

BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, January 5, 2026

Meeting was also Live Streamed at <http://www.garrettcountymd.gov/live>

IN ATTENDANCE

Chairman Paul C. Edwards
Commissioner Ryan S. Savage
Commissioner S. Larry Tichnell

County Administrator Kevin G. Null

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

- ❖ Deep Creek Quality Analysis Update. Molly Ramsey and Bruce Michael, Watershed Coordinators, Planning & Land Management Division, presented the Board of County Commissioners with an update (attached) on the following:
 - Lake conditions are generally good to fair.
 - While the watershed is primarily forested (~57%), impervious surfaces are increasing, but levels still relatively low (~4%).
 - Trends from the 2009 to 2015 period indicate degrading trends in water clarity, bottom dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, conductivity, nutrients at several lake areas.
 - Throughout 2009 to 2024, degrading water quality conditions appear to be increasing in Deep Creek Lake, especially in the southern lake areas.
- ❖ Mr. Null reviewed a number of administrative and managerial matters under his authority and jurisdiction with the Board of County Commissioners.

CALL TO ORDER PUBLIC SESSION at 4:05 PM

PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Invocation by Commissioner Tichnell

PUBLIC SESSION

1. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Savage, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the revised Public Meeting Agenda for January 5, 2026.
2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Savage, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2025.
3. No business to discuss
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None
5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**
 - ❖ Chairman Edwards announced that the budget process has begun for Fiscal Year 2027.
 - ❖ The Board of Garrett County Commissioners announced that the next Public Meeting will be held on Monday, February 2, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. at the Garrett County Courthouse.

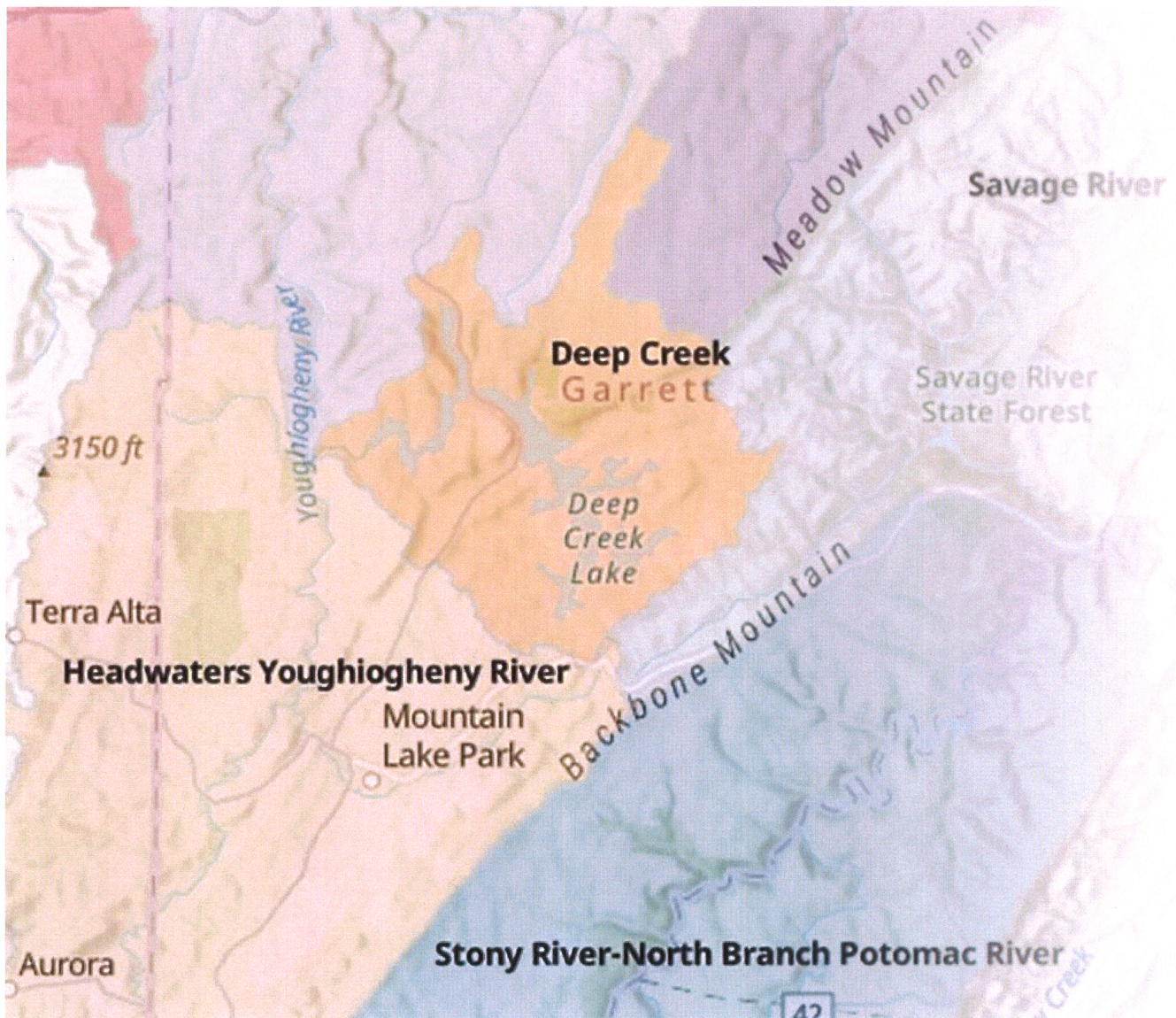
ADJOURNMENT: The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Savage, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, adjourned the Public Meeting at 4:08 P.M.

Attest:

By Order of the Board,

KEVIN G. NULL
County Administrator

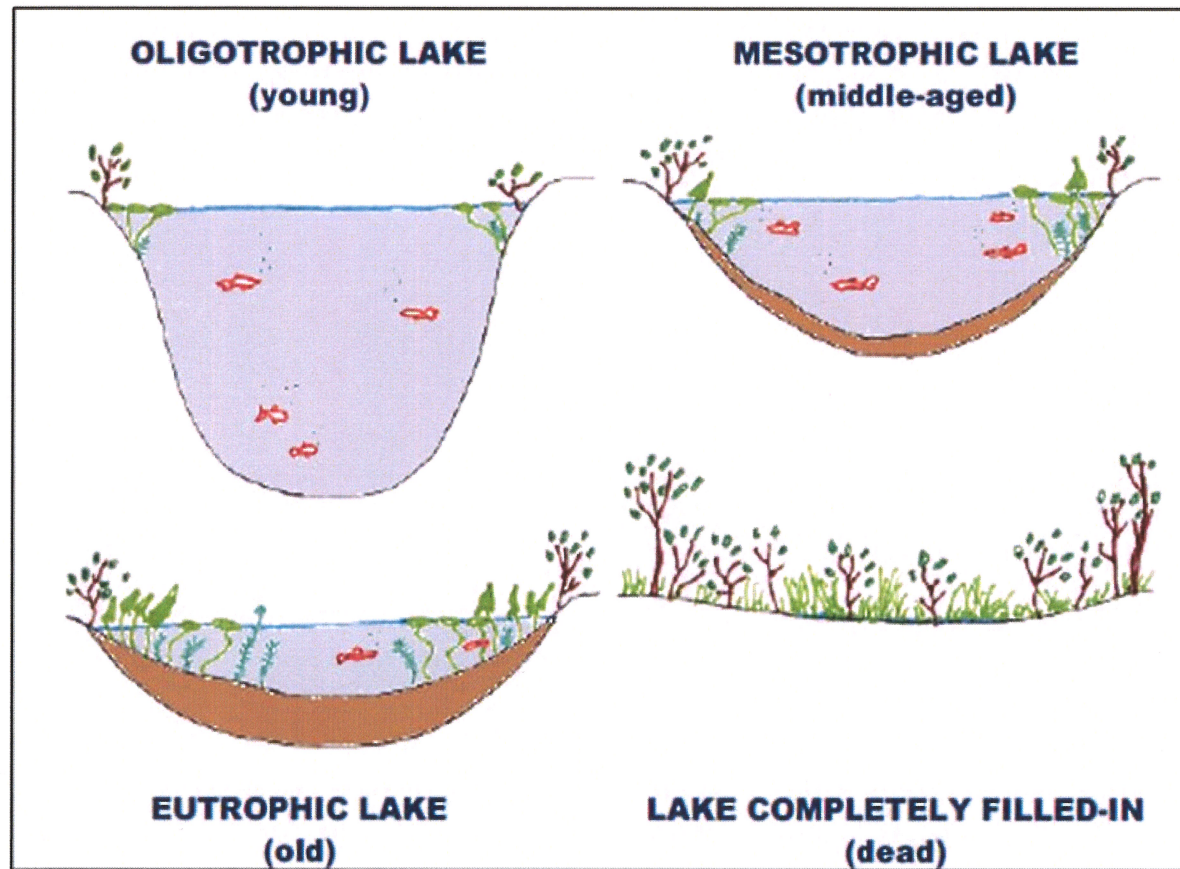
PAUL C. EDWARDS, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners



Topics

- Insights from recent DNR trend analysis of **Deep Creek Lake water quality** monitoring data (2009 – 2024)
- Potential management actions needed
 - e.g. enhanced stormwater management – training and incentives

How does a lake age?



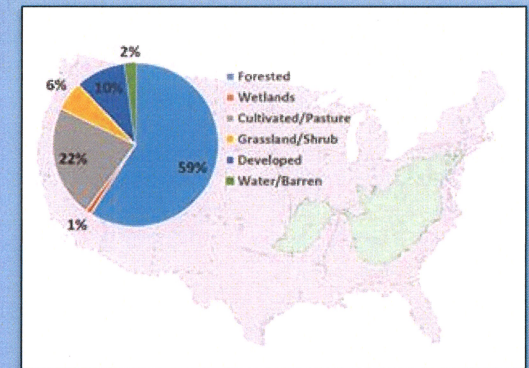
Oligotrophic - Often cold, deep, clear and abundant oxygen levels at all depths; found in areas with little nutrient runoff and little plant growth. Typical fish: lake trout, perch, and walleye.

Mesotrophic - Moderately productive and both oligotrophic and eutrophic lakes. Still relatively clear, but there can be a buildup of sediment and nutrients. Typical fish: musky, northern pike, and bass.

Eutrophic - Shallow, nutrient-rich with high plant growth; dominant in areas where humans have a significant environmental impact. These lakes can be plagued with frequent algal blooms, bottom layer anoxia, and poor water clarity. Typical fish: panfish, bass, catfish, and carp.

Other Methods to Assess Lake Conditions

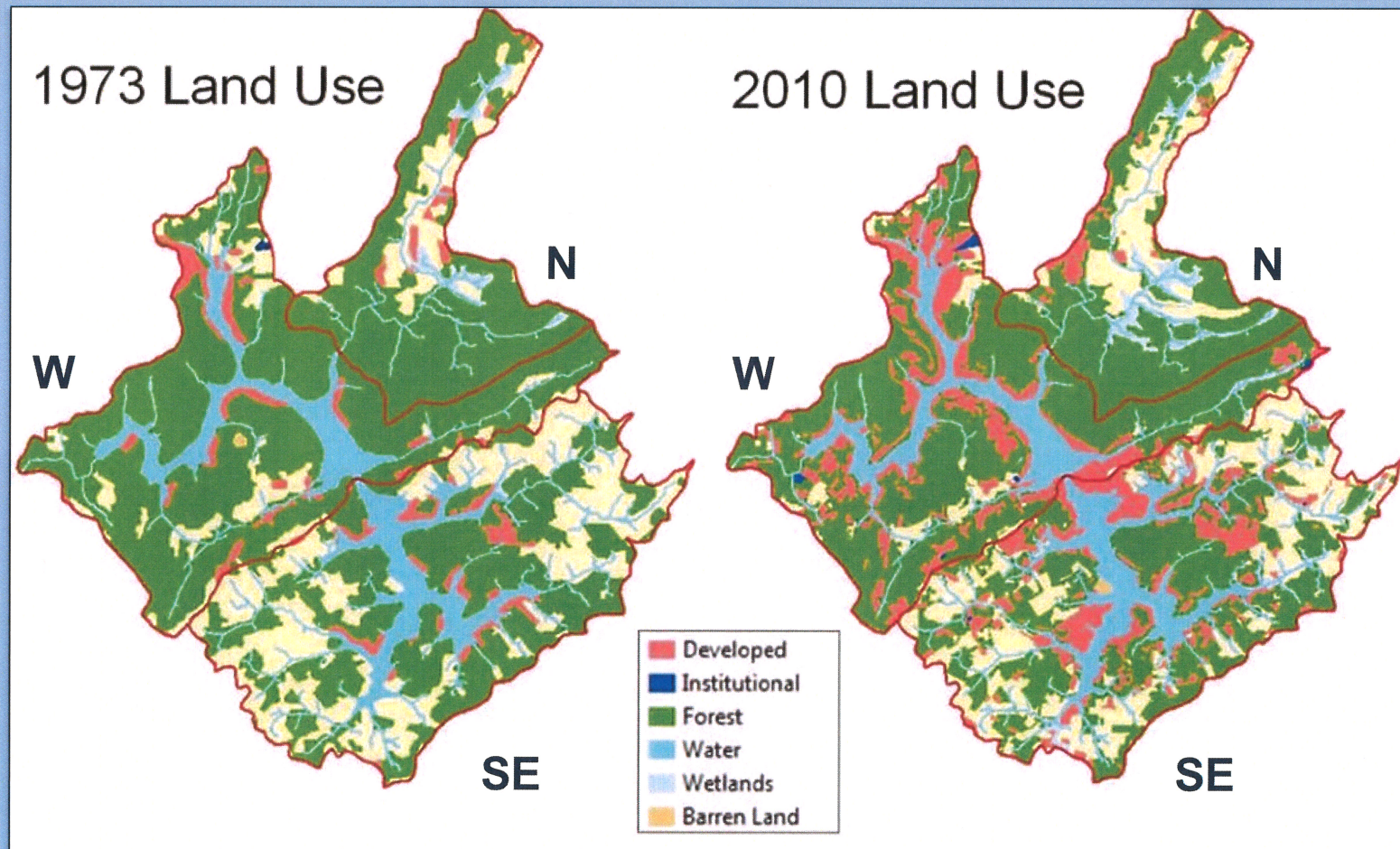
National Lakes Assessment (EPA) - Rates a lake against other similar lakes in the population of lakes in their ecological region (Southern Appalachian) – similar climate, ecological features, and plant and animal communities.



Trophic Status Index (TSI) - Rates lakes on the amount of biological productivity

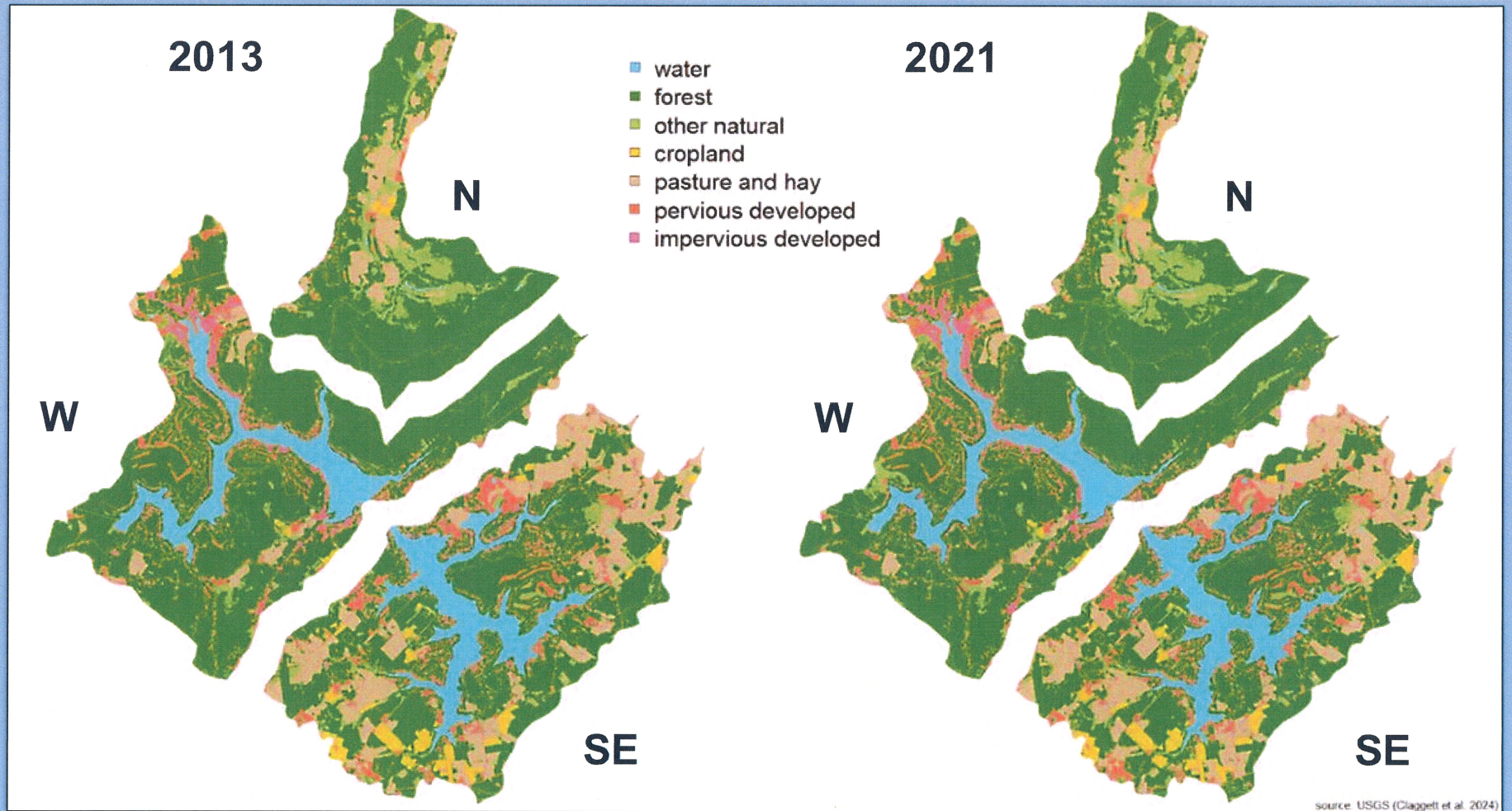
Trophic Class	TSI	Productivity
Oligotrophic	0-40	Low productivity, good WQ
Mesotrophic	40-60	Moderate productivity, fair WQ
Eutrophic	60-100	High productivity, poor WQ

Changing Land Use (1973-2010)



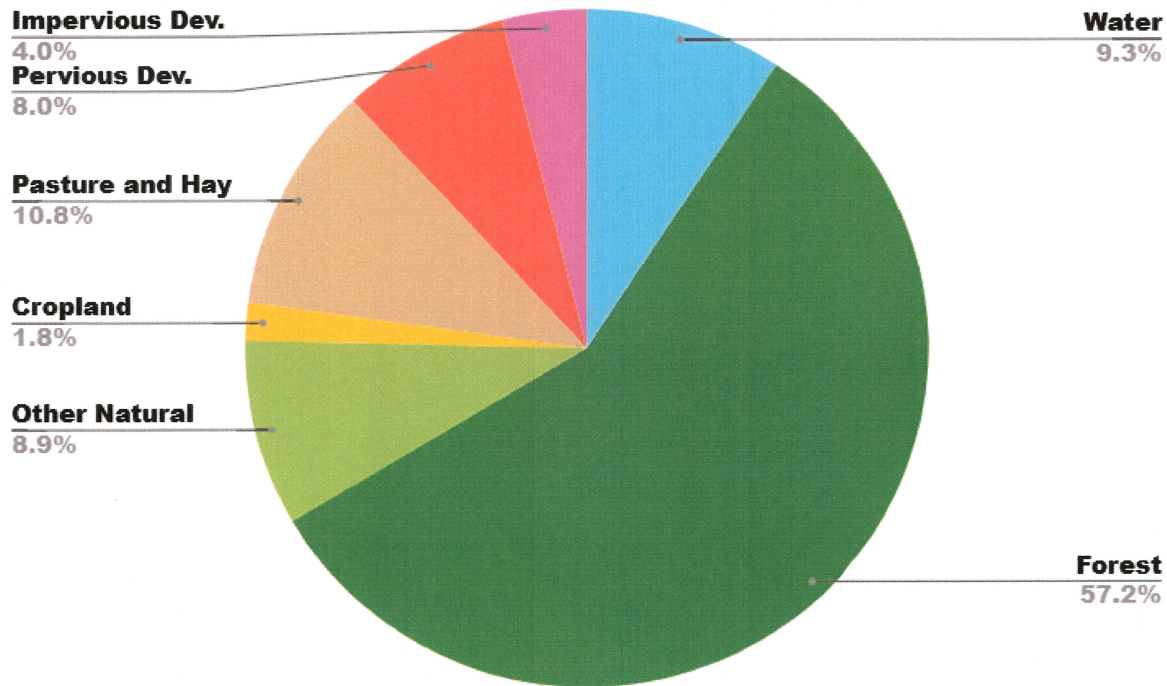
"Land use has not changed significantly over the almost 30 year span, with the majority of land in forests or barren lands." Source: Deep Creek Watershed Draft Characterization Report July 2014

Changing Land Use (2013-2021)



Recent Land Use and Summary of Changes

Deep Creek Watershed - 2021

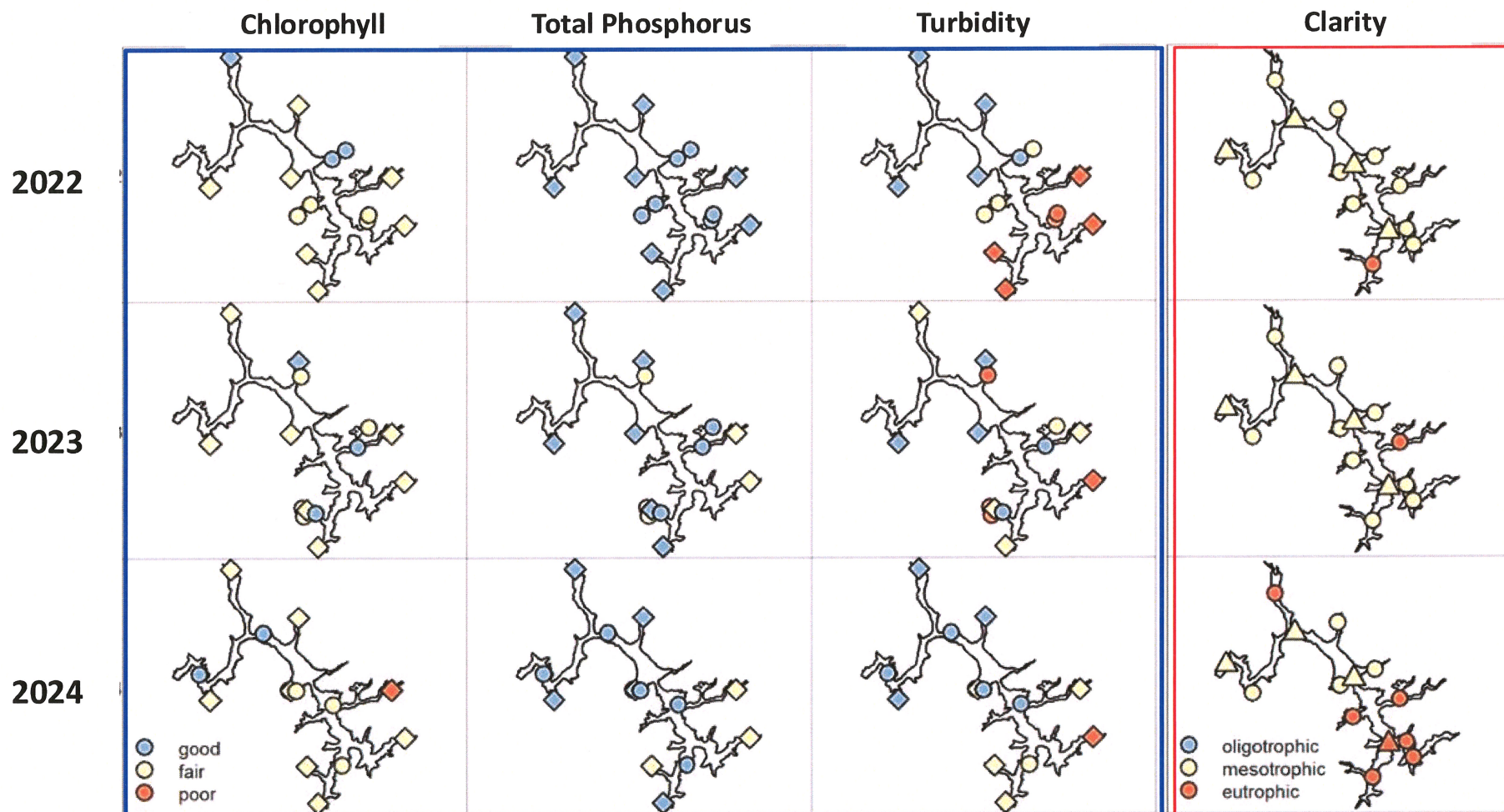


Major Land Use Changes (2013-2021)

- ↓ - 2.3% Forest
- ↑ + 7.0% Impervious

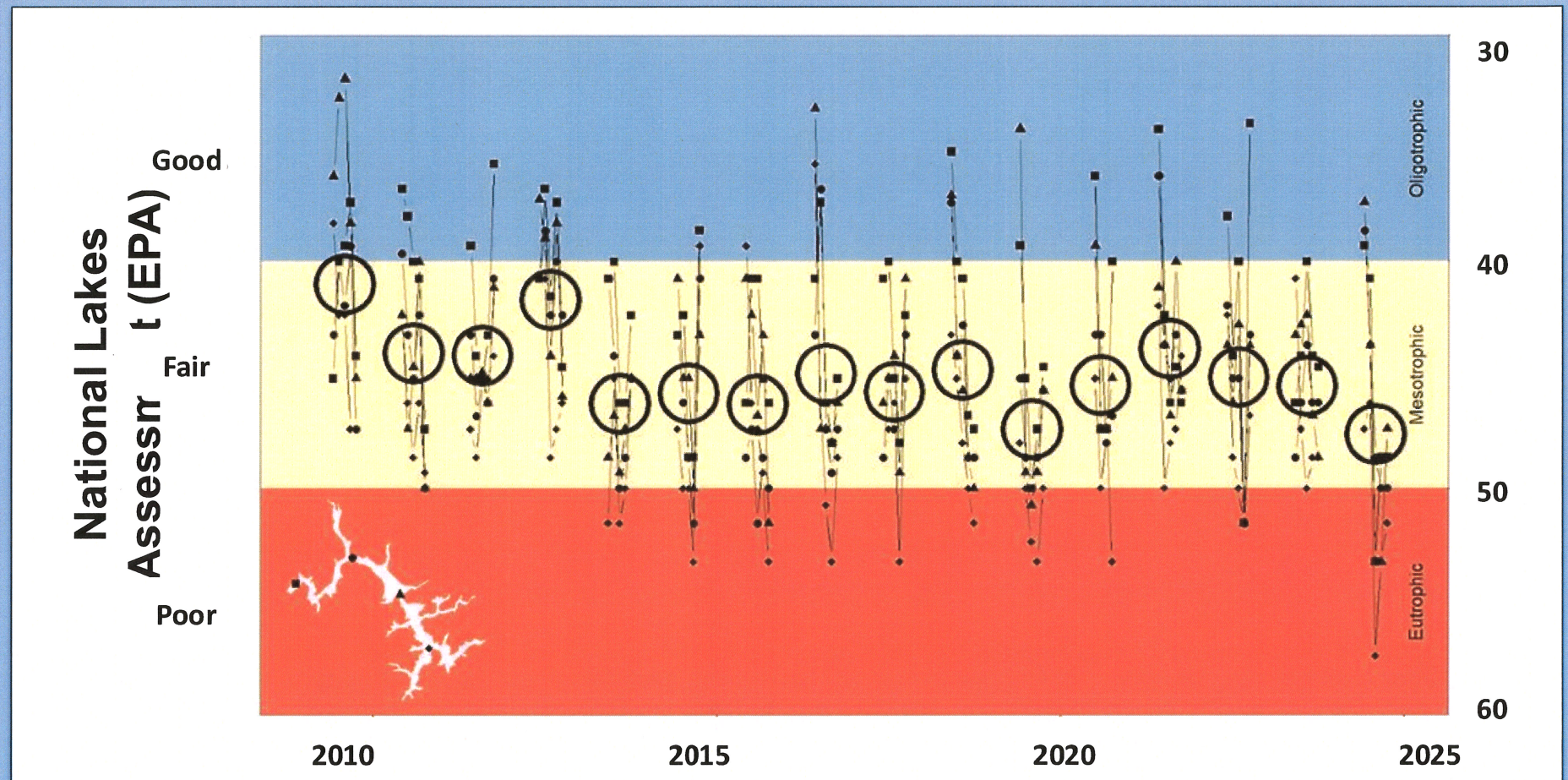
National Lakes Assessment Indicators (EPA)

Trophic State Index



categories: EPA, 2022 National Lakes Assessment, Southern Appalachians Ecoregion

Water Clarity at Main Lake Stations (2009-2024)



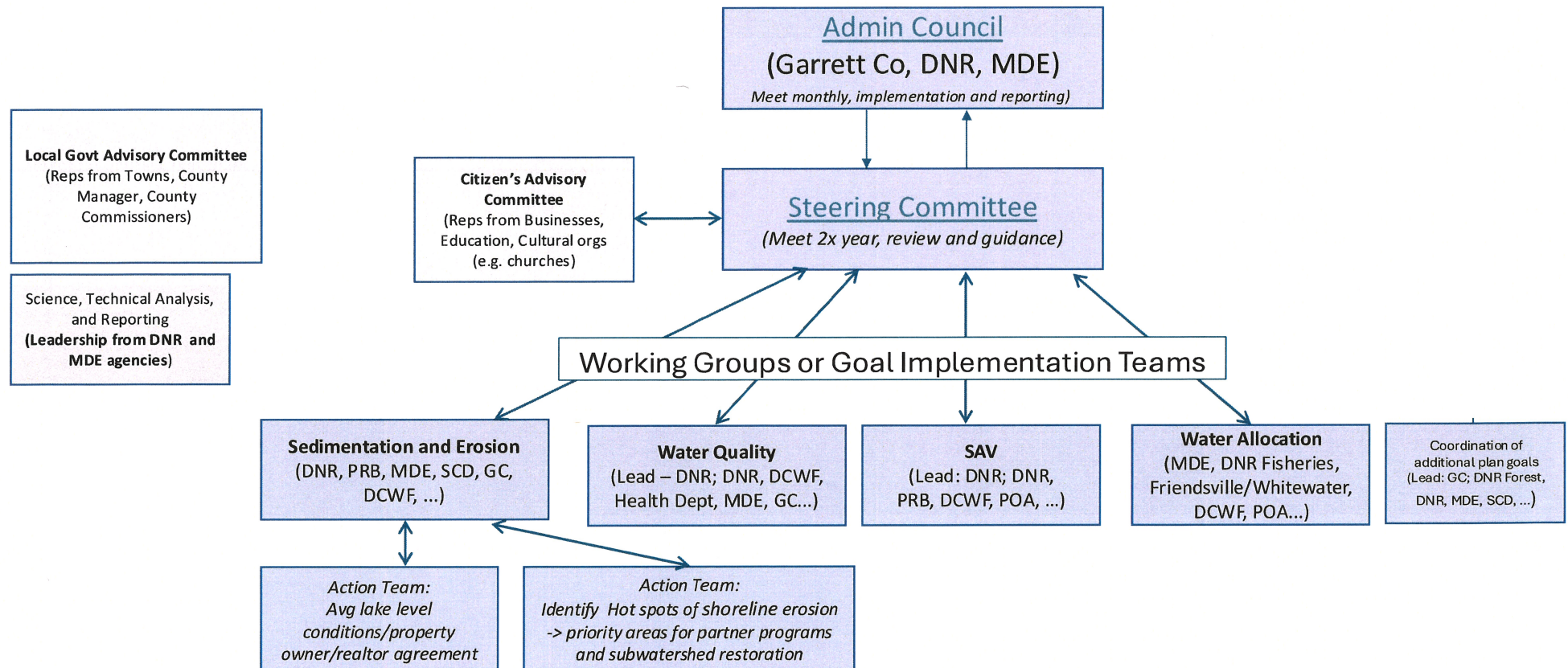
Conclusions

- Lake conditions are generally good to fair.
- While the watershed is primarily forested (~57%), impervious surfaces are increasing, but levels still relatively low (~4%).
- Trends from the 2009 to 2015 period indicate degrading trends in water clarity, bottom dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, conductivity, nutrients at several lake areas.
- Throughout 2009 to 2024, degrading water quality conditions appear to be increasing in Deep Creek Lake, especially in the southern lake areas.

Conclusions (Continued)

- Since 2009, while still considered fair, there has been a significant decline in main lake water clarity.
- Since 2009, surface water temperatures at main lake stations areas have increased ~1F.
- Since 2009, bottom dissolved oxygen conditions at Glendale Road Bridge have degraded.

DRAFT Organizational Structure of the *Deep Creek Lake Watershed Management Partnership*



Potential County Gov't Actions

Deep Creek Watershed Management Plan

- Public communication about work of partnership
- Continued engagement in working groups, steering committee

State Funding and Management

- Push for continued and expanded funding for Deep Creek e.g. shoreline erosion, boating activity

Emerging concerns

- Potential impact of Renewable Energy Certainty Act on ability of county to address needed stormwater management for solar farms

Stormwater Management

- Use DNR's trend analysis to map Priority Implementation Zones for Enhanced Stormwater Management or Implement for all of watershed

Watershed Steward Incentives

- Tax incentive program for actions taken to reduce erosion and sedimentation and protect water quality e.g. upgrade stormwater systems

County Agencies as model Watershed Stewards

- Ensure county agencies implementing best management practices as watershed stewards
- Demo projects - e.g. county roads implement demo for stormwater and erosion control measures

Septic and Sewer:

- Identify Septic Stewardship Areas near priority coves and pilot coordinated pump-outs, inspections, public sewer, and targeted upgrades or cluster systems.

Public communication

- Press releases sharing presentations, what state and county can do, potential incentives for watershed steward program (best practices for businesses and residential property owners)
- Public meeting with Adm Council