

Approved: 3-22-94
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Don Sallee at 8:00 a.m. on March 15, 1994 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present or excused:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
Don Hayward, Revisor of Statutes
Clarene Wilms, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Doug Sonntag, Assistant Secretary of Operations, Department of Wildlife and Parks
Darrell Montei, Legislative Liaison, Department of Wildlife and Parks
Jerry Hover, Director of Parks and Public Land, Department of Wildlife and Parks
Ed Augustine, President, Geary County Fish & Game Association

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Sallee advised the committee he had requested a resolution drawn concerning the Oil and Gas Industry problems in Kansas and would like to send it to Congress as a committee resolution if members wished to do so.

Committee minutes for March 8, 9 and 11 were presented for approval or correction.

HB-2797 - Wildlife and Parks; relating to certain licenses and permits

Doug Sonntag, Assistant Secretary of Operations, Department of Wildlife and Parks, appeared before the committee requesting the committee's help in their efforts to obtain financial support which would enable them to continue to serve the citizens of Kansas. Mr. Sonntag told members the Department was not requesting levies and fees on persons who do not use the wildlife and park areas but were requesting the ability to obtain financial support from those persons who use the services provided by the department in state parks and wildlife areas. The user must help pay for the service as a resource.

Darrell Montei, Legislative Liaison, Wildlife and Parks, presented testimony to the committee concerning HB-2797 stating this bill was a funding proposal to address and help solve three serious problems: (1) decreasing funding base; (2) increasing number of participants; (3) increasing operations and maintenance costs. Mr. Montei told the committee his testimony contained a synopsis of HB-2797, as well as a more detailed supplement covering the needs and proposed initiatives concerning licenses and permits. Attachment 1 He pointed out that forty-two percent of people using public lands were non-paying users such as hikers and bird watchers.

Discussion touched on the department's methods and abilities to determine whether users possessed proper permits with Mr. Montei stating that permits would be available in more places with the new system and previous enforcement methods would continue. He said individual permits would be purchased rather than a vehicle permit for state park use and hunting or fishing licenses would be necessary. Public land use areas would have similar requirements.

A member requested definition of "public lands" with Mr. Montei stating public lands are all lands operated and administered by Wildlife and Parks other than state parks. Public lands are used for hunting and fishing as well as bird watching, hiking, etc. The issue of "site specific" licenses was questioned with Mr. Montei stating such areas would be determined in conjunction with the owner of the property such as the lake at Wolf Creek, where people could hunt and fish. The funds from licenses would be used to operate and care for the area with the owner making up any deficit that occurred.

A member questioned the need for further personnel to put the new statutes into force. Mr. Montei stated they had not made provisions for more personnel; some part time help would possibly be used in the summertime, and regular employees would be making rounds, doing spot checking. Mr. Montei told members the

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, Room 423-S Statehouse, at 8:00 a.m. on March 15, 1994.

penalties would remain basically the same, therefore, it was not felt enforcement would be a major problem. Warnings could be issued for a period of time.

A member asked Mr. Montei if there were any plans for public education should the proposed changes become law. Mr. Montei replied such education would begin as soon as the department had positive statutes with which to work.

A member stated the parks need to be maintained and questioned if an alternative was available should the permit fees not be sufficient. Mr. Montei called on Jerry Hover, Director of Public Parks and Land, who stated the department would start making decisions as to which parks will be closed. He stated they were currently asking for emergency funds to allow them to open the parks this spring. Should HB-2797 not pass further plans would be made to close facilities. Decisions would be based on criteria such as the location of the park facility, how close it was to other facilities, the economic impact on the area of the state, the uses of the facility and the condition of the facility.

A member stated it was their understanding this proposal was not just because of flood damage but because of a long term situation in which the Department of Wildlife and Parks has not been appropriately funded. Declining fees have not allowed proper maintenance. Mr. Montei stated \$15 million was needed to properly repair the infrastructure. This bill attempts to provide money to do the day to day jobs. The flood helped focus on the problem. The policy of the Legislature has been to fund by fees.

A committee member asked if it would be possible for the department of Wildlife and Parks to provide the committee with numbers and amounts received from hunting and fishing licenses and vehicle permits as well as different types of fees presently collected each year.

A member questioned whether issuing warnings would not cause a drop in revenue with Mr. Montei commenting that most people, after receiving a warning will purchase a permit and warnings were not used in every case.

