

Cass
County
Land
Department
Annual
Report

2015

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.”

Table of Contents

County Commissioners.....2

Natural Resource Advisory Committee- Cass County SWCD Board.....3

Cass County Land Department Org Chart.....4

Expense Report.....5

 Expense and Tax Settlement Graphs.....6

Revenue Report.....7

 Timber Sold per Species and Acreage.....8

 Aspen Prices last 14 years in Cass County (Graph).....9

 Conservation Trust Fund Account 73.....10

Firewood Permits, Forest Road Maintenance, Grants and Trails.....11

Forest Certification, Public Land Surveys, Land Purchases and Sales.....12

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2015

District 1	Neal Gaalswyk*
District 2	Robert Kangas
District 3	Jeff Peterson
District 4	Scott Bruns
District 5	Dick Downham

*CHAIRMAN

NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2015 SWCD BOARD

District 1

Thomas Kuschel

District 2

Kenneth LaPorte

District 3

James Ballenthin*

District 4

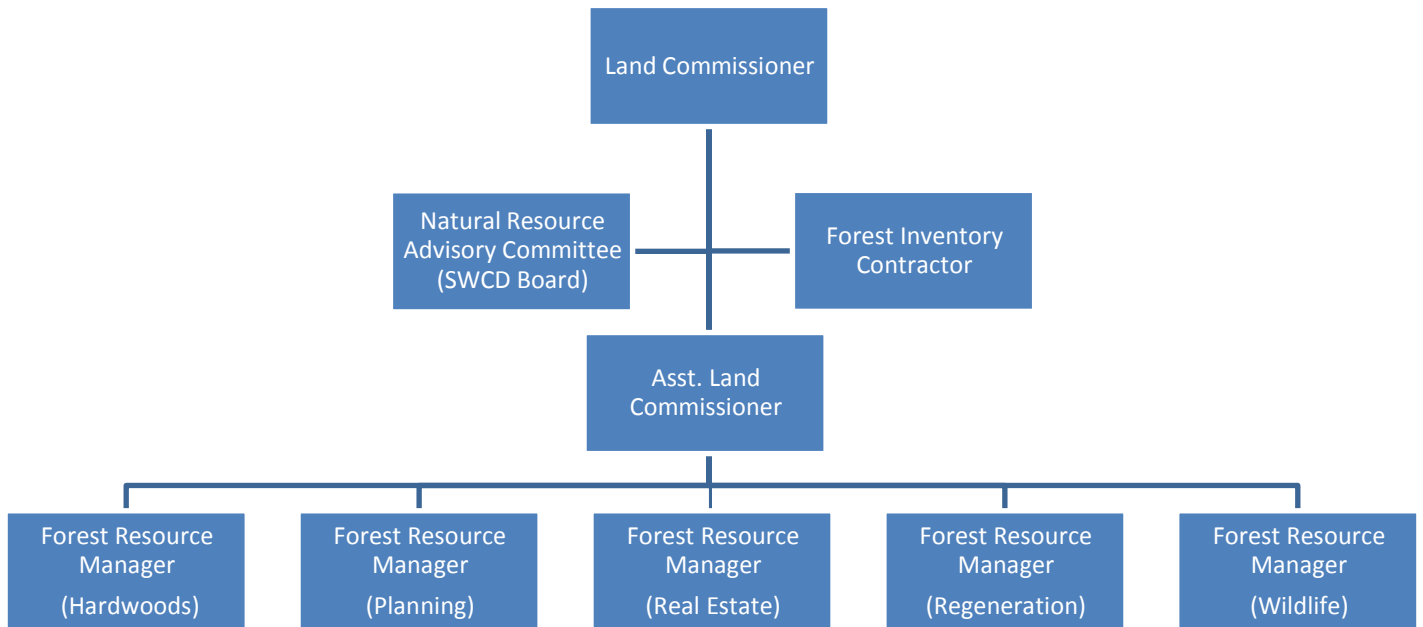
Clifton Peterson

District 5

Jane Ekholm

*CHAIRMAN

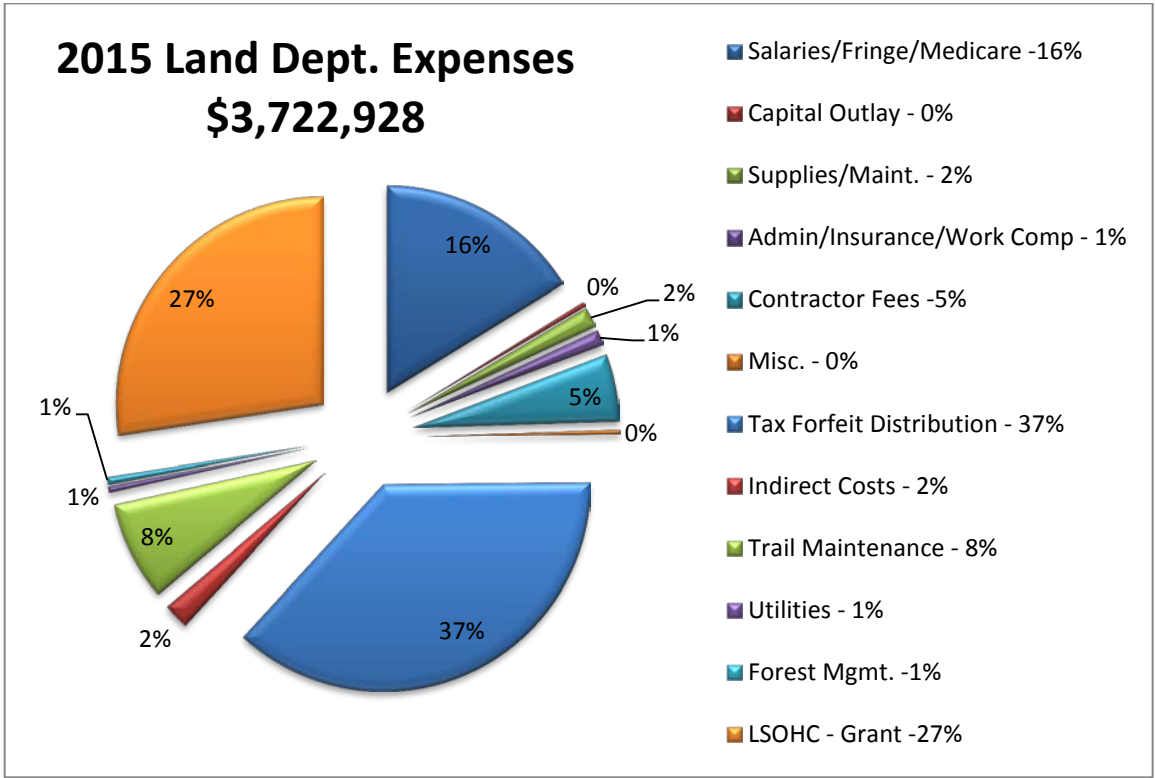
2015 Cass County Land Department Organizational Chart



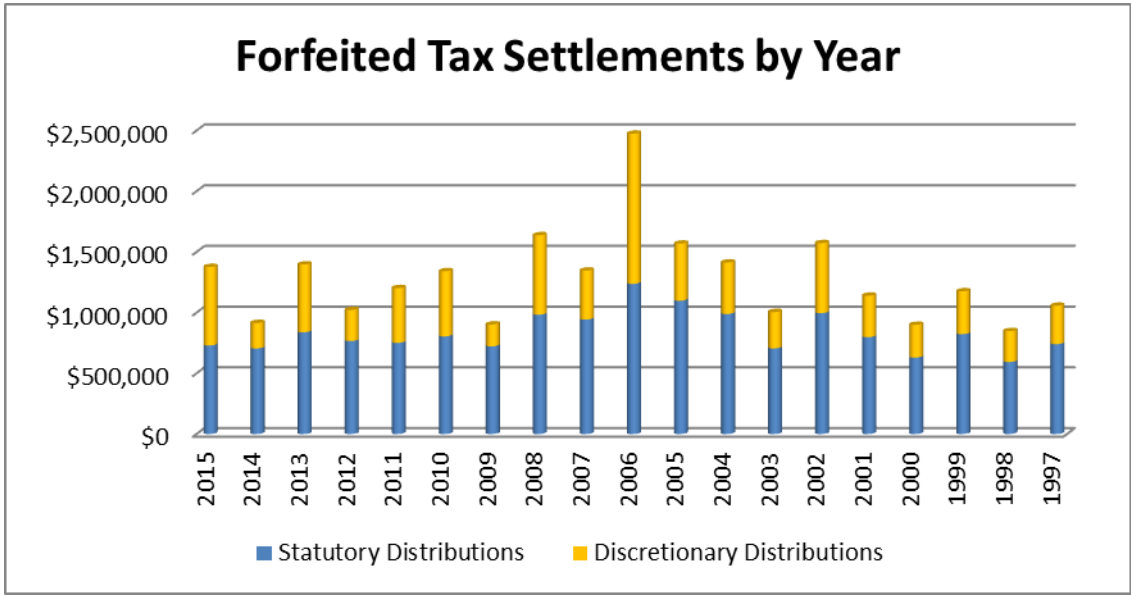
Expenses:

Land Department Expenses			
	2013	2014	2015
Permanent Salaries	\$408,998	\$408,821	\$422,060
IRS 125 - Flex	\$147	\$237	\$146
Fringe Benefits and PERA	\$110,629	\$111,598	\$111,039
Retired Employee Benefits	\$33,117	\$35,229	\$37,581
FICA / Medicare	\$30,929	\$30,538	\$32,134
Unemployment Compensation	\$0	\$0	\$0
Workers Compensation	\$9,732	\$16,520	\$6,724
County Uniforms & Clothing	\$1,548	\$1,334	\$1,782
Postage & PO Box Rental	\$970	\$1,940	\$1,871
Telephone / Internet	\$2,188	\$2,071	\$2,162
Printing, Publishing, Graphics	\$1,450	\$2,263	\$1,321
Committee, Membership Dues, and Licenses	\$6,756	\$6,477	\$9,688
Utilities	\$14,789	\$18,250	\$15,223
Trail Maintenance (Snowmobile/ATV/Ski)	\$271,671	\$280,955	\$287,673
Professional, Technical, Contract Service	\$278,761	\$104,991	\$193,483
Repairs, Maintenance & Janitorial - Building	\$33,864	\$29,061	\$29,431
Travel Expenses	\$517	\$1,080	\$1,131
Equipment Rental / Lease	\$8,043	\$8,685	\$6,002
Insurance (Property/Casualty)	\$24,247	\$26,475	\$25,830
Misc. Charges	\$16,062	\$2,972	\$1,048
Office Supplies	\$740	\$1,031	\$591
Field Supplies	\$5,264	\$10,210	\$5,502
Vehicle Repair and Expense	\$10,005	\$9,592	\$5,868
Vehicle Fuel	\$14,890	\$16,040	\$11,202
Capital Outlay, Equipment, Fixtures	\$37,893	\$46,781	\$13,701
Refunds & Remittance	\$5,369	\$0	\$6,872
Forest Management	\$31,168	\$9,140	\$17,656
Wildlife Management	\$0	\$6,069	\$4,220
Land Asset Mgmt.	\$0	\$900	\$0
Interfund Transfer (out)	\$1,396,809	\$915,231	\$1,376,217
Indirect Costs (out)	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$75,000
Sub Total	\$2,846,556	\$2,194,491	\$2,703,158
LSOHC - Grant**	\$359,697	\$743,883	\$1,019,770
Total Expenses	\$3,206,253	\$2,938,374	\$3,722,928

