



**DIVISION OF
FORESTS AND LANDS**



**DNCR FY 24-25 BUDGET PRESENTATION
SARAH STEWART, COMMISSIONER
NOVEMBER 29, 2022**

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing us to present the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources budget request for the 2024-2025 biennium.

The DNCR is home to five divisions: The Division of Parks and Recreation, the Division of Forests and Lands, the Division of Historical Resources, the NH State Library, and the NH State Council on the Arts.

Our collective mission is to protect, preserve, promote and manage the State's natural and cultural resources, supporting New Hampshire's high quality of life and strengthening the experiences of our residents and guests.

The DNCR employs nearly 1,000 people each year. We manage over 220,000 acres of public land and maintain approximately 870 buildings of various types with a total value reaching nearly \$50 million. We also maintain 22 bridges, 15 fire towers, 26 dams, 149 septic systems, 91 waterways, and over 300 miles of roads and parking lots. We are heading into another busy winter season where we will oversee the management of over 7,000 miles of snowmobile trails- an important part of this state's booming outdoor recreation economy. I am also excited to report that our Cannon Mountain Ski Resort ranked #8 in the east in Ski Magazine's 2022 Reader Resort Survey, which is the highest-ranking NH resort.

Our agency's broad scope of services is also illustrated in how we touch the daily lives of our citizens in every community of the state. Our programs, grants and services have only expanded as a result of the COVID pandemic. For example, the Division of Historical Resources' required Project Review and Compliance program experienced a 30% increase.

Growth is the key word in this budget request. Our State Parks have seen significant growth in attendance, online reservations, camping, and retail sales. To respond to this growth, our State Parks Season has grown to 36 weeks- opening earlier in the spring and staying open beyond Columbus Day. Similarly, the Division of Forests and Lands is also experiencing growth. We've helped to conserve several thousand more acres available for public access and our Forest Rangers are seeing a lot more activity, consistent with the growth in outdoor recreation.

For the fifth season running, seedling sales at the N.H. State Forest Nursery in Boscawen continue to outpace the previous year's marks.

Sales income increased 52 percent from 2021's record-breaking season and reflected a 146.7 percent increase since 2018. The total number of orders was up 37.6 percent from last year, which is just about double – 96.5 percent – compared to five years ago.

The number of seedlings lifted, sorted for quality, packaged and sold increased 50.8 percent from 2021, a 135.2 percent jump from 2018.

In order to respond to this overall growth, we have evaluated our staffing needs and are requesting permission to convert eight 9T positions into permanent full-time positions within Parks, and one 9T to permanent full time within the Division of Historical Resources. We would also like to add an additional Forest Ranger and an additional Forester to assist us in monitoring over 270,000 acres of private land under conservation easements

I am also seeking your support for three positions in the Office of the Commissioner. This agency relies on the legal advice of the Attorney General's office. Over the past several years, it has become increasingly clear that, with the number of contracts, lease agreements, rulemaking, and day-to-day interactions with the public, there is enough work to support a fulltime agency attorney. I have discussed this need with the DOJ attorneys assigned to us, and they wholeheartedly agree.

Another fulltime position I wish to fill with your support is a DNCR Financial Analyst specializing in federal grant administration. From the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the National Endowment for the Arts and the US Forest Service, our five divisions administer millions of federal grant funds annually.

Rather than continue to oversee a very siloed attempt to pull this off each grant round, our staff would benefit from the support of a centralized service position. I suspect the team at DAS would also appreciate the efficiency of working with a central point person rather than many individual grant administrators sprinkled throughout our agency.

Finally, a position I have advocated for in the past, and truly believe will be a game-changer for us is having a DNCR Curator. As part of our mission, we are to provide access to the many treasures we manage. This includes artwork, historic items, archeological finds, collections that have been donated to us, and more. My vision is to hire someone who can help us organize our treasures and then, help to develop public facing exhibits and programs at our State Library, at our Parks and Historic Sites, and even traveling exhibits to schools, local public libraries and other community centers. We are currently seeking a consultant through the RFQ process to assess the State Library's current space and provide us with a plan to store much of the stacks in a climate-controlled storage facility-freeing up valuable space for exciting and endless opportunities to engage the public.

