

# **Forest Legacy & MN Forests For the Future Programs**

**MN DNR – Division of Forestry**

Christine Ostern, Forest Legacy Program Coordinator

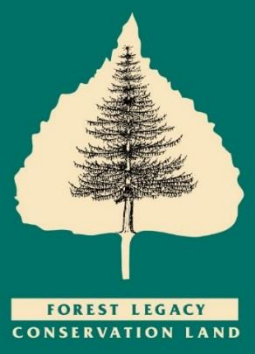
# MN DNR Forest Legacy

**Two** programs:

- 1) **Forest Legacy Program** (federal), and
- 2) **MN Forests For the future** (state)

- **Complementary** forestland protection programs
- **Administered statewide by DNR Forestry**
- **Focus is on protecting private forestlands for multiple purposes including timber and jobs, recreation, wildlife and watershed needs. Goal is to prevent parcelization, fragmentation and conversion of forest.**
- Forest land protection through **conservation easements** and some fee title ownership





# Federal Forest Legacy Program

## Forest Legacy Program

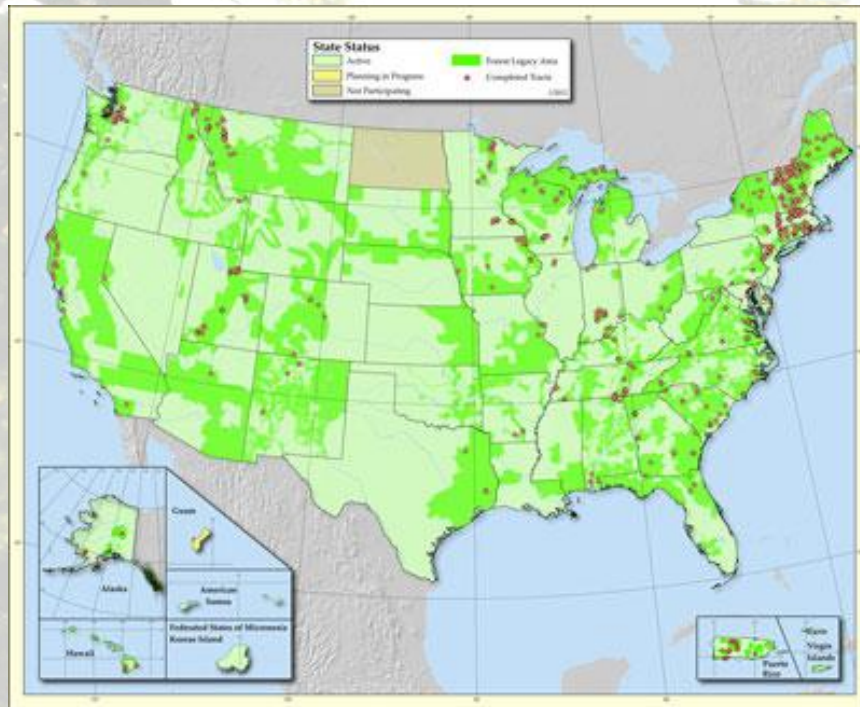
National Program - established 1990; Administered by U.S. Forest Service. Minnesota entered program in 2000

Partnership program provides matching funds to states for eligible projects. Funded Projects must conform to Federal Guidelines

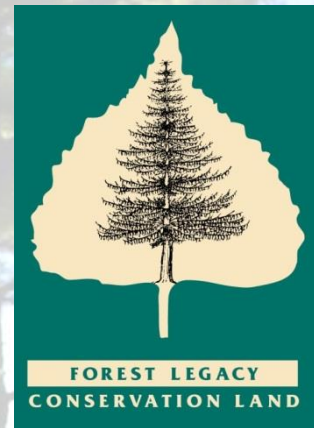
“protect environmentally important private forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.”

Geographic Scope: State identified focus areas called Forest Legacy Areas

# Federal Forest Legacy Program



**3 million  
acres  
protected  
nationally**



**The Federal Forest Legacy Program was the first national effort to protect forests with Working Forest Conservation Easements (WFCE)**

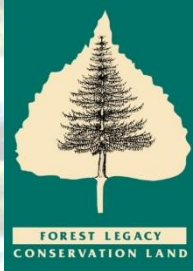
MN is included in the northeast region with assigned federal contacts and representation on regional committees.



