

**New Budget Issues for 2013 Legislative Session**  
Commission Review for the FY 13/14 Budget Request

Update 1

August 31, 2012

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## Maintain Service Levels

### Continuing Fixed Capital Outlay

**Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment** **\$300,000 MRCTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: 63% federal grant, 37% fishing license fees** **\$500,000 FGTF (FCO)**

This request is for fixed capital outlay spending authority for artificial reef planning, development, assessment, and management. Revenues 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). The program has more than 25 years of history working in partnership with local governments, recreational fishing interests, and state universities for local reef development and assessment. Funds are allocated to projects in compliance with federal regulations governing state use of federal aid funds. (DMFM)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Civic & Governance Systems and Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(24) Support and sustain statewide and regional partnerships to accomplish Florida's economic and quality of life goals.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would provide for the development of artificial reefs that would support economic growth to local areas through the purchase of materials and construction costs, and attract local residents and tourists to reef viewing.*

**Florida Boating Improvement Program** **\$1,250,000 SGTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: fuel tax and vessel registration** **\$562,000 MRCTF (FCO)**

This request is for fixed capital outlay funding in the amount of \$1,812,000 to continue a long-term program of providing grants to local governments for boating improvements through the Florida Boating Improvement Program. (1) Section 206.606(1)(b), Florida Statutes, provides \$1.25 million annually from fuel tax revenues to the State Game Trust Fund to fund local projects providing recreational channel marking, public launching facilities, derelict vessel removal, and other local boating related activities. (2) Section 328.72(15), Florida Statutes, provides \$1 from each non-commercial vessel registration (approximately \$562,000 annually) to the Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund to fund a grant program for public launching facilities, pursuant to Section 206.606, F.S., giving priority consideration to counties with more than 35,000 registered vessels. (DLE)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Civic & Governance Systems and Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(24) Support and sustain statewide and regional partnerships to accomplish Florida's economic and quality of life goals.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would provide new or improved boating access areas that would support economic growth to local areas through the purchase of materials and construction costs. It would also provide increased accessibility and safety areas for local residents and tourists.*

### Continuing Operating Needs

#### **Critical Vehicle & Vessel Replacement Funding     \$1,982,503 Various Trusts (NR)**

**Funding Source: available non-recurring trust fund balance**

This request is for non-recurring spending authority to replace those vehicles and vessels for which there is a most critical need for replacement. These include vehicles and vessels that have been wrecked or become otherwise inoperable, have a history of chronic and costly repair problems, or are unsafe to operate without major costly repairs. This request also includes regular vehicles with over 150,000 miles and patrol vehicles with over 120,000 miles showing signs of needing costly repairs very soon. Replacement of these vehicles and vessels would increase program efficiency and reduce annual repair costs. (FWC)

Law Enforcement - 50 patrol vehicles \$1,250,000

Hunting and Game Management – 5 vehicles \$129,109;

2 airboat hulls, 2 airboat trailers, 1 engine \$39,484

Habitat and Species Conservation – 4 vehicles \$129,192

Freshwater Fisheries Management – 5 vehicles, \$151,860

Marine Fisheries Management – 1 vehicle, \$28,691

Fish and Wildlife Research – 10 vehicles, \$254,167

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Civic & Governance Systems in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(25) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies at all levels.*

*This request will reduce costs for repairs and allow for increased productivity with less down-time waiting for vehicle repairs.*