Other considerations in this budget request include accounting for dramatic increases in our utility expenses and interagency transfers. Something I would like to point out for discussion is the fact that since 2007 when the Bureau of Historic Sites was created, it was general funded. This was done on purpose in order to dedicate funds to the stewardship and management of our designated historic sites, separating them from parks funding, which has ebbed and flowed over the years. Historic sites also have a separate mission from Parks, which is telling the stories of who we are through buildings, landscapes, collections and exhibits. Two years ago, when we were asked to cut our overall general fund budget, we did so without compromising our commitment to the Bureau of Historic Sites. Instead, we shifted park revenue over which you will see is what we did again in this budget. Shifting back to general funds is something we would like to discuss further.

Looking at our prioritized needs, we are making these requests consistent with our theme of growth and demand. New Hampshire's artists, cultural organizations and for-profit venues were hit very hard during the pandemic and are not fully recovered. A recent survey of 53 nonprofit grantees, most of which

receive Arts Council operating support, showed 2022 earned revenue to date at 78% of pre-pandemic levels. This is consistent with national trends and is troubling. Additional state assistance will be needed in the FY24-25 biennium as they reorient their business models to what may be the new normal.

We are also seeing an opportunity to push beyond critical needs to support the state's cultural assets in a way that fulfills the increased demand from the public throughout this sector. Specifically:

- Requests for operating support have increased significantly as organizations mature and become eligible for grants. Applications to this two-year program increased 30% in FY22-23 over FY20-21.
- Requests to the Arts in Health grant program have also increased – a 33% increase in FY23 over FY22. We project continued growth in this program as pandemic recovery continues, particularly in the areas of behavioral health and substance misuse services. Due to this growth we are requesting a new Grants Coordinator position to lead the program.
- The Artist Entrepreneurial Grant program continues to grow as artists build and diversify their careers and small businesses.
- There is a marked need for capacity building support for emerging arts organizations, particularly in the areas of financial management and fund development.

Much as the state allocated funds to boost outdoor recreation to meet the needs of the public, we see similar demand and opportunity with the arts.

You will also see a request to support New Hampshire Public Television. Historically, NHPBS was supported by the state through UNH (\$2.7 million annually), but funding was eliminated in 2011. NHPBS will utilize the requested funds to provide the state and the country with engaging local content that showcases the state's rich natural, cultural, historical, and environmental resources. Some of the programming NHPBS will produce include: our music and arts heritage and how it impacts the NH economy; documentaries about New Hampshire's hidden history, our diverse new populations, the vibrant farm to table movement, and much more. The amount requested will simply pass through our agency to NHPBS, but by allocating it to the Council on the Arts, we can count

this money toward our federal match. This is a strategic way to make every dollar work hard for New Hampshire.

In conclusion, the DNCR has sustained substantial growth over the past few years and in order to move ahead on this trajectory, we have identified specific opportunities to put the pedal to the metal while staying within the 3% general fund growth limitation and by offsetting the new positions we need with several vacant positions that we can abolish.

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DNCR FACT SHEET**

Budget Summary (In Mil)	DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET						
	ACTUALS	ADJ AUTH	PROPOSED EFFICIENCY	PRIORITIZED NEEDS	PROPOSED EFFICIENCY	PRIORITIZED NEEDS	FY 24 v FY23
	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24		FY 25		
General Funds	\$ 7.9	\$ 8.7	\$ 9.1	\$ 1.2	\$ 9.3	\$ 1.2	\$ 0.4
Federal Funds	\$ 7.0	\$ 8.7	\$ 8.5	\$ 0.2	\$ 8.6	\$ 0.1	\$ (0.2)
Other Funds	\$ 37.4	\$ 40.6	\$ 47.4	\$ 0.3	\$ 48.0	\$ 0.3	\$ 6.8
Total	\$ 52.3	\$ 58.0	\$ 65.0	\$ 1.7	\$ 65.9	\$ 1.6	\$ 7.0

