Legislative Response: Sustainable Foraging Task Force, DNR follow-up

Date: 12-15-2025

Prepared for: Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force

Question 1: Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe: How much does the state spend on herbicides to eliminate invasive terrestrial plants?

Answer: In 2024, in total, the DNR utilized approximately 6,163 gallons of liquid pesticides and 4,540 pounds of dry pesticides to treat approximately 35,196 acres of land. The table below summarizes department pesticide use by DNR Division:

Division	Acres treated	Primary purpose	Gallons of liquid product	Pounds of dry product	Count of different products used
Parks and Trails	9,608	Invasive plants, insects	343	77	24
Forestry; Division managed and/or utility licensed	7,545	Site preparation, release, Invasive plants, insects	1,603	3,060	29
Forestry; Ag leases	4	Weeds	<1	0	2
Fish & Wildlife	16,718	Invasive plants, insects	4,053	1,403	54
Ecological & Water Resources	1,321	Invasive plants	164	<1	19
Operations Services	n/a	n/a	0	0	0
Total DNR	35,196		6,163	4,540	128

The DNR uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to invasive species management. IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy for managing pests that focuses on long-term prevention of pests through a combination of methods, such as biological control, habitat manipulation, and modification of cultural practices. Pesticides are used only after all non-chemical treatment methods have been evaluated and monitoring indicates that they are needed. Then pesticide treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target pests.

Question 2: Peter Martignacco [Following up from the November 10, 2025 memo from DNR]: Were any of these permits issued for foraging on Wildlife Management Areas? Were any of these permits requested or issued for foraging ramps? Were any issued for commercial harvest? If so, how many permits were issued and can you estimate how much was harvested or allowed to be harvested under the permits?

[Information provided in the October 8, 2025 memo for reference]

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**	0	Spring harvest, likely Solomon's Seal, etc.
Ginseng	63	70	Fall harvest
Bark	0	3	
Total	**91**	**73**	

Answer: Minn. Rules 6230.0250, Subp. 20 allows for the removal of "edible fruits or seeds and decorative portions of plants" for personal use on Wildlife Management Areas. No permits are issued for this personal harvest. Fuelwood harvesting permits are allowed at the discretion of the Wildlife Supervisor as a habitat management tool and processed through the Area Forestry Office.

The DNR Forestry Division can issue special product permits on Forestry-administered lands. Ramps had been identified as a species with resource sustainability concerns, so harvest was not permitted in FY25. No special product permits were issued for ramps in FY25.

Question 3: Senator Steve Green: How does the state define "large amounts" of berries, mushrooms, or dead fuelwood for personal use for a Special Products permit (as noted on DNR's website, https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/harvest-permits-state-lands.html)?

Answer: When requesting a permit, the applicant speaks with DNR Forestry staff to determine if a permit is needed and what is allowed for harvest on "state forest" lands. These permits are not available for State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, or other DNR managed lands.

After an internal project team review, DNR Forestry's product and utilization standards were updated for clarity in June 2025. A person may harvest herbaceous plants, berries, nuts, seeds, chaga, and mushrooms, in a method that will not destroy the plant for personal use without a permit. Personal use does not have a volume measurement currently.

Fuelwood permits are limited to 12 cords of dead or down wood and live trees cannot be cut as fuelwood. These permits are for personal use only. Any amount of fuelwood over 12 cords or for commercial sale may only be sold on an informal timber permit to a qualified purchaser.

Question 4: Peter Martignacco: Do you need a permit to gather wood for fire when camping or recreating in a State Forest?

Answer: No permit is needed to collect dead fuelwood for fires to be used while recreating in a state forest.

Question 5: Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe: What plants, berries, mushrooms are currently allowed for commercial sale?

Answer: The DNR does not regulate what plants, berries, or mushrooms are allowed for commercial sale.

On state forest lands only, DNR's Forestry Division will issue special product permits for harvesting for personal use when it involves killing the plant, such as removing the roots or the entire plant, and for specific products. The Forestry Division will also issue special product permits for special forest products harvested for commercial use.

A special product permit minimum price is $25.00. Some examples of current prices for commercial use:

- Many annual/perennial herbaceous plants can be harvested for $1.00/gallon.
- Berries and nuts can be harvested for $1.00/gallon.
- Most bark can be harvested for $0.10/square foot.
- Mushrooms can be harvested for $2.00/gallon.
- Sap to make syrups can be harvested for $0.25/tap.

The Division of Forestry maintains a list of species and taxonomic groups found on state-administered forestlands that have been sold as special forest products and information on sale method(s) and land class(es) where harvest is allowed, product and harvest specifications, harvest recommendations to promote resource sustainability, and prices.