

**Northwood's Guide
For Property Owners
in Itasca County**

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Land Use Ethic

Your Land ~ Our Future

Located in north central Minnesota, Itasca County is an area of abundant lakes, rivers, forests and farms. The beauty of Itasca County attracts permanent residents as well as many seasonal residents and visitors. Itasca County's economy has historically been driven by timber harvesting, taconite mining, agriculture and tourism.

The Itasca County Land Use Ordinances and Itasca County Comprehensive Land Use Plan were first written in 1969 to protect these resources and the lifestyle they provide, and have been updated periodically since then. They are the "tools" to sustain and enhance the resources of Itasca County, so residents and visitors can enjoy the amenities they expect from this land.

The current Zoning Ordinances divide the county into land use districts, within which the county regulates the use of the land and placement of structures. It is expected that the land use regulations for these dis-

tricts will foster appropriate use of the land with respect to economic and natural environmental values, and the rights and concerns of property owners.

We encourage you to read this Northwoods Property Owners Resource Guide and check out the "Commonly Asked Questions" section. If all of your questions are not answered contact the Itasca County Environmental Services Department for additional information and assistance.

Why Itasca County?

- Aesthetic beauty
- Clean air and water
- A healthy environment
- A permanent home or recreational cabin
- A place to grow a business and raise a family
- Recreational opportunities
- Open space for a garden

Know Your Responsibilities

Zoning Districts

Zoning districts were established in Itasca County in 1969 through an elaborate public hearing process. These districts were established to guide the appropriate use of the land as it relates to the geology, soils, waters and forests of Itasca County.

Zoning districts define how land may be used, such as: the minimum size of lots, height of structures, setbacks and other features. The purpose of land use planning is to provide for orderly development and to minimize conflicts between uses which are incompatible.

Zoning Permits are issued for activities such as building a home, garage, adding an addition. Subsurface sewage treatment system permits are also required.

If you have a land use question, you should bring the following to the Environmental Services Department:

- Sketch of property
- Photos
- Legal description of property
- Septic system information
- Info on any special features: topography, wetlands, streams, drainage ways, soils, endangered or threatened plants.

Important Land Uses

Forests

If you own forested land in Itasca County you join the population of some of the most influential people in Minnesota; in fact, in the United States. Private forest landowners own nearly one-half of the forests of the state, and they own over half of the forests of the entire nation.

With this ownership comes responsibilities. Your forests are constantly changing with each season, and with each passing year. There are biotic, or living, stresses like insects and diseases, and abiotic, non-living, factors such as rainfall, windstorms, fire and climate change that will impact the overall health and productivity of your woodland.

Tend to your forest

There are resources available to assist you in your forest care and management. Sustainable practices that works with the nature. If you own 20 acres or more, you are eligible to receive a Woodland Stewardship Management Plan. This plan, written by a professional forester, will help you define your land management goals, whether those goals are to improve habitat for wildlife, enhance recreation opportunities, or obtain income from the sale of timber. Contact the Minnesota DNR-Forestry at 218-326-8343 or the University of Minnesota Extension - Itasca County for more information and resources to help you manage your forest.

Programs/Resources to help

- Minnesota passed a law in 2008 that provides the

opportunity for woodland owners who are managing their property under a forest stewardship plan to receive a reduction in their property taxes payable in 2009 and thereafter.

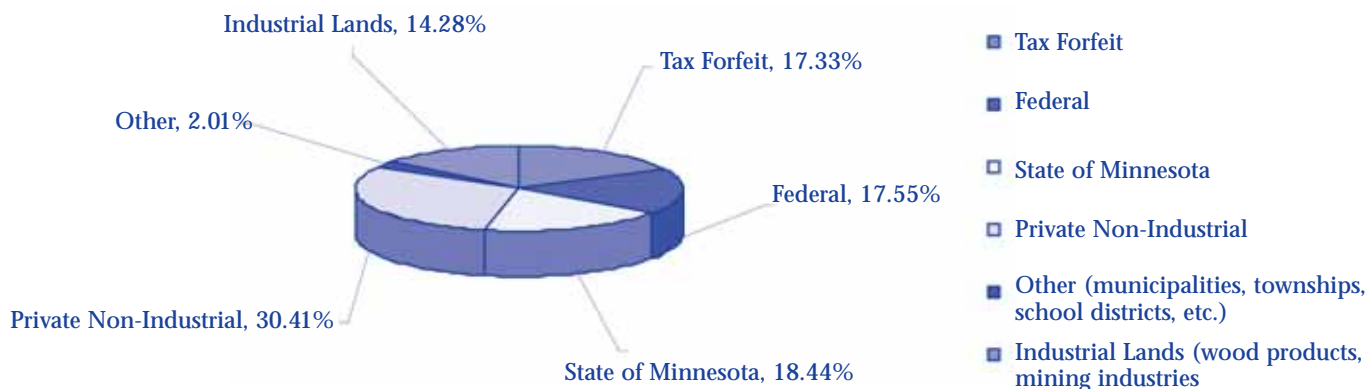
The new law allows forest owners to apply to their county assessor to have their lands assessed at 0.65 percent rather than 1 percent.

- Another program, the Itasca County Area Forest Legacy Fund, was established by the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation to provide assistance for owners of forested land who wish to establish working forest conservation easements on their property. Working forest easements typically preclude or severely limit future development of the land, while still allowing for sustainable forest management. Public access is optional. Although there may be income tax benefits, the property still remains on the property tax rolls. For more information, contact the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation at 218-327-8855, or the Minnesota Land Trust at 218-365-8663.

- The Itasca County Private Woodland Committee offers opportunity for landowners to meet, and learn with fellow landowners through field trips, workshops, and classroom discussions. Contact the University of Minnesota Extension - Itasca County for more information. 218-327-7486.

- To help family forest landowners find reliable and accurate information on forestry, wildlife and more, visit the website at <http://www.MyMinnesotaWoods.org>.

Itasca County Land Ownership – April 2008



Agriculture

At the turn of the century, homesteaders were encouraged to travel to Itasca County to farm lands that had been logged. First farms supported a subsistence type of lifestyle with dairy production, and a variety of “cold weather crops” like potatoes and rutabagas.

Agriculture is still significant to the area and contributes to the economic diversity of the area.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are over 500 farms within Itasca County on 120,176 acres of farmland. Local farms produce beef, dairy products, small grains and hay. Individuals are also using land to produce products sold at local Farmer’s Markets, local grocery stores and restaurants: apples, strawberries, blueberries, honey and more!

Itasca County also recognizes that residential uses and keeping livestock may be incompatible in some areas. Consequently, limits have been established in many areas of Itasca County and local ordinances may require licensing.

Recently regulations have been written preventing livestock from entering lakes and rivers to protect water resources and human health. If you are interested in agricultural uses for your land, contact the Environmental Services Department for more information at 218-327-2857.

