



Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Schedule VIII B-2 Potential Reductions 2019 Legislative Session

September 26, 2018

In preparation for the 2019 Legislative Session, the Governor, House, and Senate instructed state agencies to prepare a list of potential reductions equal to 10% of the adjusted recurring budget for next year. The following list contains the staff recommendations for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The 10% list totals \$28,178,073 of which \$3,164,057 is from General Revenue funds and \$25,014,016 is from trust funds.

Reduce Lake Restoration Funding: (\$1,071,782) LATF

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 would limit the 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 Non-CARL Land Management Funding: (\$3,017,400) LATF

This proposal reduces the Commission's ability to manage new and current lands. The impact of this proposal would be moderate, as it would decrease funding directed to land management operations pursuant to s. 201.15(5), Florida Statutes. A reduction would 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 the Commission is either a designated lead manager, or a secondary cooperator. Staffing on some land units within the WMA system may have to be reduced, which would result in a 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. (DHSC)

Reduce Public-Information Related to Game Wildlife: (\$40,000) TF

This proposal would eliminate public service announcements pertaining to alligator safety and mallard/mottled duck hybridization. These materials summarize public hunting opportunities on commission-managed lands. The televised public service announcements are designed to increase public awareness and cooperation in the conservation of Florida's unique duck species, including Florida's mottled duck, and to promote public safety and increase awareness concerning Florida's alligator population. The proposed reduction in outreach would have the

potential to reduce public safety related to alligators and would compromise conservation efforts for Florida's mottled duck.
(DHGM)

Reduction of Boat Ramp Funding: (\$44,830) MRCTF

Boat ramp funding is used as match to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service boating access coordination grant. A reduction in funding would reduce the Commission's ability to maximize the use of the federal dollars and would reduce the ability to maintain and repair the 240 state-maintained boat ramps. (DLE)

Reduce Invasive Plant Management Funding: (\$11,663,881) LATF

This proposal would reduce the Commission'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. Growing invasive plant populations can have adverse impacts on recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, and ecotourism, and can have an adverse impact on 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 Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network Operations, Education, and Outreach: (\$183,900) TF

This proposal would reduce funding for the Project WILD conservation education program. This program is dependent on volunteer facilitators who provide professional development trainings to elementary, middle and high school educators throughout Florida. This funding cut would reduce the amount of support available to this volunteer network and would result in approximately four hundred fewer teachers trained in our conservation education curriculum.

The proposal would also reduce operational funds which support youth saltwater fishing camps and marine education programming. Programmatic offerings to Florida Youth Conservation Center Network (FYCCN) partners would be reduced, which would decrease the number of youth exposed to the Office's conservation education and stewardship activities. This proposal would reduce the long-term support and recruitment of young anglers in Florida.

In addition, this proposal would reduce the FYCCN's ability to serve existing partners and to recruit new partners. A variety of strategies would be implemented to reduce expenditures, including a reduction in partnership coordinator travel to potential partner sites, a reduction in conference attendance to promote the FYCCN, a reduction in promotional materials, and a reduction in partner recreational equipment, such as kayaks, fishing gear, binoculars, and archery supplies. This would result in a decrease in the number of conservation education and recreational opportunities made available for youth and families throughout Florida. (FYCCN)

Reduce Game Management and Hunting Opportunity Development: (\$94,048) TF

This proposal would decrease communication and coordination with hunters and other affected stakeholders concerning rule changes and other wildlife management decisions. Additionally, the proposal would reduce the ability to assess hunter preferences and harvests, decrease the ability to conduct economic analyses of proposed decisions, decrease coordination with other agencies and partners to accomplish scientific management of the wildlife species that are hunted and trapped in Florida, reduce efforts to enhance public hunting opportunities, decrease the capability to monitor populations of wildlife species that are hunted and trapped, and decrease technical assistance to public and organizations/agencies concerning game wildlife management. (DHGM)

