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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MINNESOTA'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO  
BENEFIT FROM STATE-FUNDED PROJECTS**

*Bill Provides ~\$23.5 Million to 72 Projects Around the State*

(St. Paul, MN, May 28, 2008) – A bill based on funding recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) recently adopted by the Minnesota Legislature was signed Friday, May 23, by Governor Tim Pawlenty. A total of nearly \$23.5 million, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, has been appropriated to 72 individual projects around the state. Projects will protect and improve habitat and water quality, collect essential natural resource information, and provide environmental education.

“Minnesotans can be proud of the way their lottery dollars have been spent to benefit our lands, waters, and other natural resources. The effects of this bill will be evident for many generations to come,” said Rep. Jean Wagenius, bill sponsor in the House and Co-Vice Chair of the LCCMR.

“This bill is the product of a very democratic, bipartisan process of legislators and citizens working and deciding together on how to best invest resources to protect and enhance our state’s environment and natural resources,” said Sen. Ellen Anderson, bill sponsor in the Senate. “Thanks to the Trust Fund, Minnesotans will have cleaner waters and better protected natural lands.”

Projects funded by the bill will provide broad and diverse benefits to Minnesota's environment and natural resources, including:

- Acquisition of approximately 3,400 acres to protect forests, wetlands, and other habitat.
- Restoration of an estimated 12,900 acres through soil preparation, native vegetation installation, and exotic and invasive species removal.
- Collection of natural resources information essential for effective planning and management through programs including the Minnesota Soil Survey, County Biological Survey, County Geologic Atlas, and others.
- Research to advance our knowledge and help us address issues relating to climate change, energy production, wildlife and habitat, and water resources.
- Education and outreach to citizens and schoolchildren on issues such as reducing energy use, water quality, and natural resource planning.

The bill containing the LCCMR’s recommendations for project funding was the product of a lengthy, public process. The LCCMR issued a request for proposals in July 2007 and in response received 119 proposals requesting a combined \$98.5 million – more than \$4 requested for every \$1 available. Of the original 119 proposals, 64 were called in to present and answer questions before the LCCMR. From this reduced pool, 37 proposals, containing 72 individual projects, were recommended funding from the nearly \$23.5 million of funding available. Of this total, \$22.866 million was newly available from the Trust Fund in 2008, \$86,000 came from the Great Lakes Protection Account, and \$500,000 was transferred from a project appropriated funds in 2006 that has since been called off.

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The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund was created in 1988. Forty percent of the net proceeds from the Minnesota State Lottery, or approximately seven cents of every dollar spent on playing the lottery, goes into the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The LCCMR makes recommendations on an annual cycle for up to 5.5% of the existing value in the Trust Fund.

The Great Lakes Protection Account is an endowment created in 1986 by a cooperative partnership between the eight states bordering the Great Lakes. Funds from the account can only be used for protecting water quality in the Great Lakes. The LCCMR makes periodic recommendations for allocation of funds available from the account.

In June, the LCCMR is scheduled to begin its process for consideration of projects for funding beginning July 1, 2009. A request for proposals is expected to be issued sometime during Summer 2008.

Additional information on the specific projects allocated funding through the recently adopted bill and the LCCMR proposal and recommendation processes can be found online at: [www.lccmr.leg.mn](http://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 then over \$600 million has been appropriated to over 1,250 projects to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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