



Strategic Plan

2023-2027

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Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR's) strategic plan is intended to help guide the department toward achieving its mission "to work with Minnesotans 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."

The DNR manages the state's natural lands, such as forests, wetlands, and native prairies. We manage water resources, sustaining both surface waterways and groundwater resources. The DNR strives to maintain healthy populations of fish and wildlife, including the management of rare species. This work includes building an understanding of changes to habitats, competing species, pollutants, and other factors that might impact ecological systems. We also track and respond to changes in ecological systems over time and manage for resilience under likely forecasted future climatic conditions.

We provide enriching public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, camping, skiing, hiking, biking, motorized recreation, and conservation education for Minnesotans of all ages and backgrounds. We manage a state-wide outdoor recreation system that includes parks, trails, forests, wildlife management areas, public water access sites, and other facilities.

The DNR supports natural resource-based economies for the benefit of all Minnesotans. The department provides economic opportunities in a manner consistent with sound natural resource conservation and management principles. The DNR is also responsible for ensuring the maximum long-term economic return from school trust lands.

Neither the state nor the DNR, however, is responsible for all the important natural resources in Minnesota. We share this stewardship with Minnesotans and partners to manage for a variety of interests and values. Private landowners and non-profit partners, as well as federal, local, and tribal governments, each have significant roles in the management of resources and sustainability outcomes in Minnesota. We must work together, and DNR is committed to engaging diverse perspectives to achieve collaborative and integrated management.

This 2023 - 2027 strategic plan highlights alignment with the One Minnesota plan, goals and strategies to achieve success, current department priorities, and core department structure and work.

Successful implementation of the DNR strategic plan will help sustain and build nature-based recreational opportunities, increase the health and vitality of ecological systems, strengthen communities, and support a wide range of natural resource-dependent economic activities.

One Minnesota Plan

The One Minnesota Plan was developed by the Office of Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan to establish a shared purpose, vision for the future, guiding principles, and priority areas for the State of Minnesota. The DNR's strategic plan highlights goals, strategies, activities, and performance metrics that align with the One Minnesota Plan and advance DNR's mission.

Building Blocks

Mission

Improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results.

Vision

Minnesota is the best state in the country for children to grow up in - those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic statuses, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and zip codes.

Guiding Principles

- Practice servant leadership
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Do the right thing, especially when it is difficult
- Ask how your actions are reinforcing or removing structural inequity
- Promote the common good over narrow special interests
- Be accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Include voices from communities who will be most impacted
- Bring people together across lines of difference

Priority Areas

- Equity and Inclusion
- Minnesota's Environment
- Fiscal Accountability, Customer Experience, and Measurable Results
- Children and Families
- Thriving Communities, Housing, and Workforce
- Healthy Minnesotans

One Minnesota Priorities at DNR

Successfully achieving the DNR's mission requires consideration of both natural and social systems. The environment serves as the foundation of a healthy economy and healthy society, and relatedly, Minnesotans with strong communities and economies are better able to take actions to protect their natural resources. This section highlights some key DNR strategies intended to be implemented within the next three to five years that support and align with the One Minnesota goals.

Equity and Inclusion

People have an inherent right to a healthy environment and the personal health and wellness that come from access to thriving natural systems. We are committed to providing equitable access to outdoor spaces and the benefits afforded by a healthy environment to all Minnesotans throughout our work. We are also committed to attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects Minnesota's diversity.

Strategies

Diversify DNR workforce by improving inclusive hiring processes to attract a full range of talent and experience, including recruitment and retention of people of color, people who have a disability, and veterans. Ensure a welcoming and inclusive workplace, enhanced retention, and promotion of leadership development for a workforce that reflects the diversity of Minnesota.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Cultivate a healthy, supportive, and safe workplace.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Complete and implement an agency inclusive hiring plan
 - Build and expand relationships with workforce development and community-based organizations as well as county, local, and tribal governments
 - Embed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) core competencies throughout the performance management cycle including job postings, position descriptions, interview questions for supervisory and management positions, performance goals, coaching and development, and performance reviews.
 - Develop and implement an action plan to address areas of opportunity identified in the Enterprise Employee Engagement Survey
 - Monitor and evaluate good faith efforts for implementing the agency Affirmative Action Plan and addressing underutilization within job categories

Develop a network of vendors within the competitive bidding process from which the DNR purchases its goods and services that reflects the diversity of Minnesota’s vibrant business community.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
10% average certified spend growth (percentage of total procurement dollars spent directly with certified small businesses owned by women, minorities, people with substantial physical disabilities, and veterans) in order to meet state equitable procurement goals and support purchases from diverse suppliers.

- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Increase the number of Equity Select contracts awarded by the DNR to 150 by 2027
 - Identify top agency purchasing needs that could be met by diverse suppliers and develop plan to reach those suppliers
 - Conduct an analysis of agency diverse spend to identify levers that support greater equity in contracting and construction opportunities
 - Increase outreach and engagement to targeted group, economically disadvantaged and veteran owned businesses
 - Explore opportunities to utilize the sheltered market program for construction and purchasing transactions

Ensure our facilities, lands, and engagement processes are welcoming and accessible, and that our work is equitable across economic and cultural communities. This includes considering the impact of our work both on Minnesotans as a whole and on specific communities and groups.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
All Minnesotans know they can access and are welcome at DNR-managed public lands and facilities, programs and engagement efforts, and all benefit from Minnesota’s abundant natural resources and outdoor recreation system.

- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Implement the Language Access Plan to help ensure DNR communicates effectively with people with limited English proficiency and provides meaningful access to DNR programs and services for every Minnesotan
 - Expand opportunities to engage with diverse stakeholders and conservation leaders at annual events such as DNR Roundtable, seasonal openers, public listening sessions, and throughout our planning and public engagement events.
 - Update signage at DNR-managed lands and facilities to be more welcoming and inclusive

- Develop and implement an agency accessibility transition plan for public facilities
- Prioritize needed improvements and enhancement opportunities, and seek resources to implement the improvements and enhancements

Create and maintain [partnerships](#) that effectively expand DNR capacity to engage with and deliver programs and services to all Minnesotans.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Increased participation and engagement of diverse Minnesotans in DNR programs and decisions, and better representation of Minnesota’s diverse population, cultures, and history in our work.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Identify opportunities to increase collaboration with diverse partners and stakeholder groups
 - Increase the cultural competency of DNR staff to support the creation and maintenance of partnerships with a diversity of people and organizations
 - Continue to collaborate with the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources to implement and enhance the Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) Program

Engage with [tribal partners](#) through actively listening and responding to tribal interests as issues arise, in advance of decision points and while respecting tribal sovereignty.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Build and maintain mutually respectful and beneficial relationships between DNR and Minnesota tribal governments that facilitate better understanding and informed decision-making on matters of mutual interest, consistent with Minnesota Statutes section 10.65.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Engage in annual consultations with tribal governments
 - Coordinate and collaborate with tribal leaders and their natural resources staff on opportunities, work, and issues of mutual interest
 - Develop division plans to support coordination with tribal governments

Metrics and Milestones

- Percentage of new hires who identify as BIPOC, women or individuals with disabilities
 - In 2022, 58% of DNR new hires identified as BIPOC, women, or individuals with disabilities
 - 41.44% of new hires identified as women
 - 12.31% new hires identified as individuals with disabilities

- 8.11% new hires identified as BIPOC
- Two-year retention rate of staff who identify as BIPOC, women or individuals with disabilities
 - From 2020 – 2022 the DNR retained:
 - 85.7% of staff who identified as women
 - 69.2% of staff who identified as people with disabilities
 - 64.3%% of staff who identified as BIPOC
- Percentage of certified spend growth
 - In fiscal year 2022, DNR achieved 9.9% diverse spend
- Number of Equity Select contracts
 - Milestone: In 2022, DNR awarded 139 Equity Select contracts
- Percentage of DNR-managed buildings that are accessible to people with mobility disabilities
 - Milestone: As of 2022, 47% of DNR-managed buildings were built to accessible standards at the time of construction
- Annual consultations conducted with each tribal government
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR conducted five annual consultations with Minnesota tribal governments
- Percentage of DNR staff who have completed Introduction to DEI training
 - Milestone: In 2022, 91% of DNR staff with access to state-issued technology had completed Intro to DEI training
- Percentage of people who identify as BIPOC, women, or individuals with disabilities who participate in DNR parks and trails programs
 - Milestone: In 2022, 57% of visitors to State Parks were women
 - Milestone: In 2022, 13% of visitors to State Parks were individuals with disabilities
 - Milestone: In 2022, 11% of visitors to State Parks were BIPOC
 - Milestone: in 2022, the Parks and Trails Interpretive Services Program served 163,072 visitors through 6,525 programs
- Percentage of DNR staff who report feeling overall satisfaction working at their agency
 - Milestone: In 2022, 79.21% of staff agreed or somewhat agreed with this question on the Enterprise Employee Engagement Survey
- Percentage of DNR staff who report the agency has encouraged them to participate in continuing education and training opportunities on topics related to DEI on the Enterprise Employee Engagement Survey
 - Milestone: In 2022, 60% of survey respondents agreed and 20% of survey respondents somewhat agreed with this question on the Enterprise Employee Engagement Survey
- Percentage of staff that complete the exit survey when transitioning out of the agency
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR had an exit survey response rate of 13%

Minnesota's Environment

DNR's work is to partner with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide access to special outdoor places, and support economies that depend on sound management of natural resources. In this work, we are committed to mitigating and adapting to a changing climate and to enhancing the climate resiliency of Minnesota's natural resources, public lands, and communities.

