

Department of Natural Resources FY2023 Operating Increment Status Update

Natural Resources House Finance Sub-Committee
February 15, 2023



Presented by:
Theresa Cross, Administrative Services Director



Status Updates on UGF Increments Received in FY2023



| Division | Change Record Title | PCN | Amount | Fund Source |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Support Services - Facilities | Maintain Occupancy at the Geological Material Center | | \$125.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Geological & Geophysical Surveys | Laying the Foundation for Alaska's Power Diversification | 2 PFT | \$262.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Forestry & Fire Protection | Expand Inspection and Administration Capacity for Timber Sales | 4 PFT | \$460.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Forestry & Fire Protection | Increase Protection of Alaska from Wildland Fire | 24 PFT 6 PPT | \$3,300.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Forestry & Fire Protection | Reinstate Wildland Firefighter Academy | 1 PFT | \$1,000.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Agriculture | Sponsor Future Farmers of America | 1 PFT | \$180.0 | Unrestricted General Fund (1004) |
| Parks & Outdoor Recreation | Expand Maintenance and Operation Capacity for Statewide Parks | | \$1,045.1 | Vehicle Rental Tax (1200) |

| Fund Source | Amount |
|--------------|------------------|
| UGF | \$5,327.0 |
| DGF | \$1,045.1 |
| Total | \$6,372.1 |

Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys



Maintain Occupancy at the Geological Material Center \$125.0 UGF

- Sustained space for staff and materials in the Geologic Materials Center (GMC)
- Current recruitment plans include having nearly 20 staff members using the GMC by the end of FY2023
- Plans underway to build several closed-door offices in the GMC during FY2024



Laying the Foundation for Alaska's Power Diversification \$262.0 UGF, 2 PFT

- Will form the core of a renewable energy program
- Program goal is to collect baseline data critical for geothermal, hydro-electric, and wind power potential
- Hydrologist 3 recruitment closed recently; Analyst Programmer 3 recruitment will start soon



Division of Forestry & Fire Protection



Expand Inspection and Administration Capacity for Timber Sales \$460.0 UGF, 4 PFT

- New foresters will provide more timber sales to industry, creating and supporting well-paying jobs in Alaskan communities and providing revenue to the state with a renewable resource
- New equipment operator will increase access to state lands by building and maintaining roads
- New foresters will ensure compliance with Alaska's Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations to protect fish habitat, water quality, and ensure reforestation



Division of Forestry & Fire Protection



Increase Protection of Alaska from Wildland Fire **\$3,300.0 UGF, 24 PFT and 6 PPT**

- This year's operating budget increment was the first step to an increased firefighting capacity, which will increase public safety, protect Alaskan values, and decrease spending on fire suppression
- These new positions make up the first half of what the division requires to be self-sufficient at Preparedness Level 3
- Building this capacity will:
 - Enhance aggressive and efficient initial attack, and
 - Reduce the need for importing expensive, often delayed or unavailable Lower 48 firefighting personnel
- These new positions, including lead firefighters and fire support staff, have been hired or are in the hiring process



Division of Forestry & Fire Protection



Reinstate Wildland Firefighter Academy \$1,000.0 UGF, 1 PFT

- Rural Alaska fire crew numbers have declined drastically from 56 crews in 2010 to fewer than 8 crews in 2021
- Workforce development is key to rebuilding Alaska's wildland firefighting capacity
- 6 trainings are planned for FY2023 to train 216 students. One February training session will be virtual, while the other 5 will be in-person at: McGrath, Tok, Fairbanks, and Palmer
- 47 non-permanent positions have been created to provide opportunities for new graduates to gain experience and qualify for permanent division firefighting positions



Division of Agriculture



Sponsor Future Farmers of America (FFA)

\$180.0 UGF, 1 PFT

- State FFA Director is currently retiring, recruiting for the permanent position now
- Leadership Conferences:
 - Hosted three FFA Fall District Leadership Conferences (Interior, Mat-Su and Kenai)
 - State FFA officers participated in the National FFA Summit in Washington DC, and visited with State Senators
 - State FFA officers traveled to the Kenai District FFA event and held workshops on supervised agriculture experience projects
- Division of Agriculture, local farming opportunities, community outreach:
 - Collaborated with the Division of Agriculture where FFA Chapters from across the state participated at the State Fair
 - Toured four farms in the Matsu area, providing opportunity to observe successful production agriculture
 - Participated with an informational booth at the Nenana Totchaket Agriculture lands field day in Nenana
 - State FFA Officers and Chapter members attended and assisted with the State Farm Bureau Conference hosting a State Agricultural Issues event
- Governor's Emergency Education Relief Grant:
 - FFA program was recently awarded \$500,000 under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) grant to create new programs in underserved communities and to develop the quality of current K-12 education programs
 - This grant will operate through September 2024



Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation



Expand Maintenance and Operation Capacity for Statewide Parks \$1,045.1 VRT (Vehicle Rental Tax)

- All funds were utilized as planned resulting in improved cleanliness and safety within Parks facilities
- Hired Law Enforcement Superintendent to manage program (re-classed PCN)
- Re-classed 5 Park Rangers to year-round status making all Law Enforcement staff year round
- Replaced aging Law Enforcement equipment
- Increased opportunities for training and certification
- Additional Alaska Conservation Corp members for park cleanliness throughout the state
- Distributed additional funds to each region to cover increased services commodities impact their budgets
- Assumed management of Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area



Questions?



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