ANNUAL REPORT

GAME AND FISH FUND

For the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to submit the annual Game and Fish Fund (GFF) Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 (FY24) as required by Minnesota Statute 97A.055 Subd. 4.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is always looking for opportunities to engage with Minnesotans consistent with our mission to work with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state's natural resources. In 2024, the legislature authorized the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee to begin operating in 2025. This standing committee will be composed of Minnesotans appointed by the DNR commissioner and will replace the citizen oversight committee previously authorized in Minnesota Statute 97A.055 subd 4b.

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the legislature and DNR commissioner for desired fish and wildlife outcomes related to:

- Protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat,
- Fish and wildlife population management,
- Fish and wildlife monitoring and research,
- Communications and engagement, and
- Improvements in the management and use of money in the game and fish fund.

The outcomes section in this year's GFF report is structured around these same outcomes. The report also continues to meet the requirements of Minnesota Statutes 97A.055 Subd. 4 for the reporting of GFF revenues and expenditures, so that the committee and the broader public can understand the use of the Fund and its benefits to the state. The DNR is looking forward to working with the new committee to explore their desired areas of focus for recommendations.

The long-term financial viability of the GFF, and conservation and outdoor recreation funding more broadly, is one of the DNR's top priorities. To that end, starting in 2021 the DNR led a transformational effort, in collaboration with a diverse cross-section of people, to identify what Minnesotans value for the future of conservation and outdoor recreation. This effort, referred to as 4 The Outdoors, outlined what steps we collectively need to take to reach that future. This vision was built on the following guiding principles:

- Future generations benefit from sustained and improved outdoor recreation experiences and conservation of natural resources.
- Minnesotans work together to support diverse outdoor recreation opportunities and conservation of our state's natural features.
- Conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities equitably meet the needs of all Minnesotans.
- Conservation and outdoor recreation align with and are integrated into Minnesota state priorities.

4 The Outdoors identified four key strategies to achieve this vision. One of those strategies is to explore the use and application of fees, including but not limited to the hunting and fishing license fees that are a major source of revenue to the GFF. In the coming years, the DNR, partners, and the public will be working together to review current fee structures and make recommendations for possible changes. We look forward to working with you to put conservation and outdoor recreation work on a stronger financial path and make the vision of 4 The Outdoors a reality.

Sincerely,

Kelly Straka
Director, Fish and Wildlife Division

Patty Thielen
Director, Forestry Division

Joseph Henderson
Director, Lands and Minerals Division

Rodmen Smith
Director, Enforcement Division

Ann Pierce
Director, Parks and Trails Division

Reena Solheid
Director, Operations Services Division

Katie Smith
Director, Ecological and Water Resources Division

INTRODUCTION

Minnesota's Legislature established the Game and Fish Fund (GFF) in 1927 as a fund in the state treasury (M.S. 97A.055) for the purpose of sustaining Minnesota's fish and wildlife, supporting healthy habitats, and fostering outdoor recreation opportunities. Monies received under game and fish laws and income from state lands acquired by purchase or gift to support fish and wildlife habitats contribute to the GFF. This fund supports critical work of Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Minnesota Statutes 97A.055 Subd. 4 requires the DNR to submit reports on revenues and expenditures made from the accounts within the GFF by December 15 each year to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over appropriations for the environment and natural resources. The report must include the Commissioner's recommendations, if any, for changes in the laws relating to the stamps and surcharges for programs under the GFF. This report is the annual accounting and use report and serves many purposes. First, the report gives the DNR the opportunity to communicate the GFF's status and activities to individuals, stakeholder groups, Tribal nations, the fish and wildlife advisory committee, and legislators, among others. Second, it provides transparency and accountability to these audiences on the DNR's financial management and the outcomes of GFF supported programs. Third, it fosters discussion regarding future operations, priorities, and outcomes. Finally, the report presents the financial forecast for the GFF.

The Fund in Brief

The GFF is a substantial funding source for restoring, protecting, and enhancing habitats, and managing fish and wildlife populations in Minnesota. To put the GFF in context, in fiscal year 2024 (FY24), the GFF comprised 17 percent ($132.2 million) of the total DNR expenditures ($777.8 million). Money in the GFF comes from a variety of revenues. In FY24, sales of fishing and hunting licenses contributed nearly half of the GFF, while federal dollars for fish and wildlife conservation contributed a third (see Figure 1). Other revenue sources in FY24 included sale and lease of natural resources, investments, and sales-tax-in-lieu from the Minnesota Lottery. The relative percentages of license, federal funds, and non-license revenue can vary from year to year.

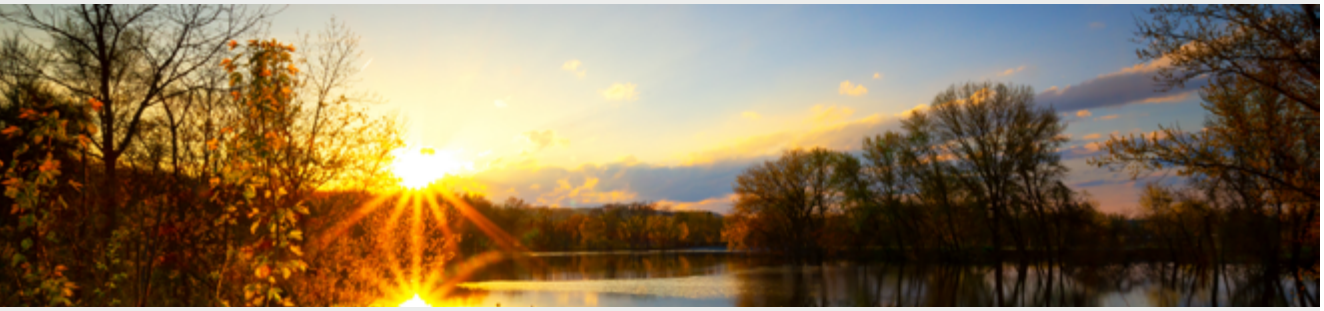
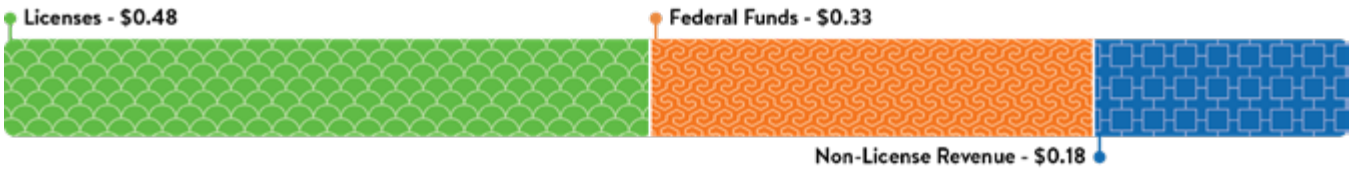
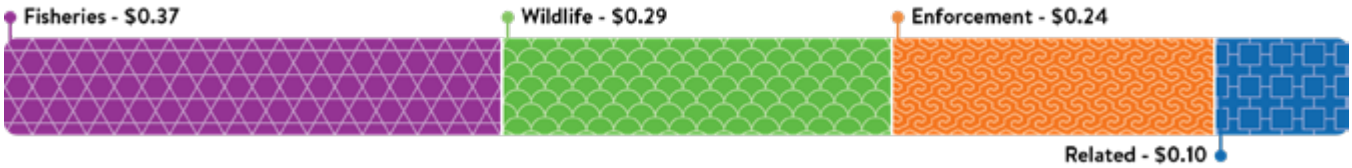


Figure 1. GFF Dollar Sources: Where Do the Dollars Come From? (Cents Per Dollar, FY24)



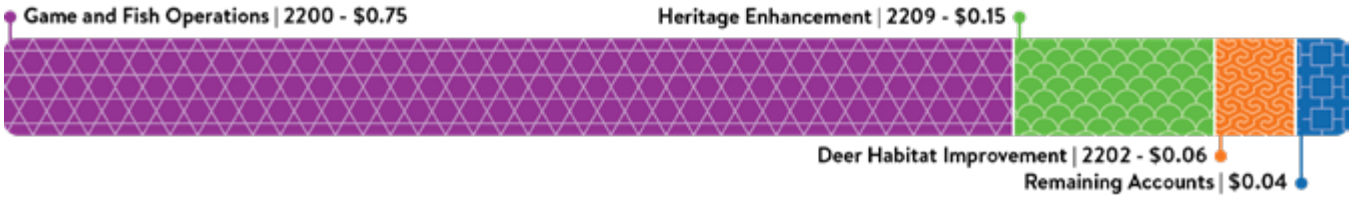
By statute, the DNR spends GFF dollars on specific purposes related to game and fish conservation and recreation. Figure 2 shows the summary "cents per dollar" breakdown of GFF expenditures. The majority of expenditures are for agency and partner activities that support the Division of Fish and Wildlife as well as the Division of Enforcement. Small amounts ("Related" in Figure 2) go to the DNR's Divisions of Ecological and Water Resources, Forestry, Parks and Trails, and Lands and Minerals for game and fish activities. For detailed information by account, refer to the "Investments We Make" section.

Figure 2. GFF Dollars at Work: Where Do the Dollars Go? (Cents Per Dollar, FY24)



The GFF is made up of fifteen different accounts (see Figure 3). Statute dictates each account's uses. Some of the accounts have broad allowable uses while other accounts have specific uses to support work on a certain species, resource, or management issue.

Figure 3. GFF Dollars at Work: Where Do the Dollars Go by Account? (Cents Per Dollar, FY24)



The Game and Fish Fund in Context

There are very few cases where a project or accomplishment can be directly tied to a single funding source. The following would be a common scenario: The DNR identifies a need for a habitat enhancement project on a grassland Wildlife Management Area. When area wildlife staff develop the project, they visit the site to identify and map the project area. They identify the need to work with a contractor to help accomplish the work. Later they will meet the contractor on-site to discuss the specifics of the project and answer any questions. Area staff salary costs are paid from the GFF, and cost for vehicle to travel to the site may be paid from the GFF or another funding source. Payment to the contractor for the work itself could paid for with the GFF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), other funding sources, or a combination of sources. There are usually several funds directly or indirectly working together to complete most projects.

OUTCOMES: THE GOALS OF GAME AND FISH FUND INVESTMENTS

GFF money directly supports DNR work with fish and wildlife species. Efforts in habitat management, monitoring and research, fish and wildlife population management, as well as communications and public engagement, all contribute to the broader mission of natural resource conservation in Minnesota. These efforts and their outcomes are intertwined and build off each other to support DNR's mission and the people of Minnesota. Over time, we continue to learn more about the diverse range of benefits these initiatives bring for fish, wildlife, and Minnesotans.

Diverse and productive habitats like grasslands, wetlands, and forests helps capture and store large amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change mitigation. These same habitats capture potential floodwaters, reduce downstream flooding, filter sediment from water, recharge groundwater, and help break down chemicals such as nitrates. Together, these benefits contribute to the health and safety of Minnesotans by reducing flood damage and helping to clean drinking water. The filtering of water in these upland wildlife habitats keeps our lakes and rivers cleaner and healthier, supporting productive fisheries and aquatic habitats. We are learning more each year about the physical and mental health benefits of spending time outdoors, whether that is a long weekend of camping or a short walk in the evening after work. Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Aquatic Management Areas (AMA) can be enjoyed across a wide range of compatible uses by every Minnesotan. WMAs are found in 86 of 87 Minnesota counties and a priority for new acquisitions is increasing "close to home" access to these public lands.

GFF supported work has an important role in supporting Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis' November 20, 2024 data release, Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy accounts for $13.5 billion in gross domestic product, 95,937 jobs, and $5.9 billion in overall compensation. In July 2023, Governor Walz announced a new partnership between the DNR, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Explore Minnesota Tourism, and Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation "to enhance and expand Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy for the social and economic benefit of all Minnesotans." According to DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen, "Connecting people to the outdoors is a priority for the DNR because it's good for the state's economy and the health and wellness of Minnesotans." Work accomplished with GFF money supports the healthy and functional natural spaces that are the foundation of Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy.

The work conducted through the GFF can be divided into several general areas, which are often difficult to separate due to their interconnected nature. Below is a brief overview of each of these areas, including some examples of the work carried out through these funds. Many projects in these areas receive funding from sources outside the GFF, such as the OHF, but the GFF plays a critical role in each. This is because DNR staff, whose salaries are largely funded by the GFF, are involved in all these initiatives. Without their leadership and expertise, much of the work would not be accomplished.

Protecting, Restoring, and Enhancing Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Productive and diverse habitats are the foundation of healthy fish and wildlife populations and outdoor recreation. Protecting, restoring, and enhancing these habitats is essential to supporting fish, wildlife, and the many other benefits these habitats provide to Minnesotans. Minnesota's grasslands, forests, wetlands, lakes, and streams all provide habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species, while also providing a large range of benefits beyond wildlife conservation. These lands absorb and store large amounts of carbon, contributing to mitigation of climate change. They also capture, store, and filter pollutants from surface and groundwater, creating healthy fisheries and safer water for drinking and recreation. Furthermore, these lands provide opportunities for people to hike, photograph, and forage, among other outdoor activities.

Protecting habitat includes purchasing or exchanging lands in line with the DNR's strategic land asset management goals and working with private landowners to preserve lands through conservation easements. The DNR works with interested landowners in specific parts of the state where the potential acquisitions or easements can protect critical landscapes or enhance existing complexes of public and/or protected lands.

Protection of Moon Valley WMA

In the spring of 2024, the DNR acquired the Moon Valley WMA, located a 15-minute drive north of Rochester. The land was acquired with OHF through The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Lands. The GFF funded DNR staff who worked with both the landowners and partners over several years to acquire this parcel. Often land acquisitions take multiple years and numerous meetings with the seller, county elected officials, and conservation partners before the sale can be completed.

This partner-led acquisition provides large acreage that both protects natural ecosystems and provides recreational opportunities close to the city of Rochester. In a KSTP news story, the Moon family stated that they hope "this can be a small refuge for our neighbors and for our family to come home to as well. It was our beautiful farm, and now it will return to its natural state, open to everyone."

Acquiring this property protects vulnerable shoreline habitat along the Zumbro River, which is becoming increasingly susceptible to development in this area and provides a public recreation area for a growing population center in southeast Minnesota. DNR staff are planning to restore the extensive floodplain habitats along the Zumbro that will benefit game species, non-game species including wood turtles (documented on the parcel), and water quality within the Zumbro River.

Habitat restoration is when land, such as marginal agricultural lands or other land cover, is changed to provide optimal wildlife habitat. Area wildlife staff and restoration specialists replant these lands with native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, or trees to create new, thriving habitats. By increasing the quality and quantity of these rich landscapes, DNR can better support local wildlife populations and enhance biodiversity.

Restoring Rice Creek WMA

This past year was the second year of the grassland restoration at Rice Creek WMA in Isanti County. The WMA is within walking distance of the city of Braham and a short drive from Cambridge. While still in the "weedy" phase, each walk through of this parcel flushed dozens of sparrows and other songbirds. Staff visited this site nearly every other week through the summer, seeing at least one rooster pheasant on each visit. The large wetland on the south side of this area held several broods of ducks during the summer. In the late summer, there were dozens of mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks, and trumpeter swans staging in this wetland. During the especially wet summer of 2024, this wetland captured and held a significant amount of water on the WMA. Most water on the surrounding landscape was quickly drained off, contributing to downstream flooding. It will still be another two or three years before the plants and plant community have fully matured. The diversity and abundance of wildlife will continue to increase in the years that follow.

While restoration increases the quantity of habitat on the landscape, enhancements increase the quality of existing habitat. Enhancements include a range of practices such as prescribed burns, conservation grazing, invasive species removal, tree thinning, plugging ditches and removing sediment from wetland basins. Other efforts may include wild rice seeding, restoring bends and curves to a waterway, fish passage projects, or planting trees that produce valuable food resources for wildlife (such as acorns from oaks). These practices, among others, contribute to overall health and vitality of the habitat.

Enhancement of Fish Passages

The DNR worked with partners in the Hockamin sub-watershed within the Baptism River watershed of Minnesota's Arrowhead Region to replace seven culverts that were barriers to fish movement in streams. Beyond improving fish passage, these culverts also allow for increased water flow during heavy rain events which are becoming more common in recent years. The increased water flow capability of these improved culverts will reduce road damage and washouts, making travel safer for the community and dramatically reducing potential future road repair costs for local government units.

Habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement should be viewed as interconnected processes rather than separate actions. For instance, new acquisitions often require restoration to increase the quantity of suitable habitat. After a site is restored, it needs ongoing enhancements to maintain its productivity and biodiversity. This ensures that each stage supports and builds upon the others, creating a resilient and thriving habitat over time.

Research, Monitoring, and Surveillance

DNR staff conduct studies to better inform our actions when it comes to managing habitats and populations. DNR biologists use two main strategies to study populations: monitoring and research. Monitoring is a long-term baseline effort to collect population information and monitor changes over time. Long-term monitoring is extremely valuable to managers to inform decisions they make pertaining to regulation and harvest limit changes. For instance, DNR staff have conducted the August Roadside Survey for pheasants since 1955. This survey allows the DNR to examine long-term trends and compare annual changes in the population. Similarly, DNR staff have conducted creel surveys for many years to monitor trends in angling. Another long-term monitoring program is the Minnesota Biological Survey which collects, analyzes, and delivers information on plants, animals, and ecological communities throughout the state to support conservation and management of biological diversity.

By contrast, research is usually a shorter-term effort to address a specific and focused question or hypothesis. Research is important to help understand why those changes occurred and, in some cases, what can be done to mitigate the effects on habitats or populations. Often research projects are conducted in partnership with universities. Recent research includes impacts of insecticide spray drift on food availability for grassland birds, spruce grouse genetics in the context of future population and habitat changes with climate change, and case studies on forest habitat management.

The DNR also conducts surveillance for diseases and pathogens. This allows the agency to immediately address new and emerging diseases or identify new areas in the state for an existing disease. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer has been a major focus in recent years, and the DNR also surveys for bovine tuberculosis, avian influenza, epizootic hemorrhagic disease in wildlife, and a wide range of fish pathogens.

Woodcock Monitoring

The American Woodcock (hereafter, woodcock) attracts people to the outdoors during the fall hunting season and also in the spring when the males perform their "sky dance" each night at dusk. Minnesota regularly ranks among the top states for woodcock harvest. In 2024, Minnesota ranked third among states for birds detected during the singing ground survey.

In addition to these surveys Minnesotans and their well-trained dogs search the spring woods for new woodcock chicks to band. There is also an annual woodcock "wingbee," where biologists from across the eastern and central United States come together each spring to determine the age and gender of wings submitted by hunters to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) during the hunting season.

DNR staff participate in the singing ground survey and wingbee events each year. They also work with other states and the USFWS to monitor regional populations, study migration patterns and habitat use, and set seasons and bag limits. The story of woodcock monitoring highlights the range of efforts that can go into monitoring and tracking wildlife species and the different ways DNR staff and the public engage with these efforts.

Fish and Wildlife Population Management

The DNR's habitat and research activities are ultimately conducted to ensure there are healthy fish and wildlife populations. In addition to these activities, the DNR also develops strategic plans, species plans, and population objectives for hunting, trapping, and fishing seasons. Public engagement, along with the use of social science, is also key to informing management decisions.

The DNR designs seasonal regulations to support population management objectives as well as provide recreational opportunities. To inform the regulations, the DNR reviews and revises hunting,

fishing, and trapping regulations in response to population changes and objectives, weather, disease related concerns, and past harvest results for resident wildlife species.

Regulation development involves teams of DNR staff, years of research and monitoring information, public input, and legislative actions. Each year near the front of the hunting and fishing regulations books, the DNR highlights "what's new" in that year. For the 2024 hunting season, new rules included blaze orange requirements for ground blinds on public lands during deer season, new CWD guidelines, changes to the Camp Ripley archery hunt, and new rules for trapping and waterfowl hunting. This work is critical to the DNR's population management efforts and plays a significant role in how the public engages with and benefits from fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Data collected from the DNR's fish monitoring and research programs provides the foundation for the lake and stream management planning process that produces and updates over 4,000 plans that the DNR uses to manage fish populations and fisheries across the state. On average, the DNR updates 235 lake and stream management plans annually with each plan providing some general ecological background, laying out constraints for the fish populations, and offering goals for the fishery. These plans establish objectives (such as stocking and creel surveys) to assess whether the goal is achieved, and the plan details the work needed to meet those objectives. DNR staff conduct lake and stream surveys as work progresses to determine whether the management plan is working, and if objectives are being met. The DNR updates these plans on a regular basis to analyze, assess, and adjust goals, objectives, and the work required to achieve them. This ongoing review considers progress made since the last plan and adapts to a complex and evolving natural environment, as well as competing stakeholder interests.

Management plans are not only a tool for managing fish populations and fisheries. The plans also serve as an outreach mechanism where anglers and the public have an opportunity to provide comments on draft management plans prior to final approval and publication. The lake and stream management planning and evaluation process also provides information for the very popular DNR LakeFinder and StreamFinder applications that provide anglers and the public with important information on fish surveys conducted through time, management plan performance evaluation, fishing regulations, and public access sites.

Heritage Trout

Reintroduction of a heritage strain of brook trout, called the Minnesota Driftless, is the culmination of work that has spanned about 20 years. This work involved sampling fish, performing genetic testing, collecting eggs and milt from remnant native populations of brook trout, and beginning to rear them at DNR's Peterson Fish Hatchery. With the Minnesota Driftless strain now producing young fish, the DNR is reintroducing brook trout to southeastern streams where they likely existed in the past. This effort enhances populations in streams where brook trout reproduction is currently vulnerable and increases fishing opportunities for anglers.

Minnesota Driftless stocking is not limited to southeast Minnesota. The Minnesota DNR also plans to stock them into northern streams including those in the Detroit Lakes, Duluth, Fergus Falls and Little Falls areas, as well as the metro area. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate the Minnesota Driftless strain in comparison to previous stocking efforts. In stocked streams, anglers can expect catchable size Minnesota Driftless brook trout in two years. The DNR aims to establish healthy populations of these fish to ensure they continue to thrive in Minnesota for generations to come.

Communications, Engagement and Outreach

The DNR actively seeks opportunities to listen to the thoughts and concerns of the public, as well as explain its efforts, gather input prior to making decisions, and maintain transparency about how and why decisions are made. The DNR also strives to provide effective outreach programs that engage new, diverse audiences across the state. Through a variety of online and in-person programs, the DNR aims to provide individuals with the information and basic skills they need to connect with and enjoy the outdoors.

Current participation rates in outdoor recreation generally do not reflect the changing demographics of Minnesota. The DNR strives to serve all Minnesotans and offer programs for diverse populations. To help people make these connections, it is important to provide a range of opportunities for Minnesotans to connect with the DNR and to help reach people in ways that work for them. The DNR has significantly increased the availability of online materials to support the growth of community awareness and access of outdoor recreational opportunities. These include new web and social media content, as well as the translation of fishing /hunting regulations into the four most commonly spoken languages in Minnesota, in addition to English: Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Spanish. Social media campaigns have focused on reaching new and future outdoor recreationists to share information on the wide range of opportunities available in our state.

Focused programming is one strategy the DNR employs to connect all Minnesotans with the outdoors, especially those who have previously had limited opportunities to experience fishing, hunting and other types of outdoor recreation.

As the state's population has become increasingly urbanized, there is a growing need for accessible fishing opportunities close to where people live. One example of a program focusing on this is Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN), which is focused on increasing angling opportunities, public awareness of those opportunities, outreach to underserved communities, and environmental stewardship within the seven-county metro region. Another example of focused programming is the DNR's Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program, one of the largest of its kind in the country. This program provides a variety of workshops for women to gain and improve outdoor skills in a relaxed, fun, and supportive atmosphere.

Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series

The Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship series program produces weekly online webinars featuring expert talks on knowledge relevant to current Minnesota seasons and activities. These webinars are an opportunity for viewers to learn about outdoor recreation skills and activities from the comfort of their homes. Participants can join the webinars live or watch them later on the DNR's YouTube channel. Last year's topics included turkey hunting, archery, fall fishing, tree stand safety, wildlife watching, and a wide number of other topics. At the end of FY24 the program had hosted 169 webinars since the start of the series, and they continue to produce more every year. The program now has over 10,000 unique subscribers.

The Big Picture of Climate Change

Climate change is having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on fish and wildlife, habitat, and the way the DNR and partners manage habitat and populations. For instance, there is ongoing concern and research on the effects of a warming climate on coldwater fisheries. With less severe winters, ticks are becoming more abundant and having impacts on the state's moose population. Warmer winters also impact habitat by facilitating quicker spread of insects such as eastern larch beetle which affects forest composition and structure.

Habitat management is a key strategy in mitigating climate change. Healthy grasslands, wetlands, and forests provide numerous benefits including absorbing and storing carbon and strengthening resiliency of natural systems and downstream communities to climate impacts. The work done through the GFF on habitats and population management, research, monitoring, and communications contributes to DNR's work towards climate change adaptation and mitigation.

GAME AND FISH FUND: THE INVESTMENTS WE MAKE

Game and Fish Fund

Minnesota's Legislature established the GFF in 1927 as a fund in the state treasury (M.S. 97A.055) for the purpose of sustaining Minnesota's fish and wildlife, supporting healthy habitats, and fostering hunting and fishing opportunities. Game and fish-related license revenue, federal monies, and lottery proceeds serve as the major revenue sources to the GFF.

The GFF plays an important role in the DNR's budget. One of many funds, it comprised 17 percent ($132.2 million) of the DNR's FY24 expenditures ($777.8 million). (See Figure 4. "Other" includes Federal, Gift, Other, Reinvest in Minnesota and Special Revenue Funds.) This fund supports sustainable and healthy fish and wildlife populations; healthy and productive habitats for fish and wildlife; high quality and abundant wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, and trapping that is accessible to all Minnesotans; and enhanced connection between people and the natural environment.

Figure 4. How the Game and Fish Fund Fits in the DNR's Funding Structure ($ in millions, FY24)

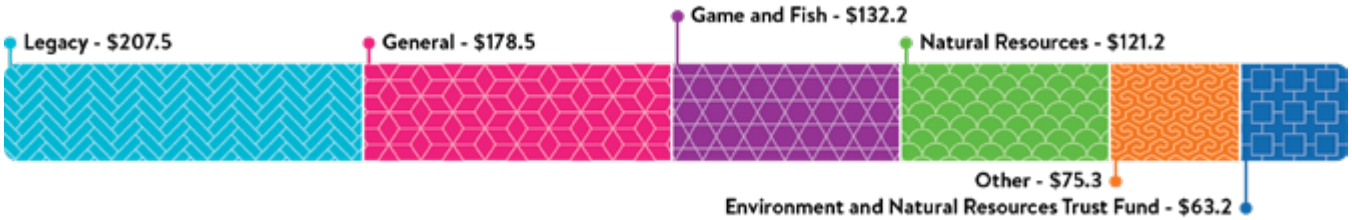


Figure 5. Game and Fish Fund Actual and Projected Revenues, Expenses, and Balance (in millions)

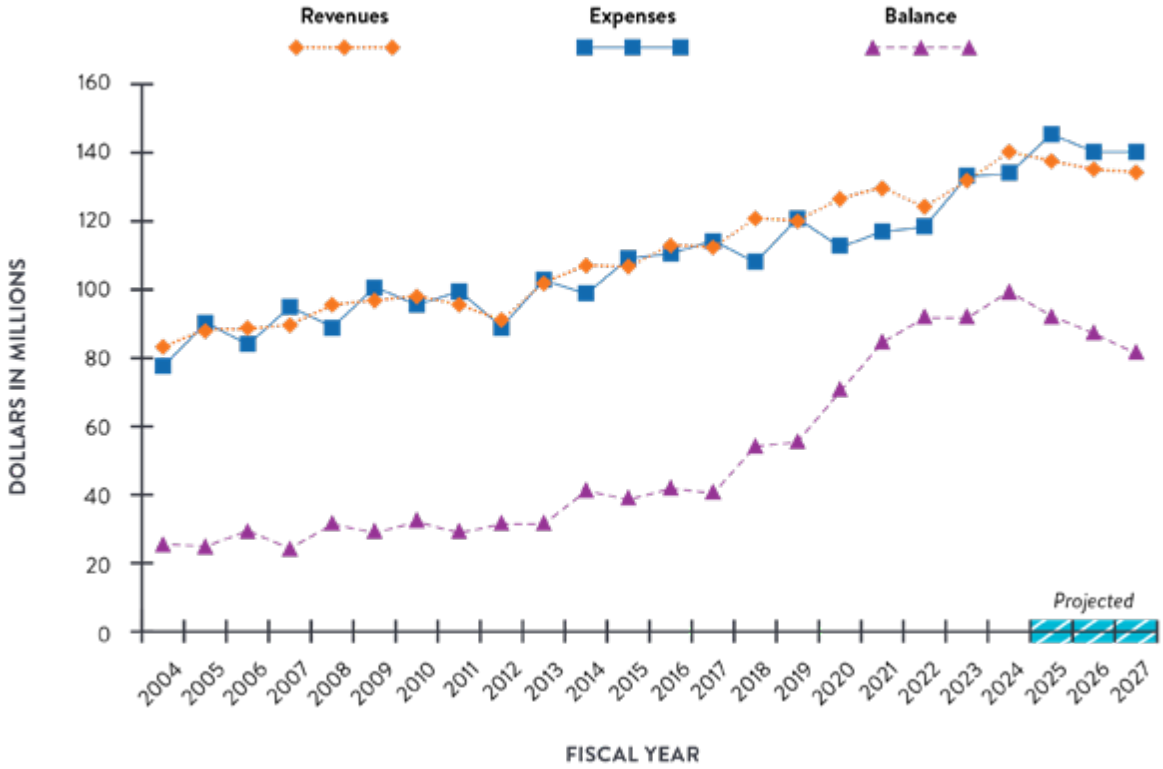


Chart Note:

- Transfers-in and Transfers-out are included in revenues and expenses, respectively.
- Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.
- Projected revenues are based on current statutory fee rates.

Game and Fish Fund Revenues

The DNR deposits an array of receipts into the GFF (Table 1). Most of the funds relate directly to the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. Other revenue sources include:

- **Sport Fish Restoration Act (formerly known as the Dingell-Johnson Act)** — Minnesota receives a portion of federal excise taxes based on a nation-wide formula known as the state's "apportionment." Minnesota receives reimbursement from the federal government for 75 percent of allowable fishing and boating access related expenses up to federal apportionment amount.
- **Wildlife Restoration Act (formerly known as the Pittman–Robertson Act)** — Minnesota receives reimbursement from the federal government for 75 percent of allowable wildlife expenses up to the same federal apportionment amount defined in the Sport Fish Restoration Act above.
- **Lottery in Lieu of Sales Tax** — Allocation of lottery in lieu of sales tax receipts.
- **License Issuing and Application Fees** — Electronic Licensing System (ELS) license issuing fees and fees for hunting applications.
- **Sale and Lease of Natural Resources** — Revenue from the lease of lands and easements, timber sales, mineral revenues, wild rice licenses revenue, sale of fish eggs, etc.
- **All Other Receipts** — Refunds from prior periods, reimbursement of excess agency direct charges, credit rebates, cash over/short, fines and restitution, hunter education firearm safety training fees, aeration permits, credit card fees, and miscellaneous revenue.
- **Transfers of Police State Aid** — Distribution from Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) of insurance premium taxes to cover part of conservation officer pension costs.

Table 1: Game and Fish Fund Receipts and Transfers-in by Fiscal Year (in thousands)

Source	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hunting Licenses	$21,674	$21,591	$23,813	$23,584	$25,329	$24,888	$24,495	$24,482
Fishing Licenses	$26,912	$29,667	$29,873	$33,940	$32,671	$29,444	$30,120	$28,206
Sports Licenses (Hunting and Fishing)	$5,471	$5,775	$5,541	$5,887	$5,383	$5,010	$5,035	$4,891
Hunting and Angling Stamps	$2,205	$2,158	$2,179	$2,415	$2,579	$2,346	$2,330	$2,324
Small Game Surcharge	$1,545	$1,483	$1,411	$1,465	$1,491	$1,395	$1,409	$1,423
Lifetime Licenses	$1,038	$1,123	$983	$1,047	$1,631	$1,616	$1,834	$1,971
Commercial Licenses	$344	$342	$336	$328	$342	$322	$322	$324
Federal Grant Fisheries (Dingell-Johnson)	$11,897	$12,384	$12,326	$13,270	$14,950	$14,934	$15,003	$12,817
Federal Grant Wildlife (Pittman-Robertson)	$21,623	$25,269	$21,478	$22,643	$20,101	$18,942	$24,761	$33,205
Lottery In-lieu-of-sales Tax	$13,211	$14,054	$14,964	$15,316	$19,039	$17,553	$18,484	$20,613
License Issuing and Application Fees	$3,453	$3,468	$3,404	$3,551	$3,642	$3,441	$3,445	$3,335
Sale and Lease of Natural Resources	$841	$1,228	$946	$682	$680	$1,006	$677	$458
Investment Income	$298	$506	$1,021	$765	$236	$273	$2,302	$4,109
All Other Receipts	$943	$632	$788	$1,118	$1,015	$2,337	$816	$1,046
Transfer-in: Police State Aid	$951	$1,026	$1,026	$1,035	$1,120	$999	$1,056	$1,279
Total Receipts and Transfers-in	**$112,406**	**$120,706**	**$120,088**	**$127,046**	**$130,210**	**$124,505**	**$132,089**	**$140,481**

Game and Fish Fund Expenditures

The DNR spent $132.2 million from the GFF in FY24. Figure 6 and Table 2 show spending by expenditure type.

Figure 6. Game and Fish Fund Expenditures by Type for Fiscal Year 2024 (in thousands)

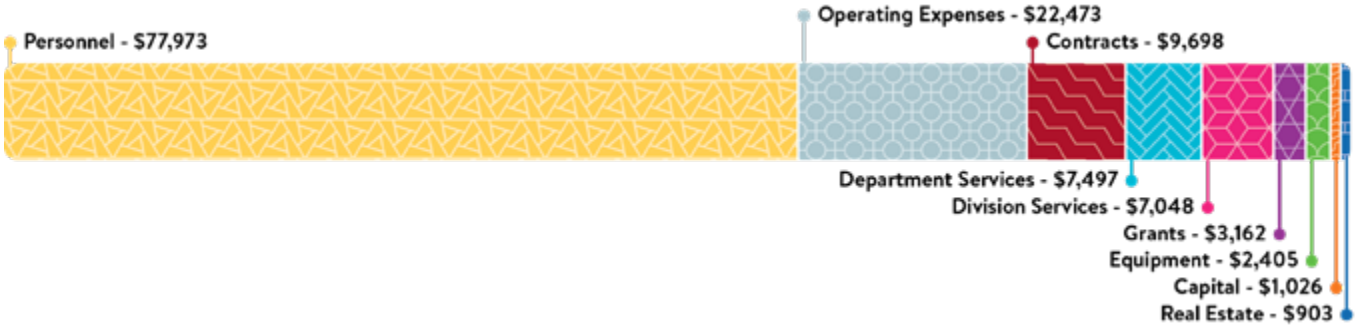


Chart Note:

- "Department Services" includes costs for leadership (Commissioner's Office and Regional Operations), Shared Services (Human Resources, Management Resources, Facilities, Office of Management and Budget Services, and Office of Communications and Outreach), mailroom, and MNIT services (computer and technology support).
- "Division Services" are the divisions' administrative support costs such as division management and fiscal services.

Table 2: Game and Fish Fund Expenditures by Type and Year, Fiscal Years (in thousands)

Expenditure Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Capital	$1,647	$144	$2,233	$896	$3,621	$890	$2,714	$1,026
Contracts	$7,319	$5,756	$7,422	$7,185	$17,179	$9,048	$10,015	$9,699
Department Services	$8,908	$9,274	$9,531	$9,455	$9,903	$9,737	$10,781	$7,497
Division Services	$6,535	$5,653	$5,889	$5,998	$6,062	$6,067	$6,630	$7,049
Equipment	$1,445	$900	$3,744	$1,172	$846	$1,690	$5,655	$2,406
Grants	$1,828	$1,633	$1,672	$1,350	$1,054	$1,518	$2,100	$3,162
Operating Expenses	$21,387	$19,647	$23,381	$19,034	$12,455	$14,814	$18,526	$22,473
Personnel	$62,436	$61,867	$63,909	$64,624	$62,514	$72,157	$74,061	$77,973
Real Estate	$1,463	$1,235	$1,230	$1,262	$1,242	$861	$1,090	$904
Agency Total Expenditures	**$112,967**	**$106,110**	**$119,012**	**$110,976**	**$114,875**	**$116,783**	**$131,572**	**$132,189**

GFF Overall Analysis

The GFF balance at the end of FY24 was $99.7 million. Three accounts make up the largest part of the GFF: the Game and Fish Operations Account (2200, $41.8 million balance), the Heritage Enhancement Account (2209, $18.4 million balance), and the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210, $23.1 million balance). A more detailed treatment of all fifteen accounts comes later in the report, as well as in the appendices.

The following are key trends that impact the fund's major revenues:

- Hunting license revenues in FY24 were comparable to FY23. Hunting participation has remained steady since FY22, but we are projecting a slight annual decline in hunting license revenues each year through FY27.
- Fishing license revenue in FY24 decreased by approximately $1.9 million compared to FY23. Fishing participation is projected to remain steady at current levels through FY27.
- FY24 federal reimbursement for the Wildlife Restoration Act increased by over $8 million due to a higher federal apportionment and increased spending on eligible activities. Projections show a further increase for FY25 before decreasing slightly in FY26 and FY27. The increased apportionment has created an opportunity to improve the health of the GFF and make additional investments in game and fish conservation by capturing federal matching dollars deposited into the GFF.
- Sport Fish Restoration Act federal reimbursement revenues decreased by over $2 million in FY24 but are projected to increase slightly in FY25 and remain steady through FY27.
- Lottery-in-lieu revenues deposited into the Heritage Enhancement Account within the GFF increased by $2.1 million in FY24 due to a law change enacted in 2023. Trends for FY25 through FY27 show a slight decrease in revenues to the fund with $960,000 going to the Lawns to Legumes project annually starting in FY25.
- The balance in the Lifetime License account increased by over $2.2 million in FY24. Lifetime licenses allow Minnesotans to buy a fishing license that is valid for an entire lifetime and "activate" that license each fishing or hunting season based on the holder's anticipated use. Lifetime license revenue deposited into the Lifetime License Account (which is an interest-earning fund) will continue to grow and become a larger part of the total GFF balance because lifetime license sales continue to exceed annual activations. When people want to hunt or fish in any given year, they "activate" their license and the DNR moves the related revenue from the Lifetime License Account into the GFF Operations Account. Lifetime license sales are projected to exceed annual activations throughout the forecast horizon.

The Accounts within the Game and Fish Fund

The GFF consists of 15 separate accounts—each designated in state law for a specific purpose. See the table below for more detailed information about each account. The following sections provide an overview of the GFF as a whole and then details about each account, including:

- Creation and Purpose of the Account,
- Sources and Uses of the Funds,
- Description of Revenues,
- Financial Review,
- Account Analysis, and
- Example Fund Uses, which are illustrative descriptions (and not necessarily a complete list) of the ways the DNR uses the account to generate the program outputs described in earlier sections of this report.

Table 3: Accounts in the Game and Fish Fund

Account Name	Sources and Uses of the Account Funding
Game and Fish Operations Account (2200)	• Revenues include licenses and permits issued, all income from state lands acquired by purchase or gift for game or fish purposes, fines and forfeited bail, sales of contraband, wild animals and other property under the control of the division, fees from advanced education courses for hunters and trappers, reimbursements of expenditures by the account, contributions to the account, and federal aid reimbursements. (M.S. 97A.055) • Funds pay for game and fish activities and related activities. Fund uses are restricted by the federal aid in the Wildlife Restoration Act and the federal aid in the Fish Restoration Act. (M.S. 97A.057)
Deer and Bear Management Account (2201)	• Revenues include $1 from deer, bear, and super-sports license fees. • Funds pay deer and bear management programs, including the computerized licensing system. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1c)
Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account (2201)	• Revenues include $.50 from deer and super-sports license fees. • Funds pay for emergency deer feeding and wild cervidae health management. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1d)
Deer Management Account (2202)	• Revenues include $16 from deer ($2 youth) and super-sports license fees. • Funds pay for deer habitat improvement or deer management programs. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1b)
Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account (2203)	• Revenues include 90 percent of the revenue from the Minnesota migratory waterfowl stamps. • Funds pay for development of wetlands and lakes in the state and designated waterfowl management lakes for maximum migratory waterfowl production including habitat evaluation, the construction of dikes, water control structures and impoundments, nest cover, rough fish barriers, acquisition of sites and facilities necessary for development and management of existing migratory waterfowl habitat and the designation of waters. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 2)
Trout and Salmon Account (2204)	• Revenues include 90 percent of the revenue from trout and salmon stamps. • Funds pay for the development, restoration, maintenance, improvement, protection, and preservation of habitat for trout and salmon in trout streams and lakes, including, but not limited to, evaluating habitat; stabilizing eroding stream banks; adding fish cover; modifying stream channels; managing vegetation to protect, shade, or reduce runoff on stream banks; purchasing equipment to accomplish these tasks; rearing trout and salmon, including utility and service costs associated with coldwater hatchery buildings and systems; stocking trout and salmon in streams and lakes, including Lake Superior; monitoring and evaluating stocked trout and salmon; acquiring easements and fee titles along trout waters; identifying easement and fee title areas along trout waters; researching; and implementing special management projects on trout streams, trout lakes, and Lake Superior and portions of its tributaries. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 3)
Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account (2205)	• Revenues include 90 percent of the revenue from pheasant stamps. • Funds pay for the development, restoration, and maintenance of suitable habitat for ring-necked pheasants on public and private land including the establishment of nesting cover, winter cover, and reliable food sources; reimbursement of landowners for setting aside lands for pheasant habitat; reimbursement of expenditures to provide pheasant habitat on public and private land; promotion of pheasant habitat development and maintenance, including promotion and evaluation of government farm program benefits for pheasant habitat; and the acquisition of lands suitable for pheasant habitat management and public hunting. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 4)

Table 3. Continued...

Account Name	Sources and Uses of the Account Funding
Wild Rice Management Account (2206)	• Revenues from the sale of wild rice licenses. • Funds shall be used for management of designated public waters to improve natural wild rice production. (M.S. 84.0911)
Wildlife Acquisition Account (2207)	• Revenues from the small game surcharge. • Funds are used for acquisition and development of wildlife lands, and maintenance of the lands, in accordance with appropriations made by the Legislature. (M.S. 97A.071)
Wild Turkey Management Account (2208)	• Revenues include $4.50 from each turkey license sold, except youth licenses. • Funds pay for the development, restoration, and maintenance of suitable habitat for wild turkeys on public and private land including forest stand improvement and establishment of nesting cover, winter roost area, and reliable food sources; acquisitions of, or easements on, critical wild turkey habitat; reimbursement of expenditures to provide wild turkey habitat on public and private land; trapping and transplantation of wild turkeys; and the promotion of turkey habitat development and maintenance, population surveys and monitoring, and research. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 5)
Heritage Enhancement Account (2209)	• Revenues include lottery payments in lieu of sales tax on lottery tickets. • Funds are only for activities that improve, enhance, or protect fish and wildlife resources, including conservation, restoration, and enhancement of land, water, and other natural resources of the state. (M.S. 297A.94)
Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Account (2210)	• Revenues are from lifetime license sales. • Funds are used to transfer from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210) to the GFF an amount equal to the amount that would otherwise have been collected from annual license fees for each lifetime license. (M.S. 97A.4742)
Walleye Stamp Account (2211)	• Revenues are from walleye stamps sales. • Funds may pay only for stocking walleyes purchased from the private sector in waters of the state. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 6)
Peace Officer Training Account (2212)	• Revenue from a portion of the surcharges assessed to criminal and traffic offenders. • Funds may only be spent for peace officer training for staff of the DNR who are licensed to enforce game and fish laws. (M.S. 97A.052)
Wolf Management and Monitoring Account (2213)	• Revenues include $.50 from each deer and super-sports license. • Funds are only for wolf management, research, damage control, enforcement, and education. (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 7b)

Game and Fish Operations Account — Fund 2200

Creation and Purpose of the Account

The Game and Fish Operations Account is the largest account within the GFF, representing 75 percent of FY24 GFF expenditures. All money received under the game and fish laws and all income from state lands acquired by purchase or gift for game or fish purposes are deposited into the Game and Fish Operations Account, except for certain revenues legally dedicated to the other accounts within the GFF. The Game and Fish Operations Account supports core game and fish activities such as lake and creel surveys, habitat research and other habitat protection activities, outreach and education programs, and natural resources law enforcement activities. The Heritage Enhancement Account and other dedicated accounts are often used together with this account.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

The major sources of revenue for the Game and Fish Operations Account (2200) are hunting and fishing licenses; license issuing fees; federal reimbursements for hunting (Wildlife Restoration Act) and fishing and recreational boating access (Sport Fish Restoration Act) activities; sale of natural resources (timber sales, leases, mining, etc. from lands acquired with Game and Fish Fund dollars); fines, forfeits, and restitution; occupational permits; non-occupational permits; police state aid; and interest income (Table 3).

Money accruing to the state from fees charged for hunting and angling licenses are not used for any purpose other than game and fish activities and related activities under the administration of the commissioner.

Description of Revenues

- **Fishing Licenses** — Includes fishing and spearing licenses, and fishing contests.
- **Hunting Licenses** — Including deer, bear, elk, small game, furbearing, and trapping licenses.
- **Sports Licenses** — Includes sports and super-sports licenses. Allows certain types of hunting and fishing with one license.
- **Sport Fish Restoration Act** — Federal reimbursement for 75 percent of allowable fishing and recreational boating access-related expenses up to federal apportionment amount.
- **Wildlife Restoration Act** — Federal reimbursement for 75 percent of allowable wildlife expenses up to federal apportionment amount.
- **License Issuing and Application Fees** — Electronic license system license issuing fees and fees for hunting applications.
- **Hunting Surcharge** — Surcharge on non-resident hunting licenses and surcharge on bonus deer licenses.
- **Fishing Surcharge** — Surcharge on non-resident fishing licenses.
- **Sale and Lease of Natural Resources** — Lease of lands, easements, timber sales, mineral revenues, sale of fish eggs, etc.
- **Fines, Forfeits, and Restitution** — Receipts due to law enforcement actions.
- **Occupational Permits** — Commercial hunting and fishing licenses.
- **Non-occupational** — Hunter education, safety training and aeration permits.
- **Investment Income** — Monthly interest paid on balance in fund.
- **Other** — Refunds from prior periods, reimbursement of excess agency direct charges, cash over/short, credit card fees, credit rebates, and miscellaneous revenue.
- **Transfers of Police State Aid** — Distribution from MMB of insurance premium taxes to cover part of the enforcement officer's pension costs.

Financial Review

Table 4: Game and Fish Operations Account Financial Activities

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$37,390,573
Prior year adjustment	$891,289

Receipts	Amount
Fishing Licenses	$27,098,037
Hunting Licenses	$14,571,968
Sports and Super-Sports Licenses	$4,890,778
Sport Fish Restoration Act	$12,816,546
Wildlife Restoration Act	$33,204,561
License Issuing Fees	$3,166,360
Fishing Surcharge	$1,107,960
Hunting Surcharge	$241,785
Sales of Natural Resources	$452,739
Fines, Forfeits, and Restitution	$333,243
Application Fees	$118,763
Occupational Permits	$323,720
Non-occupational Fees	$177,631
Investment Income (Interest)	$3,848,144
Other	$222,737
Transfers-in (Police State Aid & Transfers from Federal Funds)	$1,279,404
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$103,854,375**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Fish and Wildlife Management	$59,363,580
Enforcement	$29,032,137
License Center	$3,382,149
Ecological & Water Resources	$2,652,941
Parks and Trails	$1,957,982
Emergency Disease Response	$1,536,106
Lands & Minerals	$336,500
Safety Training and Hunter Education Fees	$117,256
Subtotal: Programmatic Expenditures	**$98,378,651**
Statewide Indirect Costs	$518,686
Transfers-out (FMIA, Invasive Species, Venison Donation, and Walk-in-Access)	$1,476,121
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$100,373,459**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$41,762,778
Net change for FY2024	$4,372,205

Account Analysis

The GFF Operations Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($41.8 million) than the prior year of FY23 ($37.4 million) mainly due to increased revenue (Figure 7). FY24 revenues and transfers in were higher than FY23 by approximately $5.9 million. FY24 expenditures were lower than FY23 by approximately $1.5 million. Together, these revenue and spending changes increased the fund balance by approximately $4.4 million at the end of FY24.

