

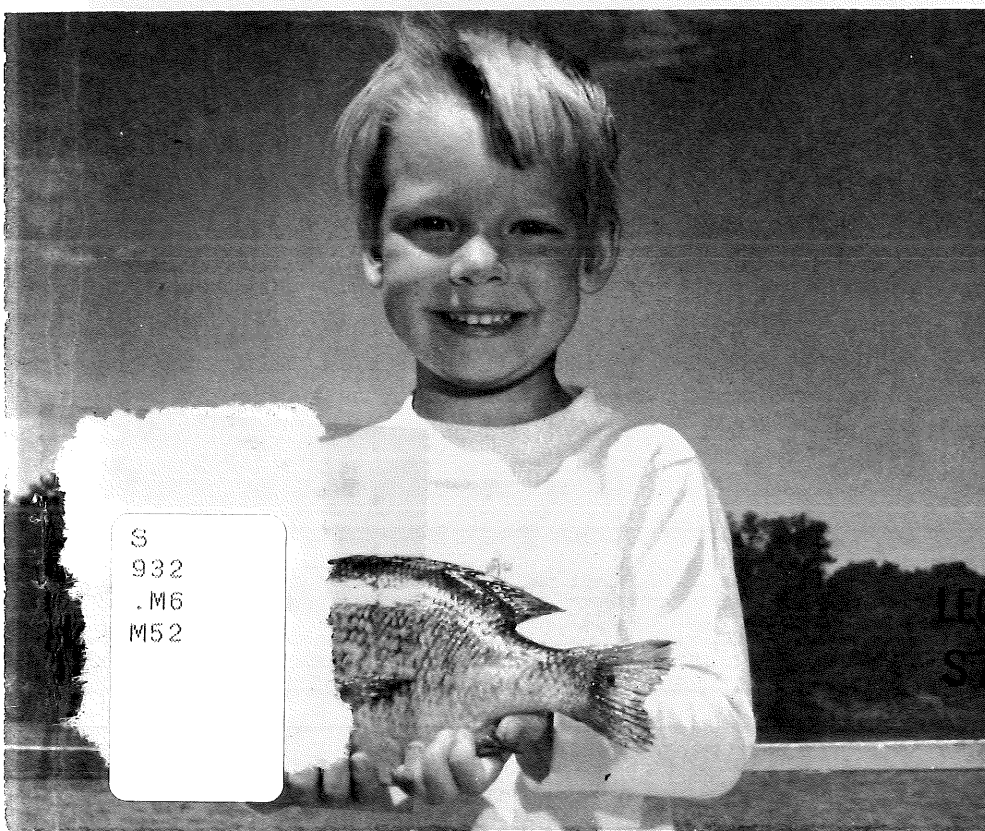
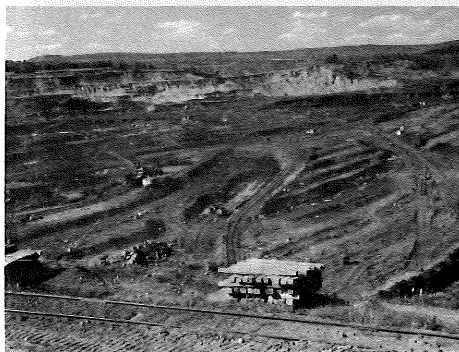


3 0307 00044 8988

Y OUR

Minnesota

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



S
932
.M6
M52



LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

80111
11-13-71
old - 11
new

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

F O R E W O R D

The mission of the Department of Conservation is to promote the wise use and management of our state's vital resources, - its forests, water, fish, wildlife, minerals and state parks. How the Department functions in this mission is paramount as the well-being of our citizens and our standards of living are directly involved.

Minnesota covers a vast area, some 84,000 square miles. Of this expanse, the Department has direct management responsibilities on approximately 7,800 square miles of land, water and related resources. Taking this into consideration, one can visualize the complexities and challenges involved. Add to this our expanding population, modern means of transportation, increasing income and leisure time, and the job becomes manifold. All these factors increase the need for recreation and the desire to get into the open air, but at the same time, increase the pressures on our priceless resources. The complex conservation challenges underscore the urgency and priority which must be given to public education programs.

