

State of New Hampshire
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Capital Budget Hearing
June 23, 2020

It is an honor to speak to you this morning to present the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) capital budget request for the 2022-2023 biennium. This department is made up of the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Division of Forest and Lands, the NH State Library, the Division of Historical Resources and the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts.

New Hampshire is a state that is known for its natural beauty, amazing outdoor recreation, vibrant cultural activity and our commitment to honoring our past. These are the natural and cultural resources we are proud to protect, promote and manage and it is with your support that we can create the best experiences for our citizens and visitors. And I'd like to add that over the past few months, as we have all been navigating the Covid-19 pandemic it can't be emphasized enough how access to our state parks and outdoor spaces is essential to granite staters everywhere. We have seen unprecedented crowds on our trails and throughout our state reservations and our staff has worked closely with local communities and other agencies to maintain safety and health guidelines.

Our department cares for 668 buildings, 21 bridges, 26 dams, 149 septic systems, 91 water systems, and over 300 miles of roads and parking lots all shown on the "Fixed Asset Analysis" included in your packet. That analysis also estimates the replacement cost for our parks infrastructure at \$267 million. Reinvesting just 1% every year would require a commitment of over \$2.6 million dollars per year (or over \$5 million for a biennium).

Thanks to the support of our legislature over the years, we have made much progress tackling deferred maintenance but we still have much to do.

We have prepared a \$21,292,000 million capital improvement project request for the next biennium. The budget addresses our goals of stewardship, safety, infrastructure, and new development.

We have identified specific projects that will allow us to succeed well into the future. Delaying these projects only delays stability, opportunities for growth, and worse, threatens the safety of our staff, volunteers and visitors.

With an emphasis on maintaining our current infrastructure and reducing our backlog of deferred maintenance, we have broken our request into 9 priorities.

1. Communication System Replacement
2. Roofing and Repair
3. Toilet Building Upgrades
4. Historic Sites Restoration
5. Fire Tower Repairs
6. Mount Washington Water System Upgrade
7. Cannon Tramway Rehabilitation
8. Roads and Parking Lots
9. Odiorne Point State Park Facilities Upgrade

Fulfillment of these requests will allow us to address fundamental needs to establish and maintain our facilities up to a standard worthy of our visitors, with the hope of maximizing opportunities throughout our great state. Safety and quality of experience requires proper care and upkeep.

To provide further information on the specific requests, I would like Tom Mansfield, our chief architect, to now speak to the priorities I just laid out for you today.

Thank you very much.

Sarah Stewart
Commissioner
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources