

# From Land to Water: Conserving Minnesota's Loons



National Loon Center  
Minnesota DNR  
Northern Waters Land Trust



# Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **Overview - Northern Waters Land Trust**
- **Why Conservation Matters for Loons**
- **Overview – DNR Loon Restoration Program**
- **Overview – National Loon Center**
- **Monitoring & Protecting Minnesota Loons**





## Answer the Call

## Workshop Goals

- Why conservation is key to preserving our freshwater habitats and the loons that inhabit them
- To learn your role in contributing to loon & freshwater conservation and monitoring.



Elizabeth Mboutchom

Education & Development

Director

# Overview of Northern Waters Land Trust







## Preserving Land to Protect Water

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



# Three Methods of Conservation



Land Acquisitions



Conservation Easements



Community Outreach





# Why Conservation Matters for Loons





# Threats to Freshwater Ecosystems



Conservation protects water quality and wildlife habitat.

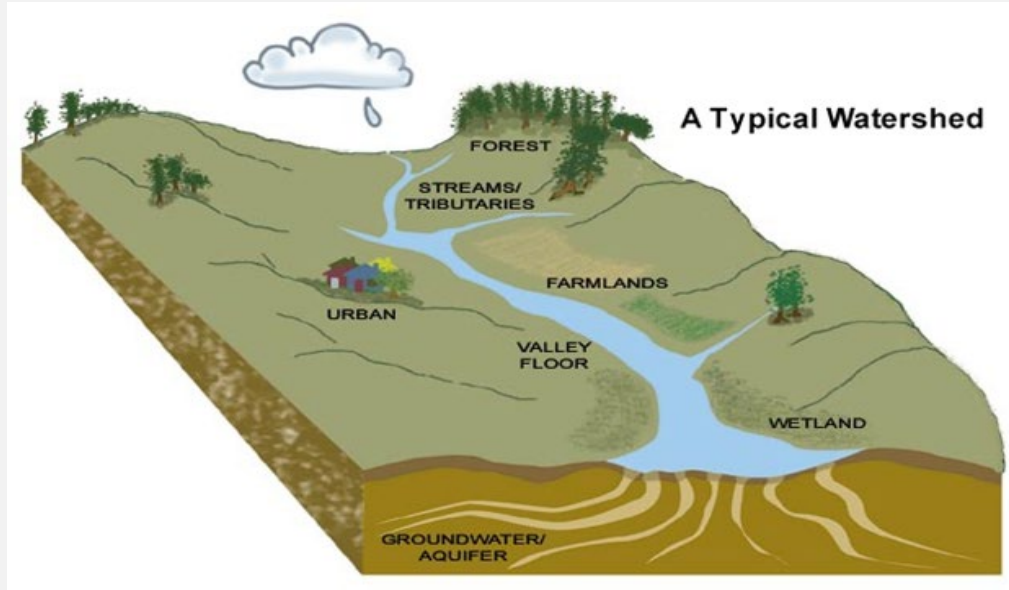
- Ecosystem: all organisms and their physical environment are linked. Components of one system
- Development takes land out of its natural state and threatens habitat and migratory flyways





# 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.



Do you know your watershed?

