



**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
**Legislative Budget Request**  
**2019 Legislative Session**  
*September 26, 2018*

**Strategic Initiative Support**

Public Assistance and Management of Invasive Species, Alligators, Crocodiles, Bears Lionfish and Other Wildlife	\$	2,123,000	TF/GR
Coral Reef Disease Response and Restoration: Multiagency Coordinated Field Support	\$	397,000	TF
Derelict Vessel Removal (FCO)	\$	1,400,000	GR
Fish Eating Creek WMA Campground Phase II (FCO)	\$	900,000	TF
Wildlife Management Area Private Landowner Remittance	\$	289,188	TF
Lake Restoration and Enhancement Projects	\$	1,500,000	TF
Invasive Plant Management	\$	4,000,000	TF
Corbett Wildlife Management Area Hungryland Boardwalk Phase I (FCO)	\$	800,000	TF

**Operational Support**

Enhanced Patrol & Support – 25.0 FTE	\$	5,623,641	GR
Law Enforcement Overtime Pay	\$	460,000	GR
Aviation Operations	\$	403,384	GR
Law Enforcement Officer Reserve Program	\$	243,052	GR
Replacement Lease Space	\$	264,897	TF
Cybersecurity Compliance and Remediation	\$	300,000	TF
Statewide Facility Safety & Security Repairs (FCO)	\$	652,625	GR/TF
Replace Failing HVAC System (FCO)	\$	780,000	GR
Body Worn Cameras	\$	735,760	GR
Agency Vehicle and Vessel Replacement	\$	5,829,000	GR/TF
Stone Crab Research and Monitoring	\$	300,000	TF
Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center (FCO)	\$	575,000	TF
Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area Office and Septic Upgrades (FCO)	\$	550,000	TF
Replace Freshwater Fisheries Research Laboratory (FCO)	\$	498,000	TF
South West Regional Office Drainage, Slope and Site - Phase II (FCO)	\$	618,000	GR
South West Regional Office Roof Replacement (FCO)	\$	162,000	GR
Enterprise Mobile Development Initiative	\$	500,000	TF
Youth Conservation Education Donations	\$	200,000	TF

**Optimize Federal and Grant Funding**

Boating Access (FCO)	\$	3,900,000	TF
Florida Boating Improvement Program (FCO)	\$	1,842,600	TF
Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment (FCO)	\$	600,000	GR/TF

General Revenue Fund	\$	15,195,612
Administrative Trust Fund	\$	1,193,998
Coastal Protection Trust Fund	\$	397,000
Federal Grants Trust Fund	\$	4,200,000
Land Acquisition Trust Fund	\$	9,948,000
Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund	\$	892,600
Non-Game Trust Fund	\$	1,692,661
State Game Trust Fund	\$	2,927,276
Total Request	\$	36,447,147

## **Strategic Initiative Support**

**Public Assistance and Management of Invasive Species, Alligators, Crocodiles, Bears  
Lionfish and Other Wildlife** **\$2,123,000 (R)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund \$1,623,000

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund \$500,000

This request would address impacts caused by both non-native and native wildlife species. Conflicts between humans and wildlife such as bears, alligators, and invasive species continue to increase and public expectations of FWC assistance with both real and perceived threats continue to grow as well. These conflicts range from simple annoyance (wildlife in garbage cans), to deaths of pets and livestock as well as serious injuries or death to people.

Native species that can cause conflicts by posing a public safety risk include species such as alligators, crocodiles and bears. Nonnative species pose threats to human health and safety, the environment, and the economy of Florida. They inhabit a variety of land and water areas of the state, preying on and competing with native fish and wildlife and adversely impacting agriculture, fishing, hunting, ecotourism and private property. Priority nonnative species include lionfish, Burmese pythons, African rock pythons, monitor lizards, Argentine black and white tegus, and green iguanas among others.

To address these increasing problems, we propose to 1) expand FWC's contractor response capacity for the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program, the Crocodile Response Program and the Bear Response Contractor Program, as well as develop a new Contractor Response program to remove high priority nonnative species, 2) continue support of the successful cost-share program with local government for purchase of bear-resistant trash cans, and develop and implement a cost-share program with home owners' associations and local government agencies to remove priority nonnative animals on private lands and locally managed public conservation lands, 3) develop management strategies to minimize the impact of lionfish on native marine fish populations and habitats, and, 4) expand our nuisance wildlife response capabilities.

Funding required to accomplish these goals include: \$500,000 recurring funding for DMFM for Lionfish, \$561,000 recurring funding for DHGM for the Statewide Nuisance Alligator and the Crocodile Response Programs, and \$1,062,000 recurring for DHSC for Contractor Response programs, bear resistant trash cans, cooperative cost-share programs and expansion of nuisance wildlife response capabilities.

