

2021

Minnesota Department  
of Natural Resources  
Overview





## DNR's mission is to work with Minnesotans

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.

### To accomplish its mission, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses the following:

- Minnesota's waters, natural lands, and diverse fish and wildlife habitats are conserved and enhanced.
- Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities meet the needs of new and existing participants so all benefit from nature.
- Minnesota's natural resources contribute to strong and sustainable job markets, economies, and communities.
- DNR demonstrates operational excellence and continuous improvement in service to Minnesotans.

The DNR manages the state's water, natural lands, such as forests, wetlands, and native prairies. We provide enriching public outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, camping, skiing, hiking, biking, motorized recreation, and conservation education for Minnesotans of all ages and backgrounds. The department strives to provide economic opportunities in a manner consistent with sound natural resource conservation and management principles. We share this stewardship with Minnesotans and partners to manage for a variety of interests and values.

The DNR's core work is rooted in natural resources management and environmental protection. Thriving natural systems are critical for thriving communities, and by managing for the sustained health of natural resources the DNR contributes to community health and economic opportunity. In this work, the agency is also committed to mitigating and adapting to climate change and enhancing the climate resiliency of natural systems and communities now and into the future.

The DNR is committed to providing equitable access to outdoor spaces and the benefits afforded by a healthy environment to all Minnesotans throughout our work. In addition, the DNR is focused on attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects Minnesota's diversity.

## The DNR has Seven Divisions

- Ecological and Water Resources
- Enforcement
- Forestry
- Fish and Wildlife
- Lands and Minerals
- Operations Services
- Parks and Trails

The following summary information has been taken directly from the agency budget narratives that can be viewed in full on the MMB website: [mn.gov/mmb-stat/documents/budget/2022-23-biennial-budget-books/base-budget-november/natural-resources.pdf](https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/documents/budget/2022-23-biennial-budget-books/base-budget-november/natural-resources.pdf)



## Four Administrative Regions

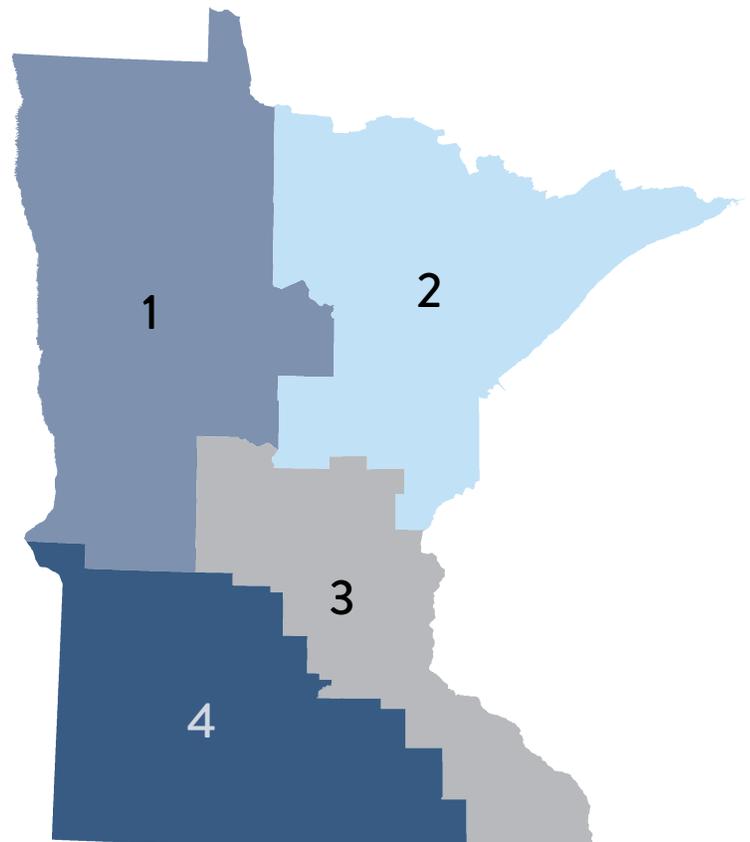
The state is divided up into administrative regions.

