



Potential Reductions 2016 Legislative Session Schedule VIII B

September 2, 2015
as of August 27, 2015

In preparation for the 2016 Legislative Session, the Governor, House, and Senate instructed state agencies to prepare a list of potential reductions equal to 5% of the adjusted recurring budget for next year. The following list contains the staff recommendations for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The 5% list totals \$12,090,469 of which \$1,453,225 is from General Revenue and \$10,637,244 is from trust funds.

Staff Recommendation

Law Enforcement Consolidation (\$71,495) TF

During FY 12/13, 161.5 FTEs were moved from DEP and DACS to FWC to consolidate law enforcement functions for conservation and recreation lands and commercial aquaculture. As planned, this consolidation has resulted in efficiencies and savings to the state by reclassifying supervisory and managerial positions to field officer positions and by eliminating duplicative management functions. Beginning in FY 13/14 state expenditures have been reduced as a result of the consolidation with annual savings estimated at approximately \$500,000. These amounts have been redirected to fill the gap for the approximately \$4.48 million in operating reductions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement since FY 2008/09. This proposed efficiency reduction represents savings from the elimination of duplication in the director's office. (DLE)

Eliminate Transfer to Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/IFAS/Invasive Exotic Plant Research funding (\$844,171) IPCTF

This proposal would eliminate the transfer to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to fund invasive exotic plant research at the quarantine lab in Ft. Pierce for insects that must be quarantined before being released. Currently, the agency pays \$844,171 on a recurring basis to help support this program. This reduction is 100% of the total program funding. (DHSC)

Reduce Invasive Plant Management Funding (\$3,036,141) IPCTF

This proposal would reduce the agency's ability to manage aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants. A reduction in funding would result in 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. This would result in fewer project sites being funded, ultimately resulting in additional sites becoming re-infested after having spent state dollars getting the invasive plants under control. Increasing invasive plant populations can have adverse impacts on recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, and ecotourism, as well as adversely impacting beneficial native habitat that is critical for the management of

fish and wildlife. 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. (DHSC)

Reduce Recreational Saltwater Outreach and Aquatic Education (\$20,000) MRCTF

This proposal would reduce state matching operational funds by 8.5% used for Outreach and Aquatic Education programs under the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Grant. Funds for this program support the education of recreational anglers on the importance of personal stewardship and fishery conservation and management actions that can be taken by the individual angler. This proposal would reduce long-term support and recruitment of anglers in Florida. Loss of these state match dollars will result in the loss of \$60,000 of federal grant dollars that would no longer be available to the agency. The recreational saltwater outreach and aquatic education program supports kids' fishing clinics, adult clinics and outreach training, marine fisheries education for Florida teachers, and a large number of public outreach events and publications in partnership with private, local, state, and federal organizations. Therefore, recreational saltwater outreach and aquatic education program activities currently conducted with the \$80,000 funds (\$20,000/state and \$60,000/federal) would be reduced. (DMFM)

Eliminate Communication Partnerships with Stakeholders (\$10,000) MRCTF

The Community Relations Office partners with stakeholder organizations to leverage our messaging to the media and other interested parties. If these funds were eliminated (1.6% of total budget), FWC would seek alternative means to bring our message to these groups. (OCR)

Eliminate Remote Video Support (\$7,000) SGTF

The FWC has a still and video production team located in Tallahassee. These limited funds provide our team with additional professional videographers to provide support services when needed, as well as the ability to react to unique events in the central and south Florida regions on very short notice. (OCR)

Reduce Replacement Equipment (\$133,000) MRCTF/ATF

This reduction would cause the office to extend the operational lifecycle of computers, video and graphics equipment and could reduce our service ability to the Divisions and Regions. It would eliminate replacement of aging and end-of-life network equipment, computers, and video conferencing equipment, extending the replacement lifecycles. Eliminate various software, hardware and services support contracts (Microsoft, Cisco, Polycom). This reduction could potentially affect service delivery. (\$2,800 OCR; \$10,200 FBO; \$120,000 OIT)

