

# KABETOGAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Kabetogama Township, Minnesota



July 2008

Developed by the *Kabetogama Township* with assistance and in-kind funding from the *Arrowhead Regional Development Commission*





# Kabetogama Township Comprehensive Plan

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## **Kabetogama Township's Vision for the Future**

The Kabetogama Township has an economy based primarily on year round tourism and recreation. Therefore, the township will support and encourage growth and development that is compatible with the rural north woods setting of the Kabetogama community. To work towards obtaining balance of commercial businesses, residential homes and recreational opportunities while promoting sustainable use of the forests and Kabetogama Lake.

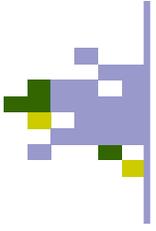
Kabetogama Township will work in concert with Voyageurs National Park and other government agencies to create a community shaped from the shared vision of all its citizens.

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Kabetogama Township was officially organized as a government entity in 2001, and this Comprehensive Plan is one of the steps the Township has undertaken in the organizational process. The purpose of this plan is to define the community's vision and to develop recommendations and action steps for implementing that vision. The Plan addresses land use, transportation, wastewater, economic development, recreation, and community life.



Kabetogama Township is located just off US Highway 53 in the northwest portion of St. Louis County. The Township is about 25 miles south of International Falls and 30 miles north of Orr. The lakes and forests in the Township have attracted visitors, businesses, and residents for over a century. Lake Kabetogama provides a unique destination because of its connectivity to Namakan, Crane, Sand Point, and Rainy Lakes and its proximity to Voyageurs National Park.

### **Town History<sup>1</sup>**

*The receding glaciers of ten thousand years ago scoured and shaped the landscape we see in our border lakes region today. Beginning with the Paleo-Indian people and flowing from culture to culture and generation to generation, the lakes and forests have provided sustenance to area inhabitants and visitors.*

*Kabetogama Lake and the adjacent chain of lakes including Namakan, Crane, Sand Point and Rainy Lakes, have a rich history of habitation and development. Early indigenous populations including the Cree, Monsoni, Assiniboin followed by the Ojibwe Sioux populated this area for many generations. Local place-names including Kabetogama, Namakan, as well as Chief Woodenfrog Island, Rottenwood Island and Nashata Point remind us of their history and cultural contributions to the area. The expanding fur trade of the early 1700's brought the first Europeans to "Voyageurs Country." Prospectors used Gold Portage to access Rainy Lake and the short-lived gold rush in the 1800s. Bowman Island, Torrie Island, and Slatinski Bay all gain their names from early commercial fisherman.*

*Beginning in the 1880s, events unfolded that would shape the course of the area and its people to the present day. The first land survey of the area was completed in 1881.*

<sup>1</sup> Town History from Kabetogama Community Action Plan, December 2002



*Information from the survey about vast acreages of pine sawtimber stumpage reached a hungry timber industry to the south and east. Backus and Brooks, Virginia & Rainy Lake and Weyerhaeuser are some of the larger timber companies that led the industry into this region. With them they brought the lumberjacks to work the camps and to build the railroads that moved the logs from landings and waterways to mill sites in Duluth, then Virginia and eventually to International Falls. As the pine groves disappeared, the pulp and paper industry grew in its place around the vast stores of spruce pulpwood that was unutilized by the earlier sawmills. Backus built the first paper mill in International Falls, taking full advantage of the now dammed and regulated water flow through the chain of lakes to efficiently produce the electricity needed to power the mill. Boise Corporation now owns and operates the mill and is the major employer in the area.*

*The railroads eventually brought settlers north as well. The tracks reached Ray in 1907 and with them came some of the first settlers. With an opportunity to homestead land that the timber companies abandoned after harvesting the pine, these early settlers, mostly Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian, left the siding at Ray and completed their journey with a 10 mile cross-country trek to Kabetogama Lake and their new home. Manninnen, Lehto, Wouri, Peterson, Star, Sipi, Stone, Fors, Bradley, McCaw, Komback and Gappa are some of the names of the families who founded the Kabetogama community. Vestiges of the fields they cleared of stumps and stone remain today. While it was the produce from these fields along with the game and the fruits of the forest that provided for their subsistence, it was the timber camps that provided jobs and the paycheck needed to purchase the goods they couldn't grow and the means to raise their standard of living.*

*In the 1920s and early 1930s, the beginnings of a new enterprise in the community begin to grow - tourism. Spurred by the completion of connecting roads to the south, more reliable transportation and fed by the desire by an ever increasing urbanized society to "get away" to enjoy the good fishing and the rustic, natural environment of the lake, a few rental cabins and a Hotel at Gappa's Landing grew into the thriving resort and tourism industry that exists today.*

*The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has brought new challenges and opportunities to Kabetogama. There are two distinct developments, which have occurred over the last 25 years that have had a profound effect on the socioeconomic fabric of the area. These will continue to influence the destiny of our community into the future.*

*The timber industry, which for generations provided stable, though in some cases seasonal, employment both in the woods and in the mills, went through a period of upheaval which saw the closing of Boise Cascade's Insulite plant in International Falls and with it went 400 good paying jobs. On the heels of this closure came an expansion of the paper mill which greatly increased its output, but because of new technologies, created few new jobs. A similar transition was taking place in the woods. The number of loggers also decreased when Insulite closed. With the expansion came a vastly increased demand for wood. Instead of more loggers, an expanding fleet of mechanized logging equipment has been employed to maintain the needed supply of wood to the mills. The net result has been that even though the industry grew in terms of output and value,*



*fewer people were required to produce those goods. For the Kabetogama community, this has meant a shrinking number and diversity of goods, services and employment opportunities available locally. It means our children attend schools with declining enrollments. When they graduate, few find full time employment locally.*

*The authorization of Voyageurs National Park in 1971 and its creation in 1975 began a new era for Kabetogama. With its establishment the park became a considerable influence on the economic and social pinning of our community. While the park's inception altered the economic base and future use of the area, it also created new possibilities and opportunities to explore and develop. It assured the preservation and protection of the landscape and scenic waterways that have sustained generations but spawned some issues and uncertainties regarding the shape and direction of the community's socioeconomic future. The community and the park have many mutually beneficial goals as both work toward their development potentials.*

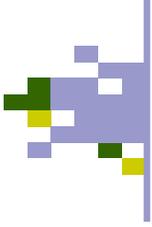
### **Statistics and Demographics**

According to the 2000 Census, there are 156 people (49% male and 51% female) living in Kabetogama Township. However the population fluctuates greatly in the summer with the inclusion of seasonal residents, vacationers, and day visitors. The median age of the Township is 52 years old. A 2004 estimate has the population decreasing minimally to 148 residents. There are 221 housing units within the area, but 143 of those housing units are registered as seasonal, recreation, or occasional use, suggesting that the populations double or triple throughout the summer. Ninety-six percent of the housing units are owner-occupied, the remaining being renter-occupied. In 2000 there were 72 households in the Township with an average size of 2.17 persons. The township continues to be a busy place in the summer months. A traffic count taken in 2007 revealed an Average Daily Traffic of 840 near the main entrance to the area. This reiterates that the number of visitors and residents in the Township on summer days increases greatly from the population.

Kabetogama Township envelops 21,227 acres. The total land area is significantly less totaling only 10,435 acres. Lake Kabetogama is the most dominant physical feature of the Township, covering nearly half of the Township. Wetland areas within the region also add an important aspect to the community totaling approximately 2,000 acres.

The majority of land is privately owned (55%). The rest of the Township is comprised of public ownership (45%) totaling 9,623 acres, most of which is made up of Lake Kabetogama and Voyageurs National Park land.

In the 2000 Census 44 percent of the Kabetogama residents acknowledged that they drove for 9 minutes or less to get to work each day. Forty-one percent drive between 30 and 44 minutes each day and 15 percent of the workforce drove over 90 minutes to work.



### **Planning History:**

There was no documented planning done in the Township until the 1990's when two studies were completed; however they focused primarily on business and economic development. As the community grew and went through changes, there was a desire for more formal planning. An action plan for the community was finished in 2002. This was the most extensive planning effort completed to date, and it provided Kabetogama Township with strong insight to the issues within the community.

The issues identified in the action plan were: sewer system improvements, better project management, development of biking and hiking trails, road improvements, and construction of a new community center. Committees were formed to examine these issues and to make progress on improving the Township.

The Township officials felt there was a need to address the sewer systems to prevent lake contamination. Many onsite systems are outdated, which can decrease water quality, especially with the high densities near the lake. The committee strived to expand wastewater possibilities and identify the availability of assistance through state grants. With planning, the community can prevent the contamination of the lake, the area's most precious resource.

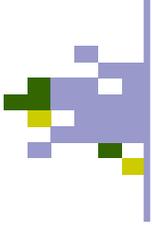
Roads and trails in the area are a major asset to the Township. They allow for transportation as well as recreation. The Township wants to ensure the safety of those traveling on the roads by keeping them well-maintained. There are a few hiking trails in the area. The Township wants to increase the number of trails and create an extensive trail system. This would provide safe walking conditions for pedestrians as well as additional recreation opportunities.

Also addressed in the Community Action Plan was the need for a community center with more office space and year round functionality. The Township officials have acknowledged this need and have recommended a new building. The Township is also working to develop a disaster plan, for more coordination during an emergency. A committee has been formed and meets regularly.

### **Planning Process**

ARDC reviewed the existing plans of the Township to develop a strong background and knowledge of the history of Kabetogama.

In 2006, ARDC assisted the Planning Commission with the development of a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that serves as the basis for all decisions on recommended actions. While zoning and land use are a main component, the plan also addresses transportation, wastewater, recreation,



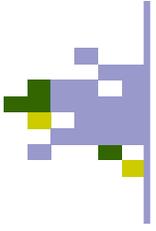
housing and economic development. The plan was developed through an open process with many opportunities for public input.