**Region 1:** Northwest

**Region 2:** Northeast

**Region 3:** Central

**Region 4:** Southern

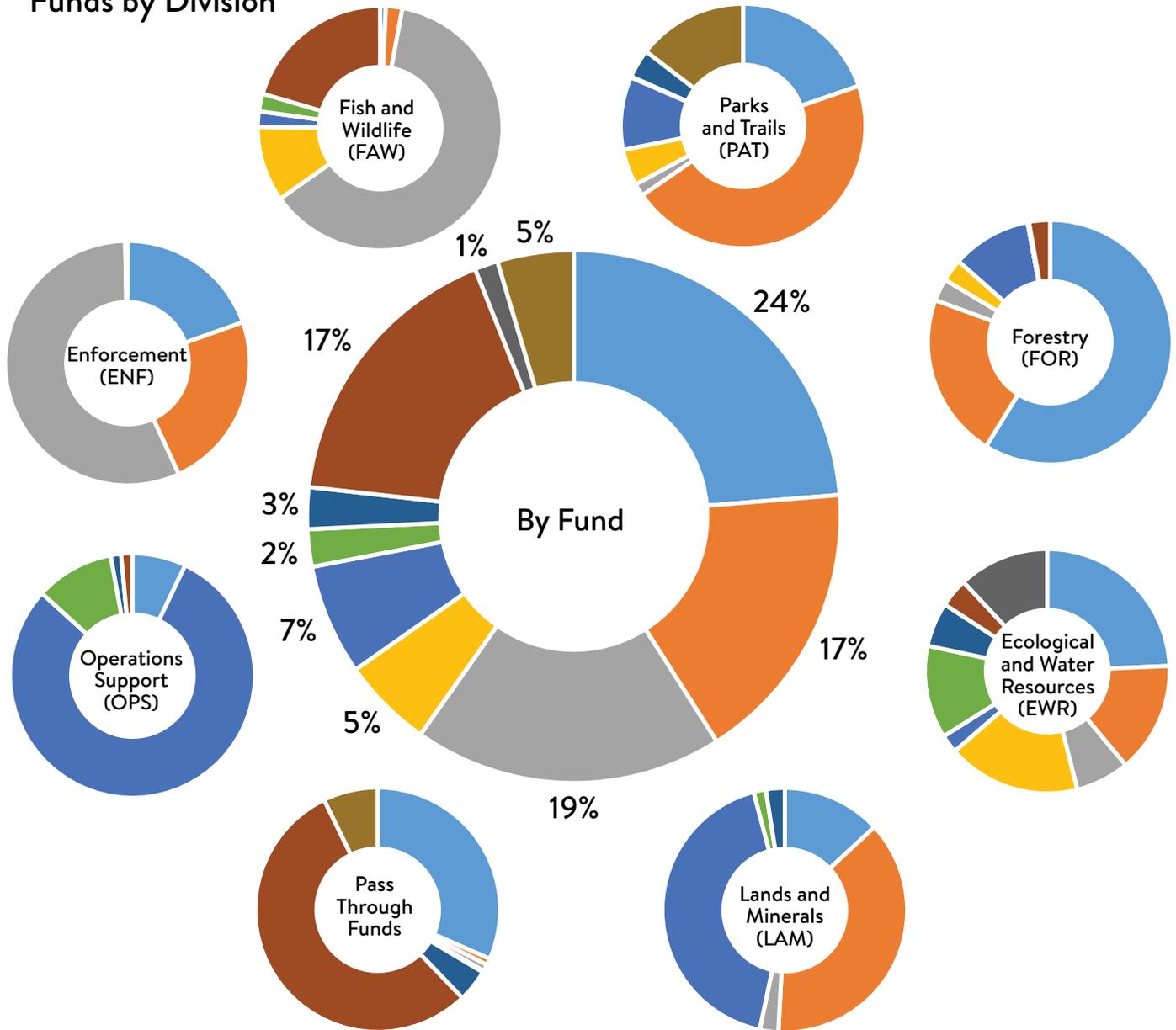


# DNR Funding

Every dollar in our budget contributes to the mission. Our FY20-21 biennial budget is \$1.3 billion, which comes from a mixture of dedicated and direct appropriations across 50 funds. 24% of our budget comes from the

