

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 52

SESSION: 2013 Regular Session

TOPIC: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations

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Overview

This act includes the appropriations for the environment and natural resources trust fund based upon the recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

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1 Appropriations. Technical.

2 Minnesota resources.

Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Provides a total appropriation of \$33,810,000 in fiscal year 2014 and \$4,350,000 in fiscal year 2015 from the environment and natural resources trust fund.

Subd. 2. Trust fund definition. Technical.

Subd. 3. Natural resource data and information. Provides a total appropriation for natural resource data and information projects of \$8,076,000, including funding for:

- (a) the Minnesota biological survey;
- (b) the county geologic atlas program (part A);
- (c) the county geologic atlas program (part B);
- (d) continuation of the wetland inventory update;
- (e) the Department of Natural Resources' conservation easement project;

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- (f) characterization of microbes discovered at Soudan Underground Mine State Park;
- (g) evaluation of a new approach to forest inventory;
- (h) evaluation and identifying disease resistant elm trees;
- (i) evaluation of the impacts on timber payment methods on postharvest forest ecological conditions; and
- (j) evaluation of management options for woodlands used for grazing to improve ecological and economic benefits;

Subd. 4. Land, habitat, restoration, and recreation. Provides a total appropriation for land, habitat, restoration, and recreation projects of \$13,522,000 in fiscal year 2014, including funding for:

- (a) state park in-holding acquisitions and authorized trail acquisitions;
- (b) restoration and enhancement of scientific and natural areas, including volunteer recruitment and engagement;
- (c) native prairie bank easement acquisition and restoration and enhancement;
- (d) acceleration of the Metro Conservation Corridors programs;
- (e) acquisition of land around Lake Tamarack for the University of Minnesota's Landscape Arboretum;
- (f) grants to soil and water conservation districts and other local units of government for staff to reenroll expiring lands into conservation programs;
- (g) development of best practices guidelines for creating moose foraging habitat;
- (h) assessment of the potential to supplement turf grass with floral plant resources to enhance bee habitat;
- (i) development of grazing plans to support conservation grazing on targeted wildlife management areas;
- (j) acquisition of conservation easements in the Avon Hills area in Stearns County; and
- (k) acquisition of land for Frogtown Farm and Park in St. Paul.

Subd. 5. Water resources. Provides a total appropriation for water resources projects of \$3,819,000 in fiscal year 2014, including funding for:

- (a) development and implementation of monitoring, modeling, and reporting protocols for Minnesota lakes to be used for water and fisheries management;

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- (b) assessment of the impacts of natural copper-nickel bedrocks on water quality;
- (c) the Heron Lake Watershed District for public outreach and installation and monitoring of water quality improvement projects;
- (d) installation of shoreland and agricultural best management practices to improve water quality in southern Minnesota;
- (e) comparison of the hydrology of habitats before and after restorations;
- (f) evaluation of water quality of Lake Superior;
- (g) development of thin film polymer membranes embedded with bacteria to generate clean water and energy from wastewater;
- (h) measurement and assessment of antibiotics in farm runoff and wastewater in the Mississippi River;
- (i) evaluation of lands restored using money from the trust fund (funded by transferring a previous appropriation for administration of the commission that is no longer needed).

Subd. 6. Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. Provides a total appropriation for invasive species projects of \$6,632,000, in fiscal year 2014, and \$4,350,000 in fiscal year 2015, including funding for:

- (a) development and support of the University of Minnesota's new aquatic invasive species center;
- (b) a detection and monitoring program for Asian carp;
- (c) evaluation of emerald ash borer detection options;
- (d) training of volunteers and professionals to find and control newly emergent invasive species;
- (e) implementation of biological control methods for invasive garlic mustard;
- (f) evaluation of the impacts of a commercially available molluscicide on the reproduction and development of native fish and aquatic insects; and
- (g) development of cost effective best management practices to control invasive species through grazing.

Subd. 7. Environmental education. Provides a total appropriation of \$636,000 in fiscal year 2014 for environmental education projects, including funding for:

- (a) the Minnesota Conservation Corps to train and mentor conservation professionals by providing apprenticeship services to soil and water conservation districts; and

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(b) an outdoor education, recreation, and youth employment program on the Mississippi River.

Subd. 8. Administration and contract agreement reimbursement. Provides a total appropriation of \$1,125,000 in fiscal year 2014 for contract management and the administration of the LCCMR.

Subd. 9 to 16. Provide project requirements that apply to all recipients. The LCCMR recommends similar requirements each year, which include: specifying the availability of appropriations; data requirements; specific project requirements, including requiring ecological restoration and management plans, and requiring easements to be permanent and have a long-term monitoring and enforcement plan; and providing carry forwards for previous appropriations.

- 3 Membership.** Amends § 116P.05, subd. 1. Clarifies that citizen members of the commission serve four-year terms.
- 4 Duties.** Amends § 116P.05, subd. 2. Renames the commission’s “work program” requirement to a “work plan” and that changes to an approved work plan approved shall be made through the commission’s amendment process.
- 5 Liaison officers.** Amends § 116P.09, subd. 2. Removes the requirement that the commission request a liaison from each agency involved in the environment and natural resources to work with and makes it optional.
- 6 Land acquisition restrictions.** Amends § 116P.15. Clarifies that an interest in land purchased with an appropriation from the environment and natural resources trust fund transfers to the state if the owner fails to comply with the terms of the grant agreement or restrictions are placed on the land that precludes it from being used for its intended purpose. Requires the commission to notify the legislature 15 days prior to approving a request for an alteration in the intended use of an interest in real property acquired with an appropriation from the trust fund and clarifies the conservation purposes required in any replacement interest to be substituted.
- 7 Real property interest report.** Amends § 116P.16. Clarifies that a interests in real property means a fee title interest, easement, or other interest for purposes of annual reporting requirements.
- 8 Acquisitions of lands or interest in lands; commissioner approval.** Amends § 116P.17. Requires all interests in lands, except conservation easements to be held by BWSR, to be approved by the commissioner of natural resources prior to acquisition (currently only interests in lands that will be conveyed to the DNR require commissioner approval), and modifies the criteria the commissioner must use when approving an acquisition.

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Requires a recipient to submit the most recent tax assessed value and the amount the recipient plans to offer for an interest in real property. Exempts conservation easements held by BWSR from these requirements and instead requires the board to keep a record of the tax assessed value (at the time of acquisition) and the most recent tax statement.

- 9** **Lands in public domain.** Restricts the purchase of an interest in real property with money from the trust fund if it is partially or fully owned by the state or a political subdivision of the state or if it was acquired with state funds unless the purchase creates an additional direct benefit to the state's natural resources and at least 12 members of the commission approve the purchase.