

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

BARNESVILLE, MINNESOTA 56514

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10 Year Comprehensive Plan Update

Lakes Planning Region Public Input Meeting

Community Center, Callaway, MN

April 24, 2007

In attendance were: Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) and Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.); Erik S. Jones, Engineer, and Mark D. Aanenson, H.E.; Curtis M. Nelson, Roger G. Ellefson, John E. Hanson, Managers, BRRWD; Pete Waller and Brian Dwight, Board Conservationists, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Wayne Brendemuhl, Jerome Flottesch, Alvin Hansen, Karen A. Brandon, Arnold Swenson, Kenneth Schellack, Eddie Bernhardson, and Arvid Thompson, Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC); Dave Barsness, Steve Hofstad, Robert J. Merritt, Brian Winter, Henry VanOffelen, and Michael T. Murphy, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); Brad Grant, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Jim Ziegler, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Lowell Deede, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); Will Bement, White Earth Indian Reservation; and landowners: Mike VanValkenburg, Jack Hedlund, Hank Sperl, Muriel Sperl, Donna Jacobs, Carolyn Kohler, David Palm, Norma Hedlund, Justin Klemetson, Pete Randolph, Keith G. Brekken, Roger Engstrom, Todd Renner, Dave Rousu, Richard Jensen, Claris Greenland, Rosemary Greenland, Jerome Wamre, Norman Danielson, George Read, Jim Haney, and Theresa Haney.

7:40 PM – **Welcome and Introductions** – *Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator*

Albright welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a brief history of the BRRWD. It was formed in 1976 after the 1975 summer flood. He listed the counties that are part of the BRRWD and explained that the Board members are appointed by their respective county Board of Commissioners. He discussed the seven planning regions and the series of public meetings that will occur in each of the planning regions. Albright also discussed the makeup and purpose of the TAC and CAC.

8:00 PM – **Introduction to the Planning Regions and General Description of the Lakes Planning Region** - *Mark D. Aanenson, H.E.*

Aanenson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the establishment of the BRRWD planning regions and a general description of the Lakes Planning Region. He displayed a map of the subwatersheds and discussed the differences between the subwatersheds and the planning regions. He also talked about the approach that was used to identify the planning regions, and how the planning regions and the hydrology model work together. Aanenson gave a general description of the Lakes Planning Region and displayed a number of maps including land use, presettlement vegetation, ecological resources, soils, annual soil loss by subwatershed, and wind erodibility.

8:20 PM – Hydrology of the Lakes Planning Region – Erik Jones, BRRWD Engineer

Jones discussed the hydrology of the BRRWD and how the model is built and calibrated using rainfall events. He described how the HEC HMS hydrology model can be used to consider different alternatives. He also discussed flooding on the Red River and how different areas of the BRRWD contribute relative to the flood peak on the Red River. Certain areas of the BRRWD contribute prior to the flood peak (early), some areas contribute during the flood peak (middle), and some areas contribute after the flood peak (late). The Lakes Planning Region has areas in the middle and late flood contribution zones. Jones discussed the runoff patterns and natural storage areas within this region. He asked if there were questions regarding the Lakes Region hydrology or the model. A question was asked about the 'Waffle Effect Project' and its affect on flooding events. Jones indicated that the 'Waffle' is a pilot project with the Energy and Environmental Research Council (EERC), located at the University of North Dakota. The project essentially looks at using the rural roadway system in the lower part of the valley to store water by blocking culverts during spring snowmelt/runoff events.

8:40 PM – BRRWD Projects and FDR Problem Areas in the Lakes Planning Region – Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator

Albright discussed the existing problem areas the planning team has identified. He discussed the history of the ditch systems in the planning region. He discussed how the loss of the old dam in Richwood affected the water levels on Buffalo Lake. He noted that Becker County turned the ditch systems over to the BRRWD in the 1980s. In 2005, local residents approached the BRRWD regarding the water levels on Rock Lake, indicating that the water was too high. Then a few years later, residents approached the BRRWD indicating that the water was too low. Some of the problem areas that have been identified so far have been the erosion issues along the Buffalo River, Becker County Ditch No. 10 and Becker County Ditch No. 19 redetermination of benefits, a number of possible detention sites that need additional evaluation, restoration of channelized portions of the Buffalo River, and fish passage issues with the Buffalo Lake dam.

A lengthy discussion occurred regarding the benefiting areas of the ditch systems. A number of questions were asked regarding the benefiting areas of County Ditch Nos. 10 and 19. Landowners wanted to know why some people paying into both systems; why the surveying costs were so high; why the BRRWD hasn't changed the benefiting areas or abandoned the systems; and what the estimated cost of abandonment proceedings might be. Albright indicated that the benefiting areas were established in the 1920s and the BRRWD doesn't know why the viewers set the areas the way they did, although some areas in the Tamarac NWR were previously in the benefiting areas and now do not pay. Albright also indicated that the costs to respond to requests on the systems did get higher than he would have liked last year. The BRRWD has not initiated redetermination or abandonment procedures because the Board of Managers feels that those types of actions generally need to start with the residents on the system. Albright also indicated that if one or both of these systems were abandoned, it is very unlikely that another legal drainage system could be reestablished in this area. Roger Ellefson, BRRWD Chairman, also commented that lands excluded from the benefit area during a redetermination will not pay the redetermination proceeding costs because they will no longer be in the system.

Another question was asked about who would have authority over the ditches if they were abandoned. Albright indicated that the BRRWD Rules and permit system would still have authority

over actions along the system, but any maintenance work would be the responsibility of the individual landowners. Additional discussion occurred regarding the Buffalo Lake outlet culvert and the role of the County Highway Department in sizing culverts.

**9:15 PM – Natural Resource Enhancement Opportunities in the Lakes Planning Region–
*Henry VanOffelen, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA)***

VanOffelen discussed the natural resource enhancement (nre) assessment work that he has completed for the BRRWD as part of the plan update process. He explained how the current planning process will be more comprehensive than past efforts. He went over some PowerPoint slides and discussed the existing resources in the Lakes Region. He indicated that there is currently a good mix of woodlands and wetlands throughout the region. He talked about the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) program and the percent of grass in the region. He also discussed a drained wetlands inventory and talked about some example goals for the region. He encouraged the group to fill out the planning worksheets and list their nre opportunities.

9:30 PM – Water Quality Issues in the Lakes Planning Region – *Jim Ziegler, MPCA*

Ziegler discussed the MPCA's water quality program. He discussed the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process and how it relates to the state water quality standards. He also covered the types of stressors including toxics and conventional parameters. Many of the stream reaches in the Red River Valley are impaired due to turbidity levels. He stressed the importance of planning in upstream areas. He also commented that the Tamarac NWR is going to start planning for a water quality monitoring program.

Following Ziegler's presentation, the group took a 15 minute break.

10:00 PM – Identification of FDR and NRE Issues-Small Group Workshop - *Mark D. Aanenson, H.E.*

Aanenson went over the input forms and surveys. He had everyone work in small groups to identify issues within the planning regions and put them on the maps provided at each table.

10:25 PM – Reports from the Small Groups

Albright thanked everyone for attending the meeting and discussed how the information will be used. He also indicated the BRRWD will have another meeting for the Lakes Planning Region to present solutions based on the input from this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.