

NATURAL RESOURCES -- DEPARTMENTWIDE

Use of Unobligated Stewardship Bonding Authority

Motion:

Move to specify that, notwithstanding section 23.0917(5g) of the statutes, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shall obligate funds from existing stewardship bonding authority that was not obligated in fiscal years 2014-15 and 2015-16, in the following amounts for the following purposes:

- a. the amount necessary, not to exceed \$1,000,000 for a grant to Iron County for a project to rebuild Saxon Harbor marina and campground;
- b. the amount necessary, not to exceed \$1,000,000 for the acquisition of an approximately 13-mile long abandoned rail corridor referred to as the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway Corridor between Dover and Sturtevant, in Racine County;
- c. the amount necessary, not to exceed \$750,000 for a grant to the Friends of Peninsula State Park for up to 50% of the costs of a project to reconstruct Eagle Tower on Eagle Bluff in Peninsula State Park in the Town of Fish Creek;
- d. up to \$500,000 for a grant to the City of Horicon to enhance a shelter located near the Palmatory Scenic Overlook on the south side of Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area. Require DNR and the City of Horicon to submit to the Joint Committee on Finance by June 30, 2019, a plan for using the funds. Provide that if, upon receiving the plan, the committee Co-Chairs do not inform DNR of an objection to the plan within 14 working days, the funds are to be disbursed. If the Co-Chairs inform the Department of an objection to the plan, funds may be disbursed only by a vote of a majority of the Committee; and
- e. the amount necessary, but not more than \$415,300, for up to 50% of the costs of a project to construct two pedestrian bridges across the Fox River and for completion of an associated trail loop, referred to as the Twin Trestles project. Specify that the amount of total stewardship bonding authority provided for the project may not exceed \$2,015,300, including \$1.6 million provided under 2015 Act 55.

Note:

For fiscal year 2014-15 and 2015-16, a total of approximately \$21,570,000 in bonding was authorized, but unobligated by DNR, under the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship

program. The motion would utilize up to \$3,415,300 of that unobligated bonding for the identified projects as shown in the following table. Under the 2017-19 SBC recommendation, \$7.5 million of this funding is enumerated for the Willow River State Park - Little Falls Dam Reconstruction project.

<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Stewardship Unobligated Bonding Provided</u>
Saxon Harbor Campground and Marina	Iron	\$1,000,000
Canadian Pacific Railway Corridor Trail	Racine	1,000,000
Peninsula State Park Eagle Tower Reconstruction	Door	500,000
Horicon Marsh Shelter Enhancement	Dodge	500,000
Neenah Menasha Twin Trestles Project	Winnebago	<u>415,300</u>
Total		\$3,415,300

Saxon Harbor, on Lake Superior, in Iron County, was severely damaged by storms on July 11 and 12, 2016. In March, 2017, the Joint Committee on Finance approved three grants from the stewardship program for projects to rebuild boat ramps and launches, parking areas, restroom facilities, and dredging as part of the harbor rehabilitation. The motion would provide \$1 million for a grant to Iron County for rebuilding the harbor marina and campground. Total costs of the rehabilitation project are estimated at between \$10 to \$20 million.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Corridor originates near Vandeenboom Road in the Town of Dover and extends approximately 13 miles northeast to County Highway H in Sturtevant in Racine County. The trail created by the project would connect to and become part of the White River State Trail. The White River State Trail runs along a former rail corridor as it travels by Elkhorn in Walworth County and Dover in Racine County, with a short gap in Burlington. The trail is operated by Walworth and Racine counties and is within five miles of Lake Geneva and Big Foot Beach State Park. The western end of the trail begins at County Highway H in Elkhorn. The eastern end of the trail is at Vandeenboom Road in Dover.

The original Eagle Tower was constructed in 1914 as a fire tower. That tower was dismantled in 1932 and rebuilt to its most recent dimensions of 75 feet tall and over 250 feet above water level. Offering views of Peninsula State Park, surrounding islands, and the Upper Michigan shoreline, the observation tower has long been a tourist destination. In May, 2015, DNR closed the tower to the public, citing structural concerns. In September, 2016, DNR dismantled the tower. The U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory then analyzed all wood elements for potential reuse. The Friends of Peninsula State Park is a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation organized to raise funds for development initiatives, staffing, and ongoing maintenance for Peninsula State Park. The friends group supports the interpretive, historical, and educational and visitor service programs of the park. The group has established the Eagle Tower Fund to raise funds to rebuild the Eagle Tower. Under the 2019-21 State Building Commission (SBC) recommendation, the Peninsula State Park - Eagle Tower Reconstruction project is enumerated at \$1,772,100 in gift funds. The motion would provide a grant of up to \$750,000 in authorized but unobligated bonding authority to the Friends of Peninsula State Park for up to 50% of the costs of the Eagle Tower reconstruction project. Under the motion, the Friends of Peninsula State Park would be required to provide a one-to-one match of

funds.

Horicon Marsh is the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the United States. Located in southeast Wisconsin, Horicon Marsh has been formally recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention of the United Nations. This marsh is now home to the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center.

2015 Act 55 directs DNR to provide stewardship funds in the amount necessary, but not to exceed \$1.6 million, from the local assistance grant program to the cities of Neenah and Menasha for up to 50% of the costs of a project to construct two pedestrian bridges across the Fox River (one bridge across the south branch of the Fox River in Neenah and one bridge across the north branch of the Fox River in Menasha) and for completion of the associated trail loop, referred to as the Twin Trestles project. The cities of Neenah and Menasha plan to construct two pedestrian trestle bridges (a bridge composed of a number of short spans supported by rigid frames used as supports -- trestles) over the Fox River and trail connections to two existing trails. The project, referred to as the Twin Trestles project, would create a 3.2-mile loop around Little Lake Butte des Morts and connect with existing trails. Total project costs were initially estimated at \$3.2 million (including \$1,664,000 for the Neenah bridge and trail connection and \$1,536,000 for the Menasha bridge and trail connection). Total project costs are now estimated at over \$4 million. The motion would provide additional funding for completion of the project.

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