

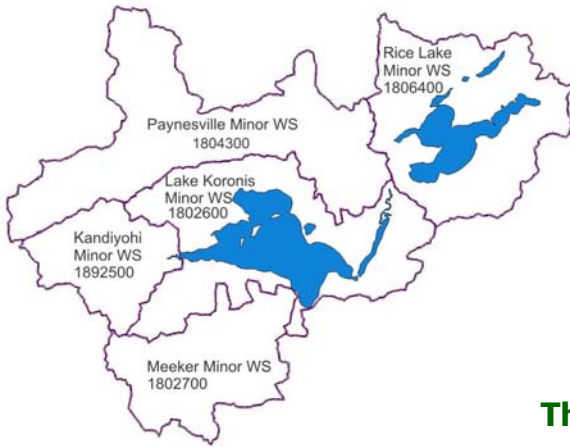
Rice – Koronis Lakeshed Management Plan

Project Profile: Stearns County

Guide to Using

Natural Resource Information

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2003



SUMMARY

The purpose of the Rice – Koronis Lakeshed Management Plan is to provide the two lake associations, property owners, and resource management agencies working in the Lakeshed with a strategic and comprehensive approach to improving water quality in the lakes as well as enhance our quality of life.

Guide to Using Natural Resource Information

This Project Profile is part of the Guide, which is a useful resource to learn how to create and use natural resource information

The Guide illustrates:

- why natural resources are important
- how your community benefits from natural resources
- how to collect natural resource information, and
- how to use natural resource information to make environmentally sensitive and fiscally responsible local land use decisions

Contact the DNR at the numbers at the back of this Profile to order the Quick Guide Brochure or the whole Guide on CD

The Problem

Declining water quality in Rice and Koronis lakes prompted members of the two lake associations to take action. First, lake association members contacted the Stearns County SWCD to see what options were available. The two associations decided to pursue grants and training through the Healthy Lakes program sponsored by the Initiative Foundation. Working collaboratively with the SWCD staff, the associations were successful.

Public Involvement is Key

Over 200 concerned citizens met to discuss and share their concerns regarding the Rice – Koronis lakes area as well as potential projects that the two lake associations should pursue. Water quality was the number one concern raised by participants at the Visioning Session. Many other concerns were expressed, such as exotic plant species, fisheries management, land use planning, and water surface use conflicts. Participants were also asked what should be done about these problems. The ideas that participants generated became the starting point for the development of the Plan.

Project partners distributed a questionnaire as a second way to gather input. Again, water quality was the primary concern raised by the survey respondents. Although no one likes to pay higher taxes, 124 of the 196 respondents support a property tax increase to fund water quality projects. Fifty people volunteered to work on projects that would improve water quality in the lakes.

A citizen planning committee was formed with members representing a wide range of interests to oversee the development of the Plan and advise the two lake association boards. Technical support was provided by agency personnel.



Source: Stearns SWCD

Natural Resource Inventory

Each lake has a unique relationship to its surrounding landscape and the watershed(s) that drains into it. The Planning Committee defined two levels of watersheds for managing water resources in Rice and Koronis watershed. They include the Lakeshed and Sublakeshed. The Lakeshed covers 311 square miles and extends from the Grove Lake area in Pope County to the outlet of Lake Koronis. The Sublakeshed covers 64 square miles and includes the five minor watersheds directly around the two lakes. An extensive inventory of water and land resources was developed for the Rice – Koronis Lakeshed Management Plan at both the Lakeshed and Sublakeshed levels. In all, more than 60 maps were created to illustrate water and land resources.

Natural Resource Assessment

Assessments of the land use changes and their corresponding impacts on lake water quality are provided in the Plan. Since all watersheds are not created equal, the Technical Committee developed a method to analyze a variety of factors or activities that impact water quality in the lakes. Natural and cultural factors were assessed at the minor watershed level to identify the critical water management issues specific to each watershed. Based on this process, the top three resource management concerns were areas identified for each of the five minor watersheds.

Implementation

Lake associations have unique roles in the management of water and land resources. They can get things done that our governments and other organizations simply cannot. The Planning Committee thoroughly considered the role of the lake associations as well as other organizations in the implementation of this Plan. The primary role for the lake associations should be:

Education: We must educate, educate, educate.

Support: We should support local units of government, resource agencies, and other groups that care about and have a responsibility for enforcing water quality rules.

Partner: The lake associations need to partner with other agencies and organizations to implement projects.

Each year, the lake association boards plan to consult with the Lakeshed Committee and working subcommittees to develop their annual work programs.

