

2025 Impacts and 2026 Session Budget Update

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CFO

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Washington
Department of
**FISH &
WILDLIFE**

Today

- 2025 Session Impacts
- 2026 Session
 - Timeline
 - Maintenance Level
 - Policy Level
 - Capital Budget



Swakane Pheasant Release Site



Department's Impacts

WDFW Impacts

- Last month, WDFW began the layoff process for 29 filled positions. Many more positions were cut.

WDFW Impacts

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- The Department is reducing our motor pool vehicle fleet and administrative costs, limiting travel, reducing contracted facilitation services with outside vendors, making targeted cuts to professional services contracts, and reducing funding for professional development.
- Business operations impacted such as service desk and desktop support, information governance, internal auditing, public records, IT Consulting, Networking and Human Resources and Budget functions.

Biodiversity Impacts

The Department's funding for work to protect and restore Washington's biodiversity was permanently reduced by \$2 million. This will impact pinto abalone and sturgeon contract work, biodiversity grant dollars to partners and NGOs, habitat restoration project development and implementation capacity, and habitat related project management and coordination.

Fish Program Impacts

Hatchery Production Evaluation

The hatchery production evaluation funding that the Legislature provided in the 2022 supplemental budget was cut in half. This work provides the data needed to assess and improve hatchery operations and adaptively manage hatchery programs under changing environmental conditions. This impacts management goals and natural populations' ability to rebuild.

Toutle and Skamania hatcheries

The Toutle and Skamania hatchery budget request was reduced by more than half, resulting in the closure of Skamania hatchery. Some production will be transferred to other facilities and returning adult fish will be collected for a period of time to meet broodstock needs.

Fish Program Impacts

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Volunteer (ALEA) grants

The [Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Volunteer Cooperative Grant Program](#) was defunded. This eliminates \$900,000 in funds to complete projects including habitat restoration, hatchery production and community outreach.

Lake Washington Predator Suppression

This reduction eliminates the ability to estimate out migrating juvenile sockeye and significantly impacts the ability to control predators eating juvenile salmonids.

Fish Program Impacts

Salmon and steelhead monitoring

One-time funding for salmon and steelhead monitoring in the Puget Sound was not funded ongoing in the budget, resulting in eliminating the Skagit River steelhead catch-and-release fishery and reducing scientific work to improve escapement estimation methods. This reduction also reduces capacity to monitor other fisheries in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish River systems.

Fish Program Impacts

Columbia River fishery management evaluation plans

Reduces staff capacity to complete the six fishery management evaluation plans in the Columbia River. This reduction slows the ability to complete these plans, putting the affected fisheries at risk.

Emerging Fisheries Impacts

This reduction is focused on the Columbia River Commercial Fisheries. Reduces our capacity to test alternative commercial fishing gear. Slows progress in implementation of the Commission's Columbia River Policy.

Wildlife Program Impacts

Ecological assessment and STRII

The lack of funding for this work eliminates our ability to lead and coordinate our ecological assessment work and support development of technical tools and data management. This reduces our direct participation in the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative work, although we still retain capacity in base funding for participation at the planning and policy level.

Lands stewardship and maintenance

We lost funding used for stewardship and maintenance of WDFW-managed lands. This will impact the agency's ability to maintain roadways and access points during the 2025-2027 biennium.

Wildlife Program Impacts

Forest health, fuel reductions

The loss in funding will require us to reconfigure this work, focus more on grant writing and collaborating with other entities like DNR and the USFS. We expect an overall reduction in the pace of acres treated.

Western Washington Pheasant Program

The funding for our Western WA Pheasant Program was reduced. The reduction doesn't affect the 2025 pheasant season but will likely affect future seasons.

Wildlife Program Impacts

Puget Sound Pinniped

Partial funding was provided to continue a Columbia River sea lion management program, but the Puget Sound work was lost.

Wildlife disease

The funding to respond to wildlife disease was drastically reduced from the agency's request. The funding is provided specifically for chronic wasting disease, leaving no additional funding for other wildlife diseases, such as avian influenza.

Habitat Program Impacts

Streamflow policy support

WDFW did not receive the funding required for continued and expanded investigations into the efficacy of streamflow mitigation and restoration measures, continued strategic relationship building and information sharing with stakeholders on water issues, and the development of policy strategies to protect and increase stream flows.

Fish barrier prioritization

The Department did not receive operating funds to continue its work to prioritize fish passage barrier removal statewide.

Riparian systems assessment

WDFW also didn't receive the funding necessary to continue development of a decision support tool, the Riparian Data Engine (RDE), to guide and optimize investments to improve riparian habitat condition and function and aid in salmon recovery.

Habitat Program Impacts

Habitat Recovery Pilot Program

Ongoing funding for the Habitat Recovery Pilot Program (HRPP) was cut. The HRPP was designed to streamline the local and state environmental permitting process for habitat recovery projects that benefit freshwater, estuarine, or marine fish or their habitats.