** The LSOHC-Grant is listed here as a pass through grant in the overall fiscal management of the department.

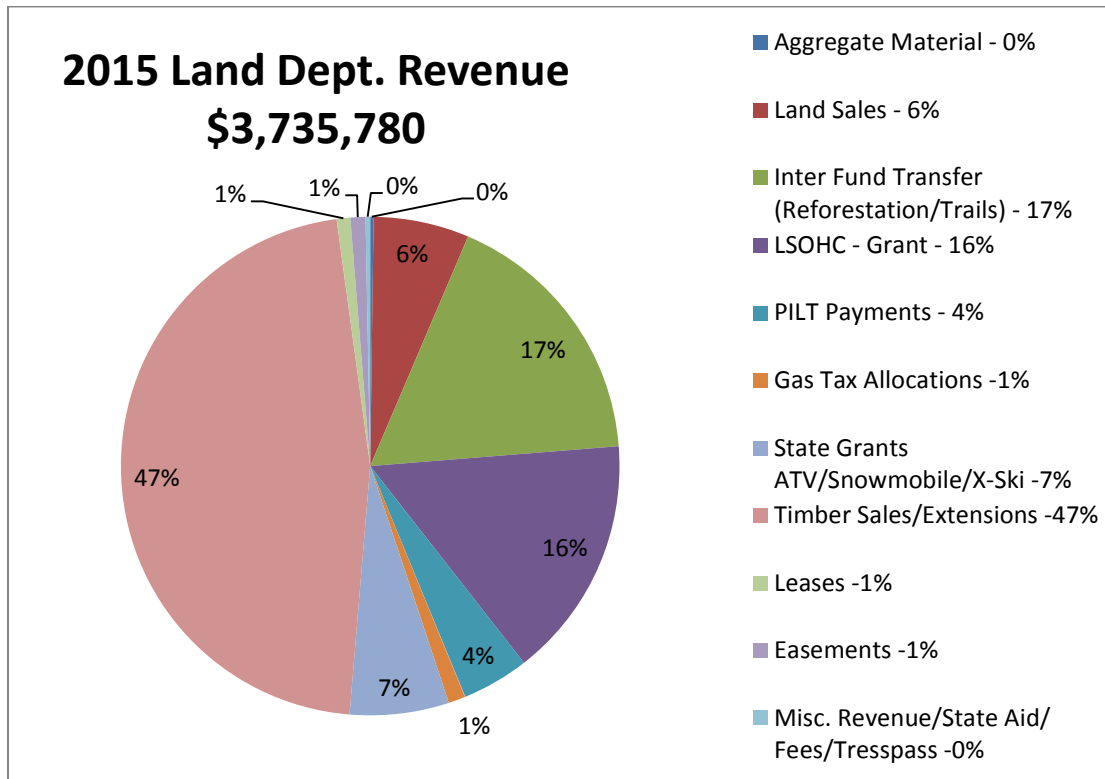


Note: 37% of the Department's expense accounts for \$1,376,217 transferred back as tax forfeited settlements to townships, towns/cities, schools, reforestation, trails, and general fund.



Revenue:

Land Department Revenue			
	2013	2014	2015
Aggregate Material - 0%	\$26,536	\$10,830	\$8,060
Land Sales - 6%	\$480,700	\$408,775	\$231,448
Inter Fund Transfer (Reforestation/Trails) - 17%	\$558,723	\$210,504	\$646,822
LSOHC - Grant - 16%	\$480,000	\$563,000	\$587,000
PILT Payments - 4%	\$162,839	\$162,550	\$162,460
Gas Tax Allocations -1%	\$40,176	\$41,254	\$41,783
State Grants ATV/Snowmobile/X-Ski -7%	\$212,686	\$208,241	\$239,409
Timber Sales/Extensions -47%	\$1,356,809	\$1,821,278	\$1,738,077
Leases -1%	\$11,622	\$0	\$33,337
Easements -1%	\$46,823	\$54,638	\$35,906
Misc. Revenue/State Aid/ Fees/Tresspass -0%	\$24,061	\$13,238	\$11,478
Total	\$3,400,975	\$3,494,308	\$3,735,780



TIMBER SOLD - ALL SALES					
<i>From: 1/1/2015 to 12/31/2015</i>					
Product	Amount Sold	Value \$	Avg. Price 2015	Avg. Price 2014	Avg. Price 2013
ASPEN	22142	\$645,429.12	\$29.15	\$26.71	\$22.17
BIRCH	8752	\$164,730.45	\$18.82	\$16.90	\$14.23
BLACK SPRUCE	164	\$826.33	\$5.04	\$14.04	\$0.00
MAPLE	5533	\$97,367.78	\$17.60	\$14.83	\$12.56
ASH	2325	\$37,024.08	\$15.92	\$11.55	\$8.29
BALSAM FIR	1849	\$20,595.60	\$11.14	\$13.99	\$12.36
BALSAM POPLAR	485	\$9,331.20	\$19.24	\$12.40	\$7.96
BASSWOOD	7534	\$133,301.16	\$17.69	\$11.68	\$10.22
JACK PINE	1600	\$36,170.48	\$22.61	\$30.99	\$21.59
JACK PINE PULP	113	\$915.41	\$8.10	\$8.87	\$10.08
MIXED HARDWOOD	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8.30	\$0.00
PINE PULP	2	\$18.23	\$9.12	\$0.00	\$23.06
R.PINE BOLTS & PULP	626	\$14,484.49	\$23.14	\$19.49	\$25.84
RED OAK	15573	\$517,266.12	\$33.22	\$28.68	\$22.89
SPRUCE	317	\$5,475.96	\$17.27	\$20.52	\$4.25
TAMARACK	825	\$8,031.41	\$9.74	\$3.53	\$3.52
R & W PINE BOLTS	2.5	\$70.39	\$28.16	\$18.20	\$12.00
RED PINE PULP	262.5	\$2,576.78	\$9.82	\$10.75	\$16.85
WHITE SPRUCE	155	\$2,409.59	\$15.55	\$28.95	\$18.45
BUR OAK	859	\$14,586.79	\$16.98	\$12.73	\$10.01
YELLOW BIRCH	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11.15	\$14.39
Total Cords	69,119.00	\$1,710,611.37	\$24.75		
RED PINE SAWTMBR	363.7	\$61,832.69	\$170.01	\$135.46	\$111.05
R&W PINE SAWTMBR	97.2	\$19,435.72	\$199.96	\$120.67	\$117.47
Total MBF	460.9	\$81,268.41	\$176.33		
HWD SALVAGE ACRES	10.2	\$1,080.00			

