

# Governor's Task Force on Fish and Wildlife Resources

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AUGUST 2015

# Economic Value

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According to a 2011 US Census Report:

- \$750 million spent annually by hunters and anglers on travel and gear in Wyoming
- An additional \$350 million spent by wildlife watchers

# Mission Statement

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*The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a coherent strategy, including recommendations and measureable actions that the State can implement in order to broaden opportunities to effectively manage Wyoming's fish and wildlife resources.*

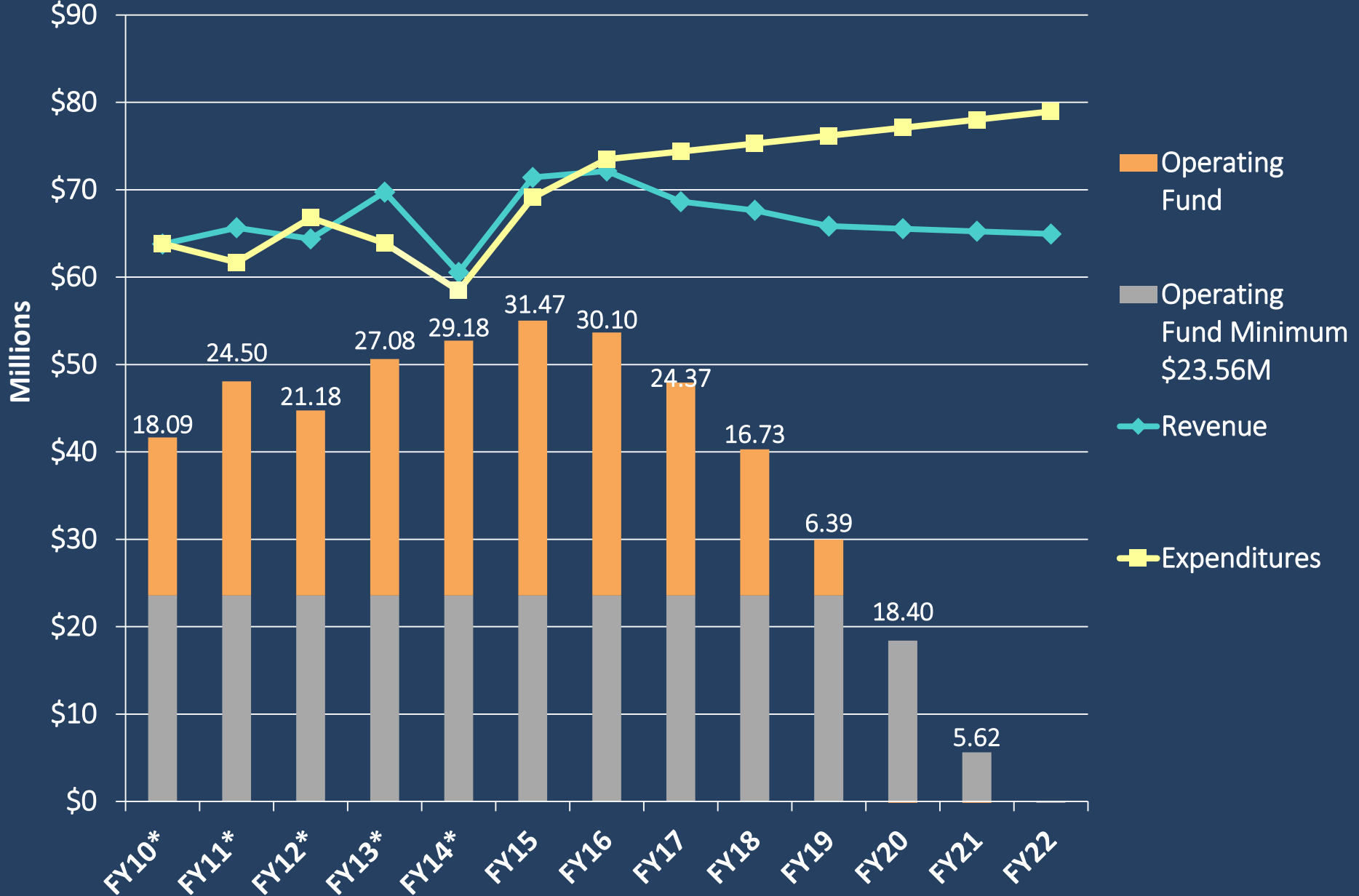
# How We Got Where We Are

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- Wyoming Game and Fish Commission has not received a license fee increase since 2008
- In 2013 session, Commission went to legislature for license fee increase but was declined
- Inflation has steadily increased while license fee revenue has generally been flat
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department instituted budget cuts
- Legislature has supported General Fund increases to support Sage Grouse Management, Veterinary Services, Wolf Management and Aquatic Invasive
- Governor formed Task Force in Spring of this year

