

# Itasca Water Legacy Partnership

## ANNUAL REPORT

[itascawaterlegacypartnership.org](http://itascawaterlegacypartnership.org)

2015





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Cover photo of Horseshoe Lake and other drone photos including Stony Point on Pokegama shown above courtesy of Bill Marshall.

## **MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The mission of the Itasca Water Legacy Partnership (IWLP) is to “Team Up” with other organizations and concerned citizens to maintain abundant, clean water for our continued health, enjoyment and a strong economy.

**Itasca Water Legacy Partnership (IWLP) is pursuing its mission by:**

- Promoting water stewardship through education and outreach
- Engaging all Itasca County citizens to join in these efforts
- Continuing its efforts to fund science-based, water-quality research

## **IMPORTANT SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS**

Our supporters and partners include the Blandin Foundation – Itasca County – Itasca Soil & Water Conservation District – ISD #318 – U.S. Forest Service – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Minnesota DNR – MN PCA – LCCMR– Wes Libbey Chapter of the Izaak Walton League – Minnesota Power – Itasca County Lake Associations – Itasca County Business Community – Community Volunteers and Individual Members

## **ORGANIZATION HISTORY**

Local water quality advocates came together in late 2006 to identify and implement a set of activities that would ensure clean water resources and quality habitat in the major watersheds of Itasca County. IWLP formalized its operations as a community coalition by establishing a board and executive committee to guide partnership activities.

2009: IWLP’s first Board election. IWLP has continued to ask representatives from many walks of life and organizations with varying interests in Itasca County’s water resources to join the volunteers of IWLP as Board members and to assist with assuring that IWLP is sensitive to the concerns of all Itasca County citizens.

2010: IWLP’s Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit organization were filed under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

2011: A request for a 501 (c) 3 status with the IRS was approved.

2012 and 2013: IWLP strengthened its financial reporting and implemented an informal system for tracking the completion of Board and committee activities. The Board also broadened its membership.

2014: Cooperated with partners to develop program for prevention and eradication of aquatic invasive species; released results on economic value of water in Itasca County; hosted several educational events; awarded Itasca County Outstanding Conservationist Award.

## **EVENTS AND SUCCESSES**

IWLP continued to work with its many partners to look for new opportunities on how to be good stewards of our great water resources. You will find specific information on projects funded by grants later in this report, but here are just a few highlights:

- To date, IWLP has raised \$1,542,144 in grant monies addressing issues as diverse as aquatic invasive control and the value of water quality to Itasca County residents.
- IWLP continued to work with partner organizations on the Aquatic Invasive Species Technical Advisory Committee.
- The IWLP booth at the Children First Fair emphasized clean water and the dangers of aquatic invasive species to over 1,200 children through exhibits and hands-on activities.
- IWLP ran an AIS booth at the three-day 2015 Grand Rapids Jaycees Home & Sport Show that was attended by over 5,000 people.
- IWLP hosted a Youth Water Summit in May that allowed 440 fifth graders a chance to participate in all-day scientific hands-on activities.
- IWLP organized a Healthy Watersheds Conference in July for nearly 100 adults, featuring 12 presenters and an afternoon World Café discussion of lessons learned from

those presentations.

- IWLP partnered with ICOLA to host a booth at the Itasca County Fair.
- Work continued throughout the summer and fall on aquatic invasive species prevention and education through a watercraft inspection program.
- The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts awarded the Itasca County Outstanding Conservationist Award to the Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership of Itasca County that included IWLP.
- IWLP worked with RMB Environmental Laboratories to ensure that the water lab at ICC would continue to operate under private management.

## COMMITTEES

### Communication and Public Relations

Informing the public about the importance of one of our County's most valuable resources—our water—is one of the major goals for IWLP. We accomplish this through our sponsored events, on our website at [www.ItascaWaterLegacyPartnership.org](http://www.ItascaWaterLegacyPartnership.org) and on our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/Itasca.Water.Legacy.IWLP](http://www.Facebook.com/Itasca.Water.Legacy.IWLP).

