

Yellow Medicine River Watershed District 2008 Annual Report

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Administrator
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Field Technician
Mark Paluch

Projects Summary

- *Tiling and Drainage Projects
- * Beaver Damage Control
- *Ditch Survey and Maintenance
- *Ditch 21
- *GYMR Phase II
- *Lac Qui Parle River Overflow
- *Lake Shaokatan TMDL
- *River Maintenance
- *South Branch TMDL
- *Overall Plan
- *New Projects
- *Annual Advisory Hearing

The Mission of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District is to provide an organized means for proper management and protection of the water resources in the Yellow Medicine River Watershed. Our watershed district places emphasis on flood control, water control management through the process of viewing and approving drainage permits, and water quality problems. We view and approve all water-related projects in the district. Our watershed district partners with Federal, State, Counties, Cities, and Townships in water planning and management. The Watershed District employs technical staff who conduct water quality monitoring of lakes, rivers and streams in the watershed, and establishes and maintains records and hydrological data. The District endeavors to provide for wildlife and create opportunities to enhance the recreational opportunities as a supplementary benefit of projects that improve water quality and provide flood protection.

On August 27, 2006, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District marked the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District.

At the February 12, 2008 regular monthly board meeting, administrator Terry Renken presented his notice of resignation, stating his intent to retire, citing his birthday coming up in March.

The board accepted his resignation, and began the hiring process for the replacement of an administrator for the watershed district. Eight applications were received, and after interviews, Cindy Potz was offered the position, which she accepted. She began her duties as administrator on April 1, 2008, after acting as the interim administrator for the month of March. The next step was to advertise for the position of field technician, for someone to assist her in the aspect of tiling and drainage projects. Six applications were received. Mark Paluch began his duties in May 2008.

***Tiling and Drainage Projects**

200 tiling and drainage permits were viewed and approved in 2008. 96 permits were approved in Lincoln County, 88 permits were approved in YM county, and 16 permits were approved in Lyon County. In some cases, the landowners are becoming more cooperative in working together to negotiate and install tiling systems that benefit all of their watershed. Further education of both the landowners and the tiling contractors is a goal for the watershed board, in order for all parties to be able to see the project on a broader scale. The board would like to design future projects in an effort to provide an adequate drainage system to benefit all landowners in the vicinity. The difficulty that remains and lies ahead is the long standing family feuds that hinder the negotiation process, due to conflicting beliefs of what was said or done many years ago, with no official documentation. We have been in negotiation during 2008 on one such situation, dealing with first one unpermitted project, and then with the neighbor creating another unpermitted project in order to repair the drainage problem created by the first unpermitted project.

