



Fiscal Year 2014 Report on the

# Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account

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Prepared by

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# Legislative Request

This report is issued to comply with Minn. Stat. 165.15, subd. 8, which states that the commissioner of transportation shall report annually to the chair and ranking minority member of each legislative committee with jurisdiction over transportation on the endowment account. At a minimum, the report must include detailed revenue and expenditure information.

The cost of preparing this report is under \$5,000.

# Summary

## Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan

The Stillwater Lift Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a Section 4(f) resource under the USDOT Act of 1966. Once the St. Croix River Crossing is opened, the Stillwater Lift Bridge will be converted from a bridge carrying vehicles across the river to a bicycle and pedestrian crossing connecting to a new trail system. Its conversion to a bicycle and pedestrian crossing has been documented during the St. Croix River Crossing Project in letters of agreement between the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the city of Stillwater.

The Stillwater Lift Bridge is one of 24 bridges MnDOT has identified for long-term preservation as part of the agency's 2006 Historic Bridges Management Plan and 2008 Historic Bridge Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. The Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan is a key piece directing the long-term preservation of the lift bridge, and is also a required document listed in the 2006 amended Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement for the St. Croix River Crossing Project.

MnDOT's Bridge Office, Cultural Resources Unit and Metro District worked with a consultant team and the Stillwater Bridge Advisory Committee to survey and assess the condition of the bridge and its deck. The assessment was used to create the Operations and Maintenance Manual for the lift bridge, which helped in the development of the Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan.

The Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan was completed in 2009. It describes how the Stillwater Lift Bridge will be overseen both before and after construction is complete on the St. Croix River Crossing Project. The Management Plan lays out the conditions necessary to preserve the bridge's structural and historical integrity for its current and future use. During the construction of the St. Croix River Crossing, the lift bridge will still be used by vehicles to cross the river. Once construction is complete on the new crossing and it is opened to traffic, the lift bridge will be transformed to a pedestrian and bicycle trail. The Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan is vital to fulfilling the preservation of the lift bridge but is also an integral part in successfully implementing the preservation activities necessary for the other 23 historical bridges throughout the state. The plan can be found at [Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan](#).

## Stillwater Lift Bridge Conversion Project

As part of the Memorandum of Agreement and Statewide Historic Bridge Management Plan, MnDOT committed to rehabilitating the Stillwater Lift Bridge and converting it to pedestrian and bicycle use. Endowment funds cannot be used to convert the lift bridge; therefore, the renovation of the lift bridge from one that carries vehicular traffic to a pedestrian and bicycle trail will begin within one year of opening the St. Croix Crossing. MnDOT and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will cover the cost of lift bridge renovation. MnDOT plans to put the lift bridge project out for bids in May 2016 so the work would happen in 2016 and 2017.

## **Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account**

The MOA for the St. Croix River Crossing Project contained the condition that “prior to the opening of the new river crossing, MnDOT and WisDOT will deposit no less than \$3 million in the endowment fund.” The endowment fund will cover the routine operations and maintenance costs when the Stillwater Lift Bridge converts to a bicycle and pedestrian crossing following construction of the new river crossing.

The 2009 Minnesota Legislature passed HF 1309, which established the Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account within Minn. Stat. 165.15. It revised Subdivision 2 of the legislation in 2014 regarding the use of funds in the account and included language on trunk highway fund transfers. The new language is found at [Minn. Stat. 165.15](#).

## **Recent Related Activities**

Since 2009, MnDOT has started planning based on recommendations made in the Stillwater Lift Bridge Management Plan. Work includes developing environmental documents for two Lift Bridge projects. The first environmental document was for a rehabilitation and maintenance project, which was completed in fall 2012. The second set of documents will address the conversion project that begins following the completion of the St. Croix Crossing Project.

Crews completed the Stillwater Lift Bridge rehabilitation and maintenance project in December 2012. This project was necessary to safely maintain vehicular traffic on the lift bridge and included steel and concrete repairs, electrical system updates and mechanical repairs.

For a complete status on the Stillwater Lift Bridge Conversion Project, visit the project website at [Stillwater Lift Bridge Project Pages](#).

## **Revenues**

MnDOT deposited \$3 million into the Stillwater Lift Bridge Endowment Account on June 30, 2014. WisDOT deposited \$1.5 million into the endowment account on Oct. 9, 2014 to bring the total to \$4.5 million. MnDOT and WisDOT transferred these funds to meet the Stipulation of the 2006 Amended Section 106 MOA.

The purpose of the endowment account is to cover the operating and maintenance costs of the converted bridge to a bicycle and pedestrian use bridge. At this time, none of the funds in the account have been spent and the account balance stands at \$4.5 million.

## **Next Steps**

In accordance with Minn. Stat. 165.15, as amended, the State Board of Investment will now invest these funds from the endowment account.