#### **Convert Federally Funded OPS Employees to Time-Limited FTE**

**28 FTE, \$0 FGTF(R)**

**Funding Source: awarded federal grants**

This request converts federally funded temporary (OPS) management consultants, researchers and biologists to time-limited full-time equivalent (FTE) positions agency-wide, having the effect of moving them from an hourly wage earning position with no benefits to a salaried position with full state benefits. The grants funding these positions would pay for all FTE costs, including salaries and benefits. This conversion would

stabilize grant funded segments of the agency's workforce, who perform significant and mission critical duties. Using OPS employees to perform tasks associated with long-term responsibilities, programs and goals, affects efficiency because it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees in jobs that have no benefits. By converting these OPS positions to FTE positions, the agency would be able to provide stability for employees, which in turn would reduce turnover in professional positions critical to the agency's mission. This request is a cost neutral transfer of special category budget to salaries budget within the Federal Grants Trust Fund. There is no increase in spending. (DHSC – 11 FTE, FWRI – 17 FTE)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Civic & Governance Systems in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(25) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies at all levels.*

*This request will provide for increased productivity by reducing employee turnover.*

**Reducing Florida's Threatened Species List**

**\$736,128 NWTF (R)(NR)**

**Funding Source: Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund**

Wildlife viewing contributes over \$3 billion and 50,000 jobs to Florida's economy each year, and maintaining Florida's wildlife diversity by managing for healthy wildlife populations is critical to supporting this industry. Managing wildlife populations so they are not listed as threatened is much more cost effective than trying to recover species once they become listed. Additionally, effective management of Florida's threatened species lowers the economic and administrative burdens of imperiled species by preventing them from becoming federally listed. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently established explicit criteria for determining when a species must be recognized by the State as threatened. As a result, the opportunity exists to implement management actions specifically directed toward removing State threatened species from the list, preventing new species from meeting the criteria for listing, and managing State threatened species to prevent federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. Funds would be used to: 1) develop and implement management plans that would result in effective management of State threatened species, removal of species from the State threatened and species of special concern lists, and prevention of new listings; 2) develop and implement research and monitoring programs to determine the status of wildlife populations that are threatened or in danger of becoming threatened and develop effective management actions to ensure their recovery and conservation; and 3) implement conservation actions, such as habitat management, population management, and providing landowner incentives, that would result in the recovery and conservation of these species. Floridians would benefit from a vigorous wildlife-watching and tourist industry, and fewer Florida species being federally listed thereby reducing costs and other burdens associated with protecting imperiled species.

HSC - \$442,564 (\$375,000 R and \$67,564 NR); FWRI - \$293,800 (\$225,236 R and \$68,564 NR)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(28) Ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would support the Commission's management and conservation of Florida's threatened and nongame wildlife species. Floridians would benefit from a vigorous wildlife-watching and tourist industry, as well as keeping species off the Federal Endangered Species List.*

## Land Acquisition and Management (Revenue Directed By Statute)

### **Florida Forever Land Acquisition**

**To Be Determined**

**Funding Source: Florida Forever Bond Proceeds**

Section 259.105(3)(g), Florida Statutes, requires that one and five tenths percent of the proceeds of bonds deposited into the Florida Forever Trust Fund be provided to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). These funds would be used to purchase strategic inholdings and additions to FWC-managed lands that help protect important fish and wildlife habitats and improve manageability. This issue is contingent on State consideration of additional bonding for land acquisition. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(28) Ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*The conservation of important fish and wildlife habitat, and filling in or adjusting boundaries of lands managed by the Commission would provide for improved management of biological and recreational resources.*

### **Lake Restoration & Enhancement Projects**

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

**Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax**

This is a request for increased recurring spending authority from available revenues dedicated to lake restoration pursuant to s. 201.15(7), Florida Statutes. These funds would be used to conduct lake restoration and enhancement activities on high priority lakes and wetlands within the state. Projects funded by this request would further efforts to improve user and business-based outdoor recreation by restoring degraded lakes and wetlands, improving fish and wildlife habitat, and enhancing public access and opportunity. All of the spending authority in this request would be used on aquatic habitat restoration and enhancement projects, a significant portion of which is conducted by private sector contractors. This issue would help recover a portion of the 50% program reduction in FY 2009/10 due to declines in documentary stamp tax revenues. Recent projections indicate the documentary stamp tax revenue source has increased sufficiently to support this request. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports all of the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(28) Ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*Projects funded by this request would further efforts to improve user and business-based outdoor recreation by restoring degraded lakes and wetlands, improving fish and wildlife habitat, and enhancing public access and opportunity.*

