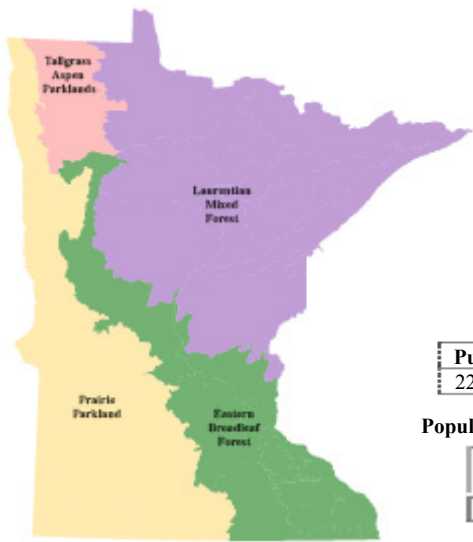


Minnesota



Quick facts

Acres: 54,006,738

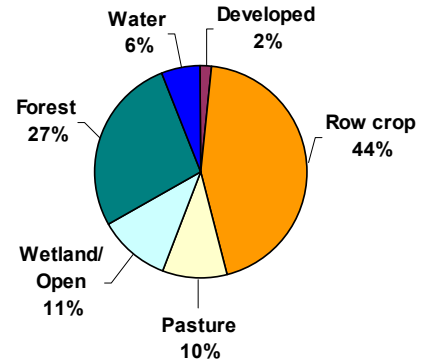
Ownership

Public	Private	Tribal
22.8%	75.7%	1.5%

Population density (people/sq. mi.)

Current	Change (2000-2010)
75.0	+9.6

Current Land Use/Land Cover



State Overview

Minnesota lies at the center of North America where three major biomes meet, the prairie, boreal forest and eastern deciduous forest. This unique location on the continent created a natural heritage rich in wildlife resources. From timber wolves in the north to timber rattlesnakes in the south, Minnesota's wildlife diversity is renowned. Minnesota's conservation community has been working to maintain and enhance this rich wildlife heritage that provides so many benefits to our economy, ecology, and society.

The Geology of Minnesota

Considered in geologic time, Minnesota's landscapes are dynamic and constantly changing. Long before historic human occupation, drastic changes occurred when massive sheets of ice pushed across the state. As these sheets of ice inched southward, growing as snow accumulated, they shaped Minnesota's four provinces.

When the glacial lobes began their retreat around 14,000 years ago, the resulting meltwater formed enormous rivers and lakes. The largest of these, Glacial Lake Agassiz, with a basin of almost 600,000 square miles, covered all of northwestern Minnesota at one time and was the largest glacial lake in North America. This lake began forming in the southern Red River valley 11,700 years ago and finally disappeared from the state around 9,000 years ago. During much of this period, the lake's northern outlets were barricaded by ice. Thus, its only outlet was the Glacial River Warren, which drained to the south and whose river corridor is visible today as the broad Minnesota River valley. As the ice continued to retreat, previously blocked northern drainage outlets gradually opened, and Lake Agassiz began to drain northward, as the Red River does today.

Water Resources

Minnesota is a water-rich area, where lakes, rivers, and wetlands abound. It is home to three major river basins: the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Drainage, the Hudson Bay Drainage, and the Gulf of Mexico Drainage. Within these three major drainage areas are 10 [large watersheds](#). The Red River and Rainy River flow north to Hudson Bay. The Lake Superior Watershed flows east through the St. Lawrence River and then to the Atlantic Ocean. The remaining seven watersheds—the Minnesota River, Missouri River, Des Moines River, Upper and Lower Mississippi River, the St. Croix River, and the Cedar River—flow south by way of the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Very little water enters Minnesota from streams originating in other states or Canada.

Minnesota's More Recent Past

The Native Americans encountered in the middle of the 17th century by Minnesota's first European explorers were heirs to varied cultural traditions that can be traced back at least 12,000 years. The first human inhabitants of Minnesota were most likely Paleo-Indians. These pioneers entered the state in small numbers as the lobes of the last major glacier, the Wisconsin, receded. In some areas, they seem to have been highly mobile gatherers and hunters who pursued big game such as bison, woodland caribou, mastodons, and mammoths. In more recent periods, native peoples probably relied more on farming, hunting, and harvesting wild plants.

In the past 200 years, Euro-American settlers arrived and spread throughout Minnesota, substantially changing the landscape. Increased agricultural activity in the 1800s meant the loss of vast tracts of native prairie, hardwood forests, and wetlands. On the heels of farmers came loggers, who harvested much of the northern forestland in the state by the early 1900s. Rivers and streams were dammed and channelized, altering the structure of their corridors, preventing the passage of some aquatic animals, and changing the natural rhythm of water levels. During this period, there was rapid population growth and major shifts in the settlement pattern from rural locations to urban centers.



Dry prairie (foreground) and Minnesota's agricultural landscape (background) – Hardwood Hills Subsection

T. Whitfield MN DNR

Today, Minnesota’s landscape continues to change. Agriculture and forestry remain significant and important parts of the economy. Minnesota’s urban centers are vibrant, and many continue to expand. The state’s bountiful rivers, lakes, and wetlands continue to be pressured by development and population growth. In 2000, Minnesota’s population was just under 5 million people and is projected to approach 6.3 million by 2030, a gain of 27 percent.

