

How we pay for management of Minnesota's natural resources

Managing Minnesota's wealth of natural resources for the many economic, recreational and ecological benefits they provide is a big job. But the fund that pays for much of the core work critical to healthy resources is being eroded by inflation.



Budget

Your Game & Fish Fund

When you purchase a hunting or fishing license, your dollars flow into the DNR's Game and Fish Fund. These dollars are kept separate from other agency funds; they can be used only for fish, wildlife, law enforcement and certain other related activities.

This fund pays for salaries, trucks, gas, office space, nets, and other operational costs.

There is an effort underway to examine the health of the Game & Fish Fund and Minnesota's license structure. Hunting and fishing licenses sales make up more than half of the revenue coming into the fund. By Law, (MN Statute 97A.055; Subd. 3), the Commissioner of Natural Resources is required to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the health of the Game and Fish Fund.

Legacy Fund not the answer

While new constitutionally dedicated Legacy funding for the outdoors will provide many benefits for the state, these funds do not go directly to the DNR, and they can't be spent on core agency work. As a result, DNR continues to rely heavily on the Game and Fish Fund, but this fund is declining. Expenditures exceed revenues by \$2.6 million per year, and it is projected to have a negative balance by the end of fiscal 2015. This is a problem because it pays for the major-

ity of the DNR's core fish, wildlife and law enforcement work. This core work – surveys, stocking, harvest management and more – is the foundation on which many other government and nonprofit conservation projects are built

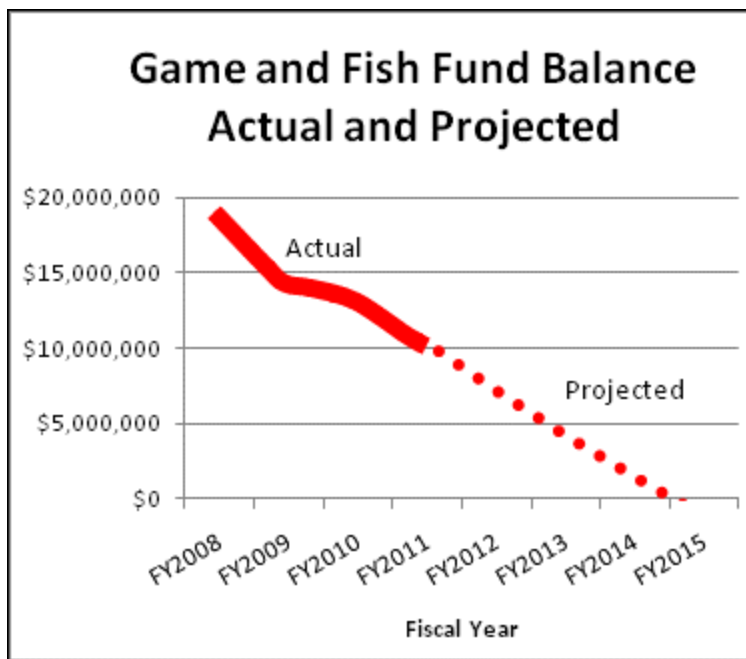
(including new projects paid for by Legacy funds). Conservation partners depend upon DNR data and staff expertise. Cracks in the fiscal foundation of our conservation work will ultimately weaken the work of others as well.

Seeking solutions

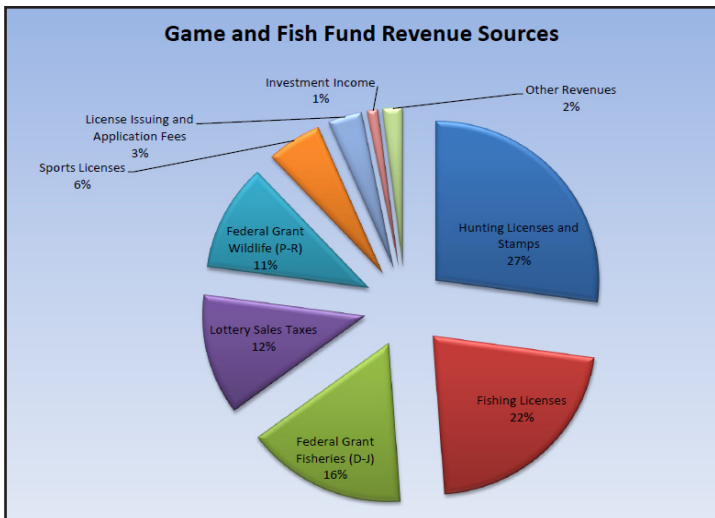
By law, the Game and Fish Fund cannot "go into the red." Therefore, a revenue increase or spending decrease is necessary. The DNR is currently working with the Game and Fish Fund Budget Oversight Committee to seek a solution. This committee,

comprised of nearly 50 citizens, reviews DNR revenues and expenditures. It is evaluating what adjustments are necessary so the DNR can continue to deliver the type of recreation, science and enforcement that citizens expect.

The declining balance in the Game and Fish Fund stems, in part, from the fact that fishing license fees have not increased since the year 2001. A resident annual fishing license has remained at \$17 for a decade. If adjusted for inflation, the license would cost about \$23 today.

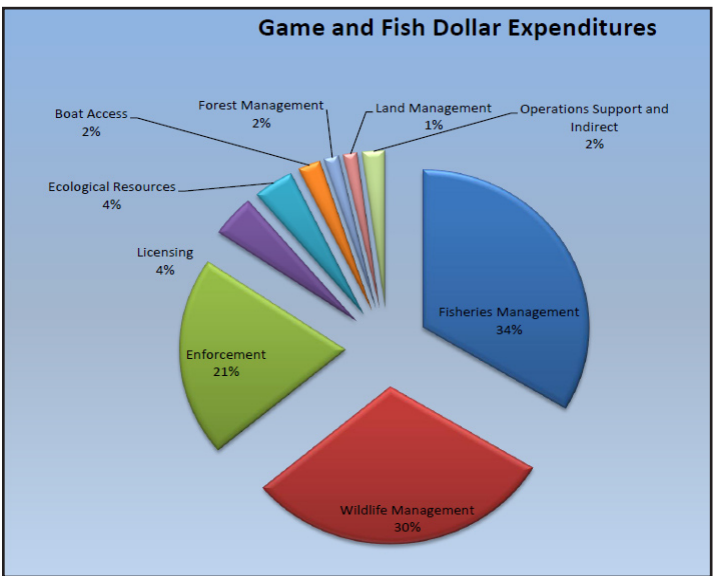


Recreation worth paying for!



Where the Game & Fish Fund comes from

The chart at left shows Game and Fish Fund revenue sources. Fishing and hunting licenses, plus the federal reimbursement the state receives for each license sold, account for 74 percent of revenue into the Game and Fish Fund. These dollars, plus revenue from other funding sources noted at left, pay for the vast majority of Fish and Wildlife Division operations and are important revenue sources for the Enforcement Division, Ecological and Water Resources Division, and technical support functions.



What the Game & Fish Fund pays for

The chart at left shows how Game and Fish Fund dollars are utilized. The largest percentage (34 percent) is to manage Minnesota's 5,400 fishing lakes and 15,000 miles of fishable rivers and streams. The second largest percentage (30 percent) is used, among other things, to manage wildlife populations and the state's 1.3 million-acre wildlife management area system. The other major percentage (21 percent) goes to the Enforcement Division, which manages recreation and conservation enforcement across the state.



For more information contact:
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