Strategies

Implement the state Climate Action Framework to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation practices, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions by increasing carbon storage on public lands and exploring emerging carbon markets, providing financial and technical assistance to communities and private landowners, and reducing emissions from DNR operations.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
 - Conserve and manage the state's natural and cultural resources to address climate change in order to reduce carbon in the atmosphere; enhance ecosystem, infrastructure, and community resilience; and ensure a healthy and equitable future for current and future generations of Minnesotans.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Improve energy and water efficiency of DNR-managed facilities and install renewable energy technology where feasible
 - Under the leadership of DNR's State Climatology Office, gather, analyze, and communicate data about changes to Minnesota's climate and the resulting impacts, as well as predicted future conditions
 - Provide internal and external training related to climate mitigation and adaptation
 - Implement targeted actions to combat climate change
 - Carry out natural resource management activities that sequester and/or store additional carbon
 - Track changes in carbon storage and sequestration of DNR-managed lands to inform management decisions
 - Support the Office of School Trust Land's Asset Management Plan strategy to explore carbon markets

Integrate effective and inclusive public engagement into resource management and program implementation processes by engaging people and communities across the state regarding DNR decision-making.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Natural resources decisions and outcomes are sound, understood, and trusted.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Identify innovative opportunities to engage with the public and partners through the Engage DNR platform
 - Diversify DNR Citizen Advisory Committees through targeted outreach and recruitment, and learn from new members what they find most worthwhile in their advisory committee experience to assist in retention
 - Enhance public engagement through the implementation and promotion of a variety of tools and resources to reach broader audiences
 - Better understand and integrate differing perspectives into decisions by meeting people where they are

Continue to implement and communicate the DNR's regulatory responsibilities with rigor, objectivity, and transparency to ensure compliance with state law and protection of natural resources.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Regulatory processes and decisions are predictable, sound, understood and trusted.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Clearly articulate to the public and regulated parties DNR's role and authority in regulatory decision making
 - Ensure transparency and access to the regulatory process
 - Ensure all DNR regulatory decisions are based on sound and rigorous scientific evaluation and meet applicable statutes and rules
 - Maintain a public rulemaking docket listing pending rulemaking proceedings
 - Simplify the development, review and dissemination of regulations to aid in understanding and compliance

Implement the 4 the Outdoors initiative by taking collective action with Minnesotans to achieve the vision for the future of outdoor recreation and conservation in Minnesota.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Implement a funding system that sustainably supports conservation and outdoor recreation in ways that are equal to the value Minnesotans place on our natural resources.
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Identify strategies to optimize the use of current funding
 - Explore the use and application of fees
 - Increase opportunities for direct support
 - Secure stable and predictable base and operational funding

Metrics and Milestones

- Changes in carbon storage on DNR-managed public lands
 - Milestone: Increase carbon storage on DNR-managed lands by 5% by 2027
- Number of people engaged through the public engagement tools
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR Engagement HQ platform engaged 12,000 contributors
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR sent 1,233 messages to 16 million recipients through the GovDelivery system
- Percentage of DNR Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members who identify as BIPOC, women or individuals with disabilities (including the Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee, Deer Advisory Committee, Mille Lacs Fisheries Committee, Minnesota R3 Council, Natural Heritage Advisory Committee, Game and Fish Fund Citizen Oversight, Parks and Trails Legacy Council, and Fisheries Workgroup)
 - Milestone: In 2022, 31% of CAC members identified as women
 - Milestone: In 2022, 17% of CAC members identified as BIPOC
 - Milestone: In 2022, 4% of CAC members identified as individuals with disabilities
- Percentage of complete permit applications receiving decisions that meet statutory timeline targets
 - Milestone: In 2022, 98.6% of Tier 1 permits met the statutory timeline target of 90 days for receiving a decision
 - Milestone: In 2022, 92.8% of Tier 2 Permits met the statutory timeline target of 180-days for receiving a decision

Fiscal Accountability, Customer Experience, and Measurable Results

We are committed to responsible and thoughtful use of public funds in the management of Minnesota's natural resources.

Strategies

Implement a common, high-level approach to fiscal forecasting and monitoring to better understand our financial outlook and inform our management decisions.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Fiscal forecasting and monitoring support, sound financial management and effective DNR programming.
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Develop fiscal forecasting and monitoring tools to track the DNR's financial outlook
 - Implement, manage and evaluate seven statewide financial service hubs

Simplify budget structures, policies, and practices to improve operational efficiency and transparency.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Reduce costs of doing business related to the complexity of our agency while maintaining fund integrity and transparency.
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Review fiscal policies and procedures to provide plain language explanations, streamline procedures, and provide data visualizations
 - Revise budget structures where possible to provide for more effective and transparent management of natural resources
 - Develop responsibility assignment processes that clarify roles and responsibilities for financial management of the agency between the Office of Budget and Management Services (OMBS) and division fiscal leadership

