

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE WILDLIFE, PARKS AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Myers at 3:30 P.M. on February 20, 2006 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Gary Hayzlett- excused
Representative Patricia Kilpatrick- excused

Committee staff present:

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research
Lisa Montgomery, Revisor of Statutes Office
Betty Caruthers, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Yoder
Jan Alderson - Teacher, Shawnee Mission South
Jeremy Roberts - Student, Shawnee Mission South
Jerod Reddick - Student, Shawnee Mission South
Stephanie Waxman - Student, Shawnee Mission South
Representative Oharah
Representative Powell
Secretary Mike Hayden - Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks
Chris Mammoliti - President, American Fisheries Society
John Strickler
Spencer Tomb - Central Vice Chair, National Wildlife Federation
Dan Haines - Kansas Chapter of Wildlife Society

Others attending:

See attached list.

Motion by Representative Long, seconded by Representative Oharah for approval of Minutes of the House Committee on Wildlife, Parks & Tourism held on February 15, 2006 be approved.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers opened hearings on **HB 2872 - Designating little bluestem as the state grass of Kansas.**

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Yoder who introduced the project which the students of Shawnee Mission South have been working on regarding Little Blue Stem. (Attachment 1)

Chairman Myers recognized the teacher of the students, Jan Alderson. She shared some characteristics and attributes of Little Blue Stem. (Attachment 2)

Next to testify was Jeremy Roberts who pointed out that Little Blue Stem can be found all across the state. (Attachment 3)

Jerrod Reddick, next to testify, pointed out that the Little Blue Stem is essential for wildlife as it provides a source of food and shelter during the winter as well as nesting areas year round. (Attachment 4)

Stephanie Waxman testified as to the many uses of the Little Blue Stem grass such as in landscapes and rock gardens. (Attachment 5)

Questions regarding the genetic difference between Little Blue Stem and Big Blue Stem and where they are found were responded to by Spencer Tomb. Both Big Blue Stem and Little Blue Stem are found in the Flint Hills and they are both natural grasses found across the state.

Representative Mah asked if special protection is given to a named grass or just a designation. Chris Tymeson

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee at 3:30 P.M. on February 20, 2006 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

with the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks responded that it is just a designation.

Chairman Myers asked for any opponents to the bill and there were none.

Chairman Myers closed hearings on **HB 2872.**

Chairman Myers opened hearings on **HB 2930 - Removing the qualifications required for the secretary of the department of wildlife and parks.**

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Oharah. He testified that "No other Secretary level position has such a detailed job description" and was wanting to give the Governor more latitude in an appointment. (Attachment 6)

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Powell. In his testimony he shared concerns that this bill ties the hands of the Governor as to the number of candidates who might be available for the position.

Chairman Myers asked for Opponents to **HB 2930.**

Chairman Myers recognized Secretary Michael Hayden who believes that the field is becoming more and more technically based and that the requirements are needed in order to continue quality leadership. (Attachment 7)

Chairman Myers recognized Chris Mammoliti for testimony. He believes having the qualifications in place enhances the respect and communication between other professional employees. (Attachment 8)

Chairman Myers recognized John Strickler who testified as to the amount of time and effort to come up with the initial qualifications statement and he feels it is broad enough to allow flexibility to the Governor. (Attachment 9)

Chairman Myers recognized Spencer Tomb who testified as to the continued importance of the education, training and experience in this area. (Attachment 10)

Chairman Myers recognized Dan Haines whose testimony stated that the current education and experience requirements are an asset to Kansas which better equips the Secretary "to ensure the diverse and valuable natural resources are protected into the future." (Attachment 11)

Chairman Myers closed hearings on **HB 2930.**

Chairman Myers stated the Committee would work **HB 2872 - Designating little bluestem as the state grass of Kansas.** Representative Grange moved to accept **HB 2872.** Representative Long seconded.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers stated the Committee would work **HB 2795 - Nonapplication of pet animal act to hunting dogs.**

