



January 15, 2019

Honorable Carrie Ruud  
Chair, Environment and Natural Resources  
Policy and Legacy Finance Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
3233 Minnesota Senate Bldg.

Honorable Leon Lillie  
Chair, Legacy Funding Finance Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
367 State Office Building

Honorable Bill Weber  
Vice Chair, Environment and Natural Resources  
Policy and Legacy Finance Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
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Honorable Ami Wazlawik  
Vice Chair, Legacy Funding Finance Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
565 State Office Building

Honorable Chris Eaton  
Ranking Minority Member, Environment and  
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Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
2403 Minnesota Senate Bldg.

Honorable Josh Heintzeman  
Ranking Minority Member, Legacy Funding  
Finance Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
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Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are pleased to share with you the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) FY20-21 priorities for the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. The attached report gives you an overview of DNR's approach to advance priorities associated with the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, including connecting people to the outdoors, acquiring land and creating new opportunities, taking care of what we have, and coordinating with partners. The report also provides an at-a-glance spending plan (pages 19-20).

If you have questions in the attached report, please contact Bob Meier at 651.259.5024; [bob.meier@state.mn.us](mailto:bob.meier@state.mn.us) or Erika Rivers at 651.259.5591; [erika.rivers@state.mn.us](mailto:erika.rivers@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sarah Strommen'.

Sarah Strommen, Commissioner  
Department of Natural Resources

Attachment

cc: Assistant Commissioner Barb Naramore  
Assistant Commissioner Bob Meier  
Parks and Trails Division Director Erika Rivers  
Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Liaisons  
Legislative Reference library



# Parks and Trails Fund DNR Strategic Directions - Fiscal Years 2020-21

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

January 15, 2019

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## Background

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Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the constitution in 2008. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Parks and Trails Division receives a portion of the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund along with the Metropolitan Council and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission.

This document lays out priorities, strategies, proposed funding allocations, and outcomes for appropriations to the DNR from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Based on guidance from the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, the DNR Parks and Trails Division prioritizes the following:

- Connect people to the outdoors.
  - Acquire land and create opportunities.
  - Take care of what we have.
  - Improve cooperation with partners to implement the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.
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## Guidance on Biennial Legacy Priorities

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The 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan identified a set of key strategies, organized within four main strategic directions, or “pillars,” to move the state toward its vision of a world-class parks and trails system connecting everyone to the outdoors. The plan selected a smaller group of recommended priority strategies for the early years of Legacy (FY2010-14) to help focus limited resources. One of these recommendations was to establish a statewide advisory body to work with DNR and other Parks and Trails Legacy agencies to champion the 25-year Plan. The Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee (PTLAC) began meeting in 2012, and has provided an important voice helping guide agencies in the best use of Legacy dollars. (More information at [the Advisory Committee’s website](#)).

### Insights on Legacy Priorities from Public Engagement

#### *Legacy 10-Year Celebration and Engagement*

In 2018, the DNR along with PTLAC and its partner agencies held a series of public events to recognize the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Legacy Amendment. We celebrated, educated, and listened as 12,500 Minnesotans shared their perspectives on Minnesota’s state and regional parks and trails at nine regional events. Each event included unique activities and displays that were suited to the location and time of year. Multi-generational activities included ice fishing, roasting marshmallows, nature programs and obstacle courses.

The events also provided structured ways for Minnesotans to provide feedback on priorities for state and regional parks and trails. Some activities were designed to solicit thoughts on the impact of Legacy funding, while others encouraged participants to provide broader aspirations on the future of Legacy investments in Minnesota’s parks and trails. Participants played a game using “\$100” to share how they would prioritize investments across Legacy Plan priorities. This feedback was not intended to replace the existing Legacy Plan, but rather to listen for emerging themes that the plan had not anticipated, and check in with public opinion on how Legacy funds were being allocated.

#### *What we learned*

The Legacy Advisory Committee, along with leaders of the Metropolitan Council, Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and Department of Natural Resources offer the following reflections on Minnesotan’s feedback:

- Many people’s identities as Minnesotans are tied to having good parks, trails, and natural resources.
- Minnesotans place high value on taking care of facilities and preserving the natural resources already found within existing parks and trails.
- Many Minnesotans see the health and wellness benefits offered by nearby parks and trails as part of their daily lives.
- Parks and trails must become more accessible and welcoming to people with different abilities and backgrounds.
- More public awareness of these resources, and marketing specific parks and trails by Legacy agencies, is necessary.

