

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

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MEDIATION PROJECT TEAM MINUTES

January 31, 2008

The Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) Mediation Project Team (PT) held a meeting on Thursday, January 31, 2008, 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 Administrator; Roger G. Ellefson, Curtis M. Nelson, Gerald L. VanAmburg, John E. Hanson, and E. Robert Olson, BRRWD Managers; Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E; Dave Barsness, Fisheries Specialist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Kevin Brennan, Fergus Wetland Management District (WMD) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Pete Waller, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Shawn May, Detroit Lakes WMD and USFWS; Michael T. Murphy; Manager, Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and USFWS (retired); Don Schultz, Area Wildlife Manager, DNR; Brian Winter, Program Director, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); and Jack Frederick, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA);

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

Albright called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. He said that Steve Hofstad, Clay County Water Planner and Clay County Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Administrator, will no longer be attending our meetings, because as of 1/28/08, he has taken a job with BWSR as a wetland coordinator. Albright commented we will still be working with Hofstad on wetland issues, and now he will cover the entire BRRWD rather than just Clay County. The last PT meeting was held on 12/13/07. We hope to finish work on our Comprehensive Planning yet this winter, which will guide the work of the POT for the future.

Business brought before the group included:

Meeting Minutes. Draft minutes for the 12/13/07 PT meeting were distributed with today's meeting agenda. Albright said the office is still working on the 10/26/07 PT meeting minutes. **Motion** by Murphy to approve the 12/13/07 minutes. **Seconded** by Barsness. **Approved.**

Project No. 54, Whisky Creek Tributaries. In accordance with the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction WorkGroup (RRBFDRWG) Project Implementation Process and Procedures Schedule, this project is at Step 8, Monitoring. Project construction was completed in the fall of 2005. All aspects of the project are working well. We experienced some damage to "east tributary" due to heavy rains and

runoff during the 2006 spring flood. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) repairs were completed in the spring of 2007, but a heavy rainfall event that occurred on 5/22/07, the same day that the contractor had finished and seeded the repairs, partially washed out parts of "east tributary" again. There's some sediment that will need to be removed from the impoundment pool in Section 14, Barnesville Township. The NRCS completed work late last fall on the Nichol Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) project in Section 21, Humboldt Township. Downstream landowners, who are experiencing drainage problems along County Road (C.R.) No. 25, are anxious to see if that project partially corrects their downstream flooding/erosion concerns. Albright said there's a large deer herd wintering at the Vertin WRP site in Section 10, Barnesville Township. Winter commented that sometimes when new grass areas are established, they provide the type of food deer can use.

Albright questioned the status of the Conservation Practice (CP) 34 for the impoundment site landowners. Tri-T Farms, Arvid Thompson, and Max Peppel have all agreed to enroll some land into CP34 on the west end of their property next to C.R. 56. Waller said there were some questions from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) regarding the property eligibility. Those issues were worked out, and the paperwork is being processed. Waller thought that the seeding would occur sometime in 2008. Murphy asked what type of seed mix they would be planting on the CP34 acreage. He said the Detroit Lakes WMD has a good history of seeding grasses in the late winter/early spring. The equipment spreads the seed on top of the snow when the temperatures are around 35-40 degrees. The seed quickly melts into the snow. They've had some real success stories with this type of seeding method. Ellefson said if the impoundment site were to fill up with water this spring, he questioned if we wanted the seed to be mixed in with the snow. Waller said the seeding will be cost shared at 100% by the State and Federal government. Murphy thought that the Detroit Lakes WMD might seed the CP34 acres as a demonstration if we wanted to work with their office. Albright thought this was something that should be discussed with Sharon Lean, District Conservationist, NRCS.

Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. At the 12/13/07 PT meeting, a letter, dated 12/06/07, from the USFWS Engineering Program Manager (Terry Pennaz) was reviewed. The USFWS had several questions regarding the engineering design. On 1/08/08, Albright met with Rick St. Germain, Project Engineer, H.E., to discuss a response to the questions. St. Germain wanted to schedule a face to face meeting. At this time, a meeting with USFWS, NRCS, BWSR, and BRRWD representatives is scheduled for Friday, February 15, 2008, at 1:30 PM at the Fergus Falls WMD. Albright felt it didn't make much sense to go through the list of concerns today, and a report will be made following the 2/15/08 meeting.

