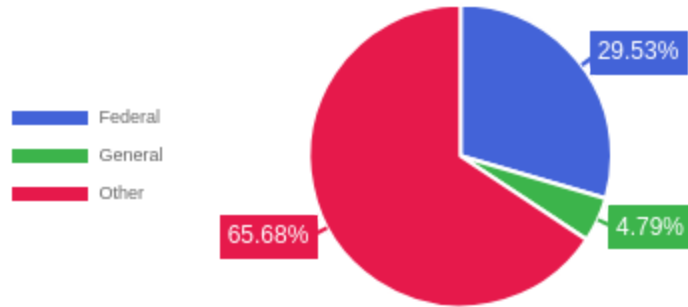


# Department of Game, Fish and Parks

## Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Brief Summary

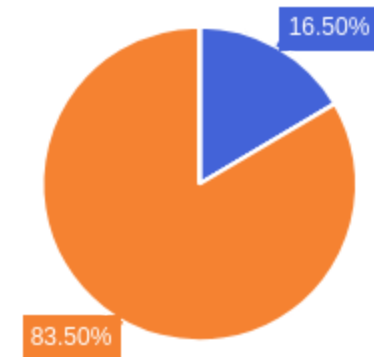
Information contained in this document is based on the Governor's FY2026 Budget and may not correspond with the final budget adopted by the Legislature.

### Source of Funds



Administration  
State Parks and Recreation

### Distribution of General Funds



### Key Personnel

Kevin Robling, Secretary

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks and Recreation Division

Chris Peterson, Finance Officer

Scott Simpson, Deputy Secretary

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife Division

### Mission of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks

We serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.

### Department of Game, Fish and Parks Budget Units

- Administration (0601)
- Wildlife - Info (0610)
- Wildlife -Development/Improvement - Info (0612)
- State Parks and Recreation (0620)
- State Parks and Recreation - Dev/Imp (0621)
- Snowmobile Trails - Info (0622)

## Major Items Summary - Department of Game, Fish and Parks

	Agency Request					Governor's Recommendation				
	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE
<b>FY 2026 Base Budget</b>	<b>\$7,481,021</b>	<b>\$38,302,285</b>	<b>\$83,520,809</b>	<b>\$129,304,115</b>	<b>583.9</b>	<b>\$7,481,021</b>	<b>\$38,302,285</b>	<b>\$83,520,809</b>	<b>\$129,304,115</b>	<b>583.9</b>
1. Bond/Lease Payment Adjustments	(\$2,355)	\$0	\$0	(\$2,355)	0.0	(\$796,010)	\$0	\$0	(\$796,010)	0.0
2. Parks and Recreation Capital Projects	\$0	(\$164,500)	\$795,000	\$630,500	0.0	\$0	(\$164,500)	\$795,000	\$630,500	0.0
3. Seasonal Employee Salary Funding Swap	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0	(\$500,000)	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	0.0
4. Wildlife Equipment Replacement Fund Shift	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
<b>FY 2026 Total Budget</b>	<b>\$7,478,666</b>	<b>\$38,137,785</b>	<b>\$84,315,809</b>	<b>\$129,932,260</b>	<b>583.9</b>	<b>\$6,185,011</b>	<b>\$38,137,785</b>	<b>\$84,815,809</b>	<b>\$129,138,605</b>	<b>583.9</b>
Change from Base Budget	(\$2,355)	(\$164,500)	\$795,000	\$628,145	0.0	(\$1,296,010)	(\$164,500)	\$1,295,000	(\$165,510)	0.0
% Change from Base Budget	(0.0%)	(0.4%)	1.0%	0.5%	0.0%	(17.3%)	(0.4%)	1.6%	(0.1%)	0.0%

### 1. Bond/Lease Payment Adjustments

	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE
Agency Request	(\$2,355)	\$0	\$0	(\$2,355)	0.00
Governor's Recommendation	(\$796,010)	\$0	\$0	(\$796,010)	0.00

The agency requests a decrease of **(\$2,355)** in **general funds** for bond payment schedule adjustments. This is to align general funds with bond schedules.