ARDC uses a basic format when developing comprehensive plans:

- A. Background Development
- B. Vision Development
- C. Issue Identification
- D. Recommendation Development
- E. Implementation & Publishing

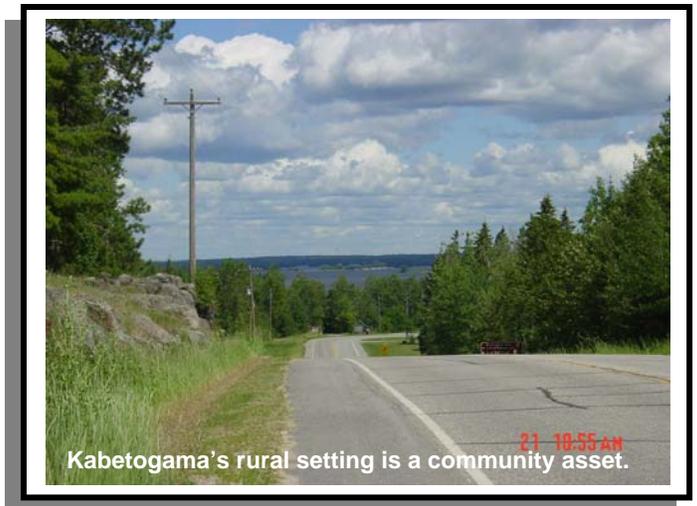
The first step of the process involved approving the work plan with the Planning Commission. After presenting the initial materials collected, ARDC then worked with the Planning Commission to develop a public meeting to gather input from the community. ARDC presented the planning process to the public as well as a summarized version of the issues from the commission meeting. The public then provided input on issues and threats to the assets within the community.

ARDC and the Planning Commission then worked to develop recommendations that address each issue. The recommendations detail the steps that need to be taken to begin solving the issues. After the Planning Commission approves of the draft, approval from the Town Board of Supervisors is needed and the official adoption process will follow.



## SECTION 2: TRANSPORTATION

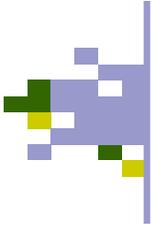
The transportation system in Kabetogama is an integral part of the Township. Trunk Highway 53 is not within the boundaries of the Township but is important because it provides access to Kabetogama Township. Additionally, there are several other county and Township roads that form a road system providing access throughout the Township. Aside from the road system there are other options for transportation in the area. Kabetogama Township also has several trails that provide recreational access to rural areas.



There are several issues that need to be addressed. Many of the roads are in need of physical and safety improvements including shoulder widening for pedestrian safety. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) conducted traffic counts on CSAH 122 and 123 in 2007. The final counts were not available at the time of this plan, however the following draft numbers were available. CSAH 122 had an AADT of 840 at a location just north of the Highway 53 intersection and an AADT of 280 just east of the intersection at CR 673. There was one count location for CSAH 123, which had an AADT of 145, just north of CR 523. These traffic counts generally provide a good analysis of road usage, however in future analyses on CSAH 123 near the Voyageurs National Park Visitor's Center would be useful in determining the high level of local traffic.

### Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: St. Louis County Roads and Highways
  - Description: There are 13.6 miles of County roads in Kabetogama Township. From Highway 53, the main artery into the Township is County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 122. Together CSAH 122 and CSAH 123 canvas the area, providing access to the Voyageurs National Park Visitors Center, Woodenfrog State Forest Campground, and Lake Kabetogama boat accesses. These roads were paved in 1979 and remain in fair condition, with some improvements desired. The shoulders range between 0-4 feet. There are a handful of other county roads that are gravel and generally well maintained.



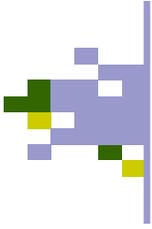
- Threats: County Roads and Highways have only a few concerns from the perspective of Kabetogama. Safety is a concern on some stretches of narrow and curvy roadways. The general lack of width on County Highways and Roads means that any parking on the road is a safety issue. Some of the roads have reduced visibility because of brush and growth within the right-of-ways.

Currently there is a County maintenance garage located in the Township. There is a perceived threat that the County will eliminate that garage in the future, possibly when the maintenance person located at the garage retires. If this occurs it could greatly affect the condition of roads as well as response time to fix problems and remove snow.

Another concern is the use of these roads by pedestrians and bicyclists. Residents and visitors often use the roads to travel to a neighbor, exercise, or to access other recreational facilities. A lack of shoulders and a lack of sight distances threaten the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in some areas. Another danger to the area is the abundance of animals (particularly white-tail deer), which can be hazardous to drivers.

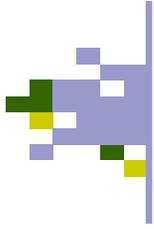
Speeding in the township is a prevalent problem especially in congested areas where speeds are not posted.

- Existing Approaches: St. Louis County currently has a strong presence in the community with a maintenance garage and a local operator. The County determines road repairs based on condition, need, and a five-year programming plan that outlines the timing of larger projects.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding County Roads and Highways.
  - **Recommendation T1: Participate in the St. Louis County Five-Year Construction Plan.** The Kabetogama Township



Board should be aware of the County's five-year planning process, review the documentation, and make comments to the St. Louis County Board about projects in the Township when appropriate.

- **Recommendation T2: Advocate for wider shoulders on main roads.** To enhance the community's recreation resources, safety, and mobility, the Town should advocate for at least four-foot shoulders on all County State-Aid Highways in the Town.
- **Recommendation T3: Work with St. Louis County to enforce speed limits.** Kabetogama should communicate to the St. Louis County Sheriff their desire to have more speed enforcement. This could involve inviting the Sheriff to a Town Board meeting. Posting signage in congested areas is recommended.
- **Recommendation T4: Complete a Roads Review annually.** A designated Township Supervisor, the Township maintenance person, and a County Highway Department representative could designate a day every year to drive all the Township's roads documenting needed brushing and maintenance, road repairs, safety concerns, and any other notable issue. The meeting notes would be developed into a project list categorized by jurisdiction and priority.
- Asset: Township Roads
  - Description: There are 1.2 miles of Township Roads in Kabetogama Township. Township roads are gravel surfaced and administered by the Township. In Kabetogama Township, Township roads are often dead-end and fairly short in distance. These roads typically provide access to a small number of properties and have very low amounts of traffic. They are generally safe for biking and walking but often intersect with busier county roads before connecting with destinations.
  - Threats: Residents are generally satisfied with the Township roads in Kabetogama. The maintenance is adequate for their needs and the response by the Township to issues is efficient. These roads are threatened by



rising maintenance costs, though. As costs for gravel and fuel grow, maintaining a good driving surface and keeping roads snow plowed becomes more expensive. These roads also tend to have limited brush maintenance and can have limited visibility.

- Existing Approaches: The Township contracts with St. Louis County and private services to meet road needs.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending an annual roads review for Township Roads (see recommendation T4 on page 11)
- Asset: County Garage and Local Operator
  - Description: Currently the Township has a County Operator based out of the area, which is very beneficial to safety and timely service.
  - Threats: If the Township was to lose the operator and garage in this location it could delay quick response to emergency situations along with the monitoring of severe weather situations.
  - Existing Approaches: St. Louis County bases an operator in the township but it is questioned how long the county will continue this practice.
  - Recommended actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the County Garage and Local Operator.
    - **Recommendation T5: Kabetogama Township recommends the support of a local garage and operator.** The Township would be better served if the operator could have authority to plow roads when necessary in the area. Flexibility would also help to be sure issues are taken care of when necessary.
    - **Recommendation T6: Kabetogama Township recommends that a seasonal operator, that would support local needs, be added in the winter months, if recommendation T5 is not accomplished.** The Township would ideally benefit from a local operator year-round. A seasonal operator in the winter months that could keep the roads plowed and maintained efficiently would still be beneficial.



## SECTION 3: RECREATION

Recreation is a significant part of Kabetogama Township. The area is a popular destination because of its scenic beauty and variety of recreational opportunities offered by Voyageurs National Park. Lake Kabetogama draws thousands of visitors every year to enjoy recreational boating, fishing, waterskiing, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, renting houseboats, and camping. The abundance of islands and forested shoreland on the lake provides quiet areas to camp and picnic. There are resorts that offer comfortable accommodations and full visitor services. Kabetogama has several multi-use trails for exercise and scenic views. There are also two main snowmobile trails that connect the area to the rest of the state. Kabetogama Township values the presence of Voyageurs National Park, which provides an abundance of other recreational activities.

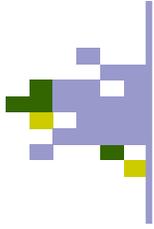


Kabetogama Township is a popular destination in Northern Minnesota, but with visitors arise many concerns. The lake is a resource that attracts users with different viewpoints of how the lake should be utilized. Residents, businesses, local and state governments, and other agencies need to work together for everyone to truly enjoy the area.

By working together all parties can improve and preserve the area and recreation will continue to flourish and remain one of the true assets of Kabetogama Township.

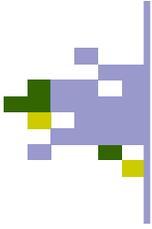
### Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: Voyageurs National Park
  - Description: Voyageurs National Park (VNP) was created in 1975 and provides many opportunities to residents and visitors. VNP contains 218,054 acres, almost a third of which is water. The Park has several visitors' centers, including one located in Kabetogama Township. The Kabetogama Visitors Center offers information, maps, boat access, exhibits, and several other outdoor programs that can be of great interest to visitors and residents. The Park also provides a



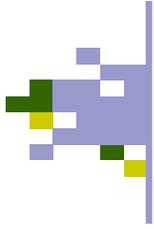
tour boat that gives visitors an intimate look at Lake Kabetogama and connecting waters.

