

DNR Response to

Citizen Oversight Report on  
Game and Fish Fund Expenditures  
Fiscal Year 2013

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**December 2014**



## **DNR Response to Citizen Oversight Report on Game and Fish Fund Expenditures Fiscal Year 2013**

The DNR responses follow each statement from the oversight report. DNR's follow-up plan for information requests are compiled in the table at the end of this response document.

The Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC) highlighted the following higher priority interests and concerns in its cover letter:

1. USFWS concerns regarding DNR's payment for MN.IT (Minnesota Information Technology) services

***DNR response:*** *The DNR and MN.IT @DNR are working closely to ensure that DNR maintains management controls of IT Services as is the current practice. We also intend to work with the Legislature to ensure that the law mirrors the current practice. (From response to #61)*

2. Expanded support for outreach for angler recruitment purposes

***DNR response:*** *Marketing was discussed at the August 4, 2014, BOC meeting. We look forward to further discussions on this topic in the near future. Desired outcomes from those discussions include developing a broader understanding of marketing expenditures from the Game and Fish Fund related to fishing and hunting, developing a broader understanding of agency-wide expenditures related to the marketing of fishing and hunting, and learning more from the oversight committees regarding the extent to which DNR should use Game and Fund revenues for marketing. (From response to #20)*

3. Continued pursuit of revenues for aquatic invasive species programs beyond the GFF

***DNR response:*** *The legislature limits our discretion with appropriations and we assume that these recommendations are directed to the legislature. (From response to #33)*

4. Strong support for implementation of the Prairie and Grassland Conservation Plan

***DNR response:*** *Implementation of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan continues to be a top priority for the department. DNR is a leader in efforts to implement the Prairie Plan. We also anticipate that the action plan resulting from the Governor's Pheasant Summit will include components that will assist with prairie plan implementation. (See response to #19 for more details)*

5. Continued support for expanded hunter access via land acquisition, easements, or other innovative programs

***DNR response:*** *The department is investigating funding options for walk-in access. The Strategic Wildlife Acquisition Tool (SWAT) aids in prioritizing and ranking acquisition projects. (See response to #8 and #89-91 for more details)*

6. Continuing discussions concerning how the solvency of the GFF can be maintained through the next several state budget cycles

***DNR response:*** *We look forward to further discussions with the committees on this subject.*



## **Expenditure Review and Policy Recommendations by DNR Program**

### **Fish Management**

#### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

1. The DNR should request substantially more funding to acquire aquatic management areas from sources such as the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and bonding in order to take full advantage of staff efforts to secure willing sellers.

***DNR response:*** *We have requested substantially more funding for AMAs, primarily from bonding and OHF. Appropriations resulting from those previous requests have been substantially less than requested. We agree with the recommendation and we will continue to seek additional funding for AMAs.*

2. The committee recommends that fish culture and stocking levels continue to be determined by science based management plans that take into account the advantages of wild, naturally reproducing fish populations, including their ability to maximize the productivity of our lakes, rivers, and streams.

***DNR response:*** *We agree.*

### **Muskie Stocking and Management**

#### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

3. The FOC commends the DNR for adopting a new model for shared services (Human Resources, Management Resources, Office of Budget and Management, and Office of Communications and Outreach) starting FY2014. The FOC would like an update during its 2015 meetings on how the new model for shared services has affected the costs of producing muskie.

***DNR response:*** *We appreciate your feedback and we will provide that update at one of the first FOC meetings in 2015.*

### **Coldwater Fish Stocking and Management Program**

#### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

4. The FOC recommends that science based management plans drive decisions concern operation and production levels of the French River Hatchery, and that stocking strategies for Lake Superior and its tributaries should not be changed merely to utilize more of that facility's production capacity.

***DNR response:*** *The French River hatchery's future role is dependent on the discussions and outcomes of the Lake Superior Plan revision process that will begin in December 2014.*

5. The FOC recommends that the Commissioner act without delay to designate as "designated trout streams" all streams and tributaries which currently support trout, or which are capable of supporting trout.

***DNR response:*** *The Fish and Wildlife Division and the Division of Ecological & Water Resources and are currently working together to review streams and begin the rule making process to designate or un-designate trout waters based on that review.*

## Wildlife Management

### Budget Recommendations

6. Continue to make incremental adjustments to align license revenue generated by the sale of wildlife related licenses and stamps more closely with wildlife expenditures (long-term outcome to reduce reliance on hunting revenue to support Fisheries Section activities). We desire that the gap be closed by 4-6% over the next three biennia. Total wildlife management expenditures are less than they were in FY 11.

**DNR response:** *We agree. The FY 2016-2017 biennial budget initiatives should help close this gap in the short term. The FY 2014 Game and Fish Fund Report will show increased staffing in the Wildlife Section due to the fee increase initiative, along with closing the gap in spending on fishing and hunting programs. One reason that spending was lower in FY13 than in FY11 was that we were holding vacancies open at the end of the last biennium due to uncertainty about future appropriations and did not spend our entire appropriation. We cannot eliminate the imbalance, but we will monitor it and take steps to request appropriations to more closely align revenues and expenditures.*

7. Develop a strategic plan to address sustaining hunting license revenues including all stamps and fees to keep up with inflation.

**DNR response:** *We will continue to analyze hunting license/stamp revenues and discuss potential options for addressing inflationary pressures on those fees with oversight committees.*

8. Support the newly developed Walk in Access program, however it is essential that the program becomes self-sustaining. The DNR should develop a sustainable, long term funding model ensuring that revenue derived from the program matches administrative and land lease costs. The DNR should pursue options under existing authority rather than seek a legislated solution.

**DNR response:** *The DNR is developing a funding approach for the Walk-In Access (WIA) Program, with the goal of long-term financial sustainability without impact to other priority programs. After the three-year pilot program (ended after the 2013-14 hunting season), managers determined that a minimum 20,000 acres program would require an operating budget of \$500,000 to \$530,000 per year.*

*A user survey conducted following this past hunting season looked at WIA use, experiences, satisfaction and willingness to pay to support the program. The survey found that we currently have about 16,000 users for the current 20,000 plus acre program. Users generally rate experiences on WIA as slightly higher than those on traditional public hunting land but lower than private land. There was general support for expansion of the program.*

*Willingness to pay analysis found that the maximum revenue is possible at a user validation price of \$10. However, at a user fee of \$10, participation drops to 39%. A validation level of \$5 would only slightly reduce revenue but greatly increase participation (71%). Given current participation levels and reported willingness to pay, we can realistically expect that a direct user fee would not generate more than \$55,000-75,000 in revenue.*

*The department is investigating funding options including the Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program (VPA-HIP) as reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. In summary, we can*

*realistically anticipate a maximum of 15 percent direct support by users with the remaining 85 percent needing to come from other sources.*

9. Expenses of wolf management (enforcement, direct research, population census, administering regulated hunting and trapping should be completely presented in the next report to better understand the resources needed to manage wolves in Minnesota. Once a more complete budget for all DNR led wolf activities, the DNR should work with the legislature to develop a structure to better cover wolf management costs.

