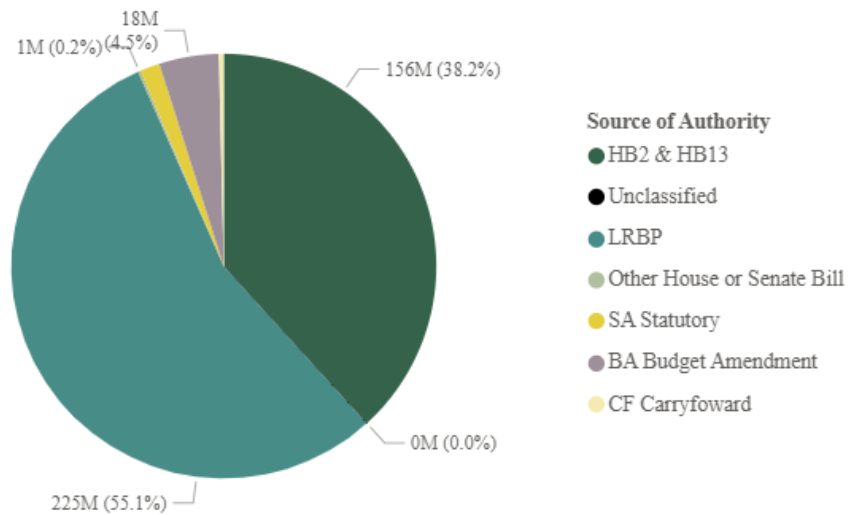


DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS

TOTAL APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The total appropriation authority for the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is shown in the pie chart below. HB 2 and HB 13 provide 38.2% of the total authority for this agency. All types of appropriation authority for this agency are described below, including total budget and the percent expended by source of authority.

Total Modified Budget by Source of Authority



Source of Authority	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended	
HB2 & HB13	155,830,251	45,113,070	29.0%	
BA Budget Amendment	18,497,206	1,732,538	9.4%	
CF Carryforward	1,494,747			
LRBP	224,608,366	10,510,611	4.7%	
Other House or Senate Bill	835,592			
SA Statutory	6,113,420	2,538,247	41.5%	
Unclassified	40,299			
Total	407,419,881	59,894,466	14.7%	

Long-Range Building Program

Long-Range Building Program (LRBP) represents 55.1% of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' total budget authority. For LRBP, the agency has allocated \$129.7 million from state special revenue, \$94.7 million from federal revenue, and \$143,300 from capital project funds. These funds support a variety of programs, including:

- Upland Game Bird Program
- Wildlife Management Area Maintenance and Habitat Protection Program
- Migratory Bird and Wetland Protection Program
- Future Fisheries Program
- Hatcheries Major Maintenance Program
- Fish Connectivity, Passage, and Habitat Program
- Statewide Administration Major Maintenance
- Statewide Signage and Wayfinding System Upgrade
- Erosion Control
- Community Ponds
- Shooting Range Development
- Public Outdoor Recreation Grant Programs
- Public Access Land Agreement Access Program

A detailed description of the agencies LRBP can be found at following links:

[Long Range Building Program Fiscal Report, Section F](#)

[Interactive LRBP map tool that lists the projects by bill and program](#)

Budget Amendments

Statute allows agencies to amend the budget to access additional federal revenues (17-7-402(1)(a)(xii), MCA).

Federal authority through budget amendments totals \$18.5 million and were 9.4% expended through November 2025.

Major federally funded projects include initiatives to expand the use of non-lethal carnivore conflict prevention techniques through collaboration with livestock producers and landowner-led groups. These efforts support a broader strategy to reduce human-wildlife conflict and improve habitat connectivity for grizzly bears across 18 million acres between the Northern Continental Divide and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystems. Additional projects focus on enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, including research to determine the natal origins of fish in mainstem rivers, identify causes of adult trout mortality, and develop methods to estimate recreational use. The findings will guide management strategies aimed at conserving trout populations while supporting recreational access.

Other federal funding supports the operations of the various programs within the department. The table on the following page summarizes authority and expenditures through the budget amendment process.

