

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 15, 2014
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"Local Watershed Board Updated on Projects"

At their regular meeting held on August 11, 2014, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed several ongoing projects. The concrete work for a house and garage move needed in Georgetown to place the final levee segment has now been completed. Hopes are that the project's contractor, Reiner Contracting, Inc., can finish the project in the next several weeks. Gladen Construction, Inc. continues to make good progress on the Manston Slough Restoration project. The drier weather conditions have helped. Concrete work started on the primary and County State Aid Highway No. 26 structures. Steven Johnson Excavation has completed work on the Hough erosion site in Section 25, Humboldt Township, Clay County. He has also completed work on the Glyndon Township road erosion, located in Section 16, along 120th AVE S; and he has completed work on repairs an erosion control project installed by the BRRWD several years ago on the Buffalo River in Section 1, Glyndon Township. Northern Excavating, Inc. has completed their work on the outlet repairs for Clay County Ditch (C.D.) No. 5. All of this work is being done through a grant obtained by the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The funding needs to be spent by 8/31/14.

Other business included:

- The Board discussed and approved a permit application from Richard Scheffler to install 83 acres of pattern tiling in the W1/2W1/2, Section 13, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, which presently drains to Wilkin C.D. No. 42. Part of the property is currently assessed into Wilkin C.D. No. 41. Hearings will be held in the near future to remove his land from Wilkin C.D. No. 41 and add part of it to Wilkin C.D. No. 42.
- Approval of a permit to Howard Pender to install 40 acres of pattern tiling in the SW1/4, Section 30, Skree Township, Clay County, draining through 110th AVE S into Spring Creek.
- Approval of a permit to LD & J Butenhoff Farms to install a new approach with a 24" dia. culvert off from County Road (C.R.) No. 62 into the SE1/4, Section 36, Elmwood Township, Clay County, subject to road authority approval to work within their road right-of-way.
- Approval of a permit to Larry Wiertzema for pattern tiling with an outlet pump in the southwest corner of the SE1/4, Section 35, Meadows Township, Wilkin County. The permit was approved subject to the BRRWD standard tiling disclaimer, approval from the downstream landowners before the water enters Wilkin C.D. No. 1B, and Wilkin County Highway Department to use their C.R. No. 18 road ditch as an outlet.
- Discussed a complaint about new ditching in the NW1/4, Section 25, Barnesville Township. The landowner will be contacted to file a permit application for the work.
- Scheduled the annual budget hearing in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Annotated (M.S.A.) 103D.911 for Monday, September 8, 2014, at 9:00 PM, in the BRRWD office. The budget hearing is where the BRRWD discusses the 2015 administrative levy, general levy, and levies for the various ditches and projects under their jurisdiction.
- Noting that letters have been mailed to all landowners along an unnamed tributary to Whisky Creek, which is a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) protected

waters. The letter indicates that personnel from Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) will be conducting a channel survey in the next several weeks to gather information about a potential comprehensive project that could be conducted in this 28 square mile drainage area. The BRRWD has a long history of dealing with drainage and flooding problems in this area. A landowner informational meeting was held February 3, 2014. The landowners hoped that the BRRWD would gather the necessary information and consider possible projects that could rectify their ongoing problems. Once the survey work is done, another landowner informational meeting will be scheduled.

- Received a preliminary hydraulic analysis for two structures located on Becker C.D. No. 19. The first crossing is located at the outlet of Momb Lake through C.R. No. 27. The second structure is located in the Rock/Rice Township road at the outlet of Rock Lake. Recommendations were made to increase the sizing of both crossings. Information will be shared with the road authorities and the DNR. At some point, the BRRWD will schedule an informational meeting with the Becker C.D. No. 19 landowners to discuss the analysis.
- Several pieces of information from the Flood Diversion Authority (FDA) pertaining to the Fargo-Moorhead Area Flood Diversion Project were reviewed. Last month, the Board anticipated that they would need to make a decision regarding the Right-of-Entry (ROE) Minnesota surveys. Given all that's going on at the current time with the project, such as the Joint Richland/Wilkin County lawsuits, the Upstream Coalition position, the Minnesota environmental review, and Governor Mark Dayton's position, the FDA has decided to postpone the ROE surveys at this time.

The Board also reviewed a letter from the FDA pertaining to cooperation on distributed storage projects. In 2013, the FDA provided the Red River Basin Commission with \$500,000 to prepare the Halstad Upstream Retention Study. This study evaluated numerous potential detention sites that were previously identified in studies from local watershed boards, water resource districts, and joint water boards on both sides of the river. FDA has also indicated a willingness to spend \$25 million to assist in funding of storage project construction. The letter indicated the FDA's willingness to partner with the various organizations to help implement the distributed storage sites. They look forward to working with the various agencies in the future in that regard. The BRRWD is currently working on several projects that could qualify for some of the funding assistance.