***DNR response:*** *We have developed a wolf management budget that is adequate to manage wolves at this time. Funding is from the GFF and the wolf management account. . The 2013 deer season was the first season when DNR directed 50 cents from the sale of each deer license to the wolf management account. This additional funding adds approximately \$300,000 annually to the wolf management account beginning in FY 2014. During FY 2013, the \$249,000 derived from the sale of wolf hunting and trapping licenses was the only source of revenue in this account. Annual revenue to the wolf management account will be close to the budgeted funding level needed for wolf management.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

10. Increase efforts to broker a compromise between trappers and hunters who own hunting dogs to reduce the incidence of trap-killed or injured dogs by the start of the next trapping season.

***DNR response:*** *The DNR will continue to work with affected stakeholders to monitor more closely the effectiveness of current regulations and will advocate for additional regulations as needed to reduce the incidence of accidental trap catches.*

11. Complete one pilot WMA planning project in each region by August 2015 that fully describes management strategies and desired future conditions on major units and WMAs.

***DNR response:*** *The Wildlife Section is requesting an FY 2016-2017 biennial budget initiative to fund WMA system plans and updates to major unit plans.*

12. Continue efforts to better align forecasted fund balances with information contained within the report.

***DNR response:*** *We agree. The November 2014 forecast used a 3-year average except in cases where a recent fee increase occurred or anticipated revenue reductions (i.e. fewer deer bonus tags). The fund statement will reflect the most current and updated revenue forecasts and trends.*

13. Ensure that infrastructure, programming, and activities comply with all applicable accessibility requirements and provide additional opportunities for an aging and population of all ability levels.

***DNR response:*** *We agree. The department strives to incorporate accessibility requirements into facilities projects and programming. A federal aid audit focusing on accessibility topics occurred during FY14 and results and recommendations are pending.*

14. Work to increase landowner knowledge and compliance of the state-required 50-foot buffer strips along Minnesota protected watercourses. Eighty percent of croplands are missing the full required 50-foot buffer strips on each side of the protected watercourse. Additional

compliance will promote increased water quality and additional wildlife habitat on private lands.

**DNR response:** *DNR continues to promote conservation compliance as a key component of the farm bill and crop insurance. In addition, the DNR is participating in a pilot area for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's "Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program" at Whitewater WMA, and we will be developing additional partnerships within other pilot watersheds.*

15. Assist in providing leadership to establish standards for sustainable farming similar to the forest certification program in the forest products industry.

**DNR response:** *See #14. We would like to have further discussion with the committee. DNR is hiring an Agricultural Liaison in FY15 to help the department dedicate more time toward agriculture issues.*

16. Meet with large users of agri-business products to promote purchase of only those agricultural products grown from sustainable farming operations that return more grass on the landscape and maintain or enhance soil health and water quality.

**DNR response:** *DNR actively promotes agricultural practices that promote grass on the landscape. We recently met with General Mills leadership regarding sustainability issues and we plan to make additional contacts. As suggested in response # 14 above, we are interested in partnering with Minnesota Department of Agriculture on their fledgling Clean Water Certification project and with the agencies involved with the Clean Water Fund as they enter into watershed plan implementation. We participated in the Minnesota Cattlemen's Association summer tour, promoted conservation grazing, and talked about grazing on WMAs and other management lands as a management tool. In addition, the Local Technical Teams implementing the Prairie Plan are focusing on working grass operations and ways to promote, perpetuate, and improve them.*

*We would like to have further discussion with the committee. DNR is hiring an Agricultural Liaison in FY15 to help the department dedicate more time toward agriculture issues.*

17. Accelerate work with other state agencies, conservation and agricultural organizations, and the legislature to provide and promote improved land and water conservation in areas of intensive agriculture.

**DNR response:** *DNR is currently participating in a multi-discipline approach to seek out opportunities for agricultural partners to promote sustainable agriculture through outreach to agricultural groups and commodity buyers like the Minnesota Cattlemen's Association and General Mills. We continue to manage funds appropriated by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and the Legislative and Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat in the agricultural regions of the state.*

*We would like to have further discussion with the committee. DNR is hiring an Agricultural Liaison in FY15 to help the department dedicate more time toward agriculture issues.*

18. Best management practices are needed for installation, collection, and conveyance systems so that sustainable conservation measures reduce the transport of sediment and pollutants, provide for wildlife values, protect ground water, and provide for appropriate water quantity and quality of wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes

**DNR response:** DNR is actively participating in Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program with Whitewater State Wildlife Management Area as a pilot project. DNR is also currently assessing a program known as STRIPS developed in Iowa that would help retain soil in agricultural fields and decrease siltation and chemical levels in surface waters. Additionally, it would provide valuable habitat for pollinating insects as well as game and non-game wildlife. The idea is to expand upon the traditional concept of buffer strips by determining the best ecological and most cost-effective arrangement and placement of grassland strips on the landscape for maximum benefits for water and wildlife in a way to 'stack benefits' of buffer strips. DNR wildlife staffs will attend an upcoming "Cover Crops and Soil Health Field Day" at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center to learn of new research regarding soil and nutrient management.

19. Support use of staff and resources for interagency implementation teams for the prairie conservation plan.

**DNR response:** Implementation of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan continues to be a top priority for the department. DNR is a leader in efforts to implement the Prairie Plan. We have assigned a full-time Grassland Strategist. The primary responsibility of this position is to coordinate efforts by the Local Technical Teams (LTTs) that are comprised of local professionals from each of the cooperating agencies and NGOs and are aligned with the Core and Corridor areas defined by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

DNR continues to be the lead agency in participation in the Prairie Plan Workgroup, a high-level workgroup in place to coordinate efforts between partners. The Workgroup recently developed subcommittees to address specific issues concerning the following:

- 1) Funding – coordinate and focus traditional funding sources, as well as seek new and addition funding sources
- 2) Local Technical Team (LTT) Assistance – ensure LTT's have the fiscal resources, technical information and organizational support they need to deliver focused and effective conservation
- 3) Communication and Outreach - inform citizens, empower conservation practitioners and engage policy makers in a way that advances the habitat protection, restoration and enhancement goals of the MN Prairie Plan
- 4) Program Policy – adapt existing programs to meet Minnesota's new and emerging grassland conservation needs, ensure we're fully utilizing all programs, and then aligning all programs to develop a complete menu of program options
- 5) Monitoring Progress – tracking and reporting statewide progress toward the Prairie Plan protection goals (outputs), as well as establishing a framework for measuring and grading overall progress toward plan implementation (outcomes)

Finally, DNR has kicked off efforts as project manager to update the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection, Restoration, and Management of Minnesota's Prairies. We also anticipate that the action plan resulting from the Governor's Pheasant Summit will include components that will assist with prairie plan implementation.

