

MEDIATION PROJECT TEAM MINUTES
October 26, 2006

A meeting of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) Mediation Project Team (PT) was held on Thursday, October 26, 2006, at 7:00 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, John E. Hanson, E. Robert Olson, Gerald L. VanAmburg, and Roger G. Ellefson, BRRWD Managers; Erik S. Jones, Engineer, H.E.; Bob Honeman, Area Resource Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); Dave Barsness, Fisheries Specialist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Michael T. Murphy, Refuge Manager, Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Shawn May, Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District (WMD) and USFWS; Don Schultz, Area Wildlife Manager, DNR; Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD and USFWS; Pete Waller, Board Conservationist, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR); Robert A. Zimmerman, Engineer, City of Moorhead; and Jack Frederick, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Members absent were: Don Buckhout, Red River Basin Coordinator, DNR; Brian Dwight, Board Conservationist, BWSR; 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; Steve Hofstad, Clay County Water Planner and Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Administrator; Robert G. Merritt, Area Hydrologist, DNR; Richard Pemble, BRRWD Citizen Advisory Committee; Maynard Pick, Staff Assistant, Congressman Collin Peterson's Office; and Brian Winter, Program Director, The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Albright called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He noted that we did not have a meeting in September because of the Fall Tour held on 9/22/06. For those attending, he hoped that the tour was educational. The Tour departed from the Ponderosa Golf Club, and included stops at the Buffalo River State Park, Hamden Slough NWR, Tamarack NWR, and a Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) project in Becker County. Albright felt it was beneficial for participants to see other parts of the BRRWD.

Business brought before the group included:

Meeting Minutes. Draft minutes for the 8/24/06 PT meeting were distributed with today's agenda. **Motion** by Murphy to approve the minutes. **Seconded** by Honeman. **Approved.**

Project No. 54, Whisky Creek Tributaries. In accordance with the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction WorkGroup (RRBFDRWG) Project Implementation and Procedures Worksheet, this project is at Step 8, Monitoring. Albright distributed copies of photographs that Wade Opsahl, Technician, H.E., compiled regarding 20 different photograph reference sites involving the various project components. The BRRWD has received \$36,964.00 in Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) mitigation money to do additional work on "east tributary", upstream of the impoundment site. This area eroded substantially during the 2006 spring flood. A DNR permit has been obtained to reslope the ditch banks in this area and install several grade stabilization structures. Sediment from the eroded areas is now located in the channel within the impoundment site. Dennis Drewes, Inc., a local contractor, plans to remove the sediment yet this fall, weather permitting.

The BRRWD is working with Scott and Betty Anderson, who own property in Section 14, Barnesville Township, where the impoundment site is located. When the east-west dike along the north side of the impoundment was constructed, it blocked local drainage from their property from entering the site. Plans are to clean the ditch along 140th AVE S to drain their water west. The BRRWD has also obtained a DNR permit to change the culvert in Greg Settlemeyer's driveway, located on "east tributary" in Section 20, Humboldt Township. That work should also be completed yet this fall, weather permitting.

Honeman stated that the NRCS is working with the owners of the S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$, Section 10, Barnesville Township, on a WRP project that would expand the Vertin WRP project. Some additional diking would be required, and several culverts would need to be located. The addition of this extra 160 acres to the impoundment site would greatly increase its storage capacity.

