



Sustainable Foraging Task Force

Tuesday, January 27th, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol Room G-23 and
Remote via Zoom
<https://www.lcc.mn.gov/foraging/>

Members Present:

Senator Susan Pha, Chair
Representative Roger Skraba, Vice Chair
Kelli Bruns
Senator Steve Green
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe

Greg Kvale
Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery
David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Gary Wyatt

Members Excused:

Representative Alex Falconer
Dale Gentry
Kristen Poppleton
Ingrid Schneider

Meeting Minutes

Sen. Pha called the meeting of the Sustainable Foraging Task Force to order at 10:04 AM. A quorum was present.

David Schultz moved to adopt the minutes of the January 6, 2026, and January 14, 2026, meetings. The roll was called.

Ayes

Senator Susan Pha
Kelli Bruns
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale

Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery
David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Gary Wyatt

There were 12 ayes and 0 nays. The motion prevailed and the minutes were adopted.

Discussion

Members discussed recommendations as prepared by staff:

Executive summary of recommendations

Task force members developed seven recommendations intended to support DNR's mission, maintain DNR's authority, and support foraging. The task force had a shared hope to find the balance between allowing humans to forage and allowing nature to thrive. The task force recognizes implementation of the recommendations will require dedicated resources, including careful planning, funding, and staff.

Recommendation 1: Develop a new statute that codifies foraging for personal, non-commercial use as a legitimate recreational and cultural activity on DNR managed state lands and waters.

The task force recommends a new statute to codify foraging as allowable on DNR managed state lands and waters and to establish definitions for non-commercial personal use, commercial use, honorable harvest, and products allowed to be harvested. The new statute would only require permits for products on a protected species list.

Recommendation 2. Proactive study of foraging and its impacts in Minnesota

The task force recommends funding to collect data, monitor, and research the impacts of foraging, including an evaluation of statute/rule changes resulting from the task force's work. This proactive study would include partnership with foragers and research experts.

Recommendation 3. Develop education and training to support best management practices for foraging.

The task force recommends funding to develop foraging education and training for the public using a collaborative approach with DNR and partners. The resources should be easily accessed by the public with no or minimal cost. In addition, the DNR should ensure consistent information and messages are shared internally among staff to support consistent implementation and to reduce potential misunderstandings.

Recommendation 4. Use plain language to provide clear and accessible information that makes it easier for the public to understand statutes and rules on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

The task force recommends the use of plain language to provide clear and accessible information that makes it easier for the public to understand statutes, rules, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge related to foraging on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

Recommendation 5. Improve DNR’s permit process for foraging on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

The task force recommends funding to improve DNR’s permitting systems and processes. For all foraging activities that require a permit, the permitting process should be clear and accessible. to increase accessibility and reduce barriers to obtaining permits for the collection of items on the protected species list. Recommended changes include making permits available online, accepting electronic payments, and reducing the cost.

Recommendation 6. Establish a mechanism for DNR to engage regularly with foraging stakeholders

The task force recommends the DNR establish a mechanism for regular engagement with foraging stakeholders to maintain open lines of communication. Regular engagement helps ensure that foraging statutes and rules stay relevant, are evidence-based, include Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and are responsive to current conditions—supporting both conservation and access goals.

Recommendation 7. Establish a five-year evaluation period during which limits on new foraging policy will apply.

The task force recognizes that the changes outlined in the recommendations above require time for data collection, monitoring, and research to evaluate ecological, cultural, and economic impacts. This recommendation establishes a defined evaluation period of five years to support collaborative review by the legislature, DNR, and foraging partners before additional policy and regulatory changes are considered.

Recommendations

Task force members developed seven recommendations intended to support DNR’s mission, maintain DNR’s authority, and support foraging. The task force had a shared hope to find the balance between allowing humans to forage and allowing nature to thrive. The task force recognizes implementation of the recommendations will require dedicated resources, including careful planning, funding, and staff. Consultation with Tribal leaders, collectively and individually, would take place prior to finalization of new statute.

Recommendation 1. Develop a new statute that codifies foraging for personal, non-commercial use as a legitimate recreational and cultural activity on DNR managed state lands and waters.

The Sustainable Foraging Task Force recommends the Minnesota Legislature create a new statute that includes the following:

Codification of foraging

Codify foraging as an allowable activity on DNR managed state lands (many of which consist of School Trust fund lands) and public waters making up the outdoor recreation system (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 86A), with the exclusion of state scientific and natural areas.

