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# Presque Isle Wilderness Waters Program

## Aquatic Plant Management Plan – Red Bass Lake

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**Prepared for:**

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This plan is a product of a WDNR Lake Planning Grant awarded to:

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## CHAPTER 1

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## Introduction

The *Presque Isle Wilderness Waters Program* results from the efforts of the Presque Isle Town Lakes Committee, an organization that has been active since 2005. The Lakes Committee views stewardship as an ongoing endeavor that is integrated, coordinated, and administered by the Lakes Committee. The Lakes Committee takes a broad perspective that allows an appropriate range of geographic scales from which to approach lake stewardship. A discrete “lake specific” focus goes hand-in hand with waterscape-wide awareness.

This aquatic plant management plan (APMP) addresses Red Bass Lake in Vilas County, Wisconsin. Despite this specificity, it maintains the waterscape perspective crucial to effective lake stewardship. This is especially important when it comes to preventing introduction and establishment of aquatic invasive species (AIS). The closely related *Wilderness Waters Adaptive Management Plan* (Stine et al., 2022) offers additional overarching waterscape level inspection that allows greater opportunity and efficiency in water resource management and education.

A 2019 systematic survey of aquatic plants using the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) “point-intercept” method was an important underpinning of this aquatic plant management plan. An analysis of the plant data along with water quality and other lake information allowed the preparation of the plan.

Aquatic plants rarely get the respect they merit, although this is slowly changing. We still call an aquatic plant bed a “weed bed.” Many aquatic plants have “weed” in their names (e.g., duckweed, pondweed, or musky weed). Likely this term was borrowed from “seaweed” and not intended as derogatory, but in today’s use, “weed” connotes an unwanted, aggressively growing plant. Such is not the case for the vast majority of aquatic plants. In fact, aquatic plants are a vital part of a lake ecosystem, recycling nutrients, providing vertical and horizontal structure, and creating habitat for animal life. Invertebrates, including crustaceans and insects, live on or within this “aquatic forest.” Fish find food and shelter within aquatic plant beds. Waterfowl eat parts of plants directly as well as feed on invertebrates associated with the plants. Muskrats eat aquatic plants and particularly love cattails and bulrushes. Otter and mink hunt invertebrates and small vertebrates within the shelter of submergent and emergent beds. In shallow water, great blue herons find fishes among the plants.

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In lakes that receive an excess of nutrients (particularly from fertilizers or leaking septic tanks), plant growth can become too lush or dominated by only a few species. As these abundant plants die, their decomposition can depress dissolved oxygen levels and diminish suitability for fish. Algae can respond rapidly to nutrient influxes and create nuisance conditions. These phenomena can cause humans to view all aquatic plants in a negative light.

On another negative front, non-native plant species, transported on boats and trailers or dumped from home aquariums, private ponds and water gardens may proliferate in a water body negatively influence the community of native species. Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) is one of the invasive plant species capable of this kind of population boom. Fortunately, this kind of rampant growth of aquatic invasive plants does not always occur. On occasion, even a native plant species can exhibit rampant growth and results in a population that is viewed by some as a recreational nuisance. The Southern Naiad (*Najas guadalupensis*) has exhibited this kind of behavior in some northern Wisconsin Lakes.

For most lakes, native aquatic plants are an overwhelmingly positive attribute, greatly enhancing the aesthetics of the lake and providing good opportunities for fishing, boating, swimming, snorkeling, sight-seeing, and hunting. In some lakes even the presence of an aquatic invasive plant species is not a significantly negative phenomenon.

When it comes to aquatic plant management, it is useful to heed the mantra of the medical profession: “First, do no harm.” It is both a social and scientific convention that aquatic plant management is more effective and beneficial when a lake is considered as an entire and integrated ecosystem. Anyone taken to curtail specific plant population (for example, herbicide use to treat Eurasian water-milfoil) will invariably impact other desirable native species. Rare plants, important habitats, or culturally significant plants (such as wild rice) should always be given careful consideration and protection.

Anyone involved in aquatic plant management should be aware that a permit may be required to remove, add, or control aquatic plants. In addition, anyone using Wisconsin’s lakes must comply with the “Boat Launch Law” that addresses transport of aquatic plants on boat trailers and other equipment. A good review of the laws, permits, and regulations that affect management and behavior surrounding aquatic plants can be found in the WDNR guidelines called *Aquatic Plant Management in Wisconsin*.<sup>1</sup>

In preparing this plan, we followed guidelines in *Aquatic Plant Management in Wisconsin*. The resulting plan is an adaptive plan (Walters, 1986). Simply put, it will be

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www4.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/ecology/APM/APMguideFull2010.pdf>

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modified as new information becomes available. The WDNR Guidance document outlines three objectives that may influence preparation of an aquatic plant management plan. Currently, the principle motivation for this plan lies in the first three objectives:

- **Protection** - preventing the introduction of nuisance or invasive species into waters where these plants are not currently present;
- **Maintenance** - continuing the patterns of recreational use that have developed historically on and around a lake; and
- **Rehabilitation** - controlling an imbalance in the aquatic plant community leading to the dominance of a few plant species, frequently associated with the introduction of invasive non-native species.

During projects with the WDNR Planning Grant Program and through past efforts, Town Lakes Committee has followed the seven-step plan outlined in the Guidance Document for developing an aquatic plant management plan:

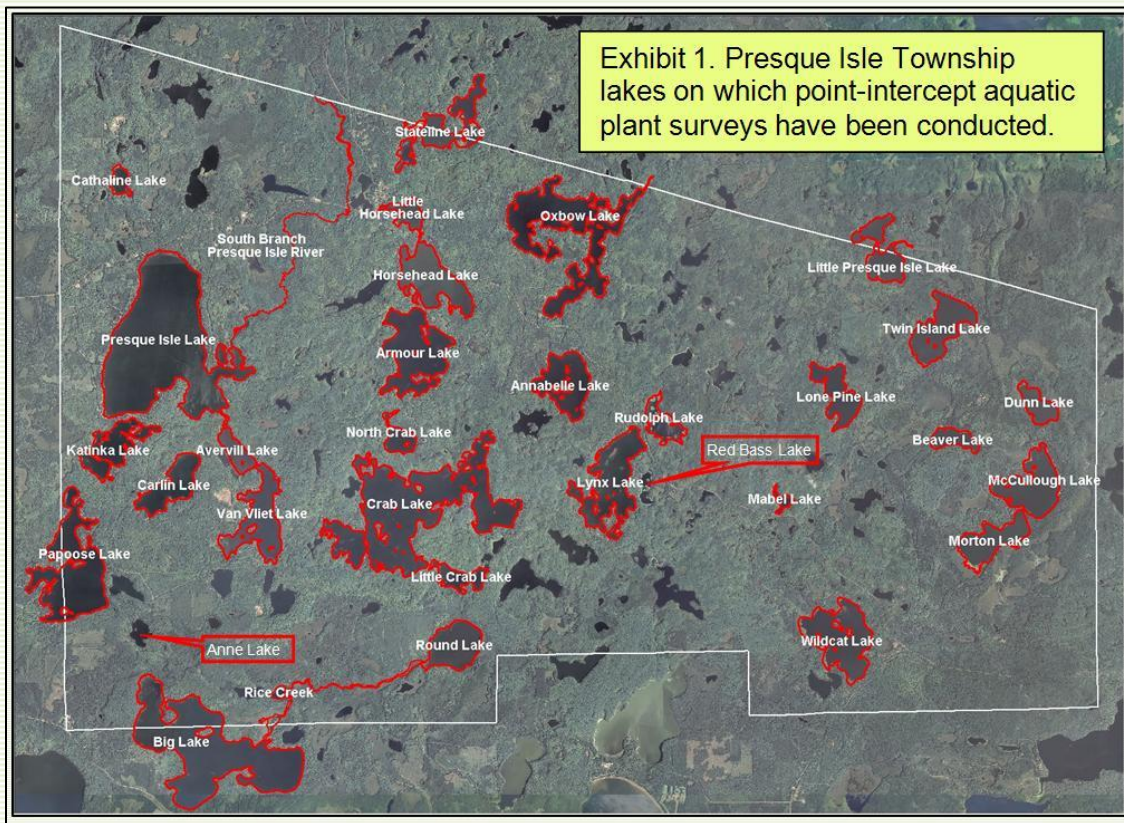
1. Goal setting – Getting the effort organized, identifying problems to be addressed, and agreeing on the goals;
2. Inventory – Collecting baseline information to define the past and existing conditions;
3. Analysis – Synthesizing the information, quantifying and comparing the current conditions to desired conditions, researching opportunities and constraints, and setting directions to achieving the goals;
4. Alternatives – Listing possible management alternatives and evaluating their strengths, weaknesses and general feasibility;
5. Recommendations – Prioritizing and selecting preferred management options, setting objectives, drafting the plan;
6. Implementation – Formally adopting the plan, lining up funding, and scheduling activities for taking action to achieve the goals;
7. Monitor & Modify – Developing a mechanism for tracking activities and adjusting the plan as it evolves.

Besides this introductory chapter, this plan is organized in six Chapters. The study area is described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 states the purpose and goals for the plan. Chapter 4 presents an inventory and analysis of information including the results of the aquatic plant survey. Chapter 5 provides recommendations that support the goals and establish the stewardship component of plan. Finally, Chapter 6 presents actions and objectives. Five appendices include: Appendix A (literature cited), Appendix B (tables and figures for aquatic plant survey), Appendix C (water quality), Appendix D (*Lake Shoreland & Shallows Habitat Monitoring Report*), and Appendix E (*Aquatic Invasive Species Report*).

## CHAPTER 2

## Study Area

Presque Isle Township is one of the northern-most townships in Vilas County, Wisconsin. Presque Isle Township's northern border is shared with the State of Michigan. In fact some of the Presque Township lakes lie on the state border. The location of the subject of this APM Plan (Red Bass Lake) is shown in Exhibit 1 along with other lakes in Presque Isle Township that have had point-intercept aquatic plant surveys conducted. Exhibit 2 is an aerial view of Red Bass Lake.



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“Almost an island” is the literal translation of the French phrase “Presque Isle.” Early French missionaries, perhaps disoriented by the preponderance of water in this north central Wisconsin landscape applied the name, “Presque Isle” to describe an area where the water seemed to dominate the land. The French visitors and Native Americans certainly recognized this landscape as special. Modern ecologists and recreationists share this view. The region that includes the Township of Presque Isle, Wisconsin is an ecological landscape marvelously rich in surface waters. Aerial photography reveals a concentration of lakes and streams that is unique in North America. Presque Isle Township has eighty-four lakes. The Presque Isle area could as easily be termed a “waterscape” as a “landscape.”



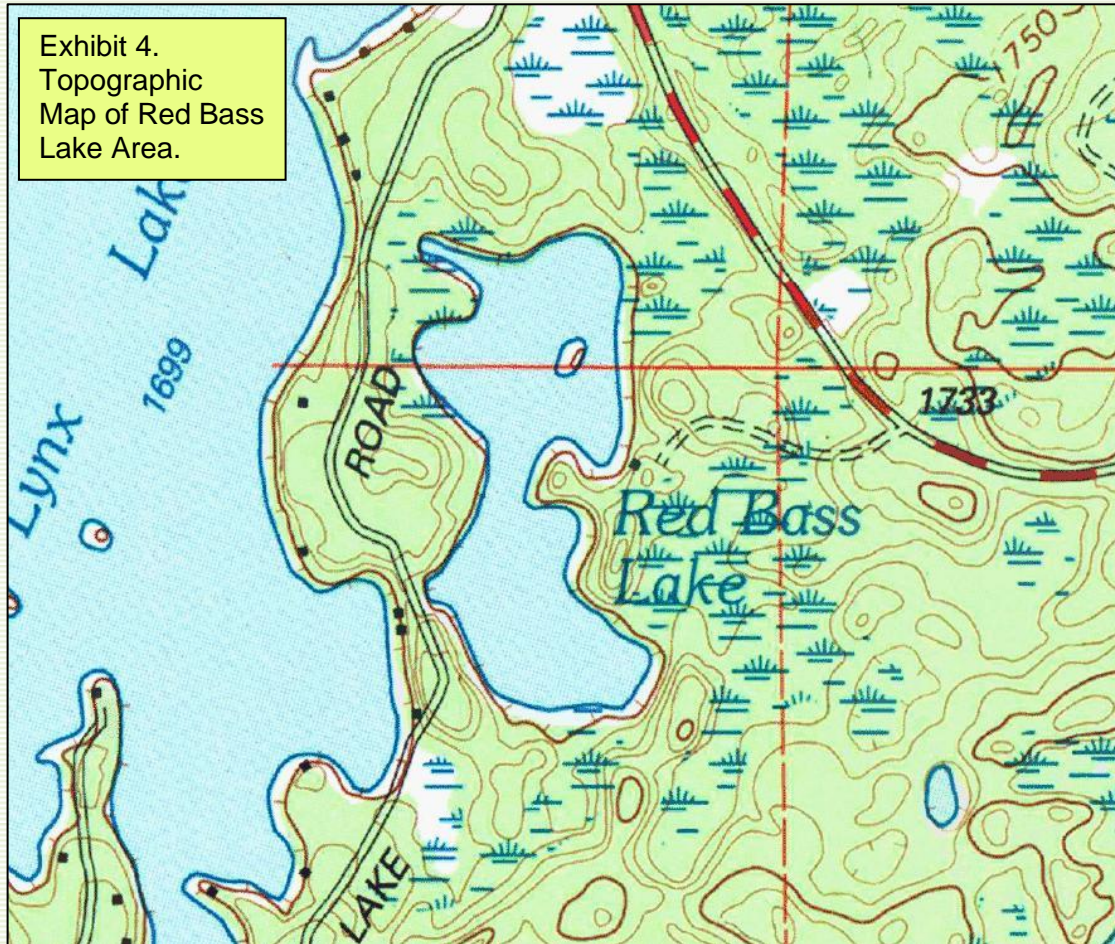
Exhibit 2. Aerial photo of Red Bass Lake.



Descriptive parameters for Red Bass Lake are in Exhibit 3. It is a seepage lake of about 27 acres and maximum depth of 22 feet from the WIDNR lakes pages. Red Bass Lake resident, Keith Bassage, reports the maximum depth at 29 feet. It has a low shoreline development index of 2. The shoreline development index is a quantitative expression derived from the shape of the lake. It is defined as the ratio of the shoreline length to the length of the circumference of a circle of the same area as the lake. A perfectly round lake would have an index of 1. Increasing irregularity of shoreline development in the form of bays and projections of the shore is shown by numbers greater than 1. For example, fjord lakes with extremely irregularly shaped shorelines sometimes have SDI's exceeding 5. A higher shoreline development index indicates that a lake has relatively more productive littoral zone habitat. Of the lakes considered in the Wilderness Waters Program, the shoreline development index ranged from 1.3 to 3.7 (median value = 2.11).

Exhibit 3. Water Body Parameters.	
Water Body Name	Red Bass Lake
County	Vilas
Township/Range/Section	T43N, R7E, S18-19
Water Body Identification Code	2954700
Lake Type	Seepage
Surface Area (acres)	35.33
Maximum Depth (feet)	22
Maximum Length (miles)	0.40
Maximum Width (miles)	0.20
Shoreline Length (miles)	1.59
Shoreline Development Index	2.0
Total Number of Piers (2019 shoreline)	9
Number of Piers / Mile of Shoreline	5.66
Total Number of Homes (2021 aerial)	4
Number of Homes / Mile of Shoreline	2.52

Red Bass Lake has one public access site. We observe a total of 9 piers on the shoreline of Red Bass Lake from a 2019 shoreland survey or about 5.66 piers per mile of shoreline. The riparian area consists of both upland and wetland areas (Exhibit 4).



## CHAPTER 3

# Purpose and Goal Statements

This plan approaches aquatic plant management with a healthy dose of humility. We do not always understand the causes of environmental phenomena or the effects of our actions to manage the environment. With that thought in mind, we have crafted a statement of purpose and goals for this plan:

*Red Bass Lake has a healthy and diverse aquatic plant community that is documented by a point-intercept aquatic plant survey. This plant community is essential to, and part of, a high quality aquatic ecosystem that benefits the human community. The purpose of this aquatic plant management plan is to maintain a balanced, high quality, and diverse native aquatic plant community for Red Bass Lake.*

Supporting this purpose, the goals of this aquatic plant management plan are:

- (1) Monitor and protect the native aquatic plant community;*
- (2) Prevent establishment of AIS and nuisance levels of native plants;*
- (3) Consider and evaluate the efficacy of active aquatic plant management; and*
- (4) Educate riparian owners and lake users on preventing AIS introduction, reducing nutrient inputs that can alter the plant community, minimizing physical removal of native riparian and littoral zone plants, and living with a lake whose natural healthy state includes areas with abundant aquatic plants.*

The purpose and goals are the foundation for the aquatic plant management plan presented in this document. They inform the objectives and actions outlined in Chapter 5 and are the principal motivation of Red Bass Lake stewards.

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## CHAPTER 4

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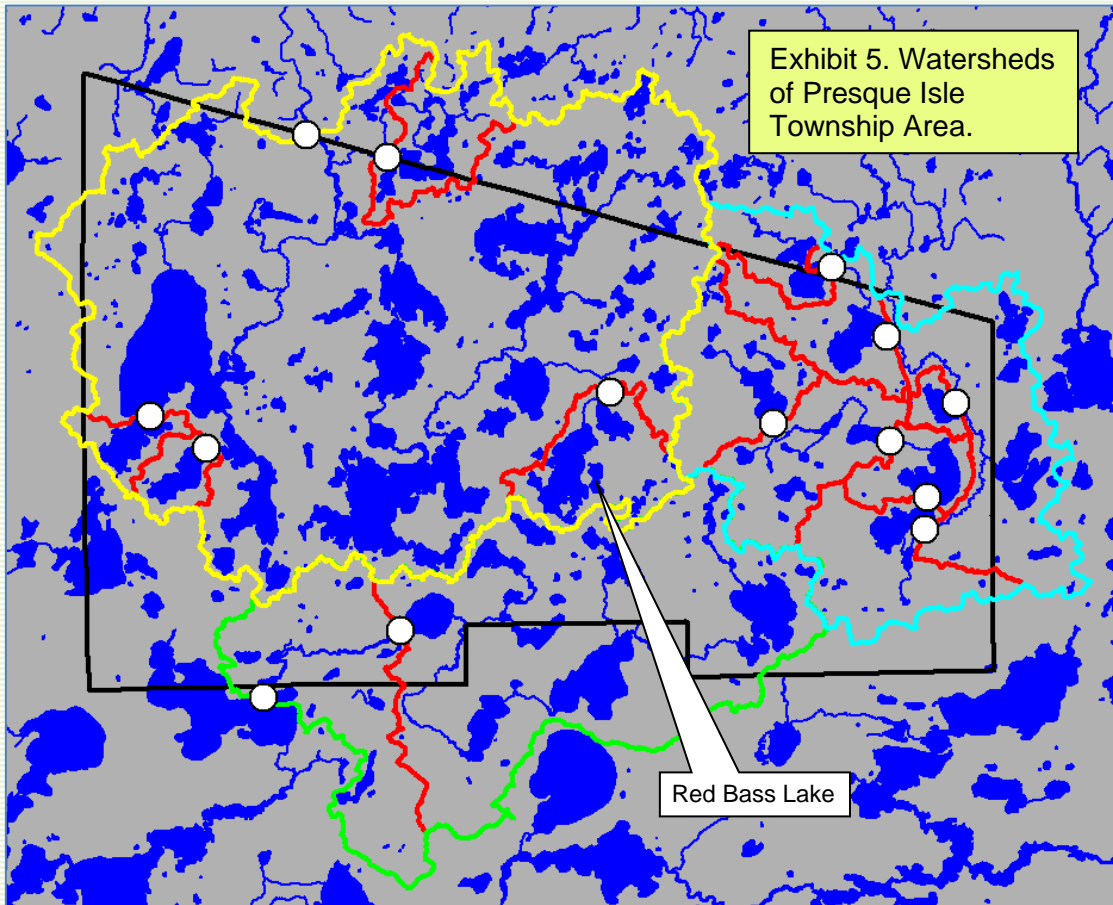
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## Information and Analysis

Our efforts in the Wilderness Waters Program have compiled information about historical and current conditions of the Red Bass Lake ecosystem and its surrounding watershed. Of particular importance to this aquatic plant management plan is the aquatic plant survey that was conducted using the *WDNR Protocol for Aquatic Plant Survey, Collecting, Mapping, Preserving, and Data Entry* (Hauxwell et al., 2010). The results of this comprehensive “point-intercept” survey along with relevant components of other information are presented in this chapter under nine respective subheadings: watershed, aquatic plant management history, aquatic plant community description, fish community, water quality and trophic status, water use, riparian area, wildlife, and stakeholders.

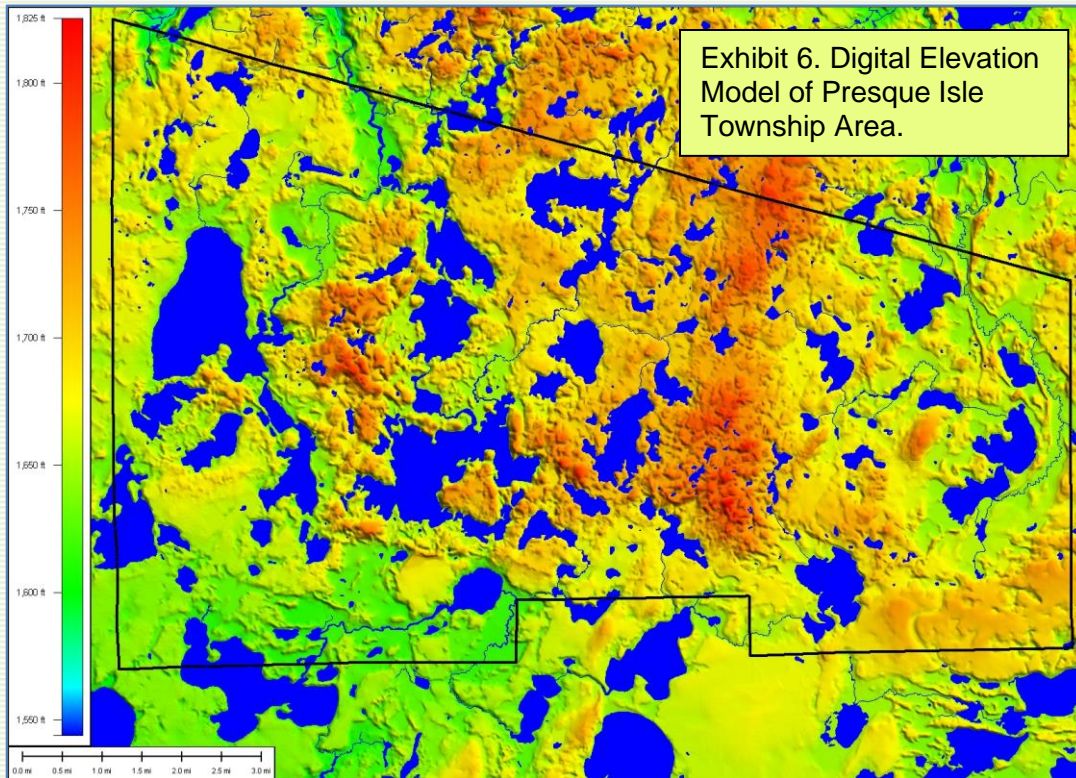
### Part 1. Watershed

The Presque Isle Township waterscape sits on a large-scale watershed divide. Some of the water drains north through the Presque Isle River system and eventually enters Lake Superior. Some of the water drains into the Flambeau River system to the Mississippi River and to the Gulf of Mexico. In fact there are two federal hydrologic sub-basins (designated by 8-digit HUC codes) that include Presque Isle Township. The Black-Presque Isle Rivers sub-basin (HUC#04020101) drains north to Lake Superior and the Flambeau River sub-basin (HUC#0705002) drains southwesterly to the Mississippi River. The Black-Presque Isle Rivers sub-basin contains two federal hydrologic sub-watersheds within Presque Isle Township: the South Branch Presque Isle River sub-watershed (HUC#040201010303) and the Pomeroy Creek-East Branch Presque Isle River sub-watershed (HUC#040201010301). Exhibit 5 illustrates these watersheds and the watersheds of the water bodies subject to the Wilderness Waters Program studies. Red Bass Lake is contained within the South Branch Presque Isle River sub-watershed (Exhibit 5).



Description: Portions of 3 federal hydrologic sub-watersheds are illustrated: (1) S.Br. Presque Isle River (bounded by yellow), (2) Pomeroy Cr-E.Br. Presque Isle River (bounded by blue and yellow), and (3) Rice Cr. (bounded by green, yellow, and blue). Also shown are the smaller watersheds of individual water bodies subject to the Wilderness Waters studies (bounded by red). White dots show outlet points for the smaller watersheds.

The elevation in Presque Isle Township ranges from around 1,550 feet above sea level to 1,750 feet above sea level. A digital elevation model is provided as Exhibit 6 and shows the relative elevations for the area with orange areas of the landscape being the highest elevations and greens and blues being the lowest elevations.



The watershed (drainage basin) is all of the land and water areas that drain toward a particular river or lake. A water body is greatly influenced by its watershed. Watershed size, topography, geology, land use, soil fertility and erodibility, and vegetation are all factors that influence water quality. The Red Bass Lake watershed is about 537.98 acres. It is identified in Exhibit 5 and bounded by the blue and yellow lines. The cover types in the watershed are presented in Exhibit 7. Forest and surface water comprise the largest components. Soil groups (B and D) are present. Soil group B covers almost 76.85% of the watershed whereas group D makes up around 23.15%. Infiltration rates rank from highest to lowest, with A having the highest and D having the lowest. The watershed to lake area ratio is 15:1. Water quality often decreases with an increasing ratio of watershed area to lake area. As the watershed to lake area increases there are more sources and amounts of runoff. In larger watersheds, runoff water can leach more minerals and nutrients and carry them to the lake. The runoff to a lake (such as after a rainstorm or snowmelt) differs greatly among land uses. Forest cover is the most protective as it

exports much less soil (through erosion) and nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrogen) to the lake than agricultural or urban land use.

Exhibit 7. Cover Types and Soil Groups of the Red Bass Lake Watershed.			
Cover Type		Acres	Percent
Agriculture		0	0
Commercial		0	0
Forest		202.39	37.62
Grass/Pasture		0	0
Open Space/Park		41.13	7.65
Shrub; Scrub		8.22	1.53
High-density Residential		0	0
Woody Wetlands (swamp)		232.63	43.24
Water		53.61	9.96
Total		537.98	100.0
Soil Group	Acres	Percent	Hydrologic Soil Groups - Soils are classified by the Natural Resource Conservation Service into four Hydrologic Soil Groups* based on the soil's runoff potential. The four Hydrologic Soils Groups are A, B, C and D. Where A has the smallest runoff potential and D the greatest.
A	0	0	<b>Group A</b> is sand, loamy sand or sandy loam types of soils. It has low runoff potential and high infiltration rates even when thoroughly wetted. They consist chiefly of deep, well to excessively drained sands or gravels and have a high rate of water transmission.
B	413.43	76.85	<b>Group B</b> is silt loam or loam. It has a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wetted and consists chiefly or moderately deep to deep, moderately well to well drained soils with moderately fine to moderately coarse textures.
C	0	0	<b>Group C</b> soils are sandy clay loam. They have low infiltration rates when thoroughly wetted and consist chiefly of soils with a layer that impedes downward movement of water and soils with moderately fine to fine structure.
D	124.55	23.15	<b>Group D</b> soils are clay loam, silty clay loam, sandy clay, silty clay or clay. This soil has the highest runoff potential. They have very low infiltration rates when thoroughly wetted and consist chiefly of clay soils with a high swelling potential, soil with a permanent high water table, soils with a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface and shallow soils over nearly impervious material.

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## **Part 2. Aquatic Plant Management History**

As far as we can determine, no systematic or large-scale plant management activity has ever taken place in Red Bass Lake. Over the years, no particular nuisance issues have demanded control action. It is our understanding that the plant survey conducted as part of the 2019/2020 Wilderness Water Program was the first effort of its kind on this water body. Findings from the 2019 survey are presented and discussed in the next section (Part 3).

## **Part 3. Aquatic Plant Community Description**

Why do lakes need aquatic plants? In many ways, they are underwater forests. Aquatic plants provide vertical and horizontal structure in the lake just like the many forms and variety of trees do in a forest. Imagine how diminished a forest's biodiversity becomes in the advent of a clear-cut. Similarly, a lake's biodiversity in large part depends on a diversity of plants.

Aquatic plants are beneficial in many ways. Areas with plants produce more food for fish (insect larvae, snails, and other invertebrates). Aquatic vegetation offers fish shelter and spawning habitat. Many submerged plants provide food for waterfowl and habitat for insects on which some waterfowl feed. Aquatic plants further benefit lakes by producing oxygen and absorbing nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) from runoff. Aquatic plants also protect shorelines and lake bottoms by dampening wave action and stabilizing sediments.

The distribution of plants within a lake is generally limited by light availability, which is, in turn, controlled by water clarity. Aquatic biologists often estimate the depth to which rooted aquatic plants can exist as about two times the average Secchi clarity depth. For example, if the average Secchi depth is eight feet then it is fairly accurate to estimate that rooted plants might exist in water as deep as sixteen feet. At depths greater than that (in our hypothetical example), light is insufficient for rooted plants to grow. In addition to available light, the type of substrate influences the distribution of rooted aquatic plants. Plants are more likely to be found in muddy or soft sediments containing organic matter, and less likely to occur where the substrate is sand, gravel, or rock. Finally, water chemistry influences which plants are found in a body of water. Some species prefer alkaline lakes and some prefer more acidic lakes. The presence of nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen also influence plant community composition.

As mentioned earlier, non-native invasive plant species can reach high densities and wide distribution within a lake. This diminishes the native plant community and the related habitat. At times, even a native plant species can reach nuisance levels with respect to certain kinds of human recreation. These cases may warrant some kind of plant management. It should be noted,



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however, herbicides, or other means is expensive (in time and/or money) and by no means permanent. Long-term outcomes of these manipulations are difficult to predict. In addition, permits are required in many cases of aquatic plant management.

We conducted a WDNR point-intercept aquatic plant survey on Red Bass Lake in summer 2019. This formal survey assessed the plant species composition on a grid of 137 points distributed evenly over the lake. Using latitude-longitude coordinates and a handheld GPS unit, we navigated to the points and used a rake to sample plants. Plants were identified, recorded, and all data were entered into a dedicated spreadsheet for storage and data analysis. This systematic survey provides baseline data about the lake.

Future monitoring will be able to identify and track changes in the plant community. Changes in a lake environment might manifest as loss of species, change in species abundance or distribution, difference in the relative composition of various plant life forms (emergent, floating leaf, or submergent plants), and/or appearance of an AIS or change in its population size. Monitoring can track changes and provide valuable insight on which to base management decisions. In the remainder of this section, we provide a report of the findings of the 2019 plant survey in Red Bass Lake. The supporting tables and figures for the aquatic plant survey are provided in Appendix B. Table 3 provides a comparison of statistics from all three survey years.

Species richness refers to the total number of species recorded. We recorded 9 species of aquatic plants.<sup>2</sup> Of these, 5 were collected at sampling sites and the others were observed from the boat. The number of species encountered at any given sample point ranged from 0 to 4 and 26 sample points were found to have aquatic vegetation present. The average number of species encountered at these vegetated sites was 1.53. The actual number of species encountered at each of the vegetated sites is graphically displayed on Figure 1. Plant density is estimated by a “rake fullness” metric (3 being the highest possible). Figure 2 indicates the majority of the rake pulls were a 1.

The maximum depth of plant colonization is 7 feet (Table 1 and Figure 3). Rooted vegetation was found at 26 of the 36 sample sites with depth  $\leq$  the maximum depth of plant colonization (72.22% of sites). These sites are displayed as a black dot within a circle on Figure 4. This indicates that although availability of appropriate depth may limit the distribution of plants, it is not the only habitat factor involved. Substrate is another feature that influences plant

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<sup>2</sup> If you are interested in learning more about the plant species found in the lake, visit the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point Freckmann Herbarium website at: <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/> or obtain a copy of “Through the Looking Glass (A Field Guide to the Aquatic Plants in Wisconsin).”

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distribution (e.g., soft substrate often harbors more plants than hard substrate). Figures 5 presents the substrates encountered during the aquatic plant survey (mud, sand, or rock).

Table 2 provides information about the frequency of occurrence of the plant species recorded in the lake. Several metrics are provided, including total number of sites in which each species was found and frequency of occurrence at sites  $\leq$  the maximum depth of rooted vegetation. This frequency metric is standardized as a “relative frequency” (also shown in Table 2) by dividing the frequency of occurrence for a given species by the sum of frequency of occurrence for all plants and multiplying by 100 to form a percentage. The resulting relative frequencies for all species total 100%. The relative frequencies for the plant species collected with a rake in 2019 are graphically displayed in descending order on Figure 6. This display shows that *Brasenia schreberi* (Watershield) had the highest relative frequency followed by *Utricularia vulgaris* (Common bladderwort). The lowest relative frequencies are at the far right of the graph. Figure 7 shows the distribution of floating and emergent plant forms in the lake. As examples of individual species distributions, we show the occurrences of a few of the most frequently and least frequently encountered plants in Figures 8-12.

“Species richness” is the term given to the total number of species in a given area. For example, the total number of plant species in a lake would be its plant species richness. Generally speaking, a high species richness means high biodiversity and this is considered a healthy a desirable condition in an ecosystem. But species richness doesn’t tell the whole story. As an example, consider the plant communities of two hypothetical ponds each with 1,000 individual plants representing ten plant species (in other words, richness is 10). In the first pond each of the ten species populations is comprised of 100 individuals. In the second pond, Species #1 has a population of 991 individuals and each of the other nine species is represented by one individual plant. Intuitively, we would say that first pond is more diverse because there is more “even” distribution of individual species. The “Simpson Diversity Index” takes into account both richness and evenness in estimating diversity. It is based on a plant’s relative frequency in a lake. The closer the Simpson Diversity Index is to 1, the more diverse the plant community. The Simpson Diversity Index for Red Bass Lake aquatic plants is 0.69 in 2019 (Table 1) which indicates a moderate diversity in this aquatic plant community.

Another measure of floristic diversity and quality is the *Floristic Quality Index* (FQI). Floristic quality is an assessment metric designed to evaluate the closeness that the flora of an area is to that of undisturbed conditions (Nichols, 1999). Among other applications, it forms a standardized metric that can be used to compare the quality of different lakes (or different

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locations within a single lake) and monitor long-term changes in a lake's plant community (an indicator of lake health). The FQI for a lake is determined by using the average *coefficient of conservatism* times the square root of the number of native plant species present in the lake. Knowledgeable botanists have assigned to each native aquatic plant a *coefficient of conservatism* representing the probability that a plant is likely to occur in pristine environments (relatively unaltered from presettlement conditions). The coefficients range from 0 to 10, with 10 being assigned to those species most sensitive to disturbance. As more environmental disturbance occurs, the less conservative species become more prevalent.

Nichols (1999) analyzed aquatic plant community data from 554 Wisconsin Lakes to ascertain geographic (ecoregional) characteristics of the FQI metric. This is useful for considering how the Red Bass Lake FQI (17.0) compares to other lakes and regions. The statewide medians for number of species and FQI are 13 and 22.2, respectively. Red Bass Lake values are average compared to these statewide values. Nichols (1999) determined that there are four ecoregional-lake types groups in Wisconsin: (1) Northern Lakes and Forests lakes, (2) Northern Lakes and Forests flowages, (3) North Central Hardwoods and Southeastern Till Plain lakes and flowages, and (4) Driftless Area and Mississippi River Backwater lakes. Red Bass Lake is located in the Northern Lakes and Forests lakes group. Nichols (1999) found species numbers for the Northern Lakes and Forests lakes had a median value of 13. Red Bass Lake data is consistent with that find. Finally, the Red Bass Lake FQI (17.0) is lower than the median value for the Northern Lakes and Forests lakes group (24.3). The lower diversity is possibly due to the low transparency of Red Bass Lake and low number of species.

We observed no aquatic plants in Red Bass Lake that would be considered a nuisance-level population. Our survey found no aquatic invasive plant species or federally listed species.

#### **Part 4. Fish Community**

It was beyond the scope of the current Wilderness Waters project to characterize the fish community and fish habitat of this water body. The WDNR Lake Pages website (<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/lakepages/>) indicates that the bottom is comprised of 40% sand, 5% gravel, 0% rock, and 55% muck and that fish species present include panfish, largemouth bass, and trout.

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## **Part 5. Water Quality and Trophic Status**

Red Bass Lake is a 27 acre drainage lake with a maximum depth of 22 feet. Existing water quality information includes data collected from the WDNR SWIMS database in August, 1985; data from Citizens Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) volunteers collected data in 2018 and 2019; and water quality samples taken by White Water Associates in August 1, 2019.

That water quality information is briefly summarized in this section, but more fully interpreted in Appendix C.

There was a temperature profile conducted May to September, 2019. There was one dissolved oxygen profile conducted in August 2019. Water color was brown and the appearance of the water was clear. The trophic state was mesotrophic. Water quality would be classified as “good” with respect to phosphorous concentrations. Chlorophyll *a* (a measure of the amount of algae) was lower than the Wisconsin natural lakes average in 2019. Nitrogen, chloride, sulfate, hardness, conductivity, calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium would all be considered low. Alkalinity was low (a measure of a lake’s buffering capacity against acid rain). The pH values of Red Bass Lake were slightly alkaline.

## **Part 6. Water Use**

Red Bass Lake has one carry in public access. There is no State of Wisconsin ownership on the lake.

## **Part 7. Riparian Area**

Part 1 (Watershed) describes the larger riparian area context of Red Bass Lake. The near shore riparian area can be appreciated by viewing Exhibits 2 and 4. The lake is lightly developed with a fairly intact forested riparian zone that extends for hundreds of feet back from the lake. The forest is a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs. Our review of 2021 aerial photography reveals 4 houses on the lake. This intact riparian area provides numerous important functions and values to the lake. It effectively filters runoff to the lake. It provides excellent habitat for birds and mammals. Trees that fall into the lake from the riparian zone contribute important habitat elements to the lake. Educating riparian owners as to the value of riparian areas is important to the maintenance of these critical areas.

The WDNR, in 2016, formulated a protocol called *Lake Shoreland and Shallows Habitat Monitoring* (WDNR, 2016). It provides a standard methodology for surveying, assessing, and mapping habitat in lakeshore areas, including the Riparian buffer, Bank, and Littoral Zones

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(WDNR, 2016). This information will be useful to local and regional resource managers, community stakeholders, and others interested in protecting and enhancing Wisconsin's lakes and rivers (WDNR, 2016). Part of the shallow water habitat survey includes documenting woody habitat. A more detailed report can be found in Appendix D.

## **Part 8. Wildlife**

A study of wildlife was beyond the scope of the current study, but would be valuable to study and interpret in future iterations of the plan. This would be especially true of wetland and water oriented wildlife such as frogs, waterfowl, fish-eating birds, aquatic and semi-aquatic mammals, and invertebrate animals. In the future, it would be desirable to monitor indicator species of wildlife such as common loons, bald eagles, and osprey. Also, of special importance would be monitoring for the presence of aquatic invasive wildlife species (for example, rusty crayfish, spiny water flea, or zebra mussel) and fish species (for example, rainbow smelt or common carp).

## **Part 9. Stakeholders**

At this juncture in the ongoing aquatic plant management planning process, the Town Lakes Committee has represented the Red Bass Lake stakeholders. Additional stakeholders and interested citizens are invited to participate as the plan is refined and updated in order to broaden input, build consensus, and encourage participation in stewardship. No contentious direct plant management actions (for example, harvesting or use of herbicides) are a component of the current plan. The Town Lakes Committee has conducted a township wide lake users' survey that is presented in the overarching *Wilderness Waters Adaptive Management Plan* (Stine et al., 2019).

## CHAPTER 5

# Recommendations, Actions, and Objectives

In this chapter we provide recommendations for specific objectives and associated actions to support the APM Plan’s goals stated in Chapter 3 and re-stated here for convenient reference:

- (1) Monitor and protect the native aquatic plant community;*
- (2) Prevent establishment of AIS and nuisance levels of native plants;*
- (3) Ecologically evaluate plant management options (including no action); and*
- (4) Educate riparian owners and lake users on preventing AIS introduction, reducing nutrient inputs that potentially alter the plant community, minimizing physical removal of native riparian and littoral zone plants, and recreating in a lake whose natural state includes an abundance of native aquatic plants.*

Since Red Bass Lake is a healthy and diverse ecosystem, we could simply recommend an alternative of “no action.” In other words, Red Bass Lake continues without any effort or intervention on part of the lake stewards. Nevertheless, we consider the “no action” alternative imprudent. Many forces threaten the quality of the lake and Wilderness Waters Program and Town Lakes Committee feels a great responsibility to minimize the threats. We therefore outline in this section a set of actions and related management objectives that will actively engage lake stewards in the process of management.

The actions are presented in tabular form. Each “action” consists of a set of four statements: (1) a declarative “action” statement that specifies the action (2) a statement of the “objective” that the action serves, (3) a “monitoring” statement that specifies the party responsible for carrying out the action and maintaining data, and (4) a “status” statement that suggests a timeline/calendar and indicates status (not yet started, ongoing, or completed). At this time, we recommend no direct manipulation of plant populations in Red Bass Lake.

## Recommended Actions for the Red Bass Lake APM Plan

**Action #1:** Formally adopt the Aquatic Plant Management Plan.

**Objective:** To provide foundation for long-term native plant community conservation and stewardship and to be prepared for response to AIS introductions.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association and Town Lakes Committee oversees activity and maintains the plan.

**Status:** Planned for 2022.

**Action #2:** Monitor water quality.

**Objective:** Continue with collection and analysis of water quality parameters to detect trends in parameters such as nutrients, chlorophyll *a*, and water clarity.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association or Town Lakes Committee oversees activity and maintains data.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #3:** Monitor the lake for aquatic invasive plant species.

**Objective:** To understand the lake's biotic community, provide for early detection of AIS and continue monitoring any existing populations of AIS.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association or Town Lakes Committee oversees activity and maintains data.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #4:** Monitor the lake for aquatic invasive animal species.

**Objective:** To understand the lake's biotic community, provide for early detection of AIS and continue monitoring any existing populations of AIS.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association or Town Lakes Committee oversees activity and maintains data.

**Status:** Ongoing.

## Recommended Actions for the Red Bass Lake APM Plan

**Action #5:** Form an Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Team and interface with the Town Lakes Committee AIS Rapid Response Coordinator.

**Objective:** To be prepared for AIS discovery and efficient response.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association and/or Town Lakes Committee coordinate activity.

**Status:** Planned for 2022.

**Action #6:** Conduct quantitative plant survey every five years using WDNR Point-Intercept Methodology.

**Objective:** To watch for changes in native species diversity, floristic quality, plant abundance, and plant distribution and to check for the occurrence of non-native, invasive plant species.

**Monitoring:** Town Lakes Committee (Wilderness Waters Program) oversees and maintains data; copies to WDNR.

**Status:** Anticipated in 2024.

**Action #7:** Update the APM plan approximately every five years or as needed to reflect new plant information from plant surveys and monitoring.

**Objective:** To have current information and management science included in the plan.

**Monitoring:** Lake Association and/or Town Lakes Committee (Wilderness Waters Program) oversees and maintains data; copies to WDNR.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #8:** Develop a Citizen Lake Monitoring Network to monitor for invasive species and develop strategies including education and monitoring activities (see <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/clmn> for additional ideas).

**Objective:** To create a trained volunteer corps to monitor aquatic invasive species and to educate recreational users regarding AIS.

**Monitoring:** The Lake Association oversees activity and reports instances of possible introductions of AIS.

**Status:** Anticipated to begin in 2022.



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### Recommended Actions for the Red Bass Lake APM Plan

**Action #9:** Become familiar with and recognize the water quality and habitat values of ordinances and requirements on boating, septic, and property development.

**Objective:** To protect native aquatic plants, water quality, and riparian habitat.

**Monitoring:** Lake residents and other stakeholders.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #10:** Promote adherence to, and enforcement of, the Town of Presque Isle's 200 foot no-wake ordinances (from shoreline and islands).

**Objective:** To minimize recreational impacts on the aquatic plant community and shoreline habitats, and promote safe boating.

**Monitoring:** Town Lakes Committee oversees activity and assesses effectiveness.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #11:** Create an education plan for the property owners and other stakeholders that will address issues concerning aquatic and riparian plant communities.

**Objective:** To educate stakeholders about issues and topics that affect the lake's aquatic and riparian plant communities, including topics such as: (1) the importance of the aquatic plant community; (2) no or minimal mechanical removal of plants along the shoreline is desirable and that any plant removal should conform to Wisconsin regulations; (3) the value of a natural shoreline in protecting the aquatic plant community and lake health; (4) nutrient sources to the lake and the role excess nutrients play in degradation of the aquatic plant community; (5) the importance of reducing or eliminating use of fertilizers on lake front property; (6) the importance of minimizing transfer of AIS to the lake by having dedicated watercraft and cleaning boats that visit the lake.

**Monitoring:** Town Lakes Committee oversee(s) activity and assesses effectiveness.

**Status:** Anticipated to begin in 2022.

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## Recommended Actions for the Red Bass Lake APM Plan

**Action #12:** Identify and highlight high quality areas of littoral zone and riparian areas through review of aquatic plant and shoreland assessment data through various reports and online tools.

**Objective:** To (1) educate lake users on the value of these areas and the importance of good stewardship to their maintenance, (2) recognize landowners who implement good practices (e.g., large percentage of buffer area intact; three vegetative layers intact – herbaceous, shrubs, trees; areas of high native aquatic plant diversity and abundance), and (3) encourage landowners to implement good practices.

**Monitoring:** Town Lakes Committee and/or lake association promotes and oversees activity.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #13:** Lake leaders should encourage and assist landowners to take on lake shore/shallow water improvement projects to rehabilitate areas identified through formal shoreland/shallow water assessments and/or lake user observations (sites might include areas of active erosion, channelized flow, point source pollution, impervious surfaces, and lawns) *Vilas County Land and Water Conservation* looks for partners in this endeavor and can provide planning and sponsorship of projects.

**Objective:** To rehabilitate specific areas of shoreland to improve natural functions and values.

**Monitoring:** Lake groups and lake leaders monitor and report progress to Town Lakes Committee.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**Action #14:** As part of an education program, encourage commitment from property owners to adopt practices that maintain/improve health of shoreland areas. In many cases, these are “practices” that mean less or no work (e.g., no mowing, no weed wacking, no leaf blowing, no removing large woody material).

**Objective:** To engage landowners in simple practices that improve/maintain health of the lake and shoreland.

**Monitoring:** Each landowner can monitor changes in the shoreland over time by simple means (e.g., annual mid-summer photographs or a catalog of plants and animals seen over time).

**Status:** Anticipated to begin in 2022.

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## CHAPTER 6

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## Contingency Plan for AIS

Unfortunately, sources of aquatic invasive plants and other AIS are numerous in Wisconsin. Some infested lakes are quite close to Presque Isle Township. There is an increasing likelihood of accidental introduction of AIS to Presque Isle Township Lakes through conveyance of life stages by boats, trailers, and other vectors. It is important for the Town Lakes Committee and other lake stewards to be prepared for the contingency of aquatic invasive plant species colonization in a Presque Isle Township water body. As part of this grant an Aquatic Invasive Survey was conducted using the *Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Monitoring Standard Operating Procedure* (2014) and also an educational seminar was conducted. Further discussion is found in Appendix E.

For riparian owners and users of a lake ecosystem, the discovery of AIS is a tragedy that elicits an immediate desire to “fix the problem.” Although strong emotions may be evoked by such a discovery, a deliberate and systematic approach is required to appropriately and effectively address the situation. An aquatic plant management plan (one including a contingency plan for AIS) is the best tool by which the process can be navigated. In fact the APM plan is a requirement in Wisconsin for some kinds of aquatic plant management actions. One of the actions outlined in the previous chapter was to establish an Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Team. This team and its coordinator are integral to the management process. It is important for this team to be multi-dimensional (or at least have quick access to the expertise that may be required). AIS invade not just a single lake, but an entire region since the new infestation is an outpost from which the AIS can more easily colonize other nearby water bodies. For this reason it is strategic for the Rapid Response Team to include representation from regional stakeholders.

