

2015 Natural Resources Legislative Summary

2015 Regular Session and First Special Session of the Eighty-ninth Minnesota Legislature

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



**For further information contact:
Bob Meier, Director
Policy and Government Relations
651-259-5024**

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

CONTENTS

LEGISLATIVE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	3
ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES OMNIBUS BILL.....	5
LANDS BILL	18
OMNIBUS LEGACY BILL	19
ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND.....	20
TAX BILL.....	23
BONDING/DISASTER	23
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	24
TRANSPORTATION BILL.....	24
MISCELLANEOUS BILLS OF INTEREST.....	24

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

LEGISLATIVE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Fiscal Notes:

- 66 total requests during Regular Session (first request on 1/16, last on 5/8)
- 1 request during Special Session
- 9 subsequently inactivated (this was usually after a note was worked on or completed by us)
- 8 were marked urgent
- 31 were exclusive to DNR, 24 were consolidated with another agency as lead, 13 were consolidated with DNR as lead
- 11 had a final sign off from the agency after the due date (this is according to Lisa's records. In some of these cases they were signed off on by due date, then sign off was removed after questions, no record of how many of the 11 that was a case for)
- By division (notes were assigned to a "lead" division who worked with other divisions as necessary):

Ecological and Water Resources	22
Lands and Minerals	15
Fish and Wildlife	9
Forestry	6
Parks and Trails	9
Enforcement	3
Operations Services Division	4

Historical Fiscal Note Requests:

2014	40
2013	56
2012	80
2011	53
2010	69

Bill Introductions:

- Regular Session House bill introductions through Monday, May 18th, 2,379
- Regular Session Senate bill introductions through Monday, May 18th, 2,233.
- 1st Special Session House bill introductions, 18
- 1st Special Session Senate bill introductions, 12

DNR Tracked Bills	293 House bills (12.3%)	227 Senate Bills (10.1%)
-------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------

Bill Summaries:

2015 Regular Session Bills Presented to Governor	80*
2015 Regular Session Bills Vetoed by Governor	3
2015 Regular Session Bills Signed by Governor	77
Agency Regular Session Bill Reviews Completed for Governor	3
2015 1 st Special Session Bills Presented to Governor	6
2015 1 st Special Session Bills Signed by Governor	6

*Fewest bills presented to Governor since statehood

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

DNR Required Reports:

Below is a summary of reports or studies that the DNR is required to take the lead on, or participate in.

Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill

Base Budget Report

The DNR Commissioner shall submit a report that contains the detail of the base budget, including prior appropriation riders, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House of Representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources by Oct 15, 2016.

Negative Surface Water Impacts, Recommendations and Study.

By December 15, 2015, the commissioner of natural resources shall consult with interested stakeholders and submit a report to the Legislative Water Commission and the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources policy and finance on recommendations for statutory or rule definitions and thresholds for negative impacts to surface waters as described in Minnesota Statutes, sections 103G.285 and 103G.287, subdivision 2. Stakeholders must include but are not limited to agricultural interests; environmental interests; businesses; community water suppliers; state, federal, and local agencies; universities; and other interested stakeholders.

White Bear Lake Augmentation Study

\$100,000 the first year is to develop cost estimates, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council, for the augmentation of White Bear Lake with water from the Sucker Lake chain of lakes. The commissioner must submit a report with the cost estimates developed under this paragraph to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House of Representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy and finance by February 1, 2016. This is a onetime appropriation.

Surplus State Land Sales.

This section directs the school trust lands director to identify at least \$5 million in surplus land sales that are not part of the state outdoor recreation system or an administrative site. The DNR must sell at least \$3 million worth of lands identified by June 30, 2017. The money must be used to extinguish the trust on school trust lands. The lands under this section were transferred to the DNR from other agencies and have minimal conservation value.

Wetland Conservation Act Report.

BWSR, in cooperation with the DNR, to report, by March 15, 2016, to the committees with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources on the proposals to implement high priority areas for wetland replacement, in lieu fee replacement, wetland replacement siting, and actions eligible for credit.

Federal Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit Program Feasibility Study.

The DNR and BWSR to study the State assuming administration of the 404 permit program.

Water Retention Projects.

The commissioner shall develop proposals for significant large scale projects that provide flood water retention, water quality improvements, nutrient and sediment reduction, and wildlife habitat to the Clean Water Council, LCCMR and LSOHC for FY 2017 consideration.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Hunter satisfaction survey.

The commissioner shall annually administer the collection of hunter information related to participation and satisfaction.

Legacy Bill

Land Acquisition Report.

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, in consultation with the commissioner of DNR shall prepare a report on outdoor heritage fund land acquisitions as of June 30, 2015. The report has a number of requirements including the amount of acres, average price paid per acre per county, information on seller, property taxes, and PILT payments. The report is due to the Legislative Coordinating Commission and chairs and ranking minority members of the House and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment, outdoor heritage fund, and finance and the house Committee on Ways and Means by January 15, 2016.

Payment-in-Lieu of Tax Alternatives; Recommendations.

The commissioner of management and budget, in consultation with the commissioners of natural resources and revenue, the Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Association of Townships, shall examine alternatives to payment-in-lieu of tax payments under Minnesota Statutes, sections 477A.10 to 477A.14, including a trust fund approach, that would apply to land acquired with money from the outdoor heritage fund and other dedicated funds. The examination must take into account the ongoing costs to the state and local units of government associated with the acquisition of the land and any constitutional constraints. The commissioner of management and budget shall submit recommendations to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House of Representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources, legacy funds, and taxes no later than January 15, 2016.

To view other reports you can visit Minnesota House of Representatives website. Every year a document is updated containing a list of mandated reports. This document will be updated with a link to the 2015 mandated reports list when it becomes available.

ENVIRONMENT OMNIBUS BILL, REGULAR SESSION Ch. [79](#), HF846 *(Ch. 79, the Environment Omnibus bill, was vetoed by the Governor in the 2015 Regular Session and was not signed into law. To view the veto letter click [here](#).)*

Summary of Legislative Path:

HF846 was amended by Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance; amended and passed by Ways and Means; passed (vote: 78-52) as amended by House 04/24. SF1764 was passed by the Jobs, Agriculture and Rural Development Committees; amended and passed by Finance; passed as amended by Senate (vote: 37-25) on 4/30. Conference committee requested and House conferees appointed 5/4 (McNamara; Hamilton; Hackbarth; Fabian; and Dill) and Senate conferees appointed 5/4 (Tomassoni; Sparks; Hoffman; Marty; and Weber). Final House vote 83/50; final Senate vote 35/30 on 5/18.

ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES OMNIBUS BILL, 1ST SPECIAL SESSION CH. [4](#), S.F. [5](#) *(Signed into law 6/13/15 the language in Chapter 4 was the same as that in Chapter 79 for the Department of Natural Resources. Language impacting other state agencies was changed. Below is a summary of language that impacts the DNR)*

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Executive Summary:

Appropriations:

Ninety-eight percent of the conference position originated in the Governor recommendations for FY 2016-2017 and 83% for FY 2018-2019. This bill funds the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) high priority items such as the 1.8 percent operating adjustment, the park operations increase and the forestry investments. Additionally, it helps ensure that the state of Minnesota will capture our increased Pittman-Robertson apportionment by providing funding for accelerated wildlife population and habitat management, expedited hunter recruitment, and additional shooting range opportunities. It also provides additional funds for our Enforcement division for nine new conservation officers, a helicopter, and negotiated retirement increases. It provides funding for current and anticipated legal costs that will help ensure our base funding will be used to fulfill our mission rather than costly legal expenses. Lastly, it includes funding for our avian flu response at our requested level.

There are three items the Governor proposed that this bill does not fund. These include: providing ongoing support for the county AIS dollars and other invasive species funding, increased funding for maintaining and improving public water accesses and onetime spending on snowmobile trails. The DNR will consider next steps for ensuring that these important functions are supported at appropriate levels.

Policy Provisions:

The Department of Natural Resources proposed a number of policy and technical changes to improve conservation results and increase operational efficiencies by clarifying authorizing language and amending or repealing outdated language. Many of the changes that were proposed are contained in the final conference committee report. The bill did not include an increase in the cost of park permits or free passes for military personnel and disabled veterans.

Buffers

This bill contains language that was negotiated with the House, Senate and agriculture interest groups. It provides buffer protections for public waters with a 50 foot average and 30 foot minimum and public ditches with a 16.5 foot buffer minimum or alternative practices and also includes other waters determined by SWCDs and adopted into Water Management Plans to accomplish voluntary measures; contains compliance provisions; establishes buffers by November 2017 on Public Waters and by November 2018 for Public Ditches with a 1 year extension if landowner has applied for conservation program or ditch authority initiated process and provides landowner assistance. Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) base capacity was funded in the legacy bill at \$11 million per year to support the program. This funding needs to be passed into law for this program to be successful.

A link to the Agencies "Implementing Minnesota's New Buffer Initiative Buffer website can be found [here](#).

Game and Fish: Normally a standalone bill, several policy provisions from the Game and Fish Bill (HF1406; SF1303) were included in Article 3. These address many important and timely game and fish management needs, as well as other outdoor recreational changes. One key provision not included from the Governor's initiative was the increased penalties for poaching and other blatant violations of game and fish laws as well as a ban on recreational feeding of bears.

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Appropriations and policy provisions related to DNR are summarized below

Article 3 – Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations:

This article appropriates money to DNR for land and mineral resources management, ecological and water resources management, forest management, parks and trails management, fish and wildlife management, and for enforcement and operations support purposes from the following sources (in thousands):

Section 3: Direct Appropriations

Total Appropriations

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	75,331	74,062	73,548	73,548
Game & Fish	102,386	102,014	97,832	97,832
Natural Resources	84,927	85,603	84,603	84,603
Permanent School	200	200	200	200
Remediation	1,100	100	100	100
Total	263,944	261,979	256,283	256,283

The Agency received a 1.8% per year increase for compensation costs for certain direct appropriated funds. Increased funding is partially offset by federal Pittman-Robertson reimbursement, which is deposited in the Game and Fish fund.

Below is a summary of appropriations by division.

Lands and Minerals

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	1,585	1,585	1,585	1,585
Game & Fish	344	344	344	344
Natural Resources	3,332	3,392	3,392	3,392
Permanent School	200	200	200	200
Remediation	1,000			
Total	6,461	5,521	5,521	5,521

Conservation Easement Stewardship Investment Fund: Creates an interest-earning account to provide ongoing funding for maintaining conservation easements. Appropriates five percent of annual balance for this purpose. Initial investments come from Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations already designated for easements. This matches the Governor recommendation. (Expenditures: \$104,000 in FY16/17 and \$104,000 in FY18/19)

Bear Head State Park Land Acquisition: Provided to acquire “Salt Lands” within Bear Head Lake State Park. (\$1M in FY16 onetime available through FY18)

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Ecological & Water Resources

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	17,526	17,110	17,046	17,046
Game & Fish	4,386	4,481	4,481	4,481
Natural Resources	10,502	10,576	10,576	10,576
Total	32,414	32,167	32,103	32,103

Rare Resources Preservation: Provides funding in the heritage enhancement (HE) account to offset a necessary reduction to the non-game fund due to reduced donations in recent years. This funding was also intended for the Minnesota Biological Study, easements for SNAs, restoration of endangered mussels, and a new regional ecologist. The HE funding increase is half of the Governor recommended amount and may not be sufficient to maintain our current level of operations. (\$204,000 in FY16/17 and \$204,000 in FY18/19)

Various Special grants and studies: Provides \$691,000 for various studies and grants. This funding is all onetime and is designated for the following purposes: Feasibility Study of state assumption of Section 404 of Clean Water Act, Mississippi Headwaters Board, White Bear Lake Augmentation Study, ring levees in the Red River watershed, and Silver Lake erosion control.

Forestry

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	26,446	26,350	26,350	26,350
Game & Fish	1,287	1,287	1,287	1,287
Natural Resources	11,881	12,144	11,644	11,644
Total	39,614	39,781	39,281	39,281

Forest Investments: Provides for increased forest inventory, stand treatments, infrastructure investments, protection from damaging pests, and improved forestry tracking systems. Includes ongoing base increase in the general fund of \$3M/biennium and onetime increase of \$1M in FMIA. (\$4.5M in FY16/17 and \$3M in FY18/19)

Minnesota Forest Resource Council: Allows MFRC to continue to operate, fulfill its core mandates and leverage over \$500,000 from partners. This matches the Governor recommendation. (\$400,000 in FY16/17 and \$400,000 in FY18/19)

Parks & Trails

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	24,967	24,427	24,427	24,427
Game & Fish	2,266	2,273	2,273	2,273
Natural Resources	46,831	46,950	46,450	46,450
Total	74,064	73,650	73,150	73,150

Parks and Trails Operations and Management: Provides critical funding to the state parks system to operate the parks as a premier outdoor recreation destination. This bill does not include the fee increase but general fund levels exceed the Governor recommendation (\$8.5M each biennium; Governor was \$7.2M) Legislature provides an additional \$1m from the State Parks account in the Natural Resources fund in FY16/17 only. (\$9.5M in FY16/17 and \$8.5M in FY18/19)

Various other special projects: The bill includes \$866,000 in projects proposed by the legislature. This funding is all onetime and is designated for the following locations: the City of Virginia, East Grand Forks, Blackduck Bridge, Blufflands Trail, and Shell Rock River Trail.

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Fish & Wildlife

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General				
Game & Fish	69,269	69,801	65,619	65,619
Natural Resources	1,908	1,912	1,912	1,912
Total	71,177	71,713	67,531	67,531

Fish & Wildlife Enhancement and Reinvestment Initiative: Enhance fisheries management, accelerated angler and hunter recruitment/retention, improved recreation through better-maintained facilities and service, increased wildlife population and habitat monitoring. Provides \$11 million, which generates \$6 million in new federal Pittman-Robertson dollars. This matches the Governor recommendation. (Expenditures: \$10.5M in FY16/17 and \$3.8M in FY18/19)

Expanding Shooting Ranges: Increase opportunities for shooting sports ranges through grant program established in 2015. (\$2M in FY16/17 onetime with spending authority through FY19)

Enforcement

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	4,257	4,140	4,140	4,140
Game & Fish	24,834	23,828	23,828	23,828
Natural Resources	10,153	10,309	10,309	10,309
Remediation	100	100	100	100
Total	39,344	38,377	38,377	38,377

Delivery of Natural Resources Law Enforcement: Funds approximately 9 conservation officers to help refill vacant field stations around the state. (\$2.2M in FY16/17 and \$2.6M in FY18/19)

Aviation Services Rightsizing: Funds replacement of dilapidated helicopter to help ensure efficient service delivery and response to emergencies (\$2.1M in FY16 onetime)

Retirement Funding Increase: Funds previously negotiated contract increases for retirement for law officers. This matches the Governor recommendation. (\$765,000 in FY16/17 and \$1M in FY18/19)

Operations Support

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
General	550	450		
Natural Resources	320	320	320	320
Total	870	770	320	320

Legal Costs: There are various issues for which, regardless of the DNR's actions, we anticipate legal challenges. This funding helps ensure that our base funding will go towards fulfilling our mission rather than costly legal defense. (\$750,000 in FY16/17 onetime)

Citizen Engagement in Natural Resources: Starts to improve operational capacities of our web-based programs to ease access to information, products, and services. This is 25 percent of the Governor's recommendation. We will use this to fund highest priority items proposed in this change item. (\$250,000 in FY16 onetime).

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Article 4 Environment and Natural Resources Statutory Changes

Section 4. DNR Utility Fees; State Land and Water.

This section modifies the current exemption on utility fees to make the utility line exemption apply to the application fees on crossing state lands and waters that are not 100 kilovolts or greater or main pipelines. This was initiated by the legislature.

Section 5. Natural Resources Conservation Stewardship Account.

These sections create the DNR conservation stewardship easement account. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Sections 6-18. ATV and Snowmobile Registration, Grant-in-aid Application Review Period, Non-trail Use Registration, ATV Definitions, Use in Road Rights of Way, Training Requirement Identification, Youthful Operators.

These sections clarify that the new owner of an (All-Terrain Vehicle) ATV or snowmobile is the individual responsible to transfer ownership; commissioner must commence public review of the application within 60 days after the complete application has been locally approved and submitted. If the commissioner fails to approve or deny the application within 60 days after submission the application is deemed approved and the commissioner must provide for a 30-day public review period; clarifies the definition of Class 1 and Class 2 all-terrain vehicles, defines characteristics of Class 1 ATVs for use within the public road right of way. The DNR ATV definition changes were an agency policy recommendation.

Sections 19-31. Aquatic Invasive Species Affirmation, Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species, Unlisted Nonnative Species, Unregulated Non-native Species, Removal and Confinement, Permit Decontamination, Rules for Designating Prohibited Invasive Species, Expedited rules, Civil Penalties.

These sections replace the word "listed" with "designated" where it refers to species identified as prohibited, regulated, unlisted, and unregulated invasive species; authorizes watercraft inspectors and conservation officers to require decontamination when staff and equipment are available; allows the commissioner to permit decontamination; allows commissioner to adopt rules for designating prohibited invasive species; commissioner may adopt rules under section 84.027 subdivision 13 that designate; civil penalties may be issued for failing to have aquatic invasive species affirmation displayed or available for inspection; expands the enabling language of the Invasive Species Account to include habitat and species enhancement. Many of the AIS provisions were DNR policy recommendations.

Sections 32-35. Connections to State Parks and Recreation Areas, Mississippi Blufflands Trail, Bluffland Trail system, Camp Ripley /Veterans State Trail.

These sections state that designated trails may include connections to state parks or recreation areas; Mississippi Blufflands Trail development and connections; states separation of motorized and non-motorized corridors is acceptable for the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail. This was initiated by the legislature.

Section 36-37. Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park; Hoists.

These sections allow the commissioner to employ a hoist safety expert to conduct an annual inspection of the hoist system at the park; corrects the state park name and adds the Stuntz Bay boat house area as not needing a state park permit. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 38. Water Trail Area Marked.

This section allows for the addition of the Shell Rock River to the list of state water trails. This was initiated by the legislature.

Section 39. Licensing.

This section contains the aquatic invasive species affirmation in the watercraft licensing section. This was initiated by the legislature.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Section 40. Shooting Sports Facility Grants.

This section contains the expansion of the shooting sports facilities grants to include skeet and archery. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 41. Special Permits; Fire Training.

This section revises the issuing of special permits to start a fire for the purpose of training firefighters. This revision updates to national firefighter training standards. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Sections 42-62. Auxiliary Forest and Forest Bough Account.

These sections clarify auxiliary forest language and amends language to cover all special forest product information and education programs instead of just balsam bough education (which is no longer required) so the funds in the account can be used. This section was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 63. Auction Sale Procedure; Timber Permits.

This section contains the increase when a bid guarantee payment is required to be increased for timber permits. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 64. Timber Permit Extension.

This section contains the reduction in the interest rate to five percent from eight percent for timber permit extensions. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 65. Condemnation of School Trust Lands.

This section allows for the condemnation of school trust lands for the state to buy-out the school trust interest in the lands. To fulfill the requirement for a public sale of the trust lands under the Minnesota Constitution. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 66-67. Public Sale Requirements, Payment of Expenses.

These sections state that the commissioner may retain services of a licensed real estate broker; real estate broker fees paid from proceeds of sale of land. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 68. Proceeds from Natural Resources Land.

Proceeds from the sale of state land not in a designated outdoor recreation system or an administrative site shall be credited to the School Trust lands account. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 69. Citizen Oversight Committee.

This section extends the sunset of the budget oversight committees for the game and fish fund an additional five years to 2020. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 70. Game Birds Causing Damage.

This section changed from Canada geese to game birds, and adds language regarding protect a disease risk. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 71. Aquatic Invasive Species Affirmation.

This section states that non-resident license to take fish includes an AIS affirmation. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Section 73. Wetland Stakeholder Coordination.

This section directs the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to establish a wetland work group, similar to the drainage work group. The group will provide forum for developing policy recommendations to improve Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR.

Section 75. Identification of High Priority Areas for Wetland Replacement.

This section directs BWSR to identify high priority areas for wetland replacement. BWSR must consult with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Agriculture, and local governments. The criteria for designating these areas include wetland functions, the historic loss and abundance of wetlands, and current state and local plans and studies that identify watershed needs. The designation of high priority areas is exempt from rulemaking requirements and become effective 30 days after being published in the State Register. Local governments may identify high priority areas and projects for wetland replacement, which can be provided to BWSR to consider in designating high priority areas for wetland replacement. This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR.

Section 76. Contracts.

This section outlines that proceeds from leases or contracts from bonded flood mitigation projects may be retained by the watershed district in a separate project specific account and used solely for flood control operation, maintenance, and replacement purposes. This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR

Section 79. Riparian Protection and Water Quality Act, Application.

This section outlines definitions and purpose. The language identifies the public waters, public ditches and other waters that are targeted to establish buffers of specified widths on. It also identifies the exemptions and corrective actions that will be taken by LGUs if a landowner is determined to be non-compliant. This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR.

Section 90. State Conservation Easements; Wetland Bank Credit.

This section adds language that indicates that in addition to preservation of wetlands preservation of riparian buffers, and watershed area essential to maintaining important functions and sustainability of aquatic resources in the watershed protect by a permanent conservation easement may be eligible for wetland replacement or mitigation credits. This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR.

Section 91. Culvert Exceptions.

This section inserts new language that indicates that a work permit is not requires for culver restoration or replacement of the same size and elevation, if the restoration or replacement does not impact a designated trout stream. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 92. Permit Restriction During Summer Months.

This sections changes the dates outlines when the Commission must not modify or restrict the amount of appropriation from a groundwater source. Changes from May to April 1 and for an agricultural land with a crop until November 15. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 93. Prohibition on Once-Through Water Use Permits.

This section states that the commissioner may issue a permit for a system in existence prior to January 1, 2015, for up to 5,000,000 gallons annually; includes groundwater thermal exchange devices. This section is a DNR policy recommendation.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Section 94. Payment of Fees for Past Unpermitted Appropriations.

This sections add that the commissioner may waive payment of fees for past unpermitted appropriations for a residential system permitted under 103G.271 subdivision 5, paragraph b. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 95. Applications for Groundwater Appropriations; Preliminary Well Construction Approval.

Removes requirement of applicant to provide an inventory of existing wells within ½ mile of the proposed well. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 96. Well Interference; Well Sealing.

This section states that the commissioner shall not validate a well interference claim if the affected well has been sealed prior to the completion of the commissioner's investigation of the complaint. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 122. Discretionary Review Notification.

This section requires the DNR and MPCA to notify a project proposer by certified mail at least 21 days prior to ordering a discretionary environmental impact statement or environmental worksheet for a proposed action. Though the DNR has only used this authority twice in the past two decades, this language would allow a project proposer three weeks to continue their activities before stopping their activities. The DNR would have preferred a 7 day notification period. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 123. School Trust Lands Director.

This section deletes language that would require the Department of Administration to provide office space for the director. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 124. Camper Cabin and Bunk Houses.

This section exempts camper cabins and bunk house from the floor space, air space or bed space requirements applicable to lodging establishments adopted by the Department of Health. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 125. All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Certificate.

This section states that the department shall maintain in its records information transmitted electronically from the commissioner of natural resources identifying each person to whom the commissioner has issued an all-terrain vehicle safety certificate. The records transmitted from the Department of Natural Resources must contain the full name and date of birth as required for the driver's license or identification card. Records that are not matched to a driver's license or identification card record may be deleted after seven years. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 126. Title Examination.

This section change added clarification to the title changes. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 131. Surplus State Land Sales.

This section directs the school trust lands director to identify at least \$5 million in surplus land sales that are not part of the state outdoor recreation system or an administrative site. The DNR must sell at least \$3 million worth of lands identified by June 30, 2017. The money must be used to extinguish the trust on school trust lands. The lands under this section were transferred to the DNR from other agencies and have minimal conservation value. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 133. Wetland Conservation Act Report.

This section directs BWSR, in cooperation with the DNR, to report, by March 15, 2016, to the committees with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources on the proposals to implement high priority areas for wetland

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

replacement, in lieu fee replacement, wetland replacement siting, and actions eligible for credit. This was a joint policy recommendation from BWSR and DNR.

Section 134. All-Terrain Vehicle Registration Transition.

This section indicates the type of registration people need to show in the transition time before the electronic licensing system has been upgraded. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 137. Federal Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit Program Feasibility Study.

This section states that the DNR and BWSR to study the State assuming administration of the 404 permit program. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 139. Youth Bear License Refunds.

This section allows the DNR to issue refunds for certain youth bear licenses issued. This was a DNR policy recommendation. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Section 140. Water Retention Projects.

This section indicates that the commissioner shall develop proposals for significant large scale projects that provide flood water retention, water quality improvements, nutrient and sediment reduction, and wildlife habitat to the Clean Water Council, LCCMR and LSOHC for FY 2017 consideration. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 141. Wild Turkey Critical Habitat Plate.

The Commissioners of Natural Resources and Public Safety must select a design depiction a wild turkey when selecting designs for the next selection of critical habitat plates. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 142. Base Budget Report.

The DNR Commissioner shall submit a report that contains the detail of the base budget, including prior appropriation riders, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House of Representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources by Oct 15, 2016. This policy was initiated by the legislature.

Section 143. Negative Surface Water Impacts, Recommendations and Study.

By December 15, 2015, the commissioner of natural resources shall consult with interested stakeholders and submit a report to the Legislative Water Commission and the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources policy and finance on recommendations for statutory or rule definitions and thresholds for negative impacts to surface waters as described in Minnesota Statutes, sections 103G.285 and 103G.287, subdivision 2. Stakeholders must include but are not limited to agricultural interests; environmental interests; businesses; community water suppliers; state, federal, and local agencies; universities; and other interested stakeholders. This was a both a DNR and a legislative proposal.

Section 147. Transfers.

Transfers dollars into the easement account. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Article 5 Game and Fish

Section 1. Game and fish expedited rules.

This provision (M.S. 84.027, Subd. 13a) allows the expedited permanent rulemaking procedure (M.S. 14.389) to be used for all fish and wildlife rulemaking resulting in more efficient establishment of season regulations on an annual basis. This expands the approach for current authorities (i.e., describe zone or permit area boundaries, designate fish spawning beds or preserves, select hunters or anglers, provide for registration of game or fish, prevent or control diseases, correct errors in rules that do not have substantive effect) when rules for a season can be established within several months following analyses of harvest and participation information from the preceding season and a hearing is not needed. This was a DNR policy recommendation.

Sections 2 and 3. Condemnation limits; Owner's rights.

These provisions eliminate the State obligation to pay relocation costs to willing landowners selling land for Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas (84.0274, Subd. 5g). DNR acquires WMA/AMA lands only from willing landowners and not through condemnation. DNR is seeking clearer authority to reimburse landowners up to \$1500 for appraisal fees since M.S. 117.232 applies specifically to MNDOT. It has been common practice for DNR to reimburse this cost, allowing landowners to have a voice in the valuation process. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 4. Bait harvest from infested waters.

This provision allows for issuing permits for the use of cast nets for taking gizzard shad on portions of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers infested waters if used for bait on the same water (97C.345, Subd. 3a; 84D.03, Subd. 3). This provision expires in 2017 and requires the agency to report in 2018 on the number of permits issued, conservation impacts of cast net use and recommended changes to statutes or rules. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 5. Construction area restrictions.

This provision allows the commissioner to adopt by written order temporary surface water use controls or recreational uses at public construction and maintenance sites that cross or are adjacent to waters of the state. This was a DNR initiative.

Sections 6 and 7. General requirements; Dealers and rental operations.

These sections conform the description personal floatation devices to the United States Coast Guard description. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 8. Towing person on water skis or other device.

This section treats wake surfing as a towed water sport (e.g., water skiing), requiring an observer or mirror on the watercraft when wake surfing and prohibits wake surfing from one-half hour after sunset to sunrise of the following day. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 9. Undressed bird.

This section treats ducks the same as other game birds. Harvested ducks no longer have to retain a feathered head and wing; a wing is sufficient. This section was an initiative from the legislature.

Section 10. Power to prevent or control wildlife diseases.

This technical change clarifies that public access to active disease areas may be closed by posting access restrictions. This was a DNR initiative.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Section 11. Compliance with federal law.

This provision clarifies that game and fish fund appropriations must be made to the commissioner including appropriations for information or telecommunications technology projects and assets. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services has indicated that lack of statute clarity on this issue will be considered noncompliance with federal laws and will result in the cessation of current Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Funds to the State of Minnesota estimated at \$16 - 35 million annually. This was a DNR initiative.

Sections 12 and 13. Notice to appear in court; Release after arrest.

These provisions update language to more closely align with the statewide uniform 'citation' standards and potential new Records Management System (RMS) functions with e-charging. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 14. Each violation a separate offense.

This provision is in response to a gross over limit of fish case where the local prosecutor suggested clarifying language about charging 'in any county in which at least one of the offenses occurred. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 15. Deer license.

This section allows hunters to purchase a deer license during an open season and begin hunting the following day. This was not a DNR initiative.

Section 16. Separate selection of eligible licenses.

This provision clarifies that landowners or tenants must live on at least 40 acres in a turkey permit area to qualify for the separate selection process. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 17. Residents of veteran's homes.

This section states residents of veteran's homes may obtain a firearm or muzzleloader deer license during the season and take antlerless deer without a permit in all areas of the state. This was an initiative generated by the legislature.

Section 18. Feral swine.

