



Minnesota Forests for the Future

Conserving Minnesota's working forest lands to meet the state's future recreation, economic, and ecological needs

Strategic Report of the DNR Commissioner's Advisory Team on the Minnesota Forests for the Future Program

February 2008



The Team Team Charge

1. Assess parcelization and other trends impacting the state's working forest lands.
2. Review the state's forest conservation easement activities.
3. Make recommendations for creating a multi-partner state program to use conservation easements and other tools to retain Minnesota's working forest lands.



The Team Members

Mark Johnson, co-chair	Minnesota Deer Hunters Association
Bud Stone, co-chair	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Wayne Brandt	Minnesota Forest Industries
Dennis Fink	St. Louis County Commissioner
Tom Landwehr	The Nature Conservancy
Chuck Lepper	Koochiching County Board Chair
Susan Schmidt	Trust for Public Land
Tom Umphress	National OHV Conservation Council
Laurie Martinson	DNR Deputy Commissioner
Craig Engwall	DNR Northeast Regional Director
Dave Epperly	DNR Division of Forestry Director
Dave Schad	DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife Director
Marty Vadis	DNR Division of Lands & Minerals Director



The Team 3 - part Report Framework

1. Strategic Report 
2. Implementation Report
3. Annual Performance Report

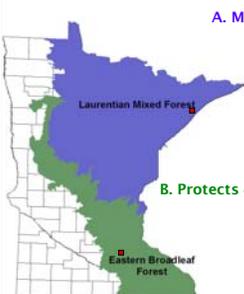
Challenge: Sustaining Working Forests

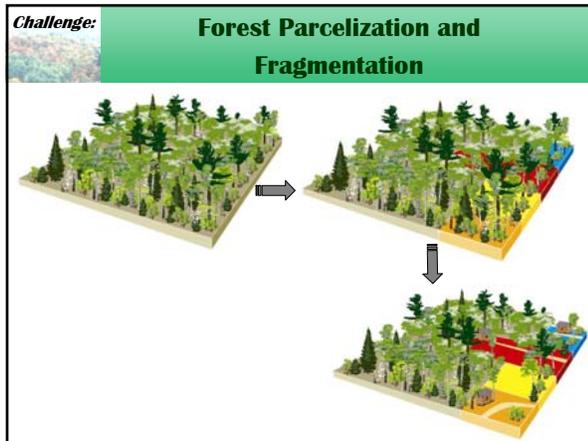
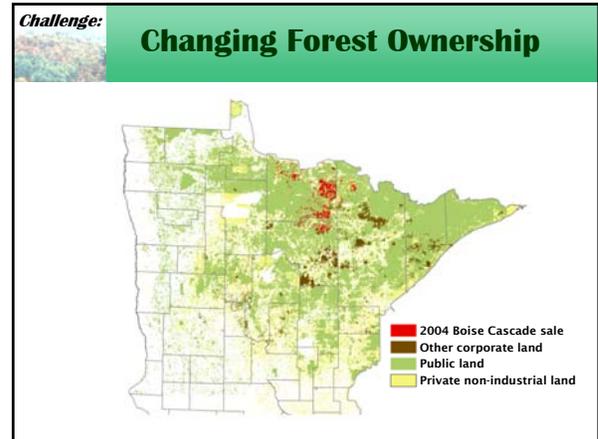
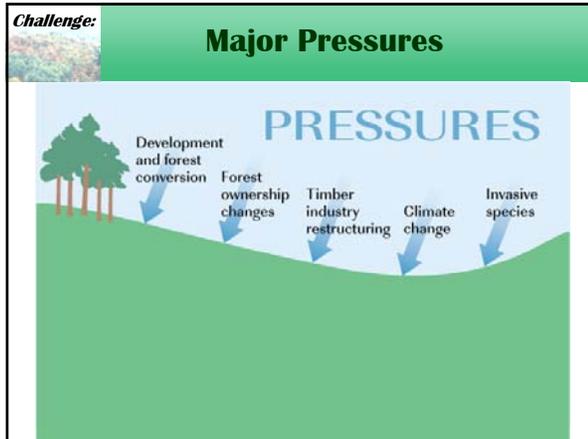