Exhibit 9 provides a flowchart outlining an appropriate rapid response to the suspected discovery of an aquatic invasive plant species. The response will be most efficient if an AIS Rapid Response Team has already been established and is familiar with the contingency plan. In the remainder of this chapter we further describe the approach.

When a suspect aquatic invasive plant species is found, either the original observer or a member of the Rapid Response Team (likely the coordinator) should collect an entire plant

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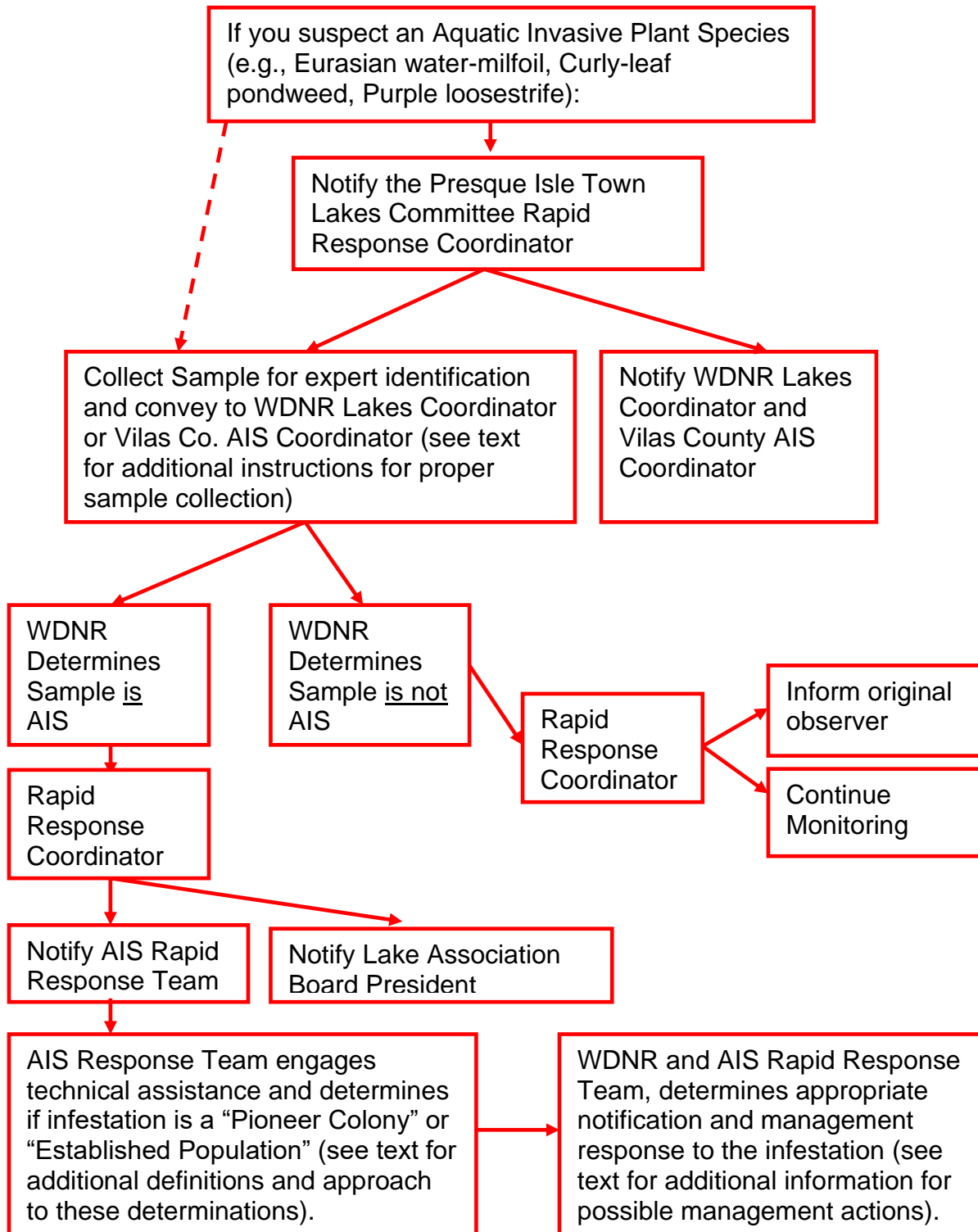
specimen including roots, stems, and flowers (if present). The sample should be placed in a sealable bag with a small amount of water to keep it moist. Place a label in the bag written in pencil with date, time, collector's name, lake name, location, town, and county. Attach a lake map to the bag that has the location of the suspect AIS marked and GPS coordinates recorded (if GPS is available). The sample should be placed on ice in a cooler or in a refrigerator. Deliver the sample to the WDNR Water Resource Management Specialist (Kevin Gauthier in Woodruff) or the Vilas County AIS Coordinator as soon as possible (at least within three days). The WDNR or their botanical expert(s) will determine the species and confirm whether or not it is an aquatic invasive plant species.

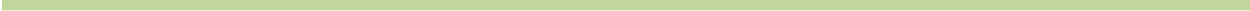
If the suspect specimen is determined to be an invasive plant species, the next step is to determine the extent and density of the population since the management response will vary accordingly. The Rapid Response Team should conduct (or have its consultant conduct) a survey to define the colony's perimeter and estimate density. If less than five acres (or <5% of the lake surface area), it is designated a "Pioneer Colony." If greater than five acres (or >5% of the lake surface area) then it is designated an "Established Population." Once the infestation is characterized, "at risk" areas should also be determined and marked on a map. For example, nearby boat landing sites and areas of high boat traffic should be indicated.

When "pioneer" or "established" status has been determined, it is time to consult with the WDNR Lakes Coordinator to determine appropriate notifications and management responses to the infestation. Determining whether hand-pulling or chemical treatment will be used is an important and early decision. Necessary notifications of landowners, governmental officials, and recreationists (at boat landings) will be determined. Whether the population's perimeter needs to be marked with buoys will be decided by the WDNR. Funding sources will be identified and consultants and contractors will be contacted where necessary. The WDNR will determine if a further baseline plant survey is required (depending on type of treatment). A post treatment monitoring plan will be discussed and established to determine the efficacy of the selected treatment.

Once the Rapid Response Team is organized, one of its first tasks is to develop a list of contacts and associated contact information (phone numbers and email addresses). At a minimum, this contact list should include: the Rapid Response Coordinator, members of the Rapid Response Team, County AIS Coordinator, WDNR Lakes Management Coordinator, Lake Association Presidents (or other points of contact), local WDNR warden, local government official(s), other experts, chemical treatment contractors, and consultant(s).

**Exhibit 9. Aquatic Invasive Plant Species Rapid Response**





**Appendix A**  
**Literature Cited**

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## **Appendix B**

### **Aquatic Plant Survey Tables and Figures**

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Table 1. Summary statistics for point-intercept aquatic plant survey.

Table 2. Plant species and distribution statistics.

Figure 1. Number of plant species recorded at sample sites.

Figure 2. Rake fullness ratings for sample sites.

Figure 3. Maximum depth of plant colonization.

Figure 4. Sampling sites less than or equal to maximum depth of rooted vegetation.

Figure 5. Substrate encountered at point-intercept plant sampling sites.

Figure 6. Aquatic plant occurrences for 2019 point-intercept survey data.

Figure 7. Point-intercept plant sampling sites with emergent and floating aquatic plants.

Figure 8-12. Distribution of plant species.



**Table 1. Summary statistics for 2019 point-intercept aquatic plant surveys for Red Bass Lake.**

Summary Statistic	Value	Notes
Total number of sites on grid	137	Total number of sites on the original grid (not necessarily visited)
Total number of sites visited	135	Total number of sites where the boat stopped, even if much too deep to have plants.
Total number of sites with vegetation	26	Total number of sites where at least one plant was found
Total number of sites shallower than maximum depth of plants	36	Number of sites where depth was less than or equal to the maximum depth where plants were found. This value is used for Frequency of occurrence at sites shallower than maximum depth of plants.
Frequency of occurrence at sites shallower than maximum depth of plants	72.22	Number of times a species was seen divided by the total number of sites shallower than maximum depth of plants.
Simpson Diversity Index	0.69	A nonparametric estimator of community heterogeneity. It is based on Relative Frequency and thus is not sensitive to whether all sampled sites (including non-vegetated sites) are included. The closer the Simpson Diversity Index is to 1, the more diverse the community.
Maximum depth of plants (ft.)	7.00	The depth of the deepest site sampled at which vegetation was present.
Number of sites sampled with rake on rope	5	
Number of sites sampled with rake on pole	71	
Average number of all species per site (shallower than max depth)	1.53	
Average number of all species per site (vegetated sites only)	2.12	
Average number of native species per site (shallower than max depth)	1.53	
Average number of native species per site (vegetated sites only)	2.12	
Species Richness	5	Total number of species collected. Does not include visual sightings.
Species Richness (including visuals)	9	Total number of species collected including visual sightings.
Floristic Quality Index (FQI)	17.0	

**Table 2. Plant species recorded and distribution statistics for the 2019 Red Bass Lake aquatic plant survey.**

Common name	Scientific name	Frequency of occurrence at sites less than or equal to maximum depth of plants	Frequency of occurrence within vegetated areas (%)	Relative Frequency (%)	Number of sites where species found	Number of sites where species found (including visuals)	Average Rake Fullness
Watershield	<i>Brasenia schreberi</i>	69.44	96.15	45.45	25	34	1.04
Common bladderwort	<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>	38.89	53.85	25.45	14	14	1
White water lily	<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	22.22	30.77	14.55	8	21	1
Oakes' pondweed	<i>Potamogeton oakesianus</i>	16.67	23.08	10.91	6	13	1
Creeping bladderwort	<i>Utricularia gibba</i>	5.56	7.69	3.64	2	3	1
Fringed sedge	<i>Carex crinata</i>				Visual	2	
Marsh cinquefoil	<i>Comarum palustre</i>				Visual	2	
Spatterdock	<i>Nuphar variegata</i>				Visual	2	
Three-way sedge	<i>Dulichium arundinaceum</i>				Visual	1	
Bluejoint grass	<i>Calamagrostes canadensis</i>				Boat survey		
Bulbet-bearing water hemlock	<i>Cicuta bulbifera</i>				Boat survey		
Ovate spikerush	<i>Eleocharis ovata</i>				Boat survey		
Creeping spikerush	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>				Boat survey		
Needle spikerush	<i>Eleocharis acicularis</i>				Boat survey		
Iris	<i>Iris sp.</i>				Boat survey		
Common rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>				Boat survey		
Northern bugleweed	<i>Lycopus uniflorus</i>				Boat survey		
Bur-reed	<i>Sparganium sp. (erect)</i>				Boat survey		
Virginia marsh St. John's wort	<i>Triadenum virginicum</i>				Boat survey		
Broad-leaved cattail	<i>Typha latifolia</i>				Boat survey		
Cranberry	<i>Vaccinium macrocarpon</i>				Boat survey		

**Frequency of occurrence within vegetated areas (%):** Number of times a species was seen in a vegetated area divided by the total number of vegetated sites.

Dr. Freckmann (U.W. Steven's Point: Herbarium) confirmed the voucher specimens January, 2020.

Figure 1. Number of plant species recorded at Red Bass Lake sample sites (2019).



Figure 2. Rake fullness ratings for Red Bass Lake sample sites (2019).



**Rake fullness  
(all species)**

- 1
- 2
- 3



**Figure 3. Maximum Depth of Plant Colonization,  
Red Bass Lake, 2019**

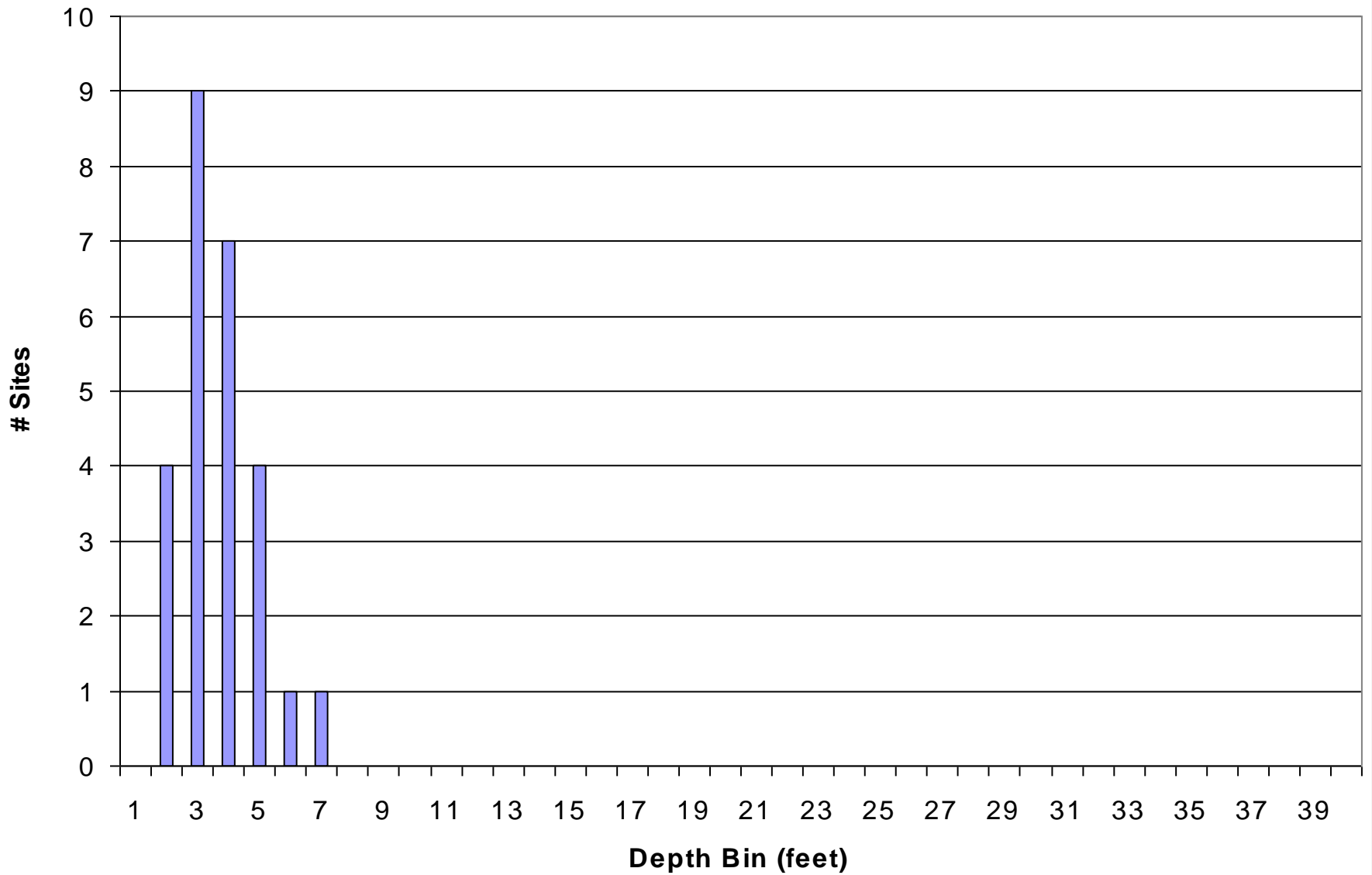


Figure 4. Red Bass Lake sampling sites less than or equal to maximum depth of rooted vegetation (2019).



- Site less than or equal to maximum depth of plant colonization (MDC).
- Plant find(s) at site less than or equal to MDC.

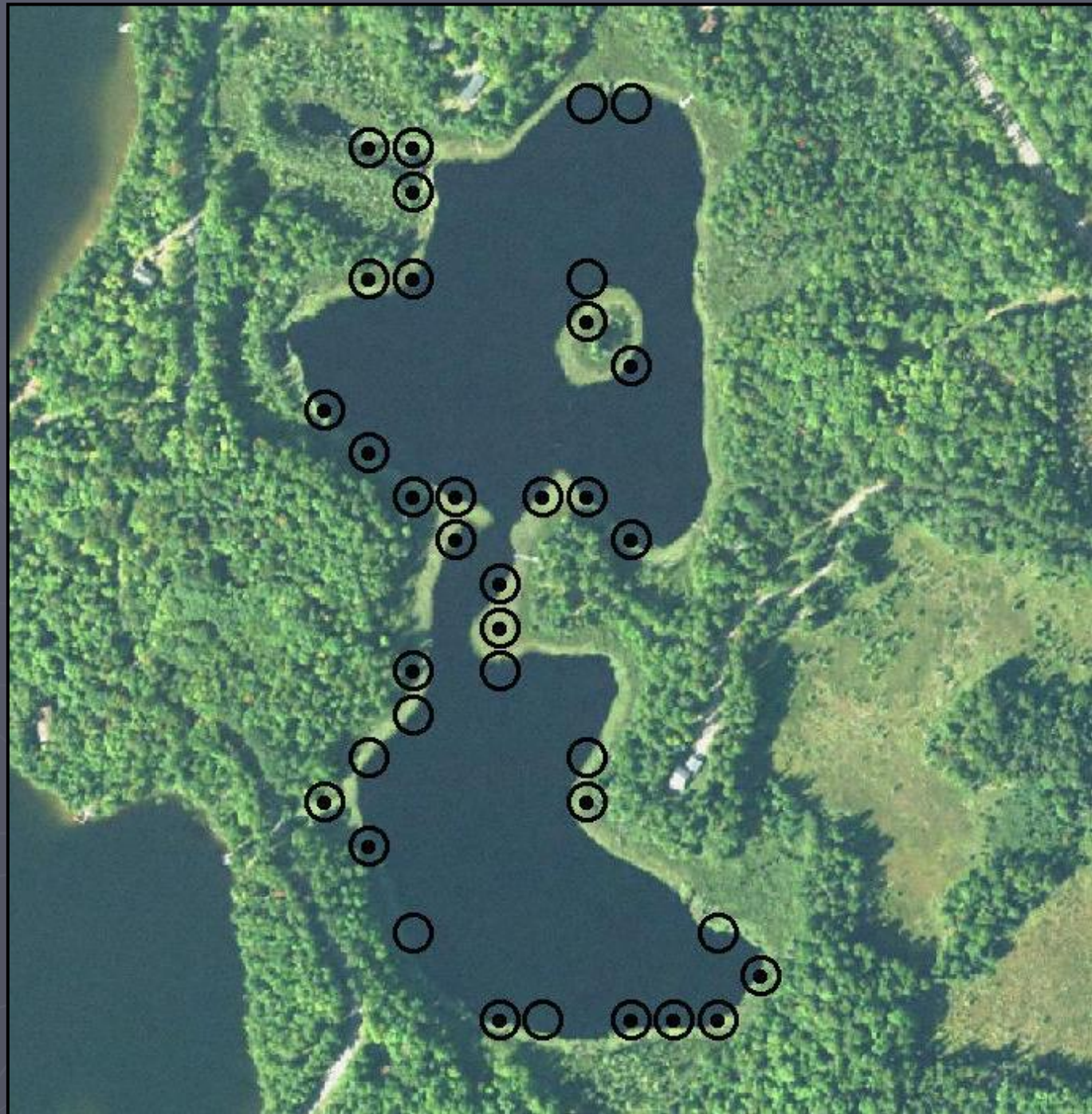


Figure 5. Red Bass Lake substrate encountered at point-intercept plant sampling sites (2019).



Figure 6. Red Bass Lake aquatic plant occurrences for 2019 point-intercept survey data.

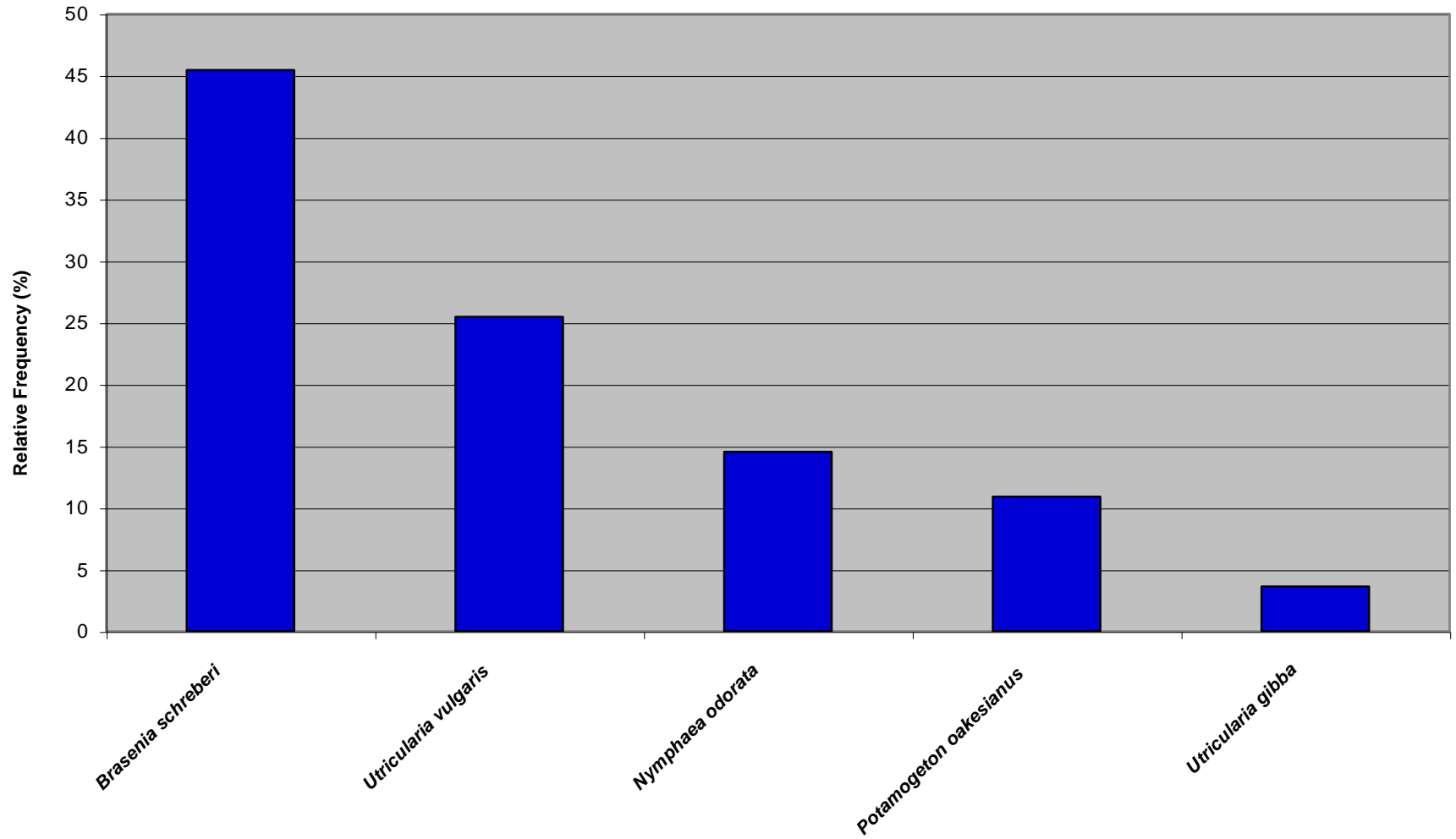




Figure 7. Red Bass Lake point-intercept plant sampling sites with emergent and floating aquatic plants (2019).

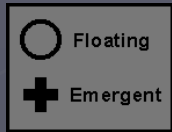


Figure 8. Distribution of plant species, Red Bass Lake (2019).