Definition of Non-Commercial Personal Use

“Non-commercial personal use” is defined as foraging allowed products as part of a non-business activity, without profit motive. This includes foraging for:

- Personal or household consumption, ceremonial, cultural, or medicinal purposes,
- Gifting or sharing with family, friends, or community members for consumption or ceremonial, cultural, or medicinal purposes.

Definition of Commercial Use

Commercial use is defined as foraging on DNR-managed state lands and waters with a profit motive. [Note, this definition is provided only as a counterpoint to defining non-commercial personal use. The task force is not making recommendations regarding commercial foraging.]

Honorable Harvest Practices

Foraging statutes and rules for non-commercial personal use on DNR-managed state lands and waters will be informed by Traditional Ecological Knowledge, including regenerative harvesting methods, and honorable harvest practices.

The ethic of the honorable harvest is a way of being in relationship with the living world. As Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer explains, the honorable harvest is grounded in respect, reciprocity, and reverence and is guided by protocols that many Indigenous cultures have known and practiced for generations:

*“Ask permission of the ones whose lives you seek. Abide by the answer.
Never take the first. Never take the last.
Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.
Take only what you need and leave some for others.
Use everything that you take.
Take only that which is given to you.
Share it, as the Earth has shared with you.
Be grateful.”*

Products Allowed to be Harvested

Foraging products for non-commercial personal use according to honorable harvest practices would be allowable without permit for products

including, but not limited to the following items, or included on the DNR protected species list:

- Seeds*,
- Berries,
- Nuts,
- Flowers, leaves, roots* and shoots of herbaceous and woody plants, and
- Fungi.

* Seeds and roots are two examples for which certain products would likely be included on the DNR protected species list. See section below for additional information.

In addition, the task force recommends the following key considerations for a new statute that codifies foraging as a legitimate recreational and cultural activity on DNR managed state lands and waters for personal, non-commercial use:

- Affirms the sensitivity of state parks, particularly in protecting endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as cultural resources. The task force recognizes and supports the DNR's authority to identify and designate specific areas within state parks where foraging is restricted or prohibited due to management practices, land restoration activities, plant surveys, or maintenance needs.
- Acknowledges foraging as a right that has been included in the Minnesota Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights.
- Does not conflict with existing wild rice, wild ginseng, and wildflower statutes and rules.
- Does not conflict with existing statutes and rules related to aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.
- Recognizes Minnesota Statutes 10.65 outlining the State of Minnesota's relationship with and responsibility with Tribal governments.
- Ensures compliance with federal nexus in regard to PRDJ (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson) funding
- Accepts that expansion of allowable foraging of aquatic plants will require additional conversations between DNR and community stakeholders.

Protected Species List and other Limitations

The task force recommends the new statute allow DNR, in consultation with stakeholders, to create a list of protected species that require a permit to forage, are prohibited from foraging, or have limitations placed on foraging, based on evidence using a similar approach already used by the DNR with hunting and fishing. The new statute would allow local DNR land managers the authority to set additional limits when applicable to specific geographies. (suggestion: be more specific about what this looks like/enforcement options, how is geography defined, and need for immediate response when an issue is seen) The task force recommends permits be required only for products on this protected species list.

In development of a protected/limited species list, the DNR should not make restrictions that are broad or preemptive without evidence. The list might include, for example:

- Restrictions on uprooting of whole plants; some plants would require a permit, while certain abundant species would might not be restricted.
- Restrictions on foraging of native seeds necessary for prairie restoration and other ecological and revegetation projects.

Recommendation 2. Proactive study of foraging and its impacts in Minnesota

The Sustainable Foraging Task Force recommends that the Minnesota Legislature provide a direct appropriation to support the DNR in data collection, monitoring, and research on the ecological, cultural, and economic impacts of foraging in Minnesota. This research should include an evaluation of statutory and rule changes resulting from the task force's work and related legislation, including impacts on conservation outcomes, public access, stewardship practices, community engagement, and the sharing of Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The task force further recommends that the DNR seek additional funding for this purpose, including through the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

The task force encourages the DNR partner with foragers and organized groups that support these activities as a critical source of data and information to support research, conservation, and sustainable land and water management, for example by creating an optional online form for foragers to share observations and experiences, or adding questions to existing licensure surveys. Foragers can share species present, habitat conditions, concerns or challenges. Data collected through these partnerships should be aggregated and used to inform policy development, conservation strategies (including future quantity limits), public guidance, and scientific study.

