



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #669

Funding for New State Parks Properties (DNR -- Forestry and Parks)

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Natural Resources is currently in the process of developing three new state parks, including Milwaukee Lakeshore and the two Centennial State Parks (Capital Springs, in Dane County, and the Tommy G. Thompson/Caldron Falls park in Marinette County).

GOVERNOR

No provision.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. On October 7, 1998, Governor Thompson announced that planning was underway for the creation of Milwaukee Lakeshore State Park, extending from Municipal Pier to Harbor Island, including lands north and west of the Summerfest grounds. The approximate 20-acre park would feature urban greenspace, a pedestrian walkway, and a protected harbor. At the December 21, 1999 meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance under 13.10, the Committee approved \$48,300 annually for a park and recreation specialist, as well as \$25,000 in one time funding for a vehicle and computer equipment at Milwaukee Lakeshore Park. In addition, the Committee provided \$6,200 in 1999-00 and \$25,000 in 2000-01 for limited-term employee salary and supplies to begin operations.

2. In honor of the 100th anniversary of Wisconsin's State Park system, Governor Thompson announced the creation of two new Centennial State Parks on October 31, 2000. The Governor announced that Caldron Falls Centennial State Park was planned to be located in Marinette County, and the Capital Springs Centennial State Park was planned to be located in Dane

County. The purchase of these properties with funds from the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship 2000 program was approved by the Joint Committee on Finance at the December 19, 2000, meeting under s.13.10. At the April 24, 2001 s.13.10 meeting, the Committee approved a one-time transfer of \$12,000 in 2000-01 only from the Division of Administration and Technology to the Division of Land for 2.0 positions to provide a park manager for each of the two Centennial State Parks. Ongoing funding to support these two staff would need to be provided in the biennial budget.

3. The Department is currently involved in negotiations with the City of Milwaukee over the development of the property that will become Milwaukee Lakeshore State Park. At this time, no development has taken place, and DNR is not currently maintaining a parks personnel presence at the site. Until negotiations with the City of Milwaukee are completed and development proceeds, the staff position appropriated for Lakeshore State Park is focusing on duties associated with the development of the Hank Aaron State Trail (also in Milwaukee). This staff support is in addition to base funding for the trail of \$140,000 annually for operations, and an existing project manager position.

4. Master planning work is proceeding for the 326-acre Capital Springs State Park property on Lake Waubesa in Dane County. The parcels purchased by the state will eventually be managed cooperatively with the county, in conjunction with approximately 3,000 acres of state and local park, trail, and recreational lands including Lake Farm County Park (which adjoins the parcel). Dane County anticipates opening approximately 75 campsites on its adjoining property this summer. The Department indicates that it is negotiating with the county to establish a revenue and work-sharing agreement for joint state-county management of the properties. Currently, the Dane County parks staff is providing maintenance services to the state-owned portion of the park property without compensation. These services include mowing and standard property maintenance activities, as well as security services. DNR estimates the value of the services received to be approximately \$25,000 annually. In addition, the County is preparing to open a heritage information center on the county property as part of its park operations, and has offered to provide office space for the Capital Springs State Park superintendent on the premises, eliminating the immediate need for additional construction.

5. The Department indicates that further work needs to be done before master planning for the development and use of the 2,187-acre Caldron Falls property is able to proceed. The Caldron Falls property contains almost four miles of meandering water frontage (less than one mile of straight-line shoreline) along the Caldron Falls flowage on the Peshtigo River, 3,000 feet of frontage on Woods Lake, and 2,300 feet of frontage on Huber Lake. In addition, the property contains over 4,000 feet of trout streams. The property consists mainly of moderately rolling forest land, and includes approximately ten miles of mown trails which could be used for hiking and cross-country skiing. A former owner is residing on the property until June 1, 2001. DNR anticipates utilizing the position and funding provided by the Joint Committee on Finance at the April s.13.10 meeting to maintain a presence after the former owner vacates the property. The property contains a number of improvements and is in a location remote from other DNR park properties, increasing the need for some basic level of supervision to be provided.

6. Final plans to establish the Centennial State Parks were not concluded until after the deadline for agencies to submit budget requests had passed. Consequently, DNR did not request staff or funding for the parks as part of its 2001-03 biennial budget. The Governor did not include positions or funding for either of the Centennial State Parks under SB 55, largely because of the fiscal condition of the account (as discussed in separate LFB budget papers). Now that DNR has had an opportunity to evaluate the properties and formulate a request to address the development and maintenance of these properties, it may be argued that the provision of some additional positions and equipment could be considered.