Reduce Operating Expenses, Other Personal Services, and Contracted Services: (\$321,673) TF

This proposal would eliminate a significant portion of travel by personnel in Executive Direction and Administrative Support Services offices, would reduce spending on communications, subscriptions, partnerships, utilities, and software, and would result in a reduction of support to Agency programs. The proposal would also limit the number of events and meetings each year hosted by the Commission, as costs would rise due to outsourcing services through hotel vendors and event planners. Much of the Commission’s face-time with the public, stakeholders, and communities takes place in the field during statewide travels. Limiting travel and exposure to the critical resources we protect would weaken the Agency’s ability to carry out its strategic plan.

In addition, the proposal would eliminate the Other Personal Services position housed in the Improvement & Planning Section (IPS). Eliminating this position will decrease the Office’s ability to maintain the level of service currently provided towards facilitation and strategic planning.

An effect of this proposal would be a reduction in the number of license and permit transactions. Sales of licenses and permits represent a significant portion of cash flow to the Commission and reducing the volume of potential sales transactions would result in a decrease in earned revenue. The impact resulting from this reduction would be compounded by the subsequent decrease in Commission eligibility toward the receipt of federal funding, which is based on the number of recreational license holders in the state. (\$150,000 OED; \$6,501 OLA; \$100,000 OLP; \$35,500 CRO; \$29,672 IPS)

Reduce State Data Center Services, Spending for Hardware and Software Maintenance, Technology Refresh, and Operating Capital Outlay: (\$630,000) ATF

This proposal would result in a significant reduction in the volume of software licenses and maintenance purchases by the Office of Information Technology necessary to provide enterprise services for the Commission. These items include backup licenses, Anti-virus and Anti-ransomware support licensing, virtual private network licenses, Google Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, WebQA, GovDelivery email distribution, and communications services. This reduction would limit funding necessary to maintain aging technology services by a factor of 70%. This would include wiring, switches, routers, video conferencing equipment, desktop computers, wireless networks and access points, commission data backup, commission meetings agenda management system, United Parcel Service, and Voice-Over IP telephone systems.

Additionally, the proposal will reduce the amount of resources available to maintain existing systems such as PermitMe, PMARS, etc., and would reduce the capacity at which the Office is capable of replacing or repairing failed or outlaid equipment having a unit cost in excess of \$1,000.

This proposal would also eliminate existing services hosted at the State Data Center (SDC), such as enterprise email archiving, and servers used for software development and testing. This reduction will place additional stress on already limited information technology resources. (OIT)

Eliminate the Fostering Success Program: (\$100,000) GR

This proposal would eliminate funding for the Fostering Success Program. This program provides part-time employment opportunities and career mentoring to aged-out foster children. The proposal would reduce the number of youth currently hired from seven to zero. (FYCCN)

Reduce Small-Game Management: (\$201,135) TF

This proposal would nearly eliminate the Commission'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 proposal would reduce the Commission's ability to provide small-game hunting opportunities, including public dove fields, which would result in a decrease in revenue from dove permits, in the approximate amount of \$40,000 - \$60,000. The full time equivalent position currently dedicated to small-game management would be shifted to address other division or agency priorities. (DHGM)

Reduce Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management Operations: (\$188,616) TF

A reduction in the amount of \$4,612 from the Land Use Proceeds Disbursements appropriation category would eliminate the Division's ability to spend potential proceeds generated from the lands it manages at Tenoroc Fish Management Area. However, this reduction would not result in a significant impact to operations. A reduction in the amount of \$15,914 from the Operating Capital Outlay appropriation category would eliminate the Division's entire allotment in the State Game Trust Fund, which would reduce its ability to replace equipment needed to manage public resources. A reduction in the amount of \$32,290 in the Other Personal Services appropriation category would eliminate the Division's entire allotment in the State Game Trust Fund, which would impact its ability to hire temporary staff to document fish populations and evaluate Division management projects (e.g. angler surveys). A reduction in the amount of \$40,800 in the Enhanced Wildlife Management appropriation category would eliminate the Division's entire allotment in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, which would impact its operations by reducing the ability to purchase supplies (i.e. fish feed, spawning supplies, etc.), the ability to maintain equipment necessary for fish production at Blackwater Hatchery. A reduction in the amount of \$75,000 in the Expense appropriation category would reduce the Division's allotment within the State Game Trust Fund by 27%, which would impact regional fisheries operations by reducing the Division's ability to purchase equipment, fuel, and supplies needed for management and restoration projects. A reduction in the amount of \$20,000 the Expense appropriation category would eliminate the Division's allotment in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, which would impact operational costs at Blackwater Hatchery for the

