

4. the well threatens the quality of the groundwater, or

5. the well poses a threat to health or safety.

All known wells must be disclosed during property transfer. A well's average life is approximately 25 years. This in mind, a licensed well contractor or other qualified professional should review the site to ensure that all wells are identified. Liability for an unused well lies with the current property owner. Undisclosed wells found within 6 years of property transfer may become a previous owner's responsibility.

Walk the Site

After you have looked over the resources identified above, you should walk the site and visualize if the inventory maps seem accurate.

Site Planning

Contact the appropriate agencies for regulatory requirements and setbacks. It may be necessary to have the wetlands delineated, soils analyzed, floodplain jurisdiction determined, tree preservation plan developed, or topographic survey conducted before submitting a site plan.

The more complete and accurate the site plan is, the faster an appropriate determination can be made. Take note of the dates of board meetings so you can plan accordingly. This takes time, but the more work you put into the planning stage, the more you will avoid delays and frustration.



Please note that the information in this brochure is only a summary. Contact Stearns County Environmental Services Department for more complete information.

This guide was developed by the Anoka Conservation District through the 2002 Agricultural Preservation Program and adapted for the residents of Stearns County by Stearns County Environmental Services.

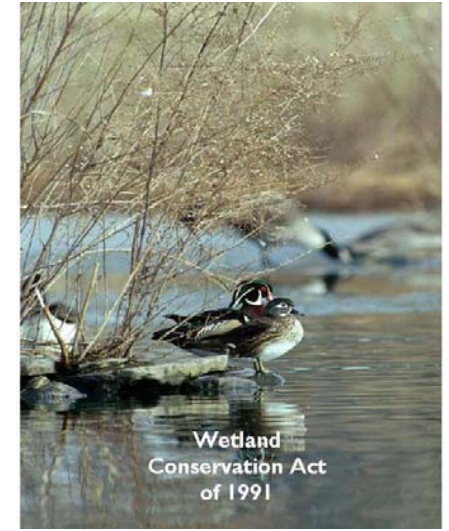
Brochures in the Series

1. Purchasing & Developing Land
2. What's Regulated & Who Regulates
3. Exemptions
4. Wetland Impact Avoidance & Minimization
5. Wetland Replacement and Appeals
6. Wetland Banking
7. Ditch Maintenance, Pond Excavation & Mining
8. Violations and Enforcement

All Stearns County Environmental Services programs and services are available without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. Copies of this brochure are available in their entirety at

www.co.stearns.mn.us

PURCHASING AND DEVELOPING LAND



Brochure #1

Stearns County Environmental Services
Administration Center Room 343
705 Courthouse Square
St. Cloud, MN 56303

(320) 656-3613
FAX (320) 656-6484
1-800-450-0852

Information is current as of April, 2011

SITE EVALUATION

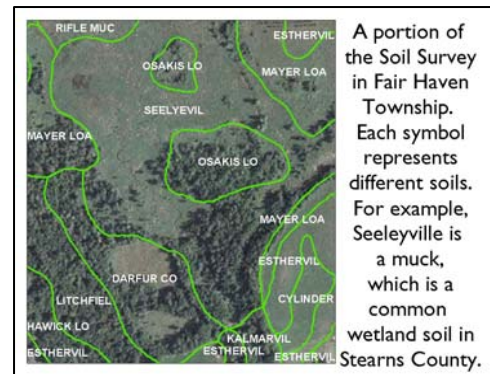
Before purchasing land, you should review the natural resources of the site. This includes soils, water, vegetation, and wildlife. In addition to these resources, federal, state, and local requirements should be researched and understood to help ensure that any activities are done correctly and that the parcel can meet your needs and expectations.

Most agencies identify property locations according to legal descriptions or Parcel Identification Numbers (PIN's). You should have this information available before calling. It is available on your property tax statement (e.g. 99.99999.0000).

Soils

Most of the soils in Stearns County have been mapped in the Stearns County Soil Survey. The soil survey contains information frequently used for land use planning.

