

APRIL, 1986

Summary of the  
Kettle River Landowner Survey

881546

INTRODUCTION

A survey of all landowners within the designated land use district boundaries of the Kettle Wild and Scenic River was conducted in February, March and April of 1985. State rules and local government ordinances list the types of land uses and accompanying dimensional standards for the land use districts, which average  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile on either side of the river.\*

Landowners were asked to respond to a variety of questions or statements dealing specifically with their land or generally with land use and recreation management issues in the district. The purpose of the survey was to gather data that could be used by state natural resources managers to assess the effectiveness of both state and local government administration of Kettle River rules and ordinances, as well as to guide future management decisions.

This summary provides the reader with highlights of the survey's findings. The survey is discussed in detail in "An Evaluation of State and Local Government Management of the Kettle Wild and Scenic River Rule", MN-DNR April, 1986, and the interested reader is referred to that document.

RESULTS

The results of the survey shown here are divided into four sections; 1) Response Rates, 2) Your Land-Background Information; 3) Recreation Management and 4) Land Use Management.

1. Response Rates

A total of 183 surveys were mailed to all landowners of record on February 26, 1985.\*\* 145 of the surveys went to landowners in the Scenic district and 38 surveys were sent to Wild district landowners. 3 surveys from the scenic district were returned as "non-deliverable". The total number of surveys assumed to be received by landowners was revised to 180. Completed surveys

\*Two distinct land use districts exist along the river. The Wild district extends from the mouth of the Kettle at the St. Croix River upstream to the Kettle River Dam at Sandstone. The Scenic district extends from the dam to the Pine-Carlton County line. Land use requirements and dimensional standards for the Wild district are slightly more restrictive than those for the Scenic district.

\*\*A landowner of record was considered to be the current party receiving property tax statements for a specific tax parcel. If more than one parcel on which taxes were paid was held by the same party, only one survey was mailed. Also, for a single parcel owned jointly by two or more parties or where a Contract for Deeds existed, only one survey was sent to the party listed as being responsible for the tax payments.

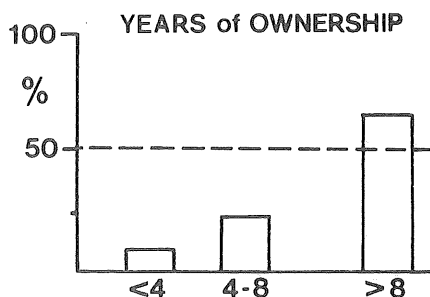
returned as of April 30, 1985, totalled 119. This equals a response rate of 66%. Separate response rates of 61% for the wild district and 65% for the scenic district were calculated by discerning which district the landowner returning the survey was from. This was accomplished using a simple methodology which still retained the landowners' identity as anonymous, since the respondents were not required to list their names and pre-stamped and addressed return envelopes were provided.

## 2. Your Land-Background Information

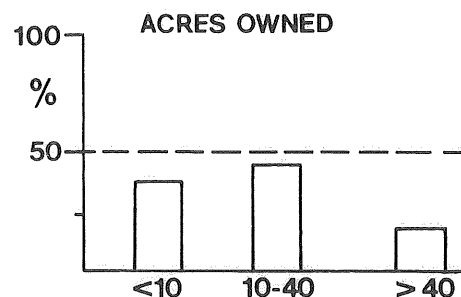
Landowners responded to a variety of questions regarding facts about their land, such as length of ownership, acreages owned, property development and ownership reasons. This information was used to profile landowners and identify any problem areas. Bar graphs are used to depict the findings below. Where large differences in the findings were noted between wild and scenic district landowners, the graphs depict each group. If the findings were similar or equal for both groups, the graphs show all owners as one group. For the findings shown here, the percentage of landowner response is measured by the vertical axis of the graph, while the parameters of the question are shown on the horizontal axis.