*Brasenia schreberi*,  
Watershield

-  1 (Rake fullness)
-  2
-  3
-  Visual
-  Not found
-  Unsampled (depth)
-  Non-navigable

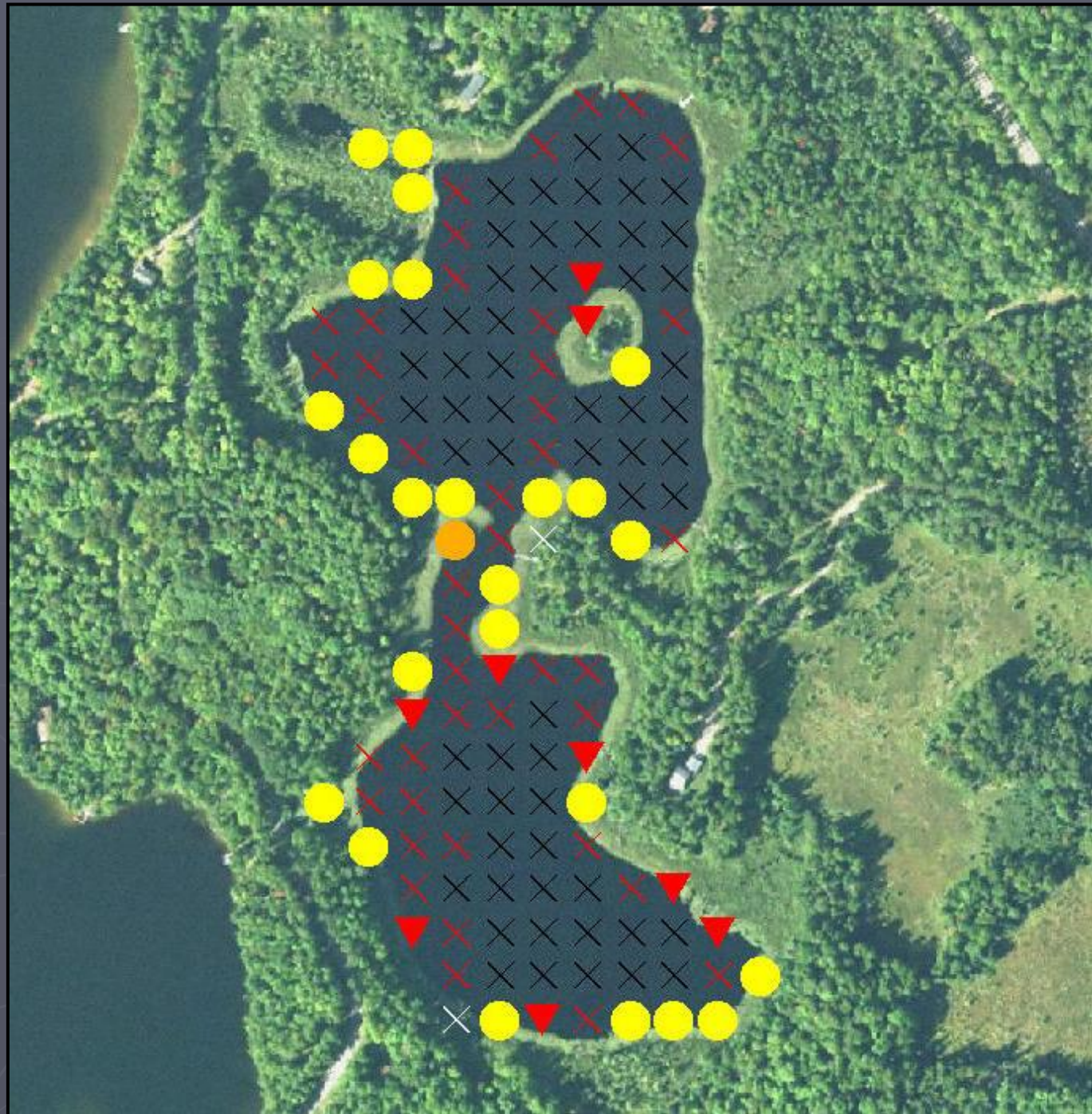


Figure 9. Distribution of plant species, Red Bass Lake (2019).

*Utricularia vulgaris*,  
Common bladderwort

● 1 (Rake fullness)

● 2

● 3

▼ Visual

× Not found

× Unsampled (depth)

× Non-navigable

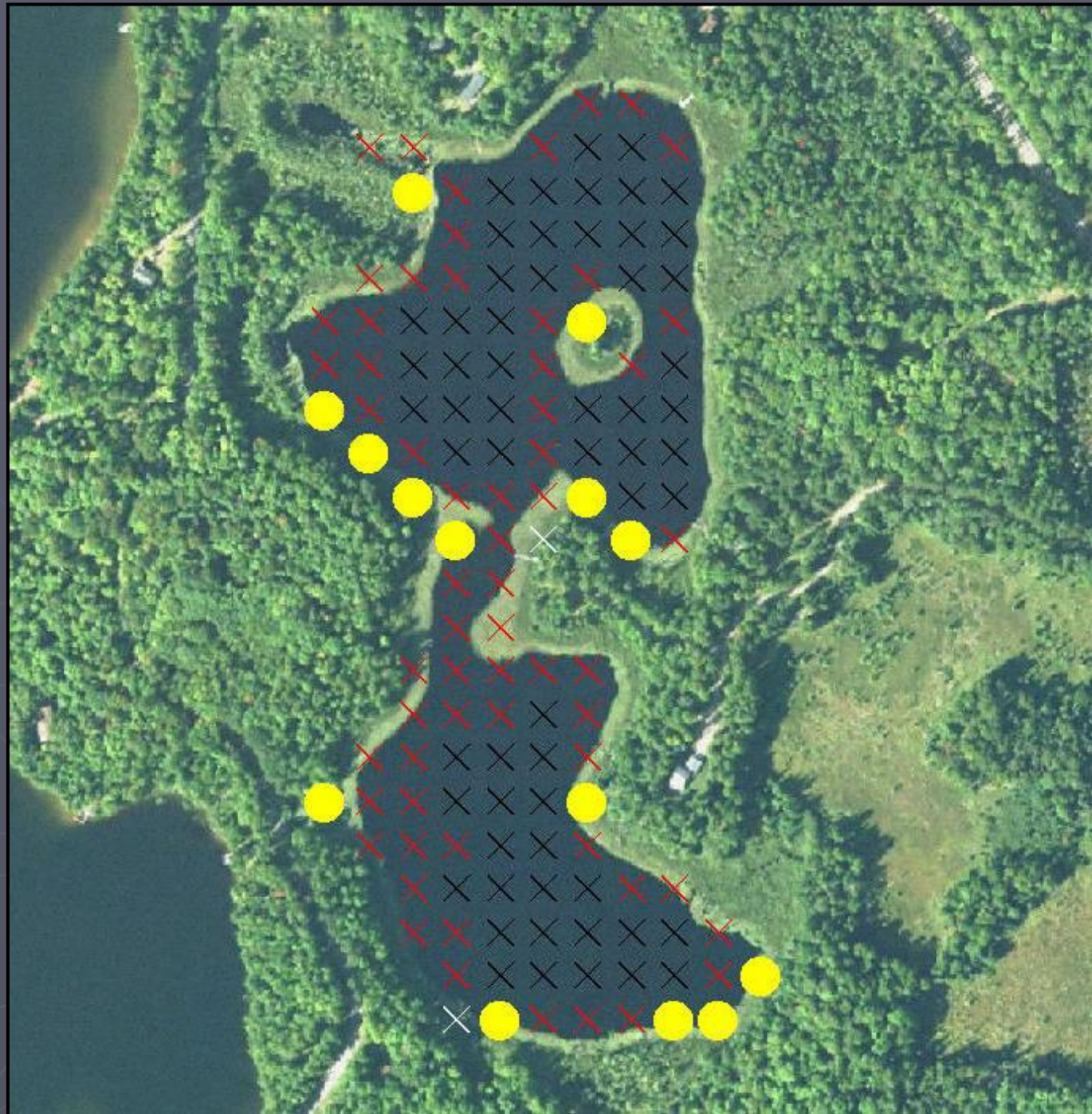


Figure 10. Distribution of plant species, Red Bass Lake (2019).



*Nymphaea odorata*, White water lily

● 1 (Rake fullness)

● 2

● 3

▼ Visual

✗ Not found

✗ Unsampled (depth)

✗ Non-navigable

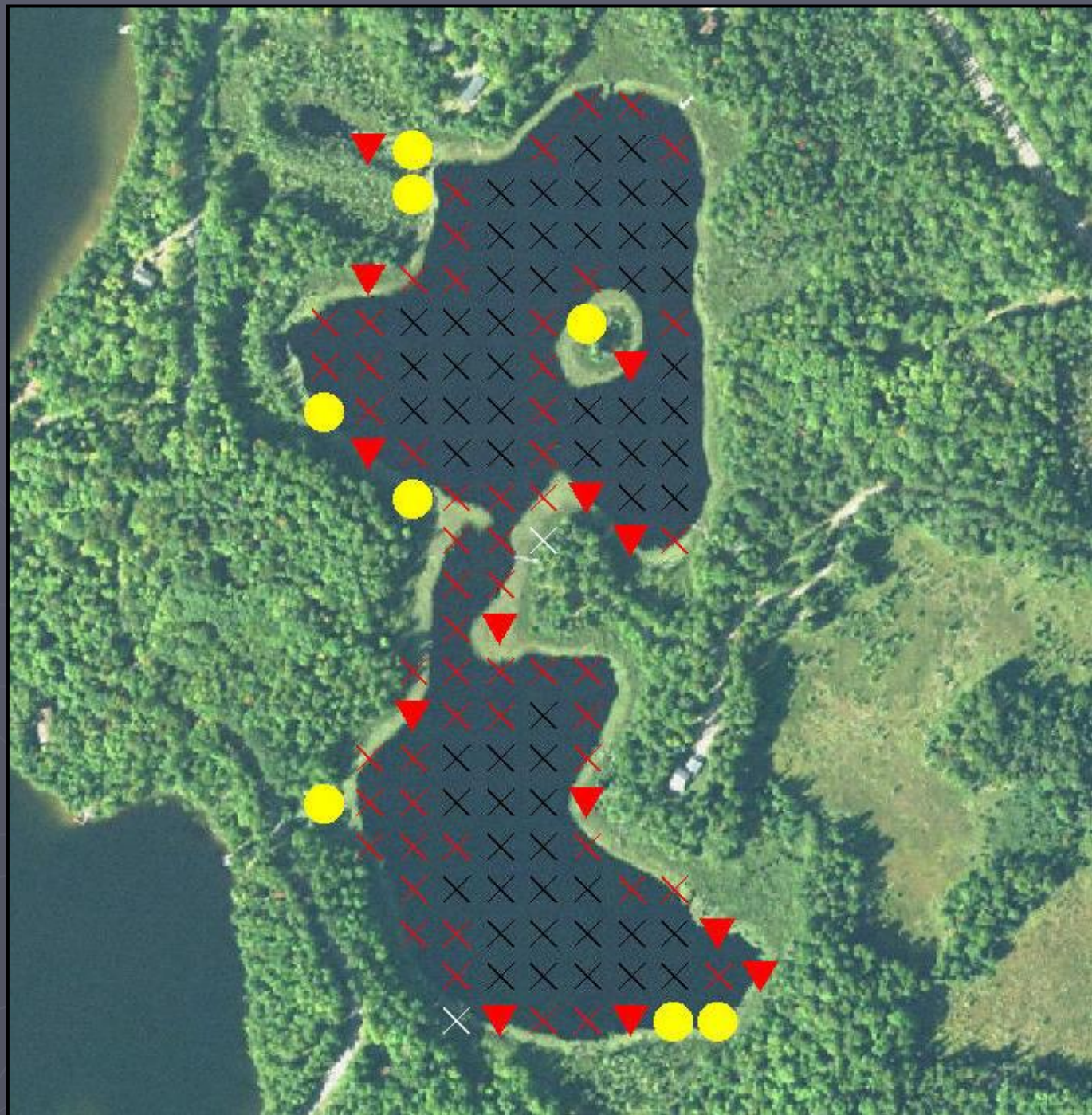


Figure 11. Distribution of plant species, Red Bass Lake (2019).



*Potamogeton oakesianus*, Oakes' pondweed

● 1 (Rake fullness)

● 2

● 3

▼ Visual

✗ Not found

✗ Unsampled (depth)

✗ Non-navigable

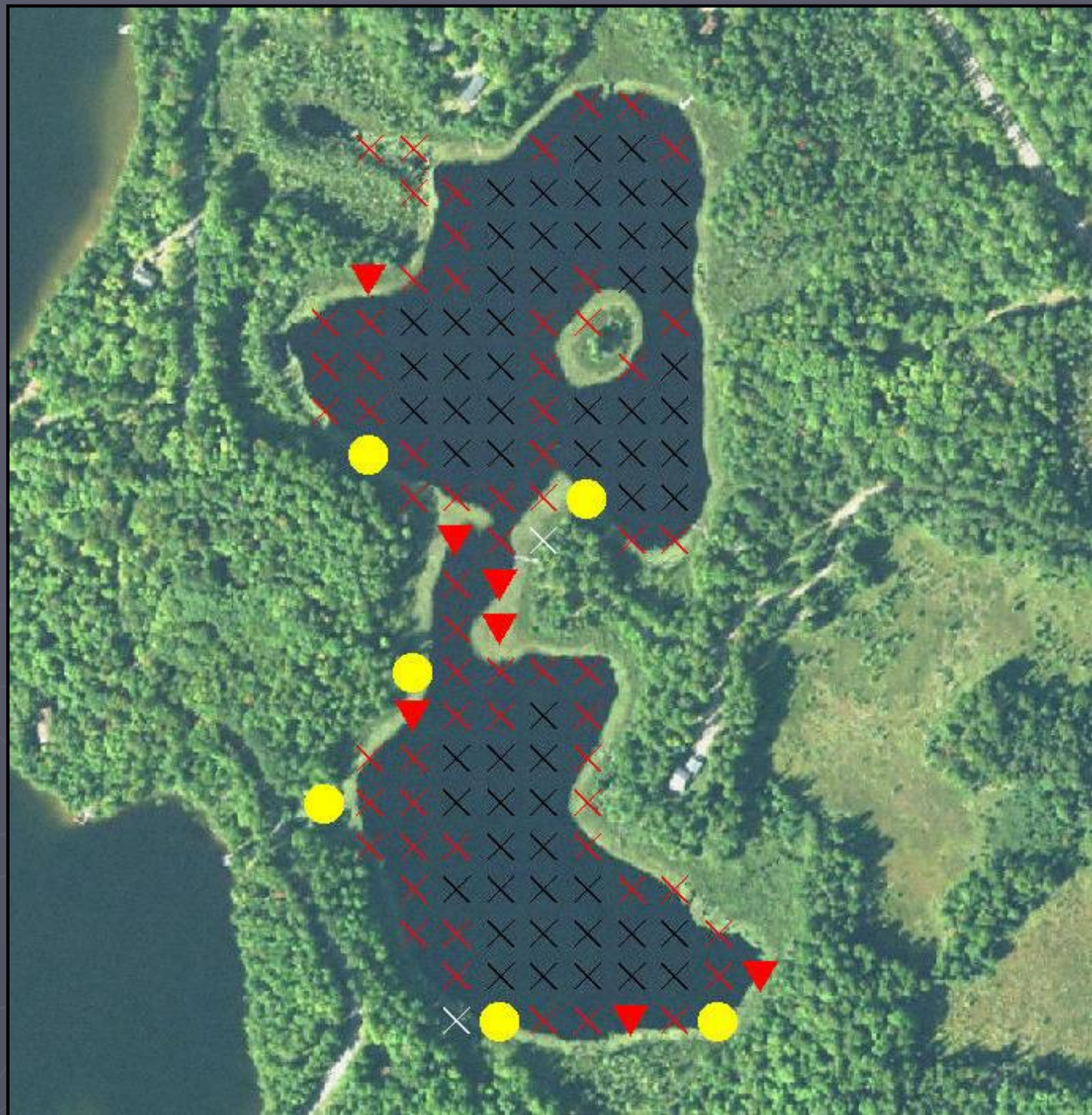


Figure 12. Distribution of plant species, Red Bass Lake (2019).

*Utricularia gibba*,  
Creeping bladderwort

● 1 (Rake fullness)

● 2

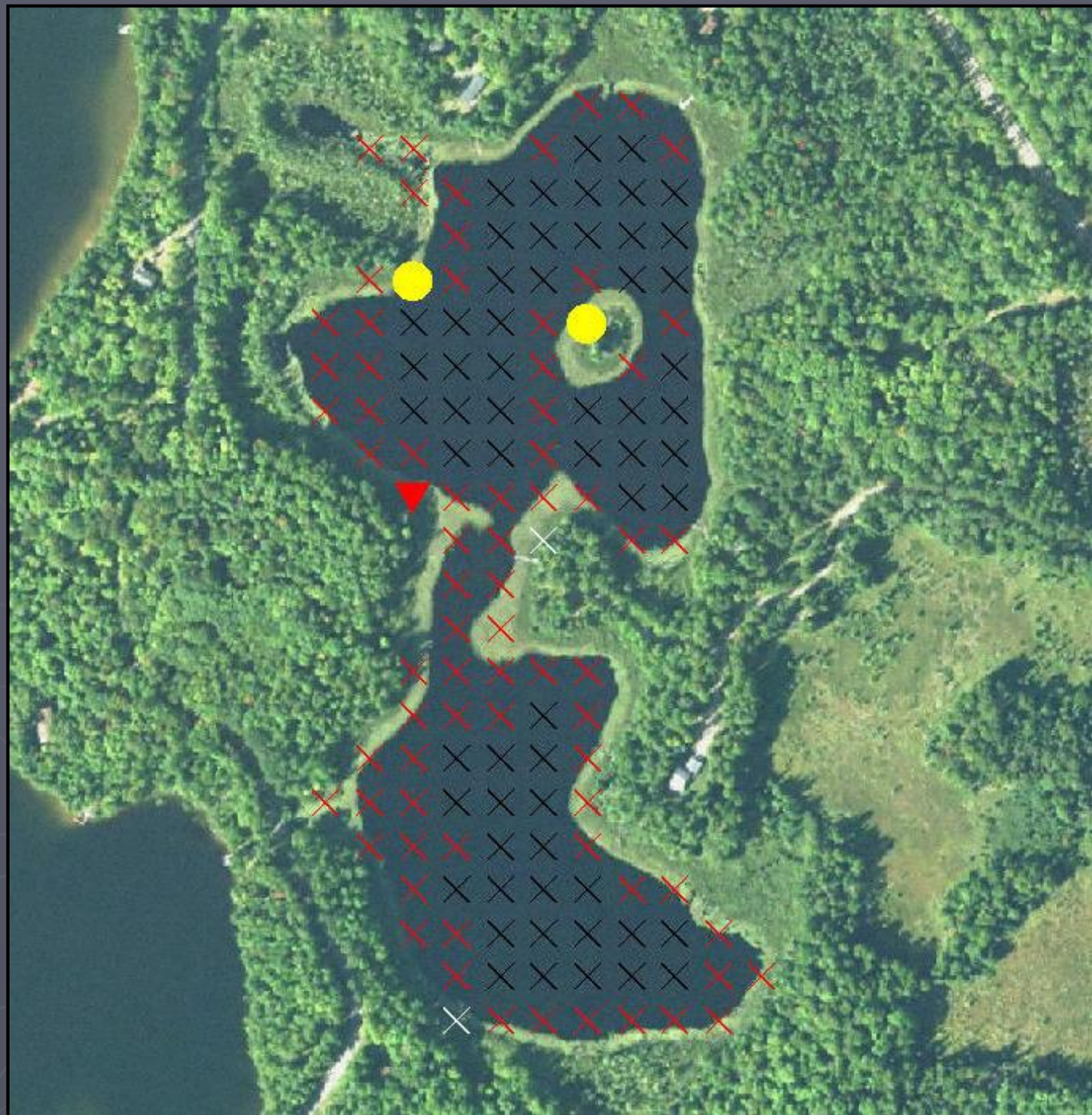
● 3

▼ Visual

✗ Not found

✗ Unsampled (depth)

✗ Non-navigable





**Appendix C**  
**Red Bass Lake Water Quality Report**

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## Appendix C

### Review of Lake Water Quality

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# Review of Red Bass Lake Water Quality

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Prepared by Angie Stine, B.S. White Water Associates, Inc.

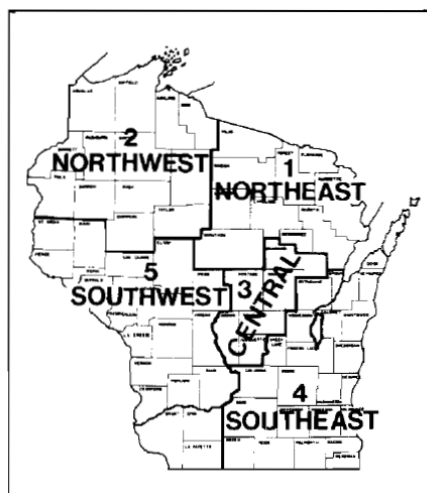
## Introduction

Red Bass Lake is located in Vilas County, Wisconsin. It is a seepage lake of about 27 acres and maximum depth of 22 feet from the WIDNR lakes pages. Red Bass Lake resident, Keith Bassage, reports the maximum depth at 29 feet. The Waterbody Identification Code (WBIC) is 2954700. The purpose of this study was to review and report existing baseline water quality data found in the Wisconsin DNR SWIMS database. Future water quality monitoring data can be compared to this baseline dataset in order to detect and understand long-term changes in water quality. Water quality data was retrieved from the Wisconsin DNR SWIMS database from 1985, 2018, and 2019 (WDNR, 2021a). Secchi disk measurements were collected on site in 2018 and 2019.

## Comparison of Red Bass Lake with other datasets

Lillie and Mason's *Limnological Characteristics of Wisconsin Lakes* (1983) is a great source to compare lakes within our region to a subset of lakes that have been sampled in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is divided into five regions of sampling lakes. Vilas County lakes are in the Northeast Region (Figure 1) and were among 243 lakes randomly selected and analyzed for water quality.