- Older participants are concerned about preserving natural resources for younger generations and about teaching them about nature and outdoor activities.<sup>1</sup>

The DNR's past Legacy Fund spending fairly closely reflects participant's results of the \$100 game. The DNR has dedicated more than half of Legacy funds to Taking Care of What We Have and over a quarter to Acquiring Land and Creating Opportunities. Spending of 16% on Connecting People to the Outdoors is less than participants allocated in the \$100 game; however, the cost of holding outdoors programs and marketing the benefits of outdoor recreation tends to be relatively less expensive than buying land and developing facilities.

As a result of what we learned from this feedback, the DNR proposes increasing Fiscal Year 20/21 Legacy spending for Connecting People to the Outdoors to 17% and increasing the amount of funds in Taking Care of What We Have that are utilized for resource management. More information about our spending proposal for Connecting People to the Outdoors and Taking Care of What We Have can be found on pages 8 and 13, respectively.

### **Early Legacy Plan Priorities**

The Legacy Plan identified each of these strategies as top priorities for the first years of plan implementation. Though we are now celebrating 10 years of Legacy, these priorities still provide guidance for how the DNR invests Legacy funds across the state park and trail system.

1. **Do more marketing.** Time and again, Minnesotans have expressed a need for better information, including more integrated Web-based offerings, to increase awareness of recreational opportunities.
2. **Provide a welcoming environment** with programs and special events to attract first-time visitors to parks and trails. Adapt to meet the needs of Minnesota's changing demographics, which are aging and becoming more diverse.
3. **Physically connect communities to parks and trails** and make them accessible to people of all abilities.
4. **Accelerate the acquisition of private land within park or trail boundaries** (private in-holdings).
5. **Connect high-priority trails and fill critical gaps.**
6. **Focus on opportunities in areas near regional centers** and in areas of shortage that are projected to grow most rapidly over the coming 25 years.
7. **Accelerate the rehabilitation of aging park and trail infrastructure** to ensure high-quality experiences.
8. **Preserve existing high-quality natural resources** and restore those that have been degraded. Prioritize the control of the spread of invasive species.
9. **Give visitors the opportunity to easily find what they want.** Develop and maintain integrated and standardized information (e.g., website) about parks and trails of state and regional significance.
10. **Establish a statewide advisory committee** to help foster a network of parks and trails with a seamless user experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Report Forthcoming. *Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Legacy Amendment Impact on Minnesota's Parks and Trails*. [www.legacy.mn.gov/ptlac/2018-regional-events](http://www.legacy.mn.gov/ptlac/2018-regional-events)

## Legacy Pillars and Budget Proposal

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### Pillar 1: Connect People to the Outdoors

The DNR's primary strategy for connecting people to the outdoors is by promoting innovative programs and providing education, interpretation, outdoor skill training, and special events to engage families in outdoor activities and to encourage natural resource stewardship.

### Pillar 2: Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

The DNR will pursue high-priority acquisitions that establish important connections and preserve priority natural or cultural resources. We will focus on expanding trail experiences that motivate new customers. We will complete high-priority development projects that encourage outdoor recreation participation and enhance or protect natural and cultural resources.

### Pillar 3: Take Care of What We Have (Maintain Existing Holdings)

We will ensure high-quality outdoor recreation experiences through infrastructure renewal and increased accessibility. We will manage and restore natural landscapes within the state park and trail system, including invasive species detection and management.

### Pillar 4: Coordinate with Partners

Coordination and cooperation are needed to do everything from providing information to park and trail visitors to ensuring that park and trail shortages are addressed. While agencies and organizations can do much coordination and cooperation on their own, the Legacy Advisory Committee continues to encourage the development of a seamless network of parks and trails.

### DNR Parks and Trails FY 20/21 Legacy Budget Proposal

Legacy Pillar	Dollars	Percent
Connect People to the Outdoors	\$6,923,590	17.0%
Acquire Land and Create Opportunities	\$9,978,115	24.5%
Take Care of What We Have	\$23,825,295	58.5%
<b>Total DNR Parks and Trails Appropriation</b>	<b>\$40,727,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
Coordinate with Partners*	\$1,028,000	N/A

