

MINUTES OF THE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Senator Robert Tyson at 8:34 a.m. on February 20, 2003 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

Members present: Senator Schmidt, Senator Tyson, Senator Taddiken, Senator Umbarger, Senator Huelskamp, Senator Corbin, Senator Lee

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research
Lisa Montgomery, Revisor of Statutes
Shannon Stone, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Roger Wells, Quail Unlimited National Habitat Coordinator
Barth Crouch, Regional Biologist, Pheasants Forever
Steve Swaffar, Director of Natural Resources, Farm Bureau
Dustin Mullins, Constituent, Clay Center
Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association
Ken Corbit, President, Kansas Board of Hunting Association
Mike Hayden, Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Others attending: See attached guest list

Hearing on Senate Bill 221

An overview of **SB 221** was given by staff, Raney Gilliland. A fiscal note for the bill was provided by the Division of the Budget. ([Attachment 1](#))

Roger Wells of Quail Unlimited, gave a PowerPoint presentation covering a plan for the recovery of the Northern Bobwhite. The study, which was concluded in March 2002 by the Southeast Quail Study Group, reported a composite population decline of 65.8% nationwide among Northern Bobwhites since 1980. Even though Kansas averaged the smallest decline with only a 1.6% population reduction, southwestern Kansas quails declined by 51%. The study concluded with the goal of restoring Northern Bobwhite populations to 1980 densities on remaining improvable habitats within a 25 year period. Mr. Wells provided information on habitable environments for the birds and listed a number of recommended practices to accomplish the goal in the state of Kansas. ([Attachment 2](#))

Speaking on behalf of his organization, Pheasants Forever, Barth Crouch shared that he supported **SB 221** because it aided the ongoing efforts of KDWP's Walk-In Hunting Access Program (WIHA) and it helped landowners enhance and restore habitats on private lands. ([Attachment 3](#))

Steve Swaffar of Kansas Farm Bureau acknowledged that upland game populations have declined significantly over the last 10 years due to conversion of rangeland to cool season grasses and lack of vegetative diversity on Conservation Reserve Program lands. The Bureau shared their policy statement regarding funding for upland game populations and lent their support to the bill. They requested clarification on questions concerning public access to private land and articulated their opposition to use of tax and fee revenues for the acquisition of private land. ([Attachment 4](#))

Constituent, Dustin Mullin from Clay Center shared his beliefs as to why **SB 221** was a good idea for Kansas hunters. He believes Kansas needs to be pro-active in protecting our sport, our environment and our species. Mr. Mullins believed **SB 221** to be a step in the right direction. He went on to recommend that a larger percentage (proposed was a 50/50 split) of fee funds be used for habitat improvement and requested the Committee consider reducing the \$10 fee to a \$5 or \$6 fee. ([Attachment 5](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE at 8:30 a.m. on February 20, 2003 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

Kansas Livestock Association Sr. Vice President, Mike Beam said the organization's members believe quality habitat, increased access for hunters and economic incentives to landowner to provide hunting and access to private land are needed. They saw **SB 221** as positively addressing these needs. (Attachment 6)

Ken Corbet of the Kansas Sport Hunting Association (KSHA) stated that KSHA supports the general intent of **SB 221** but had a few suggestions to make. Among those recommendations:

- Establish a maximum cost of \$5.00 for the stamp
- Ensure that monies from the stamp be used only to increase habitat on private property
- Improve the quality of public access grounds before increasing the quantity
- Consider a pilot project for the release of pheasants in a targeted area

(Attachment 7)

Secretary Mike Hayden of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks gave testimony in opposition to **SB 221**. While the Secretary was pleased that the bill addressed the issue of habitat loss, he did not see the bill as addressing the problem of public access needs for hunters, neither did the Department believe the bill would provide the necessary stimulus for the declining bird populations. Because the bill specifically stated that no private property could be purchased using the fund, the Department also saw the bill as too restrictive. (Attachment 8)

Questions, answers and comments on the subjects of: walk-in-hunting areas, South Dakota wildlife and game, multiple year leases, and public access on private property followed testimony.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

