“Local Watershed Handles Routine Business”

At their regular meeting held on 3/11/13 in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), addressed their agenda items in approximately 2.5 hours. Jeff Schaumann, Chairman, Oakport Township, attended to discuss the proposed benefits for Project No. 70, Crystal Creek/McCann's Flood Control Levees. The project was started during the 2011 spring flood, when local residents decided to make the temporary levees permanent. Appraisers appointed by the BRRWD assessed benefits for the project to the entire area. The Township, in working with the affected homeowners, thought that the project costs should be divided on an individual basis with no cost to McCann's Addition. The project hearing is scheduled for Thursday, March 21, 2013 at 7:30 PM in the Moorhead City Hall Council Chambers. The office will prepare a breakdown of the costs. Landowners can decide at the hearing which proposal is most acceptable.

Other items included:

- The Board was given an update on the Manston Slough Restoration Project. The office continues to work with landowners to obtain the required easement options. Discussions have taken place with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) regarding the Reinvest In Minnesota funding allocated by BWSR for the project. BWSR needs to transfer the funding to the DNR, who will then transfer it to the BRRWD through a series of contract agreements. The office plans to schedule the continuation hearing for some time in April 2013.

- The Board approved a resolution for the Oakport Flood Mitigation for certification of the levee completed around Brentwood/Rolyn Acres subdivisions. This phase of the levee work was completed last summer. All of the documents will be sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for approval. Bruce Albright, Office Administrator, commented that the certified levee will require annual inspections. The BRRWD will work with the City of Moorhead.

- The hearing for the redetermination of benefits on Clay County Ditch No. 67 will be held on Thursday, March 21, 2013 at 7:00 PM in the 1st Floor Moorhead City Hall Council Chambers. The proposed redetermination changes benefits on one property. This property experienced severe erosion problems prior to the project being built in 2000.

- The Board discussed the status of the Georgetown Levee Improvement Project. There are several easements left to obtain. Part of the work includes moving of several houses. As soon as conditions allow this spring, the contractor is expected onsite to finish the project.

- The next Mediation Project Team (PT) Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 1:30 PM in the BRRWD office.

- The 15th Annual Joint Conference between the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) and the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group will be held March 26-27, 2013 at the Courtyard by Marriott and Conference Center, Moorhead MN. The BRRWD PT members have been invited to attend. Albright noted that there may be an opportunity to discuss RRWMB membership issues while at the Conference. The BRRWD is also considering a public informational meeting on Saturday, April 6, 2013 to continue these discussions.
• A motion was approved to authorize the office to set up the hearing for the acquisition of right-of-way needed to install the one-rod grass buffer strips on Clay County Ditch Nos. 9, 32, and 33. The office received a BWSR grant for $333,590 to assist with the buffer strip establishment and the installation of side inlets, which will help control erosion. The BRRWD would like to stake the required right-of-way prior to spring planting so the work can be completed as soon as conditions permit this spring. If we miss this opportunity, the work will be delayed one year.

• Four Managers/staff will be attending the upcoming Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Legislative Reception and Day at the Capitol on March 13-14, 2013. A number of legislative meetings have been arranged. The BRRWD is pursuing two issues this Session, which include funding needed for the Oakport Flood Mitigation Project and a possible increase in the BRRWD’s general levy.

• The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. to investigate a repair petition filed for inlet culverts on Clay County Ditch No. 49.

• A contribution for $200 to the International Water Institute was approved for their 18th Annual River Watch Forum.

• The Board approved payment of bills totaling $493,967.32. The office will need to draw on their line of credit with Midwest Bank to pay the expenditures. The Board discussed a possible bond sale to help raise capital improvement funding on several projects including the Manston Slough Restoration. Carolyn Drude, Ehlers & Associates, Inc. will be contacted.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, will be held on Monday, March 25, 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.