

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 140-G**

Protecting the Pineland Sands Aquifer

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**Category:** G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 2,006,856

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 years, July 2015 - June 2017

**Summary:**

Reduce impacts to forest and aquatic habitats and ground water aquifer from conversion of forests to irrigated agriculture through fee acquisition of 1,000 acres of priority parcels in west-central Minnesota.

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**Name:** Richard Peterson

**Sponsoring Organization:** MN DNR

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Faribault MN 55021

**Telephone Number:** (507) 333-2012 x222

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**Web Address** www.state.mn.us

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**Location**

**Region:** NW

**County Name:** Cass, Hubbard, Wadena

**City / Township:**

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**Alternate Text for Visual:**

The map shows the location of priority parcels located within Cass, Hubbard, & Wadena Counties.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

**2015 Main Proposal**

**Project Title:** *Protecting the Pineland Sands Aquifer*

**PROJECT TITLE: Protecting the Pineland Sands Aquifer**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Approximately 1,000 acres of forested sites overlying an important ground water aquifer in west-central Minnesota and containing high natural resource values at risk of conversion to agriculture (primarily to irrigated agriculture for potato production) would be permanently protected through fee acquisition by MN DNR. The overall goals of the project are to reduce potential impacts from forest conversion to agricultural uses on wetlands, surface waters and the drinking water aquifer and help consolidate state ownership, protect large forest habitat blocks from conversion and fragmentation, increase management access to landlocked state and county lands, and provide additional public access opportunities.

This project provides one of the tools needed for the conservation and protection of forests in an area of the state that is undergoing dramatic deforestation and conversion of forests to agricultural fields. In recent years over 7,500 acres of forested properties have been acquired for agricultural purposes. Many of these forests sit atop an important ground water aquifer for the region. These resulting sales and conversions have many potential impacts including potential groundwater contamination from agricultural chemicals, reduced stream flow and lake levels, habitat loss from land conversion, forest fragmentation, loss of management access and decreased recreational use. Protecting and maintaining the land in a forested condition is one of the best land use practices consistent with maintaining water quality and quantity in this aquifer region. This project will target approximately 1,000 acres of forest for fee title acquisition to be administered by the Department of Natural Resources.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1:** Habitat Acquisition

**Budget:** \$2,006,856  
\$1,500-\$2,300/acre  
\$2,000/ac average

The Pinelands Sands Aquifer Project will protect sites containing high conservation and natural resource values by fee acquisition. A total of fifteen area staff participated in a science based assessment of resource values. Values evaluated included shoreline habitat, groundwater protection, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, terrestrial ecological value, trails values, forest access, forest consolidation and forest productivity. The parcels were further evaluated based on their threat of conversion to agriculture using the following criteria: size of parcel; proximity to other irrigated or non-irrigated agricultural land; topography, soil drainage; and farmland classification based on SSURGO data (Soil Survey Geographic Database).

- 60,000 acres evaluated by the interdisciplinary team
- 11,000 acres identified as parcels of interest with natural resources values and at risk. Most parcels of interest are inholdings located within boundaries of State Forests and are currently under lease for private hunting use and not open to public use.
- 2,800 acres identified as initial acquisition target
- DNR may request to add other priority parcels as changes in landowner interest, parcel availability, or threats emerge.
- All of the sites will be fee title acquisition administered by MN DNR.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Acquire 1,000 acres of priority forest habitat in fee title	June 30, 2017

**Activity 2:** Management planning and basic site improvements

**Budget:** \$0 –in kind



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

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Complete basic site improvements necessary for public access and management access (e.g., as needed, boundary signs,); conduct basic inventory of property resources.

