

Budget Issues for the 2015 Legislative Session
Commission Review of the FY 15/16 Legislative Budget Request
September 10, 2014
as of August 28, 2014

I. Strategic Initiative Support (page 2)

FL Youth Conservation Center Networks	4.0 FTE,	\$	542,308	GR/TF
Apalachicola Oyster Fishery Monitoring	2.0 FTE,	\$	300,000	TBD
Freshwater Fisheries Monitoring Program		\$	236,347	SGTF
Lionfish Outreach		\$	160,000	GR
Florida Boating Improvement Program-FCO		\$	1,842,600	TF
Non-CARL Land Mgmt & Public Use Services		\$	700,000	TF
Wildlife Mgmt Area Land Improvements-FCO		\$	1,500,000	TF

II. Operational Support (page 5)

Agency Fund Shift from MRCTF to GR		\$	5,000,000	GR/TF
Law Enforcement Operational Expense		\$	1,500,000	GR
LE Vehicle/Vessel Replacement Funding		\$	2,343,347	GR
OPS Health Insurance		\$	178,898	TF

III. Optimize Federal and Grant Funding (page 6)

Tenoroc Shooting Range Enhancements-FCO		\$	950,000	FGTF
Artificial Reef Construction & Assessment-FCO		\$	600,000	GR/TF
Boating Access Improvements - FCO		\$	3,800,000	TF
Convert OPS Grant Staff to FTE	19.0 FTE;	\$	0	FGTF
Gulf Coast Restoration				TBD

I. Strategic Initiative Support

Florida Youth Conservation Center Network 4.0 FTE \$532,308 GR/SGTF (R)

Funding Source: hunting and fishing license revenues; general revenue

FWC implemented the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (FYCCN) as a means to develop public and private sector partnerships that deliver youth conservation programs and activities statewide. While considering the need for core staffing to meet the growing demand for FYCCN, FWC continues to seek creative ways to shift, realign, and repurpose existing agency staff positions and resources before requesting new or additional staffing or resources. While maintaining a philosophy of leveraging partnerships to minimize dedicated agency staffing, a core team of dedicated staff positions are needed to handle coordination of partnerships and participants, program development, and operation of agency based sites and facilities. This budget initiative provides for a total of 10.0 FTE staff resources for FYCCN, with only a net increase of 4.0 FTE to FWC's overall budget. 5.0 FTE are proposed to be transferred and repurposed from the Federal Grants Trust Fund, that will become available because of a reduction in federal Sport Fish Restoration funding. 1.0 FTE is being reassigned from the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, 2 OPS positions are requested to be converted to FTE's, and 2.0 new FTE's are requested that will provide for a coordinator in every region. Coordinators oversee local partnership recruitment, trainings, and educational programming. These are highly responsible positions that must work flexible hours for evening meetings and to attend weekend programming, with hours often worked outside of a standard 40 hour workweek. FYCCN sites and facilities serve as activity hubs for youth conservation related opportunities such as fishing, hunting, boating, archery, shooting sports, hunter safety, and hands-on learning about fish and wildlife conservation. Successful conservation of Florida's diverse fish and wildlife resources is widely recognized as essential for Florida's tourism industry and outdoor-activity-based "sunshine" economy and quality of life for Florida residents. In the few years since its inception, FYCCN has experienced high levels of popularity and growth accompanied by a rapidly growing demand for expanding partnerships and programs. Successful conservation efforts cannot be sustained into the future without informed and involved citizens who support, appreciate and enjoy Florida's fish and wildlife resources. Sustaining and nurturing this citizen support must begin with the youngest generation of Floridians, but studies suggest our young people are increasingly disconnected from outdoor activities, particularly those that will foster fish and wildlife conservation awareness and appreciation.