Albright said the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) would have been filed for the Board's signature at the 1/28/08 BRRWD meeting; however, after reviewing the document, Albright felt the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan should be attached to the EAW. This will help explain the project. Right now, both the MOU and O&M are waiting signatures by the various agencies because of the USFWS design questions. The O&M and MOU will also be needed to file the wetland permit application. According to Mark D. Aanenson, H.E., the wetland impact process can be very simple if the O&M and MOU are signed. If not, he will need to complete a more lengthy COE form regarding wetland impacts. The NRCS has now agreed to do the archeological survey, which will be completed in the spring, as soon as conditions permit. Brennan said that we still need to fill in the goals for the upstream watershed practices. Right now, this item is blank in the MOU in Section B (3). Albright said that Honeman has done the mapping for this area and project goals were discussed at the 12/10/07 agency meeting held in Breckenridge.

Albright said he would like to start working on the landowner easement options in the near future. First up will be to tabulate all of the land areas affected by the project, and make sure that we have the proper easement exhibits, which are 40 acre parcel drawings, showing the project's impact on each

tract. A week ago, Albright talked with Tom Arnhalt, who is interested in selling the W½, Section 20, Manston Township, to the DNR. An appraisal for the property was done over one year ago, and Lee Markell, DNR, has contacted Arnhalt to indicate that because so much time has lapsed, the DNR will need to do a new appraisal. Markell has requested a copy of the BRRWD's easement. Albright said the easement options need to be prepared before they can be sent to Markell.

In the near future, Rick St. Germain should complete an updated cost estimate for the project. Because some of the design features have been scaled back, Albright felt the costs should go down. If there is extra money in the budget, the Board of Managers, BRRWD, could consider offering some cash incentives to work in the upstream drainage area. The BRRWD remains optimistic that construction of the project can begin in 2008. The BRRWD still needs to complete the watershed legal process, which includes a Final Hearing. Albright has not talked with Steve Holubok. The Holubok Family has until 8/01/08 to remove any buildings they want from the SE¼, Section 30, Manston Township. The BRRWD purchased this property back in May 2007. Donald Holubok has purchased a house in Rothsay and is no longer living in the buildings. The WRP and BWSR easements can not be taken from the BRRWD until the buildings are removed. Albright said if Holubok does not take all the buildings, the BRRWD will need to decide if they want to offer them for sale or have them demolished. At that time, the BRRWD can also seal the well and remove the septic system. Steve Holubok is interested in farming the property in 2008. Albright has not talked with him about the BRRWD's rental rate. NRCS would like to see the tract seeded to Round-Up Ready soybeans, so that it could be ready for native grass planting in 2009.

A meeting was held in the BRRWD office on 12/21/07 with Andy Beyer, former President of the Kent Rod & Gun Club. The Gun Club owns the NW¼, Section 30, Manston Township. They are interested in working with the BRRWD on the development of the Manston Slough project. However, the ownership of this tract seems to have some problems. When the tract was initially purchased in 1947, it listed 29 separate owners, who all obtained a 1/29th interest in the property. Beyer said the Kent Rod & Gun Club has been paying some of the taxes, other landowners still get tax statements from the county for their 1/29th share. A couple of the shares are tax forfeited and are currently owned by Wilkin County. Beyer is interested in seeing the title mess cleaned up. He had an abstract, which was furnished to Corey Elmer, Attorney, Vogel Law Firm, who has sent the abstract in for updating. Once it's back, Elmer will complete a title opinion for the property. The group discussed ways that the BRRWD can get an easement or acquire this tract. The DNR is interested in purchasing the property. Beyer plans to contact some of the owners who were still living. Brian Winter questioned if there are tax forfeited properties, we want to make sure the county doesn't offer them for resale. Schultz said that the DNR gets notice regarding any tax forfeited property that is sold by a county. Winter also said that in the corporation papers for the Kent Rod & Gun Club, there should have been a statement as to what they were going to do with the remaining assets, should they dissolve. The Kent Rod & Gun Club no longer meets, and has merged with the Abercrombie Gun Club. Albright felt it might take some time to sort the legal issues involving their property.