This policy prohibits the possession, release, hunting or trapping of feral swine. Board of Animal Health rules prohibit importation of live feral swine but do not address possession or release of feral swine. Additional policies in game and fish statutes are needed to respond to the serious natural resource, agricultural, economic and human health impacts from feral swine. Feral swine/wild pigs are found in at least 40 states with grave consequences to fish and wildlife habitats and populations, agricultural crops, and wildlife and human disease spread. A 2010 legislative report identified the need for establishment of penalties for release of swine. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 19-20. Scopes; visually impaired hunters; Scopes; Age 60 or over.

This sections allows a person age 60 or over to use a muzzle loader with a scope to take deer during muzzleloader season. The scope may have magnification capabilities. This was an initiative generated by the legislature.

Section 21. Possession of firearms and ammunition restricted in deer zones.

This section defines the first violation of 97B.041 as punishable by a warning. This was not a DNR initiative.

Section 22. Hunter satisfaction survey.

This section states the commissioner shall annually administer the collection of hunter information related to participation and satisfaction. This was not a DNR initiative.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Section 23. Exceptions.

This provision clarifies that hand held artificial lights and firearms may be possessed while tracking bears shot during legal hunting hours. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 24. Taking unprotected wild animals.

This change eliminates the need for a permit to use radio equipment to take unprotected wild animals such as coyotes. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 25. Resident age 84 or over may take deer of either sex.

This provision is self-explanatory. This was an initiative generated by the legislature.

Section 26. Possession of firearms; hunting turkey.

This provision allows the possession of a firearm not legal for turkey when hunting turkey when the person has a permit to carry for that firearm. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 27. Beaver season.

This provision requires the beaver season to remain open until May 15 of each year.

Section 28. Cast nets for gizzard shad.

This section defines the use of cast nets to harvest gizzard shad, a popular catfish bait. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 29. Minnow dealers.

Minnow dealers may designate employees as helpers on their dealer license (97C.501, subd. 2). Only designated helpers may buy or sell minnows on behalf of the licensed dealer. This does not include employees selling minnows at a retail location. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 30. Rulemaking; lifting spearing bans and northern pike regulations.

This provision removes all but 1 of the remaining spearing bans for 12 lakes. Pike size restrictions are adjusted on 2 lakes to improve the fishery. Good cause clause rulemaking is used to make the changes. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 31. Rulemaking; water surface use restrictions.

This section allow a longer period of temporary special controls in situations of local emergency. This was a DNR initiative.

Section 32. Rulemaking; Personal flotation devices.

This section will conform state language with changes in federal regulation. Types I, II, an III flotation devices are now referred to as "wearable". This was a DNR initiative.

Section 33. Rulemaking; motorized trail environmental review.

This section directs the Environmental Quality Board to amend MR 4410 to allow ORV activities without preparing a mandatory environmental assessment worksheet. Examples include constructing a recreational trail less than 25 miles long on forested or other naturally vegetated land for recreational use and designating existing, legally constructed route (such as a logging road).

Repealers:

Article 3, Section 34

This section repeals statutes that are no longer needed related to muskrat farms and northern pike experimental and special management waters.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

LANDS BILL, REGULAR SESSION, CH. [25](#), SF1406 (Signed into law: 5/14/15)

Summary of Legislative Path:

House (HF1429):

3/4/2015 Introduced, referred to Mining and Outdoor Recreation Policy
3/16/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended and re-refer to Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance
4/07/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended and re-refer to Ways and Means
4/13/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended
4/23/2015 Not identical with SF1406, SF substituted on General Register
5/06/2015 Amended; bill passed as amended

Senate:

3/05/2015 Introduced, referred to Environment and Energy
3/25/2015 Committee report; to pass as amended
4/21/2015 Amended; passed
5/7/2015 Returned from House with amendment; Senate concurred and repassed bill

Summary:

The bill authorizes sales of state lands that require legislative approval. There are three parcels of DNR-administered state land included in the bill: (1) 0.02 acres of land in Cass County bordering Leech Lake; (2) 81.4 acres of acquired forestry land in Pine County and buildings which is the former site of the Wilder Foundation St. Croix Boys Camp; and (3) 0.36 acres of land in Todd County bordering the Prairie River, which was a former dam site. The bill also authorizes sales of tax-forfeited lands in Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Crow Wing, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Hubbard, Lake, Martin, Pine, Rice, St. Louis, Washington and Winona Counties. The remaining sections amend previous laws addressing tax-forfeited land sales in Lake and St. Louis Counties and allow St. Louis County to add county fee land to the lakeshore lots offered for sale to permit conformance with zoning requirements.

OMNIBUS LEGACY BILL, REGULAR SESSION, HF303 (Note: The Legacy Conference Committee report only passed the House floor, the Senate did not take a final vote on the conference committee report in the 2015 Regular Session.)

Summary of Legislative Path:

House (HF0303)

1/22/2015 Introduced, referred to Legacy Funding Finance
4/21/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended and re-refer to Taxes
4/23/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended and re-refer to Ways and Means
4/27/2015 Committee report, to adopt as amended
4/27/2015 Second reading
4/30/2015 Amended; Point of order raised, ruled well taken; Third reading as amended
4/30/2015 Bill passed as amended
5/11/2015 Return from Senate with amendment; House refuses to concur, conference committee of 5 requested
5/11/2015 House conferees Urdahl, McNamara, Torkelson, Heintzeman, and Kahn
5/11/2015 Senate accedes, conference committee of 5 to be appointed

Senate

5/1/2015 Received from House; Introduced, referred to Finance
5/6/2015 Committee report: to pass as amended, second reading
5/7/2015 Special order: amended, third reading

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

5/11/2015 House not concur, conference committee of 5 requested
5/11/2015 Senate conferees Cohen, Scalze, Sieben, Stumpf, and Fischbach

The conference committee adopted the conference committee report as amended. The House adopted the conference committee report on 5/18/2015 with a vote of 123-11. The Senate did not vote on the conference committee report prior to the adjournment of the 2015 regular session.

