“Local Watershed Makes Project Order”

Homeowners adjacent to a proposed drainage project in Country Heritage Addition, Oakport Township, Clay County, attended the regular meeting of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) held on Monday, November 12, 2012, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office located at 1303 4th AVE NE. The homeowners questioned the status of the project. The hearing was held on 10/03/12 and construction bids were reviewed at the 10/22/12 meeting. The low bidder was Steven Johnson Excavation, Ottertail MN, with a bid of $42,057.00. A letter was sent to the four primary homeowners on 11/06/12 explaining the current project costs, which are now approximately 60% of the earlier Engineer's estimate. The BRRWD has authorized a $7,500 contribution to the project from their Minnesota Statutes Annotated 103D.905, Subd.3 account, and Ulteig Engineers Inc. has agreed to contribute $7,500 in engineering services to the project construction. While four homeowners pick up the majority of the costs, others in the project's drainage area are also assessed at a lower rate. The Board made the Order to construct the project, which will start the 30-day appeal period ending on 12/12/12. Postcards will be sent to all affected landowners regarding the decision. Weather permitting, the project could be constructed yet this fall or the work may need to be done next spring. The project completion date is 6/15/13.

Other items included:

- A landowner had concerns regarding the sizing of culverts near the outlet of Whisky Creek. Whisky Creek, an unnamed Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) protected waterway, and the South Branch of the Buffalo River all converge near Section 10, Alliance Township, Clay County. Recently, the Clay County Highway Department installed an additional culvert in a crossing on County Road No. 15 between Sections 14 and 15, Alliance Township. The landowner was concerned that the outlet could not handle all of the water which causes farmland flooding. The Board explained that for several years they have been considering doing a comprehensive study of the unnamed DNR protected waterway. They currently have a proposal on file from Houston Engineering, Inc. to do the study, entitled "Barnesville Township Drainage Investigation". The Board talked about holding an informational meeting this winter with all of the affected landowners to determine their interest.

- A landowner filed a complaint regarding recent work done on 80th AVE S along the north line of Section 14, Elkton Township, Clay County. A neighboring landowner in that Section raised the road and filled in a culvert. The landowner said he would open the plugged pipe. A permit was also granted to install a culvert where the road had been raised and the water had formally overtopped. Elkton Township Supervisors will be contacted to determine whether or not they authorized the road repairs.

- Approval of permits to Larson Farms for pattern tiling of 25-30 acres in the NE¼NE¼, Section 3, Andrea Township, Wilkin County; Howard Pender for random tiling in the NW¼, Section 30, Skree Township, Clay County, to drain into Spring Creek; Richard and Chad Oberg, for pattern tiling in the NW¼ and SW¼, Section 24, Kragnes Township, Clay County, both systems will have inline control structures and gravity flow into drainage systems for which the land is assessed; and Terry Arnhalt to install an approach with an 18” diameter culvert along the east line of the SE¼, Section 6, Manston Township, Wilkin County, for field access.

- The Board discussed concerns filed by neighboring landowners regarding recent tiling permits approved by the BRRWD. One area is located north of Interstate-94 in the NW¼, Section 13, Barnesville Township, Clay County. The other area is located in Section 29, Elkton Township, Clay County. The Board authorized H.E. to conduct a survey of the culverts along C.R. No. 21 to 
Clay County Ditch No. 55. In that particular case, the neighboring landowner feels the water will not drain north because one of the pipes is set too high.

- The revised Engineer's Report was received for Project No. 71, 50th AVE S Flood Control. The project has been redesigned to include a certified levee around all of Section 31, Moorhead Township, Clay County. A meeting was held on 11/01/12 with one of the landowners whose property is needed for construction of the dike but it is not located within the limits of Moorhead. The revised estimated project costs are $4,770,028. The City of Moorhead would like the BRRWD to advance the project development so that the project hearing could be held sometime early this winter and bid opening for the project next spring. The Board accepted the revised Engineer's Report and authorized their Appraisers to continue work on the project.

- The Board reviewed a letter from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) committing BWSR to provide $682,365 of Reinvest in Minnesota bonding funds to assist with the restoration of wetlands associated with Project No. 56, Manston Slough Restoration. The funds can be used for actual construction expenses, including seeding. Related to the same project, the Board also discussed a claim made for crop damages during the 2012 growing season because the land was idle in anticipation of the project construction which did not happen. The Board agreed to reimburse the landowner $4,500.

- The Board approved Pay Request No. 1 for $439,687.50 to Reiner Contracting for their work associated with the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project. All work on Phase 1 has now been completed.

- The next Mediation Project Team (PT) Meeting was rescheduled from 11/15/12 to 12/06/12. The meeting will be held at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office.

- An update was received from Manager Van Amburg regarding the status of the Army Corps of Engineers FM Diversion Project. The Red River Basin Commission has been authorized to look at upstream storage.

- A construction contract was awarded to Ziegler Construction Inc. for the Elkton Township Wetland Restoration Project. It appears that all necessary permits in accordance with the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act have been obtained. All easement areas have now been staked.

- Managers Hanson and Van Amburg were appointed as delegates to the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts annual meeting to be held on November 29-December 1, 2012, in Alexandria at the Arrowwood Convention Center. Manager Nelson was named the alternate.

- The Board discussed the status of the new office project. The contractor is still working on several clean up matters. Hydro-seeding was completed last week. The new boardroom table will arrive the week of Thanksgiving. This will clear the way for audio/visual technicians to complete their work.

- The Board approved payment of bills totaling $815,136.94. The DNR will be billed for various projects. Some payments will be withheld, until there is enough cash on hand to pay all of the bills.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, November 26, 2012, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville. The meeting will include a closed session beginning at 6:00 PM to discuss employee issues. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.