

# Potential Reductions for 2010 Legislative Session

## August 12, 2009

In preparation for the 2010 Legislative Session, the Governor, House and Senate instructed state agencies to again prepare a list of potential reductions equal to 10% of recurring appropriations. There is not yet any specific identified shortfall, however in order to be well positioned in case there is one, they are requesting a list with enough options to allow the Legislature to be selective in reaching their goal. The following list contains the staff recommendation for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. These issues are all important and valuable to the agency, and it is our sincere hope that very little of what is listed here will actually be eliminated.

The list includes a total of \$3,091,548 from General revenue and \$15,859,608 from trust funds. Also, because so much of the agency budget is used as State match for grants, an additional \$8.4 million in grant funding would be lost if the matching budget is cut.

### **Staff Recommendation**

#### **Law Enforcement**

**Eliminate 52 Law Enforcement Officer Positions (\$2,693,428) GR**  
**Eliminate 93 Law Enforcement Officer Positions (\$4,722,142) Trust**

This reduction would eliminate 146 law enforcement officer positions (class 8515), reducing the total number of sworn positions from 721 to 575. The per officer savings is \$50,618 including salaries & benefits, incentive and HR contract costs.

Out of the agency's \$32 million recurring General Revenue (GR) budget, \$28 million (87.5%) supports the Division of Law Enforcement. It is unavoidable to include some portion of law enforcement in any need to significantly reduce agency GR appropriations. Due to the Division of Law Enforcement's primary role of fish, wildlife and boating safety law enforcement patrol, the vast majority of its appropriations are used for salaries of employees that provide or support the patrol function. Reducing the number of employees is the only viable solution to reducing large amounts of funding.

A reduction of 136 sworn law enforcement officer positions would significantly impede the ability of the Division of Law Enforcement to provide law enforcement services to the resources and citizens of Florida, meet our constitutional mandate of protecting fish and wildlife resources, and provide homeland security or disaster relief services when needed. The reduction would result in reduced high visibility patrols in manatee areas, panther areas, wildlife management areas, and popular boating and fishing areas, currently serving as a deterrent to illegal activities. Our ability to respond rapidly to calls for service from the public would be reduced and available officers will have to cover larger patrol zones. The health and safety of the public would be jeopardized if these positions were eliminated; reducing our ability to adequately provide boating safety patrol, investigate boating accidents and respond to critical incidents that have a direct impact on the safety of Florida's citizens and visitors. Our ability to respond to man-made and natural disasters would also be adversely impacted. Responding safely to major catastrophic events requires extensive training, preparations, logistics and scheduling. Having less people to respond to such events presents additional workload and dangers to those that do respond.

## **Hunting & Game Management**

### **Eliminate Alligator Marketing and Education (\$150,000) SGTF**

This reduction would eliminate the appropriation to transfer funding to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services per Florida Statutes to conduct alligator marketing and education activities. Eliminating this transfer would not affect agency revenues or existing alligator management program elements. Although these activities are viewed by the alligator products industry as essential to their continued success, most of the fees that formed the original basis for the issue have been abolished. The appropriation was not provided during FY 2002-03 through FY 2006-07. A non-recurring appropriation was provided during FY 2007-08 and the recurring appropriation was reinstated for FY 2008-09. Amendments to statutes are necessary in order to effectively implement this reduction.

### **Reduce Wildlife Management Area Brochure Printing (\$32,458) SGTF**

This would reduce the number of Wildlife Management Area brochures printed from more than 1,200,000 to about 750,000. Each year, the Commission produces brochures for each of its Wildlife Management Areas to explain area-specific rules and aid recreational users, including hunting and fishing enthusiasts. Currently brochures are printed and distributed to local offices and partners for distribution to the public. The proposed reduction in printing will reduce waste and increase efficiency, but frustrate some constituents who are left without easy access to printed brochures. When supplies are exhausted, downloadable brochures will remain available on the Web for recreationists to view and print on their own.