**NonCARL Land Management and Public Use Services                      \$1,000,000 SGTF (R)**

**Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax**

This request is for increased recurring spending authority from available management funds pursuant to s. 201.15(5), Florida Statutes. It would be used to improve public hunting programs and conduct natural resource management on wildlife management areas including activities such as prescribed burning, exotic vegetation control, wildlife food plots, plant and wildlife surveys, public access, public use management, site security and signage, and facilities maintenance. This issue would help recover some of the natural resource management and public access lost as a result of the 63% documentary stamp funding reduction in FY 2009/10. Recent projections indicate the documentary stamp tax revenue source has increased sufficiently to support this request. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports all of the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(28) Ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would improve public hunting programs and conduct natural resource management on wildlife management areas including activities such as prescribed burning, exotic vegetation control, wildlife food plots, plant and wildlife surveys, public access, public use management, site security and signage, and facilities maintenance.*

**Wildlife Management Area Land Improvements                      \$595,000 SGTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: land use revenues from leases, sales, and concessions**

This is a fixed capital outlay request for \$595,000 to enhance land management operations within the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system. This request is funded from revenue received pursuant s. 201.15(5), Florida Statutes, which requires revenue

received through leases, sales, and contracts be used to supplement land management operations. This request would be used to fund multi-year and multi-party improvements to lands within the WMA system. Use of these funds would include land restoration and enhancement activities, as well as providing for enhanced public use and recreation. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would be used for land improvement projects on Wildlife Management Areas to improve fish and wildlife habitat, reduce the spread of exotic and noxious vegetation, restore degraded habitats, and improve public access and use.*

### **Invasive Plant Management**

**\$2,000,000 IPCTF (R)**

**Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax**

This request is for recurring spending authority to manage and control invasive aquatic plants in public waterways and upland invasive plants on public conservation lands. This issue would help recover some of the program reduction of \$16.9 million that has occurred since FY 08/09 (42%) due to declines in documentary stamp tax revenues. Related delays and cancellations of plant control projects can cause geometric increases in growth of invasive plants. Excessive, invasive plant populations have adverse impacts on recreation such as fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, ecotourism as well as negatively impacting beneficial native habitat that is critical for the management of fish and wildlife. These impacts can adversely affect the economy of communities in close proximity to these resources, including freshwater fishing opportunities which currently have a \$2.6 billion economic impact that supports 24,800 jobs. 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 through private contractors. Recent projections indicate the documentary stamp tax revenue source has increased sufficiently to support this request. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would support invasive plant management projects in public lakes, rivers and public conservation areas for the protection of fish and wildlife habitat, ensuring more fishing, hunting, boating, swimming and ecotourism activities are available for the*

*residents and visitors of Florida. Additional funding will put more private contractors to work, thus helping stimulate Florida's economy.*

**Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area Facility**                      **\$405,000 SGTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax**

This is a fixed capital outlay request to construct a 1,900 square foot field office to provide work space and evidence storage for law enforcement and biological staff on the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area in Glades County. Staff are currently housed in an aging trailer located in the immediate vicinity of sensitive cultural resources. The planned structure would be much more energy efficient than the current lease, resulting in long-term savings to the state in operational costs. The structure, access road and parking would be elevated to avoid flooding common in this region ensuring that staff can operate efficiently out of the office in all conditions. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*This facility will provide work space for staff. This will provide better communications and greater continuity of operations for law enforcement staff and more effective resource protection of lands and waters in this region.*