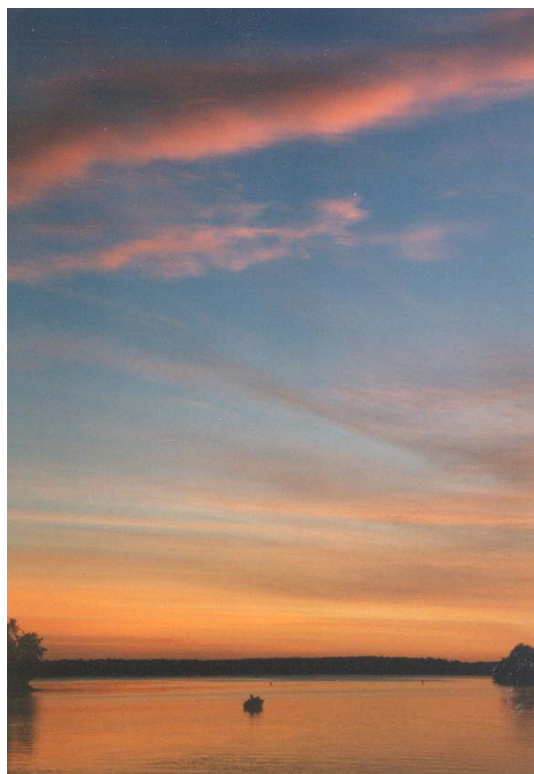
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These Project Profiles were produced, written, and designed by the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Source: Peter Jacobson

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Conclusions and Key Findings: Minor Watershed Assessment

Minor Watershed Management Priorities

From the inventory developed in the lakeshed planning process, the Technical Committee identified the three most critical resource issues for each minor watershed. Based on these priority issues, three management strategies were then established for each minor watershed. By working through this minor watershed assessment process, the two lake associations, in conjunction with the Stearns SWCD and other resource agencies, will be able to target conservation efforts to protect and improve water quality in the two lakes. The following list provides the top three management priorities for each minor watershed:

Paynesville Minor Watershed (1804300)

- Stormwater management.
- Feedlot management.
- Wetland protection.

Rice Lake Minor Watershed (1806400)

- Wetland restoration/protection.
- Septic system management.
- Cultivated land management.

Lake Koronis Minor Watershed (1802600)

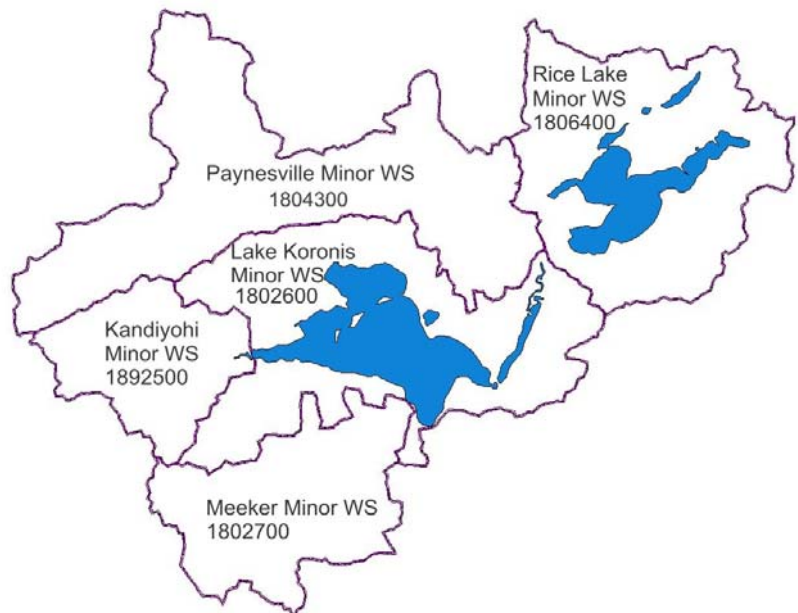
- Soil erosion prevention.
- Septic system management.
- Wetland protection.

Kandiyohi Minor Watershed (1892500)

- Wetland restoration.
- Feedlot management.
- Septic systems management.

Meeker Minor Watershed (1802700)

- Increase and enhance riparian buffers.
- Wetland restoration.
- Cultivated land management.



As of June 2003, 39 feedlot evaluations (FLEvals) within the five minor watersheds adjacent to the two lakes have been completed. In addition, grant applications for funding to support corrective actions on the priority feedlots have been submitted by the Stearns SWCD.

Another recent success story in the Rice – Koronis Lakeshed comes from the private sector. Lakeshore residents, Pete and Kathy VonBank purchased a large tract of undeveloped land on the north side of Rice Lake that has significant ecological value to lake water quality. They will hold the property until the MN DNR can purchase it and place it into a land preserve.

Potentially Restorable Wetlands Rice Koronis Lakeshed Management Plan



For more information contact:
Seamless County Soil and
Water Conservation District

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Potentially Restorable Wetlands

