
Chapter 1: Introduction



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1.1 NORTH SHORE MANAGEMENT PLAN PURPOSE

In early 2001, the North Shore Management Board (NSMB) recognized that the North Shore Management Plan needed to be updated. A traditional comprehensive plan is generally updated every five to ten years. The NSMP, as of September 2003, is almost 15 years old.

In 2001 and 2002, the NSMB pursued funds to complete the plan update. The NSMB received funds from Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program and contributions from NSMB members in order to make the plan update a reality.

To summarize, there are three main purposes to the NSMP Update:

- 1) Create a template for future operations for the North Shore Management Board that is sustainable and provides a benefit to local units of government.
- 2) Review and update as needed the shoreland management standards in the plan.
- 3) Provide land use goals, objectives, and action steps. These action steps can provide a future framework for NSMB activities.

1.2 NORTH SHORE MANAGEMENT BOARD HISTORY

1.2.1 Board Organization and Structure

The North Shore Management Board is a ten-member Joint Powers Board that contains a representative from all local units of government that exercise zoning authority on the North Shore of Lake Superior. The membership as of January 2004 is as follows:

<u>Counties</u>	<u>Cities</u>	<u>Townships</u>
St. Louis	Two Harbors	Lakewood
Lake	Beaver Bay	Duluth
Cook	Silver Bay	Silver Creek
	Grand Marais	

All members joined the NSMB when it was originally created in 1987. Silver Creek Township joined the NSMB in 1999 upon the creation of the zoning ordinance for the Castle Danger Subordinate Service District, which is administered by the Township. Lake County administers other areas within the North Shore Management Zone in Silver Creek Township.



The members of the NSMB include one elected official from each county, city, and township on the Board. They operate under the provisions defined in the Joint Powers Agreement. Part of the plan revision will be the creation of operating procedures that will supplement the Joint Powers Agreement.

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has met continuously since the inception of the NSMB. The committee may have up to 16 members, representing a cross-section of interests and geographical areas. The NSMB has relied on the Citizens Advisory Committee to monitor key land use issues and offer suggestions to the NSMB for projects that may serve to help address these issues.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to assist in the creation of the NSMP, but has not met regularly for over a decade. The TAC consisted of local, county, and state agency officials with expertise in a number of diverse areas.

1.2.2 The birth of the North Shore Management Board

Minnesota's Statewide Shoreland Management Program was conceived by the Legislature in 1969 as a cooperative effort of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and local units of government. In 1981, the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) funded a program evaluation that identified Lake Superior as a distinctive management unit, not adequately addressed by the existing Statewide Shoreland Management Program. Recommendations from this evaluation called for the initiation and support of a local government effort to develop a shoreland management plan for the North Shore of Lake Superior.

During the fall of 1986, the DNR proposed new state shoreland management regulations. DNR staff at a public information meeting presented these draft regulations to concerned citizens and government officials on the North Shore. During that meeting, it became evident that there was a large amount of opposition to the proposed management regulations. The opposition mainly centered on the rules not being applicable to the North Shore, the difficulty and added administrative costs for enforcement of the rules, and the further erosion of local control.

From October 1986 to July 1987, a task force consisting of representatives from the North Shore, local units of government, DNR, and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), discussed the possibility of jointly organizing the governmental units along the North Shore for the purpose of developing and implementing a management plan for the shoreland corridor of Lake Superior. The creation of a Joint Powers Board was recommended. In July of 1987, the NSMB was established.

The purpose of the NSMB was to direct the development of a North Shore Management Plan with strategies for environmental protection and orderly growth along the North Shore of Lake Superior (*North Shore Management Plan, 1988*)



1.2.3 The Creation of the North Shore Management Plan

In October 1987, the North Shore Management Board and the DNR signed a memorandum of understanding pertaining to the coordination, cooperation and responsibilities in developing a shoreland management plan for Lake Superior.

