

# Convention Will use Reams of Paper

*Let's plant some trees*

By the Rev. Thomas D. Harries, St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, Richfield, MN.

The Minnesota Episcopal Environmental Stewardship Commission (MEESC) invites you to celebrate the gift of nature's bounty and respond with good stewardship to the tremendous use of paper at General Convention. 'Pay it forward' by contributing to the cost of planting trees in Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, located about 60 miles south-south-east of the Twin Cities. Rather than plant trees for pulp, we will make a more lasting contribution to a unique Minnesota forest.

Shawn Fritcher, resource manager at the park, said the trees would be part of a broader restoration project. "The greatest benefit to the park and public," Fritcher said, "will come from trees planted in strategic locations in the campground area, where older trees have died leaving gaps in the woods." Campers will thus have an experience of camping right in the Big Woods.

White Oak, Red Oak, and Sugar Maple, are grown locally, from local genotype seeds harvested in or near the park. Once they reach a height of five to six feet and have a very good chance of survival, they will be transplanted to the campground. Care will be taken to protect them from deer for several years after they are planted in the park.

Nerstrand Big Woods State Park is one of the last quality pieces of a forest that once covered the entire Twin Cities Metro Area. Much of the Big Woods was cut long ago for agriculture. The biggest pressure on the remaining stands is housing development. People like to live in the woods, but they often damage them in the process.

In the shelter of the Nerstrand Big Woods grows the Minnesota dwarf trout lily — a federally endangered forest wildflower that is preserved and protected within the park. The dwarf trout lily is endemic to Minnesota. It is found only within a 275 square mile area in Rice and Goodhue Counties that includes the Nerstrand Big Woods State Park.

If you are coming to General Convention as a delegate or visitor, take time to visit Nerstrand Big Woods State Park before you leave.



**We invite you to contribute the cost of a tree**, or whatever portion of the cost you can afford. The total cost, which includes payment to the nursery, transplanting, and staff time to continue watering and protecting the trees while they get established, will be \$180 per tree. All three varieties are long-lived hardwoods that are worth the investment. These trees will help offset the loss of CO<sub>2</sub> to O<sub>2</sub> exchange caused by the "harvesting" of trees for the paper used at General Convention.

At our June meeting MEESC will be purchasing a number of trees itself. Information on the number of trees purchased and the status of challenges is posted on the MEESC website for activities at General Convention (<http://www.env-steward.com/gc-03.htm>).

If you or your congregation wishes to support this project, please send a check made out to **Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota** with the notation "**Tree Project**" on both envelope and check, to

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