

## Ecological and Water Resources

The DNR's Division of Ecological and Water Resources' mission is to promote and protect healthy lands and waters in Minnesota. We accomplish this goal using the full-breadth of the Division's four operational sections:

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



*Scenic view of Sugarloaf Cove SNA*

## Ecological and Water Resources Land Acquisitions

The DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources regularly collaborates with The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Lands, Minnesota Land Trust, Friends of the Mississippi River, and The Conservation Fund to acquire land to ensure that:

- the state's natural heritage is not lost from any ecological region of Minnesota
- the state's Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) system provides people with opportunities for scientific study and compatible nature-based recreation and education



*Swedes Forest SNA*

## Land acquisition programs

### Scientific and Natural Areas (fee title and easement)

The Scientific and Natural Areas program administers 192,000 acres of land, including nearly 170,000 acres of peatlands, within 67 of Minnesota's 87 counties. The SNA program prioritizes acquiring lands to:

- protect rare animal habitat and plant species
- protect native plant communities or unique geological features from being harmed or destroyed
- sustain natural features and public benefits

- provide public access for compatible nature-based recreation and education
- connect SNAs to other protected lands to develop larger conservation areas

### Native Prairie Bank (easement)

The Native Prairie Bank has worked with private landowners to place conservation easements on more than 150 remnant prairie lands. These efforts have permanently protected nearly 14,000 acres of high quality land. Native Prairie Bank easements prioritize acquiring lands that:

- provide protection of native remnant prairie on private lands
- support protecting lands identified by MN Prairie Conservation Plan Priority Areas
- protect the quality and diversity of the prairie including habitat for rare species



*Native prairie land*

### Local government engagement on land acquisitions

Throughout the acquisition process, Ecological and Water Resources completes local government engagement as required by department policy or funding source. For example:

- all acquisitions (fee-title and conservation easement) require county board notification per DNR policy
- all fee-title acquisitions require county and township board notification and county board approval
- all acquisitions purchased using Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) funding require county board approval

### Contact

Molly Roske, SNA Program Supervisor, 651-259-5094