

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FY 06/07 Potential Reductions
July 14, 2005 Commission Meeting

Each year, as agencies prepare their budget requests, they are required by law to include a list of potential reductions that will be available for consideration should the State have a need to cut back spending. These potential reductions must come from the recurring base operating budget of the agency and must be at least equal to 1.5% of that budget.

In preparing a recommendation for Commission review, staff looked at several approaches, or scenarios, to identify potential reductions. In one scenario, staff took a hard look at what it would take to cut entire activities or sub-activities within programs. Several were identified for review, and the savings and impacts were examined relative to considering them for reduction.

In other scenarios, staff looked at areas of recent growth for potential reduction. These include activities supported by grant revenues and activities funded from documentary stamp taxes. Reductions in grant-funded activities do not create savings, but they do reduce spending and, in some cases, may leave available grant revenues to be directed toward other uses. Reductions in doc-stamp-funded programs leave cash in the trust fund which can be redirected (swept) by Legislative action should the need arise.

In addition, staff reviewed a percentage-based list of possible alternative reductions identified last year by an appointed Commission sub-committee. This amounted to roughly 5% of last year's recurring budget.

The following is the staff recommendation for the FY 06/07 list of potential reductions. After carefully considering all of the options in the various scenarios, staff felt the reductions listed here would offer the least harm to our ability to continue to address resource needs and meet public demand for services. It is sufficient to cover the 1.5% requirement for both General Revenue and trust without offering any reduction in law enforcement officers.

Reduce Community Relations Media Grant: \$500,000 TF
Reduce Recreation Services Birding Trail Grant: \$300,000 TF
Reduce Federal Land Acquisition Grant: \$1,500,000 TF
Reduce Non-CARL Land Management: \$742,000 TF shift to GR

Staff Recommendation for Potential Reductions List

Reduce Grant Spending Authority (\$2,300,000) Trust Funds

\$500,000 Community Relations Office – currently used for a Federal Aid grant to deliver conservation messages via mass media, received in FY 2002-03. CR expects to deplete all available grant funds by June 30, 2006, making the entire \$850,000 in spending authority available as a potential cut. A reduction of \$500,000 would leave \$350,000 available to seek additional grants from other sources.

\$300,000 Office of Recreation Services – currently used for a grant from DOT supporting the Great Florida Birding Trail. Reduction is possible due to a reduction in the need for the grant by FY 06/07.

\$1,500,000 Division of Habitat & Species Conservation – currently used for Federal land acquisition grants. Potentially available due to a reduction in recent use.

Reduce Non-CARL Land Management (\$742,000) SGTF shift to GR

Reduce ability to manage new and current lands. This will reduce the funding available to the division to manage non-CARL lands by 12% in the future. Based on the statewide CARL formula, these lands are already 97% under-funded for management activities. This reduction creates a savings in documentary stamp spending which can be redirected to cover law enforcement salaries. If a fund shift is then done to move law enforcement salaries from General Revenue to SGTF, it has the effect of releasing an equivalent amount of General Revenue.