

Approved: Carl Dean Holmes  
Date 4-29-95

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carl Holmes on March 13, 1995 in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Kline - Excused

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department  
Shirley Wilds, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Sharon Patnode - KS Wildlife and Parks  
John Strickland - KS Wildlife and Parks

Others attending: See attached list

The Chair announced two bills will be worked in Committee tomorrow. Also, he reviewed the schedule for the week, reminding the Committee of a possible lengthy meeting upon adjournment of the House on Friday.

**Sharon Patnode.** Ms. Patnode reported on the two performance audits done on the Wildlife and Parks Department, as was requested by the Legislative Post Audit Committee.

One performance audit report concentrates on assessing the Department's compliance with certain federal requirements related to fish and wildlife programs. This report was prompted due to findings by the federal auditors that the Department may have improperly diverted funds during fiscal years 1989 through 1992. Areas of study in the charge were:

1. Did the Department of Wildlife and Parks divert hunting and fishing license fees to unallowed purposes and, if so, how much was diverted?
2. Did the Department comply with the federal requirements for minimum annual funding of fisheries?
3. Did the Department have adequate financial management practices?

The other performance audit report focused on reviewing issues relating to the financial management, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. In brief, the issues addressed were:

1. Has the Department of Wildlife and Parks established adequate and appropriate financial-management practices related to the State parks and fish and game activities?
2. Have the potential savings and efficiencies from merging the Park and Resources Authority and the Fish and Game Commission been achieved?
3. Are the primary missions, goals, and objectives of the State's parks and fish and game areas being met and, if not, how can those operations be improved?
4. How can the Department be structured more efficiently?

Both of the above reports include several recommendations for the Department of Wildlife and Parks, including correcting their financial management problems.

The reader can procure copies of these reports from the Division of Post Audit, Wildlife and Parks Department, or is invited to peruse the information in the office of Chairperson Holmes.

**John Strickler.** Mr. Strickler commented that in his view the audit is a positive step in starting to rectify the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, Room 526-S Statehouse, at 3:30 p.m.. on March 13, 1995.

situation at the Department. He said he is committed as the Acting Secretary to continue to explore ways to correct and improve some of the existing problems, utilizing the findings in the reports. He added that the future Secretary will most assuredly be dedicated to that end as well. Chairperson Holmes inquired of Mr. Strickler if he believed there were actions that could be considered by the Legislature to aid in bringing the Department into better management, both structurally and financially. Mr. Strickler responded that although the Department is experiencing "real" problems, he believes everyone involved is willing to work toward workable solutions. He said that since the majority of the problems seem to exist through management channels, there is no legislative avenue to help in that process.

The Chair referred to copies of correspondence in his possession between the previous and present Attorney Generals' offices regarding the diversion of funds. He inquired of Mr. Strickler if the same staff remains in place that was involved in that diversion and, if so, has there been any disciplinary action taken. Additionally, can the same thing continue to happen in the Department's present state. Mr. Strickler said that the key decision makers are gone, but it is his contention that from the beginning this was not a situation where there was ever the mentality of anyone who deliberately set out to divert any funds. Instead, he suggested it was poor management, and those in management positions at that time are now gone.

Referring to some of the seemingly extravagant outlays of money (for \$108 thousand bathrooms and \$240 thousand shower houses at Hillsdale Reservoir; \$40 thousand ticket booths; \$60 thousand shelter houses etc.), the Chair inquired if those expenditures have a direct relationship to the diversions. Mr. Strickler said that those were capital improvement items totally separate, but also that certainly the Department is "scaling down" such improvements.

At the request of a Committee member and the Chair, Mr. Strickler said a Department Land Acquisition Report will be forthcoming for the record. ( NOTE: This document was furnished for the record in time to be included in these minutes.) (See Attachment #1).

Vice Chairperson Doug Lawrence announced that upon adjournment the Subcommittee on **SCR 1604** would have a brief meeting.

Upon completion of its business, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 1995.





## DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE &amp; PARKS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

900 SW Jackson St., Suite 502 / Topeka, Kansas 66612 - 1233  
(913) 296-2281 / FAX (913) 296-6953

## LAND ACQUISITION REPORT

BY THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND PARKS

JANUARY 9, 1994

K.S.A. 32-844 requires the Department to submit a land acquisition report to the Legislature at the beginning of each session. The report covers a calendar year period. Senate Substitute for H.B. 2538 (Omnibus Bill) requires the Department to submit a similar report at the beginning of the session covering the FY 94 and FY 95 time period. This submitted report covers calendar year 1993 and 1994 and is intended to satisfy both statutory requirements.

1993

The Department accepted a donation of 1,360 acres in Montgomery County near the town of Havana. The tract is located in sections 11-14 and 23, T33S, R13E. The property is locally, and popularly, known as the "Buffalo Ranch." State funds were not used to acquire the property, and the property will remain on the county tax rolls. Provisions have been made with a private foundation for operations and maintenance costs and capital improvements on the property. This was the only real estate transactions that occurred during 1993.

1994

McPherson County - 71 acres located in the NE/4 of Sec. 28, T21S, R4W were purchased at the appraised value of \$37,317. The property will remain on the county tax rolls. The purchase is part of the McPherson Wetlands Project.

Sumner County - 160 acres located in the NW/4 of Sec. 15, T33S, R2W were purchased at the appraised value of \$53,000. The property will remain on the county tax rolls. The purchase is part of the Slate Creek Wetlands Project.

Ford County - 160 acres located in the SE/4 of Sec. 18, T26S, R22W were purchased at the appraised value of \$79,500. The property will remain on the county tax rolls. The purchase is part of the Playa Wetlands Project.

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Energy & Natural Resources  
Attachment #1

Ford County - 40 acres located in the NE/4 of Sec. 13, T26S, R23W were purchased at the appraised value of \$14,400. The property will remain on the county tax rolls. The purchase is part of the Playa Wetlands Project.

Osage County - 52.75 acres located in the SW/4 of Sec. 7, T16S, R16E and 6.81 acres located in the SE/4 of Sec. 12, T16S, R15E were purchased for \$20,846. The appraised value was \$21,250. The property adjoins Clinton Reservoir and will be used for wildlife and recreational purposes. The property will remain on the county tax rolls.

Franklin, Anderson and Allen Counties - A 50.2 mile stretch of railroad line from Ottawa to Iola was railbanked and the property was transferred to the Department to operate and manage as a recreational trail. This property will be a linear park and park lands have not been placed on the county tax rolls.

Ford County - An offer to purchase at the appraised value of \$25,600 has been extended to 80 acres located in the SE/4 of Sec. 26, T25S, R23W. The property would remain on the county tax rolls. The property would be part of the Playa Wetlands Project.

Ford County - An offer to purchase at the appraised value has been extended to approximately 40 acres located in the SW/4 of Sec. 26, T25S, R23W. Appraised value is \$13,000, but exact value cannot be determined until exact acreage is determined. The property would remain on the county tax rolls. The property would be part of the Playa Wetlands Project.

Sedgwick and Reno Counties - 150.8 acres of federally owned land at Cheney Reservoir has been approved by General Service Administration for transfer to the Department. The transfer will be accomplished by quitclaim deed and that deed has not been received as of this date. The land is located in Sec. 5, T27S, R4W and Secs. 32 and 33, T26S, R4W. The property adjoins Cheney Reservoir and will be used for wildlife and recreational purposes. The property would be added to the county tax rolls.