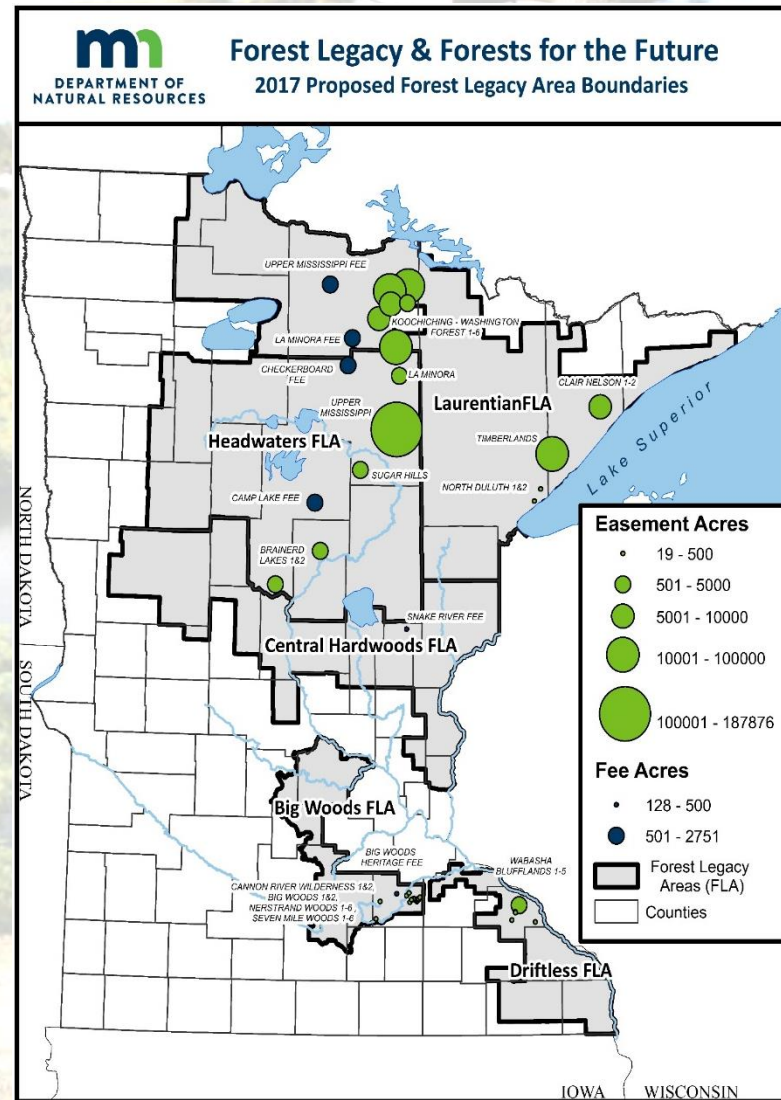


# Federal Forest Legacy Program

## Forest Legacy Areas



Federally Funded projects must be within a designated Forest Legacy Area



# Minnesota Forests for the Future Program

## Minnesota Forests for the Future

Established by Legislature in 2008 (ML84.66)

The lead or umbrella program for working forest conservation easements

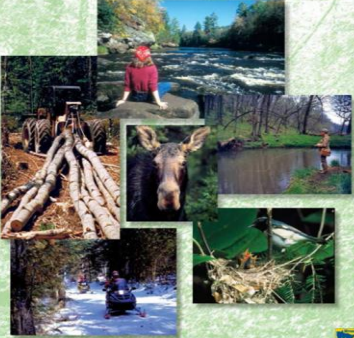
“protects private, working forest lands for their timber, scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, and other cultural and environmental values.”

Geographic Scope: Statewide



## Minnesota Forests for the Future

Conserving Minnesota's working forest lands to meet the state's future recreation, economic, and ecological needs.



