

MEDIATION PROJECT TEAM MINUTES
January 26, 2006

A meeting of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) Mediation Project Team (PT) was held on Thursday, January 26, 2006, at 1:30 PM at the Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) Science Center near Glyndon.

Attending were: Bruce E. Albright, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) and BRRWD Office Administrator; Curtis M. Nelson, E. Robert Olson, Gerald L. VanAmburg, and John E. Hanson, BRRWD Managers; Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E.; Bob Honeman, Area Resource Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); Shawn May, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District (WMD); Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD and USFWS; Dave Barsness, Fisheries Specialist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Steve Hofstad, Clay County Water Planner and Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Administrator; Pete Waller, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Brian Winter, Program Director, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Michael T. Murphy, Manager, Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and USFWS; and Jack Frederick, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Members absent were: Don Buckhout, Red River Basin Coordinator, DNR; Brian Dwight, Board Conservationist, BWSR; Roger Ellefson, BRRWD Manager; Craig O. Evans, PM-D, United States Army Corps of Engineers (COE); Audubon Dakota; Leo Grabowski, Project Manager, COE; Brad Grant, District Administrator, Becker Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Kevin Kassenborg, District Manager, Clay SWCD; Robert G. Merritt, Area Hydrologist, DNR; Richard Pemble, BRRWD Citizen Advisory Committee; Maynard Pick, Staff Assistant, Congressman Collin Peterson's Office; Don Schultz, Area Wildlife Manager, DNR; and Robert A. Zimmerman, Engineer, City of Moorhead.

Albright called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM.

Business brought before the group included:

Meeting Minutes. Draft minutes for the 12/08/05 PT meeting were distributed with today's agenda. Murphy noted a correction for Page 4, fourth paragraph. The discussion pertains to acquisition personnel within the USFWS. To clarify his statements, Murphy said the existing USFWS acquisition personnel have now been divided between the Department of the Interior and a new appraisal services directorate. Albright said that the change will be made to the minutes. **Motion** by Frederick to approve the minutes. **Seconded** by Winter. **Approved.**

Project Implementation Process and Procedures. Albright said today's meeting agenda has been coded in accordance with the discussion that took place at the 12/08/05 meeting with Don Buckhout. A document has been drafted to provide guidance to the PTs, watershed districts, and regulatory agencies, regarding integration of the various procedures that must be followed to implement flood

damage reduction (fdr) and natural resource enhancement (nre) projects. Albright distributed copies of the document for those who did not have one. Albright felt the flow chart would be useful in tracking the status of an individual project. As you can see from the agenda, we have several of our projects listed in the Step 2 process, which includes project alternatives and preliminary engineering.

Project No. 54, Whisky Creek Tributaries. This project is at Step 8, which is monitoring. Wade Opsahl, Technician, H. E., who supervised the project construction, will complete a report for pre-construction and construction phases. Post construction monitoring will start in the spring.

A meeting was held this morning with landowners involved with the Section 14, Barnesville Township, impoundment site. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) II and in particular, Conservation Practice (CP) 34. In general, the Red River Basin CREP has 2,125 acres available for this practice, which includes a 15-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payment and a perpetual Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement. Besides the landowners, others in attendance included personnel from the Clay SWCD office; Kathy Knutson, Clay County Farm Service Agency (FSA) CRP Clerk; Steve Hofstad; and Pete Waller, BWSR. Albright said the program allows for a 50% upland buffer in conjunction with those areas directly impacted by the impoundment pool. Landowners will have until 12/31/07 to sign up for the program. The BRRWD office will furnish project maps to the Clay SWCD and BWSR, which define the impacted area. This is a voluntary program. Since the project was just completed last fall, landowners are not sure how it will work, and how it might affect their property. Albright felt if the area received a heavy rainfall in early June, the landowners may take a second look at the program.

At the recent 23rd Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference held in Winnipeg, MB, on January 11-13, 2006, the BRRWD received the 2006 "Outstanding Project Award" from the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). Once again, Albright thanked all of the PT participants for their involvement, which helped make this project become a reality.

Spring Prairie Township Erosion. The BRRWD still needs to meet with the landowners where a survey was done several years ago regarding a possible impoundment site in Sections 28 and 29, Keene Township, Clay County. Hofstad felt the land involved with this impoundment, if it were ever developed, would also qualify for CP34. Albright has not seen a copy of the survey that H.E. completed for this area. Albright questioned if the engineering was at a point where we've started to look at pool elevations, etc. Hofstad felt that Northern Improvement Company, the landowner in Section 29, would be very interested in knowing those elevations as they have gravel on their property and would not want to sign any easement that might jeopardize future development of a gravel pit in this area.

