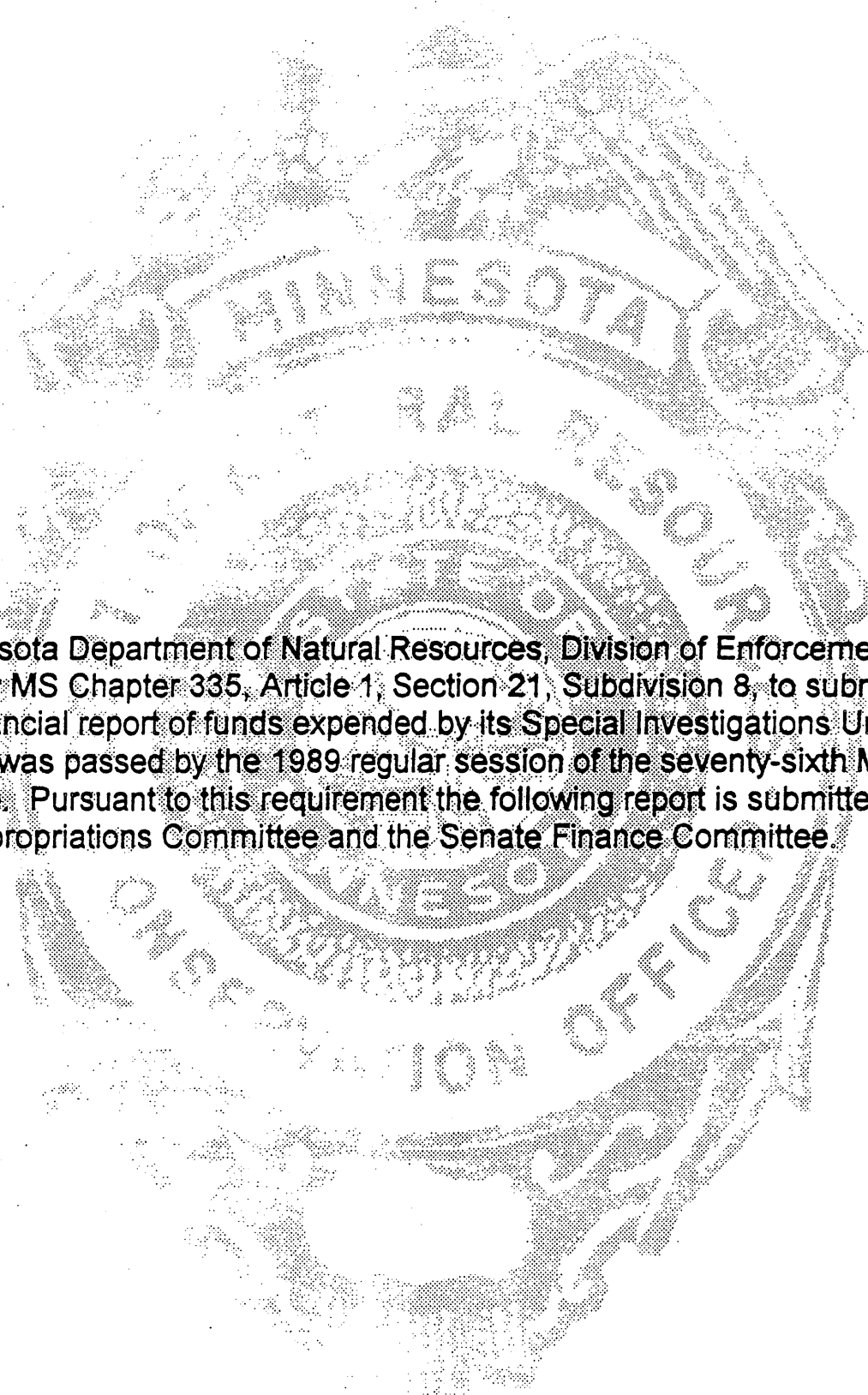




*Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Enforcement*

*Special Investigations Unit
1996 Legislative Report*

November 1996



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Enforcement is directed by MS Chapter 335, Article 1, Section 21, Subdivision 8, to submit an annual financial report of funds expended by its Special Investigations Unit. This legislation was passed by the 1989 regular session of the seventy-sixth Minnesota Legislature. Pursuant to this requirement the following report is submitted to the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Enforcement
Special Investigations Unit**