Briefly, Graphs 1, 2 and 3 show that the majority (66%) of landowners have owned land for more than 8 years, size of ownership is highest in the 10 to 40 acre class and that most of the respondents have property with river frontage. Graph 4 shows that over 50% of landowners have some type of building on their property. Cabins and houses were listed most often followed by storage sheds, outhouse and agricultural buildings.

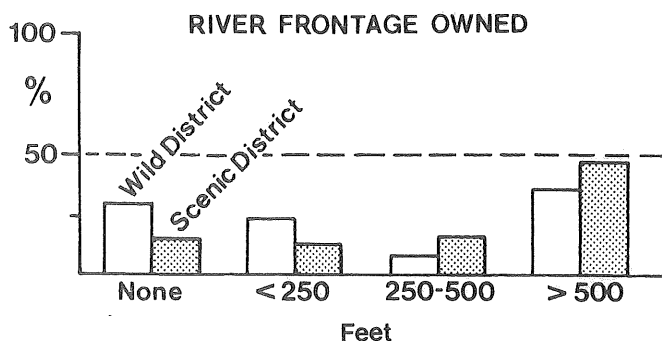
GRAPH 1



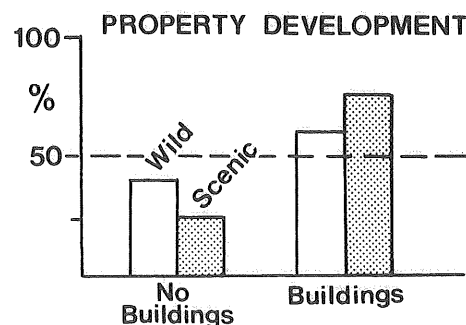
GRAPH 2



GRAPH 3

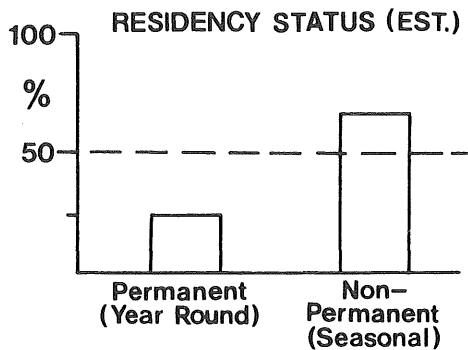


GRAPH 4

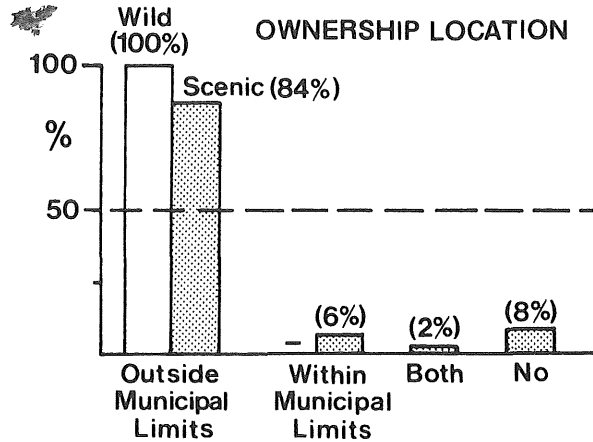


Graph 5 shows 75% of landowners are estimated to be non-permanent, seasonal residents, while about only 25% are permanent, year-round residents. In addition, most of the landowners responding to the survey indicated they have land outside of municipal limits (Graph 6). Combining the findings from Graphs 5 and 6 leads to the conclusion that a large percentage of landowners in the county portion of the district are not local residents.