Throughout the summer, Albright said the BRRWD office repeatedly contacted the NRCS regarding the Kelly Nichol WRP project in Section 21, Humboldt Township. To date, no work has been completed on that site. The BRRWD feels that it was one of the project components that went through the mediation process to develop this entire project. That work has to be completed. We went through a very nice summer where things were dry, and many contractors were looking for work. Numerous contractors stopped by the BRRWD office, questioning the project status. We've now learned that the NRCS plans to rebid the project this winter and do the work next spring. We have downstream concerns that need to be dealt with and landowners have been patiently waiting for about five years for something to happen. Until the Nichol WRP site is done, we cannot address these downstream problems. Honeman said the NRCS took additional soil borings on the site this summer. Based on area soils, they've had to redesign parts of the WRP project. Ellefson said one of the problems was that this property was formerly farmed by the Berg Family of Barnesville. Back in the 1980s, they installed numerous ditches on the tract. Some of those ditches drain south into the Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34. Water then drains west and back north. Ellefson said back when we were working with the Bergs, there was an order that they had to put culverts at the outlets of their ditches entering the T.H. 34 ditch. Those culverts were never installed. He questioned if we could go in yet this fall and temporarily install some culverts at these locations to help relieve downstream flooding problems. Honeman felt confident that the project will be rebid this winter. This is their Number One project at this time. Given area soils, they may need to haul in clay to actually build part of the wetland restoration levees. Honeman understood the BRRWD's concerns, but with the additional engineering that was necessary, hopefully it will result in a better project in the end. Albright said for the past several years, the upstream water coming from the proposed WRP site is cutting a new channel across property owner by Bill Thompson in Section 20, Humboldt Township. All of this erosion and sedimentation is reentering "east tributary", causing additional downstream problems. Ellefson felt there were some things that could be done on a temporary basis to address some of the immediate concerns. However, other Board members said that we've been dealing with this issue for over 20 years, and we could probably wait another six months to see the WRP project completed.

Albright said that the BRRWD has submitted Project No. 54, Whisky Creek Tributaries, for consideration as the 2006 Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Project of the Year.

The awards will be given out at the 36th Annual Meeting and Trade Show in Alexandria on November 30-December 2.

Spring Prairie Township Erosion. This area has been targeted for the promotion of buffer strips. The office is currently working with the Clay SWCD and Steve Hofstad, local water planner, on the targeting and marketing of bufferstrips using the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) II for this area. The office has had no further contact with Spring Prairie Colony regarding the installation of a lateral to Clay County Ditch No. 39 at the outlet of the waterway. A number of years ago, a petition was filed to make the area south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 26 a lateral to this ditch system. For a number of reasons, the petition never moved forward beyond the preliminary hearing stage. The landowners are concerned that when this stretch of waterway fills up with sediment, the water can erode the bank, break out, and flow westerly into Clay County Ditch No. 65. The Colony has expressed an interest in continuing with the project. The office has had no contact with Aggregate Industries, who's looking at establishing a gravel pit in Section 29, Keene Township. Roger Wang, a neighboring landowner in Section 28, has contacted the office regarding his concerns about the placement of culverts or a crossing in the natural waterway in the SE¹/₄, Section 29. Wang feels that if the culverts are too small, the water will back up onto his property. Hofstad has assured Albright that Aggregate Industries is aware of the BRRWD permitting requirements.

Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. Earlier this year, Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD and USFWS, worked on developing the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Operation and Maintenance Plan (O&M) for this project. A meeting was held on 7/26/06 at 9:30 AM in the Barnesville office with various partners listed on the documents to review the draft copies. Agencies were supposed to forward their comments to Brennan. Brennan said they will be incorporated into the final documents. Albright distributed copies of both documents. Comments should be forwarded directly to Brennan. Albright felt that rather than taking the time to go through the documents line by line at tonight's meeting, the PT members should review the documents and we'll discuss them further at the next meeting.

In the MOU, Section VIII (3) states that the various agencies and individuals shall work together to increase water conservation practices in the contributing drainage area to Manston Slough. Albright said this was identified early on in the project development phase. The area has been targeted for CREP II marketing.

Jones has been in contact with Leo Grabowski, Project Engineer, COE, regarding this project. Grabowski feels that if the project is mainly a wetland restoration, with some funding coming through the Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) program, and provided the outlet structure is ungated, this project could probably be handled under a General Permit. Water fill on wetlands to the proposed 972 permanent pool elevation would not be a problem if it is to restore the marsh to historic levels. Grabowski felt that the total number of wetlands that will be restored by the project could be used to mitigate the wetland impacts along the embankment levees. The COE would look at the greater good of the proposed project, rather than the minor individual impacts. Grabowski felt we did not need to follow the Concurrence Points process, which the COE is currently developing. When we file the COE application, Grabowski would also like to see copies of the O&M and MOU. He has furnished Jones with the General Permit criteria and conditions.

