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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Action Plan 1984-86

MINNESOTA STATE AGENCY ACTION PLAN 1984-86

**DEPARTMENT
OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

Prepared for the

Executive Branch Policy Development Program 1984-85

June, 1984

Executive Summary
June, 1984

To develop DNR's State Agency Action Plan 1984-86, twenty-eight key DNR managers participated in a 3-day strategic planning retreat in mid-May 1984 which was preceded by an extensive two month environmental scanning exercise. Eight principal trends were identified during this process and the issues and initiatives reported in the agency's action plan were developed from those.

The issue areas and the issues within them are listed below. The agency's plan also includes anticipated actions in response to the issues, possible legislation and resulting structural changes, if any.

WATER MANAGEMENT

- Develop a Water Allocation Plan
- Implement the Ground Water Plan
- Complete the Water Resources Information System
- Reduce Flood Damage
- Intensify Lakeshore Management

FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- Intensify Forest Management
- Utilize Forest Products for Economic Development
- Stabilize the Commercial Forest Land Base
- Update the Forest Inventory
- Provide Urban Forestry Programs

MINERAL MANAGEMENT

- Implement the Metallic Mineral Development Plan
- Identify and Develop Industrial Minerals
- Peat Development

GENERAL LAND MANAGEMENT

- Reduce Soil Erosion
- Protect Wetlands

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

- Develop a Long Range Plan for Fish and Wildlife
- Intensify Fish Management
- Reduce Habitat Deterioration
- Identify Alternative Funding Sources for Fish and Wildlife Management

OUTDOOR RECREATION MANAGEMENT

- Acquisition and Development of Recreational Areas
- Rehabilitation and Maintenance of the Outdoor Recreation System
- Provide Public Information
- Improve Public/Private Partnerships in Recreation

NATURAL RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT

- Respond to Increased Enforcement Responsibilities
- Reduce the Illegal Commercialization of Game and Fish Resources

DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT

- Improve Interdisciplinary Coordination
- Utilize Advancements in Technology to Improve Management Effectiveness
- Implement Department of Administration and DNR Study Recommendations to Improve Administrative Management
- Restore Environmental Education Efforts
- Expand the Minnesota Conservation Corps

INTRODUCTION

The following is the Department of Natural Resources response to the Governor's request for a strategic planning activity within the executive branch agencies. Governor Perpich's request for a three year action plan coincided with a felt need within DNR to take a renewed look at the future of natural resource management. As a result, the Department initiated a comprehensive approach which included a three day retreat for key managers and an extensive two month environmental scanning exercise.

During the months of March and April 1984, each of twenty-eight key managers, in consultation with their staffs, wrote papers on the state and national trends which they felt would impact their respective areas of expertise. These papers were then shared among the group. Concurrently, staff in the Department's Office of Planning provided information on general economic, technological, political, social and organizational trends expected to impact the state.

The relationship between trends, implications (issues) and desired Department initiatives (actions) is a complex one. Generally, implications and resultant initiatives come not from a single trend, but instead from the combination of a number of trends. Within this document, therefore, trends are listed separately from issues and initiatives. Initiatives, however, are tied to specific issues.

TRENDS

In group sessions at the strategic planning retreat, DNR key managers were asked to review and prioritize the trends that had been identified. While the entire group of managers did not collectively arrive at a consensus as to the ordinal ranking of important trends for the future of natural resources, the following eight were listed most frequently as the main trends:

- (1) Changing demographics of future natural resource users;
- (2) Changing structure of the state's economy and the future of natural resources as economic development tools;
- (3) Continuing degradation of life-supporting natural resources (land, air, water);
- (4) Increasing land use conflicts and need for methods to better allocate natural resources;
- (5) Increasing complexity of intergovernmental relations and administrative matters;
- (6) Advancing technological capabilities;
- (7) Changing character of DNR's workforce; and
- (8) Increasing need for improved public information and public relations.

ISSUES/ACTIONS

The mission of the DNR is to protect the natural resources of the state for present and future generations. Thus, a primary focus of the agency will always be preserving the natural resource base. Because it is no longer an endlessly abundant base, management of it must be skillful so that the values of basic life support, aesthetics and economics can be balanced. Overcut forests and dangerously polluted waters are recent enough in memory to suggest that a balance is absolutely essential.

