

Minnesota's School Forests
Presentation to PSFAC – Aug 30, 2010

- School Forest Program created in 1949 with the passage of MS 89.41. (p2)
- MS 89.41 – schools may establish and maintain forests on any land belonging to it or acquired. County board may sell tax forfeit land to school for school forest as provided in MS 282.01 (p4)
- School Forest is established by the Commissioner of DNR through a certificate when a school submits an application, copy of deed, and school board resolution (p19)
- DNR provides management and educational assistance
- Since the land is owned by the school, they may develop, manage, and harvest the forest and retain the receipts from revenue in keeping with sound forest management & educational principles (p7)
- School forests acquired through county tax forfeit revert to the county if no longer used as a school forest (p9)
- A school forest committee is established to guide the use of the school forest (p11)
- Requirements: site coordinator, committee, adequate funding, proof of land ownership, educational student activities, annual report, sustainable forest management.

- There are 116 School Forests in Minnesota (see map)
- Over 7000 acres
 - 60% school district acquired land
 - 40% from tax forfeit land
 - 2 on Trust Land – Longville & Nashwak-Keewatin

Longville School Forest

- Established in 1996 (Commissioner Sando) on swamp trust & school trust land
- School District (#118) established trails, erected structures & installed signs
- No products harvested or sold from the land
- Significant community involvement and use (butterfly garden established by garden club, used by youth groups and town activities)
- Discovered that land is trust land in 2008
- Lease for use initiated in 2009 – lease fee \$695/year

Nashwak-Keewatin

- Established in 1998 (Commissioner Sando) on school trust land
- No improvements on the site other than trails
- Trails established during timber harvest
- Land managed by DNR. Past timber harvests have generated revenue for the school trust fund
- School not involved in management or harvest
- School use is occasional dispersed recreation, no different than use on other state forest lands or use by other members of the community