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Oharah who gave a short report then moved to table the bill. Representative Swenson seconded.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers stated the Committee would work **HB 2930 - Removing the qualifications required for the secretary of the department of wildlife and parks.**

Representative Swenson moved to table HB 2930, Representative Treaster seconded.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee at 3:30 P.M. on February 20, 2006 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers stated the Committee would work **HCR 5034 - Cheyenne Bottoms - "Migratory Bird Capital of Kansas."**

Chairman Myers called attention to a written response from the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau. (Attachment 12) Chris Tymeson had requested removing the wording "a state park" and Representative Bethell had requested the wording "southwestern" to be replaced by "central." Therefore an amendment was presented with these changes. (Attachment 13) Representative Mah moved to amend the bill to change southwestern to central and remove the words a state park on line 13. Representative Grange seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Representative Mah moved to pass HCR 5034 as the original bill with the changes in wording on line 13 as just amended. Seconded by Representative Long. Chairman called for a show of hands. Eight in favor with five opposed.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers adjourned the Committee at 4:50.

Next meeting on call of Chairman.

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5817 W. 100TH TERRACE
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS 66207
(913) 341-1028
Kevin@KevinYoder.org



STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 531-N
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7693
yoder@house.state.ks.us

KEVIN YODER
20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on HB 2872

Kevin W. Yoder
State Representative

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today for a hearing on HB 2872. This legislation is the work product of a classroom project in the Shawnee Mission School District. Students in a Freshman biology class at Shawnee Mission South have been working on this project and are excited to be here today to share with you their ideas regarding the naming of a state grass.

Now, I know that naming an item an official thing of the State of Kansas is not something to be taken lightly. The students that will appear before you today have done research on this topic and have prepared testimony for you to review. Regardless of the committee's support for this concept, I appreciate the Chairman and the committee's indulgence in taking time out of its busy schedule to hear from high school students from Overland Park.

Today we have with us three students from this class who have prepared testimony, along with Jan Alderson, the teacher. I will defer questions to them as they have prepared to convince you why Little Blue Grass should be the official grass of the State of Kansas. It is my hope, that this committee will "not let the grass grow under their feet" and debate this bill before turnaround. I can assure you that it isn't "a snake in the grass" and that it should not be, "put out to grass".

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
Kansas House of Representatives
February 20, 2006

Jan Alderson

Chairman Myers and members of the Committee on Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, my name is Jan Alderson. I am a science teacher at Shawnee Mission South High. My students and I are grateful for the opportunity to submit this proposal to you and to appear before you to address the proposal to establish a state grass through the State Grass Bill: HB2872. My students are excited to watch how this legislative process takes place.

I understand that I am to keep this brief so will submit a two-page document using primarily a list format for easy reading. My students and I do not come before you as experts on grasses, instead, found that during a series of lectures given by me to my students covering some of the flora and fauna of Kansas, that Kansas has many state symbols such as as state flower and state tree, but there is no state grass. Because Kansas is a grassland state, we feel that it is critical to establish a state grass.

Following a wide variety of considerations, ultimately the grass we selected is the Little Blue Stem grass or *Schizachyrium scoparium* sometime called *Andropogon scoparius*. We were hoping to bring you a sample of this grass, however; it is in a dormant phase currently.

The following are some of the characteristics and attributes of the Little Blue Stem as well as other reasons why this would be an excellent choice.

Some important information:

1. Establishing a state grass would be important to Kansas, a prairie state, bringing positive considerations of this state which has some of the largest pockets of virgin prairie in the United States. This rich history would be more fully recognized through this effort. The grassland ecosystem was the largest continuous ecosystem in the US before urban development. This relative new ecosystem is one of the most diverse, most complicated ecosystems in the world surpassed only by the rainforest of Brazil in the diversity of its organisms. We should be proud of our grassland "roots."
2. This native grass is found throughout the state of Kansas within the short, middle, and tall grass ecosystems and would represent the entire state.
3. *Schizachyrium scopium* is a beautiful grass all-year round. The richness in color is surpassed by any no other Kansas grass. It is blue green during its growing season and red-orange in the fall and dormant stages. Because of its beauty and hardiness, it is also becoming a preferred grass by homeowners. Adding to the color, it is a good companion grass to many of the most beautiful, native wild flowers.

