



Budget Issues
2016/17 Legislative Budget Request
September 2, 2015
as of August 27, 2015

I. Strategic Initiative Support

Water & Land Conservation	\$	19,736,425	TF
Black Bear Education and Outreach		125,000	TF
Critical Wildlife Area Monitoring Program	\$	74,292	TF
Enhanced Monitoring of Imperiled Species to Support Management of Conservation Lands		307,184	TF
Derelict Vessel Removal Program	\$	1,500,000	GR
Lionfish Management	\$	297,841	GR
Babcock Ranch Preserve Management & Public Use	\$	466,270	TF
Enhanced Wildlife Disease/Public Health Surveillance		206,715	TF
Florida Boating Improvement Program	\$	1,842,600	TF
Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center Water Supply Reservoir Renovation		300,000	TF

II. Operational Support

Agency Fund Shift from MRCTF to GR [(\$5,000,000)/\$5,000,000]	\$	0	GR/TF
Statewide Network Service Upgrade & License Refresh	\$	863,480	TF
Recreational Licensing Issuance Services Increase	\$	250,000	TF
Farris Bryant Building Sprinkler System	\$	250,000	TF
Southwest Regional Office Parking Lot Repair	\$	610,161	TF
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Enhancements	\$	1,000,000	TF

III. Optimize Federal and Grant Funding

Gulf Restoration	\$	TBD	TF
United States Fish & Wildlife Service Boating Access	\$	3,900,000	TF
Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment	\$	600,000	GR/TF

I. Strategic Initiative Support

Water and Land Conservation

\$19,736,425 (\$849,028)

Funding Source: Documentary Stamps

The water and land conservation constitutional amendment dedicates funding to among other things, restoration and improvement of conservation lands including wetlands and forests, fish and wildlife habitat, lands protecting significant water resources, and outdoor recreational lands. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manages land for the primary purpose of maintaining and enhancing their habitat value for fish and wildlife pursuant to s. 379.212, Florida Statutes. The following requests are for an increase in spending authority from available revenues dedicated to water and land conservation activities that support the funding objectives of this constitutional amendment:

- **Economic Assessments of Conservation Lands and Species**

\$209,920 (R)

This request is for funding to conduct economic analyses on Florida's conservation lands including all Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and wetlands, and species including managed, imperiled, and exotic species. Analyses on WMAs will estimate the economic value (market and non-market) of recreational activities and natural resources within each WMA and the aggregated value of WMAs. These economic assessments can also lead to identification of regional gaps in recreational opportunities and ecosystem services. This will assist FWC management in prioritizing conservation actions. Analyses on managed and imperiled species will provide estimates of economic benefits from managing and conserving such species and will also conduct benefit-cost analyses to provide justification for such efforts. Analyses on exotic species will identify negative effects of such species on Florida's native species and human health and safety, and estimate the economic damages. The results will guide FWC's leadership and policy to control such species. The funding request would provide funding for 2 OPS Economic Analysts specializing in natural resource economic impact analysis and survey methods. (FWRI)

- **Land Management and Public Use Services**

\$340,298 (R)

This request is for an increase in recurring spending authority from available funding dedicated to land management activities pursuant to s. 259.032(9)(a), Florida Statutes. Funds will be used to enhance natural resource management and public access of the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system. This will be accomplished through

activities such as prescribed burning, exotic vegetation control, supplemental wildlife plantings, upland and hydrological restoration, plant and wildlife surveys, public access, public use management, site security and signage, and facilities maintenance. (DHSC)

- **Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Enhancements**
\$15,478,220 (R)

Funds would be used to enhance natural resource management and public enjoyment of the WMA system. This will be accomplished through activities such as prescribed burning, exotic vegetation control, wildlife food plots, plant and wildlife surveys; projects such as the Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project and wetland restoration and management projects; public use programs such as hunting, developing public access (including ADA), human-dimensions studies and stakeholder forums to inform enhancements for public use, managing uses for safe, enjoyable experiences and improving facilities maintenance. During the past two years FWC staff have worked through a process designed to provide a vision for the future for Florida's WMA System. This process led to goals, objectives and strategies designed to increase the WMA System's contribution to the biological diversity and wildlife centric recreation in Florida. In addition, analysis revealed the gaps between where the WMA System is now and where it needs to be in the future to meet the needs of Florida's wildlife and the increasing needs of Florida's citizens. (\$13,078,220 DHSC; \$2,400,000 DHGM)

- **Nonnative Reptile Removal and Control through Incentives and Partnerships**
\$1,660,768 (\$285,400 NR)

