"Local Watershed Orders Project"

At their 1/26/09 meeting in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), approved an Order to construct Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation. After the 1997 spring flood, landowners north of Moorhead asked the Army Corps of Engineers to look at developing a flood control project. In 2002, the BRRWD became involved. The Final Hearing for the project was held on 12/01/08. The Order is subject to a 30-day appeal period. Notice of the decision will be mailed to all affected landowners. The project is estimated to cost $18.8 million. The local share will be approximately $439,300, which will be assessed to benefited landowners in accordance with the Appraisers' Report. The balance of the funding will come from the State of Minnesota through their Flood Damage Reduction Program, administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The next step will be acquisition of easement options. Ulteig Engineers, Inc. indicated that they should have two phases ready for construction bidding by mid-March 2009.

Other business included:

- Continued discussions regarding a high water problem northeast of Lake Park on LaBelle Lakes. A meeting will be arranged with the landowner regarding the lake outlet. It appears from aerial photographs that some fill may have been placed in the outlet.

- Noting that the Turtle Lake siphon was restarted last week.

- Received the preliminary construction plans from the Clay County Highway Department for the regrading of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 8 and the Clay County Ditch No. 11-N improvement project. The next step will be for the BRRWD to schedule the Final Hearing. Viewers will also need to assess project benefits.

- Discussed a request from the Clay County Highway Department to replace culverts in CSAH No. 11 on the outlet of Clay County Ditch No. 3. Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) is working with the County on sizing a replacement structure.

- Noting that the Environmental Assessment Worksheet has been completed for the Manston Slough Restoration project. Forwarding the document to the Environmental Quality Board for publication will wait until the Memorandum of Understanding is signed by all parties.

- Noting that the South Branch of the Buffalo River (SBBR) project has been approved by the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group. The pilot Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Initiative for the Red River Valley was approved in the 2008 Legislative session bonding bill. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources has made up to $3 million in 2008 RIM funds to be used for this pilot program to acquire permanent riparian easements and establish conservation practices on riparian lands. The funds must be obligated via signed RIM applications by June 1, 2009. The SBBR application is for approximately 800 acres along the SBBR channel in Manston and Atherton Townships, Wilkin County. The project is being developed jointly with the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District. Affected landowners will be sent a letter in the next several weeks. Office staff plans to attend a RIM training session scheduled for 2/19/09 in Erskine, MN.

- Discussed the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Breakfast, scheduled for March 18-19, 2009, at the Kelly Inn, St. Paul, MN. All Managers plan to attend.
• Approved payment of bills totaling $61,897.46.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, February 9, 2009, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.