GUEST LIST

DATE: 2/20/03

NAME	REPRESENTING
Whitney Damron	KS Sport Hunting Assn.
Mary Jane Stattelman	KGFA/ KARA
Steve Swaffar	Ks Farm Bureau
Barth Crouch	Pheasants Forever
Roger wells	Quail Unlimited
Ken Corbet	Kansas Sport Hunting Assn
Justin Holshy	Propane Marketers Assn of KS
Woody Mow	Ks. App Prod. Assn
Robin Jenuison	Ks Sport Hunting Assn
JoAnn Habutzel	Northern Flint Hills Audubon

KANSAS

DIVISION OF THE BUDGET
DUANE A. GOOSSEN, DIRECTOR

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

February 20, 2003

The Honorable Robert Tyson, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Statehouse, Room 128-S
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Senator Tyson:

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note for SB 221 by Senate Committee on Natural Resources

In accordance with KSA 75-3715a, the following fiscal note concerning SB 221 is respectfully submitted to your committee.

SB 221 would require that individuals who purchase a license to hunt upland game birds also purchase an upland game bird restoration stamp. The cost of the stamp would be \$10 and all receipts would be deposited in the newly created Upland Game Bird Restoration Fee Fund, which would be administered by the Department of Wildlife and Parks. One-half of the monies in this fund would be spent on increasing public access to private land. The other half would be used to increase upland game bird habitat on private property. The bill specifically states that the Upland Game Bird Restoration Fee Fund could not be used to finance the purchase of private land.

Estimated State Fiscal Effect				
	FY 2003 SGF	FY 2003 All Funds	FY 2004 SGF	FY 2004 All Funds
Revenue	--	--	--	\$1,300,000
Expenditure	--	--	--	--
FTE Pos.	--	--	--	--

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Attachment 1-1*

According to the Department of Wildlife and Parks, SB 221 would increase state revenues by \$1.3 million in FY 2004. This estimate is based on information received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and on hunting license receipts from calendar year 2001. Any fiscal effect resulting from the passage of SB 221 is not reflected in *The FY 2004 Governor's Budget Report*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duane A. Goossen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

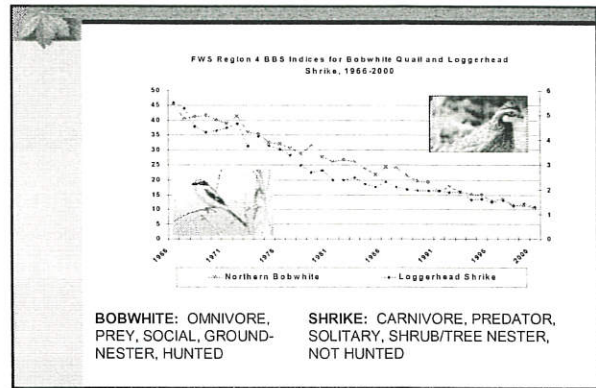
Duane A. Goossen
Director of the Budget

cc: Dick Koerth, W&P

NORTHERN BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

A PLAN FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE
NORTHERN BOBWHITE

SOUTHEAST QUAIL STUDY GROUP
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MARCH 2002



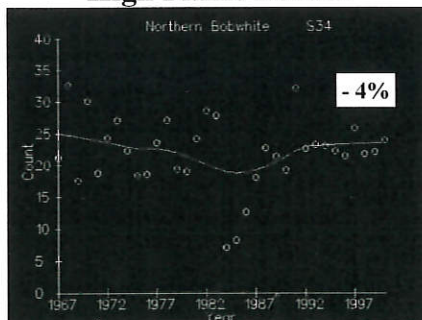
STATUS OF THE NORTHERN BOBWHITE

- U.S. BREEDING POPULATION
 - 1980: 19,619,000 BIRDS
 - 1999: 6,714,000 BIRDS
- DECLINE OF 65.8%
 - ANNUAL RATE OF DECLINE: 3.8%
1982-99

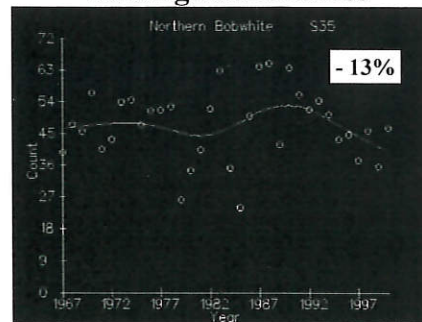
BOBWHITE HARVEST (1980 - 1999)

