

LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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Strategic investment of lottery-generated environmental funds to address range of land, water, and habitat issues in Minnesota

~\$38.4 million secured for 47 projects around the state

(St. Paul, MN, May 10, 2013) – \$38.4 million from Minnesota’s Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (“Trust Fund”) has been appropriated to 47 individual projects around the state. The bill containing the appropriations, which recently passed the Minnesota Legislature with strong bi-partisan support, was based on project recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). Governor Dayton signed the bill into law on May 9, thereby approving funds for all of the projects contained in the bill.

Generated by profits from the Minnesota State Lottery since 1991, Trust Fund dollars are constitutionally-dedicated by Minnesota voters to ensure a long-term, stable source of funds for protecting and enhancing the state’s environment and natural resources.

Rep. Jean Wagenius, bill author in the House and Co-Chair of the LCCMR, noted, “The Trust Fund allows Minnesotans to invest in some of the best, most cutting-edge solutions for tackling challenges facing our lands and waters. For example, this funding establishes a new, first-of-its-kind aquatic invasive species research center at the University of Minnesota that will be at the forefront of dealing with the threats of Asian carp and zebra mussels.”

According to Sen. Kari Dziedzic, bill author in the Senate, “From improving groundwater quality to seeking out solutions for white nose bat syndrome to providing additional outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state, the projects funded through the LCCMR process provide critical research and investment that will improve and protect our quality of life, our environment, and our economy in Minnesota.”

Projects funded by the bill will produce broad and diverse benefits for Minnesota’s environment and natural resources statewide by providing:

- Information gathering, mapping, and planning efforts that are essential for effective natural resource management, including projects that survey, map, and interpret data on Minnesota’s groundwater, surface water, plant and animal habitat, invasive species, and more.
- Land acquisitions permanently protecting approximately 1,200 acres, including over 900 acres of habitat in forests, prairies, wetlands, shorelands, and grasslands, and nearly 300 acres in parks, trails, and the state landscape arboretum.
- Land restorations of an estimated 9,300 acres of habitat and 6 miles of shoreline through seed collection, prescribed burns, soil preparation, native vegetation installation, invasive species control and removal, and structural improvements.
- Research and analysis advancing our knowledge and providing strategies and recommendations for addressing issues relating to invasive species control, water quality and quantity, bioremediation and wastewater treatment, renewable energy, forestry, species protection, conservation grazing, and more.
- Education, outreach, and technical assistance that will educate and provide training on topics including ecology, plants and wildlife, land protection, invasive species, and outdoor recreation.

A few specific project highlights include separate efforts to reverse declining moose populations in northeastern Minnesota and declining bee pollinators statewide by enhancing the habitat resources available to each; continued work toward statewide completion of the Minnesota Biological Survey, County Geologic Atlases, and an update of the National Wetlands Inventory; and a general overall focus on invasive species control involving distinct efforts pertaining to emerald ash borer, garlic mustard, zebra mussels, common carp, Asian carp, and other emerging invasive species.

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The LCCMR's recommendations for project funding were the product of a competitive, multi-step proposal and selection process. The LCCMR issued a request for proposal in December 2011. In response, 169 proposals requesting a total of approximately \$155 million were received – more than \$4 requested for every \$1 available. Sixty-five of these proposals were called in to present and answer questions before the LCCMR and from this pool 46 projects were recommended to receive a portion of the \$38.4 million appropriated. Additionally the legislature added one project for a total of 47 projects.

Projects can begin work on July 1, 2013, when the dollars from the Trust Fund first become available. Additional information on individual projects and the LCCMR proposal and funding process can be found on the LCCMR's website at www.lccmr.leg.mn.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund is a permanent dedicated fund in the Minnesota state treasury that was established by 77% voter approval of a constitutional amendment in 1988. The amendment directs forty percent of the net proceeds of the Minnesota State Lottery, or approximately seven cents of every dollar spent on playing the lottery, into the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is intended to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for innovative and far-sighted activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

The LCCMR has already begun its process for making its 2014 recommendations. A request for proposal was issued in March with proposals due June 7. Approximately \$29.6 million is expected to be available. Proposals received by the June 7 deadline will be considered by the LCCMR in October 2013.

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

The LCCMR is made up of 17 members (5 Senators, 5 Representatives, 5 citizens appointed by the governor, 1 citizen appointed by the Senate, and 1 citizen appointed by the House). The function of the LCCMR is to make funding recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963. Since then over \$735 million has been appropriated to more than 1,700 projects recommended to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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