The soil survey is easy to use if you focus only on the soil within your parcel. After you know the soil types that exist, you can use the charts to deter-

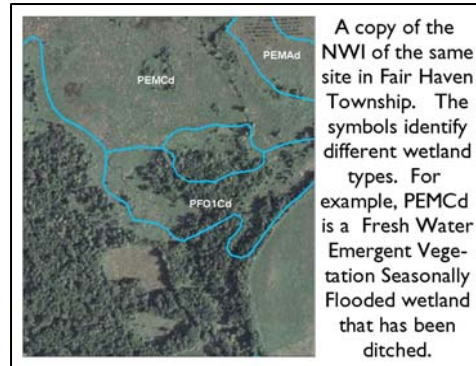


mine things such as suitability for septic systems, roads, buildings, lawns, trees, and gardens. General information is also available for depth to water table and flooding potential.

Please contact the Stearns Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for more information. Soil information is available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

Wetlands

The US Fish and Wildlife Service conducted an inventory of the locations and types of wetlands in Stearns County. The inventory has been completed for all of Stearns County and was published in 1991. Most of the wetlands were identified by aerial photo interpretation with limited field verification.



These maps are entitled the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and should only be used for general land use planning. Photo interpretation is not 100% accurate and some wetlands in farmed areas were not inventoried. Also, the process does not meet the requirements of the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual as required by the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) 1995 Amendments. However, the inventory is reasonably accurate when the NWI maps correlate well with the soil survey.

For a fee, Wetland Consultants will perform an on-site delineation of the wetland boundaries and prepare a report detailing the findings. A list of consultants can be obtained at the Stearns County Environmental Services Department.

Flood Plain

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, through its National Flood Insurance Program, has



developed maps that identify zones of 100-year and 500-year flooding. It is important to know if portions of the property are within the flood plain because flood plain areas are more strictly regulated. Floodplain maps are available online at <http://co.stearns.mn.us/OnlineServices/InteractiveMapping/FloodplainMapping>

Aerial Photos

Looking at a site from an aerial viewpoint often provides a better understanding of the resources. The relative location of trees, wetlands, water, open space, etc. on your parcel as well as adjoining land become apparent through the use of aerial photos. Below are sources of aerial photos of Stearns County.

Stearns County Surveyor's Office
320.656.3696
2010 Aerial Photography
Copies can be made for a fee.

USDA Farm Service Agency
Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/apfoapp?area=apfohome&subject=landing&topic=landing>

Online aerial photos are available at <http://co.stearns.mn.us/OnlineServices/InteractiveMapping>

Cultural Resources

The State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) has a list of potential archeological sites throughout the County. Contact SHPO at 651/259-3450 to determine if a potential archeological sites has been inventoried on your property.

Wildlife

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has inventoried exceptional natural vegetative communities identified by the County Biological Survey and the endangered, threatened or special concern species inventoried in the past. Contact Stearns County Environmental Services or the Division of Ecological



Services within the DNR for information pertaining to your site.

Trees

Stearns County has lost much of its native oak and maple/basswood forest. Much of this is



due to the rapid and sometimes careless development of oak and maple/basswood woodland areas. Considering that oaks and maple/basswood stands are extremely common in Stearns County and are among the most preferred shade trees, pre-cautions should be taken to protect this valuable resource.

Construction damage is a major reason for tree mortality. To protect a tree, you must protect the root system, which is primarily in the upper 12 inches of the soil and extends horizontally more than the height of the tree. Soil compaction or placing fill over the root system can kill a tree by depriving the roots of oxygen. Lowering the grade of the site may kill a tree by removing the root system.

A forestry consultant may be able to help you maintain your property values by properly planning for your trees.

Wells

By law [Minnesota Rules, Chapter 4725], a well must be in use, be under a maintenance permit through Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), or be sealed by a licensed well contractor. A well must be sealed if:

1. the well is not in use,
2. the well is contaminated,
3. the well has been improperly sealed in the past,