



LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

100 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.
ROOM 65 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-1201

Phone: (651) 296-2406

Email: lccmr@lccmr.leg.mn

Web: www.lccmr.leg.mn

TTY: (651) 296-9896 or 1-800-657-3550

Susan Thornton, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Banker, (651) 296-2668, mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn

25th Anniversary of Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

(St. Paul, MN, May 20, 2015) – Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund ("Trust Fund") this year marks its 25th year of providing support for the protection and enhancement of Minnesota's environment and natural resources. Established by 77% voter approval of an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution in 1988, the first funding for projects became available from the Trust Fund in 1991. Since then the Trust Fund has provided more than \$425 million to over 900 projects benefitting every county in the state.

The Trust Fund is a permanent, constitutionally-dedicated fund in the Minnesota state treasury that was established by Minnesota voters to provide a long-term, consistent, and stable source of funding for the "public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources." The money in the Trust Fund is generated through the contribution of 40% of the net proceeds of the Minnesota State Lottery (approximately seven cents of every dollar spent playing the lottery) along with income from stock and bond investment of the money deposited into the fund.

Money from the Trust Fund is awarded to projects through a competitive, multi-step proposal and selection process overseen by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), a 17-member commission in the Minnesota Legislature made up of five state senators, five state representatives, and seven appointed citizen members. Once project selections are finalized and approved by the legislature and the governor, the LCCMR has oversight over the projects funded until they reach completion.

"The goal of the LCCMR for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund is to provide support for innovative projects that can achieve multiple ecological and public benefits for Minnesota," said LCCMR Director Susan Thornton. "Through this fund the aim is to facilitate and promote wise stewardship of our state's unique natural resources for ourselves and future generations."

Of the approximately 900 projects funded since 1991, most individual projects have pertained to multiple environment and natural resources subject areas. The percentage of the total projects pertaining to various subject areas is as follows:

- Biological Diversity: 61.78% of projects
- Natural Areas and Habitat: 59.86% of projects
- Recreation: 41.26% of projects
- Natural Resource Information and Planning: 38.84% of projects
- Water Resources: 30.12% of projects
- Environmental Education/Outreach: 18.37% of projects
- Agriculture/Forestry/Mining: 10.15% of projects
- Invasive Species: 6.71% of projects
- Renewable Energy: 4.51% of projects
- Historic Preservation: 0.21% of projects

In honor of the 25th Anniversary of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund there will be a short program on Thursday, May 21 at Steamboat Landing in Snelling State Park as part of Wilderness Inquiry's 7th Annual Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures Partner Paddle, a recipient of Trust Fund support over the years. The Partner Paddle is from 1:30-4:30 PM and the program will occur within the window of 2:45-3:15 PM after approximately 100 participants paddle down the Mississippi River from Hidden Falls Regional Park in 24-foot Voyageur canoes. Speaking at the event will be LCCMR Co-Chair Nancy Gibson and several Trust Fund project managers:

- Marla Spivak – University of Minnesota: Bee and pollinator research
- Carrol Henderson – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Impacts of Deepwater Horizon oil spill on Minnesota loons and pelicans
- Peter Sorensen – University of Minnesota: Invasive carp biology and management
- Matt Holland – Pheasants Forever: Minnesota Habitat Corridors Partnership

Jeff Broberg, Sen. Gary Dahms, Sen. Kari Dziedzic, William Faber, Nancy Gibson, Rep. Tom Hackbarth
Bonnie Harper-Lore, Sen. John Hoffman, Gary Lamppa, Rep. Denny McNamara, Norman Moody, Rep. John Persell
Sen. David Tomassoni, Rep. Paul Torkelson, Rep. Jean Wagenius, Sen. Torrey Westrom, Della Young

25th Anniversary of ENRTF – Page 2

A related media advisory for the event and directions to Steamboat Landing are attached.

A list of 25 project highlights from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund's 25 years of funding is attached. For more information on the Trust Fund and the LCCMR, please visit <http://www.lccmr.leg.mn>. For more information on the 7th Annual Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures Partner Paddle, visit: <http://bit.ly/1GpUnS8>.

