HOUSE RESEARCH =

Bill Summary =

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 1237 **DATE:** April 28, 2009

Version: Third engrossment

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Subject: DNR & BWSR Policy Changes

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Overview

This bill includes a number of policy provisions related to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), including:

- (1) recommended policy and technical changes proposed by the DNR;
- (2) changes to the membership of BWSR (provision from H.F. 952);
- (3) changes to the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program administered by BWSR (provisions from H.F. 591 and H.F. 1727);
- (4) changes to the funding sources that may be used for local matches for local water management base grants administered by BWSR (also being proposed in H.F. 536); and
- (5) changes to adult supervision requirements for youths operating off-highway motorcycles.

Section

- Wild rice season. Amends § 84.105. Shortens the wild rice harvest season by one month, making it August 15 to September 30. Wild rice may only be harvested when ripe; the change will align the season more closely to the time wild rice is ripe.
- **Definitions.** Amends § 84.66, subd. 2. Technical.
- **Prohibitions on youthful operators.** Amends § 84.793, subd. 1. Modifies adult supervision requirements for youthful operators of off-highway motorcycles by removing the requirement that the adult be on another off-highway motorcycle.
- **Purposes for the account.** Amends §84.83, subd. 3. Adds snowmobile trails on Devil Track and Hungry Jack lakes in Cook County to the list of trails eligible for grant-in-aid funds.

- **All-terrain vehicle or vehicle.** Amends § 84.92, subd. 8. Modifies the definition of an ATV by increasing the maximum engine displacement amount from 800 to 900 cubic centimeters.
- Arrowhead Regional Trails, in Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Pine, Carlton, Koochiching, and Itasca Counties. Amends § 85.015, subd. 13. Adds the motorized trail portion of the Willard Munger Trail to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail.
- Willard Munger Trail System, Chisago, Ramsey, Pine, St. Louis, Carlton, and Washington Counties. Amends § 85.015, subd. 14. Removes a portion of the Willard Munger Trail, which is added to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Trail in the previous section.
- **Multiple-vehicle permits.** Amends § 85.053, subd. 3. Expands the number of state park permits that may be issued for a reduced rate for persons with multiple vehicles. Currently, a person may only purchase one reduced rate second vehicle permit if they have more than one vehicle.
- **John A. Latsch State Park.** Adds § 85.054, subd. 15. States that a state park permit is not required for motor vehicles entering or parking in the parking lot adjacent to John Latsch Road and Highway 61.
- **10 Greenleaf Lake State Recreation Area.** Adds § 85.054, subd. 16. States that a state park permit is not required for motor vehicles entering or parking Greenleaf Lake State Recreation Area.
- **School-sanctioned activities.** Adds § 85.054, subd. 17. States that a state park permit is not required for vehicles transporting K-12 students engaged in school sanctioned activities at state parks.
- State boater wayside. Adds § 86A.05, subd. 15. Allows boater waysides to be established for public use and establishes criteria. States that the commissioner of natural resources shall administer the waysides consistent with the subdivision and may provide facilities for sanitation, picnicking and other activities if they are justifiable and compatible with the resources and natural environment.
- **Secondary authorization; when permitted.** Amends § 86A.08, subd. 1. Limits the authorization of a secondary unit of the outdoor recreation system within the boundaries of another to only when consistent with the purposes and objectives of the respective units.
- **Master plan required.** Amends § 86A.09, subd. 1. Exempts boater waysides from master planning requirements.
- Law enforcement watercraft displaying emergency lights. Adds § 86B.311, subd. 6. Requires the operator of a watercraft to move away from a law enforcement watercraft with its emergency lights on, and maintain a slow-no wake speed while within 150 feet of the law enforcement watercraft.
- Dogs pursuing or killing big game. Amends § 97A.321. Establishes an enforcement and appeals process for dog owners to appeal civil penalties resulting from their dogs pursing or killing big game.

- **Taking wild animals to protect public safety.** Amends § 97B.657. Allows a licensed peace officer to take protected wild animals any time that they pose an immediate threat to public safety and requires a peace officer to protect all evidence and notify a conservation officer within 48 hours of the taking.
- **Membership.** Amends § 103B.101, subd. 1. Increases the membership of BWSR from 12 to 15 appointed members.
- Voting members. Amends § 103B.101, subd. 2. Expands the membership of BWSR to include a township officer and two city officials (at least one of the city officials must be from the metropolitan area).
- Wetland functions for determining public values. Amends § 103B.3355. Adds carbon sequestration to the list of functions that determine the public value of wetlands. States that the provision is effective August 1, 2009, and applies to rulemaking that begins after that date.
- **Financial assistance.** Amends § 103B.3369, subd. 5. Expands the types of funding a county may use to come up with the local match required for base grants awarded by the Board of Water and Soil Resources for local water management planning and implementation through the Natural Resources Block Grant. Currently, the match is required to be provided through a local levy; this change would allow other local sources.
- **Request by district board.** Amends § 103C.501, subd. 2. Removes the requirement that a soil and water conservation district have a comprehensive plan for purposes of cost-share funds.
- **Cost-sharing funds.** Amends § 103C.501, subd. 4. Adds water quantity problems due to altered hydrology to the list of priorities for cost-share funds.
- **Contracts by districts.** Amends § 103C.501, subd. 5. Adds water quantity improvements to the list of activities that a soil and water conservation district may provide cost-share contracts for.
- **Policies and rules.** Amends § 103C.501, subd. 6. Modifies cost-share rulemaking provisions by permitting BWSR to adopt rules and requiring BWSR to adopt policies related to the cost-share program and adds water quantity problems due to altered hydrology to the lists of priorities.
- **Purpose and policy.** Amends § 103F.505. Makes changes to the purpose of the RIM reserve program including: modifying the purpose to include the restoration of marginal agricultural land, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and the enhancement of soil and water quality; and adding to the purpose, minimizing damage to flood-prone areas, carbon sequestration, and supporting native plant habitats. Removes reference to the reestablishment of perennial vegetation.
- **Drained wetland.** Amends § 103F.511, subd. 5. Modifies the definition of "drained wetland" to include alterations made after December 23, 1985, and removes the requirement that they meet the commissioner's definition of a legal alteration for purposes of the RIM reserve program.

- **Reinvest in Minnesota reserve program.** Amends § 103F.511, subd. 8a. Defines the "Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve program" as the program under section 103F.515 to be consistent with current Minnesota Rules.
- **Riparian land.** Amends § 103F.515, subd. 1. Modifies the definition of "riparian land" by removing the requirement that it be identified in a comprehensive local water plan for purposes of the RIM reserve program.
- **Establishment of program.** Amends § 103F.515, subd. 1. Makes technical corrections to incorporate the statutory name change of the RIM reserve program and the modified purpose of the program.
- Eligible land. Amends § 103F.515, subd. 2. Expands eligibility of lands for the RIM reserve program by adding lands that, with a water quality improvement practice, would be beneficial to resource protection, and lands used for pasture that are marginal (currently only lands on hillsides used for pasture are eligible). Also adds land that is a wellhead protection area that has a wellhead protection plan approved by the commissioner of health. Exempts environmentally sensitive areas and lands used for pasture from the requirement that the lands be in crop production for at least two of the last five years. Removes the priority for wetlands with a cropping history during the period from 1976 to 1985.
- Nature of property rights acquired. Amends § 103F.515, subd. 4. Prohibits a conservation easement under the program from allowing livestock grazing unless approved by BWSR (currently BWSR must consult with the commissioner of natural resources before approval and there are exceptions for severe droughts or local emergencies). Permits conservation easements to allow spraying chemicals or mowing if approved by BWSR. Requires BWSR to allow the harvest of native grasses for use in seed production or bioenergy on wellhead protection lands.
- Agreements by landowner. Amends § 103F.515, subd. 5. Modifies a requirement of landowner agreements to not convert land to agricultural crop production if it supports native vegetation AND has not been used in crop production (currently the land must either support native vegetation OR have not been used in crop production).
- Payments for conservation easements and establishment of conservation practices.

 Amends § 103F.515, subd. 6. Requires BWSR to establish rates for landowner payments for the conservation easements and related conservation practices and removes the current payment structure.
- **Cooperation.** Amends § 103F.521, subd. 1. Adds soil and water conservation districts and watershed districts to the list of entities BWSR shall cooperate and share information with.
- **Supplemental payments on federal and state conservation programs.** Amends § 103F.525. Removes the prohibition on using bond proceeds to supplement payments made under federal land retirement programs.
- **Food plots.** Amends § 103F.526. Allows BWSR to authorize wildlife food plots on lands enrolled in the program.
- **Rulemaking.** Amends § 103F.531. Allows BWSR to adopt "policy" to implement the program and removes the requirement that rules include standards for tree planting.

- **Release and alteration of conservation easements.** Amends § 103F.535, subd. 5. Allows BWSR to alter, release, or terminate any conservation easements (currently only those existing as of April 30, 1992, can be altered, released, or terminated).
- **Public waters inventory.** Amends § 103G.201. Eliminates the requirement that public water inventory maps be filed with the county auditor and requires that the county be notified of updates to public water inventory maps and that those updates are made available to the county.
- 41 General requirements and procedures. Amends § 168.1296, subd. 1. Allows owners of one-ton pickup trucks to be issued critical habitat plates and extends the eligibility for the plates until after January 1, 2012.
- Wild rice harvest authority. Permits the DNR to restrict or prohibit the harvesting of wild rice on public waters based on the stage of ripeness until December 31, 2009.
- **Revisor's instruction.** Instructs the Revisor to change "conservation reserve program" to "Reinvest in Minnesota reserve program" in various statutes.
- Repealer. Repeals § 85.0505 (allows liquor to be sold at a restaurant in John A. Latsch State Park); § 103B.101, subd. 11 (requires the director of the Division of Waters at the DNR to perform engineering work requested by the BWSR and appear at certain hearings); § 103F.511, subd. 4 (the definition for "conservation reserve program"); 103F.521, subd. 2 (a requirement that BWSR and others provide technical assistance to landowners under the RIM Reserve program); and some of the existing rules for the RIM Reserve program.