

Enforcement Strategic Plan 2015-2025



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Cover photo:

Wetland Resource Enforcement Officer Julie Siems and K-9 Brady, a lab trained in the detection of zebra mussels, offers a new tool in the DNR's approach to curb the spread of invasive species.

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Conservation Officer Greg Abraham (retired) photographed in the field, performing traditional game warden law enforcement duties.

Leadership Message

Minnesota's Conservation Officers—once called Game Wardens—have been serving the public since 1887, constantly adapting to meet the changing needs of Minnesota's people and natural resources. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources hires and trains the most dedicated officers and support staff so that the public can trust in our commitment to outstanding service to citizens, high-quality outdoor safety and ethics training, and protection of Minnesota's natural resources.

This strategic plan lays out the ways in which we will address three emerging trends in natural resource management and outdoor recreation:

- Changing face of Minnesotans and their outdoor pursuits,
- Increasing environmental enforcement needs, and
- Meeting the challenge of the retirements of about one-third of the Enforcement Division's licensed workforce over the next five years.

We identified three strategies within the strategic plan as the top priorities for the Division over the first two years:

- Enforce natural resources laws and regulations to ensure long-term sustainability;
- Support the sustainable use of Minnesota's natural resources through regulation, inspection, and enforcement of Minnesota's commercial natural resource laws;
- Explore and develop new operational strategies to improve Conservation Officer availability to the public while maintaining flexibility for individual officers.



These three strategies, along with a handful of other strategies and actions, have been identified as the place where the Division will begin the implementation for the first two years of this 10-year plan. They are marked throughout this plan with a "2-Year Priority" stamp.

To ensure citizens receive the highest level of enforcement and education services today and in the decades to come, the strategic plan was developed based on input from our many partners, including citizens, user groups and outdoor sporting organizations, legislators, and other local, state, tribal, and Federal agencies.

We are honored to work with the dedicated officers and support staff of the Division as we continue our longstanding tradition of trusted public service. We look forward to working closely with you to protect our state's resources and to educate and inspire the next generation of those who use and value them.

Tom Landwehr, Commissioner

Dave Schad, Assistant Commissioner

Mike Carroll, Assistant Commissioner

Bob Meier, Assistant Commissioner

Barb Naramore, Assistant Commissioner

Colonel Ken Soring,
Chief Conservation Officer

Lieutenant Colonel Rodmen Smith,
Enforcement Deputy Director

Captain Alex Gutierrez,
Enforcement Administrative Manager

Captain Todd Kanieski,
Enforcement Central Region Manager

Captain Shane Kirlin, Enforcement Training
and Recruitment Manager

Major Greg Salo,
Enforcement Operations Manager

Captain Cory Palmer,
Enforcement Southern Region Manager

Captain Tom Provost,
Enforcement Northeast Region Manager

Captain Stacey Sharp,
Enforcement Northwest Region Manager

Major Roger Tietz,
Enforcement Operations Support Manager

Captain Thomas Buker,
Enforcement Chief Pilot

DNR Enforcement Overview

We are the primary conservation law enforcement agency in Minnesota, an authority granted to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and his delegates. The Enforcement Division (also referred to as the Division in this report) is one of seven divisions of the DNR that collaboratively work to fulfill the DNR's mission. Visit mndnr.gov/enforcement for more information about the Division.

We have the full powers of peace officers while in the employ of the State of Minnesota. The jurisdiction of Conservation Officers is statewide and on boundary waters, with authorities that are concurrent with various units of government. Our primary responsibility is to provide resource protection and public safety by gaining voluntary compliance through education and law enforcement. We enforce federal laws pertaining to fish and wildlife protection through a formal cooperative law enforcement agreement with the U.S. Department of Interior. We also enforce DNR rules and regulations and general criminal laws on lands administered by the DNR, including state parks, trails, forests, waysides, scientific and natural areas, state trails, and archeological and burial sites.

Our work includes education, outreach, and law enforcement in four areas:

1. Fish and Game Protection and Education

- We work with recreational and commercial users to protect fish and game populations.
- We manage youth and adult hunting safety education programs.
- We recruit new users through outreach opportunities and shooting range development.

2. Recreational Safety and Enforcement

- We work with motorized and non-motorized recreational users to enforce recreational laws and regulations.
- We deliver recreational motorized safety education.

3. Natural Resource Protection

- We enforce regulations related to invasive species, wetland protection, water appropriation, water quality, solid waste, timber theft, and air quality.
- We work with other regulatory agencies to educate user groups on the state's natural resource laws and regulations.

4. Public Safety

- As licensed peace officers, we work within the emergency management system to provide mutual-aid assistance in response to disasters, search and rescue, and law enforcement.



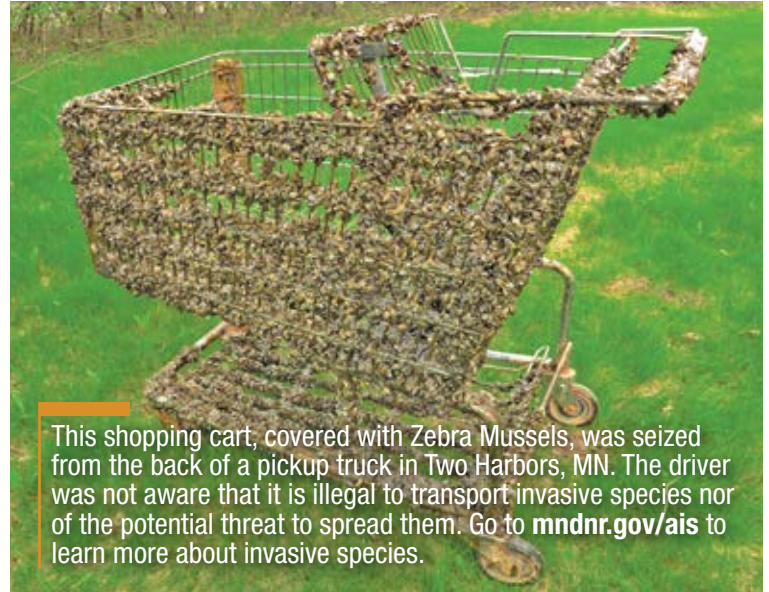
Conservation Officer Joyce Kuske, Little Falls, launching her watercraft to conduct routine boat and water safety checks.

Goals and Strategies – At-a-Glance

Goal 1: We deliver high-quality law enforcement to conserve and enhance Minnesota’s waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats and populations.

Strategies

- 1. Laws and Regulations: Ensure the long-term sustainability of Minnesota’s natural resources through the enforcement of natural resources laws and regulations.*
- 2. Natural Resource Protection: Broaden enforcement activities to focus on protection of Minnesota’s natural resources in high-value areas (e.g., groundwater appropriation, wetlands conservation, invasive species management, and preventing solid waste, pollution violations).*
- 3. Voluntary Compliance: Promote voluntary compliance with rules and regulations by communicating their purpose and ensuring they are easy to understand and follow.*



Strategic Plan Implementation: The First **2** Years



Within the 10-year plan, there are a number of strategies and actions that have been identified as the place to begin implementation. If successful, they should lead to: fewer environmental violations, highly-trained staff working on the DNR’s top priorities, new Conservation Officers who reflect the changing face of Minnesotans, more opportunities for staff to move into leadership positions, one-call service for the public, and, overall, greater public satisfaction with the services of the Enforcement Division.

Goal 2: We enrich outdoor recreation experiences by providing high-quality safety education and outdoor ethics programs, building partnerships with communities, and creating positive public interactions.

Strategies

- 1. Safety Education Programs: Provide high-quality, easily accessible outdoor education programs that lead to safe and ethical outdoor recreationists.*
- 2. Community Presence: Build on our community presence to increase the effectiveness of the Division’s critical work.*
- 3. Personal Interaction: Promote safe and ethical recreation participation through positive one-on-one public interactions.*

Goal 3: We support strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities by upholding conservation laws and regulations, supporting a safe working environment for fellow DNR staff, and providing peace officer services to all citizens.

Strategies

- 1. Regulatory Services: Support the sustainable use of Minnesota's natural resources through regulation, inspection, and enforcement of Minnesota's commercial natural resource laws.*
- 2. Employee Safety: Support a safe environment at department-sponsored events and facilities for DNR employees and citizens.*
- 3. Emergency Response: Respond to natural disasters, public safety emergencies, and recreation-related emergencies.*

Goal 4: We are committed to strengthening the Enforcement Division's organizational excellence through investments in our people and the technology we use to ensure quality service.

Strategies

- 1. Hire Staff: Strengthen the Division's workforce through an innovative hiring process that attracts and recruits diverse, passionate, and qualified individuals.*
- 2. Serve All Minnesota: Explore new models for the Division's organizational structure to ensure consistent staff coverage and high-quality service delivery throughout Minnesota.*
- 3. Work Environment: Provide a safe and fulfilling work environment.*
- 4. Technology: Use technology to optimize the Division's business processes.*



Regional Training Officer Alex Gutierrez works out of his mobile office. Technology plays an increasingly important role in the daily activities of all Conservation Officers.

Introduction

The 10-year strategic plan for the Enforcement Division of the DNR has been developed in the context of three broad and relatively new trends: changes in demographics and outdoor recreation participation, an increase in the demand for natural resource law enforcement, and shifts in the Division's workforce. These trends require the Division to adapt, finding new approaches and strategies to provide the services that meet the needs of citizens while conserving and protecting our state's resources.