OMNIBUS LEGACY BILL, 1st SPECIAL SESSION 2015, CH. 2, SF1 *(Signed into law 6/13/15)*

Article 1: Outdoor Heritage Fund

This bill funds activities that protect, enhance, or restore fish, game, and wildlife habitat across Minnesota. Appropriation amounts to DNR programs (totaling \$32.6M) are generally the same as the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) recommended. The Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant program was appropriated \$8.44M. Including pass through fund, DNR will receive \$89.077M, the Board of Water and Soil Resources \$7.513M, and the Legislative Coordinating Commission \$1.215M

Outcomes: \$97.198M for programs to restore, protect, and enhance forests, prairies, wetlands, and habitat for fish, game and wildlife. This total includes \$40.948M for prairies, \$12.634M for forests, \$20.39M for wetlands, \$22.368M for habitats, and \$0.858M for administration.

Of these amounts, DNR is appropriated:

- \$4.57M for WMA & SNA Acquisition – Phase VII
- \$3.74M for Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection – Phase IV
- \$4.88M for Accelerated Prairie Restoration and Enhancement on DNR Lands- Phase VII
- \$2.18M for Protecting Pinelands Sands Aquifer Forestlands—Phase II
- \$961K for Mississippi Headwaters Partnership (Protection)
- \$910K for Southeast Forest Habitat Enhancement
- \$131K for Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Program—Phase IV
- \$2.13M for Accelerated Shallow Lakes and Wetlands Enhancement – Phase VII
- \$4.54M for DNR Aquatic Habitat—Phase VII
- \$8.44M for Conservation Partners Grant Program – Phase VII
- \$150,000 for Contract Management
- \$45.537M for pass-through grants

Sec 2. (d) Land Acquisition Report

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, in consultation with the commissioner of DNR shall prepare a report on outdoor heritage fund land acquisitions as of June 30, 2015. The report has a number of requirements including the amount of acres, average price paid per acre per county, information on seller, property taxes, and PILT payments. The report is due to the Legislative Coordinating Commission and chairs and ranking minority members of the House and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment, outdoor heritage fund, and finance and the house Committee on Ways and Means by January 15, 2016.

Sec 3. Milkweed

When feasible, the commissioner of natural resources is encourages to plant milkweed.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Sec 10. Payment-in-Lieu of Tax Alternatives; Recommendations

The commissioner of management and budget, in consultation with the commissioners of natural resources and revenue, the Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Association of Townships, shall examine alternatives to payment-in-lieu of tax payments under Minnesota Statutes, sections 477A.10 to 477A.14, including a trust fund approach, that would apply to land acquired with money from the outdoor heritage fund and other dedicated funds. The examination must take into account the ongoing costs to the state and local units of government associated with the acquisition of the land and any constitutional constraints. The commissioner of management and budget shall submit recommendations to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House of Representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources, legacy funds, and taxes no later than January 15, 2016.

Article 2: Clean Water Fund

This bill funds activities that support water quality improvement and water supply sustainability. Generally, the appropriations meet the Governor's budget request except for two areas (net reduction of \$0.95 million).

Outcomes: \$0.6M decrease for nonpoint source restoration and protection activities will reduce DNR's capacity to provide technical assistance on water quality projects and forest stewardship planning through SWCD's.

\$0.35 decrease for applied research and tools will limit DNR's ability to provide surface water modeling expertise for targeting water quality practices and maintaining base watershed data layers available to all water management entities.

Article 3: Parks and Trails Fund

DNR is receiving the Governor's recommendations of 40 percent of dollars appropriated to DNR, with 40 percent to metropolitan parks and trails, and 20 percent to Greater Minnesota. DNR is also receiving funds to coordinate with partners. Language on use of funding for DNR is from the Governor's recommendation.

In Section 3, Subd (b and c) the DNR received funding for grants to Greater MN. The DNR can use up to 2.5% of the funding for administering grants under subd (b) but no funds for administering grants under Subd (c).

Article 4. Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

This article was not of concern to DNR.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND, REGULAR SESSION, [CH. 76, SF698](#), (Signed into law 5/22/15)

Summary of Legislative Path:

House:

1/26/2015	Introduction and first reading (HF390), referred to Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance
2/5/2015	Committee report, to adopt as amended and re-refer to Government Operations and Elections Policy
2/18//2015	Committee report, to adopt, second reading, motion to re-refer to Ways and Means, motion prevailed
5/4/2015	Committee report, to adopt as amended
5/11/2015	Referred to Chief Clerk for comparison with SF698
5/12/2015	Bills not identical, SF substituted on General Register,
5/16/2015	Bill was passed as amended

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

5/17/2015 Conferees: Torkelson; Fabian; Lillie
5/18/2015 House adopted conference committee report and repassed bill vote: 106-26

Senate:

2/9/2015 Introduction and first reading, referred to Finance
5/6//2015 Committee report: To pass as amended, second reading
5/11/2015 Special order, third reading, passed
5/17/2015 Returned from House with amendment; Senate did not concur
5/17/2015 Conferees: Dziedzic; Hoffman; Dahms
5/18/2015 Senate adopted conference committee report and repassed bill vote: 65-0
Final House vote 106/26 on 05/18; final Senate vote 65/0 on 05/18

Summary:

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) bill appropriates money from a constitutionally dedicated fund that originated from a combination of Minnesota State Lottery proceeds and investment income. Projects are funded in the following topic areas: Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information; Water Resources; Environmental Education; Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species; Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy; Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat; Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation; and Administration and Contract Agreement Reimbursement.

The Legislature amended several of the LCCMR recommendations that were agency initiatives and also transferred a project focusing on urban/community forests from the MPCA to the DNR. The DNR intends to coordinate with the LCCMR and the MPCA on this project to ensure that the goals and outcomes of the project are met. In addition, the proposed project to the University of Minnesota Raptor Center for lead ammunition demonstrations and education was not funded. In its place the legislature funded additional trap shooting sport facility grants. This language came from an amendment from Representative Dill in the House. It is our understanding that the NRA opposed the initial project.

This bill will provide funding for nearly \$18,500,000 for the following projects at the DNR. These projects would not be possible without ENTRF funds.

