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SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE ON CONSERVATION.

⁽¹⁾ Governor Elmer L. Andersen,

⁽³⁾ April 7, 1961

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Today I invite your attention to a few of the more urgent problems which require legislative action in the field of Conservation.

1. Accelerated Program of State Nursery Production

The production of state tree nurseries should be increased to 50 million seedlings annually. This will require \$353,000 increase in the appropriation for the biennium. I urge favorable action.

2. Forest Fire Protection

Equipment is vitally needed to maintain fire fighting protection for Minnesota forest lands. Conversion to the new radio frequencies assigned by the Federal Communications Commission has been delayed for lack of appropriation. The recommended budget contains an increase of \$70,000 for equipment and to finance partial conversion to the new radio frequencies during the coming biennium. I endorse this essential service of forest management.

3. Permissive Legislation to Establish County Parks

It is recommended that permissive legislation be enacted whereby counties may establish county park areas. In 1955 such legislation was passed and subsequently amended to apply only to Hennepin County. Such legislation would help alleviate the critical state park situation and permit the counties to acquire desirable park sites while still available. I urge favorable action on H.F. 1467 and S.F. 1310.

4. Acquisition of Strategic State Park Areas

I also recommend early committee action on bills establishing Devil's Track Falls, Fort Snelling and Big Stone Lake State Parks, and a bill providing for acquisition of strategic areas for 13 existing state parks. Park site opportunities are transient and should not be lost. These bills accordingly are deserving of your careful consideration and support.

5. Interim Commission on State Parks

In addition to the park legislation already presented I wish to endorse S.F. 479, H.F. 561 calling for the establishment of a State Park Interim Commission. Our greatest need in the management of our state parks and related recreational needs is planning and programming for the future. Such a commission is urgently needed to survey and project state park needs, and recreational opportunities.

6. State-wide Topographic Mapping

In 1949 when the topographic mapping program was authorized by the legislature, there were only 45 partial maps of the state dating from 1895 to 1934 and covered 11% of the area of the State. By January 1, 1960, 232 topographic quadrangle maps had been completed so the state is now 34.6% mapped.

I recommend that topographic mapping be continued to provide the basis for an expanded program of geologic mapping particularly in the Arrowhead region under the State Geological Survey. An appropriation of \$50,000 for each year of the biennium on a matching basis is required for this program.

7. Acquisition of Public Access

Public Access, too, is a program of great urgency. It is no longer considered merely a wildlife program, but is better identified as a part of our public recreational program. Boating has taken its place along with fishing and hunting, and if not now, promises to exceed the demands of both combined in the new future. A total of 607 public accesses have been acquired or established since the inception of the program in 1945. It should be remembered acquisition also implies the responsibility for development and maintenance. Legislative support for this purpose is an investment in our recreational future we should not overlook.

8. "Save Minnesota's Wetlands"

This is truly a multi-purpose program which benefits waterfowl, upland game and furbearers; provides public hunting areas; and conserves precious water. Over 75,000 acres of valuable wildlife lands, particularly irreplaceable wetlands, have already been brought into State ownership. The goal is 250,000 acres and the cost will be great, but the preservation of our water, wildlife and public hunting justify the program. Continued support of this program is deserving of every consideration.

9. Acquisition of So-called Volstead Lands

S.F. 726 and H.F. 848 provide for the acquisition by the State of Minnesota of approximately 33,000 acres of land from the Federal government at a total price of approximately \$148,000. This amount is based on the difference between the \$193,000 which is owed the State of Minnesota for drainage assessments and interest on these lands and the

appraised value that has been placed on such lands by the Federal government of approximately \$341,000. I am happy to endorse this bill which is department-sponsored, non-controversial and decidedly in the interest of the state.

10. Facilitate Administration of State Water Code

Two bills relating to water are of particular importance.

H.F. 676 (S.F. 809) amending Ch. 105.44 is designed to supply state-wide data on water use and H.F. 677 (S.F. 616) amending 105.54 to facilitate enforcement of present water statutes. I urge favorable action.

11. Minnesota Memorial Hardwood Forest

Approval by the Legislature of the bill (H.F. 871, S.F. 1440) supporting the Minnesota Memorial Hardwood Forest would perpetuate one of the nation's outstanding scenic, touring and boating areas in the Hiawatha Valley of Minnesota. The Memorial Forest would extend from St. Paul to the Iowa border along the shores of the Mississippi River and major tributaries, prevent erosion and insure a rich harvest of hardwood and coniferous forest products. The state and participating counties would share alike in the proceeds from timber harvest. Here is an area that dramatically demonstrates the potential in the principles of multiple use, encompassing assets of vast economic and aesthetic values.