Outcome	Completion Date
2. Complete base site improvements and inventory on 1,000 acres as needed	June 30, 2017

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

**Project Organization**

- **Project Manager** provides leadership and undertakes the day-to-day activities and will lead the acquisition efforts.
- **Project Team** consists of members from the Divisions of Lands and Minerals, Forestry, Ecological and Water Resources, and Fish and Wildlife and a Project Manager who have provided the overall strategic direction for the project.
- **Land Assessment and Evaluation Team** of Parks and Trails, Fish and Wildlife, Ecological and Water Resources, Forestry and Cass and Hubbard County staff have conducted the assessment of resource values and determined the parcel risk for land conversion for approximately 60,000 acres of industrial forest land in Cass, Hubbard and Wadena Counties to arrive at a prioritized list of parcels for protection.
- **Cass County, Hubbard County, and Wadena County** have been engaged throughout the process and Cass and Hubbard County Land Commissioners have participated on the Land Assessment and Evaluation Teams.

**B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy**

This project contributes to the DNR’s overall statewide land asset management goals that include land acquisition for: 1) the protection of significant resources; 2) consolidation of land ownership; and 3) improved access for management and public recreation

This project is part of a DNR initiative to conduct a comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessment of industrial forest land in order to develop an understanding of the land’s resource values and public benefits, threats to those values and benefits, and protection priorities for those lands. The initial effort focused on lands located in Cass, Hubbard and Wadena Counties. Through this effort the Department has identified over 7,000 acres of high priority industrial forestland for potential acquisition.

Acquisition and funding efforts to date include:

- Phase 1: 1,200 acres and up to 2,800 acres depending on pending funding; includes a 900 acre SNA that has been appraised and optioned and will close during 2014. Funding includes ENRTF ML2010 LCCMR SNA \$132,000, ENRTF ML2011 LCCMR SNA \$450,000, OHF ML2011 LSOHC SNA \$660,000, OHF\* ML2014 LSOHC [Forestry - Pinelands] pending \$1,050,000, OHF ML2013 LSOHC SNA \$170,000, RIM SNA RIM Match \$158,000, State Capital Bonding \$3,000,000 pending 2014.
- Phase 2: 1,000 acres; LCCMR proposed 2015 \$2,000,000; LSOHC Potential Proposal 2015.
- Additional phases to focus on remaining priority parcels with potential funding requests to LSOHC, State Capital Bonding, and Federal Forest Legacy.

**C. Timeline Requirements**

Two years is requested (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017) is requested to allow for the land acquisition and completion of the inventory and planning work.

## 2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Protecting the Pineland Sands Aquifer

### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<b>Personnel:</b> Project manager: approximately 0.05 FTE over two years	\$5,000
<b>Contracts:</b> DNR Lands and Minerals reality staff and contract appraisers in support of professional services to acquire fee land.	\$40,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b>	NA
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> 1,000 acres to be acquired and managed by DNR Forestry and DNR Wildlife	\$1,955,000
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> Direct and Necessary Costs - DNR's direct and necessary costs pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$133), Safety Support (~\$33), Financial Support (~\$65), Communication Support (~\$1,141), IT Support (~\$4,546), Planning Support (~\$704), Procurement Support (~\$235), and division and regional program management (~\$0) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.	\$6,856
<b>Travel:</b> 1,000 miles with limited overnight for site inspections of properties to be acquired and for meetings with landowner..	NA
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 2,006,856</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied to Project During Project Period:</b>	NA	
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> State Capital Bonding \$3 million Outdoor Heritage Fund \$1.05 million	\$4,050,000	Pending
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> Travel, management planning and basic site improvements to ready sites for public use and management use.	\$ 20,000	
<b>Funding History: Funding committed</b> ENRTF ML2010 LCCMR SNA \$132,000.00 ENRTF ML2011 LCCMR SNA \$450,000.00 OHF ML2011 LSOHC SNA \$660,000. OHF* ML2014 LSOHC [Forestry - Pinelands] pending \$500,000.00 OHF ML2013 LSOHC SNA \$170,000.00 RIM SNA RIM Match \$158,000.00	NA	

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2015 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List**