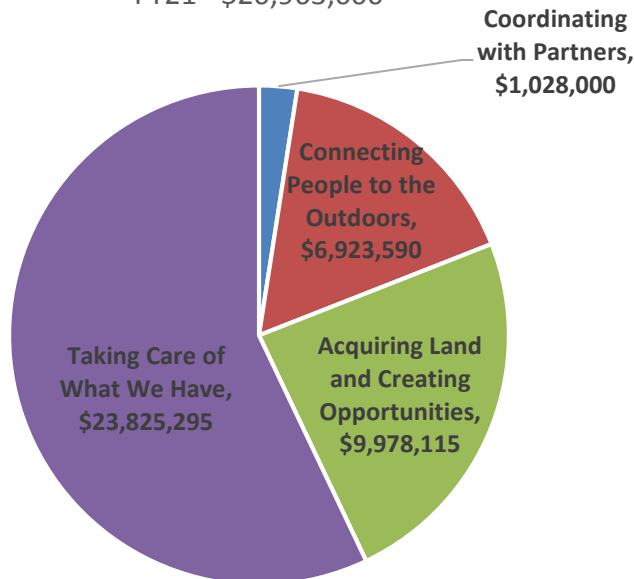
*\*Funding for the Coordinate with Partners pillar is appropriated separately from the DNR budget.*

## Proposed Allocation of DNR FY 20-21 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

(Including Coordinating with Partners Funds)

FY20 - \$20,792,000

FY21 - \$20,963,000



### Pillar Pages: Orientation to this Document

The following pages lay out specific outcomes in each of the four pillar areas. While the pillars help guide Legacy investments, DNR also uses an integrated approach to advancing Legacy priorities. For example, many projects rely on multiple strategies, such as acquiring land and developing built facilities, connecting people to these new opportunities, coordinating with partners, and maintaining and taking care of these investments over time.

### Supplement versus substitute/supplant statement

In compliance with M.S. 85.53 Subd. 2. (h), DNR affirms that the programs and projects presented in this document, requested to be funded through an appropriation from the Parks and Trails Fund, do not supplant, nor substitute for, any previous funding that was not from a Legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

## Minnesota State Parks and Trails Strategic Guidance

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### Parks and Trails Division Areas of Impact

The DNR Parks and Trails Division strives to achieve five overarching outcomes, called “areas of impact.” These five areas of impact are guided by the Division Leadership Team, and include the following:

1. Operational excellence in outdoor recreation

2. Healthy cultural and natural resources
3. Visitor services and outreach
4. Healthy and productive organization
5. Organizational stability and sustainability

The areas of impact are implemented by staff across the state, so we deliver excellent operations, resource management and visitor services in the northwest, northeast, central and southern regions of Minnesota.

## Minnesota State Parks and Trails System Plan

The Division of Parks and Trails has developed a [system plan](#) to advance new approaches for managing the DNR's state parks, state recreation areas, state trails, state forest recreation areas, and state water recreation system. The system plan is an outgrowth of work completed by the [State Parks and Trails Future Strategies Committee](#). That committee recommended the Division "move toward a more differentiated system that favors quality of facilities and opportunities over quantity or geographic distribution."

As evidenced in the biennial recommendations contained in this report, the system plan is a tool to help future investments focus on Minnesota's most important natural resources and highest-quality recreation opportunities. While the system plan does inform planned investment in state parks and trails, it does so through identifying **differentiated niche experiences**, the quality of which can be sustained at varying levels of investment.

In these pages, state parks are sometimes referenced by their system plan investment group category. State Park Investment Groups include the following:

- **Destination units** offer a destination-quality experience, with an array of outdoor recreation and lodging opportunities, park facilities, and naturalist-led interpretive offerings.
- **Core units** offer a diversity of quality outdoor recreation experiences, from classic camping and hiking opportunities to adventurous climbing, mountain biking, OHV-riding, and kayaking opportunities, often in close proximity to population centers.
- **Rustic units** will offer basic amenities, including picnic tables, fire rings, and orientation signage.



## Connecting People to the Outdoors

**FY20/21 Proposed Legacy Allocation: \$6,923,590**

17% of total DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation

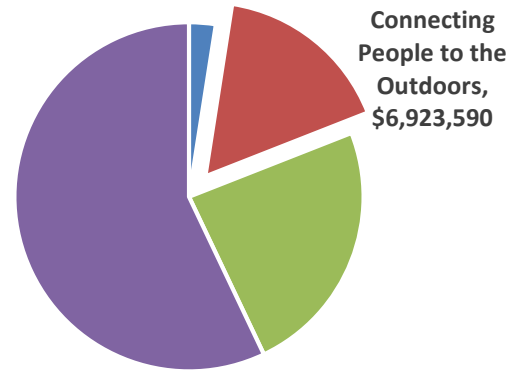
### Previous Budget Allocations

FY12/13 Biennium: \$4,300,000

FY14/15 Biennium: \$5,066,000

FY16/17 Biennium: \$5,448,000

FY18/19 Biennium: \$5,559,696



### Why is this Important?

People who engage with nature are more likely to have an appreciation of the natural world—and to want to support and maintain it for future generations. Feedback from the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events emphasized the importance of teaching the next generation about conserving natural resources, and public awareness and marketing of park and trail opportunities and the health and wellness benefits associated with them.

