### METHODS FOR DETERMINING VEGETATION & FISH HEALTH

#### **Overview**

Biodiversity is important in maintaining a healthy lake ecosystem. Biodiversity is considered to be a principle driver of ecosystem function and critical to ecosystem resilience and stability. A diverse ecosystem provides a number of services such as nutrient recycling, improved water quality, and increased recreational opportunities. Human disturbances often lead to a decrease in species diversity resulting in a weakening and/or loss of support to the ecosystem services provided by healthy biotic community.

The development of health assessment indices have provided a means in which natural resources managers can evaluate and monitor the health of a lake's biological community to help focus restoration and preservation efforts. The species that make up a community vary in their tolerance to human disturbances, therefore, as the episodic and cumulative disturbances occur to a system a decrease in species richness and a shift to species that are very tolerant to disturbance. Assessment tools developed by the MnDNR use these tolerance differences to relate the relative health of a given lake. Specifically, different sets of tools have been developed to relate the health of the fish community (Fish IBI) and another set of tools for the vegetation community (FQI).

#### **Floristic Quality Index**

The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) is a vegetation health assessment tool that is based on a metric of species richness and a Coefficient of Conservatism (C), which is a score (0 - 10) that relates a species site fidelity and tolerance to disturbance. Thus, species that have narrow habitat ranges and/or low tolerance to stress have high C-values. Therefore, the more species observed in a lake and the greater the C-values the greater the system health.

FQI assessment was designed to allow for health assessment from various community sampling techniques. Three different survey methods can be used: Minnesota Biological Survey methods, MnDNR transects or point intercept surveys (most common). All three methods have limitations yet all are relatively good at capturing and evaluating the health of the vegetation community.

Due to natural differences in species composition between deep and shallow lakes and ecoregions, two unique sets of thresholds were developed for FQI scoring for the North Central Hardwoods ecoregion (Table 1). The MnDNR has performed at least one survey and FQI assessment on all of the CRWD lakes presented in this appendix. Each lake report card shows the most recent FQI score for each lake and how it relates to the impairment thresholds presented in Table 1. It should be pointed out that the report cards only show FQI assessments conducted by the MnDNR, and therefore do not include any FQI assessments based on surveys performed by CRWD or other parties.

Table 1: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources North Central Hardwoods ecoregion point intercept and transect sampling FQI impairment thresholds for deep and shallow lakes.

Classification	Deep	Shallow
Exceptional	32.4	26.0
Impaired	18.6	17.7

#### **Fish Index of Biotic Integrity**

The Fish IBI is comprised of multiple metrics that integrate aspects of species richness, community assemblage, and trophic composition. The combining of all individual metrics results in a single score that relates the relative health of the fish community with healthier systems having greater overall scores. Low scores are typically associated to imbalanced communities filled with tolerant species and high scores are typically received when communities are balanced and filled with intolerant species.

Fish IBI sampling includes trap and gill net surveys along with nearshore backpack electrofishing and beach seining. Together these various sampling gears are able to capture information from various habitats throughout a lake and also target all fish species.

Minnesota lakes that fall within lake classes 20 - 43 (Schupp lake classification) have been partitioned into four distinct Fish IBIs. Lake class groups are clustered together using eight lake attributes that account for the expected variability of a fish community due natural phenomenon (Table 2).

Table 2: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fish IBI tool classification.		Schupp's Lake Class	Lake Classification Group Description
	2	22, 23, 24, 25, 27	Generally, deep lakes with high shoreline complexity (SDI) that are typically less than 80% littoral.
Due to these expected differences and unique IBIs each tool has its own set of thresholds to generalize the relative health of a lake's fish community (Table 2)	4	28, 29, 30, 31, 32	Compared to LCG 2 these lakes on average are smaller, have intermediate littoral area, have less shoreline complexity (typically rounder basins). They also typically have a low trophic status, low phosphorus levels, and clearer water compared to LCG2.
(Table 3).	5	33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39	Central and Northern MN lakes of shallow to moderate depths (mostly littoral). Generally, naturally eutrophic lakes with lots of vegetation and soft sediment.
	7	38, 41, 42, 43	Shallowest lakes typically consisting of > 80% littoral area. Primarily in the southern half of the state. Excludes winterkill lakes (w/in 10 years) and riverine lakes

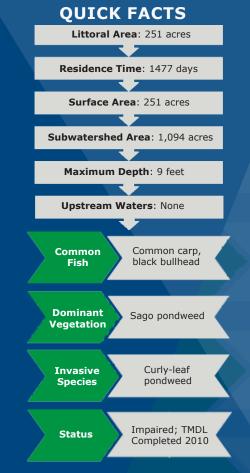
#### Table 3: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources impairment thresholds for fish IBI tools.

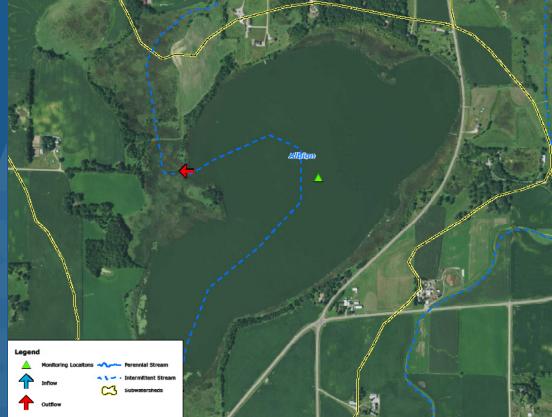
Classification	Tool 2	Tool 4	Tool 5	Tool 7	The MnDNR has performed Fish IBI assessments on
Exceptional	64	59	61	NA	six lakes throughout the CRWD: Cedar, Betsy, Louisa, Clearwater, School Section, and Bass. The lake report
Impaired	44	38	24	36	cards for each of these lakes present the Fish IBI
					score and how it relates to the impairment thresholds presented in Table 3.

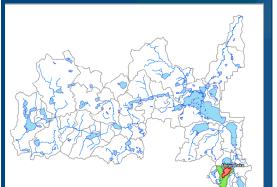
More information on Fish IBI methodology can be found on the MnDNR's website: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/surfacewater\_section/lake\_ibi/index.html

### **ALBION LAKE**









#### TO DO LIST

- Rough fish management
- AIS management
- Manage upstream loads

Fish Health (IBI)		Impaired		Su	pportir	ng	
	0		36				100
*Fish IBI has not be	en as	ssessed					
		12.7 ↓					
Vegetation Health		Impaired		Supporting		Exceptional	
(FQI)	0		17.8		26 *Sampl	le date: 8/14/20	15
Sediment P Release (mg/m²/day)		Low		Moderate		High	
	0		3.3		7.5		

\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed

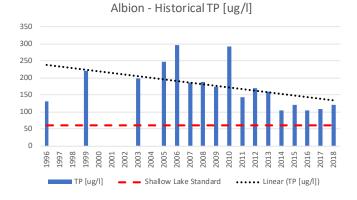






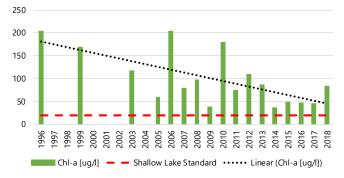
#### **2019 Water Quality**

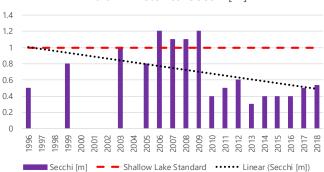
#### **Historic Water Quality**



#### Lake not sampled







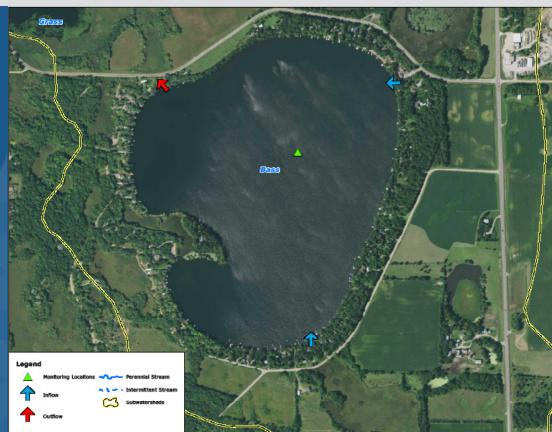
Albion - Historical Secchi [m]

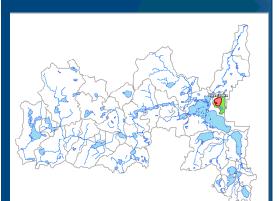


### **BASS LAKE**



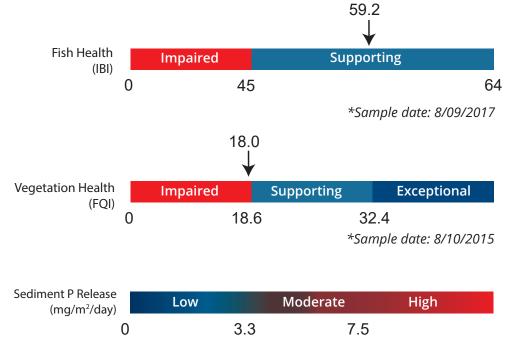






#### <u>TO DO LIST</u>

- Protect water quality
- Manage upstream loads
- AIS management and prevention



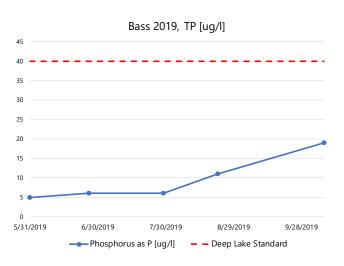
\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed



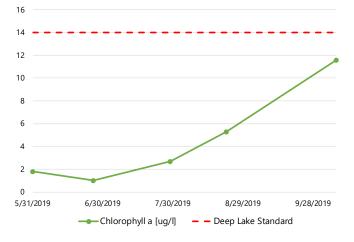
### **BASS LAKE**



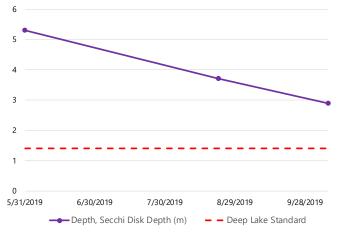
### **2019 Water Quality**



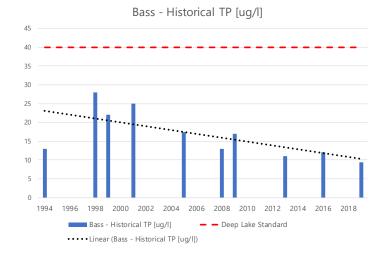
Bass 2019, Chlorophyll a [ug/l]



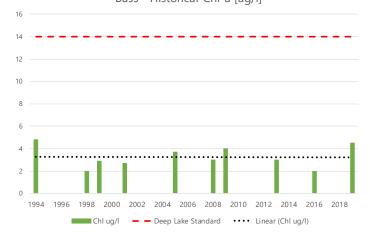
Bass 2019, Secchi Disk Depth [m]



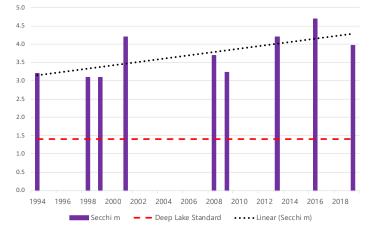
#### **Historic Water Quality**



#### Bass - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



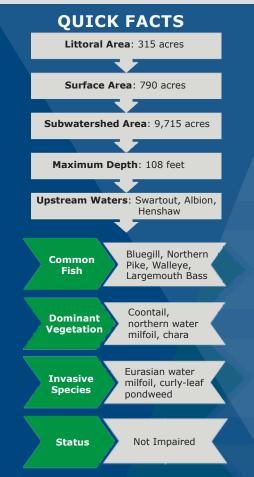
#### Bass - Historical Secchi [m]

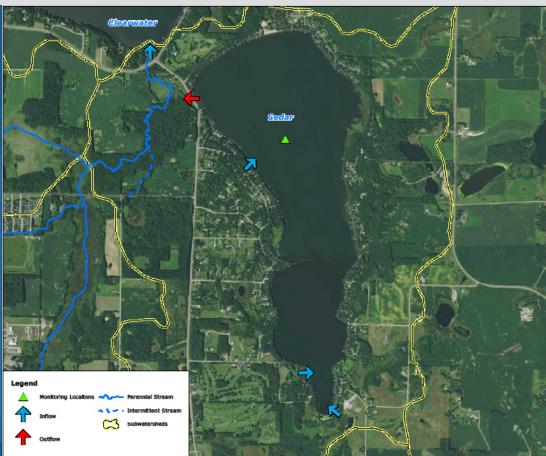


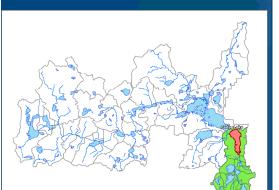


### **CEDAR LAKE**



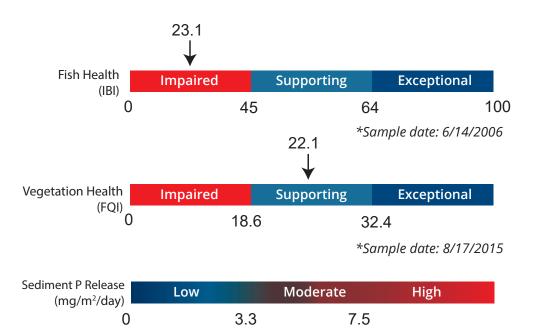






#### TO DO LIST

- AIS management
- Nough fish management in
- upstream lakes
- Manage upstream soluble P loads



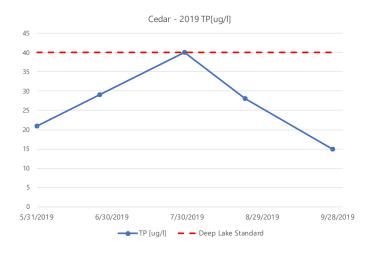
\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed



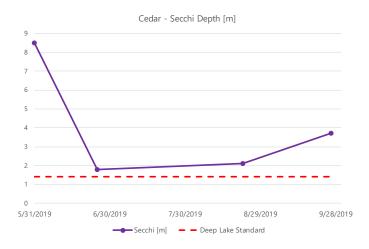
# **CEDAR LAKE**



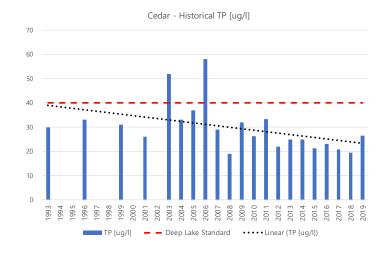
#### **2019 Water Quality**





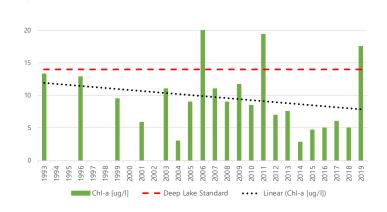


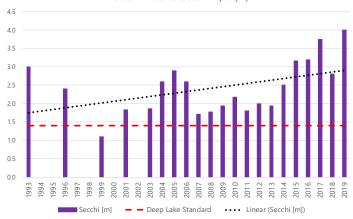
#### **Historic Water Quality**



Cedar - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]

25



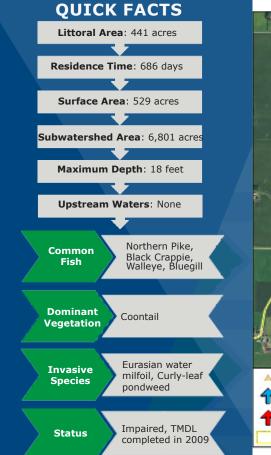


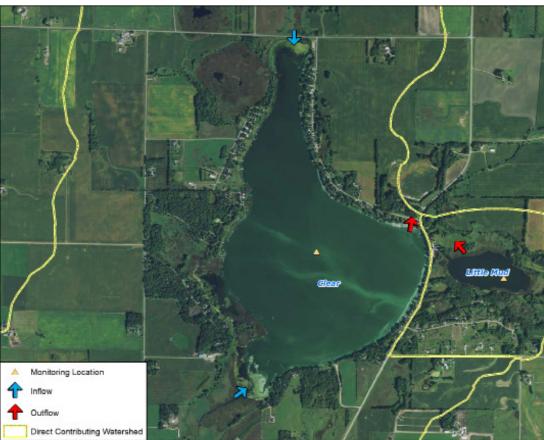
Cedar - Historical Secchi Depth [m]

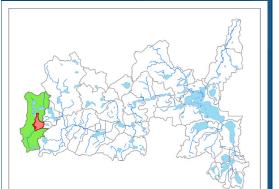


### **CLEAR LAKE**



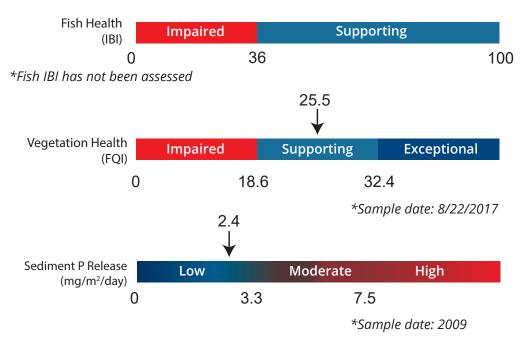






#### TO DO LIST

- AIS Management
- Manage rough fish
- Manage upstream soluble P loads

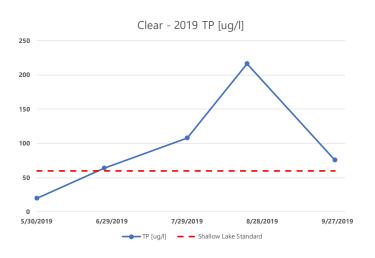


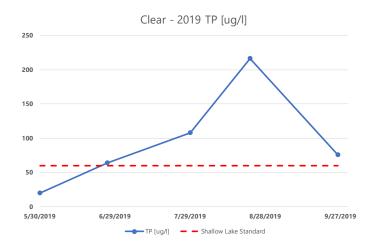


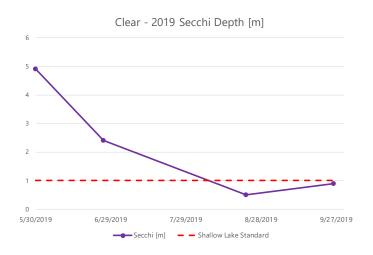
# **CLEAR LAKE**



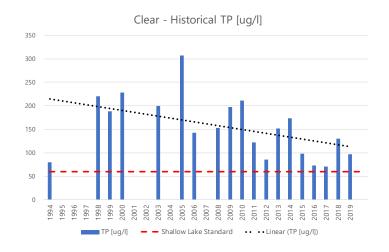
#### **2019 Water Quality**



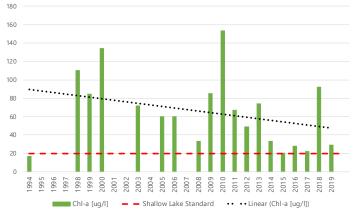




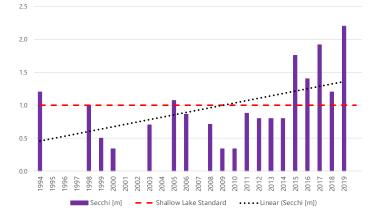
#### **Historic Water Quality**



#### Clear - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



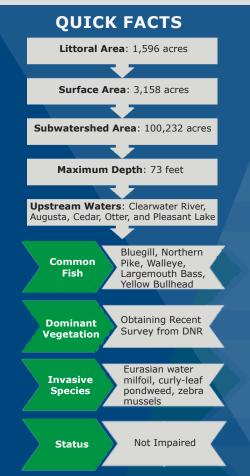
Clear - Historical Secchi Depth [m]

