

Wabana Township, Minnesota
Comprehensive Plan 2020
Our Township. Our Future.



Wabana Township, Minnesota

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Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Steve Bjerke
Deb Kee
Steve Melin
Bob Moore
Gary Oja
Jim Olijnek
Wayne Speedling

This plan was prepared by, and is a product of, Wabana Township. Public engagement and consultation services were provided by Laura Connelly and Ed Zabinski of unTapped, LLC.

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Table of Contents

- I. TOWNSHIP OVERVIEW..... 4
 - Introduction and Legal Authority 4
 - Vision Statement..... 4
 - Plan Purpose 5
 - Planning Process..... 5
 - Township Profile 6
 - Local and Regional Setting..... 6
 - Demographics 6
 - Township Government 7
 - Township Officers and Staff..... 7
 - Township Meetings 7
 - Township Finances and Budget 8
 - Township History 9
 - Township Resources, Assets and Recreational Opportunities 12
 - Township Facilities and Services 12
 - Roads and Transportation..... 12
 - Water Resources..... 13
 - Recreational Opportunities 14
- II. PLAN FOR THE FUTURE 17
 - Township Values 17
 - Goals & Objectives 19
 - Strategies & Action Plans 20
- III. APPENDIX 25
 - Appendix A. Township Maps..... 25
 - Appendix B. Wabana Township Planning Commission..... 32
 - Appendix C. The Lakes and Water Quality..... 33
 - Appendix D. Resorts and Camps in Wabana Township and on the Wabana Chain of Lakes..... 38
 - Appendix E. Grant-In-Aid Trails Information and Policy..... 40

I. TOWNSHIP OVERVIEW

Introduction and Legal Authority

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a road map and vision for the future of Wabana Township. The document can guide people of Wabana Township in making decisions about land use, natural resources, and the township's facilities and infrastructure.

This plan reflects the community's goals and intentions as gathered from citizens about their present and future needs. By implementing this plan, future residents will find Wabana Township as attractive and appealing as it is today.

This plan is divided into three parts:

- 1) Township Overview: Introduction, History, and Community Information
- 2) Plan For the Future: Values, Goals, and Strategies and Action Plans
- 3) Appendix

The authority to develop and execute a comprehensive municipal plan for Wabana Township by the Wabana Town Board of Supervisors is granted in Minnesota Statutes, Sections 462.351 through 462.364, and specifically in Minnesota Statutes, Sections 462.355 and 462.356. This Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed and updated, as needed, every five years.

Vision Statement

Wabana Township is a very special place to live, to enjoy the seasons and to experience the history and culture of northern Minnesota. Balancing land development while maintaining the area's forests, wildlife, and history is a critical management role for Wabana Township.

The community is committed to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the water quality of the area's pristine lakes. The Township will carefully guide redevelopment and compatible new development to protect water quality and preserve the northern character of the area.

The Township will encourage single dwelling housing. Back-lot development with lake access, planned unit developments, mobile home trailer parks, trailer campgrounds, and multiple dwellings on a single lot in the shoreland overlay district are not endorsed.

It is recommended that commercial development within the Township should be in line with the values expressed in this plan. Development of a plan for a commercial corridor in cooperation with Itasca County is a desirable goal.

The Township supports the regulatory permitting of short-term rentals (for example VRBO's, or vacation rentals by owners, and Airbnb's) in cooperation with Itasca County and

the State of Minnesota. This would include compliance with septic codes, fire and safety codes, occupancy limits, parking and noise enforcement.

The Township will adhere to sound management practices and achieving community goals while maintaining low fees and property taxes.

Plan Purpose

Minnesota is one of the largest states that continues to utilize a thriving grassroots form of democracy: townships. In townships, people make their own governance decisions. This continues to work for communities across the State, no matter whether they are very rural or if they have become very urban and are adjacent to developing cities. One of the reasons Wabana Township has decided to develop a Comprehensive Plan is to give its citizens a guide to understanding the potential future for their community. The plan will also serve as a handy reference document when the Township applies for grants.

The intent of Wabana Township's comprehensive plan is to "preserve the character and quality of life in the township" so that it will be a fully intact, rural part of Itasca County. It is hoped that the area's rural qualities will vary as appropriate within the Township while the central physical feature remains the clean and attractive waters of its lakes.

Goals for helping meet this intent include:

- 1) preserving natural resources;
- 2) providing township facilities and recreational opportunities;
- 3) improving relationships with other governmental units; and
- 4) ensuring development occurs in an environmentally sustainable way.

These goals, all with sets of objectives, are described later in this plan.

Planning Process

In May 2019 a seven-member Planning Advisory Committee (a committee of the Planning Commission) was appointed by the Township Board to guide the comprehensive planning process. After conferring with State and County planning managers and legal counsel, the Committee secured funding to assist in creating the plan. The Committee then mapped out a timeline and hired consultants to assist with facilitating public engagement and creating the written document. The Advisory Committee has met weekly since its inception.

In May 2020, a survey was sent to 412 township residents using addresses provided by Itasca County. The survey was mailed to both full time and seasonal residents and of the surveys mailed, 228 people responded. The intent of the survey was to gather opinions and feedback from township residents to help create a sustainable comprehensive plan that is community focused and representative of the community vision. The community input collected from

the survey formed the basis of the comprehensive plan’s goals and objectives. The results of the survey can be found at:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:4233d4ae-9d85-4fc6-ba32-4a4e658614a5>

On August 19, 2020, a public hearing was held virtually to share a summary of the survey, to explain the draft goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, and to allow for further public input. The meeting’s outcome finalized the four supporting goals and objectives and identified implementation strategies and action plans to help meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Township Profile

Local and Regional Setting

Wabana Township is situated in the north woods of Itasca County in northeastern Minnesota. Itasca County is the third largest county in the state and home to over 1,400 lakes, rivers and streams. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated population of Itasca County in 2019 was 45,130. The county’s three largest towns include the county seat of Grand Rapids (10,900), Cohasset (2,700), and Coleraine (2,000). The primary economic drivers of the highly rural region are timber, mining, and tourism.

Wabana Township is a standard 6-mile by 6-mile square (23,040 acres) including large tracts of public land (10,467 acres). The township includes 26 named lakes including the large chain of Wabana, Little Wabana, Bluewater, Little Trout, and portions of Big Trout plus 21 additional smaller lakes amounting to 4,558 acres. An additional 1,203 acres of Blandin Forest Legacy Easement land are open to public use. This leaves only 6,812 acres or 30% of the area for private or commercial use which is mostly in the south portion of the township. The public land consists of tax-forfeited land, School Trust Land, State Forest, Wabana Township acreage, and large tracts of the Chippewa National Forest. See Appendix A for a township map entitled “Land Use in Wabana Township.”

Demographics

Based on the 2010¹ census, there are 535 residents in 222 households and another 200+ seasonal property owners in Wabana Township. Approximately 250 residents reside around the 26 lakes, many of whom retired and moved to the area from a variety of different cities. The racial makeup of the township is 98.77% White, and 1.23% from two or more races.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wabana_Township,_Itasca_County,_Minnesota
Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan

The median income for a household in the township is \$51,563, and the median income for a family is \$57,344. About 2.0% of families and 3.9% of the population were below the poverty level, including 8.3% of those under age 18 and none of those age 65 or over.

Township Government

Township government is a unit of government patterned after the English town meeting developed to guarantee "grassroots" democratic participation. In Minnesota, townships are the rural units of government closest to the people. Minnesota is first in the nation in the number of townships, having 1,803 organized townships. Townships are about 36 square miles in area, and in Minnesota include populations from a few to over ten thousand. Township governments presently serve approximately one-fourth of the population of Minnesota ([Minnesota Association of Townships](#)).

Township Officers and Staff

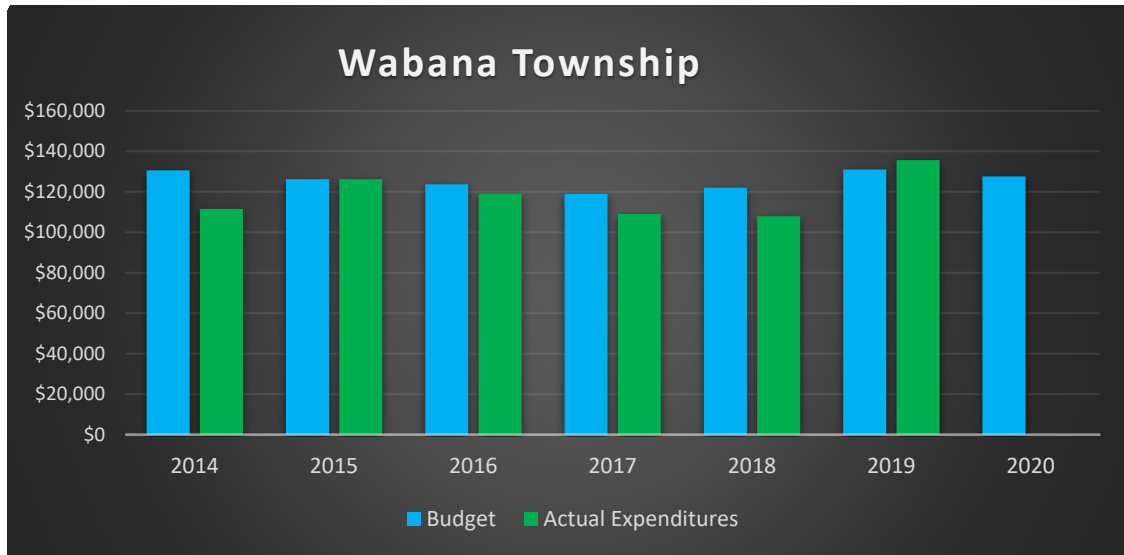
The Township's Board of Supervisors are elected to a four-year term; they in turn, elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

The Board of Supervisors' responsibilities include: approving all township expenditures, drafting and monitoring the annual budget, holding Truth in Taxation hearings, hosting the Annual Meeting, managing staff, overseeing the maintenance of township infrastructure, and partnering with Itasca County to approve building permits and the governance of the township. The Township Clerk and Treasurer are elected officials whose job description is outlined by the State of Minnesota. Maintenance workers are hired by and directed by the Township Board.

Township Meetings

Wabana Township is governed by an elected board of three supervisors, one clerk, and one treasurer. The Township holds regular business meetings at the Wabana Town Hall starting at 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month. The meetings are open to the public; people can attend the meetings in person or virtually via Zoom. Questions, concerns and comments by Township residents are highly appreciated; they help guide the work of the Township board. Residents are encouraged to contact the Township Clerk with any agenda items prior to a meeting. When the Township holds special meetings, notices for the meetings will be published in the *Grand Rapids Herald Review* and posted on the Town Hall door. If residents want to join the meetings virtually, the Zoom meeting number and password can be found on Township website: <https://wabanatownship.com>.

Township Finances and Budget



The Township holds an annual meeting every March during which it determines the annual budget and reviews the previous year's expenditures and account balances. The Township funds are derived mainly from property taxes with a small amount coming from township hall rental fees and State allotments.

Township History

From the forest and the moorland, and the large
lakes of the northland:
From the small lakes filled with fishes
From the land of the Ojibway's, the lure land
of Chief Wabana
Mahng, the loon, the wild goose Waga
The blue heron, the shu-shuh-gah and the grouse, the
Mushkodasa. The moose and the red deer of the game,
The fleetest call to you to pause and listen.
You, who love the haunts of nature, love the shadows
Of the forest.
Love the dark and woody pine trees, and the wind
Among the branches,
Love the rain showers, lakes and moonlight, and the
Canoes and lapping water.
Pause and read this description of the haunts of/
Chief Wabana;
Buried now, on Isle Balgillow, diadem of Lake Wabana.

Unknown author; published in *Grand Rapids Herald Review* (1929). According to past and present owners of Balgillow Island it is believed that the Chief is not actually buried on the island.

“Wabana” in the Ojibwe language means “many bays.” The area has a rich history of Native American culture dating back hundreds of years. The first white people to see the Wabana area were trappers and hunters known to frequent the area because of its bountiful natural resources.



Wabana Hotel; built 1901, destroyed by fire in 1928.

By 1865 the first logging companies entered the area. From approximately 1875-1900 the logging of the pine forests occurred. By 1911 much of the landscape in this area was cut over and the land became a tax liability to the lumber companies. After 1905, in an effort to avoid property taxes on unproductive land, they began selling the harvested timber land as agricultural property. It was advertised as agricul-

tural land with a "payback of a year or two" to any interested buyer. The new buyers soon learned that the soil was less than perfect for farming crops, and the work to clear the land of millions of tree stumps was extraordinarily backbreaking and labor-intensive.

The area offered more than timber, though. It proved attractive for tourism and people interested in unmatched hunting and fishing. Resorts sprang up on many pristine lakes, and many of these resorts remain operating to this day.

During this period Native people still lived in large numbers on Wabana Lake, especially on Balgillow Island and Buckman Cove. A well-known Native leader, Chief Waubeno, dwelt on the island. Waubeno was admired and respected by early loggers and settlers who had contact with him, and the two Wabana lakes and the township itself were named for him.

As the area transitioned from loggers to early settlers, a log school house was constructed in 1900 by Dave Cochran; it was destroyed by fire only five years later. The first hotel, post office and general store were built in 1901. A replacement school house was built near northwest Clearwater Road and Northstar Lane in 1920.

Wabana Township was officially established on May 11, 1921. J.C Hamblin, H.C. Heaton, and Herman Piper were the first supervisors. T.G. Dudley served as the town clerk and justice of the peace; Frank Wakeman was the treasurer; K.T. Kells was appointed constable and Mrs. H.C. Heaton was the town's superintendent of schools.

In 1925 a brand-new framed school house was constructed on the corner of Clearwater and Wabana roads. This schoolhouse transitioned to serve as the township hall and was used until 1987-1988 when the current township hall was constructed at the same location.



Drawing of Wabana Schoolhouse, circa 1925.

Throughout its history, the Township provided its residents with multiple facilities, including a skating rink, baseball fields, playground equipment, tennis court, picnic area, swimming beach and cemetery. The Township Hall has also been a place for numerous community gatherings over the years, including meeting sites for the local 4H Club, graduations, birthday parties, Christmas parties and plays, memorial services, Bible school, women's club, hunters' suppers, dancing, lakeshore association meetings, exercise classes, and senior social meetings and more.

The township includes portions of the Chippewa National Forest which was created by Congress in 1908; it was the first national forest east of the Mississippi River. It was originally known as the Minnesota National Forest, but the name changed in 1928 to honor the original inhabitants. In 1943, the Federal government purchased cutover forest land in Wabana Township and expanded the boundaries of the nearby National Forest. The State of Minnesota also acquired land in the township through tax-forfeitures to create the George Washington State Forest, and these designations enabled the creation of public campsites and other amenities in Wabana Township.



The Wabana community gathers around the campfire at Arrowhead Point; early 1900s.

Township Resources, Assets and Recreational Opportunities

Township Facilities and Services

Wabana Township owns and operates several facilities serving its residents and visitors.

Township facilities

- Town hall: This was built in 1987. It also includes a warming house/storage area, a pavilion with electricity, and a storage building.
- Recreation assets: A playground, ice rink, public beach, ball field and tennis court. These assets are used throughout the year by the community.

Township property

- Cemetery: This public site is located on Wakeman Bay Road.
- Land: This property is located directly behind the cemetery and includes 19 acres of forest land.
- Beach: This facility is located on Wabana Lake at the southwest end of Wakeman Bay. The beach is accessed from McLaughlin Drive. The township leases the land from Itasca County but maintains the site.

Township communications

- The Township website (<http://wabanatownship.com/>).
- The *Warbler*, a newsletter prepared by the Township.
- Grand Rapids *Herald Review*, the official Township newspaper; all public notices are posted on the Township Hall entrance.

Roads and Transportation

There are 6.25 miles of roads maintained by the Township. The Township board reviews the conditions and needs of the roads annually. The board considers things such as: additional gravel, grading, or repair as needed; vegetation control; ditch mowing; sign damage; dust control applications; or updating other needs of maintenance. These roads are gravel (Class 5); the cost of paving the roads has been financially prohibitive. The Board encourages Township residents to notify them about issues of erosion or hazardous situations as soon as possible to ensure a rapid response.

Residents may petition the Township board for reclassifying private roads for Township ownership. There are stringent requirements to bring private roads up to Township standards (at the cost of land owners adjacent to the private road) before roads will be accepted into the Township.

A map of all the roads in the Township is provided in Appendix A of this document.

Township Roads	Miles	Other Roads	Owner	Miles
Arrowhead Road	1.0	49	County	7.26
Doan Lake Road	0.3	59	County	1.65
Havenwood Drive	0.6	60	County	6.18
Lady Slipper Lane	0.6	211	County	0.69
McLaughlin Drive	0.8	327	County	0.76
Shoreview Drive	0.9	330	County	0.04
Wakeman Bay Road	1.25	335	County	4.03
Zims Lane	0.8	350	County	0.72
Total miles	6.25	---	County Forest	1.48
		---	Mn DNR	0.09
		---	Private	13.57
		3478	USFS	1.79
		3481	USFS	1.21
		3490	USFS	0.79
		3491	USFS	2.59
		Total miles		42.85

Water Resources

The lakes and lakeshore account for approximately 20% of the area of the township, and nearly half of the population lives on lakeshore property. The lakes provide economic input through the resorts and tourism and are the primary source of recreational value (fishing, swimming, boating, and more). The lakes of Wabana Township are among the most pristine in the state and are currently not infected with aquatic invasive species. There are approximately 100 households of permanent residents on the Wabana Chain alone and another 140 households of seasonal visitors. A list of the 26 lakes within Wabana Township are shown below.

Lake List	Acreage	Lake Classification	Lake ID #
Arrowhead	45	NE-1	31-388
Big Rain Barrel	21	NE-1	31-408
Birch	38	NE-1	31-390
Bluebill	19	NE-1	31-404
Bluewater	364	RD-2	31-395
Bosley	46	NE-3	31-403
Clearwater	68	RD-1	31-402
Doan	98	NE-3	31-536
Francis	16	NE-1	31-409
Hanson	67	RD-1	31-344
Hay	55	NE-2	31-407
Island	63	NE-2	31-406
Little Rain Barrel	12		
Little Trout	85	RD-1	31-394
Little Wabana	115	NE-3	31-399
Middle Hanson	65	NE-2	31-396
Minnow	8		31-1089

Moore	96	NE-3	31-535
Murphy	139	NE-1	31-389
Pickerel	42	NE-2	31-398
Potato	8		GNIS 657922
Spring	39	NE-1	31-404
Tadpole	43	NE-2	31-401
Trout	1,743 (800 in township)	RD-2	31-410
Twin	11	NE-1	31-391
Upper Spring	18	NE-1	31-411
Wabana	2,221	RD-2	31-392
	4,558 acres		

Recreational Opportunities

1) Trails

- Snowmobile trails

There is one public snowmobile trail within the Township: the Taconite Trail which crosses 11 miles of private and public land ownership. Future reroutes may be necessary. This corridor trail is critical to the entire northeast Minnesota snowmobile system (see Appendix A for the map).

- Cross country skiing / hiking / horseback trails

One of the star attractions of Wabana Township's natural environment is access through Trout Lake to visit the 4,500-acre Joyce Estate, a beautiful, historically preserved family compound of a turn-of-the-century logging magnate, David Joyce, from Chicago. With 40 buildings, telephone system, golf course and private airplane hangar, the compound served as a woodland retreat for the Joyce family. The estate was built during the 1917-1935 era. In 1972 the estate was placed into conservatorship and is now managed by the Chippewa National Forest through its heritage and interpretive program. A portion of an approximately three-mile trail system to the Joyce Estate resides with Wabana Township. It provides hiking and horseback riding in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. The ski trail is located on United States Forest Service lands within a designated semi-primitive non-motorized area. The Joyce Estate trail system is identified as a grant-in-aid (GIA) ski trail and is groomed by volunteers associated with Northern Lights Ski Club.

The larger Wabana Trails system lies within a natural area designation managed and groomed by Itasca County. An approximately 10K trail is located within a 470-acre special management area. The area has an existing parking area and an established hiking and cross-country ski trail system. The designation for the trails limits motorized use and timber sales (see Appendix A for the Wabana Trails map).

- Off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails

Currently there are no designated grant-in-aid off-highway or all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails within the Township. The USFS has designated some forest roads for use by ATVs. Itasca

County allows ATV use on corridors adjacent to county roadways. See Appendix E for an Itasca County ATV map and a copy of the Chippewa National Forest OHV policy and maps.

2) **Public Water Access**

Public lake access sites are currently provided on seven lakes within the Township, which in turn give public access to 10 lakes. Access sites vary from fully developed boat launches to carry-in facilities (see Appendix A for the map).

- Wabana Lake There are two fully developed sites on the southeast and northwest portions of the lake. The southeast access site has the capacity for 8-10 cars/trailers. The northwest site offers 12-15 car/trailer parking spots. Both sites are developed and managed by the Minnesota DNR and are located on School Trust lands. These two accesses provide access to four lakes (Wabana, Little Trout, Trout, and Bluewater) and offer a unique experience to users.
- Bosley Lake Itasca County manages this site that provides carry-in access only. Parking is provided for five cars.
- Island and Hay Lakes This site provides access to Island and Hay Lakes. The launch is not paved; a small parking lot for up to three cars/trailers is provided. A designated campsite is also provided adjacent to the access.
- Clearwater Lake A small boat access is located just off County Road 60; the site is managed by Itasca County.
- Spring Lake A carry-in access with a small parking lot is managed by Itasca County.
- Moore Lake This carry-in site is accessible only through the Joyce Estate.
- Bluewater Lake A private enterprise (Bible camp) allows public access across its property during the winter for ice fishing. There have been discussions with the Minnesota DNR and Itasca Co about permanent winter access.

3) **Fishing**

Wabana Lake, the largest in the township, is stocked with walleyes. In July 2019, the Minnesota DNR performed a fish survey on Wabana Lake. The preliminary report can be found at: <https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Wabana-Fishing-draft.pdf>.

Detailed Minnesota DNR 2016 lake management plans for Wabana, Bluewater, and Big Trout are available at <https://wcola.org/find-the-latest-information-here/>. Information on other Wabana Township lakes may be found at Minnesota DNR Lake Finder: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fisheries/lakes.html>.

4) **Swimming Beaches**

Wabana Township maintains a swimming beach in Wakeman Bay on Wabana Lake. This site is located on land owned by Itasca County and leased to the township. This is the only designated beach in the township and does not have a lifeguard.

Other public swimming occurs in various locations adjacent to public lands on the Wabana Lake chain. These locations are non-designated and not maintained.

5) *Resorts and Camps*

There are five small family-run resorts in the Township; four on Wabana and one on Little Wabana. There are no resorts on either Bluewater or Little Trout Lakes. The one resort on the north end of Trout Lake is located in Balsam Township. There are two camps on the northwest corner of Bluewater Lake (see Appendix D for specific details on the resorts and camps).

Dispersed boat-in camping is available on Wabana, Bluewater and Trout Lakes. Dispersed boat-in campsites are cooperatively managed by Minnesota DNR and the US Forest Service. Five sites are located within the township; a total of seven sites are designated in the chain of lakes. Sites are available on a first-come/first-served basis. The sites are located on School Trust and National Forest lands (see Appendix A).

6) *Hunting*

Public hunting is allowed on all public lands within the township. The 10,467 acres of public lands and additional 1,203 acres of UPM-Blandin Paper forestlands located within the township are available for hunting. While the Blandin lands are private, they are open to the public under a forest legacy easement which allows for public hunting. Permanent deer stands are not allowed on Itasca County, Forest Service or Blandin lands.

II. PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The intent of the Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan is to preserve and improve the character and quality of life in the Township. This section includes a description of the values that underlie the plan's goals as well as the strategies and specific actions that will be considered based on the ideas, interests and concerns articulated by the Township residents through the community survey and the July 2020 public meeting.

Township Values

1. It is important to provide an excellent quality of life for all residents.

Wabana Township residents enjoy living in a rural setting among people who share a sense of community. People of Wabana Township value their neighbors, look out for one another, volunteer their time, and are very active in social and civic activities. They take pride in the natural resources of the area, including the pristine lakes and forest land. They are environmentally concerned and use the natural resources wisely. They like to live in a clean, well-maintained area and appreciate feeling safe. People hold great interest in Wabana Township's long history.

Wabana Township residents have played an important role in preserving the forest and shoreline landscapes in the area. The Township is blessed with beautiful lakes, forests, and great topography. People are concerned about protecting the environment, using and developing land appropriately, and protecting water resources and critical wildlife habitat. Many residents are drawn back to the area because of fond childhood memories and the hope they can relive them there.

2. We want to retain the township's rural feel.

We believe it is important to preserve and protect the township's natural and cultural environment to sustain it for future generations. Wabana Township is blessed with beautiful lakes, trees, great topography, and a sense of community that is strongly felt by its residents. Residents are willing to be caretakers of the environment; they do not want to leave it bereft of value.

3. We will create space for housing that is compatible with other uses.

Township residents have concerns about what types of commercial uses and land development are compatible with a rural style of community life. They recognize there may be conflicts with any growth, and that occupations that began in private homes may eventually outgrow what had been originally seen as acceptable years later.

These issues have been discussed in many forums. These include varying types of housing, planned unit developments, and intensified growth around lake areas that are important to the economy and lifestyle of the community. Wabana Township has a clear and consistent record stating it does not support the development of controlled access lots or private lake

accesses for second-tier or non-riparian development. The concerns are that this type of development can create conflicts near quiet residential areas, harm environmentally sensitive areas on lakes, and increase lake uses with the potential for environmental harm.

The ideal goal for housing in the Township would be to offer single-family residential housing in the lakes area that provide for generational families to reside and enjoy the northern character of the area. Many of those surveyed expressed that they have resided in or owned their family home-sites for many years and want to maintain them for their children's children. Just as many love the quiet, scenic, and beautiful lakes area and want to protect it from overcrowding, perhaps the County Board should consider zoning that offers diversity throughout the County.

4. We value growth that is sustainable.

Growth and development are not all bad. They can bring a new tax base, new and different types of housing stock, and enhanced community vitality. A balance needs to be struck by using different regulatory tools to protect the sensitive nature of the area while still allowing growth to happen slowly and deliberately. Too much development may kill the serene nature of this area, so careful management and planning can protect what exists today.

Significant development of any of the available large tracts around the lakes would increase housing density, reduce forest land base, and increase the potential for shoreline erosion that could impact water quality. Controlled growth away from the lakes could be a positive way for the township to grow the tax base.

Limited growth is projected since there is not much buildable land, especially around the lakes. Major growth of single dwelling housing or commercial facilities is not likely. Planned unit development or multiple family dwellings are possible, but not likely; they are currently prohibited within 1,000 feet of any lakeshore. Some of the private lakeshore could be sold, divided, and developed as single dwellings which could result in up to 80+ additional households.

5. Building partnerships and strengthening external relationships is essential to accomplishing our goals.

Achieving the Township's goals and visions as outlined in this document is dependent on having strong relationships with a multitude of partners. Moving forward, it is critical to establish, maintain and strengthen relationships with the following entities:

- WCOLA (Wabana Chain of Lakes Association)
- Itasca County, including the Department of Environmental Services, the Land Department, the Board of Commissioners, and the Sheriff's Department
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, including the divisions of Parks and Trails, Enforcement, Conservation Officers, Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife, Ecological and Water Services
- United States Forest Service, including the recreation and forest management functions.
- Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

It would be desirable to establish at least annual meetings with these entities since they are responsible for the management and oversight of most of the public and private resources within the Township. The development of this Comprehensive Plan has led to greater interaction and communication with many of these functional managers and groups, and building on that work will assure better ongoing communication and foster greater trust. Being considered a progressive, positive partner by these organizations is a desirable goal.

Goals & Objectives

The planning process identified the following goals and objectives that will help achieve the plan's vision as found earlier in the document (pages 17-19). The implementation strategies and action plans to achieve these goals are described in the following pages.

Goal #1: Preserve the Township's natural resources.

- A. Ensure water quality is protected at a high level.
- B. Develop a coordinated plan for aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention and containment.
- C. Protect shorelines from erosion.
- D. Protect Wabana Township forests.
- E. Minimize conflict between land uses.

Goal #2: Provide facilities and recreational opportunities for the Township's residents.

- A. Maintain safe and efficient township roads.
- B. Provide Wabana Township property owners access to a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.
- C. Maintain and provide safe and accessible township facilities and assets.
- D. Plan for recreation that reflects changes in township usage patterns.

Goal #3: Work with other units of government to help achieve Township goals.

- A. Ensure the township has a clear understanding of public sector best practices related to land and water management.
- B. Improve safety for Township residents.
- C. Strengthen and expand working relationships with Itasca County and other Governmental agencies.

- D. Expand communication of Township government and promote community-wide activities with Wabana Township property owners.
- E. Encourage broader community participation in Township governance.

Goal #4: Ensure development throughout the Township occurs in an environmentally sustainable way.

- A. Maintain the Township’s rural, historical, and cultural environment.
- B. Define long-term plans for land and water use.
- C. Develop shoreland overlay rules and regulations.
- D. Define commercial and industrial development zones in the Township.

Strategies & Action Plans

Below are 13 strategies and subsequent action items that define the means for meeting the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The list includes significant inputs received from the community from the survey and community meeting. In some cases, the action plans will require a team of volunteers to achieve these strategies. Formation of and opportunities to be part of these teams will be announced on the Township website and in the *Warbler*.

Priority	Strategies & Action Items	Goals
1	<p>Develop a plan for creating a land use ordinance to address critical issues, including planned unit developments, cluster housing, backlot development, campgrounds, landfills, and gravel pits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Review and assess Wabana Township Ordinance 101 and make recommendations to the Township Board. The ordinance and moratorium are in place. Are they adequate? Can they be improved? Do they need to be continued or rewritten? B) Review and assess whether the existing regulations on minimum lot sizes and setbacks can be achieved while still managing appropriate development. C) Address what types of commercial and industrial development will be permitted, including storage units, within and outside of the shoreland overlay district. 	1,3,4

Priority	Strategies & Action Items	Goals
	<p>D) Develop shoreland overlay rules and regulations for water quality and economic perspectives that would best work with the mission of the Township.</p> <p>E) Address how to grandfather existing resorts in the regulations, including guidelines spelling out what established resorts are permitted to do.</p> <p>F) Research the feasibility of requiring an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) or an environmental impact study (EIS) for proposed developments.</p> <p>G) Address shoreline protection best practices, including a permit review process and education programs for lakeshore owners.</p>	
	<p><i>Issue background: A few decades ago, lakes were populated mostly with seasonal cabins lightly used on weekends or summer vacations. This limited the housing density and lake crowding. The trend in recent years has been to tear down cabins and replace them with large year-round homes. As a result, township land values have increased, along with property taxes. Additionally, there has been more stress on the lakes through expanded usage. New developments and home construction should be designed to blend in with the surrounding environment, including the color of the structure</i></p> <p><i>The Township does not want planned unit developments, back-lot development with lake access, campgrounds, RV/trailer parks, or multiple dwellings on a single lot anywhere within the township and the shoreland district. As it currently stands, the shoreland overlay district, Ordinance 101 and the associated moratorium prohibit any of these developments. Subdividing old resorts, however, could become a concern since they are governed by a different set of rules regarding development.</i></p>	
2	<p>Develop plans for managing water surface usage and maintaining water quality.</p> <p>A) Provide education and resources to resort and short-term rental operators with boat accesses about how to preserve lake water quality.</p> <p>B) Organize training sessions for the Township board and planning committees about the township's roles in maintaining the water quality of area lakes.</p> <p>C) Investigate research on wake boat usage and how to minimize impact on shorelines.</p> <p>D) Investigate water surface zoning in coordination with Itasca County.</p> <p>E) Address dock ownership issues.</p>	1, 3, 4