Ed Augustine, President, Geary County Fish and Game Association, appeared before the committee and presented testimony in opposition to HB-2797. Attachment 2 Mr. Augustine stated there had been little factual information about provisions of HB-2797 and expressed concern about those persons who wish to drive through a park on a Sunday afternoon drive having to purchase a permit. He further pointed out that in purchasing permits as non-consumptive and non-contributing visitors to wildlife areas people could conceivably be using the same area as hunters thereby producing a conflict between hunters and anti-hunters. Mr. Augustine recommended dropping the Wildlife area permit concept and substituting a provision requiring a hunting or fishing license to visit the areas. He also recommended using a hunting or fishing license to access state fishing lakes commenting that the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks receives funds based on hunting and fishing licenses, not access permits.

A member questioned Mr. Augustine about his concern of conflict between hikers and bird watchers and hunters and those fishing noting they were already allowed to use the property. Mr. Augustine stated that granted a permit to use the area would cause a conflicting philosophy with those wanting to hunt or fish the same area.

A member asked Mr. Augustine if he knew when the last raise was made on hunting and fishing licenses with the reply being it was raised from \$10 to \$13 last year.

Senator Emert made a motion to approve the minutes of March 8, 9 and 11, 1994. Senator Hardenburger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Senator Vancrum made a motion that the committee adopt a resolution to Congress expressing concern over the difficulties of the oil and gas business in Kansas. Senator Wisdom seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 a.m.
The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 1994.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

DATE March 15, 1994

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME AND ADDRESS

ORGANIZATION

Charles H. Freeman

John Bennett Osawatomie Ks

Theo Bennett Osawatomie, Ks

Lester Martin Osawatomie, Ks

Myrtle Martin Osawatomie, Ks

Phil Dooter Vassar, Ks

BARBARA DOOTOR VASSAR, Ks

A. L. Klasing Vassar, Ks.

FRONT DANCE WICHITA

Ellen Thomas Topeka Ks

E. L. Augustine Junction City, Ks

Spencer Tomb Manhattan

William C. Long Manhattan

Ralph Snyder Topeka

John Young Vassar, Ks

Joel Young Vassar

Cynthia Abbott Mayetta

Darrell Monte Pratt

Terry Flower Pratt

Doug Sonntag Pratt

John Scheirman Topeka

A.A.R.P. - Capitol City Task Force

Kansas Campers

Kansas Campers

Kansas Campers

Kansas Campers

Wheat State Campers

Wheat State Campers

Wheat State Camper

CHENBY LAKE ASSN

KANSAS CAMPERS

Gearry Co Fish & Game Assoc

Ks. Wildlife Federation

Riley County Fish & Game Assn

Ks. American Legion

Leath Shade House

A.A.R.P.

Ks. Audubon Council

KWP

KDWP

KDWP

KDOT

STATE OF KANSAS



Joan Finney
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS

Theodore D. Ensley
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H.B. 2797

Testimony Presented To: Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Provided By: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

March 15, 1994

H.B. 2797 is a funding proposal by the Department to address and help solve three serious problems:

1. decreasing funding base
2. increasing number of participants
3. increasing operations and maintenance costs.

Wildlife and outdoor recreation are important economic and quality of life assets in Kansas, but the Department cannot meet current demands placed upon many of its facilities and properties. Moreover, Kansas is unable to realize its full economic benefit from these assets because of these limitations.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks is built on a user pay concept. This is particularly true on the fish and wildlife side. Users, through license purchases and related fees and expenditures, support virtually all fish and wildlife management efforts and have since the early part of this century. Many projects and expenditures are for the benefit of all wildlife, not just for the benefit of hunters and anglers. This type of financial support by hunters and anglers will continue, but the number of license buyers is remaining steady or slightly decreasing. There is a growing number of individuals who participate and enjoy outdoor activities and wildlife, but make no financial contribution to the Departments

Senate Energy & Natural Resources
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Attachment 1

protection and management of wildlife and natural resources and facilities available for enjoyment of these resources.

State parks receive about 40% of their funding from a vehicle permit and fees associated with camping. There are costs associated with vehicles such as roads and parking areas, but the largest proportion of our expenses are associated with people and providing for their enjoyment while using a state park. Because of the type of permitting system in place and because of exemptions, revenues are not adequate to properly meet our responsibilities and provide services demanded by park users.