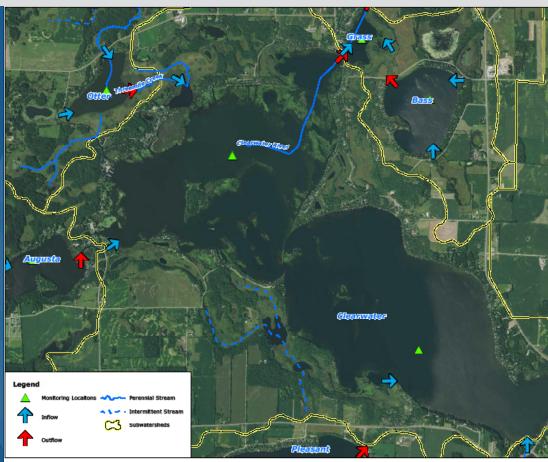


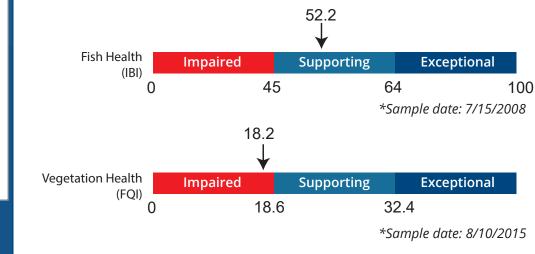


# **CLEARWATER LAKE**

# Clearwater River



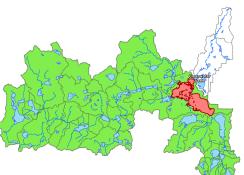




Sediment P Release (mg/m <sup>2</sup> /day)	Low		Moderate	High
(iiig) iii / ddy)0		3.3	7.5	

\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed





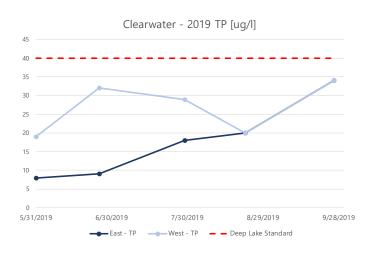
### TO DO LIST

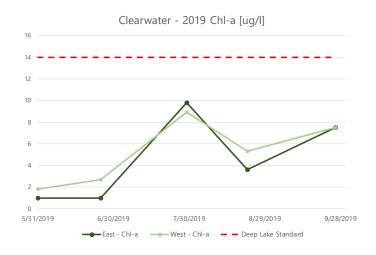
- Protect water quality
- Manage upstream loads
- AIS management

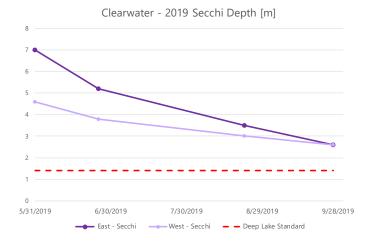
# **CLEARWATER LAKE**



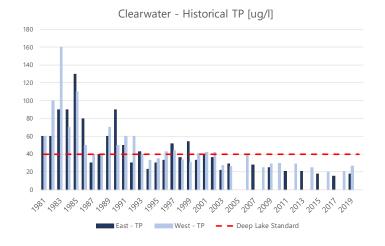
#### **2019 Water Quality**



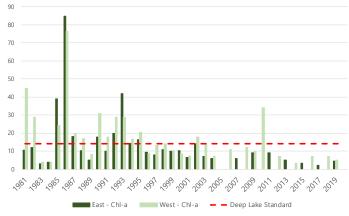


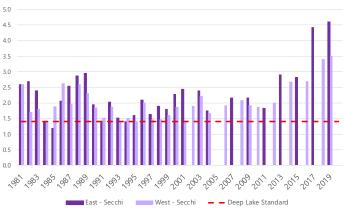


#### **Historic Water Quality**



Clearwater - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



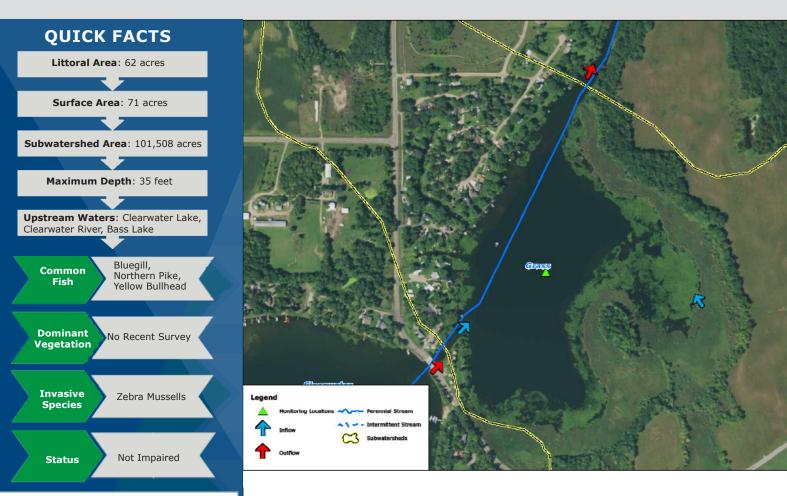


Clearwater - Historical Secchi [m]



### **GRASS LAKE**

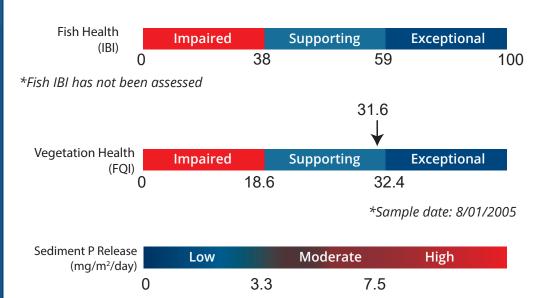






#### TO DO LIST

- Protect water quality
- Manage upstream loads
- AIS Management



\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed



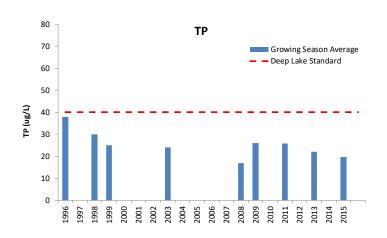
### **GRASS LAKE**

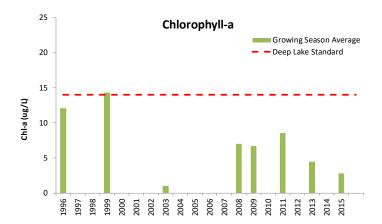


#### **2019 Water Quality**

Lake not sampled

### **Historic Water Quality**



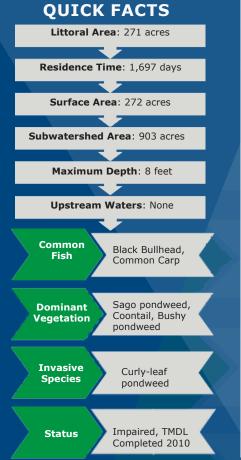


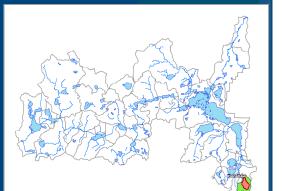
Secchi Depth 1997 1998 2010 2012 2013 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2009 2011 2014 2015 1996 2007 2008 0.0 0.5 1.0 **Secchi Depth (m)** 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5 Growing Season Average – Deep Lake Standard \_ 5.0

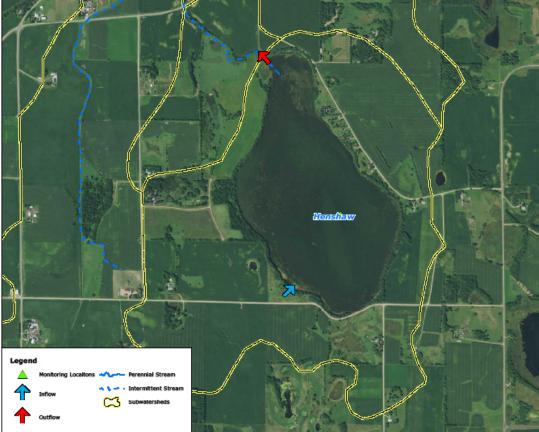


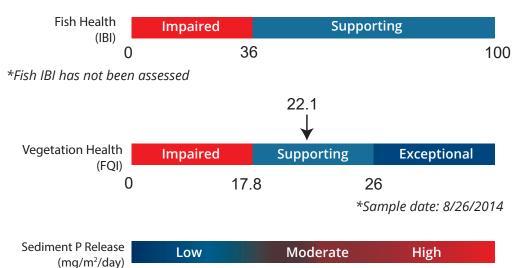
### **HENSHAW LAKE**







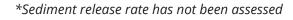




3.3

### TO DO LIST

- A Rough fish management
- AIS management
- Internal load management study
- Manage upstream load



