



# Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley



2 February 2016





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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Lake Cluster Maps</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Biological Significance</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Social and Cultural Significance</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Threats</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Future Priority</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Local Institutions for Wetland Conservation</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Phewa Lake and Catchment Area	8
2. Kamalpokhari Lake and Catchment Area	10
3. Begnas Lake and Catchment Area	12
4. Rupa Lake and Catchment Area	14
5. Khaste Lake and Catchment Area	16
6. Dipang Lake and Catchment Area	18
7. Maldi Lake and Catchment Area	20
8. Gunde Lake and Catchment Area	22
9. Neurani Lake and Catchment Area	24
10. Pokhara Seti Catchment Area	26
<b>References</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Lake Conservation Committee</b>	<b>29</b>



## Introduction

Pokhara valley situated around 200 km west of the Kathmandu, which is a widening of the Seti Gandaki valley. The Pokhara name itself was derived from “Pokhari”, which is meant for Pond in Nepali vernacular- one of the wetland types. The valley itself is one of the most popular tourism destinations in Nepal, where natural heritages, especially lakes and mountains are main tourist attractions. It is also known as the “City of the Lake”. The Lake cluster of the Pokhara Valley has of international importance, as it supports vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered species as well as threatened ecological communities. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Site of Nepal, declared on 2 February 2016.



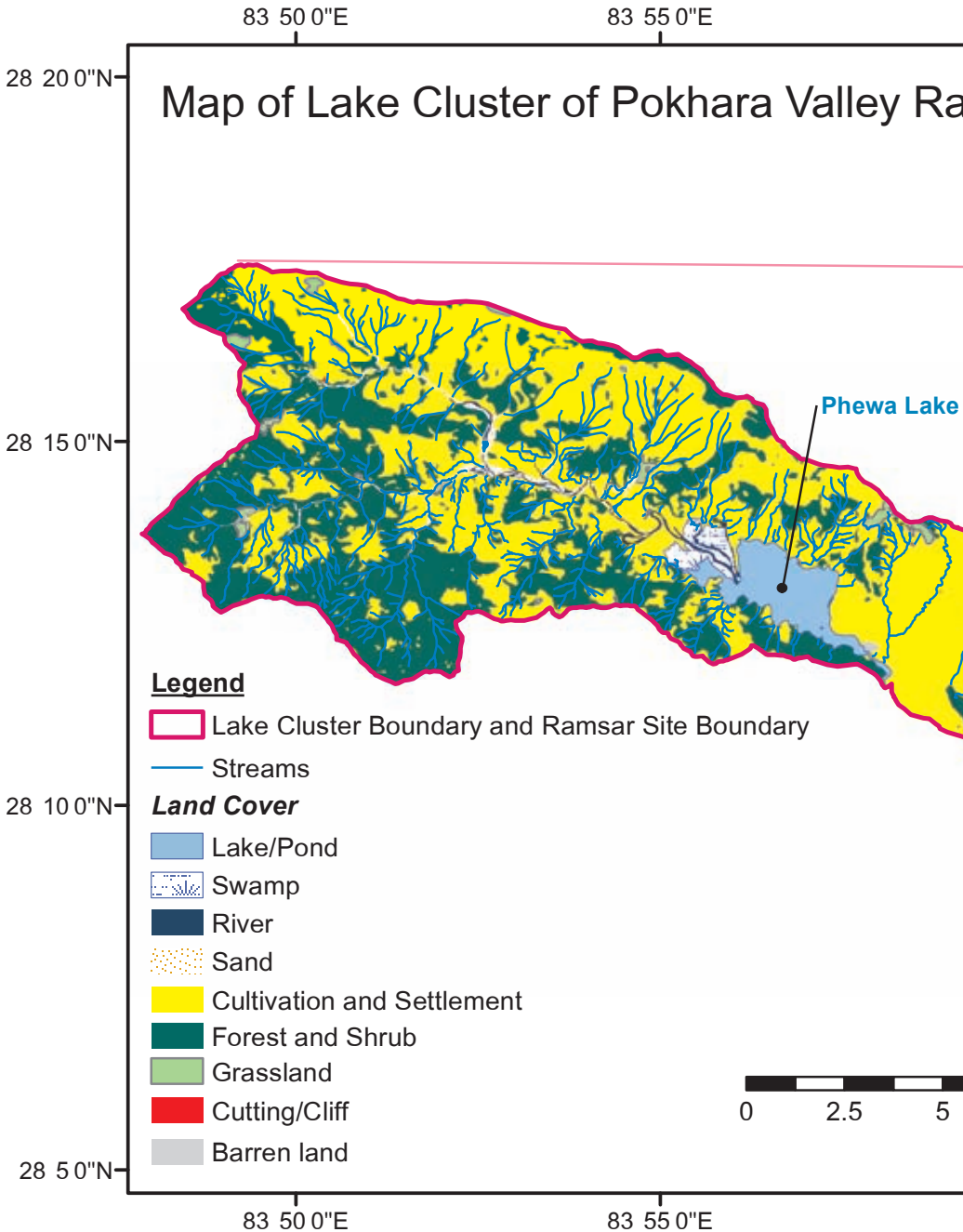
The Lake Cluster of the Pokhara Valley Ramsar Site comprises of the nine lakes, located in the two municipalities of the Kaski district, Western Development region of the Nepal. Out of the nine lakes, two lakes namely Phewa and Kamalpokhari are in Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan city where the rest of the lakes belong to Lekhnath Municipality.

**Table 1: Lake Cluster of the Pokhara Valley**

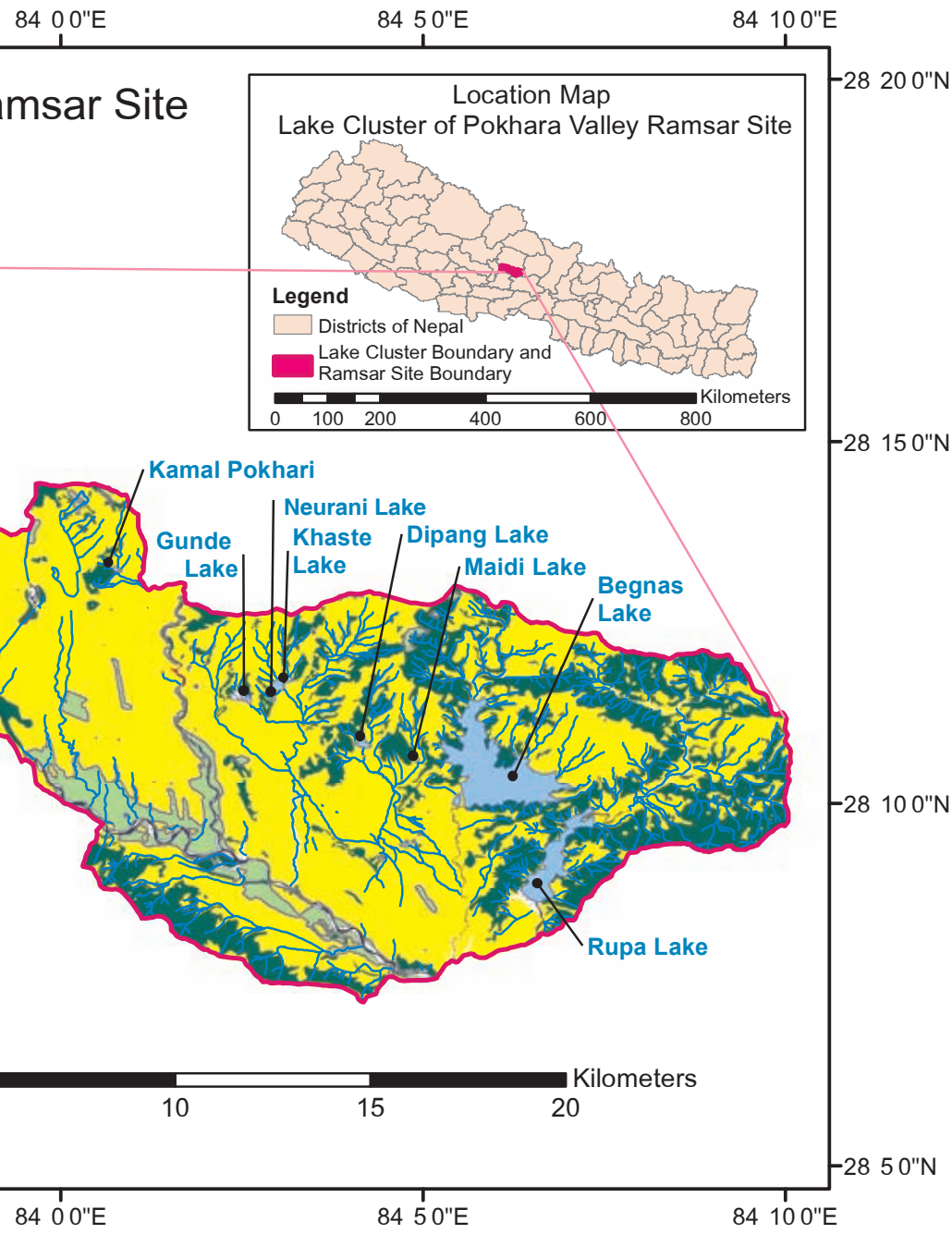
Wetland	Location (Municipality and wards)	Total Catchment Area (sq km)	Water bodies (sq km)
Phewa	Pokhara Municipality	119.0	4.51
Begnas	Lekhnath Municipality, 9 & 11	18.4	3.27
Rupa	Lekhnath Municipality	27.6	1.07
Khaste	Lekhnath Municipality, 3,4 & 6	2.7	0.09
Dipang	Lekhnath Municipality, 6	2.4	0.06
Maidi	Lekhnath Municipality, 9	1.6	0.01
Gunde	Lekhnath Municipality, 4	0.6	0.08
Neurani	Lekhnath Municipality, 6	0.2	0.02
Kamalpokhari	Pokhara Municipality, 13	1.2	0.02
Pokhara Seti Catchment		87.3	0.11
<b>Total</b>		<b>261.1</b>	<b>9.24</b>

The total area of the catchment comprises of 261.1 sq km, which comprises of water bodies, agriculture land, forests, settlement and other built-up area. Agriculture land dominates the land use in the catchment area followed by forests, and water bodies. Water bodies comprises nearly 3.5% of the total catchment area of the lake cluster.

# Lake Cluster Maps







## Biological Significance

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The lake and catchment area provide home to many globally threatened and endemic plants, birds and wetland dependent mammals. Tamrakar (2008) reported 60 aquatic plants on the Pokhara Lake clusters, which comprises of 16 sub-merged, 4-free floating, 6 rooted floating and rest are emergent plant species. The same study also identified 203 terrestrial plant species with varieties of uses (Tamrakar, 2008). Rare marsh wild rice *Oryza rufipogon* is also found around the lake. Some of the threatened plants found in the lake cluster includes *Alstonia scholaris*; *Apostasia wallichii* and *Michelia champaca*; *Asparagus racemosus*; *Bulbophyllum plyrhiza*; *Cymbidium iridioides*, *Dendrobium densiflorum*, *D. fimbiatum* and *Cyathea spinosa*; *Dioscorea deltoidea*; *Oberonia nepalensis*; *O. iridifolia*; *Oroxylum indicum* and *Papilionanthe sp.*; *Oryza rufipogon* (wild gene pool of cultivated rice); *Tinospora sinensis* and monogeneric species like *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Trapa natans* and *Typha angustifolia*.

There are 168 bird species found around the Lake clusters, (Tamrakar, 2008) including endangered, endemic and globally threatened bird species. Out of the 168 bird species, 10 species are included under CITES Appendix while, five species fall under various threat categories of the IUCN. Some of the endemic/threatened birds found in the Lake cluster include Spiny Babbler (*Turdoides nepalensis*), Nepal Wren Babbler (*Proeopyga immaculate*), Comb duck (*Sarkidiornis melanotos*), Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*), Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) etc.

The lake cluster harbors 28 species of the fishes, 11 species of the frogs, 28 species of the reptiles and 36 species of the mammals (Tamrakar, 2008). The common otter (*Lutra lutra*) is found in the lake, which is included under Appendix I (CITES) and Nearly Extinction (IUCN). Population of otter is declining around the lake cluster.



## Social and Cultural Significance

The lake clusters of the Pokhara valley have high socio-cultural significances. There are lot of temples and shrines on the catchment area of the lake city. Each lake has own cultural value or significance, where lakes are used for celebration of festivals, holy baths and worship God and Goddess.

©Photo Credit: Anonymous



Wetlands Name	Socio-cultural significance
Phewa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tal Barahi temple is situated in the middle of the lake</li> </ul>
Begnas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barahi temple in Begnas tal is visited during the full moon, Teej festival (fasting by women for the betterment of their husband) and <i>Sangranti</i> celebration on every month (the first day Nepali Month).</li> <li>Religio-cultural performances are done before and after paddy crop cultivation and harvesting</li> </ul>
Rupa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rupa is historically a known being a site where famous Rishi called <i>Chewan</i> who practiced Yoga at the bank of lake for long time</li> <li>Barahi temple and Shiva temples are found popular religious destinations in the middle of the lake and people visit during Shivaratri</li> <li>Religio-cultural performances are done before and after paddy crop cultivation and harvesting festival</li> </ul>
Khaste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tal Barahi is religiously important as people take bath in the 11<sup>th</sup> day of full moon i.e., <i>Ekadasi</i>, during solar eclipse, Ram Nawami, new year and Dashain</li> </ul>
Dipang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local people believe lake water is holy for worship of the God and Goddess</li> </ul>
Maidi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maidi lake is regarded as important religiously and people take bath during new year</li> </ul>
Gunde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gunde lake is considered as sacred and people take bath towards the exit during women festival <i>Teej</i>, <i>Ekadasi</i>, full moon, during solar eclipse, Ram Nawami, new year and human cremation</li> </ul>
Neurani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neurani lake is important for fishing</li> </ul>
Kamalpokhari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kamalpokhari (Buddha lake) has small temples in the west and people worship for Snake God during Nagpanchami</li> </ul>

## Uses

These lakes have greater value in groundwater recharge, flood control and sediment trapping. Thousands of people are dependent on these lakes for the tourism business, wetland resources, irrigation and fishery. Some uses of the wetland include:

- Irrigation
- Electricity
- Recreation/Tourism
- Commercial fish farming
- Maintaining balance in local hydrology and ecology
- Festival celebration/ worships (Religious)



@Photo Credit: Amit Poudel

## Threats

Major threats to the lakes are from (a) mass tourism (b) commercial fishing and (c) land use changes, especially settlement and built-up area expansion. Some of the threats include:

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Encroachment/ Agriculture land expansion
- Pollution (Solid waste)
- Commercial fishing
- Aquatic invasion
- Excessive tourism pressure
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Urbanization/settlement expansion
- Infrastructure development



@Photo Credit: Sony Baral Gauri

## Future Priority

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- Wetland restoration focusing on (a) sedimentation control, (b) sustainable land use practices, (c) water quality improvement, and (d) pollution control
- Diversifying livelihoods through (a) community based tourism management, (b) good aqua-culture practice promotion, and (c) wise use of wetland resources
- Strengthening wetland governance, especially by (a) strengthening community/stakeholder capacity on wetland management, (b) strengthening/promoting mult-stakeholders platform for wetland management, and (c) institutionalizing Payment for Ecosystem services

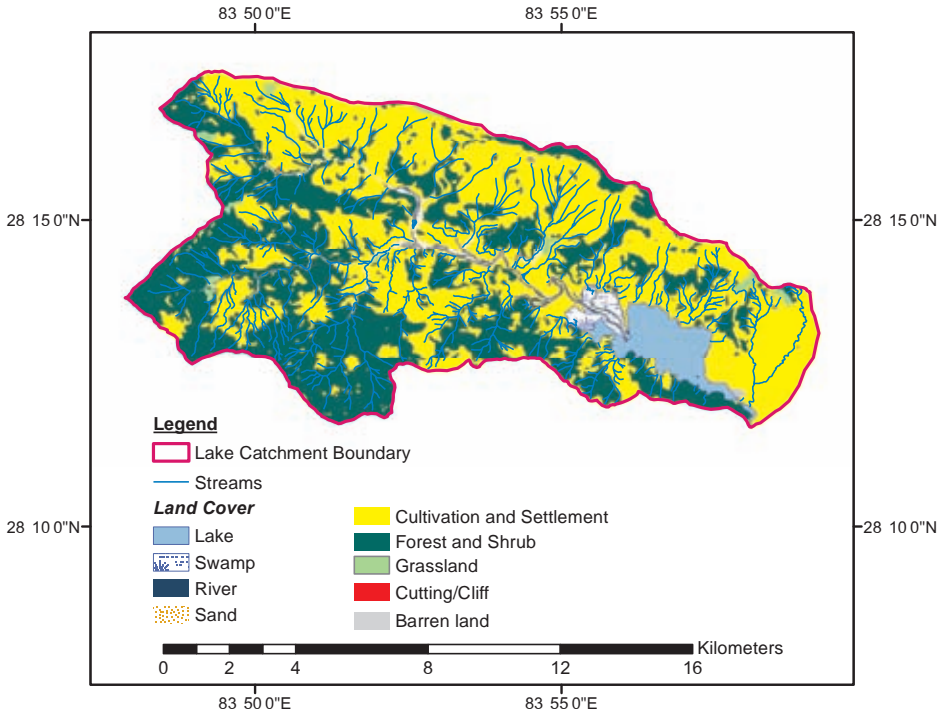
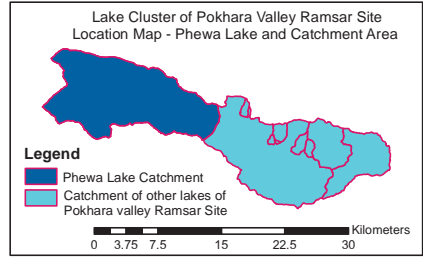
## Local Institutions for Wetland Conservation

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Pokhara Valley Lake Conservation Committee is established in 2008, which comprises of main lake conservation committee and 9 Lake specific sub-committee.



# 1. Phewa Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Pokhara Municipality
Coordinate	83°47'52.8" - 83°59'11.7" E 28°11'37.1" - 28°17'25.7" N
Altitude	762 – 2,483
Total Catchment area	119.0 sq. km
Water bodies	4.51 sq. km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Majhi (Fishing people)
Wetland type	Fresh water lake



## Wetland Values

- Rare and endangered fish species
- Cultural and religious use (Tal Barahi temple & Buddha Stupa); Tal Barahi temple is situated in the middle of the lake
- Source of livelihoods for Majhi communities (wetland dependent) and Boat users
- Globally threatened plants

## Wetland Uses

- Irrigation
- Commercial fishing
- Boating (Tourism)
- Hydro-power (Electricity) generation

## Wetland Threats

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Encroachment/Agriculture land expansion
- Pollution (Solid waste)
- Commercial fishing
- Aquatic invasion
- Excessive tourism pressure
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Urbanization/settlement expansion

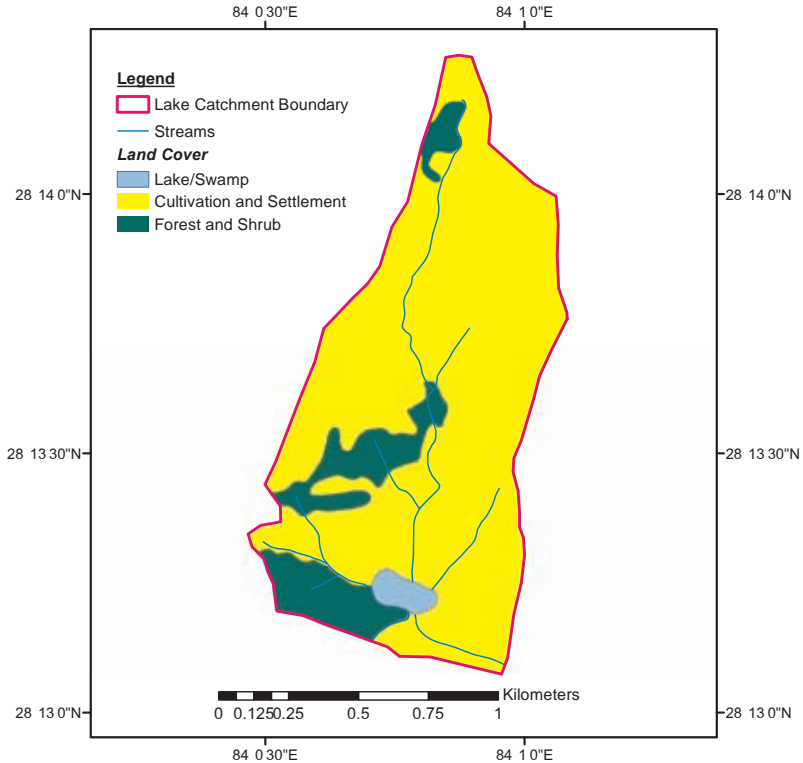
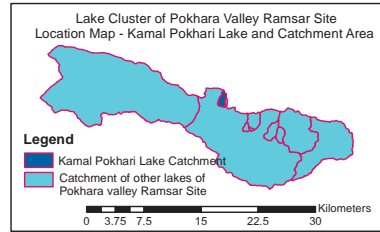
## Management Priority

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Institutional strengthening

## Institutions

- Lake Conservation Committee
- Boating Association
- Fishermen Cooperative

## 2. Kamalpokhari Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Pokhara Municipality, Ward No 13
Coordinate	84°00'28.0" - 84°01'05.0" E 28°13'04.4" - 28°14'16.1" N
Altitude	550 – 1,439 m
Total Catchment area	1.2 sq km
Water bodies	0.02 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Jalahari community (Majhi, Bote, Darai & Poday)
Wetland type	Marsh land with patches of swamp land





### Wetland Values

- Cultural and religious value (Holy place/Annual festival/temple construction)
- Kamalpokhari (Buddha lake) has small temple in the west and people worship for Snake God during *Nagpanchami*
- Lotus species

### Wetland Uses

- Paddy cultivation
- Fishing
- Festival celebration (Religious and cultural)

### Wetland Threats

- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Water bodies encroachment/Agriculture land expansion
- Paddy cultivation
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Encroachment
- Settlement/built-up area expansion
- Extinction of lotus plant

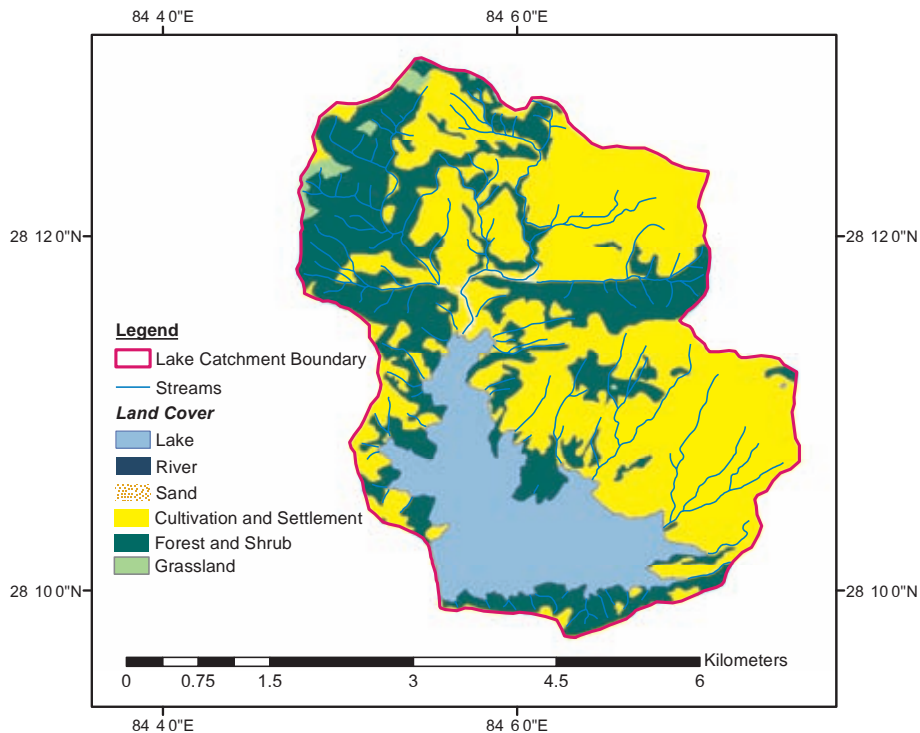
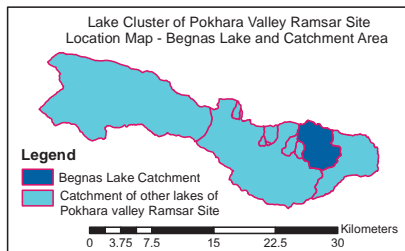
### Management Priority

- Wetland Restoration
- Livelihoods improvement/diversification

### Institutions

- Lake Conservation Committee
- Mother group

### 3. Begnas Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality, Ward No 9 & 11
Coordinate	84°04'45.3" - 84°07'35.7" E 28°09'44.1" - 28°13'0.4" N
Altitude	637 – 1,439 m
Total Catchment area	18.4 sq. km
Water bodies	3.27 sq. km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Jahahari communities (Fishing people)
Wetland type	Freshwater Lake



## Wetland Values

- Rare and endangered fish species
- Cultural and religious value (Holy place)
- Barahi temple is visited during the full moon, Teej festival (fasting by women for the betterment of their husband) and Sangranti celebration on every month (the first day of each Nepali Month)
- Religio-cultural performances are done before and after paddy crop cultivation and harvesting
- Source of livelihoods for fishing communities (Majhi, Bote, Darai & Podey)
- Globally threatened plants found in the catchment area

## Wetland Uses

- Irrigation
- Commercial fishing
- Boating (Tourism)

## Wetland Threats

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Pollution (Solid waste)
- Commercial fishing
- Aquatic invasion
- Excessive tourism pressure
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Encroachment
- Settlement/built-up area expansion
- Road/tourism related infrastructure development

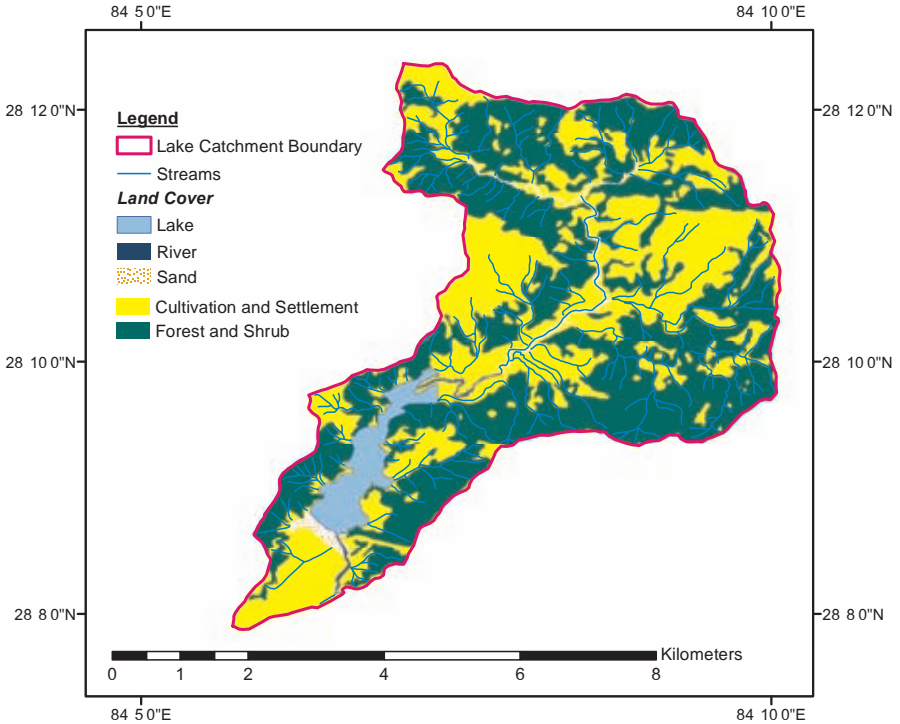
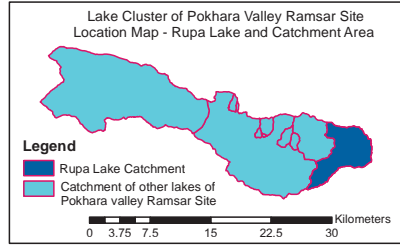
## Management Priority

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Institutional strengthening
- Visitors management

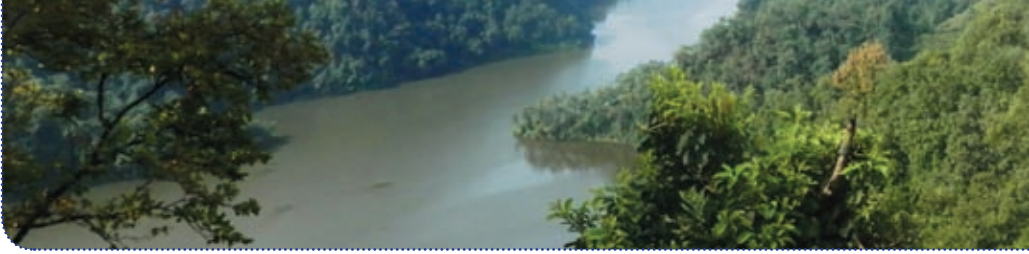
## Institutions

- Lake Conservation Committee
- Fishing Cooperative

## 4. Rupa Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality and Rupakot Village Development Committee
Coordinate	84°05'43.5" - 84°10'04.0" E 28°07'52.4" - 28°12'22.0" N
Altitude	590 – 1,422 m
Total Catchment area	27.6 sq. km
Water bodies	1.07 sq. km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Majhi (Fish farming)
Wetland type	Freshwater Lake



## Wetland Values

- Rare and endangered fish species
- Habitat for 17 species of rare and endangered birds
- Cultural and religious use
- Rupa is historically known as a site, where famous Rishi called *Chewan* practiced Yoga at the bank of lake for long time
- Barahi temple and Shiva temples are found popular religious destinations in the middle of the lake and people visit during Shivaratri
- Religio-cultural performances are done before and after paddy crop cultivation and harvesting festival
- Source of livelihoods for local fishermen (wetland dependent communities)
- Globally threatened plants found in the catchment area
- Wild rice area

## Wetland Uses

- Irrigation
- Fishing

## Wetland Threats

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Commercial fishing
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Encroachment
- Settlement area/built-up area expansion
- Infrastructure development (Road construction)

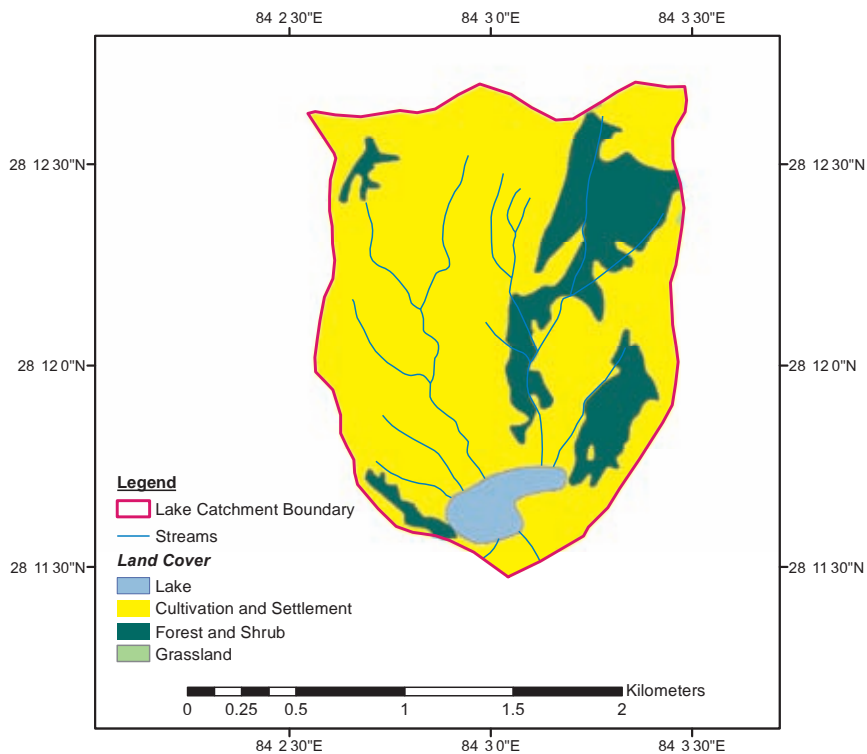
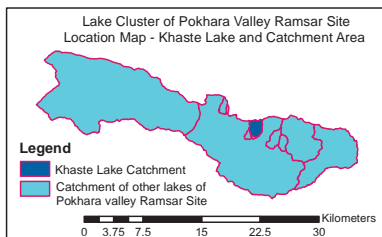
## Management Priority

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practice
- Institutional strengthening
- Tourism promotion

## Institutions

- Lake Conservation Committee
- Fishing Cooperative

## 5. Khaste Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality, Ward No 3,4 & 6
Coordinate	84°02'32.7" - 84°03'29.2" E 28°11'28.5"- 28°12'42.2" N
Altitude	744 – 1,192 m
Total Catchment area	2.7 sq km
Water bodies	0.09 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Majhi (Fish farming)
Wetland type	Freshwater Lake



### **Wetland Values**

- Farming/Agriculture
- Cultural and religious value
- Source of livelihoods for Majhi communities (wetland dependent)
- Wild rice

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation
- Fishing

### **Wetland Threats**

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Commercial fishing
- Aquatic invasion
- Encroachment
- Extinction of lotus
- Forest encroachment

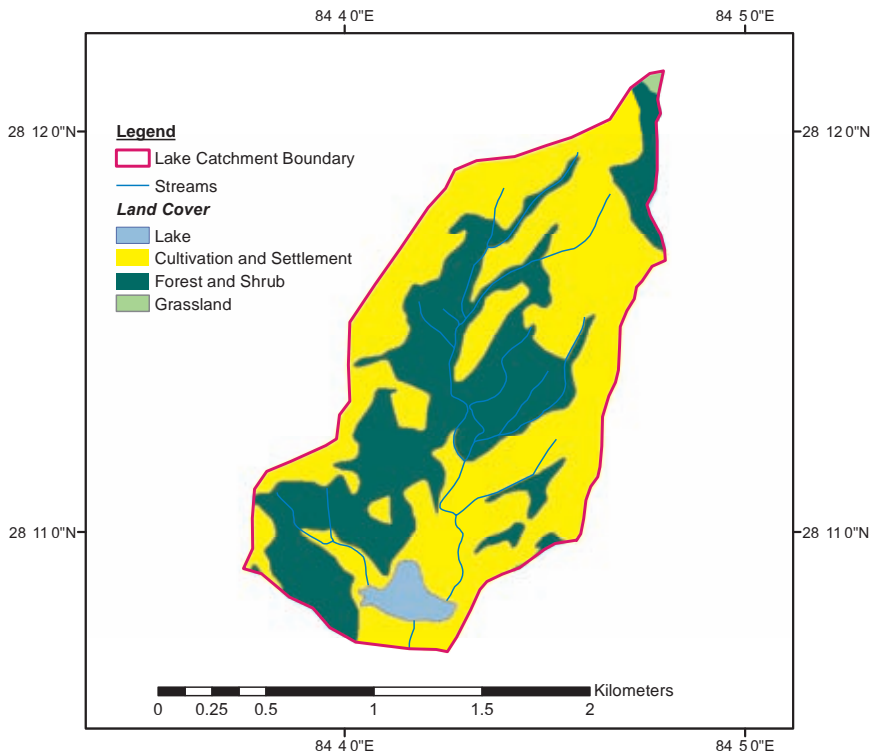
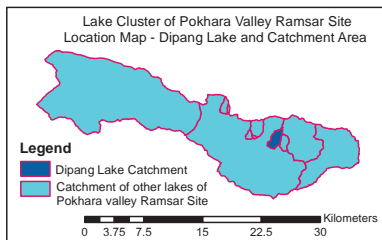
### **Management Priority**

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Livelihood diversification
- Tourism promotion

### **Institutions**

- Local Youth Club
- Lake Conservation Committee

## 6. Dipang Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality, Ward No 6
Coordinate	84°03'44.8" - 84°04'48.0" E 28°10'42.0" - 28°12'9.1" N
Altitude	694 – 1,266 m
Total Catchment area	2.4 sq km
Water bodies	0.06 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Magar
Wetland type	Freshwater Lake





### **Wetland Values**

- Rare and endangered wetland plants and fishes
- Cultural and religious value (Temple construction)
- Tourism value, also known as “Honey moon lake” due to wilderness
- Habitat for birds (Around 15 birds are permanent resident of the area)

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation

### **Wetland Threats**

- Human encroachment
- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Built-up area expansion/settlement area development

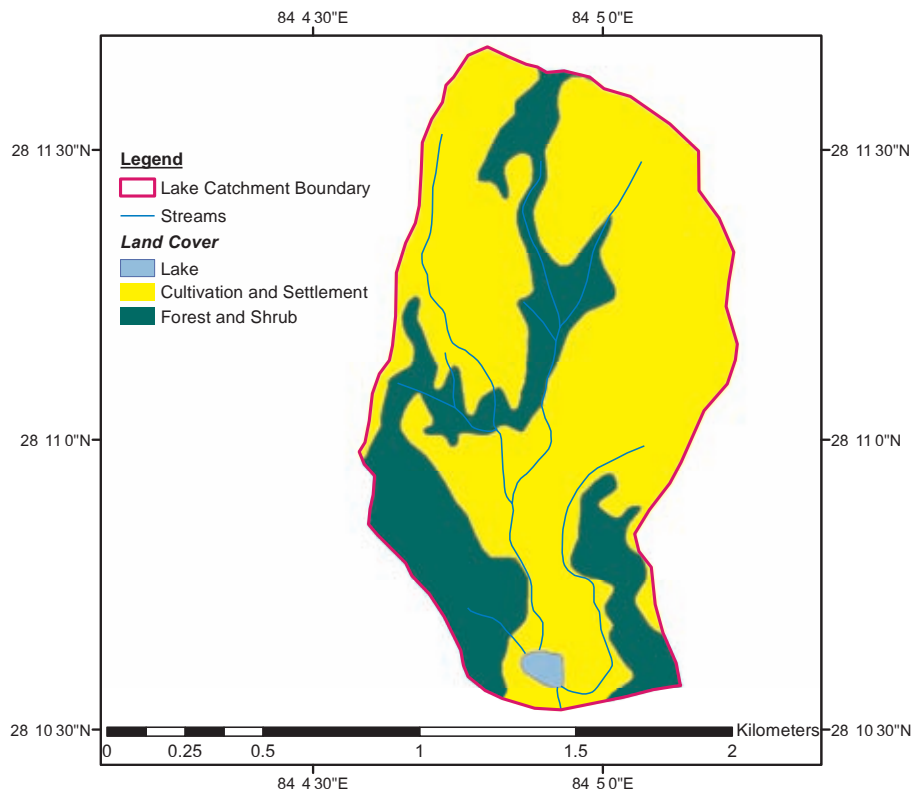
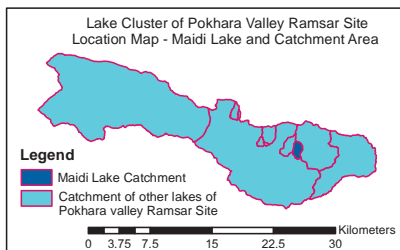
### **Management Priority**

- Wetland restoration
- Tourism promotion
- Institutional strengthening

### **Institutions**

- Lake Conservation Committee

## 7. Maidi Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality, Ward no 9
Coordinate	84°04'34.8" - 84°05'13.9" E 28°10'32.0" - 28°11'40.6" N
Altitude	702 – 1,102 m
Total Catchment area	1.6 sq km
Water bodies	0.01 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland type	Marsh land with some patches of swamp land



### **Wetland Values**

- Habitat for rare and endangered fish species and wetland dependent plants
- Cultural and religious value/significance
- Source of livelihoods for Majhi communities (wetland dependent)

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation
- Fishing

### **Wetland Threats**

- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Human encroachment
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Settlement/built up area expansion

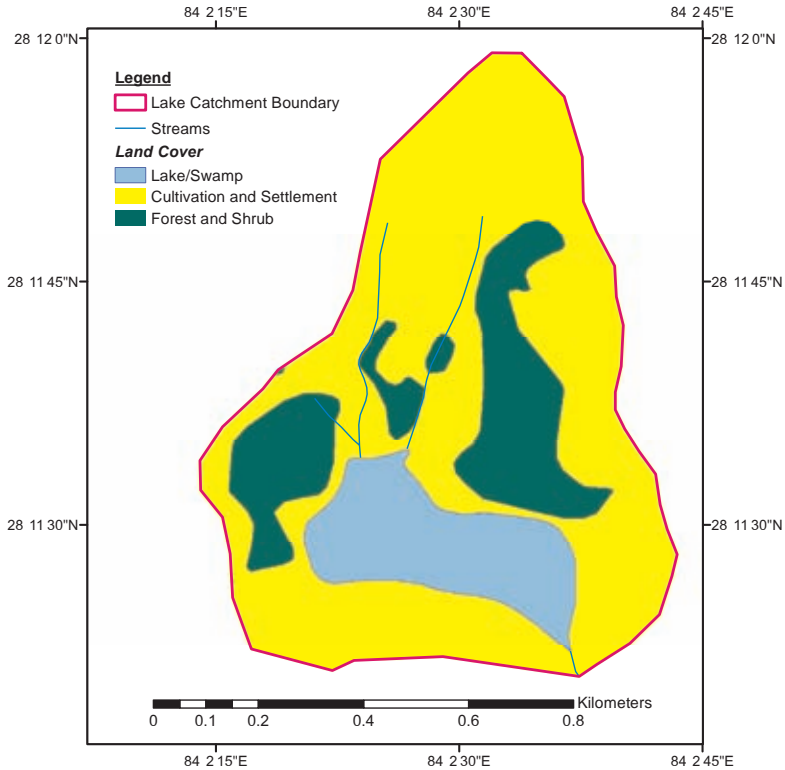
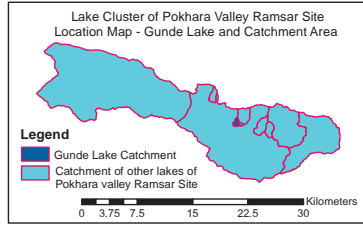
### **Management Priority**

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Tourism development

### **Institutions**

- Lake Conservation Committee

# 8. Gunde Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Lekhnath Municipality, Ward No 4
Coordinate	84°02'14.0" - 84°02'43.4" E 28°11'20.7" - 28°11'59.1" N N
Altitude	741 - 944 m
Total Catchment area	0.6 sq km
Water bodies	0.08 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	
Wetland type	Marsh land with some patches of swamp land



### **Wetland Values**

- Habitat for rare and endangered fish species and wetland dependent plants
- Cultural and religious significance
- Site of Migratory birds

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation
- Fishing
- Wetland plants for making mat

### **Wetland Threats**

- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Human encroachment
- Settlement/built up area expansion

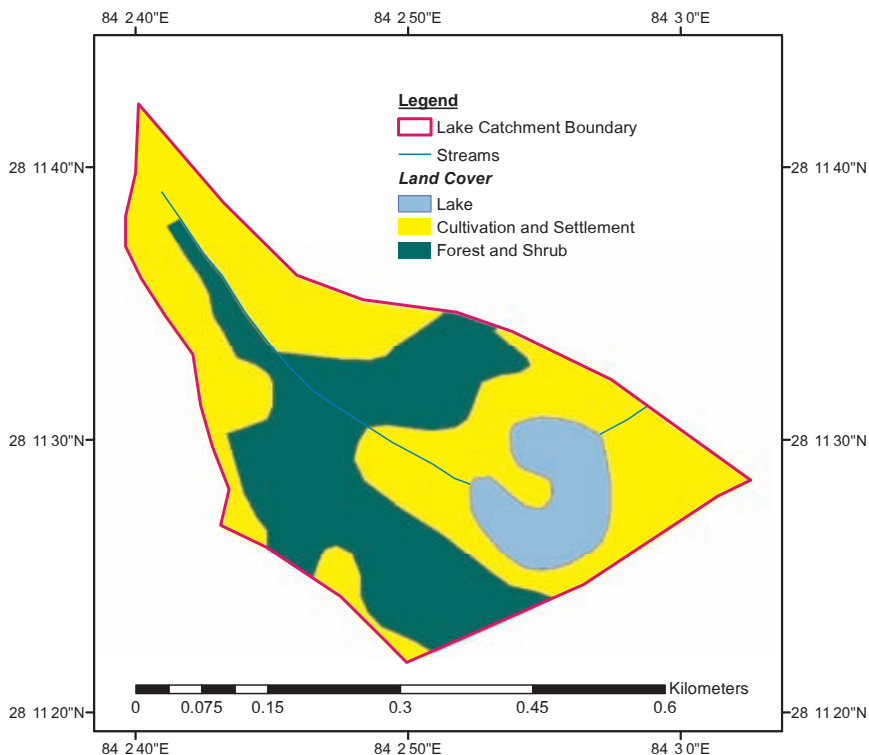
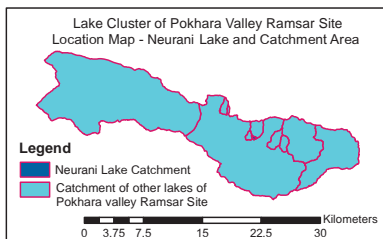
### **Management Priority**

- Wetland Restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Tourism development

### **Institutions**

- Lake Conservation Committee

## 9. Neurani Lake and Catchment Area



Location	Leknath Municipality
Coordinate	84°02'39.6" - 84°03'02.6" E 28°11'21.8" - 28°11'42.3" N
Altitude	744 - 863 m
Total Catchment area	0.2 sq km
Water bodies	0.02 sq km
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland dependent community	Majhi (Fishing people)
Wetland type	Marsh land with some patches of swamp land



### **Wetland Values**

- Habitat for rare and endangered fish species and wetland dependent plants
- Cultural and religious significance

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation
- Fishing
- Livestock farming

### **Wetland Threats**

- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Aquatic invasion
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Human encroachment
- Settlement/built up area expansion

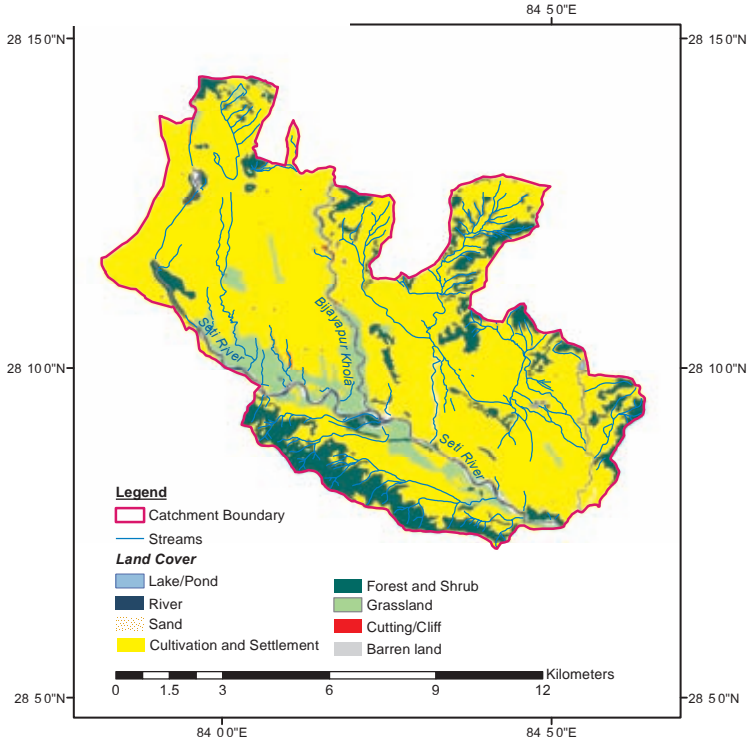
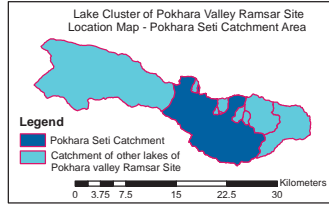
### **Management Priority**

- Wetland restoration
- Sustainable financing practices
- Tourism development

### **Institutions**

- Lake Conservation Committee

# 10. Pokhara Seti Catchment Area



Pokhara Seti Catchment area includes other than catchment area of each lake clusters of Pokhara Valley.

Location	Downstream area of Pokhara and Lekhnath municipality
Coordinate	83°47'52.8" - 84°10'04.0" E 28°07'15.6" - 28°17'25.7" N
Altitude	550 – 2,483 m
Total Catchment area	8,727.7 ha
Water bodies	205.0 ha
Tenure (Water bodies)	Local government (Municipality)
Tenure Catchment area	Private & government
Wetland type	River





### **Wetland Values**

- Habitat of rare and endangered fish species and wetland dependent plants
- Source of livelihoods, especially for farmers

### **Wetland Uses**

- Irrigation
- Fishing

### **Wetland Threats**

- Sedimentation/Siltation
- Flash floods
- Encroachment
- Livestock grazing (fringe area)
- Settlement/built up area expansion
- Un-planned infrastructure development, especially road
- Pollution/Waste dumping
- Sand extraction

### **Management Priority**

- Water quality improvement
- Soil and water conservation
- Farming system improvement

## References

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## Pokhara Valley Lake Conservation Committee

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Chair	District Development Committee, Kaski
Member	Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City, Pokhara
Member	Lekhnath Municipality, Lekhnath
Member	District Soil Conservation Office, Kaski
Member	District Plant Resource Office, Kaski
Member	Urban Development Office, Kaski
Member	Chairperson of Phewa Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Begnas Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Rupa Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Khaste Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Dipang Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Maidi Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Gunde Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Neurani Lake Conservation Committee
Member	Chairperson of Kamalpokhari Lake Conservation Committee
Member Secretary	District Forest Office, Kaski



**World Wetlands Day**  
2 February 2016

**Wetlands for our Future**  
Sustainable Livelihoods

