

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

**SUBJECT:** Update on FY 11-13 Capital Development Funding to Enhance Public Access and Use of DNR Lands

**FOR:** February 2013 Board meeting

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Dan Olson and Glen Clickner, Section Chiefs, Bureau of Facilities and Lands

**SUMMARY:**

In the FY 11-13 budget, the Legislature increased DNR's Stewardship capital development funding by \$7 million dollars from a requested \$18 million in the Governor's budget, to \$25 million for the biennium. On an annual basis the funding is \$12 million in FY 12 and \$13 million in FY 13.

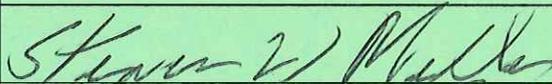
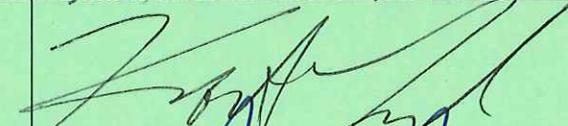
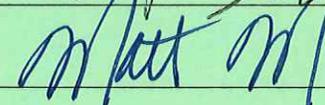
Based on Joint Finance Committee action and notes, of the \$7 million dollar increase, \$5 million dollars is to be used for infrastructure improvements on DNR lands consisting primarily of projects such as parking lots, public access roads, increased signage, and property boundary marking. Approximately \$1.25 million will be used to update and increase electrification at campsites in state parks. The remaining amount will be used for additional access infrastructure related work such as boating, canoeing/kayaking access improvements, trails, or other projects such as repair or replacement of water control structures and various emergency repairs to trails and other facilities as a result of storm damage. All of this work will provide for enhanced public access and use of DNR lands.

Department staff from the Bureau of Facilities and Lands will report on the progress made in using these funds thus far in FY 11-13.

**RECOMMENDATION:** For Information Only.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):**

- Background memo
- Type name of attachment or type N/A if not applicable
- Type name of attachment or type N/A if not applicable
- Type name of attachment or type N/A if not applicable

Approved by	Signature	Date
Steven W. Miller, Bureau Director		1-7-13
Kurt Thiede, Administrator		1-11-13
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		1/30/13

cc: Board Liaison - AD/8

DATE: January 11, 2013 FILE REF:

TO: Natural Resources Board Members

FROM: Cathy Stepp

SUBJECT: Update on the use of FY 11-13 Capital Development Funding to Enhance Public Access and Use of DNR Lands

Department staff from the Bureau of Facilities and Lands will inform the Board on the status of using additional FY 11-13 Capital Development funding to enhance public access and use of DNR lands.

### Background

Since the Stewardship Program began in 1990, DNR has been able to acquire over 550,000 acres of additional land open to the public. This is one of Wisconsin's great conservation and outdoor recreation success stories, and has provided much increased opportunities for public hunting, fishing, camping, biking, trapping, hiking and other outdoor recreation. However, as the Board knows, concerns have been expressed about the management of DNR lands and the public awareness of, and accessibility to some of these lands. In past years, while the funding has been made available to acquire these lands, funding was not generally made available to keep up with the increasing management needs. While the concept of "buy now, manage later" is a very successful strategy and has been endorsed by successive Legislatures, at some point management does need to be addressed. In the FY 11-13 state budget, the Legislature has made a significant amount of funding available to help the Department address public access management needs.

In the FY 11-13 budget, the Legislature increased DNR's Stewardship capital development funding by \$7 million dollars from a requested \$18 million in the Governor's budget, to \$25 million for the biennium. On an annual basis the funding is \$12 million in FY 12 and \$13 million in FY 13.

Based on Joint Finance Committee action and notes, of the \$7 million dollar increase, \$5 million dollars is to be used for infrastructure improvements on DNR lands consisting primarily of projects such as parking lots, public access roads, increased signage, and property boundary marking. Approximately \$1.25 million will be used to update and increase electrification at campsites in state parks. The remaining amount will be used for additional access infrastructure related work such as boating, canoeing/kayaking access improvements, trails, or other projects such as repair or replacement of water control structures and various emergency repairs to trails and other facilities as a result of storm damage. All of this work will provide for enhanced public access and use of DNR lands.

### Public Access - \$5 million

We have titled the initiative for using the \$5 million dollars as: "Conservation Infrastructure Development". The overarching main goal is to **increase and enhance public access** to DNR properties. Our initial approach and priorities are to identify and work on:

- DNR properties that have no public access and/or no recognizable signage;
- DNR properties that have limited or poor public access and/or limited or poor signage.

- High profile, high use properties that would benefit from better access, better signage, and better property delineation (fences and signage).

To achieve this goal we asked field staff in Fall 2011 to develop conservation infrastructure projects that will improve:

- Gravel parking lots,
- Gravel access roads to parking lots, and gravel roads to the interior of properties if those roads are open to the public,
- Property signs that identify the property,
- Signage that identifies what uses are allowed on a property and what uses are not allowed,
- Property boundary signs on main property thoroughfares,
- Property boundary fences and signs where there is a history of trespass problems,

Over \$12 million dollars of potential work was identified by DNR property managers and, in doing so the following criteria was used to focus these improvements for the \$5 million available:

- Properties for which there is currently no official or recognizable public access or signage should receive first consideration,
- Properties classified as Tier 1 properties for master planning purposes,
- Large highly visible Wildlife Areas, Fishery Areas, Wild Rivers and the Lower Wisconsin Riverway, State natural Areas, and State Forests that are near the state's population centers and/or have high use levels even though they are not near any of the state's population centers.

#### **Public Access – Progress on \$5 million**

To date, 71 projects statewide for parking lots, roads, and signage are either completed or under construction for \$2.85 million. Of those 71 projects, 24 projects are completed and 57 are under construction. An additional 32 projects for \$538,000 are identified and ready for funding allotment. Projects are currently being identified to fund the remaining \$1.6 million available by Spring 2013.

#### **Campsite Electrification – Progress on \$1.25 million**

To date, electrification upgrades at 346 campsites and 97 newly electrified campsites are currently under construction statewide at 12 State Parks and three Southern Forest Units. A majority of the work is expected to be completed by Spring 2013. The total bid cost for this work was \$1.58 million, which was \$330,000 over initial estimates of \$1.25 million. The Bureaus of Parks and Recreation and Facilities and Lands, in order to reduce future disruption and administrative costs of additional construction projects, decided to use \$330,000 of the \$750,000 Other Public Access funds to complete the campsite electrification effort.

#### **Other Public Access – Progress on \$750,000**

To date, two projects for a new trail project and new primitive campsites are under construction for \$117,000. An additional \$97,000 for two boat access projects are identified and ready for funding allotment. Also, the additional \$330,000 to complete Campsite Electrification utilized Other Public Access funding. Projects are currently being identified to fund the remaining \$206,000 available by Spring 2013.