***Beaver Damage Control Program**

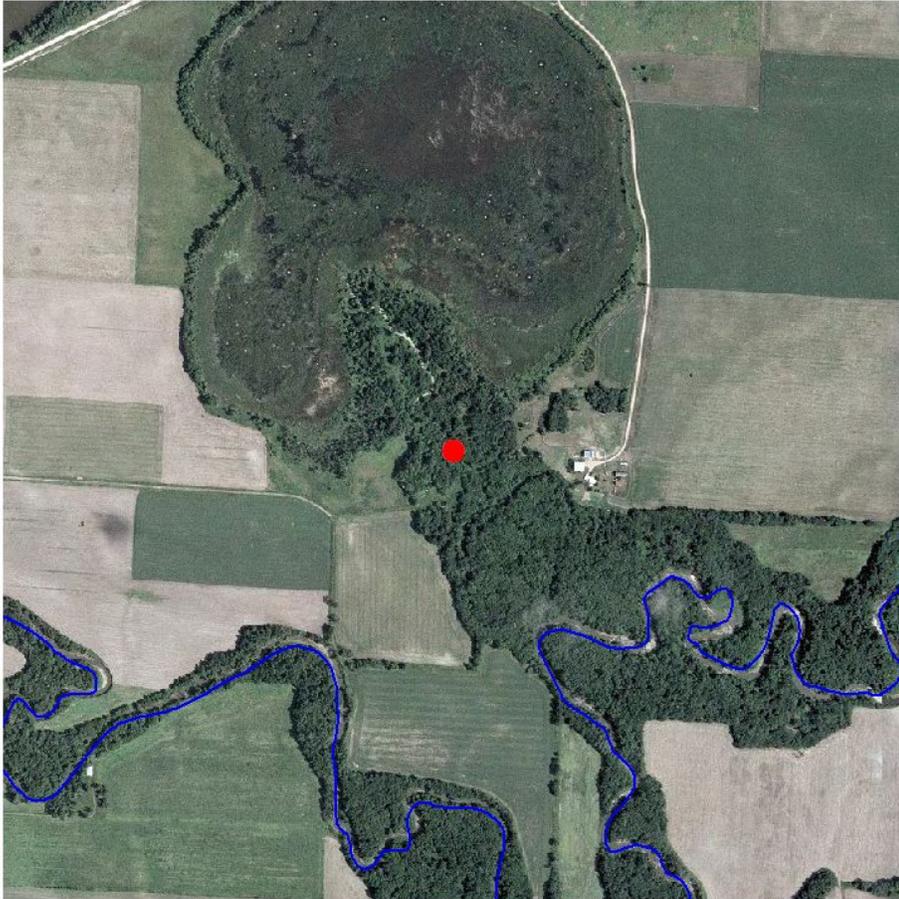
From February 2006 to June 2008, the Yellow Medicine River watershed board worked with Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District in a joint powers effort to manage a grant from the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources for funding to operate a beaver damage control program to eliminate nuisance beaver and beaver dams, and lessen the crop damage done to the croplands in the vicinity of the beaver dams. The beaver damage control program grant brought \$6385.00 each to the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District and the Lac Qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District, with a match by each watershed district.

We continue to research and utilize ideas for controlling the building of beaver dams in the streams and ditches. In the early spring of 2008, we hired a contractor to remove a large beaver dam by way of dynamite.



We are looking at another location this coming year for the same technique of dam removal. We appreciated the assistance of DNR staff from the Marshall office, in using GPS to mark the location of a nuisance beaver dam deeply located in an area of heavy trees and brush. There are a series of beaver dams in this stream, that prevent the drainage

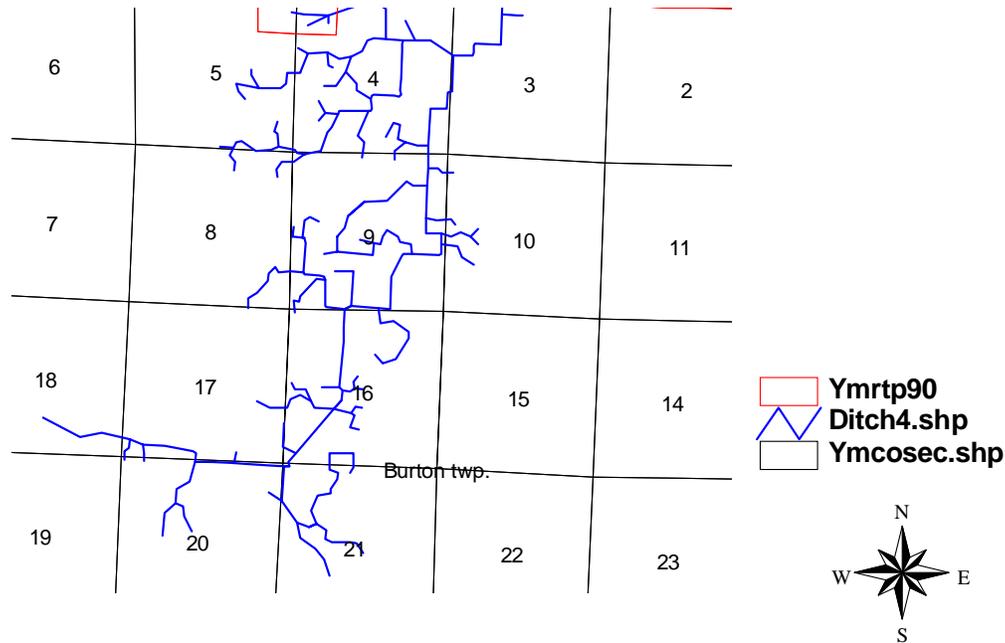
of Meade Lake, causing the lake to be altered from its present prime environment for ducks and wildlife.



