

Cass
County
Land
Department
Annual
Report

2010

Cass County Mission:

“The mission of Cass County is to deliver quality public services to the citizens in an effective, professional, and efficient manner.”

Cass County Land Department Mission:

“Manage the County’s forest land base within the confines of MN Statutes 282 and to improve the quality and value of the County’s forest land resources.”

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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2010

District 1	James Demgen*
District 2	Robert Kangas
District 3	Jeff Peterson
District 4	James Dowson
District 5	Dick Downham

*CHAIRMAN

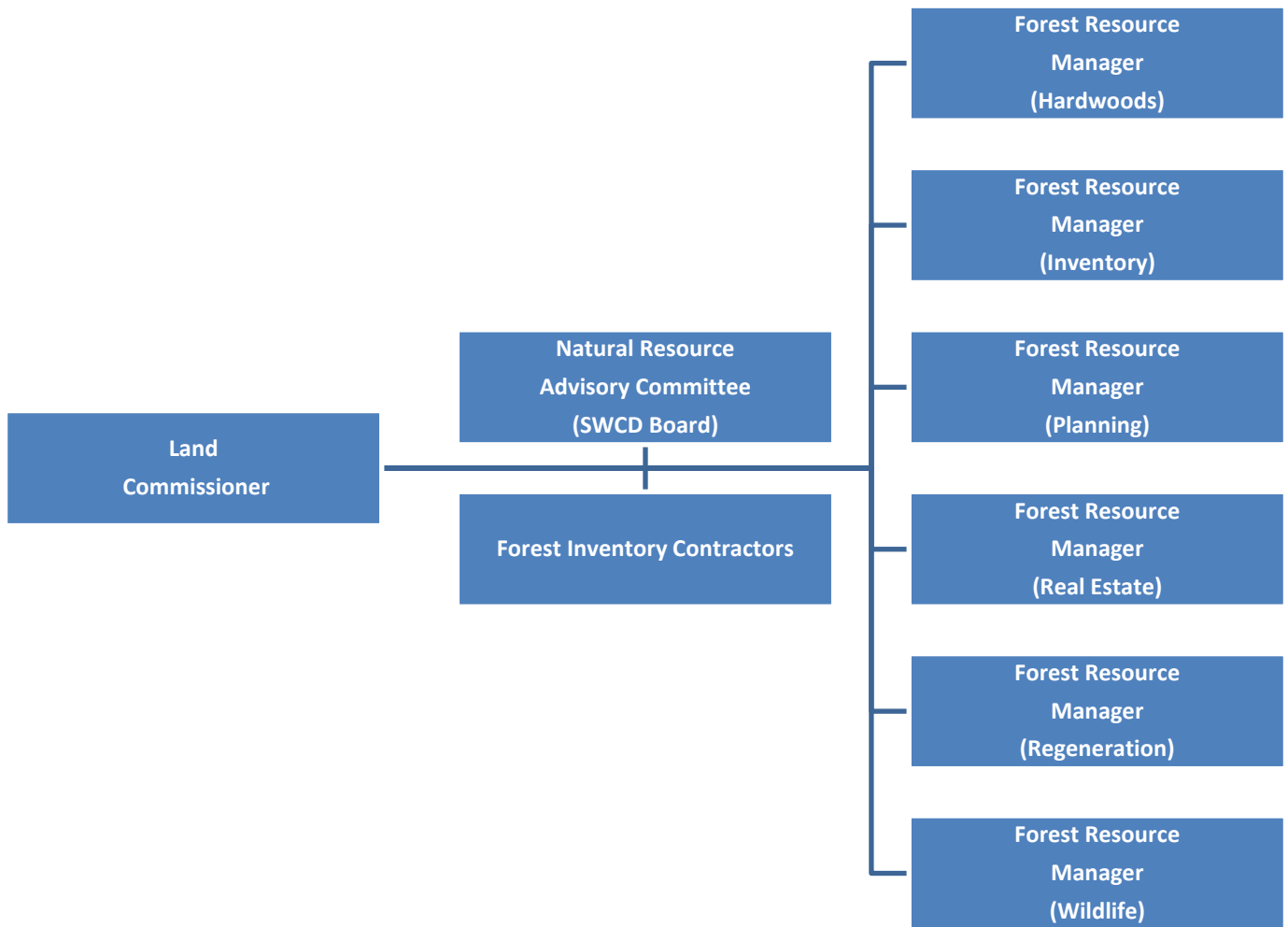
NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2010 SWCD BOARD

