

# Kabekona Conservation: A Success Story



Photo: Catherine Holmgren





**Annie Knight**  
Executive Director

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**Northern Waters  
Land Trust**







# Northern Waters Land Trust

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- **Service Area:** Northern Minnesota
- **Prioritization Tool**
  - Protect environmentally-sensitive lakeshore & watershed parcels to create more resilient ecosystems, preserving water quality & wildlife habitat.
- **Staff of Specialists**
- **Volunteer Board of Directors & Committees**
- **Non-profit:** 501(c)(3) organization
- **Accredited Land Trust**





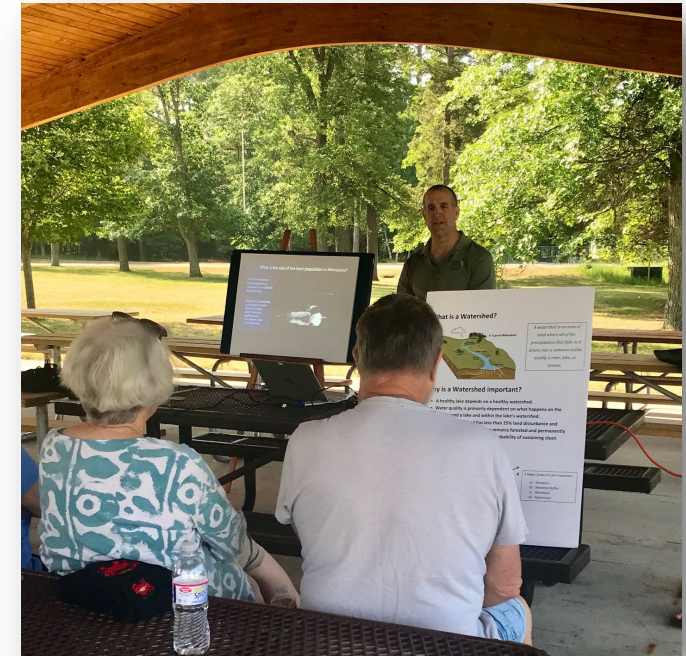
# Methods of Conservation



Land  
Acquisitions



Conservation  
Easements



Community  
Outreach





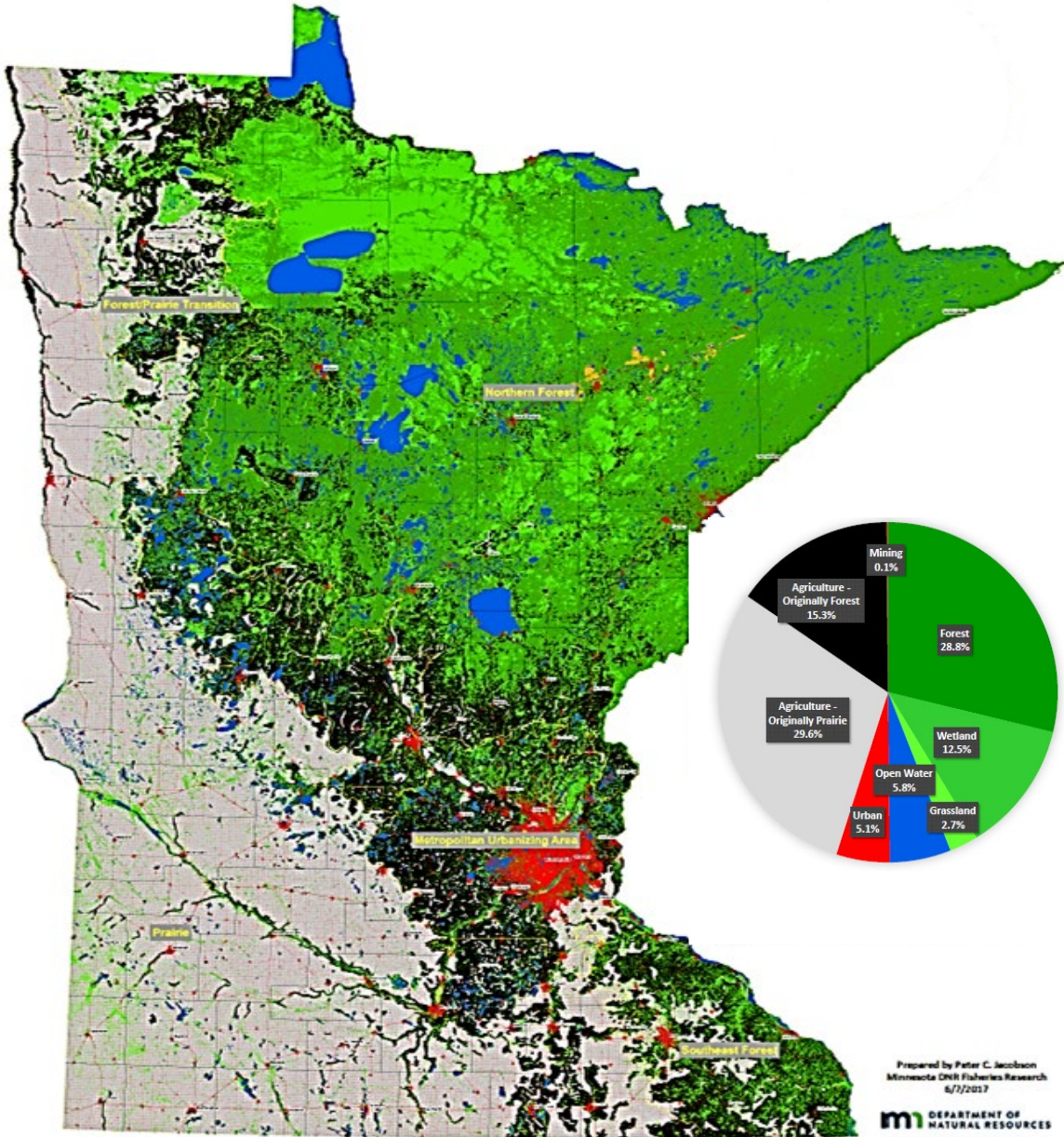


# Why Conservation Matters

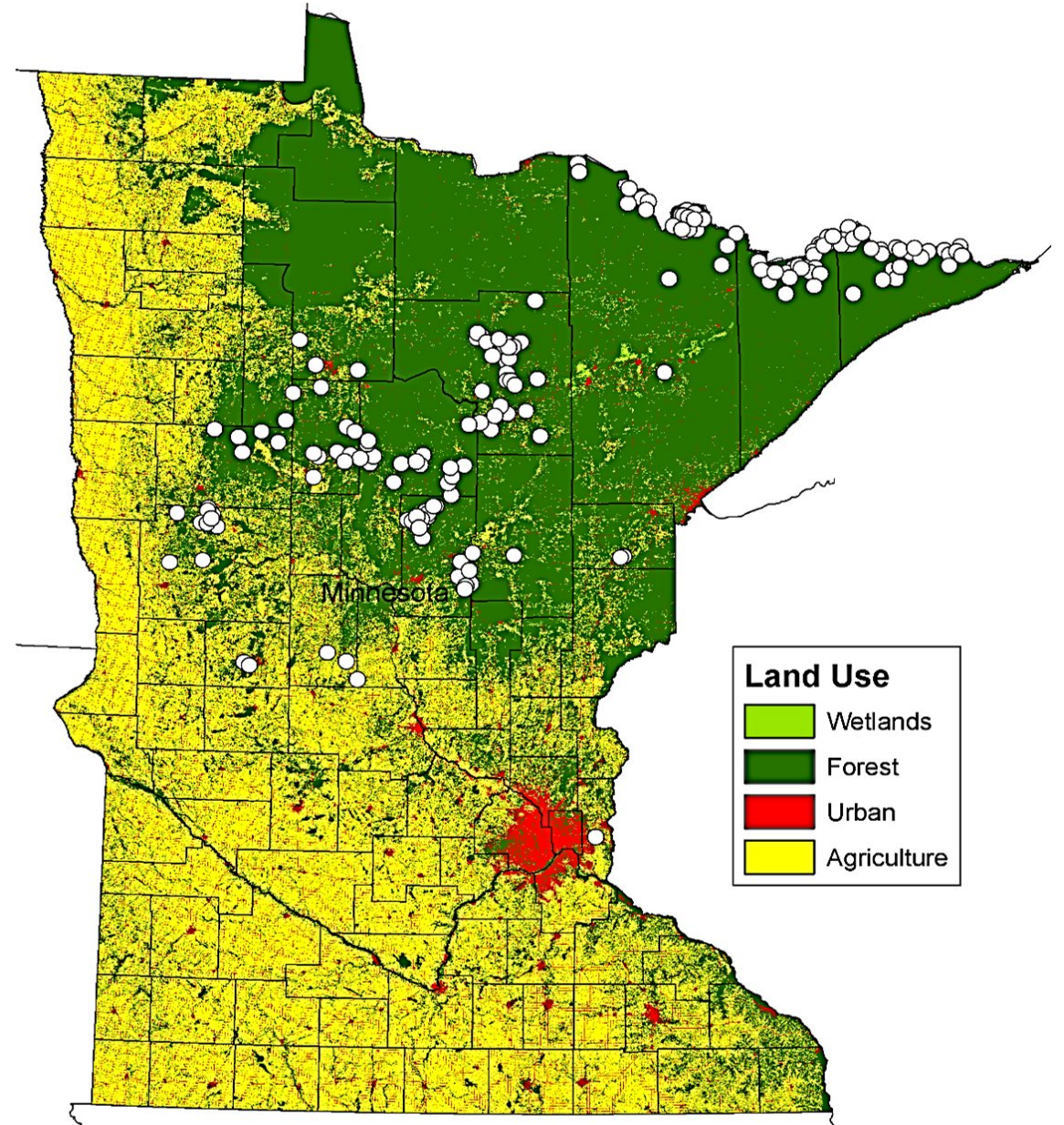




# Minnesota Land Use Change 1847-2011: Remaining forest, wetlands, and grasslands



# Identified Cisco Refuge Lakes in MN Under Future Climate Scenarios (Fang et al 2012)





## Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Lakes: Priority tullibee refuge watersheds

