

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

BARNESVILLE, MINNESOTA 56514

123 FRONT STREET SOUTH – PO BOX 341

PHONE 218-354-771

10 Year Comprehensive Plan Update

Southern Planning Region Public Input Meeting
Assumption Catholic Church, Barnesville, MN

June 26, 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.; Roger G. Ellefson, Curtis M. Nelson, John E. Hanson, Gerald L. VanAmburg, and E. Robert Olson, Managers, BRRWD; Kenneth Schellack, Alvin Hansen, Eddie Bernhardson, Arvid Thompson, and Lauren Peterson, Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC); Henry VanOffelen, Don Schultz, Robert G. Merritt, Kevin Brennen, Dave Barsness, Bruce Poppel, Jack Frederick, Pete Waller, Lance Yohe, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); and landowners: Steve Froslic, Bruce Nelson, Dale Dinger, Lowell Seidler, Jerry Nordick, Fred Hansen, Richard Jenson, Larry Peterson, Greg Anderson, Robert Faulkner, Edwin Haick, Leon Dunham, David Kritzberger, Norris Johnson, Kurt Krueger, Jim Haick, Louis Krueger, Arnold Korbel, Dan Solum, Robert Hovland, Jim Marty, Tom Thomas, Mark Grefsrud, Ernest Hovland, Larry Rogers, Paul Tschakert, Frank Syvertsen, Douglas Butenhoff, Randy Butenas, Adele Butenas, Mark Yaggie, Merle Nelson, Bruce Nelson, Clifford Froslic, Rick Maier, and Sylvester Trosvik.

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

Albright welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He discussed the planning process and differences between the old plan and the level of detail in the new planning process. The BRRWD completed their first plan in the late 1970s and updated it in 1998. The older plans were more general in nature. In the 1980s, Watershed Districts were building dams and retention areas, but in the 1990s, they began having conflicts with resource agencies. The Mediation Agreement was a result of this regulatory impasse. Different types of land within the BRRWD will have different challenges, and the planning process will have different goals and objectives for each region. This is the fifth in a series of seven regional meetings. We expect to complete the planning process in the next six to nine months. Albright introduced the BRRWD Board members and Lance Yohe, Red River Basin Commission.

7:55 PM – **Introduction to the Planning Regions and General Description of the Southern Planning Region** - *Mark D. Aanenson, Houston Engineering, Inc.*

Aanenson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the establishment of the planning regions and a general description of the Southern planning region. He discussed the different ways in which the new plan will be organized. Aanenson displayed maps showing the location of the BRRWD subwatersheds and the differences between the subwatersheds and the planning regions. He discussed the approach that was used to identify the planning regions. Aanenson then gave a general description of the Southern

planning region and presented a number of maps illustrating land use, presettlement vegetation, ecological resources, groundwater aquifers, soils, annual soil loss by subwatershed, and wind erodibility.

8:10 PM – Hydrology of the Southern Planning Region – Erik Jones, BRRWD Engineer

Jones gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the hydrology of the Southern planning region. He discussed the ditch systems in the region and showed the drainage areas for each of the systems. Jones talked about the timing of the contribution areas in the BRRWD as compared to the flood peaks on the Red River. The Southern Planning Region is in the early contribution area, as it contributes most of its runoff prior to the peak on the Red River. Using the 1975 summer flood as a model, Jones demonstrated how runoff travels through the planning region and showed the timing of the peak flows at different gauging stations for each of the rainfall events. Jones discussed the types of district projects that have been built in the Southern Planning Region, including ditch repairs and improvements and the Deerhorn Creek Levee Project.

8:20 PM – BRRWD Projects and FDR Problem Areas in the Southern Planning Region – Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator

Albright discussed the existing problem areas that the planning team identified. He discussed the flooding problems on Wilkin County Ditch No. 42. He also discussed Wilkin County Ditch No. 40 and the native brook trout population in that area. Other problem areas that were discussed included sediment loads in Wilkin County Ditch No. 44, the channel capacity of the South Branch of the Buffalo River, and flow issues with Wilkin County Ditch No. 13-Lateral No. 1, located near the Manston Slough. Albright gave a brief summary of the Manston Slough Project. Someone asked why water flows from the South Branch of the Buffalo River breakout to County Ditch No. 13. Albright indicated that a number of beaver dams didn't help the situation; however, the larger issue is that there is just too much water coming down the South Branch for the channel to hold it. Most likely, the South Branch of the Buffalo River also needs cleaning.

8:30 PM – Natural Resource Enhancement Opportunities in the Southern Planning Region – Henry VanOffelen, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA)

VanOffelen discussed the natural resource (NR) assessment work that he has completed for the BRRWD in conjunction with the plan update process. The BRRWD is the seventh of the nine regional plans he has worked on in the Red River Basin. He discussed the goals of the NR effort. They include the identification of opportunities for projects that will result in both natural resource enhancement (nre), as well as flood damage reduction (fdr). We also want to avoid future fdr and nre project conflicts. VanOffelen discussed a number of NR opportunities in this planning region provided by the abundance of grassland and rare habitats and species. He displayed PowerPoint slides with maps illustrating the percent of grass cover, restorable resources, and buffer conditions of the region's ditches and streams. Potential NR goals for the Southern Planning Region include: improving the existing hydrologic conditions in the watercourses by reducing peak flows, reestablishing the habitat corridor along the South Branch of the Buffalo River, reducing erosion and sedimentation in watercourses,

protecting and enhancing grassland areas east of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9, and protecting high quality natural resource features.

8:40 PM – **Water Quality Issues in the Southern Planning Region** – *Jack Frederick, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)*

Frederick discussed the water quality program administered by the MPCA. He discussed the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process and how this process relates to the state water quality standards and intended uses. 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. With the appropriate data, he commented that all of the waters in the valley are probably impaired for turbidity. High turbidity levels are currently affecting fish habitat and causing hypoxia in Lake Winnipeg and the Gulf of Mexico. He then discussed the causes of turbidity such as the agricultural runoff, wind erosion, and streambank erosion. Much of the streambank erosion is caused by the variable flows in the systems. Some flood control projects can have a positive effect on these flows and sediment levels. Albright commented that when topsoil is lost due to erosion, it is not just a water quality issue but also a productivity issue for the agricultural sector.

8:55 - The group took a 15 minute break.

9:10 PM – **Identification of FDR and NRE Issues - Small Group Workshop**- *Mark D. Aanenson, Houston Engineering, Inc.*

Albright instructed the group to provide input on the provided maps and worksheets. Aanenson commented that the small group worksheets do a good job of highlighting the types of information that the District is interested in. He went over the input forms and surveys and had everyone get started.

9:30 PM – **Reports from the Small Groups**

Albright thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He discussed how the information will be used, and the next scheduled meeting. He commented on the good discussions that took place at the tables. He also indicated the BRRWD will have another meeting this winter to present solutions based on the input from this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.