purchase of fuel and supplies, and reparations to hatchery equipment. All appropriation categories except that of Land Use Proceeds Disbursements, are used as state match for the Division's Sport Fish Restoration federal grant. Eliminating this funding would reduce the Division's potential to capture \$552,012 of future federal grant funding. (DFFM)

Eliminate Transfer to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/IFAS/Invasive Exotic Plant Research Funding: (\$633,128) 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 \$633,128 on a recurring basis to help support this program. This reduction reflects 100% of the total program funding. (DHSC)

Eliminate Oceanaria Reimbursements for Manatee Rehabilitation and Support for the University of Florida Marine Mammal Veterinary Program: (\$2,104,000) MRCTF

FWC has managed the Oceanaria Reimbursement Assistance Program for rescued, rehabilitated, and released Florida manatees since 1991. Since July, 2000, these funds have 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 specialized, federally permitted, facilities are the only institutions available for acute-care, veterinarian-based rehabilitation of manatees. This proposal would reduce or eliminate this service to the state of Florida at a time when the number of manatees killed and injured annually is at record levels. Presently, the oceanaria are reimbursed for only about 50% of qualified expenses.

This reduction would also eliminate the University of Florida Marine Mammal Veterinary Program. 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 provides much needed expertise to FWC externships and specialized pathology services which are critical in determine cause of death for manatee carcasses. This reduction would eliminate at least 3 positions at the University of Florida. (FWRI)

Reduce Florida Bass Conservation Center Operations: (\$84,243) LATF

A reduction in the amount of \$84,243 in the Lake Restoration appropriation category would reduce the operating budget of the \$15 million state-of-the-art hatchery facility by 12% in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. This reduction would severely restrict the Center's ability to produce 3 to 4 million sportfish which are stocked in Florida's public waters statewide; eliminating the potential to achieve a maximum design capability of 6.75 million fish annually. (DFFM)

Reduce Public Hunting Areas Coordination: (1.0 FTE, \$81,084) LATF

This proposal would eliminate 1.0 FTE position, which would reduce the potential for new public hunting opportunities and decrease communication with hunters and other public-lands users. This communication and coordination with the public helps to ensure that decisions about recreational use of public lands are made with input from affected users. The proposal would

also reduce the ability to coordinate with other land-management agencies to optimize public hunting opportunities and ensure that resource management and recreational use opportunities are compatible. (DHGM)

Reduce Hunting-Related Marketing and Education Efforts: (1.0 FTE, \$69,678) SGTF

This proposal would decrease the distribution of public information related to hunting and the conservation and management of game wildlife species. The effect from this reduction would result in less information communicated to and received by the public about hunting and its role in wildlife management. Additionally, the proposal would reduce communication concerning regulations and public hunting opportunities, which in turn would reduce hunter satisfaction and decrease the ability to retain and recruit hunters. (DHGM)

Eliminate Budget Analyst Position: (1.0 FTE, \$36,500) ATF

This proposal would eliminate the Budget Analyst position housed in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, resulting in a loss of support to OED offices relative to budget management, guidance, and direction. Eliminating this position will lead to a decrease in budgetary coordination among OED offices, and would reduce the level of analysis related to department budget and expenditure data, including the creation, development, and management of several monitoring and informational reports. (CFO)