Albright said we are currently behind schedule in accordance with the task list that was distributed earlier this year. That summary called for Engineer's Report to be completed by 8/15/06. The office has discussed this matter with H.E. The revised date for filing the Engineer's Report has now been set

for 11/01/06. Rick St. Germain, Engineer, H.E., will now be the project supervisor. He would like to see Midwest Testing finish the soil borings as soon as possible. To date, there have been no surprises regarding the soils investigation. The BRRWD is still considering setting a series of piezometers along the west side of the project to monitor potential seepage. This is a concern that has been raised by downstream landowners on Wilkin County Ditch No. 22.

Albright has been in contact with John Voz, Wetland Restoration Specialist, Ducks Unlimited (DU). Voz met with Donald Holubok on 8/23/06 at his home. Holubok will need to sign the application for Long-Term Contracted Assistance through the WRP Program form by 9/30/06, if there are going to be any guarantees that there will be WRP or Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) funds available for his property acquisition. The second part of the form includes an Intent to Continue, which states that signing the document does not bind the landowner to the actual filing of an easement. Albright said there has been no contact from Holubok this summer regarding the BRRWD's 3/27/06 offer to acquire his property. BRRWD and WRP easements would be worth \$406,220.00. The BRRWD's offer for a direct sale and acquisition of Holubok's property was \$679,120.00. The BRRWD might have to withdraw this offer because some of the items listed in the offer are now coming in at lower value than originally estimated.

Schultz said that the DNR has completed appraisals for the Tom Arnhalt and C&H Farms properties. Lee Markell is their DNR negotiator. While their appraised values came in slightly lower than expected, Schultz felt that the landowners were still willing to sell the property. He also noted that the NRCS is ready to start signing some of the WRP contracts. Albright cautioned that we want to make sure that neighboring landowners are aware of the WRP contracts. They've expressed concerns to the BRRWD office that drainage rights be maintained on those tracts before the actual easements are signed.

Albright said the Barnesville River Watch Team continues to monitor the site. They've been obtaining water quality samples on a monthly basis. Albright will tour the project area on 8/28/06 with BWSR representatives. Ron Harnack, Executive Director, would like to see the project site. One of the next steps after the Engineer's Report is filed will be for the BRRWD to start working with project landowners on negotiating easement options. Hopefully, this work can be completed this upcoming winter. The BRRWD could hold the final project hearing next spring. Construction on the project could begin in 2007.

Project No. 58, Riverton Township Retention. A draft copy of the Engineer's Report, dated 5/08/06, was furnished to Brian Winter, TNC, at the 6/29/06 PT meeting. Winter has commented that TNC had reviewed the report, and they planned to submit their comments to Jones. Nothing major was noted. To date, Jones has not received that information. Albright said this will be a 2007 project. Through the 2006 Legislative bonding bill, \$230,000 in FDR funding has been allocated to this project. This represents approximately 50% of the total estimated cost. Winter is also working with the USFWS to locate possible wetland restoration areas on the Williams property that they recently purchased upstream of the proposed project. The Williams property is comprised of about 1,300 acres, located in Sections 25 and 36, Riverton Township and Section 1, Elkton Township. Restoration work in this area should enhance downstream project features. Albright said the BRRWD would like to appoint their Appraisers for the project yet this fall, so that they can complete their field work before snow falls. The primary downstream benefiting area will include Clay County Ditch No. 12, as well as the City of Glyndon. It is well documented that during the 1997 spring flood, water escaped to the north from Ditch No. 12 and flowed directly into Glyndon.

Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. A meeting was held on 8/03/06 with Guy Miller, who conducted 22 appraisals for the BRRWD, associated with voluntary buyouts. Those offers have been forwarded to the respective homeowners. Ulteig Engineers, Inc. (UEI), has started the preliminary survey to determine the dike alignment. Albright said several homeowners have requested second appraisals, which is allowable in accordance with the buyout guidelines. The DNR supports the acquisition of homes that are located either in the floodway, floodplain, or cannot be protected by the proposed project because of their location.

Frederick noted that the project will require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). He felt that the Steering Committee should start working on this issue. The project will need to be designed to account for internal as well as external drainage during a flood. Albright felt that portable pumps would be used during a flood to remove water from inside the proposed levees. Frederick questioned if there will be a plan in place to block sewer services for the area, so that raw sewage does not exit the project area via the manholes. Albright felt that Frederick should plan on attending the next Steering Committee meeting to discuss these issues with the group.

