

Information Item: Priority Waters Project Update

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Environment Committee: November 9, 2021



Presentation Outline

- Revisit drivers and approach to Priority Waters project
- Update on project since last presentation
- Introduction to outreach materials



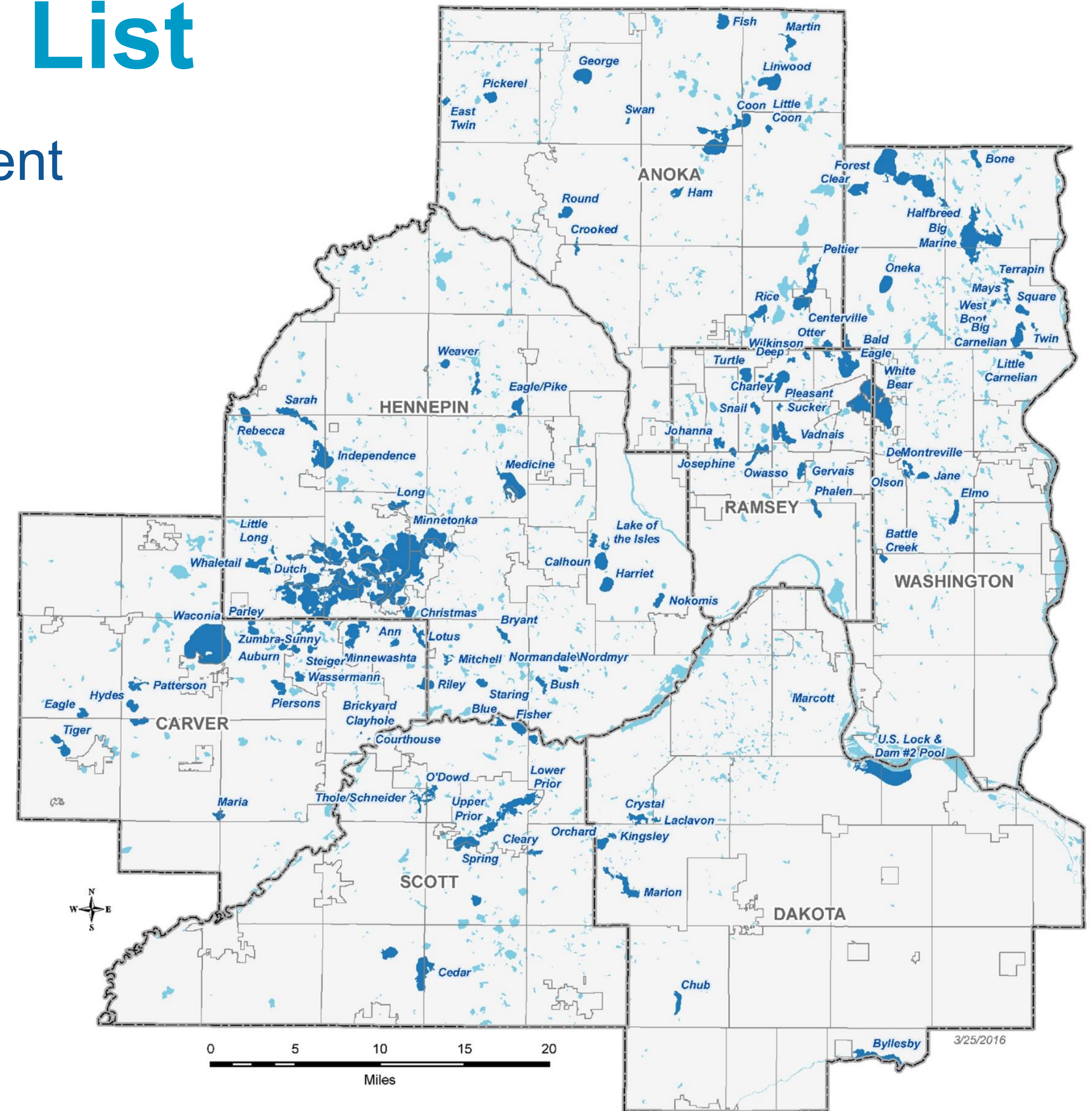
Why Do We Need to Prioritize?

- We have over 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams.
- Future Council initiatives may ask:
 - Which waters to focus on protecting and restoring?
 - Which waters to target for monitoring and assessment?
 - Which waters to offer technical assistance on?
 - Which waters to target grants for?
 - Which waters to protect during construction projects?
 - Which waters to focus education around?

We need priorities for plan-making and plan implementation

Current Priority Lakes List

- Used to set monitoring and assessment priorities.
- Lakes prioritized based on:
 - High regional recreational value
 - Water supply provider
 - Good water quality
 - Wildlife significance



Goals of the New Priority Waters List

- Build on successes of the existing Priority Lakes List.
- Add priority rivers and streams.
- Be used for resource (grant and system investment) decisions.
- Offer insights to other organizations as they prioritize projects and spend their valued resources.
- Be a key lens for policies and activities included in the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan.



Prioritization Approach

The Priority Waters List is those waters the Council has determined to be regionally significant based on their uses and benefits.