Albright said that in 1998, the BRRWD received a petition to install a lateral to Clay County Ditch No. 39 south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 26. The preliminary hearing was held in April 1999, but the BRRWD never took further action to move this project forward. Landowner concerns were expressed at the hearing about the project costs. The preliminary hearing only involved those landowners on Clay County Ditch No. 39. The BRRWD would like to determine if this project should move forward or be stopped. A meeting was held with the petitioner, Steve Wear, in early December 2005. Right now, Albright is trying to arrange a meeting with Joe Wipf, Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren, Inc., to discuss the project's fate. The proposed project is at the outlet of a natural waterway that drains the upstream area into Clay County Ditch No. 39. In retrospect, Albright felt we might have held the hearing with the wrong landowners, as when the water breaks out of the existing channel

south of CSAH No. 26, it flows westerly into Clay County Ditch No. 65. If developed, Albright felt Ditch No. 65 could receive protection benefits, which would help spread the project costs.

Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. The Preliminary Resolution Hearing in accordance Minnesota Statutes Annotated (M. S. A.) 103D.601 was held by the BRRWD on 12/06/05. At the 12/12/05 BRRWD meeting, the Board approved a motion authorizing the project to move forward. The BRRWD has filed the Governor's Clean Water Initiative Quarterly Project Status Report for the period of 10/01/05-12/31/05. Earlier this month, Albright had a telephone conference with Pete Waller and John Voz regarding the Holubok property involved with the project. Bob Usgaard, Ducks Unlimited (DU), who formerly worked in the Fergus Falls NRCS office, has taken a new position with DU as their Shallow Lakes Coordinator. Usgaard will still be available to work with the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements on this project. Usgaard's replacement is Mark Norton, who started work on 1/23/06. Voz was going to contact Albright to arrange a meeting with Holubok to discuss the WRP. The State may have limited funding available for new 2006 contracts. Honeman felt that after talking with Tim Koehler, Soil Conservationist, NRCS, there might be funding available through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). This is a separate set of funds. There were also several landowners who expressed interest regarding WRP in a Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) project. They are no longer interested and funding from that project might be shifted to Manston.

Albright said that currently, watershed districts have the power of eminent domain, per M.S.A. 103D.335, Subd. 11. To date, the BRRWD has never had to use eminent domain to acquire easements for a project. A bill has been drafted for discussion in the 2006 Legislative Session that might take away the power of eminent domain from appointed officials. The proposed law also states that no court or government entity shall award attorney's fees or expense to the State of Minnesota or any political subdivision thereof, or any condemning authority to paid by condemnees/owners for defending their property against a threatened or actual taking by eminent domain or financing related thereto. The proposed legislation is being brought forth from a "reform" group. Frederick would like to see a copy of the proposed legislation. Albright will e-mail a copy to him.

Murphy questioned how the BRRWD proposed to deal with the Holubok property. To date, they have not expressed an interest in being involved with the proposed project. Albright said, typically, the BRRWD would first work with those landowners who are in favor of the proposed project. There are always several landowners on every project whose easements are harder to get. Hopefully, by taking time, and through an education process, the BRRWD will be able to work with Holubok. We sent him a letter about a year ago outlining his options, which include: a WRP/WREP easement, a BRRWD easement, the potential to sell the property, the potential to stay in the buildings, including options such as ringdikes, etc.

Albright had a telephone discussion earlier this week with Ed Fick about a \$100,000 amendment to our current DNR grant for this project. The paperwork should be here in the near future. The funding will be used for land acquisition, and development of the plans and specifications. The BRRWD will also be asking the Legislature for \$1.5 million in the 2006 bonding bill to fund the project construction.

