NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 24, 2009
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"Local Watershed Involved with Spring Flood"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), spent time at the 3/23/09 meeting in Barnesville, discussing efforts to help fight the 2009 spring flood. Bruce Albright, Administrator, reported that calls started coming into the office on 3/16/09. The BRRWD has jurisdiction over all of the legal drainage systems within the BRRWD. When ditches are full of snow and ice, they are slow to open, causing flooding problems. Where homes could be protected by opening the drainage systems, backhoes were used to remove the blockages. Some landowners reported higher water levels than during the 1997 spring flood. Because of the rainfall that occurred on Sunday night, parts of the District are now seeing a second flood crest. Water has overtopped the Deerhorn levees in several locations. BRRWD Chairman Roger Ellefson noted that the levees were designed to handle the 25-year runoff event. There have also been some concerns expressed about farmstead ringdikes. The Board noted that landowners have to be responsible for their culverts and gates. Once a ringdike is constructed at the taxpayers' expense, the landowner must assume these maintenance responsibilities. The Turtle Lake and Grove Lake Outlets were stopped on 3/16/09. Flood control projects, where applicable, have been closed to retain water. Georgetown is having the Army Corps of Engineers add 2’ to their levee. The Kragnes ringdike is functional, and gates will be closed when necessary.

Other business included:

- Discussion with landowners regarding Project No. 61, Clay County Ditch No. 11-North-Improvement. The Final Hearing is scheduled for 3/30/09 at 7:30 PM in the Moorhead City Hall. Landowners presented a letter outlining concerns about the proposed ditch alignment. The project was designed by the Clay County Highway Department, as they have plans to regrade County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 8, which parallels the ditch system west of Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 75. The Board asked their Engineer to review the alignment concerns. Further discussion will take place at the hearing.

- Concerns expressed by a landowner east of Barnesville regarding the City's plugging of a culvert on 13th ST. Back in 1988 when the BRRWD issued a permit for work in this area, the Board noted concerns regarding the City's design for a storm sewer outlet to handle the rural drainage flows. A City representative indicated a willingness to work with the landowner and the BRRWD to find a permanent solution to the problem.

- Approved permits to: the Clay County Highway Department to reconstruct 4.65 miles of CSAH No. 11 from CSAH No. 18 to CSAH No. 26 and replace culverts on Clay County Ditch Nos. 3 and 65; the City of Moorhead for the development of Horizon Shore Fifth Addition, Phase 1, including street and underground utility improvements on 36th ST S with a watermain boring under Clay County Ditch No. 47; the Clay County Highway Department to regrade one mile of County Road No. 86, beginning at T.H. No. 10 and proceeding north, including the addition of driveway culverts along the road to improve area drainage while maintaining the centerline culvert sizings; and the Moorhead Public Service to directional bore an 8” casing under Clay County Ditch No. 47 for an electrical conduit.

- Noting that the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Manston Slough Restoration project has been published in the EQB Monitor. The comment period will end on 4/22/09.

- Discussed the funding status for the Oakport Flood Mitigation project. Both the House and Senate versions of the 2009 bonding bill include project funding. The office learned that $300,000 in additional funding will be made available from the 2008 bonding bill. The Board authorized the purchase of another buyout property.
• Rescheduled the upcoming Mediation Project Team meeting, which was going to be held on 3/26/09, because the road to the MSUM Science Center is under water. A new date for the meeting was not set.

• Discussed attendance for the upcoming Red River Watershed Management Board /Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group Annual March Conference to be held on 3/31/09 beginning at 9:30 AM at the Northland Inn, Crookston.

• Discussed the status of continued funding in accordance with M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3. The Board met with local representatives last week at the MAWD Legislative Breakfast in St. Paul to discuss this issue.

• Approved the 2009 Hamden National Wildlife Refuge Annual Water Management Plan.

• Signed contracts with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regarding the Buffalo River tmdl and Surface Water Assessment Grant.

• Accepted a bid from Ernst Trenching, Inc., in the amount of $14,400 to directional bore an 18" dia. steel pipe under CSAH No. 10 into Clay County Ditch No. 55, west of Downer. The work will be done this spring when conditions permit.

• Approved payment of bills totaling $73,328.09.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, April 13, 2009, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.