# Summary: Executive Budget Recommendation for Fiscal Year 2026-27
# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**Analyst: Austin Scott**

| | FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date as of 2/11/26 | FY 2026-27 Executive | *Difference: FY 2026-27 vs. FY 2025-26* *Amount* | *%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IDG/IDT** | $208,100 | $208,300 | *$200* | *0.1* |
| **Federal** | 100,214,800 | 102,198,400 | *1,983,600* | *2.0* |
| **Local** | 0 | 0 | *0* | *--* |
| **Private** | 7,609,200 | 8,330,900 | *721,700* | *9.5* |
| **Restricted** | 362,152,800 | 432,856,300 | *70,703,500* | *19.5* |
| **GF/GP** | 73,009,400 | 63,123,000 | *(9,886,400)* | *(13.5)* |
| **Gross** | **$543,194,300** | **$606,716,900** | ***$63,522,600*** | ***11.7*** |
| **FTEs** | 2,515.2 | 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) | Executive Change from YTD |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***1. Nature Awaits (One-Time)*** | FTE | 13.8 | 0.2 |
| 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** | **($575,600)** |
| | GF/GP | $2,011,800 | ($575,600) |
| ***2. Fee increase – Hunting Licenses and Fishing Licenses*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$29,423,300** |
| 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 | 29,423,300 |
| | GF/GP | NA | $0 |
| ***3. Fee increase – Watercraft Registrations*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$6,862,700** |
| 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 | 6,862,700 |
| | GF/GP | NA | $0 |
| ***4. Gas Tax Revenue Distribution*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$17,700,000** |
| 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 |
| ***5. Capital Outlay Adjustments*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$12,050,000** |
| 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 |

| Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations | | FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26) | Executive Change from YTD |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***6. Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Funding Decrease*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **($3,965,900)** |
| 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 |
| ***7. Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Funding for Silver Lake State Park*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$1,404,100** |
| 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. | Restricted | NA | 1,404,100 |
| | GF/GP | NA | $0 |
| ***8. Michigan Historical Center*** | FTE | 42.0 | 1.5 |
| 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 |
| | GF/GP | $3,327,600 | $0 |
| ***9. Parks and Recreation Division Employee Recruitment and Retention*** | FTE | NA | 3.0 |
| | **Gross** | **NA** | **$393,700** |
| Appropriates $393,700 in state restricted funding and authorizes 3.0 new FTE positions for supervisory roles in state parks. | Restricted | NA | 393,700 |
| | GF/GP | NA | $0 |
| ***10. Recreational Boating – St. Jean Boat Launch Management*** | FTE | 182.0 | 0.0 |
| Provides $271,300 from the Waterways Account manage the St. Jean Boat Launch at Gray Haven State Harbor in Wayne County. | **Gross** | **$24,547,600** | **$271,300** |
| | Federal | 2,129,600 | 0 |
| | Restricted | 22,418,000 | 271,300 |
| | GF/GP | $0 | $0 |
| ***11. Natural Resources Heritage – Kirtland's Warbler Management*** | FTE | 9.0 | 0.0 |
| 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 |
| | Private | 0 | 150,000 |
| | Restricted | 452,500 | 0 |
| | GF/GP | $0 | $0 |
| ***12. General Law Enforcement – Fund Swap*** | FTE | 293.0 | 0.0 |
| 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 |
| | GF/GP | $19,043,700 | $0 |
| ***13. Internal Authorization Shifts*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$0** |
| 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 |
| ***14. Technical Adjustments*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$4,021,700** |
| 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 |
| | GF/GP | NA | $0 |
| ***15. Removal of FY 2025-26 One-Time Appropriations*** | **Gross** | **$10,200,000** | **($10,200,000)** |
| Removes $10.0 million GF/GP of one-time funding that was included in the FY 2025-26 budget to support the following:<br>• Elberta waterfront community conservation project ($1.8 million GF/GP)<br>• Fish production one-time ($2.8 million GF/GP)<br>• Ice storm wildfire protection ($2.0 million GF/GP)<br>• Reforestation ($2.2 million GF/GP)<br>• Removal and repair of high-hazard dams ($1.5 million GF/GP) | GF/GP | $10,200,000 | ($10,200,000) |

| Major Budget Changes from FY 2025-26 Year-to-Date (YTD) Appropriations | | FY 2025-26 YTD (as of 2/11/26) | Executive Change from YTD |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***16. Economic Adjustments*** | **Gross** | **NA** | **$5,551,100** |
| 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 |

**Major Boilerplate Changes from FY 2025-26**

***Sec. 211. Contingency Authorization* – REVISED**
Allows for the legislative transfer process to increase state restricted authorization by up to $5.0 million. Revises to add federal authorization to up to $3.0 million.

***Sec. 234. 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.)*

***Sec. 253. 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.)*

***Sec. 254. Feeding Birds or Wildlife Near a Residence* – DELETED**
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.)*

***Sec. 255. 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.)*

***Sec. 256. 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.

***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.)*

***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.)*

| Supplemental Recommendations for FY 2025-26 Appropriations | | FY 2025-26 Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| ***1. Gas Tax Revenue Distribution*** | **Gross** | **$13,628,000** |
| Includes an increase of $13.6 million in gas tax revenue in accordance with statutory formula across multiple appropriations including programs in boating, snowmobiling, and recreational trails. | Restricted | 13,628,000 |
| | GF/GP | $0 |
| ***2. Capital Outlay – State Game and Wildlife Area Infrastructure*** | **Gross** | **$10,000,000** |
| Appropriates $10.0 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account for state game and wildlife area infrastructure improvements. | Restricted | 10,000,000 |
| | GF/GP | $0 |
| ***3. Capital Outlay – Fisheries Infrastructure*** | **Gross** | **$7,000,000** |
| Appropriates $7.0 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account for fish hatchery improvements statewide including $2.0 million for the new cool water facility at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Van Buren County. | Restricted | 7,000,000 |
| | GF/GP | $0 |

| Supplemental Recommendations for FY 2025-26 Appropriations | | FY 2025-26 Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| ***4. Wildlife Management (One-Time)*** | **Gross** | **$3,221,400** |
| Provides $3.2 million from the Game and Fish Protection Account for Machigan's participation in the Chronic Wasting Disease Research Consortium Study. | Restricted | 3,221,400 |
| | GF/GP | $0 |