NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 7, 2013
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce E. Albright, 218-354-7710

“Watershed Schedules Hearings”

At their regular meeting held on 2/25/13 in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), scheduled three hearings for projects in the Moorhead area. On Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at 7:00 PM in Moorhead City Hall, a hearing for Project No. 71, City of Moorhead 50th AVE S Flood Control will be held. The project is a drainage channel and series of levees west of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75 in Sections 29, 30, 31, and 32, Moorhead Township. The project is estimated to cost $4,077,028. The majority of the costs will be financed through a grant obtained by the City through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and their Flood Damage Reduction (fdr) Program. On Thursday, March 21, 2013 at 7:00 PM, a redetermination of benefits hearing will be held for Project No. 42, Clay County Ditch No. 67. The original benefits were adopted on 10/22/00. At that time, one property on the ditch system was assessed greater benefits due to an erosion concern that has since been resolved. The purpose of the redetermination will be to make that property's benefit equal to the neighboring properties. Also on 03/21/13, at 7:30 PM, the hearing for Project No. 70, Crystal Creek/McCann's Additions Flood Control will be held. This "emergency" project was started during the 2011 spring flood. Since then, a series of permanent levees have been constructed to protect Crystal Creek Addition, North Crystal Creek Addition, and McCann's Addition. The project is located in the E½ of Section 21, Oakport Township, Clay County. Total estimated project costs are $200,000. Local assessments will be approximately 50% of the total costs due to funding contributions by the BRRWD, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Oakport Township. Both hearings will be held in the Moorhead City Hall 1st Floor Council Chambers.

Other items included:

- The Board approved permits to: the United States Fish and Wildlife Service/Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District to install water control structures and an invasive fish barrier on the Anderson Waterfowl Production Area in Section 1, Audubon Township, Becker County; the Clay County Highway Department to replace a bridge and raise the overflow road profile on Township Road 229 over the South Branch of the Buffalo River between Sections 17 and 20, Elmwood Township, the project does not have any impacts on the 100-year event when compared to the existing bridge; Gerald Zimmerman for pattern tiling in the SE¼, Section 11, Oakport Township, Clay County with a pumped inlet to County Ditch No. 35 for which the property is assessed; and Jeremy Tischer to install a flap gate on an approach culvert along T.H. No. 9 in the SE¼ , Section 32, Manston Township, Wilkin County.

- The Board reviewed proposals from Houston Engineering, Inc. for a web-based permit database and the redesign of the District's website. The BRRWD website was developed over 6 years ago and needs to be updated for a more modern look and content updates. The upgrade will include a dynamic interface for sharing project information and easier maintenance. The permit database system will allow the public to complete permit applications online. Bruce Albright, Office Administrator, said the permit program was adopted in 1979 and has not changed much over the years. The new permit system will be easier to work with and will be more efficient. The Board authorized both projects, which should be functioning by August 1, 2013.

- The Board agreed to submit an application to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for the Water Quality Certification Pilot Program. The program is a product of a one-of-a-kind State and Federal partnership including the Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the DNR, the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS), and the US Environmental Protection Agency. The Department of Agriculture is seeking recommendations for pilot project watershed areas in 3 parts of the state, including the northwest. The pilot
programs are expected to run approximately 3 years and applications are due March 1. Accepted pilot areas are expected to receive additional NRCS funding and technical assistance money. Selected pilot areas will be required to produce measurement of key elements needed for a successful program. The local Soil and Water Conservation Districts support the BRRWD’s application. The BRRWD is considering the Whisky Creek watershed in Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties.

- The Board discussed the implementation of the Conservation Drainage Program grant funds received from BWSR for $70,000. The office is working on a letter that will be mailed to all applicants filing permits for tiling projects. The objective of a Drainage Water Management Plan is to provide the producer a framework for the implementation of Drainage Water Management (DWM) on cropland. The DWM can control soil water table elevations and the timing of water discharges. Interested parties need to start with the development of an NRCS Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) 130. A number of people in the BRRWD were recently certified to complete the CAP 130.

- The Board discussed the status of the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The office continues to work on easement options. It is hoped, most of that work will be completed by the next meeting. Once completed, the Board will continue the final hearing. H.E. has been asked to furnish the plans and specifications. Albright will participate in a conference call with the DNR and BWSR to discuss transfer of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) money furnished by BWSR for the project. It is hoped project construction will begin this spring.

- Funding bills have been submitted in the Minnesota Legislature House and Senate for the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project. The BRRWD has asked for $5.62 million to complete the project in 2013. We are waiting to see if there is a bonding bill this session and if so, how much money is allocated for projects.

- The Board discussed the possibility of a redetermination of benefits for Turtle Lake. The original benefits were determined in 1999 when the project was initially constructed. The water levels have since come down and the lake is on a maintenance schedule.

- Work continues on the final easements for the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project.

- The next Medication Project Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office.

- The Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) will host the Legislative Reception on March 13-14 at the St. Paul Kelly Inn. Invitations will be sent to our nine Representatives and Senators.

- The Board discussed the status of the hearing held on January 31, 2013 to define the eastern boundary of the new watershed area in Otter Tail County. Questions raised at the hearing will be field reviewed this spring.

- The office is working with local SWCDs on a Conservation Day which has been tentatively scheduled for the BRRWD office on Tuesday, April 2, 2013 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. The meeting will be open to the public. Landowners involved with the Whisky Creek (Clay County) and South Branch of the Buffalo River Project areas will be sent invitations.

- The Board agreed to help fund a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position in the Clay SWCD office in Moorhead. The funding runs from 7/01/12-6/30/14. The BRRWD agreed to contribute 20% or $4,000. The BRRWD will also contact the Barnesville Rod and Gun Club for possible funding assistance.
• The Board approved payment of bills totaling $122,377.31.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, March 11, 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.