District 1	Thomas Kuschel
District 2	Kenneth LaPorte
District 3	James Ballenthin
District 4	J. David Harder*
District 5	Willard Pehling

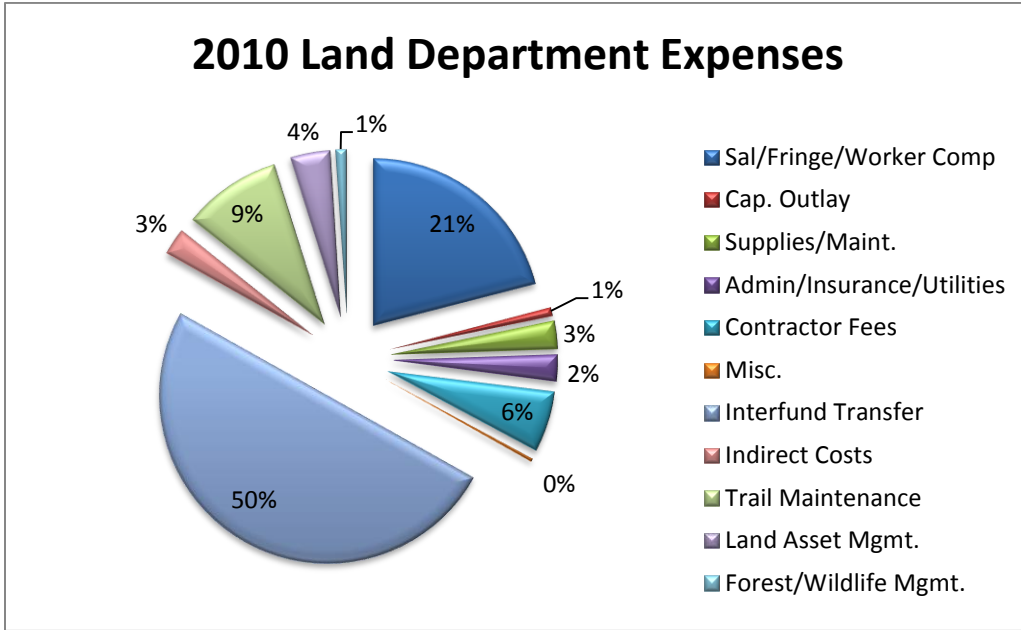
*CHAIRMAN

2010 Cass County Land Department Organizational Chart

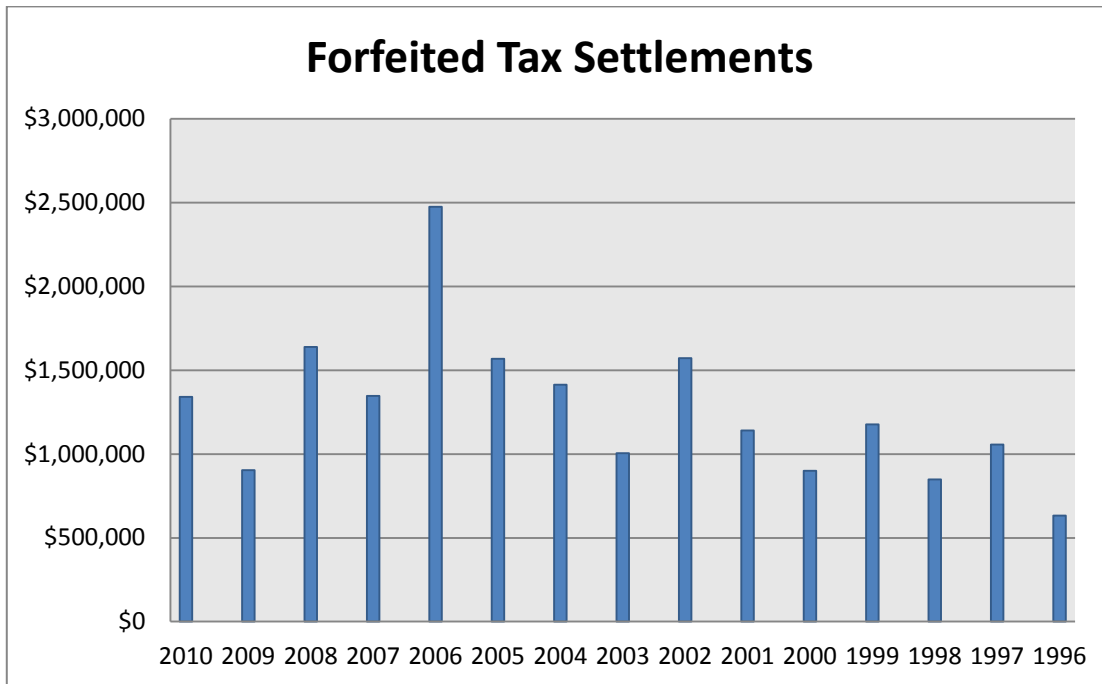


Expenses:

Land Department Expenses	
Fiscal Year January 1, 2010 thru December 31, 2010	
Permanent Salaries	\$383,171
IRS 125 - Flex	\$184
Fringe Benefits and PERA	\$103,386
Retired Employee Benefits	\$15,855
FICA / Medicare	\$28,097
Unemployment Compensation	\$19,987
Workers Compensation	\$11,914
County Uniforms & Clothing	\$1,461
Telephone / Internet	\$8,965
Printing, Publishing, Graphics	\$7,557
Committee, Membership Dues, and Licenses	\$4,011
Utilities	\$14,005
Trail Maintenance (Snowmobile/ATV/Ski)	\$254,064
Professional, Technical, Contract Service	\$157,788
Repairs & Maintenance - Building	\$31,537
Travel Expenses	\$961
Equipment Rental / Lease	\$7,507
Insurance	\$29,420
Misc. Charges	\$1,889
Office Supplies	\$3,984
Field Supplies	\$9,447
Vehicle Repair and Expense	\$11,463
Vehicle Fuel	\$11,841
Capital Outlay, Equipment, Fixtures	\$22,539
Refunds & Remittance	\$1,533
Forest Management	\$16,132
Wildlife Management	\$10,150
Land Asset Mgmt.	\$102,598
Interfund Transfer (out)	\$1,341,021
Indirect Costs (out)	\$70,000
Total Expenses	\$2,682,467