**Project Title:** Protecting the Pineland Sands Aquifer

**Project Manager Name:** Richard Peterson

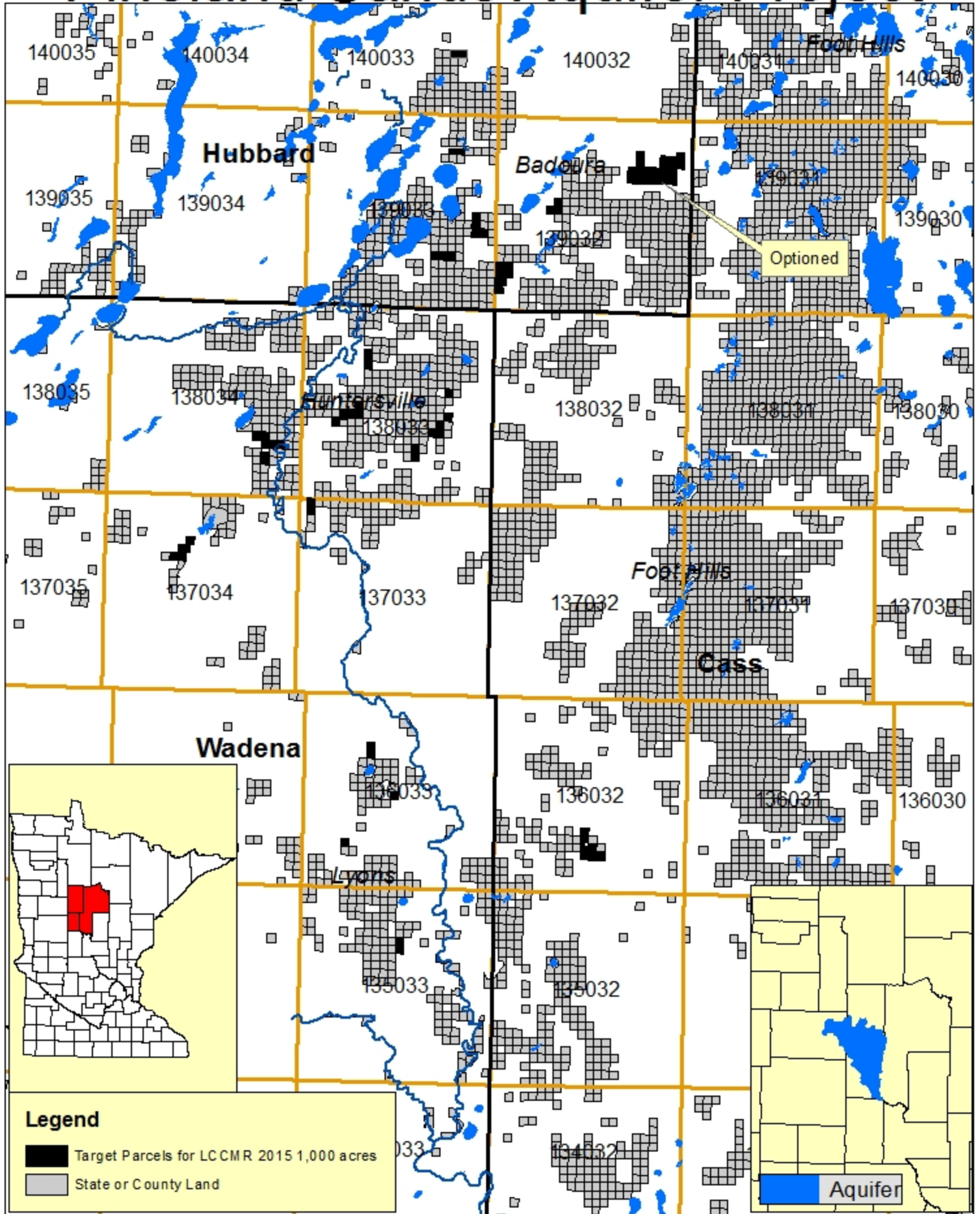
**Organization:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry

**ENRTF \$ Request:** \$2,006,856

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
		Latitude	Longitude								
1	Pineland Sands 5	46 49 33.6	94 49 9.2	242,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	121		For Profit	DNR
2	Pineland Sands 6	46 50 25.6	94 47 53.5	326,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	163		For Profit	DNR
3	Pineland Sands 7	46 52 11.6	94 49 10.2	120,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	60		For Profit	DNR
4	Pineland Sands 8	46 49 33.2	94 46 35.8	334,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	167		For Profit	DNR
5	Pineland Sands 9	46 54 48.1	94 49 11.6	160,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	80		For Profit	DNR
6	Pineland Sands 10	46 51 18.1	94 45 19.0	250,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	125		For Profit	DNR
7	Pineland Sands 11	48 48 40.4	94 46 35.1	220,000	Hubbard	Forest	Fee title	110		For Profit	DNR
8	Pineland Sands 13	46 46 59.8	94 51 40.4	186,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	93		For Profit	DNR
9	Pineland Sands 14	46 45 14.8	94 52 55.3	424,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	212		For Profit	DNR
10	Pineland Sands 15	46 45 12.8	94 49 7.1	322,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	161		For Profit	DNR
11	Pineland Sands 16	46 44 21.0	94 50 23.3	162,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	81		For Profit	DNR
12	Pineland Sands 17	46 46 5.9	94 49 7.4	84,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	42		For Profit	DNR
13	Pineland Sands 18	46 44 22.3	94 56 36.3	368,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	184		For Profit	DNR
14	Pineland Sands 19	46 44 22.0	94 55 20.1	156,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	78	0.4	For Profit	DNR
15	Pineland Sands 20	46 31 15.1	94 49 54.5	162,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	81		For Profit	DNR
16	Pineland Sands 21	46 36 29.9	94 51 12.7	162,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	81		For Profit	DNR
17	Pineland Sands 22	46 34 45.7	94 51 12.6	80,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	40		For Profit	DNR
18	Pineland Sands 23	46 33 53.2	94 52 28.2	80,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	40		For Profit	DNR
19	Pineland Sands 24	46 41 42.9	94 49 7.5	360,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	180		For Profit	DNR
20	Pineland Sands 25	46 42 36.3	94 54 5.7	164,000	Wadena	Forest	Fee title	82		For Profit	DNR
21	Pineland Sands 28	46 33 54.0	94 42 26.8	244,000	Cass	Forest	Fee title	122		For Profit	DNR
22	Pineland Sands 29	46 33 53.8	94 43 42.7	298,000	Cass	Forest	Fee title	149		For Profit	DNR

NOTES:

# Pineland Sands Aquifer Project



**Project Manager:** Richard Peterson

**Affiliation:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry

**Telephone Number:** 507-333-2012 x222

**Title:** Statewide Legacy Program Coordinator

### **Organization Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' overall mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

### **Work History**

**Division of Forestry:** Richard Peterson has over 31 years of experience working for the DNR Division of Forestry in various professional positions.

Program Coordinator, 2004 to Present: Program coordinator for Minnesota Forests for the Future Program and Federal Forest Legacy Program – responsible for overall program administration and served as project manager for acquisition of 44 forest conservation easements and fee acquisitions totaling over 358,000 acres; LCCMR project manager and LSOHC manager for several Forest Legacy and Forests for the Future appropriations. Conducts annual monitoring of 38 easement properties on 351,000 acres.

Area Forest, 1994-2005: Coordinated and delivered DNR Forestry programs to private landowners in a multi-county area of south-central Minnesota. Applied ecological principals to strategic planning, outreach, forest stewardship, restoration, and protection in the community-based Big Woods initiative in the Big Woods ecological subsection in south-central Minnesota which were part of the Cannon River Watershed project with ENRTF appropriations.

District Forester, 1989-2004: Coordinated and delivered DNR Forestry programs to private landowners in a multi-county area of south-central Minnesota.

Assistant District Forester, 1988: Timber sales, inventory, private land, fire and state land programs.

Resource Assessment Forester, 1983-1987: Conducted forest inventory and assessments at various field locations.

### **US Forest Service, Superior National Forest**

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Crew, 1982: Conducted maintenance, management and enforcement activities in BWCAW.

### **University of Minnesota**

Research Assistant, 1980-81: Conducted recreational impacts research in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness as part of a master's degree program in Forest Management at the College of Forestry in St. Paul, MN.

### **Education**

MS Forest Management: University of Minnesota College of Forestry 1982

BS Botany: University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences 1972

