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HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Testimony as a Proponent, HB 2192

House Committee on Agriculture  
Kyle Hoffman, Chairman  
January 31, 2017

Chairman Hoffman, Vice Chair Thompson, Ranking minority member Carlin and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 2192 today.

This is the epitome of a simple bill. It merely adds a single word to statute, changing the name of Lake Scott State Park to Historic Lake Scott State Park. So why bother with such a small and seemingly insignificant change?

I hope to help you understand that the addition of that single word is in fact quite significant and appropriate. The park is contained in my legislative district, roughly thirty miles from my home in Lane County. I have visited the park frequently to attend youth church camps, go fishing and camping, and even compete in 10K races.

But the unique thing about the park is its history, both geologic and cultural. It is situated in a beautiful valley in a section of Kansas which is otherwise quite flat and featureless. It must have appeared as quite an oasis to native Americans and early settlers as they came upon this valley.

The park contains a natural spring which flows from the Ogallala aquifer. The park is home to the El Quartejejo ruins, the northernmost pueblo ruins ever found. It is believed that El Quartejejo was first constructed in the late 1600s by Pueblo Indians when they fled from their home in what is now New Mexico to escape political unrest. Members of both the Taos and Picuris bands were among the inhabitants of El Quartejejo, and it is believed that they were at times joined by members of the Plains Apache.

Although the only visible remains of the pueblo are the reconstructed foundation of a single seven-room structure, there is speculation that the valley may have once held several pueblo dwellings. One can also view traces of early-day irrigation canals constructed by the inhabitants

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of the pueblo. KDWPPT has plans to construct a museum and interpretive center to share this unique bit of Kansas history.

The valley which contains the park was also a frequent stopping point for the plains bands of native Americans, including Northern Cheyenne, Oglala Sioux, Pawnee, Kiowa, and others. Those bands would have used the valley as a place to camp and water during their frequent hunting expeditions on the plains of western Kansas. We are all familiar with the 1876 defeat of the U.S. troops under the leadership of General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn in Montana. Following that defeat, and several retaliatory skirmishes by U.S. troops, the Northern Cheyenne surrendered and agreed to be relocated to a reservation in Oklahoma.

That relocation did not go well. The Northern Cheyenne did not like Oklahoma and longed to return to their ancestral homelands in Montana. So, in the fall of 1878 a large group of Northern Cheyenne under the leadership of warriors Dull Knife and Little Wolf left Oklahoma, determined to return to Montana. They stopped in the valley in Scott County to camp on their way. While there, they were engaged in battle by U.S. Cavalry. They protected their women, elders, and children in a cave, then escaped under cover of darkness that night to continue their flight to Montana. That encounter marked the last battle between U.S. troops and native Americans on Kansas soil. In 2013 a symposium was held in Scott City to commemorate the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle, which is known today as The Battle of Punished Woman's Fork. Two busloads of Northern Cheyenne people traveled from Montana to attend the event. It was a moving experience to witness, as they for the first time viewed the battle site and cave where their direct ancestors had sought refuge and repelled the troops on their way back home.

I hope this bit of little-known Kansas history has convinced you that adding that single word to Kansas statutes is indeed appropriate. Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to stand for questions.