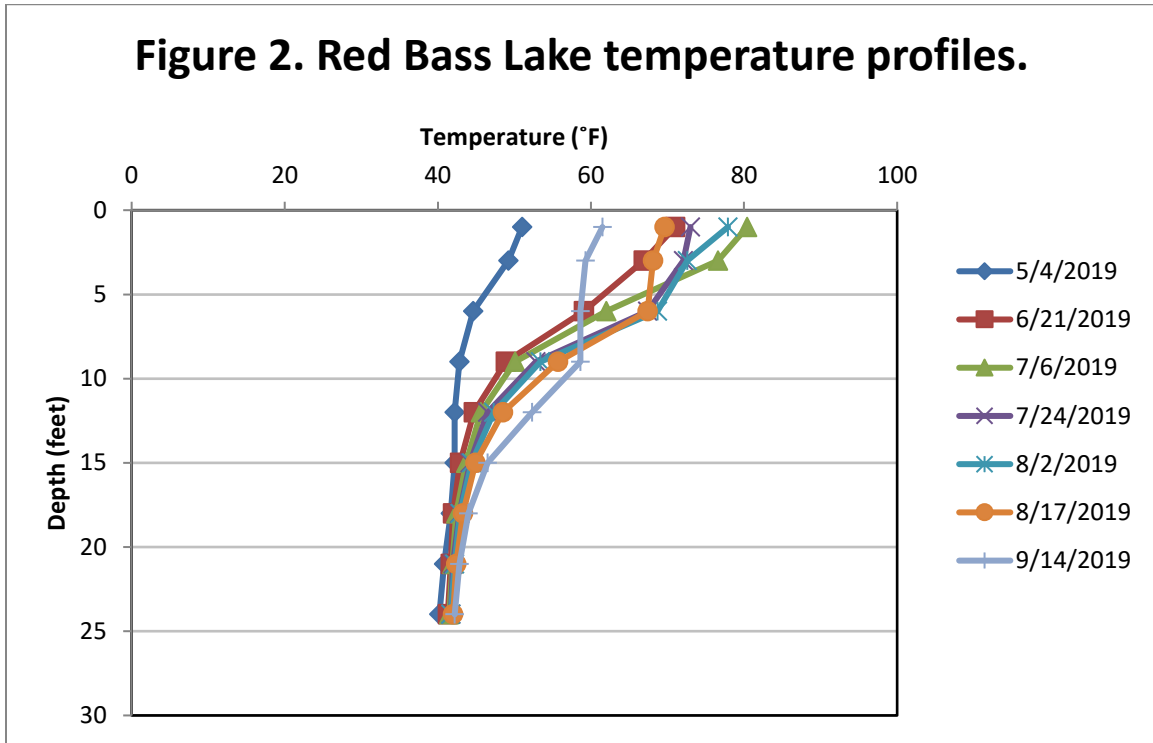
**Figure 1. Wisconsin regions in terms of water quality.**



## Temperature

Measuring the temperature of a lake at different depths will determine the influence it has on the physical, biological, and chemical aspects of the lake. Lake water temperature influences the rate of decomposition, nutrient recycling, lake stratification, and dissolved oxygen (D.O.) concentration. Temperature can also

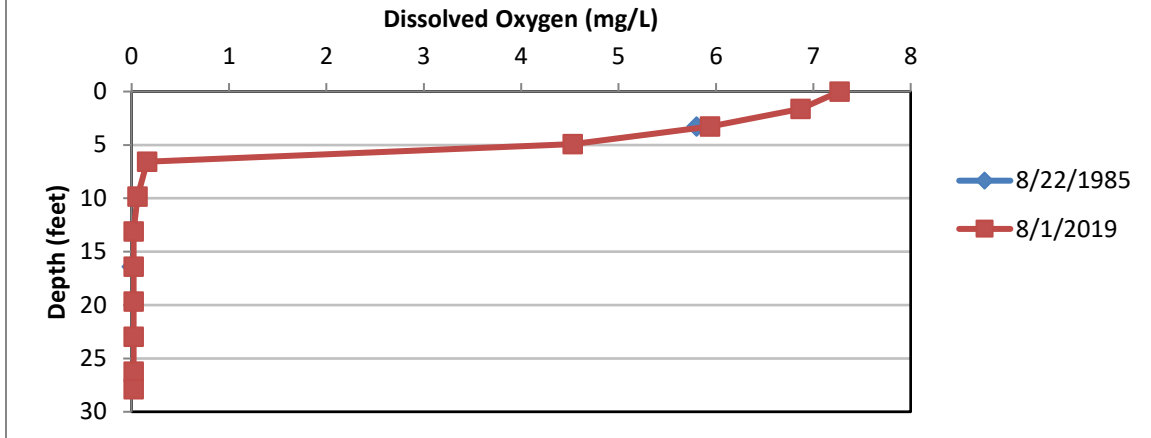
affect the distribution of fish species throughout a lake. A temperature profile was conducted in May, June, July, August and September of 2019 (Figure 2).



### Dissolved Oxygen

The dissolved oxygen (D.O.) content of lake water is vital in determining presence of fish species and other aquatic organisms. Dissolved oxygen also has a strong influence on the chemical and physical conditions of a lake. The amount of dissolved oxygen is dependent on the water temperature, atmospheric pressure, and biological activity. Oxygen levels are increased by aquatic plant photosynthesis, but reduced by respiration of plants, decomposer organisms, fish, and invertebrates. The amount of dissolved oxygen available in a lake, particularly in the deeper parts of a lake, is critical to overall health. In August, 1985, D.O. was 5.8 mg/L at 3 feet. A D.O. profile was also conducted August 1, 2019 with a surface D.O. of 7.27 mg/L which drops off at approximately 5-6 feet.

**Figure 3. Red Bass Lake dissolved oxygen profiles.**



### Water Clarity

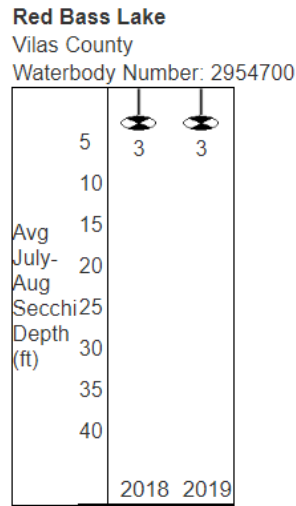
Water clarity has two main components: turbidity (suspended materials such as algae and silt) and true color (materials dissolved in the water) (Shaw et al., 2004). Water clarity gives an indication of the overall water quality in a lake. Water clarity is typically measured using a Secchi disk (black and white disk) that is lowered into the water column on a tether. In simple terms, the depth at which the disk is no longer visible is recorded as the Secchi depth. Secchi depths were measured in the field in 2018 and 2019 (Figure 4).

Figure 4 shows Red Bass Lake’s Secchi depths from 2018 and 2019. The mean, min, and max for Secchi are shown in Figure 5. According to Table 1, Red Bass Lake’s average Secchi depth can be considered “very poor” with respect to water clarity. It should be noted that the water clarity is tannic which will affect the Secchi measurements.

**Table 1. Water clarity index (Shaw et al., 2004).**

Water clarity	Secchi depth (ft.)
Very poor	3
Poor	5
Fair	7
Good	10
Very good	20
Excellent	32

**Figure 4. Red Bass Lake Secchi depth averages (July and August only) (WDNR, 2021).**



Past secchi averages in feet (July and August only).

**Figure 5. Red Bass Lake’s July and August Secchi Data (Deep Hole): Mean, Min, Max, and Secchi Count (2018-2019) (WDNR, 2021).**

Year	Secchi Mean	Secchi Min	Secchi Max	Secchi Count
2018	3.15	3.1	3.2	2
2019	3.12	2.5	3.5	6

Report Generated: 03/23/2021

### Turbidity

Turbidity is another measure of water clarity, but is caused by suspended particulate matter rather than dissolved organic compounds (Shaw et al., 2004). Particles suspended in the water dissipate light and reduce the depth at which the light can penetrate. This affects the depth at which plants can grow. Turbidity also affects the aesthetic quality of water. Water that runs off the watershed into a lake can increase turbidity by introducing suspended materials. Turbidity caused by algae is the most common reason for low Secchi readings (Shaw et al., 2004). In terms of biological health of a lake ecosystem, measurements less than 10 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU) represent healthy conditions for fish and other organisms. Red Bass Lake turbidity has not been tested, and should be included in future water quality sampling.

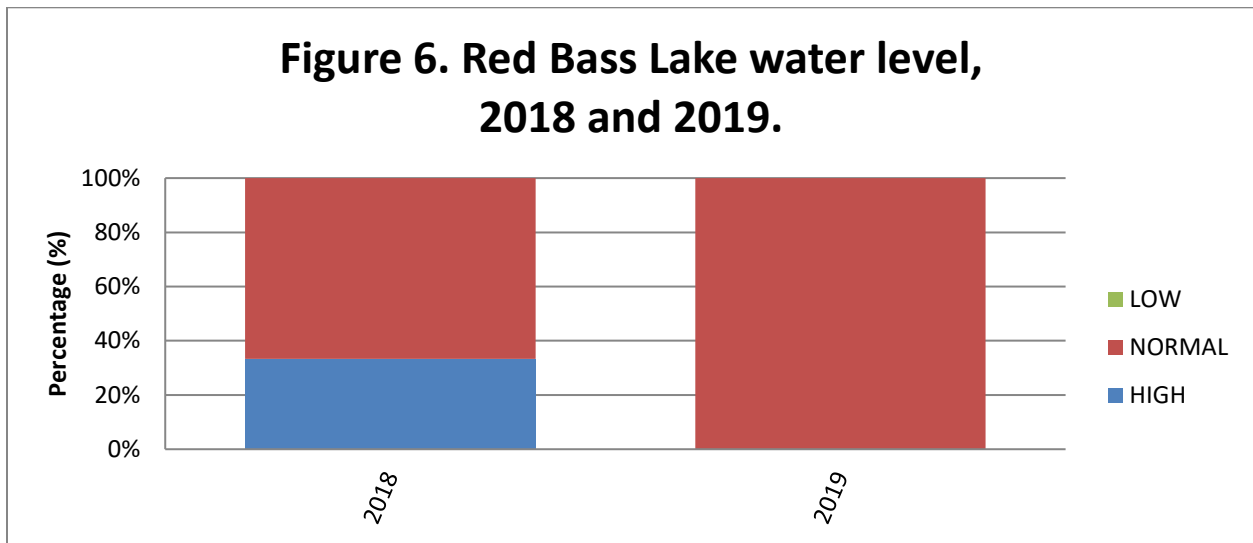
### Water Color

Color of lake water is related to the type and amount of dissolved organic chemicals. Its main significance is aesthetics, although it may also influence light penetration and in turn affect aquatic plant and algal

growth. Many lakes have naturally occurring color compounds from decomposition of plant material in the watershed (Shaw et al., 2004). Units of color are determined from the platinum-cobalt scale and are therefore recorded as Pt-Co units. Shaw states that a water color between 0 and 40 Pt-Co units is low. Red Bass Lake was analyzed for color level in August, 1985 and had a value of 120 Pt-Co and on August 2019 with a value of 120 SU.

### Water Level

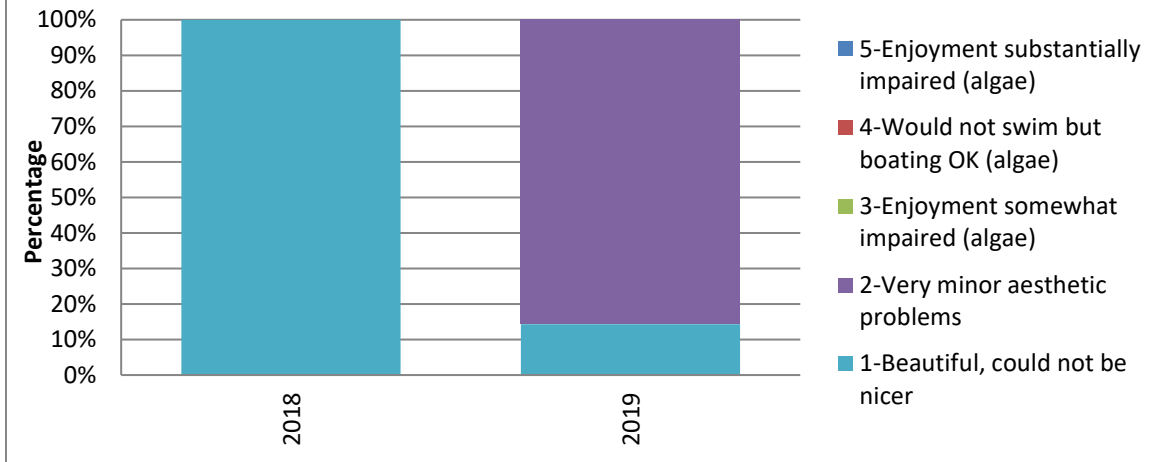
When CLMN volunteers collect Secchi depth readings, they also record their opinion of lake level as “high,” “normal,” or “low.” Water level was monitored by a Citizen Lake volunteer in 2018 and 2019. Figure 6 indicates that in 2019 the water level was normal.



### User Perceptions

When Secchi depth readings are collected, the CLMN record their perceptions of the water, based on the physical appearance and the recreational suitability. These perceptions can be compared to water quality parameters to see how the lake user would experience the lake at that time. When interpreting the transparency data, we see that when the Secchi depth decreases, the rating of the lake’s physical appearance also decreases. A Citizen Lake Monitor looked at Red Bass Lakes’s aesthetic value in 2018 and 2019 (Figure 7).

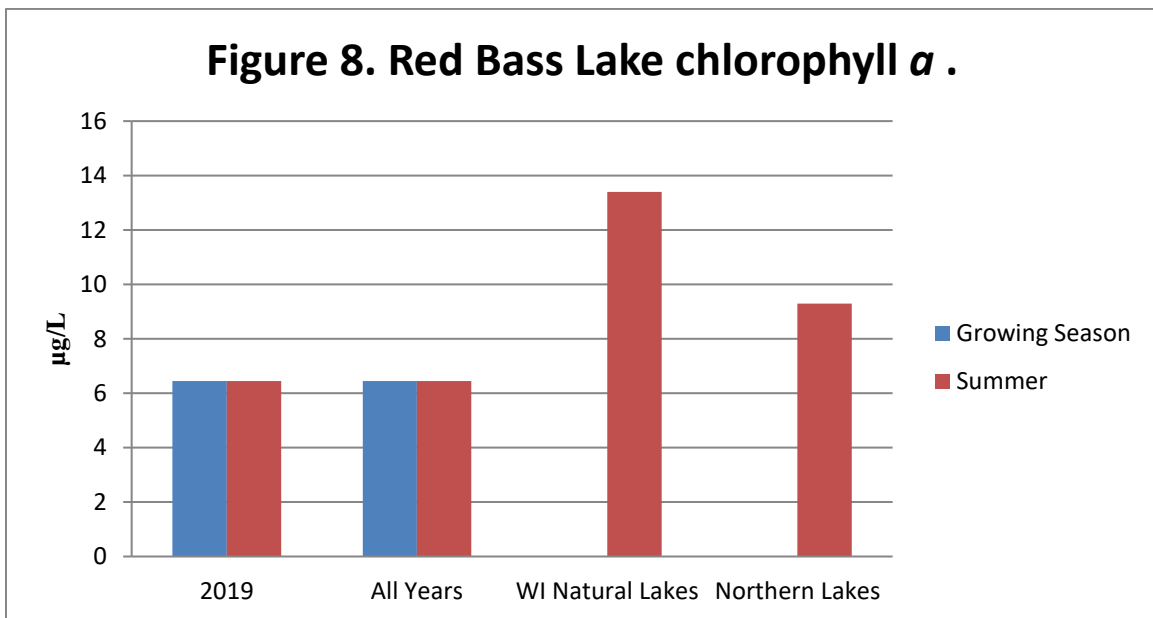
**Figure 7. Red Bass Lake aesthetic value, 2018-2019.**



**Chlorophyll *a***

Chlorophyll *a* is the photosynthetic pigment that makes plants and algae green. Chlorophyll *a* in lake water is therefore an indicator of the amount of algae. Chlorophyll *a* concentration greater than 10 µg/L are perceived as a mild algae bloom, while concentrations greater than 20 µg/L are perceived as a nuisance. Chlorophyll *a* values were below nuisance levels and well below the average levels for Wisconsin natural lakes for the summer months. Chlorophyll *a* was analyzed on Red Bass Lake in August, 2019 (Figure 8). Long term monitoring should be conducted to show any trends in chlorophyll *a* data.

**Figure 8. Red Bass Lake chlorophyll *a* .**

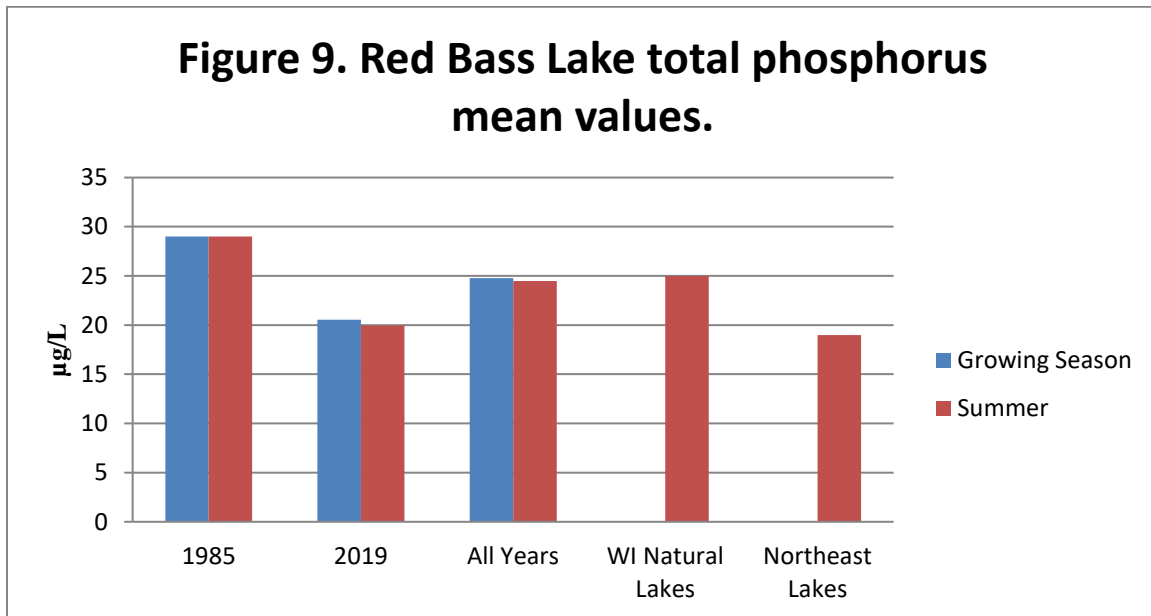


## Phosphorus

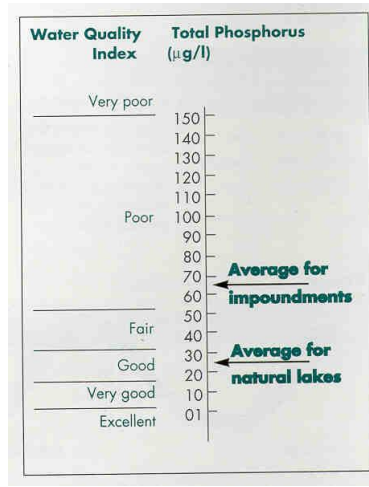
In more than 80% of Wisconsin's lakes, phosphorus is the key nutrient affecting the amount of algae and plant growth. If phosphorus levels are high, excessive aquatic plant growth can occur.

Phosphorus originates from a variety of sources, many of which are related to human activities. Major sources include human and animal wastes, soil erosion, detergents, septic systems and runoff from farmland or lawns (Shaw et al., 2004). Phosphorus provokes complex reactions in lakes. An analysis of phosphorus often includes both soluble reactive phosphorus and total phosphorus. Soluble reactive phosphorus dissolves in the water and directly influences plant growth (Shaw et al., 2004). Its concentration varies in most lakes over short periods of time as plants take it up and release it. Total phosphorus is considered a better indicator of a lake's nutrient status than soluble reactive phosphorus because its levels remain more stable (Shaw et al., 2004). Total phosphorus includes soluble phosphorus and the phosphorus in plant and animal fragments suspended in lake water. Ideally, soluble reactive phosphorus concentrations should be 10  $\mu\text{g/L}$  or less at spring turnover to prevent summer algae blooms (Shaw et al., 2004). A concentration of total phosphorus below 20  $\mu\text{g/L}$  for lakes should be maintained to prevent nuisance algal blooms (Shaw et al., 2004).

Total phosphorus was analyzed in August, 1985 and was 12  $\mu\text{g/L}$  and on August, 2019 (Figure 9). Based on these values, Red Bass Lake's total phosphorus can be classified as "good" (Figure 3). Long term monitoring should be conducted to determine any trends in total phosphorus.



**Figure 10. Total phosphorus concentrations for Wisconsin’s natural lakes and impoundments (Shaw et al., 2004).**

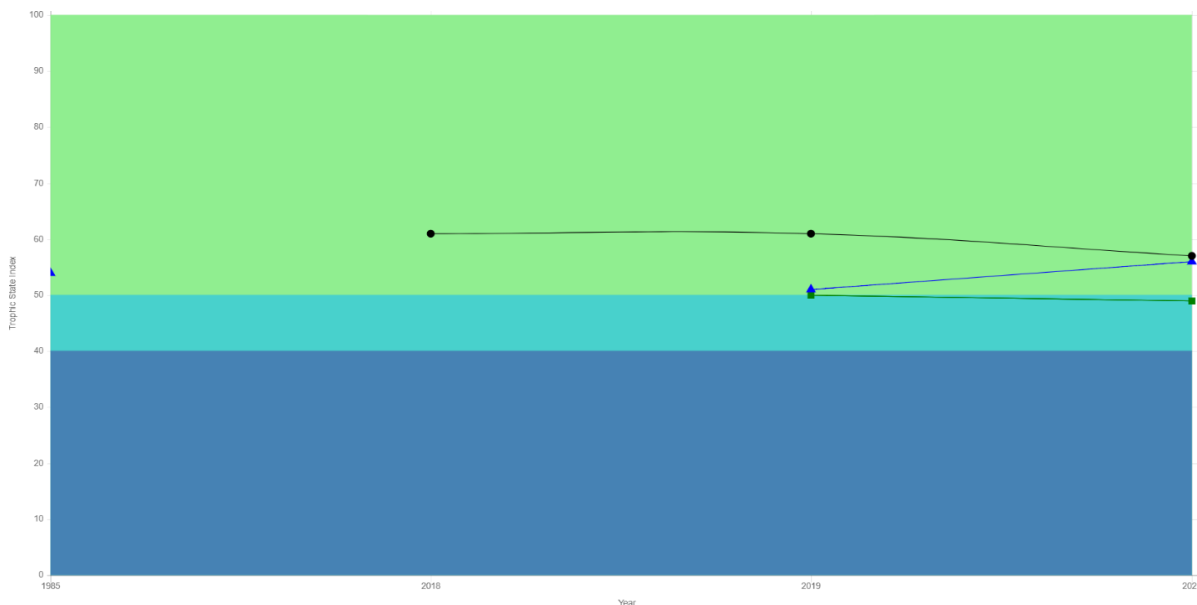


### Trophic State

Trophic state is another indicator of water quality (Carlson, 1977). Lakes can be divided into three categories based on trophic state – oligotrophic, mesotrophic, and eutrophic. These categories reflect a lake’s nutrient and clarity levels (Shaw et al., 2004).

Trophic State Index (TSI) was calculated by the WDNR using chlorophyll *a* data (TSI 50) from 2019 and (TSI 49) in 2021 (Figure 11). Total phosphorus TSI was 51 in 2019 and TSI 56 in 2021. The Secchi TSI was 61 in 2019 and TSI 57 in 2021. According to Table 2, Red Bass Lake could be categorized as “mesotrophic and mildly eutrophic.” Further analysis should be done to better understand the current TSI of Red Bass Lake.

**Figure 11. Red Bass Lake Trophic State Index, 1985, 2018, 2019, and 2021.**





(WDNR, 2021)

<b>Table 2. Trophic State Index.</b>	
<b>30-40</b>	<b>Oligotrophic:</b> clear, deep water; possible oxygen depletion in lower depths; few aquatic plants or algal blooms; low in nutrients; large game fish usual fishery
<b>40-50</b>	<b>Mesotrophic:</b> moderately clear water; mixed fishery, esp. panfish; moderate aquatic plant growth and occasional algal blooms; may have low oxygen levels near bottom in summer
<b>50-60</b>	<b>Mildly Eutrophic:</b> decreased water clarity; anoxic near bottom; may have heavy algal bloom and plant growth; high in nutrients; shallow eutrophic lakes may have winterkill of fish; rough fish common
<b>60-70</b>	<b>Eutrophic:</b> dominated by blue-green algae; algae scums common; prolific aquatic plant growth; high nutrient levels; rough fish common; susceptible to oxygen depletion and winter fishkill
<b>70-80</b>	<b>Hypereutrophic:</b> heavy algal blooms through most of summer; dense aquatic plant growth; poor water clarity; high nutrient levels

(WDNR, April 2013)

Researchers use various methods to calculate the trophic state of lakes. Common characteristics used to make the determination are: total phosphorus (important for algae growth), chlorophyll *a* concentration (a measure of the amount of algae present), and Secchi disk readings (an indicator of water clarity) (Shaw et al., 2004) (Table 3).

**Table 3. Trophic classification of Wisconsin Lakes based on chlorophyll *a*, water clarity measurements, and total phosphorus values (Shaw et al., 2004).**

Trophic class	Total phosphorus µg/L	Chlorophyll <i>a</i> µg/L	Secchi Disk (ft.)
Oligotrophic	3	2	12
	10	5	8
Mesotrophic	18	8	6
	27	10	6
Eutrophic	30	11	5
	50	15	4

## Nitrogen

Nitrogen is second only to phosphorus as an important nutrient for aquatic plant and algae growth (Shaw et al., 2004). Human activities on the landscape greatly influence the amount of nitrogen in a lake. Nitrogen may come from lawn fertilizer, septic systems near the lake, or from agricultural activities in the watershed. Nitrogen may enter a lake from surface runoff or groundwater sources.