General Fund, 17% comes from the Game and Fish Fund and 19% comes from the Natural Resources Fund. Approximately 25% of our budget comes from the Legacy Funds and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

## Funds by Division



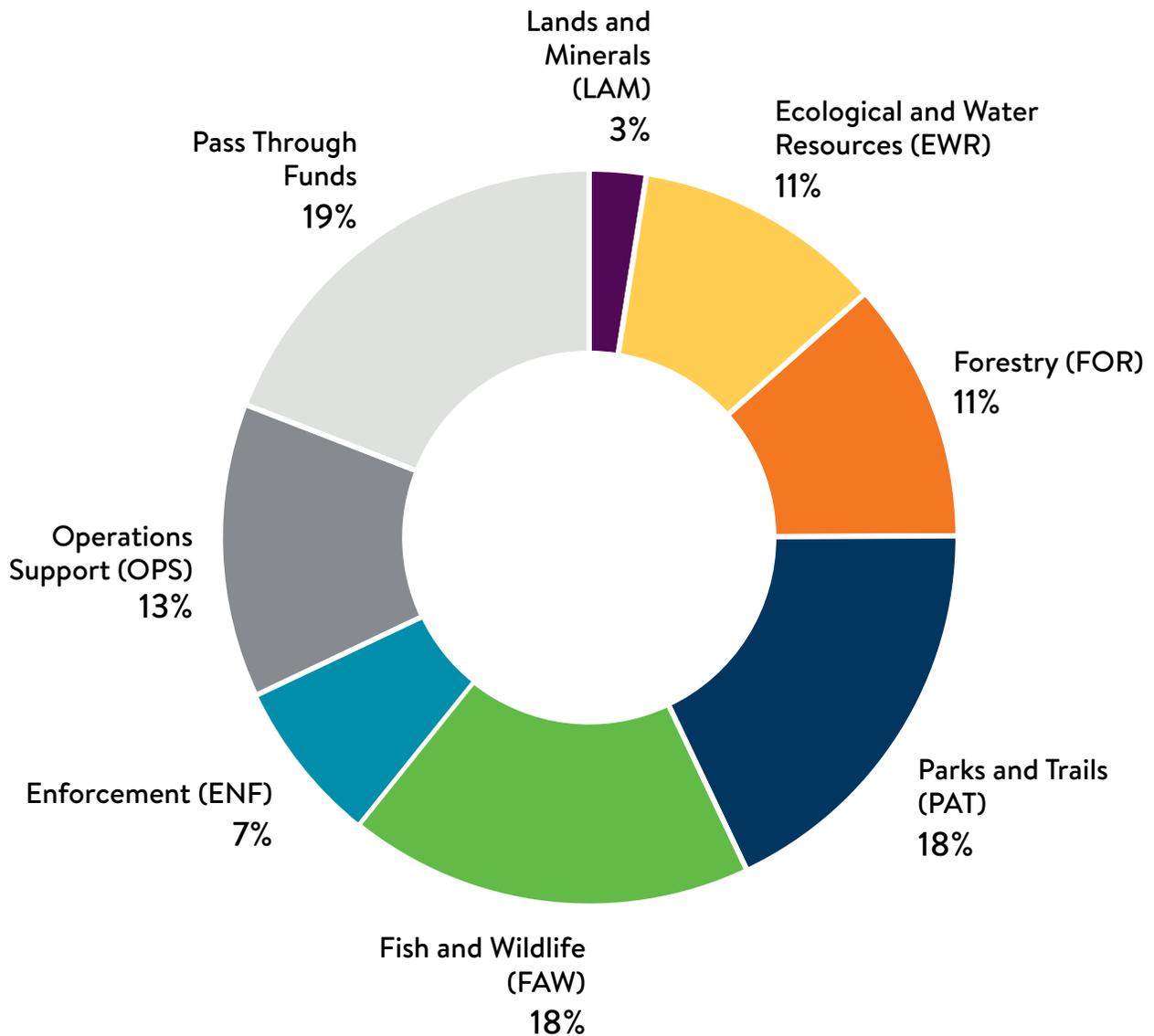
- Key**
- General
  - Special Revenue
  - Clean Water
  - Natural Resources
  - Other
  - Parks and Trails
  - Game and Fish
  - Env and NR Trust
  - Federal
  - Outdoor Heritage

