



March 8, 2023

SB 2017
2023-25 Appropriation Request
North Dakota Game and Fish Department

Chairman Monson and members of the Government Operations Division of House Appropriations, my name is Kim Kary, Administrative Services Division Chief of the ND Game and Fish Department. I will be testifying on SB2017, our appropriation bill.

The ND Game and Fish Dept is largely directed under NDCC Title 20.1 and many of those responsibilities reside under 20.1-02-05 which lists the power of the Director. The major statutory responsibilities can be summarized as: to manage and regulate the state's wildlife resources, game and non-game, for the use, enjoyment, possession, disposition, and conservation for the public of North Dakota.

2023-25 agency requested/executive budget recommendation: \$110,754,601

Senate version: \$109,532,444

Senate version is an increase of \$19,950,810 from the 2023-25 legislative base level appropriation of \$89,581,634.

My testimony will cover the following for the Department:

- Federal and Special Revenue
- Fund Balance
- Legislative base changes
- 23-25 Budget Changes
- Other Sections included in the Senate budget version for SB2017
- Budget by Divisions

The Game and Fish Department is a special fund agency receiving revenue from game and fish license sales (hunting, fishing, and boat registrations) and federal funding. We receive no general fund dollars.

23-25 Revenue Projections:

Federal revenue is projected to be as follows:

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (PR funds)*	\$31,000,000
Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (DJ funds)**	\$ 9,500,000
Recreational Boating Safety Program	\$ 1,487,000
State Wildlife Grants	\$ 1,180,650
Misc. Federal Grants	\$ 733,962
Bureau of Reclamation (Lonetree)	\$ 2,180,744
Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)	\$ 703,419
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)	\$ 2,500,000

Total Federal Revenue \$49,285,775 52%

Game & Fish (G&F) Revenue by Fund:

Game and Fish Fund (Licenses + Misc.)	\$38,445,797
Private Land Habitat Fund	\$ 6,171,356
Nongame Wildlife Fund (Donations)	\$ 68,000
Aquatic Nuisance Species Fund	<u>\$ 1,382,042</u>

Total Game & Fish Revenue \$46,067,195 48%

Total All Revenue \$95,352,970

* **Wildlife Restoration Act** – funds are from excise taxes on the sale of guns, ammo and archery equipment which is allocated to the states by a formula based 50% on the amount of land area of the state relative to the rest of the states, and 50% based on the number of hunting license holders in a state relative to other states. These funds are referred to as Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds.

****Sport Fish Restoration Act** – funds are from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel which is allocated to the states by the same formula above with the exception of using the number of fishing license holders vs hunting licenses. These funds are referred to as Dingell-Johnson (DJ) funds.

Federal Revenue Levels

- USFWS Sport Fish Restoration Act funds (DJ) – Since 2008, our DJ fund apportionment has been over \$4M except for 3 years (2011, 2012, 2014) when it was between \$3.6M-\$3.9M. Thus in 2013 we changed the funding source from federal to state for one of our fisheries projects. Since 2015 DJ funds have continued to be over \$4M. In 2022, the amount was \$4.6M. We project the funds to remain slightly above the \$4M level annually for 2023-25. The funds require a 25% match.
- USFWS Wildlife Restoration Act funds (PR) – In 2013 PR funds were \$7.7M and have steadily increased to \$15.8M in 2022. We project the funds to remain around the \$15M level annually for 2023-25. The funds require a 25% match.
These funds are apportioned to States from the USFWS by law and are not dependent on Congress approval. The PR funds have a 2-year window to be obligated by the department; otherwise, we will lose the funds and they will revert back to the USFWS to be allocated to other states.
- U.S. Coast Guard, Recreational Boating Safety Program – We project the funds to remain approximately the same for 2023-25. The funds require a 50% match.
- USFWS State Wildlife Grant funds – have remained the same the last several years, but it is dependent on Congress. These funds pay for 2 biologist positions and projects involving nongame and endangered species. We project the funds to remain approximately the same for 2023-25. The match varies.
- Bureau of Reclamation - have remained the same the last few years. 100% federal.

I will explain a couple other federal revenue sources, WRDA, NFWF, Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), later when I talk about the budget changes.

The USFWS DJ & PR funds equate to 82% of our total federal funds. These funds are not dependent on congress. They are apportioned to states each year based on the formula explained on the previous page. If these federal funds decrease, we would cut programs or use our special funds (licensing revenue).

Another important part of these DJ and PR funds is they require each Game and Fish agency to have the following in law:

NDCC 20.1-02-17

Hunting and fishing license fees and application fees may only be used for departmental programs and administration. Noncompliance will result in a diversion of all USFWS federal funds.

Any misuse of our special funds will result in what is called a “diversion”. A diversion of federal funds means we become ineligible for future USFWS federal funds until the diversion is resolved. This equates to approximately \$40M.

License & Special Revenue

We project our license revenue to remain approximately the same for 2023-25. The license sales for General Game, Resident Deer Gun and Fishing are shown below.

GENERAL GAME

2012	Res	102,274	NR	47,433
2013	Res	101,423	NR	45,016
2014	Res	96,026	NR	45,021
2015	Res	95,324	NR	46,985
2016	Res	96,011	NR	45,703
2017	Res	93,949	NR	37,044
2018	Res	97,524	NR	38,086
2019	Res	99,353	NR	36,660
2020	Res	109,252	NR	41,326
2021	Res	106,610	NR	41,282
	*2022 Res	103,430	NR	42,717

*Data as of 1/17/23. The 2022 license year ends 3/31/2023.

RESIDENT DEER GUN

2009	125,583
2010	101,216
2011	94,130
2012	48,605
2013	43,625
2014	34,640
2015	29,559
2016	34,970
2017	40,438
2018	41,068
2019	52,347
2020	54,809
2021	54,662
2022	50,950

FISHING LICENSE SALES

Resident fishing license sales spiked during COVID.

2012	Res	159,502	NR	58,894
2013	Res	160,132	NR	59,311
2014	Res	157,187	NR	64,911
2015	Res	157,663	NR	64,949
2016	Res	152,102	NR	60,994
2017	Res	152,056	NR	62,958
2018	Res	147,573	NR	62,501
2019	Res	144,339	NR	64,156
2020	Res	162,177	NR	67,579
2021	Res	147,249	NR	64,090
	*2022 Res	138,866	NR	50,141

*Data as of 1/17/23. The 2022 license year ends 3/31/2023.

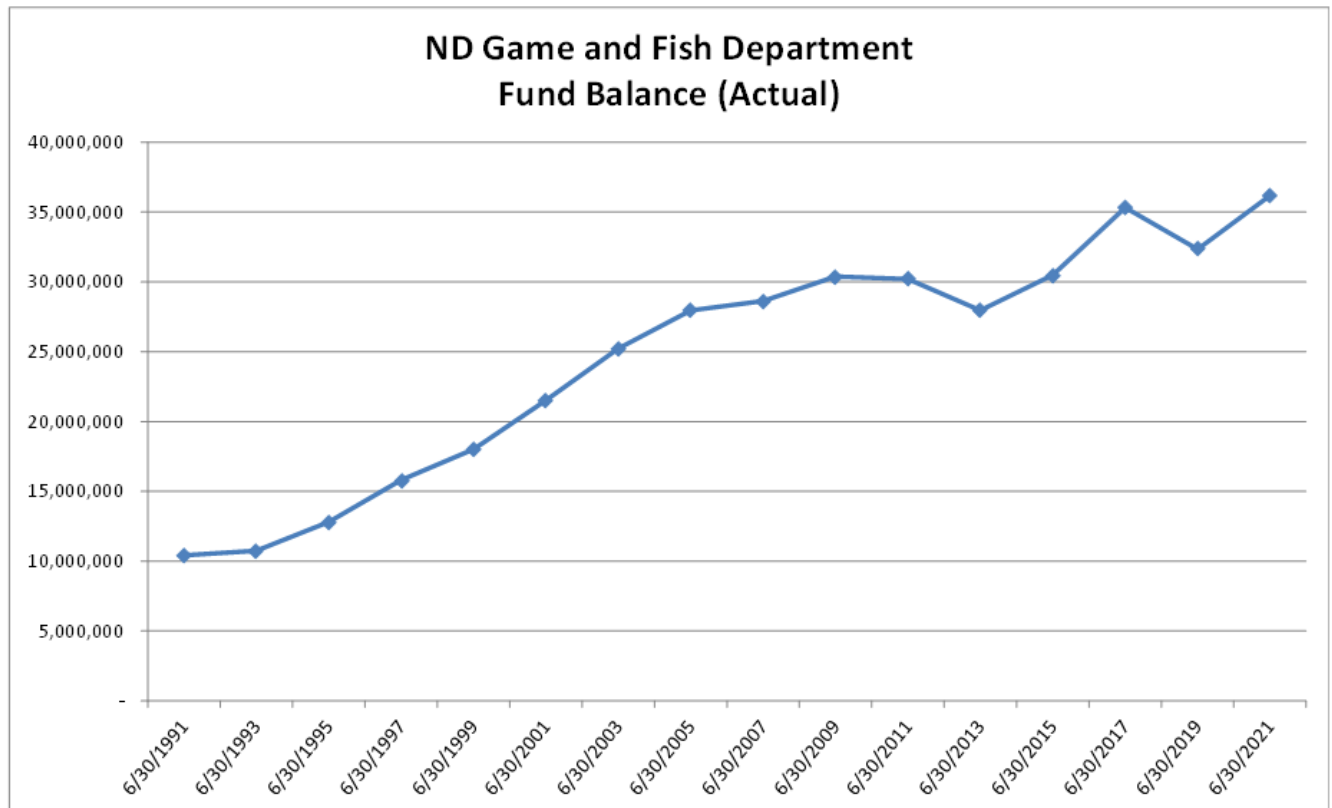
Fund Balances - Fund balance projections, based on Senate version, are as follows:

