

September 15, 2023

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Division of the Budget

Mr. Adam Proffitt, Director
Division of Budget
900 SW Jackson, Suite 504-N
Landon State Office Building
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Director Proffitt;

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks submits our fiscal year 2025 budget for your consideration. The submittal fiscal year 2025 is very similar to our fiscal year 2024 budget request. We would note the following change packages that are included in the electronic submittal.

Supplemental requests for fiscal year 2024:

- 1) The Department requests additional spending authority from the Park Fee Fund in the amount of \$200,000 in FY2024. This authority is needed to replace a shower house in El Dorado State Park that must be replaced.
- 2) The Department also requests additional spending authority in FY2024 in the amount of \$3,000,000. These funds are from a federal grant the agency Parks Division is receiving from federal highway funds. These funds will be used to continue development of the Flint Hills Trail. When complete the Flint Hills Trail will provide a needed recreational opportunity for Kansans and non-resident visitors to the state. The trail will also support local tourism and related economic benefits.
- 3) The Department requests supplemental spending authority of \$300,000 from the Park Fee Fund. This authority is necessary as required matching funds for the federal highway funds obtained for development of the Flint Hills Trail referenced in the previous request.

Enhancement Requests for Fiscal Year 2025.

- 1) The Department requests an Enhancement in FY2025 of \$3,500,000 that represents spending authority for funds from the federal grant referenced above for development of the Flint Hills Trail. These are federal highway funds were secured by our State Parks Division. Required matching funds will come from the Park Fee Funds included in the agencies FY2025 budget request.

This federal grant is expected to provide funding for development of the Flint Hills Trail for several additional years. Future years budget requests will include funding for this project.

- 2) The Department requests an Enhancement of \$200,000 from the State General Fund. These monies would be used as matching funds for a federal grant to acquire a parcel of land adjacent to Lovewell Wildlife Management Area in Jewell County. Funding from the State General Fund to acquire this property was included in the recommended budget for FY2024. However, the 2023 legislature did not approve the acquisition.

The Department is including acquisition of this property as a legislative priority this year. KDWP staff will be scheduling opportunities for the public to be informed about the intent to acquire the property and will be contacting people and interest groups in the area this fall.

This property is adjacent to an existing wildlife area managed by the Department. KDWP does not anticipate any additional staff or equipment resources will be needed to manage this property. Any related management expenses will come from existing Department funding allocated to the management of Lovewell Wildlife Management Area.

Thank you for consideration of the Department's Fiscal Year 2025 budget request. We look forward to working with you and the Division of Budget staff. Please reach out at any time if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Brad Loveless, Secretary

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request and Narrative

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) is the state outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife management agency. The FY2025 budget request totals \$119,566,630, or an approximately \$4 million increase from the approved FY2024 budget. The budget increase is attributable to two broad areas, capital improvements and the much-needed salary increase approved by the 2023 Kansas Legislature.

The FY2025 KDWP budget request includes spending authority totaling \$44.4 million from federal grants, \$70.3 million from fees and permits and \$4.76 million from allocated funds.

Allocated funds include a requested enhancement from the State General Fund of \$200,000. These monies would be used to provide the required match for a federal grant available to KDWP for the purchase of a parcel of property adjacent to Lovewell Wildlife Management Area in Jewell County. In addition, the Department was allocated \$4,345,379 of funds from the Economic Development Initiative Fund. EDIF funds are used to provide support in the State Parks Division and Administration. Finally, \$224,457 is requested from the State Water Plan Fund. These will be used to provide support for Aquatic Invasive Species control efforts. This is identical to the amount approved for invasive species efforts from the State Water Plan Fund in the FY2024 budget.

KDWP generates revenue from a variety of permits associated with camping and outdoor recreation including boating registrations, hunting permits and tags, fishing permits, camping fees and cabin rentals in state parks and associated activities.

In many respects the requested FY2025 budget is very similar to the approved FY2024 budget. Significant new efforts reflected in the FY2025 request include initiation of development efforts at the new Lehigh Portland State Park near Iola, KS that was approved by the 2023 Kansas Legislature. Funding for development of amenities for this new state park will be primarily supported by a federal grant. In addition, the same grant includes funding for capital improvements at three other existing state parks.

