

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Budget Status Report – Week 6
Fiscal Year 2015/16 Legislative Budget Request
Charlotte Jerrett, April 11, 2015

Senate

There was no budget activity this past week, so the Senate position on FWC's budget remains the same as reported last week. Budget conferees will be appointed by the Senate President, in preparation for conference committee meetings. Further details on Senate budget recommendations are available below and on the attached side-by-side comparison spreadsheet:

Senate Bill 1500 General Appropriations Act (GAA)

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/2500/BillText/e1/PDF>

In the GAA, the FWC budget starts on page 228, line item 1740, with a total of \$363.7 million and 2,136.50 full-time employees (FTE).

New Issues: The Senate GAA recommends funding for the Florida Youth Conservation Center Network, Apalachicola fisheries monitoring, boating improvement projects, the Triple N Shooting Park, the Tenoroc Shooting Range, vehicle replacement for the Division of Law Enforcement, artificial reef construction, and authorized spending authority for funding for Gulf restoration efforts related to the Deepwater Horizon incident. An additional 19.0 FTE is recommended for conversion of grant funded part-time employees (OPS) to temporary FTE, and non-recurring funding is recommended for the Lowry Park Zoo, Palm Harbor Fire and Rescue, and Mote Marine Laboratory.

Amendment 1: The Senate GAA consists of a number of structural changes to the budget in order to implement the water and land conservation amendment. The Conservation and Recreation Land (CARL) Trust Fund is recommended for termination, with the base budget shifted to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). Additional funding is recommended for land management and lake restoration projects (Lake Apopka).

Reductions: The Senate GAA recommends a \$124,749 reduction for data center workload, which is pass-through funding for support provided to FWC by state data centers. A \$10,000,000 budget reduction to the Invasive Plant Management Program is also proposed.

Trust Fund Sweeps: The Senate GAA recommends a sweep in the amount of \$65,540 from the CARL Trust Fund, \$3,310,114 from the State Game Trust Fund, and \$10,000,000 from the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund. A trust fund sweep

is a transfer of trust fund cash balance to the General Revenue Fund where it will be used to meet other fiscal priorities.

Employee Compensation: The Senate GAA provides several issues for employee compensation.

- 1) Contingent on the availability of funds, and at the agency head's discretion, each agency is authorized to grant competitive pay adjustments to address retention, pay inequities, or other staffing issues.
- 2) Each agency is authorized to grant merit pay increases based on the employees exemplary performance as evidenced by a performance evaluation.

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. Senate conforming bills affecting FWC include:

- SB 2504 State Employees
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/2504/BillText/Filed/PDF>

House

There was no budget activity this past week, so the House position on FWC's budget remains the same as reported last week. Budget conferees are expected to be appointed by the House Speaker, in preparation for conference committee meetings. Further details on Senate budget recommendations are available below and on the attached side-by-side comparison spreadsheet:

House Bill 5001 General Appropriations Act (GAA)
http://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=Orig_GAA.pdf&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=5001&Session=2015

In the GAA, the FWC budget starts on page 229, line item 1740, with a total of \$403.8 million and 2,116.50 employees.

New Issues: The House GAA includes funding for the Florida Youth Conservation Center Network, boating improvement projects, the Triple N Shooting Park, the Tenoroc Shooting Range, artificial reef construction, and authorizes spending authority for funding for Gulf restoration efforts related to the Deepwater Horizon incident. A portion of the fund shift from the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund to the General Revenue Fund is recommended, and non-recurring funding is recommended for the Lowry Park Zoo.

Amendment 1: The House GAA proposes a number of structural changes to the budget in order to implement the water and land conservation amendment. The Conservation and Recreation Land (CARL) Trust Fund is being terminated and the base budget shifted to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). Additional funding is recommended for land management and invasive plant management.

Reductions: No budget reductions are proposed.

Trust Fund Sweeps: The House GAA recommends a sweep in the amount of \$65,540 from the CARL Trust Fund. A trust fund sweep is a transfer of trust fund cash balance to GR where it will be used to meet other fiscal priorities.

Employee Compensation: The House GAA provides several issues for employee compensation.

- 1) Contingent on the availability of funds, and at the agency head's discretion, each agency is authorized to grant competitive pay adjustments to address retention, pay inequities, or other staffing issues.
- 2) Each agency is authorized to grant merit pay increases based on the employees exemplary performance as evidenced by a performance evaluation.

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. House conforming bills affecting FWC include:

- HB 5005 State-Administered Retirement Systems
- http://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h5005_.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=5005&Session=2015
- HB 5007 Collective Bargaining
- http://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h5007_.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=5007&Session=2015
- HB 5009 State Group Insurance Program
- http://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h5009_.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=5009&Session=2015

Next Steps

Now that the House and Senate have each passed their respective budgets, procedurally, they are positioned to hold a budget conference to work out the differences. Once the differences are worked out, the House and Senate 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 2015/16.