“Local Watershed Approves River Watch Funding”

Nate Strand, Biology Teacher, Barnesville High School, attended the 5/29/12 meeting of the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD). He presented the Barnesville River Watch budget for 2012-2013. Estimated costs are $6,016.67. The Board approved the budget and commented on the merits of the program. Through the River Watch program, the Watershed District obtains valuable water quality data needed for monitoring projects, stream conditions, etc. It also provides a valuable education component for the students involved and the general public.

Other business included:

- There was considerable discussion regarding Watershed staff attending all meetings. Presently, Administrator Bruce Albright, Resident Secretary Julie Jerger, and BRRWD Administrative Assistant Mona Barker, all attend. The Board felt there was a valuable education component by having all present. One Manager felt money could be saved by cutting back on the staff’s time. For now, the three employees will continue to attend.

- The Board approved permits to the City of Moorhead to reconstruct 43rd AVE N including new culverts in a waterway; Christian Anderson for several small individual tiling projects in the E1/2, Section 32, Goose Prairie Township, Clay County; Mark Anderson/Arland Johnson for a Wetlands Reserve Program project, located in the NW1/4, Section 30, Highland Grove Township, Clay County; Jeff Pender to install an approach and culvert off County Road (C.R.) No. 25, SE1/4, Section 29, Skree Township, Clay County; M & J Farms Partnership to install a 10” tile line to control seepage from a farmyard in the NE1/4, Section 29, Cromwell Township, Clay County; Barnesville American Legion to place tiling in Reed Field to control seepage and frost boils regarding their fencing; and Mark Yaggie to install tiling in the N1/2, Section 24, Manston Township, Wilkin County.

- The Board discussed correspondence with Wolverton Township regarding a crossing they have over Wolverton Creek on 230th AVE. Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) will stake the road overflow section to see how much fill has been added. Township representatives plan on attending the 6/11/12 BRRWD meeting to discuss the possible installation of an additional culvert to replace the overflow section.

- The Board also discussed weekend rains and concerns expressed by a landowner on Wolverton Creek south of C.R. No. 30. Water from Wilkin County Ditch No. 22 was actually flowing south on to his property rather than going north. The Board authorized H.E. to prepare a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permit application to address downstream sediment blockages.

- The preliminary Engineer’s Report was received for Project No. 74, Clay County Ditch No. 51, Lateral No. 3. The office will schedule the preliminary hearing to be held at Moorhead City Hall.

- We are waiting for the Appraisers to finish their work on the Country Heritage Ditch, Crystal Creek diking, and Wilkin County Ditch No. 22-Lateral No. 3. Once the Appraisers’ Reports are filed, the final hearings can be scheduled.

- The Board approved a final pay request to the contractor working on the Lake Jacobs Outlet. The lake is currently below the control elevation. Some downstream channel cleaning will be completed this fall after the crops are removed.
• There was considerable discussion regarding the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The hearing was held on 5/22/12 in Barnesville. Approximately 240 notices were mailed out, 40 people attended and about four people expressed opposition to the project. The Board would like the office to work on obtaining the remaining easement options prior to the 6/11/12 meeting. At that time, a date will be scheduled for continuation of the final hearing. Given current land values, the Board agreed to increase the cropland permanent easement payments to $4,000 per acre.

• All construction work, except for seeding, has been completed on the Cromwell Township Outlet Project. As soon as the seeding is done, a meeting will be held with one of the project landowners who has several concerns.

• The Board is trying schedule a meeting with representatives from the DNR to discuss funding for the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. We need $1 million to complete work on existing contracts and an additional $5 million to complete Phase 4. At this time, it does not appear that the 2012 bonding bill includes funding for either request. An Oakport construction committee meeting will be held prior to the DNR conference call to discuss cost estimates.

• Considerable discussion took place regarding the Georgetown Levee improvement. A hearing continuation is scheduled for 5/31/12 at 8:00 PM in the Georgetown Community Center. The Board went through a detailed list of all remaining land acquisitions/easements.

• A hearing will be held on Monday, June 4, 2012, at 7:30 PM in the Moorhead City Hall Council Chambers to discuss a petition filed by Gerald Zimmerman to install two temporary impoundments in Clay County Ditch No. 39.

• The office is working on a distribution list for a kickoff meeting to discuss the Upper Red Total Maximum Daily Load Project. A date and time for the kickoff meeting will be arranged in June.

• The Board has completed the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Greater Minnesota Watershed District Performance Standard Review. The only item of concern was completing our annual reports. The Board will also look at adopting a Data Practices Policy.

• The status of the new office project was discussed. The floor slab was poured on 5/25/12. The contractor will now start constructing the exterior walls. Plans are to take occupancy of the new building around Labor Day 2012.

• The Board approved payment of bills totaling $43,533.16.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD is scheduled for Monday, June 11, 2012, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. If you should have questions or comments concerning the BRRWD, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.