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\$26 million strategic investment to provide long-term benefits to Minnesota's environment

2010 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund projects selected

(St. Paul, MN, October 19, 2009) – The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) has completed its annual process for making recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature on funding for environment and natural resources projects around the state. The LCCMR is recommending the 2010 Legislature provide a total of approximately \$26 million from the state's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund ("Trust Fund") to 48 projects. Together the projects will help ensure multiple long-term goals benefitting Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

The 48 projects being recommended address the full range of priorities specified in the LCCMR's 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP). Those priorities were focused on innovative ways of addressing issues pertaining to water, energy, habitat, invasive species, and the public understanding of Minnesota's natural resources. Examples of recommended projects include:

- Acceleration of Minnesota's County Geological Atlas program, which is working to provide essential information statewide for sustainable use and protection of groundwater resources.
- Research into protecting Minnesota's waters from emerging contaminants, such as endocrine disrupting compounds, that threaten both human and aquatic health.
- Advancement and demonstration of renewable energy options that may be able to help Minnesota reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.
- Expansion and enhanced protection of natural areas in state parks and unique habitat throughout the state.
- New and continued efforts to prevent and control the spread of invasive species, including European Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard, Emerald Ash Borer, and Round Goby.
- Critical data gathering and planning that will guide conservation of state bird populations.
- Environmental education programs designed to help reduce the "nature deficit" phenomenon in children and adults.
- Study and protection of a unique, possibly only-of-its-kind in the world, habitat and species recently discovered deep underground in Minnesota's Soudan Underground Mine State Park.

"This year's RFP produced a flood of funding requests having exceptional merit. As a result, this year's project selection process was amongst the most competitive processes for Trust Fund dollars," said LCCMR Director Susan Thornton. "Through working together as a group, the Commission selected a strong suite of projects that will ensure multiple cross-benefits for the state of Minnesota."

A total of approximately \$26 million is available from the Trust Fund for recommendation by the LCCMR in 2010. The LCCMR's recommendations will now go before the 2010 Legislature for consideration and approval during the legislative session beginning February 4. Recommended projects will begin work on July 1, 2010, when the funds become available.

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In response to the LCCMR's 2010 proposal process, proposals requesting a total of approximately \$163.8 million were received. Combined requests amounted to more than \$6 requested for every \$1 available, making for a very competitive process. Of the original 240 proposals received, 85 were requested to give presentations and answer questions before the LCCMR. From this reduced pool, 48 projects received a recommendation for some portion of the \$26 million available.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund was created in 1988. Forty percent of the net proceeds, or approximately seven cents of every dollar spent on playing the lottery, goes into the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, which is then managed and invested for continued growth by the State Board of Investment. The LCCMR can make recommendations on an annual cycle for up to 5.5% of the existing market value of the Trust Fund. Expenditures from the Trust Fund must be used for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources

Additional information on the LCCMR's 2010 proposal recommendations and the 2010 proposal process can be found online at: www.lccmr.leg.mn.

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, and one citizen appointed by each the Senate and the House). The function of the LCCMR (formerly LCMR) 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. These projects help maintain and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963. Since 1963, over \$600 million has been appropriated to more than 1,250 projects recommended by the Commission to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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