	<u>Actual</u> <u>6/30/2021</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>6/30/2023</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>6/30/2025</u>
Game and Fish Fund	\$33,434,612	\$28,952,216	\$19,059,783
Private Land Habitat Fund	\$1,594,095	\$3,425,261	\$1,775,677
Non-Game Wildlife Fund	\$163,669	\$177,669	\$145,669
Aquatic Nuisance Species Fund	\$983,317	\$419,794	\$258,294
Total	\$36,175,693	\$32,974,940¹	\$21,239,423
			RAWA ² (\$4,375,000)
			Adjusted Total with RAWA \$16,864,423

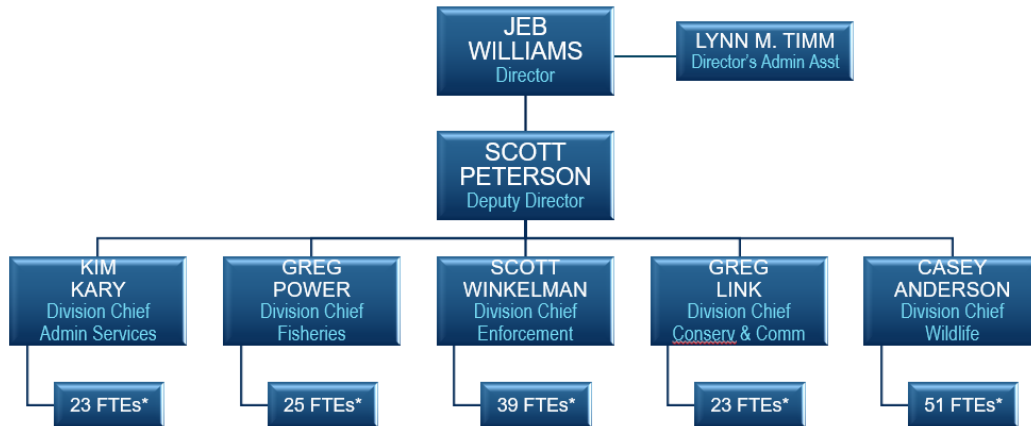
1 - Balance if spend entire appropriation in all lines

2 - RAWA decision package does not include increase for compensation plan.

Per NDCC 20.1-02-16.1, the fund balance shall not be reduced below \$15M unless authorized by the budget section.



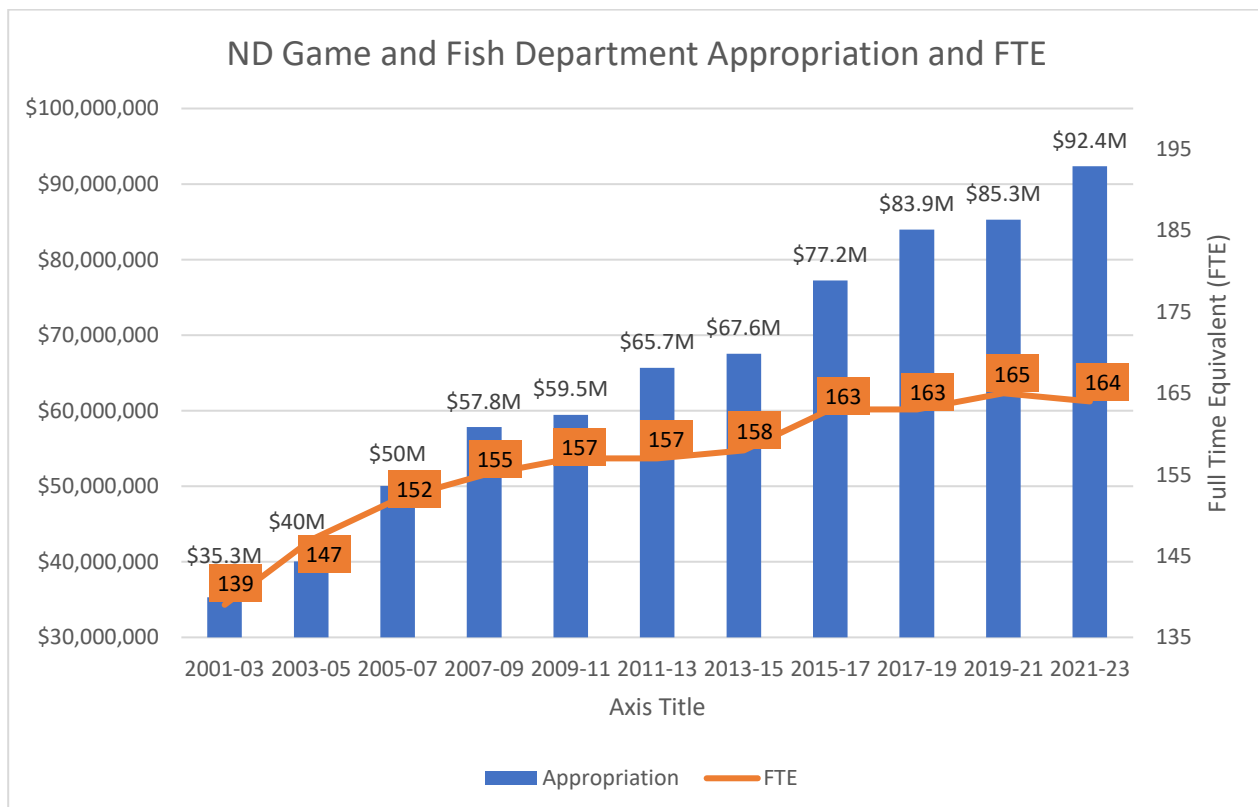
NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT



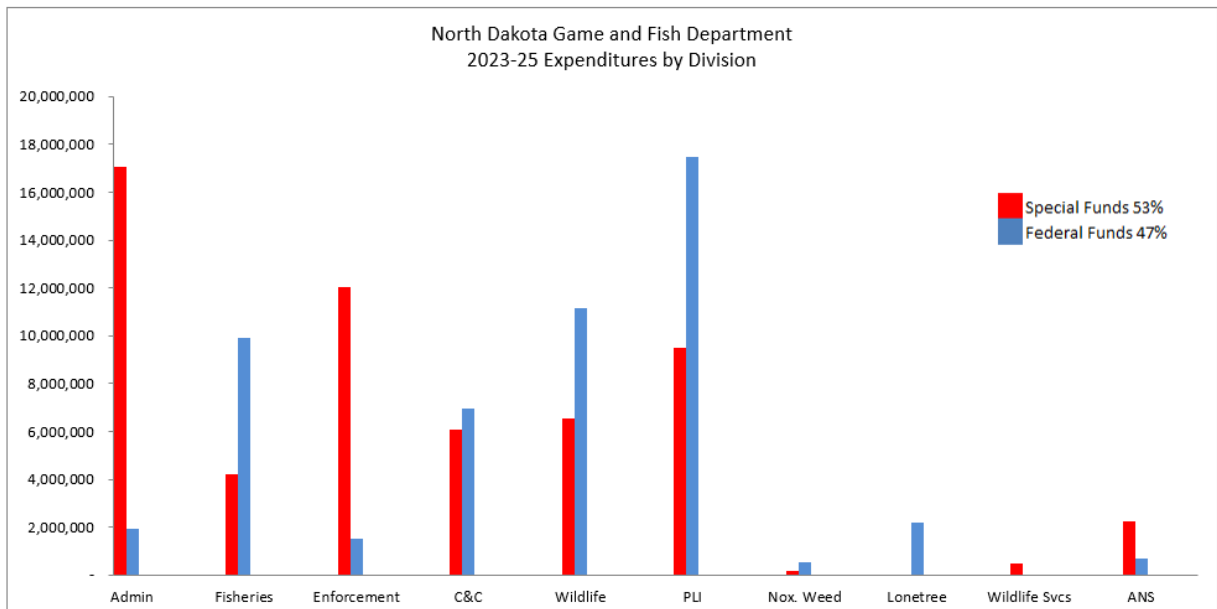
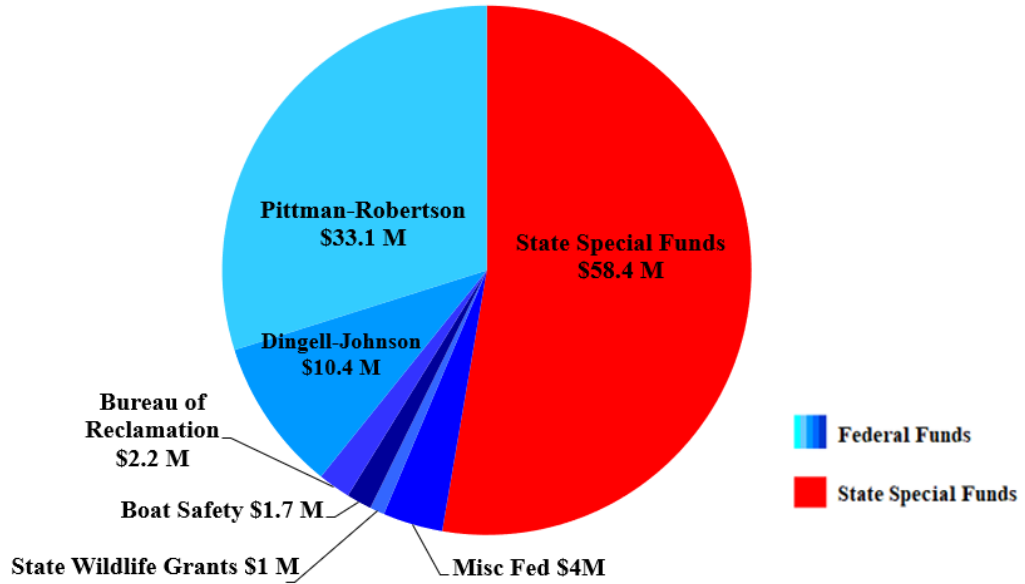
07/2021 = 164 total Full-Time Equivalents