GRAPH 5

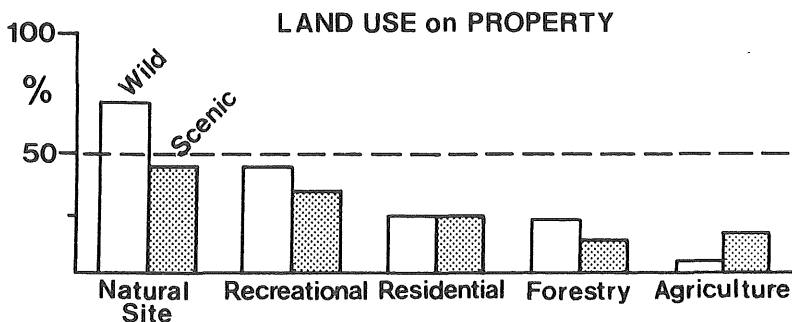


GRAPH 6

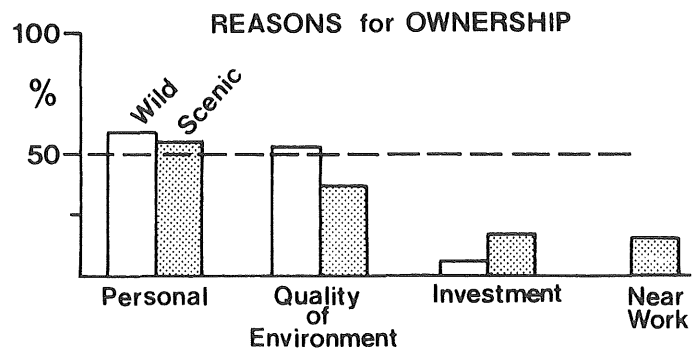


Landowners were asked to indicate their reasons for owning Kettle River land. Graph 7 depicts that slightly over 50% of owners from each district listed "personal reasons", which was the highest single response to the question. A slightly higher proportion of wild district landowners listed "quality of environment" than did scenic district landowners, whereas only scenic district owners indicated "nearness to work" as an ownership reason. From the above, it is important to note that next to "personal" reasons, many landowners listed "quality of environment" as an ownership reason. 70% of wild district and 45% of scenic district landowners indicated their land use as a "natural site" as shown in Graph 8. This finding conflicts somewhat with Graph 4, where over 50% of landowners from each group indicated they have buildings on their property. It is suspected that in the eyes of some landowners, "natural site" meant that buildings could exist on the property, but that the majority of the property is in a "natural" state. Owners perceived their property to be recreational more often than residential, which conforms to the Residency Status findings of Graph 5. Forestry and Agricultural land uses were also indicated, with slightly more Forestry in the wild district and over twice as much Agriculture as Forestry use in the scenic district.

GRAPH 7



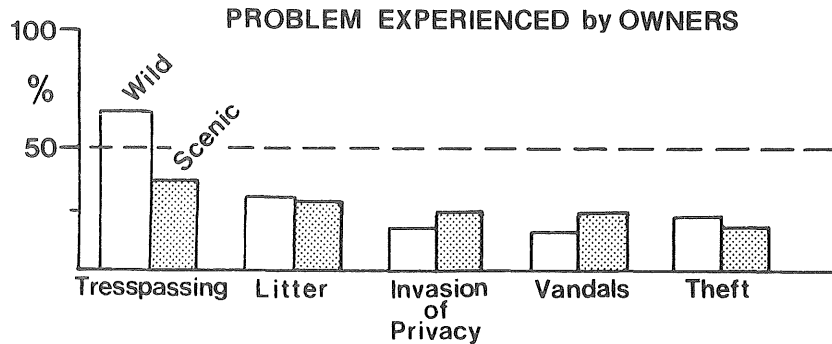
GRAPH 8



Graph 9 illustrates the frequency that particular problems were experienced by landowners. Trespassing is shown to be more of a problem for wild district landowners than for scenic district owners. Litter was cited as the second most experienced problem by both groups.

Of the remaining problems experienced by landowners, invasion of privacy and vandals were listed more often by scenic district landowners, whereas theft was indicated by wild district landowners slightly more than by scenic district landowners. These problems and their order rank similar to those listed by landowners on both eastern and western rivers in the country. Litter, trespassing, vandalism and invasion of privacy were documented as problems occurring most often by researchers. Additional discussion about the indicated problems experienced by Kettle River landowners follows in the next section.