Dollars in the Game and Fish Fund come largely from hunting and fishing license fees to support game and fish related programs, while dollars Natural Resources Funds come from a variety of dedicated sources such as recreation vehicle registrations, state park passes, camping fees, and timber revenues. Conversely, dollars in the General Fund come from “general” taxes

such as income and sales tax, while the Legacy dollars come solely from sales taxes dedicated to these purposes.

Our budget funds our own programs as well as advancing natural resources outcomes through legislatively-named grants to our environmental partners.

## Expenditures by Division





## Ecological and Water Resources

The DNR's Ecological and Water Resources Division helps realize a vision of healthy lands and waters throughout Minnesota by delivering integrated land and water resource conservation.

Consistent with DNR's mission, the division supports sustainable economic development, provides outdoor recreation opportunities, enhances rare wildlife and native plant populations, and protects aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems from the negative impacts of invasive species.

The division's customers include individuals, landowners, businesses, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, local governments, conservation groups and others who live in Minnesota and those who visit the state.

### Services Provided

We organize our ecological and water resources work into three main service categories:

- Conservation Assistance and Regulation Services.
- Ecosystem Management and Protection Services.
- Inventory, Monitoring, and Analysis Services.



## Enforcement

As the primary conservation law enforcement agency in Minnesota, the DNR Enforcement Division plays an important role in connecting people to the outdoors and conserving and enhancing Minnesota's natural resources by providing outreach, safety training and law enforcement throughout the state. We achieve compliance with laws and regulations through outreach, safety education, and law enforcement.

### Services Provided

Our enforcement work includes outreach, safety education, and law enforcement in four main areas:

- Fish and Game Education, Protection and Enforcement.
- Recreational Safety and Enforcement.
- Natural Resource Protection and Enforcement.
- Public Safety.



## Forestry

The DNR provides wildfire protection for 45.5 million acres of public and private land.

The DNR Forestry Division aims to help sustain community wellbeing and quality of life by improving the productivity, health, diversity, accessibility, and use of forests. Healthy forests provide clean water, carbon storage, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and forest-related products.

Healthy forests help ensure the state's natural areas remain productive, ecologically healthy, and beautiful in the face of wildfires; land use pressures; climate change; and invasive plants, insect pests, and diseases. They play a key role in protecting water quality and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and provide low-cost, accessible recreation opportunities for all Minnesotans to connect to the outdoors.

Minnesota's forest products industry relies on a sustainable state timber supply. The industry provides 64,000 jobs and economic benefits worth \$17.8 billion, according to the most recent estimate (2017). Well managed forests also provide economic benefits from tourism and outdoor recreation activities like hunting, hiking, horseback riding, birdwatching, snowshoeing, off-highway vehicle riding, and more.

