



Conservation Finance

We know that close-to-home access to the outdoors encourages higher levels of physical activity and a sense of community pride and belonging. Parks and open spaces support our health and happiness, all the while building climate resilience. However, delivering that which we all deserve requires funding at every turn.

Proven Success

For 20 years, we've worked with Minnesota's elected officials, thought leaders, and communities to mobilize support for critical bills and policies that advance funding for parks and public lands. We seek out opportunities to create and renew public funding that brings community dreams to life. To date, our work has raised nearly \$7 billion to increase access to the outdoors and its benefits in Minnesota.

Trust for Public Land—in partnership with state and local governments, land trusts, and community-based organizations—invites millions of voters to serve as nature's fundraisers for conservation, climate, and parks. Voters throughout the country have created \$93 billion in conservation funding through 650 voter-approved ballot measures. And our work has a tremendous return on investment. For every \$1 invested in our Conservation Financing program, more than \$2,000 in new public funds are generated.

The past 150 million votes in favor of these funding measures represent values, action, and participation in land conservation, park equity, and natural climate solutions. Voters are true stakeholders and benefactors of parks and nature.

In Minnesota, TPL has guided eleven successful state and local ballot measures. In 2008, we were at the helm during the passage of the statewide Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. To date, the amendment has funded 5,500 projects in support of clean water, parks, and trails. In addition to these critical land conservation needs—protecting drinking water, parks, trails, and restoring multiple ecosystems and habitats—the Legacy Amendment provides funding for arts, as well as cultural and outdoor heritage projects.

Our local efforts are just as powerful. In 2016, we worked with the City of Minneapolis to create \$800 million in funding to improve parks in underserved communities. In 2018, we worked with the City of Brooklyn Park and its residents to create \$26 million to uplift this community through investments in quality open spaces. Most recently, we mobilized Rochester residents who voted 61.5 percent to invest \$40 million in the city's parks, trails, and natural lands.

Minnesotans affirm their desire for parks, lands, trails, and community schoolyards year after year, and that access to the outdoors is a fundamental human need. All communities are stronger, healthier, and more connected when everyone is able to get outside and engage with nature.

How We Do It

Through our decades of experience, we know that building trust and advocacy within communities takes time. Our team creates and protects new public funding for land conservation, parks, and climate through our Conservation Finance methodology, including: feasibility research, public opinion surveys, program recommendations, ballot language, and campaigns.

The Future of Minnesota's Public Conservation Funding

We have reached a pivotal moment for Minnesota conservation funding that requires unified statewide efforts. The existing, voter approved, Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) is up for renewal—25 years after voters approved this billion dollar investment in conservation.

In the next major election, voters will be asked to consider our shared parks, trails, and public lands for the next 25 years. And given the increased use of local parks and natural areas since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more counties and cities in Minnesota need our help. Why? Parks and public lands are, quite simply, being loved to death.

The ENRTF has enabled TPL to protect and create dozens of iconic outdoor spaces like Frogtown Park and Farm in St. Paul and LaSalle Lake State Recreation Area near Park Rapids. Renewal of funding is projected to generate \$2.7 billion over twenty years, allowing us and our partners to continue to protect and create access to nature in Minnesota.

Our goal is to help create new dollars and renew dedicated public funding for state and local parks and conservation in Minnesota.



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