For agricultural information contact:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service in Itasca County at 218-326-6595.
- Farm Service Agency for Aitkin and Itasca counties at 218-927-2912.
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health is the official animal disease control, eradication agency, and emergency response. www.bah.state.mn.us.

Mining

It is important for people to understand that when you own land in Itasca County you may not own the rights to the minerals. It is also important to know whether your land is on or near land that may be mined in the future.

Among the world’s best known deposits of iron is the Mesabi Range of northeastern Minnesota. “Mesabi” is an Ojibwa name meaning “giant.” It is a large area of low rolling hills stretching from Grand Rapids to Babbitt. The Mesabi Range is one of the four largest deposits of iron ore in the world, spanning 110 miles long, averaging 1 to 3 miles across and reaching a thickness as great as 500 feet. The area was discovered by Leonidas Merritt and his brothers in 1887. Mining began in 1892. For decades, the taconite mines in the Mesabi Iron Range helped feed the blast furnace of the country’s steel mills. Mining on the Mesabi Iron Range is recognized as an important resource locally and nationally.

Recreation and Tourism

The natural beauty of our 1,000 lakes, rivers, and northern forests provide residents and visitors with a myriad of recreational opportunities that change with the seasons. Sportsmen partake in hunting in fishing pursuits. Hikers, bikers, skiers, and birders have splendid opportunities on federal, state, and county lands.

Itascans recognize the economic significance of tourism. In fact, it is listed in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a core area in terms of land use. We welcome guests to come and enjoy the area ‘year round.’

If you are interested in purchasing land, be aware of the trail systems (snowmobile, hiking, biking, and more). Some of these trail easements may cross your land and may be shown on your abstract or deed. Check with the Itasca County Recorders office at 218-327-2856 for information on recorded easements.

Before purchasing land, it is wise to look beyond your property lines to see if there are activities that are acceptable to you. For example, are you comfortable living next to a snowmobile trail? Note there are many unmarked trails, some are privately owned.

Itasca County, the third largest county in Minnesota, has almost 2,000,000 acres of land within its borders.

The ownership matrix adds to the complexity of land use.

52% of the land base is publicly owned.

Federal lands are comprised of Chippewa National Forest and Leech Lake Tribal lands. Most other public lands are managed by the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry or the Itasca County Land Department.

Industrial lands include mining and forest products industries.

Private lands are primarily family forest landowners.

Wildfire Protection

Each year hundreds of people build their dream homes tucked into the woods away from the city. Despite the beautiful setting, these homes may be vulnerable to wildfire. In fact, many homes in Itasca County are a considerable distance from the nearest volunteer fire dept. Be aware if your driveway and turn around area do not meet minimum access requirements for emergency services vehicles (rural fire departments, ambulances etc.). Response time to an emergency may be hampered if vehicles do not have adequate access.

Here are some things you can do to reduce the risks from wildfire:

1. Keep your firewood pile at least 30 feet from your home. Don't store wood under an attached deck.
2. Reduce "ladder fuels" by mowing tall grass, trimming shrubs and pruning the branches off the lower six to ten feet of trees, especially conifers, within 100 feet of the house.
3. Do not burn trash. It is against the law to burn trash in Itasca County.
4. A burning permit is needed to burn brush except



- when there are three inches of snow on the ground. Always have a shovel on hand and a garden hose attached BEFORE you light a fire.
5. Driveways should be at least 12 feet wide with a 14 foot vertical clearance to allow emergency service vehicle access. Remember to keep your driveway snowplowed during winter months. Keep road signs and your 911 emergency address sign visible by clearing tall grass or tree branches.
6. A turnaround near your home should be provided for emergency vehicles.
7. Consider having electrical lines to your home placed underground.
8. Locate propane tanks within 30 feet of your home and place in an area cleared of vegetation.
9. Install fire extinguishers in the kitchen and garage.
10. Install a spark arrestor or heavy wire screen on wood burning fireplaces and chimneys.
11. Develop and discuss a fire escape plan for your family. Have a practice drill and include your pets.

For more information on reducing the risks from wildfire visit the following websites

www.firewise.org www.itascaswcd.org

Purchasing Property

The following are essential considerations when purchasing a property.

MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE: Every parcel has a required minimum parcel size depending on the zoning district it is located in. You need to be aware that not all parcels meet minimum parcel size and requirements. Every parcel can be defined as one of the following.

Conforming parcels are parcels that meet the minimum parcel size requirements of the Itasca County Zoning Ordinance. These parcels can be developed if setbacks can be met.

Nonconforming parcels of record are parcels that do not meet the current minimum parcel size requirements, but were legally recorded prior to zoning, which came into effect in November 1969, or met the minimum parcel size requirements at the time it was legally recorded. These parcels can be developed if documentation is provided to Environmental Services when a zoning permit is applied for and current setbacks are met.

Nonconforming parcels are parcels that did not meet the minimum parcel size requirements of the Zoning Ordinance that was in effect at the time the parcel was recorded. A variance is required to develop

a nonconforming parcel, and variances are not guaranteed to be approved.

SETBACKS: When purchasing property, it is important to be aware of required setback distances from roads, property lines, bluffs, lakes and rivers to find a suitable place for the home, driveways and septic systems. The buyer should contact Environmental Services for assistance.

WETLANDS are a welcomed amenity to many properties and perform valuable functions. They are also protected from alteration or destruction through federal legislation. To help you determine the location of wetlands on your property and to minimize wetland impacts, contact the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District.

SURROUNDING LAND USES: It is important to be aware of activities found beyond your property line. Gravel extraction, highways, snowmobile trails, utility corridors, mining, forestry or agricultural uses may impact your home.

Contact Itasca County Environmental Services for more information at 218-327-2857.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING Purchasing or Building?

Checklist:



1. Is your intended use permitted in this area?
(Check with Environmental Services to find appropriate uses and requirements)
 Yes No
2. Do you know where your property lines are?
(Check with Surveyors office)
 Yes No
3. Is the site appropriate for your intended use?
(check on details such as utilities, legal road access, proximity to the water table, soils type.)
 Yes No
4. Are there activities present or allowed in the area that may be undesirable to you? Consider mining activities, agricultural activities, forestry activities, gravel pits, dog kennels and dusty roads.
 Yes No
5. Have you acquired necessary permits before starting your project? (such as constructing an access road, building a structure or installing a septic system?)
 Yes No
6. Is your road maintained and plowed by a governmental agency? If not, you may not be entitled to some public services. (A waiver form is available at Environmental Services)
 Yes No
7. Does this property meet the required parcel size requirements? (Contact Environmental Services)
 Yes No
8. Does the property have a septic system Certificate of Compliance and evidence of regular cleaning?
(Seller should be able to provide a Certificate of Compliance and proof of maintenance).
 Yes No
9. Are you adding a new bedroom? (additions require a permit and a Certificate of Compliance on septic systems).
 Yes No
10. Does this property have any wetlands, shoreland or river frontage? (Contact the Itasca SWCD for information and appropriate permits)
 Yes No
11. Have you had a water quality test on the property?
 Yes No
12. Are there any recorded covenants on your property?
(Contact the Recorders office)
 Yes No
13. Can a business be operated in my home?
 Yes No

Where is My Land?

