At their regular meeting held on July 13, 2020, at 7:00 PM in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), authorized signature of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), required for the proposed Whiskey Creek Enhancement Project. The Board distributed the EAW for a 60-day review period, which ended 6/24/20. We received four comment letters that were incorporated into the EAW Record of Decision. Essentially, the EAW Findings were that an Environmental Impact Statement won't be required for the proposed project. The project is located along Whiskey Creek and its tributaries in the Townships of Nilsen, Connelly, Nordick, and McCauleyville in Wilkin County. Project components include the establishment of expanded permanent vegetated buffers, the installation of sediment control best management practices, stream restoration, and upland conservation practices. The project is a cooperative undertaking between the BRRWD, the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), State, and Federal agencies.

Other Business included:

- Approved the BRRWD's 7/13/20 monthly financial reports, including the project account balance sheet, administrative disbursements, and summary of income. Cash on hand is $3,289,164.06. The current administrative disbursements since 6/8/20 totaled $29,067.92, and the total for the year is $214,487.25. Income received since the last meeting totals $2,027,266.91 and for the year, totals $2,982,124.67. We received $1.4 million from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) FY16 Targeted Watershed Grant for Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration, and 2020 property/ditch tax payments from Clay County ($503,839.67), Becker County ($64,401.20), and Otter Tail County ($330.11). The Board also approved payment of the bills in the amount of $488,532.64. The BRRWD's 2021 Annual Budget Hearing is scheduled for August 24, 2020, at 8:00 PM.

- Entered into Executive Session to discuss the permit appeal lawsuit and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Contested Case. When the Board reconvened the regular meeting, they approved a motion to authorize BRRWD Attorney Brent Edison to hire an expert witness hydrologist for deposition and trial testimony regarding the Diversion Authority's new property rights acquisition mitigation information, modeling, and impact maps.

- Appointed Manager Van Amburg to serve on the Minnesota-Clay County Joint Powers Authority land acquisition committee, associated with the FM Diversion project.

- Approved permits to Matt Halverson for a wetland restoration in the SW¼, Section 14, Elkton Township, Clay County, using scrapes and ditch plugs, as part of a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) conservation easement project; Jerry Butenhoff for a wetland restoration in the W½, Section 12, Elkton Township, Clay County, using minor scrapes and embankments, as part of a CREP conservation easement project; Gerald Zimmerman to install pattern tile in the NW¼, Section 4, Moland Township, Clay County, running south to north, outletting via a lift station and/or control structure in the middle of the quarter into Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 65 on the north side of the property, to which the land is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Shawn Norman to add the east 80 acres in the NW¼, Section 15, Maston Township, Wilkin County, to Norman's existing tile main project (Permit No. 18-003), drilling to the existing project outlet, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Pheasants Forever for 13 wetland restorations by means of sediment removal, ditch plugs, and potential tile removal, plus crossings with culverts in the NW¼NW¼, Section 8, and the E½SW¼, Section 5, Parke Township, Clay County; David Simmer to lower an 18” dia. culvert by approximately 6” that the township plans to replace at the intersection of 300th AVE and 260th ST in the SE¼, Section 20, Akron Township, Wilkin County, subject to township approval to work within their road right-of-way; Kraig Nelson for the installation of random drain tile and culvert installations for field crossings in various locations in Sections 9, 11, and 12, Audubon Township, Becker County, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; Ed Askegaard to pattern tile 156 acres in the NE¼, Section 10, Mitchell Township, Wilkin County, via a lift station to C.D. No. 22-Lateral No. 3, to which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer; and Michael Yaggie to install pattern tile with 60’ spacings in the E½, Section 28, Nilsen Township, Wilkin County, outletting to C.D. No. 3-Branch 3, to which the property is assessed, subject to our standard tiling disclaimer.
• Approved Change Order No. 5 (-$18,790.65) and Pay Request No. 12 in the amount of $265,001.36 to Sellin Brothers, Inc. for their work on Phase 1 of Project No. 79, Wolverton Creek Restoration. The contractor is working on seeding and expects to complete Phase 1 in the next few weeks.

• Authorized two culvert repairs on Clay C.D. No. 21. The first repair site is in the northwest corner of Section 1, Elmwood Township, where a band on a 36" dia. corrugated metal pipe field inlet failed and needs to be replaced along with any damaged or deteriorated pipe ($2,000-$3,500). The other repair is for a 60" dia. reinforced concrete pipe culvert through 130th ST S between Sections 5 and 6, Elkton Township, that has minor joint separation, causing some settling along the road ditch slope adjacent to the road surface. The pipe will be excavated, and the joints wrapped with geotextile fabric to prevent water from washing soil through the joints ($2,000-$3,000 for materials and labor).

• Authorized replacement for two culverts in Clay C.D. No. 58 through 130th ST S between Sections 17 and 18, Elkton Township, with a single line of 73" x 55" arch pipe for approximately $20,000 for materials and labor, subject to a 50/50 cost-share agreement with Elkton Township.

• Authorized BRRWD Engineer Erik S. Jones to work with the Wilkin SWCD to investigate a possible repair of slope failures next to a farmstead where C.D. No. 12 enters the Red River north of Breckenridge. The BRRWD has agreed to conduct a preliminary survey investigation, provide a concept plan, and potentially submit a BWSR Clean Water Fund grant application for erosion control.

• Approved hiring LM Road Services, Ulen, MN, to conduct the 2020 ditch spraying for cattails, trees, and noxious weeds on the Clay and Wilkin County ditch systems and projects.

• Authorized Jones to work with a Becker C.D. No. 5 landowner regarding a pipe installation and advice about a potential ditch improvement process.

• Authorized signature of cost-share agreement with the Wilkin SWCD for the repair of the C.D. No. 27 east/west branches and the installation of side inlets. The SWCD will provide $159,395.99 in grant funds and the ditch system will provide 25% matching funds.

• Approved a Pete Lake homeowner's request for reimbursement of the gravel costs to raise his driveway near the outlet of Project No. 67, HRBP Lakes Outlet. Since 2010 when the BRRWD completed an outlet project for Helgeson, Randkler, Businger, and Pete Lakes, the runout elevation of the Pete Lake outlet has been modified higher a couple of times in response to Pete Lake landowner requests. Due to the spring runoff, Pete Lake was at elevation 1356.1 in June, which affected the private driveway near the outlet.

• Approved a Turtle Lake homeowner's request for the BRRWD to cost-share 25% of his shoreland restoration and protection project. The Clay County Planning and Zoning and SWCD has agreed to provide the design and contribute 50% of the costs for the project from their shoreline restoration grant funds.

• Received the HR Committee report regarding the possible transition of the current HEI contracted staff to BRRWD inhouse employees.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their next regular meeting on Monday, July 27, 2020, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, we will hold an electronic meeting in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Annotated, Section 13D.021. The conference line information is: Toll Free 1-833-403-3948 or Local 1-701-499-9476. Access Code 2503. Conference PIN 1401. The public is welcome to dial in to the meeting. More information will be posted on the BRRWD's website prior to the meeting at www.brrwd.org.