# Review of Funding Needs for Proper Management of Conservation and Recreation Lands and the Management Practices for All State-Owned Lands

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by
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# Summary

Florida's explosive growth and consequent rapid urbanization have resulted, particularly in recent years, in the destruction or alteration of much of the state's natural resources. As environmental concern about increasing development has grown, there has been general agreement that public acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and lands for conservation and recreation has proven to be the most effective means of protecting these lands for future generations.

Beginning in 1972, Florida began acquiring conservation and recreation lands through the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL), Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL), and Preservation 2000 (P-2000) programs. These bond-funded programs have resulted in the acquisition and preservation of more than 1.5 million acres of land.

Once acquired, lands must be managed to protect and enhance the natural resource values for which they were acquired and to provide, in nearly all cases, some form of recreational opportunities. Other significant needs are exotic species control, restoration of degraded habitats, and controlled burning. Funding appropriate land management is critical; if necessary needs like exotic species control, for example, are not met the very qualities for which a parcel is acquired could be effectively lost. Currently, lands will continue to be acquired under the P-2000 program through one more $270 million bond issue, while the Florida Forever program is poised to provide up to $3 billion dollars beginning in 2001. Funding for managing this huge acreage must be available if the purposes of these acquisition programs are not to be frustrated.

The Florida Statutes contain a number of provisions designed to preserve and protect the state's natural resources. The statutes provide for uses of lands, require detailed management planning, provide for review of management plans by the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council (LAMAC), and set out a system for review of actual management activity by land management review teams.

The primary source of dedicated management funding is the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund (CARL TF), which is primarily funded by $10 million in phosphate severance tax revenues and 5.84 one-hundredths percent of the documentary stamp tax proceeds. Annually, an amount equal to 1.5 percent of the total deposits into the P-2000 TF is provided from the CARL TF and distributed to the land managing agencies and the Department of State's Division of Historical Resources (DHR). This amount will be approximately $43.7

million in FY 2000. Actions taken during the 1999 legislative session, effective July 1, 2001, reduced the documentary stamp tax revenues deposited into the CARL TF and that funding will be reduced by approximately $19.5 million in that year, and by similar amounts thereafter.

While significant, the CARL TF funding is not sufficient to fund all management needs. The agencies also use revenues generated from the lands, visitor fees, and other state funds to meet their needs. To determine the amounts needed for present and future land management, staff met with agency staff with land management responsibilities to determine the types of tasks being accomplished and the type of information available regarding land management activities and funding. A common format was determined that included all significant activities and the agencies were requested to provide the actual amounts spent for each activity for both recurring and nonrecurring expenses. The agencies were also asked to provide the same information in the same manner in estimating the funding needed to fully implement their adopted management plans. Staff analyzed the information presented to determine whether sufficient funds will be available for future management needs from existing sources and considered alternatives for long-term funding.

This report contains charts indicating FY 1998-1999 spending by category of activity and, using the same format, the amounts needed to fully implement the adopted management plans.

Drawing conclusions from the chart of FY 1998-1999 expenditures is difficult. Although the agencies generally used the requested format as the basis for presenting information, the information included in each category varied among the agencies. In some instances, this is due to differences in accounting for expenditures and in others, differences in how various activities are defined. For example, one agency listed $551,509 for “habitat restoration,” a category not used by other agencies, but no expenditures for “planting,” which was used by the other agencies. In fact, expenditures were made by that agency for planting sea grasses but not separately accounted for. Another example of this is the Division of Recreation and Parks’ (DRP’s) expenditure of $8,419,038 for “development,” but no reported expenditures for “facilities,” which the DRP included in its calculation of its “development” expenditures. Further, although all agencies expend funds for maintenance, only the DRP listed this as a category; such expenditures are assigned to other categories by the other agencies. Another difficulty in interpreting this information is that it is unclear to what extent each agency incorporated costs of such activities as planning, training, and the costs of administration.

Providing the requested information in the format used was difficult in many instances, as only one agency was recording its costs in the format used. As the agencies have different missions, they accounted for expenditures in the way that most benefited their operations, perhaps giving greatest attention to the functions of greatest value to their missions. Even though there are inconsistencies in the way agencies are recording and reporting management costs, this study reveals more details about these management activities than ever available before. With the large sums now being spent on management and a new 10-year acquisition program on the horizon, perhaps it is time for management costs to be calculated in a single format with common definitions for each category of activity.

Regarding future needs, the agencies identified approximately $440 million in unmet needs, if adopted management plans were to be fully implemented. While it is unlikely that Florida could fund even a significant portion of that amount, the amounts needed raise concerns that unmet needs will continue to increase as Florida begins another 10 years of acquisition through the Florida Forever program. Of particular concern is the control of exotic species, which have successfully invaded Florida for many years. If management funding is inadequate for exotic species control on public lands today, the new lands to be acquired through the Florida Forever program may well be at risk in the future.

In FY 1998-1999, the agencies reported expenditures of approximately $73 million. Management funds for that fiscal year from the CARL TF totaled $34,790,710. Although agencies have been able to make up the shortfall with other funds, continued P-2000 and Florida Forever acquisitions of hundreds of thousands of acres will require new revenues if the lands are to be maintained for the purposes for which they were acquired. Projections for the CARL TF indicate that management funding exceeding $47 million in 2001 and thereafter will not be possible due to the fund’s other obligations.

