

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 March 6, 2006 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Judy Morrison- excused
Representative Broderick Henderson- excused
Representative Margaret Long- excused
Representative L. Candy Ruff- excused
Representative Shari Weber- 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:

Jamie Corkhill, Social & Rehabilitation Services
Chris Tymeson, KS Department of Wildlife & Parks
Cindy D'Ercole, KS Action for Children
Representative Mike Burgess
Dr. Barbara Burgess
Representative Lana Gordon
Vern Osborne
Richard Forester, President, Topeka Convention & Visitor's Bureau

Others attending:

See attached list.

Motion by Representative Oharah, seconded by Representative Flaharty for approval of the Minutes of the House Committee on Wildlife, Parks & Tourism held on February 20, 2006 be approved.

Motion carried.

Chairman Myers opened hearings on **SB 459 - If person owes arrearages on child support, secretary of wildlife and parks not issue license, permit, stamp or tag to person.**

Chairman Myers recognized Jamie Corkhill who presented a proposal regarding recreational licenses and **SB 459**. (Attachment 1) With this program a vendor enters identifying information about a purchaser in a computer. If their name is a match to one in the system they are denied a license until such time as the support debt is paid.

Chairman Myers recognized Chris Tymeson who stated that the Department of Wildlife & Parks is supportive of **SB 456**. He also stated that this bill would preclude the issuance of lifetime licenses but the Department has agreed to a compromise and would restrict lifetime licenses if the bill passes. Chairman Myers asked Chris Tymeson to explain further as to how the system would work. (Attachment 2)

Chairman Myers recognized Cindy D'Ercole who testified that Kansas has not been doing a very good job with enforcing child support and feels **SB 459** as part of a package of bills will help to enforce unpaid support orders which in turn will benefit the children of Kansas. (Attachment 3)

In response to questioning by Representative Kilpatrick, Chris Tymeson stated that this Senate bill is in follow up to statutory authority passed by Congress in 1996 for child support enforcement.

Concerns were brought up about use of social security numbers for the license and also what might the response be to a vendor if someone is turned down for a license. It was also noted that this bill is restricted to child support court cases within the SRS caseload. Both SRS and the State Department of Wildlife & Parks

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee at 3:30 P.M. on March 6, 2006 in Room 241-N of the Capitol.

are wanting to see this bill pass in order to follow up on the Federal mandates and not risk any loss of Federal aide.

Chairman Myers asked for any opponents to the bill. Seeing none the chairman closed the hearings on **SB 459**.

Chairman Myers opened testimony regarding the renaming of state park #24 in Shawnee County. He recognized Representative Mike Burgess for testimony. Representative Burgess presented a proposal to name state park #24 as the Oregon Trail Kaw River State Park. He shared the historical significance of the name, the educational opportunities, and the importance of using the word river in the name. (Attachment 4)

Representative Burgess then introduced the next conferee, his mother, Dr. Barbara Burgess. She presented history as well as personal knowledge of the Oregon Trail and the attraction it can bring to the area by naming the park Oregon Trail Kaw River. Assets include the area along the river as well as the possibility of hiking trails from the Governor's mansion to the Kansas History Center. (Attachments 5 & 6)

Chairman Myers next recognized Representative Lana Gordon who again stressed the importance of the word "river" in the name of the park to attract visitors to the area. She suggested that other important figures could be noted in the park by use of narratives and monuments. (Attachment 7)

Chairman Myers recognized Verne Osborn who testified to the historical importance of the name and the attraction that would be to people outside of Topeka. While naming the park the Menninger park may have significance for Topekans he did not believe it would hold much significance for people outside the Topeka borders. (Attachment 8)

Chairman Myers recognized Richard Forester who testified but did not present any written testimony. He spoke to the importance of the inclusion of the word river or water to the name of the park. He also believes that the fact of the park having access to water is an attractor for the community and believed the signage should have the words river access on it.