GRAPH 9



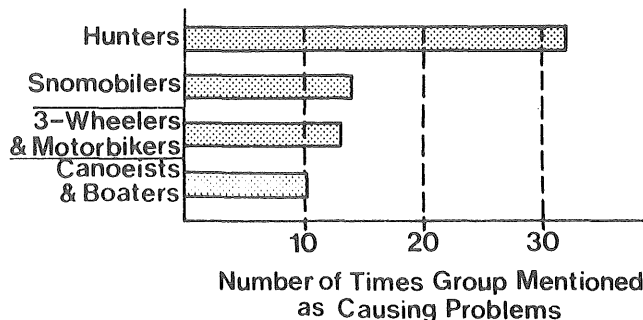
### 3. Recreation Management

Although several questions were posed to landowners addressing Recreation Management, only 3 will be discussed here. It was initially planned to conduct a recreation user survey and analyze those results with landowner responses. Since the recreation survey has not been initiated, most landowner data will probably not be analyzed until a recreation survey is completed.

Landowners were asked to list specific recreational groups or activities which may have caused them problems during the last 8 years, or since the river was designated a Wild and Scenic River.

Landowners listed Hunters as causing the most problems, followed in order by Snowmobiles, 3-Wheelers/Motorbikers and Canoeists/Boaters. Graph 10 illustrates that Hunters were mentioned over 30 times by owners versus Canoeists only being mentioned 10 times. Combining this information with the findings illustrated in Graph 9 as discussed earlier, suggests that the named landowner problems could most often be attributed to Hunters. This information should hopefully assist all types of sports and outdoor groups, Hunter education efforts and law enforcement officials to deal with landowner/recreationist problem areas.

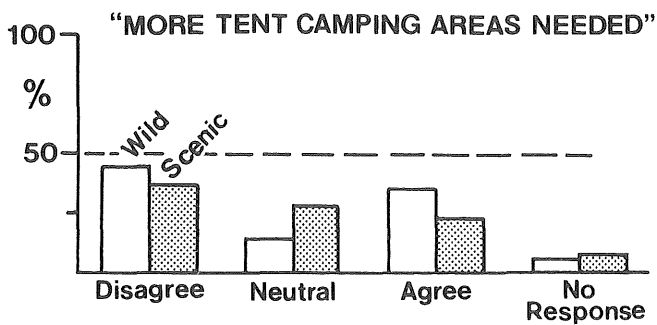
GRAPH 10



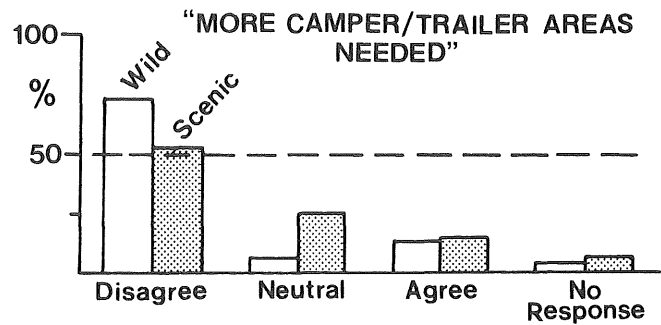
Two recreation management issues linked to land use management were studied. Landowners were asked whether they disagreed or agreed with the statements, "More tent camping areas" and "More camper/trailer areas" are needed along the river. Tent camping areas are typically for access by river or on foot, whereas camper/trailer areas are typically accessed by road and vehicle.

Landowner response to both statements, as shown in Graphs 11 and 12, was more often in disagreement than in agreement for more facilities. However, the difference between those landowners disagreeing versus those agreeing for more tent camping areas was slight (Graph 11). Those disagreeing with a need for more camper/trailer areas outnumbered those that agreed by ratios of over 5:1 for wild district owners and slightly less than 3:1 for scenic district owners (Graph 12). These responses indicate that while the need for more tent camping areas along the river is practically a divided issue, only a small majority of landowners favor no more camper/trailer areas.