#### **Itasca County Fair Booth**

During the Itasca County Fair in mid-August, IWLP partnered with the Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations. Volunteers and AIS inspectors engaged the public in conversations about AIS and answered many AIS-related questions. Despite the Fair closing early on three of the five days due to bad weather, 1,514 people listened to conversations about AIS and how to prevent its spread. Children were encouraged to spin the “Wheel of Invaders” for prizes and information about specific AIS threats. We plan to expand this work in 2016.



#### **ICTV**

IWLP partnered with Tom Chapin to produce a one-hour episode for Tom's popular “Just Outdoors with Tom Chapin” television and internet show. The episode, titled “Itasca County Invasive Species,” focused on AIS watercraft inspections. ICTV also taped the IWLP-sponsored Healthy Watersheds conference and the Tall Timber Days parade, where Itasca County AIS crews manned two vehicles and a mobile thermal decontamination unit.

### Education

Throughout the year, IWLP volunteers help run a series of events designed to better inform the community about the importance of our water resources.

#### **Children First Booth at the IRA Civic Arena**

IWLP once again participated in the very successful Children First event held every year at the IRA Civic Arena in Grand Rapids. It was estimated that over 3,500 adults and children from 48 communities attended this event. Approximately 1,200 children visited the IWLP booth to view displays on clean water and AIS. Children put on a moustache, detective hat and used a magnifying glass to be an “AIS Detective” to identify three AIS samples on display. Many children loved getting a temporary AIS tattoo. The IWLP drawing for a chance to win one of three junior fishing poles was very popular as well.



#### **Youth Water Summit**

Nearly 450 fifth-grade students from District 318 RJE Middle School and the Bigfork, St. Joseph's Catholic, and Deer River schools took part in a full day of water science education. The five-hour event was held on May 21, 2015 at the Itasca County Fairgrounds, funded by the Environmental Trust fund (\$6,882) and the ISD #318 Endowment Fund (\$1,000).

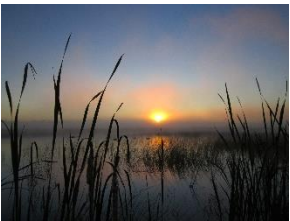


The water summit generated tremendous community support with around 80 volunteers, 44 presentations and 77 presenters. Most students had eight thirty-minute presentations during the day. The fifth-grade teachers who participated asked parents help chaperone--they were enthusiastic about learning along with the students! Keynote speaker Justin Liles of WDIO presented three popular sessions in the middle of the day.

Presentations included invertebrate identification, water art, watersheds, phenology observations, lake turnover, kayaking, enviroscape model, ground water model, lead and mercury, secchi disk, effects of plastic bags, master gardening, rain gardens, journaling, hydrological cycle, scientific instrumentation, density, pH, hydraulics, septic system science, and many more sessions.

Students were given a vocabulary list of terms prior to the event for better understanding the sessions and each student, presenter, volunteer and teacher was provided with a blue t-shirt to wear with Itasca Water Legacy Partnership's "Team Up for Clean Waters" logo. Surveys collected from the students, teachers, presenters and volunteers will help generate ideas for improvements in 2016.

### Healthy Watersheds Conference



A year of planning yielded a day dedicated to the water, forests and watersheds of Itasca County on Friday, July 31st at the Sugar Lake Lodge on beautiful Siseebakwet Lake near Grand Rapids, Minnesota. There were 12 outstanding presentations by experts in their fields. Ninety people participated in the day-long conference with about 47 people staying to participate in a World Cafe discussion after lunch led by Bernadine Joselyn, Director of Public Policy and Engagement with the Blandin Foundation. During the productive community roundtable conversations, participants brainstormed ideas and solutions based on what they had learned throughout the morning. A summary of the discussion can be found on IWLP's website at: [www.ItascaWaterLegacyPartnership.org](http://www.ItascaWaterLegacyPartnership.org) under Reports. Fifteen people took advantage of the four continuing education units offered. Conference funding included registration fees and donations from several individuals and local businesses including Blandin Foundation, Minnesota Power, RMB Environmental Laboratories, Inc., Greater Pokegama Lake Association, Itasca Coalition of Lakes Associations, Siseebakwet Lake Association, Lake Country Power, Grand Rapids Rotary, GRACF – Fund for the Environment, Miner's Cub Foods, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, and Deerwood Bank.