Chris Tymeson spoke to the fact that there could be a boat ramp built as well as protective railroad crossings in the future. A representative of the Oregon Trail Association stated that volunteers would be willing to work on upkeep of the park.

Written testimony only was supplied to the Committee by Jennie Chinn, Executive Director of the Kansas Historical Society. (Attachment 9)

Chairman Myers recognized Representative Mah who expressed concern about not hearing of the interest in naming the park Oregon Trail Kaw River State Park until very recently. Representatives Nancy Kirk and Harold Lane had been working on putting together the name of C.F. Menninger State Park but they were not able to appear to testify at this hearing. Six members of the Shawnee County delegation presented the bill with the name C.F. Menninger State Park and therefore Representative Mah expressed concern over not hearing of this other idea at an earlier date.

Chairman Myers stated that the Committee could hear continued testimony regarding this on Wednesday, March 8 or an amendment could be presented if that is appropriate.

Chairman Myers adjourned the Committee at 4:45.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 8, 2006.

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Gary Daniels, Secretary

House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee
March 6, 2006

SB - 459 Recreational Licenses

Gary Daniels, Secretary
Jamie Corkhill, Policy Attorney
785 - 296 - 3271

For additional information contact:
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House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
3/6/06
Attachment 1

Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Gary Daniels, Secretary

House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee
March 6, 2006

SB 459- Recreational Licenses

Chairman Myers and members of the Committee, I am Jamie Corkhill, Policy Attorney with SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about SB 459 Recreational Licenses and the Kansas Child Support Enforcement Program (CSE).

Lack of child support income is an ongoing challenge for many families today. Of the 131,000 cases served by the CSE Program, 54 percent of children receive the financial support to which they are entitled. That performance, although meaningful to many Kansas families, places Kansas 37th in state rankings. Within our own federal region, Kansas lags far behind Nebraska (#7) and Iowa (#16).

SB 459 is part of a package of changes intended to improve Kansas' efforts to efficiently and effectively enforce support orders whenever they go unpaid. This measure brings Kansas into compliance with Federal statute enacted in 1996 and builds upon the automation project recently undertaken by the Department of Wildlife and Parks. As part of their new licencing procedures, the vendor enters identifying information about the purchaser in the Kansas Outdoor Automated Licensing System. Under this bill, that information would be matched by the computer against SRS' list of child support debtors. If the purchaser is not matched, the transaction continues normally. If there is a match no license is issued until the support debt is paid in full or an arrangement is made for regular payments. In cooperation with the Department of Wildlife and Parks, SRS will supply printed materials for people who are denied a license, explaining why the license was denied and what options are available.

Our goal is not to deny people recreational licenses. Rather, our goal is to encourage people to avoid this sanction by paying their support obligations on time and in full. Outreach and voluntary compliance will make this measure succeed as a tool for increasing child support payments. We know parents value their children's financial well-being more than their own recreational activities; we just want to make sure that their actions match those values.

Kansas has a long history of enacting progressive laws to protect and provide for our children, reflecting the high value we as a people place on our most vulnerable citizens. This measure builds on that history and affirms that children continue to hold that priority today.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I will be glad to stand for questions.

Note: Attached is a CSE Fact Sheet that provides background information about the Child Support Enforcement Program and its recent achievements.