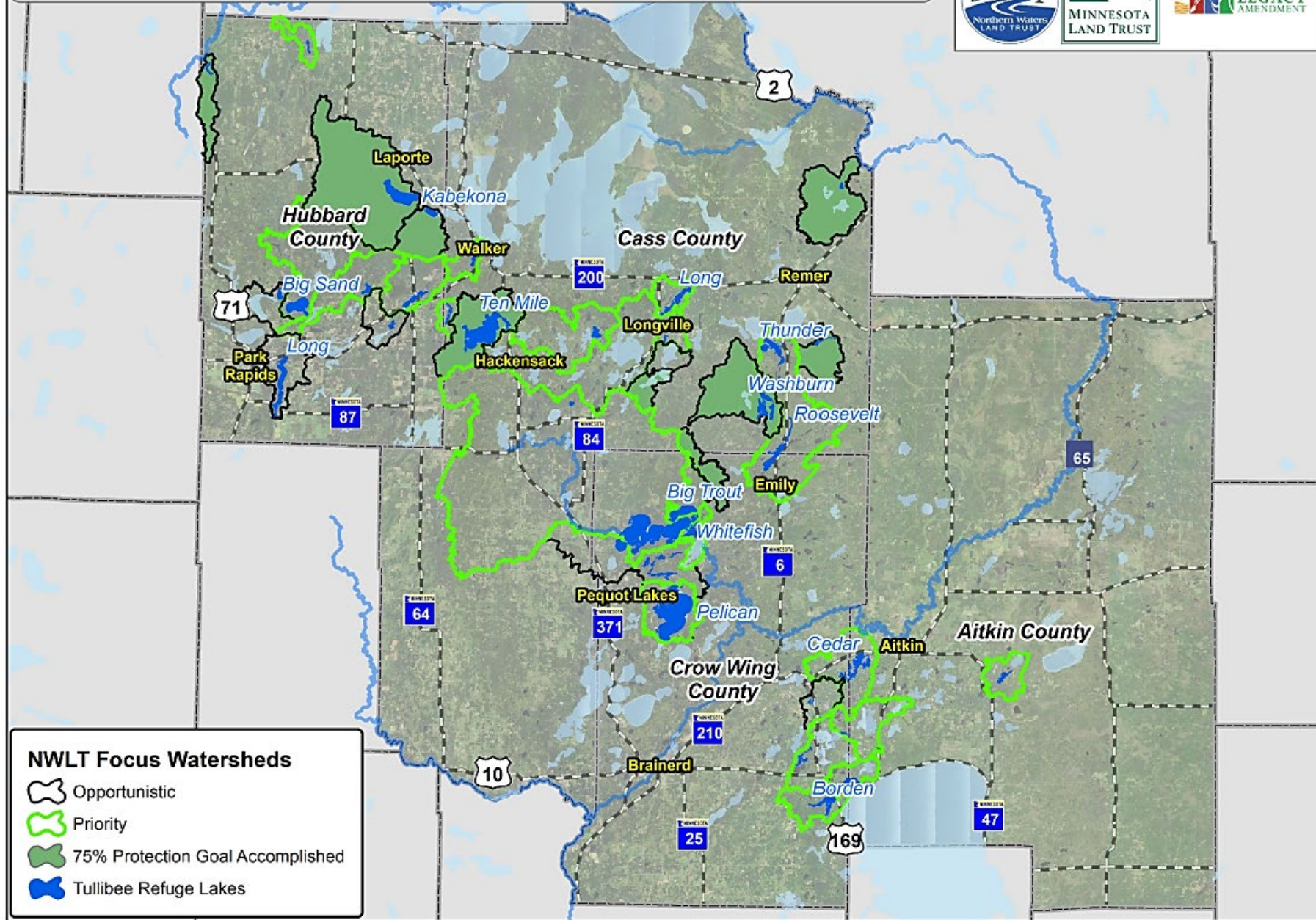


# Land Protection

Focused on cold-water tullibee (cisco) refuge lakes

Since 2014:

- \$23 million in grant funding received
- More than 6,000 acres protected so far







Everything we do on land  
impacts our water.

