

Budget Brief – Forestry, Fire and State Lands

NUMBER: NRAS-BB-07-06

SUMMARY

The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands manages the state's sovereign lands and provides forestry conservation and fire control activities on non-federal forest, range, and watershed lands. Although there are no state forests, approximately 30 percent of the state is non-federal land, leaving a sizeable area on which the Division administers the state's forestry laws. For detailed information on this line item, please see Compendium of Budget Information for the 2007 General Session, pages 25-39.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Wildland Fire Suppression

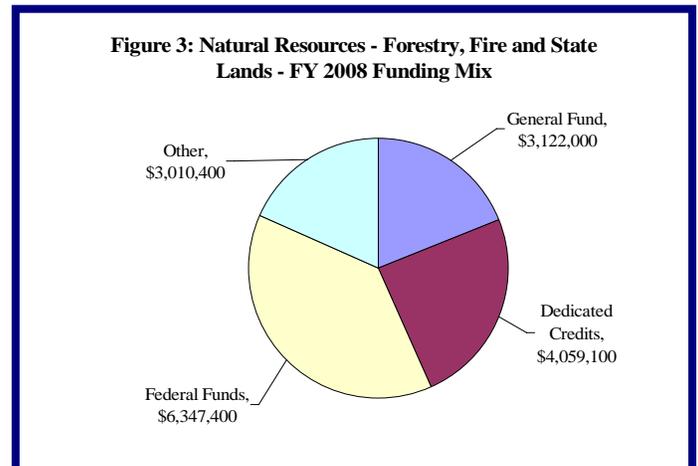
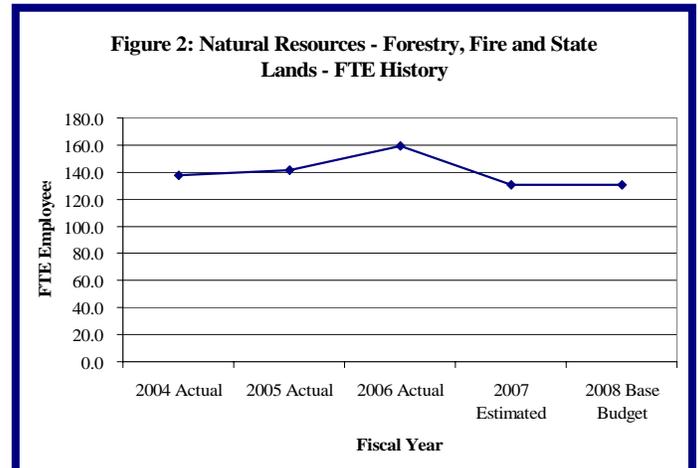
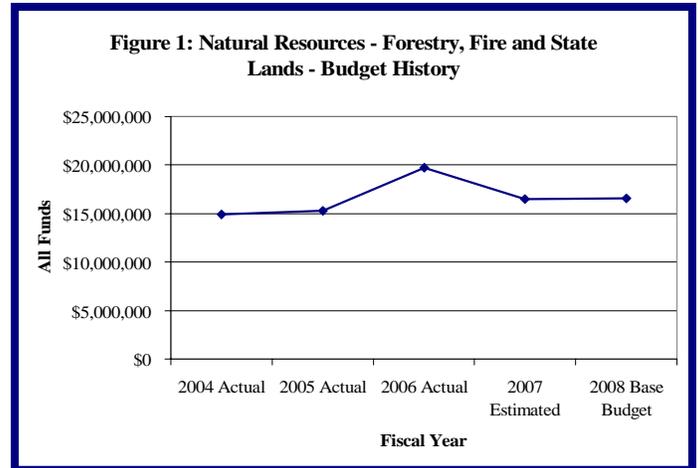
The Division is requesting for FY 2007 a supplemental appropriation of \$8,225,000 from the General Fund in order to cover fire suppression cost exceeding the available funds in the Fire Suppression Program. The Analyst recommends the Committee place this request on its priority list for the Executive Appropriations Committee.

Reseeding

If the burned areas are not promptly reseeded with appropriate types of vegetation, there is a great likelihood of floods, mud slides, new fires, etc. The Division is requesting funding to re-seed the areas after fires. The Analyst recommends the Committee place on its priority list for FY 2008 a request for one-time appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the General Fund.

