



## Foraging on State Lands

Background Information Presented to the  
Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force

# Agenda

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Public Land Management
- Overview of Outdoor Recreation System
- Foraging on Public Lands
- Statutory and Rule Clarifications
- Management Challenges
- Invasive Species
- Education and Outreach
- Implementation Questions



# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Public Land Management

- *The mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to work with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.*
- **Public lands managed by the DNR**
  - 64 State Parks; 9 Recreation Areas, 235,000 acres
  - 60 State Forests, 4.2 million acres
  - 700+ Aquatic Management Areas; 1,500+ Wildlife Management Areas, 1.37 million acres
  - 168 Scientific and Natural Areas, 190,000 acres

# Overview of Outdoor Recreation System

- The outdoor recreation system is comprised of different units that are authorized, established, and administered to accomplish the purpose and objectives of its classification (Minn. Stat. 86A.04).
- **Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 5)**
  - To protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed state those natural features which possess exceptional scientific or educational value.
- **State Forests (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 7)**
  - To provide for multiple uses, including sustained timber and other production, outdoor recreation, and environmental purposes.
- **State Parks (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 2)**
  - To preserve, protect, and perpetuate Minnesota's natural features and provide for their use, enjoyment, and understanding without impairment for the enjoyment and recreation of future generations.
- **Wildlife Management Areas (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 8)**
  - To protect lands and waters that have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage the lands and waters for the production of wildlife for public hunting, fishing, trapping, and other compatible recreational uses.
- **Aquatic Management Areas (Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 14)**
  - To protect, develop, and manage lakes, rivers, streams, and adjacent wetlands that are critical for fish and other aquatic life, water quality, biological value, and fishing and other compatible recreational uses.

# Foraging on Public Lands

- Minnesota's land management jurisdiction is a shared responsibility, with state, county, federal, and local entities each having specific roles. DNR's management authority exists only over state lands.
- Land uses, including foraging, are managed differently on DNR-managed public lands due to a number of variables including statutory purposes and management direction, funding requirements, federal law, extent of the land base, etc. and treaty rights.
  - **Statute/Rule:**
    - Minn. Stat. 90.195 provides DNR the authority to issue special use and product permits.
    - Minn. Rules 6100.0900 prohibits removal of plants, except edible plants and mushrooms, from State Forests and State Parks.
  - **Funding:**
    - Federal funding received from USFWS may restrict uses to ensure lands are managed for wildlife.
  - **Treaties:**
    - Many treaties include specific areas and resources that can be harvested.

# Statutory and Rule Clarifications

No definition of:

- “Personal use” – this term is not defined in rule for any land type, except for wild ginseng (Minn. R. 6282.0400).
- “Edible fruit” – this term can be interpreted differently (either colloquially or botanically)
- “Decorative portions of plants” – this term could be interpreted widely to mean any part of a plant that does not kill the plant.
- Personal possession limits



# Management Challenges

- Plant localized and population impacts, lack of detailed population data (i.e., ramps and fiddlehead ferns)
  - Minnesota Biological Survey
- Potential overharvest
- Difficulty determining the effects of plant harvest when viewed with other recreational uses, climate impacts, natural disaster events, etc.
- Foraging requires a careful understanding of the plants harvested and look alike species.
- Improperly identified wild foods can pose serious health risks.
- Establishment of user-created trails or create areas of increased erosion
- Potential spread of invasive species, impact to threatened/endangered species



# Invasive Species

## Potential invasive species transfer

- Terrestrial Invasive Species
- Golden Oyster Mushrooms and other mushrooms sold online



# Education and Outreach

- DNR currently does not have a centralized page describing foraging rules and land types
- Foraging requirements vary across different units of the Outdoor Recreation Act (i.e., State Forests, State Parks, etc.) and can be challenging to apply/interpret
- DNR manages 5.6 million acres and signage and messaging requires significant resources
- Diverse community outreach and translation needs
- Current lack of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for foraging



# Implementation Questions

- What is a long-term source of funding or revenue to research and manage state lands for foraging?
- What is a long-term source of funding for the Minnesota Biological Survey to acquire adequate plant population data?
- How should the state ensure Tribal engagement occurs timely where known culturally significant sites are located to avoid unintended impacts?
- What are the right organizations and communication tools to efficiently and inclusively conduct stakeholder engagement?

# Questions?