

2015 Watershed District of the Year

Buffalo Red River Watershed District

At the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) 2015 Annual Meeting and Trade Show held in Alexandria on December 3-5, 2015, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) received two awards.



"Watershed District of the Year" was presented by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Presenting the award was Luke Skinner, Director, Division of Ecological and Water Resources. The award was a 28" x 36" Les Kouba artist's proof framed print, titled "Evening Flight Mallards". He cited several reasons why the BRRWD was the recipient, including: the recent development of the Manston Slough Restoration Project, the BRRWD's involvement with the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group and the Mediation Project Team process, a willingness to work with agencies and landowners to develop natural resource enhancement (nre) and flood damage reduction (fdr) projects, and the recent restoration of the Buffalo River in Hawley Minnesota.

Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said, "This is the third time since the early 1980s that the BRRWD has been selected as the "Watershed District of the Year" by the Minnesota DNR. We want to thank all the other resource partners, including the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, for being able to work on meaningful fdr and nre projects."



DNR Watershed District of the Year, left to right: Gerald L. Van Amburg, Chairman, Brea L. Kobiela, Manager, Bruce E. Albright, Administrator, John E. Hanson, Secretary, Peter V. Fjestad, Vice Chairman, and Luke Skinner, Director, Ecological and Water Resources, DNR.

HISTORY

The BRRWD, formerly known as the South Buffalo Watershed District, was established on August 31, 1960, and was comprised of approximately 344 square miles in Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin Counties (primarily the South Branch of the Buffalo River). Following a severe summer flood in 1975, it became apparent that any rational approach to address flooding needed to include all of the area contributing runoff to the Buffalo River. By order dated September 17, 1976, the State of Minnesota expanded the BRRWD and changed the name to the BRRWD. The same order expanded the representation on the Board of Managers. The newly formed Board of Managers adopted their first Overall Plan on January 9, 1978, and submitted the plan to the State for approval. The State approved the Overall Plan on July 26, 1978. The most recent Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was prescribed (approved) by the State on June 23, 2010.

In 2011, Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties petitioned the State to expand the BRRWD instead of creating a new separate watershed district for the area that was located between the pre-expansion south border of the BRRWD and the Bois de Sioux Watershed District. By order of the Board of Water and Soil Resources on April 25, 2012, the State of Minnesota expanded the BRRWD to its current size. The same order expanded the representation on the Board of Managers to include an additional manager from Wilkin County and a manager from Otter Tail County.