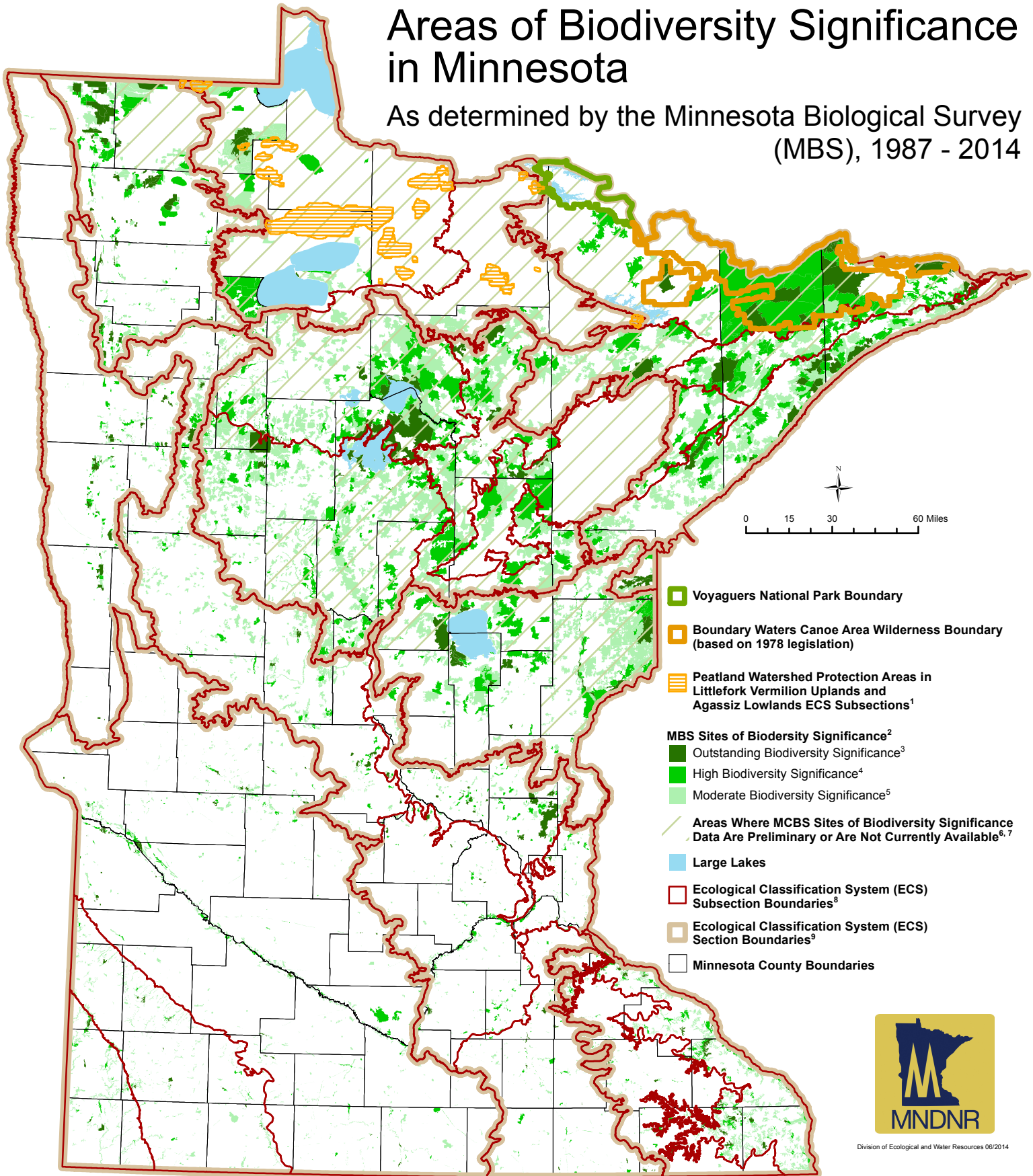
Areas of Biodiversity Significance in Minnesota

As determined by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), 1987 - 2014



MNDNR

Division of Ecological and Water Resources 06/2014

[1]Peatland Watershed Protection Areas are designations "that would protect the Scientific and Natural Areas and Peatland Scientific Protection Area cores from adjacent development. The boundaries of the watersheds were delineated to enclose an area large enough to provide an adequate buffer from development carried on in adjacent areas" (from the report *Recommendations for the Protection of Ecologically Significant Peatlands in Minnesota*, MN DNR, 1984). Polygons include both the core and buffer areas.

[2]Sites of statewide biodiversity significance were mapped by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) as of June 2012. These data represent areas with varying levels of native biodiversity that may contain high-quality native plant communities, rare plants, rare animals, and/or animal aggregations. Initially, boundaries of sites are determined by review of aerial photography in order to identify potential areas of native biodiversity based on native vegetation. In subsequent field investigations, MBS assesses the ecological characteristics of the site and the presence of rare species. A biodiversity significance rank is assigned on the basis of the number of rare species, the quality of the native plant communities, size of the site, and context within the landscape. Following field investigations, site boundaries sometimes are revised, or sites added, to incorporate critical habitat for rare plants and rare animals. In these instances, the quality of native plant communities is not the primary criterion for ranking the site. The data generally reflect the condition of sites at the time of MBS fieldwork in a region and have not been systematically updated to account for changes to the vegetation or species populations since then. The data are oldest for parts of the western prairie region of Minnesota, where surveys began in 1987, followed by southeastern Minnesota and eastern Twin Cities metro counties. Areas not mapped as sites of statewide biodiversity significance include: 1) lands where native plant communities have been altered or destroyed by human activities such as farming, overgrazing, non-sustainable timber harvest, draining, invasive species, and development; and 2) occurrences of native plant communities that are too small to meet minimum size standards for mapping. Areas that do not meet MBS criteria for statewide biodiversity significance may include lands with conservation value at the local level, such as habitat for native plants and animals, corridors for animal movements, buffers surrounding higher quality natural areas, or areas with high potential for restoration of native habitat.

[3]Sites of **Outstanding Biodiversity Significance** are sites containing the best occurrences of the rarest species, the most outstanding examples of the rarest native plant communities, and/or the largest, most intact functional landscapes present in the state.

[4]Sites of **High Biodiversity Significance** are sites containing very good quality occurrences of the rarest species, high-quality examples of rare native plant communities, and/or important functional landscapes.

[5]Sites of **Moderate Biodiversity Significance** are sites containing occurrences of rare species, moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have a strong potential for recovery.

[6]MBS data designated 'preliminary' are data at a reasonable level of coverage and completion but are not finalized. Some changes to the data may occur as these sites are finalized.

[7]Areas where MBS data are not currently available include areas where MBS surveys have not yet been conducted as well as areas where MBS surveys are underway but data have not been compiled.

[8]See http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecs/index.html

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