

# Natural Resources

# Projects Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Project Title	Priority Ranking	Funding Source	Project Requests for State Funds		
			2020	2022	2024
Natural Resources Asset Preservation	1	GO	\$ 137,000	\$ 137,000	\$ 137,000
Natural Resources Betterment of Buildings	2	GO	\$ 47,500	\$ 47,500	\$ 47,500
Natural Resources Acquisition and Betterment of Public Lands	3	GO	\$ 69,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 69,000
Wildfire Aviation Infrastructure	4	GO	\$ 9,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Improving Accessibility to State Parks and Recreation Areas	5	GO	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Dam Safety Repair, Reconstruction or Removal	6	GO	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program	7	GO	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park	8	GO	\$ 16,800	\$ 11,000	\$ 15,000
Parks and Trails Local and Regional Grant Program	9	GO	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Community Tree Planting Grants	10	GO	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
<b>Total Project Requests</b>			<b>\$ 335,800</b>	<b>\$ 324,500</b>	<b>\$ 328,500</b>
<b>General Obligation Bonds (GO) Total</b>			<b>\$ 335,800</b>	<b>\$ 324,500</b>	<b>\$ 328,500</b>

## Natural Resources Asset Preservation

**AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$137,000**Priority Ranking:** 1

**Project Summary:** \$137 million in state funds is requested for the repair and renovation of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) capital assets (including buildings, roads, trails, water accesses, bridges, recreational facilities and more) to assure they are safe and functional for the recreating public, support the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources and preserve the state's investment in its capital assets.

**Project Description**

This \$137 million request is to fund Natural Resources Asset Preservation and Replacement Needs under Minnesota Statutes 84.946. DNR manages a broad range of building and recreational assets located in all 87 Minnesota Counties. DNR has 2,852 buildings in over 225 locations around the state, 75 state parks and recreation areas, 9 waysides, 43 forest campgrounds, 3,300 miles of roads, 675 miles of surfaced state trail, over 1,000 bridges and culverts, 1,678 water access sites, 1,019 water control structures, 15 hatcheries, 2 nurseries, 368 fishing piers and thousands of miles of hiking trails, all of which require periodic renewal.

The value of DNR buildings and recreational assets is about \$3 billion. To keep everything in a safe and usable condition requires significant repair, renovation and renewal.

- **Buildings:** \$64 million for renewal of existing buildings, particularly much-needed funding to bring crisis or poor building components up to acceptable or better condition. Special focus will be paid to safety, accessibility, code compliance, roof replacements, replacement of inefficient mechanical systems and providing renewable energy systems. Projects include completing the repair of the Soudan mine hoist.
- **Water and Wastewater Systems:** \$10 million for septic and water systems statewide, including at Itasca, Whitewater, Myre-Big Island and Scenic State Parks. Many shower buildings at state parks are grossly inadequate. Potable water supplies and wastewater systems need to be brought into compliance with Department of Health and Pollution Control Agency standards.
- **Roads, Trails, and Bridges:** \$38.5 million to provide critical renewal and replacement of roads, trails, culverts, and bridges on state land. DNR has over 3,300 miles of roads that provide access to over 5 million acres of state forest lands, state parks and recreation areas, and wildlife management areas. DNR has over 650 miles of paved trails and thousands of miles of natural surface trails. These systems include over 650 bridges, more than 100 of which are 100+ years old.
- **Public Water Access Sites and Lake Superior Small Craft Harbors:** \$15.5 million to rehabilitate existing public water access sites and harbors to address safety issues and implement best management practices (BMPs) for shoreland management, aquatic invasive species (AIS) management and universal design (ADA) components.
- **Water Control Structures:** \$3 million for water control structures that provide core waterfowl habitat on key shallow lakes and significant wetlands. DNR Fish and Wildlife manages over 600 dikes,

water control structures and fish barriers across Minnesota. These structures are deteriorating and require repair or replacement to maintain existing investments in the state's fish and wildlife resources. Potential projects include structures at Aurzada Prairie, Quistorff, Spohn, Staples, Heron Lake Dam WMAs and fish hatchery ponds.

- Monitoring Wells: \$1.1 million for rehabilitation of existing groundwater monitoring (observation) wells.
- Campsites: \$3.8 million for critical upgrades to outdated sites at Nerstrand, Temperance River, and Maplewood State Parks.
- Hatcheries and Nurseries: \$1.1 million for critical repair and replacement of hatchery system components statewide.

### **Project Rationale**

DNR parks, trails, and public land are enjoyed by visitors from across the state. DNR's assets have been neglected because of insufficient funding and the resulting deferred maintenance is significant and costly. The facility condition assessment shows that of about 2,852 buildings, 215 are in crisis condition and 549 are in poor condition. Some bridges are weight restricted, trails are in very poor condition and state natural resources are under-utilized because of inadequate accesses or water control structures. Some water and wastewater systems don't meet health and safety standards and must be brought into compliance. The needs are documented further in DNR's 10-Year Capital Asset Need: Taking Care of What We Have report.

### **Project Timeline**

Funds will be expended or encumbered by 2024, with the majority of spending in years two and three.

### **Other Considerations**

The DNR is pursuing a comprehensive approach to energy and climate change, and has set aggressive goals for securing a more sustainable future that incorporate greater use of clean energy and reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions. DNR leads by example in adopting renewable energy installations, for example, with Solar PV capable of generating 675 KW annually installed at 31 locations around the state, and by installing energy-star equipment and building construction designed to operate near the net-zero level.

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

### **Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2019 Ch. 2 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$3,419,000

L2018 Ch. 214 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$26,581,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$15,000,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$10,000,000

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## Natural Resources Betterment of Buildings

**AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$47,500**Priority Ranking:** 2**Project Summary:** \$47.5 million in state funds is requested to support the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) strategic and long-term investment in its building management objectives. DNR offices, state park shower buildings, nurseries, and fish hatcheries need to be brought up to current standards and work places need to be made safe and efficient.**Project Description**

This \$47.5 million request includes funds under MS 86A.12 to acquire, construct, and improve buildings. The request would allow significant improvements to or replacement of buildings that are not ADA accessible, unsafe, no longer serve their intended purpose or have reached the end of their useful life. The Drill Core Library in Hibbing; buildings at International Falls; Badoura forest nursery; Cloquet office; park shower buildings at Frontenac, Scenic, Bearhead, and Lake Bronsen State Parks; replacement of hatchery buildings at Waterville are all included in this proposal. Additionally, the funds would support siting and design for future capital budget requests to address needs in Bemidji (where DNR staff are scattered across three DNR-owned sites and two leased sites), Spicer area (where DNR offices are also in three locations), and Little Falls.

Additional storage buildings are also needed at various locations around the state. The equipment used by DNR, such as boats and fire trucks, to provide safety services to the public and protect our natural resources, is becoming larger and contains highly sophisticated electronic operating systems. This equipment no longer fits in many of existing DNR storage buildings and is forced to be stored outside. The cost of constructing buildings to properly store equipment is offset in the long-term by increasing the life-cycle of the equipment.

New construction and expansion of use do not qualify for asset preservation funding, so building betterment funding is needed.

**Project Rationale**

DNR buildings must be safe, accessible, energy efficient and optimally located to best serve the public and meet the agency's infrastructure needs. To meet these goals, DNR follows these guidelines:

- Configure sites and facilities to best achieve the state's conservation mission and natural resource results,
- Right-size the DNR's building portfolio,
- Provide just enough facilities to support DNR's mission and not more,
- Construct and operate facilities to have the smallest environmental footprint possible, and
- Design facilities to enhance and support integrated natural resource work.

**Project Timeline**

This request has many components and all phases will be complete within the given time frames.

**Other Considerations**

In addition to cost reductions, it is anticipated that co-location of DNR sites will enhance outdoor recreation opportunities by focusing delivery at key locations.

DNR has successfully co-located offices and other facilities with other public entities, as evidenced by sites in Warroad (with the City), Thief River Falls (DPS and MNDOT), Blackduck (US Forest Service), and Bemidji (MNDOT), and is seeking similar opportunities.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, Buildings, \$6,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, Buildings, \$2,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, Hatcheries, \$2,000

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## Natural Resources Acquisition and Betterment of Public Lands

**AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$69,000**Priority Ranking:** 3**Project Summary:** \$69 million in state funds is requested for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to acquire and better state lands in order to improve and conserve Minnesota's natural heritage, enrich public outdoor recreational opportunities and provide for the commercial uses of natural resources.**Project Description**

This request includes \$49 million under Minnesota Statutes 86A.12 to acquire and improve public lands and \$20 million under Minnesota Statutes 84.027, subd. 18 to provide compensation to the school trust.

