



# Conservation That Works For a Better Minnesota DNR's 2015 Capital Budget Request



The Governor's recommendations for the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) capital budget creates a better future for Minnesota by conserving our natural resources while targeting investments that maintain a strong infrastructure and create jobs and support local economies.

## Maintaining a Strong Conservation Infrastructure

DNR manages more than 5.5 million acres of state lands and provides public access to recreational opportunities throughout the state. DNR's capital asset portfolio is worth more than \$2 billion. This year's request addresses unmet needs from 2014 and other urgent needs. Significant unmet capital investment priorities include more than \$300 million for natural resources asset preservation needs over the next 10 years.

Maintaining a strong infrastructure sustains the value of the state's critical assets and will:

- Improve the delivery of public services
- Ensure the health and safety of Minnesotans
- Reduce operating costs
- Increase efficiencies

## Creating Jobs and Supporting Local Economies

DNR puts bonding money to work quickly. On average, DNR receives approximately \$150 million in each two-year bonding cycle and spends that money within a short period of time. DNR puts bonding money to work across the whole state. DNR has over 200 work sites statewide and recreational facilities in every county of the state. Capital investments put people to work in local communities. Every \$1 million spent for construction supports approximately 24 jobs.

## DNR'S 2015 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST

### Natural Resources Asset Preservation (\$20 million)

Natural resources asset preservation (M.S. 84.946) repairs and renovates critical department buildings, recreational facilities, roads, bridges, trails, water control structures, and water access sites. DNR owns and actively maintains 2,800 buildings at over 200 locations statewide, more than 3,000 miles of roads, 590 miles of paved trails, and 650 trail bridges. DNR completed a facility condition assessment of our buildings in 2014 and found 215 in crisis (very poor) condition and 540 in poor condition. It will take \$55 million to bring those buildings up to standards and an additional \$75 million to address the deferred maintenance for all of our buildings. Project priorities include: Projects will be located across the state and include the rehabilitation of buildings and facilities to address deficiencies: (ADA improvements; roof, door, window, and siding replacements; mechanical and electrical system repairs; energy improvements; and water, well, and septic projects). Major building rehabilitation projects would include Itasca State Park's Nicollet Court. Of the 590

miles of paved state trails, 100 miles are in serious need of rehabilitation. About \$4.5 million would be directed to the Sakatah and Munger trails. Other asset preservation needs exist for DNR roads and bridges; water control structures; water accesses; and fishing piers.

### Buildings and Facilities Development (\$3 million)

Substandard DNR offices and storage facilities do not provide safe working environments, nor do they ensure the protection of state assets, public accessibility, or the efficient delivery of public services. This request provides for replacement of buildings that no longer support natural resources work and for construction of new storage facilities that protect and extend the life of DNR equipment. This appropriation will be used in conjunction with the asset preservation funding request. The request includes pre-design and construction work for Bemidji, and to design and construct office buildings at co-located facilities.



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## Flood Hazard Mitigation (\$23.67 million)

Since 1988, the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program has provided technical and financial assistance to local units of government to implement projects that reduce flood damages in the state. Investing in flood hazard mitigation reduces future costs – FEMA estimates every \$1 spent on mitigation saves an average of \$4 in damages prevented. Despite major strides in reducing repetitive and catastrophic flood losses in the state, considerable needs remain for additional flood protection – as demonstrated by the damages caused by major floods in 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2012. These funds would go towards completing critical projects, including: Ada, Climax, Melrose, Otter Tail County, Oakport Township, Oslo, and the Roseau WMA impoundment. Project mitigation includes acquisition and removal of flood prone structures, levees, floodwalls, flood warning systems, floodplain mapping, farmstead ring dikes, and other measures.

## Dam Repair, Reconstruction, Removal (\$4.575 million)

Minnesota's public dam infrastructure includes nearly 800 dams owned by the state, counties, cities, and watershed districts. Most of the dams are over 50 years old and require ongoing rehabilitation to maintain their structural integrity and prevent public safety hazards. This program provides for the repair and renovation of state-owned dams and provides 50% cost share funds to local government projects. The dams that have the potential for significant damage or loss of life are defined as high hazard dams and the 2015 request is directed to these. Project priorities include: Emergency projects, Lanesboro, St. Cloud, Pelican Rapids, Norway Lake (Pine River) and Canby R-6 Impoundment.

## State Land Reforestation and Stand Improvement (\$3 million)

MS 89.002 requires the reforestation of harvested state lands and the restoration and maintenance of state forests. This request will provide for reforestation and stand improvement on approximately 25,000 acres of state forested lands, including purchasing native seeds and native seedlings, planting, seeding, site preparation and protection of tree plantings on state lands. This includes treatment of the 2011 St. Croix Valley blowdown area that damaged 97,000 acres of forest land. Reforestation and stand improvement increases the value of Minnesota's forests for the forest-based economy, wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities.

## Native Prairie Bank Acquisition and Development (\$5 million)

Of the original 18 million acres of prairie in Minnesota, only an estimated 235,000 acres remain today, of which about 104,000 acres are threatened. This request would provide for the protection of approximately 1,300 acres through acquisition of conservation easements on private-owned native prairie and the development and restoration of approximately 220 acres of native prairie bank lands. This work will increase the viability of the state's remaining native prairie.

## Marsh Lake Restoration (\$1.1 million)

This project is an ecosystem restoration project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and will restore the Pomme de Terre River and modify the existing dam. The cost share is 65% federal and 35% state. These funds are for the final design.

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