It's good to know where your boundaries are BEFORE you purchase your property! Do not rely on the plat book or the USGS Quadrangle map to show property lines. Existing parcels have legal descriptions, but not every legal description has a land survey.

Types of land descriptions can include but are not limited to:

- Metes and Bounds descriptions
- Platting or Subdivision descriptions (Lot and Block)
- Boundary Commission Plat (Lot and Block)
- Registered Land Survey (RLS)
- Common Interest Communities (Unit Numbers)
- Conservation Subdivisions (Unit Numbers)
- Auditor' Subdivisions
- Aliquot parts or a fraction of a parcel, i.e. of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

If you need to have your boundaries located, local professional land surveyors are listed in the yellow pages of the phone book under Surveyors-Land. Remember to read your abstract! A lot of information about the property may be located within the Abstract of Title.

Access to your property

Make sure you have legal access (ingress and egress) to your property. Check your deed to see if you have an easement for access from your property to a public road. Check to see who is responsible for road maintenance. If you build in a remote area, the construction, maintenance and snow plowing of your road or driveway may be your responsibility, and you may not be entitled to some public services.

View the property

View the property to check for major utility easements such as pipeline, power and driveway easements.

Check the aerial view on the Itasca County Web site at: www.co.itasca.mn.us

Click on **MAPS**. Click on Interactive **GIS MAPS**. View the “**Display Plat**” if applicable.

Developing Your Land

The comprehensive land use plan and zoning ordinances set forth guidelines and regulations for residential or commercial development. Please contact Itasca County Environmental Services for additional information.

Subdivision's in Itasca County: When subdividing land in Itasca County, one should start by contacting the Itasca County Department of Environmental Services and the Itasca County Department of Surveying and Mapping to determine what process and permits are required. It is imperative to work with these departments at the preliminary stages to avoid costly errors and delays.

In addition, a property within a platted subdivision may have rules that govern the use of the property that are in addition to the county zoning laws. These are typically referred to as “covenants” or deed restrictions. Common examples of restrictions or covenants are: increased setbacks, architectural review, and mandatory contributions to road maintenance costs. There may be covenants on non-platted lands through the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act. Covenants and other rules that apply to your property are usually stated on the plat or on your deed.

Are you interested in learning about conservation easements to help protect your land from Development? Contact the Minnesota Land Trust for more information at www.mnland.org

Building or Remodeling a Home

Choosing a location for your home:

Whether you are landscaping your property, building a cabin or designing a resort, each parcel of land has limitations for development. These may include types of soil, slope, wetlands, native vegetation, and other natural features.

An important step in getting started is to draw a detailed map of your property. The map is essential baseline information that can be shared with building contractors, professional foresters, Itasca County Environmental Services and Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Using a topographic map will help. Note these important features on the map:

- sewage treatment sites
- hills and sloping areas
- location of roads and driveways
- potential building sites
- drainage patterns
- existing vegetation
- wildlife habitat
- land features such as wetlands, lakes, rivers, rock

- outcrops and bogs
- water wells
- underground cables, pipelines and overhead wires.

Other than the building site, what about the rest of your land?

- Consider limiting the amount of cleared area and mowed lawn on your property. Native vegetation will lower maintenance while enhancing aesthetics and wildlife habitat.

- Think about ways to landscape that can help maintain the quality and aesthetics of the waters on your land.

- Consider retaining and planting native trees and shrubs that provide food and shelter for wildlife, buffer harsh winter winds and cool homes during the summer months.

- Plan adequate space for emergency services vehicles.

Some Commonly Asked Questions:

Q: Do I need to “tell” anyone I am building a structure?

A: Yes. You must obtain a zoning permit from the Itasca County Environmental Services Department, 218-327-2857.

Q: How do I know if my land is “buildable”?

A: This is determined by a number of factors including how wet the site, type of soil, if the land can support a structure and septic system, and the minimum lot size. Structures and roads must also meet required setbacks.

Q: Do I need a zoning permit to increase the size and shape of my house, including a deck?

A: Yes.

Q: How far away from a lake or river does my structure need to be?

A: Required setback distances vary depending on the classification of the river or lake. Check with Itasca County Environmental Services.

Q: Do I need a land use permit to reside or re-roof my house?

A: No, not unless you are increasing the size or shape of the building.

Q: Are there limits to the size of my home?

A: The maximum height of structures is 35 feet. There are building limitations on the amount of the lot covered by

impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces include roofs, driveways, paved areas and gravel roads. The property must be able to support two septic system sites and the use must be consistent with the uses permitted in your land use district.

Q: Do I need to apply for homestead classification on the home I just purchased or built?

A: If you are a Minnesota resident, own the property or are related to the owner, and occupy the property as your primary place of residence; you should apply for homestead classification. Minnesota state law provides for a reduction in the property tax for homestead property. Contact the Assessor’s office for an application.

Q: Can a business be operated in my home?

A: To establish a business in a residential zone, a conditional use permit may be required. Contact Environmental Services for more information.

Q: Can I reduce my property taxes?

Landowners who own over 20 acres of forested land may reduce their property taxes if they meet certain criteria. Contact the Itasca County Assessor’s Office for more information (218-327-2861).

Are you interested in starting a business?
Contact Itasca Economic Development Corporation
(IEDC) at 1-888-890-JOBS
Or visit the website at <http://www.itascadv.org>

Protecting Trees from Construction Damage

According to the University of Minnesota, healthy, well-placed trees can increase property values by 9-27%. Trees are ecologically significant because they create oxygen, stabilize soils, maintain water quality and provide habitat for wildlife. Trees also cool homes during the summer and help protect structures against harsh winter winds. It's not always easy to save trees during construction but your efforts will be rewarded.

Tree Selection Tips:

- Save the best and chip the rest. It is costly to work around trees, and it is also expensive to remove damaged trees after construction has been completed. Remove trees that are too close to buildings.
- Understand characteristics of tree species in your area. Knowing about trees' unique qualities can ensure tree survival and improve future appearance of the site.
- Select tree species that fit spatial constraints of the site. Be sure to consider overhead powerlines.
- Young, small trees survive disturbance better than old, large trees. Large trees almost never survive within five feet of a new building and should not be kept.

- Improve tree survival by saving groups of trees rather than individuals.
- Consider hiring a professional to help you with your project. Remove trees that may be a hazard or risk.

The Root of the Matter: Roots are essential components of a tree. Roots are responsible for nutrient and water uptake, store energy and anchor the plant. Some trees are very sensitive to soil compaction and root cutting. It is critical to protect roots in a construction zone. Root systems often extend beyond the dripline of a tree.

