

**Game and Fish Department
Budget 720
Senate Bill No. 2019, House Bill No. 1358**

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2003-05 legislative appropriation	147.00		\$43,365,763	\$43,365,763
2001-03 legislative appropriation	136.00		35,396,976	35,396,976
2003-05 appropriation increase (decrease) to 2001-03 appropriation	11.00	\$0	\$7,968,787	\$7,968,787

Item Description

Private land open to sportsmen (PLOTS) program - Section 7 of House Bill No. 1358 provides an appropriation to the Game and Fish Department of \$3.3 million for the purpose of increasing funding for the PLOTS program, and authorizes five additional full-time equivalent positions to administer the PLOTS program. Section 8 of House Bill No. 1358 provides legislative intent that the department use these funds to create a new short-term lease program that targets the best access areas in portions of the state that are most impacted with hunting access problems within the PLOTS program.

Capital projects - The 2003 Legislative Assembly authorized funding from the game and fish fund for the following capital projects:

Project	Other Funds
Extraordinary repairs	\$919,944
Construction of a shop in Bismarck	600,000
Land acquisitions	500,000
Equipment over \$5,000	230,000
Information technology equipment over \$5,000	10,000
Total	\$2,259,944

Status/Result

The five additional positions authorized have been filled. The department has created new programs, including the working lands program, the tree planting cost-share program, and the wetland reserve program, as well as made changes to its existing CRP cost-sharing program. The working lands program is the major addition to the PLOTS program and has been well-received by landowners. As of May 1, 2004, the total acres available to public access under the PLOTS program was 537,815 acres. This is an increase of 112,564 acres from the December 31, 2003, total of 425,251 acres and an increase of 272,282 acres from the December 31, 2002, total of 265,533 acres.

The Game and Fish Department plans to build a new shop on state-owned land located next to the State Penitentiary. The department would like approximately six acres for the new shop site, which would replace the shop located on Airport Road. The department has chosen an architect, begun design work, and anticipates receiving bids for the project in July or August 2004.

In October 2003, the department received Budget Section approval to acquire two parcels of land at the confluence of the Missouri and the Yellowstone Rivers in McKenzie County. One parcel, referred to as the Neu property, consists of 388.46 acres of land for a total purchase price of \$650,000. The Game and Fish Department will acquire the property under a written agreement to provide \$333,333 to the American Foundation for Wildlife, which will provide the balance of \$316,667 to acquire the property and, subsequently, donate the entire property to the Game and Fish Department, with the transfer expected to be completed in summer 2004. Negotiations are underway for the second parcel of land, consisting of 1,000 acres and referred to as the Ochs property. The Game and Fish Department will not provide funding for the Ochs purchase, but will receive it in fee title as a donation from other project partners. The department anticipates to receive title to the Ochs property by early fall 2004.

Information technology transfers - House Bill No. 1505 provides for server consolidation and the transfer of one full-time equivalent position relating to information technology services from the Game and Fish Department to the Information Technology Department.

Additional full-time equivalent positions - In addition to the five full-time equivalent positions provided in House Bill No. 1358, the 2003 Legislative Assembly did not change the executive recommendation to add three full-time equivalent biologist I positions for habitat and access programs. The Legislative Assembly added three full-time equivalent game warden positions.

The Game and Fish Department was exempted by the Information Technology Department from the transfer of one full-time equivalent position, but will transfer seven servers to the Information Technology Department.

The three new biologist positions and the three new game warden positions have been filled.