Reduce Operating Expenses (\$217,000) MRCTF/ATF

A variety of strategies could be implemented to reduce expenditures in the Expense category. This may include reducing office supplies, maintenance, telecommunications and other expenses for office operations. These reductions would reduce the ability to provide administrative and operational services for internal and external customers. (\$62,351 OED; \$102,267 FBO; \$1,382 OSI; \$10,000 OCR; \$41,000 Regional Offices)

Reduce OPS Part-Time Staffing (\$26,000) ATF

This proposal would reduce funding for hiring temporary support in times of peak workload and to meet needs for special projects. This reduction would spread workload across existing staff. (FBO)

Defer Maintenance at FWRI Headquarters and Field Laboratories (\$94,095) Trust Funds: (\$75,000) MRCTF; (\$19,095) SGTF

FWRI headquarters in St. Petersburg consists of 132,000 ft² of specialized laboratories, hazardous waste storage and research facilities. Several smaller laboratories located in Cedar Key, Gainesville, and Tequesta have similar capabilities. FWRI has historically kept maintenance costs well below those for comparable private sector facilities through an aggressive program of preventative maintenance. This reduction would curtail preventative maintenance activities associated with our scientific support facilities. Critical life safety functions would be maintained. (FWRI)

Reduce Commercial Saltwater Blue Crab Outreach (\$4,000) MRCTF

This proposal would reduce by one half the number of commercial blue crab outreach education programs undertaken by the Marine Fisheries Services Section. These programs include education regarding new commercial blue crab regulations; publication of SEASTATS (a brochure that discusses the blue crab, and includes information on appearance, including how to distinguish males from females, distribution and habitat, reproduction, molting, feeding, parasites and diseases, and similar species found in Florida waters); and, produces signage to be posted at boat ramps indicating that it is a felony to molest commercial blue crab traps. (DMFM)

Eliminate Oceanaria Reimbursements for Manatee Rehabilitation (\$1,254,000) MRCTF

FWC manages 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. This amount was increased to \$1,254,000 in FY 14-15. These specialized, federally permitted, facilities provide acute-care, veterinarian-based rehabilitation of manatees. Presently, the oceanaria are reimbursed for about 50% of qualified expenses. (FWRI)

Reduce Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Research (\$145,367) GR

This proposal represents a significant reduction in the annual General Revenue (GR) operating budget for the Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) group and will reduce scientific

sampling that monitors state waters for harmful algae species including: 1) red tide, which causes die offs of fish, manatees, dolphins, and sea turtles and poses risks to public health through consumption of contaminated shellfish; 2) saxitoxin-producing species that pose lethal risks to public health from toxic pufferfish and contaminated shellfish; 3) cyanobacteria (blue green algae) that cause large numbers of fish kills in fresh and saltwater each year, and 4) the assemblage of harmful algal species that are implicated in the “superblooms” and the degradation of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) including mass mortalities of manatees, birds and dolphins. (FWRI)

Reduce Lake Restoration Funding (\$466,006) SGTF

This proposal would decrease funding for aquatic habitat management and restoration projects. A reduction in budget authority would limit maintenance operations on completed lake restoration projects. Reduced funding would 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 would be delayed, as would start-up and planning for future restoration projects. 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. (DHSC)

Reduce funding for public access services (\$45,000) LATF

This issue would reduce design and construction services. These services maintain and develop public access on the state’s wildlife management system and to provide support throughout the agency with a variety of facility improvement and maintenance projects. This reduction would curtail any new public access projects and maintenance of existing projects. (OPAWVS)

Reduce Freshwater Fisheries Operations (\$156,796) SGTF

This proposal would reduce the Division’s ability to spend potential proceeds generated from the lands it manages by 45%. Past use of this appropriation has been to spend revenue from the sale of sand at Tenoroc Fish Management Area on Tenoroc land management activities as required by statute. Management activities include, but are not limited to, improving pond access, maintenance of boat ramps, fishing platforms and fish feeders, mowing of grounds, parking areas, and recreational fishing areas, fence and road maintenance and repair, and control of exotic plant communities. Section 259.032(11)(d), Florida Statutes, requires revenue received through leases, sales, and contracts be used to supplement land management operations. (DFFM)

