



# Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



## 2015 Enforcement Service Deficiency \$568,000/FY15 [General Fund, Game and Fish Fund, and NR 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 law enforcement. Over time, the capacity to serve this role throughout the state has diminished due to impacts of inflation over years of flat budgets.

The Enforcement Division entered fiscal year 2015 with a projected \$1.8 million deficit. Some causes include:

- Bargaining unit negotiated compensation adjustments of 2.5% to 3% per year over the last four years;
- 1.5 percentage point increase (8% increase) in employer share retirement enacted in the 2014 legislative session;
- Vehicle increases for acquisition, maintenance and insurance; and
- Division funding tied to dedicated accounts (snowmobile, ATV, etc.). Spending in these funds is limited to the lesser of the appropriation amount or the available funds from fees. Resources available do not always match program needs.

In addition, the division has been maintaining 28 vacancies, including 24 field officer positions to meet prior years' budget challenges. The DNR cannot continue to reduce service area coverage by enforcement staff to resolve this issue.

The DNR has been receiving concerns from citizens and user groups related to the limited coverage and reduced capacity of the Division. If we continue down this path without additional resources, there is a significant potential for a reduction in voluntary compliance for resource protection and public safety

regulations impacting the quality of outdoor recreation and tourism.

The division has enacted a number of cost reduction options and budget adjustments. These actions have been accomplished in a way to allow for maintaining acceptable services levels and include:

- Reducing training, travel, fleet and communication (radio) costs;
- Postponing of the Conservation Officer Academy;
- Identifying additional federal resources; and
- Refocusing work to match areas of available state funding (boat safety, AIS).

Through these actions, we have identified approximately \$1.3 million in savings or offsets.

### Major program elements

The proposal requests \$568,000 in one-time funding to offset the balance of the projected deficit that are specifically related to recent cost increases:

- \$255,000 for the increase in employer paid portion of the State Patrol Retirement Plan for FY 2015, and
- \$313,000 for the 3% pay increase for FY2014 that will be paid as back-pay in FY15.

### Key measures and outcomes

Funding allows the DNR to maintain current staffing and service coverage levels and avoid a reduction of up to 15,000 service hours.

### Fiscal impacts

Funding of this proposal would come from a variety of funds including General Fund, Natural Resource Fund (NR) and Game and Fish Fund (GFF).

- \$69,000 GF
- \$371,000 GFF
- \$128,000 NR

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