

LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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\$22.8 MILLION IN FUNDING RECOMMENDED FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROPOSALS IN MN

(St. Paul, MN, November 9, 2007) – On October 30, 2007 the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) completed its annual process for funding recommendations from the state's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Thirty-six proposals for projects to maintain and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources are recommended to the 2008 Legislature by the LCCMR for a combined \$22.866 million from the Trust Fund beginning July 1, 2008.

The proposals recommended for 2008 funding are from across the state and address the full range of priorities that were the focus of an LCCMR request for proposal (RFP). Those priorities pertain to Minnesota's native prairies, water quality, shorelands, invasive species, and foundational information about the state's natural resources. Some examples of proposals recommended include:

- Acquiring and restoring a variety of habitat corridors throughout the state;
- Implementing innovative methods for protecting ecologically sensitive shoreland areas in Minnesota lakes;
- Assessing, acquiring, and restoring Minnesota's remnant native prairies;
- Researching how Minnesota's prairies and forests might react to expected changes in the state's future climate;
- Continued progress on Minnesota's soil survey gathering statewide information essential for the protection and restoration of the state's soils, water, wetlands, and habitats;
- Reducing the carbon footprint of Minnesota's high schools, colleges, and universities;
- Creating the first-ever breeding bird atlas for Minnesota.

"This year's proposals showed a lot of depth in various issue areas. It was challenging to prioritize funding recommendations for about \$23 million when there were over \$98 million in project requests," said LCCMR Co-Chair Rep. Kathy Tingelstad.

Regarding the decision-making process, LCCMR Co-Chair Sen. Jim Vickerman stated, "The Commission worked together closely as a group, all of us relying on one another's diverse perspectives. We can proudly say that unanimous agreement was reached on a strong and diverse package of proposals."

Summing up the final package of recommendations, LCCMR citizen-member Co-Chair David Hartwell explained, "Collectively, the proposed projects we've recommended are going to do an immeasurable amount of good for the environment, natural resources, and people of Minnesota. The amount of land protection and restoration this will ensure for Minnesota is particularly impressive."

The LCCMR's recommendations will now go before the 2008 Legislature for consideration and approval during the next legislative session.

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In response to the LCCMR's RFP for 2008 funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, 118 proposals requesting a combined \$98.5 million were received. With \$22.8 million available from the Trust Fund in 2008, the combined requests amounted to more than \$4 requested for every \$1 available. This ratio made for a competitive proposal process. Of the original 118 proposals, 63 were called in over five days to present and answer questions before the LCCMR. From this reduced pool, 36 proposals received a recommendation for some portion of the \$22.866 million.

This is the second year since what was formerly the LCMR (Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources) was reorganized as the LCCMR, now a joint commission of both legislative and citizen members. It is also the second year since the Commission started making annual funding recommendations as compared to its historical practice of doing so every two years.

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. The LCCMR can make recommendations on an annual cycle for up to 5.5% of the existing value in the Trust Fund.

Additional information on the LCCMR's 2008 proposal recommendations and the 2008 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. Prior to June 1, 2006 over \$525 million has been appropriated to approximately 1,214 projects recommended to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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