The project has several facets:

- Acquisition: \$34 million would be used to acquire (either in fee or through easements) strategic in-holdings and parcels, and critical needs for the following programs: Wildlife and Aquatic Management Areas to support the Pheasant action plan, Scientific and Natural Areas, State Parks, and forest management including Forest for the Future acquisitions to preclude the loss of large parcels of forest lands.
- Betterment of Public Lands: \$15 million would be used to improve public lands.
  - a. Reforestation: \$7 million is required to provide for reforestation of state lands, including trust lands, to support the forest industry (M.S. 89.002, Sub 2).
  - b. SNA development: Development of parking areas to provide access to public lands.
  - c. Motorized Recreation Improvements: Clear River OHV Campground in the Beltrami Island State Forest would be developed to accommodate motorized recreation.
  - d. Water Access: Funds would supplement water recreation funds to design and construct water access at Moccasin Point (Lake Vermilion) and Detroit Lakes (North.)
  - e. Groundwater Observation Wells: These funds would expand the system of observation wells to provide data for analyzing groundwater trends that is critical for water supply planning.
  - f. Hatchery ponds at New London and Tower would be enhanced to increase production and improve treatment.
- School Trust Land Acquisition and Betterment: \$20 million would be used to provide compensation to the Permanent School Trust Fund for the acquisition of lands that contain DNR facilities that prohibit revenue generation, such as designation of Wildlife Management Areas and development of public water access sites. These funds will begin to address the requirement under Minnesota Statutes 84.027, subd. 18. In addition, the betterment of trust lands by accomplishing reforestation and improvement of forest roads can increase compensation to the School Trust.

**Project Rationale**

This funding is needed to improve the management and conservation of the natural resources of the state as provided for in 86A.12. Proper management of natural resources and recreational improvements help to ensure a prosperous and healthy Minnesota.

Additionally, this funding would allow the DNR to address the requirements under MS 84.027, Subd. 18 regarding the School Trust Fund.

**Project Timeline**

Projects will be completed within the required time frame.

**Other Considerations**

Acquiring in-holdings is the highest priority.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, Reforestation, \$3,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Reforestation, \$1,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Parks and Trails, \$14,548,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, St. Paul Invasive Tree Pests, \$1,500,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, Reforestation, \$2,963,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, Parks and Trails, \$18,917,000

The Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Native Prairie Bank (NPB) and Groundwater Monitoring programs are also supported in part by the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund and/or the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

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Wildfire Aviation Infrastructure

**AT A GLANCE**

**2020 Request Amount:** \$9,500

**Priority Ranking:** 4

**Project Summary:** \$9.5 million in state funds is requested to support the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR), Division of Forestry’s efforts to extinguish wildfires through aerial suppression. Airtanker Base ramps, hangar buildings, utilities and support systems require investments to make them efficient and sustainable.

**Project Description**

- Hibbing Airtanker Base: \$5 million is to replace the ramp (\$2 million) and build new tanker base buildings (\$3 million) at Hibbing. The ramp (staging and access area) is decaying and is almost inoperable. The current facility utilizes two mobile home units that have reached the end of their useful life. The wildfire response facility will be approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and accommodate up to 30 people for briefing, dispatch, crew readiness, storage, and pilot rest areas.
- Grand Rapids Hangar: \$2 million to construct a hangar facility and helibase. A hangar will provide security and storage for DNR-owned aircraft as well as facilities for Grand Rapids and Hill City helicopter operations (helibase.) The helibase and hangar facility will provide accommodations for 12 people for briefing, crew readiness, storage, and pilot rest areas. The current hangar space for DNR-owned aircraft at Grand Rapids is a privately-owned maintenance and storage space with multiple tenants, requiring extensive movement/repositioning of airplanes by the hangar operator. Significant damage occurred to a DNR airplane in 2018 during repositioning which resulted in months of the aircraft being unavailable.
- Brainerd Airtanker Base: \$2.5 million is to build a joint Aircraft Firefighting and Rescue (ARFF) facility and MN DNR Airtanker Base building at Brainerd. A joint facility will bring efficiencies through shared utility infrastructure (natural gas, water and sewer), shared common spaces, parking, and space for an emergency operations center (EOC) for state, county or local governmental units. The current airtanker base facility utilizes two mobile home units that have reached the end of their useful life. Storage buildings have been constructed ad-hoc but are not efficient, not fully reliable, and do not meet needs. The airtanker base portion of the combined building will be approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and accommodate 30 people for briefing, dispatch, crew readiness, storage, and pilot rest areas. DNR anticipates the design and construction costs to be \$2.5 million for the DNR portion of the project, with the airport ARFF project portion estimated at \$2.5 million (a separate bonding request by Brainerd Airport Commission).