At the last meeting, considerable time was spent discussing the environmental reviews that will be required to develop a project of this nature. For the USFWS environmental review, we'll need to have the construction plans done. Brennan said it would also be good if we started looking at development of an operational plan. This cooperative agreement between the DNR, USFWS, BRRWD, and NRCS will include an operation team that would meet on an annual basis to discuss how the project performs,

as well as development of a plan for the upcoming year. For the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), as well as USFWS review, we'll need an archeological survey. Frederick felt we should also start conversations with the COE immediately, as they could have some concerns regarding Section 404 permitting. Brennan felt it was important to note that while the proposed project includes two pools, one for a permanent wildlife pool, and another is the flood water storage pool, the primary purpose of the project from the USFWS standpoint cannot be for flood control. We need to key on the restoration of the natural hydrology, rather than using the area as an impoundment site. Brennan would still like to see an additional culvert installed at the dam outlet, which could facilitate the pool drawdown. This could also be of benefit to the BRRWD if there is a follow up storm. Manager Nelson said that we would have to look at the capacity of the downstream outlet, as some landowners have already expressed concerns about moving the water past their buildings, etc.

Albright will mail Brennan a copy of a cooperative agreement the BRRWD currently has for a flood control project. Brennan felt this would be a good place to start in terms of developing an agreement for the Manston Slough Restoration. Murphy felt we should also start looking at trying to identify partnerships in terms of dollars that could be used to help develop the project.

Jones recently sent an e-mail to the State Historical Preservation Officer regarding the archeological survey. To date, there has been no response. Albright received an e-mail earlier this week that Don Schultz was unable to attend today's meeting. The DNR is proceeding with the appraisals on the C&H Farms and Arnhalt properties. Brennan said the USFWS has indicated that they could take donated properties after the WRP and BRRWD easements are in place. Brennan also felt the engineers should consider installing a stop log structure in CSAH No. 26, which would allow for different operating plans on the north and south pools. We also need to start looking at a monitoring/evaluation program. Albright said the Barnesville River Watch Team has been collecting water samples at the site for the two years. Frederick will be willing to help in developing the monitoring plan. Barsness said there could be fisheries concerns with installing an additional pipe in the dam to augment outlet flows. The DNR will want to make sure that there's not a constant water supply that could attract fish out of the South Branch of the Buffalo River up into this area. Once the flows are stopped at the dam, the fish will have no place to go.

Obviously, there's lots of work to be done on this project if we're going to make favorable progress. Albright said the BRRWD office will be drafting the easement options for the individual landowners in the next several weeks. The BRRWD will need to start meeting with those landowners to get them signed. The engineers need to start looking at some of the design details, such as the dam breach analysis, EAW and USFWS environmental reviews, permitting, development of an operational and maintenance plan, and development of a monitoring/evaluation plan.

Project No. 58, Riverton Township Retention. In accordance with M.S.A. 103D.605, the BRRWD has scheduled the Preliminary Resolution Hearing for Thursday, February 16, 2006, at 7:00 PM in the Glyndon Community Center. Notices are being published. This is one of the legal steps the BRRWD must go through to develop a project of this nature. Besides the publication notice, Albright will mail notice of the hearing to affected parties. Jones noted that once we get through the Preliminary Resolution Hearing, he plans to do more work on the engineering details to address issues raised by TNC at our last meeting held on 6/15/05. Winter questioned how the BRRWD proposed to finance the project. Albright said the estimated costs at this time are \$450,000. During our meetings held last fall with the Senate and House Bonding Committees, we asked them to consider \$225,000 in funding with the 2006 Bonding Bill. If everything goes well, the BRRWD could be ready to construct the project in the summer of 2007.

Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. A Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006, at 1:30 PM in the Clay County Courthouse, Moorhead, MN. Notices have been sent. Back in 2003-2004, a series of five Steering Committee meetings were held to develop the Preliminary Engineering Study. The last meeting of this group was on 2/04/04. One of the first steps will be to consider using part of the current \$2 million DNR grant to conduct buyouts of homes that are located in the floodway/floodplain.

Project No. 60, Swede Grove Lake Outlet. Clay County filed a petition on 8/25/04 to create an outlet for Swede Grove Lake. Between approximately 1999 and 2003, the County operated an outlet on Swede Grove Lake, which they constructed, to keep water away from CSAH No. 37, which runs along the east side of the road. By agreement with the downstream landowners, that outlet was closed. Albright said the County just wanted to reopen the existing outlet to protect their roadway. Since then, several meetings have been held with DNR Fisheries, Wildlife, hydrologists, and USFWS personnel to talk about a more comprehensive project for the lake. With additional project options, it appears that the project costs keep going up. At a 9/23/05 agency meeting held in Detroit Lakes, the concept of permanently lowering the lake to elevation 1235.0, with temporary drawdown features to 1231.0 was discussed. The lake is currently around elevation 1238.5, which is the same elevation set by the DNR on 11/08/04 with their Ordinary High Water (OHW) survey.

