

## State-Owned Land in Minnesota

### *How much land does the government own?*

There are about 51.2 million acres of land and 2.6 million acres of water within Minnesota. About 25 percent of the land is owned by governmental units. 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.

Almost all 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.

### *Who manages the land?*

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.

### *Easement acquisition trend*

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. Conservation easements 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 (BOWSR) and the DNR have utilized easements recently; BOWSR having over 195,000 acres under easement through the RIM and CREP programs; and DNR having about 20,000 acres under easement for various purposes.

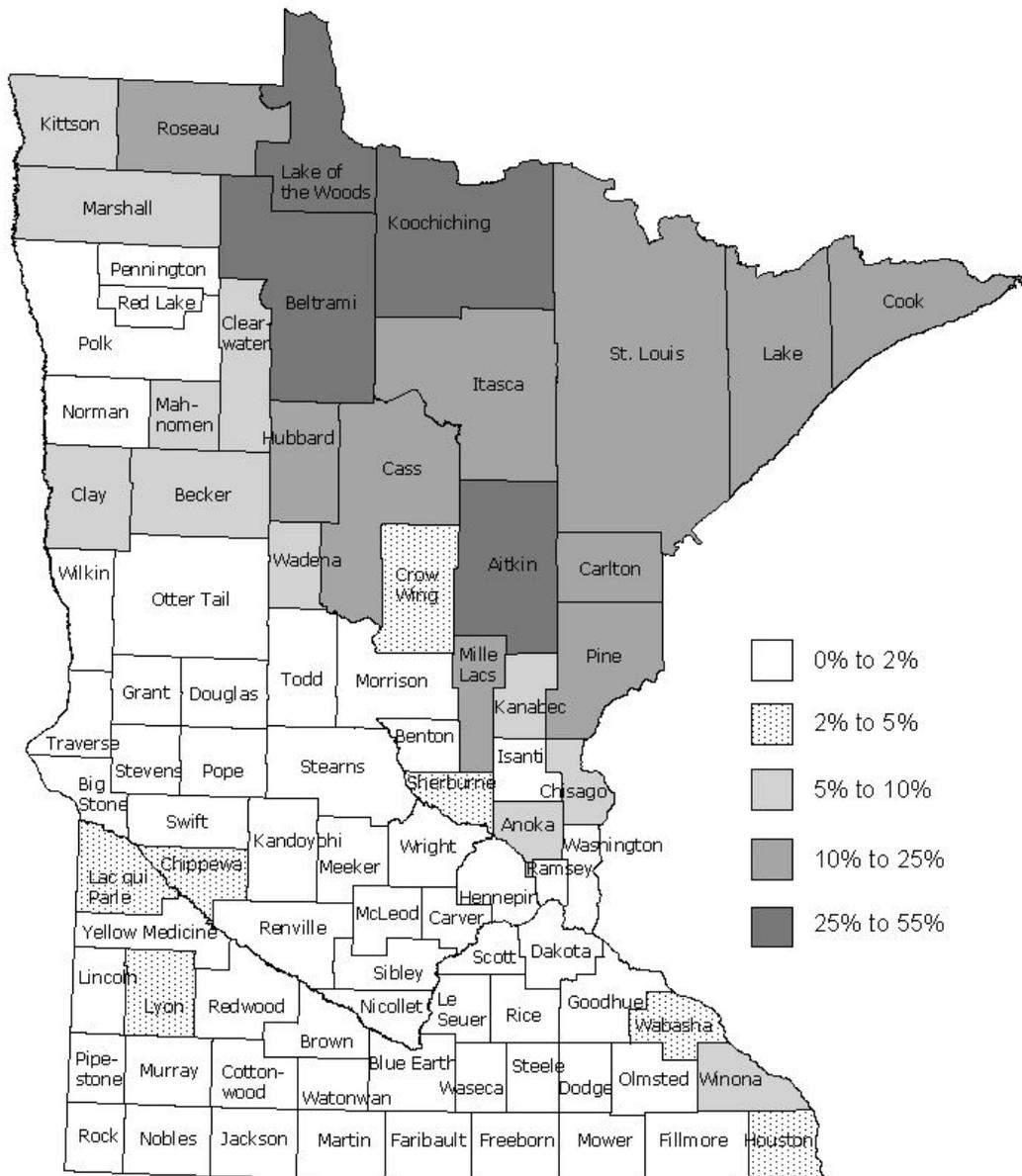
Information about the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) can be found on the BOWSR web site at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/index.html](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/index.html).

A 2002 law, chapter 393, section 36, was enacted requiring the Commissioner of Administration to inventory most state-owned land and report to the 2003 Legislature on whether the land is:

- 1) Being used for a public purpose;
- 2) Expected to be used for a future public purpose; and
- 3) Not now or expected to be used for a public purpose.

## State Land Ownership

Approximate percentage of state-owned land within each county



**For more information:** Contact legislative analyst John Helland at 651-296-5039.

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