



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FY 2014-15 BIENNIAL BUDGET PRIORITIES

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2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Investments in Forest Management \$2,000,000 FY2014 / \$2,000,000 FY2015 (General Fund)

It is needed because

The forest industry is the fifth largest manufacturing industry in the state and provides rural and urban jobs, raw materials for manufacturing, and products people need. Minnesota's forest products sector has an economic impact of \$16.2 billion in sales annually and supports 60,900 jobs.

Minnesota's forest lands serve as the foundation for an extensive forest-based economy, a vital tourism industry, and high-quality recreation. State forest lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provide broad access to recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, and trail opportunities, protect the environment, and provide 30-35 percent of the industry's timber. Maintenance of forest health is dependent on low-cost management opportunities the wood fiber industry provides. Commercial management of timber is the primary tool that allows DNR to manage forests for diversity and wildlife habitat.

The downturn in the economy has resulted in less demand for wood, mill closures, lost jobs, and eroding timber sales revenue. When loggers aren't cutting wood, the state is losing one of the best tools for managing state forests, reducing long-term forest productivity.

DNR is at a critical crossroads in managing the state's forest resources. Forest management is a long-term investment – forest resources are natural assets that depreciate in value if not managed optimally. Improving the health, diversity, and productivity of the state's forest lands requires a higher investment than current timber sales revenue and the General Fund provide.

Timber sales revenue, which is deposited in the Forest Management Investment Account (FMIA), provides approximately 55 percent of the DNR Division of Forestry's forest management budget. The FMIA, dependent on timber sales revenue, is a volatile fund. The FMIA is facing a \$4.6 million structural deficit. This imbalance is due to:

- Declining timber markets, which have reduced timber revenues deposited into the FMIA by two-thirds since 2007;
- Appraising and selling damaged timber at reduced value in the Sandstone blowdown area from the July 2011 windstorms.

The General Fund, which provides approximately 45 percent of the DNR Division of Forestry's forest management budget, also has declined, resulting in a disinvestment in forest management actions in the state that sustain the long-term value of Minnesota's forest resources.

Due to the volatility of the FMIA and that revenues are projected to decrease in the near future, DNR is requesting \$2 million in General Fund per year to increase stability in funding for the most critical forest management actions that benefit all Minnesotans.

Major program elements

Over the past several years, DNR has managed budget challenges by increasing organizational efficiencies, seeking other sources of funding to support certain forest management activities, and reduced or postponed investments in state forests to maintain commitments to core statutory obligations.

Timber management, basic silviculture, and stand-level forest inventory assessment are priority programs that will be maintained at a reduced level in the next biennium.

Key measures and outcomes

A \$2 million general fund increase per year will result in the following outcomes:

- The current FMIA structural deficit is largely offset.
- The total volume of wood offered for sale annually at public auction is reduced to approximately 600,000-650,000 cords of wood.
- A minimum level of silvicultural practices is conducted, with emphasis on reforesting harvested sites primarily through natural regeneration or aerial seeding and restoring forest productivity for the highest commercially viable species.
- Forest roads are maintained to provide basic access to state lands for forest management, recreation, and wildfire suppression.
- Inventory data on state forest lands, including basic information about the condition of forests (e.g., tree cover, size, age, and productivity), is maintained at the minimum level to ensure forest management continues.
- Timber harvest is prioritized on forest types that can be regenerated successfully through natural regeneration methods and full-cost recovery is possible.
- An additional five to 10 new vacancies are incurred.
- Response to forest pest outbreaks, invasive species management, and strategies to adapt forests to the effects of climate change are maintained at a reduced level.
- Land transactions and leases will be made only where it is critical to alleviating development pressures on state forests and provide greater access to state lands for forest management, recreation, and wildfire suppression.

Financial implications

This initiative would increase General Fund appropriations by \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2014 and \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2015.

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2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Parks and Trails Operations and Customer Service \$2,250,000 FY2014 / \$2,250,000 FY2015 (General Fund)

It is needed because

State parks and trails provide a gateway to the great outdoors—creating unforgettable experiences in Minnesota’s most-loved outdoor places. State parks and trails also serve as a cornerstone of many local tourism economies—they dominate the top ten tourist attractions throughout the state, attracting more than 8 million visitors to local communities annually and supporting an \$11.3 billion tourism industry.

DNR is facing significant changes in both its customer base and preferences. DNR is establishing a 21st Century state park and trail system to engage future generations in the magic of Minnesota’s outdoors while supporting the economic vitality of surrounding communities and ensuring the protection of the state’s unique resources.

Over the past decade, DNR has created a leaner, more efficient system by co-managing facilities, creating shared business functions, shortening camping seasons at 18 state parks, and reducing routine maintenance. In doing so, DNR has managed to continue to provide quality customer services while reducing costs by \$1.5 million.

Last biennium, the legislature provided one-time funding (\$1.8 million/year) from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to partially offset a reduction for basic, day-to-day parks and trails operations, maintenance, and resource management. This request replaces the one-time funding and a small portion of the ongoing budget reduction to maintain current levels of operations.

Major program elements

Targeted investments in this system will help DNR meet the growing public demand for safe, fun, and affordable outdoor recreation opportunities.

- Sustain current levels of camping (shortened seasons at low-use parks).
- Maintain day-to-day operations and maintenance of state parks, trails, and recreation areas, including interpretive services and outreach.
- Create additional efficiencies in the system through co-management opportunities and repurposing low-priority units.
- Ensure public safety of visitors and staff.
- Conduct maintenance on the highest-priority state assets that have fallen into disrepair. If left unaddressed, the significant maintenance backlog will likely become major capital projects.
- Conduct high-priority resource management projects (e.g., terrestrial invasives control).

Key measures and outcomes

This funding will help the state park and trail system:

- Provide quality, easy-to-access, and safe recreational opportunities to the public.
- Sustain camping opportunities, visitor services, and maintenance at state parks.

Financial implications

This proposal requests \$2,250,000 in FY 2014 and \$2,250,000 in FY 2015.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Managing Aquatic Invasive Species \$3,750,000 FY2014 / \$3,750,000 FY2015 (General Fund)

It is needed because

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) threaten not only the health of the state's water resources, but also the recreational enjoyment of, and economic benefits derived from, these resources. The spread of AIS is one of the top conservation challenges facing Minnesota today and the unintentional transport on trailered watercraft and water-related equipment is one of the primary means of spread.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for managing AIS and implementing actions to prevent and curb their spread. These efforts are funded primarily through the General Fund, the Invasive Species Account (ISA), and one-time funding. DNR is requesting an increase of \$3.75 million/year in General Fund to largely replace the expiring one-time funding in order to allow the department to continue AIS-related efforts throughout the state.