# Protection Benefits Freshwater Ecosystems

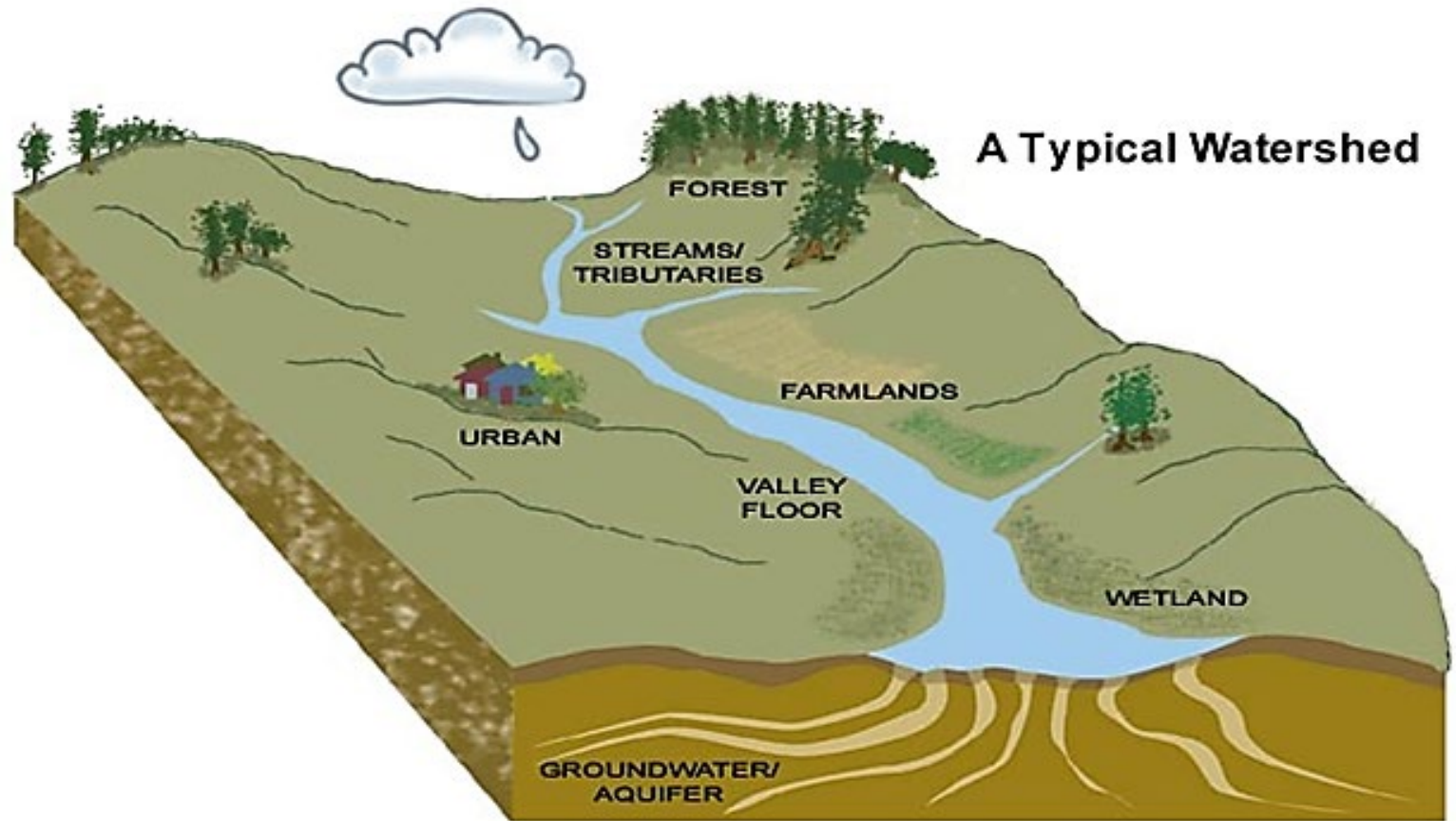
- Ecosystem: all organisms and their physical environment are linked. Components of one system
- Land taken out of its natural state and threatens water quality, habitat, and migratory flyways





