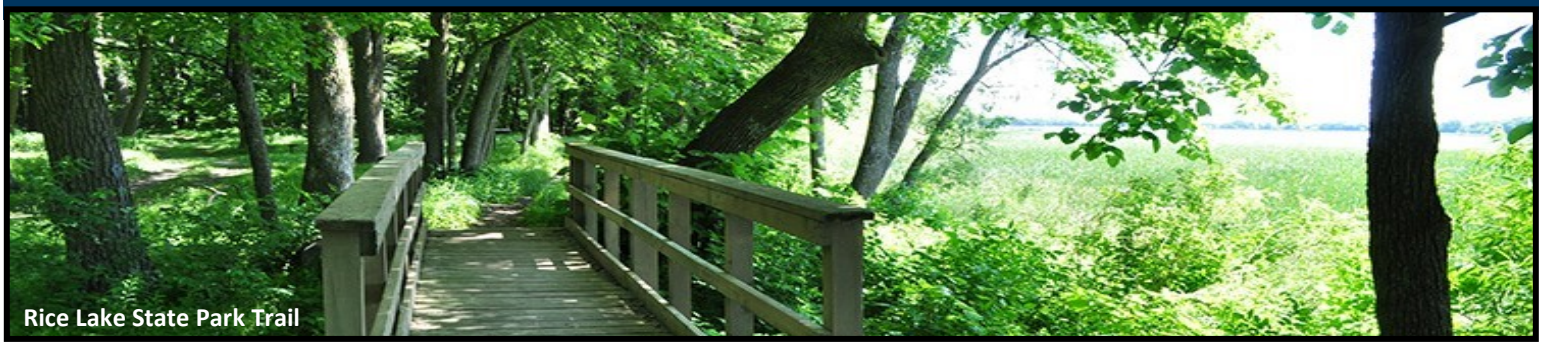
Steele County


Rice Lake State Park Trail

- 1 Scientific and Natural Area
- 11 Wildlife Management Areas
- 3 Fishing Piers
- 1 Water Access Site
- 20 Miles of Straight River Water Trail
- 2 Authorized State Trails
- Rice Lake State Park
- 202 Miles Grant-in-Aid Snowmobile
- 69 acres Walk-in-Access
- 6 Full & 5 Part-time DNR Employees

Morehouse Dam with new Fish Passage

MINNESOTA PUBLIC LANDS
OWNED BY YOU, MANAGED BY DNR

- 2019 Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)—$50,435
- School Trust Fund Payments—$393,788
- State Land Managed by DNR— 2503 Acres; 0.91 % of County Land Base

Rice Lake SP Water access

SUCCESSES

- DNR Forestry provides cost-share funding for two private woodland projects and technical assistance to five additional owners in 2020. City of Owatonna receives $50,000 DNR grant to fight Emerald Ash Borer spread.
- DNR Wildlife works with local partners MN Pheasants, Inc. Steele Co. Chapter to receive grants for restoring 35 acres of prairie on WMAs. DNR partners with Trust for Public Land and Pheasants Forever on acquisitions and habitat plantings starting this year to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunity and flood reducing perennial vegetation.
- An average of 66,883 people visit Rice Lake State Park each year with an estimated local economic impact of $1,875,409 annually.
- DNR staffs a booth each year at the SCFF with guest appearances by Smokey Bear, stocks live fish for the IKES display tanks and provides information on a wide variety of topics, including the I Can Camp! program.

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Straight River Water Trail

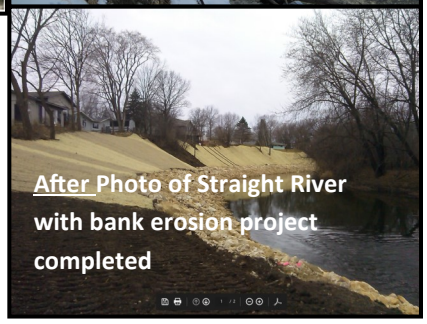
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Steele County

Emerald Ash Borer exit hole and adult

Flooding in Owatonna

Before Photo of Straight River with bank erosion endangering homes


After Photo of Straight River with bank erosion project completed

SUCCESSES CONTINUED

- DNR, SWCD and local landowners worked together to complete a bank stabilization project to protect nine homes along the Straight River in Medford.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Flooding continues to be a problem in portions of Owatonna and portions of the Straight River. These would benefit from additional mitigation. Flood mitigation is available through the DNR's flood mitigation program in St. Paul. Interested homeowners can contact Pat Lynch at 651-259-5691 for more details. Flood preparation can be enhanced with the placement of river gauges in the appropriate up-stream locations, such as the Straight River.
- Both Oak Wilt and Emerald Ash Borer are present in the county. DNR Forestry is working with a Forest Health Specialist to bring management option information to landowners.
- Steele County livestock operations are currently about 40% in compliance with water appropriation permitting. This is something that the DNR has been working closely with county feedlot officers, producers, and growers on to bring all operations into compliance with 103G. Guidance from Steele County leaders to producers would also be a positive thing to help bring livestock operations into compliance. For more information contact Todd Piepho, DNR area hydrologist at 507-421-1991.
- Lake restoration projects are greatly hampered and benefits reduced by increased quantity and very poor quality of water coming into the lakes from uplands and common carp access. Application of land use best practices such as reduced impervious surfaces, increased wetland restorations, carp exclusion structures and cover cropping will benefit lake conditions for people and habitat.

Northern Stocking Rice Lake

Aurora WMA

Dartts Park erosion restoration