2005 CSE Fact Sheet

- The Kansas Child Support Enforcement Program, operated under Title IV-D of the federal social security act, has two purposes: (1) to ease the taxpayers' burden for public assistance to children not being supported by both parents, and (2) to promote financial stability for the appalling number of children living in or near poverty. By pursuing these goals CSE helps families become and remain independent of public assistance, which in turn allows the State to extend its finite resources to more families in need. CSE's work helps custodial parents expand their children's opportunities to grow, learn, and develop their abilities to the fullest.
- The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services is the designated Title IV-D (CSE) agency for the State of Kansas. CSE operates within the Integrated Service Delivery Division of SRS. The CSE caseload consists of approximately 131,000 TAF and Non-TAF cases serving over a quarter million people.
- The Kansas CSE Program is a multifaceted operation that combines state, county, judicial, and private resources to meet detailed federal requirements concerning all phases of operation. CSE services include:
 - Locating absent parents and their assets;
 - Establishing parentage, as needed;
 - Establishing support orders, including medical coverage;
 - Ensuring regular payment of support through income withholding orders;
 - Enforcing past due support through administrative action, such as interception of federal and state tax refunds;
 - Enforcing past due support through court action, such as garnishment of bank accounts; and
 - Modifying ongoing support orders, as needed, to reflect the child's current needs and the parent's ability to provide support.
- CSE services are provided across Kansas by full and part-time SRS staff and by more than 20 contractors. CSE's enforcement contractors are selected through competitive procurement and presently include a county prosecutor, several district court trustees, and a variety of private sector vendors. Other private contractors include the vendor operating the Kansas Payment Center, a paternity testing laboratory, credit bureaus, and process servers.

- CSE cases fall into two broad categories:
 - Temporary Assistance to Families (TAF). When a child's custodian applies for TAF (Temporary Assistance to Families), that child's support rights are assigned to the State. If CSE collects support in a TAF case, it is used to reimburse the state and federal governments for public assistance provided to the child's family. Any collections beyond the claim for reimbursement are passed on to the family. If the TAF eligibility worker determines that monthly child support collections for a family are regularly exceeding the monthly TAF grant, the TAF cash grant may be ended. When that happens, appropriate transitional services and supports for the family continue, including CSE services.
 - Non-TAF. Federal law requires the CSE Program to provide services to any family, regardless of income, that applies for support enforcement services. CSE is also required to provide Non-TAF services when a family stops receiving cash TAF benefits, at the custodial parent's discretion. The idea is to prevent the need for TAF and other forms of public assistance by insuring reliable child support income, and to provide equal treatment under the law for all children. It is important to note that nearly 2 out of 3 Kansas Non-TAF families formerly received public assistance.

The CSE Non-TAF caseload also includes families receiving only Child Care Assistance from SRS. When CSE successfully collects support in such a case, current support (and any past due support that is not subject to an SRS claim for reimbursement) goes to the family. Child support income enables the family to make co-payments while eligible for Child Care Assistance and, after Child Care Assistance ends, to pay independently for child care services from the provider of their choice.

- Although SRS normally deducts a 4% cost recovery fee from Non-TAF collections, families receiving Child Care Assistance, Medicaid, or Food Assistance are all exempt from the fee. In addition, all CSE cases are automatically exempt from any district court trustee fee that might otherwise apply.
- In state fiscal year 2005, CSE's total support collections topped \$156 million, most of which was passed on to families. Altogether, more than 1.8 *billion* dollars of support have been collected for families and taxpayers since the Kansas IV-D program's inception in 1976.
- In state fiscal year 2005, CSE established over 9,800 child support obligations. The Child Support Guidelines, used to calculate all current support orders in Kansas, call for work-related child care expenses to be factored into the monthly support award, so that the parent who pays for child care will receive a fair contribution toward that expense from the other parent. Whenever appropriate, CSE also establishes a medical support order that requires the noncustodial parent to provide group health coverage for the child.

- Paternity establishment by the CSE Program also plays a vital role in SRS' mission. Children benefit from having their parentage established because it opens the avenue to cash and medical support from the second parent, assures them access to complete family medical information, and paves the way for potential inheritance and other rights. It also gives the child certainty about his or her family background, which is so important to the child's emotional development and confidence.
- Federal rules permit TAF cash assistance to be ended when current support payments regularly exceed the cash grant. Such closures provide significant advantages to the State, allowing scarce public assistance resources to be focused on the people most in need. CSE services to the former TAF family continue automatically, providing a safety net that reduces the risk of the family returning to dependence on public assistance. This is especially important for people affected by the five-year lifetime limit on TAF eligibility.

Whenever CSE secures regular child support income for a household receiving Child Care Assistance, the State also has the opportunity to stretch its limited resources to help more families -- including families who do not have the option of child support income from an absent parent. Regular, dependable child support income gives a working family greater assurance that, regardless of the ups and downs of public human services, they will be able to purchase the child care services that they need.

- In October 2000 the Kansas Payment Center (KPC), a joint venture of CSE and the Kansas Office of Judicial Administration, became Kansas' central unit for collection and disbursement of all support payments. The KPC offers a number of customer services statewide that were not feasible before 2000. Examples include 24-hour access to payment and disbursement information by phone or through the Internet, a toll-free customer service center, and direct deposit of support disbursements. Taken together, these elements enable families to monitor support payments independently and use up-to-date information for planning and managing their own household expenses.

- Historic information about the Kansas CSE Program:

	State FY 2002	State FY 2003	State FY 2004	State FY 2005
CSE cases	150,204	144,544	134,115	131,616
Total collections	\$143.1 million	\$146.8 million	\$151.7 million	\$156.3 million
State's share	\$15.3 million	\$15.7 million	\$17.2 million	\$16.8 million

KANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

**Testimony on SB 459 relating to Permit Issuance
To
Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee**

**By Christopher J. Tymeson
Chief Legal Counsel
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks**

March 6, 2006

Senate Bill No. 459 would create a new statute relating to issuances of licenses. The provisions of this bill would be effective on July 1, 2006. **The Department supports the provisions contained in the bill.**

The bill would preclude the issuance of any license permit, stamp, tag or other issue of the Department to an applicant upon request of the Secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services. The request would be made quarterly to the Department and would contain a list of individuals who owe arrearages under child support orders. Upon denial, vendors of the Department would have to provide written notice to the applicant detailing how the applicant could dispute the action. The bill also contains provisions for release of the hold on the license issuance.

Currently K.S.A. 32-930 precludes the issuance of lifetime licenses in similar fashion to this bill. When federal requirements for child support enforcement went into effect in the late 1990's, the State was required to implement procedures to restrict recreational license and permit sales. However, due to a decentralized paper licensing system utilizing local vendors, the Department opposed legislation restricting the issuance of all licenses and permits. Compliance was an impossibility at that time. As a compromise, the Department agreed to restrict lifetime licenses, which were the only centralized license issued by the Department. Now that the Department does have an automated licensing system, it is possible to comply further with the federal requirements for restricting recreational licenses and permits.

House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
3/6/06
Attachment 2

March 6, 2006

To: House Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
From: Cindy D'Ercole
Re: Senate Bill 459 – Child Support



**KANSAS
ACTION FOR
CHILDREN**

Making a difference for Kansas children.

Kansas Action for Children Inc.
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Celebrating 25 years
of child advocacy

Kansas Action for Children supports enactment of SB 459.

Kansas does not do a very good job at child support establishment and enforcement. One of the reasons that Kansas does not compare well to other states is that we have not implemented some of the administrative tools other states use to collect support arrearages. SB 459 is part of a package of bills that will give Kansas the ability to effectively enforce unpaid support orders.

Reason for child support arrearages

Although there are numerous reasons for sporadic or no child support payments, common themes emerge. There are certain child support debtors that are very difficult for the state to communicate with and even locate. These debtors include parents with a sporadic work history, who are self-employed or receive their wages in cash.

Other states have successfully found these debtors and helped families collect child support payments using this tool. Colorado has successfully implemented a similar process to SB 459.

Recreational License Sanctions

At the point of sale, Department of Wildlife and Parks can match applicants with a list of child support debtors. This capability is due to technology at the Department that electronically issues hunting licenses, permits and tags. When applying, the basic information from the applicant will be immediately matched to a list of support debtors. When there is a match, the person applying for the license will be educated about the options available. If the applicant is a support debtor, the matter must be resolved before the license, permit, or tag can be issued.