- Threats: To maintain this large Park sufficient funds are necessary. A reduction in funding for the Park would cause repercussions throughout the Township due to a lack of maintenance, enforcement, and infrastructure improvements. Increased VNP wilderness restrictions could greatly impact the area. For example, forest fires and species migration can occur naturally in a designated wilderness, but when these events cross the Park boundaries into residential areas, they cause property damage and safety concerns. VNP and the Township have some differing viewpoints on recreational issues and park management, which could cause tension.
- Existing Approaches: Currently, Kabetogama Township does have irregular conversations with VNP officials as concerns arise. The Park has been receptive to conversations in most cases.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding Voyageurs National Park:
  - **Recommendation R1: Kabetogama Township should participate in the Voyageurs National Park Governmental Affairs Committee.** The Township should stay informed on all park activities and advocate for Kabetogama interests along with other surrounding local governments.
  - **Recommendation R2: Kabetogama Township should hold a meeting with Voyageurs National Park management annually to ensure open lines of communication.** An annual meeting would provide a place for VNP and Kabetogama Township to voice their concerns and work together on local issues. The meeting could also be a time for setting future goals and accomplishments. The Town Board should lead this effort.
- Asset: Voyageurs National Park campsites
  - Description: Kabetogama attracts thousands of people each year, to enjoy the scenic wilderness and quiet rural area.



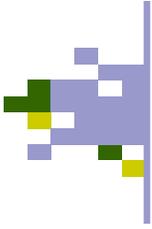
Many people visit Kabetogama and enjoy camping at the boat-in-only campsites. There are about 47 sites located on the islands and shores of Lake Kabetogama. The sites include day use sites, houseboat sites, and smaller and larger campsites. These campsites allow for private, quiet areas to recreate.

- Threats: During peak vacation times in the Township there are often not enough campsites for all the visitors and areas near the lake access get congested. Also, cost for general maintenance of the area is rising and the sites may not be maintained to previous levels.
- Existing Approaches: Currently VNP is in charge of site maintenance and upkeep, but due to limited staff and funding it is difficult to enforce the campsite rules as well as continue to maintain the sites to a high standard.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the Voyageurs National Park campsites:
  - **Recommendation R3: Kabetogama Township should communicate to Voyageurs National Park the Township's need for proper campsite maintenance. The Township should encourage better funding for campsite maintenance.** Having open discussions with the Park will help to inform both parties of the problems, give each an opportunity to voice concerns, and provide solutions to the issues.
  - **Recommendation R4: Kabetogama Township should communicate to Voyageurs National Park the Township's desire for congestion management in Voyageurs National Park.** The Township should participate in discussions regarding managing campsites and the possibility of a reservation system.
- Asset: Watercraft and Lake Recreation
  - Description: Fishing is the largest attraction to Kabetogama. Lake Kabetogama is known as one of the best walleye-fishing lakes in Minnesota and attracts fishing enthusiasts from all over the Country. However,



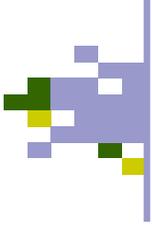
fishing boats are not the only vessels using the lake. Others include kayaks, canoes, pontoons, and houseboats. VNP provides some education and information to the visitors to promote safety and park preservation.

- Threats: When different groups of people are together for different recreation purposes there can be friction. Interaction on the lake between motorized and non-motorized watercraft can create safety concerns. Kayaks can be difficult to see on wavy waters.
- Existing Approaches: Voyageurs National Park provides separate launch areas for paddlers and has educational information available for users at the Visitor's Center.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding watercraft and lake recreation.
  - **Recommendation R5: Kabetogama Township should communicate to Voyageurs National Park the Township's vision for continued safe motorized travel in the Park.** Kabetogama Township should express any arising issues that may develop. The township should also advocate for un-restricted boating.
  - **Recommendation R6: Kabetogama Township should communicate to Voyageurs National Park the need for improved safety measures for kayaks on the Park's waters.** Requiring flags or other visibility enhancers on the kayaks is one possibility for increasing safety. Other options should be explored. The need for increased safety education for all watercraft users should also be communicated to VNP.
- Asset: Tour Boat
  - Description: VNP has a tour boat that offers cruises around the Park. This gives a chance for visitors to see the wilderness, wildlife, and rock gardens. This is a valuable education tool and gives a detailed look into the history of the area. This tour boat is the only boat that brings visitors to Kettle Falls.
  - Threats: The tour boat is valuable to the community, but lacks stable operation hours, drivers, and funding. In

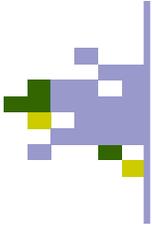


addition, the small size of the boat limits capacity. There are also flexibility issues with the boat that are out of VNP's control. For example, it's a challenge to maintain a schedule in the event of low rider turnout and inclement weather.

- Existing Approaches: Currently the Park staff makes an effort to be flexible and now has a reservation system in place. A reservation clerk will be taking reservations ahead of time.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the tour boat.
  - **Recommendation R7: Kabetogama Township should communicate to Voyageurs National Park the Township's need for improved tour boat operations in Voyageurs National Park.** This would be advantageous to Kabetogama Township, Lake Kabetogama, and VNP and would promote the entire area.
- Asset: Woodenfrog Campground
  - Description: Woodenfrog Campground is a State of Minnesota owned campground with 63 campsites available. The campground is located on Lake Kabetogama and has boat access. There is a swimming beach and access to a hiking trail system. Each year the campground is open from the Minnesota Fishing Opener through Labor Day.
  - Threats: The Campground has many campsites, but only a few are actually near the water with a view of the lake. The campground also lacks facilities (showers, shelters) that are common in the more developed State Parks system. Woodenfrog does not have any protected night tie-up areas, so boats must be launched and removed everyday.
  - Existing Approaches: The State of Minnesota controls the general maintenance of the campground and performs limited management. Improvements are needed to ensure visitors have a comfortable experience in Kabetogama.

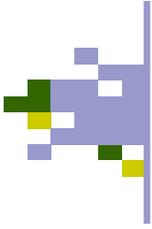


- Recommended Action: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the Woodenfrog Campground.
  - **Recommendation R8: Kabetogama Township should communicate to the State of Minnesota the Township's need for improvements to Woodenfrog Campground, including creating more campsites on the water, nighttime boat tie-ups, and improved infrastructure.** These improvements would lead to more enjoyment of the facilities by visitors.
  - **Recommendation R9: Kabetogama Township should communicate to the DNR the Township's desire for State Park designation and subsequent improvements for the Woodenfrog Campground Area (long-term recommendation).** A State Park designation would be very beneficial to the area and would provide better campground management and attention. See Figure 1 on page 20 for more information.
- Asset: Trail System
  - Description: The trail system in Kabetogama is a great asset to the community. There are two main snowmobile trails (Arrowhead State Trail and Voyageur-Kabetogama-Ash Trail) that connect the Park to the rest of the State. There are also hiking trails that circle around Woodenfrog Campground and other areas of the Township.
  - Threats: There is a need for trail improvement in the area. The trails that do exist are limited and not necessarily connected to each other. Currently, Kabetogama does not have a paved bike trail.
  - Existing Approaches: Currently trails are not being consistently maintained for heavy use. There has not been any promotion of the trails, so they tend to be an underutilized asset.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the trail system:
    - **Recommendation R10: Kabetogama Township should communicate to St. Louis County the Township's need to**



**widen shoulders on paved County Roads to four feet in order to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and to provide walking routes in the town.** This would provide for a place to safely walk along the roadside, until further trail systems are established (also see Recommendation T2).

- **Recommendation R11: Kabetogama Township should undertake and complete a community trail plan.** The plan would identify trail locations, legal use, and current maintenance level. The plan could recommend changes in maintenance and allowed uses, new trail segments, and trail improvements. The plan could also address trailhead-parking issues.
  
- Asset: Lady Slippers
  - Description: The Township has a wide range of wildflowers, the most prominent of which is the lady slipper. The State Flower of Minnesota, the Showy's Lady slipper is a small, but important, contribution to the rural wilderness character of Kabetogama Township.
  
  - Threats: Lady slippers are popular among out-of-state visitors who are unaware that it is illegal to pick the flower. Spraying alongside roadways can also be a threat to the wildflowers.
  
  - Existing Approaches: The State law protects the flowers but currently the Township is not actively protecting the species in the area.
  
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the lady slippers.
    - **Recommendation R12: Kabetogama Township should work with local entities and agencies to identify ways to educate the public about lady slippers and ways to prevent damage or picking.** Visitors and residents need to be made aware of the regulations regarding the lady slippers.
  
- Asset: Fisheries
  - Description: Tourism is the largest industry in Kabetogama. Fishing on Lake Kabetogama, especially for walleye, draws the most visitors to the Township.



- Threats: Lake Kabetogama does have a poor consistency of in-year classes of fish.
- Existing Approaches: The DNR sets slot limits that regulate the size and number of fish that can be harvested.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the fisheries.
  - **Recommendation R13: Kabetogama Township should communicate to both the DNR and VNP, the need for a study on the reproduction and juvenile mortality of walleye in the Namakan Basin.**
  - **Recommendation R14: Kabetogama Township should hold a meeting with VNP and the DNR annually to review park biologist's studies and recommendations.**

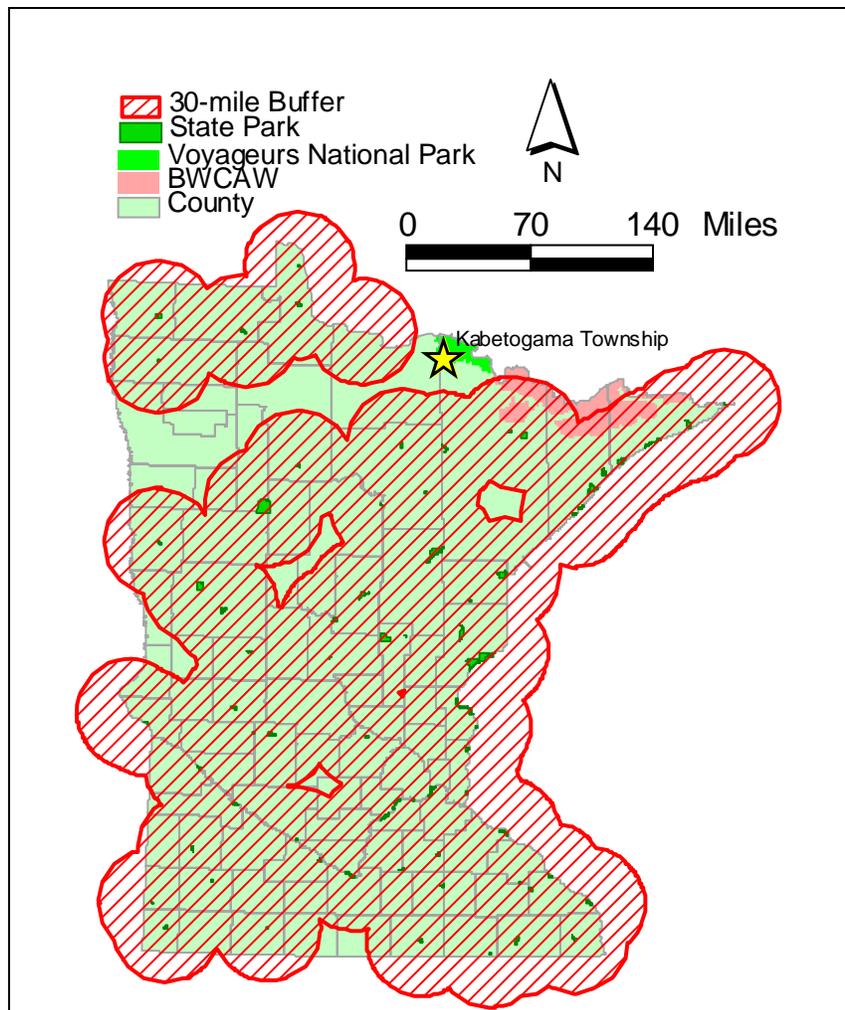


Figure 1: Kabetogama Township is one of the few places in Minnesota that is not within 30 miles of a State Park.

