HOUSE FISCAL AGENCY

Budget Briefing: Natural Resources

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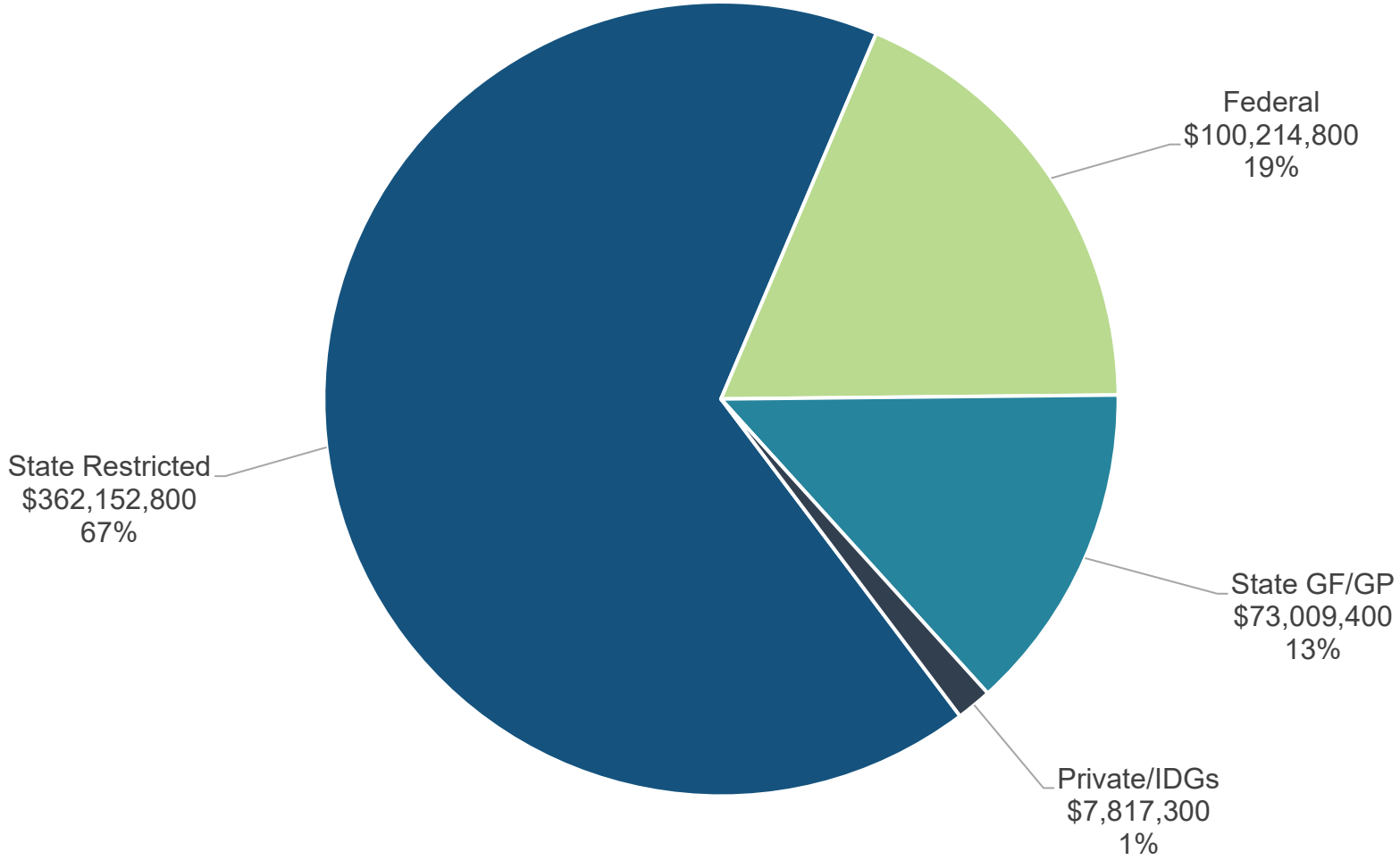
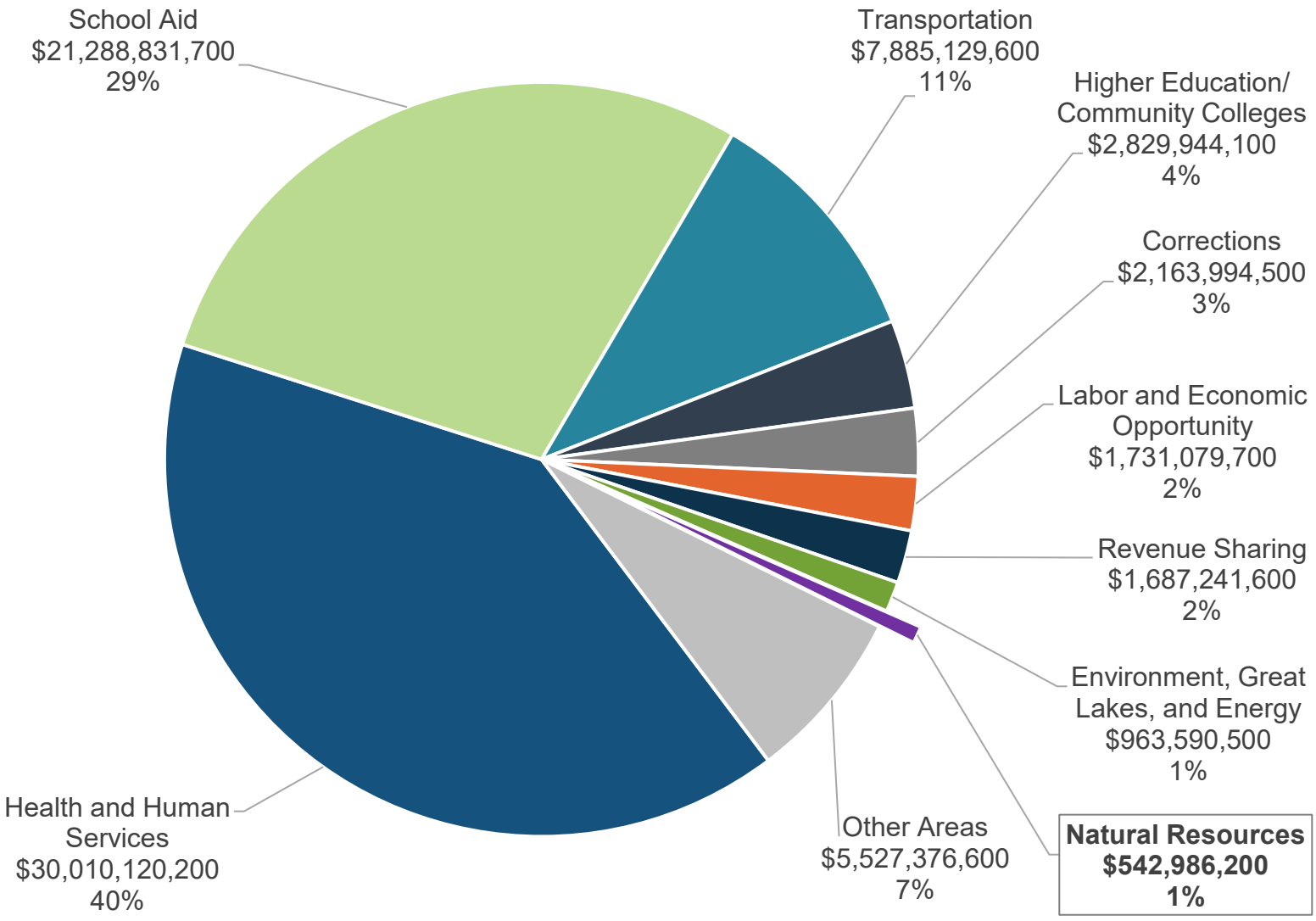
FY 2025-26 Fund Sources

Two-thirds of the **$543.1 million** DNR budget is funded by state restricted revenue. There are 39 funds that comprise this revenue, three of which make up over **60%** of the total: State Park Improvement Account (**$95.6 million**), Game and Fish Protection Account (**$80.5 million**), and Forest Development Fund (**$49.5 million**).



