"Local Watershed Ends Year With Short Meeting"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), held a regular meeting on December 22, 2008, in the Barnesville office. Continued discussions took place regarding a high water problem on LaBelle Lakes northeast of Lake Park. A landowner would like to see a tile buried in the waterway to create a more permanent outlet. Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) was asked to investigate this possibility further and to check on costs.

Other business included:

- Approved permits to: Larry Jacobson for 4-5 acres of patterned tiling in the N1/2, Section 9, Highland Grove Township, Clay County; and the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe (BNSF) Railroad to reconstruct the east and west approaches for a bridge over the Red River between Fargo and Moorhead.

- Agreed to send a letter to a landowner/operator regarding drainage activities completed in 2008 without a BRRWD permit in the NE1/4, Section 8, Elkton Township, Clay County. A survey will be completed in the spring when conditions permit to determine the required corrective actions.

- Authorized H.E. to investigate a possible water retention site in the SW1/4, Section 5, Humboldt Township, Clay County. The landowner expressed an interest in working with the BRRWD in this regard.

- Discussed the status of the Grove Lake Outlet project in northwestern Otter Tail County. The work is currently on hold because of the cold weather conditions. The contractor intends to continue installing the outlet pipe during the winter when it gets above freezing. The Board approved Pay Request No. 2 in the amount of $17,323.25. They also signed various forms needed to purchase wetland credits for the project from the Otter Tail County Highway Department.

- Noting that a meeting was held on 12/23/08 at the Clay County Highway Department to meet with landowners regarding the Clay County Ditch No. 11 North/County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 8 Improvement/Regrading Project. The County is trying to find a place to deposit excess dirt.

- Requested a one year time extension until 6/30/10 to complete work on the Manston Slough Restoration project. The Board intends to begin easement negotiations with landowners this winter.

- Noting that a Technical Committee meeting for the Oakport Flood Mitigation project will be held on 1/06/09 at 1:30 PM in the Oakport Town Hall. The Board discussed the status of buyouts.

- Noting that the siphon out of Long Lake continues to run this winter on the Turtle Lake Outlet project. With the wet fall conditions, Turtle Lake and Long Lake had both reached the same elevation. Long Lake needs to go down in order for the Turtle Lake siphon to operate.

- Agreed to contact a landowner regarding a delinquent ringdike payment.
Noting that the next meeting of the Mediation Project Team (PT) will be held on 1/29/09 at 1:30 PM at the MSUM Science Center east of Glyndon. The Board discussed the 12/11/08 special PT meeting that was held to discuss problems along the South Branch of the Buffalo River in Wilkin County. H.E. was authorized to look at off-channel levies and to plot the original alignment of the river, which has been straightened in various reaches.

Signed a six month extension to complete work on the Revised Watershed Management Plan with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The new deadline date is 6/30/09.

Noting that a meeting will be held on 1/07/09 at 9:30 AM in the Barnesville office to discuss the Clean Water Legacy project for Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee.

Discussed funding available through the BWSR pilot Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Initiative for the Red River Valley. BWSR is looking for priority river/stream restorations and flood damage reduction projects consistent with the Mediation Agreement. BWSR has made up to $3 million RIM funds to be used for this pilot program to acquire permanent riparian easements and establish conservation practices. The funds must be obligated via signed RIM applications by June 1, 2009. Payment rates for cropland will be 100% of the estimated market value (emv), and 60% of the emv for non-cropland areas. The program also includes funding to establish vegetation, not to exceed $200/acre. To use this funding, projects must be submitted by January 9, 2009.

Approved payment of bills totaling $81,694.15.

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2009, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. The Annual Meeting includes election of officers, designation of depositories, and appointment of consultants. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.