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Budget Amendment Authority			
For FY 2026			
Federal Grants	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>% Expended</u>
Carnivore Conflict Grants	\$4,744,362	\$302,961	6.4%
Wildlife enhancement grants	4,839,464	538,509	11.1%
Wildlife Programs Operating Expense	5,573,282	184,908	3.3%
Trout Fisheries Evaluation	957,298	185,735	19.4%
Wildlife Programs Personal Services Expense	1,756,158	370,326	21.1%
Murry Springs Fish Hatcheries Operations	236,119	112,989	47.9%
Fish Habitat Planning	186,014	3,548	1.9%
Wildlife Programs Capital Outlay and Equipment	185,000	33,563	18.1%
Aquatic Invasive Species Education	19,509	-	0.0%
Total Federal Budget Amendments	\$18,497,206	\$1,732,538	9.4%

Statutory Appropriations

Expenditure of statutory appropriations for the agency totaled approximately \$2.5 million.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks receives 6.5% of the revenue from the lodging facility use tax which is statutorily appropriated for maintenance of state park facilities. Statutory authority for payments of taxes, funded with state and federal special revenue, provides payments to counties and other local governments for property taxes of department owned land.

The table below summarizes statutory expenditures.

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	
Statutory Appropriation Expenditures Through November 30, 2025	
<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Expended</u>
Lodging and Facility Use Tax for Parks Maintenance	1,260,229
State Special Revenue for Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)	935,405
Federal Special Revenue for Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)	342,612
Total Other House and Senate Bills	<u>\$2,538,247</u>

Carryforward

After each fiscal year, 30% of the unexpended and unencumbered HB 2 appropriations from the prior fiscal year for personal services, operating expenses, and equipment, may be re-appropriated in the two fiscal years following (17-7-304(4)(a), MCA).

The agency had \$1.5 million in state and federal special revenue carried forward from FY 2024. All carryforward authority was in the administration division. The carryforward authority consists of \$1.5 million in state special revenue and a small amount of federal revenue. This authority is unexpended.

Other Bills

Other bills approved by the legislature include HB 5, HB 10, and HB 899. Authority from other house and senate bills totals about \$835,600.

HB 5 provides for new facilities. If construction of a new facility requires an immediate or future increase in state funding for operations and maintenance, the legislature may not authorize the new facility unless it also appropriates funds for the increase of operations and maintenance of the new facility.

HB 10 funds long-range state information technology and infrastructure projects.

HB 899 creates a state task force to study and plan a Montana State Shooting Center. The task force will evaluate locations, costs, funding options, and partnerships for building or improving shooting-sports facilities. The task force includes the governor or a designee, legislators, state agencies, shooting-sports groups, and industry representatives. HB 899 appropriated \$55,000 in general fund for the 2026 Biennium and attached the new board to the department for administrative purposes. Any unexpended authority reverts to the general fund at the end of the biennium.

The table on the following page summarizes funding and expenditures for authority under other bills.

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks					
Appropriation Through Other House or Senate Bills					
General Fund	Fund	Budgeted	Expended	% Expended	
HB 899 Establish Montana state shooting center task force	General Fund	27,500	-	0.0%	
State Special Revenue	Fund	Budgeted	Expended	% Expended	
HB 5 Operation and Maintenance	General License Account	433,762	-	0.0%	
HB 5 Operation and Maintenance	State Parks Miscellaneous	73,000	-	0.0%	
HB 10 Long-range information technology financings and appropriations	General License Account	34,753	-	0.0%	
	Total State Special	\$541,515	\$0	0.0%	
Federal Special Revenue	Fund	Budgeted	Expended	% Expended	
HB 10 Long-range information technology financings and appropriations	Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act	\$226,590	\$0	0.0%	
HB 10 Long-range information technology financings and appropriations	Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act	39,987	-	0.0%	
	Total Federal Special	\$266,577	\$0	0.0%	
Total Other House and Senate Bills	Total Funding	\$835,592	\$0	0.0%	

Non-Budgeted Proprietary Fund Authority

Non-budgeted proprietary revenues are anticipated to be \$13.9 million for FY 2026. The executive must report on all enterprise funds and internal service funds, and the legislature approves a maximum rate that programs funded with internal service funds can charge for their services.

