
LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION

ON

MINNESOTA RESOURCES (LCCMR)

Six-Year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

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I. Trust Fund Vision and Mission Statements

Trust Fund Vision Statement

All Minnesotans have an obligation to use and manage our natural resources in a manner that promotes wise stewardship and enhancement of the state's resources for ourselves and for future generations. The Trust Fund is a perpetual fund that provides a legacy from one generation of Minnesotans to the many generations to follow. It shall be used to preserve, protect, restore and enhance both the bountiful and the threatened natural resources that are the collective heritage of every Minnesotan. It shall also be used to nurture a sense of responsibility by all and to further our understanding of Minnesota's resource base and the consequences of human interaction with the environment.

Trust Fund Mission Statement

The mission of the Trust Fund is to ensure a long-term secure source of funding for environmental and natural resource activities whose benefits are realized only over an extended period of time.

Future Funding Focus Areas

In implementing the Six-Year Strategic Plan, the Commission will identify annual focus areas for funding through the RFP process. In selecting the areas of funding focus, the LCCMR will maintain a continuing awareness of issues identified by the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan developed by the University of Minnesota, Institute on the Environment, public input, the Commission's evaluation of natural resource issues, and major funding initiatives identified by the MN legislature.

II. Background

MN Constitution Art. XI, Sec.14

Environment and Natural Resources Fund

A permanent environment and natural resources trust fund is established in the state treasury. Loans may be made of up to five percent of the principal of the fund for water system improvements as provided by law. The assets of the fund shall be appropriated by law for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. The amount appropriated each year of a biennium, commencing on July 1 in each odd-numbered year and ending on and including

June 30 in the next odd-numbered year, may be up to 5-1/2 percent of the market value of the fund on June 30 one year before the start of the biennium. Not less than 40 percent of the net proceeds from any state-operated lottery must be credited to the fund until the year 2025. [Adopted, November 8, 1988; Amended, November 6, 1990; November 3, 1998]

Minnesota Statutes 2008, Chapter 116P.02

116P.02 Definitions

Subd. 5. **Natural resources.** "Natural resources" includes the outdoor recreation system under section 86A.04 and regional recreation open space systems as defined under section 473.351, subdivision 1.

Minnesota Statutes 2008, Chapter 86A

86A.04 COMPOSITION OF SYSTEM

The outdoor recreation system shall consist of all state parks; state recreation areas; state trails established pursuant to sections [84.029](#), [subdivision 2](#), [85.015](#), [85.0155](#), and [85.0156](#); state scientific and natural areas; state wilderness areas; state forests; state wildlife management areas; state aquatic management areas; state water access sites, which include all lands and facilities established by the commissioner of natural resources or the commissioner of transportation to provide public access to water; state wild, scenic, and recreational rivers; state historic sites; state rest areas, which include all facilities established by the commissioner of transportation for the safety, rest, comfort and use of the highway traveler, and shall include all existing facilities designated as rest areas and waysides by the commissioner of transportation; and any other units not listed in this section that are classified under section [86A.05](#). Each individual state park, state recreation area, and so forth is called a "unit."

Minnesota Statutes 2008, Chapter 473

473.351 METROPOLITAN AREA REGIONAL PARKS FUNDING

Subd. 1. Definitions.

(d) "Regional recreation open space systems" means those parks that have been designated by the Metropolitan Council under section [473.145](#).

Minnesota Statutes 2008, Chapter 116P.08

116P.08 Trust fund expenditures; exceptions; plans

Subd. 1. **Expenditures.** Money in the trust fund may be spent only for:

- (1) the reinvest in Minnesota program as provided in section [84.95](#), subdivision 2;
- (2) research that contributes to increasing the effectiveness of protecting or managing the state's environment or natural resources;
- (3) collection and analysis of information that assists in developing the state's environmental and natural resources policies;
- (4) enhancement of public education, awareness, and understanding necessary for the protection, conservation, restoration, and enhancement of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources;
- (5) capital projects for the preservation and protection of unique natural resources;
- (6) activities that preserve or enhance fish, wildlife, land, air, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state;
- (7) administrative and investment expenses incurred by the State Board of Investment in investing deposits to the trust fund; and
- (8) administrative expenses subject to the limits in section [116P.09](#).

Subd. 2. **Exceptions.** Money from the trust fund may not be spent for:

- (1) purposes of environmental compensation and liability under chapter 115B and response actions under chapter 115C;
- (2) purposes of municipal water pollution control under the authority of chapters 115 and 116;
- (3) costs associated with the decommissioning of nuclear power plants;
- (4) hazardous waste disposal facilities;
- (5) solid waste disposal facilities; or
- (6) projects or purposes inconsistent with the strategic plan.

III. Six-year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

A. PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN -- as required in M.S. 116P.08, Subd. 3

The Six-Year Strategic Plan is to guide the work and process used by the LCCMR in making recommendations for Trust Fund expenditures. Specifically, the Six-Year Strategic Plan, as required by statute, is to provide short and long-term goals and strategies for the Trust Fund expenditures, require measurable outcomes for the expenditures, and identify areas of emphasis for funding.

In developing the Six-Year Strategic Plan, the LCCMR used the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, developed with financial support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund by the University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment, along with information gathered during 2007 and 2008 natural resource presentations and site visits. The LCCMR continues to request information from technical experts, citizens, agencies, local units of government, private, and nonprofit organizations to assist it in identifying the most pressing natural resources issues facing Minnesota and the opportunities to address them.

The LCCMR will continue to use the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan as a guide in developing Requests for Proposals (RFPs).