**Coral Reef Disease Response and Restoration:  
Multiagency Coordinated Field Support** **\$397,000 (NR)**

Funding Source: Coastal Protection Trust Fund (Transfer from DEP)

Florida's coral reefs, which account for over \$6 billion annually in economic value to the state of Florida, are in a state of serious decline due to the cumulative impact of a number of environmental and disease-related stressors. In addition to these historical stressors, a large scale ongoing disease event that began in 2014 has impacted several critically important reef-building coral species, some of which have become essentially extinct in the wild. The critical condition of our coral reefs has galvanized dozens of state, federal, academic and nonprofit partners who are working collectively to determine the nature of the disease, intervene or treat affected corals, and develop restoration strategies to restore degraded reef ecosystems. Given the highly degraded condition of Florida's reefs, it is likely these response efforts will be needed for a decade or more. While each of the partners involved brings unique skillsets to the effort,

one common need is coordinated field support for disease surveillance, investigation, intervention and treatment; out-planting of nursery-raised corals for restoration, and collection of healthy corals to preserve genetic diversity and support restoration efforts. FWC, with nearly 30 years of experience and infrastructure support for coral reef monitoring and research, is uniquely positioned to provide this coordinated field support. This request will fund a team of 4 OPS scientific research divers based in the Florida Keys that will augment existing capability and serve as a dedicated field team in support of this multiagency effort. Additional recurring expense funds are included to support this field capability as well as nonrecurring funds to purchase a tow vehicle for an existing research vessel.

**Derelict Vessel Removal**

**\$1,400,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

FWC requests \$1,400,000 in non-recurring budget authority for FY 2019/2020 to continue derelict vessel removal operations. With a Commission approved grant rule that requires a 25% match by the applicant, the requested amount would allow the Division of Law Enforcement to continue the cleanup of approximately 150 of the 367 derelict vessels currently documented in the public waters of the state.

**Fisheating Creek WMA Campground Phase II**

**\$900,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

This request is from revenues dedicated to land management activities pursuant to s. 379.212, Florida Statutes. Fisheating Creek WMA in rural Glades County (population approximately 13,000) generates an average of 50,000 visits per year. The travel-related economic impact of these visitors is approximately \$4,300,000 (Rob Southwick, Southwick and Associates, 2010; "Economic Impact per Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Viewing Trip in Florida".) The FEC campground is a main destination for these visitors. This campground is a 30-year old heavily used facility with water, sewer and electric systems that due to their age and material type, have far exceeded their usable service life. These antiquated facilities routinely break and/or flood which create unsafe conditions. Such conditions include:

- Groundwater contamination from sewer line breaks
- Lack of potable water due to water line breaks
- Electrical hazards due to insufficient campsite connections elevation above flood water

Phase I funding was provided to replace and upgrade about half the campground. Phase II will replace and upgrade the remaining half of the campground, with the replacement of water, sewer, and electric services and raised camp pads. These improvements will ensure environmental compliance, accessibility and safety for campground visitors. Improvements are consistent with the adopted management plan. All construction plans are complete and the permits are in place to begin site work.

**Wildlife Management Area Private Landowner Remittance**

**\$289,188 (R)**

Funding Source: State Game Trust Fund

This request is for recurring spending authority essential to support existing public nature-based recreational opportunities. Funding the program prevents the loss of approximately 50,000 acres private lands from the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system. This spending authority is necessary to compensate private landowners participating in the Recreational User Pay Program the fees they are owed for leasing their lands in the public WMA program pursuant to s. 379.354(8) (h), Florida Statutes. The permit fees underlying this program are based on the economic compensation requested by the landowner, game population levels, desired hunter density, and administrative costs. Private landowners must be remitted their portion of the permit fee for each permit sold. WMA's affected by this request include Flint Rock, Gulf Hammock and Grove Park. The requested funding will enable the Commission to continue the private landowner program with participating private landowners.

**Lake Restoration and Enhancement Projects**

**\$1,500,000 (R)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

This request is for an increase in recurring spending authority from available revenues pursuant to s. 379.212, Florida Statutes for the Lake Restoration Program. Each year the Lake Restoration program averages over 60 requests for aquatic habitat restoration and enhancement projects on publicly owned waters throughout the state. Funding will be used to manage existing aquatic habitat resources, restore and enhance priority aquatic habitats identified in the 2018 Priority Aquatic Habitat Assessment Plan and address critical emerging aquatic habitat resource issues. Project examples include the proposed drawdown of East Lake Tohopekaliga to remove organic sediments and improve near shore habitat conditions, hydrologic restoration activities to improve sheet flow in the Everglades and implementing habitat management activities in Lake Okeechobee to improve nutrient assimilation. These will improve habitat conditions resulting in greater utilization by fish and wildlife, expand public access and increase public and business-based outdoor recreation. The increase will be used on publicly owned freshwater aquatic habitats to fund restoration/enhancement projects using competitively procured private contractors and cooperating with other state, federal, and local governmental entities.

