

## Section 3 Recreation Trends Analysis

This section provides an overview of the trends affecting recreation opportunities in Todd County. For more in depth demographic information, please refer to **Appendix E**.

### A. Demographic Trends

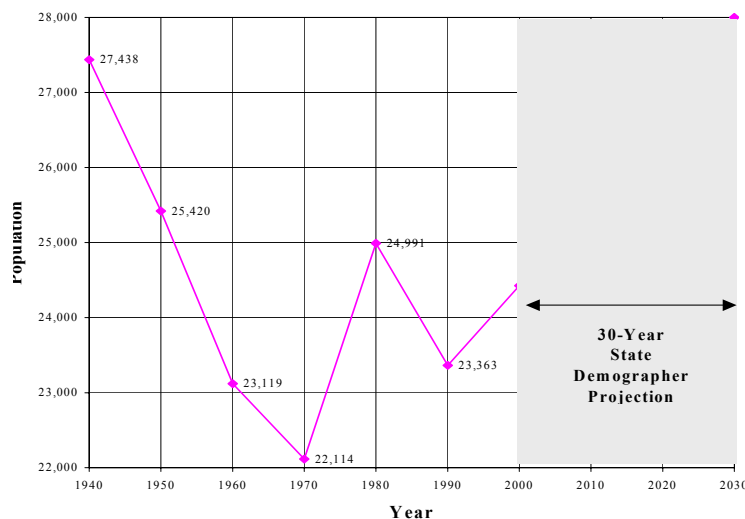
Since the County’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001, data from the 2000 U.S. Census has been published and made available to the public. There have been some significant changes and/or extensions of demographic trends in the County. The following provides an update to the major demographic trends.

#### Population Estimates and Projections

As described in the Comprehensive Plan, Todd County has experienced a fluctuating population base over the past fifty plus years. The population declined by twenty percent during the time period from 1940 to 1970. This decline came after several decades of growth starting back in the late 1880s. From 1970 to 1980, the population of the County increased by thirteen percent, only to be followed by a decline of 6.5 percent during the 1980s. The decade of the 1990s reversed the trend yet again, with an increase of almost five percent growth in population.

The Minnesota State Demographers Office provides population projections for all counties in the state on five-year increments to the year 2030. The figure below illustrates the County’s population estimates since 1940 and projections to year 2030.

**Figure 9  
Todd County  
Historic and Projected  
Population By Decade  
1940 - 2030**



The population growth rate in Todd County during the first five years of the 2000 to 2010 decade has been greater than what was projected in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the most recent population projections prepared by the State Demographers Office forecast substantial growth in the County’s population over each of the next three decades (14.6 percent increase by 2030). In contrast, at the time the Comprehensive Plan was being prepared, the State Demographer projected a 2.8 percent decrease in the County’s population by the year 2020.

**Median Age**

In 1970, the median age for residents of Todd County was 31.7 years. By 1980, the median age decreased to 30.4 years and by 1990, it reversed the trend by increasing to 34.0 years. In 2000, the County’s median age continued to increase and was reported by the U.S. Census Bureau at 38.5 years.

**Population by Age Groups**

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of population by three age groups: 1) under 18 - youth, 2) 18 to 64 – working aged population, and 3) 65 and over – typically the retired portion of the population. While the trend for the 1970 to 1990 was a growing working age group and senior population coupled with declines in the younger generation, the 1990s experienced a change in trends where the senior population group declined in percent of the population with a more significant increase in the working aged population. Declines in the number and percent of the population in the younger generation have been consistent over the past forty years.