4. It is an extremely hardy grass with Prairie Cord grass the only native Kansas grass which is hardier (but no as colorful). Little Blue Stem will grow in any type of soil except boggy soil (few areas in Kansas). It will tolerate high soil salinity or alkaline conditions.

5. It is drought resistant. Most of the prairie grass biomass is found underground, thus withstanding extremes in weather. Its complexity, and rich diversity allows it to survive adversity.

6. It is one of the most commonly observed native grasses found along roadsides, thereby, familiar to a wide range of travelers.

7. The seeds are consumed by small mammals and waterfowl. This grass is found in bunches providing important habitat and nesting sites for birds and small mammals as well as livestock grazing (and haying) and foraging by deer and antelope. Some expert state that deer don't prefer this grass which may be a good thing within the areas where deer have become pests. *Scoparium* resists trampling. The stem and growth from previous years remain standing where it weathers to create mulch.

We sincerely appreciate all those who have made this effort possible and who have become involved in this project. Special thanks to Joan Leavens, Educational Director of the Prairie Center; Representative Kevin Yoder, District 20; Valerie Wright, Director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station; and Marci Penner, Director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation and author of The Kansas Guidebook for explorers.

Submitted most humbly,

Jan Alderson, Science Teacher
Shawnee Mission South High
Shawnee Mission School District
soalders@smsd.org
913-993-7551
5800 West 107th
Overland Park, Kansas 66207



Jeremy Roberts - State Grass jksoccer07@yahoo.com

The little blue stem may be found all across the state of Kansas. Although there are other populous plants in Kansas like the Big Blue Stem and the Buffalo grass, the big blue stem is only found in eastern Kansas and the buffalo grass is only found in western Kansas. The little blue stem can be found all across the state. The Kansas Department of Transportation uses the little blue stem in their roadside seed mix. Prairie Passage, which is a program that plants native grasses along highway I-35 uses the grass and helps promote tourism all throughout the Midwest. Some prairie tourist destinations in Kansas are the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve and the Konza Prairie. The Konza Prairie is a program with Kansas State University and the Tallgrass Prairie Reserve is a prairie partnership with the National Parks Service.

Bibliography

"Our Mission." Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. 2005. National Parks Service. 19 Feb. 2006 <<http://www.parktrust.org/zbar.html>>.

Van Slyke, Tom. "Location and Habitats." Konza Prairie Biological Station. Kansas State University. 19 Feb. 2006 <<http://www.k-state.edu/konza/>>.

Little Bluestem

I believe that we should make the Little Bluestem our state grass, because it is essential for wildlife. Numerous birds and small mammals utilize the dried stems for cover, and for nesting materials. Many butterflies utilize Little Bluestem as a host plant. Animals such as deer, antelope, and small mammals use this as a main source of food. Animals such as cows, and other domesticated livestock use this for grazing. A very important attribute of this grass is that it won't die during the winter, so this makes an excellent source of food and shelter during the cold winter months. Many smaller animals use this grass for nesting and covering, and it is great for quail. Many sources, such as Quail Unlimited believe that the decrease in quail population has derived from the loss of habitat. Many landowners are taking out our native grasses, like little bluestem, and replacing them with foreign grasses like fescue, which can also be poisonous to smaller animals. Quail are unable to use these grasses for foraging or nesting. Quail have always been an ecological barometer, indicating a healthy ecological community, and are a favorite of landowners and hunters. I believe that by making Little Bluestem our state grass, it will remind our fellow Kansans the importance of keeping our native habitat, and how essential it is for the future of Kansas Wildlife.



