



# Department of Natural Resources Biennial Budget FY24-25

This document provides a high-level summary of our FY24-25 biennial budget highlighting key information about where our funding comes from and how we use it.

The state of Minnesota budgets on a two-year (biennial) funding cycle. The legislature and governor establish our “base” budget in the odd-numbered year and amend it in the even-numbered year. Our FY24-25 biennial budget is \$2 billion and is used to support our mission:

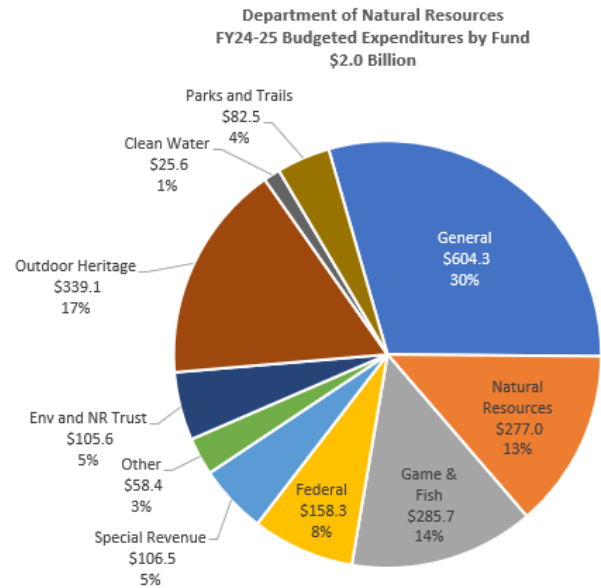
*To work with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state’s natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.*

Like most state agencies, we organize our budget by our seven divisions and then across many funds.

Our divisions include: 1) Lands and Minerals, 2) Ecological and Water Resources, 3) Forestry, 4) Parks and Trails, 5) Fish and Wildlife, 6) Enforcement, and 7) Operations Services. Parks and Trails has the largest budget (\$427 million) and accounts for 21% of our total spending. Lands and Minerals is our smallest division and constitutes 3% of our budget. We also have an eighth aspect of our budget for monies that we do not use for our operations. They are either appropriations to non-state entities or payments that the DNR makes on behalf of the state. We refer to these monies as *pass-through funds*, which make up 22% of our FY24-25 budget.

We manage our budget across more than 50 funds, and most of our fiscal activity occurs in four primary funds: General Fund (30%), Outdoor

Heritage Fund (17%), Game and Fish Fund (14%), and Natural Resources Fund (13%). Together, these account for 74% of our spending.



## Where do we get our funding?

### The General Fund

The General Fund is the state’s main operating fund. General Fund dollars play an important role in our budget because they are our most flexible funding source. They allow us to budget for our general operating needs as well as respond quickly to emergencies and urgent, unexpected needs.

Our FY24-25 General Fund budget is \$604.3 million, which is less than 1% of the total General Fund spending for the state. Seventy-three percent of these dollars (or \$440 million) are direct appropriations for managing of the state parks and trails, minimizing the spread of invasive species, managing the state’s forests and lands,

protecting our water, providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and enforcing natural resource laws. Direct appropriations are set by law and state agencies cannot spend more than the amount appropriated.

The FY24-25 General Fund budget includes the Get Out MORE (Modernizing our Outdoor Recreation Experiences) initiative, which invests \$110 million in Minnesota’s recreation infrastructure. These investments are onetime in nature and are included in division budgets as shown in the table below. Please note spending across these categories will not be limited to only the division shown in the table. These General Fund investments will be paired with an additional \$40 million in investments from bond funds that are also part of the Get Out MORE initiative but are not shown.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Division</i>
Enhancing Access and Welcoming New Users to Public Lands and Outdoor Recreation Facilities	\$25M	PAT
Modernizing Camping and Related Infrastructure	\$5M	PAT
Modernizing Boating Access	\$35M	PAT
Enhancing Fisheries and Fishing Infrastructure	\$35M	FAW
Restoring Streams and Modernize Water-related Infrastructure	\$10M	EWR