**Project Rationale**

Airtanker base, hangars and helibase facilities must be secure, safe, energy efficient and provide the space needed for operations personnel and aircraft pilots and crews so DNR can effectively respond to wildfire. To meet these goals, these facilities should:

1. Be strategically spaced across the state for efficient and timely response to wildland fires,
2. Utilize appropriate construction techniques and heating/cooling systems for Minnesota’s



environment,

3. Support integrated operations where necessary and feasible (example: Brainerd ARFF), and
4. Provide for storage and protection of equipment to increase equipment life-cycle and decrease equipment down-time.

### **Project Timeline**

This project has several components in three different locations. The Hibbing ramp is under design. Constructing joint facilities requires similar timeframes for all entities. All phases will be complete within the given timeframes.

### **Other Considerations**

DNR has successfully co-located with other public entities in Warroad, Thief River Falls and Bemidji.

Infrastructure updates and building improvements at DNR airtanker bases have been sporadic and limited since the program's inception in 1976.

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This project is not expected to have a significant impact on operating budgets.

### **Description of Previous Appropriations**

n/a

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## Improving Accessibility to State Parks and Recreation Areas

**AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$10,000**Priority Ranking:** 5**Project Summary:** \$10 million is requested in state funds to improve accessibility in state parks. The intent is for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create comprehensive ADA accessibility at a state park which could include renovation of day use facilities, shower buildings, vault toilets, sidewalks, parking areas and selected trails. The project would upgrade William O'Brien State Park to serve as a showcase.**Project Description**

This project will utilize the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards to improve accessibility at strategic facilities and amenities in William O'Brien State Park. This will include renovations of bathrooms, showers, campsites, trails and day use facilities to accommodate all users. It will also include development of new accessible amenities (e.g. yurts or wall tents) to meet the growing demand of a diverse user base and people of all abilities.

Many buildings at state parks are over 50 years old and are not compliant with current ADA standards. Recent renovation and construction meets ADA standards, but this is only being accomplished on a building-by-building basis and many parks remain only partially accessible. Funding for this proposal would create comprehensive accessibility at William O'Brien State Park so that the park can be enjoyed by all.

At William O'Brien State Park, using the standards from the ADA, DNR would seek to enhance accessibility of the following:

- Lake Alice Day Use: picnic shelter, beach, sanitation building, amphitheater, rental area, fishing pier, nature play, parking
- Interpretive Center
- Riverway and Savanna campgrounds: shower building, campsites, vault toilets
- Riverside group camp: campsites, vault toilets
- Riverside trail
- Water access (boat launch)
- Wayfinding and signage
- Review/improve parking and access routes throughout the park

**Project Rationale**

The project is under design with \$500,000 from 2018 bonding. This project will show what comprehensive accessibility looks like, serve as a model for on-going efforts, and, most importantly, provide an accessible experience for Minnesotans.

**Project Timeline**

Projects will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

The DNR Division of Parks and Trails is responsible for providing a wide range of recreational opportunities and these opportunities need to be available to everyone.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018, Ch. 214, Bond, \$500,000

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**Dam Safety Repair, Reconstruction or Removal****AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$20,000**Priority Ranking:** 6**Project Summary:** \$20 million in state funds is requested for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide funds for design; engineering and construction to repair, reconstruct, or remove dams; and to respond to dam safety emergencies. Top priority project is the Bronson Dam.**Project Description**

Minnesota's public dam infrastructure includes 645 dams owned by the state, counties, cities and watershed districts. The state owns 312 of these public dams, most of which are over 50 years old and require ongoing repairs to maintain their structural integrity, prevent public safety hazards and to maintain water levels on recreational lakes. Emergency repairs must be made when an imminent dam failure threatens public safety.