Nitrogen exists in lakes in several forms. Red Bass Lake was analyzed for total Kjeldahl nitrogen (0.8 mg/L August, 1985 and 0.65 mg/L August, 2019), ammonium (0.02 mg/L August, 1985 and ND August 2019), and nitrate-nitrite (0.02 mg/L August, 1985 and ND August 2019) in 1985 and 2019. Nitrogen is a major component of all organic (plant and animal) matter. Decomposing organic matter releases ammonia, which is converted to nitrate if oxygen is present (Shaw et al., 2004). All inorganic forms of nitrogen can be used by aquatic plants and algae (Shaw et al., 2004). If these inorganic forms of nitrogen exceed 0.3 mg/L (as N) in spring, there is sufficient nitrogen to support summer algae blooms (Shaw et

al., 2004). Elevated concentrations of ammonium, nitrate, and nitrite, derived from human activities, can stimulate or enhance the development, maintenance and proliferation of primary producers (phytoplankton, benthic algae, macrophytes), contributing to the widespread phenomenon of the cultural (human-made) eutrophication of aquatic ecosystems (Camargo et al., 2007). The nutrient enrichment can cause important ecological effects on aquatic communities, since the overproduction of organic matter, and its subsequent decomposition, usually lead to low dissolved oxygen concentrations in bottom waters, and sediments of eutrophic and hypereutrophic aquatic ecosystems with low turnover rates (Camargo et al., 2007).

## **Chloride**

The presence of chloride ( $\text{Cl}^-$ ) where it does not occur naturally indicates possible water pollution (Shaw et al., 2004). Chloride does not affect plant and algae growth and is not toxic to aquatic organisms at most of the levels found in Wisconsin (Shaw et al., 2004). Red Bass Lake was analyzed for chloride in August 22, 1985 and had a value of 2.5 mg/L and on August 1, 2019 with the value of 2.95 mg/L. This chloride concentration is well below the generalized distribution gradient found in surface waters in Wisconsin.

## **Sulfate**

Sulfate in lake water is primarily related to the types of minerals found in the watershed, and to acid rain (Shaw et al., 2004). Sulfate concentrations are noted to be less than 10 mg/L in Vilas County (Lillie and Mason, 1983). Red Bass Lake sulfate was sampled in August, 1985 with a value of 4.9 mg/L at 3 feet and 8.4 mg/L at 17 feet and on August 1, 2019 with a value of 6.4 mg/L.

## **Conductivity**

Conductivity is a measure of the ability of water to conduct an electric current. Conductivity is reported in micromhos per centimeter ( $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$ ) and is directly related to the total dissolved inorganic chemicals in the water. Usually, values are approximately two times the water hardness, unless the water is receiving high concentrations of human-induced contaminants (Shaw et al., 2004). Red Bass Lake conductivity levels were sampled in August, 1985 with a conductance of 25  $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$  and on August, 2019 had a value of 21.6  $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$ .

## **pH**

The acidity level of a lake's water regulates the solubility of many minerals. A pH level of 7 is considered neutral. The pH level in Wisconsin lakes ranges from 4.5 in acid, bog lakes to 8.4 in hard water, marl lakes (Shaw et al., 2004). Natural rainfall in Wisconsin averages a pH of 5.6. Some minerals become available under low pH (especially aluminum, zinc, and mercury) and can inhibit fish reproduction and/or survival. Mercury and aluminum are not only toxic to many kinds of wildlife, but also to humans (especially those that eat tainted fish). The pH scale is logarithmic, so every 1.0 unit change in pH increases the acidity tenfold. Water with a pH of 6 is 10 times more acidic than water with pH of 7. A lake's pH level is important for the release of potentially harmful substances and affects plant growth, fish reproduction and survival. A lake with neutral or slightly alkaline pH is a good lake for fish and plant survival. In August, 1985 the pH of Red Bass Lake was 5.75 and August, 2019 the pH was 5.9, indicating that the lake is slightly acidic.

Table 4 displays the effects pH levels less than 6.5 will have on fish. Since Red Bass Lake’s pH was slightly acidic, it is likely the pH would negatively affect walleye. While moderately low pH does not usually harm fish, the metals that become soluble under low pH can be important. In low pH waters, aluminum, zinc, and mercury concentrations increase if they are present in lake sediment or watershed solids (Shaw et al., 2004).

**Table 4. Effects of acidity on fish species (Olszyk, 1980).**

<i>Water pH</i>	<i>Effects</i>
6.5	Walleye spawning inhibited
5.8	Lake trout spawning inhibited
5.5	Smallmouth bass disappear
5.2	Walleye & lake trout disappear
5	Spawning inhibited in most fish
4.7	Northern pike, sucker, bullhead, pumpkinseed, sunfish & rock bass disappear
4.5	Perch spawning inhibited
3.5	Perch disappear
3	Toxic to all fish

### **Alkalinity**

Alkalinity levels in a lake are affected by the soil minerals, bedrock type in the watershed, and frequency of contact between lake water and these materials (Shaw et al., 2004). Alkalinity is important in a lake to buffer the effects of acidification from the atmosphere. Acid rain has long been a problem with lakes that have low alkalinity levels and high potential sources of acid deposition. Alkalinity on August, 2019 was very low (below detection limit).

### **Hardness**

Hardness levels in a lake are affected by the soil minerals, bedrock type in the watershed, and frequency of contact between lake water and these materials (Shaw et al., 2004). One method of evaluating hardness is to test for calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>). Red Bass Lake’s hardness was 9.11 mg/L in August, 1985 and 6.15 mg/L on August 1, 2019. Table 5 categorizes Red Bass Lake to have “soft water to moderately hard water.”

<b>Table 5. Categorization of hardness (mg/L of calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>)) (Shaw et al., 2004).</b>	
Soft water	0-60
Moderately hard water	61-120
Hard water	121-180
Very hard water	>180

## **Calcium and Magnesium Hardness**

The carbonate system provides acid buffering through two alkaline compounds: bicarbonate and carbonate. These compounds are usually found with two hardness ions: calcium and magnesium (Shaw et al., 2004). Calcium is the most abundant cation found in Wisconsin lakes. Its abundance is related to the presence of calcium-bearing minerals in the lake watershed (Shaw et al., 2004). Aquatic organisms such as native mussels use calcium in their shells. The aquatic invasive zebra mussel tends to need calcium levels greater than 20 mg/L to maintain shell growth. Red Bass Lake had a calcium level of 2 mg/L on August, 1985 and 1.48 mg/L on August, 2019 which is an indication that zebra mussels would not flourish due to low levels of calcium. Magnesium was 1 mg/L on August, 1985 and 0.597 mg/L on August, 2019, which is lower than other lakes in the region.

## **Sodium and Potassium**

Sodium and potassium are possible indicators of human pollution in a lake, since naturally occurring levels of these ions in soils and water are very low. Sodium is often associated with chloride and gets into lakes from road salting, fertilizations, and human and animal waste (Shaw et al., 2004). Potassium is the key component of commonly-used potash fertilizer, and is abundant in animal waste. Both of these elements are held by soils to a greater extent than is chloride or nitrate; therefore, they are not as useful as indicators of pollution impacts (Shaw et al., 2004). Although not normally toxic themselves, they provide a strong indication of possible contamination by more damaging compounds (Shaw et al., 2004). Red Bass Lake sodium was 2 mg/L on September, 1985 and 1.47 mg/L on August, 2019. Potassium was 1 mg/L on August, 1985 and 0.47 mg/L on August, 2019.

## **Dissolved Organic Carbon**

Dissolved Organic Carbon (DOC) is a food supplement, supporting growth of microorganisms, and plays an important role in global carbon cycle through the microbial loop (Kirchman et al., 1991). In general, organic carbon compounds are a result of decomposition processes from dead organic matter such as plants. When water contacts highly organic soils, these components can drain into rivers and lakes as DOC. DOC is also extremely important in the transport of metals in aquatic systems. Metals form extremely strong complexes with DOC, enhancing metal solubility while also reducing metal bioavailability. Baseflow concentrations of DOC in undisturbed watersheds generally range from 1 to 20 mg/L carbon. Red Bass Lake DOC has not been tested, and should be included in future water quality sampling.

## **Silica**

The earth's crust is abundant with silicates or other compounds of silicon. The water in lakes dissolves the silica and pH can be a key factor in regulating the amount of silica that is dissolved. Silica concentrations are usually within the range of 5 to 25 mg/L. Generally, lakes that are fed by groundwater have higher levels of silica. Red Bass Lake silica was 8.3 mg/L taken in October, 1985.

## **Aluminum**

Aluminum occurs naturally in soils and sediments. In low pH (acidic) environments aluminum solubility increases greatly. With a low pH and increased aluminum values, fish health can become impaired. This

can have impacts on the entire food web. Aluminum also plays an important role in phosphorus cycling in lakes. When aluminum precipitates with phosphorus in lake sediments, the phosphorus will not dissolve back into the water column as readily. Red Bass Lake aluminum was 180 µg/L at 3 feet and 340 µg/L at 17 feet taken in August, 1985.

### **Iron**

Iron also forms sediment particles that bind with and store phosphorus when dissolved oxygen is present. When oxygen concentration gets low (for example, in winter or in the deep water near sediments) the iron and phosphorus dissolve in water. This phosphorus is available for algal blooms. Red Bass Lake iron has not been tested, and should be included in future water quality sampling.

### **Manganese**

Manganese is a mineral that occurs naturally in rocks and soil. In lakes, manganese is usually in particulate form. When the dissolved oxygen levels decrease, manganese can convert from an insoluble form to soluble ions. A manganese concentration of 0.05 mg/L can cause color and staining problems. Red Bass Lake manganese has not been tested, and should be included in future water quality sampling.

### **Sediment**

Lake bottom sediments are sometimes analyzed for chemical constituents that they contain. This is especially true for potentially toxic metals such as mercury, chromium, selenium, and others. Lake sediments also tend to record past events as particulates settle down and become part of the sediment. Biological clues for the historic conditions in the lake can be gleaned from sediment samples. Examples include analysis of pollen or diatoms that might help understand past climate or trophic states in the lake. Sediment data was not collected for Red Bass Lake, and future sampling should include this parameter.

### **Total Suspended Solids**

Total suspended solids are all particles suspended in lake water. Silt, plankton, and wastes are examples of these solids and can come from runoff of agricultural land, erosion, and can be produced by bottom-feeding fish. As the suspended solid levels increase, they absorb heat from sunlight which can increase the water temperature. They can also block the sunlight that plants need for photosynthesis. These events can in turn affect the amount of dissolved oxygen in the lake. Lakes with total suspended solids levels less than 20 mg/L are considered “clear,” while levels between 40 and 80 mg/L are “cloudy.” Total suspended solids data is unknown for Red Bass Lake, so future water quality sampling should include this parameter.

### **Aquatic Invasive Species**

Red Bass Lake currently does not have any aquatic invasive species. The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Aquatic Invasive Species Smart Prevention program classifies Red Bass Lake as “not suitable” for zebra mussels, based on calcium and conductivity levels found in the lake (UW-Madison). On June 6, 2019 a White Water Associates biologist conducted an Aquatic Invasive Survey on Red Bass Lake and no AIS were found.

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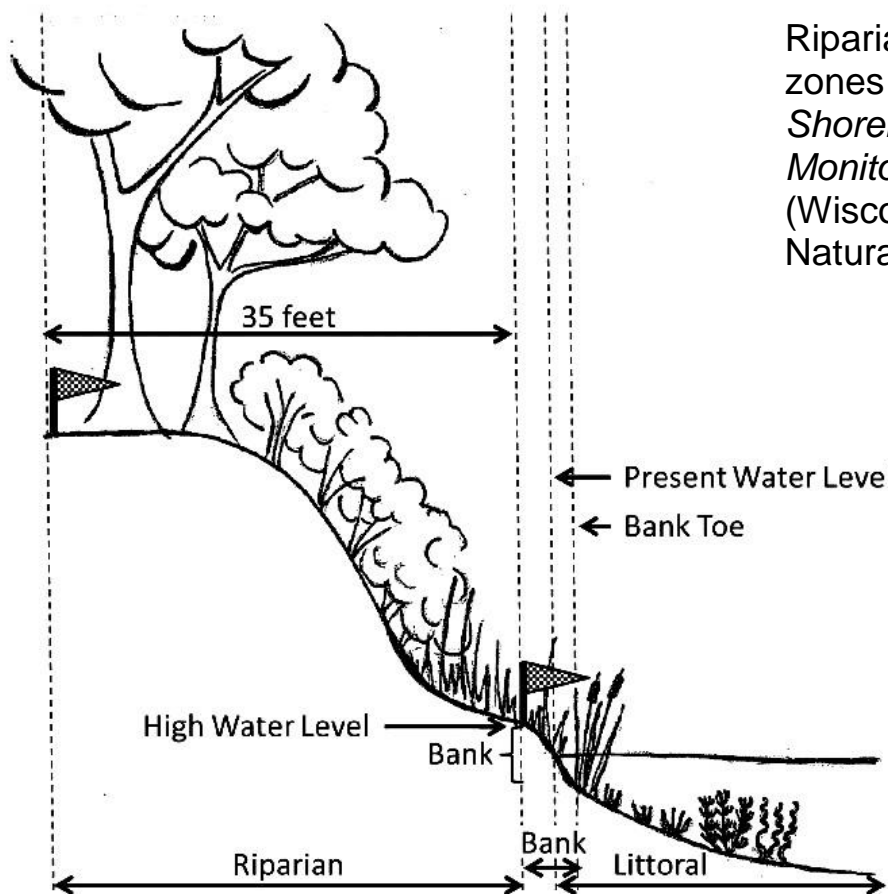
**Appendix D**  
**Red Bass Lake Shoreland and Shallows**  
**Habitat Monitoring Report**

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# Red Bass Lake (Vilas County, Wisconsin)

## Shoreland and Shallows Habitat Monitoring Report

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Riparian, bank, and littoral zones covered by the *Shoreland & Shallows Habitat Monitoring Field Protocol* (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2016)



Date: March 2019



## INTRODUCTION

White Water Associates, Inc. is retained by the Presque Isle Town Lakes Committee (PITLC) as a consultant for the *Presque Isle Wilderness Waters Program*. A recent Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) lake planning grant to the PITLC included an assessment of the shoreland area and shallows habitat for Red Bass Lake (Vilas County, Wisconsin). The assessment was conducted using the *Lake Shoreland and Shallows Habitat Monitoring Field Protocol* (WDNR 2016)<sup>1</sup>. This protocol provides a standard methodology for surveying, assessing, and mapping habitat in lakeshore areas, including the riparian buffer, bank, and littoral zone (WDNR 2016). This information will be useful to local and regional resource managers, community stakeholders, and others interested in protecting and enhancing Wisconsin's lakes and rivers (WDNR 2016).

## METHODS

There are three principal components to the shoreland and shallows habitat monitoring: (1) obtain georeferenced photos of the entire lake shoreline area, (2) assess the riparian, bank, and littoral habitat by ownership parcel, and (3) count and map all pieces of large woody material in water less than 2 feet deep. In this section, we describe each of these components.

The photographic component of the monitoring documented shoreland habitat conditions around the lake at the time of the survey. Results may be referred to in future years (WDNR 2016). Digital photos were taken with the intent to slightly overlap, thus capturing the entire shoreline. The survey crew used the boat to circumnavigate the lake at a distance of approximately 50 feet perpendicular from shore where conditions permitted. This standardized relative position on the lake allowed the photos to include the water's edge and understory vegetation 35 feet inland. A digital camera with an internal GPS was used to capture the photos. An example shoreland photograph is shown on next page. In the laboratory, photos were processed, georeferenced, and provided as part of the data package to the WDNR.

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<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. May 27, 2016. *Draft Lake Shoreland & Shallows Habitat Monitoring Field Protocol*. WDNR 2016.



The shoreline habitat assessment was conducted for every ownership parcel on the lake. To facilitate this effort, parcel data was obtained March 2018 via the Wisconsin Statewide Parcel Map, which can be found at <https://maps.sco.wisc.edu/Parcels/>. Parcel IDs and shoreline lengths were derived from these spatial data files. Parcel IDs and parcel lines, together with a “riparian buffer” line at 35 feet from the shoreline, were layered onto aerial photography maps saved as a georeferenced image file viewed on the Avenza Maps application on an Apple® iPad Pro 9.7 equipped with GPS for offline navigation. The GPS function of the iPad allowed the survey crew to know their position relative to the shoreline and specific parcels. The map is provided as Exhibit 1. Data sheets were prepared that included parcel ID numbers and frontage feet of each parcel (an example data sheet is shown in Exhibit 2). Exhibit 2 also shows the categories that were documented for each parcel. Back in the laboratory, data recorded on field data sheets were input to a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet and later conveyed to the WDNR as part of the data package to be included in a publicly available database.

The woody habitat component of the assessment was conducted on a separate circumnavigation of the lake. Before starting, a Secchi depth was measured. The protocol specifies that if the Secchi depth is less than two feet, no woody habitat survey will be conducted due to poor visibility (WDNR 2016). In addition to the Secchi depth, lake water level was documented relative to the lake's *high water level* (HWL). As the lake was circumnavigated, large wood was enumerated. The protocol defines "large wood" as wood greater than 4 inches in diameter somewhere along its length and at least 5 feet long. Eligible large wood was that which was located between the high water level and the 2 foot depth contour and the large wood section must be in the water or below the high water level. Tree "branchiness" ranking was recorded as "0" (no branches), "1" (few branches), or "2" (tree trunk with full crown). Additional details on eligible large wood are provided in the protocol document (WDNR 2016). A GPS was used to document each eligible piece of large wood. A datasheet entry corresponded to each large wood piece. An example datasheet is provided as Exhibit 3.

## FINDINGS

The data and photos for the assessment of shoreland area and shallows habitat for Red Bass Lake have been delivered to the WDNR. Any user can view the results in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lakes and AIS Mapping Tool found at:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/viewer/>. In this section we summarize a few of the data and provide some example maps that illustrate the findings from the assessment.

The assessment was conducted on June 6, 2019. At the time of the survey there were 17 ownership parcels on Red Bass Lake. The shoreline perimeter of Red Bass Lake is 1.5 miles. Exhibit 4 summarizes some of the Red Bass Lake data. Exhibits 5 through 13 provide maps of findings on Red Bass Lake. Any interested party can access the data in the database and create maps of this type or maps specific to detailed areas of shoreland and shallow water habitat. Exhibit 14 provides instructions for navigating the WDNR AIS Mapping Tool.

In general, the assessment shows the shoreland and shallow water habitat of Red Bass Lake to be of high quality. There is excellent tree canopy coverage as well as shrub and herbaceous coverage. That being said, there is evidence of human influence in the riparian buffer zone and bank zone. The number of large wood pieces per mile of shoreline is somewhat low.

It should be noted that this report has summarized only some of the data collected during the assessment in order to exemplify how the data might be investigated. This only hints at the possibilities and interested stakeholders can sort through more shoreland data on the WDNR data base (see Exhibit 14 for instructions).

## **LAKE STRATEGY**

Red Bass Lake is a high quality lake with good shallow water habitat and intact riparian area. Lake stewardship could primarily be directed toward protection of the current conditions and monitoring to detect changes over time. Although Red Bass Lake is in a mostly natural state, there are a few parcels that could undertake some restoration to ameliorate possible runoff and erosion issues. These areas can be identified by investigating the 2019 monitoring data in maps and tables in this report as well as in the WDNR database (link given previously). The Healthy Lakes program in Wisconsin provides simple, practical, and inexpensive best practices that improve habitat and water quality on lakeshore property (see <https://healthylakeswi.com/> for additional information and guidance on funding projects). Red Bass Lake large woody habitat is somewhat sparse and could be augmented with the “fish sticks” best practice.

Exhibit 1. Shoreland Parcels.

**RED BASS LAKE PARCELS 2019**



### Habitat Assessment Data Sheet (one per parcel)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Lake name \_\_\_\_\_ WBIC \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parcel ID \_\_\_\_\_ Observers \_\_\_\_\_

**RIPARIAN BUFFER ZONE**

**Percent Cover**

	Percent
Canopy	<input type="text"/> (0-100)
Shrub <input type="checkbox"/> Herbaceous <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Shrub/Herbaceous	<input type="text"/>
Impervious surface	<input type="text"/>
Manicured lawn	<input type="text"/>
Agriculture	<input type="text"/>
Other (e.g. duff, soil, mulch)	<input type="text"/>

sum=100

description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Human Structures**

	Number
Buildings	<input type="text"/>
Boats on shore	<input type="text"/>
Fire pits	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Runoff Concerns**

In Riparian or Entire Parcel	Present in Riparian	Present out of Riparian
Point source	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Channelized water flow/gully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stair/trail/road to lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawn/soil sloping to lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bare soil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sand/silt deposits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**BANK ZONE**

	Length (ft)
Vertical sea wall	<input type="text"/>
Rip rap	<input type="text"/>
Other erosion control structures	<input type="text"/>
Artificial beach	<input type="text"/>
Bank erosion > 1 ft face	<input type="text"/>
Bank erosion < 1 ft face	<input type="text"/>

**LITTORAL ZONE**

**Human Structures**

	Number
Piers	<input type="text"/>
Boat lifts	<input type="text"/>
Swim rafts/water trampolines	<input type="text"/>
Boathouses (over water)	<input type="text"/>
Marinas	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Aquatic Plants**

	Present
Emergents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant Removal	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If Applicable (low water level):**

**EXPOSED LAKE BED ZONE**

	Present
<b>Plants</b>	
Canopy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shrubs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herbaceous	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disturbed</b>	
Plants (mowed or removed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sediment (tilled or dug)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Exhibit 2. Example habitat assessment data sheet.