Major program elements

- Prevent and curb the spread of invasive species into Minnesota;
- Provide early detection and rapid response to new infestation of invasive species; and
- Manage or reduce impacts caused by invasive species.

Key measures and outcomes

This initiative will allow DNR to implement AIS prevention and management measures to protect Minnesota's water resources and provide high-quality recreational opportunities. Outcomes include:

- 5,600 hours per year of AIS enforcement (maintaining 16,000 total hours, equivalent to 2013 efforts).
- 67,000-70,000 hours of watercraft inspections per year (equivalent to 2013 efforts).

- 8,000 hours of authorized watercraft inspections by local government units (LGUs) per year (2013 efforts supported 16,000 hours).
- Three Field Specialists that work with local units of government and local groups on AIS prevention and management activities per year (equivalent to 2013 level of assistance).
- One AIS Specialist that works on statewide prevention and management efforts per year (equivalent to 2013 level of assistance).
- Control invasive aquatic plants on 4,600 lake acres per year through local grants (2013 efforts supported 6,500 lake acres).
- 30 accesses upgraded with new best management practices (BMPs) per year (2013 efforts supported 100 accesses).
- Eliminate support for research.

Financial implications

State costs for each program element/year:

- \$600,000: AIS enforcement efforts.
- \$1,813,000: watercraft inspections.
- \$150,000: LGU authorized watercraft inspections.
- \$400,000: service provider trainings, managing invasive species, and new infestation detection and response.
- \$632,000: local invasive aquatic plant management grants.
- \$155,000: public access BMPs.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET General Fund Adjustment (\$2.21 million) FY2014 / (\$2.21 million) FY2015 (General Fund)

It is needed because

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes that changes in our economy, environment, and society demand that we lead in new ways—both to advance conservation results and maintain critical public services while reducing costs. This proposal contains a 5 percent adjustment in DNR's general fund direct appropriations.

In developing the general fund adjustment, DNR identified areas where costs could be recovered, operations restructured, and partnerships leveraged—by becoming more efficient, innovative, and entrepreneurial—while maintaining investments in essential activities that drive the state's economic engine.

Major program elements

This proposal will result in:

- A full cost recovery model for real estate services on state managed lands. DNR divisions that manage state lands will be responsible for covering the full cost of administering these lands (divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, and Parks and Trails). The general fund will no longer subsidize the administration of state lands.
- Restructured operations for the state's drill core library. DNR will redesign operations of the state's drill core library located in Hibbing, Minnesota, reducing costs by restructuring the delivery of services at the library, reducing hours of operation, and shifting to a cost recovery model for the streamlined operation.
- The elimination of general fund support for prairie wetlands. DNR will support prairie wetland conservation with other funding sources and through partnerships with federal, state, and local entities.

Key measures and outcomes

- Increased transparency of land management costs.
- Streamlined operations at the state's drill core library provide for the efficient delivery of services to customers.
- Increased leverage for prairie wetland conservation through strategic partnerships.

Financial implications

- Real estate services – (\$1,847,000)
- Drill core library – (\$164,000)
- Prairie wetlands program – (\$199,000)

These General Fund dollars have been reprioritized into the divisions of Ecological and Water Resources, Forestry, and Parks and Trails.

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2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Real Estate, Mining, and Minerals Activities Fee Increases

Revenues: \$432,000 FY2014 / \$478,000 FY2015

**Expenditures: \$414,000 FY2014 / \$460,000 FY2015
(Special Revenue Fund)**

It is needed because

Minnesota's current fees for real estate, mining, and mineral related activities do not cover the full cost of providing the permitting, leasing, research, and reclamation services. In FY 2010-11, the legislature provided \$680,000 in one-time funding to replace General Fund reductions to continue support for this work.

M.S. 16A.1285 requires that charges for goods and services and any regulatory, licensure, or other similar charges "must be set at a level that neither significantly over recovers nor under recovers costs, including overhead costs, involved in providing the services." The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is requesting increasing permit to mine fees and fees for mineral, real estate, and state aggregate leases to offset General Fund reductions and more fully recover these costs.

Major program elements

- Increases to the permit to mine fees will allow the DNR to recover more of the processing costs of these permits, continue environmental quality research related to permitting.
 - Taconite: Increase from \$60,000 to \$84,000; elimination of reduced fee for no-production (increase from \$30,000 to \$84,000)
 - Peat: Increase from \$1,000 to \$1,350; elimination of reduced fee for no-production (increase from \$500 to \$1,350)
 - Scram: Increase from \$5,000 to \$10,250; elimination of reduced fee for no-production (increase from \$2,500 to \$10,250)
 - Nonferrous metallic minerals: Elimination of reduced fee for no-production (increase from \$37,500 to \$75,000)

The elimination of the reduced fee for no-production reflects the fact that DNR's work can be higher when a mining company is not in production – due to the need to monitor the site for reclamation, to ensure permit conditions and closure plans are being met, or to ensure construction of stockpile and tailing facilities are in accordance with permit conditions and approved operations plans.

- An increase in the application fee for mineral leases from \$100 to \$1,000 (public sale leases) or \$2,000 (negotiated leases) allows DNR to more fully recover the costs associated with issuing the leases.
- Establishment of an application fee for real estate leases of \$100 (agricultural and miscellaneous lease) or \$500 (aggregate lease) will recover part of the costs from the lease applicants.
- Establishment of an aggregate reclamation fee of \$0.15 per cubic yard for gravel pits on state-owned lands will provide funding for reclamation activities such as land sloping, contouring, spreading soil from stockpiles, and planting vegetation on site. This will implement actions not currently being taken related to small gravel pits on state-owned land.

Key measures and outcomes

- Ability to continue to timely issue permits to mine while ensuring that the mining can be conducted in a sound environmental manner. Permits to mine are needed before a metallic mineral mine can be opened or significantly expanded on any land in Minnesota. With the permit to mine fee increase, DNR will be able to maintain the current level of effort and resources dedicated to the following activities:

- Investigations of mine waste management and environmental impacts.
 - Involvement in community and outreach activities including project reviews for state land projects that don't require a permit to mine, continuous improvement projects, reclamation practice improvements and innovation grant work with IRRRB and companies, the Laurentian Vision, and DNR area teams.
 - Involvement by experts in EAW-level environmental review, both for mining and non-mining projects, including bulk-sampling.
 - Timeliness and effectiveness of permitting for mines and economic development in the state.
- Timely issuance of mineral and real estate leases to generate revenue for the schools, university, and local taxing districts.
 - Reclamation of state-owned gravel pits to improve the environmental quality and safety of Minnesota's lands.

