



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

59 - 10/21/26

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August 5, 2026

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court and

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

1. Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, the NH Fish and Game Department (NHFG) requests authorization to accept and expend \$210,000 from the US Fish & Wildlife Service for the purpose of purchasing an excavator, effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2027. 100% Federal Funds.
2. Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, the NH Fish and Game Department (NHFG) requests authorization to accept and expend a \$10,000 donation of from the Granite State Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) for the purpose of providing a portion of the 25% non-federal match required to purchase an excavator, effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2027. 100% Agency Income.

Funds to be budgeted in Fiscal Year 2027 are as follows:

GAME MANAGEMENT							
03-75-75-751520-21580000							
Class	Expense Account	Class Description	Revenue Account	FY2027 Current Budget	Requested Action #1	Requested Action #2	FY2027 Adjusted Budget
Revenue							
000		FEDERAL FUNDS	404519-16	669,041	210,000	0	879,041
008		AGENCY INCOME	404114-24	49,912	0	0	49,912
009		AGENCY INCOME	407129-44	1,237,460	0	10,000	1,247,460
Total				\$1,956,413	\$210,000	\$10,000	\$2,176,413
Expense							
018	500106	OVERTIME		38,000	0	0	38,000
019	500105	HOLIDAY		6,120	0	0	6,120
020	500200	CURRENT EXPENSES		86,211	0	0	86,211
026	500251	ORGANIZATIONAL DUES		4,500	0	0	4,500
029	500290	INTRA-AGENCY PAYMENTS		325,000	0	0	325,000
030	500311	EQUIPMENT	404519-16	104,969	209,979	10,000	324,948
033	500150	LAND ACQUISITIONS &		100	0	0	100
041	500801	AUDIT FUND SET ASIDE	404519-16	1,055	21	0	1,076
046	500464	CONSULTANTS		20,000	0	0	20,000
049	584935	TSFRS TO OTH AGEN.		2,000	0	0	2,000
050	500109	PERSONAL SVCS TEMP		30,000	0	0	30,000
060	500602	BENEFITS		11,504	0	0	11,504
070	500704	IN STATE TRAVEL		1,500	0	0	1,500
080	500710	OUT OF STATE TRAVEL		18,000	0	0	18,000
304	500841	RESEARCH & MNGMNT		1,307,454	0	0	1,307,454
Total				\$1,956,413	\$210,000	\$10,000	\$2,176,413

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council

EXPLANATION

NHFG proposes to purchase a mid-sized excavator with bucket, mulching head, thumb and push blade that will significantly expand our capacity to restore and maintain wildlife habitats and public access infrastructure across state-owned lands.

NHFG's Wildlife Habitat Program manages habitat and infrastructure on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and other state lands to ensure that wildlife can thrive and that the public can continue enjoying hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation.

A recent program assessment identified substantial stewardship backlogs, including:

- Over 800 acres of young forest habitat requiring regular maintenance—critical for both game and nongame wildlife.
- 100 acres of required habitat mowing per year to maintain inventoried young forest habitat.
- 42 miles of field edges overdue for clearing to prevent habitat loss.
- 130 miles of access roads requiring routine maintenance for safe public access and support of forest and habitat management operations.

Contracting all of this work would cost more than \$150,000 annually, roughly half the cost of a new excavator, meaning the investment pays for itself in just a few years. NHFG proposes to acquire an excavator that meets or exceeds the specifications of a Volvo EC160EL (148 hp) via requisition through the Department of Administrative Services. The excavator would be outfitted with a bucket, thumb, and mulching head. This model provides the best horsepower to cost ratio among the evaluated options and meets the minimum engine requirements for the type of mulching and heavy maintenance work our program must perform.

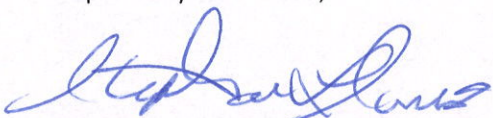
Total cost for the excavator and attachments is estimated at \$280,000. Seventy-five percent of this cost (\$210,000) would be covered by federal funds (approval attached). The remaining 25% (\$70,000) could be covered by the RGS donation plus Game Management Account funds. The NHFG Commission authorized the use of Game Management Account funds for this purpose at their May 19, 2026 meeting, and likewise voted to accept the RGS donation at their July 21, 2026 meeting (minutes attached).

Funds are budgeted in the following expense classes:

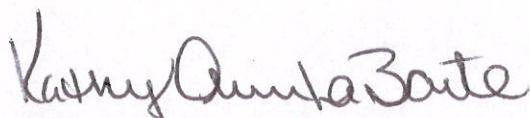
- Class 030 – Equipment, for the purchase of the excavator.
- Class 041 - Audit Fund Set Aside, in accordance with RSA 124:16.

General funds will not be requested to support this project.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephanie L. Simek, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Kathy Ann LaBonte, Chief
Business Division

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

MAY 19, 2026 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: Gunstock Mountain Resort, 719 Cherry Valley Rd., Gilford, NH 03249.

Commissioners Present: A.J. DeRosa, R. Green, J. Titone, D. Trahan G. Chandler, J. Caveney, C. Hodgdon, E. Stohl, P. McGonagle, B. Temple & D. Poole.

Commissioners absent/excused:

Executive Director Simek – Present

Tanya Haskell, Administrative Assistant – present (transcriber of minutes)

Chairman DeRosa called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Commissioner DeRosa announced that the meeting was being captured on video.

In addition, he thanked Commissioner McGonagle for hosting the Commission Meeting.

At this time, Chairman DeRosa called for a moment of silence honoring the passing of Maine Warden pilot, Joshua Tibbetts, who recently perished in a plane crash.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Green moved to approve the April 21, 2026, Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2.) Commissioner Green moved to approve consent agenda items 2a – 2c., as presented below, and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$250.80, made to the Small Gifts & Donations Account: (S. Simek)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • David & Kara Tubbs, Boscawen, NH - | \$250.00 |
| • Michael & June Cormier, Candia, NH- | \$.40 |
| • Joshua Spaulding, Hopkinton, NH - | \$.40 |
| | Total: \$250.80 |

2b.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$125.00 made to the Search & Rescue Account:

- | | |
|------------------|----------|
| • John Collins - | \$100.00 |
|------------------|----------|

- Kathleen Alves, in memory of Mark Lamonthe - \$ 25.00
- Total: \$125.00

2c.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$150.00 made to Wildlife Education Program:

- Active Retirement Assn., Durham, NH - \$100.00
 - John Stark School District, Henniker, NH - \$ 50.00
- Total \$150.00

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Financial Statement – No comments on the financial statement.

2.) Allison Brehm, Biometrician, came before the Commission and provided an update on the mandatory online registration of hunter harvested furbearers. (See video for full presentation)

Program findings (Year 1):

- 268 coyote harvest reports; avg. 13 hours of targeted hunting effort.
- 15 fox reports; avg. 5 hours effort.
- Majority of coyote harvests conducted using bait; <10% with other methods.
- Only ~5% of coyotes reported with mange; population currently appears healthy.
- Harvest intensity peaks during night hunting periods; sharply declines afterward.
- 44% of harvests occurred on hunters' own property.

Program value:

- Provides meaningful data on species abundance, harvest trends, animal health, and regional distribution.
- Builds long-term dataset that supports predictive modeling and management decisions.

Open questions & discussion:

- Limited staff for follow-up with hunters; suggestion to implement random follow-up sampling.
- COs report increased hunter engagement and compliance with tagging.
- Discussion around comparing firearm vs. trapping CPUE indices—indices should remain independent.

Ongoing studies:

- **Survival & mortality study (begun 2023):** 3-year duration; results anticipated post-2027.
- **Camera trap study:** Will continue 3–5 more years to build robust abundance dataset.

Public Comments (Selected Points)

- Support for diversifying data sources (e.g., citizen-science road ecology).
- Comments encouraging more proactive action based on CPUE and harvest trends.
- Inquiry about public vs. private land trapping—staff noted this is not directly tracked, but regional surveys suggest ~60% on public land; follow-up data to be provided.

The Commission thanked Allison for the presentation.



3.) Jim Oehler, Habitat Program Supervisor, came before the Commission and provided an overview of a future action item to purchase a mid-sized excavator with bucket, mulching head, thumb and push blade that will significantly expand the capacity to restore and maintain wildlife habitats and public access infrastructure across state-owned lands. (See video for full presentation)

Need: Replace aging 1995 excavator; expand capacity to maintain WMAs and public access infrastructure.

Scope of work:

- 800 acres of young forest needing recurring treatment; ~100 acres/year.
- 42 miles of field edges; target 5 miles/year.
- 130 miles of WMA access roads; target 16 miles/year brushback. 1

Recommended equipment:

- **Volvo EC160EL mid-sized excavator**, 148 HP (meets mulching requirements).
- Cost with attachments: **\$280,000**.
- Funding: Primarily federal; **\$70,000 match from Game Management Account** (balance: \$1.4M).
- Payback estimated at **~2 years** vs. contractor costs (~\$150,000/year).

Staffing & readiness:

- Operators: Kyle Bilodeau, John Sojka, Nick Bunch.
- CDL capacity in place for equipment transport.
- Existing dump truck & trailer adequate.

Discussion

- State bid process required before purchase.
- Prior smaller excavator has been heavily used (1,800 hours), demonstrating value.
- Contractors will still be used but much less frequently.

After brief discussion, Commissioner Stohl moved to make this an action item and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Stohl moved to approve the purchase of a mid-sized excavator with bucket, mulching head, thumb and push blade, that will significantly expand the capacity to restore and maintain wildlife habitats and public access infrastructure across state-owned lands and Commissioner Green seconded. The cost for the machine with attachments is \$280,000. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Weldon Bosworth, Gilford NH, spoke to the importance of keeping track/record of furbearers shot/harvested, as over a period of years it becomes another line of data to aid in making decisions. He further reported that "Citizen Science" is essentially road ecology, counting roadkill, which is done in many states around the world.

DRAFT

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JULY 21, 2026 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

Commissioners Present: A.J. DeRosa, R. Green, J. Titone, D. Trahan G. Chandler, J. Caveney, B. Temple, E. Stohl, P. McGonagle, & D. Poole.

Commissioners absent/excused: C. Hodgdon

Executive Director Simek – Present

Tanya Haskell, Administrative Assistant – present (transcriber of minutes)

Chairman DeRosa called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Commissioner DeRosa announced that the meeting was being captured on video.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1.) Commissioner Trahan moved to approve the June 16, 2026, Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner Stohl seconded.

Commissioner Green moved to amend the Commission minutes, page 5, 1st paragraph, removing the words ~~prior to voting~~, and adding the word DRAFT to the top of the first page of the Commission Minutes and Commissioner Stohl seconded.

The vote on the amendment was unanimous in the affirmative.

The vote to approve the minutes, as amended, was unanimous in the affirmative.

- 2.) Commissioner Green moved to approve consent agenda items 2a – 2d., as presented below, and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$200.00 made to the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

• Jay Corbin, Nashua, NH -	\$100.00
• Allen Abriel, Merrimack, NH -	<u>\$100.00</u>
	Total: \$200.00

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$150.00 made to the Wildlife Education Program from the Cornish Conservation Commission.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 made to the "Let's Go Fishing" Program from Michele Angers & Tom Dooley of Contoocook, NH, in memory of Raymond Angers.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$5.00 made to the Hunter Education Program from Robert Lord, Errol, NH.

