

Agency Purpose

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “works with citizens to conserve and manage the state’s natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.” This mission requires sharing stewardship with citizens and partners, working together to address often-competing interests.

Core Functions

The DNR works to provide opportunities for hunting and fishing, other recreational opportunities, and economic development, as well as to preserve important features of our natural heritage. Multiple interests must often be balanced in order to protect the long-term sustainability of our natural resources while meeting the economic and recreational needs of Minnesota citizens.

Key DNR Policy Principles:

- ⇒ Protect the long-term health of the state’s natural resources.
- ⇒ Deliver sustainable levels of products and services that support Minnesota’s natural resources-based economies.
- ⇒ Provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for Minnesota’s citizens.
- ⇒ Guard the integrity of dedicated funds and ensure financial accountability.

These management principles guide DNR’s work:

- ◆ enhance communication and working relationships with core natural resource constituents, with particular attention to hunters and anglers;
- ◆ cooperate with other agencies, local units of government, citizens, and stakeholders to manage and sustain natural resources effectively;
- ◆ provide for sustainable economic use of our natural resources; place immediate focus on enhancing the state’s forest-based economy;
- ◆ make resource and land use decisions at the local level;
- ◆ integrate planning and budgeting across area, regional, and state organizational levels;
- ◆ adapt DNR’s organizational structure to deliver services more effectively and efficiently;
- ◆ use sound scientific principles, accurate information, and state-of-the-art technology in managing natural resources; and
- ◆ model the sustainable use of natural resources in our work.

Operations

The DNR works directly with citizens, stakeholder groups, and all levels of government in setting priorities, managing diverse natural resources, and providing scientific and technical expertise. The DNR administers 12 million acres in mineral rights and 5.5 million acres of land for state forests, wildlife management areas, parks, recreation areas, scientific and natural areas, state trails, and public water access sites.

At A Glance

Minnesota has approximately 51 million total land acres.

Public Lands and Waters Administered by DNR

- ◆ 5.5 million acres of land owned by the state of Minnesota, including 4.2 million acres predominantly in state forest management
- ◆ 12 million acres of land managed for mineral rights
- ◆ Eight million acres of surface rights and mineral rights managed for horticultural peat, industrial minerals, and construction materials
- ◆ 58 State Forests
- ◆ 11,842 lakes
- ◆ 69,000 miles of rivers and streams

Facilities Administered by DNR

- ◆ 66 State Parks and six state recreation areas
- ◆ 1,585 state water accesses
- ◆ More than 1.2 million acres of wildlife management areas and 37,294 acres of aquatic management areas
- ◆ 140 Scientific and natural areas
- ◆ Over 3,400 miles of canoe and boating routes plus 150 miles of Lake Superior Kayak Trail
- ◆ 1,300 miles of multi-use state trails and 500 miles of state bicycle trails
- ◆ 1,600 miles of cross country ski trails (DNR and Grant-in-Aid)
- ◆ 1,700 miles of off-highway vehicle trails (DNR and Grant-in-Aid)
- ◆ 21,600 miles of snowmobile trails (DNR and Grant-in-Aid)

The agency is organized into four geographic regions, eight operating divisions, and four support bureaus. Staff work out of 182 field offices that are located statewide.

- ⇒ **Lands and Minerals Division** manages agency real estate transactions and promotes, regulates, and provides expertise on mineral exploration, mining, and mine land reclamation.
- ⇒ **Waters Division** regulates all phases of the hydrologic cycle, including managing impacts on wetlands, lake, river, and groundwater phases of the hydrologic cycle.
- ⇒ **Forestry Division** protects citizens and property from wildfire and strives for the sustainable yield of timber resources for forest products while managing state forests for wildlife habitat and recreation.
- ⇒ **Parks and Recreation Division** operates a system of state park and forest campgrounds that conserves and manages natural, scenic and cultural resources, and offers opportunities for recreation and education.
- ⇒ **Trails and Waterways Division** provides public access to lakes, rivers and streams; designates boating routes; and maintains a statewide network of recreation trails.
- ⇒ **Fish and Wildlife Division** conserves and enhances the state's fish and wildlife populations and their supporting habitats through regulation, restoration, research, monitoring, and education.
- ⇒ **Ecological Services Division** works to advance healthy, resilient ecosystems through research on native plant and animal communities, regulation and environmental review; provides extensive public information; and maintains the state's scientific and natural areas.
- ⇒ **Enforcement Division** enforces laws related to game and fish; wetlands; aquatic plants; and the operation of watercraft, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicle (ATVs) and other recreational vehicles; and provides a series of conservation and safety education programs.
- ⇒ **Operations Support** includes the commissioner's office, four bureaus and regional operations that provide administrative leadership and support services to all DNR divisions and geographic regions (northwest, northeast, central and southern) as well as provide direct services to the public.

Budget

Direct, open, and statutory appropriations total \$629 million for the FY 2006-07 biennium: 29% is from the General Fund, 29% from the Game and Fish Fund, 22% from the Natural Resources Fund, 6% from federal funds, and the remaining from other funding sources.

Contact

Department of Natural Resources
Gene Merriam, Commissioner
500 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Phone: (651) 259-5555
Fax: (651) 296-4799
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>