Eliminate Law Enforcement Captain Position: (1.0 FTE, \$78,500) ATF

This proposal represents an approximate 10% reduction in the total Office of Inspector General budget and would significantly hinder the ability to conduct timely and thorough investigations; especially those that are governed by Florida Statute (section 112 F.S.) and union contracts. The loss of an investigative position would require the other investigators to absorb the vacated duties. The Office of Inspector General is mandated by section 20.055 F.S. Specifically, section 20.055 (6) states that, "In carrying out the investigative duties and responsibilities specified in this section, each inspector general shall initiate, conduct, supervise, and coordinate investigations designed to detect, deter, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, and other abuses in state government." Eliminating this position from the OIG would impact the office's ability to effectively comply with the statute which may impact the public's faith in government accountability. (OIG)

Reduce Marine Fisheries Assessment: (7.0 FTE, \$833,738) MRCTF

This proposal will reduce marine fisheries monitoring and assessment efforts that support science-based management of valuable commercial and recreational fisheries. Saltwater fishing in Florida generates over \$5 billion in economic impact and supports over 50,000 jobs. 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 critical to evaluating the effects of current fishery regulations and predicting future stock levels. This reduction would result in the closure of the FWRI field lab on Apalachicola Bay and create a significant data gap for statewide fisheries assessments for species such as snook, seatrout, red drum, red snapper and gag grouper. State funds in this program are used as match for grants from federal, state and nonprofit sources. This reduction would require us to forego grant funded work in excess of \$2 million. (FWRI)

Eliminate 33 Law Enforcement Officer Positions: (\$3,064,057) GR

Eliminate 40 Law Enforcement Officer Positions: (\$3,635,880) MRCTF

This proposal would eliminate law enforcement officer positions. The calculation is based on the officer class (8515). The actual number would vary, as higher-level positions are eliminated based on vacancies. The savings per officer are \$90,897, which includes salaries and benefits, salary incentive pay, human resource assessment costs, and operating expenses.

From the Agency's \$31.3 million recurring General Revenue (GR) budget, \$29.5 million (94%) supports the Division of Law Enforcement. It is unavoidable not to include some portion of law enforcement in any proposal to significantly reduce agency GR appropriations. Due to the Division of Law Enforcement's primary role in the enforcement of law relative to fish, wildlife, state parks, state forests, and boating safety patrol, the vast majority of its appropriations are used for the salaries of employees that directly provide or support the patrol function. Decreasing the number of employees is the only viable solution to reducing a significant portion of budget.

A reduction of 73 sworn law enforcement officer positions would impede the ability of the Division of Law Enforcement to provide law enforcement services to the citizens of Florida, meet the constitutional charge to protect fish and wildlife resources, and provide disaster relief or homeland security services when needed. The reduction would result in fewer high-visibility patrols in manatee areas, panther areas, wildlife management areas, state parks, state forests, and popular boating and fishing areas, currently serving as a deterrent to illegal activities. The Commission's ability to respond rapidly to calls for service from the public would be reduced, and remaining officers would have to cover larger patrol zones. Efforts to insure the health and safety of the public would be hindered should these positions be eliminated, reducing the ability of the Commission 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. The Commission's 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 fewer people to respond to such events presents additional workload and risk to those who do respond. (DLE)

Abbreviations:

(R) – Recurring Appropriation
(NR) – Non-Recurring Appropriation
CRO – Community Relations Office
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
FCO – Fixed Capital Outlay
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 Centers Network
GDTF – Grants and Donations Trust Fund
GR- General Revenue Fund
IPCTF – Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund
IPS – Improvement and Planning Section
LATF – Land Acquisition Trust Fund
Maint - Maintenance
Mgmt – Management
MRCTF – Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund
OCR – Office of Community Relations
OED – Office of the Executive Director
OLA – Office of Legislative Affairs
OLP – Office of Licensing and Permitting
OSI – Office of Strategic Initiatives
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