GRAPH 11



GRAPH 12

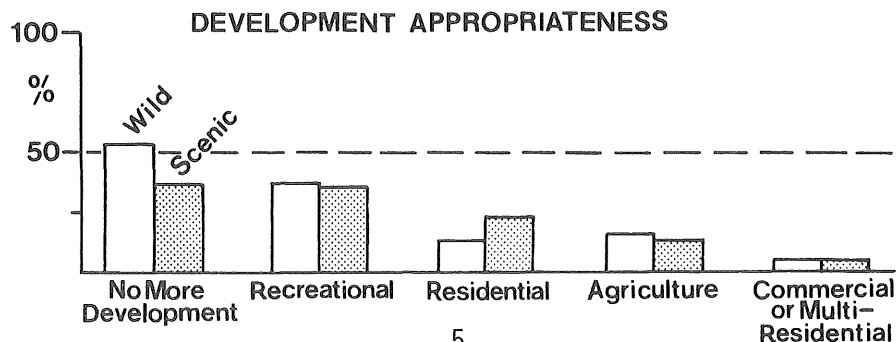


4. Land Use Management

Landowners responded to questions addressing appropriateness of development and its affect on land use and land use regulations that apply to the river corridor.

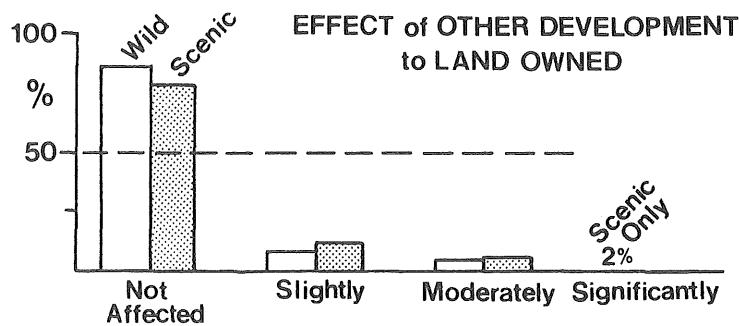
Graph 13 illustrates that landowners are divided on their preferences for or against development. For example 38% of scenic district and 52% of wild district landowners indicated that "no more development" was appropriate. The remainder of landowners that felt some type of development was appropriate. They preferred recreational development slightly more than preferring either residential or agricultural development. Only a small percentage of landowners indicated they felt commercial/industrial uses were appropriate. Neither of these last two uses are allowed in any part of the districts subject to county jurisdiction although both would be allowed within municipal portions of the wild and scenic districts.

GRAPH 13



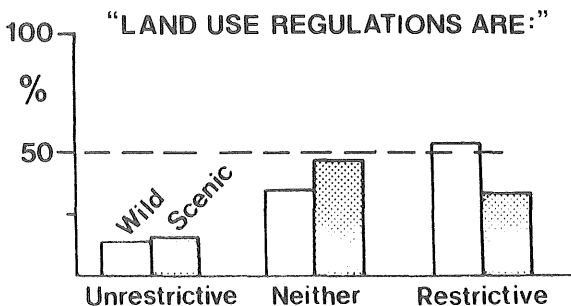
Graph 14 shows that the majority of landowners (86% wild, 79% scenic) responded that any development that has occurred during the last 8 years has not affected the use of their land. (The 8 year time frame was chosen to generally reflect the time elapsed between the adoption of local river ordinances and the issuance of the survey.) About 10% of both wild and scenic landowners indicated they were slightly affected, whereas only a small percentage of landowners felt either moderately or significantly affected. These findings must be evaluated in relationship to the extent of development that actually has occurred. Review of county and municipal building permit files and numerous field inspections of the land use district show that only limited new development has occurred during the last 8 years. Therefore, the fact that most landowners indicated they were "not affected" by development could partially be attributed to the fact that only limited development has occurred. A relationship between the exact location of those landowners who responded in any given way versus the location of any new development cannot be established since the respondents anonymity was preserved when surveys were returned. In sum, even though the findings illustrated in Graph 14 cannot be linked to specific areas of the river, they can still be viewed as positive since only a very small minority indicated their land use has been affected due to new development.