To have drawdown capabilities to elevation 1231, Jones is looking at the installation of a 24" dia. conduit that would tap into the main portion of the lake. Based on a field survey completed by H.E. this winter, it appears that most of the lake is in the range of 10'-15' deep. With the 24" dia. outlet pipe, there should be enough velocities in the pipe to stop fish migration coming upstream from the Buffalo River.

According to the project implementation process and procedures, Albright felt we were at Step 2B with this project, which includes PT development of project alternatives to address priority areas, purpose, and need. Some engineering, survey, and assessment work has been completed for the alternatives that have been analyzed to date.

Jones said the 24" dia. culvert would be sized to flow at a rate of approximately 2.5 cubic feet per second (cfs). It would take about 5,000' of pipe to reach a gravity flow outlet, located southeast of the lake. Pipe costs, including installation, will range in the \$40-\$60/linear foot. This means that there could be \$200,000 to \$300,000 of conduit pipe to create an outlet that would lower the lake to elevation 1231. At the present time, Jones is proposing to use concrete pipe. Honeman questioned if installation of the underground conduit could have a scope and effect on area wetlands. Jones said that pipe would have gasketed joints and should be able to go through wetland areas without impacting them. The H.E. field survey conducted this winter shows a top of ice elevation of 1238.3.

Winter questioned project benefits. If the lake were lowered as discussed, most of the wetland basins along the west side of the waterbody would be lost. From the aerial photograph, it appears that these basins were once drained into the lake. Barsness said this used to be one of their premiere walleye rearing ponds. At the 9/23/05 agency meeting, Scott Kahan, USFWS, felt that their wetlands could also be improved on the south end of the lake if the lake is lowered so that they can manage for emergent vegetation rather than open water.

Albright felt we should start listing potential project benefits so that we can assess if the project is feasible, given the proposed cost. The BRRWD also need to hold a meeting with the Clay County Highway Department, as the scope of the project as originally discussed has expanded from their initial

request. Under the petition process, and in accordance with Minnesota Watershed Law, the petitioner is responsible for the development costs incurred if for some reason the project is not developed. The County should not have to be responsible for costs incurred relating to nre assessments, etc. Albright felt that potential project benefits could include an improved fishery, creation of shallow water habitat that would be better for waterfowl, the installation of bufferstrips and wetland restorations around the lake's perimeter, which should improve water quality, and incorporation of flood storage for springtime runoff events. All of these benefits would have a value, and in the very near future, we'd better determine if this project is feasible.

Frederick questioned the downstream receiving waterbody for the lake outlet. Jones said it is the Buffalo River. Frederick said if we take water out of the bottom of Swede Grove Lake, it might have low dissolved oxygen and be carrying nutrients. There are identified stretches of the Buffalo River that are impaired waters. Hofstad commented that there are already several CRP contracts along the west side of the lake.

Murphy discussed the proposed lake elevations. By creating a shallow water habitat, we should be able to restore the aquatic plants. Barsness said that because of the deeper water, all of the aquatic plants are now gone. Frederick said that on a statewide basis, there's an initiative to restore the shallow lakes. Murphy felt if we didn't consider the county road, which was the initial request of this petition, we would then need to look at the lake and the other benefits that could be provided by installing a lower outlet. The topography in the watershed that drains into Swede Grove Lake is quite rolling and contains a number of hills and wetland basins. Even if Swede Grove Lake is not lowered, there will be other shallow basins in the area, which could provide habitat for waterfowl, etc. An example is the Hamden Slough NWR, where there are benefits for having larger bodies of shallow water.

Winter commented that he would hate to see a project that would lower the lake levels so that landowners could begin farming the wetland basins that were previously drained along the west side of the lake. He felt that BRRWD should consider some type of permanent easement to protect these areas. Murphy said that from some of the information that he has studied regarding lake drawdown, it's probably better not to draw off the top water, but the bottom water, which would be better for wildlife and fisheries. Frederick said this may not be true from a water quality perspective. Frederick questioned if we could start taking some water samples at the lake. Albright said this matter could be discussed with the Hawley River Watch Team.

Albright felt one of the next steps would be for the engineer to provide a list of potential project benefits with values assigned to those benefits. The BRRWD should also hold a meeting with David L. Overbo, Engineer, Clay County Highway Department, and the local commissioner from that area, Jerry Waller, to discuss the project status. The County may want out of their petition if the project is going to be expanded to include some of the things discussed today.