This issue addresses one of the agencies top strategic objectives - addressing conflict wildlife. Funds would be provided to support python and large lizard removal in the form of incentives, stipends or contracts; and to enhance inspection resources at Florida ports and common carriers. Over the course of the last five years, populations of pythons, monitor lizards, Argentine black and white tegus and other nonnative fish and wildlife have increased, while the capacity to assess the potential impacts, and mitigate for those impacts by concerted removal efforts has not kept pace. Removal of emerging nonnative fish and wildlife species is crucial to protecting both environmental resources and the tourism economy of Florida. More than 600 species of nonnative fish and wildlife have been introduced into Florida. Predicting the likelihood of establishment and assessing for negative impacts will ensure FWC can respond with appropriate management actions. Working with stakeholders and developing

partnerships is crucial to not only reduce these potential negative impacts, but will provide regulatory certainty to the industry without restricting economic activity. In addition to funding incentive programs, this request would provide funds to support the development and implementation of risk screening tools, impact mitigation measures and partnerships. One of the targeted risk mitigation tools that would be funded is enhancing our port and common carrier inspection capabilities (within The Division of Law Enforcement) to provide for inspections where potential prohibited/nonnative wildlife traffic occurs. Targeting illegal shipments helps to provide a level playing field for businesses that are following federal and state regulations. Additionally, increased enforcement provides stability to the marketplace by preventing black market competition which harms legitimate licensed businesses. (\$1,634,928 DHSC; \$150,000 DLE)

- **Landowner Assistance for Public-Private Conservation Partnerships**

\$1,308,971 (\$475,944 NR)

The Office of Conservation Planning Services (OCPS) coordinates FWC's efforts to provide science-based fish and wildlife conservation information and recommendations to conserve and enhance Florida's fish and wildlife habitat resources. Working with private landowners, staff develops and helps implement comprehensive, habitat-based management plans and incentive programs that conserve Florida's fish, wildlife and habitat resources. Almost 70% of Florida's fish and wildlife habitat occurs on privately-owned lands. Therefore, public-private conservation partnerships are critical for the future of Florida's fish and wildlife resources. Conservation Planning Services staff provided fish and wildlife-related technical assistance on approximately 1,000 projects during Fiscal Year 2013-14. However, less than 50% of the demand for these types of services is currently being met with existing staff levels. This request would provide for 12 Biological Scientist IV OPS positions, 12 vehicles and associated operational expenses, and would increase the biological staff resources that deliver technical assistance to private landowners by 50%, allowing FWC to better meet the increasing demand from private landowners for fish and wildlife-related assistance. (DHSC)

- **Comprehensive Mapping and Spatial Analysis support for FWC Managed Lands \$419,592 (R)**

This request would establish a multi-faceted mapping and spatial analysis support function for FWC managed lands. Elements to be funded by this request include maintaining and updating the statewide

Cooperative Land Cover map (in cooperation with Florida Natural Areas Inventory); spatial modeling of natural resources including imperiled species and their associated habitats, land use change and threat assessments, and upland restoration and enhancement projects and their associated benefits to functioning watersheds; spatial tracking of natural resource management actions including prescribed burning, exotic vegetation control, native plant community restoration, and feasibility analysis of management actions. This request would provide funding for 2 OPS Associate Research Scientists (Land Cover Analyst and Spatial Modeler) and 2 OPS Assistant Research Scientists (Land Cover Analyst and Land Management Analyst). (FWRI)

- **Regional Volunteer Coordinators**

- **\$318,056 (\$87,684 NR)**

Funding is being requested for five OPS Regional Volunteer Coordinators and associated expenses. During the past two years FWC staff have worked through a process designed to provide a vision for the future for Florida's Wildlife Management Area (WMA) System. This process led to goals, objectives and strategies designed to increase the WMA System's contribution to the biological diversity and wildlife centric recreation in Florida. In addition, volunteers and volunteer coordination was identified as a key strategy to achieve system goals and objectives. Through volunteer projects such as exotic and invasive species removal and monitoring, imperiled species monitoring and habitat improvement, volunteer coordination helps the agency achieve three of their strategic initiatives: Expand Participation in Conservation, Conservation through Innovation and Conflict Wildlife. Coordinators recruit, screen, and assist in training and managing volunteers focused on projects selected for their strategic importance. Volunteers enable FWC to expand projects over larger geographic areas, for longer periods of time, complete them faster and at lower cost. Additionally, biologists can redirect their efforts to other priority tasks. Every dollar invested in current volunteer coordinators has returned \$2.50 in services. (OPAWVS)

