

YRPC Weekly News

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YRPC Leverages Technology to Enhance Conservation Efforts

By: Arnie DeWitt, YRPC Stream Monitoring Coordinator

Arnie, the Yellow River Protection Conservancy (YRPC) has modernized its environmental stewardship tracking by developing a custom database and interactive mapping application built on Google Workspace technology.

The YRPC's Guardians of the River Program works with local landowners within the Yellow River Watershed to encourage best management practices. These conservation strategies aim to reduce nutrient runoff into local surface waters. Excess nutrients, such as phosphorus, accelerate weed and algae growth, degrading aquatic ecosystems and impairing recreational activities like swimming, fishing, and boating.

As the program expanded from shoreland and woodland to residential properties in municipalities like Spooner, traditional management methods reached their limits. Former spreadsheet tracking provided basic member counts and parcel data, but lacked dynamic visualization tools. Constructing physical visual maps required significant manual labor and proved impractical for detailed urban views.

YRPC needed a solution that could instantly generate a map upon data entry, with pan-and-zoom capabilities to display concentrated areas of participation in cities within the watershed such as the City of Spooner,

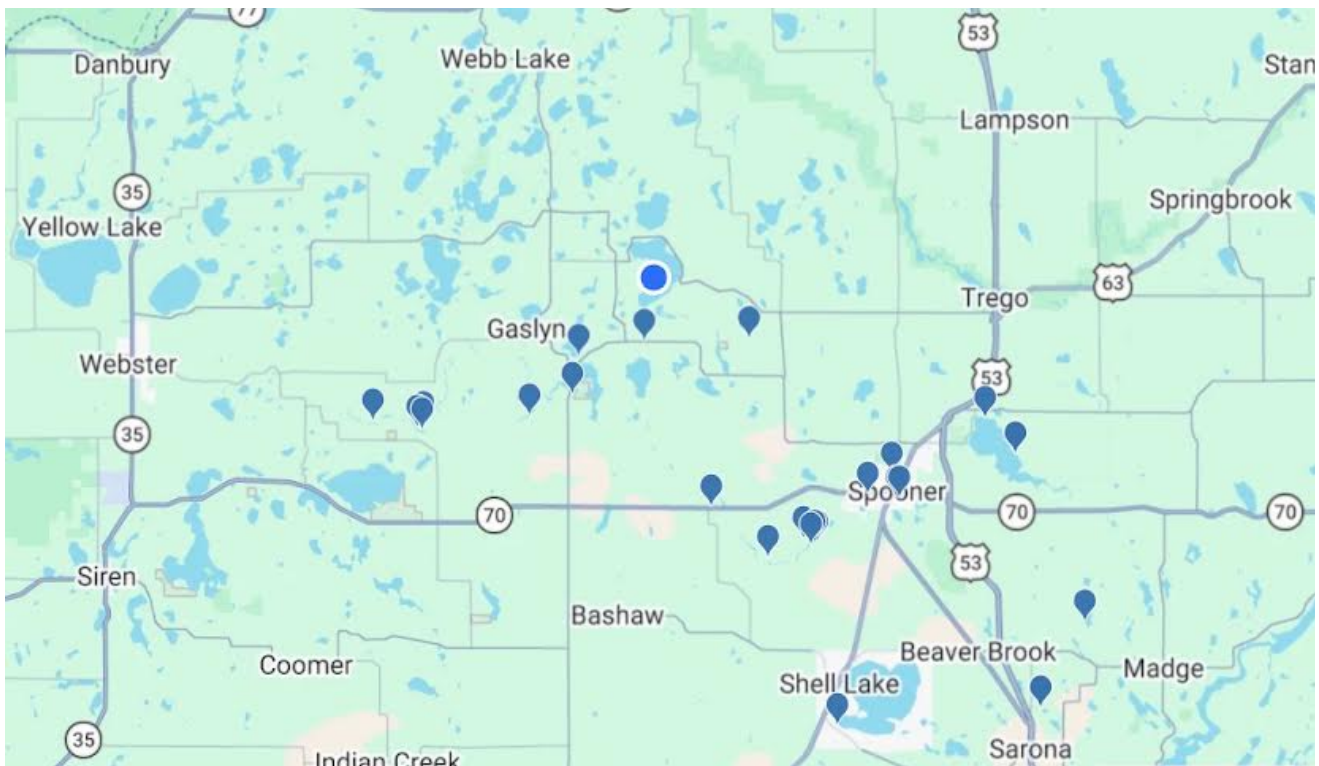
Building on a Google Workspace migration that began in 2025, YRPC designed a custom Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The application centralizes records for contacts, donors, volunteers, and Guardians of the River members. When a member's contact and parcel information is entered, the system automatically populates a Google Map with precise visual markers indicating participating land.

