



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #548

Point Beach State Forest Operations (DNR -- Forestry and Parks)

[LFB 2003-05 Budget Summary: Page 323, #15]

CURRENT LAW

Currently, the Department's park staff operate 83 recreational properties open to the public, including 45 state parks, 25 state trails, seven southern forests and five recreation areas. An estimated 14 million visitors enter the parks and southern forests annually.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$25,000 annually from the forestry account to support an additional limited-term employee (LTE) to staff a new public entrance and visitor services building at Point Beach State Forest. Funding would provide approximately 1,600 hours for an LTE ranger with law enforcement credentials at the property for security and customer service duties.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Due to heavy seasonal variations in attendance at the majority of state park properties, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation relies on LTEs to meet many of its staffing needs during peak months. Under the bill, the state parks LTE salary budget totals \$2,091,000 in 2003-04 and \$2,191,000 in 2004-05.

2. The Department's initial request for LTE support under this item anticipated that an LTE with law enforcement credentials would be required to help staff a park that was planning to undertake a campground expansion during the biennium. The LTE would have assisted with safety patrols as well as performing general oversight and customer service at the campground.

3. However, after the DNR budget had been submitted to DOA, it was decided

internally that it would not be feasible for the campground expansion to take place during the 2003-05 biennium. As LTE support was still desired to staff the new Point Beach State Forest visitor service building, DNR revised its request to locate the support at that facility.

4. Responsibilities at the Point Beach visitor center are anticipated to be largely customer-service related. From this perspective, funding adequate for an administrative services LTE could be provided, generating savings to the forestry account of \$11,200 annually (salary for an administrative services LTE would be approximately \$8 per hour, compared to \$14.40 per hour for an LTE with law enforcement credentials).

5. Department staff assert that limited-term employees with additional credentials (such as law enforcement certification) are valuable at any property, and justify their additional expense through their ability to carry out dual functions. For example, in addition to staffing the visitor center, they would be available in case any security or public safety issues arose at the park, decreasing the need for additional support or law enforcement staff coverage.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide \$25,000 annually from the forestry account for additional limited-term employee (LTE) support to staff a new public entrance and visitor services building at Point Beach State Forest. Funding would be sufficient to support a LTE with law enforcement credentials.

2. Provide \$13,800 annually from the forestry account for additional LTE support to staff a new public entrance and visitor services building at Point Beach State Forest. Funding would be sufficient to support a LTE for administrative and customer service duties.

Alternative 2	SEG
2003-05 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$22,400

3. Delete provision.

Alternative 3	SEG
2003-05 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$50,000

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