

Overview of Game and Fish Fund Citizen Oversight

AUTHORIZATION IN STATUTE

Citizen oversight of the Game and Fish Fund has been authorized in statute since 1994. The current citation is Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.055, subd. 4b.

Game and Fish Fund contains funds from several sources, for example:

- License fees, stamps, and surcharges for hunting and angling
- Lottery in-Lieu funds
- Some federal funds
- Fines and miscellaneous receipts

HOW THE OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE HAS EVOLVED

1994 — Established in Minn. Stat. § 97A.055, subd. 4a	2001 — Reauthorized and restructured in Minn. Stat. § 97A.055, subd. 4b	2011 — Reauthorized and restructured in Minn. Stat. § 97A.055, subd. 4b
7 separate committees. Members appointed by DNR Commissioner.	Integrated structure with several subcommittees plus an umbrella group. Members appointed by DNR Commissioner.	Integrated structure with 2 principal citizen oversight committees plus an umbrella group. Members appointed by DNR Commissioner.
<p>The "general" committee was commonly called the "Citizen Oversight Committee" (COC).</p> <p>COC members wrote the 2001 reauthorization bill and found sponsors.</p>	<p>Subcommittees designate their own chairs, which together form an umbrella "Budgetary Oversight Committee" (BOC).</p> <p>DNR Commissioner appoints another person to chair the BOC, because the statute bars subcommittee chairs from chairing the BOC.</p>	<p>Each committee designates its own chairs plus 4 other members to serve on an umbrella "Budgetary Oversight Committee" (BOC).</p> <p>DNR Commissioner appoints an 11th person to chair the BOC, because the statute bars subcommittee chairs from chairing the BOC.</p>
Tasks are to review annual reports of revenue and expenditures, and make recommendations to the legislature and the commissioner for improvements in the management and use of money in the game and fish fund.	<p>Oversight participants sought and gained two additional tasks:</p> <p>Recommendations to the commissioner for outcome goals from expenditures (added in 2000; sought by Wildlife Operations Committee)</p> <p>Biennial budget plan recommendations to the commissioner by August 15 of each even-numbered year (added in 2001; sought by former Citizen Oversight Committee)</p>	Tasks remain unchanged from previous authorization.

HOW MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED

Members serve in the citizen oversight process as long as the member and the DNR Commissioner both want the appointment to continue. DNR senior managers make recommendations to the commissioner for new appointments and advise on continuing appointments. These appointments are for individuals, not formal representatives of particular organizations. The DNR strives to have an appropriate range of interests and perspectives on each committee.

An entirely new slate of appointments was made in December 2011 for the new oversight structure, following an open request for applications.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND TASKS

The DNR commissioner appoints oversight committee members and each committee chooses its own chair.

The **Fisheries Oversight Committee (FOC)** reviews fisheries funding and expenditures, including activities related to trout and salmon stamps and walleye stamps.

The **Wildlife Oversight Committee (WOC)** reviews wildlife funding and expenditures, including activities related to migratory waterfowl, pheasant, and wild turkey management and deer and big game management.

FOC and WOC tasks are:

- Review annual reports of revenue and expenditures;
- Review the proposed work plans and budgets for the coming year;
- Propose changes in policies, activities, and revenue enhancements or reductions;
- Review other relevant information; and
- Make recommendations for improvements in the management and use of money in the game and fish fund

The **Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC)** is composed of the chairs of the Fisheries Oversight Committee and the Wildlife Oversight Committee and four additional members from each committee. The DNR Commissioner appoints the BOC Chair, who may not be a FOC or WOC chair.

BOC tasks are:

- Coordinate integration of the fisheries and wildlife committees' reports into an annual report to the legislature;
- Recommend changes on a broad level in policies, activities, and revenue enhancements or reductions;
- Provide a forum to address issues that transcend the fisheries and wildlife committees; and
- Develop recommendations for a biennial budget plan and report for expenditures on game and fish activities and, by August 15 of each even-numbered year, submit the budget plan recommendations to the commissioner and to the senate and house committees with jurisdiction over natural resources.
- May also make recommendations to the commissioner and to the senate and house committees with jurisdiction over natural resources for outcome goals from expenditures.

DNR SUPPORT

DNR managers and staff provide technical information and assistance to the oversight committees. DNR provides meeting rooms along with video and audio conferencing as needed. A facilitator assists the BOC with work planning, effective meetings, group decision-making, and production of reports and other communications. DNR managers and commissioners are available for BOC meetings.

Since FY 2002, the DNR has posted on the DNR's website its annual Game and Fish Fund expenditures reports, BOC reports and correspondence, and other information about citizen oversight of the Game and Fish Fund.