### **Reduce Public-Information Related to Game Wildlife (\$60,000) SGTF**

This reduction would eliminate direct-mail marketing materials promoting public hunting opportunities as well as public service announcements pertaining to mallard/mottled duck hybridization and alligator safety. The direct-mail marketing materials promote specific public hunting opportunities, namely, special-opportunity and spring turkey hunts. The televised public service announcements are designed to (1) increase public awareness and cooperation to conserve Florida's unique duck species (Florida's mottled duck) and (2) promote public safety and increase awareness concerning Florida's alligator population. The proposed reduction in outreach would decrease our efforts to inform the public, potentially reduces public safety related to alligators, compromises conservation efforts for Florida's mottled duck, and may result in lowered public satisfaction.

### **Eliminate Public Dove Fields (\$77,700) SGTF**

Providing public hunting opportunity is part of the core mission of the Division of Hunting and Game Management. This would reduce public hunting opportunity. Dove hunting is considered one of the best ways to introduce youths and new hunters to hunting and is extremely popular among hunters in general. It would also result in a reduction in agency revenues of about \$40,000 - \$60,000 from dove permits. Funds are used for OPS staff, equipment, and supplies needed to plant and maintain wildlife foods on agricultural fields to attract doves and provide habitat for many other species of wildlife.

### **Reduce Nuisance Alligator Trapper Stipends (\$105,000) SGTF**

This would reduce by half the appropriation to pay nuisance-alligator trappers a fee for alligators taken under the statewide nuisance alligator program. There would be no impact on agency revenues or existing alligator management program elements. This reduction would have a financial impact on contract nuisance alligator trappers, and some trappers may not wish to continue providing these services with a reduced stipend. FWC staff, however, believes that

new contract trappers can be readily recruited and hired to cover any loss of current trappers without any significant interruption in service to the public.

## **Habitat & Species Conservation**

### **Reduce lake restoration funding (doc stamp) (\$612,426) SGTF**

Reduce ability to fund aquatic habitat management and restoration projects. Impact will be significant since a program reduction of 50% for FY 09/10 was necessitated due to declines in Doc Stamp revenues. An additional reduction in spending authority will limit maintenance operations that are needed to maintain habitat quality and protect investments previously made on lake restoration projects. Reduced funding will also result in fewer aquatic habitat enhancement projects in public waterways, and limit maintenance or repair of water management infrastructure on state owned lands. Engineering services for some lake and wetland projects will be delayed, as will start up and planning for future restoration projects. Monetary contributions to partners for various enhancement and restoration projects will be reduced or withdrawn. Monitoring of aquatic plant and animal communities needed to evaluate present and future restoration activities would be reduced. A significant portion of the aquatic habitat enhancement projects are conducted by private sector contractors and reduced funding would directly impact the economic situation of these private contractors.

### **Reduce non-CARL land management funding (doc stamp) (\$368,641) SGTF**

Reduce ability to manage new and current lands. Impact would be significant as a program reduction of 63% for FY 09/10, necessitated due to declines in Doc Stamp revenues, is already affecting funding directed to land management operations pursuant to Ch. 201.15(5) F.S. An additional reduction would further diminish wildlife protection, public recreational opportunities, and land management programs on private, state or federally owned lands within the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system where FWC is either a designated lead manager or a secondary cooperator. Staffing on some land units within the WMA system would have to be reduced resulting in the reduction of land management activities and maintenance of infrastructure for public access and recreational activities. Reduced funding will affect long-term resource protection programs such as community restoration and imperiled species recovery. In some cases such as exotic plant control, recent accomplishments may be compromised or negated if funding is inadequate to support necessary maintenance treatments.