Links to the final report by Maven Perspectives, the event planner, and to a copy of all of the presentations, can be found at [www.mavenperspectives.com](http://www.mavenperspectives.com). In addition, five presentations were filmed, either by ICTV staff or Rich Libbey, and were run on ICTV for several weeks. You can view those videos on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLskc2Ud\\_rdtAN65j5ItbRII3s7HCG\\_4CJ](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLskc2Ud_rdtAN65j5ItbRII3s7HCG_4CJ)

Following the afternoon World Café session, participants left with ideas for actions they could implement immediately, including involvement with the Itasca County Water Plan when it is reviewed in 2016, reducing the use of plastic bags, assessing one's shoreline, learning more about pharmaceuticals in our water and, finally, to lead by example.





## **Membership**

IWLP's accomplishments for 2015 were made possible by generous support from its members and dedicated volunteers. Financial contributions enable IWLP to carry out its mission by providing funds for educational outreach, special events, and operational costs not covered by grant monies. The commitment by volunteers who share IWLP's vision for maintaining our water resources was invaluable. IWLP thanks all who so generously shared their time, talent and financial support in 2015.

As of December 31, 2015 current paid-up membership units totaled 93, including four new members. Total donation revenue for 2015 was \$4,880.42 (includes \$100 in Memorials). IWLP also received \$277.42 in stock donations. Donations were down about \$1,500 from 2014. The cost to run the 2015 membership campaign was \$461.00 or about 9 percent of the revenue raised.

## **AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES**



Throughout 2015, IWLP continued its leadership role in the implementation of the Itasca County AIS Program, focusing on three priority areas: prevention, communication and Community Action Project grants.

The Itasca County AIS Coordinator, employed by IWLP, oversaw the hiring of 11 AIS Watercraft Inspectors and the purchase of the County's first mobile thermal decontamination unit. In 2015 between May 1 and November 1, inspectors completed 9,861 inspections at 26 landings on 17 lakes. The 2015 drain plug violation rate of 9.5 percent was a 68 percent decrease from 2014.

The AIS Coordinator also developed and implemented a communication strategy. Hour-long AIS education presentations were shared with over 475 members of 15 organizations and businesses. Over 4,800 conversations about AIS were completed at seven large public events in 2015.

The AIS Coordinator worked with the Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations to manage the Community Action Project (CAP) matching fund grant program, a priority area in the Itasca AIS Program. In 2015, 13 grants totaling \$37, 542 were awarded to individuals, lake associations and local businesses to fund projects to fight the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

For 2015, IWLP transferred the purple loosestrife eradication program to the Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District. The report for 2015 may be found at [http://www.itascaswcd.org/Programs/Invasive%20Species/2015\\_ItascaSWCD\\_AIS\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.itascaswcd.org/Programs/Invasive%20Species/2015_ItascaSWCD_AIS_Final_Report.pdf)

### **AIS Technical Advisory Committee**

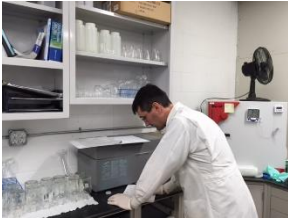
IWLP serves as a lead partner on the Itasca County AIS Technical Committee, a subcommittee of the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) committee. During the summer of 2014, the committee helped draft the 2014-2016 Itasca County AIS Program that allocates the funds received from the State to Itasca County for AIS prevention. The committee continues to provide insight and support for implementing the County's AIS plan. In December, the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts awarded the Itasca County Outstanding Conservationist Award to the Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership of Itasca County.