The 2017 Minnesota Outdoor Activities Survey identified broad trends in outdoor recreation participation among Minnesotans.<sup>2</sup> While the study showed that outdoor activity has become increasingly important to Minnesotans, it also shows that barriers to participation still exist for some. The study reinforces what we already intuitively know – that people desire to spend time together in nature with family and friends in order to improve their health and disconnect from the demands of everyday life. Our goal is to reduce the barriers that exist so that *all Minnesotans* can enjoy the benefits of our state parks and trails system.



### Desired 25-Year Outcome

**The state’s population is projected to increase by 19% over the next 25 years. Our goal is for the number of visits to Minnesota’s parks and trails to increase by at least this much as well.** This increase would encourage life-long visitation by individuals and families and foster a continued sense of stewardship from generation to

<sup>2</sup> The Improve Group. (2017) 2017 Minnesota Outdoor Activities Survey Report on Findings. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. St. Paul, MN.

generation. Together with partners, Minnesota can encourage growth in outdoor recreation participation so that more residents enjoy higher quality-of-life and the health and wellness benefits from nature-based recreation.

### **Top Legacy Plan Priorities for the FY20/21 biennium:**

1. Provide a welcoming environment with programs and special events to attract first-time visitors to parks and trails. Adapt to Minnesota's changing demographics, which point to a more diverse and older population.
2. Ensure that visitors have access to simple, easy-to-understand orientation and wayfinding information when they visit parks and trails.
3. Do more effective marketing. Time and again, Minnesotans have expressed a desire for better information, including more integrated Web-based offerings, to increase awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities.
4. Provide ongoing diversity training to Minnesota state and regional parks and trails employees.
5. Physically connect communities with parks and trails and make them accessible to people of all abilities.

### **DNR 'Connecting People' Programs**

- Interpretive services, including I Can! skills building programs and naturalist programs
- Volunteering and partnerships
- Public information and social media
- Marketing and retail



### **FY20/21 Plan and Proposed Outcomes**

#### ***DNR's FY20/21 Plan***

The DNR will promote innovative programs, education, interpretation, outdoor skill training, targeted marketing and advertising, and special events to engage target markets in outdoor activities and encourage natural

resource stewardship. **The goal is to continue to increase state park and trail visitation, attract new users and bring our visitor demographics more in line with the demographics of the state.**

### ***Proposed Results/Outcomes***

- Interpretive Services:
  - Engage 16,000 participants, with an emphasis on attracting new customers in “I Can!” and other skill-building programs. Help participants stay connected to additional opportunities with an electronic monthly newsletter. Conduct research to better understand the impact of skill-building programs on participants, including retention in outdoor recreation.
  - Deliver 2,900 programs by Legacy-funded naturalists for about 100,000 visitors. Provide interpretive programs through year-round and seasonal naturalists, as well as Naturalist Corps, at Destination and Core state parks.
  - Deliver Bison Buggy tours, connect to underserved communities, and support other interpretive services at Blue Mounds State Park.
  - Update interpretive exhibits and displays, and provide welcoming self-service interpretation, exhibits, brochures and maps.
  - Enhance interpretive delivery with updated visitor center displays and use of new technologies.
- Public Information:
  - Provide motivating messages through media relations, multi-cultural media outreach, Web content, social media, and cartography to provide information about parks and trails, services and trip planning.
  - Improve wayfinding, orientation, and general visitor information at state parks and trails.
  - Expand and refine the use of social media to reach current users and potential new visitors, including youth, young adults, and families with children.
- Marketing and retail:
  - Implement new marketing and advertising campaigns, including materials, photo and video shoots, promotions and media buys. Raise awareness and motivate participation with 12 million annual gross impressions to target market populations.
  - Increase marketing focus on culturally diverse markets, and expand digital and social media presence with selfie stations.
  - Improve Hiking Club and Passport Club loyalty programs.
- Partnership development:
  - Augment programming and services with volunteers. Engage a partnership coordinator to develop volunteer programs to engage the public in park and trail resource stewardship.
  - Increase volunteer engagement.
  - Support the Urban Outreach Program based out of Fort Snelling State Park.