Financial implications

- The permit to mine fee changes will provide for \$310,000 in revenue in FY 2014 and \$356,000 in revenue in FY 2015.
- The mineral lease application fee increase will generate revenue of \$83,000 per year.
- The real estate lease application fee will generate \$21,000 per year.
- The aggregate reclamation fee will generate \$18,000 per year. Expenditures would commence in FY 2016, and be used to reclaim state-owned gravel pits not currently being reclaimed.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Drill Hole Inspections and Drill Core Library Fee

Revenues: \$209,000 FY2014 / \$209,000 in FY2015

**Expenditures: \$209,000 FY2014 / \$209,000 in FY2015
(Special Revenue Fund)**

It is needed because

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will establish a fee to conduct drill hole inspections and to utilize the state's drill core library located in Hibbing, Minnesota. These new fees will allow DNR to maintain inspections and continue drill core library operations in the state. Revenue generated by the fees will be deposited in a new Drill Mining Professional Services Account which will support minerals activities in the state.

DNR conducts drill hole inspections during mineral exploration to protect the environment. Drill hole inspections are a critical component of prudent and responsible management of the state mineral leases and state lands. The fee will recover the costs of conducting inspections, replacing General Fund support for the work and allowing DNR to maintain current levels of drill hole inspections.

M.S. 103I.605 directs mineral exploration firms that drill in the state to submit to the state a one-fourth portion of core samples obtained for mineral exploration. These samples become property of the state and are stored in the drill core library. The existing facility contains approximately 2.3 million feet of core. Translated into today's costs, the value of this core is about \$200 million. A fee to access exploration data will replace General Fund support for the library. This new fee, combined with a reduction in the hours of operation, will allow DNR to more fully capture library operation costs.

Major program elements

- Assessment of a fee for exploratory boring inspections by DNR will recover inspection costs from exploration companies.

- Assessment of a fee to access exploration data and drill core in the drill core library will recover costs of operating the library from the parties using the data.

Key measures and outcomes

- Ability to continue inspections of exploration drill holes to ensure protection of the state's groundwater and lands.
- Ability to continue to provide access to mineral exploration data that can lead to new leasing and mining, along with the generation of revenue and jobs.

Financial implications

The new fee structure will be as follows:

- Inspection application (\$2,000): The exploratory boring fee will generate \$104,000 per year. This new fee will recover the costs from the exploration companies conducting the drilling work.
- Library use fee (\$250/day or \$5,000/year): The fee to access exploration data will generate \$105,000 per year. The new fee will recover the costs from the parties accessing the data. DNR will also reduce the operating costs associated with running this facility and may limit the days that the library is open or limit it to being open by appointment only to a maximum of 20 hours per week.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Asian Carp Deterrent Barrier Insurance \$200,000 FY2014 / \$200,000 FY2015 (Invasive Species Account)

It is needed because

Laws of 2012, Chapter 264, provided \$7,500,000 from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to design, construct, operate, and evaluate structural deterrents for Asian carp to protect Minnesota's aquatic habitat. The deterrent barrier located at Lock and Dam #1 (Ford Dam) will require real estate and construction agreements with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). As part of these agreements, the USACE will require insurance coverage that exceeds the State's liability limits. This funding request is needed to cover liability insurance for an Asian carp deterrent barrier at Lock and Dam #1.

Major program elements

The construction of a deterrent barrier will help prevent Asian carp from moving up the Mississippi River to waters in northern Minnesota. This investment will provide the insurance required for operation of the deterrent barrier.

Key measures and outcomes

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) works to protect Minnesota's water resources and provide high-quality recreational opportunities. Desired outcomes of this investment include:

- A deterrent barrier limits the spread and impacts from Asian carp in the upper reaches of the Mississippi River.
- Operation of a deterrent barrier that does not increase risk to public safety.

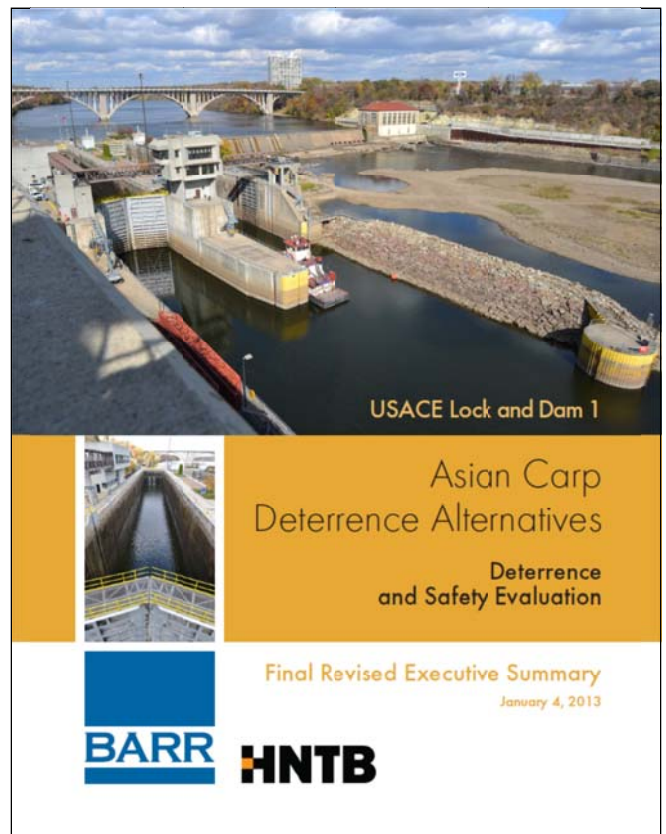
Financial implications

State costs for each program element:

- \$200,000 per year for liability insurance for an Asian carp deterrent barrier.

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2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Investments in Game and Fish Management and Habitat Conservation

\$4,000,000 FY2014 / \$4,000,000 FY2015

(Game and Fish Fund)

It is needed because

Minnesota leads the nation in fishing participation rates and is in the top ten in hunting participation. Minnesota has 1.5 million licensed anglers and nearly 600,000 licensed hunters, generating \$3.6 billion in direct expenditures each year and supporting 55,000 Minnesota jobs.

License revenue generated from hunting and fishing is deposited in the Game and Fish Fund and invested in sustaining Minnesota's high-quality hunting and fishing opportunities. License fees were adjusted during the 2012 legislative session with broad stakeholder support and will become effective March 1, 2013. This request allocates additional resources generated by the increased license revenue to accelerate critical fish and wildlife management activities.