Internal service funds are used to account for operations that provide goods or services to other agencies or programs of state government on a cost-reimbursement basis. Enterprise funds are used to account for operations that generate revenue by providing goods or services to the public for a fee.

The agency anticipates \$13.6 million in proprietary revenues as follows:

- Internal Services - \$13.0 million budgeted revenues
 - Personal Service – \$6.9 million budgeted revenues, 2.8 million expended
 - Operating Expense - \$4.2 million budgeted revenues, \$1.8 million expended,
 - Equipment - \$1.5 million budgeted revenues, \$316,300 expended,
 - Other - \$473,000 budgeted revenues, \$48,800 expended.
- Enterprise Funds - \$571,700 budgeted revenues
 - Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Visitor – \$571,700 budgeted revenues, \$313,400 expended.

HB 2 BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

The following chart shows the HB 2 budget as passed by the legislature, including the pay plan, and the HB 2 modified budget from July 1, 2025, through November 30, 2025. Net modifications to the budget include operating plan changes from one expenditure account to another, program transfers, reorganizations, and agency transfers of authority. The positive modifications and negative modifications are shown by program, expenditure account, and fund type.

Legislative Budget Compared to Modified Budget - HB 2 Only

Agency Name	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	155,863,562	155,830,251	-33,311
01 TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION	10,413,435	10,415,180	1,745
03 FISHERIES DIVISION	25,181,355	25,377,985	196,630
04 ENFORCEMENT DIVISION	17,441,922	17,788,214	346,292
05 WILDLIFE DIVISION	24,981,511	25,260,312	278,801
06 PARKS & OUTDOOR REC DIV	42,127,518	42,378,099	250,581
08 COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION DIV	6,350,105	6,364,616	14,511
09 ADMINISTRATION	29,367,716	28,245,844	-1,121,872
Total	155,863,562	155,830,251	-33,311

Expenditure Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
61000 Personal Services	68,234,489	68,303,419	68,930
62000 Operating Expenses	80,547,818	80,495,494	-52,324
63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,741,687	1,741,687	0
66000 Grants	1,577,888	1,577,888	0
67000 Benefits & Claims	18,800	19,300	500
68000 Transfers-out	3,101,537	3,101,537	0
69000 Debt Service	641,343	590,926	-50,417
Total	155,863,562	155,830,251	-33,311