"Quail Story." Quail Unlimited. Quail Unlimited. 19 Feb. 2006
<http://www.quail.org/content/quail_story/quail_story.cfm>.

"Tall Fescue." 05 May 2005. 19 Feb. 2006
<<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/loar1.htm>>.

Jerrold Reddick
jreddick@everestkc.net

Stephanie Waxman

The Little Bluestem is a native ornamental grass used in landscape settings and rock gardens, and often used in combination with prairie plants, forage grasses and silage. Encouraging planting of native plants is environmentally sound. Because of its growth habit and the wide range of soils on which it thrives, Little Bluestem has great value for erosion control. It also does not require watering or fertilizing because it is native and is suitable for use in mixtures for vegetation of abandoned cultivated lands. This grass is a bunch grass, is very showy and attractive for gardens throughout the seasons. It can be used in rain gardens to collect water runoff. Little Bluestem is approved for use in seed mixtures developed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for use in the establishment/inter-seeding of native rangelands in the short, mixed, and tall grass prairie regions of Kansas.

Resources

1. Terry Conway
Resource Conservationist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Salina, Kansas
2. "How to build your own Rain Garden" pamphlet
3. Mrs. Joan Leavens
Blue Ridge Water Association

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
2/20/06
Attachment 5

Stephanie Waxman
soccerstar1990@sbcglobal.net

Re: HB 2872
February 20, 2006

Conway, Terry - Salina, KS [terry.conway@ks.usda.gov]

Little Bluestem - Adaptation / Suitability for Use in Kansas

Per our phone conversation on 2/17/06 regarding the distribution and use of little bluestem;

Little bluestem is considered to be a dominant grass species component of the tall and mixed grass prairies and as a subdominant component of the short grass prairie in Kansas. Little bluestem is approved for use in seed mixtures developed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for use in the establishment / interseeding of native rangelands in the short, mixed, and tall grass prairie regions of Kansas.

Terry Conway
Resource Conservationist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Salina, Kansas

STATE OF KANSAS

LYNNE OHARAH
REPRESENTATIVE, FOURTH DISTRICT

HOME ADDRESS:
2120 95TH STREET
UNIONTOWN, KANSAS 66779

OFFICE ADDRESS:
STATE CAPITOL, SUITE 427-S
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1504
(785) 296-7655



HOUSE OF
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TESTIMONY ON HB 2930
February 20, 2006

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

HB 2930 seeks to remove the appointment criteria from the qualifying statement of the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks, and leaves the appointment up to the discretion of the Governor.

The Secretary of Wildlife qualifier, contained in Statute 32-901, states "The secretary shall be fully qualified by education, training and experience in wildlife, parks or natural resources, or a related field, and shall have a demonstrated executive and administrative ability to discharge the duties of the office of secretary."

No other Secretary level position has such a detailed job description. The Secretary of Agriculture states that "The secretary shall have a demonstrated executive and administrative ability to discharge the duties of the office of secretary." The Secretary of Transportation has a very limited description and also states that requirements are a limiting factor. The Secretary of Revenue and the Secretary of Human Resources have no qualifier's appointment.

Every one of the above-mentioned positions are highly visible, demanding and take a high level of executive ability. I feel that the elected Governor, being the highest elected official in the State, has the ability to identify key individuals and should have the latitude to appoint any person to positions under the Governor's authority. Restricting and disqualifying citizens that the Governor may feel would be the best candidate is not in the best interest of the State.

With that Mr. Chairman, I will stand for questions.

KANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

**Testimony on HB 2930 relating to the Educational Requirements of the Secretary
To
House Committee on Wildlife, Parks and Tourism**

**By J. Michael Hayden
Secretary
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks**

February 20, 2006

House Bill 2930 would amend K.S.A. 32-801 to strike any educational, training, and experience requirements for the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks. The provisions of this bill would be effective on July 1, 2006. **The Department is opposed to the provisions contained in this bill.**

Since the statutory merger of the old Fish and Game Commission and the Parks Authority in 1987, K.S.A. 32-801 required the Secretary of the newly created Department of Wildlife and Parks to have education, training and experience in wildlife, parks, natural resources, or a relate field. Although that was the first time the requirements were set in statute, the Director of the Fish and Game Commission met those same standards for a number of years prior to the creation of the KDWP.

The Department feels very strongly that the director or secretary of any technically based government agency should possess knowledge of that particular field, in this case management of the state's natural resources. Removing such requirements from the statutes simply lessens the quality of leadership the Department would have in the future. The Department respectfully requests the Committee to oppose this bill.

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
2/20/06
Attachment 7



KANSAS CHAPTER AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

Chris Mammoliti

To: Don Meyers, Chairperson
House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee

Committee Members: Judy Morrison (*Vice-chairperson*), Virginia Beamer, John Grange, Gary Hayzlett, Mitch Holmes, Patricia Kilpatrick, Lynne Oharah, Clark Shultz, Dale Swenson, Shari Weber, Geraldine Flaharty (*Ranking Minority Member*), Broderick Henderson, Margaret Long, Ann Mah, Candy Ruff, and Mark Treaster.

From: Executive Committee, Kansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
President – Chris Mammoliti, Watershed Institute, Inc.
President-Elect – Mark Eberle, Fort Hays State University
Past-President – Kristen Hase, National Park Service

Re: HB 2930—Proposal to delete the requirement that the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks “*shall be fully qualified by education, training and experience in wildlife, parks, or natural resources, or a related field, and shall have a demonstrated executive and administrative ability to discharge the duties of the office of secretary.*”

As an interested party in the conservation and management of the natural resources of the state of Kansas for the benefit of all Kansans, the Kansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, a formally constituted subunit of the American Fisheries Society, respectfully submits its opposition to the repeal of the qualifications clause proposed in HB 2930 regarding the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks as currently stipulated in K.S.A. 2005 Supp. 32-801 (b).

Certainly it is desirable that a cabinet secretary or any administrative officer of state government should have “a demonstrated executive and administrative ability”. In addition, there are several reasons why it is desirable that the Secretary should have knowledge of the activities and underlying principles of natural resource management.

A Secretary of Wildlife and Parks who is knowledgeable about natural resources can best lead an agency comprised of professionals having an education and experience in natural resource conservation and who use increasingly sophisticated techniques to manage these resources for the benefit of Kansas citizens and guests. As in any leadership role, the ability of the Secretary to sustain the confidence and morale of these employees is enhanced if the Secretary has a similar background of education and experience as the people within the agency.

A Secretary of Wildlife and Parks who is knowledgeable about natural resources also enhances communication between the agency and the governor, the legislature, the Wildlife and Parks Commission, and other units of state government. The Secretary must be able to serve as an effective liaison that can understand and convey clear information



KANSAS CHAPTER AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

from the professionals employed by the agency to the people in the various governing bodies so they can all work cooperatively to manage the natural resources of Kansas for the greatest benefit of its citizens.

A Secretary of Wildlife and Parks who is knowledgeable about natural resources also enhances communication between the agency and nongovernmental groups interested in hunting, fishing, bird watching, or the many other forms of recreation, as well as other stakeholders in our natural resources. These communications take the form of both formal and informal presentations by the Secretary to members of the various groups, and a Secretary is best able to convey information important to these groups and to address their concerns with more understanding if the Secretary has natural resource experience.

Kansas has been able to hire people with an education and experience in natural resources to serve as Secretary of Wildlife and Parks who have also served as administrators at the national level. Past Secretary Steve Williams became Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2002 and became President of the nonprofit Wildlife Management Institute in 2005. Among several positions in government, current Secretary Mike Hayden has served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks and as President and CEO of the nonprofit American Sportfishing Association. The ability to attract high-quality applicants reflects the positive reputation KDWP—and the Secretary position—enjoy across the country. This positive reputation is based on the professionalism of the agency's employees and of the Secretary, on whom we place the reasonable expectation outlined in the statute for a person experienced in administrative skills and having an education or experience in natural resources. We respectfully request that proposal HB 2930 to repeal the statutory qualifications for the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks as currently stated in K.S.A. 2005 Supp. 32-801 (b) be rejected and that the current language be retained.

In providing this testimony, the Kansas Chapter has the full support of the American Fisheries Society and its North Central Division. Founded in 1870, the 9,000 member American Fisheries Society is the oldest and largest professional society representing fisheries scientists. The Society serves to promote and strengthen the field's professional standards by encouraging a comprehensive education and continuing on-the-job training for fisheries scientists. The Society and its North Central Division lend their support because the value of applicable education and experience in natural resource leadership is widely recognized and respected. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Mammoliti".

Chris Mammoliti, President

JOHN K. STRICKLER
1523 University Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502-3447
Phone: 785/565-9731
Fax: 785/532-3305
jstrickl@oznet.ksu.edu

February 20, 2006

TO: House Committee on Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
Representative Don Myers, Chair

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 2930

I am testifying in opposition to HB 2930 which would eliminate any qualifications for the position of Secretary of Wildlife and Parks.

By way of background, I served as Acting Secretary in 1987 when the Department of Wildlife and Parks was created by Governor Mike Hayden through an Executive Reorganization Order that combined the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and the Kansas Park Resources Authority and raised it to cabinet level status. One of my responsibilities was to lead a national search for a permanent Secretary. After a permanent Secretary was hired, I served as the Governor's Special Assistant on Environment and Natural Resources for two years. In that capacity, I was involved with the process of total recodification of statutes related to the new Department.

A great deal of thought went into the statement of qualifications for the Secretary. While there were some concerns among the constituency of the old Kansas Fish and Game Commission about the possible "politicization" of the agency by moving it to the Cabinet level, there was general acceptance of the change because of problems that had developed with the Fish and Game Commission and the Director that led to general dissatisfaction with the organizational situation at that time. The intent with the qualifications statement for the Secretary addressed some of these concerns because it assured that there would be some basic requirements for the agency head. The qualifications statement was written to be broad enough to allow flexibility to the Governor in filling the position while still assuring the Department's constituency that some reasonable basic requirements would be met.

At the request of Governor Bill Graves, I again served as Acting Secretary of Wildlife and Parks and again led a national search for a permanent Secretary that resulted in hiring Steve Williams who later moved on to serve as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In both searches I was involved in, the only instructions I received from Governors Hayden and Graves were to do as broad a search as possible and find the best individual we could who met the basic qualifications. At no time was I ever asked about any individual's political affiliation by either Governor. Using the broad qualifications requirements, we were able to recruit an outstanding group of candidates from within and outside the state in both searches.

I see no reason why this proposed change in the Secretary qualifications is needed, and to eliminate them would constitute a breach of faith with the constituents of the Department that was made at the time the Department was created. Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on this proposed legislation, and I would be glad to respond to any questions.

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION



Spencer Tomb

The voice of outdoor Kansas

February 20, 2006

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2930

Mr. Chariman and Members of the Committee: Good Afternoon, my name is Spencer Tomb, I am from Manhattan. I am a past president of the Kansas Wildlife Federation and currently serve as the Central Vice Chair of the National Wildlife Federation with responsibility for Kansas and eighteen other states in the middle of the continent.

When I was on the board of the Kansas Wildlife Federation I also served as the Federation's principal volunteer lobbyist from 1985-1995. I chaired a committee of hunters and anglers who read, dissected and discussed every word of Governor Hayden's reorganization order that formed the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. We continued to meet when the Wildlife and Parks statutes were recodified to merge the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and the Kansas Park Resources Authority. This committee felt very strongly about two issues in the merger. First was that the funds that were derived from hunters and anglers would be kept separate and used only for wildlife and fisheries projects and salaries. The second issue was that the leadership of the agency would be in the hands of qualified professionals who were experienced, educated and trained in the broad area of natural resource management. That language was "boiler plated" into the recodification bill, HB 2005.

