

**Summary of the June 6, 2005 meeting of the Lake Superior Advisory Group – Habitat/Water Quality**  
Sea Grant Building at 2305 East Fifth St., Monday, June 6, 2005, 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Don introduced the topic and format for the meeting. Jesse Shomberg functioned as the meeting facilitator and introduced Pat McCann from the MN Dept. of Health who produces the Fish Consumption Advisories for Minnesota. The Fish Consumption Advisory purpose and process was outlined. The Great Lakes Protocol standardized advisories among the Great Lakes states. Consumption advice is more conservative toward women and children. The new brochure provides general advice. Site-specific advice is still available on the web site. The Federal Government is responsible for commercial fish standards that are sold in the marketplace. Mercury is becoming more of an issue as PCB levels have declined in Lake Superior. PCB content is higher in fatty fish. Pat introduced a variety of handouts and information sources.

Brian Fredrickson of MN PCA talked about the Lake Superior Basin Plan next. Brian talked about the many activities that go on in the Lake Superior basin that impact the Lake. A US Forest Service watershed assessment model was applied to the sub-watersheds to get an idea of where the most impacted areas are. The characteristics of the watersheds along the north shore are different from the rest of the Lake Superior watershed. The planning process was outlined. Recommendations were presented. Protecting high quality watersheds is a high priority. Improvement in environmental monitoring is another recommendation along with supporting watershed initiatives. The beach monitoring and total maximum daily load programs were mentioned. A question about sediment as pollution was discussed.

Melinda Granley of the South St. Louis SWCD spoke next. She gave some basic information about watersheds and their function. Land use determines many stream parameters. She talked about impervious surface and the relation to stream volume and velocity, leading to increased sediment loading. She characterized the North Shore streams as fragile. She talked about the Miller Creek and the Sucker River Watershed Projects. The Sucker River was chosen because of its high value and its status as not yet impaired. She listed recommendations for protecting water quality. Forest Stewardship Plans, buffers, limiting development, maintaining septic systems, and dealing appropriately with runoff all can help maintain healthy watersheds.

Gaylord Paulson from MNDNR Forestry spoke on the North Shore Subsection Forest Resource Management Plan. State ownership of timberlands totals just 9% within the three-subsection area covered by the plan. He outlined the planning process. The Minnesota Forest Resource Council's Site Level Management Guidelines were talked about. These provide some flexibility in managing the riparian zone. Comments on the plan were noted. The Riparian Science Technical Committee is reviewing riparian related research and will supply the Forest Resource Council with relevant findings so that they can revise the Site Level Guidelines. Buffers and various timber-cutting scenarios in the riparian zone were discussed. County and Federal management of their lands was touched on. Threshold levels for old forest cover in minor watersheds were mentioned.

Jesse Shomberg with MN Sea Grant gave some background information on the Lake Superior watershed. He talked about watershed function, infiltration, and runoff. Impervious surfaces, forest cover, and wetlands are watershed health indicators. The relationship of each to watershed health was discussed. Pollution enters streams with sediment. Research on changes in phosphorus and sediment in four North Shore streams was summarized. Recommendations on keeping impervious surfaces to a minimum and increasing infiltration were given.

A short question and answer period followed. The connection of land use impacts on lake health was questioned. Fish Advisories of various species in Lake Superior and other great lakes was discussed. Wetland loss and mitigation statewide was talked about. The Coastal Program was mentioned as a source of funds for projects influencing water quality in the Lake Superior coastal region. Mercury total maximum daily load and Federal and State regulation was mentioned. Don distributed issue response summaries and thanked all the speakers. Don summarized by saying that factors impacting water quality are heavily influenced at the township and local zoning level. He urged people to get involved! The next steps in planning process were discussed and the meeting adjourned.