### **Reduce Invasive Plant Management funding (doc stamp) (\$4,041,138) IPCTF**

Reduce ability to manage aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants. Impact would be significant as a program reduction of 33% for FY 09/10 was necessitated due to declines in Doc Stamp revenues. An additional reduction in funding would result in significantly fewer invasive aquatic plant control projects in public waterways and upland invasive plant control projects on public conservation lands. Delays or cancellation of plant control projects can cause geometric increases in growth of invasive plants. With the significant program funding reductions that have already occurred in FY 09-10, the upland plant management program is not able to initiate any new projects, only able to keep a small percentage of previous project sites from becoming reinfested. Any additional cuts would result in fewer project sites being funded, ultimately resulting in additional sites becoming reinfested after having spent significant tax dollars getting the invasive plants under control. Increasing invasive plant populations can have adverse impacts on recreation such as fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, ecotourism as well as adversely impacting beneficial native habitat that is critical for the management of fish and wildlife. These impacts would adversely affect the economy of communities in close proximity to these resources. In addition, excessive invasive plant populations in public waterways can restrict water flow and cause flooding during critical periods resulting in danger to human health

and safety. A significant portion of the invasive plant control projects are conducted by contractors in the private sector. Reduced funding would directly impact the economic situation of these private contractors.

**Reduce Enhanced Wildlife Management funding (doc stamp) (\$784,309) CARL**

Reduces program's ability to manage CARL areas. This reduction will result in significant decreases in vital land management operations on public lands in the Wildlife Management Area system that protect fish and wildlife resources and deliver public access and recreational opportunities. Staffing on some land units within the WMA system would have to be reduced resulting in the reduction of land management activities and maintenance of infrastructure for public access and recreational opportunities. The proposed budget reduction will reduce current levels of service and protection of previous investments made in areas such as exotic plant control, prescribed burning, community restoration, imperiled species recovery, and maintenance of public use infrastructure such as roads, trails, and boardwalks.

**Reduce Habitat Restoration funding (\$461,100) LATF**

Reduce ability to provide habitat management and restoration for Florida's gopher tortoises with the possibility of it not occurring in some key regions of the state. Habitat management is a primary tool for long term conservation of gopher tortoises as described in FWC's management plan that was developed with input from more than 180 stakeholders. The number of acres managed and contracts for managing habitat would be reduced and could prevent Florida from reaching its conservation goal and objectives in conserving gopher tortoises.

**Manatee Protection Plan Grants funding (\$68,185) STMTF**

Eliminates funding available to assist counties in the development of manatee protection plans.

**Transfer to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/IFAS/Invasive Exotic Plant Research funding (\$129,758) IPCTF**

Reduce ability to fund invasive exotic plant research at a quarantine lab in Ft. Pierce for plants and animals that must be quarantined before being released.

**Eliminate Marine Habitat Programs**

**(5 FTEs, \$376,972 MRCTF/STMTF and \$3.9 million grant revenue)**

Marine Habitat Management staff within the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation oversees development of marine/estuarine habitat restoration programs. Loss of dedicated staff will eliminate our ability to request, secure, and oversee grants to improve, enhance or restore coastal habitat; hinder our ability to provide timely, science-based comments on development projects affecting marine habitats; eliminate FWC representation on a variety of working groups and task forces necessary to ensure fish, wildlife and their habitats are considered in decision-making; and significantly reduce the ability of the agency to use influencing and partnerships to effect positive conservation measures for marine habitats. Staff identify, prioritize, and implement marine/estuarine habitat restoration programs that have concurrent benefits to user groups and commercial interests. They provide leadership and technical expertise to multiple working groups, councils and task forces that plan and implement marine habitat restoration and enhancement projects. Activities also include coordination with stakeholders in the development of comprehensive habitat protection strategies; and with volunteer user groups for the enhancement and protection of coastal resources.

## **Freshwater Fisheries Management**

### **Shift Blackwater Fish Production Facility to grant funding (\$331,000) SGTF/CARL**

Currently, 4 FTEs and \$331,000 SGTF support freshwater fish production facilities at Blackwater Fish Hatchery in Santa Rosa County. This facility provides annual fish production (750,000-1 million striped bass, hybrid striped bass, largemouth bass, panfish, and channel catfish) for stocking in fresh water at 25-30 Florida panhandle lakes, rivers and streams. A shift of \$331,000 from state funding to Sport Fish Restoration federal grant funding would allow fish stocking activities to continue. The shift to federal grant funding (Sport Fish Restoration Program) would subject fish produced and stocked by the hatchery to federal requirements such as NEPA and Endangered Species Act ( Section 7) review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Reduce Florida Bass Conservation Center Operations (\$200,000) SGTF**

Approximately 40-45% of our annual fish production would be eliminated (1.4 million fish) in order to ensure the newly constructed \$15 million state-of-the-art hatchery facility is sufficiently maintained. This reduction eliminates any possibility for the Center to achieve its maximum design capability to produce 3.6-6.75 million fish annually.

