



Published on International Falls Daily Journal (<http://www.ifalldailyjournal.com>)

State land reforestation project planned

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Created 07/20/2007 - 1:16pm

DNR Staff Report

This summer herbicides will be applied to approximately 145 acres of state land in the Brainerd area to help re-establish trees on timber harvested sites. Signs will be posted on all sites after treatment.

Other herbicides will be applied from July 30 through September as part of an effort to prepare for the planting of seedlings in the spring of 2008.

Trees are planted on state lands to reforest harvested areas, provide wildlife habitat, protect watershed values, and maintain the visual quality of state-owned forested land. Professional foresters determine the tree species appropriate for the site. Private contractors hired by the DNR do the actual planting.

"Last spring, 230 acres were planted with 160,000 trees in the Brainerd area," said Bud Bertschi, DNR forester.

"However, most of the areas where we planted trees will have to be replanted next spring. The hot, dry weather in June extended the drought that northern Minnesota has experienced for the past two years, affecting the newly planted trees."

Protecting seedlings until they grow tall enough to be out of the reach of deer is another part of the DNR's effort to re-establish trees on state forest lands. Paper bud caps or PlantSkydd, an organic deer repellent, will be applied to conifer seedlings to deter deer from eating the terminal bud and side branches of the seedlings. Sites treated with PlantSkydd this fall will have signs posted so the public will know when they are on a treated site.

"Other sites in the Brainerd area will be prepared for tree planting next spring by using a disk trencher and some previously planted areas have so much re-growth on them that it will choke out the seedlings. We will be using brush saws to cut the unwanted vegetation in order to make sure the planted trees are free to grow and do not succumb to competition for light, moisture and nutrients," according to Bertschi.

For more information about any of the areas being re-established, contact DNR-Forestry, 1601 Minnesota Drive, Brainerd MN 56401 or call 218-833-8695.

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