The Importance of Child Support

Child support is a critical source of support for many low- and moderate-income families. As we look at ways to support vulnerable Kansans with limited state and federal dollars, it is clear that child support is an effective and efficient support. Not only does child support potentially save children and families from experiencing poverty, but it also benefits the state economically through a reduced need to provide cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid.

At the child development level, children whose non-custodial parents pay child support have more contact with them, potentially providing the children with emotional as well as financial support. Research also indicates that

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House Committee on Wildlife, Parks
and Tourism
3/6/06
Attachment 3

children with parental contact have better grades, better test scores, fewer behavior problems, and remain in school longer.

Despite court orders, many Kansas families get sporadic or no child support. From the experience in other states, it is clear that Kansas can do a better job helping these families. SB 459 will give Kansas an effective and efficient tool that can decrease families' dependence on public assistance. I strongly encourage you to support this bill

The Importance of Child Support

If child support orders were established and followed for families needing support, the state could experience substantial savings.

Researchers have estimated that if all families who needed child support had orders in place, and those orders were fully enforced:

- cash assistance costs for families would drop 26%
- food stamp costs would drop 19%
- Medicaid costs would drop 5%

Child Support Enforcement Improves Child Well-being

There is increasing evidence that children in single-parent families who regularly receive child support do better in a variety of ways than children who do not receive such support. Research indicates that the receipt of child support appears to have a positive effect on children's achievement in school, reduces divorce rates, deters non-marital births, and that fathers who pay child support are more involved with their children.

Child Support in Kansas *A Critical Source of Support for Families*

Child support is a critical source of economic stability for families.

Kansas can help families collect child support arrearages by expanding administrative remedies to collect unpaid child support such as liens on insurance proceeds, recreational license sanctions, administrative suspension of driving privileges, and a statewide Financial Institution Data Match.

Background

Child support payments are a critical source of economic stability for low- and moderate-income families. As we look at ways to support vulnerable Kansans with limited state and federal dollars, it is clear that child support is an effective and efficient support. Not only does child support potentially save children and families from experiencing poverty, but it also benefits the state economically through a reduced need to provide cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid.

Child Support in Kansas

Kansas does not do a very good job at child support establishment and enforcement. In fact, Kansas is falling behind the national average on nearly every category according to FFY 2003 Federal Performance Measures. One of the reasons that Kansas does not compare well to other states is that we do not have a lot of the tools other states use to collect support arrearages.

Although they do require an initial investment from the state, these processes and procedures will enable the Kansas Child Support Enforcement program to help families become independent of public assistance and reduce net state expenditures for public assistance. These administrative procedures include:

- Liens on insurance proceeds
- Recreational license sanctions
- Administrative suspension of driving privileges
- A statewide Financial Institution Data Match.

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MIKE BURGESS

Proposal to name State Park 24 the Oregon Trail Kaw River Park

Chairman Myers and members of the Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Committee:

Almost all of my childhood vacations centered around one theme, the Oregon Trail. I spent three days during my first few months in a covered wagon traveling through the Flint Hills in a wagon train. I have literally walked miles and miles of the trail visiting historic sites along the trail. My dad and I had to entertain ourselves while mom attended Oregon Trail conventions and meetings. I've climbed rocks, looked at mountain passes, visited grave sites, and viewed ruts in the prairie.

There are a number of reasons I think we should name State Park 24 the Oregon Trail Kaw River Park. The following outline summarizes those reasons.