**Invasive Plant Management Facility**    **\$75,000 IPCTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax**

This request seeks fixed capital outlay spending authority to construct a specialized mechanical equipment and chemical storage annex at the Invasive Plant Management (IPM) field office in Inverness, Florida. The IPM Section maintains a field office on Fort Cooper State Park property in the city of Inverness. The property was developed during FY 2007-2008 under a 49 year lease with DEP's Division of State Lands. During the planning and engineering phase, an equipment storage building was planned; however, project funds were not available during the construction phase. The mechanical equipment and chemical storage annex would provide secure, weatherproof storage for boats, sampling equipment and herbicides, thus reducing equipment maintenance costs and providing additional room for storing herbicides which is greatly needed. (DHSC)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would provide secure, weatherproof specialized mechanical equipment and chemical storage used to support invasive plant management projects in public lakes, rivers and public conservation areas for the protection of fish and wildlife habitat, ensuring*

*more fishing, hunting, boating, swimming and ecotourism activities are available for the residents and visitors of Florida.*

## **Federal Grants**

### **Triple N Ranch Public Shooting Park**

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

**Funding Source: Wildlife Restoration federal grant funding**

This request is for federal grant spending authority to plan, develop and build a shooting park on Triple N Ranch Wildlife Management Area (TNRWMA) in Osceola County. Currently, there is no public shooting range in Osceola County, but demand is high and the county ranked high in a statewide geographic assessment of need for new public shooting facilities. The proposed site, which was previously a citrus grove, would encompass approximately 350 acres within TNRWMA. Commission staff has worked with Osceola County staff to evaluate the best site in the county and develop conceptual designs for the shooting complex. The Commission would contribute use of the TNRWMA site and allocate \$1.4 million of Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration grant funds. Osceola County and other partners are committing resources to build safety berms, roads and other infrastructure to enhance the project. Spending authority for these federal funds would enable the planning team to move forward with the project. This park would provide an opportunity for the public to learn and practice firearms proficiency and would serve as a training facility to be used by hunter education students, hunter education volunteers and law enforcement personnel. This request is 100% reimbursed from federal funds. The federal match would come from partnership participation. (DHGM)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports Cross-Cutting Strategies and the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(1) Strengthen collaboration and alignment among state, regional and local entities toward the state's economic vision.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*This funding would provide for the development of a shooting range that would support economic growth to local areas through the purchase of materials and construction costs, and attract local residents and tourists to a recreational shooting facility.*

### **Boating Access Federal Grants**

**\$3,300,000 FGTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: Federal Sport Fish Restoration Act and Boating Infrastructure Grant Program**

The Division of Law Enforcement requests \$3,300,000 in fixed capital outlay budget authority from the Federal Grants Trust Fund. Included in this request is \$1,700,000 to use funds available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Sport Fish Restoration Act – Boat Access apportioned funds to providing funding for various boating access projects. If the apportioned funds are not spent, they would be reallocated to other states and future Sport Fish apportionments to Florida would be reduced. This would be used for the extensive maintenance and repairs of 235 boat ramps operated and maintained by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, construction of new boat ramps, assistance with the increased responsibility for oversight of waterway markers in Florida, and joint boat access partners on public lands, such as Dept. of Environmental Protection, Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Water

Management Districts, and other governmental entities. This request also includes funding for grants that would be submitted to the USFWS Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP) projects for \$1,600,000. (DLE)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

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*(24) Support and sustain statewide and regional partnerships to accomplish Florida's economic and quality of life goals.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would provide new or improved boating access areas that would support economic growth to local areas through the purchase of materials and construction costs. It would also provide increased accessibility and safety areas for local residents and tourists.*

### **Recreational Boating Safety Grant** **\$2,000,000 FGTF (NR)**

**Funding Source: US Coast Guard boating safety federal grant funding**

The Division of Law Enforcement requests non-recurring federal grant spending authority to use available federal funding for boating safety activities. These include fuel purchases, maintenance of vessels and vehicles, purchase of equipment, salaries, and training. This issue requests special category spending authority that may only be used for grants for which 100% reimbursement of these funds would be received. (DLE)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*This funding would provide for local fuel purchases that would support economic growth. It would also provide increased tools for boating safety for local residents and tourists.*

