



Minnesota State Parks and Trails 18 Month Legacy Report

Chapter 172, Art. 3, Sec. 2, 2009 Session Laws



This report focuses on key outcomes and expenditures to date from the Parks and Trails portion of Minnesota’s Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources. The Legislature has charged the DNR Parks and Trails Division with some key objectives, including: connecting people to the outdoors, accelerating natural resource management, and accelerating facility maintenance and rehabilitation. More detail on Legacy projects is available on the Legislative Coordinating Commission’s website (www.legacy.leg.mn), created to help citizens monitor how dollars from the Legacy Amendment are being invested in the state.

Grants Supporting Local Communities

Parks and Trails of Regional Significance

- Provided \$7,575,750 through 38 grants to local units of government for acquisition, development, restoration, and maintenance of park and trail facilities of regional or statewide significance.
- Provided \$958,135 through 22 grants to local units of government for solar energy projects within parks or on trails of regional significance.
- 2.5% of this appropriation is legislatively authorized for administration costs (\$221,750).

FY10 Grants Budget \$3,870,750

FY 10 Grants Awarded: \$3,870,750

FY11 Grants Budget \$ 4,777,500

FY 11 Grants Awarded: \$4,663,135



Connecting People to the Outdoors

- New outdoor programs such as “I Can Camp!” and “Outdoors Extra” were added to enhance traditional programming. Over 1,000 special and requested programs and workshops –including “Archery in the Parks,” live music, live animal, and rock-climbing programs –reached 9,581 participants and 600 new campers the first season.
- Thirty Minnesota Naturalist Corps trainee positions, four year-round naturalists, and two seasonal naturalists were added to the busiest state park programs, reaching 266,403 participants (a 21% increase).
- Overnight visits increased by nearly 100,000 people and vehicle permits by 50,000 since 2008.
- Minnesota State Parks and Trails’ messages were seen/heard over 12 million times in 2010.
- Six new touch-screen kiosks reached 5,145 people in the first three months, providing trip-planning assistance in non-traditional settings. New touch-screen interpretive devices were installed at 20 state parks.
- Interpretive planning and signage for the Harmony/Preston and Root River State Trails will be complete in Spring 2011, including orientation, way-finding, a new trail guide, and natural and cultural interpretation. Testing is underway for new mobile, podcast, and audio interpretive technologies on state trails.
- Website improvements such as a new kids’ website (engaging kids ages 5-11) and new panoramic virtual tours have been added to motivate families and children to get outdoors.
- Re-established 84 km of cross-country ski trails in six state forests. State park service hours and trail maintenance have been extended on 450 km of cross-country ski trails.
- Annual major visitor center exhibit upgrades focusing on new educational delivery methods and new technologies began at Sibley State Park, followed by Jay Cooke State Park (complete by 12/ 2011).
- New free recreational loaner equipment and educational kits –including fishing poles, binoculars, GPS units for geocaching, and “Kids’ Exploration Kits” –are now available in state parks.
- Visitor center hours were extended by over 600 hours, and state park office hours by over 6,000.

FY10 Budget: \$2,201,091

FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$2,201,091

FY11 Budget: \$3,823,000

FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$2,409,228



Conservation Corps Minnesota

The Division of Parks and Trails (as directed by Chapter 172, Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(c)) utilizes Conservation Corps of Minnesota services for restoration, maintenance, and other activities that supplement our ability to reach Legacy Fund goals. Through this partnership with the Conservation Corps:

- Completed 70,674 crew hours toward Parks and Trails Legacy projects.
- The Corps more than doubled in size, with over 184 year-round Young Adult Program corpsmembers that will work on Parks and Trails Legacy field-based projects in FY11.
- Anticipates exceeding the legislative requirement of spending **at least \$1,600,000** for FY10/11 services.



Accelerating Natural Resource Management

- Restored native plant communities on 2,968 acres of state park land (968 acres over legislative requirement).
- Conducted invasive species detection, prevention & response on 20,133 acres of state park lands and re-established native vegetation, exceeding legislative requirement by 25%.
- Conducted prescribed burns on 16,871 acres of state park land. The division anticipates reaching the 19,164-acre target.
- Restored & managed 811 acres of native prairies and woodlands along state trails, 88% of the target.

FY10 Budget: \$1,920,000
FY11 Budget: \$1,663,000

FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$1,920,000
FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$889,049



Accelerating Facility Maintenance and Rehabilitation

- State Trail renewal projects are complete on 15 miles of the Heartland State Trail, the Paul Bunyan State Trail, and the Munger State Trail. Reconstruction of Sakatah State Trail is scheduled for July 2011.
- Trail renewal projects have been completed in 19 state forests and 15 state parks, providing safe and enjoyable use for equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and skiers.
- State park and recreation area facility renewal projects are completed at Buffalo River, Cuyuna, and Soudan Mine State Parks. Major campground renewal projects at Lake Shetek and a remodeling project on the historic River Inn at Jay Cooke are under construction. Over 1,600 campsites have been upgraded and 12 Camper Cabins are being constructed for installation next year in state parks.
- Temperance River and Cuyuna State Parks now have upgraded accessible trails and walkways. Many state park campgrounds now have extended spurs to allow for easier access for larger vehicles.
- Engineering inspections of 10 bridges are complete. Rehabilitation of 2 bridges and replacement of a third bridge is complete on the Heartland State Trail. Three bridges on the Munger and Glacial Lakes State Trails are scheduled for rehabilitation (2) and replacement (1) during summer of 2011.
- Photovoltaic, passive solar, and geothermal systems have been installed at five state parks and one state recreation area.
- Sixteen replacement and four new fishing piers have been purchased for installation in 2011. This improves public fishing opportunities broadly –especially for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- The Master Plan for the new Vermilion State Park is complete.

FY10 Budget: \$8,247,000
FY11 Budget: \$9,654,000

FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$8,243,581
FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$3,469,441



Planning for a Parks and Trails Legacy

- **DNR Parks and Trails Division 10-Year Strategic Plan**
 Planning efforts will be complete by Feb. 15th, successfully coordinating with the "10/25 Legacy Plan" and the University of Minnesota Center for Changing Landscapes 25-year inventory and framework.
- **Minnesota Parks and Trails 10/25-Year, Long-Term Plan**
 Planning efforts will be complete by Feb. 15th. Conducted extensive public engagement: a summit with recreation/ conservation leaders, 17 listening workshops throughout the state, outreach to more than 1,000 youth/ young adults, meetings with diverse racial/ ethnic groups, and extensive web-based input.
- **Parks and Trails Budget Analysis**
 The Department submitted a *Parks and Trails Budget Analysis*, examining the adequacy of funding sources and appropriations the DNR receives to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain parks and trails.

FY10/11 Budget: \$522,909

FY10/11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 1/12/2011: \$521,316



Budget Summary

FY10 Budget **FY10 Expended/Encumbered/Awarded as of 1/12/2011**
\$16,861,000 **Total: \$16,855,988**

FY11 Budget **FY11 Expended/Encumbered/ Awarded as of 1/12/2011**
\$20,040,000 **Total: \$11,553,353**