NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2008
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"Local Watershed Holds Four-Hour Meeting"

The Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), took over four hours to go through their three-page agenda and to listen to landowner concerns at their 4/14/08 meeting held in Barnesville.

The first business was to continue the Becker County Ditch No. 19 Abandonment Hearing, started on 4/08/08 in Callaway. Both Holmesville Township and the Becker County Highway Department are on record in opposition to the petition. The main concern that prompted the petition was the 2007 assessments, which landowners felt were unfair. The Board closed the hearing and a motion was made to deny the abandonment petition, to order a redetermination of benefits for Becker County Ditch Nos. 10 and 19, and to reimburse the Ditch No. 19 system in the amount of $3,437.25 from the Survey and Data Acquisition fund for a 2006 elevation survey of area lakes.

A landowner expressed concerns regarding his 2008 assessment on Clay County Ditch No. 55. The assessment was for finishing the 1995 improvement project east of Interstate-94, which could not be done until the Minnesota Department of Transportation installed another culvert under Interstate-94. The work was completed in 2007. The downstream landowner felt the project will only direct more water his way. The one-time assessment should pay off the ditch system's account balance.

Two Oakport Township residents, whose property cannot be protected by the purposed dike, attended the meeting to express concerns about the project development. The Board said Ulteig Engineers, Inc. is continuing to work on project details/questions. Everyone hopes that all issues can be resolved in the near future.

A landowner discussed his erosion problem in Section 5, Humboldt Township, Clay County. Past attempts to correct this situation have been met with downstream opposition. The Board agreed to meet with Humboldt Township Supervisors to discuss a possible plan.

Harold Rotunda, Certified Public Accountant, gave the 2007 Audit. Of particular note was the fact that in one year, the BRRWD was able to change the 2006 negative balance of $14,311 into a positive balance of $346,985. This happened by levying assessments to pay off some of the ditch account balances and the use of M.S.A. 103D.905, Subd. 3, regarding general taxation. Rotunda also talked about the need to track the special taxation allocations.

Other business included:

- Approved permits to: the City of Moorhead for ditch and storm water improvements for the Shepherd Meadows First Addition; the City of Moorhead for Astrup Second Addition detention pond and storm sewer outlet; and David Kragnes to install patterned tiling in the E1/2SE1/4, Section 30, Morken Township, Clay County

- Noting that the Appraisers/Viewers are working on reports for the Clay County Ditch No. 49 redetermination of benefits; Project No. 62, Clay/Wilkin Judicial Ditch No. 1, Branch
No. 4-Improvement/Extension; the Kragnes ringdike; the Oakport Flood Mitigation project; and Clay County Ditch No. 11N-Outlet Improvements.

- Noting that construction bids will be opened at 8:00 PM at the 4/28/08 BRRWD meeting for Project No. 58, Riverton Township Retention.

- Discussed the Manston Slough Restoration project. Houston Engineering, Inc. is working on a downstream hydraulic model for Wilkin County Ditch No. 13-Lateral. We hope to use that information to address the United States Fish and Wildlife Service design issues. There was also some discussion regarding the title issues involving the Kent Rod & Gun Club property.

- Noting that the Turtle Lake siphon has been restarted this spring. The lake is approximately 0.9’ above the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources permitted elevation.

- Noting that a Mediation Project Team meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2008, at 7:30 PM in the MSUM Science Center.

- Noting that a hearing regarding the Lawndale Trout Stream Restoration Project, involving Wilkin County Ditch No. 40, will be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville City Hall.

The next meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2008, 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.