As discussed earlier in the GFF Overall Analysis, hunting revenue held steady relative to FY23, while fishing license revenue in FY24 decreased by approximately $1.9 million compared to FY23. The poor conditions for ice-fishing in the winter of 23-24 contributed to the decrease in fishing license revenue. Fishing participation is projected to return to FY23 levels and remain steady through FY27. Hunting, fishing, and sports license are all forecasted to decrease slightly each year based on current hunting and fishing license trends.

Wildlife Restoration Act apportionments increased in FY24 and are expected to increase further FY25 before staying steady through FY27. With the additional federal monies available for match on current state expenditures combined with the new appropriations enacted in the 2023 legislative session that are Wildlife Restoration Act-eligible, the DNR projects an improved long-term outlook relative to previous forecasts. These additional federal monies contribute to leaving the GFF with a projected balance of $35 million in FY27.

Figure 7. Game and Fish Operations Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

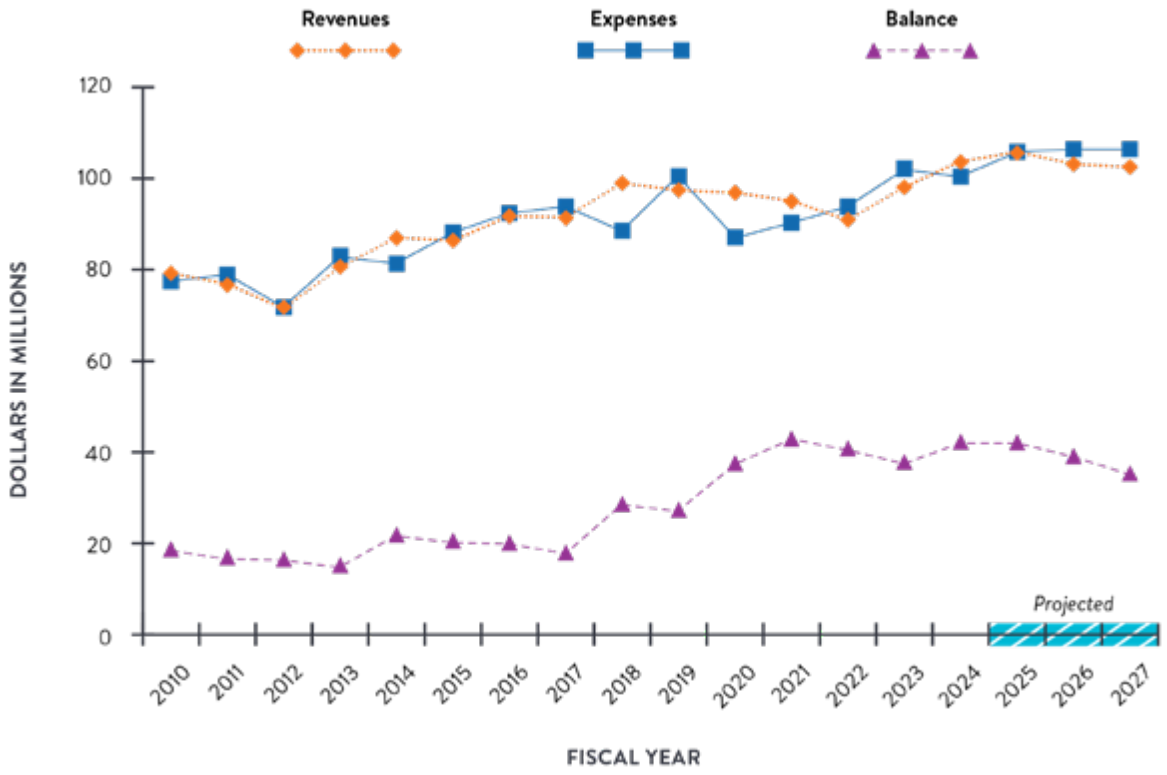


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

This is a primary account in support of fish and wildlife activities. The Heritage Enhancement Account or other dedicated accounts are often used together with this account.

- Carried out fish, wildlife, habitat, and social science research, social science research, restored and enhanced habitat, conducted outreach and education programs, and carried out enforcement activities.
- Funded facility management, staff salaries, and vehicle use for fish and wildlife activities
- Provided funding for fishing piers and developed shore fishing areas, including facility rehabilitation and maintenance.
- Supported critical information technology that supports fish and wildlife work including the Land Record System and Electronic License System.
- Supported fish production, repairs, and improvements at fish hatcheries across the state.
- Monitored over 250 conservation easements on coldwater streams, warmwater streams, and lakes. Removed invasive trees from 8,536 acres of grassland WMAs in western Minnesota through work with the roving crew and contractors.
- Worked with local cooperators on 24,460 acres of Cooperative Farming Agreements across the state.
- Oversaw 14,751 acres of forest stand improvements on WMAs.
- Conducted 42 public meetings on deer management.
- Conducted the August Roadside Survey and produced a report that generates significant interest among upland hunters each fall.
- Conducted 14 creel surveys and 841 lake and stream surveys.
- Supported outreach and logistics for the yearly fishing, deer, and pheasant openers.
- Conducted firearm and hunter safety, bow hunter education, and advanced hunter education programs.
- Produced over 50 Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship series online education programs.
- Provided secondary funding support for recreational boating access, includes acquisition costs to expand existing access, supplies such a planks and docks, and design and engineering costs to upgrade access sites to included stormwater, aquatic invasive species, and accessibility best management practices.

Deer and Bear Management Account — Fund 2201

Purpose of the Account

This account is for deer and bear management.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

One dollar from each annual deer, bear, super-sports license, and one dollar annually from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210), established in section M.S. 97A.4742, for each license issued under section M.S. 97A.473, Subd. 4, shall be credited to the Deer and Bear Management Account (2201) (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1c).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for deer and bear management programs, including a computerized licensing system.

Financial Review

Table 5: Deer and Bear Management Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$1,041,261
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Hunting License	$612,173
License Issuing Fees	$49,502
Total Revenues and Transfers in	**$661,675**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$434,147
License Center	$52,010
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$486,156**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,216,780
Net change for FY2024	$175,519

Account Analysis

The Deer and Bear Management Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($1.2 million) than in FY23 ($1. million) due to revenues being greater than expenditures (See Table 4 and Figure 8). The DNR will make slightly higher investments in this program over the next few years to deliver results to Minnesota and achieve an account balance that allows for any unpredicted needs in deer or bear management.

Figure 8. Deer and Bear Management Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

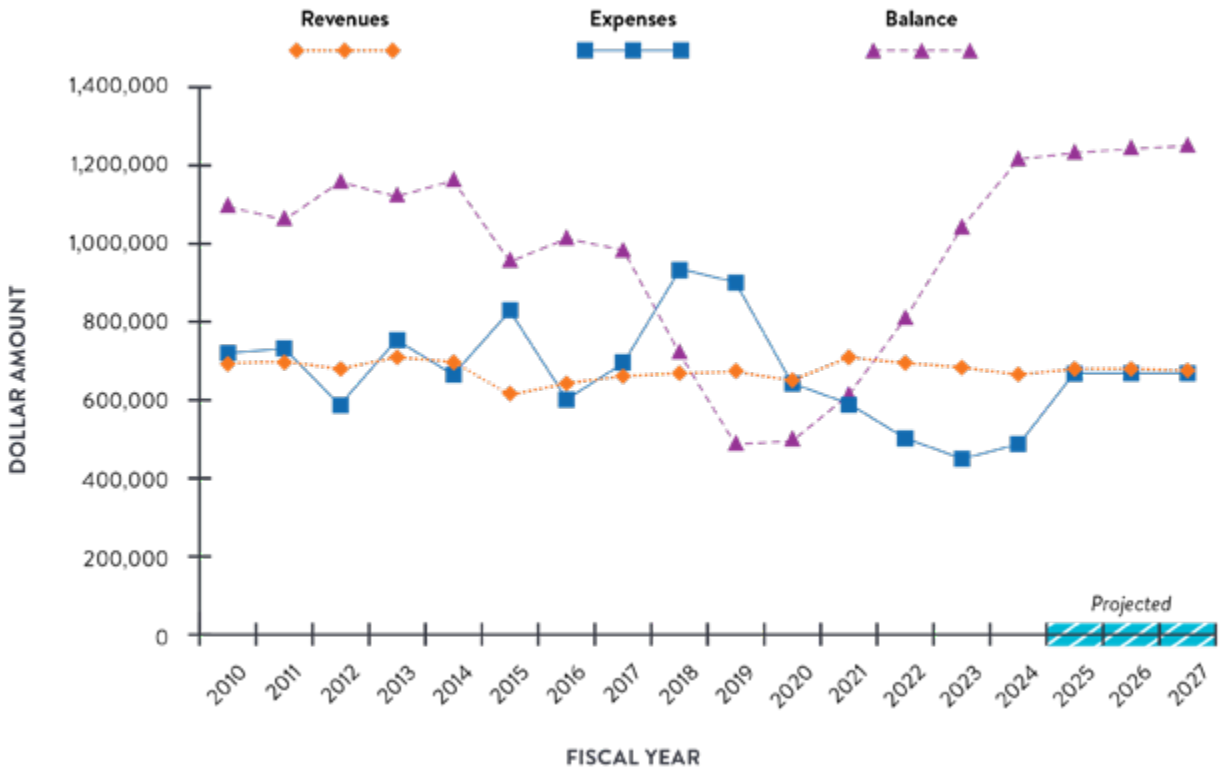


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses:

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Continued longterm monitoring of bear population dynamics research via hunter-submitted tooth samples (1,500–2,800 samples annually) and statistical population modeling.
- Increased monitoring of bear reproduction by increasing from 30 to 48 bears collared. These bears are observed from birth to age of first reproduction. This account funded flights, fleet, collars and supplies for the trapping and denning fieldwork.
- Generated information needed for bear habitat, season, and population management recommendations in Minnesota.
- Provided technical assistance to staff, the public, and the media on how to secure attractants, reduce human-bear conflict, and coexist with bears as part of the BearWise program.
- Provided technical assistance to producers and growers for bear and deer damage to agriculture.
- Performed annual deer population modelling and monitoring.

Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account — Fund 2201

Purpose of the Account

This account is for emergency deer feeding and wild cervidae health management.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Fifty cents from each deer and super-sports license is credited to the Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account (2201) (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1d). These funds are used to support surveillance, monitoring and research of health issues that pertain to Minnesota deer, elk, and moose. From broad surveillance programs such as CWD sampling to individual cases investigations of sick moose or elk, staff collected biological samples and tested for several diseases and parasites that can impact these populations.

By statute, money in the account can only be used for:

- Emergency deer feeding and wild cervidae health management. Funds are available until expended. When the unencumbered balance in the appropriation for emergency deer feeding and wild cervidae health management exceeds $2.5 million at the end of a fiscal year, the unencumbered balance exceeding $2.5 million is canceled and available for deer and bear management programs and computerized licensing.

Financial Review

Table 6: Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$1,540,853
Prior year adjustment	$10,942

Receipts	Amount
Hunting License	$326,898
Total Revenues and Transfers in	**$326,898**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$200,448
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$200,448**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,678,246
Net change for FY2024	$137,392

Account Analysis

The Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($1.7 million) than in FY23 ($1.5 million) due to revenues outpacing expenditures. The DNR seeks to maintain a reserve balance of $1 million in the Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account to ensure the ability to meet the needs of an emergency cervid disease outbreak should one occur.

Figure 9. Emergency Deer Feeding and Wild Cervidae Health Management Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

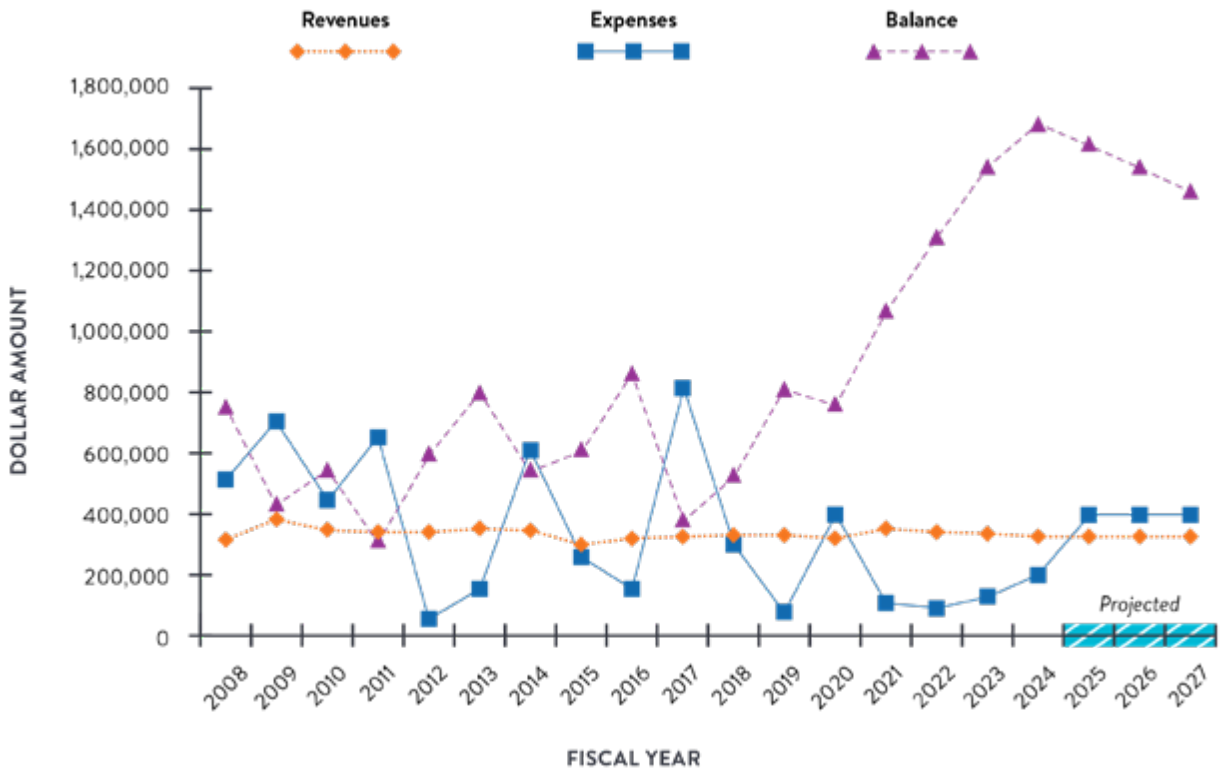


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below examples may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Responded to reports of sick or dead wild deer, elk, and moose statewide.
- Provided veterinary diagnostic lab expenses to test for diseases and parasites in wild deer, elk, and moose.
- Extracted DNA from banked wild elk samples through the Minnesota Genomics Center to be sequenced as part of a landscape genetics project between Minnesota, Manitoba and North Dakota.
- Performed diagnostic analysis for CWD and bovine tuberculosis from hunter-harvested elk.

Deer Management Account — Fund 2202

Purpose of the Account

This account is for habitat improvement and deer management programs.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

The amounts of $16 from each adult annual deer and super-sports license, $2 from each youth annual license, $16 from each adult annual license and $2 from each youth annual license from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210), established in section M.S. 97A.4742, for each license issued under section M.S. 97A.473, Subd. 4, shall be credited to the Deer Management Account (2202). (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1b).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for deer habitat improvement or deer management programs.

Financial Review

Table 7: Deer Management Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$3,029,160
Prior year adjustment	$66,792

Receipts	Amount
Hunting License	$8,110,276
Refunds of Prior Year Expenditure	$60
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$8,110,336**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
FAW Statewide Indirect Costs	$120,413
Wildlife Management (Direct Appropriation)	$8,502,698
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$8,623,112**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$2,583,176
Net change for FY2024	($445,983)

Account Analysis

The Deer Management Account ended FY24 with a slightly lower fund balance ($2.6 million) than in FY23 ($3 million) due to expenditures exceeding revenue. The increased FY19 revenues and expenditures in the graph below relate to an increased allocation of deer license revenue to this account per a statutory change. This change did not increase funding for deer management, as there was a corresponding reduction to the Game and Fish Operations Fund Account (2200) in FY19. Based on current trends, the DNR anticipates that revenues will resume a downward trend caused by slowing hunting license sales.