The funding initiatives proposed in H.B. 2797 are as follows:

State Park Use License (Section 1)

This section would remove the requirement for a vehicle permit to use state parks and replace that system with state park use license requirement for state parks. Persons under 16 years of age would not be required to obtain the license. Such a license would also be required to use rail-trails. Provisions which would allow for a short term license, such as a daily, are included.

Public Lands Use License (Section 2)

This section establishes a public lands use license required of each individual using Department lands and waters (other than state parks and rail trails). Persons under 16 years of age and persons with valid hunting, fishing or furharvesting licenses would not have to secure the use license. Provisions which would allow for a short term license, such as a daily, are included. A site specific license is also created. This would apply to special management areas brought under management by the Department after July 1, 1994. The Site Specific license would be for that area only and be required of all users 16 years of age and older. It is designed to cover costs of management with owners required to make up any difference.

The public land use license approach is partially in response to requests from individuals and organizations to implement a procedure whereby they would assist financially with costs of

operation for wildlife areas and state fishing lakes. It also recognizes the fact that about 42% of the users currently do not contribute financially to operation and maintenance costs of these areas.

One approach which was considered, but not recommended, would have required all users to purchase a hunting, fishing or furharvester license. This is not acceptable to many who are not engaged in consumptive wildlife activities. That approach may increase the number of licenses sold and as a result, yield additional federal aid revenues to the state. But, it would also require some uses to purchase a license for an activity they were not pursuing. Some are concerned that to follow an approach other than this will result in reduced fish and wildlife management and reduced emphasis on hunting and fishing...such will not be the case.

Most of the lands and waters were secured for wildlife conservation purposes, and hunting and fishing are primary activities within those purposes. It is the position of the Department that those lands and waters will be managed for fish and wildlife purposes and will continue to provide hunting and fishing recreation. Other uses will be encouraged or permitted to the extent that those uses are compatible with and contributory to the primary purposes and uses for which the lands and waters were originally secured.

Lifetime State Park and Public Lands Use Licenses (Section 3)

This section provides for lifetime state park and/or public land use licenses. These new lifetime licenses would be administered the same as is currently being done for lifetime hunting and fishing licenses.

24-Hour Resident Fishing Licenses (Section 4)

This license, although convenient to some residents, has resulted in an estimated \$230,000 annual lost revenue to the Department, as many who once bought an annual fishing license are now purchasing 24 hour fishing licenses. The 24-hour license is

primarily for nonresidents and perhaps to encourage some residents to take up fishing. However, it has resulted in a loss of annual license buyers and revenue. It is recommended that the 24-hour fishing license be made specific to nonresidents.

48-Hour Waterfowl Hunting License (Section 5)

This license was established to encourage nonresidents to hunt waterfowl in Kansas through a lower cost hunting license that was valid only for waterfowl hunting. Individuals still need all appropriate stamps. The Department only sells about 81 of these licenses per year. Due to the low number sold and the administrative costs associated with these licenses, it is recommended that the license be discontinued. It is anticipated that enough individuals will elect to purchase a regular nonresident hunting license to offset any revenue losses.

Fee Structure (Section 6)

This section amends the current fee structure of the Department to include the several license and permit proposals in H.B. 2797. Amendment items involve: state park, public land and site specific use licenses (including lifetime licenses and combinations); a nonresident 24-hour fishing license; and deletion of the 48 hour waterfowl hunting license. For several of the items, the minimum figure is deleted leaving the maximum in place.

Deposit of Public Land Use License Receipts (Section 7)

This section amends current law to specify that receipts from the sale of public land use licenses and site specific use licenses are to be deposited in the Wildlife Fee Fund.

Deposit of State Park Use License Receipts (Section 8)

This section amends current law to specify that receipts from the sale of state park use licenses are to be deposited in the Park Fee Fund. It deletes the reference to motor vehicle permits. The limitations on authorized uses of the Park Fees Fund are amended to include rail trails.

Deposit of Lifetime Public Land Use License Receipts (Section 9)

This section amends current law to specify how receipts from the sale of lifetime public land use licenses are to be deposited into the Wildlife Fee Fund and the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Deposit of Lifetime State Park Use License Receipts (Section 10)

This section creates a Park Conservation Fund and specifies how receipts from the sale of lifetime state park use licenses are to be deposited into the Park Fee Fund and the Park Conservation Fund.

