
2017 Annual Activity Report of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District



*Yellow Medicine River Watershed District
122 North Jefferson Street, PO Box 267
Minneota, MN 56264-0267
Phone: 507-872-6720, Fax: 507-872-6958
E-mail: admin@ymrwd.org
Website: www.ymrwd.org*

Board of Managers and Staff

President

Tim Buysse (Lyon County)
2092 County Road 10
Cottonwood, MN 56229
507-872-6219

Vice President

James Kraus (Yellow Medicine County)
2818 210th Ave
Porter, MN 56280
507-828-4232

Secretary

John Boulton (Lincoln County)
2589 State Hwy 68
Porter, MN 56280
507-296-4668

Treasurer

Tim Dritz (Lincoln County)
1618 Co. Hwy 16
Hendricks, MN 56136
507-694-1185

Public Relations & Interactions

Doug Gregoire (Yellow Medicine)
1758 460th St.
Cottonwood, MN 56229
507-828-4972

Administrator / Engineer

Emily Javens, PE
admin@ymrwd.org
507-872-6720

Attorney (Consulting)

John Engels Law Firm
124 N Jefferson St
Minneota MN 56264
(507) 872-6234

Auditor (Consulting)

Richard W. Holmber, LTD
432 Legion Field Road
Marshall, MN 56258
(507) 532-9674

Advisory Committee:

Joe Drietz, Lincoln County Commissioner, 412 E Ashby St, Ivanhoe MN 56142
Glen Sorenson, Lincoln SWCD Supervisor, 2777 Co Rd 55, Arco MN 56113
Joe Weber, Lincoln SWCD Supervisor – Alternate, 1978 Co Hwy 13, Lake Benton MN 56149
Merle Rost, Lincoln Water Management Task Force, 2986 259th Ave, PO Box 155, Ivanhoe MN 56142
Rodney Stensrud, Lyon County Commissioner, 2040 380th St, Minneota MN 56264
Gary Crowley, Lyon SWCD Supervisor, 2994 210th Ave, Marshall MN 56258
John Biren, Lyon Water Management Task Force, 1424 E College Dr. Ste 600, Marshall, MN 56258
Ron Antony, Yellow Medicine County Commissioner, 2535 230th Ave, Canby MN 56220
Hollis Weber, Yellow Medicine SWCD Supervisor, 2550 470th St, Hazel Run MN 56241
Jerry Nelson, Yellow Medicine SWCD Supervisor – alternate, 4763 290th Ave, Granite Falls MN 56241
Jolene Johnson, Yellow Medicine Water Planner, 1000 10th Ave, Suite 3, Clarkfield, MN 56223

Mission

The mission of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District (YMRWD) is to provide an organized means for proper management and protection of the water resources in the Yellow Medicine River Watershed. The YMRWD has three core functions outside of administration: (1) Serve as the drainage authority for systems under its jurisdiction, (2) Provide a regulatory framework that permits a variety of activities that complement the flood reduction and water quality goals of the district, and (3) carry out activities of the watershed management plan.

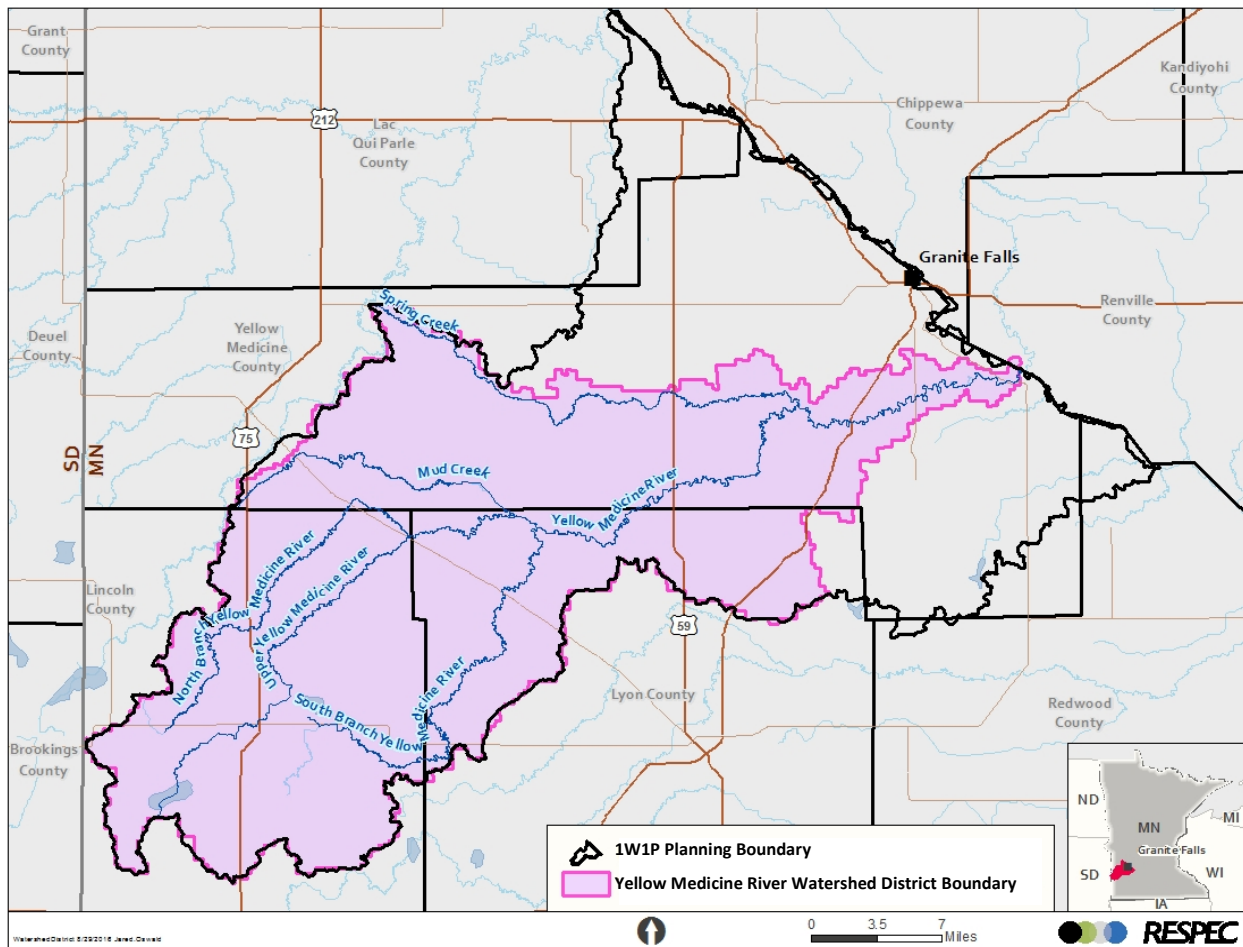
History of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District