1. A name of historical significance
 - a. First state park to recognize the Oregon Trail
 - b. Would tie a number of historical sites in the Topeka area together
 - c. Proximity to one of three ferry crossings of the Kaw River
 - d. In 1843 about 1500 people composed of five different groups camped along the banks near this very spot during a two-week period, Kansa Indians, Catholic missionaries, European nobleman on a buffalo hunt, emigrants on the Oregon Trail, government soldiers and surveyors including Lt. John Fremont.
2. Ties in with promotion of territorial Kansas that other communities and some of our local entities are doing
3. Includes the word river in the park name to maximize park usage and indicate river access
4. Creates educational opportunities
 - a. Oregon trail game in school
 - b. Study flora and fauna of the trail – deer, birds, catfish and all of the plants
 - c. Life-sized learning opportunities - ferry boat, keel boat, Kansa Indian canoe made out of buffalo hide, covered wagon, etc.
 - d. Capitalize on proximity to the State Historical Center
 - e. Close proximity to Interstate 70
 - f. Opportunity to tie in the study of native Americans.
5. There are other opportunities to memorialize an individual
 - a. Room at a library to showcase collection of books
 - b. Statue, plaque or sign at the entrance to the park

In summary, this is a non-controversial option that maximizes tourism potential and educational opportunities.

In support of the proposed amendment to Senate Bill 459

State Park 24: Oregon Trail Kaw River Park

by Barbara Burgess, Ph. D. March 6, 2006

Naming Rationale

1. The name of the park should reflect what can be found at the site. Visitors will be attracted to the Oregon Trail Kaw River Park by the name and will come to the park to see where the pioneers, missionaries, Native American and hunters and trappers on the Oregon/California Trail crossed the Kaw River. Visitors can see the plants and animals found along the river and described in journals and letters written 160 years ago by travelers on the trail who caught catfish in the river, hunted game birds & ducks and deer along the river, picked wild strawberries and other berries and admired wildflowers. This is one of the few locations where lands along the river have not been changed by industrial development and by the construction of dikes and levees. This is one site where native plants and animals still exist, and this park is accessible.

2. It was the Oregon Trail travelers who put this place on the maps in the 1830s. This is an historic trail landmark, important to the history of the country and the state. Reconstructed Kansa Indian canoes, a ferry boat, and even a trader's keelboat could be displayed here. (Note: Frederick Chouteau's trading post was located up stream near Mission Creek, and the Chouteau brothers transported furs downstream to Kansas City and trade goods upstream to this trading post in the early 1800s.)

3. Hiking trails could be established in this park that offer visitors the opportunity to hike in this riverine environment all the way from the park surrounding the governor's mansion to the trails on the Kansas History Center. Modern travelers will be able to explore and hike along the south bank of the Kansas River like the travelers on the trail 160 years ago who explored this area on the south side of the river while they waited their turn to be ferried across the Kaw River.

History

In the 1830s, people began traveling to destinations in the west. They followed and developed this trail that started near the western border of Missouri and followed along the south side of the Kansas River to a river crossing in what is now Topeka. This trail followed the Kansas River valley to the Vermillion River where the trail turned north and eventually followed the Little Blue River to the Platte River. These travelers included missionaries to the Indians, government soldiers and surveyors who were mapping the newly acquired lands, trappers, traders and hunters, and people who were emigrating to Oregon or traveling to the gold fields in California. This trail became well-established in the 1840s, and thousands of people traveled west on the Oregon/California Trail in the following decades.

The Papan brothers established a ferry boat business in about 1842 located approximately between Topeka Boulevard and Kansas Avenue and transported Kansa people who lived in villages on both sides of the Kansas River across the river. Other travelers used this same ferry service to cross the river during the next decades, and Papan's Ferry put this place on the early maps. A few years later two other ferry boat services carried wagons and travelers across the Kansas River, one near the Baptist Mission on the grounds of the Kansas History Center called Smith's Ferry and the other one farther upstream at Union Town, near present day Willard. The Kansas River crossings were important landmarks on the trail. Crossing the Kansas River was mentioned in most of the journals and letters written by pioneers who traveled west on this trail, and the Kaw River crossings were identified in all the Oregon and California Trail maps and guidebooks.

