

Sustainable Foraging Task Force



Meeting 3: October 8th, 2025

Welcome and purpose

- Welcome
- Adoption of previous meeting minutes
- Purpose and duties of Task Force

Purpose of Task Force

Gather and review information on the impact of foraging on species resilience, ecosystem health, and other aspects of Minnesota's biomes, solicit public input when appropriate, and develop recommendations for foraging guidelines reduced-price foraging permits.

Recommendations must be specific, actionable, and consistent with Indigenous and other cultural practices and traditions.

The task force must submit a written report to the commissioner of natural resources and to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over natural resources policy.

The recommendations must detail proposals for changes or additions to statute or rules.

Duties of Task Force

- **gather and review data and information**, including **traditional ecological knowledge**, on the **impact of foraging** on species resilience, ecosystem health, and other aspects of Minnesota's diverse biomes;
- **review existing regulations** governing foraging activities on **state lands**;
- **develop recommendations** for science-based, including traditional ecological knowledge, **foraging guidelines for state lands** that balance public access and foraging opportunities with conservation needs. The recommendations must be in the form of **draft statutory or rule language and must be consistent with Indigenous and other cultural practices and traditions**;
- develop **recommendations for increasing public understanding of sustainable foraging practices** that include safety and ecological considerations;
- **solicit public input**, when appropriate; and
- develop **recommendations for reduced-priced foraging permits**.

Task Force meetings

Meeting	Purpose/focus (<i>italics: tentative or details to be confirmed</i>)
1. August 20, 2025 – noon-2:00pm	Learning: foraging basics
2. September 9, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Learning: MN and other states' statutes & rules
3. October 8, 2025 – noon-2:00pm	Learning: DNR information; MN foraging history and context
October 20, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Foraging field trip, Ft. Snelling State Park
<i>Dates/times TBD (likely Oct., Nov., Dec.)</i>	Public listening sessions for input from members of the public
4. October 21, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Learning: <i>foraging practices (including indigenous perspectives)</i>
5. November 18, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Learning: <i>foraging practices (including indigenous perspectives)</i> ; Recommendations: ideas, including those noted in meetings etc.
6. December 2, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Recommendations: create and discuss; <i>additional learning</i>
7. December 16, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Recommendations: discuss and refine; <i>additional learning</i>
8. January 6, 2026 – 11:00am-1:00pm	Recommendations: refine
9. January 27, 2027 – 10:00am-noon	Recommendations: finalize
10. February (date and time TBD)	Report: discuss draft

Agenda

- Welcome and purpose
- Agenda and introductions
- Task Force member interview results
- Adopt charter
- Presentation: Information from DNR
- Presentation: MN Foraging history and context
- Discussion: Scope of task force
- Next steps
- Public input
- Adjourn

