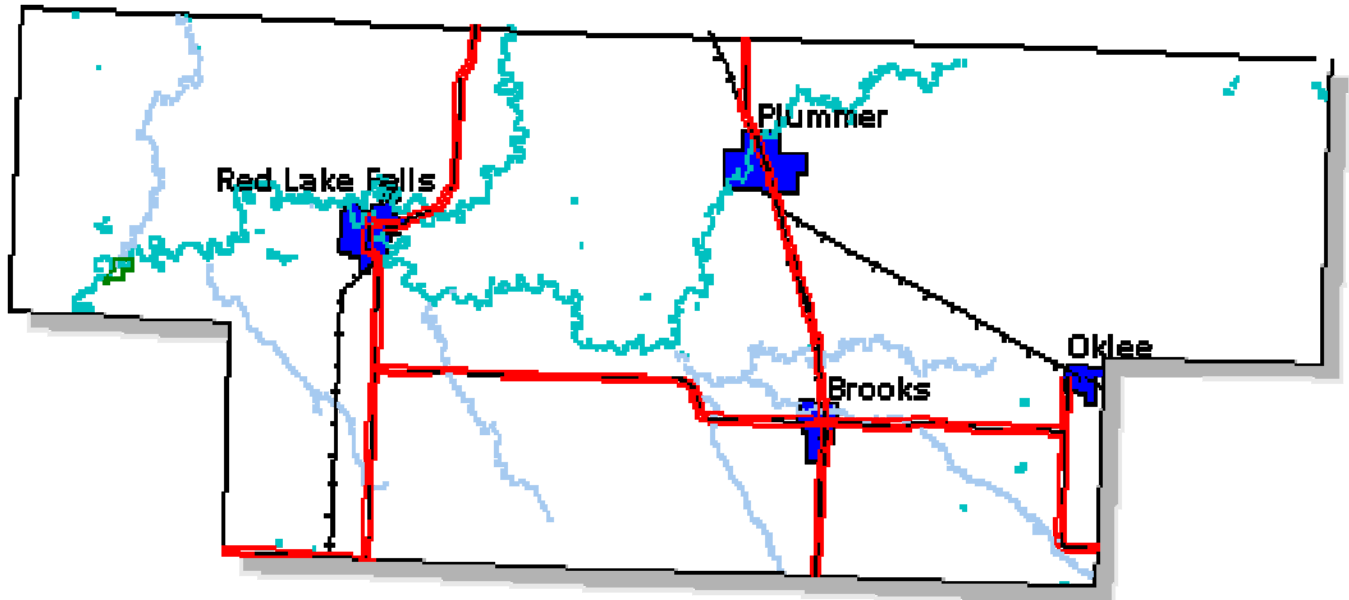


Red Lake County's Priority Concerns Scoping Document



A precursor to the Red Lake County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan.

The priority concerns scoping document of the Red Lake County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan was developed in accordance with the changes to the Comprehensive Local Water Management Act; Statutes 103B.304 – 103B.355. The scoping document lists the priority concerns the Red Lake County Water Management Advisory Committee has chosen, along with a detailed account of how the concerns were identified and selected.

**Tanya Hanson, Local Water Management Coordinator
Red Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District**

INTRODUCTION

Red Lake County is positioned in the northwestern corner of Minnesota. Red Lake County is 432 square miles, with 13 townships and 4 cities. The County seat is Red Lake Falls. The current population is 4,317 (2005 census).

Red Lake County Demographic Information

The 2005 census for Red Lake County was 4,317.

County	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000
Red Lake	5,388	5,417	4,525	4,481	4,299
City	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000
Brooks	163	173	136	153	141
Oklee	536	536	450	428	396
Plummer	285	353	290	279	270
Red Lake Falls	1,740	1,732	1,481	1,486	1,590

The four cities located within Red Lake County include: Red Lake Falls, Plummer, Oklee, and Brooks.