0



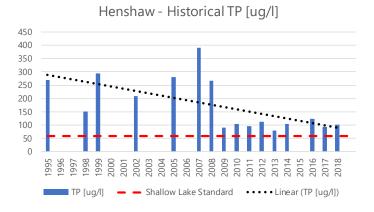
7.5





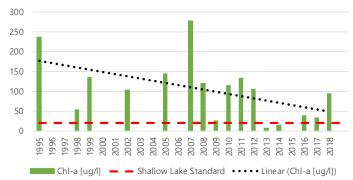
#### **2019 Water Quality**

#### **Historic Water Quality**

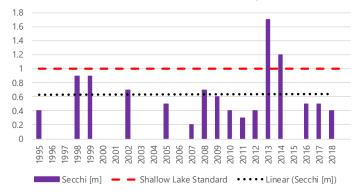


Lake not sampled





Henshaw - Historical Secchi Depth [m]



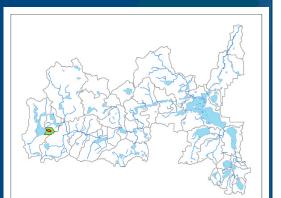


## LITTLE MUD LAKE



### **QUICK FACTS** Littoral Area: 25.1 acres Residence Time: 1299 days Surface Area: 37.4 acres Subwatershed Area: 294 acres Maximum Depth: 42 feet Upstream Waters: None Common No Recent Survey Fish Coontail Dominant Vegetation Eurasian Invasive watermilfoil Species Status Not Impaired





Fish Health (IBI)	Impaired		Supporting	
(151)		36		100
*Fish IBI has not been assessed				

Vegetation Health (FOI)	Impaired	Sup	porting	Exceptional
(FQI) 0		17.8	20	6

\*Vegetation FQI has not been assessed

# Sediment P Release<br/>(mg/m²/day)LowModerateHigh03.37.5

\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed

Resilience

#### TO DO LIST

- Rough fish management
- AIS management
- Internal load management study
- Manage upstream load

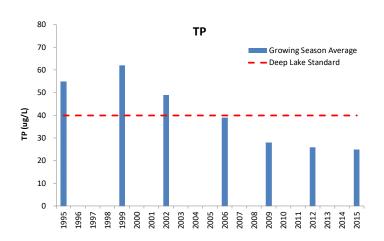
# LITTLE MUD LAKE

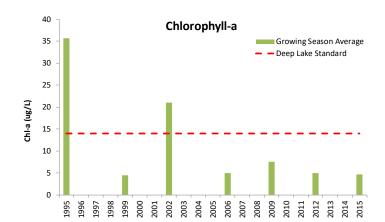


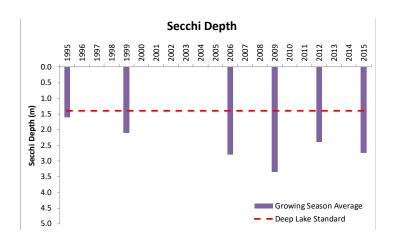
#### **2019 Water Quality**

Lake not sampled

**Historic Water Quality** 





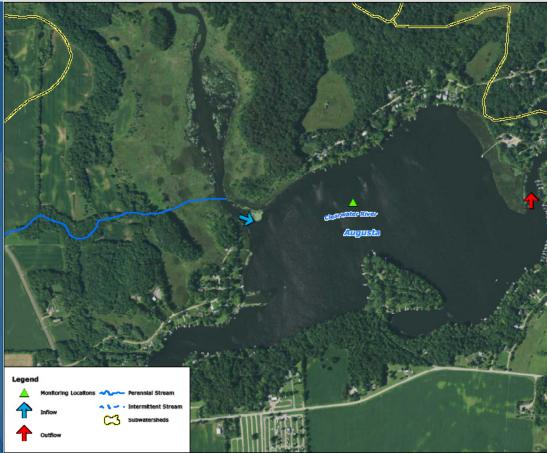




### LAKE AUGUSTA



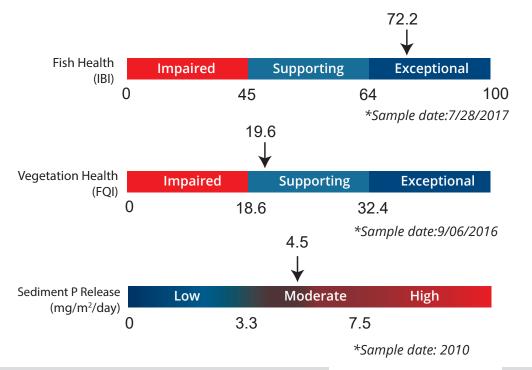






#### TO DO LIST

- Manage upstream loads
- AIS management

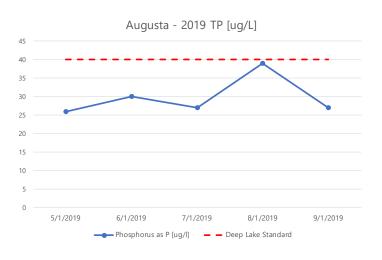


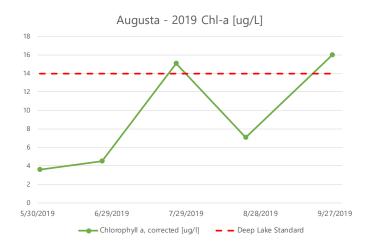


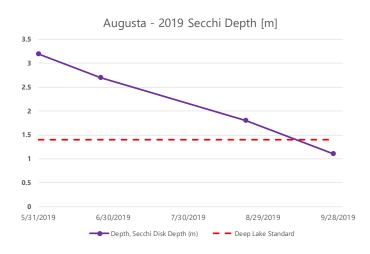
# LAKE AUGUSTA



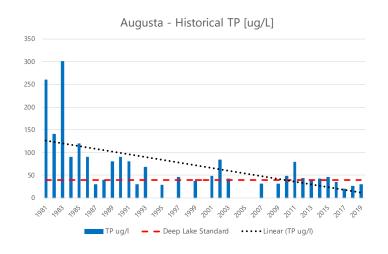
### 2019 Water Quality



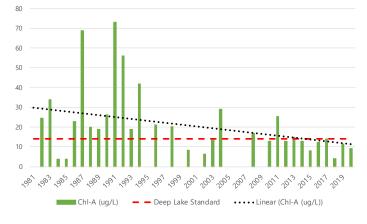


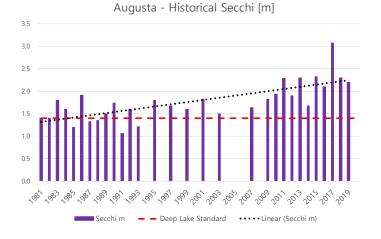


#### **Historic Water Quality**



Augusta - Historical Chl-a [ug/L]

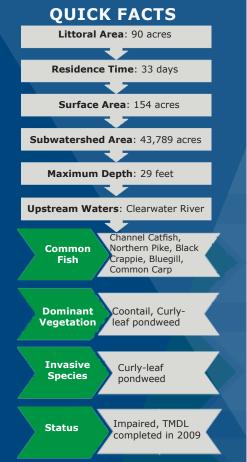


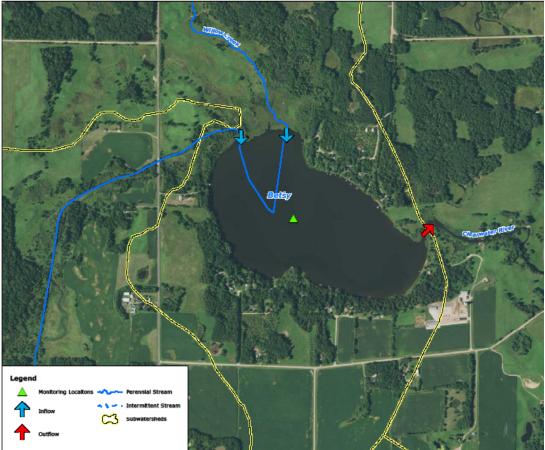


Resilience RESOURCES LLC

### LAKE BETSY



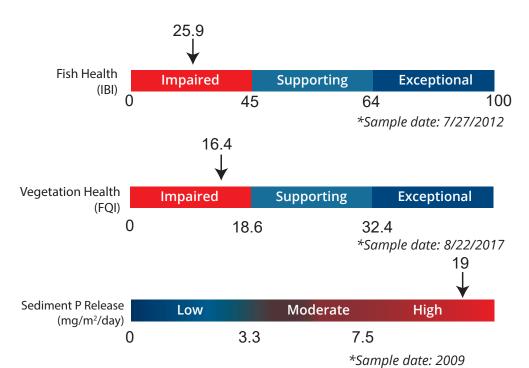






#### <u>TO DO LIST</u>

- Rough fish management
- Internal load reduction study
- and implementation
- A Manage upstream loads
- AIS management