Urban and Community Forestry Program

Until recently, the federal government has allowed the Division to count its fire suppression expenditures as Utah's match for the federal grant that has funded Utah's Urban and Community Forestry Program. Recently, however, the federal requirements for this grant have changed and the Division's match has to come from funding other than the fire suppression. The Division is requesting for FY 2008 an ongoing appropriation of \$125,000 from the restricted fund to hire an urban and community forester in Southern Utah, as well as to provide cost-share grants for tree planting and care in communities. This will be used as the in-kind contribution to match the federal grant that funds the Utah's Urban and Community Forestry Program.



Recruitment Program

The Division has been challenged to recruit qualified people to fill vacant professional positions. The 2006 Legislature provided for FY 2007 a one-time appropriation of \$62,000 from the Division's restricted account to start up an internship program and hire an intern from one of the local universities with forestry and fire programs. The Division is requesting additional funding for FY 2008 for the new internship program.

Permanent Storage Facilities

The Division has a trailer with equipment and materials used by its own staff, as well as community fire councils, and interagency prevention groups for presentations on wildland urban interface prevention and safety. The Division is requesting \$75,000 one-time funding to purchase a storage facility to house and protect the trailer from environmental impacts, vandalism, and theft.

Lands Inventory Central Index

The Division is required by UCA 65A-4-2 to maintain a central index of all lands owned by agencies of the Department of Natural Resources and to make that index available to the public. Due to lack of funding this has not been accomplished. The Division is requesting for FY 2008 a one-time appropriation of \$100,000 from their restricted account to contract with a vendor to develop a database program that will fulfill the requirement. The Analyst recommends the Committee direct the Division to use up to \$100,000 from its non-lapsing balances to develop the lands inventory central index.

Full-Time Fire Wardens

The Division is requesting additional funding from its restricted account in order to convert 11 of the Fire Warden positions to full time. Currently these are part-time positions with no benefits with high turnover. After the training and with some experience, these employees often are recruited by the Forest Service or BLM where they receive higher salaries, benefits, and a 20-year retirement. The training costs for the certification as an Incident Commander 3 alone can be over \$15,000 per person. In addition, the Division has estimated that retaining the Fire Wardens can result in 10-20 percent reduction in overall fire suppression costs. The total cost for converting the status of the 11 wardens to full time is \$350,000 per year. One half of this cost will be covered by the Division and the other by participating counties.

Wildland Fire Coordinator

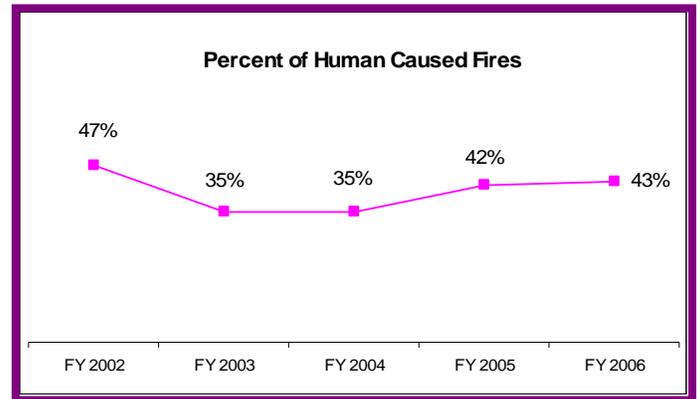
The Division is requesting funding to hire a wildland fire coordinator, who will work closely with counties helping them meet the new standards, as required in (and equipment standards) in order for them to participate in cooperative wildland fire agreements with the State. In addition, this position will also participate in wildland urban interface program in the Wasatch Front area, where workload has increased 25-30 percent within the last 4 years.

Three New Vehicles

An operational review of the fire program has recommended placing the Fire Wardens in a management role rather than a suppression role, thus allowing them to be a part of the command team that makes the decisions on how to use the available resources during fire suppression. The wardens can better perform this role from smaller command vehicles, which also have better gas mileage. The fire trucks will still be kept in the counties, but they will be driven primarily for fire suppression purposes and not for routine administrative needs. The Division is requesting funding from its restricted account to purchase three new vehicles in FY 2008.

