

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill would establish the Minnesota Naturalist Corps and provide funding from the new parks and trails fund for the program. It also would provide funding from the parks and trails fund for additional state park naturalists and for information center and kiosks at state parks.

Section

1 Minnesota Naturalist Corps. Adds § 84.992.

Subd. 1. Establishment. Establishes the Minnesota Naturalist Corps under the control of the commissioner of natural resources.

Subd. 2. Program. Requires the commissioner to develop a program for the corps and specifies requirements for the program.

Subd. 3. Training and mentoring. Requires the commissioner to develop and implement a training program for corps members and requires that each corps member be assigned a state park naturalist as a mentor.

Subd. 4. Uniform patch. Requires uniforms worn by members to have a patch identifying them as corps members and that the program was funded by the clean water, land, and legacy amendment.

Subd. 5. Eligibility. Requires corps members to be permanent residents of the state, be participating in an approved college internship program, and have completed at least one year of postsecondary education.

Subd. 6. Corps member status. States that corps members are not employees of the state and exempts them from employment benefits and unemployment benefits under certain circumstances.

Subd. 7. Employee displacement. Requires the commissioner to certify that the

assignment of corps members will not result in the displacement of currently employed or seasonal employees and prohibits the department from terminating, laying off, or reducing hours for any employee for the purpose of using corps members.

- 2 **Appropriation; Minnesota Naturalist Corps.** Provides \$270,000 from the parks and trails fund in each fiscal year for the Minnesota Naturalist Corps established in section one.
- 3 **Appropriation; State Park Naturalists.** Provides \$640,000 from the parks and trails fund each fiscal year for additional state park naturalists.
- 4 **Appropriation; state park information centers and kiosks.** Provides a total appropriation of \$760,000 from the parks and trails fund for various projects within state parks for the installation of information centers and kiosks. Requires the commissioner to display a sign that identifies each project as a project funded by the clean water, land, and legacy amendment.