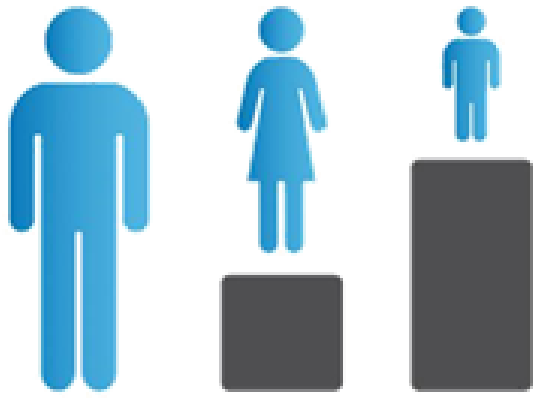
Method: Quantitative assessment using regional scale datasets.



Scoring Categories



Drinking Water Protection



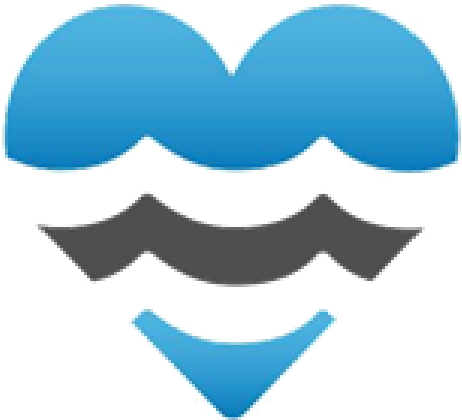
Equity



Recreation and Tourism



Industry and Utility



Healthy Habitat



Science and Education



Tranquil Connection

Draft Priority Water List

- Waters qualify based on top overall and/or category scores
- Separate lakes list and rivers and streams list
 - 156 lakes
 - 78 waters



Outreach Effort

- Audience
 - Internal staff: ES, Parks, Planning, Research
 - External partners: City, County, Watershed staff; MAWSAC/TAC members; WRPP advisory group, State agency staff
 - Elected/appointed officials: Council members, City council members



Outreach Materials

- Project website:

<https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Projects/Priority-Waters-List.aspx>

- Explains the project and process
- Shares draft Priority Waters List

- Feedback survey

- Do the categories make sense?
- Do the waterbodies shown as priorities make sense?
- Did we miss any datasets or incorrectly score waterbodies?
- Is this product something you can make use of in your work?
 - Can we modify it to make it more useful?



WASTEWATER & WATER	+
Projects	-
Capital Program 2021-2026	
Energy & Sustainability	
> Priority Waters List	
Metro Solids	+
Sewer Planning & Construction Updates	

PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE PRIORITY WATERS LIST



Assessing the uses and benefits of our region's water bodies to effectively manage lakes, rivers, and streams.

Shape the next Priority Waters List. We invite you to offer feedback on the Metropolitan Council's approach to developing the Priority Waters List and our preliminary results. The new list builds on the success of our Priority Lakes List, last updated in 2015, and now includes rivers and streams.

With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the seven-county area, the Priority Waters List will support the region in effective management of our waterbodies. It will:

- Guide how the Council allocates limited resources to monitor, assess, plan for, and improve the region's waterbodies.
- Provide a key lens for developing policies and activities to include in the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan (2050 WRPP). It will inform how the Council can align with the priorities of local, regional, and state partners, and provide value for those partners.
- Offer insights to other organizations as they prioritize projects and spend their valued resources.

For the purposes of this page, "waterbody" is defined as a lake, river, or stream.

Background

The Met Council has had a version of a Priority Waters List since 1982 — the Priority Lakes List. We updated our Priority Lakes List in 2015 as part of the Water Resources Policy Plan Update. This new version includes rivers and streams, as well as lakes. With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the region, waterbodies needed to be prioritized to adequately dedicate staff and financial resources.

The list primarily serves as a tool for staff to effectively distribute resources to monitor, assess, plan for, and improve the region's waterbodies. As the regional planning agency for the seven-county metro area, it is important for our work to align with the priorities of local, regional, and state partners, and provide value for those partners. The list is being developed now ahead of the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan (2050 WRPP). The list will be included in the updated policy plans for others to use as they prioritize projects and spend their valued resources.

Tips on providing feedback

- Understand how to interpret the list. Please review the *Priority Waters List Approach*, *Water History and Context*, and *Scoring Categories* sections.
- Review the list itself in the *Draft Priority Waters List* section.
- Interested in a deep dive? Review the *Data and Methods* section for analysis details.
- Tell us what you think — what resonates and what to improve. Go to *Provide Feedback* to answer questions designed to help us finalize our approach to creating the Priority Waters list.

➤ PRIORITY WATERS LIST APPROACH
➤ WATER HISTORY AND CONTEXT
➤ SCORING CATEGORIES
➤ DRAFT PRIORITY WATERS LIST
➤ DATA AND METHODS
➤ PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Outreach Website

- Recommend visiting:
 - Introductory text
 - *Priority Waters List Approach*
 - *Water History and Context*
 - *Scoring Categories*
 - *Draft Priority Waters List*
 - *Provide Feedback*
- *Data and Methods* for analysis details.



Water History and Context Section

- History of the Twin Cities is intimately tied to water.
- Different peoples who have lived in the area think about and value water in different ways.
- Priority Waters List is a snapshot in time.



Draft Priority Waters List Section

- Explore the list in two ways:
 1. Searchable and sortable lists
 2. Map

Draft Priority Waters List: Lakes

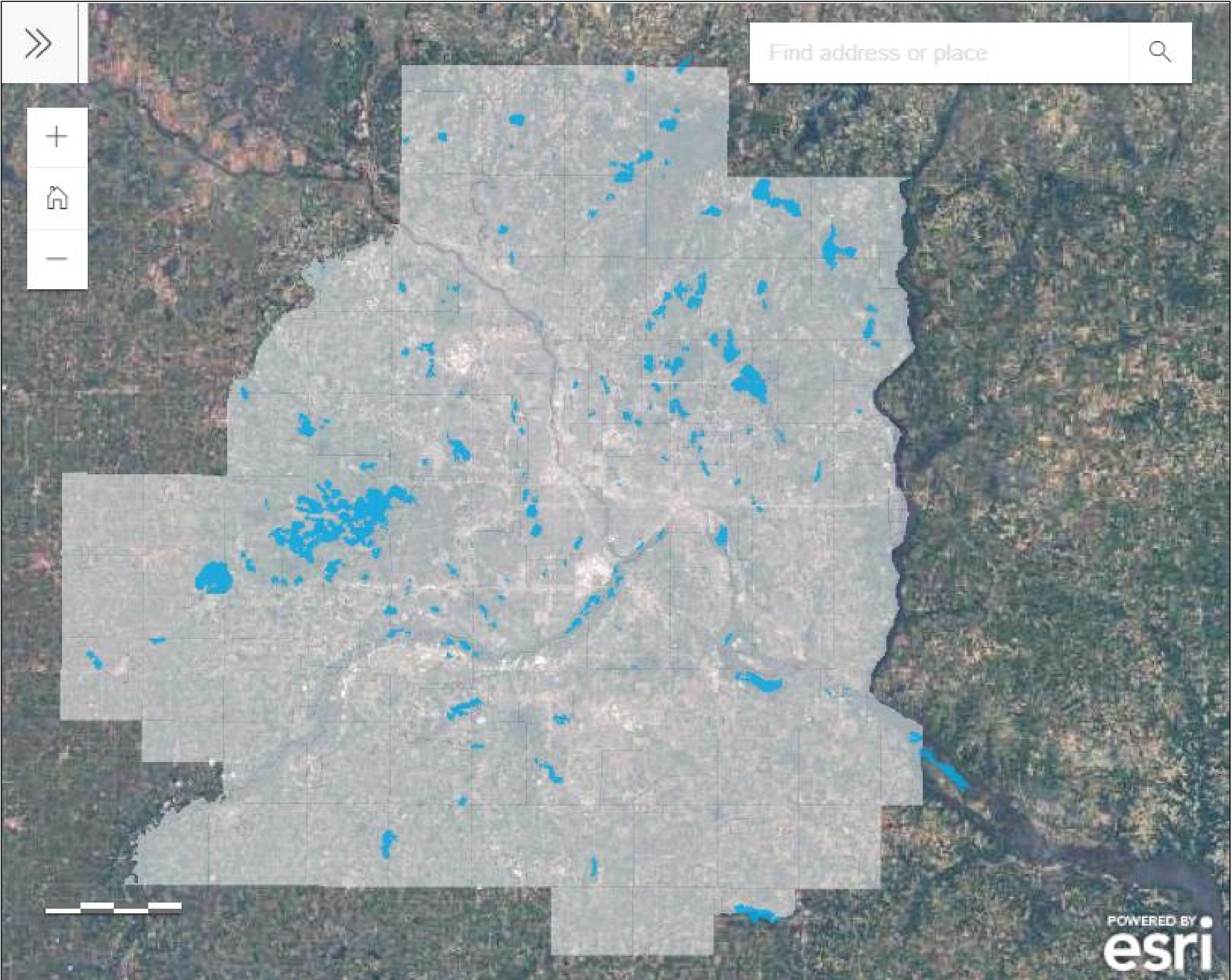
Lake name

Search

County

All

DNR Lake ID	Lake name	Alternate name	County	Area (acres)
62000700	Gervais		Ramsey	235.0
27076100	Gray's Bay Outlet		Hennepin	25.4
19007800	Gun Club		Dakota	341.7
27015200	Half Moon	Halfmoon	Hennepin	33.0
02005300	Ham		Anoka	154.6
27001600	Harriet		Hennepin	341.2
27012800	Hayden		Hennepin	107.6
02009600	Hickey		Anoka	40.4
02001600	Howard		Anoka	455.6
27004800	Hyland		Hennepin	83.9
27017600	Independence		Hennepin	832.0
02002200	Island		Anoka	72.7



Next Steps

- Internal and external outreach to local and regional partners **Now-end 2021**
- Revise and finalize list **Early 2022**
- Publication and outreach **2022**

Questions

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