GRAPH 14

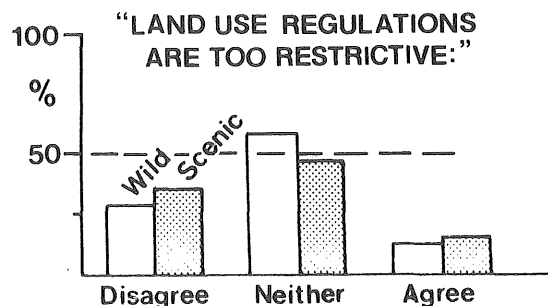


Graphs 15 and 16 show how landowners responded to statements addressing the degree of restrictiveness of Kettle River land use regulations. Graph 15 illustrates that only 15% of landowners feel the regulations are unrestrictive versus 53% of wild district and 37% of scenic district owners who felt the regulations are restrictive. In either case, it must be pointed out that the responses about "restrictiveness" or "unrestrictiveness" were general and were not solicited with regard to a specific area of the river or one given land use regulation.

GRAPH 15



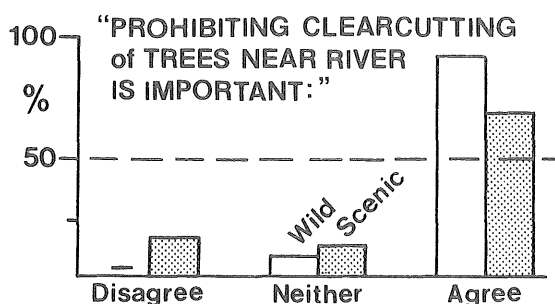
GRAPH 16



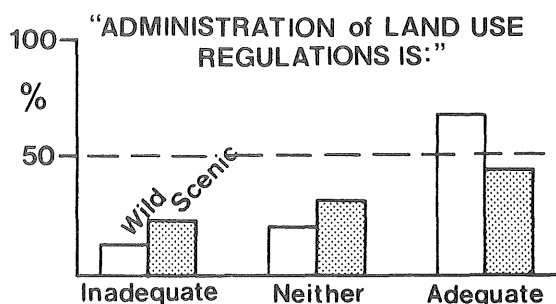
The findings from Graph 15 must be compared with Graph 16 to provide meaningful interpretation. When landowners were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Land use regulations are too restrictive for my land", more landowners from both groups disagreed than agreed with the statement. This finding, combined with the fact that about 50% of landowners were neutral on the subject, suggests that while most landowners indicated the regulations in general are "restrictive" (Graph 15), they aren't "too restrictive" and limit most landowners from developing or using their land in the way they choose.

To further assess landowner sentiment towards Kettle River land use regulations, landowners were asked if they disagreed or agreed with a specific regulation. Graph 17 shows landowner responses to a statement that incorporated the vegetative cutting regulations in effect along the river. Clear cutting (complete removal of a stand of trees) is prohibited within 150 feet of the river in the scenic district and within 200 feet of the river in the wild district. Clearly, Graph 17 illustrates that this provision is supported by almost all of wild district owners (90%) and just over 2/3 (68%) of scenic district owners. Only a small percentage of scenic district owners (18%) indicated they disagreed with the statement.