FINANCIAL REPORT - FISCAL YEAR 1996

LINE	DESCRIPTION	ALLOCATION	EXPENDITURE
1	Salaries		
	* Full-time	\$216,651	216,651
	* Part-time	2,000	0
2	Overtime Pay	21,125	21,125
	Subtotal	\$239,776	\$237,776
3	Rents and Leases	1,000	534
4	Repairs	3,000	1,156
5	Printing	500	0
6	Professional & Technical	15,000	15,000
7	Purchased Services	4,000	781
8	Claims, fines, etc.	23,000	22,791
9	Communications	7,800	4,020
10	Travel	2,500	4,414
11	Employee Development	6,500	0
	Subtotal	\$63,300	\$48,696
12	Supplies and Materials	12,000	6,011
13	Fleet Management	25,000	17,243
14	Equipment	10,960	10,334
	Subtotal	\$47,960	\$33,588
	TOTAL	* \$351,036	\$320,060

* \$30,976 was extracted from allocation to be rolled into FY 97 Divisional budget. (\$15,000 of rollover was earmarked for purchase of a covert vehicle)

LINE	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDITURE
1	Salaries, full time classified with benefits (Two N.R. Spec III, one N.R. Spec IV) (Unclassified and temporary assignments)	\$216,651
2	Overtime Pay	21,125
3	Rents and Leases (Maintenance contracts, parking cards for state vehicles) contracts for equipment)	534
4	Repairs (Equipment)	1,156
5	Printing	0
6	Professional and Technical Services (Laboratory costs and scientific research for the testing and verification of Divisional evidence for court purposes)	15,000
7	Purchased Services (meeting rooms, aircraft billing, credit services agreement)	781
8	Claims, fines, etc. (Funds dedicated for the purchase of evidence and associated costs of commercial resource investigations)	22,791
9	Communications (Telephone charges, long distance tolls, pager rental, etc.)	4,020
10	Travel, In and Out State (Expenses incurred for intelligence sharing, training, etc.)	4,414
11	Employment Development	0
12	Supplies and Materials (Gasoline, audio/video tapes, batteries, office supplies, etc.)	6,011
13	Fleet Management (Vehicle operational costs paid to DNR fleet management for insurance, maintenance and replacement of vehicles)	17,243
14	Equipment	10,334
	TOTAL	\$320,060

ANTICIPATED 1997 EXPENDITURES

LINE	DESCRIPTION	ALLOCATION
1	Salaries	
	*Full-time	\$224,321
	*Part-time	2,000
2	Overtime Pay	24,329
4	Rents and Leases	900
5	Repair Services	2,700
6	Printing	450
7	Professional and Technical Services	15,000
8	Purchased Services (Claims, fines, etc.)	30,150
9	Communications	7,020
10	Travel	2,250
12	Supplies and Materials	9,300
13	Fleet Management	22,500
14	Equipment	9,864
	(Criminal restitution money for vehicle purchase)	15,000
	TOTAL	\$365,784

In fiscal year 1996, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Enforcement, Special Investigations Unit accounted for the disbursement of approximately 3% of the Division's budgetary allotment. The Special Investigations Unit conducted activities utilizing three full time Special Investigators and eighteen Conservation Officers who were certified to conduct part time overt and covert wildlife investigations. A summary of fiscal year 1996 Special Investigations Unit operations includes:

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

- * Special Investigators attended and participated in specialized training emphasizing the use and construction of electronic surveillance equipment. This valuable training also covered legal updates associated with surveillance activities and is paramount in conducting lawful and effective covert and overt operations.
- * Special Investigators attended and made presentations at the Midwest Natural Resources Covert Investigator's Seminar. This program provides investigators with information concerning the legal aspects of conducting covert investigations, introduces innovative specialized equipment, and affords the sharing of information critical in determining illegal trends. In addition, the MN DNR Special Investigations Unit has initiated a project to systematically collect and disseminate the resources required to provide covert operatives with background history sufficient to withstand the inquiries of targeted suspects.
- * Special Investigators attended the National Association of Marine Investigator's (NAMI) seminar and received training sufficient to conduct watercraft/snowmobile theft investigations and fraudulent titling/ registration.
- * Provided funding and support for two uniformed Conservation Officers to attend the Tennessee Commercial Mussel Regulatory Seminar. Through this training, wildlife managers and enforcement officers identified the biological and regulatory inconsistencies of Mississippi River states concerning the commercial mussel industry and shared intelligence concerning the illegal activities occurring on the river system.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Enforcement activities conducted during fiscal year 1995 included but were not limited to the following:

- * A cooperative covert waterfowl investigation with Canadian and USFWS agents resulted in the arrests and convictions of two American waterfowl guides. The sentencing included fines and forfeitures exceeding \$25,000, incarceration, and subsequent deportation from Canada.

* The conclusion of a two-year undercover bear guiding/hunting investigation in northern Minnesota. During the course of this operation, Special Investigators documented an on going conspiracy designed to illegally take, transport and possess black bear in violation of state and federal law. Currently, fifteen defendants have pleaded guilty to state and federal charges relating to these offenses. Total fines have exceeded \$17,400.00. Additional penalties include jail time, more than thirteen years of probation and the confiscation of firearms and illegally taken wildlife.

Similar violations relating to white tailed deer were identified by MN DNR and IN DNR Special Investigators during undercover hunts in Indiana. . Nine defendants await state and federal prosecution in Indiana for a multitude of violations including the illegal taking, transportation, and possession of white tail deer.

* A cooperative covert wildlife investigation involving a Minnesota resident illegally guiding big game hunters in Alaska. Covert contacts by MN DNR Special Investigators and a subsequent guided hunt resulted in many documented violations. The successful prosecution included fines exceeding \$3000, jail time and revocation of hunting licenses for an extended period of time.

* Fifteen license fraud investigations were conducted for outstate natural resource law enforcement agencies

* In addition, forty seven investigations involving unlawful natural resource commercialization have been conducted and include multiple suspects/defendants. The Special Investigations Unit had a 100% conviction rate for cases which were prosecuted.

* Assisted many federal, state, and county law enforcement agencies in cooperative criminal investigations. The Special Investigations Unit was instrumental in the recovery of two stolen snowmobiles

* Receipt, review, maintenance, and associated enforcement of commercial licenses and reporting requirements. These included:

1605	Game Farm Dealers
80	Raw Fur Dealers
12	Raw Fur Tanners/Dressers
27	Wild Rice Dealers
87	Shooting Preserves
136	Bear Guides
501	Minnow Dealers

2,448 TOTAL COMMERCIAL LICENSES

ADMINISTRATION

- * Conducted an analysis of the two year Lake Winnibigoshish perch investigation resulting in an intelligence package suitable for field officer use. The report details violator profiles, suspect fishermen, arrival and departure dates and times, lodging, and vehicle logs.
- * Prepared a comprehensive legislative report assessing the MN wholesale/retail fishing industry. This document details the extent of exploitation and illegal commercialization of Minnesota's wild aquatic life and provides recommendations for new legislation.
- * Administrated the Division's forensic research and testing program. During the past year, thirty samples, associated with the securing of evidence in criminal cases, were custodied from the Special Investigations Unit to University of Minnesota pathobiologists for forensic analysis
- * Maintained the Division of Enforcement's statewide intelligence information
- * Provided specialized equipment, training, surveillance and interview assistance to uniformed Conservation Officers