## SECTION 4: WASTEWATER

Wastewater in Kabetogama is especially important because of the community's ties to Lake Kabetogama. The clarity and health of the lake water has a direct impact on the tourism-based economy and on residents' quality of life. The majority of the homes in the Township are served with individual septic systems, which are the resident's responsibility to maintain and inspect regularly. Cluster systems are being considered to serve areas with a lack of land to fit individual treatment systems, to be governed by Kabetogama Township.

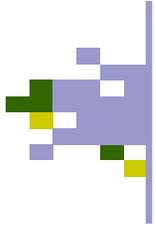


Like other areas in Minnesota it is probable that Kabetogama has a significant amount of non-conforming individual systems contributing to lake pollution. These non-functioning systems can be a health threat by polluting drinking water sources or by making direct contact with humans and animals. While wastewater system replacement can be expensive it is vital to keep the wildlife, forests, water, and people healthy in Kabetogama. To ensure that the Township is protected, residents need to be held accountable for their wastewater. Inspections and general education will help to keep the area healthy.

Along with the Community Action Plan that the Township completed in 2002, they also made an amendment to that plan addressing wastewater. In this amendment the Township lists priorities for action to keep the water clean. This document is included as Appendix C of this plan.

### Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: Individual Sewage Treatment Systems
  - Description: Operating Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS), or “septics” are an asset to homeowners, filtering wastewater before it re-enters the water cycle. Septics must be placed in proper soils and maintained regularly in order for effective operation. Septics are a relatively inexpensive method of treatment and other than regular inspections are nearly cost-free to homeowners.
  - Threats: Some homeowners do not have their septics regularly inspected and pumped every three years for proper



operation. Failing septic systems can pollute the homeowners own water source and can also pollute waters in streams and lakes. The cost of installing a new ISTS or extending a central system is very expensive (often over \$20,000) so some homeowners are hesitant to admit their septic systems may be failing.

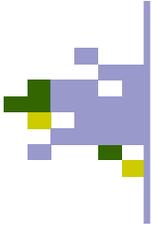
There is currently a lack of information for homeowners on wastewater management. Residents need to know how often to pump or inspect their systems. Lacking this information can contribute to non-conforming or poorly-maintained systems.

**Otter Tail Sanitary District Example.** This District accommodates 1,545 homes, cabins, and businesses. The District may levy taxes as well as write and enforce ordinances. Residents may choose to have their systems managed by the district or on their own. This system has been successful in improved lake water quality.

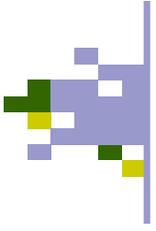
**Crow Wing Sanitary District Example.** This district assesses a fee of \$23 and requires an inspection every 3 years, which is kept track of by the district. This sanitary system does not own or operate any of the systems, but uses the inspections to manage the district.

- Existing Approaches: St. Louis County does have the legal authority to inspect septic systems in order to ensure their compliance. Like most Counties in Minnesota, St. Louis County does not require the inspections except during point-of-sale. This is likely due to the cost of enforcing regular inspections.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding ISTS.
  - **Recommendation W1: The Township should work with the University of Minnesota Extension Service to provide a septic education workshop for citizens.** The Township newsletter should be used to inform and educate residents about the significance of alternative wastewater systems and to promote the workshop.

- Asset: Cluster Wastewater Treatment Systems
  - Description: There are proposed cluster wastewater treatment systems in Kabetogama Township. These systems can treat several homes in a small area. The Town has initiated the use of these systems, which has a positive impact on the community by guaranteeing better water quality.
  - Threats: Cluster systems are expensive and need special attention regarding maintenance. A system failure would be expensive to repair and would be a threat to people's health and the environment.



- Existing Approaches: The Township has completed a wastewater study to identify districts that could accommodate a cluster system. See Appendix C.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding cluster systems.
  - **Recommendation W2: Kabetogama should continue to be proactive in regards to wastewater treatment.** The Town should continue to study the issue and help to find solutions for homeowners. The Town Board should also be aware of new trends in ISTS management.
  - **Recommendation W3: Kabetogama should advocate to St. Louis County the need for section corners to be surveyed.** Section corners are needed for surveys when developing community sewer projects in the future.
- Asset: Water quality in Lake Kabetogama
  - Description: Lake Kabetogama is a healthy lake that continues to provide several types of recreation, including the renting of houseboats. There is significant concern in the area for the legal dumping of gray water into the lake. Gray water is disposable water from sinks and showers on houseboats. There is also a growing trend of dumping hot tub chlorinated water into the lake by houseboats and shoreline properties.
  - Threats: The repeated dumping of gray water and chlorinated water can contribute to reduced water clarity and poor lake health.
  - Existing Approaches: Currently, VNP acknowledges that gray water is being dumped into the Lake. The Park is conducting a study that measures the effects of gray water dumping.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding water quality.



- **Recommendation W4: Kabetogama Township should communicate to VNP and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Township's need for the reduction of gray water and chlorinated water being dumped into Lake Kabetogama. Gray water is detrimental to water quality and could negatively affect the Township.**



## SECTION 5: ECONOMICS

Tourism is the way-of-life in Kabetogama Township. The attraction of Lake Kabetogama and connected waters has been the basis for the Kabetogama community for many years. Businesses include fishing guides, restaurants, resorts, bait shops, and boat services. Almost every business in the Township is based in some way on the tourism industry.

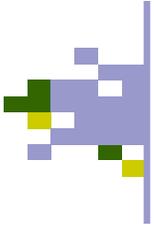
Some smaller, traditional styled resorts have closed recently and been replaced with condominiums and other types of residential developments. This changes the character of the Township and economic patterns. The loss of recreational lodging could impact related businesses of the area. Kabetogama Township recognizes that the character of the area and its scenery are vital assets and that new developments could compromise that character.

By supporting tourism businesses and ensuring the protection of resources that are in the area, Kabetogama can continue to strengthen its economy.

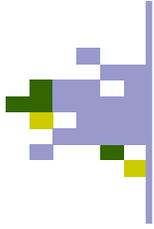
### Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: Scenic Views
  - Description: Lake Kabetogama is an ideal destination for those seeking a rural Northern Minnesota experience. The hills and woods provide a good foundation for views of the lake. Although development density in the area is increasing, there is still a rural, northwoods character to the community.
  - Threats: Increased development is starting to change the area from its rural northwoods character. There are a large amount of roadside signs impacting views, with little regulation of the size or placement.
  - Existing Approaches: St. Louis County has the zoning appointment in the Township, but does not strictly enforce sign restrictions.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding scenic views:





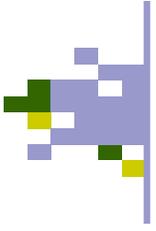
- **Recommendation E1: The Town of Kabetogama should work with the local resort association to improve signage and way-finding in the community.** Signage should be appropriate to the community's character. The Town should bring their ideas to St. Louis County for enforcement.
  
- Asset: Resorts
  - Description: Kabetogama Township has 23 resorts. These resorts range from a few cabins to large lodges and several cabins. The resorts are an integral part of the Kabetogama experience and the area is known for its hospitality.
  
  - Threats: As the cost of land in Kabetogama increases, the economics of operating a traditional resort, hotel, or campground become more difficult. Some facilities have recently been sold and redeveloped into residences and time-share condominiums. This has an impact on the community's tourist businesses.
  
  - Existing Approaches: St. Louis County addresses lakeshore development by limiting heights and densities of buildings on lakeshore property.
  
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding scenery.
    - **Recommendation E2: The Town of Kabetogama should continue to support resorts and associated businesses.** Businesses that will help to invigorate the economy and contribute to the "tourist experience" should be encouraged.
  
- Asset: Home Businesses
  - Description: Many entrepreneurs have businesses on their properties along with their homes. These home businesses make up a significant portion of the economic base for Kabetogama.
  
  - Threats: As development increases in the Township, there may be more residential units surrounding home businesses. The residential uses in close proximity may have conflicts with traffic, noise, or other issues caused by a home business. Increasing land values



create hardships not only for residents but also for small businesses that are greatly affected by tax increases.

- Existing Approaches: St. Louis County Ordinance requires that the majority of surrounding homes be in favor of such establishment.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding home businesses:
  - **Recommendation E3: Kabetogama should continue to support home businesses that do not have a significant impact on neighbors.**
- Asset: Timber
  - Description: Timber and the logging industry is a major part of the Town's history and is still a part of its economy.
  - Threats: Increasing land values may be resulting in some lands being managed for development rather than timber.
  - Existing Approaches: Approximately four square miles of the Town are zoned as Forest Agricultural Management, which allows for timber harvest.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding timber:
    - **Recommendation E4: Kabetogama Township should continue to support timber management in the Town.**





## SECTION 6: LAND USE

Zoning Codes regarding land use in Kabetogama Township are currently regulated by St. Louis County. These codes are used to keep the densities and resources at the levels that the Township desires.