7. Pressure for resources to develop Capital Springs is alleviated somewhat by the cooperative management efforts extended by Dane County. Staff in the area maintain a presence on the property, and some routine maintenance is provided. DNR indicates that some county capital equipment is available for shared use. In addition, the county has indicated a willingness to provide office space for the State Park superintendent. DNR is negotiating with Dane County to establish a revenue-sharing agreement; however, it may be argued that until such time that the State Park is developed for use and park admissions stickers are required, some compensation could be provided to the county in recognition for the services provided to the State-owned property. Providing \$25,000 annually for DNR to contract with the county for maintenance and security until admissions revenue for the State Park becomes available may be less costly than providing state-owned capital equipment and staff to undertake this responsibility. In addition, continuing the level of funding provided for Capital Springs State Park at the April meeting of the Committee under s.13.10 would enable DNR to retain a parks supervisor for the property who would assume the responsibility for coordinating master planning and development efforts for the property. Providing a parks supervisor position would cost \$49,700 in 2001-02 and \$45,700 in 2002-03. This funding includes one-time costs in the first year associated with new parks staffing, including office supplies and a computer.

8. Due to both the remote location and the features of the property, additional resources may be required for master planning and development efforts at the Caldron Falls State Park in Marinette County. While the Committee provided a park manager position to staff the property until June 30, 2001, DNR indicates that a parks manager 2 position would be preferable. (Parks manager 2 positions also possess law enforcement credentials, which would allow the supervisor to provide security services in addition to assuming the responsibility for coordinating master planning and development efforts for the property.) In addition, DNR indicates that inventories of the animal and plant species present on the property will affect the eventual development plans for the park. In view of this, providing a naturalist position to provide these services at the property may serve to expedite the planning process and development work at the park. This position would work cooperatively with DNR foresters and endangered resource specialists to coordinate resource inventory and planning efforts at the property. In addition, it may be argued that providing some capital equipment for basic property maintenance may be appropriate. Given these resources, it is likely that property development could begin in the second year of the biennium. Providing a park manager 2 position and a natural resource educator would cost \$99,500 in 2001-02 and \$91,400 in 2002-03. These costs include one-time expenses for a vehicle and computers associated with new parks staffing. Supplies and services necessary to provide a year-round presence on the property

include expenses for phone, office supplies, fuel, utilities, refuse collection, grounds maintenance equipment, radios, and a service vehicle would total approximately \$70,000 in 2001-02 and \$30,000 in 2002-03.

9. Alternatively, it could be argued that since master plans must first be developed before property development plans are initiated, the precise needs of the facilities can not be determined at this time. Allocating ongoing funds for the park manager positions provided to each Centennial State Park at the April, 2001, s.13.10 meeting would allow for planning to proceed and would provide a parks staff presence at each site.

10. No date has been set as to when the two Centennial State Parks will generally be open to the public. The Department indicated that this would be decided as property management decisions were made in conjunction with the master planning process, and may depend upon the staff and services available at each of the properties.

ALTERNATIVES TO BASE

1. Provide \$80,200 in 2001-02 and \$91,300 in 2002-03 and 2.0 positions from parks account SEG for a park manager position at Capital Springs and at Caldron Falls. (This alternative provides ongoing funding for the two staff provided at the April, 2001 s.13.10 meeting.)

Alternative 1	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$171,500
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$171,500]</i>
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Base)	2.00
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>2.00]</i>

2. Provide \$111,900 in 2001-02 and \$95,000 in 2002-03 and 2.0 positions from parks account SEG for a park manager position at Capital Springs, a park manager 2 position at Caldron Falls, and one-time startup costs.

Alternative 2	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$206,900
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$206,900]</i>
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Base)	2.00
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>2.00]</i>

3. Provide \$149,200 in 2001-02 and \$137,100 in 2002-03 and 3.0 positions from parks account SEG to support operations and master planning efforts at the Centennial State Parks (two staff, and one-time start up costs for Caldron Falls and one park manager and one-time start-up costs at Capital Springs).

Alternative 3	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$286,300
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$286,300]</i>
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Base)	3.00
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>3.00]</i>

4. In addition to one of the above alternatives, provide \$95,000 in 2001-02 and \$55,000 in 2002-03 from the parks account for operations costs at the two Centennial Park properties. This would include \$25,000 annually to either provide maintenance and enforcement services at Capital Springs Centennial State Park or to contract with Dane County for cooperative maintenance and enforcement support efforts at the property. In addition, \$70,000 would be available in 2001-02 and \$30,000 in 2002-03 for operations costs and one-time equipment purchases for Caldron Falls Centennial State Park.)

Alternative 4	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$150,000
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$150,000]</i>

5. Maintain current law.

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