

# Sustainable Foraging Task Force



Meeting 5: November 18, 2025

# Welcome and purpose

- Welcome
- Adoption of previous meeting minutes
- Task Force purpose, duties, operating agreements

# 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.**

# 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

# 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
4. October 21, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Learning: traditional foraging practices
Various dates and times in Nov., Dec.	Public listening sessions for input from members of the public
<b>5. November 18, 2025 – 10:00am-noon</b>	<b>Learning:</b> other locations (Wisconsin DNR, Washington County DNR) <b>Recommendations:</b> review ideas, including those noted in meetings
6. December 2, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Recommendations: create and discuss
7. December 16, 2025 – 10:00am-noon	Recommendations: discuss and refine
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
- Presentations and discussion: Wisconsin, Washington County Depts of Natural Resources
- Presentation: additional information re: questions from last meeting
- Recommendations discussion kickoff
- Next steps
- Public input (reminder: listening session at 1:00 today, in this room)
- Adjourn

# Introductions

- Name, role, organization



# Presentations

- Washington County Parks: JJ Williams, Parks Manager
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Matt Zine, Conservation Biologist
- Q&A and discussion

# Additional information: Member questions

- DNR follow-up to questions from October 8 meeting
  - Document in member materials
- Questions about existing research related to foraging
  - Resources found to be relevant are in member materials and on task force website
  - Review is continuing and additional resources will be shared as they're found

 DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

Legislative Response: Sustainable Foraging Task Force, DNR follow-up from October 8, 2025

Date: 11-10-2025  
Prepared for: Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force

Question 1: Luke Skinner: What species is the agency particularly concerned about from the impacts of foraging?  
Answer: DNR does not have data or reports on any specific foraged species. In particular, vascular plants listed in our [rare species guide](#) are of concern to ensure those species are not harvested. In addition, plant species listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern are listed in [M.R. 6134.0300](#). As we gather additional information on what is being harvested and find ways to gain additional population level detail, we will be better able to answer this question.  
The NatureServe Explorer [website](#) also provides a lot of helpful information regarding species of concern regionally and specific to Minnesota.

Question 2: Gary Wyatt: Can you provide data on the number of permits issued for foraging?  
Answer:  
State Forests: Most special product permits that the DNR Forestry Division issues are for fuelwood, spruce tops, balsam boughs, and Christmas trees. A summary of special product permits issued in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and 2026 are as follows:

Products	FY25	FY26	Notes
Ferns	3	0	Spring harvest
Other Herbaceous	25		
Ginseng	63		
Bark	0		
Total	91		

**Fordham Urban Law Journal**  
Volume 45  
Number 4 *Taking a Bite out of the Big Apple: A Conversation About Urban Food Policy (Colloquium)* Article 3

2018  
Food Law Gone Wild: The Law of Foraging  
Baylen J. Linnekin

# Recommendations Kickoff

- Initial list compiled from comments and suggestions discussed in previous meetings
- Questions:
  - Anything in the list or NOT in the list you feel strongly about?
  - What stands out?
  - Are there any that seem less important than others?
  - What needs clarification?
  - What could be combined, or grouped into a common theme?

Number	Ideas, suggestions, comments that could become, or inspire, recommendations	Comments
1	There are people for whom foraging is important to sustenance. Could we give them more latitude vs. someone who does this for fun and can go to grocery store? Could permissions be based on need?	
2	How should "personal use" be defined — by volume, intent to sell, or other criteria?	
3	Should "commercial use" include or exclude trade, barter, or gifting?	
4	Gray areas- cultural or community gathering, educational uses. Do we have (or need) a different category?	
5	Ecosystems, species populations, and environmental conditions	

Number	Ideas, suggestions, comments that could become, or inspire, recommendations	Comments
10	How should non-edible/decorative/non-timber forest products (cones, leaves, branches, moss, etc.) be categorized to differentiate them from the edible/medicinal items that are the focus of this task force? Clear examples: berries vs. pinecones vs. wildflowers, etc.	
11	Additional education and outreach. Not always clear on websites: what can/should, etc. Voluntary compliance: knowing and understanding why laws exist, choosing to abide by them and encouraging others. Adding to what DNR is already doing and/or based on what they're doing that does/doesn't work well	
12	Low-impact items with short seasonal window - spoil, become woody or toxic, go out of season. Naturally self-limiting. Weather and timing restrict overharvest	
13	Assess when foraging can support ecological management — in certain cases, encouraging foraging of overabundant or invasive species could help manage their spread while engaging the public in stewardship. Note concerns about spreading invasive species when transporting what has been gathered.	
14	Ensuring compliance with the Noxious Weed Law maintains consistency with existing environmental regulations and prevents unintentional spread of harmful species. Should foraging of invasive species be encouraged (for control) or restricted (to prevent spread of seeds/spores)?  What training or educational materials are needed to prevent unintentional transport or replanting of invasive species?	
15	Develop a "Forage Freely" list for certain invasive or overpopulated species like garlic mustard, invasive mushrooms, and others	

# Next steps

- Reminder: 1:00 listening session, in this room (not on Zoom)
- Listening session schedule
  - Tuesday 11/18, 1:00-2:30pm, in person
  - Wednesday 11/19, 8:30-10am, online. Focus: North
  - Thursday 11/20, 3:00-4:30pm, online. Focus: South
  - Wednesday 12/3, 11:30am-1pm, online. Focus: Central
- Next meeting (12/2): please come prepared with written ideas for recommendations

- 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