

November 11, 2025

Dear Sustainable Foraging Task Force,

I'm writing this written testimony to be considered for upcoming rule-making regarding foraging on public land.

I believe that foraging should be allowed on public land AND remain unpermitted for recreation and personal use. Foraging is something that is done by many cultures, people from all backgrounds and encourages people to get outside. I believe that permitting could ultimately create a road block for people and limit their use of public lands.

Foraging is also a fun hobby for all ages. I remember looking for plants and mushrooms as a child. I would go every year to my special spot and see if the morels popped up yet. It was exciting to find one but also exciting to find something new as I was looking around. This hobby is one of the reasons I grew up playing in the outdoors and eventually made my career in the field of natural resources. Now I enjoy harvesting in all seasons and learning different types of plants, mushrooms and their uses. Although, I don't always go out with the intention of foraging, but may find something on my hike that I want to identify and/or take for personal use. If I needed a permit and didn't have one, would I get fined when I get back to my vehicle? I think the concern of getting in trouble would start to discourage people from foraging at all, which would limit the fun of learning plants and mushrooms.

Teaching sustainable harvesting techniques would be a better practice than permitting. Permitting doesn't teach anything and seems like putting natural resources behind a pay wall. My suggestion would be to teach sustainable harvesting in an online class leading to certification (similar to DNR Hunter-Safety course). Organizations that already teach sustainable harvest, like Minnesota Mycology Society, could be collaborated with for creating a training. This sustainable harvest training would be required for people that harvest large quantities for commercial or business use. It would be optional (but still encouraged) for those taking items for personal use. Most people naturally know this practice, especially indigenous people and those that forage for personal use near their home. Plants and mushrooms are gifts from nature that can grow plentiful, but usually only when sustainably harvested.

Please take this letter into consideration for providing input to the DNR.

Thank you,
Jennie Stackhouse