## **Marine Fisheries Management**

### **Eliminate Funding in Support of Agency Technology Improvements (\$77,000) MRCTF**

This would eliminate the use of DMFM expense funds to pay for or contribute to technology improvements and upgrades. Loss of these funds will severely reduce the ability of the Division to contribute to agency-level technology improvements that contribute to overall efficiency and improved communications, record-keeping and customer service. As an example in FY 08/09 funds were used to pay most of the costs associated with a document scanning and management program and purchase of equipment for a video-conference meeting room.

### **Eliminate Funding for Special Marine Fisheries Management Projects (\$35,000) MRCTF**

This would reduce the Division's recurring budget available to fund special marine fisheries management projects such as angler surveys or short-term studies addressing new or emerging management questions. Loss of these funds will severely limit the Division's ability to address emerging regulatory or management issues through such mechanisms as public opinion surveys or directed studies. As an example in FY 07/08 funds were used to fund a stakeholder mail survey to gather information about the goliath grouper fishery in Florida and to support a license renewal campaign in cooperation with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

### **Reduce Public Commenting Operational Expenses (\$6,000) MRCTF**

The public commenting position coordinates the Division role in agency commenting processes that are administered through the Office of Policy and Stakeholder Coordination. Reduction of expenses will eliminate attendance at meetings and other expenses associated with coordinating marine fisheries concerns with other local, state and federal agencies. The travel expenses associated with this position currently allow the agency to be represented at meetings where advance work ensures that agency concerns or recommendations are be incorporated into development projects, habitat restoration or mitigation and projects reviewed under the Coastal Zone Management Act.

### **Reduce Hearing, workshop and training activities (\$35,000) MRCTF**

The division would reduce the expected number of administrative hearings, public workshops and training activities for employees. This would require affected commercial fishermen to

travel farther to attend informal administrative hearings and will have a fiscal impact on petitioners. It would reduce the number of locations at which public workshops would be held around the state for pending regulatory actions of the FWC. It would reduce the available funds for in-service training. All of these reductions hinder the ability of the Division to provide a high level of customer service and technical competence and to receive the maximum possible public input on potential actions of the agency. This reduction would limit the ability of the agency to garner public support from stakeholders for regulatory programs that are needed to successfully protect and maintain Florida's marine fisheries resources and fishing industries.

**Reduce funding for Distribution of Commercial and Recreational Regulations Publications (\$112,000) MRCTF**

This would eliminate a significant portion of non-grant funding available for publication of recreational fishing regulations. It would result in fewer copies of recreational fishing regulations being printed and distributed throughout the state. Recreational regulations would go from two to one printing per year, with a greater likelihood of regulations being out of date. Depending on future contract amounts it could result in severely reducing or eliminating the publication of a Spanish-language version of the recreational regulations. It would similarly reduce or eliminate funds for printing and distribution of once-per-year commercial regulations summaries, including a Spanish-language version. Regular publication of saltwater fishing regulations is an essential service for fishermen to know and understand current rules limiting or controlling fishing activity and to maximize compliance in the interest of fish and wildlife conservation.

