

LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pollinator and moose decline, invasive carp, water quality, outdoor engagement and more are focus of Lottery funds investment

~\$29 million secured for 71 environmental projects around the state

(St. Paul, MN, May 12, 2014) – \$29 million from Minnesota’s Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (“Trust Fund”) has been appropriated to 71 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.

“There are a lot of great projects for Minnesota in this bill,” noted Rep. John Persell, bill author in the House. “These funds are enabling some of the state’s best and brightest to tackle challenges such as invasive carp, declining pollinators, and cleaning up our lakes and rivers. These projects will help ensure that our children and grandchildren have a clean and diverse Minnesota similar to the one we’ve all been fortunate to know and enjoy.”

Sen. Kari Dziedzic, bill author in the Senate, explained, “From cutting-edge research at university campuses around the state to engaging youth with the outdoors to expanding parks and trails to developing improved wastewater treatment and agricultural practices, these investments are going to improve and protect our environment and our quality of life in Minnesota.”

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

- Research and analysis advancing our knowledge and providing strategies and recommendations for addressing issues relating to terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, water conservation, land management, wastewater treatment, species protection, alternative agriculture practices, waste re-utilization, and renewable energy.
- Inventory, monitoring, mapping, and planning efforts to guide natural resource management, including projects that survey, map, or interpret data pertaining to pollinators, invasive species, water resources, species and habitat distributions, land use, climate change, and more.
- Education, outreach, demonstration, and technical assistance that will engage and educate on topics including pollinators, invasive species, climate change, renewable energy, ecology, water quality, habitat conservation and more, with a particular emphasis on involving under-represented and under-served students and communities in the outdoors.
- Permanent protection of approximately 500 acres of natural areas, including acquisition of about 250 acres of habitat having rare or unique ecological significance and acquisition and development of about 250 acres for regional and local parks and trails.
- Restoration and enhancement of an estimated 1,440 acres of habitat through seed collection, prescribed burns, soil preparation, native vegetation installation, invasive species control, and monitoring and evaluation.

A few specific project highlights include:

- Efforts examining pollinator decline and education on actions that can be taken to counteract the decline.
- Research aimed at understanding and reversing declining moose populations in northeastern Minnesota.

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- Initiatives pertaining to water quality impacts and treatment and remediation options for a variety of contaminants including antibiotics, pharmaceuticals, endocrine disruptors, pesticides, and excess nutrients.
- Efforts evaluating control methods for invasive carp, emerald ash borer, and other invasive pests.
- Research and development of a variety of innovative renewable energy technologies and applications involving solar, geothermal, and waste re-utilization.
- Expansion of the Mesabi Trail in northern Minnesota and the establishment of a new park north of Stillwater bordered by the St. Croix River and Brown's Creek State Trail.

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 March 2013. In response, 192 proposals requesting a total of approximately \$112 million were received – nearly \$4 requested for every \$1 available. Ninety-four of these proposals were called in to present and answer questions before the LCCMR and from this pool 71 projects were recommended to receive a portion of the \$29 million appropriated.

Projects can begin work on July 1, 2014, 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 2015 recommendations. A request for proposal was issued in December 2013 with proposals due March 28. Approximately \$44 million is expected to be available. A total of 152 proposals requesting a total of \$126.3 million were received by the deadline and will be considered by the LCCMR in June and July 2014.

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 nearly \$800 million has been appropriated to more than 1,800 projects recommended to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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