HB 2930 removes the language that Kansas hunters and anglers asked for as these departments were merged. We thought then and we think today that it is important for the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks to be qualified by education, training and experience in a field that will improve his or her understanding of resource conservation and management. The Secretary serves at the pleasure of the Governor and advises the Governor on natural resource issues. The Secretary also represents the State of Kansas in discussions with neighboring states and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Secretary also is expected to be able to interact with the KDWP staff, the Wildlife and Parks Commission and the public on complex natural resource issues. These functions of the Secretary cannot be done well by a person who does not have the education, training and experience in the area.

Our hunting and fishing license and permit fees are the primary sources of funds for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Kansas hunters and anglers have high expectations for the use of our fees. We expect the department to be administered and staffed by professionals. We want the decisions made in Topeka and Pratt to be based on science rather than what said in the barbershop or read on the pages of Field and Stream or Outdoor Life. We urge you to defeat HB 2930 in the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony for the Kansas Wildlife Federation. I will be happy to answer your questions.

P. O. Box 771282 ♦ Wichita, KS 66277-1282 ♦ (316) 214-3001 kswildlife.org

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
2/20/06
Attachment 10

POSITION STATEMENT: OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 2930

Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society 20 February 2006

The Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society (KCTWS) opposes House Bill 2930, and strongly recommends that the current educational and experience qualifications for the Secretary of Wildlife and Parks be maintained in K.S.A. 32-801. KCTWS position is that a Secretary of Wildlife and Parks must possess these skills, in conjunction with good administrative capabilities, to ensure the wise conservation and use into the future of the natural resources of Kansas.

The Kansas Chapter is a state-level chapter of The Wildlife Society, which is the primary scientific organization focused on research, conservation, and management of wildlife in North America. The KCTWS membership includes a wide array of professional wildlife biologists, ecologists, and natural resource managers employed in Kansas by state and federal agencies, NGOs, private industry, and colleges and universities, as well as students and private citizens. KCTWS members are concerned with the future of our state, and feel that decisions concerning natural resources be based on the principles, concepts, and science of natural resource management.

The Secretary directs the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), which is responsible for the wise stewardship of the wildlife resources of Kansas, including the enjoyment and use by its citizens. The wildlife resources in Kansas also support an ever-growing tourism demand by non-Kansas interests. A recent International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies report estimated wildlife recreation value to Kansas at \$591 million during 2001. The KDWP, which manages the resources and the public using them, is a respected agency nationwide. It is comprised of highly motivated professionals from many disciplines. A Secretary's knowledge provided by the current education and experience requirements are tools needed to direct and guide such an agency, ensuring continued high quality natural resources and the benefits they provide.

A Secretary of Wildlife and Parks also is an integral partner with other state and federal agencies responsible for all aspects of a healthy environment in Kansas. A Secretary interacts with leaders of the State Conservation Commission, Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and others chartered to protect and manage the State's natural resources. Interaction with federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corp of Engineers, and the U.S Department of Agriculture enhances Kansas' natural resources and brings federal funding into the State. The current educational and experience requirements are necessary to equip a Secretary with the ability to address the diverse issues involved with such interactions.

It is also the KCTWS's position that the public's confidence in the government's ability to manage the wildlife resources in Kansas is paramount. The Secretary, as the leader of KDWP, represents the agency to the public. Weakening the Secretary's qualifications erodes the public's confidence in the KDWP's ability to manage the natural resources so important to Kansas. This ability to protect and manage natural resources hinges on the integrity and public perception of science-based management decisions. A Secretary possessing the current education and experience requirements will maintain the highest confidence of residents and nonresidents alike that Kansas' natural resources are being managed to their highest potential.