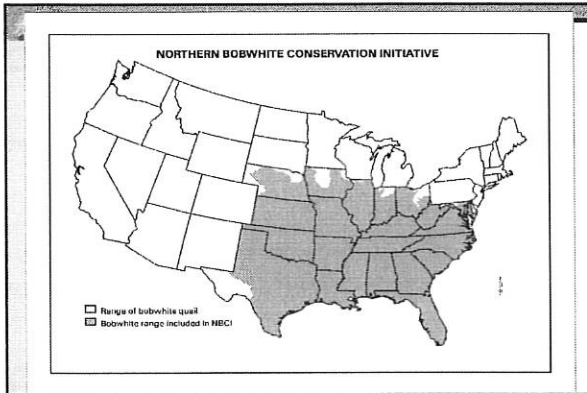
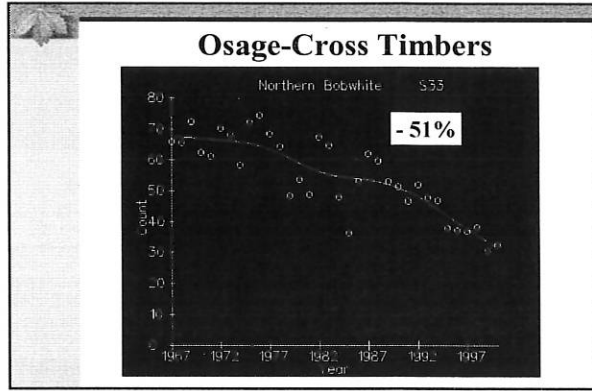
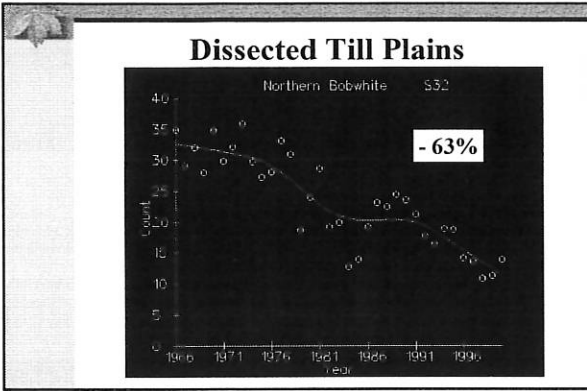
- DOWN 2/3 RANGE-WIDE
 - MISSISSIPPI: - 92.6%
 - SOUTH CAROLINA: - 90.9%
 - LOUISIANA: - 90.9%
 - KANSAS: - 1.6%

High Plains Border



Rolling Red Prairies





GOAL

RESTORE NORTHERN BOBWHITE POPULATIONS TO 1980 DENSITIES ON REMAINING IMPROVABLE HABITATS.

STABILIZE POPULATIONS IN 5-10 YEARS
ACHIEVE GOAL IN 20-25 YEARS

LAND-USE TYPES (ACRES X 1000) SUITABLE FOR ENHANCING BOBWHITE POPULATIONS IN KANSAS.

Cropland	Pasture / Hay	Rangeland	CRP	Improvable Acres
30,509	4,286	15,705	2,839	54,618

POPULATION OBJECTIVES (COVEYS TO BE ADDED) IN KANSAS.

Shortgrass Prairie	Central Mixed Grass Prairie	Eastern Tallgrass Prairie	Kansas Total
6,200	21,200	92,200	119,600

KANSAS OBJECTIVES

Practice	Coveys
Develop center pivot irrigation corners, CRP and rangelands on 640,000 acres in the west.	5,300
Improve 212,000 acres of CRP in central KS by strip disking, burning, legume seeding, etc.	21,200
Improve range management, convert fescue pastures to NWSG and add CRP NWSG on 853,000 acres in the east.	83,700
Convert 46,000 acres of fescue CRP to NWSG CRP in southeast KS annually.	8,500
Total – 1.751 million acres impacted	118,700

- RECOMMENDED PRACTICES TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL IN KANSAS**
- Encourage enrollment in Continuous Conservation Reserve practices such as grassed terraces, cross-wind trap strips, riparian buffers, filter strips.
 - On existing CRP acres encourage use of strip disking, legume seeding, shrub planting, prescribed burning and food plot planting.
 - Conversion of cool season (fescue) CRP acres and pastures to native warm season grasses and forbs.
 - Improve existing shelterbelts, windbreaks, hedgerows and other woody cover.