The thirteen townships located within Red Lake County include: Wylie, Browns Creek, River, Louisville, Red Lake Falls, Gervais, Emardville, Garnes, Equality, Lake Pleasant, Terrebonne, Poplar River, and Lambert.

Plan Information

On behalf of the 17 counties in Northwestern Minnesota, the Red Lake Watershed District submitted a grant proposal to LCMR in 1986. Funding for the grant proposal was approved by the Minnesota legislature in the spring of 1987, with authorization to begin the project July 1, 1987. The Northwest Minnesota CLWP project began with the establishment of a Joint Powers Board (JPB) on October 26, 1987. The object of the JPB was to allow participating counties to work together simultaneously to develop individual CLWP, but to reduce duplication of efforts while producing plans that were specific to each county.

The Northwest Minnesota JPB consisted of the following 15 counties: Becker, Clay, Grant, Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, Roseau, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilken.

Two of the original 17 applicants chose to join the Upper Mississippi Headwaters project instead of the NW MN JPB.

The JPB hired the International Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship in the Red River Basin to be the project manager for comprehensive water planning in the 15-county Northwest Minnesota planning area. Through this process, the original Red Lake County Comprehensive Local Water Plan was developed,

written, and approved.

Red Lake County initiated Water Planning in 1988 with the formation of the Red Lake County Water Plan Task Force. This committee was established to ensure that the planning process maintained a local focus and to provide the local knowledge base of county resources, problems, and procedures. It established the issues, goals, objectives, action plans and implementation strategies, and was the principle architect of the Red Lake County CLWP.

Red Lake County CLWP was finalized and implementation activities began in 1990. The Red Lake County Water Plan Task Force continued its work as an advisory board and changed its name to the Red Lake County Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC).

The Water Resources Advisory Committee continued throughout the 2nd Water Plan revision process up until 1999. In 1999, the Water Resources Advisory Committee was terminated because of lack of participation and input. The Red Lake County Board of Commissioners, as well as, the Red Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, became the Water Plan Task Force. The board is still the Water Plan Task Force today.

The expiration date of Red Lake County's third version of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan is February 26, 2008.

Major Watersheds in Red Lake County

Two major watershed areas drain the entire county. The Red Lake River and the Clearwater River (a tributary of the Red Lake River) drain towards the south and west into the Red River of the North. All water eventually drains westward to the Red River of the North and then northward.

RED LAKE RIVER WATERSHED:

The Red Lake River originates at the dam at the outlet of Lower Red Lake and flows in a westerly direction approximately 196 river miles to its confluence with the Red River of the North at East Grand Forks. There are two main tributaries to the Red Lake River. One is Thief River, which drains the northern part of the district and joins the Red Lake River in Thief River Falls.

CLEARWATER RIVER WATERSHED:

The second tributary is the Clearwater River, which drains the area south of the Red Lake River, which encompasses the eastern half of Red Lake County. There are about 1,347 square miles in this entire watershed. The Clearwater River empties into the Red Lake River at Red Lake Falls. The Lost, Hill, and Poplar Rivers are minor tributaries to the Clearwater River.

The Red Lake Watershed District has jurisdiction within these watersheds.

For more information about these two watershed district please refer to the Red Lake Watershed Districts website: <http://www.redlakewatershed.org/>

Landuse Statistics:

Below is a chart showing the land use statistics for the county.

LAND USE STATISTICS		
RED LAKE COUNTY	PERCENT	ACRES
FORESTED	10%	28,000
CULTIVATED	77%	215,523
WATER	< 1%	1,945
MARSH	2%	4,393
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	532
EXTRACTIVE	< 1%	535
PASTURE & OPEN	5%	13,252
NON / MIX RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	1,001
TRANSPORTATION	3%	8,173
FARMSTEAD / FEEDLOT	2%	5,020
TOTAL:	100%	278,374
RED LAKE WATERSHED	PERCENT	ACRES
FORESTED	10%	10,282
CULTIVATED	77%	77,183
WATER	1%	960
MARSH	1%	943
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	169
EXTRACTIVE	< 1%	498
PASTURE & OPEN	5%	5,243
NON / MIX RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	283
TRANSPORTATION	3%	2,922
FARMSTEAD / FEEDLOT	2%	1,815
Total:	100%	100,298
CLEARWATER WATERSHED	PERCENT	ACRES
FORESTED	10%	17,718
CULTIVATED	78%	138,340
WATER	< 1%	985
MARSH	2%	3,450
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	363
EXTRACTIVE	< 1%	37
PASTURE & OPEN	4.5%	8,009
NON / MIX RESIDENTIAL	< 1%	718
TRANSPORTATION	3%	5,251
FARMSTEAD / FEEDLOT	2%	3,205
Total:	100%	178,076