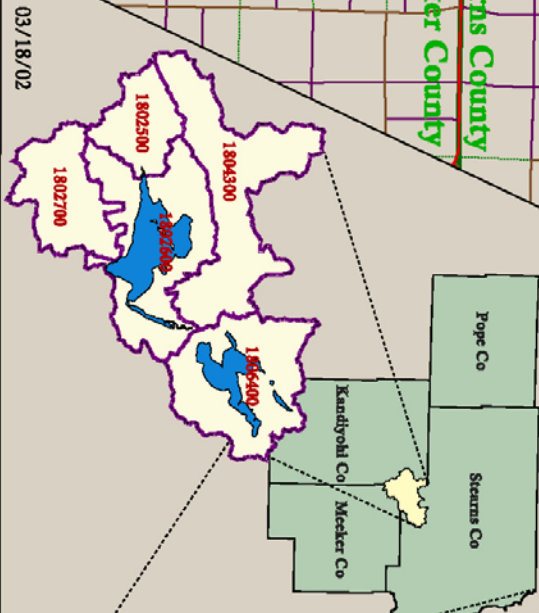
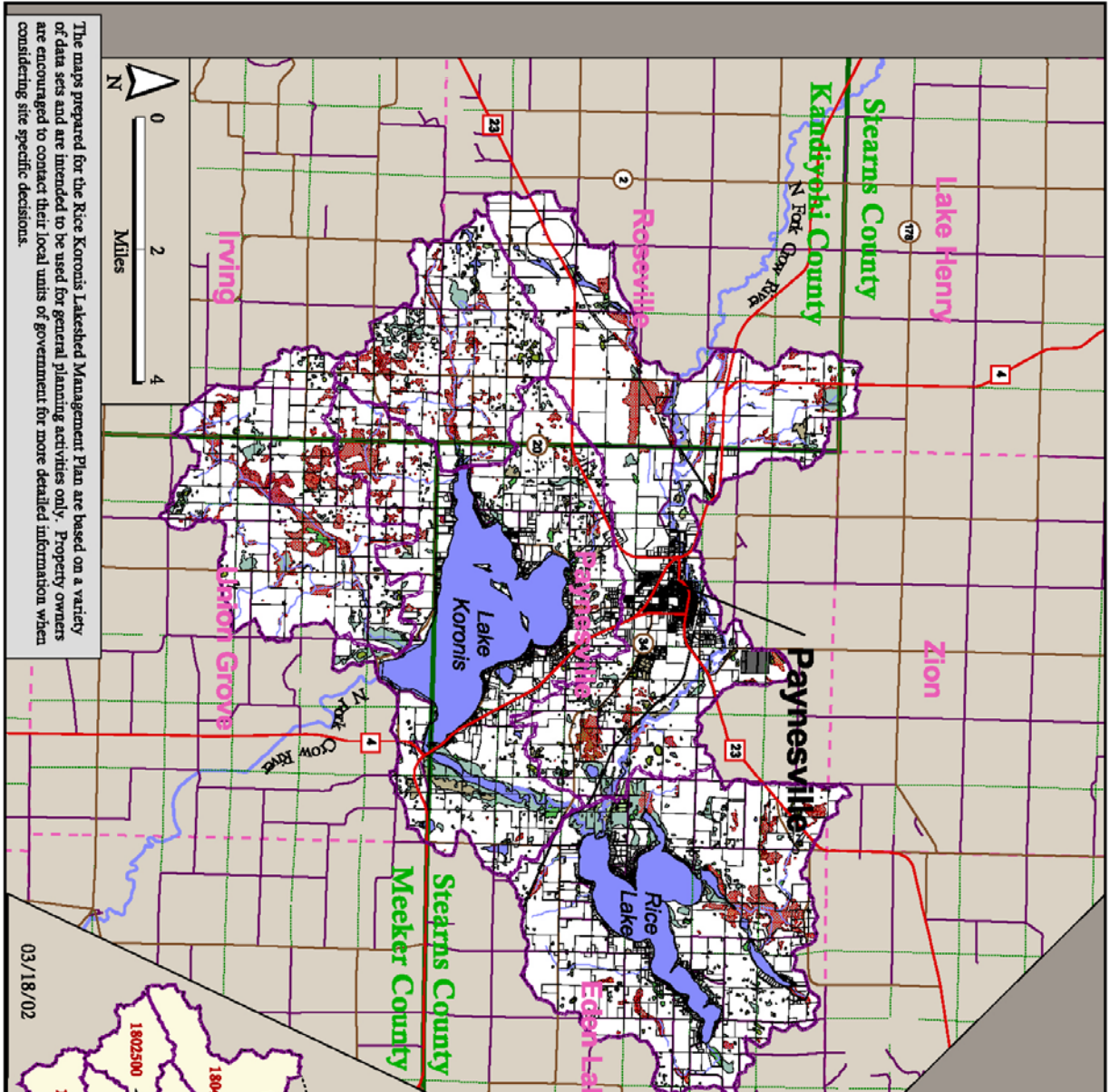
NOTE: These wetland areas are classified
by the National Wetland Inventory as
being potentially restorable/detrital.

Circular 39 Classification

- Seasonally Flooded Basin
- Wet Meadow
- Shallow Marsh
- Deep Marsh
- Shallow Open Water
- Straw Swamp
- Wooded Swamps
- Marshes/Industrial Activities
- Riverine Systems
- Uplands (Non-Wetland)

Source: National Wetland Inventory

- County Boundaries
- Township Lines/Names
- Section Lines
- Parcel Boundaries
- Minor Boundaries
- State Highways
- County Roads
- Township Roads
- N. Fork Crow River
- Seamless



03/18/02

The maps prepared for the Rice Koronis Lakeshed Management Plan are based on a variety of data sets and are intended to be used for general planning activities only. Property owners are encouraged to contact their local units of government for more detailed information when considering site specific decisions.