At the same time, the economics of today are such that a fresh look at the relationship between natural resources and the economy is necessary as some of the proposed actions show. Here again, however, a balanced perspective is important. Natural resources management contributes substantially to economic activity through the products it provides (e.g., water, fishing and hunting opportunities, wood products, minerals production, recreational opportunities, etc.), as well as by the prevention of economic loss (e.g., managing floodwaters, enforcing against overharvest of fish and wildlife, etc.).

Additionally, there is the question of precisely how the organization gets the job done. The actions proposed herein reflect needs for staff and funding. But the Department realizes that the resources available for getting the job done are not as abundant as they once were. Thus, the actions propose the thoughtful application of management and data base information systems, improved public information and relations, and new ways to cooperate with the private sector, all of which are geared toward improved productivity. DNR recognizes the need not only to get the job done, but also to get smarter at how it's done. Working smarter means improved productivity.

The issues and actions selected for the Governor's review are presented in the categories and on the pages listed below.

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All actions cover the time frame of fiscal years 1985 through 1987 and will be initiated during that period.

I. ISSUE AREA: WATER MANAGEMENT

Minnesota has long been viewed as a water-rich state, although challenges to water quality have surfaced in the last ten years. Even more recently, challenges to the quantity of the state's water have also emerged. Federal court decisions suggest that the state's waters may be vulnerable to out-of-state diversion should other states need to import water to sustain economic growth. Because of its importance to so much of Minnesota's economic base--agriculture, forestry, mining, industry, and tourism--water management is quickly becoming one of the most crucial natural resource concerns of this decade.

Issues:

1. Water Allocation Planning: To be able to respond to potential diversion requests, Minnesota should develop a process and plan for water allocation. The Water Planning Board, the Natural Resources Research Institute and the Environmental Quality Board have suggested a method for documenting the value of water to the state--combining social, environmental and economic impacts--as a basis for future decision making. The LOMR currently is funding a pilot ground water allocation study in the vicinity of Swift County. Similar efforts should be undertaken for surface waters.
2. Ground Water Plan Implementation: Although ground water is used by 70 percent of Minnesotans and supports major economic activities like irrigation and industry, little is known about the actual quantity of such water and its susceptibility to contamination by human activity. The LOMR is currently funding research into tools for aquifer investigation, but more needs to be done to refine knowledge of this resource.
3. Water Resources Information System: In order to facilitate the efforts to plan for water allocation and ground water study, an adequate water information system is needed. Much has already been accomplished through funds provided by the Minnesota Legislature and federal agencies, but several key linkages for the system remain to be developed.
4. Flood Damage Reduction: The state continues to experience substantial economic losses from flooding, as evidenced by 1983 flood problems (Clearwater, Thief, Cotton and Redwood Rivers; Pulaski, Prior, Big Marine and Big Carnelian Lakes). Although the 1983 damages of \$10 million are much less than the \$158 million of 1978 and the annual average of \$70 million, they are still high. Restrictions in related federal efforts (the Corps of Engineers requires a 35 percent local funding commitment for projects, and disaster relief is only granted where state or local authorities provide a 25 percent match) further compound flood management efforts.
5. Lakeshore Management: During the past 10 years, residential development along lakeshores has doubled. These new and often innovative types of developments have emerged as significant issues to be addressed. It is becoming increasingly difficult to balance the interests of developers, residents and the general public along lakeshores.

Actions:

1. The Department will begin to develop a water allocation and management program to define the values of water; to define decision criteria for allocation on the basis of river reach and aquifer rather than by installation; to investigate instream flow methodologies and their applicability to protected flows; to draft rules or procedures to implement this approach in areas where major withdrawals or conflicts have occurred; and to improve the daily administration of the water appropriations permit process to enforce compliance and enable follow-up investigations and appropriate legal remedies.
2. The Department's goal is to implement the following elements of the ground water plan: apply geophysics methods to accelerated data compilation and analysis in regional aquifer studies; begin investigations of aquifer recharge; continue and accelerate compilation of county-level summary reports so that data is accessible and usable; continue and expand quality and water level monitoring; interpret data from monitoring and report significant changes; prepare specifications for well abandonment on state-owned lands, retaining some wells for monitoring purposes; and develop inter-agency agreements on coordination and cooperation where several agencies have jurisdiction.
3. In cooperation with the Land Management Information System and the Systems for Water Information Management Committee the Department intends to complete the following elements of the water information system: computerize the protected waters inventory and digitize these water bodies; improve compatibility of the River Mile Index System with other land and water data bases; computerize lake hydrologic and hydraulic information; and develop a standard ground water data base.
4. While improvements have been made in floodplain management since the initiation of the program in 1969, 17,000 urban and rural structures existing before then are still potentially threatened. The Department will seek state cost-sharing funds to be provided to individual communities for flood damage reduction initiatives. Techniques to be incorporated into local plans include: flood warning systems, signing floodplain areas, floodproofing public buildings and advising private owners, floodwater impoundments, detailed inundation mapping, assessments of damage potential, and methods to clear debris and acquire and relocate flood-prone structures.
5. To ensure a quality lake resource for all interested parties, the Department's goal is to intensify lakeshore management by evaluating the impacts of new development trends, carefully analyzing and determining lake carrying capacity, strengthening the capability of local governments to address problem lakes and enhancing training and educational opportunities for local officials.

Legislation:

- 1.-5. Because all of the actions listed are important new initiatives, many may require new funding which may come from a variety of sources. A recommendation for policy legislation will be the likely outcome of the water allocation planning effort, if that action is funded.

Structural Change:

None anticipated at this time.

II. ISSUE AREA: FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The wise management of state forest resources is critical to the economy and well being of all Minnesotans. At this time the state forest land base is unstable, and resources are underdeveloped and underutilized. There is an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic quality of these forests, improve wildlife habitat, produce more useable raw materials and to ensure a continuing supply of resources for the future.

Issues:

1. Intensification: Minnesota's state forest lands are producing at less than 50% of their potential. A program of intensified forest resource management will result in healthier and more aesthetic forests, more wildlife and new forest products industries with increased revenues for the state.
2. Economic Development: The forest products industry in Minnesota is a major employer in rural areas, particularly in the northern forested areas. About 50,000 people are employed by forest products industries directly and about 150,000 work in related trades and services. The forests of Minnesota have the potential to have a substantial positive impact on the economy by providing a stable source of renewable timber resources.
3. Land Base Stabilization: Over the last 10 years, commercial forest land in Minnesota has been disappearing at the rate of about 50,000 acres per year. The long term effect of this trend could be devastating to an economy that would otherwise have the potential to attract new forest industries.
4. Forest Inventory: The basic data for all forest resource management decisions comes from the Phase I and Phase II forest inventories. It is critical that the existing inventories be kept up to date and expanded where inventory data is currently lacking.
5. Urban Forestry: Minnesota's urban forest resources are affected by numerous biological and environmental factors, but many urban dwellers are unaware of the importance of trees as a natural resource. Losses of principal urban trees in recent years, such as elms and oaks to Dutch elm and oak wilt diseases, and the lack of public awareness combine to make urban forestry a serious issue.

Actions:

1. To intensify forest management the Department will:
 - Give special emphasis to nursery and tree improvement programs;

- Develop unit management plans with specific intensification goals;
 - Work continuously on improving harvesting and site preparation methods;
 - Integrate pest management into silvicultural programs and develop a long range gypsy moth management program;
 - Work with private landowners to ensure increased resource production;
 - Coordinate management intensification efforts with the U.S. Forest Service, counties and forest products companies; and
 - Seek increased funding for eliminating the backlog of areas needing reforestation.
2. To continue the use of forests for economic development the Department will:
- Promote the use of timber resources for economic development through primary and secondary forest products industries growth;
 - Increase the utilization of aspen, birch, balsam fir and hardwood surpluses;
 - Develop management plans which highlight economic growth areas;
 - Promote the use of wood residues for energy; and
 - Seek funding for new forest products marketing and economic development initiatives.
3. To stabilize the commercial forest land base the Department will:
- Develop a commercial forest land preservation policy;
 - Establish specific plans with goals and objectives for all state forest lands; and
 - Redraw state forest boundary lines during the planning process to help ensure their long term stability.
4. To update the forest inventory program the Department will:
- Complete the initial Phase II inventory of state and county lands;
 - Maintain inventory data as changes due to harvest, fire, planting and pests occur;
 - Begin a reevaluation of Phase II inventory areas as part of a continuous forest inventory project; and
 - Seek funding from the LCMR for the 10 year Phase I reinventory.
5. To provide an urban forestry program the Department will:
- Assist communities with the development of tree management programs;

- Promote special programs such as Arbor Day, Tree City USA and the Minnesota Register of Big Trees;
- Encourage the media to promote urban forest management;
- Provide insect and disease technical information; and
- Seek funding for urban forestry programs.

