

# Natural Resources

# Projects Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Project Title	Priority Ranking	Funding Source	Project Requests for State Funds		
			2022	2024	2026
Natural Resources Asset Preservation	1	GO	\$ 149,000	\$ 149,000	\$ 149,000
Natural Resources Betterment of Buildings	2	GO	\$ 49,000	\$ 49,000	\$ 49,000
Natural Resources Acquisition and Betterment of Public Lands	3	GO	\$ 91,000	\$ 91,000	\$ 91,000
Wildfire Aviation Infrastructure	4	GO	\$ 8,250	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Improving Accessibility to State Parks, Recreation Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas	5	GO	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Dam Safety Repair, Reconstruction or Removal	6	GO	\$ 9,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program	7	GO	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park	8	GO	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000
Parks and Trails Local and Regional Grant Program	9	GO	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Community Tree Planting Grants	10	GO	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
<b>Total Project Requests</b>			<b>\$ 372,750</b>	<b>\$ 360,000</b>	<b>\$ 363,000</b>
<b>General Obligation Bonds (GO) Total</b>			<b>\$ 372,750</b>	<b>\$ 360,000</b>	<b>\$ 363,000</b>

## Natural Resources Asset Preservation

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$149,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	1
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$149 million for the repair and renovation of capital assets (including buildings, roads, trails, public water accesses, bridges, recreational facilities and more) to ensure they are safe and functional for the recreating public, support the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources, and preserve the state's investment in its capital assets.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$149 million for Natural Resources Asset Preservation (NRAP) needs under M.S. 84.946. The DNR manages a broad array of building and recreational assets that serve and benefit people across Minnesota. This includes 2,902 buildings at more than 225 locations, 75 state parks and recreation areas, nine waysides, 43 forest campgrounds, 4,633 miles of roads, 803 miles of paved trails, 503 bridges and several thousand culverts, 1,691 public water access sites, more than 1,000 water control structures and dams, 15 fish hatcheries, one conservation-grade tree nursery, and thousands of miles of hiking trails. All of these require periodic repair and renewal.

This request addresses the following high-priority needs :

- **Buildings:** \$61 million for repair and deferred maintenance of existing buildings, particularly to bring crisis or poor buildings and building components up to acceptable or better condition. The DNR's 10-Year Capital Asset Needs Report shows that of 2,902 buildings, 191 are in crisis condition and 450 are in poor condition. Special focus will be paid to safety and accessibility for visitors and staff, and operational efficiency.
- **Water and Wastewater Systems:** \$13 million to address aging and failing water and wastewater infrastructure statewide, including at Itasca, Myre-Big Island, and Fort Snelling state parks. Projects will focus on water and wastewater systems that do not meet current health and environmental standards.
- **Roads and Trails:** \$34.5 million to provide critical repair and renewal of roads, trails and associated culverts on public land. DNR-managed roads provide Minnesotans access to state forests, parks, recreation areas, and wildlife management areas, and the recreational and economic activities these lands support. Priority trail repair projects include the Glacial Lakes, Paul Bunyan, and Willard Munger state trails.
- **Bridges:** \$14 million to repair and replace bridges in the worst condition. This includes replacement of the vehicle entrance bridge at Tettegouche State Park, a nearly 100-year-old, fracture-critical bridge that is beyond the end of its service life and has required temporary closures and ongoing weight restrictions due to safety hazards.

