

Members

Rep. Robert Hoffman, Chair
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Rep. Robert Bischoff
Rep. Paul Robertson
Sen. Thomas Weatherwax
Sen. John Waterman
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the
Committee
Steve Wenning, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 22, 2005
Meeting Time: 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Place: Ft. Harrison State Park
State Park Office Training Room
Meeting City: Lawrence, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Robert Hoffman, Chair; Rep. Robert Bischoff; Rep. Paul Robertson; Sen. Thomas Weatherwax; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. James Lewis.

Members Absent: Rep. Phyllis Pond; Sen. Richard Young.

Call to Order. Rep. Hoffman, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order. After an introduction of the committee members, Rep. Hoffman asked Steve Wenning, Attorney for the Committee, to provide an overview of the Committee's charge.

Overview of Committee's Charge. Mr. Wenning described the committee's statutory charge, which is to study and recommend legislative proposals pertaining to the operations of the Department of Natural Resources and to oversee the Indiana Water Resource Management Program. Mr. Wenning explained that the Legislative Council had also asked the Committee to consider SR 61-2005 (Exhibit I) pertaining to elevating Tillery Hill State Recreation Area to the status of a state park. With respect to the resolution, Kyle Hupfer, Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), indicated that changing from a recreational area to a state park will limit the use of the land. Rep. Hoffman asked Director Hupfer to provide a recommendation pertaining to the proposal at a future meeting.

DNR Suggested Topics for Study. Director Hupfer offered the following topics for the Committee's consideration:

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

1. *Elimination of two advisory councils under the Natural Resources Study Commission (NRC).*
2. *Non-consumptive User Fees.*
3. *Lifetime License Fund.*
4. *Deer License Options.*

Exhibit II outlines Director Hupfer's presentation.

With respect to the elimination of two advisory councils, Ray McCormick, chair of one of the advisory councils, noted that the councils had been valuable in the past. Dick Mercier, Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, disagreed with the proposed abolishment of the advisory councils, citing the past work of the councils and the opportunity for public input provided by the councils. Phil Ohmit, Hoosier Conservation Alliance, noted that the councils have provided valuable input to the DNR for many years. Lynn Dennis, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), stated that TNC has a staff person who serves on a council and that TNC would like to see a mechanism that provides experts an opportunity to offer advice. Jack Corpuz, Pheasants Forever, suggested that the councils be combined and reduced in size, noting that the councils have joint meetings.

With respect to non-consumptive user fees, Mr. Mercier stated that Michigan charges a parking fee in fish and wildlife areas. Mr. McCormick explained that the greater usage of the Goose Pond fish and wildlife area would come from non-consumptive users as opposed to hunters and fishers. Mr. Ohmit said that the issue had been discussed fifteen years ago when enforcement was an issue. A window sticker for cars could solve the enforcement issue. Gary Doxtater, private citizen and former director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, believed that non-consumptive fees used to support fish and wildlife activities would be a great idea. Ms. Dennis indicated that TNC membership would be supportive of the concept. Mr. Corpuz was also supportive.

With respect to the lifetime license fund, Glenn Salmon, DNR Fish and Wildlife, stated that \$400,000 of money from the fund was annually used to finance the point-of-sale system for a five-year period.

With respect to the deer license options, Mr. McCormick expressed his concern that crop damage caused by deer was unusually high this year. Ms. Dennis stated that deer cause damage to oak tree regeneration.

Suggested Topics for Study Offered by Committee Members.

Cowboy Guns. Sen. Waterman suggested a hunting season for "cowboy guns."

Youth Hunting Day. Rep. Hoffman suggested suspending license requirements for taking a kid hunting for a weekend for small game. The hunter education requirement would also be suspended. An adult with a hunting license would have to be present.

Taxable Marinas. Sen. Weatherwax stated that he would like the Committee to study and resolve the tracking and distribution of revenue collected by marinas on the sale of fuel. Rep. Hoffman read a letter from a marina owner who indicated that forms pertaining to revenue collections provided by the state resulted in the marina paying auto tax and not marina tax.

Channeling and Funneling. Sen. Weatherwax also asked the Committee to examine channeling and funneling issues.

Taxidermy. Rep. Bischoff asked that a taxidermy issue be considered.

Out-of-State Boat Registrations. Rep. Hoffman wanted the Committee to consider simplifying the process of registration of out-of-state boats.

Other business. Rep. Hoffman asked for input from the public regarding topics for study.

Use of Forests. Ray Moistner, Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association, indicated that he would like the Committee to consider issues surrounding the use of forests.

Youth Hunting Seasons. Mr. Corpuz asked the Committee to consider youth hunting seasons, noting that the sale of hunting licenses has dropped 31% from 1983 to 2005.

Next Meeting Dates and Locations. September 12th and 13th at Pokagon State Park
October 4th and 5th Brookville Lake near Liberty

Adjournment. Rep. Hoffman adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45 a.m.