Florida Black Bear Education and Outreach

\$125,000 (R)

Funding Source: Bear Permit Fees

This request is to utilize funds generated from the sale of bear hunting permits to support efforts to reduce human-bear conflicts. Funding would be used to partner with residents, local governments, and businesses to reduce human-bear conflicts. The majority of the funds would go toward offsetting the cost of bear resistant equipment and other measures focused

on resolving issues associated with food attractants and garbage. The remaining funds would be used for other elements of bear population management. Calls regarding conflicts with bears have increased by 400% over the last decade in Florida, as both human and bear populations grow and expand. Bear conflict situations range from nuisance behavior such as knocking over trash cans to property damage and severe human injury. The FWC has a long-standing, proactive approach to bear management and enhanced human-bear conflict efforts will continue to build upon that existing foundation. (DHSC)

Critical Wildlife Area Monitoring Program

\$74,292 (R)

Funding Source: Vehicle Registration Fees

Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs) are sites that FWC has established to protect wildlife from disturbance during critical life stages. The majority of CWAs host nesting colonies of imperiled shorebirds, sea birds, and wading birds and are established in high-traffic (recreational) and high-visibility locations where disturbance is most problematic. Monitoring at CWAs helps FWC manage declining populations, provides outreach to the public, and meets goals of the Imperiled Species Management Plan. Use of dedicated seasonal technicians has resulted in improved species conservation and strengthened stakeholder relations. Furthermore, they enhance efficiency by limiting time-consuming and expensive travel by regional staff and the time commitment associated with developing and administering annual grants. Technician responsibilities include: posting, monitoring, stewarding, outreach, coordination with LE, and data management. This request is for spending authority to support 4 seasonal OPS technicians and operating expenses to: 1) post CWAs seasonally; 2) monitor target species in order to assess effectiveness of management efforts as well as to contribute to population assessments; 3) conduct stewardship activities; 4) conduct outreach activities to foster local support for conservation efforts; and 5) engage stakeholders to improve and maintain relations. Floridians will benefit from improved conservation of some of the most vulnerable concentrations of wildlife in their state. (DHSC)

Enhanced Monitoring of Imperiled Species to Support Management of Conservation Lands

\$307,184 (\$75,000 NR)

Funding Source: Vehicle Registration Fees

Imperiled species management is a core component of management planning on conservation lands and this request is focused on providing sound scientific information to inform land management. This request will support research and monitoring on both state-listed and federal-listed species, thereby reducing the number of listed species. In addition, this

funding will accelerate recovery by addressing critical data gaps to determine how best to manage species and their habitats, to reduce key threats, to promote population increase and to accelerate delisting. This funding will also establish a monitoring program to track population trends both to inform management and to track progress toward recovery and to facilitate reassessment of listing status. Three OPS Biological Scientist II positions are included in this request. (FWRI)

Derelict Vessel Removal Program
\$1,500,000 (NR)

Funding Source: General Revenue

Our database has currently identified 283 known derelict vessels in the Florida waterways. The funding of this request will reinstate a successful program which provides a continuing mechanism for the removal of derelict vessels from the waterways of the state, helping to maintain a safe and healthy environment for commercial and recreational users of these waterways and those accessing these waterways. With their removal, Florida's waterways can continue to attract boaters and maintain the environmental quality, assuring a clear, safe and healthy waterway free of dangerous debris and hazards from illegal dumping. (DLE)

Lionfish Management
\$297,841 (NR)

Funding Source: General Revenue

A portion of this request would fund a non-recurring incentive program for the removal of lionfish (\$150,000) by providing partial funding to lionfish tournaments and to provide incentives for a Reef Rangers program. Lionfish are an invasive species that may impact native fish populations and the businesses affiliated with fishing and diving opportunities. The FWC encourages people to remove invasive lionfish using spears and hand-held nets in Florida waters to limit negative impacts to native marine species. Eradication of lionfish is not possible. However, localized removal efforts may be beneficial. Lionfish tournaments not only remove lionfish from the water, but also help raise awareness about invasive species. The Reef Rangers program was created to help facilitate communication between divers participating in lionfish removals. A second portion of this request would fund an adaptive management project (\$150,000) to determine how effective removals might be on selected reefs and to help manage the frequency at which these removals might be needed to protect reef fish diversity. This would help FWC more efficiently utilize funds to focus removals in the areas that they are needed the most. (DMFM)

Babcock Ranch Preserve Management and Public Use
\$466,270 (\$54,858 NR)

