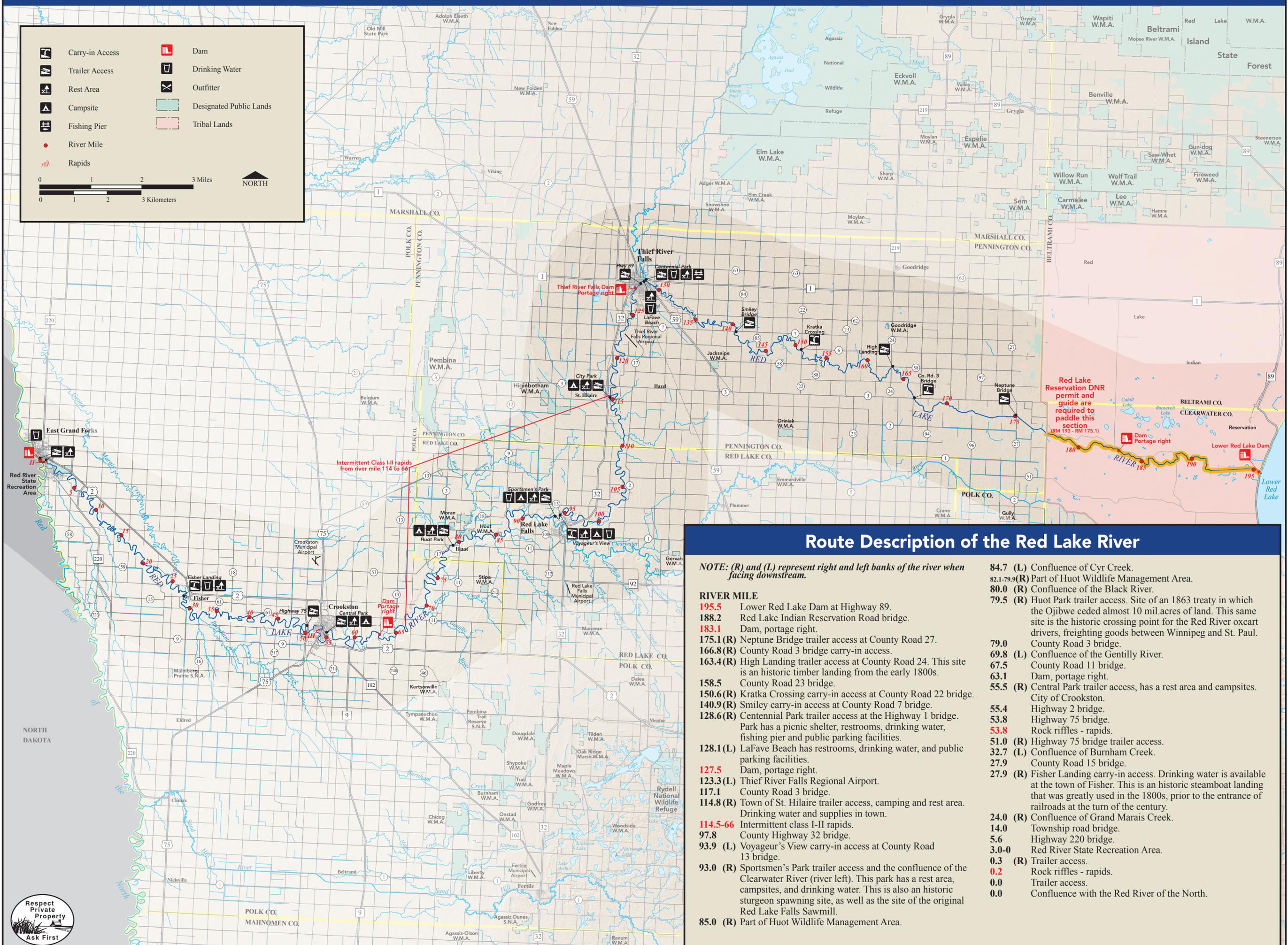


# A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE RED LAKE RIVER



## Route Description of the Red Lake River

**NOTE:** (R) and (L) represent right and left banks of the river when facing downstream.

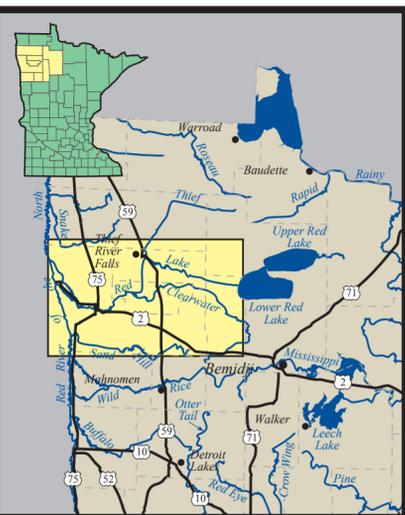
### RIVER MILE

- 195.5 Lower Red Lake Dam at Highway 89.
- 188.2 Red Lake Indian Reservation Road bridge.
- 183.1 Dam, portage right.
- 175.1 (R) Neptune Bridge trailer access at County Road 27.
- 166.8 (R) County Road 3 bridge carry-in access.
- 163.4 (R) High Landing trailer access at County Road 24. This site is an historic timber landing from the early 1800s.
- 158.5 County Road 23 bridge.
- 150.6 (R) Kratka Crossing carry-in access at County Road 22 bridge.
- 140.9 (R) Smiley carry-in access at County Road 7 bridge.
- 128.6 (R) Centennial Park trailer access at the Highway 1 bridge. Park has a picnic shelter, restrooms, drinking water, fishing pier and public parking facilities.
- 128.1 (L) LaFave Beach has restrooms, drinking water, and public parking facilities.
- 127.5 Dam, portage right.
- 123.3 (L) Thief River Falls Regional Airport.
- 117.1 County Road 3 bridge.
- 114.8 (R) Town of St. Hilaire trailer access, camping and rest area. Drinking water and supplies in town.
- 114.5-66 Intermittent class I-II rapids.
- 97.8 County Highway 32 bridge.
- 93.9 (L) Voyageur's View carry-in access at County Road 13 bridge.
- 93.0 (R) Sportsmen's Park trailer access and the confluence of the Clearwater River (river left). This park has a rest area, campsites, and drinking water. This is also an historic sturgeon spawning site, as well as the site of the original Red Lake Falls Sawmill.
- 85.0 (R) Part of Huot Wildlife Management Area.
- 84.7 (L) Confluence of Cyr Creek.
- 82.1-79.9 (R) Part of Huot Wildlife Management Area.
