

Buffalo Creek Watershed Ditch Authority

RE: Renville/Sibley McLeod County JD 15
Improvement Benefits – Branch M37

December 10, 2025

In accordance with the Minnesota Statute 103E.321, we herewith submit the following viewers' report.

This report covers the determination of benefits for the improvement of portions of a previously constructed drainage system. The basis for determining benefits and damages is, therefore, based upon a comparison of the conditions that would exist with the current drainage system in a reasonable state of repair with those that will exist after the drainage system improvement.

Proceedings for a large ditch known as Judicial Ditch No. 15 were started in 1915 and the construction of the ditch was completed in 1926. Most of CD 33 was reconstructed as branches of JD No. 15. Over the years, there have been many repairs, improvement, laterals added, and outlets granted. The ditch files show that there has also been county tile added and county tile abandoned. JD No 15 drains parts of four sections of Bird Island Township, parts of 17 sections of Palmyra Township, parts of 14 sections of Martinsburg Township, parts of 35 sections of Hector Township, parts of 26 sections in Preston Lake Township, parts of five sections in Grafton Township of Sibley County, and parts of three sections in Collins Township of McLeod County.

CD No. 129, CD 33B, JD 75-2, CD 107, CD 114, and JD 28A use parts of JD No. 15. The cities of Hector and Buffalo Lake also drain into JD No. 15. Each of these has been given outlet benefits in JD No. 15. JD No. 15 becomes part of Buffalo Creek and empties in Section 30 of Collins Township, McLeod County.

Branch M37 Improvement will improve parts of 14 Branches: (M-37 through M-45, M-75 through M-78). These fourteen branches drain parts of Sections 7 and 18 of Preston Lake Township. The flow is southerly and empties into JD No.15 in Lot 8 of Section 18. There are 698 acres benefited within this improvement.

Supporting documentation for the analysis and conclusion of the report are contained in our files and are available for inspection.

The figures stated herein are based on a full and fair consideration of all pertinent facts and information that the viewers were aware of at the time of this appraisal. The following aids were used during the viewing process.

1. Soil survey manual and maps of Renville County
2. FSA aerial photos
3. Topographical and LiDAR maps
4. Yield averages and production costs taken from the Farm Business Management Reports
5. Visual inspection of each government lot, or 40 acre and smaller parcel
6. Original ditch files, maps and profiles
7. Information from Bolton & Menk Engineering
8. Sales data from the Renville County Assessors' Office

Land classification benefit values were calculated and based upon the potential increase in agriculture production as a result of construction of the drainage project. These benefit values were then reconciled with recent sales values. Existing individual land management practices were not considered. All present land use was evaluated using an estimated best land management practice standard. Special consideration was given to those areas which were determined to be in a native/non-converted condition, or identified as wetlands and restricted from drainage by federal or state regulations.

Some acres were assigned a land classification of 'D-'. These acres represented building sites. Benefits for lands used for industrial agricultural purposes, such as large bin sites or hog production facilities, have been determined with consideration of the drainage system providing an outlet for the accelerated runoff and for the different land use.

Improvement Benefit Valuation

As a redetermination of benefits was recently adopted by the Drainage Authority establishing both the potential benefits and current benefits for the drainage system, we have used those numbers in our calculations. Benefits for the improvement are the viewers' opinion of the difference in value with the improvement project completed, compared with the current benefits indicated during the redetermination of benefits. It is our opinion that the market values between the redetermination and improvement report dates have not significantly changed.

The existing drainage system has various tiles that do not have adequate size to meet the NRCS recommended drainage capacities for tile outlets for agricultural drainage. The proposed improvement will replace some of the existing tile with a tile of size and capacity recommended by Buffalo Creek Watershed District. An efficiency rate has been applied to the potential benefit value to reflect the increase in benefit provided through the proposed improvement efficiency rate. This rate reflects the viewers' determination of the portion of the potential benefit being provided by the improvement of the county ditch system with consideration of the increased capacity and a parcel's proximity to the improved outlet.

The net benefit provided by the ditch system is determined by the adjusted potential benefit value being applied to the number of acres determined to be in each class per tract, accumulating the sum of these benefit values, and then applying the hydraulic efficiency and proximity rate percentage.

Improvement damages have been given for the temporary easement required for the construction of the proposed improvement.

This report is respectfully submitted to the Buffalo Creek Watershed Drainage Authority by:

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