**Invasive Plant Management**

**\$4,000,000 (R)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

This request would provide for an increase in recurring spending authority from available revenues pursuant to s. 379.212, Florida Statutes, to manage invasive plants on public conservation lands and in public water bodies. Excessive invasive plant populations have adverse impacts on recreation such as fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, and ecotourism, as well as negatively impacting beneficial native habitat that is critical for the management of fish and wildlife. Additional funding would allow staff to address older untreated infestations on conservation lands and establish rotational treatment intervals to maintain habitat quality for the long-term. Plant control projects using the additional funding would target Brazilian pepper, melaleuca, and earleaf acacia in the Everglades ecoregion, Old World and Japanese climbing ferns throughout the state, and expanding hydrilla infestations on systems like the Harris Chain of Lakes. The increase will fund invasive plant management activities on publicly owned aquatic and upland areas, utilizing government cooperators and private sector contractors.

**Corbett Wildlife Management Area**

**\$800,000 (FCO)**

**Hungryland Boardwalk Phase I**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

Corbett WMA is located in western Palm Beach County and averages 151,000 visits per year. The site is near the Everglades Youth Camp and also is used by camp staff for conservation education programs. This project would allow us to bring this popular facility into compliance with federal ADA requirements for this management area, which was purchased with Pittman-Robertson Funds. The existing 2.1 mile Hungryland Trail consists of surface trails with three separate boardwalks. The trail loops through a variety of habitats found on the WMA. The surface trail is not wide or stable enough to be ADA compliant. The existing boardwalks also do not meet current ADA requirements and have deteriorated to where they cannot be economically repaired. Due to poor condition, the trail may need to be closed for public use. Phase 1 of the Project will widen and stabilize the non-ADA compliant trail, remove and replace the decking and rails on 2 of the 3 existing boardwalks. Phase 2 will replace the last of the three existing boardwalks and add a 500 ft. section of low boardwalk through a chronically muddy section to improve safety, accessibility and visitor experience. In FY 17-18, FWC constructed trailhead improvements to add ADA compliant parking, restroom and pavilion at a cost of approximately \$350,000. Upon completion of both phases of boardwalk construction, this site will provide a fully accessible trail head and trail. The trailhead also serves the nationally designated Ocean-to-Lake Trail that traverses Corbett WMA.

## **Operational Support**

### **Enhanced Patrol & Support – 25 FTE**

**\$5,623,641 (\$2,964,842 NR)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

This request is for 25 sworn law enforcement officer positions and all associated operating costs. FWC Officers are responsible for serving across Florida's 8,400 miles of shoreline, 13,000 square miles of offshore water, and more than 34 million acres of public and private lands, as well as patrolling Florida's 174 state parks. The FWC Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) provides law enforcement patrol and investigative services for laws relating to all wild animal and aquatic resources; boating safety enforcement, law enforcement in Florida's State Parks, the protection of the public in rural, semi-wilderness, wilderness, and offshore areas where no other law enforcement agencies routinely patrol; natural disaster and civil disturbance response; search and rescue missions; mutual aid requests; domestic security initiatives; and wildlife import/export enforcement in Florida's ports.

Over the past five years the Division has seen a large increase in calls for service, increases in the number of registered vessels, as well as an increase in both population and tourism in Florida. The number of law enforcement positions has remained the same since 2004. Since 2012, Florida's population has grown to nearly 21 million residents. The number of visitors coming to Florida has increased by more than 24 million people per year to over 116 million annually. Florida also has the largest number of registered vessels of any state in the nation at nearly one million. Since the FWC assumed state park patrol responsibilities, state park system attendance has increased to over 31 million visitors. These additional positions will allow us to continue to insure attendees have a safe time in Florida's parks. This is an increase of nearly seven million people per year; an increase of 25%.

These positions would be added in locations where the Division needs to increase our level of service. These staffing shortfalls can create public safety concerns, officer safety issues, as well as reduced services to the public. These positions would be allocated across the state in the following regions; 8 in South B, 6 in Southwest 5 in South A, and 6 in Northeast. To determine

the location of these positions, we analyzed standard law enforcement benchmark data at the county level: land area, coastline, water area, licenses sold, state park attendance, calls for service, protected lands, registered vessels, shellfish areas, manatee areas, and population.

The DLE has proactively attempted to address these issues internally by both moving positions to areas of greatest need and by reducing management positions and increasing officer level positions. The Division has moved 20 positions to the southern part of the state to address staffing issues. Additionally, the Division aggressively streamlined its rank structure and downgraded 19 sworn positions including a deputy director, majors, captains and lieutenants.

**Law Enforcement Overtime Pay**

**\$460,000 (R)**

Funding Source: General Revenue

The Division receives an annual recurring budget to pay our sworn officers when they work more than their contracted hours (80hrs bi-weekly). These hours are utilized to address staffing shortages, meet increased calls for service, increase patrols during busy seasons or holidays, conduct mission critical patrols, and perform search and rescue operations. The Division closely manages this budget to ensure that there is sufficient funding to meet any unforeseen circumstances throughout the fiscal year. This could include natural disaster response, large public events, or events in our state parks. The proposed increase is requested to meet future anticipated needs.

**Aviation Operations**

**\$403,384(R)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

This request provides funding for operation and maintenance costs related to the Division of Law Enforcement aviation program. The FWC aviation section consists of fixed and rotary wing aircraft. In 2017, the FWC acquired two surplus aircraft, a Beechcraft King Air C-12 and a Rockwell Aero commander 500S. Prior to acquisition of these planes, the Division had not added or replaced any aircraft in its fleet since 2006.

The primary missions of these aircraft are to conduct search and rescue operations (SAR), assist in disaster relief, and increase the efficiency of water and land patrols by acting as an observer for officers in the field. FWC completed over 1,000 search and rescue missions last calendar year.

Before the addition of these aircraft, the Division was limited in its range over open water when conducting search and rescue operations. These two aircraft provide a vastly increase coverage area as well as the ability to remain airborne for a longer duration. These aircraft also provide increased air worthiness and pilot safety, through the ability to maintain flight on a single engine.

The Division's aviation section has always supported Florida's commercial fishing fleet, but this funding will increase those abilities. Additionally, this funding will help assist in joint operations with the FDLE terrorism task force, and radiological/nuclear detection missions, as well as with the Florida Forest Service during wildfire events. This request would provide for funding for fuel, scheduled maintenance, and pilot training.

**Law Enforcement Officer Reserve Program**

**\$243,052 (R)**

Funding Source: General Revenue

Being an effective conservation officer requires mentoring from experienced personnel. This program seeks to mitigate the risk associated with inexperienced officers by bringing back experienced, qualified retirees to mentor and train with new officers. This request would provide budget authority to allow the Division to continue hiring retired/former FWC officers who have left the agency in good standing, the option to return to work an average of 192 hours (two 8-hour shifts per month in a 12-month period) per year. These funds are necessary to help address a growing concern and risk within the overall law enforcement field.

In the past 6 months, paid reservists have worked nearly 3,000 hours, issued over 300 warnings and citations and checked nearly 3,000 citizens. As this program grows, these numbers will continue to increase. These reservists patrolled on the waters of Florida, in the woods and provided law enforcement services to our State Parks.

One major area of risk identified by the agency is the lack of tenure among our officer corps. Currently, 55% of officers have fewer than five years as an FWC officer. These OPS officers would concentrate on several issues that are critical to the agency:

- Mentoring less experienced officers
- Patrolling in state parks during peak times
- Augmenting current officers during busy times, such as holiday weekends

Trends in law enforcement show that seasoned and tenured officers are aging out of the workforce after a career with one agency. This trend, along with generational trends of moving and changing employers, creates a gap in experienced officers. Additionally, FWC prides itself on focusing on recruiting those re-entering civilian employment, after retiring from our armed forces. It is important to establish good work habits, learn key skills and develop institutional knowledge early in an officer's career. Having a large percentage of the Division's work force with a short tenure makes this difficult. This problem is compounded when junior officers are forced into training roles for newly hired officers, as has recently been the case. For Academy Class 31, 45% of their field training officers (FTOs) had fewer than 5 years' experience as an FWC officer. This perpetuates a lack of institutional knowledge and necessary skills which would typically be passed down by senior officers during initial training and on-the-job mentoring. By retaining senior officers on a part-time basis as reservists, we can bridge the experience gap with our less tenured officers. Passing on job skills and knowledge is key to providing efficient customer service.