Project No. 58, Riverton Township Retention. At the 12/13/07 PT meeting, Honeman suggested ways to address the NRCS wetland impact issues. A meeting should be arranged with Sharon Lean, District Conservationist, NRCS, in Moorhead with the affected landowners (TNC/Tim Pender/Helen Johnson) to review the wetland analysis completed by Mark Aanenson, H.E. Winter said that when he initially met with Lean on this issue back in early November, she felt that her office would need to do a field survey, and that she did not have time to complete the field work last fall and would need to wait until next spring when conditions permit to make her determination. Honeman felt that NRCS could use H.E.'s wetland report. To date, Albright has not had time to arrange a meeting with Lean. He plans to set one up before the end of the week. When NRCS had questions regarding the wetland impacts, Winter said that TNC was hesitant to sign the easement option, until language is added to the

option that released TNC from any involvement with those issues. Winter has the language that needs to be added to the easement, but has not had time to give that information to Albright because he's been out of the office due to recent surgery. Winter suggested that we modify the easement option so that TNC can sign it as quickly as possible.

Jones indicated that H.E. recently had a telephone conference call with the DNR Dam Safety Division. H.E. furnished more information regarding the dam safety permit. Jones didn't expect any problems.

Back on 11/28/07, TNC submitted a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) small grants application for funding to seed the upland areas within the project boundaries in the E½, Section 28, Riverton Township. The BRRWD offered a letter of support to TNC for the grant and committed matching funds of \$66,500 for their proposed project, titled Restoring Wet and Mesic Prairie in the Bluestem Prairie Complex. Winter has not yet heard if the grant was approved, but there were a number of applications, and the initial scoring did not rank the project very high.

Regarding the NAWCA grant for restoring wetlands on the Williams property, which has been approved, Winter will be meeting with USFWS officials tomorrow to discuss the field survey work. He felt that in the near future, TNC would present a package showing where the wetland restorations would be located. May felt that the Detroit Lakes WMD would like to do the work in 2008. Albright said the wetland restorations will require a BRRWD permit. Lee Alm, an area landowner, has also expressed concerns about restoring wetlands adjacent to his property. He has had a longstanding problem with seepage in his basement, and he wouldn't like to see more wetlands added that could increase this problem. Winter said that Phil Gerla, who works part-time for TNC as a hydrologist in the Northern Tall Grass Prairie Eco-Region and is an associate professor at the University of North Dakota (UND), has studied the Williams property. Gerla doesn't think that any of the wetland restorations will affect Alm. Winter said that Hay Creek runs through the south part of the Williams property. Initially, when this area was farmed, it appears that the former landowner may have diverted part of the Hay Creek channel. Winter questioned the procedure to restore the original channel. He questioned if funding from the NAWCA grant could be used to do this work. Shawn May felt that this work could be added to a future NAWCA application that would be filed in the next year or two, which could also include the Manston Slough Restoration project. Albright suggested that Winter look at old aerial photographs of the area, which will give some indication as to which areas of Hay Creek may have been straightened. Winter would be interested in restoring the historic channel. Albright said that Winter would need a DNR protected waters permit to do this work. He might want to work with Luther Aadland, who is the program consultant for the DNR's Stream Habitat program. Aadland may have some ideas about ways to correctly restore the channel. Ellefson commented that the area gradient is quite steep and has sandy soils. TNC may want to be careful about opening up portions of the river that may be erodible.

Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. A Technical Committee meeting was held on 1/29/08. The EAW will be ready for distribution again in the next several weeks. Back in October, the BRRWD sent out the EAW for public comment. Somehow, the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) lost the document, and they did not publish it in the EQB Monitor. Paul Stone, Ecological Services, DNR, raised questions about the adequacy of the EAW. Representatives from Ulteig Engineers, Inc. (UEI) met with Stone and addressed his concerns. UEI is working on the lost storage mitigation. The hydrology report for the project shows basically no impact to the Red River. However, some storage is lost because of the dike construction. UEI feels that some of the lost storage can be contained within the storm water ponds that will be needed for the project. The ponds will be designed to handle a 100-year flood event for the internal drainage. As land develops inside the project boundaries, they could also be used to meet the MPCA's storm water requirements. UEI is working on the easement drawings, which could be mailed to all of the affected landowners in the next 6-8 weeks. The

BRRWD has scheduled a landowner informational meeting for April 3, 2008, at 7:00 PM in the Dilworth Community Center.