- 80.0 (R) Confluence of the Black River.
- 79.5 (R) Huot Park trailer access. Site of an 1863 treaty in which the Ojibwe ceded almost 10 mil. acres of land. This same site is the historic crossing point for the Red River oxcart drivers, freighting goods between Winnipeg and St. Paul.
- 79.0 County Road 3 bridge.
- 69.8 (L) Confluence of the Gently River.
- 67.5 County Road 11 bridge.
- 63.1 Dam, portage right.
- 55.5 (R) Central Park trailer access, has a rest area and campsites. City of Crookston.
- 55.4 Highway 2 bridge.
- 53.8 Highway 75 bridge.
- 53.8 Rock riffles - rapids.
- 51.0 (R) Highway 75 bridge trailer access.
- 32.7 (L) Confluence of Burnham Creek.
- 27.9 County Road 15 bridge.
- 27.9 (R) Fisher Landing carry-in access. Drinking water is available at the town of Fisher. This is an historic steamboat landing that was greatly used in the 1800s, prior to the entrance of railroads at the turn of the century.
- 24.0 (R) Confluence of Grand Marais Creek.
- 14.0 Township road bridge.
- 5.6 Highway 220 bridge.
- 3.0-0 Red River State Recreation Area.
- 0.3 (R) Trailer access.
- 0.2 Rock riffles - rapids.
- 0.0 Trailer access.
- 0.0 Confluence with the Red River of the North.



Red Lake River

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STATE PARKS  
AND TRAILS  
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This information is available in alternative format upon request.

Minnesota State Parks and Trails Regional Unit

123 Main Ave North  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
218-681-0889

Online water trail information and maps can be found at [mndnr.gov/watertrails](http://mndnr.gov/watertrails)

DNR Information Center

The DNR's Information Center is available to provide free publications of facilities and services as well as answers questions pertaining to DNR recreational opportunities in Minnesota.