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

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25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)

1. PROTECTING MINNESOTA'S POLLINATORS

Since 2010 the ENRTF has been supporting a variety of initiatives aimed at improving understanding and responding to population declines in pollinators in Minnesota and throughout the country. Highlights include:

- Research on impacts of neonicotinoid insecticides on bees and other pollinators;
- Development and assessment of practices to improve pollinator habitat;
- Surveys documenting the diversity and distribution of bees and other pollinators;
- Conservation breeding of endangered and threatened pollinator species;
- Education and outreach efforts, including launch of a new pollinator education center at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.



2. MINNESOTA WILDLIFE BENEFITTING FROM HABITAT CORRIDORS PARTNERSHIP

Between 2001-2014 the ENRTF supported one of the most successful natural resources efforts in Minnesota history, the Habitat Conservation Partnership. 15 partner organizations coordinated efforts protecting, restoring, and enhancing fragmented landscapes and connecting high quality habitat on over 179,000 acres throughout greater Minnesota, including over 104,000 acres restored or enhanced, over 60,000 acres enrolled in voluntary conservation easements, and over 14,000 acres purchased for permanent protection and now open to the public.

3. PROTECTING MINNESOTA FROM INVASIVE SPECIES

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been supporting a variety of efforts aimed at the detection, control, management, and eradication of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species throughout Minnesota. Recently this meant helping to establish both the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and the Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center at the University of Minnesota in order to support long-term, coordinated research efforts for the state. Additionally, other efforts since 1991 have focused on purple loosestrife, emerald ash borer, Eurasian watermilfoil, garlic mustard, and common carp.



4. ENGAGING MINNESOTA STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WITH THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Since 2010 the ENRTF has been supporting the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program led by Wilderness Inquiry in partnership with state and federal agencies, non-profits, and local school districts. The program provides unique place-based, hands-on environmental education and recreational experiences that engage disadvantaged youth and families directly with the Mississippi River through hiking, canoeing, fishing, aquatic sampling, camping, and conservation-related summer employment. To date, over 70,000 students, teachers, and families have been served by the program in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area and the program is now expanding to greater Minnesota.

5. IMPACTS OF DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL ON MINNESOTA'S LOONS AND PELICANS

Since 2011 the ENRTF has been supporting research to determine whether populations of two of Minnesota's migratory bird species, specifically common loons and white pelicans, have been impacted by the 2001 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Contamination from petroleum chemicals and the dispersants used on the oil have the potential to create short and long term population declines causing changes in behavior, migratory abilities, reproductive success, and longevity. If a link is documented, Minnesota may be eligible for remediation settlement funds from the Federal Natural Resource Damage Assessment process currently underway, and those funds could be used to help restore populations of these two species in the state.



For more information on these Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund projects and others, visit: www.lccmr.leg.mn



25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)



6. MINNESOTA BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been funding the Minnesota Biological Survey, a systematic, county-by-county survey of the state's natural habitats to identify significant natural areas and collect data on the status, distribution, and ecology of rare plants, rare animals, native plant communities, and functional landscapes throughout the state. To date over 20,000 records of rare features have been recorded and the effort is nearing completion as surveys are underway in the last three remaining counties. This information is used to guide natural resource management and decision-making throughout the state.

7. MINNESOTA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been providing support to expand, manage, and develop Minnesota's State Park System, which permanently protects and provides public access to some of Minnesota's most diverse, unique, and pristine natural landscapes. More than half of Minnesota's current 75 state parks and state recreation areas have benefitted from ENRTF investment in some form. Some highlights include Tettegouche State Park in Lake County, Big Bog State Recreation Area in Beltrami County, Whitewater State Park in Winona County, Interstate State Park in Chisago County, Minneopa State Park in Blue Earth County, and Itasca State Park in Becker, Clearwater, and Hubbard Counties.



8. MINNESOTA STATE TRAILS

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been providing support to expand and develop Minnesota's State Trail System, which provides multi-use public recreation opportunities to experience Minnesota's diverse and unique landscapes. More than half of Minnesota's current 25 state trails have benefitted from ENRTF investment. Some highlights include the Gitchi-Gami State Trail in northeastern Minnesota, Gateway State Trail and Brown's Creek State Trail near the Twin Cities, Paul Bunyan State Trail in northern Minnesota, Casey Jones State Trail in southwestern Minnesota, Glacial Lakes State Trail in central Minnesota, and Root River State Trail in southeastern Minnesota.



