



# Minnesota State Parks and Trails

## First Biennial Legacy Report

Chapter 172, Art. 3, Sec. 2, 2009 Session Laws  
(Revised)



This report focuses on key outcomes and expenditures from the Parks and Trails portion of Minnesota’s Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources. The Legislature has charged the DNR Parks and Trails Division with connecting people to the outdoors, accelerating natural resource management, and accelerating facility maintenance and rehabilitation. More detail on Legacy projects is available on the Legislative Coordinating Commission’s website ([www.legacy.leg.mn](http://www.legacy.leg.mn)), created to help citizens monitor how dollars from the Legacy Amendment are being invested in the state.

### Connecting People to the Outdoors

- New outdoor programs such as I Can Camp!, I Can Climb!, I Can Paddle!, and I Can Fish! were added to attract the target market. Over 1,000 special and requested programs and workshops, such as Archery in the Parks, served 10,000 participants in 2010.
- Thirty seasonal Minnesota Naturalist Corps trainees, four year-round naturalists, and two seasonal naturalists were added to help serve over a quarter million participants in 2010 (up 21% from 2009).
- Overnight stays have increased by 122,000 people (14%) since 2008. Sale of daily vehicle permits increased by 27,000 (13%) since 2008.
- Connection plans were successful in addressing the decline in outdoor recreation participation as demonstrated by a 90%+ participation rate by families, the target market.
- Six new multi-lingual, touch-screen, trip-planning kiosks reached 27,000 people since 2009 in target market settings. New touch-screen interpretive devices were installed at 20 state parks in 2010.
- Interpretive kiosks and way-finding panels were installed along the Root River State Trail.
- Website improvements such as a new site (in final development stage) for kids ages 5-11 and new panoramic state park and water trail virtual tours have been added.
- More than 100 km of cross-country ski trails in 26 state forests were groomed. State park service hours and trail grooming have been extended on 800 km of cross-country ski trails.
- Annual major visitor center exhibit upgrades focusing on new educational delivery methods and new technologies are in progress at Sibley and Jay Cooke state parks.
- New free recreational loaner equipment and educational kits are now available in state parks. The kits include fishing poles, binoculars, GPS units for geocaching, and Kids’ Discovery Kits

**FY10 Budget: \$2,474,000**

**FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$2,449,598**

**FY11 Budget: \$3,823,000**

**FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$3,203,616**



I Can Climb! at Interstate State Park



I Can Camp! engaging young families

### Accelerating Natural Resource Management

- Restored native plant communities on 2,968 acres of state park land (148% of the legislative target).
- Conducted invasive species detection, prevention and response and re-established native vegetation on 20,133 acres of state park lands (125% of the legislative target).
- Conducted prescribed burns on 21,875 acres of state park land (114% of the legislative target).
- Restored and managed 802 acres of native prairies and woodlands along state trails.

**FY10 Budget: \$1,920,000**

**FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$1,896,852**

**FY11 Budget: \$1,663,000**

**FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$1,252,072**

### Accelerating Facility Maintenance and Rehabilitation

- State trail renewal and reconstruction projects are complete on 24 miles of the Heartland, Paul Bunyan, Sakatah Singing Hills, Root River, and the Willard Munger state trails.
- Trail renewal projects have been completed in 19 state forests and 15 state parks, providing safe and enjoyable use for equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and skiers. Over 600 miles of paved trails and 135 miles of natural surface trails have been enhanced to provide safe recreational trail opportunities, making it easier and more enjoyable for people to get outside.
- A major campground renewal project at Lake Shetek State Park and a remodeling project at the historic River Inn at Jay Cooke State Park are complete.
- Over 1,600 campsites have been upgraded and 12 camper cabins are currently under construction.
- A new trail center is being designed at Bear Head Lake State Park, and campground electrical projects are complete at Bear Head Lake, Glacial Lakes, and Rice Lake state parks.