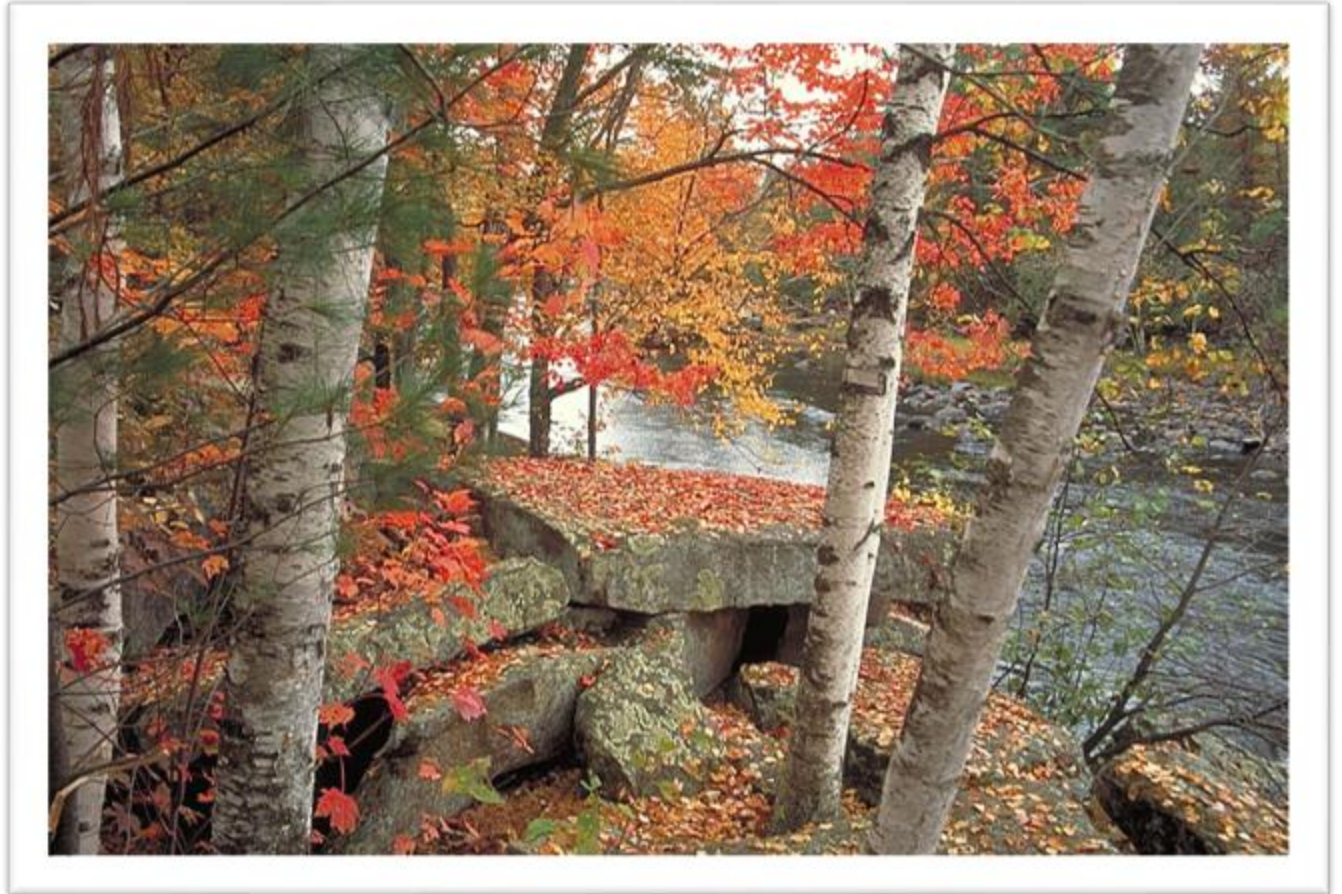
Introductions

- Name and organization



Interview results

- 13 of the 17 members responded to interview invitations
- Results are themes that emerged



Known context

DNR lands: 5.6 million acres, 4 biomes, 59 state forests, school trust acres, forested lands, 1800 wildlife management areas, 66 state parks, nine recreation areas, 9 waysides, 166 scientific and natural areas, 700 aquatic management areas. **Managed by different divisions within DNR and each have different goals, laws, statutes, and rules**

[MN DNR Background Info \(Task Force Mtg. 1, 8-20-25\)](#)

Foraging occurs for a variety of reasons – food, medicine, recreation, art, and cultural purposes.

More people on lands requires more resources to monitor and educate.

Foraging may not be perceived by all stakeholders as a legitimate recreational activity on state lands, like hunting or fishing.

Scope

What's in?	Unknown	What's out?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State lands• Personal use• Terrestrial plant species• Mushrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County managed state land• Aquatic plant species (e.g., cat tails)• Non-food plant species (e.g., birch bark, spruce tops)• Aquatic species (e.g., invasive crayfish)• Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tribal, Federal, and private lands• Commercial use• Maple syruping and wild rice (given already established rules and regulations)

Scope – additional considerations

- Native, near native versus non-native or invasive species
- Species that may be particularly impacted by climate change
- *“Two sides of the coin – a) accessibility for everyone and b) species longevity and diversity. Both have value.”*



Success: Shared hopes

- Clear, simple recommendations resulting in accessible foraging on state lands.
- Recommendations accepted by DNR and legislature.
- Balanced, finding middle ground
- Support for cultural practices, including those of MN tribes

Hope we can provide suggestions for new rules or new guidance that is clear and understandable, meets the recreational needs/desires of multiple groups.

That legislature can act upon recommendations. Be very thoughtful that they are as specific as possible so that they're actionable.

Have recommendations that are acceptable to both pro-foraging open access and natural resource managers that want to conserve.

There are certain culturally significant species for our task force to be aware of.

Tensions: Shared concerns

- Balancing accessibility now, with conservation long term
- Balancing individual rights today, with protection for tomorrow

Not erring too far in either direction. Trying to protect nature by keeping us out of it, or foraging rules too wide and not being good stewards. Thoughtful, clear approach. "I do think we can come up with something that allows humans to forage and also allows nature to thrive."

Some might consider sustainable foraging to mean very limited quantities and locations. Others might say we've been foraging in Minnesota for 100 years and haven't seen any species being affected. If not detrimental, why do we need rules and regs? "Don't make rules – we've been doing it and doing fine". Finding that balance.

Important Actions for Consideration

- Defining **key terms** (e.g. sustainable foresting, boundary of personal use)
- Clarify how **different rules apply to different lands**
- Determine when a **permit** is needed
- Explore **certification or education programs** (model from other outdoor recreation programs)
- Explore potential **ripple effects** of expanded foraging (good and bad)
- Consider **whether different rules, rights or restrictions** apply to different groups/foraging purposes (e.g., tribal or non-tribal members, food or medicine)
- Consider development of **standard criteria that would trigger limits on foraging**
- Recognize that we are **not going to solve all of the issues** across the landscape... and what we come up with may be **the best for now**, but not appropriate in 5 years

Themes related to task force operations

- Charter: No modifications suggested.
- Suggestions that each meeting include a reminder of:
 - Task force purpose and member duties
 - Operating agreements
- Perspectives: individual; representing an organization
 - Appointees selected by organizations based on knowledge and expertise
 - Knowledge and expertise are grounded in the organizations members represent – but members are not necessarily speaking *for* their organization
 - Members should feel empowered to share their opinions and expertise – and indicate if they are speaking formally on behalf of the organization they represent
 - If the TF needs formal/official DNR perspective, this will be requested from the TF DNR liaisons (Bob Meier and John Waters)

Adopt Task Force charter

Key sections

- Meetings
- **Operating agreements**
- **Ending discussion and reaching closure**
- Dispute resolution
- Subcommittees
- Roles – duties

Operating agreements

- Say your name before speaking
- If online, cameras on whenever possible
- Come to meetings prepared. Review agenda and materials in advance.
- Take space, make space
- Refrain from side conversations
- Show respect to members and presenters
- Be open-minded and curious about others' opinions, viewpoints, and lived experiences
- Recognize that time or research may be needed before questions are answered
- Focus on the issue, not the people
- Assume good intent but acknowledge harm

Ending discussion and reaching closure

Task force discussions will seek consensus using a gradients of agreement scale, such as the [Fist to Five](#) tool to ensure the six duties of the task force are executed and for internal task force processes, such as approving this charter.

A formal process to finalize the complete list of recommendations developed by the task force will be followed:

- Voting will only take place if a simple majority of members is present.
 - As of the current charter draft, 17 members have been appointed; the presence of 9 members represents quorum
 - With all 19 members appointed, the presence of 10 members will be a simple majority and represent quorum
- Each member shall have one vote, regardless of their affiliation or role on the task force
- There is no voting by proxy
- Participants can choose to abstain from a vote
- Decisions will be finalized when 80% of voting participants indicate agreement
- Every effort will be made to address members' concerns before decisions are made

While these recommendations are advisory, the task force's input will inform the decisions of DNR staff, the commissioner of natural resources, and legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over natural resources policy.