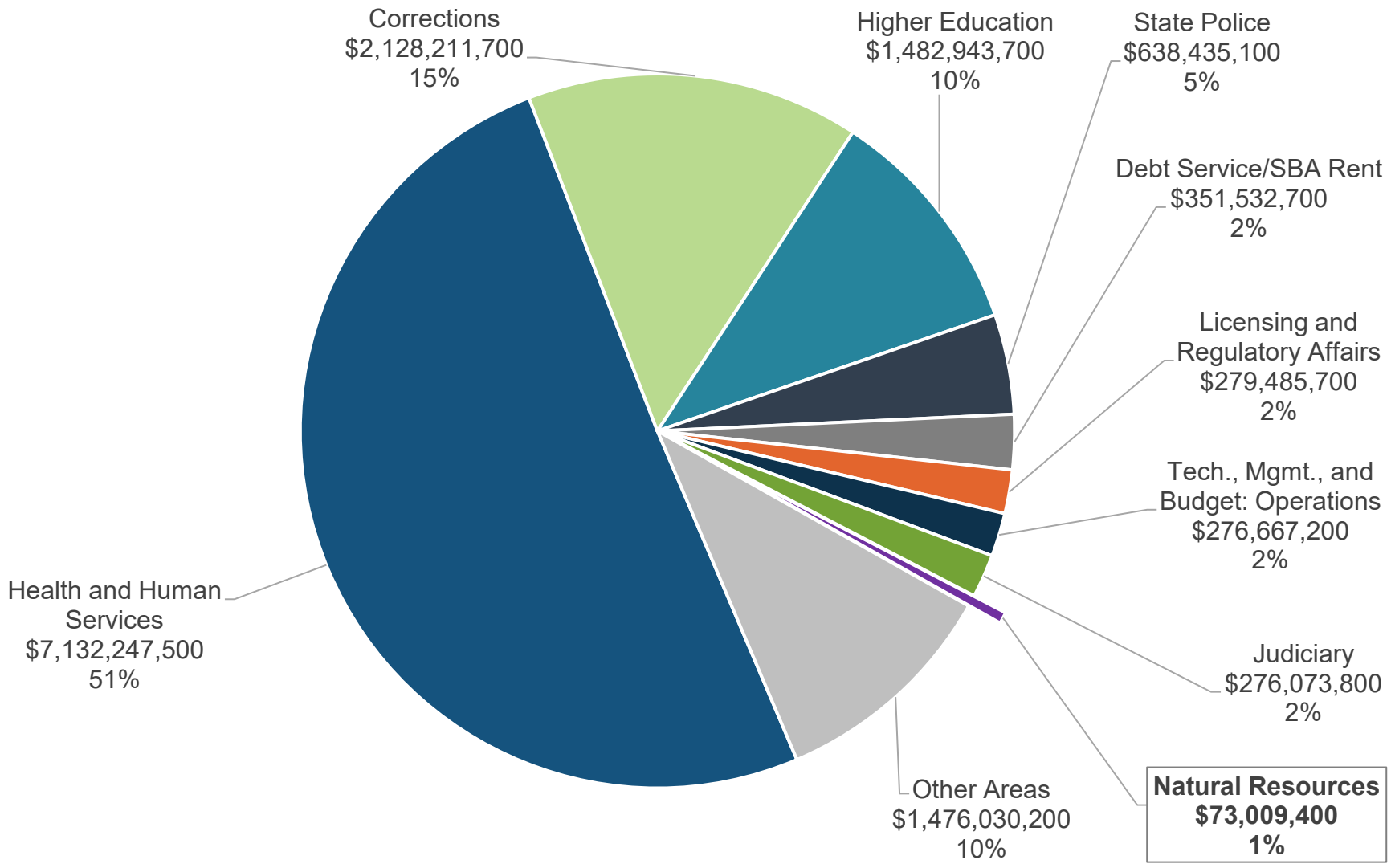
DNR Share of Total State Budget

The DNR budget represents **1%** of the **$74.6 billion** state budget (adjusted gross) for FY 2025-26.



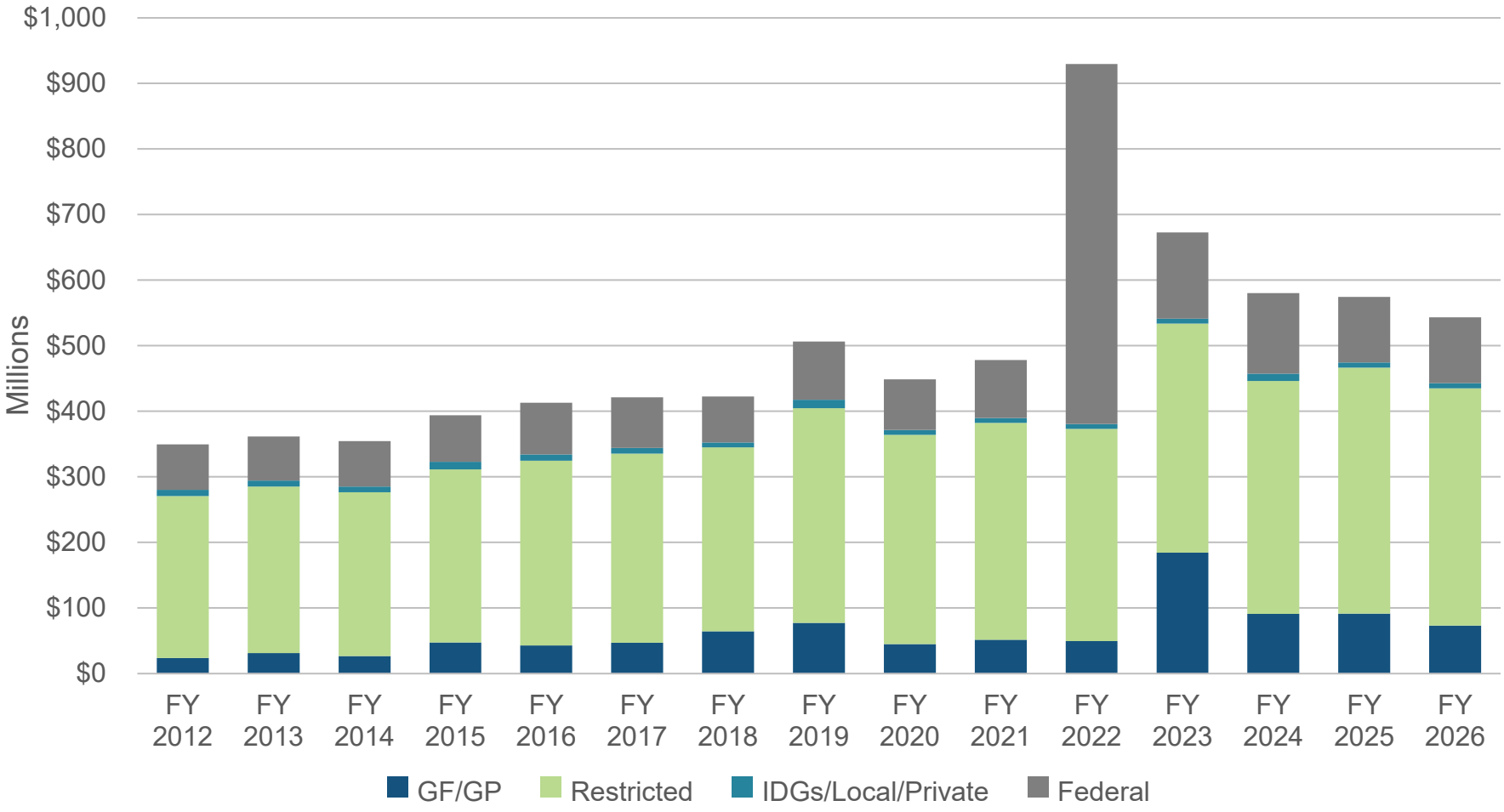
DNR Share of Total GF/GP Budget

The DNR budget also represents **1%** of the state's **$14.1 billion** GF/GP budget for FY 2025-26.



DNR Funding History

DNR gross funding has increased since FY 2011-12. One-time federal COVID funding totaling $457.7 million was appropriated in FY 2021-22. Additional GF/GP funding was appropriated in FY 2022-23 for the Brandon Road Project ($64.0 million) and Flint State Park ($23.0 million).