The task force supports strong protections against pesticide and herbicide use where such use threatens ecological health, Indigenous food systems, or public safety, while also recognizing that targeted use of these chemicals remains an important tool in invasive species management. The task force encourages a balanced, science-based approach

that avoids blanket bans, allows chemical-specific restrictions where appropriate, and prioritizes integrated pest management practices that include stewardship, prevention, and least-toxic alternatives. The task force recommends that DNR continue to track the use and cost of herbicides and pesticides on all DNR-managed state lands and waters to support evidence-based evaluation of land management practices over time.

Recommendation 3. Develop education and training to support best management practices for foraging.

The task force commends the DNR's emphasis on education over citations related to foraging activities. To build on this approach, the task force recommends a direct appropriation to support the development of foraging education and training for the public that leverages varied expertise and strengths of the DNR and partners.

The task force recommends this development of education and training take place in partnership and collaboration with, for example, the University of Minnesota Extension (which brings extensive research base and expertise in adult learning), Tribal Nations (which brings a depth of understanding of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, including honorable harvest practices and expertise in Minnesota Statutes 10.65), and/or others with relevant knowledge. Additional partners who might provide input into the development of education and training may include, but are not limited to the Minnesota Mycological Society, Herbalist Society, Minnesota Foraging Alliance, Back Country Hunters and Anglers, Minnesota Native Plant Society, Minnesota Master Naturalists and Gardeners, and Minnesota Wildlife Federation.

The task force recommends foraging education and training include the following topics:

- Review of existing state statutes and administrative rules, including when permits are required.
- Cultural and community considerations: Tribal sovereignty and distinct treaty rights, including plants species as sacred medicines.
- Honorable harvest practices and regenerative harvesting methods in alignment with Traditional Ecological Knowledge: how foraging affects biodiversity and soil health, seasonal considerations
- Minnesota's outdoor recreation system: breadth of recreational and cultural activities occurring on public lands and waters, including identification of public land types and what rules apply.
- Personal physical safety: tick exposure, contamination exposure, gear, safe use of knives and digging tools, first aid, and emergency protocols.

- Plant identification basics: How to positively identify edible and medicinal plants and fungi (and their look-alikes).
- Reducing spread of invasive species, including compliance with Noxious Weed Law.

The task force recommends the DNR, and its partners ensure this education and training is easily accessed by the public with no or minimal cost. The task force also recommends DNR develop and execute an internal communication plan to provide consistent information and messages across DNR's many divisions regarding statutory and rule changes resulting from the task force's work. Intentional and robust dissemination internally within DNR will support consistent implementation across DNR-managed lands and waters and reduce potential misunderstandings of foraging as trespassing, theft, or suspicious behavior.

Recommendation 4. Use plain language to provide clear and accessible information that makes it easier for the public to understand statutes and rules on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

The task force recommends the use of plain language to provide clear and accessible information that makes it easier for the public to understand statutes, rules, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge related to foraging on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

A persistent theme that emerged during task force meetings and public listening sessions was the lack of clear and accessible information on foraging available on State of Minnesota websites. Public resources on foraging should be available in multiple languages and when possible, should be visual by using icons, photos, and/or color-coded symbols or QR codes to communicate key information. The task force recognizes the DNR is committed to this effort and has already made concerted efforts to improve its public websites and additional funding from the Minnesota legislature may be needed to continue this effort.

The task force recommends the DNR continue to make it easier for the public to understand what is and is not allowed on certain state land types and that the language used be consistent. The task force recommends a single page on foraging instead of multiple pages by different land type as it is confusing for the public to decipher the differences that matter. For example, deciphering these two DNR websites presents its challenges:

- [Harvesting plants](#) (State parks and recreation areas)
- [Harvesting on state forest lands](#) (Forestry)

The task force also recommends the DNR work together with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to ensure alignment and consistency of language and necessary cross linking of webpages on this topic, especially related to: [Certified Wild Mushroom Harvester](#), [Harvesting and Selling Wild Mushrooms in Minnesota](#), and [Minnesota Noxious Weed List](#).

Recommendation 5. Improve DNR’s permit process for foraging on DNR-managed state lands and waters.

The task force recommends the DNR improve its permitting systems and processes. For all foraging activities that require a permit, the permitting process should be clear and accessible. to increase accessibility and reduce barriers to obtaining permits for the collection of items on the protected species list. The task force recognizes that dedicated resources will be required to execute and streamline this work.