Legislation:

1. The Department will seek legislation to realign positions and funding sources within the Division of Forestry to place emphasis on positions dedicated to forest resource management intensification, to increase funding for eliminating the reforestation backlog, and for forest roads.
2. The Department will realign positions and funding sources within the Division of Forestry to place emphasis on economic development projects, and will seek funding for new initiatives in forest products marketing and economic development.
3. The Department will seek a commercial forest land preservation policy. The Department will also request realignment of forest boundaries as a result of the unit planning process.
4. The Department will seek to realign positions and funding sources within the Division of Forestry to accomplish the reinventory of Phase II inventory plots; funding from the LCMR for the Phase I reinventory; and funding for a Phase II inventory of private lands.
5. The Department will request increased funding and positions for urban forestry programs.

Structural Change:

Any proposed changes would be accomplished and incorporated according to provisions of the Forestry Division's Administrative Realignment Plan (1984).

III. ISSUE AREA: MINERAL MANAGEMENT

Although the emphasis may change from dependence on iron ore and taconite to a more diversified minerals economy, the future development of Minnesota's mineral resources looks very promising. However, the state needs to continue the acceleration of mineral potential evaluation to stimulate exploration and discovery of non-ferrous minerals. Further long-term minerals research on environmental protection needs and techniques, mineral economics, and mineral marketing also continue to have a high priority in the state's minerals program.

Issues:

1. Metallic Mineral Development Plan: Minnesota represents the largest unexplored, high mineral potential area in North America. The productive greenstone belts of Ontario extend into the state and, based on that

province's discovery statistics, it is estimated that in Minnesota's greenstone areas alone at least 50 undiscovered, commercial mineral deposits exist. Even counting its three iron ranges, which have been closely drilled, less than 3% of the state has been adequately explored. Minnesota needs a mineral development plan that would encourage and coordinate mineral exploration and development in an environmentally acceptable manner.

2. Industrial Minerals Identification and Development: Industrial minerals such as sand and gravel, crushed rock and certain clays are locally valuable. Others such as silica sand, dimension stone, limestone and feldspars have national markets. Even in the depressed year of 1983 they represented a \$94 million industry in Minnesota, yet they are relatively untapped resources.
3. Balancing Peatland Development Objectives with Environmental Protection Concerns: The 1983-84 biennium has seen significant progress in furthering the promotion of peat fuels and horticultural peat industries in Minnesota. The energy peat development project which the 1983 legislature directed the DNR to implement will, upon the completion of this biennium's work, probably shift to another agency, very likely the new Natural Resources Research Institute. Because of the successes of the development initiative it is inevitable that the DNR's regulatory and management responsibilities for peat will grow. The paramount informational issue at the base of these responsibilities is the behavior of peatland surface and subsurface water. The gaps that remain in the understanding of peatland hydrology, even though there exists a considerable fund of research knowledge, affect the Department's ability to address public concerns related to the balance of development and environmental protection. The state clearly would benefit from further well-reasoned, carefully designed, hydrologic study of peatlands.

Actions:

1. To implement the metallic mineral development plan the Department will:
 - Promote mineral exploration by accelerating the development of basic geologic data such as aeromagnetic surveys, and bedrock maps;
 - Promote mineral exploration and increase discovery chances by accelerating mineral potential studies to highlight areas of high mineral potential and to identify exploration techniques particularly applicable to Minnesota;
 - Prepare and publicize a Governor's Executive Order encouraging mineral development and coordinating the regulatory review processes;
 - Assure access for mineral exploration; and
 - Develop incentives and initiatives for industry to explore and develop Minnesota's mineral potential.
2. To identify and develop industrial minerals the Department will:
 - Expand efforts to locate and inventory Minnesota's potential for industrial minerals;

- Promote marketing and utilization of industrial minerals, particularly those with national and international uses;
 - Accelerate the inventory of aggregate resources and protect their future use; and
 - Promote research of new uses for such minerals.
3. Regarding peat development and environmental protection the Department will seek to:
- Encourage and promote further work in peatland hydrology that specifically speaks to the issue of peatland development and protection management functions;
 - Implement and refine a system for peatland protection; and
 - Accelerate the detailed inventory of peatland development areas.