At the Tech Committee meeting, Bret R. Anderson, Northern Technologies, Inc., gave a presentation regarding the geotechnical investigation being done for the project. Geotechnical exploration and consulting services focus on evaluation of ground conditions and soil structure below proposed projects. Their firm has taken soil borings in the area. The recovered soil samples are returned to the laboratory for classification and execution of various tests. Northern Technologies are also using prior work completed by the COE for their Section 205, Local Flood Reduction Project feasibility study, dated July 2001. Soils in the Fargo-Moorhead area consist of post glacial clays of varying composition. This marine deposit was formed during retreat of the most recent glacial advance across this region of North America. The resulting water impoundment, i.e., Glacial Lake Agassiz, produced three distinct formations. Stability of the embankments along the Red River is directly related to the cohesive strength of the fat clays.

Due to the size and magnitude of the project, for construction, it has been broken down into four phases. The BRRWD would like to begin construction on Phase 1 in 2008. The BRRWD still needs to complete the watershed legal process. The Appraisers have started their work regarding assessment of benefits and damages. Currently, the BRRWD has spent approximately \$3.5 million on project development. Most of this funding has been used for buyouts. We're currently working with a group of 8-10 homeowners on the west side of Broadway, who recently learned that they can't be protected by the proposed project because of their proximity to the Red River and the poor soils. The BRRWD has held two meetings to date with the Broadway homeowners and another meeting will be held in the next several weeks. The BRRWD hopes to pick up another \$8-\$10 million in the 2008 bonding bill, which will be used for actual project construction. Project construction will take approximately three years (2008, 2009, and 2010). This means that we will need to go back to the Legislature in 2010 (a bonding year) for the final project funding. The State of Minnesota is picking up all the project costs, except for \$435,000, which was determined to be the landowners share using the 2% median household income threshold.

VanAmburg questioned if there was any way that the project could recoup part of their costs for installing the stormwater ponds, especially if future developers use them for their stormwater runoff. Albright felt this might be a bargaining point with the landowners who have ponds on their property. At the 1/28/08 meeting, the BRRWD granted an extension until 6/30/08 for Master Construction to complete demolition of buyout property basement/driveways, etc. The request came because several of the houses still need to be moved.

Project No. 60, Swede Grove Lake Outlet. At an informational meeting held in 2006, landowners were asked their opinion of the proposed project to lower Swede Grove Lake. Initially, Clay County petitioned the BRRWD to create an outlet to alleviate highwater problems along one of their county roads. Since then, the PT has recommended a larger project that would lower Swede Grove Lake approximately 8' and restore its historic water elevation, vegetation, and shoreline. A downstream landowner, who would have most of the outlet on his property, has expressed concerns about the project. The project was approved for funding by the RRBFDROWG in the fall of 2007. Representative Lanning has a funding bill that includes money for Swede Grove Lake Outlet (\$175,000), Grove Lake Outlet (\$50,000), and Oakport Flood Mitigation (\$10 million). Members of the BRRWD Board questioned if we should seek this funding if we're not going to develop the project. At this time, the BRRWD office is trying to arrange a meeting with the Clay County Highway Committee and the downstream landowner to discuss where this project should go. It appears that the meeting will be held sometime in early March 2008.

Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration. A Technical Committee meeting regarding the Clean Water Legacy (CWL) Grant for Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee was held on 1/18/08 in Barnesville. The CWL funding was approved in the fall of 2006 in the amount of \$289,000. Last fall the BRRWD opened bids for channel improvements downstream of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75. The contractors hauled in the rocks that will be used for grade stabilization, and will do the work in the spring of 2008 when conditions permit. The Clay SWCD is currently advertising for Hofstad's replacement. In the interim, they will handle the CWL grant, which is being worked on jointly with the Wilkin SWCD. A good share of the remaining funding, approximately \$240,000, will be used for side inlet controls/bufferstrips. The group also talked about completing a survey of Wolverton Creek (estimated to cost \$30,000-\$35,000). The grant will expire on 6/30/09. There's an area on the upstream end of Clay-Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1 that could use 15-20 inlets. There's also inlet work proposed for the area downstream of T.H. 75, and if it works out, they would like to use the same contractor this spring who does the grade stabilization project.

