



LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund providing support to projects around the state for 25th year \$46.3 million secured for 65 environmental projects from state lottery-generated fund

(St. Paul, MN, May 27, 2015) – \$46.3 million from Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund ("Trust Fund") has been appropriated to 65 individual projects around the state. The bill containing the appropriations, which passed the Minnesota Legislature with strong bi-partisan support on May 18, was based on project recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). Governor Dayton signed the bill into law on May 22, thereby approving funds for all of the projects contained in the bill.

Generated by profits from the Minnesota State Lottery since 1991, Trust Fund dollars are constitutionally-dedicated by Minnesota voters to ensure a long-term, stable source of funds for protecting and enhancing the state's environment and natural resources for current citizens and future generations. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Trust Fund providing this support, which has so far totaled nearly \$500 million for over 900 projects benefitting every county in the state.

"Minnesota is extremely lucky to have the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Not many other states have the same ability to make these targeted investments protecting the environment and tackling new challenges as they emerge," said Sen. Kari Dziedzic, bill author in the Senate. "Minnesota's fish and wildlife, the quality of its lakes and rivers, and its many unique lands are what this year's projects are working to secure for the future."

Rep. Paul Torkelson, bill author in the House, stated, "This year's projects will help ensure clean water and healthy habitat for the future by developing innovative technologies and techniques for improved stewardship of resources and securing the critical information needed for effective resource management and protection. Of particular value, this year's bill also took a forward-looking approach of setting aside some funds to ensure nimble responses to issues that emerge suddenly in the state."

Projects funded by the bill will produce broad and diverse benefits for Minnesota's environment and natural resources statewide by providing:

- ~\$14 million for advancing our knowledge and providing strategies and recommendations for addressing issues relating to invasive species; water sustainability and protection; plant and animal species protection, management, and recovery; habitat restoration; improved agricultural and forestry practices; renewable energy; and land protection strategies.
- ~\$11 million for inventory, monitoring, mapping, and planning efforts to guide natural resource management, including projects that survey, map, or interpret data pertaining to groundwater and wetland resources; habitat distributions; invasive species; local recreation and conservation; forestry; river ecology; and plant and animal species, including threatened species such as pollinators, orchids, and bats.
- ~\$9.6 million for permanent protection of approximately 1,800 acres of natural areas, including acquisition of about 1,300 acres of habitat having rare or unique ecological significance and acquisition of about 500 acres for state and regional parks and trails.
- ~\$5.6 million for education, outreach, demonstration, and technical assistance that will engage and educate on topics including water quality; pollinators; plant and animal species; alternative agricultural practices; renewable energy and resource reuse; community forestry; and habitat protection, restoration, and stewardship.
- ~\$3.2 million for restoration and enhancement of approximately 2,700 acres of habitat through seed collection, prescribed burns, soil preparation, native vegetation installation, invasive species control, and monitoring and evaluation.
- ~\$2 million for parks and trails development, including state parks, the Mesabi Trail, and new recreational sites in southeast Minnesota.

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Jeff Broberg, Sen. Gary Dahms, Sen. Kari Dziedzic, William Faber, Nancy Gibson, Rep. Tom Hackbarth
Bonnie Harper-Lore, Sen. John Hoffman, Gary Lamppa, Rep. Denny McNamara, Norman Moody, Rep. John Persell
Sen. David Tomassoni, Rep. Paul Torkelson, Rep. Jean Wagenius, Sen. Torrey Westrom, Della Young

A few specific highlights include:

- Establishment, development, and support of a new research center at the University of Minnesota dedicated to developing and implementing solutions for controlling terrestrial invasive plants, pathogens, and pests, including agricultural weeds and pests.
- Expansion of Banning State Park in Pine County, Myre-Island State Park in Freeborn County, Minneopa State Park in Blue Earth County, the Goodhue-Pioneer State Trail in Goodhue County, and the Mesabi Trail in northern Minnesota.
- Acceleration of the Minnesota Biological Survey, Minnesota County Geologic Atlas, and the updating of the National Wetlands Inventory to acquire essential information for understanding and managing Minnesota's natural resources.
- Development of Minneopa State Park in Blue Earth County and Blue Mounds State Park in Rock County to assist in the reintroduction and preservation of American bison.
- A statewide analysis of water sustainability for Minnesota, including assessment of threats to water quality and quantity and quantification of the potential impacts of changes in the availability of clean water for various sectors of the economy.
- Research and development of a variety of innovative technologies to enable local production of nitrogen fertilizer in a renewable and sustainable manner.

The LCCMR's recommendations for project funding were the product of a competitive, multi-step proposal and selection process. In response to a request for proposal, 152 proposals requesting a total of approximately \$126 million were received – nearly \$3 requested for every \$1 available. Seventy-six of these proposals were called in to present and answer questions before the LCCMR and from this pool 65 projects were recommended to receive a portion of the \$46.3 million appropriated.

Projects can begin work on July 1, 2015, when the dollars from the Trust Fund first become available. Additional information on individual projects and the LCCMR proposal and funding process can be found on the LCCMR's website at www.lccmr.leg.mn.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund is a permanent dedicated fund in the Minnesota state treasury that was established by 77% voter approval of a constitutional amendment in 1988. The amendment directs forty percent of the net proceeds of the Minnesota State Lottery, or approximately seven cents of every dollar spent on playing the lottery, into the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is intended to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for innovative and far-sighted activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

The LCCMR has already begun its process for making its 2016 recommendations. A request for proposal was issued in December 2014 with proposals due May 11. Approximately \$46.3 million is expected to be available. A total of 185 proposals requesting a total of \$130.9 million were received by the deadline and will be considered by the LCCMR in September and October 2015.

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

The LCCMR is made up of 17 members (5 Senators, 5 Representatives, 5 citizens appointed by the governor, 1 citizen appointed by the Senate, and 1 citizen appointed by the House). The function of the LCCMR is to make funding recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963. Since then over \$850 million has been appropriated to over 1,900 projects recommended to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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