* Includes Division Chiefs

- 30 employees are retirement eligible
- Only 18 out of the 164 FTEs are funded 100% Special funds
- 44% of FTEs are biologist or wildlife technicians – 75% Federal funds
- 90 out of the current 164 FTEs were seasonal employees (55%)



ND Game and Fish Department 2023-25 Expenditures by Funding Source Agency Requested Budget \$110.8 million



**2023-25 Senate Changes from Legislative Base - Green Sheet Items
North Dakota Game and Fish Department**

2023-25 Legislative Base	\$89,581,634
Cost to continue salaries	\$295,116
ITD Shared software & service rate changes	\$80,908
Misc. Base Budget Changes	\$2,966,393
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2023-25 Dept. Base Budget Request	\$92,924,051
Compensation Package	\$2,847,244
Budget Changes	\$13,761,149*
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2023-25 Total Senate Version	\$109,532,444
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*See details on page 10.

21-23 Biennium Budget and Compare 23-25 Legislative Base Budget to Senate Version

	Code	21-23 Biennium	23-25 Legislative Base	23-25 Increase (Decrease)	23-25 Senate Version
Salaries & Wages	72010	33,741,592	33,741,592	4,686,592	38,428,184
Operating Expenses	72030	16,276,782	16,276,782	1,543,716	17,820,498
Capital Assets	72050	7,576,270	6,774,770	1,773,891	8,548,661
Grants	72060	8,923,343	8,923,343	1,166,633	10,089,976
Shooting Sports Grant Program	72062	250,000	250,000	0	250,000
Habitat & Deer Depredation	72070	19,980,597	17,995,597	8,926,706	26,922,303
Noxious Weed Control	72071	725,000	725,000	0	725,000
Missouri River Enforcement	72073	296,999	296,999	20,588	317,587
Grant-Gift-Donation	72074	670,133	670,133	14,824	684,957
Nongame Wildlife	72075	100,000	100,000	0	100,000
Aquatic Nuisance Species	72076	1,509,009	1,509,009	1,450,655	2,959,664
Lonetree Reservoir	72077	1,818,409	1,818,409	367,205	2,185,614
Wildlife Services	72078	500,000	500,000	0	500,000
Total		92,368,134	89,581,634	19,950,810	109,532,444
FTEs		164	164	6	170

2023-25 Budget Changes

Senate changes from Legislative Base Budget	Page #	Total Request	Federal	Special
1) Fisheries - 1 Biologist New FTE	11	\$241,998	\$181,497	\$60,501
2) Aquatic Nuisance Species increase - WRDA Funding ♦ includes 1 Biologist New FTE	11-12	\$1,406,839	\$703,419	\$703,420
3) Additional emphasis on Wildlife Habitat & Access on private lands ♦ includes 3 Biologist New FTEs	12-13	\$4,693,574	\$3,460,104	\$1,233,470
4) National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ♦ Mid-term conservation agreements	13	\$2,777,778	\$2,500,000	\$277,778
5) ANS Lab and Storage Facility – Jamestown [one-time]	13-14	\$850,000	\$0	\$850,000
6) Bunkhouse improvements – Devils Lake [one-time]	14	\$350,000	\$0	\$350,000
7) Enforcement - 1 Investigation Warden New FTE	14-15	\$353,768	\$26,568	\$327,200
8) Enforcement - Replace In-Car Video System & Add Body Cameras [one-time]	15	\$550,000	\$0	\$550,000
9) Agency Motorpool	16	\$1,157,192	\$0	\$1,157,192
10) Fisheries – Dam Repairs [one-time] ♦ Camel Hump and Baukol Noonan	16	\$380,000	\$0	\$550,000
11) Fisheries – Pondliners [one-time] ♦ GDNFH Pondliners	16	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	\$250,000
TOTAL		\$13,761,149	\$7,621,588	\$6,139,561

Agency Requests not included in Senate version	Page #	Total Request	Federal	Special
Admin Services – 1 Account Budget Specialist New FTE	17	\$238,513	\$0	\$238,513
Enforcement – 1 Investigation Warden New FTE	17	\$353,768	\$26,568	\$327,200
TOTAL		\$592,281	\$26,568	\$565,713

23-25 EXPLANATION OF BUDGET CHANGES IN SENATE VERSION \$13,761,149

1. Fisheries - New FTE Biologist II: \$241,998 (75% federal)

We are requesting one (1) new FTE and related operating expenses for a Biologist II District Supervisor in Williston.

The state is divided into six fisheries districts of roughly equal size, with a District Fisheries Supervisor historically stationed in each district. The northwest and southwest fisheries districts cover approximately the western one-third of North Dakota, with district offices located in Williston and Dickinson, respectively. When the Northwest District Fisheries Supervisor retired in 2016, that position was converted to the Department's Aquatic Nuisance Species Supervisor to direct more effort to Department efforts to curb the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species. Since 2016, the Southwest District Fisheries Supervisor has overseen fisheries management activities in both the northwest and southwest. The Southwest District Fisheries Supervisor retired in 2022, and that position was also reprioritized to direct manpower to other areas of the Fisheries Division that were short-staffed. This most recent change left both the northwest and southwest fisheries districts without a supervisor.

The District Fisheries Supervisor serves an important role developing fisheries program directives throughout the district, planning and leading biological surveys, overseeing data entry and analysis, developing technical summaries and reports, and conducting applicable research projects as needed. District Fisheries Supervisors provide outreach materials for various media and respond directly to public inquiries for information in their district. They supervise field staff ranging from District Fisheries Biologists (Biologist I), District Fisheries Technicians (Wildlife Technician I) and seasonal fisheries aides. Currently, fisheries staff of the northwest and southwest consists of a single Biologist I in each. These staff conduct surveys and management in their respective district, but are limited to available assistance from seasonal aides and other Department staff to fill in. This request is for re-establishing a District Fisheries Supervisor in Williston. This position will supervise both the northwest and southwest district biologists and their activities. Although the combined districts cover a large geographic area, the combined number of waters is in line with the management responsibilities of other fisheries districts statewide. Lastly, there is an immediate need for more biological support staff on the upper end of the Missouri River System. If approved by the legislature, this position will assist in addressing these needs.

2. Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) (Line 76): \$1,406,839 (50% federal)

- New FTE – Biologist I ANS and related operating expenses
- Temporary salaries for seasonal watercraft inspectors - \$245K
- Equipment – 2 wash stations, 3 Internet Landing Installed Device Sensors (ILIDS) - \$205K
- Grants for ANS outreach \$68K

The 2020 WRDA legislation passed by Congress established a new federal cost-share reimbursement program for Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination (WID) for states in the Missouri River Basin. Therefore, the Department will be eligible to participate in the program that awards states a 50 percent reimbursement for work associated with establishing and operating watercraft inspection stations. Work-related to the monitoring of ANS is also eligible for reimbursement. The WRDA WID cost-share program would increase the funds in the ANS line by

over \$700,000 a biennium. We have been awarded the funds and are working on signing a Programmatic Agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The WRDA cost share will further support the critical elements of the Department's ANS program. It will fund one (1) new ANS biologist position. Additional funds will allow the Department to increase the size of its seasonal watercraft inspection crew and enable the Department to keep seasonals employed later into the fall. Funds will bolster the ANS education/outreach campaign and allow the Department to diversify its current campaign further to reach a broad demographic of water users. Finally, cost-share dollars will help the Department place ANS prevention devices like wash stations, CD3s, and ILIDS that help contain the spread of current ANS population and prevent new introductions.