Funding Source: License Fees/Permits

This request would develop and provide public-use opportunities and be used to conduct natural resource management on Babcock Crescent B Ranch. This request is made pursuant to provisions of Section 259.1053(5)(c)(2), F.S. Effective August 2016, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will be the lead managing agency, with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a cooperating agency, responsible for the management of Babcock Crescent B Ranch. Public hunting and other fish and wildlife management activities will be established and implemented by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Permit fees for hunting will be used to cover the costs of administering public hunting, fish and wildlife management, and other land management activities and to help ensure the ranch is financially self-sufficient. (DHSC)

Enhanced Wildlife Disease/Public Health Surveillance
\$206,715 (\$30,000 NR)

Funding Source: License/Permit Fees

This request provides funding to enhance our existing Wildlife Health program. Diseases are increasingly a threat to wildlife, domestic animal, and human health. Florida is especially at risk for disease introduction due to its geographic location, subtropical climate, exotic species introduction, growing human/domestic animal population, and ever-increasing urban/wildland interface. This funding request includes support for an OPS Veterinarian I who will conduct research and surveillance to assess health risks to Florida's wildlife (and where relevant, threats to domestic animals and public health), implement coordinated efforts at early detection and prevention of disease introduction or spread, provide training to FWC employees to minimize their risk of zoonotic disease, conduct timely investigations of avian and other wildlife mortality events, provide expanded health diagnostic capabilities to the agency, and enhance FWC capacity and readiness to respond appropriately to significant large-scale wildlife health threats. At present, FWC is unable to meet monitoring needs relative to zoonotic diseases such as Avian Influenza and Chronic Wasting Disease and this request will allow us to close that information gap, protect wildlife and minimize public health risks. (FWRI)

Florida Boating Improvement Program
\$1,842,600 (FCO)

Funding Source: \$1,250,000 fuel taxes; \$592,600 vessel registration fees

This request is for fixed capital outlay funding in the amount of \$1,250,000 from the State Game Trust Fund (SGTF) to continue a long term program of providing

grants to local governments for boating improvements. Section 206.606(1)(a), Florida Statutes, provides \$1.25 million annually from fuel tax revenues to the SGTF to fund local projects providing recreational channel marking, public launching facilities, derelict vessel removal, and other local boating related activities. Section 328.72(15)(a), Florida Statutes, provides \$592,600 annually from vessel registration revenues to the Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund. (DLE)

**Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center Water Supply Reservoir Renovation
\$300,000 (NR)**

Funding Source: License Fees/Permits

This request would provide funding for needed renovations to a 2-acre water supply reservoir at FWC's Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center in Holt, Florida. This would include stabilizing the banks, removing 3-feet of sand/clay from the lake bottom, replacing original asbestos piping and valves, and fully lining the reservoir. The repairs would return the reservoir to its original depth, and lining the reservoir would reduce the amount of water currently being withdrawn from the aquifer. Water from the reservoir supplies fish production ponds at the facility. (DFFM)

II. Operational Support

**Agency Fund Shift from MRCTF to General Revenue
\$(5,000,000)/\$5,000,000 (R)**

Funding Source: General Revenue

This request is for the shift of expenses in the amount of \$5,000,000 to General Revenue from the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund, within the Division of Law Enforcement. In Fiscal Year 08/09 salary budgets of \$5,991,093 and expense budgets of \$1,500,000 were shifted from the General Revenue Fund to the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund. In Fiscal Year 09/10 an additional \$7,747,869 was shifted from the General Revenue salary budget to the Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund. Current projections indicate that the cost to continue the current Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund budget will exceed the annual revenues in FY 2016/17. The 2015 Legislature provided a fund shift from MRCTF to GR in the amount of \$500,000.

MFN Statewide Network Service Upgrades and Database Servers License Refresh

\$863,480 (\$591,000 NR)

Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

Agency strategic systems and applications (VOIP, Videoconference, GIS, Cloud services) rely on the State's network infrastructure for connectivity, and the increasing data requirements and connectivity to internet and other Cloud services have strained the slowest remote site connections to the MyFloridaNet (MFN). This funding would provide new circuit construction to reach the lowest entry-point for more capable technology for 22 remote locations and recurring bandwidth upgrade costs. All agency databases hosted at the Agency for State Technology data centers and at our disaster recovery site, are running on older versions of Microsoft SQL Server product (SQL version 2008). This funding for software licensing would allow all SQL database servers to be upgraded to the latest version (currently SQL version 2014), improving and ensuring system reliability, availability and industry support. A total of seven (7) enterprise licenses are required at \$46,714 each. (OIT)

