

# Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources

## MEMO

**DATE:** March 14, 2022

**SUBJECT:** ENRTF-Funded Activities to Acquire or Improve Land or Buildings (Capital Projects)

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In response to a request from Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) members, staff compiled a list of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)-funded capital projects since 2013. Projects were added to the list of capital projects if they fit the broad definition of capital, i.e., projects that included some activity to acquire or improve land or buildings. Projects were grouped into 11 more narrow categories (as defined below) based on the dominant capital activity planned. The approximate amount of the project budget allocated to capital activities is also shown on the list.

We also examined trends in the number and funding level of capital projects from 2013 to 2021, and the results of this analysis are presented in the attached figure and tables. For the purpose of this analysis, we only counted a project once according to its dominant capital activity. However, projects may have included spending for capital activities in more than one category, such as land acquisition and development of recreational facilities. In these cases, the dollar amounts were split into the appropriate categories.

In all the above calculations, we used the amounts shown in the initial approved work plan budget, and non-capital costs of the projects were, to the best of our ability, not included. In some cases, this means funds may have ultimately been spent differently than shown in this analysis.

## Highlights

- There are different kinds of capital projects; we have identified at least 11 categories.
- 163 ENRTF-funded projects from 2013 to 2021 included activities to acquire or improve land or buildings, with approximately \$169.5 million allocated toward these activities.
- The amount of ENRTF dollars directed towards capital projects has increased from 22% of ENRTF funding to 48% of ENRTF funding from 2013 to 2021.
- The increase has primarily been driven by increased funding for projects to construct recreational facilities and trails.
- The ENRTF has been used to fund two large-scale (>\$1.5 million for a local project) building projects since 2013. These projects were funded in the last 3 years.

## Capital Project Categories

**Building Design and/or Construction** – The design and construction of large buildings and facilities. Examples: visitor centers, learning centers

**Conservation Easements** – Acquisition of easements on private land for conservation.

**Educational Exhibits** – The design and installation of educational exhibits. Examples: kiosks, displays

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**Land Acquisition** – Fee title acquisition of land for recreation, conservation, or other purposes related to natural resources and the environment. Examples: scientific and natural areas, parks

**Recreational Facilities** – The design and construction of recreational facilities and supporting infrastructure. Examples: campgrounds, restrooms, shower facilities, offices, docks, canoe landings, picnic areas, boat wash stations, parking lots, access roads

**Renewable Energy** – The design and construction of renewable energy systems. Examples: solar gardens, biomass boiler systems

**Research and Demonstration** – The design and construction of research facilities, installation of long-term monitoring equipment, and evaluation and demonstration of innovative technologies. Examples: AIS deterrents, wastewater treatment, renewable energy systems

**Restoration (Large-Scale)** – Restoration involving large-scale earth-moving and placement of materials. Examples: shoreline stabilization, grading, stream restoration. Traditional land restoration (plantings, prescribed burns, etc.) was not included.

**Stormwater** – The design and construction of stormwater infrastructure to improve water quality or habitat. Examples: retention basins, rain gardens

**Trails** – The engineering, design, and construction of trails.

**Other** – Projects that don't fall under any other category. Examples: green schoolyards, bison holding facilities

## Attachments

- Table 1. Projects Appropriated ENRTF Funds for Activities to Acquire or Better Land or Buildings (Capital Projects), 2013 to 2021
- Tables 2 to 4 and Figure 1. Summary Tables and Figure.
- LCCMR Memo: Requirements for Bond and Other State-Funded Capital Projects, From December 15, 2021 LCCMR Meeting