

# NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Lavon Heidemann, Chairperson – Appropriations Committee  
Senator Daneille Conrad, Senator Tony Fulton, Senator Thomas Hansen,  
Senator John Harms, Senator Heath Mello, Senator John Nelson,  
Senator Jeremy Nordquist, Senator John Wightman  
Mike Lovelace, Legislative Fiscal Office  
Cindy Miserez, DAS Budget Office

Cc: Rex Amack, Director, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioners: Lynn Berggren, Jerrod Burke,  
Rex Fisher, Dr. Kent Forney, Mick Jensen, Norris Marshall,  
Dr. Mark Pinkerton, Ron Stave  
Assistant Directors: Roger Kuhn, Kirk Nelson, Sam Sidner

FROM: Patrick H. Cole, Administrator  
Budget and Fiscal Division

SUBJECT: Report on LB's 1, 2 and 3 of the 2009 Special Session

DATE: January 13, 2010

The attached report outlines the actions and plans being pursued by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to implement Legislative Bills 1, 2 and 3 of the One Hundred First Legislature, First Special Session, 2009.

# Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

## Implementation of Budget Actions Pursuant to Legislative Bills 1, 2 and 3, of the One Hundred First Legislature, First Special Session, 2009.

The following summarizes the required budget actions pursuant to the 2009 Special Session on the programs of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission:

	AGENCY FY10	AGENCY FY11
TOTAL GENERAL FUND IMPACT (authority reductions and fund transfers)	\$ 1,217,826.00	\$ 2,440,438.00

### REAPPROPRIATION REDUCTIONS

Program		Change to Reappropriation
336 Wildlife Conservation	General	\$ -
	Cash	\$ (4,695,889.00)
	Federal	\$ -
337 Administration	General	\$ -
	Cash	\$ (570,385.00)
	Federal	\$ -
549 Parks Admin & Operations	General	\$ -
	Cash	\$ (1,918,834.00)
	Federal	
617 Engineering & Operations	General	\$ -
	Cash	\$ (1,111,029.00)
	Federal	\$ -
TOTALS	General	\$ -
	Cash	\$ (8,296,137.00)
	Federal	\$ -
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ (8,296,137.00)</b>

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission had been monitoring the status and projected balances of its cash funds and expanded efforts last biennium to control expenditures. The resulting unexpended authority over the past two fiscal years is in part represented by the reappropriation change amounts presented in LB 1. These early internal control measures had resulted in reduced operations on most park areas, a delay or postponement of equipment purchases, a reduction in temporary employee positions and/or employment terms and the holding open of several permanent positions that became vacant.

Most of these cost saving measures were carried forward into the Agency's current biennium budget request which reflected a reduction to the cash funded base of over \$5,000,000 between the 4 programs identified here. That reduction included the elimination of 29 permanent positions (28.63 FTE) as follows: Program 336 (Wildlife Conservation), 1 Fisheries Program Manager, 3 Conservation Officers and 3 (2.63 FTE) Conservation Technicians; Program 337 (Administration), 1 Division Administrator; Program 549 (Parks Administration and Operations), 1 IT Infrastructure Support Analyst, 3 Park Superintendent I's, 1 Park Superintendent II, 3 Park Superintendent III's, 1 Park Worker III, 1 Food Service Leader, 2 Grounds Keeper Leaders, 2 Sign Printers, 1 Office Clerk III, and 1 Accounting Clerk I; Program 617 (Engineering and Operations), 1 Park Superintendent I, 3 Groundskeeper Leaders and 1 Facility Maintenance Specialist. Only two positions resulted in layoffs, the 2 Sign Printers in Program 549.

The reduction to the reappropriation amounts as stipulated in LB 1 will have minimal additional impact on the programs and services being provided since these amounts did not include encumbered items/categories of expenditures.

### FY09-11 APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENTS

Program		FY 10 Change to Base	FY 11 Change to Base
336 Wildlife Conservation	General	\$ (25,000.00)	\$ (25,000.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
337 Administration	General	\$ (25,000.00)	\$ (25,000.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
338 Niobrara Council	General	\$ (1,188.00)	\$ (2,375.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
549 Parks Operations & Admin	General	\$ (100,000.00)	\$ (200,000.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
617 Engineering & Operations	General	\$ (60,000.00)	\$ (60,000.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS	General	\$ (211,188.00)	\$ (312,375.00)
	Cash	\$ -	\$ -
	Federal	\$ -	\$ -
	TOTAL	\$ (211,188.00)	\$ (312,375.00)

Adjustments to the Agency's appropriations were limited to General Funds primarily in recognition of the Agency's own cash fund reductions reflected in its budget request. The reductions made will necessitate leaving some positions vacant and further reducing some seasonal temporary positions. Details are as follows:

Program 336 (Wildlife Conservation): \$25,000 each Fiscal Year will be saved by leaving an Administrative Secretary position vacant in the Law Enforcement Division as well as reducing temporary staffing (Wildlife Biologists) used for environmental reviews related to threatened and endangered species. The latter measure will affect the timeliness of reviews. The former is being mitigated to some degree by a shift of some duties and the automation of some functions. Neither of these actions is anticipated to have an impact on federal funds nor require a change in existing fees.