Although the agencies provided the required information, staff found it extremely difficult to analyze. While there was a format generally used by the agencies, because there was no commonality, in many cases, as to what activities were reported under the various categories of activity, it was difficult to determine exactly what was being accomplished and at what cost. **Because the issue of appropriate funding is so important at this time, staff recommends that a task force be created under the leadership of the DEP to determine the appropriate categories of management activities and those functions to be assigned to the individual categories.** With expenditures accounted for in a common system, future funding decisions can be based on a common record of past experience. Staff recommends that legislation include initial categories, to be expanded by the task force.

Staff also recommends that the Legislature consider the creation of new funding sources for land management. One possibility would be to channel some portion of the unobligated documentary stamp tax revenues currently going to general revenue to land management. A second possibility would be to use revenues from the sale of Florida Forever bonds for limited management activities. Because the constitutional provision authorizing the sale of the bonds permits revenues to be used to improve lands, the Division of Bond Finance has advised that the use of bond proceeds for such practices as controlled burning, exotic species control, or other similar uses is allowable. If funds are used for such purposes, staff recommends the uses be for initial, one-time activities or for fixed capital outlay development intended, generally, to be a non-recurring cost and not for routine management activities. Also, this is a time-limited program and would not constitute a permanent solution to the problem.

# Background

Florida's explosive growth and consequent rapid urbanization have resulted, particularly in recent years, in the destruction or alteration of much of the state's natural resources. As environmental concern about increasing development has grown, there has been general agreement that public acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and lands for conservation and recreation has proven to be the most effective means of protecting these lands for future generations.

Florida began acquiring significant amounts of conservation and recreation lands under the bond-financed Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program in 1972. Using these funds, the state acquired approximately 363,382 acres of land, including purchases such as the Big Cypress National Preserve, Paynes Prairie State Preserve, Caya Costa State Park, and other examples of undeveloped sensitive lands. This program is no longer in existence.

The Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program, established in 1979 as an expansion of the EEL program, was the state's primary acquisition program prior to the creation of the Preservation 2000 program in 1990. Funded primarily by phosphate severance tax and documentary stamp tax revenues, the program receives approximately $60 million annually from these sources. The fund's balance from all sources is expected to total more than $76 million in FY 2000-2001. Through the CARL program (including P-2000 distributions), nearly $1.4 billion has been expended to acquire over 685,000 acres of land since 1980.

Although not specifically addressed in this report, the second major component of the state's land acquisition effort is the Save Our Rivers (SOR) program, established in 1981 to fund the acquisition of lands necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources. Funding for the program comes from a dedicated portion of the documentary stamp tax proceeds deposited into the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. The five water management districts (WMDs) have acquired more than 1,150,000 acres through this program (including P-2000 distributions).

The 1990 enactment of the Preservation 2000 (P-2000) program provided significantly-increased funding for land acquisition. This ambitious program provides for the annual sale of up to $300 million in bonds, not to exceed a total of $3 billion over a 10-year period, and the use of the proceeds to acquire lands for conservation and recreation and the provision of open space within urban areas. Although there is no requirement that bonds be sold annually, the Legislature has provided funds from the documentary stamp tax for the issuance of approximately $271 million in bonds in each year of the 9-year period from 1991 through 1999. Less the costs of issuance and other costs, the proceeds of bond sales are de posited into the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund (P-2000 TF). Fifty percent of each year's funding is used for acquisitions through the CARL program and thirty percent for acquisitions by the water management districts using SOR procedures. The balance of the annual proceeds is distributed among the Division of Forestry (DOF), Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC), (2.9 percent each), the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), (1.3 percent), and the Florida Communities Trust (FCT), (10 percent) for land acquisition. Except for FCT and WMD lands, the lands acquired require state funding for land management activities.

Since its inception, the P-2000 program has funded the acquisition of more than 1 million acres of land at a cost of nearly $2 billion (eighty percent of the funding is reflected in the acreage totals of the CARL and SOR programs).

CARL lands are authorized for purchase by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees); WMD land acquisitions are approved by the districts' governing boards; and acquisitions and grants by the five smaller programs are authorized by the heads of the agencies. All state conservation and recreation lands are titled in the Trustees and are assigned to the agencies designated to manage them.

## Management Requirements

The Florida Statutes contain a number of provisions relating to land management:

- **Section 253.034, F.S.**, requires that all lands acquired for conservation or recreation be managed to protect and conserve land, air, water, and natural resources. Such lands must be managed to provide for areas of natural resource based recreation, and to ensure the survival of plant and animal species and the conservation of finite and renewable natural resources. Where feasible and consistent with the goals of protection and conservation of natural resources, public land not designated for single-use purposes must be managed for multiple-use purposes. All multiple-use land management strategies must address public access and enjoyment, resource conservation and protection, ecosystem maintenance and protection, and protection of threatened and endangered species, and the degree to which public-private partnerships or endowments may allow the agency with management responsibility to enhance its ability to manage these lands. Multiple and single-use management are defined as follows:

- "Multiple Use" means the harmonious and coordinated management of timber, recreation, conservation of fish and wildlife, forage, archaeological and historic sites, habitat and other biological resources, or water resources so that they are utilized in the combination that will best serve the people of the state,, making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources and giving consideration to the relative values of the various resources. Where necessary and appropriate for all state-owned lands that are larger than 1,000 acres in project size and are managed for multiple uses, buffers may be formed around any areas which require special protection or have special management needs. Such buffers shall not exceed more than one-half of the total acreage. Multiple uses within a buffer area may be restricted to provide the necessary buffering effect desired. Multiple use in this context includes both uses of land or resources by more than one state agency, or by one or more agencies and private sector land managers. In any case, lands identified as multiple-use lands in the land management plan shall be managed to enhance and conserve the lands and resources for the enjoyment of the people of the state.