Deposit of Combination and Combination Lifetime State Park and Public Land Use License Receipts (Section 11)

This section specifies how receipts from the sale of combination and combination lifetime state park and public land use license Receipts are to be deposited in the several involved funds.

Rule and Regulation Authority (Section 12)

The bill would become effective upon publication in the statute book. However, the various license requirements would not take effect until January 1, 1995. This will provide ample time to inform the public and prepare administratively to accommodate the changes. Most of the changes will require development of regulations to implement procedures and fees. This section will make it clear that authority to adopt regulations prior to January 1, 1985 exists. However, the regulations could not be effective until January 1, 1995.

The Department is charged with management of the state's fish, wildlife and parks resources and with providing associated recreational opportunities to our people and visitors to our state. These are important missions for quality of life in Kansas. They will become even more important in years to come. Kansas must address funding issues and develop secure funding sources if we are to meet current and future demands. We are asking the Legislature for help and support in this effort.

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND PARKS
FUNDING INITIATIVES

(Supplement to Testimony on H.B. 2797)
3-15-94

INTRODUCTION AND NEED

The lands, facilities, and wildlife resources managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks are among the state's most important quality-of-life features. Kansas' 24 state parks host more than 4.3 million visits by residents and non-residents annually, and the department's 71 wildlife areas and 37 state fishing lakes (termed "public lands") receive approximately 1.2 million visits each year. The department is charged with management of these areas, as well as the wildlife resources of Kansas' 82,000 square miles of private lands. Wildlife-related activities account for more than 10 million recreation days in Kansas each year, with an estimated direct economic benefit of \$542 million to the state, even without the application of standard multipliers. Growth in the demand for these opportunities is well documented nationally.

In Kansas, however, many of these features and the associated recreation and economic benefits are in jeopardy. Meager beginnings, aging equipment, recent floods, and years of deferred maintenance have yielded public lands facilities that fail to meet existing needs. They fall short of satisfying both current and potential user demands.

Wildlife resources and department programs to protect and manage them face severe threats as well. Demands for outdoor recreation are increasing markedly, while many important wildlife habitats continue to suffer losses. In Kansas, the lack of public recreation lands limits many types of outdoor activities, especially those associated with wildlife and natural areas.

This package of proposals contains two general types of initiatives -- those pertaining to state parks and those pertaining primarily to wildlife lands and resources. Each initiative addresses fiscal challenges facing the department and its constituents. Importantly, they are uniformly based on a user-pay concept. Together these initiatives present a short-term and a somewhat longer-range approach to funding issues; they are, however, independently viable. In total, they would generate an estimated additional \$956,000 annually for state parks operations and maintenance, and an estimated \$2.4 million annually for wildlife management programs, including the operation and maintenance of state fishing lakes and wildlife areas.

Following are summaries of the proposed initiatives. Further detail is provided in latter pages. The initiatives for state parks are separated from those for wildlife lands and resources in order to reflect the need to maintain resulting revenues separately in the Park Fee Fund (PFF) and the Wildlife Fee Fund (WFF), respectively.

STATE PARK SYSTEM FUNDING INITIATIVES

The development of the Kansas state park system began almost 40 years ago with Kanopolis State Park. Many park facilities are nearing the end of their normal usable service lives; and those unfortunate circumstances are exacerbated by sub-standard initial development in many cases and a long history of inadequate funding for maintenance. As a result, many parks in the system have seriously deteriorated infrastructures that are near failure. Public demand for parks remains intense, however, and evidence of increasing demand is documented. A quality state park system, which includes rails-trails in Kansas, could host an estimated 10 million visitors each year, bringing major quality-of-life and economic benefits to the state.

Presently, about 40 percent of the funding for state park operations and maintenance is generated by park user fees, with the balance appropriated annually from the State General Fund. Current user fees include daily and annual vehicle entrance permits, daily and annual camping permits, utility service fees and less significant amounts for special event services and concession contracts.