Strategic Report of the DNR Commissioner's Advisory Team on the Minnesota Forests for the Future Program • April 2008

# Minnesota Forests for the Future Program Priority Forests

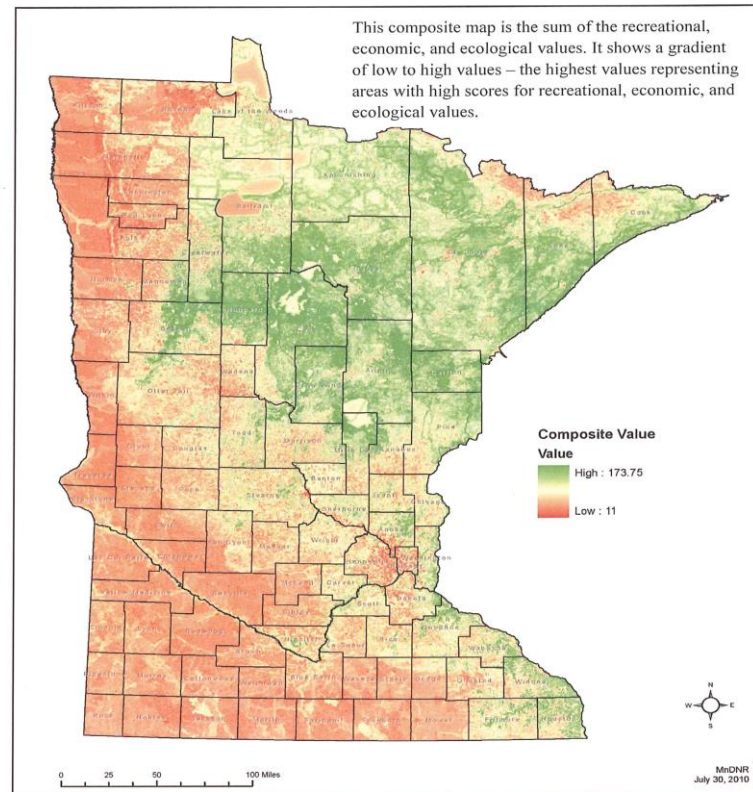
Forests with High Public Benefits (recreational, economic, and ecological)

Forests for the Future

Composite Value Map (recreational, economic, and ecological values)

The Minnesota Forests for the Future Program is focused on forest lands throughout the state that provide multiple benefits – environmental, recreational, and economic.

Dark green shades indicate areas of interest based on a 2011 analysis of recreational, economic and ecological values.



Note: Although this map shows the whole state, it is just for assessing the combined recreational, economic, and ecological values of forest lands. The areas with the lowest values (red tones) are typically areas that were masked out in the forest-product-focused economic value map. The analysis for that map did not include non-forest areas nor did it include the BWCA, Voyageurs National Park, and State Parks because they are not managed for timber-based forest products.



# Conservation Easement –DNR Programs

## Conservation Easement Numbers and Acres

Easement Type	Number	Acres
ACUB	6	814
<b>Aquatic Management*</b>	19	1,378
Cave	2	219
<b>Forest Legacy*</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>135,941</b>
<b>Forests for the Future*</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>224,491</b>
Metro Greenways	16	662
Northern Pike Spawning	8	87
Other Conservation	41	2,792
<b>Native Prairie Bank*</b>	139	12,134
SNA-Conservation	13	816
<b>Trout Stream*</b>	735	5,664
Waterbank	20	1,154
Wild and Scenic River	136	3,959
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>390,111</b>

