FY 2026-27: NATURAL RESOURCES
Summary: Conference
Article 13, Senate Bill 878 (S-1) CR-1

Analyst: Austin Scott

	FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date as of 2/11/26	FY 2026-27 Executive	FY 2026-27 House	FY 2026-27 Senate	FY 2026-27 Conference	*Difference: Conference From FY 2025-26 YTD* *Amount*	*%*
IDG/IDT	$208,100	$208,300	$208,300	$208,300	$208,300	*$200*	*0.1*
Federal	100,214,800	102,198,400	96,019,200	102,198,400	100,804,700	*589,900*	*0.6*
Local	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	*--*
Private	7,609,200	8,330,900	8,330,900	8,330,900	8,330,900	*721,700*	*9.5*
Restricted	362,152,800	432,856,300	365,601,900	425,493,600	399,299,000	*37,146,200*	*10.3*
GF/GP	73,009,400	63,123,000	36,710,000	61,686,900	63,286,800	*(9,722,600)*	*(13.3)*
Gross	**$543,194,300**	**$606,716,900**	**$506,870,300**	**$597,918,100**	**$571,929,700**	***$28,735,400***	***5.3***
FTEs	2,515.2	2,519.9	2,287.2	2,505.9	2,519.9	*4.7*	*0.2*

Note: Appropriation figures for all years include all proposed appropriation amounts, including amounts designated as "one-time."

Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages Michigan's natural and cultural resources through conservation and protection. State parks, wildlife, fisheries, forests, and minerals management are all administered by DNR.

Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations		**FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26)**	**Conference Change from YTD**
1. Nature Awaits (One-Time)	FTE	13.8	0.2
Executive continues one-time funding for the Nature Awaits program which provides grants to schools to cover transportation and other costs related to connecting all Michigan fourth grades to the state park system. Program funding in FY 2025-26 is $2.0 million GF/GP and 13.8 FTE positions, funding in FY 2026-27 would be $1.4 million GF/GP and 14.0 FTE positions.	**Gross**	**$2,011,800**	**($1,161,800)**
	GF/GP	$2,011,800	($1,161,800)
House does not concur with Executive and eliminates program funding.			
Senate does not concur with Executive and eliminates program funding.			
Conference reduces GF/GP by $1.2 million and adds 0.2 FTE positions and for a new one-time appropriation of $850,000 GF/GP and 14.0 FTE positions.			
2. Fee increase – Hunting Licenses and Fishing Licenses	**Gross**	**NA**	**$0**
Executive includes $29.4 million in state restricted funding from proposed price increases for hunting licenses and fishing licenses. New revenue would primarily support Fisheries Division, departmental marketing and outreach, Wildlife Division, and the Michigan Wildlife Council.	Restricted	NA	0
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House does not concur with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference does not concur with Executive.			
3. Fee increase – Watercraft Registrations	**Gross**	**NA**	**$0**
Executive includes $6.9 million in state restricted funding from a proposed price increase for watercraft registrations. New revenue would primarily support local and state boating infrastructure and Law Enforcement Division.	Restricted	NA	0
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House does not concur with Executive.			
Senate does not concur with Executive.			
Conference does not concur with Executive.			

Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations		FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26)	Conference Change from YTD
4. Gas Tax Revenue Distribution	**Gross**	**NA**	**$17,700,000**
Executive includes an increase of $17.7 million in gas tax revenue in accordance with statutory formula across multiple appropriations including programs in boating, snowmobiling, and recreational trails.	Restricted	NA	17,700,000
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
5. Capital Outlay Adjustments	**Gross**	**NA**	**$12,050,000**
Executive provides an increase of $12.1 million in state restricted funding increases to State Parks Repair and Maintenance, Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance, and Wetlands Restoration, Enhancement, and Acquisition.	Restricted	NA	12,050,000
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive and reduces Wetlands Restoration, Enhancement, and Acquisition by $500,000 from Waterfowl Hunt Stamp revenue.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
6. Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Funding Decrease	**Gross**	**NA**	**($3,965,900)**
Executive includes a decrease of $4.0 million from the ORV Trail Improvement Fund in accordance with statutory formula across multiple appropriations including programs in ORV trail development, maintenance and law enforcement.	Restricted	NA	(3,965,900)
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
7. Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Funding for Silver Lake State Park	**Gross**	**NA**	**$1,404,100**
	Restricted	NA	1,404,100
Executive includes an increase of $1.4 million from the ORV Trail Improvement Fund in accordance with statutory formula across multiple appropriations including support for the ORV area at Silver Lake State Park.	GF/GP	NA	$0
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
8. Michigan Historical Center	FTE	42.0	1.5
Executive adds $436,200 from the Michigan Historical Center Operations Fund and authorizes 1.5 new FTE positions to expand support for ongoing operations in the Michigan Historical Center.	**Gross**	**$6,838,300**	**$436,200**
	Federal	1,225,300	0
	Restricted	2,285,400	436,200
House does not concur with Executive; reduces funding by $1,800 GF/GP.	GF/GP	$3,327,600	$0
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
9. Parks and Recreation Division	FTE	NA	3.0
Executive appropriates $393,700 in state restricted funding and authorizes 3.0 new FTE positions for supervisory roles in state parks.	**Gross**	**NA**	**$393,700**
	Restricted	NA	393,700
House does not concur with Executive.	GF/GP	NA	$0
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
10. Recreational Boating – St. Jean Boat Launch at Gray Haven State Harbor	FTE	182.0	0.0
	Gross	**$24,547,600**	**$200,000**
Executive provides $271,300 from the Waterways Account to manage the St. Jean Boat Launch at Gray Haven State Harbor in Wayne County.	Federal	2,129,600	0
	Restricted	22,418,000	200,000
House does not concur with Executive.	GF/GP	$0	$0
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference provides $200,000 from the Waterways Account for operations at Gray Haven State Harbor.			

Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations		FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26)	Conference Change from YTD
11. Natural Resources Heritage – Kirtland's Warbler Management	FTE	9.0	0.0
Executive appropriates $150,000 in private funding from the Nongame Wildlife Fund to manage Kirtland's Warbler habitat.	**Gross**	**$661,800**	**$150,000**
	Federal	209,300	0
House concurs with Executive.	Private	0	150,000
Senate concurs with Executive.	Restricted	452,500	0
Conference concurs with Executive.	GF/GP	$0	$0
12. Technical Adjustments	**Gross**	**NA**	**$4,021,700**
Executive includes $4.0 million Gross ($0 GF/GP) for technical adjustments to align expenditures and increased available state restricted revenues ($2.7 million) and federal revenues ($1.3 million).	Federal	NA	1,300,000
	Restricted	NA	2,721,700
House concurs with Executive.	GF/GP	NA	$0
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
13. General Law Enforcement	FTE	293.0	0.0
Executive swaps out $1.6 million from the Marine Safety Fund in favor of $1.6 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account for a net zero change.	**Gross**	**$55,577,700**	**$0**
	Federal	7,065,800	0
	Restricted	29,468,200	0
House concurs with Executive and eliminates GF/GP funding.	GF/GP	$19,043,700	$0
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
14. Wildlife Management	FTE	201.5	0.0
House eliminates GF/GP funding for wildlife management, which supports wildlife lands, facilities, and population management.	**Gross**	**$47,995,900**	**$0**
	Federal	26,433,400	0
Senate does not concur with House.	Private	315,700	0
Conference does not concur with House.	Restricted	16,762,700	0
	GF/GP	$4,484,100	$0
15. Reduction to Actual Expenditures and Filled FTE positions	FTE	NA	0.0
House reduces funding by $32.1 million Gross ($736,500 million GF/GP) and 214.2 FTE positions to reflect actual spending and filled FTE positions departmentwide.	**Gross**	**NA**	**$0**
	Federal	NA	0
	Restricted	NA	0
Senate does not concur with House.	GF/GP	NA	$0
Conference does not concur with House.			
16. Information Technology Services and Projects	**Gross**	**$10,729,400**	**$0**
House reduces funding for information technology services and projects by 50%, totaling $5.4 million Gross ($636,000 GF/GP).	Restricted	9,457,300	0
	GF/GP	$1,272,100	$0
Senate does not concur with House.			
Conference does not concur with House.			
17. Property Management	**Gross**	**$3,573,500**	**$0**
House reduces funding for building occupancy charges and rent by $181,200 Gross ($74,700 GF/GP).	Restricted	2,079,100	0
	GF/GP	$1,494,400	$0
Senate does not concur with House.			
Conference does not concur with House.			
18. Cormorant Population Management (One-time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$500,000**
House adds $150,000 from the Game and Fish Protection Account to manage cormorants statewide.	Restricted	0	500,000
	GF/GP	$0	$0
Senate does not concur with House.			
Conference adds $500,000 from the Game and Fish Protection Account on a time-time basis.			

Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations		FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26)	Conference Change from YTD
19. Internal Authorization Shifts	**Gross**	**NA**	**$0**
Executive shifts $2.8 million cumulative from the Game and Fish Protection Account and ORV trail Improvement Fund between seven appropriations for a net zero change to move funding from grant programs to ongoing operations.	Restricted	NA	0
	GF/GP	NA	$0
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
20. State Water Trail Organizations (One-Time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$500,000**
Conference adds $500,000 in one-time GF/GP for grants to state water trail organizations	GF/GP	$0	$500,000
21. Whitefish Recovery (One-Time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$350,000**
Senate adds a $100 GF/GP placeholder for whitefish recovery to support efforts to recover and monitor up to three lake whitefish stocks.	GF/GP	$0	$350,000
Conference adds $350,000 in one-time GF/GP.			
22. Cultural Resource Management	**Gross**	**$1,022,600**	**($100,000)**
Conference reduces $100,000 GF/GP for archeological operations and the identification, treatment, and disposition of Native American cultural items.	GF/GP	$1,022,600	($100,000)
23. National Recreational Trails	**Gross**	**$3,911,600**	**($1,393,700)**
Conference reduces $1.4 million in federal authorization from the US Department of Transportation for a grant program that assists states with the development and maintenance of recreational trails.	Federal	3,911,600	(1,393,700)
	GF/GP	$0	$0
24. State Game and Wildlife Area Infrastructure (One-time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$1,000,000**
Conference adds $1.0 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account for improvements to state game areas and wildlife areas.	Restricted	0	1,000,000
	GF/GP	$0	$0
25. Fisheries Infrastructure (One-time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$900,000**
Conference appropriates $900,000 from the Game and Fish Protection Account for infrastructure improvements to state fisheries.	Restricted	0	900,000
	GF/GP	$0	$0
26. Fisheries Equipment (One-time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$200,000**
Conference includes $200,000 from the Game and Fish Protection Account for equipment to be used at state fisheries.	Restricted	0	200,000
	GF/GP	$0	$0
27. Hartwick Pines Visitor Center Upgrades (One-time)	**Gross**	**$0**	**$200,000**
Conference adds $200,000 from the State Park Improvement Fund for upgrades to the visitor center at Harwick Pines State Park in Crawford County.	Restricted	0	200,000
	GF/GP	$0	$0
28. Removal of FY 2025-26 One-Time Appropriations	**Gross**	**$10,200,000**	**($10,200,000)**
Executive removes $10.0 million GF/GP of one-time funding that was included in the FY 2025-26 budget to support the following:	GF/GP	$10,200,000	($10,200,000)
• Elberta waterfront community conservation project ($1.8 million GF/GP)			
• Fish production one-time ($2.8 million GF/GP)			
• Ice storm wildfire protection ($2.0 million GF/GP)			
• Reforestation ($2.2 million GF/GP)			
• Removal and repair of high-hazard dams ($1.5 million GF/GP)			
House concurs with Executive.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			

Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations		FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26)	Conference Change from YTD
29. Economic Adjustments	**Gross**	**NA**	**$5,551,100**
Executive reflects increased costs of $5.6 million Gross ($889,200 GF/GP) for negotiated salary and wage increases (3.0% on October 1, 2026), actuarially required retirement contributions, worker's compensation, building occupancy charges, rent, and other economic adjustments.	IDG	NA	200
	Federal	NA	683,600
	Restricted	NA	3,978,100
	GF/GP	NA	$889,200
House concurs with Executive and rolls all economic adjustments into a single line "Departmentwide employee economic adjustments" within the Departmental Administration and Support section.			
Senate concurs with Executive.			
Conference concurs with Executive.			
30. Employees by Status	**Gross**	**NA**	**$0**
House includes the estimated number of full-time, limited-term, noncareer/per diem, part-time, permanent-intermittent, and seasonal people employed by the department. Estimates were obtained from the Forty-Sixth Annual Workforce Report published by the Civil Service Commission and are as follows:	GF/GP	NA	$0
• Full-time employees – 1,618.0			
• Limited-term employees – 27.0			
• Noncareer/per diem employees – 1,088.0			
• Part-time employees – 1.0			
• Permanent-intermittent employees – 31.0			
• Seasonal employees – 267.0			
Senate does not concur with House.			
Conference does not concur with House.			

Major Boilerplate Changes from FY 2025-26

Sec. 254. Solar and Wind Project Prohibition **– DELETED**
Prohibits the department from using funds in part 1 for utility scale solar or wind development projects. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive, Senate, and Conference delete, House retains.

Sec. 283. Prohibition on Expending Funds for Legal Actions Against Swine Hunting **– DELETED**
Prohibits the department from using funds in part 1 for legal services against hunting operation concerning swine. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive, Senate, and Conference delete, House retains.

Sec. 284. Feeding Birds or Wildlife Near a Residence **– RETAINED**
Prevents the department from prohibiting an individual from feeding birds or wildlife within 300 feet of a residence if feed quantity totals less than 2 gallons. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive and Senate delete, House and Conference retain.

Sec. 285. References to State-managed Lands **– DELETED**
States that state lands managed by the department shall be identified as department-managed public lands or publicly owned lands. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive, Senate, and Conference delete, House retains.

