

A bill for an act

relating to natural resources; creating an account; appropriating money for state parks and trails; requiring planning and a report; amending Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 85.53.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 85.53, is amended to read:

85.53 PARKS AND TRAILS FUND.

Subdivision 1. Establishment. The parks and trails fund is established in the Minnesota Constitution, article XI, section 15. All money earned by the parks and trails fund must be credited to the fund.

Subd. 2. State park and trail legacy account. A state park and trail legacy account is established in the parks and trails fund.

Sec. 2. STATE PARKS AND TRAILS APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) \$ in fiscal year 2010 and \$..... in fiscal year 2011 are appropriated to the commissioner of natural resources from the park and trail legacy account to:

(1) connect people to the outdoors by providing access, conservation education, and interpretative services with a goal of reaching at least 350,000 additional participants to state parks and trails by the end of the biennium and reaching 25 percent of all state parks and trails visitors through education programming. Activities to achieve the goal include, but are not limited to, outdoors skills training; community assistance; volunteer coordination and enhancement; marketing and technology enhancements to target new audiences and provide new opportunities to engage citizens, including enhancements to the department Web site; creating accessibility to facilities; and providing personal contact by:

(i) opening or reopening visitor centers at Lake Bronson, Blue Mounds, St. Croix, and Grand Portage State Parks and expanding visitor center hours at other high profile parks where appropriate;

(ii) increasing the number of education interns working with park naturalists as assistants from 18 to 30. Internships allow expansion of programming, create positive partnerships with colleges and universities, and reach new audiences, particularly in combining technology and education;

(iii) adding ten new park naturalists, outdoor skills instructors, or outdoor education teachers to provide expanded state park programming to reach new users, focusing on families and children connecting technology fun with outdoor learning;

(iv) attracting 50,000 new users, with a focus on young adults, families, and children, through expanded outdoors programming focusing on connecting technology fun with outdoor learning;

(v) conducting 500 requested park conservation education programs for schools and other groups;

(vi) advancing new conservation education delivery methods reaching new and younger audiences with 50 new MP3 audio trail guides, educational touch screen computers, podcasts, and videocasts;

(vii) providing interpretive services for state trails, including at least five new kiosks, signage, updating five trail maps, and developing three new resource oriented brochures;

(viii) producing a new state map integrating state parks, trails, and regional park and trail facilities; and

(ix) enhancing cross-country skiing and winter use opportunities in at least ten state parks or trails;

(2) accelerate natural resource management, restoration, and protection activities, including but not limited to:

(i) restoring at least 300 acres of state park prairie, oak savanna, and wetland and at least 400 acres of forest targeted to the north shore region and Itasca and Maplewood State Parks;

(ii) conducting prescribed burns on an additional 6,000 acres of prairie and fire-dependent forest if conditions allow;

(iii) controlling invasive species on an additional 4,000 acres of prairie, forests, and wetlands;

(iv) completing state parks animal species database for all vertebrates and selected invertebrates;

3.1 (v) providing establishment mowing and invasive species control for 670 acres
3.2 of in-progress prairie reconstructions; and

3.3 (vi) restoring and managing native prairies and woodlands along at least six percent
3.4 of the developed miles of state trails, including removing invasive species; and

3.5 (3) accelerate facility maintenance, rehabilitation, and energy conservation by:

3.6 (i) upgrading at least four percent of facilities in overnight and day use areas and
3.7 trails, including contact stations, sanitation buildings, visitor centers, lodging, utility
3.8 systems, roads, parking areas, picnic areas, and fire rings;

3.9 (ii) improving access to parks and trails systems for visitors of all ability levels at
3.10 no fewer than 15 sites each year;

3.11 (iii) enhancing the trail surface of 50 miles of state trails, resurfacing ten to 20
3.12 miles of state trails, repairing three to five trail bridges, and replacing one to two bridges
3.13 annually;

3.14 (iv) rehabilitating and renewing trails in state parks and state forests for hiking,
3.15 biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding at the rate of at least
3.16 four percent per year; and

3.17 (v) increasing energy conservation and operations, promoting new
3.18 conservation-based energy sources, and reducing energy costs in at least seven buildings
3.19 and facilities.

3.20 (b) The commissioner shall utilize the Minnesota Conservation Corps and Youth
3.21 Corps to carry out the activities of this section when practicable and to leverage federal
3.22 stimulus funding for these purposes.

3.23 (c) The commissioner shall develop and use appropriate signage as notice to parks
3.24 and trails visitors that activities funded under this section are the results of the clean water,
3.25 land, and legacy constitutional amendment adopted by the voters in November 2008. The
3.26 commissioner shall make information regarding projects funded under this section and the
3.27 measurable outcomes of the projects available on the department's Web site.

3.28 (d) The commissioner shall submit a report on the expenditure and use of money
3.29 appropriated under this section to the legislature by March 1 of each year. The report must
3.30 relate the expenditure of funds by the categories established and detail the outcomes in
3.31 terms of additional use of parks and trails resources, user satisfaction surveys, and other
3.32 appropriate outcomes.

3.33 (e) The commissioner shall undertake a ten year strategic state parks and trails plan
3.34 to use funding available under the Minnesota Constitution, article 11, section 15, and a
3.35 25-year vision plan for the use of the funds. The plans must include goals and measurable
3.36 outcome objectives. In developing the plans, the commissioner shall utilize a process,

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4.1 including Web site survey tools, that includes at least seven regional listening sessions
4.2 and ensures that citizens are included in the development and finalization of the plans.
4.3 The commissioner shall provide for input from the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council,
4.4 the Minnesota United Snowmobile Association, the Minnesota Trail Riders Association,
4.5 the ATV Association of Minnesota, the Amateur Riders Motorcycle Association District
4.6 Number 23, the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association, and local and regional park and trail
4.7 organizations. The commissioner shall present the ten-year plan and 25-year vision plan
4.8 in a report to the legislature no later than January 15, 2011.