Number of Timber Tracts Sold : 89

Timber Acres Sold: 3,914.90

Avg. Value per Acre Sold: \$457.98

Avg. Revenue per Auction: \$149,413.3

Avg. Revenue per Tract Sold: \$20,145.61

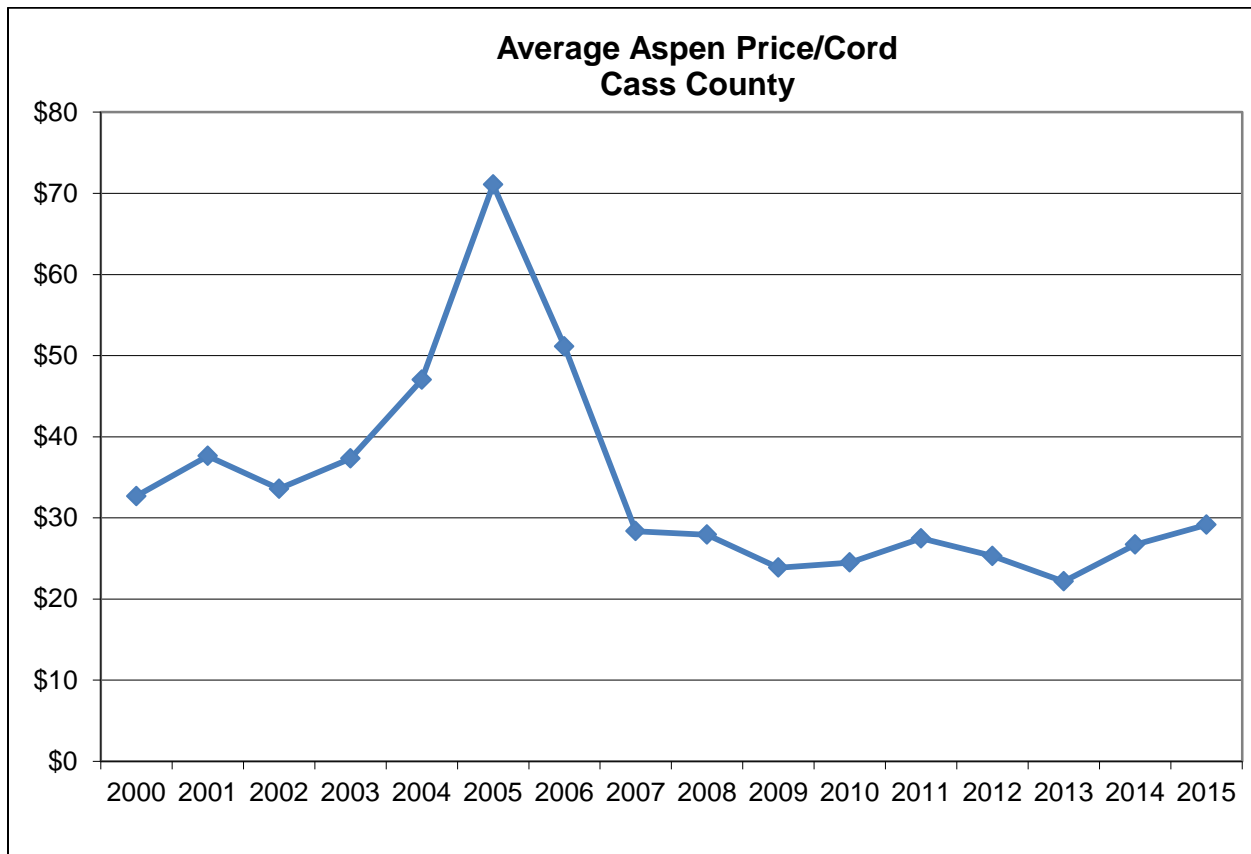
***Grand total sold will not match Timber Sale Revenues due to 2 year sales.*

