



Tribal Water Quality Assessment: What is ATTAINS?

KAYLA BOWE, RED LAKE NATION

JUNE 4, 2024

2024 NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANS



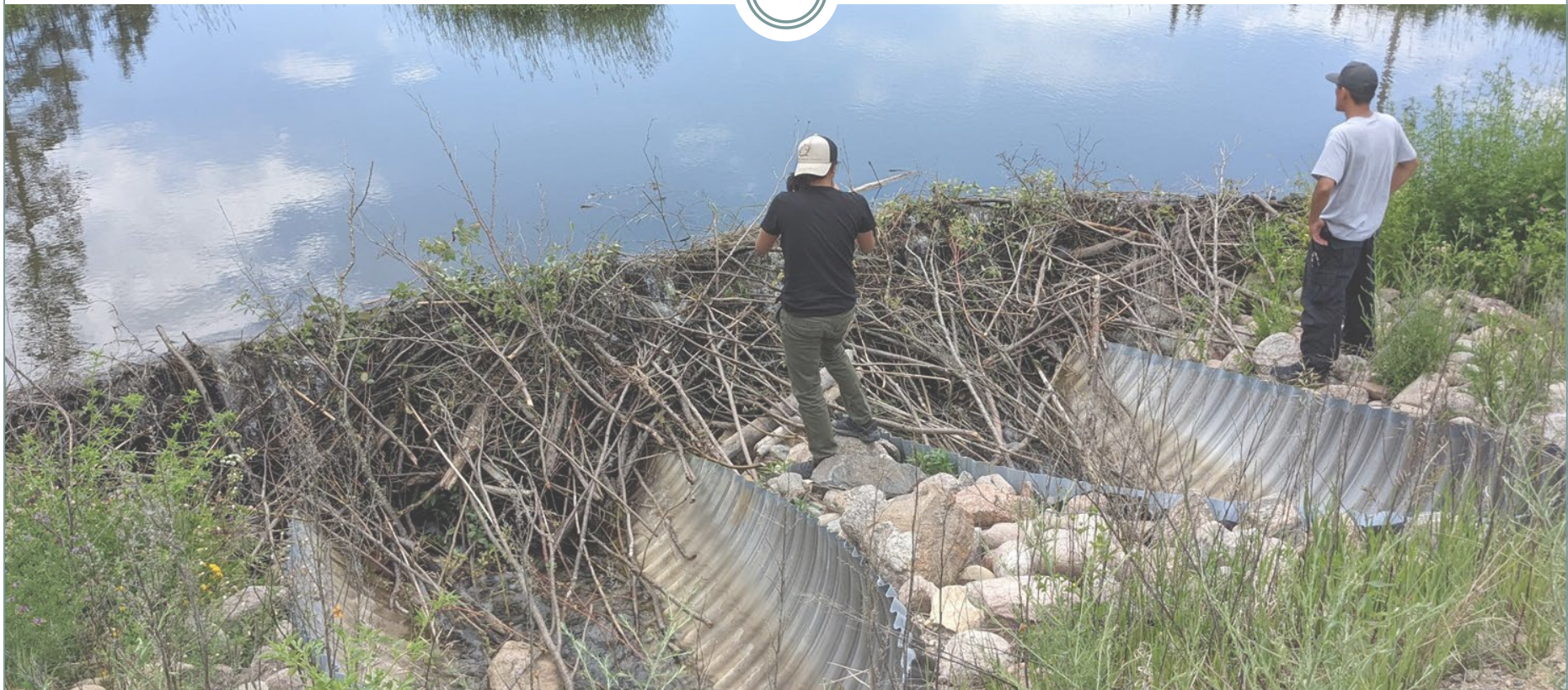
Outline



- What *doesn't* ATTAINS do?
- What is ATTAINS?
- What does ATTAINS do?
- How do you become involved?
- What can you do now?
- Working with a Mentor Tribe and Mentor Program History
- Questions



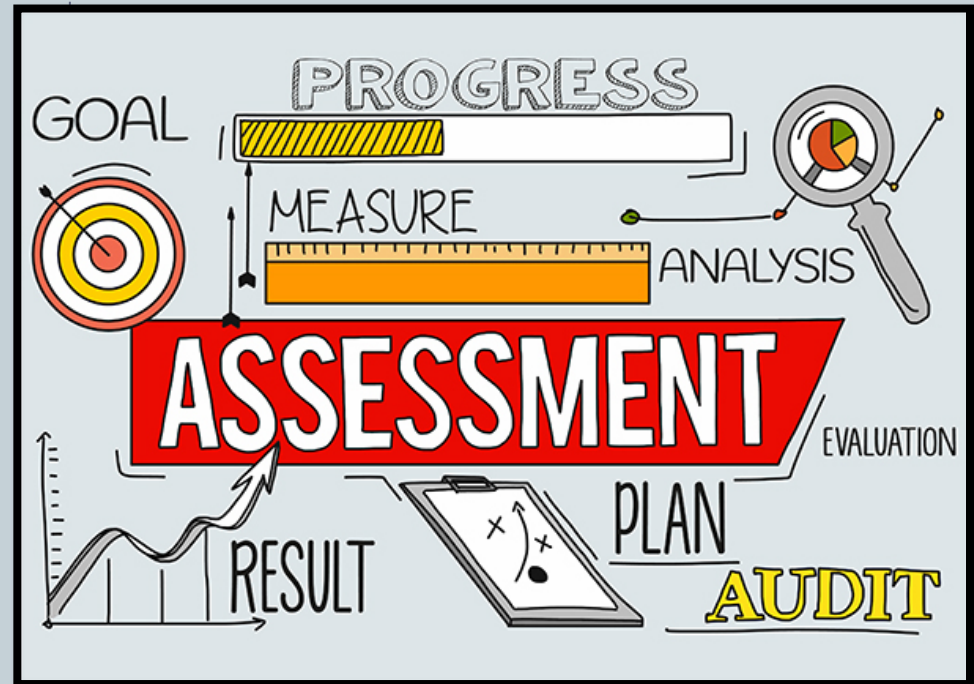
What *doesn't* ATTAINS do?