A question was raised about what the BRRWD was going to do with the homes that they acquire. Albright said that while definite plans are not in place at this time, the BRRWD probably intends to try to resell the houses so that they can be moved. An example of specifications for doing this type of work has been obtained from the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD). They also have specifications for demolition of houses in case they don't sell. A number of permits will be required to demolish the homes, where all the materials will need to be hauled offsite. The State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) may also need to review the properties. Several of the properties will need to have their working wells sealed. The first closing is tentatively scheduled for 9/26/06. As the BRRWD acquires more homes, we'll prepare a bid package to try to sell the homes and get them moved as quickly as possible. Eventually, the land where the homes are located will be turned over to Oakport Township for their use and future maintenance.

Project No. 60, Swede Grove Lake Outlet. The BRRWD held an informational meeting in Hawley on 7/13/06 with the project landowners. They really didn't express many comments either for or against the project. The BRRWD is questioning if there are enough benefits to build the proposed project, which now has been designed to incorporate both flood damage reduction (fdr) and natural resource enhancement (nre) benefits. Total project costs are estimated to be in excess of \$200,000. The BRRWD wants to find out from the project petitioner, the Clay County Board of Commissioners, if they want to proceed. The lake has come down some with the current dry weather. Albright will prepare minutes for the informational meeting, which will be forwarded to the Clay County Board Commissioners for their review. There doesn't appear to be much interest from downstream landowners about establishing an outlet across their property. However, if the lake does get high enough, it will flow naturally to the south and eventually to the main stem of the Buffalo River.

Buffalo River Levees. A third attempt to invite landowners to a BRRWD meeting will be made in September. Drainage issues in Sections 5 and 6, Riverton Township, Clay County, will be discussed. The area is impacted by both local drainage and Buffalo River main stem flooding. The problem in the past is that we have never gotten all of the landowners to attend a meeting so that the BRRWD can have meaningful discussion. A 1981 Farm Service Agency (FSA) aerial photograph has been located that shows that an approach along the north line of Section 5, Riverton Township, was moved some time after that date. Its new location is on the line between Sections 5 and 6. At this location, the approach blocks water flows and forces water to the south into a neighboring landowner's field. The BRRWD could make a decision that the approach relocation was done illegally without a BRRWD

permit, and the landowner could be forced to move the approach back to its original location. The landowners in the area are still interested in working with the BRRWD Mediation PT on a comprehensive project similar to the Deerhorn Creek project in Wilkin County, which would install levees to control flooding along the Buffalo River during the major runoff events.

Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee Restoration. The Steering Committee held their last meeting on 3/16/06. At that time, the group discussed H.E.'s 2/27/06 preliminary investigation report. The purpose of the investigation was to identify existing survey information available on Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee that will provide information on the existing creek conditions. This information is necessary to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing flooding and erosion problems in the drainage area and correcting degradation of the creek itself. Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee is approximately 25.5 miles long. After reviewing all of the available information, it was clear that further surveying will be necessary in order to properly identify problem areas on the creek. The engineer recommended that additional field surveys be performed in order to obtain an accurate understanding of the existing channel conditions. This work would also include soil borings to determine the channel sediment depths.

Albright said the Steering Committee was interested in finding a way to establish a tax base so that they could raise funds to obtain this additional survey data. They also identified the need to install several gauging stations along the channel so that we can start to gather water quantity flow data. To date, Albright said the gauges have not been installed.

Lawndale Trout Stream Restoration. Schultz said that DNR Fisheries personnel from the Fergus Falls office have contacted Dave Yaggie. They've offered him a grassland easement on part of his property west of the Atherton Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Section 34, Atherton Township. They've also discussed ways to furnish him with a well to replace his irrigation permit, which allows him to appropriate water directly from Lawndale Creek. Hopefully, the DNR will obtain the field survey across the WMA later this summer. Pending funding, work on rechannelizing the natural stream across the WMA could start in 2007.