Legislation:

1. The Department needs continued LQMR support for the generation of basic geological data.
3. The Department may propose peatland protection policy legislation.

Structural Change:

None anticipated at this time.

IV. ISSUE AREA: GENERAL LAND MANAGEMENT

Caring for the state's land resources--both publicly and privately owned--will always remain a paramount responsibility of the Department because of its fundamental importance to all other natural resource management activities.

Issues:

1. Soil Erosion: This is a major long-term environmental problem for which regular and precise measurement is nearly impossible. Yet, its degrading effects are readily apparent not only upon agricultural and forest production but also upon fisheries and wildlife habitat.
2. Wetlands: Minnesota's wetland resources are still being drained at the rate of 2 to 3 percent annually. This has serious impacts on wildlife habitat and as yet unknown impacts on the ground water filtering process and relationship. The draining of wetlands can be attributed in part to lack of public education and in part to the Minnesota Drainage Code, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 106. The code, which has not been comprehensively reviewed since 1947, is seriously outmoded. The case of Lost Marsh in Blue Earth County in fall 1983 attests to this. The wetland, containing a DNR managed wildlife management area, was drained, as permitted by the statute, without the state being notified.

Actions:

1. A major initiative is necessary to reduce soil erosion on Minnesota lands to below the tolerance level of 5 tons per acre per year (the "T" value at which topsoil can replace itself). The Department will:
 - Work with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and legislators a demonstration effort, including the use of state lands for demonstration areas similar to current projects at the Whitewater and Lac Qui Parle Wildlife Management Areas;
 - Continue to cost-share in the purchase of no-till farming equipment with local soil and water conservation districts when possible;
 - Promote conservation tillage through information and education in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Board of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture; and
 - Continue efforts to shape the 1985 national farm bill with respect to this issue.
2. To protect wetlands the Department will:
 - Perform technical determinations of the depth of existing ditch constructions before further drainage occurs to ascertain public rights and protect the state's investment in wetlands that are either part of a wildlife management area or protected by the state water bank program;
 - Provide information to legislators and the public, as requested, on the impacts of the current drainage code over the last few years;
 - Support retention of the recently developed tax incentives to preserve wetlands; and
 - Support wetland restoration on private and public lands and the accelerated acquisition of important privately held wetlands.

Legislation:

1. Appropriate legislation would set soil loss limits statewide and would create programs to provide conservation incentives to landowners of highly erodable soils.
2. The Department recommends a serious review and possible revision of the drainage code so that the wetlands protection gains of recent years are not over-ridden for the benefit of a few at the expense of many. In order to obtain the technical data on existing ditch depths, a general fund change or an LCMR appropriation will be sought by the Department.

Structural Change:

None anticipated at this time.

V. ISSUE AREA: FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

With the increased emphasis on tourism, there are increased pressures on the state's hunting and fishing resources. Urban, suburban and rural residence development and agricultural and forestry production mean additional pressures through habitat degradation. Despite these pressures, the Department's mandate is to maintain a diversity of fish and wildlife populations for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Further, the Department is required to preserve significant scientific and natural areas.

Issues:

1. Long Range Planning for Fish and Wildlife: Given the intense pressures on the resource as well as the inherent complexities of ecosystems, comprehensive planning and management for fish and wildlife is essential. This comprehensive planning must cover not only a broad range of functions but also a significant time period (e.g., 10 years).
2. Intensified Fish Management: Increased pressure on the fish resource is occurring with emphasis on tourism and recreation for economic development in Minnesota. The increased demand results in needs for intensified fish management and allocation of the resource to maximize the socio-economic benefits.
3. Habitat Deterioration: As noted earlier, soil erosion and wetlands loss in Minnesota complicate and severely hamper efforts to provide adequate fish and wildlife resources for the state. Habitat degradation from these problems and others occurs to a large extent on private land. Roadsides make up half the natural vegetation in agricultural areas and if properly managed can provide quality nesting cover for pheasants and other ground nesting birds. State forests provide additional areas for improving wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, resources to undertake this last effort are lacking at present.
4. Alternative Funding Sources For Fish and Wildlife Management: A reliable revenue source is essential to carry out the long term, accelerated fish and wildlife management program. Present funding sources fluctuate greatly and often are not adequate to keep pace with management needs. Several variables contribute to this financial situation. They include: increased operating costs to manage resources; increased numbers of free hunting and fishing licenses for the elderly and others; declining numbers of hunters and anglers who purchase licenses; and increased costs to acquire and maintain both habitats for nongame wildlife and other areas for the general public who just enjoy participating in the aesthetics of the outdoors.

Actions:

1. The Department will develop a comprehensive long-range plan for managing fish and wildlife, including nongame wildlife and scientific and natural areas.
2. To intensify fish management the Department will:
 - Develop lake management plans for these important waters including schedules for inventory of fish stocks, numbers of users and evaluation of management efforts;

- Develop a fish hatchery production system to efficiently produce species required by lake management plans;
- Develop a fish management program on marginal waters near population centers with aeration systems, fishing piers, stocking, and rehabilitation efforts;
- Develop a management information system to provide timely information to managers for decisions on lake management and to the public regarding inventory and management plans; and
- Develop special fishing opportunities with diverse species and special regulations including agreements with Indian communities, with other states and with Canadian provinces.

3. To improve fish and wildlife habitat the Department will:

- Continue to acquire important wetlands when possible;
- Intensify efforts to improve fish and wildlife habitat on private lands through various mechanisms (e.g., tax incentives, conservation easements, gifts of land, land banking, etc);
- Undertake a strong effort to educate the public on the values of state and other publicly owned land for fish and wildlife;
- Launch a good roadside management program using pheasant stamp funds; and
- Coordinate management activities with the Forestry Division as far as possible with severely limited resources.

4. The Department will identify and evaluate alternative funding sources for fish and wildlife management.

Legislation:

1. The Department will seek an LCMR appropriation to fund the development of a comprehensive plan for fish and wildlife management.
2. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 75 percent of the intensified fish management program, but a legislative appropriation will be required to adequately fund the program.
3. Legislative action is needed to continue and expand the funding for acquisition of wetlands. Continued legislative support is also important for proper roadside management. An LCMR appropriation will be sought to appropriately fund the forestry-wildlife coordination effort.
4. Legislation may be required to enable use of alternative revenue sources.

Structural Change:

None anticipated at this time.

VI. ISSUE AREA: OUTDOOR RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Minnesota's lands, waters, forests, and its fish and wildlife form the base of the state's tourism industry. The state's outdoor recreation system, through its parks, trails, public water accesses, canoe and boating routes, fishing and hunting areas and forest campgrounds, provides Minnesotans and visitors access to that base. The currently accelerated tourism promotion relies heavily on both the resources and the recreation system to attract visitors to Minnesota as well as to keep the state's tourism dollars at home.

Issues:

1. Acquisition and Development: There continues to be unmet demand for outdoor recreation lands and facilities. This demand can be satisfied through the acquisition and management of key parcels of land. Parcels needed include public water access sites, trail alignments and connections, canoe and boating route campsites, wildlife management areas, and inholdings in state parks.
2. Rehabilitation and Maintenance: Tourist expectations must be met to assure return visits and continued growth in economic returns from tourism. These expectations are best met when facilities are well maintained and safe; which means neat and structurally sound buildings, clean campgrounds and boat launch sites, and properly signed trails and waterways. Many park facilities were developed during the CCC/WPA programs of the 1930s and 1940s and are in need of major rehabilitation or replacement.
3. Public Information: The ever changing public must consistently be informed about the outdoor recreation opportunities available to them. Accessible and accurate information on opportunities, trip planning, snow and river conditions and campsite availability all mean more satisfied recreators.
4. Public/Private Partnerships: The DNR is not the sole provider in the outdoor recreation system. Providers from the federal, state, and local levels, as well as from the private sector must work in an integrated fashion to more efficiently and properly meet the needs of the state's tourists.

