



# Guardians of the River Agriculture Property Owner Pledge



|                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>                    | <b>Name:</b>                       |
| <b>Email:</b>                   | <b>Email:</b>                      |
| <b>Phone:</b>                   | <b>Phone:</b>                      |
| <b>Postal Address of Owner:</b> |                                    |
| <b>Acres Actively Farming:</b>  | <b>Acres Inactive (Grassland):</b> |

**We pledge to manage our property through actions and practices that will protect the Yellow River's water quality, aquatic and shoreline habitat, wildlife, and natural scenic beauty (Check all that apply).**

- ☐ **Will continue with practices currently in place as indicated below**
- ☐ **Will start with additional practices as indicated below**

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Signature(s):</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
|----------------------|--------------|

| Action or Practice                                                                                                                                                                  | Will continue | Will start |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| <b>1. Healthy Land (Soil &amp; Landscape) – Low Erosion</b>                                                                                                                         |               |            |
| Stable slopes with terraces or contour farming in the Loess Plateau                                                                                                                 |               |            |
| Good soil structure. Aggregated topsoil, minimal crusting, Infiltration rate sufficient to absorb rainfall.                                                                         |               |            |
| Adequate rooting depth: ≥50–100 cm effective depth for major crops (wheat, maize)                                                                                                   |               |            |
| <b>Soil Chemical Health</b>                                                                                                                                                         |               |            |
| Soil organic matter ≥1.5–2.5% (higher is better in loess soils)                                                                                                                     |               |            |
| Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium applied at crop-demand levels, No long term phosphorus accumulation.                                                                                |               |            |
| Salinity and sodicity control: Electrical conductivity (ECe) <4 dS/m, Exchangeable sodium percentage (ESP) <15%                                                                     |               |            |
| Neutral to slightly alkaline pH. pH ~6.5–8.0 (avoid extreme alkalinity common in irrigated zones)                                                                                   |               |            |
| <b>Soil Biological Health</b>                                                                                                                                                       |               |            |
| Active soil microbes and earthworms, Crop residue retention or manure return, Low dependence on chemical inputs alone.<br>Indicator: stable or rising soil organic carbon over time |               |            |
| <b>2. Healthy Water – Agricultural Criteria</b>                                                                                                                                     |               |            |
| Water withdrawals within ecological limits. Agricultural use must not reduce environmental flows                                                                                    |               |            |

| Action or Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Will continue | Will start |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Efficient irrigation ≥60–70% irrigation efficiency (drip, sprinkler, lined canals)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |            |
| Stable groundwater levels. No long-term groundwater declines due to irrigation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |            |
| Agriculture must not degrade river or groundwater quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low nutrient runoff               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Nitrate &lt;10 mg/L in groundwater</li> <li>◦ Minimal phosphorus runoff to prevent eutrophication</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Low pesticide residues               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Use of low-toxicity, short-residual chemicals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Controlled salinity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Irrigation return flows not increasing river salinity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |               |            |
| <b>Sediment Control:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced sediment yield from farmland (Vegetative cover during rainy seasons, Grass strips shelterbelts, and check dams).</li> <li>• No bare soil during monsoon periods</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |               |            |
| <b>3. Cropping &amp; Farm Management Criteria</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |            |
| <b>A. Crop Suitability</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crops matched to local water availability</li> <li>2. Reduced expansion of high-water-use crops (e.g., rice, cotton) in dry zones</li> <li>3. Drought-tolerant wheat and maize varieties preferred</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |            |
| <b>B. Land Use Structure - Farmland proportion balanced with:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grassland</li> <li>2. Forest and shelterbelts</li> <li>3. Riparian buffer zones (≥10–30 m along waterways)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |            |
| <b>C. Climate &amp; Resilience - Farming systems that:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain yield stability during drought years</li> <li>2. Reduce reliance on emergency irrigation</li> <li>3. Increase carbon sequestration in soils</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |               |            |
| <b>4. Integrated “Healthy Yellow River Agriculture” Benchmarks (Summary)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |            |
| A. Soil stays on the land, not in the river<br>B. Water use stays within ecological limits<br>C. Farming does not increase salinity or pollution<br>D. Productivity is stable without degrading future capacity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |            |

**Thank-you for joining the Guardians of the Yellow River!**

For more information about the Yellow River Protection Conservancy, check our website at [yellowriverprotectionconservancy.org](http://yellowriverprotectionconservancy.org) or scan this QR code:



Please keep a copy for yourself and submit the signed copy to YRPC via 1, 2, or 3 below.

1. Hand this completed and signed document to a YRPC Board Member
2. Scan the completed and signed document and email it to [contact@yrpc.ltd](mailto:contact@yrpc.ltd)
3. Send the completed and signed document to YRPC 1092 Blackburn RD, Spooner, WI. 54801