Albright said that Mark Yaggie has filed a ditch repair request for Wilkin County Ditch No. 40. The ditch system, which was initially installed in the early 1900s, channelized portions for the Lawndale trout stream. In the early 1960s, there was an improvement project, which diverted the flows around the WMA. H.E. has been authorized to investigate Yaggie's request. Once their study is completed, we'll need to meet with DNR Fisheries to review the extent of the proposed repair in accordance with Minnesota Drainage Law.

Pete/Grove Lakes Highwater Investigation. Albright said that landowners and Township Supervisors attended the 6/26/06 BRRWD meeting in Barnesville to discuss their concerns regarding highwater problems in several lakes in northwestern Otter Tail County. The area is located within the BRRWD boundaries. Water in the area is also affecting Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34. Grove Lake is at the lowest elevation in this chain of lakes. It appears that water north of T.H. 34 would drain south into Pete Lake, which is almost at a point where it will start to drain naturally into Grove Lake. The Township and landowners would like to see an outlet established that would at least stop the lake from getting any higher. The various townships have had to spend major funding trying to keep their roads out of water. A peninsula on Grove Lake is also starting to go under water, and they are losing their access. The area was platted several years ago. The BRRWD authorized H.E. to conduct a preliminary study of the area. Albright said downstream landowners on Whisky Creek/Clay County Ditch No. 34 have already contacted the office with concerns about establishing an outlet for this area.

It appears that if the water gets much higher in Grove Lake, it will naturally flow west into Maple Lake, where there already is an outlet that will flow westerly into Whisky Creek. The BRRWD feels that if a project/outlet were installed in this area, it would need to be equipped with a gate that would be operated in accordance with an O&M plan. In essence, if downstream areas were flooding along Whisky Creek, the gate would need to be closed.

H.E. filed their report on 7/10/06. Several closed basin lakes in northwestern Otter Tail County are currently experiencing highwater problems. Pete Lake and Grove Lake are located in Scambler Township. Helgeson, Seim, Bussinger, and Rankel Lakes, which may contribute to Pete Lake, are also located in Scambler Township. At the time of the survey, it appears that Helgeson Lake, Bussinger Lake, Rankel Lake, and possibly Seim Lake are connected at the same elevation. The outlet for these lakes appears to be out the south end of Rankel Lake into Pete Lake. The outlet of Pete Lake appears to be to the south into Grove Lake. The natural outlet route out of Grove Lake was difficult to determine. There appears to be two potential outlet routes. One would take the water west into Maple Lake through 155th AVE. The other outlet route would be west through 150th AVE in Section 2, Norwegian Grove Township, into a wetland area along Whisky Creek in Section 35, Tansem Township, Clay County. Albright said copies of the report have been forwarded to Terry Lejcher and Robert Merritt, Area Hydrologists, DNR. To date, there has been no comment from the DNR. The BRRWD intends to schedule an informational meeting with the area landowners to further discuss this project. Areas just downstream of these lakes are assessed into Clay County Ditch No. 34. There could be issues in accordance with Minnesota Drainage Law that will need to be reviewed if an outlet is established for this area.

Frederick said the MPCA would have concerns regarding water quality if an outlet is established for Grove Lake. There also could be fish passage/migration issues that will need to be addressed. Frederick would like to be invited to the informational meeting.

Kragnes Ringdike. At the request of the BRRWD, on 8/14/06, H.E. filed a preliminary engineering report for a ringdike design for the Village of Kragnes. The LIDAR survey collected for the Buffalo River Flood Insurance Restudy, as well as survey information from the Kragnes Drainage Study was utilized in the preliminary engineering design. A ringdike system for Kragnes would involve three separate ringdikers. The first ringdike would enclose the White House property, located north of CSAH No. 5 and east of C.R. 96 in the southwest corner of Section 27, Kragnes Township. The second ringdike would enclose the properties with buildings along the east side of T.H. 75 south of CSAH No. 5. This dike would be located in the northwest corner of Section 34, Kragnes Township. It would include the Richards Bus Garage and two other building sites. The third ringdike would protect the land surrounded by C.R. 96, T.H. 75, and CSAH No. 26. This "wedge" shaped piece of land would be protected in a couple of different ways and two alternatives have been considered. This property is located in Sections 33 and 34, Kragnes Township. A Flood Insurance Restudy of the Buffalo River is currently underway for this area. At this time, it appears that the anticipated 100-year water surface elevation for Kragnes would be 892.5 (NAVD88). Unless the roads around the wedge ringdike are raised, the level of protection to the wedge area is limited. The road overtopping elevation on C.R. 96 is 891.8, which is approximately 200' south of the north line of Section 33. The low point in T.H. 75 is approximately 892.6. The estimated construction cost for the "White House" ringdike is \$55,160. The estimated construction cost for the ringdike on the east side of T.H. 75 is \$138,522. The estimated construction cost for the "Wedge" ringdike on the west side of T.H. 75 is approximately \$38,000. Diking for the "Wedge" area would primarily be done with the installation of flapgates that would be operated in accordance with an O&M plan. Jones reviewed a map showing the various project locations.

Albright said assuming our traditional ringdike funding, which is 50% DNR through their FDR program, 25% BRRWD, and 25% landowner, this would amount to about \$72,000 for the local share. This divided among the 20-25 properties that would be protected would amount to about \$3,000 each. Of course, the Village of Kragnes could decide to build any one of the particular projects, which would change the benefit area. Albright has talked with Ed Fick, DNR FDR Hydrologist, St. Paul about the project. At this time, they do not have funding available. However, Fick felt they could probably find some funding if the project were to move forward. Copies of the engineering investigation have been forwarded to Fick and Merritt for their review. Albright said the BRRWD intends to hold an informational meeting later this fall with the affected landowners to see if there is interest or opposition in continuing with the project.

Comprehensive Planning. Given the BRRWD's current workload, the Board of Managers, has decided to delay scheduling the kickoff meeting for the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) until after freeze-up. We've had fairly good success in setting up the various Advisory Committees. We still need a Fisheries representative for the TAC. Dave Barsness, Fisheries Specialist, DNR, Detroit Lakes, declined our offer. Tom Groshens is the new Red River specialist, who replaced Henry VanOffelen, and is stationed in the Bemidji DNR office. Albright will contact him to be on the TAC. We had pretty good response from the CAC. We still need several representatives from Otter Tail County and probably one more from Becker County.

CREP II. Waller said there was good attendance at the update meetings held in Fergus Falls and Thief River Falls on August 8 and 11, 2006. Basically, BWSR has doubled the State's share regarding the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Reserve payments. The new rate has a target of 90% of the 2007 estimated market value using the combined Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and RIM payments. BWSR is currently developing the new payment rates for each county and township. They will notify agencies once posted on the BWSR website. BWSR will also work with local drainage authorities to promote incentives to achieve water quality. New payment rates will apply to pre-existing landowner applications. Waller would like to see each SWCD establish a set of measurable goals in the next 30 days. He feels that the bottom line regarding the success of the program will rest on landowner contacts. Individual proposals and follow-ups are what get the projects done.

Fredericks suggested that the agencies use mass media marketing to help promote the program. The RRBFDWRWG still has \$45,000 available for CREP II incentives. The money will be available on a first come, first serve basis for SWCDs that sign easements within identified priority areas. The value for each easement signing is \$300.

Activities Update. Albright distributed a copy of the 8/14/06 meeting press release. There was continued discussion with a landowner near the outlet of Wilkin County Ditch No. 44 on the South Branch of the Buffalo River regarding additional work he feels is needed in that area to remove sediment. The BRRWD is looking at ways to establish a project assessment area. The area clearly needs further engineering study. This will also be one of the sub-regions discussed during the Comprehensive Planning process. This time of the year, after small grain harvest, is traditionally busy with permitting activity. The BRRWD hopes to sell bonds in the amount of about \$425,000 later this fall to finance Project No. 57, City of Moorhead/I-94 Flood Control and Project No. 51, Clay County Ditch No. 68-Establishment. The BRRWD also has a number of pending ditch repair requests on file. Managers E. Robert Olson and John E. Hanson have been reappointed to the BRRWD Board of Managers from their respective counties for three-year terms beginning 9/01/06. Ray Bohn, Administrator, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD), has made an offer to negotiate

between the BRRWD and the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) regarding our membership. The Board agreed to the mediation, but to date, they have not selected two delegates to participate. The annual budget hearing will be held on 9/11/06. Albright said this is where we set all of the ditch system, project, and administrative levies for 2007. This year, we also obtained legislation allowing us to increase our levy under Minnesota Statutes Annotated (M. S. A.) 103D.905, Subd. 3, for projects/programs that are petitioned for by a political subdivision. That levy was approved for a two-year period (2007/2008). In 2007, the total taxation under this new levy will be about \$750,000. This additional funding should allow the BRRWD to work on more of the fdr and nre problems within the District.