## **Enhancements**

### **Windley Key Field Office Construction** **\$557,865 MRCTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: available non-recurring trust fund balance**

This request is for \$557,865 to construct a law enforcement field office on property located on Windley Key. Windley Key is strategically located adjacent to one of the busiest boating areas in Monroe County. Hundreds of local residents and out of town boaters frequent this area creating the potential for a dangerous situation. In addition to boating safety, enforcement activities in the area include those for heavy commercial and charter fishing, recreational fishing, border security, and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary issues. The field office at Windley Key would provide a law enforcement

presence that would greatly assist in the deterrence of unwanted activity and enhance the ability of the Division to provide law enforcement services to the public and resources in this extremely high use area. It would also create operational efficiencies by improving readiness to respond to emergency calls and provide a waterside support facility to a multitude of FWC services and other law enforcement agencies. Previous FCO funds were received and used to demolish an existing building that was a safety hazard, provide preliminary design work for a replacement building and replacement of the docks. (DLE)

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*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would provide new or improved boating access areas that would support economic growth to local areas through the purchase of materials and construction costs. It would also provide increased accessibility and safety areas for local residents and tourists.*

**Florida Black Bear Conservation and Management      \$375,210 NWTF (R) (NR)**

**Funding Source: speeding fines and vehicle title fees**

This request is for \$253,126 recurring and \$122,084 non-recurring funding to implement critical parts of the newly approved Florida Black Bear Management Plan, which would enhance Florida black bear conservation and reduce human-bear conflicts. Updating abundance and range estimates is a top priority in the new plan. There are seven bear subpopulations, and five of them have not been assessed in the past 10 years. This recurring funding would allow the FWC to use scientifically sound methodologies to survey subpopulations separately so that each subpopulation would be assessed approximately every 7-8 years. This request also would support working with stakeholders to develop science-informed and community-based approaches to bear management and conservation. Part of the request would continue and enhance the Bear Response Program which receives more than 4,000 calls each year from the public and employs private contractors to assist FWC staff in responding to human-bear conflicts. Another part of this effort would include locating and assisting a local community each year to become 'Bear Smart' by reducing human-bear conflicts through a rigorous outreach and response program. DHSC \$195,244 (\$162,740 R and \$32,504 NR); FWRI \$179,966 (\$90,386 R and \$89,580 NR)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

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*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(28) Ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This funding would implement critical parts of the newly approved Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Florida Black Bear Management Plan, which will enhance Florida black bear conservation and reduce human-bear conflicts.*

### **Citizen Partnerships Coordination**

**\$51,692** NWTF (R)

**Funding Source:** hunting and fishing license fees

This request is for an OPS Biological Scientist III to maintain and improve FWC's capacity to leverage limited state resources by developing volunteer partnerships. The current OPS coordinator is supported by a grant which ends at the close of the 2012-13 fiscal year. This grant has required that 85 percent of the coordinator's time be focused solely on grant-funded projects, which has limited the support that can be provided to other agency-wide needs. Despite these limitations and turnover in this grant-funded position, over four years the Coordinator's support has helped the agency increase volunteer hours by 22 % to an annual value of \$2.4 million. More telling is the increase in volunteer retention from 35 to 56%. Every dollar invested in the volunteer program has returned to the agency \$3.2 dollars in volunteer services. The Coordinator's services have been requested by every division within the agency. This OPS position requires a biological science background because of the major focus on non-game species citizen science projects. Volunteers assist in monitoring and collecting species data, managing habitat, and outreach to reduce human-wildlife problems. The position would be responsible for providing agency wide services to staff including training in designing successful volunteer projects, managing volunteers, and would assist in recruiting, screening and training of volunteers, all essential to building and maintaining strong volunteer networks. The position would also seek additional sources of funding and sponsorships, and would build partnerships to bring additional resources to this effort. (OPAWVS)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