Without the benefit of new and aggressive funding initiatives, the Kansas state parks system cannot provide the services and facilities demanded by current and potential users. This will result in millions of dollars in lost economic activity to the state and further deterioration of the system, unless future General Fund appropriations are substantially increased. People with special needs, such as those who are physically challenged, will continue to experience Kansas park facilities which are inadequate and inaccessible for their use. As a first step in addressing these needs, the department proposes the following initiatives:

- 1) **Discontinue the state park motor vehicle permit system and establish an annual and daily state park use license, which would be required of all park users age 16 years and older.**
- 2) **Create a lifetime state park use license.**

PUBLIC LANDS AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FUNDING INITIATIVES

The increasing demand for wildlife-associated recreation is well documented. Kansas offers some of the nation's most unique opportunities for such experiences and reaps significant quality-of-life and economic benefits as a result.

More than 200,000 resident hunters and 39,000 non-resident hunters, for example, directly spend more than \$44 million each year in the state; and non-harvest wildlife users spend an estimated 2.25 million recreation days and more than \$22 million annually in Kansas.

With only about one percent of Kansas' land area open for public outdoor recreation, department-managed wildlife areas and state fishing lakes (public lands) receive intensive use. These areas are critical to wildlife and outdoor recreation in the state. Without them, many residents and visitors would not have opportunities to experience wild Kansas.

Kansas ranks among the top four pheasant and quail hunting states and first in the nation for prairie chicken hunting and viewing opportunities. Demands for non-harvest wildlife use and environmental education opportunities also are documented to be increasing. No corresponding new funding initiatives have been available in recent years, however. As a result, many basic and essential wildlife management programs are jeopardized, and constituent opportunities are decreasing correspondingly.

Funding for wildlife area and state fishing lake operations and maintenance is generated primarily by user fees -- sales of hunting and fishing licenses, associated federal aid reimbursements, and revenues from agricultural leases on department lands. It is important to note that people who do not hunt, fish, or harvest furbearers do not contribute financially to the management of these land and waters; yet recent survey information documents that as much as 42 percent of the use of these areas is by non-paying users.

Many of Kansas' public wildlife areas and especially state fishing lakes are in sub-standard condition. Most of the 37 state fishing lakes were constructed 30 to 60 years ago and many have failing dams and water control structures. Several require immediate and extensive repairs. Many state lakes and some wildlife areas are characterized by deteriorated roads, boat ramps, camp sites, day-use facilities, docks, and other basic infrastructure features. Without proper maintenance of these facilities, users will experience significant losses of service and recreational opportunities. The scarcity of public lands in the state demands that existing facilities be well-managed.

In addition, losses of wildlife habitats grow more severe, with urban sprawl, pollution, changing land uses, and widespread development as leading threats. This package contains the following proposed initiatives to address these critical issues:

- 1) **Require an annual and daily license for use of department wildlife lands and waters, exempting persons less than 16 years old and those who hold valid hunting, fishing and furharvesting licenses.**
- 2) **Create a lifetime license for use of all department wildlife lands and waters.**
- 3) **Eliminate the 24-hour resident fishing license and 48-hour waterfowl hunting license.**

4) **Create a site specific use license.**

DETAILED DISCUSSION: STATE PARKS SYSTEM FUNDING INITIATIVES

INDIVIDUAL PARK USER LICENSE

The individual park use license system would entail the elimination of the current vehicle permitting system, which currently offers both annual and daily permits. Under the proposed system, annual, daily and lifetime state park use licenses would be offered.

Park revenue increases are critical for operation and maintenance of the state park system, which is in extreme disrepair due to facility aging, deferred maintenance, historical underfunding, and recent flood damages. Funding for rails-to-trails is included in the state park use license system. Without immediate increased funding, state parks will experience major facility failures and complete loss of services in certain locations. More widespread facility dysfunction, occurring over time, will be inevitable. Most Kansas state parks are in serious need of repairs to such facilities as shelter houses, shower houses, sanitary facilities, beaches, and camping areas. Compliance with ADA requirements will require attention and funding.

The implementation of the individual park licensing system would generate an estimated \$956,000 in additional PFF revenues annually. It would entail the elimination of the current annual and daily vehicle permits. An annual license price of \$10.00 and a daily price of \$4.00 is used for this estimate of revenue potential.

The replacement of the state park vehicle permit requirement with a state park use license would also remove the exemption for persons age 65 years and older and would account for \$261,000 of the \$956,000. This licensing system alteration is important, because everyone must share the operational and maintenance expense for state parks, including upper-aged persons, who currently pay no entrance fees. This revenue estimate is based on the assumption that all park users age 65 years or greater (except about 30 percent of those affected who will decline to participate in any park programs) will purchase the annual state park use license. The number of affected park users who would purchase the lifetime license is not expected to significantly alter income projections.