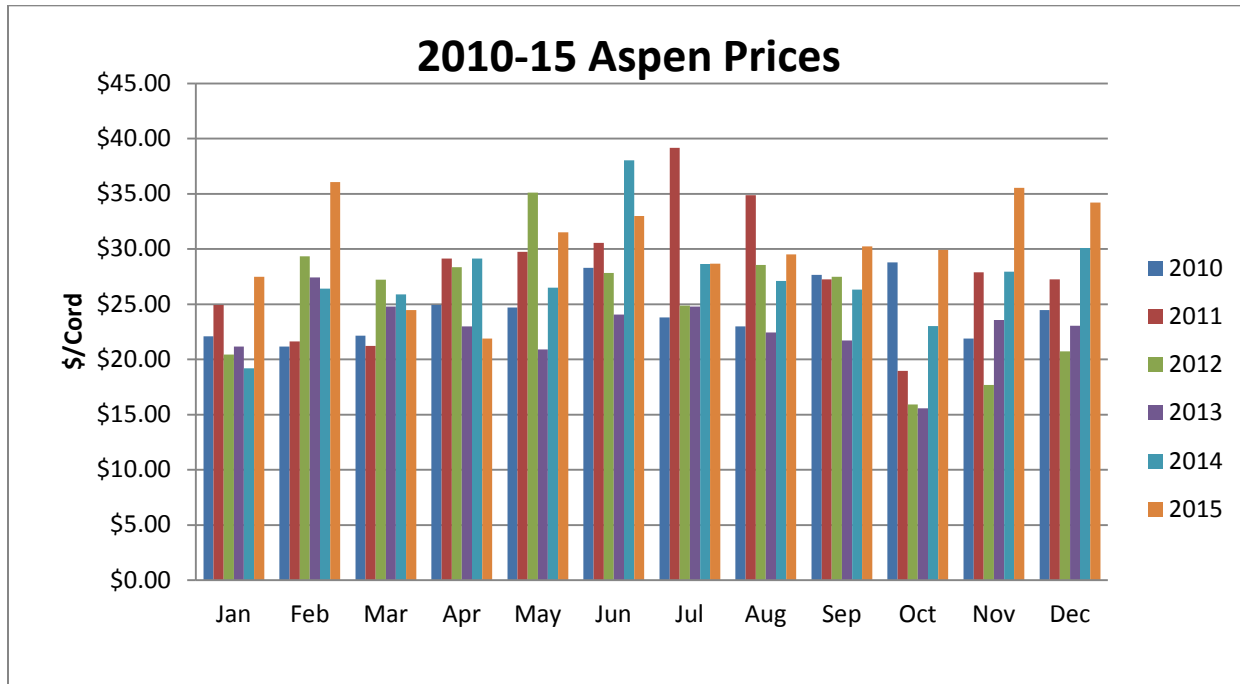
Grand Totals: \$1,792,959.78

The Land Department contacted 62 private landowners in 2015 regarding timber management adjacent to their property.

Total Acres Sold			
Between 1/1/2015 and 12/31/2015			
Timber Type	Acres	Timber Type	Acres
BLACK ASH	79.8	WHITE SPRUCE	3.2
LOWLAND HARDWOOD	154.5	WHITE CEDAR	0
QUAKING ASPEN	1,018.10	BALSAM FIR	98.8
PAPER BIRCH	560.7	BLACK SPRUCE	27
BALSAM POPLAR	119.3	TAMARACK	44.3
NORTHERN HARDWOOD	476.1	UPLAND GRASS	34.4
OAK	608.6	LOWLAND BRUSH	12
WHITE PINE	0.7	MARSH	46.3
RED PINE	427.7	NOT LISTED	30.3
JACK PINE	173.1	Total Acres For All Timber Types:	3,914.90

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 \$100.0K per year) are available to Cass County for “improvement of natural resources”. The financial activity is designated locally as Fund 73.