In the 1990s, the Oregon/California Trail was recognized as a national historic trail and people from all over the world are retracing this trail and visiting the historic sites along the trail. The 192 miles of the trail in Kansas have been marked by signs erected by the Kansas Department of Transportation. Many communities have established local parks and sites where modern visitors can see remnants of the trail and historic sites related to travel on the trail. The Kaw River crossing is one of the most important sites on the trail, yet no Kaw River Crossing site has been established for modern travelers to visit and experience the Kansas River.



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Dr. Barbara Burgess

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Property offers trails, fishing, Kansas River access, day-use potential

It is official. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks started 2006 off by assuming ownership of a donated 76-acre tract of land that will become the state's 24th state park. A development group -- 21st Century Ad Astra, L.L.C. -- donated the property to KDWP. The donation has been pending for a couple of years, and the 2004 Kansas Legislature designated the future park as State Park 24, until a permanent name is agreed upon.

Governor Kathleen Sebelius said, "What a great opportunity for Kansans to enjoy such a beautiful park, today and for generations to come."

The land is part of the former Menninger Clinic grounds. The Clinic moved to Houston, Texas in 2003. The donated land consists of 76 acres along the Kansas River in northwest Topeka. Most of the future park property is forested and rich in wildlife.

The property has existing trails, which are accessible only through Maclennan Park, which surrounds the Governor's mansion. The plan is to improve the trail system with volunteer labor to offer hiking and biking trails to suit all levels of users. Eventually, KDWP would like to have a trail system that connects from Maclennan Park to the Kansas History Center.

The new state park may also include a boat ramp to allow access to the Kansas River. Renovation of an existing pond on the property will provide environmental education and children's fishing opportunities.

The current KDWP Region 2 office building located adjacent to the donated property will serve as the park office and trail head. The intent is for the future park to be day-use only.

-30-

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dear Chairman Myers and Committee:

I am here to testify on behalf of an amendment to SB429, renaming State Park 24, The Oregon Trail Kaw River Park. Giving this park this designation has National Historical significance; taking the area back to its roots.

While I was a member of the Topeka Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, a study was commissioned by the Board. The firm conducting the study, through their survey of visitors, found, that including “river” in the name of the park, made the area more appealing for a stop along the way. River is a word with which people easily identify. Something that would increase the number of visitors to the area; who may stop to shop, stay in hotels, eat in our restaurants, and enjoy the beauty of the area; is another reason to support this name. Then they could go home and tell others to visit-increasing tourism and economic development.

While other names have been suggested for Park 24, The Menninger Foundation, and other historical events that took place on the land, could be recognized by including narratives and monuments throughout the park. Being that the Historical Society is nearby, perhaps they might help in the creation of these.

I feel Oregon Trail Kaw River Park will attract additional revenues to our area, while describing history. I appreciate your consideration and support of this amendment.

Lana Gordon

Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism Committee

Verne Osborn

Chairman: Representative Don Myers
Vice Chairman: Representative Judy Morrison

Testimony on Amendment to Senate Bill 459

Thank you Mr. Chairman for this opportunity to testify. I also want to thank Representative Burgess for bringing this issue back on the table.

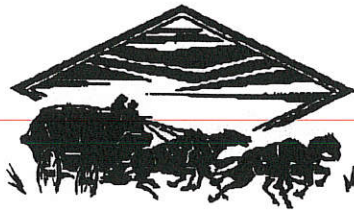
As 2003 convention chairman for the Oregon-California Trails Association, which was hosted in Manhattan, I can testify to the fact that many came from all over the United States to experience our rich trail history. They came, they saw, they enjoyed, and they were impressed. Today, I hope to encourage this Committee to build on our rich trail history by naming ^{the} ~~is~~ site the ***Oregon Trail and Kaw River Park***.