3. Additional emphasis on Wildlife Habitat & Access on Private Lands (Line 70): \$4,693,574 (\$3,460,104 fed PR funds & \$1,233,470 special funds)

We are requesting appropriation authority in Special Line 70-Habitat & Deer Depredation (Private Lands Initiative) for:

- **Two (2) New PLI Biologist FTEs** in the field to deliver habitat and access through the Department's Private Land Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS) program. The primary objective for each of these FTE positions would be to develop habitat and increase public access. *(75% federal PR funds)*
- **One (1) New FTE to manage the partners, grants, and habitat program.** This FTE will be in Bismarck to manage a non-access habitat program which will largely be comprised of seeking grants for habitat work on private lands and managing associated budgets, obtaining new grants, reporting outcomes, and working with partners. This FTE will also be responsible for developing, and expanding partnerships with other state, federal and private entities to expand the Department's habitat programs outside of PLOTS but will also coordinate with the PLOTS program staff where possible to expand the habitat base on existing PLOTS agreements. Examples of Grant opportunities include: USFWS PR, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Outdoor Heritage Fund, USDA, etc. *(50% federal PR funds)*
- **\$3,000,000** for expansion of current PLOTS program (access payments to landowners). *(75% federal PR funds)*
- **\$1,000,000** to develop habitat without required access. *(75% federal PR funds)*

This request is being made to address the need for a significant change to the Private Lands Initiative (PLI), to adapt to decreasing habitat conditions on the landscape, and to be responsive to additional grants and funding opportunities that are not currently pursued due to staff constraints. While the current funding for PLI is substantial, the changes occurring on the landscape are resulting in a higher cost to develop habitat and acquire additional public access. Developing habitat and access together requires significantly more staff time than acquiring access alone. The current funding and staffing arrangement of PLI has been able to steadily maintain around 800,000 acres for several years, but this request is being made to utilize additional federal USFWS Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds to develop additional habitat and increase to one million acres of PLOTS.

In the last decade, North Dakota has lost over 2.5 million acres of grasslands, including Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and native prairie. In addition, nearly 60% of North Dakota's wetlands have been converted, tree rows, fence lines and abandoned farmsteads have been removed. This is most

evident in eastern ND, but central and western ND are experiencing this as well. Some deer units in eastern ND have seen an 85% decrease in deer harvested due to habitat loss. Habitat conditions in North Dakota are at a crossroads. With over 90% of land in North Dakota held in private ownership, the Department must increase efforts on private land by developing critical wildlife habitat without requiring public access as it has done through the Save Our Lakes program for many years. For landowners wanting to develop habitat there are limited options. USDA programs, such as CRP, provide options for habitat without access, but changes to the program have resulted in many offers not being accepted (63% acceptance). Furthermore, there is hesitancy by some landowners to enter into USDA programs due to lengthy process and requirements. Programs available through various conservation partners provide options but primarily consist of cost share centered around livestock grazing infrastructure. This creates a gap for landowners wanting to develop habitat but not wanting to work with USDA, those not wanting to enroll into PLOTS or those not set up for livestock grazing. The Department's PLI program can provide habitat development options through private lands biologists across the state. The Department is a trusted source whom landowners are comfortable working with, however, not all are interested in allowing unrestricted walk-in hunting access through PLOTS. The Department must reach beyond the PLOTS program to deliver habitat on to private lands.

These federal funds are apportioned to States from USFWS by law and are not dependent on Congress approval. These PR funds have a 2-year window and need to be obligated by the Department by 9/30/23; otherwise, we will lose the funds and they will revert back to the USFWS to be allocated to other states.

This request for additional federal and special spending authority will benefit hunters seeking more habitat and hunting access and private landowners who have expressed interest in developing wildlife habitat on their land.

4. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) (PLI Line 70): \$2,777,778 (90% federal)

The request is being made to address needs for grassland dependent species and their habitats. It is for mid-term conservation agreements for private landowners who have expressed interest in mid-term conservation program agreements on restored native grasslands through the Department's Meadowlark Initiative. Hunters will also benefit from the additional habitat and wildlife on these lands. While public access is not a required component, landowners may also be eligible for the PLOTS program if they are willing to allow walk-in hunting access.

5. ANS Lab & Storage Facility – Jamestown: \$850,000 (100% special) [one-time funding]

In 2019, the North Dakota legislature passed Senate Bill 2293, which gave North Dakota's Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Program an estimated \$1.5 million per biennium. These funds were used to hire additional FTE/seasonal staff and bolster education, monitoring, and prevention efforts. Although the total number of FTE and seasonal staff has quadrupled over the past two years, facility size and storage capacity have primarily remained the same. In addition, the Department has purchased and will continue to buy large ANS prevention devices, whose electronics need to be housed in a heated facility in the winter months. Currently, those electronics are housed in shared areas in regional offices.

ANS staff collect more than 400 water samples per year from waterbodies, hatcheries, and bait vendor facilities to look for nuisance larval invertebrates, including zebra mussels, golden clams, and spiny water flea. These samples are prepared and processed using specialized compound light

microscopy to look for nuisance invertebrates. All lab based ANS monitoring takes place in small office rooms that don't have access to running water, or wastewater disposal, which adds considerable time and effort to processing samples. Storage space for water samples and general voucher specimens is limited to the same few heated office rooms. The lack of workable lab space could contribute to incidental sample contamination. A new ANS facility that doubles as a lab and a heated storage building would allow for the continual accumulation of ANS related assets without seeking additional space to meet storage and lab needs.

The Department currently hires 9 seasonal employees to work out of our Jamestown District Office each year. However, we are restricted who to hire, due to our temporary housing situation. Currently we can accommodate 4 seasonal employees in our temporary housing. We have 2 FEMA park model campers that house up to 2 employees each (depending on gender).

The Department's proposed solution is to construct a 40'x100' building that will serve as an ANS Lab & Storage Facility. The building will also provide temporary housing for up to 10 seasonal staff.

6. Bunkhouse improvements – Devils Lake: \$350,000 (100% special) [one-time funding]

Seasonal employees are essential to the Department to complete necessary work every summer. The Department currently hires 7 seasonal employees to work out of our Devils Lake District Office each year. The Aquatic Nuisance Species program is expanding, and the Devils Lake area is a high priority for this effort. However, we are restricted due to our temporary housing situation. Currently we can accommodate 4-5 seasonal employees in our temporary housing. The number we can house greatly depends on the gender of seasonal employees. We have 3 campers that house 1 employee each and 1 bunkhouse that comfortably houses 2 employees. Additionally, all seasonal employees share one bathroom located in the bunkhouse. This is not suitable for a mixed gender work force. Further, the condition of the campers has deteriorated to the point that spending additional funds for repairs is not in the best interest of the state.

The Department's proposed solution is to renovate our current bunkhouse which would create 5 separate living quarters and 2-3 bathrooms. Each room could house 2 seasonal employees. The overall dimensions of the new bunkhouse would be approximately 30' x 40'.

7. Enforcement – 1 New FTE Warden Investigators: \$353,768 (\$26,568 federal)

The Senate approved one (1) of the two (2) New FTE Warden Investigators that the agency requested. The amount includes related operating and equipment expenses. One would have been located in Eastern ND and one in Western ND. Now this one (1) position will need to be statewide. The majority of the funding will be special funds with a minimal amount from the US Coast Guard for boat safety work.

Looking ahead to future needs for the Enforcement Division, there is a need for a non-district regional Warden Investigator to increase investigative presence for the North Dakota Game and Fish Enforcement Division. An increase in population has increased enforcement activity. Time dedicated to investigations has been on the rise since 2011. Investigations have become more complex involving multiple people, violations, and locations. When more time is spent on investigations, time dedicated to patrol suffers. Covering an average of 2400 sq miles of a warden's district becomes even more challenging when long hours are spent on investigations. Work for the wardens is

compounded when neighboring districts are empty, or the adjacent warden is off work hours. Work level saturations occur with the balance between investigations, patrol, and reporting fit into a standard hour schedule. If you also include time and distance for travel within a district you have a finite number of tasks that can be accomplished. It should also be noted that keeping staff at extremely high work levels for extended times will cause a drop in productivity.

Time is difficult to track on investigations as each is not completed on a linear timeline. Investigations may stop and start on many occasions over multiple months or even years until completion. The combination of incidents, public outreach, reporting, mandatory training, meetings, biological data collection and wildlife response calls make it extremely difficult to put sufficient time and effort towards long term investigations. Assignment of investigations to the Department's only commercial investigations supervisor causes time and distance issues making the effort less productive and cannot be done in a sufficient manner by a lone investigator.

