

# Natural Solutions for Climate and Water Quality



© Mark Godfrey/TNC

## Bonding for Forests HF1174 (Lippert) / SF977 (Senjem)

This bill includes three DNR programs that benefit Minnesota’s forests and expand their potential to sequester and prevent future release of carbon.

### **Forests for the Future:** \$5 million

This DNR program provides a one-time payment to private landowners who enroll their forest land in a permanent conservation easement, which requires the forest remain intact and have a sustainable timber harvest plan for logging that preserves the health of the forest.

Lands enrolled in the program protect watershed health, provide habitat for wildlife and rare species, and ensure a consistent source of timber and other forest products.

### **Reforestation:** \$5 million

This DNR program expands the state’s ability (on state-owned lands) to have crews plant and replant trees after timber harvests or in places that were historically forested and are not currently forested. The trees planted are state assets.



© Richard Hamilton Smith

### **Expanding State Tree Nursery Capacity:** \$5 million

The state operates nursery facilities to provide seedlings for state-owned lands, members of the public, and NGOs. State tree nurseries cannot keep up with their own need, let alone public and NGO demand.

To mitigate carbon emissions, the state needs more trees to plant and to start introducing new southerly species to Minnesota. Investments in state nurseries and increasing their production will help these efforts.

## **Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs) & Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs)** HF1168 (Reyer) /SF1650 (Johnson Stewart) - \$4 million

This bill includes two programs that allow DNR to acquire land that is publicly accessible under particular designations. We recommend \$2 million for each program.

- **Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs)** tend to be shoreland that helps protect critical waterways while also offering access to anglers.
- **Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs)** are often home to rare species of plants, animals, or geologic features and are accessible to birders, hikers, and photographers.

## **Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Working Grasslands** HF1752 (Huot) / SF1725 (Eken) - \$3 million

This program provides a one-time payment to private grassland and ranchland owners to enroll their land in a permanent easement that prevents further development. Landowners may continue to graze animals or hay on the property, so long as the grassland remains intact. Working grasslands provide multiple benefits and sequester carbon, improve groundwater quality, and support grassland-based animal agriculture.

The legislature in 2018 provided \$1 million to create this program under RIM and landowners are now participating. We expect increased demand as landowners become aware of the program and recommend continued investment in this program to meet demand.



© Richard Hamilton Smith