Trends

Changes in Demographics and Outdoor Recreation Participation

In Minnesota, as in the rest of the country, there is a broad trend—evident since the 1990s—of declining participation in nature-based outdoor recreation. This trend impacts national, state, and local parks and trails, and other outdoor recreational facilities. It includes activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and wilderness use. Two primary factors behind the trend are a decline in involvement among young adults (ages 20–45) and their children and disproportionately low participation among racially/ethnically diverse populations.

A decline in participation means a decline in license and permit revenue which in turn reduces the capacity of the DNR to protect habitat and provide outdoor recreation experiences. The Division will need to find new ways to work with and serve a changing population of people in the outdoors, and to do its part to encourage more outdoor recreation for young people who may not yet have experienced it as part of their tradition.

Increase in Demand for Natural Resource Law Enforcement

The Division has been and will continue to be successful at protecting Minnesota's vast natural resources because of the importance they play with the quality of life and economic health of our state. In 1991, Minnesota environmental protection took a big step forward with the creation of the Wetlands Conservation Act, one of the most sweeping wetlands protection laws in the country. That led to the creation of the Wetlands Unit, staffed by Conservation Officers specializing in wetland laws and education. These specialized officers forged new ground and led the way in protecting Minnesota's wetlands and setting an example for the nation in environmental protection.

The Enforcement Division has a fleet of fixed and rotary wing aircraft designed to assist with various missions that help accomplish the goals of the agency.

The Division also has a tradition of enforcing invasive species laws. This work has increased in recent years because of growing concerns about invasive species and the wide array of damage they cause to natural resources, outdoor recreation, tourism, and industry. The Division added aquatic invasive species enforcement and education to the daily focus of the Wetlands Unit and five full-time, specialized officers were added to the Division. This continued dedication to environmental enforcement and education is why the Division continues to be a model for other states for environmental protection.

Minnesota's water underlies our quality of life—and it's not an infinite resource. The protection of our waters in all forms continues to be a top priority of the Division. For the past several years, the state has experienced moderate to severe drought conditions, which triggered an increased concern about water appropriation and its impacts on the state's aquifers. In 2013, the Division increased its focus and attention on water appropriation across the state. The demands placed on Minnesota's waters through development, recreation, and commodities will continue to increase. This type of environmental enforcement protection and education will be a core focus for the Division.

Changing Workforce

The workforce is aging; more than 50 of the Division's licensed peace officers will be eligible for retirement by 2018. Including current vacancies, this is approximately 24 percent of the Division's licensed staff. The Division will need to prepare for this turnover by providing leadership opportunities to current staff and recruiting new employees.

Fish and wildlife enforcement will remain a core responsibility for the foreseeable future, but currently this is just 60 percent of the Division's work. Recreational vehicle enforcement, environmental enforcement, safety education, and other duties make up the rest of the Division's work. As changes in demographics, outdoor recreation participation, and the need for environmental enforcement occur, the kind of work conservation officers do inevitably will evolve. The Division will need to train current employees and attract new candidates who understand and support the variety of work the Division does.



DNR Enforcement Organizational Structure

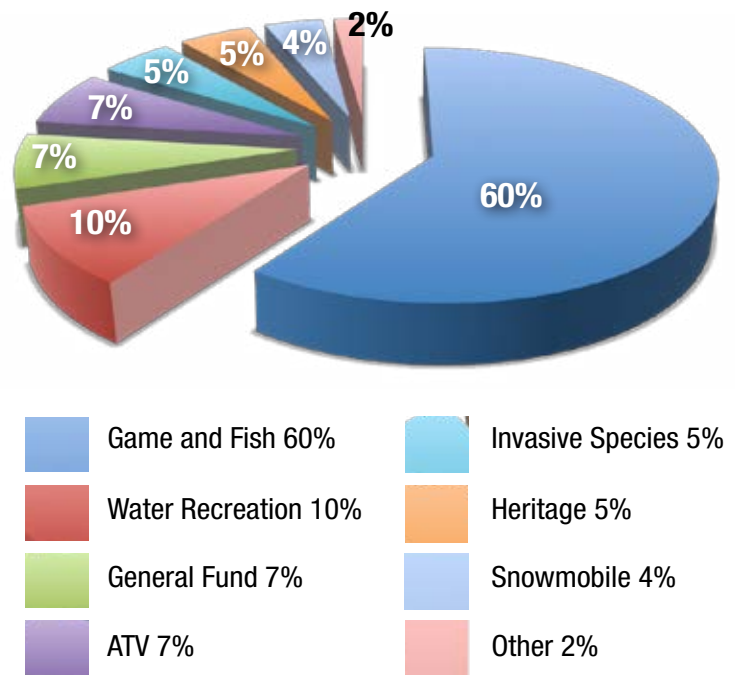
As of 2014, at full staff, the Enforcement Division has 247 positions, 211 licensed and 36 non-licensed. Of the licensed staff, there is one Division Director (Colonel), one Assistant Director (Lieutenant Colonel), two Majors, 10 Captains, 18 Lieutenants, 155 field officers, nine Water Resource Enforcement Officers (WREOs), nine Regional Training Officers (RTOs), four pilots, and two Special Investigations Unit Officers (SIU).



