

Rural Land Use Patterns

At the end of 1997, rural properties in Minnehaha County surpassed 10,800 parcels as indicated in Table 11. These parcels totaled 465,000 acres (727 square miles) and supported a variety of land uses from agricultural to residential, commercial and industrial activities. The dominate land use is agriculture, comprising 90 percent of the total rural land base.

While the rural area is primarily in agricultural use, the division of parcels among the various land uses illustrates some significant trends. Almost 40 percent of all rural parcels are less than 10 acres in size and devoted to or intended for residential use. Another 12 percent are parcels 10 to 40 acres in size, many of which are residential acreages and hobby farms. Most parcels of this size are not capable of supporting a bonafide farming operation.

A noteworthy statistic from the land use inventory is the 1,556 parcels less than 10 acres in size that are vacant and most probably qualify for residential use. These potential building sites along with those allowed by density zoning (i.e. one per quarter-quarter section) are factors which will undoubtedly result in a more heavily populated rural area during the planning period.