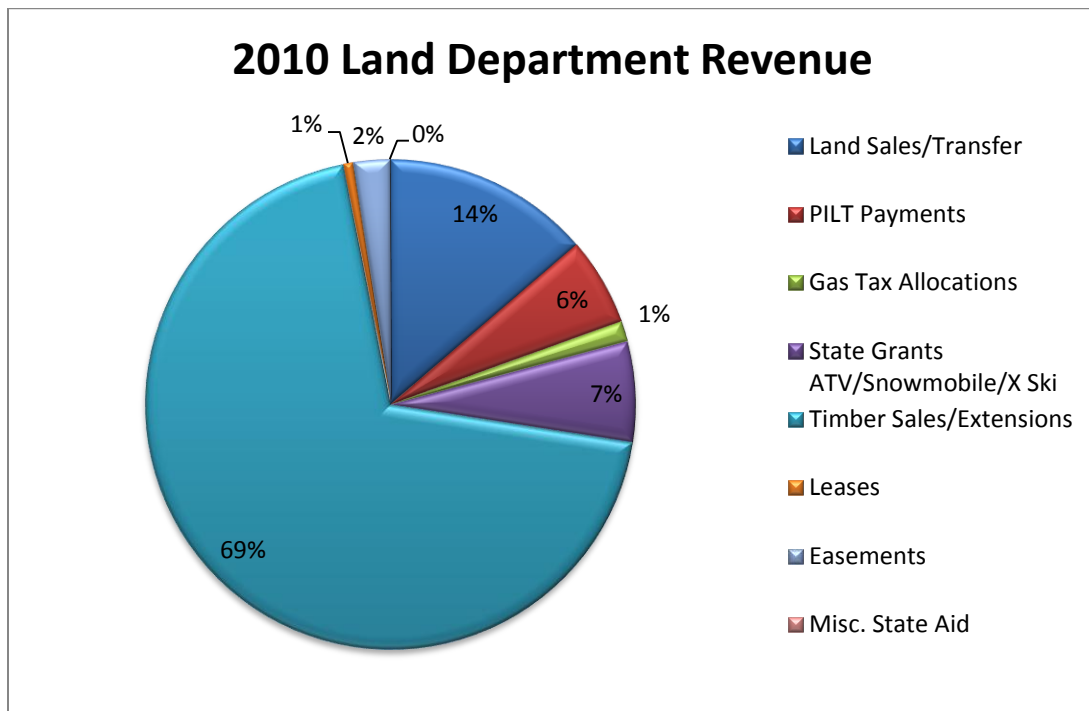


Note: 50% of the Department’s expense accounts for \$1,341,021 transferred back as tax forfeited settlements to townships, towns/cities, schools, reforestation, trails, and general fund.

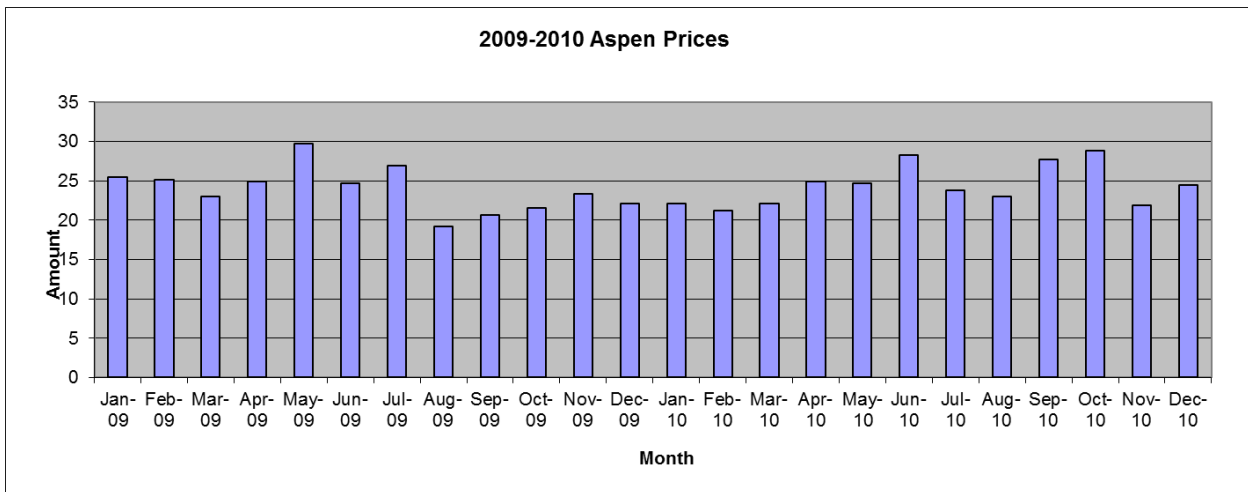
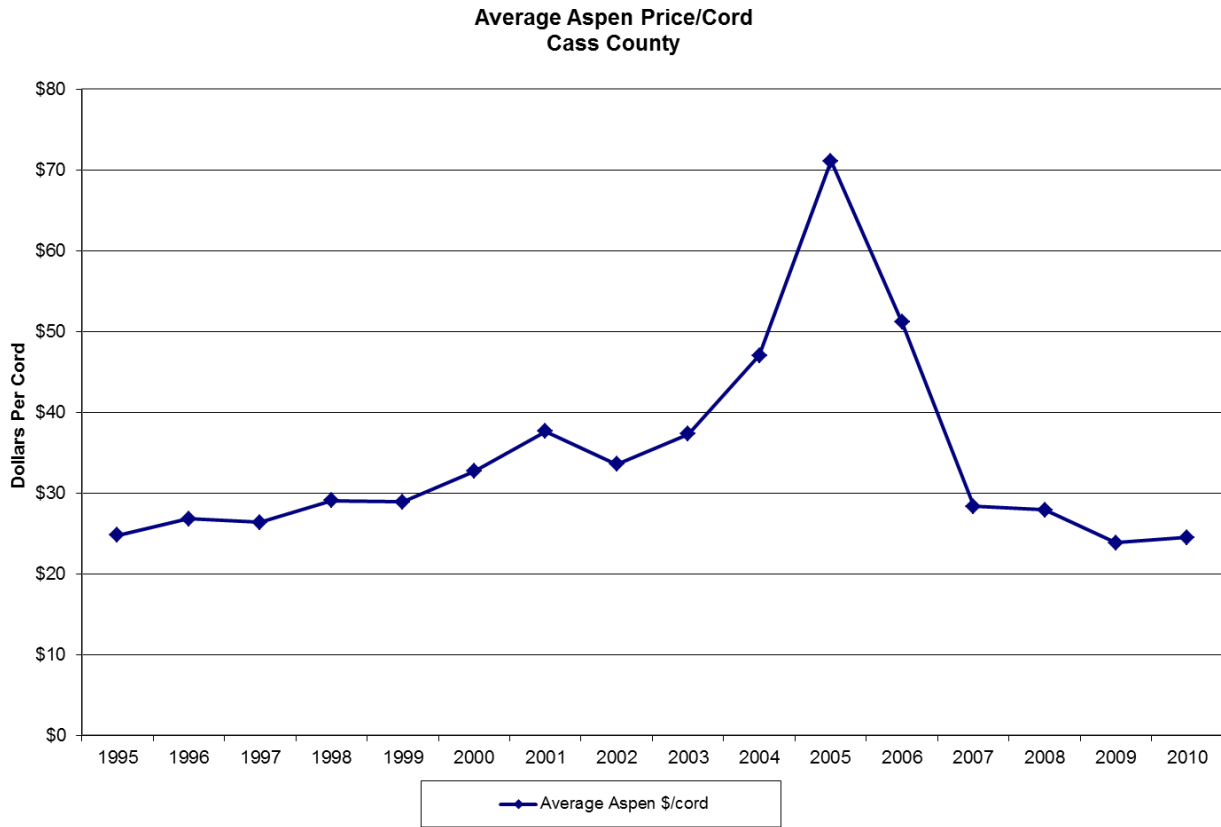


