



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #475

### **Parks and Southern Forests Operations (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation)**

[LFB 2011-13 Budget Summary: Page 309, #4]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

The Department of Natural Resources parks and southern forests staff operate 76 recreational properties open to the public, including 46 state parks, 15 state trails (another 22 trails are state owned but locally operated and maintained), two national scenic trails, eight southern forests and five recreation areas (a sixth recreation area, Fisher Creek is owned by the state but operated by Manitowoc County).

#### **GOVERNOR**

Provide \$407,800 SEG annually (\$67,500 forestry account and \$340,300 parks account) for limited-term employees, utilities, fleet expenses and supplies to operate new facilities, trails, and campgrounds developed in recent years in the Wisconsin state park and forest systems.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. Recently, new buildings have been added to upgrade parks and southern forest facilities including entrance and visitor stations, toilet and shower buildings, accessible cabins, and shop buildings. In some cases, properties containing these new facilities have had to absorb the maintenance and operational costs within existing budgets. In addition, several new facilities at multiple properties are under development or are beginning construction and scheduled to open in the 2011-13 biennium and will require services including electricity, sewer and water, fuel, and cleaning and basic maintenance. Further, new trail miles have been added to several state trails

requiring additional trail maintenance. The bill would provide additional operations and maintenance funding from the parks and forestry accounts of the conservation fund. The bill includes operations for 27 state parks, two state recreation units, five state trails, and five state forest units. Under the bill, the parks account of the conservation fund would be expected to have an estimated June 30, 2013, available balance of approximately \$850,000 and the forestry account would be expected to have an available balance of approximately \$2.4 million.

2. The bill includes \$2,000 parks SEG annually for maintenance costs associated with the replacement of an existing shop facility at Chippewa Moraine Recreation Area that is deteriorating. However, DNR indicates that the Department is now planning to scale back the project and re-design it, and the project would not move forward before the 2013-15 biennium.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to provide \$407,800 SEG annually (\$67,500 forestry account and \$340,300 parks account) for limited-term employees, utilities, fleet expenses and supplies to operate new facilities, trails, and campgrounds at parks and southern forests.

2. Adopt the Governor's recommendation, except delete \$2,000 parks SEG annually related to a delayed shop facility project at Chippewa Moraine Recreation Area.

<b>ALT 2</b>	<b>Change to Bill</b>
	Funding
SEG	- \$4,000

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