



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

The following are responses to the request from the Divisions of the Appropriations Committee pertaining to the testimony presentation outline. The item number of the outline was used. All other information requested is included in the agency's written testimony.

1. Cite the North Dakota Century Code chapter(s) associated with the agency and list its major statutory responsibilities.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is largely directed under Title 20.1 and many of those responsibilities reside under 20.1-02-05, which lists the powers of the Director, e.g. Private Lands Open to Sportsmen program. The major statutory responsibilities can be summarized very easily, which is 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.



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- 2. Explain the purpose of the agency's various divisions/programs.**
- 1) Administrative services division.** This division includes the following:
 - a) Business operations. Responsible for business operations such as accounting functions, grant management, federal aid coordination, etc.
 - b) Data/technology. Responsible for department data and analytics. Provides coordination and management of department data, systems and technical resources.
 - c) Licensing. Responsible for all licensing related functions for fishing, hunting, trapping and boating. This section includes department customer support services.
 - d) Facilities management. Responsible for the management of facilities for the department headquarters and district offices throughout the state. Responsible for department print service management.
 - 2) Enforcement division.** The law enforcement program enforces game and fish laws and rules and regulations necessary for proper management of fish and game resources. Enforcement officers called district game wardens have districts averaging approximately two thousand six hundred square miles [673396.92 hectares]. In addition to their enforcement activities, they must carry out education programs, and assist other divisions during busy periods of the year.
 - 3) Fisheries division.** This division is divided into four programs:
 - a) Fish production. Fish are raised at two fish hatcheries and stocked into waters of the state. Also, adult fish are trapped and transported into various waters.
 - b) Fish management/research. Responsible for research and survey work connected with sport fishing. It gathers information about the status of lakes and fish populations and carries out management practices on lakes.
 - c) Fisheries development. Provides public use facilities, lake improvement systems, lake and pond construction, and other developments on public fishing waters.

- d) Aquatic nuisance species. Implements measures to reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species throughout the state. Measures include education, monitoring, and inspections.
- 4) **Conservation and communications division.** This division has three major sections:
- a) Conservation. Since the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1970, state game and fish agencies across the nation are routinely asked to conduct environmental reviews on development projects that have a federal nexus (e.g. a project that is funded with federal money or occurs on federal land). Staff within the Conservation Section carry out those reviews. The Conservation Section also deals with all issues related to nongame wildlife and rare and declining species, including federally listed species.
 - b) Communications. Responsible for department communication including marketing/R3, digital media, North Dakota Outdoors/publications, and video production. Staff in this section write news releases, publish a monthly magazine, manage production of hunting guides and an annual PLOTS guide, produce weekly webcasts and television news segments, manage social media accounts, write blogs, manage the website, produce a bi-monthly podcast, design brochures and publications, handling of phone and email inquiries from the public, manage the department's marketing efforts, and direct the agency's recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters and anglers.
 - c) Education. Includes hunter education, fur harvester education, bowhunter education, aquatic education, boating education, educator resources, NASP (National Archery in the Schools Program), and public information outreach staff located statewide.
- 5) **Wildlife division.** This division is divided into three sections:
- a) Resource management. Responsible for all habitat development, and management and maintenance on wildlife management areas. This involves tree plantings, herbaceous cover and food plantings, road construction, weed control, signing, water developments, and any other activity that enhances these areas for wildlife, hunting, and other compatible uses.
 - b) Game management. Responsible for population surveys that are used to determine annual harvest seasons and conduct research with the objective of improving population management on various species of game for the citizens of the state.
 - c) Private lands. Responsible for carrying out private land habitat improvements and hunting access programs. The program involves annual leasing and development of fish and wildlife habitat and hunting access on private land, entering into cost-sharing agreements with landowners or partners to develop conservation practices which benefit fish and wildlife. The section also carries out practices which will alleviate big game and predatory animal depredation.



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- 3. Report any financial audit findings included in the most recent audit of your department or institution and action taken to address each finding.**

No findings from the most recent State Auditor's Office financial and federal audit for the audit period FY19&20.



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4. Discuss current biennium accomplishments and challenges and next biennium goals and plans.

21-23 Accomplishments

- Meadowlark Initiative
- OHF partnership lake enhancement project
- Partnership with McLean County on flood control land acquisition project
- Administer electronic posting program
- Record number of fishing lakes

21-23 Challenges

- **Changing Landscape**
Habitat loss, fragmentation, degradation
Nature: wetlands, drought, etc.
Receding lake levels
Policies/programs: Conservation Reserve Program
- **Access**
Public resources on private land
Gaining and improving access to public waters
- **Wildlife Health and Invasive Species**
Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD)
Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS)

23-25 Goals

- Shooting range partnership with Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation
- Partner with interested landowners on habitat only projects
- Mobile app
- Increase PLOTS acreage
- Maximize federal funding opportunities



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- 11. Discuss any other bills being considered by the Legislative Assembly and their potential budgetary impact on the agency.**

HB 1183 – Relating to a public employees retirement system plan for peace officers.



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- 12. Provide a one-page itemized listing of the changes your agency is requesting the committee to make to the executive recommendation.**

The Department is not asking for any changes to the executive recommendation.



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13. Provide a comparison of your agency's major requests to those recommended in the executive budget.

The following requests were not included in the executive budget:

- New FTE – Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program manager
- Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) – we requested 11 FTE and we received 7 FTE. The request was included as a Section in the bill contingent upon passage by congress.



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- 14. Identify the purpose and amount of federal state fiscal recovery funding appropriated to your agency during the November 2021 special legislative session, the amount of funds spent to date, the timeline for obligating and spending the remaining funds, and any amounts that will not be obligated by December 2024.**

The Department received \$303,000 of the \$10M that was appropriated to OMB from the American Rescue Plan Act to be allocated to deferred maintenance projects.

The Department had 3 projects funded:

Facility	Description	Approp.	Expense	Completion Date
Lonetree Office	Fire alarm system upgrade	\$14,500	\$9,946	Oct. 2022
Riverdale Office	Lighting retrofit	\$41,500	\$23,987	Sept. 2022
Bismarck Main Headquarters	Energy management & DDC upgrade	\$247,000	\$178,640 (contract amt)	Est. 6/30/2023
	TOTAL	\$303,000	\$212,573	

The Department will not obligate \$90,427 since bids for the projects came in less than budgeted. OMB has decreased our appropriation by that amount.