



Land Services Department
Assessor
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CROW WING COUNTY

BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Upcoming seminar on Minnesota's Rural Preserve Program and other property tax preference programs.

Crow Wing County Land Services, University of Minnesota Extension, and Crow Wing SWCD will present information on the Rural Preserve Program, the 2c Managed Forest Program and the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act Program on April 21, 2010 from 6 PM to 8 PM at the Crow Wing County Land Services Building in Brainerd. According to Gary Griffin, Land Services Supervisor, "each of these programs has potential to reduce property tax burdens for certain types of activities". Attendees will receive information regarding the benefits and requirements of the different programs to assist landowners in their decisions to enroll or not. Landowners currently enrolled in the Green Acres Program are encouraged to attend.

The Rural Preserves Program allows eligible non productive land that is part of an agricultural homestead or that was "grandfathered" into the Green Acres program to be taxed at a value less than its full estimated market value. Other requirements also apply.

In addition, if you own 20 acres or more of forested land, you may be eligible to enroll in other property tax programs that are aimed at protecting forestland. Property tax programs for qualifying forest owners include the 2c Managed Forest Land Program which reduces the class rate from 1.00% to .65%. The Sustainable Forest Incentive Act is a state administered program, which requires filing a covenant, and gives forest landowners a minimum \$7 per acre payment per year on enrolled eligible lands.

The Rural Preserves Program

Changes to the Green Acres Law in 2008, created a new land classification called rural vacant land and removed these lands from the Green Acres program. In 2009, the legislature modified the program again by "grandfathering" previously enrolled rural vacant land into the program until 2013. The changes also created the Rural Preserve Program. Lands in the Rural Preserve Program are valued based on a percentage of the average valuation of tillable land in the county. When property is withdrawn from the program or is no longer eligible, the landowner must pay any deferred taxes for the current year and the two previous years, plus any deferred special assessments.

Landowners enrolled in Green Acres who have rural vacant land have three options:

1) Withdraw the land from the program by August 16, 2010 without paying back-taxes. 2) Enroll the land in Rural Preserves before May 2013 without paying back-taxes. 3) Do nothing and the land will be removed from the program May 1, 2013 and back-taxes will be assessed.

The first enrollment period for Rural Preserves is May 1, 2011. Only non-productive lands greater than 10 acres and part of an agricultural homestead or that were previously enrolled in Green Acres are eligible for the program.

Landowners must record a covenant on the property that states the land will remain undeveloped and unfarmed for a minimum of 10 years. They also must obtain a conservation plan approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District

2c Managed Forest Program and the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act Program

For these forestland programs, owners need a Woodland Stewardship Management Plan prepared by an approved Woodland Stewardship Plan Writer. A Woodland Stewardship Management Plan is an overview of your property developed with your goals for your land. A Woodland Stewardship Management Plan may qualify you for cost-share funds that can reduce costs for projects like tree planting. There is a fee for the plan, and there may be a delay due to high demand.

Mike Reichenbach, an extension educator at the University of Minnesota Extension, Keith Pohl, Crow Wing SWCD and Gary Griffin, Land Services Supervisor for the Assessor's Office, will present information on these programs. Any questions please call the Crow Wing County Assessor's Office at 824-1010 or email them at assessor@co.crow-wing.mn.us.

A second program will be held on September 23, 2010 at the same location and time.

For more information visit www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu and click on legal and financial.

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