NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 14, 2012
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“Local Watershed Plans for New Year”

At their 12/10/12 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), discussed projects that will be completed in 2013. The contractor for Project No. 72, Wilkin County Ditch No. 22-Lateral No. 3 Improvement, asked for an extension, which was granted to finish the work by 5/31/13. He said approximately two-thirds of the work is done.

The Board discussed the status of the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The office intends to complete work on the remaining easement options over the Holidays. The Board can then schedule a continuation of the final hearing, which will be held in January, 2013. Once the Board makes the Findings of Fact and Order, there will be a 30-day appeal period. Pending no appeals, the Board could advertise and open construction bids in March, 2013. A contractor could begin work on the project as soon as conditions permit this spring.

The Board discussed scheduling of the final hearing for the Crystal Creek Flood Control Project in north Moorhead. The office plans to meet with the Appraisers during the Holidays to finish their work. A hearing will be scheduled for January, 2013. All work on the project has been completed.

The Board discussed Project No. 73, Country Heritage Addition Drainage Erosion Control. The Board made the order for the project on 11/12/12. No appeals were filed. Steve Johnson Excavation, Otter Tail, MN, is ready to start the project in the spring when conditions permit.

Engineers are finalizing the dike alignment for Project No. 71, City of Moorhead 50th Avenue South Flood Control. The City would like the BRRWD's Appraisers to finish their report early this winter so a hearing can be held and construction bids opened before spring. The project is estimated to cost $4,770,028.00 and includes drainage improvements and flood control for properties located in Sections 29, 30, 31, and 32, Moorhead Township, Clay County.

Other items included:

- The Board approved a permit to Tri-T Farms, Inc. for the installation of an approach off of County Road No. 55 along the south line of Section 14, Barnesville Township, Clay County to gain access to a field. The approach will have a 24” diameter pipe and was approved by the Clay County Highway Department.

- The Board discussed a complaint filed by a downstream landowner on Whisky Creek concerning work done by the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District (WMD) in the NW¼, Section 36, Tansem Township, Clay County. The Detroit Lakes WMD furnished information regarding the wetland restoration work they completed. The downstream landowner was concerned that Whisky Creek had been diked. Their report indicated no dikes were installed on the creek. They did note beaver activity in the area, and the BRRWD removed the beaver dams.

- A complaint filed by a landowner in Section 20, Audubon Township, Becker County, concerning a road that may be blocking drainage from wetland was discussed. A field investigation was conducted on 12/07/12. Manager Hanson from Becker County had a 1911 Atlas which showed the road to be in existence at that time. The drainage area to the wetland in question is relatively small and if problems should arise, the neighboring landowner may need to install a culvert.

- The BRRWD plans to meet with local legislators over the Holidays to discuss funding needed to finish the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. Approximately $6.5 million is needed to complete all the project work.
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) contract for funding associated with the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project was extended until 12/31/13.

The office sent a letter to the Clay County Auditor/Treasurer to withdraw the $30,000 assessment placed on Project No. 32, Hawley EDA Diversion for the year 2013. The majority of the cost associated with the reinforced concrete pipe repair will be split among parties listed in an Agreement that addresses that problem.

The Board discussed a comprehensive plan for work on the Buffalo River in Riceville Township. Landowners on Becker County Ditch No. 21 have complained that the river needs cleaning as they currently have standing water in their ditch system. A meeting was held with the DNR to discuss a potential river restoration project. It appears the project will require an Environmental Assessment Worksheet. Installation of buffer strips along the ditch system was discussed.

The next Mediation Project Team (PT) meeting will be held on January 17, 2013 at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office. The PT intends to spend most of their time discussing potential retention sites that could benefit the Fargo-Moorhead area and their diversion project.

The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. to conduct a right-of-way analysis pertaining to Clay County Ditch No. 34, which is a channelized reach of Whisky Creek. The BRRWD is currently working with the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District addressing erosion problems within the Whisky Creek watershed.

The BRRWD has received a $70,000 grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for conservation drainage programs. The funding will be used for drainage water management in coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service practice standards. Conservation practices and strategies have been developed to reduce quantity and quality impacts of subsurface tile drainage. A plan for use of the funds still needs to be developed. Once approved, funds will be available to landowners within the BRRWD for cost share assistance for implementing the practices.

The Board discussed a drainage problem in Akron Township, Wilkin County, involving the sizing of culverts in several roads. Troy Larson, Wilkin County Manager, will work with the Wilkin County Highway Department to obtain more information.

The Board approved payment of bills totaling $239,746.84.

A special meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2012, from 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The meeting will be followed with a closed session to discuss employee issues.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, which will also be their annual meeting, including the appointment of consultants, election of officers, etc., will be held on Monday, January 14, 2013, 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.