"BRRWD Discusses Drainage Concerns"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed drainage concerns from several landowners at their regular meeting held on August 12, 2019, at 7:00 PM, in Barnesville. A landowner on Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13 had questions about problems on the ditch during this year's spring runoff. Private dikes along the South Branch of the Buffalo River are higher than the natural ground and raise the river elevation high enough to push water over a natural ridge between the river and C.D. No. 13, causing downstream overland flooding. Development of an Upper South Branch restoration project to remove excess sedimentation in the channel should help address this concern. A homeowner in Oakport Township, Clay County, questioned the possible raising of 2nd ST N in Section 6, to address repeated overtopping of the township road during flood events. A study to determine the impacts to the area floodplain would need to be conducted before considering a project of this scope. Another landowner contacted the office with a complaint about a culvert in Section 33, Humboldt Township, Clay County, that is placed 2' higher than the road ditch grade and is holding water on his property. When the township replaced the existing culvert this spring as a ditch maintenance project, they replaced the pipe at the same elevation as the old one. A meeting with the Township and landowner will be scheduled. The Board also reviewed landowner concerns and survey results regarding a crossing with failing culverts on Wilkin C.D. No. 6A in Tanberg Township. The Board authorized the Wilkin County Highway Department to replace the existing culverts with two 48" dia. pipes, subject to the landowners' approval.

Other business included:

- Approved the BRRWD's monthly financial statements, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, and summary of income. Cash on hand is $2,398,415.51. Current 2019 accounts receivable are $5,024,993. Administrative disbursements this month equal $29,520.95, and for the year, total $199,754.71. Total income this year is $2,358,657.52. Income received since the 7/8/19 meeting totaled $27,837.70, including $806.58 from Otter Tail County for current and delinquent ditch/property tax proceeds; $19,552.42 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for reimbursement from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Upper South Branch of the Buffalo River Grant; and $2,292.54 from landowners associated with the Section 27, Manston Township, waterway repair. The remainder of the income came from Midwest Bank July interest ($4,961.16) and Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) for their monthly office rent ($225). The Board discussed the status of the Clay County 2019 1st half ditch/project tax proceeds, which the County has not yet forwarded. BRRWD Administrator Bruce E. Albright will contact the County regarding this issue. The Board also approved payment of the bills, totaling $478,147.01.

- Approved permits to Lynn Brakke to install pattern tile in the SW¼, Section 2, the SE¼, Section 3, the N½NE¼, Section 10, and the NW¼, Section 11, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County, outletting via gravity flow to Wolverton Creek, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Donald Yaggie to install tile in the S½, Section 29, Meadows Township, Wilkin County, outletting via gravity flow directly into Wilkin C.D. No. 1A to which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Albin Warling for Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) designed water and sediment control basins with surface intakes and underground outlets to Becker C.D. No. 9 to which the property is assessed; the Minnesota Department of Transportation to extend a culvert under Trunk Highway No. 210 by 6' to the south and shape the inslopes to 1H:4V in the NW¼NW¼, Section 2, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County; City of Moorhead for the construction of a permanent levee in the NW¼SW¼, Section 21, Oakport Township, Clay County, from 50th AVE N/Oakport ST to Clay C.D. No. 67; Mark Askegaard for three tiling projects in Sections 9 and 16, Holy Cross Township, Clay County, all outletting to Wolverton Creek, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Pheasants Forever, Inc. for two wetland basin restoration projects in association with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Section 9, Tansem Township, and Section 24, Hawley Township, Clay County; Richard Yaggie to pattern tile the SE¼, Section 9, Foxhome Township, Wilkin County, outletting via gravity flow to Wilkin C.D. No. 4, to which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer;
Blayne Tonsfeldt to install a new approach with an 18” dia. x 60’ culvert placed west of the newly established property line in the southeast corner of the SE¼, Section 28, Alliance Township, Clay County, off County Road (C.R.) No. 51 (170th AVE) and the replacement of an existing 18” dia. culvert in the southwest corner of the quarter with an 18” dia. x 60’ pipe, subject to County approval to work within their road right-of-way; and Bill Steffl to install water and sediment control basins, designed by the Becker SWCD, in the SW¼SW¼, Section 28, Callaway Township, Becker County, with surface intakes and underground outlet, subject to downstream landowner notification.

- Denied a permit from Todd Boit to replace/lower an 18” dia. culvert in the NW¼NE¼, Section 13, Audubon Township, Becker County, through C.R. No. 144. The Board would reconsider Boit’s proposal when he completes work to unblock or replace an existing driveway culvert within 30 days and obtains downstream landowner approval for the proposed project.

- Approved a $10,000 retainer for Fremstad Law to provide the BRRWD with legal counsel for the Diversion Authority lawsuit.

- Discussed a possible retrofit of Wilkin C.D. No. 27. The estimated cost is approximately $591,000 with a potential 75%/25% split with the Wilkin SWCD to leverage some their existing Clean Water Fund (CWF) grant. Other funding sources were also discussed. Once the financial issues have been worked out, the BRRWD will schedule a landowner informational meeting to discuss the proposed project.

- Noting that Drewes Construction, Inc. has begun construction on the Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1-Outlet Repair. The contractor will probably request an extension of the 10/01/19 completion deadline due to wet conditions.

- Approved Pay Request No. 7 in the amount of $224,169.22 to Sellin Brothers, Inc. for their work on Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration.

- Authorized HEI to hire a trapper to address landowner and Highway Department complaints about beaver activity along Whiskey Creek in Wilkin County.

- Approved a motion to increase the BRRWD Manager per diem rate from $75/day to $125/day, according to 2019 State Legislation, and to amend Article III, Section 7, Compensation, of the BRRWD Bylaws to reflect the rate increase, effective 8/12/19.

- Approved a $200 donation to the Sustainable Farming Association Soil Health Workshop to be held on 9/5/19 at the Grommesh Farm near Barnesville.

- Approved a $2,166 contribution to help fund the Clay SWCD Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position.

- Approved a motion to nominate Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation, for the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Project of the Year Award.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting and Annual Budget Hearing on Monday, August 26, 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.