ACCOUNTABILITY DETAIL

The Division goal is to prevent human caused wildfires. This measure tracks the wildfires and in particular what percent of the total was caused by humans. Although the Division has no direct impact on the number of fires caused by humans, they can use this measure as an indicator on how effective their educational and preventative efforts have been.

**BUDGET DETAIL**

In 2006 the Division management has restructured most of the Division's programs. The total number of programs has not been changed but staff and resources were reorganized. This restructuring does not affect the total expenditures of the Division but it does have an impact on the historical trends of the individual programs. The FY 2007 Appropriated figures are based on the old structure because they come directly from the 2006 appropriations, which took place before the restructuring.

Budget Recommendation

The Analyst recommends for the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands for FY 2008 a base budget appropriation of \$16,538,900, with \$3,122,000 from the General Fund (see Budget Detail Table).

At this time the Executive Appropriations Committee (EAC) has not allocated any General Funds beyond the agencies' base budgets. The Analyst recommends the Appropriations Subcommittee consider the following recommendations for General Fund increases be placed on the funding priority list for the EAC:

- a supplemental appropriation of \$8,225,000 for fire suppression
- a one-time appropriation of \$1,000,000 for FY 2008 for reseeded burned areas

None of the requests for funding increase are built in the tables and charts of this Budget Brief.

BUDGET DETAIL TABLE

Natural Resources - Forestry, Fire and State Lands						
	FY 2006	FY 2007		FY 2007		FY 2008*
Sources of Finance	Actual	Appropriated	Changes	Revised	Changes	Base Budget
General Fund	3,010,400	3,122,000	0	3,122,000	0	3,122,000
General Fund, One-time	2,155,000	(564,700)	0	(564,700)	564,700	0
Federal Funds	5,455,500	5,045,500	(3,464,600)	1,580,900	4,766,500	6,347,400
Dedicated Credits Revenue	4,952,500	3,522,500	0	3,522,500	536,600	4,059,100
GFR - Sovereign Land Mgt	6,306,400	4,865,600	0	4,865,600	(1,855,200)	3,010,400
Transfers	(262,500)	0	0	0	0	0
Beginning Nonlapsing	2,060,400	468,200	3,464,600	3,932,800	(3,932,800)	0
Closing Nonlapsing	(3,932,800)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$19,744,900	\$16,459,100	\$0	\$16,459,100	\$79,800	\$16,538,900
Programs						
Division Administration	731,100	377,000	413,700	790,700	2,200	792,900
Fire Management	618,400	416,000	173,500	589,500	900	590,400
Fire Suppression	6,006,500	4,512,400	(759,100)	3,753,300	52,300	3,805,600
Lands Management	149,400	158,400	111,700	270,100	1,000	271,100
Forest Management	2,964,800	842,700	671,700	1,514,400	1,500	1,515,900
Program Delivery	4,176,800	2,121,300	2,262,600	4,383,900	8,100	4,392,000
Lone Peak Center	4,197,000	3,572,500	591,300	4,163,800	13,800	4,177,600
Project Management	900,900	4,458,800	(3,465,400)	993,400	0	993,400
Total	\$19,744,900	\$16,459,100	\$0	\$16,459,100	\$79,800	\$16,538,900
Categories of Expenditure						
Personal Services	7,535,200	7,212,000	857,100	8,069,100	79,800	8,148,900
In-State Travel	160,700	146,000	(3,900)	142,100	0	142,100
Out of State Travel	79,900	56,100	17,800	73,900	0	73,900
Current Expense	6,657,900	6,115,900	(1,617,900)	4,498,000	0	4,498,000
DP Current Expense	169,000	170,000	(21,600)	148,400	0	148,400
DP Capital Outlay	6,100	0	6,100	6,100	0	6,100
Capital Outlay	2,293,700	806,100	76,200	882,300	0	882,300
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2,842,400	1,953,000	686,200	2,639,200	0	2,639,200
Total	\$19,744,900	\$16,459,100	\$0	\$16,459,100	\$79,800	\$16,538,900
Other Data						
Budgeted FTE	159.3	133.0	(2.6)	130.4	0.0	130.4

*Does not include amounts in excess of subcommittee's state fund allocation that may be recommended by the Fiscal Analyst.