"Local Watershed Works on Comprehensive Plan"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed the status of their Comprehensive Planning effort at the 2/11/08 meeting in Barnesville. The process started over a year ago, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is funding 50% of the costs. The BRRWD, which covers 1,379 square miles in parts of Clay, Becker, Wilkin, and Otter Tail Counties, was divided into seven planning regions. Last year, meetings were held in each of the regions to gather citizen input regarding problems/concerns. Now, the BRRWD is working on the goals/solutions. The Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees (CAC/TAC) met on 2/05/08. Another CAC/TAC meeting will be held on 3/14/08 in Barnesville. BRRWD Chairman Roger G. Ellefson commented, "The new plan will guide the efforts of the BRRWD over the course of next 10 years." It is hoped that the "draft" plan can be completed by 4/30/08. It will then be distributed for public review and comment. The plan needs to be done by 12/31/08. The Board discussed the creation of watershed management districts for each of the planning regions, which would fund work/projects in the individual regions. A formula for the funding still needs to be developed.

Other business included:

- The office is trying to schedule a meeting with the Clay County Highway Committee to discuss the Swede Grove Lake Outlet project north of Hawley. The County petitioned the BRRWD for an outlet on Swede Grove Lake. Since the petition, the project has taken on new features, which provide wildlife/fishery benefits, but also increase the project costs. The BRRWD wants to find out if the County wants to continue the project.

- An agency meeting to discuss the Manston Slough Restoration project will be held on 2/15/08 at the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District. United States Fish and Wildlife Service concerns regarding the project design will be discussed. They feel the project is more heavily weighted towards flood control than wildlife enhancement.

- Signed a contract with Pifer's Realty and Auction to sell approximately seven houses acquired through the buyout process for Oakport Flood Mitigation. The sale will take place on 5/01/08.

- Noting that a landowner informational meeting regarding the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project will be held on 4/03/08 at 7:00 PM in the Dilworth Community Center. Notice will be sent to approximately 320 homeowners.

- Plans to restart the Turtle Lake siphon in early March 2008. Since it was stopped on approximately 11/26/07, the lake has risen 1.3’.

- Discussed permitting/licensing for the Kragnes Flood Control project. The next step will be to schedule the required hearing.
• Discussed a possible retention site in the NE1/4, Section 1, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County, on Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1. The BRRWD authorized some field survey work and further investigation.

• Discussed a request to add the S1/2SW1/4, Section 5, Manston Township, to the benefiting areas of Wilkin County Ditch Nos. 13 and 13-Lateral. A hearing will be required.

• Noting that all Managers plan to attend the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts' Legislative Day at the Capitol on March 12-13.

• Noting that the Annual Meeting with the Advisory Committee has been scheduled for 3/28/08 at 1:30 PM, Galaxie Supper Club, Barnesville.

• Paid bills totaling $44,015.53.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, February 25, 2008, 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.