



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2015 POLICY FACT SHEET

Natural Resources Conservation Easement Stewardship Account

It is needed because

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) currently holds over 1,000 conservation easements. The DNR continues to protect land and natural resources and provide opportunities for public recreation through conservation easement acquisition. Conservation easements require ongoing stewardship, including regular monitoring, to ensure that their conservation values remain protected.

This initiative is needed to allow the DNR to address the long-term stewardship of its new conservation easements at the time of easement acquisition through deposit of a principal amount into an account that would be managed to maximize long-term gain. Interest and other earnings on the account would be used for conservation easement stewardship.

The DNR has \$1,043,840 in existing Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations for conservation easement stewardship but is not able to invest this money for a sustainable level of return. The DNR needs to be able to transfer this money into an account where it will generate more interest and other earnings.

Major program elements

This initiative:

- Creates a natural resources conservation easement stewardship account in the special revenue fund that will be managed by the State Board of Investment to maximize long-term gain.
- Provides for deposit of specified contributions, appropriations and gifts into the account.
- Annually appropriates five percent of the balance on July 1 in the account to the DNR for conservation easement stewardship.
- Requires the commissioner to seek a financial contribution to the account for each conservation easement acquired by or assigned to the DNR and specifies considerations for determining the contribution amount.

- Transfers money already appropriated to the DNR for conservation easement stewardship into the account.

Key measures and outcomes

The goal of this initiative is to enable the DNR to monitor, through money earned in the account:

- all new DNR conservation easements; and
- key easements where Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations for stewardship have already been provided.

Fiscal impacts

There are no immediate net fiscal impacts. Initial deposits into the account would be from the transfer of \$1,043,840 previously appropriated from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. All revenues from earnings on this money are expected to be expended on the annual appropriation from the account.

The DNR would seek future appropriations for the deposit into the fund in conjunction with requests for conservation easement acquisition funding. Specific sources and amounts are unknown at this time.

For further information contact:

Susan Damon, Manager, Land Acquisition & Legal Services

Division of Lands and Minerals

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155

651-259-5961

susan.damon@state.mn.us