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Cross-Country Ski Program

Thousands of Minnesotans enjoy cross-country skiing every year. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers 1,400 miles of state-operated and grant-in-aid cross-country ski trails statewide. By purchasing a ski pass, cross-country skiers support the maintenance and grooming of these cross-country ski trails. Most grant-in-aid cross-country ski trails are maintained by local ski club volunteers.

Since 1983, when the Legislature established the program, skiers aged 16 and older have been required to have a ski trail pass while on these ski trails. Passes cost \$5 (daily), \$15 (annual), or \$40 (3-years) and can be obtained through any of nearly 1,800 licensing agents, online at www.wildlifelicenses.com/mn, by calling 1-888-665-4236, or by mail from DNR License Center, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul MN 55155-4026. Ski trail information, locations, maps, grooming conditions, and more information are available at www.mndnr.gov/skiing/index.html.

Receipts from ski pass sales go into the Cross-Country Ski Account, a dedicated account that is used to support maintenance and grooming of cross-country ski trails in the local grant-in-aid program. The Cross-Country Ski Account is one of the dedicated accounts in the DNR's Natural Resources Fund.

Grants-in-aid are awarded each year from the Cross-Country Ski Account through the Cross Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Program.

Grant sponsors/recipients for Fiscal Year 2008 included 18 counties, 12 cities, and one township. These grants were used to maintain and groom about 700 miles of cross country ski trails.

Counties

Aitkin
Anoka
Beltrami
Cass
Cook
Crow Wing
Douglas
Goodhue
Hubbard
Isanti
Itasca
Kandiyohi
Lake
Morrison
Ramsey
Stearns
St. Louis
Washington

Cities and township

Ault Township
Austin
Babbitt
Deer River
Duluth
Ely
Faribault
Grand Marais
Lakeville
Orr
Red Wing
St. Cloud
Tower

Fiscal Year 2008 financial summary

Receipts from sales of ski trail passes and issuance fees in FY2008 totaled nearly \$308,000. About 17,200 ski passes were sold. An issuance fee of \$1 per pass is collected by merchants or the DNR, depending on how the cross-country ski pass was purchased.

Expenditures of \$167,464 included the FY2008 Grants-in-Aid contribution of \$140,200, issuance fees retained by merchants or the DNR License Center/ELS based on their ski permit sales (\$21,155), and about \$6,000 for other costs incurred by the DNR.

The end-of-year fund balance for Fiscal Year 2008 was nearly \$558,000, up from the previous end-of-year balance of about \$417,000.

Cross-Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid for Fiscal Year 2008 totaled \$202,700. The total includes an amount carried over from the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year contribution.

Receipts, Expenditures, and Fund Balances	
Receipts	
Ski trail passes	\$283,206
Issuance fees collected	25,009
Net of other receipts/offsets	(107)
Total receipts	\$307,928
Expenditures	
Trails and Waterways Mgmt	\$146,309
Fish & Wildlife: License Center/ELS	<u>21,155</u>
Total expenditures	\$167,464
Fund balance – start of FY2008	\$417,334
Net change	\$140,464
Fund balance – end of FY2008	\$557,798

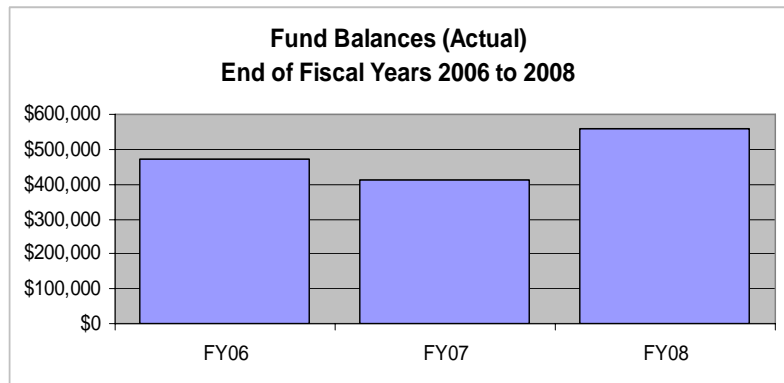
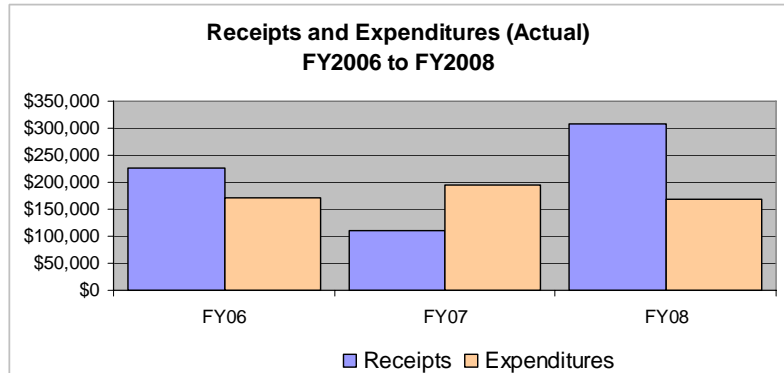
Cross-Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid	
FY2008 addition	\$140,200
FY2007 carryover (unspent)	\$ 62,500
Total of active grants-in-aid	\$202,700

Recent financial history

The history of the Cross-Country Ski Account shows that permit revenues vary considerably from year to year. Revenues show a strong correlation to the timing, duration, and amount of snowfall.

