

Excerpt from Current Six-Year Strategic Plan for Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (2020)

B. Key Issues and Strategic Framework for Six-Year Strategic Plan

In initial development of the Strategic Plan, several key issues were identified that are having the most pressing impacts on Minnesota's environment and natural resources:

- Land and water habitat fragmentation, degradation, loss, and conversion
- Land use practices
- Transportation
- Energy production and use
- Resource Consumption
- Invasive species

To most strategically address these key issues the following five core areas of potential action were identified and form the strategic framework for this plan:

- Integrated planning
- Critical land protection
- Land and water restoration and protection
- Sustainability practices
- Economic incentives for sustainability

C. Funding Priority Areas of the Request for Proposal

The implementation of the Six-Year Strategic Plan occurs through the LCCMR's proposal and funding process for individual funding cycles, which occur on either an annual or biennial basis. Each funding cycle the LCCMR develops a Request for Proposal (RFP) with specific identified funding priority areas. While the RFP can and does vary from year to year, the funding priority areas generally occur in the following seven broader categories with more specificity for each category identified within the actual RFP:

- Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy
- Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species
- Environmental Education
- Foundational Natural Resource Data and Information
- Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation
- Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat
- Water Resources

D. Goals of Six-Year Strategic Plan

The five core areas identified as the strategic framework for this plan provide an integrated approach to resource conservation and protection. The following goals address one or more of the strategic framework areas.

Land and Water Protection

- Protect and conserve land and water (surface and ground) resources that are important for overall ecosystem integrity.
- Provide protection to fragile or unique natural resources, such as prairies, shorelands, trout streams, ground water resources, surface water flows, wetlands, fens, and aquatic habitat where further development or neglect could cause irreparable harm or loss.

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- Protect land resources such as large contiguous tracts of forests, prairies that are threatened by fragmentation, high quality natural areas such as those listed in the county biological survey, and important habitat areas.
- Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through land protection, acquisition, and land use practices.
- Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through protection from invasive species.
- Protect and promote habitat, native species, and water quality through reduction and elimination of harmful environmental contaminants.

Research, Planning, and Demonstration

- Improve natural resource data management, conservation, and use statewide through the acquisition, management, and distribution of critical natural resource data by funding efforts to generate natural resource "foundation documents" to increase accuracy, efficiency, and ease of access to the data (including maps, inventories, and surveys).
- Address emerging issues and provide critical information to assist in our understanding and wise management of natural resources.
- Support research, planning, and/or demonstration projects that protect and conserve sensitive lands, surface and ground water resources, and ecologic integrity.
- Support evaluation of climate change impacts and reduction strategies.
- Support community-based conservation planning.

Encourage Participation in Outdoor Recreation, Hunting, and Fishing

- Promote interest and participation in angling, hunting, outdoor recreation, and environmental and natural resource education. Partnerships to accomplish this goal are encouraged.
- Acquire, enhance, construct, manage, and maintain a variety of accessible outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

All proposals should strive to maximize efficiency and return on investment for the proposed expenditures. Additionally, the following criteria, as applicable, are considered in evaluating and selecting proposals to recommend for funding :

- **Funding Priorities:** Responds to RFP funding priorities and LCCMR Six-Year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund articulated and adopted by the LCCMR.
- **Multiple Benefits:** Delivers multiple benefits to Minnesota's environment and natural resources.
- **Outcomes:** Identifies clear objectives likely to result in measurable, demonstrated, and meaningful outcomes.
- **Knowledge Base:** Contributes to the knowledge base or disseminates information that will benefit other efforts.
- **Extent of Impacts:** Results in broad, long-term impacts of statewide or regional significance.
- **Innovation:** Employs or demonstrates innovative approaches to more effectively and efficiently solve specific environment and natural resources issues.
- **Scientific/Technical Basis:** Reflects current scientific and technical knowledge, standards, and best practices.

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- **Urgency:** Addresses an issue for which immediate future action is necessary and essential to avoid undesirable consequences.
- **Capacity and Readiness:** Demonstrates capacity and readiness for efforts to be managed and completed in a timely, accountable, and effective manner.
- **Leverage:** Leverages collaborative partnerships and additional efforts, resources, and non-state funds.

E. Strategies for Six-Year Strategic Plan

Priority will be given to innovative projects providing multiple ecological and other public benefits to Minnesota's environment and natural resources. More specifically, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund should support efforts that:

- Identify, protect, and enhance strategic land areas that make the largest contribution to multiple benefits for conservation and increase the management of those lands to enhance the conservation, quality, and diversity of natural resources.
- Establish statewide highest value habitat corridors using consistent conservation biology methodology and criteria for habitat, water quality and quantity, and native species.
- Acquire the most recent and accurate baseline natural resource data on a regular basis – data such as topography, parcel and land cover, soil and geological survey, and ground water quality and quantity.
- Identify and manage lands suited for human activity by using best management conservation practices to minimize the negative effects on natural resources.
- Increase understanding of potential effects of climate change on resources and develop strategies for reducing the impact of climate change on natural resources.
- Increase understanding of effects of contaminants on natural resources, including ground water, and develop strategies for reducing contamination.
- Increase public understanding of the need for better conservation, preservation, and restoration of Minnesota's habitats and landscapes.
- Develop strategies for delivery of environmental education to Minnesota students and residents at school, home, work, and play.
- Develop strategies to prevent introductions and reduce spread of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and restore or reestablish terrestrial or aquatic habitats impacted by invasive species.
- Develop land use strategies for sustainable, renewable energy production (electricity and fuels) that protect, enhance and restore native species, water quality, habitat, and prairies.
- Evaluate renewable energy options in Minnesota, including energy conservation, based on greenhouse gas and other emissions reductions, surface and ground water use, effects on the economy, and use by the electric and transportation sectors.
- Increase involvement of citizens and communities in scientific efforts pertaining to Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

F. Outcomes for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

Outcomes for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be specifically defined by the individual work plans of the projects receiving funding recommendations. However there are some broad outcomes that are hoped to be achieved:

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- Funding recommendations are consistent with and accelerate implementation of the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan and other related environment and natural resource plans, documents, reports, or recommendations. See “Appendix I: Environment and Natural Resources Plans, Documents, and Reports”.
- Complete acquisition of baseline natural resource data, including the County Biological Survey, Soil Survey, wetlands inventory, restorable wetlands inventory, and the County Geologic Atlas by 2020.
- Funding recommendations in the aggregate include work in all ecoregions, as defined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- To the extent possible, funding recommendations support the creation and continuation of “green jobs” in Minnesota.