## **The Water Lab at Itasca Community College**

Under the direction of Drs. John Downing and Jack Jones, IWLP established the Itasca Community College Water Testing Laboratory in 2007. The objective was to provide a state certified water testing laboratory that would provide local water testing capabilities and a practical educational experience for students at ICC who had an interest in water science. A local water laboratory was preferred to obtain base line water quality data on Itasca County lakes. With Surface Water Assessment Grants and Clean Water Partnership grants awarded from the MPCA and under the leadership of Downing and Jones, credible data were obtained from water samples collected for the first time from nearly 300 Itasca County lakes. The Deer

Lake and Pokegama Lake nutrient studies utilized the ICC lab to process hundreds of water samples needed to complete the study. Funds from the MPCA to continue monitoring and assessments were no longer available in the 2013 and 2014. With little revenue input, ICC was unable to continue the operation of the laboratory.



IWLP's goal in establishing a water testing laboratory at ICC was to have a locally run water quality lab that would hire and train students in laboratory operations, hoping that in the future some of the students may be employed by industrial laboratories. RMB Environmental Laboratories, Inc. Detroit Lakes, MN, owned and operated by Robert Borash, agreed to operate the lab and to allow the continued education of ICC students in sample collection and analysis. RMB has a long history of working with students and Robert Borash and his staff will fulfill IWLP's goal of maintaining a water quality lab in conjunction with student participation. RMB has the ability to analyze water samples from a variety of sources, including well water. Local lake associations and private residents are encouraged to contact RMB for more information regarding any water testing that one might need.

The lab space at ICC is leased to IWLP and RMB Environmental Labs will be provided the space to conduct their work in exchange for allowing students to collect and analyze samples, a great educational experience for the students. RMBEL will operate the lab under a contract for services agreement. Lab operations will be supervised in whole by RMBEL. IWLP is elated to be able to have RMBEL continue operation of the local water quality lab. Learn more about RMBEL and its services at [www.rmbel.info](http://www.rmbel.info).



# 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

Itasca Water Legacy Partnership continued the strong relationship with Itasca County for Aquatic Invasive Species lake access inspections, prevention and communication, our largest program for the year. IWLP receives an administrative fee to offset the additional cost of administration for this important program.

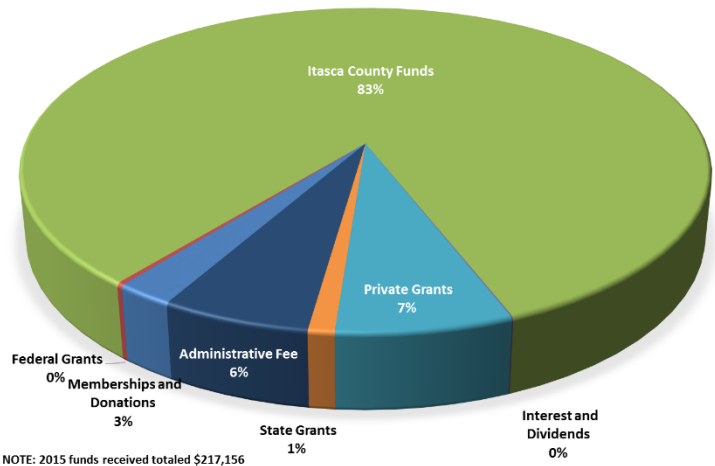
Education for youth, \$5,633 and adult, \$11,627 were funded by private donations, Itasca County ETF, and Blandin Foundation. We are proud that we can provide these programs at these low costs. The power of volunteers is our strength.

IWLP general operating expenses, \$11,627, include office supplies, postage, promotion, accounting fees, insurance, and website. An increase from 2014 of \$4,810 was a result of increased accounting fees for payroll services, an increase in insurance for added liability, work compensation and unemployment, and design of the website.

IWLP ended 2015 with a cash balance of \$143,261, specifically IWLP operating - \$58,256; AIS projects - \$50,167; Blandin Foundation - \$33,589; and, Itasca County Youth Summit \$1,249.