Challenge: A Comprehensive Forest Conservation Strategy

A. Maintains large, intact forest landscapes 

B. Protects & reconnects fragmented forest landscapes 



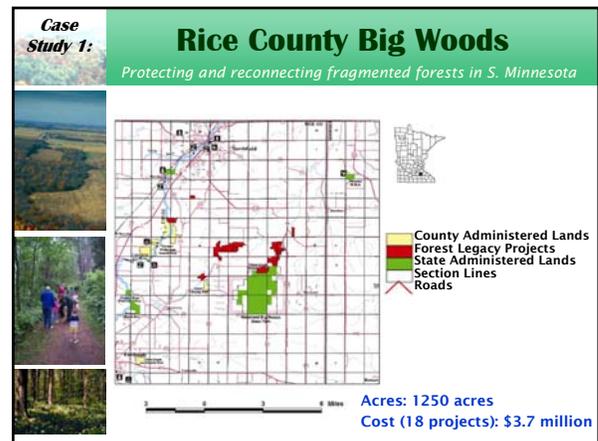
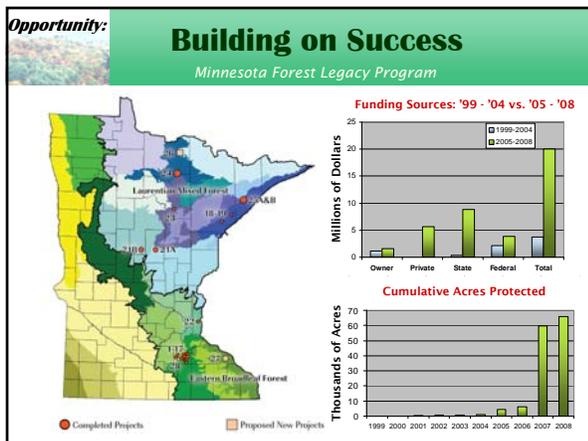


Opportunity:

Conservation Easements

An effective tool

- Voluntary
- Individually negotiated
- Legally binding
- Land remains in private ownership
- Land stays on local tax rolls
- Most are permanent



Case Study 2: Koochiching-Washington
Protecting large, intact forest blocks for multiple public benefits

Acres: 51,163 acres
Cost (1 project): \$12 million

Response: Establish Minnesota Forests for the Future Program

Promoting an interconnected network of sustainably managed private and public forests.

Response: PROPOSED: Minnesota Statutes, chapter 84
Section 1. [84.66]

Minnesota Forests for the Future Program

- Purpose
- Establishment
- Land eligibility
- Land interests
- Application
- Landowner responsibilities
- Advisory team
- Monitoring, enforcement, and damages

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Response: Program Goals

1. Conserve forests with high **public benefits**
2. Promote **strategic conservation** of private forests
3. Practice **sustainable forestry** and maintain productive forest lands
4. Establish and maintain **sound and accountable program** processes, practices, and procedures
5. Implement a **comprehensive easement stewardship program**
6. Establish and maintain **diverse partnerships**

Response: Toolbox Approach

We need multiple tools to meet forest conservation goals.

Response: Acreage Targets

- **Short-term** (2009): 75,000 acres
- **Preliminary Long-term** (up to 25 years):

Target Range	Laurentian Mixed Forest	Eastern Broadleaf Forest	Total
Low End	250,000	20,000	270,000
Upper End	500,000	30,000	530,000

Response:

Project Selection

DNR and Project Review Committee

Criteria:

1. Project Size
2. Strategic Location
3. Recreational Opportunities
4. Timber and Other Economic Benefits
5. Ecological and Habitat Values
6. Other Considerations

Response:

Program Implementation

- Legal and program standards
- Acquisition Process
- Stewardship
- Relationships
- Continuous improvement

Response:

Next Steps

Implementation Report Items

- Convene advisory committee
- Refine long-term acreage targets and associated costs
- Refine time frame for achieving targets
- Refine strategies for program implementation
- Refine project scoring and ranking system

Discussion

- Have we framed the program effectively?
- What are your recommendations for:
 - Advisory team make-up?
 - Refining targets?
 - Toolbox criteria?
 - Monitoring and management?
 - Other opportunities for collaboration?