DNR prepares a dam safety priority list in May of odd numbered years. Lake Bronson Dam is a high hazard dam and is the DNR's top priority. High hazard dams are those that have the potential for loss of life or serious economic loss if failure were to occur. The scope of the work and current cost estimates indicate a cost of \$20 million.

The program also includes the removal or modification of hazardous or obsolete dams that no longer provide significant public benefits and whose rehabilitation would not be cost effective or good for the environment. These projects may also provide natural resource benefits by maximizing the biological diversity of river systems and through restoring and reconnecting upstream and downstream habitats. Low-head river dams need to be modified to eliminate their dangerous "drowning machine" currents.

About 10 percent of Dam Safety Program capital budget appropriations are reserved for emergencies. Any emergency funds remaining are used on high priority projects.

**Project Rationale**

This request supports the Dam Safety Program under MS 103G.511 to manage Minnesota's public dam infrastructure. Dams maintain water levels on many of our recreational lakes, providing significant recreation, tourism and economic benefits. For example, Mille Lacs, Minnetonka, Bronson and Ottertail Lakes all depend on dams to maintain water levels and surrounding property values. Making needed repairs limits the potential liability of the DNR and local government units that own dams, protects the public safety and saves money by maintaining existing infrastructure assets.

**Project Timeline**

Projects will be completed within given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

DNR estimates over \$100 million will be needed over the next several decades to repair, reconstruct or remove state- and other publicly-owned dams.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, \$9,400,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, \$ 6,500,000

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## Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program

**AT A GLANCE****2020 Request Amount:** \$20,000**Priority Ranking:** 7**Project Summary:** \$20 million in state funds is requested for grants to cities, counties and watershed districts for flood risk reduction. Projects include pumping stations, levees, acquisition and removal of at-risk structures, and flood impoundments.**Project Description**

These funds would address flood risk reduction projects in Austin, Fairbault, Golden Valley, Montevideo, Moorhead, Rushford, Roseau River Watershed. Types of projects include the purchase and removal of damaged and at-risk residential structures from the floodplain and construction of levees, pumping stations and multi-purpose flood impoundments.

**Project Rationale**

Flood mitigation is cost effective. Studies show that every \$1 spent on flood mitigation avoids \$7 in future damages. Past investment in flood mitigation has resulted in a more flood resilient state and significantly decreased flood fighting and recovery costs as evidenced in the 2019 spring flooding. . This project expands previous work in this area to reduce flood risk in the most vulnerable areas. This funding supports the flood hazard mitigation program in MS 103F.161.

**Project Timeline**

Projects will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

Past appropriations for Flood Hazard Mitigation have leveraged significant federal and local dollars, considerably reducing Minnesota's vulnerability to flood losses.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, \$20,000,000

L2017, SS1, Ch. 8 - Bond, \$11,555,000

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - Bond, \$23,549,000

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - Bond, \$2,515,000 (Disaster)

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - General Fund, \$500,000 (Disaster)

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, \$4,500,000

L2014, Ch. 295 - General Fund, \$7,500,000

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**Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park**

**AT A GLANCE**

**2020 Request Amount:** \$16,800

**Priority Ranking:** 8

**Project Summary:** \$16.8 million is requested in bonding for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop key recreational amenities at Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park, including a visitor center, campground, camper cabins and trails.

**Project Description**

These funds would enable the DNR to continue design and construction of recreational opportunities, such as: Lodge Visitor Center; Murray Campground (includes campsites with electric hook-ups, gathering space, toilet/shower facilities); a solar plant to provide renewable energy for the park; internal hiking trails; and associated roads, parking and amenities.

**Project Rationale**

The DNR Division of Parks and Trails is responsible for providing a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities. Lake Vermilion State Park was established in 2008 by the Minnesota Legislature, and the Lake Vermilion / Soudan Underground Mine Cooperative Master Plan was completed in December 2010. The goal for development of the park is to provide new nature-based recreational opportunities that will encourage healthy, active lifestyles and engage increasingly diverse users in a growing appreciation for outdoor activities.