3.) Commissioner Trahan moved to approve the donation of prizes for participants in the 2025 Deer Hunter Mail Survey, 2025 Bow Hunter Survey, the 2025/2026 Small Game Hunter Survey, 2025 Ruffed Grouse Wing and Tail Survey, and the 2026 Spring Turkey Survey and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. These prizes will be awarded via random computerized drawings.

4.) Commissioner Stohl moved to accept the donation of various attachments for the 47 HP 4 WD Kioti tractor and brush hog from Bob Lottero, Jefferson, NH, valued at approximately \$4,640.00 and Commissioner Trahan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Commissioner Trahan moved to accept the donation of up to \$10,000 from the Granite State Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society to go towards the purchase of the excavator with bucket, mulching head, thumb and push blade that the Commission approved at their May 19, 2026, Commission Meeting, Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Financial Statement – Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division.

Key Financial Highlights:

- Unrestricted revenue slightly exceeded budget: **\$14.9M.**
- Appropriations in the Fisheries & Game Fund: **\$19.2M.**
- Resulting draw from surplus: **\$4.3M.**
- Ending FY26 balance: **\$8.3M (unaudited)** – lowest since 2020 when balance was \$7.5M.
- Lapsed funds:
 - Prior year: \$2.2M
 - Current year: \$890K returned to the fund.

Interest Earnings Issues:

- Back interest earnings received for FY26: **\$302,382.**
- Additional true-up for FY25–26 identified discrepancies due to ARPA fund accounting:
 - Additional back interest awarded: **\$238,238.**
- Interest was redistributed properly to 5 dedicated accounts (reducing main interest by **\$121,211**).



Dawn.M.Trombly
Federal Aid Administrator

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From: Dwyer, Chris <Chris_Dwyer@fws.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 8:48 AM

To: Trombly, Dawn <dawn.m.trombly@wildlife.nh.gov>

Cc: Dibona, Shelley A <shelley_dibona@ios.doi.gov>; Kandar, Mary E <mary_kandar@ios.doi.gov>; Elmasry, Joanne <joanne.elmasry@wildlife.nh.gov>; Oehler, James <james.d.oehler@wildlife.nh.gov>

Subject: Equipment Approval (W-11-D-78; F22AF03670) Excavator with Attachments.

EXTERNAL EMAIL WARNING! This email originated outside of the New Hampshire Executive Branch network. Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email. Do not enter your username and password on sites that you have reached through an email link. Forward suspicious and unexpected messages by clicking the Phish Alert button in your Outlook and if you did click or enter credentials by mistake, report it immediately to helpdesk@doit.nh.gov!

Hi Dawn:

Thank you for submitting your equipment request for review. The purchase of the following equipment is approved for acquisition and use for grant-eligible activities under NH, W-11-D-78, based on the grant note submitted on 5/22/2026.

Grant Note Date	Item	Purpose	Location	Estimate (ea)	Estimate (total)
5/22/2026	Volvo EC160EL (148 hp) or similar excavator outfitted with a bucket, thumb, grading blade, and mulching head	For use in restoring and maintaining wildlife habitats and public access infrastructure across state-owned lands. Specifically, maintenance of young forest habitat, wildlife habitat mowing, field edge clearing, access road maintenance, and wildlife habitat management operations.	Statewide	\$280,000 (\$210,000 Federal)	\$280,000 (\$210,000 Federal)

As a reminder, beyond the period of performance for your W-11-D-78; F22AF03670 grant (7/1/2022 - 6/30/2027) and throughout the duration of the equipment's useful life, the above equipment must continue to be used in the program or project for which it was acquired, as long as needed, whether or not the project or program continues to be supported by the Federal award. When no longer needed for the original program or project, the above equipment may be used in other activities in the following order of priority:

1. Activities supported under a Federal award from the Federal awarding agency which funded the original program or project;
2. Activities under Federal awards from other Federal awarding agencies; and then
3. Any activities consistent with the administration of the State fish and wildlife agency.

Please maintain a copy of this email in your grant file. I will do the same here in Hadley and upload a copy via Grant Notes.

Thank you,
Chris

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Chris Dwyer
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