- OBSTACLES TO BE OVERCOME**
- Lack of knowledge among landowners and sportsmen about what to do on their land.
 - Lack of time or incentive on the part of private landowners.
 - Lack of suitable specialized equipment (burning tools, NWSG drills, tree planters, etc.)
 - Need for experienced help and/or fear to undertake some needed practices such as prescribed burning.
 - Expense involved in habitat improvements.

- WHAT'S NEEDED TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES**
- Demonstration tours, workshops, videos, internet information, pamphlets and 1 on 1 contact.
 - Cost-share assistance for certain practices such as conversion of cool season pastures to NWSG.
 - Financial incentives either as cash payments or demonstration of income potential of hunting opportunity. (Involve KS Sport Hunting Assn.)
 - Acquisition of specialized equipment for loan or rent.
 - "Habitat Management Teams" on hand to help.

- ENCOURAGING FINDINGS**
- PRIMARY LAND USE WOULD BE ALTERED ON ONLY 2.8% OF THE IMPROVABLE ACRES
 - THE 2002 FARM BILL PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES
 - MANY PRACTICES CAN BENEFIT PRODUCERS' INCOME

KEY PLAYERS

- LANDOWNERS
- STATE WILDLIFE AGENCIES
- QUAIL UNLIMITED & OTHER GROUPS
- PARTNERS IN FLIGHT – SONGBIRD INITIATIVE
- FARM SERVICE AGENCY
- NATURAL RESOURCES CONS. SERVICE
- PRIVATE, PUBLIC ENTERPRISES



<http://seqsg.qu.org/seqsg/index.cfm>



Testimony of Pheasants Forever on SB 221,
Before the Senate Natural Resources Committee,
on February 20, 2003

By Barth Crouch, Regional Wildlife Biologist,
205 S Santa Fe, Salina, KS 67401

Senator Tyson and distinguished members of the Natural Resources Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the 34 local Pheasants Forever Chapters in Kansas and the approximately 5,000 Kansas members of the organization. Pheasants Forever is very aware of the needs of our wildlife resources in the state and of the needs of the caretakers of our land, the Farmers and Ranchers of Kansas. We have always supported the idea of landowners, sportsmen and state government working together to care for the natural resources with which our state has been blessed.

As an organization nationally, we have supported the concept of habitat programs paid for by the sportsmen and women who enjoy those resources. The very first act of Pheasants Forever after being founded in 1982 was to help pass a Pheasant habitat stamp in Minnesota.

In that context, we support the aim of SB221, as I understand it. My understanding is that it would be a source of more funding from the upland bird hunters of Kansas to aid the ongoing efforts of KDWP's Walk-In Hunting Access Program and to support the joint efforts of KDWP and groups like Pheasants Forever chapters in helping private landowners with habitat enhancement and restoration on private lands across our state. I applaud Senator Tyson and the Committee for bringing this bill up for consideration.

Having said that, I would be remiss if I didn't also let you know that Pheasants Forever has also supported giving a full tool box to the departments of state government entrusted with the care of their state's natural resources. Pheasants

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Forever Chapters in several states have purchased, from private landowners, parcels of good wildlife land that were then conveyed to their state agency responsible for wildlife to hold for the citizens of the state. These lands are used to propagate wildlife, serve as examples of how to manage for certain sustainable wildlife species, and to continue the American heritage of Public Hunting for all the people.