DNR Appropriation Areas

State Parks and Recreation: 73 parks, 22 recreation areas, 5 trails, 3 state scenic sites, 3 historic parks, Mackinac Island State Park, state forest campgrounds, recreational boating, and MacMullan Conference Center

Wildlife and Fisheries: Wildlife management, fisheries management, and fish production

Grants, Department Initiatives, and One-Time: Federal and state grants, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Michigan Conservation Corps, invasive species prevention and control, and one-time projects

Forest Resources: Forest management and timber market development, wildfire protection, and minerals management

Departmental Administration: Central administration including information technology and Natural Resources Commission

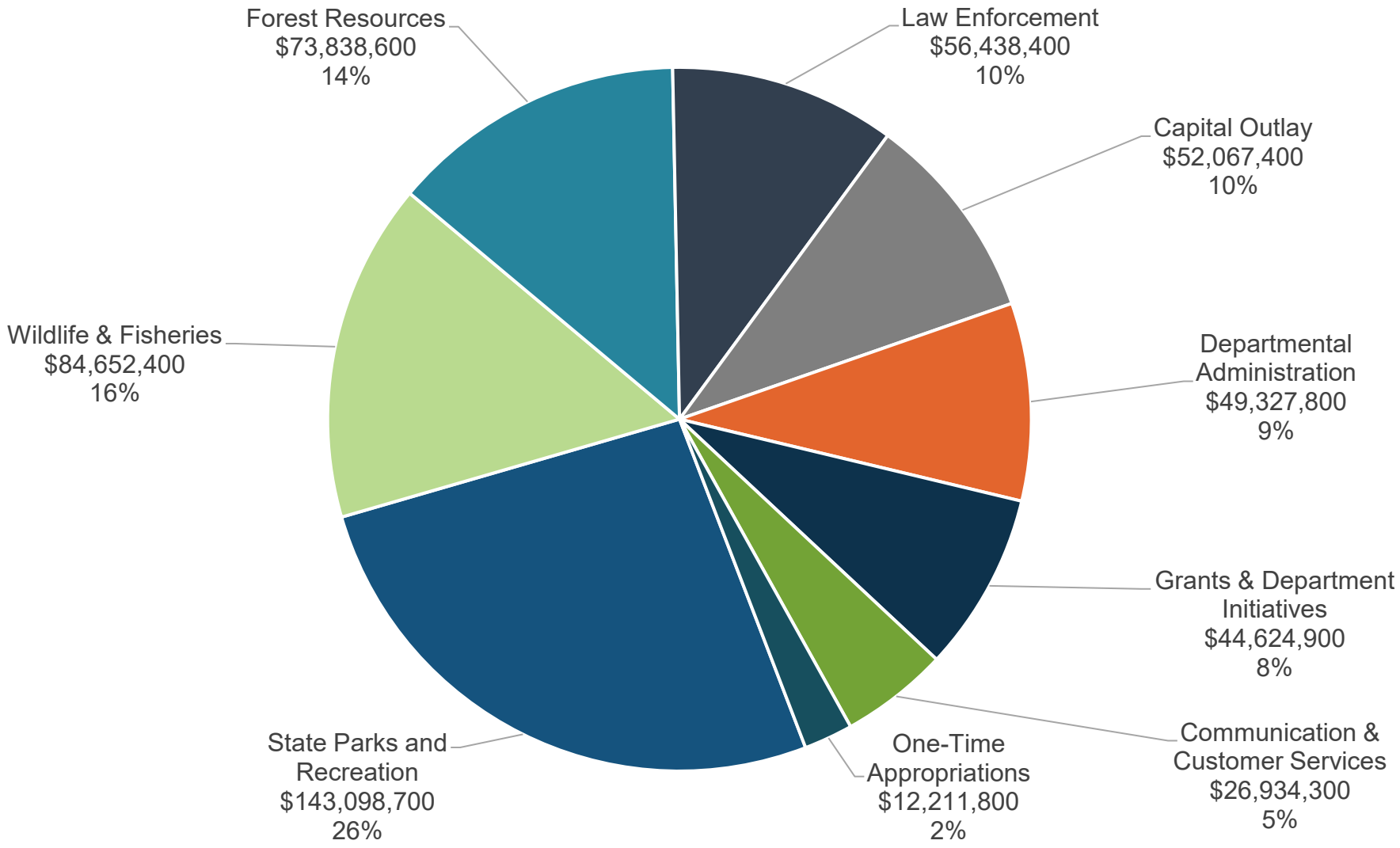
Law Enforcement: Conservation officers

Capital Outlay: Recreational lands and infrastructure projects and waterways boating program

Communication and Customer Services: Marketing and outreach, historical programs, and Michigan Wildlife Council

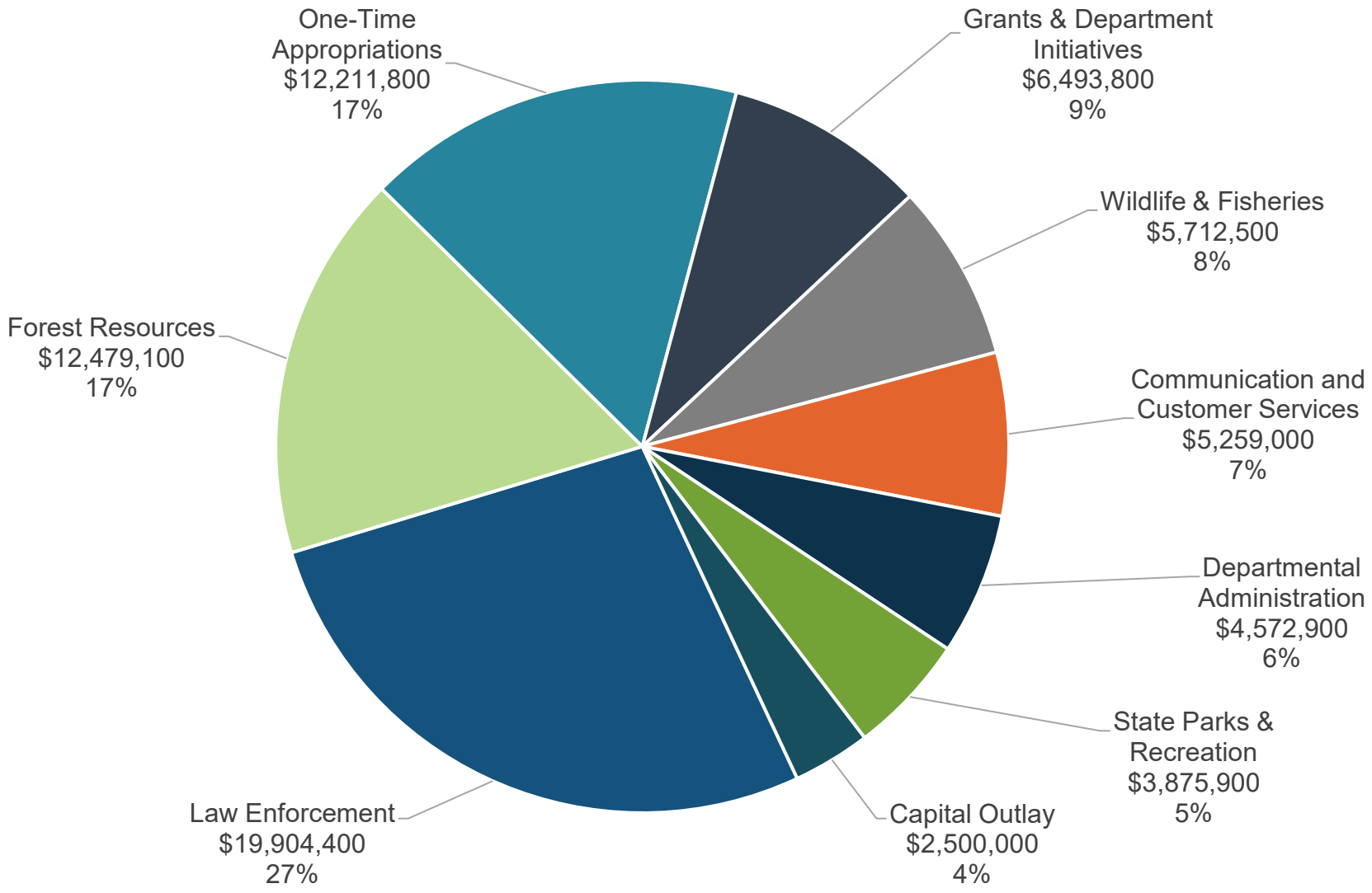
FY 2025-26 Gross Appropriations

More than half of the **$543.2 million** DNR budget supports core departmental programs in state parks, wildlife, fisheries, and forestry.



FY 2025-26 GF/GP Appropriations

Funding for law enforcement and forest resources are the largest GF/GP appropriations, making up more than a third of DNR's **$73.0 million** GF/GP funding.



DNR Restricted Funds in the Michigan Constitution

There are 11 restricted funds in the DNR budget that have constitutional restrictions on fund revenues and how funding may be used. (The Conservation and Recreation Legacy Fund encompasses 7 individual funds.) In FY 2025-26, **74.6%** of restricted funding in the DNR budget (**$270.1 million**) is appropriated from these funds:

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)
Revenues from sale of oil and gas leases, extraction of minerals on state lands, and royalties were deposited into MNRTF until it reached a $500.0 million balance in May 2011 (except lands purchased by the Game and Fish Protection Fund). Revenue is now deposited in the Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund.

Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund (MSPEF)
Funds state park operations, maintenance, and land acquisition. When MNRTF reached $500.0 million in May 2011, MSPEF began to receive mineral revenues.

Michigan Conservation and Recreation Legacy Fund
Includes 7 restricted funds that receive user fees and tax revenue.

Michigan Game and Fish Protection Trust Fund
Revenues from the sale of oil and gas leases on state lands purchased with Game and Fish Protection Fund are deposited into the Fund.

Michigan Nongame Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund
Receives revenue from the sale of wildlife habitat license plates.