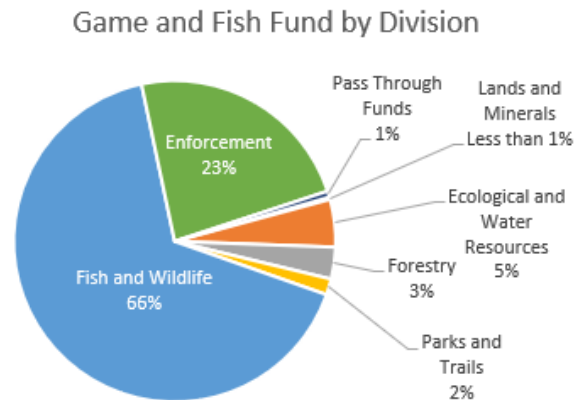
The remaining 27% of the General Fund budget are open appropriations that are available up to the amount needed to meet a statutory requirement.

We have three open appropriations in the General Fund. Two of them are for making

payments to Tribal governments and counties based on treaties and statute on behalf of the state. The payments made to counties are known as payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILT) and are approximately \$46 million dollars each year. Since the state does not pay property taxes on land it owns, PILT payments help compensate counties for this lost tax revenue. We also make payments to tribes on behalf of state in accordance with the 1854 Treaty and the Leech Lake Band agreement. These are roughly \$9.2 million annually. An additional onetime amount of \$3 million each year in FY24 and FY25 was added to the 1854 Treaty agreement. Lastly, we have authority to access General Fund dollars (as needed), so that we can respond quickly to forest fires. For FY24-25, this is estimated at \$25 million per year.

The Game and Fish Fund

The Game and Fish Fund (GFF) supports management, monitoring, and protection of fish and wildlife resources as well as the enforcement of game and fish laws. Our Fish and Wildlife Division accounts for 66% of our GFF expenditures, over half of which is spent on compensation.



The fund is sourced by a variety of revenues that directly relate to the programs they support. Sales of hunting and fishing licenses contributed 55% of

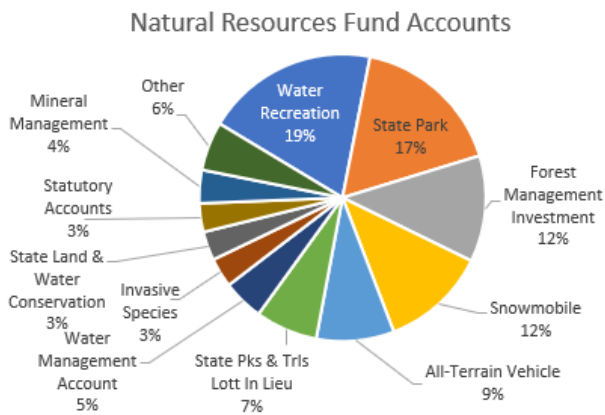
GFF total revenue in FY23. We also receive federal funds through the federal sport fish and wildlife federal grants. We estimate these funds at \$101.7 million in the FY24-25 biennium. Together, these license and federal revenue contribute about 96% of the fund.

A citizen’s oversight group plays an important role in making recommendations for improvements in management and use of money in the fund.

For more information about the Game and Fish Fund, please see our annual [Game and Fish Report](#) available on our website.

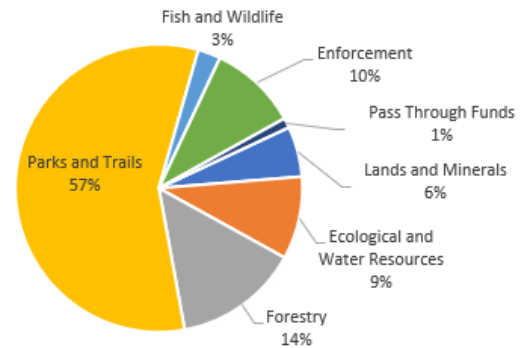
The Natural Resources Fund

The Natural Resources Fund (NR) supports the development and maintenance of Minnesota’s natural resources and the enforcement of natural resource laws. NR expenditures make up 13% of our total budget. This fund consists of 21 accounts that are all dedicated for a specific purpose ranging from water-based recreation to forest management to state parks. The two largest accounts are Water Recreation and State Parks, which make up 19% and 17% of the Natural Resources Fund budget, respectively.



