

NEWS

Game and Fish Commission approves changes to regulations, FY 24 budget



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CHEYENNE - The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission met this week in Wheatland. The seven-member board approved the annual Wyoming Game and Fish Department budget — a regular task at July meetings. The standard operational budget, which supports the day-to-day work of the department, was approved at \$99.2 million. Game and Fish doesn't receive state general-fund dollars. The bulk of the budget comes from sportspeople.

The Commission also approved \$20.1 million for one-time projects that include funding the Jackson housing project and a portion of the state education and shooting complex project. In addition, the Commission voted to approve the projects presented by the Animal Damage Management Board. The

department allocates \$200,000 annually toward predator control projects for wildlife protection.

In an effort to increase public access for sportspeople, the Commission voted to approve the 10-year renewal of the Dave Johnston Power Plant Public Access Area in Converse County, a new public access area on the North Platte River near Glenrock and a public access road and parking area on private land in Carbon County owned by Sims Land & Livestock, Inc. near McFadden.

The Commission also approved changes to a series of regulations after considering extensive public comment:

- Chapter 22, Watercraft Regulation.
- Chapter 44, Regulation for Issuance of Licenses, Permits, Stamps, Tags, Preference Points and Competitive Raffle Chance.
- Chapter 46, Fishing Regulations.
- Chapter 47, Gray Wolf Hunting Seasons.

The Commission received numerous informational presentations and updates. Game and Fish continues to monitor chronic wasting disease throughout the state and was presented with an overview of prevalence rates across the state and ongoing research. The department also provided an update on the Jackson employee housing project that is expected to break ground in August. Additionally, the Commission was updated on the use of revenue from House Bill 122 — which went into effect July 2021 — to secure public access for hunting and fishing. Portions of the funds generated were used in the acquisition of the Ellis Ranch and Pitcher-Brokaw access easement.

Each July the department regularly presents its annual awards. Director Brian Nesvik recognized Hank Edwards, soon-to-be retiring wildlife health laboratory supervisor, and Bart Kroger, Worland wildlife biologist, with lifetime achievement awards. Kevin Spence, Green River terrestrial habitat biologist, was presented with the Director's Award.

Additionally, Game and Fish recognized divisional employee of the year awards:

- Christina Malessa, Federal aid coordinator, Cheyenne — Fiscal Division
- Chris Martin, Visual communications supervisor, Cheyenne — Communications and Education Division
- Ian Tator, Statewide terrestrial habitat manager, Cheyenne — Wildlife Division
- Josh Leonard, Aquatic Invasive Species coordinator, Laramie — Fish Division
- Sara Reichert, Senior application development programmer, Cheyenne — Services Division

The next Commission meeting is Sept. 12-13 in Gillette.