The DNR and the NSMB agreed that the focus for the 1988-89 planning program would be shoreland management. The goals of the Memorandum of Understanding were to define the responsibilities of the NSMB and the DNR in support of common objectives, interests and statutory requirements, to ensure timely identification and resolution of differences, and to enhance communication and coordination. (*North Shore Management Plan, 1988*)

The intent was for the shoreland management portion of the North Shore Management Plan to serve as a substitute for what would eventually become the Statewide Standards for Management of Shoreland Areas. These standards, adopted in July 1989, provide minimum standards for management of shoreland areas for all lakes in Minnesota except for the North Shore of Lake Superior.

Minnesota Rules Section 6120.2800, Subpart 1a clearly makes this distinction:

“North Shore Management Plan. *The minimum standards and criteria for the subdivision, use, and development of the shoreland of Lake Superior, other than for the City of Duluth, are those specified in the North Shore Management Plan, A Shoreland Management Plan for Lake Superior’s North Shore, December 1988, adopted by the North Shore Management Board on November 29, 1988. The plan is incorporated by reference, is available through the Minitex interlibrary loan system, and is not subject to frequent change.”*

It was intended that during plan implementation, the NSMB would play an ongoing monitoring role to insure that policies and standards in the North Shore Management Plan were implemented and consistency maintained by local government units. Thus, the NSMB, through the Memorandum of Understanding, took over the oversight responsibilities that were exercised by the DNR under the Shoreland Management Program. In other words, the DNR is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Statewide Standards for Management of Shoreland Areas on all lakes in Minnesota except Lake Superior. Instead, the NSMB is responsible for monitoring compliance with the North Shore Management Plan.

1.2.4 Implementation of the North Shore Management Plan

The North Shore Management Plan was completed in December 1988. It was the responsibility of each local unit of government to review and amend their existing land use ordinances so they were in agreement with the final North Shore Management Plan. Local units of government took different approaches to meet this responsibility.



Some communities created a zoning overlay where special shoreland provisions were added, others placed text from the NSMP in their ordinances in areas where it made the most sense. Others adopted the NSMP by reference. The NSMB found that all of the local units of government adopted the NSMP in a sufficient manner.

1.3 NORTH SHORE PLAN UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS

The North Shore Planning process started in earnest in December of 2001. Stakeholders representing various state agencies and local units of government were invited to a strategic planning session discussing future opportunities for the NSMB. The initial meeting looked at past successes and missed opportunities and discussed suggestions for change. This discussion formed an initial framework for the plan revision.

For the development of the plan update a steering committee was formed with representatives from the NSMB, the CAC and members of organizations and/or agencies that formed the original Technical Advisory Committee of for the NSMB. The steering committee met throughout the planning process and discussed various elements of the plan at each meeting. They began by clarifying operational issues for the NSMB activities, and then moved on to land use goals and objectives and the shoreland standards. At each meeting a set of recommendations was developed to be included in the plan. Throughout the planning process representatives of the member units of government reviewed the recommendations as part of the NSMB meetings.

Citizen input was gathered through a survey that was mailed out in July of 2002. The survey was mailed to approximately 1200 households and received a 17 percent response rate.

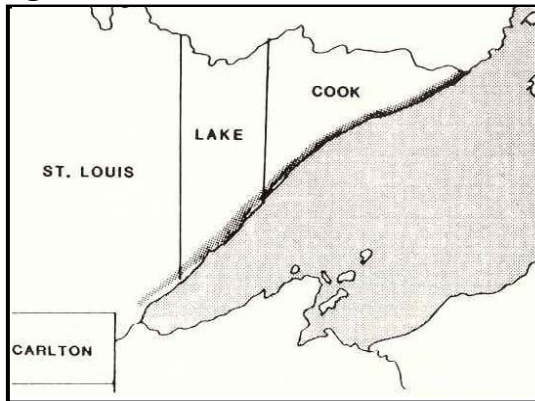
When the initial draft plan update was completed presentations were made to the local units of government by NSMB staff or in some cases by the staff of the local unit of government.