Our natural resources form the basis of our economy. The value of forest products harvested in Minnesota annually exceeds \$300 million. Another \$150 million is expended for hunting and fishing. Camping, boating, and other outdoor recreation activities result in the expenditure of millions of dollars more. Minnesota's billion-dollar mining industry accounts for about 60 per cent of all the iron ore produced in the nation. Present mining production is valued at about \$500 million dollars per year and the expansion of taconite operations and the possible development of a new copper-nickel industry could increase this figure substantially. In addition, the multi-million dollar tourist industry relies directly on the appeal of green forests, clear water and an abundance of fish and wildlife.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that the Department has grown to be the complex and widely distributed organization that it is today.

Through the enlistment of quality personnel, the Conservation Department will continue to promote the wise use and management of Minnesota's precious heritage, - its natural resources. True, this is our job, but it is also the duty of every citizen. Conservation was willed by the people and is supported by the people.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

When Minnesota became a state in 1858, the need for protecting and managing our wildlife, forests, minerals, and water was probably only visionary as the supply must have seemed inexhaustible. But, as civilization advanced, the need became evident and through the far-sighted efforts of pioneering conservationists, the conservation concept was born.

At first there were several natural resource organizations in Minnesota which were independent of each other. Then in 1931, the Department of Conservation evolved as an agency designed to bring together the various areas of resource management. At the onset, the separate organizations of Forestry, Game and Fish, and Waters were combined into the Department of Conservation and later two more organizations - Lands and Minerals, and State Parks - were included. Under the reorganization bill passed by the 1967 Legislature, the names of the divisions are now Game and Fish, Lands and Forestry, Enforcement and Field Service, Parks and Recreation, and Waters, Soils and Minerals.

When the Department was first established, it was administered by a five member Commission. This system was abolished in 1937 when Chapter 310 vested the authority with a Commissioner of Conservation. In addition to the five divisions, five bureaus have been established by Commissioner's Order and affirmed by the Legislature to assist the Commissioner and the divisions. These are the bureaus of Boat and Water Safety, Business Management, Engineering, Information, and Planning.

The Commissioner is appointed by the Governor upon the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commissioner appoints a Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, and five technically qualified Division directors when a vacancy occurs. Through the Commissioner's leadership, the activities of the Department of Conservation are governed and the broad policies by which the Department operates are laid down. The functions of the Department are channeled into the divisions and bureaus. From the helm of each Division, the director charts the course of established policy and actions of his respective Division.