- "Single Use" means management for one particular purpose to the exclusion of all other purposes, except that the using agency shall have the option of including in its management program compatible secondary purposes which will not detract from or interfere with the primary management purpose. Such single uses may include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the use of agricultural lands for production of food and livestock, the use of improved sites and grounds for institutional purposes, and the use of lands for parks, preserves, wildlife management, archaeological or historic sites, or wilderness areas where the maintenance of essentially natural conditions is important. All submerged lands shall be considered single-use lands and shall be managed primarily for the maintenance of essentially natural conditions, the propagation of fish and wildlife, and public recreation, including hunting and fishing where deemed appropriate by the managing agency.

Each agency managing lands owned by the Trustees must submit a land management plan to the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) Division of State Lands. All management plans must specifically describe how the managing agency plans to identify, locate, protect and preserve, or otherwise use fragile nonrenewable resources, such as archaeological and historic sites, as well as other fragile resources, including endangered plant and animal species, and provide for the conservation of soil and water resources and for the control and prevention of soil erosion. The plans must include reference to appropriate statutory authority for such use or uses and shall conform to the appropriate policies and guidelines of the state land management plan. All land management plans for parcels larger than 1,000 acres must contain an analysis of the multiple-use potential of the parcel, which analysis shall include the potential of the parcel to generate revenues to enhance the management of the parcel. Additionally, the plan must contain an analysis of the potential use of private land managers to facilitate the restoration or management of these lands. In those cases where a newly acquired property has a valid conservation plan, the plan shall be used to guide management of the property until a formal land management plan is completed. Any management plan for a parcel exceeding 160 acres in size must be made available to the public.

Land management plans are reviewed by the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council (LAMAC), comprised of the Secretary of the DEP and a designee of the DEP, the Director of the DOF, the Executive Director of the FWCC, the Director of the Division of Historical Resources (DHR) of the Department of State, and the Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Each plan is reviewed for consistency with s. 253.034(5), F.S., and the Trustees' rules. The LAMAC must also consider the propriety of the recommendations of the managing agency with regard to the future use of the property, the protection of fragile or nonrenewable resources, the potential for alternative or multiple uses not recognized by the managing agency, and the possibility of disposal of the property by the Trustees. After its review, the council must submit the plan, along with its recommendations and comments, to the Trustees. The council must specifically recommend to the Trustees whether to approve the plan as submitted, approve the plan with modifications, or reject the plan.

This section also permits lands listed as projects for acquisition to be managed for conservation pursuant to s. 259.032, F.S., on an interim basis by a private party in anticipation of a state purchase in accordance with a contractual arrangement between the acquiring agency and the private party that may include management service contracts, leases, cost share arrangements or resource conservation agreements. Such lands shall be managed to maintain or enhance the resources the state is seeking to protect by acquiring the land. Funding of these contractual arrangements may originate from the documentary stamp tax revenue deposited into the CARL TF. No more than five percent of funds allocated under the trust fund may be expended for this purpose.

- **Section 253.036, F.S.**, requires that the management plans for parcels larger than 1,000 acres contain a component or section prepared by a qualified professional forester which assesses the feasibility of managing timber resources on the parcel for resource conservation and revenue generation purposes through a stewardship ethic that embraces sustainable forest management practices if the lead management agency determines that the timber resource management is not in conflict with the primary management objectives of the parcel. The Legislature intends that each lead management agency, whenever practicable and cost effective, use the services of the DOF or other qualified private sector professional forester in completing such feasibility assessments and implementing timber resource management. All additional revenues generated through multiple-use management or compatible secondary use management shall be returned to the lead agency responsible for such management and used to pay for management activities on conservation, preservation, and recreation lands under the agency's jurisdiction. In addition, such revenue must be segregated in an agency trust fund and shall remain available to the agency in subsequent fiscal years to support land management appropriations.

- **Section 259.032, F.S.**, requires that conservation and recreation lands be:

    - Managed in a manner that will provide the greatest combination of benefits to the public and to the resources.

    - Managed for public outdoor recreation which is compatible with the conservation and protection of public lands.

    - Managed for the purposes for which the lands were acquired.

    Management may include, but not be limited to, the following public uses: fishing, hunting, camping, bicycling, hiking, nature study, swimming, boating, canoeing, horseback riding, diving, model hobbyist activities, birding, sailing, jogging, and other related outdoor activities.

