



# Cass County COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Comprehensive Local Water Plan • Private Land Use Plan  
Public Land Use Plan • Public Infrastructure Plan



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# **CASS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

## **IMPLEMENTATION SECTIONS:**

**COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER PLANNING**

**PRIVATE LAND USE PLANNING**

**PUBLIC LAND USE PLANNING**

**PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING**

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**INITIATIVE  
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We also thank the Initiative Foundation’s Healthy Communities Program for the leadership training and financial support that made this plan possible.

# CASS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## INTRODUCTION AND AUTHORITY

Cass County is pleased to present this update of our Comprehensive Plan. We recognize that our greatest assets are our immense and varied natural resource base and our citizens. We also recognize that these high quality natural and human resources provide unique opportunities to wisely plan future development and growth. We must place the highest priority on maintaining and preserving the unique environment of the County for our residents and visitors.

This plan is authorized under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 394.23 & 103B, and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9300.

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This plan has been developed by citizens of Cass County to provide a comprehensive policy guide for Cass County in carrying out our responsibilities to our landowners, visitors, and other government units. It includes both short and long-term strategies to achieve its goals. It will be reviewed and updated on a five-year basis.

## PLAN PROCESS

The planning process was directed by a 33 member leadership team — *The Cass County Visioneers*. Using a process outlined by the Initiative Foundation's Healthy Community Program, the team organized five "visioning sessions" to afford citizen input to the planning process. Participants were divided up into teams and asked to list assets and challenges in the County. They then identified five or six key elements and Desired Outcomes that Cass County should achieve over next five years.

Fourteen citizen subcommittees, with Cass County staff support, then used this public input, existing plans, and other data to develop this plan. The County Board of Commissioners held five more meetings to present the draft plan and gain additional comment. Annual evaluations will be held to update and refine plan elements.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

*The plan details policy for a broad range of issues grouped into categories and subcategories as follows:*

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*This is intended to be a working document of goals, objectives, and action plans. A full set of background studies and data collected during the planning process is presented in a separate document.*

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# **COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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# COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

## A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This plan is an analysis of Cass County's ground and surface waters and related land resources with a five-year action strategy designed to achieve County water resource and management goals.

The scope and purpose of the plan is to:

- Identify existing and potential problems and opportunities for the protection, management, and development of water and related land resources
- Preserve the pristine quality of the county's ground and surface waters and, where degradation has occurred, provide for water quality restoration
- Monitor water quality, use, and availability
- Develop objectives and carry out a plan of action to promote sound hydrologic management, effective environmental protection
- Provide coordinated and efficient delivery of environmental services to assure the long term protection of water resources and watersheds

## B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103B and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9300 require that fifty-five key resource data items be reviewed in the water management planning process. In addition, 18 resource assessments are required to evaluate resource condition and the impact that various land uses may have on those resources. This background information is included in a separate supporting material document.

## C. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS AND GOALS

- 1. GROUNDWATER QUALITY GOAL:** Preserve the quality of the County's groundwater and where degradation has occurred, provide for restoration of groundwater quality.
- 2. GROUNDWATER QUANTITY GOAL:** Monitor water use to assure adequate groundwater resources.
- 3. SURFACE WATER QUALITY GOAL:** Preserve the quality of Cass County's surface water, and where degradation has occurred, work to restore the surface water quality.
- 4. SURFACE WATER QUANTITY GOAL:** Monitor water use to assure adequate surface water resources.

**5. WETLAND PROTECTION GOAL:** Preserve the functions, values, and extent of the County's wetland resources and support programs that protect wetlands from development impacts.

**6. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION GOAL:** Work cooperatively with other departments and agencies to provide accurate, useful environmental information.

**7. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GOAL:** To work cooperatively with other agencies in implementing plans and projects based on watershed-wide priorities.

**8. DATA MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Assemble and manage historical and current surface and groundwater data in efficient, useable formats that afford easy access and analysis.

**9. REGULATORY GOAL:** Enact and enforce policies, rules, and ordinances that are administered equitably and that protect the County's natural resources.

**10. PLAN ADMINISTRATION GOAL:** Provide coordinated and efficient delivery of environmental services to assure the long-term protection of water resources.

#### **D. POLICY NEEDS**

The ESD Advisory Committee has adopted the following list of objectives and action items in order to achieve our stated goals:

**1. GROUNDWATER QUALITY GOAL:** Preserve the quality of the County's groundwater and where degradation has occurred, provide for restoration of groundwater quality.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Determine the Quality of Cass County's Groundwater Resources***

- a. Create a County groundwater-monitoring program. The purpose of this program is to utilize the UMD regional groundwater flow model, well testing results for nitrates and coliform bacteria, and other monitoring data to discover the quality, extent, and flow direction of our groundwater and learn more about the impacts of human activity on our groundwater.
- b. Evaluate the results of studies of contaminants to groundwater.
- c. Coordinate water monitoring and research efforts with Williams Lake IRI project.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: MPCA, USGS, MDH, UMD

***OBJECTIVE 2: Prevent Contamination of Cass County's Groundwater Resources***

- a. Continue enforcement of county individual sewage treatment system ordinance provision requiring individual sanitary treatment system evaluation and/or update at the time of property transfers.

- b. Develop and implement a systematic program of compliance inspections of ISTS systems not currently in compliance on a lake-by-lake or area-by-area basis, beginning with critical areas.
- c. Develop and implement an alternative individual sewage treatment code that sets County standards for waste treatment and allows alternative and experimental systems to be evaluated and adopted as standard systems.
- d. Use the regional groundwater flow model to implement a wellhead protection program.
- e. Administer the state well permitting.
- f. Promote the implementation of water well abandonment and closure programs.
- g. Utilize the regional groundwater flow model to identify possible negative recharge area impacts for new proposed developments or plats.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: UMD, MDH, MPCA, RWA

**2. GROUNDWATER QUANTITY GOAL:** Monitor water use to assure adequate groundwater resources.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Determine the Extent of Surficial Aquifers***

- a. Utilize the regional groundwater flow model to estimate volumes of groundwater

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: UMD, MDH, MPCA

**3. SURFACE WATER QUALITY GOAL:** Preserve the quality of Cass County's surface water, and where degradation has occurred, work to restore the surface water quality.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Provide for Protection of All Surface Waters***

- a. Work with agencies, developers, and individuals to create and implement stormwater management plans.
- b. Work with the Mississippi Headwaters Board River Defense Network to implement a pipeline spill emergency program for the county.
- c. Assist lake associations in their efforts to develop and implement management plans for individual lakes or watersheds.
- d. Assess the Itasca County Lake Vulnerability Index for use in Cass County.
- e. Work with other agencies to develop lake sustainability and carrying capacity criterion.
- f. Develop a sensitive resource protection list for use in determining priorities for conservation easements, acquisitions, and other protection programs.

- g. Set up lakeshore revegetation demonstration sites on all general development lakes.
- h. Continue agricultural programs for stream protection.
- i. Support the Mississippi Headwaters Board River Watch Program
- j. Use major watershed management strategies for water quality protection.
- k. Develop a priority list of areas needing collective septic drainfields and implement an installation program.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: SWCD, MES, DNR, MPCA, LLB, USACE, USFS, MHB, NRCS, ACCL, BWSR, TCLLWP, PRWPF

***OBJECTIVE 2: Monitor and Manage Recreational Uses to Protect Water Resources***

- a. Assist in monitoring of lakes for exotic species such as Eurasian water milfoil.
- b. Support the implementation of fishery habitat management plans.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: DNR, SWCD, TCLLWP, PRWPF

**4. SURFACE WATER QUANTITY GOAL:** Monitor water use to assure adequate surface water resources.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Monitor the Existing Volume and Flow of Surface Water***

- a. Use current studies to help develop water budget modeling for watersheds.
- b. Evaluate possible impacts of droughts on natural and economic resources.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups agency: DNR, MPCA, MHB

**5. WETLAND PROTECTION GOAL:** Preserve the functions, values, and extent of the County's wetland resources and support programs that protect wetlands from development impacts.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Determine the Extent and Condition of our Wetland Resources***

- a. Use the wetland and groundwater models to identify wetlands that may be the most significant for groundwater recharge.
- b. Develop a high priority wetland inventory

***OBJECTIVE 2: Protect our Wetland Resources from Degradation***

- a. Enforce existing regulations affecting wetland conversions.
- b. Develop and implement management plans for High Priority wetlands.

- c. Work cooperatively with departments, agencies, watershed organizations, foundations, developers, and individuals to place wetlands in conservation easements or similar protective mechanisms.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: SWCD, DNR, LLB, USACE, BWSR

**6. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION GOAL:** Work cooperatively with other departments and agencies to provide accurate, useful environmental information.

- a. Promote the implementation of water well abandonment and closure programs.
- b. Continue to work with producers on agricultural conservation plans
- c. Promote soil testing to help determine spreading rates for septage, animal waste, and chemical fertilizers
- d. Conduct non-point source pollution training.
- e. Continue to support the efforts of lake associations and to assist in organizing new lake associations.
- f. Promote the Citizen Lake Monitoring Program for all lakes in the county.
- g. Provide lakeshore revegetation technical assistance and train shoreland volunteers to assist in designing and installing lakeshore plantings.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: SWCD, MES, DNR, MPCA, LLB, MHB, NRCS, ACCL, BWSR, TLLWP, PRWPF

**7. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GOAL:** To work cooperatively with other agencies in implementing plans and projects based on watershed-wide priorities.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Assess Cass County's groundwater aquifers***

- a. Work with the regional groundwater flow model and the MPCA Basin Planning Program to estimate aquifer boundaries and interaction with surface waters.

***OBJECTIVE 2: Assess Cass County's surface water watersheds***

- a. Determine subwatershed boundaries on a project basis in cooperation with lake associations.
- b. Assess watershed impacts caused by individual developments and the cumulative effects of development on receiving waters.
- c. Assist MDNR and MPCA Basin Planning Program with watershed stream gauging programs.

- d. Support the efforts of watershed organizations.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: DNR, MPCA, MHB, NRCS, ACCL, BWSR, PRWPF, TCLLWP

**8. DATA MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Assemble and manage historical and current surface and groundwater data in efficient, useable formats that afford easy access and analysis.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Assemble and manage Cass County's groundwater data***

- a. Develop a program with local water well drillers and septic system installers to record GPS locations for all new wells and septic systems
- b. Continue to update and refine the regional groundwater flow model to provide better predictive groundwater data.

***OBJECTIVE 2: Assemble and manage Cass County's surface water data***

- a. Acquire and maintain surface water quality data for future trend analysis.
- b. Maintain the ESD and lake association program for Hydrolab testing.

***OBJECTIVE 3: Assemble and manage Cass County's statistical and demographic data***

- a. Create a county atlas. Maps, tables, and descriptions of all county data such as: watersheds, ecology, geomorphology, population density, roads, etc
- b. Develop and institute policies and procedures for the acquisition, maintenance, use, and security of data.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: SWCD, MES, DNR, MPCA, LLB, USACE, USFS, MHB, NRCS, ACCL, BWSR, TCLLWP, PRWPF

**9. REGULATORY GOAL:** Enact and enforce policies, rules, and ordinances that are administered equitably and that protect the County's natural resources.

***OBJECTIVE 1: Ordinance Enforcement***

- a. Continue to administer and enforce the Cass County Wetland Ordinance and Wetland Conservation Act.
- b. Continue to administer and enforce the Cass County Land Use Ordinance
- c. Continue to administer and enforce the Cass County Individual Sewage Treatment System Ordinance.
- d. Continue to administer and enforce the Cass County Subdivision and Platting Ordinance
- e. Continue to administer and enforce the Cass County Feedlot Ordinance and the MPCA Feedlot Permitting Program

**OBJECTIVE 2: Establish and Assess Review Criteria**

- a. Adopt the regional groundwater flow, wetland functional analysis, and upland functional analysis models as official County review criterion for permits, conditional uses, variances, developments, and plats.
- b. Assess and reclassify shoreland zoning districts to protect critical areas and sensitive resources.
- c. ESD Advisory Committee to make recommendations on evaluation and revision of county ordinances and plans.
- d. Review ordinances from townships and municipalities for compatibility and provide technical assistance to improve implementation.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting groups: SWCD, DNR, MPCA, LLB, MHB, ACCL, BWSR, TCELLWP, PRWPF

**10. PLAN ADMINISTRATION GOAL:** Provide coordinated and efficient delivery of environmental services to assure the long term protection of water resources.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Establish an Effective Structure for the Administration of the Plan**

- a. Formalize the ESD Advisory Committee's role in water plan administration. Develop operating policies and meeting schedules for project and budget review, and plan evaluation.
- b. Adopt the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan Update as part of the Cass County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- c. Conduct annual meetings in five communities to gain public input on environmental issues and problems, and evaluate plan implementation. Incorporate findings into Comprehensive Plan and ordinance updates.
- d. Convene an intergovernmental meeting to explore funding options for Water Plan-related projects including special taxing districts and user fees.
- e. Maintain cooperative intergovernmental agreements that assist other local, state, federal, and tribal agencies in achieving their natural resource goals, and enlists their support in achieving ours.

Lead agency: ESD

Supporting agency: SWCD, BWSR, MPCA, MDH, DNR, LLB, NRCS, USFS, TCELLWP, PRWPF

**F. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

This Water Plan will be evaluated in several different ways. Public meetings will be held to solicit citizen input on general effectiveness of plan

implementation and needs for changes. The ESD Advisory Committee will review progress on projects, as well as assisting in the development of the annual budget and workplan. Cooperating departments, agencies, and organizations will be consulted on a project or program basis.

*The review intervals will be as follows:*

Public review meetings .....	Annually
ESD Advisory Committee project review .....	Quarterly
Budget and workplan .....	Annually
Agency project review .....	As needed
Plan revision .....	5 years

**G. ACRONYMS**

ACCL	Association of Cass County Lakes
BWSR	Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
ESD	Cass County Environmental Services Department
DNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
LGU	Local Governmental Unit
LLB	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
MBR	Middle Boy River Project
MDH	Minnesota Department of Health
MES	Minnesota Cooperative Extension Service
MHB	Mississippi Headwaters Board.
MLA	Minnesota Lakes Association
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PRWPF	Pine River Watershed Protection Foundation
RWA	Rural Water Association
SWCD	Cass Soil and Water Conservation District
TCLLWP	Tri-County Leech Lake Watershed Project
UMD	University of Minnesota-Duluth
USACE	Army Corps of Engineers
USFS	US Forest Service

# COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (2002-2006)

**Citizen Review:** ESD Advisory Committee

**Staff Coordination:** John Sumption, ESD Deputy Director

ACTION	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Groundwater Quality / Objective 1</b>					
1. County groundwater program	X	X	X	X	X
2. Evaluate contaminant studies	X	X	X	X	X
3. Coordinate with USGS studies		X		X	
<b>Groundwater Quality / Objective 2</b>					
1. Septic system upgrades at transfer	X	X	X	X	X
2. Systematic ISTS inspection	X	X	X	X	X
3. Develop alternative ISTS code	X	X			
4. Wellhead implementation	X	X	X	X	X
5. Administer state well program			X	X	X
6. Well abandonment	X	X	X	X	X
7. Identify development impacts	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Groundwater Quantity / Objective 1</b>					
1. Estimate groundwater volume		X	X		
<b>Surface Water Quality / Objective 1</b>					
1. Stormwater management planning	X	X	X	X	X
2. MHB River Defense Network	X	X	X	X	X
3. Lake management plans	X	X	X	X	X
4. Lake vulnerability index	X	X			
5. Sustainability and carrying capacity study		X	X		
6. Sensitive resource protection list	X	X	X		
7. Lakeshore revegetation demonstrations	X	X	X	X	X
8. Agricultural stream protection	X	X	X	X	X
9. MHB River Watch Program	X	X	X	X	X
10. Watershed strategies	X	X	X	X	X
11. Collective drainfield priorities	X	X	X	X	X

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Surface Water Quality / Objective 2</b>					
1. Exotic species protection	X	X	X	X	X
2. Fisheries habitat plans	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Surface Water Quantity / Objective 1</b>					
1. Watershed water budget models	X	X	X	X	X
2. Evaluate drought impacts	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Wetland Protection / Objective 1</b>					
1. Groundwater recharge wetlands	X	X			
2. High priority wetland inventory	X	X			
<b>Wetland Protection / Objective 2</b>					
1. Restrict wetland conversions	X	X	X	X	X
2. High priority wetland plans	X	X	X	X	X
3. Wetland easement programs	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Education and Information / Objective 1</b>					
1. Promote well closure	X	X	X	X	X
2. Agricultural conservation plans	X	X	X	X	X
3. Promote soil testing	X	X	X	X	X
4. Non-point pollution training		X		X	
5. Organize lake associations	X	X	X	X	X
6. Promote Citizen Lake Monitoring	X	X	X	X	X
7. Train shoreland volunteers	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Watershed Management / Objective 1</b>					
1. Estimate groundwater aquifer boundaries			X	X	
<b>Watershed Management / Objective 2</b>					
1. Determine watershed boundaries	X	X	X	X	X
2. Assess development impacts	X	X	X	X	X
3. Watershed stream gauging	X	X	X	X	X
4. Support watershed organizations	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management / Objective 1</b>					
1. Locate wells and septic systems	X	X	X	X	X
2. Update groundwater model	X	X	X	X	X

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Data Management / Objective 2</b>					
1. Acquire surface water data	X	X	X	X	X
2. Hydrolab testing	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management / Objective 3</b>					
1. Create data atlas	X	X	X	X	X
2. Develop data management policies	X				
<b>Regulatory / Objective 1</b>					
1. Enforce wetland ordinance and act	X	X	X	X	X
2. Enforce land use ordinances	X	X	X	X	X
3. Enforce ISTS ordinance	X	X	X	X	X
4. Enforce subdivision ordinance	X	X	X	X	X
5. Enforce feedlot ordinance	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Regulatory / Objective 2</b>					
1. Adopt models as criterion	X				
2. Reclassify shorelands	X	X			
3. ESD Advisory recommendations	X	X	X	X	X
4. Coordinate municipal/township ordinances	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Plan Administration / Objective 1</b>					
1. ESD Advisory policies	X				
2. Adopt Plan	X				
3. Conduct public input meetings	X	X	X	X	X
4. Intergovernmental meeting on funding options		X		X	
5. Intergovernmental agreements	X	X	X	X	X

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# PRIVATE LAND USE PLAN

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# PRIVATE LAND USE PLAN

## LAND USE PLANNING

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

It is the purpose of these policies to:

1. Provide a rational basis to make difficult land and resource use decisions wisely
2. Eliminate the conflicts caused by unplanned development
3. Improve coordination and communication between the county, local governments, and citizens in land use planning
4. Protect the County's natural resources from degradation

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. 1993 Land Use Plan
2. Cass County ordinances
3. Municipal plans and ordinances
4. Highway 371 & Highway 210 Corridor Plans
5. Cass County Wetland, Upland, and Groundwater Analysis Models

### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Demand continues to increase for first and second tier lakeshore development and other recreational property.
2. Demand continues to increase for commercial and residential development necessary for normal (local) growth that places more pressure on rural areas, small lakes, wetlands, and agricultural lands
3. As the makeup and density of land ownership increases, so do the expectations for services.
4. Physical limitations on remaining undeveloped property create environmental and logistical challenges
5. The current land use ordinances need to be merged and revised.

## **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Development of lakeshore property with minimal natural resource impacts.
2. Provision of necessary infrastructure to accommodate the conversion of seasonal cabins into year-round residences
3. Preservation of critical habitats
4. Lake access that does not degrade water quality
5. Location of higher density residential areas where sewer and water infrastructure is available
6. Concentration of commercial businesses at or near major transportation intersections.
7. Adequate affordable housing available for all age and income levels
8. Preservation of agricultural lands for agricultural use
9. An active forest management and timber harvesting program that supports a variety of uses including recreation

## **E. POLICY NEEDS**

1. **Natural Resources Policy:** To incorporate the goals and strategies of the Cass County Comprehensive Local Water Plan in promoting land and water uses that result in the sustainable use of natural resources, balancing development and environmental commitment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and resources of the County for this and future generations.
  - a. Preserve the quality of the County's groundwater and where degradation has occurred, provide for restoration of groundwater quality.
  - b. Monitor water use to assure adequate groundwater resources.
  - c. Preserve the quality of Cass County's surface water, and where degradation has occurred, work to restore the surface water quality.
  - d. Monitor water use to assure adequate surface water resources.
  - e. Preserve the functions, values, and extent of the County's wetland resources and support programs that protect wetlands from development impacts.
  - f. Work cooperatively with other departments and agencies to provide accurate, useful environmental information.
  - g. To work cooperatively with other agencies in implementing plans and projects based on watershed-wide priorities.
  - h. Assemble and manage historical and current surface and groundwater data in efficient, useable formats that afford easy access and analysis.
  - i. Enact and enforce policies, rules, and ordinances that are administered equitably and that protect the County's natural resources.

- j. Provide coordinated and efficient delivery of environmental services to assure the long term protection of water resources.

**2. Housing Policy:** To encourage diversified housing development that maximizes the use of infrastructure including roads, sewer, water and other public services.

- a. Encourage high density residential development to be located in or near municipalities
- b. Encourage joint planning between local governments on infrastructure expansion
- c. Limit rural development density
- d. Encourage cluster development as an alternative in environmentally sensitive areas
- e. Provide affordable and multi-family housing
- f. Encourage single family lakeshore development
- g. Provide buffers between developments and existing uses such as extractive uses and shooting ranges.

**3. Agriculture Policy:** Encourage agriculture as the primary use in historically farmed areas as part of a diverse economy and respect the settlement characteristics of agricultural areas.

- a. Discourage reclassification of agriculture land to other uses, and keep the 40-acre parcel limit.
- b. Recognize the importance of agricultural land to the economy.
- c. Encourage specialized agricultural operations i.e. - truck farms, vegetables, and fruits.
- d. Recognize economic contribution of hobby farms, but consider issues such as animal unit per acre and animal waste disposal.
- e. Regulate feedlots
- f. Provide buffers between developments and agricultural land uses such as feedlots.

**4. Commercial/Industrial Policy:** Encourage a sound and diverse economy that meets the needs of Cass County residents and visitors for employment and services.

- a. Encourage location of commercial businesses at or near major transportation intersections.
- b. Continue to regulate new extractive uses and require existing extractive use operations to file a reclamation plan and financial assurance for reclamation.
- c. Locate industrial uses in existing industrial parks or areas developed for industrial purposes.

**5. Recreation Policy:** Develop an integrated green space and recreation system within Cass County that provides diverse, developed and undeveloped, recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors while protecting unique scenic and natural areas.

- a. Maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities
- b. Enhance existing recreation facilities
- c. Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas

**6. Transportation Policy:** Maintain and enhance a transportation system that meets the local and regional access needs of Cass County residents, businesses, and visitors.

- a. Coordinate efforts with county, state, tribal, and federal transportation planning
- b. Establish road use and design standards
- c. Provide strict guidelines for private roads connecting to public roads.
- d. Require buffers where possible between developments & public roads.

**7. Governmental Cooperation Policy:** Coordinate efforts between the County, municipalities, townships, state and federal agencies, and tribal government to assure wise land use, economic development, and the protection of natural resources.

- a. Develop and implement planned growth strategies for residential and commercial development
- b. Coordinate with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe on land use regulation and natural resource protection efforts

## **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Adopt Comprehensive Plan and Land Use ordinance revisions - 2002

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Planning Commission and ESD Advisory Committee will review policies and ordinance annually
2. Update policies every 5 years

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Minnesota Agricultural Statistics 2001
2. United States Department of Agriculture
3. Department of Trade and Economic Development
4. Census Bureau
5. Minnesota Statutes, Session Laws, and Rules
6. Property Tax Analysis - Cass County Assessor's Office

## SOLID WASTE PLAN

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1. To define the County's role related to solid waste collection and disposal
2. To set proper solid waste collection and disposal standards
3. To promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. Pine River Transfer Station
2. Slagle Landfill and Demolition
3. Walker Hackensack Transfer Site
4. May Township Transfer site
5. Crooked Lake Transfer Site
6. Cass County Solid Waste Ordinance
7. Cass County Land Use Ordinances
8. Household Hazardous Waste Program
9. Materials Exchange Program
10. Co-operation with Leech Lake Tribal Solid Waste Transfer Station.

### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. **Slagle Site:** No current problems - well managed.
2. **Walker Hackensack Transfer Site:** Driveway needs improvement, need roll-off and brush areas
3. **May Township Transfer Site:** More space for containers, separate entrance to site, weather protected area for furniture and materials reuse, enclosed area for batteries, oil drums, antifreeze drums and bulbs
4. **Crooked Lake Transfer Site:** Continued funding assistance from the County, bag sales or punch card system, additional cardboard canisters
5. **All sites:** More accurate and up to date signage, controlled access
6. **Pine River Transfer Station:** Need containment for oil, antifreeze and batteries to keep spills from leaking onto the ground.

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Efficient management, recycling, and disposal of waste materials
2. Well equipped remote transfer sites with good physical access
3. Expanded household hazardous waste collection program

**E. POLICY NEEDS**

1. Seek legislative changes to equalize the state tax charged to commercial haulers versus that charged to private individuals who haul their own.
2. A central site in Pine River for computer and TV collection coordinated with the other transfer sites ( if possible, have limited collection & temporary storage area for these items at all sites).
3. Make contractors responsible for cleaning up construction sites.
4. Define and enforce illegal dumping and burn barrel regulations.
5. Provide disposal sites for stumps and brush.
6. Develop a standardized county-wide waste disposal fee schedule.
7. Establish an enforcement and cleanup fund.
8. Institute administrative penalty orders.
9. Maintain access to a private grinder for brush and certain Construction and Demolition Materials.
10. Establish areas for short term storage of construction materials for reuse.
11. Improved standards for cleanliness at recycling facility.
12. Update Solid Ordinance and appendices.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Adopt revised ordinance - 2002

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Solid Waste Committee will review policies and ordinance annually.
2. Update policies every 5 years.

## **SUBDIVISION PLAN**

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

1. To develop policies to ensure that new divisions of land and the infrastructure necessary thereto contribute to orderly, stable, and safe overall development.

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Survey Records, Plats and other recorded divisions, parcel maps
2. 1993 Comprehensive Land Use Plan
3. Subdivision Ordinance (existing Cass County, municipal, township, and adjoining counties)
4. Highway 371 & Highway 210 Corridor Plans
5. County Transportation Plan

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. There is continued demand for first and second tier lakeshore development and other recreational property.
2. There is an increasing demand for commercial and residential development necessary for normal (local) growth.
3. As the makeup and density of land ownership changes, so do the expectations for services.
4. The 1998 Cass County Subdivision Ordinance does not address several of these growth-related issues and needs revision.
5. The known problem issues encountered by members of the committee have been discussed and preliminary solutions suggested.

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. To protect and promote the public health, safety, and general welfare
2. To provide for the orderly, timely, economic and safe development of land
3. To preserve agricultural lands
4. To maintain the availability of housing affordable to persons and families of all income levels

5. To facilitate adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewage, storm drainage, schools, parks, playgrounds, and other public services and facilities
6. To adopt concise regulations establishing standards, requirements, and procedures for the division of land

## **E. POLICY NEEDS**

1. **Road access policy:** To require that access by either public dedication or easement is provided to connect all lots and subdivisions to public roads. To establish road design standards in the subdivision ordinance and define to which types of developments these standards apply.
2. **Minor subdivision policy:** To establish standards and procedures to provide oversight for review of subdivisions of 5 to 9 lots.
3. **Metes and Bounds division policy:** To establish standards and procedures to provide oversight for review of subdivisions of 1 to 4 lots.
4. **Aliquot part (1/4 1/4 ) division policy:** To establish standards and procedures to provide oversight for review of subdivisions by fractional description.
5. **Plat review policy:** To establish standards and procedures to provide oversight for review of plats, planned unit developments, condominiums, and townhouses
6. **Registered land survey policy:** To establish standards and procedures to provide oversight for review of subdivisions of lots by registered land survey
7. **Stormwater, erosion control, and site grading plan policy:** To require stormwater, erosion control, and site grading plans whenever negative onsite or offsite impacts may result from development
8. **Utility corridor policy:** To provide adequate utility access to all lots and subdivisions
9. **Administration policy:** To give the Planning Advisory Commission and the Environmental Services Department discretion in setting enforcement policies.

## **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Revise Subdivision Ordinance in 2002

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Review policies and ordinance annually
2. Update policies every 5 years

## **WASTEWATER PLAN**

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

1. Assure effective wastewater treatment to protect public health and enhance the environment

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. EPA
2. State of Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080
3. Cass County wastewater ordinance
4. Northeast Wastewater Technical Committee
5. University of Minnesota Extension Services

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Increasing pressures to treat wastewater
2. Minimal requirements for operation and maintenance of onsite wastewater systems.

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Protection of public health and the environment.

### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. Adoption and implementation of the performance code for wastewater treatment developed by the ten county northeast region. Adaptation of the code customized for Cass County.
2. Require operating permits for the following systems:
  - a. Commercial systems
  - b. Alternative systems
  - c. Cluster systems
  - d. Holding Tanks
  - e. Planned Unit Developments
3. The implementation of a computer tracking system for operation and maintenance on systems requiring an operating permit and septage disposal sites.

4. The implementation of a systematic program of compliance inspections and with system upgrades. Program shall be base on watersheds and prioritized by population density.
5. Cass County staff shall have a goal of field inspecting 100% of all permitted system installation. (Statewide 92% of all new construction was field inspected in the year 2000 with an average of two inspections per site. Cass County field inspected 25% of all permitted construction.) Permit fees should reflect services provided (cost analysis).
6. Set policy for operating plans for new residential systems.
7. Require that when systems are installed for plats of record, the permit and installation meets the conditions of the original plat--Computerized flagging
8. ESD should aggressively sponsor training for residents, installers, designers: examples could be "system maintenance for homeowners," "filter workshop for designers and installers," "lakeshore association training in system inspection."
9. Establish county wastewater planning subcommittee as part of the ESD Advisory Committee.

## **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. County developed performance code-2002, implement construction season 2003--Ordinance
2. Upgrade operating permits with computer tracking-2003--Ordinance
3. Computer tracking program including septage sites-2003--Ordinance
4. Compliance inspection program-Develop criteria-2002, Pilot Program-2002, Revise criteria-2003, Implement program-2003--Ordinance.
5. Field inspection of new permits for onsites-construction season 2002 --ESD policy change.
6. Operating Permits. Develop criteria-2002.
7. Computerized tracking and flagging of any permit for a plat-construction season 2002--ESD policy.
8. Sponsor training-Residential summer 2002, Professional winter 2003 --ESD policy
9. Establish county wastewater planning subcommittee-2002 ESD policy, 2003--Ordinance.

## G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL

1. Annual evaluation and report by wastewater planning committee.

## H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1. Performance Code for Management of Onsite Wastewater Treatment in Northeast Minnesota.
2. Internet Based Maintenance Reporting for Onsite Treatment Systems
3. EPA onsite wastewater management guidelines

# PRIVATE LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (2002-2006)

**Citizen Review:** ESD Advisory Committee

**Staff Coordination:** Paul Fairbanks, ESD Director

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>LAND USE PLAN</b>					
<b>Natural Resource Policy</b>					
1. Preserve surface and groundwater quality	X	X	X	X	X
2. Monitor surface and groundwater supply	X	X	X	X	X
3. Preserve County's wetlands	X	X	X	X	X
4. Work cooperatively with other agencies	X	X	X	X	X
5. Assemble and manage data	X	X	X	X	X
6. Enact and enforce ordinances	X	X	X	X	X
7. Coordinate services	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Housing Policy</b>					
1. High density residential near municipalities	X	X	X	X	X
2. Joint planning on infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X
3. Limit rural development density	X	X	X	X	X
4. Cluster development alternatives	X	X	X	X	X
5. Affordable and multi-family housing	X	X	X	X	X
6. Single family lakeshore development	X	X	X	X	X
7. Buffers between conflicting uses	X	X	X	X	X

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Agricultural Policy</b>					
1. Discourage reclassification of ag land	X	X	X	X	X
2. Recognize ag land importance	X	X	X	X	X
3. Encourage specialized ag	X	X	X	X	X
4. Hobby farm management	X	X	X	X	X
6. Buffers between conflicting uses	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Commercial/Industrial Policy</b>					
1. Locate business near major intersections	X	X	X	X	X
2. Regulate new and existing extractive uses	X	X	X	X	X
3. Industrial uses in industrial parks	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Recreation Policy</b>					
1. High density residential near municipalities	X	X	X	X	X
2. Joint planning on infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X
3. Limit rural development density	X	X	X	X	X
4. Cluster development alternatives	X	X	X	X	X
5. Affordable and multi-family housing	X	X	X	X	X
6. Single family lakeshore development	X	X	X	X	X
7. Buffers between conflicting uses	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Transportation Policy</b>					
1. Coordinate transportation planning	X	X	X	X	X
2. Road use and design standards	X				
3. Guidelines for private-public road connections	X	X	X	X	X
4. Development-road buffers	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Governmental Cooperation Policy</b>					
1. Develop and implement planned growth policies	X	X	X	X	X
2. Coordinate with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	X	X	X	X	X
<b>SOLID WASTE PLAN</b>					
1. Seek state tax change		X			
2. Electronic equipment recycling program		X			
3. Construction site cleanup		X			
4. Dump and burn barrel regulations	X	X	X	X	X
5. Provide stump and brush site	X	X	X	X	X

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>SOLID WASTE PLAN</b> ...continued					
6. Standardized fee schedule	X				
7. Enforcement and cleanup fund		X	X	X	X
8. Administrative penalty orders	X				
9. Maintain private grinder	X	X	X	X	X
10. Short term storage of construction materials for reuse		X			
11. Improved standards recycling facilities	X				
12. Update Solid Ordinance		X			
<b>SUBDIVISION PLAN</b>					
1. Provide for orderly development of land	X	X	X	X	X
2. Preserve ag lands	X	X	X	X	X
3. Provide for development infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X
4. Enact and enforce development standards	X	X	X	X	X
5. Develop road access policy	X	X	X	X	X
6. Enact minor subdivision policy	X				
7. Establish metes and bounds policy	X				
8. Establish aliquot part policy	X				
9. Establish plat review policy	X				
10. Establish registered land survey policy	X				
11. Establish stormwater and grading plan policy	X				
12. Establish utility corridor policy	X				
13. Establish administrative policies	X				
<b>WASTEWATER PLAN</b>					
1. Adopt performance code		X			
2. Operating permits for commercial and cluster		X			
3. Computer permitting system	X	X	X	X	X
4. Systematic compliance inspections	X	X	X	X	X
5. Residential operating plans				X	X
6. Check systems for plats		X	X	X	X
7. Training program	X	X	X	X	X
8. Wastewater subcommittee	X	X	X	X	X

# **PUBLIC LAND USE PLAN**

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# PUBLIC LAND USE PLAN

## ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Public Lands Asset Management Plan is to (1) enhance the value of the county administered public lands asset base; (2) through “Best Management Practices” to sustain and build on the economic and natural resource values of those lands. To do this, we will look at:

1. The current inventory of our resources;
2. The conditions that now exist;
3. What future conditions would best suit the needs of the people who utilize the resources of Cass County;
4. What policy changes need to be made to make ultimate use of and to protect our public lands;
5. What programs need to be established and managed, and
6. What Evaluation Tracking System needs to be in place to monitor and track success.

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

#### 1. LAND

##### a. Public land now owned

**20% of Cass County acreage is county administered tax forfeited land. Twice that, or 42% is private land.**

##### b. Private Lands Ownership Classification

**34% of parcels are “Seasonal Recreational” showing the high importance of the “tourism” economy.**

Parcel Class	Parcel Count	Improved	Unimproved
Homestead	12,757	9,046	3,711
Seasonal Recreational Residential	14,481	8,795	5,686
Other	15,909		
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,147</b>		

**2. RECREATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

<b>Recreation systems under management of the Cass County Land Department</b>	
Snowmobile Trails	433.6 Miles
Cross Country Ski Trails	25.6 Miles
Hunter Walking Trails	20.0 Miles
Boat Accesses	5

**3. PEOPLE**

a. Citizens of Cass County

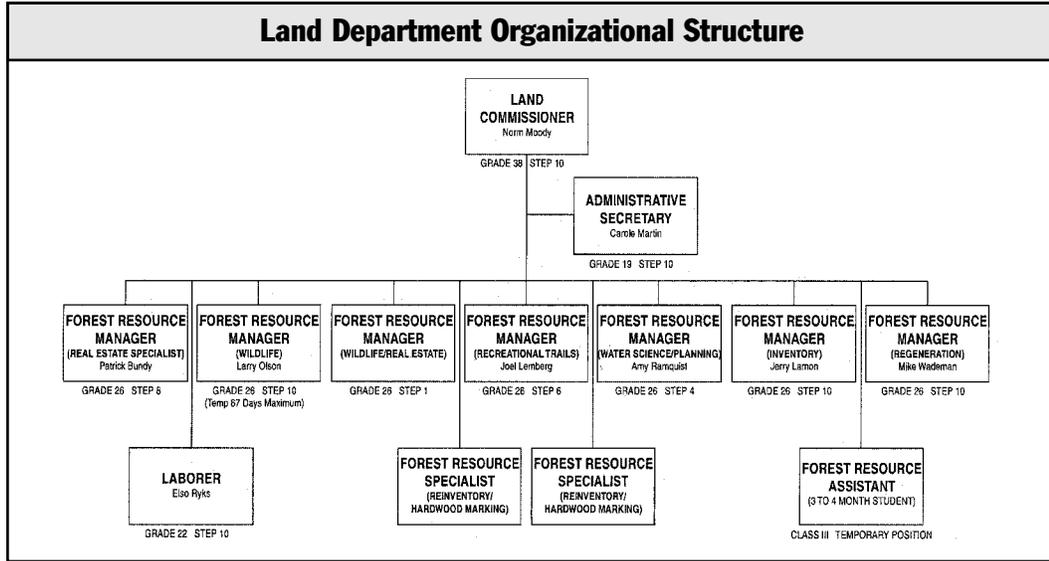
<b>Within the citizenry of Cass County there is a large proactive group of volunteers that benefit the county as a whole. A major impetus for that comes from the growing base of retirees, i.e. the 18% of population over 65.</b>					
<b>Population Growth of Cass County from 1980 to 2000</b>					
	Population			Percent of Change	
	1980	1990	2000	1980-200	1990-2000
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,050</b>	<b>21,791</b>	<b>27,150</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>
<b>Race</b>					
White		19,309	23,490	3,110	
American Indian			2,373		
Other		109	550		
<b>Age</b>					
Under 18		5,929	6,788		
18-64		11,697	15,475		
65 and Over		4,183	4,887		

b. **Tourism and sportsmen** - impact on public waters and lands Casual observation and intuition tell us that tourism is a major factor of the economy of Cass County. Hard data to precisely quantify the impact is not available but much suggestive data has been published.

<b>Minnesota Sales and Use Taxes</b> <b>28.7% derived from tourism related businesses.</b>	
Cass County Total Sales and Use Taxes - All Industries: \$ 9,134,000 <small>(1998)</small>	
<b>Tourism Related Sales Taxes (in millions):</b>	
Amusement/Recreation	\$ 477,000
Retail: Eating, Drinking	\$ 1,018,000
Hotels, Lodging Places	\$ 1,131,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,626,000</b> <small>(28.7%)</small>

**c. County Commissioners and Land Department**

Governed by five elected county commissioners functioning as the County Board, the Cass County Land Department is currently headed by the Land Commissioner with a full-time staff of seven plus a shared laborer position and seasonal forest resource assistants. The organizational structure is diagrammed below.



**4. SYSTEMS:** Cass County has been a preeminent leader among rural Minnesota counties in “leading edge” application of technology to management of public lands. The development of a comprehensive county Geographic Information System (GIS) beginning in the late 1980’s has evolved into an integrated Land Records Information System (LRIS) that continues to be enhanced. The Forest Management System in use at the Cass County Land Department uses a variety of the latest technological tools including the in-house GIS/LRIS network, GPS technology (Global Positioning Satellite), and specialized computer programs.

**5. Financial Resources:** Public lands are a very important source of net revenues for the county.

<b>COMBINED PUBLIC LANDS PAYMENTS TO LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT</b>				
	Forfeited Tax Apportionment	State PILT*	Federal PILT* & 25 % Fund	Total Public Lands Payments
1993	\$259,611	242,338	473,703	\$975,652
1994	\$257,090	288,979	466,950	\$1,013,019
1995	\$134,370	288,973	476,083	\$899,426
1996	\$632,689	288,715	525,088	\$1,446,492
1997	\$1,057,104	289,506	536,158	\$1,882,768
1998	\$847,975	289,186	652,948	\$1,790,109
1999	\$1,175,748	289,892	611,102	\$2,076,742
2000	\$899,321	286,523	599,429	\$1,785,273
2001	\$1,139,595	537,916	668,802	\$2,346,313

**FORFEITED TAX SALE FUND:** Minnesota law charges counties with the duties of administering lands forfeited to the state for non-payment of property taxes. If those lands are classed by the County Board pursuant to statutory definition as conservation lands, those lands are held in trust and managed for the benefit of local taxing districts.

To account for transactions resulting from the management of county administered tax forfeited lands, Chapter 282 of Minnesota Statutes establishes the Forfeited Tax Sale Fund. This trust fund is used to account for all revenues and disbursements resulting from the management of those lands. In Cass County, the primary source of revenues collected are from sale of timber from tax forfeited land, and to a lesser degree, the sale of tax forfeited land not being held for conservation purposes, as well as other minor revenue sources.

The law requires an annual “apportionment” of any balance remaining of revenues over costs. That formula first allows the county to direct up to 30% of the balance into timber development on tax-forfeited land and dedicated memorial forests. Next, the county board may direct up to 20% of the remaining balance to county parks and recreation areas. After that, any balance remaining must be apportioned as follows: county, 40%; town or city, 20%; and school district, 40%.

The current policy of the Cass County Board of Commissioners is to direct 25% of the initial balance to timber development, or “reforestation” activities, and 5% to recreation areas, specifically recreational trails. A history of balance apportionments, often referred to as “settlements” from 1993 to 2001 appears in Chart FR-1.

<b>FORFEITED TAX FUND APPORTIONMENT (1993-2000)</b>					
	County General Fund	Co. Timber Dvlpmnt/Trls	Towns & Cities	School Districts	Total Apportionment
1993	\$72,929	77,784	36,300	72,598	\$259,611
1994	\$71,608	76,720	37,157	71,605	\$257,090
1995	\$38,181	40,078	18,705	37,406	\$134,370
1996	\$177,381	189,711	88,535	177,062	\$632,689
1997	\$296,151	317,029	148,031	295,893	\$1,057,104
1998	\$238,023	254,147	118,602	237,203	\$847,975
1999	\$329,278	352,696	164,591	329,183	\$1,175,748
2000	\$251,810	269,796	125,905	251,810	\$899,321
2001	\$318,980	341,765	159,870	318,980	\$1,139,595

**Chart FR-1**

**ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND:** In the late 1990's through a series of session laws, the state of Minnesota made the decision to get out of the business of leasing state owned lakeshore to private individuals for "cabin" uses. Through an exchange and special sale program, the state traded these leases for other lands in each county where those leases were located. Each county then is charged with the duty of selling those leases either to the present lease holder, or if declined, at public auction. The proceeds of the lease sales are then to be held in a dedicated "environmental trust fund" within the county treasury. Interest earnings from the fund can then be used by the county only for "improvement of natural resources". With the majority of sales completed in 2001, the principle at current value is in excess of \$3.7 million, and is expected to total \$3.8 million when all sales are complete in 2004.

**PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAX - State of Minnesota "PILT":** In 1979, the Minnesota Legislature enacted Payment In Lieu of Tax Legislation (Minnesota Statute 477A) to encourage retention of tax-forfeited land and to provide compensation to local taxing districts for loss in tax base as a result of this retention. Payments began in 1980 and were based, in each county, on the number of acres in public ownership. Tax relief is a primary objective; however, a portion of the payment is dedicated to intensifying the management and improvement of all the resources on tax-forfeited lands.

The state of Minnesota also compensates local governments for state lands held for the purpose of "public hunting grounds" which includes game refuges and designated wildlife areas.

A history of state payments in lieu of taxes, including public hunting grounds payments, appears in Chart FR-2.

<b>PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAX (PILT) - STATE OF MINNESOTA</b>					
	Paid to Townships	Co. Natural Resources Fd	County General Fund	School Districts	Total State PILT
1993	\$32,452	95,696	110,143	4,047	\$242,338
1994	\$32,456	95,695	156,409	4,419	\$288,979
1995	\$31,800	95,884	156,988	4,301	\$288,973
1996	\$32,634	95,765	153,538	6,778	\$288,715
1997	\$33,276	95,822	153,991	6,417	\$289,506
1998	\$34,147	95,846	153,708	5,485	\$289,186
1999	\$34,201	95,927	154,420	5,344	\$289,892
2000	\$35,075	95,974	150,546	4,928	\$286,523
2001*	\$67,292	114,190	319,745	36,689	\$537,916

**Chart FR-2**

(Includes Public Hunting Grounds Payments)

**PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAX - Federal “PILT”:** Payments in lieu of taxes on national forest lands originate from a 1908 act of Congress that requires 25 percent of the revenues derived from national forest lands be paid to states for use by the counties in which the lands are situated for the benefit of public schools and roads, and a per acre payment for general tax relief. A history of federal PILT appears in Chart FR-3.

<b>FEDERAL PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAX (PILT) (1993-2000)</b>					
	Townships	County General Fund	School Districts	Co. Highway Fund	Total Federal PILT
1993	\$34,038	79,421	180,122	180,122	\$473,703
1994	\$15,491	36,146	207,657	207,656	\$466,950
1995	\$9,646	54,662	205,888	205,887	\$476,083
1996	\$-	82,458	221,315	221,315	\$525,088
1997	\$-	95,491	220,334	220,333	\$536,158
1998	\$31,307	73,050	274,296	274,295	\$652,948
1999	\$37,702	87,967	242,717	242,716	\$611,102
2000	\$32,254	75,258	245,959	245,958	\$599,429
2001	\$53,042	123,760	TBA	TBA	\$176,802

Chart FR-3

## C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

**1. CASS COUNTY OWNERSHIP:** (see map attachment) This map details the acreage analysis summary shown in item 1 of the Inventory of Resources section.

**2. CURRENT LAND DEPARTMENT MISSION, OBJECTIVES, ISSUES, STRATEGIES:** Within the context of Cass County’s broader mission, the Land Department has defined its mission “to professionally manage the county’s forest land base within the confines of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 282, and to improve the quality and value of the county’s forest land resources”.

*Stated general objectives are*

- improve the productivity of the land asset base
- insure all county lands are accessible, and
- require that projects have a “tax base neutral impact”

*Objectives of the current land asset management program are:*

**Financial (direct)**

- increase value of asset base
- increase forest management revenue
- decrease department costs as percent of revenue

**Financial (indirect)**

- build tourism economy
- build on **Conservation Trust Revolving Account (CTRA)** for purchase of critical habitat
- provide enhanced recreational opportunity

**Issues identified by the Land Department are:**

- forest productivity
- recreational opportunity
- reducing management costs
- gaining access to all county administered land under management

**The strategies that have been employed to achieve objectives are:**

- land acquisition - direct, exchange, easement
- projects and programs will have a “tax base neutral impact”
- work proactively with citizen groups on conservation and critical habitat protection through the CTRA Program

**3. CURRENT LAND ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY:** The Cass County Land Department has been working to improve the County Managed Forest Land base for decades through the use of land exchanges. This is a process where county lands that have been identified as being suitable for exchange are traded for selected parcels of private lands of equal value.

In 1998 the County Board authorized the Land Department to utilize a new tool for the Land Asset Management Program. The new option is *acquisition-exchange-sale*. Under this program when critical habitat parcels are identified, the county may purchase the parcel of private land, then exchange the purchased parcel with a county owned parcel that subsequently will be offered for sale at a future land sale.

Standard land exchanges and the *acquisition-exchange-sale* program does not affect the tax base since equal real estate value is exchanged for equal real estate value, but there are definite advantages to the taxing districts in that the lands that transfer into the public trust are lands that would be costly to provide public services and the public lands transferred to private ownership are usually serviced by existing roads and other services. There is also the opportunity to save on management costs since the acquired public lands are usually adjacent to other county managed lands which reduces management costs.

**4. CURRENT EXCHANGE/ACQUISITION/SALE PROGRAM, INITIATIVES; HISTORY/ANALYSIS; PROPERTY DESIRED THROUGH EXCHANGE:**

**a. Situation statement:** The Cass County Land Department manages 256,000 acres of tax forfeited land. Adjustment to the present ownership is desirable for the following reasons:

- Several thousand acres are surrounded by private land, thereby inaccessible to the public.
- Corridors of public land are essential for recreational trails development and wildlife travel corridors.
- Critical and unique habitats need to be transferred into public ownership to permanently protect rare, threatened or endangered plants, animals or watersheds.
- Increase timber values and/or productivity.

**Analysis:** The Land Department has been pursuing land exchanges to improve the public resources relating to public waters exchanges. The Land Department has also facilitated exchanges to acquire critical habitat, one example being the expansion of the prairie chicken management area west of Backus. The Land Department is presently pursuing selected private land purchases. Once purchased, the county will exchange the trust status of a less desirable tax forfeited parcel to the acquired private land and offer the former tax forfeited parcel for sale at a public auction. This process will result in no change to the county's tax base.

**Result:** The quality and accessibility of the County Administered Forest Land Base can be continually improved and critical lands and/or habitats can be transferred into the public trust.

**Initiatives:** The Land Department has made application for revolving fund dollars to accelerate the current acquisition-exchange-sale program through various sources including the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) in 2001.

The Land Department has worked proactively with the Tri-County Leech Lake Watershed Project/Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation since 1997 to plan and implement conservation projects that match the Land Department mission. Together they have initiated the establishment of a **Conservation Trust Revolving Account (CTRA)** for the purpose of acquiring critical habitat and recreational corridor parcels in pursuant of their joint mission.

**b. Land Exchange History/Analysis - 1995 to 2001**

Exchange	Acres Loss	Acres Gained	Public Water Increase
Madison	12	26	2970 Feet Lakeshore
DeMotts	40	40	No Change
Lee	120	160	3300 River Footage
Cragun	113.7	195.28	4850 Feet Lakeshore
Sawyer	40	40	No Change
Yeh	120	265	5100 Feet Lakeshore
Alton	40	108	No Change
Breitkreutz	40	120	No Change
Melby	80	80	No Change
Zaffke	40	40	No Change
Kask	.34	37.1	686 Feet Lakeshore
Collins	80	120	No Change
Keupers	120	120	No Change
Simons	40	40	No Change
Herheim	40	40	600 Feet River
Bouma	90	120	400 Feet Lakeshore

Net gain in Acres = 536

Net gain in Lakeshore and River Frontage = 17,906

The net result has been a gain in the tax base.

**c. Property Desired through Exchange** - This list is the result of dynamic analysis of the current land base, discussions with land owners, and citizen conservation groups such as Tri County Leech Lake Watershed Project/Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation and others.

## 5. CURRENT LAND DEPARTMENT BUDGET AND FUND BALANCE REPORT

### Forfeited Tax Sale Fund (Fund 71) Land Department Operating Budget - 2001 - 2002

		2001 Budget	Actual 11/21/01	2002 Budget
71-032	FOREST DEVELOPMENT			
	Revenues - FORFEITED TAX APPORTIONMENT	210,000.00	284,804.00	225,000.00
	Expenditures	210,000.00	523,660.66	225,000.00
71-085	IN LIEU OF TAXES			
	Revenues - IN LIEU OF TAXES (STATE)	95,900.00	114,189.83	114,000.00
	Expenditures	108,901.00	72,245.33	114,000.00
71-313	ROAD & BRIDGE			
	Revenues - GAS TAX ALLOCATION	25,000.00	30,642.60	30,000.00
	Expenditures	25,000.00	4,605.55	30,000.00
71-645	RECREATIONAL TRAILS			
	Revenues - FORFEITED TAX APPORTIONMENT	50,000.00	54,236.00	170,000.00
	Expenditures	150,000.00	121,428.49	170,000.00
71-650	LAND COMMISSIONER			
	(The Forfeited Tax Apportionment is tracked through the following "71-650" account series in the county financial system.)			
	Revenues			
	LAND SALES	50,000.00	346,758.34	50,000.00
	LAND SALES (TIMBER)	0.00		
	PRINCIPLE/INTEREST CONTRACTS	35.25		
	PRINCIPLE/INTEREST CONTRACTS	64.75		
	REPURCHASES	3,564.76		
	TIMBER SALES	1,460,000.00	1,680,126.68	1,500,000.00
	TIMBER SALES (EXTENSIONS)	5,000.00	17,808.96	5,000.00
	LEASES	5,000.00	27,709.76	2,000.00
	EASEMENTS	1,000.00	4,548.60	1,000.00
	TRESPASSES	5,577.03		
	GRAVEL	0.00	75.00	
	TRAILS REIMBURSEMENT		0.00	
	TRANSFERS FROM/TO			(764,028.00)
	Total Revenues	1,521,000.00	2,086,269.13	793,972.00
	Land Commissioner Expenditures	794,090.00	639,919.42	793,972.00
	 Total Revenues	 \$ 1,901,900	 \$ 2,569,942	 \$1,332,972
	Total Expenditures	\$ 1,287,991	\$ 1,361,859	\$1,332,972

**6. FOREST MANAGEMENT** (See Forest Management Plan for details.)

**7. “CAL” REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT** - A number of administrative and statutory activities related to the management of county administered lands (CAL) pose challenges to the Land Department beyond the more visible functions of forestry and natural resource management. “Real estate management” functions of the Land Department include administration of easements through and leasing of CAL; risk management activities; security, situation assessment and statutory civil eviction process for inhabited tax forfeited (non-conservation) parcels; legislative initiative; and, data, technology and survey control maintenance and enhancement.

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

**1. GENERAL:** It is the broadly expressed desire of the people of Cass County that the County retain its northwoods, clean lakes, pristine rural environment. This expression of attitude is the reason people come here to recreate and retire, and that should be preserved. (Cass County survey, Fall 2000; and five community visioning meetings held in 2001 for Comprehensive Planning process.)

The generally expressed goal is to minimally maintain what we have, but the challenge to those in public administration is to ENHANCE the northwoods, clean lakes, pristine environment.

**2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Consolidate the land base for the best management of conservation lands (i.e., by acquisition and exchange-keeping tax base neutral while maintaining or increasing acreage)
- b. Classify all public lands for “best use” (i.e. forestry, recreation, access, habitat protection, non-conservation - disposal, etc.)
- c. Acquire and maintain access to all county administered lands (i.e., recreational corridors, utility corridors, and traditional forest and wildlife management practices)
- d. Sustain the forestry and tourism economy while providing public lands for hunting, fishing and other recreational uses.
- e. Educate the public on the value and preservation of public lands, the county’s role in sustaining public lands and the positive impact on the economy from our public lands.
- f. Preserve our natural resources as much as possible while still making them accessible to the public.
- g. Protect critical habitat through proactive work with citizen conservation groups who develop and contribute to a **Conservation Trust Revolving Account (CTRA)**.

- h. Encourage the expansion of county managed public lands to enhance and expand our forestry economy and hunting heritage. A recently published study from the University of Minnesota states that the number of acres closed to public hunting (500 foot radius from a home) is growing as a result of residential sprawl/forest fragmentation in the north country.

**Acres Closed to Public Hunting**

Cass County	13.2%
Crow Wing County	26.2%
Hubbard County	16.7%

- i. Identify and manage designated “Lines of Business” within the Land Department to gain FOCUS (i.e., Forestry, Recreation, Critical Habitat Protection, Conservation Development Real Estate, Non-Conservation Forfeited Lands Real Estate)
- j. Return non-conservation\* public lands to their appropriate use via the statutory sale mechanisms (i.e., appropriate use might be residential development, economic development, etc.) \* See definition - Appendix A.
- k. Evaluate Land Department organization to ensure that the structure and staffing matches the future strategies and programs needed to successfully achieve the stated objectives.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NEEDED**

- 1. Establish a formal, periodic, interagency Lands Management Planning Process that proactively engages, through “Memoranda of Understanding” (MOU’s), the USFS, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the State of Minnesota DNR.
- 2. Establish the Land Asset Management Subcommittee as a part of the Natural Resources Committee for citizen input.
- 3. Encourage and seek legislation of tax policy that encourages: (a) conservation easements in undeveloped lands and wild shoreline buffers, and (b) other “View Shed” or Visual Management Practices (VMP) that preserve and/or enhance the northwoods aesthetics.
- 4. Establish a Conservation Trust Revolving Account (CTRA) in conjunction with citizen conservation groups.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE** (SEE WORKSHEET - APPENDIX B)

- 1. Plan monitoring and update
- 2. Consolidation Program
- 3. Land Classification Program
- 4. Land Access Acquisition Program
- 5. Forestry Management Program

6. Hunting Lands Management Program
7. Critical Habitat Program - Conservation Trust Revolving Account (CTRA)
8. Lines of Business Management Program
9. Non-conservation Lands Disposal Program
10. Land Department Strategy - Structure - Staffing Program
11. Public Education Program
12. Administration of the Environmental Trust Fund

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

Continuation of the Land Asset Management Committee into the future to semi-annually review progress towards our goals and objectives, and to monitor progress on action plans for each of the enacted programs in the Action Plan with Timeline section above.

## **H. APPENDIX A**

### **Conservation and Non-Conservation Lands Defined:**

Minnesota Statutes 282.01 Tax-forfeited lands; classification, sale [excerpt]:

“Subdivision 1. Classification as conservation or nonconservation. It is the general policy of this state to encourage the best use of tax-forfeited lands, recognizing that some lands in public ownership should be retained and managed for public benefits while other lands should be returned to private ownership. Parcels of land becoming the property of the state in trust under law declaring the forfeiture of lands to the state for taxes must be classified by the county board of the county in which the parcels lie as conservation or nonconservation. In making the classification the board shall consider the present use of adjacent lands, the productivity of the soil, the character of forest or other growth, accessibility of lands to established roads, schools, and other public services, their peculiar suitability or desirability for particular uses and the suitability of the forest resources on the land for multiple use, sustained yield management. The classification, furthermore, must encourage and foster a mode of land utilization that will facilitate the economical and adequate provision of transportation, roads, water supply, drainage, sanitation, education, and recreation; facilitate reduction of governmental expenditures; conserve and develop the natural resources; and foster and develop agriculture and other industries in the districts and places best suited to them.

In making the classification the county board may use information made available by any office or department of the federal, state, or local governments, or by any other person or agency possessing pertinent information at the time the classification is made. The lands may be reclassified from time to time as

the county board considers necessary or desirable, except for conservation lands held by the state free from any trust in favor of any taxing district. ...”

## **I. APPENDIX B**

### **Cass County Land Asset Management Program Tracking**

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Purpose and Scope:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Inventory of Relevant Resources:

3. Assessment of Existing Conditions:

4. Desired Future Conditions:

5. Policy Needs: Current Policy Applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

New Changes Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Action Plan:

Key Steps	Person Responsible	Due Date
-----------	--------------------	----------

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7. Evaluation Method and Interval

## J. APPENDIX C

### **Cass County Land Department Commercial Timber Resources On Public-Owned Certified Forest Land in Cass County**

January 1, 2001

**This brochure lists acres and volume of each cover type.** An area's cover type is assigned according to the tree species that occurs most frequently—even though there may be other tree species present in the stand. Two volumes are reported for each cover type: one volume for all trees in the cover type and one volume for the single tree species which makes up the cover type. The volumes listed exclude stands that have a DBH of less than 5", and the percentage is based on acreage, not volume. These numbers do not include land managed by agencies other than Cass County. The first acreage listed is the area of trees with a 5" or greater DBH. The second acreage is the total area.

**Where do these numbers come from?** Acres of cover type and volume figures come from an inventory process that has been in place since the early 1980s. This inventory system, called CSA or Cooperative Stand Assessment, is used by most forestry land management agencies in Minnesota.

More specific analysis of timber volume and annual allowable harvest figures can be obtained by contacting the land management agencies in Cass County directly:

Cass County Land Department 218 E Washburn Ave Backus, MN 56435 (218) 947-3338	Department of Natural Resources Brainerd Region Forestry Headquarters 1601 Minnesota Drive, Suite 2 Brainerd, MN 56401-3971	Chippewa National Forest 200 Ash Avenue Cass Lake, MN 56633 (218) 335-8600
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**What is certified wood?** Third-party certification of forest lands occurs through the oversight of the Forest Stewardship Council. County administered lands in Cass County have applied for and received certification that they are well managed.

**What are the benefits of being certified?** Certification reassures the public that their county and state forest lands are being managed in an environmentally, economically and socially sound manner. It may also mean an economic advantage in the form of an increased market share and/or a financial premium for wood products. Certified forest product labeling allows consumers to recognize certified wood and use their purchasing power to promote sustainable forest management.

**How much land is certified?** Cass County contains about 737,000 acres of public land, but only the 255,000 acres managed by the Cass County Land Department are certified. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources manages about 194,000 acres and the National Forest Service manages the 290,000 acres of the Chippewa National Forest that lie within Cass County.

### **Forest Stewardship Council Principles:**

In order to be certified, a forest operation must:

- Meet all applicable laws
- Have legally established rights to harvest
- Respect indigenous rights
- Maintain community well-being
- Conserve economic resources
- Protect biological diversity
- Have a written management plan
- Engage in regular monitoring
- Maintain high conservation value forests
- Manage plantations to alleviate pressures on natural forests

For a full copy of the FSC's principles and criteria, contact:

#### **Forest Stewardship Council-U.S.**

1134 29th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
tel: 202.342.0413  
fax: 202.342.6589  
[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)

For more information on forest certification, contact

#### **SmartWood Program**

#3 Millet Street  
Goodwin Baker Building  
Richmond, VT 05477  
tel: 802.434.5491  
fax: 802.434.3116  
[www.smartwood.org](http://www.smartwood.org)

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# FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

## NEW FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

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### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE:**

Write a new Forest Management Plan.

### **B. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

1. Only an old (1971) Forest Management Plan exists.
2. The Land Department has many unwritten policies and policies that are written but not in a Forest Management Plan.
3. The old forest management plan is outdated and does not meet FSC standards.

### **C. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS:**

1. Have a new Forest Management Plan written that meets FSC standards and addresses the issues of the Forest Management Sub-Committee.

### **D. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY:**

1. Add any new policies and practices of the Land Department into the management plan in a timely fashion.

### **E. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE:**

1. Have the contractors working on a rough draft of the Forest Management Plan by Nov. 1, 2001.
2. Have a rough draft approved by the Forestry Sub-Committee by June 31, 2002.
3. Have a completed Forest Management Plan by Dec. 31, 2002.

### **F. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL:**

1. Review and/or update the Forest Management Plan every two years.

# RECREATION PLAN

## PUBLIC LAKE ACCESS

.....

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To define the County's role as it relates to public lake access

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. Existing improved public water access by jurisdiction:

a. MN Department of Natural Resources	89
b. United States Forest Service	28
c. Cass County	7
d. City	7
e. Township	4
f. United State Corp. of Engineers	4
g. MN Power Company	1
h. MN Department of Transportation	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>

### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Maintenance practices range from excellent (federal) to poor (county)
2. Concurrent jurisdiction of access use enforcement does not exist
3. No uniform public process is used to consider new or improvements.

### D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

1. Concurrent jurisdiction of access use enforcement
2. A uniform public process is used to consider new or improvements

### E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY

1. County should not develop additional public water accesses
2. Logging access near riparian areas should be obliterated after use
3. County should transfer ownership of existing sites to federal or state
4. Units of government agree to a common notice/comment system
5. Signage at access includes a telephone contact number

### F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plane (June, 2002)

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual lake association survey by county of enforcement and maintenance issues
2. Annual report by Land Department on status of county sites and unit of government cooperation in notice/comment system
3. Annual report by Sheriff's Office on calls for service related to public water access

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. List of lake associations
2. List of unit of government public water access contact person
3. Map of present improved public water accesses

# **PERMANENT TREE STANDS AND SHOOTING LANES**

.....

## **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To establish Cass County's position on permanent tree stands and shooting lanes.

## **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Permanent tree stands are scattered throughout the forest with densities greatest near timber access trails.
2. Land Department estimates thousands of permanent tree stands exist today on County-administered land.

## **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. No local ordinances exist prohibiting permanent tree stands.
2. Existing state law allows timber trespass charges if trees are cut down (larger than 4")
3. Existing state law allows damage to public property charges if nails are placed in trees.
4. Many valuable trees are currently being damaged by clearing for shooting lanes.
5. Permanent stands denigrate the forest by establishing "territorial rights", timber volume loss, litter, and visual effects.
6. State wildlife areas do not allow any stands for more the 24 hours.
7. USFS does not allow permanent stands.

## **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Prevent additional permanent stands that are fastened to trees on CAL.
2. Remove existing permanent stands fastened to trees on CAL.
3. Prevention of damage to marketable tree species (including regeneration) as it relates to shooting lanes.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. County should seek enactment of state legislation as a preferred alternative to local ordinance and determine which policy initiatives are already covered by state statute.
2. County should remove damaging permanent tree stands.
3. County should develop a uniform enforcement plan with state, federal, and tribal input to minimize confusion and cost.
4. Educate the hunting public about the county policies on damaging tree stands and shooting lanes through: State hunting regulations; Firearm safety training; Township newsletters; Cass county newsletters and Local papers.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual report by land department of estimated permanent tree stands and timber damage.
2. Annual report by interagency enforcement team on recreation enforcement.

**H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. State statute on timber damage and trespass.
2. Permanent tree stand regulations presently in effect by jurisdiction.

**MOTORIZED/NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS/CROSS COUNTRY MOTORIZED TRAVEL**  
.....

**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To establish policy on which trails on County Administered Lands are open for motorized use and to prohibit cross country motorized travel.

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Approximately 11 % of CAL (28,000 acres) is restricted to non-motorized recreation only.
2. The other 89% (227,000 acres) is open to motorized use.

**C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. No local ordinances exist restricting motorized use, except in riparian areas.
2. No ordinances exist prohibiting cross-country travel.
3. Many cross-country motorized paths lead to permanent deer stands on County Administered Lands.

4. Timber trespass may be charged for any merchantable trees removed by construction of cross-country motorized paths.
5. Erosion and environmental degradation is occurring due to cross-country motorized travel on County Administered Land.

#### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Trails are closed to motorized use unless posted open.
2. Trail maintenance coincides with use.
3. Develop a uniform enforcement plan with state, federal, and tribal input to minimize confusion and cost.

#### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Determine which policy initiatives on cross-country motorized travel and operation of motorized vehicles on trails posted closed are already covered by state statute.
2. Seek enactment of new state legislation as a preferred alternative to local ordinance.

#### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request county board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption on comprehensive plan (June 2002).
2. Determine which policy initiatives are already covered by state statute (September 2002).
3. Propose needed additional legislation (November 2002)
4. Develop a uniform enforcement plan with state, federal, and tribal input to minimize confusion and cost (December 2002).
5. Educate the hunting public about the county policies on motorized /non-motorized trails and cross country motorized travel (December 2002) through: State hunting regulations; Firearm safety training; Township newsletters; Cass county newsletters and Local papers.

#### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Evaluate all trails by Land Department staff biannually.
2. Two years after implementation, the Natural Resource Committee will evaluate policies for effectiveness.

#### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. USFS Policy on classification of trails.
2. State statute on trespass.

## **HANDICAPPED RECREATION ACCESS**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To determine Cass County's role in providing recreation access to handicapped

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. DNR presently issues permits allowing shooting from motorized vehicles
2. No public land is presently set-aside exclusively for handicapped use
3. Deep Portage provides wheel chair and blind environmental education trails, signs and instruction (limited to portions of the reserve)
4. Carlos Avery (state) & Camp Ripley (federal) are among the sites that offer handicapped access and "hunts" in cooperation with advocacy groups

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Deep Portage would provide an excellent site for a sponsor to provide expanded handicapped services including hunting with dorm access
2. The state program should not be expanded locally
3. The state program promotes conflicts between user groups

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Handicapped recreation enthusiasts and Deep Portage benefit from expanded services

### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. None

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Recommend Deep Portage conduct a market survey/seek sponsors if they determine appropriate

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Market, sponsors, and Deep Portage will determine success

### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. DNR handicapped permit application.
2. Cass County legal memorandum discussing handicapped access.
3. Deep Portage educational program description.

## ATV TRAILS

---

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To establish a network of destination ATV trails.

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. Currently there are no designated ATV trails. The majority of the CAL is open to ATV use.

### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. No local ordinance exists restricting motorized use, except in riparian zones of wetlands and state laws are not enforced.
2. Heavy use damages trails and wetlands.
3. ATV license funds can be used to establish and maintain trails in a similar fashion to snowmobile trails.
4. ATV clubs and users are willing to assist in developing and maintaining trails.

### D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

1. Provide destination trails for ATVs, which can be a tourism marketing tool for the county and its businesses.
2. Establish maintenance policies and practices on ATV trails to reduce damage on existing, non-maintained, county trails.
3. After establishment of ATV trail system, go to trails closed unless posted open policy.

### E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY

1. None until trail system is established then adopt, after review, closed unless posted open trail policy.

### F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE

1. Work with ATV clubs, users, Cass County Land Recreation Advisory Committee to define and establish trail network.
2. Educate county residents of the trail and its importance to county tourism.
3. Review motorized/non-motorized trail policy and recommend changes based on evaluation.

### G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL

1. Maintain CAL recreation advisory volunteer committee to work with the Land Department and ATV clubs and users to evaluate yearly progress.

### H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1. None

## **WATER SURFACE USE MANAGEMENT**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

Cass County supports the current management of surface waters by the townships or cities they are located in.

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. The sheriff's department is in charge of navigational hazard permits and water safety
2. DNR licenses watercraft
3. The townships control and enforce all ordinances pertaining to surface waters except Leech and Gull Lake county ordinances
4. DNR must approve ordinances prior to adoption.

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. The public is requesting additional water surface regulation.

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Water surface use is determined and enforced by jurisdiction it is located in.

### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. None

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Notify adjacent counties of Cass County policy (common water boundary).

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. None

### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. DNR water surface information.

## **DISPERSED CAMPING AND RESTRICTING STRUCTURES**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To allow Dispersed Camping and restrict structures on County Administered Land (CAL)

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. At present, camping is allowed anywhere on CAL, and structures can be put up on a temporary basis.  
There is not a time limit on how long a person may camp in one location.

**C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. No ordinance exists prohibiting camping for extended periods of time.
2. No ordinance exists prohibiting temporary structures for extended periods of time.
3. Camping and structures are a problem mostly during the fall, specifically at deer season.
4. Minnesota Statute 90.311 deals with squatters on CAL and MS 90.321 deals with prosecution for trespass.

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. No camping allowed for a period longer than two weeks. Camper must then be moved at least one mile from its previous location.
2. No structures allowed on CAL.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Restrict camping in one location to no longer than two consecutive weeks.
2. Restrict camping within a quarter mile of a boat access.
3. Ban structures on CAL.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of Comprehensive Plan.

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Same as trails.

**H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Policy for dispersed camping adopted by Crow Wing County.

**TRAIL CLOSURES**  
.....**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To give the Land Commissioner permission to close Timber Access trails at his discretion for any justifiable reason.

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Approximately fifty miles of Timber Access Trails (TAT's) are closed to motorized traffic.
2. There are 800-1000 miles of TAT's on Cass County lands (1,939 acres).

**C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. No county ordinances exist banning motorized recreation on closed trails.
2. Can enforce state trespass laws if trails is properly signed.
3. Non-motorized trails are used frequently by motorized users.
4. Before a trail can be gated, county commissioners must approve the gating.

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Enforcement of trail closure violations.
2. Land Commissioner has discretion to close trails as needed.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. County Board gives Land Commissioner ability to use discretion.
2. Seek enactment of state legislation as a preferred alternative to local ordinance. Determine which policy initiatives are already covered by state statute.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of Comprehensive Plan.

**RECREATION DESTINATION CORRIDORS**  
.....

**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To establish corridors on public land used exclusively for recreation destination travel year round.

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Total destination trail miles:
2. Trails limited by season (over water):
3. Trails limited by easement use:
4. Destinations served:
5. Uses allowed:

**C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. The absence of year round destination routes creates additional use conflicts on roads and road rights-of-way.
2. Trails by easement are becoming more difficult to obtain and keep.
3. Gaps in public ownership cause repetitive reroutes.
4. Timber access roads are not designed to feed the destination system.
5. USFS process for trail designation is difficult.

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Permanent public corridors linking destinations.
2. Reduce conflicts on road rights-of-way by encouraging corridor use.
3. Wherever feasible, encourage multiple use.
4. Survey grade global positioning documentation of trail location.
5. Marketing program to encourage local and tourist trail use.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Use timber access roads to “feed” destination trails
2. Apply for USFS “permanent” classification
3. Provide program specific staff and financial resources

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Natural resource committee establishes timetable and goals
2. Annual report by land department

**H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Existing trail map

**RECREATION ENFORCEMENT**  
.....**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To implement a county strategy for enforcement of non-game recreation laws.

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Boat and water program: Officers and volunteers for major lakes, funding by the County
2. ATV program:
3. Snowmobile program:
4. Other programs

**C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Calls for service for non-game recreation law violations are increasing.
2. Ownership of the land dictating the responding agency.
3. Boat and water assisted by volunteers.

4. Local recreation education provided annually
5. County and Tribe presently have an agreement to enforce each other's non-game (civil) laws.
6. DNR and USFS have been active only on fish and game issues
7. Lack of uniform standards complicate public compliance and enforcement
8. Primary complaints are water surface use

#### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. DNR, County, Tribe, and USFS have common standards and enforce each others rules/laws
2. Local education programs continue
3. Volunteer program initiated beyond water patrol
4. Citations and prosecutions increase

#### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Expand county/tribe agreement to DNR and USFS
2. Develop a uniform enforcement plan with state, federal, and tribal input to minimize confusion and cost.

#### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

#### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual report by interagency enforcement team on recreation enforcement.

#### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. County calls for service, non-game recreation
2. Present prosecution statistics by type and jurisdiction

## PUBLIC LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (2002-2006)

**Citizen Review:** Natural Resource Committee

**Staff Coordination:** Norm Moody, Land Commissioner

ACTION	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>					
1. Establish interagency land mgmt. planning process		X			
2. Establish Land Asset Subcommittee	X				
3. Encourage land preservation tax policy		X			
4. Establish Conservation Trust Revolving Account		X			
<b>FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>					
1. Draft new forest management plan		X			
2. Review plan every two years				X	
<b>Water Surface Management</b>					
1. Cooperative access use enforcement	X				
2. No new access development policy	X	X	X	X	X
3. Transfer existing accesses to other govts.		X			
4. Access management policies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Tree Stands</b>					
1. Seek legislation on tree stand use		X			
2. Removal of damaging tree stands		X			
3. Develop interagency enforcement plan	X				
4. Hunter education program	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Trails</b>					
1. Seek legislation on trail use		X			
2. Seek legislation on enforcement		X			
3. ATV trail education program	X	X	X	X	X
4. Classify trail system	X				
5. Establish recreation destination corridor plan		X			
6. Establish trail closure policies	X				

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Trespass and Enforcement</b>					
1. Expand interagency enforcement agreement	X				
2. Develop a uniform enforcement plan		X			
3. Camping restrictions	X				
4. Structures on County Administered Land	X				

# **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

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# PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

## FACILITY PLAN

### COUNTY FACILITIES

#### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To provide facilities that promote the county's mission.

#### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. Courthouse
2. Annex
3. LEC
4. Highway
5. Land
6. Health and Human Services
7. Public Health (for sale)
8. Extension (in Pine River as of 2001)
9. Pine River Satellite Offices (CD Counselor, Environmental Services, Sheriffs Dept.)
10. Web based services

#### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Perception in southern and eastern area's of low service level
2. Web based services are just coming on-line
3. Existing central site (Walker) reaching its physical limits
4. County growth based on in-migration trend will continue

#### D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

1. Consistent Service delivery throughout the county
2. Communication as to the services provided, where and by whom needs to be improved.
3. Improve the county website; integrate into local access by using city/Township/family center clerks; promote website as option for doing county business
4. Provide remote service centers in communities based on need/demand
5. Insure that future remote sites have connectivity to central County computer systems.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Policy to require that with each future county expansion the county will evaluate whether the expansion should occur in the county seat or outside of the county seat (remote service center)
2. Adopt a policy that would establish guidelines and incentives whereby local government or family centers who have full-time employees coverage could act as service representatives for county government to provide information and access to county website, county department documents/information.
3. Monitor usage and availability of the county web site by constituents.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Customer satisfaction surveys
2. Annual budget review of off-site service delivery
3. Monitor usage of website

**H. LISTING OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. County facility map
2. Service delivery schedule hard copy & website.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES PLAN**  
.....

**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To provide an appropriate level of advanced planning for disaster response

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. County emergency operations plan
2. Disaster response training program
3. NOAA weather system
4. Warning siren system
5. Community level plans
6. Cell phone coverage
7. Recreational trail mile markers
8. Enhanced 911 street name and address system
9. Past experience in FEMA financial recovery programs

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## **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Public health disaster response is currently written and waiting for adoption.
2. Townships do not have emergency operations plans
3. NOAA is very close to being online
4. Some cities need to refine 911 street addresses
5. Public Health components need to have more detail
6. The central portion of the county (Hackensack and Longville) are too far from emergency medical attention, such as hospital or clinic

## **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Expansion of NOAA coverage
2. Additional siren locations?
3. Townships over a certain population should be encouraged to have a disaster operation plan
4. All recreation trails need mileage or location markers
5. Centrally located emergency medical facility operating 24 hours 7 days per week

## **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. County Emergency Response personnel should provide an annual training to cities and townships over 800 population at least once per year to review disaster plans and to inform them regarding County role.
2. NOAA should be promoted aggressively upon activation.
3. The county should use all possible resources to make residents aware of the emergency planning that exists.

## **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual report by emergency service director

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Present county disaster plan
2. Public health annex
3. NOAA weather system coverage map
4. Cell phone coverage map

## HEALTH CARE PLAN

---

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To enhance the promotion of wellness in the county.

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

- 1. Hospitals - In county:** Indian Health Services, Cass Lake Hospitals  
**Out of county:** Grand Rapids, Deer River, Park Rapids, Brainerd, Bemidji, Crosby, Staples, Wadena.
- 2. Physician Clinics - In county:** Pine River, Walker (2), Longville, Cass Lake (2), Remer  
**Out of county:** in same cities as listed above & Pequot Lakes
- 3. Nursing Homes - In county:** Pine River, Walker, Ag-gwah-ching  
**Out of county:** in same cities as listed above
- 4. Assisted Living:** Pine River, Walker (2), Remer - also available out of county.
- 5. Adult Foster Care Homes:** Pine River (4), Cass Lake (1), Pillager (2), Walker (3)  
**for Developmentally Disabled:** Backus (4), Hackensack (1), Staples/Motley (3)
- 6. Board & Lodge:** Pine River
- 7. Ambulance Services - In county:** Remer, Longville, Pine River, Walker, Leech Lake  
**Out of county:** Staples, Brainerd, Deer River, Crosby, Grand Rapids, Park Rapids, Bemidji, Wadena
- 8. First Response Teams:** Cass Lake, Backus, Hackensack, Outing, East Gull Lake, Bay Area, Pillager
- 9. Home Health Care - In county:** Leech Lake, Cass County Public Health  
**Out of county:** Golden Heart (Brainerd), North Country (Bemidji) Staples, Grand Rapids, St. Joseph's (Brainerd), St. Joseph's (Park Rapids), Crosby, Deer River
- 10. Public Health:** Cass County and Leech Lake Reservation
- 11. Mental Health Clinics - In county:** Walker, Leech Lake Reservation  
**Out of county:** in same cities as a. above
- 12. Detox & Chemical Dependency - In county:** Detox: Leech Lake Reservation  
**Out of county:** CD: Brainerd & Fergus Falls Detox: Nevis, Grand Rapids, Brainerd
- 12. School Nurses:** Walker, Pine River, Cass Lake (LPN's), Bug School (LPN), Pillager?
- 13. Parish Nurses/Interfaith Support Services**
- 14. Jail Health Nurse:** Public Health provides
- 15. Family Centers:** (provide space community health service)

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. EMS - response to county in primary service area/mutual aid agreements
2. Hospitals - access outside the county for most residents
3. Health Care Workers - shortage of staff; high personal cost for training, low wages
4. 1st Responders group - need for additional volunteers
5. EMS - shortage of volunteers; high cost for training EMT's; large time commitment
6. Emergency care facility - lacking
7. Population is becoming more aged
8. Population is growing
9. Jail Health program will grow
10. Air ambulance available

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Additional paramedics and EMT's in ambulance services system
2. Additional EMT's for First Response Team
3. Coordinated volunteer "soft care services" (transportation, cleaning, meal preparation, etc.) i.e., Interfaith Support Services
4. Certified School Nurse (RN) health coverage in all schools
5. Additional long-term care options/alternative settings in communities for the Elderly (board & care, foster care, assisted living, etc.)
6. Increased jail health services to meet the rising needs of inmates with mental illness, chemical dependency issues and chronic illness.
7. Analysis of response times and availability of emergency medical services
8. Assist communities to acquire funding for Rural Health Clinics

### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Policy to use all possible resources available i.e., county websites, newsletters, senior citizen meetings, to inform county residents about the health services available to county residents.

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD INTERVAL**

1. Reviews gaps analysis annually
2. Health & Human Services Annual Report

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. PSA (Primary Service Area) Map
2. Gaps analysis (one page summary)
3. Cass County Health Profile

## **HOUSING PLAN**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To provide a plan to satisfy the unmet housing needs in Cass County.

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Cass County Housing Authority - Cass Lake, Pine River, Walker
2. 3 city HRA's - Cass Lake, Pine River, Walker
3. Region 5 RDC
4. Central Minnesota Housing
5. Leech Lake Housing & Urban Development

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. There is a need for affordable housing
2. County Housing Authority is ineffective due to the lack of funding, staffing and visionary structure.
3. Cass County has been active in turning over tax-forfeited land to private owners through the city's governments.
4. There is no public finance policy in place.
5. Housing agency's services are fragmented.
6. No county wide building code.

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Revitalize the existing county HRA looking at existing models (i.e., Itasca County, City of Brainerd) to become more effective.
2. Tax forfeited land should be available to townships and HRA's.
3. The county should adopt a public financing policy.
4. Partnering efforts among the existing housing agencies to give unified approach.
5. County should adopt the state building code.
6. Additional affordable housing to enhance the economic development potential.

**E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Expand the current positive activity of making tax forfeited land available to cities by also making it available to townships that have a current land use plan and/or HRA's for purposes of housing.
2. Form a task force to study the best method to revitalize the County Housing Authority.
3. Adopt a public financing policy and tax abatement policy to be used in partnership with local government to enhance housing opportunities in Cass County.
4. Adopt a policy that would make housing resources available on the county web site.
5. Adopt the State Building Code on a countywide basis.

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan.

**G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual Report by the County Board regarding the policies adopted by the Board.

**H. LISTING OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Latest Cass County Housing Study.

**SCHOOL PLAN**  
.....

**A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To partner with the school districts of Cass County and work cooperatively towards common program goals

**B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Health and Human Services
2. Sheriffs Department
3. County Attorney's Office
4. Extension
5. Environmental Services
6. MIS Department
7. Probation Department
8. County Administrator
9. Auditor/Treasurer's Office

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS/PROGRAMS**

1. Cass County/Leech Lake Reservation Children's Initiative Programs (Youth & Family Workers, Day Treatment, ENABL, Abstinence Education etc.)
2. Youth Tobacco Prevention
3. Youth Risk Behavior - alcohol
4. HIV/STD Education
5. Early Childhood Screening
6. Consultation to school health personnel
7. Provision of school immunizations
8. Child Abuse Prevention & Reporting
9. Truancy Circles
10. Children's Mental Health
11. Members of the Interagency Team for special needs children (PHN & SW)
12. Environmental Programming (school forests, Youth as a Resource, River Watch)
13. Family Centers - bridge from community to school

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Increased availability of sheriff's deputies within the school
2. Birth record information for school census
3. Increased enforcement of truancy and educational neglect laws (i.e., CHIPS Petition available)
4. Expand programs to all communities/schools
5. Cooperative effort to seek funding for countywide programming
6. Cooperative programming with Leech Lake Health Division and other departments.
7. Facilitate improved coordination of fragmented health education programs presently being done by schools, county, LLR
8. Coordination of all county departments services to school through county coordinator.

### **E. POLICY CHANGES NECESSARY**

1. Establish provision of birth records to schools through Health & Human Services.

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD INTERVAL**

1. Annual Children's Initiative Report and evaluation of services
2. Ongoing tracking of truancy rates - annual
3. Health & Human Services Annual Report
4. Evaluation of this School Plan on an annual basis by Collaborative Board
5. School input through the Collaborative on an annual basis

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Map of school district borders

## **FINANCE PLAN**

### **CAPITAL PLANNING**

---

#### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To maintain a capital improvement plan that is affordable and meets county needs.

#### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. State law allows counties to adopt multi-year plans after state review
2. Present plan adopted September 8, 1999 and covers years 2000-2008
3. Plan is updated annually after notice to the public

#### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Annual tax effort has historically varied from \$0 to \$1,062,000
2. Present annual capital plan property tax effort is \$560,000 (50% of the allowable limit for projects not requiring advance referendum approval)
3. Present plan projects include: jail expansion, courts addition, courthouse annex remodeling, transfer station expansion, and land department building replacement

#### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. A local process that requires a clear documented need for a project
2. Minimum variation in annual property tax effort to fund capital programs.
3. Maintenance of appropriate fund balance(s) for unforeseen replacement costs and a preference to save annual effort to avoid borrowing

#### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. None

#### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Resubmit for state review prior to present plan expiration

#### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annually by Board of Commissioners

#### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Capital Improvement Plan Fiscal Years 2000 - 2008 (as amended)

## **BUSINESS SUBSIDIES**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To establish policy regarding the use of business subsidies in unincorporated areas

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Two direct business subsidies are available: tax increment financing, and tax abatement
2. Each subsidy must meet initial and subsequent reporting criteria
3. Each subsidy effectively redirects public property tax dollars back into the qualifying project
4. 40 projects have been authorized over the last 16 years (see attachment)

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. The use of business subsidies can be controversial in the sense of providing public funds to the private sector and the “but for” test
2. Recent shifts from local to state based property tax effectively limits the incentives to developers
3. Presently a moratorium in effect pending the adoption of a county plan

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Businesses requiring subsidies should be located in areas that provide the appropriate public infrastructure
2. Discourage intra-county competition for business subsidies

### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. The County expand technical assistance to any jurisdiction considering subsidies
2. Completion of a county business subsidy plan
3. Business subsidies are not available from the County in any unincorporated area (outside of a city)

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Request County Board to accept policy changes for implementation upon adoption of comprehensive plan (June, 2002)

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annually by Board of Commissioners

### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. List of projects receiving business subsidies

## **USER FEES**

.....

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To charge user fees to the benefiting party

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. 8 % of the present budget relies on user fees
2. Solid waste funding is 33 % tip fee and 67 % solid waste fee
3. Courts fees and most related costs recently transferred to state

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Counties have broad general authority to charge fees
2. Not all services lend themselves to an identifiable recipient
3. Costs of administration including collection are considered in fee setting
4. Recovery of out-of home placement cost is grossly inadequate

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Web based services should be accessed without charge
2. Local government fees should be competitive regionally
3. Fees should not compete with private service providers
4. Stability in fee schedule by frequent incremental changes indexed to inflationary trends
5. Improve receivable analysis

### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. Establish regular receivable review schedule
2. Increased effort in OHP cost recovery from parents

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Update fee schedule through 2003 budget planning process

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual budget process

### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. List of fees
2. Budget analysis indicating fees collected as percent of activity

## **PUBLIC LAND**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To monitor the property tax base balance between public and private land.

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. The private land base (40%) paid \$30.3 million in locally levied property taxes in 2001
2. The public land base (60%) generated \$2.3 million in combined public lands payment in 2001

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Service cost analysis is not presently available by ownership
2. Public land economic multiplier is difficult to document

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. To analyze changes on the basis of tax base and economic impact (tax benefit vs. tax burden)
2. Payments in lieu of tax (PILT) should equal the service cost of the related public land parcel
3. The process for private to public land transactions should include an opportunity for all affected parties to comment and have a meaningful impact on the transaction outcome

### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. Develop tax benefit/burden matrix by July 1, 2002
2. Communicate county's desire to comment on public acquisitions

### **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Annually document changes in private vs. public ownership patterns

### **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

1. Annual review

### **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. Parcel map by ownership
2. PILT payments by jurisdiction (see public land plan)

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To maximize public participation in financial planning and policy development

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Citizen Budget Committee
2. Required annual publications
3. Biannual county newsletter
4. School districts
5. Cities
6. Townships
7. Federal Government

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. Limited attempts to plan or share information intergovernmental
2. Public hearing notices generally limited to annual budget process

### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Web based financial information and feedback

## **FISCAL AGENT SERVICES**

---

### **A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

To develop a criteria for providing new or continuation of fiscal agent relationships (personnel status and/or accounting services)

### **B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES**

1. Mn Counties Information Systems
2. Mississippi Headwaters Board
3. Children's Initiative
4. Four County Health Program
5. Discretionary grants

### **C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. The level of documentation varies with respect to the relationship
2. Fiscal agent costs in total exceed revenues generated

**D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

1. Utilize a standard form of agreement for all fiscal agent relationships
2. All direct and indirect costs to the county be charged back to the benefiting activity
3. In-kind (donated expenses) be documented with an exchange of checks rather than an informal “net” process
4. Fiscal agent status only considered when capacity allows

**E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

1. Require specific annual review of all fiscal agent relationships including open grant programs

**F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

1. Research policy implications of personnel relationships by agreement

**H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

1. List of open discretionary grants
2. Related joint powers agreements

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The transportation systems in Cass County can be a major contributing determinant of the economic health and quality of life for the County.

In response to the nationwide goal of a transportation system that promotes economic growth and efficient movement of goods and services, it is extremely important that rural counties, such as Cass, be involved in transportation planning locally, regionally, and cooperatively on a statewide basis.

### B. TRANSPORTATION GOALS

To facilitate the coordination of transportation planning for Cass County, with that of the region and the State, the following goals are identified for Cass County's Transportation Plan.

1. To provide a balanced, multi-model transportation system for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.
2. To maximize public involvement in the transportation planning process.
3. To foster cooperation and reduce institutional barriers between all entities involved in providing transportation to the County.
4. To coordinate this plan with the transportation plan of the State and Region.
5. To ensure adequate maintenance and the functional integrity of the existing transportation system.
6. To identify existing and projected deficiencies in the transportation system, including right-of-way, and to establish methods to improve these deficiencies.
7. To establish a rational methodology for prioritizing projects.
8. To identify and efficiently utilize all potential sources of funds for transportation projects.
9. To recognize the interrelationship of transportation and existing and future land use concerns and to integrate transportation and land use planning.
10. To be sensitive to the transportation needs of industry and those of economic development, while protecting and improving the high quality of life in the County.
11. To encourage Cities and Townships to coordinate their transportation planning with the County.

## C. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IN CASS COUNTY

The following is a listing and current inventory of the existing transportation systems serving Cass County.

### 1. Highway Systems

- a. **State Trunk Highways** - There is presently 264.3 miles of State Trunk Highway serving Cass County. These highways have functional classifications of Major Collector, Minor Arterial, or Principal Arterial. Presently these highways are performing adequately in delivering their required service. To assure future performance of this system MnDOT is presently developing planning objectives for the major highways in this system by developing corridor studies which address access management as well as appropriate land use issues. These corridor studies are presently being prepared for Trunk Highways 210, 371 and 34.

- b. **County State Aid Highways** - There is presently 532.25 miles of County State Aid Highways that service Cass County. These highways have a functional classification of Major or Minor Collector.

Presently of these 532.25 miles of highway, 374.45 miles are bituminous surfaced and 157.8 miles are gravel surfaced.

The funding for improvements to the County State Highways primarily comes from State of Minnesota gas tax revenues as well as Federal gas tax revenues.

The County State Aid Highway System in Cass County is presently providing adequate service to the County; though there are signs that future demands for increased miles of hard surfaced road to provide for the traffic growth and associated heavier truck traffic are evident.

Present and future system needs are addressed through the development and maintenance of the Cass County Highway Departments 5-year Capital Improvement-Construction Plan. In this plan, future projects are prioritized and appropriate funding sources are identified.

To augment the County's Capital Improvement-Construction Plan in providing a desired level of service on the gravel surfaced highways on the County State Aid System, Cass County has implemented a gravel road stabilization program. The goal of this program is to provide for a generally higher level of service on gravel highways that carry perceived higher traffic volumes. This is accomplished by stabilizing the gravel surface on these highways by applying various industry accepted, as well as experimental, methods and applications.

- c. **County Road System** - There are presently 271.8, miles of County Roads on this system. These roads are functionally classified as Collector or local roads. Of the 271.8 miles of road on this system, 45 miles are bituminous surfaced and 226.8 miles are gravel surfaced.

Improvement projects on the County Road System are prioritized by the Cass County Board of Commissioners and are funded primarily by Property Tax Levy Revenues.

Presently this system is performing adequately. There are indications, as with the County State Aid System, that the needs associated with County growth are increasing faster than funding.

There is a gravel road stabilization program in place for the gravel County Road System also. The criteria for road selection is the same as for the County State Aid Highway System.

- d. Town Roads - There are presently 853.31 miles of roads on the Town Road System. These are functionally classified as local roads.

The majority of these roads are gravel, or soil surfaced and primarily serve the purpose of local access to residents, resorts and some industry.

The Town Boards administer this road system in the County. Funding is derived from local property tax levy revenues along with some State of Minnesota Gas Tax revenues

The Town Road System currently is performing adequately, but is seeing the same issues associated with growth, as the other highway systems.

- e. Other Highway Systems - Other highway systems serving Cass County are City Streets and Roads, Leech Lake Reservation Tribal Roads, Private Roads and Cartways, and Forest Access Roads.

These roads primarily serve local or recreation transportation needs. They provide a very important role in maintaining access to personal and public recreational property, thus add to the overall quality of life for residents and visitors of Cass County.

## **2. Rail Systems**

Cass County is presently served by two freight rail lines, both of which are owned by Burlington Northern Railroad.

One rail line runs parallel with T.H. 210, in the southern end of the County, and the other runs generally parallel with T.H. 2 in the northern end of the County.

The present needs of the County are being met by these two rail lines.

### 3. Airports

Cass County is presently served by 6 local airports located within the County and 2 regional airports located within close proximity of Cass County.

The local airports along with their State and Federal classification are:

**East Gull Lake** (Landing Strip, Basic Utility)

**Longville** (Intermediate System, Basic Utility)

**Pine River** (Intermediate System, Basic Utility)

**Walker** (Intermediate System, Basic Utility)

**Remer** (Landing Strip, Basic Utility)

**Backus** (Landing Strip, Basic Utility)

**Landing Strip** - State Functional Classification of airports with turf runways, capable of accommodating single-engine and light twin engine aircraft.

**Intermediate System** - State Functional Classification of airports which can be used by single-engine and light to medium sized multi-engine aircraft. These airports have paved and lighted runways less than 5,000 feet in length.

**Basic Utility** - Federal Aviation Administration classification of airports which can accommodate 95 percent of the general aviation fleet operating under 12,500 pound gross weight.

Regional Airports serving Cass County are Bemidji and Brainerd. Though not located within Cass County, they do serve to provide commercial air service to people and businesses in Cass County.

The present aviation needs of Cass County are being met by the local and regional airports serving the area. Expansion of some of the local airports, as well as the Brainerd Regional Airport, is presently being considered to address future growth needs.

### 4. Transit

Present Transit Services operating in Cass County are Commercial Bus Service (Greyhound), Charter Bus Services, Ride-to-Work sponsored by the Tribal Casinos, and Dial-a-Ride services provided by the Cass County Council on Aging and Veterans Service Office.

Transit needs are presently being met on a County and Regional basis. Local transit means to provide transportation for senior citizens and disabled residents are not in existence.

Future needs should be addressed cooperatively between State, County and Local (City and Township) agencies.

## **5. Recreational Trails**

Cass County is presently served by Recreational Trails under Federal, State and County jurisdiction.

These trails serve to provide transportation and recreational uses and add to the economic and quality of life to the County.

The State Trails serving Cass County are the Paul Bunyan and Heartland Trails. The Paul Bunyan Trail is a 100 mile long multi-use trail which connects Brainerd and Bemidji. This trail passes through the towns of Pine River, Backus, Hackensack and Walker in Cass County.

The Heartland Trail is a 50 mile long multi-use trail which connects Park Rapids, Walker and Cass Lake. It also intersects with the Paul Bunyan Trail, near Walker, which allows for connectivity and access to the towns served by the Paul Bunyan Trail.

The major federal trails serving Cass County is the Mi-Gi-Zi trail, which is a 17.8 mile long multi-use trail which begins at the Knutson Dam Campground on the Mississippi River and ends at the intersection with the Heartland Trail, near Cass Lake.

The County Recreation Trail System consists of 433.6 miles of snowmobile trails, 25.6 miles of cross-country ski trails and 20.0 miles of hunter walking trails.

Recreational trail usage continues to rise with the growth in the County. Presently there are improvement and expansion projects planned and under construction.

## **D. ACTION PLAN**

Continued coordination with the various Federal, State, Tribal, and Local government agencies should be pursued to assure for the necessary maintenance and growth of the Transportation Systems identified in this Plan and to meet the goals identified at the onset of this Plan.

## **E. EVALUATION METHOD**

For transportation in Cass County, evaluation must be ongoing because the demands on the transportation system will continue to change due to the anticipated continued growth of the area and County.

Proposed future projects and programs should be evaluated to assess whether the goals of the Transportation Plan are being met.

## UTILITY PLAN

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To report on the state and condition of utilities that serve constituents in Cass County. To determine what involvement Cass County can and should have with the utilities to better the quality of living for the people of Cass County

### B. INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

1. **Telephone Companies** (see list of supporting materials)
2. **Broadband Companies** (see list of supporting materials)
3. **Power Companies** (see list of supporting materials)
4. **Natural Gas Companies** (see list of supporting materials)
5. **Petroleum Companies** (see list of supporting materials)
6. **Municipal Water** (see list of supporting materials)
7. **Municipal Sewer** (see list of supporting materials)

### C. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Telecommunications access is adequate and available County-wide in all but a very small area in northern Cass County
2. Power is available throughout Cass County
3. Natural gas (residential and commercial) is available in parts of southern Cass County and in the City of Cass Lake
4. Municipal Water is at least partially available in 7 of 15 communities
5. Municipal Sewer is at least partially available in 12 of 15 communities
6. Cass County recognizes that the county constituents benefit from Utility services and that Utilities need reasonable access to lands for placement of facilities to serve County Constituents. Cass County has been historically supportive of Utility ROW within County Road ROW.
7. Cass County recognizes wireless communications benefits constituents of Cass County.
8. Cass County recognizes the need for effective and affordable wastewater treatment to protect the County's surface water and groundwater.
9. All utilities provide alternative rates, community development assistance, Gopher State One Call underground locating, energy conservation incentives and customer service assistance.

**10.** Power growth and reliability are addressed through planning and forecasting by individual utility work plans, regional interconnection organizations and federal reliability councils.

**11.** The Minnesota Legislature does not currently have plans to deregulate the electric industry.

**12.** All Cass County electric providers currently include water and wind sources in their electricity source mix.

**13.** Utilities wish to continue working and communicating with the Cass County Board and its residents toward solutions that benefit Cass County.

#### **D. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS**

**1.** The county will continue to support Utility Right-of Way (ROW) in County road ROW

**2.** The County will allow construction of Towers on County land with reasonable accommodation for preserving the esthetics of the area.

**3.** The County supports extending municipal sewer service, where feasible, to high-density areas where individual septic treatment systems negatively impact the environment.

**4.** The County will assist municipalities in identifying high-density areas in need of central sewer systems.

**5.** The County will also assist municipalities with writing sewer and water grant/loan applications to State and Federal funding agencies, conducting public meetings and general planning efforts.

**6.** As new technologies, standards and legislation are developed, the Cass County Board will be asked to make policy, ordinance and permit approval decisions to accommodate these new technologies.

**7.** Cass County will encourage Distributed generation (DG) which are small-scale electrical generating facilities, typically 10 megawatts or less, capable of interconnecting with utility transmission and distribution systems. Statewide interconnection standards must be developed that will facilitate public safety, regional reliability, resource diversity, environmental protection and certification procedures.

#### **E. POLICY CHANGE NEEDS**

**1.** Cass County will require utility easements within all Planned Unit Developments, subdivisions, and plats, as part of the design standard.

**2.** Cass County will provide reasonable notice (minimum 7 days) to Utilities when planned maintenance or construction activity occurs on Road ROW

**3.** The County will adopt a Tower ordinance that protects the interest of the constituents of Cass County, which will also allow reasonable placement of Towers to adequately service the geographic area. Radio propagation will

have a direct influence on the reasonableness of permit approval such that a tower ordinance will not exclude wireless services from Cass County constituents.

**4.** Cass County through the Environmental Services Department will meet annually with municipal sewer and water system providers to discuss plans and promote cooperation.

## **F. ACTION PLAN WITH TIMELINE**

**1.** Request County Board to accept policy changes and to enact Ordinance changes as needed upon adoption of Comprehensive Plan.

**2.** Cass County will work with Utilities through membership in local utility organizations like Lakes Utility Coordinating Committee (LUCC) to maintain contact and coordination with the Utility community.

## **G. EVALUATION METHOD AND INTERVAL**

**1.** Review impact of changes through annual survey of Utilities.

**2.** Review of appropriate Land Use Ordinances to ensure consistency.

## **H. LIST OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

- 1.** Inventory of Utilities
- 2.** Telephone Exchange Map
- 3.** Municipal Sewer Systems Map and Spreadsheet
- 4.** Municipal Water Systems Map and Spreadsheet
- 5.** Pipelines Map
- 6.** Natural Gas Service Areas Map
- 7.** Survey of Municipal Sewer and Water Systems
- 8.** Power Companies Service Area Map
- 9.** Cell/Wireless Providers Maps
- 10.** Statement of Current Conditions and Needs
- 11.** Electric Utilities Services Statement
- 12.** Cable TV Service Map

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (2002-2006)

**Citizen Review:** Board of Commissioners

**Staff Coordination:** Robert Yochum, County Administrator

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Facilities</b>					
1. Establish County service delivery plan	X				
2. Utilize community facilities for service delivery	X	X	X	X	X
3. Monitor use of county website	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Emergency Services</b>					
1. Expand NOAA weather alert coverage	X	X			
2. Encourage community disaster plans	X	X	X	X	X
3. County-sponsored disaster training	X	X	X	X	X
4. Needs assessment for central medical facility		X			
<b>Health Care</b>					
1. Increase numbers of emergency service personnel	X	X	X	X	X
2. Coordinate volunteer services	X	X	X	X	X
3. Assess long term care options for seniors		X			
4. Needs assessment for rural health care		X			
5. Education campaign on health care services	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Housing</b>					
1. Make tax forfeited land available to cities for housing	X	X	X	X	X
2. Revitalize County Housing Authority		X			
3. Housing finance and tax abatement policy	X				
4. Housing availability on County website		X	X	X	X
5. Assess need for state building code		X			
<b>School</b>					
1. Increase law enforcement availability to schools			X	X	X
2. Provide birth records for school census	X	X	X	X	X
3. Cooperative health programs-schools, LLR	X	X	X	X	X
4. Coordination of County/school services	X	X	X	X	X

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Finance Policy</b>					
1. Maintain a current capital improvement plan	X	X	X	X	X
2. Complete business subsidy plan	X				
3. Provide web-based services free of charge	X	X	X	X	X
4. Establish a regular receivables review schedule	X				
5. Increased effort in OHP cost recovery from parents		X	X	X	X
6. Develop tax benefit/burden matrix		X			
7. Establish fiscal agent services policy and annual review	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Citizen Participation</b>					
1. Provide for web-based information and feedback	X	X	X	X	X
2. Actively seek diversity in citizen appointments	X	X	X	X	X
3. Forum for comment on acquisitions and trades	X				
4. Increase distribution of County Newsletter	X				
5. Conduct a mass transit feasibility study		X			
<b>Utilities</b>					
1. Require utility rights-of-way along roads	X				
2. Require notice to utilities before road maintenance		X			
3. Adopt a communication tower ordinance	X				
4. Assist municipalities with service extension process	X	X	X	X	X
5. Amend ordinances to accommodate new technologies	X	X	X	X	X
6. Encourage small scale electric generation	X	X	X	X	X

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:**

**COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT**

John Sumption, ESD Deputy Director \_\_\_\_\_ 218-547-7256

**PRIVATE LAND USE**

Paul Fairbanks, ESD Director \_\_\_\_\_ 218-547-7287

**PUBLIC LAND USE**

Norm Moody, Land Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ 218-947-3330

**PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

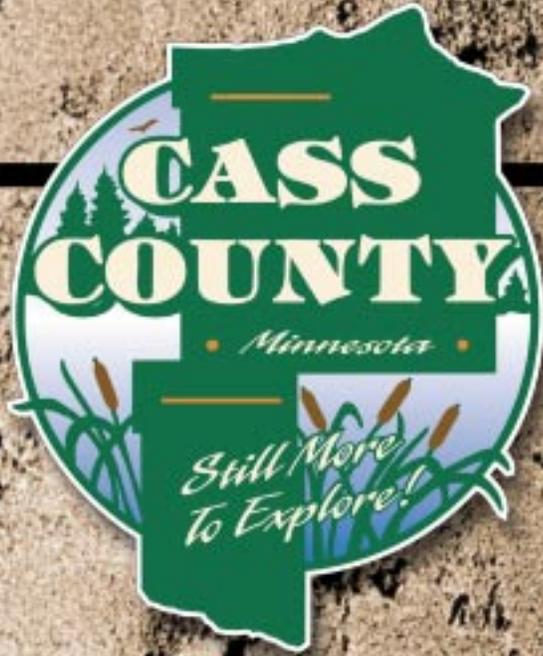
Robert Yochum, County Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ 218-547-7418

**OR VISIT THE WEB AT: \_\_\_\_\_ [WWW.CO.CASS.MN.US](http://WWW.CO.CASS.MN.US)**



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**CASS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**CASS COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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