Expenditures by Division

Our mission is to conserve and manage natural resources, provide outdoor recreation opportunities and provide for commercial uses of resources that creates a sustainable quality of life.

Every dollar in our budget contributes to this mission. Our biennial budget is $1.2 billion, which comes from a mixture of dedicated and direct appropriations. Spending is divided across our seven divisions and dollars that are passed through to non-state entities. Our largest division is Parks and Trails, which accounts for 23% of our total spending, while Lands and Minerals, our smallest division, constitutes 2%. Our budget includes roughly $205 million of internal billing, which pays for various administrative and other services.

Expenditures by Fund

We manage our budget across 50 funds. About 63% of our budget comes from the General Fund, the Game and Fish Fund, and the Natural Resources Fund. About 20% of our FY2020-21 budget comes from one-time appropriations from Legacy Funds and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Expenditures by Spending Category

The largest portion of our budget is spent on compensation. We employed 4,300 people across the state over the course of FY 2019. These employees worked over 5.5 million hours, which translates into over 2,600 full time equivalents (FTEs).

Our next largest spending categories are operating expenses and contracts. Examples of operating expenses include supplies, equipment, rent, vehicles, and mileage. We contract for services when we need skills or services we do not provide or when our internal staffing is insufficient.

Additionally, we send nearly $213.4 million out the door to local governments and non-governmental organizations to help fulfill our mission. This accounts for 15% of our budget.

Expenditures by Fund Since FY 2008

Our budget has changed over the past decade. Most notably, new revenues generated through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment has provided us the opportunity to focus on special projects outside of our regular base spending. The top line tracks our operating budget, which has seen a slight increase over time (averaging 2% annually). The bottom line shows our General Fund budget over the same period, which follows a similar trend.

Information by Fund

General Fund

Our General Fund budget is $311.2 million for the FY2020-21 Biennium. Fifty-nine percent of this are direct appropriations to fulfill our mission. The other 41% are “open” appropriations, which means they are available to us “as needed.” We use these funds to manage forest fires and make payments to tribes and counties based on treaties and statute. This includes the Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payment we make to counties, which is $36.3 million dollars each year.

Direct appropriations from the General Fund play an important role in our budget because they are our most flexible funding source. They allow us to meet the needs in the field, including responding to emergencies and urgent, unexpected needs.
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 68% of our GFF expenditures, over half of which we spend 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 45% of GFF total revenue in FY 2019, while federal dollars for hunting and fishing contribute 37%. A citizen oversight group plays an important role in making recommendations for improvements in management and use of money in the fund. GFF spending is 20% of our total budget.

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. Our Parks and Trails Division accounts for 55% of our NR fund spending, over half of which is spent on compensation. The two largest revenue sources include the state tax revenue and license and registration fees—together these contribute 37% of the fund’s resources in FY 2019. NR expenditures make up 19% of our total budget.

These funds are unique, because some of our spending authority comes from direct appropriations that are sourced by revenues we generate. When the direct appropriations exceed revenues, we manage to the receipts to ensure the funds stay healthy. This can limit our ability to maintain services at a base level and makes managing our budget difficult at times.