Concurrent with its adoption of the annual Conservation and Recreational Lands list of acquisition projects, the Trustees must adopt a management prospectus for each project. The management prospectus must delineate: the management goals for the property; the conditions that will affect the intensity of management; an estimate of the revenue-generating potential of the property, if appropriate; a timetable for implementing the various stages of management and for providing access to the public, if applicable; a description of potential multiple-use activities as described in ss. 259.032 and 253.034, F.S.; provisions for protecting existing infrastructure and for ensuring the security of the project upon acquisition; the anticipated costs of management and projected sources of revenue, including legislative appropriations, to fund management needs; recommendations as to how many employees will be needed to manage the property; and recommendations as to whether local governments, volunteer groups, the former landowner, or other interested parties can be involved in the management.

Concurrent with the approval of the acquisition contract for any interest in lands, the Trustees must designate an agency or agencies to manage such lands and will evaluate and amend, as appropriate, the management policy statement for the project, consistent with the purposes for which the lands are acquired. For any fee simple acquisition of a parcel which is or will be leased back for agricultural purposes, or any acquisition of a less-than-fee interest in land that is or will be used for agricultural purposes, the Trustees must first consider having a soil and water conservation district manage and monitor such interests.

State agencies designated to manage lands acquired under this chapter may contract with local governments and soil and water conservation districts to assist in management activities, including the responsibility of being the lead land manager. Such land management contracts may include a provision for the transfer of management funding to the local government or soil and water conservation district from the CARL TF in an amount adequate for the local government or soil and water conservation district to perform its contractual land management responsibilities and proportionate to its responsibilities, and which otherwise would have been expended by the state agency to manage the property.

This section also authorizes private sector involvement in the development of management plans and requires that initial plans and 5-year updates for parcels over 160 acres in size be developed with input from an advisory group. Such a group must include, at a minimum, representatives of the lead land managing agency, comanaging entities, local private property owners, the appropriate soil and water conservation district, a local conservation organization, and a local elected official. The advisory group must conduct at least one public hearing. Notice requirements are provided. The required management prospectus must be available to the public for a period of 30 days prior to the public hearing. Once a plan is adopted, the managing agency or entity must update the plan at least every 5 years. Such plans may include transfers of leasehold interests to appropriate conservation organizations designated by the LAMAC for uses consistent with the purposes of the organizations and the protection, preservation, and proper management of the lands and their resources.

Individual management plans must conform to the appropriate policies and guidelines of the state land management plan and shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A statement of the purpose for which the lands were acquired, the projected use or uses as defined in s. 253.034, F.S., and the statutory authority for such use or uses.

2. Key management activities necessary to preserve and protect natural resources and restore habitat, and for controlling the spread of nonnative plants and animals, and for prescribed fire and other appropriate resource management activities.

3. A specific description of how the managing agency plans to identify, locate, protect, and preserve, or otherwise use fragile,, nonrenewable natural and cultural resources.

4. A priority schedule for conducting management activities, based on the purposes for which the lands were acquired.

5. A cost estimate for conducting priority management activities, to include recommendations for cost-effective methods of accomplishing these activities.

6. A cost estimate for conducting other management activities which would enhance the natural resource value or public recreation value for which the lands were acquired. The cost estimate must include recommendations for cost-effective methods of accomplishing those activities.

7. A determination of the public uses and public access that would be consistent with the purposes for which the lands were acquired.

Finally, the Trustees are authorized to enter into any contract necessary to accomplish the purposes of s. 259.032, F.S. The lead land managing agencies also are directed to enter into contracts or interagency agreements with other governmental entities, including local soil and water conservation districts, or private land managers who have the expertise to perform specific management activities which a lead agency lacks, or which would cost more to provide in-house. Such activities shall include, but not be limited to, controlled burning, road and ditch maintenance, mowing, and wildlife assessments.

- **Section 259.036, F.S.**, requires the DEP to establish management review teams on a regional basis to conduct periodic reviews of land management practices. The teams are comprised as follows:

    1. One individual who is from the county or local community in which the parcel or project is located and who is selected by the county commission in the county which is most impacted by the acquisition.

2. One individual from the DRP.

3. One individual from the DOF.

4. One individual from the FWCC.

5. One individual from the DEP's district office in which the parcel is located.

6. A private land manager mutually agreeable to the state agency representatives.

7. A member of the local soil and water conservation district board of supervisors.

8. A member of a conservation organization.

The land management review team reviews select parcels of managed land prior to the date the managing agency is required to submit its 5-year land management plan update. A copy of the review is provided to the managing agency, the Division of State Lands,, and the LAMAC. The managing agency must consider the findings and recommendations of the land management review team in finalizing the required 5-year update of its management plan.

In conducting a review, the land management review team evaluates the extent to which the existing management plan provides sufficient protection to threatened or endangered species, unique or important natural or physical features, geological or hydrological functions, or archaeological features. The review also evaluates the extent to which the land is being managed for the purposes for which it was acquired and the degree to which actual management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the adopted management plan.

If the land management review team determines that reviewed lands are not being managed for the purposes for which they were acquired or in compliance with the adopted land management plan, management policy statement, or management prospectus, or if the managing agency fails to address the review findings in the updated management plan, the DEP must provide the review findings to the Trustees, and the managing agency must report to the Trustees its reasons for managing the lands as it has.