The subject property is adjacent to the Historical Museum and Kaw Mission and this area is rich in historical heritage. It seems appropriate to build on that heritage by naming the park the ***Oregon Trail and Kaw River Park***. The Oregon Trail crossed the Kansas River at least three times, and to my knowledge, none have been recognized for their historical significance. Naming it the ***Oregon Trail and Kaw River Park*** will honor the thousands of emigrants as well as the Native Americans who lived in the area and that creates another story for the site to tell. It would mean more to the State in historical value to name it for its initial use being one of the major crossings of the Oregon Trail.

We've got to be very careful in matching our historical resources and the story they have to tell with the proper historical name. We can lose a tremendous opportunity if we fail to acknowledge a site for its factual history. We can develop this historic site to educate our Kansas citizens as well as promoting this site to those travelers along I-70 who would observe the signs and be encouraged to stop. We need to consider "what does this name communicate to the general public?"

Naming it Menninger Park would have meaning in Topeka, some meaning in Kansas, but little or no meaning outside our borders or to the traveling public. It would be a nice gesture to the Menninger family; however, 50 years from now that name will be meaningless. The legacy of the Oregon Trail began in the 1840s with the movement of emigrants settling the west and will live on forever. Would naming it Menninger Park make you want to stop and see what it's all about? Or, would naming it the ***Oregon Trail and Kaw River Park*** do that?

Again, I want to encourage this Committee to give this amendment serious consideration. Thank you for your time and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Kansas State Historical Society

Jennie Chinn, Executive Director

As the executive director of the Kansas State Historical Society I am testifying neutral on the issue of naming the state park in west Topeka after the Oregon-California Trail. The Historical Society is committed to preserving and sharing the history of Kansas, but we have no role in the naming of state parks. The Kansas State Historical Society is looking forward to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks developing a recreational area just north of our property in Topeka. Both properties lie near the route of the California-Oregon Trail.

In the 1840s, before Kansas was open for settlement, the Oregon-California Trail was the only practical way to get through the western mountain ranges for families moving west. Once you left western Missouri it took four to six months to make it to the west coast. The only other way west was by sea, around South America, and the journey took an entire year.

The Oregon-California Trail served families wanting to make a better life in the West. It was a 2,000-mile journey and most of it had to be walked. Emigrants used small farm wagons to transport their supplies. When repairs were needed they either fixed the wagons themselves or waited for blacksmiths along the trail.

The Potawatomi Baptist Mission, a state historic site on the grounds of the Kansas State Historical Society, served such a role for travelers on the California-Oregon Trail. The mission was part of a movement to convert Indian children to Christianity and teach them vocational skills. Missionary schools were built on reservation lands and were usually supported by government funds as part of treaty negotiations.

Missionary Johnston Lykins, writing to the commissioner of Indian affairs in September 1849, described the site of the Potawatomi Mission.

[The mission is located] half a mile south of the Kansas [River], nine miles below Uniontown, the trading post of the [Potawatomi] nation, and one and a half miles west of the great California road from Kansas, Westport, and Independence. The station has an excellent supply of good spring water, first-rate soil, and is within reach of the necessary amount of timber. The mechanic shops consist of blacksmith and wagonmaker's shops—located one-fourth mile west of M.L. school edifice, and near the bank of the Kansas River.

Joseph E. Ware made note of the mission in his well-publicized *The Emigrants' Guide to California* in 1849. Gold-seekers and homesteaders were informed in this manual about the blacksmith's services available at the mission.

The Oregon-California Trail is an important and significant part of this country's history. Part of our interpretation at our facility in Topeka is devoted to trail history. Today many tourists travel the Oregon-California Trail looking for new and unique experiences to help them understand the trail's significant history.

No matter what name the state park is given, the Historical Society has pledged to work with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to interpret the significant interaction between people and the natural environment in Kansas. Due to the location of the Historical Society and the new state park, exploring the significance of the Oregon-California Trail through programming is a natural. Such programs can serve the needs of Kansas students, families, and tourists.