KDWP developed budget requests under the following budgeted divisions:

Administration

The Administrative sections within KDWP provide for support functions within the agency that include operational support. A change KDWP requests in the FY2025 budget is a return to separating Administration, Executive Services and Information budget requests. These three divisions were combined in the FY2024 budget. KDWP has determined that complicated internal budgeting and requests a return to the previous, longstanding format with separate budgeting. As a result, the Administration budget appears to be \$3.3 million less than FY2024, but the difference is explained by budgeting separately.

The FY2025 Administration budget request totals \$4,760,227 from all sources. A copy of the summary and detailed Salary, Contractual, Commodities and Capital Outlay request follows.

Executive Services

The Executive Services division of the budget request includes support for the Departments major offices, Office of the Secretary, Engineering Services and other support services of the agency. As referenced above, for FY2025 KDWP is requesting the Executive Services portion of the budget be submitted separately from the Administration budget. There are no significant changes in this portion of the budget for FY2025. From all funding sources the Executive Services budget request is \$4,346,629. This includes approximately \$3 million of salary and \$1.3 million of operational funding.

Information Services

Budgeting for Information include two Sections within the Department, the Information Technology Section and Public Information. Information Technology includes staffing and critical support for computer services and communication technology. Public Information includes agency efforts related to communication with the public and press in a variety of printed and digital formats. This includes the Department magazine.

Noteworthy within this portion of the budget is an increase in contractual services from the FY2023 actuals. This is due to inflation, increased costs of contracted services that are necessary to continue current efforts.

Fish

This portion of the budget provides support for the Fisheries Division of KDWP. The Fisheries Division is a major field division that provides fisheries management on public waters, operates state fish hatcheries and oversees Department fisheries research efforts.

Overall, the FY2025 budget request for Fisheries is \$9.6 million from all sources and is approximately \$1 million less than the approved budget for FY2024. This reduction is due to a flattening of revenue and a corresponding adjustment.

Ecological Services

The Ecological Services Section focuses on nongame species of fish and wildlife. This includes both resident and migratory species that are part of the natural history of Kansas. E.S. also oversees and manages Department efforts related to rare and sensitive species of fish and wildlife. The E.S. budget request for FY2025 is similar, but slightly less than the approved FY2024 budget. There are no major changes in this portion of the budget for FY2025.

Education

The Education Section of KDWP is responsible for several high profile and popular programs including Hunter Education, Boating Education, Aquatic Education and operation of the agency nature centers. In addition, Education oversees the very popular agency shooting ranges utilized by the public.

The FY2025 budget request for Education is similar to the approved FY2024 budget for this section. FY2025 is approximately \$2.4 million or \$300,000 less than FY2024. This adjustment also reflects a flattening of license revenue and corresponding adjustment.

Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement Division is a major field division of KDWP that operates statewide. Natural Resource Officers, or "Game Wardens" are charged with enforcing game laws, protection of fish and wildlife resources and boating safety.

The FY2025 budget request for Law Enforcement is similar to the approved FY2024 budget. The total request is \$12.047 million. It should be noted that both the FY2024 and FY2025 LE budgets are significantly higher than the FY2023 actuals. This reflects two related budgetary items. The 2023 Kansas Legislature passed legislation that approved moving KDWP law enforcement personnel into the Kansas Police and Fire Retirement System. The FY2024 and FY2025 budgets reflect both the increase in benefits cost associated with this change and a required payment to KPERS associated with the transfer of these personnel to KPF retirement. The final payment to KPERS is included in the FY2025 budget request and will not be present in future budget requests.

Parks

The Kansas State Parks Division operates 29 state parks statewide. Significant changes in the budget request for park operations in the FY2025 budget include the following.

- 1) An FY2024 supplemental request for one FTE to be stationed at the new Lehigh Portland State Park. The 2023 Kansas Legislature approved the new park but did not include staffing. Staff are needed to care for the property and oversee development of the park. Funding for this position would come from the Park Fee Fund.
- 2) An FY2024 supplemental request in the amount of \$300,000 from the Park Fee Fund. These funds are required match for a federal grant the State Parks Division was successful obtaining for continuing development of the Flint Hills Trail.
- 3) A change package for FY2025 in the amount of \$215,355 from the Park Fee Fund. This spending authority is for the FTE referenced in 1) above and one additional position for Lehigh Portland State Park (a total of 2 staff for the park in FY2025). Staffing is necessary to care for the property, oversee development of the site and provide basic services.

The total budget request for the State Parks Division of KDWP for FY2025 is \$18,093,777 from all funding sources. Additional funding requests or requests for spending authority related to Park operations and development are included in the Capital Improvement portion of the KDWP budget request.

Public Lands

The Public Lands Division of the KDWP operates and maintains public use areas statewide including public wildlife areas and state fishing lakes. The total budget request from all sources for FY2025 is \$14,268,775. This is similar to the approved FY2024 budget. There are no significant changes in the Public Lands budget this year.

Grants

The Grants portion of the KDWP budget includes funds granted to local units. The FY2025 budget request includes \$169,400 all from the Wildlife Fee Fund. This includes \$150,000 of funding managed by the Fisheries Division that represents aid to local units of government for managing public fishing opportunities on community water bodies. An example would be a city owned lake.

In addition, \$19,400 of spending authority from the Wildlife Fee Fund is requested to fund Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites (OWLS). These are small grants to schools and communities typically used to plant small habitat sites. These plantings are examples of habitat plantings for wildlife and birds that serve as an educational tool most often for schools but also some city or county parks or recreation properties. This is a continuation of a longstanding program. This program is managed by the Education Section of KDWP.

Wildlife

The Wildlife Division is a field division of KDWP that is charged with wildlife management efforts and wildlife related research. The Wildlife Division differs from the Public Lands Division in that their habitat/wildlife management efforts are focused on private lands, working with landowners who request assistance across Kansas. The district and regional wildlife biologists also work closely with other state and federal agencies to assist private landowners' awareness of wildlife-oriented programs. USDA and NRCS programs are an example. The Wildlife Division also contains the wildlife research staffing and facility of KDWP and focuses on applied research that has direct wildlife management outcomes. Examples are population trends and habitat management strategies that support or increase wildlife populations in Kansas.

The total budget request for the Wildlife Division in FY2025 is \$15.8 million. This is very similar to the approved FY2024 budget. There are no significant changes.

Capital Improvements

KDWP manages properties, offices and public use facilities located statewide. These facilities include offices that house our staff, infrastructure associated with state parks, dams at state fishing lakes and ponds, many miles of roads, restrooms, shower houses, boat ramps and many other examples of facilities necessary to accomplish our mission. This infrastructure requires major maintenance and periodic replacement. The KDWP request for Capital Improvements totals approximately \$31.5 million. This includes a total request of \$27,886,515 of spending authority previously submitted in July and

enhancements of \$3.7 million in the FY2025 budget request and supplemental authority totaling \$3.5 million to the FY2024 Capital Improvement budget.

The FY2025 request is similar to past years in most areas but differs from the approved FY2024 CI request in the following areas that should be noted.

As referenced earlier, the Department is requesting an enhancement of \$200,000 from the State General Fund in FY2025 to provide required matching funds for a federal grant that is available to the Department for acquisition of a property that is adjacent to the Lovewell Wildlife Area in Jewell County. The available federal grant requires a 25% match of non-federal funds. This area will be managed by the Public Lands Division with existing staff at that location.

The FY2025 CI portion of the budget also includes a requested enhancement of \$3.5 million for development of the Flint Hills trail. This request for spending authority is related to a federal grant the State Parks Division has been awarded for completion of improvements to the trail. The grant and associated development of the Flint Hills Trail will continue for several years into the future and future CI requests will include funding for this project.

The Department also requests supplemental spending authority in FY2024 totaling \$3.5 million that includes \$3,300,000 for development of the Flint Hills Trail associated with the federal grant referenced above. In addition, the Department is requesting \$200,000 of additional spending authority from the Park Fee Fund for replacement of a shower house at El Dorado State Park that needs to be replaced.