Prescribed fires restoring natural areas

January 15, 2012 (revised)

- Facility renewal projects are complete at Cuyuna Country SRA and at Soudan Underground Mine and Buffalo River state parks.
- Forty-four accessibility projects at 32 state parks are complete, including extended campground spurs for easier access for larger vehicles, hundreds of accessible picnic tables and fire rings, and new vault toilets. Temperance River State Park and Cuyuna Country SRA added upgraded accessible trails and walkways.
- Twenty-six bridge rehabilitation/renewal projects are done or scheduled to be done in 2012 on the Glacial Lakes, Willard Munger, Heartland, Blue Ox, Gandy Dancer, Douglas, Root River, Luce Line, Sakatah Singing Hills, Shooting Star state trails, and at Jay Cooke and Split Rock Lighthouse state parks.
- Five solar array upgrades and three geothermal systems were installed at Great River Bluffs, Lake Shetek, Tettegouche, Glendalough, St. Croix and Grand Portage state parks, and at Big Bog and Iron Range OHV SRAs.
- Fifteen replacement and five new fishing piers have been purchased and installed. This improves public fishing opportunities broadly—especially for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- The master plan for the new Lake Vermilion State Park is complete.

**FY10 Budget: \$8,247,000**

**FY10 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$8,071,767**

**FY11 Budget: \$9,654,000**

**FY11 Funds Expended/Encumbered as of 12/31/2011: \$7,491,518**

## Planning for a Parks and Trails Legacy

### • DNR Parks and Trails Division 10-Year Strategic Plan

The plan is complete, successfully coordinating with the "10/25 Legacy Plan" and the University of Minnesota Center for Changing Landscapes 25-year inventory and framework.

### • Minnesota State and Regional Parks and Trails Legacy Plan

*Legislature appropriated \$250,000 to DNR. Plan is complete, \$246,703 expended.*

Conducted extensive public engagement: a summit with recreation/conservation leaders, 17 listening workshops throughout the state, outreach to more than 1,000 youth/young adults, meetings with diverse ethnic/racial groups, and extensive web-based input.

### • Parks and Trails Budget Analysis

The Department submitted a *Parks and Trails Budget Analysis*, examining the adequacy of funding sources and appropriations the DNR receives to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain parks and trails.

## Conservation Corps Minnesota

The Division of Parks and Trails (as directed by Chapter 172, Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(c)) utilizes Conservation Corps Minnesota services for restoration, maintenance, and other activities that supplement our ability to reach Legacy Fund goals. The division met the FY10/11 legislatively required obligations with Conservation Corps. Through contracting with the DNR, Conservation Corps crews:

- completed 109,584 crew hours toward Parks and Trails Legacy projects.
- engaged youth and young adults by involving 184 year-round Young Adult Program corpsmembers to work on Parks and Trails Legacy field-based projects in 2011.

## Grants Supporting Local Communities

The Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program:

- Provided \$7,575,750 through 38 grants to local units of government for acquisition, development, restoration, and maintenance of park and trail facilities of regional or statewide significance.
- Provided \$1,072,500 through 25 grants to local units of government for solar energy projects within parks or on trails of regional significance.

A total of 2.5% of this appropriation is legislatively authorized for administration costs (\$221,750).

**FY10 Grants Budget \$3,970,000**

**Admin Expended: \$99,250**

**FY 10 Grants Awarded: \$3,870,750**

**FY11 Grants Budget \$4,900,000**

**Admin Expended: \$106,326**

**FY 11 Grants Awarded: \$4,777,500**

## Biennial Budget Summary

**FY10 Budget**      **FY10 Expended/Encumbered/Awarded as of 12/31/2011:**

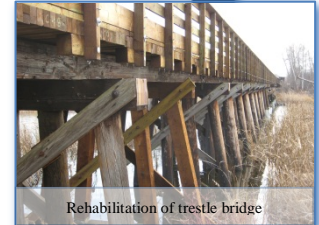
**\$16,861,000**      **Total: \$16,634,920**

**FY11 Budget**      **FY11 Expended/Encumbered/ Awarded as of 12/31/2011:**

**\$20,040,000**      **Total: \$16,831,033**



Fishing piers providing local access



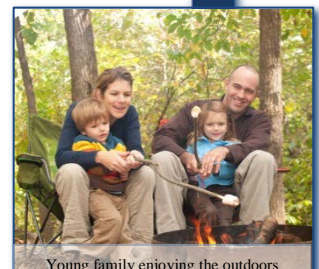
Rehabilitation of trestle bridge



Legacy plan presentation at the Capitol



Conservation Corps are youth workers



Young family enjoying the outdoors