Funding

The Division is funded primarily through a portion of the fees collected from users. The funding the Division receives from each of these user groups is directly used for enforcement activities related to that activity, so the operating budget also serves as a general work plan for the Division. A small amount of funding to the Division from the state general fund provides flexibility for some of the Division's work.

Enforcement Division Funding, 2013



To find your local Conservation Officer, go to:



Minnesota Conservation Officers utilize many different tools, including snowmobiles, to serve the citizens of Minnesota.

Mission and Goals

The 10-year Strategic Plan for the Enforcement Division is organized around the DNR's mission and four goals and what the Division will do to help achieve those goals.

DNR Mission

Our mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

DNR Goals

1. Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats will be conserved and enhanced.
2. Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities meet the needs of new and existing participants so that all benefit from nature.
3. Management of Minnesota's natural resources will contribute to strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities.
4. DNR will have operational excellence with a focus on continuous improvement in service to its conservation mission.

Enforcement Vision

Our vision is to be the nation's premier conservation law enforcement agency by providing outstanding service to citizens, high-quality outdoor safety and ethics training, and dedicated protection of Minnesota's natural resources.

Enforcement Core Values


The Enforcement Division fulfills the DNR mission by providing high-quality service through information, education, and law enforcement.

- **Dedication:** We enforce state and federal law, and hold an individual's right to Constitutional protection sacred.

We place the highest value on preserving life. We are accountable, transparent and responsive.

- **Integrity:** We strive to be impartial and make ethical decisions.
- **Organizational loyalty:** We support decisions, work within departmental systems, and strive to improve those systems.
- **Professionalism:** We seek excellence with every citizen interaction or incident that we encounter. We promote teamwork and empowerment of our staff at all levels.
- **Safety:** We put safety first in our work, commit to a goal of zero accidents, and demonstrate safe practices in all we do.
- **Partnership:** We work together with citizens and other partners to accomplish our conservation mission.
- **Respect:** We value the dignity and worth of all persons.
- **The Oath of the Badge.** "I accept this badge and promise to serve diligently, faithfully and with honor."

10-Year Strategic Plan for Enforcement



The purpose of this strategic plan is to communicate the Enforcement Division's strategic priorities to staff and partners so they understand them and can assist with implementation efforts. The plan confirms many of the Division's current priorities—enforcement of natural resources laws and regulations and education—as well as establishing direction for outreach, recruitment, and new priorities. Current priorities reflect the work the Division does on a daily basis and the importance for maintaining its core work. New priorities recognize the changing state of Minnesota and challenging trends that will impact the Division over the next 10 years.

Although the strategic plan lays out the direction for the next 10 years, some actions can and should be taken immediately. These actions will be identified with a “2-Year Action” stamp.

Strategies for the Division are directly linked to the DNR's four goals, and the strategic plan is organized around those goals.

DNR GOAL 1: Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats will be conserved and enhanced.

Enforcement's Contribution

We deliver high-quality conservation law enforcement to conserve and enhance Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats and populations.

Why is this important?

The citizens of Minnesota value natural resources and recognize them as our state's proudest asset. These natural resources provide world-class nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities, a diverse and stable economy, and an abundance of environmental benefits like clean air, safe and secure drinking water, and high-quality habitat. The Division plays a critical role in ensuring that laws and regulations are understood and followed so that our natural resources are conserved. The Division serves and supports the conservation law enforcement needs of other DNR divisions so their goals and objectives can be met.

STRATEGIES - Goal 1

Strategy 1: Enforce Laws and Regulations. Ensure the long-term sustainability of Minnesota's natural resources through the enforcement of natural resources laws and regulations.

Actions



1. Maximize officer presence and contacts with the public. Conduct proactive patrols in areas of high value and/or high use (e.g., boundary waters, large outdoor recreation events, season openers).



2. Maintain and improve partnerships with other agencies and organizations that can extend the reach of our natural resources enforcement work. Support other DNR division efforts to monitor and enforce Minnesota's laws and regulations (e.g., aquatic invasive species (AIS) inspectors, parks and forest officers).



3. Use a variety of techniques and methods to respond to reports of unlawful behavior (e.g., regulatory investigations, work crews and special details, public interviews).

