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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FORESTS AND LANDS

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January 26, 2022

The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chairman  
Fiscal Committee of the General Court and

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

**REQUESTED ACTION**

1. Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, authorize the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Forests and Lands, Natural Heritage Bureau, to budget and expend prior-year carry forward funds from the Natural Heritage Bureau account in the amount of \$249,288 to develop a scientific tool for specialized data analysis and upland forest management effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council approval through June 30, 2023. 100% Other Funds (Agency Income)
2. Pursuant to RSA 124:15 and contingent upon approval of Requested Action #1, authorize the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Forests and Lands, Natural Heritage Bureau, to establish a temporary full-time Environmentalist III (LG 23) position and a year-round part-time temporary Environmental Technician I (LG 9) position for the purpose of supporting the creation of the EIA tool and other projects effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council approval through June 30, 2023. 100% Other Funds (Agency Income)

Funds are to be budgeted in fiscal year 2022 as follows:

03-035-035-351010-21030000, Natural Heritage – Agency Income

Class-Account	Class Description	FY22 Current Adjusted Authorized	Requested Action	Revised FY22 Adjusted Authorized
001-484944	Transfers From Other Agency			
004-408189	Intra Agency Transfers	(\$51,911)		(\$51,911)
009-401470	Agency Income	(\$483,296)	(\$249,288)	(\$732,584)
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>(\$535,207)</b>	<b>(\$249,288)</b>	<b>(\$784,495)</b>
010-500100	Personal Services Perm Clas	\$260,045		\$260,045
020-500200	Current Expenses	\$5,500	\$15,000	\$20,500
026-500251	Organizational Dues	\$1,000		\$1,000
027-582703	Transfers To Doit	\$21,113	\$20,000	\$41,113
029-500290	Intra-Agency Transfers	\$10,417		\$10,417
030-500301	Equipment New Replacement	\$500		\$500
039-500190	Telecommunications	\$1,100	\$3,000	\$4,100
040-500800	Indirect Costs	\$1,833		\$1,833
042-500620	Additional Fringe Benefits	\$11,618		\$11,618
050-500109	Personal Service Temp Appoi	\$40,000	\$98,796	\$138,796
060-500601	Benefits	\$168,981	\$42,492	\$211,473
070-500702	In State Travel Reimburseme	\$7,600	\$3,000	\$10,600
080-500712	Out Of State Travel Reimb	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500
103-502674	Contracts For Op Services	\$4,000	\$64,000	\$68,000
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$535,207</b>	<b>\$249,288</b>	<b>\$784,495</b>

The following appropriation authorities are being requested:

**Class 020 – Current Expenses – Additional appropriation needed to pay for program supplies.**

**Class 027 – Transfers to DoIT – Additional appropriation needed to pay for computer equipment.**

**Class 039 – Telecommunications – Additional appropriation needed to pay for the cost of phones and data plans.**

**Class 050 – Personal Service Temp Appointment - Additional appropriation needed for the cost of a full-time temporary position and a year-round part-time position.**

**Class 060 – Benefits – Additional appropriation for the cost of benefits for the temporary positions.**

**Class 070 – In State Travel Reimbursement – For per diem, hotel and meals costs as well as fuel and fleet vehicle maintenance costs.**

**Class 080 – Out of State Travel Reimbursement – Additional appropriation needed for the cost of conferences, meetings, and trainings.**

**Class 103 – Contracts for Operational Services – Additional appropriation needed for the cost of subcontracts for specialized scientific data analysis and products.**

### **EXPLANATION**

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) Natural Heritage Bureau is requesting to use an existing carried forward balance of available funds to develop and implement a scientific ecological assessment tool called the upland forest Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA). This tool will assess the health of upland (higher elevation) forests. The Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) developed a similar tool to assess the health of wetlands called the "NH Method" wetland assessment tool ([www.nhmethod.org](http://www.nhmethod.org)) utilizing a federal grant program. However, NHB was unable to secure federal or other funding for the upland forest tool and will instead, use an existing carried forward balance of available funds in the NHB comprised predominantly of the Conservation Plate Funds per RSA 261:97-b. It should be noted that while the "NH Method" wetland assessment tool is regulatory, the Upland EIA tool is non-regulatory.

The funding of the Natural Heritage Bureau is comprised of a mix of funding from sources including income from NHB data sharing services and funding from the Conservation Plate Fund (aka Mooseplate) per RSA 261:97-b. Growth in income from some of these sources has produced a balance of available funds. Budgeting of these available funds will allow the Natural Heritage Bureau to complete this tool development project.

This tool will be used to improve public land manager's understanding of the impacts of a particular management decision (e.g. prescribed fire treatment, new motorized trail, etc.), as well as the impacts of key stressors (e.g. climate change, fragmentation) on the approximate 200,000 acres of forests and natural communities managed by DNCR. Although the primary purpose of this tool is for use on state lands, it will be available for landowners and land managers to use and several partners have expressed interest in having this tool developed for their use.

Your approval of this request will provide a standardized process for land managers to make wise management decisions that balance multiple uses on state reservations and refine the records in the Natural Heritage Bureau's database.

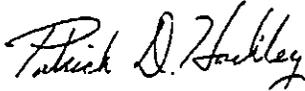
The following information is provided in accordance with the Comptroller's instructional memorandum dated September 21, 1981.

1. **List of personnel involved:** We are requesting to establish an Environmentalist III, Labor Grade 23, full time temporary position and an Environmental Technician I, Labor Grade 9, year-round part time position.
2. **Nature, Need and Duration:** Budgeting of the available funds will allow NHB to complete development of the EIA project as well as other related small projects. This tool would be used to improve public land manager's understanding of the impacts of a particular management decision, as well as the impacts of key stressors on the approximate 200,000 acres of forests and natural communities managed by DNCR. Although the primary purpose of this tool is for use on state lands, it will be available for anyone to use and several partners have expressed interest in having this tool developed for their use. We are requesting through June 30, 2023.

3. **Relationship to existing agency programs:** NHB developed a similar tool for wetlands utilizing federal grants from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
4. **Has a similar program been requested of the legislature and denied?** No. A senate bill was previously proposed to fund the development of this scientific tool. However, it was ultimately not put forward for full consideration since it was determined that NHB's carried forward fund balance could instead be leveraged to complete this project.
5. **Why wasn't funding included in the agency's budget request?** A request was considered during budget development. However, due to fiscal uncertainty and a hiring freeze that was instituted as a result of the impact of the global pandemic that occurred at that time, the request was excluded from the budget submission.
6. **Can portions of the grant funds be utilized?** Not applicable.
7. **Estimate the funds required to continue this position(s):** Approximately \$114,731 per fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurred,



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Patrick D. Hackley  
Director



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Sarah L. Stewart  
Commissioner