

# Growing Needs at the Minnesota State Forest Nursery



From the boreal forests of the north to the southern deciduous bluff lands, trees clean our drinking water, store carbon, provide jobs, frame our homes, shade our trails, shelter wildlife, and create beauty. The Minnesota State Forest Nursery is where many of these forests begin.

Since 1931, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has grown and sold tree seedlings to support reforestation on public and private lands across the state. The Minnesota State Forest Nursery is dedicated to sourcing native seed and growing quality native tree and shrub seedlings to ensure future forests for all Minnesotans. Our facility is the only large-scale nursery providing bareroot stock in the state. Coniferous and deciduous seedlings are lifted from nursery fields as 4-6" seedlings and shipped with bare roots.

Increased tree planting to address climate change, maintain clean air and water, restore woodlands after wildfires, and provide wildlife habitat means increased pressure on the nursery. Unfortunately, several decades have passed without upgrades to nursery buildings and equipment, field development, and workflow improvements. Currently, the nursery provides about four million seedlings annually. Anticipated need is three to four times greater. To support the growing demand for tree planting, the nursery is in desperate need of modernization to meet current and anticipated demand.



## From Seeds to Trees

- Cones and seeds are collected from all over the state.
- Seeds are sown in fields and grown into seedlings.
- Seedlings are lifted, sorted, and sold to planting on private and public lands in Minnesota.

## Priority Modernization Needs

The seed processing building relies on the same equipment it had 30 years ago. Breakdowns are increasingly common and parts are difficult to find. Various small renovations over the years have created an inefficient layout with variable floor heights, which create bottlenecks, workflow challenges, and safety concerns. Replacement is necessary to ensure increased production of viable, quality seed.

The cold storage building is too small and lacks reliable temperature regulation, sprinkler and drainage system, and electronic alerts and monitoring. Reliable, year-round cold storage is necessary to ensure seedling vitality once lifted and increase planting success.

The seedling packing house and loading dock layout are too small and inefficient for current and future operational needs, creating barriers for effective workflow, safety, and accessibility. A new design is needed to produce and distribute 10 million seedlings each year.



## A Nursery Investment to Meet Minnesota's Needs

Improvements to the Minnesota State Forest Nursery today will enhance production efficiency, improve worker safety, decrease energy use, and reduce operational costs. Most importantly, investment in a state-of-the-art nursery now will ensure critical environmental, recreational, and economic benefits in the future. The demand for tree seedlings continues to increase to meet climate change, habitat, forest management, and water quality needs. We need to grow seedlings today to support tomorrow's woodlands. The 17.8 million acres of forests in Minnesota are counting on it!

**For more information contact:**

**Bob Meier, Assistant Commissioner**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155-4047

Phone: 651-259-5024

Email: [bob.meier@state.mn.us](mailto:bob.meier@state.mn.us)



This information can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, braille, or audio tape by emailing [info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us) or calling 651-259-5016.