Actions:

1. To acquire and develop recreational areas the Department will:
 - Seek funding to accelerate the acquisition and development of lands to ensure availability of an outdoor recreation system that will support the state's tourist industry; and
 - Emphasize the provision of fishing opportunities (i.e., public water accesses and fishing piers) in metropolitan and other high demand areas.
2. To rehabilitate and maintain recreational areas the Department will:
 - Develop a long range rehabilitation and maintenance program for trails, canoe and boating routes, and water access sites;
 - Work to accelerate its parks rehabilitation program; and

- Develop forest unit plans with a re-emphasis on forest recreation, including upgrading and promoting existing forest recreational facilities.
- 3. The Department will increase its information and education activities and continue to improve the close working relationship with DEED's Office of Tourism to improve the public's awareness of the outdoor recreation system.
- 4. To improve the public/private relationship in recreation the Department will:
 - Take a lead in strengthening the working relationships of the various public and private organizations involved in outdoor recreation and in providing user information, all for the purpose of efficiently providing a variety of recreational packages which will enhance the attractiveness of local and regional areas; and
 - Take a lead in developing and seeking enabling legislation which would allow simpler working arrangements, such as cooperative agreements, to permit more flexibility between the Department and other public agencies and private organizations.

Legislation:

1. Accelerated acquisition and development funding will be requested through bond sales and LCMR appropriations.
2. The Department will seek permanent funding for personnel, equipment, and services for on-going rehabilitation and maintenance.
3. Legislative appropriations and action will be needed to fund and staff the Department's information and education activities.
4. Legislation will also be sought to permit and facilitate more cooperative working arrangements.

Structural Change:

The Department will examine the recommendations made in the Department of Administration report (January 1984) on combining the Unit of Trails and Waterways with the Division of Parks and Recreation.

VII. ISSUE AREA: NATURAL RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT

The area of natural resources enforcement is in transition. In the past, the "game warden" was the familiar local individual who apprehended those in violation of fish and game laws and rules. Due to increasing program complexity within the Department, the increase in tourist visits--many of which involve some aspect of the state's natural resources--and the increasing illegal commercialization of fishing in the state, the role of the game warden is becoming more appropriately generalized to that of the "conservation officer".

Issues:

1. Increased Enforcement Responsibilities: The complexity of enforcement has grown as natural resource management programs have grown. Conservation officers are called upon to mediate water use and water appropriation disputes, ensure proper use of state trails, investigate arson and trespass in state forests, patrol state parks and state forest campgrounds, register and monitor 3-wheel vehicle-users, and investigate animal nuisance complaints, especially within metropolitan areas, in addition to more traditional enforcement activities with respect to hunting and fishing. Also, to retain contact with other peace officers, especially the State Patrol, the Department must convert to a high-band radio system, following the lead of the Patrol. Thus, during the next biennium, conservation officers will also be involved in a major radio system conversion.
2. Illegal Commercialization of Game and Fish Resources: Through the efforts of a recently created undercover unit, the illegal taking of game and fish by commercial operators has been found to be occurring to a greater extent than previously suspected. Much more work needs to be done to identify and apprehend these violators.

Actions:

1. To respond to increased enforcement responsibilities the Department will:
 - Improve law enforcement training throughout the Department;
 - Intensify the enforcement effort in the metropolitan area and the Lake Superior region;
 - Convert to a high-band radio system; and
 - Seek legislation to add a civil damages dimension to fishing and hunting violations presently treated under the criminal code.
2. The Department will seek to reduce the illegal commercialization of game and fish by:
 - Increasing the number of undercover operations and entering cooperative efforts such as information sharing and investigations with other states and the federal government whenever possible;
 - Using the latest scientific surveillance and enforcement techniques such as night vision scopes, telemetry and forensics when possible;
 - Continuing to promote the Turn-in-Poachers (TIP) Program; and
 - Increasing the use of roadblocks and work teams.

Legislation:

1. New civil damages legislation will be sought.

Structural Change:

None anticipated at this time.

VIII. ISSUE AREA: DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT

During the last few years, improving organizational management has received close attention within the Department. Concentration on this issue has, however, been difficult due to the fiscal crisis in the state. Thus, its continued improvement remains an issue.

