



# Ground broken on Manston Slough project

October 2013 Snapshots

For more than 140 years, excessive water has been a problem for a plot of land in Wilkin County. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of many partners, that problem is finally going to be solved.

On Sept. 5, 2013, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Manston Slough restoration project, which will restore approximately 1,300 acres of wetlands and provide for 5,446 acre-feet of flood water storage.

Gerald VanAmburg, Chairman of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) and a Board of Water and Soil Resources Board (BWSR) member, said, "Today is an auspicious, joyful day. This project has really been in the making since the 1800s. Drainage was never really a success here, so this has been a long day coming."



*Partners from BWSR, DNR, NRCS, BRRWD and USFWS gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony at the Manston Waterfowl Production Area in early September.*

The first attempt to drain the area in Mitchell, Manston and Meadows Townships in Wilkin County was in 1897 by the State of Minnesota with the construction of State Ditch No. 15. In 2005, the BRRWD began working with local partners to explore a larger flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement project.

VanAmburg said the concept of the project wasn't 'love at first sight.'

"The project is kind of like an arranged marriage – people had to be acquainted with it and the benefits before they came around," VanAmburg said.

The project, estimated to cost \$5.6 million, includes a number of funding partners. The BRRWD has secured 75 percent state funding through the Department of Natural Resources, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and BWSR (Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve funds). The local share of the project costs will be funded by the BRRWD and assessments to benefitted landowners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service helped secure the necessary easements on private lands, using the Wetlands Reserve Program.

The primary project benefits will increase the quantity and quality of waterfowl and wildlife habitat within the project area and provide recreational opportunities for the public; enhance the quality of water flowing from the project area; provide for groundwater recharge to the south lobe of the Buffalo aquifer; and provide for reduced flood damages adjacent to and downstream of the project area.

Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, said this project was the result of a lot of good work and voluntary efforts of landowners. "One person asked me why I should sign up. I said simple, because it is the right thing to do," Albright said.

Project completion is expected in the summer of 2014.