### **Requests for further information or analysis**

The WOC requests that the Section of Wildlife provide information on the successes of the staffing realignment (verbal or email update, not a report).

**DNR response:** *The division realignment accomplished three key things:*

- A. *The Wildlife Research Unit reports directly to the Wildlife Chief. This was essential to retain the close coordination of Operations and Programs with the Research Unit. Under the previous alignment, the Wildlife Research Unit was under the division director along with the Fisheries Research Unit. As a science-based decision making organization, the daily communications/interactions between research and the other units is very important.*
- B. *We split the Programs Unit into a Populations/Regulation Unit and a Habitat Unit. With the increasing demands for specific programs over the years, program responsibilities and, therefore, staff had expanded to the point of being unwieldy. A single program manager had an unmanageable workload associated with supervision, programmatic direction, programmatic support, and budget management. The realignment has divided the workload and created greater focus and efficiency in each unit.*
- C. *We created a Dedicated Habitat Program. Under the previous alignment, program staff handled species issues, season/regulation issues, and habitat issues. Species and season/regulation issues tend to be high profile issues of great interest to much of our constituency and very workload intensive. As a result, the Habitat Program is able to focus on habitat related issues. The primary example is that the Habitat Program is able to focus attention on interactions with the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and the work associated with assembling, prioritizing, and seeking funding for important habitat work centered on forests, prairies, and wetlands.*

## **Outreach Section**

### **Budget Recommendations**

#### From FOC review

- 20. The FOC strongly feels the new marketing coordinator position is a key asset to support the long-term GFF revenues. However, the FOC feels the marketing budget is underfunded. The FOC recommends the DNR propose future GFF expenditures to include additional marketing funding to meet goals for future fishing license revenues.

**DNR response:** *Marketing was discussed at the August 4, 2014, BOC meeting. We look forward to further discussions on this topic in the near future. Desired outcomes from those discussions include developing a broader understanding of marketing expenditures from the Game and Fish Fund related to fishing and hunting, developing a broader understanding of agency-wide expenditures related to the marketing of fishing and hunting, and learning more from the oversight committees regarding the extent to which DNR should use Game and Fund revenues for marketing.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

#### From FOC review

- 21. The FOC recommends the DNR explore possible options to add a nominal surcharge to every hunting and fishing license sale that could be dedicated to education, marketing, and outreach.

**DNR response:** *We would like to have further discussions with the committee.*

22. The FOC recommends the DNR Marketing Coordinator seek continued partnership and support from Explore MN to incorporate more fishing-related content into their ads. These ads should target families, youth, and out-of-state and lapsed fishing license buyers.

**DNR response:** *We agree.*

From WOC review

23. Continue the highly successful Archery-in-the-Schools program. As program participation increases, provide additional funding as needed.

**DNR response:** *We will continue to fund Archery in the Schools grants and have implemented a community archery grants program. We intend to assess how best to allocate dollars related to archery skills building and practice.*

24. Provide additional support to high school teams for shooting sports (trap) with appropriate funding mechanisms to support or enhance expansion of the program.

**DNR response:** *The DNR has implemented a trap shooting range grants program that will increase capacity for high school shoot sports. Details about the expedited small grants program are available at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/rangedev.html>. A grant process to fund even larger trap range grant projects is under way.*

25. Implement strategies developed by the newly formed hunter recruitment and retention work group.

**DNR response:** *We agree and we will seek a biennial budget initiative to further these efforts.*

26. Expand marketing efforts for critical habitat license plates to generate increased revenue without major increases in the license plate fee for the current 107,000 purchasers.

**DNR response:** *The state issued a new moose critical habitat license plate in the summer of 2014, which we promoted at the Minnesota State Fair and other locations.*

27. Expand marketing efforts for wild rice management and harvest.

**DNR response:** *We would like more discussion with the committee.*

28. Develop a concentrated marketing campaign utilizing the print media and social media products to educate the public about cleaning and utilizing northern pike.

**DNR response:** *We would like more discussion with the committee.*

## License Center Operations

### Budget Recommendations

#### From FOC review

29. The FOC recommends the DNR increase marketing promotion of the Life Time Fishing License. These efforts should include marketing the concept of using the Life Time Fishing as a gift to younger anglers.

**DNR response:** *This note has been included in emails to over 143,000 stakeholders. As an addition, the marketing position will work to create a promotional effort during the year-end holiday seasons. This will include a banner on the DNR home page during the holidays in Nov, Dec and beginning of Jan. Please let us know if the committee would like to have further discussion.*

#### Give A Lifetime Gift

Lifetime licenses never quit giving the gift of the outdoors. They can be purchased for any age. Visit [DNR's lifetime license page](#) for more information.



#### From WOC review

30. Continue third party handling of the day to day operation of the ELS system

**DNR response:** *We agree.*

- 30B. Support the user funded operation of the license center, e.g. 10% of stamp sale use for license center operations and enhancements to provide sustainable funding for that operation.

**DNR response:** *The license center receives an appropriation. Minn. Stat., sec. 97A.075, designates 90% of stamp sales to specific programs for most stamps sold and these funds are deposited into dedicated accounts for those programs. The remaining fees collected are deposited in the game and fish fund. The ELS commission licensing fee ranges from \$.50 - \$1.75 per stamp types. This could be more or less than 10%. Minn. Stat., sec. 84.027, subd. 15, provides for the costs of administering electronic licensing through use of commissions and fees on electronic transactions.*

### Policy/Activity Recommendations

#### From FOC review

31. The FOC recommends the DNR re-evaluate the process to purchase a lifetime fishing license. Consideration should include developing a streamline process that would allow ELS agents to have the ability to sell a lifetime fishing license for the first purchase at an ELS Terminal.

**DNR response:** *Minnesota law requires one year of residency and agents do not have the capability to verify this. Data privacy laws restrict access to personal information on individuals. Agents would also be at an increased risk for accepting large dollar amounts for single transactions, with a risk of revenue loss due to insufficient funds (NSF), stop payments, etc.*

From WOC review

32. Continue to explore license center software changes to consolidate paper for users who purchase licenses at different times.

**DNR response:** *DNR is currently working with the contractor on new system development. We will explore new system capabilities.*

## Ecological and Water Resources

### Budget Recommendations

33. The FOC recommends against any use of the GFF for AIS work or research. The FOC is recommending a user fee approach to help fund the AIS program. The user fee needs to be a dedicated fee to the AIS program, and would replace general fund or GFF appropriations in the future.

**DNR response:** *Thank you for your input on this matter. The legislature limits our discretion with appropriations and we assume that these recommendations are directed to the legislature.*

### Policy/Activity Recommendations

34. The FOC is happy with the efforts the DNR is putting into the education of the public on AIS prevention. However, the FOC still sees a need to simplify the message to the public.

**DNR response:** *Simplicity in communications is important to us as well and we continue to strive for improvement.*

## Enforcement

### Budget Recommendations

From WOC review

35. Continue to explore efficiencies and streamline operations such as fleet while maximizing time in the field in an effort to reduce the 29% not directed field service hours.