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

This reduction would eliminate informational materials that describe public hunting opportunities as well as public service announcements pertaining to alligator safety and mallard/mottled duck hybridization. These materials summarize 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. (DHGM)

Reduce Trap Retrieval Program (\$124,498) MRCTF

This proposal would reduce by approximately one-half the statewide retrieval of lost or abandoned commercial spiny lobster, stone crab, and blue crab traps using competitively-bid, contractual services. Currently \$25 of the commercial license fee for these three fisheries is specified by the Legislature to be spent on trap retrieval of lost or abandoned traps during closed seasons [sec. 379.367(2)(b), sec. 379.365(1)(a) and sec. 379.366(3)(a), F.S., respectively]. This program is designed to ensure that commercial fishing gear does not remain in the marine environment longer than necessary and reduces potential impacts on marine fisheries and their habitat. The trap retrieval program is authorized in s. 379.2424, F.S. (DMFM)

Reduce Marine Fisheries Assessment (\$300,000) MRCTF

This reduction will reduce marine fisheries monitoring and assessment efforts that support science-based management of commercial and recreational fisheries. Scientists in this program monitor the abundance of recreational and commercial fishes in six estuaries around the state and conduct detailed studies offshore which inform management actions such as size limits and closed seasons. This information is used to evaluate the effects of current fishery regulations and predict future stock levels for species such as snook, seatrout, red drum, red snapper and gag grouper. (DMFM)

Small-Game Management Program (\$201,932) SGTF/LATF

This proposal would nearly eliminate the agency's ability to provide small-game (i.e., quail, squirrel, rabbit, dove, rail, snipe, and woodcock) management, including technical assistance for small-game habitat management to federal, state, and private landowners. It would eliminate cooperative partnership efforts with other management agencies and organizations for mourning doves and bobwhite quail. The reduction would reduce the agency's ability to provide small-game hunting opportunities, including public dove fields which would result in a decrease in agency revenues of about \$40,000 - \$60,000 from dove permits. (DHGM)

Eliminate 21 Law Enforcement Officer Positions (\$ 1,307,858) GR
Eliminate 57 Law Enforcement Officer Positions (\$3,455,910) MRCTF

This reduction would eliminate law enforcement officer positions. The per-officer savings is \$61,103 including salaries & benefits, incentives, and human resource contract costs. Out of the agency's \$29 million recurring General Revenue (GR) budget, \$26.1 million (90%) 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, state parks, state forests, 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. This reduction would reduce the agency's capacity to provide conservation law enforcement support in a number

of areas including fish and wildlife resource protection, waterway/boating safety, and response to natural disasters.

Abbreviations

(R) – Recurring Appropriation

(NR) – Non-Recurring Appropriation

CWA – Critical Wildlife Area

DFFM – Divisions of Freshwater Fisheries Management

DHGM – Division of Hunting & Game Management

DHSC – Division of Habitat & Species Conservation

DFFM – Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management

DLE – Division of Law Enforcement

DMFM – Division of Marine Fisheries Management

FBO – Finance & Budget Office

FCO – Fixed Capital Outlay

FETF – Florida Forever Trust Fund

FGTF – Federal Grants Trust Fund

FPRMTF – Florida Panther Research and Management Trust Fund

FTE – Full Time Equivalent Employee Position

FWRI – Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

FWC – Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FY – Fiscal Year

FYCCN – Florida Youth Conservation Center Network

GDTF – Grants and Donations Trust Fund

GR- General Revenue Fund

IPCTF – Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund

LATF – Land Acquisition Trust Fund

Maint - Maintenance

Mgmt – Management

MRCTF – Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

OCR – Office of Community Relations

OED – Office of Executive Director

NWTF – Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund

OPAWVS – Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services

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

SGTF – State Game Trust Fund

TF –Trust Funds (various)

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WMA – Wildlife Management Area

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