Major program elements

This initiative provides for improved fish and wildlife populations, habitat, and regulation enforcement.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife manages fish and wildlife populations and habitat through monitoring, research, and active management. This request will:

- Accelerate land management activities through area wildlife offices, contracts and enhancement crews to more closely meet optimal frequency of management practices. This will protect and enhance the state's investment in 1.3 million acres of public wildlife lands within 1,430 separate units.
- Accelerate and expand waterfowl and other game bird population assessments. This will improve management of harvest rates, recruitment rates and other population dynamics.
- Support for the wildlife health program to address wildlife disease management such as chronic

wasting disease, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, and other diseases.

- Develop additional capacity and a suite of tools that can be systematically applied to better engage stakeholders and affected citizens to foster and enhance public relations and participatory decision making.
- Accelerate implementation of the prairie plan by strategically focusing prairie, grassland and wetland conservation efforts to protect and restore habitat on public and private land. Provide incentive dollars to implement conservation practices that take new and innovative approaches to prairie landscape conservation.
- Increase efforts to work directly with affected landowners to manage wildlife damage situations, primarily from deer, elk and Canada geese.
- Accelerate lake and stream management plans, surveys, stocking, and fish habitat projects to improve fish community health. This will improve fishing recreation and the associated tourism economy.
- Accelerate creel surveys to measure angler catch, satisfaction and preferences to improve management of fish populations and harvest.
- Integrate aquatic habitat needs into watershed and landscape plans and programs.
- Accelerate fisheries research to improve management and sustainability of fishery resources is achieved.
- Increase outreach and recruitment efforts to enhance participation in hunting, angling and archery. Work with partners to deliver effective and coordinated programs and marketing efforts.

The Division of Enforcement protects Minnesota's natural resources through regulation, investigation, and education of hunters and anglers.

- This request will enhance compliance with game and fish laws by maintaining enforcement activities at six field stations and renewing emphasis on special investigations and targeted patrols (increase from 3,000 hours to 4,500 hours).

The Division of Ecological and Water Resources monitors, protects, enhances, and restores habitat.

- This request will provide for inventory, analysis, monitoring, and integrated geographic information systems that will serve to target areas where restoration and management efforts will have the greatest impact to protect and better manage fish and wildlife habitat.

Key measures and outcomes

- Healthy and abundant fish and wildlife populations.
- Stable or increased participation in fishing, hunting and other wildlife related recreation.
- Knowledgeable and involved partners and citizens who understand and support fish and wildlife conservation efforts.
- Enhanced game and fish law education and compliance so that resources are protected and citizens can safely enjoy outdoor recreation.
- Improved health of fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them.
- Continued focus on fulfilling the state's trust responsibility to manage resources for the benefit of all people.

Financial implications

Major program costs include the following:

- \$3.02 million for Division of Fish and Wildlife
 - Wildlife - \$1.97 million
 - Fisheries - \$900,000
 - Outreach - \$150,000
- \$830,000 for Division of Enforcement
- \$150,000 for Division of Ecological and Water Resources

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET **Clean Water Legacy** **\$9,010,000 FY2014 / \$9,010,000 FY2015** **(Clean Water Fund)**

It is needed because

Clean water is essential for strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities, and for conserving Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats. Right now, the quality of water in Minnesota is not good enough. Improving water quality and managing water sustainably will be one of the most challenging resource issues facing Minnesota in the coming decades.

The need for water quality improvement projects far outstrips the available funding. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides information and analysis to identify the most important water quality issues and prioritize innovative solutions for the most pressing pollution problems.

Major program elements

DNR is requesting \$9.01 million/year from the Clean Water Fund to support the state's clean water efforts in five main areas.

- **Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment:** Collect data about stream flow, lake biology, and fish mercury to help MPCA identify water quality problems.
- **Watershed Restoration/Protection Strategies:** Analyze land and water interactions to correctly diagnose what is causing water quality problems and locate pollution sources. Develop targeted, science-based watershed restoration and protection strategies that guide implementation decisions.
- **Ground Water/Drinking Water:** Provide information and analysis about aquifer levels and ground water movement that communities need

to protect their ground water from contamination and manage it sustainably.

- **Nonpoint Source Implementation:** Help local governments and their clients further target, design, and implement restoration and protection projects for clean water
- **Applied Research and Tool Development:** Develop maps, models, and targeting tools that enhance understanding of which types of clean water restoration and protection—and in what locations—yield the most benefits.

These initiatives are done in partnership with other state and local agencies working on water quality issues. Agencies are working in interagency teams to streamline the way information is collected, stored, and shared, and aligning staff around major watershed projects to capitalize on a broad array of knowledge and skills.

Project priorities are determined by an existing schedule for statewide watershed assessments (developed by the MPCA), existing watershed implementation plans (developed by state and local partners), and priority watersheds for pilot studies as determined by interagency teams or statewide initiatives (e.g., sentinel watershed studies, MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program).

Key measures and outcomes

- Information and analysis about water quality and watersheds will inform targeted plans and strategies to fix water quality problems and provide long-term watershed protection. Take measurements at 151 stream flow gages; sample 300 lakes statewide for developing an index of biological integrity, and provide results to MPCA

for testing lake impairment status in five major watersheds; test fish contaminants at 160 lake and river sites.

- Local capacity to plan and implement projects will be enhanced so that communities can grow and develop while sustaining high quality natural resources that support their long-term needs. Develop restoration and protection strategies for 14 major watersheds; assist with 64 implementation projects.
- Ground water and drinking water supplies will be protected from contamination and managed sustainably. Complete 7 County Geologic Atlases; add 100 monitoring wells to the existing ground water observation well network.

Financial implications

Major program costs:

- Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment: \$3.435 million/year
- Watershed Restoration/Protection Strategies: \$1.85 million/year
- Groundwater/Drinking Water: \$1.5 million/year
- Nonpoint Source Implementation: \$1.0 million/year
- Applied Research and Tool Development: \$1.225 million/year

There is currently no funding for Clean Water Fund activities in DNR's base budget. DNR received one-time Clean Water Fund appropriations of \$14.5 million and \$20.72 million for the FY 2010-11 and FY 2012-13 bienniums, respectively.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Scientific Management Tools for Sustainable Forestry and Invasive Species Mitigation

\$1,000,000 FY2014 / \$1,000,000 FY2015

(Heritage Enhancement Account)

It is needed

An ongoing appropriation from the Heritage Enhancement Account of \$1 million in FY2014 and \$1 million in FY2015 is needed to advance scientific assessment of the state's forest resource base, develop site-level tools for forest managers, and identify and respond to forest health threats by invasive species and climate change.