# What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land where all of the precipitation (rain or snow) that falls in it drains into a common outlet, such as a river, lake, or stream.



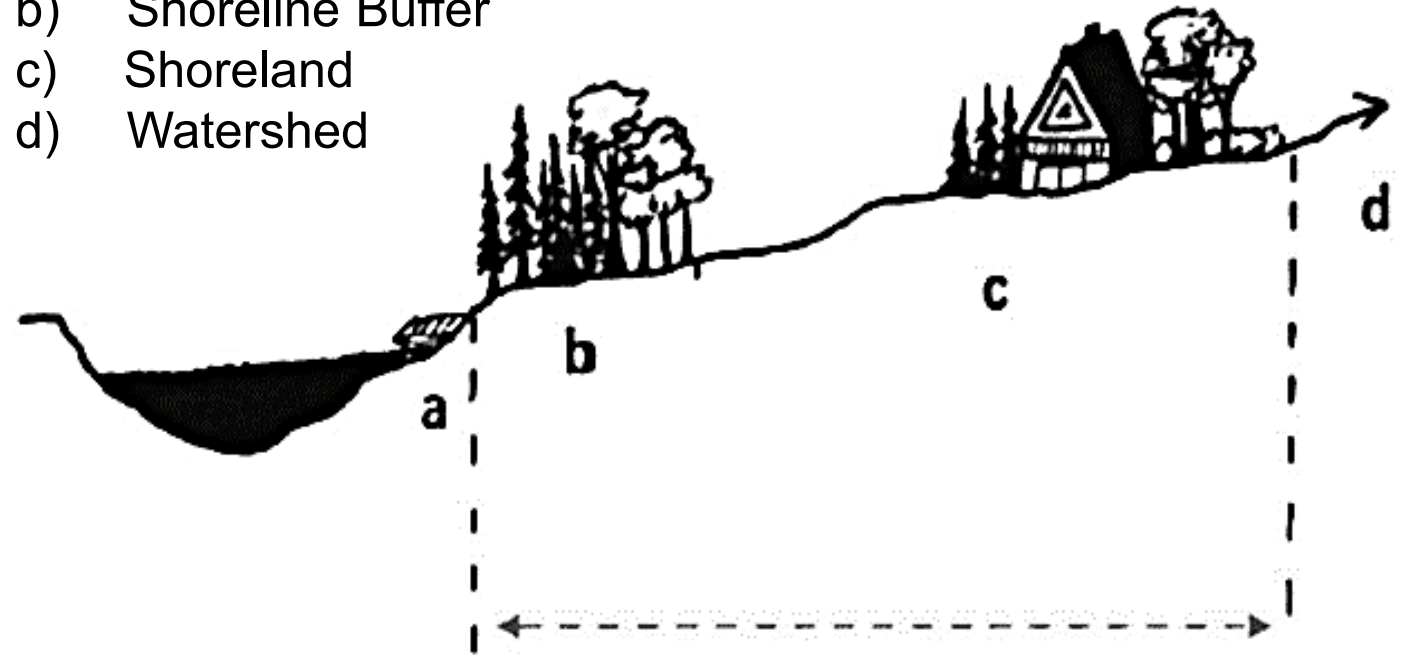


# Role of watersheds in water quality

- Water quality dependent on watershed activity
- Conservation protects water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Forests filter and absorb runoff before it enters a lake, protecting water quality.