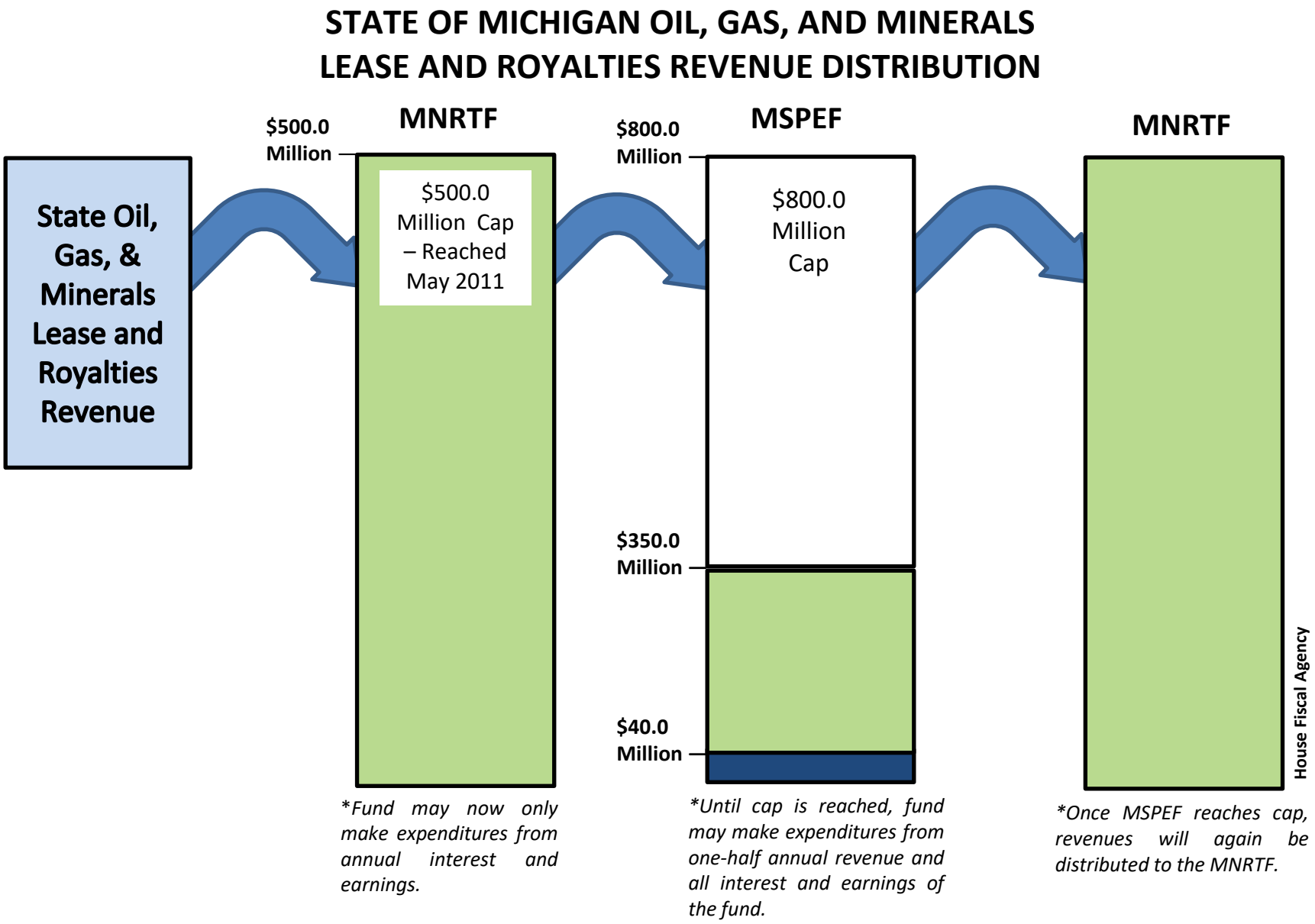
Oil, Gas, and Minerals Revenue

- Article IX, Section 35, of the Michigan Constitution requires that until the MNRTF reaches a $500.0 million balance, revenues from the extraction of oil, gas, and minerals from state-owned lands (except for lands purchased with Game and Fish Protection Fund) must be deposited into the MNRTF.

- The MNRTF reached the $500.0 million principal balance in May 2011. Revenues must now be deposited into the MSPEF, until that fund reaches an $800.0 million balance. Until that balance is achieved, one half of the annual revenue, plus the fund's interest earnings, may be expended each year. The MNRTF received $112.4 million in revenue last fiscal year.

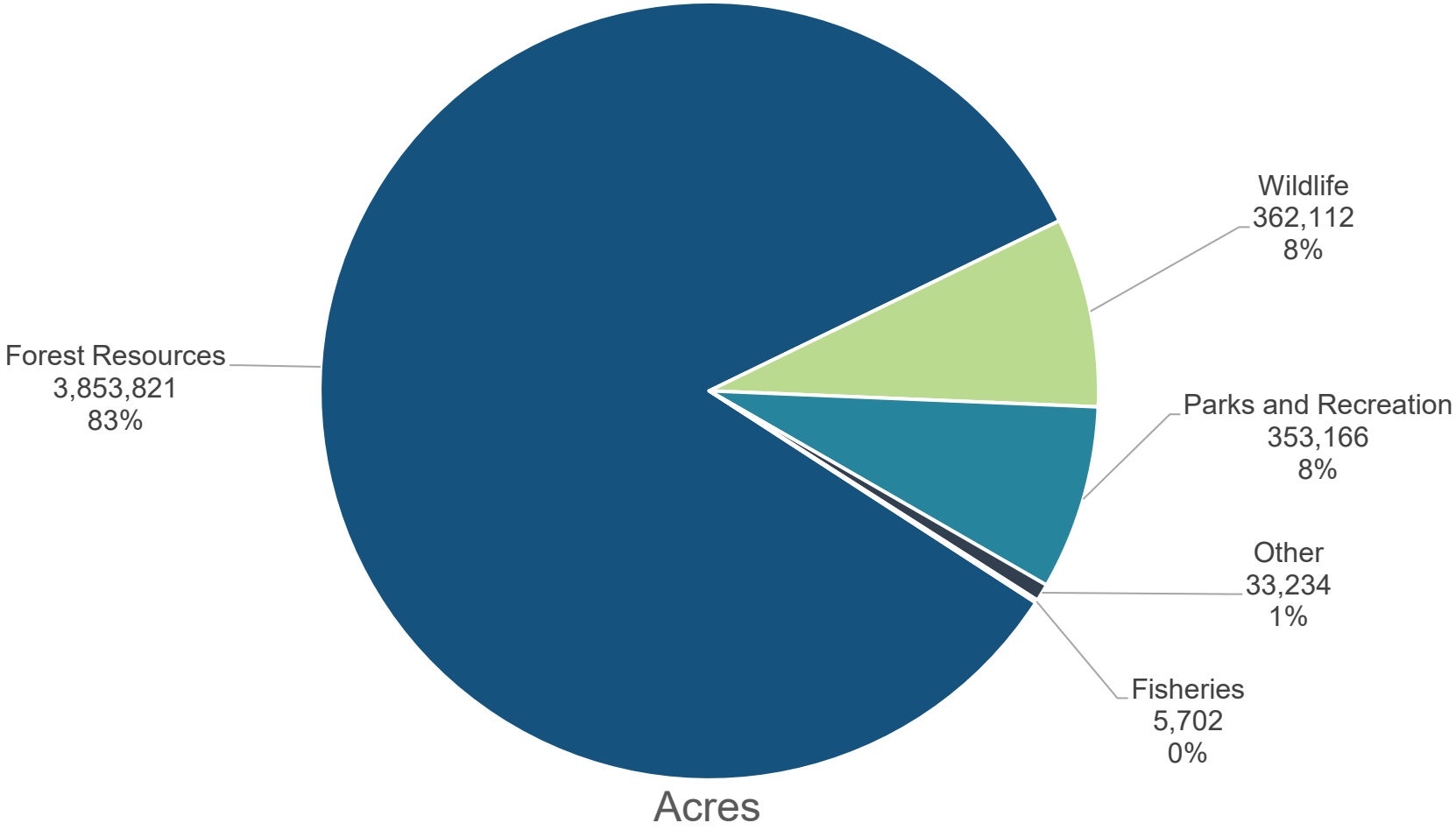
- The MSPEF was created in 1994 with a $40.0 million transfer from the sale of the Accident Fund of Michigan. At the close of FY 2024-25, the fund balance was estimated to be $341.8 million. Once the fund reaches $800.0 million, the cap amount will be adjusted annually for inflation. These mineral revenues will again be credited to the MNRTF once the MSPEF reaches its cap. The MSPEF has grown annually by an average of $12.8 million over the last decade.

Oil, Gas, and Minerals Revenue



DNR-Managed Acreage

DNR manages a total of **4.6 million acres** of publicly owned land statewide. Land is managed by divisions based on its respective purpose. Most publicly owned land is managed by DNR's Forest Resources Division, which operates Michigan's public forestry and timber programs.



