



# ***Conservation That Works*** **For a Better Minnesota** **DNR's 2014 Capital Budget Request**



The Governor's recommendations for Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) capital budget creates a better future for Minnesota by conserving our natural resources while targeting investments that: 1) maintain a strong infrastructure, and 2) create jobs and support local economies.

## **Maintaining a Strong Conservation Infrastructure**

DNR manages more than 5.5 million acres of state lands and provides public access to recreational opportunities throughout the state. DNR's capital asset portfolio is worth more than \$2 billion. DNR has significant unmet capital investment needs, including more than \$300 million in natural resources asset preservation needs over the next 10 years.

Maintaining a strong infrastructure is critical to sustaining the value of the state's assets and will:

- Improve the delivery of public services
- Ensure the health and safety of Minnesotans
- Reduce operating costs
- Increase efficiencies

## **Creating Jobs and Supporting Local Economies**

DNR puts bonding money to work quickly. DNR has a proven track record of being able to put bonding money to work quickly – on average, DNR receives approximately \$150 million in each two-year bonding cycle and spends that money within a short period of time.

DNR also puts bonding money to work across the whole state. DNR has over 225 work sites statewide and recreational facilities in every county of the state. Capital investments put people to work in local communities across Minnesota. Every \$1 million spent for construction supports approximately 24 jobs.

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## **DNR'S 2014 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST**

### **Natural Resources Asset Preservation (\$23 million)**

Natural resources asset preservation (M.S. 84.946) is a critical investment to repair and renovate the department's buildings, recreational facilities, roads, bridges, trails, water control structures, and water access sites. DNR owns and actively maintains 2,761 buildings, more than 3,000 miles of roads, 560 miles of paved trails, and 650 trail bridges. Natural resource asset preservation needs over the next 10 years exceed \$300 million.

Project priorities include: Projects will be located throughout the state and include the rehabilitation of buildings and facilities (ADA improvements; roof, door, window, and siding replacements; mechanical and electrical system repairs; Soudan elevator shaft repair; and sanitation buildings); energy improvements; water, well, and septic projects (including Ft. Snelling Upper Post); trails; roads and bridges; water control structures; and water accesses and fishing piers.

### **Buildings and Facilities Development (\$2 million)**

Substandard DNR offices and storage facilities do not provide safe working environments, nor do they ensure the protection of state assets, public accessibility, or the efficient delivery of public services. This request provides for pre-design costs in support of DNR's facility management plan (including co-located facilities in Bemidji and Rochester) and for the construction of new storage facilities that protect and extend the life of DNR equipment.

### **Dam Repair, Reconstruction, Removal (\$4 million)**

Minnesota's public dam infrastructure includes nearly 800 dams owned by the state, counties, cities, and watershed districts. Most of these dams are over 50 years old and require ongoing repairs to maintain their structural integrity and prevent public safety hazards. This program provides for the repair and renovation of state-owned dams and provides 50% cost share funds to local government projects.



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Project priorities include: Emergency projects, Byllesby Lake, Rapidan, Champlin Mill Pond, Shell Rock (Albert Lea Lake), Bald Eagle Lake, Balsam Lake, Deer Creek, Lizzie Lake, Height of Land Lake, Sand Hill Lake, Perkins Lake, Brawner, Stalker Lake, Sullivan Lake, Platte River.

## State Land Reforestation and Stand Improvement (\$5 million)

MS 89.002 requires the reforestation of harvested state lands and the restoration and maintenance of state forests. This request will provide for reforestation and stand improvement on approximately 35,000 acres of state forested lands, including purchasing native seeds and native seedlings, planting, seeding, site preparation and protection on state lands. Included in this request is treatment of the St. Croix blowdown area. Reforestation and stand improvement increases the value of Minnesota's forests for the forest-based economy as well as other important values, including wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities.

## Native Prairie Bank Acquisition and Development (\$6 million)

Of the original 18 million acres of prairie in Minnesota, only an estimated 235,000 acres remain today, of which about 104,000 acres are threatened. This request would provide for the protection of approximately 1,900 acres through acquisition of conservation easements and the development and restoration of approximately 350 acres of native prairie bank lands.

## RIM Critical Habitat Match (\$3 million)

This program provides for land acquisition and improvement for wildlife management areas, scientific and natural areas, aquatic management areas, state parks, and state forests. The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Critical Habitat Match program is cost-effective, equally leveraging state investments with private donations. Currently, pledged private donations exceed state matching funds available through the Critical Habitat License Plate Program. Since 1986, more than \$76 million in donations has been leveraged to protect 112,470 acres and enhance 46,891 acres.

## Fish Hatchery Improvements (\$3.561 million)

High-quality fishing opportunities in Minnesota are supported, in part, by the successful operation of the state's 17 fish hatcheries/rearing facilities. These fish hatcheries produce millions of walleye, trout, salmon, muskellunge, and other important game species for stocking in approximately 880 lakes and 85 streams statewide annually. Improvements are needed to the state's fish hatchery facilities, including system upgrades to prevent the spread of invasive species and pathogens.

Project priorities include: The Lanesboro hatchery facility is a project priority due to structural integrity and radon issues with the facility. Other priorities include the Grand Rapids, Hinckley, Spire Valley, and Crystal Springs facilities.

## Parks and Trails Acquisition and New Development (\$5 million)

This request provides for the acquisition and development of new recreational infrastructure in state parks, state recreation areas, state trails, and water access sites.

Project priorities include: Projects include development of Whitewater State Park campground and Heartland State Trail (between Detroit Lakes and Frazee) and acquisition of key in-holdings in state parks.

## Minnesota Forests for the Future (\$3 million)

Thousands of acres of privately-owned forest lands are under threat to be sold, leased, subdivided and developed. This program allows landowners to sell a permanent easement to the state that prevents development, provides public access, and allows the owner to continue to manage the forest sustainably for timber production while protecting its natural resource values. These easements are monitored to ensure the state's interests are protected. Approximately 18,000 acres of private forest lands will be protected by acquiring large scale conservation easements or fee title.

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