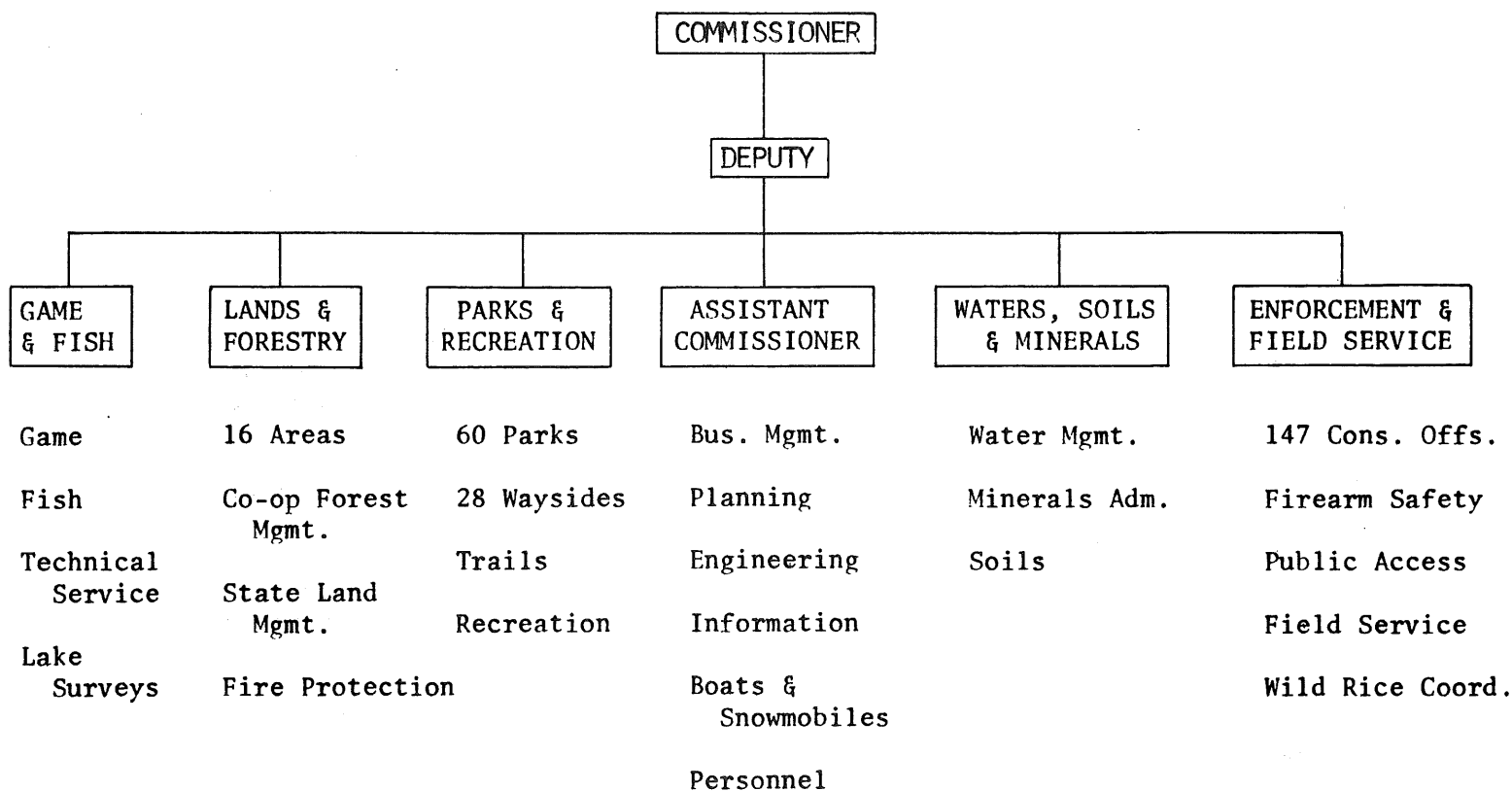
Working toward a common conservation goal are approximately 2,100 persons at peak employment. This includes 1,100 regular or full-time employees, about 1,000 seasonal and hourly (part-time) personnel and several in the state's Natural Resources Program.

- - THE STORY OF CONSERVATION OPERATIONS - -

Conservation is best defined as a philosophy or way of life; it is a rule and guide for resource management; it teaches the interdependency of all things; it recognizes the aesthetic in Nature and the spiritual in man; and it is manifested in a rewarding economy for today and tomorrow.

Conservation of natural resources today is big business and the organization of the Department of Conservation is equivalent to a large corporation. The operations of the five divisions and six bureaus that comprise this "conservation corporation" are described on the following pages.

MINNESOTA CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTRY

Forests, a multiple resource, are essential to Minnesota's wildlife, recreation and industry.

The Division of Lands and Forestry is responsible for the protection of some 17 million acres of private and public forest land. It manages 54 state forests consisting of nearly three million acres. Among its many functions are: Administration of state timber sales, forest fire prevention and protection, recreation in forests, management assistance to private owners of forest land, production of forest tree nursery stock, and arrangements for land exchange. In cooperation with other agencies this Division participates in watershed activities throughout the state. It cooperates with the Department of Corrections by providing forestry projects at camps for persons committed to that department's Youth Conservation Division. The Division is also responsible for the management, sale or lease of trust fund and consolidated conservation area lands outside state forests.