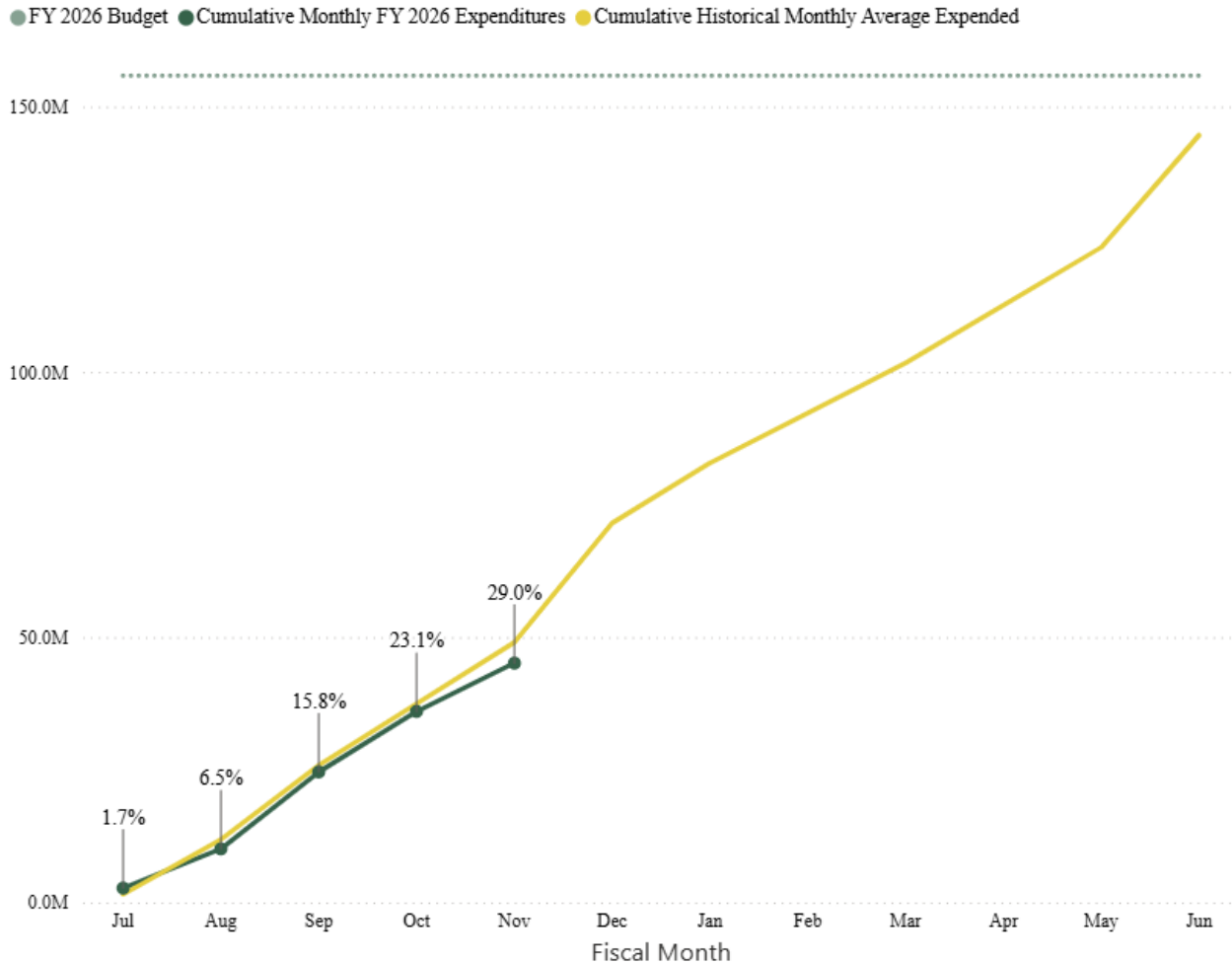
Fund Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
01 General	8,120	8,120	0
02 State/Other Spec Rev	121,437,219	121,413,171	-24,048
03 Fed/Other Spec Rev	34,418,223	34,408,960	-9,263
Total	155,863,562	155,830,251	-33,311

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks reduced its total spending authority by \$33,311 to account for workers' compensation adjustments. The agency also transferred \$1.1 million in state special revenue authority from the Administration Division to the Fisheries, Enforcement, Wildlife, and Parks and Outdoor Recreation Divisions. In addition, it reallocated \$102,700 from operating and debt service expenses to personal services.

HB 2 APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The following chart shows the appropriated budget for the agency compared to expenditures for FY 2026 compared to expenditure rates over the previous five years for the same time periods.

Monthly Expenditures Compared to Historical Average



Through November 30, 2025, the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks spent 29.0% of its \$155.8 million modified HB 2 budget, about \$4.0 million less than expected based on its five-year average spending rate of 31.5%. The lower spending was mainly due to lower operating costs funded with state special revenue in the Parks and Recreation Division.

The table on the following page provides a summary of expenditures by program, expenditure type, and funding source.