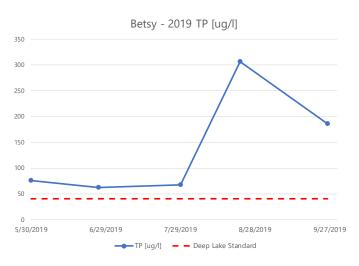


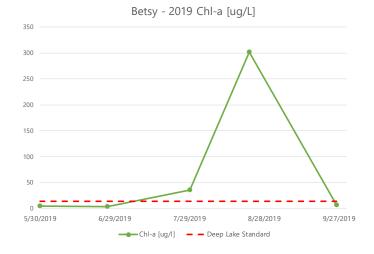


# LAKE BETSY

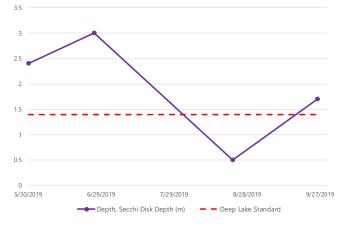


#### **2019 Water Quality**

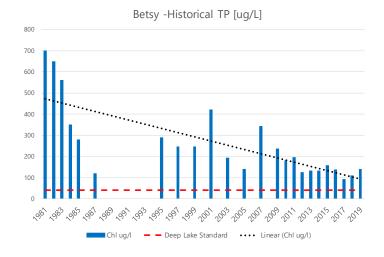




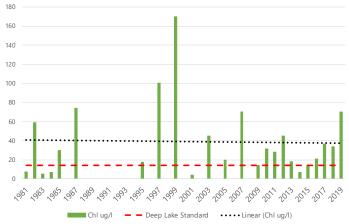
Betsy - 2019 Secchi Depth [m]



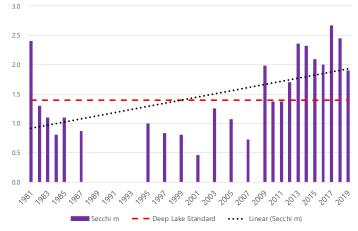
#### **Historic Water Quality**



Betsy - Historical Chl-a [ug/L]







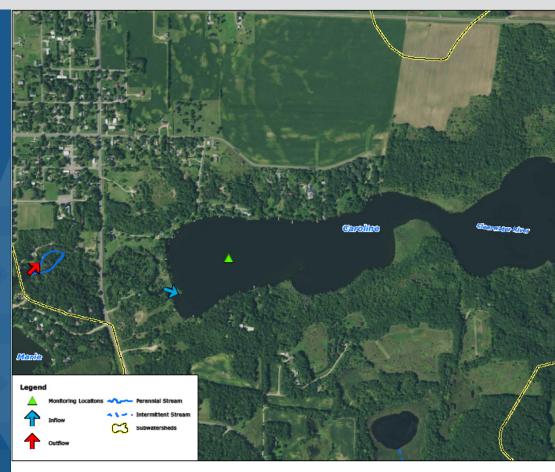
ce

RESOURCESLLC

### LAKE CAROLINE



### **QUICK FACTS** Littoral Area: 46 acres Residence Time: 26 days Surface Area: 135 acres Subwatershed Area: 60,132 acres Maximum Depth: 45 feet Upstream Waters: Louisa, Marie Black Crappie, Bluegill, Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, Common Carp, Walleye, White Sucker Common Fish Dominant No Recent Survey Vegetation Curly-leaf Invasive pondweed, Species Eurasian watermilfoil Impaired, TMDL Status completed in 2010

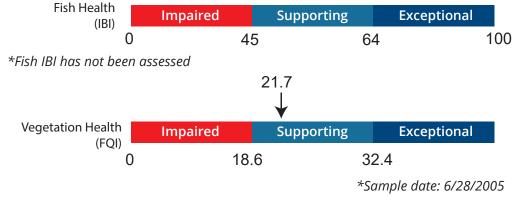




#### TO DO LIST

Manage upstream loads AIS management

Internal load management study



Sediment P Release (mg/m²/day)	Low		Moderate	High	
0		3.3	7.5		

\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed

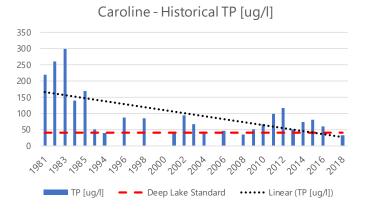


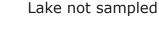




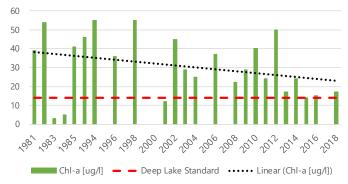
#### **2019 Water Quality**

#### **Historic Water Quality**

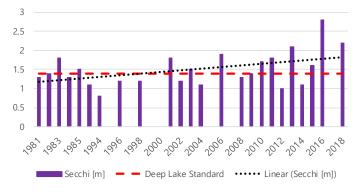








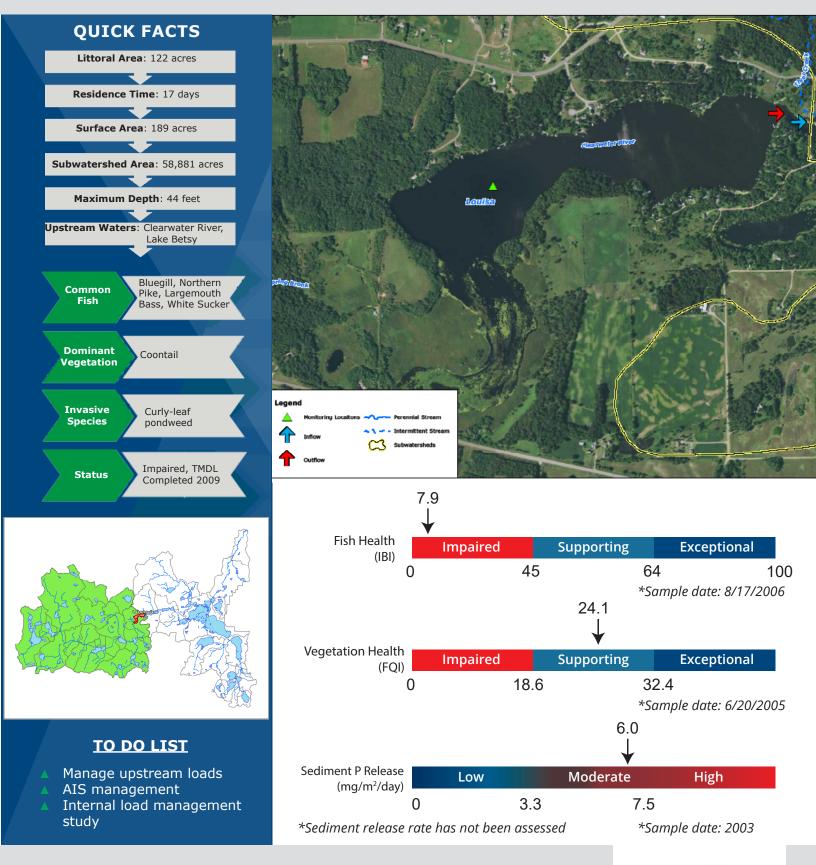
Caroline - Historical Secchi Depth [m]





### LAKE LOUISA



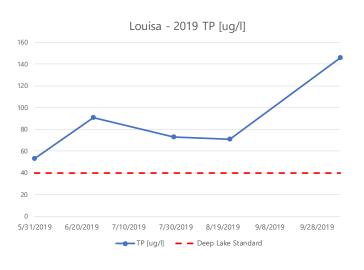


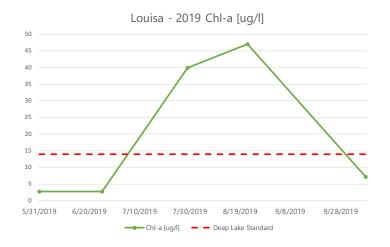


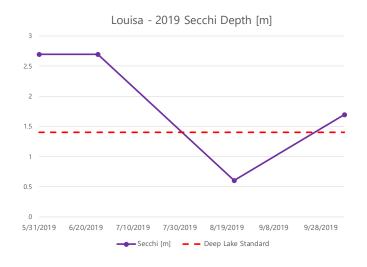
# LAKE LOUISA



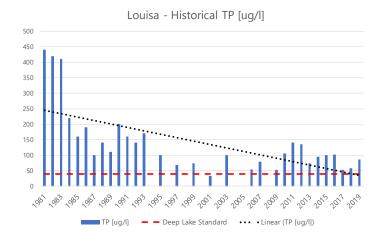
#### 2017 Water Quality



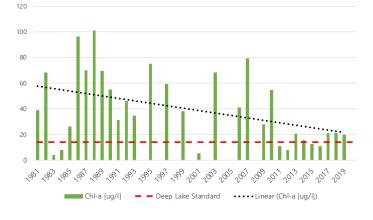




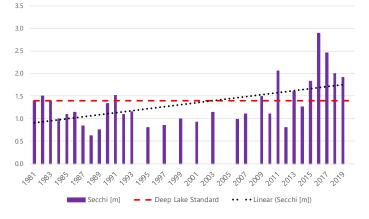
#### **Historic Water Quality**



Louisa - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



Louisa - Historical Secchi Depth [m]