**Fish and Wildlife Research Institute**

**Reduce Red Tide Research & Monitoring (\$398,120) GR**

This reduction would eliminate or severely curtail collaborative research and monitoring efforts between Mote Marine Laboratory and FWC to: 1) determine the role of natural and human factors contributing to red tide formation and intensity, 2) implement automated technology to provide continuous, real-time monitoring of conditions where red tides develop and persist, including a new beach alert system, 3) monitor waters in support of shellfish safety regulations initiated by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and 4) investigate the linkage between land-based nutrient pollution and red tide strength and persistence. The projects to be eliminated are critical to our understanding of red tides and their impacts. Loss of this monitoring and research capability would dramatically curtail red tide information available to state and local agencies responsible for shellfish safety and reporting on beach conditions for visitors.

Funding for the cooperative red tide research and monitoring program was reduced by nearly \$3 million last year, which represents about a 60% reduction. This additional reduction would further curtail critical monitoring and event response capability which is already extremely limited. Economic impacts of red tides in Florida have been estimated to exceed \$20 million annually. This program, which fosters collaborations between FWC and numerous partners (universities, local governments, non-profit research labs, and citizens groups), funds projects designed to minimize the size, intensity, or duration of red tide blooms or reduce the environmental, economic, social, or public health impacts of future red tides in Florida. Exploring environmentally sound methods to reduce or eliminate the effects of red tide is important economically and socially to Floridians and visitors.

**Eliminate Marine Habitat Monitoring and Mapping Programs (6 FTEs, \$397,650 and \$4.5 million in grant revenue)**

Coral Monitoring: 2 FTEs, \$131,000 TF and \$1,918,000 grants

Coastal Habitat Monitoring: 3 FTEs, \$210,000 TF and \$1,300,000 grants

Marine Habitat Mapping: 1 FTE, \$56,650 TF and \$1,316,000 grants

Affected activities related to FWC marine habitat research and management are described below. Program components include research and management of corals, seagrasses, and marine habitat mapping. The proposed reduction would eliminate FWC's participation in coral reef monitoring that provides long-term coral health and population trends in the Florida Keys. The proposed reduction would eliminate FWC's capability to participate in health assessments of the Florida reef tract, which currently does not have a positive trend. We would lose our ability to directly participate in research that provides information necessary for coral management. We will no longer participate in resource damage assessments associated with vessel groundings that result in monetary awards to the State of Florida for resource damages caused by vessel groundings. FWC would no longer have staff to conduct seagrass research and would end its ongoing pre- and post-surveys of the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program on improving the marine habitats of Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay. Sophisticated Geographic Information System (GIS) support will end for marine habitat mapping. This support is used in multiple ways by scientists, resources managers and the public for developing strategies to improve marine habitat quality and management. Uses of GIS range from helping to locate optimal artificial-reef placement, aquaculture permit assessment, predicting distribution of commercially important fish, location of seagrass beds and coral reefs for inclusion in boater guides, and generally transferring geographic information to the public about the marine ecosystem. FWC and FWRI's ability to execute statutorily-mandated scientific work would be reduced or eliminated and \$4.5 million in grant revenue would be turned away.

**Reduce Nongame Wildlife Research Programs (6 FTEs, \$655,000) NWTf**

The proposed elimination would eliminate research and monitoring efforts on several imperiled and nongame species and their habitats in Florida. Long standing partnerships with other governmental agencies (local, state, and federal), non-governmental organizations, and individuals focused on conserving and restoring imperiled bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian species would cease. For many of these species, FWC is the primary or sole data collector and loss of these programs would have a long term impact on our partners ability to restore populations. The species impacted include bald eagle, grasshopper sparrows, painted bunting, American Oystercatcher, American Kestrel, black bear, beach mice and gopher tortoise. This reduction would eliminate 6 staff members, many of whom are world-recognized species experts and leaders in cooperative conservation efforts.

**Shift Portion of Saltwater Hatchery Funding to Grant (6 FTEs, \$500,000) MRCTF**

This reduction would shift a portion of the funding for Florida's only saltwater sportfish hatchery from state funding to grant, putting the project on a more tenuous footing regarding future funding security. Moving hatchery support to grant funding would also curtail our ability to use future grant funding to respond to emerging fisheries issues. The saltwater hatchery program is highly supported by the public and angling community, and is in the planning stages for a statewide expansion via public/private partnerships.

