



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2016-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Delivery of Natural Resources Law Enforcement \$1,004,000 FY16/\$1,523,000 FY17 [Game and Fish Fund and Natural Resources Fund]

It Is Needed Because

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Enforcement Division's primary role is protecting natural resources and public safety. We accomplish this through education, outreach and delivery of law enforcement services. The capacity to provide these services has diminished due to budgets not keeping pace with inflationary costs. This funding will be used to hire conservation officers to fill the equivalent of 11 of the 24 vacant field stations over the biennium.

The services provided by Conservation Officers support the DNR mission by:

- Protecting habitat (water, air, wetlands, vegetation);
- Ensuring sustainable harvest of resources;
- Increasing quality of life by ensuring safe and equitable outdoor experiences;
- Recruiting and training of youth and adults in outdoor activities;
- Supporting economic opportunities, ensuring commercial activities are conducted in sustainable manner; and
- Responding to citizen calls for service search and rescue, and natural disasters 24/7.

The proposal will also support the implementation of the Division of Enforcement Strategic Plan.

Major Program Elements

The proposal requests an increase to base funding of \$1,004,000 in FY16 and \$1,523,000 in FY17 to fund 7.5 conservation officers in FY16 and an additional 4 conservation officers in FY17 for a total 11 new officers in biennium to provide law enforcement services and fill field officer vacancies across the state that have increased to 24 over the last several years.

Key Measures and Outcomes

Funding will help reverse the diminishing capacity of the division to provide core law enforcement services state-wide. The Division has experienced a reduction of approximately 60,000 hours of conservation officer service in FY14-15 through 24 field officer vacancies (approx. 15% of complement). This funding would reduce officer vacancies from 24 to 13 over the biennium.

Filling vacant stations will help to ensure the safety and quality of life for the citizens of Minnesota who rely on the health of our natural resources for their recreational and commercial uses.

Fiscal Impacts

Funding for this proposal comes from a variety of dedicated accounts including Game & Fish Fund (GFF), Natural Resource Fund (Water Recreation, Snowmobile, All-Terrain Vehicle, Off-Road Vehicle, Off-Highway Motorcycle, and the Heritage Enhancement account).

- \$742,000 in FY16 and \$1,125,000 in FY17 from the Game and Fish Fund.
- \$262,000 in FY 16 and \$398,000 in FY17 from the Natural Resources Fund.

The funding from these accounts would need to be continued in the base funding to maintain the positions.

For Further Information, Please Contact:

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