Improve Minnesotans' digital access to natural resources and recreational outdoor experiences by modernizing DNR's customer-facing IT applications and the underlying systems that support them.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Enhance customer satisfaction, efficiency, security, and accessibility through information technology (IT) systems modernization.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Collaborate with MNIT to implement the IT strategic plan
 - Evaluate the impact of the IT strategic plan on access to DNR programs and services

Conduct a customer experience audit utilizing data from the Electronic Licensing and State Park Reservation systems to better understand how customers engage with the DNR and identify ways to improve the experience of customers.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Enhance customer experience, quality and delivery of services through targeted continuous improvement initiatives
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Develop a plan for implementing a customer experience audit
 - Establish metrics and evaluate customer experience quality

Metrics and Milestones

- Percentage of projected positive balances in key funds
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR had 84% of positive projected balances in key revenue funds
- Trends (year-over-year) in internal transaction costs
 - Milestone: Reduce year-over-year transaction costs annually
- Percentage of high priority IT projects that are funded and resourced
 - Milestone: Increase by 10% high priority IT projects that are funded and resourced by 2027

Children and Families

Minnesotans value access to natural spaces and outdoor experiences, and the DNR seeks to foster these connections for both current and future generations.

Strategies

Partner with educational program providers (school, camps, nature centers) to expand and enhance options for quality natural resource and outdoor recreation programs for youth and families.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Strengthen the partnerships among natural resources, outdoor recreation, youth and family education providers and programs.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Advance student understanding and knowledge of forestry and natural resources by developing and delivering professional development resources for Minnesota educators through the Minnesota Project Learning Tree and the School Forest programs
 - Continue to support and evolve the No Child Left Inside grant program

Evaluate current partnerships, explore potential new partnerships, and adjust the DNR's work as needed to better reflect interests, demographics and values of Minnesota's children and families.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Ensure all Minnesota children and families have the opportunity to engage with the natural world in ways that support physical activity, mental well-being, creativity, and appreciation for nature.
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Collaborate with the Governor's Children's Cabinet to implement the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights
 - Continue to learn from and evolve I Can! program offerings

Create opportunities for youth voices and perspectives to be heard and incorporated in DNR's work.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Increase engagement and collaboration with youth and youth-focused organizations to inform and guide the development and implementation of DNR programs, policies, and services.
- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Engage the Minnesota Youth Council and other youth-focused organizations to receive guidance and advising on DNR programs, policies and services
 - Explore the opportunity to expand the Young Professionals element of DNR Roundtable to include high school students

Metrics and Milestones

- Number of partners who have signed the pledge to advance the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights
 - Milestone: Support outreach and engagement efforts to increase partner pledges to 50 by 2027
- Number and demographics of participants in I Can! programs

- Milestone: In 2022, the I Can! program had 1,904 participants
- Number of children served through No Child Left Inside grants
 - Milestone: In 2022, the DNR served 18,158 through the No Child Left Inside Grant Program

Thriving Communities, Housing, and Workforce

Thriving natural systems are critical for thriving economies. As we work with natural resource-based industries, we implement policies, best practices, and programs designed to serve Minnesota’s communities, both now and in the future.

Strategies

Recognize, represent, and value the diverse natural resource assets in Minnesota. Use data to better understand the ways that these diverse natural resources help communities and economies across Minnesota thrive.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Consider all benefits of functioning ecosystems and account for these benefits, in decision-making.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Embed consideration of ecosystem benefits in our work and decisions

Provide information to Minnesotans on the important role of natural resource-based industries in an equitable and sustainable Minnesota economy. Continue to develop and update science-based natural resource best management practices in collaboration with forest, agricultural, mineral, and recreational industries.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Enhance Minnesotans’ recognition and understanding of the breadth of economic benefits provided by natural resources to further their support for sustainable natural resource management.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Utilize outreach and communication tools to increase public access to key information related to natural resource-based industries and management best practices
 - Incorporate examples of natural resource-based industries and jobs into discussions regarding Minnesota’s “green economy” and workforce development needs and opportunities

Proactively engage in conversations about the role of natural resources as an economic driver, including nature-based services (such as clean air, clean water, and enjoyable aesthetic experiences), outdoor recreation, natural resource dependent industries, and tourism.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**

Incorporate considerations of natural resource economics into broader state economic development efforts and in DNR's own decision-making.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**

- Hold roundtable discussions and other engagement opportunities that allow business leaders, community members, and advocacy groups to share perspectives about the value of natural resources to Minnesotans

Collaborate with state agency, local government, business, and nonprofit partners to promote and support Minnesota's outdoor recreation industries and economies.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**

Increase awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities across Minnesota and the economic benefits generated by outdoor recreation businesses and providers.