One of DNR's key strategies to address forest health threats is to maintain and enhance working forests through use of scientific management tools such as the Ecological Land Classification System (ECS) provides, while reducing damage by invasive species.

The ECS provides critically important information for use in designing and implementing forest management practices that sustain forest productivity, health, biodiversity, habitat, and ecological function. The ECS is a framework that helps managers organize and assimilate new information. It is Minnesota-based and site-specific, which lends precision to providing and receiving management advice. ECS tools are needed now, more than ever, to help land managers make the most effective use of limited resources in selecting appropriate management treatments. These tools are useful not only to DNR land managers, but also to other forest land managers, owners, researchers, and the academic community.

Monitoring and managing invasive plants and animals in forested regions are critical to long-term forest sustainability. Focused steps to protect forests from invasive species are underway. This initiative would build on those efforts by reducing the spread of target species and promoting control where feasible. Reducing the spread includes targeted outreach to

people whose activities influence spread of invasive plants, as well as managing forests to be more resilient to damage by emerald ash borer.

Major program elements

This initiative supports core ECS and invasive species work. Specifically, ECS development will: 1) accelerate native plant community mapping on state forest lands and 2) continue development of silvicultural data interpretations based on the results of native plant community mapping.

In the process of mapping native plant communities (NPCs) and developing NPC field guides and silvicultural interpretations, the ECS program assembles a great deal of information that helps forest managers set better landscape forest composition goals and make more effective site-level management decisions. Products developed using ECS program information and expertise include:

- Natural disturbance regimes
- Natural stand dynamics
- Silvicultural opportunities throughout the life cycle of NPCs
- The suitability of trees for each of the various NPCs (including identifying those tree species likely to do better under a warming climate)
- Tree regeneration strategies and requirements
- Risk analysis for rutting, soil compaction, and swamping by NPCs
- Risk analysis for invasive species by NPCs

To advance invasive species management, this initiative will: 1) mitigate the impact of terrestrial invasive species on state forest land and 2) launch an outreach campaign to reduce the spread of terrestrial invasive species by recreationists.

Key measures and outcomes

- Inventory and map native plant communities on 100,000 acres of state forest lands each year of the biennium. (DNR's goal is to have all Forestry-administered "timberlands" mapped. So far, approximately 300,000 acres have been mapped, which is about 12.5 percent of the 2.4 million acres of timberlands that the DNR manages. With improved methodology, technical resources, and investments, 10 years is a reasonable time frame for finishing timberland mapping.)
- Complete silvicultural interpretations of 30 additional native plant communities. (Twenty are currently available publicly.)
- Complete development of guidelines to manage ash resources (at risk of invasion by the emerald ash borer) on state-administered lands.
- Merge state dollars with available federal funding to accelerate the effort to obtain and interpret aerial photography across 300,000 acres of state lands to detect and map buckthorn and other woody invasive species.
- Expand upon a federal grant to accelerate the outreach program, PlayCleanGo, targeting recreationists, and create 10 new public or private partnerships to improve visibility.

Financial Implications

The Heritage Enhancement Account in the Game and Fish Fund provides \$264,000 per year toward ECS goals. Using an additional \$1 million per year during FY2014 and FY2015, DNR will accomplish the outlined goals to advance ECS and invasive species.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET **Parks and Trails Legacy** **\$15,901,000 FY2014 / \$16,493,000 FY2015** **(Parks and Trails Fund)**

It is needed because

The Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment created the Parks and Trails Fund, an important new funding source for parks and trails statewide. A portion of this funding is appropriated for state parks and trails. This request reflects consensus recommendations of the Parks and Trails Legacy Funding Work Group, convened as directed by the 2011 Legislature to develop funding allocations for the Parks and Trails Fund, with a funding allocation of 40 percent for state parks and trails administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

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 considering the broad-based participation declines in outdoor recreation we are now witnessing, largely as a result of declining participation by young adults (25 to 45 year olds) and their children.

DNR is establishing a 21st 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

This proposal will help the state park and trail system provide high-quality, easy-to-access, safe recreational opportunities to the public and promote the benefits of these experiences. This will be accomplished by

building on the four strategic directions in the Parks and Trails Strategic Plan:

- Connect people to the outdoors;
- Provide opportunities through acquisition, development, and redevelopment;
- Take care of what we have; and
- Coordinate among partners.

DNR will renew and rehabilitate state parks and trails; provide visitor services and interpretation, outreach, facility maintenance, and resource protection; and assist with strategic, high-priority acquisition and development efforts.

Key measures and outcomes

- Ensure high-quality outdoor recreational experiences through infrastructure renewal and increased accessibility for people of all abilities by:
 - Substantially improving one campground and enhancing campsites at 100 sites;
 - Replacing six fishing piers that have exceeded their useful life;
 - Improving ADA accessibility at three state parks and two state trails; and
 - Renewing recreation facilities so they are safe and accessible (20 projects).
- Carry out connection strategies that promote innovative programs, provide education, interpretation, outdoor skills training, and special events to engage target markets in outdoor activities and encourage natural resource stewardship by:
 - Providing skill-building programs to 4,000 new visitors;
 - Providing interpretive programs to 150,000 participants;

- Providing new interpretive displays and information for two state trails and two state park visitor centers per year, and visitor services information for existing and new state parks and trails; and
- Providing 17 million gross impressions that motivate the target market to visit.
- Expand trail experiences that motivate new customers to visit by:
 - Developing two key trail connections and filling funding gaps to develop priority trail segments;
 - Resurfacing 10 miles of paved trails;
 - Rehabilitating 10 trail bridges; and
 - Providing public information about these new opportunities via the most current media.
- Manage and restore natural landscapes within the state park and trails system including invasive species detection and management by:
 - Restoring and reconstructing approximately 1,000 acres of native plant communities; and
 - Conducting prescribed burns on approximately 8,000-10,000 acres.
- Pursue high-priority acquisitions that provide important connections, preserve priority natural or cultural resources.
 - Acquiring two to six high priority park and trail acquisitions.
- Complete high-priority development projects that create new opportunities to encourage outdoor recreation participation and/or enhance or protect natural and cultural resources. Plan and design for upcoming new facilities.
 - Developing four new camper cabins;
 - Providing two new fishing piers;
 - Enhancing one group camp; and
 - Developing 80KW of renewable photovoltaic energy.

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Financial Implications (if appropriate)

For FY 2014, the proposal allocates \$15.901 million for state parks and trails from the Parks and Trails Fund. For FY 2015, \$16.493 million is allocated for state parks and trails.



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Parks and Trails Legacy – Grants to Greater Minnesota \$7,950,000 FY2014 / \$8,247,000 FY2015 (Parks and Trails Fund)

It is needed because

The Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment created the Parks and Trails Fund, an important new funding source for parks and trails statewide. A portion of this funding is appropriated for grants to local government units (LGUs) for parks and trails of regional or statewide significance. This request reflects consensus recommendations of the Parks and Trails Legacy Funding Work Group, convened as directed by the 2011 Legislature to develop funding allocations for the Parks and Trails Fund, with a funding allocation of 20 percent for Greater Minnesota regional parks and trails.

These grants will accelerate the protection and restoration of Minnesota's natural resources and support a sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure. Parks and trails are essential for providing close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. LGUs often lack sufficient resources to acquire and develop adequate recreational facilities to meet regional needs. Grant requests have significantly out-paced available funds. In FY 2013, for example, requests totaled over \$46.9 million for \$7.5 million available in funding.

Major program elements

The Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program is established in M.S. 85.535 and provides funding to LGUs for the acquisition, development, improvement, program development, and restoration of parks and trails in Greater Minnesota. This is a competitive grant program for parks and trails of regional or statewide significance. Grant selection criteria are based upon the Parks and Trails Legacy 25-Year Plan, which emphasizes connecting people to the outdoors, acquiring land and creating opportunities, taking care of what we have, coordinating among partners, and

considering regional significance. Per program statute, priority for trail funding is given to projects that provide connectivity, enhance opportunities for commuters, and enhance safety. Grant recipients are responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance. Projects are located statewide among various LGUs.

Key measures and outcomes

- Assist LGUs to acquire or develop parks and trails to address present and future needs.
- Leverage funds and resources through local match contributions.
- Increase access to natural resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Provide connectivity across the landscape.
- Provide greater coordination among recreation providers and partners.

In FY 2013, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) awarded grants for 13 parks and trails projects to local communities that will help acquire 295 acres to expand existing regional parks and create new parks; develop/redevelop four regional parks to expand and improve recreational opportunities; develop 25 miles of new trails; redevelop six miles of existing trails; and construct one trail underpass.

Financial implications

This proposal requests \$7,950,000 in FY 2014 and \$8,247,000 in FY 2015.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Parks and Trails Legacy – Collaboration among Parks and Trails Legacy Partners

\$200,000 FY2014 / \$207,000 FY2015

(Parks and Trails Fund)

It is needed because

The Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment created the Parks and Trails Fund, an important new funding source for parks and trails statewide. The 2011 Minnesota Legislature mandated that a stakeholder work group develop recommendations for the allocation of the Parks and Trails Fund. The Parks and Trails Legacy Funding Work Group successfully achieved consensus recommendations, including a recommendation to set aside 0.50 percent of the total funding allocation to support coordinated activities among the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails, and Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails. This coordination is essential to achieve a long-term vision for Minnesota's entire system of parks and trails.

This proposal is needed to advance these consensus recommendations and support coordinated activities among DNR, Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails, and the Metropolitan Council. These funds will accelerate the protection and restoration of Minnesota's natural resources and support a sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure. Parks and trails are essential for providing close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities.

Major program elements

The Legacy Advisory Committee will advise the three partnering entities on how to use these funds:

- To enhanced, integrate, and create accessible web-based information for park and trail users;
- Promote and jointly-market all parks and trails of state and regional significance;
- Support activities of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee; and

- Support capacity-building efforts for the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition, which will help determine visitation data and operating expenditures and implement other outcomes from the Greater Minnesota strategic plan (e.g., system planning at a regional level).

Key measures and outcomes

- Provide an enhanced, integrated web-based park and trail user information resource.
- Assist in providing promotional and joint marketing for all parks and trails in the state.
- Provide financial support for the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee.

Financial implications

This proposal requests \$200,000 in FY 2014 and \$207,000 in FY 2015.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

Technical Change for Parks and Trails Reservation System Contract Management \$500,000 FY2014 / \$500,000 FY2015 (State Parks Dedicated Account)

It is needed because

A technical change will allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to sustain and improve its new, innovative state parks reservation system and provide better customer service to Minnesotans and tourists to our state. An appropriation of \$500,000 from the State Park Account in the Natural Resources Fund will cover annual vendor payments associated with the continuous improvement of the new reservation system.

In FY 2012, DNR contracted with a vendor to develop and implement a new reservation system to meet the evolving needs of customers, improve customer service, and increase efficiencies for managing reservations within DNR. The resulting changes to the system require that all revenue received from reservations, including reservation fees that had previously been paid directly to the vendor, be deposited into the State Parks Dedicated Account. This change allows the state to more directly manage revenue and expenses.

Major program elements

Revenue from the state park dedicated account is used for state park and recreation area operations. This technical change will provide DNR with the ability to pay the costs of the new reservation system, which will be revenue neutral.

Key measures and outcomes

- Sustain the new, more efficient reservation system for camping in state parks;
- Improved customer service; and
- Ensure DNR's ability to pay the vendor for the reservation fees collected.

Financial Implications (if appropriate)

\$500,000 in FY 2014 and \$500,000 in FY 2015

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET State Cross Country Ski Trail Grooming and Maintenance \$75,000 FY2014 / \$75,000 FY2015 (Cross Country Ski Account)

It is needed because

This proposal from the Cross Country Ski Account will help sustain the maintenance and operation of a system of 728 miles of ski opportunities at state parks, state trails, and state recreation areas. These funds will be directed to improve grooming on the most heavily used trails in popular cross country skiing locations around the state.

Cross country skiing is one of the primary recreation uses in state parks during the winter months, and groomed trails provide a significant draw to key areas of the state during the off-peak season. About half of the statewide cross country ski opportunities in the state are provided at state parks and trails.

Major program elements

The Great Minnesota Ski Pass and the Cross-Country Ski Account are established in M.S. 85.40 to 85.45. The ski pass is required for use of all state park, state trail, and state recreation area ski trails as well as for local Grant-in-Aid funded trails. M.S. 85.43b states that state ski trails are eligible for funding from the ski account if the money is appropriated by law.

This proposal will ensure the state will be able to sustain its operations of heavily used trails within a system of 728 miles of ski opportunities at state parks, state trails, and state recreation areas. Currently, the cross country ski account primarily funds a Grant-in-Aid program with 40 active grants covering 673 miles of club maintained, local unit of government sponsored, ski opportunities throughout the state.

Key measures and outcomes

- Provide expanded winter recreational opportunities.
- Maintain the number of miles of groomed cross country ski trails in 13-15 priority parks and state recreation areas.