## Funding Land Management

Pursuant to s. 259.032(11)(b), F.S., an amount equal to 1.5 percent of the cumulative total of funds ever deposited into the P-2000 and Florida Forever Trust Funds is to be made available annually from the CARL TF for management, maintenance, and capital improvements on lands not eligible for funding pursuant to s. 11(4), Art. VII of the State Constitution, and for associated contractual services for lands acquired for conservation and recreation and titled in the Trustees. Such capital improvements include, but are not limited to, perimeter fencing, signs, firelanes, access roads and trails, and minimal public accommodations, such as primitive campsites, garbage receptacles, and toilets. Any equipment purchased with such funds may be used on any conservation and recreation lands managed by a state agency. Funding from this source is expected to be approximately $43.7 million in FY 2000. Beginning in 2001, of this amount, $250,000 will be transferred annually to the Plant Industry Trust Fund within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the purpose of implementing the Endangered or Threatened Native Flora Conservation Grants Program pursuant to s. 581.185(11), F.S.

The land managing agencies have entered into a memorandum of understanding for the allocation of management funding. Pursuant to s. 259.032(11)(c), F.S., the following categories of land management needs are recognized:

- Lands which are low-need tracts, requiring basic resource management and protection, such as state reserves, state preserves, state forests, and wildlife management areas. These lands generally are open to the public but have no more than minimum facilities development.

- Lands which are moderate-need tracts, requiring more than basic resource management and protection, such as state parks and state recreation areas. These lands generally have extra restoration or protection needs, higher concentrations of public use, or more highly developed facilities.

- Lands which are high-need tracts, with identified needs requiring unique site-specific resource management and protection. These lands generally are sites with historic significance, unique natural features, or very high intensity public use, or sites that require extra funds to stabilize or protect resources, such as lands with heavy infestations of nonnative, invasive plants.

In evaluating the management funding needs of lands based on the above categories, the lead land managing agencies must include in their considerations the impacts of, and needs created or addressed by, multiple-use management strategies.

Up to one-fifth of the management funds must be reserved by the Trustees for interim management of acquisitions and for associated contractual services, to ensure the conservation and protection of natural resources on project sites and to allow limited public recreational use of lands. Interim management activities may include, but not be limited to, resource assessments, control of invasive, nonnative species, habitat restoration, fencing, law enforcement, controlled burning, and public access. The Trustees will make these interim funds available immediately upon purchase. This amount will be approximately $8.7 million in FY 2000.

The DEP is directed to set long-range and annual goals for the control and removal of nonnative, invasive plant species on public lands. Such goals must differentiate between aquatic plant species and upland plant species. In setting such goals, the DEP may rank, in order of adverse impact, species that impede or destroy the functioning of natural systems. Up to one-fourth of the management funds may be used by the agencies receiving those funds for control and removal of nonnative, invasive species on public lands.

Although P-2000 funds may not be used for management, recent changes to the State Constitution have been interpreted by the Division of Bond Finance to permit Florida Forever bond proceeds to be used for improvements that could include land management activities. However, from a fiscal policy point of view, it may be questionable to use bond proceeds with long-term interest payments for short-term land management benefits.

Effective July 1, 2001, the documentary stamp tax revenues deposited into the CARL TF will be reduced from 5.84 one-hundredths percent to 4.2 one-hundredths percent and the use of such funding for land acquisition will be prohibited. By prohibiting acquisition, there should be additional funds available for land management in the short term.

# Methodology

Staff met with agency staff having land management responsibilities to determine the types of tasks being accomplished and the type of information available regarding land management activities and funding. A common format was determined that included all significant activities and the agencies were requested to provide the actual amounts spent for each activity for both recurring and nonrecurring expenses. The agencies were also asked to provide the same information in the same manner in estimating the funding needed to fully implement their adopted management plans. Staff analyzed the information presented to determine whether sufficient funds will be available for future management needs from existing sources and considered alternatives for long-term funding.

# Findings

The land managing agencies were asked to provide detailed information regarding costs in a format developed by the FWCC and specific to its management needs and activities. Staff decided to use the FWCC's format in surveying the other agencies with the understanding that, although there are common management activities, the other agencies may not accomplish all the FWCC's activities and may manage and account for expenditures in ways differing from the FWCC. For example, while the FWCC, DOF, and CAMA report expenses for the category "Roads/Trails/Bridges," the DRP has included such costs (which are considerable) in its reported expenditures for "Development" and "Repairs/Renovations." Similarly, because of its emphasis on the provision of recreation in many forms, the DRP accounts for and reported substantial expenditures for "Visitor Services," while the FWCC and CAMA did not specifically report expenditures in that category. In some instances, staff has combined closely-related categories in order to more effectively display information. The following chart presents 1998-1999 expenditures for management.