Strategy 2: Natural Resource Protection. Broaden enforcement activities to focus on protection of Minnesota's natural resources in high-value areas (e.g., groundwater appropriation, wetlands conservation, invasive species management, solid waste, pollution violations).

Actions

1. Work with other DNR divisions, partner agencies, and stakeholders to prioritize the highest-value conservation law enforcement activities.



2. Strategically prepare the Division and Conservation Officers for the broadening role of environmental enforcement through communication, training, and clear priority setting.

Strategy 3: Voluntary Compliance.

Promote voluntary compliance with rules and regulations by communicating their purpose and ensuring they are easy to understand and follow.

Actions

1. Work with other DNR divisions, stakeholders, and the Minnesota legislature to use plain language to simplify and standardize laws and regulations.



2. Increase public understanding about the purposes for rules and regulations.

- Use a broad range of communications strategies and incorporate new methods of delivery (especially electronic) to ensure the public understands the rules and regulations.
- Clearly define potential consequences (both personal and natural resource related) of unlawful actions.
- Promote media stories that focus on examples of positive recreation experiences that lead to safe and ethical recreation participation.

3. Expand citizen engagement efforts that promote voluntary compliance, such as TIP (Turn in Poachers) and Trail Ambassadors. Explore technology that will improve TIP and Trail Ambassador effectiveness (e.g., app to send GPS coordinates of location and/or a picture of violation).

Goal 1 Measures of Success

- *Officer training for environmental enforcement updated*
- *Number of positive media stories increased*
- *Plain language principles used in public information materials*