State Parks: Overview

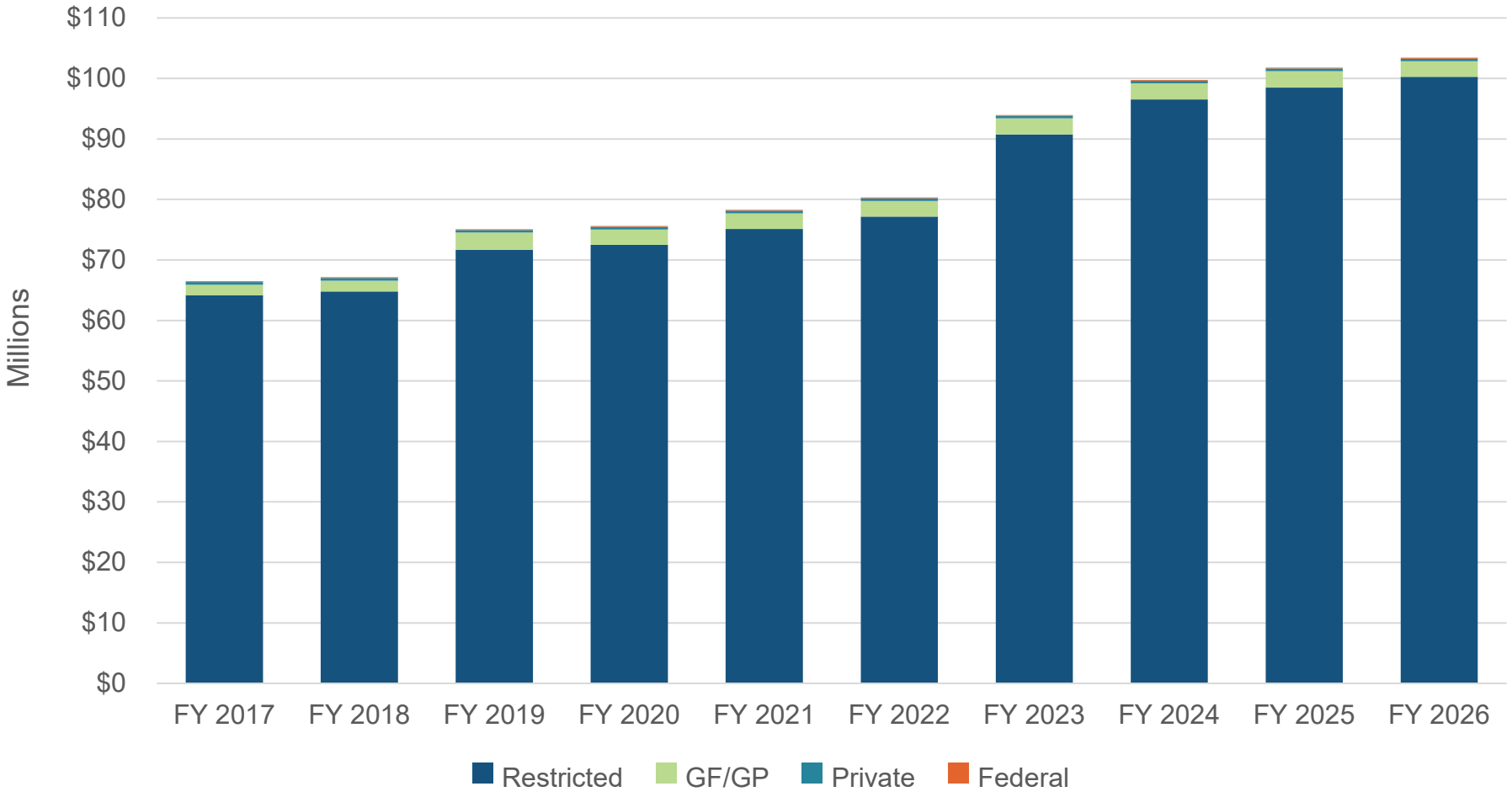
DNR manages a total of 103 facilities designated as state parks as defined by the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (451 PA 1994). These facilities are divided into four categories: parks, recreation areas, historic parks, and trails.

On June 16, 2016, the 1,122-acre Watkins Lake area in Jackson and Washtenaw Counties was announced as Michigan's newest state park. The FY 2024-25 DNR budget funds the operation of state parks collectively at **$103.4 million**.

Type	Number	Area
Parks	73	195,529 acres
Recreation areas	22	104,422 acres
Historic parks	3	1,747 acres
Trails	5	196 miles

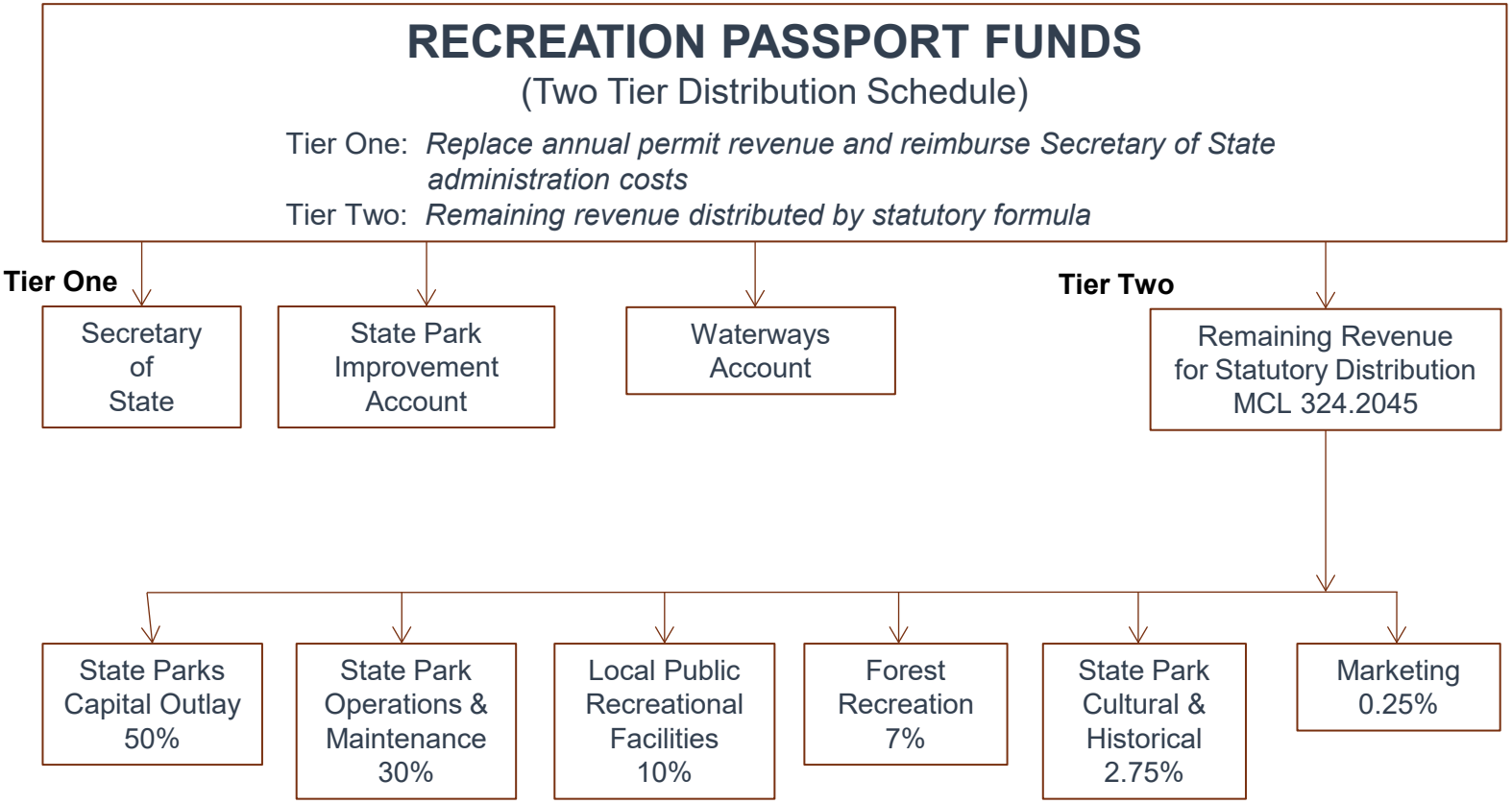
State Parks: Appropriations

Funding for state park operations has steadily increased since the Recreation Passport program replaced daily and annual state park passes in 2010. Recreation Passport rates increased to $14 for 2024 and participation rates have continued to climb.