- **What activities we'll undertake to support this strategy:**

- Support the efforts of the Outdoor Recreation Industry partnership, that aims to coordinate action for the growth of Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy and outdoor recreation
- Maintain and develop tools to communicate and promote outdoor recreation opportunities across Minnesota

Metrics and Milestones

- Annual trends in the economic value generated by outdoor recreation to local communities and the state

Healthy Minnesotans

Minnesotans derive critical health and wellness benefits from connections to the natural world. DNR provides for the use and enjoyment of natural resources across the state, by all Minnesotans.

Strategies

Advance connections to the outdoors for Minnesota’s children and families, and the health and wellness benefits those connections provide, through targeted programs, policies, and communications.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
Connect Minnesotans to the outdoors in meaningful ways that will contribute to human health, prosperity and quality of life.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Identify opportunities to advance youth connections to outdoor recreation opportunities through safety training and other instructional and interpretive programming
 - Participate in the Parks Rx program and other initiatives that aim to enhance physical and mental wellbeing through time spent in nature
 - Incorporate the latest research on the connection between time spent outdoors and mental and physical well-being in DNR programming

Facilitate Minnesotans’ access to safe, high-quality natural food sources by providing and protecting public lands for foraging and harvesting, and by managing game and fish populations.

- **What we want to accomplish with this strategy:**
More Minnesotans are aware of and have access to healthy food.
- **What activities we’ll undertake to support this strategy:**
 - Inform Minnesotans about foraging opportunities on DNR-managed lands, including what is available and what requirements and limitations apply
 - Partner with the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on developing and communicating fish consumption advisories
 - Provide hunting, fishing and foraging skill-building opportunities through online and in-person seminars and events

Metrics and Milestones

- Number of youths participating in DNR classes and programs
 - Milestone: Increase annual outreach and engagement efforts to youth to raise awareness about DNR classes and programs
- Number of participants in the Parks Rx program
 - Milestone: Promote the Park Rx America program to raise awareness and increase annual participation of health care providers by 10% by 2027
- Number of participants in online and in-person classes and seminars related to foraging and harvesting
 - Milestone: Increase the number of participants in online and in-person classes and seminars through targeted recruitment efforts annually

Department of Natural Resources

Strategic Plan

The DNR 2023-2027 Strategic Plan includes a mission, four long-term goals with accompanying strategies, and shorter-term priorities that reflect the strategic focus for the next four years. For additional information about how this 2023-2027 plan relates to our 10-year Conservation Agenda and up-to-date information on our progress in implementing the goals, priorities, and strategies in this plan, please visit the [Conservation Agenda page](#) of the DNR website.

Mission

The mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource is:

To work with Minnesotans 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.

Goals

Our strategic plan has four broad goals. These goals are designed to serve the department over the long-term — ten years or more. The first three goals focus on conserving the state's natural resources, providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and supporting sustainable commercial uses of natural resources. The fourth goal, operational excellence, focuses on ensuring that the internal workings of the department deliver high quality services to Minnesotans.

GOAL 1

Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats are conserved and enhanced.

Minnesota is known for its water, forests, prairies, and wildlife. Not only does our state boast a diversity of natural lands, plants, and animals, many of these natural resources are of relatively high quality. As such, the quality of Minnesota's natural resources is inextricably linked to our quality of life. We must address multiple pressures – land use change, invasive species spread, pollution, and a changing climate – to sustain the places and experiences we value.

The following strategies serve to guide targeted actions related to Goal 1:

- **Conserve natural areas.** Retain natural areas and working lands containing important habitats, especially habitats in jeopardy, such as native prairies, wetlands, shallow lakes, and shorelines. Connect fragments of high-quality habitat. Conserve endangered, threatened, rare, declining and vulnerable species.
- **Mitigate and adapt to the changing climate.** Identify and implement policies and practices that enhance climate change resiliency. Ensure climate strategies are informed by best available science and engagement with communities and conservation partners.
- **Manage lands and waters effectively and adaptively.** Foster healthy habitats and create resiliency in Minnesota's habitats to allow species to adapt to change. Monitor and fine-tune management actions. Prevent and slow the spread of invasive species.
- **Identify natural resources most in need of protection and management.** Give priority to places facing the pressures of land use change, pollution, climate change and invasive species.
- **Restore degraded habitats.** Restore the integrity of degraded lakes, wetlands, rivers, grasslands, and forests.
- **Monitor and fine-tune management actions.** Track and continually improve the effectiveness of our conservation work.

Four key trends informing Goal 1 strategies:

1. Minnesota is known for its abundant water, but this precious resource is not unlimited and increasing demands for use, as well as water quality degradation, are impacting the long-term sustainability of our water.
2. Invasive species are spreading, threatening native species and adversely affecting both recreation and natural resource dependent businesses.
3. Prairie, grassland, and wetland habitats are declining, negatively impacting native species and water resources.
4. Conservation and community organizations and federal, state, local, and tribal governments each have unique tools, constituencies, and capacities, increasing the opportunity to coordinate across organizations.