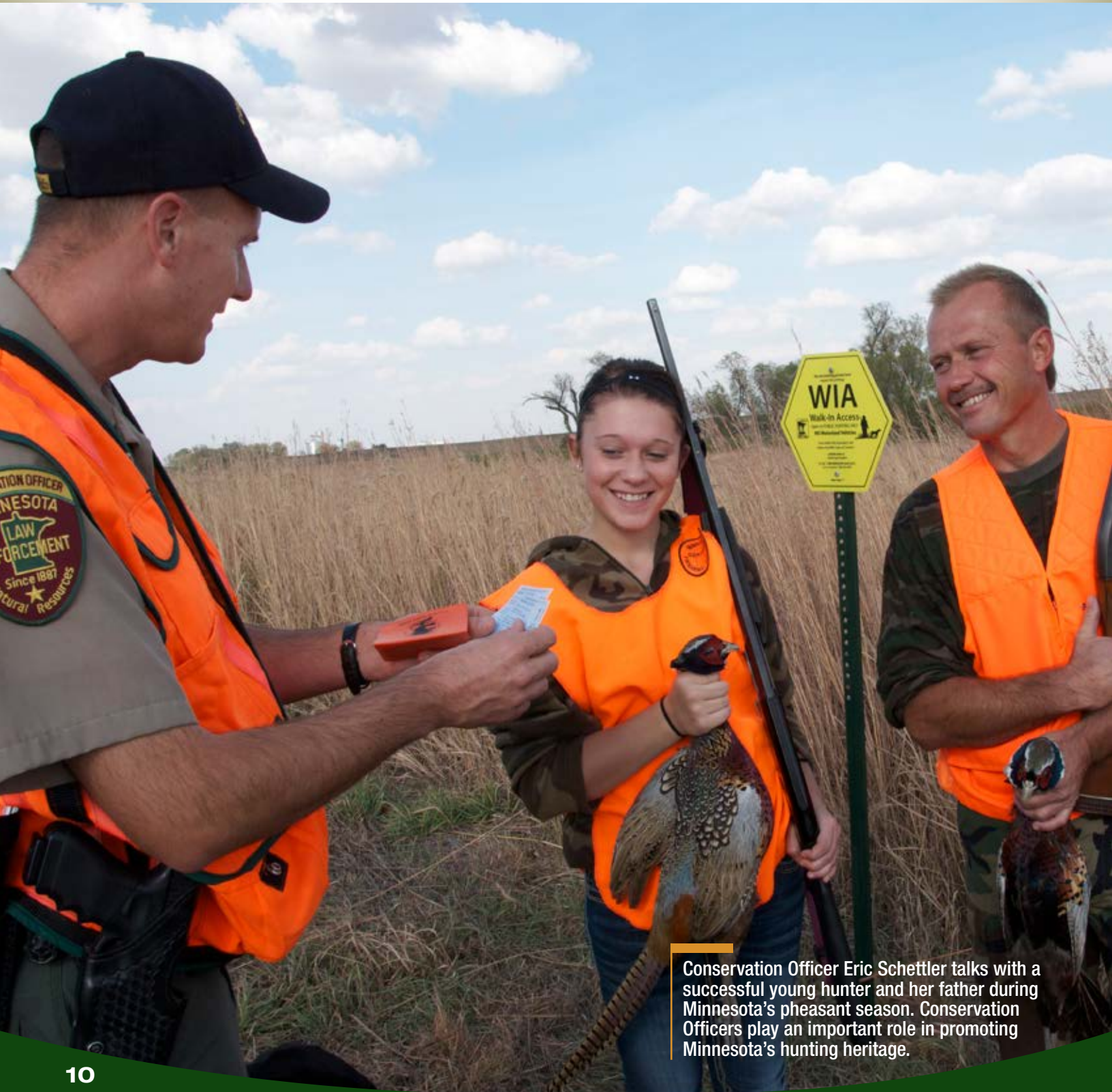


Enforcement star Badge from the 1930s.

The Enforcement Division was founded in 1887 to uphold game and fish laws. This kind of enforcement continues to be the core work of the Division, but expanding roles in environmental protection will enhance protection of wildlife in Minnesota while improving the health of our environment.

What is Voluntary Compliance?

We hope that all who enjoy and use Minnesota's natural resources will follow the laws and regulations that help protect them, but "voluntary compliance" is more than simply purchasing a license—although that is important in itself. Voluntary compliance involves knowing and understanding why laws and regulations are important to the protection and preservation of the state's natural resources and choosing to not only abide by those laws and regulations but to encourage others to do so.



Conservation Officer Eric Schettler talks with a successful young hunter and her father during Minnesota's pheasant season. Conservation Officers play an important role in promoting Minnesota's hunting heritage.

DNR GOAL 2: Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities meet the needs of new and existing participants so that all benefit from nature.

Enforcement's contribution

We enrich outdoor recreation experiences by providing high-quality safety education and outdoor ethics programs, building partnerships with communities, and creating positive public interactions.

Why is this important?

Conservation Officers are considered "the face of the DNR" because of their frequent interactions with the public, and they are known throughout the communities that they serve. These one-on-one interactions and community relationships facilitate a positive image, encourage outdoor recreation experiences, and promote voluntary compliance with Minnesota's laws. The Enforcement Division provides high-quality safety education programs that improve the public safety of outdoor recreationists, encourage ethical practices and resource stewardship, and increase understanding of rules and regulations.



Hunter education firearms safety is a centerpiece of the Enforcement Division's work. Since 1955, the Division has trained over one million students.

STRATEGIES - Goal 2

Strategy 1: Safety Education

Programs. Provide high-quality, easily accessible outdoor education programs that lead to safe and ethical outdoor recreationists.

Actions

1. Enhance safety education programs to expand and emphasize resource stewardship and outdoor ethics.
2. Continuously improve safety education programs through program evaluation, feedback from volunteer instructors, implementing best practices from other state safety education programs, and inviting regular stakeholder input.
3. Streamline our safety education programs by standardizing course delivery options, fees, and age requirements.
4. Seek opportunities to enhance service delivery through the use of technology.
5. Seek opportunities to attract and retain the next generation of volunteer instructors.



Strategy 2: Community Presence.

Build on our community presence to increase the effectiveness of the Division's critical work.

Actions

1. Connect with citizens and communities throughout Minnesota.
 - Actively pursue opportunities to present our work to community groups (e.g., outdoors groups, schools, conservation organizations).
 - Participate in community gatherings that build positive relationships with communities and individuals.
2. Build on our community presence through better use of technology.
 - Expand the Division's online presence by providing education and informational materials through online videos and new media.
 - Use technology to enhance availability of Enforcement staff to the public (e.g., improved call-center technology).



Safety Education. The Enforcement Division provides extensive education programs across the state to all kinds of recreation users, from young hunters to boaters to snowmobilers to anyone who just wants to go out on an ice-covered lake. Visit mndnr.gov/es for a list of safety classes.

- Expand use of public safety announcements.
- Develop presentations and videos that can be used at community events and safety education classes that provide consistent messaging and complement (or substitute when necessary) conservation officer presence.

Strategy 3: Personal Interaction.

Promote safe and ethical recreation participation through positive one-on-one public interactions.

Actions

1. Reinforce positive and safe behavior during field interactions.
2. Continue positive reinforcement programs that encourage interactions between conservation officers and the citizens they serve (e.g., kid's awards for wearing life jacket).

Goal 2 Measures of Success

- *Public satisfaction with safety education programs increased*
- *Number of public service announcements increased*
- *Number of online videos/video hits increased*

For information on volunteer instructor opportunities or safety education classes, go to:



DNR GOAL 3: Management of Minnesota's natural resources will contribute to strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities.

Enforcement's Contribution

We support strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities by upholding conservation laws and regulations, supporting a safe working environment for fellow DNR staff, and providing peace officer services to all citizens.

