

Approved: Carl Dean Holmes
Date 2/13/96

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carl Holmes at 3:37 p.m. on January 24, 1996, in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes
Marcia Ayres, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Darrell Montei, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Holmes opened the meeting by announcing that there will be substantial changes in next week's agenda. Retail wheeling scheduled for next Monday will be postponed a few days. The Environmental Task Force that worked over the summer will present their findings on Monday, January 29, instead.

Representative Clay Aurand announced the sub-committee on **HB 2613** and **2614** will meet tomorrow at 7:30 a.m. in Room 527-S.

Hearing on HB 2622: Maximum fees authorized for use of state parks and other areas

Darrell Montei. Mr. Montei testified regarding **HB 2622**. (Attachment #1) He also distributed and referred to a brochure titled "Why Am I Paying More?" A Fee Increase for Kansas State Parks published by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Questions and discussion followed. Some questions were answered by Jerry Hover of the Department of Wildlife and Parks who conducted a park patron survey. Mr. Hover will provide copies of the survey to the Committee.

The hearing was closed and the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 1996.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: January 24, 1996

NAME	REPRESENTING
Tom Brund	Allen & Assoc.
Dane Holthaus	Western Resources Inc
Bill Caven	KARC / Sierra
Michelle Ystesson	Kitsap Public Forest Group
Duane Watermark	Division of the Forest
Darrell Moutei	KDWP
JERRY Hoover	KDWP
Dele L. Zimbley	KDA



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H.B. 2622

Testimony Presented To: House Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Provided By: Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks

January 24, 1996

H.B. 2622 establishes a statutory list of the various park permits and other park issues of the Department and establishes maximum fees for those permits and other issues. The maximum fees are set at the same amounts that are currently in effect as set by regulation. Numerous specific provisions which relate to the various permits and other issues, and which are currently established by regulation, are included in the bill. A provision in the bill would prevent the implementation of any new fees except those specifically authorized by the bill.

A statutory listing of the various park permits and other park related issues provides uniformity with how other Department issues are statutorily structured. The same is true of the establishment of maximums for the various permits and other issues. Those maximums form a limit within which the Department, through Commission regulatory action, can adjust fees to maintain revenues.

Setting the maximums at the current fee levels effectively negates the Department's and the Commission's fiscal management authority and responsibility. In response to inadequate fee revenues and an unsuccessful legislative effort during the 1994 Session to adjust fee sources and amounts, fees for certain park permits and other park issues were increased effective January 1, 1996. While still not adequate to address over-all park needs, the increases will provide short-term revenues necessary to meet minimum park operation and maintenance levels.

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Attachment 1

Park funding has been about evenly split between the Park Fee Fund and the State General Fund. Efforts to place more emphasis on the "user pay" concept have occurred, and the efforts are partially in response to legislative encouragement. That user pay concept has resulted in higher fees for those people who use the parks. While not always universally accepted, the most recent fee increases were set after park patron surveys, comparisons with other states, and several public hearings were conducted. Surveys showed support for fee increases in order to fund improved operation and maintenance. Comparisons with averages throughout the nation indicate the Kansas fees are commensurate with comparable fees for similar permits.

The provision limiting fees to only those contained in the bill will restrict the Department's and Commission's ability to address alternative permit approaches. One example under consideration involves differential fees for various types of campgrounds, such as improved versus primitive sites.

The Department does not oppose a general listing of the various park permits and other park issues nor does the Department oppose the establishment of maximums for those items listed. However, the maximums should be high enough to allow the Department and the Commission sufficient financial management flexibility. The authority to also consider other regulatory issues and attendant fees should be continued.