

MINUTES OF THE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Senator Robert Tyson at 8:32 a.m. on January 30, 2003 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

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

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Judy Moler, Kansas Association of Counties
J. Michael Hayden, Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Parks
Dick Koerth, Assistant Secretary of Administration, KDWP

Others attending: See attached guest list.

Upon calling the meeting to order, Chairman Tyson introduced himself and welcomed guests and conferees to the Committee Meeting.

Bills Introductions

Judy Moler, (Kansas Assoc. Of Counties) requested introduction of a bill to extend the state's authority to continue work on waste tire clean up. Senator Taddiken made a motion to introduce the bill, Senator Umbarger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Senator Huelskamp requested a bill that would limit regulation of small livestock markets. Senator Huelskamp made the motion to introduce the bill, Senator Schmidt seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Senator Huelskamp requested a bill that would bring the Kansas Animal and Health Board up-to-date through the inclusion of various organizational representatives. Senator Huelskamp made the motion to introduce the bill, Senator Taddiken seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Testimony

The Chair welcomed Secretary of Wildlife and Parks, Mike Hayden.

State Park Funding

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Mr. Hayden gave a brief overview of activities at the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks before introducing Dick Koerth, Assistant Secretary of Administration at KDWP. Mr. Koerth explained the responsibilities of the Department and reviewed state park issues related to funding. (Attachment 1) The state park budget is experiencing over \$1 million in cuts. The Department has been forced to cut back on temporary and seasonal help and has had to shut down a few campgrounds and portions of parks. State support has dropped from 36% to 22%. Conversely, park usage has risen dramatically. In an effort to raise much needed funds, KDWP has raised park fees annually for the last two years. Additionally, KDWP is requesting the elimination of the ½ price senior citizen vehicle permit (**HB 2054**). KDWP estimates increased revenues of \$80,000 from the elimination of the ½ price senior vehicle permits.

KDWP also relies heavily on inmate labor to keep up grounds in a number of parks. Senator Schmidt requested KDWP's views on expanding the number of minimum security beds to help alleviate labor costs at the Department. Secretary Hayden responded that KDWP could definitely use more minimum s

security inmate labor if it was made available.

Status of Wildlife Game Populations

The Lesser Prairie Chicken

Distinguished from the greater prairie chicken by size and regional habitat, this obscure bird occupies the sand sage areas of southwest and south central Kansas. While the bird's current status is "candidate in listing" for the federal "Threatened Species List", researchers note an increase in the number of lessers in Kansas. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is believed to have had a favorable impact on the lesser. CRP grounds provide the birds grasslands for roosting and possibly nesting.

Quail

The quail population in Kansas has steadily declined at alarming rates since 1987 and is now at a 50 year low. Researchers see long term population trends as discouraging. Mr. Hayden attributed much of the bird's decline to the landscape change, genetic isolation and the use of herbicides and pesticides.

Deer

KDWP has recently chartered a work group to develop recommendations that will guide future deer management policies. Among the recommendations from this focus group are:

1. The issuance of transferable landowner/non resident permits
2. Development of deer management goals and objectives
3. Leasing hunting rights on private land
4. Development of incentives for resident deer hunting opportunities
5. Adjustment of nonresident deer permit prices
6. Regular monitoring of deer herd health
7. Development of a permit pricing structure
8. Issuance of damage control permits

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9. Changing minimum acreage requirements
10. Changes in current guide/outfitter standards

Discussion over transferable permits, and rising/diminishing deer populations followed.

Approval of Minutes/Adjournment

Minutes from January 23 and 24 were reviewed and approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30a.m.