



Yellow Medicine River Watershed District 2009 Annual Report

Yellow Medicine River Watershed District
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Administrator.....Cindy Potz
Asst. Administrator.....Mike Weckwerth
Field Technician.....Matt Moon

Projects Summary

- *Tiling and Drainage Projects
- *Beaver Damage Control
- *Ditch Survey and Maintenance
- *GYMR Phase II
- *Lac Qui Parle River Overflow
- *River Maintenance
- *South Branch TMDL
- *Overall Plan
- *SWAG Project
- *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.

***Tiling and Drainage Projects**

122 tiling and drainage permits were viewed and approved in 2009. 48 permits were approved in Lincoln County, 48 permits were approved in YM County, and 26 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. Changes to the permitting process are underway as a tool to make adjacent landowners aware that a tiling project is being considered. It is the Watershed's belief that future disputes can be reduced with open communication prior to the project.

***Beaver Damage Control Program**

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District annually budgets 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. We continue to research and utilize ideas for controlling the building of beaver dams in the streams and ditches. In the early spring of 2009, we hired a contractor to remove a large beaver dam by way of dynamite. 2009 expenditures for beaver control were \$7993.00.



Nuisance beaver dam

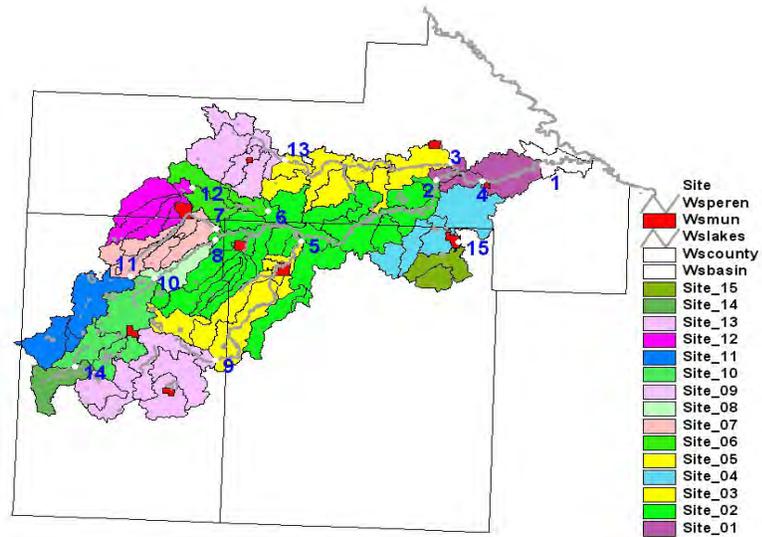
***Watershed ditch berm inspections**



The board achieved completion of the enforcement of the 16.5 ft ditch berm law in 1999. From that time forward, each year, the staff completes a ditch berm inspection and reports back to the watershed on whether any ditch berms become out of compliance. Two ditch berms were reported out of compliance in 2009. Those landowners have been contacted and have indicated that they will reestablish the area to seed.

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. All ditches were in good condition and no major repair projects were needed in 2009.

***Phase II 2005-2009 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 has been written and approved.

***Fallen Tree Removal Program- River Maintenance**



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 \$987.00 on fallen tree removal in the year of 2009. We also received a grant from Lyon County Environmental Office for \$3000.00 for the removal of fallen trees in Lyon County, to be spent before 3 June 2010. Heavy snow this past winter hindered the efforts to remove the reported fallen trees, but were dealt with in the spring of 2010.

***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

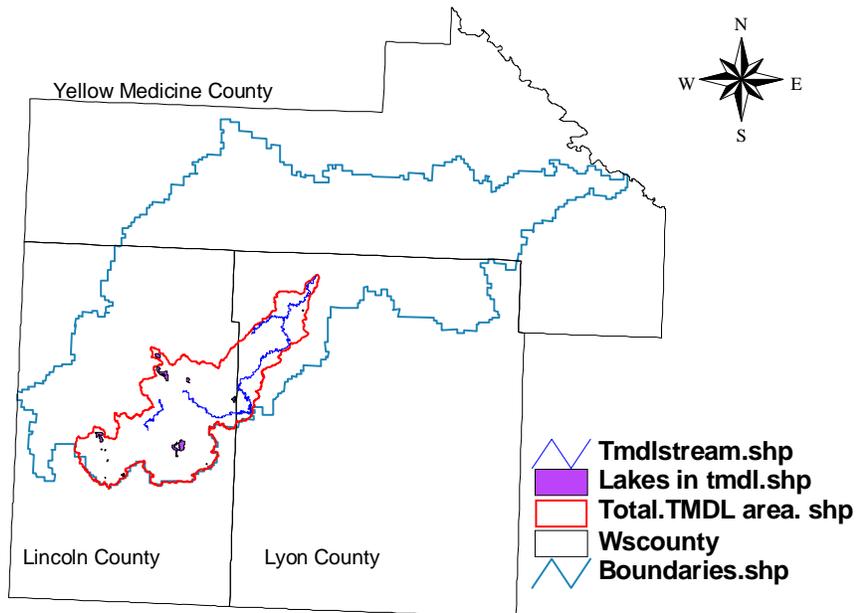
The Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank watershed district, working with a grant acquired by Mary Homan, was able to offer 75% cost share on the project. The total construction cost for the project for three locations was \$26,821.93. Cost share payment from the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank was \$18,413.25. We continue to work closely with the Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District the acquisition of grants and identifying areas of concern.

Overall Plan

The watershed board and staff have created and approved 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 2009, we spent \$95,034.35 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. During our sampling season of the South Branch TMDL, an MPCA intern became available through the Marshall MPCA office. Matt Moon worked with us during the 2009 SB TMDL sampling season.





SWAG Project

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District was approved for a grant from the MN Pollution Control Agency in the amount of \$29,555 for water sampling and testing. Nine locations were identified along a stretch from West of Taunton, going Northeast to a location along the Yellow Medicine River before it flows into the Minnesota River.

***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 also plan to resubmit an application for a grant for Records Modernization, to transfer hard copy of permits, etc, to the computer files.
- We continue to work 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 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 27, 2009*

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, David Lanners, Omro Township officer; Pauline Van Overbeke, Lincoln SWCD coordinator, Charles Siepel, City of Cottonwood development coordinator, Pete Doyscher, Lincoln County Environmental Office, Menno Fokken, YM SWCD treasurer, Lou Ann Nagel, YM SWCD coordinator, and Cindy Potz, YMRW District administrator.

Cindy Potz read the published notice.

Cindy Potz read the 2008 advisory committee hearing minutes.

Leonard Drietz made a motion to approve the 2008 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.

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

Rose Anderson gave an update on the Jefferson Park Riverbank Restoration project completion, and that construction bids and costs came in lower than the project engineers cost proposal. She reported that the use of a crew from the Minnesota Conservation Corp was very beneficial as well.

Discussion was held on the request from the City of Minneota for cost share on a large repair project on Jefferson Street in Minneota, in which septic systems and the storm water drainage are found to be intertwined, and septic material is entering the South Branch of the Yellow Medicine River at Riverside park near Kompelien Field. As the South Branch of the Yellow Medicine River is already listed as impaired for fecal coliform, this problem is a great concern for the watershed district, as well as the city of Minneota. The watershed will work on finding funding sources to assist the city in finding cost share options.

Discussion was held on this years past discussions of the future of the watersheds drainage and tiling permit program, and whether the board has plans to discontinue the permitting program, as some other watershed districts have done. Ron Antony stated that his YM County board of commissioners showed concern over dropping this program, as they feel that the watershed district was developed to maintain control over the flow of surface waters and drainage projects in the watershed. John Boulton stated that the discussions held were just a way of opening communications and determining the options in perhaps finding new ways of doing the permits, in order to save costs. Potz reported that after having had some meetings and input from our project partners, she understands that the board has decided to maintain the permit program, but to work on revising the permit application and procedures for assuring that the actual project that was permitted does not go beyond the permits approved work. Pete Doyscher suggested that we work with the landowners and the contractors to assure that the tiling has been completed as permitted,

by using the latest GPS technology to depict the length of tile, and also, ask for a copy of the billing, as all contractors note the length of tile and size of tile when they bill the landowner for the project. These ideas were greatly appreciated by the board.

Chairman Blumeyer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

SP 08-20-2009 Motion was made by Commissioner Rodney Stensrud, seconded by Merle Rost, Lincoln County water task force member to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Lunch was served.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Boulton, YMRW District secretary

This concludes the 2009 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 give 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.