Apalachicola Oyster Fishery Monitoring

2.0 FTE; \$300,000 TBD (R)

Funding Source: general revenue

This is a request for spending authority to develop the information needs important to manage Florida's oyster fishery. The Florida Department of Agriculture is discontinuing their monitoring program for oysters in Apalachicola Bay. FWC has an interest in monitoring Apalachicola oysters to support harvest management and to assess the long term status of oyster stocks. The Apalachicola Bay commercial oyster fishery has been severely impacted from low flows on the Apalachicola River. FWC currently has no dedicated revenue stream to conduct oyster fishery surveys

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that collect data on both juvenile and adult life stages or their causes of mortality and is limited by the number of trained biological staff available. Funds being requested would be used to provide personnel (1 Research Scientist FTE, 1 field supervisory FTE and 2 OPS research staff) and an operational budget to conduct fishery-independent surveys and develop other relevant research and monitoring programs directed at supporting improved assessment and management of oyster populations in Florida. An estimated 2,000 oyster industry members make their living directly harvesting oysters and or processing oysters on Florida's Gulf coast and it is likely a similar number work in related or supporting industries. (FWRI)

Freshwater Fisheries Monitoring Program

\$236,347 SGTF (R)

Funding Source: license fees

Funding for the development of FWC's freshwater fisheries monitoring program has historically been supported by federal Sport Fish Restoration funds, which have significantly declined in recent years. The combination of declines in Sport Fish Restoration and state funding has resulted in a 50% reduction of the number of high priority water bodies that are sampled in the program. This request is for a shift in funding of 4 FTE positions dedicated to long-term monitoring of highly important freshwater fisheries state-wide. Sport Fish Restoration funds will continue to be used for program expenses. Recreational freshwater fishing is a \$1.8 billion industry in Florida supporting over 14,000 jobs. Florida's 1.2 million freshwater anglers (residents and visitors) enjoy world class fishing opportunities that contribute to the state being recognized as the "Fishing Capital of the World". FWC has a successful history of managing hundreds of lakes and rivers to sustain fish populations while maximizing diverse opportunities for anglers in search of black bass, crappie and many other fish species. Our science-based management approach is built on a foundation of timely, accurate data on fish populations and their habitats from key water bodies throughout the state. Freshwater fisheries monitoring provides managers with critical information to make informed management decisions that provide high quality fishing opportunities and fuel this economic engine. In addition, the FWC freshwater fisheries monitoring program is critical to evaluate the biological and economic success of key management initiatives including the Black Bass Management Plan, TrophyCatch, largemouth bass stocking, harvest regulations, and habitat enhancement projects. All information collected from the monitoring program is stored in a centralized database maintained internally, which is easily accessible by managers for analyses or dissemination of information to the public on highly important water bodies. (FWRI)

Lionfish Outreach

\$160,000 GR (NR)

Funding Source: general revenue

One of the agency's six strategic initiatives is "Conflict Wildlife-ensure continued support and appreciation for fish and wildlife by implementing an integrated programmatic approach across FWC, to minimize adverse human health and safety, environmental, social, and economic impacts from native and non-native fish, wildlife, and plants." This request is consistent with this initiative and is to continue to raise awareness of invasive lionfish and other marine non-native invasive species. FWC was authorized to spend \$259,852 in FY 2014/2015. It is expected

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that another year of increased lionfish awareness will aid in improved lionfish management. Awareness is an important phase in the management of invasive fish and wildlife. It is important for people to know how the release of their pets can impact the ecosystem and the economy. Lionfish are reef dwelling predatory fish from the South Pacific and Indian Oceans with venomous spines that can cause painful stings. Lionfish have become established off the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of Florida and may impact native fish communities. The FWC encourages people to remove lionfish in Florida waters to limit negative impacts to native fauna. Lionfish are taken primarily by divers using spears and hand-held nets. Although eradication is not possible, localized removal efforts can be beneficial. The requested funding will be used to continue to raise awareness about proper removal efforts and to ultimately encourage the public to be more attentive to the potential for lionfish and other species of marine organisms to cause changes in our marine environment. Examples of how the money will be spent include educational materials about removal and handling, staff travel to events where they can educate the public about proper handling techniques, support for lionfish derbies being held to remove lionfish, etc. (DMFM)

Florida Boating Improvement Program \$1,892,600 SGTF/MRCTF (FCO)

Funding Source: fuel tax revenues & vessel registration fees

This request is for fixed capital outlay funding in the amount of \$1,250,000 from the State Game Trust Fund (SGTF) to continue a long term program of providing grants to local governments for boating improvements. Section 206.606(1)(a), Florida Statutes, provides \$1.25 million annually from fuel tax revenues to the SGTF to fund local projects providing recreational channel marking, public launching facilities, derelict vessel removal, and other local boating related activities. Section 328.72(15)(a), Florida Statutes, provides \$592,600 annually from vessel registration revenues to the Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund (MRCTF).