- **Public Water Access Sites (PWAs) and Lake Superior Small Craft Harbors:** \$11 million to repair deteriorated ramps, pavement and docks and address other safety issues at existing sites; implement aquatic invasive species (AIS), stormwater, and shoreland best management practices; and enhance accessibility. PWAs have seen an unprecedented level of use during the COVID-19 pandemic and are in critical need of investment to maintain their functionality.
- **Water Control Structures:** \$4 million to repair or replace deteriorating water control structures that provide waterfowl habitat and support fisheries on key shallow lakes and wetlands across Minnesota.
- **Monitoring Wells:** \$1 million for rehabilitation of existing groundwater monitoring (observation) wells.
- **Campsites, Group Camps, and Day Use Areas:** \$7.5 million to address deferred maintenance and meet the changing needs of the public, thereby connecting more people to the outdoors. Priority sites include Sibley, Frontenac, Itasca, Beaver Creek Valley, and Old Mill state parks.
- **Hatcheries and Nurseries:** \$3 million for critical repairs to fish hatchery and tree nursery facility components that support conservation, outdoor recreation, tourism and rural economies. For example, the Crystal Springs hatchery requires immediate replacement of its 1930s-vintage water piping and control system, which is on the verge of failing, thereby risking the production of more than 220,000 fish each year that DNR relies on for stocking Minnesota lakes and streams.

### **Project Rationale**

The DNR manages built assets valued at nearly \$3 billion for the benefit of all Minnesotans. This infrastructure, which spans every Minnesota county and reflects generations of investment, connects Minnesotans with the outdoors, supports community prosperity, conserves our natural heritage, and contributes to our quality of life. Stewardship of these assets requires ongoing repair, renovation, and replacement.

The growing list of deferred maintenance (currently estimated to total \$682 million) poses considerable risk to the safety and usability of DNR-managed assets, and the public benefits they provide. This requires significant investment in asset preservation to ensure these resources continue to serve all Minnesotans safely and effectively into the future.

### **Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

### **Other Considerations**

The DNR's asset preservation needs are further documented in the most recent DNR 10-Year Capital Asset Need report ([mndnr.gov/reports](http://mndnr.gov/reports)).

The DNR has set aggressive goals for securing a more sustainable future that incorporate greater use of clean energy to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The DNR leads by example by investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy, which have included solar PV with a capacity of 645 KW, air-source heat pumps, and building construction designed to meet or exceed the Sustainable Buildings 2030 standard.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020 (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, Asset Preservation \$20,000,000

L2019 Ch. 2 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$3,419,000

L2018 Ch. 214 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$26,581,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Asset Preservation, \$15,000,000

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## Natural Resources Betterment of Buildings

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$49,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	2
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$49 million for reconstruction or replacement of offices and facilities that are unsafe, fail to meet current needs, or have reached the end of their useful life, in order to create a healthy and safe workplace and better serve all Minnesotans.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$49 million to acquire, construct, and improve buildings under M.S. 86A.12. The request will allow significant improvements to, or replacement of, DNR-managed buildings across Minnesota including:

- adding needed capacity for the statutorily-required storage of mineral exploration samples at the **Hibbing Drill Core Library** and enhancing the mineral core examination facilities;
- addressing critical needs at the **Waterville fish hatchery**, which is nearly 70 years old, including biosecurity measures and a discharge water treatment system;
- enhancing the safety and efficiency of tree seed and seedling storage and processing facilities at the **Badoura State Forest Nursery** to support afforestation and reforestation efforts across Minnesota; and
- replacing **campground shower buildings** at state parks to enhance their safety, functionality and accessibility while reducing maintenance costs.

These funds will also support the highest-priority replacements of inadequate or unsafe office and storage spaces statewide and the most critical renovations to historic buildings.

**Project Rationale**

The DNR manages built assets valued at nearly \$3 billion for the benefit of all Minnesotans. This infrastructure, which spans every Minnesota county and reflects generations of investment, connects Minnesotans with the outdoors, supports community prosperity, conserves our natural heritage, and contributes to our quality of life. Stewardship of these assets requires ongoing repair, renovation, and replacement.

Funding for Natural Resources Acquisition and Betterment of Buildings is a critical counterpart to funding for Natural Resources Asset Preservation (NRAP). NRAP funding addresses the regular maintenance needs (including the backlog of deferred maintenance) that affects the safety and usability of DNR-managed facilities. “Betterment” funding allows for significant improvements to, or replacement of, buildings that are unsafe, fail to meet current needs, or have reached the end of their useful life. These programs together are critical to address the substantial deferred maintenance and renewal/replacement needs for DNR-managed facilities and infrastructure.