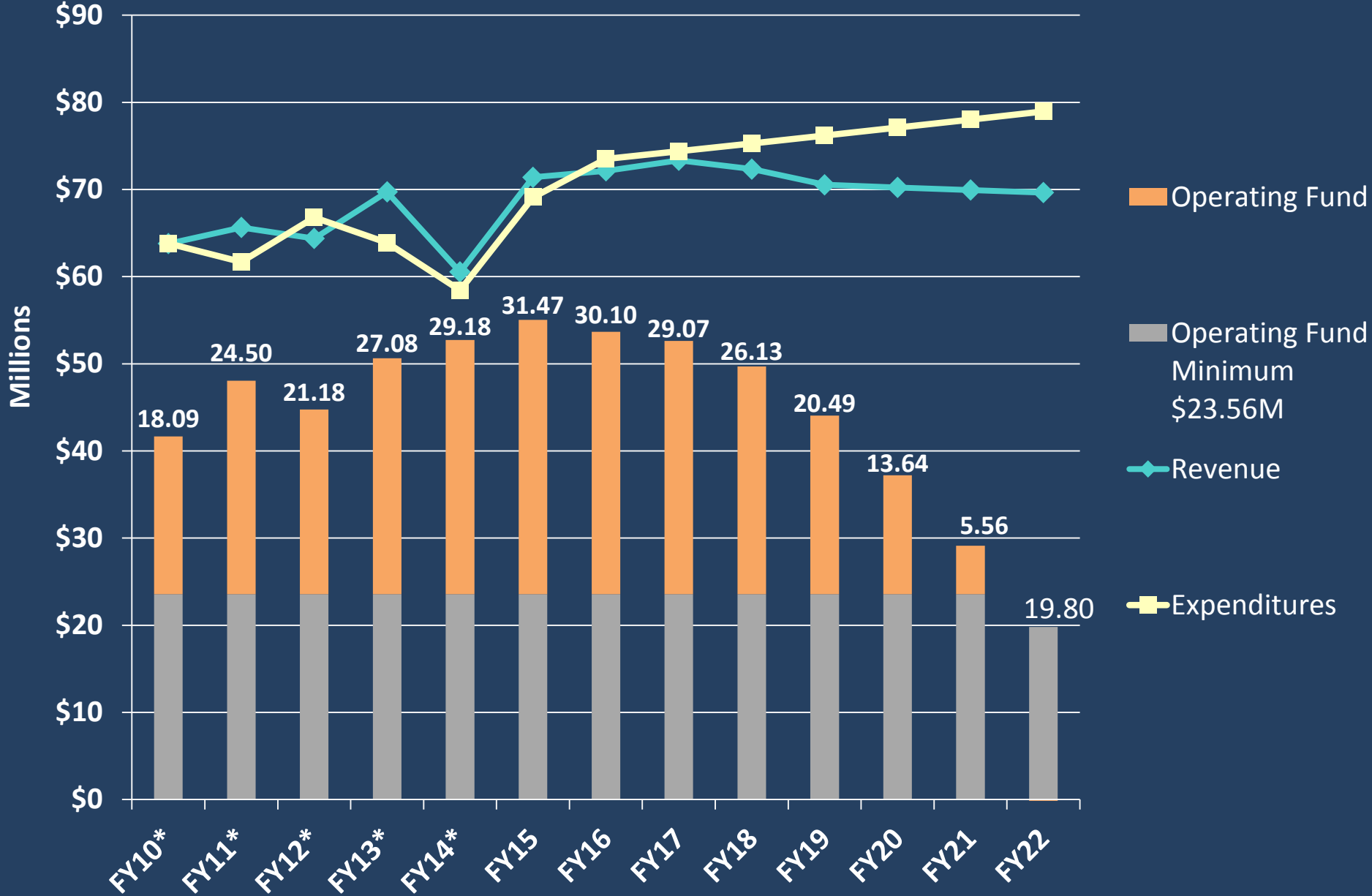


# 3% INFLATION



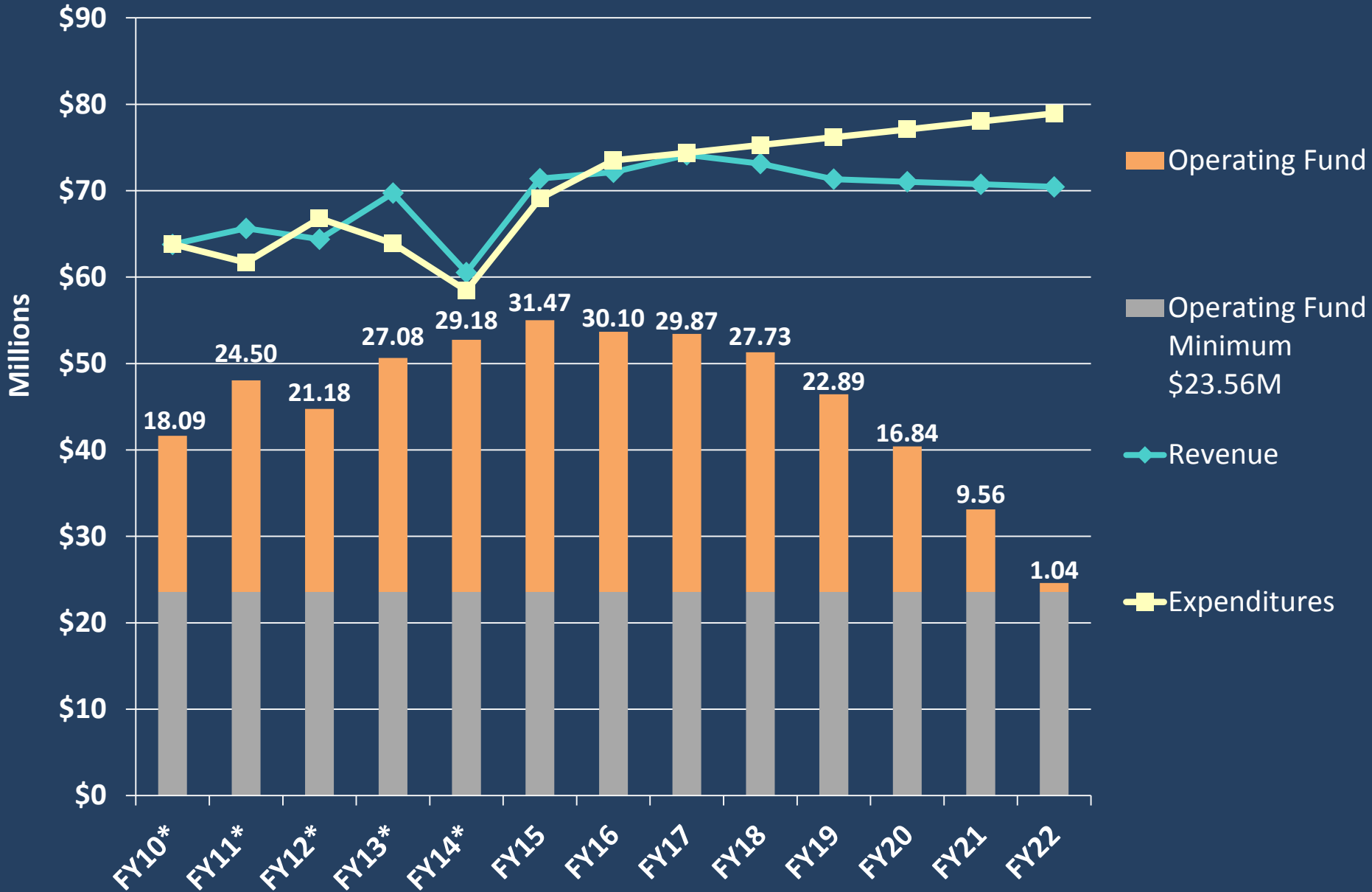


# HEALTH INSURANCE / 3% INFLATION



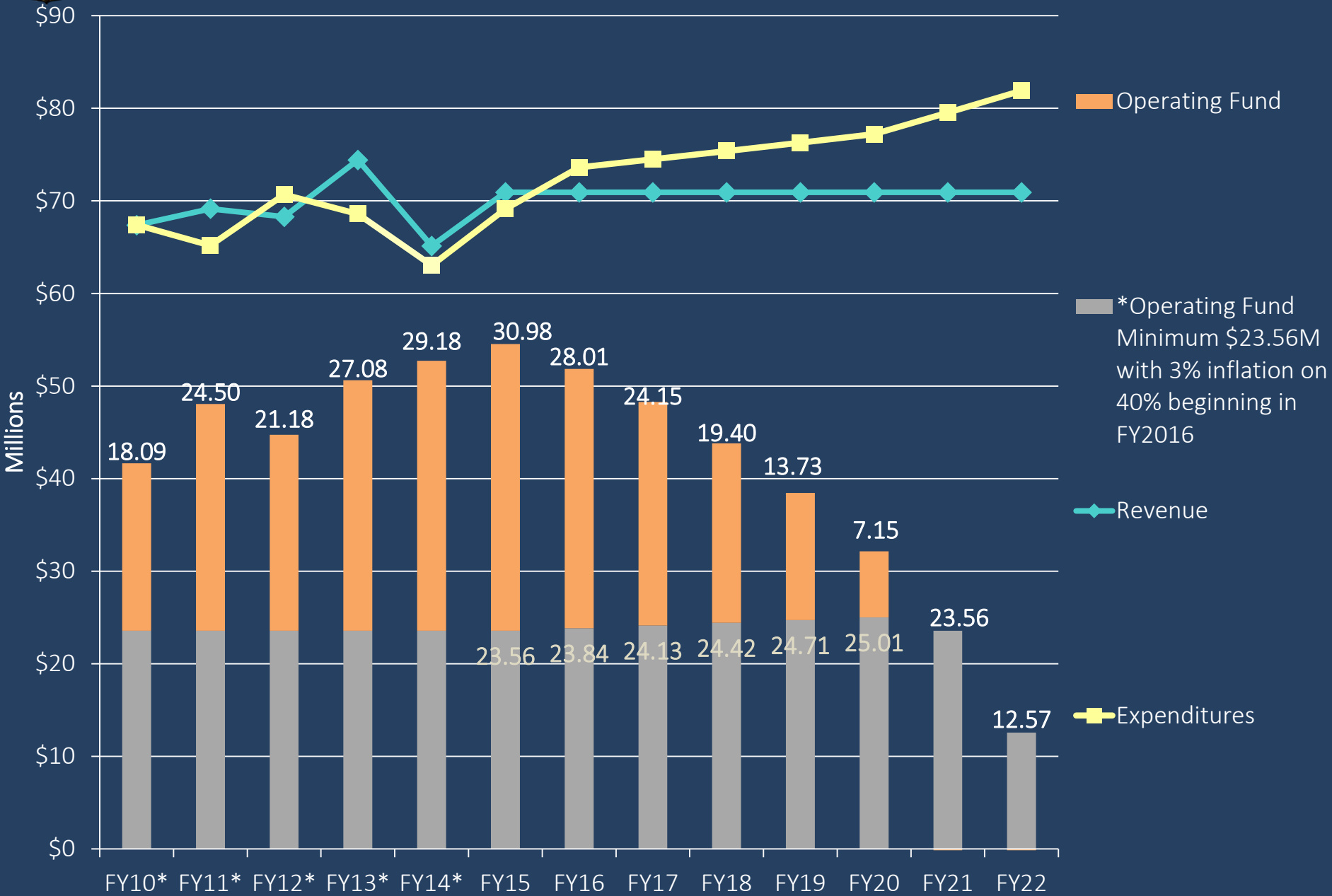


# HEALTH INSURANCE/GRIZZLY BEARS / 3% INFLATION





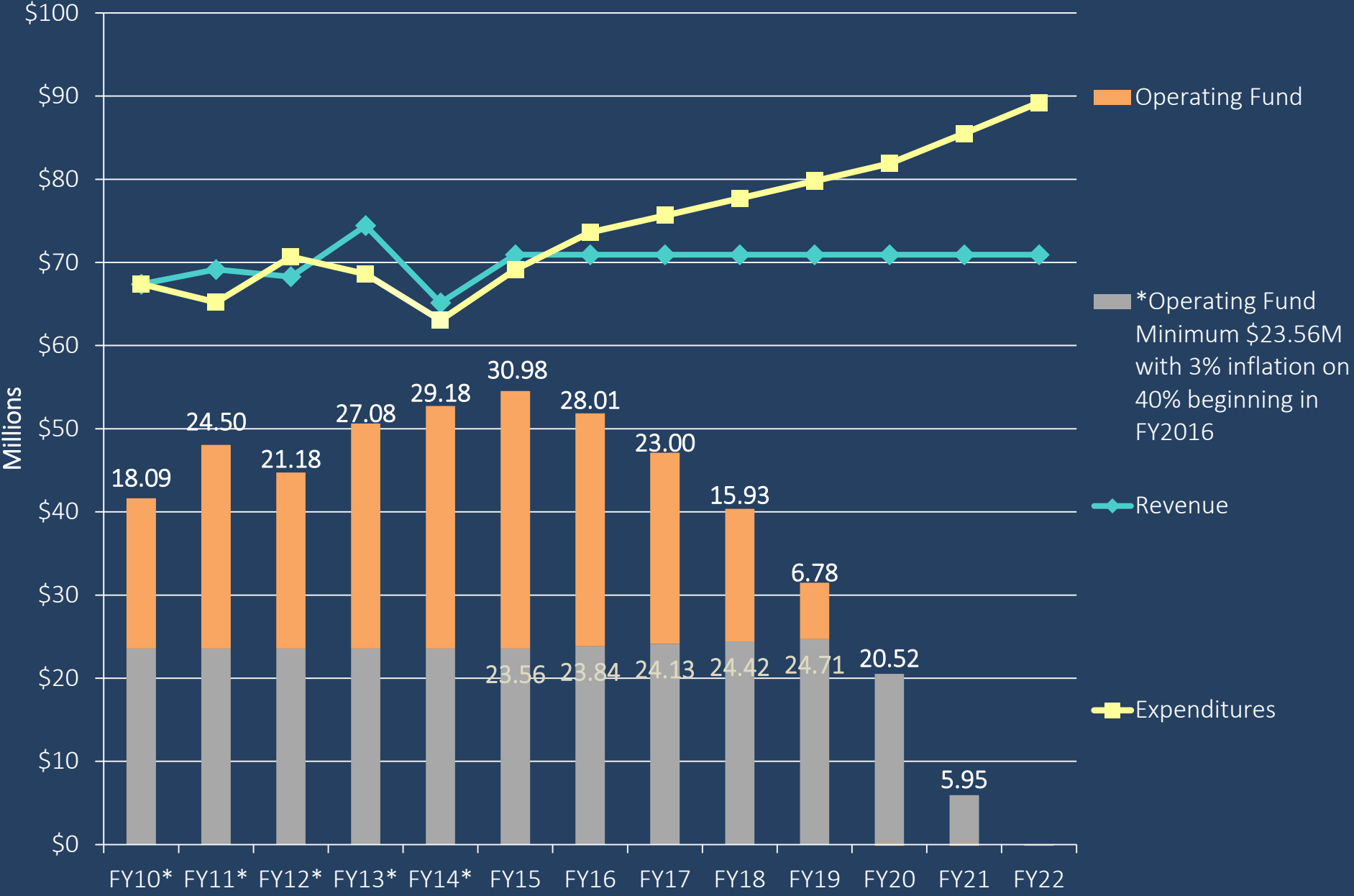
# PROJECTION - 3% INFLATION







# PROJECTION - 3% INFLATION / COST ALLOCATION



# Task Force Recommendation

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a) Engage an objective and qualified third party to conduct a program review of the WGFD with a report to the Governor before the 2016 legislative session.

*Governor Mead has requested that once the program audit is complete, the Task Force reconvene to further review and, if necessary, refine its recommendations.*