Major Zones of Lake Protection:

- a) Shoreline
- b) Shoreline Buffer
- c) Shoreland
- d) Watershed



A healthy lake depends on a healthy watershed.





# Why 75%?

Protect the forested “Sponge”.





# Kathy DonCarlos

Land Conservation  
Coordinator

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## Northern Waters Land Trust







## Conservation Significance

# Kabekona Lake

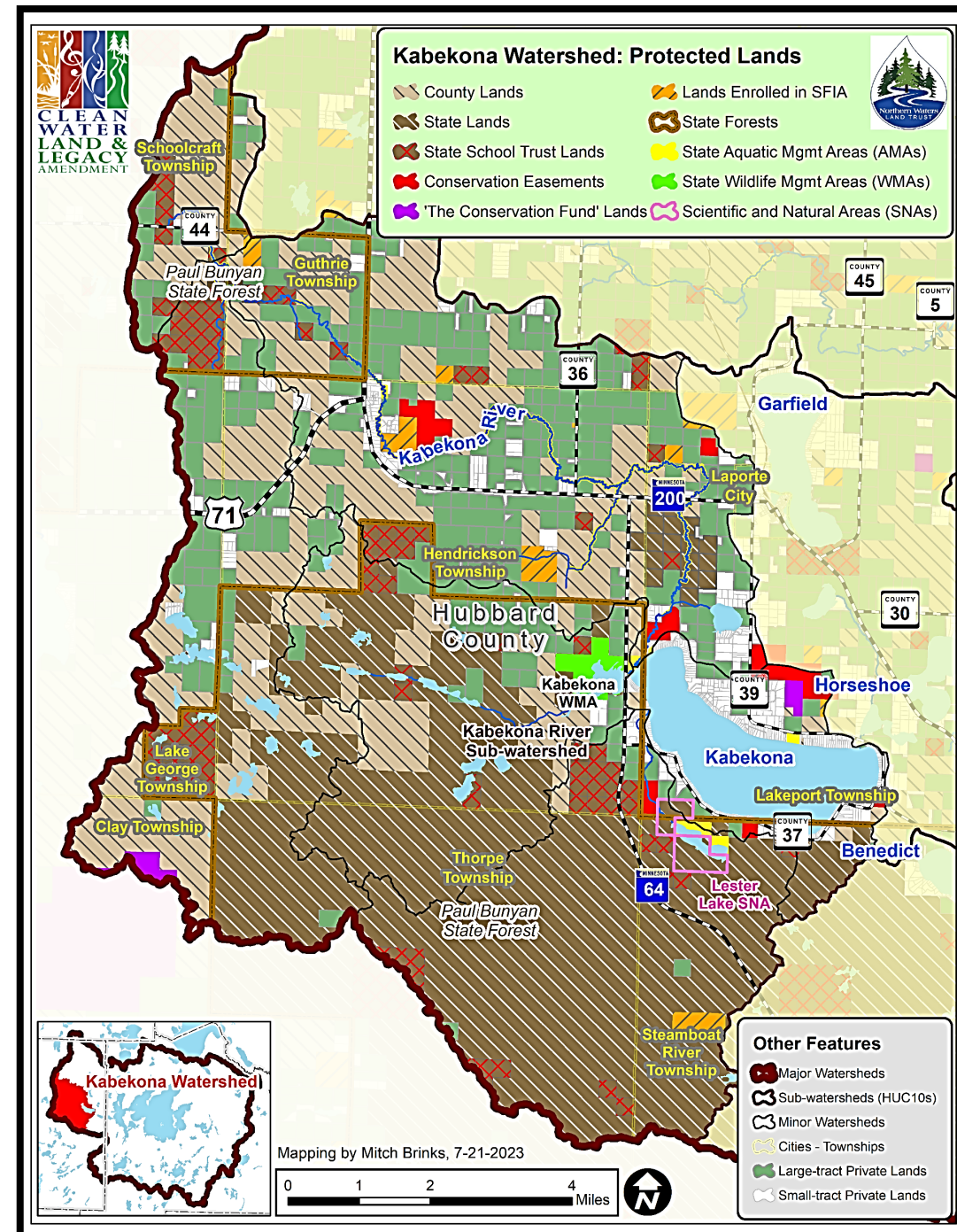
- Cold-water lake
- Refuge lake for tullibee (cisco)
- Lake of Outstanding Biological Significance
- Flows through 3 smaller lakes, into Kabekona Bay of Leech Lake
- Loon habitat





# Kabekona Lake Watershed Protection

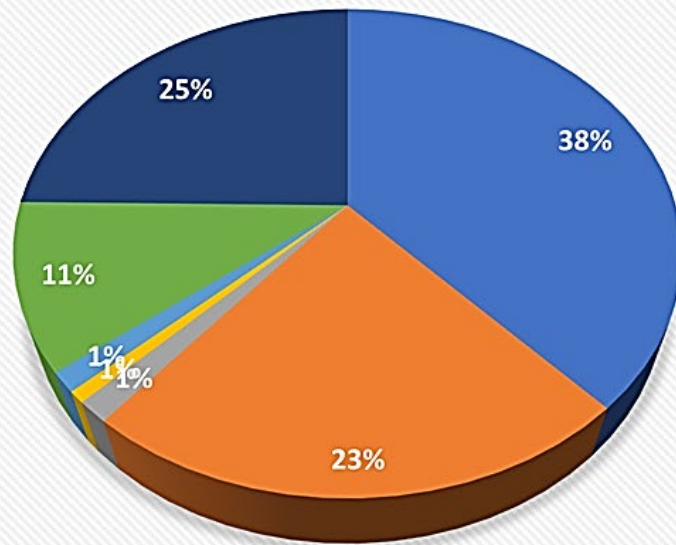
- Cold-water lake in Hubbard County
- Surface area: 2,252 acres
- About 10 miles of shoreline
- Watershed: 97 square miles
- Conservation commitment of lake association, conservation organizations, and landowners





# Kabekona Watershed Protected Lands

## Kabekona River Watershed



- State Forest, School Trust Land
- County Forest
- WMA, AMA, SNA
- Conservation Easements
- SFIA
- Misc Protected (public waters, private wetlands)
- Private Land

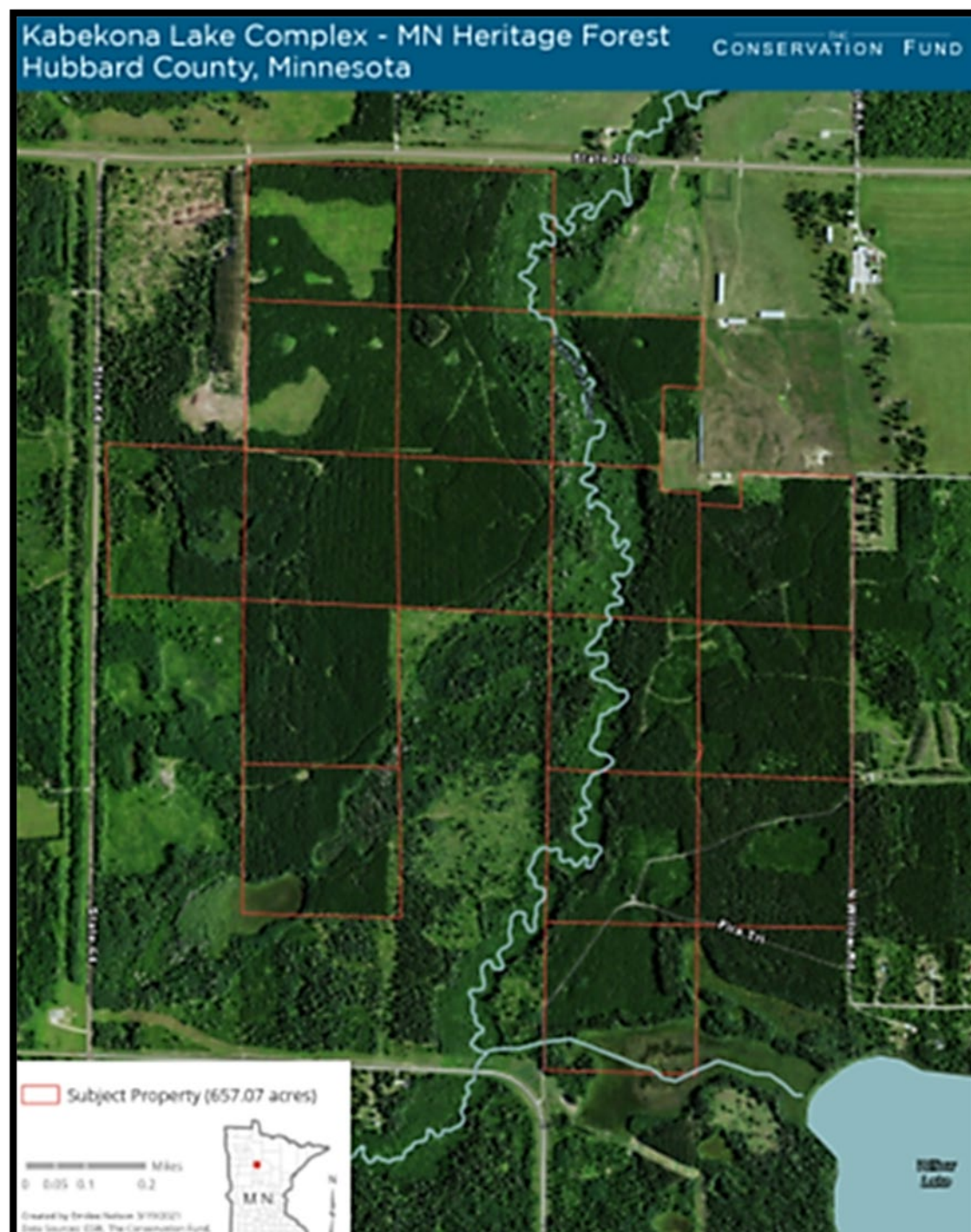
- State forests: 23,620 acres (38%)
- County forests: 13,996 acres (23%)
- DNR Wildlife Management Areas (AMA) and Scientific Natural Areas (SNA): 862 acres (1.4%)
- Conservation easements and SFIA agreements: 1,267 acres (2.0%)