Program 337 (Administration): \$25,000 each Fiscal Year will be saved by leaving a Facility Maintenance Technician position vacant at the Lincoln headquarters building. This will result in a delay in some of the less critical building maintenance functions such as painting and light fixture, window and floor covering repair and replacement. This action is not anticipated to have an impact on federal funds or require a change in existing fees.

Program 338 (Niobrara Council): A reduction of \$1,188 in Fiscal Year 09/10 and \$2,375 in Fiscal Year 10/11 will result in a reduction of temporary office staffing and some delays in maintenance work and equipment and supply replacements. It is not anticipated that this will have a significant impact on Federal Fund allocations immediately, but may cause reductions over time if the state match is not met in a timely fashion.

Program 549 (Parks Operations and Administration): \$100,000 in Fiscal Year 09/10 and \$200,000 in Fiscal Year 10/11 will be saved by leaving some vacant positions vacant. The specific positions include Park Superintendents, Regional Managers, Groundskeeper Leaders and various administrative support staff positions. Any specific vacancy savings is subject to change based on immediate needs. For example, a position such as a Groundskeeper Leader plays a less critical role in the winter season, thus may be kept vacant during the current winter season, but be filled in late spring. The Parks operation and amount of turnover in personnel does not easily afford a precise timing of vacancy savings.

The overall objective of accommodating these specific cuts as well as dealing with the limitations on cash fund revenues, is to continue to provide quality experiences for guests and to keep as many parks operational as possible, albeit some with severely reduced services and/or operating seasons. The agency began a process, prior to the current biennium budget cycle, to identify and prioritize specific areas based on numerous economic and resource related criteria. The overall goal is to ensure some representative geographical distribution. Consolidation of services and personnel has occurred in some regions resulting in vacancies eliminated in the current base budget and/or being utilized now. Others are expected over time.

Attempts to partner with local communities and to seek management assistance, financially or otherwise, on areas not owned, but managed by the agency have been made. While not specifically tied to the special session actions, but from the bigger long-term funding strategy, these types of strategies will increase over time. Two examples of another strategy, which will be reviewed by the Legislature during the 2010 legislative session, include transfer of ownership

of the Arnold and Atkinson State Recreation Areas to the local communities. These types of transfers will help ensure public access while accommodating local control.

No impact is anticipated on Federal funds from these actions. The agency will likely seek an increase in the cost of annual, duplicate annual and daily Park Entry Permits in the next legislative session. While tied to the larger long-term financial picture of Park System management, as opposed to the specific special session action, this increase was proposed during the 2009 legislative session without success. The need for increased funding existed prior to the special session and certainly will continue without significant changes in overall management strategies. Increases to other park fees (e.g. lodging rates, event and activity fees, etc) will likely be considered for calendar year 2011.

Program 617 (Engineering and Operations): \$60,000 each Fiscal Year will be saved by keeping a Supply Worker position vacant and reducing temporary staffing. The reduction in temporary staffing will delay the completion of some drafting projects for construction projects as well as land surveys. Keeping the Supply Worker position vacant will necessitate shifting some of the duties to other personnel, ultimately delaying some maintenance projects related to roof, window, sidewalk and door repairs. While not anticipated to have an immediate impact on Federal funding, it may delay reimbursements due to postponement of eligible projects.

### CASH FUND TRANSFERS TO GENERAL FUND

	FY10 Transfer AGENCY	FY11 Transfer AGENCY
23370 Nebraska Snowmobile Trail Fund	\$ 250,000.00	
23380 NORDA	\$ 378,307.00	\$ 1,064,007.00
REC ROAD FUND	\$ 378,306.00	\$ 1,064,006.00
23420 Niobrara Council Fund	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	<b>\$ 1,006,638.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,128,063.00</b>

The cash fund transfers identified will result primarily in a delay in the completion of some deferred maintenance projects in the Park System (NORDA), and the development or enhancement of snowmobile trails. The Rec Road Fund, while not an agency fund, does have its expenditure priorities identified by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to benefit access to recreation facilities. As with the NORDA transfer, this will result in a delay of some road repair and development projects. The Niobrara Council Fund transfer will have no significant impact.

None of these fund transfers will have a direct or immediate impact on Federal fund receipts, nor will they necessitate an immediate need for fee increases. However, as previously stated, the agency will likely seek an increase in the cost of Park Entry Permits and some other park fees for 2011 and/or 2012 to address the larger long-term financial picture of Park System management as a whole. The need for increased funding existed prior to the special session and certainly will continue without significant changes in overall management strategies.