Sec. 286. Contingency Authorization for New Hunting and Fishing License Revenue **– DELETED**
Allows for the legislative transfer process to increase state restricted authorization by up to $30.0 million if legislation is enacted to raise hunting and fishing license prices.
Executive deletes, House, Senate, and Conference concur.

Sec. 304. Receive and Expend for Carbon Offset Credits **– RETAINED**
Authorizes department to receive and expend revenues to pay vendors for administering carbon offset credits.
Executive, Senate, and Conference retain, House deletes.

Major Boilerplate Changes from FY 2025-26

***Sec. 305. Snowmobile Trail Improvement Fund and ORV Trail Improvement Fund Restrictions* – NEW**
Imposes restrictions on the expenditure of the Snowmobile Improvement Fund and ORV Trail Improvement Fund for administrative purposes.
House and Conference add new section, Senate does not include.

***Sec. 501. Little Manistee River Designation Prohibition* – DELETED**
Prohibits Fisheries Resource Management funding from being expended to designate the Little Manistee River as a natural river as defined in Part 305 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive, Senate, and Conference delete, House retains.

***Sec. 601. Allegan State Game Area Expanded Use* – NEW**
Requires the department to collaborate with Allegan County to develop a plan that expands public use in the Allegan State Game Area.
House and Conference add new section, Senate and Conference do not include.

***Sec. 701. Recreation Passport Selection* – DELETED**
Requires the department to provide the choice to opt in to purchasing a Recreation Passport. *(Document from the State Budget Office dated November 7 noted this section is unenforceable in FY 2025-26.)*
Executive, Senate, and Conference delete, House retains.

***Sec. 1201. Whitefish Recovery* – NEW**
Requires the department to support efforts to recover and monitor up to three lake whitefish stocks; requires funding to be used for spawning and rearing activities and post-stocking assessment and evaluation necessary to support lake whitefish stock recovery; allows department to contract with qualified nonprofit, research-based organizations to implement a lake whitefish stock recovery plan; requires the use of department-owned hatchery facilities or facilities owned or operated by partners contracted under this section; requires that funds appropriated under this section not be used for operational expenses or for the support of full time equated positions or permanent state positions, allows the department to use limited-term employees.
Senate and Conference add new section.

***Sec. 1202. State Water Trail Organizations* – NEW**
Requires the funding in part 1 for state water trail organizations for be distributed equally among the state's water trails and prohibits funding from being expended for personnel costs.
Conference adds new section.

FY 2025-26 Supplemental Appropriation Items **Article 18, Senate Bill 878 (S-1) CR-1**		**Appropriation Change**
1. Gas Tax Revenue Distribution Includes $13.6 million in state restricted gas tax revenue in accordance with statutory formula across multiple appropriations to support boating, snowmobiling, and recreational trails programs.	**Gross** Restricted GF/GP	**$13,628,000** 13,628,000 $0
2. Capital Outlay – Dam Infrastructure Projects Appropriates $5.0 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account to repair some of the approximately 200 state-owned dams on Michigan waterways.	**Gross** Restricted GF/GP	**$5,000,000** 5,000,000 $0
3. Capital Outlay – Fisheries Infrastructure Includes $7.0 million in state restricted Game and Fish Protection Account funds to support fish hatchery improvements statewide. Of the total, $2.0 million would be used for the new cool water facility at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Van Buren County.	**Gross** Restricted GF/GP	**$7,000,000** 7,000,000 $0
4. Capital Outlay – State Game and Wildlife Area Infrastructure Includes $10.0 million in state restricted Game and Fish Protection Account funds to support state game and wildlife area infrastructure improvements.	**Gross** Restricted GF/GP	**$10,000,000** 10,000,000 $0
5. Fisheries Infrastructure Includes $4.0 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account to repair and upgrade the egg collection facilities and fish weirs on the Little Manistee River and the Platte River.	**Gross** Restricted GF/GP	**$4,000,000** 4,000,000 $0

FY 2025-26 Supplemental Appropriation Items
Article 18, Senate Bill 878 (S-1) CR-1

		Appropriation Change
6. Wildlife Management	**Gross**	**$3,221,400**
Includes $3.2 million in state restricted Game and Fish Protection Account funds to support Michigan's participation in the Chronic Wasting Disease Research Consortium Study.	Restricted	3,221,400
	GF/GP	$0

FY 2025-26 Supplemental Boilerplate Items
Article 18, Senate Bill 878 (S-1) CR-1

Sec. 601. Wildlife Management
Designates unexpended funds appropriated for State Sites Cleanup Program as a work project appropriation; funds would support Michigan's participation in the Chronic Wasting Disease Research Consortium Study.