We are in support of SB221 as part of the wildlife conservation toolbox that KS Wildlife & Parks needs to properly carry out their charge of conserving the wildlife resources of Kansas. We also feel that KDWP needs a full toolbox, including funding to acquire from willing sellers, by both long-term easements and fee title acquisition, the right to preserve unique natural resources for Kansans. They should also have adequate funding to properly manage those lands to the best condition possible. We also support the right of private landowners who want to insure the integrity of their lifelong work as stewards of the land to have the opportunity to see their efforts be protected for the future by making their own choice as to who they sell their land.

We are very happy to have upland birds be selected as a focus for extra funding from the fees paid by the sportsmen and women of Kansas. We hope that the rest of the members of the Kansas legislature agree and pass this bill and that the governor signs it into law. I also have to say that there are other wildlife and fisheries resources that need help in Kansas and would urge you to give Kansas Wildlife & Parks all the tools they need to do their job.

Thank you again for this opportunity.



Kansas Farm Bureau

2627 KFB Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66503-8508 • 785.587.6000 • Fax 785.587.6914 • www.kfb.org
800 S.W. Jackson, Suite 817, Topeka, Kansas 66612 • 785.234.4535 • Fax 785.234.0278

PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

Senate Natural Resources Committee

RE: SB 221- relating to conservation stamps

**February 20, 2003
Topeka, Kansas**

**Presented by:
Steve M. Swaffar, Director
Natural Resources**

Chairman Tyson and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 221 creating a conservation stamp for upland bird habitat restoration. I am Steve Swaffar, Director of Natural Resources for the Kansas Farm Bureau. Kansas Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization that develops policy through the input of our 105 county organizations and the more than 41,000 farmer and rancher members across the State.

Kansans have a rich heritage of upland bird hunting. Family traditions have been built on the time spent together hunting upland game. However, that heritage has suffered in the last 10 years as upland game populations have declined significantly. Despite the best efforts of state and federal conservation programs and agencies, population trends indicate that numbers continue to decline. One of the causes for these declines is loss of quality habitat for pheasant and quail populations. Conversion of rangeland to cool season grasses, lack of vegetative diversity on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and less than optimal climatic conditions have all had detrimental impacts on pheasant and quail populations.

Farmers and ranchers hope to maintain their family traditions as upland bird hunters, but as importantly, they now have a vested economic interest in the State's hunting industry. As the farm economy has worsened, farmers and ranchers have used hunting opportunities as a small source of income to help make ends meet. As bird populations have declined, fewer farmers have had the opportunity to benefit economically from hunts. Clearly, enhancing habitat and increasing the number of upland birds will provide greater opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

Kansas Farm Bureau members are concerned about the current and future enhancement and funding for upland game populations and other natural resources in the state. Our members created the following policy statement that reflects that concern:

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Since the protection of natural resources is vital to all Kansans, and important for future generations of Kansans, we support creating a dedicated source of funding, expanding cost-share programs, creating tax incentives and establishing a state revolving loan fund for resource protection. A program that would provide additional support to protect and enhance natural resources must ensure farmers, ranchers and rural residents are treated fairly and that property rights are protected.

SB 221 creates the Upland Game Bird Restoration Fee fund through the sale of a stamp to upland bird hunters, similar to the stamp that already exists for waterfowl hunters. Fifty percent of this fee fund is for improvement to upland bird habitat on private lands and 50% is to be used to increase public access on private land. We support the use of these monies for a habitat improvement incentive program for private landowners. However, we raise the question whether a landowner must then make that improved habitat accessible to the public? We believe it is not the intent of the bill to make access to those areas mandatory, but we request the committee consider clarifying that point in the bill.

We understand the desire for the general public to access private property for recreational purposes. However, we do not support the State assuming permanent ownership of more private land. Kansas Farm Bureau policy articulates this point, ***"We oppose the use of tax and fee revenues for the acquisition of any private land."*** SB 221 states no funds shall be expended from the upland bird restoration fee fund to purchase private land. We encourage the committee to steadfastly support and defend this provision of the bill. We believe voluntary, long-term leases and conservation easements are a much better tool for allowing access to the public and benefiting landowners. Additionally, a greater number of acres can be made accessible to the public through leases than through purchases. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today.

Kansas Farm Bureau represents grassroots agriculture. Established in 1919, this non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry.

S.B. 221
Senate Natural Resources Committee
Proponent Testimony
By: Dustin W. Mullin

I would first like to thank you for the time you have given me to speak to you this morning on behalf of this bill. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to do so.

I think it is appropriate to let you know that this is an issue which I have changed my position on. When I first heard rumors of more taxes to be placed on hunters or hunting, my initial reaction was negative. However, after more thoughtful consideration of the issue, I now believe that this is an appropriate action to be taken and this is an appropriate time to take it.

I had originally visited with Senator Taddiken and suggested to him that if the Department of Wildlife and Parks wanted more money to support the Walk-in-Hunting program, then there should be a stamp specifically required for the use of such areas. This seems more equitable in that it would place the cost of the program on those who use it. However, since making that recommendation, I have visited with my good friend, Mr. Tymeson, at Wildlife and Parks and he has explained to me that the program receives significant funding from the federal government. Such funding would be lost if an access fee was attached to the program and therefore my proposal is not feasible. Obviously, I still think my idea is the best, but recognizing that it is not a valid option, I have had to change my thinking.

Why is S.B. 221 a good idea? First let me say that I am an avid hunter, not just of upland game, but of just about any type of wildlife hunted in this state. I think that is important to remember because it tells you that in addition to the lifetime hunting and fishing licenses that I have already purchased, each year I am spending a significant amount of additional money to purchase deer permits, turkey permits, furharvester permits, HIP stamps, and duck stamps. Now I'm asking myself why am I the proponent of a bill that will add another STAMP. The reason is simple, I love the outdoors, I love hunting, and I understand that if any of my three children

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are going to enjoy the same great outdoors in this great state, then we need to be pro-active in protecting our sport, our environment and our species. I see this bill as a necessary step in that process.

Why is walk-in-hunting or public access important? Again I think it is important for you to know that I, personally, use very little public hunting. I hunt ducks in the new wetlands areas north of Milford, and I would like to express my gratitude to each of you and the legislature as a whole for helping make all of that happen. But, apart from that, I hunted exactly one walk-in-hunting area on one occasion this year. However, I recognize that for many people it is becoming more and more difficult to gain access to areas to hunt and fish. I am amazed, and alarmed, at the amount of property that is being bought by non-farmers for the purpose of hunting. What is happening, at what to me is an alarming rate, is that land is being purchased or leased by "hunting clubs" or outfitters. The more that this happens, the less land that is available for hunting for those individuals who are not so well equipped to be able to pay the necessary money to play this new type of game. It is my fear that without pro-active measures by the state to provide additional public access, then hunting in America will go the way of the Europeans who have made it a sport that is exclusive to the wealthy. That, in my opinion, would be a most unfortunate circumstance for our children.

I have overloaded you with philosophy and background. I now want to address the specifics concerning a couple of issues in this bill.

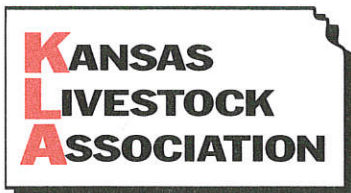
- Upland Game Stamp – I would support this bill in its current form as an upland hunting stamp. I think that it captures a majority of the people who hunt in the state. However, I think it would be a good idea to consider broadening the base of the stamp. If it is a "conservation stamp" required of all hunters it may be more equitable. I think there are people who deer hunt and turkey hunt who benefit from more public access and better habitat. You need to at least consider making them contribute to this process.
- 50/50 Split – I like where the money is going. I think the money needs to be divided in some manner. These public access areas are heavily used and therefore the habitat on these areas needs to be exceptional. It does no good to lease a bunch of land for public hunting if we can't support a species to be hunted. Personally, I

would prefer to see a larger percentage of the money placed on habitat improvement. Perhaps 60/40 or even 70/30.

- \$10.00 Fee – I've talked to several people about this issue. Is this the right amount? I don't have a good answer for that. I guess in my opinion, it is bumping up against the high side. If you go to a five or six dollar fee, I understand that it is only a difference of four or five dollars for a person, but it may help with public perception.
- Dedicated Funds – This is critically important. I, like everyone else, am taxed out. I, nor any other sportsman that I know, would support this measure as a way of funding the general budget. I don't know how this whole process works, but I have expressed my concern to Senator Taddiken over having someone see this pot of money and saying "lets go get that;" amend the statute and now these are no longer dedicated funds. The Senator has expressed to me how unlikely that is and how politically unfavorable it would be. I agree with the Senator, but I feel it is important to make that message clear.
- Prohibition on use to purchase land – I mentioned my good friend Mr. Tymeson earlier and he is indeed my good friend and a person I spend a significant amount of time hunting with each year. However, this is an issue we can't seem to see eye-to-eye on. I come from rural Kansas. This is farm country and I believe that there is no better steward of the land than a Kansas farmer. It is this foundational belief of mine that refuses to let me agree with Chris and accept the notion that the state should be buying land. I know that there is a concern, and a valid concern, that if the state leases land on a year-to-year basis, makes habitat improvements, then the farmer will lease the land to a higher paying private outfitter. However, I do not see why this concern can not be addressed by entering into longer term leases. I understand that even a ten year lease is eventually going to end, but it would at least guarantee the general public access to quality hunting for that period of time, allowing the state to get a return on its investment in habitat. I believe there are creative ways to contract around this concern without taking land ownership out of the hands of farmers.

I hope that I have been able to provide some meaningful insight into why this bill is important and why it should be passed; but also a few considerations that may need to be addressed before the bill leaves the committee.

Thank You.



Since 1894

TESTIMONY

To: The Senate Natural Resources Committee
Senator Robert Tyson, Chairman

From: Mike Beam, Sr. Vice President

Date: February 20, 2003

Subject: SB 221 - Upland Game Bird Restoration Stamp

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), formed in 1894, is a trade association representing over 6,000 members on legislative and regulatory issues. KLA members are involved in many aspects of livestock production, including cow-calf/stocker enterprises, cattle feeding, seed stock production and diversified farming operations.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Mike Beam and I am employed by the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA). Our Board of Directors recently reviewed and discussed SB 221 and took action to support this legislation.

As we understand SB 221, it would create a \$10 "upland game bird restoration stamp" that hunters of game birds would be required to purchase to validate their hunting licenses. Fifty percent of the revenue from this new stamp would be used for increasing public access on private property and the other half would be dedicated for funding upland game bird (quail, pheasants, and prairie chickens) habitat enhancements on private land. No funds could be used to purchase private land.

Pheasant, quail, and prairie chicken hunting is a sacred family-oriented heritage for most farmers, ranchers, and rural communities throughout this great state. The decline in upland game population is indeed a concern of many stakeholders and it appears there are three primary impediments to sustaining and enhancing the Kansas quail, pheasant and prairie chicken hunting tradition.

Most observers say we need more quality habitat, increased access for hunters, and economic incentives to landowners to provide the access and habitat. SB 221 is a targeted proposal to address these challenges.

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Attachment 6-1

I've given some brief thought to specific examples of how revenue from this stamp could supplement current state initiatives in the habitat and access programs.

One example would be to provide more money to add more value to the Walk-in-hunting program. I'd guess the state could lease more quality bird hunting grounds if the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks could offer more money on private property that's specifically managed for upland game.

Last summer our office was contacted by a biologist who suggested the state or federal government should provide incentive payments to owners of (Conservation Reserve Program) lands that are inter-seeded with legumes. From what I've read, the quickest way to increase pheasant numbers is to enhance native grass CRP fields with alfalfa, clover and other legume crops. If Kansas could offer an attractive incentive for this seeding it would likely pay big dividends in pheasant numbers, hunter success, and rural commerce.

In summary, we like this approach and would support the committee's effort to move SB 221 forward for consideration during the 2003 Legislative Session.



Kansas Sport Hunting Association

February 20, 2003

Senate Natural Resources Committee
SB 221

Ken Corbet, President
Hickorywood Lodge
Troy, KS 66620
785-236-6444

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Ken Corbet, president of the Kansas Sport Hunting Association. The Kansas Sport Hunting Association has 195 members. Of those 195 members 106 are hunting service providers with 70 of the 106 being involved in the operation of a controlled shooting area. The Kansas Sport Hunting Association also has 83 game bird producer members.

