

# FY 2024/25 Biennial Budget: Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change



Climate change is impacting our natural lands and waters as well as Minnesotans' ability to access and enjoy the benefits they provide. Our natural lands also represent some of our most powerful resources in mitigating the impacts of climate change. As highlighted in Minnesota's Climate Action Framework, by investing in the state's grasslands, wetlands, and forested lands, we can mitigate and adapt to climate change and protect the health of our communities, economy, and natural resources.

For more information on Minnesota's Climate Action Framework, visit [climate.state.mn.us/minnesotas-climate-action-framework](https://climate.state.mn.us/minnesotas-climate-action-framework).

## Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change (\$52.8 million)



### Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands on WMAs for Carbon Capture and Resiliency

Grasslands that are rich in native plants capture and hold more carbon, which helps mitigate climate change. Healthy wetlands also trap carbon. By enhancing grasslands with native plants and restoring wetlands we can sequester more carbon, provide higher quality wildlife habitat, and improve water quality. Enhancement

and restoration also increase water storage and groundwater recharge, thereby increasing resilience to both floods and drought. This budget includes a one-time \$10 million General Fund investment to enhance and restore more than 6,000 acres of grasslands and wetlands on public wildlife management areas.

### Private Forest Landowner Technical Assistance, Cost Share and Inventory

Assisting private landowners to sustainably manage their forest is key to increasing carbon capture and storage while assuring healthy forests in the face of climate change. There are over 80,000 private land owners in Minnesota that own 20 or more acres of woodlands; nearly 50% of Minnesota forest lands are privately owned. This proposal would provide information, technical assistance and financial incentives

(via the DNR, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and consulting foresters) to private woodland owners to advance the health and management of their lands for multiple forest benefits. The One Minnesota Budget includes a General Fund investment of \$4.2 million in FY 2024/25 and \$2.6 million in FY 2026/27 to meet the increased demand for planning assistance and cost share funding to assist private woodland owners.

### Enhancing Community Forests Through the Minnesota ReLeaf Program

Trees benefit Minnesota communities in many ways, including storing carbon, improving air quality, decreasing stormwater runoff, and adding natural beauty. Our community forests are threatened by tree pests and diseases; climate change adds to the problem. This proposal helps communities, particularly those with fewer resources, address their reforestation needs created by emerald ash borer and other tree pests and disease. The One Minnesota Budget includes a General Fund investment of \$15.2 million in FY 2024/25 and \$804,000 in FY 2026/27 and ongoing, combined with \$6 million in additional bonding funds, for the ReLeaf Program.



### Accelerated Tree Seed Collection

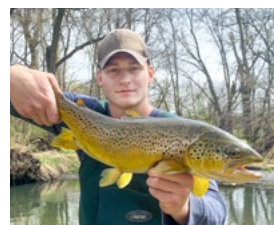
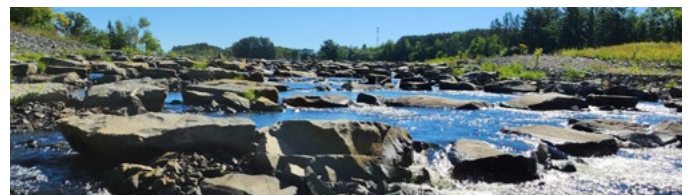
Planting native trees is a powerful and commonsense climate mitigation action. Tree seed collection is the critical first step in producing the tree seedlings used by many public and private landowners for reforestation. Current approaches to seed collection are

under-resourced and unsustainable. Investment is needed to help ensure native tree seed is available to support reforestation efforts across the state. This budget makes an ongoing General Fund investment for accelerated tree seed collection at \$800,000 per biennium.



### Restoring Streams and Modernizing Water-related Infrastructure

Climate change is affecting Minnesota's water quality and aquatic habitats. More intense rains are combining with changes in land use to cause more flooding and road washouts, degrade streambanks, and overwhelm water control structures. This impacts our fish, waterfowl and recreation opportunities. This budget includes a one-time \$15 million General Fund investment in FY 2024/25 in the Get Out MORE (Modernize Outdoor Recreation Experiences) budget proposal to replace culverts and bridges to improve stream ecology, remove or modify dams and restore habitat to enhance fish passage, and renovate other water control structures to address the impacts of climate change and support waterfowl production.





## Protecting and Restoring Carbon Storage in State-Administered Peatlands

Peatlands hold approximately 37% of the carbon stored by ecosystems. Nearly 60% of Minnesota's peatlands are located on state-owned public lands, many of which are School Trust Lands. These lands must be managed to generate revenue for the Permanent School Fund; for peatlands this can mean disturbing the land in ways that release the stored carbon. To maintain and enhance carbon storage, we must invest in new management strategies. This budget includes a one-time \$1.6 million General Fund investment in FY 2024/25 to pilot an approach for managing School Trust peatlands and restoring degraded peatlands to maximize carbon storage.

Minnesota's public lands play an essential role in our state's climate solution. By further investing in protecting and restoring our natural lands, we can harness the power of these landscapes to store more carbon and enhance Minnesota's resilience to the impacts of climate change.



Throughout the 2023 legislative session, go to [dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/legislativeinfo](https://dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/legislativeinfo) for updates on this climate adaptation and mitigation proposal as well as DNR's work on the FY 2024/25 biennial budget.