Project/Program Title	DNR Comments	DNR Requested	LCCMR Recommended	Conference Committee
County Geologic Atlases - Part B		\$2,542,389	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Minnesota Biological Survey	Entering a new phase of a long standing DNR program	\$3,500,000	\$2,450,000	\$2,450,000
Updating the National Wetland Inventory for Minnesota - Phase V		\$2,772,610	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Reintroduction and Interpretation of Bison in Minnesota State Parks		\$797,718	\$600,000	\$600,000

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Endangered Bats, White-Nose Syndrome, and Forest Habitat		\$1,269,546	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
Assessing Contaminants in Minnesota Loons and Pelicans - Phase III		\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000
Movement and Seasonal Habitat Use of Minnesota Elk		\$250,242	\$200,000	\$200,000
Trap Shooting Sports Facility Grants	Project not included in LCCMR recs.	N/A	N/A	\$132,00
Improving Community Forests Through Citizen Engagement	Initially proposed by the PCA, was moved to the DNR. The DNR would be able to implement this project.	N/A	\$800,000	\$800,000
State Parks and State Trails Land Acquisitions		\$2,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Enhancement, and Public Engagement		\$6,315,700	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition	\$135,000 of the DNR's Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition appropriation be deposited in a conservation easement stewardship account. The DNR supports this requirement.	\$6,450,162	\$3,325,000	\$3,325,000
Metro Conservation Corridors Phase VIII - Wildlife Management Area Acquisition		\$530,000	\$400,000	\$400,000

**2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Contract Agreement Reimbursement	Contract management for appropriations to the DNR to be passed through to NGOs, cities, and counties	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$135,000
-------------------------------------	--	-----------	-----------	-----------

Additionally, carry-forward language was added in the House file for several projects including one DNR project, Detecting and Monitoring Certain Carp Populations. A new appropriation was added during Conference Committee to create an Emerging Issues Account with \$1,000,000 with funding to be approved by the Governor after initiation and recommendation by the Commission.

TAX BILL, REGULAR SESSION, HF0848 *(This bill was not passed in the 2015 Regular Session.)*

Summary of Legislative Path:

House Taxes, to Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division to Ways and Means to Conference Committee. SF826 was heard and amended in the Tax Committee. The Senate received the House file and did not concur Conferees were named (House conferees: Davids, Drazkowski, Barrett Swedzinski and Lenczewski Senate conferees: Skoe; Rest; Dzedzic; Koenen; Gazelka).

This bill did not pass off the floor of either body by the constitutional end of the 2015 legislative session.

Agency Impact

Art. 10, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20. These sections set up an alternative system to PILT for lands acquired with at least 20 percent OHF and ENRTF and would require a one-time payment to a trust to benefit the counties. The payment amount would be 30 times the tax assessed in the year prior to acquisition. The proposed funding for the payments would come from the OHF and ENRTF. It would also have negative impacts on funding available for land acquisition. The bill also contains language providing that if payments from ENRTF and OHF to fund the payment to the counties were determined to be unconstitutional this provision would prohibit use of ENRTF and OHF for state land acquisition if another source of funds for payments to the counties could not be found.

BONDING/DISASTER, 1st SPECIAL SESSION, CH. 5, HF2 *(Signed into law 6/13/15. Note: There were different versions of bonding and disaster relief bills proposed during the 2015 Regular Session, but none of those were signed into law)*

Article 1 – Bonding

This Article contains \$23.549M for DNR projects. Of this amount \$10M is allocated for the Little McDonald Lake Project and \$13.549M will go towards flood projects on the DNR Priority List.

Article 2 – Disaster Relief

Article 2 contained \$3.015 for flood hazard mitigation, of this amount \$2.515M is bonding and \$500,000 is appropriated from the general fund. \$2.140 is allocated for dam facility work.

2015 Regular Session and Special Session Legislative Summary Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, REGULAR SESSION, CH. [77](#), SF888 (Signed into law 5/23/15)

Summary of Legislative Path:

House: HF495 was heard in Government Operations and Elections Committee where it was heard and amended; it was re-referred to State and Government Finance where it was adopted as amended and re-referred to Ways and Means. The House received SF888 from Senate, House did not concur and named conferees. Senate: State and Local Government passed as amended and re-referred to Finance; passed as amended. The senate named conferees (House conferees: Anderson, S.; Albright; O'Driscoll; Loonan; Laine. Senate conferees: Saxhaug; Pappas; Carlson; Wiklund; Metzen). Final Vote: House 76-61 Senate 44-21

Agency Impact:

Items that the DNR expressed concern about relating to restrictions on capital projects, changes to rulemaking and grants and MN.IT related policy language were addressed or removed prior to bill passage.

TRANSPORTATION BILL, REGULAR SESSION, CH. [75](#), SF1647 (Signed into law 5/20/15)

Summary of Legislative Path:

In the House HF1733 was heard and passed out of Transportation and Policy Finance, the House did not concur with the Senate and conferees were named. In the Senate the bill was passed as amended from the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, passed as amended from Finance Committee. Conferees were named. In the Senate (House conferees: Kelly, Petersburg, Sanders, Howe, and Norton. Senate conferees: Dibble, Kent, Jensen, Senjem, and Hawj). Final Vote House: 76-58 Final Vote Senate: 65-0

Agency Impact:

Items of impact to DNR in the Transportation bill were addressed or removed prior to passage of the bill.

MISCELLANIOUS BILLS OF INTEREST

Technical Changes to Land Surveys, Regular Session, [CH. 7](#), HF794 (Signed into law: 4/21/15)

Language signed into law in this bill includes changes to surveying, including corners; placement of monuments; and how documentation is filed.

Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape, Regular Session, [CH 24](#), HF283 (Signed into law: 5/11/15)

Designates Camp Ripley as a Sentinel Landscape. Establishes a coordinating committee which includes the commissioner of natural resources, or a designee. The first meeting shall be convened by March 1, 2016. The committee shall identify sentinel land, and develop recommendations to encourage landowners within the sentinel lands to voluntarily participate in and begin or continue land uses compatible with Camp Ripley's military mission.