9. RESEARCH TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE MINNESOTA'S WATER QUALITY

Since 1991 the ENRTF has supported numerous research initiatives aimed at protecting and improving the water quality of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams. Highlights include:

- Development of technologies to treat or eliminate antibiotic-resistant bacteria, hormones, and pharmaceutical compounds from wastewater.
- Evaluation of the sources of contaminants of emerging concern and their impacts on aquatic ecosystems.
- Assessment of the impacts of agricultural practices on erosion, nutrient flow, and sediment flow.
- Investigation of the sources, bioavailability, and mitigation options for mercury in aquatic ecosystems.





25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)

10. MINNESOTA: A HISTORY OF THE LAND

Between 1999-2004 the ENRTF provided support for a prominent environmental education effort in the form of an award-winning PBS documentary series called *Minnesota: A History of the Land* that chronicled how Minnesota's landscapes and environment have changed from the time of glaciers to present day impacts such as forestry, agriculture, and urban sprawl. The documentary series was supplemented by educational materials and outreach efforts to schools and public audiences around the state. To date the series has been viewed by over one million people and is used by over half of all K-12 school districts for classroom instruction about Minnesota's environment.



11. MINNESOTA COUNTY GEOLOGIC ATLAS

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been funding the Minnesota County Geologic Atlas Program, a systematic, county-by-county effort that collects and interprets information on the geology of Minnesota to define and map groundwater resources and the connections between groundwater and surface waters and understand the pollution sensitivity of groundwater. Geologic atlases are essential to the sound and sustainable management and protection of Minnesota's water resources. Presently 37% of the state has been completed and the effort is on target to be completed statewide within the next 15 years.

12. MINNESOTA SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

Since 1991 the ENRTF has been a major supporter of Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas Program, an effort to preserve and perpetuate the state's ecological diversity and ensure no single rare feature is lost from any region of the state, including landforms, fossil remains, plant and animal communities, rare and endangered species, and other unique biotic or geological features. Over half of Minnesota's current 139 scientific and natural areas have been permanently protected, restored, or managed through ENRTF support. Some highlights include Prairie Coteau in Pipestone County, Lost 40 in Itasca County, Pembina Trail Preserve in Polk County, Morton Outcrops in Renville County, Seminary Fen in Carver County, and Kellogg-Weaver Dunes in Wabasha County.



13. MINNESOTA WILDLIFE BENEFITTING FROM METRO CONSERVATION CORRIDORS PARTNERSHIP

Since 2003 the ENRTF has been supporting the Metro Conservation Corridors Partnership, a coordinated effort that has involved 13 different organizations in protecting, restoring, and enhancing remaining high quality natural lands in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. So far the effort has benefitted more than 20,000 acres and 37 miles of shoreline, including over 11,000 acres permanently protected through purchase or conservation easement and over 9,000 acres restored or enhanced.



25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)



14. NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY FOR MINNESOTA

Since 2008 the ENRTF has been supporting an update of the National Wetlands Inventory for Minnesota to help support efforts aimed at ensuring healthy wetlands and clean water for the state. The National Wetlands Inventory is an important tool used by both the public and private sector for wetland management, land management, conservation planning, and more. The previous inventory is more than 30 years out of date and significant impacts from urban development, agriculture, mining, road construction, and utility project have occurred since. The update of the inventory for the entire state is expected to be completed by approximately 2020.

15. MINNESOTA'S METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PARKS

Since 1993 the ENRTF has been providing support to expand, manage, and develop the Twin Cities Metropolitan Regional Park and Trail System. The Twin Cities is host to a nationally renowned system consisting of 51 parks and park reserves containing more than 54,000 acres and 300 miles of interconnected trails that provide outdoor recreation while preserving green space for wildlife habitat and other natural resource benefits. Some highlights of regional parks that have benefitted from ENRTF investment include Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park in Hennepin County, Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park in Scott County, Como Regional Park in Ramsey County, Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Dakota County, and Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park in Anoka County.