**DNR response:** *We agree to explore efficiencies in all parts of operation. We are currently working on reducing fleet costs. "Not directed" time includes costs for vacation, sick, training, which are constants.*

36. Ensure retirement benefits are commensurate with the sustainability of that obligation to minimize future loss of overall enforcement efforts and impact to the GFF.

**DNR response:** *More discussion may be helpful. Retirement/severance benefits are either contractual and/or governed by Minnesota State Retirement System.*

From FOC review

37. Repeat the request for supplemental funds (budget request) in response to the governor's office previous veto.

**DNR response:** *We agree. We will consider this within the budget building process in DNR and state budget.*

38. Ensure that proceeds from auctions of confiscated hunting and fishing equipment go into the GFF, as the auction nets \$135,000 to \$140,000 each year.

**DNR response:** *We deposit funds from auctions as required by statute, and we deposit proceeds from most items sold into Game and Fish Fund.*

## **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

### From WOC review

39. Include public contacts (and locations) and outreach numbers (such as classes for ATV, snowmobile, firearm safety, etc.) in the new records management system.

**DNR response:** *We agree. Timing of such capabilities may depend on ability to purchase the required hardware/software.*

40. Continue to maximize use of officers for saturation activities such as Lake of the Woods or other areas of highly concentrated natural resource activities.

**DNR response:** *We agree.*

41. Research alternatives that can be used with the new records management system to help determine overall compliance rates for hunters and anglers to better target information, education, and enforcement efforts.

**DNR response:** *We agree. See response at #39.*

### From FOC review

42. The FOC recommends that the DNR work with the legislature to set restitution values at levels similar to the federal restitution values, and that a restitution value be established for catfish.

**DNR response:** *We want to discuss the further with the oversight committees. The department is considering some revisions to restitution values.*

43. Continue to attempt to recruit and train minority officers to the extent that additional funds have been appropriated for their employment and training. This will also aid in reaching the overarching goal of having a workforce that represents the population served. In addition, it helps with public relations especially as we relate to more ethnically diverse populations with different social mores and appreciations of the resource than we are used to.

**DNR response:** *We agree.*

## **Parks and Trails**

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

44. The FOC recommends that the amount of funds set aside in escrow for current acquisitions be listed in their balance sheet, so one would be able to see that there is money there to pay for projects that have been committed to.

**DNR response:** *We would like to have further discussion with the committee. The balance sheet shared with the FOC shows actual costs for complete transactions (funds spent) or estimated costs for those transactions we hope to draw on when complete. Neither state nor federal funds are set aside in escrow. Projects are only committed to if there are funds*

available. We would be happy to make changes to the balance sheet for clarity purposes if needed.

45. The process to select boating access projects should be fully coordinated with Regional and Area Fish and Wildlife managers to identify and select priority access opportunities and maintenance needs consistent with a Boating Access strategic plan.

**DNR response:** We agree. Area and Regional teams made of DNR staff from all division consult on sites recommended for boat access acquisition. Many acquisitions are successful because of the support of the regional and area fisheries and wildlife managers. We frequently withdraw sites because of concerns voiced during an internal review process. Acquisitions also go through an external review process, were the local government units, sportsman's club, riparian landowners and lake association are encouraged to comment.

## Forestry

### Budget Recommendations

46. Continue to seek additional funds from LCCMR to supplement GFF allocations for the invasive species program that is critical for protecting forest habitat.

**DNR response:** The DNR will continue to look for funding for the invasive species program from a number of different funding sources, including the LCCMR. As you know, the existing GFF funding is needed to support inventory and management of invasive species on state forest lands and to support outreach efforts designed to disrupt the link between outdoor recreation and the spread of terrestrial invasive species. The effect of terrestrial invasive species on wildlife habitat can be devastating. It's imperative that resource managers continue to inventory, treat, and monitor for invasive species to protect the resources, including clean water, carbon storage, recreation, and wildlife habitat just to name a few, that flow from state lands.

47. Apply (or continue to apply) for reimbursement Pittman-Robertson grants for all forest management overhead and operational activities on WMAs to save G&F funds for other habitat management activities.

**DNR response:** The DNR has included the eligible costs in the most recent Pittman-Robertson grant and will continue to include them in the future.

### Policy/Activity Recommendations

48. Increase harvest on state-owned land by an additional 10% from the current 30,000-acre effort to enhance habitat for forest wildlife.

**DNR response:** The DNR's interdisciplinary Subsection Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMP) direct, across all state lands, the management that will take place over the duration of the 10-year plan. Each of the SFRMPs outline rotation ages, conversion goals, harvest levels, and a host of other goals. In fiscal year 2014, the DNR sold 40,376 acres of timber to loggers.

49. Provide additional contract options so smaller logging operators can participate in greater forest management activities by conducting sales for a variety of cordages.

**DNR response:** DNR sells timber permits in a wide variety of volumes from less than 500 cords to over 6,000 cords on a single permit. A fiscal year 2011-2013 analysis showed over 80% of our permits are less than 1,000 cords and over 40% of our permits are less than 500 cords. We deliberately offer a variety of permits with varying cordages at every auction to accommodate each size of logging operation.

50. Continue to provide the exceptional detail in use and outcomes from the GFF.

**DNR response:** Thank you. We will do so.

## Lands and Minerals

### Budget Recommendations

51. Control professional services charges and Office of Enterprise Technology overhead expenses so that the four year multi-million dollar lands record system is completed on time and within budget. It appears that the \$5 million project has grown to \$6.8 million.

**DNR response:** The Land Records System project is done and now in operation.

52. Provide enhanced revenue options to increase the current \$13,000 that is generated on 1461 cooperative farming contract acres.

**DNR response:** Table 59 on page 72 of the FY13 GFF report shows that the \$13,000 in revenue generated on 1,461 acres actually refers to agricultural leases, not cooperative farming agreements. We will review the rental rates charged on the leases covering the 1461 acres and make adjustments to the rates if needed to ensure that they are commensurate with the recommended rates.

53. Provide a longer term estimate (currently at \$326,000 per year) to maintain the new lands records system and examine how these costs to the GFF can be more sustainable.

**DNR response:** We agree. The DNR will be discussing the long term funding needed to maintain the new land records system starting in FY 2016 and beyond, and examining the appropriate sources of funding for this work.

### Policy/Activity Recommendations

54. Include more detail (such as adding acres or miles) in the table listing GFF-supported land surveys that were completed in the year.

**DNR response:** We agree. The Division of Lands and Minerals will provide more details in next year's report on the surveys completed each year.

55. Continue to implement administrative improvements (e.g. streamlining RIM processing and payments).

**DNR response:** We agree. The department is in a continuous process for our land acquisition program improvements. For example, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has reduced approval steps for new WMA acquisitions.

56. Develop standards so that activities such as surveying can be completed within a timeframe that is commensurate with private and non-profit real estate transactions. Contract with private surveyors as needed to support transaction schedule deadlines or goals.

