NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 10, 2019
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, Administrator, 218-354-7710

"BRRWD Discusses Local Drainage Concerns"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), met with several landowners regarding area drainage concerns at their regular meeting held on September 23, 2019, at 7:00 PM, in Barnesville. A landowner in Manston Township discussed his concerns about the breakouts from the South Branch of the Buffalo River on the west side of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9 that caused erosion damage on a neighbor's property in Section 6, Manston Township, Wilkin County. This spring, water broke out from the South Branch and flowed cross-country to Wilkin County Ditch (C.D.) No. 13-Lateral, where the increased flows washed out several ditch crossings near the landowner's property and overtopped a township road. The Board is aware of these issues and in response, has been working on a phased restoration project for the South Branch of the Buffalo River, which would include an off-channel retention site(s) west of T.H. No. 9 to reduce downstream impacts. If the BRRWD is able to close on the needed property for a channel restoration site east of T.H. No. 9 by the end of the year, Phase 1 of the project could be ready for construction in 2020.

The Board also discussed a potential flood mitigation project with Barnesville Township Supervisors involving repair of the 170th ST S east road ditch in Section 1 and the installation of an additional culvert through 170th ST S. The project would also include cleaning about 0.7 miles of a natural waterway between 170th ST S and Stony Creek. The Board authorized Erik S. Jones, BRRWD Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc., to assist Barnesville Township to file a "Notice of Interest" to apply for a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Assistance program grant to fix the drainage problems.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Cash on hand is $3,524,953.19. Income since the 9/9/19 meeting totals $33,589.95, including $33,136.50 from Wilkin County for the Buffer Initiative Aid payment and $453.45 from landowners for the Section 27, Manston Township, waterway repair cost share payments. Total income this year is $4,479,838.16. The Board approved payment of the bills, totaling $318,408.83. The BRRWD is scheduled to meet with the Clay County Board of Commissioners at their October 8, 2019, meeting to present the 2020 tax petitions to use our taxing authority for two general levies in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd. 3.

- Approved permits to: Wilkin County Highway Department to replace the existing pipes on a natural waterway through County Road No. 169 between Sections 17 and 18, Akron Township, with two lines of 58" reinforced concrete arch pipe; Wendell Rogers to install 80 acres of pattern tile, outletting via a 6" dia. tile gravity outlet to a low spot in his pasture in the SE¼, Section 32, Humboldt Township, Clay County, subject to the BRRWD's standard tiling disclaimer; and Marita Palya to add an approach and an 18" dia. x 10' long culvert to access their pasture north of their main residential driveway off 160th ST S in the NW¼, Section 11, Elkton Township, Clay County, subject to a field review to determine the culvert sizing and township approval to work within their right-of-way (R/W).

- Reviewed a complaint from Moorhead Township regarding an individual dumping grass clippings and tree branches in the County Road R/W in front of two culverts in the west ditch of County State Aid Highway No. 52 in Section 26. The BRRWD will work with the Clay County Highway Department regarding this issue.

- Discussed a complaint from a property owner on the north side of T.H. No. 34 about water standing in the ditch along his property across the road from the Galaxie Supper Club. The Galaxie's driveway culvert on 200th ST S is set too high, blocking water coming through the T.H. No. 34 culverts from draining south. As a result, the low flows on the north side of T.H. No. 34 never drain out completely. A local contractor provided an estimate of $6,156 to lower the culvert. Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD
Administrator, has been working on this issue with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Humboldt Township, the BRRWD, and the landowner, and he will prepare a draft cost share agreement for the parties to split the work costs equally.

- Approved a cost-share proposal to split the costs for the repair for washed out structures on Becker C.D. No. 15-Branch 7 in 220th ST on the Audubon/Hamden Township line. The estimated cost for the work is $12,000 to $15,000. The proposal would have Audubon Township pay $5,000 of the final repair costs, and the ditch system would be responsible for the remainder.

- Agreed to sponsor the Audubon Society's Phase II Conservation Partners Legacy Urban Wood and Prairies Initiative grant application and to contribute $2,000 as a local match. The BRRWD has a five acre area just north of Wall ST in Oakport Township associated with the Oakport Flood Mitigation project that is ready for seeding. The total project costs are $60,776 with a 10% local match requirement. Other partners include the City of Moorhead and North Dakota State University.

- Approved an amendment to the BRRWD's original Memorandum of Understanding with Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for the use of the BRRWD's Targeted Watershed Program grant for Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, to include the Reinvest In Minnesota easement on the Todd Blilie property (Section 10, Wolverton Township).

- Approved Pay Request No. 2 for Dennis Drewes, Inc. in the amount of $253,923.60 for Project No. 78, J.D. No. 1-Improvement and approved a time extension due to the wet weather until 11/15/19 for the contractor to finish the dirt work with seeding to be completed next spring.

- Approved the retrofit of Wilkin C.D. No. 27, following a landowner informational meeting held on 9/20/19. The project is estimated to cost approximately $591,000. About half those costs could be covered by the Otter Tail and Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation Districts from their buffer aid funding (approximately $275,000). The retrofit will be one of the Wilkin County Highway Department's 2020 projects.

- Approved replacement of two damaged inlet culverts on Judicial Ditch No. 2 in Sections 7 and 18, Orwell Township, Otter Tail County. The existing culverts will be replaced with a 24" dia. x 50' long corrugated metal pipe (CMP)/flapgate and a 24" dia. x 60' long CMP/flapgate for a probable cost of $5,000-$5,500.

- Noted that the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts has scheduled their annual meeting and trade show for December 4-7, 2019. Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation, has been selected as one of the finalists for their "Project of the Year" award.

- Noted that the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center is hosting their annual Water Resource Conference on October 15-16, 2019, at the St. Paul RiverCentre. Manager Van Amburg plans to attend, and BRRWD Engineer Erik Jones was asked to share his experiences regarding the Wolverton Creek Restoration project in a river restoration panel discussion.

- Noted that a One Watershed, One Plan Planning Team meeting is scheduled for 9/25/19.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. The meeting date was moved in observance of 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.