Vein Becker, Vice President
Becker's Game Farm
Pittsburg, KS 67444
620-335-5645

Don Montgomery, Secretary/Treasurer
Hess Hill Game Birds
Tipton, KS 67445
785-236-2666

Our controlled shooting area clients must either have a resident hunting license, nonresident hunting license, or a controlled shooting area license. Many of our customers hunt on other ground so they have a regular hunting license, but some do not. The controlled shooting area license cost the hunter \$15.50 and only gives the hunter access to a controlled shooting area. Since hunters with a controlled shooting area license are only shooting birds that we have released, they would not get the benefit from the restoration stamp envisioned in SB221. Therefore, we do not believe they should be required to have the stamp.

Even though The Sport Hunting Association members are predominantly involved in private hunts we share your concern over the numbers of native upland birds. The quality of our native bird hunting impacts us all. We are in support of the general intent of SB221 but we do have some suggestions on the specifics. It would be our recommendation that the maximum cost of the stamp be \$5.00. A \$10.00 habitat stamp on a \$18.50 license may be a little much. We would also recommend that the monies from the game bird restoration stamp only be used to increase habitat on private property rather than being used to increase public access to private lands. Kansas has a fairly significant Walk In Hunting Program and certainly some of that land would be a candidate for the habitat improvement money. We should improve the quality of our public access ground before we increase the quantity. It is better to have hunters happy with their hunting experience and wanting more than have them dissatisfied and not want to return.

Finally we would recommend that consideration be given to a pilot project releasing pheasants in targeted areas. We recognize that releasing pheasants is not a long-term solution. Additionally, with the widespread drought conditions in western Kansas a comprehensive releasing program would not be practical or cost effective. In the future however, we will have pockets that will suffer economically because of unfavorable conditions. In those areas a targeted stocking program could improve hunting. Our association has considerable expertise in all areas of raising and liberating pheasants and

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would be willing to cooperate in this endeavor. As an example the conditions in Wyoming make it impossible for them to have good pheasant habitat, so they have had a stocking program since 1937.

Mr. Chairman we appreciate Wildlife and Parks focusing attention on this issue with SB81, but SB221 is more consistent with the philosophy of the Kansas Sport Hunting Association and we appreciate the opportunity to comment today.



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SENATE BILL 221
Testimony provided to
Senate Committee on Natural Resources
February 20, 2003

This bill would require all upland game bird hunters to purchase an Upland Game Bird Restoration Stamp for a fee of up to \$10. Of the revenue generated by the stamp, one-half would be used for leasing private land for public access, and the other half would be earmarked to fund habitat programs on private land. The bill specifically states that no private property could be purchased using this fund.

The Department believes this bill contains only part of the solution in addressing the long-term public access needs of hunters as well as habitat needs of declining game species within the State. The long-term solution for these problems must be a combination of strategically placed property acquisitions, leases and conservation easements.

While the Walk-In Hunting Area (WIHA) program has helped to fill the void of available hunting areas in the State of Kansas, with over 900,000 acres enrolled this season, this successful program also has shortcomings. WIHA areas are leased short-term, offering no guarantee of future availability or long-term habitat management changes. Also, the majority of WIHA tracts are located in the western half of the state, away from the urban areas and high concentrations of outdoorsmen and women, necessitating strategically placed publicly owned acreage.

In addition, the Department is reluctant to lend support to the bill without any of the user fee funding going to habitat improvement on publicly owned and managed wildlife areas of the state, lands that will be available to the hunting constituent base in perpetuity. While the Department does support the concept of a user fee stamp that will improve the natural resources of Kansas, our agency believes that SB 221 is too restrictive and does not address the long-term needs of the sportsmen and women of Kansas.

Obtaining the right combination of public land, leased land and conservation easements in necessary areas will be a slow process but the Department urges this Committee and the Legislature to look forward into the future and include all options. Without such vision to plan for publicly owned and accessible wildlife areas, this State would not have Cheyenne Bottoms, Kirwin, Quivira, or other outdoor recreation areas as well as the aesthetic, environmental, recreational and economic benefits that accompany those lands and adjoining privately owned lands.

Senate Natural Resources Committee
Date: February 20, 2003
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