

§12822. Commissioner's authority regarding conservation of natural areas

1. Inventory of natural areas. The commissioner shall conduct an ongoing statewide inventory of the State's natural areas, including, but not limited to, rare plants, animals, natural communities and ecosystems or associated habitats and may conduct investigations related to the population, habitat needs, limiting factors and other biological and ecological data to support the mandates of the department or other cooperating agencies.

[PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

2. Natural heritage database. The commissioner shall maintain a natural heritage database that must contain data from inventories and other data sources and other relevant biological, ecological or other information about natural areas described in subsection 1 and about ecologically significant sites that harbor or otherwise contain these features. Information contained in the natural heritage database may be made available as necessary or appropriate for conservation and land use planning, environmental review, scientific research and inquiry, education or other appropriate use. For the purposes of this subsection, "appropriate use" means a use that will not jeopardize endangered plant species or habitats.

[PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

3. Ecological reserves database. The commissioner shall maintain a database of areas designated as ecological reserves as defined in section 1801, subsection 4-A and other public lands designated and managed for equivalent purposes and shall provide scientific review of areas on state land proposed as ecological reserves.

[PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

4. Promotion of conservation of natural areas. The commissioner shall promote the conservation of natural areas by:

A. Making available current and accurate information to all appropriate entities to interpret, educate or otherwise inform so as to support planning and conservation activities in this State; [PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

B. Promoting voluntary action to conserve and protect natural areas in this State; [PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

C. Entering into agreements with landowners of natural areas to promote appropriate and effective management of these areas in order to maintain and enhance the natural value of these areas. The commissioner shall notify landowners of natural areas of the natural value of their land and the implications of voluntary conservation; and [PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

D. Developing and disseminating educational or technical materials for the purpose of informing the general public and other interested persons or institutions about natural areas and the value of these areas. [PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2025, c. 706, §32 (NEW).

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