



RAINY-RAPID WATERSHED

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan



Photo credit: DNR

What is One Watershed, One Plan?

- Voluntary program and plan to guide watershed managers as they work to protect and restore the watershed's resources
- Aligns water planning along watershed boundaries, including all the counties and soil & water conservation districts within the watershed
- Local priorities, locally driven
- Uses existing authorities and funding mechanisms (county and SWCD boards)
- After adopted, implementation funding from the state is obtained through a non-competitive process instead of competitive
- Program website: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan>



Watershed and Plan Highlights

- The watershed consists of the Rapid River Watershed and the lower portion of the Lower Rainy River Watershed. It drains to Lake of the Woods.
- Covers most of Lake of the Woods County and small portions of Beltrami and Koochiching counties.
- Primary town is Baudette, MN.
- Covers 1,251 square miles (800,640 acres).
- Contains world class fisheries in the Rainy River and downstream Lake of the Woods. Sturgeon are recovering due to habitat improvement and fisheries management.

- 81% of the watershed is publicly owned. Much of the public land is vast peatlands, which were ditched in the early 1900s for agriculture. The ditches did not drain the peatlands adequately for crop production, therefore the state assumed ownership of the land to pay the tax debts from the failed ditches.
- Implementation of the Rainy-Rapid Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan is voluntary, and outreach and incentives will be used to assist with voluntary implementation on private lands. (see map below).
- The five Plan Goals are summarized below.

Goal: Protect, Manage, and Improve Habitat

- How:**
- Forest stewardship plans
 - Land protection
 - Invasive species prevention and management
 - Stream connectivity enhancements

Goal: Protect Drinking Water and Groundwater from Contaminants

- How:**
- Seal unused wells
 - Landfill best management practices

Goal: Protect Surface Water from Contaminants

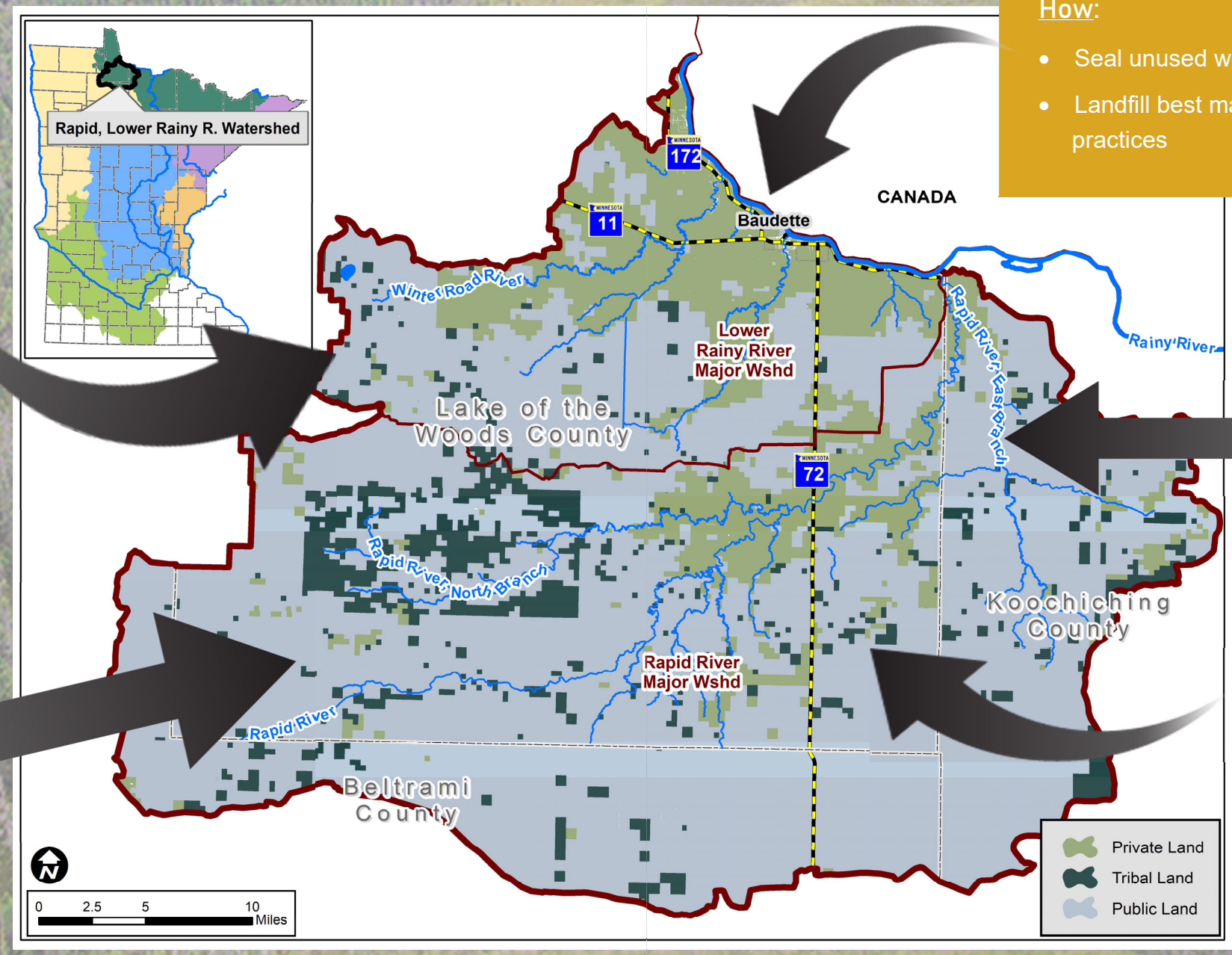
- How:**
- Agricultural practices
 - Stormwater management
 - Chloride best management practices

Goal: Restore Hydrology

- How:**
- Explore the feasibility of peatland restoration
 - Conduct a pilot project to restore peatlands based on the feasibility study.

Goal: Stabilize Streambank, Ditch, and Riparian Lands

- How:**
- In-channel projects to stabilize streams and drainages
 - Stabilization of outlets and gullies



WHO WE ARE

We are an international watershed, sharing a border with Canada.

We support a world class fishery in the Rainy River and downstream Lake of the Woods.

We treasure vast peatlands that host an array of flora and fauna.

Past scars from ditching and pollution are showing signs of healing through lake sturgeon and Rainy River water quality recovery.

OUR VISION

We envision a watershed where past scars have healed; where protection of peatlands, forests, and streams are balanced with sustainably managed agricultural land, timber, fisheries, economy and tourism, providing opportunities for all.

For a full copy of the plan, visit: <https://lakeofthewoodsswcd.org/rainy-rapid-watershed>

Or contact the Lake of the Woods SWCD, 218-634-1842 ext 4, staff@lakeofthewoodsswcd.org

The Rainy-Rapid Partnership

The Rainy-Rapid Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan will be implemented by the Rainy-Rapid Partnership. Partners and roles are shown below.

Joint Powers Collaboration



Local Collaborators outside the formal agreement:

Koochiching
SWCD and County

Beltrami
SWCD and County

Red Lake Nation

City of Baudette