HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill includes the fiscal year 2015 recommendations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) on the use of the environment and natural resources trust fund dollars.

It also modifies existing requirements related to the acquisition of real property using trust fund dollars and removes the sunset provision for the LCCMR which is due to expire in 2016.

Section

1 **Appropriations.** Technical.

2 **Minnesota resources.**

Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Provides a total appropriation of $28,970,000 from the environment and natural resources trust fund.

Subd. 2. Trust fund definition. Technical.

Subd. 3. Water resources. Provides a total appropriation for water resources projects of $4,579,000, including money for:

(a) the University of Minnesota to study the solar-driven destruction of contaminants for water treatment and reuse purposes;

(b) the University of Minnesota to research how and why certain bacteria important for water quality are affected by exposure to certain man-made chemicals;

Section

(c) the University of Minnesota to assess the role of triclosan (antibacterial agent found in soaps and other products) in creating antibiotic resistant bacteria during the wastewater treatment process;

(d) the University of Minnesota to study new wastewater contaminant treatment options under certain weather conditions;

(e) the University of Minnesota to study the relationship between antibiotics and antibiotic resistant bacteria in lakes;

(f) the University of St. Thomas to study biological samples from shallow lakes to determine the effects of estrogen exposure on aquatic wildlife;

(g) the Science Museum of Minnesota's St. Croix Watershed Research Station to study the effectiveness of best management practices for sediment and nutrient reduction;

(h) the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to test methods of defining properties of confined drinking water aquifers;

(i) the USGS to calculate complete watershed water budgets for two counties;

(j) the Pollution Control Agency (PCA) to quantify the causes of high mercury levels in fish within the Roseau River and two tributaries of the Red River of the North;

(k) the Freshwater Society to train lake associations and others to develop lake management plans and implement certain water quality improvement projects;

(l) the University of Minnesota to design, install, and monitor a rainwater reuse system; and

(m) the Red Lake Watershed District and USGS to complete an analysis of the flooding and water quality benefits from restorations at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge.

Subd. 4. Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. Provides a total appropriation for invasive species projects of $2,298,000, including funding for:

(a) the University of Minnesota to develop ways to modify certain locks and dams to impede the movement of invasive carp;

(b) the University of Minnesota-Duluth to develop bioacoustic technology to help address invasive carp;

(c) Red River Basin Commission to develop aquatic invasive species strategies on a watershed scale;

(d) the Department of Agriculture to continue to monitor ash tree and emerald ash borer populations and expand control and management efforts;

Section

(e) the University of Minnesota and the Department of Agriculture to survey and evaluate the potential risk of the invasive pine beetle; and

(f) the University of Minnesota and the Department of Agriculture to monitor for brown marmorated stink bugs and evaluate biological control agents.

Subd. 5. Foundational natural resource data and information. Provides a total appropriation for natural resource data and information projects of $4,210,000, including funding for:

(a) the University of Minnesota to update Minnesota's land cover data;

(b) the DNR to inventory springs;

(c) BWSR for drainage records modernization tools;

(d) the University of Minnesota to obtain and restore forest inventories from 1935, 1953, and 1966;

(e) the University of Minnesota to use historical data to assess changes over time to the state's ecology, identify vulnerable species, and inform climate change management strategies;

(f) Audubon Minnesota to complete the state's breeding bird atlas;

(g) the DNR to assess the impact of petroleum and other contaminants from the Gulf oil spill on loons and white pelicans;

(h) the University of Minnesota to study the state's sandhill crane populations;

(i) the DNR to assess wild bees in prairie-grassland habitats;

(j) the Minnesota Zoo and the DNR to prevent the possible extinction of native butterfly species;

(k) the University of Minnesota to study native freshwater mussels and for public outreach;

(l) the University of Minnesota to study the distribution of food and cover used by moose to determine the impact on diet and moose survival;

(m) the DNR to study the physiology and behavior of adult moose and the effects of female moose condition on calf production and survival; and

(n) Minnesota Wildflowers Information to accelerate work needed for a publicly available plant identification Web site.