The task force recommends the following permit features:

- Make the permits available online.
- Reducing costs for foragers should be a factor in determining improvements, for example, a single permit where multiple permits are currently required.
- Accept electronic payments, in addition to check or money order.
- If beneficial to state DNR land managers, include a pathway for large special events and organized public activities to register for foraging education on state lands or waters.
- Explore permit differences for state residents versus non-residents as is done for hunting and fishing permits.

The task force recognizes that focused effort and additional internal DNR consultation will be required to modify permitting for the harvest of aquatic plants currently included in Minnesota Statutes 103G.615, Permits to harvest or destroy aquatic plants.

Recommendation 6. Establish a mechanism for DNR to engage regularly with foraging stakeholders

The task force recommends the DNR establish a mechanism for regular engagement with foraging stakeholders to maintain open lines of communication. The DNR may do this through, for example, an annual town hall or the creation of an advisory council that meets at regular intervals during the year. The task force recommends this action as it recognizes

that ecosystems, species populations, and environmental conditions are continually changing due to climate shifts, land use, and other pressures. Regular engagement with foraging stakeholders helps ensure that foraging statutes and rules stay relevant, evidence-based, include Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and are responsive to current conditions—supporting both conservation and access goals.

In addition, this regular engagement provides an opportunity for the DNR to report back specifically on findings from research and study activities focused on the ecological, cultural, and economic impacts of foraging in Minnesota, including the effects of changes to statutes and rules made because of the task force’s work.

Recommendation 7. Establish a five-year evaluation period during which limits on new foraging policy will apply.

The task force recognizes that the changes outlined in the recommendations above require time for data collection, monitoring, and research to evaluate ecological, cultural, and economic impacts. This recommendation establishes a defined evaluation period of five years to support collaborative review by the legislature, DNR, and foraging partners before additional policy and regulatory changes are considered.

While the data collection, monitoring, and research described in Recommendation 2 takes place, DNR should avoid rulemaking that substantially reduces, narrows, or alters the scope of foraging access except as necessary to:

- Respond to an urgent or emergency, including an immediate threat or substantiated risk to public health, safety, or ecological integrity.
- Comply with federal law or binding federal funding requirements.
- Make administrative or technical improvements.

Note, this recommendation only limits rulemaking related to foraging. The task force is not making recommendations to limit rulemaking in other key areas already identified by DNR.

Voting

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 1**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Angela Gupta
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale
Peter Martignacco

Rebecca Montgomery
David Schultz
Gary Wyatt
Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Kelli Bruns
Senator Steve Green
Bradley Harrington

Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Representative Roger Skraba

The vote was 8 ayes, 6 nays. The motion, not receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, failed and the recommendation was not adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 2**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Kelli Bruns
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale
Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery

David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Gary Wyatt
Representative Roger Skraba
Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Senator Steve Green

The vote was 13 ayes, 1 nay. The motion, receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, prevailed and the recommendation was adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 3**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Kelli Bruns
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale

Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery
David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler

Gary Wyatt
Representative Roger Skraba

Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Senator Steve Green

The vote was 13 ayes, 1 nay. The motion, receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, prevailed and the recommendation was adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 4**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Kelli Bruns
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale
Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery

David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Gary Wyatt
Representative Roger Skraba
Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Senator Steve Green

The vote was 13 ayes, 1 nay. The motion, receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, prevailed and the recommendation was adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 5**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Kelli Bruns
Angela Gupta
Bradley Harrington
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Greg Kvale
Peter Martignacco
Rebecca Montgomery

David Schultz
Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler
Gary Wyatt
Representative Roger Skraba
Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Senator Steve Green

The vote was 13 ayes, 1 nay. The motion, receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, prevailed and the recommendation was adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 6**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Kelli Bruns

Angela Gupta

Bradley Harrington

Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe

Greg Kvale

Peter Martignacco

Rebecca Montgomery

David Schultz

Luke Skinner

Matt Wappler

Gary Wyatt

Representative Roger Skraba

Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Senator Steve Green

The vote was 13 ayes, 1 nay. The motion, receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, prevailed and the recommendation was adopted.

Sen. Pha moved to adopt **Recommendation 7**. The roll was called.

Ayes

Angela Gupta

Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe

Greg Kvale

Peter Martignacco

Rebecca Montgomery

David Schultz

Gary Wyatt

Representative Roger Skraba

Senator Susan Pha

Nays

Kelli Bruns
Senator Steve Green
Bradley Harrington

Luke Skinner
Matt Wappler

The vote was 9 ayes, 5 nays. The motion, not receiving the pre-determined 80% threshold, failed and the recommendation was not adopted.

Next Steps and Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.