Why is this important?

Minnesota's economy is fueled by nature-based tourism and sustainable commercial use of natural resources. Enforcement of our natural resource laws and regulations plays a critical role in conserving natural resources into the future. The Enforcement Division recognizes and promotes this critical link between conservation law enforcement and a strong and healthy Minnesota economy.

STRATEGIES - Goal 3

Strategy 1: Regulatory Services.

Support the sustainable use of Minnesota's natural resources through regulation, inspection, and enforcement of Minnesota's commercial natural resource laws.

Actions



1. Organize and train Conservation Officers to enforce Minnesota's commercial laws. Develop resources to provide the skills and knowledge needed to enforce commercial laws (e.g., electronic commercial manual, videos of specialists to explain commercial laws and proper enforcement).



2. In coordination with other DNR divisions, identify the Division's role in the enforcement of commercial permits. Standardize and communicate commercial enforcement procedures.

3. Increase capacity to enforce commercial uses of natural resources (e.g., establish a team-lead in critical areas).

"The Pickle" works harbor security and boating safety at the 2013 Duluth Tall Ships event for the Enforcement Division's Lake Superior Marine Unit. The Pickle is one of two safe boats the division operates on Lake Superior.



Strategy 2: Employee Safety. Support a safe environment at department-sponsored events and facilities for DNR employees and citizens.

Actions

1. Provide department staff with awareness and preparedness training for public events.
2. Evaluate and assist with implementing procedures that create safe and secure DNR worksites.
3. Provide enforcement presence at key public meetings to ensure public and staff safety.
4. Identify and address other divisions' enforcement needs during peak times (e.g., summer weekends at State Parks and Trails).

Strategy 3: Emergency Response.

Respond to natural disasters, public safety emergencies, and recreation-related emergencies.

Actions

1. Respond effectively to natural disasters and other public safety emergencies in coordination with our law enforcement partners, with a clear priority on public safety.
2. Refine Division emergency response protocols to identify assets and resources needed to prepare for and implement an efficient response (e.g., personnel, training, equipment).



Goal 3 Measures of success

- Number of staff completing safety training increased
- Emergency response protocols refined and updated
- Process for completing updates of emergency response protocols established



Rescuing a family from their flooded home by airboat, Conservation Officers Tom Hemker and Joel Heyn demonstrate one way the Enforcement Division responds to natural disasters and emergencies.

DNR GOAL 4: DNR will have operational excellence with a focus on continuous improvement in service to its conservation mission.

Enforcement's contribution

We are committed to strengthening the Enforcement Division's organizational excellence through investments in our people and the technology we use to ensure quality service.

Why is this important?

We focus on organizational excellence so that we can effectively achieve the preceding three goals in this plan. We recognize that our staff are our most important resource and the Division is only as strong as its people. Investing in people and the tools they need will result in improved service to citizens.



Conservation Officer Dustie Speldrich, during a routine contact with an ATV operator, provides information on the local ATV trail system.

STRATEGIES - Goal 4

Strategy 1: Hire Staff. Strengthen the Division's workforce through an innovative hiring process that attracts and recruits diverse, passionate, and qualified individuals.

Actions

1. Continue to seek applicants with a passion for the outdoors that value recreational opportunities and the natural resources that sustain those activities.



2. Actively recruit qualified individuals through a variety of actions, including:

- Enhance recruitment efforts to reach new audiences with diverse backgrounds (e.g., CO Prep Program, online recruitment videos).
- Identify and recruit candidates with a natural resources education.
- Extend recruitment efforts with other governmental agencies (e.g., tribal law enforcement, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service) to form a larger recruitment pool.
- Enhance targeted geographical recruitment to attract candidates for specific locations.
- Provide new and innovative pathways for qualified candidates to gain experience with the Division (e.g., Explorer Program, licensed interns).



Make a difference.
Join our team.

Being a Conservation Officer is not just a rewarding career, it's an opportunity to make a difference.



CO Prep is a legislatively-funded effort to improve the diversity within the Division of Enforcement ranks. The Division of Enforcement is looking for current Minnesota DNR employees with an accredited four-year degree and who have shown the commitment, skills, knowledge and passion to protect our natural resources and are interested in becoming Conservation Officers. Successful

CO Prep applicants will have educational credits and related expenses paid to attain the certification needed to obtain a Peace Officer's license, all while continuing to be paid as a DNR employee. After successful completion of required courses, applicants will attend the 12-week Conservation Officer Academy at Camp Ripley and 16 weeks of field training prior to being stationed.

More information can be found at:
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=21005>

CO Prep

The Conservation Officer Pre-employment Education Program trains six people each year who have four-year degrees in fields other than law enforcement. Through the program, they get law enforcement training while being paid. CO Prep helps the Enforcement Division recruit and hire a diverse mix of highly-qualified candidates.

