

Members

Sen. Harold Wheeler, Chairperson
Sen. Becky Skillman
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. James Lewis
Rep. Markt Lytle
Rep. Dale Sturtz
Rep. Richard Mangus
Rep. Phyllis Pond



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 30 & 31, 2000
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: Lees Inn, 235 Frontage Road,
Meeting Room 215-217
Meeting City: Columbia City, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. Harold Wheeler, Chairperson; Sen. Becky Skillman; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Markt Lytle; Rep. Dale Sturtz; Rep. Richard Mangus; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Members Absent: None.

Sen. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. After an introduction of the members of the Natural Resources Study Committee (Committee) the Chairman received testimony from witnesses.

Holly LaSalle & Bob Smith, Tippecanoe Environmental Lake and Water Foundation

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Ms. LaSalle and Mr. Smith provided the following information in their joint presentation. The Tippecanoe Environmental Lake and Water Foundation's mission is to monitor and improve the water quality in 15 lakes and develop retention ponds to reduce sediment flowing into the lakes. The foundation is currently working on 12 watershed management projects that they would like to complete in the next three years. Current funding for these projects is from Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) funds and private donations. However, before these projects are completed the LARE funding caps will be met. They requested that the state provide funding to finish these projects. They also supported additional funding for the Clean Water Indiana initiative. The foundation tried to establish a sewer conservancy district around the lake but the initiative was defeated. They concluded in stating their belief that since the state legally owns the lakes in Indiana the state should help pay for their maintenance.

Dick Mercier, President, Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, Inc.

Mr. Mercier discussed SB139-2000 concerning falconry and trapping. The Bill was recommended by the Committee last year, passed the Senate, but failed in the House after confined hunting language was placed into the Bill on second reading. The Bill makes clear the fact that the state, not local entities, regulate falconry and trapping.

After Committee discussion, it was moved that the Committee adopt legislation containing the language in SB 139-2000. The motion was adopted by a 7-0 roll call vote.

The Committee asked Mr. Mercier about his group's views on an automated point-of-sale (POS) system for sale of sporting licenses. Mr. Mercier stated that with the large number of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses being sold a POS system would reduce errors by vendors and reduce fraud.

Gregg McCollam, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Mr McCollam stated that 17 states have POS systems. Costs of implementation have varied from Texas which developed a system at no state cost (implementation was paid through user fees) to Arkansas which used \$800,000 of state money to bring its POS system online. Each of the 17 states has developed a POS systems that was created to meet that state's needs. Before developing a POS system for Indiana DNR would like to conduct a feasibility study which would cost about \$40,000. A POS system would provide many benefits to the state and its citizens including the following:

- Current information would be electronically sent to DNR providing the state with accurate demographic and harvest information and allowing the state to better manage its resources.
- No license printing costs or guessing how many licenses to print before the next hunting season.
- Each vendor would be able to sell all 19 types of licenses. Currently, because of bonding requirements, vendors only select a few of the licenses that could be sold.
- Save the purchaser time and allow all licensing needs to fulfilled in one location.
- Reduces bookkeeping expenses and errors by vendors and the state.

Phil Ohmit, Hoosier Conservation Alliance

Mr. Ohmit voiced his support of a POS system. He cited a recent example of a member who could not buy a turkey hunting license because each vendor he visited was sold out.

Charlie O'Neill, Indiana Wildlife Federation

Mr. O'Neill stated that a POS system was needed to accurately determine the number of licenses sold so the state could receive federal matching funds for the licenses that are sold.

Colonel Larry Allen, Director, Division of Law Enforcement, DNR

Col. Allen explained that a POS system would add convenience to the consumer, vendor and DNR. The automated system would also assure that violators do not replace revoked licenses and that consumers who lose a license can receive a replacement quickly. The state would save money once a POS system is operational.

Dave Vice, Deputy Director, DNR

Mr. Vice testified that some states have changed their POS system two or three times. A feasibility study is needed to determine what systems have worked and what systems have not.

Some Committee members voiced concern about individual privacy issues if POS information became public. After Committee discussion, it was moved that the Committee recommend legislation requiring DNR to conduct a feasibility study and appropriate \$40,000 for the study. The motion was adopted by a roll call vote 8-0.

