



## **Yellow Medicine River Watershed District 2013 Annual Report**

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Administrator.....Cindy Potz  
Asst. Admin.....Mike Weckwerth

*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.*

**Projects Summary**

- \* Tiling and Drainage Projects
- \* Beaver Damage Control
- \* Ditch Survey & Inspections
- \* Fallen Tree Program
- \* Opdahl Dam Retention
- \* Annual Advisory Meeting
- \* MPCA WRAP 10 Year Grant
- \* New Projects

### **\* Tiling and Drainage Projects \***

The number of tiling permits requested has decreased for the third straight year across the Watershed District. Factors to be considered regarding the decrease may include: 1) drought conditions, 2) the increased tile lines installed in previous years. Following the suggestions of the Advisory Committee, the Watershed District has implemented a more detailed permit to clarify the project details prior to construction.

136 tiling and drainage permits were viewed and approved in 2013. 70 permits were approved in Lincoln County, 38 permits were approved in YM County, and 24 permits were approved in Lyon County. Once again throughout 2013, landowners were instructed at the time of obtaining a blank permit, to contact their neighbors and were instructed as to where the neighboring landowners needed to sign on the permit. By instructing the farmers to negotiate prior to the tile being installed, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District Board of Managers believes this will alleviate future disputes. When there were instances regarding permit disputes, the Watershed Board would ask the landowners to come to the Board Meeting to discuss how to reconcile the differences.

### **\* 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 2013, we hired a number of local contractors to remove the nuisance beavers and the dams. On a couple of sites, the beavers were removing standing corn stalks as material for their dam and another site the beavers were building dams across the face of culverts. Expenditures for beaver control in 2013 were \$9886.41.



### **\*Watershed Ditch & Berm Inspections \***

The Watershed filed the Completion Report for the Enforcement (of the 16.5 ft ditch berm law in 1999) to BWSR. From that time forward, each year, the staff completes a ditch berm inspection and reports back to the watershed on whether any ditch berms became out of compliance. Following the inspections, the Watershed plans to look into a method of eliminating the unwanted vegetation in a couple of the ditches by hiring a contractor who could apply a safe and legal chemical. This would be looked into to see if it is less expensive than cleaning out the reaches that have silted in. Heavily silted in reaches would have to still be mechanically cleaned.

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

For the past few 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. A number of fallen trees were reported due the velocity and high levels of water which traveled through the watershed starting in the Fall of 2010.

The blockage caused by the fallen trees can redirect the flow of water outside of its normal channel, eroding the banks, overflowing onto farmer's fields and creating oxbows. This in turn causes excessive silt to be washed into the stream causing further turbidity problems.

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District also uses the funding from the Fallen tree program to eliminate potential infrastructure damage. Fallen trees can block the flow of water through culverts and under bridges. As this water backs up, and the trees are not removed, therein lies the opportunity for the water to wash out roads, crossings and bridges which could lead to a person or person(s) to become seriously injured and putting extra expense on the taxpayers.

In 2013 the Watershed District spent \$4842.54 on fallen tree/beaver dam, removal. Residents of the watershed routinely inform the District Office as to the location of the blockage, whereupon, a staff member will visit and assess the site before bringing a contractor in the remove the debris. The railroad bridge spanning the Yellow Medicine River near Hanley Falls frequently becomes clogged with logs. The staff notifies the railroad when it is necessary to clean it out prior to spring thaw.



**\*Opdahl Dam Retention Project \***

With its highest elevation from 1962 feet above sea level and dropping to 860 feet along 107 miles, the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District has adopted the role of constructing water holding retention structures. One said structure which was recently completed in Nordland Township, Section 15. The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District worked, along with Area II of the Minnesota River Basin Projects, to design, develop and construct the structure which will hold the water back for 62 hours if/when a 100 storm event occurs. This particular retention dam was constructed across a ravine in which 630 acres flow through. The pool storage area will be at 9.4 following 5.85 inch rainfall. This project is situated directly above the South Branch of the Yellow Medicine River, which in turn flows through the city of Minneota.



**\*MPCA WRAPS 10 Year Grant\***

**Why this project is taking place:**

The MPCA is committed to working with a range of partners using a watershed approach that addresses all of Minnesota's 81, 8-digit HUC watersheds, within a ten year cycle. The major components of the approach include unified methods to: 1) monitor and gather information, 2) assess the data, 3) develop implementation strategies to meet standards and protect waters, and 4) implement water quality protection and restoration activities. Intensive watershed monitoring began in the Hawk/Yellow Medicine 8-digit HUC in 2010. This monitoring work expands on previously established routine water quality and flow sampling to include extensive fish and aquatic invertebrate surveys. Following completion of the intensive watershed monitoring in 2011, subsequent steps include assessment of the monitoring data to determine impairments, identification of stressors that are causing impairments, development of TMDLs using identification of pollutant sources using computer modeling and other techniques, and civic engagement as a strategy in moving towards water quality goals. In accordance with the federal Clean Water Act, the MN Clean Water Legacy Act states that "Public agencies and private entities...shall encourage participation by the public and Stakeholders, including local citizens, landowners and managers, and public and private organizations in the identification of impaired waters, in developing TMDLs and in planning, priority setting and implementing restoration of impaired waters." (2007 MN Statute Section 114D.35). The project will culminate in a set of strategies to restore impaired waters and protect un-impaired waters. These strategies will ultimately be executed by state and local governments, citizen organizations, businesses, and individuals.