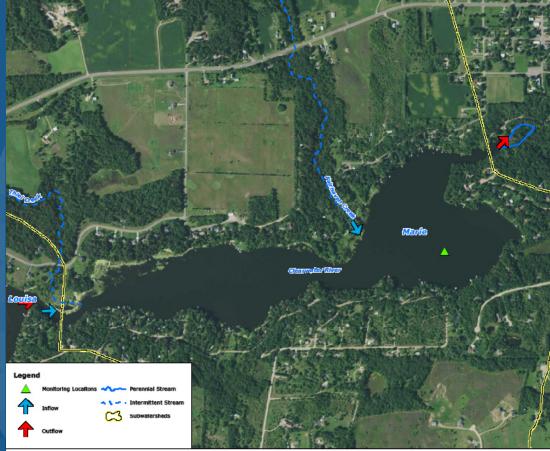
### LAKE MARIE

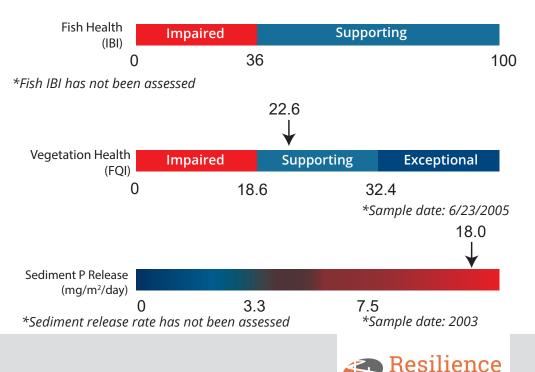


RESOURCESLLC

### **QUICK FACTS** Littoral Area: 107 acres Residence Time: 24 days Surface Area: 146 acres Subwatershed Area: 59,837 acres Maximum Depth: 36 feet Upstream Waters: Clearwater River, Louisa Black Crappie, Bluegill, Northern Pike, White Sucker, Common Fish Yellow Perch Dominant Vegetation Coontail, Canadian waterweed Invasive Curly-leaf Species pondweed Impaired, TMDL Status Completed 2009 TO DO LIST

- Manage upstream loads
- ▲ AIS management
- Internal load management study

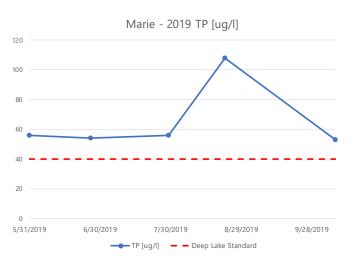




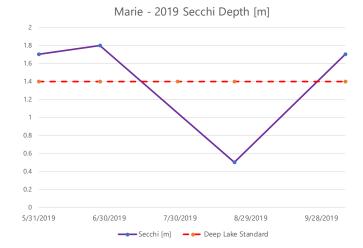
# LAKE MARIE



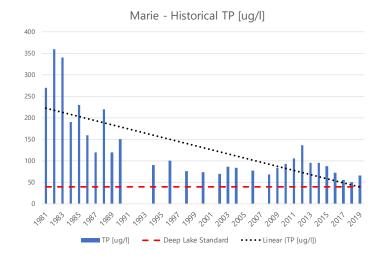
#### **2019 Water Quality**



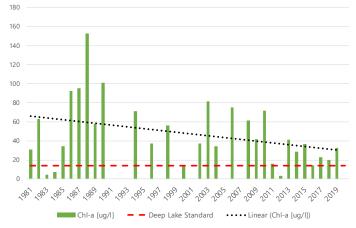




### **Historic Water Quality**



Marie - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



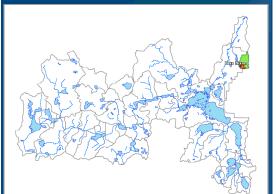
Marie - Hisotrical Secchi Depth [m] 3.0 2.5 2.0 1.5 1.0 0.5 0.0 `20<sup>09</sup> 2001 2005 ~9°` ~9<sup>637</sup> ~9<sup>89</sup> ~99^ ~9<sup>99</sup> 2003 2001 1981 . ^જી 1995 1991 201 2013 2019 2014. ,98<sup>5</sup> 201 Secchi [m] 🛛 🗕 🗕 Deep Lake Standard 🔹 • • • • • Linear (Secchi [m]) 



### **NIXON LAKE**



#### **QUICK FACTS** Littoral Area: 33 acres Surface Area: 60 acres Subwatershed Area: 690 acres Maximum Depth: 67 feet Upstream Waters: None Bluegill, Northern Pike, Yellow Bull-head, Largemouth Common Fish Bass Currently obtain-Dominant ing vegetation info Vegetation from DNR Currently obtaining Invasive 47 vegetation info from Species DNR Not impaired Status CC3



TO DO LIST

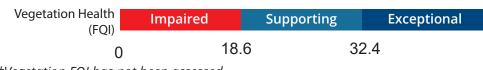
Manage upstream loads

Protect water quality

AIS management

and prevention

Fish Health (IBI)	Impaired		Supporting	
(IBI) C	)	36		100
*Fish IBI has not beer	n assessed			