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, November FY 2026

Program Name	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	Percent Expended	
			FY 2025	Last 5 Years
Technical Services Division	\$10,415,180	\$3,638,438	34.9%	30.0%
Fisheries Division	25,377,985	8,728,644	34.4%	36.0%
Enforcement Division	17,788,214	5,414,424	30.4%	34.7%
Wildlife Division	25,260,312	8,019,494	31.7%	29.6%
Parks & Outdoor Rec Div	42,378,099	6,878,355	16.2%	24.5%
Communication & Education Div	6,364,616	2,169,271	34.1%	32.5%
Administration	28,245,844	10,264,444	36.3%	37.1%
Total	\$155,830,251	\$45,113,070	29.0%	31.5%

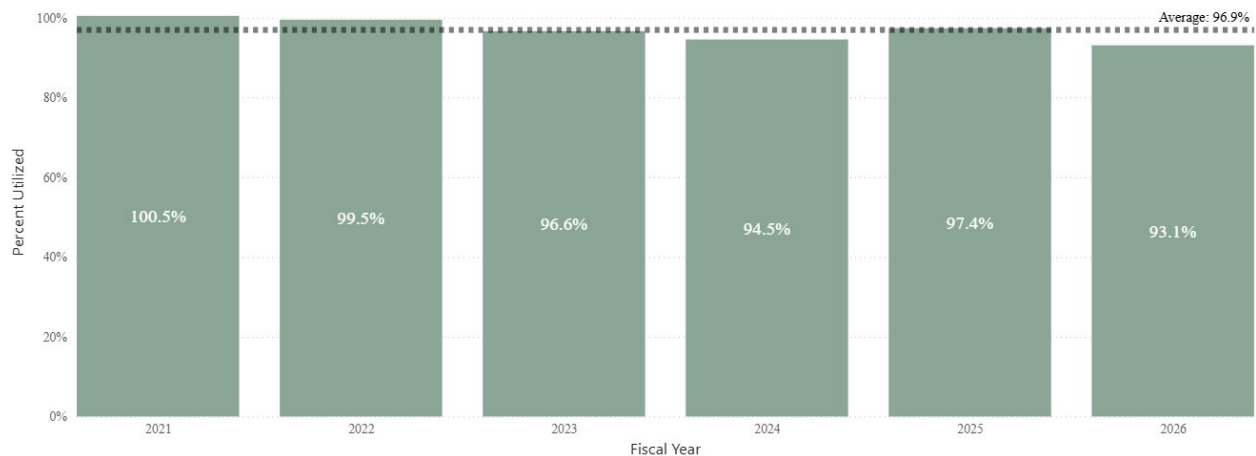
Expenditure Category	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	Percent Expended	
			FY 2025	Last 5 Years
Personal Services	\$68,303,419	\$27,177,433	39.8%	40.4%
Operating Expenses	80,495,494	16,809,817	20.9%	24.3%
Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,741,687	552,536	31.7%	14.4%
Grants	1,577,888	317,055	20.1%	21.6%
Benefits & Claims	19,300	(2,494)	-12.9%	30.4%
Transfers-Out	3,101,537	-	0.0%	2.0%
Debt Service	590,926	258,724	43.8%	5.4%
Total	\$155,830,251	\$45,113,070	29.0%	31.5%

Funding Source	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	Percent Expended	
			FY 2025	Last 5 Years
General Fund	\$8,120	-	0.0%	0%
State/Other Spec Rev	121,413,171	34,044,644	28.0%	32.9%
Fed/Other Spec Rev	34,408,960	11,068,427	32.2%	29.4%
Total	\$155,830,251	\$45,113,070	29.0%	31.5%

Personal Services

Appropriations for personal services in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks total \$68.3 million were 32.4% expended as of November 30, 2025. The department had 743.26 HB 2 positions budgeted (PB) and as of November 1 there were 73.91 PB vacant.

The chart below shows the hourly utilization percentage, hours utilized divided by hours budgeted, for the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the FY 2026 and the previous five fiscal years.



Overall, the department has utilized 93.1% of its budgeted hours as of this point in FY 2026, 3.8% below the five-year average of 96.9% over the same period. On average, vacant positions have remained unfilled for approximately 5 months. The Fisheries Division has the highest number of vacancies, totaling 20.00 PB, primarily among seasonal staff who operate aquatic invasive species check stations and serve as fisheries technicians.

Since the beginning of the year, a total of 27.00 PB were vacated due to employee departures from state employment, and 7.00 PB vacancies were the result of retirements.

The table below summarizes the vacancies in the department as of November 1, 2025.

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Vacancies As of November 1, 2025							
<u>Division</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Months Vacant</u>	<u>Midpoint Pay Rate</u>		<u>FTE</u>	<u>Months Vacant</u>	<u>Midpoint Pay Rate</u>
Technical Services Division				Fisheries Division			
DevOps Engineer	1.00	3.8	\$41.13	Fisheries Management Biologist	2.00	4.4	\$34.12
Software Developer 2	1.00	5.0	36.64	Fisheries Technician 4	1.80	18.4	19.34
Application Dev Bureau Chief	1.00	19.7	43.39	Fisheries Technician	0.70	5.0	19.34
DevOps Bureau Chief	1.00	4.4	42.63	Hatchery Bureau Chief	1.00	2.3	56.47
Quality Assurance Analyst	1.00	-	35.19	AIS Prevention Specialist	1.00	1.8	36.25
GIS Technician	1.00	11.4	36.64	Fish Hatchery Manager	1.00	4.0	30.60
Division Total / Average¹	6.00	7.4	\$39.27	Fish Culture Specialist	3.00	6.5	25.90
Enforcement				Biology Field Technician 1	0.50	0.0	15.47
Crime Investigator	1.00	11.0	\$36.55	Fisheries Technician 3	1.21	33.7	15.47
Game Warden	13.00	3.7	28.14	AIS Lab Technician	1.00	0.9	20.33
Game Warden 1	6.00	137.0	28.14	Fish Tech 3	1.00	1.4	15.47
Division Total / Average¹	20.00	44.1	\$28.56	AIS Watercraft Inspector	5.80	44.4	15.47
Wildlife Division				Division Total / Average¹	20.01	18.7	\$23.47
Wildlife Management Biologist	1.00	1.0	\$34.12	Administration			
Wildlife Management Biologist	1.00	2.5	\$34.12	Regional Admin Support	2.00	2.4	\$21.48
WHIP Grant Manager	1.00	123.8	\$31.98	Construction Specialist 2	1.00	7.3	54.39
Wolf Plan Coordinator	1.00	20.4	34.12	Research Bureau Chief	1.00	4.0	56.47
Wildlife Technician 4	0.12	1.4	19.34	Fisheries Research Biologist	1.00	4.0	40.31
Wildlife Technician 3	0.18	26.8	15.47	Wildlife Geneticist	1.00	4.0	36.35
Survey Caller	0.76	2.8	15.47	Fisheries Disease Ecologist	1.00	4.0	40.31
Division Total / Average¹	5.06	30.6	\$29.88	Biology Field Technician 1	1.00	4.0	15.47
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division				Deputy Chief Legal Counsel	1.00	4.3	54.83
Access Technician	0.07	50.0	\$15.47	Chief of Administration	1.00	22.1	75.89
Recreation Manager	1.00	5.0	37.53	Accounting Manager	1.00	26.2	34.56
Recreation Ranger	2.27	1.6	30.02	Budget Analyst 2	1.00	1.3	33.52
Recreation Site Technician	1.71	5.6	18.85	Regional Admin Support	1.00	3.7	21.48
Recreation Technician	2.79	4.0	4.03	Aircraft Pilot 1	1.00	5.0	41.21
Division Total / Average¹	7.84	4.2	\$19.17	Division Total / Average¹	14.00	6.8	\$39.12
Communications & Education Division				Grand Total¹			
Program Manager	1.00	1.4	36.35		73.91	21.4	\$29.25
Division Total / Average¹	1.00	1.4	\$36.35				

¹ Averages for months vacant and pay rate are weighted by PB

OTHER ISSUES

Information Technology Project Expenditures

The 2019 Legislature approved HB 10 (Long-Range Information Technology), which appropriated \$2.5 million in state special revenue and \$7.5 million in federal revenue to develop a new automated licensing system to replace the current system that has been in place for 20 years.

The table below shows the expenditures and status of the technology project.