Other Issues. Chuck Fritz, Director, International Water Institute (IWI), has been working on a Red River Basin initiative that would obtain LIDAR for the entire Red River Basin. The International Joint Commissions Red River Basin Task Force and the International Flood Mitigation Initiative identified the needs and benefits of the project. To date, there's been some small data collects within the Red River Basin, totally about 3,843 square miles (sq. mi.) in the United States and 1,113 sq. mi. in Canada. Other states, including North Carolina and Louisiana, have done large scale collections. Benefits of a mapping initiative would include more accurate floodplain maps, flood damage mitigation, increased flood and drought resiliency, targeted restoration activities, enhanced planning and project development, detailed surface hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, more efficient natural resource management, innovative tools for conflict resolution, increased agricultural productivity through the use of precision farming, water quality improvements, and cost reduction on all civic projects. To complete the collect in the United States, the mapping would need to cover 39,300 sq. mi., which includes the Devils Lake basin. The project would deliver 1-meter resolution digital elevation model, meeting FEMA standards. It will also have a data archival and dissemination interface via the internet. There would be economy of scale by doing the larger collect. Fritz has estimated that the LIDAR collection would cost between \$70-\$80/sq. mi. Total estimated project cost for the 39,300 sq. mi. is about \$5 million. The RRWMB has agreed to contribute \$500,000 to the project. Fritz plans to attend an upcoming BRRWD meeting, where he plans to ask the BRRWD to consider contributing \$50,000 to the effort.

Frederick spent some time talking about the massive fish kill that occurred on the Red River during the last week of July. What appears to have happened is a localized fish kill that started downstream of M. B. Johnson Park, somewhere close to the golf course on the North Dakota side of the Red River. Whatever caused the fish kill did not seem to be causing anymore mortality after 7/28/06. Frederick said a fish kill of this type has happened in the past. It seems to occur when the Red River has relatively low flows, low dissolved oxygen, and high water temps. People testing the river in this section also reported high fecal chloroform bacteria on 7/26/06, just downstream of the North Broadway Bridge. A meeting hosted by River Keepers was held on 8/16/06, including Minnesota and North Dakota agencies to discuss the problem. The meeting was held as a first step in developing a monitoring plan for the FM reach of the Red River so that agencies can better assess the impacts of future potential fish kills to determine their cause. Frederick asked if Jones would have some information that would help delineate the watershed for Clay County Ditch No. 41 at the outlet north of American Crystal Sugar. He also asked if H.E. would have some information pertaining to the watershed on Rose Creek on the North Dakota side. Jones said that he would look for this information. Most of the agencies have difficulty in doing monitoring over the weekend, since they are on union contracts. A new system is being considered that would allow people to go out over the weekend should another fish kill occur during the summer months.

2006 Fall Tour. Albright said the Fall Tour is scheduled for Friday, September 22, 2006. The tour will depart at 1:30 PM from the Ponderosa Golf Course. Anticipated stops include the MSUM Science Center, Buffalo River State Park, Hamden Slough NWR, and the Tamarac NWR. The tour is expected to return to Ponderosa between 5:00 PM and 5:30 PM, where we'll have supper catered by the Eagle Café, Barnesville. Albright urged all PT members to attend. A separate tour notice will be sent in the near future.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the BRRWD's Mediation PT is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 2006, at 7:00 PM at the MSUM Science Center. We will not hold a PT meeting in September because of the Fall Tour. After the planned October meeting, we'll probably look at holding one more meeting between Thanksgiving and Christmas. During the winter months, the meeting schedule will go to an afternoon format.

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the group, Albright adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Prepared and Submitted by

Bruce E. Albright, BRRWD Administrator