Available Resources:

*Protecting Trees from Construction Damage:
A Homeowner's Guide by Gary R. Johnson:*

www.extension.umn.edu

*Or phone the University of Minnesota-Itasca County
at 218-327-7486.*

Building a Driveway

If you're planning to construct a road or driveway or having one constructed for you, consider the following checklist to save time and money. Following the checklist will also lower maintenance, improve safety and protect water resources.

Checklist:



- A Shoreland Alteration permit may be required in some areas of Itasca County. Contact Itasca County Environmental Services to learn about setback distances from rivers and lakes.
- Obtain a Driveway Access Permit from the Itasca County Highway Department if your driveway connects to a county road.
- Obtain a Driveway Access Permit from the Minnesota Department of Transportation if your driveway connects to a state highway.

- For crossing a wetland contact the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District for a permit.
- For water crossings contact the Minnesota DNR for an application.
- Call GOPHER State One-call at 800-252-1166 at least 48 hours before you do any excavating. They will identify all underground utilities.

For additional information:

*Zoning Regulations: Itasca County Environmental Services
Department 218-327-2857
Erosion Control: Itasca County Soil and Water
Conservation District 218-326-0017*

Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff is surface water that occurs following a rainfall or snowmelt. Stormwater runoff can be a major source of pollution for our lakes, rivers and wetlands. Naturally occurring landscapes, including forests, wetlands and bogs trap rainwater and snowmelt. This allows water to slowly filter through soils and back into aquifers.

When too much of the natural surface of a site is covered by non-absorbent (impervious) surfaces such as roads, parking lots, and buildings, runoff does not slowly infiltrate into the soil. This can lead to flooding, erosion and the transport of pollutants into lakes and streams.

Listed below are techniques and ideas on how to reduce impervious cover, conserve natural areas and protect water quality during lot layout and design.

1. Maintain Natural Areas: Retain trees, shrubs and grasses. On cleared areas consider planting trees or shrubs to re-establish forest cover. Trees intercept rainfall and maximize infiltration and water absorption. Maintain vegetation along rivers and lakes to filter storm water runoff.

2. Distribute Runoff: Use pervious (absorbent) areas such as grass swales to help direct and filter runoff from roads and buildings.

- Stockpile topsoil and redistribute over site following construction. Proper soil conditions are needed to re-establish plants that will help mitigate runoff.
- Direct concentrated runoff into wetlands or consider installing a rain garden.
- Place roads and buildings away from steep slopes where excess stormwater runoff could lead to erosion.

3. Reduce Impervious Cover in site design: Reduce the total area of rooftops, driveways and sidewalks on site without compromising safety or violating local ordinances.

4. Use Best Management Practices (BMPs): Proven erosion and sediment control measures, called Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be an important component of your construction plans. BMPs include practices such as seeding and mulching disturbed areas, installing silt fence to trap eroded soil and using rock check dams to slow water flow in ditches. Proper maintenance of these improvements is critical to ensure their performance.



Rain Gardens: Wherever you live, managing stormwater runoff is important. Rooftops, roads, driveways and sidewalks create hard surfaces which rain and melted snow cannot penetrate. Runoff from those hard surfaces carries pollution, nutrients and sediments into lakes, streams and wetlands.

Rain gardens are planted with water tolerant plants and can be designed for any shape.

Rain gardens can be designed in any shape. Typical gardens are 100 to 300 square feet. For roof top runoff, place rain gardens at each down spout, at the low points in the lawn. A rule of thumb is to keep rain gardens 10% the size of the roof area being drained.

Of utmost importance is the soil. For rain gardens to infiltrate runoff, soil needs to be porous to quickly absorb water, ideally emptying within 48 hours.

Rain gardens should be placed at least 10 feet from buildings to prevent foundations and basements from being damaged by water. They should not be less than 35 feet from septic system drainfields and 50 feet from drinking water wells. For recommendations on plant species and more guidance on rain garden designs visit the Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District.

Online Resources:

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan Application
www.pca.state.mn.us/pulications/wq-strm2-51.doc

Erosion and Sediment Control
www.pca.state.mn.us/water/pubs/swm-ch6.pdf

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)
www.pca.state.mn.us/water/pubs/sw-bmpmanual.html

Minnesota Stormwater Program
for Construction Activities
www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwat-c-steps.html

Water Supply

A safe and adequate water supply is a valuable asset to your property and your family.

The Water Well

The design, location, construction and abandonment of a well is regulated by the Minnesota Dept. of Health. A private water well must be located and constructed to protect it from surface waters and from sources of contamination.

Water Quantity

The average person uses approximately 75 gallons of water per day. Water use does not occur evenly over the course of a day and water systems must often meet the needs of many uses during short periods of time. These times, called “peak use periods” usually last from 30 minutes to two hours and usually occur in the morning, near mealtimes, laundry periods, and before bedtime.

A water system must be able to meet the demand for both total gallons per day and peak use. The water system flow rate is the quantity of water delivered in gallons per minute. The flow rate should at least equal the peak use rate (the greatest water demand likely to occur at one time), and should be capable of maintaining this rate continuously for one to two hours.

Water Quality

A safe source of water should meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) primary drinking water standards. Private well water should be tested regularly by a laboratory certified by the MN. Dept. of Health and results compared to EPA drinking water standards. Coliform bacteria and nitrate-nitrogen are used as indicators to determine if water is safe or unsafe. Water testing kits are available at Environmental Services.

*For additional information on the rules and regulations governing a private water well and for information on water treatment options, contact the Minnesota Department of Health at **218-723-4653** or **www.Health.state.mn.us**.*

Check list:



- Is your septic system located at least 50 feet from a deep well and 100 feet from a shallow well?
- Do water tests confirm there are no coliform bacteria or nitrate contamination?
- Was the well drilled by a state licensed well driller?

Some commonly asked questions about my well:

- Q. Do I need to “tell” anyone I am constructing a well?**
- A. Yes, Contact the Minnesota Department of Health Well Management Unit at 218-723-4653 for a permit. Wells must be properly located (setback from sewage treatment systems and structures) and installed by a licensed well driller.**
- Q. Do I need a permit for an auxiliary water supply for my garden?**
- A. Yes. Contact the State Department of Health. There is no fee for this permit.**

Shoreland on Lakes or Rivers

The consequences of uncontrolled or unplanned shoreline development can be disastrous. Over-developed and poorly designed shoreland areas degrade the entire water body.

Increasing demand for shoreline building sites has led to skyrocketing land costs and intensive development. Itasca County has established minimum lot size requirements depending on the classification for each specific lake or river.

Things to Consider When Developing Shoreland

- Leave a buffer strip of natural vegetation along the waters' edge.
- Limit amounts of impervious surfaces.
- Maintain natural vegetation and minimize lawn area.
- Retain trees and shrubs for natural screening.
- Do not disturb steep slopes.
- Retain aquatic and shoreline vegetation to protect shorelines from erosion.
- Minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizers.
- Minimize the amount of clearing for a beach and dock.