Non-CARL Land Management and Public Use Services \$700,000 SGTF (R)

Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax

This request is for an increase in recurring spending authority from available revenues dedicated to land management activities pursuant to s. 201.15(5), Florida Statutes. Funds will 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 request would recover a portion of this program's funding reduction that occurred in prior years 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)

Wildlife Management Area Land Improvements \$1,500,000 SGTF (FCO)

Funding Source: dedicated documentary stamp tax

This request is for an increase in recurring spending authority from available revenues dedicated to land management activities pursuant to s. 201.15(5), Florida Statutes. Funding would be used to fund multi-year and multi-party improvements to lands within the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system and would include land

restoration and enhancement activities and repair of infrastructure to provide for improved public access, use and recreation. (DHSC)

II. Operational Support

Agency Fund Shift from MRCTF to General Revenue \$5,000,000 (R)

Funding Source: General Revenue

This request is for the shift of expenses in the amount of \$5,000,000 to General Revenue from the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund, within the Division of Law Enforcement. In Fiscal Year 08/09 salary budgets of \$5,991,093 and expense budgets of \$1,500,000 were shifted from the General Revenue Fund to the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund. In Fiscal Year 09/10 an additional \$7,747,869 was shifted from the General Revenue salary budget to the Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund. Current projections indicate that the cost to continue the current Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund budget will exceed the annual revenues in FY 2016/17. (DLE)

Law Enforcement Operational Expense \$1,500,000 GR (R)

Funding Source: General Revenue

In FY 08-09, the Division received recurring spending authority in the amount of \$450,000 to help cover the increase cost of fuel. This amount is not sufficient to cover the increased cost that has continued through the years. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the average fuel cost per gallon in Florida was \$1.806 in July, 2004, \$3.527 in July, 2008, \$3.407 in July, 2012, and \$3.50 in July, 2014. This is a 94% increase in cost. Law Enforcement expectations have increased over the last several years and with that the gallons of fuel consumed by our patrol vehicles and vessels have increased. In order to meet those expectations, the division has implemented cost saving measures, but with both the increased cost per gallon and the increased gallons used, our fuel costs from FY 09-10 through FY 13-14 have increased by \$1,900,000 (62% increase). As the prices continue to rise, this will require the division to reduce high visibility preventative patrols, offshore patrols, manatee patrols, and public hunting and wildlife viewing area patrols.

(DLE)

Critical Vehicle & Vessel Replacement Funding \$ 2,343,347 GR (R)

Funding Source: General Revenue

The Division of Law Enforcement has a total fleet of 970 vehicles. Of that total, 240 vehicles meet the criteria to be replaced with over 120,000 miles, and showing signs of needing costly repairs. The rough terrain of rural areas of the state make high mileage vehicles a liability to officers, so replacement is a priority. Failure to replace these vehicles creates officer safety concerns since they are operated in harsh conditions and must provide the officer dependable transportation into and from remote areas of the state where no other law enforcement entities patrol. Of the 550 vessels within the Division, 276 vessels meet the DMS eligibility requirements for trade. The Division has typically purchased vessels that range in

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size from 16' – 28'. Law Enforcement vessel hours on the water are far greater than normal boaters and officers are often at sea in weather conditions that most boaters would avoid. The constant exposure to the marine environment and natural elements causes a vessel to deteriorate over time. Law enforcement vessels are required to get on and off plane constantly throughout the work shift which is harder on the boat because of the constant starting and stopping. This funding will provide for approximately 51 vehicles (\$1,550,517) and 16 to 18 vessels (\$792,830).

OPS Health Insurance Funding Shortage **\$178,898 TF (R)** **Funding Source: various trust funds**

The 2013 Legislature provided funding for OPS employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week, to obtain state employee health insurance. Several Divisions/Offices with the FWC require additional funding to pay for the employer portion of health insurance.