B. SUMMARY OF KEY NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK USED TO IDENTIFY STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Summary of Key Natural Resource Issues identified in the Preliminary Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are:

- Land and water habitat fragmentation, degradation, loss and conversion
- Land use practices
- Transportation
- Energy Production and Use
- Toxic contaminants
- Impacts on resource consumption
- Invasive species

These are the issues that, if addressed, would protect and conserve Minnesota's natural resources of air, water, land, wildlife, fish and outdoor recreation to the greatest degree.

The Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan focuses on the first four key natural resource issues. The remaining three issues are not included in the plan due to budget and time factors and will be given consideration in future plan updates.

Five Areas of the Strategic Framework in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are:

- Integrated Planning
- Critical Land Protection
- Land and Water Restoration and Protection

- Sustainability Practices
- Economic Incentives for Sustainability

The recommendations in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan were organized into the Strategic Framework and provide a comprehensive and integrated environmental strategic plan.

The recommendations within the Strategic Framework are designed to conserve and protect Minnesota's six statutorily defined natural resources in a comprehensive approach, while being mindful of demographic change, public health, the state's economy, and climate change.

Future elements of a Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan will include additional in-depth review of natural resource issues such as toxic contaminants, invasive species, groundwater and surface water sustainability, mining, and emerging natural resource issues.

C. GOALS - SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic framework laid out in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan provides an integrated approach to resource conservation and protection. The following goals address one or more of the strategic framework areas.

Land and Water Protection

- Protect and conserve land and water (surface and ground) resources that are important for overall ecosystem integrity.
 - Provide protection to fragile or unique natural resources, such as prairies, shorelands, trout streams, groundwater resources, surface water flows, wetlands, fens, and aquatic habitat where further development or neglect could cause irreparable harm or loss.
 - Protect land resources such as large contiguous tracts of forests, prairies that are threatened by fragmentation, high quality natural areas such as those listed in the county biological survey, and important habitat areas.
 - Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through land protection, acquisition, and land use practices.
 - Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through protection from invasive species.

- Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through reduction and elimination of harmful environmental contaminants.

Research, Planning, and Demonstration

- Improve natural resource data management, conservation, and use statewide through the acquisition, management, and distribution of critical natural resource data by funding efforts to generate natural resource “foundation documents” to increase accuracy, efficiency, and ease of access to the data (including maps, inventories, and surveys).
- Address emerging issues and provide critical information to assist in our understanding and wise management of natural resources.
- Support research, planning, and/or demonstration projects that protect and conserve sensitive lands and surface and ground water resources, and ecologic integrity.
- Support evaluation of climate change impacts and reduction strategies.
- Support community-based conservation planning.

Encourage Participation in Outdoor Recreation, Hunting and Fishing

- Promote interest and participation in angling, hunting, outdoor recreation, and environmental and natural resource education. Partnerships to accomplish this goal are encouraged.
- Acquire, enhance, construct, manage, and maintain a variety of accessible outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state.

Public Education and Information

- Provide public dissemination of important natural resource information so that we have informed citizens able to assist public and private planners and resource managers in managing our natural resources.

- Promote environmental literacy of Minnesota’s students and citizens so that they can apply informed decision-making processes to maintain a sustainable lifestyle.

Selection Criteria

- Review projects based on the following criteria: meeting priority goals, leverage, technical standards, capabilities to manage projects, multiple benefits, and the likelihood of meaningful results.

D. STRATEGIES - SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Priority will be given to projects providing benefits to multiple natural resources or to projects providing multiple benefits:

- Identify, protect, and enhance strategic land areas that make the largest contribution to multiple benefits for conservation and increase the management of those lands to enhance the conservation, quality, and diversity of natural resources.
- Establish statewide highest value habitat corridors using consistent conservation biology methodology and criteria for habitat, water quality and quantity, and native species.
- Acquire the most recent and accurate baseline natural resource data on a regular basis – data such as topography, parcel and land cover, soil and geological survey, and ground water quality and quantity.
- Identify and manage lands suited for human activity by using best management conservation practices to minimize the negative effects on natural resources.
- Increase understanding of potential effects of climate change on resources and develop strategies for reducing the impact of climate change on natural resources.
- Increase understanding of effects of contaminants on natural resources, including ground water, and develop strategies for reducing contamination.

- Increase public understanding of the need for better conservation, preservation, and restoration of Minnesota's habitats and landscapes.
- Develop strategies for delivery of environmental education to Minnesota students and residents at school, home, work, and play.
- Develop strategies to prevent introductions and reduce spread of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and restore or reestablish terrestrial or aquatic habitats impacted by invasive species.
- Develop land use strategies for sustainable, renewable energy production (electricity and fuels) that protect, enhance and restore native species, water quality, habitat, and prairies.
- Evaluate renewable energy options in Minnesota, including energy conservation, based on greenhouse gas and other emissions reductions, surface and ground water use, effects on the economy, and use by the electric and transportation sectors.

E. OUTCOMES

- Funding recommendations are consistent with and accelerate implementation of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan and other related natural resource plans or recommendations, including
 - Forest Resource Council Guidelines
 - Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information
 - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources plans
 - Scientific and Natural Areas Program Long Range Plan
 - Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Implementation Plan
 - Aquatic Management Area Acquisition Plan
 - Wildlife Strategic Plan
 - State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency GreenPrint for Minnesota: State Plan for Environmental Education
 - Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group final report
 - Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council priorities
 - Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Park Policy Plan
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- Complete acquisition of baseline natural resource data, including the County Biological Survey, Soil Survey, wetlands inventory, restorable wetlands inventory, and the geologic atlas by 2020.
 - Funding recommendations in the aggregate include work in all ecoregions, as defined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
 - To the extent possible, funding recommendations support the creation and continuation of “green jobs” in Minnesota.

Appendix A

Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan:
Executive Summary and Short Description of
Recommendations