- Continue to increase the organization’s inter-cultural competence through training and development. Build cross-cultural partnerships and contract with targeted vendors. Promote new and innovative partnerships through small “grants” available to support engagement of under-represented groups.

## Acquire Land and Create Opportunities

**FY20/21 Legacy Allocation: \$9,978,115**

24.5% of total DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation

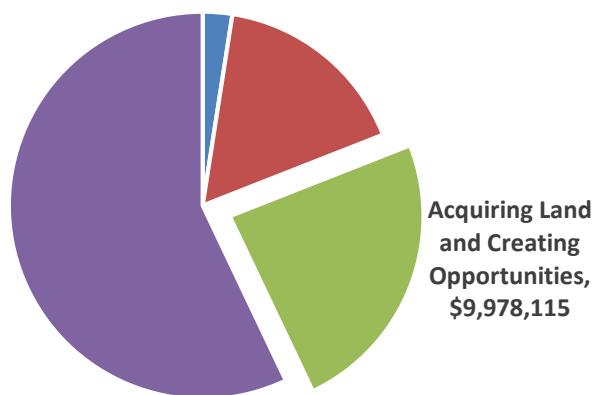
### Previous Budget Allocations

FY12/13 Biennium: \$10,301,350

FY14/15 Biennium: \$13,509,000

FY16/17 Biennium: \$9,527,000

FY18/19 Biennium: \$9,142,034



### Why is this Important?

Minnesotans are avid outdoor recreationists. Just over half of Minnesota residents visit natural park areas near their homes each year, and a little more than two-thirds use paved trails for walking, hiking, skating and biking. Other park and trail facilities are also frequently used. Yet, Minnesotans who use these parks and trails often say they would like additional opportunities available to them. New and expanded park and trail opportunities are needed to satisfy current visitors, as well as to create opportunities for new visitors.

### Desired 25-Year Outcome

Land needed to meet the nature-based outdoor recreation needs of Minnesotans will be acquired and/or developed. High-priority development projects that encourage outdoor recreation participation and enhance or protect natural and cultural resources are completed.



## **Top *Legacy Plan* Priorities for the FY20/21 biennium:**

1. Accelerate acquisition of private land within a park or trail boundary (private in-holdings).
2. Connect high-priority trails and fill critical gaps.
3. Develop infrastructure and amenities that meet the lifestyles of our target markets.
4. Design, develop, and redevelop parks and trails facilities that meet the differing outdoor recreation needs for people of all abilities.
5. Design and construct sustainable, resilient, and energy-efficient infrastructure.

## **DNR ‘Acquire Land, Create Opportunities’ Programs**

- State Park and Recreation Area Development
- State Trail Development
- State Park and Trail Land Acquisition

## **FY20/21 Plan and Proposed Outcomes**

### ***DNR’s FY20/21 Plan***

Using the State Parks and Trails System Plan as a guide, pursue high-priority acquisitions that provide important connections and/or preserve priority natural or cultural resources. Acquire and/or develop critical trail connections between existing trails, parks, and communities to attract new customers and serve communities. Complete high-priority development projects that create new opportunities to encourage outdoor recreation participation and/or enhance and protect natural and cultural resources. Continue to prioritize making our facilities energy efficient and accessible to all.

### ***Proposed Results/Outcomes***

- Complete a shower building upgrade at Split Rock Lighthouse State Park.
- Develop a paved multi-use trail connecting to Mary Gibbs Visitor Center at Itasca State park.
- Develop critical trail segments of the Minnesota Valley State Trail.
- Complete new trail development at Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area.
- Complete analysis and design for high-priority development projects planned for FY22/23.
- Acquire approximately 20 new acres of priority trail connections and state park inholdings.

## Taking Care of What We Have

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**FY20/21 Legacy Allocation: \$23,825,295**