1.4 PLAN AREA BACKGROUND

1.4.1 North Shore Management Plan Boundary

The North Shore of Lake Superior is part of the shoreline of the Great Lakes and is in northeastern Minnesota in Cook, lake and St. Louis counties. The planning area is approximately 150 miles long, extending from and including Lakewood Township, just north of Duluth, to the Pigeon River on the U.S./Canada border. (See Figure 1.1)

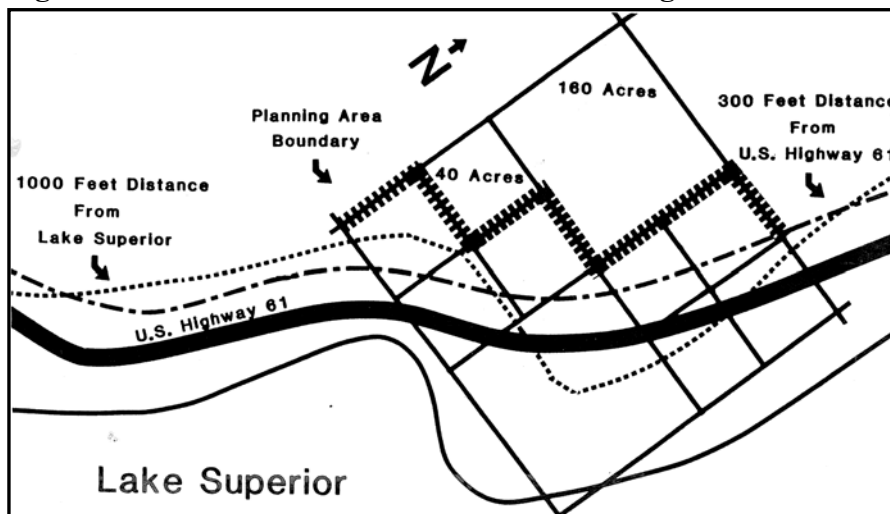
Figure 1.1: The North Shore of Lake Superior



Source: 1988 North Shore Management Plan

The North Shore Management Plan area boundary is defined along the 40-acre subdivision lines of the rectangular coordinate system established in the U.S. Public Land Survey, nearest to the landward side of a line 1000 feet from the shoreline of Lake Superior or 300 feet landward from the center line of U.S Highway 61, whichever is greater. However, the boundary between Lakewood Township and the western corporate limits of Two Harbors is the centerline of the U.S. Highway 61 Expressway. (See Figure 1.2)

Figure 1.2: Definition of the North Shore Management Plan Area Boundary



Source: 1988 North Shore Management Plan

1.4.2 Plan Area Physical Characteristics

The Minnesota Shore of Lake Superior is characterized by very rugged relief on the northern half of the North Shore starting approximately at Silver Bay and going Northeast. The shore becomes less rugged going South West with a more rolling landscape traveling Southwest of Castle Danger. This landscape creates an environment for fast flowing streams and waterfalls.



Map 1.1 Appendix A, displays the streams that flow into Lake Superior. There are 27 primary streams along the North Shore, draining an area of 2,184 square miles. Most streams drain a relatively small watershed and travel a short distance to the Lake. Streams north of Tofte typically drain larger areas. The Brule River with 270 square miles and the Poplar River with 114 square miles are among the larger watersheds on the shore. (*MPCA, An assessment of representative Lake Superior Basin Tributaries, 2003*)

According to the soil survey done for the area one mile inland and 1.5 miles inland for major streams, nine percent of the area has slight development limitations while the remainder has severe limitations and requires special measures to overcome construction problems. Soils along the North Shore are characterized by bedrock and thin and highly erodible glacial soils for over 75 percent of the area project. These soil conditions create challenges for development and wastewater management needs. Slow drainage, shrinking and swelling and low bearing strength are other limitations associated with these soils. Steep slopes cover 14 percent and wetlands cover 3 percent of the project area. These last two categories pose the most severe development limitations. Most of the soils within the project can accommodate recreational development such as trails and campgrounds and only pose slight to moderate limitations. (*Soil survey of the North Shore of Lake Superior Coastal Zone Management Area, 1977, Soil Conservation Service*)

Land cover along the North Shore is dominated by forest. Approximately half of the plan area is within the Superior National Forest Boundary. Further, there are eight state parks, two state forests, and five Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) located with the plan area (see Maps 1.2A, B, and 1.3 Appendix A). All three Counties in the plan area have a large percentage of their land base in public ownership. It should be noted however that a relative large amount of these private lands are located within the plan area.