## **Replacement Lease Space**

**\$264,897 (R)**

Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

The current Master Lease (Lease # 720:0138) with Hall Investments Tallahassee, Ltd., where FWC occupies 53,821 square feet among three current buildings at the Koger Office Complex, (Berkeley, Atkins and Marathon) is scheduled to expire in October 2019. At expiration of this lease, the annual cost per square foot of \$25.49 correlates to a total annual cost of \$1,371,898. In 2017, a solicitation was issued in accordance with Chapter 255, Florida Statutes, and the Department of Management Services guidelines. This solicitation was subsequently awarded to Nathan Lee Head for a new lease space of 60,622 square feet with a cost per square foot of

\$27.00, correlating to an annual cost of \$1,636,794 for the first two years. This request is for \$264,897 which is the difference between the current cost with Hall Investments Tallahassee, Ltd, and the new award to Nathan Lee Head. The new lease with Nathan Lee Head of Tallahassee, LLC, is scheduled to begin in November 2019.

**Cybersecurity Compliance and Remediation**

**\$300,000 (\$75,000 (NR))**

Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

This initiative would put the Agency in a better posture to comply with Information Technology Security Rule 74-2 of F.A.C, with findings and recommendations stemming from two audits conducted during Fiscal Year 2017-18, and additional requirements pertaining to Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) compliance (enforced by FLDE/FBI).

This issue would strengthen the compliance for the entire agency, not just the Division of Law Enforcement. We now have the final audit reports for both the Auditor General IT Operational Audit and the FDLE Criminal Justice Information System audit. Both audits had similar non-compliant findings regarding cybersecurity and auditing. In addition, we have an FBI Noncriminal Justice Information Technology Security Audit coming up in August. Based on our pre-audit meetings with FDLE we anticipate similar non-compliant findings for the FBI audit. FWC is also now responsible for enforcing and maintaining guidelines for CJIS information technology security provisions on law enforcement and non-law enforcement (Human Resources (HR), Office of Information Technology (OIT), Office of Licensing and Permitting (OLP)). The purpose of this funding request is to deploy a system which will provide us the tools needed to meet these needs.

Every time a network event occurs, there is a log file that is created. Some examples are when a network account is created or deleted, elevated access privileges are granted, or database changes are made. We need a system that can take all these logs and compile them into a reportable and actionable format. Additionally, we need a way to analyze security events such as malicious attacks and unauthorized access. Finally, we are now required to maintain these log files for a period of one year to be able to analyze trending behaviors and other events.

**Statewide Facility Safety and Security Repairs**

**\$652,625 (FCO)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund \$469,775

Funding Source: State Game Trust Fund \$182,850

This request is to fund safety and security repairs at multiple facilities (\$469,775). F Building is 7,000 square feet, 2-story concrete block structure built in the 1930's on FWRI's St. Petersburg campus. The building houses 35 staff. On several occasions dating back to 2002, staff have complained of poor air quality due to mold. Multiple small-scale remediation efforts have been implemented by FWC during that time but recently the mold problem has progressed and professional remediation is needed to ensure the safety of staff. FWC contracted with Forensic Analytical Consulting Services (FACS) to conduct extensive toxicology assessments in late 2017 and early 2018. Their results show that there is mold present throughout F Building and that it will need a comprehensive remediation effort to rid the building of mold. This request would fund a remediation effort that would include partial roof replacement, window/door replacement, walls/floor sealing, and all points where pipes and conduit penetrate exterior walls need to be sealed. The building would be professionally cleaned and older model HVAC systems which have been compromised by mold would be replaced.

This request also provides \$182,850 for an emergency generator to protect wildlife carcasses and tissue samples held in eight ultra-cold freezers, a walk-in refrigerator and walk-in freezer at the FWRI Wildlife Research Lab in Gainesville. Tissues are stored for disease surveillance and mortality investigations in a variety of wildlife species including deer, bear, panther, birds, and hogs. The generator will also backup the necropsy facility where mortality investigations and tissue samples are collected.

**Replace Failing HVAC System**

**\$780,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

The Robert M Ingle (RMI) building, a four-story concrete building built in 1981 and located on FWRI's St Petersburg campus needs a new HVAC system to maintain necessary air quality levels to ensure a safe working environment. RMI houses 45 staff along with a scientific library and archives. For the past several years, the HVAC system has been operating erratically requiring numerous repairs. Analyses by professional HVAC technicians indicate that finding parts for the 40-year-old system is becoming increasingly difficult and repairs may no longer be feasible. In addition to its unreliable nature, the current HVAC system is also very inefficient, costing at least twice as much to operate than modern systems. This sub-standard HVAC system does not remove moisture as it cools which creates conditions in which several outbreaks of mold have forced staff to relocate to other offices while the issues were remediated.