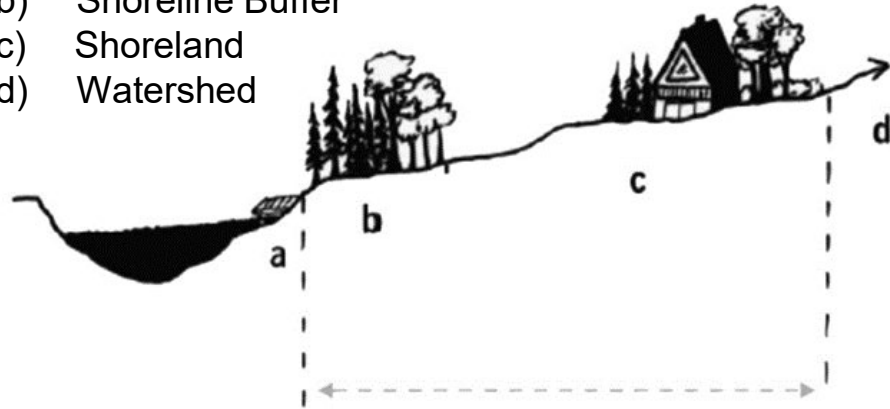


# Why is a watershed important?

- Water quality is primarily dependent on what happens on the land around a lake and throughout a lake's watershed.
- Conservation in a lake's watershed increases the lake's probability of sustaining clean water and healthy, resilient ecosystems.

## Major Zones of Lake Protection:

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



A healthy lake depends on a healthy watershed.



# Threats to loons



The lakes are a shared space  
between people and wildlife.

- Shoreline development
- Loss of water quality, aquatic invasive species
- Lead poisoning
- Increased human activity on lakes





Jayden Jech

Program Coordinator

MN DNR - Loon Restoration  
Program

# Minnesota Loon Conservation



# Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

## 2016 Settlement

Comprehensive Restoration Plan for the Gulf of Mexico includes Restoration of Common Loons in Minnesota

- **MN DNR**

- Protect Lakeshore Loon Nesting Habitat
- Augment Nesting with Artificial Nesting Platforms

- **MPCA**

- Get the Lead Out



Minnesota Loon  
Restoration Program



# Ways you can help



Everything we do on land  
impacts our water.

## DNR

- Loon Restoration Program
- Loon Monitoring Program
- Loon-Friendly Lake Registry

## MPCA

- Get the Lead Out

Public Access Points –  
rivers/lakes

- AIS



# Ways to Get Involved

## Loon Watcher Survey

- Volunteers observe loons at least once per month (May-August), report findings at the end of breeding season
- Goal: collect data on loon breeding behavior and productivity

## MN Loon Monitoring Program

- Long-term Study of 600 lakes
- Volunteers count the number of adult and juvenile loons
- The observations are shared with the DNR

## Loon-Friendly Lake Registry

- Lake Association commitment to ensure lake is loon-friendly
- Develop and implement a Loon-Friendly Lake Plan
- Nominate Loon Liaison



Rendering by Widseth

Maddi Nistler  
MN GreenCorps Member

Natasha Bartolotta  
Stewardship & Outreach Manager

# Overview of the National Loon Center





# National Loon Center



## Answering the Call of the Loon

- **Common loon and freshwater education, conservation, and research**
- **Mission:** restore and protect loon breeding habitats, promote responsible recreation where loons thrive, and serve as a national leader in advancing loon and freshwater research and education.
- **Upcoming facility on track to open as early as 2025**
- **Non-profit Sec. 501(c)(3) organization**



NATIONAL  
LOON CENTER



Brandi Grahl

# Monitoring & Protecting Minnesota Loons



# Loon Surveys

Documenting loon nesting, band resights, and notable behavior via:

- The StewardShip
- Junior Loon Biologist



The StewardShip





# Examples of Loon Nesting Habitat

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# Ongoing Loon Banding Projects



Resighting banded loons

- Minnesota
- Maine
- Michigan
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wisconsin



# Loon Mortality Study

Loon-focused “CSI” effort to understand factors affecting loon survival.

Necropsies often reveal causes of death as a result of people’s actions:

Boat strikes  
Lead poisoning  
Entanglement  
Gun shots



Photo of a necropsy of a common loon revealing ingested lead tackle via Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University and the Loon Preservation Committee

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Take a photo of the loon where it was found, if possible.



Wear gloves to retrieve the loon if it is safe to do so and the loon is not already badly decomposed.



Double bag the loon in two garbage bags.



Place the loon in a freezer to prevent further decomposition



Write down the date found, finder's name & info, lake name, and county.

Questions?





# Contact Information

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## Presenters

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*Thanks For Attending*