Resilience and Continuity Despite Staff Changes: A Tribal Perspective

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2024 NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANS

Outline

- Background of Red Lake
- Tribal program structure
- Problems with continuity
- How to make EPA-required documents more useful
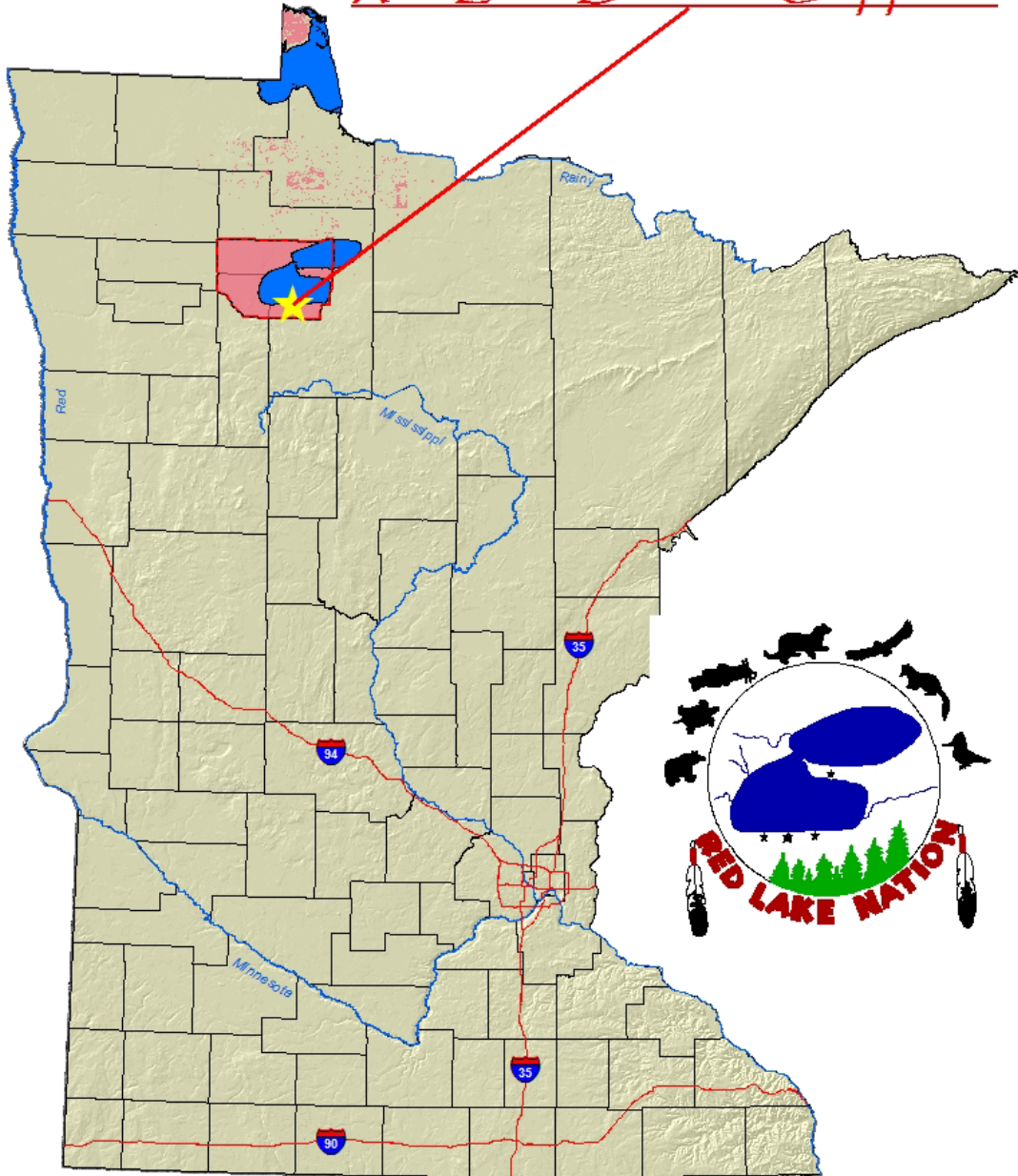- Utilizing networks and partnerships
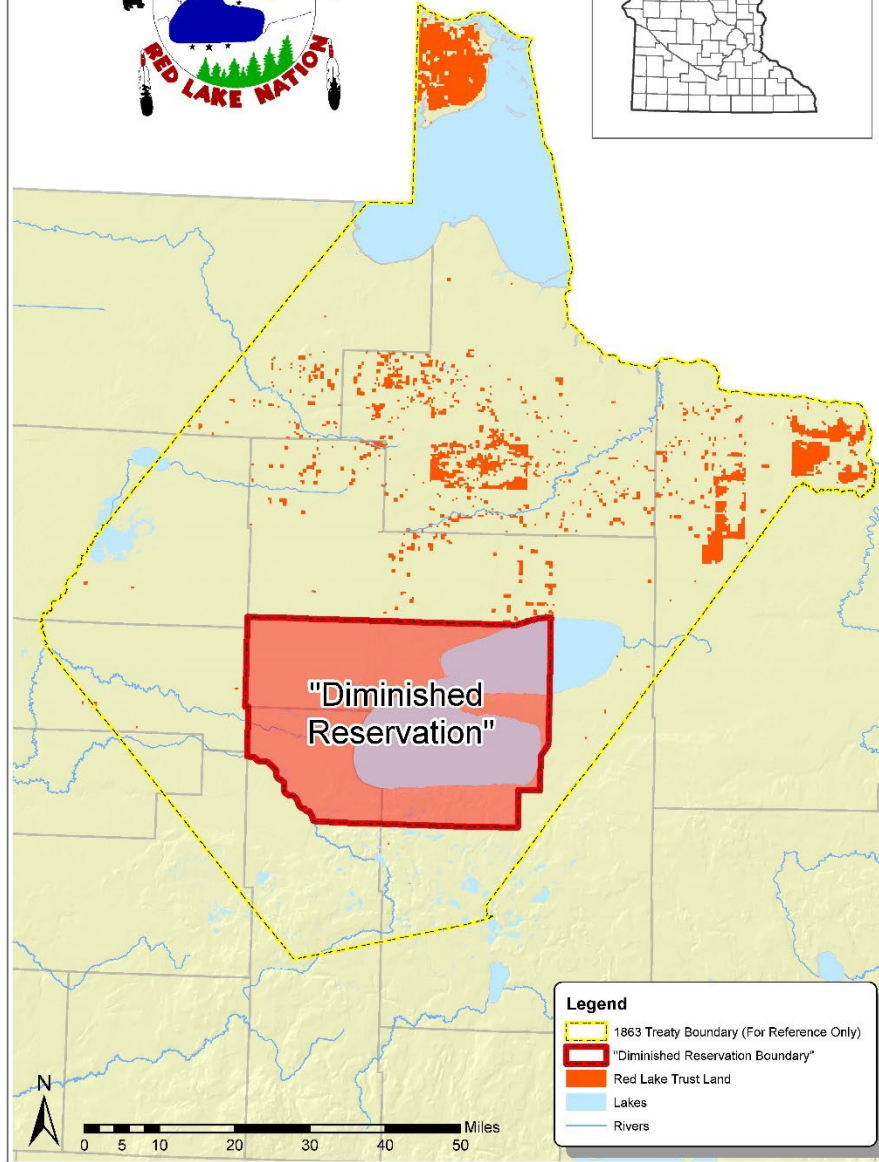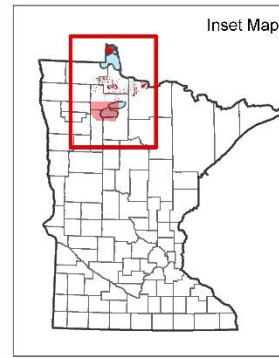- Questions

Background of Red Lake

Red Lake Band of Chippewa

Red Lake Reservation & Restored Ceded Lands

Inset Map

"Diminished Reservation"

Legend
- 1863 Treaty Boundary (For Reference Only)
- "Diminished Reservation Boundary"
- Red Lake Trust Land
- Lakes
- Rivers

Miles
0 5 10   20   30   40   50

N

Water Resources Program

- ~850,000 acres of Trust Land
- Upper and Lower Red Lake ~284,000 acres
- 135 small lakes
- 371 miles of rivers/streams

- Program Staff:
  - Program Director
  - 2 Biologists
  - 2 Technicians
  - 0.5 Wetlands Specialist
  - 0.5 Hydrologist
  - 0.5 Environmental Specialist
  - Summer Interns and Graduate Students
  - Hiring Environmental Specialist & Climate Change Specialist

Tribal Program Structure

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- Varies by Tribe
- Some only have one water resources staff
- Some personnel split between programs
- Inconsistent Funding
  - EPA
  - BIA
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- EPA Programs
  - CWA 106
  - CWA 319
  - WPDG
  - CWA 303(c)/401
  - CWA 402
  - CWA 404
  - CWA 303(d)?

Problems with Continuity

Problems with Continuity

- ## Small Programs and Turnover
  - 1 staff, turnover of 1 = 100%
  - Spread too thin for crossover training

- ## Inconsistent/Low-level Funding
  - Funding hasn't kept up with inflation
  - Can't pay competitive wage
    - Stepping-stone position
  - Mission Creep

Making EPA Documents More Useful

EPA Documents

- QAPPs
- Monitoring Strategy
- Wetland Program Plan
- Assessment Methodology
- SOPs

EPA Documents

- QAPPs and Monitoring Strategies
  - Lots of required information

EPA Documents

- QAPPs and Monitoring Strategies
  - Lots of required information
  - Include additional information useful to a new employee
    - Site Rationale: What site are you sampling? Why? How did you come to this conclusion? What is the frequency of sampling? What parameters are you sampling? Include metadata.
    - Data location: Where is it stored? Is it backed up?
    - Story Maps

EPA Documents

- Assessment Methodologies
  - What are your water quality criteria?
  - What are your designated uses?
  - What is your assessment window?
  - How many data points are needed to make a determination?

Networks and Partnerships

Existing Networks & Partnerships

- ## Regional Tribal Networks
  - Region 5 Tribal Programs
    - Annual TEPM Conference
    - Monthly Calls
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- Local Organizations/Government Units
  - SWCDs, Watershed Districts

Project Collaboration

- Unexpected benefit of project collaboration
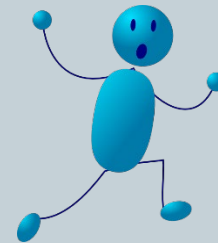 - Can provide continuity

Utilizing Same Equipment

- Same as partner tribes, agencies, etc.
  - Shared SOP
- Rely on network to train staff
- Troubleshoot issues

Final Thoughts

- Documentation!

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Questions?

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