

Department Administration

Carlton County
Tax Forfeited Land
Management Plan

5.I Assessment

Carlton County administers its tax-forfeited land base through its Land Department, Auditor's Office, and the County Board. The County Board sets policies, adopts appropriate ordinances, authorizes land and timber sales, and undertakes similar policy and legal actions. The Auditor sets land and timber values, conducts foreclosures, and handles related legal and fiscal actions.

Day-to-day administration and field management of the land and timber resources is done by the Land Department which is headed by the Land Commissioner who reports directly to the County Board of Commissioners. The Land Department has a staff of three including the Land Commissioner, a County Forester, and a clerk. Temporary seasonal help may be hired to undertake such projects as tree planting.

Both the Land Commissioner and County Forester were hired at nearly the same time and both will likely retire within months of each other in the current decade. In such an event there would be a tremendous loss of Departmental knowledge and history. It is critical that the County protect itself against this eventuality. The plan recommends the taking of measures to record management decisions and actions in a manner that ties them to the resource inventory and to document key knowledge of the resource and Department activities.

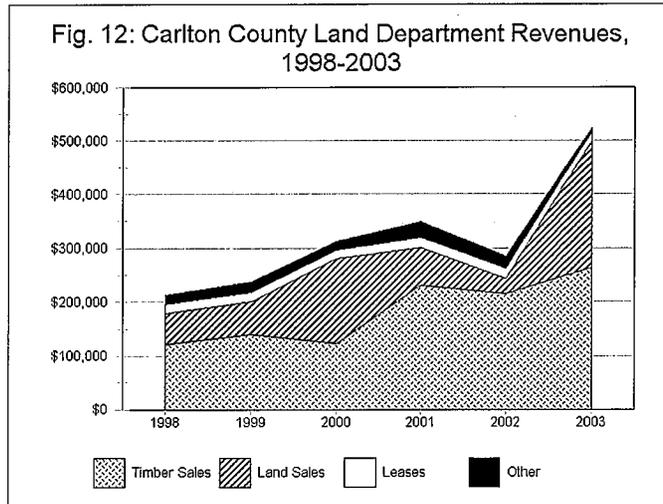
Budget

Table 8 and Figure 12 summarize revenues for the Land Department.

Revenues	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Timber Sales	121,400	140,444	122,569	231,073	214,118	263,746
Land Sales	56,916	59,819	157,962	69,975	28,724	234,623
Leases	17,200	17,778	16,050	18,102	18,744	18,064
Other	16,994	20,431	17,145	29,816	23,648	8,185
Total	\$205,386	\$230,704	\$305,652	\$340,763	\$285,234	\$524,618

These revenues pay all Land Department costs (payroll and land management) and County administrative services provided by the Auditor's Office. Unspent funds are allocated to local units of government.

In addition, the County receives payment-in-lieu of taxes from the State for public lands within the county. In 1997 this payment was \$101,454 and rose to \$130,597 in 2002.



Education and Outreach

Land Department staff have long participated in a variety of educational programs to help teach children and others about the importance of the forest resource and its proper management. The Department has also from time to time cooperated with other entities in promoting general education efforts about land management, logging practices, and related matters.

The small Department staff size limits its capacity to undertake more rigorous education and outreach efforts on its own.

SFI Certification

Carlton County has received certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) through the American Forest & Paper Association. In order to retain that certification, the County must continually satisfy the objectives listed in Chapter 4 as evaluated through a series of performance measures and indicators. The County will consider second or third party certification of its adherence to SFI protocols. Further, the County may consider securing certification under the International Standards Organization (ISO) process.

5.2

Policies

Objective: *Carlton County desires to possess a professional, competent and adequately funded department overseeing the administration and management of tax-forfeited and other designated lands under County jurisdiction.*

The following are the policies of Carlton County regarding department administration:

1. Maintain a separate Land Department with a Land Commissioner as its chief executive to be responsible for managing tax-forfeited lands and any County-owned lands as determined by the County Board.
2. Maintain a professional staff within the Land Department with the appropriate skills, training and attitude to properly execute the department's management responsibilities.

