- The One Watershed, One Plan Advisory Committee and Planning Team met on 4/24/19 in the Barnesville office.

- Discussed a flooding concern in Rustad in Kurtz Township, Clay County. The Board plans to hold an informational meeting with the affected landowners to discuss this issue. The problem could be caused by a plugged or damaged culvert, connecting the railroad track drainage to the 19th ST S ditch that drains north to C.D. No. 40.

- Discussed a proposal to restore a wetland basin associated with the Jay Lake Dam Project on Becker C.D. No. 5 north of Jay Lake and to repair a washed-out downstream access road. An informational meeting regarding the possible project will be scheduled with the affected landowners later this summer.

- Approved a timeline to make it possible for the Board to adopt the draft revised Rules at the 7/8/19 Board meeting, including review by BRRWD Attorney Tami Norgard, Vogel Law Firm. According to Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Buffer Law requirements, the BRRWD needs to have the revised Rules with the Buffer Law language adopted by that date.

- Approved a $100 contribution to the Wilkin County 4-H Parade of Champions at the 2019 Wilkin County Fair.

- Held the BRRWD Advisory Committee's Annual meeting on 4/26/19 in Barnesville.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next meeting on Monday, May 13, 2019, 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.