**FY 1998-1999 Management Expenditures**

| Activity | FWCC | DRP | DOF | CAMA | OGT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Habitat Restoration | | | | 551,509 | |
| Burning | 392,447 | 1,680,936 | 1,491,012 | 462,736 | 2,472 |
| Cultural Resource Mgt. | | 1,198,478 | | | |
| Development (FCO) | | 8,419,038 | | | 1,467 |
| Exotic Species Control | 78,509 | 1,456,037 | 282,899 | 774,458 | 1,142 |
| Equipment | 843,259 | 1,331,865 | 1,101,106 | 285,711 | 73,140 |
| Facilities | 637,823 | (Included in Development and Repairs) | 1,232,458 | 933,934 | |
| Fences/Gates | 115,893 | | 581,146 | 228,792 | 2,500 |
| Hydrology | 28,156 | 473,362 | 463,087 | 296,671 | |
| Listed Species | | | 538,672 | | |
| Maintenance | | 12,563,960 | | | 475,217 |
| Planting | 312,854 | 432,871 | 1,357,831 | | 1,120 |
| Protection | | 6,341,566 | | | |
| Repairs | | 4,732,229 | | | 38.,676 |
| Roads/Trails/Bridges | 443,024 | (Included in Facilities & Repairs) | 1,996,060 | 585,209 | 5,583 |

| Activity | FWCC | DRP | DOF | CAMA | OGT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Signage | 97,247 | | | (Included in Fences/Gates) | 1,212 |
| Surveys | 338,306 | 664,974 | | 133,829 | 56.160 |
| Technical Assistance | 52,539 | 793,105 | | | |
| Timber Inventory/Sales | | | 1,102,491 | | |
| Visitor Services | | 11,454,174 | 1,495,307 | | |
| Wildfire | | | 510,604 | | |
| Wildlife | | | 215,671 | | |
| Channel Maintenance | | | | | 53,027 |
| **TOTALS** | **3,340,055** | **51,542,595** | **12,128,525** | **4,768,969** | **1,143,917** |
| **CARL $** | **7,036,245** | **4,062,042** | **8,066,483** | **2,517,979** | **4,007** |
| **NON-CARL $** | **0*** | **47,480,553** | **4,062,042** | **2,250,990** | **1,139,910** |

*The FWCC reports that the expenditures reported only reflect three-fourths of the fiscal year. Because a new detailed cost accounting system is not completely capable at this time, the FWCC did not wish to mix its actual data with estimates. Staff has confirmed that the entire allocation of CARL funding has been expended for management activities, $5,676,849 by the Bureau of Wildlife Management and the remaining $1,359,396 elsewhere in the FWCC for land management. The expenditures by the bureau during FY 1998-1999, less administrative costs, total $10,662,447.

Drawing conclusions from the chart of FY 1998-1999 expenditures is difficult. Although the agencies generally used the requested format as the basis for presenting information, the information included in each category varied among the agencies. In some instances, this is due to differences in accounting for expenditures and in others, differences in how various activities are defined. For example, one agency listed $551,509 for “habitat restoration,” a category not used by other agencies, but no expenditures for “planting,” which was used by the other agencies. In fact, expenditures were made by that agency for planting sea grasses but not separately accounted for. Another example of this is the DRP’s expenditure of $8,419,038 for “development,” but no reported expenditures for “facilities,” which the DRP included in its calculation of its “development” expenditures. Further, although all agencies expend funds for maintenance, only the DRP listed this as a category; such expenditures are assigned to other categories by the other agencies. Even though there are inconsistencies in the way agencies are recording and reporting management costs, this study reveals more details about these management activities than ever available before.

Another difficulty in interpreting this information is that it is unclear to what extent each agency incorporated costs of such activities as planning, training, and the costs of administration. In meetings with the agencies, Senate staff requested that salary and administrative costs not be included unless the employee spent more than one-half of the employee’s work time in providing direct management services. It appears that some of the agencies included some or all of such costs, which is understandable due to the difficulty in assessing which of an employee’s efforts constitute direct services. In those cases in which administrative costs were reported, staff did not include them on the chart.

Providing the requested information in the format was difficult in many instances, as only one agency was recording its costs in the format used. As the agencies have different missions, they accounted for expenditures in the way that most benefited their operations, perhaps giving greatest attention to the functions of greatest value to their missions. With the large sums now being spent on management and a new 10-year acquisition program on the horizon, perhaps it is time for management costs to be calculated in a single format with common definitions for each category of activity. This could be helpful for the Legislature, the Governor, and agency managers in determining exactly what is being accomplished and the funding needed for effective management. A good example of this is the DRP’s “Management Group Definitions,” as follows:

***MANAGEMENT GROUP DEFINITIONS***

*For each group include costs for staff, training, planning, travel, preparation,* *execution, follow-up, recordkeeping, reporting, contract costs, contract management time, materials and supplies.*

***Resource Management***

*"Burning" - Prescribed burning. Include fireline preparation and maintenance.*

*"Exotics" - Invasive exotic plant and animal removals. Include nuisance native animal and plant control activities.*

*"Planting" - Natural community plantings.*

*"Surveys" - Plant and animal survey/monitoring and natural resource research. Include BNCR Resource Management Evaluation participation and review. Include DSL Land Management Reviews for DRP-managed lands.*

*"Hydrologic" - Hydrologic restoration, including repair, removal, backfilling ditches, canals, berms, and dams; water quality/quantity monitoring.*

*"Equipment" - New and replacement resource management equipment, including maintenance.*

*"Technical Assistance" - Assistance outside the parks; review of permits and proposals. Staff or equipment advice/aid/loans to other DEP divisions, other agencies, private citizen groups or citizens. Include Land Management Reviews for other agency lands. Include research and review of permit applications that might affect park natural or cultural resources, rezoning and land use change requests, other technical proposals, park development or construction proposals, Unit Management Plan writing and review.*

*"Cultural Resource Management" - Management planning and activity for all prehistoric and historic sites and features. Include all cultural object collection care and maintenance activities. Include maintenance and restoration of historic structures and equipment.*

