Your Leech Lake River Watershed

What is a watershed?
A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same point or outlet. A watershed carries water "shed" from the land into soils, groundwater, and streams, making its way to rivers, lakes and eventually the sea. It's important to remember that what you do on the land not only affects water quality in your watershed, but for all communities downstream.

The Leech Lake River Watershed
The Leech Lake River Watershed’s Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) is the 8 digit number: 07010102. The watershed covers approximately 854,659 acres (1,335 square miles) in the northern part of the Upper Mississippi River Basin, in the Northern Lakes and Forest ecoregion. It includes parts of Beltrami, Cass, and Hubbard counties and includes the Leech Lake Reservation (Leech Lake Band of Chippewa). Major communities in the watershed are Laporte, Benedict, Walker, Federal Dam, Boy River, Whipholt, Longville, and Hackensack.

Characteristics
This watershed is largely forested with about 46% of the land privately held, with the remaining land county or federal public land, or held by tribal land owners. It has 277 total river miles and contains over 750 lakes with a total acreage of 166,374. Major rivers and streams include Boy, Kabekons, Leech Lake, Little Boy, Mud, Sixmile Brook and Steamboat. Major lakes include Boy, Woman, Child, Girl, Kabekona, Inguadona, Leech, Sixmile Tenmile and Steamboat. One-half of Minnesota’s naturally producing Muskie lakes and a quarter of the natural Muskie habitat in the U.S. is located in the watershed.

Threats to the watershed
Currently, the surface water resources within this watershed meet Minnesota’s surface water quality standards for conventional pollutants (not including mercury). However, these resources are experiencing increased pressure from development and subsequent loss of shoreline and aquatic habitat.

Watershed approach on 10-year cycle
On a 10-year rotation, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and its partners evaluate water conditions, establish improvement goals and priorities, and work with citizens to take actions designed to restore and protect water quality in all 81 Minnesota watersheds. The Leech Lake River Watershed begins its cycle in 2012.

You and your watershed
At every step of the 10-year process, you’re encouraged to get involved. This is your watershed. Please take the time to make it a vibrant one, now and for years to come.

For more information or to get involved:
- Go to the MPCA web page [http://www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us) and click on water. From there you can go to surface waters to learn more about the watershed approach or click on watersheds to learn more about your watershed.
- Watershed Coordinator, John Ringle at john.ringle@co.cass.mn.us or 218-547-7256.
- Civic Engagement Lead, Paula West at westcom@brainerd.net or 218-838-5010.
- MPCA Project Manager, Phil Votrub at phil.votrub@state.mn.us or 218-316-3901.