*5% of  
easements*

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*93% of  
acres*

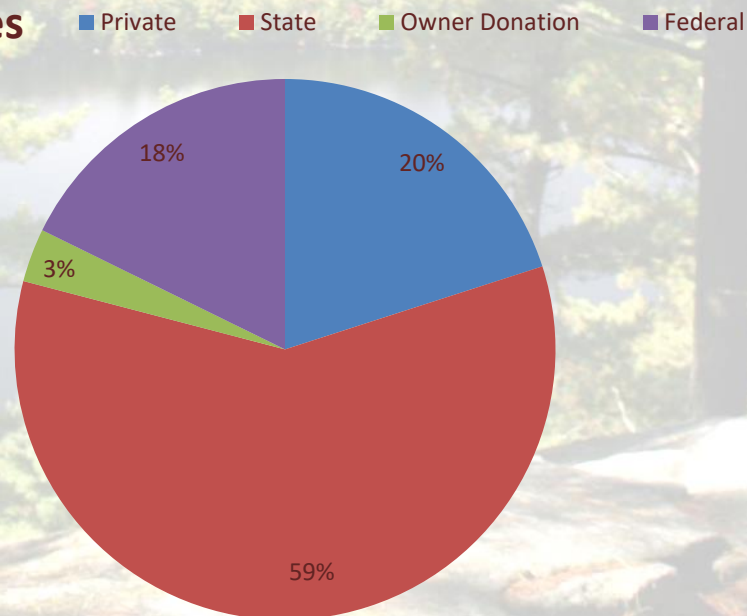
\* active programs



# Conservation Easements-Purchased Easements – DNR Forestry Easement Funding Breakdown

Private	State	Owner Donation	Federal
\$18,148,010	\$53,482,590	\$2,897,328	\$16,065,625

**Funding sources**



# Acquiring Forestry Conservation Easements

## Land Eligibility

- Forestland ( $\geq 75\%$  forested); on a case by case basis non-forest may be included.
- 20 acre minimum; exceptions can be made. Larger parcels are targeted.

## Parcel Prioritization criteria

- Size (larger is higher priority)
- Strategic location – near/adjacent to other protected land
- Environmental benefits-habitat, watershed
- Public Access Opportunities
- Timber, economic (“working forests”)
- Partner support

*Aligns well with program (funder goals and plans).*



# Acquisition Process

- Property evaluated using program ranking process
- Property evaluated & approved using DNR's Strategic Land Asset Management metrics
- County Coordination done
- DNR Land Records Systems entry
- DNR Realty Specialist assigned
- Draft legal description prepared by DNR surveyor
- Fair market appraisal and review appraisal (contracted by DNR externally)
- Title review, legal review, purchase agreements, closing, recording completed by DNR staff
- Baseline Property Report and certified Forest Stewardship Plan
- Annual monitoring begins following year



# Types of restrictions typically included

Easement terms are negotiated jointly by the landowner and the holder and are designed to target rights necessary to accomplish the conservation objectives. Typical restrictions include:

- Buildings or other developments
- Subdivision
- Surface alteration & mining - limited gravel
- Industrial, commercial and agricultural use
- Public Access – (landowners choice)





# Forest and Vegetation Management

## Forestry Legacy Easements

Harvesting and other forest management are permitted subject to:

1. A state approved forest management plan (Forest Stewardship Plan or equivalent).
2. The use of applicable site level forest management guidelines (BMPs)



*Other easement programs vary with regard to timber harvest and forest management.*



# Conservation Easement Stewardship

The Division of Forestry conducts **annual** monitoring visits of all Forest Legacy/MN Forests For the Future conservation easements which includes:

- On-site inspections
- Landowner meetings
- Review of Forest Stewardship Plans, easement terms and previous year's monitoring report
- Monitoring report and photos completed and filed.

Funding is deposited for each conservation easement at time of acquisition into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account. Amounts are determined through use of a Stewardship Calculator. The Stewardship Account is used to fund all monitoring and enforcement costs.



# What makes DNR Forest Legacy different than other programs?

- **Protecting working forests** – *forest management, stewardship, timber and non-timber activities, roads and trails, forest recreation...are allowed.*
- **Public access – landowner choice**
- **Size** – target is larger properties
- **Wetland, grassland and other non-forest cover types can be included**
- **Value determined by independent fair market appraisal**
- **Costs paid by state** (except clearing title issues)
- **DNR staff work closely with landowner before, during and after; same staff conducting annual monitoring visits**
- **Can be modified to fit land and negotiated with landowner**
- **Can allow sale of carbon credits**



# Our Partners in Conservation



Division Partners  
EWR –LAM–FAW

MN SWCDs

THE  
CONSERVATION FUND



MINNESOTA FOREST INDUSTRIES



State Forest Stewardship Committee



Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce





MOLPUS WOODLANDS GROUP®

**Landowner Partners:** Marlow

**Private landowners** Timberlands

**Corporate Landowners**

The Biofore Company

Rajala Companies



**UPM**





# Thank you

If you have questions, please ask!

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