***Public Services***

*"Visitor Services" - Staff and expenses to collect fees; advise and manage park visitors, manage overnight accommodations; plan, conduct, and evaluate interpretive and environmental education programs and special events; conduct interpretive training; plan, develop, and maintain exhibits and interpretive signs; manage concessions and vendor permits.*

*"Maintenance"* - *Preventative, routine, and corrective maintenance of facilities and equipment. Facility work projects and working equipment repair and maintenance. Include equipment and vehicle maintenance (except for resource management equipment). Include cleaning and maintenance of buildings, landscaped grounds, trails, playgrounds, water systems, and all other facilities.*

*"Protection"* - *Visitor safety and cultural resource protection; facility protection. Include patrolling, developing protection plans, safety committee work, incident work, developing protection educational programs and materials.*

*"Administration"* - *Staff and expenses to conduct general administration of parks; supervise employees; supply and maintain uniforms; provide or take training (other than that listed above for specific topics); conduct park publicity; administrate work projects, special use permits, attendance reports, time sheets, mail, park inspections, records management, other logs and regular or special reports; inventories and audits; fiscal accounting activities; grant-writing; volunteer recruitment, planning, and supervision.*

***Fixed Capital Outlay***

*"Development"* - *Design and construction of park facilities, park infrastructure, and recreational amenities.*

*"Repair and Renovation"* - *Repairs for renovation to existing park facilities, park infrastructure, recreation amenities, and park lands.*

Although the CARL management funding is distributed based on acreage managed and the category of need of the parcel, the DHR is not a typical land managing agency as are the other recipients. While the DHR does manage three historical sites in Tallahassee, the division's primary function is to conduct field surveys and management surveys on CARL lands in order to identify and protect historical and archeological sites. The DHR reports that in an average year it conducts 10-15 new surveys on lands totaling 50,000 to 200,000 acres and provides direct management service for 60-120 archeological and historical sites. The DHR receives ten percent of the annual management funding for the CARL TF.

The projected amount of management funding from the CARL TF is expected to be $43.7 million in 2000. After deducting $4.37 million for the DHR, $39.33 million will be available for land management. If the existing method of funding continues, because of the ever-increasing management funding, the trust fund will be unable to sustain its obligations in 2001 and thereafter. The CARL TF is also used for some bond debt service, DEP staff costs, and payments in lieu of taxes. Also, the 1999 Legislature enacted ch. 99-247, L.O.F., which will result in the reduction of the documentary stamp tax revenues deposited into the CARL TF from 5.84 one-hundredths percent to 4.2 one-hundredths percent, effective July 1, 2001. This decrease will be approximately $19.5 million in FY 2001 and similar amounts thereafter. There have been some indications that these changes and reductions may be accelerated to July 1, 2000 by legislative action in the Legislative Session of 2000.

As noted earlier, Florida Forever bond proceeds may be used for “improvements” such as fixed capital outlay expenditures, and perhaps for traditional management uses such as controlled burning or exotic species control. If these funds were to be used to fund some of the activities now funded from the CARL TF, the pressure on the trust fund could be eased in the short-term. To approximate the level of funding that could be made available from the Florida Forever bond proceeds, staff totaled the agencies’ FY 1998-1999 funding for activities that could be characterized as providing fairly long-term benefits. Even if allowable, significant spending for recurring needs should be carefully considered. If funds are used for such purposes, staff recommends the uses be for initial, one-time activities or for fixed capital outlay development intended, generally, to be a non-recurring cost. The total expenditure for habitat restoration, development (FCO), equipment, facilities, fences/gates, planting, roads/trails/bridges, signage, and surveys was $20,661,335.

In order to gain insight as to the state’s future needs, staff asked the managing agencies to calculate the funding needed to fully implement their adopted management plans. Many plans, especially the DRP’s, include infrastructure and development that are unlikely to be funded in the near future, but would result in significant public benefits if implemented. The following chart indicates the amounts estimated for full implementation. These are estimates only, and the allocation of costs to categories provides the same uncertainty as the previous chart of 1998-1999 expenditures.

**Amounts Needed to Fully Implement Adopted Management Plans**

| Activity | FWCC | DRP | DOF | CAMA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Habitat Restoration | | | | 871,804 |
| Burning | 2,680,878 | 1,970,206 | 2,099,509 | 450,150 |
| Cultural Resource Mgt | | 3,663,307 | | |
| Development (FCO) | 1,316,000 | 191,752,360 | | |
| Exotic Species Control | 5,874,160 | 5,405,010 | l,978,262 | 10,618,000 |
| Equipment | 4,357,120 | 6,236,041 | 1,164,485 | 524,923 |
| Facilities | 4,141,016 | | 1,442,297 | 883.531 |
| Fences/Gates | 12,551,829 | | 455,563 | 162,050 |
| Hydrology | 4,084,151 | 21,858,097 | 448,243 | 6,553,722 |
| Listed Species | | | 933,339 | |
| Maintenance | 270,900 | 4,262,315 | | |
| Planting | 9,437,764 | 5,604,320 | 2,099,145 | |
| Protection | | 2,238,267 | | |
| Repairs | | 76,480,151 | | |
| Residence Dev. | 957,432 | | | |
| Roads/Trails/Bridges | 20,796,688 | | 4,365,079 | 410,044 |

| Activity | FWCC | DRP | DOF | CAMA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Signage | 14,602 | | | |
| Surveys | 1,036,950 | 1,887,717 | | 297,251 |
| Technical Assistance | 539,880 | 713,605 | | |
| Timber Inventory/Sales | | | 1,518,126 | |
| Visitor Services | | 5,127,043 | 2,331,783 | |
| Wildfire | | | 803,339 | |
| Wildlife | | | 257,398 | |
| Staff | 4,562,409 | | | |
| **TOTALS** | **72,629,377** | **327,199,039** | **19,896,565** | **21,161,006** |