Some commonly asked questions:

Q. How are shorelines managed?

A. To provide better management and protection for shoreland development, a lakes classification plan was developed and adopted for the county's public waters. Itasca County Lakes and Rivers Classification Scheme:
Lake Classifications

1. General Development
2. Recreational Development 1 and 2
3. Natural Environment 1,2 and 3
4. Phosphorus Sensitive

River Classification

1. Tributary
2. Forested
3. Remote
4. Bigfork River
5. Mississippi River-Scenic
6. Mississippi River-Wild

Q. What are the guidelines for shoreline?

- A. Environmental Services has set standards for land activities on shoreland areas. For instance:
- No structures, except decks, piers and docks shall be placed at an elevation such that the lowest floor, including basement floor, is less than three feet above water table.
 - Alteration of vegetation is regulated. Selective removal is allowed to provide a view corridor to the water and also to accommodate placement of stairways, picnic areas, access paths, watercraft access, etc. However, that removal must leave sufficient cover to screen cars, dwellings, and other structures from view from the water. Contact Itasca County Environmental Services for current guidelines.
 - Other provisions relate to setbacks, excavations, water-oriented accessory buildings and agricultural practices. Contact Itasca County Environmental Services for additional information.

Q. What should I plant on my shoreline?

- A. What to plant depends on the planting site and landowner objectives. It is important to match site characteristics with native plant species requirements, such as:
- Soil fertility and moisture
 - Shade

A natural resource professional can help you with this and assist with achieve other planting objectives such as:

- Bloom colors
- Increasing habitat for wildlife

For more information contact:

- Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District
218-326-0017 or www.itascaswcd.org
 - Itasca County Environmental Services Department:
218-327-2857
 - Mississippi Headwaters Board: 218-947-7524
- For more information on appropriate shoreland management practices, visit the following website
www.shorelandmanagement.org

Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)

Most town and city dwellers rely on a public waste water treatment system for sewage management. While public waste water treatment systems may be available to some rural dwellers, most rely on private, subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS).

The design and installation of SSTS are regulated by state rules and permitted through the Itasca County Environmental Services Department. An SSTS consists of a sealed tank and a drainfield for sewage treatment. SSTS must be designed by State licensed contractors. A list of licensed contractors can be obtained at Environmental Services.

The design is required by the Environmental Services Department as part of the permitting process which includes a final inspection and Certificate of Compliance.

A current *certificate of compliance* or a *compliance inspection* for an existing system is required within 2 years of the sale of the property or bedroom additions.

For further information contact the Environmental Services Department at 218-327-2857.

SSTS Setback Requirements:

Buildings:

- 10 feet from tank
- 20 feet from sewage treatment area

Property lines and Road Right of Way:

- 10 feet from tank or sewage treatment area

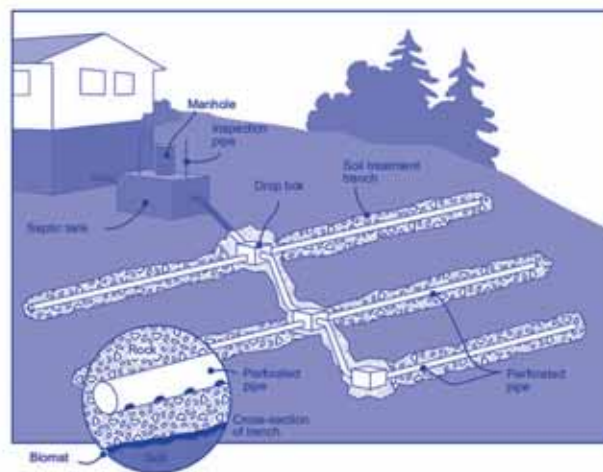
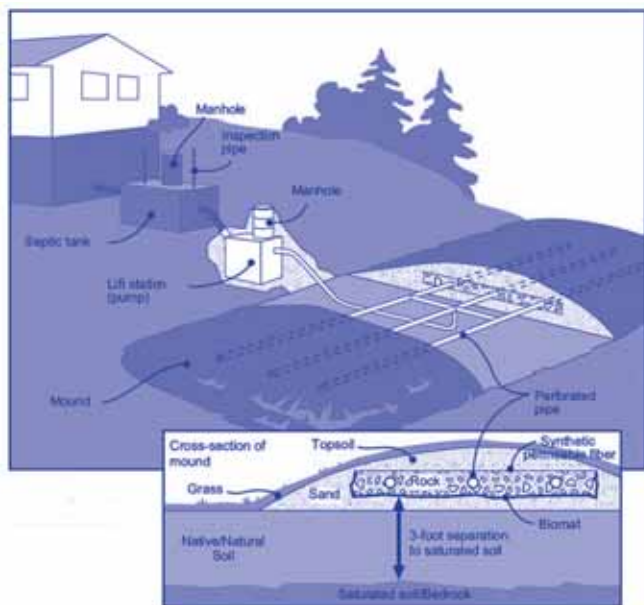
Well:

- 50 feet from the tank to any well.
- 100 feet from the sewage treatment area if a well has less than 50 feet of casing and does not encounter 10 feet of impervious material. (Shallow well).
- 50 feet from sewage treatment area if a well has

more than 50 feet of casing or encounters 10 feet of impervious material. (Deep well).

Maintenance and Care:

1. Under normal use, an appropriately sized septic tank **MUST** be cleaned (pumped) every 2-3 years to remove accumulated floating scum and sludge. If this material is allowed to enter the soil treatment system (mound or trench) it will cause expensive and often irreparable damage.
2. Do not drive over the soil treatment system and maintain snow cover in the winter to prevent the area from freezing.
3. Use water-conserving fixtures like low-flow showerheads and toilets.
4. Distribute washloads evenly throughout the week to avoid overloading the system with large amounts of water.
5. Wash only full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine. Consider a front-loading washing machine because they use less water.
6. Use liquid detergents (powdered detergents add fine particles that may clog the soils treatment system).
7. Use the smallest amount possible of detergents, disinfectants, soaps and cleaners to promote good bacterial activity in your septic tank and soil treatment area.
8. Do not use a garbage disposal or dispose of vegetables, meat, fat, oil, coffee grounds or other undigested food products in the sewage treatment system.
9. Good vegetative cover should be maintained over the soil treatment system, however, do not plant trees or shrubs because the roots may clog the distribution lines.



10. Route roof drains and drain tile away from the drain field.
11. Do not dispose of solvents, paints, antifreeze and chemicals down the drain.
12. DO NOT USE starters, feeders, cleaners and other

additives. There is no quick fix or substitute for proper operation and regular maintenance.