Issues:

1. Improved Interdisciplinary Coordination: As the Department attempts to balance resource protection with needed economic development and mitigate conflicts between a spectrum of natural resource users, the need for improved interdisciplinary coordination becomes essential. Examples of this coordination vary from the continuous planning and management of state rivers to project specific activities such as the recreation provision plan for the periphery of the BWCA. Additionally, the lack of consistent economic data across disciplines is a problem.
2. Advancements in Technology: The technological advances of the information society provide opportunities for more informed decision making, improved communications with the public and enhanced management accountability. These opportunities can lead to long term efficiencies but there are substantial costs that must be invested to have skilled personnel and appropriate equipment.
3. DOA and DNR Study Recommendations: Three successive internal and external studies of DNR conducted in 1983 and 1984 identified a number of specific areas for improvement of administrative support. Areas where improvement could be made if staff and dollars were available include: financial management, personnel, training, lands, engineering and field services.
4. Environmental Education: To do an effective and efficient job on environmental education programs, the Minnesota Environmental Education Board (MEEB) must return to the 1981 funding level. (Its budget was cut in half during the 1982-83 biennium; restored to about 75% of the FY 80-81 level for the 1984-85 biennium.)
5. Minnesota Conservation Corps: Currently, approximately 16% of the state's youth between the ages of 19 and 23 are unemployed. Besides providing good, healthy outdoor work for unemployed young adults, the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) provides a cost effective means of accomplishing the state's backlog of needed conservation work. Unfortunately, the program lags behind those in other upper midwestern states due to inadequate funding.

Actions:

1. To improve interdisciplinary coordination the Department will:
 - Hold meetings of key managers (similar to the 1984 strategic planning retreat) on a more frequent basis, perhaps quarterly, for informal exchanges of information and development of administrative and resource management strategies;

- Seek to convert to general funding positions within the Office of Planning currently funded by the LCMR (River Management, Parks Planning, Suitability) in order to continue a formal coordination of interdisciplinary activities (e.g., rivers management and the interdisciplinary development of the BWCA periphery recreation plan);
 - Improve the Department's capability to provide natural resource economic analysis and develop a mechanism to coordinate economic work through the Office of Planning.
2. To appropriately utilize advancements in technology, an LCMR appropriation will be sought to continue acceleration of the Department's computerized information systems in order to build centralized data bases for all resource and management information.
 3. Department actions to improve administrative management come from two sources: specific actions recommended in the 1984 study by the Department of Administration and administrative initiatives identified during the May 1984 strategic planning retreat of DNR key managers. The Department will improve administrative management by:
 - Strengthening the role of regional administrators in policy and program decision-making;
 - Adding personnel aides in regional offices and fiscal assistance in the central office;
 - Clarifying roles, responsibilities and working relationships of business managers, finance and personnel staff;
 - Increasing automation of fiscal and personnel record keeping and developing an automated cost accounting system;
 - Adding three land specialists in the northern regional offices;
 - Developing a long range plan for the improvement of managerial, supervisory, and employee training; and
 - Establishing common reportability for regional administrators and directors; restructuring the responsibilities of the assistant commissioner for administration; and changing the position of assistant commissioner for planning to assistant commissioner for planning and special services.
 4. To restore environmental education efforts, the Minnesota Environmental Education Board and the Department will seek to return staff levels to those existing prior to the budget cuts of 1981, 1982, and 1983.
 5. To expand the capability of Minnesota Conservation Corps the Department will:
 - Seek to bring the Corps up to a similar level as neighboring states to make possible more of this cost effective approach; and
 - Initiate a joint effort with the Departments of Economic Security and Corrections to employ juvenile offenders in this program.

Legislation:

1. The Department will need LCMR support and a general fund appropriation for the conversion of positions.
2. An LCMR appropriation will also be needed to continue the accelerated development of computerized information systems.
3. The Department will seek a general fund appropriation to enhance its administrative support as recommended by the Department of Administration.
4. The Minnesota Environmental Education Board will also require a general fund appropriation to restore efforts as proposed.
5. The Department will seek to enact enabling legislation for the Minnesota Conservation Corps and expand state or federal funding to intensify this cost effective program.

Structural Change:

The only structural change that will result from these actions is that in the Commissioner's Office: creation of common management reportability and restructuring of the responsibilities of the Assistant Commissioners.