Priority	Strategies & Action Items	Goals
	F) Educate shoreland owners about the detrimental effects of fertilizer use on water quality.	
3	<p>Develop a cooperative approach to address aquatic invasive species (AIS) management for Wabana Township lakes.</p> <p>A) Develop working partnerships with WCOLA, Itasca County Soil and Water, and Minnesota DNR.</p> <p>B) Continue the partnership between Wabana Township and WCOLA for Itasca County AIS inspectors.</p> <p>C) Obtain an AIS decontamination unit.</p> <p>D) Develop an AIS Rapid Response and Prevention Plan and explore funding for initial AIS response.</p> <p>E) Develop a plan for management of Lake Wabana public boat accesses that considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can AIS inspector hours be increased, and can they be set for peak hours and days? • AIS management relies on working with public agency managers. Is it possible to manage or limit lake access to control AIS if there are no inspectors available? • How can the public accesses be better managed, and what does management entail? • How should parking be managed? Can parking at the northwest landing be improved or expanded? 	1,3
4	<p>Develop a plan for first responder and emergency services in the Township that includes utilizing available volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate Balsam and other townships' experiences with first responders. • We can train people to be first responders; the primary requirement is a willingness to help. The local ambulance service can provide training. 	3
5	<p>Develop a Township communications plan using available resources (<i>Warbler</i>, website, etc.) to gather input from and better inform residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit input and ideas to improve communications within the Township both for the website and the <i>Warbler</i>. 	3
6	<p>Make Township meetings accessible to all using the best available technology.</p>	3

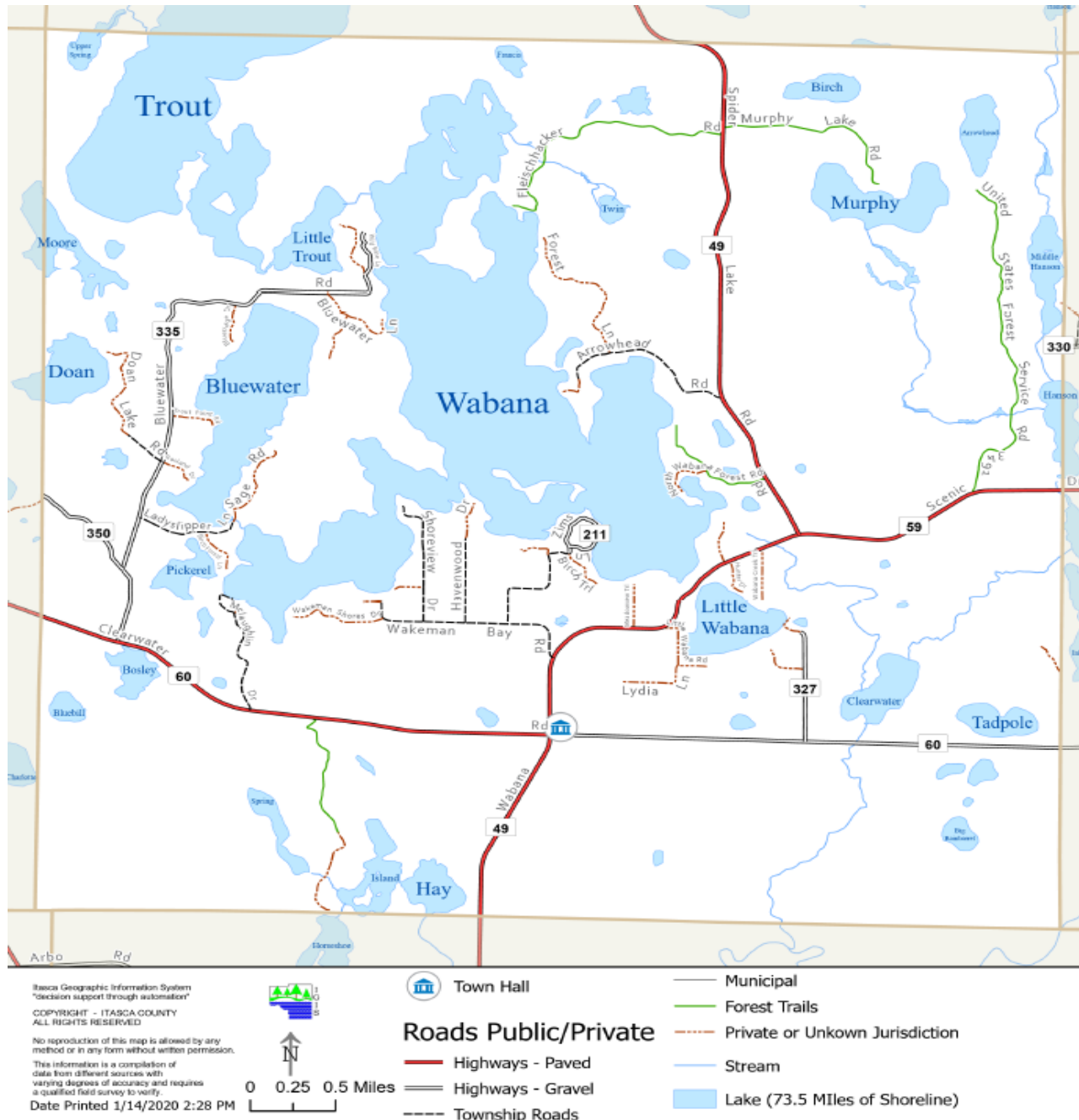
Priority	Strategies & Action Items	Goals
7	<p>Continue discussions with Minnesota DNR regarding the future of School Trust Land within the Township.</p> <p><i>Issue background:</i> The Minnesota School Trust Fund was created in 1859 for the purpose of providing a continued source of funding for public education in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources serves as the trustee for the 2.5 million acres of School Trust land.</p> <p>A significant amount of School Trust lands (1,350 acres) is located within Wabana Township, including both forested and riparian lands. The DNR manages this land by promoting revenue-generating activities that are also protective of the natural resources (for example, harvestable timber and mine land leases). The riparian lands located on Wabana Lake alone include more than four miles of shoreline. The undeveloped shoreline provides many environmental and aesthetic benefits along with opportunities for public recreation (camping and hunting).</p> <p>During the Township’s comprehensive planning process, a dialog with the Minnesota DNR Forestry Division’s trust land manager was established. As a result, the township developed a better understanding of Trust Fund objectives as they relate to lands located within the township.</p> <p>The Wabana Township board and Advisory Committee support the ongoing management of these lands by the DNR. They also strongly support keeping these lands undeveloped and in public ownership. Privatization or sale of these lands could have significant adverse impacts on the Wabana Chain of Lakes.</p>	1,3,4
8	<p>Working with WCOLA, communicate key comprehensive planning issues with Itasca County (e.g., short-term rentals, septic systems, parking, etc.).</p> <p><i>Issue background:</i> Short-term rentals are vehicles for homeowners to rent out their facilities online. These kinds of establishments could be considered like motels or resorts, but they are not regulated. A major concern is a lack of health-oriented requirements along with concerns over potentially inadequate septic systems. Residential properties have septic systems sized for family use. When operated as commercial property, the septic systems could be overwhelmed. Some of the properties at times have been a nuisance due to overcrowding, partying, and noise. The State and County are developing regulations to address these properties.</p>	3,4
9	<p>Create a committee focused on improving and maintaining the Township’s recreational facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the ball field so the space can be used for other activities (i.e. football, golf, soccer, etc.) • Updating the playground equipment, tennis courts, hockey rink, beach, community center • Public wi-fi at the Township Hall • Continued maintenance and development of the trail system (ATV, hiking, biking, snowmobile trail) • Assessing the need for local daycare resources • Investigate installing more portable toilets on the west side of Lake Wabana (on the point) where we’ve seen a large increase in the number of people swimming and gathering. There is a 	2,3

Priority	Strategies & Action Items	Goals
	campsite with toilet facilities nearby, but it was not designed for the number of people who gather there.	
10	Explore needed transportation improvements in the Township, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roads • biking lanes • dust control 	2
11	Develop regular dialog with the U.S. Forest Service and the Minnesota DNR concerning Wabana Chain of Lakes campsites and other facilities.	3,4
12	Solicit input from seasonal Township residents about services they desire.	2,3
13	Develop and strengthen Wabana Township Planning Commission's working relationship and collaboration with the Itasca County Board of Commissioners, Environmental Services and Land Departments, U.S. Forest Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and State and County Soil and Water agencies.	1, 3, 4

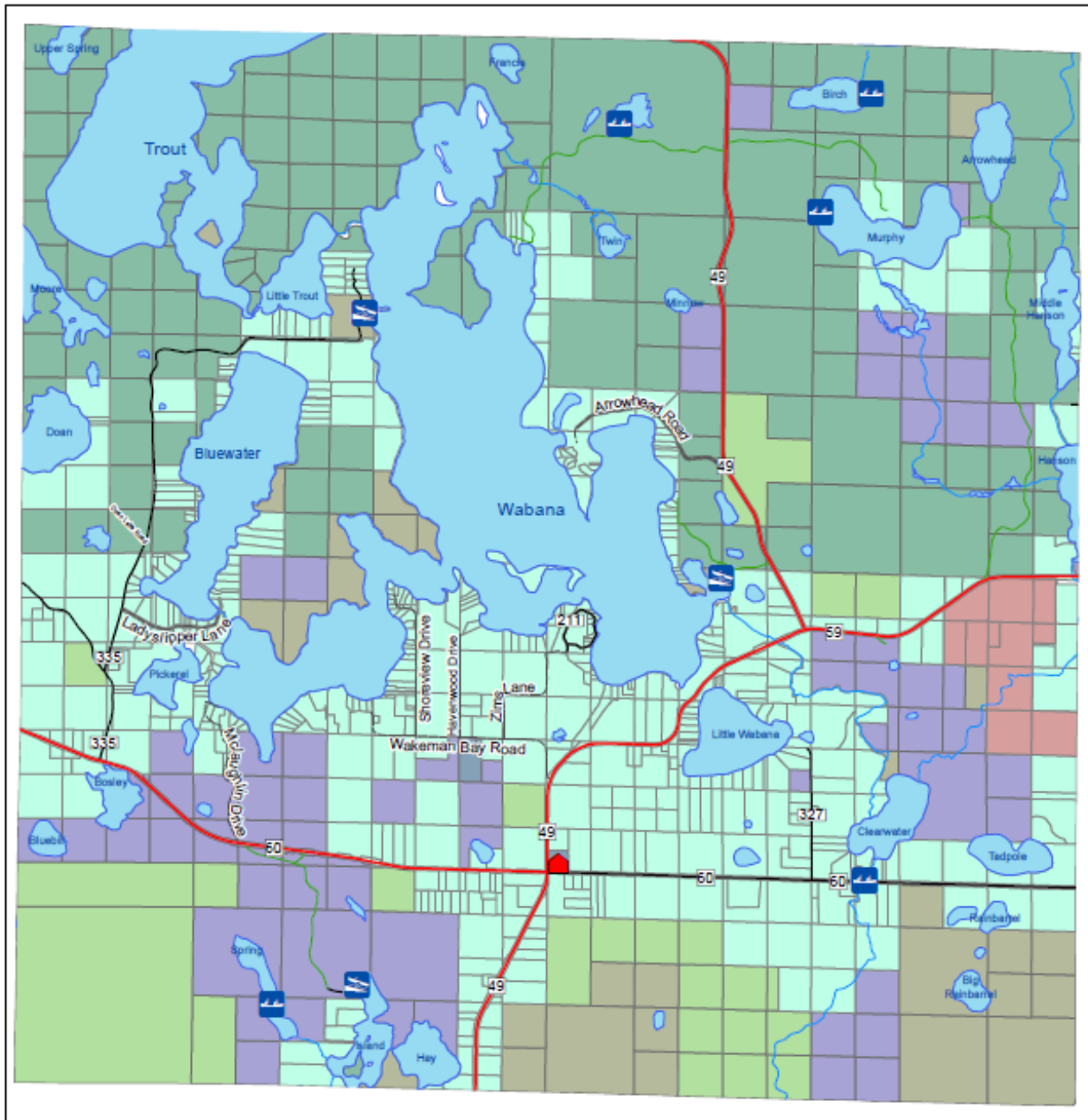
III. APPENDIX

Appendix A. Township Maps

Township Roads



Land Use in Wabana Township



The Data is provided "as is" without warranty or any representation of accuracy, timeliness or completeness. The burden for determining accuracy, completeness, timeliness, merchantability and fitness for the appropriateness for use rests solely on the requester. The County makes no warranties, express or implied, as to the use of the Data. There are no implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. The requester acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the Data, including the fact that the Data is dynamic and is in a constant state of maintenance, correction and update.

