

Subject Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve

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Overview

This bill would establish the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve consisting of lowland conifer stands within state forests. It requires the commissioner of natural resources to identify and map lands within the reserve. Certain land management requirements and timber and peat harvesting restrictions would apply within the reserve.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Additional revenues; priority.
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Adds the amount necessary to compensate the permanent school fund (PSF) for school trust lands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve to the prioritized list of amounts to be transferred from the general fund when there is a positive general fund balance at the end of the biennium.

2	Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve.
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Subd. 1. Definition. Defines “lowland conifer stands” for purposes of the new Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve as treed wetlands that occur on mucky mineral or wet organic soils, that include black spruce, tamarack, and white cedar cover types, including stagnant stands. Specifies that the cover types include three wetland forest systems (wet forest, rich forest peatland, and acid peatland).

Subd. 2. Establishment. States that the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve is established to mitigate climate change and protect ecologically unique areas and includes all stands in the state forest system that are lowland conifer stands, including the underlying peatlands associated or adjoining each stand. Requires the commissioner of natural resources to designate the areas within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve and submit a report listing all stands within the reserve to the legislature by January 1, 2024. Requires the commissioner to submit maps locating the areas to the legislature by July 1, 2024.

Section **Description**

Subd. 3. Caron sequestration; reports. Requires the commissioner to submit a report to the legislature listing all stands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve that are 90 years of age or older and to estimate the carbon sequestered by January 1, 2025. Requires the report to be updated and submitted every five years thereafter. Requires the commissioner to submit a report to the legislature identifying any bogs and peatlands in the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve and estimate the carbon sequestered by January 1, 2025.

Subd. 4. Productive stands. Requires the commissioner to submit a report to the legislature with a list and map of all productive stands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve and which stands were harvested within the last five years by January 1, 2025. Requires the report to be updated every January 15 thereafter.

Subd. 5. Timber harvesting restrictions. Allows timber harvesting in the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve only if the stand is less than 90 years of age and the stand is accessible to heavy logging equipment. States that stands accessible for only part of the year may be harvested only during times the stand is accessible.

Subd. 6. Peat harvesting restrictions. Prohibits a person from harvesting peat within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve except under a permit issued before the peat was included in the reserve.

Subd. 7. Management. Requires the commissioner to manage stands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve passively to the extent possible and requires regeneration of harvested sands to be done naturally.

Subd. 8. Drained lands. Requires the commissioner to identify tax-forfeited lands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve that were drained for agricultural purposes and to make reasonable efforts to restore the lands to their original hydrological condition.

Subd. 9. School trust lands. Requires the commissioner to compensate the PSF for the school trust lands within the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve. States that to the extent money is available under the previous section, the commissioner must extinguish the school trust lands interest. Specifies that payments for lands without commercial value must be compensated at an amount equal to \$500 per acre and lands with commercial value must be compensated at a rate agreed to by the commissioner and the school trust lands director.

Subd. 10. Existing contracts and legislation. States that obligations, including permits, leases, and legislative directives in effect before the designation are not impacted by this section and continue until they expire or are removed.

Subd. 11. Sunset. States that the section expires December 31, 1999.

Section	Description
3	Appropriation. Provides an unspecified appropriation from the general fund to the commissioner for purposes of the Lowland Conifer Carbon Reserve.



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