Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet

2016-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET
Investments in Forest Benefits
$2,000,000 FY16/$2,000,000 FY17
[General Fund]

It Is Needed Because

The 4.2 million acres of state forest lands, including consolidated conservation (con-con) and school trust lands, administered by the DNR Division of Forestry (DOF) create great economic, social, and environmental benefits for all Minnesotans. Investments in forest management will ensure that forests remain healthy and resilient statewide. Minnesota's forests provide two-thirds of our state's clean drinking water; a multitude of bird-watching, skiing, camping, snowmobiling, and hunting opportunities; clean air; and storage of 1.6 million metric tons of atmospheric carbon.

The forest products industry is the fifth largest source of manufacturing jobs in Minnesota. It has a $16.1 billion per year economic impact and provides 62,400 jobs. State forest lands provide 30 percent of the wood fiber available in Minnesota. The wood products industry relies on this stable, sustainable, certified wood fiber source. Investments in forest management, technology, and invasive species management are needed to ensure diverse, healthy, and reliable forests for today and tomorrow.

In Minnesota's forests, 46 percent of the trees are at risk of attack from emerald ash borer (EAB) or gypsy moth. New to Minnesota, both insects have cost infested states many millions in lost timber, recreation, water quality, energy conservation, and human health. Rural communities are at a higher risk for damage because their forests are comprised mostly of trees species susceptible to gypsy moth and EAB. Invasive plants, like buckthorn and oriental bittersweet, are threatening forest sustainability in southern Minnesota and are becoming a growing concern in northern Minnesota. Protecting hardwood resources will become increasingly difficult over time if invasive plants take hold in our forests.

Major Program Elements

This initiative impacts activities in three areas:

- Improving state forest land management and infrastructure to ensure safe state forest roads, timely and accurate forest inventory, and sustainable forest management.
- Reducing effects of invasive forest pests and engaging the public in the fight against terrestrial invasive species.
- Modernizing forestry data management to provide reliable and integrated technology systems for efficient field application and improved accountability.

The activities in this initiative will be applied across all state forest land types, thus the investments provide environmental and financial benefits to the School Trust Fund and counties with con-con lands.

Key Measures and Outcomes

Outcomes of improved state forest land management:

- Increase forest inventory work by 50,000 acres per year to reach our desired 20-year inventory cycle. All management activity starts from solid, timely inventory data. An accurate on-the-ground picture makes us more efficient and allows for sound sustainable forest management decisions.
- Provide safe roads and bridges for recreational activities and timber harvesting. Increase maintenance by 25 percent on the 2,340-mile state forest roads system, including culvert repair, spot graveling, grading, beaver control, vegetation removal, and other non-bondable maintainence.
- Apply thinnings and other treatments on an

additional 2,000 acres per year. Such activities remove unwanted trees, adjust the types of trees growing in a stand, and make stands more accessible for future management activities.
- Evaluate 100 timber harvest sites for sustainable forest management methods.

Indicators of improved forest health:
- Increase our ability for early detection and rapid response to regional and statewide forest health issues; address pest outbreaks and emerging threats to county, city, private, and state forests.
- Survey and treat 750 acres of state forest lands for terrestrial invasive plants, such as oriental bittersweet, buckthorn, and garlic mustard. Treatments will preserve the environmental quality, diversity, and health of the forest.
- Expand the acclaimed PlayCleanGo program that engages residents, recreationists, and businesses in the campaign to reduce the impact of gypsy moth, EAB, wild parsnip, and other invasive species threatening the health and vitality of our forests.

Key measures of improved data management:
- Perform an in-depth business analysis and create a plan for needed forestry technology systems replacements. This road map will lead to 21st Century systems that best assist ongoing forest management decisions and activities.
- Complete critical updates to existing inventory, silviculture (growing trees), and forest road data management systems to keep them functioning while transitioning to new systems.
- Create a web-based logger registration and notification system that will serve 350 loggers per year, improving quality and timeliness of communications and reducing DOF timber sale administration and mailing costs.

Fiscal Impacts

- $2,600,000 and 6.5 FTEs for state forest land management and infrastructure
- $800,000 and 2 FTEs for forest health protection
- $600,000 and 1 FTE for technology to improve forestry data management

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