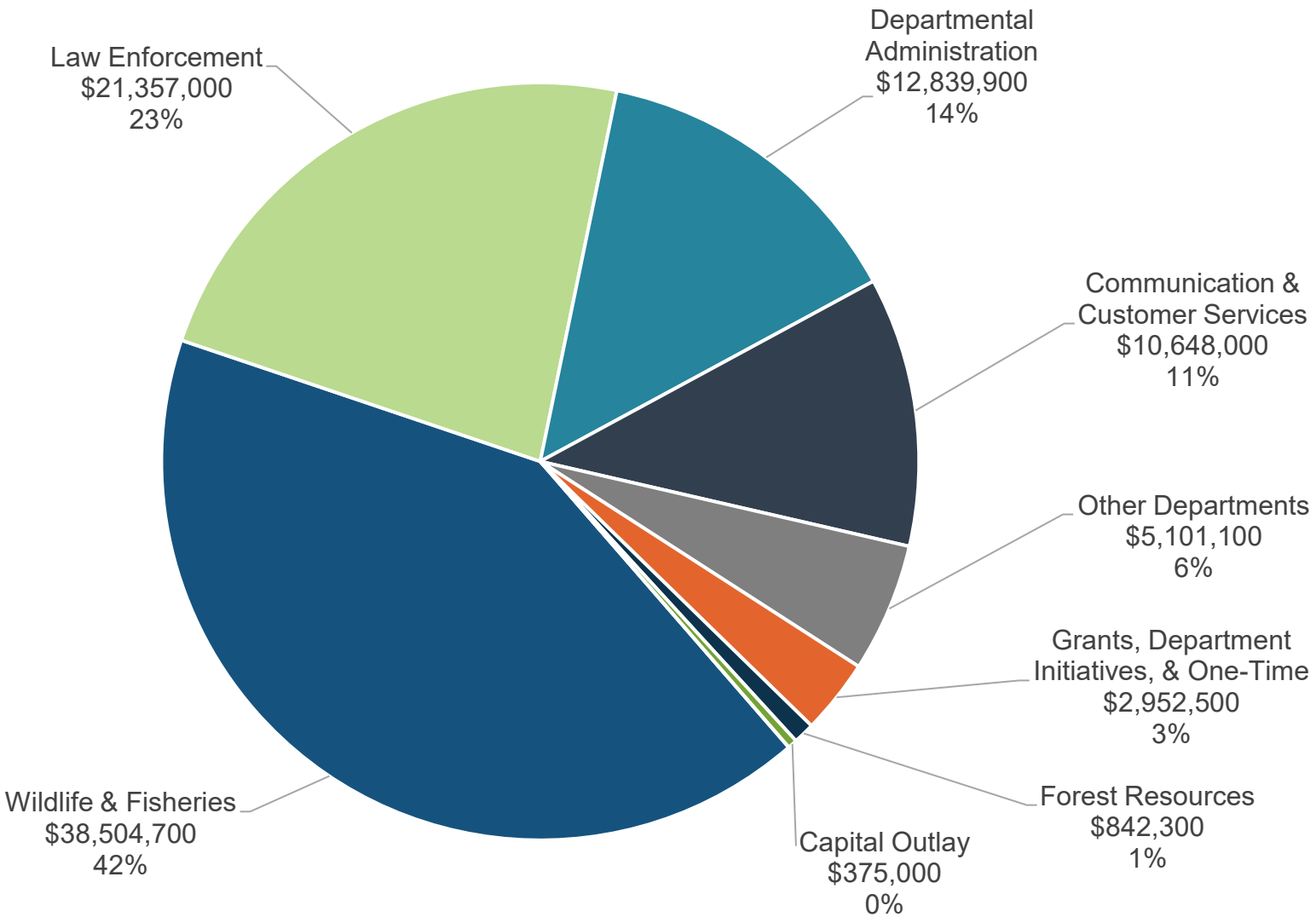
State Parks: Recreation Passport Program

In 2010, the legislature replaced daily and annual state park and boating access permits with a Recreation Passport, which currently cost residents $14 when renewing vehicle registrations. The chart below details the revenue distribution. In FY 2024-25, the Recreation Passport Program generated an estimated **$45.9 million**.



Statewide Game and Fish Protection Fund Appropriations

FY 2025-26 appropriations from the Game and Fish Protection Fund total **$92.6 million**.



Hunting and Fishing License Fees

- 2013 PA 108 established a new fee structure for hunting and fishing licenses and increased the cost of certain license fees. The number of license types was reduced from 227 to only 42. New fees began March 1, 2014.
- The sale of hunting and fishing licenses generated an estimated **$68.4 million** in revenue in FY 2024-25.
- The current fee structure requires a base license ($10 for residents) that allows hunters to hunt small game and waterfowl. Additional specific hunting tags must be purchased to add to the base license for other game, such as deer, turkey, bear, wolf, elk, and fur harvesting.
- An additional $1.00 charge is required for each base hunting license, all-species fishing licenses, and combo licenses; funding is used for marketing, education, and outreach.
- Five different fishing licenses are offered.

Hunting Licenses

	Current Fee
Base Hunting Licenses *Note: Must purchase base license to buy any additional specific hunting license tags; base license allows small game and non-waterfowl migratory bird hunting.*	
Base License; Resident	$11.00
Base License; Non-Resident	$151.00
Base License; Junior	$6.00
Base License; Senior	$5.00
Mentored Youth Hunt	$7.50
Small Game Nonresident 7-day	$80.00
Small Game Nonresident 3-day	$50.00
Sportcard	$1.00

Hunting Licenses

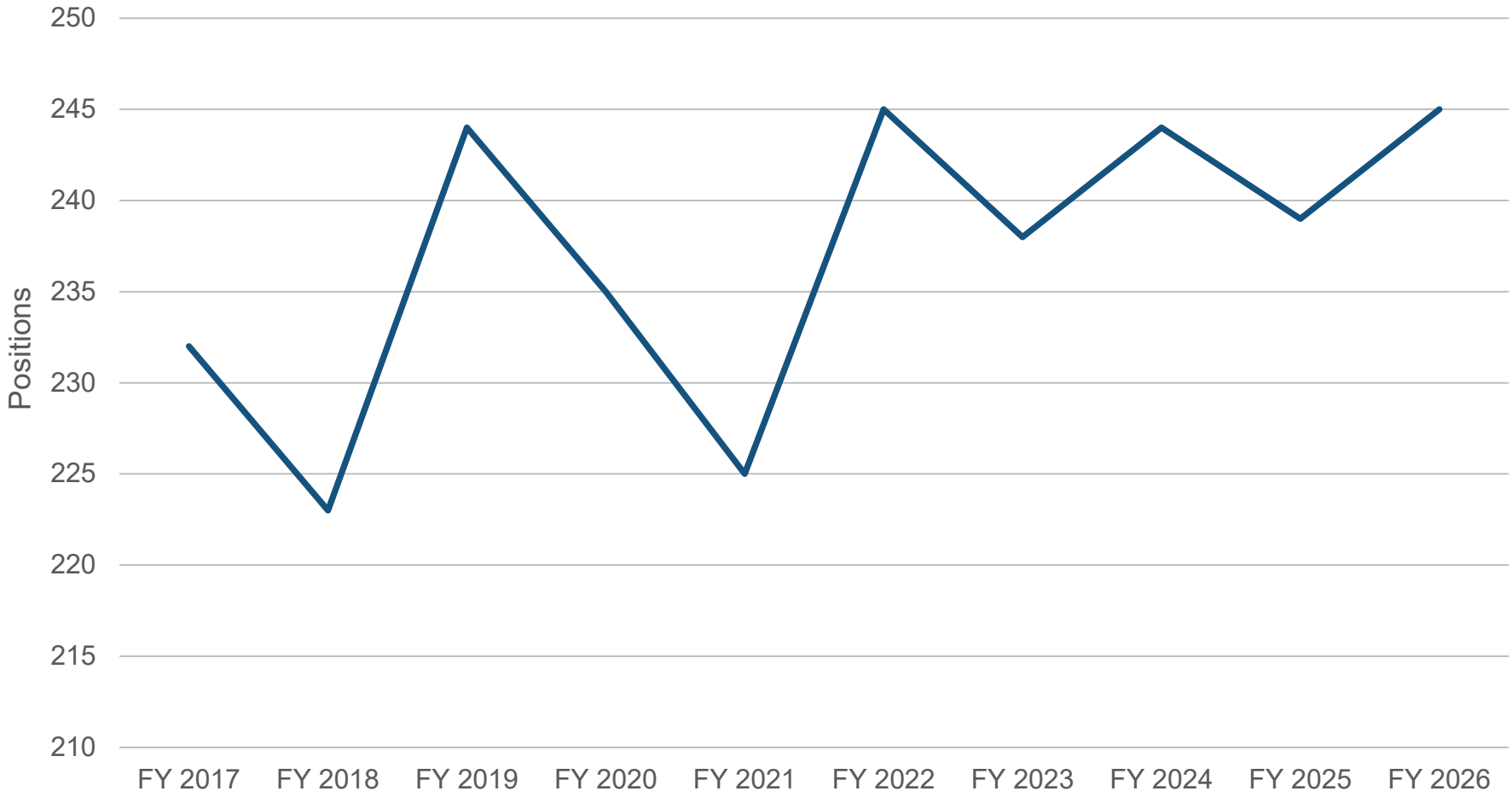
	Current Fee
Specific Hunting License Tags	
Antlerless Deer	$20.00
Hunting License Application	$5.00
Bear Harvest	$25.00
Bear Participation	$15.00
Deer	$20.00
Deer Senior	$8.00
Elk (residents only)	$100.00
Fur Harvester	$15.00
Fur Harvester Senior Resident	$6.00
Pheasant	$25.00
Turkey	$15.00
Turkey Senior Resident	$6.00
Waterfowl State License	$12.00
Military (active duty and disabled veteran)	$0.00