GRAPH 17

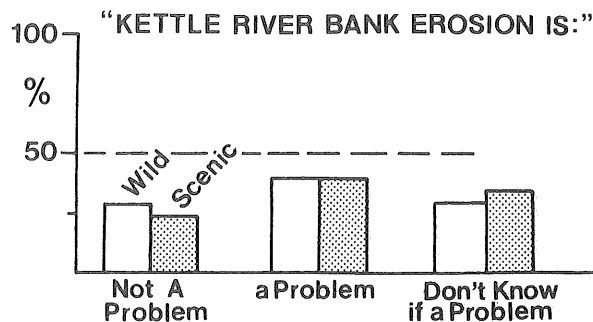
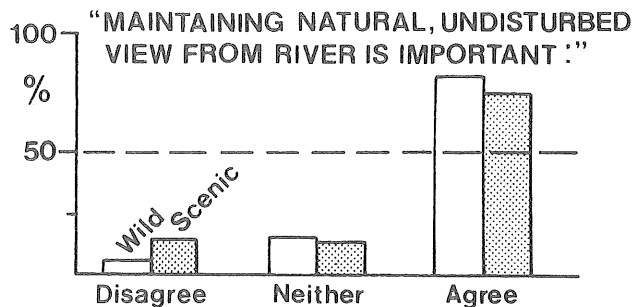


GRAPH 18



Landowners assessed the adequacy or inadequacy of the administration of land use regulations. Graph 18 shows that about 2/3 of wild district landowners and slightly less than 1/2 of scenic district landowners felt administration was adequate. Nearly 25% of scenic district and 13% of wild district landowners felt that administration was inadequate. Although land use development within either district has been minimal, these findings show that to whatever extent landowners have experienced land use regulation administration, it appears to have been "adequate" more often than "inadequate".

Landowners were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Maintaining a natural, undisturbed view from the river is important". The statement reflects one of the primary management goals for which the Kettle was designated a Wild and Scenic River. Regulations addressing clearcutting of trees, as discussed earlier, and low-density development limits with regulations requiring 150 to 200 foot structure setbacks from the river are examples of how the goal is implemented. Graph 19 (next page) illustrates that 81% of wild district and 74% of scenic district landowners agreed with the statement, versus only 5% of wild district and 14% of scenic district owners who disagreed. About 13% of owners from each district were neutral on the issue. Clearly, the majority of owners support the management goal of maintaining natural views from the river.



Finally, landowners were asked to provide an opinion concerning river bank erosion. Respondents indicated whether erosion is a problem or not a problem, or if they didn't know if erosion was a problem. Responses were fairly evenly divided among the three categories, with landowners indicating that erosion is "a problem" slightly more often than those who either felt erosion not to be a problem or just didn't know. Assuming that landowners generally responded to this statement based on their knowledge of bank conditions on the river segment(s) they are most familiar with, it is obvious that no "correct" answer exists. Bank erosion is surely non-existent in some areas and potentially serious in other areas. These findings suggest that there is a need for a systematic survey of bank conditions along the Kettle. The local Soil and Water Conservation District, or other resource management personnel should consider conducting such a survey and program available monies for controlling or correcting any serious bank erosion problems that are identified.

CONCLUSION

Major findings from the preceding discussion of the Kettle River Landowner Survey are restated below:

1. The majority of landowners returning surveys occupy their land seasonally, and are not local residents.
2. Landowners indicated that trespassing and littering are the two problems that they experienced most often. When asked to indicate which recreational groups caused them the most problems, hunters were mentioned the most and canoeists and boaters were mentioned the least.
3. Landowners were divided on whether or not more tent camping areas were needed on the river, whereas most landowners did not agree that more trailer/camper areas are needed.
4. Most landowners did not feel that in general, Kettle River land use regulations were too restrictive for their land use. When asked about specific regulations, a substantial majority of landowners agreed that prohibiting the clearcutting of trees near the river and maintaining natural, undisturbed views from the river was important.
5. Riverbank erosion was noted as being a problem by about 1/3 of landowners. A survey to identify serious erosion areas is recommended.

This concludes the summary of the Kettle River Landowner Survey. As mentioned previously, additional discussion on survey findings is contained in a comprehensive report of Kettle River Management. Please contact Bill Zachmann, MN-DNR, Division of Waters, 500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55146, for further information.