**DNR response:** DNR is using private surveyors. Private surveyors under a contract with the DNR are performing the large Beaches WMA boundary surveying project. The Beaches WMA project contract is \$158,900. DNR contracted a small survey project for the Warren Lake AMA, budgeted for \$5,000.

The Lands and Minerals Division is in a continuous process for administrative and program improvements. However, there are many instances where state law requires actions that the DNR must take for a real estate transaction that are not required in the private sector. For example, state law requires DNR to inform the landowner of the value of the land as determined by an appraisal; in the private real estate market, this data is not normally shared between seller and buyer.

57. Continue to explore ways of streamlining the acquisition process to reduce both the time and cost of the DNR acquiring high quality lands for management purposes.

**DNR response:** We agree. The DNR has implemented changes to the start-up of the land acquisition process, streamlined the regional review of new proposed process, enacted changes under the data practices act to make appraisals available to the landowners and the public, and taken some legal work in-house.

For example, the regional review process changed from an approval process to a notification process, with the notice period limited to five days. The start-up packet for trout stream easements will be distributed to the regional staff. Trout stream easements are not subject to a hold during the five working days comment period but can be continued to be processed through the acquisition system.

The second phase of the continuous improvement project for land acquisition is nearing completion and we expect to implement further changes in FY 2015.

### Requests for further information or analysis

Provide an update on the continuous improvement process for land management and acquisition activities. Provide an update on the costs of land records system development and ongoing maintenance and operations costs.

**DNR response:** The report on the continuous improvement project for land acquisition will be available in the fall of 2015. The projected costs for the land records system are \$973,000 in FY 2015. The Game and Fish Fund will contribute \$326,000 to these costs. The costs cover:

License contact..... \$96,000 ..... (Contract to use software)

Enhancement contract..... 132,000 ..... (Further development of system)

MN.IT Staff..... 524,000 ..... (Minnesota Information Technology Services Agency)

MN.IT professional services .....40,000 ..... (Project manager for Land Records System project)

MN.IT infrastructure ..... 133,000 ..... (Operating, maintaining, supporting and securing the servers, network and core systems)

LAM staff.....48,000 ..... (Quality control of data and expertise for enhancements)

MN.IT staff provides:

- a) User support and system administrative services for operating and maintaining the system;
- b) Analysis and design to support further development of the system by the software vendor; and

- c) *Analysis, design, and programming to support further development of reports and map products from the system.*

## **Operations Support**

### **Budget Recommendations**

#### From WOC review

58. Develop budget options for operations support consistent with Division requirements for cost control strategies.

**DNR response:** *Senior managers and OSD work collaboratively to contain costs while ensuring DNR has the necessary business services to maximum natural resources benefits. Costs for shared services are tied directly to the services required by divisions to support their natural resources work.*

#### From FOC review

59. Until a formal resolution is accomplished, the FOC recommends that a formal shared services cost allocation plan and cost coding procedures be established to pay for MN.IT services on a reimbursable basis as approved by the DNR Commissioner.

**DNR response:** *We agree. The provision of MN.IT services for the DNR follows the shared services model. Service level agreements reviewed by the DNR's Shared Services Governance Board and approved by the commissioner describe services and costs, including supplemental services. The deputy commissioner reviews and approves professional services rates.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

#### From WOC review

60. Include regional and Commissioner's office in any budget scenarios for reductions or enhancements.

**DNR response:** *The Regional and Commissioner's offices are committed to seeking and achieving budget savings where possible.*

#### From FOC review

61. The FOC urges the DNR, acting through the Governor's Office, to work with the legislature to amend the 2011 IT legislation to restore management control to the DNR from the Office of Enterprise Technology (MN.IT) in the next Legislative session.

**DNR response:** *The DNR and MN.IT @DNR are working closely to ensure that DNR maintains management controls of IT Services as is the current practice. We also intend to work with the Legislature to ensure that the law mirrors current practice.*

62. The FOC recommends that the IT policy requiring periodic replacement of computer equipment be reevaluated since it may not be necessary given operational requirements.

**DNR response:** *MN.IT @DNR closely monitors and maintains IT replacement of computer equipment and IT infrastructure to ensure that DNR's facilities and services are fully operational and high performing. Older computers break down more frequently, are more expensive to support, and tend to increase security vulnerabilities. A key program objective is to maintain equipment costs at historical levels, to contain total cost of ownership (TCO). DNR*

*policies for computer equipment replacement conform to industry best practices in common use in both private and public sector organization.*

63. The FOC recommends that MN.IT develop a cost recovery program to sell serviceable GFF purchased computer and computer equipment that are periodically replaced and return such funds to the GFF. This assumes that such a program would be financially feasible and physically possible. If not, then the DNR should provide evidence to that fact.

**DNR response:** *MN.IT @DNR's Computing Equipment Fleet program centralizes the department equipment purchasing process, calculates the cost of replacing each piece of equipment following industry standard cycles, and equips agency personnel with high-functioning equipment. Customers pay for a provisioning service, not for computers. Division customers do not purchase or retain rights to the equipment.*

## **Game and Fish Dedicated Accounts**

### **Deer and Bear Management – Computerized Licensing**

#### **Budget Recommendations**

64. This account should be evaluated to determine ramifications from consolidating it with the Deer Management Account.

**DNR response:** *The DMA and D-B accounts have few limitations; DNR uses them for both salary and projects to support management. However, we cannot use the DMA account for bear research and management. Theoretically, we could manage the accounts as one; however, we would not want the importance of Minnesota's bear program diminished because of its smaller overall contribution to one large account. DNR's preference is to manage the accounts separately in order to 1) preserve the integrity of bear research and management, and 2) not eliminate the ability to use dedicated funds to pay changes in electronic licensing for those two species.*

65. This portion of the account should receive strong consideration to be eliminated (pending outcome of the current re-evaluation of deer feeding guidelines) with the revenue transferred for cervid health.

**DNR response:** *Deer feeding and cervid health are the same fund so no transfer would be necessary with an elimination of deer feeding.*

66. Develop a separate cervid health management sub-account to better track costs of myriad disease and big game population limitations.

**DNR response:** *Cervid health expenditures are currently tracked independent of deer feeding. We track those expenditures in SWIFT using CC1 (activity) and CC2 (project) codes.*

67. Define a minimum account balance necessary (estimated to be in the \$600,000 range) to meet the needs of an emergency outbreak of a cervid health related issue and report that balance in future reports for planning purposes.

**DNR response:** *An exact amount would be difficult to determine because expenditures would vary depending on the specific issue and needed response. A reasonable balance would be at least \$600,000; however, \$1 million would be preferable.*

68. Eliminate the deer feeding portion of this account and develop a formal partnership agreement with MDHA or similar organizations for implementing deer feeding programs, if any, in the future.

**DNR response:** *We do not advocate deer feeding. We established the deer feeding account and policy at the direction of the legislature. We are continuing discussions about the appropriateness of this existing policy with interested stakeholders.*

#### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

69. Support the current accelerated timetable to establish new deer population goals so that all zones and areas can be implemented by 2016.

**DNR response:** *We agree. The division has developed a work plan to revisit deer population goals through a public process in the remaining 86 deer permit areas during 2015 and 2016. As planned, the process will occur in five regional goal-setting blocks during 2015 and six blocks during 2016. Management strategies will address updated goals, statewide, for the 2015 and 2016 deer season respectively.*

70. Consider the best venue to expand information and education about deer management and goal setting (e.g., provide a footnote in the hunter synopsis and/or permit area map directing people to the website for detailed information).

**DNR response:** *We continue to consider opportunities to expand our audience and better communicate deer management and goal setting as a component of our management (for example, see the September 2014 Minnesota Conservation Volunteer "Letters" on page 4). We will consider that suggestion for the 2015 hunting regulation synopsis. Current efforts focus on enhancing the new deer management website and increasing the frequency of communication via Deer Notes, the email update for deer management, available at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mammals/deer/mgmt.html>.*

71. Continue moratorium on moose hunting seasons.

**DNR response:** *The moose hunt season will remain closed until the population can support an annual hunt.*

72. Update the elk management plan to determine opportunities to increase the population.

**DNR response:** *The department initiated an elk plan update in spring 2014 for completion before the current plan expires on December 31, 2015. We updated the citizen working groups (Kittson County and Grygla workgroups) this spring to reflect the range of interests in elk management while continuing to represent local interest. In addition to other components of the elk management plan, team members have openly discussed opportunities for, and concerns related to, a population increase. Based on discussions with the groups this summer, staff will be developing an updated draft plan for review by the working groups, partner agencies (e.g., Minnesota Department of Agriculture), and the public in the coming months.*

## **Deer Management Account** **(including emergency deer feeding and wild cervid health management)**

### **Budget Recommendations**

73. This account should be evaluated to determine ramifications from consolidating it with the Deer and Bear Management Account.

***DNR response:** See response #64.*

## **Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account**

### **Budget Recommendations**

74. Develop a plan for incremental increases in the state waterfowl stamp to keep pace (at a minimum) with inflation.

***DNR response:** DNR will consider increasing the cost of a waterfowl stamp in future license increases. See response #7.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

75. Delay indefinitely any plans for an early teal season.

***DNR response:** DNR declined the opportunity to seek an early teal season for the 2014 waterfowl season. The USFWS offered a bonus blue-winged teal option during the regular season, which DNR also declined. We will review other Midwest states' early teal seasons and bonus blue-winged teal harvest and challenges and will seek hunter's input on future waterfowl season opportunities.*

76. Continue the waterfowl youth opener for recruitment of the next generation of duck and goose hunters.

***DNR response:** We agree.*

77. Establish 14,000 acres of seasonal wetlands using moist soil management techniques. The DNR conservation goal is 12,000 acres with some stakeholders desiring a higher target.

***DNR response:** Seasonal wetlands are an increasing area of interest and expertise. The DNR has created a moist soil/seasonal wetland specialist position. Recently, the Wetland Habitat Team hosted a Prairie Wetland Workshop aimed at training staff on management techniques to benefit seasonal wetlands. We are exploring options to expand and accelerate the existing shallow lakes program or to create a similar focus on small wetlands in the prairie region.*

78. Accelerate enhancement of 1,800 shallow lakes for waterfowl migration habitat. This is a long-term goal first recommended by the BOC in 2010.

***DNR response:** We have expanded the shallow lakes program and continue to prioritize shallow lake enhancement at a high level. We continue to seek accelerated funds through Legacy funding. We are exploring additional options to expand and accelerate the existing shallow lakes program.*

## Trout and Salmon Management Account

(There were no recommendations or requests for further information regarding this account.)

## Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account

### Budget Recommendations

79. With the accelerated changes occurring on private land, increase financial and technical support to maintain or enhance RIM, CRP, and other programs that provide habitat and hunter opportunities.

**DNR response:** *We agree that technical and financial assistance to enhance wildlife habitats on private land, especially including lands protected by conservation easements, is important. For lands under conservation easements, we cannot conduct habitat maintenance or enhancement that is the responsibility of the landowner and part of the easement payment and conditions. Efforts to assist private landowners include:*

- 1) DNR area wildlife staffs provide technical or cost-share assistance to private landowners for wildlife conservation using traditional funding sources.*
- 2) Annual allocation of Pheasant Stamp funds to support additional Farm Bill Assistance positions located in County Soil and Water Conservation district offices.*
- 3) Continue to participate in the State Farm Bill Assistance Committee with the Board of Water and Soil Resources and Pheasants Forever. This committee directs the use of Farm Bill Assistance funds, which currently supports 21 FTEs through BWSR and 10 FTEs through Pheasants Forever.*
- 4) Continue to develop and utilize the skills of our 10 Local Technical Teams that are active in the prairie region of the state. These teams, made up of conservation professionals and local citizens, are developing relationships with landowners and each other to deliver available assistance.*

*See additional opportunities for private land conservation in questions #8, 14-19 above.*

80. Double the financial assistance for the partnership with BWSR to expand technical support to landowners and their participation in federal Farm Bill Conservation Programs (from \$150 to \$300K/year).

**DNR response:** *Historically, the DNR contributed at a level of \$300K per year but decreased the amount to \$150K when the budgets became tight and other partners stepped up. Now that we have filled many of those vacancies and know at least some of the potential in the new farm bill, we will re-evaluate our financial commitment to this approach during the next round of budget discussions.*

81. Provide a sustainable funding source for the Walk-in or other innovative hunter access programs through a combination of user fees, the federal farm bill, or other funding opportunities (but not from the short-term increases in the PR fund).

**DNR response:** *See #8 above.*

82. Increase the cost of the pheasant stamp incrementally to keep up with inflation.

**DNR response:** *DNR will consider proposing an increase in the cost of a pheasant stamp in future license initiatives. See #7 above.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

83. Create a best management practice guide for food plots on private land and develop a strategy to distribute to landowners as recommended by the BOC in 2010. The plan should be consistent with the pheasant habitat model that includes winter cover, grasslands, and food within a nine square mile block.

**DNR response:** *We would like to have further discussion with the committee on this topic.*

84. As stable and sustainable funding becomes available, consider including additional counties in the walk-in program.

**DNR response:** *We agree with this recommendation dependent upon issues discussed in #8.*

## **Wild Rice Management Account**

### **Budget Recommendations**

85. Expand partnership with Ducks Unlimited (double monetary effort) to control negative impacts of beaver impounded wild rice areas and increase the number of lakes managed for wild rice from the current 300 by 10% over the next two biennia.

