“Local Watershed Addresses Landowner Concerns”

At their 8/27/12 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), spent time meeting with several landowners regarding drainage/water concerns. The first issue pertained to culverts located in Spring Prairie Township, Clay County. Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) worked with the landowner earlier this summer to measure area culverts in Section 19. The upstream culverts in County Road (C.R.) No. 92 are approximately twice as large as the outlet culverts in the NW corner of the same section. The landowner was interested in replacing the deteriorating quarter line culvert on the south side of 57th AVE N. He questioned what size pipe should be installed. The Board tabled action on his request and will contact the Clay County Highway Department to review the history of the area culverts.

Another landowner and his renter discussed the cleanout of a ditch located on the south side of Trunk Highway No. 108 in Section 33, Norwegian Grove Township, Otter Tail County. They felt neighboring landowners would express concerns regarding the work and wanted to apply for a BRRWD permit. The Board noted that work should also be reviewed with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. In the interim, the Board agreed to contact neighboring landowners to see if there are any concerns.

John Young, Jr., Councilman, City of Hawley, attended the meeting to discuss a project designed through the Clay County Soil and Conservation District (SWCD) to address erosion along the Buffalo River which is threatening their waste water treatment pond. The project's estimated cost is $32,000. The Clay County SWCD will contribute $4,000. The City of Hawley asked the BRRWD to help fund the project. The Board approved a motion to fund the remaining project costs at 50/50 with the City of Hawley. The final billing will be paid once the actual construction is completed.

The Board also discussed two appeals filed regarding an action taken earlier this year to have Wolverton Township lower a spillway on 130th AVE between Sections 9 and 10. Based on the original engineering design, the replacement of the bridge included two lines of 10' x 7' reinforced concrete box (RCB) culverts with an emergency overflow section at a design elevation located north of the creek channel. A neighboring landowner felt the Township had filled in the spillway area. A survey conducted by H.E. shows that the spillway area is about 1.3 feet higher than the designed elevation. Both the Township and the neighboring landowner appealed the Board's action. The landowner wants the Board to set a date for completing the work. The Township asked to leave the road as is because it has no upstream impacts. The office will contact the Wilkin County Highway Department and review aerial photographs to see if the emergency spillway was ever installed.

Other business included:

- The office noted that the replacement culvert needed to make repairs on the Hawley Diversion Project has been ordered from Hancock Concrete Products, LLC. It is anticipated that the RCP will arrive in approximately 2 weeks. The City of Hawley, BRRWD, and H.E. have agreed to split the repair costs.
- Permits were approved to Spring Prairie Colony for approximately 40 acres of pattern tiling in Section 3, Spring Prairie Township, Clay County; the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District for the Jim Sheridan Wetland Restoration located in Section 10, Parke Township, Clay County; John M. Jones for 80 acres of pattern tiling in the S½SW¼, Section 33, Flowing Township, Clay County; Scott Jetvig for random tiling in Sections 12 and 34, Eglon Township, Clay County; David Watt for pattern tiling in the NW¼, Section 27, Moland Township, Clay County; and Dirk Swanson for pattern tiling in the SE¼, Section 29, Kragnes Township, Clay County.
- Bids will be opened at the 9/10/12 meeting for Project No. 39, Georgetown 2012 Levee Improvement, and Project No. 72 Wilkin County Ditch No. 22-Lateral No. 3 Improvement.
- The annual fall tour with the Mediation Project Team, agencies, and local elected leaders is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 20, 2012. The tour will start at 1:30 PM from the Galaxie Supper Club east of Barnesville.
- The Board agreed to sign the first amendment to the Limited Joint Powers Agreement regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Board authorized a 9/13/12 special meeting to meet with Army Corps of Engineers officials.
• The Board approved a $20,000 request from the Becker County SWCD for the installation of conservation practices within the BRRWD for the years 2013-2014. In the past, this has been a very successful partnership to install sediment control basins and buffer strips to improve water quality.

• The Board discussed the status of the new office building. Plans are to move into the new facility before the end of September 2012. The office furniture will be ordered in the near future. The Board agreed to hire a moving contractor to assist in the relocation. The architect is working with Thompson Greenery regarding landscaping.

• The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has tentatively approved our application to clean 4.5 miles of Wolverton Creek/Comstock Coulee. The DNR was very interested in the BRRWD's comprehensive plan for the entire area. The BRRWD now needs to look for a funding source to help complete the channel restoration. This winter, the Board will discuss the possible establishment of a water management district for the area. Overall project costs are estimated in excess of $5 million. It is hoped that grant funding through the Clean Water Fund will assist with much of the work.

• The Board agreed to sign a joint funding agreement with the US Geological Survey for the operation of stream flow gauging stations on the Buffalo River near Hawley and the South Branch of the Buffalo River at Sabin.

• The Board approved payment of bills totaling $491,873.33.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, which has also been advertised as the annual budget hearing for 2013, is scheduled for Monday, September 10, 2012. The regular meeting will begin at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office at 114 Front ST S, Barnesville, with the Budget Hearing beginning at 9:00 PM. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.