While it is unlikely that Florida could fund even a significant portion of the amounts reported in the previous table by the agencies, the amounts needed raise concerns that unmet needs will continue to increase as Florida begins another 10 years of acquisition through the Florida Forever program. Of particular concern is the control of exotic species, which have successfully invaded Florida for many years. If management funding is inadequate for exotic species control on public lands today, the new lands to be acquired through the Florida Forever program may well be at risk in the future.

To determine the amount of funding used for natural resource based management in FY 1998-1999, staff calculated the spending reported for habitat restoration, burning, exotic species control, hydrology, listed species, planting, wildfire, and wildlife. This amount was approximately $11,800,000, with a total of approximately $61,300,000 being expended on activities relating to the use of lands by people.

Staff also reviewed the timber management practices at a PRIDE-operated correctional facility in Gadsden County. Questions had been raised by citizens in the area as to whether the harvesting practices had conformed with proper management practices for such state-owned lands. The timber harvesting program includes best management practices which appear to have been implemented. Subsequent to a recent harvest, a scheduled management review indicated that the lands were being managed appropriately.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

The Legislature has enacted extensive provisions designed to improve land management, protect and enhance natural resources, and provide quality recreational opportunities. If funding were available to fully implement adopted management plans, carry out effective exotic species control and restoration programs, as well as build the infrastructure envisioned by management planners, the Legislature's intent could be realized. However, as a practical matter the state has many other pressing needs and land management funding is unlikely ever to approach the level needed to fully implement management plans, totaling approximately $440 million. Even continuing management expenditures at current levels will become difficult in the near future without new sources of revenue. In FY 1998-1999, the agencies reported expenditures of approximately $73 million. Management funds for that fiscal year from the CARL TF totaled $34,790,710. Although agencies have been able to make up the shortfall with other funds, continued P-2000 and Florida Forever acquisitions of hundreds of thousands of acres will require new revenues if the lands are to be maintained and managed for the purposes for which they were acquired. Projections for the CARL TF indicate that management funding exceeding $47 million in 2001 and thereafter will not be possible due to the fund's other obligations.

It is clear that the factor provided in s. 259.032(11)(b), F.S., to determine the level of funds available for managing conservation lands is not adequate to meet land management needs by state agencies. The basis of the factor merely served as a guide and was never based on any analytical studies. The continued use of the factor will overtake the available revenues in the CARL TF sometime around 2001, even with the use of some bond proceeds for some fixed capital improvements on conservation lands. Use of the factor will not close the gap on the agencies' projections of nearly $440 million needed for implementing their management plans for conservation lands.

Additionally, statutory changes by the 1999 Legislature will reduce the fund's revenues in 2001 and thereafter from 5.84 one-hundredths of the documentary stamp proceeds to 4.2 one-hundredths, causing a reduction of approximately $19.5 million in that year, and similar amounts thereafter. Another 1999 change permits CARL funds to be used on any state lands acquired for conservation or recreation; formerly, the funding was only available for management on lands acquired through bond-funded conservation programs. While this will provide flexibility in the use of funds for additional lands, because the total amount of funding will not change, it will dilute the effectiveness of the funding if agencies spread their share to additional lands.

Although the agencies provided the required information, staff found it difficult to analyze. Although there was a format generally used by the agencies, because there was no commonality, in many cases, as to what activities were reported under the various categories of activity, it was difficult to determine exactly what was being accomplished and at what cost. Even though there are inconsistencies in the way agencies are recording and reporting management costs, this study reveals more details about these management activities than ever available before. Because the issue of appropriate funding is so important at this time, staff recommends that a task force be created under the leadership of the DEP to determine the appropriate categories of management activities and those functions to be assigned to the individual categories for purposes of accounting for expenditures. With expenditures accounted for in a common system, future analysis and funding decisions can be based on a common record of past experience. Staff recommends that legislation include initial categories, to be refined by the task force.

Staff also recommends that the Legislature consider the creation of new funding sources for land management. One possibility would be to channel some portion of the unobligated documentary stamp tax revenues currently going to general revenue to land management. A second possibility would be to use revenues from the sale of Florida Forever bonds for limited management activities. Because the constitutional provision authorizing the sale of the bonds permits revenues to be used to improve lands, the Division of Bond Finance has advised that the use of bond proceeds for such practices as controlled burning, exotic species control, or other similar uses is allowable. If funds are used for such purposes, staff recommends the uses be for initial, one-time activities or for fixed capital outlay development intended, generally, to be a non-recurring cost and not for routine management activities. Also, this is a time-limited program and would not constitute a permanent solution to the problem.