**DNR response:** *DNR will explore options to work with partners, including Ducks Unlimited to improve and expand wild rice management. Wild rice account funds were not sufficient in the past year and we had to supplement them with state waterfowl stamp funds to maintain past year's management levels. We use state waterfowl stamp funds for a variety of high priority waterfowl habitat projects and their increased use to supplement wild rice work is problematic.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

86. Significantly expand information and education about the cultural and natural resource values of this native grain to include increased efforts to recruit and retain wild rice harvesters.

**DNR response:** *We agree this is a needed activity. DNR is looking at the opportunity to partner with Wisconsin on a wild rice video. An effort to highlight wetland habitat across the state using time-lapse cameras may include the placement of a camera on a wild rice water.*

87. Increase marketing efforts for wild ricing to increase license sales and get more people engaged in the outdoors harvesting the most valuable grain that grows in Minnesota.

**DNR response:** *We agree. See #86.*

88. Provide additional detail in the report on lakes that have received some form of management during the fiscal year.

**DNR response:** *We produce a report on the cooperative management of wild rice waters each year and we can make this report available.*

## **Wildlife Acquisition Account (Small Game License Surcharge)**

### **Budget Recommendations**

89. Continue to collaborate with conservation groups to maximize acquisition opportunities of key tracts in a timely manner, as the 8,000 acre goal is unattainable with the limited amount of funds available through this account annually.

***DNR response:*** *We agree that partner acquisition opportunities are vital to meeting this goal in a timely manner.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

90. Continue to acquire the highest priority WMA land to provide contiguous blocks large enough to provide hunting and trapping opportunities at a rate of 8,000 acres per year utilizing a variety of funding sources and partnerships.

***DNR response:*** *We agree. The Strategic Wildlife Acquisition Tool (SWAT) aids in prioritizing and ranking acquisition projects to meet this goal, both internally and with partners.*

91. Continue to identify high quality, high priority lands that are in need of protection for the highest conservation and public benefits.

***DNR response:*** *We agree. The Strategic Wildlife Acquisition Tool (SWAT) aids in prioritizing and ranking acquisition projects to meet this goal, both internally and with partners.*

## **Wild Turkey Management Account**

### **Budget Recommendations**

92. Increase the cost of a turkey license commensurate with inflation.

***DNR response:*** *DNR will consider increasing the cost of a turkey license in future license increase initiatives.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

93. Monitor the loss of woodland and travel corridor habitat to assist in determining the resultant reduction and carrying capacity of turkey populations.

***DNR response:*** *We believe suitable turkey habitat in Minnesota is nearly fully occupied. We would consider the need for a research or monitoring project or program if data indicates a population reduction due to habitat loss.*

94. Monitor, document, and provide information to the public on the impacts of recent destruction and loss of woodland habitat for expansion of agricultural row crops.

***DNR response:*** *DNR cooperates with the Minnesota Forest Resources Council on measuring and reporting forest loss in landscape plans, including loss to agricultural expansion. DNR has been drawing attention to the potential impacts of forest conversion to irrigated crops in the Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains Subsection. DNR's Forest Legacy Program is an example of an effort to protect sensitive forest lands.*

95. Partner with the University of Minnesota to conduct and analyze a hunter survey to determine harvest and satisfaction information.

**DNR response:** *A hunter survey is in process and results will be available in calendar year 2015.*

## Heritage Enhancement Account

### Budget Recommendations

96. Conduct an internal audit to ensure that 87% of the fund is spent in the field as required for this account.

**DNR response:** *DNR completed an internal audit and adopted an administrative policy that defines the term “field operations” and establishes procedures to ensure that the DNR complies with state law.*

97. Analyze the continuing need for the major increase in game and fish funding that went to Forestry in 2010, given the condition of other available funding mechanisms.

**DNR response:** *We agree that this should be analyzed further for future fiscal years. The Heritage Enhancement Account (HEA) funding has allowed the DNR to make investments in staffing, training, equipment, and program structure to complete an inventory of native plant communities on state administered lands. Considering the state administers some 5 million acres, this project will take time to complete. Stable funding from HEA allows us to put the right staff in the right locations to get the right work done. The ultimate outcome of the investments made in inventorying native plant communities will be that resource professionals, forester, biologists, wildlife managers, will make more informed, and thus better, resource management decisions. Better decisions result in healthy, vigorous, climate change adapted forests that benefit a host of wildlife species. Continued stable funding will allow the DNR to complete this important inventory.*

## Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund

(There were no recommendations or requests for further information regarding this account.)

## Walleye Stamp Account

### Budget Recommendations

98. The FOC recommends the DNR increase the marketing efforts for the walleye stamp. Those marketing efforts should include the goal of putting less reliance on the ELS agents to sell the stamp and more emphasis on educating the license buyers before they seek their purchase.

**DNR response:** *We have used marketing in the past including regulations book and point of sale advertising and other awareness and education materials, in addition to requiring the ELS agents to asking the customer if they want to purchase.*

### Policy/Activity Recommendations

99. The FOC recommends the DNR re-evaluate the overall benefits of the Walleye Stamp program. Consideration should be given to either eliminate the program if promotion will not

provide a sizable return on investment or continue with on-going promotion of the stamp providing annual supplemental revenue to support walleye stocking.

**DNR response:** *Even though revenues from this voluntary stamp have been relatively limited, our investment is low and the additional revenue is supplemental to other funding.*

## **Peace Officer Training Account**

This new account was not examined for this report.

## **Wolf Management and Monitoring Account**

### **Budget Recommendations**

100. Update revenue estimates for future years, which will change, based on reduced permits.

**DNR response:** *We will update revenue estimates based upon our best estimate of permit and license sales numbers.*

101. Recommend hunting and trapping fees be increased from the legislatively set \$30 to \$50 to better reflect the costs of monitoring and managing this species.

**DNR response:** *This was close to our original license fee recommended to the legislature. We will consider fee increases in the future.*

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

102. Revise estimates (true total costs) for managing timber wolves, e.g. include Enforcement hours and list the total cost of wolf management and monitoring in the Game and Fish Fund Report.

**DNR response:** *We will investigate the feasibility of capturing total costs spent on wolf management and enforcement in the GFF report.*

103. Explore other funding options, including general fund dollars or funds from the Department of Agriculture or USDA for funding depredation response.

**DNR response:** *We will explore other funding options.*

104. Strongly support the DNR's science based wolf management plan for hunting and trapping.

**DNR response:** *Thank you.*

## **Emerging/Other Issues**

### **Policy/Activity Recommendations**

105. Support expenditures from the anticipated short-term increase in Pittman Robertson funding for significant projects and other habitat protection and management activities that do not have tails in future years when funding is expected to be reduced.

**DNR response:** *Biennial budget planning for FY 2016-2017 will include initiatives to address capturing short-term increases in federal aid.*

106. The BOC believes that litigation costs associated with denial of research permits, setting of special angling regulations, management of high profile species (e.g. wolves), or similar issues should not be allocated to the GFF as appears to be the current practice or intent, but instead borne by all Minnesota citizens. The BOC recommends that the DNR identify and propose to the legislature an alternative source of funding in an effort to prevent unexpected reductions in game and fish funding for management activities.