GOAL 2

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

Minnesota consistently ranks among one of the top states in which to live, and a key factor is our healthy natural environment with abundant parks, natural lands, and high-quality recreation opportunities. All Minnesotans should be able to access and enjoy the benefits of natural areas and outdoor time. We are challenged, however, to maintain basic operations at many state recreation facilities. Demand is increasing for new and enriched outdoor experiences. Innovative targeted strategies will provide support to help connect families with nature and active outdoor experiences.

The following strategies serve to guide targeted actions related to Goal 2:

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of DNR Outreach** and adjust programs and facilities accordingly.
- **Develop and promote outdoor programs and activities for people of all backgrounds and diverse interests.** Especially work to provide services for families with children, ethnically and culturally diverse communities, women, youth, and young adults who have an interest in outdoor activities.
- **Expand our capacity to get more Minnesotans outdoors** by working with our partners to use innovative strategies and tools, such as online programming, digital applications, and self-led activities.
- **Maintain and enhance Minnesota's outdoor recreation system.** Ensure high-quality, easy-to-access and safe recreational opportunities for long-standing and new participants.

Four key trends informing Goal 2 strategies:

1. Participation in outdoor recreation is evolving, with changes in user demographics and some uses declining and others emerging or increasing.
2. Use of public outdoor spaces has been increasing, with people seeking both mental and physical health benefits of nature.
3. Demands on outdoor recreation infrastructure are increasing and changing, while funds for maintenance and upgrades are not keeping pace.
4. Minnesotans enjoy the outdoors in a wide range of ways, some of which can be difficult to accommodate in close proximity to other users or sensitive resources.

GOAL 3

Minnesota's natural resources contribute to strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities.

Minnesota's lands and waters define our state and are a major reason people choose to live, work, and play here. Sound natural resource-based economic development will ensure our state's competitive advantage. We have been successful in the past at growing a vibrant economy and protecting the land and water that make Minnesota among the nation's leaders in quality of life measures.

The following strategies serve to guide targeted actions related to Goal 3:

- **Manage for healthy, productive forests.** Ensure Minnesota's forests continue to provide a full range of values, including a sustainable supply of wood resources, outdoor recreation and tourism, wildlife, biodiversity, and clean water.
- **Develop and manage mineral resources responsibly.** Ensure mineral exploration and mining are environmentally sound and benefit the state's job markets, economies, and communities.
- **Sustain healthy watersheds and groundwater supplies.** Manage for clean, abundant water and flood protection as essential foundations of industry, agriculture, community growth and development, as well as recreation.

- **Support and grow Minnesota's nature-based tourism economy.** Create and maintain exceptional outdoor recreation experiences to create jobs, support local economies, and reduce health costs.
- **Manage school trust fund lands effectively and sustainably.** Provide revenue for Minnesota schools using fiscally responsible and sound natural resources management principles for oversight of school trust fund lands.

Four key trends informing Goal 3 strategies:

1. The forest products industry is responding to changing climatic conditions and consumer demand with adaptive management and creative wood-product uses.
2. The School Trust has emerging opportunities for new revenue but may lack the ability to make the necessary investments in its asset base.
3. Public investment in conservation and outdoor recreation is transforming local economies through increased tourism, new residents and businesses, improved tax revenues, and health care savings.
4. Water quality and water quantity are increasingly limiting factors for current and future economic activities and community needs.

GOAL 4

DNR demonstrates operational excellence and continuous improvement in service to Minnesotans.

Accomplishing our natural resource goals requires operational excellence. DNR must continually seek to improve efficiency and effectiveness on behalf of Minnesotans. Increasing efficiency alone cannot address today's conservation challenges that operate at a larger and more complex scale than in the past. Investing in our employees is crucial to maintain our ability to support core operations, be nimble in the face of new challenges, and recruit and retain tomorrow's workers. To succeed in a changing world, DNR staff must bring diverse perspectives, skills, and focus to their work.

The following strategies serve to guide targeted actions related to Goal 4:

- **Commit to workforce development.** Develop a workforce that is representative of all Minnesotans by enhancing a safe, respectful, and dynamic work environment to retain high-quality performers and continue to attract top talent.
- **Employ adaptive management practices.** Practice adaptive management, learning as we go, to respond to rapid and long-term changes, new insights, and unanticipated events, while delivering safe, effective, and efficient work processes.
- **Make smart investments to manage future operational costs.** Invest in DNR's facilities and fleet to ensure safe and effective delivery of public services and efficient internal operations for the long term.
- **Reduce energy use and invest in renewable energy.** Improve the efficiency of DNR facilities, vehicles, and equipment and increase our use of renewable energy in order to reduce our department's greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Enhance transparency.** Provide easy and transparent access to information so the public can understand and participate in the DNR's work.

