

2026 Capital Budget



Summary

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages nearly **\$4.36 billion worth of built assets, as well as 5.6 million acres of state-owned land across Minnesota**, which is about 11% of Minnesota’s total land area. Minnesotans rely on DNR facilities and infrastructure to support our state’s unique quality of life. These assets include the state park campground where Minnesotans spend their summer vacation with family and friends, the public fishing pier where a child catches their first fish and the hatchery that raised that fish for stocking, and the DNR office where people can buy a hunting license, submit a permit application, or get information about natural resources in their community. With over **\$789 million in deferred maintenance**, our infrastructure needs significant ongoing investment to ensure that DNR-managed assets are safe and functional for the public, support the conservation of Minnesota’s natural resources, preserve the state’s investment in facilities and infrastructure, and meet the needs of current and future generations of Minnesotans.

The DNR’s 2026 **capital budget request includes \$62 million** in investments for the DNR. These investments will advance the DNR’s mission and address priorities such as improving access to the outdoors, advancing safety and community wellbeing, and rehabilitating aging—and in some cases failing—infrastructure. Projects funded through this investment will help ensure DNR facilities, lands and engagement processes are welcoming and accessible to all Minnesotans.

Preserve existing assets (Natural Resources Asset Preservation): \$30 million

Repair, renovate or replace degraded or failing capital assets (including buildings, roads, trails, public water accesses, bridges, recreational facilities and more) to ensure they are safe and functional for the recreating public, meet the needs of today’s users, support the conservation of Minnesota’s natural resources, and preserve the state’s investment in its capital assets.



BEFORE: Tettegouche State Park High Falls Bridge washed out, June 2024.



AFTER: Tettegouche State Park High Falls Bridge replaced, August 2025.

Acquire, construct, and improve offices and facilities (Betterment of Buildings): \$3 million

Invest in new facilities, such as designing a new St. Paul Fish Hatchery to replace the existing facility or replacing existing DNR offices and storage to improve accessibility, staff safety, public service and operational effectiveness.



St. Paul Hatchery rearing tanks (left) and egg incubation jar rack (right)

Invest in public lands (Acquisition and Betterment of Land): \$2 million

Acquire high-priority parcels and improve existing state lands by replanting and seeding trees after timber harvests, completing forest stand improvements to enhance diversity, resilience, habitat, water quality and economic value, and enhancing access to state lands to create a more welcoming, safe and inclusive experience for Minnesotans.



Aviation Infrastructure: \$5 million

Modernize Brainerd aviation infrastructure to support effective wildfire response, law enforcement response and search and rescue operations, and other safety and natural resource management needs. This project includes:

- facilities to accommodate daily fire briefings, emergency dispatch, crew readiness, and pilot rest areas,
- an airtanker loading facility, and
- emergency equipment storage.

Improving accessibility of DNR-managed lands and facilities: \$2 million

Improve accessibility at high-use facilities at state parks and recreation areas, as well as heavily visited wildlife management areas and aquatic management areas to enhance the experience for all users.



For more information contact:
Samantha Minkler, Capital Asset Manager
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155-4047
Phone: 651-259-5701
Email: samantha.minkler@state.mn.us

Dam Safety Program: \$10 million

Repair, modify, reconstruct or remove public dams.



Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program: \$9 million

Provide cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments to reduce flood risks and impacts. Projects range from purchasing and removing residential structures from floodplains to constructing levees, pumping stations, and multi-purpose flood impoundments. Project priorities are based on a competitive application process, consistent with the procedures outlined in M.S. 103F.161.

Parks and Trails local and regional grant program: \$1 million

Provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local parks and trails across Minnesota.

Throughout the 2026 legislative session, go to dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/legislativeinfo to find our legislative fact sheets and sign up for our weekly legislative updates.



This information can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, braille, or audio tape by emailing info.dnr@state.mn.us or calling 651-259-5016.
©2026 Minnesota DNR. An equal opportunity provider.