Other factors we considered when looking at the issue of adding a non-district warden/investigator.

1. Not all officers are top investigators and were hired as field wardens.
2. Field Wardens do not have the specialized training to complete complex investigations that may lead into other jurisdictions.
3. Lack of time for compliance checks (e.g., Guides, Outfitters, Taxidermists, Bait Vendors, etc.) by district wardens that could be better handled by trained commercial investigators.
4. Loss of patrol affecting public safety by district wardens while doing investigations.
5. Increased ability and time for ANS/Wildlife health enforcement.
6. A warden investigator has more freedom to complete investigations as they are not tied to district calls on wildlife and complaints.
7. Warden investigator can assist field wardens on special projects without having to pull other district wardens out of their districts.
8. A warden investigator would give the region more flexibility to fill in when injuries, retirements, and job openings occur in a district.
9. With 29 field wardens currently in the state the volume of work often exceeds the capacity of workers. Many county sheriff's offices employ more deputies for one county than the ND Game and Fish employ Game Wardens in an 11-13 county region.
10. The number of outfitters has increased over time resulting in an increase demand for oversight.

8. Enforcement – Replace In-Car Video System & Add Body Cams: \$550,000 (100% special) [one-time funding]

This request is for replacing 40 in-car video systems and adding 40 body cameras. The current in-car video systems are over 10 years old and are no longer in production. Due to their age, they are malfunctioning at increasing rates and are difficult to service due to age/lack of parts. The Enforcement Division currently does not have body cameras. Body cameras are becoming a normal and expected equipment item for all law enforcement officers. Adding body cameras will improve department credibility and protection against complaints, protect citizens, and help document evidence in criminal cases. The new in car video systems and body cameras are a package that work together for improved efficiency and ease of use for the officer.

9. Agency Motorpool: \$1,157,192 (100% special)

Increase in motorpool costs due to rising fuel prices based on Department of Transportation Fleet Services Budget Guideline rates.

Motorpool costs are incurred during the day-to-day operations of the Department and are essential in serving our customer base. A reduction in motor pool allocation would result in a reduction of services such as enforcement activities, management of our state's big game, small game, and furbearing resources, management of our Wildlife Management Areas, delivery of our Private Lands Initiative, management and development of the state's fisheries, monitoring and surveillance of Aquatic Nuisance Species and wildlife diseases including Chronic Wasting Disease, and the responsibility of implementing the Statewide Action Plan for species of conservation priority. Our entire customer base including hunters, anglers, trappers, and watercraft operators would be impacted, at varying levels, by a reduction of motor pool cost allocation.

10. Fisheries – Dam Repairs: \$380,000 (100% special) [one-time funding]

Camels Hump Dam: This work will include both a geotechnical study to identify water movements through the dam and solutions to correct these movements as well as partnering with DOT to cure in place and line the principal spillway to correct the rusting steel pipe.

Baukol-Noonan Dam: This work is to repair the failed riser pipe that has rusted through as well as also cure in place line the principal spillway to correct its rusting steel pipe. Cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining is one of several methods used to repair existing pipelines that don't require that you dig up the pipes. CIPP is a jointless, seamless, pipe-within-a-pipe with the capability to repair pipes ranging in diameter from 4–110 inches.

11. Fisheries – Pondliners: \$1,000,000 (75% federal) [one-time funding]

As in past bienniums, there is a continued need to invest money at the Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery (GDNFH) by continuing the pond lining program which eliminates water loss issues with the current ponds as well as increases fish production capacity. Depending on the liner cost, the request should line approximately four (4) 1.5-acre ponds (the cost includes engineering fees). There are 40 ponds in the Department owned east rearing unit with 15 of the 40 lined to date.

23-25 AGENCY REQUESTS NOT INCLUDED IN SENATE VERSION

1. Administrative Services - New FTE Account Budget Specialist III: \$238,513 (100% special)

We are requesting one (1) New FTE for an Account Budget Specialist III and related operating expenses.

This biennium, the department has received over \$6M in additional federal funds from USFWS Pittman-Robertson, new federal funds for Chronic Wasting Disease work from USDA-APHIS, and the potential of additional funds from USFWS for CWD, and the Water Resources Development Act funds from the Corps of Engineers for Aquatic Nuisance Species work. There is also the addition of millions of federal funds that the department has the potential to be awarded: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (\$2.5M) and Recovering America's Wildlife Act (\$22,775,000).

Currently we have 1 FTE in Administrative Services that is the Federal Aid Manager who handles these duties for all federal funds for the department (approx. \$37M per biennium). The amount of federal funds the department received in 2013-15 was \$25M and 2015-17 was \$30.2M, an increase in federal revenue of \$5M. In 2015-17, we requested and received an FTE to assist with the growing workload. Since 2015-17, when we received the additional FTE, federal revenue has again increased approx. \$7M (15-17 \$30.2M to 21-23 est. \$37M). Any addition of federal funds above current levels is not sustainable by existing staff.

The amount of federal regulations, grant application processing requirements, and reporting requirements in the new federal systems have increased and it now takes a lot more time to administer the grants. The workload involved with these federal funds pertaining to understanding and maintaining compliance with federal regulations, keeping up with and implementing changes, processing applications and amendments, monitoring budgets and grant balances, requesting reimbursements, preparing subgrant agreements and monitoring subgrantees, and preparing, reviewing, and submitting financial and performance reports in multiple different federal systems will require another position to manage and perform these duties.

2. Enforcement – 1 New FTE Warden Investigators: \$353,768 (\$26,568 federal)

The Senate approved one (1) of the two (2) New FTE Warden Investigators that the agency requested. The amount includes related operating and equipment expenses. One would have been located in Eastern ND and one in Western ND. The Department is requesting the other FTE to allow for one Warden Investigator to be located in Eastern ND and Western ND.

The majority of the funding will be special funds with a minimal amount from the US Coast Guard for boat safety work.

Other Sections Included in the Executive Bill Draft for SB2017

We are requesting the following two Sections be included in SB2017:

SECTION 4. LINE ITEM TRANSFER AUTHORITY. Notwithstanding section 54-16-04, the director of the office of management and budget shall transfer up to \$2,000,000 of appropriation authority between the operating expenses, capital assets, and grants – game and fish line items in section 1 of this Act as requested by the game and fish department during the biennium beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2025. The game and fish department shall notify the legislative council of any transfer made pursuant to this section.

The Department currently has this language in its 21-23 appropriation bill, but it ends 6/30/23.

The continuation of this limited transfer authority will benefit the department by allowing it to be responsive to changing circumstances and be able to operate in a more efficient and effective manner.

- We have a wide range of expenditures (e.g., construction, building maintenance, boat ramps/docks, food plots, weed spraying, contract pilots, law enforcement, research grants, surveys, shooting ranges, etc.) that can be challenging to project a budget 3 years in advance.
- When maintaining buildings/facilities, things happen and based on the type of repair and the cost, it will determine whether it should be paid from the Operating line or the Capital Asset line.
- It is hard to project new boat ramp/dock projects. We have appropriation in the Grants line but if we are doing boat ramp maintenance on our Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), it needs to come out of the Capital Asset line. If it is not on our WMA, it can come out of the Grants line.
- There are O&M situations that depending on the circumstances will determine if the cost should be coded to Operating line or Grants line. For example, paying a club or political sub for O&M of fish cleaning stations or docks/boat ramps on our WMA is a service contract paid from the Operating line. We can give a grant (Grants line) to do the same if the O&M is on their land and not our land. In addition, wet years versus dry years can dictate the types and locations of maintenance required on boat ramps and facilities. The location (our WMA versus club land) dictates the line from which the funding comes.
- It is hard to budget for unplanned situations and try to make the appropriation and accounting rules match. An unplanned situation could arise where a ramp is compromised, or access road is washed out on our WMA and we need to repair but only have budget available in the Grants line.

The Department makes a concerted effort to spend sportsman/angler money wisely. This is demonstrated by the following:

- 1) prior to the license fee increase in April 2014, fees had not been increased since 1983 for deer and 1991 for fishing
- 2) having a healthy Special fund balance
- 3) monitoring our revenue and keeping a handle on expenditures accordingly
- 4) Also, per NDCC 20.1-02-17 - hunting and fishing license fees and application fees may only be used for Departmental programs and administration. No one else can use our Special funds. Noncompliance with this law will result in a diversion of Federal funds.

Having this limited transfer authority would allow the Department to be more responsive to changing circumstances as noted above and have the broader flexibility that the Legislature has already granted to a select few executive branch agencies, as well as the legislative and judicial branches of government.

SECTION 5. CONTINGENT APPROPRIATION AND FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS- RECOVERING AMERICA’S WILDLIFE ACT. Subject to the provisions of this section, there is appropriated out of other funds in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$27,150,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, and seven full-time equivalent positions to the Game and Fish Department for Recovering America’s Wildlife Act for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2025. The funding and positions authorized in this section are available only upon passage of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.

