

FA 02: THE MINNESOTA FOREST RECOVERY PROJECT – PHASE II



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT FORESTS FOR WILDLIFE

The Need

Protecting, restoring and enhancing Minnesota's forests is critical for the long-term viability of both game and non-game species. From the ovenbird to the ruffed grouse, maintaining well-connected and diverse forest habitats will ensure our forests remain healthy and resilient for wildlife.



Phase I Success

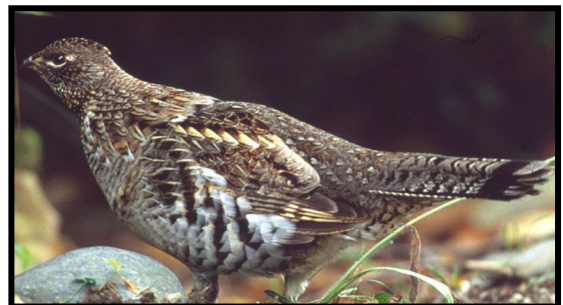
- **Enhanced 4882** acres of forests to increase habitat value for diverse species, exceeding 2,465 acre target. Currently under budget, and expect ~ 1000 additional acres by Phase I close on June 30, 2022.
- Now poised to increase pace and scale of enhancement for greater impact and add a conservation easement component.



Phase II Goals—Acceleration

Main goals of the project are to:

- **Protect** : 7300 acres of forests through conservation easements in key locations to conserve habitat and critical corridors in northern Minnesota.
- **Enhance**: 23,780 acres of degraded forests in priority locations in northern Minnesota.



This project benefits a wide diversity of species that rely on healthy, connected, functioning forests (from top left clockwise: brook trout, fisher, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, and evening grosbeak).

Funding Request: \$9,579,000; approx. 2/3 allocated to habitat enhancement, 1/3 to easements acquisition.



MINNESOTA FOREST RECOVERY PROJECT PARTNERS



Details-Protection

Forest Protection activities will:

- Acquire conservation easements to fill protection gaps within large expanses of conserved forest in northern Minnesota.
- Focus on the largest and most important gaps in the [Resilient and Connected Lands Network](#).
- Conserve areas identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey, surface water features, and the like.
- Avoid forest fragmentation and the costly extension of services to remote areas.
- Keep private lands on the tax rolls.

Details-Enhancement

Enhancement Treatments and Strategies include:

- Site prep. including shearing, brush cutting, and removal of trees killed by spruce budworm.
- Tree planting and browse protection.
- Coordinating activities across multiple landowners to maintain or increase both young and mature forest patches and structural diversity.
- Prescribed burning.
- Black ash stand diversification to prepare for emerald ash borer.



Enhancements such as brushsaw shrub removal, prescribed burning, or winter shearing create young forest and open habitats, and can serve as site prep. for planting. This prescribed burn also encourages culturally important blueberries. Photo credit: Lane Johnson.



Planting adds species and structural diversity, recovers forest conditions where it is “stuck” in brushy conditions, and improves resilience. TNC oversaw planting of 1.36 million trees in 2021, in part with Forest Recovery Project—Phase I funds. Photo credit: Jim Manolis.