



## LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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## 65 environmental projects throughout Minnesota recommended for \$45.3 million in funding

*Funding would come from the MN Lottery-generated Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund*

(St. Paul, MN, October 23, 2017) – The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) met on October 17 and selected 65 environment and natural resources projects totaling \$45.3 million to recommend to the 2018 Minnesota Legislature for funding. The recommendations are the result of a competitive request for proposal and involved a multi-stage process for allocating funds available from the Minnesota Lottery-generated Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). If approved by the legislature the projects will begin in July 2018.

The LCCMR's 2018 Request for Proposal (RFP) sought projects to support seven priority issue areas. The 65 projects being recommended for funding address this spectrum of issue areas and will collectively benefit every region of the state. Some highlights by funding priority include:

- Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information: 12 projects including the Minnesota Geological Atlas and the Minnesota Biodiversity Atlas, which provide essential information for understanding and protecting Minnesota's wildlife such as plants, pollinators, birds, animals, habitat, and water and groundwater resources.
- Water Resources: 11 projects including efforts to develop road salt alternatives and characterize emerging pathogens in Minnesota water, as well as an innovative pilot program at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to provide technical assistance to greater Minnesota wastewater treatment operators to optimize existing treatment plants and ponds, resulting in lower costs for communities and cleaner water for all Minnesotans.
- Environmental Education: 11 projects, including "Youth Energy Summit (YES!)" to mobilize over 20 youth-led teams in Minnesota communities to complete water quality projects and "Get Outdoors After School", a program to equip out-of-school youth organizations across Minnesota with knowledge, skills and resources to incorporate outdoor nature activities into after-school programs and engage under-privileged children with the outdoors.
- Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species: 6 projects that provide science-based solutions for preventing and controlling zebra mussels, carp, toxic algae, Palmer amaranth, hybrid cattails and other invasive organisms that threaten the health of the state's prairies, forests, wetlands, and agricultural resources.
- Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy: 5 projects including research at University of Minnesota-Morris to develop a solar powered robot to control weeds on agricultural lands while reducing fossil-fuel and herbicide use and a University of Minnesota-Twin Cities project to create renewable energy from solar windows.
- Methods to Protect or Restore Land, Water, and Habitat: 7 projects including wetland and forest restoration, developing "BioMulch" a biodegradable material for use in vegetable and fruit production that could reduce waste and revolutionize horticulture in Minnesota, and accelerating the States Nongame Wildlife Fund by providing a 1:1 match to the approximately \$1 million that citizens donate annually, primarily through a checkoff on their state tax returns.
- Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation: 12 projects including the Local Parks and Trails Grant Program at the Department of Natural Resources as well as extensions of the Mesabi Trail and Superior Hiking Trail in northern Minnesota and the Harmony State Trail and Mississippi Bluff lands State Trail in southern Minnesota.

Jeff Broberg, Sen. Gary Dahms, Sen. Kari Dziedzic, Rep. Rob Ecklund, William Faber, Nancy Gibson, Rep. Josh Heintzeman, Rep. Joe Hoppe, Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen, Nicole Kessler, Gary Lamppa, Norman Moody, Rep. Jim Newberger, Sen. David Tomassoni, Rep. Jean Wagenius, Sen. Torrey Westrom, Della Young

## **LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES**

In response to the RFP, LCCMR received selection process 217 proposals requesting a total of approximately \$183 million were received. Nearly \$4 was requested for every \$1 available, making for a very competitive process. Of the original 217 proposals received, 102 were requested to give presentations and answer questions before the LCCMR. As a result, 65 proposals received a recommendation for funding.

The Commission will finalize recommendations at its November and December meetings. The recommendations will then be presented to the legislature for consideration during the legislative session beginning February 20, 2018. Projects receiving an appropriation through the legislature and signed by the Governor will begin work on July 1, 2018, when the funds become available.

Additional information on the LCCMR's 2018 proposal recommendations and proposal process can be found online at: [www.lccmr.leg.mn](http://www.lccmr.leg.mn).

### **Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**

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. Since 1991, the Trust Fund has provided approximately \$500 million in support of over 1,000 projects benefitting every county in the state.

### **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.

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