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*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This request supports partnerships with local communities and the FWC through citizen science programs and an increased focus on the youth conservation center network.*

### **Saltwater Fishing Regulations**

#### **Booklet Printing and Distribution**

**\$0 net cost**

**Funding Source:** saltwater fishing license fees

This request is for an internal transfer in budget to allow the agency to annually print and distribute the commercial and recreational (English and Spanish) saltwater fishing regulations. Florida's commercial fishermen and wholesale dealers rely on this publication, which includes bag and size limits, gear restrictions, seasons, area closures, and license requirements for the commercial harvest and sale of marine fisheries. Commercial fishermen usually have the booklet on the water with them while fishing.

Only having an online version has not adequately provided this important information to Florida's licensed commercial fishermen and wholesale dealers. Florida has approximately 870,000 recreational resident and 438,000 non-resident saltwater anglers annually. The English version of the recreational regulations are available biannually to recreational license holders to assist in improved compliance with established regulations, increased understanding of the benefits of fishery conservation, and explain how license holders can participate in the agency regulatory activities that affect recreational anglers. As part of FWC's reductions list during the 2011 Session, funds for commercial and recreational regulations were removed by the Legislature. The inability to print and distribute the regulations at the levels FWC has in past years has not provided this important information to many visiting and resident anglers. In addition to the regulations being available online, English recreational regulations are printed and shipped by the contracted publishing company. These limited copies are shipped primarily to tax collectors and license vendors. There are numerous other locations, such as tackle shops, visitors' bureaus, beach front condominiums, etc., however, that do not receive any copies of these booklets. These businesses interact with recreational anglers, especially visiting anglers, and would benefit greatly from receiving this information. The Spanish version of the regulations is usually printed once a year and distributed to selected locations where recreational saltwater fishing licenses are sold to Spanish speaking populations. Both the English and Spanish versions are available on the website, but many people still do not have the ability to print the regulations themselves. FWC has received numerous complaints from the public about the inability to obtain these regulations. Internal budget will be transferred between divisions from unallocated non-federal grant funding. (-\$50,000 DHSC; -\$75,000 OED; +\$125,000 DMFM)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Business Climate & Competitiveness and Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(20) Reduce barriers to small/minority business and entrepreneurial growth.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*Businesses such as tackle shops, chambers of commerce, beachfront condominiums and hotels, etc. provide this information to their customers as part of the gear anglers need for saltwater fishing. Additionally, those participating in the commercial fishery will have better access to those regulations that help sustain their industry for the long term. These publications also provide anglers and commercial fishers with information that helps them understand the benefits of fishery conservation, and explains how license holders can participate in agency regulatory activities that affect recreational anglers.*

### **Early Warning Biomonitoring System for Water Quality and Quantity Problems**

**\$93,993 NWTF (R)**

**Funding Source: speeding fines and vehicle title fees**

Freshwater mussels are among the most sensitive inhabitants of Florida rivers. They are among the first species to be impacted by deterioration in water quality, flow and habitat alterations. Monitoring of these species can provide an early warning system for deleterious changes in our state's rivers. Mussel monitoring in the Apalachicola River has provided valuable information in support of management decisions regarding water quality and water flow, but funding is needed to continue this work. The recent discovery of

previously believed extinct mussels in the Suwannee River provides information about the water quality in one of the state's most important river system. Decreases in abundance and distributions of freshwater mussels can help forewarn of potential decreases in important sportfish and imperiled non-game fish populations. Using mussels as an early warning system will allow the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to assist Water Management Districts and others in establishing and evaluating minimum flows and levels which are required by Florida Statute (F.S. 373.042), and provide assistance to the Department of Environmental Protection and others with regards to water quality protections. (FWRI)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Infrastructure & Growth Leadership and the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(16) Ensure the future supply and quality of water to meet Florida's economic and quality of life goals.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*By providing Florida's water management districts with information they need to establish minimum flows and levels criteria this request helps to ensure the future supply and quality of water to meet Florida's economic and quality of life goals. In addition, this request will serve as an early warning system for detecting environmental disturbance to ensure Florida's environment and quality of life are sustained and enhanced by future growth plans and development decisions.*