	Total	Federal	Special
Research/Surveys/Inventories	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$0
Develop/restore (all habitats)	\$12,243,578	\$9,182,683	\$3,060,895
Midterm grass conservation agreements	\$2,500,000	\$1,875,000	\$625,000
Habitat enhance/improvement	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$0
Communications/Outreach/Marketing	\$80,000	\$60,000	\$20,000
Grants - Meadowlark Initiative	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$0
Grants - Partner Farm Bill Biologists	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$0
Various operating expenses	\$940,972	\$705,728	\$235,244
4 Temps (4 months) and operating expenses	\$120,000	\$90,000	\$30,000
4 PLI Biologists, operating expenses & equipment	\$894,544	\$670,909	\$223,635
3 Conservation Biologists and operating expenses	\$720,906	\$540,680	\$180,226
TOTAL	\$27,150,000	\$22,775,000	\$4,375,000

We are requesting that this Section be included in SB 2017. If the funding of RAWA passes, we are requesting this be set up as a new Special Line appropriation. We need the flexibility of spending these funds as a Special Line to effectively implement the various RAWA components. The purpose and outcome of certain RAWA activities could frequently shift (i.e., between Operating and Grants) considering the specific method and party doing the work.

Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) presents a new funding opportunity for the ND Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) which is different than traditional funding in which licenses and fees paid by hunters, anglers, shooters, and other sources are used as match for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program. RAWA could potentially invest \$1.4 billion annually in fish and wildlife conservation nationally. If passed by Congress, an estimate of over \$14 million annually could ultimately be allocated to North Dakota, the largest investment in state-based fish and wildlife conservation in history. This funding stream was specifically developed to address the needs of rare and declining Species of Conservation Priority (SCP) and their habitats which are identified in each state’s Wildlife Action Plan. RAWA funding will require a 25% match from states; however, one unique attribute of RAWA is that eligible match can be from any federal agency except the Department of Interior and Agriculture. In addition, RAWA is also eligible to be used for ANS prevention which is a very important issue to ND citizens.

21-23 ONE-TIME FUNDING ITEMS STATUS

- **PLOTS payments \$1,485,000:**

Total Spent - \$1,484,170.45

- \$699,897.20 has been spent on Wetland Reserve Program access agreements totaling approximately 3,892.51 acres.
- \$784,273.25 has been spent on Conservation Reserve Program Access agreements totaling approximately 7,264.65 acres.

- **Red River basin wildlife and water quality enhancement program \$500,000:**

Spent \$34,427.50 on 129.7 acres.

- **Radio equipment replacement (SIREN) \$801,500:**

Currently spent \$752,163. All of the handheld radios have been programmed and distributed to our officers. Of the 66 truck/boat radios, we have 11 left to install. They will be installed in new State Fleet trucks and our boats by 6/30/23.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET BY DIVISION

The Department included in its 23-25 budget request the following funds appropriated for grant expenditures to other state agencies:

- **\$122,000** to ND Parks & Recreation Department. This is the same amount included as revenue in the Parks and Recreation Department. It is for operation and maintenance of the public boating and fishing facilities located in state parks. The amount is the same as 21-23. (100% federal funds; Parks & Rec provides the match)
- **\$148,228** to Board of Animal Health, Ag Dept. (100% G&F funds).
- **\$500,000** to Wildlife Services, Ag Dept. This is the same amount as 21-23. (100% G&F funds)

DIVISIONAL BUDGETS

The 21-23 Department FTE is 164. The 23-25 Department FTE request is 172; the Senate version is 170.

Below are brief details on the budgets for the Department's five (5) divisions: Administrative Services, Fisheries, Enforcement, Conservation/Communications, and Wildlife.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION (26 FTEs)

This budget includes business operations, data/technology, licensing, facilities management, and administrative services for the department. The majority of this division is funded with Game & Fish (G&F) funds.

Operating costs in this division include:

- Secretarial support for all Divisions
- Licensing section costs including lotteries
- Accounting costs
- Information Technology costs
- All Department utility, telephone, office rental, janitorial, office supplies, insurance, postage, aircraft costs, office machine rental, and other similar costs
- Credit card transaction fees
- Legal services from Attorney General's office
- Costs for the Game and Fish Advisory Board
- Statewide Cost Allocation payment to OMB
- North Dakota Risk Management fund
- Buildings, Grounds, Vehicle Maintenance Supplies
- Travel costs for the Director, Deputy Director, Administrative Services Division Chief, Business Manager, and IT staff.

Capital Assets – \$3,519,491

- \$784,891 for extraordinary repairs to Department owned facilities statewide (100% G&F funds)

- \$1,525,600 for In Lieu of Tax payments for all Department lands WMAs (75% federal funds)
- \$850,000 budget change for ANS Lab and Storage Facility. [See pages 13-14.](#)
- \$350,000 budget change for Devils Lake Bunkhouse Improvements. [See page 14.](#)
- \$9,000 – zero turn lawn mower for Bismarck Main Headquarters. (100% G&F Funds)

Grants – \$295,000 for cooperative grants to local groups and organizations for game and fish related projects, funding for Tribal access agreements, ND Natural Resources Trust, other Director’s grants, and sponsorship grants (e.g., ND Landowners Sportsman Council, ND Stockmen’s Assoc., etc.). (100% G&F funds)

The Department’s **Grant-Gift-Donation** line Senate budget version, including compensation package: \$684,957 (Admin \$400,000; Wildlife \$284,957) is used as follows: (100% G&F funds)

- Grants and gifts received for special projects are used as desired by the donor.
- Revenue received for surface damage, easements, and reclamation on department owned or department managed properties as a result of mineral exploration and extraction activities. The department manages Corps of Engineers (COE) and department lands along Lake Sakakawea, the Missouri River and the Killdeer Mountain WMA. There is significant oil activity on these lands. The COE and other applicable federal agencies require that this money be spent by the department on these areas that are affected. This line allows the department to receive revenue and turn around and spend the funds on the appropriate areas. This funding is often used for road repairs, fencing, habitat development and similar work.
- Royalty payments received for the department’s 160-acre mineral lease in the Killdeer Mountains WMA. These funds are used to employ one full-time biologist to assist with the increase in workload due to oil activity on our WMA’s. The federal paperwork is time consuming.

2. FISHERIES DIVISION (25 FTEs plus 2 new FTEs, [see pages 11-12.](#))

This budget includes fish production and distribution, fishery research and surveys, fishing area and boating facility development and maintenance, and the Aquatic Nuisance Species program.

Grants – Total \$2,187,304:

- \$690,000 for boating access and development. These grants are used for cost sharing with local governments on fishing and boating facilities. The Department receives 75% federal funding for this work. In some cases, the 25% match comes from local partners such as park boards.
- \$850,000 in grants is to pay the Department's share of costs for the Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery. (75% federal funds)
- \$60,000 base amount in grants used for Aquatic Nuisance Species. (100% G&F funds)
- \$122,000 to ND Parks and Recreation Department for boating access related costs on state parks. (100% federal funds)

- \$170,304 in grants for general administration, management, Valley City State University stream survey work, and other miscellaneous grants. (68% federal funds)
- \$125,000 for Sweet Briar fish study.
- \$70,000 for non-boating access.
- \$100,000 for community fisheries.

Capital Assets line – Total \$2,582,000:

- \$524,000 in capital repairs which includes dam repairs, fishing and boating facility development work and repairs such as toilets, fish cleaning stations, boat ramps, etc., on lands owned by the Department (WMAs) or areas we cooperatively manage. High and low water conditions at Devils Lake, Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River have been major challenges for the boating access program. (75% is federal funds)
- \$678,000 for equipment – boat motor replacements, power rake skid steer attachment, vibratory compactor skid steer attachment, Clark work boats with motors and trailers, tracked ATV, small excavator, wheel loader, compact track loader, etc. (75% is federal funds)
- \$380,000 – budget change dam repairs (Camel Hump & Baukol Noonan). [See page 16.](#)
- \$1,000,000 – budget change for GDNFH pondliners. [See page 16.](#)

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) – This Special Line item was created by passing SB2293 during the 2019 Legislative Session. The Legislative base appropriation is \$1,509,009.

The Department has 2 ANS fisheries biologists and temporary seasonal staff, operating expenses, grants, and capital expenditures. It allows for ANS watercraft inspections, enforcement surveillance, monitoring of North Dakota waters for ANS, and working with partners to increase information and education programs. These expenditures are funded through surcharges for resident fishing and combination licenses and nonresident fishing and waterfowl licenses as well as requiring aquatic nuisance species fees for motorboats.

Also salaries and respective operating expenses for travel and motorpool for wardens to conduct watercraft inspections at boat ramps, inspections at fishing cleaning stations, and check stations. Various wardens code time to this line for ANS work. We budget for cumulative hours to be equal to 1 FTE.

Budget Change: WRDA Funding for ANS Line \$1,406,839. [See pages 11-12.](#)

Senate budget version for this line, including compensation package: \$2,959,664.