Buffalo River Levees. Albright felt this project was at Step 2A, which is where the PT meets to define the problem and proposed project purpose/goals. Two meetings were held in 2005 with the landowners in Sections 4, 5, and 6, Riverton Township, to discuss their problem. The meetings were poorly attended, and we could not have a meaningful discussion as to what they would like to see done in this area. Frederick recently drove the Buffalo River and was surprised at the severe bank erosion that was occurring in some areas. The Buffalo River traverses through this area, and Albright said because of the sandy soils, we do have bank erosion problems. With the installation of off channel levees, we might be able to install grass along the river to help resolve some of these problems. Albright will contact one of the land operators who was not able to attend the meetings last year to see

if a meeting can be arranged with him to discuss the area concerns. The area has a localized and regional flooding problem. There are localized problems caused by improperly sized culverts and a plugged township road ditch, etc., that could be fixed to benefit the landowners for the smaller 2"-5" rainfall events. The area also has a history of flooding from the Buffalo River for the major flood events.

Albright said at the 1/23/06 BRRWD meeting, they authorized the removal of two log jams from the Buffalo River. One log jam is located in the Kragnes area and is rather large. The contractor bid \$5,500 to do this work. The second log jam is located at the Texas crossing in Georgetown, where the contractor supplied a bid of \$2,000. Given the mild weather conditions, Albright thought the contractor would remove the log jams in the near future.

Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration. Albright has had discussions with several of the project landowners. They are anxious to hold another subcommittee PT meeting to discuss problems along the waterway. Albright has also discussed the project with Luther Aadland, Stream Habitat Program, Division of Ecological Services, DNR. At some point, Aadland should get involved regarding channel restoration. H.E. is working on a study that will compile all existing data regarding the creek, including maps and a channel profile. The BRRWD feels that we need something to discuss before we meet with the PT subcommittee. That work should be done in early February. Landowners are anxious to meet again before spring field work. Barsness has discussed the proposed project with Tom Grohans, who is working out of the Bemidji DNR office. Grohans is the new Red River Basin Fisheries coordinator, and has assumed the same position as previously held by Henry VanOfflen. This summer, Grohans may look at conducting a better fish survey on the waterway.

Lawndale Trout Stream Restoration. The BRRWD and DNR have scheduled an informational meeting for Wednesday, February 15, 2006, at 1:00 PM in the Barnesville City Hall to discuss this project. The DNR is looking at redesignating the trout stream across their property in Sections 34 and 35, Atherton Township. They need to hold a public informational meeting for that process. The trout stream designation was taken off of this area in the early 1960s when Wilkin County Ditch No. 40 was routed around the Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The BRRWD has authorized Jones to work with the DNR regarding the ditch system hydrology. The BRRWD has also sent a letter of support to the DNR for the proposed project. Dave Olson, *The Forum* is working on an article on the restoration project.

Fargo/Moorhead Upstream Feasibility Study (FMUS). To date, there has been no further correspondence from Craig Evans, COE, regarding the scheduling of a second meeting to discuss Phase 2 work.

South Branch of the Buffalo River Restoration. The BRRWD has tentatively scheduled a landowner informational meeting for Tuesday, February 21, 2006, at 7:00 PM, in the Barnesville office to discuss the recent DNR permit they received to clean a portion of the South Branch of the Buffalo River west of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 9. Approximately, twenty landowners downstream of the project to the Clay/Wilkin County line will be invited to attend. Last summer, some of the downstream landowners expressed concerns about doing this work. They would like to see their areas of the South Branch of the Buffalo River repaired before the BRRWD does additional cleaning at the outlet of Wilkin County Ditch No. 44. The BRRWD received the DNR permit from Terry Lejcher, Area Hydrologist, Fergus Falls, on 12/01/05. Frederick cautioned that there are impaired reaches of the South Branch of the Buffalo River, located downstream of the project. Some studies have shown that by cleaning the river, it can only make things worse regarding water quality. Albright said the

DNR permit is for minimal work only, to include approximately 1' of sediment removal, with a 10' wide bottom, and 4:1 sideslopes. No fill can be placed in adjacent wetland areas. Albright said those agency people from the PT who are involved with this area will be invited to the meeting by letter.