16. MINNESOTA SOIL SURVEY

Between 1997-2014 the ENRTF provided funding that helped complete the Minnesota Statewide Soil Survey, which systematically collected and mapped data pertaining to soil types and soil properties for each county in the state. This information is used by governments, farmers, and other businesses for purposes including protection and restoration of soil, water, wetlands, and habitat; agricultural productivity and soil management; and building construction.

17. RESEARCH OF UNIQUE ORGANISMS IN MINNESOTA'S SOUDAN UNDERGROUND MINE

Since 2010 the ENRTF has been supporting research efforts studying unique microorganisms never before characterized by science that were discovered bubbling out of abandoned drill holes a half mile underground in an inactive iron mine that is now part of a state park in northern Minnesota. The organisms are of interest because they thrive in an extreme environment of a very salty brine high in dissolved metals and devoid of oxygen. Research has so far uncovered potential applications of using the microorganisms for bioremediation of mine waters, bioenergy production, and development of a biocontrol for white nose syndrome, a disease that is decimating bat populations around the country.



For more information on these Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund projects and others, visit: www.lccmr.leg.mn



25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)

18. RESTORING MINNESOTA'S TROUT STREAMS

Since 2007 the ENRTF has been supporting the restoration of trout streams in southeastern Minnesota through on-the-ground restorations and outreach and technical assistance to increase the capacity of local conservation efforts to implement future projects. To date these efforts have directly improved more than five miles of streams to better support habitat for trout and other species, and dozens of outreach and technical assistance efforts have been conducted involving over one thousand conservation professionals and volunteers.



19. LOCAL INITIATIVES GRANTS FOR MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES

Since 1991 the ENRTF has enabled a variety of grant programs to support local and community initiatives throughout the state. The goal of these programs is to foster intergovernmental and public/private partnerships by providing matching grants to private organizations and local governments for "on the ground" environmental and conservation projects. Funded projects have occurred in every county of the state and have included a variety of different efforts in the areas of clean water, outdoor recreation, habitat protection, habitat restoration, environmental education, and local and regional parks and trails.

20. MINNESOTA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Since 2008 the ENRTF has been supporting the creation of a Breeding Bird Atlas for Minnesota to provide a comprehensive systematic field survey of the occurrence, distribution, diversity, and breeding status of bird species within every region of the state. Minnesota is one of only seven states in the country that has yet to complete a Breeding Bird Atlas, which are an important tool for setting conservation priorities, developing conservation plans, and guiding habitat protection, restoration, and management efforts. Nearly 1,000 volunteers have contributed to this effort, providing over 350,000 observations documenting approximately 250 bird species in the state. The Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas is expected to be completed by June, 2017.



21. ENGAGING MINNESOTA YOUTH IN ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Since 2008 the ENRTF has been supporting environmental education efforts aimed at engaging youth in adoption and implementation of energy conservation and renewable energy projects in their schools and communities. This includes the two award winning programs Schools Cutting Carbon and Youth Energy Summit (YES!). Together these initiatives alone have so far directly involved nearly 10,000 students in the implementation of over 500 projects at approximately 200 middle schools, high schools, and colleges around the state while engaging or impacting an additional 200,000 students, community members, and local businesses.



25 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MN'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND (ENRTF)



22. UNDERSTANDING MINNESOTA'S LAKE SUPERIOR

Since 1997 the ENRTF has been supporting a variety of ongoing research initiatives to improve our understanding of the condition, functioning, and processes of Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world and one of Minnesota's most unique and treasured natural resources. Highlights include:

- Acquisition and modification of the Blue Heron research vessel for the Large Lakes Observatory at the University of Minnesota—Duluth.
- Collection of baseline data on aquatic communities, nutrient chemistry, temperature, and currents in the lake.
- Monitoring and evaluation of recent significant changes in the lake, including water temperatures, decreasing ice cover, increasing nutrient loads, decreasing biological productivity, increasing invasive species, and changes in species abundance and distribution.

23. MINNESOTA CONSERVATION APPRENTICE ACADEMY

Since 2010 the ENRTF has been supporting the Minnesota Conservation Apprenticeship Academy, a unique program working to prepare Minnesota's next generation of conservation professionals to meet tomorrow's natural resource challenges. Many of the state's most experienced conservation practitioners are nearing retirement and so this program pairs college students with these practitioners so that their practical knowledge, skills, and experience can be transferred to this next generation. To date nearly 150 students participating in this program have been placed in conservation districts located throughout the state and 96% of all past participants who have completed the program have indicated that they are currently employed or continuing their education in the natural resources field.



24. CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR MINNESOTA'S FUTURE

Since 1997 the ENRTF has been supporting a variety of renewable energy research initiatives to develop technologies able to produce energy in a cleaner and more sustainable manner. Highlights include:

- Development, testing, and demonstration of a variety of technologies that utilize nutrients and waste products in wastewater to generate biofuel products.
- Development, testing, and demonstration of a system that uses wind energy to generate nitrogen fertilizer and uses hydrogen to store wind energy for electrical energy generation.
- Development and testing of a new method for producing solar cells that is faster and more energy efficient while using more common and less toxic materials in the production.



25. IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS TO MINNESOTA WATERS

Since 1993 the ENRTF has provided support to improve public access to lakes and rivers statewide through the acquisition, development, and construction of public boat accesses, fishing piers, and shore fishing stations. Every county in the state has benefitted from this program, which has provided over 120 fishing piers, over 30 shore fishing stations, and over 40 public boat access sites, including the Gray's Bay Public Water Access on Lake Minnetonka – the largest boat access in the state.



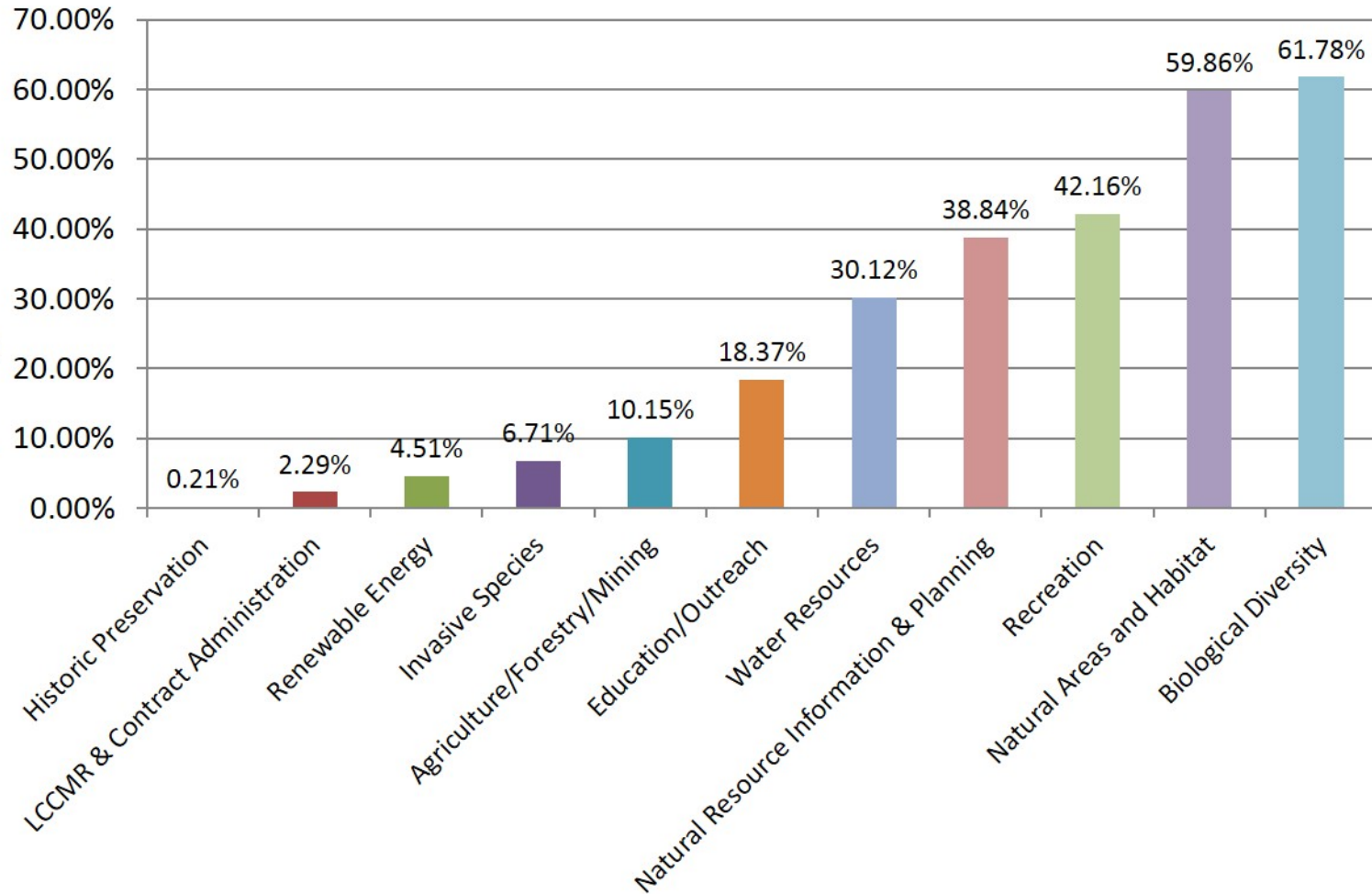
For more information on these Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund projects and others, visit: www.lccmr.leg.mn