Figure 10. Deer Management Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

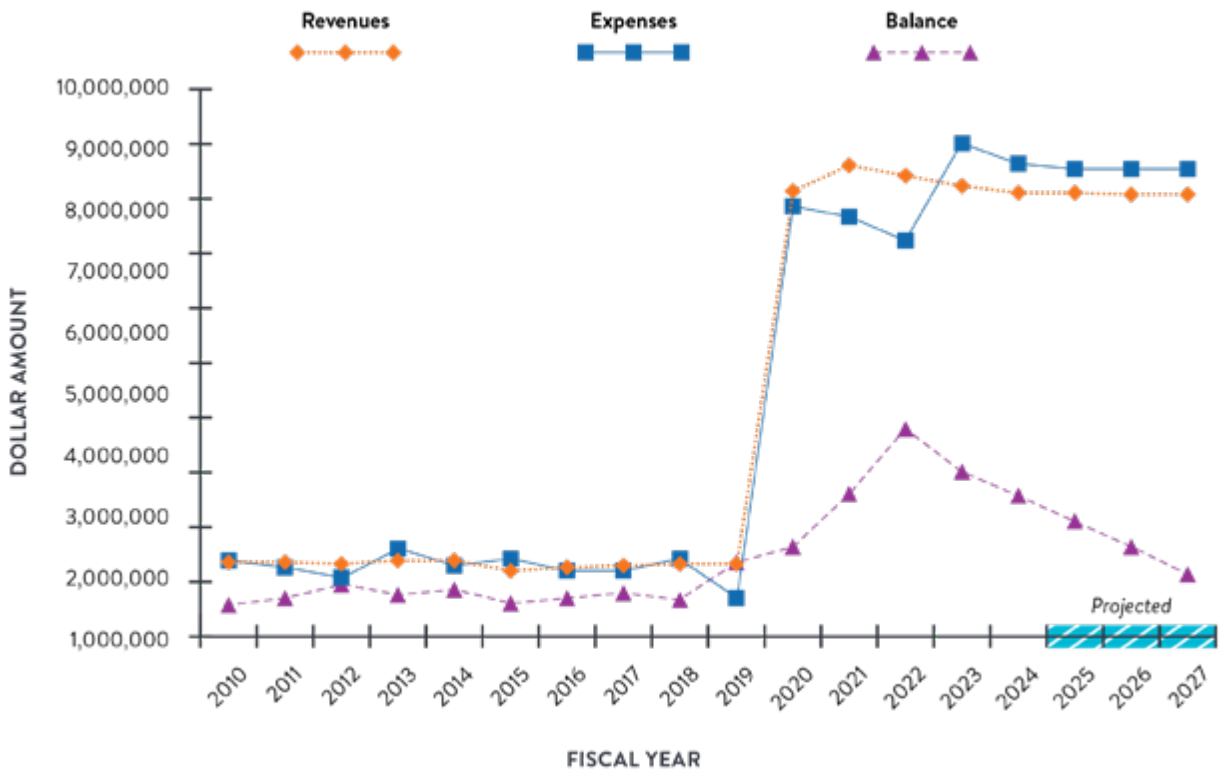


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses:

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Developed and implemented annual deer season recommendations and regulations, including the provision of over 125 special hunt opportunities to address local deer management needs or to increase hunting access/opportunities through mentored and assisted hunts.
- Provided technical guidance to and developed cooperative wildlife damage management agreements with landowners in response to deer depredation.
- In consultation with the Deer Advisory Committee and biologists from tribal nations in Minnesota, conducted an internal evaluation of progress made in the first half of the 2019-2028 White-tailed Deer Management Plan and developed recommendations for deer management priorities in 2025-2029. The evaluation and recommendations are anticipated to be released for public comment in FY25.

Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account — Fund 2203

Purpose of the Account

This account is for the improvement of waterfowl habitat and management of waterfowl populations.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Ninety percent of the revenue from the Minnesota migratory waterfowl stamps must be credited to the Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account (2203) and is appropriated to the DNR (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 2). Currently, the waterfowl stamp is $7.50 (M.S. 97A.475, Subd. 5).

Per statute, money in the account can only be used for:

1. Development of wetlands and lakes in the state and designated waterfowl management lakes for maximum migratory waterfowl production including habitat evaluation, the construction of dikes, water control structures and impoundments, nest cover, rough fish barriers, acquisition of sites and facilities necessary for development and management of existing migratory waterfowl habitat and the designation of waters under section M.S. 97A.101. In addition to the expenditure items listed above, this category includes costs for related coordination and operational support.
2. Management of migratory waterfowl; examples of migratory waterfowl management expenditures include public information, census and surveys, special hunt management, and related coordination and operational support.
3. Development, restoration, maintenance, or preservation of migratory waterfowl habitat; examples of expenditures in this category include wetland maintenance, wetland restoration, food plot development, planting nesting cover, prescribed burns, and related coordination and operational support.
4. Acquisition of and access to structure sites.
5. Promotion of waterfowl habitat development and maintenance, including promotion and evaluation of government farm program benefits for waterfowl habitat.
6. Money in the account cannot be used for costs unless they are directly related to a specific parcel of land or body of water under, (1), (3), (4), or (5), or to specific management activities under (2).

Financial Review

Table 8: Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$1,266,862
Prior year adjustment	$33,527

Receipts	Amount
Waterfowl Stamp	$549,661
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$549,661**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$535,590
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$535,590**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,314,460
Net change for FY2024	$47,598

Account Analysis

The Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($1.3 million) than in FY23 ($1.3 million) due to decreases in expenditures coupled with consistent revenue. Project spending has not kept pace with revenues and resulted in a growing balance from FY11 onward. The DNR is committed to increasing the investment in waterfowl. This will bring down the account balance to a healthier long-run level of $600,000.

Figure 11. Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

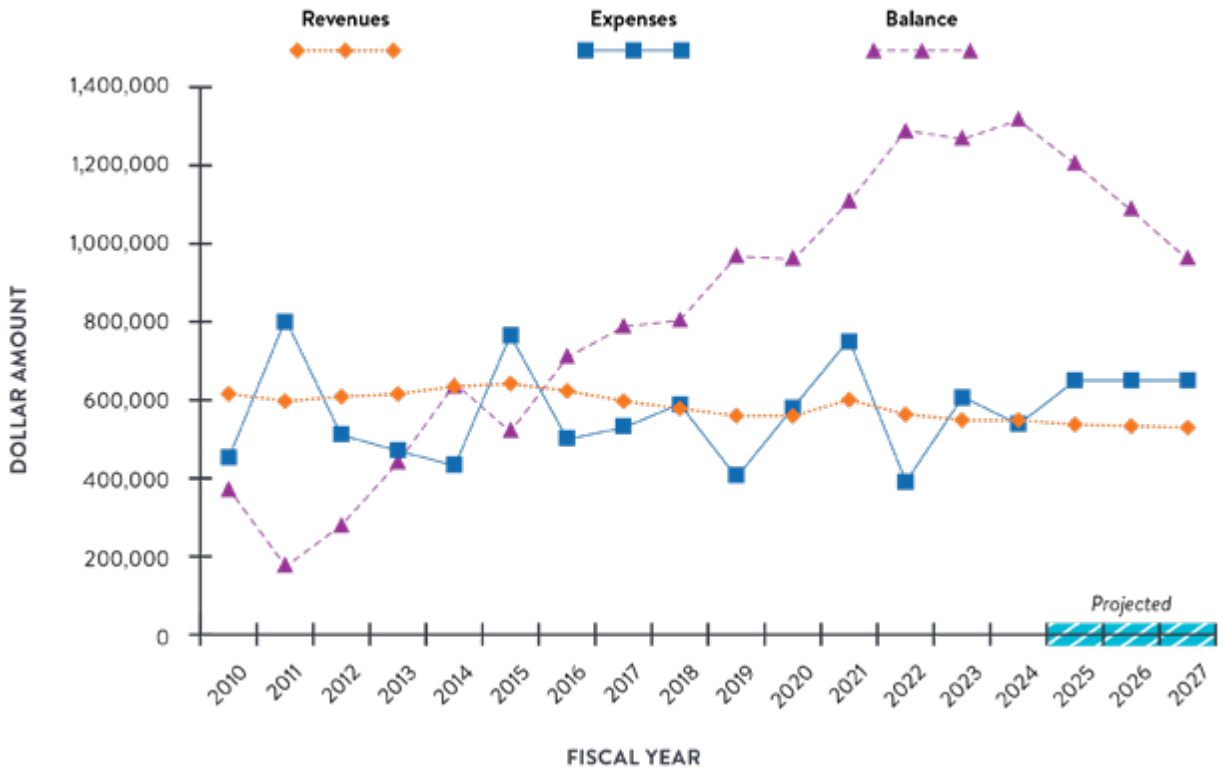


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Complete annual inspections, needed maintenance, and emergency repairs of electric fish barriers to ensure their effective and safe operation. Electric fish barriers are one type of barrier used at shallow lakes and wetlands in Minnesota to limit access of fish that would otherwise negatively impact habitat for waterfowl.
- Funded habitat enhancement through drawdowns at Cory Lake. Drawdowns improve a shallow lake or wetland by drying out and consolidating the bottom sediment, removing certain fish, and promoting vegetative growth when the wetland is reflooded.
- Funded outlet cleanouts at Ash and Jenny lakes to manage water levels.

Trout and Salmon Account — Fund 2204

Purpose of the Account

This account is for the improvement of trout and salmon streams and lakes.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Ninety percent of the revenue from trout and salmon stamps must be credited to the Trout and Salmon Account (2204) (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 3). Currently, the trout and salmon stamp costs $10. (M.S. 97A.475, Subd. 10).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for:

1. The development, restoration, maintenance, improvement, protection, and preservation of habitat for trout and salmon in trout streams and lakes, including, but not limited to, evaluating habitat; stabilizing eroding stream banks; adding fish cover; modifying stream channels; managing vegetation to protect, shade, or reduce runoff on stream banks; and purchasing equipment to accomplish these tasks;
2. Rearing trout and salmon, including utility and service costs associated with coldwater hatchery buildings and systems; stocking trout and salmon in streams and lakes, including Lake Superior; and monitoring and evaluating stocked trout and salmon;
3. Acquiring easements and fee titles along trout waters;
4. Identifying easement and fee title areas along trout waters; and
5. Researching and conducting special management projects on trout streams, trout lakes, and Lake Superior and portions of its tributaries.

Money in the account cannot be used for:

1. Costs unless they are directly related to a specific parcel of land or body of water, to specific fish rearing activities;
2. Costs associated with supplies and equipment to implement trout and salmon management activities.

Financial Review

Table 9: Trout and Salmon Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$1,667,113
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Trout Stamp	$1,092,684
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$1,092,684**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Fish Management	$1,203,759
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$1,203,759**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,556,037
Net change for FY2024	($111,076)

Account Analysis

The Trout and Salmon Account ended FY24 with a slightly lower fund balance ($1.6 million) than in FY23 ($1.7 million) due to increased expenditures coupled with slight reduction in revenue. Trout and salmon stamp sales have stabilized following record sales in FY20 due to increased outdoor recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sales in following years have receded from these record levels but remain higher than sales prior to the pandemic. Expanded trout angling opportunities in southeast Minnesota streams may also be supporting stamp sales.

The DNR has increased annual trout and salmon stamp expenditures with the goal of making more investments for Minnesota with available dollars. However, due to the length of time it takes to initiate habitat improvements and complete trout stream easement acquisitions, the fund balance is expected to remain consistent for the next few years.

Figure 12. Trout and Salmon Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

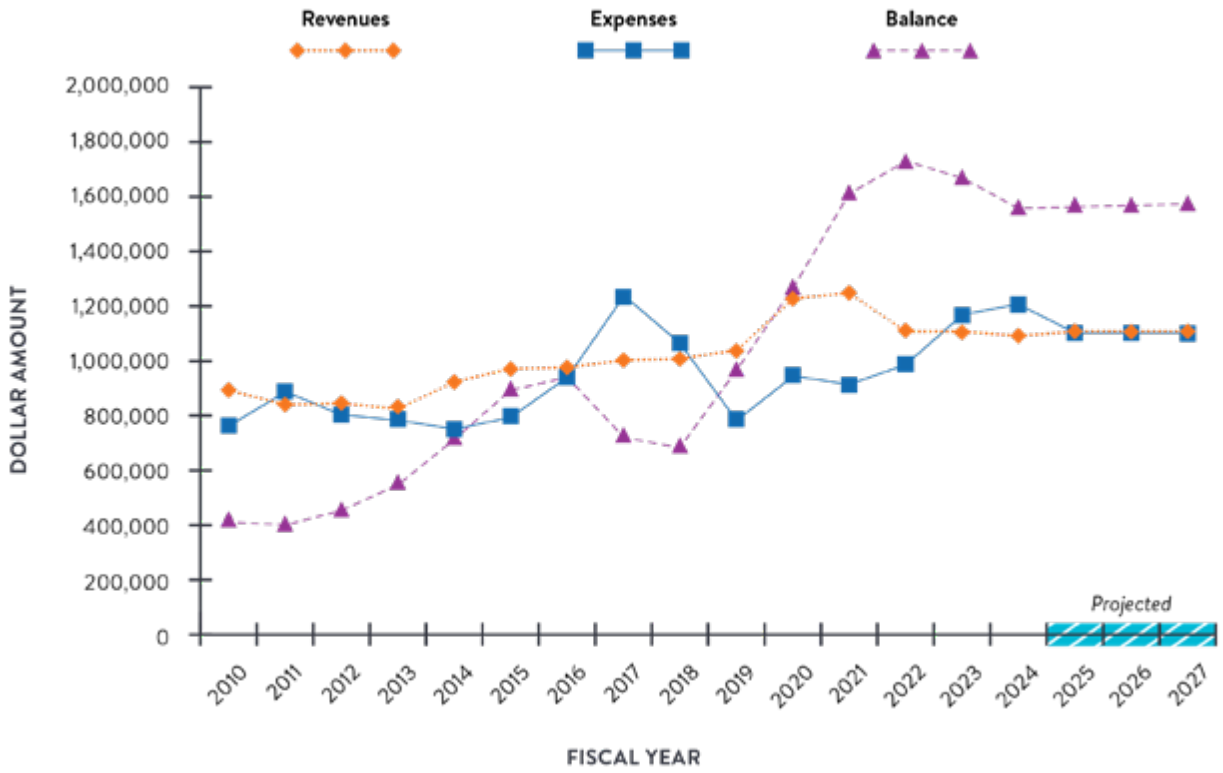


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Produced more than one million trout to improve and create fishing opportunities in a multitude of lakes and streams across the state. Trout production is funded by a combination of Trout and Salmon Stamp and Game and Fish Operations Account resources.
- Completed habitat enhancement projects on more than 12 coldwater streams benefitting more than 80 stream miles.
- Secured six trout stream easements, totaling 3.4 miles of shoreline and 44 riparian acres.

Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account — Fund 2205

Purpose of the Account

This account is for pheasant habitat improvement.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Ninety percent of the revenue from pheasant stamps is deposited in the Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account (2205) (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 4). The current stamp price is $7.50 (M.S. 97A.475, Subd. 5).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for:

1. Development, restoration, and maintenance of suitable habitat for ring-necked pheasants on public and private land including the establishment of nesting cover, winter cover, and reliable food sources;
2. Reimbursement of landowners for setting aside lands for pheasant habitat;
3. Reimbursement of expenditures to provide pheasant habitat on public and private land;
4. Promotion of pheasant habitat development and maintenance, including promotion and evaluation of government farm program benefits for pheasant habitat; and
5. Acquisition of lands suitable for pheasant habitat management and public hunting.

Money in the account cannot be used for:

1. Costs that are not directly related to a specific parcel of land; or
2. Any personnel costs, except that prior to July 1, 2019, personnel can be hired to provide technical and promotional assistance for private landowners to implement conservation provisions of state and federal programs.

Financial Review

Table 10: Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account Financial Review

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$874,277
Prior year adjustment	$1,765

Receipts	Amount
Pheasant Stamp	$528,712
Refunds from Prior Period	$0
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$528,712**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$479,937
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$479,937**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$924,817
Net change for FY2024	$50,541

Account Analysis

The Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($925,000) than in FY23 ($874,000) due to revenue exceeding expenditures. Pheasant stamps sales have been trending downward, but the decline has slowed in the last few years. The DNR plans to reduce spending in this account as a proactive strategy to offset expected lower revenue in the future.