# Lands purchased for public management with public and private funding include:

- 1995 – 2 acres for Kabekona Lake AMA
- 2006 – 27 acres for Kabekona Lake AMA
- 2010 – 320 acres for Lester Lake SNA
- 2010 – 120 acres for Lester Lake AMA
- 2019 – 13 acres for Kabekona Lake AMA
- 2022 – 72 acres for Hubbard County Forests
- 2023 – 136 acres for DNR State Forests
- 2023 – 657 acres for DNR State Forests







Kabekona Watershed  
Conservation  

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Recognition





# Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

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Recognizing:

~ Peter Jacobson & Tim Cross

~ Heather Baird & Martin Jennings

for leading the MN DNR research and program implementation to guide land protection efforts on a watershed scale.



DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES



# Trust For Public Land

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Recognizing:

~ **Bob McGillivray**

for leading the Trust For  
Public Land in protection  
efforts in northern  
Minnesota.







# The Conservation Fund

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Recognizing:

~ Emilee Nelson

~ Kim Berns-Melhus

for leadership in protecting  
Minnesota's northern forests.

THE  
CONSERVATION FUND



# Minnesota Land Trust

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Recognizing:

~ Ruurd Schoolderman  
for leading the Minnesota  
Land Trust in land protection  
efforts in northern  
Minnesota.



© Photo: Ingrid Bey



**Kabekona**  
*is* **CLEAN.**

**Is your boat**  
**CLEAN?**

Photo: Ingrid Bey

# Kabekona Lake Association & Foundation

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Recognizing:

~ Dan Rasmus & Ingrid Bey  
for leading Kabekona Lake  
Association and Foundation in  
land protection efforts in the  
Kabekona Lake Watershed.







# Luther Nervig

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Recognizing:

~ **Luther Nervig**

for leading Kabekona Lake Association and Foundation in land protection efforts in the Kabekona Lake Watershed.







# Kathy DonCarlos

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Recognizing:

~ **Kathy DonCarlos**

for leading Northern Waters Land Trust's land protection efforts and partner coordination in the Kabekona Lake Watershed.







DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

# Collaborative Conservation



TRUST FOR  
PUBLIC  
LAND™



HUBBARD COUNTY  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District



CLEAN  
WATER  
LAND &  
LEGACY  
AMENDMENT



MINNESOTA  
LAND TRUST



The Nature  
Conservancy



THE  
CONSERVATION FUND



# Kabekona Conservation A Success Story



*Kabekona*