Division of Hunting and Game Management – \$42,529 TF
Division of Marine Fisheries Management - \$523 TF
Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management – \$24,401 TF
Office Executive Direction – \$111,445 TF

III. Optimize Federal & Grant Funding

Tenoroc Shooting Range Enhancements **\$950,000 FGTF (FCO)** **Funding Source: Wildlife Restoration federal grant funding**

Fixed Capital Outlay (FCO) spending authority is requested for an anticipated federal grant for site work, a maintenance/storage building, public restrooms, a 5-stand sporting clays range, a trap field and a pavilion at the Tenoroc Shooting Range in Polk County. These additions will greatly add to the value of the Tenoroc site as one of FWC's Youth Conservation Centers. The enhancements will help to make the site a destination for children and families in central Florida to experience nature and learn about conservation through fish and wildlife-related recreation. The Tenoroc Shooting Range was built on a reclaimed mining site; proper drainage and maintenance of the gravel parking is a continuous problem. The facility is using two shipping containers for storage of targets and maintenance equipment and two temporary-modular buildings for restrooms. As a public service, Polk County Sheriff's office has offered to provide free labor to build a new 5-stand sporting clays course, an additional trap field and a pavilion. FWC has construction plans for the proposed improvements and is allocating \$950,000 of federal aid funds towards the enhancements to this site:

- Site work (drainage, holding ponds, and paving of parking lot) – \$400,000
- 5-Stand Sporting Clays Range, Trap Field, Pavilion, and Public Restrooms - \$300,000
- Maintenance/Storage Building, and Public Restrooms – \$250,000

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Revenues are anticipated from a dedicated Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration grant for hunter safety education and public shooting ranges. (DHGM)

Artificial Reef Construction and Assessment \$600,000 GR/FGTF (FCO)

Funding Source: 50% federal grant, 50% general revenue

This request is for fixed capital outlay 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). 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. Funds are allocated to projects in compliance with federal regulations governing state use of federal aid funds. (DMFM)

Boating Access \$3,800,000 FGTF (FCO)

Funding source: Sport Fish Restoration Grants

The Division of Law Enforcement requests \$3,800,000 in fixed capital outlay budget authority from the Federal Grants Trust Fund. Included in this request is \$1,700,000 to obligate funds available from US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Sport Fish Restoration Act – Boat Access, to provide funding for various boating access projects. If the apportioned funds are not spent, unobligated funds will be reallocated to other states and future Sport Fish apportionments will be reduced in the State of Florida.

This request also includes funding for one (1) grant that will be submitted to US Fish and Wildlife Service, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP) Tier II project for \$2,000,000 and Tier I projects for \$100,000.

Fixed Capital Outlay is required in order to allow sufficient time for the construction of boating access facilities, which require sufficient time for permitting and construction (average 2 to 3 years). (DLE)

Convert FWRI and DHSC Grant Funded OPS to Temporary FTE 19.0 FTE; \$0 FGTF; GDTF (R)

Funding Source: federal and private grants

This request is to convert 19 OPS positions currently funded by long-term grants to grant-funded FTE positions. FWC is very successful at competing for external grant funding for fish and wildlife research and conservation, however, implementation of grant-funded projects is often hampered by our practice of using OPS staff to conduct the grant-supported scientific activities. Existing salaried employees are stretched increasingly thin with grant oversight work. Our potential to attract and retain top-flight scientific talent is hindered by our inability to quickly create benefited research or technical positions. If approved, the 19 temporary salaried positions would be used in programs directed at fisheries, conservation and management of wildlife species and habitat, harmful algal blooms, fish and wildlife health, and GIS applications. Fiscal impact is neutral because the grants would pay

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for all salaries and benefits. If the grant funding becomes unavailable, FTE positions would no longer be filled.

Gulf Coast Restoration Funding

\$ TBD GDTF

Funding Source: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Grant Awards

Spending authority is requested to provide for anticipated funding for the following projects:

NFWF - Escribano Point Land Acquisition - \$1,500,000

NFWF - Oyster Reef Habitat Restoration, St. Andrew Bay - \$2,500,000

NFWF - Comprehensive Shorebird Restoration - \$5,656,417; 6.0 FTE

NFWF – Seagrass Habitat Restoration - \$2,828,500

NFWF – Enhanced Marine Mammal Response Network - \$1,177,616

NRDA – Marine Fisheries and Hatchery Enhancement Center - \$18,793,500

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

DLE – Division of Law Enforcement

DMFM – Division of Marine Fisheries Management

FCO – Fixed Capital Outlay

FGTF – Federal Grants Trust Fund

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

GR – General Revenue

Maint - Maintenance

Mgmt – Management

MRCTF – Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund

OED – Office of Executive Director

NWTF – Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund

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