"BRRWD Hears Drainage Complaints"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held their regular meeting on 10/28/19 at 7:00 PM in Barnesville. Two landowners were present to discuss drainage concerns. The first landowner reported that water is backing up onto his property in Section 4, Manston Township, Wilkin County, from his neighbor's tile outlet along 160th ST on the north line of Section 4. The tile water flows west to Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9 and then south in the east ditch for approximately 1,000' to a centerline culvert where it crosses to the west side of the highway. Once in the west ditch, the water flows to the South Branch of the Buffalo River, just north of County Road (C.R.) No. 182. Water is backing up onto his property along the east side of T.H. No. 9 because both ditches are full of vegetation. He asked if the BRRWD could contact the neighboring landowner to have the tile pump shut off until the downstream drainage issues are addressed. The Board directed the staff to contact the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the tile owners to coordinate cleaning the T.H. No. 9 ditches to provide an adequate outlet for the tile water.

A landowner in Section 2, Riverton Township, Clay County, discussed his ongoing concerns about wet conditions on his property. He claims that a gravel pit holding pond in Section 1, Riverton Township, Clay County, is seeping and discharging water onto his downstream property. His most recent complaint was about erosion problems on the natural waterway crossing his property. This waterway also becomes blocked periodically by beaver dams, causing water to breakout onto his hayland. The gravel mining operation has a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) permit to discharge water. The landowner questioned MPCA’s permitting process regarding outlet adequacy. The Board agreed to coordinate a meeting with the landowner and a group of agency personnel on 11/1/19 to consider options to address his concerns.

The Board also received an update from Rob Sip, Executive Director, Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB), regarding the RRWMB activities. He presented their 2018 Annual Report, 2020 Operating and Project Budget, and Progress Indicators handout. Sip noted that they are also working on their very first Strategic Plan with a goal to have it operational by the end of December, which will include a funding strategy that would complement the Strategic Plan and the RRWMB Governing Documents and Bylaws. Sip reported on cost-saving practices the RRWMB is implementing. He added that part of their Strategic Plan is focusing on membership. Sip and a few RRWMB Board members plan to visit the BRRWD again early next year to discuss possible RRWMB membership.

Other business included:

- Reviewed the BRRWD's financial status. Cash on hand is $2,794,627.77. Income since the 10/15/19 meeting includes $39,000 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s National Water Quality Initiative Phase 1 funding for the Whiskey Creek Enhancement project in Wilkin County. Total income this year is $4,545,206.32. The Board approved the payment of bills totaling $36,677.67.

- Approved the payment for a Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, temporary easement and option for a parcel of land in Holy Cross Township owned by the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority's Minnesota Land Committee. Regarding the Diversion permit denial and contested case, Clay County Commissioner Jenny Mongeau suggested that a meeting should be arranged to provide an opportunity for the BRRWD, the City of Moorhead, and the Clay County Commissioners to find "common ground" regarding these issues.
• Authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. to conduct a survey of the ditches on both sides of 140th ST S downstream of the Agassiz Valley Elevator in Section 13, Barnesville Township, Clay County, to determine the best location for the installation of a culvert(s) to move water north from the elevator site, eventually to Stony Creek.

• Approved a $200 payment to FM Excavating to remove a logjam on the Buffalo River in the SW¼, Section 10, Kragnes Township.

• Approved a repair request to clean 1.0 mile of County Ditch (C.D.) No. 59 in Section 25, Kragnes Township, Clay County, for approximately $8,500.

• Approved repairs for a 2.0 mile stretch of C.D. No. 11N from the Red River to 28th ST S in Sections 32 and 33, Holy Cross Township, Clay County, for approximately $10,000.

• Approved a hydraulic study for two culverts along C.R. No. 8 at 28th ST S and 40th ST S on C.D. No. 11N in Sections 33 and 34, Kurtz Township, Clay County.

• Agreed to schedule a landowner informational meeting this winter to present options for the potential upgrade of a railroad structure and ditch repair along C.D. No. 36 along 130th AVE S in Sections 8 and 9, Holy Cross Township, Clay County.

• Approved a repair for C.D. No. 44 in Sections 10 and 11, Manston Township, Wilkin County, including beaver dam removal, flapgate replacement, and cleaning the ditch to the original grade. A downstream landowner voiced concerns about the ditch cleanout, citing potential impacts to current flooding problems on the South Branch of the Buffalo River, which is the outlet for this ditch system.

• Discussed the possible addition of desktop monitors and auxiliary components for the Boardroom table. The cost estimate for the equipment and labor is approximately $5,500. Staff plans to meet with a representative from the company that installed the original system to discuss their quote for the monitors and the potential for a system upgrade.

• Noted that Kathy Fenger, BRRWD Assistant Administrator, attended the Clay County 4-H 2019 Awards program on 10/20/19 in Hawley where the BRRWD was presented with a "Friend of 4-H" Award for hosting the Barnesville Lego League Team for the past three years.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD Office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville, MN. The meeting date is changed in observance of Veterans' Day. All meetings are open to the public. For more information about the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.