

3. Fish & Wildlife..... \$2,000,000

Funds are requested for fiscal year 2016 and 2017 for the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s ongoing maintenance and program development. This item includes elements critical to basic operation of the program:

A. Conservation Camps and Shooting Ranges \$500,000

Much of the camps’ infrastructure dates back more than 50 years and is inadequate for its current use. We plan to replace or repair infrastructure as needed. We will be constructing a new dining/education center at Buck Lake in the fall of 2015 and planning to enlarge residential capacity at Kehoe to accommodate adult programs within the next six years. By leveraging capital funds effectively, we can also ensure every Vermonter has reasonable access to a publically-accessible shooting range. Additionally, Federal Wildlife Restoration funds are at a record high and programs only need to provide ¼ match. Creating safe, public shooting ranges is a critical Department priority.

B. Roxbury Hatchery – Construction and Bid Documents \$400,000

Roxbury Fish Hatchery was destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene in August of 2011. The facility is valuable for both its historical significance, and the high quality trout it produced up to 2011. The annual economic impact of the fish produced at the Roxbury Fish Hatchery is conservatively estimated to be \$2.4 M (according to the 2006 US Fish & Wildlife Service Survey of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation and the 2010 Vermont Angler Survey). This economic value is a primary economic benefit and does not include a ripple effect (i.e. jobs created).

C. Hatchery Improvements..... \$700,000

With the rising operational costs associated with fish hatcheries, the fish hatcheries are always looking to invest in new means of raising fish more cost efficiently. Although many of these changes are cost effective in the long run, a significant capital investment is required initially.

With increased scrutiny on point source wastewater discharges, the fish hatchery program must adapt to meet related wastewater discharge permit conditions. This will most likely result in capital requests for funding to meet wastewater discharge standards.

- Bald Hill Hatchery (Newark)
- Bennington Hatchery
- Ed Weed Hatchery (Grand Isle)
- Salisbury Hatchery

D. Wildlife Management Area Infrastructure..... \$150,000

Developing and maintaining this infrastructure is essential for the safe, enjoyable use of WMAs by the public. WMAs serve a critical role for the Department to meet its mission of conserving fish and wildlife resources and providing public enjoyment and appreciation of Vermont's fish and wildlife resources. This project will maintain and improve existing WMA infrastructure to allow for safe, enjoyable use of these state lands by the public for outdoor, wildlife-based activities, and allow for continued management activities on WMAs.

E. Fishing Access Areas \$100,000

The Department is working to upgrade a portion of its 185 existing Fishing Access Areas as well as retrofit existing infrastructure (courtesy docks) to meet current ADA guidelines. Capital investments are required as federal funding has declined 12% over the past 5 years, leaving less money available for infrastructure improvements. As a result, a larger percentage of the program budget must be spent on operation and maintenance leaving infrastructure projects to be pushed back due to lack of funding.

Total Request for FY 2016	\$13,064,343
<u>Total Request for FY 2017</u>	<u>\$13,218,000</u>
Total Request for Section 9 FY 2016 and FY 2017	\$26,282,343