1.4.3 Land Use Controls

The land use controls are under the jurisdiction of the ten members of the NSMB and Grand Portage Reservation. Zoning classifications tend to change over time. For the most current zoning information contact the zoning administrator. For St. Louis County zoning information can be located at http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us/planning/PPPPage/maps_zoning.htm.

1.4.4 Population and Development Trends

The population within the project area has seen a significant increase since the 1990 Census. Over the entire project area the population increased by 10.5 percent or 1,416 residents between 1990 and 2000. Map 1.4, Appendix A, provides an overview of population change for areas within the project area using census block data.

The total number of housing units increased by 633 within the project area or a 5.6 percent increase according to Census block data. Tables 1.1 through 1.3 provide an overview of changes

in housing units throughout the plan area. Cook County experienced the largest increase in housing units with almost two thirds of the new units being built in Cook County.

Table 1.1: Change in Housing Units St. Louis County

Area	1990	2000	Change actual	Change Percentage
Duluth Twsp	705	714	9	1.3%
Lakewood Twsp	650	735	85	13.1%
Total Change	1355	1449	94	7%

Source: Census 1990 and 2000

Table 1.2: Change in Housing Units Lake County

Area	1990	2000	Change actual	Change Percentage
Beaver Bay	115	139	24	21%
Beaver Bay Twsp	371	403	32	8.6%
Crystal Bay Twsp	312	350	38	12.2%
Lake UT 1	198	183	-15	-7.6%
Lake UT 2	1,069	1,096	27	2.5%
Silver Bay	947	933	-14	-1.5%
Silver Creek Twsp	904	984	80	8.9%
Two Harbors	1,660	1,631	-29	1.75%
Total Change	5576	5719	143	2.6%

Source: Census 1990 and 2000

Table 1.3: Change in Housing Units Cook County:

Area	1990	2000	Change actual	Change Percentage
East Cook UT	987	1,128	141	14.3%
West Cook UT	1,380	1,526	146	10.6%
Grand Portage	202	286	84	41.6%
Grand Marais	680	722	42	6.2%
Lutsen Twsp	549	611	62	11.3%
Schroeder Twsp	228	210	-18	-7.9%
Tofte Twsp	286	225	-61	-21.3%
Total Change	4312	4708	396	9.2%

Source: Census 1990 and 2000

1.4.5 Survey Highlights

As part of the planning effort a survey was distributed to approximately 1200 households within the plan area. A total of 165 responses or 17 percent were returned. A complete overview of the survey results can be found in Appendix B. Below is a discussion of the survey highlights.



The highest ranking problem areas that people considered a moderate, serious or very serious issue were:

- Safety in relation to traffic access points 62 percent
- Septic systems polluting Lake Superior 57 percent
- Declining fish habitat 53 percent
- Amount of signage 53 percent
- Visual impacts of development 52 percent
- Residential runoff polluting the lake 51 percent

Twenty seven percent of the respondents felt the quality of life has gotten worse rather than better and 44 percent felt it had stayed the same. 18 percent felt the quality of live has gotten worse. Increased traffic and development are the most frequent concerns mentioned in the written comments. When asked how the quality of live could be improved on the North Shore the majority of the comments indicated addressing development issues and traffic concerns. Other areas identified include wastewater treatment needs, services and economic development.

The survey asked residents to respond to a number of development scenario statements. The responses were as follows:

- High density commercial and residential development is appropriate anywhere as long as wastewater services can be provided? Sixty four percent oppose this statement while 19 percent supports the statement.
- Commercial and high density development should be clustered near existing centers? Forty two percent support this statement while 29 percent opposes the statement.
- Commercial and high density residential development is appropriate if offset by other areas remaining undeveloped (Transfer of Development Rights). Forty two percent support this statement while 30 percent opposes.
- Seventy percent favored maintaining the current level of public land on lake Superior and 44 percent supported increasing the amount of public land. Seventy percent supports encouraging private preservation of open space.

The survey also included questions regarding future NSMB action steps:

- Seventy two percent of the respondents support ridgeline development guidelines while 9 percent opposes.
- Seventy eight percent supports signage guidelines on Highway 61 while 5 percent opposes.
- Sixty six percent support development of guidelines that encourage development in areas already served by utilities and wastewater.