- Received a report from H.E. regarding the possible effects of adding a lateral diversion ditch channel to Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch (J.D.) No. 1. The diversion ditch would be located along the northern edge of Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County, and would drain into Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee. The preliminary diversion channel was designed with a 20' bottom width and 4H:1V sideslopes, and would run westerly at a 0.05% slope. Culverted crossings along the alignment would be needed. The estimated cost of the diversion, including construction and project easements, would be \$1.4 million. J.D. No. 1 was improved in 1976, but with the recent wet weather conditions we've experienced, landowners primarily in Clay County have experienced severe flooding problems along the ditch. The consideration of a diversion channel could possibly rectify some of those problems/concerns. At the last meeting, H.E. filed a repair survey regarding J.D. No. 1, for those portions in Clay County. While some minor cleaning could be done, it doesn't appear that a ditch repair alone would address all of the issues. The BRRWD scheduled an informational meeting for 8:00 AM, on Thursday, September 4, 2014, in the Barnesville office to discuss the repair and diversion reports. Affected landowners will be mailed notice.
- Construction bids will be opened at 10:00 AM, August 25, 2014, at the Fargo H.E. office for the Hawley Buffalo River Channel Restoration project. The office is still working on land acquisition easements needed to construct the project and we are still waiting for several permits. DNR funding for the project needs to be expended by 06/30/15.

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- The next Mediation Project Team (PT) meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 25, 2014, at 7:00 PM, in the BRRWD Barnesville office. Several projects using the Mediation process are currently being considered, including a possible retention area in Section 11, Manston Township, and restoration of the South Branch of the Buffalo River channel in Section 6, Manston Township. Other work includes the Barnesville Township Comprehensive Study, and a possible retention area on Stony Creek northwest of Barnesville.
- The contract for the Buffalo River total maximum daily load study with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has been extended until 12/31/14. The extension was needed to address comments furnished on the report by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Letters have been sent to landowners in Clay and Wilkin Counties owning property along Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee. An archaeological investigation is currently being conducted along the channel by Dr. Michael Michlovic, Minnesota State University-Moorhead. Later this fall, some wetland delineation work will also need to be completed along the channel. Recently, the BRRWD received a permit from the DNR for a 26-mile channel restoration project. The Board intends to apply for various state and federal grants to assist with the estimated \$8.5 million costs. The BRRWD is also considering establishing a water management district that would help collect local funding for the grant match. An informational meeting with the project landowners will be held later this fall to update them regarding all of the recent activities.
- Hearings are scheduled for Tuesday, August 19, 2014, at 7:00 PM, regarding the release and addition of lands to Clay C.D. Nos. 21 and 58. The hearings will begin at 7:00 PM in the BRRWD office. The hearings are required because of petitions filed by Curtis Stubstad for land that he owns in Sections 1 and 2, Elmwood Township.
- Wilkin County has scheduled a hearing on Thursday, August 14, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Courtroom, Wilkin County Courthouse, Breckenridge, MN, to transfer of the drainage systems within the newly added area in Wilkin County to the BRRWD. Drainage systems can be transferred to a watershed district in accordance with M.S.A. 103D.625. The Commissioners will consider the order at their 09/09/14 meeting.
- The Board reviewed a chronological listing of the events/activities associated with the Swede Grove Lake outlet project. From about 1998 to 2003, Clay County operated a "temporary" outlet on Swede Grove Lake that drained the high water to the Buffalo River. The outlet protected C.R. Nos. 37 and 24 from flooding. Due to downstream landowner concerns, the outlet was stopped and the County petitioned the BRRWD for a permanent outlet. The BRRWD reviewed the petition with their Mediation PT, and the project took on several different concepts, including lowering the lake approximately 7.5 feet. At issue was where the BRRWD is currently at with the project. No work has been done on it since 2010. In 2013, the Managers dismissed the petition, meaning that some of the project development costs would be the responsibility of the petitioner, which was Clay County. An informational meeting will be scheduled with the County sometime in the near future to discuss what the next steps might be.
- The Board reviewed grant proposals, prepared by Xinhua Jia, North Dakota State University, which will be submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture for possible funding. The projects are titled, "Impact of Drainage Water Management on Soil Phosphorus Loss in the Red River of the North Basin", and "Managing Water for Increased Resiliency of Drained Agricultural Landscapes". The Board agreed to support both proposals. Letters supporting the projects will be sent to NDSU.
- Approved the payment of bills, totaling \$358,779.74.

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, August 25, 2014, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office, located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.