*For additional information on sewage treatment systems contact the University of Minnesota Extension
<http://septic.umn.edu/homeowner/>*

Protecting your septic system from freezing:

Common reasons septic systems freeze are a lack of snow cover and cold temperatures, combined with construction or "use" issues. These can include a water-logged system, cold air entering the system, compacted soil or lack of plant cover. Others include irregular use of the system, leaking plumbing fixtures or a pipe that does not have the proper change of elevation.

If the soil over a pipe is compacted, the elevation of the pipe may shift, causing a loss of gravity flow. This results in water left standing in pipes, which can freeze easily. If your system has frozen, you should contact a professional sewage pumper or installer.

Here are some precautions:

- Stop mowing the grass over the drain field in early fall. Let it grow stronger to trap more snow.
- Add a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment area to provide insulation. A mulch of loose hay or straw works well, as do leaves. The key is to keep it loose to form air pockets, which act as the insulators. This is particularly important if your system is new, and vegetative cover has not been well established
- Use normal amounts of water; the warmer the better. Spread out your laundry schedule to one warm/hot load per day, year around.
- Don't leave water running all the time to prevent freezing. A slow trickle could freeze, while a steady stream could overload the system with water.
- Don't add antifreeze to the system
- If you plan to be gone for more than a day or two, plan accordingly. Have someone visit and use water regularly. If you are going to be gone for an extended period (weeks or months), pumping the tank before leaving may be the best option.
- Reroute the drip water from your furnace. This slow drip can freeze in the pipes. Route this clean water into the sump or a bucket.
- Fix any leaky plumbing. The small trickles of water going into the system can freeze as thin ice layers within pipes, and eventually close them.
- Keep all vehicles (including ATV's and snow-mobiles) and high traffic activities off the system all year.
- Make sure all risers, inspection pipes and man-holes have tight covers. Adding insulation is a good

idea. Check for any cracks in the covers in the fall.

- Keep an eye on your system. If any seeping or ponding occurs, contact an onsite professional.

Some commonly asked questions:

- Q. Is a permit required to have a sewage treatment system installed on my property?**
- A. Yes, a permit is required. A design from a licensed contractor must be submitted to the Environmental Services Department along with your permit application.
- Q. What is a Certificate of Compliance?**
- A. A Certificate of Compliance shows that at the time of the inspection, the system was installed according to the design. The certificate is issued by the Itasca County Environmental Services Department after the system has been properly installed and is valid for five years.
- Q. What is a Compliance Inspection?**
- A. A compliance inspection of an existing system is conducted by a licensed inspector at the request of the landowner to verify the soils, and that the tank is sealed and the drainfield meets the required separation above the water table. The Compliance inspection is valid for three years.
- Q: How is the type of system needed on my property determined?**
- A: The type of system is determined by the soil texture, depth to water table, proximity to surface waters, the number of bedrooms and water use appliances in the dwelling.
- Q: What happens if my system fails the inspection?**
- A: A failing system must be upgraded, repaired or replaced within two years of the inspection or date of transfer. If the system is posing an imminent threat to public health or safety, it must be upgraded replaced or repaired within ten months.

Remember, if you are purchasing land with the intent to build a dwelling, make sure it meets the minimum lot size requirements and there is enough space for your planned buildings, along with enough area for two septic systems. Water table and soil type are two critical factors to consider.

*For more information on septic systems visit the University of Minnesota Extension website at:
<http://septic.umn.edu>*

Protecting Wetlands

Wetlands are very common in Itasca County.

For your information...

Wetlands perform important functions. These functions include:

1. Wildlife Habitat
2. Shoreland Protection
3. Fisheries Habitat
4. Erosion Control
5. Groundwater Discharge
6. Groundwater Protection
7. Groundwater Storage
8. Public Recreation
9. Habitat diversity

Staff with Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District can assist you in determining if a wetland exists on your property.

Wetlands can improve water quality, reduce stormwater runoff and erosion and provide wildlife habitat. Despite their benefits, wetlands have sometimes been considered a nuisance and have been drained or filled for development or agricultural production.

Wetlands are consistently wet enough to support water-loving plants. They are determined by the soil, vegetation and water conditions. Some wetland types have open water—most do not. Cattails and standing water are not the only indicators of wetland. Other plant indicators may include: tag alder, black spruce, willow, tamarack, white cedar, black ash and many others. Wetland functions depend on the characteristics of the particular wetland. A common misconception is that seasonal rains increase and droughts reduce wetland size. In fact, the true relationship is between the soil, the water table interacting with that soil and those plants adapted to wet soil conditions.

Wetland Management: When you submit a zoning permit application to Itasca County, the application must address wetlands, waters and vegetation management AND provide evidence that the activity you are proposing conforms with the Itasca County Zoning Ordinance.

If you anticipate any wetland disturbance, contact the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District at 218-326-0017 for specific regulations.

Road Building

Plan ahead: Begin planning well in advance of the anticipated construction starting date. If you suspect wetland disturbances will occur, contact the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District at 218-326-0017 before you begin. In many cases, a site visit

can be arranged and a determination made that will avoid unnecessary delays. Permitting can take up to 2 months in some instances. Wetland impacts are calculated in square feet and replacement may be required.

Road location & layout: Use the natural topography as an aid in road layout and keep in mind a reasonable attempt to avoid and minimize the impact must be demonstrated. A “dogleg” design can often be used to avoid wet areas. A curved road also limits the line of site and promotes privacy.

Road size: Choose a location and size for your road that will minimize the need for filling, ditching and grading. This approach further minimizes impacts while accommodating snow removal.

Stream or waterway crossing: If development requires crossing a stream or waterway, contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Division of Waters at 218-327-4106 for the classification or status of the waterway. A permit is needed for building a bridge or placing a culvert, if not from the DNR then from Itasca County.

Some commonly asked questions:

Q. Are there different types of wetlands?

A. We recognize many types of wetlands. They range from areas with open water to areas that may never have open water and forested areas to meadows.

Q. When does a landowner need a permit to fill a wetland?

A. In many cases permits are required. In some cases, the permitting process can take a long time if state and federal permits are needed. Plan ahead.

What can you do?

- Avoid filling or altering wetlands even if they are only wet during the spring.
- Consider restoring previously drained or filled wetlands.
- Avoid contamination of the waters on your land by avoiding or minimizing the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Avoid, minimize and mitigate.

Solid Waste Disposal for Homeowners

In Itasca County, we are fortunate to have an integrated solid waste management system. Itasca County continues to expand and improve solid waste programs with an emphasis on waste education and reduction. The plan also discusses the investigation of available waste management options and regional options for waste management. For more information regarding these programs contact Itasca County Environmental Services Department at 218-327-2857.

Household Garbage Disposal

In Itasca County, residents may choose to hire a private commercial garbage hauler, or self-haul their waste to one of 13 canister/transfer sites located throughout the county. Each of these sites accepts household waste with pre-purchased coupons as well as acceptable recyclables free of charge. In addition, the Cohasset, Bray Lake, and Spring Lake sites serve as demolition debris disposal locations.