Financial implications

Funding is available through the Cross-Country Ski Account; these funds must be requested and appropriated to DNR for use on state ski trails. This proposal requests \$75,000 in FY 2014 and \$75,000 in FY 2015.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Local and Regional Trail Grants Lottery-in-Lieu \$200,000 FY2014 / \$200,000 FY2015 (Lottery-in-Lieu Account)

It is needed because

Trails are vital to local communities, offering outdoor recreation opportunities and providing safe connections between local schools, businesses, residential areas, recreation areas, and other trails. Trail grants leverage local funds in the development of a statewide outdoor recreation infrastructure, requiring local units of government to provide a 25 percent cash match. Trail connections also build an active transportation infrastructure at the local level that promotes environmentally friendly transportation, such as bike commuting.

Major program elements

Local and regional trail grants are funded through the Local Trail Connections Program and the Regional Trail Program, both established in M.S. 85.019. The Local Trail Connections Program provides grants to local units of government to promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations. The Regional Trail Program provides grants to local units of government for the development of regionally significant trails outside of the seven-county metropolitan area.

Currently, these programs receive \$805,000 from Lottery-in-Lieu funds, which in FY 2013 enabled the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to award grants to 11 local communities for 14 miles of new regional trails and local trail connections and 6 miles of regional trail restoration. This is a competitive grant program, with project proposals submitted by local units of government throughout the state. Priority for trail project funding is given to projects that connect communities, trails, and parks and thereby increase the effective length of trail experiences. Significant considerations also include

trail length, expected use, and resource quality and attractiveness.

Key measures and outcomes

- Provide two to four additional grants to help meet the demand for high-quality recreational trails in local communities throughout Minnesota.
- Enhance local capacity to increase access to natural resource based recreation activities.
- Promote healthier lifestyles by providing more recreational trail opportunities close to home.

Financial implications

This proposal requests an additional \$200,000 in FY 2014 and \$200,000 in FY 2015 from the Lottery-in-Lieu Account to provide increased funding to local units of government for the acquisition and development of local and regional trails and trail connections.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Aquatic Plant Management Fee Increases Revenues: \$700,000 FY2014 / \$700,000 FY2015 (Water Recreation Account)

It is needed because

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to base the cost of aquatic plant management permitting on program costs, as provided by M.S. 103G.615, subd. 2, which states that “[permit] fees shall be based on the cost of receiving, processing, analyzing, and issuing the permit, and additional costs incurred after the application to inspect and monitor the activities authorized by the permit, and enforce aquatic plant management rules and permit requirements.” Currently, permit revenues, which are deposited in the Water Recreation Account, cover less than one-third of the cost to issue aquatic plant permits. Revenue from other funds is used to cover the remaining expenses associated with this permit program. This proposal will increase fees so that the revenue generated more fully covers program costs.

Major program elements

Fees would be changed as follows:

- Permit fee for lakeshore property owners controlling aquatic plants in public waters would increase from \$35 to \$90 per property.
- Permit fee for lakeshore property owners controlling swimmer’s itch or algae would increase from \$4 per hundred feet of shore to \$40 per property. The \$2,500 fee cap for lakeshore property owner groups would be eliminated.
- A \$100 permit fee would be established for individuals requesting a permit that authorizes commercial mechanical control or commercial harvest of aquatic plants.
- A \$300 inspection fee would be established for each waterbody where commercial harvest is proposed and an inspection of the aquatic plant community is required before the permit can be issued.

Key measures and outcomes

- Permit revenues will more fully cover costs of issuing aquatic plant permits in public waters.
- Sites proposed for aquatic plant control will be evaluated to ensure control measures are used appropriately and valuable aquatic habitat is protected.
- Lake users will be informed of the location of pesticide treatments and any water use restrictions in the treatment areas that result from those treatments.
- Control of aquatic plants will be monitored to ensure that management of aquatic plants is within standards described in rule.
- Aquatic plant management regulations will be enforced.
- Permits that reduce the abundance of invasive aquatic plants on a lake-wide or bay-wide scale are free of charge.
- Permits reestablishing aquatic plants are free of charge.

Financial Implications (if appropriate)

Aquatic plant management permit fees currently generate approximately \$220,000 in revenue, covering a portion of the approximately \$1 million in annual program costs incurred by DNR. The fee change will generate approximately \$700,000 in total revenue to recover more of the costs of aquatic plant management permitting.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Critical Habitat License Plate Donation Increase Revenues: \$1,300,000 FY2014 / \$1,300,000 FY2015 (RIM Account)

It is needed because

Critical habitat license plates were created in 1995 to provide an opportunity for Minnesotans to contribute to the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources and show their commitment through special vehicle license plates. This requests the first increase in critical habitat license plate donations since 1995.

This program utilizes an innovative and cost-effective funding model that leverages state investments with private donations. Funds generated by the Critical Habitat License Plate Program (M.S. 168.1296, subd. 5) are credited to the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Critical Habitat Private Sector Matching Account (M.S. 84.943), which requires expenditures from the account to be matched equally by either private donations of land, cash, or Nongame Wildlife Management Account donations (M.S. 84.943, subd. 3). Private donations typically exceed available state matching dollars. An increase in the critical habitat license plate will help ensure adequate state matching dollars are available to match private donations. As of January 2013, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has received donations in land and cash exceeding available state funds by \$12.3 million.

Major program elements

This initiative increases the popular critical habitat license plate from \$30 to \$40. The funds, which are statutorily appropriated, would be used to:

- Support the protection of land that contains critical fish and wildlife habitat;
- Enhance and expand nongame wildlife projects, including implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan;
- Increase monitoring efforts to determine the most effective conservation actions.

Since 1995, approximately \$69 million in private donations have been leveraged in the protection and enhancement of 63,000 acres of acquired and 46,000 acres of developed critical habitat through the program. This additional revenue will allow the state to more fully match private donations and increase acres protected by approximately 400 acres per year.

Key measures and outcomes

- Maintain and enhance healthy, productive habitat and fish and wildlife populations that serve as a foundation for quality outdoor experiences and recreation opportunities.
- Provide additional protection of lands containing critical fish, wildlife and nongame habitat.
- Ensure healthy ecosystems that enhance the quality of living for all residents.
- Fully match voluntary, private donations with state funds.
- Incentivize private donations with an innovative and cost-effective funding model.