In four of the most recent seven years, grants-in-aid expenditures exceeded the cross-country ski permit receipts. For the most recent three years (first chart), revenues exceeded expenditures in two of the years.

The second chart shows that end-of-year fund balances during the recent period have grown overall. The fund balance is kept at a level that helps ensure the next years' funding for grants will be available. A healthy fund balance can keep the program at a steady level of grants-in-aid support.



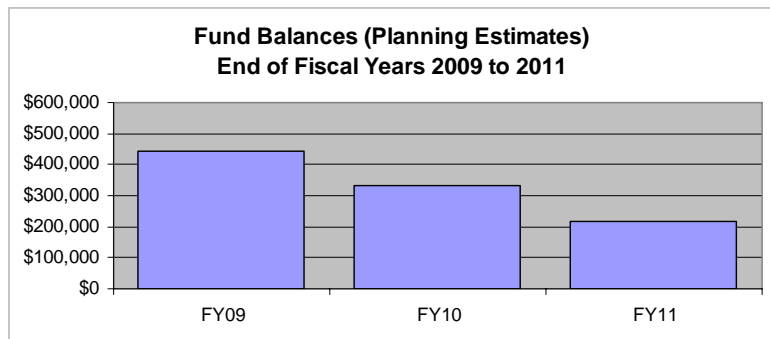
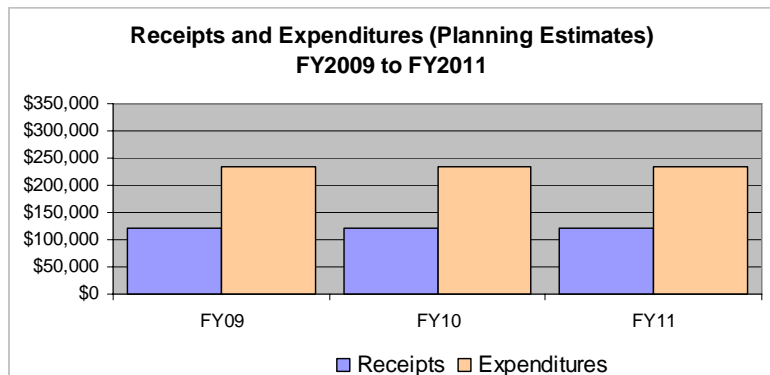
Program future

Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances

At various times, the fund balance may allow the DNR to increase the amount of grants-in-aid beyond the planned \$200,000 per fiscal year.

The department's projections for the next three fiscal years are shown in the table to the right. Expenditures exceed revenues over the three-year period, reflecting increased grants. As a result, the fund balance declines over the period.

The next page describes additional grants planned for FY2009 and FY2010.



Grants for FY2009 and FY2010

In Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, the DNR plans to award Capital Improvement Grants for Grant-in-Aid Ski Trails. The capital grants are in addition to the grooming and maintenance grants previously described. The funds are from two sources, each contributing 50 percent: the Federal Recreational Trail Program and the DNR Cross-Country Ski Account. The Ski Account dollars are being leveraged to gain the federal funding.

- For FY2009, the Capital Improvement Grants will total approximately \$50,000. Applications for the FY2009 grants were due to the DNR in February 2008.
- For FY2010, the Capital Improvement Grants are expected to total approximately \$100,000. Applications will be due to the DNR by February 28, 2009.

The capital improvement grants are an example of cooperative efforts between the DNR and the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA). The DNR will continue to look to the statewide cross-country ski community for input on Minnesota's Cross-Country Ski Program.

References and additional information

- Minnesota DNR cross-country ski link: www.mndnr.gov/skiing/index.html
- Purchase a cross-country ski pass online:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/skipass/index.html>
- Cross Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid (GIA):
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia_crosscountry.html
- Ski capital improvement grants 2010: (use the Cross Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid link)
- Minnesota Statutes, Sections *85.40* (definitions), *85.41* (cross-country ski passes), *85.42* (fees) and *85.43* (disposition of receipts and purpose)
- Non-DNR Websites: (use the Cross Country Ski Trail Grants-in-Aid link)

For questions or for additional information about the Minnesota DNR Cross-Country Ski Program, contact the Program Coordinator, Andrew.Korsberg@state.mn.us.