Strategy 2: Serve all Minnesota.

Explore new models for the Division's organizational structure to ensure consistent staff coverage and high-quality service delivery throughout Minnesota.

Actions



1. Explore and develop new operational strategies to improve conservation officer availability to the public (e.g., minimum staffing levels, minimum levels of coverage).



2. Evaluate and continuously improve the Division structure to maximize organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

- Implement operational improvement projects aimed to standardize work (e.g., business processes).
- Integrate specialty units to meet department needs (e.g., air and marine resources, investigative services).
- Develop strategies for improving energy efficiency (e.g., fleet strategies).

3. Identify areas where conservation officers may work in teams to cover a larger geographic area.

4. Explore integrating specialty positions (e.g., environmental, safety education) within each district while seeking to preserve the right balance between field work and specialty assignments.

5. Maximize Conservation Officer availability for core enforcement work by exploring ways to efficiently identify and respond to other non-enforcement work and public inquiries (e.g., expand information service capabilities, assign non-peace officer licensed duties to other staff).

Strategy 3: Work Environment. Provide a safe and fulfilling work environment.

Actions



1. Continue to promote and improve the DNR Culture of Safety and Culture of Respect initiatives.



2. Continue to provide high-quality training programs that emphasize staff safety.

3. Provide high-quality leadership development opportunities that include clearly defined advancement and mentorship opportunities for both licensed and non-licensed staff.

Strategy 4: Technology. Use technology to optimize the Division's business processes.

Actions

1. Maximize the use of the Records Management System (RMS).

2. Improve the permitting process and transition to electronic processing where possible.

3. Explore new and innovative options for connecting conservation officers to customers (e.g., one-call options for service, new media, access to the Division through an improved internet presence).



4. Provide training to support the use of new technology by staff.

Goal 4 Measures of Success

- *Public is able to reach a conservation officer with one call*
- *Recruitment for geographic and demographic goals met*
- *Access to employee safety training improved and results in decreased workers compensation claims*
- *Leadership training opportunities established for all staff*
- *Records Management System implemented and institutionalized*
- *Permit processing time reduced as a result of electronic conversion*

Strategic Plan Acknowledgements

Stakeholder Engagement

The Department of Natural Resources and the Enforcement Division wish to thank a wide variety of stakeholders, both outside and within the agency, for their help throughout this effort. Without their insights and time, this plan would not have been possible.

Three levels of stakeholder input were sought throughout the planning process. The first level was input from staff within the Division, which was solicited at an all-staff meeting prior to official planning, throughout the process via email and an internal Intranet site, and directly from project team members once a final draft was completed.

The second level of input was from staff outside the Division but within the DNR. DNR Division staff from Forestry, Ecological and Water Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Trails, and the Commissioner's Office were integral team members who provided input from their professional experience and Division perspective. Project team members also solicited input from the DNR's Division and Regional management teams early in the process and after a final draft was completed.

The third level of input was from stakeholders outside the DNR. The project team met with more than 30 stakeholder groups and individuals with expertise and interest in various areas related to natural resources, including hunting and fishing, recreation, environmental protection, law enforcement, tribal governments, and education.

Workgroup Members

The Enforcement Division Strategic Plan was developed with thorough input from internal and external sources. The project team was composed of a diverse group of Enforcement staff, as well as representatives from other DNR divisions.



Helping kids learn about the wonders of Minnesota's fish, Conservation Officer Jacqueline Glaser and DNR Fishing in the Neighborhood Program mentor Leah Weyandt partner with the Brooklyn Park Police Department at their 2012 Cops n' Kids Fishing Tournament.

Enforcement Division

Colonel Ken Soring
Lieutenant Colonel Rodmen Smith
Major Phil Meier (Retired)
Captain Tom Provost
Conservation Officer Coleen Adam
Conservation Officer Scott Fritz
Captain Alex Gutierrez
Lieutenant Wayne Hatlestad
BillieJean Kennedy
Conservation Officer Paul Kuske
Conservation Officer Matt Miller
Lieutenant Mike Shelden

Forestry Division

Jon Nelson

Ecological and Water Resources Division

Heidi Wolf
Adam Doll

Fish and Wildlife Division

Bob Welsh

Parks and Trails Division

Aaron Wunrow

Operations Services Division

Andrea Date
Emmett Mullin
Jim Zicopula

Commissioner's Office

Bob Meier
Erika Rivers

Wetland Resource Enforcement Officer Rob Haberman works with a local producer in an effort to monitor ground water use through an automatic irrigation system. Conservation officers work closely with DNR hydrologists in an effort to monitor permitted and unpermitted ground water appropriation, a valuable natural resource.





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