The growing list of renewal and replacement needs (currently estimated to require more than \$100 million per year to systematically address) poses considerable risk to the public benefits provided by DNR-managed assets. This requires significant investment to ensure these resources continue to serve all Minnesotans safely and effectively into the future.

Renewal and replacement of DNR-managed buildings also reduces operating costs and enhances public value by replacing antiquated buildings with ones that require less energy and water to operate, have greater safety features, provide better access to all Minnesotans, and require significantly less maintenance now and into the future.

### **Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

### **Other Considerations**

The DNR uses renewal and replacement to enhance the energy efficiency and sustainability of DNR facilities, which lowers operating costs for specific facilities.

When determining building needs, the DNR looks for opportunities to consolidate uses to promote efficient use of space and reduce long-term operating costs (example: co-located offices or storage).

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets, although some reduction may be realized due to the enhanced efficiency of replaced buildings.

### **Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, Buildings, \$6,000

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Natural Resources Acquisition and Betterment of Public Lands

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$91,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	3
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$91 million to acquire and better state lands in order to conserve Minnesota's natural resources, enrich outdoor recreational opportunities, and provide for sustainable commercial uses of natural resources.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$71 million to acquire and improve DNR-managed public lands under M.S. 86A.12, and \$20 million to compensate the Permanent School Trust Fund under M.S. 84.027, subd. 18.

**Acquisition:** \$32 million is requested to acquire (either in fee or through easements):

- New and expanded Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs) that reflect Pheasant Action Plan and Duck Action Plan priorities and provide match for Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) funding.
- High-priority parcels for Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs), focusing on in-holdings and adjacent parcels to existing SNAs, parcels already in public ownership, and those that may provide match for RIM funding.
- Strategic in-holdings for state parks and recreation areas, state trails, and public water accesses.
- Forested parcels, to protect important private forest lands threatened by conversion to nonforest uses.

**Betterment of Public Lands:** \$39 million is requested to improve public lands, including:

- Reforestation after timber harvests, forest pest outbreaks, and storms/wildfires.
- Forest stand improvement projects to enhance species diversity, resilience, wildlife habitat, water quality benefits, and economic value.
- Major safety projects at Pine Bend Bluffs SNA, as well as enhancing access (e.g. adding parking) at other SNAs.
- Renewal and replacement of campgrounds, recreation areas, and day-use areas to meet the needs of current users. This includes construction of a campground with off-highway vehicle access in the Beltrami Island State Forest.
- Renewal and replacement of public water accesses to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards; help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by adding boat-

cleaning areas; and protect water quality and enhance habitat for pollinators and other wildlife by incorporating native vegetation and best practices for stormwater runoff management, erosion control, and shoreline buffers.

- Priority stream restoration projects across the state, including the Whetstone Channel reconnection project.
- WMA Gateway development projects to create a more inclusive experience at select WMAs. Projects at the entry point and specific points of interest will facilitate learning, build confidence in outdoor settings and introduce visitors to a network of public lands that may otherwise be unknown to them.
- Adding more shore fishing opportunities across the state to enable and encourage anglers of all incomes, ages and abilities to enjoy fishing.

**School Trust Land:** \$20 million to compensate the Permanent School Trust Fund for designations that restrict the state's ability to maximize the long-term economic return from the land while maintaining sound natural resource conservation and management principles, consistent with M.S. 84.027, subd. 18.

### **Project Rationale**

Minnesota's public lands are vital to the health and wellbeing of the state. They provide opportunities for those of all incomes and abilities to connect with and enjoy the benefits of the outdoors, and contribute to the health of local economies. The existing system of state lands is a legacy of generations of past investments. Continued investment is needed both to maintain the rich outdoor resources Minnesotans currently enjoy, and to ensure the state's public lands meet the needs of a growing and changing population. Investment is also needed to help ensure Minnesota's natural systems are resilient to the effects of climate change and other large-scale landscape impacts.

