July Rains Bring Concerns to Local Watershed

At their 7/26/10 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), had several groups of landowners in to discuss ongoing highwater problems. The recent heavy rainfall events have exacerbated their concerns. Landowners around a group of lakes in Otter Tail County near Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 34 felt something had to be done to address their problems. An outlet for the area would route water from north of T.H. No. 34 into Pete Lake and then Grove Lake, where the BRRWD already has installed an outlet. They also discussed Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MNDOT) plans to raise T.H. No. 34 this fall in four locations where high water is affecting the road. The Board agreed to schedule an informational meeting for sometime during the month of August to further discuss a possible outlet for the area.

A homeowner located on Ranum and Tansem Lakes also attended the meeting to discuss his problems. He had hoped that MNDOT would work with him to establish an outlet for the area. He was discouraged to learn that MNDOT plans to raise the road. Costs associated with each alternative were discussed. The landowner felt another option might be a buyout.

The Board learned from their Engineer that as of 7/23/10, the LaBelle/Boyer Lake Outlet project, involving T.H. No. 10 east of Lake Park, is fully operational. Boyer Lake is now down approximately 6”. Appraisers are also working on another project north of Hawley affecting several homes and a township road. Their report is expected at the 8/09/10 meeting. A hearing could be held in August.

Other business included:

- Discussion about problems affecting Wolverton Creek in Wolverton Township, Wilkin County. Both the County and Township have been repairing their roads after flooding events, and adding more fill to the roadbed, which changes the flooding characteristics along the Creek. The landowner felt the increased road heights could jeopardize his buildings. Letters will be sent to Wolverton Township and the Wilkin County Highway Department regarding the concern.

- Approval of permits to: American Crystal Sugar for the installation of drain tile at their Sabin Beet Receiving Station, located in Section 31, Elmwood Township, Clay County; Russell Henderson to install a culvert in the southwest corner of Section 34, Manston Township, Wilkin County; after-the-fact permits to Noland and David Dunham for tiling completed in the SW1/4, Section 4, and the NW1/4, Section 9, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County; David L. Dunham for the installation of field approach and 24" dia. culvert off County Road (C.R.) No. 31 in the NW1/4, Section 35, Humboldt Township, Clay County; Karen Plemel to install a waterway crossing and culvert and to install a dike to control high water on Boot Lake in the SW1/4, Section 31, Lake Park Township, Becker County; MNDOT to raise T.H. No. 34 in four locations east of Barnesville because of highwater; Chris Stepp to install an approach and culvert off 100th ST to the NW1/4NE1/4, Section 4, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County; Bill Austin for the installation of drain tile in the SE1/4, Section 19, Skree Township, Clay County; Robert P. Schultz for the installation of a drainage ditch outletting to County Ditch No. 21 in the NW1/4, Section 6, Elkton Township, Clay County; and the approval of six permit applications for Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) projects, including Kelly Nichols in the E1/2SE1/4, Section 16, Humboldt Township, Clay County; Margaret Johnson and Alita Neumann in the SE1/4, Section 11, Manston Township, Wilkin County; Mary Rumsey in the S1/2SE1/4, Section 11, Manston Township, Wilkin County; Lowell Seidler in the W1/2, Section 8, Meadows Township, Wilkin County; and Todd Klein in the E1/2NE1/4, Section 7, Meadows Township, Wilkin County.

- Discussed a potential diking violation in Section 22, Kragnes Township, Clay County. A Manager investigation will be conducted. The landowner doing the work had applied for BRRWD permits in 2009, which were denied. The work affects the floodplain along the Buffalo River.
• Authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) to analyze a slide area along Clay County Ditch No. 11 in the NW1/4, Section 32, Kurtz Township.

• Noting that the office has mailed all easement options pertaining to Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. The Board would like to hold the required hearing and solicit bids for construction to begin later this fall.

• Agreed to advertise for bids regarding the installation of a crossing needed by the Church of the Nazarene on Clay County Ditch No. 41-Lateral No. 1, off 15th AVE N, Moorhead. The bid opening will be held on 8/23/10.

• Noting that a special meeting will be held on 7/29/10 regarding the Hawley Economic Development Administration Diversion and deteriorating reinforced concrete pipe that has been ongoing since the project was built. The pipe manufacturer, contractor, engineer, and the City of Hawley have all agreed to attend to discuss possible solutions.

• Noting that the next Mediation Project Team meeting is scheduled for 8/19/10 at 7:00 PM in the Minnesota State University Moorhead Science Center near Glyndon.

• Authorized H.E. to prepare plans and specifications for the replacement of culverts on Clay County Ditch No. 49.

• Scheduled the annual budget hearing (M.S.A. 103D.911) for 8/23/10 at 9:00 PM in conjunction with the regular BRRWD meeting that will be held on that same date.

• Noting that Wilkin County has reappointed Roger G. Ellefson as a Manager for a three-year term beginning 9/01/10.

• Authorized tree and brush spraying on a variety of BRRWD ditch systems/projects.

• Noting that the BRRWD will host the 2010 Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Summer Tour, scheduled for 8/24/10-8/26/10. The BRRWD is working with a variety of partners in hosting the tour.

• Approved payment of bills totaling $1,026,785.01

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 9, 2010, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.