

**Table 2. Factors for differentiating among lakes, shallow lakes, and wetlands.**  
 For purposes of applying water quality standards and making 303(d) assessments.  
 (July 13, 2009 draft – MPCA Environmental Analysis and Outcomes Division).

Factor	Lakes	Shallow lakes	Wetlands
Protected Waters Inventory Code	Typically coded as “L or LP” in PWI	May be coded as either “L, LP or LW” in PWI	Typically coded as a “LW” in PWI
Depth, maximum	Typically >15 feet	Typically < 15 feet	Typically < 7 feet
Littoral area	Typically <80%	Typically >80%	Typically 100%
Area (minimum)	> 10 acres (Bulletin 25)	> 10 acres (Bulletin 25)	No minimum
Thermal stratification (summer)	Stratification common but dependant upon depth, size and fetch	Typically do not thermally stratify	Typically do not stratify.
Fetch	Significant fetch depending on size & shape	Fetch is variable depending on size & shape	Rarely has a significant fetch
Substrate	Consolidated sand/silt/gravel	Consolidated to mucky	Mucky to unconsolidated
Shoreline features	Generally wave formed, often sand, gravel or rock	Generally wave formed, often sand, gravel or rock	Generally dominated by emergents
Emergent vegetation & relative amount of open water	Shoreline may have ring of emergents; vast majority of basin open water.	Emergents common, may cover much of fringe of lake; basin often has high percentage of open water.	Emergents often dominate much of basin; often minimal open water.
Submergent vegetation	Common in littoral fringe, extent dependant on transparency	Abundant in clear lakes; however may be lacking in algal-dominated turbid lakes.	Common unless dominated by an emergent like cattail.
Dissolved Oxygen	Aerobic epilimnion; hypolimnion often anoxic by midsummer	Aerobic epilimnion but wide diurnal flux possible	Diurnal flux & anaerobic conditions common
Fishery	Typically managed for a sport/game fishery. May be stocked. MDNR fishery assessments typically available.	May or may not be managed for a sport fishery. If so, fishery assessment should be available. Winter aeration often used to minimize winterkill potential.	Typically not managed for a sport fishery. Little or no MDNR fishery information. Seldom aerated May be managed to remove fish & promote waterfowl.
Uses	Wide range of uses including boating, swimming, skiing, fishing; boat ramps & beaches common	Boating, fishing, waterfowl production, hunting, aesthetics; limited swimming; may have boat ramp, beaches uncommon	Waterfowl & wildlife production, hunting, aesthetics. Unimproved boat ramp if any. No beaches.