Meidd Outlet
Location of Bever dam
UTM E 281597
UTM N 4948500



*Watershed ditch berm inspections



The board completed the enforcement of the 16.5 ft ditch berm law in 1999. Each year from then on, the staff completes a ditch berm inspection, and reports back to the watershed on whether any ditch berms become out of compliance. Three ditch berms were reported out of compliance in 2008. Those landowners have been contacted and have indicated that they will reestablish the area to seed this spring.

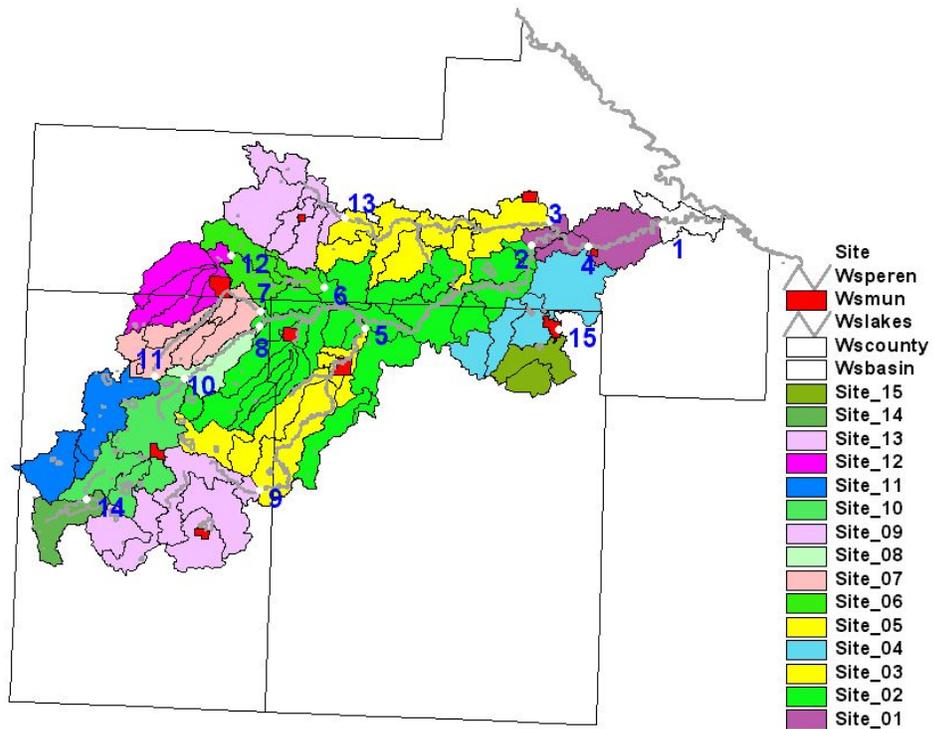
Tree spraying is completed at the time of the inspection, as part of the maintenance of the watershed ditches. Beaver dams and washouts are noted, and a contractor is contacted to remove dams or repair washouts. We did notice a lot of repair work necessary on ditch 4, and held a stakeholders meeting to visit about the estimated cost of the repairs, approximately \$20,000.00. The watershed board and stakeholders agreed to assess the landowners for the cost of the project, which began assessment in 2008, for the next 5 years. Other small repairs were made to ditch 1, 8, and 18.

*Ditch 21

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District was presented with a petition by a landowner in the name of Terry Renken, to begin the procedure to establish a ditch system, or lateral to a ditch system, in Lincoln county. An engineer was hired to survey the affected lands and landowners within the drainage area of the project. At a public informational meeting, many landowners met with the board in opposition to the addition of this project to their drainage system. As the board

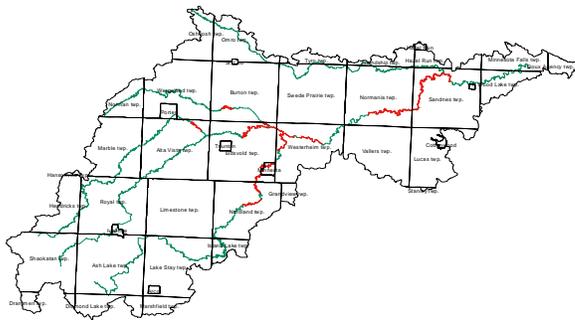
is required to act on the presentation of the petition, the board contacted Robert Gjorvad, Attorney, for legal advice on proceeding with this matter. During the year of 2008, it was determined by our legal authority that the petition is legal, and the board was working with Gjorvad to meet the watershed ditch authority requirements to establish the project. The board held a final hearing in December 2008, to review the viewers report and visit with the engineer and landowners. Minutes of that meeting are available upon request. The watershed board voted to close the project, as the cost benefit ratio did not appear to be feasible.

