

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VOTING FOR CONSERVATION

Minnesotans love our parks and natural areas—there are countless examples of our willingness to invest in these spaces. For nearly as long as we've been an organization, we've supported communities in securing funding for parks, trails, open spaces, and conservation. I believe the results are a reflection of the values we share as Minnesotans.



Paul Austin
Executive Director

After successful campaigns for Dakota County, Washington County, and the Wayzata Big Woods, we helped build the momentum to envision and pass the Clean Water, Land, & Legacy Amendment. We worked integrally with the 2008 Vote Yes Campaign to create a winning strategy. **And in the face of the worst recession since the Great Depression, Minnesota voters passed the Legacy Amendment with overwhelming support.** More recently, we lent our expertise to the cities of Brooklyn Park in 2018 and Rochester in 2020, helping them pass referendums to reinvest in community parks while protecting water quality and natural areas. In both cases, over 60% of the residents voted to invest their hard-earned dollars. With a track record like that, there is no question that protecting our outdoors is something we can all agree on.

Today, we are proud to help lead and staff the **Minnesotans For Our Great Outdoors** campaign to keep state lottery funds working to protect our water, land, and wildlife. In this newsletter, we'll tell you about the question on your ballot, **the importance of voting YES**, and the tools you can use to share this information with family and friends. With over 70% of people across our state in support, this may be one of the easiest political conversations to have this fall.

The work of Conservation Minnesota is guided by your values and priorities. We listen to Minnesotans and focus on solving the conservation problems that matter most to you.

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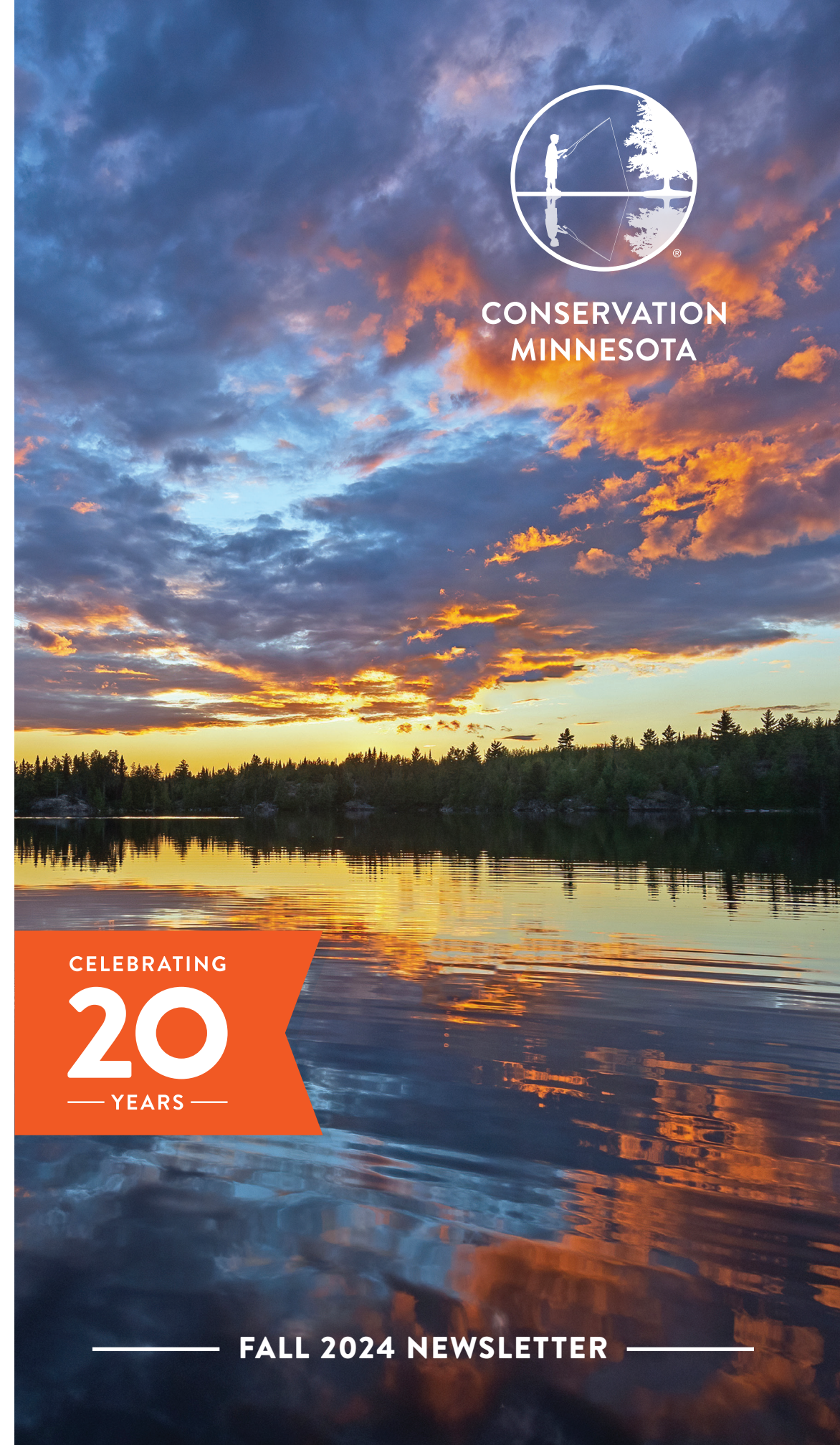