Amid the changes that continue across all of Minnesota’s diverse landscapes are tremendous opportunities to improve the quality and diversity of habitats on both public and private lands for the benefit of people and wildlife. Working in broad partnership with residents and the conservation community, the CWCS is designed to conserve key habitats that will benefit the greatest possible number of species in greatest conservation need. With efforts like these in place, Minnesota’s wildlife will continue to inhabit Minnesota’s landscapes and enrich the lives of the people who live here.

Minnesota’s Species in Greatest Conservation Need and the SGCN Problem Assessment

Out of almost 1,200 documented species of wildlife in Minnesota, there are 292 SGCN. Each of these 292 SGCN was evaluated to determine the factors influencing their rarity, vulnerability, or decline. Table 5.1 lists the nine problems, or factors, used in the analysis, and the percentage of SGCN for which each factor influences species vulnerability or decline. The results of the species problem analysis indicate that habitat loss and degradation are the most significant challenges facing SGCN populations. An assessment of the SGCN that potentially benefit from the key habitats approach shows that a substantial number of SGCN use at least one key habitat at the subsection, province, and statewide scales. Statewide, 92 percent of SGCN use at least one key habitat, and in the provinces the range is from 87 percent in the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands Province to 96 percent in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province. The range in the subsections is from 51 percent to 98 percent (Table 5.2). All of these results suggest that the coarse filter approach for managing key habitats is likely to benefit a great number of the 292 SGCN in Minnesota.

Table 5.1. SGCN Problem Assessment for Minnesota

Problem	Percentage of SGCN for which this is a problem	
Habitat Loss in MN	76	NOTE: The inverse of the percentages for each problem does not necessarily represent the percentage of SGCN for which the factor is not a problem, but instead may indicate that there is not sufficient information available to determine the level of influence the factor has on SGCN in the subsection.
Habitat Degradation in MN	83	
Habitat Loss/Degradation Outside of MN	24	
Invasive Species and Competition	24	
Pollution	32	
Social Tolerance/Persecution/Exploitation	21	
Disease	3	
Food Source Limitations	3	
Other	18	

Table 5.2. Statewide Summary by Subsection of Species That Use Key Habitats

Province	Subsection	Percent of SGCN using at least 1 key habitat	Total number of SGCN	Number of SGCN using at least 1 key habitat
Eastern Broadleaf Forest	Anoka Sand Plain	85.6	97	83
	Oak Savanna	87.1	93	81
	Rochester Plateau	88.3	94	83
	The Blufflands	89.1	156	139
	Hardwood Hills	92.9	85	79
	Big Woods	95.9	121	116
	St. Paul Baldwin Plains	98.0	149	146
Laurentian Mixed Forest	St. Louis Moraines	51.4	74	38
	Glacial Lake Superior Plain	56.4	55	31
	Littlefork Vermilion Uplands	68.7	67	46
	Agassiz Lowlands	76.1	88	67
	Nashwauk Uplands	80.0	60	48
	Border Lakes	81.2	69	56
	North Shore Highlands	82.1	84	69
	Toimi Uplands	84.6	52	44
	Tamarack Lowlands	85.5	69	59
	Pine Moraines & Outwash Plains	86.5	89	77
	Laurentian Uplands	87.9	58	51
	Chippewa Plains	89.2	83	74
	Mille Lacs Uplands	97.7	128	125
	Prairie Parkland	Minnesota River Prairie	87.9	116
Coteau Moraines		92.3	78	72
Inner Coteau		93.6	78	73
Red River Prairie		94.0	83	78
Tallgrass Aspen Parklands	Aspen Parklands	87.1	85	74

Minnesota's Four Provinces and 25 Subsection Profiles

Overview

There are four major ecological provinces in Minnesota: the Eastern Broadleaf Forest, the Laurentian Mixed Forest, the Prairie Parkland, and the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands. All four are parts of much larger systems that cover major areas of central North America. The Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province, primarily made up of deciduous forest, extends eastward from Minnesota all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. The Laurentian Mixed Forest Province, largely consisting of coniferous forest, extends northward into Canada. The Prairie Parkland Province extends westward into the Dakotas and across the Central Plains of the United States. The Tallgrass Aspen Parklands Province represents the southern tip of a large province that extends north and west into the Canadian Prairie Provinces.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 provide summary information about SGCN by province.

Table 5.3. Number of SGCN in Provinces and Number and Percentage of SGCN Unique to Provinces

Province	Number of SGCN	Number SGCN Unique to Province	Percentage of SGCN Unique to Province
Eastern Broadleaf Forest	205	51	25
Laurentian Mixed Forest	171	47	27
Prairie Parkland*	139	13	9.3
Tallgrass Aspen Parklands*	85	2	2.3
*Prairie Parkland and Tallgrass Aspen Parklands combined	147	20	14

Table 5.4. Number and Percentage of SGCN That Use Key Habitats

Province	Total number of SGCN	Number of SGCN Using At Least 1 Key Habitat	Percentage of SGCN Using At Least 1 Key Habitat
Tallgrass Aspen Parklands	85	74	87.1
Prairie Parkland	139	127	91.4
Eastern Broadleaf Forest	205	192	93.7
Laurentian Mixed Forest	171	164	95.9
State total	292	269	92.1