The Legacy Amendment in Minnesota –

• What is it?
• Why was it approved by voters?
• Who are these Minnesotans anyway?
• How is Legacy being implemented in three different parks and trails systems, and what are its accomplishments?
• How is Legacy being evaluated?
• What are the risks and opportunities ahead?
November, 2008: 56% of Minnesota voters approve the following:

**Clean Water, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas**

"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to dedicate funding to protect our drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore our wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve our arts and cultural heritage; to support our parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore our lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater by increasing the sales and use tax rate beginning July 1, 2009, by three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales until the year 2034?"
What did passage of the amendment set in motion?

About $40M per year in new dollars to support parks and trails of state and regional significance (about 20% increase in DNR Parks and Trails pre-Legacy budget).

Legacy dollars supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes, not be used as a substitute.
Why did the constitutional amendment pass?

After all, there seemed to be good reasons for it to fail:
• U.S. economy entering the ‘Great Recession.’
• Minnesota was a ‘no new taxes’ state at the time.

Reasons for its passage:
• Broad, well-organized coalition.
• Strong tradition of support for the outdoors.
• High levels of civic and political engagement.
A brief stop off in demographics...

In 2014 -
Total population: about 5.5 million
Twin Cities metro population: about 3 million

% population of color: 19 (compare to U.S. at about 40%)
  • African American: about 6%
  • Latino/a: about 5%
  • Asian: about 5%
  • Native American: about 1%

% population of color, Twin Cities metro: 22 (projected to reach 40% in 2040)

Other trends –
Higher than national participation rates in outdoor rec for both white and non white populations, but falling.
Older (mostly white) population growing rapidly.
Continued rural to urban migration, affecting many Greater Minnesota communities.
How is Legacy being implemented in three different parks and trails systems, and what are its accomplishments?
Legacy dollars began to flow July 1, 2009:

• 40% for DNR state parks and trails
• 40% for Twin Cities seven county metro area regional parks and trails
• 20% for Greater Minnesota regional parks and trails
The three systems funded by Legacy are different:

**Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails:**
- A mature statewide system of state parks, including Itasca State Park at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, established 1891 (celebrating its 125th birthday this year!).
- Most state parks established 1930s to 1960s, with a younger system of state trails, water trails, and water access sites.
- Heavily used, aging infrastructure.
The three systems funded by Legacy are different:

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trail Commission:**
- A brand new system of regional parks outside the Twin Cities, created in 2013 in response to the Legacy Amendment.
- Strategic Plan 2015, established criteria for ‘park/trail of regional significance.’
- Some individual units are mature.
- 80 counties, many cities divided into six districts.
The three systems funded by Legacy are different:

**Metropolitan Council system**
- A mature, connected system begun in the 19th Century by landscape architect Horace Cleveland and other visionaries.
- Newer components added in response to suburban growth.
- Ten different participating counties/cities.
- Most heavily used of the three systems, much of it day use.
The Minnesota Legislature appropriates Legacy dollars directly to the three agencies, and provides oversight.

- Biennial budgets and approval of funding splits (currently 40/40/20)
- Fiscal oversight:
  - Supplement not substitute
  - Only direct and necessary expenses
- Legislative Coordinating Commission
  - Annual reporting cycle of expenditures and outcomes
  - Legacy website tracks all programs and projects: http://www.legacy.leg.mn
- Legislative Auditor
Legislature directed DNR to develop a plan to guide the use and evaluation of funds over the 25 year life of Legacy.

DNR convened a wide array of agencies and smart people and over 18 months held a series of open meetings with the public...

...and developed **A Parks and Trails Vision for Minnesotans:**

“In 2035, our world-class parks and trails connect everyone to the outdoors. They create experiences that inspire a legacy of stewardship for the natural world and they provide fun outdoor recreational opportunities that strengthen friendships, families, health, and spirit, now and into the future. Minnesotans experience the full range of benefits that outdoor recreation provides, reinforcing our identity as an outdoor culture.”
The 25 Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan published in 2011

Plan identified that Legacy spending was to pursue four broad strategic objectives (or ‘pillars’):

- Connect People to the Outdoors (programming/participation)
- Acquire Land and Create Opportunities (acquire/develop)
- Take Care of What We Have (rehabilitation/retrofitting)
- Coordinate Among Partners

Each pillar being made up of strategies (including Five Year priorities), and benchmarks.
Example: ‘Connect People to the Outdoors’ Pillar

• Seven key strategies (e.g., ‘Welcoming Environment’, ‘Access’, ‘Marketing’), with many sub-strategies.
• Benchmarks to measure for this pillar include ‘# visits to Minnesota’s parks and trails of state and regional significance.’
• Target markets include:
  • Youth
  • Young adults
  • Families w/children
  • Racial and ethnic minorities
  • New immigrants
  • Older adults
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways:  
**Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails:**  
Focus on **Connecting People** and **Taking Care of What We Have** pillars.