Canister and Demolition Sites – Days/Hours of Operation

All Year – Closed Holidays

Itasca County/Cohasset Transfer Station:

Open Monday – Saturday 8:30a.m.-5:00p.m.

Demo Landfill 8:30 a.m.-4:30p.m.

Outlying Canister Sites:

Summer: (April 15-Sept.14)

Open Thursday – Monday, 8:30a.m.-5:30p.m.

Closed Tuesday and Wednesday

Winter: (Sept.15 – April14)

Open Friday, Sat., and Monday, 8:30a.m.-4:00p.m.

Closed Tuesday – Thursday, and Sunday

Spring Lake and Bray Lake Sites:

Same hours as outlying canister sites, EXCEPT during deer hunting season these two sites are open Sundays 8:30a.m.-4:00p.m. in addition to regular winters.

Fee Schedule

- Household Garbage: \$2.00/33-gallon garbage bag or equivalent
- No charge for properly prepared recyclable materials (tin cans, glass bottles and jugs, cardboard, plastic #1- #7, newspapers, office paper and magazines)
- Demolition: \$9.00/cubic yard (concrete, brick, untreated wood, rocks, bituminous, and plastic building parts)
- Appliances: \$4.00/item or equivalent
- Tires \$2.00/15” and smaller; \$7.00/16” and larger
- Scrap Metal: \$4.00/item or equivalent
- Used Oil and Oil Filters: free drop off at Bray Lake, Goodland and Cohasset
- Batteries: free drop off at the Cohasset canister site
- Antifreeze: free drop off Cohasset canister site

Coupons

Coupons are required at transfer stations and may be purchased at the following locations: *Antler Lodge, Balsam Store, Bowstring Store, Cub Foods, Davis Petroleum, Effie Country Service, Frontier Bait, God’s Country, Hollywood Bait, Super America-Cohasset, G.R. State Bank, Minit Mart, Guyer’s Market, Hager’s Hardware, Iron Country Traders, Outpost 38, Jurvelin Hardware, Nashwauk Hardware, Nashwauk Little Store, Petrich’s Store, MarketPlace, Northern Telephone, Pokegama Lake Store, Swan Lake 76, River Road Market, Ron’s Korner Market, Scenic Pines Store, 63-76, Shallow Lake Store, Spring Lake Store, Swan River One Stop, Winnie 1 Stop, Two Rivers Cenex, Max Mini Store.*

Household Hazardous Waste

Typically, if a household product’s container has one of the following written on it, the product probably contains hazardous chemicals and must be disposed of at a HHW collection: danger, caution, poison, toxic, flammable, warning, corrosive, contains lye, acid or petroleum distillates. Waste examples include; latex and oil based paint, strippers, solvents, thinners, dioxins, and Ni-cad/rechargeable batteries. HHW is collected at the Cohasset Transfer Station by appointment, usually on the second and fourth Thursday of April through October, and once a month November through March. Residents can call Itasca County Environmental Services at (218) 327-2857 to set up a 10 minute appointment.

Recycling for Homeowners

Recycling Program

Itasca County encourages the reuse of valuable resources and to reduce the quantity of solid waste that must be landfilled. Your cooperation and effective participation and contributions toward the achievement of that goal. A variety of materials can be recycled by a variety of methods. At this time our program accommodates specific types of recyclables. Only clean, sorted materials of those types may be accepted. Dirty and inappropriate materials can contaminate and ruin the entire contents of a container. Please exclude all unacceptable materials from the items placed in the containers. At Itasca County Solid Waste Disposal Sites, non-recyclable material may be placed in the green dumpsters for a nominal fee.

Following are examples of acceptable materials at each canister site.

1. Cans: Clean tin cans, clean aluminum cans, clean steel cans. Rinse cans. You may leave labels on.
2. Glass: Rinse containers. You may leave labels on. Remove from bags and other containers. Remove lids. Clean and empty bottles, jugs or jars of any color.
3. Plastic: Clean and empty #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 plastic with tops off.
4. Cardboard: Clean, dry corrugated, gray cardboard (cereal, shoe box, “shiny”, cracker boxes.)
5. Paper based egg cartons, beverage cases, paper bags (including grocery bags).

The following items can be placed in the same bin at canister sites:

1. Newspaper, shoppers, paper bags.
2. Office Paper: letterhead, plain paper, bond copying paper, white or colored typing paper, writing papers, computer print out paper (without carbon leafs), NCR paper and forms
3. Magazines: magazines, phone books, catalogs, glossy brochures, and similar items.

FREE-Electronics Recycling!

Household electronics will be accepted free of charge at the following Itasca County sites during normal hours of operation:

1. Cohasset Transfer Station
2. Bray Lake Canister Site
3. Spring Lake Canister Site

4. Electronic Business Waste Not Included – Coupon Payment Required

This no charge recycling program is made possible by: New Minnesota Legislation requiring manufacturers and retailers to share responsibility in recycling of electronics Itasca County’s partnership with Waste Management’s Recycle America Cycling Services.

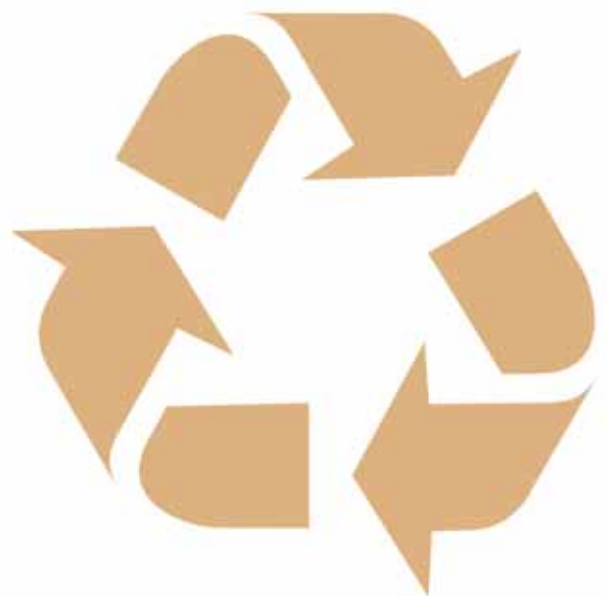
How to Recycle

Recyclable materials should be kept separated, cleaned, prepared, and set aside before they become mixed with garbage. Cans and jugs must be thoroughly drained, rinsed, or washed.