LIST OF PRIORITY CONCERNS

The Red Lake County CLWMP will address the following priority concerns:

Surface Water Quality & Impaired Waters - TMDLs

Water Quality is important to Red Lake County because of our recreational opportunities, along with the downstream domestic use of the water supply.

High priority areas and activities:

- a. Rivers and streams – identifying impaired waters
- b. Non-impaired waters – water quality protection
- c. Feedlots – agricultural waste management
- d. Source water supply – Cities of Crookston & EGF
- e. Recreational uses / Tourism Opportunities
 - i. Tubing
 - ii. Red River Corridor Enhancement Group
 - a. additional river accesses
 - b. canoe routes
 - c. portages
 - d. signage
 - e. city park improvements
 - iii. Fishing and Hunting
 - a. Beach Ridge – prairie chickens, sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge
 - b. Woodland – deer, moose, ruffed grouse, coyotes, and smaller wildlife
 - iv. Promotion of Tourism

Surface Water Quantity

Flooding causes loss of income to farmers which greatly impacts local economy, washes out roads and bridges, and contributes to sediment deposits in the rivers and streams.

High priority areas and activities:

- a. Flooding
 - i. Agricultural – ditch and outlet maintenance
 - ii. Overland – ditch improvements
- b. Drainage
 - i. Inadequate ditches – ditch and outlet maintenance
 - ii. Aging public ditch systems – abandonment or maintenance
 - iii. Subsurface drainage – impacts to water quality
 - a. TSS, TP, and high N
 - b. Less Tillage, Reduce Runoff, Increase Infiltration
- c. Drought
 - i. Bank Sloughing
 - ii. Water Management and Supply
- d. Beaver Control
 - i. Plugging ditches, culverts, and waterways

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality is important to Red Lake County because of all the public and private wells that are located throughout the county.

High priority areas and activities:

- a. Observation Wells – Three DNR Wells
- b. Wellhead Protection Plan
 - i. Red Lake Falls and Oklee – completed
 - ii. Plummer and MN Wheat Growers - needed

Erosion and Sedimentation

Erosion and Sedimentation are two issues that the County is always trying to and will always be trying to address, work on, and prevent.

High priority areas and activities:

- a. Map eroded areas – prioritize erosion control projects
- b. Tributary bank instability at outlets into river
- c. Shoreland degradation
 - i. Shoreland Ordinance
- d. Ditches that outlet into rivers and streams
 - i. filling streams and rivers with sediments
 - a. establishment of buffers
- e. Channelized portion of Clearwater River
- f. Ditch Bank Sloughing and Stabilization
- g. Sediment from Wild Rice Production
 - i. install drain tile
 - ii. install outlet structures
 - iii. install sedimentation ponds
- h. Wind Erosion
 - i. highly erodible fields
 - a. residue management
 - b. conservation tillage
 - c. field windbreaks

Unique Water / Land Related Resources

Red Lake County has several unique areas of interest.

High priority areas and activities:

- a. Prairie Remnants
- b. Old Treaty Crossing at Huot Park

PRIORITY CONCERNS IDENTIFICATION

The Red Lake County Local Water Management planning process of addressing priority concerns has included the following steps:

May 8, 2007: The Red Lake County Board of Commissioners signed a resolution to update the plan.