Fishing and Combo Licenses

Fishing Licenses	Current Fee
24 hour Fishing License	$10.00
72 hour Fishing License	$30.00
Resident All-Species Fishing License	$26.00
Resident All-Species Fishing License, Senior	$11.00
Non-Resident All-Species Fishing License	$76.00
Combination Hunting and Fishing Licenses	
Resident: Base License, 2 Deer Licenses, All-Species Fishing License	$76.00
Non-Resident: Base License, 2 Deer Licenses, All-Species Fishing License	$266.00

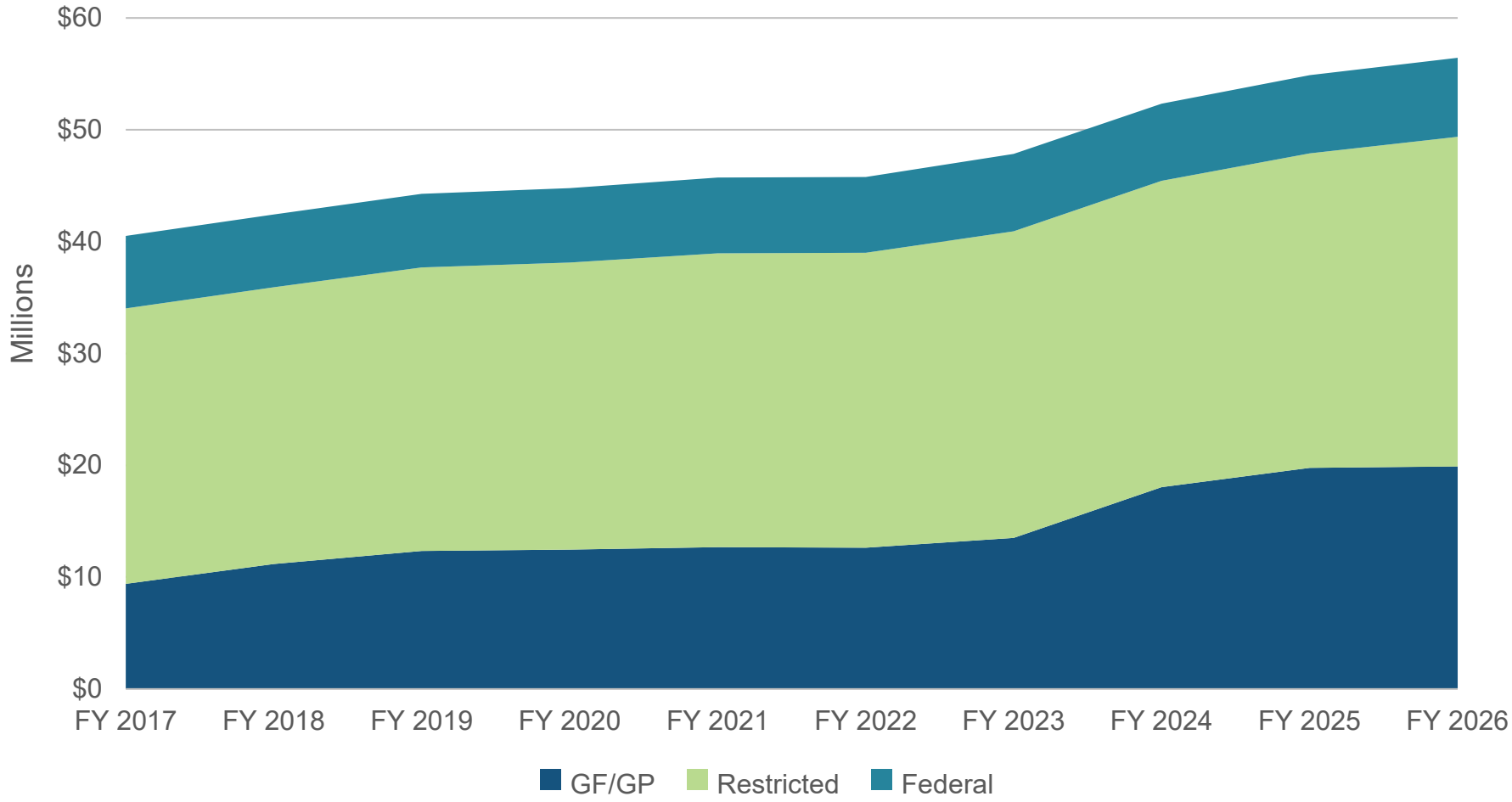
Law Enforcement: Conservation Officers

Conservation officer academies over the last decade have raised the number of commissioned COs above 220.



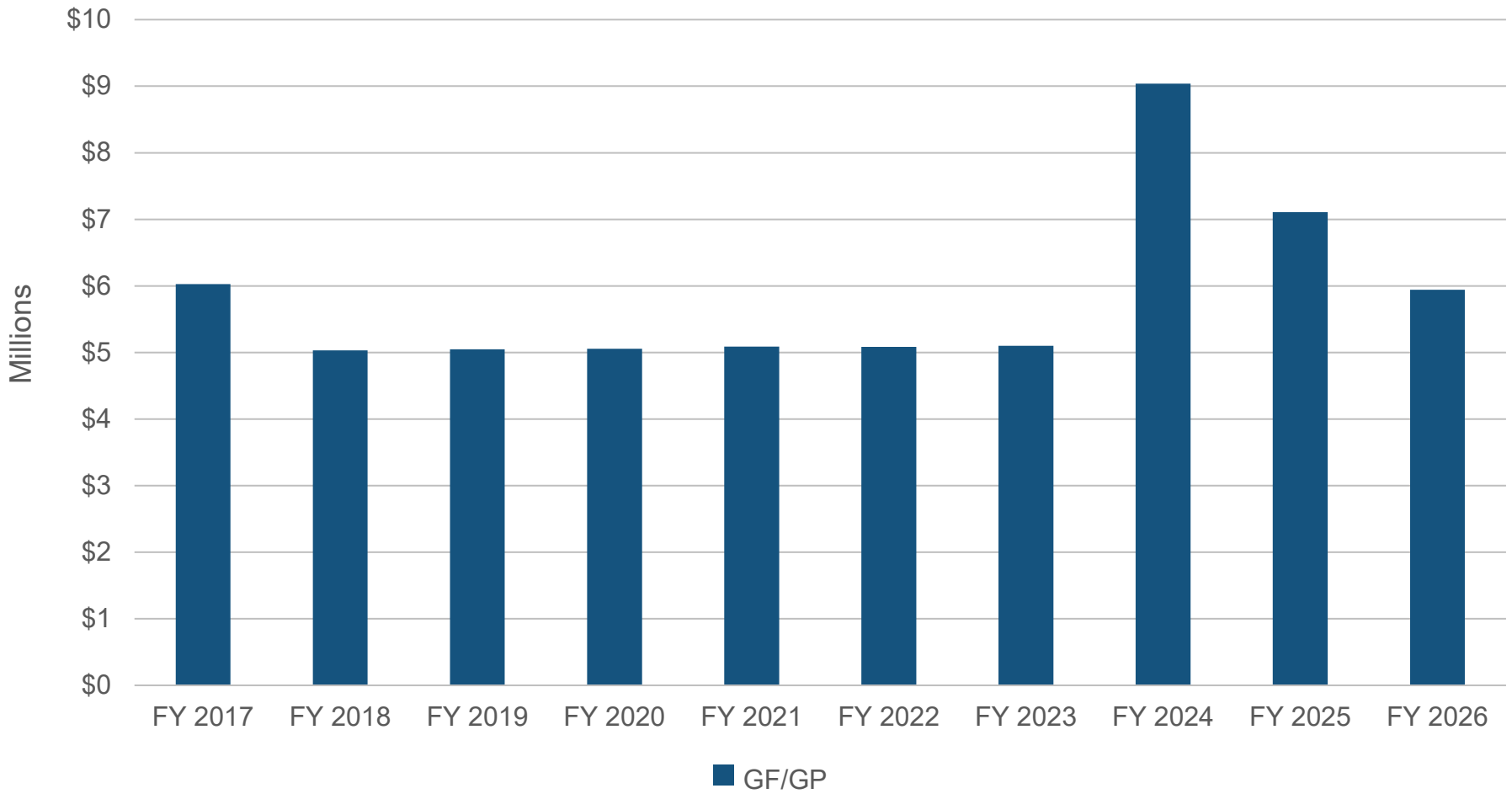
Law Enforcement: Appropriations

Increased GF/GP funding for conservation officer academies, pay parity raises, and equipment over the last decade have raised the gross appropriation for law enforcement to the current level of **$56.4 million**.



