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Report Highlights

Management Oversight of Funds and Operations

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

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Why We Conducted This Work

We conducted certain procedures at the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to evaluate controls LDWF uses to ensure accurate financial reporting, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and overall accountability over public funds for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2016.

What We Found

We evaluated LDWF's operations and system of internal control through inquiry, observation, and review of its policies and procedures, including a review of applicable laws and regulations. Based on the documentation of LDWF's controls and our understanding of related laws and regulations, we performed procedures on selected controls and transactions relating to LaCarte Purchasing Card (credit card) charges, movable property, payroll expenses, and other charges that resulted in findings and recommendations. Overall, our procedures identified a lack of management oversight over LDWF funds and operations, which resulted in the following deficiencies:

- LDWF's lack of financial and operational oversight over the nearshore segment of the British Petroleum (BP) Tissue Sampling Program in Venice, Louisiana (the Venice team) resulted in protocol deviations, costs that appear excessive, and missing state property. The Venice team collected only 1,091 (46%) of the 2,376 fish required to be sampled in accordance with the protocol at a cost of \$3,050,085, or \$2,796 per fish. This amount included purchases of \$2,283,574 for boats, fishing and water sports equipment, lodging, vehicles, household supplies and groceries, clothing, cameras, and other items, and \$766,511 in payroll disbursements for the Venice team. Property totaling at least \$54,957 was purchased with LDWF funds by the Venice team from September 2010 through October 2013 that is no longer in LDWF's possession.
- LDWF's lack of management oversight over purchasing, sponsorships, and contracts resulted in questionable purchases totaling \$763,929 including \$283,675 in clothing and uniform purchases without a formal policy providing for uniform purchases, and \$188,805 in payments for sponsorship agreements, some of which may have been a violation of the Louisiana Constitution as a donation of public funds. In addition, LDWF state credit card users artificially divided 101 payments totaling \$157,725 to seven vendors without obtaining prior approval from the Division of Administration.

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What We Found (Cont.)

- LDWF used federal grant funds totaling \$1.8 million to purchase a used aircraft without a proper inspection and did not exercise reasonable due diligence in using the aircraft. As a result, damages to the aircraft noted after the purchase could cost the state up to \$580,600 in repairs.



- LDWF made a questionable purchase of a \$220,000 Catamaran, motors for this vessel, and a trailer that was only used twice from 2012 to 2016. This purchase appeared to have little or no benefit to the agency. During that timeframe, LDWF incurred expenses totaling almost \$38,000 to maintain and repair the vessel.

- LDWF did not properly oversee the Louisiana Saltwater Series or the License to Win! Sweepstakes, which may result in donations of state resources or ineffective programs. In addition, LDWF did not have adequate controls over a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation.
- LDWF management overrode controls and did not maintain adequate internal controls over movable property items, including drones and guns. In addition, LDWF did not maintain accurate information in the state's movable property system.
- LDWF did not maintain adequate internal controls over time and attendance resulting in time statements that were not certified by employees and/or approved by a supervisor, and employee leave and overtime that was not approved by a supervisor.