Under the Reorganization Act of 1967, the Lands Section of the former Division of Lands & Minerals is now combined with the Division of Lands and Forestry.

Forestry

The origin of forestry in Minnesota was the Minnesota Forestry Association created in 1876, the first such organization in the nation. The Association acted as the semi-official forest agency until 1895. Then, following the Hinckley fire of 1894 which took the lives of 418, the Legislature named the State Auditor ex-officio Forest Commissioner with the power to appoint a Chief Fire Warden. As the result of other fires, a forestry law was enacted in 1911 which created a Forestry Board to overhaul forestry laws. In 1925, forestry was under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Next came the Department of Conservation and Forestry was made a Division within the Department in 1931.

Programs carried out by the Forestry Section are combined into five general areas:

1. Forest Management and Sales. This includes state land timber sales, forest development such as tree planting, timber stand improvements and forest management planning.

2. Forest Protection which involves forest fire control and fire prevention.

3. Tree Nurseries. There are three nurseries that produce tree planting stock - Badoura, Carlos Avery and General Andrews. Over 400 million tree seedlings have been produced for reforestation, erosion control, game habitat and other purposes by these three nurseries.

4. Cooperative Forest Management. This program includes private forest management services; assistance to school districts, colleges, universities and municipalities in establishing school and municipal forests; administering the forest tax laws for auxiliary forests and the tree growth tax law; forest insects and disease control; the Watershed Program, Marketing and Utilization Program, and Resource Conservation and Development Program.

5. State Forests and Recreation. This involves the administration of 54 state forests and provides for recreation in state forests. The Division leases sites for summer homes, and hunting cabins, provides camp and picnic grounds, canoe routes and riding and hiking trails.

Lands

Under the 1857 act authorizing a state government, Congress granted to Minnesota millions of acres of land, to be used for the support of public schools, a state university, for erecting public buildings, constructing public roads and other internal improvements. Congress also granted in 1860 all swamp and overflowed lands which had not already been conveyed to the state; in 1862 a grant for an Agricultural College; and in 1870, 72 additional sections for the university.

Part of the Swamp Land grants were conveyed to railroad companies, but the trust fund lands that were covered by the original State Constitution and the Swamp Land Amendment of 1881, established Permanent Trust Fund lands that exceeded 5½ million acres.

The Land Section, under the supervision of a Land Administrator, has land appraisal offices at Bemidji, Hibbing and Thief River Falls. The Section carries out a comprehensive program of land leasing and land sale. Land appraisers survey and locate state-owned land to determine its value for sale and lease purposes and to recommend the proper use of land which is unsuitable for agricultural purposes or is isolated from schools, roads or settlements. They also appraise and classify tax-forfeited lands in Conservation Areas and the Red Lake Game Preserve.

DIVISION OF GAME AND FISH

In modern-day Minnesota good hunting and fishing coupled with an abundance of wildlife does not come by accident. Up-to-date game and fish management techniques, research and enforcement of game and fish laws are essential to assuring continued sport and other values provided by wildlife.

The Division of Game and Fish has jurisdiction and care of all wildlife, including birds, fish and mammals. Its activities include management of game and fish populations to insure a maximum yield for both recreational and commercial purposes, and research in game and fish management methods and techniques.

This Division has by far the greatest number of followers; the hunters and fishermen of the State give most of their attention to its activities. Through their support, the Division of Game and Fish designs the policies and procedures necessary for maintaining an abundance of fish and game.

Historically, the game and fish program has been financed primarily by sportsmen through their purchase of licenses to hunt, fish, and trap. Over the past years, approximately 3,000,000 fishing, 1,000,000 hunting and 72,000 trapping licenses have provided most of the support necessary to perpetuate fishing and hunting in Minnesota. In addition to license revenue, hunting and fishing generates tremendous economic wealth to the entire state. Hunting alone is a \$50 million business in Minnesota.