58.5% of total DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation

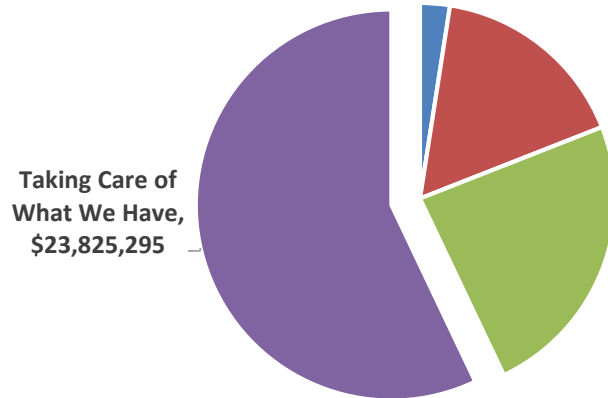
### Previous Budget Allocations

FY12/13 Biennium: \$13,859,650

FY14/15 Biennium: \$15,198,000

FY16/17 Biennium: \$19,927,000

FY18/19 Biennium: \$20,773,270



### Why is this Important?

Minnesota has invested, and continues to invest, in the development of parks and trails of state and regional significance. Once a park or trail is established, regular reinvestment is needed to maintain natural and cultural resources and to ensure safe, high-quality experiences for current and future visitors. Today, a shortage of funding, aging infrastructure, and intensive use have led to a backlog of preservation, rehabilitation and renewal work. For example, many of the 296 bridges in the state trail system are more than 100 years old and will need to be rehabilitated or replaced. And, the state parks and trails system includes more than 2,500 buildings – many of them historic. Assets like these contribute to Minnesota being a national leader in outdoor recreation, but also require adequate investment of resources.



### Desired 25-Year Outcome

Minnesota parks and trails of state and regional significance are well maintained and up-to-date. They meet current needs and provide high-quality recreation opportunities for a variety of visitors with different interests, needs and abilities. Rehabilitation is accelerated beyond current levels; this work includes infrastructure and natural resource management.

## Top *Legacy Plan* Priorities for the FY20/21 biennium:

1. Accelerate rehabilitation of an aging park and trail infrastructure to ensure high-quality experiences. State and regionally significant parks and trails need more funds set aside for development, restoration and redevelopment to meet current standards for accessibility and energy sustainability.
2. Preserve existing high-quality natural and water resources. Manage the spread of invasive species and restore high-quality, rare and aquatic plant communities. Natural resources are the foundation for the state park and trail system. State park visitors and participants in the 10-year Legacy Celebration events said natural settings are very important to them.
3. Protect cultural resources, including archaeological sites, cultural landscapes and structures listed on the National Register, which are critical to help tell the stories of our past to our visitors. Complete archaeological investigations and complete resource assessments to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to cultural resources.

## DNR 'Taking Care' Programs

### *Asset Management*

- Renewal and rehabilitation of state trails, forest trails, state trail bridges, and state park buildings and facilities.
- Renewable energy and energy conservation projects across the state park and trail system.
- Emergency repair and maintenance of buildings and facilities.
- Enhancing ADA accessibility.

### *Natural and Cultural Resource Management*

- Invasive species management on Parks and Trails Division Lands.
- Landscape restoration and maintenance.
- Prescribed burning.
- Archaeological investigations.
- Resource assessments to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources.
- Special projects (e.g., bison restoration).



## FY20/21 Plan and Proposed Outcomes

### ***DNR's FY20/21 Plan***

Using the [State Parks and Trails System Plan](#) as a guide, the division will work to ensure visitors experience high-quality resources through safe, accessible and well-maintained facilities. "Taking Care of What We Have" means that we are maintaining the natural and cultural resources and built facilities that are necessary to sustain quality outdoor experiences for current and future visitors. Accelerating investments to restore and preserve our resources and facilities will be crucial for the division to address a backlog of rehabilitation needs and sustain the system into the future. These investments help improve public safety, increase accessibility of outdoor recreation to people of all abilities, and reduce our energy footprint.

### ***Proposed Results/Outcomes***

- Complete three campground rehabilitations at Destination state parks.
- Rehabilitate two Destination state park visitor centers.
- Rehabilitate two state park amphitheaters, one each at a Destination and Core state park.
- Replace shower and bathroom buildings at four Core State Parks.
- Restore an historic building at a Destination state park.
- Complete a park portfolio upgrade of orientation, wayfinding, and vault toilets at four Rustic state parks.
- Rehabilitate and repair bridges across four state trails.
- Maintain sustainable state park hiking trails at high-priority locations.
- Invest in energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy projects across the state park and trail system.
- Complete assessments and design for future state park and trail system asset management.
- Reconstruct native plant communities, with a focus on high-quality, rare or aquatic communities.
- Conduct prescribed burns on state park and trail lands.
- Manage invasive species on state park and trail lands.
- Conduct natural and cultural resource assessments to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to resources.
- Contract with Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa to engage youth workers and complete resource management.



## Coordinate with Partners

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**FY20/21 Legacy Allocation: \$1,028,000**

Note that in previous sessions, 'Coordinate' funding benefitting all systems has been a separate appropriation to DNR.