**Shift portion Freshwater Fisheries Research to Grant (5 FTEs, \$300,000) SGTF**

This reduction would shift the funding for several freshwater fisheries research and monitoring projects, including field sampling to assess sportfish populations and efforts to determine the impacts of reduced freshwater flows, to grant funding putting these projects on a more tenuous footing regarding future funding. Obligation of grant funds to these projects will also restrict our use of grant funds in the future to respond to emerging fisheries issues.

**Reduce Oceanaria Reimbursements for Manatee Rehabilitation and Support for the University of Florida Marine Mammal Veterinary Program (\$496,000) MRCTF**

FWC has managed the Oceanaria Reimbursement Assistance Program for rescued, rehabilitated, and released Florida manatees since 1991. Since July, 2000, \$1.15 million annually has been available to reimburse the three contracted and federally permitted manatee rehabilitation facilities in Florida: Lowry Park Zoo, Miami Seaquarium, and Sea World Florida. These facilities are involved in the rescue and full-time acute-care, veterinarian-based rehabilitation of manatees. This reduction would reduce the annual amount available for reimbursement to permitted facilities from \$1.15 million to \$824,000 which would reduce or eliminate in some areas FWC's options to rescue and rehabilitate injured manatees. Presently, the oceanaria are reimbursed for only about 65% of qualified expenses. A reduction in the reimbursement amount to \$824,000 would result in a reimbursement rate of only 47% which would likely result in some oceanaria discontinuing their participation in the program. This reduction would reduce the University of Florida Marine Mammal Program by \$200,000 to \$650,000 annually. This program is a joint endeavor of the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine and FWC. This program was developed to promote the health and understanding of marine mammals in Florida and is one of the few initiatives in the country training veterinarians, veterinary medical students, and related professionals in the care of marine mammals. This program has also provided much needed expertise to FWC Marine Mammal Pathobiology Lab (MMPL) through externships and specialized pathology services. This reduction would eliminate at least 3 positions at the University and much needed support for FWC in determining cause of death for salvaged manatee carcasses.

## **Executive Direction and Support Services**

### **Office of Executive Director:**

#### **Reduce Travel, Supplies and Training (\$27,500) ATF**

This reduction would eliminate a significant portion of in-state travel by the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director. Reducing executive managements travel limits opportunities to foster public understanding and appreciation for the economical and community importance of conserving Florida's fish and wildlife habitat. In addition, curtailing executive managements travel would restrict collaboration between FWC and other state/federal natural resources agencies that enhances the total conservation effort in Florida. This reduction would significantly impact the ability of the Executive Director's office to provide staff important in-service training to maintain and enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. This reduction would impact the Office's ability to produce material used in internal and external meetings that foster our conservation message.

### **Office of Planning and Policy Coordination:**

#### **Reduce Planning and Facilitation Assistance (\$6,000) ATF**

This reduction will reduce the expert facilitation and management of public meetings by external facilitators with advanced knowledge or training related to specific species or topics. Expert facilitation or mediation of potentially complex, contentious, or topic specific meetings supports productive meeting outcomes for constituents and staff.

#### **Reduce Stakeholder/Partner Meetings (\$13,000) SGTF**

This reduction will reduce stakeholder and partner meetings, forums, and facilitated or mediated discussions or negotiations to identify common interests, reduce conflicts and jointly develop issue resolutions. These meetings support management of the 'people side' of complex conservation activities and effective interactions with constituency groups who provide input, recognition and support for issues presented by Commissioners and senior staff.

**Reduce Stakeholder/Partner Printing (\$3,000) ATF**

This reduction will reduce printed materials available to stakeholders and partners for their knowledge and use in decision making and support of agency issues. It will also reduce the amount of printing support provided to other divisions related to public information, rule making, and other agency issues.

**Office of Community Relations:**

**Reduce Community Relations Operations (\$45,000) SGTF/MRCTF**

This will affect our ability to serve the public by limiting our ability to cover statewide stories and by decreasing temporary support services, including coverage of the agency's main telephone line.

