NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 30, 2012
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“Local Watershed Part of F-M Diversion”

At their 11/26/12 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), received a report from Lance Yohe, Executive Director, Red River Basin Commission (RRBC). The City of Fargo made funding available to the RRBC for a study titled, "Halstad Upstream Retention Modeling". The Army Corps of Engineers have developed an unsteady flow model and are also developing hydrologic models for each sub-watershed in the United States. The RRBC is asking the BRRWD to submit possible retention sites that are currently identified or in the process of being identified so they can be modeled and prioritized for mainstream, local, and regional benefits. The RRBC received $500,000 from the FM-Diversion Board of Authority (FM-DBA) for this work. Yohe reported that he would like potential BRRWD sites in the next several months. The FM-DBA will also have funding available for engineering, design, and project construction. Yohe felt this was an opportunity for the BRRWD to develop more retention areas.

Yohe also invited the Board to attend the upcoming 30th Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference, which will be held January 22-24, 2013, at the Alerus Center, Grand Forks, ND. If the BRRWD has projects/programs that meet any of the goals and objectives for the Natural Resources Framework Plan, those projects should be submitted and will be part of the conference agenda. Yohe encouraged Board members to attend.

Other items included:

- The Board discussed ongoing water issues in Section 27, Skree Township, Clay County. The landowners have now reached an agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service regarding a restoration plan. They submitted a BRRWD permit application to install an approach along 110th AVE S. The Board approved the permit subject to other parties’ approval. Ultimately, the BRRWD would like to hold a meeting this winter with all affected parties to resolve this issue.

- The Board approved a permit to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the milling and overlay of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75 from the Wilkin County Line to the 60th AVE S in Moorhead. The work will include several culvert replacements. All culverts will be replaced at the same elevation and size.

- The Board discussed the status of an appeal filed regarding Project No. 74, Clay County Ditch No. 51-Lateral No. 3. The BRRWD's attorney, Tami L. Norgard, Vogel Law Firm, is working with the appellant to see if the appeal can be withdrawn at this time. This would allow for the development of the Engineer's Detailed Survey Report and work by the Viewers to determine project benefits and damages.

- The Board discussed the appeal period for Project No. 73, Country Heritage Ditch Improvements. The Board made the order on 11/12/12 and the appeal period will expire on 12/12/12. While several inquiries have been made regarding the appeal process, to date no appeals have been filed. The project contractor, Steven Johnson Excavation, Otter Tail, MN said the work could be completed next spring when conditions permit. The project has a 6/30/13 deadline.

- The Board discussed the status of Project No. 72, Wilkin County Ditch No. 22-Lateral No. 3. The project deadline is 11/30/12, and it appears the contractor will need to ask for an extension.
• Cleanout work has now been completed on the outlet channel from Project No. 68, Lake Jacobs. Last winter while the project was operating, downstream icing occurred because of an inadequate channel. That problem has now been corrected.

• Between now and the end of the year, the office will be working with landowners to secure the remaining easement options involved with the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The Board would like to continue the final hearing and advertise for construction bids next spring. The BRRWD has received a commitment for funding from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). This will bring the project to the 75% state funded level.

• The Board discussed meeting with local Legislators to secure funding needed for the completion of the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project in 2013. The BRRWD still needs approximately $6.5 million to complete Phase 4. The project landowners are anxious to see the work completed.

• The contractor has completed work on Phase 1 (east of T.H. No. 75) on the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project. Work on Phase 2 will begin again next spring when conditions permit (west of T.H. No. 75).

• A Mediation Project Team (PT) Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 6, 2012, at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office. The Mediation PT process is used to look at flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement projects.

• The BRRWD has received a $70,000 grant from BWSR for Targeted Drainage Water Management. Drainage Water Management includes controlled subsurface drainage planning, control structures and implementation incentives, denitrifying bio-reactors, and nutrient management planning incentives of associated acres to protect and improve water quality. Program details will be forthcoming.

• BRRWD Managers plan to attend the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Annual Meeting being held on November 29–December 1, 2012, at the Arrowwood Convention Center, Alexandria, MN.

• The Board approved payment of bills totaling $77,657.05, depending on fund availability.

• A special meeting (closed session) is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2012, to discuss employee issues.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, December 10, 2012, at 7:00 PM in the Barnesville office located at 1303 4th AVE NE, Barnesville. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our website at www.brrwd.org.