



# Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



## 2010-2011 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Parks and Trails - Investing in our State Parks and Trails Legacy \$6,536,000 FY 2010 / \$13,642,000 FY 2011

### **It is needed because**

Passage of the 2008 Clean Water, Land, and Legacy amendment established new funds to protect and enhance Minnesota's unique natural, cultural, and historical resources. Of these new funds, 14.25 percent is dedicated to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance through the Parks and Trails Fund. Under this budget proposal, 38 percent will be used by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to renew, restore and rehabilitate state parks and state trails through visitor services and outreach, facility maintenance, and resource protection. This fact sheet describes how this portion of the funds will be used.

DNR manages an outdoor recreation system that provides for the public use, enjoyment, and stewardship of the state's unique resources. DNR promotes the state park and trail system as a gateway to the outdoors by ensuring high quality, easy-to-access, safe recreational opportunities, especially for families and new participants. This is critical due to recent research that indicates broad-based participation declines are occurring on a per-capita basis in outdoor recreation due to declining participation by young adults (20 to 40 year olds) and their children.

DNR is establishing a 21<sup>st</sup> century state park and trail system that attracts future generations to experience the magic of Minnesota's outdoors while supporting the economic vitality of surrounding communities and ensuring the protection of the state's unique resources.

### **Major program elements – State Parks and Trails**

This proposal will help the state park and trail system provide high-quality, easy-to-access, and safe recreational opportunities to the public.

- ◆ Facility renewal and rehabilitation.

Create a gateway for connecting people with Minnesota's great outdoors through renewal and rehabilitation of a system of 67 state parks, 7 state recreation areas, 54 forest recreation areas, and 21 state trails that meet the needs of current and future generations. Ensure safe and high quality outdoor recreational opportunities through infrastructure enhancements, providing greater accessibility for people of all abilities. Upgrade or renew facilities in day and overnight use areas – such as kiosks, tables, shelters, fire rings, trails, and trailheads. And enhance energy efficiency in existing facilities, buildings, equipment, and operations.

- ◆ Visitor services and outreach.  
Provide education, interpretation, and outdoor skills training to engage people in outdoor activities and encourage natural resource stewardship. Reach out to new participants through marketing, special events, and other targeted initiatives. Provide for conservation education, outdoor skills training, special events, interpretive and other gateway activities that engage the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.
- ◆ Resource protection.  
Manage and restore natural landscapes within the state park and trail system and showcase energy efficient and environmentally-friendly operations through the demonstration and use of best management practices.

### **Priority-setting – State Parks and Trails**

Project priorities are determined that target strategic investments in the state park and trail system to optimize:

- ◆ Public safety;
- ◆ Outdoor recreation participation;
- ◆ Protection of existing investments;
- ◆ Renewal to state-of-the-art standards, including enhancing facility accessibility, increasing

energy efficiency, and improving stormwater management;

- ◆ Public interest and opportunities for partnerships;
- ◆ Native landscape restoration and protection; and
- ◆ Historical and cultural resource connections.

### **Key measures and outcomes – State Parks and Trails**

- ◆ Attract 100,000 new participants to state parks and trails annually through outreach, marketing, and new technologies.
- ◆ Provide educational programming to reach 25 percent of all state park and trail visitors through special events, interpretation, outdoor skills training, and outreach activities.
- ◆ Upgrade approximately four percent of facilities in overnight and day use areas and trails.
- ◆ Restore 111 acres of park lands that are currently old fields, crop land, or other non-native vegetation (ultimately: 16,700 acres to be restored to prairie/savanna; 8,600 acres to be restored to forest/woodland).
- ◆ Restore or manage native prairies and woodlands on six percent of the developed miles of state trails, including invasive species removal.
- ◆ Rehabilitate and renew trails in state parks and state forests for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding at a rate of four percent per year.
- ◆ Improve accessibility throughout the park and trail systems for visitors of all ability levels with a target of 8 percent of existing playgrounds and 15 buildings and facilities each year.
- ◆ Increase energy conservation and promote new conservation-based energy sources in seven buildings and facilities each year.
- ◆ Enhance customer and visitor services, resource management, facility repairs and services using best management practices for 74 state parks and recreation areas, 54 state forest campgrounds and day use areas. These facilities include over 5000 campsites, 68 group camps, 1,266 trail miles, 6,381 picnic sites, 36 swimming beaches, and many trail and visitor centers.
- ◆ Enhance the state trail system, including improved trail surfaces, trailheads, vegetation and natural resource management and interpretive services.
- ◆ Resurface 10-20 miles of state trail, rehabilitate three to five bridges, and replace one or two bridges annually. This work is critical to

maintaining public safety along Minnesota's state trails.

### **Financial implications**

For FY 2010, the proposal allocates \$6.536 million for state parks and state trails from the parks and trail fund. For FY2011, it allocates \$13.642 million for state parks and state trails from this same source.

### **Contact**

Courtland Nelson, Director  
Division of Parks and Trails  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-259-5591

[Courtland.Nelson@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:Courtland.Nelson@dnr.state.mn.us)