**Reduce Magazine Content and Circulation (\$16,000) SGTF**

This reduction will reduce the number of conservation messages we can deliver to the public, decrease circulation of Florida Wildlife Magazine & reduce magazine content by 4 pages.

**Reduce License Plate Sales Promotion (\$38,500) STMTF/FPRMTF**

Specialty license tags produce much needed revenue from voluntary donations and raise the level of awareness of the needs of fish and wildlife among members of the public. A reduction in this area may reduce the amount of revenue received to support manatee and panther conservation.

**Reduce Video Support and Contracted Services (\$37,500) SGTF**

FWC's videos are primarily used to convey conservation messages in a way that the public immediately recognizes. A reduction in this area will reduce messaging to the public on a wide range of issues, such as imperiled species, law enforcement, and changes in fishing license requirements.

**Office of Information Technology (OIT):**

**Reduce OIT Infrastructure Spending. (\$75,000)**

This reduction would eliminate the majority of the dollars this office spends in the replacement of antiquated equipment. The focus of this spending is cost savings, productivity and cost avoidance for the agency. Without this funding the Office of Information Technology will be unable to continue funding in key areas such as video teleconferencing, replacement of antiquated personal computers and servers that are past their warranty period.

**Reduce OPS positions (\$275,000)**

This reduction would reduce the number of OPS employees in the application support/development area. The area of impact would affect the support of application maintenance and development across Division boundaries. This action would severely reduce OIT's ability to respond to bug fixes, agency enhancement requests, and modification requests based on rule or statutory change. The impact would range from potential inability to issue permits affecting revenue for the agency, to officer safety/public safety issues arising from our inability to maintain applications for our law enforcement division.

**Office of Recreation Services:**

**Eliminate youth wildlife viewing skills building program (\$16,784) SGTF**

Will eliminate funding necessary to complete the development of this partnership program. Phase 1 was completed last fiscal year. This phase would finalize development of resource materials and delivery to partners that will work with children and families to learn about and build outdoor skills. Project partners include Audubon of Florida, Florida Park and Recreation Association, Florida libraries and Get Outdoors Florida. Partners are supporting the project with resources for promotion, training and program delivery.

**Eliminate Great Florida Birding Trail website redesign/enhancement (\$9,050) NWTF**

Will eliminate funding necessary to complete this project. Phase I redesign of the website is complete, this funding would complete the build-out. The redesigned website will provide improved service to residents and visitors using the Great Florida Birding Trail.

**Reduce funding for public access improvements and maintenance on wildlife management areas (\$162,790) CARL**

This 20% reduction in CARL funds will eliminate the Interpretive Planning and Writing subsection within ORS. Four part-time OPS positions equivalent to 2 FTEs will be eliminated. As a result the office will no longer be able to provide interpretive writing and photography services to HSC and other divisions, which include WMA entry kiosk maps, interpretive signs and materials, developing and maintaining the WMA website. ORS will not be able to conduct special projects such as Wildlife 2060, writing for news media, Florida Monthly magazine, etc. Eliminating this function will result in fewer interpretive signs on the management areas, the loss of consistent and professional appearance and durability of interpretive materials and the inability to replace existing, aging interpretive panels. Impacts will include less positive land management reviews, a reduction of service to the public and possible increase in resource damage or safety issues since many interpretive materials inform the public about these issues. The remainder of the reduction will be absorbed by the design and construction subsection of ORS. This will significantly reduce resources for building and maintaining public access amenities such as entrance kiosks, parking and hunter check stations, wildlife-viewing structures, trails and restrooms. One part-time OPS Construction Manager position will be eliminated. Impacts will include less positive land management reviews, a reduction in service to the public, deferred maintenance of existing structures resulting in potential safety issues. ORS will be much less able to assist divisions with special projects such as design, permitting, bidding and construction supervision of the new Lake City Regional Office building or the Gainesville Research Lab equipment building. This reduction of service will result in increased workload and costs to field staff that lack experience and expertise to manage construction projects.