1991-2014 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations

% of Appropriations Pertaining to Individual Subject Areas*

(*Most appropriations pertain to multiple subject areas)

Since 1991, the Trust Fund has provided \$428 million in support to approximately 900 projects benefitting every county in the state.





****MEDIA ADVISORY****

**7th Annual Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) Partner Paddle
& 25th Anniversary Celebration of Minnesota's Environmental and Natural Resources
Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

Why: The UWCA – a program run by Wilderness Inquiry in partnership with Mississippi River Fund, Mississippi National River & Recreation Area, Minnesota DNR, and many other partners – offers numerous opportunities for Minnesota youth, teachers, families, and community groups to experience the outdoors close to home. Since its inception in 2008, the UWCA has served more than 70,000 youth and families in Minnesota. Once per year, UWCA partners get together to paddle the Mississippi and get ready for the year ahead.

Minnesota's ENRTF celebrates its 25th Anniversary. Since 1991, the Fund has provided over \$425 million to over 900 projects to protect and enhance the state's "air, water, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources," including funding for UWCA.

Who: John Anfinson, Superintendent, Mississippi National River & Recreation Area
Nancy Gibson, Co-Chair, Legislative-Citizen Commission on MN Resources
Carrol Henderson, Director, MN DNR Non-Game Wildlife Program
Matt Holland, Director of Conservation, Pheasants Forever
Greg Lais, Executive Director, Wilderness Inquiry
Katie Nyberg, Executive Director, Mississippi River Fund
Peter Sorenson, Professor, University of Minnesota
Marla Spivak, Professor, University of Minnesota

When: Thursday, May 21st
UWCA Partner Paddle: 1:30 – 4:30 PM
Program for 25th Anniversary of ENRTF: Approx. window of 2:45-3:25 PM

Where: UWCA Partner Paddle: Starting and Ending at Hidden Falls Regional Park (North Gate)
Map: <https://goo.gl/N2pXEZ>
Program for 25th Anniversary of ENRTF: Steamboat Landing in Fort Snelling Park
Map: <http://bit.ly/1c5sySu>

Details: Close to one hundred participants will paddle 24-foot Voyageur canoes on the Mississippi River from Hidden Falls to Fort Snelling State Park and back. They will stop at Steamboat Landing to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Minnesota's ENRTF. Speakers will present at Steamboat Landing during approx. window of 2:45 – 3:15 PM:

- Marla Spivak, Bee pollination research
- Carrol Henderson, Effect of BP oil spill on MN loons and pelicans
- Peter Sorenson, Invasive carp biology and management
- Matt Holland, Habitat Corridors Partners project
- Nancy Gibson, State of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on MN Resources

Photos are available on request.

More information: www.wildernessinquiry.org/programs/urban-wilderness-canoe-adventures



Mississippi River

historic fort

Steamboat Landing

55

chapel

Visitor Center

Walking path

To get to Steamboat Landing, you will need to drive to Fort Snelling State Park (not Historic Fort Snelling) and park at the Thomas C. Savage Visitor Center. You will need a State Park Day Pass, which can be purchased at the entrance for \$5. From the Visitor Center, it is a 5-minute walk down to Steamboat Landing.

Pike Island

Parking

Mendota Bridge