Barsness questioned if there would be any problem getting the money spent. Albright felt we'll need to keep working on the project, but there should be enough areas that need grade stabilization, side inlet controls, and bufferstrips that if we aggressively pursue this project, we should be able to spend the money. Barsness has applied for DNR funding in the amount of \$20,000 to assist. Jack Frederick suggested that Albright contact Bruce Paakh about 2008 monitoring on Wolverton Creek.

Lawndale Trout Stream Restoration. In accordance with M.S.A. 103E.227, Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E., has filed the Engineer's Investigation and Report. The report was filed at the 1/14/08 BRRWD meeting. Albright has forwarded a copy of the report to Arlin Schalekamp, Area Fisheries Supervisor, and Luther Aadland, DNR. The next step will be for the BRRWD to schedule the required hearing. The DNR would like to see the hearing held sometime this spring. Schultz said that Schalekamp is currently working on the EAW, which should be available for public review in the near future. The current Governor's budget for projects of this type doesn't contain that much money and it is questionable if there will be funding to actually do this work in 2008. Aadland feels that there may be other sources of funding that he can use if the money doesn't come through the 2008 Legislative Session.

Pete/Grove Lake Outlet. The BRRWD still needs to meet with the downstream landowner on Maple Lake (Kern Kuhlmann) regarding his concerns about constructing a project that would use his property as an outlet. Last fall, the BRRWD learned that Maple Lake (proposed Grove Lake outlet) is also high, and the outlet would need to be repaired. Given the current weather conditions, etc., the BRRWD has not scheduled the meeting with Kuhlmann. Legislatively, we would like to see the DNR provide 50% of the project costs. The DNR's share would be approximately \$50,000. The BRRWD would like to complete the watershed legal process for the project this winter/spring, so that if needed, construction of the project could occur in 2008.

Kevin Brennan said he's been involved with some of the discussions regarding the high water problem on Lake Olaf. This area was originally part of the BRRWD, but was removed by the Water Resources Board when landowners filed a petition to remove their property from the District. Brennan said they're looking at outlets that could go north, south, or west. Any direction would affect USFWS lands. Jeff Langan, H.E., is working with Otter Tail County as their engineer. They looked at a number of different systems, including gravity flow, pumping, or a siphon system. One option might be to raise the affected roads. BRRWD Chairman Ellefson has been contacted by an Otter Tail County Commissioner to discuss the possibility of draining Lake Olaf back into the BRRWD. They have made no official contact with the BRRWD regarding this option. There would be legalities regarding annexing the land back into the District, and it appears that the landowners around Lake Olaf may not be interested in this option.

Kragnes Ringdike. Since the last PT meeting, the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) Railroad license agreement has been submitted. Last fall, the BRRWD experienced some difficulties in getting answers from BNSF regarding their review of the project. A part of the project will need to be located on their right-of-way (r-o-w). H.E. has also filed the required permit with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT). We are expecting no problems regarding either permitting process. The Appraisers are currently working on the assessment of benefits and damages. The BRRWD would be required to hold a hearing to fulfill Watershed Law requirements. We would like to develop this project this winter/spring, so that construction can be done in the summer of 2008. The BRRWD has secured DNR Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) funding for the project.

Hay Creek/Stinking Lake Sediment Reduction Project. Earlier this week, Albright learned that BWSR approved our CWL grant application in the amount of \$195,000. The funding request includes \$70,000 for technical assistance, a grant of \$115,000, and \$10,000 for native buffer cost/share. The next step will be to furnish additional information, which includes a workplan and budget to meet the individual program requirements. The application was submitted jointly by the BRRWD and Becker SWCD.