**Body Worn Cameras**

**\$735,760 (R)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

The Division of Law Enforcement (Division) requests funding to continue a program for Body Worn Cameras (BWC) for all patrol positions in the Division. The Division received over \$700,000 (nonrecurring funds) for fiscal year 18/19 to implement a body camera program. This funding will allow the Division to continue utilizing body cameras.

Other agencies' use of BWC programs has been shown to be a promising practice to improve law enforcement's interactions with the public. BWCs are an important tool that could be an integral part of the Division's problem-solving and community engagement strategy, helping to increase both trust and communication between the members and the stakeholders we serve. BWCs can be highly effective, providing an objective audio and visual record of interactions that can capture empirical evidence in the event of a crime, citizen interaction, or use-of-force incident. Preliminary research indicates that departments that have effectively implemented BWC programs have received fewer public complaints, file fewer use-of-force reports, and show a reduction in adjudicated complaints resulting in a decrease of agency liability.

The funding requested would provide for the costs of the cameras and associated management software, cloud-based storage of recorded videos, and required support staff. Based on research from other agencies that have implemented a BWC program additional staff is required for support of the cameras and for the increase in public records request for videos. The public records staff is also responsible for redacting portions of the videos that contain confidential information, which is a labor-intensive, time-consuming task.

**Agency Vehicle and Vessel Replacement**

**\$5,829,000 (NR)**

Funding Source: Various Agency Trust Funds

This request includes spending authority for the acquisition and replacement of vessels, motors and trailers. The Department of Management Services (DMS) replacement criteria for vessels is 10 years or older. Of the nearly 600 vessels within the Division of Law Enforcement, 238 meet eligibility requirements for trade. The Division has typically purchased vessels that range in size from 16' to 28'. Depending on the type of vessel and whether a motor and trailer are needed, the average cost ranges from \$28,000 to \$140,000 for each unit.

This request also includes nonrecurring spending authority for other FWC Divisions to replace those vessels and vehicles for which there is a most critical need for replacement. These include vehicles that have been wrecked or have become otherwise inoperable, have a history of chronic and costly repair problems, or are unsafe to operate. Finally, this funding request also includes amounts for replacement of regular (non-patrol) vehicles with over 150,000 miles. Replacement of these vehicles would increase program efficiency and reduce annual repair costs.

Vehicle Replacement – OED (4 Vehicles)	\$	129,101	ATF
Vehicle Replacement – HGM (3 Vehicles)	\$	78,906	SGTF
Vehicle Replacement – HSC (5 Vehicles)	\$	187,923	NGTF
Vehicle Replacement – FFM (8 Vehicles)	\$	256,000	SGTF
Vehicle Replacement – FWRI (14 Vehicles)	\$	504,738	NGTF
Vehicle Replacement – FWRI (5 Vehicles)	\$	172,332	SGTF
Vehicle Replacement – DLE (approximately 70 Vehicles)	\$	2,500,000	GR/NGTF
Vessel Replacement – DLE (approximately 15 vessels)	\$	1,500,000	GR
Vessel Refurbishment -DLE (approximately 10 vessels)	\$	500,000	GR

**Stone Crab Research and Monitoring**

**\$300,000 (\$200,000 (NR))**

Funding Source: Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

This request would enhance monitoring and research support to sustainably manage Florida's third most valuable fishery, Stone Crab, which generated over \$31 million in dockside revenue in 2016. This request is supported by the Stone Crab Industry through the Florida Keys Commercial Fishing Association. Funding for Stone Crab fishery monitoring was last increased in 2006 totaling \$275,000/year and provided for data collection in Northwest Florida but has proven insufficient to cover Southwest Florida between Everglades City and Tampa Bay, which represents 30% of the landings and fishery revenue. The current funding request would allow us to close this last major data gap and effect statewide coverage (Steinhatchee to Key West). Closing this data gap is essential because lack of data in this region prevents FWC from fulfilling standing requests from the industry to explain how current and future changes to freshwater inflow quantity and quality from Comprehensive Everglades Restoration will impact the core stone crab nursery area located between Everglades City and Boca Grande. Recurring funds are requested (\$100,000) to establish additional personnel (1 OPS staff), equipment, and operational budget to ongoing operations that enhance current fishery-independent surveys and new research to support improved assessment capacity. Non-recurring funds (\$200,000) would be used to purchase one new 25' vessel that allows research in deeper waters and provides the displacement to haul 2,000 pounds of research traps; one new tow vehicle and one replacement truck for transporting field staff for commercial ride-along trips.

**Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center****\$575,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

This funding request would provide needed facility repairs and upgrades to the Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center. The hub of the Center is the Blackwater Hatchery; originally constructed in 1938, the building is in need of repairs to comply with ADA standards and upgrades to meet the needs of increasing fish production requests. The facility supports Florida's diverse fishing opportunities by providing over one million sportfish annually for stocking in public waters. Recreational freshwater fishing is a \$1.8 billion industry in Florida supporting over 14,000 jobs. The hatchery is integral in ensuring that the Commission meets objectives identified in its strategic priorities.

This facility has also been instrumental in regional restoration efforts for striped bass. The native striped bass had virtually disappeared from rivers in Florida and neighboring states, but through a multi-agency partnership this fish is on the road to recovery. As part of this restoration effort, Blackwater hatchery has produced over 14 million fry that have been used to enhance or reestablish striped bass populations in Florida's panhandle, as well as other river systems in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Population assessments and reports from anglers indicate that this successful program is now producing catches in the 30+ pound class in Florida's rivers. The Center also supports research efforts on other imperiled fish and mussels that are found in the NW region of the state.

The facility consists of the hatchery itself, and two primary buildings that house FWC personnel. Approximately 1,000 visitors tour the hatchery and associated grounds annually. This funding request would ensure that the facility complies with ADA standards to provide equal access for all visitors by making modifications to the doorways, reception area, and restrooms, which would ensure that the path of travel is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals with wheelchairs. Funding would also be used to construct an outdoor fish harvest pavilion to allow stocking trucks to transfer fish for holding and quarantine purposes. These enhancements will increase operational efficiency, decrease handling time, reduce the risk of pathogen introductions, and reduce fish mortality.

**Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area  
Office and Septic upgrades****\$ 550,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: Land Acquisition Trust Fund

This request would provide for Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area office and septic upgrades. Currently 12 personnel that staff both the Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area and Babcock Ranch Preserve are housed in one open room in a small enclosed storage area connected to the maintenance shop at Babcock Webb. This building was not designed or permitted as an office. The facility and its septic system do not meet current codes. A new energy efficient, ADA-compliant building properly designed for public office use is proposed to be constructed. This construction would allow the maintenance shop storage area to be returned to its original intended use and necessary storage function for equipment and supplies. Significant site and storm water modifications will be made to retrofit the site to meet current water quality

regulations. The project is shovel ready as all plans are complete and all land use and environmental permits are in place for quick construction start.

**Replace Freshwater Fisheries Research Laboratory** **\$498,000 (FCO)**  
Funding Source: State Game Trust Fund

This request is to purchase a new modular building to replace the existing facility for the FWC/FWRI Gainesville Freshwater Fisheries Research Lab, which is located at the University of Florida. This facility houses 17 full-time staff that conduct research, monitoring, and management activities on freshwater fish, invertebrates, and habitat state-wide. The current facility has multiple structural issues that pose a safety threat including substantial erosion that threatens the foundation pads, ongoing roof leaks, fracturing of the exterior wall seams, separation of floor seams where modular units are connected, separation of ridge beams and trusses, and lack of anchor straps to support load bearing columns. A professional inspection was completed that determined this building poses a potential safety hazard from collapse, is not rated for hurricane force winds and that needed repairs would likely far exceed replacement costs.

**Southwest Regional Office Drainage, Slope and Site - Phase II** **\$618,000 (FCO)**  
Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

This request would provide funding to grade, level, and repair the 30 plus year old Lakeland Regional Office parking lot and facility grounds to eliminate drainage, runoff and flooding issues. In addition to correcting significant drainage and water flow problems, the project will also resurface and restripe the existing parking area to maximize available parking, and increase safety and address ADA parking challenges. In light of the challenges outlined above, an engineering study was completed in the spring of 2015 by the FWC Public Access and Services office (PASO) and the construction level engineering design, plans and permitting will be completed in spring of 2019.

**Southwest Regional Office Roof Replacement** **\$162,000 (FCO)**  
Funding Source: General Revenue Fund

The roof on the Southwest Regional Office is 20 years old and in need of a full replacement due to its deteriorating condition. There have been 11 leaks that have been patched multiple times in the past 2 years and the leaks have begun to cause damage to office ceilings. The estimated cost of replacement with for a metal roof (with a life of 50 years) would be \$162,000.