Figure 13. Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

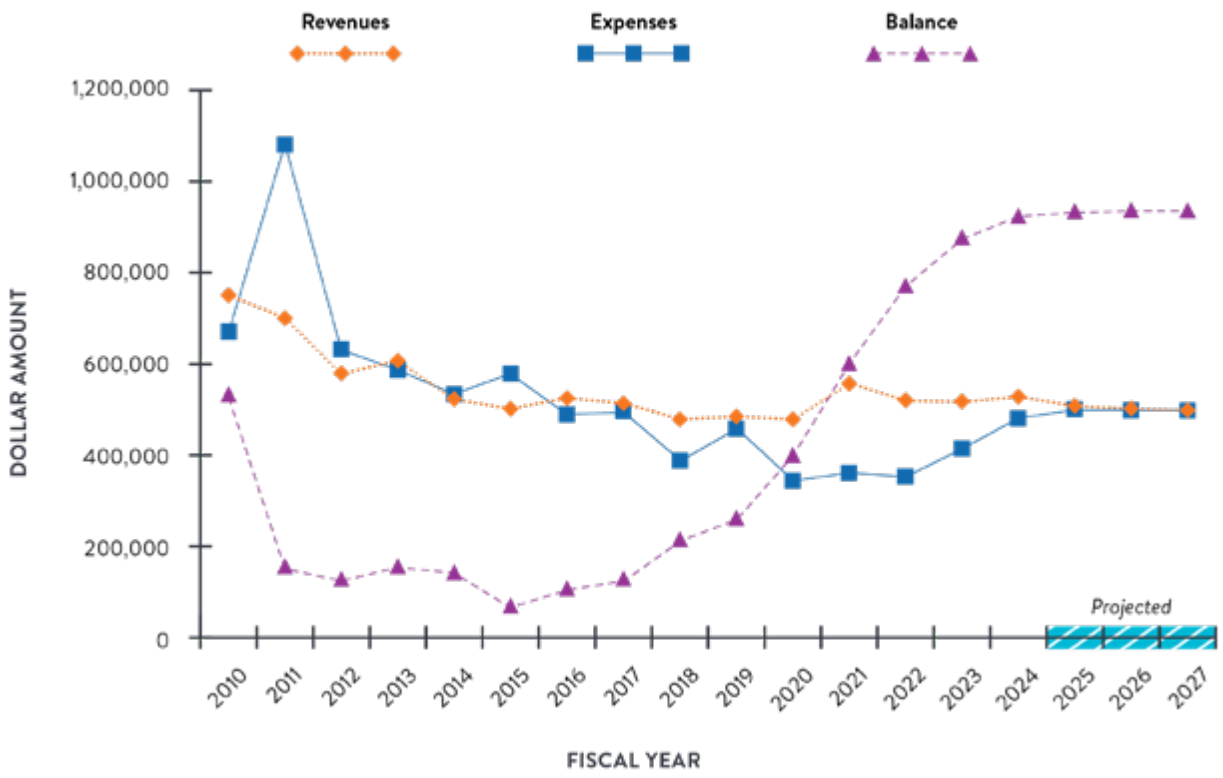


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Conducted fieldwork including prescribed fire treatments in grasslands, grassland restoration, invasive species control, and woody plant removal.
- Conducted the August Roadside Survey for pheasants and other farmland wildlife which help the DNR estimate populations of pheasants across southern Minnesota.
- Worked with private landowners through Soil and Water Conservation Districts to enroll agricultural lands in conservation programs and easements by supporting the state's Farm Bill Assistance Program in three counties.

Wild Rice Management Account — Fund 2206

Purpose of the Account

This account is for wild rice management.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Wild Rice license sales (M.S. 84.0911).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for management of designated public waters to improve natural wild rice production.

Financial Review

Table 11: Wild Rice Management Account Financial Review

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$61,403
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Wild Rice License	$53,131
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$53,131**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$38,000
Total Expenditures	**$38,000**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$76,534
Net change for FY2024	$15,131

Account Analysis

The Wild Rice Management Account ended FY24 with a slightly higher fund balance ($77,000) than in FY23 ($61,000) due to wild rice license revenues exceeding expenditures. Wild rice license revenues fluctuate year to year depending on both the abundance of the year's wild rice crop and the accessibility of that crop to harvesters. The DNR targets annual expenditures at $38,000 per year to fund wild rice lake water level management through a cooperative agreement with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services and/or private contractors.

Figure 14. Wild Rice Management Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

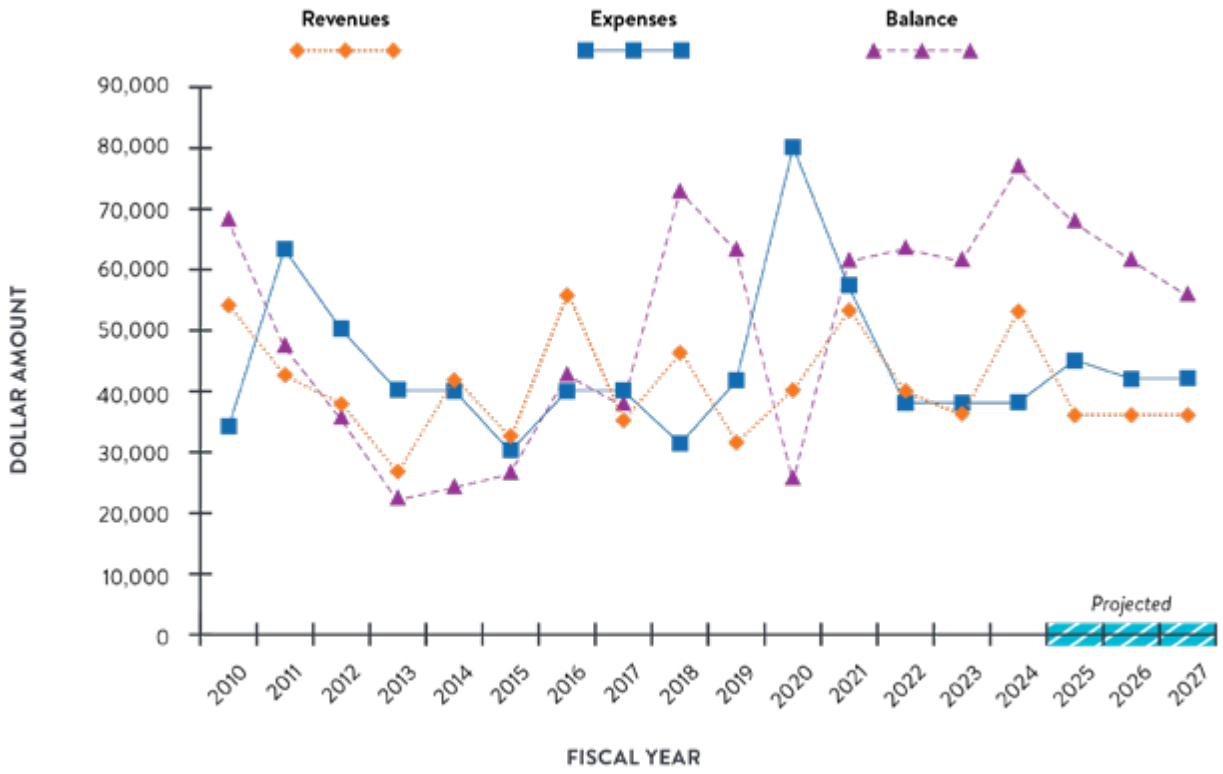


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example may involve more than one fund.

- Contributed to the USDA contract to maintain free flowing outlets of wild rice lakes. Much of this work involves the removal of beaver dams. This is one of the few accounts where the "example fund uses" is comprehensive, with total funding for the USDA contract coming from Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Funds, mitigation funds, and gift funding from Ducks Unlimited.

Wildlife Acquisition Account — Fund 2207

Purpose of the Account

This account is for land acquisition for the benefit of wildlife.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Revenue from the small game surcharge and $6.50 annually from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210), established in section M.S. 97A.4742, for each license issued under sections M.S. 97A.473, Subds. 3 and 5, and M.S. 97A.474, Subd. 3. (M.S. 97A.071) is credited to this account.

By statute, money in the account can only be used for:

Subd. 2a Use of Wildlife Acquisition Account (2207) money.

1. At least 50 percent must be used for land costs; and
2. The remainder can only be used for other land acquisition costs, development, and maintenance of wildlife lands, and activities under Subd. 3.

Subd. 3 Waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada.

- The Wildlife Acquisition Account (2207) can be used for developing, preserving, restoring, and maintaining waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada under agreement or contract with any nonprofit organization dedicated to the construction, maintenance, and repair of projects that are acceptable to the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the land and water affected by the projects. The commissioner can execute agreements and contracts if the commissioner determines that the use of the funds will benefit the migration of waterfowl into the state.

Financial Review

Table 12: Wildlife Acquisition Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$4,298,008
Prior year adjustment	$2,312

Receipts	Amount
Wildlife Acquisition Surcharge	$1,422,535
Sale of Buildings	$0
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$1,422,535**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$977,404
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$977,404**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$4,745,450
Net change for FY2024	$447,443

Account Analysis

The Wildlife Acquisition Account ended FY24 with a higher fund balance ($4.75 million) than in FY23 ($4.3 million) due to revenue exceeding expenditures. Expenditures vary from year to year due to the timing of land acquisitions.

Figure 15. Wildlife Acquisition Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

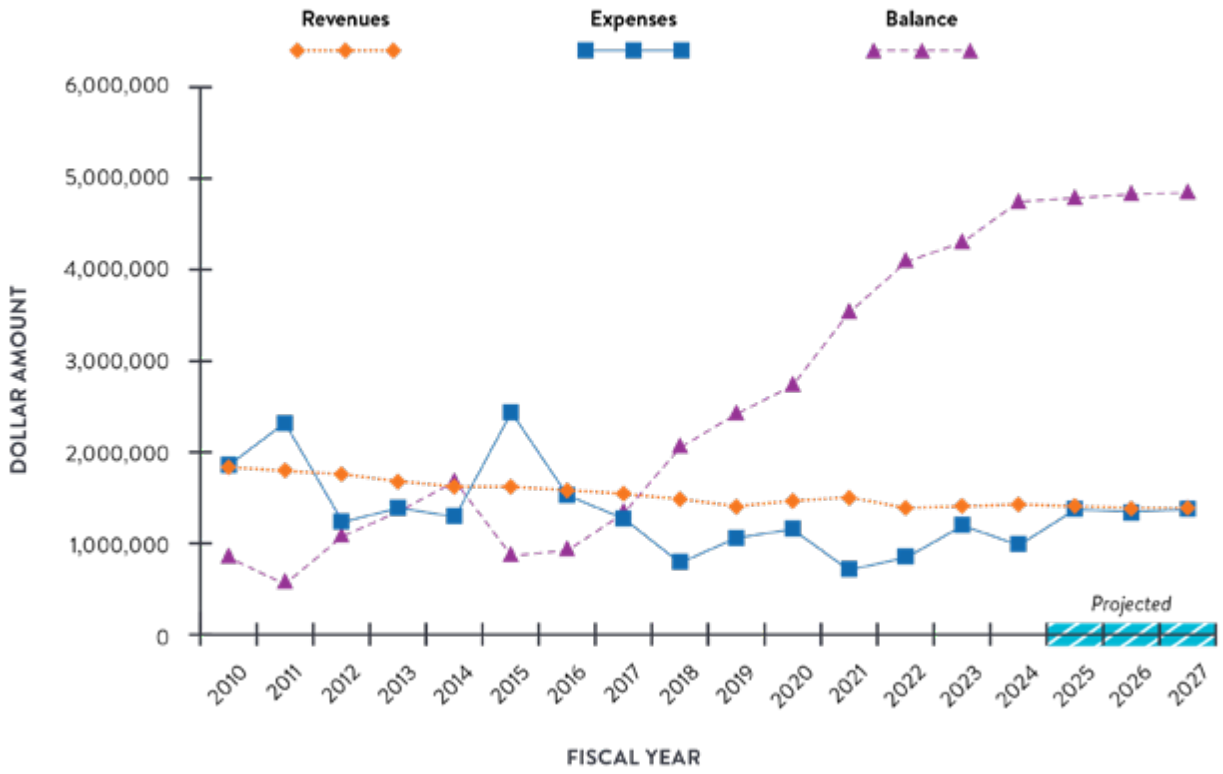


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below examples may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Funded a land payment for a 25-acre addition to Haydenville WMA.
- Provided professional services to enable dozens of WMA land transactions where the land payments came from other accounts.

Wild Turkey Management Account — Fund 2208

Purpose of the Account

This account is for turkey habitat management.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

$4.50 from each turkey license sold, except youth licenses under section M.S. 97A.475, Subd. 2, clause (4), and Subd. 3, clause (7), has to be credited to the Wild Turkey Management Account (2208) (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 5).

By statute, money in the account can only be used for:

1. Development, restoration, and maintenance of suitable habitat for wild turkeys on public and private land including forest stand improvement and establishment of nesting cover, winter roost areas, and reliable food sources;
2. Acquisitions of, or easements on, critical wild turkey habitat;
3. Reimbursement of expenditures to provide wild turkey habitat on public and private land;
4. Trapping and transplanting wild turkeys; and
5. Promotion of turkey habitat development and maintenance, population surveys and monitoring, and research.

Money in the account cannot be used for:

1. Costs that are not directly related to a specific parcel of land, a specific trap and transplant project, or to specific promotional or evaluative activities, or
2. Any permanent personnel costs.

Financial Review

Table 13: Wild Turkey Management Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$788,822
Prior year adjustment	$1,477

Receipts	Amount
Hunting Licenses	$239,292
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$239,292**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Wildlife Management	$190,098
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$190,098**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$839,493
Net change for FY2024	$50,671

Account Analysis

The Wild Turkey Management Account ended FY24 with a higher fund balance ($839,000) than in FY23 ($789,000) due to license revenue exceeding expenditures. In FY20, there was a significant increase in wild turkey license sales and associated revenues. The DNR attributes this increase to changes made in eliminating the spring turkey lottery and allowing turkey hunting statewide, along with increases in outdoor participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. We expect stable to slightly decreasing revenue in turkey license sales over the coming years.

Figure 16. Wild Turkey Management Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

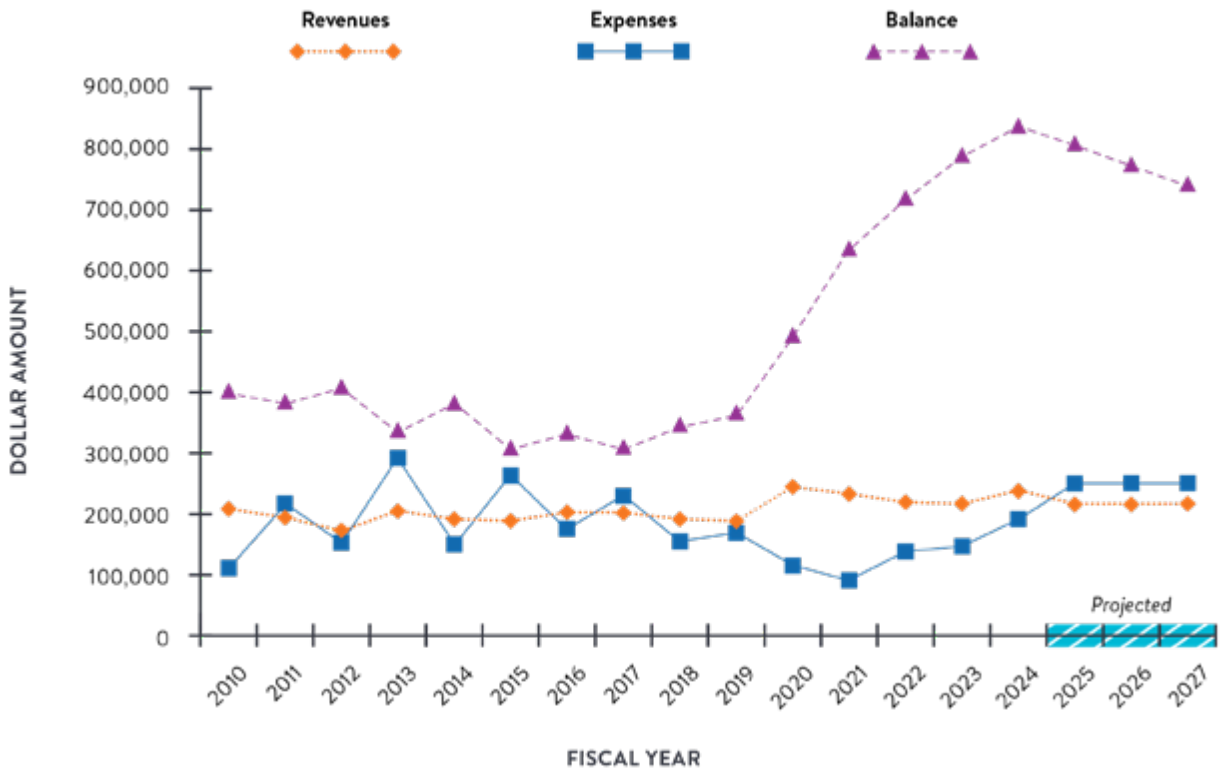


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Completed three oak acorn direct seeding projects totaling 18.5 acres at the Head Lake and Dead Lake WMAs.
- Supported a 145-acre prescribed burn at Baker's Lake WMA in McLeod County, a 122-acre prescribed burn at Green Valley WMA in Lyon County.
- Supported a 10-acre direct hardwood seeding at Fritsche Creek WMA in partnership with the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association.
- Contributed funds to additional prescribed burns, forest stand improvements, woody cover development, forest stand burns, prairie restoration and enhancement, winter food development, and WMA land acquisition.