### Previous Budget Allocations

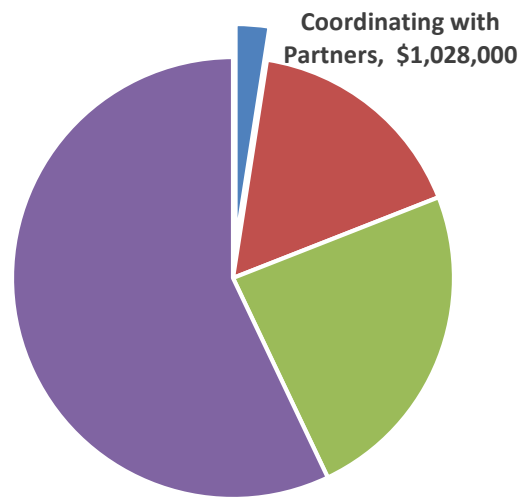
FY12/13 Biennium \$404,000

FY14/15 Biennium \$407,000

FY16/17 Biennium \$1,091,000\*

FY18/19 Biennium: \$1,069,000

\*\$260,000 to University of Minnesota



### Why is this Important?

The state and regional parks and trails system is made up of many parts, with different providers in different parts of the state, and funded through a variety of sources. This complex network poses a challenge to state and regional providers interested in meaningful coordination, as well as to our visitors, who seek high-quality, connected, and accessible opportunities. Coordination is essential to achieve the vision laid out in the 25-year *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan* and to ensure that the principles the public developed for the use of Legacy Funds are achieved. DNR is working with partners - including, but not limited to, the Metropolitan Council and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission – to achieve that effective coordination that results in the best use of funds. Efficiency and effectiveness are enhanced through coordination.

### Desired 25-Year Outcome

Minnesotans and visitors see parks and trails of state and regional significance as a seamless network; they may not know which agency is responsible for management of the natural area they are enjoying—and they don't need to. Emphasis is on the user experience. Outdoor recreation providers must work together to offer visitors easy-to-use maps and other information.

### Top Legacy Plan Priorities for the FY20/21 biennium:

1. Give visitors the opportunity to easily find what they want. Maintain integrated and standardized information (e.g., website) about parks and trails of state and regional significance.
  2. Promote and coordinate the implementation of the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, with strategic guidance and advice from the Legacy Advisory Committee.
  3. Enhance coordination with other agencies, organizations and nonprofits.
  4. Enhance coordination of Minnesota's state and regional parks and trails at the regional and site levels.
-

## Parks and Trails ‘Coordinating’ Programs

(Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council, and Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trail Commission):

- Coordinated research and planning across state and regional recreational systems.
- Integrated, Web-based systems.
- Ongoing support for the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee.
- Landscape restoration evaluation.
- Coordinated approaches to involve youth and diverse audiences in Legacy work.

## FY20/21 Plan, Proposed Outcomes and Project Highlights

### *Coordinating Agencies’ FY20/21 Plan*

Coordination and cooperation are needed to do everything from providing information to park and trail visitors to ensuring that park and trail shortages are addressed. While agencies and organizations can do a great deal of coordination and cooperation on their own, the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee will encourage the coordinated development of a network of parks and trails.

### *Proposed Results/Outcomes*

Coordinating agencies, in consultation with the Legacy Advisory Committee, will:

- Enhance, integrate and create accessible Web-based information for park and trail visitors.
- Facilitate standardized, coordinated research and planning across state and regional park and trail systems.
- Support activities of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee.
- Involve youth and diverse audiences in Legacy work and outcomes.
- Coordinate projects and Legacy approaches with other agencies, organizations and nonprofits.

### *Project Highlights*

- **Web-based Systems:** In the last biennium, the partner agencies launched an integrated website that people can use for trip planning, creating customized maps, using print-on-demand services, and interfacing with smartphones. Integrated, web-based tools will continue to provide people with useful information about a seamless system of parks and trails in Minnesota.
- **Research:** Standardized and coordinated research is needed across the three systems to understand who is using the state and regional park and trail systems, where they are coming from, and their satisfaction with facilities and programs. Partners began this work in the previous biennium; and will conduct further integrated research and system planning to ensure that citizen expectations for the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund are being met. Information on use and satisfaction that can be compared

across systems is also important for decisions about future investments. Partners also conducted a broad recreational participation survey to better understand changing patterns since the last similar survey, over a decade ago.