The projects identified above directly support the DNR's strategic conservation and resource management goals, as well as the wellbeing of local communities and economies. In addition, the projects further connect people to the outdoors, enhance the DNR's ability to serve all Minnesotans, and help the state mitigate and adapt to climate change. This funding is needed to improve the management and conservation of the natural resources of the state as provided for in M.S. 86A.12. Additionally, this funding will allow the DNR to make progress addressing the requirements under M.S. 84.027, subd. 18 regarding the School Trust Fund.

### **Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

### **Other Considerations**

In-holdings are the highest priority for acquisition.

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.



**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020 (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, Forests for the Future (i.e. easement acquisitions), \$1,000,000

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, Reforestation, \$3,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Reforestation, \$1,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, Parks and Trails, \$14,548,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, St. Paul Invasive Tree Pests, \$1,500,000

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Wildfire Aviation Infrastructure

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$8,250
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	4
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$8.25 million to repair, construct and acquire wildfire aviation infrastructure in Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Brainerd that supports effective response to wildfires and other safety needs.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) responds to wildfires and other safety needs, which requires having safe, secure, and efficient areas to house air operations. This request would allow the DNR to address the following high-priority aviation infrastructure needs:

- **Hibbing Airtanker Base:** The ramp that serves as the DNR’s airtanker staging and access area at the Hibbing airport has deteriorated to the point where it can no longer be used. This has necessitated a temporary move to a new staging location, adding operational complexity and reducing response efficiency. The two mobile home units that house the tanker base operations have also reached the end of their useful life. A total of \$3.3 million is needed to repair the ramp (\$1.5 million) and replace the operations center (\$1.8 million). The new operations center would accommodate dispatch, weather, and communications personnel; and include wildfire crew readiness and rest areas, as well as meeting space for daily weather and activity briefings.
- **Grand Rapids Hangar:** The DNR currently operates from three separate locations within the Grand Rapids airport. This creates operational inefficiencies and, in the case where DNR is renting space that serves multiple tenants, increases security risks and the potential for damage and associated downtime when repositioning aviation equipment to accommodate other renters. A total of \$2.75 million is needed to purchase or construct a consolidated hangar and helibase facility to provide security and storage for DNR-owned aircraft and house helicopter operations.
- **Brainerd Airtanker Base:** The wildfire response facility at the Brainerd airport currently consists of two mobile home units that have reached the end of their useful life. A total of \$2.2 million is needed to replace these units and associated storage areas with an operations center that meets current needs.

**Project Rationale**

Airtanker base, hangar, and helibase facilities must be secure, safe, energy efficient, and provide the space needed for operations personnel and aircraft pilots and crews so the DNR can effectively respond to wildfires and support enforcement and other public safety needs. To meet these goals, these facilities should:

1. Be strategically spaced across the state for efficient and timely response to wildland fires and enforcement activities,
2. Support integrated operations as much as possible to increase efficiency and inter-operability, and

3. Provide for storage and protection of equipment to increase life-cycle and decrease down-time.

This bonding request helps the DNR advance the above goals and a number of its strategic priorities, including managing natural resources responsibly and cultivating a healthy, safe and supportive workplace. Additionally, effective wildfire response is necessary to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

The DNR is working with the airport authorities on these projects and may grant them funds to execute construction.

The DNR has successfully co-located with other public entities in Warroad, Thief River Falls, and Bemidji.

Infrastructure updates and building improvements at DNR airtanker bases have been sporadic and limited since the Wildfire Aviation program's inception in 1976.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This project is not expected to have a significant impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

Not applicable.

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## Improving Accessibility to State Parks, Recreation Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$20,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	5
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$20 million to improve accessibility at William O'Brien and Fort Snelling state parks and at two high-visitation wildlife management areas. Project components include renovations of bathrooms, showers, campsites, trails, and day-use facilities and development of new accessible amenities to serve visitors with a variety of physical abilities.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$20 million to more comprehensively improve the accessibility of state-managed lands and facilities to Minnesotans of all abilities, thereby advancing the strategic priorities of connecting people to the outdoors and expanding diversity, equity and inclusion. The funding will enable the DNR to complete accessibility improvements to high-use facilities at William O'Brien State Park that were partially funded in 2020, and to apply the lessons learned from that project to Fort Snelling State Park and two high-visitation wildlife management areas (WMAs), Carlos Avery and Whitewater. When complete, the project will include accessibility renovations of bathrooms, parking areas, showers, campsites, trails and a variety of day-use and interpretive facilities, as well as new amenities to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse user base with a variety of physical abilities and skills.

