"Local Watershed Plans for 2008"

At their last meeting of the year, held on 12/10/07 in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed a number of projects they hope to build in 2008. The Final Hearing and an Order to construct Project No. 58, Riverton Township Retention, was made in September 2007. The BRRWD is still working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) regarding wetland issues. Erik S. Jones, Engineer, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.), is working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the dam safety permit. The Board would like to open construction bids in March 2008.

Since the 1997 spring flood, residents in Oakport Township have wanted a flood control project. The BRRWD became involved with the project in 2003. Ulteig Engineers, Inc., is currently working on the dike alignment. Approximately five miles of levees will protect over 400 homes along the Red River of the North and Oakport Coulee. The Board approved a motion to acquire properties on a "voluntary" basis for those houses located on the west side of Broadway. The BRRWD recently learned that because of geotechnical concerns in this area, the dike will need to follow Broadway. The BRRWD will hold an informational meeting (to be scheduled) sometime in late January or early February with all affected landowners to give an update regarding the project status. If everything goes well, the BRRWD would like to start moving dirt in August 2008. Project construction will be phased over a three-year period.

Discussions took place regarding the Manston Slough Restoration project. The NRCS will complete the archeological survey in the spring of 2008 when conditions permit. The next step will be for the BRRWD to draft the easement options and contact affected landowners. An agency meeting was held on 12/10/07 in Breckenridge to discuss the project status. The BRRWD plans are to complete the easement negotiations, final engineering, environmental review, permitting, and the watershed legal process this winter and next spring, with hopes to start construction in August 2008.

H.E. is still working with Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad regarding the Kragnes Ringdike project. Present plans are to complete the design and permitting this winter, so that construction can begin in next spring.

Other business included:

- As previously approved, transferred $50,000 from M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, to Project No. 51, Clay County Ditch No. 68.

- A decision to stop the Turtle Lake siphon. The elevation of Turtle Lake is approximately 1361.4, or 0.1' above the DNR permitted elevation. Running the Turtle Lake siphon in the winter causes open water concerns on Long Lake. The Long Lake siphon will continue to operate during the winter months.

- Noting that meetings will be held on 12/17/07 with Senator Langseth and Representative Lanning regarding the BRRWD's taxing authority under M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3. Joel Carlson, BRRWD Lobbyist, plans to attend.
Regarding comprehensive planning, the next step will be to reconvene the Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees to look at solutions for problems identified during the seven sub-region meetings held in 2007. A goal of having the draft plan completed by 3/01/08 has been set.

Received a report from H.E. regarding the possible repair of Clay County Ditch No. 63 near Glyndon. The next step will be to obtain field survey data in the spring when conditions permit.

Signed a contract with the United States Geological Survey for the time frame of 10/01/07 to 9/30/08 for operation of the Hawley and Sabin gauges. The BRRWD costs are $4,235.

Approved payment of bills totaling $160,843.65.

The Board of Managers, BRRWD, will hold their Annual Meeting on Monday, January 14, 2008, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. The meeting will include election of officers and appointment of consultants. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.