The first official organization for the protection of Minnesota's wildlife was a Board of Fisheries consisting of three members appointed by the Governor in 1874. In 1887, the Legislature authorized the appointment of a Chief Game Warden and four years later, the form of the agency was changed by the creation of a five-member Board of Game and Fish Commissioners. The office of Game and Fish Commissioner was created in 1915, when the agency was generally known as the Game and Fish Department.

In 1925, the Game and Fish Commissioner was made a member of the three-man Conservation Commission and in 1931 the Game and Fish Department was made a Division in the newly created Department of Conservation.

Today, the Game and Fish Division is organized into three sections - Game, Fisheries, and Technical Services.

Game

The Section of Game has the responsibility of managing the state's wildlife resources. The Section plans, develops and promotes a comprehensive game management and research program throughout the state in the face of an increasing population with more leisure time and increasing competitive demands for land and water uses.

The programs are formulated to maintain, restore and manage wildlife resources on public hunting grounds throughout the state. The Section works with related agencies in an attempt to manage wildlife habitat on private lands as well.

The Game Research Unit is engaged in many research and technical service projects, including censuses of wildlife populations and hunting take. These censuses help form the basis for setting Minnesota's hunting seasons. Major emphasis is placed on finding ways to improve the habitat whereby more game can be produced.

Game Managers work closely with private landowners in carrying out such beneficial practices as nesting cover, food plots, woody cover plantings and wetland improvements. In addition to technical assistance, cost-sharing assistance is also available from this Division to private landowners.

Fisheries

The fish crop of Minnesota's lakes and streams is one of the state's most important natural assets. It is a renewable resource and one that, with proper management, can be expected to provide recreation for thousands of people each year. About 30 kinds of sport fish plus many commercial and other species are found in Minnesota's lakes and streams. Altogether, there are 164 different kinds.

The Section of Fisheries has the responsibility of carrying out a state-wide fish management program in accordance with Minnesota laws, Department of Conservation policies, regulations, and available funds. The objectives of the program are two-fold - (1) to provide a maximum sustained yield of fish and, (2) to provide a maximum number of satisfactory sport fishing hours.

The major fish management activities include: Fish habitat improvement; acquisition, development and management of northern pike spawning and rearing areas; operation of hatcheries and rearing ponds for fish propagation and distribution; rescue and transfer of fish from lakes which are subject to winterkill; rough fish control; lake reclamation through the use of fish toxicants; administration of licensed commercial fishing and private fish hatcheries; formulation of regulations governing the harvest of fish (sport and commercial).

The Fisheries Research Unit carries out extensive research projects on both cold-water and warm-water lakes. Progress in game and fish management depends on the factual information gathered by careful research.

Technical Services

This section conducts biological surveys of Minnesota's lakes and streams. These surveys play a major role in the management of fish and aquatic wildlife and provide a record of the habitat features at a time when rapid development of surrounding lands threatens these natural resources.

The section has a continuing program of watershed, fish lake, waterfowl lake survey and mapping. Other activities include stream surveys, game management area surveys and analyzing samples in laboratories.

Watersheds are surveyed and mapped to aid the management sections and to gather data for use in joint watershed management planning with other agencies. A continuing record is maintained of angler numbers and their success on key fishing lakes as a means of evaluating fishing regulations and other management plans. Cooperative surveys and censuses are made of border lakes with the Province of Ontario to determine the amount of summer angling and the amount of ice fishing by fishermen using snowmobiles in the winter.

Supervision is given and permits issued for the control of aquatic nuisances such as water weeds and algae. Aid is given to the Department of Health on pollution investigations. Some pesticide investigations are also made.

DIVISION OF ENFORCEMENT AND FIELD SERVICES

The laws and regulations governing the protection of our wildlife are geared to allowing equitable, but not excessive harvests and to promote safe hunting and fishing.