Recreational Licensing Issuance Services (RLIS) Increases

\$250,000 (R)

Funding Source: Hunting and Fishing Licenses and Permits

Increased budget authority is necessary to provide for increases in contract costs from increases in sales transactions. Transactions from license/permit sales and replacement licenses have increased by over 200,000 transactions over the last three years. FWC can no longer absorb these increased costs within existing appropriations. (OLP)

Farris Bryant Building Sprinkler System

\$250,000 (NR)

Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

The Bryant Building was built in 1964 and the attic area has never had a fire sprinkler system installed. The FWC has been cited for a High Hazard violation from the State Fire Marshall during annual Fire Safety inspections. A fire sprinkler system must be installed to meet safety code requirements. (OED)

Southwest Regional Office Drainage and Parking Lot Repair

\$610,161 (FCO)

Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

Correct Lakeland Regional Office parking lot and facility grounds grading to eliminate drainage and runoff issues and alleviate flooding. Resurface and restripe existing parking area to maximize available parking, and increase safety and address ADA parking challenges. (OED)

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Enhancements
\$1,000,000 (R)**

Funding Source: Documentary Stamps

The Office of Executive Director has determined potential ADA issues throughout the state. We are compiling a list of all known ADA issues in FWC-owned facilities and are requesting a lump sum of \$1,000,000 to address this problem. The intent is to prioritize this list based on health and safety and most critical issues. There are two critical factors to the timeliness of these renovations/enhancements: 1) FWC will undergo a federal audit in 2017 that will review facilities for ADA compliance; and 2) the agency is exposed to litigation due to non ADA-compliance where public access occurs.

III. Optimize Federal & Grant Funding

Gulf Coast Restoration Funding **\$ TBD GDTF**
**Funding Source: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and
Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Grant Awards**

Spending authority is requested to provide for anticipated funding for the following projects:

NRDA – Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area Public Access - \$195,000

NRDA – Escribano Point WMA Hydrologic and Public Access Improvements - \$1,432,000

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service Boating Access
\$3,900,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: federal grants

Included in this request is \$1,900,000 to obligate funds available from US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Sport Fish Restoration Act – Boat Access, to provide funding for various boating access projects. If the apportioned funds are not spent, unobligated funds will be reallocated to other states and future Sport Fish apportionments will be reduced in the State of Florida.

This request also includes funding for one (1) grant that will be submitted to US Fish and Wildlife Service, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP) Tier II project for \$2,000,000 and Tier I projects for \$100,000.

Fixed Capital Outlay is required in order to allow sufficient time for the construction of boating access facilities, which require sufficient time for permitting and construction (average 2 to 3 years). (DLE)

Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment \$600,000 (FCO)

Funding Source: 50% federal grant, 50% state matching funds

This request is for fixed capital outlay spending authority for artificial reef planning, development, assessment, and management. Artificial reefs are manmade structures that are very popular with anglers and divers because they tend to concentrate species of fish of interest to these groups.

Revenues to fund this request are from Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration grants from the USFWS and from the sale of recreational saltwater fishing licenses (a portion of which serves as the match required to receive federal funds). According to socioeconomic studies conducted from 1998 to 2011, for every dollar spent on artificial reef construction an average of \$261 is spent annually by those that use artificial reefs. The program has more than 25 years of history working in partnership with local governments, recreational fishing interests, and state universities for local reef development and assessment. Funds are allocated to projects in compliance with federal regulations governing state use of federal aid funds.

Abbreviations

(R) – Recurring Appropriation

(NR) – Non-Recurring Appropriation

CWA – Critical Wildlife Area

DACS – Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

DEP – Department of Environmental Protections

DHGM – Division of Hunting & Game Management

DHSC – Division of Habitat & Species Conservation

DLE – Division of Law Enforcement

DMFM – Division of Marine Fisheries Management

FCO – Fixed Capital Outlay

FGTF – Federal Grants Trust Fund

FG/MR - Federal Grants Trust Fund and Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

FTE – Full Time Equivalent Employee Position

FWRI – Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

FWC – Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FY – Fiscal Year

GDTF – Grants and Donations Trust Fund

GR – General Revenue

Maint - Maintenance

Mgmt – Management

MRCTF – Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

OED – Office of Executive Director

NWTF – Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund

OPS – Other Personal Services (includes part-time & temporary employment wages)

SG/MR – State Game Trust Fund and Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

SGTF – State Game Trust Fund

TF –Trust Funds (various)

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WMA – Wildlife Management Area