

Welcome

I'm glad to be here today to kick off this important event.

Managing our state's wealth of natural resources is an important priority to me.

I encourage members of my administration to demonstrate leadership and ask them to look beyond the status quo and yesterday's thinking.

This Forest Summit is an excellent example of looking toward the future. I congratulate Commissioner Garber for setting the stage for the discussions you will have over the next two days.

This summit is important:

Minnesota's forests are critical to our quality of life. They are a foundation for a:

- Healthy environment including clean water, clear air and a healthy wildlife habitat.
- For a healthy economy including forest products industries, tourism and recreation.
- And forests promote a healthy social/cultural environment-our forests are part of our heritage, they allow our north woods communities to thrive, and they are a place for people to go to get away from the city.

I challenge you to re-think the status quo in how we manage our forests:

- To better position Minnesota as a world competitor in a global forest products industry
- To find balance in how we manage forests to provide greater long-term stability
- To help maintain the beauty of our forests that citizens and visitors come to expect

I encourage greater cooperation and building of partnerships:

- There are many different groups represented here who have more than a passing interest in our forests.
- It should not be the role of government to, on its own, take on the challenges facing Minnesota's forests.
- The best solutions lie in working together: linking resources and knowledge for more effective results.

Minnesotans want to know that their forests are being carefully managed.

I encourage you to quickly move from planning to action:

- As you implement actions, communicate the results using good science.
- Always measure the results of what you promise, Measure what counts, encourage success, and build understanding and support for forest management.



The success at this summit will depend on the quality of your participation:

- Share information
- Share perspectives
- Seek innovative solutions
- And make commitments to move forward

Before I leave, I want to share with you how important forests are to me. Each year my Southside buddies and I go up North-(expands on outdoors story)

Over the next two days:

- Keep your minds open and focused on the possibilities
- And have some fun

Thank you.