- **Connect**  
  - “I Can” series of experiential skill-building programs  
  - Conservation Corps leads, reaching new audiences,  
  - larger share of Legacy Target Markets (communities of color, families w/young children) than traditional state parks users.

- **Marketing and promotion**  
  - Park pass sales since 2008 have exceeded Legacy Plan targets.
  
  • Interpretive interns and staff expanded offerings at parks/trails
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways:

**Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails:**

Focus on **Connecting People** and **Taking Care of What We Have** pillars.

- **Take Care**
  - Greatly expanded work on landscape restorations, invasives management, with extensive use of Conservation Corps.
  - Bison restoration at Minneopa State Park.
  - Rehab of older campgrounds and buildings for ADA accessibility, stormwater retention, with modern electric, water, camper cabins.
  - Resurfacing aging trails and bridges.
  - Retrofitting units with solar.
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways: Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails:
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways:

Greater Minnesota:

Focus on **Acquiring Land and Creating Opportunities.**

- Parks and trails are first approved for regional significance status by Commission, before applying for Legacy dollars.
- Competitive grants process.
- New park and trail land acquisition grants throughout state, especially the high population-high growth corridor from St. Cloud to Rochester.
- Key acquisition and development projects in other regional centers, e.g., $1M acquisition of Bent Tree Trail right of way connecting to a state trail in city of Albert Lea.
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways: **Greater Minnesota:**
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways:

**Metropolitan Council:**

**Focus on Creating Opportunities and Taking Care of What We Have.**

Creating Opportunities (New Development)
- Extensive creation of new park/trail/boat access facilities in seven county area.

Taking Care
- Expanded work on landscape restorations, invasives management.
- Rehab of older campgrounds, aging trail surfaces, buildings, and bridges.
The three systems are implementing the plan in different ways: **Metropolitan Council:**
So, the three Legacy parks and trails systems are diverse and have different strengths and challenges.

The fourth pillar, Coordinating with Partners, speaks to the importance of acting together, creating unity out of diversity.

- Recreation systems that are as seamless as possible. For example, the three agencies are currently developing a web portal to allow users to search and display all state and regional parks and trails without regard to managing agency.
- Support physically connected systems.
- Seek ways to partner with the other Legacy Funds on key projects. For example, with Clean Water, and Arts and Culture.
- Support, and seek the guidance of, an advisory committee.
Legacy direction evaluation and strategic guidance:

- Provided by Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee (PTLAC).
- Established as an outcome of the 25 Year Legacy Plan.
- 17 Members appointed by the three Legacy agencies.
- Charged with championing the 25 Year Plan.
- Ideally, a mix of parks and trails expertise and fresh outside perspectives with a wide range of needed skills, and demographic and geographic diversity.
- During 2016, the three agencies are sharing their strategic accomplishments and future directions with PTLAC in advance of the 2017 legislative session.
Is the Legacy Program helping solve societal problems?
• Providing opportunities for communities and individuals to address physical and mental health? (Obesity, heart disease, depression....)
• Disparities in access, employment, enjoyment of the outdoors of all Minnesota communities, whatever their color?
• Ecologically and physically sustainable, resilient systems that stand a good chance of surviving into the next generation?

Are we touching a range of scales and locations?
• Communities in all corners of the state.
• Big WOW projects that get widespread buzz all the way through small projects that make a difference to one park and one vulnerable community.

Are we all pulling in the same direction? (Agencies and Legacy Advisory Committee)
• Working to ensure that the funding split (currently 40/40/20) is fair and sustainable.
• Thinking, planning, and acting cooperatively to create a seamless system.
• Working across four Legacy Funds when appropriate.

Are we communicating well?
• Are we telling meaningful stories about what Legacy funds are achieving within the context of the 25 Year Plan?
• Are we listening to the people of Minnesota about what they believe to be important?
• Are we measuring progress effectively and sharing this information?
Thank you!
Questions?