

Frequently Asked Questions about Tax-Forfeited Land Sales

Who manages tax-forfeited land in Beltrami County?

The Natural Resource Management Department manages tax-forfeited land in Beltrami County. We oversee approximately 147,000 acres for public use, recreational use, and natural resource management.

Does the county have a policy on tax-forfeited land parcels?

Yes, the *Beltrami County Land Asset Management Policy* revised and adopted by the County Board in May 2012. Copies of which may be obtained from our county website.

How do I inquire about purchasing a specific parcel of tax-forfeited land?

Beltrami County does not accept direct requests for tax-forfeited parcels to be sold. Our guiding document is the *Beltrami County Land Asset Management Policy*.

How can I find out when a land auction is scheduled?

We do not have regularly scheduled auctions. A tax-forfeited land auction is generally set up when a series of parcels have gone through extensive review, both internally and externally, and it is deemed in the best interest of the citizens of Beltrami County to sell these parcels.

There are several ways of being notified when Beltrami County is having a land sale:

1. Beltrami County website – www.co.beltrami.mn.us
2. Legal advertisement section of the official county newspaper (currently the *Bemidji Pioneer*)
3. Email notifications – sign up on the Tax-Forfeited Land page
4. Call our office at (218) 333-4210

How do I obtain a list of tax-forfeited parcels that are for sale?

On the Beltrami County website, click on the “Tax Forfeited Lands” under the “County Services” tab. From this page, you are able to get updated parcel information in several ways:

1. View the “Parcels for Sale List” for the most recent Land Sale information.
2. Select “Sign Up For Tax-Forfeited Land Email Notifications” and enter your information. When a tax-forfeited land sale is scheduled, you will receive an email advising you of the auction date.
3. View the “Over the Counter” parcels that are available for purchase.
4. Select “Online Mapping” and choose the “Land Sales” app to see the current properties for sale.

How do I find information about the parcels (price, location, etc.)?

General information will be provided on the county website approximately four weeks before a public auction. Online mapping instructions are provided so you can get a map or aerial view of the parcel.

To get more specific information regarding parcels, contact the following:

1. General information: Natural Resource Management (218) 333-4210
2. Tax information: Real Estate & Tax Services (218) 333-4138
3. Recorded easements, liens, or encumbrance documents: Recorder’s Office (218) 333-4170
4. Building or zoning information: Contact the City or Township Clerks listed [here](#)
5. Wetland/shoreland or septic information: Environmental Services (218) 333-4158

**Properties with septic systems will need a signed [Property Transfer Agreement](#) per County Ordinance 32 section 712 C

What happens to liens and encumbrances on tax-forfeited properties?

All sales are subject to existing liens, leases, easements, deed restrictions, dedications, and right-of-ways.

Please refer to section 6710 of the [Minnesota Department of Revenue Delinquent Tax and Forfeiture Manual](#) on page 137.

For any questions regarding how this may affect a deed/title, please consult a real estate attorney or title company.

What does special assessment mean?

These are assessments billed to a specific parcel for service fees or improvements. Two types of assessments occur with tax-forfeited properties:

1. Before special assessments occur before forfeiture and are cancelled at the time of forfeiture. Cities or townships may recertify these assessments once a parcel has been sold. Contact the city/township to inquire about these assessments.
2. After special assessments occur after forfeiture and are added onto the appraised value of the parcel.

How is the auction conducted?

The auction is an oral auction with the award going to the highest bidder. Bidder registration begins approximately 30 minutes prior to the land sale (photo ID is required).

Can I purchase a parcel for “back taxes” or make an offer below the minimum bid?

No, State Statute requires that each parcel be offered at public sale for no less than the minimum bid (appraised value plus any special assessments after forfeiture; M.S. §282.01, Subd. 4, 7).

Do I need to be present to bid or can I have someone else represent me?

If you are unable to attend the tax-forfeited land auction, a signed affidavit (signed by both parties) designating a proxy will be accepted. The signed affidavit must be delivered to the Natural Resource Management office in advance of the auction.

Who cannot bid at a public land auction?

Conduct of Public Sales: Purchasers (*extracted from Section 6747 of the MN Department of Revenue Delinquent Tax and Tax Forfeiture Manual*)

Any individual or organization is eligible to bid on and purchase a parcel of tax-forfeited land at a public sale with the following exceptions:

1. County Auditor;
2. County Treasurer;
3. County Attorney;
4. District Court Administrator;
5. County Assessor or Supervisor of Assessments;
6. Land Commissioner or Assistant Land Commissioner; or
7. Any deputies or employees of any of the above individuals

None of these individuals, either personally or as an agent or attorney for another person, may purchase a parcel of tax-forfeited land unless the parcel was owned by the individual before forfeiture. These individuals are further prohibited from having another person directly or indirectly purchase tax-forfeited land on their behalf for their benefit or gain (282.016).

Any county officials and employees listed above who own land adjacent to one or more parcels of tax-forfeited land being offered at a private sale for adjacent landowners only (282.01 7a) may bid on such property at the private sale.

The county auditor may also exclude the following persons or entities from purchasing tax-forfeited land:

- Has delinquent property taxes for other properties within the county

- Has had a rental license revoked in the last five years
- Was a vendee on a cancelled contract for a purchase of tax-forfeited property within the last five years

Eligible Repurchasers

No one who could have repurchased a parcel of tax-forfeited land may purchase that same parcel of property at a private or public sale for less than the sum of all taxes, special assessments, penalties, interest, and costs due at the time of forfeiture plus any special assessments for improvements certified as of the date of sale.

How is payment made?

All land sale fees are due in full within three business days (unless otherwise specified) of the tax-forfeited land auction. Cash, check, cashier's check, or money order will be accepted. Beltrami County does not offer contract for deed.

What extra fees are collected?

1. 3% Surcharge: this percentage is state mandated and goes into the State's General Fund to help pay claims ordered against the state by the district courts
2. State Deed Tax: 0.33% of the basic sale price or \$1.65 minimum
3. State Deed Fee: \$25.00
4. Recording Fee: \$46.00

If I purchase a tax-forfeited parcel, when do I get the deed?

It can take 6-8 weeks for the State of Minnesota to process the state deed request sent in by the County. Once received from the State, the deed is recorded and mailed to the owner.

When can I take possession of the parcel I purchased?

As the purchaser, you are allowed to take immediate possession after full payment, unless otherwise notified by the County.

When will I have to start paying taxes?

Property taxes will begin the year following the sale. *NOTE: Appraised value or purchase price of a parcel does not represent a valuation to determine future taxes owed on a property.*

What happens to parcels that are not sold at public auction?

These parcels are offered "over the counter" for the minimum bid (plus associated extra fees) that was stated at the time of auction. They will be available until sold or until the County Board, by resolution, removes them from the listing.

Does Beltrami County have tax deed sales?

Beltrami County does not have tax deed sales.

Are tax-forfeited land sales the same as foreclosure sales?

No. Tax-forfeited lands forfeit to the State of Minnesota for non-payment of taxes. Foreclosures occur when homeowners fail to pay their mortgages. Also known as "Sheriff Sales", foreclosure sales are handled through the Sheriff's office. Please call (218)-333-8391 for more information regarding foreclosure sales.