b) The Wyoming Game & Fish Commission should have the authority to establish fees for licenses, stamps and permits for programs directly related to game & fish species within limits established by the legislature (e.g. limits on and frequency of adjustments, and agency operating fund balance).

*General consensus, one member withheld consent*

# Task Force Recommendation

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c) Revenues generated from licenses, stamps and permits should be used for programs that benefit game species.

d) General fund appropriations should be allocated to fully fund management of currently legislatively funded non-game species and other “legislatively mandated” programs. “Non-game species” shall include Sensitive Species, Grizzly Bears, Wolves and Sage Grouse. “Legislatively Mandated” programs shall include Aquatic Invasive Species and Veterinary Services. Total - \$3mm

# Task Force Recommendation

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- e) Adjust Governor's Endangered Species Act (ESA) budget to adequately address species that, if listed, may adversely affect Wyoming's economy.
- f) Fully fund the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust (WWNRT) at the authorized level in order to allow the Trust to achieve its purposes without future appropriations.
- g) Until implementation task force recommendations 1b, 1c, and 1d, general fund appropriations should be allocated for the purpose of health insurance costs for employees in commission funded programs.

# Task Force Recommendation

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h) WGFD should be responsible for its own deferred maintenance expenses (currently, \$1.5 million). It is appropriate for general fund to continue funding capital improvements.

i) Engage with Wyoming congressional delegation with the goal of reforming the ESA. In the interim, secure additional federal funding for state management of ESA to decrease Wyoming general fund appropriations.

# Foundation for Non-Traditional Revenue Initiative

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The task force recognizes that all benefit from the revenues that Wyoming's wildlife generates and hunters and anglers should not solely bear the burden to sustain resources that all Wyoming residents enjoy and benefit from economically.

# Alternate Sources of Funding Identified – Task Force did not reach consensus

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- Taxes: sales, severance, natural resource, coffee, lodging, fuel, beer, real estate transfer
- Mill Levy
- Trust: Mineral Trust, general fund appropriation for non-consumption wildlife
- Park Fees: Park sales tax, National Park fee dedicated to resources
- Access fee on state lands for non-consumptive user
- License plates
- Outfitter fee
- Conservation stamp for non-consumptive user
- Sur-charge on licenses
- Voluntary donations and voluntary non-consumptive user fee