Heritage Enhancement Account — Fund 2209

Creation and Purpose of the Account

Minnesota's Legislature established the Heritage Enhancement Account (2209) in the GFF in 2000. This account is for enhancement and protection of fish and wildlife resources.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Revenue in the Heritage Enhancement Account (2209) comes from the in-lieu-of-sales tax on the sale of lottery tickets. By law, 81.56 percent of the total in lieu of sales tax receipts were deposited to accounts spent for environmental and natural resource purposes in FY23, 50 percent of which is directed to the Heritage Enhancement Account (2209) for spending on activities that improve, enhance, or protect fish and wildlife resources, including conservation, restoration, and the enhancement of land, water, and other natural resources (M.S. 297A.94).

Financial Review

Table 14: Heritage Enhancement Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$17,035,592
Prior year adjustment	$354,262

Receipts	Amount
Heritage Enhancement - Lottery-In-Lieu	$20,612,635
Credit Agreement Rebate	$1,784
Refund of Prior Period Expenditures	$46
Sale of Useable Equipment	$70,079
Agency Indirect Cost Reimbursement	$151,410
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$20,835,953**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Fish and Wildlife Management	$10,114,762
Ecological & Water Resources	$2,497,187
Ecological & Water Resources - Invasive Species Grants	$2,410,000
Enforcement	$2,972,569
Forest Management	$926,569
No Child Left Inside	$493,044
Shooting Sports Facility Grants	$110,538
Neonicotinoid Study	$146,114
Investments in Fishing	$55,457
Statewide Indirect Costs	$89,179
Total Expenditures	$19,815,419
Transfers-out	$0
Total Expenditures & Transfers-out	**$19,815,419**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$18,410,388
Net change for FY2024	$1,374,796

Description of Revenues

- **Heritage Enhancement - Lottery-In-Lieu** — Receipts collected in lieu of sales tax on lottery sales— 50 percent of 81.56 percent of in lieu of lottery sales tax revenue must be deposited into the Heritage Enhancement Account (2209) in the GFF.
- **Credit Agreement Rebates** — Rebate received from purchasing card transactions.
- **Refund of Prior Period Expenditures** — Return of prior year payments to vendors.
- **Agency Indirect Cost Reimbursement (Regional Indirect Cost Plan)** — Reimbursement for dollars that contributed to the Regional Cost Plans at the beginning of the year and then returned to the account when they were not used.

Account Analysis

The Heritage Enhancement Account ended FY24 with a higher fund balance ($18.4 million) than in FY23 ($17 million) due to revenue exceeding expenditures. Lottery revenues vary from year to year. Minnesotans increased purchases of lottery tickets slightly in FY24. A law change in the 2023 legislative session increased the amount of sales tax receipts from 72.43 percent to 81.56 percent effective the beginning of FY24, 50 percent of which is directed to the Heritage Enhancement Account. Forecasted sales are expected to remain relatively flat for FY25 and beyond. In FY25, increased expenditures for community tree planting grants, the C.C. Andrews Nursery reopening, and domestic hogs and fur farms will result in a sharp one-year fund balance decline. A further law change in that uses $960,000 for the Board of Water and Soil Resources "Lawns to Legumes" program will decrease revenues to the fund for FY25 and on-going. Revenues and expenditures will level in FY26-27 resulting in a slower, steady fund balance decline.

Figure 17. Heritage Enhancement Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

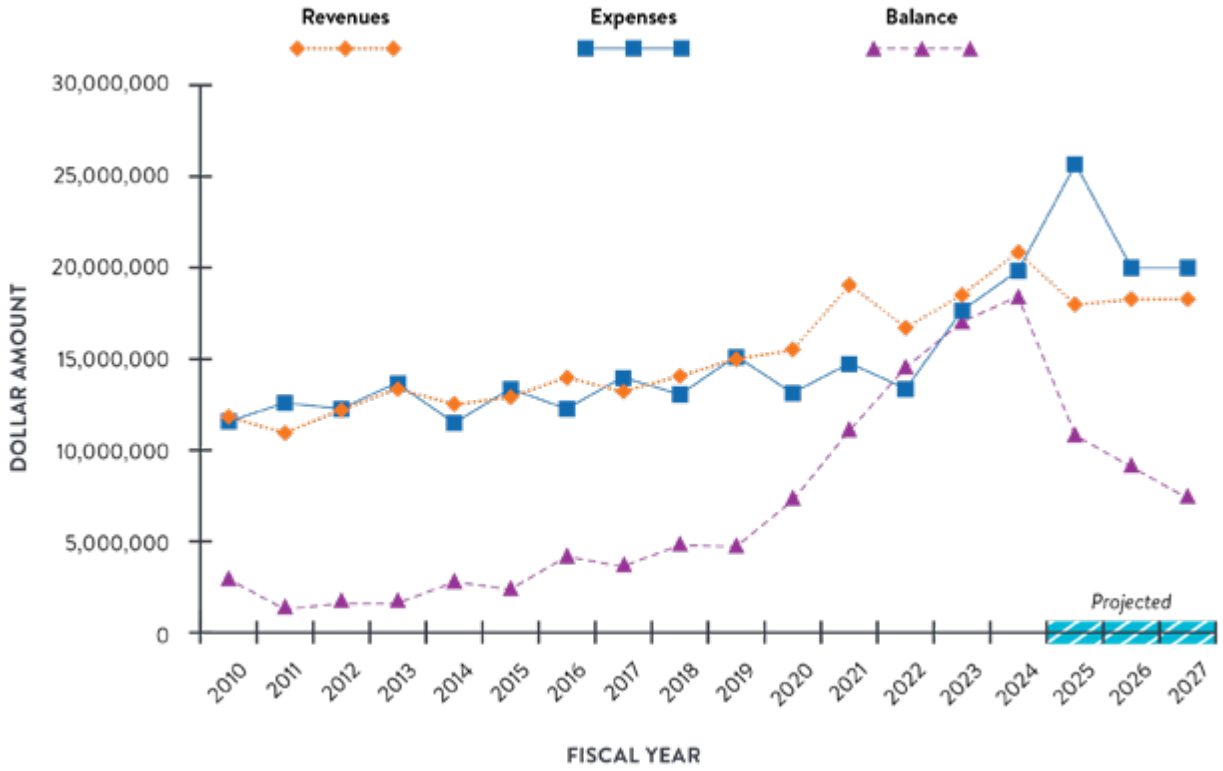


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses:

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

Like the Game and Fish Operations account, use of this account includes an emphasis on activities that restore, enhance, or protect fish and wildlife resources, as well as providing technical guidance to the public, research, evaluation, and monitoring activities.

- Completed 665 lake and stream surveys to secure data necessary for the development of fish stocking and lake management plans.
- Purchased 32,300 pounds of walleye fingerlings from private producers for stocking in public lakes.
- Completed geomorphology surveys in support of stream channel erosion evaluations and stream restoration projects.
- Supplied conservation officers with necessary equipment for them to safely and effectively do their work on behalf of the people of Minnesota.
- Assisted 212 foresters, biologists, and ecologists with Ecological Classification System determinations and other questions or concerns related to forest resource habitat management.
- Mapped 182,578 acres of state forest land and WMAs by native plant community type to inform habitat management decisions.
- Submitted 17 case studies to the University of Minnesota Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative Great Lakes Silviculture Library to share knowledge gained on forest habitat management with resource managers. Case studies document how forested native plant communities respond to silvicultural treatments, or forest management activities.

- Implemented a rare species monitoring plan for the state threatened plant Desmodium nudiflorum as part of the Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change national network.
- Treated 826 acres in 26 invasive plant management projects on state forest lands to restore forest habitat.
- Surveyed over 10,400 acres of state forest land in 434 stands for terrestrial invasive species, locating 277 infested stands totaling 7,105 acres.
- Released over 9,100 biological control insects to control invasive spotted knapweed and leafy spurge at 15 sites on state forest lands.
- Distributed invasive species materials at the 2023 Minnesota State Fair to educate people on preventing the spread of invasive species, including 8,000 handheld boot brushes and almost 9,000 terrestrial invasive species temporary tattoos.

The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) systematically collects, interprets, monitors, and delivers data on plant and animal distribution as well as the ecology of native plant communities and functional landscapes. The following MBS accomplishments were made with support from the Heritage Enhancement Account.

- Conducted field surveys of previously undocumented rare species and native prairies, wetlands, and forests throughout the state.
- Entered and managed native and rare species, native plant community, and habitat data in the DNR Natural Heritage Information System and delivered this information statewide through various platforms and media.
- Provided public outreach about native and rare species and plant communities, including websites, social media, presentations at local events, state, and national conferences, and answered biodiversity questions that come to the DNR Public Information Desk.

Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund — Fund 2210

Creation and Purpose of the Account

The Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210) account was established as a fund in the state treasury by Minnesota's Legislature in 2000 (M.S. 97A.4742).

Sources and Uses of the Funds

All money received from the issuance of lifetime angling, spearing, angling and spearing, small game hunting, deer hunting, sporting, and sporting with spearing option licenses and earnings on the fund is credited to the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210).

Money in the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210) is invested by the State Board of Investments (SBI) to secure the maximum return consistent with the maintenance of the perpetuity of the fund. Returns on investments of the fund are also deposited in the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210). Each year, the DNR works with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) to transfers from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210) to the Game and Fish Operations Account (2200) the amount of funding that would otherwise have been collected from annual license fees for each lifetime license.

Financial Review

Table 15: Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$20,869,805
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Fishing Licenses	$1,014,415
Hunting Licenses	$962,338
Sportsman Licenses	$1,046,194
G-F Lifetime License Activations	($1,052,332)
ITC Interest Earnings	$260,492
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$2,231,107**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$0**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$23,100,912
Net change for FY2024	$2,231,107

Description of Revenues

- **Sales of Lifetime Licenses** — Hunting, fishing, small game, and sports.
- **GFF Lifetime License Activations** — Deposit correction for total amount of activations for the license year (number of activations multiplied by current license prices). Funds are transferred from the Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund (2210) to the Game and Fish Operations Account (2200) and revenue accounts related to those licenses.
- **ITC Interest Earnings** — Interest earning on balance not invested with SBI. Per accounting rules, SBI investment income is not reflected in the fund statement.

Account Analysis

The amount of lifetime license activation transfers out increases each year due to the growing number of lifetime license holders. The lifetime license activation costs reflect as negative revenue. The fund balance will continue to increase because of the nature of this trust account. We invest the money to receive the maximum return possible. The balance will keep increasing until the amount of the activation transfers out exceeds the amount of new licenses sold, which should not happen until after the time period shown on this chart.

Figure 18. Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

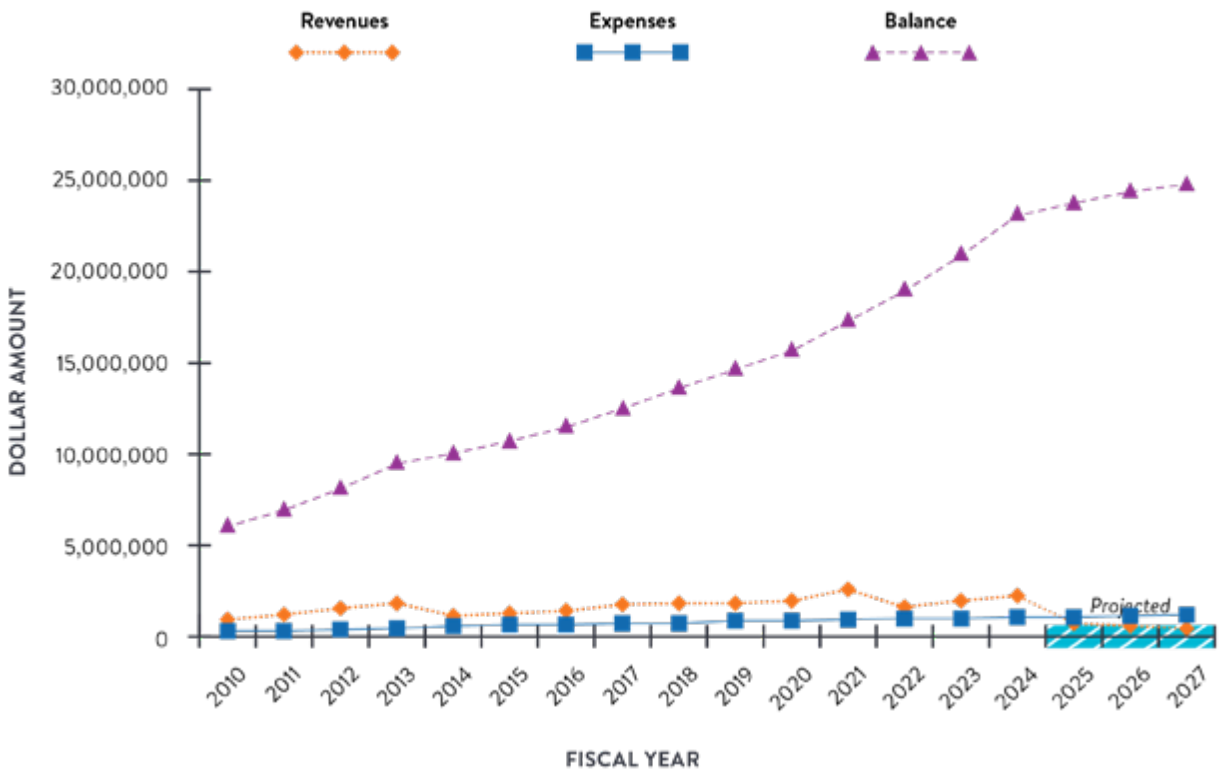


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses:

This account does not directly fund activities. See “Sources and Uses of the Funds” above for explanation.

Walleye Stamp Account — Fund 2211

Purpose of the Account

This account is for stocking walleyes purchased from the private sector in waters of the state.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Revenue from walleye stamps must be credited to the Walleye Stamp Account (2211) and is appropriated to the commissioner only for stocking walleyes purchased from the private sector in waters of the state (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 6).

Financial Review

Table 16: Walleye Stamp Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$238,246
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Walleye Stamp	$153,226
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$153,226**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Fish and Wildlife Management	$175,000
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$175,000**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$216,471
Net change for FY2024	($21,775)

Account Analysis

The Walleye Stamp Account ended FY24 with a lower fund balance ($216,000) than in FY23 ($238,000) due to increased expenditures coupled with slight reduction in revenue. Walleye revenue increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, but revenue has slightly decreased since then and is still expected to remail above FY19 levels.