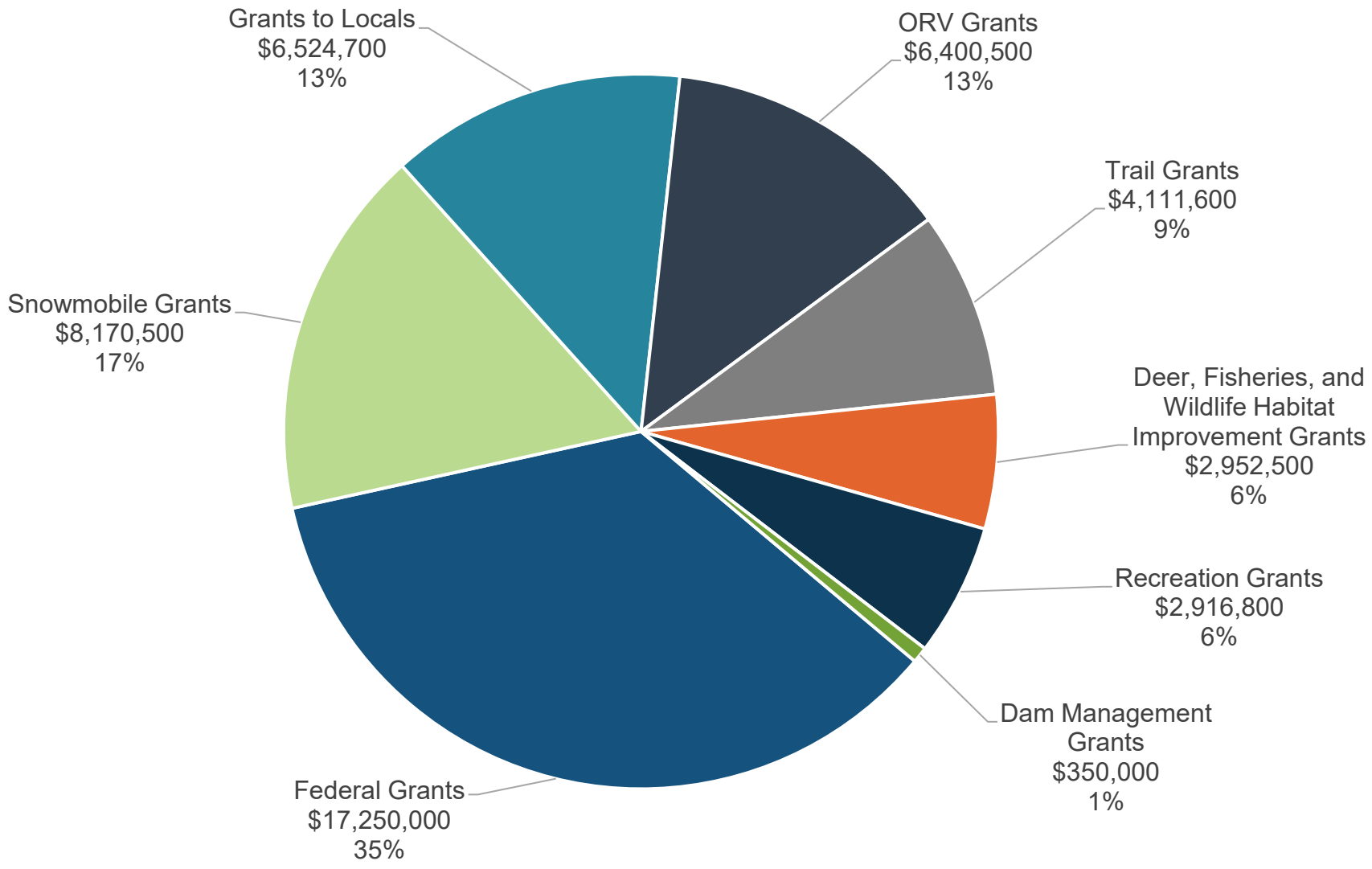
Invasive Species Prevention and Control

An annual GF/GP appropriation for invasive species prevention and control began in FY 2014-15. The FY 2016-17 and FY 2023-24 appropriations included additional one-time funding; ongoing funding was increased beginning in FY 2023-24.



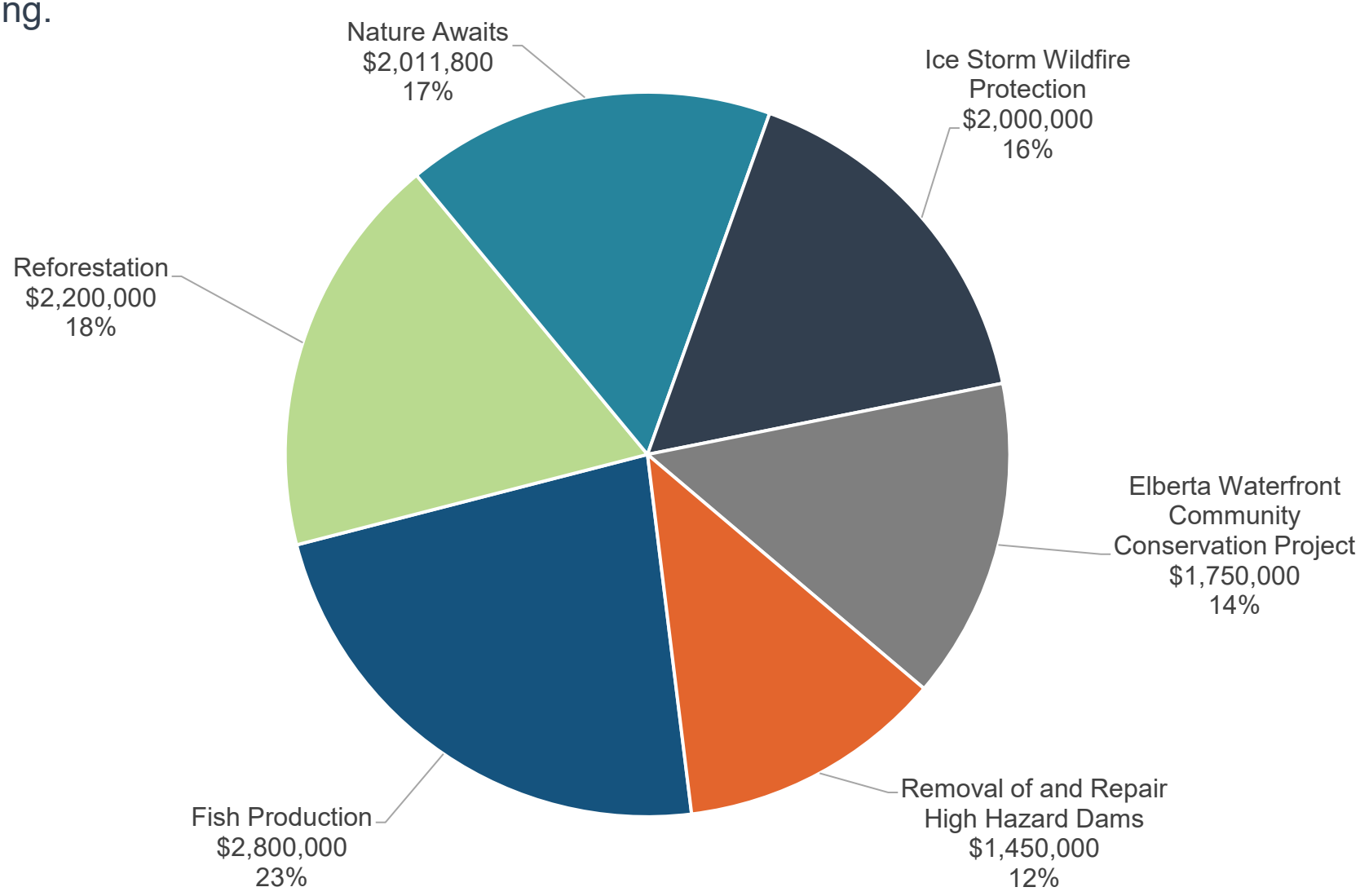
DNR Grants

DNR administers 20 grant programs totaling **$48.7 million** in FY 2025-26. These grants are available to public, private, and nonprofit organizations.



One-time Appropriations

The FY 2025-26 DNR budget includes **$12.2 million GF/GP** for six one-time projects; one-time funding for fish production and Nature Awaits supplement ongoing program funding.



For more information about the Natural Resources budget:

HFA Resources

http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/Naturalresources.asp

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