Revenue:

Land Department Revenue	
Fiscal Year January 1, 2010 thru December 31, 2010	
Land Sales/Transfer	\$373,330
PILT Payments	\$158,271
Gas Tax Allocations	\$36,846
State Grants ATV/Snowmobile/X Ski	\$180,596
Timber Sales/Extensions	\$1,893,591
Leases	\$17,247
Easements	\$65,148
Misc. State Aid	\$1,804
Total	\$2,726,833



Aspen Market Trends:



Conservation Trust Fund 73

Background:

The MN legislature in the years 1998 - 2000 directed Cass County and other counties to sell former State lakeshore lease lots and to legally reserve the principal amount of the proceeds in perpetuity (approximately \$4.1M). The interest earnings on the principal amount (approximately \$120.0K per year) are available to Cass County for “improvement of natural resources”. The financial activity is designated locally as Fund 73.

Conservation Trust Fund Account 73	
Interest Earned in 2001-2009	\$1,381,885.64
Interest Earned in 2010	\$157,431.39
Total Interest Earned	\$1,539,317.03
Less Expenditures from 2003-09	(\$682,152.17)
Less Expenditures from 2010	(\$37,319.97)
Revenues from 2009	\$37,406.04
Revenues from 2010	\$5,843.97
Total Revenues Reserved for Natural Resources	\$863,094.90
Permanent Trust Funds	\$4,124,700.00
Fund 73 Total Cash	\$4,987,794.90

Discussion:

This fund was used for the following projects in 2010:

1. A bike route establishment along CSAH 5 from Hackensack to Longville
2. Individual sewer treatment system compliance inspections on Roosevelt, Lawrence, Ten Mile, Margaret, and Sylvan Lakes
3. Phase II of the Shingobee Trail Connection
4. Phase 4 and 5 of the City of East Gull Lake multiuse year-round trail

**At the end of 2010, the useable fund balance had been allocated to projects.

Firewood Permit Sales:

62 Permits Issued	620 cords	\$1,550.00
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Firewood permits are available over the counter on a first come first served basis. Permits are written up post-timber harvest for the general public to purchase. Not all sales have firewood permits filed. If merchantable timber is left on the site after the logger closes the sales, then permits are written.