Our Parks and Trails Division accounts for 57% of our NR spending, nearly half of which is spent on compensation.

Natural Resources Fund by Division



The two largest revenue sources to the fund include the 1) state’s gasoline tax and 2) license and registration fees—together these contributed 49% of the fund’s resources in FY23. For more information about the Natural Resources Fund, please see our annual [Natural Resources Fund Report](#) available on our website.

An important aspect of our budget is that a significant portion of our spending authority in GFF and NR comes from appropriations that are sourced by the revenues our programs generate. When revenues exceed appropriations, we cannot spend above our appropriation even though there may be unmet needs. Conversely, when appropriations exceed revenues, we only spend what we collect to ensure that our funds stay healthy. This can limit our ability to provide services at the “right” level and fulfill our mission.

Federal Grants

We receive a variety of funding from the federal government for research, boat and water safety, trail development, disaster response, wildlife habitat protection, and special projects. We expect to receive \$158.3 million, which is 8% of our FY24-25 biennial budget.

Constitutionally-Dedicated Funding

In 1988 and 2008, Minnesota voters approved constitutional amendments that established dedicated funding for environmental,

recreational, and cultural purposes. We receive funding from four of the five constitutionally-dedicated funds. These include the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) and the following Legacy funds: Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, and Parks and Trails Fund. These funding sources are unique, because 1) they fund one-time projects rather than ongoing operations and 2) Outdoor Heritage Fund and ENRTF are appropriated annually rather than biennially. Additionally, the dedicated sales tax supporting the Legacy funding expires after 25 years. In FY24-25, we received \$552.7 million, which accounts for 27% of our FY24-25 budget.

*Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund*

We use these dollars to conserve and enhance Minnesota’s natural resources including air, water, fish, and wildlife. The Legislative-Citizen Commission on the Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) committee governs this fund and makes annual funding recommendations to the legislature. We received \$105.6 million from this fund in FY24-25, which is 5% of our overall biennial budget.

*Outdoor Heritage Fund*

These dollars are used to restore, protect and enhance land and water for fish, game and wildlife. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) oversees this Fund and makes recommendations to the legislature annually. We received \$339.1 million from this fund in FY24-25, which accounts for 76% of our Legacy Funds and 17% of our biennial budget. Of this, \$236.5 million is for pass-through grants to local governments and external organizations.

*Clean Water Fund*

Funding is used to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in surface and groundwater. The Clean Water Council as well as an interagency committee of state agencies makes funding

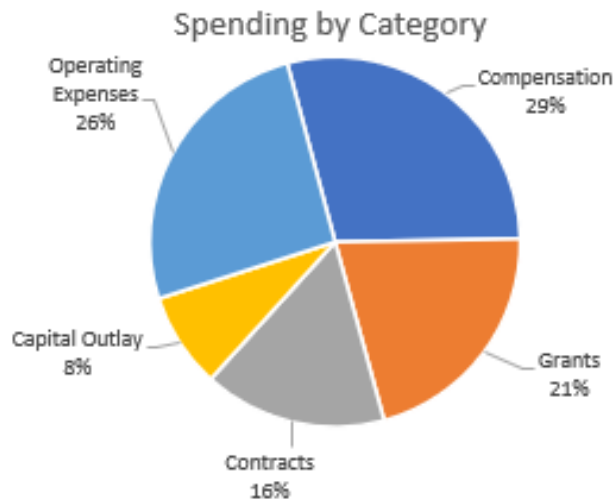
recommendations to the governor. We received \$25.6 million from this fund for FY24-25, which accounts for 6% of our Legacy Funds and 1% of our overall biennial budget.

*Parks and Trails Fund*

We use this funding to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance. All of these dollars are spent by our Parks and Trails division and half of these dollars are for pass-through grants. We received \$82.5 million from this fund, which accounts for 18% of our Legacy Funds and 4% of our biennial budget.

**What do we spend our money on?**

Our largest expense is compensation, which is 29% of our total budget. We employed approximately 3,700 people across the state in FY23, which translates into approximately 2,500 full-time equivalents (FTE). This trend is consistent across all our divisions.



Operating expenses is the next largest spending category. Examples of operating expenses include supplies, equipment, rent, and fleet. The third largest spending category is grants. We send nearly \$473.5 million out the door to local

governments and non-governmental organizations to help fulfill our mission.

The two smallest categories are contracts and capital outlay. In any given year, we may also contract for services when we need skills that we do not have or when our internal staffing is insufficient. Capital outlay includes building repairs, and improvements, and land acquisition. Please note that this summary does not include expenditures or appropriations from the bond fund.

### **Division Budgets**

We structure our budget around our seven divisions. Our largest division is Parks and Trails, which accounts for 21% of our total spending. Below is a high-level summary of key budget information for each division.

#### **Lands and Minerals (LAM)**

Size of Biennial budget: \$54.6 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 88

Responsible for implementing land policy on state-owned lands and providing fiduciary oversight for real estate and minerals transactions that relate to state ownership. Approximately half of LAM's overall budget comes from the General Fund (\$30 million or 55%). LAM also operates out of the Mineral Management Account in the Natural Resources Fund, which is sourced primarily by mineral mining royalties.

#### **Ecological and Water Resources (EWR)**

Size of Biennial budget: \$280 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 380

Dedicated to promoting and delivering integrated conservation of Minnesota's water resources, biological diversity, and ecosystem services to achieve healthy watersheds throughout Minnesota, and ensuring a high quality of life for present and future generations. EWR receives \$65.3 million from the General Fund, which is 23%

of EWR's budget. EWR operates out of various funds, including the Federal Fund and the Natural Resources Fund, which make up 29% and 9% respectively. EWR also receives funding from the Clean Water Fund (\$20.2 million or 7%).

#### **Forestry (FOR)**

Size of Biennial budget: \$238.8 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 439

Sustains Minnesota's forest ecosystems in a healthy, resilient, and productive state to ensure that current and future generations enjoy a full range of forest benefits. FOR has a General Fund biennial budget of \$143.3 million, which accounts for 60% of the FOR budget. We can access additional General Fund dollars as needed to fight forest fires; historically, we have spent an average of \$25 million per year for this purpose.

#### **Parks and Trails (PAT)**

Size of Biennial budget: \$427 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 578

Creates outdoor opportunities through a state park and recreation system that conserves and manages Minnesota's natural, scenic, and cultural resources. PAT receives \$144.7 million in General Fund support this biennium (34% of the PAT's budget), but also relies on user fees from parks and recreation vehicles. Most of these fees are designated for a specific purpose. PAT also receives funding from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (\$56.1 million) which accounts for 13% of the PAT budget.

#### **Fish and Wildlife (FAW)**

Size of Biennial budget: \$400 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 558

Manages and monitors fish and wildlife, their habitats, and the public use of fish and wildlife. FAW relies largely on the Game and Fish Fund (\$189.4 million or 47%). FAW also receives funding from the General Fund (\$68.5 million or

17%) and the Outdoor Heritage Fund (\$57.2 million or 14% of the biennial budget).

More information on each division available on the [DNR website](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/) (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>).

### Enforcement (ENF)

Size of Biennial budget: \$135.3 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 250

Ensures compliance with laws regarding state game and fish, recreational vehicles, natural resource commercial operations, environmental protection, and public safety. The ENF budget primarily comes from the Game and Fish Fund (\$66.4 million or 49%) and the Natural Resources Fund (\$28 million or 21%). Enforcement receives \$30.4 million from the General Fund, which is 23% of the ENF budget.

### Operations Support (OPS)

Size of Biennial budget: \$59.8 million

Number of FTE (FY23): 266

Provides administrative leadership and support to the entire agency and direct services to the public through the call center and website. The OPS division is funded through internal billings, which means that OPS bills the other divisions for the administrative support they receive. The legislature approved this funding structure in 2008. Please note: to avoid double-counting expenditures, we have excluded the \$211 million of activity funded through these internal charges to divisions.

### Pass-Through Funds

Size of Biennial budget: \$447.5 million

Represents funding to local governments and non-governmental organizations to build recreation facilities and to protect and enhance natural areas. This includes pass through dollars of \$325.1million appropriated through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Outdoor Heritage Fund, and the Parks and Trails Fund. This also includes \$91.3 million for PILT payments to counties discussed previously.