



Minnesota Highlights



Upper Mississippi Forest Project The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and Blandin Paper Company (UPM) have signed a binding agreement for the purchase of a working forest conservation easement to forever protect 187,277 acres of north woods forests, wetlands and shoreline currently owned by UPM in Itasca and other counties (northern MN). The agreement will provide public access and numerous land and water safeguards including sustainable forest practices, regardless of who may own the lands in the future. The Blandin Foundation and the Richard King Mellon Foundation also partnered on this project.

A New State Park The State of Minnesota acquired 3,000 acres of land in Cook County in northeastern Minnesota. The purchase includes five miles of lake shoreline on Lake Vermilion. The land is now Minnesota's newest state park. Plans are being developed for the park, which will include shore fishing opportunities for park visitors. This project was highlighted on the National Fish Habitat Action Plan's "2010 Ten Waters to Watch" list.



Photo: Lake Vermilion. MN DNR

Protecting Lake Habitats Cass County acquired donated conservation easements on three adjacent lakeshore properties on Wabedo Lake. The development value of the 68 acres and 0.81 miles of shoreline is \$720,000. Another donated conservation easement on Tamarack Lake protects 81 acres and 2,210 feet of lakeshore (donated value of \$136,000). The county is seeking additional donated conservation easements on lakeshore with high conservation potential.

Pickeral Lake is Reclaimed This 620-acre headwater lake (Freeborn Co.) suffered from poor water quality due to high carp and bullhead populations, with water clarity of less than one foot. After installation of a barrier to prevent future infestations, the lake's rough fish were removed. Water quality and aquatic plant growth have already seen positive changes. A fishery is developing for yellow perch and northern pike.



Photo: Wild celery and other submergent aquatic plants in Pickeral Lake after reclamation. MN DNR

Other highlights include:

- Chippewa National Forest staff are working with Itasca County and the MN DNR to remove fish passage barriers on the Prairie River downstream of Wabana, Little Trout and Bluewater Lakes.
- MN DNR received \$3.4 million in Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Funds for acquisition, restoration & enhancement of lakes and rivers. In the next 3 years, this project aims to acquire 7.8 miles of shoreline, modify two dams to allow for aquatic organism passage and restore/enhance stream and lake shore.