May 8, 2007: Notice of decision to update the plan, along with Priority Concerns Input form and a request for relevant plans was sent to local units of government: cities and townships; watershed district; environmental services; contiguous counties; and SWCD TSA 1.

May 8, 2007: Notice of decision to update the plan, along with Priority Concerns Input form and a request for relevant plans was sent to BWSR, DNR, MPCA, MDA, MDH, and the EQB.

May 8, 2007: Citizen Input Survey was distributed for publication to:

Red Lake Falls Gazette newspaper
Oklee Herald newspaper

June 1, 2007: Citizen Input Survey

There was only one returned survey that was received:

Brown's Creek Township Participant:

Top three concerns:

Erosion, Flooding, and Ditching

Resource most threatened:

Streams/Rivers

June 12, 2007: Red Lake County Local Water Management Advisory Committee meeting held in the conference room at the MN Wheat Growers. The committee reviewed the update process and developed a process to solicit public input. We did all we could do with the above mentioned efforts to try and obtain public input.

Participants:

Brian Dwight	BWSR, Board Conservationist
Ronald Weiss	County Commissioner
Velma Oakland	County Commissioner
David Bachand	SWCD Supervisor
David Miller	SWCD Supervisor
Les Hofstad	SWCD Supervisor
Mark LaCrosse	SWCD Supervisor
Orville Knott	SWCD Supervisor / Watershed Manager
Tanya Hanson	SWCD, District Manager
Wayne Weber	SWCD, District Engineer
Luther Newton	NRCS, District Conservationist

June 30, 2007: Priority Concerns Input Form Deadline

Concerns submitted by local units of government:

SWCD: Rachelle Winter & Bryan Malone, Pennington SWCD

1. Maintaining the Red Lake River as a tourist destination.
2. Maintain bluffs and prevent further development on or near bluffs.

Concerns submitted by state review agencies:

BWSR: Brian Dwight, Board Conservationist, Bemidji

1. Surface Water Quality
2. Maintain & Improve drainage practices of Ag. Land that reduce erosion and sediment delivery to the natural and created drainage systems
3. Improve the recreational opportunities on the Red Lake River

MDH: Beth Kluthe, Source Water Protection Unit, Bemidji

1. Protect ground water-based drinking water sources
2. Sealing unused, unsealed wells
3. Develop a local groundwater quality database

DNR: Michael Carroll, Regional Director, Bemidji

1. Flooding & Erosion Control
2. Groundwater Resource Protection

MPCA: Lisa Thorvig, Director of Municipal Division, St. Paul

1. Impaired Waters / TMDLs
2. Stormwater Issues, especially in and around the city of Red Lake Falls.
3. Feedlot Compliance – finding / fixing feedlot and land application runoff problems.

MDA: John Hines and Becky Balk, St. Paul

1. Manure Management and ISTS
2. Conservation Tillage and Drainage
3. Agricultural Chemical Use and potential impacts to unconfined shallow groundwater

November 13, 2007: Notice of CLWMP Public Meeting distributed for publication to:

Red Lake Falls Gazette newspaper
Oklee Herald newspaper

December 10, 2007: CLWMP Public Meeting was held at 8:00 a.m. in the conference room at the MN Wheat Growers. The regular SWCD Board meeting followed.

Participants:

PRIORITY CONCERNS SELECTION

The following priority concerns were selected by the LWM Advisory Committee, after examining the list of concerns submitted by citizens, local unit of governments, and state agencies, and will be the foundation of the Red Lake County CLWMP. Justification for the selected concerns is as follows:

Surface Water Quality & Impaired Waters – TMDLS

Portions of the Clearwater River (Dissolved Oxygen and Turbidity), County Ditch 57 (Dissolved Oxygen), Black River (Turbidity), Lost River (Fecal Coli form Bacteria), and Cyr Creek (Turbidity) are on the 2008 Impaired Waters List for MPCA. Surface Water Quality Protection needs to occur in the areas where TMDLs have not been identified.

Agricultural Waste Management Education needs to be promoted to inform producers on how to protect sensitive areas.