Large Information Technology Projects Original and Revised Budgets						
<u>Project</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Original Budget</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Percent Expended</u>
Explore MT	04/02/21	Executing	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$2,880,475	28.8%

Status of Line-Itemed Decision Packages, 2025 Legislature

The table below summarizes the agency's expenditures against legislative appropriations for decision packages that appear as line items in HB 2. A description of each decision package is provided below.

The Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks Legislative Appropriation and Expenditures for the 2027 Biennium				
<u>Decision Package</u>	<u>Legislative Appropriation</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Percent Expended</u>
DP 301 - SPA Coordination (OTO)	\$214,482	\$214,482	\$0	0.0%
DP 507 - Equipment (BIEN/OTO)	286,000	286,000	176,373	61.7%
DP 606 - Recreational Equipment (BIEN/OTO)	149,500	149,500	-	0.0%
DP 610 - AmeriCorps Operations Increase (OTO)	354,000	354,000	-	0.0%
DP 6307 - Fishing and Water Access Sites (RST/BIEN/OTO)	103,500	103,500	12,567	12.1%
DP 6308 - Fishing Access Weed Control & Riparian Habitat (RST/BIEN/OTO)	133,750	133,750	845	0.6%
DP 805 - Publication Specialist (OTO)	100,944	100,944	-	0.0%
Total of HB 2 Line Itemed Decision Packages	\$1,342,176	\$1,342,176	\$189,785	14.1%

DP 301 - SPA Coordination (OTO)

FY 2026 – \$107,241 State Special Revenue

FY 2027 – \$107,241 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only increase in state special revenue to fund 1.00 temporary position to perform Stream Protection Act permitting. Increased case load is anticipated due to the Department of Transportation initiative to rehabilitate or replace 500 – 700 bridges across the state of Montana over the next five years.

DP 507 - Equipment (BIEN/OTO)

FY 2026 – \$286,000 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only appropriation of state special revenue for specialized wildlife equipment including trucks, tracked UTVs, tree planter, snowmobiles, elk traps, and camper trailers to support wildlife technicians.

DP 606 - Recreational Equipment (BIEN/OTO)

FY 2026 – \$149,500 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only and biennial appropriation from state special revenue for small equipment purchases.

DP 610 - AmeriCorps Operations Increase (OTO)

FY 2026 – \$177,000 State Special Revenue

FY 2027 – \$177,000 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only an increase in appropriation from the State Parks Miscellaneous state special revenue account to expand the AmeriCorps program. The state special revenue in this decision package must be matched with federal funds.

DP 6307 - Fishing and Water Access Sites (RST/BIEN/OTO)

FY 2026 – \$51,750 State Special Revenue

FY 2027 – \$51,750 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only increase in appropriation of state special revenue to address increases in recreational use of fishing and water access sites. The legislature intends that the agency seeks outside contractors should there not be sufficient resources within the agency to complete the task. It is the intent of the legislature that the agency will not use more than 5.0% of the fund to administer contracts.

DP 6308 - Fishing Access Weed Control & Riparian Habitat (RST/BIEN/OTO)

FY 2026 – \$66,875 State Special Revenue

FY 2027 – \$66,875 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only increase of state special revenue to improve riparian habitat and increase weed control at fishing access sites. Where available, the legislature intends that the agency to contract with conservation districts or other contractors for the weed spraying activities. It is the intention of the legislature that the agency will not use more than 5.0% of the fund to administer contracts.

The following language is included in HB 2:

“Fish, Wildlife, and Parks will report to the Environmental Quality Council, and the Joint Interim Budget Committee for Natural Resources and Transportation by the first day of December of each year of the 2027 Biennium on the actual habitat enhanced and actual areas treated for weeds.”

DP 805 - Publication Specialist (OTO)

FY 2026 – \$50,472 State Special Revenue

FY 2027 – \$50,472 State Special Revenue

The legislature adopted a one-time-only temporary position to facilitate the transition of a new Montana Outdoors editor. The modified position would fund the retention of the retiring editor during the transition period to a new editor and to update public program materials.

Required Reports

Required reports for the agency can be found by clicking the link below.

[Required Reports](#)