Section

Subd. 6. Methods to protect, restore, and enhance land, water, and habitat. Provides a total appropriation for projects for protection, restoration, and enhancement methods of $3,675,000, including funding for:

(a) the University of Minnesota to enhance pollinator habitat;

(b) the University of Minnesota to research the impacts on native bee and honey bee colonies of systemic, neonicotinyl insecticides;

(c) the University of Minnesota to collect and preserve germplasm of plants from the prairie region and to study and evaluate the adaptive capacity of the plants;

(d) BWSR to assess the decline of the northern white cedar plant communities;

(e) the Nature Conservancy to provide a plan for the protection of unimpaired waters in southeastern Minnesota;

(f) Great Rive Greening to restore and enhance upland, shoreline, and 150 acres to provide educational opportunities for volunteers in the greater metropolitan area;

(g) Friends of the Mississippi River to restore approximately 150 acres of prairie, forest, and oak savanna in the greater metropolitan area;

(h) the Red River Basin Commission to evaluate the potential of cattails to capture excess nutrients;

(i) the Northwest Research and Outreach Center to evaluate different management techniques for cattails and study the use of cattails as a source for biofuel;

(j) the University of Minnesota-Duluth to restore an unproductive mine stockpile and improve the treatment of municipal sewage and biosolids; and

(k) the city of Silver Bay to expand and enhance a city-owned greenhouse facility.

Subd. 7. Land acquisition for habitat and recreation. Provides a total appropriation for land acquisition projects of $6,923,000, including funding for:

(a) the DNR to acquire land for scientific and natural areas (SNAs);

(b) the Metropolitan Council for grants to acquire land for the metropolitan regional park system;

(c) the DNR for agreements to acquire, design, and construct segments of the Mesabi Trail;

(d) Washington County to acquire shoreland along the St. Croix River to be transferred to the city of Stillwater;

Section

(e) Martin County and Fox Lake Conservation League to acquire land in the county for its park system; and

(f) the city of Morton to acquire land for a Minnesota River water trailhead and canoe landing and for interpretive trails.

Subd. 8. Air quality, climate change, and renewable energy. Provides a total appropriation for air quality, climate change, and renewable energy projects of $3,360,000, including funding for:

(a) the University of Minnesota to develop solar cell materials using nontoxic and common metals combined with sulfur;

(b) the University of Minnesota to study a new geothermal pump method and technology;

(c) the University of Minnesota to demonstrate technologies that use and treat wastewater streams to convert byproducts to biofuels;

(d) the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center to develop clean energy strategies for farms;

(e) the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center to calculate fossil fuel energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions due to local renewable energy technologies;

(f) the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center to study the cofermentation of sugar beet processing wastewater and manure for hydrogen and methane production;

(g) the University of Minnesota to develop a dual utility large scale septic tank system;

(h) various agreements to install solar arrays at six residential environmental learning centers; and

(i) Itasca Community College to develop an installation design for a boiler heating system using woody biomass.

Subd. 9. Environmental education. Provides a total appropriation of $3,681,000 for environmental education projects, including funding for:

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

(b) Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center and Laurentian Environmental Learning Center to complete youth-led sustainability action projects in various communities;

Section

(c) Wilderness Inquiry to establish a metrowide system for place-based environmental education experiences using underutilized resources;

(d) the DNR and the University of Minnesota to increase participation of under-represented communities in natural resource professions and outdoor recreation;

(e) the Will Steger Foundation to conduct forums, workshops, and trainings on the state's changing climate and the potential impacts;

(f) the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to develop exhibits for an education center that offers hands-on learning experiences about the role of pollinators and the importance of their habitat;

(g) Pheasants Forever to complete community pollinator education and habitat projects;

(h) the Raptor Center to develop an environmental education program on raptors for middle schools; and

(i) the International Wolf Center for outreach to metro K-12 classrooms and nature centers to help children understand wolf management issues.

Subd. 10. Administration and contract agreement reimbursement. Provides a total appropriation of $244,000 for contract management, the Legislative Coordinating Commission's Legacy Web site and an upgrade of the LCCMR's project records management system.

Subd. 11 to 19. 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 **Acquisition of lands or interest in lands; commissioner approval.** Amends § 116P.17. Establishes a requirement that recipients of an appropriation from the trust fund requesting DNR approval of an acquisition (as required by existing law) make the request at least ten business days prior to the acquisition. States that acquisitions made by BWSR may be exempt from the approval requirements if specifically authorized by law.

Establishes a requirement that recipients using a trust fund appropriation to acquire an interest in real property that are submitting the most recent tax assessed value and tax statement to the DNR and commission (as required by existing law) submit the information at least ten days prior to the acquisition.

4 **Repealer.** Repeals § 116P.05, subd. 3. Eliminates the sunset for the LCCMR which is currently due to expire June 30, 2016.