



Kansas Wildlife Federation
Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 268
to the Kansas Senate Committee on
Natural Resources

March 19, 2015

Chairman Powell and members of the Committee, we thank you for the opportunity to present our ongoing concerns regarding imperiled wildlife species conservation needs in Kansas.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation is a 65-year old grassroots organization of hunters, anglers and concerned wildlife conservationists that promotes hunting and fishing opportunities and associated recreation for the benefit of all hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. KWF supports the sustainable use and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats through education, partnerships, outreach, and policy oversight.

KWF opposes Senate Bill 268, which modifies the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975. KWF was involved in getting the nongame program passed in Kansas. SB 268 eliminates protection for the majority of the habitat types that threatened and endangered species require for existence. SB 268 impacts mammals, fish, birds, invertebrates, amphibians and turtle species statewide.

K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 82a-307 authorizes county commissioners to clean and maintain the banks and channels of the streams and watercourses within definitely established bank lines but shall not change or diminish the course, current or cross section of any stream. SB 268 goes further to allow degradation of these stream courses by 5%.

SB 268 also arbitrarily moves Sedgwick County, the true sponsor of this legislation, from zone one to zone two, which doubles the drainage size of the watershed drainage of "designated streams" before triggering permit requirements. Sedgwick Counties rainfall and topography deem it to be in zone one as K.S.A 82a-301 was originally enacted. This is totally an unnecessary action, solely for the convenience of the county.

One of our biggest concerns is that enacting SB 268 will eliminate any opportunity for counties to work with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to minimize impacts on critical habitats needed for our threatened and endangered species to survive. Many 'avoidance' opportunities occur with discussions between the department and project sponsors.

KWF contends that the KDWPT has an excellent record as a lead agency in managing the nongame wildlife resources as they intersect with the development of natural resources. It is important to note that in a typical year, KDWPT staff reviews about 2,000 projects under their authorities, and typically only one-half of one percent requires any mitigation expense.

A 2011 survey commissioned by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism was conducted by Responsive Management Inc. regarding: *Kansas Residents' Opinions on Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Actions to Protect Wildlife by Responsive Management*. It revealed some very interesting information:

“An overwhelming majority of Kansas residents (91%) agree that the Department should continue to identify and protect habitat critical to the existence of threatened and endangered wildlife.”

See the following website to view the results of a survey on the high levels of support for recovery of endangered species. *Kansas Residents' Opinions on Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Actions to Protect Wildlife by Responsive Management*.
(<http://www.kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Services/Threatened-and-Endangered-Wildlife/Kansas-Residents'-Opinions-on-Threatened-and-Endangered-Wildlife-and-Actions-to-Protect-Wildlife-by-Responsive-Management>)

The Kansas Wildlife Federation feels it is in the best interest of all Kansans to maintain the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism as the lead agency in conservation and natural resource planning, particularly as it pertains to the protection of sensitive species, critical habitat designation, and permit reviews.

It is unfortunate that local governments can't follow simple regulations to protect critical habitats of threatened and endangered species in Kansas. Their response is to undermine wildlife conservation measures in Kansas.

We therefore ask you to **oppose** the passage of SB 268.

Thank you for considering our concerns.



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Kansas Wildlife Federation