LIFETIME PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE

Under this initiative, a lifetime park entrance license (mentioned above) would be available to all park users. As stated above, sales of these lifetime licenses are not expected to significantly affect income projections.

DETAILED DISCUSSION: WILDLIFE LANDS AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FUNDING INITIATIVES

PUBLIC LANDS USE LICENSE

The proposed public land user licensing system would exempt from the new requirement anyone who holds a hunting, fishing, or furharvesting license, as well as anyone less than 16 years of age.

The resulting annual revenue, estimated at \$2.24 million, would provide for wildlife habitat management and for essential repairs of failing state fishing lake dams and water control structures, deteriorated wildlife area roads, fences, trails, restrooms and other facilities including ADA compliance.

The new funds would also allow needed development of these properties, including habitat, improved parking areas, wildlife viewing sites, and other public-use facilities. These revenue projections are based on an annual license fee of \$10 and a daily license fee of \$4.00. It assumes 30 percent of the people who currently use these lands and waters will decline to do so under this requirement.

SITE SPECIFIC USE LICENSE

This license would be required on special management areas for which the Department would assume management after July 1, 1994. These would be specific purpose management areas and the special use license is designed to provide sufficient income to make the area self supporting. Any deficiencies in income would be met by the ownership of the area. These licenses would be required of any person 16 years of age and older and including individuals in possession of a valid hunting, fishing or furharvester license. No estimate of income is available, but the intent is to equalize income and expenditures.

ELIMINATION OF THE RESIDENT 24-HOUR FISHING LICENSE AND 48-HOUR WATERFOWL HUNTING LICENSE

Since the 24-hour fishing license was first offered in 1985, annual fishing license sales have decreased, while the total number of all fishing license sales has increased. Most of this increase, however, is attributed to sales of 24-hour licenses, which are available for only \$3.00. The Department currently offers a five-day non-resident fishing license for \$13 (the same price as the annual resident license), which would still be available, as well as the non-resident 24-hour license, under this initiative. The resident 24-hour license, however, represents a significant source of revenue loss. Its elimination would recoup an estimated \$230,000 in annual WFF revenue. This estimate does not consider those persons who presently buy several 24 hour licenses, nor does it allow for those who will chose not to participate due to the change. The resulting funds would be used for renovation of state lake dams, fish stocking, boat ramps, docks, and other angler-

benefitting facilities and programs. This revenue estimate is based on the current resident license price of \$13.

Since its inception, sales of the 48-hour waterfowl hunting license have been insignificant (average 81 per year), so direct fiscal benefits from its elimination would be slight (some of the former purchasers of this license would purchase regular non-resident hunting licenses). The license represents an administrative inefficiency, however, and offers no important service to constituents.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT REVENUE IMPACTS

STATE PARK SYSTEM FUNDING INITIATIVES Annual Revenue Enhancement

Individual Park Use License	956,000
Lifetime Park Use License	(not significant initially)

TOTAL	\$ 956,000
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WILDLIFE PROGRAMS FUNDING INITIATIVES Annual Revenue Enhancement

Public Lands Use License	2,240,000
Lifetime Public Land & Use License	(not significant initially)
Eliminate 24-hour Fishing & 48-hour Waterfowl Lic.	230,000

TOTAL	\$2,470,000
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March 11, 1994

To: Members of the Senate Energy &
Natural Resource Committee

Dear Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to present these thoughts relative to HB 2797. I represent the Geary County Fish & Game Association, a 300 member Sportsman Conservation Education. Our comments are as follows, directed toward the three main points of HB 2791.

First is the "Permit" requirement for each individual person who enters a State Park over 15 years of age. While there has been a mountain of reports stating of the needs to rebuild state parks there has been hardly any factual information about the provision of the bill. Information reported in the media and comments from Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks employees lead the public to believe a hunting or fishing license will permit one to a state park (see attached). While the intent for each person to have a permit with no exception for the elderly. The reality of the change will hit when those persons who visit a park for a Sunday afternoon drive are each required to purchase a permit (present discussion mention 10.00 each). Just think of the impact it will have on you personally if you take a few visitors for a ride to show them a park, or for two or three fishermen who launch a boat at a boat ramp.