***Phase II 2005-2008 Clean Water Partnership- Yellow Medicine River**



The watershed district continued partnering with MPCA, with Lyon SWCD, Lincoln SWCD, and YM SWCD in an implementation program to focus on establishing best management practices in the watershed that work to resolve the matter of excess nutrients found to be entering the Yellow Medicine River and its tributaries. 2008 was the final season for securing and installing BMPs for the project. A final report is being written.

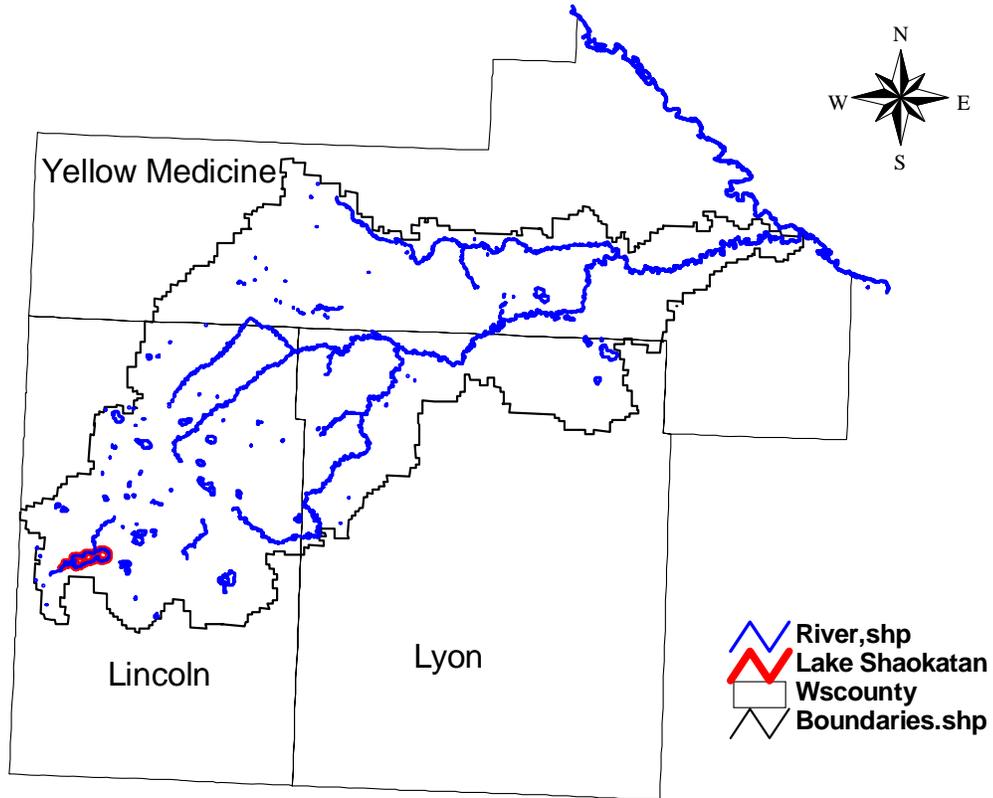
*Fallen Tree Removal Program- River Maintenance



MAP OF THE TREE REMOVAL LOCATIONS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

For the past five years the Yellow Medicine River watershed district has managed a fallen tree removal program, working with contractors to focus on a portion of the Yellow Medicine River or a tributary, to saw up, drag up, and burn up, fallen trees. We spent \$5731.74 on fallen tree removal in the year of 2008. We also received a grant from Lyon County Environmental Office for \$3000.00 for the removal of fallen trees in Lyon County. Heavy snow this past winter hindered the efforts to remove the reported fallen trees.