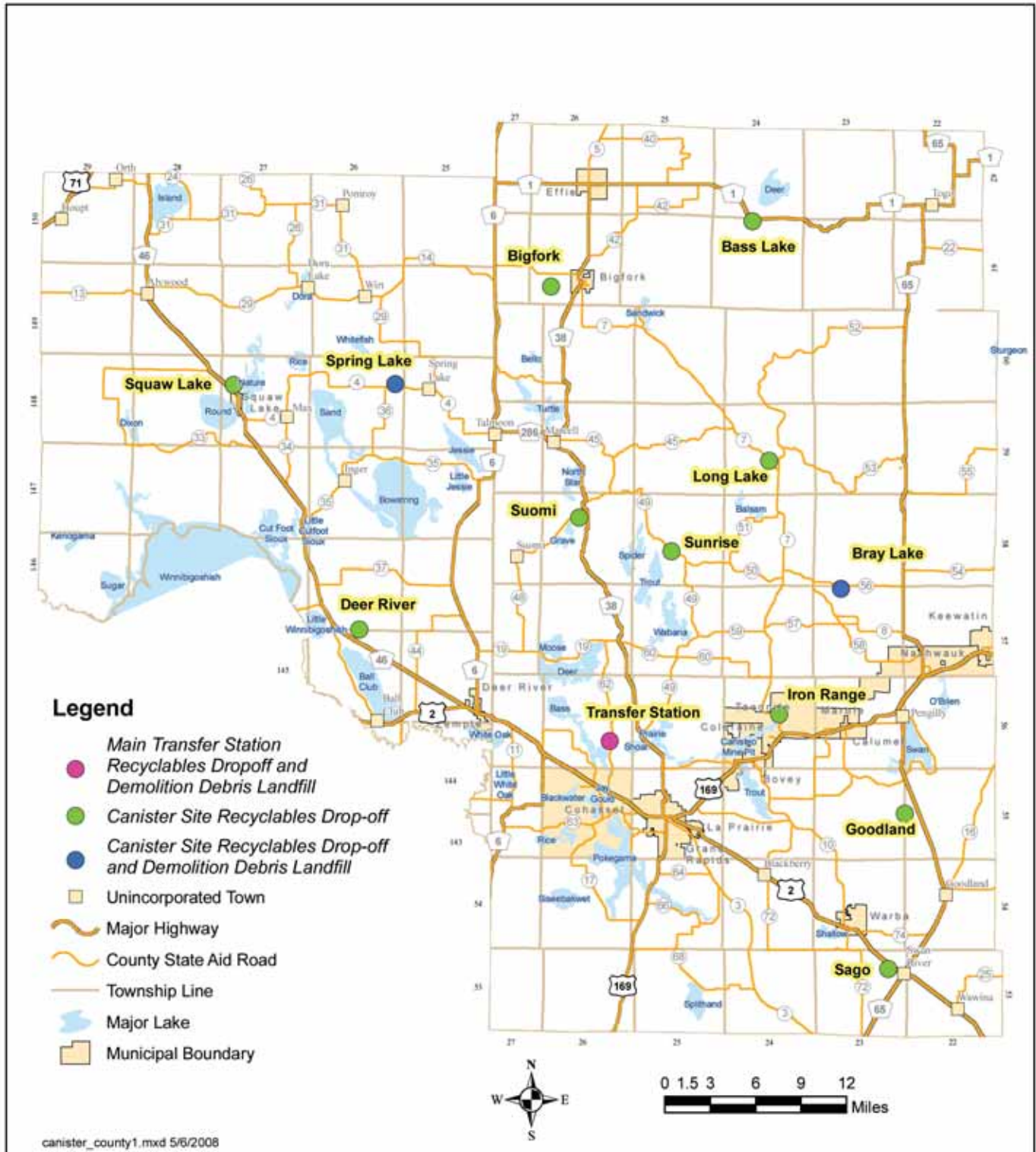
Find a convenient location to store the recyclables – under a sink, near the garbage can, or in the garage. Each type of recyclable should be stored in a separate barrel, bucket, box, bag, or shelf space.

When bringing your recyclables to an Itasca County Solid Waste Disposal Site, empty the recyclables in the proper bins and place your containers in the green dumpsters, or take them home and use them again.

Another approach is to place all the cans, bottles, jugs, and jars in a single container at your home, bring it to the Itasca County Drop-Off Site, and sort the materials into the proper recycling materials containers at the site.



Canister Sites in Itasca County



Itasca County Reference Guide

Agriculture-cost share programs and assistance

Natural Resource Conservation Service 218-327-6595
Farm Service Agency 218-927-2912
Minnesota Board of Animal Health www.bah.state.mn.us

Conservation Easements for Land Protection

MN Land Trust 218-365-8663
www.mnland.org

Drinking Water Wells

Minnesota Dept. of Health Well Management
Unit 800-383-9808
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells
Water testing kits:
Itasca County Environmental Services 218-327-2857

Driveway Access Permits to County Roads

Itasca County Transportation 218-327-2853
MN DOT 800-657-3774

Land Information

Itasca County Property taxes:
Itasca County Auditors 218-327-2860
Itasca County Assessors 218-327-2861
Itasca County Surveyors Depart. 218-327-2854
Recorders Office (ownership/deeds/covenants) 218-327-2856
www.co.itasca.mn.us

Zoning Permits

Environmental Services 218-327-2857
www.co.itasca.mn.us

Lakeshore and Rivers Permits and Projects

DNR Waters 218-327-4106
Itasca County Environmental Services 218-327-2857
Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District 218-326-0017
Mississippi Headwaters Board 218-947-7524
University of Minnesota Extension-Itasca County
218-327-7486
www.shorelandmanagement.org

Law Enforcement

Itasca County Sheriff 218-326-3477

Private Forest Land Assistance

DNR-Forestry 218-246-8343
Itasca SWCD 218-326-0017
University of Minnesota Extension-Itasca County
218-327-7486
www.MyMinnesotaWoods.org

Public Land Management

Itasca County Land Dept. 218-327-2855
DNR -State Land Management 218-246-8343

US Forest Service Chippewa National Forest 218-246-2123

Sewage Treatment Systems

Itasca County Environmental Services 218-327-2857
University of Minnesota Extension-Itasca County
218-327-7486
<http://septic.umn.edu>

Solid Waste Management

Household garbage, demolition material, household
hazardous waste, recycling
Itasca County Environmental Services 218-327-2857
www.co.itasca.mn.us

Starting A Business

Itasca Economic Development Corporation 218-326-9411

Stormwater Management

Erosion and Sediment Control, Prevention, and
Best Management Practices
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 800-657-3864
www.pca.state.mn.us
Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District 218-326-0017
www.co.itascaswcd.org

Tree Care and Maintenance

University of Minnesota Extension-Itasca County
218-327-7486

Utilities Permits

Itasca County Engineering 218-327-2853
Lake Country Power 800-421-9959
MN Power Call Before You Dig 800-252-1166

Wetlands

Itasca County SWCD 218-326-0017
www.itascaswcd.org

Wildfire Information

Burning permits and regulations
MN DNR
Deer River 218-246-8343
Grand Rapids 218-327-4435
Effie 218-743-3694

Wildfire Prevention

Itasca County Firewise 218-360-1114
www.itascaswcd.org