The Division of Enforcement and Field Services is a new division which resulted from the conservation reorganization bill passed by the 1967 Legislature. The functions of this division prior to this time were included in the Division of Game and Fish. Minnesota's game wardens are now known as CONSERVATION OFFICERS and in addition to their responsibilities in enforcing hunting, fishing and trapping regulations, they are also responsible in varying degrees for the following programs: Public access; investigating lumber cutting, vandalism and littering; water laws; dumping of water into rivers, streams and lakes; investigation of wild animal damage; disposal of car-killed deer, and game census.

In addition to these duties, Conservation Officers and approximately 2,500 trained adult volunteer instructors cooperate in teaching gun safety courses and basic principles of conservation throughout the state.

Law Enforcement

The best laws and regulations are no better than the enforcement they receive. Conservation Officers enforce conservation laws relating to wild animals, fish, wild rice, protection or control of public waters, water pollution and others.

Public Relations

The best policies are no better than the publicity and understanding they receive. The Conservation Officers publicize the conservation policies through state and county fair exhibits, television programs, radio, and talks at approximately 2,000 meetings of organizations which have an interest in conservation.

Firearms Safety

The Conservation Officers administer, supervise, and enforce all aspects of the Minnesota Youth Firearms Safety Training Program. To date, over 200,000 youngsters between the ages of 12 to 16 have been trained since the program began.

Public Access

An active program of buying access sites began in 1947 primarily to provide access to public waters for hunters and fishermen. The Conservation Officers are responsible for this program. There has been an increased public demand for adequate public access to nearly 2,200 lakes that conform to the prerequisite of 150 acres within the meander lines.

Cooperation With Other Agencies

The Officers cooperate with other Divisions of the Department of Conservation by assisting with game and fish censuses, browse cutting, predator control, fish stocking, rescue, etc.

Cooperation with agencies outside the Conservation Department include sheriff's offices, highway patrol, civil defense and fire departments.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The mission of Minnesota's Division of Parks and Recreation is to preserve the best examples of the various features that make up our diverse and rich landscape and to provide recreation for Minnesotans and their out-of-state visitors.

The Division develops public use facilities for the enjoyment of the people, but these facilities must be consistent with the protection of the character and natural attributes of the parks.

The Division of Parks and Recreation administers state parks, memorial parks, recreational reserves, monument areas, and wayside areas. The Division is responsible for park acquisition, development, maintenance and operation, including revenue operations such as Douglas Lodge (Itasca), refectories, boat services, tourist and group camps, and camp rentals. Other activities include overall park planning, investigation of additional areas for potential parks, provision of visitor services, and cooperation with county and local park engineers.

The State Park System dates back 46 years to 1889 when the first park, Camp Release in Yellow Medicine County, was established. Prior to 1925, Minnesota's state parks, with the exception of Itasca and Sibley, were under the direction of the State Auditor. (Itasca at that time was supervised by the Department of Forestry and Sibley by the Department of Game and Fish). In 1925, the parks were placed under the administration of the Conservation Commission and in 1931, with the Division of Forestry in the newly created Department of Conservation. Following the creation of the Division of State Parks in 1935, the Park System was integrated into the present departmental setup.

This system consists of 90 units located strategically throughout the state. The major units in the System are the 59 areas classed as state parks and recreation reserves. These areas vary in size from 100 to 30,000 acres and are a combination of superlative scenic characteristics with varied extensive recreational opportunities. They often contain a combination of significant historical, archaeological, ecological, geological and other scientific values. Preserving the native landscape and withholding all the natural resources from commercial use are essential to any state park.

Twelve of the 90 units in the State Park System are classed as scenic or historic monuments and sites and vary in size from 50 acres to less than a fraction of an acre. A state historic site or monument possesses significant state-wide value to the historic heritage of Minnesota. There are ten state park waysides located along or close to major highways and have scenic, historic or scientific significance. The Department of Conservation's waysides provide travelers with a place to stop, rest, picnic, or enjoy the landscape.

The Division of Parks and Recreation works closely with the Historical Society in administering historic properties, providing technical assistance to county historical societies and assisting in the development of museum exhibits, markers and publications in state parks that preserve historic sites.

DIVISION OF WATERS, SOILS AND MINERALS

Minnesota has no shortage of water, but proper management and use of this vital resource must be our legacy to future generations. Water is a valuable resource to be protected, developed, and used wisely.

The expansion of two taconite plants and the construction of three new ones have increased the investment in Minnesota taconite to over one billion dollars. The interest of major copper and nickel producing companies in the potential of copper, nickel and associated minerals in northeastern Minnesota, holds promise of developing a new industry that may approach the Minnesota taconite industry.

This Division today encompasses the Minerals Section of the former Division of Lands and Minerals, the duties of the former Division of Waters and a new responsibility for Soils.

The Division of Waters, Soils and Minerals administers laws applicable to public waters in Minnesota, both surface and underground, under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Conservation. It is concerned with the preservation, protection and improvement of the state's water supply.

The Division is responsible for the administration of over five million acres of State-owned trust fund minerals and mineral rights under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Conservation. It also acts as agent for the counties and local taxing districts in leasing iron ore and other minerals located in tax-forfeited lands. The Division conducts research on low grade ore and promotes exploration and development of State-owned minerals in areas where iron ore and other minerals may exist. Activities of this Division include: Issuing exploration

permits and mining leases, permits for the appropriation of ground or surface water and for work in beds of public water, collecting basic hydrologic data in cooperation with the U. S. Geological Survey, making surveys of lakes and streams, maintaining and operating state dams, making reports and recommendations to the Water Resources Board on applications for new watershed districts, making reports to state and federal agencies on projects affecting public waters, and appearing for the State on matters affecting waters.

Waters

Minnesota, the "Land of Sky-Blue Waters", is rightfully proud of its many lakes and streams. The lakes which dot the landscape are of many kinds, shapes and sizes. Minnesota is publicized as having 10,000 lakes, but how many there are depends on the size at which the count begins. There are 15,291 lake basins larger than ten acres. But if we include all the small waters, ponds and wetlands, perhaps 100,000 would be too small a number. The total is estimated to be about 2.6 million acres or about five per cent of the state's area. To this we could add the 1.4 million acres which is Minnesota's portion of Lake Superior. The Mississippi, Minnesota, St. Croix, Red, and St. Louis rivers, together with hundreds of tributary systems make up more than 15,000 miles of flowing waters.

Drainage of potholes and marshes in Minnesota has been going on at a rapid rate since the end of World War II. In many counties, the prairie-type wetlands, so valuable to waterfowl and associated wildlife, have been eliminated. In fact, by 1939, most of the wetlands in the southern tier of counties and the Red River Valley had been drained. Between 1945 and 1950, nearly three potholes per square mile were drained in a 15,000 square mile area and from 1943 to 1954, it is estimated that 350,000 potholes were drained. Drainage continues with no sign of abatement.

In earlier years, water was considered a nuisance to be drained away. Later when floods came it was referred to as a menace. In fact, the first state agency created to deal with water was primarily concerned with the drainage phase of water management. The first agency was a commission of three members established in 1893 to supervise northern Minnesota drainage problems. In 1897, a Drainage Commission was created for the care, custody, control and supervision of all drainage ditches in the state. It was replaced in 1905 by the State Drainage Commission which became the Department of Drainage and Waters in 1919. This was incorporated into the Department of Conservation in 1931 as the Division of Waters.

Over the years a general awareness of the growing need for water for various purposes has resulted in a shift of emphasis to investigations, studies and reports dealing with the state's water supply. Today, the

Waters Section is concerned with the preservation, protection and improvement of this great heritage and with the administration of state laws applying to all public waters.

Minerals

The Minerals Section is under the supervision of a Chief Mining Engineer and has an engineering, research and chemical building at Hibbing, and an engineering office on the Cuyuna Range at Ironton.