**Project Timeline**

Projects will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

This request focuses on continued investment and development in Minnesota's newest state park.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

The additional annual operating budget for the Lake Vermilion State Park property is estimated at \$100,000 for fiscal year 2018, which will be offset by revenue from entrance permits, camping fees and equipment rentals.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018 Ch. 214 - Bond, \$4,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, \$3,500,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, \$14,000,000



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**Parks and Trails Local and Regional Grant Program**

**AT A GLANCE**

**2020 Request Amount:** \$4,000

**Priority Ranking:** 9

**Project Summary:** \$4 million in state funds is requested to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state.

**Project Description**

This \$4 million request in state funds is to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state. These funds will support park and trail grant programs as established in M.S. 85.019, which establishes four matching grant programs:

- The Outdoor Recreation Grant Program helps local governments acquire, develop and/or redevelop close-to-home outdoor recreation facilities.
- The Regional Park Grant Program helps local governments acquire shoreland, natural areas and threatened habitat, and develop and rehabilitate natural resource-based outdoor recreation facilities of regional significance.
- The Local Trail Connections Grant Program provides grants to local units of government to develop and acquire trail connections to residential areas, schools, workplaces, community centers, recreation areas, trails and parks.
- The Regional Trail Grant Program provides grants to local units of government for development and acquisition of regional trails outside of the metropolitan area.

The grant programs allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to partner with local communities to acquire land and develop parks and trails that help create a network of close-to-home recreation facilities. The request will provide funding for park grants to local communities to acquire approximately 100 acres, develop or redevelop several local and/or regional parks, and also provide funding for about 20 local and regional trail projects.

**Project Rationale**

This project supports the DNR conservation mission of protecting natural resources, delivering outdoor recreation opportunities to the public and maintaining the health and economic vitality of Minnesota’s communities by ensuring public access to a high-quality system of local and regional parks and trails. Connecting people to Minnesota’s great outdoors has been identified by the department as a strategic direction critical to enhancing community health and wellness.

**Project Timeline**

Project funds will be granted within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

While Legacy funds have provided additional park and trail building acquisition and development

funding to areas of regional significance, these funding sources cannot be used for local parks and trails. Therefore, bond funding remains one of the only sources of money for the purchase and development of smaller recreational opportunities located within communities.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on the operating budget involved in managing the grant process.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Local Trail Grants, \$1,400,000

L2014, Ch. 294 - Bond, \$100,000

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**Community Tree Planting Grants**

**AT A GLANCE**

**2020 Request Amount:** \$2,000

**Priority Ranking:** 10

**Project Summary:** \$2 million in state funds is requested for community grants to remove and replace dead or dying shade trees located on public property that are lost to emerald ash borer or other exotic, invasive forest pests or diseases.

**Project Description**

This request for \$2 million in state funds will provide grants to communities to minimize loss or damage of forest resources by shade tree pests; protect shade trees from shade tree pests; and establish or maintain cooperation between state, federal and local units of government in the preparation of plans for forest protection, management, and planting or replacement of trees damaged or lost to forest pests. Grant funds will be used for removal and disposal or utilization of public trees lost to forest pests or disease, and purchasing and planting of trees on publicly owned land.

By the end of the project, grant recipients must demonstrate their commitment to ongoing care by providing the following documents: updated Community Forestry or Shade Tree Ordinance, annual maintenance plan for public trees, community forestry public education plan, and management plan or forest health management plan.

Projects will be evaluated according to how well they: demonstrate commitment to long-term monitoring and management of the project, increase the diversity of tree species, develop and sustain local community forestry programs, and benefit the entire urban forest resource and provide multiple benefits to the community.

**Project Rationale**

Minnesota community forests are facing imminent threats from exotic invasive pests such as emerald ash borer (EAB), gypsy moth, and oak wilt. At the same time, maintaining shade tree coverage is increasingly important for energy efficiency, climate mitigation and public health. This program will use past successes of the Minnesota Shade Tree Program and Minnesota ReLeaf Grant Program to increase the capacity of local forestry programs to prepare for these pests, utilize the removed trees, and restore the many benefits of healthy, diverse urban forests.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

In the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, article XI, section 5, one of the purposes for “public debt and works of internal improvements” is item (f), “to promote forestation...”

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2010, Ch 189 - Bonding, \$3,000,000

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