***DNR response:** We are exploring options to reduce legal fees associated with litigation, including the hiring of a general counsel to provide internal legal services and strategic legal guidance to help avoid or minimize future lawsuits. In the long term, we believe this will reduce Attorney General costs. We would like to discuss this further with the BOC.*

## Compilation of information requests and DNR follow-up plan

ACCOUNT	FOC REQUEST	WOC REQUEST	DNR FOLLOW-UP PLAN
<b>Fish Management</b>	None	None	
<b>Muskie Stocking and Management</b>	<p>A. Do organizations (e.g. Muskies, Inc. or others) provide direct dollars in addition to the posted Game and Fish Fund dollars for the propagation of various sizes of muskie?</p> <p>B. If Muskies, Inc. provides funds, does that contribution actually reduce the “calculated” cost per fish?</p> <p>C. The FOC would like a better explanation for the difference in actual costs versus the way in which the costs are calculated and reported in the Game and Fish Fund Report.</p> <p>D. How much of the program cost is due to rearing fish to the larger size?</p>	None	<p><i>Direct dollars from non-governmental organizations go into a gift account that is not part of the Game and Fish Fund.</i></p> <p><i>We can be clearer and more transparent about funding sources and our use of the Game and Fish Fund relative to total funding of program costs and will plan to have that discussion with the committee in 2015.</i></p> <p><i>We plan further discussion with the FOC in 2015 about the other two questions.</i></p>
<b>Coldwater Fish Stocking and Management Program</b>	The FOC would like an opportunity to provide input in connection with the updating of the Lake Superior Management Plan, scheduled to begin in fall 2014.	None	<i>We added committee members to the list of invitees that will participate in the Lake Superior Plan revision process.</i>
<b>Wildlife Management</b>	None	<p>A. Standards and desired future conditions for major units of the DNR’s wildlife management areas</p> <p>B. Information on the successes of the staffing realignment</p> <p>C. Additional sustainable funding proposals for wolf management and the walk-in access program in addition to the ones that have not met with legislative approval</p>	<p>A. <i>The Wildlife Section is requesting an FY 2016-2017 biennial budget initiative to fund updates of the major unit master plans (where we identify desired future conditions).</i></p> <p>B. <i>See detailed response regarding staffing realignment.</i></p> <p>C. <i>See DNR responses to #8 re: Walk-In Access Program and #9 re: Wolf Management.</i></p>

ACCOUNT	FOC REQUEST	WOC REQUEST	DNR FOLLOW-UP PLAN
<b>Outreach Section</b>	<p>A. Overview of total Outreach efforts and overall marketing strategies to the BOC next year</p> <p>B. Estimate of all hunting and angling outreach and marketing efforts and related activities by DNR staff to go along with the \$1.654 million identified in the separate Outreach section</p> <p>C. Participation trend graph for shooting sports (High School trap and Scholastic Clays) in next year's report</p>	None	<p><i>We welcome the opportunity to do this at an upcoming FOC meeting.</i></p> <p><i>We can provide the requested graph in the next DNR report.</i></p>
<b>License Center Operations</b>	None	None	
<b>Ecological and Water Resources</b>	None	None	
<b>Enforcement</b>	Provide the BOC with an update during the next review cycle regarding the strategic plan and innovative concepts for enforcement efforts and activities.		<i>We will do so.</i>
<b>Parks and Trails</b>	Update on the boating access plan FY 2014-2015 during the next review cycle	None	<i>We will share the updated plan with the FOC in 2015.</i>
<b>Forestry</b>		<p>A. Report on the outcome for increasing logging operations for forest habitat management.</p> <p>B. Analyze and seek to reduce the 16% department services charge from GFF expenditures for forestry (e.g., Lands and Minerals charges 9% of total expenditures for department services.)</p>	<p>A. <i>We look forward to meeting with FOC and sharing the updated plan.</i></p> <p>B. <i>MMB allocates indirect costs across each of the division's funding sources. The fiscal year 2014 service charge will be roughly 14%.</i></p>
<b>Lands and Minerals</b>	None	<p>A. Provide an update on the costs of land records system development and ongoing maintenance and operations costs.</p> <p>B. Provide an update on the continuous improvement process for land management and acquisition activities.</p>	<p><i>See detailed response for a cost breakdown.</i></p> <p><i>The report on the continuous improvement project for land acquisition will be available in the fall of 2015.</i></p>
<b>Operations Support</b>	An analysis to ensure that MN.IT costs charged to the DNR are fair and equitable compared to other agencies and justified based on operational requirements.	Consider how total overhead costs could be included in the next report.	<i>The DNR has a rigorous methodology for allocating costs for operations governance programs. The legislature authorized the creation of the shared services model, which includes a MN.IT @DNR provision. DNR's internal policy for this function is Operational Order 122 "Shared Services Governance Framework." Cross-functional advisory groups and committees, DNR's Shared Services Governance Board, and DNR's senior managers review rates and</i>

ACCOUNT	FOC REQUEST	WOC REQUEST	DNR FOLLOW-UP PLAN
			<p>costs annually. The Commissioner approves final rates and costs.</p> <p>The DNR's 2014-2015 Shared Services Outcomes Report will be available by December 2015. A copy of the 2012-13 Biennial Report is available upon request.</p>
<b>Deer and Bear Management – Computerized Licensing</b>	None	Analyze the benefits of streamlining the deer and bear management accounts, eliminate the deer feeding account, while keeping a separate wild cervid health sub-account.	See earlier responses related to these accounts. We would like to have further discussion with the committee.
<b>Deer Management Account</b>	None	Inform the WOC about the ramifications of combining the two accounts.	See response #64.
<b>Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Account</b>	None	Provide an update on meeting performance outcomes.	We would like to have further discussion with the committee.
<b>Trout and Salmon Management Account</b>	None	None	
<b>Pheasant Habitat Improvement Account</b>	None	Report on the recommendation for funding a \$150K increase in the partnership funding with BWSR.	We would like to have further discussion with the committee.
<b>Wild Rice Management Account</b>	None	As part of the next review cycle, please provide a list of which lakes currently receive active wild rice management.	We would like to have further discussion with the committee.
<b>Wildlife Acquisition</b>	None	None	
<b>Wild Turkey Management Account</b>	None	Report to the WOC on the results and outcomes of the hunter satisfaction survey in calendar year 2015.	See response #95.
<b>Heritage Enhancement Account</b>	Report to the BOC on the audit results in 2015.		Results are pending.

ACCOUNT	FOC REQUEST	WOC REQUEST	DNR FOLLOW-UP PLAN
<b>Lifetime Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund</b>	None	None	
<b>Walleye Stamp Account</b>	None	None	
<b>Peace Officer Training Account</b>	None	None	
<b>Wolf Management and Monitoring Account</b>	None	Report on total costs for managing and monitoring wolves and plans for sustainable funding sources to cover all costs.	<i>We would like to have further discussion with the committee.</i>