We ask that this concept be dropped. A substitute might be to remove the age exemption for car stickers. Each car would require a sticker rather than every family member 16 or older required to purchase a permit.

Second point is the permit or license to access wildlife areas. These areas generally owned by the Corps of Engineers were originally licensed to the Fish and Game Commission for wildlife management, to include hunting as a management tool. There have been comments from those who are non-consumptive and non-contributing visitors to wildlife areas that they would favor paying for an access permit or license but are uncomfortable in purchasing a hunting or fishing license.

Should the provision be retained the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks would be faced with dramatically opposed users. Conceivable a group of nature watchers could be using the same area as a deer hunter. In this conflict who would win? This is an opening for anti-hunters to legally block hunters.

We recommend the dropping of the Wildlife area permit concept and to substitute the provision that a hunting or fishing license be required to visit areas.

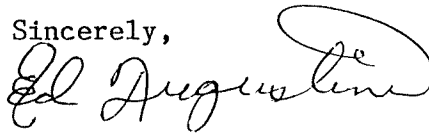
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The third point pertaining to State Fishing lakes. The same permit is use wildlife areas is proposed to use State Fishing lakes, or a current hunting or fishing license. We recommend that a hunting or fishing license be required of all persons over 15 rather than the proposed permit. In addition, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks receives from the Fish and Wildlife Service funds based on hunting and fishing licenses, not access permits.

Thank you for your consideration of the points and I will be happy to answer questions as you require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ed Augustine". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ed Augustine
President, Geary County
Fish & Game Association

OUTDOORS

'94 outlook: Big bass and plentiful birds

Here is some idle speculation about the upcoming year:

■ A new state record largemouth bass will be caught — but not by me. I heard a rumor last year that one weighing around 12 pounds had been caught, weighed and released around Topeka. The old record of 11.75 pounds has been around nearly 20 years. The bass was caught in a Jefferson County pond by Topekan Kenny Bingham. Twenty years is a long time for a record like that to stand — unless you consider that the world record bass was caught in 1932 and that record still stands.

■ It should be a good year for turkey

hunters. At least the harvest should be a record since each hunter will be allowed two turkeys this year. Permits are on sale now. Access to territory is getting better, too. I've talked to some landowners recently who have changed their minds completely regarding turkeys. When they first started showing up the landowners were fiercely protective of them. But once the flocks reached 80-100 birds and they started ravaging milo fields, well, "Heck, yes, shoot all of 'em you can."

■ **THE WALLEYE FISHING** is a question mark. Some of our top walleye lakes — Glen Elder, Lovewell, Milford — were flooded big time last year. The floods came after the spawn, but no one is sure whether the walleye decided to see where all the water was going or whether they were content to stay put in their home lakes.

■ Speaking of walleye fishing, the time for the spawn is drawing near. Walleye move

into their spawning territories when the water reaches 40 degrees and start spawning when it hits 42-45 degrees. All these warm days have been heating the water up to those levels.

The best time to fish the spawn is at night. Try the faces of the dams. Don't overlook the state lakes, either.

■ The state legislature showed its political face when it failed to consider a bill that would have required people 65 or older to buy hunting and fishing licenses. A vote for the measure would have upset the older voting bloc. A vote against the measure might have upset those who do buy the licenses.

Far, far safer not to vote at all.

■ **I DO BELIEVE THE** legislature will pass the bill that will require non-sportsmen who use state parks to pay a user fee. It makes sense and the money is needed badly to pay for repairs to the flood-battered

parks.

■ Unless we get heavy deluges during the peak of nesting season, look for this to be a banner year for pheasants and quail. The reason? There were good numbers of birds left at the end of the season (I know, I missed enough) and it's been a kind winter to them. Ditto with the deer herd.

■ I hope the environment and wildlife concerns will play a minor, but important, role in the governor's election this year. Gov. Joan Finney paid lip service to those matters during her 1988 election campaign, but afterward showed little interest. She appointed a political crony with little wildlife background to run the Wildlife & Parks Department, an appointee who later was forced to resign.

■ The 14th annual Capital-Journal Dog of the Year will take place around the Fourth of July as usual. Stonewall, my black Lab, hopefully will win his 14th straight title. But that's just speculation.



**Jim
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