"More Flooding Complaints Filed With Local Watershed"

Approximately 15 landowners attended the 4/27/09 meeting of the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), in Barnesville to discuss flooding problems. The first group discussed issues pertaining to LaBelle Lake northeast of Lake Park in Becker County. A complaint was filed with the BRRWD last fall regarding high water. A survey of the outlet channel was conducted. At the time, the water was about 1.2' above the Ordinary High Water elevation. This spring, two driveways are under water because of the snow melt/runoff. A motion was approved to make an emergency declaration in accordance with M.S.A. 103D.615. This action should expedite project development. Last fall, an estimate was obtained for installing a closed conduit tile for the lake's outlet. The tiling costs range between $37,000 and $44,000. The BRRWD will look for funding partners, which could include the State of Minnesota, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Erik Jones, Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.), will continue to work on the project design. The Board appointed Appraisers to begin the assessment of benefits and damages.

Several landowners then talked about problems around Boyer Lake, east of Lake Park. Several years ago, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) raised Trunk Highway (T.H.) No. 10. The water is now standing in the median of T.H. No. 10. MNDOT is looking at an outlet that would drain the lake northwesterly to LaBelle Lake. The BRRWD will meet with MNDOT to discuss their intentions. Obviously, if Boyer Lake were to be drained into LaBelle Lake, the outlet for LaBelle Lake may need to be larger.

Other business included:

- Approved permits to: Alan Malingen to increase the sizing of his driveway culvert on the north side of County Road No. 30 in the E1/2, Section 28, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County; Parke Township to install a tiled outlet to lower water in Dewey Lake in Sections 34/35, subject to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service approval; Clay County Highway Department for the regrading of County State Aid Highway No. 8 in conjunction with the BRRWD's development of Project No. 61, subject to the 30-day appeal period; Barb Ronsberg to add a culvert to a dry field approach off 110th AVE S in the N1/2NW1/4, Section 34, Skree Township, Clay County; Skree Township to replace a 12" dia. and 18" dia. corrugated metal pipe (CMP) with a 24" dia. CMP in 220th ST S between Sections 34/35; William Richter to install a culvert with a flapgate through 80th AVE S to drain standing water on his property in the southwest corner of Section 9, Elkton Township, Clay County; and Jeff Ehrichs to increase the sizing of his driveway culvert along the frontage road in the Bouton Subdivision, located in the NW1/4, Section 21, Riverton Township, Clay County.

- A report from Robert A. Zimmerman, Engineer, City of Moorhead, regarding the status of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Feasibility Study, which the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is conducting. Phase 1 of the Study is nearing completion, with public meetings scheduled in Fargo (May 19) and Moorhead (May 20). It is estimated that a total cost for Phase 2 will be $2.4 million. The City of Moorhead's share of the cost is estimated at $140,000. The City of Moorhead asked the BRRWD to contribute $70,000 to this effort. A motion was approved for the funding.

- A landowner on Project No. 61, Clay County Ditch No. 11 North expressed concerns regarding the project's design. The BRRWD made an Order was to construct the project on 4/15/09. This started the 30-day appeal period. The landowner feels that the proposed ditch should follow the existing ditch alignment. Bruce Albright, BRRWD Administrator, will analyze his concerns.
• Harold J. Rotunda, CPA, presented the 2008 Financial Audit.

• Agreed to assemble more information regarding a permit application filed by Kyle Schiefert to improve drainage on his property in the SE1/4, Section 18, Humboldt Township, Clay County. The new Digital Elevation Model will be used to look at area elevations to help determine which way the water should flow after it leaves his property.

• Noting that someone has illegally removed the block on the Grove Lake Outlet in northwestern Otter Tail County. In accordance with the Operation and Maintenance Agreement, the outlet must be closed when downstream areas are flooding. The outlet was damaged this winter and is now sticking up in the air. Logs are also blocking the flow. It's expected that the contractor will come back and finish the project this spring, once road restrictions are lifted.

• The comment period for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Manston Slough Restoration project ended on 4/15/09. Comments we received from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the DNR. H.E. has drafted the Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order. Based on the comments received, a decision was made that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The office will meet with the DNR on 4/30/09 to discuss their purchase of the Holubok property from the BRRWD. Tom and Susan Arnhalt will also come in on that date to sign their easement option.

• Noting that a Technical Committee meeting for the Oakport Flood Mitigation project will be held on 4/28/09. Albright anticipated that the group will continue to meet on a regular basis until construction starts, which is expected in July 2009. The BRRWD is working with local Legislators to secure project funding. Oakport Township would like to receive $12 million this year for project development.

• Approval to restart the siphons on Turtle and Long Lakes. The water elevation is about 1.3' above the DNR permit level.

• Discussed options for cleanup/repairs to the Georgetown Flood Control Levee. The City made a decision this spring to have the COE raise their existing levee by approximately 2'. In accordance with the COE Agreement, that material must be removed and put back into the borrow pits. An informational meeting was held with the City of Georgetown on 4/22/09 to discuss their options. H.E. is preparing a letter that will review the clean up costs, the possibility of installing three farmstead ringdikes around properties within the City limits, permanent raising of the existing levee, and several buyouts.

• Noting that the BRRWD now has 14 applicants for farmstead ringdikes. The requests were prompted by the 2009 Spring Flood. The BRRWD is working with the Legislature to secure funding to construct several of the ringdikes in 2009.

• Approved an Order regarding the replacement of structures on Lateral No. 2, Wilkin County Ditch No. 22. The hearing was held on 4/23/09 in Comstock. A ditch committee, consisting of Sherrie Bucholz, Jeff Nord, Dennis VanWechel, and Ed Askegaard, was appointed.

• Approved payment of bills, totaling $102,913.95.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Managers, BRRWD, is scheduled for Monday, May 11, 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.