



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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Scott R. Mason
Executive Director

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July 30, 2021

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
And the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a VI, authorize the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD), to accept and expend \$61,887 in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) for the purchase of critical emergency response equipment (2-boat, motor and trailer packages). The emergency response equipment being sought will enable Conservation Officers to better respond to the increase in recreational activities related to relaxed COVID-19 restrictions effective upon the approvals of the Fiscal Committee of the General Court and Governor and Executive Council through June 30, 2022. This is an allowable use of ARP FRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds are to be budgeted in FY2022 in the following account:

03-75-75-751520-24XX0000¹ F&G (ARP) Emergency Response Equipment

Class	Description	FY22 Requested Budget
030-500311	EQUIPMENT NEW REPLACEMENT	\$61,825
041-500801	AUDIT FUND SET-ASIDE	\$62
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$61,887
000-400338	FEDERAL FUNDS	\$61,887
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$61,887

¹All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH7501A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF6027501Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

Funds are budgeted as follows:

- Class 030 – Equipment – 2 – Boat, motor and trailer packages
- Class 041 – Audit Fund Set-Aside-.001 of federal funds payable to DAS for audit fees

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EXPLANATION

The NHFGD is requesting to accept and expend funds from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the purpose of purchasing 2 additional boats to enable Conservation Officers to adequately respond to calls for assistance from the public and patrolling public waterways to provide public safety in light of the increased tourism and recreation activity that is being seen due to COVID-19.

Conservation Officers employed by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Law Enforcement Division are responsible for the enforcement of all laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the State's fish, wildlife and marine resources. Furthermore, Conservation Officers are tasked with conducting search and rescue missions in both the woodlands and waterways of the State. While the Advanced Search and Rescue Team responds to calls for lost and injured hikers, the Dive Team conducts under water searches for drowning victims and evidence. Currently, there are only forty-four (44) Conservation Officers in New Hampshire, which includes those officers in training and assigned to administrative duties.

Since the relaxed COVID-19 restrictions were implemented, the State of New Hampshire has experienced a significant increase of tourists seeking to visit and recreate. This is especially true for people participating in recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and Off Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) use. The increase in recreational activities has been documented through the increase in hunting/fishing licenses, Hike Safe Cards, boater registrations OHRV registrations and calls for service.

License/Registration	2019	2020	Overall Increase
Fishing/Hunting	298,185	347,110	48,925 (16.7 %)
OHRV/Snowmobile	79,460	93,109	13,649 (17.2%)
Hike Safe Card	6,159	7,752	1,593 (25.7%)
Boat Registrations	96,006	101,279	5,273 (5.5%)
Calls for Service	2019	2020	Overall Increase
	14,191	16,044	1,853 (13.0%)

The diverse responsibilities of the Law Enforcement Division require multiple pieces of equipment to carry-out the mission of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Conservation Officers are assigned 4x4 patrol trucks, all-terrain vehicles, trail bikes, snow mobiles, boats and various gear so that they can perform all of the duties required. The financial burden of all this required equipment is challenging and it is critical for the Law Enforcement Division to pursue alternative funding options to address equipment deficiencies.

Recently, the Law Enforcement Division conducted an internal review of all Law Enforcement Division equipment. During this review, it was determined that over 20 4x4 patrol vehicles had in excess of 150,000 miles. In an effort to address this equipment deficiency, equipment funds over the past 6 months have been allocated to purchase 12 new 4x4 patrol vehicles. The decision to expend over \$400,000.00 on new patrol vehicles was paramount, as a 4x4 patrol vehicle is the one piece of equipment that is used almost every duty day. Unfortunately, the need to purchase new patrol vehicles has made it nearly impossible to purchase other necessary equipment, such as boats.

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Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) equipment funds enable the Law Enforcement Division to purchase several all-terrain vehicles and snow mobiles per year, but the general law enforcement funds that can be utilized to purchase boats have been expended mostly on 4x4 patrol vehicles. Acquiring new patrol boats would address an immediate need and would provide Conservation Officers the ability to respond to increased calls and increased activity on the state waterways due to tourists and residents seeking more outdoor activities post-COVID, such as:

- respond to emergencies on lakes, ponds and rivers
- participate in water searches and drowning recoveries
- participate in safe boating education and enforcement
- patrol for hunting and fishing activity
- participate in fish stocking in multiple waterbodies

The new patrol boats being requested are:

Item	Computation	Federal
War Eagle 754LDR 17'7" aluminum patrol boat with 75 horse power out board motor and trailer	Total package = \$27,000.00	\$27,000.00
Lund Alaskan SS 18' aluminum patrol boat with 75 horse power out board motor and trailer	Total package = \$34,825.00	\$34,825.00
Audit Cost		\$61.82
Total Cost		\$61,886.82

If the funds are approved, these new patrol boats will replace existing patrol boats in District One (Great North Woods) and District 2 (Lakes Region).

District One will be assigned the:

- **War Eagle 754LDBR 17'7 aluminum patrol boat with a 75 horse power Yamaha outboard motor and galvanized trailer – Total Package = \$27,000.00.** This boat would be assigned to District One and would be used on waterbodies of all sizes throughout the Great North Woods. The boat would be utilized for general patrol, stocking fish and emergency response when required. It would replace a Boston Whaler in poor condition that was manufactured in the early 1980's. The Boston Whaler currently does not have an outboard engine that runs and would be brought to State Surplus as it has reached its useful purpose for patrol and emergency response

District Two will be assigned the:

- **Lund Alaskan SS 18' aluminum patrol boat with a 75 horse power Honda outboard motor and galvanized trailer – Total Package = \$34,825.00.** This boat will replace a 2001 Mckee Craft 18' fiber glass boat that was previously brought to State Surplus by the Department of Safety, Division of State Police, Marine Patrol Unit. The Marine Patrol Unit determined that this boat no longer met the needs for law enforcement and emergency response on larger lakes in the Lakes Region and was able to replace the vessel.

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In an effort to address an immediate equipment need on for District Two on Lake Winnisquam, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Law Enforcement Division acquired this boat from State Surplus in 2018 with the understanding that the acquisition only provided a **short-term** solution to a major equipment deficiency. The Mckee Craft replaced a smaller 16 foot boat that had also been previously acquired from the Marine Patrol Unit through State Surplus. The 18' Mckee Craft replaced a 16' foot boat that was not large or heavy enough to be operated in less than ideal conditions on Lake Winnisquam.

The Mckee Craft is currently used on Lake Winnisquam where it is kept on a dock. This boat has limited patrol abilities as it is too tall to pass underneath a trestle on the lake and presents challenges to trailer for use on other waterbodies. This boat also has an older 2-stroke outboard engine that has had issues with the oil pump and requires the mixing of oil and gas.

The Lund Alaskan SS 18' has proved to be an ideal patrol platform for larger bodies of water. The Law Enforcement Division has been using these boats on Newfound Lake, Squam Lake and Lake Umbagog for several years and they have performed consistently in all conditions. It is also easy to trailer and can be used at various waterbodies throughout the District. The Lund Alaskan SS 18' would fill a major equipment deficiency for the **long-term** and would be much better suited for patrol and emergency response on Lake Winnisquam and other area waterbodies.

Due to relaxed COVID-19 rules and restrictions and increased post-pandemic demand for travel, hospitality, tourism, and other services, it is expected that the State will see a heavy influx of resident and tourist activity. Although this is a very welcome change, it also poses a challenge to state agencies and municipalities in managing large groups of people and dealing with increases in tourist and other activities that may lead to unrest or other security challenges.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott R. Mason
Executive Director