At William O'Brien State Park, the DNR will complete the work partially funded with 2020 bonding to enhance accessibility of the following facilities and amenities:

- Interpretive center
- Savanna campground: shower building, campsites, vault toilets, camper cabins
- Riverside group camp: campsites, vault toilets
- Trails and trail amenities
- Picnic shelters
- Athletic field
- Wayfinding and signage
- Key parking and access routes throughout the park

At Fort Snelling State Park, the DNR will enhance accessibility of the following:

- Ranger station: restrooms, service counter, exterior plaza, parking and self-registration station

- Beach and day use area: parking, access routes, building access, beach and picnic area
- Picnic Island: causeway, parking, public water access, perimeter trail, youth camp, picnic areas and shelters, restroom buildings
- Visitor Center: minor interior improvements
- Confluence (“Pike”) Island: trail from the Visitor Center to the Mississippi River
- Other trails: repair degraded areas that are limiting accessibility

At the Carlos Avery and Whitewater WMAs, the DNR will conduct a comprehensive, site-specific assessment of accessibility needs and opportunities at each WMA and complete the accessibility improvements identified to have the greatest benefit. Projects are expected to include improved accessibility of parking lots, gated trails, and hunting blinds.

### **Project Rationale**

Many DNR buildings and facilities are more than 50 years old and were built before the advent of state and federal accessibility standards. All recent renovations and construction projects meet these standards. However, such projects are currently only implemented as building and facility components are in need of major repairs. As a result, most parks and recreation areas remain only partially accessible.

The importance of increased accessibility extends beyond state parks and recreation areas to other DNR-managed outdoor recreation lands and facilities. The DNR also has been partnering with the Minnesota Council on Disability and interested stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance accessibility at WMAs. As was done for William O’Brien State Park, the first step is to identify the needs and opportunities that exist to improve the comprehensive accessibility of these locations.

Funding this proposal will create more comprehensive accessibility at specific state parks and WMAs. This will demonstrate what more comprehensive accessibility looks like, serve as a model for efforts on other state lands, and, most importantly, provide a much more accessible experience so that all Minnesotans can enjoy these public lands and facilities in their entirety.

### **Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

### **Other Considerations**

The DNR is responsible for providing a wide range of recreational opportunities and these opportunities need to be available to everyone. Enhanced accessibility opens outdoor experiences to people with disabilities and improves access and experience for people of all abilities.

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

### **Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020, (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond \$3,000,000

L2018, Ch. 214, Bond, \$500,000

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## Dam Safety Repair, Reconstruction or Removal

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$9,500
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	6
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$9.5 million to maintain the structural integrity of dams, prevent public safety hazards, and maintain water levels on rivers and lakes.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$9.5 million for dam safety projects. This request supports the DNR's Dam Safety Program, which was established under M.S. 103G.511 to manage Minnesota's public dam infrastructure. The program provides design, engineering, and construction assistance to repair, reconstruct, or remove dams, and to respond to dam safety emergencies. This request will support:

- Removal of the Grindstone Dam following completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.
- Modification of the Clearwater and Buck's Mill dams to address the safety hazard inherent to the obsolete design of these low-head river dams.
- Contingency funds to address construction cost increases and enhanced risk mitigation for the Lake Bronson Dam replacement project, which received 2020 bonding funds.

About 10 percent of the request will be reserved for emergencies. Unspent emergency funds will be used on high priority projects.

**Project Rationale**

Dams are relied on to maintain water levels on many of Minnesota's recreational lakes, providing significant outdoor recreation, tourism, economic, and community benefits. For example, Mille Lacs, Minnetonka, Bronson, and Ottertail lakes all depend on dams to maintain water levels.