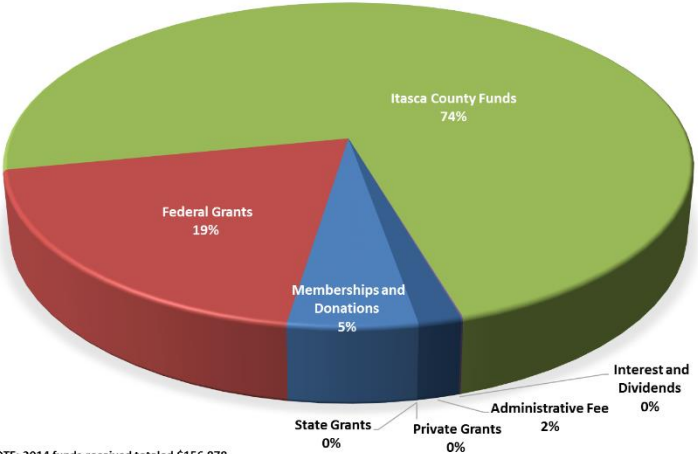
The following charts present data separately for 2015 and 2014.

2015 SOURCE OF FUNDS



NOTE: 2015 funds received totaled \$217,156

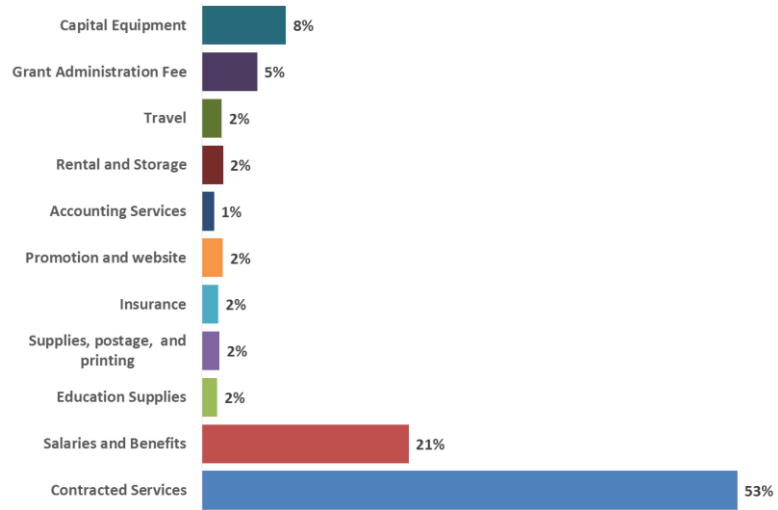
2014 SOURCE OF FUNDS



NOTE: 2014 funds received totaled \$156,878

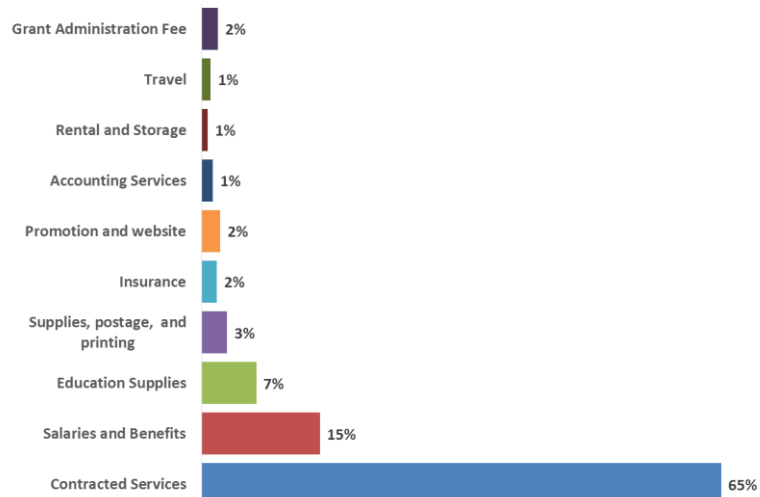


### 2015 Spending by Activity



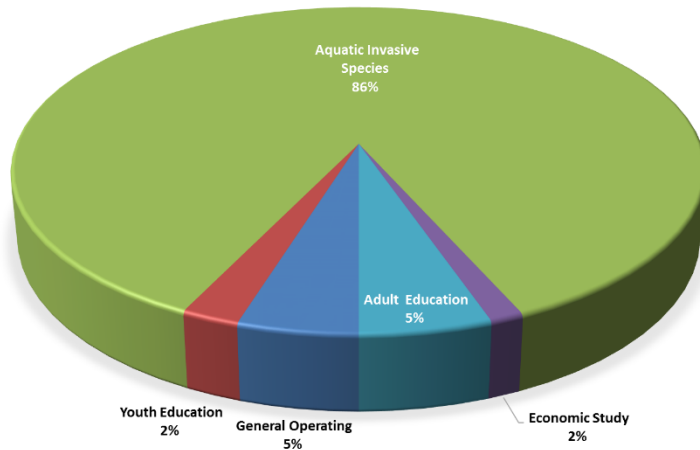
NOTE: 2015 spending totaled \$239,603

### 2014 Spending by Activity



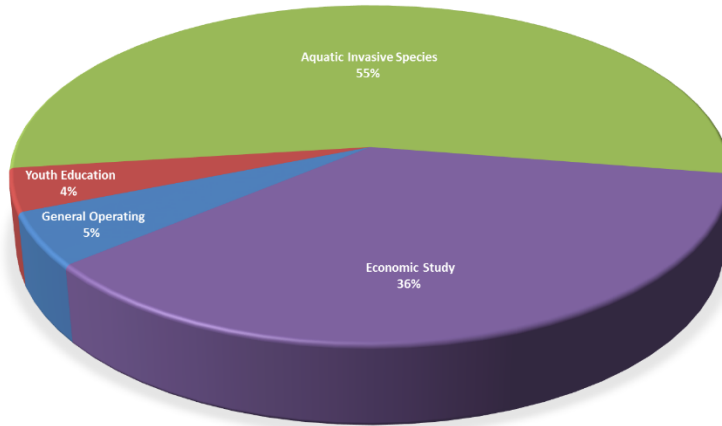
NOTE: 2014 spending totaled \$135,068

2015 SPENDING BY PROGRAM



NOTE: 2015 spending totaled \$239,603

2014 SPENDING BY PROGRAM



NOTE: 2014 spending totaled \$135,068

2016  
IWLP Board of Directors  
and Technical Advisory  
Committee



# 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Board Members

### **Dennis Anderson**

Retired DNR Fisheries

### **Kathy Cone**

Office Administrator, Itasca County Soil & Water Conservation District

### **John Downing**

Professor, Ecology, Evolution & Organismal Biology and Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering, Iowa State University; Itasca County property owner

### **Patty Gould-St. Aubin**

Broker/Owner, Itasca Realty Lakes and Homes

### **David Lick, President**

Retired, Grand Rapids business owner; member of the Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations

### **Shirley Loegering**

Retired, Office Administrator; Secretary, Grand Rapids Wes Libbey Chapter of the Izaak Walton League

### **Patricia Leistikow**

Retired Accountant, former Itasca Community College Director of Finance and ISD 318 Accounting Director