Series	Location	Project	Orig. Amount
2006A	Blue Dog, Cleghorn Springs, McNenny	fish hatcheries improvements	10,000,000
2007	Custer State Park - Administration	CSP improvements	5,110,000
2007	Custer State Park - Administration	Camping Cabins	840,000
2008	Custer State Park - Administration	CSP improvements	2,182,271
2010C	Custer State Park - Administration	CSP improvements	3,875,000
2013D	Snake Creek M & O	Cedar Shores stabilization project	3,000,000
2013D	Angostura	Water/sewer system replacement	1,500,000
2014A	Newton Hills M & O	Good Earth visitor center	1,237,759
2014A	Custer State Park - Administration	CSP visitor center	825,173
2015A	Custer State Park - Administration	CSP improvements	11,500,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>40,070,203</b>

The governor recommends a decrease of **(\$796,010)** in **general funds**. The governor recommended using one time dollars to payoff the fish hatcheries bond to free up ongoing dollars in addition to bond schedule changes originally requested by the agency.

2. Parks and Recreation Capital Projects

	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE
Agency Request	\$0	(\$164,500)	\$795,000	\$630,500	0.00
Governor's Recommendation	\$0	(\$164,500)	\$795,000	\$630,500	0.00

The agency requests a decrease of **(\$164,500)** in **federal fund** expenditure authority and an increase of **\$795,000** in **other fund** expenditure authority for parks and recreation capital projects. GFP utilizes zero-based budgeting for all capital development projects. For FY26, funds would be focused on preventative maintenance (e.g. maintenance of park roads, natural and cultural resources, park buildings, trails and utility projects) rather than waterbased recreation (e.g. boat ramp and boat dock improvement projects and fish cleaning stations) or new development (e.g. new playground installation, paving new park roads, and new welcome centers) as revenues are returning to normal after COVID.

A full list of projects can be found in the detail budget brief.

*The governor recommends this request.*

3. Seasonal Employee Salary Funding Swap

	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE
Agency Request	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00
Governor's Recommendation	(\$500,000)	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	0.00

*The governor recommends a decrease of **(\$500,000)** in **general funds** and an increase of **\$500,000** in **other fund** expenditure authority for seasonal employee salaries.* Seasonal staff perform a large variety of tasks ranging from customer service, custodial services, mowing grass, tree maintenance, fee collection, project work to maintain and improve the capital assets in state parks, educational programming for visitors, etc. Interns are employed to learn the job responsibilities of a Park Manager or Naturalist position. Interns are typically the recruitment pool for future full-time positions with the Division of Parks and Rec. GFP has no plans to raise licenses and/or fees to cover the recommended decrease of general funds in the FY26 budget recommendation.

4. Wildlife Equipment Replacement Fund Shift

	General	Federal	Other	Total	FTE
Agency Request	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00
Governor's Recommendation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00

The agency requests a fund shift of **\$200,000** in **other fund expenditure authority** from aquatic management to wildlife administrative services for wildlife equipment replacement. The agency owns and maintains vehicles and intend to replace pickups for wildlife staff.

The agency had reduced capital expenses due to low cash flow as fees have not increased at the same rate as salary policy. A license fee package increase was approved by the rules review committee in 2024. The agency anticipates the fee increases will allow the agency to resume normal operations such as replacing vehicles.

A list of wildlife projects can be found in the detail budget brief.

Department of Game, Fish and Parks Budget Request							
By Fund Category	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2024 Budget Revised	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Agency Request	FY 2026 Governors Recommended	Change From FY2025
General	\$6,742,859	\$7,318,163	\$7,319,814	\$7,481,021	\$7,478,666	\$6,185,011	(\$1,296,010)
Federal	\$28,349,767	\$32,701,737	\$33,748,679	\$38,302,285	\$38,137,785	\$38,137,785	(\$164,500)
Other	\$89,355,352	\$83,965,747	\$85,532,746	\$83,520,809	\$84,315,809	\$84,815,809	\$1,295,000
Total	\$124,447,978	\$123,985,647	\$126,601,239	\$129,304,115	\$129,932,260	\$129,138,605	(\$165,510)
By Program	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2024 Budget Revised	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Agency Request	FY 2026 Governors Recommended	Change From FY2025
Administration	\$4,199,431	\$4,431,842	\$4,882,062	\$5,062,323	\$5,061,943	\$5,061,943	(\$380)
Wildlife - Info	\$60,570,103	\$62,249,674	\$63,093,681	\$64,477,767	\$64,477,767	\$64,477,767	\$0
Wildlife - Development/Improvement - Info	\$4,794,400	\$7,362,875	\$7,362,875	\$11,175,000	\$11,175,000	\$11,175,000	\$0
State Parks and Recreation	\$31,994,932	\$33,241,438	\$33,981,930	\$34,387,962	\$34,385,987	\$33,592,332	(\$795,630)
State Parks and Recreation - Dev/Imp	\$21,617,445	\$15,816,000	\$15,816,000	\$12,714,500	\$13,345,000	\$13,345,000	\$630,500
Snowmobile Trails - Info	\$1,271,666	\$883,819	\$1,464,691	\$1,486,563	\$1,486,563	\$1,486,563	\$0
Total	\$124,447,978	\$123,985,647	\$126,601,239	\$129,304,115	\$129,932,260	\$129,138,605	(\$165,510)
By Object Expenditure Personnel Costs	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2024 Budget Revised	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Agency Request	FY 2026 Governors Recommended	Change From FY2025
	\$40,482,258	\$45,271,507	\$46,330,222	\$47,499,765	\$47,499,765	\$47,499,765	\$0
Salaries	\$31,415,630	\$35,214,454	\$36,071,396	\$36,898,484	\$36,898,484	\$36,898,484	\$0
Benefits	\$9,066,628	\$10,057,053	\$10,258,826	\$10,601,281	\$10,601,281	\$10,601,281	\$0

Operating Expenditures	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2024 Budget Revised	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Agency Request	FY 2026 Governors Recommended	Change From FY2025
	\$83,965,720	\$78,714,140	\$80,271,017	\$81,804,350	\$82,432,495	\$81,638,840	(\$165,510)
Travel	\$5,028,528	\$4,898,228	\$5,703,313	\$5,180,359	\$5,180,359	\$5,180,359	\$0
Contractual Services	\$36,868,424	\$37,260,310	\$34,822,696	\$37,561,207	\$37,558,852	\$36,765,197	(\$796,010)
Supplies	\$9,172,561	\$8,327,577	\$8,358,430	\$8,404,854	\$8,404,854	\$8,404,854	\$0
Grants	\$1,991,922	\$1,556,501	\$3,220,885	\$2,506,600	\$2,506,600	\$2,506,600	\$0
Capital Outlay	\$29,845,147	\$25,030,088	\$27,564,784	\$27,464,330	\$28,094,830	\$28,094,830	\$630,500
Other Expenses and Budgeted Operating Transfers Out	\$1,059,139	\$1,641,435	\$600,909	\$687,000	\$687,000	\$687,000	\$0
Total	\$124,447,978	\$123,985,647	\$126,601,239	\$129,304,115	\$129,932,260	\$129,138,605	(\$165,510)
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	573.9	576.8	583.9	583.9	583.9	583.9	0.00

## Funding Sources (Governor's Recommended)

	General	Federal	Other	General%	Federal%	Other%
STATE GENERAL FUND	\$6,185,011	\$0	\$0	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USFWS HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
NATIONAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS F	\$0	\$714,489	\$0	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%
LAND & WATER CONSERVATION GRAN	\$0	\$2,411,115	\$0	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%
BOR RETROFIT & CONSTRUCT DISAB	\$0	\$459,000	\$0	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
USFWS FISHING & MOTORBOATING A	\$0	\$542,570	\$0	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%
US COAST GUARD BOATING SAFETY	\$0	\$1,126,251	\$0	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%
COE-MISSOURI RIVER IMPLEMENTAT	\$0	\$1,841,373	\$0	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%
ENHANCED HUNTER EDUCATION PROG	\$0	\$132,708	\$0	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
USFWS FISHING ACCESS	\$0	\$295,173	\$0	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
USFWS STWD PUBLIC LAND MGT & D	\$0	\$14,556,552	\$0	0.0%	38.2%	0.0%
USFWS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SURV	\$0	\$1,684,553	\$0	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
USFWS WALK-IN PUBLIC HUNTING A	\$0	\$2,995,612	\$0	0.0%	7.9%	0.0%
MIGRATORY BIRD JOINT VENTURES	\$0	\$17,000	\$0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
STWD PRIVATE LANDS WILDLIFE HA	\$0	\$1,103,330	\$0	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
WILDLIFE RESTORATION	\$0	\$2,150,000	\$0	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%
STATE WILDLIFE GRANT PROGRAM (	\$0	\$321,688	\$0	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
GFP-WILDLIFE FEDERAL FUNDS	\$0	\$1,242,275	\$0	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%
USFWS FISHING ACCESS	\$0	\$120,225	\$0	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
USFWS STATEWIDE FISH HATCHERY	\$0	\$2,460,505	\$0	0.0%	6.5%	0.0%
USFWS FISH MANAGEMENT SURVEYS	\$0	\$1,015,939	\$0	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
USFWS FISHING & MOTORBOATING A	\$0	\$49,400	\$0	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
USFWS AQUATIC EDUCATION PROGRA	\$0	\$178,331	\$0	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
USFWS SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$0	\$577,994	\$0	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
QZAP GRANT	\$0	\$179,515	\$0	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
US COAST GUARD BOATING SAFETY	\$0	\$380,445	\$0	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
USFWS HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM	\$0	\$512,256	\$0	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
USFWS STATEWIDE FISHERIES RES	\$0	\$423,000	\$0	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
USFWS WILDLIFE RESEARCH	\$0	\$243,466	\$0	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%
USFWS STWD ENDANGERED SPECIES	\$0	\$12,200	\$0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SURVEI	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
ENHANCED HUNTER EDUCATION PROG	\$0	\$95,920	\$0	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
COE-MISSOURI RIVER IMPLEMENTAT	\$0	\$164,900	\$0	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
GAME FISH & PARKS ADMINISTRATION	\$0	\$0	\$4,041,698	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
DEPT OF GAME, FISH & PARKS FUND	\$0	\$0	\$37,891,800	0.0%	0.0%	44.7%

	General	Federal	Other	General%	Federal%	Other%
USFWS AQUATIC EDUCATION PROGRA	\$0	\$0	\$25,670	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USFWS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SURV	\$0	\$0	\$328,162	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
USFWS HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM	\$0	\$0	\$60,825	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
ENHANCED HUNTER EDUCATION PROG	\$0	\$0	\$12,800	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USFWS FISHING ACCESS	\$0	\$0	\$147,666	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT	\$0	\$0	\$2,954,449	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%
USFWS STWD RPR. & MAINT. OF SM	\$0	\$0	\$42,475	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
USFWS STWD PUBLIC LAND MGT & D	\$0	\$0	\$41,363	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USFWS STATEWIDE FISH HATCHERY	\$0	\$0	\$174,390	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
NO DESC (PRIOR)	\$0	\$0	\$6,990	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
HABITAT STAMP	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL FUND	\$0	\$0	\$2,418,871	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
PARKS AND RECREATION	\$0	\$0	\$33,565,721	0.0%	0.0%	39.6%
USFWS FISHING ACCESS	\$0	\$0	\$241,346	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
US COAST GUARD BOATING SAFETY	\$0	\$0	\$253,436	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
PARKS PROMOTION FEES	\$0	\$0	\$57,100	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
USFWS FISHING & MOTORBOATING A	\$0	\$0	\$3,504	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NATIONAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS F	\$0	\$0	\$60,980	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
SNOWMOBILE TRAILS FUND	\$0	\$0	\$1,486,563	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%