There are more than 1,150 dams in Minnesota; 650 are public dams, and the state owns more than 300 of these. Most of the publicly owned dams in Minnesota are more than 50 years old and require ongoing repairs to maintain their structural integrity, prevent public safety hazards, and to maintain water levels on recreational lakes. Emergency repairs must be made when an imminent dam failure threatens public safety.

Management of the state's public dam infrastructure via the Dam Safety Program also includes modification of hazardous or obsolete dams, and removal of those that no longer provide significant public benefits where rehabilitation will not be cost-effective or environmentally protective. These projects may also provide natural resource benefits by maximizing the biological diversity of river systems and through restoring and reconnecting upstream and downstream habitats.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

As a part of the Dam Safety Program, every other year the DNR develops and submits to the legislature a dam safety project priority list. This list, along with the maintenance needs identified in the DNR's 10-Year Capital Asset Needs Report, informs each capital request for dam safety repair, reconstruction and removal.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020 (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, \$20,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, \$9,400,000

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Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$25,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	7
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$25 million for cost-share grants to local governments, including cities, counties, and watershed districts, for projects that reduce flood risk. Projects range from purchasing and removing damaged and at-risk residential structures from the floodplain to constructing levees, pumping stations, and multi-purpose flood impoundments.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$25 million for flood hazard mitigation assistance grants. These funds will allow for cost-share grants to local governments to support projects that reduce flood risk in cities and watershed districts in the Red River Valley, Minnesota River Valley and other flood-risk areas across the state. Types of projects include the purchase and removal of flood-damaged and at-risk residential structures, construction of levees and pumping stations, and engineering and construction of multi-purpose flood impoundments.

This funding supports the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program established by M.S. 103F.161.

**Project Rationale**

Flood mitigation is cost effective. Studies show that every \$1 spent on flood mitigation avoids \$7 in future damages. Past investment in flood mitigation has resulted in a more flood-resilient state, and significantly decreased emergency flood response and recovery costs. Even with the significant progress that has been made, flood mitigation risks remain. Climate change and the resulting increased intensity of storm events has elevated the urgency for robust program funding, to enhance the resiliency of Minnesota communities to future flooding events.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

Past appropriations for flood hazard mitigation assistance grants have leveraged significant federal and local dollars, considerably reducing Minnesota's vulnerability to both the safety and economic impacts of floods.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

This will have a minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020, (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, \$17,000,000

L2018, Ch. 214 - Bond, \$20,000,000

L2017, SS1, Ch. 8 - Bond, \$11,555,000

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - Bond, \$23,549,000

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - Bond, \$2,515,000 (Disaster)

L2015, SS1, Ch. 5 - General Fund, \$500,000 (Disaster)

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Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$12,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	8
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$12 million to design and develop key recreational amenities at Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park, Minnesota’s newest state park.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$12 million for Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park. This project supports continued design and construction of recreational opportunities and supporting infrastructure at Minnesota's newest state park. Projects include:

- construction of the Lake Lodge Visitor Center; design of the South Vermilion Ridge Campground, including campsites with electric hook-ups and shower facilities,
- rehabilitation of an existing fire tower, including access, parking and interpretation,
- design of additional hiking/biking trails within the park, and
- design and construction of a renewable energy project that will offset some operating costs of the park.

**Project Rationale**

The DNR is responsible for providing a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities across the state. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how important state parks, trails, and recreation areas are to Minnesotans, with visitors flocking to these public resources in record numbers. State parks and trails advance a key agency priority of connecting people with the outdoors, which offer health and wellness benefits to individuals, families and communities. Lake Vermilion State Park was established in 2008 by the Minnesota Legislature, and the Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine Cooperative Master Plan was completed in December 2010. The goal for development of the park is to provide new nature-based recreational opportunities that will encourage healthy, active lifestyles, and engage increasingly diverse users in a growing appreciation for outdoor activities.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

This request focuses on continued investment and development in Minnesota's newest state park.