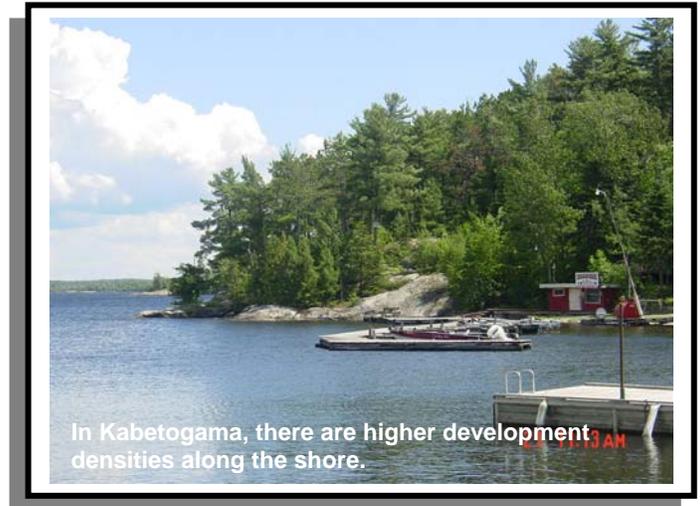
Lake Kabetogama is a resource that is very important to Kabetogama Township. When visitors are on the lake and they look towards shore they do not see large developments and buildings peaking above the tree line. This is a quality that should be protected. Regulating development along the shore will keep the character of a northern Minnesota wilderness.

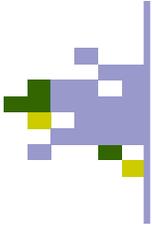
Since most of the businesses that exist in Kabetogama Township are located on the lake, close regulation and strict guidelines are needed to keep the area clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing.

The inland area of Kabetogama has always been known as a rural and quiet setting. Historically the properties have been scattered with large lot sizes. While more people are moving to Kabetogama, the area is becoming more densely developed which increases the population density. Increased development creates a need for more septic systems and can become a threat to the environment, including vegetation and wildlife.

Kabetogama needs to take action to protect its inland areas so they remain healthy and serve their purpose.

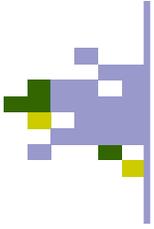
Housing in Kabetogama Township can range from seasonal cabins, to standard homes, to mobile homes. Generally most of the housing is on or near the lake but there are several inland homes as well. The majority of the homes in the area are owner occupied, with limited housing options for low-income families in the area. Near the lake land values have risen every year and made new home construction or purchases very expensive in the area.





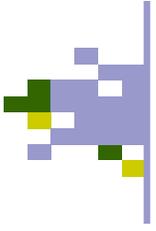
## Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: County Zoning Administration
  - Description: The zoning administration for Kabetogama Township is through St. Louis County. The County's planning commission and planning staff review permits and make decisions regarding issues. The Town's Planning Committee is advisory in nature and does not have an official capacity. This is cost effective for the Town, as they do not have to fund staff for planning administration. St. Louis County is also in
  - Threats: By not administering the zoning process, the Town saves money, but loses direct control of projects. Due to the County's size and scope, some projects that are important to the Town may not get as much attention by the County.
  - Existing Approaches: St. Louis County currently forwards zoning applications and information regarding the Township to the planning committee for their review.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding lake views:
    - **Recommendation L1: Kabetogama Township should continue to review and forward concerns or recommendations to St. Louis County.**
- Asset: Rural and Lakeshore Characteristics
  - Description: St. Louis administers two inland zones for Kabetogama Township; FAM-1 which encourages the development of forestry and agriculture management. MUNS-5 is the other zone that is for low-density areas but accommodates home businesses as well as residential areas. These areas both limit development so that the areas stay at a low density, which is important to keeping a rural setting.
  - Threats: Development of residences is occurring at a relatively high rate in the inland forests of the Township. The open spaces, which have been a great draw to the community, are being threatened by development.



- Existing Approaches: Currently the Township relies upon the zoning setup by the County to keep the area rural.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding rural settings:
  - **Recommendation L2: Kabetogama should continue to review developments in the Town as they are proposed and make comments regarding developments that threaten the rural and lakeshore characteristics of the Town.**
  - **Recommendation L3: Kabetogama Township should communicate with timberland owners, including Forest Capitol, and address future plans regarding the development of their land.**
- Asset: Housing
  - Description: Housing in the area is adequate and is concentrated around the shore land areas. Many businesses in the area are home businesses that operate from residential areas.
  - Threats: Few lower-income opportunities for housing exist. It is difficult to retain younger residents.
  - Existing Approaches: Kabetogama Township acknowledges that having housing available that people who work in the Town can afford is desirable to maintain population.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding housing:
    - **Recommendation L4: Kabetogama should inventory housing needs in Town and encourage developments to meet needs.**





## SECTION 7: COMMUNITY LIFE

Kabetogama has a close-knit community that is interested and responsible for the future of the Township. By continuing to be active, the residents can ensure that their town is moving toward their vision. Also, the town needs to decide how they want to utilize and equip their Community Hall so that it can continue to be a valuable asset.

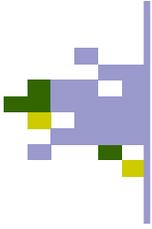
The Township needs office space for the clerk, lake association office, and a central location for the historical society.



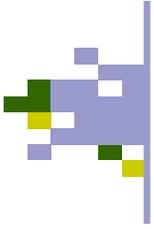
### Assets, Threats, and Recommendations

- Asset: Community Center
  - Description: Kabetogama Township appointed a Community Center Building Committee to begin the planning process for a new Community Center that will more appropriately meet the needs of the growing and changing Township. Township meetings, bingo, receptions, conferences, community parties, funeral luncheons, and other activities can all be held in a Community Center. The center currently provides a skating rink in the winter.
  - Threats: There is an existing community center; however, it is not meeting the needs of the Township. The current building is over 50 years old. There are several structural problems with the building and it cannot be used in the winter months. The size of the current hall also limits the number of events that can be held there.

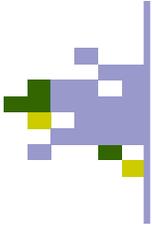
In the past events such as the Lady Slipper Festival were well attended. Participation within the area has diminished and events, including the Lady Slipper Festival, have not occurred. There is also a lack of activities for youth. The skating rink is popular but is in need of more volunteers to manage the flooding, and maintenance of the rink.



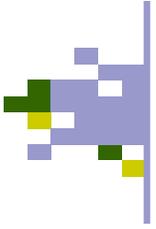
- Existing Approaches: The current Community Hall has been holding some events but is very limited in its facilities to fully meet the needs of the community. There is currently a planning process taking place for the community plan. The committee is working on issues of location and types of use for the facility.
- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the Community Center:
  - **Recommendation C1: Kabetogama should construct a new Community Center.** The Township has realized the need for a new community center and has delegated a committee, which will submit a plan to the Town Board for approval. The Community Center will be a place that can host annual community events that help to build the community and help promote the Township.
- Asset: Community Entrance
  - Description: Although it is actually outside Township Boundaries, the intersection of Highway 53 and CSAH 122 is the gateway to Kabetogama Township. At this intersection stands the Kabetogama Walleye statue that has been a landmark for years, and was recently restored. There are several plaques and signs that give visitors a look into the history and culture of Kabetogama. Also located here is the Gateway Store.
  - Threats: Currently at this facility there is limited parking due to limitations brought by the wetland areas. Expansion to the Gateway Store or the visitor's welcome area would be difficult due to the restrictions on removing or changing wetland areas.
  - Existing Approaches: There is parking on the roads and other areas that are not necessarily safe. As of now, limited options are available to expand the area.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the community entrance:



- **Recommendation C2: Support the Community Entrance area. Expansion of the parking area through land acquisition or wetland conversion should be explored. Developing a town way-finding map should be explored by the Township.**
  
- Asset: Ellsworth Rock Gardens
  - Description: The rock gardens in Voyageurs National Park are appreciated by both residents and visitors.
  - Threats: The gardens are in need of yearly maintenance, which can be expensive and time consuming.
  - Existing Approaches: In the past volunteers have contributed their time and done work for free.
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the rock gardens:
    - **Recommendation C3: Support VNP's new efforts to restore and maintain the Ellsworth Rock Gardens.**
  
- Asset: Fire/EMS
  - Description: Currently the fire and EMS responders are adequate. Recently a new fire hall was built to equip the area. There are enough volunteers to run the system efficiently.
  - Threats: As the population of residents age in the community there is a growing need for younger and new volunteers to begin taking the spot of older volunteers. There is also a need to continue the funding for emergency response so they can continue to provide service and upgrade equipment.
  - Existing Approaches: Continued on-going training and expansion of protection are being done to draw more recruits to fill personnel voids.

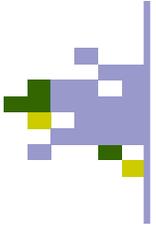


- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the fire and EMS
  - **Recommendation C4: Support the hiring of local personnel for local, state, and federal government jobs.**
  
- Asset: Communication Technology
  - Description: Kabetogama Township has made many upgrades in recent years to their communication. Part of the area is serviced with high speed internet; however this service is not yet available to all. Kabetogama also has its own Post Office which assists with communication.
  
  - Threats: Cell phone coverage in the area is limited and can cause problems for visitors and residents. The great expense of high-speed internet installation is hindering hook-up. The area is experiencing problems with the mail due to zip code problems.
  
  - Existing Approaches: The Township will pursue contacting the legislatures to solve the zip code problem.
  
  - Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding communication technology.
    - **Recommendation C5: Pursue cell phone service and zip code resolution.**
  
- Asset: Cemetery
  - Description: The Township does have a well maintained cemetery.
  
  - Threats: Eventually the space will fill and more land will need to be acquired in order to provide adequate grave space. Acquiring more land and routine maintenance can prove to be very costly.
  
  - Existing Approaches: Kabetogama Township is not aggressively pursuing land for future cemetery use.



- Recommended Actions: Kabetogama Township is recommending the following actions regarding the cemetery.
  - **Recommendation C6: Township should continue to support existing cemetery association with land needs.**







## APPENDIX A: CURRENT PLANNING AND ZONING

Zoning in Kabetogama Township is administered by St. Louis County.

### **FAM-1 (Forest Agricultural Management)**

There is approximately 3.69 sq mi of FAM-1 designated land in the Township. This district is intended to recognize and promote the development of the County's forestry and agricultural industry and to encourage recreational use of such areas. This district is typically used in areas with land developed at very low densities and often there is considerable government and corporate ownership. A low level of development is important in areas where this district is used since the uses encouraged in this district would be less compatible in a more urban setting. In this area lots require a minimum of 35 acres and developments can have coverage of two percent.

### **MUNS-5 (Multiple Use Non-Shoreland)**

This district is intended for the rural areas of St. Louis County outside of shoreland areas, due to the low density of development that can accommodate a wide range of activities including; single-family dwellings, seasonal dwellings, home occupation, and accessory uses and is for low-density areas. Minimum lot size is 2.5 acres, with a limit of 10 percent land coverage. This accounts for about 7.81 square miles in the Township.

### **SMU-11 (Shoreland Mixed Use)**

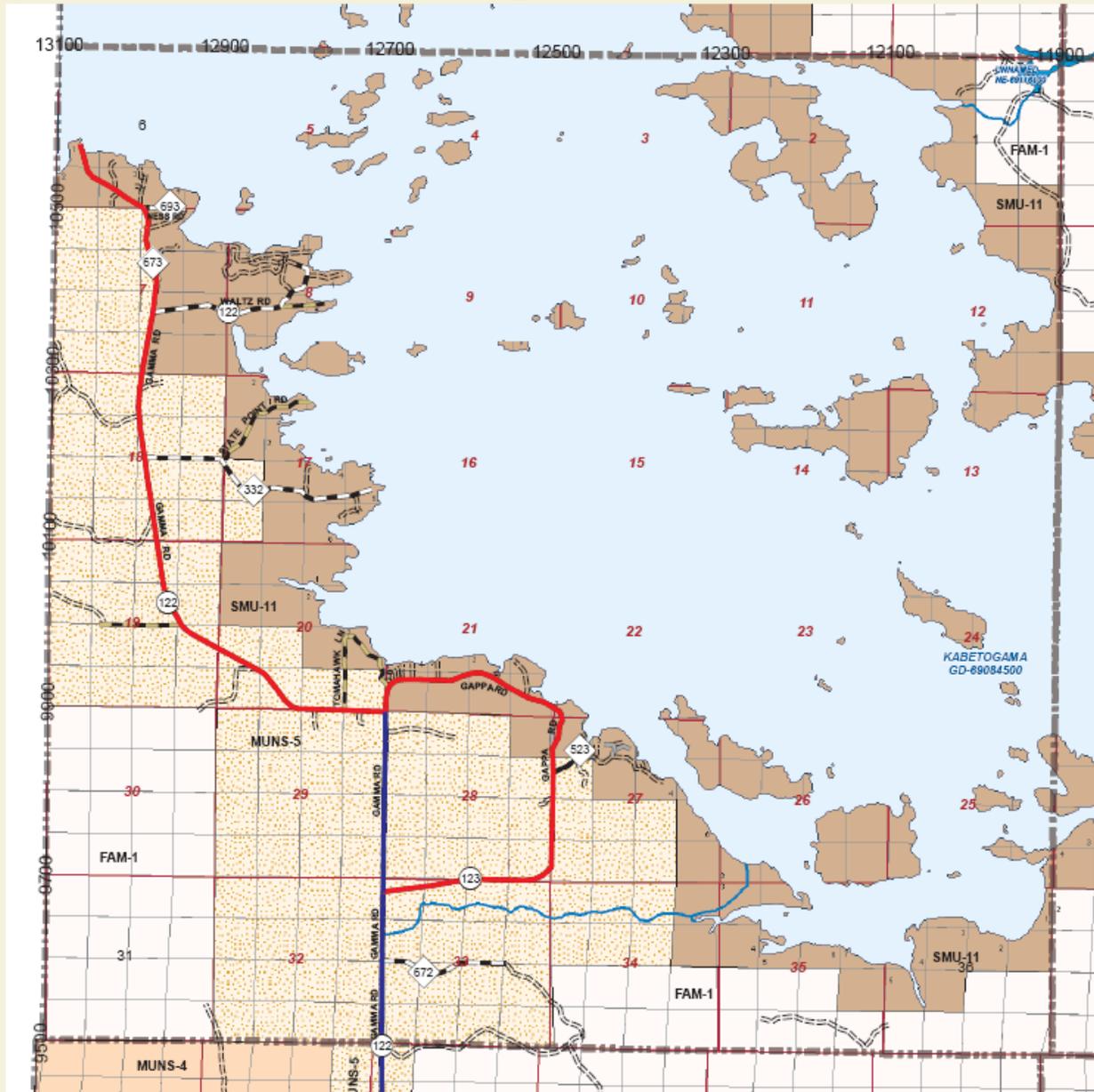
This district is intended to provide a balance between lake and river use and the water resources by allowing a wide range of uses that are consistent with adjacent land uses and the recreational and natural attributes of the water body. The minimum lot size is 0.5 acre with a limit of 25 percent land coverage.

Lake Classification for Lake Kabetogama is considered General Development, which requires a 75 foot setback from the shore, and a 50 foot setback from the shore impact zone.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> St. Louis County Website. Retrieve March 27, 2007, from <http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us/slcportal/SiteMap/HomePage/Departments/Planning/PhysicalPlanning/Maps/ZoningMaps/tabid/315/Default.aspx>

# Kabetogama 69-21



### Zone Districts

- Forest Agricultural Management  
Fam-1, 2, 3
- Residential  
Res-1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
- Shoreland Mixed Use  
Smu-1, 2, 3, 3a, 4, 4a, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- Multiple Use Non-Shoreland  
Muns-2, 3, 4, 5, 7
- Sensitive Areas  
Sens-1, 2, 3, 5
- Industrial  
Ind-4
- Limited Industrial  
Liu-1, 4, 5, 10, 11
- Non-Shoreland Commercial  
Com-4, 6, 7, 11
- Lake Superior Overlay  
Lso-10

6/29/2006

Lands within 300 feet of rivers, shall have same dimensional standards as adjacent non-shoreland area. Except for St. Louis, Cloquet, Whiteface, and Vermilion rivers.

### River Classification & Setbacks

- ○ ○ ○ ○ Primitive 300 ft.
- ● ● SLC Remote 200 ft.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ Recreational 150 ft.
- ● ● Rural / Agricultural 200 ft.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ Urban 100 ft.
- ● ● Trout Streams 150 ft.
- ○ ○ ○ ○ DNR Remote 200 ft.
- ● ● DNR Forested 150 ft.
- Tributaries 100 ft.

### Lake Classification

#### & Shoreline Setbacks

- General Development - GD 75ft.
- Recreational Development - RD 100ft.
- Natural Environment - NE 150 ft.

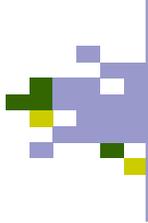
### Road Functional Classifications & Road Setbacks

- Principal and Minor Arterial 110 ft.
- Major Collectors 85 ft.
- Minor Collectors 68 ft.



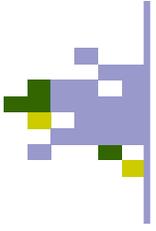
## APPENDIX B: Implementation Matrix

Recommendation	Partners	Action Steps	Date
<b>Transportation</b>			
T1. Participate in St. Louis County Five-Year Construction Plan	Kab, St. Louis County	Actively communicate and work with St. Louis County Public Works Dept. and advocate for road reconstruction when it is needed.	Ongoing
T2. Advocate for wider shoulders on main roads	Kab, St. Louis County	Write a memo to the County, outlining which roads would benefit from shoulder widening and other transportation recommendations.	2008
T3. Work with St. Louis County to enforce speed limits	Kab, St. Louis County	Invite County Sheriff or Deputy to Township meeting and discuss traffic enforcement in the Township.	2008
T4. Complete a Roads Review annually	Kab	Town Supervisors and maintenance providers should conduct a road review for all Township roads annually. Develop road priorities to address each year.	Annually
T5. Support a locally based County garage and operator	Kab, St. Louis County	Write a memo to the County, stating the township's need for a local operator, especially if local position becomes vacant.	2008
T6. Support the addition of a seasonal County employee for winter	Kab, St. Louis County	Write a memo to the County, explaining the need for a local operator, especially in the winter months.	2008
<b>Recreation</b>			
R1. Participate in the VNP Governmental Affairs Committee	Kab	Contact Park officials and express interest in participating in the Committee. Attend meetings and advocate for the township.	Ongoing
R2. Hold a meeting with VNP annually to ensure communication	Kab, VNP	Set up an initial meeting that will open communication and also to address some existing concerns. Set up a yearly meeting where the Township and Park Management can discuss issues.	Annually
R3. Communicate to VNP, township's need for proper campsite maintenance	Kab, VNP	See R2. Explain the township's reliance on the tourism businesses generated from camping facilities and the necessity for them to be well maintained.	2008 Meeting
R4. Communicate to VNP the desire for congestion mgmt in VNP	Kab, VNP	See R2. While growing numbers of visitors in VNP help support the Kabetogama economy, proper management of local facilities is needed.	2008 Meeting
R5. Communicate to VNP the township's vision for safe motor travel	Kab, VNP	See R2.	2008 Meeting
R6. Communicate to VNP the need for improved safety measures for kayaks	Kab, VNP	See R2. Continue to monitor water safety issues and relay concerns to VNP.	2008 Meeting
R7. Communicate to VNP the need for improved tour boat operations	Kab, VNP	See R2.	2008 Meeting



R8. Communicate to the State the need for improvements to WoodenFrog Campground	Kab, DNR	Document the current utilization of the Campground and needs that have been expressed by Campground users. Work with regional DNR Parks and Recreation official, and take necessary steps towards improving the facilities.	Ongoing
R9. Communicate to DNR the desire for State Park designation to WoodenFrog	Kab, DNR	Advocate to DNR Parks and Recreation the need for State Park designation for Woodenfrog Campground.	Ongoing
R10. Communicate to St. Louis County the need for wider shoulders	Kab, St. Louis County	See T2.	2008
R11. Undertake and complete a community trail plan	Kab	Secure funding necessary to facilitate a planning process through Regional Transportation Advisory Committee or other available sources. Designate a trails committee that would identify needs and create recommendations. Gather public input in the process. Identify sources for infrastructure dollars for building or maintaining trails.	2008 & 2009
R12. Work with local entities/agencies to help protect lady slippers	Kab	Work to identify the best method of protecting lady slippers. Explore education sessions by VNP and the placement of educational signs.	2008
R13. Communicate to DNR/VNP the need for walleye morality study	Kab, DNR, VNP	Write a memo to the DNR and VNP, explaining the reliance the community has on the vitality of aquatic life, and the need for a study.	2008
R14. Hold a meeting with VNP/DNR annually to review park studies	Kab, DNR, VNP	This meeting should be separate from the annual VNP meetings. The Township should continually identify needs for studies of natural resources.	Annually
<b>Wastewater</b>			
W1. Work with UM Extension to provide septic education	Kab, UM Extension	Contact the regional UM Extension office and begin to work towards public education outreaches. A public meeting as well as additional opportunities should be explored.	2008/ongoing
W2. Continue to be proactive in regards to wastewater treatment	Kab	The Township should continue to look for new trends and continue to address issues that arise.	Ongoing
W3. Kabetogama should advocate to St. Louis County the need for section corners to be surveyed.	Kab, St. Louis County	Send a letter advocating for section corner surveys and aid the County through the process, when necessary.	2008
W3. Communicate to VNP the need for elimination of gray water dumping	Kab, VNP	Review the results of the VNP efforts to measure the effect of gray water on quatic habitat. Advocate to the Park the dependence the Township has on Lake Kabetogama.	2008
<b>Economics</b>			
E1. Work with resort association to improve signage and wayfinding	Kab, Resort Association, St. Louis County	Develop criteria for addressing sign problems. Work with the County to remove signs that are non-compliant with the current zoning ordinance. Encourage the Resort Association to deveop ways to decrease signage and increase wayfinding.	Ongoing
E2. Contine to support resorts and associated businesses	Kab	When issues arise, continue to advocate for local resorts and other businesses that constitute the local economy.	Ongoing

E3. Continue to support home businesses that do not impact neighbors	Kab	Continue to review building and business permits and make recommendations to the County Planning Commission.	Ongoing
E4. Continue to support timber management in the Town	Kab	Encourage timber management, as it continues to employ and support the local economy.	Ongoing
<b>Land Use</b>			
L1. Continue to review and forward concerns/recommendations to County	Kab, St. Louis County	Continue to review County land use decisions that affect the Township. Local concerns are helpful when St. Louis County makes decisions.	Ongoing
L2. Continue to review developments and make comments	Kab	If proposed developments threaten the rural and lakeshore characteristics of the Township, the township should send comments to the County.	Ongoing
L3. Communicate with timberland owners and address future plans regarding development	Kab	Continue to review development trends in the Township and address issues that arise.	Ongoing
L4. Inventory housing needs in Town and encourage needed development	Kab	Set up a meeting with the area Housing Authority. Work with this agency to inventory the needs in Town and develop vision for the future of housing and encourage developments to meet the current needs.	2008/ ongoing
<b>Community Life</b>			
C1. Construct a new community center	Kab	The Community Center Committee should continue generating plans and seeking funding for a new building.	Ongoing
C2. Support Community Entrance, expand parking	Kab	Meet with St. Louis County and land owners to explore areas to create more parking areas.	Ongoing
C3. Support VNP's efforts to restore/maintain Ellsworth Rock Gardens	Kab, VNP	Lend support and encourage volunteers to help with ongoing care of the area.	Ongoing
C4. Support the hiring of local personnel for local, state, federal jobs	Kab	Send a memo to state and federal governments encouraging the review of local residents when making hiring decisions. When positions open up, continue to advocate for local residents.	Ongoing
C5. Pursue cell phone service and zip code resolution	Kab, St. Louis County	Continue to correspond with the US Postal Service about getting a proper zip code to alleviate problems. If the township is approached about cell phone towers, accommodations that consider aesthetics should be made.	Ongoing
C6. Continue to support cemetery association with land needs	Kab	Communicate with the cemetery association and assist with land needs when the issue arises.	Ongoing





## APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN AMENDMENT

Kabetogama Township is the gateway to the Voyageurs National Park. One is taken back in time the moment of your arrival in this beautiful land of smooth worn rocks and clean clear lakes. This peaceful lake county has its origins in great, natural disturbances. Huge sheets of glacial ice from the north overrode this area. As they passed through, the glaciers scraped and plowed the earth beneath their crushing weight leaving a beautiful smooth rock landscape.

It is believed that the area resembled the hill country of Kentucky and Tennessee as they are today. There were numerous streams with very few lakes. As the climate slowly became cooler and drier, forests of spruce and other conifers appeared, sea levels dropped, and land that had been originally submerged formed over bridges, which many new animals to this part of the world immigrated from Europe, and Asia. Man did not leave any record of his existence at that time.

The geology of the National Park area is mainly granite, biotite schist, and migmatite (a rock consisting of inter-layered granite and biotite schist on various scales). The exception is the northwest corner of Rainy Lake, where a major volcanic-sedimentary (greenstone) belt projects in from Ontario. All of these rocks are early Pre-Cambrian. According to many geologists, some are 2.7 billion years old. As the glacier receded, ice was caught in the debris. As it thawed, it made the now known kettle lakes that dot the area. Other lakes formed in the natural depressions or as the glacier carved out basins in the bedrock.

The climate warmed, the ground thawed and lichens, mosses, ferns and forest returned to cover the barren landscape. As generations of these plants lived and died, they helped to build a thin mantle of soil. Today you see smooth, polished and grooved rock surfaces on numerous islands which are the tops of rocky crags the ice failed to remove. This is what creates the beauty of the area.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the 1970s Congress created the Voyageurs National Park and the peaceful lake country we know today. In 2001, Kabetogama Township, St. Louis County, was established and a Town Board of Supervisors was elected. Their stated goals are to protect the health, safety and welfare of the small emerging community of Kabetogama. The primary purpose for forming the Township government and the Community Action Plan was to allow the community to play a larger role in fulfilling its needs, providing a common voice in order to participate in a broader debate on issues and policy development on matters that impact the community. In December, 2002, Kabetogama finalized and adopted this Community Action Plan with the Land Use and a Wastewater Committee group of citizens interested in protecting the environment. This Plan identified protecting the environment and wastewater as basic issues and concerns to pursue.

In 2003 Kabetogama Township merged the Land Use and Wastewater Committee groups and they were charged with developing a plan for wastewater improvements on Kabetogama Lake. The Township Board desires to assess the long-term solutions to improving the community's wastewater infrastructure. The method of identifying the



needs and priorities for wastewater improvement is through an amendment to the Kabetogama Township Community Action Plan dated December 2002.

Currently the reliance on onsite wastewater systems represents a major impediment for business and development especially when the respect for natural resources is paramount. The focus of this amendment is to identify the priority for establishing economically viable and environmentally sound approaches to the establishment of wastewater systems in the community. The infrastructure improvements must be needed, affordable and merge with the environment – not harm it. Improved wastewater services should be more attractive and more permanent than the current mound systems that are the predominant wastewater treatment choice. Working together as a community to get this done will be necessary since costs to repair, replace and manage this very valuable and resource sensitive environment cannot be done individually in many areas. Therefore, a community plan for more than one area in the Township will help define common groupings that could work together and save time and costs equally.

This Community Action Plan Amendment establishes the criteria for prioritizing the areas where wastewater services should first be considered. These criteria include:

1. Existing and future development areas
2. Natural resources (lakeshore, soils, geology, wetlands and floodplain)
3. Environmental criteria
4. Blending and working in harmony with the present ecological environment.

No attempt has been made to weight the criteria, as they were all considered equally important. If any areas identified are referred for further study, the Town of Kabetogama can use the priority established in the Community Action Plan as well as input from the community.

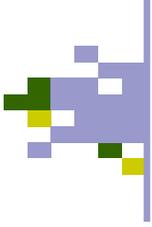
## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Areas within Kabetogama Township were rated based on the criteria established by the Township. The criteria were developed to identify potential locations where wastewater treatment needs exist and problems may arise. Existing rules and ordinances establish the minimum standards for onsite wastewater systems.

There are important definitions in State and County rules and ordinances that apply to individual sewage treatment systems. These definitions impact the compliance of existing systems that in turn defines the need for upgrading wastewater systems in Kabetogama Township. Below are the State and County definitions.

Minnesota Rule 7080, for onsite wastewater systems, provided definition for sewage treatment systems that are considered “failing” and for those that are considered an “imminent threat to public health or safety”. Definitions for these terms are as follows:

“**Failed System**” means a seepage pit, cesspool, drywell, leaching pit, other pit, a tank that obviously leaks below the designated operating depth, or any system with less than the required vertical separation as described in 7080.0060, subpart 3.



**“Imminent threat to public health and safety”** means situations with the potential to immediately and adversely affect or threaten public health or safety. At a minimum, this includes ground and surface water discharges and sewage backup into dwelling or other establishments.

St. Louis County adopted their Individual Treatment Systems Ordinance 55 effective August 1, 2000 (ISTS Ord. 55). The ISTS Ord. 55 governs treatment systems constructed in the townships and unincorporated areas of St. Louis County. In addition, a point of sale provision applies to property transfers. Important definitions are as follows:

**“Imminent threat to public health”** means situations where the system is discharging to the ground surface, backing up into the structure, or presents any other situation that prohibits system function. This situation must be abated in 10 days and a new system installed in 60 days unless weather conditions prohibit. In such case the administrator may issue a provisional permit for a holding tank or other method of temporary abatement for as period not to exceed 150 days.

**“Non-conformity”** means any existing soil treatment system that has less than the equivalent of three feet but more than one foot of vertical separation between the bottom of the distribution media and saturated soil level or bedrock in shoreland areas or two feet in non-shoreland areas; any system that discharges sewage to a seepage pit, dry well, or leaching pit; or individual sewage treatment systems in use that are undersized relative to occupancy. The system may be used until the property use is expanded or the system fails.

**“Definitional Failure”** means that the system has less than 1 foot of vertical separation but is not discharging to the surface. The system must be corrected within 2 years

Also consulted in the criteria development was the Kabetogama Township Community Action Plan, the St Louis County shoreline zoning ordinance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

An initial set of criteria for wastewater were presented to the Kabetogama Town Board on April 19, 2004. To determine densities aerial photos of the area were consulted. Soils maps, floodplain maps and existing zoning maps were reviewed for environmental suitability.

### **Wastewater Criteria**

After consideration of the needs, natural resources and environmental considerations, the following criteria were established for wastewater prioritization:

1. Residential and commercial developments where lots have less than an average of 100 feet wide or where other nonconformance with zoning requirements is known.
2. Groupings of buildings (commercial and residential) of at least ten (10) units.
3. Residential and commercial development in the shoreline zone (1000 feet).
4. Existing and potential development areas adjacent to roads considered by St. Louis County as “Major Collectors”.



5. Developments where the St. Louis County Soil Survey indicate the presence of poor soils for wastewater systems. (currently no data is available)
6. Areas where wetlands or floodplains will impact future development.
7. Bedrock rock topography which hinders proper wastewater treatment.
8. Wastewater systems that are in noncompliance (based on St. Louis County records) or where wastewater systems variances have been granted (no variances were found).

Data may not be available in order to rank the project area on some of the criteria. However, the criteria are important and when information becomes available the ranking will be adjusted accordingly.

**RESULTS** The results of the criteria ranking for wastewater are shown in Exhibit 1. There were 8 areas in the Township that were ranked as shown on Map C1 Wastewater. They were named as follows:

Area Name	Ranking
1. North Kab - Lost Acres, Harris Beach, Ness Road	6
2. Puck's Point	4
3. State Point	6
4. Northern Lights	5
5. North 123 - Gappa Road	7
6. Burma Road	5
7. East 123 - Gappa Road (off lake)	2
8. N123 and N122 - (off lake)	2

Areas that have the highest score have the greatest need for infrastructure services. Data available for ISTS systems not in compliance was available from the St. Louis County ISTS database. There is no data indicating that variances have been granted. If failed ISTS systems were discovered the ranking of the sites would change.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** The priority ranking of areas for potential wastewater services should be used as a guide. If the opportunity for infrastructure development occurs in an area of lesser priority it does not mean that it should not be pursued. Further, by adopting this priority it does not mean that wastewater services will necessarily follow. This is a guide for the Town of Kabetogama to consider infrastructure improvements on a priority basis. Further, if an area is proposed for infrastructure improvements it is not inferred that all properties within the improvement area will be serviced by the improvement. These decisions will be made based on factors beyond this Community Action Plan Amendment.

For wastewater, the existing infrastructure which consists of individual treatment systems should be managed in a manner that protects the public health and promotes the longevity of the system. As the existing systems reach their useful life, the need for connection to or creation of community systems will become a higher priority.

**EXHIBITS** Exhibit 1 is the ranking sheet for wastewater. The total scores are reflective of the need and priority for future consideration by the Township. No

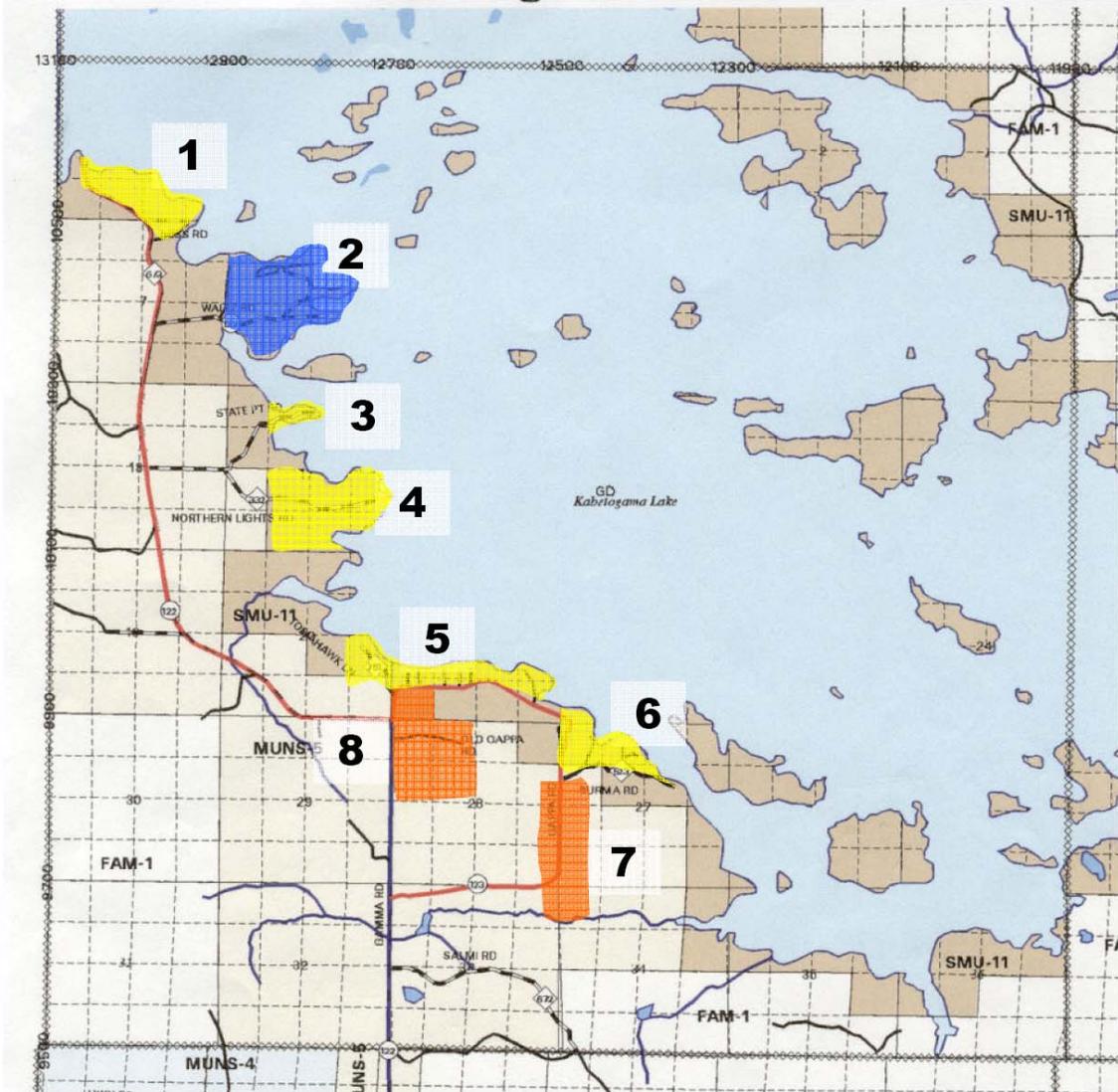


weighting was placed on the criteria. Future actions by the Township may consider weighting the criteria to meet opportunities that may arise for infrastructure development and improvement.

Site Map C1 Wastewater shows the location of the sites that were ranked and their ranking is color coded to numerical ranking in Exhibit 1.

Several maps and documents were utilized in the development of the rankings that are not produced herein. These maps and documents are on file at the Kabetogama Town Hall. They include:

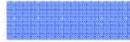
1. Kabetogama Community Action Plan, December 2002
2. Aerial Photos dated 9/23/1997
3. Lake Kabetogama Lake Map, B-0208, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
4. Topographic Map, Kabetogama 69-21, St. Louis County, Provided by USGS
5. National Park Service Brochure: Voyageurs (Geology)
6. Preliminary Soil description by the US Department of Agriculture
7. The St. Louis County Zoning Map effective December 19, 1995 titled Kabetogama 69-21
8. St. Louis County Wetland and Watershed Boundary Map dated June 1, 1999.
9. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Map, Community Panel Number 270416 0075 C, dated February 19, 1992
10. The Town of Kabetogama Plat Directory dated 4/01/04
11. The St. Louis County 2002 Plat Book.



## Kabetogama Community Action Plan

Map C1 - Wastewater

### Key

-  **Priority 1**
-  **Priority 2**
-  **Priority 3**



## PROJECT PARTNERS

### What is ARDC?

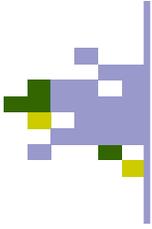
The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) is a multi-disciplined planning and development organization whose jurisdiction encompasses the Northeast Minnesota counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.

In accordance with the Minnesota Regional Development Act, the Commission serves as an advocate for local governments in Northeast Minnesota, provides leadership in the development of projects that benefit the Arrowhead Region and serves as a catalyst to identify needs and seek solutions to issues of regional significance. This role is especially important with regard to problems and opportunities that are multi-jurisdictional in scope or impact. Throughout its existence, ARDC has developed numerous planning and implementation programs aimed at meeting the needs of the Arrowhead Region.

ARDC also serves as an umbrella agency for a wide variety of local, state, and federal initiatives. These programs include services to aging, human services, transit transportation, metropolitan planning, economic development, community development, and natural resources. Other responsibilities of ARDC include the development and maintenance of resource data to support the preparation of comprehensive development plans for units of government.



**ARDC holds many public forums each year**



Digital copies of this plan can be found on ARDC's website ([www.ardc.org](http://www.ardc.org)).

For more information contact:

ARDC  
221 West First Street  
Duluth, MN 55802

Or call toll free-  
1-800-232-0707