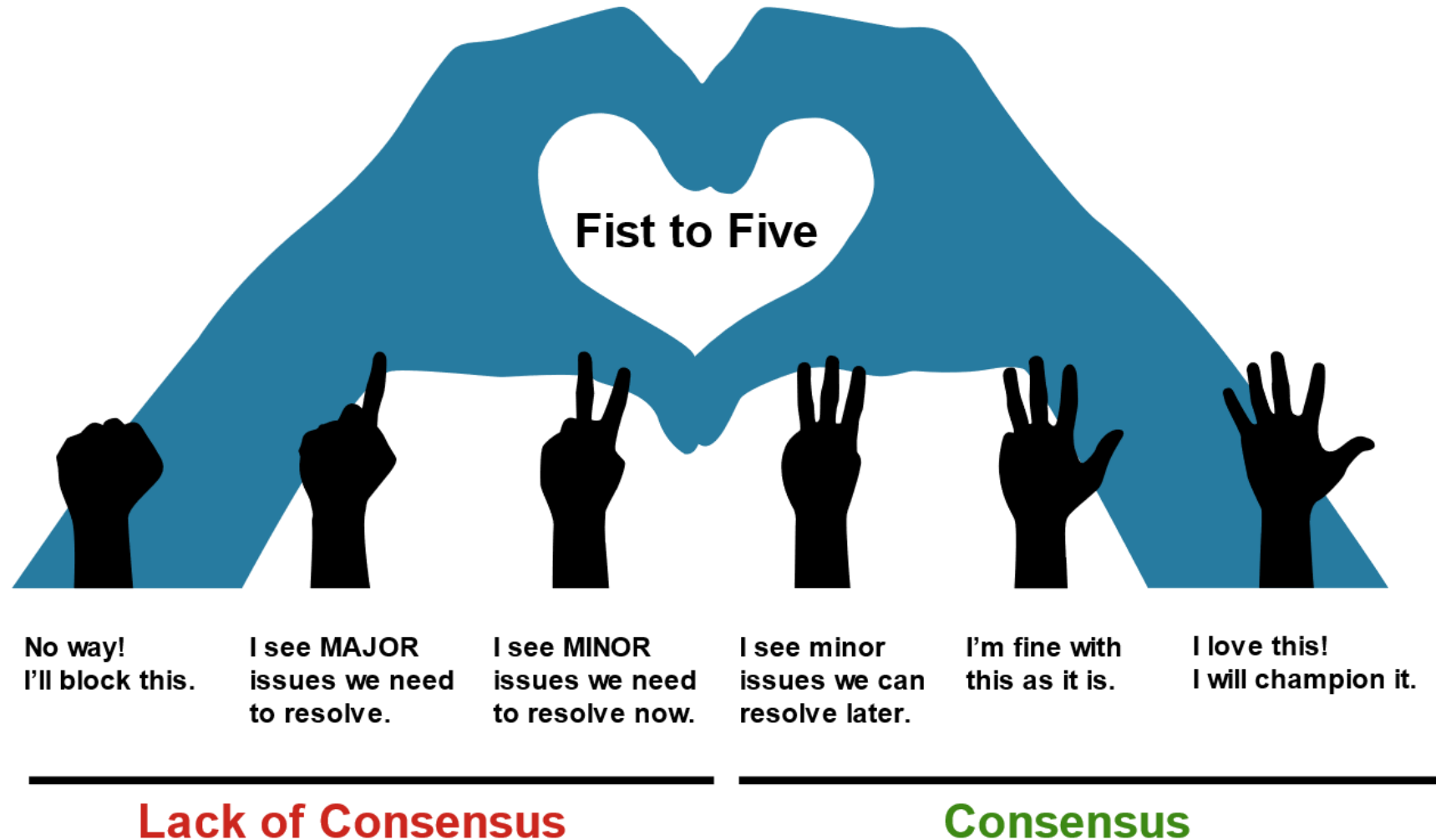
Adoption of charter

- Questions or concerns?
- Vote
 - Yes = adopt the charter
 - No = do not adopt

DNR Presentation

MN foraging history and context

Discussion: Scope of task force



Discussion: Scope of task force

ALL IN

- State lands
- Personal use
- Terrestrial plant species
- Mushrooms

Fist to five: **Agree** these are **IN scope** for the TF

Discussion: Scope of task force

ALL OUT

- Tribal, Federal, and private lands
- Commercial use
- Maple syruping and wild rice (given already established rules and regulations)

Fist to five: **Agree** these are **OUT OF scope** for the TF

Discussion: Scope of task force

Proposed
OUT

- County managed state land
- Aquatic plant species (e.g., cat tails)
- Aquatic animal species (e.g., invasive crayfish)
- Non-food plant species (e.g., birch bark, spruce tops)
- Insects

Fist to five (each): **Agree** this is **OUT OF scope** for the TF

Next steps

- Field trip

- October 20, 10am-12pm at Fort Snelling State Park
- Watch for an email with details about the visit

- Listening sessions

- Four, 90-minute sessions
- Three online, one in person
- Regionally focused
- Task force member role:
 - Help **promote**
 - Join **one** as an observer

Listening sessions typically include:

- Pre-published questions to help testifiers organize their thoughts
- Short presentation on task force purpose, efforts so far, etc.
- Testimonies; individuals are asked to provide name and contact info in case TF wants to follow up

Listening sessions will be recorded

Public input

- Welcome! Please introduce yourself:
 - Name
 - Location/region
 - Group/organization/community you represent (if applicable)
- Ground rules
 - Limit comments to 2 minutes (additional information in writing is welcome)
 - Respect and appreciate diversity of thought
 - Focus on ideas, not people
 - If you disagree, disagree respectfully
- Reminder: this meeting is open to the public, livestreamed and being recorded

Adjourn

- Adjourn

Thank you