### **Snook Research and Monitoring Program**

**\$300,000 MRCTF (R)**

**Funding Source: Dedicated Snook Stamp Revenues**

This is a request for increased recurring spending authority from available revenues dedicated to snook research and management programs pursuant to s.379.354(8)(c) Florida Statutes. Recent impacts to Florida snook populations caused by extreme environmental events (e.g., cold-kills, red tides) have generated fisheries management concerns and increased the need for more detailed data collection programs, especially on juvenile life stages in nursery habitats. The current ability to conduct a full scope of snook fishery surveys that collect data on both juvenile and adult life stages is limited by the number of trained biological staff available as well as the equipment and operational budget needed for additional field and laboratory work. Funds being requested would be used to provide additional personnel (4 OPS staff), equipment, and operational budget to enhance current fishery-independent surveys, expand tagging programs, and develop other relevant research and monitoring programs directed at supporting improved assessment and management of snook populations in Florida. (FWRI)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

*This request facilitates the collection of data needed to sustain, manage and protect Florida's natural assets.*

### **Marine Youth Conservation Facility**

**\$2,000,000 MRCTF (FCO)**

**Funding Source: available non-recurring trust fund balance**

This is a fixed capital outlay request to construct an 8000 square foot youth conservation facility to provide conservation education and outdoor skills programs for youth in west central Florida. The proposed center would be the first marine-focused location in the FWC Youth Conservation Centers Network (YCNN), and will be part of a larger Conservation and Technology Park created through an innovative partnership with a private landowner (Tampa Electric or TECO), the Florida Aquarium and FWC. TECO and the Florida Aquarium are creating a number of recreational and educational elements for the Center that will mesh seamlessly with the proposed youth center programming including canoe/kayak trails, a wildlife viewing tower, wetlands boardwalks, fishing ponds and exhibits associated with coral restoration and marine animal rescue and rehabilitation. The proposed facility will consist of a central building with multipurpose classrooms as well as outdoor structures to support hands on activities. (FWRI)

*Link to Governor's Initiatives:*

*This request supports the Quality of Life & Quality Places strategies in the Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.*

*(27) Create and sustain vibrant, safe and healthy communities that attract workers, businesses, residents and visitors.*

*(29) Promote, develop, protect and leverage Florida's natural, art and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.*

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### **Abbreviations**

(R) – Recurring Appropriation

(NR) – Non-Recurring Appropriation

CARL - Conservation & Recreation Lands Program

CARLTF – Conservation & Recreation Lands Program Trust Fund

DHGM – Division of Hunting & Game Management

DHSC – Division of Habitat & Species Conservation

Dist - Distribution

DLE – Division of Law Enforcement

DMFM – Division of Marine Fisheries Management

FCO – Fixed Capital Outlay

FFTF – Florida Forever Trust Fund

FGTF – Federal Grants Trust Fund

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

GDTF – Grants and Donations Trust Fund

IPCTF – Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund

LATF – Land Acquisition Trust Fund

Maint - Maintenance

Mgmt – Management  
MRCTF – Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund  
OED – Office of Executive Director  
NWTF – Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund  
OPAWVS – Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services  
OPS – Other Personal Services (includes part-time & temporary employment wages)  
SG/MR – State Game Trust Fund and Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund  
SGTF – State Game Trust Fund  
TF –Trust Funds (various)  
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
WMA – Wildlife Management Area

*Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, September 2012 Meeting*