Four key trends informing Goal 4 strategies:

1. Solving challenging community and natural resource issues is increasingly a collaborative endeavor requiring strong partnerships.
2. Minnesota's demographics are changing, affecting DNR's workforce, demand for services, and public engagement expectations.
3. Funding conservation requires more creativity and flexibility than it has in the past as traditional revenue sources, such as users-based funding, are insufficient to cover the breadth of DNR's work.
4. Costs of doing business are rising, and the public's expectations for how we deliver services are changing. Customers expect more online resources and programming, in addition to traditional services.

Priorities

Our strategic plan has nine priorities and three priority approaches.

The priorities are near-term focus areas for the DNR that support the four longer-term goals and associated strategies. The three priority approaches are foundational concepts intended to be applied when implementing all nine priorities.

While the goals will serve as guideposts for ten years or more, these priorities will be reconsidered and refreshed as needed by 2027. They are not intended to capture all the critical work we are doing, but to highlight the areas that require additional leadership and focus in order to make substantial near-term progress. The intent of the priorities is to: 1) create department-wide alignment and leadership focus, 2) support interdisciplinary collaboration around critical issues and opportunities, and 3) clearly articulate strategic direction of the DNR within the One Minnesota framework.

The nine DNR strategic priorities are:

Address Critical Natural Resource Issues Proactively

Manage for the sustained health of natural resources by addressing ongoing and emerging critical natural resource issues facing Minnesotans and our ecological systems.

Connect People to the Outdoors

Connect Minnesotans to the outdoors in meaningful ways that will contribute to human health, prosperity and quality of life, and will build stewardship for our special places and shared natural resources.

Consult and Collaborate with Tribal Governments

Consult and collaborate with tribal nations on shared natural resource management issues, responsibilities, and interests.

Cultivate a Healthy, Supportive, and Safe Workplace

Continue to support a workplace culture that is inclusive, respectful, and safe in order to recruit and retain a highly qualified, engaged, and diverse staff that will contribute to improved natural resources outcomes.

Enhance Public Engagement

Engage with Minnesotans to ensure the DNR considers all Minnesotans in providing services and creates durable natural resources decisions by better understanding their interests and building trust.

Ensure DNR's Financial Vitality

Fund the DNR mission and key priorities, in the short and long term, through design and implementation of a seamless budget and financial management structure.

Expand Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Enhance the DNR's ability to serve all Minnesotans by cultivating a workforce that reflects and embraces the diversity of Minnesota's population, and ensuring our programs, resources, and decision-making processes serve Minnesota's diverse population.

Manage Natural Resources Responsibly for Economic and Community Benefit

Contribute to sustainable jobs and community prosperity, while ensuring strong environmental stewardship, by supporting economic uses and enjoyment of natural resources in Minnesota.

Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

Conserve and manage the state's natural and cultural resources to address climate change in order to enhance ecosystems, infrastructure, and community resilience and ensure a healthy and equitable future for current and future generations of Minnesotans.

The following three priority-approaches will be integrated into implementation of all priorities:

Enhance One-DNR

Promote department-wide coordination and cooperation, while celebrating unique strengths and talents of our divisions and regions in order to advance the DNR's mission, goals, and priorities.

Expand Communications to Reach Wider Audiences

Incorporate proactive and strategic communications that connect to existing and new audiences using appropriate media platforms and approaches, in order to remain relevant and effectively deliver our information and messages.

Embed Consideration of Ecosystem Benefits in Our Work and Decisions

Consider all benefits of functioning ecosystems when managing natural resources in order to analyze and account for these benefits, communicate the value of natural resources, and inform decision making.

Performance Metrics

The DNR tracks progress on our goals, strategies and priorities through measurable performance indicators and conservation targets. We are committed to accountability and transparency in our work and strive to maintain a culture of continuous improvement. Through annual evaluation, reporting, and engagement, the DNR communicates conservation results to stakeholders and the public. The Performance and Accountability Report complements DNR's 10-year strategic plan by tracking metrics that describe natural resource conditions and management activities. Key measures include:

Goal 1: Natural Resources Conservation

- Performance Measure: acres of habitat protected, enhanced, and restored
- Performance Measure: number of species in greatest conservation need for which we have updated status or habitat information identified in the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan
- Performance Measure: number of river and stream restoration projects connecting and or improving aquatic habitats and stream function

Goal 2: Outdoor Recreation

- Performance Measure: percent of visitors using state parks, trails and recreation areas by sector and demographics
- Performance Measure: number of accessible state parks and trails

Goal 3: Natural Resources Economy

- Performance Measure: income from state mineral leases
- Performance Measure: forestry economic impact on local communities
- Performance Measure: state parks and trails economic impact on local communities

Goal 4: Operational Excellence

- Performance Measure: percent of energy use in DNR facilities and fleet
- Performance Measure: number of individuals recruited into DNR workforce development programs who identify as BIPOC, women, and or individuals with disabilities

Department Structure and Divisional Work

DNR conserves and manages the state’s waters and natural lands, including forests, wetlands, and native prairies. We provide enriching public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, camping, skiing, hiking, biking, motorized recreation, and conservation education for Minnesotans of all ages and backgrounds. The department provides economic opportunities in a manner consistent with sound natural resource conservation and management principles. We work with partners and the public to manage for a variety of interests and values.