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

Upon completion of the new recreational amenities, there will be some additional operating costs,

which will be partially offset by revenue from entrance permits, facility rental, camping fees, and equipment rentals.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020 (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, \$5,800,000

L2018 Ch. 214 - Bond, \$4,000,000

L2017 (1st SS), Ch. 8 - Bond, \$3,500,000

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**Parks and Trails Local and Regional Grant Program**

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$4,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	9
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$4 million to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$4 million to provide competitive grants to local governments for acquisition and development of local and regional parks and trails across the state. These funds will support the following park and trail matching grant programs established in M.S. 85.019:

- The Outdoor Recreation Grant Program helps local governments acquire, develop and/or redevelop close-to-home outdoor recreation facilities.
- The Regional Park Grant Program helps local governments acquire shoreland, natural areas and threatened habitat, and develop and rehabilitate natural resource-based outdoor recreation facilities of regional significance.
- The Natural and Scenic Area Grant Program helps local governments and school districts acquire and protect natural and scenic areas statewide that are diminishing due to development, especially in high growth areas, shore lands, bluff tops and areas where land use changes may limit future opportunities.
- The Local Trail Connections Grant Program provides grants to local units of government to develop and acquire trail connections to residential areas, schools, workplaces, community centers, recreation areas, trails and parks.
- The Regional Trail Grant Program provides grants to local units of government for development and acquisition of regional trails outside of the metropolitan area.

These grant programs allow the DNR to partner with local communities to acquire land and develop parks and trails that help create a network of close-to-home recreation facilities. The request will provide grants to local communities to acquire approximately 100 acres of parkland and trail corridor, develop or redevelop about 10 local and regional parks, and complete about 14 local and regional trail projects.

**Project Rationale**

This project supports Minnesota’s communities by helping to ensure public access to a high-quality

system of local and regional parks and trails. Connecting people to the outdoors is a DNR strategic priority that is critical to enhancing community health and wellness. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of parks and trails to Minnesotans. Pass-through funding for local and regional parks and trails projects further fosters connections of children and families to the outdoors.

### **Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

### **Other Considerations**

While Legacy funds have provided additional park and trail building acquisition and development funding to areas of regional significance, these funding sources cannot be used for local parks and trails. These programs have received Lottery-in-Lieu, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and General Fund appropriations in recent years but the demand for funding is significantly greater than available funds. Therefore, bond funding remains one of the only sources of money for the purchase and development of smaller recreational opportunities located within communities.

### **Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on the operating budget involved in managing the grant process.

### **Description of Previous Appropriations**

Not applicable

### **Project Contact Person**

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Community Tree Planting Grants

**AT A GLANCE**

<b>2022 Request Amount:</b>	\$5,000
<b>Priority Ranking:</b>	10
<b>Project Summary:</b>	\$5 million for grants to communities to help mitigate loss or damage of community forest resources due to shade tree pests or disease, thereby protecting the important public benefits shade trees provide.

**Project Description**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests \$5 million for grants to communities to plant or replace public trees damaged by forest insects or disease, to minimize loss of or damage to community forest resources.

Projects will be evaluated according to how well they: demonstrate commitment to long-term monitoring and management, increase the diversity of tree species, develop and sustain local community forestry programs, benefit the entire community forest resource, and provide multiple benefits to the public. Grant recipients must demonstrate their commitment to ongoing care.

**Project Rationale**

Maintaining community shade tree canopy is increasingly important for energy efficiency, climate mitigation, and community health and wellbeing. However, Minnesota community forests are facing imminent threats from invasive pests such as emerald ash borer (EAB), gypsy moth, and oak wilt. This request will allow the DNR to help communities mitigate loss or damage of their forest resources as a result of shade tree disease or pests, such as EAB.

**Project Timeline**

The project will be completed within the given time frame.

**Other Considerations**

Funding reforestation with bond funds is supported in the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, article XI, section 5(f).

**Impact on Agency Operating Budgets**

There will be minimal impact on operating budgets.

**Description of Previous Appropriations**

L2020 (5th SS), Ch. 3 - Bond, \$1,000,000

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