Exhibit 3. Coarse woody habitat inventory data sheet.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Lake name \_\_\_\_\_ WBIC \_\_\_\_\_

Observers \_\_\_\_\_

Present water level is  Below  At  Above the High Water Level

Secchi depth \_\_\_\_\_ ft

ID	Branch	Touch Shore	In Water	ID	Branch	Touch Shore	In Water	ID	Branch	Touch Shore	In Water	ID	Branch	Touch Shore	In Water
1				26				51				76			
2				27				52				77			
3				28				53				78			
4				29				54				79			
5				30				55				80			
6				31				56				81			
7				32				57				82			
8				33				58				83			
9				34				59				84			
10				35				60				85			
11				36				61				86			
12				37				62				87			
13				38				63				88			
14				39				64				89			
15				40				65				90			
16				41				66				91			
17				42				67				92			
18				43				68				93			
19				44				69				94			
20				45				70				95			
21				46				71				96			
22				47				72				97			
23				48				73				98			
24				49				74				99			
25				50				75				100			

**Branch:** 0 = no branches, 1 = a few branches, 2 = full tree crown

**Touch Shore:** 0 = entirely below High Water Level (HWL), 1 = crosses HWL

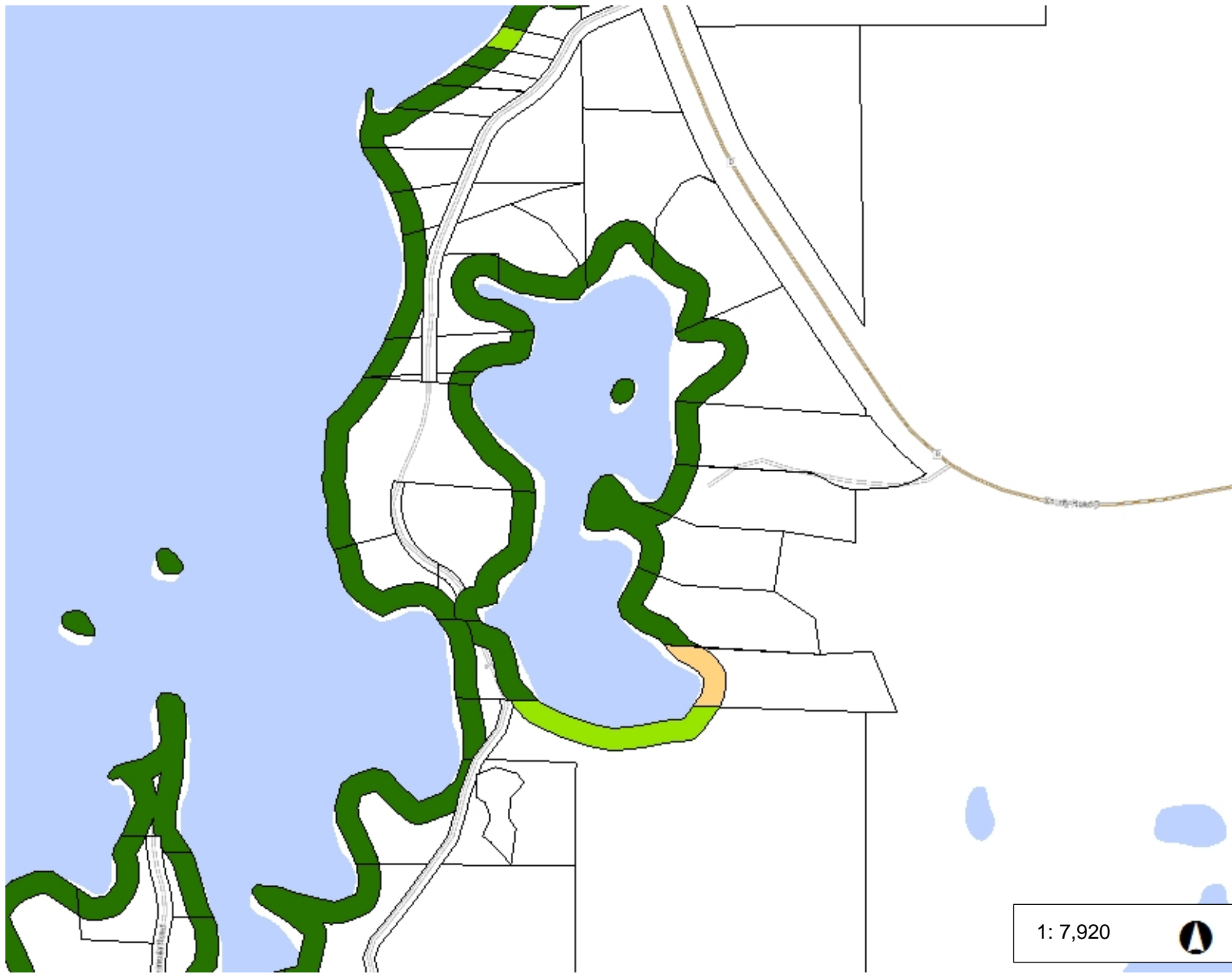
**In Water:** 0 = less than 5 ft of log is currently underwater, 1 = at least 5 ft of log is currently underwater

Exhibit 4. Summary of shoreland and shallow water habitat for Red Bass Lake.			
Date of Survey: June 6, 2019		Miles of shoreline: 1.5	
Number of ownership parcels: 17		Mean parcel frontage feet: 467	
Riparian Buffer Zone		# of parcels	% of parcels
Impervious surfaces		8	47
Manicured lawn		2	12
Agriculture		0	0
Other (duff, soil, mulch)		2	12
Human structures (buildings, boats on shore, fire pit, other)		8	47
Broad runoff concerns (incl. point source; channelized water flow; straight stair, trail, or road to lake; lawn or soil sloping; bare soil; sand/silt deposits; other erosion). Note: Exhibit 10 is less inclusive.		8	47
Bank Zone		# of parcels	% of parcels
Concerns in the bank zone (e.g., vertical sea wall, rip rap, other erosion control structures, artificial beach, active erosion)		0	0
Littoral Zone		# of parcels	% of parcels
Human structures in littoral zone (e.g., piers, boat lifts, swim rafts, water trampolines, boat houses over water, marinas, other)		9	53
Emergent and/or floating aquatic plants		16	94
Evidence of aquatic plant removal		0	0
Large Wood Habitat			
Total Number of large wood pieces		51	
Number of large wood pieces per mile of shoreline		33.9	





# Exhibit 5. Red Bass Lake Riparian Coverage - % Canopy - 2019



**Legend**

**Percent Canopy**

- 0 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 60
- 61 - 80
- 81 - 100

Shoreland Parcels  
 County Boundary  
 Municipality  
 State Boundaries  
 County Boundaries

**Major Roads**

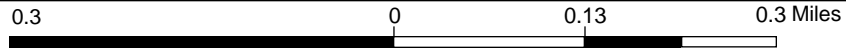
- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- US Highway

**County and Local Roads**

- County HWY
- Local Road

+ Railroads  
 Tribal Lands  
 — Rivers and Streams  
 - Intermittent Streams  
 ■ Open Water  
 ■ Great Lakes

1: 7,920



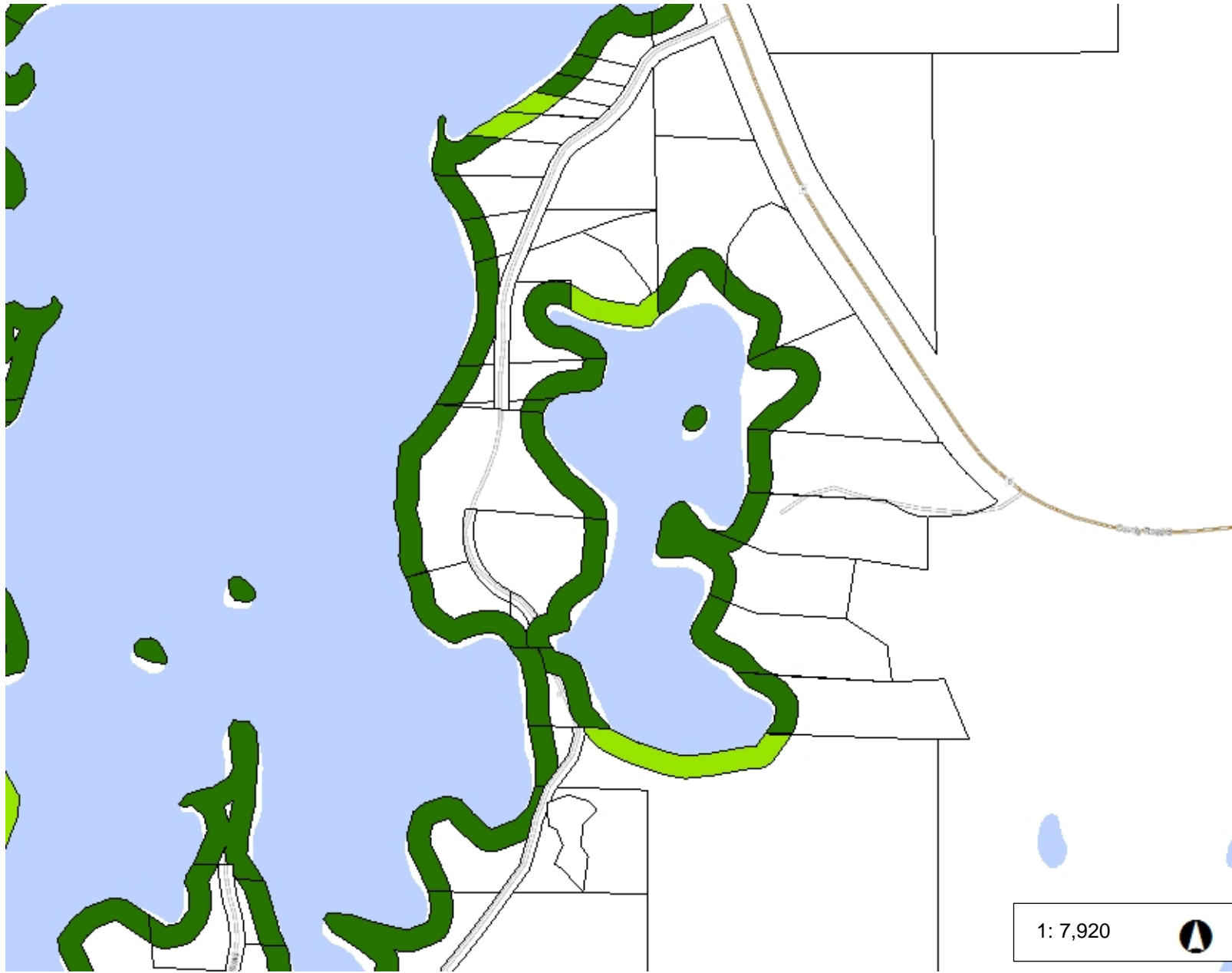
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**Notes**



# Exhibit 6. Red Bass Riparian Coverage - % Shrub Herbaceous - 2019



### Legend

#### Percent Shrub Herbaceous

- 0 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 60
- 61 - 80
- 81 - 100

- Shoreland Parcels
- County Boundary
- Municipality
- State Boundaries
- County Boundaries

#### Major Roads

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- US Highway

#### County and Local Roads

- County HWY
- Local Road

#### Railroads

- Tribal Lands

#### Rivers and Streams

- Intermittent Streams

#### Open Water

- Great Lakes

1: 7,920



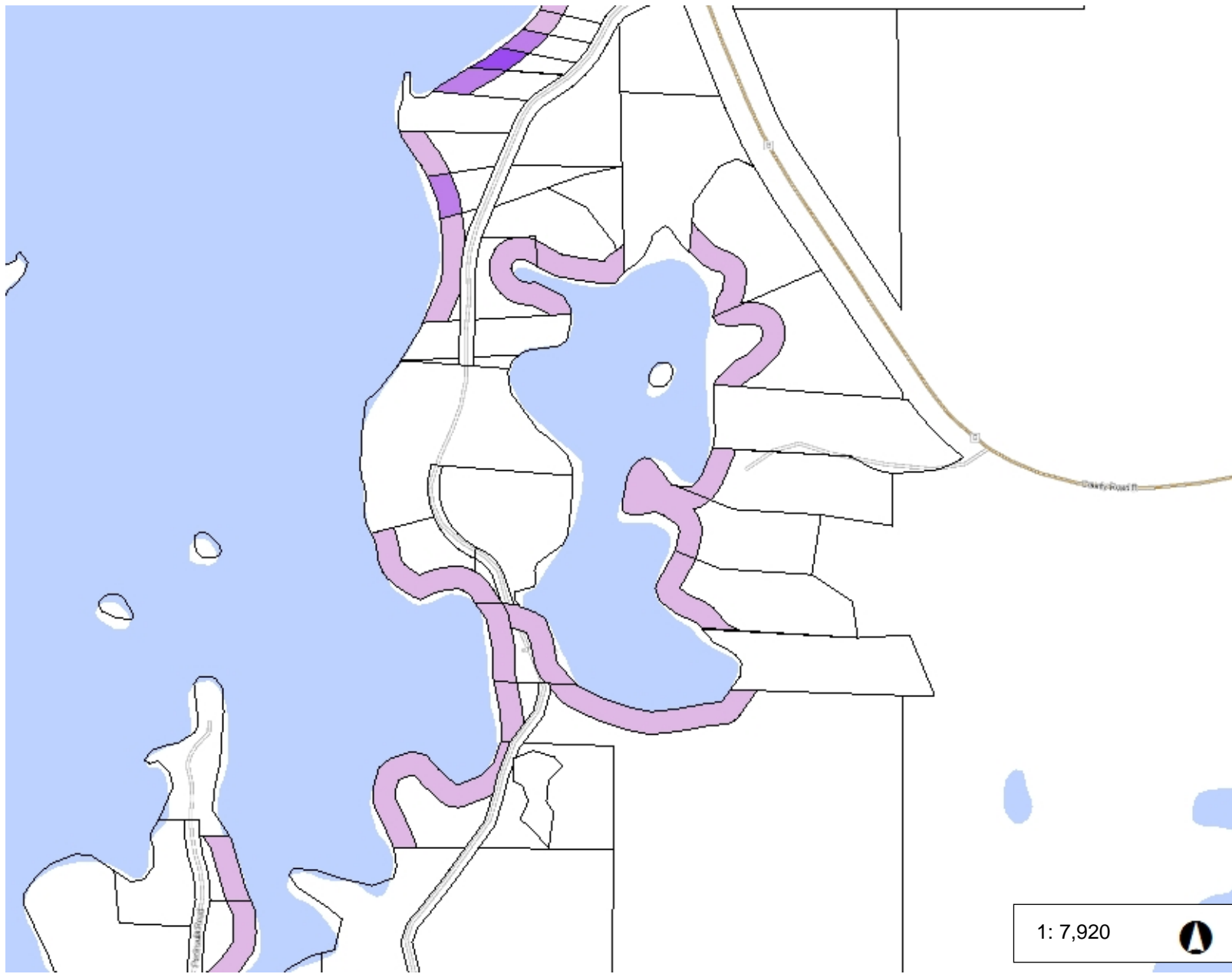
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### Notes



# Exhibit 7. Red Bass Lake Riparian Coverage - % Impervious - 2019



**Legend**

**Percent Impervious**

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 35
- 36 - 100

**Shoreland Parcels**

**County Boundary**

**Municipality**

**State Boundaries**

**County Boundaries**

**Major Roads**

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- US Highway

**County and Local Roads**

- County HWY
- Local Road

**Railroads**

**Tribal Lands**

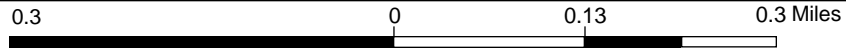
**Rivers and Streams**

**Intermittent Streams**

**Open Water**

**Great Lakes**

1: 7,920



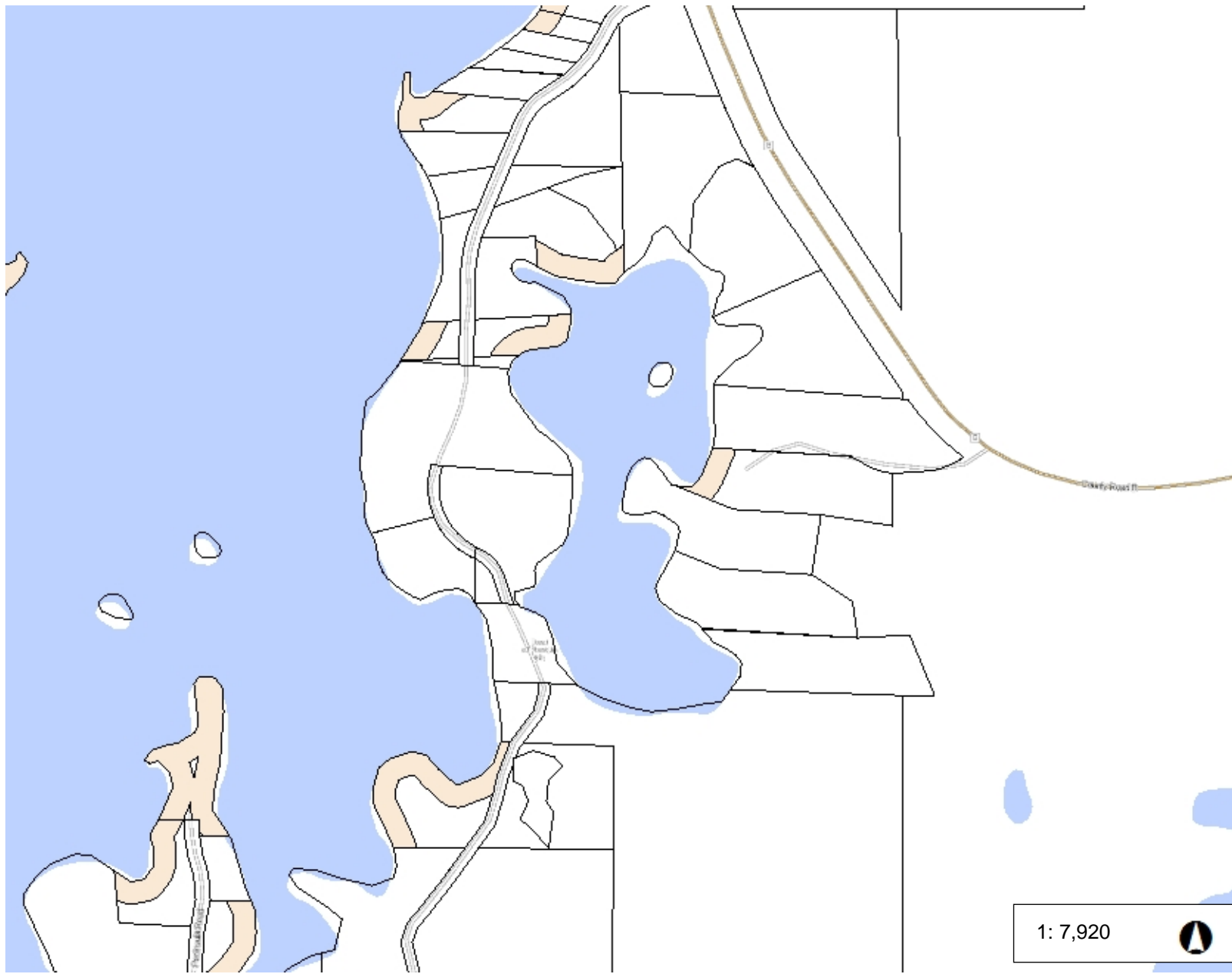
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**Notes**



# Exhibit 8. Red Bass Riparian Coverage - % Manicured Lawn - 2019



**Legend**

**Percent Manicured Lawn**

- 1 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100

**Shoreland Parcels**

**County Boundary**

**Municipality**

**State Boundaries**

**County Boundaries**

**Major Roads**

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- US Highway

**County and Local Roads**

- County HWY
- Local Road

**Railroads**

**Tribal Lands**

**Rivers and Streams**

**Intermittent Streams**

**Open Water**

**Great Lakes**

1: 7,920

0.3 0 0.13 0.3 Miles

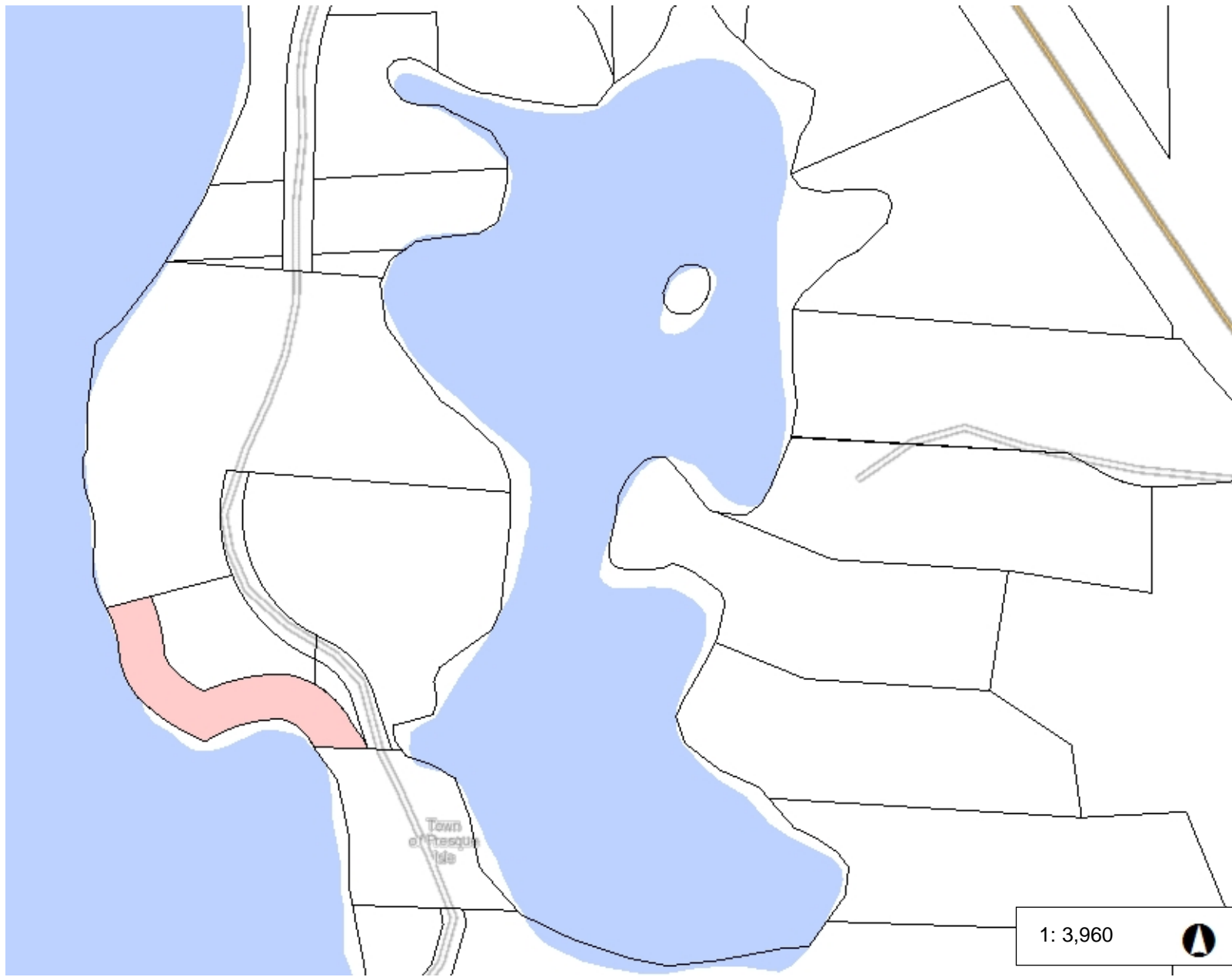
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**Notes**



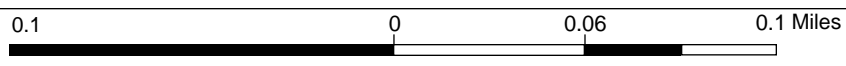
# Exhibit 9. Red Bass Lake Bank Erosion and Modifications - 2019



**Legend**

- Bank Erosion >1ft
- Bank Erosion <1ft
- Vertical Sea Wall**
  - 1 - 50 ft
  - 51 - 100 ft
  - 101 - 200 ft
  - 200 + ft
- Rip Rap**
  - 1 - 50 ft
  - 51 - 100 ft
  - 101 - 200 ft
  - 200+ ft
- Other Bank Modifications**
  - 10 - 50 ft
  - 51 - 100 ft
  - 101 - 200 ft
  - 200+ ft
- Artificial Beach**
  - 0 - 50 ft
  - 51 - 100 ft
  - 101 - 200 ft
  - 200+ ft
- Shoreland Parcels
- County Boundary
- Municipality
- State Boundaries

1: 3,960



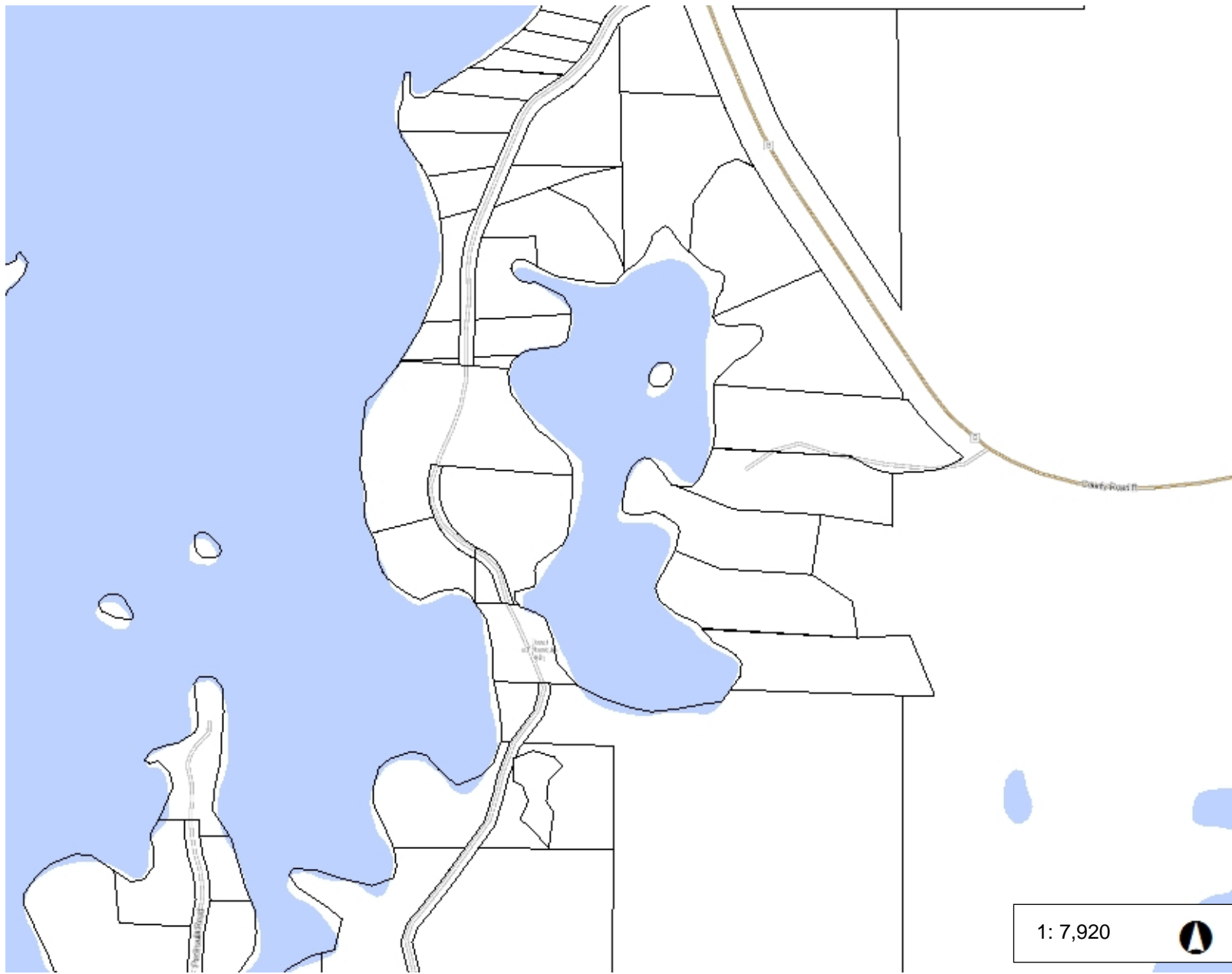
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**Notes**



