

Natural Resources Asset Preservation

AT A GLANCE

2022 Request Amount:	\$149,000
Priority Ranking:	1
Project Summary:	\$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).

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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