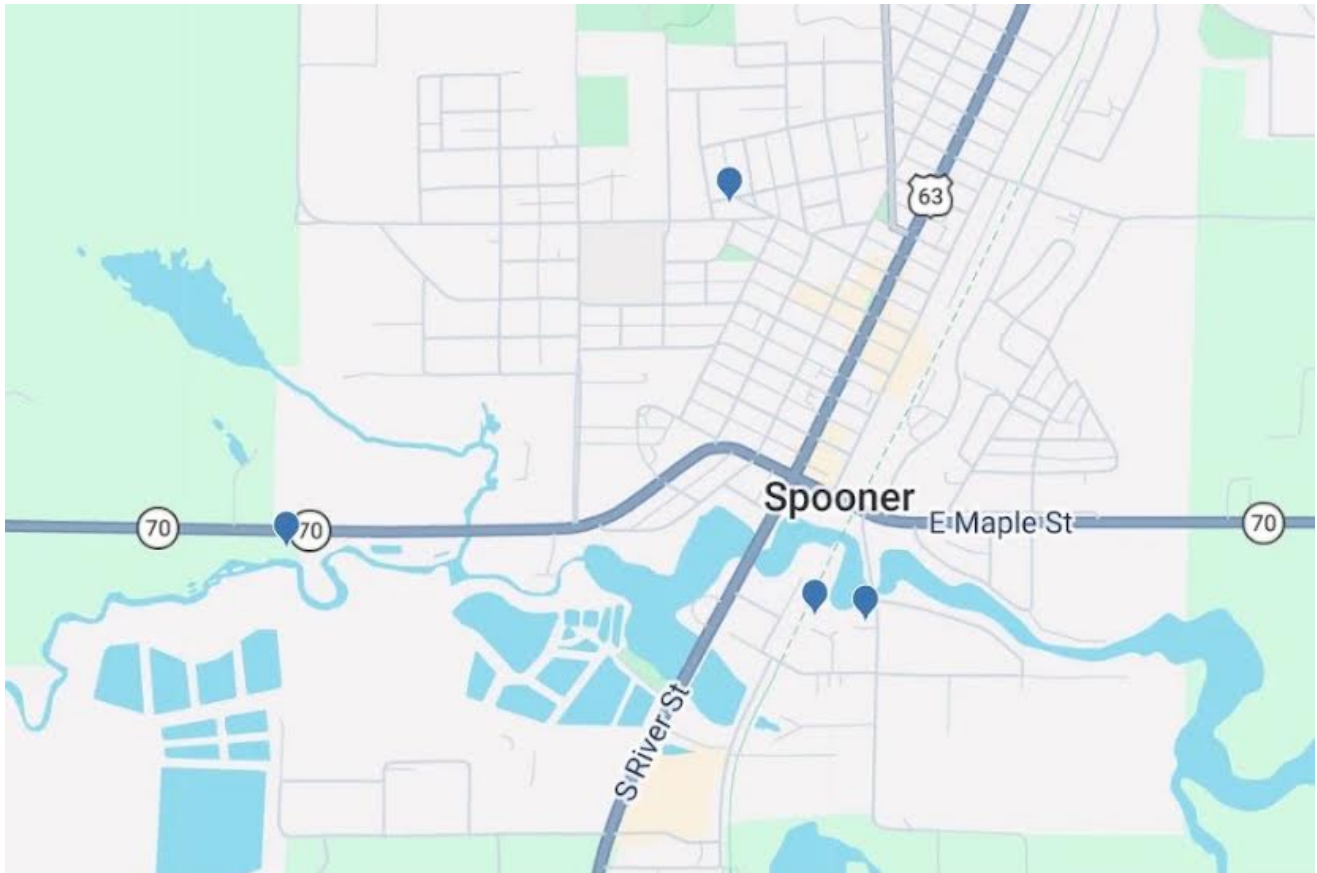
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YRPC will begin publishing these high-resolution map updates on its public website in late August. This approach provides near-real-time visibility of member coverage within the Yellow River Watershed while eliminating the print and transport costs associated with large paper displays previously used at community events.

The custom-built CRM system was completed in May 2026 at no additional cost to YRPC. Thanks to Google's nonprofit pricing and in-house volunteer IT support, YRPC's annual IT expenses are less than \$200.

Below are images of Guardians Maps with blue markers above the land parcels. The top map displays the entire watershed, The bottom map is zoomed in to show the City of Spooner members in the Guardians Program.





[Click here for information about the Burnett County Project RED Event on August 28th in Granstburg and on the St. Croix River.](#)

YRPC Website

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