3. **ENFORCEMENT DIVISION** (39 FTEs plus 1 new FTE, [see pages 14-15.](#))

This budget supports a staff of one (1) administrative assistant and thirty-eight (38) law enforcement employees plus 1 new FTE. The majority of the Operating budget is for State Fleet and travel costs. Game wardens are very dependent on vehicles to do their work and drive almost 2M miles per biennium.

Capital Assets Line – \$190,000 for replacement of equipment included are: 21’ fiberglass boat/motor/trailer, 17’ aluminum boat/motor/trailer, 16’ aluminum flat bottom boat/motor/trailer, and UTV with tracks (39% federal funds).

Budget Change: Replace In-Car Video System & Add Body Cams \$550K. [See page 15.](#)

Grants – \$90,000 for Boating Safety Grants to county law enforcement to assist in the promotion and enforcement of boat and water safety on their local recreational waters. (50% federal funds)

Missouri River Enforcement line – \$310,753 base budget for this special line includes salaries, operating, and equipment related to enforcement activities on and along the Missouri River in the Burleigh and Morton County area. Grants are also given to local law enforcement agencies to help with the Missouri River enforcement. This line is funded 50% from federal boat safety funds.

Senate budget version for this line, including compensation package: \$317,587.

4. **CONSERVATION/COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION** (23 FTEs)

The division includes the communication section, education section and conservation section. Communication includes the ND Outdoors magazine, ND Outdoors weekly television program, web page and social media management, blogs, bi-monthly podcast, design brochures and publications, marketing, handling of phone and email inquiries from the public. Some education programs include: aquatic, hunter, fur harvester and boating education. We have a youth mentoring program, national archery in the schools program, a nongame wildlife program and outreach staff located statewide. Conservation section conducts environmental reviews, deals with issues related to nongame wildlife, work involving the Endangered Species Act and rare and declining species, including federally listed species.

Grants – Total \$4,962,500:

- \$3,520,000 for shooting range grants throughout the state. Included in the total are funds for the following: \$1M for a range in Medora with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation; \$1.2M to Richland County Wildlife Club for a shooting range near Hankinson; \$500K to Red River Regional Marksmanship Center in West Fargo. All but \$60,000 of the total is federal PR funds which is

passed on to local clubs/groups that provide the matching funds for shooting facilities for public use and for hunter education. New shooting ranges only require a 10% match and existing ranges is 25%.

- \$284,000 is included for youth programs: National Archery in the Schools Program, Hooked on Fishing, Encourage Tomorrows Hunter grants, trout in the schools program, trapper education, etc. All but \$32K is game and fish funds.
- \$639,780 is included in grants for the State Wildlife Grant Program. This federally funded program works primarily with wildlife species that are not hunted. The match is normally provided by the grant recipient.
- \$138,720 administration/coordination grants.
- \$80,000 for Innovative R3 (**R**ecruitment, **R**etention, and **R**eactivation) which encompasses any new and innovative opportunities and strategies the Department may identify to implement on its own or through cooperation with partners and stakeholders to increase or enhance the **R**ecruitment, **R**etention, and **R**eactivation of hunters, anglers, trappers, boaters, and recreational shooters of all ages, genders, and abilities. R3 done right requires adaptability to seek and find unique and novel ways to attract and engage non-traditional participation from all sectors of our public. Innovative R3 includes the efforts of the Department's R3 Coordinator to develop and implement the agency's R3 strategic plan, enlisting and engaging Department staff, conservation organizations, partners, and other stakeholders to achieve desired R3 results. The development and implementation of effective methods for attaining and tracking participation data, and monitoring and evaluating new and on-going R3 programs and strategies fall under this, as well. These R3 strategies may include, but are not limited to, promotional outreach and marketing campaigns, tools, and activities to reach new prospective participants; introductory and follow-up "How To" events, demonstrations, and mentoring; unique public and private land access opportunities; customer engagement through retail incentive; etc. To achieve R3 objectives when working with partners, the Department will develop cooperative agreements to lay out clear roles and expectations of involved parties, as well as the duration and measurable outcomes of the project. (75% federal funds)
- \$300,000 for Pollinator Plots Program for the establishment of diverse native wildflower and pollinator (e.g., monarch butterflies, bees, etc.) planting in urban and public areas, such as schools, parks, campgrounds, recreational areas, ROW's, and other "green" spaces. These urban wildflower plots mesh with the Main Street Initiative for enhancing healthy and vibrant communities. This will provide grant funds to cooperating groups and entities to help cover site preparation, seed and planting materials, interpretive information, and other establishment costs which often exceed \$500/acre. (100% G&F funds)

Capital Assets line – Total \$70,000:

- \$50,000 in extraordinary repairs for WMA shooting ranges. (100% federal funds)
- \$20,000 in extraordinary repairs for Department's Conservation and Outdoor Skills Park area located on the State Fair grounds. (100% G&F funds)

Shooting Sports Grant Program line – \$250,000 is budgeted for shooting sports grants made available to schools, clubs, and organized groups in the state which are used to promote and facilitate increased shooting sports participation in the state. The clubs pay the 25% match for the majority of these grants. (75% federal funds)

Nongame Wildlife line - \$100,000 is budgeted for this special line which is supported by the income tax check off. (100% G&F funds)

5. **WILDLIFE DIVISION** (51 FTEs plus 3 new FTEs, [see pages 12-13.](#))

This budget includes operating costs for Department managed lands, wildlife surveys and investigations, grants to organizations on cooperative projects. It also includes the following Special Lines: Noxious Weed Control, Lonetree, Wildlife Services, and Private Land Habitat and Deer Depredation.

Grants – Total \$2,555,172:

- \$2,406,944 Includes work for grants with wildlife groups and organizations on cooperative projects and wildlife research projects conducted through universities. These include chronic wasting disease (CWD) work, North American Wetland Conservation Act, Central Flyway studies, waterfowl habitat projects, studies/research on various species such as elk, pronghorn, sage grouse, deer, moose, mountain lions, etc. (48% federal PR funds)
- \$148,228 to reimburse the State Veterinarian for costs related to oversight of farmed wildlife producers and the administration of wildlife propagation permits. The amount in 21-23 biennium was \$119,329 and increased to \$148,228 (19-21 \$115,481). (100% G&F funds)

Capital Assets line – Total \$1,619,170:

- \$425,000 for extraordinary repairs (e.g. fences, roads, water control structures) and similar work on department wildlife management areas (WMA) statewide. (75% federal funds)
- \$102,170 for repairs to miscellaneous projects
- \$292,000 for equipment – replace 2 heavy equipment trailers, replace 1 grass drill, replace 1 grain drill, replace 4 ATV/UTV's and replace 2 tractors. (75% federal funds)
- \$800,000 is included for land acquisitions of small tracts near wildlife management areas, possibly in-holding or round-outs that may come up during the biennium. This amount is the same as the 19-21 biennium. (100% G&F funds)

Noxious Weed Control line - \$725,000 is requested for the work on department lands. This line is the same amount as 21-23. (75% federal funds)

Lonetree line – \$2,198,414. The Lonetree area consists of over 30,000 acres of land managed for wildlife purposes. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department manages and provides technical services for this area for the State of North Dakota as laid out in the Garrison Diversion Reformulation Act. The budget for this line increased approx. \$300k from 21-23, mainly due to the replacement of equipment >\$5k. The budget continues to include funding for 5 staff, operating, equipment, maintenance, and development for this area. It is funded 100% by federal funds from the Bureau of Reclamation.

Senate budget version for this line, including compensation package: \$2,185,614.

Wildlife Services line - \$500,000 is to support Wildlife Service's animal damage control work in the Ag Department. (100% G&F funds) This is the same amount as the 21-23 biennium.

Private Land Habitat and Deer Depredation line – The base budget for this special line is \$19,280,597. This line is funded with interest earned on game and fish funds, habitat stamp sales, cash from the regular game and fish fund, and from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Pittman Robertson (PR) federal funds.

This line is commonly called the Private Land Initiative (PLI) line. This line is not just for our Private Land Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS) program in which private landowners enter into agreements for walk-in hunting access. It also includes funds to cost share trees, grass, and other wildlife habitat management practices. In addition, funds are used to enhance and restore aquatic habitat along priority lakes and streams. As well as big game depredation and administrative costs for the PLI line.

Of the total line, the base budget for the PLOTS Program is approx. \$15.3 million of which approx. \$13.2 million is landowner payments. We had a goal to reach 1 million acres of public hunting access on private land by the year 2009. We reached that goal two years early in September 2007. The number of PLOTS acres for the 2022 hunting season was approximately 797,000 acres. A chart of PLOTS acres by program is attached to this testimony.

The line also includes \$1,100,000 mandated in the 2010 session by SB2227 to be budgeted to provide wildlife feeding and other winter management practices on lands impacted by big game depredation. Per NDCC 20.1-02-05(17h) - Any unexpended funds, up to two million dollars, may be carried forward for these types of expenditures in future bienniums.