Forest Road Maintenance:

The Land Department graded the Bungo/Moose Lake, Beuber, Bull Moose, and Old Grade forest access roads twice during 2010. Beuber Lake Trail was brushed out on both sides as trees were encroaching onto the road. Additionally, 32 road access permits were issued during 2010. Access permits are issued to residents who need to travel along forest access roads for trapping or hunting purposes during break-up or trail closure periods.

Easements:

The Land Department with the consent of the County Board issued the following easements in 2010.

Private Property – Ingress/Egress	3 New/5 Transferred
Utility Easements	2 New

*The Land Department generated \$65,148 in revenue for easement fees in 2010. These fees are based off County Board recommendations and included in the Department’s Policy and Procedures Manual.

[CCLD Procedures All 6-2-10.pdf](#)

Grants and Trails:

Cass County received \$180,596 in state aid grants and spent \$254,064 on snowmobile, ATV, and cross country ski trails in 2010. The majority of the difference between the grant amount received and expenses can be attributed to the fiscal year calendar of the State verses that of the County. The funds are received by the Land Department and dispersed to local clubs around the county to do trail grooming, signing, grading, brush work, and mentoring programs. The Land Department worked with 6 snowmobile, 2 ATV, and 1 cross-country ski club in 2010. State aid and local club involvement will be needed annually to sustain the County trail system.

Cass County Trail Maintenance 2010			
<i>Trail Designation</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Mileage Completed</i>	<i>Trail Miles</i>
Snowmobile Trails	Grooming	1,764	434
ATV Trails	Grading	51	51
X Ski Trails	Grooming	94.5	31.5
Hunter Walking	Mowing	20	20

Forest Inventory:

The forest inventory was completed in the early 1980's for the majority of the land parcels under county management. Since that time, technological advancements in positioning systems have made new inventories more accurate on the ground and the forest tracts have changed over time as stands age and regenerate. To manage the timber landscape effectively, efficiently, and economically; accurate inventory records are needed. The Land department is committed to updating inventory records annually. The Land Department completed a re-inventory of 3,065 acres of forest lands in 2010.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification:

In 2010, the Land Department completed its 5 year audit through the SmartWood program of the Forest Stewardship Council. The County has been certified since 2001 and sought this certification to assure the public and consumers of products from the forest that the lands are being managed in an environmentally, economically, and socially sound manner. The auditing process is conducted by a third party and evaluates whether Site-level Forest Management Guidelines are being followed in the field and the office. The audit resulted in 6 minor corrective actions that were ratified within 6 months and 11 observations were noted by the auditors. The Land Department retained its certification of the forested lands within Cass County.

Public Land Surveys:

The original public land surveys were conducted in Cass County between 1857 and 1871. The State of Minnesota assigned over maintenance responsibilities of this system to county governments. In an effort to update survey monuments to increase the accuracy and efficiency of conducting surveys within the county; the Land Department contracted out several projects in 2010 to private vendors. The largest project was to identify every NE corner in each township and place monuments with recorded coordinates. This project will create a verified and certified starting point at all four corners of each township in Cass County. Additional projects are site specific in scale and lend themselves to solving property line discrepancy, establishing boundaries for timber cruising and sale administration, or establishment of a parcel boundary for land sales.

Land Sales:

The Land Department did not host a public tax-forfeited land auction in 2010 due to the high market fluctuation. Parcels were available over the counter on a first come first served basis for parcels offered in prior year auctions that were not purchased. A total of 7 parcels were sold in 2010 for \$37,900 of revenue.