3. Establish a permanent County Land Management Advisory Committee to advise the Land Department on all pertinent matters affecting tax forfeited lands and to facilitate public input on resource management. The Committee should include representatives of resource agencies, loggers, forest industry, township officials, environmental interests, recreation interests, and the general public.
4. Support and participate in education programs and initiatives for private non-industrial forest land owners and the general public regarding appropriate forest management.
5. The *Voluntary Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines for Landowners, Loggers and Resource Managers* (February 1999) adopted by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council and as may be modified by Carlton County is included by reference as County policy.
6. Adopt the "Best Management Practices in Minnesota for Water Quality in Forest Management" for use on all management activities on tax-forfeited and County owned land.
7. Ensure that annual general revenues are equal to or greater than annual expenses.
8. All major departmental expenditures must be justified in terms of the benefit(s) they produce. A general objective is to have the dollar value of the benefits equal or exceed the amount expended. However, legitimate non-revenue producing benefits can and must be accounted for thereby potentially creating situations where the dollar value of benefits do not equal or exceed the amount expended.
9. Share costs of resource development, management, infrastructure (e.g., roads), and other activities wherever possible.
10. Prepare and adopt a Tax-forfeited Land Management Plan including regular annual review, monitoring of implementation, and, within each ten year period, revisions as may be appropriate.
11. Undertake management and operate the Department in a manner that ensures retention of certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® program.
12. Prepare and publish an annual report highlighting Department activities, SFI adherence, and other pertinent matters.

Objective: *Carlton County desires to promote a greater sense of stewardship among the general public towards the natural resources within the county and to foster a sound understanding of the management goals and activities of the Land Department.*

1. Initiate and sustain on-going dialogue with public and private parties directly involved in forest land management in Carlton County.
2. Join or cooperate with the Carlton County Private Woodland Council, University of Minnesota Forestry Center, and other local and state organizations to sponsor and otherwise participate in events and

activities designed to educate all levels of the general public about land management, the environment, and economic resources.

3. Inform the public about Land Department management goals, activities, sites and other matters through a variety of measures including, but not limited to, brochures, meetings, presentations and project signs.
4. Encourage and assist private landowners to participate in Private Forest Management (PFM) programs offered by the DNR, forest industry, independent forest consultants, and others.

5.3

Projections

Table 9 presents projected levels of generalized revenues and expenditures for the Carlton County Land Department during the first ten years of this strategic plan.

Table 9: Projected Land Department Revenues & Costs, 2004 - 2013 (in constant 2004 dollars)	
Item	Amount
Revenues	
Timber Sales	\$5,100,000
Land Sales	\$600,000
Leases, Easements, Other	\$200,000
Total	\$5,900,000
Expenditures	
Personnel	\$1,600,000
Reforestation	\$105,000
New Building	\$400,000
Other	\$500,000
Total	\$2,605,000
Net Gain (Loss)	\$3,295,000

5.4

Strategic Actions

Carlton County will undertake the following actions relative to department administration to implement this strategic plan:

1. Institute enhanced land administration techniques including the implementation of a Geographic Information System (GIS), updated aerial photography, and integrated resource maps and databases with other managing agencies.
2. Routinely update the resource inventory.

3. Create a digital database of forest plot information (previously produced by Natural Resource Services, Limited) and integrate it with GIS-based inventory.
4. Create a County Land Management Advisory Committee and provide staff and support services to operate the committee.
5. Undertake periodic audits as required by SFI. As part of this effort, the Department will work towards the goal of undergoing third-party audits and certification (probably by 2006).
6. Consider one of several options to "capture" extensive knowledge and historical understanding of events, activities, and issues held by current Land Commissioner and County Forester. This also includes need for smooth transition in staff. Optional approaches include hiring replacement forester 1-2 years before their planned retirement; embedding their observations and insights into the inventory database; retain one or both as consultants for 1-2 year period after their retirement.