

Hello Friends of Vermont Fish and Wildlife,

My name is James Ehlers. I was recently appointed to the legislatively mandated Fish and Wildlife Funding Task Force. Subsequently, I was elected chair of the committee. My co-chair is Jim Shallow.

I am writing to extend to you the opportunity to offer your perspective on VT Fish and Wildlife Department funding. Over the next several weeks, our committee will be identifying department budget area shortfalls and potential revenue sources to cover these as well as fully funded budget areas that the public desires to expand. We invite you to submit suggestions for funding current department activity. We also encourage you to identify areas where you or organization would like to see increased department action and associated results, along with your ideas for potential revenue sources to sustain these activities and accomplish tangible objectives. Including the pros and cons associated with your recommendations would be most helpful.

For your background, the Appropriations Bill of the last session contains our charge. It is as follows:

Sec. 296a. FISH AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT; FUNDING TASK FORCE

(a) The governor shall appoint a fish and wildlife funding task force of up to nine members to develop recommendations for comprehensive, sustainable funding mechanisms for the operations of the department of fish and wildlife which complement existing funding sources. The task force shall, among other things, consider whether costs of work carried out by fish and wildlife department personnel in providing technical services to permitting bodies and in enforcing laws and regulations other than fish and wildlife laws and regulations, should be paid for from other agency and department funds, as appropriate.

(b) The office of finance and management shall provide staff services to the committee. Members may receive a per diem and expenses pursuant to section 1010 of Title 32. On or before January 15, 2007, the committee shall report its recommendations to the governor and the following legislative committees: the senate committees on finance, on appropriations, and on natural resources and energy; and the house committees on ways and means, on appropriations, and on fish, wildlife and water resources.

As you can see from above, our recommendations will be reported to the governor and several legislative committees.

Please send your suggestions to [james@elkpublishing.com](mailto:james@elkpublishing.com) and [jshallow@audubon.org](mailto:jshallow@audubon.org). Attaching them as Word documents would be most appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration, interest and support. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
James Ehlers