This information is a compilation of data from different sources with varying degrees of accuracy and requires a qualified field survey to verify.

Name: Wabana_Twp_Comp_Plan_2020
Date: 11/10/2020



ITASCA Geographic Information System
"Decision support through automation"

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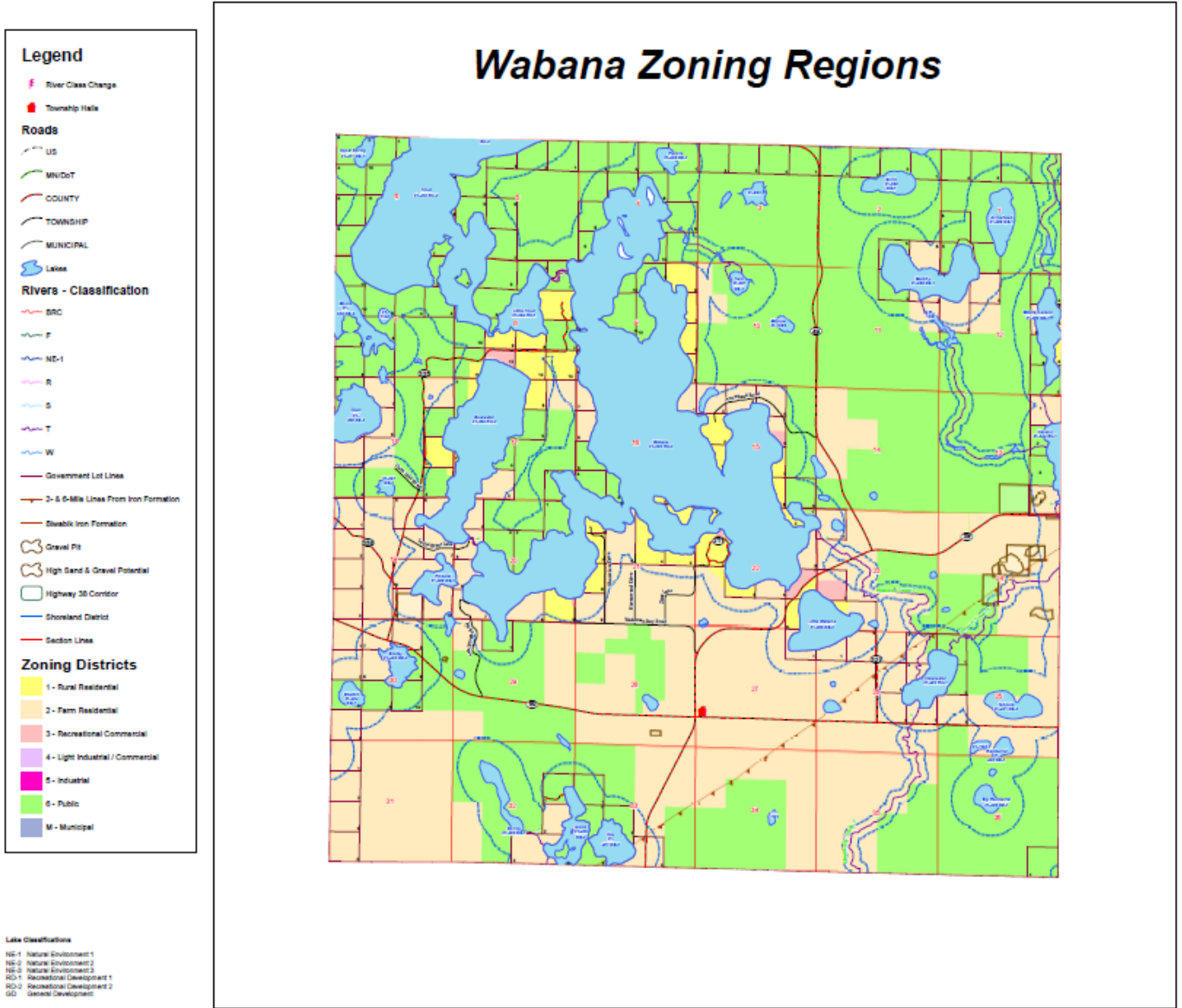
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Legend

Type	Land Use
US/State Highway	Privately Held Lands
County Road - Paved	County, "Six Forked"
County Road - Gravel	Industrial Forest
Township Roads	Schwartz Lands LLC
Municipal	State of Minnesota
Forest Trails	Township
Lakes	USA
Rivers	
Carry-in	
Trailer Launch	
Town Hall	

Wabana Township Zoning Map



Lake Classifications

NE-1 Natural Environment 1
 NE-2 Natural Environment 2
 NE-3 Natural Environment 3
 RD-1 Recreational Development 1
 RD-2 Recreational Development 2
 GD General Development

River Classifications

BCB Big Lake River Corridor
 F Forested
 NE-1 Natural Environment 1
 R Riparian
 S Sandstone - Mississippi
 T Tributary
 W Wild - Mississippi

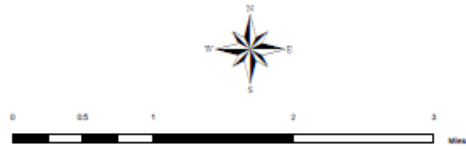
Alphanumeric characters inside of the lake boundaries and along streams and rivers represent MN DNR identification and classification designations.

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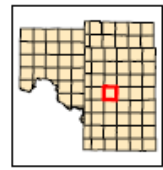
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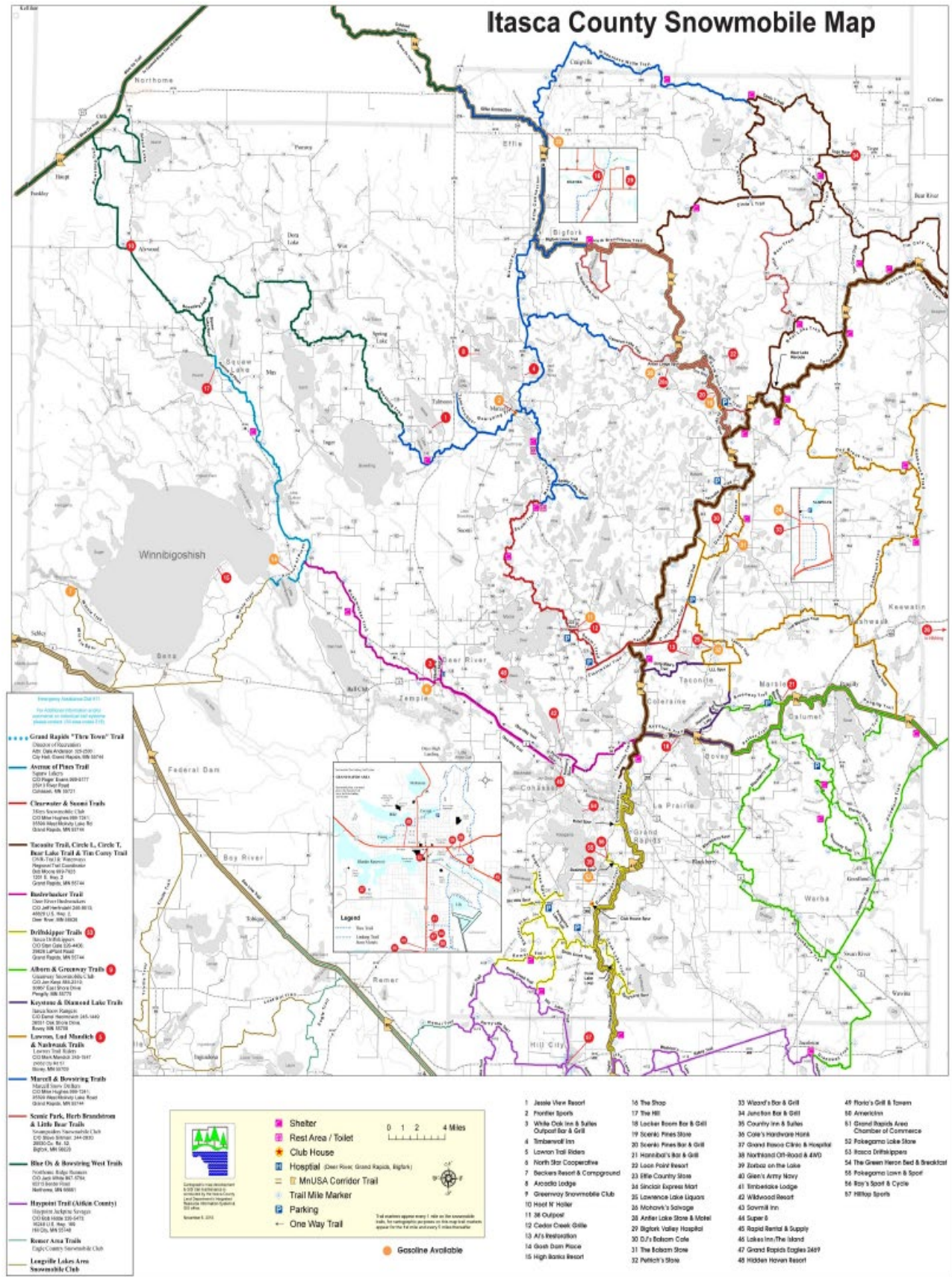
Esri's Geographic Information System
 "decision support through automation"



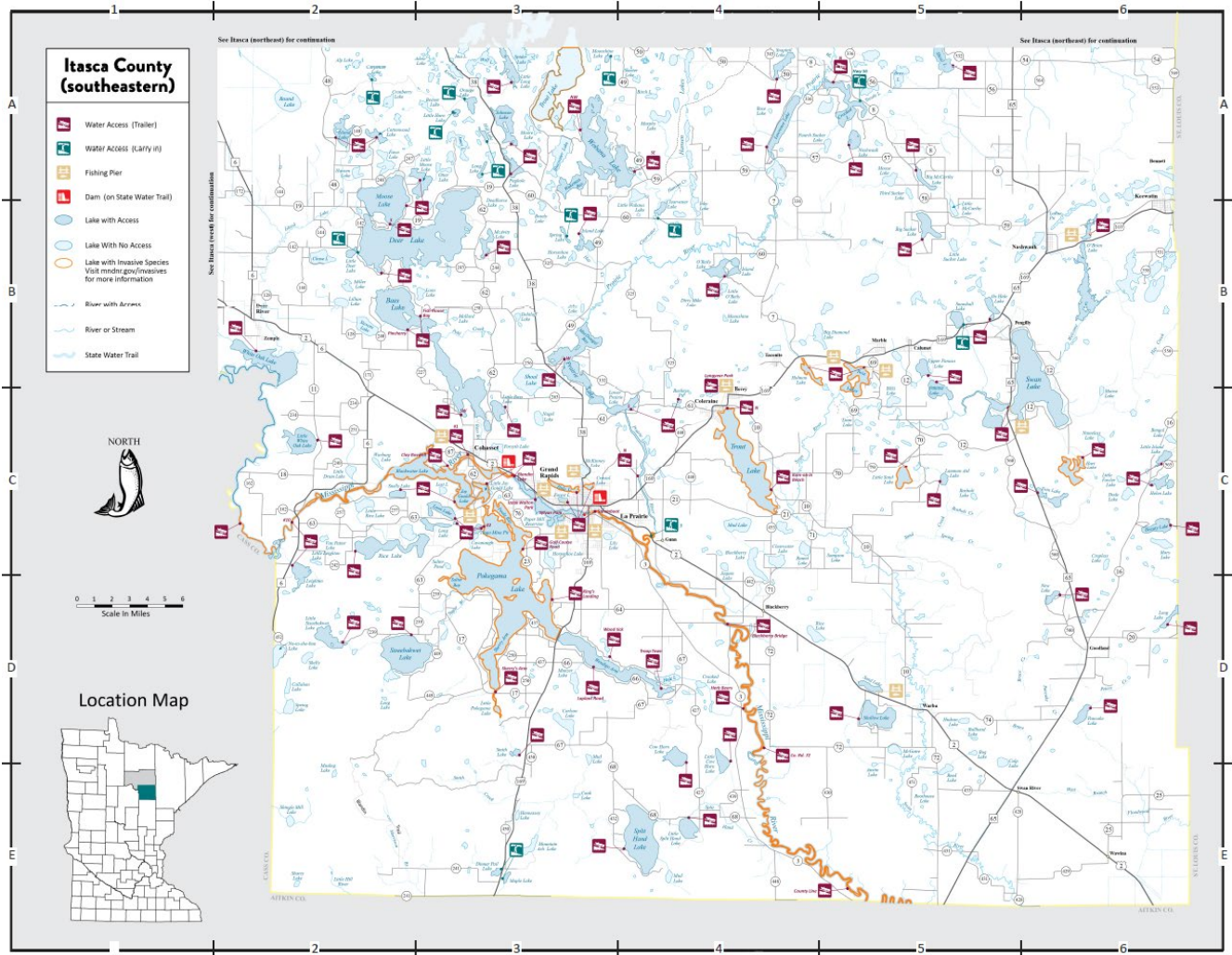
Index Map

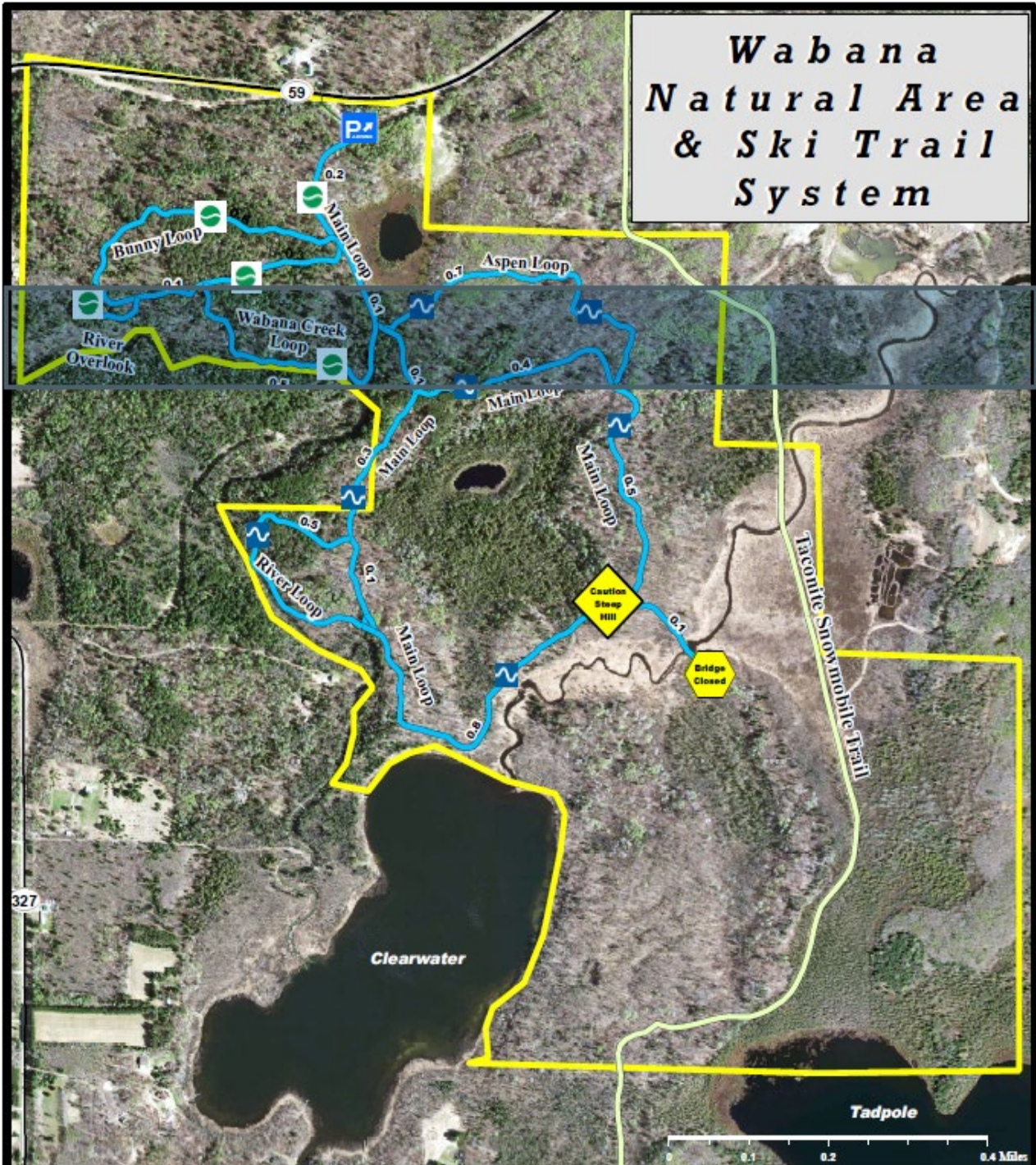


Itasca County Snowmobile Map





Water Access





Wabana Natural Area & Ski Trail System

Wabana Ski Trail System
 Beginner to Intermediate - 6 miles

-  Easier/Beginner
-  More Difficult/Intermediate

Wabana Natural Area: This 470 acre area was established by county board action in 1974. It consists primarily of mixed aspen-birch, spruce-fir and lowland conifer forests. It is managed by the Itasca County Land Department. No motorized use allowed unless on existing access corridors only.

Directions:
 Located 14 miles northeast of Grand Rapids off Highway 38.
 Go north Hwy 38 north 7 miles. Take left onto Co Rd 49 for 8 miles.
 Continue straight on to County Road 59 for .4 miles after Co Rd 49 Intersection.

Legend

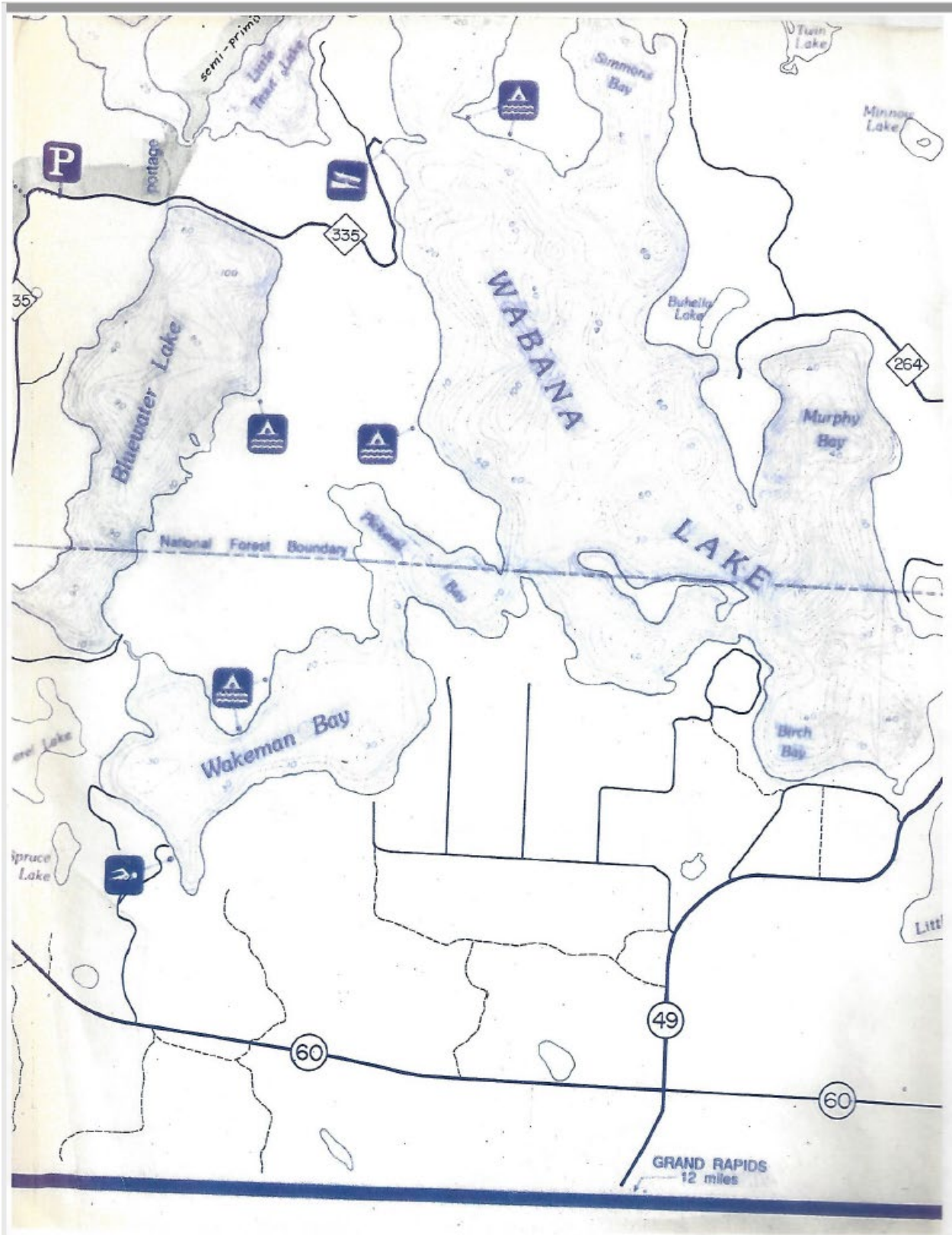
-  Cross-Country Ski Trails
-  Snowmobile Trails
-  Wabana Wildflower Sanctuary





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 October 2020

Boat-In Camping Sites



Appendix B. Wabana Township Planning Commission

The Township Board will define and formalize its roles in the near future.