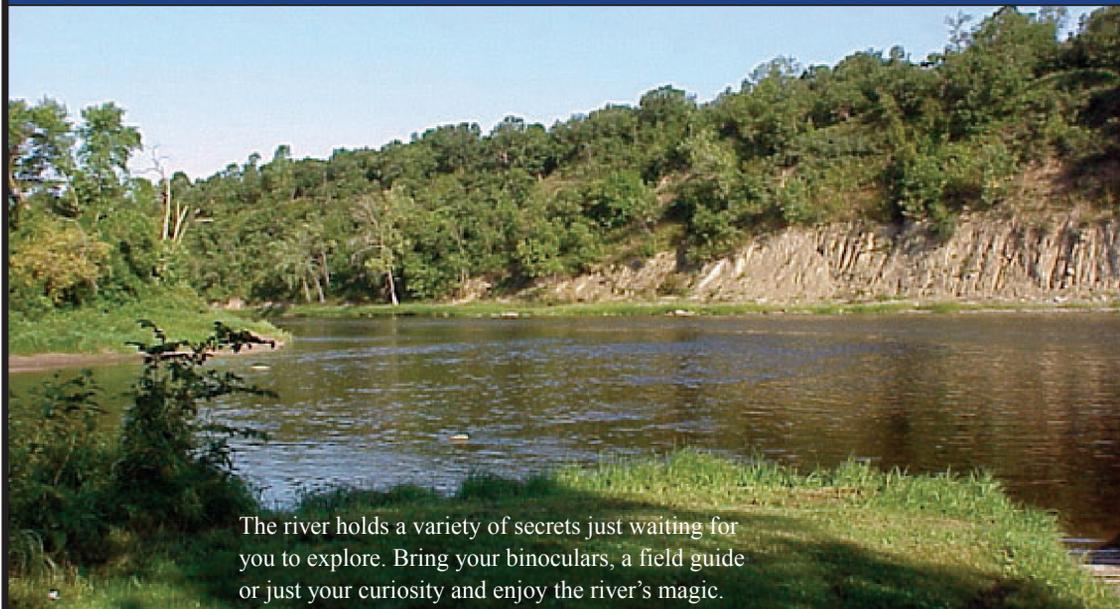


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1-888-646-6367 MN Toll-Free  
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Red Lake River Corridor Enhancement Group

A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE RED LAKE RIVER



The river holds a variety of secrets just waiting for you to explore. Bring your binoculars, a field guide or just your curiosity and enjoy the river's magic.



The Red Lake River

Marshy wilderness, flat farmland, towering eroded cliffs and steep, wooded banks characterize the Red Lake River.

One of the few canoeing rivers in northwest Minnesota, the Red Lake flows westward to join the Red River in East Grand Forks.

Above the dam at river mile 181 the Red Lake flows through marshland in the Red Lake Indian Reservation. White and yellow water lilies, wild rice and cattails thrive here; blackbirds, snipes, wrens, gulls, great blue herons and many ducks inhabit the marsh.

Below the dam, the river is flanked by a prairie that is at times bright with wildflowers. Trees are sparse and small on the low grassy banks. Near High Landing the trees become larger and the river meanders through farmland; stands of willow, elm and cottonwood are interspersed with open fields. Residential development is extensive along the banks at Thief River Falls.



OLD TREATY CROSSING PARK, DAVID ARSCOT

Below St. Hilaire the banks steepen and are heavily wooded to Red Lake Falls. A chain of boulder-field rapids and pools interrupts the Red Lake in this 17-mile stretch where the river drops 110 feet.

High, nearly vertical, eroded cliffs and the first of many huge slump areas are encountered near Red Lake Falls. Entire hillsides have moved down to the river. The natural process of flood and drought cycles changes the landscape quickly.



BLUE VERNAIN, DAVID ARSCOT

Just downstream from Huot is the Old Crossing Treaty State Historical Wayside Park, where in 1868 the Ojibway Indians ceded almost 10 million acres of land for white settlement of the Red River Valley. This also was an important crossing of the Red River Oxcart Trails, the tracks of which are still partially visible.

In its lower reaches the river meanders through farmland, often screened from the river by stands of elm, willow and cottonwood.

Wildlife along the Red Lake River is varied and abundant. Wooded bottomlands provide excellent habitat for wood duck and deer. Fox, grouse, beaver, mink, muskrat, weasel, coyote, squirrel, rabbit and raccoon range through the region. Bottomlands and scattered oxbows attract mallards, blue-winged teal, great blue herons, shorebirds, owls and numerous species of songbirds. Otters and fishers make the riverway their home.