**Table 1  
Age Distribution 1970 – 2000, Todd County**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>1970 Number</b>	<b>1970 Percent</b>	<b>1980 Number</b>	<b>1980 Percent</b>	<b>1990 Number</b>	<b>1990 Percent</b>	<b>2000 Number</b>	<b>2000 Percent</b>
Under 18	8,293	37.5	8,123	32.5	7,131	30.5	6,683	27.4
18 to 64	10,482	47.4	12,998	52.0	12,255	52.5	13,804	56.5
65 & over	<u>3,317</u>	<u>15.0</u>	<u>3,870</u>	<u>15.5</u>	<u>3,977</u>	<u>17.0</u>	<u>3,939</u>	<u>16.1</u>
Total	22,114	100.0	24,991	100.0	23,363	100.0	24,426	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2 summarizes the projected populations by age groups to the year 2030. Please note that the State Demographers Office uses slightly different age categories than the U.S. Census Bureau data noted above.

**Table 2**  
**Projected Age Distribution 2000 – 2030, Todd County**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2000 Number</b>	<b>2000 Percent</b>	<b>2010 Number</b>	<b>2010 Percent</b>	<b>2020 Number</b>	<b>2020 Percent</b>	<b>2030 Number</b>	<b>2030 Percent</b>
Under 20	7,499	30.7	6,790	26.3	6,890	25.5	6,920	24.7
20 to 64	12,988	53.2	14,500	56.7	14,520	53.6	13,780	49.2
65 & over	<u>3,939</u>	<u>16.1</u>	<u>4,350</u>	<u>17.0</u>	<u>5,660</u>	<u>20.9</u>	<u>7,300</u>	<u>26.1</u>
Total	24,426	100.0	25,640	100.0	27,070	100.0	28,000	100.0

Source: Minnesota Planning

The State Demographer’s Office has projected a continuation in the aging of the population base of Todd County with more seniors residing in the County by the year 2030. For the younger population group, the state has projected a change in the declining pattern where the numbers of youth is projected to increase in the two decades starting in 2010. As a percent of the population the younger generation will decline over the next thirty years. One last long-term trend is the projected decline in the working aged group after the year 2020.

The above demographic estimates and projections by age group are useful to recreation planning process as they provide fundamental information on the potential users of public and private recreation facilities. While the trends are statistically small in relation to demographic trends of the three regional centers (Alexandria, Brainerd and St. Cloud), the growth in population and changes in the demographics of the County are useful for recreational planning.

Minnesota will be one of the fastest growing states in the Upper Midwest. From 2000 to 2030, the population is projected to grow from 4.9 million to 6.3 million, an increase of over 1.3 million people. The counties surrounding the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the lake counties in north central Minnesota, and the counties along the interstate highway system including Stearns and Douglas will experience the largest population growth. The context of a growing central Minnesota region along with major growth projected for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area should be factored into the County’s recreational planning process along with questions relating to who should pay for recreational services.

**Population by City and Township**

The distribution of the population by city and township is another useful demographic analysis for county level recreation planning. Across the 1990s, population increased in both the County’s cities (522 people) as well as the townships (541 people). Over the past forty years, the total township population has been changed more significantly in terms of numbers and percent than the populations of the cities. The following table summarizes the population distribution by city and township.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of Population by City and Township 1960 – 2000**

	<b>Cities</b>	<b>Townships</b>	<b>County</b>
1960 Population	8,570	14,549	23,119
Percent	37.1	62.9	100.0
1970 Population	8,135	13,979	22,114
Percent	36.8	63.2	100.0
1980 Population	8,917	16,074	24,991
Percent	35.7	64.3	100.0
1990 Population	8,499	14,864	23,363
Percent	36.4	63.6	100.0
2000 Population	9,021	15,405	24,426
Percent	36.9	63.1	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

**Farm/Non Farm Population**

As documented in the Comprehensive Plan, the farm population in the County has experienced significant declines for several decades. That major trend continued from 1990 to 2000 with a decrease in the farm population by 492 persons or a 12 percent drop. Table 4 illustrates the farm/non-farm populations in Todd County since 1970.

**Table 4**  
**Farm/Non-Farm Populations 1970 – 2000**

	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Farm	9,778	6,735	4,116	3,624
Non-Farm	<u>4,201</u>	<u>9,339</u>	<u>10,748</u>	<u>15,512</u>
Total Rural Population	13,979	16,074	14,864	19,136

Source: U.S. Census. Note: “Rural” is defined as all areas not classified as urban.

The growth of rural non farm population in the rural portions of Todd County has continued to increase as projected in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. The ratio of non-farm to farm population has now increased to almost 5 to 1. With the increasing rural population and demand for outdoor recreation such as hunting, hiking, bird watching and other activities, the County will continue to see an increase of rural land use conflicts.

**Appendix E** includes additional demographic information for Todd County.

## B. Recreation Trends

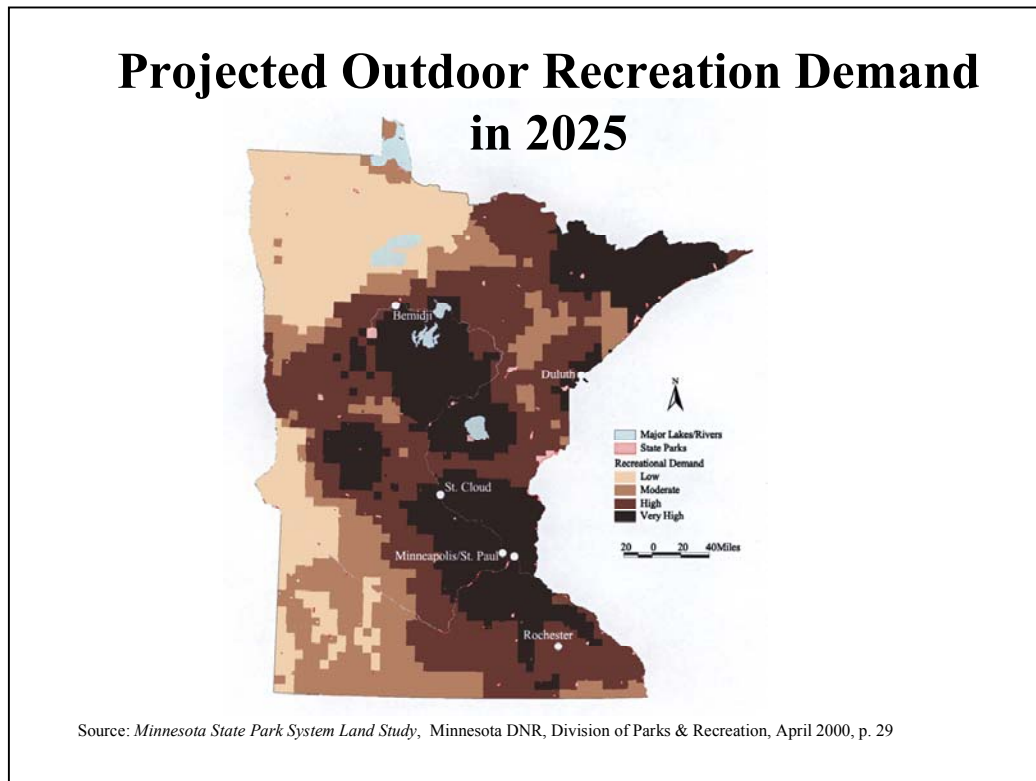
### Outdoor Recreation Demand: Statewide Context

While the population in Todd County is projected to grow moderately, by 14.6 percent from 2000 to 2030, other adjacent counties in the region are projected to experience much more rapid growth rates (Crow Wing County – 63.8 percent, Stearns County – 33.2 percent, and Douglas County – 40.7 percent). The “spillover” effects from the three regional centers that the County has recently began to experience over the last five to ten years, will likely increase over the next twenty years.

Counties in and around the 7-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area including Sherburne and Wright counties are projected to have even higher growth rates. With Interstate 94 and U.S. Highway 10, all of these counties are well within a one to two hour drive of Todd County. Not only will recreation demands by long time local residents increase over the next twenty years, but so will demands from a growing population base in the region and the state.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) studies the future day use outdoor recreation demand. The figure below illustrates the projected outdoor recreation demand for the year 2035. Todd County is located primarily in the “high” and “very high” categories. The areas around the three regional centers that surround Todd County are all designated in the very high category. The figure below illustrates the projected outdoor recreation demand.

Figure 10



**Trends in Outdoor Activities**

The federal government periodically monitors national trends in outdoor recreation activities. The following table summarizes the ten most popular activities in 2000-2001 and 1994-1995.

**Table 5  
Ten Most Popular Recreation Activities**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Rank Order in 2000-2001</b>	<b>Percent of Population 16+ Participating in 2000-2001</b>	<b>Rank Order in 1994-1995</b>	<b>Percent of Population 16+ Participating in 1994-1995</b>
Walking for pleasure	1	83.1	1	66.7
Family gatherings	2	73.6	3	61.8
Visiting a beach	3	60.7	2	62.1
Visiting nature centers	4	57.4	8	46.5
Picnicking	5	54.7	5	49.1
Sightseeing	6	52.1	4	56.6
Attending outdoor sports events	7	49.9	7	47.5
Visiting historic sites	8	46.3	9	44.1
Viewing wildlife	9	44.7	*	31.2
Swimming in lakes, streams	10	42.1	10	39.0

Source: Outdoor Recreation in America. Roper. 2004. \* Pool swimming was number 6 in 1994 – 1995.

**2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey**

In 2004, the MN DNR conducted a survey of adult Minnesotans on their participation in outdoor recreation. The surveyed citizens lived in one of five regions in the state with Todd County being located in the Northwest region. A survey form was sent to a sample of 4,400 citizens residing throughout the state. Approximately 60 percent of those persons completed and returned the survey.

Nearly 60 percent of the survey respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is “very important” to their life, while another 25 percent indicated that it is “moderately important”. Less than one out of five people (18 percent) believe outdoor recreation is of little importance.

“Enjoying nature” and “exercise/healthy lifestyle” were the two top reasons why those surveyed recreate outdoors. Some of the other reasons given by the respondents include bonding with friends and family, escape the pressures of modern life, and to experience peace and quiet.

The leading outdoor recreation activity identified by the survey was walking/hiking for exercise or pleasure. Recreational boating, fishing, swimming and hunting were other common activities identified by the surveyed citizens.

Minnesotans who live in more rural settings with lower population densities tend to recreate more outdoors than their urban counterparts. Further differences include the following: men, younger age groups, people living in larger households, and white ethnicity groups also tend to recreate outdoors more than their counterparts.

Most of Minnesotan's outdoor recreation occurs near home and within the state. Two-thirds of all recreation use is within a 30-minute drive of the respondents home while 89 percent of the activities occur in Minnesota.

Some of the barriers to outdoor recreation cited by respondents included lack of time, outdoor pests, costs, travel time, over crowding, and the lack of companions to recreate with.

The results from the survey have been documented in a report entitled, "2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey of Minnesotans: Report on Findings". The report can be viewed on the MN DNR web site ([www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)).

### **County Level Outdoor Recreation Survey**

Given the fact that cost to prepare an in depth survey of outdoor recreation participation at the county level was beyond the budget and scope for this planning process, such a survey has not been developed at this time. The costs for such a survey would equal or exceed the budget for this first recreational plan.

Members of the CAC recognized the importance of hunting, fishing and trapping to residents and visitors of the County. They also noted that only forty percent of MN DNR lands in the state are available for public hunting.

As the County implements this Plan, it may wish to invest in developing more extensive surveys to better evaluate the range of outdoor recreation activities that are desired by residents and visitors as well as changes and trends in the activities desired by the public. Surveys could be targeted to key groups or users such as snowmobile riders, youth, bikers, etc. to help reduce costs. Please note that Section 4 does provide an overview of the input gathered from the people who participated in this planning process.

## C. Public Land Inventories and Trends

### Statewide Context

The State of Minnesota covers approximately 84,000 square miles or 53.8 million acres. Water features such as lakes, rivers and stream cover 2.6 million acres leaving about 51.2 million acres of land area.

According to research prepared for the Minnesota House of Representatives, one-fourth of the land area is publicly owned ([www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/issinfo/sssoland.htm](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/issinfo/sssoland.htm)). The federal government owns about 7 percent of the land area, or 3.4 million acres, while the state government owns about 17 percent of the land area, or 8.4 million acres. Over 95 percent of the state-owned land was given to the state by the federal government

The majority of federal land in Minnesota is natural resource land, primarily forest acreage in Chippewa and Superior national forests. Other federal lands are mainly in national wildlife management areas, national parklands, and Indian reservation lands.

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for the management of over 90 percent of all state-owned land. At least 80 percent of DNR land is forested lands, primarily in state forest units, with other land in wildlife management areas, state parks, scientific and natural areas, fisheries management areas, water access sites, and state trails and recreation areas.

Other state agencies that own and manage land are the Department of Transportation, Military Affairs, Administration, Human Services, and the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities systems.

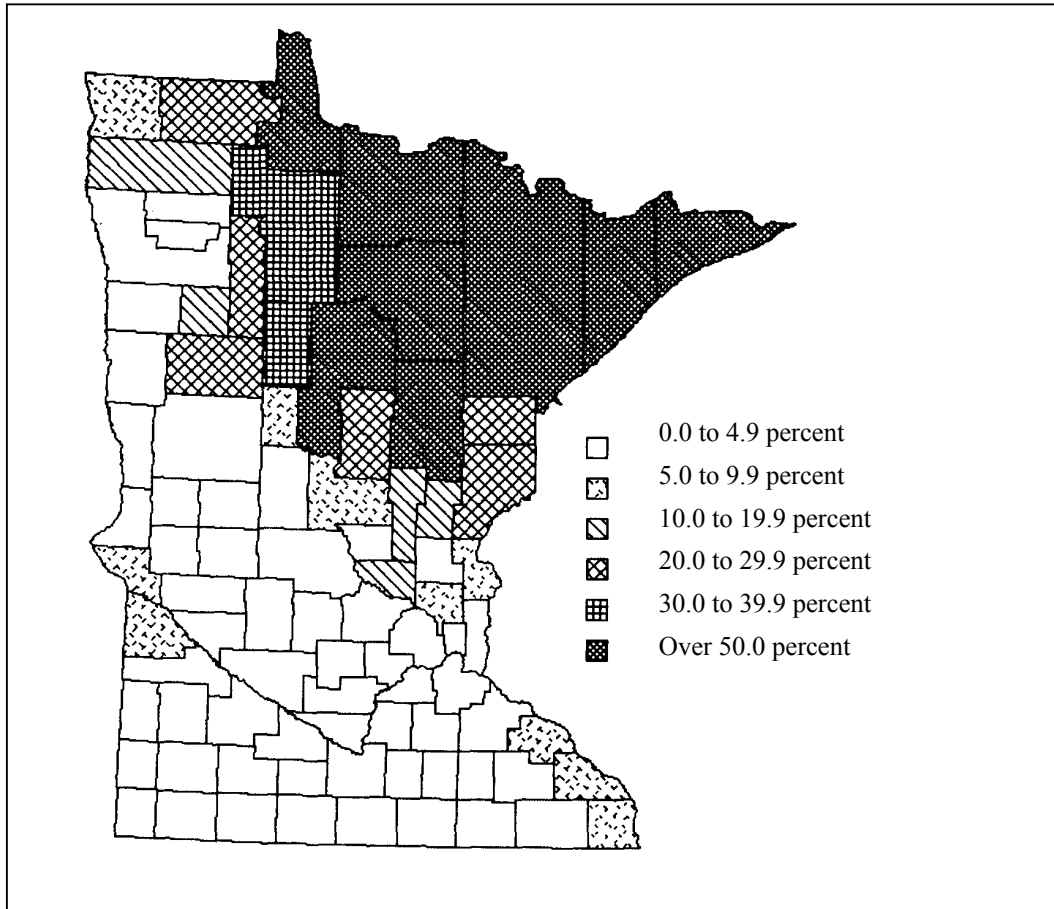
Given the large number of public entities in our system of governance, inventorying the amount of publicly owned lands is a fairly complicated endeavor. For example, at the federal level, there are well over a dozen different agencies or departments that are recorded landowners in the state such as the U.S. Department of Interior. The state of Minnesota has even more departments with recorded public land ownership. To complicate the matters further, different divisions within a department or agency can own land such as the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the MN DNR. Each agency as well as each section can own land for its delegated responsibilities.

### 1983 Minnesota Public Land Inventory

There have been a handful of inventories of publicly owned land in Minnesota over the past twenty to thirty years. The 1983 Minnesota Public Lands inventory prepared by the MN DNR and the Land Management Information Center collected and organized public land data for the federal, state and county levels. Figure 11 illustrates the percent of total publicly land by county across the state as of 1983.



**Figure 11**  
**Percent of Total Public Land, 1983**



Within the five county area in Region 5 Regional Development Commission, Cass County has the highest percent of total public lands owned (57 percent) while Todd County has the lowest percent of publicly owned lands (under 2 percent). The following table shows the variation of public land ownership patterns for the five counties in Region 5.

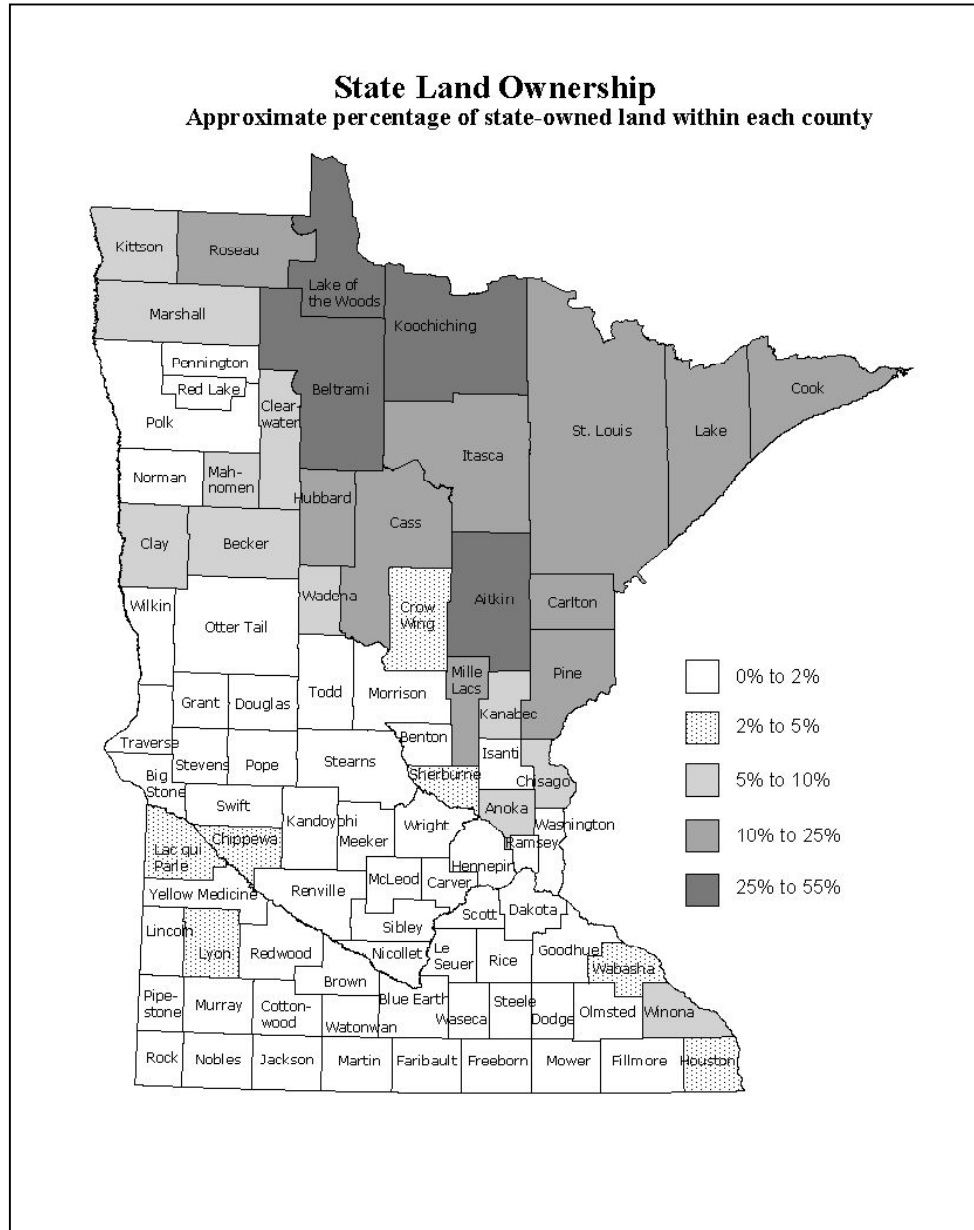
**Table 6**  
**Percent of Public Land by County, 1983, Five County Region in Central Minnesota**

County	Federal Land	State Land	Tax Forfeit	Total
Cass	22.73	14.73	19.76	57.22
Crow Wing	0.09	4.90	16.61	21.62
Morrison	0.02	8.31	0.02	8.36
Todd	0.06	1.80	0.01	1.88
Wadena	0.01	7.06	1.19	8.27
State Average	6.67	10.97	5.46	23.12

Source: LMIC and MN DNR. Minnesota Public Lands, 1983.

The State of Minnesota is the largest public landowner in Todd County. Todd County like Ottertail, Morrison, Douglas, Pope and Stearns counties all have less two percent of their land area under state ownership. Wadena County has between 5 and 10 percent state ownership while the counties to the north tend to have even higher levels of state ownership. Figure 12 illustrates the state land ownership pattern on a county basis.

**Figure 12**



While the 1983 public land inventory reported that the statewide county average of public land was 23 percent, CAC members noted that recent research indicated that the current county average was 41 percent.

## Conservation Easements

A recent trend for natural resource land protection has been to acquire protection through conservation easements, rather than only the purchase of direct fee title, simply the acquiring of the land. Conservation easements are administered by both public agencies and non profit organizations as regulated by state statutes (Chapter 84C).

Conservation easements administered by state agencies protect quality land for a certain period of time by payments to landowners based upon a percentage of the assessed value of their land. Both the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the MN DNR have utilized easements recently; BWSR having over 195,000 acres under easement through the RIM and CREP programs; and MN DNR having about 20,000 acres under easement for various purposes.

Over the past ten or more years, the use of conservation easements by state and federal agencies has become more targeted to lands where there are soil erosion and other water quality management concerns or forest management protection.

Information about the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) can be found on the BWSR web site at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/index.html](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/index.html).



### **What is a Conservation Easement?**

A conservation easement is a set of restrictions that a landowner **voluntarily** places on his or her property to preserve its conservation values. The conservation values of the property and the restrictions created to preserve those values, along with rights reserved by the landowner, are detailed in a document known as a conservation easement. This document is filed with the local county land records office.

A conservation easement is conveyed to a government agency or a nonprofit conservation organization qualified to hold and enforce easements. Most, but not all conservation easements are perpetual. They apply to the current landowner and all future landowners.

Each conservation easement is unique, specifically tailored to the particular land being protected as well as to the landowner and their particular situation.

Minnesota Land Trust

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