February 21, 2020

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Chief Financial Officer
2020 Legislative Session Budget Report – Week 6

SENATE

There was no budget activity this week, therefore, the Senate overall position on FWC's budget remains the same as reported last week with an appropriation total of $405.4 million, with 2,114.50 FTE positions. The GAA (SB 2500) can be found HERE; the FWC budget starts on page 247, line item 1771. Further details on Senate budget recommendations are available below and on the attached side-by-side comparison spreadsheet.

New Issues:

The committee recommended the following *Strategic Support* initiatives: Coral Reef Disease Response and Restoration, State Reef Fish Survey, Combatting Burmese Pythons, Non-Native and Conflict Species Management, Derelict Vessel Removal Program, Enhanced Wildlife Disease Response, Fish Eating Creek Wildlife Management Area - Campground Phase II, and funds for enhanced Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance.

The following *Operational Support* initiatives were funded: Center for Red Tide Research, Long-Term Stored Vessel Study, Replacement of Patrol Vehicles, Cloud Computing Solutions, Network Bandwidth Increase, FWRI - Facilities Repair and Maintenance - Critical Safety & Security, Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area Office, FWRI Repairs – Joint Use Facility HVAC - Phase I, Marine Navigating Repair and Management, Support Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Funding, DeFuniak Springs Field Office and Replacement of Vehicles and Vessels.

The following *Optimize Federal and Grant Funding* initiatives were recommended: Hurricane Irma Fisheries Disaster Recovery – Year 2, Joe Budd Shooting Sports Complex, Palm Beach Recreational Shooting Park – Paving and Access Improvements, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, Florida Boating Improvement Program, Hurricane Irma Marine Debris Removal, Artificial Reef Construction Program, and budget authority for various National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Projects.

The following issues were recommended to be funded with non-recurring appropriations: Red Tide Research, Mote Marine Critical Marine Habitat Restoration, and ZooTampa – Florida Panther Medical Facilities.

Reductions: No reductions to FWC's budget were recommended.

Trust Fund Sweeps: No trust fund sweeps were recommended.

Employee Compensation: The Senate recommended a competitive pay adjustment of 3.0 percent for all eligible state employees as of June 30, 2020, with a minimum annual increase of $1,000.

Budget Conforming Bills: Budget conforming bills are bills traveling with the General Appropriations Act (GAA) that contain substantive changes to law that are necessary to support the budget as outlined in the GAA. Implementing bill(s) are available here:

SB 2502 - Implementing the 2020-2021 General Appropriations Act

SB 2504 - State Employees

SB 7004 - State Administered Retirement Systems

HOUSE

There was no budget activity this week, therefore, the House overall position on FWC's budget remains the same as reported last week with an appropriation total of $405.3 million and 2,104.0 employees. The House GAA for FWC can be found HERE; the FWC budget starts on page 247, line item 1771. Further details on House budget recommendations are available below and on the attached side-by-side comparison spreadsheet

New Issues:

The committee recommended the following *Strategic Support* initiatives: Coral Reef Disease Response and Restoration, State Reef Fish Survey, Non-Native and Conflict Species Management, Derelict Vessel Removal Program, Enhanced Wildlife Disease Response, Fish Eating Creek Wildlife Management Area - Campground Phase II, Expanding Mechanical Control Technology for Invasive Plant Management, and funding for enhanced Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance.

The following *Operational Support* initiatives were funded: Center for Red Tide Research, Long-Term Stored Vessel Study, Replacement of Patrol Vehicles, Cloud Computing Solutions, Network Bandwidth Increase, FWRI Facilities Repair and Maintenance, Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area Office, FWRI Repairs – Joint Use Facility HVAC - Phase I, Marine Navigation Repair and Management, Support for Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Funding, DeFuniak Springs Field Office, and Replacement of Vehicles and Vessels.

The following *Optimize Federal and Grant Funding* initiatives were recommended: Hurricane Irma Fisheries Disaster Recovery – Year 2, Joe Budd Shooting Sports Complex, Palm Beach Recreational Shooting Park – Paving and Access Improvements, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, Florida Boating Improvement Program, Hurricane Irma Marine Debris Removal, Artificial Reef Construction Program, and funding for various National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The following projects were recommended to be funded with non-recurring appropriations: Seminole County Discounted Bear-Resistant Refuse Containers, Parkland Exotic Invasive Tree Removal, St. Lucie County Treasure Coast International Airport Scrub-Jay Habitat, Restoring Central Florida's Urban Wetland Corridor, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Near Infrared Python Detection Camera, Zoo Miami, Zoo Tampa, Bascom Farms, Grants/Aids- Florida Aquarium.

Reductions: The committee recommended the reduction of 10.50 FTE positions that have been vacant in excess of 180 days; they propose eliminating the funding for the Smithsonian Marine Station, the Fostering Success Program, and the Transfer to the Department of Agriculture/Institute of Food and Agriculture (IFAS) for Invasive Exotic Plant Research.

Trust Fund Sweeps: No trust fund sweeps were recommended.

Employee Compensation: The House recommends a competitive pay adjustment of $1,800 for those eligible state employees making $50,000 or less on September 30, 2020. For those employees with a base rate of pay greater than $50,000, but less than $51,800, an annual increase to achieve $51,800; provided however, in no instance may an employee's base rate of pay be increased to an annual amount greater than $51,800.

Budget Conforming Bills: Budget conforming bills are bills traveling with the GAA that contain substantive changes to law that are necessary to support the budget as approved in the GAA. Implementing bills are available here:

HB 5003 - Implementing the 2020-2021 General Appropriations Act

HB 5005 - Collective Bargaining

HB 5007 - State-Administered Retirement Systems

Next Steps

Now that the Senate and House have each passed their respective budgets, procedurally they are positioned to hold a budget conference to work out the differences. Once the differences are resolved, the Senate and House will then take up the agreed-upon conference budget bills and, when passed, will send them to the Governor for final action. After the Governor completes his line item veto list, the State will have its beginning budget for Fiscal Year 2020/21.