Comprehensive Planning. The BRRWD has completed approximately 95% of their Phase 1 work. A meeting was held last week with Peter Waller and Brian Dwight to discuss Phase 2 work. One of the next steps will be to set up the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Albright showed the group a flow chart that the office has prepared that includes the CAC and TAC, as well as Citizen and Technical Committees for each of the seven subwatersheds that will be studied. The next step will be to contact these individuals to see if they are willing to serve on the committees. The CAC and TAC will be involved with all sub-region meetings. Murphy said that Mike Swan might be a good representative for the Becker County discussions involving the White Earth Indian Reservation.

CREP II. Waller said that the program is starting out very slowly. The BRRWD has sent a list of the PT's "priority areas" to all of the SWCDs. Waller asked for a computer copy of the map from Jones. Waller said that Pheasants Forever has agreed to offer an added incentive of \$25/acre for CREP II easements. There was discussion why the program is not taking off. It appears that there are not enough dollars in it for landowners, especially associated with the 30-year RIM easement to get them interested. Representatives from BWSR will be discussing ways to possibly enhance the program.

Activities Update. Albright distributed copies of the 1/23/06 meeting press release. Most of the items discussed at the meeting have already been discussed at today's PT meeting. The BRRWD has awarded a contract for the City of Moorhead/I-94 flood control project. The Final Hearing for Project No. 51, Clay County Ditch No. 68, is scheduled for 3/02/06 in Glyndon. This is a new ditch proposed by the City of Glyndon, which will also incorporate fdr benefits. The BRRWD, along with the Clay, Becker, and Wilkin SWCDs, and the Clay County Highway Department have applied for a BWSR Beaver Damage Control Grant.

The lawsuits in Kragnes continue to plague the district. Upcoming hearings include 1/30/06 and 2/06/06. To date, the BRRWD has spent approximately \$85,000 in defending the malicious claims.

Albright distributed copies of an e-mail sent from Governor Pawlenty's Clean Water Initiative regarding stakeholder input on 2007 Farm Bill conservation policy recommendations to be developed by Minnesota's Clean Water Cabinet. They plan to develop 2007 Farm Bill conservation policy recommendations, with broad stakeholder input. The Cabinet has developed "Guiding Principals", which is a working document the Cabinet plans to use in developing more specific recommendations, focused on the role of the Farm Bill in addressing clean water priorities. The Cabinet hopes to submit their completed recommendations to the Minnesota Congressional Delegation and USDA as soon as June 2006. Comments are requested by April 30, 2006, or sooner if possible. If agencies want to comment, they should send in their replies directly to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

A report from MPCA entitled, "Red River Basin Turbidity Impairment Project", has been circulated via e-mail. The draft study, dated January 2006, includes information regarding the parts of 16 streams that do not meet state and federal water quality standards.

Albright reviewed correspondence from Chuck Fritz, International Water Institute (IWI) regarding the proposed digital elevation model (DEM). The DNR is moving ahead with their collect for the Wild Rice Watershed District, as well as areas along the Red River north to the Canadian border. From

what people can tell, the DNR has sought quotes on two scopes of work, including 3,000 square miles (sq. mi.), which came in at \$100-\$120/sq. mi., and 1,500 sq. mi., which came at \$120-\$140/sq. mi. Breaklines would run another \$40/sq. mi. Fritz said that because of economies of scale, it takes a larger collect, around 20,000 sq. mi. before the costs start to come down into the \$60/sq. mi. range. Fritz would like to see a DEM done for the entire Red River Basin in Minnesota and North Dakota. He's concerned that the DNR has not done enough work to solicit partners, to take advantage of the \$500,000 they currently have from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to do their project. Initially, the BRRWD was going to be included with the DNR's work; however, now based on the costs, it appears that we will not.

Other Issues. Albright said the March conference is scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2006, at the Northland Inn, Crookston, MN. More details regarding the conference will be forthcoming after the 2/01/06 Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction WorkGroup (RRBFDRWG) meeting.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be held on the traditional meeting date, the fourth Thursday or February 23, 2006, at 1:30 PM in the MSUM Science Center. We probably won't have a meeting in March, as on the fourth Thursday, March 23, we are scheduled to be in St. Paul for the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Legislative Breakfast. The March Conference is the following Thursday. We'll probably hold our next meeting sometime in early April.

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the group, Albright adjourned the meeting at 3:45 PM.

Respectfully Prepared and Submitted by

Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator