

Section 2

Inventory of Existing Recreational Opportunities

Section 2 summarizes the inventory work completed for this planning process as well as some of the other related resource management efforts in Todd County. A brief description of the inventories is provided first, followed by the inventories of existing recreational systems and open space resources in the County.

A. GIS Data and Map Development

The TCDC contracted with the Todd County GIS and Land Services Department to create a series of maps and data to support the outdoor recreational and open space planning process. Some of the maps are provided in this section of the Plan while others are in the Appendix. The maps can also be viewed on the County’s website at www.co.todd.mn.us.

The maps and corresponding data were developed to support the outdoor recreation and open space planning process. Each member of the CAC was given a three-ring binder containing the maps developed by the GIS Department for this process.

Citizens and CAC members alike have had numerous opportunities throughout the planning process to review the maps and use this information in their discussions and deliberations. One additional introductory comment regarding the maps and data is that this information will be valuable in the implementation phase.

Maps and data developed for this process benefited from several previous efforts. The following narrative describes some of the related GIS data and mapping development efforts by the County:

Todd County Community Based Comprehensive Plan

A total of fifty-five (55) maps were created for the Todd County Community Based Comprehensive Plan. Several of these maps inventoried natural resource features and recreational amenities in the County.

Building a Sense of Place

After the Comprehensive Plan was completed, the County undertook a more thorough process of inventorying and documenting cultural and natural resources through the **Building a Sense of Place** process established by the Land Information Access Association (see www.liaa.org for more information).

The Todd County GIS and Land Services Department staff worked with citizens and local officials for over one year to gather information about these resources. An interactive mapping feature that utilizes data gathered for the Sense of Place project was one of the products completed. The County's web site (www.co.todd.mn.us), which is increasingly being used by the public, is a great asset in providing information to the public about recreation, open space and greenway planning and design concepts.

Digital Soil Survey

The County worked with the USDA NRCS to complete a detailed digital soil survey of the County in 2004. The County now has digital soils information that can be useful in a variety of recreational and open space planning efforts. For example, the Todd County Soil Survey (Table 9, pages 178 – 184) provides recommendations on where to locate a variety of recreational facilities (camping areas, picnic areas, playgrounds, etc.) based on 114 different soil types.

Geologic Atlas

The County entered into an agreement with the Minnesota Geologic Survey and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to develop a detailed geologic atlas. The atlas will provide extensive geologic and landform information for the greenway and open space planning process as well.

County Biological Survey

The County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources are working collaboratively to prepare an in depth biological survey. The survey work has been completed and the mapping work will be completed next year.

Agricultural Land Preservation Study

Todd County received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to prepare a detailed inventory of the prime farmlands in the County. The study has been completed. Parcel mapping is being developed on a countywide basis as a part of this project.

Other Resource Management Efforts

In addition to the mapping efforts described above, there are other resource planning efforts such as the county water plan and hazardous mitigation plan that can compliment the County's recreational planning and implementation processes. Citizens, local officials, and county leaders should refer to maps and data from these efforts for additional information in the implementation of this Plan.

The maps provide detailed information about land, water and other natural resource features in the County. This spatial information is essential in the development of meaningful policies and programs to protect and enhance open space areas and natural resource features in the County.

B. Public Parks

The following list outlines the types or categories of parks typically described in recreation plans for local units of government:

- State or Regional Park.
- County Park.
- Community Park.
- Neighborhood Park.
- Neighborhood or School Playgrounds.
- Specialty Parks and Tot Lots.

The outline above summarizes a general hierarchy of park types by their function or geographic level of service. Other criteria can be used to help in the proper locating of parks within a community or region and in the design of facilities and improvements at the site level. Some of the criteria typically used include size, spacing, access to public roads, and activities.

2003 Outdoor Recreation Inventory

In 2003, the Todd County GIS Department developed the first detailed inventory of recreational sites and facilities in the County. **Figure 2**, 2003 Outdoor Recreation Inventory Map, illustrates the location of all the sites and facilities recorded by County staff. A total of 48 park sites were inventoried in the County.

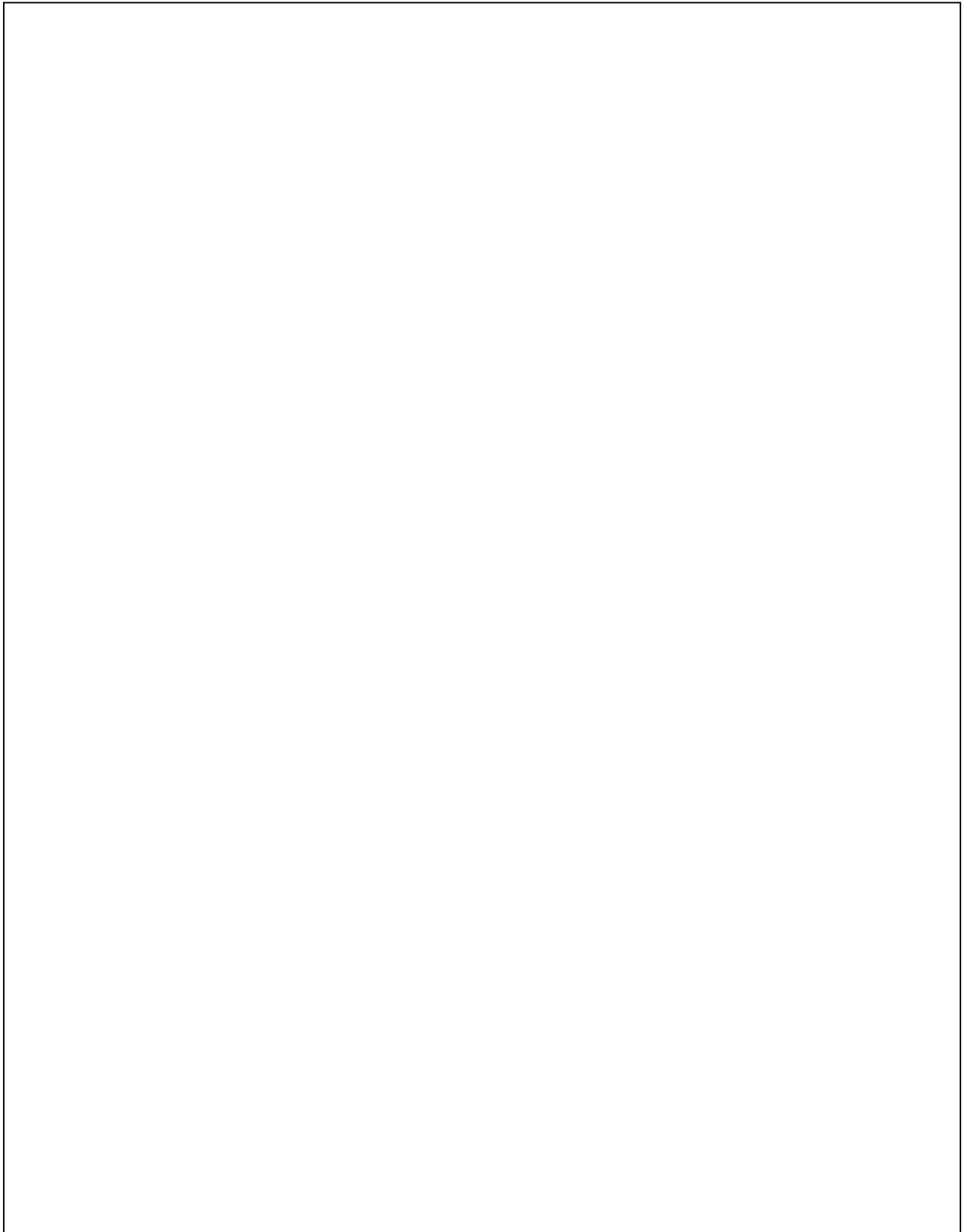
Battle Point Park

Currently, there is only one park owned by the County, Battle Point Park. The site is located on the northeast side of Lake Osakis in Gordon Township. It is located approximately 6 miles from the City of Osakis. The site covers approximately 10 acres, which includes a narrow peninsula extending several hundred feet into Lake Osakis. To the south, east and north of the park are dozens of lakeshore homes.

In 1984, the County received a grant from the state to improve facilities on the Lake Osakis public access site. The County and the MN DNR developed a site plan and five-year management plan for the development of the site. The plan proposed improvements annually over a five-year period. In addition to the public access facilities including a boat landing and parking lot improvements, a small picnic area and pit toilets were installed along with picnic tables and cooking grills. The state legislature conveyed ownership of the site to the County in 1976 provided that it agreed to maintain the site for the benefit of the public for various recreational activities.

Input from the public received as a part of this Plan indicated a strong interest in upgrading facilities on the park/public access site. Several civic organizations from the Osakis area have recently begun meeting to develop a plan for improving Battle Point Park. In the spring of 2005, the County Board authorized the preparation of a site and topographic survey of the site to help in the design of future improvements.

Figure 2
2003 Outdoor Recreation Inventory Map



Municipal Parks and School Playgrounds

As a part of the recreation inventory, a separate recreation inventory map was made for all of the cities in the County. Each community map includes the name and location of public parks, beaches, and playgrounds. A table summarizing facilities and improvements (picnic tables, grills, shelter, restrooms, drinking water, parking, athletic facilities and trail connections) for each park site is also provided on these maps. Please see **Appendix D**.

There were a total of 47 municipal parks, beaches and playgrounds in the County inventoried by staff in 2003. While the inventory did not include acreage, ownership or maintenance data, the parks sites typically covered less than 5 to 10 acres. The municipal parks have developed over many years through contributions and donations often made by individuals, businesses, an/or civic groups in the small communities. Many of the city parks are located near watercourses that meander through the communities.

School playgrounds tend to have more active recreation equipment and athletic facilities than the city parks. The school playgrounds and athletic fields tend to be larger in size than the city parks. It should be noted that some of the park sites included in this inventory are owned and/or maintained by sportsmen organizations or churches.

Other Public Recreation Sites

The 2003 Outdoor Recreation Inventory also included several other public recreation sites in the County including public access sites and wildlife management areas.

Public Access Sites

There are 40 public boat access areas in Todd County maintained by the County, townships, cities or the MN DNR. These sites are shown on Figure 2. In addition to providing access to the lakes, all of these sites provide some parking and are usually open 24 hours a day. Restrooms and docks are usually located only on the larger and busier sites. The public access sites typically cover small tracts of land but may have some available space for additional recreational amenities.

The MN DNR distributes Public Water Access Maps on a county-by-county basis and they are free to the public (see www.dnr.state.mn.us)

Public Wildlife Management Areas

Wildlife management areas (WMA) are state-owned lands preserved for wildlife habitat. Todd County has 31 State Wildlife Management Areas that cover 14,169 acres. These wildlife management areas are located throughout the County as shown on Figure 2.

Waterfowl production areas (WPA) are federally owned lands preserved for waterfowl nesting areas. There are 6 Federal Waterfowl Production Areas occupying 741.5 acres and located primarily in the southwestern corner of the County.

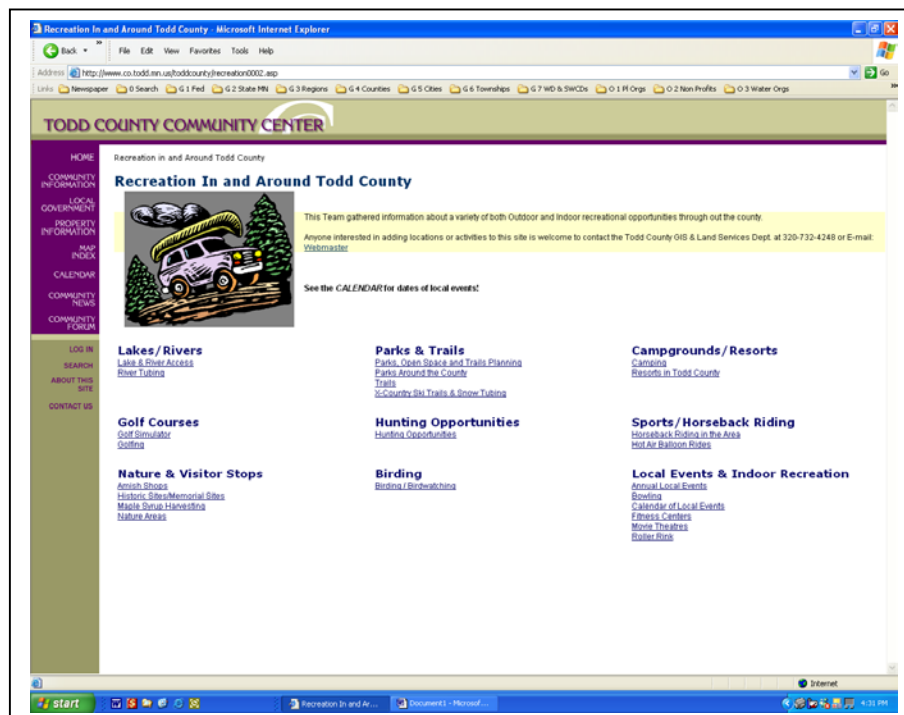
Both waterfowl production areas and wildlife management areas serve multiple recreational and natural resource management uses in the County. In addition to their value as wildlife habitat and nesting areas, they serve to increase nutrient, sediment and chemical retention, floodwater storage, and groundwater recharge. The MN DNR distributes Wildlife Lands Maps on a statewide basis. The map brochure is free to the public (see www.dnr.state.mn.us).

State Parks and Forests

Currently, there are no state parks or state forests in Todd County, although the Birch Lakes State Forest is located immediately south of the county line in Stearns County. This state forest covers 530 acres. It was established by the state legislature in 1959 with the support of local citizens. This state forest is located in the transition zone between Minnesota’s forested region to the northeast and the prairie region to the southwest. It has 200 yards of shoreline and includes a campground; a day use area; hiking, biking and snowmobile trails; water access; and a swimming beach. The MN DNR distributes a map for state forests on a statewide basis. The map brochure is free to the public (see www.dnr.state.mn.us).

Commercial Recreation Sites (Semi-Public)

The 2003 Outdoor Recreation Inventory also included several “semi-public” or privately owned commercial recreation sites in the County. These businesses open to the public typically include golf courses and other outdoor commercial recreation businesses such as the Eagle Mountain ski and tubing resort near Grey Eagle. The Todd County Community Center website includes a detailed listing of the commercial recreation businesses in the County (see www.co.todd.mn.us/toddcounty/recreation0002.asp).



Golf Courses

The 2003 recreation inventory listed a total of five golf courses in Todd County.

- Double Eagle Golf & Supper Club.
- Long Prairie Country Club.
- Osakis Country Club.
- Greystone Golf Course.
- Vintage Terrace Golf.

Resorts and Campgrounds

The 2003 recreation inventory listed a total of twelve resorts in Todd County.

• Buck Point Lodge – Lake Osakis	• Leisure Resort & Campground – Long Lake
• Early Inn Resort – Lake Osakis	• Rainbow Lodge Resort – Sauk Lake.
• Gateway Resort- Sauk Lake	• Linwood Resort – Lake Osakis
• Head of the Lakes Resort – Lake Osakis	• Red Barn Resort – Sauk Lake
• Holiday Resort – Lake Osakis	• Sun Fish Resort – Lake Osakis
• Lakeshore Resort – Lake Osakis	• Idlewilde Resort and Lodge – Lake Osakis

Campgrounds listed in the 2003 inventory included the following:

• City of Bertha Campground	• Saukinac Campground
• Long Lake Campground	• Camp RnL RV Campground
• Swan Lake Campground	• Dower Lake Recreation Area.
• Ueker’s Campground	• Uncle Berns Campground

Hunting Preserves, Horseback Riding and Bible Camps

The 2003 recreation inventory also included two hunting preserves, a bible camp and two horseback riding businesses. Each year, these businesses provide excellent recreational opportunities for thousands of people from young to old.

• Little Elk Ranch.	• Rooster Ridge Hunting Preserve
• Circle R Ranch Inc	• Little Moran Hunting Club
• Lake Beauty Bible Camp	

The recreation inventory includes several other businesses and organizations that provide recreation services to the public. Some of the categories listed on the website include bird watching, nature and visitor shops, local events and indoor recreation, and lakes and rivers related businesses.

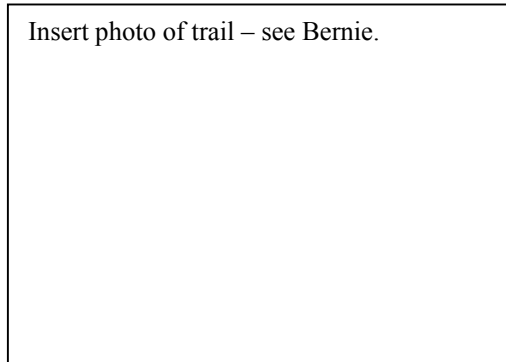
C. Public and Private Trails

Snowmobile Trail System

There are over 450 miles of snowmobile trails in Todd County. Over 470 landowners in the County support the trail system by providing access for the trail system to operate on their property.

The Todd Area Trails Snowmobile Association manages the snowmobile trail system. This organization has been working with trail riders, landowners, neighboring trail association and the MN DNR for over 30 years in establishing and maintaining the countywide trail network.

The location of the snowmobile trail system is shown on Figure 2.



Lake Wobegon Regional Trail

The Lake Wobegon Trail is a 46-mile long regional trail that extends from the city of St. Joseph to the city of Sauk Centre. It is a 10-foot wide, bituminous surfaced hike-and-bike pathway. The trail opened on September 30, 1998. The trail also has an extension on the west side of Albany heading northeast to the City of Holdingford.

The trail runs on the MN/DOT rail corridor formerly owned by Burlington Northern Railroad Company. The trail was originally the idea of the Albany Jaycees, who spent many hours raising money and support for the trail. Planning for the trail began in the fall of 1994, and fundraising began in the fall of 1995.

Construction costs were a joint effort between the Federal ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act), State DNR Regional Trail Initiatives Grant, Albany Jaycees Fundraisers (including city contributions), Central Minnesota Initiative Fund (McKnight Foundation) and Stearns County. Many supporters including Representative Oberstar, helped procure the additional funding needed to build the trail.



The use trail has grown substantially since it was first opened and further additions to the trail are continuing to be planned. The trail is used by bikers, roller-skiers, roller bladers, pedestrians, and snowmobilers. The trail is available for snowmobiling, however, use of metal studs on snowmobiles is prohibited on the trail to help protect the trail from damage caused by the studs on the snowmobile tracks.



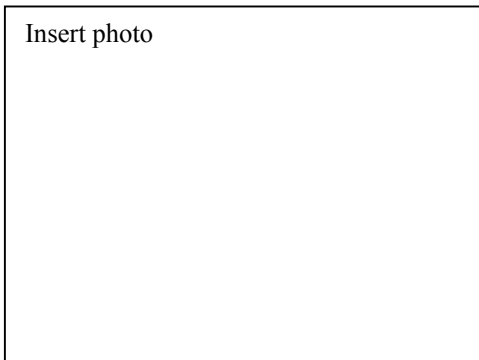
In 2004, Todd County was awarded a TEA-21 grant (\$480,000) from the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the construction of 8 miles of the Lake Wobegon Trail in the southwestern portion of the County. This segment along with the 3-mile segment from Sauk Centre to the Stearns-Todd County line will extend the regional trail to the City of Osakis and the Central Lakes Trail. Construction of the Todd County segment is scheduled for 2006.

Although not in Todd County, the Central Lakes Trail starts in Osakis and extends northwest through Douglas County to Ashby in Grant County. The trail continues westerly to Fergus Falls in Ottertail County. It passes through Nelson, Alexandria, Garfield, Brandon, Melby, and Evansville in Douglas County. This rails to trails project was completed in the summer of 2004. The asphalt surfacing is continuous from Osakis in Douglas County to Fergus Falls in Ottertail County. (more information about the Central Lakes Trail is available at www.MnBikeTrails.com).

Connecting to regional trail systems can provide greater recreation opportunities for all types of trail users in Todd County.

Bertha-Hewitt Student Trail Project

In 2002, students in the Contemporary Conflicts class in the Bertha-Hewitt school worked on a service-learning project that proposed to connect the two cities with a trail. The proposed trail would follow the abandoned railroad bed along Highway 71. The abandoned railroad corridor is also used for the snowmobile trail in the winter season.



The students developed a survey, developed a design for the trail and amenities, contacted vendors and contractors for potential costs, contacted the railroad and researched land ownership records, and prepared an article for the local newspaper. The response to the survey reflected strong support for the proposed trail project. This potential trail project was forwarded to the CAC for their consideration.

Canoe Routes – the Long Prairie River and the Crow Wing River

The Long Prairie River flows over 100 miles. Beginning as an outflow from Lake Carlos, the River flows generally east for about 46 miles to the City of Long Prairie. At this point, it makes a right angle turn and flows north-northeast for about another 40 miles. Upon entering Morrison County, the river bends to the northeast for the last 15 miles and joins the Crow Wing River.

The Long Prairie River is one of the primary natural resource corridors in Todd County. The sand plain landform that the Long Prairie River follows contains the largest volume of groundwater in the County. The surface water that drains into the Long Prairie River comes from watersheds that cover over one-half of the County.



Several years ago, a group of local citizens developed the Long Prairie River Revitalization Plan. The plan included a number of recommendations for improving the river and its watershed. The citizen group and the Todd County SWCD have joined to support riparian tree planting projects and sponsored canoe trips down the river. In addition, the Todd County SWCD has been successful in obtaining state and federal grants to assess and improve the water quality in the river. As a water resource, the Long Prairie River plays a critical economic and ecological role in the County. Given its importance and the amount of efforts made to protect and enhance the Long Prairie River, there are many opportunities to enhance recreational opportunities. These opportunities will need to be balanced with the economic needs and concerns of landowners and resource management objectives of local and state officials.

The Crow Wing River is a state designated canoe route. The designation starts near the City of Akeley and ends at the confluence with the Mississippi River near Crow Wing State Park. The portion of the Crow Wing River that forms Todd County’s northeastern boundary is included in the designated canoe route.

Local Trails

Throughout the County, there are networks of trails that exist but typically are not constructed or maintained by the public. Some of these trails are located in the public rights-of-way. While some are used by ATVs, others are used for horse back riding, hiking, bicycling, or a combination of trail users. Some trails connect the more highly developed shoreland areas of the County. At this time, no inventories of these “local” trail networks have been prepared.



All Terrain Vehicles

All terrain vehicles (ATVs) are motorized, floatation tired vehicles with at least three, but no more than six low-pressure tires, with an engine displacement of 800 cubic centimeters, and a total dry weight of less than 900 pounds. The State of Minnesota regulates the use of ATVs as well as off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) and off-road vehicles (ORVs). Off-highway vehicles (OHV) is the term used to describe all of these recreational machines including ATVs, OHMs, and ORVs.

The majority of Todd County is located in the “Agricultural Zone” (south of U.S. Highway 10. In this area, the state prohibits ATVs from being driven in the rights-of-way including the ditches of state or county roads from April 1 to August 1. This regulation does not apply to ATVs licensed and used for agricultural purposes. The riding of OHVs on the roadway or shoulders is always prohibited, year round.

Currently, there are no public OHVs sites in Todd County.

D. Private Open Space

Section 1 provided a detailed definition of open space. This definition included three basic types or categories of open space based on land ownership including:

- Public.
- Semi-public.
- Private.

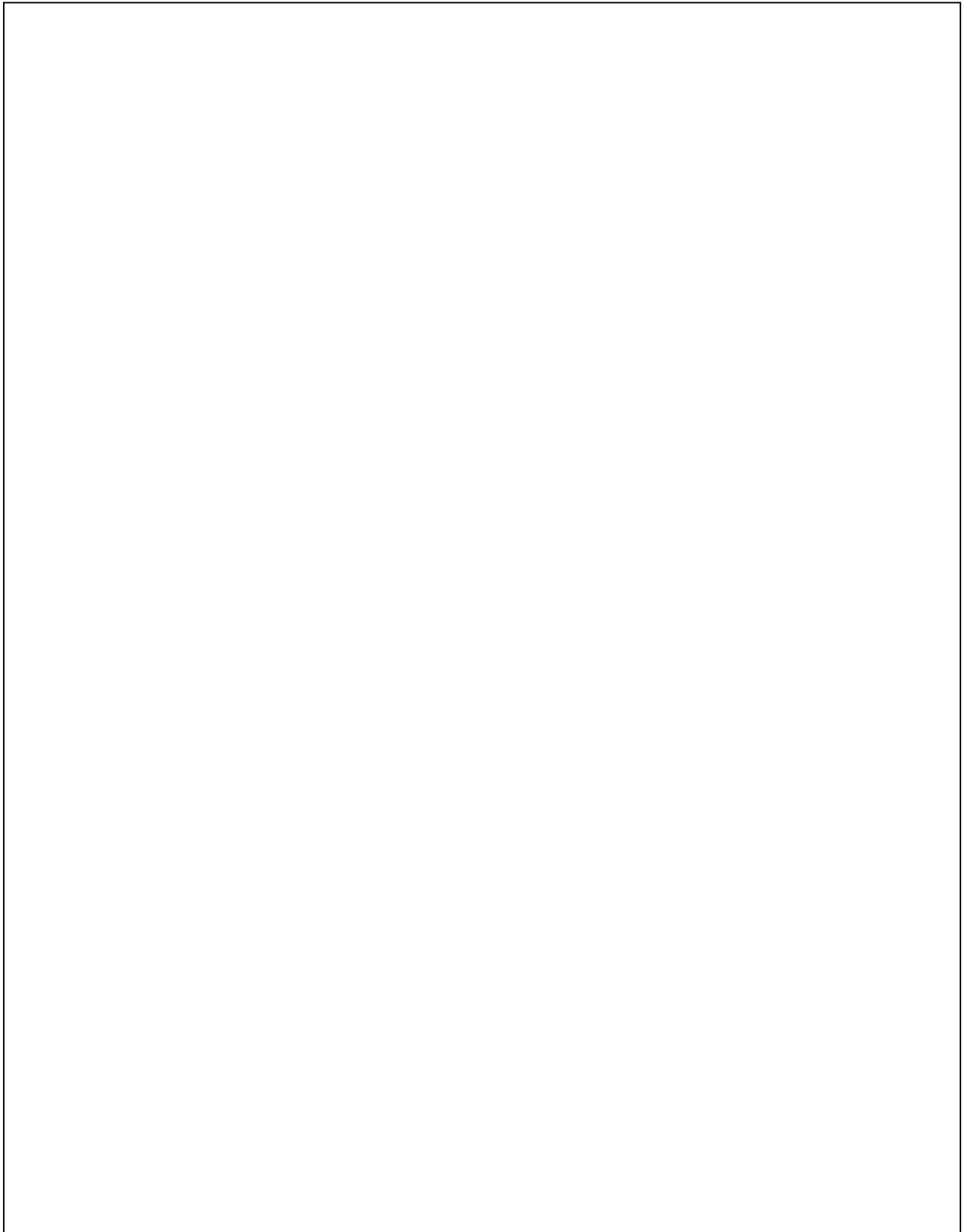
Given this definition of open space and the amount of land that is privately owned in the County (approximately 590,000 acres or 95 percent) and in rural land cover types such as cropland or forestland, most of the County is considered private open space. (Please note that the public and semi-public recreation open spaces have been inventoried under the preceding section on Public Parks.)

Some of the maps developed for the County’s Comprehensive Plan and other resource management efforts can help provide a baseline for inventorying private open space in the County include the following:

- Presettlement Land Cover Map (Figure 3).
- 1989 Land Cover Map (Figure 4).
- Development Constraints Map (Figure 5) information shown on the Natural Resources Plan in the Todd County Comprehensive Plan.
- Building Sites Map (Figure 6).
- Topography Map (Figure 7).
- Parcels 40 Acres or Larger Inventory Map (Figure 8).

(For detailed information on mapping resources, please contact the Todd County GIS Department or see the county website at www.co.todd.mn.us).

Figure 3
Presettlement Land Cover Map



**Figure 4
1989 Land Cover Map**

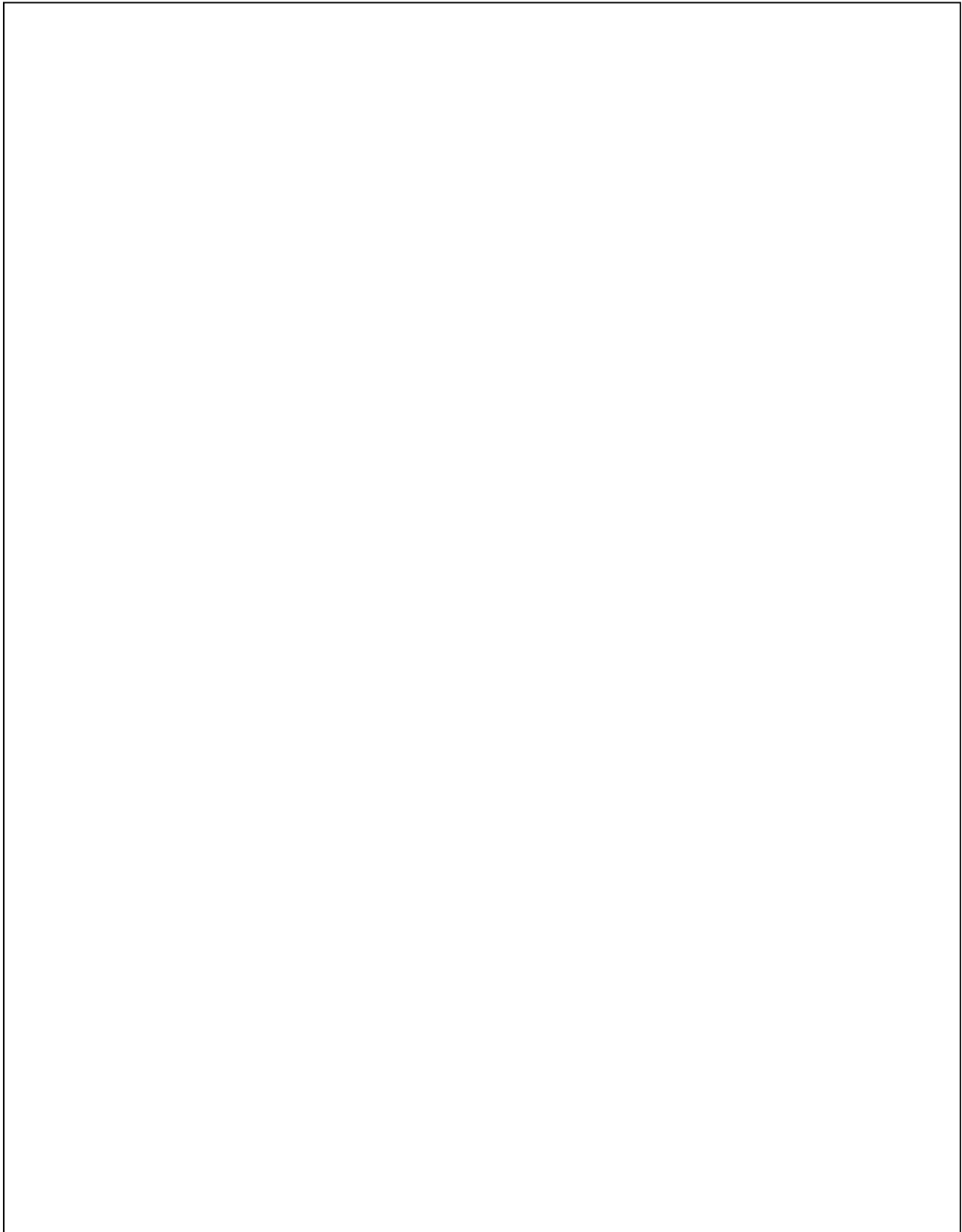


Figure 5
Development Constraints Map

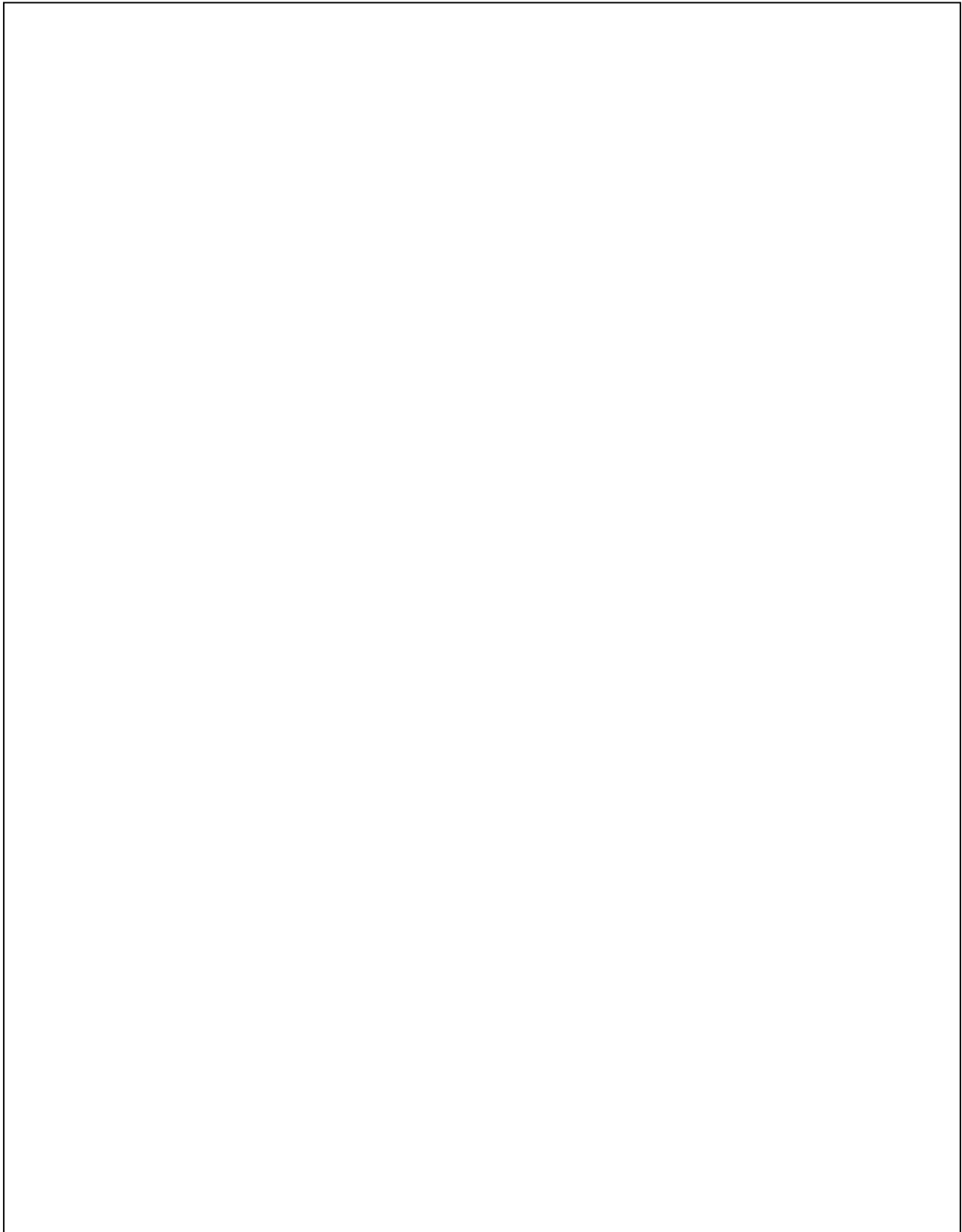
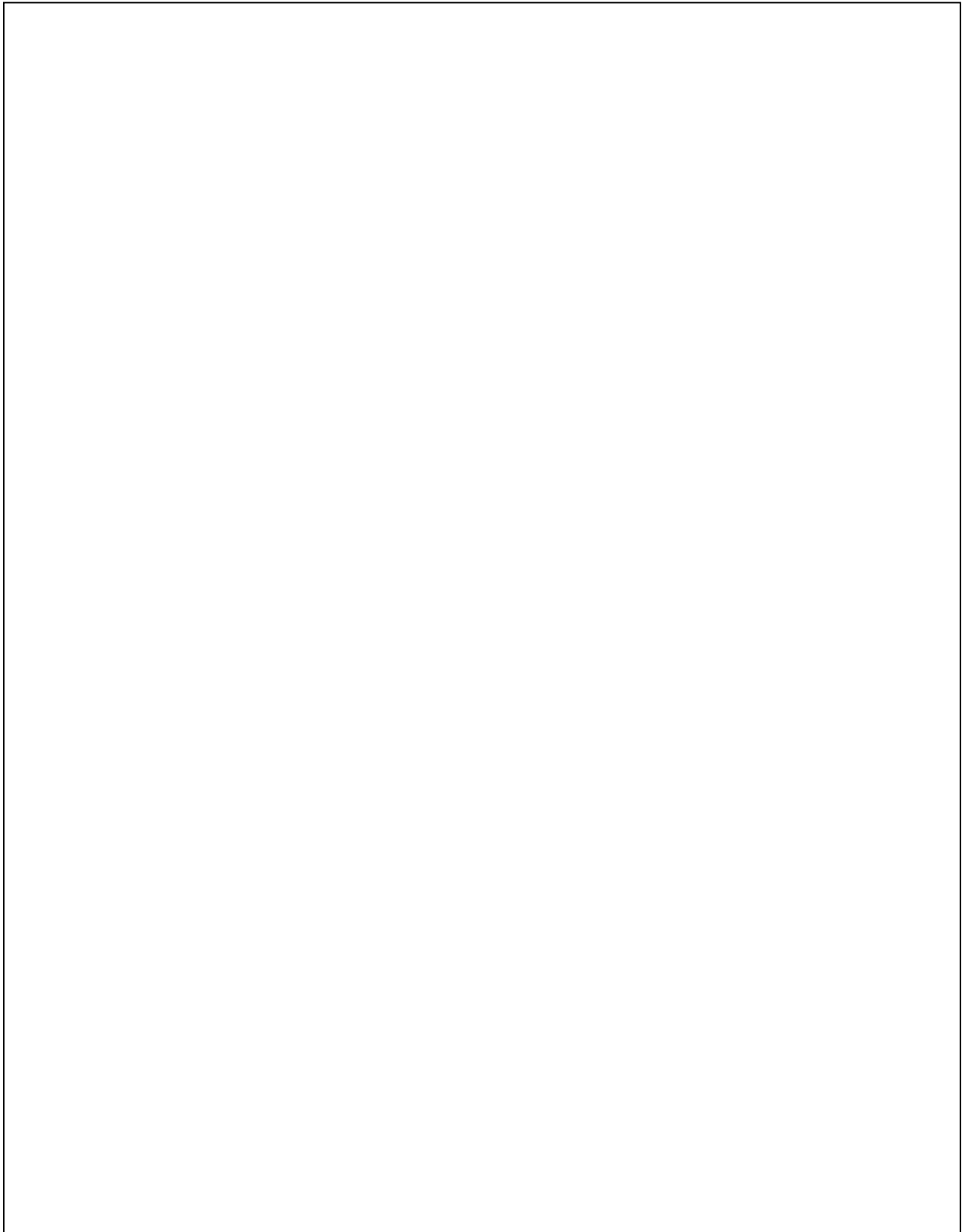


Figure 6
Building Sites Map



**Figure 7
Topography Map**

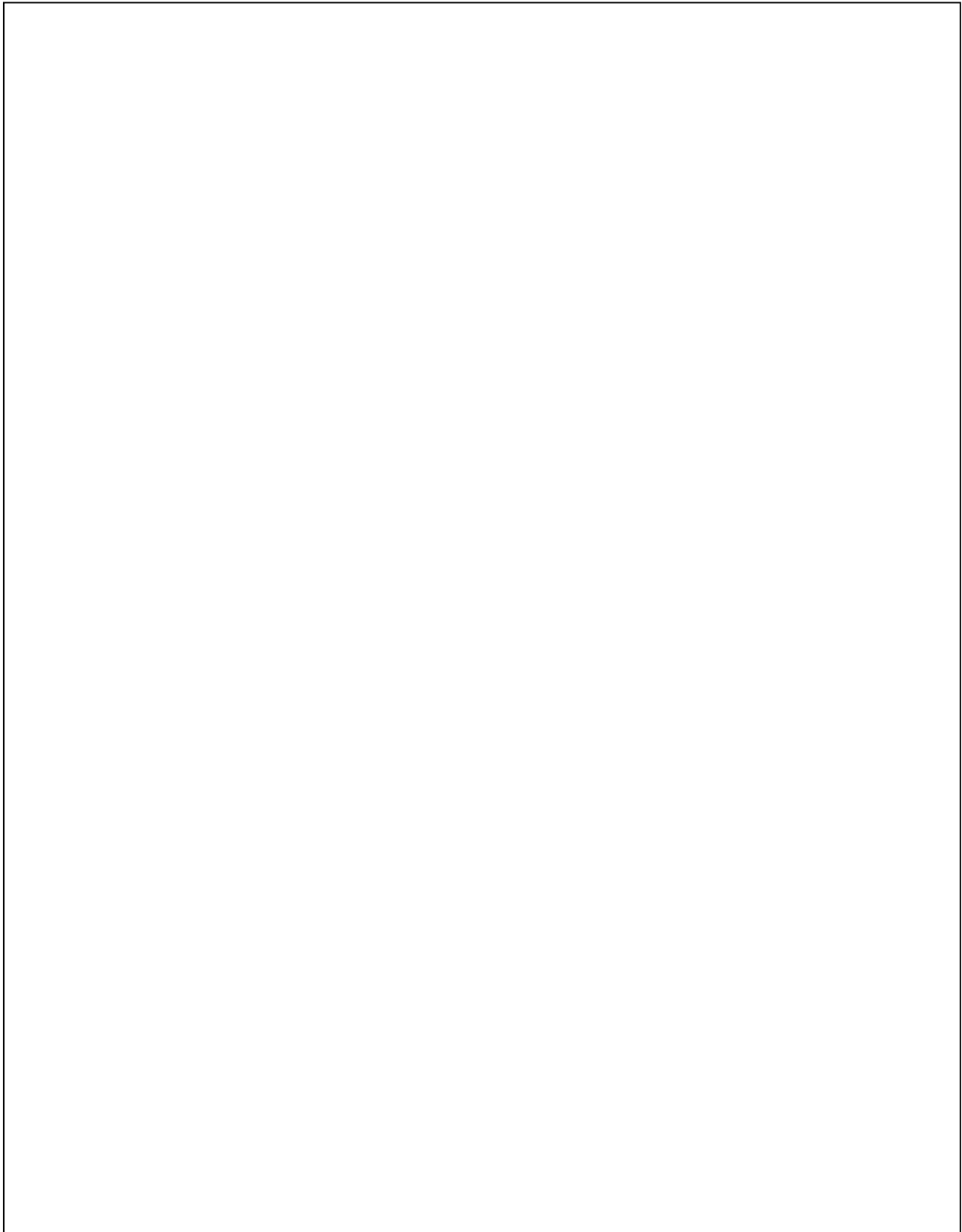
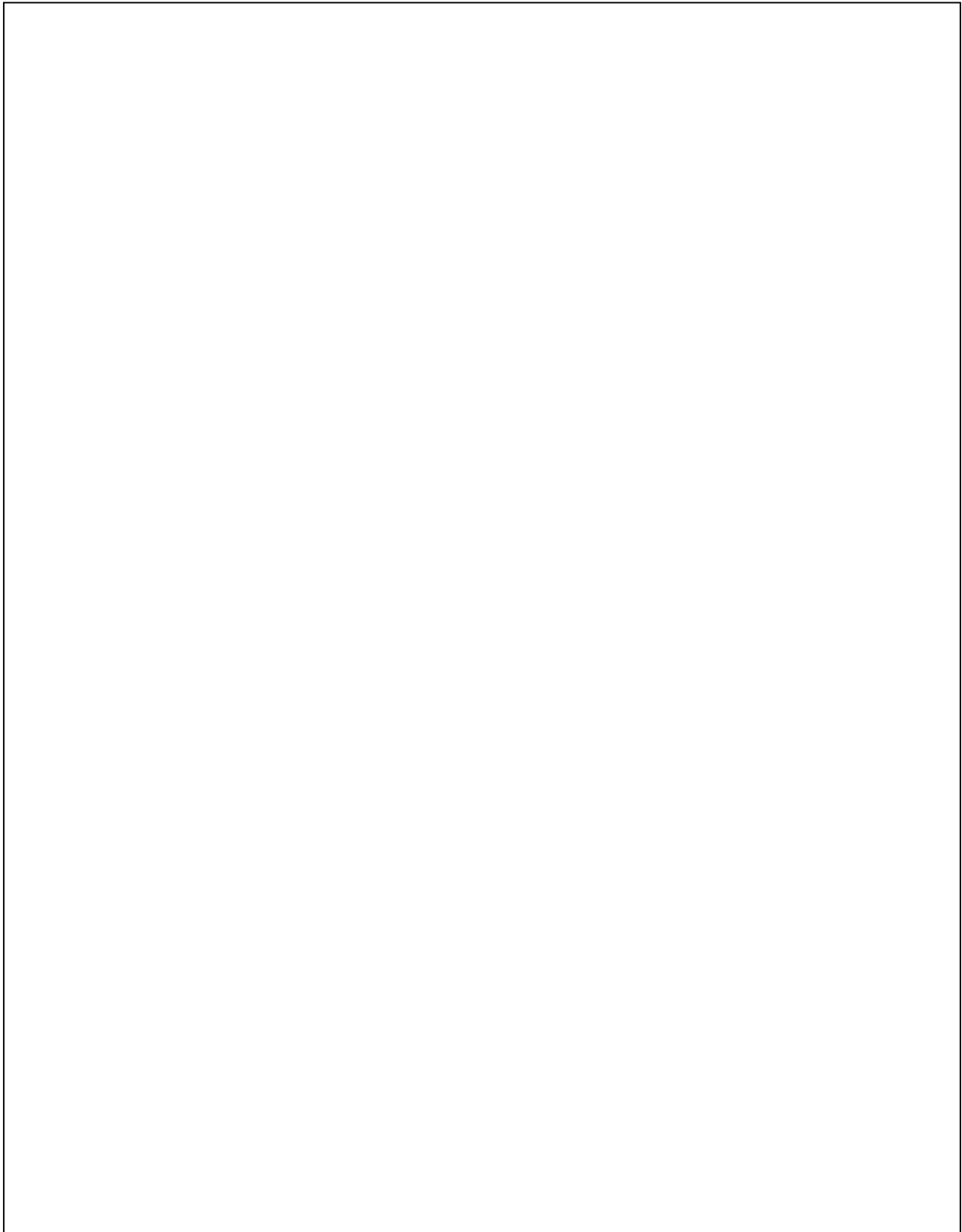


Figure 8
Parcels 40 acres or Larger Inventory Map



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