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CELEBRATING
20
— YEARS —

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

MINNESOTA'S LOTTERY FUNDS OUR GREAT OUTDOORS

Did you know that a portion of our state's lottery proceeds fund conservation activities?

In 1988, 77% of voters first approved an amendment dedicating state lottery proceeds to conservation activities. Since then, voters have renewed this funding twice, which contributes to the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). To date, **it's provided over \$1 billion in stable, long-term funding for innovative projects to help protect our Great Outdoors without spending any tax dollars.** The impacts of lottery funding are widespread and have helped local communities protect ecosystems, promote outdoor recreation, improve health outcomes, bolster agricultural resiliency, and support thriving businesses and good-paying jobs.

On the Ballot

This November, the opportunity to renew lottery funding will be on every ballot in Minnesota. **Over 50% of voters must vote YES** to ensure this critical funding source continues flowing to the Great Outdoors for the next 25 years. **Leaving the question blank counts as a NO vote.**

If it doesn't pass, the constitutional protection for this important conservation funding will expire. That could risk turning the money over to the legislature's discretion, which could leave a significant deficit in conservation funding.

We're confident Minnesotans will support the renewal once they know it's on the ballot. Every time voters have been asked if we should use lottery proceeds to protect our land, water, and habitat, over 70% have voted **YES**.

Ballot
November 5, 2024

The Lottery amendment will appear on the front of your ballot, on the right side.

Review the amendment wording below.

Constitutional Amendment

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Renewal

Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to protect drinking water sources and the water quality of lakes, rivers, and streams; conserve wildlife habitat and natural areas; improve air quality; and expand access to parks and trails by extending the transfer of proceeds from the state-operated lottery to the environment and natural resources trust fund, and to dedicate the proceeds for these purposes?

Yes

No

Benefits of Lottery Funding

Lottery funds are at work all over the state. Since its inception, over 1,700 projects have been funded for **“the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.”** A few examples of projects that have been funded include:

- Superior Hiking Trail improvements
- Restoration of critical habitats for moose
- Aquatic invasive species research
- Innovative fuel development—algae for fuels
- Microplastics removal from water bodies
- Water quality management in southeast trout streams
- Drinking water improvement through pollution prevention
- Development of markets for continuous living cover crops
- Biological control of soybean aphids



Building a Strong Outdoor Future

It's clear that lottery funding has played an important role in protecting our Great Outdoors. This year's vote provides a new opportunity to enhance Minnesota's air, land, and water in a way that includes all Minnesotans. A Community Grants Program will make it possible for smaller non-profits and communities that have historically been left out of the process to access these important state dollars.

Want to learn more? Check out the **Minnesotans For Our Great Outdoors** website.