The Wabana Township Planning Commission will consist of five to seven interested residents appointed by the Township Board to advise the Board on issues related to Comprehensive Plan maintenance, land development, zoning changes, permit reviews, conditional use reviews and variance request reviews. The Planning Commission shall exercise all other duties as determined by the Township Board.

The Commission will develop a charter with Township Board approval and meet on an as-needed basis.

Appendix C. The Lakes and Water Quality

WCOLA's Role

The lakes of Wabana Township are very important: they are an integral part of the community and need to be maintained in their pristine state. The Wabana Township Board has partnered with the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association (WCOLA) to help keep these lakes clean, clear and free of invasive species. One such partnership is funding for Itasca County AIS inspectors to staff the two Wabana public boat launches and to train the resort operators with lake access. WCOLA is dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of the environment of the lakes and lakeshores in the Wabana Chain of Lakes and the surrounding area.

The Wabana Chain of Lakes Association (WCOLA) has organized and paid for water testing for the Wabana Chain. Testing of Secchi readings (water clarity depth) started in 1975 and water testing for chemical properties began in 1991. RMB Labs has prepared the following summary reports on each of the lakes in the Wabana Chain using much of the data WCOLA provided along with data from the MPCA.

Little Trout: https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/LittleTrout_31-0394-00_rev.pdf

Bluewater: https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Bluewater_31-0395-00_rev.pdf

Little Wabana: https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/LittleWabana_31-0399-00_rev.pdf

Wabana: https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Wabana_31-0392-00.pdf

Trout: https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Trout_31-0410-00.pdf

Water Surface Zoning

With 26 lakes in Wabana Township, water surface zoning may become a necessary tool at a future date to enhance the recreational use, safety and enjoyment of lakes and rivers and to help preserve them as natural resources. Keeping our lakes pristine requires low population density, proper septic systems designed for their use, minimized run off, and keeping out AIS.

All water surface use management starts at the local unit of government (township, city or county). Any ordinance proposed by the local unit of government must have a hearing and be approved by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources before it takes effect.

Water surface use zoning can address a variety of lake uses, including no wake zones, motor size, types or limits, and speed limits. Any water surface zoning proposal in the township would be coordinated with Itasca County. A complete overview of this management tool can be found here: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/regulations/boatwater/surfaceusezoning.html>.

Water Quality

As mentioned previously, extensive data has been gathered over several decades both by Secchi readings as well as chemical sampling and analysis; this data provides the basis for scientific trend analysis. The effects of inadequate septic systems were clearly identified in the test results as were the positive effects of improved septic systems. The overall trends have been generally positive showing much better than the criteria for impaired lakes. A Water Quality Management Plan has been written for the Wabana Chain of Lakes describing the plans for monitoring and sampling the water quality for these lakes.

A recent study of lake water quality provides insight into lake water quality. Researchers chose a variety of study lakes and examined residential lakeshore property sales that occurred over a five-year span. They used a hedonic model to attribute the portion of purchase price that is attributed to environmental amenities, such as water quality. A Secchi disk was used to measure water clarity.

The results showed that water clarity has a significant positive relationship to property value. In other words, the better the water clarity, the more the property was worth. This result was true for each of the lakes in the study.

This study also revealed that property values change when a lake is improved or degraded. With a one-meter (3.3 ft) *decline* in water clarity, property prices *declined* by an average of \$70 per frontage foot, or \$14,000 for a 200-foot frontage lot. With a one-meter *increase* in water clarity, property prices *improved* by an average of \$46 per frontage foot, which corresponds to \$9,200 for a 200-foot frontage lot.

These results illustrate the importance of protecting lake water quality. Minnesota's lakes are extremely important to the recreation, beauty, peace, and individual property owners' investments.

A presentation by John Downing entitled, "What's up with our lakes," <https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Whats-up-with-our-lakesv2.pdf>) describes where our lake waters come from. Several other important topics concerning our lake quality can be found on the WCOLA website. Extensive reports on water quality and trends have been prepared by RMB Labs for the Wabana chain of lakes and can also be viewed at <https://wcola.org/find-the-latest-information-here/>.

Additional information about the classification of lakes in Wabana Township (and all other lakes in Minnesota) can be found here: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/shoreland-mgmt/guide/classification.html>

Water Quality Management Plan

A water quality management plan was written to maintain and improve the environment of the lakes and lakeshores in the Wabana Chain of Lakes and surrounding watershed area. Water quality is measured during the ice-off season by weekly Secchi disk readings at 10 sites on the chain of lakes and by periodic water chemical sampling and analysis by both WCOLA

volunteers and the MPCA. These actions provide a measure of the health of the lakes including clarity and the ability to detect changes in the chemical make-up of the water.

Excellent water quality and managing the spread of aquatic invasive species can be achieved by promoting environmentally sound practices through education, monitoring, testing and inspection processes. Cooperation with appropriate governmental agencies and lake and water-oriented associations will also be necessary. The plan can be found here: <https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Wabana-Chain-of-Lakes-Association2.pdf>

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) have quickly become serious problems throughout the state. Thankfully Wabana Township, as yet, has no observed infestations. Many lakes in the area have one or more types of AIS infestations. Significant actions have been taken and need to be continued to keep our lakes clear of AIS. These actions include training of lay detectors and inspectors, regular publications of materials to identify and help prevent AIS, disseminating resort and camp AIS prevention packages, providing special welcome packages for those new to the lakes, funding trained AIS inspectors at the boat landings, walk through inspections around the shorelines, participating in County-led AIS seminars, and planning for a future decontamination station. An AIS Rapid Response Plan has been developed in case of detection of an infestation. An AIS risk assessment along with packages prepared for resorts and camps have been completed for the chain of lakes and can be found on the WCOLA web site.

AIS boat inspections at public accesses will continue to be staffed at least five days per week during the open water season. This effort is funded in part WCOLA in partnership with Wabana Township, Itasca County Soil and Water, and the State of Minnesota.

Information and education are provided to the chain of lakes users about AIS issues and preventative actions we all might take. Additionally, a program entitled “5 Star Designation” can be awarded to any lake service provider who works to reduce possible AIS infestations and commits to a set of rules. These providers have signed up to provide services that are AIS-compliant. For more information on this initiative and Itasca County’s AIS efforts, go to the Itasca County’s web page: <https://www.itascaswcd.org/programs/aquatic-invasive-species>.

Two of the resorts on the Wabana chain of lakes have gained 5 Star accreditation. WCOLA continues to financially support government agencies’ actions to educate resorts, lake service providers and marine oriented businesses on AIS prevention and concerns.

AIS Rapid Response Plan

The objective of the WCOLA AIS Rapid Response Plan is to define a plan of action to quickly react to an AIS infestation. The plan is intended to enable a head start should a concern arise and provide a step-by-step process to follow. It is also intended to provide lake residents with knowledge of the issues involved, funding required, education opportunities, and re-

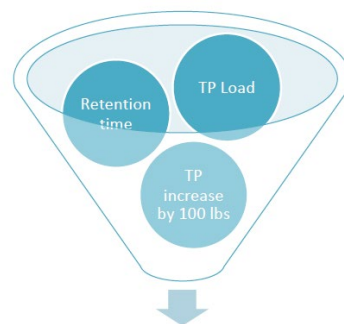
sponsibilities. The plan (July 2018) can be found here: <https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/WCOLA-Rapid-Response-Plan-Approved.pdf>. Emergency funds for initial AIS response for all Wabana Township lakes should be considered.

Shoreline Preservation

Lake quality is highly dependent upon the natural forest land, shoreline filtering, and the effectiveness of septic systems. Both the chemical make-up of the water and water clarity are influenced by housing density, runoff from lawns and the potential for septic leakages. Thankfully, we are blessed with considerable natural forest surrounding the larger township lakes, specifically Wabana, Little Wabana, Bluewater, Trout and Little Trout. However, there are several large tracts of privately held water frontage, as well as tracts of School Trust and tax-forfeited land. If this land was sold and developed, housing density could increase dramatically while reducing natural forest land. Considerable effort has already been taken to improve the septic systems in Wabana Township, and a new County effort has begun to encourage testing with low interest loans offered for making septic system improvements. Additionally, a large tract of Wabana Lake shoreline is being set aside as a land trust to prohibit future development. Preventing over-development of other large acreage can be accomplished by enforcing lot sizes, minimum frontage and setbacks along with prohibiting PUD and RV type campgrounds within 1,000 feet of shorelines. Shoreland runoff without adequate buffer zones is another problem area.

Paul Radomski, DNR Lake Ecologist, has suggested using the Clean Water Fund to focus on preserving the quality of high-value lakes rather than cleaning up impaired lakes to provide the greatest return on investment. Currently there are more than 600 nutrient-impaired lakes in the state of Minnesota. In Itasca County, there are eight impaired lakes (out of a total of 1,251 lakes). Many times, treatments of impaired lakes do not achieve the goals of cleaning up the lake and there is no return on investment.

The DNR has developed a model to predict the economic benefits seen by working on high-value lakes. One of the inputs for the benefit calculation is Mean Total Phosphorus (Mean TP), and then a lake's sensitivity to the total phosphorus load and what impact TP had on water clarity, measured by Secchi disk readings.



Sensitivity = Loss in water transparency (inches)

Radomski's presentation focused on a few Itasca County Lakes, and Bluewater Lake was one of his examples because of its high sensitivity index value for a large lake. Using the DNR's model, the results indicate that seven to eight feet of water clarity are lost per 100 pounds

of phosphorus entering the lake, and that a four-pound/year phosphorus reduction goal would see an increase in water clarity of about a foot in three years.