\*Vegetation FQI has not been assessed



\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed



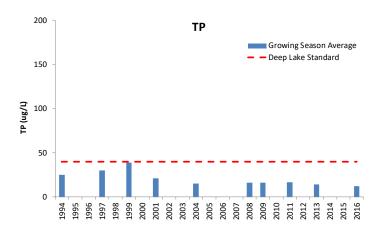
### **NIXON LAKE**

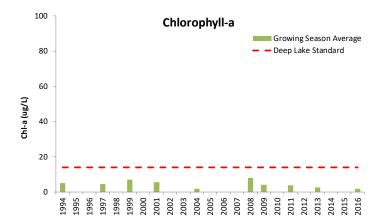


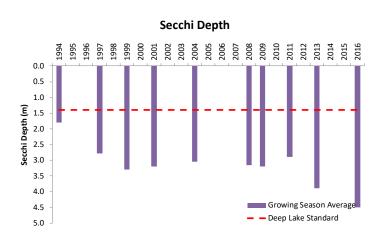
#### **2019 Water Quality**

Lake not sampled

### **Historic Water Quality**



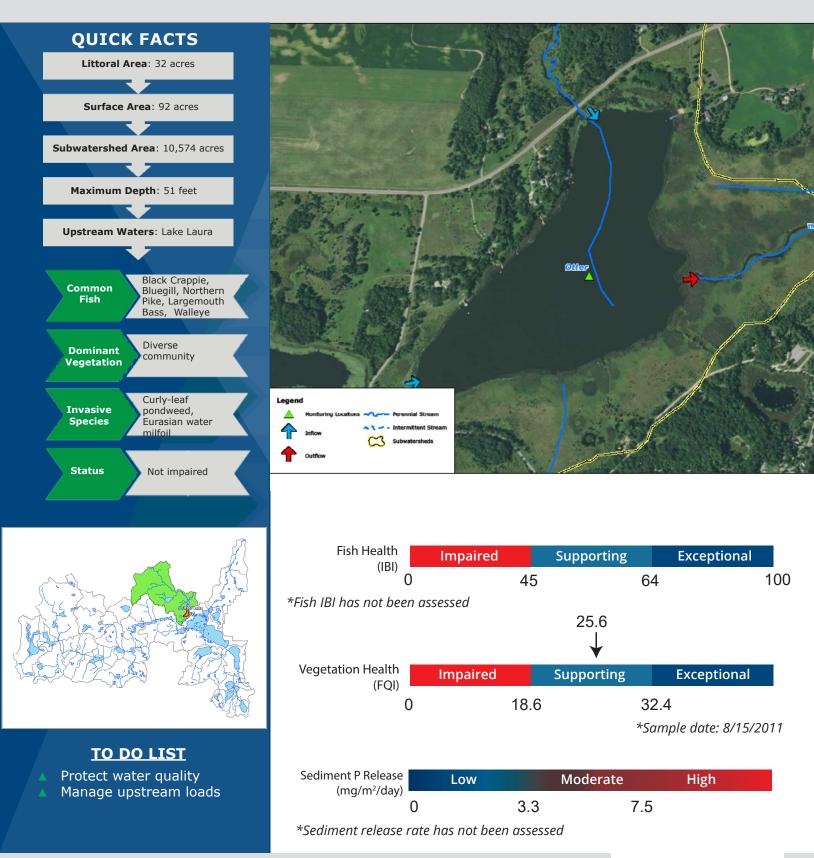






### **OTTER LAKE**







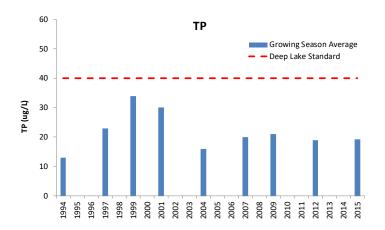


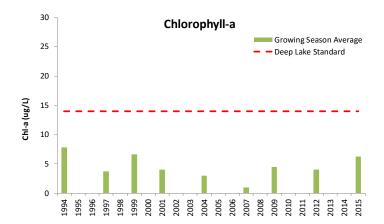


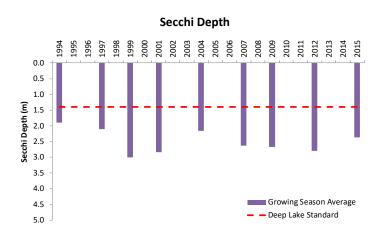
#### **2019 Water Quality**

Lake not sampled

### **Historic Water Quality**



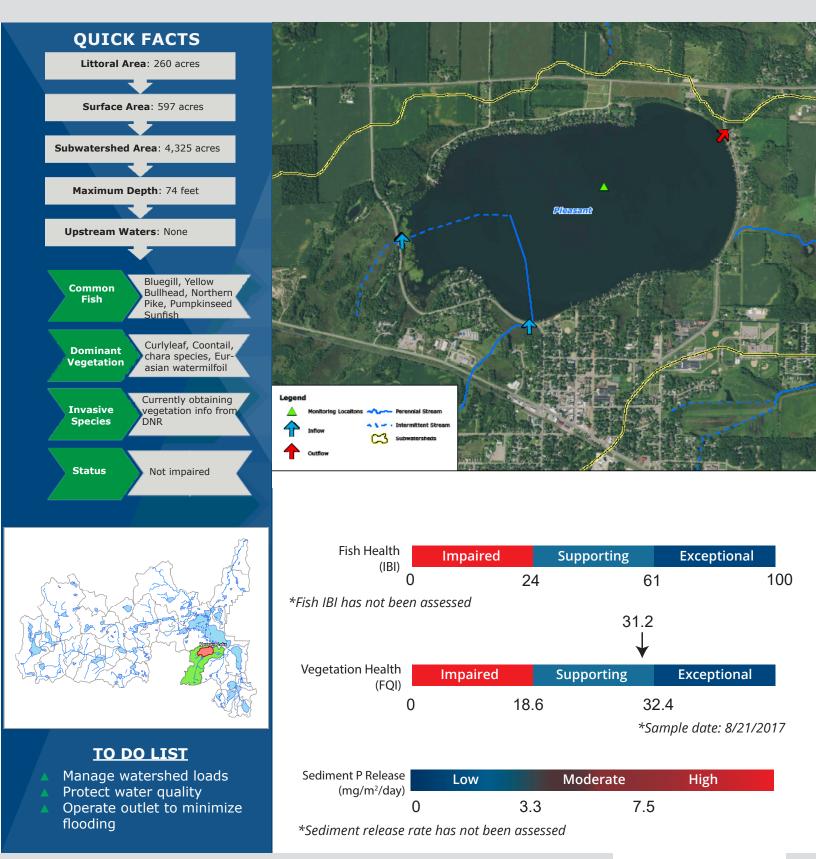






### **PLEASANT LAKE**



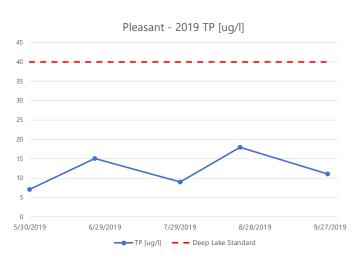


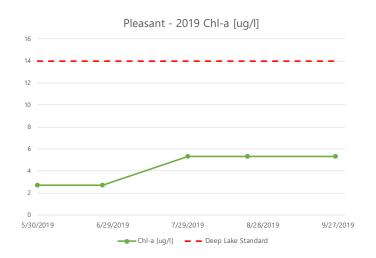


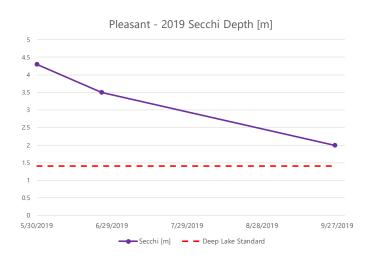
# **PLEASANT LAKE**



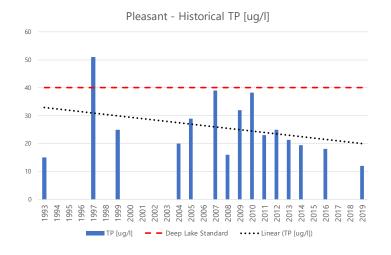
### **2019 Water Quality**



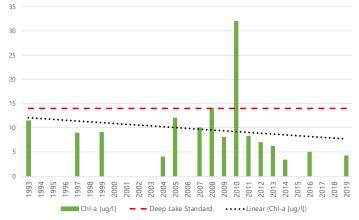


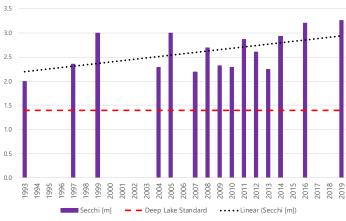


#### **Historic Water Quality**



#### Pleasant - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



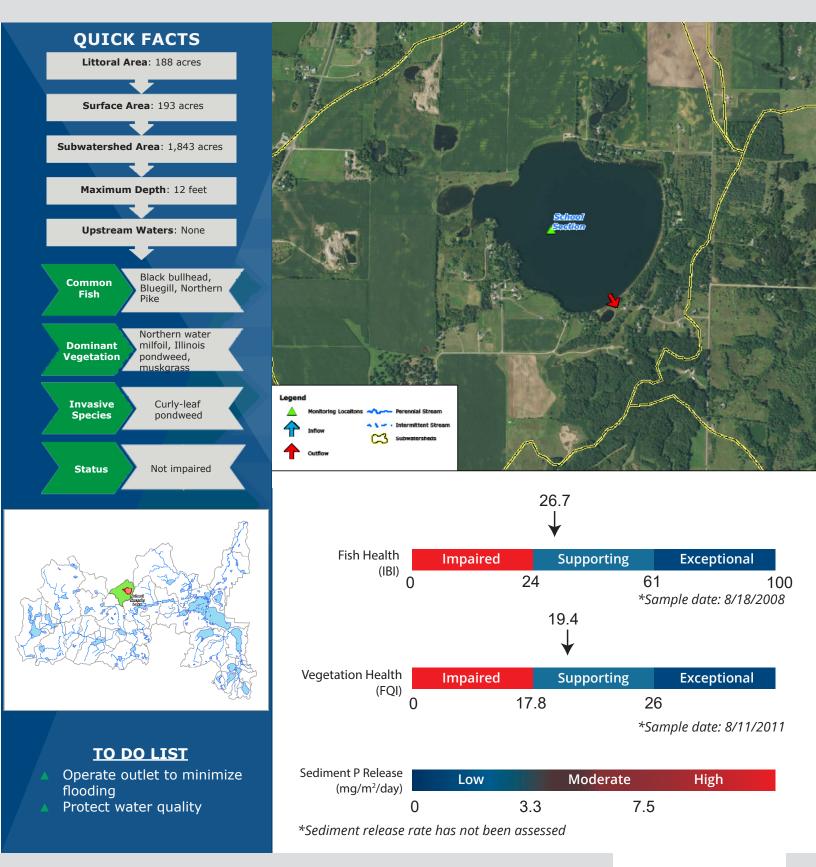


#### Pleasant - Historical Secchi [m]

Resilience RESOURCESLLO

# **SCHOOL SECTION LAKE**

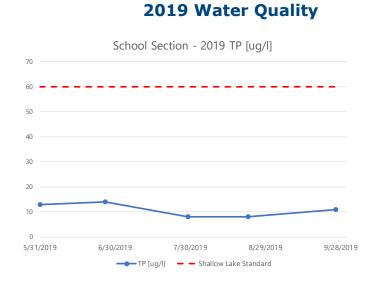




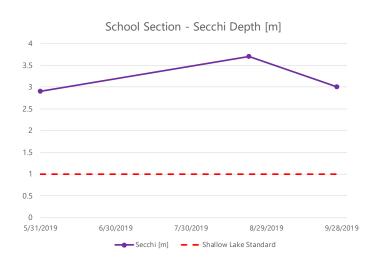


# **SCHOOL SECTION LAKE**

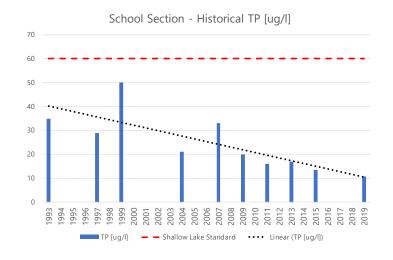




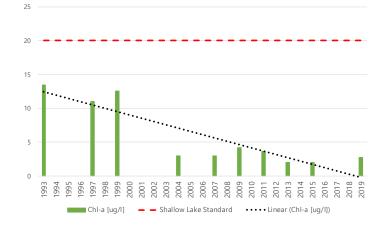
School Section - 2019 Chl-a [ug/l]