The DNR’s work is rooted in natural resources management and environmental protection. Healthy natural systems are critical for thriving communities. By managing for the sustained health of natural resources, the DNR contributes to community health and economic opportunity. In this work, the agency is also committed to mitigating and adapting to climate change and enhancing the climate resiliency of natural systems and communities now and into the future.

The DNR is committed to providing all Minnesotans with equitable access to outdoor spaces and the benefits afforded by a healthy environment. In addition, the DNR is focused on attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects Minnesota’s diversity.

The DNR is one department, working through seven divisions, organized into four geographical regions. The divisions each offer expertise to help achieve our mission, while the regions allow for in-depth local community knowledge and engagement. All divisions and regions work together under the same mission, goals, and priorities. Each division is described briefly below, with information representing its core work.

Ecological and Water Resources

The DNR Ecological and Water Resources Division helps realize a vision of healthy lands and waters throughout Minnesota by delivering integrated land and water resource conservation.

Consistent with DNR’s mission, the division supports sustainable economic development, enhances rare wildlife and native plant populations, and protects aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems from the negative impacts of invasive species.

DNR’s ecological and water resources work falls into three main areas:

- Conservation assistance and regulation
- Ecosystem management and protection
- Inventory, monitoring, and analysis

Enforcement

As the primary conservation law enforcement agency in Minnesota, the DNR Enforcement Division plays an important role in connecting people to the outdoors and conserving and enhancing Minnesota's natural resources by providing outreach, safety training, law enforcement, and emergency services throughout the state.

Our enforcement work spans four main areas:

- Fish and game education, protection and enforcement
- Recreational safety and enforcement
- Natural resource protection and enforcement
- Public safety

Fish and Wildlife

The DNR Fish and Wildlife Division strives to sustain healthy populations of fish and wildlife, high quality recreational opportunities, and vibrant local economies. We manage fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. We facilitate use of these public resources, including fishing, hunting, and trapping, through skill-building and other programs. We also serve people seeking hunting and fishing licenses and recreational vehicle registration and titling.

We organize our fish and wildlife work across four categories:

- Monitor and manage fish and wildlife populations
- Protect, restore, and enhance key fish and wildlife lands
- Connect people to the outdoors through hunting, fishing, and engagement
- Administer hunting and fishing licenses and recreational vehicle titles and registrations

Forestry

The DNR Forestry Division aims to help sustain community well-being and quality of life by improving the productivity, health, diversity, accessibility, and use of forests. Healthy forests provide clean water, carbon storage, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and forest-related products.

The division also provides wildfire protection for 45.5 million acres of public and private land.

DNR achieves the state's forestry goals by:

- Wildfire prevention and response
- Leading forest management and policy development
- Providing technical assistance to communities and private landowners

Lands and Minerals

The DNR Lands and Minerals Division regulates mining to protect natural resources and the environment. This includes both currently operating and proposed mines, as well as the reclamation of mining areas for future use once mining is complete. The mine land reclamation activity promotes a healthy environment with sustainable use of natural resources and contributes to a strong natural resource-based economy.

The division's land management responsibilities include real estate services for the Department such as appraisals, title work, leasing, and sales. Land management also includes oversight of school and university trust lands, which generate revenue by leasing surface lands and mineral rights. These funds go to public school districts throughout the state and the University of Minnesota and its students. In addition, the DNR manages minerals on tax-forfeited land, providing revenue to local school districts, counties, cities, and townships.

DNR lands and minerals falls in three areas of work:

- Mine permitting and reclamation
- Minerals management
- Real estate management

Operations Services

The Operations Services Division provides department-wide operational support and services for the DNR. The division's work spans a number of services that are more efficiently provided in a centralized manner.

The DNR's internal operations support includes:

- Budget management
- Human resources
- Facilities and asset management
- Vehicles and equipment
- Safety
- Communication and outreach
- Planning services

Parks and Trails

The DNR Parks and Trails Division aspires to provide unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire people to pass along the love of the outdoors to current and future generations.

State parks and trails improve the lives of individuals, children and families by connecting them to nature, helping them to stay healthy and fit, strengthening local communities and economies, and conserving Minnesota's special places and resources.

Each year, the DNR serves millions of out-of-state visitors and Minnesotans alike. There is a state park, trail, recreation area, or forest campground within 30 miles of most people in the state.

DNR's parks and trails work falls into three major categories:

- Develop and manage state parks, trails, recreation areas, forests and water recreation opportunities
- Work with outdoor recreation partners to provide a seamless outdoor recreation system at the local, regional, state and federal levels
- Deliver natural resources education and interpretive programming



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