A review of the Secchi data collected by lake residents shows that Bluewater Lake has had a decrease in water clarity over the last eight years. A big improvement was seen from 2005 to 2010 due to the new septic initiative that Wabana Township implemented, but since then the clarity has been decreasing.

One of the best ways to improve water clarity is to reduce shoreland run-off. Many great ideas for shoreland management can be found in the Itasca Waters Shoreline Guide (<http://itascawaters.org/shoreland-guide-2018>). RMB Labs Bluewater Water Quality report and Paul Radomski's data charts can be found at <https://wcola.org/find-the-latest-information-here/>.

Water Quality Initiatives With Resorts and Camps

A resort/camp information package to help resorts and camps educate their customers about using the area lakes has been developed. The package includes information about boat cleaning, AIS identification and other precautions. The information package can be viewed at: <https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WCOLA-Info-for-Resorts-package.docx>

Appendix D. Resorts and Camps in Wabana Township and on the Wabana Chain of Lakes

Trout Lake

Britton's Trout Lake Resort (32482 County Rd 326, Bovey, MN 55709)

5 Star qualified and AIS trained. Extensive shore line and eight cabins. This resort does not reside within Wabana Township.

Little Trout Lake

There are no resorts or landings on this lake.

Little Lake Wabana

Jasper's Resort (36418 Hunter Drive, Grand Rapids, MN 55744)

The property consists of three cabins and some camping space. There is one landing on WaGaThaKa property.

Lake Wabana

Birch Bay Resort (30711 Zims Lane, Grand Rapids, MN 55744).

5 Star qualified and AIS trained. The site consists of eight cabins with lots of shoreline and private boat landing.

WaGaThaKa Resort (36363 Wabana Lake Road). The resort includes 11 cabins and a historic lodge.

Murphy's Landing Resort (30177 Arrowhead Rd, Grand Rapids, MN 55744) includes 11 cabins.

Wabayo Resort (31784 Wakeman Bay Road, Grand Rapids, MN 55744).

Landings:

- Public landing at the south end is AIS monitored
- Public landing on the northwest side is AIS monitored

Bluewater Lake

Camp Fire Camp (37508 Bluewater Road, Grand Rapids, MN 55744).

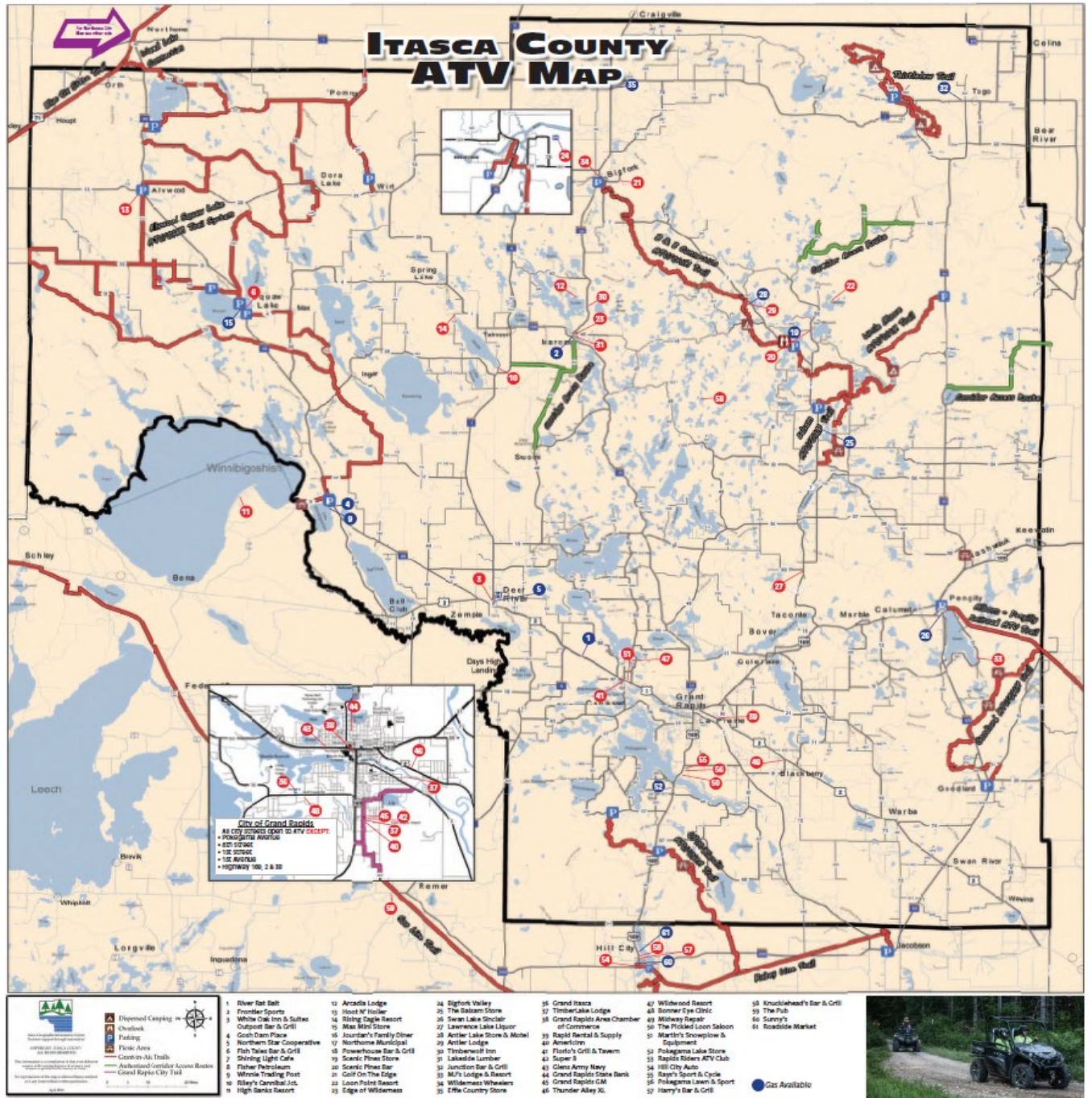
Bluewater Bible Camp (38400 Bluewater Road, Grand Rapids, MN 55744).

Landings

- No public landings
- One private landing is available at the Bluewater Bible Camp

Channels and creeks connect Wabana to Bluewater and Little Trout Lakes and further to Trout Lake. These are navigable by small boats, thereby connecting several lakes for cruising. The “no wake” signs should be obeyed since there are loon nests along the shorelines. Motors can also disturb the creek bottom and release harmful chemicals trapped by the sediment.

Appendix E. Grant-In-Aid Trails Information and Policy



OHV

Off Highway Vehicle



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

An off-highway vehicle (OHV) is a term referring to all-terrain vehicles (ATV), off-highway motorcycles (OHM) and 4-wheel drive trucks.

Chippewa National Forest OHV Policy

The Chippewa National Forest is implementing the November 2007 OHV Road Travel Access decision. This policy applies only to Chippewa National Forest lands, trails and roads.

Where to Ride

- OHV use is allowed only on roads that are designated open for such use, as marked on the Motorized Vehicle Use Map.
- Forest Service roads are identified and signed with a number at their main intersection with other roads.
- Designated roads include both low standard and higher standard roads. Please show caution when sharing a road with passenger vehicle traffic.

Low standard roads are Forest Service roads planned, constructed, and maintained for future-management use. They are managed for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not encouraged.

High standard roads are Forest Service roads managed for passenger car traffic. Specific high standard roads are open for OHV use. Please show caution when sharing a road with passenger vehicle traffic.

Get the Map

To locate Forest Service roads and trails a free *Chippewa National Forest Motorized Vehicle Use (MVU)* map is available showing numbered roads on the Forest open to OHVs. The map is available at national forest offices in Blackduck, Cass Lake, Deer River and Walker. The black and white MVU map is updated annually. Make sure you have the most recent copy.

Where Not to Ride

- Cross-country motorized travel off of system roads and designated motorized trails is prohibited.
- Big game retrieval and other OHV use such as bear baiting or trapping is prohibited off designated system roads or trails is prohibited.
- All roads open to OHVs will be temporarily closed during the spring break-up period between March 15 and May 1 each year.
- About 110 miles of roads open to OHVs will be affected by seasonal closures to protect habitat for endangered, threatened or sensitive species.

This policy only involves National Forest system land, trails, and roads on the Chippewa National Forest. Contact other public land agencies for their specific OHV policies.

Get Involved in the Trail Planning Process

Planning for additional OHV connector trails and opportunities will soon occur. Federal, tribal, state and local government agencies will work together to identify these opportunities across multiple ownerships. Public meetings will provide you an opportunity to comment on the specific proposals.



Chippewa National Forest OHV

OHV Planning – What you can do:

Mailing List

Contact one of the offices listed below and ask to be added to the forest wide mailing list to receive OHV info. You will receive notification of public meetings, and proposed projects as part of OHV planning.

Talk to Law Enforcement officials and land managers

To clarify where to ride, ask questions. OHV riders want to be responsible trail users. Managers want to know more about where users want to ride.

Check the NEPA Quarterly Newsletter

Four times a year, each Forest Service District Ranger announces current and upcoming project proposals (including roads and trails) in the NEPA Quarterly. The NEPA Quarterly is available by mail, at all Forest Service administrative offices or online at www.fs.fed.us/forest/chippewa/publications. For each project proposal, public comments are accepted for a specific period of time.

Pocket Reference Card

OHV POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- All cross-country OHV travel into the Chippewa National Forest off roads and trails is prohibited.
- The policy allows for OHV use only on National Forest roads and trails that are designated open for such use.
- ATV summer use is permitted on the Soo Line Trail.
- OHV use is prohibited in the Suomi, Trout Lake and North Winnie Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Areas and Non-Motorized trails like the North Country Scenic Trail
- OHV travel is not allowed in ditches and shoulders of National Forest roads.
- All National Forest roads open to OHV use are temporarily closed during spring break-up March 15 to May 1 each year.
- Seasonal closures to protect habitat will be posted.
- To locate Forest Service system roads and trails a free Chippewa Motorized Vehicle Use map is available showing numbered roads on the Forest open to OHVs.
- National Forest roads closed or open to OHV use may change due to monitoring of road conditions. Please contact the Chippewa National Forest annually for current road information and maps.



For More Information Contact:

Supervisor's Office, Chippewa National Forest
200 Ash Avenue NW, Cass Lake, MN 56633
PH: (218) 335-8600

Deer River Ranger District
1037 Division Street, Box 308
Deer River, MN 56636 PH: (218) 246-2123

Blackduck Ranger District
417 Forestry Drive, Blackduck, MN 56630
PH: (218) 835-4291

Walker Ranger District
201 Minnesota Ave. E., Walker, MN 56484
PH (218) 547-1044

www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/chippewa



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