Surface water quality is a huge concern not only for the City of Crookston and the City of East Grand Forks who use the Red Lake River as a water supply source but also to Red Lake County who has many recreational uses for the river. Surface Water Quality needs to be monitored to protect future recreational and tourism opportunities throughout the county.

Surface Water Quantity

Flooding is a major issue throughout the county during spring runoff and heavy summer rainfall events. Drainage system maintenance and improvement is one area that needs to be addressed by local units of government and landowners. Drought is another concern because of the surface water supply needs. Beaver control is another area to help prevent overland flooding.

Groundwater Quality

DNR has three observation wells that are located within the county. Monthly monitoring is done to measure the groundwater level. Wellhead Protection Plans have been completed for both the City of Red Lake Falls and the City of Oklee. A Wellhead Protection Plan still needs to be completed for the City of Plummer. The City of Plummer is number 70 on the Wellhead Protection Phasing List.

Erosion and Sedimentation

Prioritization is needed of all the erosion areas within the county so that erosion control projects can correct issues before the area becomes too large and unmanageable. Shoreland degradation is occurring throughout the river systems. Ditches that outlet directly into the rivers are causing large sedimentation issues in the river. Wind Erosion is another issue where the promotion of residue management, conservation tillage, and the planting of field windbreaks could reduce the amount of soil that is being lost.

It is not possible to address all of the water related concerns that impact Red Lake County; however the four selected are broad enough to cover most of the concerns that were submitted, yet focused enough to achieve goals and action items with the staff and the

funding that is available. Detrimental impacts to Red Lake County's water resources would result if these priority concerns were not addressed.

Water and related land resource plans and official controls received

No relevant plans or official controls were received from the local units of government or state review agencies.

Identifying differences between priority concerns and existing plans

No known differences between any other local units of government or county plan exits with the priority concerns that were developed for the Red Lake County CLWMP.

Identification of Existing Plans that relate to Red Lake County CLWMP

The Red Lake County Water Resources Advisory Committee will relate to the portions of the Red Lake Watershed District 10-Year Overall Plan that are pertinent to Red Lake County.

The existing plans that are listed below add additional direction to Red Lake County's Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan when prioritizing our county concerns.

The Red Lake County Shoreland Ordinance, Red Lake County ISTS Ordinance, Red Lake County Feedlot Ordinance, Red Lake County SWCD Annual Plan of Operation, City of Red Lake Falls Wellhead Protection Plan, City of Oklee Wellhead Protection Plan, MPCA Red River Basin Water Quality Plan, Red Lake Watershed District 10-year Overall Plan, Red Lake Watershed District Annual Water Quality Report, Contiguous County's CLWMP, Red Lake River Corridor Enhancement Project, and Red Lake County NRCS Business Plan.

Future Steps

State agencies will be requested to provide additional information and data so a detailed assessment of the identified priority concerns will be done to identify the nature, extent and severity of the concern to assure the appropriate action items are identified.

The Red Lake County Local Water Management Advisory Committee will be working on Plan Development to define the goals and objectives, and then design an implementation program to address each of the four priority concerns. As required by Minnesota Statutes, a public hearing will be held to validate the focus of the final plan.

The plan will then be submitted for final state review and approval. When the plan is approved at the state level, it can be adopted by Red Lake County and implementation can begin.

PRIORITY CONCERNS NOT ADDRESSED BY THE PLAN

With the unallotment in 2003 and the continuing 43% decrease in CLWMP funding, staff and program limitations exist. Most of the concerns submitted will be addressed in the plan or, are existing issues in the county and will be identified as ongoing activities in the final plan. Additional concerns that were submitted but not selected as a priority concern and are not ongoing activities coordinated by the plan are being addressed by other local units of government that work closely with the SWCD.

SSTS (formerly ISTS) – Red Lake County Environmental Services

Stormwater Issues – Shoreland Officer, SWCD

Feedlot Compliance and Manure Management – Feedlot Officer, SWCD and NRCS