*** Lake Shaokatan TMDL**



In 2008, the staff met with Kelli Daberkow, MPCA, to discuss the Lake Shaokatan TMDL project. Kelli was picking up where Muriel Runholt, past project manager, left off when she retired.

We were asked to edit various portions and tables of the final report, to better reflect the results and diagnostics of the monitoring and data assessment. We were able to complete the editing of the final report in November 2008, and were assured that it would be forwarded to EPA for review and acceptance. We are anticipating the submission of a grant application for further implementation projects.

***Lac Qui Parle River Overflow Project**



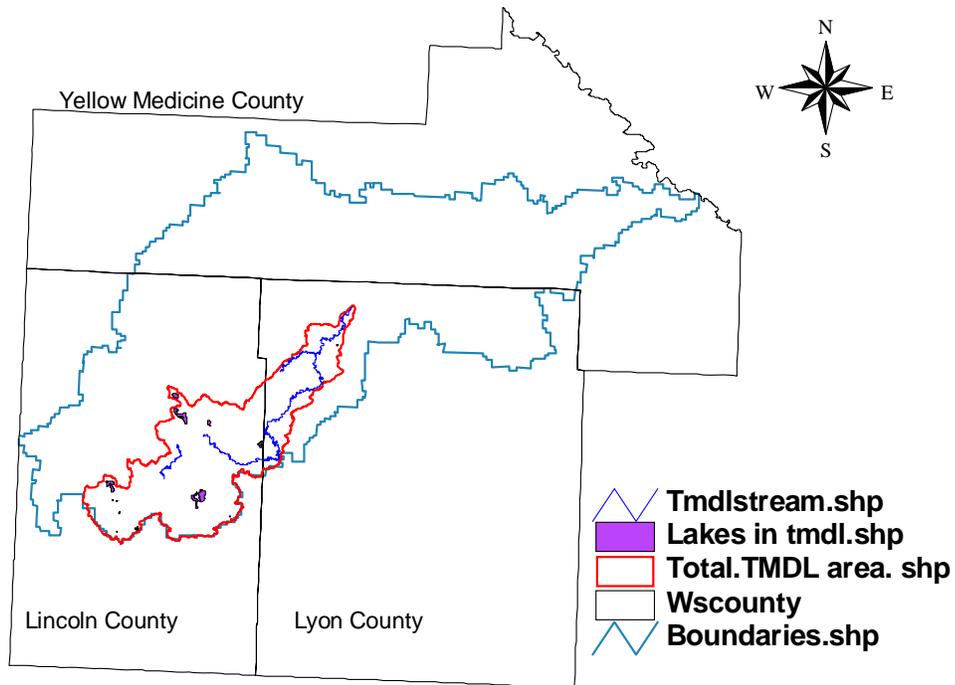
Above is a photo nearing completion of the Lac Qui Parle river overflow project, completed in September of 2008. The Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank watershed district, working with a grant acquired by Mary Homan, was able to offer 75% cost share on the project. The total construction cost for the project for three locations was \$26,821.93. Cost share payment from the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank was \$18,413.25.

*** Overall Plan**

The watershed board and staff have been in the process of creating and then after the comment period, editing the contents of the 2009 overall plan for the watershed district. The cost for writing and editing this plan was \$11,454.54. A copy of the overall plan is available upon request, and is also available on our website.

***South Branch TMDL**

The watershed board and staff submitted an application for a 319 Non point source management grant for the South Branch of the Yellow Medicine River, for our TMDL Fecal Coliform Reduction Project. The contract was received in December of 2007, and began in 2008. The grant of the sum of \$238,500.00 was designated for use on projects designed to reduce the deterioration of water quality due to excess fecal coliform in the South Branch. In the year of 2008, we spent \$22,408.68 on the project, in implementation and data analysis. We anticipate the construction of numerous projects addressing feedlots, buffer strips, and rock inlets in the coming year. In the fall of 2008, we were introduced to our new project manager, Darrell Schindler, MPCA, from the Willmar office. We will now be submitting our semi annual reports and budget reports to Darrell instead of Mark Hanson.