The river supports several species of game fish, including northern pike walleye and channel catfish. The Red Lake River is particularly noted for its channel catfish angling. Some of the most popular fishing areas are located below the Ottetail power dams in both Crookston and Red Lake Falls, and near the junctions of the Red Lake with the Thief, Clearwater and Black rivers. Smallmouth bass may be found in the upper reaches.

According to the most recent Minnesota Department of Health Advisory, children under six and women of child-bearing years should eat no fish from this river. Others may eat one meal a month.

Planning A Safe River Trip

A successful river trip is safe. To enjoy a safe journey, you should be prepared by doing the following:

- Get acquainted with your route. Plan your trip with a map before you depart and advise someone of your plans including planned departure and arrival times.
- Travel with a companion or group.
- Choose a distance that is comfortable for you, most people paddle two to three river miles per hour.
- Wear a U. S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device that state law requires be on board the boat for each person.
- Bring a first aid kit that includes waterproof matches.
- Be cautious of river obstructions, such as overhanging and dead trees.
- Bring an extra paddle in your canoe.
- You must pack out all trash.
- Leave only footprints; take only photographs!

Water levels can speed or slow you down. You can get information about water levels from the regional DNR office, or check the DNR website, or the DNR Information Center. Remember that much of the shorelands are privately owned. Respect and protect the water and shorelands.

Boating Information

- Register your watercraft. All watercraft more than 9 feet in length, including nonmotorized canoes and kayaks, must be registered in Minnesota or your state of residence.



MARIA ALEBY

- Few portions of this water trail are suitable for motor use.

Rating Whitewater

Rivers and rapids are rated according to the International Scale of River Difficulty. Ratings

are estimates based on observations at low or moderate water levels or on secondhand reports.

CLASS I. Easy rapids with small waves and few obstructions.

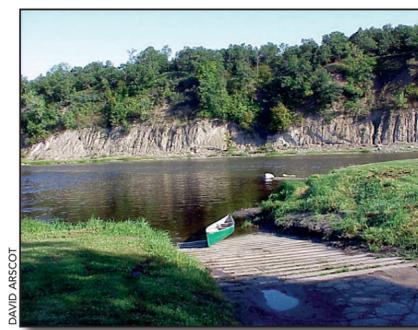
CLASS II. Rapids with waves up to three feet high. Some maneuvering is required.

CLASS III. Difficult rapids with high, irregular waves capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow chutes may require extensive maneuvering. Usually considered the limit for an experienced paddler in an open canoe.

CLASS IV. Long, turbulent rapids with high, irregular waves, constricted passages, and blind drops. Decked canoes and kayaks only; open canoes should be portaged.

CLASS V. Long, violent rapids with complex routes and steep drops or waterfalls. Hazard to life in the event of a mishap. Runnable only by experts in decked boats.

CLASS VI. Cannot be attempted without great risk to life.



DAVID ARSCOT

Rest Areas and Camping Sites

- Public rest areas are available along the route to rest, picnic and explore.
- Camp only in designated campsites, which are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Bring drinking water. It is only available at a limited number of rest areas. Drinking river water is not recommended, but if you do it must be treated.



CENTRAL PARK, DAVID ARSCOT

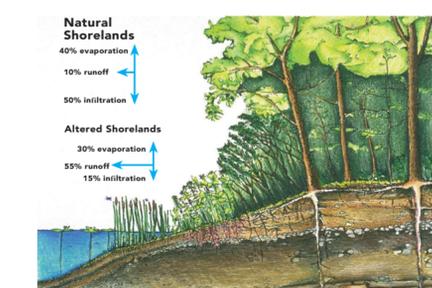
- Respect private property. Stop only at designated sites; much of the shoreland is private property.
- Be sanitary! Use designated toilet facilities or bury human waste away from the river.

Sustainable Ecosystems

Outdoor recreation is dependent on a healthy and attractive natural environment. Sustainable outdoor recreation enables people to enjoy the outdoors without negative impacts on the environment.

Communities working together can improve water resources by promoting environmentally sensitive land use practices along rivers and throughout watersheds.

Natural shoreline buffers improve water quality by filtering out pollutants and sediments. Healthy and diverse native shoreline plant communities are attractive and provide important shoreline habitat for birds and wildlife.



DAVID