Figure 19. Walleye Stamp Account Financial Summary FY2010 to FY2027

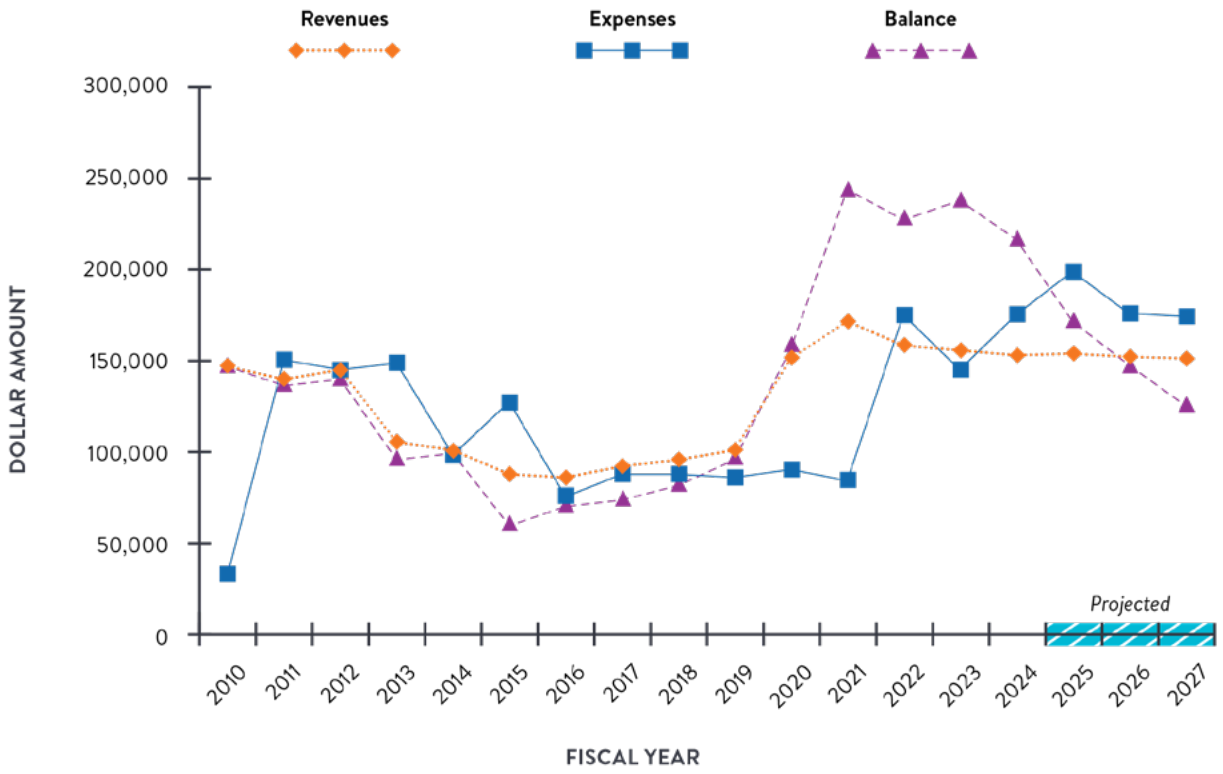


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example may involve more than one fund.

- Purchased approximately 7,700 pounds of walleye fingerlings from private producers for stocking in public lakes.

Peace Officer Training Account — Fund 2212

Purpose of the Account

The Peace Officer Training Account (2212) was established by the Legislature in the GFF in the state treasury. Money in the Peace Officer Training Account (2212) can only be spent for peace officer training for DNR staff who are licensed under sections M.S. 626.84 to 626.863 to enforce game and fish laws, (M.S. 97A.052).

Sources and Uses of the Funds

The state assesses fines for criminal citations including but not limited to game and fish citations. Once collected, MMB distributes one percent of this revenue to this account and the remaining 99 percent to the General Fund. Most of this revenue relates to nongame and fish citations.

Money in the Peace Officer Training Account (2212) can only be spent for peace officer training for enforcement officers of the DNR.

Financial Review

Table 17: Peace Officer Training Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	($23,856)
Prior year adjustment	$28,440

Receipts	Amount
General K/T Surcharge	$94,346
Credit Agreement Rebate	$136
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$94,482**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
ENF Statewide Indirect Costs	$407
Enforcement	$80,924
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$81,331**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$17,735
Net change for FY2024	$41,591

Account Analysis

Revenues from citations increased slightly in FY24, totaling $94,000 and projected to increase further in FY25 and beyond. While anticipated expenses (based on historic appropriation levels) may drive the account into deficit, the DNR is confident it can manage actual expenses so that the technical deficits shown on the chart below do not occur.

Figure 20. Peace Officer Training Account Financial Summary FY2012 to FY2017

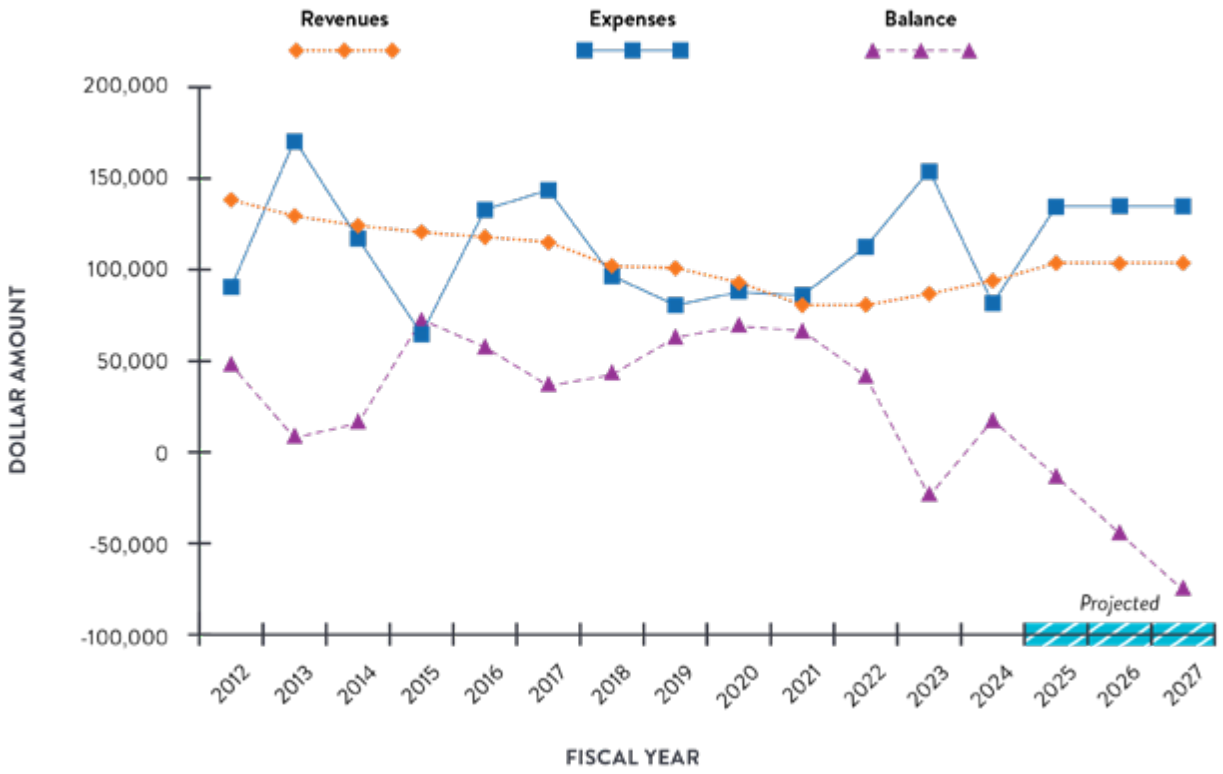


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Covered costs for annual Peace Officer Standards and Training Board continuing education requirements. This includes firearms qualifications, defensive tactics, medical/first aid training, and emergency vehicle operations for approximately 185 officers/employees.

Wolf Management and Monitoring Account — Fund 2213

Purpose of the Account

The Wolf Management and Monitoring Account (2213) was established by Minnesota's Legislature in the GFF in the state treasury. Revenue from wolf licenses is credited to the Wolf Management and Monitoring Account (2213) and is appropriated to the commissioner only for wolf management, research, damage control, enforcement, and education.

Sources and Uses of the Funds

Wolf license application fees and licenses sales, and $0.50 from each deer and super-sports license sold are credited to this account (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 1e and 7b).

Wolf hunting and trapping seasons and associated license sales ceased when the gray wolf hunting and trapping were prohibited on December 19, 2014, due to a federal court ruling related to the wolf's recovery status in the Great Lakes region under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

An amendment to Subd. 1 by Minnesota Laws 2017, chapter 93, article 2, section 70 (removal of $.50 from deer licenses), is effective July 1 of the year following the year the wolf is delisted under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Funds are only used for:

Wolf management, research, damage control, enforcement, and education (M.S. 97A.075, Subd. 7b).

Financial Review

Table 18: Wolf Management and Monitoring Account Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$1,430,250
Prior year adjustment	$3,286

Receipts	Amount
Wolf Hunting and Trapping Licenses	$0
Wolf Allocation	$326,898
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$326,898**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Fish and Wildlife Management	$485,290
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$485,290**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,275,144
Net change for FY2024	($155,106)

Account Analysis

The Wolf Management and Monitoring Account ended FY24 with a slightly lower fund balance ($1.27 million) than in FY23 ($1.43 million) due to increased expenditures coupled with slight reduction in revenue (Figure 21). Wolf account revenues declined with the halt of wolf license application fees and license sales when the federal Endangered Species Act protections were restored per court order in December 2014. Subsequent federal actions and court rulings have occurred since 2014, however wolves in Minnesota currently are listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The account's current source of revenue is $0.50 from each deer license. Expenditures have been below annual revenue for the last decade which has resulted in a growing account balance.

Figure 21. Wolf Management and Monitoring Account Financial Summary FY2013 to FY2027

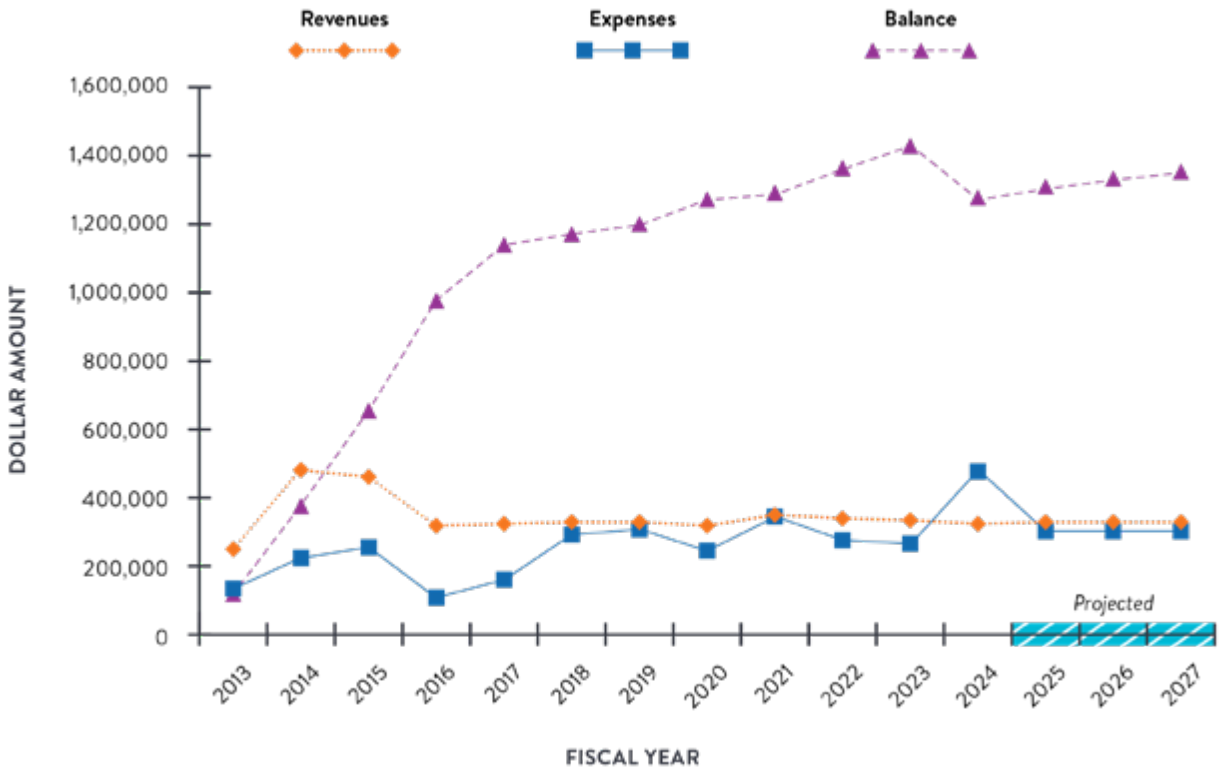


Chart Note: Data for FY2010-2024 represent actual revenues and expenditures. Data for FY2025-2027 represent projections from the February 2024 forecast, rather than the November 2024 forecast. Projected expenditures represent the full level of spending authorized by law.

Example Account Uses

Disclaimer: Many of the DNR's activities involve multiple funds. The below example activities may involve more than one fund. The list of activities is not comprehensive.

- Captured, radio collared, and monitored approximately 20 wolves for the Minnesota wolf population estimate and to monitor wolf population trends.
- Analyzed Minnesota wolf pack and territory data from tribal, university and agency partners for wolf population estimate.
- Contracted with USDA Wildlife Services in Minnesota to respond to wolf depredation conflicts with livestock and pets.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Related Accounts

Appendix B

Acronym Glossary

Appendix A — Related Accounts

The following programs have tangible impacts on GFF activities, due to the coordination and collaboration that DNR staff undertake to achieve complex natural resource objectives.

Venison Donation Program

A $1 fee on all deer bonus permits is collected and transferred out of the GFF into a special revenue fund to support this program.

This cooperative effort between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the DNR allows Minnesota deer hunters to donate deer carcasses to food banks, food shelves and other programs to help people in need. This in turn provides an excellent source of protein to those in need while helping reduce local deer populations where appropriate. Donated venison is screened for lead and contaminated meat is discarded, ensuring the safety of the product donated to people in need.

Total expenditures for the program were $90,000 in FY24, a 13 percent increase compared to FY23 and 14 percent higher than the five-year average.

Example Account Uses:

- Certified 23 meat processors to participate in the venison donation program. Certified processors accept donated deer, process them, and donate the venison. The processors are reimbursed for processing the donations. In FY24 a total of 221 deer were received through donations to participating processors, resulting in 7,804 pounds of venison donated to people in need.

Financial Review

Table 19. Venison Donation Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$451,249
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Donations	$0
Transfer-in from 2200	$106,115
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$106,115**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Programmatic Expenditures	$0
Transfer-out to Dept. of Agriculture	$100,000
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$100,000**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$457,364
Net change for FY2024	$6,115

Walk-In Access Program

This program, now in its twelfth year, operates out of a special revenue account. The Walk-In Access (WIA) program received a new grant in the spring of 2020 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA for more than $2.5 million to fund the program over the next three years. This year the program

worked from a one-year extension to that grant. The program initially received a onetime appropriation of about $616,000 legislatively appropriated from the surcharge portion of the venison donation fund.

The program also receives support from a $5 surcharge on all nonresident hunting licenses, and an option for small game hunters and deer hunters to donate one, three, or five dollars to support the WIA program. The WIA Program provides hunting opportunities by purchasing access to private land with high quality wildlife cover, through a landowner agreement. Much of that land is in a set-aside program or conservation easement such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), ReInvest in Minnesota, or Wetland Reserve Program/Easement. WIA is voluntary for landowners. Most landowners choose to enroll their property for three years. Enrolled lands are covered under the Minnesota recreational use laws that limit landowners' liability. Recent legislation opened these lands up to birdwatching, photography, and related activities. We are still in the process of transitioning to these new activities since most contracts are for the three-year period.

Example Account Uses:

- Increased WIA program enrollments each year since its inception, despite significant acreage losses in the CRP during the same period. In recent years the program has leveled off at around 30,000 acres per year. The DNR is currently determining future funding for the program and the target acreage we would like to maintain the program in the long-term.
- The DNR also maintained and updated the WIA website and electronic map to provide additional opportunities for users to locate WIA lands.
- Continued to provide enhancements to the WIA Electronic Information System, which the DNR uses to generate landowner agreements and track WIA enrollments.
- Continued work to expand activities on WIA lands including birdwatching and nature photography. Other uses such as camping and motorized vehicles will continue to be excluded.

Financial Review

Table 20. Walk-In Access Program Financial Activity

Beginning Balance and Adjustments	Amount
FY2024 Beginning fund balance	$943,346
Prior year adjustment	$0

Receipts	Amount
Donations	$26,983
Transfer-in from 2200	$135,670
Total Revenues and Transfers-in	**$162,653**

Expenditures by Appropriation	Amount
Operating Expenses	$1,209
Compensation	$51,266
Transfers-out	$0
Total Expenditures and Transfers-out	**$52,475**

Fund Balance and Net Change	Amount
FY2024 Ending fund balance	$1,053,524
Net change for FY2024	$110,178

Appendix B — Acronym Glossary

Following is a list of the acronyms used more than once in this report.

AMA	Aquatic Management Area
CWD	Chronic Wasting Disease
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
GFF	Game and Fish Fund
OHF	Outdoor Heritage Fund
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WIA	Walk-In Access
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

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