APPS Maintenance and Operations

We received half of the required ongoing funding to maintain the new online HPA permitting application. This funding covers license fees and staff time in support of the system.

DNR passthrough reductions

We received cuts to passthrough funding for both Teanaway Community Forest restoration efforts in Region 3 and Forest Practices work statewide.

Enforcement Program Impacts

Some equipment will be deferred to the next biennium and travel is reduced.

Fisheries Enforcement Compliance

Funding for enforcement officers is reduced.

Enforcement has now stopped hiring. All funded positions are filled.



License Fee Increase Information

License Fee Increase Impacts

You may receive calls or emails about SB 5583 (Concerning recreational fishing and hunting licenses). The governor signed this bill in May, and the bill was not agency-request legislation. This bill reflects a 38% fee increase. The cost people will see in the RCW language does not reflect the out-the-door cost for licenses as there may be added fees.

Although this bill is an increase to revenue for the Department, most of the revenue is used to cover increased costs due to compensation while the remainder of the revenue is used to offset State General Fund reductions as a fund swap. The swap is \$10.1 million for 2025-27 and \$7 million per biennium ongoing thereafter. You can find talking points about this and other legislative session items on our [Talking Points page](#) on the Intranet.



2026 Session

Revenue Forecast

- Washington has a “balanced budget”, this is over 4 years as part of the “budget outlook”
- The Legislature uses the official revenue forecasts for resources available
- The Budget outlook is updated using June 24 forecast
 - Revenue forecast decreased compared to March ↓
 - Federal budget introduces increased uncertainty ↓
 - Increased tort liabilities ↓



Two loon chicks



American wigeon swimming

Revenue Forecast

- Revenue forecast decreased compared to March 

Enacted Budget (March Forecast)				
	BN2527		BN2729	
			4-year	
Forecast	\$	70,952	\$	76,425
Revenue bills	\$	4,257	\$	4,377
	\$	75,209	\$	80,802

June Forecast				
	BN2527		BN2729	
			4-year	
Forecast	\$	74,756	\$	80,014

Change in Forecast	\$	(453)	\$	(788)	\$	(1,241)
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Key Takeaways for Legislative Session

- Legislative session 2026 is going to be another hard session for WDFW
 - Keep current work whole
 - Keep asks to maintenance level
 - Push policy asks to 2027-29 biennium (legislative session 2027)



Roosevelt Beach, WA

Broad Timeline





Maintenance Level Packages

Maintenance Level Requests



When do we submit a maintenance level package?

- Inflation or price per unit increases.
- Other legally unavoidable costs not captured in the current budget.

Maintenance Level

1. Increased Pamphlet Costs
2. Survey Flight (Cost) Time Increases
3. Personnel and Labor Services
4. Wage Adjustments (Kelly Services)
5. Fish Food and Animal Feed
6. CIM correction
7. WCC contract increase from ECY
8. Enforcement Vehicle Replacement
9. Marking and Tagging Fish
10. Post-Wildfire Habitat Recovery
11. Wildfire Suppression
12. Passed Unfunded legislation
13. Motor Pool
14. Increased DES costs
15. Zooplankton Monitoring
16. HPA O&M
17. Inflation and Enforcement Readiness
18. Enforcement OT Wage Adjustments
19. Closing Skamania Broodstock

Specific Cost type Adjustments

1. Local Funding Adjustments
2. Federal Funding Adjustments
3. Other Fund Adjustments
4. Fuel Rate Adjustments
5. Lease Rate Adjustment
6. Utility Rate Adjustments
7. Equipment Replacement Costs
8. IT Equipment Maintenance and Software
9. Operating Costs from Capital Projects

Dead Packages

Analysis didn't find increased costs for these areas:

1. Radio Collar Monitoring
2. Increased Attorney General Costs
3. Public Records Requests
4. County and Other Assessments/Lands Lease Rate Adjustments
5. WSP Radio Cost Increases
6. Office of Administrative Hearings
7. Consolidated Mail Services Cost Increase



Policy Level Packages

Policy Level

Increased Officers and Presence

Officer positions are all filled, but the state and needs continue to grow.

Facilities

Possible maintenance level; Port Angeles and Auto-trailer parking storage

STRII

State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative

Policy Level

Biodiversity

Forest Health

Riparian and HRCD



Capital Budget

Capital Asks

Requirement:

- Critical or emergent costs that cannot be accommodated with savings or efficiencies in the existing budget
- Cannot be addressed through the minor works budget

2 Major Works Projects

Snow Creek Resort – Currently a major works design project with no new funding in 25-27. Seeking \$175,000 to complete demolition of nuisance structures and ensure a safer access site for the public. Already part of 10-year capital plan, just need a bridge to 27-29 capital construction request.

Bob Oke Pheasant Farm – Emergent concerns over nitrates in soil and ground water. New major works request. Seeking \$500,000 to cover design costs ahead of 27-29 request for \$4.5M to construct new pens and nitrate treatment.



Questions?