- **Support for the Legacy Advisory Committee:** The committee is comprised of volunteers who travel from all over the state for bimonthly strategic directions discussions. Reimbursement for travel expenses and support for their work makes participation possible for a diverse group of citizens. This committee helps advance implementation of the *25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan*.
- **Public Engagement:** The Legacy agencies, in partnership with the Legacy Advisory Committee, held a series of events across the state to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of passage of the Legacy Amendment. The agencies will continue to engage Minnesotan's with a significant presence at the 2019 Minnesota State Fair.
- **Restoration Evaluation:** Evaluation of natural resource restoration projects across all four Legacy Funds will determine progress toward goals and help achieve legislative mandates for restoration evaluation. A coordinated approach to evaluation provides several efficiencies.

## DNR Parks and Trails Division FY20/21 Legacy Spending Plan At-A-Glance

### Connect People to the Outdoors

**\$6,923,590 or 17% of DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation**

<p><b>Interpretive services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 year-round naturalists and several partially Legacy funded naturalists at Destination and Core parks</li> <li>• Blue Mounds State Park naturalist including Bison Buggy programs and outreach to underserved communities</li> <li>• Deliver the “I Can!” series of outdoor skills building programs</li> <li>• Statewide Naturalist Corps program and partnered interns</li> <li>• Interpretive exhibits and self-service interpretation</li> <li>• Statewide program direction from Visitor Services supervisor and 4 regional naturalists</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public information:</b> media relations, multi-cultural media outreach, Web content management, social media, cartography, online trip-planning platforms, orientation and wayfinding</p>
<p><b>Marketing and retail:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted marketing and advertising with a focus on reaching culturally diverse audiences (campaign development, materials, photo and video shoots, promotions and paid media)</li> <li>• Increased focus on digital and social media, including selfie stations</li> <li>• Loyalty program improvements for Hiking Club and Passport Club</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnership development:</b> volunteer programs, urban outreach program, and support for innovative diversity and inclusion initiatives across the state park and trail system</p>
<p><b>Information technology:</b> GIS data management, data analysis and business operations support</p>

### Acquire Land, Create Opportunities

**\$9,978,115 or 24.5% of DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation**

<p><b>Land Acquisition:</b> Acquire key state park inholdings and parcels for strategic state trail connections</p>
<p><b>Destination State Park Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split Rock Lighthouse State Park shower building</li> <li>• Itasca State Park paved, multi-use trail connection to Mary Gibbs Visitor Center</li> <li>• Convert residence to public lodging at Jay Cooke or Whitewater state parks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core State Park Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area trail development and entrance monument sign</li> </ul>
<p><b>State Trail Development:</b> Minnesota Valley State Trail development</p>
<p><b>Project Design:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glendalough State Park bicycle trail</li> <li>• Beltrami State Forest OHV campground</li> <li>• Itasca State Park concession/parking area</li> <li>• Heartland State Trail Spur from Emmaville to Itasca State Park</li> </ul>
<p>Professional services and A&amp;D staff</p>

## Take Care of What We Have

### *\$23,825,295 or 58.5% of DNR Parks and Trails Division Allocation*

<p><b>Natural and Cultural Resource Management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract with Conservation Corps of Minnesota &amp; Iowa to engage youth in resource management</li> <li>• Contract with Minnesota Historical Society to complete cultural resource management and perform archaeological investigations</li> <li>• Complete invasive species management, native plant community restoration, prescribed burning, and resource assessments across the state park and trail system</li> </ul>
Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
Sustainable state park hiking trails; high priority locations to be determined
A&D staff, professional services, and pre-design for new biennium projects
Regional small projects
<p><b>Destination State Park Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campground rehabilitation: Paint Rock Springs campground at St. Croix State Park and Upper and Lower Cedar campgrounds at Whitewater State Park</li> <li>• Historic building rehabilitation; Nicollet Court at Itasca State Park</li> <li>• Visitor center rehabilitation at Sibley and Wild River state parks</li> <li>• Accessibility updates at Sibley State Park amphitheater</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core State Park Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shower building replacement at Myre-Big Island, Fort Ridgely, Maplewood, and Frontenac (includes campground site work) state parks</li> <li>• Fort Ridgely State Park amphitheater</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rustic State Park Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park portfolio update of orientation, wayfinding, and vault toilets (carry-over project from FY 18-19: Old Mill, Charles Lindberg, Monson Lake, and Judge C.R. Magney state parks)</li> </ul>
<p><b>State Trail Rehabilitation and Bridge Repair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmony-Preston Valley State Trail</li> <li>• Taconite State Trail</li> <li>• C.J. Ramstad/North Shore State Trail</li> <li>• Great River Ridge State Trail</li> </ul>