Albright said back in the late 1980s, the BRRWD constructed a detention site on the Stinking Lake outlet. The Hay Creek drainage system feeds through the lake. The upstream drainage area is about 26 square miles (sq. mi.). Most of the CWL funding will be used for on the ground applications to improve water quality, including bufferstrips, sediment control basins, and side inlet controls. Frederick suggested that the BRRWD contact Bruce Paakh so that he can also do monitoring on this site, which will track the progress of the CWL work.

Comprehensive Planning. Notices have been sent regarding a Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees (CAC/TAC) meeting that will be held on 2/05/08 beginning at 9:00 AM in the Eagle Café, Barnesville. The morning portion of the meeting will be used to review the work completed to date, as well as problems identified at the seven regional meetings held in 2007. The afternoon portion will be spent working on goals/solutions. Depending on how far we get, Albright felt that one more CAC/TAC meeting would complete the draft plan. Once the plan is completed, the BRRWD intends to hold two regional meetings with all of the people who participated in the problem identification phase. One of these meetings will probably held in Barnesville, and one in the Glyndon/Hawley area. The rest of the summer will be used for the public review and comment period. The plan needs to be completed by 12/31/08.

Activities Update. Albright distributed a copy of the 1/14/08 meeting press release. Ellefson was elected Chairman again for 2008. The BRRWD has obtained a DNR FDR Grant in the amount of \$20,000 for the construction of another farmstead ringdike. To date, the BRRWD has built approximately 20 ringdikes, which protect rural building sites from flooding. Anyone interested in the program should contact the BRRWD office. The grant funds 50% of the construction costs. The BRRWD contributes 25%, and the landowner is responsible for the remaining share.

Albright said the BRRWD is updating their computer system, which will include a server. Some of the Mangers and Albright attended part of the 25th Annual Red River Basin Commission Land and Water International Summit Conference, held last week in Fargo. The BRRWD also had their booth at the event. The BRRWD has offered a letter of support regarding a grant application made by the North Dakota State University (NDSU) to the United States Department of Agriculture to study the source, fate, and transport of cryptosporidium. The grant is for approximately \$425,000. NDSU should learn later this year if they are accepted.

Other Issues. Albright distributed information regarding the upcoming ND/MN Subsurface Drainage Forum, which will be held on Thursday, February 14, 2008, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at NDSU Memorial Union. The information included a pre-registration form. Registration costs are \$30.

There was considerable discussion regarding BRRWD funding. Back in 2006, the BRRWD worked with Representative Lanning to get their funding increased through M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3. That funding is a district-wide tax that's available for projects of "common benefit". Initially, we thought the increased funding was only good for a two-year period (2007, 2008). The BRRWD held a meeting with Representative Lanning and Senator Langseth on 12/17/07 to discuss continuing the increased funding. Both Legislators felt that the BRRWD's financial concerns could be addressed by rejoining the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB). While researching the actual legislation, we found that the increased funding was good for a three-year period, which includes 2009. The office will need to work with the Clay County Board of Commissioners to get a petition asking for the increased funding in 2009. Without funding, many of the projects discussed at today's PT meeting would not be possible. The BRRWD may try to work legislatively to request certain changes regarding the RRWMB.

Ellefson lead a discussion regarding recent land acquisitions within the BRRWD by the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD). The land was purchased at public auction to be used for trades involving projects proposed within the WRWD. The Bois de Sioux Watershed District is also acquiring property for trading and projects. Ellefson said he had a real problem with using public funds to acquire land that is not needed for a specific project. Nelson said that the land acquisitions are being funded by the RRWMB. Brennan said that the USFWS can acquire property at public auction, but they need to conduct an appraisal before going to the sale and are only allowed to pay up to the "fair market value".

10th Annual Joint Conference. The RRWMB and the RRBFDROWG Joint Conference will be held at the Northland Inn in Crookston, MN, on March 20, 2008. Each PT will be given approximately 10 minutes to summarize and detail projects they are working on. As more information available, Albright will mail it to the PT members.

Next Meeting. Because of the 3/20/08 Conference, Albright said the BRRWD PT will probably not met until April. Right now, the next PT meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2008, at 7:30 PM in the MSUM Science Center. As the BRRWD completes work on the Overall Plan, there should be more work for the PT to do regarding the design of projects that will address the various problems/goals.

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