



[Home](#) :: [Rivers Activities Picnic](#) :: [Changing Currents Forum](#) :: [13 Questions Answered](#) :: [Resources](#)

Yellow Medicine River Watershed District (YMRW)

**Build a Question; Find an Answer**

### Responding Organizations

We asked river groups across the region to answer, from their perspectives, up to 13 questions important for citizens and policymakers to think about. This is who has responded:

- [Center for Global Environmental Education](#)
- [Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River](#)
- [Crow River Organization of Water](#)
- [Ducks Unlimited](#)
- [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#)
- [League of Conservation Voters Education Fund](#)
- [Minnehaha Creek Watershed District](#)
- [Minnesota Conservation Federation](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#)
- [Minnesota Environmental Partnership](#)
- [Minnesota Milk Producers Association](#)
- [Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway](#)
- [The Minnesota Project](#)
- [Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board](#)
- [Mississippi Corridor Neighborhood Coalition](#)
- [Mississippi Headwaters Board](#)
- [Mississippi River Citizen Commission](#)
- [Northwest Partnership](#)
- [Water Resources Center](#)
- [Yellow Medicine River Watershed District](#)

### Changing Currents Forum

Compare where these organizations stand on important river issues. And if you have something to say about what you read here, or if you have further questions to ask, participate in the [Changing Currents Forum](#).

### Build a Question; Find an Answer

Do you represent an organization interested in protecting rivers in the region? If so, we have some [questions you might want to answer](#).

### Yellow Medicine River Watershed District

[ymrw.com/YMRW.html](http://ymrw.com/YMRW.html)

#### About the organization

YMRW is working with watershed drainage issues in a unique topographical setting, with the elevation falling 1100 feet from the beginning of the watershed basin to the top of the watershed district.

**Respondent:** Steve Howey, conservation agronomist

#### How important to you is the river or stream nearest your home, and why?

I believe the river in my vicinity is a reflection of the environment, and if the river is healthy, the environment is, too. If it shows high phosphorus or nitrates or other pollutants, I feel I should look into what I can do to fix the situation.

#### How can citizens find out about the condition of the river nearest their homes or communities?

Citizens can check with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency or Environmental Protection Agency, or sometimes their local watershed district to see if a clean water partnership diagnostic study has been done.

#### What can homeowners do to make their land and property more river friendly? What can farmers do? Business owners?

Homeowners can be careful with fertilizers on their lawns, and keep lawn clippings from being part of the runoff. Bag the clippings, and dispose of them.

Farmers can do a soil sample, to detect the amount of phosphorus and nitrates in the soil, so as not to apply additional unnecessary nutrients during fertilization.

Business owners can encourage environmental concerns by offering brochures and information on the river water testing and maintenance being done in the area by local agencies.

#### What are the most important actions citizens can take to help clean up Minnesota's rivers?

*Do not throw waste directly in the river.* We have seen dead animals thrown on the ice in the spring, expecting the spring thaw to carry the evidence away, and we have seen appliances, stolen bikes, garbage, cement slabs (a no-no), and other stuff. Volunteer for river monitoring, and share your interest in preserving the water quality of the river with your acquaintances.

#### What are policymakers doing to enhance the current and future health of Minnesota's rivers? What should they be doing?

In the past, policymakers have allocated funds for agencies to work on programs in clean water partnerships, CREP, and other valuable programs. They must continue to see the necessity of keeping these programs alive, to keep the rivers alive.

#### River policymakers must address diverse and often competing elements such as the environment, commerce, flood control, recreation, and land use—but from your point of view, what overarching values should guide how we use, treat, and manage rivers?

The rivers should be addressed as a major resource, and values such as quality of water, quantity of water, and proper methods of stream bank stabilization, reservoirs, dams, road retention structures, and other important water management issues should be kept in mind.

#### How can we manage the conflict of private land use and the best management practices for our rivers?

Offer incentives to the landowners for putting in some of the priority sites of their cropland into filter strips, basins, etc.

#### How important is the development of a land-use plan in the watersheds that feed our rivers? Do you have a land-use plan?

We believe it is very important to develop land-use and nutrient management plans for our watershed. We are developing both in our watershed.

#### What programs are available—and are more needed—to educate and inform citizens, river users, river property owners, and policymakers about river issues?

Programs of river friendly farmers, many others.