***New projects**

We have begun some grant research on acquiring funding for additional projects at varying locations in the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District. The Cottonwood Lake Association and the City of Cottonwood have requested assistance with diagnostics and consequent implementation projects for Cottonwood Lake.

We plan to submit an application in the fall of 2009 for a SWAG grant for continued monitoring at various locations of the Yellow Medicine River.

We also plan to resubmit an application for a grant for Records Modernization, to transfer hard copy of permits, etc, to the computer files.

We are also working with the Mn Dept of Agriculture in installing a wood chips bioreactor in a farm field drainage system as a test site in Yellow Medicine County.

Additional new grant proposals also include acquiring funds for installation of implementation projects in all of Yellow Medicine River Watershed, such as new installation and replacement of blind intakes, manure management and manure storage options.

***The 2009 Annual Advisory Hearing**

Our advisory hearing is held annually, with a presentation by the watershed district staff, and comments and suggestions by the advisory hearing committee.

Annual Advisory Committee Hearing

August 28, 2008

The annual meeting of the YMRW District annual advisory committee hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by advisory committee chairman Curt Blumeyer, Lincoln county commissioner. Committee members present were Jolene Johnson, YM county water task force; Norris Peterson, YM SWCD supervisor; Rodney Stensrud, Lyon County Commissioner; Merle Rost, Lincoln water task force member, and Ron Antony, YM County commissioner.

Introductions were made.

Yellow Medicine River Watershed District board of managers in attendance were John Boulton, Donald Oerter, Jeff Hoffman, and Richard Jelen.

Attending the meeting were Niles (Dick) Anderson, Rose Anderson, Lyon SWCD coordinator, Leonard Drietz, Alta Vista township board, Leon Dritz, Alta Vista Township board, Kelli Daberkow, Marshall MCPA project manager, David Sill, BWSR board conservationist, Marshall; David Lanners, Omro Township officer; Pauline Van Overbeke, Lincoln SWCD, Charles Siepel, City of Cottonwood development coordinator, and Cindy Potz, YMRW District administrator.

Cindy Potz read the published notice.

Cindy Potz read the 2007 advisory committee hearing minutes.

Leonard Drietz made a motion to approve the 2007 advisory committee hearing minutes.

Leon Drietz seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Cindy Potz presented the annual report and projects presentation through a powerpoint presentation. During the presentation, comments and questions were taken. John Boulton made a comment on the importance of the Lac Qui Parle overflow project, in that managing the floodwater from the Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank watershed is beneficial for both watershed districts.

Rose Anderson gave an update on the Jefferson Park Riverbank Restoration project, and that construction adjustments have been necessary, therefore the projected costs will be higher than bid. She will keep the watershed office informed of the changes.

Ron Antony inquired about Wood Lake, and whether the watershed district advises some preliminary testing on flow and nutrient loading in Wood Lake, and though it is out of watershed district, what would the district suggest, and what can the district do to help. Discussion was held, and Cindy commented that it is always better to get ahead of the diagnostics of the pollution of a lake, rather than deal with the expense and number of years involved in the repair. She stated that the YM Water Management Task Force would likely be able to obtain a grant to do some diagnostic studies on the lake, and eventually find funding to create filter strips or drainage tile control measures.

Ron stated that as YM county is spending money on building a larger and improved campsite, that he feels that it might be beneficial to keep tabs on the condition of the lake. The board agreed.

John Boulton commented on the value of keeping our river channels clear of trees and debris. Boulton stated that this was especially beneficial during the search for the still missing student this past spring.

The powerpoint presentation was completed at 7:45 p.m.

Merle Rost, advisory committee member, stated that he feels that the advisory committee and all those in attendance should commend the watershed district and their partners on their efforts to improve water quality and control water quantity.

Chairman Blumeyer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Kelly Daberkow, seconded by Commissioner Rodney Stensrud, to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m. Lunch was served.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Boulton, YMRW District secretary

This concludes the 2008 annual report of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District.

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District board of managers and staff would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the support given to our organization, by the various county offices and personnel, as well as the commissioners of each of Lyon, Lincoln, and Yellow Medicine Counties. We appreciate the opportunity to work with each of you, in meeting the goals of the watershed district, in our efforts to successfully manage and monitor the waters of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed.