

## Public Lands Summary

Version 1.4, 6/27/2019

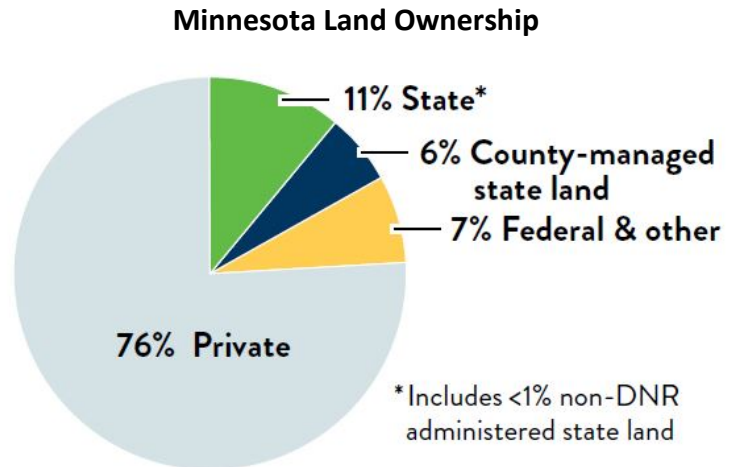
This document is a fact sheet of essential data about Minnesota's public lands. It summarizes their extent and the recreational, economic and environmental benefits they provide. **Learn more:** [mndnr.gov/publiclands](http://mndnr.gov/publiclands)

### Public lands overview

About 24 percent of Minnesota's lands are public lands – more than 12 million acres of state, federal and county lands managed on behalf of citizens.

The DNR manages 5.6 million acres of state lands, about 11 percent of Minnesota's total land area, or roughly 1 acre per person.

Minnesota counties manage 2.8 million acres of state lands, about 6 percent of Minnesota's total land area.



### DNR manages 5.6 million acres of state lands

#### Public lands and facilities managed by the DNR include:

- 59 state forests, school trust acres, and other forested lands covering 4.2 million acres.
- More than 1,800 wildlife management areas covering 1.3 million acres.
- 66 state parks, nine state recreation areas and nine state waysides, totaling 232,000 acres.
- 166 scientific and natural areas covering 192,000 acres.
- 700 aquatic management areas covering 46,000 acres.

#### Public lands can be reached via trails and public water access sites managed by the DNR:

- 1,500 miles of state trails, 23,800 miles of grants-in-aid trails (1,800 off-highway vehicle, 700 ski, and 21,300 snowmobile), and 4,100 miles of hiking, biking, horse and motorized trails within state parks, state recreation areas and state forests.
- Approximately 1,700 public water access sites.

### Local government aid: Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

- Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is a form of local government aid paid for tax-exempt natural resources land.
- Each year, the state Department of Revenue distributes about \$30 million in PILT payments to counties. Those payments are further distributed to townships and local school districts according to state law.

# Public lands provide many benefits

## Recreational

- The majority of Minnesotans (82 percent) consider outdoor recreation to be either very or moderately important to their lives.
- Public lands are often the only outdoor recreation option for citizens who do not own land. Public lands are particularly important in areas of the state, like western and southern Minnesota, where most land is private.
- Participation:
  - 1.7 million anglers, hunters and trappers.
  - 826,000 registered boats.
  - 192,000 registered snowmobiles and 300,000 registered all-terrain vehicles (ATV's).
  - 10 million state park and recreation area visitors.

## Economic

- Timber Production:
  - Each year, the DNR offers 870,000 cords of wood for sale from DNR-administered forest lands. This provides 30 percent of Minnesota's wood fiber for the forest industry.
  - DNR-managed forest lands produced \$1.6 billion in primary forest products and related sales in 2016.
- Mineral Development:
  - Mineral leases from lands with state-owned mineral rights generate about \$36 million in revenue annually (average from the past ten years). School trust and university trust lands generated 89% of this revenue.
- Recreation:
  - Fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching generate \$3.7 billion per year through direct expenditures in the state.
  - Trail users spent \$3.3 billion, contributed \$2.8 million in local taxes, which accounted for 43,000 jobs in 2008.

## Environmental

- Regionally and locally, public lands ensure quality water for drinking, swimming and fishing, buffer the impacts of floods, and help protect groundwater.
  - Sound management of public lands surrounding the Mississippi River ensures clean drinking water for more than one million Minnesotans.
  - The 147-acre addition of public land to the Lake Bella Wildlife Management Area in Nobles County resulted in the protection of over 95 percent of all highly vulnerable acres within the wellhead protection boundaries for the city of Worthington in 2014.
- Public lands provide critical habitat for wildlife, pollinators, native plants, and rare species.
  - Minnesota's public forests, prairies, and grasslands are home to about 417 wildlife species.
  - 49 rare species (of 577 rare species statewide) are known to occur only on public lands.
  - 2.1 million acres (or 69 percent) of the state's mapped native plant communities are on public land.