

Rep. Tabor offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 105.

A resolution to recognize and commemorate August 9, 2003, as the 100th anniversary of Michigan's State Forestry System and to encourage the continued sustainable management of Michigan forests into the next 100 years.

Whereas, Michigan has a long and rich tradition of forestry dating back to the establishment by the Michigan Forestry Commission of the first state forest in 1903. Prior to this, and as farming had mostly failed on the poor sandy soils of northern Michigan, the landscape had been left with dead wood and vulnerable to intense forest fires. In 1871, fires burned approximately 2.5 million acres, and over 1 million acres burned in the Thumb Area in 1881. Fires destroyed trees and habitat, killed wildlife, and accelerated erosion and river/stream degradation; and

Whereas, In an effort to avoid future similar fires, in 1887, the state of Michigan established a Forestry Commission to preserve, protect, and restore Michigan's forests. The Forestry Commission started nurseries for seedlings and stressed that fire protection as imperative to good forest management. In 1902, Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University) established a forestry curriculum for education, training, and research; and

Whereas, In 1903, the Forestry Commission established the first state forest in Crawford and Roscommon Counties. Over the next 100 years, the state forest system grew from 34,000 acres to nearly 4 million acres. It changed dramatically as well, transforming from cutover and burned-over abandoned land to a vibrant, healthy, growing forest; and

Whereas, Today, Michigan's landscape is again dominated by forests. These 19.3 million acres of forestland support a diversity of ecosystems, trees, animals, birds, and fish; provide outdoor recreation; protect air and water quality; support local communities and forest industry; and enhance the quality of life in Michigan; and

Whereas, Michigan's state forest system is the largest in the country. The efforts of many people and organizations have guided its stewardship and kept it healthy and growing; and

Whereas, It is fitting that we recognize and commemorate 100 years of Michigan forestry management with a celebration on August 9, 2003, at the North Higgins Lake State Park CCC Nursery; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body recognize August 9, 2003, as the 100th anniversary of Michigan's State Forest System and applaud the work of all those who have contributed to this rich tradition of conservation of one of our state's most important resources; and be it further

Resolved, That we continue to explore and develop new methods for the sustainable management of the forests as we head into the next 100 years; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Natural Resources Commission as a token of our esteem.