Financial implications

This account is statutorily appropriated. Currently, critical habitat license plate revenues average close to \$4 million/year. The donation increase will provide an additional \$1.3 million for a number of programs, including wildlife and aquatic management areas, scientific and natural areas, state parks, state forests, and nongame management programs.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Conservation Officer Pre-Employment Education Program (CO-PREP) \$250,000 FY2014 / \$250,000 FY2015 (Game and Fish Fund; Natural Resources Fund)

It is needed because

Minnesota's conservation officers (CO) play a critical role in protecting the state's wealth of natural resources, ensuring safe and enjoyable recreational experiences, and maintaining public safety. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is proposing a low-cost, innovative approach to diversify the conservation officer workforce to better reflect Minnesota's changing demographics.

The goal is to recruit and hire a diverse mix of highly qualified candidates who hold an existing four-year degree from accredited educational institutions in fields other than law enforcement. The division proposes to provide law enforcement training through the state community college system and a living wage while the candidate attends classes. Upon successful completion of law enforcement training, the candidate will join the Division of Enforcement's Conservation Officer Academy and eventually be placed in a field station.

Major program elements

Program participants will enter the hiring process for conservation officers at the same time as traditional applicants. During the hiring process, applicants will choose the 'traditional' track or the 'CO PREP' track. Once successful applicants have been notified of conditional job offers, candidates in the CO PREP track will attend a local community college and receive the required courses to take the Minnesota Peace Officers Standards and Training Exam.

The educational training opportunities will be a blend of metro and greater Minnesota community colleges in an effort to recruit qualified applicants across the state. This affords DNR the opportunity to recruit perspective applicants in focused areas where current

staffing levels do not reflect the diversity of the community.

Key measures and outcomes

The program will result in more trained COs and a more diverse CO workforce. At this level of funding, six CO PREP candidates could be trained each year.

Financial implications

Funding is needed to pay for tuition and education-related expenses while CO PREP candidates are attending community college. Applicants will also be paid a living wage while attending classes for the CO PREP program. Those costs are:

- \$10,000 per student for tuition
- \$3,000 per student for school-related expenses
- \$30,000 per student for a living wage

This fiscal obligation is a one-time cost per student/applicant. Once the applicant successfully completes the educational training and Conservation Officers Academy, their salary would be paid for by vacant position funding. Funding for the CO PREP program would also initiate a comprehensive recruitment program aimed at working with diverse communities to identify qualified candidates for the program.

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Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2014-2015 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Data Analytics and Decision Tools \$300,000 FY2014 / \$300,000 FY2015 (Various Funds)

It is needed because

DNR is at a data-management and decision-process crossroads. Natural resource decision making is getting ever more complex as it must evaluate interrelated factors and trends related to demographics, global economics, invasive species, and climate change. At the same time, natural resource professionals are witnessing an explosion of available data and analytical technologies that could help address these challenges, make natural resource data more accessible to the public, and improve accountability to results.

DNR is pioneering an outcomes tracking system that helps the agency better meet public expectations for accountability to conservation outcomes. Using modern database and reporting systems, DNR is linking agency goals to funds invested and results achieved in ways that foster continuous improvement of agency programs and provide user-friendly access to the public. This initiative will build on the success of DNR's new Outcomes Tracking System by developing a more comprehensive performance management system that links data, modern decision-support tools, and outcomes. The system will help DNR and partners improve decision-making and measure results, achieve work efficiencies and cost savings, and make natural resource information more accessible to the public.

This initiative advances the Governor's office focus on improving how state government works to deliver the best services at the best price. It also advances DNR's efforts to base management decisions on the best available science and accepted best management practices.

Major program elements

This initiative requests support for software and data development, GIS analysis, infrastructure and maintenance, consulting, and staff to expand DNR's capacity to help manage and integrate natural resource data into workflow and decision making for improved decision making and natural resource results.

Key components of the initiative include:

- Linking financial tracking, program administration, and outcomes reporting systems. This will enhance staff work efficiencies and data consistency as DNR reports conservation results to the public. It will also help build powerful datasets to help evaluate cumulative program results and effectiveness.
- Increasing public access to natural resource information. This will accelerate DNR's efforts to efficiently make natural resource data available to the public. Priority pilot projects include a) modernization of invasive species information systems and b) integrated land acquisition and funding data for enhanced public understanding and stewardship.
- Increasing use of decision-support tools and processes to improve natural resource management decisions. This will help DNR expand the use of the best emerging tools for integrating ecological, economic, and recreational data to inform DNR and partner management decisions.
- Modernizing data governance policies and practices. These policies will help expand agency capacity for data integration and analytics. It will entail reviewing and developing standards for data quality, use of modern database design, and guidance for improved data sharing with partners

Key measures and outcomes

- DNR data functions as an information foundation that is trustworthy, integrated, consistent, and readily accessible to staff and the public. This will help staff, decision makers, and the public have the best information as they work together to address complex challenges to sustain Minnesota's natural resources.
- DNR has agency-wide data integration tools that facilitate bringing together information needed to understand and better manage natural resource systems. Minnesotans have easy-to-understand information on natural resource conditions.
- DNR has agency-wide decision-support processes to help guide users through comprehensive analysis of tradeoffs among multiple resource values.

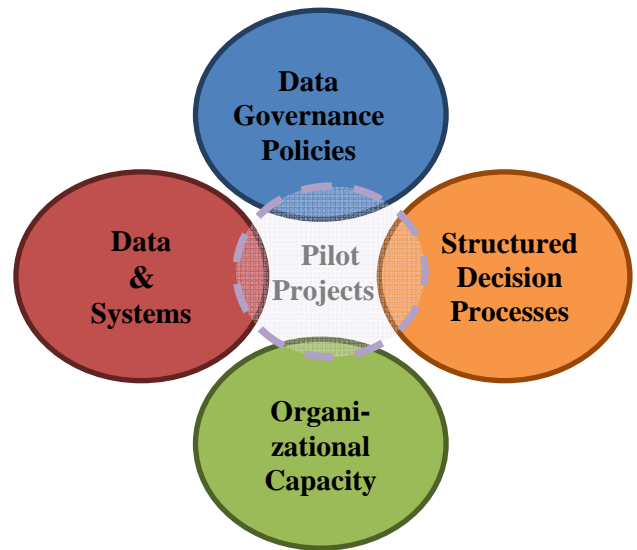
Financial implications

Funding of \$300,000 per year would be provided by the Game and Fish Fund, Heritage Enhancement Account, the Natural Resources Fund, and Special Revenue Fund.

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Building blocks for effective integrated data management for Better Natural Resource Outcomes



This initiative will enhance four building blocks for effective integrated data management. This will help DNR and partners improve decision-making and measure results, achieve work efficiencies and cost savings, and make natural resource information more accessible to the public.