## Services Provided

DNR achieves the state's forestry goals by:

- Fire Prevention, fire pre-suppression, fire suppression, and prescribed burning.
- Managing DNR-administered forest lands and managing timber on school trust lands.
- Leading forest management and policy development.
- Providing technical assistance to communities and private landowners.
- Developing and distributing forest information.
- Implementing the Sustainable Forest Resources Act.



## Fish and Wildlife

The DNR Fish and Wildlife Division strives to sustain healthy populations of fish and wildlife, high quality recreational opportunities, and vibrant local economies. We manage fish and wildlife populations, their habitats, and use of these public resources, including fishing, hunting, and trapping. We also serve people seeking hunting and fishing licenses and recreational vehicle registration and titling. We introduce hunting and angling to new participants through programs ranging from Learn-to-Hunt and Learn-to-Fish to capacity-building grants for partner groups delivering programs. Access to natural lands and participation in outdoor recreation benefits personal health and helps sustain Minnesota's hunting and fishing heritage. This boosts Minnesota's economy, especially in rural communities, by supporting more than 48,000 jobs and generating \$3.8 billion in statewide economic activity<sup>1</sup>.

### Services Provided

We organize our fish and wildlife work across four categories:

- Monitor and manage fish and wildlife populations.
- Protect, restore, and enhance key fish and wildlife lands.
- Connect people to the outdoors through hunting, fishing, and engagement.
- Administer hunting and fishing licenses and recreational vehicle titles and registrations.



## Lands and Minerals

DNR regulates mining to protect natural resources and the environment. This includes both currently operating and proposed mines, as well as the reclamation of mining areas for future use once mining is complete. The mineland reclamation activity promotes a healthy environment with sustainable use of natural resources and contributes to a strong natural resource-based economy.

DNR regularly evaluates ways to increase access to public lands and connects people to the outdoors by expanding close to home recreation opportunities and access to public waters.

DNR's land management responsibilities within the Division of Lands and Minerals include oversight of school and university trust lands, which generate revenue by leasing state surface lands and mineral rights. These funds go to school districts throughout the state and the University of Minnesota and its students. In addition, the DNR manages minerals on tax-forfeited land, providing revenue to local school districts, counties, cities, and townships.

### Services Provided

DNR meets its lands and minerals goals through three bodies of work:

- Mine Permitting and Reclamation.
- Minerals Management.
- Real Estate Management.



## Operations Support

The Operations Support program provides department-wide operational support and statewide and regional leadership services for the DNR. The program promotes department-wide coordination and leadership, strategic goal-setting, partner and stakeholder engagement, legal services, and operational excellence to advance the DNR's mission and serve Minnesota.

### Services Provided

The DNR's operations support includes both operational support and leadership services.



## Parks and Trails

The DNR Parks and Trails Division aspires to create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire people to pass along the love of the outdoors to current and future generations.

State parks and trails improve the lives of individuals, children and families by connecting them to nature, helping them to stay healthy and fit, strengthening local communities and economies, and conserving Minnesota's special places and resources. The importance of state parks and trails to Minnesotan's health and well-being has been underscored during the COVID-19 health crisis, with visits to state parks and trails up as much as 65-100 percent above recent averages.

DNR serves out-of-state visitors and Minnesotans alike. There is a state park, trail, recreation area, or forest campground within 30 miles of most people in the state. DNR serves:

- 10 million state park visitors each year (18 percent of whom are from out-of-state).
- 2 million state trail visitors (14 percent of whom are from out-of-state).
- Owners of 500,000 registered snowmobiles and off highway vehicles, and 814,000 registered watercraft.
- Local communities, whose economies benefit from about \$275 million in state park visitor spending each year.

### Services Provided

DNR's parks and trails work falls into four major categories:

- DNR connects people to the outdoors through state parks, trails, forest recreation areas and water recreation.
- DNR acquires land and creates new recreational and conservation opportunities.
- DNR connects with outdoor recreation partners to provide a seamless outdoor recreation system at the local, regional, state and federal level.