Al Schnelker, Indiana Marine Trade Association

Mr. Schnelker discussed the history of the Indiana Marine Trade Association (IMTA) over its 1 ½ years of existence. The IMTA has prepared a list of 19 issues that affect boating (Attachment #A). Mr. Schnelker presented detailed information on the following issues:

- The length of time required by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to process boat titles prevents many purchasers from using their boats for much of the boating season.
- Redesign dealer plates for boats so they do not mar the finish of the boats.
- Amend two sections of the Indiana Code concerning 31 day temporary tags to allow for the same procedures and grace period required to register an automobile.
- Amend booklets on boating laws whenever there is a change in the boating laws.
- Attempt to conform Indiana's boating laws with federal government requirements so boaters are not confused about the applicable standards when boating on federal reservoirs or the Great Lakes.

Lt. Ralph Taylor, Division of Law Enforcement, DNR

Lt. Taylor explained that DNR used to register boats but that the responsibility has been given to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). The statutes noted by Mr. Schnelker need to be amended to reflect that change. Lt. Taylor stated some of the other concerns raised by the IMTA do not need legislation but could be resolved internally by BMV and DNR.

Rep. Pond suggested that DNR use the state's Access Indiana web site and pamphlet inserts to provide the public with boating law updates.

Glenna Shelby & R. Joe Roach, Shafer-Freeman Environmental Conservation Corp.

Ms. Shelby and Mr. Roach updated the committee on the dredging activities at the Shafer and Freeman lakes. They thanked DNR for assistance that has allowed the Shafer-Freeman Environmental Conservation Corp. to purchase dredging equipment that has allowed year-round dredging to take place. About 100 cubic yards of material is removed each day. The legislature was also thanked for passing legislation that has allowed DNR to establish special temporary speed limits.

Jody Weldy, Indiana Trail Riders Association

Ms. Weldy stated that Indiana has some of the best horse trails in the Midwest. This causes riders from other states to come to Indiana, with the result being that Hoosiers are crowded out of their own trails. The Indiana Trail Riders Association (ITRA) would like fees for non-resident riders to be increased with the extra money being used to expand state horse trails and facilities. Indiana has a shortage of riding areas in Northern Indiana. Most Northern Indiana trails are seven to twelve miles long which is inadequate for horse riding. ITRA would like to see more trails developed at Clark State Forest.

Greg Hershberger, Director, Indiana Trail Riders Association

Mr. Hershberger stated that some of the best trail riding areas in Northern Indiana have had restrictions placed on them and DNR has indicated that it would like to close about a third of the existing riding trails in Northern Indiana. The ITRA would like to see that the limited riding areas are increased and not reduced. Horse riders would also like to have trails that are more than flat ground.

Responding to Committee questions, Larry Macklin (Director of DNR) stated that all Indiana parks have seen an increase in use. DNR is trying to meet the various needs within the resources available.

Sen. Wheeler recessed the meeting until 9:00 a.m. August 31, 2000.

At 9:15 a.m. Sen. Wheeler called the meeting to order. He stated that the reason the meeting was being held at Lees Inn was because Chain-O-Lakes State Park did not have a building that could accommodate the Committee.

Stacey McGinnis, District Manager, Noble County Soil and Water Conservation District

Ms. McGinnis gave a presentation on the current watershed diagnostic project underway in Noble County. The project began in 1997 when the Noble County Soil and Water Conservation District (Noble Co. SWCD) met with other interested groups to establish priorities for the county. They have received \$30,000 to conduct a two part study of the area. The study will allow the Noble Co. SWCD to identify specific areas of need so that effective planning can take place and future funds can be used efficiently. Ms. McGinnis indicated her support for the Clean Water Indiana Program.

Steve Merrill, Park Manager, Chain-O-Lakes State Park, DNR

Mr. Merrill gave a description and history of Chain-O-Lakes State Park. Though the county initially began to purchase land for use as a state park, the park was not officially established until 1960. About 100 inmates from the Department of Correction are used for work crews in Chain-O-Lakes State Park and other parks in the area. There have not been problems using inmates on work crews because they are a select group (e.g. demonstrated good behavior, non-violent offenders, etc.).

Responding to a question by the Committee, Mr. Merrill indicated that the cabins at the park could attract more renters during the winter months if there was a large indoor meeting facility in the park. Many businesses are now conducting business retreats but need a facility to hold group meetings.

Sen. Wheeler announced that Committee members and others were invited to take a DNR guided tour of Chain-O-Lakes State Park after the meeting was over.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.