In summary, the KCTWS position is that the current educational and experience requirements for a Secretary of Wildlife and Parks is an asset for Kansas, and that possessing such skills better equips a Secretary to ensure the diverse and valuable natural resources are protected into the future. Consequently, House Bill 2930 should not be passed.



HEART OF KANSAS - CONVENTION & VISITORS' BUREAU

February 20, 2006

TO: Members of the House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee

FROM: Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB) encourages support of HCR 5034 designating **Cheyenne Bottoms** as the *Migratory Bird Capital of Kansas*. Cheyenne Bottoms is one of the State's most important natural assets. State support and recognition of Cheyenne Bottoms through this designation acknowledges its importance as a natural wonder and increases potential expansion in the area.

Strong cooperation between Barton County and the small communities surrounding Cheyenne Bottoms (including Hoisington) has earned both state and national scenic byways. Additionally Barton County and the City of Great Bend have partnered with Wildlife and Parks to help make the Wetlands Interpretive Center at Cheyenne Bottoms a reality. In our view, singling out one of the communities in Barton County as proposed would be counter productive and would not serve to enhance future cooperation for important Cheyenne Bottoms projects.

Thank you.

Cris Collier
Executive Director

House Concurrent Resolution No. 5034

By Committee on Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

1-26

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
2/20/06
Attachment 13

9 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION designating Cheyenne Bottoms the
10 "Migratory Bird Capital of Kansas".

Hoisington, Kansas

11
12 WHEREAS, Cheyenne Bottoms is a 41,000 acre natural land sink in
13 southwestern Kansas of which nearly 20,000 acres is a state park named
14 the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area. Mentioned in writings of Zebulon
15 Pike in 1806 as he explored the southern part of the recent Louisiana
16 purchase and discovered by surveyors of the Sante Fe Trail in 1825, the
17 area was observed in 1860 by Lt. J.E.B. Stuart, later of civil war fame, to
18 be surrounded by myriads of buffalo. Although subject to alternating per-
19 iods of drought and flood, the area was frequented by prodigious numbers
20 of waterfowl and was the site of heavy market shooting during the period
21 from 1890 to 1905; and

central

22 WHEREAS, Federal legislation passed in 1937 placing an excise tax
23 on sporting arms and ammunition helped state wildlife agencies to ac-
24 quire wildlife habitat. The state of Kansas commenced acquiring land in
25 the bottoms in 1942 and by 1949 had completed purchasing the bulk of
26 the acreage making up the reserve. Several projects to build dams, dikes
27 and pump stations were then started and continued through 1990. Today
28 the Cheyenne Bottoms provides diverse marsh habitat for waterfowl and
29 shorebirds during the migrational seasons and insures needed food, water
30 and resting places; and

31 WHEREAS, The spring and fall migration periods provide the best
32 opportunities to view large numbers of different species at the bottoms.
33 Waterfowl and sand cranes begin arriving in February. Wading birds, such
34 as herons and egrets, arrive in April and May. Nesting and creation of
35 new families occurs in late May. The fall migration may begin as early as
36 July and is at its peak during September and October. Whooping cranes
37 may stop in the area in October and November and eagles are present
38 during the winter months: Now, therefore,

39 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas,*
40 *the Senate concurring therein:* That this jewel of conservation which
41 ~~maintains numberless amounts of wildlife and is the source of enjoyment~~
42 ~~for many birders and sportsmen is properly designated as the "Migratory~~
43 ~~Bird Capital of Kansas"; and~~

That Hoisington, Kansas, is the only community in the natural
land sink basin in central Kansas and that having been
established in 1886 with much of its history connected with
Cheyenne Bottoms that Hoisington, Kansas, be named as the
"Migratory Bird Capital of Kansas"

- 1 *Be it further resolved:* That the secretary of state provide an enrolled
- 2 copy of this resolution to the secretary of the Kansas department of wild-
- 3 life and parks.