

Restoring Minnesota's Peatlands: A Vital Investment for Our Future

What difference does peatland restoration make for communities in Minnesota?



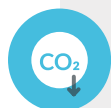
Peatlands act as natural filters, trapping sediments, nutrients, and pollutants, which helps to neutralize acidity and store sulfur and nitrogen.² Studies have shown that peatlands can significantly reduce the levels of pollutants in water, making them valuable for maintaining clean water supplies.³



Peatlands provide water storage, buffering against flooding and drought.⁴ Sphagnum mosses, common in peatlands, form floating mats that can absorb up to 20 times their weight in water, making peatlands excellent at water storage.¹



Minnesota's fishing industry, generating \$2.4 billion annually⁹, relies on peatlands to sustain ecosystems by maintaining water quality, regulating hydrology, and providing essential habitats. The hydrology of many prime fishing lakes and rivers is influenced by peatlands, making their restoration and protection vital for long-term fishing success.



Minnesota has over 6 million acres of peatlands, more than any other state in the contiguous U.S. These peatlands cover more than 10% of the state and store at least 37% of its terrestrial carbon.⁴

What can be done with more funding for peatland restoration?

Expand current restoration projects, covering more acres of degraded peatlands

Peatland restoration can include plugging ditches, re-wetting partially drained peatlands, and bringing back completely drained or converted peatlands. Re-wetting peatlands restores natural hydrology, sequesters carbon, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions*, potentially mitigating over 1 million metric tons of carbon annually—equivalent to removing 233,000 cars from the road.⁴

Support comprehensive research and monitoring efforts

Including studying the effectiveness of different restoration techniques, tracking changes in carbon storage, and monitoring impacts on water quality and biodiversity. Additionally, funding can be used to develop improved mapping of peatlands and peat soils, especially forested wetlands.⁴

Enable greater community involvement and education

Communities need to learn about the benefits of peatland restoration. This could involve outreach programs, workshops, and collaboration with local communities to raise awareness and encourage participation in restoration efforts.

*While re-wetting can initially increase methane emissions, most research suggests that long-term carbon gains outweigh these short-term effects and reduce downstream carbon export.^{1,4}

72%

of voters in Minnesota say it's extremely/very important to "protect and restore the water quality of lakes, rivers, and streams."¹⁰



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