DEPARTMENT POSITION COUNTS FY 24-25				PROPOSED EFFICIENCY		PROPOSED PRIORITIZED NEEDS		CAPITAL BUDGET - PROPOSED w/ REQUESTED FED FUND (ARPA) SUPPORT	
Division	Classified	Unclassified	Sub-Total	Classified	Total	FY 24-25			
Commissioner's Office	32	1	33		33	State Parks	\$	53.6	
Forest and Lands	52	1	53		53	Cannon Tramway	\$	15.7	
State Parks	75	2	77		77	Land Reservations	\$	2.0	
State Library	26	1	27		27	Historic Sites	\$	2.2	
Arts Council	6	1	7	1	8	Trails Bureau/CLH	\$	7.7	
Historical Resources	11	1	12		12				
Total Full Time Permanent	202	7	209	1	210		\$	81.2	

Seasonal Pos Count Est: Winter - 400+ / Summer - 350+ / Part Time Est: 250+
Full-Time Temp (9T) Position Count FY 22-23: 29

**SELECTED STATISTICAL AND DATA PERFORMANCE MEASURES			
STATE RESERVATIONS DATA - FORESTS & PARKS		DNCR FLEET	
			# vehicles
Total Reservation and Easement Acreage Stewardship	514,739	Passenger Autos	3
DNCR Reservations (acres)	169,249	Trucks	157
Fish & Game Wildlife Management Areas (acres)	60,020	Vans / Buses	7
Federal Flood Control Areas under Management License (acres)	13,446	Mobile Equipment	48
Reservation Acreage	242,715	Snowmobiles / OHRV	83
Conservation Easements Acreage	272,024	Total	298
Miles of Boundary Line Maintained	1,100	HISTORICAL RESOURCES	
Average Acres Treated Annually	1,573	Historic tax credit proj under review	20
Board Feet Timber Harvested Annually (10yr avg)	5.6 million	Tax credit projects, investment value	\$157,810,495
Tons of Pulp Harvested Annually	22,000 tons	State & Natl Register listed properties	1,305
Tons of Biomass Chips Harvested Annually	35,000 tons	Inventoried property records	11,000+
Campgrounds / Sites	23 / 1,427	Archaeological sites	3,700
Day Use Parks	38	Historic Highway Markers	268
Historic Sites	16	Preservation easement properties	41
Natural Areas / Waysides	8 / 7	Fed & State project reviews	1,500+
State Beaches (Lake & Ocean)	22	Fed & State Agy regulatory partners	70
Ski Areas (Downhill & X-country)	4	Certified Local Govts, local commissions	107
Miles of Snowmobiles / OHRV trails	7,200 / 1,200	STATE LIBRARY	
Seacoast Metered Parking Spaces	1,644	State Library Collection	650,000 vols
Retail Outlets in Parks	37	Blind and Physically Handicapped - Clients served	2,592
DNCR BUILDINGS INFRASTRUCTURE		Inter-library loan prog items delivered	750,000 items
Total Buildings - Various Types	884	Delivery milage	250,000
Total Sq Ft Buildings	870,387 ft	Technology instruction sessions	75
Building Value \$ (Millions)	\$65.06	Database usage	650,000 sessions
Roof Area Sq Ft	973,090 ft	NH State Government Digital Document Depository	70,000 Docs
Other Structures:		STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS	
Pit Toilets	110	FY20 Grants to Communities Total	\$834,688
Dams	26	FY20 Number of Grants	142
Bridges	22	FY19 Direct Spending Leveraged	\$47.7m
Wells	91	FY19 Artists employed via grant prgm	4,599
Septic Systems	147	State Art Collection # of objects	650+
Toilet/Bathhouse Buildings	86	Percent for Art Program # of artworks	350+

Notes: Figures are approximated and/or updated as of Fiscal Year Ending 2022. Arts Data represents Pre-COVID Statistics.