### **Brian Rusch, Treasurer**

Mechanical Engineer, Minnesota Power

### **Jan Sandberg**

Retired, Program Evaluator, Office of the Legislative Auditor; Board Member, Greater Pokegama Lake Association; Board member, Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations

### **Byron Snowden, Vice-President**

Retired, Itasca County Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment

### **Davin Tinquist**

Itasca County Commissioner

### **Sarah Verke, Secretary**

DNR Ecological and Water Resources, Administrative Support, Grand Rapids business owner and parent advocate for Healthy Legacy

### **John Zimmerman**

Retired, VP Human Resources, Lockheed Martin, Owego, NY; President, Wabana Chain of Lakes Assn.; Board member, Itasca County Historical Society

## Technical Assistance

### **Bill Grantges**

Itasca County AIS Coordinator; MN DNR Certified Lake Service Provider; MN DNR Certified Level 1&2 AIS Watercraft Inspector

### **Erika Herr**

MN DNR Area Waters Hydrologist

### **Eric Raitanen**

Fisheries Biologist, Chippewa National Forest

### **Moriya Rufer**

Director of Client Services, RMB Environmental Laboratories, Inc.

### **Terry Schaedig**

District Manager, Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District

### **Dan Steward**

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

### **Dan Swenson**

Environmental Services Administrator, Itasca County Environmental Services

## Emeritus

### **Harold Dziuk**

Retired, Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota; shore land volunteer