# Exhibit 10. Red Bass Lake Runoff Concerns - 2019



**Legend**

- Channelized Flow
- Point Source
- Shoreland Parcels
- County Boundary
- Municipality
- State Boundaries
- County Boundaries

**Major Roads**

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- US Highway

**County and Local Roads**

- County HWY
- Local Road

- + Railroads
- Tribal Lands
- Rivers and Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Open Water
- Great Lakes

1: 7,920

0.3      0      0.13      0.3 Miles

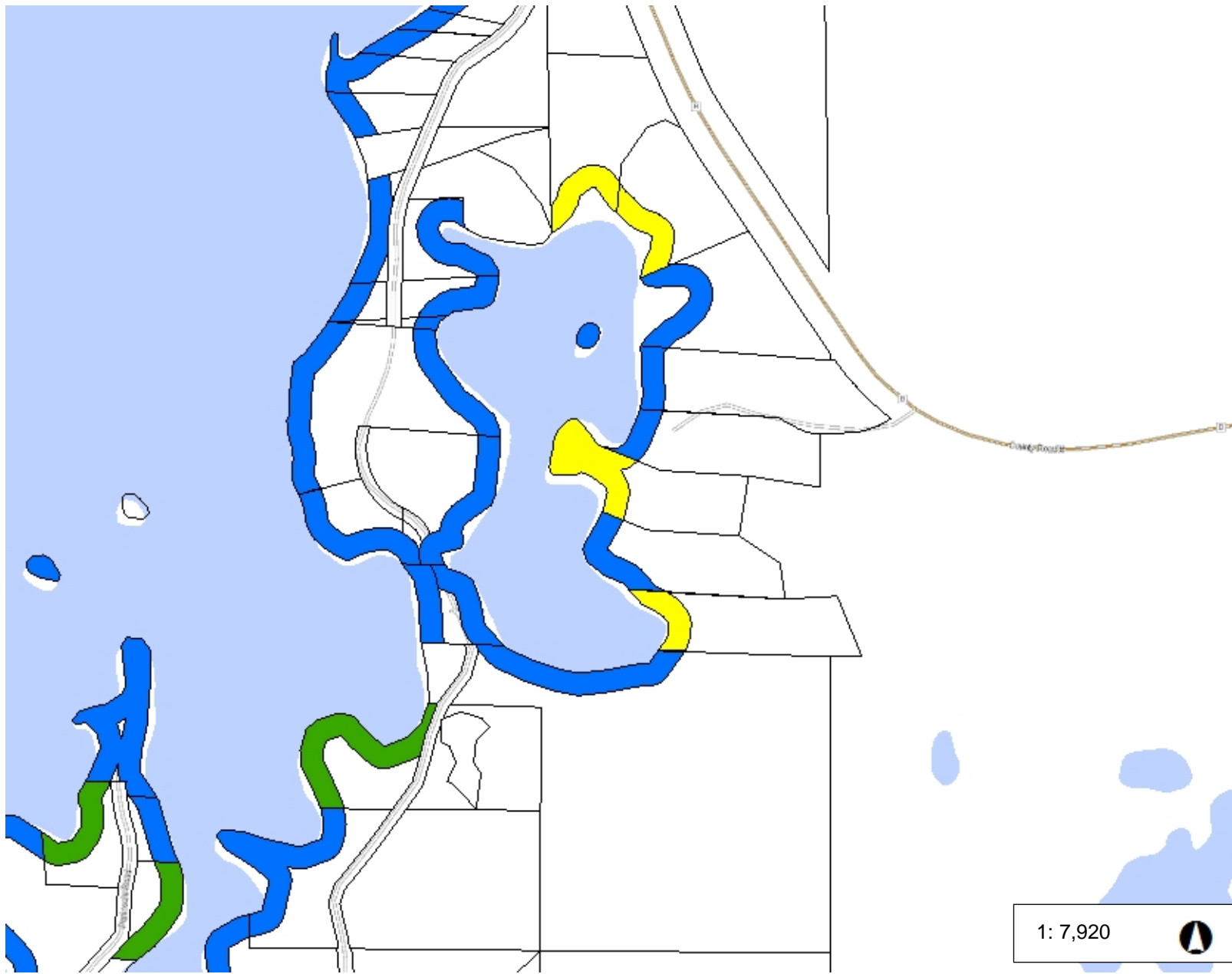
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**Notes**



# Exhibit 11. Red Bass Lake Littoral Zone - Aquatic Plants - 2019



### Legend

- Aquatic Plant Removal
- Floating & Emergent Plants
- Emergent Plants
- Floating Plants
- Shoreland Parcels
- County Boundary
- Municipality
- State Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Major Roads**
  - Interstate Highway
  - State Highway
  - US Highway
- County and Local Roads**
  - County HWY
  - Local Road
- Railroads
- Tribal Lands
- Rivers and Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Open Water
- Great Lakes

1: 7,920



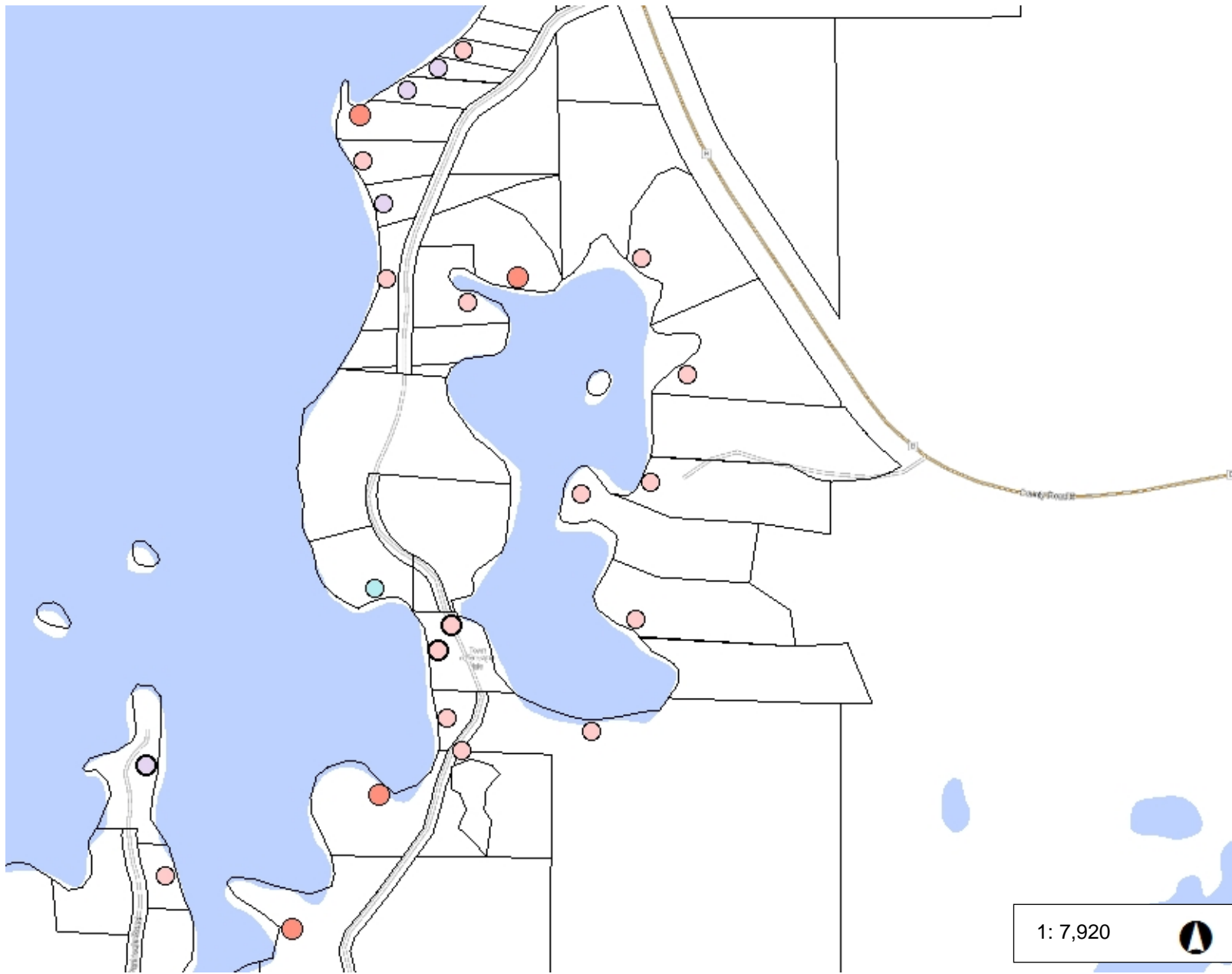
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### Notes



# Exhibit 12. Red Bass Lake Littoral Zone - Human Structures - 2019



### Legend

#### Swim Rafts

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6+

#### Boat Lifts

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6+

#### Piers

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6+

#### Boat Houses

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6+

#### Marinas

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6+

Shoreland Parcels

1: 7,920



0.3 0 0.13 0.3 Miles

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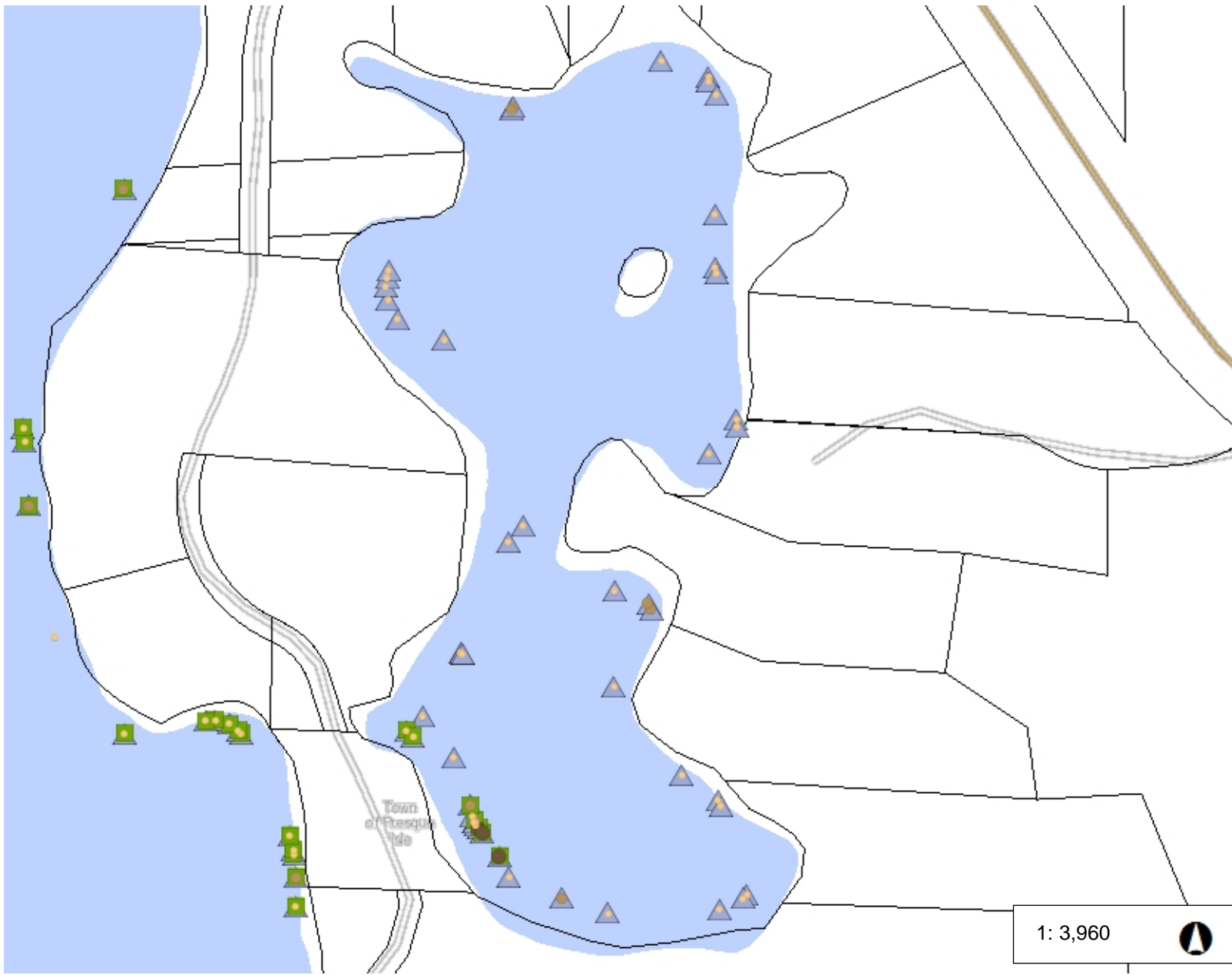
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### Notes





# Exhibit 13. Red Bass Lake Woody Habitat - 2019



**Legend**

- WH Branchiness**
  - No branches (orange circle)
  - Few branches (brown circle)
  - Full tree crown (dark brown circle)
- WH Touching Shore** (green square)
- WH In Water** (blue triangle)
- Shoreland Parcels (black outline)
- County Boundary (thin black line)
- Municipality (yellow outline)
- State Boundaries (dashed black line)
- County Boundaries (yellow outline)
- Major Roads**
  - Interstate Highway (thick orange line)
  - State Highway (orange line)
  - US Highway (red line)
- County and Local Roads**
  - County HWY (thin orange line)
  - Local Road (grey line)
- Railroads (black line with cross-ticks)
- Tribal Lands (tan shaded area)
- Rivers and Streams (blue line)
- Intermittent Streams (dashed blue line)
- Open Water (light blue fill)
- Great Lakes (medium blue fill)

1: 3,960

0.1 0 0.06 0.1 Miles

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**Notes**

## Exhibit 14. Exploring the Wisconsin DNR AIS Mapping Tool for shoreland and shallow water habitat data for specific lakes.

For stakeholders interested in mining the trove of shoreland and shallow water habitat data that has been collected for specific lakes, the Wisconsin DNR AIS Mapping Tool is the portal for entry. The following steps have been outlined to facilitate your experience.

1. <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/viewer/>
2. Click on **Proceed** – it will take a while to load.
3. Click on **I Accept**
4. On top grey menu go to **Find Location**
5. Right below grey menu **Find Locations** click on **Find Locations**
6. Bottom Left – Click on **Lakes and Open Waters** then scroll down click on **Find**
7. Search Type – you can put **Name of Lake** or **WBIC** (Water Body Identification Code)
8. **Value** – put **Lake Name** or **WBIC** then click on **Find**
9. If using **Lake Name** then also select the **County**
10. If you know where your lake is you do not need to use the tool above; you can just go on the map and find your location by holding the left button on your mouse and scrolling to the location you want to view. You can use the Zoom In and Zoom Out on the menu bar or use your mouse.
11. The lake should show up – Then on the white menu bar click on **Show Layers**
12. Under Layers - Uncheck all boxes that have a black check mark except **surface waters** and **basemap**
13. Check (click on) the **Shoreland Habitat Monitoring** box
14. Click on the grey + symbol next to it
15. All of the categories that were mapped show up here.
16. Check (click on) the box you want to view. For example, check the box in front of the category **Riparian Coverage**
17. Then check (click on) the sub category **Percent Canopy**. The display will show up on the map to the right.
18. Each Heading there is a + sign on you need to click on the + sign to make it a – sign to see the categories underneath. The Main Sub Heading needs to be checked to see the sub categories. To go onto the next category, you need to uncheck the one you were just on. If there are no colors that show up on the map that would indicate it wasn't indicated on the data sheet and entered. So, if you click on Rip Rap and the map is clear then there is no rip rap by definition of the protocol.
19. If you want to find more info on a certain section on the top menu under basic tools click on **Get Info**. Then go to the parcel you want information on and click once- to the left you will see information on this parcel. You then have to click on the > to find the info and you may have to > again. To close out of the info use the < back arrow. To close out of that click on the X to right of **Identify Results**.
20. You can use your mouse to hold and move the **Lake Map** or use it to scroll in or out to make the map smaller or larger.



**Appendix E**  
**Red Bass Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Report**

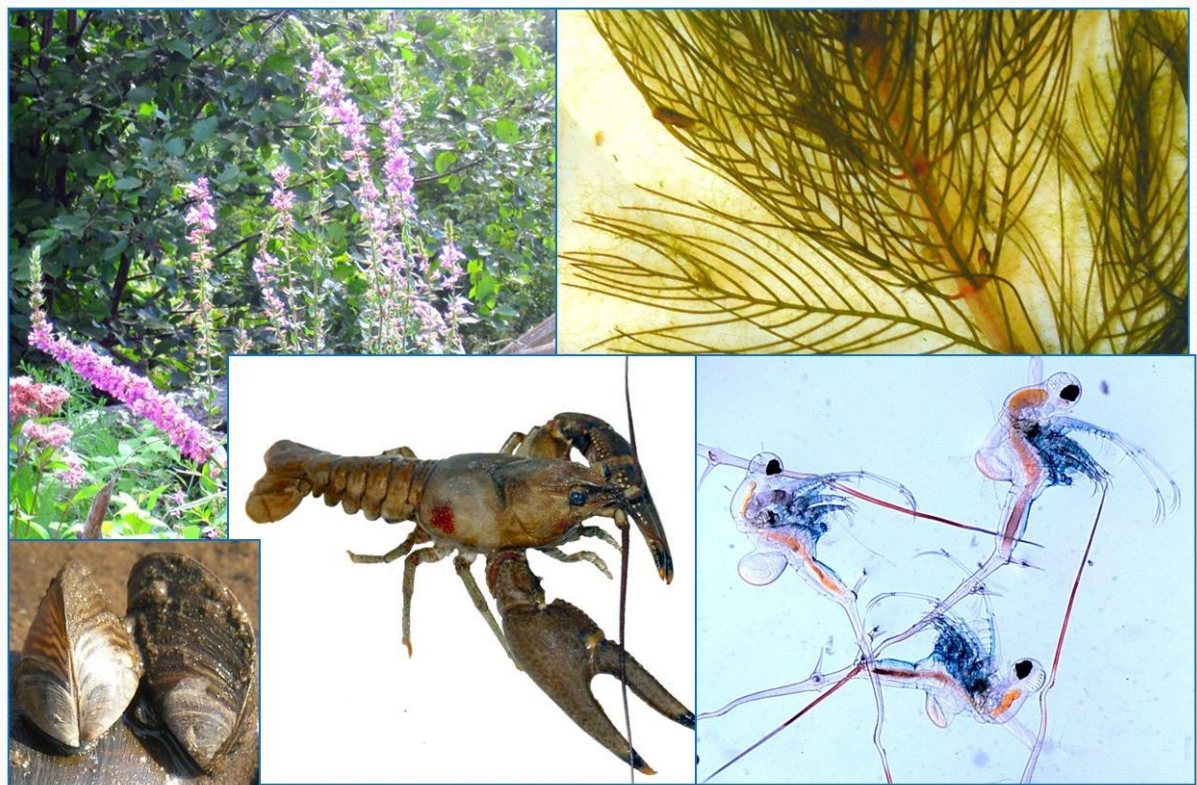
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# Red Bass Lake (Vilas County, Wisconsin)

## Aquatic Invasive Species

### Report

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Date: 2019

## INTRODUCTION

White Water Associates, Inc. has been retained by Wilderness Waters: through an Education, Prevention, and Planning Grant on Red Bass Lake (Vilas County, Wisconsin). Some tasks for this grant focused on aquatic invasive species (AIS). Efforts are intended to increase the understanding of AIS as well as native species in Red Bass Lake. This work prepares Red Bass Lake stakeholders to conduct actions that serve lake health. A portion of this project monitored Red Bass Lake for AIS using Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) protocol. This approach assesses the lake as to its vulnerability to AIS and documents any AIS detected. Findings from the survey were entered into the SWIMS database. A *floating workshop* on lake health, riparian ecology, AIS was not offered due to Covid-19 concerns in 2020 and 2021.

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES EARLY DETECTION MONITORING

In order to determine if other aquatic invasive species (AIS) were present in study areas, biologists followed the *Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Monitoring Standard Operating Procedure* (WDNR, 2014). This procedure outlines several types of monitoring techniques, including: boat landing searches, sample site searches, targeted searches, waterflea tows and/or a Ponar dredge, and a meander search. The Red Bass Lake Survey took place June 6, 2019.

Four sites around the lake shoreline were thoroughly searched and a meander search was conducted while traveling from one site to another. The four shoreline sites were randomly selected and are identified in Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2. There is no improved boat landing. Snorkeling was not used to search for AIS due to the weather that day. A long rake was used to collect any suspicious aquatic plants for closer inspection and identification. A D-net was used to collect invertebrate animals to look for AIS. Any invasive species observed were recorded. In the event of a new AIS record, specimens are collected for verification.

Spiny water fleas are aquatic invasive zooplankton found in several nearby lakes in Wisconsin. They can be monitored by way of plankton tow nets or by an examination of sediment for dead waterflea exoskeleton fragments. In Red Bass Lake, a plankton tow net was used to collect three samples in the middle of the lake and they were combined (Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 3). The sample was brought back to the lab to look for spiny water flea spines under magnification. No AIS were found.

There were no known AIS that were established in Red Bass Lake prior to this survey. During the survey there were no AIS found.



Exhibit 1. Red Bass Lake AIS survey sites 1-4 and locations of zooplankton tows.

<b>Exhibit 2. AIS Survey on Red Bass Lake 6/6/2019.</b>			
<b>Density (1-5), and live (L) or dead (D).</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Species found</b>
1	46.19765	-89.66491	None
2	46.20110	-89.66338	None
3	46.19604	-89.66486	None
4	46.19693	-89.665449	None

<b>Exhibit 3. Spiny Water Flea Zooplankton Tow from Red Bass Lake</b>			
<b>Date: 6/6/2019</b>	<b>GPS Coordinates</b>		<b>Depth of sample (feet)</b>
Tow 1	46.20063	-89.66361	3.5
Tow 2	46.19894	-89.66373	3.5
Tow 3	46.19631	-89.66359	3.5

The Wisconsin DNR has a very informative website that educates on invasive species. The Red Bass Lake stakeholders are the ones that frequent the lake and play a big role in protecting the lake. Stopping the spread of AIS and early detection is important when it comes to invasives. Please feel free to take the time to browse through the many links provided:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/>.

## **Literature Cited**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2014. *Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Monitoring Standard Operating Procedure*. Retrieved 2017.

<<http://dnr.wi.gov/water/wsSWIMSDocument.ashx?documentSeqNo=99459630>>