The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District (YMRWD) is a local unit of government established on August 27, 1971 through a petition of its residents to the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources. The jurisdiction of the organization covers 685 square miles in southwestern Minnesota that drain to the Yellow Medicine River in Lincoln (39%), Lyon (23%), and Yellow Medicine (38%) counties. County Commissioners appoint representatives to a 5-member board of managers that direct and oversee activities of the District.

District Staff

The District maintains one full time Administrator. Emily Javens was the District Administrator throughout 2017. Toward the end of 2017 Emily made the decision to leave the District to work with the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts. In November of 2017 the Board of Managers hired Michelle Overholser as the new District Administrator effective January 1, 2018. The District also developed two Shared Services agreements with Lincoln SWCD and Yellow Medicine SWCD. The SWCDs are contracting out employee hours to the District to provide some technical and administrative assistance. By utilizing a shared service agreement, the district will be better equipped to address the needs of the watershed district residents.

District and Watershed Planning Boundaries



Current and Future Goals

For 2017, the YMRWD adopted the One Watershed One Plan and begin implementation of the efforts outlined in the plan. In 2018 the YMRWD will lead efforts between plan partners. For 2018, the YMRWD plans to accelerate the implementation of the YM1W1P. The implementation funds through BWSR will be received this year, which will provide the means to increase conservation activities. The YMRWD will be the fiscal agent for the implementation grant and will be reporting and tracking all the conservation practices that are completed in the YM1W1P planning boundary.

In 2017, as a drainage authority, they completed the construction of the Lincoln County Ditch 38 Project and finished the design of the Lincoln County Ditch 39 Improvement Project. The construction on the Lincoln County Ditch 39 Improvement Project will be completed in 2018.

One Watershed, One Plan

The Yellow Medicine One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) project began in 2014 as one of five pilot projects across Minnesota that set out to align watershed planning along watershed boundaries and move away from county planning boundaries. It was hoped that the plan could be completed by the end of 2015, but unforeseen delays pushed the planning process into 2016. Project partners signed an extension to the One Watershed One Plan Memorandum of Agreement in order to continue the planning efforts. The plan was completed, went out for public comment in May and was approved by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources on December 14, 2016.

In 2017, the implementation Memorandum of Agreement was signed by all the partners. The partners also agreed to adopt the 1W1P as part of their local water plans.

Drainage Authority Work

During 2017, eleven ditch systems were under the jurisdiction of the watershed district. Nine are permanently managed by the district and two were temporarily under the jurisdiction of the district while undergoing an improvement project. Major activity included the following:

- Lincoln County Ditch 38 – The construction work was completed and a final acceptance hearing will be held early 2018.
- Lincoln County Ditch 39 – The final order establishing the drainage project was adopted and a bid was awarded to Cooreman Construction.

In the permanently managed systems the work was primarily limited to maintenance.

Regulatory Program: Drainage Permitting

120 tiling and drainage permits were viewed and approved in 2016, up from 72 in 2016.

Nuisance Beaver Program

In 2017 the Watershed District continued its program to pay a bounty on nuisance beavers. The district funds a nuisance beaver program to help deter overland flooding and stream bank erosion caused by beaver dams in streams and ditches located in the watershed boundaries.

Appreciation

This concludes the 2017 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 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.

Respectfully submitted,

John Boulton

John Boulton, 2017 YMRWD Secretary