This line includes 2 budget changes as discussed on [pages 12-13](#):

1. Additional emphasis on Wildlife Habitat & Access on Private Lands (PLI Line 70)
\$4,693,574
2. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) (PLI Line 70): \$2,777,778

Senate budget version for this line, including compensation package: \$26,922,303



North Dakota Game and Fish Department

Private Land Initiative

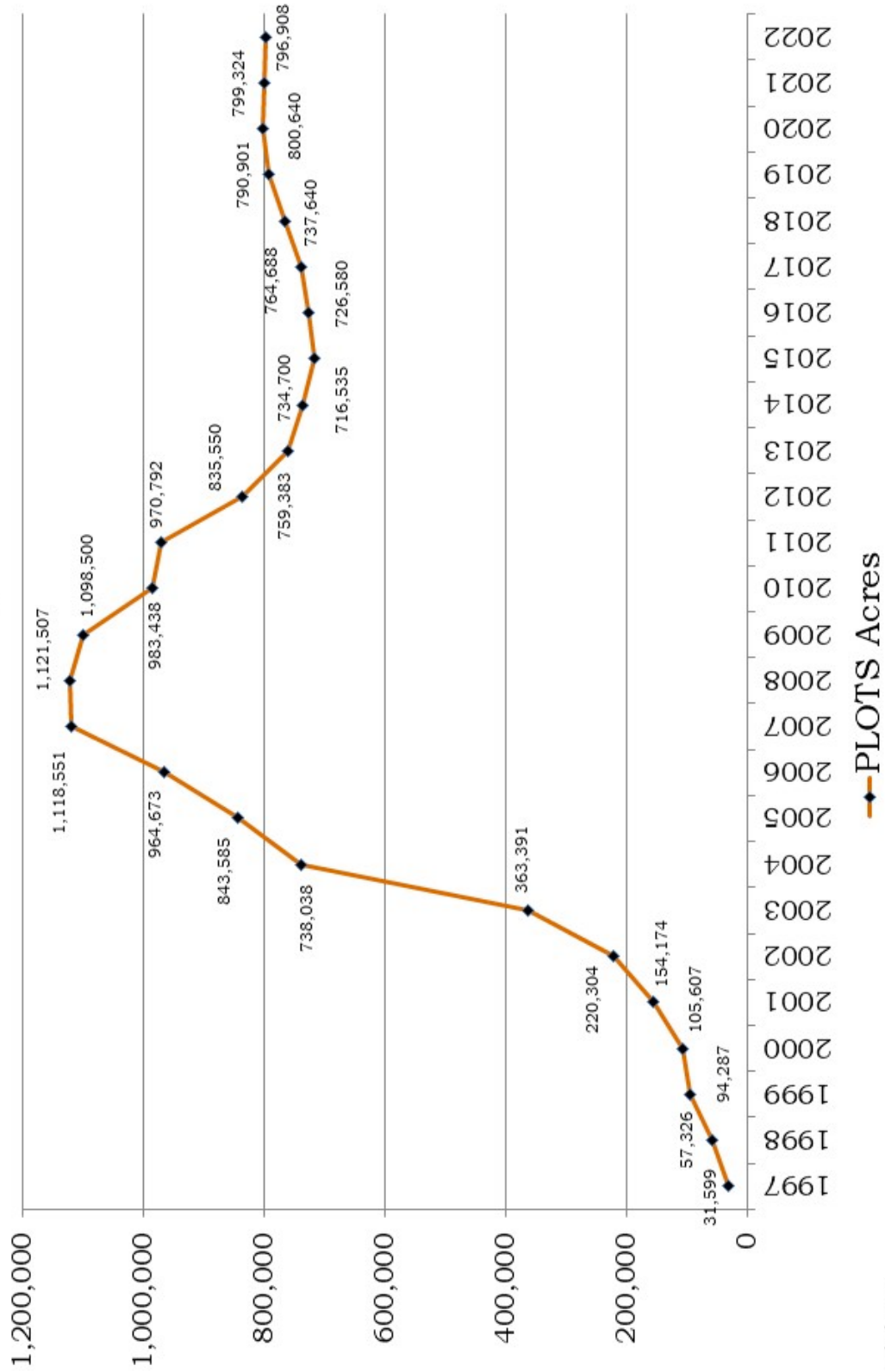
2022 PLOTS Program Acreage

8/3/2022

<u>Program Type</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Program Acres</u>	<u>Access Acres</u>
Beginning Farmer Program	2,520	2,520	0
CREP II	2,444	2,179	265
CREP/Coverlocks	13,142	1,703	11,439
CRP Access Program	193,324	181,739	11,585
Habitat Plots	81,833	74,197	7,636
Other	3,256	3,256	0
Private Forest Conservation Program	4,353	3,305	1,048
Working Lands Program	459,397	458,572	825
WRP Incentive Program	36,639	33,596	3,043
Totals	796,908	761,067	35,841

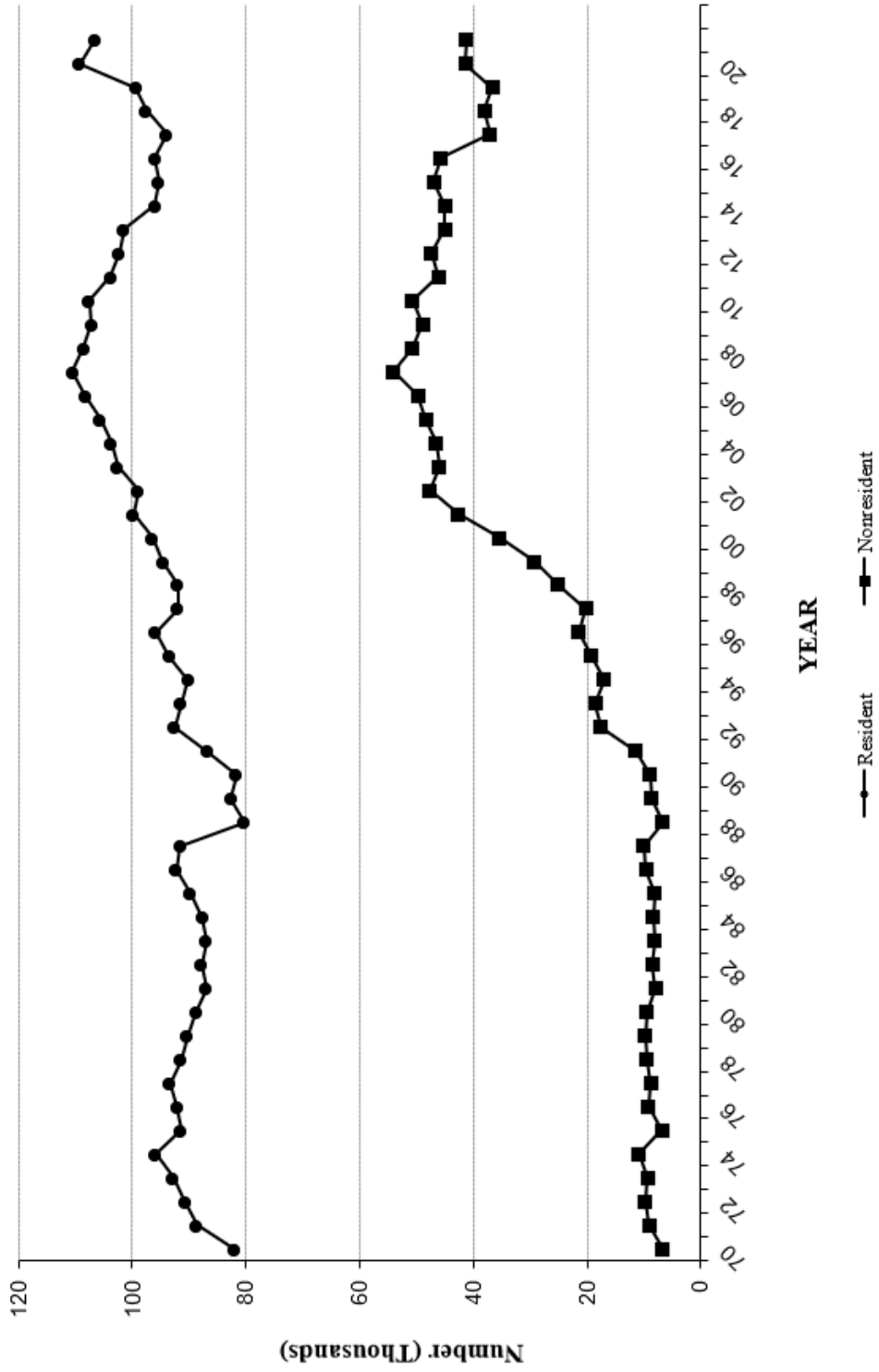


Annual PLOTS Acres Available for Fall Hunting Seasons



8/5/2022

North Dakota General Game License Sales



North Dakota Fishing License Sales