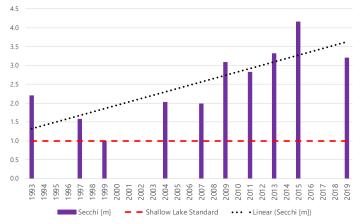
#### **Historic Water Quality**



#### School Section - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



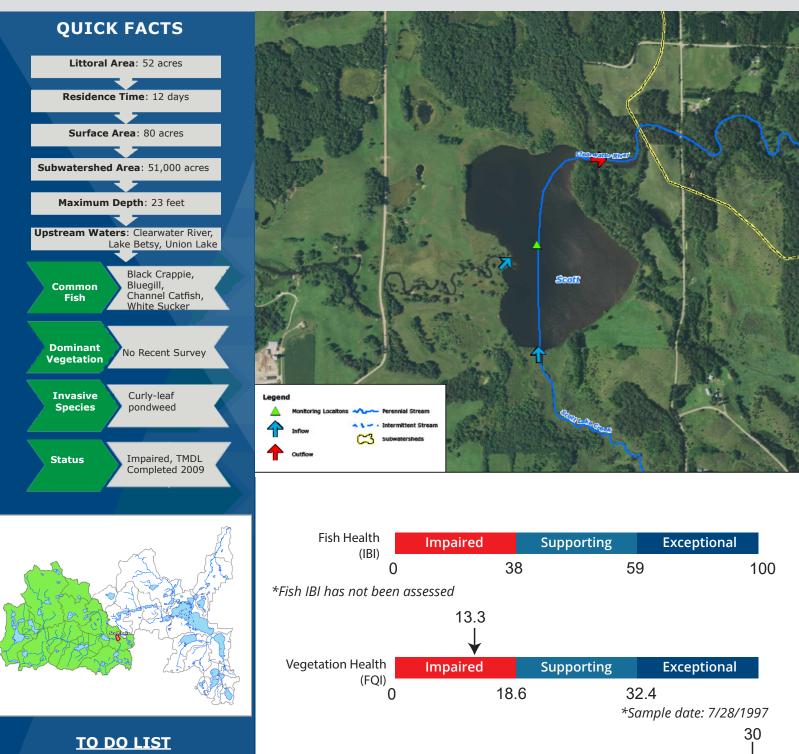




Resilience Resourcesus

# **SCOTT LAKE**





Sediment P Release

 $(mg/m^2/day)$ 

0

Low

3.3

Moderate

7.5

High

**Resilience** 

\*Sample date: 2010

- A Rough fish management
- Manage upstream loads
- Internal load management study

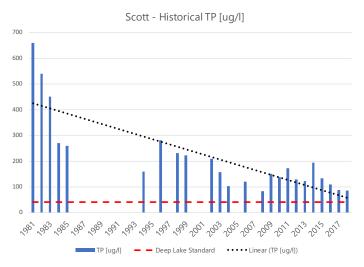


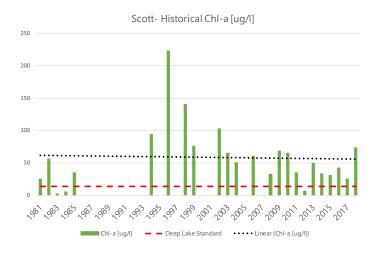


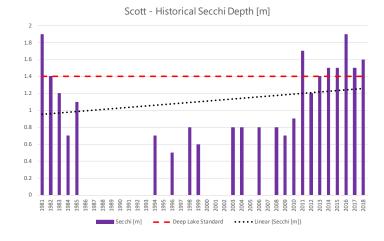
#### **2019 Water Quality**

#### Lake not sampled

#### **Historic Water Quality**



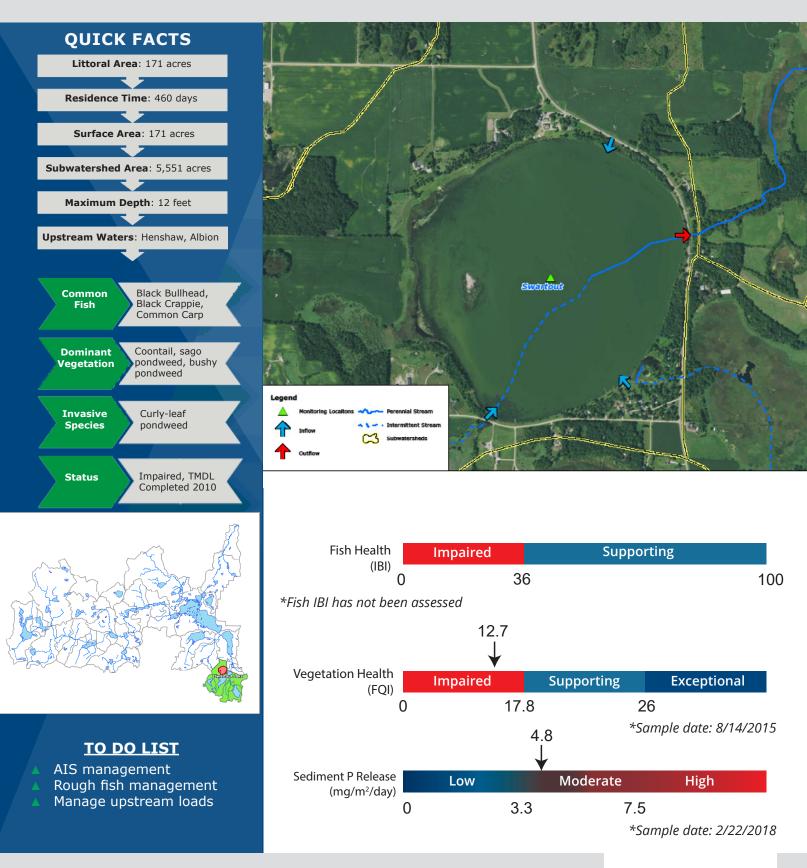




Resilience RESOURCESLLE

### **SWARTOUT LAKE**







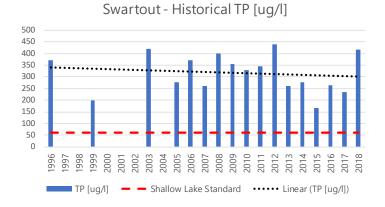




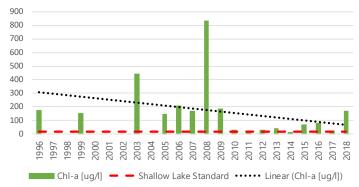
#### **2019 Water Quality**

#### Lake not sampled

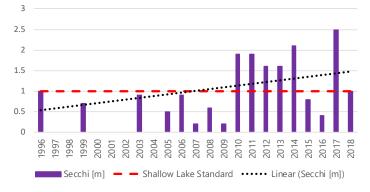
#### **Historic Water Quality**



Swartout - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]



Swartout - Historical Secchi Depth [m]



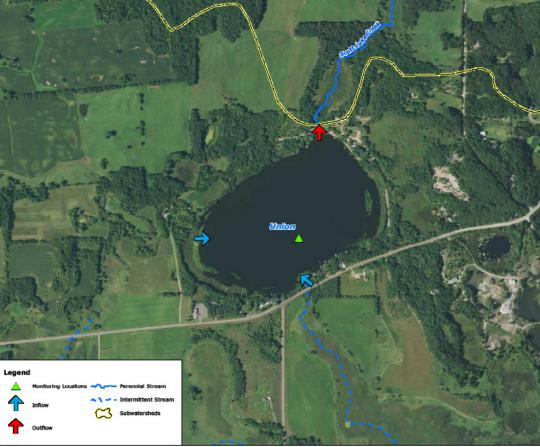


### **UNION LAKE**



Resilience RESOURCESLLC

### **QUICK FACTS** Littoral Area: 27 acres Residence Time: 291 days Surface Area: 93 acres Subwatershed Area: 4,741 acres Maximum Depth: 35 feet Upstream Waters: None Black Crappie, Bluegill, Northern Common Fish Pike, Largemouth Bass Coontail, curly-leaf Dominant pondweed, sago Vegetation pondweed Curly-leaf Invasive pondweed Species C 3 Impaired, TMDL Completed 2009 Status



Fish Health (IBI)	Impaired		Supporting		Exceptional	
0		45		64		100
*Fish IBI has not been	assessed					
	14.7 I					
Vegetation Health	Impaired		Supporting		Exceptional	
(FQI) O	I	18.6		32.4		
			;	*Samp	le date: 6/17/2	2016

TO DO LIST Manage upstream loads

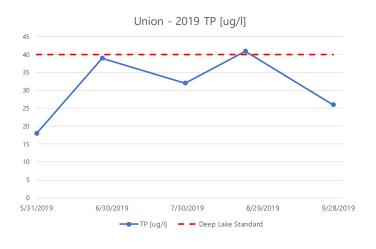
Sediment P Release (mg/m²/day)	Low		Moderate	High
(iiig) iii / ddy) (	C	3.3	7.5	

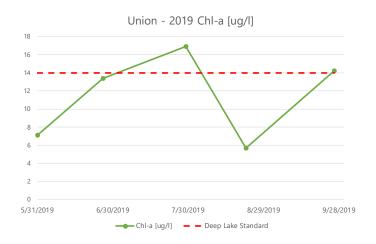
\*Sediment release rate has not been assessed

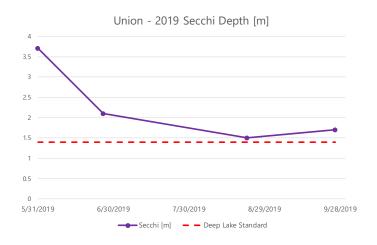
# **UNION LAKE**



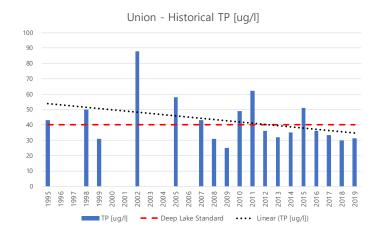
### **2019 Water Quality**



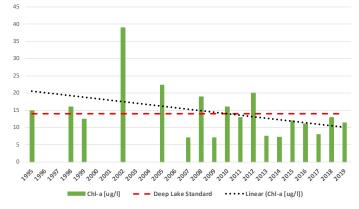


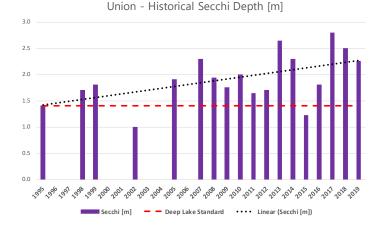


### **Historic Water Quality**



Union - Historical Chl-a [ug/l]





ence

RESOURCESLLC