The Section administers minerals acquired by the state through tax-forfeiture. Tax-forfeited mineral royalties are derived primarily from royalty paid under taconite leases. About 80 per cent is returned to the taxing districts in which the taconite is located and the remainder is retained by the state and deposited in the General Revenue Fund.

State-owned mining units are active in producing millions of tons of royalty ore. Fourteen units are regular natural ore mines, one a stockpile unit, one a lakebed mine, and two taconite quarries are operated by the Erie Mining Company.

Field examinations and investigations are made for preparing the engineering data used by the Attorney General's Office in litigating the ownership of underwater minerals. The transition that is taking place in the iron ore industry makes it necessary for the Division to expand the flexibility of its research facilities and to include advanced methods of grinding, sizing, reduction roasting, flotation, agglomeration and other types of mineral beneficiation.

The Division processes and classifies drill hole exploration samples, makes laboratory tests on samples of low grade ore, iron ore tailings, taconite and non-ferrous minerals. A chemical laboratory makes analytical determinations of samples from iron ore shipments, lean ore dumps, and samples from tests conducted in the research laboratory.

BUREAU OF BOAT AND WATER SAFETY

This Bureau provides for the licensing of watercraft and snowmobiles. Fees collected from boat licenses are allocated to counties to assist county sheriffs in enforcement of the Boat and Water Safety Act of 1959. There are now approximately 240,000 registered boats in Minnesota.

The Bureau of Boat and Water Safety came into existence following the passage of the Boat and Water Safety Act in 1959. It was created by the Commissioner of Conservation to carry out the provisions of the Act. The Act is designed to promote the full use and enjoyment of our waters by our people, to provide for the licensing of watercraft, and for the safety of persons and property when using Minnesota's waters.

The Bureau is responsible for handling the registration of snowmobiles required under an Act passed by the 1967 Legislature. There are approximately 35,000 snowmobiles in Minnesota.

BUREAU OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Business Management, created in 1954, provides administrative services to the Divisions and is responsible for the development of good business practices in the Department. It is responsible for the Department's accounting system, and all licenses and permits, personnel policies, training and payrolls, and department-wide office service.

BUREAU OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Bureau of Engineering Services, created in 1958, coordinates property and project surveys, design and construction supervision related to projects that may be sponsored by the various department Divisions. The Bureau prepares maps, plats, cost estimates, specifications, material lists, engineering data, and determines whether contemplated developments are feasible from an engineering standpoint.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION

The Bureau of Information was established in 1941 to carry out the Department's public relations, public information and education programs. This involves a great variety of activities such as publication of the departmental magazine, The Conservation Volunteer.

The Bureau prepares a weekly newsletter which is sent to over 500 newspapers as well as special news releases and feature stories. Informational pamphlets and brochures on various conservation subjects are prepared and approximately 1,700 mailed each month. The Bureau cooperates with the divisions in writing and editing material.

Films are available to the public upon request. Other activities include the annual Arbor Day tree planting program, a program of outdoor safety through the Minnesota Safety Council, a variety of special projects, reports, photographic services, and a broad program involving writing and research.

BUREAU OF PLANNING

This newest Bureau of the Department was born in 1964 in the midst of the recreation boom that is sweeping the country. This new bureau is designed to cope with the mounting demand for outdoor space and facilities.

The Bureau's chief function is to coordinate the Department's long-range planning activities. This involves close liaison with the divisions and other agencies making long-range plans that affect the resources for which the Department of Conservation is responsible. To assist the Department in its planning, review and analysis of federal and local planning programs is a continuing requirement. All programs of the new Bureau are now coordinated with other state planning endeavors by the State Planning Agency established in 1965.

DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Department takes part in many transactions which call for legal services of a highly technical nature. Legal counsel is required in such matters as acquiring property, entering into contracts, negotiating claims, participating in hearings and handling litigations in courts of law. Responsibilities of the legal staff include providing counsel on matters which arise through various Conservation Department procedures and the handling of all legal proceedings in which the Department is involved. Personnel of the legal staff are under the supervision of the State Attorney General's Office and are paid and furnished office space by the Department.