2015 Conservation Trust Fund Account 73	
Interest Earned in 2001-2014	\$1,972,917.61
Interest Earned in 2015	\$85,248.04
Total Interest Earned	\$2,058,165.65
Less Expenditures from 2003-14	-\$1,669,790.13
Less Expenditures from 2015	- 13,100.00
Total Expenditures	\$1,682,890.13
Total Revenues Reserved for Natural Resources	\$654,764.31
Permanent Trust Funds	\$4,124,700.00
Fund 73 Total Cash	\$4,779,464.31

This fund was used for the following projects in 2015:

1. Christmas Point Trail Relocate

Firewood Permit Sales:

79 Permits Issued	790 cords	\$1,975.00
-------------------	-----------	------------

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 Deerfield, Bull Moose, Moose Lake –Bungo and Old Grade forest access roads twice during 2015. Additionally, 23 road access permits were issued during 2015. 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.

Grants and Trails:

Cass County received \$239,409 in state aid grants and spent \$287,673 on snowmobile, ATV, and cross country ski trails in 2015. There is carryover in grants due to the difference in the fiscal year versus the calendar year. 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 monitoring programs. The Land Department worked with 4 snowmobile, 2 ATV, and 1 cross-country ski club in 2015. State aid and local club involvement is needed annually to sustain the County trail system.

Cass County Trail Maintenance 2015			
<i>Trail Designation</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Mileage Completed</i>	<i>Trail Miles</i>
Snowmobile Trails	Grooming	127	434
ATV Trails	Grading	165	55
X Ski Trails	Grooming	25.9	25.9
Hunter Walking	Mowing	20	20

Cass County Trail Inventory 2015		
<i>Trail Designation</i>	<i>Surface</i>	<i>Trail Miles</i>
Snowmobile Trails	Natural	443
Snowmobile / Bike Trails	Paved	114
ATV Trails	Natural	55
X Ski Trails	Natural	26
Hunter Walking Trails	Natural	20
Horse Trails	Natural	7
State Forests - DNR		
ATV and OHM Trails	Natural	70
OHV Trails	Natural	11
Horseback/Mountain Bike	Natural	27
County Totals		773

Cass County does not maintain any paved or natural surface trails. All paved trails in Cass County are built and maintained by the local taxing districts or the State of MN. Natural surface trails are maintained by the State of MN or local clubs. The County offers assistance to clubs with some matching dollars for grants and bidding out projects. The match is normally about 35% of the total cost of the project.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification:

In 2015, the Land Department completed a five year recertification audit using Rainforest Alliance under the Forest Stewardship Council standard. 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 no new nonconformity reports and one new observation noted by the auditor. The Land Department retained its certification of the forested lands within Cass County.

Public Land Surveys:

The Land Department completed 9 survey projects for 7 miles of property line certified and posted. The total cost was \$26,170.00 with an average cost of \$3,738.57/mile. The contracts require the survey companies to find or restore all controlling corners of the project corridor, provide a signed certificate of survey, and post the boundary inter-visibly every 330' ft. with Welcome to Cass County Land signs. The projects have provided an opportunity to paint and set-up timber sales in areas where unknown property lines prevented management. Signing and monumenting the parcels provides better public access opportunities and defines the property lines into the future.

Land Purchases:

The Land Department was successful in obtaining Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund grants for \$880,000 in 2015 to purchase key tracts of forest habitat land. In 2015, 585 acres of land were acquired in Cass County with the consent of Townships. The acquired lands will be managed under the County's Forest Resource Management Plan and are open to the public for hunting, fishing and the taking of game. The land purchased provides upland access to 424 acres of existing public land, protected 1,636.32 feet of lakeshore habitat, and eliminated 6.25 miles of public property line. County General Fund dollars were not used to purchase the properties.

Land Sales:

The Land Department hosted one public tax-forfeited land auction in 2015. In addition, 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 24 parcels were sold in 2015 for \$225,417 of revenue. The land being sold are parcels classified as non-conservation land and identified in the Forest Resource Management Plan to return to the tax rolls. These parcels may have no public access, public access surrounded by private property, platted land, or isolated acreage. The Land Department sold 113.82 acres in 2015. The Department plans on holding a Land Sale Auction during the summer of 2016 with new parcels available for purchase. Parcels continue to be available over-the-counter year-around.