

# Budget for One Minnesota



## NATURAL RESOURCES

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan’s Budget for One Minnesota strengthens our state’s ability to both protect our natural resources and promote them as an asset that improves the lives of our residents. The Department of Natural Resources budget includes funding for new programs, additional funding in key areas, appropriations from the Legacy funds and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and important policy changes.

Combined, the components of the Walz-Flanagan biennial budget will positively impact our land, water, and wildlife – and Minnesotans’ ability to enjoy our natural resources for generations.

These funding and policy priorities are contained in the Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Bill that was recently signed by Gov. Walz. Here is a summary of those priorities contained in the omnibus bill:

### PROTECTING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES



#### **Sustaining Minnesota’s White-Tailed Deer/Addressing Chronic Wasting Disease**

White-tailed deer are one of the most popular species to hunt in Minnesota. Deer hunting provides a \$500 million economic boost to the state’s economy. Chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, threatens this treasured tradition. The omnibus bill provides \$1.87 million from the General Fund and \$2.85 million from the Game and Fish Fund to address chronic wasting disease. Also, the omnibus bill requires cervid (deer and elk) farm owners to use high tensile fencing material and to depopulate herds promptly following detection of chronic wasting disease and appraisal of the herd value. Cervid farm owners can also lose their license if they have more than one animal escape within a year.

The omnibus bill also provides additional funding for the Board of Animal Health to do inspections and for the University of Minnesota to develop CWD diagnostic animal testing and environmental monitoring.



### **Maintaining Our Existing Service Levels**

The omnibus bill provides sufficient funding for the DNR to maintain its basic existing services. This funding in the omnibus bill covers inflation-related cost increases that the agency sustains, such as health care and salaries.



### **Minnesota Forest Management**

Good forest management includes periodic review of timber harvest levels and their impact to the greater forest ecosystem and economy. In March 2018, the DNR set a new 10-year sustainable timber harvest target to offer 870,000 cords for sale each year from DNR-managed forests, plus an additional 30,000 cords of ash and tamarack for sale annually. The decision came after more than a year of rigorous scientific analysis, public input, and discussions with key partners in conservation organizations and the forest industry. The omnibus bill provides \$2 million in funding from the Forest Management Investment Account (FMIA) in FY20-21 to support the sustainable timber harvest target to maintain clean water and air, support wildlife, provide recreation opportunities, sustain biodiversity, and provide a reliable source of wood for Minnesota's forest products industry



### **Protecting Our Public Waters**

Protecting Minnesota's public waters is fundamental to maintaining our quality of life. Surface waters are affected by a range of civic and commercial activities. The DNR's public waters protection program ensures a balance between conservation and use. The omnibus bill invests \$800,000 from the General Fund and \$716,000 from the Water Management Account in FY20-21 for public water protection work. This investment allows DNR to provide needed services to the public in important water management activities such as: responding to floods and lake level concerns; assisting local governments with water-related land-use decisions; and providing technical assistance to lake shore owners, other landowners, communities, and state and federal agencies.



## **Fighting Aquatic Invasive Species**

Reducing the spread of aquatic invasive species is a major focus for the DNR and its partners. The AIS watercraft surcharge on a three-year watercraft registration, which has not changed since 1993, allows the DNR and its partners to combat existing AIS infestations and reduce the spread to new waterbodies, and prevent the introduction of new species. The omnibus bill increases the AIS surcharge on three-year boat registrations from \$5 to \$10.60, providing \$1.76 million in FY20-21 to the DNR to continue to be able to conduct AIS inspections, respond to new discoveries, and reinstate local grants.

The bill also provides funding to the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota to develop solutions to prevent the spread AIS and control existing infestations.

## **MAKING SMART DECISIONS**



### **Angler Surveys to Inform Fisheries Management**

Minnesota's 1.4 million anglers contribute over \$4 billion annually to state's economy. Fishing is an integral part of our culture and contributes to our high quality of life. Angler survey information is critical for tracking trends in fishing pressure, angler catch, harvest, and angler attitudes and preferences. The data are also critical for monitoring the effectiveness of special and statewide angling regulations. The omnibus bill provides funding of \$810,000 in FY20-21 and \$1 million thereafter from the Game and Fish Fund to expand angler surveys beyond the state's ten largest lakes.

## **CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE OUTDOORS**



### **State Park and Trail Additions and Maintenance/Recreation Grants**

Minnesotans enjoy unforgettable trail-based experiences that inspire them to pass along the love for the outdoors to current and future generations. However, state trails operations and maintenance funding has not kept pace with a growing trail system and rising costs. For

example, while the number of paved trails has grown by 150 miles over the last decade, operations and maintenance funding has fallen by \$900/mile. The omnibus bill provides \$5 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to expand and rehabilitate state trails. The omnibus bill also provides \$2 million to acquire more than 330 acres of high-priority parcels within state park boundaries to round out park acreage. State parks and trails generate substantial tourist travel and economic benefit supporting businesses and communities across the state, especially in greater Minnesota.

The omnibus bill also provides funding to support high school fishing leagues and firearms safety programs, as well as create a new “No Child Left Inside” grant program. Funding was approved for additional grooming of cross-country ski trails across the state and local grants to support all-terrain vehicle and off-highway vehicles in northern Minnesota.