**Enterprise Mobile Development Initiative** **\$500,000 (\$200,000 (NR))**  
Funding Source: Administrative Trust Fund

A significant portion of new information technology projects involve development targeted to mobile and portable devices. Market statistics show that by the end of 2017, 75% of the U.S.

population were actively browsing the internet from a mobile device. Furthermore, 77% of U.S. adults own a smartphone, with 95% of teenagers (13-17) having access to one. These multiple mobile initiatives required to serve this constituency, not only need to be carefully and skillfully managed, but will necessitate having a development team with specific skill sets in mobile application development (or access to equivalent resources), for successful implementation. As one of its strategic initiatives, FWC has set forth to increase participation in conservation among youth and families through programs that promote fishing, hunting, boating, wildlife viewing, shooting sports and conservation appreciation. One approach has been through applied Citizen Science, where we engage the public in online reporting of wildlife sightings, fish kills, or injured wildlife. Most of these online applications are designed to engage with our stakeholders, and many that may be used internally by FWC staff to collect critical data out in the field, are not optimized for use on mobile platforms.

The purpose of this request is to provide funding in support of the development of tools, code methodology, native applications, mobile enabled websites, and visual standards, color, layout, etc. This request would provide resources to convert existing legacy applications to public facing mobile friendly components and will enable the creation of new applications with public facing mobile friendly components when appropriate. Existing FWC mobile application or mobile enable websites that will be targeted for improvement and optimization in this request include the FWC FWC Report Application, Trophy Catch, Panther and Bear Sightings, Gopher Tortoise and Lionfish applications.

#### **Youth Conservation Education Donations**

**\$200,000 (R)**

Funding Source: State Game Trust Fund

In 2007 the Florida Legislature passed legislation that established a method for citizens to make a donation, at the time of the purchase of their recreational hunting or fishing license, toward the promotion of youth hunting and fishing programs. FWC's recurring spending authority associated with the revenue received from voluntary donations is currently \$50,000. However, annual revenues have exceeded that amount and additional spending authority would needed to spend the revenue as intended. Due to increased marketing campaigns associated with these donations, FY 2017/18 revenues donated for the promotion of youth hunting and fishing programs totaled \$271,975, and are anticipated to increase in subsequent fiscal years. This request is to increase recurring spending authority by \$200,000 (\$50,000 currently appropriated) based on revenues that have been received to date and sustained increases in anticipated revenues in subsequent fiscal years. If this issue is approved, the total spending authority associated with this revenue source would increase to a total of \$250,000, and would provide for disbursements in an amount consistent with revenue received from donations in support of youth hunting and fishing programs.

### **Optimize Federal and Grant Funding**

#### **Boating Access**

**\$3,900,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: Federal Grants Trust Fund

This request is comprised of two programs: (1) Boating Access (BA), with \$1,700,000 in authority requested to provide recreational boaters with access to Florida waterways by developing new access facilities and renovating or improving existing facilities; (2) Boating

Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP), with \$2,200,000 in authority requested to provide grant funds to local governments for facilities that support transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or more in length. The Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) is requesting a total of \$3,900,000 in fixed capital outlay budget authority in the Federal Grants Trust Fund for grant opportunities associated with the Wildlife & Sportfish Restoration Program (WSFR). This authority will be used to leverage Federal apportionment funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) program. WSFR works with states, insular areas and the District of Columbia to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, their habitats and the hunting, sport fishing and recreational boating opportunities they provide. Annual apportionments are based on a federally approved formula consisting of land size and paid license sales.

**Florida Boating Improvement Program**

**\$1,842,600 (FCO)**

Funding Source: Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund \$592,600 (FCO)

Funding Source: State Game Trust Fund \$1,250,000 (FCO)

This request is for spending authority in the amount of \$592,600 from MRCTF to continue a long-term, successful program of providing grants to local governments for boating improvement projects. Section 328.72(15), Florida Statutes, provides vessel registration revenues to the MRCTF to fund a grant program for public launching facilities, pursuant to Section 206.606, giving priority consideration to counties with more than 35,000 registered vessels. In addition, Section 206.606(1)(b)1, Florida Statutes, provides \$1.25 million annually from fuel tax revenues to the State Game Trust Fund (SGTF) to fund local projects providing recreational channel marking, public launching facilities, derelict vessel removal and other local boating related activities. Projects that meet the criteria under the FBIP include recreational channel marking, public launching facilities, derelict vessel removal and other boating related activities that enhance boating access for recreational boaters. In accordance with Section 328.72(15), Florida Statutes, \$1 is directed from the county portion of vessel registration fees and deposited into MRCTF to be used to fund a competitive grant program for local projects providing public launching facilities.

**Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment**

**\$600,000 (FCO)**

Funding Source: General Revenue Fund \$300,000

Funding Source: Federal Grants Trust Fund \$300,000

This request is for 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). This request supports a strategy identified by the Marine Fisheries Management Innovative Tools strategic initiative to prioritize, implement and support habitat restoration. 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. The Artificial Reef Program has funded more than 1,500 artificial reefs since 1986.

Funds are allocated to projects in compliance with federal regulations governing state use of federal aid funds.