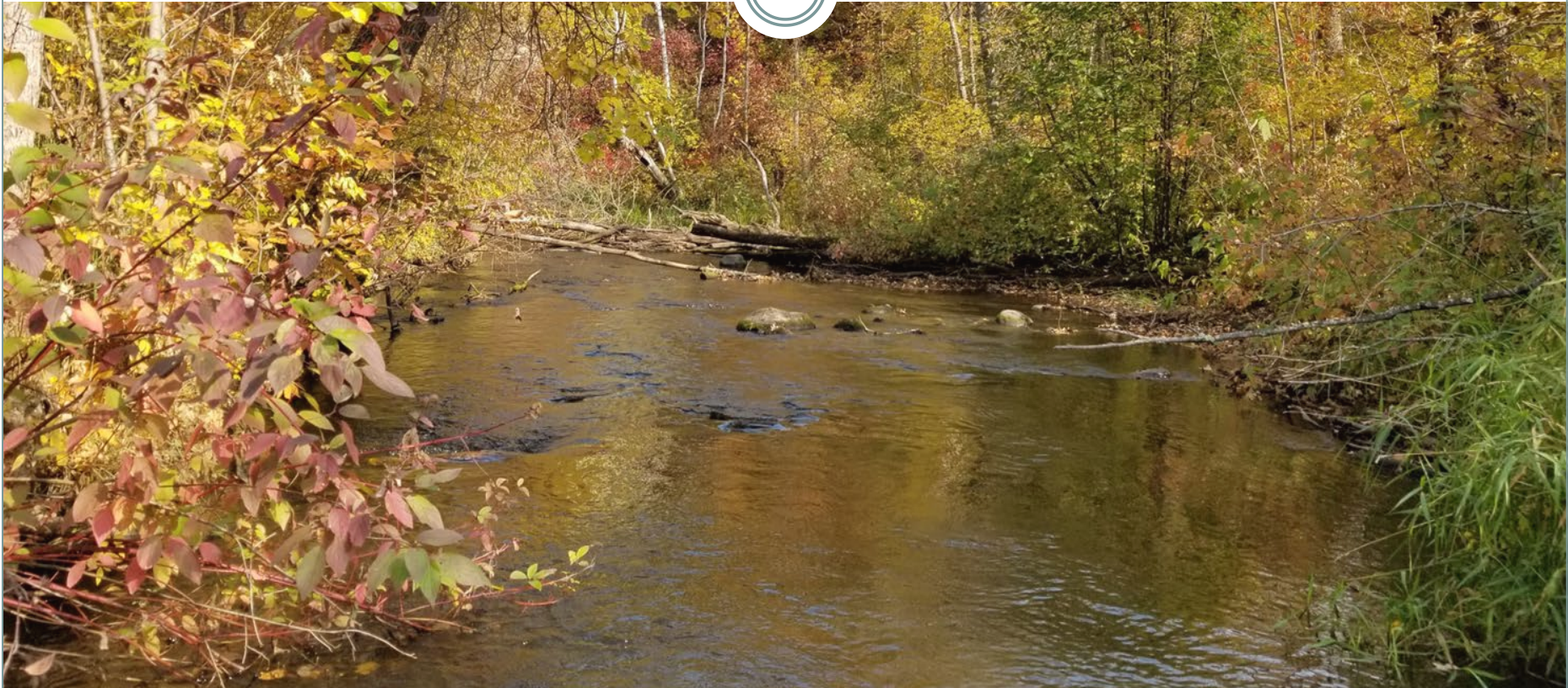
ATTAINS *doesn't*:

- Host your water quality data
- Submit your data to WQX
- Do your assessments for you
- Determine your assessment criteria for you





ATTAINS: What is it?





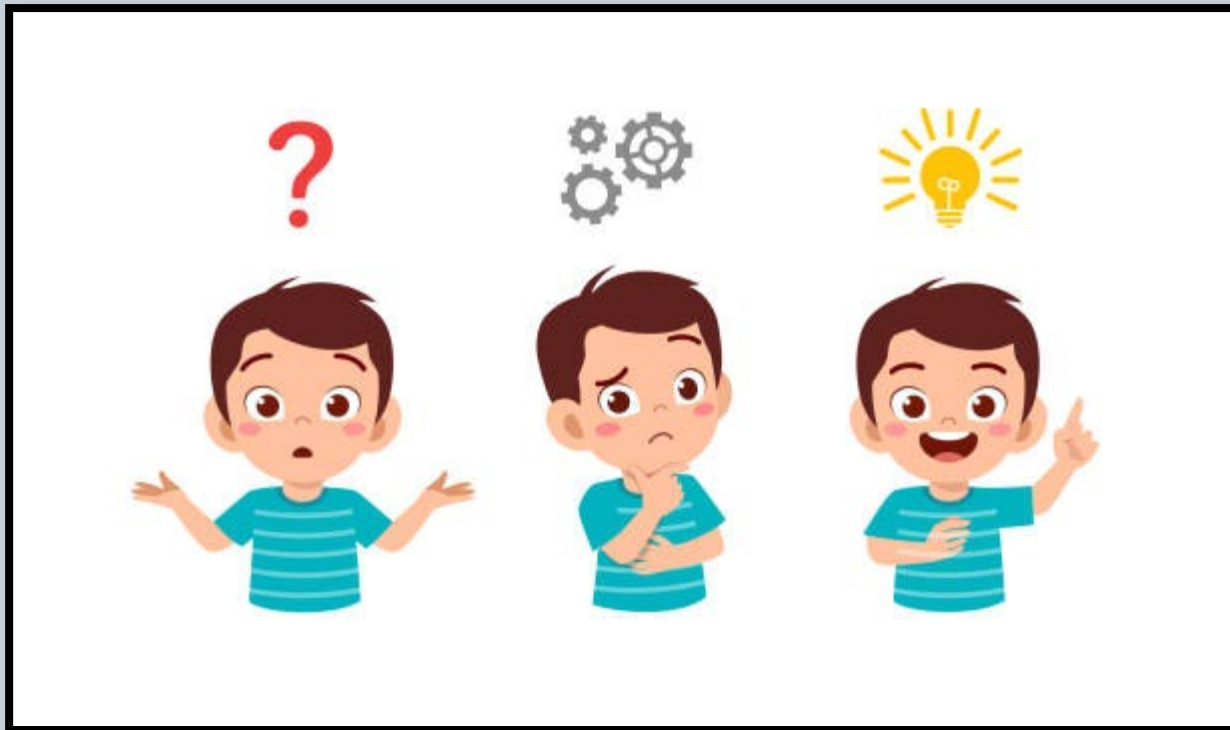
ATTAINS



**ASSESSMENT
TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL)
TRACKING AND
IMPLEMENTATION
SYSTEM**



ATTAINS: What does it do?





What does ATTAINS do?



- Online reporting tool to replace your Tribal Assessment Report (TAR)
- May still need to provide supplemental information





What does ATTAINS do?



- Online reporting tool to replace your Tribal Assessment Report (TAR)
- May still need to provide supplemental information
- Holds water quality assessment decisions and submits them to EPA

Assessments 2022 (EPA Final Action)

Assessment Unit ID ^	Assessment Unit Name ⇅	Water Type ⇅	Overall Status ⇅
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
RLN_HAY	Hay Creek	RIVER	Not Supporting
RLN_HEAR	Heart Lake	LAKE	Fully Supporting
RLN_HERI	Heritage Lake	LAKE	Not Assessed
RLN_ISLA	Island Lake	LAKE	Fully Supporting



What does ATTAINS do?



- Online reporting tool to replace your Tribal Assessment Report (TAR)
- May still need to provide supplemental information
- Holds water quality assessment decisions and submits them to EPA
- **Saves assessment unit (AU) and monitoring location (ML) information in the system**
 - Each year you only need to submit your assessment decisions unless there have been additions to your MLs



What does ATTAINS do?



- Great way to share your water quality data
 - With the public
 - With your Tribal Council
 - With the community



What does ATTAINS do?



- Great way to share your water quality data
 - With the public
 - With your Tribal Council
 - With the community
- **Everything is displayed visually in How's My Waterway**



What does ATTAINS do?



- Great way to share your water quality data
 - With the public
 - With your Tribal Council
 - With the community
- Everything is displayed visually in How's My Waterway
- **Nice way to compare Tribal data next to State data because States use it too**



How's My Waterway Snapshot



How's My Waterway?

Explore, Discover and Learn about your water.

Community **State & Tribal** National

Let's get started! Select your state, tribe or territory from the drop down to begin exploring water quality.

▼ Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota ▼ **>> Go**

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota by the Numbers

79
Stream Water Quality Monitoring
Stations

94
Lake Water Quality Monitoring
Stations

849,391
Total Trust
Acres

Waters not assessed do not show up in summaries below.

About Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota

The Red Lake Nation consists of over 849,000 acres of trust land in northern Minnesota. Tribal trust waters include three-fourths of Red Lake, the largest lake within Minnesota and one of the largest in the nation at 283,839 acres, as well as portions of Lake of the Woods which totals over 1,000,000 acres. The Tribe's Water Resources Program has had an extensive monitoring program in place for over 30 years. The Tribe recently received approval for TAS under Clean Water Act sections 303 and 401 which will allow the development of EPA approved Water Quality Standards. Red Lake Nation is also a part of the ATTAINS (Tribal) Program. [Show less](#)

DISCLAIMER

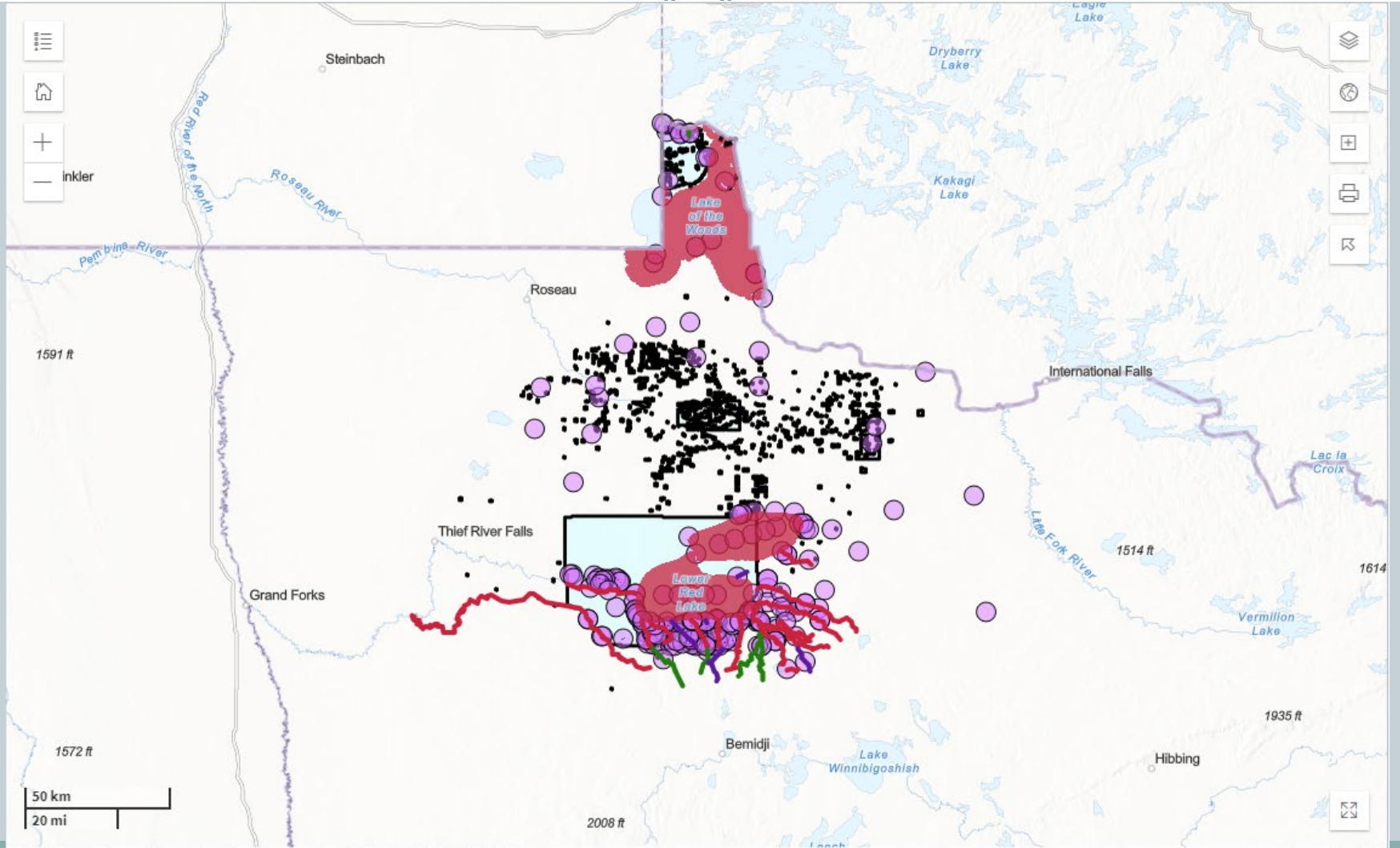
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota at a Glance

108
Waterbodies

267
Water Monitoring Locations

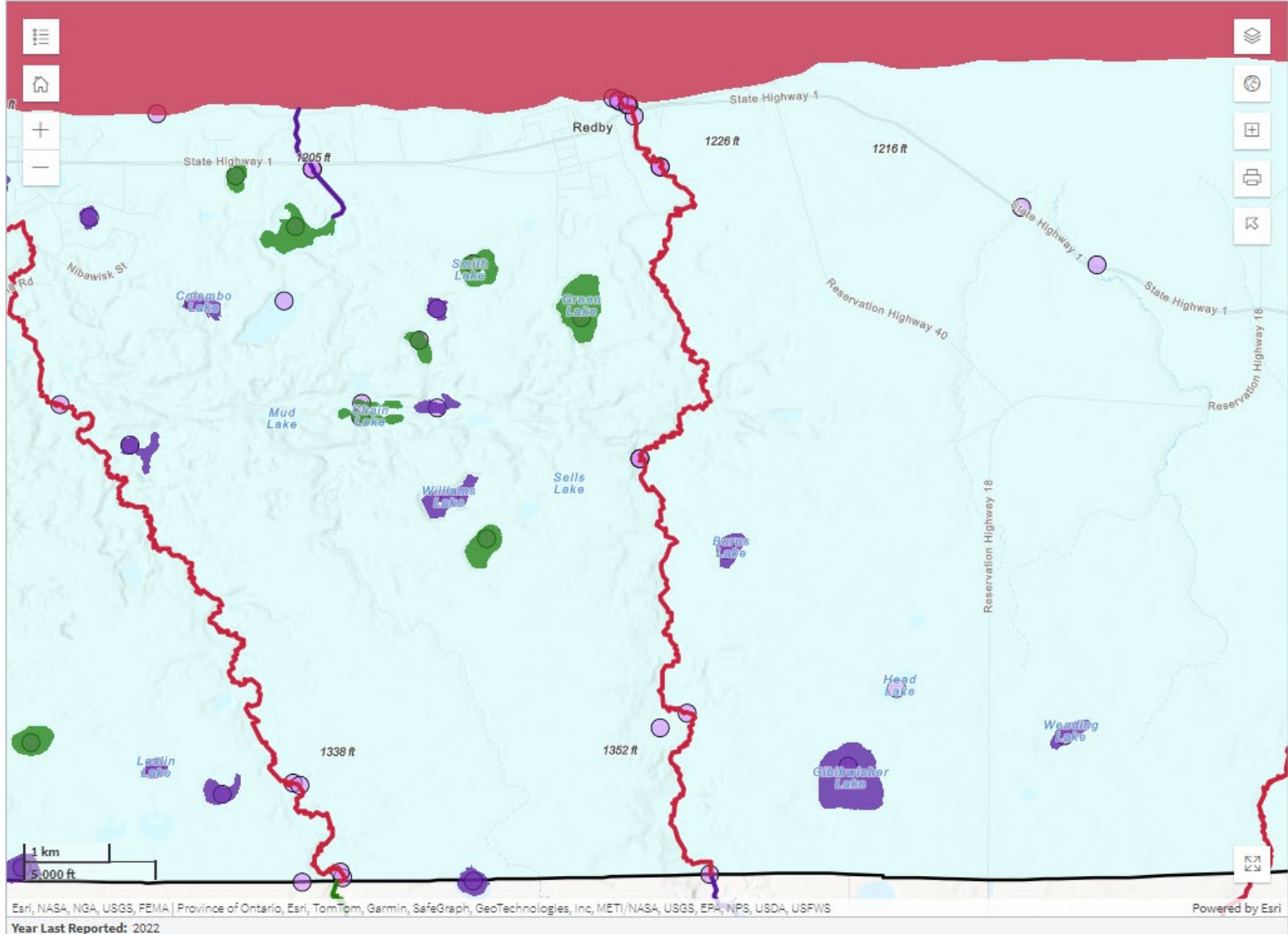


How's My Waterway Snapshot





How's My Waterway Snapshot



Waterbody Report



Mud River

Assessment Unit ID: RLN_MUD

Waterbody Condition: Impaired (Issues Identified)

Existing Plans for Restoration: No

303(d) Listed: No

Year Reported: 2022

Organization Name (ID): Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota (REDLAKE)

What type of water is this?

River (9.33 Miles)

Where is this water located?

From South Reservation Line to Lower Red Lake

Assessment Information from 2022

State or Tribal Nation specific designated uses:

[Information on Water Quality Standards](#)

Expand All

General

Good



Primary Contact

Impaired



Secondary Contact

Impaired



Warm Water Fisheries

Impaired



Probable sources contributing to impairment from 2022:

No probable sources of impairment identified for this waterbody.

Assessment Documents

No documents are available

Plans to Restore Water Quality

What plans are in place to protect or restore water quality?

No plans specified for this waterbody.





Considerations for Using ATTAINS



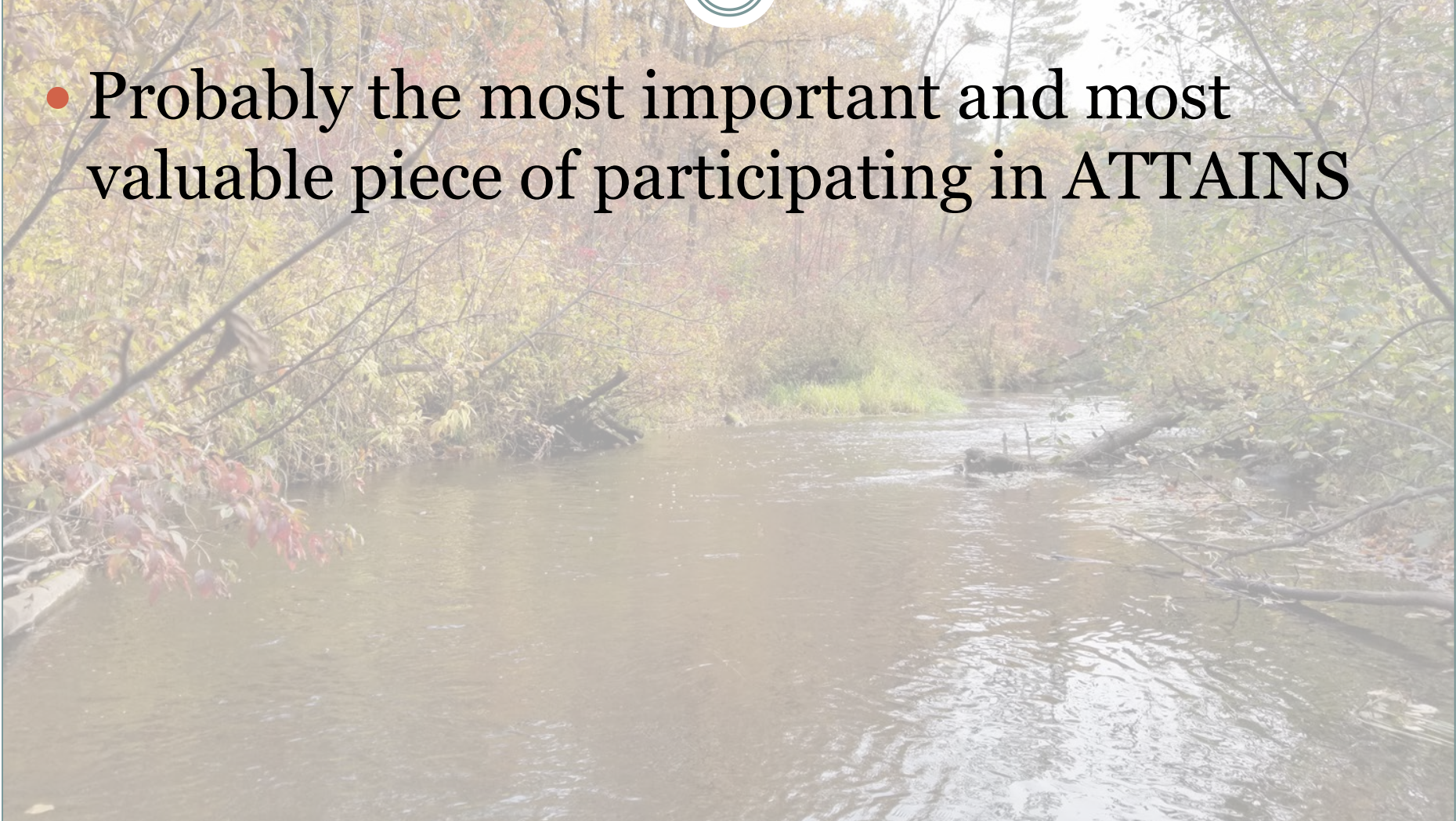
- Do you have WQS?
- What are your water quality criteria?
- Designated uses?
- What is your assessment window?
- How many data points are needed to make a determination?



Assessment Methodology



- Probably the most important and most valuable piece of participating in **ATTAINS**

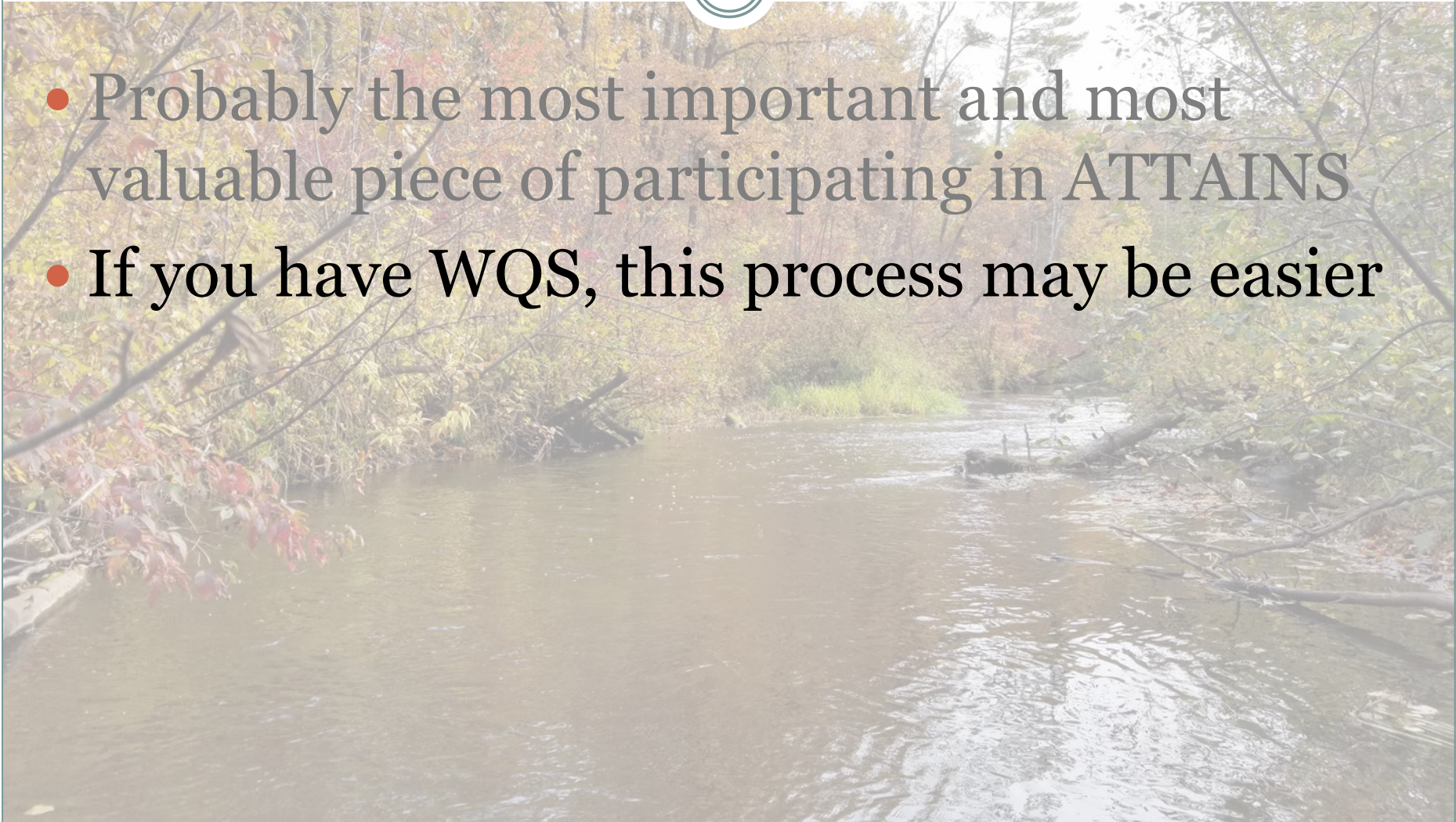




Assessment Methodology



- Probably the most important and most valuable piece of participating in ATTAINS
- **If you have WQS, this process may be easier**





Assessment Methodology



- Probably the most important and most valuable piece of participating in ATTAINS
- If you have WQS, this process may be easier
- If you don't, it requires more thought and planning



Assessment Methodology



- Probably the most important and most valuable piece of participating in ATTAINS
- If you have WQS, this process may be easier
- If you don't, it requires more thought and planning
- **May already have some of the information in your QAPP or reference your WQS**



Considerations for Using ATTAINS



- **Assessment units**
 - Will you use points for sample locations?
 - ✦ No GIS required



Considerations for Using ATTAINS



- **Assessment units**

- Will you use points for sample locations?
 - ✦ No GIS required
- Polygon for lake (or watershed)



Considerations for Using ATTAINS



- **Assessment units**
 - Will you use points for sample locations?
 - ✦ No GIS required
 - Polygon for lake (or watershed)
 - Line segments for stream reaches
 - ✦ How do you determine the segment? Entire reach?
 - ✦ These both require GIS



Considerations for Using ATTAINS



- **Assessment units**
 - Will you use points for sample locations?
 - ✦ No GIS required
 - Polygon for lake (or watershed)
 - Line segments for stream reaches
 - ✦ How do you determine the segment? Entire reach?
 - ✦ These both require GIS
 - If using GIS, this must be submitted before you can submit assessments
 - ✦ Does your Tribe have the capacity to do this?



Considerations for Using ATTAINS



- Do you have a lot of assessment units or monitoring locations?
- Options:
 - Manual entry using the ATTAINS web interface
 - Batch uploading using spreadsheets in ATTAINS





Considerations for Using ATTAINS

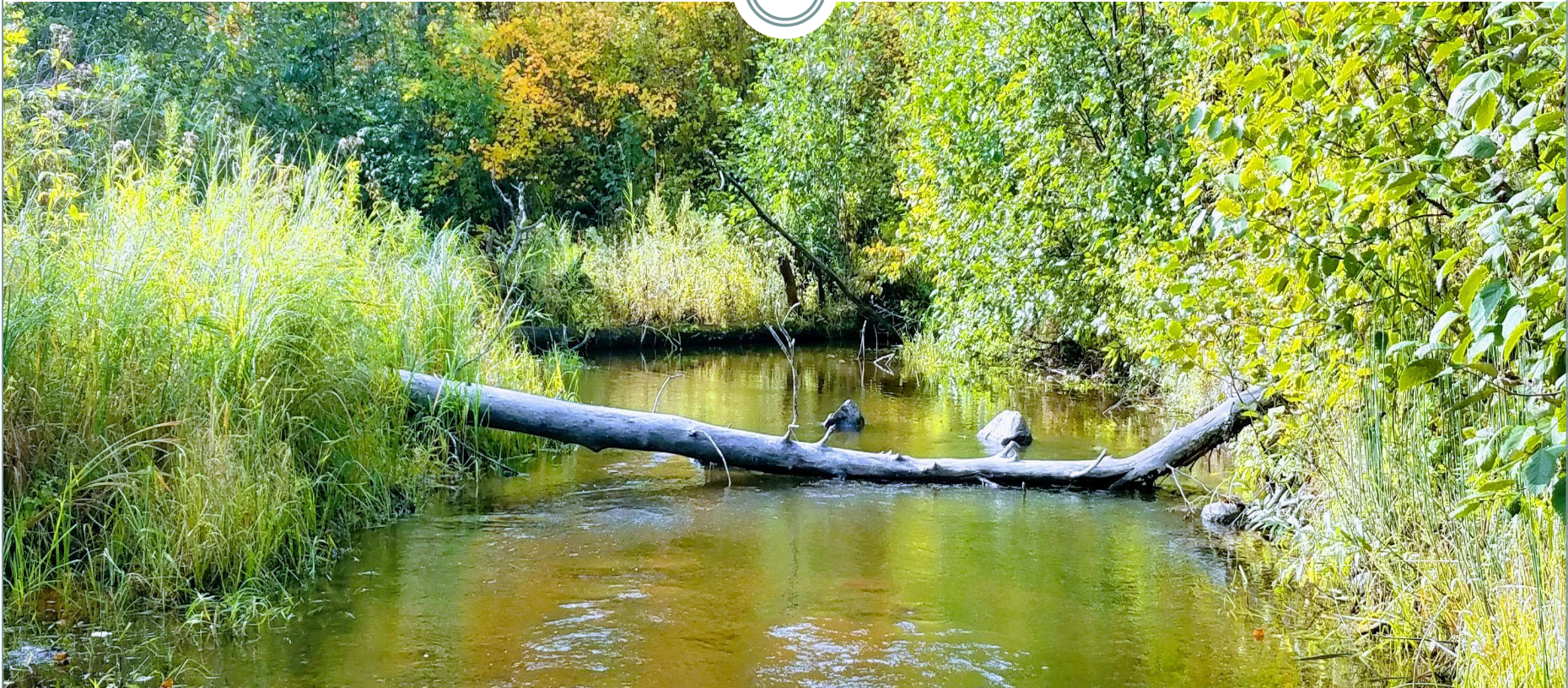


- Understanding Impairments
 - Cause
 - Observed Effect
 - Insufficient Information
 - Meeting Criteria
 - Criteria vs Thresholds
 - Parameter attainment vs parameter status
 - Use attainment





ATTAINS: How Do You Become Involved?





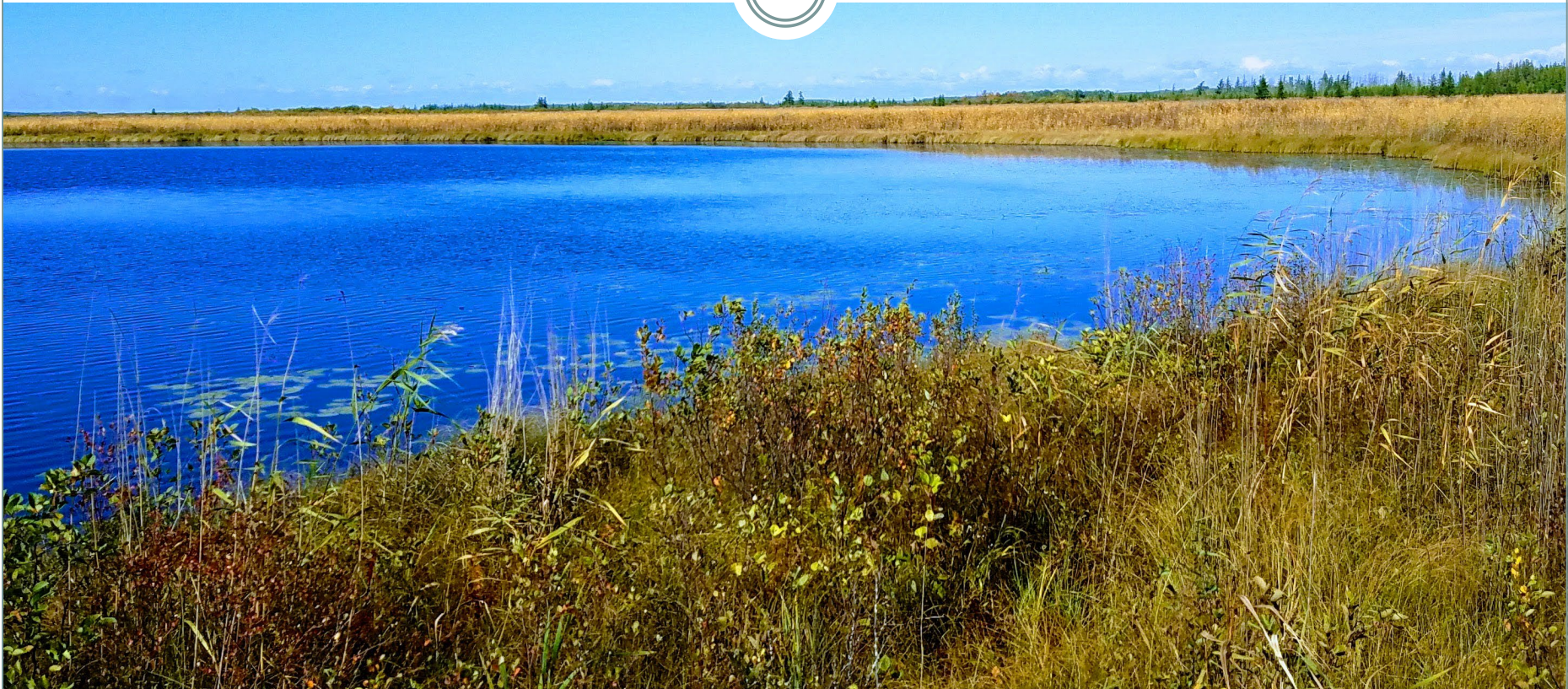
Requirements from the Tribe



- Must be up to date on grants and deliverables
- Submitting data to WQX
- Completing assessments
- Willing to complete an assessment methodology
- Submit a letter of interest to the Region



What Can You Do Now?





What Can You Do Now?



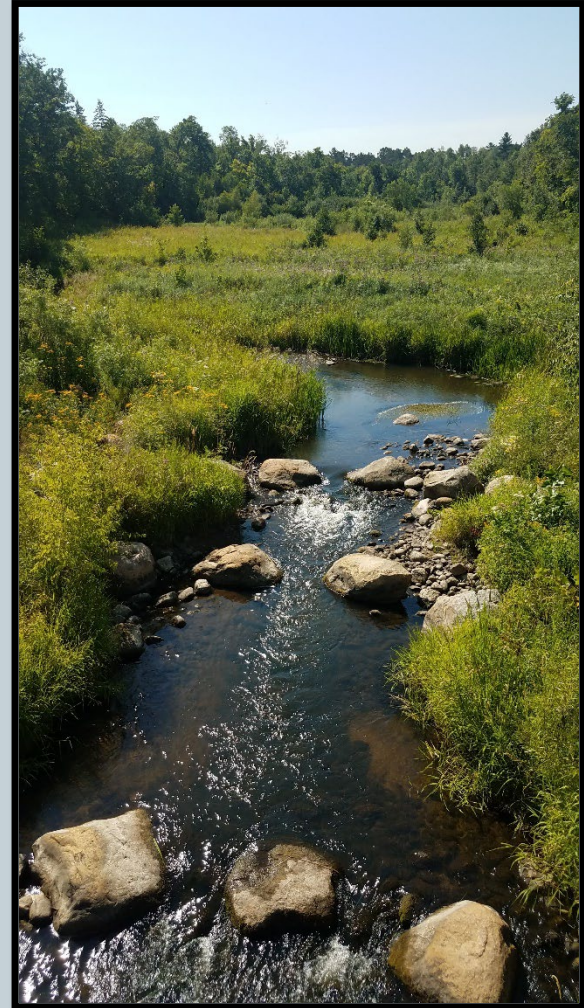
- **Develop an assessment methodology!**
 - Incredibly valuable piece whether you submit through ATTAINS or not
 - Future training??
- **Keep up to date on assessments and grant requirements**
- **Continue submitting data to WQX**



What Can You Do Now?

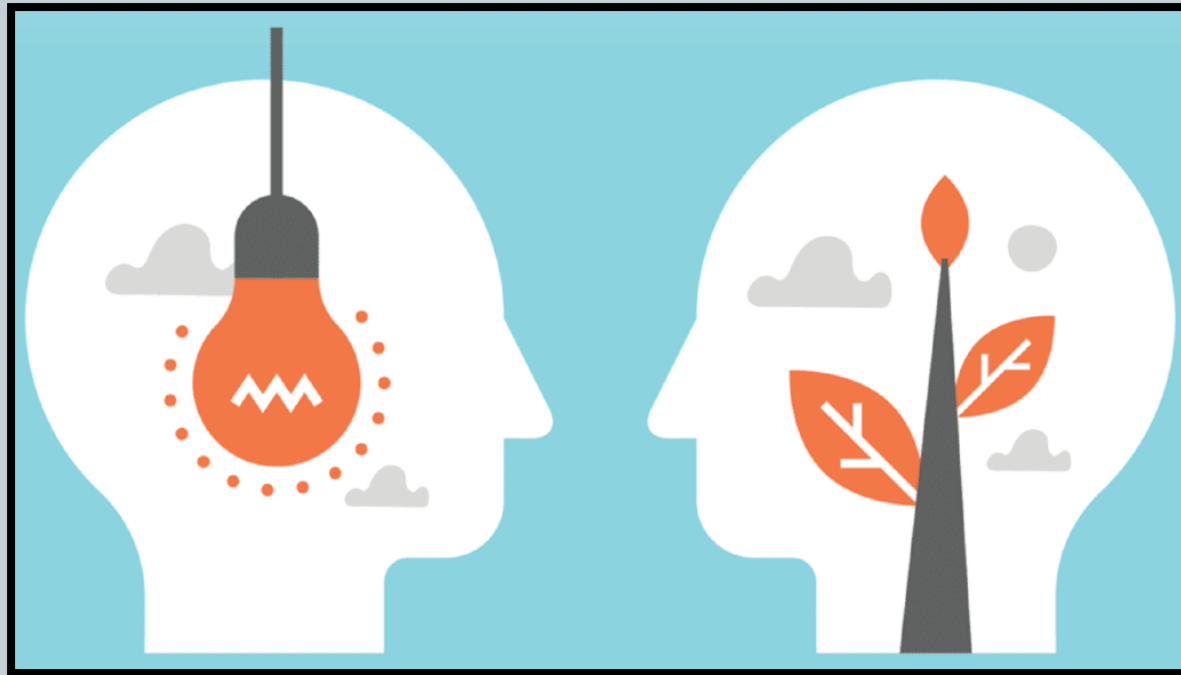


- Be Patient!
- Can't bring everyone in at once
- Requires additional time from mentor tribes and EPA to help
 - In person trainings
 - Funding





Working with a Mentor Tribe





Working with a Mentor Tribe



- Assigned to you by EPA Regional Staff
- Someone “local” you can work with
- One-on-one feedback
- Beneficial having a Tribal perspective
- History of the Mentor Program



Final Thoughts



- Worth the effort?
 - Yes – especially for the assessment methodology
- Requires some thought to initiate
- Heavy lift initially
- In the long-term, a time saver
- Allows one to really look at what the WQ data is saying



Questions?



KAYLA BOWE, RED LAKE NATION
KAYLA.BOWE@REDLAKENATION.ORG

