

# Wetland Benefits

## **Water quality.**

Wetlands surround some of Minnesota's most valuable resources: our lakes and rivers. Wetlands filter and absorb polluted surface water runoff before it enters lakes and rivers downstream.

## **Flood control and low flow augmentation.**

Wetlands serve as holding areas for water. When rainfall is heavy, wetlands slow the waters, reducing flood damage and soil erosion downstream. During drought, slow release of water from wetlands maintains stream flows, and may help recharge underground water supplies (called groundwater) often used for drinking.

## **Fish and wildlife habitat.**

Wetlands provide a permanent or seasonal home to fish and wildlife, including some threatened or endangered species. Wetlands also indirectly support many species by breaking down large amounts of leaves and stems for food for insects, amphibians and fish.

## **Education and recreation.**

Wetlands offer great opportunities for education and recreation. Many schools visit wetlands to learn about aquatic plants and animals; some have even restored or created wetlands on school grounds. Recreational benefits include fishing, hunting, bird-watching and hiking.

## **Commercial benefits.**

Wetlands are used for development of specialty products such as vegetable farming, peat mining, sod farming, minnow harvesting and timber harvesting.

