NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 
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“Watershed Discusses Lake Outlets”

At their 11/09/09 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed the status of several outlet projects for lakes in the eastern part of the watershed district. Earlier this fall, the BRRWD held a series of informational meetings with affected landowners. The Tansem/Ranum Lake outlet along Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34 is on hold until next spring. Right now, one homeowner is being affected by the highwater. The problem at this time appears to be under control. The second outlet is on the Clay-Wilkin County line, east of Barnesville. The office has obtained a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permit to do temporary pumping for 30 days. Erik Jones, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.), has been working with Prairie View and Humboldt Townships regarding a pumping system. At the last meeting, the BRRWD and the two townships agreed to split the pumping costs on a 1/3 basis. Some minor channelization work will be required before the pumping can begin. The Board also discussed a highwater problem along T.H. No. 10 between Lake Park and Audubon involving LaBelle and Boyer Lakes. The BRRWD intends to seek Legislative funding this winter to help construct the estimated $300,000 project next spring. The outlet installed last winter for Grove Lake is still operating. It appears that for now, the highwater problem at that site is solved.

The Board approved permits to:

- Jerry Matter to install culverts on the outlet of Becker County Ditch No. 21 in Sections 3 and 10, Riceville Township. The culverts will allow highwater flows from the ditch system to drain west via an alternative route to the Buffalo River. The Riceville Township Supervisors and the USFWS approved the work. The project will be completed as a ditch system expense.
- The Red River Valley Coop Association for an underground power line crossing on Clay County Ditch No. 11 between Sections 29 and 32, Kurtz Township.
- Disapproved a permit for a landowner to construct a berm along the west side of the Buffalo River in Section 22, Kragnes Township, Clay County. The Board felt the application lacked the necessary information to assess the impacts of the proposed work. Part of the application also talked about repairing a driveway that was damaged during the 2009 spring flood. This work does not require a BRRWD permit.
- Arliss and Donna Fedje and David and Ann Dolence to construct ringdikes for their property located on the south side of Wall ST in the John Odegaard Subdivision. Neither property can be protected by the Oakport Flood Mitigation because of their proximity to the Red River. Approval was conditioned to receipt of a Conditional Use Permit from the City of Moorhead.
- Jerry Janssen for three tiling projects: on the west side of Interstate-94 (I-94) in the NW1/4, Section 29, Elkton Township; the east side of Interstate-94 (I-94) right-of-way (r-o-w) in the N1/2, Section 29, Elkton Township, subject to approval from the downstream landowner and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) to use the I-94 r-o-w as an outlet; and for random tile lines along Stony Creek in the SE1/4, Section 34, Skree Township, Clay County.

Other business included:

- Discussion with a landowner regarding a berm along Lateral No. 2 on Wilkin County Ditch No. 22 in the NE1/4, Section 2, Mitchell Township. The landowner feels that the operator of this property has been farming too close to the ditch, consequently lowering the spoil bank elevation. Water overtopped the bank during the 2009 spring flood, which caused flooding of the complainant's buildings. In response, the Board agreed to have H.E. survey the berm elevations. The ditch r-o-w will also be staked.
Discussion regarding an erosion slide near John Leseth's property along Project No. 61, Clay County Ditch No. 11 North-Improvement. The slide occurred in an area where there had been a former slide. The Board will look at repairs in the spring of 2010.

Denied a claim from Nanik Construction for a fuel price increase regarding their work on the Riverton Township Retention project. Upon review of the submitted fuel invoices, no work occurred during the time frame allowable in the contract which qualified. The BRRWD intends to seek a nine-month extension regarding the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant to complete the project. The contractor has been working over a year in very poor conditions to try to finish the project.

Noting that a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant application has been prepared and submitted for the Manston Slough Restoration project in the amount of $400,000. Lyle Wilkins, Inc., is working by contract on the demolition of a building site in the SE1/4, Section 30, Manston Township, Wilkin County. An extension for that work was granted until 11/23/09.

Discussed the status of the Oakport Flood Mitigation project. Basically, all construction work has come to a halt because of the extremely wet weather last month. Three pay requests were processed for various phases. The Board discussed the status of land acquisition needed for the project by easement. The Board has not ruled out using eminent domain to obtain the necessary r-o-w.

Signed a DNR grant agreement for $155,413.00 to make improvements to the Georgetown Levee. The funding will be used for buyouts, soils investigation, and engineering.

Appointed delegates to the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) annual meeting to be held on December 1-3, 2009, in Alexandria.

Authorized removal of a tree blocking the Buffalo River near the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe (BNSF) Railroad tracks in Section 14, Hawley Township, Clay County.

Approved payment of bills totaling $604,499.28.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 23, 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.