



Land Use

Land Cover

Rice County is located in a transitional area of Minnesota between south-central and southeastern Minnesota. The location has contributed to diverse land uses and development patterns. This can be attributed to a variety of factors such as the proximity to the Twin Cities, attractive lakes, rural landscapes, and relatively affordable land prices.

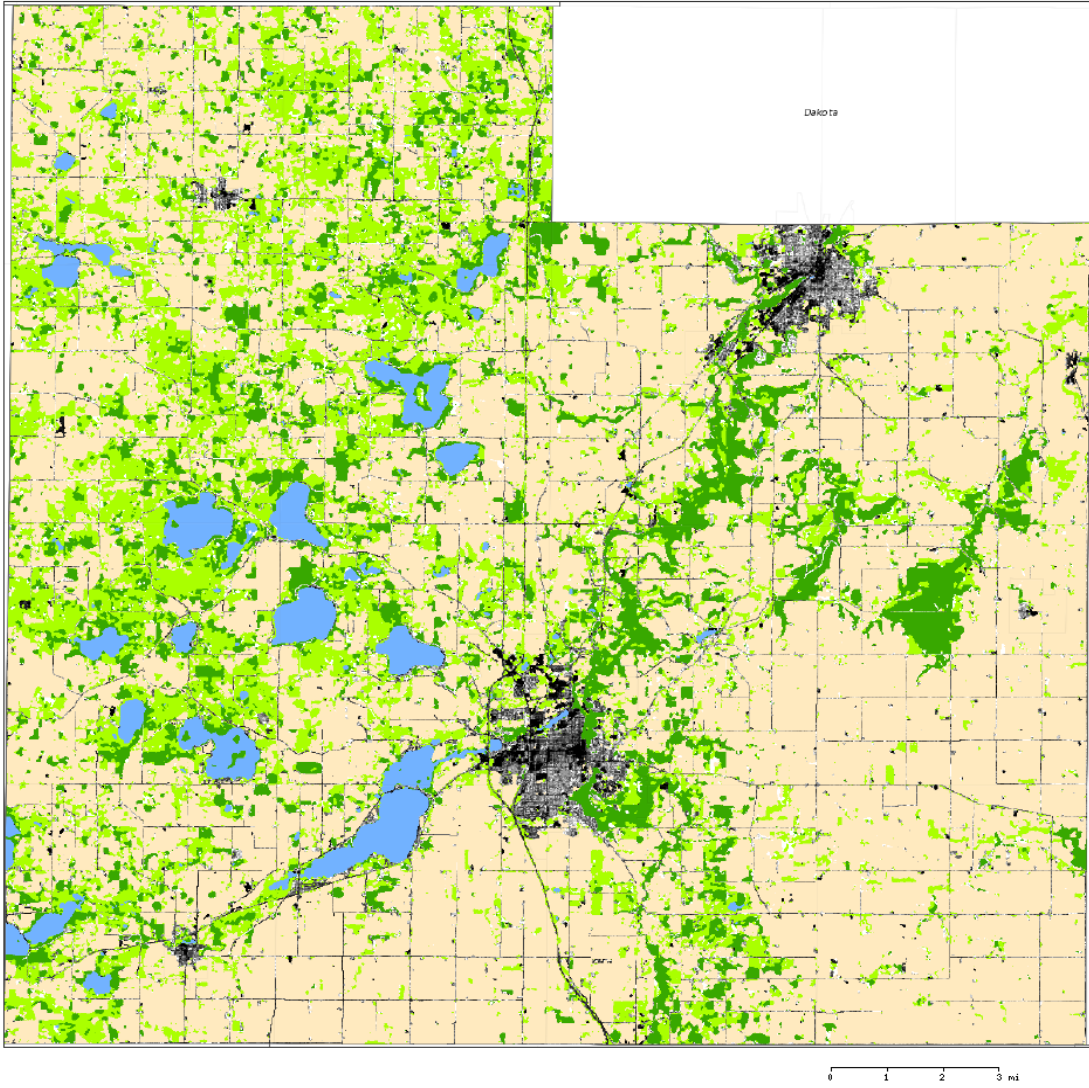
Rice County is predominately rural in nature with a total land area of roughly 496 square miles (329,914 acres). In the year 2000, approximately 59% was comprised of agricultural land; 19% grass, shrub, or wetland; 10% forested; 9% urban; and the remaining 3% was water.

There are over 450 square miles of rural land, 46 square miles of urban land concentrated mainly in Northfield and Faribault, and 17 square miles of open water. Small urban centers such as Dundas, Lonsdale, Nerstrand, Morristown, and Dennison contribute to the urban landscape of the county. Furthermore, residential development along the various lakes has also shaped the character and look of Rice County. These areas will continue to see development pressures well into the future.

To view a Rice County Land Use and Cover map for 1988-1990, click on the following link:
http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/maps/LandUse/lu_rice.pdf


Clearly, change, including inland cover and land use, is a constant. Humans have long altered the land by clearing forests, farming, and building settlements. Due to advances in civilization, human-induced changes now occurs much faster, and in many ways more dramatically than in the past. It is increasingly apparent that these rapid transformations can have profound social and environmental implications.

2000 Rice County Land Cover and Impervious Surface Area



Land Cover	Acres	Percent	Impervious Intensity (%)	Acres	Percent	Weighted Impervious Area (%)
Agriculture	193,506	58.65	0	305,299	92.54	0
Forest	33,552	10.17	1-10	4,362	1.32	0.07
Grass/Shrub/Wetland	62,197	18.85	11-25	6,784	2.06	0.38
Water	10,916	3.31	26-40	5,331	1.62	0.54
Urban	29,709	9.01	41-60	4,389	1.33	0.66
			61-80	1,931	0.59	0.4
			81-100	1,781	0.54	0.51

Total Area: 329,914 Acres
Total Impervious area: 8,412 Acres
Percent Impervious Area: 2.6 %


 Created by the Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis Laboratory,
 University of Minnesota in cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

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