**Goal:**

The goal of this project is to establish a framework and to provide tools for local government and watershed projects to engage the public in a manner that will lead to water quality improvement through implementation. This goal will result in outlining specific strategies to protect or restore all waters within this watershed. These strategies will be used as the basis for making informed local water quality and land use planning decisions as well as for development of grant applications to implement the restoration and protection of waters within this 8-digit HUC.

**Progress:**

Progress on the watershed approach to date includes the intensive watershed monitoring work that began in 2010, utilizing input from citizens to determine the values across the watershed, zonation mapping, stressor identification using the MPCA Biotic Stressor Id Report and Monitoring and Assessment Report. This work plan outlines and describes future and ongoing steps including stressor identification, finalization of watershed modeling, civic engagement, and TMDL development.

## **\*New Projects \***

We have begun some grant research on acquiring funding for additional projects at varying locations in the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District.

- Part of a One Watershed-One Plan grant submitted to BWSR as a Targeted Watershed Project.  
Cooperating Agencies: SWCD's (Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine) Area II Minnesota River Basin Projects.
- Continue in the development of a new program using Civic Engagement as a BMP for grant projects.
- Collaborating with Area II out of Marshall, on the construction of a Water Retention Structure to be located in Lyon County, Nordland Township, Section 6.
- Assist Area II with a Retention Structure Maintenance Program
- Supporting the LQPYB Watershed's projects for the overflow of the LQP River.
- Received a Grant for LiDar Terrain Analysis.
- WRAPS(Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) with SWCD/NRCS/Civic Engagement
- Establish Watershed Modeling scenarios with Priority Management Zones

## **\*The 2013 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 Meeting  
August 22, 2013*

*The annual meeting of the YMRW District Annual Advisory Committee was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Advisory Committee Chairman Curt Blumeyer, Lincoln County Commissioner. Other Advisory Committee members present were Gary Crowley, Lyon SWCD supervisor; Norris Peterson, YM SWCD supervisor; Glen Sorenson, Lincoln SWCD supervisor, Jolene Johnson, YM county Water Planner, Rodney Stensrud, Lyon County Commissioner, and Ron Antony, YM County Commissioner.*

### ***Introductions were made.***

*Yellow Medicine River Watershed District Board of Managers in attendance were:  
John Boulton, Tim Buysse, Tim Dritz, Jeff Hoffman and Corey Hoffman.*

*Attending the meeting were:, Kevin Swedezinski, Alta Vista Township Board; Delmar Fenske, Omro Township Officer; Pauline Van Overbeke, Lincoln SWCD Coordinator; Pete Doyscher, Lincoln County Environmental Office; Rose and Dick Anderson, YM County Landowners, George Potz, YM County Landowner; presenter Darrell Schindler, MPCA; presenter Paul Radomski, DNR; Toby Spanier, Educator through University of Minnesota; Barbara Radke, Educator through University of Minnesota; Dustin Hauschild, Lincoln County Highway Dept; LouAnn Nagel, YM SWCD coordinator; Skip Wright, MN DNR; Robert Bottelberghe, Limestone township; Megan Ulrich, Upper Sioux Community; Pam Weckwerth, Canby DAC, David Sill, BWSR; Jordan Croatt, Pheasants Forever of Lyon County; Mike Moorsee, YMRW District Civic Engagement member; Cindy Potz, YMRW District Administrator; and Mike Weckwerth, YMRW District Asst. Administrator.*

*Cindy Potz read the published notice.*

*Cindy Potz read the 2012 advisory committee meeting minutes.*

*Tim Dritz made a motion to approve the 2012 advisory committee meeting minutes.*

*Pauline Van Overbeke seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.*

*Mike Weckwerth introduced our guest speaker Darrell Schindler, MPCA, who gave a power point presentation of the Watershed Restoration and Protection project (WRAP) of which this watershed district was chosen to begin the process of an assessment and subsequent analysis and report of the stressor ids and Priority Management Zone locations in our watershed district. The report will be part of a statewide watershed approach to addressing the issues and concerns of our watershed stakeholders and also addressing the viewing and results of the conditions of the streams, lakes and rivers in our watershed district. The report will be available to all agencies to review and write grants addressing our values and goals, and the suggested Best Management Practices that will be the most beneficial in assuring the improvement of water quality in our watershed district. The work plan that will be developed will leave room for adaptive management practices. Discussion was held on various aspects of the WRAP presentation and reports.*

*Mike Weckwerth introduced Paul Radomski, MN DNR, who gave an interesting powerpoint presentation of how to assess the values and goals of our stakeholders in the watershed district, ranging from landowners to all agencies, as well as county commissioners in our district. Previous to this meeting, a survey had been distributed via email, post office mailings, and a flyer through the local newspaper. Limited response of the surveys led to a limited ability to create a true assessment of the values and concerns of the overall representation of the landowners in our watershed district. It was stated however, that the presentation of maps and priority management zones as shown by Paul Radomski, were very preliminary, due to the limited level of participation in the surveys. Other methods of obtaining information and opinions from the stakeholders will be addressed in the future. Various values were discussed at the meeting, and the scenarios that could be mapped and presented depending on the height of value concerning various aspects, for example, that of the enforcement of the 16.5 ft berm on all watershed ditches, and the impact of that procedure on the watershed.*

*Mike Weckwerth gave a power point presentation about our progress thus far on the Watershed restoration and protection project, showing details of the civic engagement objective of our work plan, and the tasks listed in order to successfully build this WRAP report. Members present were asked to fill out a copy of the survey following the presentation.*

*Chairman Blumeyer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.*

*Motioned by Rodney Stensrud, YM County Commissioner, seconded by Corey Hoffman YMRW District board manager, to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.*

*Lunch was served.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Corey Hoffman, YMRW District Secretary*

**This concludes the 2013 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 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.**

