

**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
January 27, 2005
Room W130, West Office, Building, State Capitol Complex**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Thomas Hatch, Co-Chair
 Rep. Bradley T. Johnson, Co-Chair
 Sen. Parley Hellewell
 Rep. Kerry W. Gibson
 Rep. John G. Mathis
 Rep. Ronda R. Menlove
 Rep. Michael E. Noel
 Rep. Carl W. Duckworth
 Rep. James R. Gowans

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sen. Beverly Evans
 Sen. Ron Allen
 Rep. Ben C. Ferry
 Rep. Rebecca Lockhart

STAFF: Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst
 Cindy Hopkin, Committee Secretary

SPEAKERS: Miles Moretti, Director DWR, Greg Sheehan, Deputy Director DWR, Ernie Perkins, Bill Fenimore, Don Peay, Bill Christensen, Debbie Goodman, and Jim Carter.

Note: A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Rep. Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst, presented the Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) administration budget. Utah code requires the division to contribute 25% of the amount of fees deposited in the Agricultural and Wildlife Damage Prevention Account during the previous fiscal year to the Department of Agriculture. The required amount for FY 2006 is \$69,300 which is \$9,700 more than what is currently in the base of the Predator Control line item. In order to have sufficient funds to fulfill its obligations to the Department of Agriculture, the analyst recommends the transfer of \$2,900 from Wildlife Operations line item and \$6,800 from the Reimbursement line item.

For the operation and maintenance of the recently acquired Range Creek, the division is requesting for FY 2006 ongoing appropriation of \$104,000 from the General Fund. The division has also requested for FY 2006 a one-time funding of \$57,000 from the General Fund. The analyst recommends the Legislature place this request on the priority list for funding.

The analyst referred to the 3 charts in the accountability section, page ii of the Budget Brief - DWR Operations handout. The first chart shows that in the last 3 or 4 years, the interest in obtaining Big Game permits has steadily increased. The second and third charts show a decline in the number of fishing licenses and in the total number of licenses sold. Contributing factors in this decline are the continuous drought, the increased cost of licenses, the economic downturn, and the availability of other types of recreational activities.

The proposed Intent Language on page iii of the Budget Brief is the same as last year.

Utah code requires that the DWR's annual budget request include a request for General Funds equal to 25% of the amount of fees and contributions deposited in the Agricultural and Wildlife Damage Prevention Account during the previous fiscal year. The amount to be transferred to the Department of Agriculture for FY 2006 is \$69,300 which is \$9,700 more than what is currently in the base of the Predator Control line item. In order to have sufficient funds to fulfill this obligation, the analyst recommends the following transfers of General Funds to the Predator Control line item: \$2,900 from Wildlife Operations line item and \$6,800 from the Reimbursement line item.

The analyst recommends an appropriation of \$59,600 as a base budget for the Predator Control line item for FY 2006 from the General Fund, but does not recommend any supplemental FY 2005 appropriations. The DWR is required to request General Funds from the Legislature to reimburse the Wildlife Resources Restricted Account, a sum equal to the fees that were lost by the mandated issuance of free or reduced price licenses.

Since there were budget cuts in the last two to three years, the Legislature has not been reimbursing the full amount of the division's losses. For FY 2006 the division is requesting appropriations of \$97,700 from the General Fund.

The Wildlife Resources capital budget includes large structural projects or habitat improvements and also projects that improve wildlands or related structures. (1) The division is requesting for FY 2006 a one-time increase of \$750,000 from the restricted account for the rebuilding of Mantua Hatchery. (2) The office space in Price is limited and the rent for the current space has increased dramatically each year. With other DNR agencies looking for reasonable office space in the area, DWR has offered to take most of the costs of building a new building with arrangements to be repaid by each agency over time. The division is requesting for FY 2006 to borrow \$1,500,000 from its GFR - Wildlife Resources Trust Account. If this request is approved, the analyst recommends that the Legislature adopt the corresponding intent language.

The analyst recommends for the Contributed Research line item for FY 2006, a total appropriation of \$353,400. The DWR Co-operative Environmental Studies line item accounts for spending on studies done in cooperation with federal agencies, local government agencies, or other entities.

Miles Moretti assisted by Greg Sheehan, presented the division's goal's, updates on current projects and funding needs. The division provided the committee with handouts detailing projects completed by the Fishlake National Forest crew and the division's issues. The drought has been hard on both livestock and wildlife; with the help of private parties and other agencies, the DWR has been able to rehab about 30,000 acres this year and their goal next year is 50,000 acres.

The Legislature asked the DWR to put together a working group to talk about wolves that will eventually come into the state from Montana, Wyoming and Idaho where they are listed as endangered. The division is prepared to handle the wolves if and when they are delisted. The group has put together a plan that is in draft form and should be out shortly.

Dir. Moretti reported some good news in the area of endangered species. Because of the hard work of state wildlife agencies, federal agencies, and private land owners, the DWR has been able to keep the sage grouse from becoming listed as an endangered species.

The DWR gave the committee a booklet about Range Creek Canyon.

Rep. Johnson turned the gavel over to Sen. Hatch.

Comments from the public were made by:

Ernie Perkins, Bill Fenimore, Don Peay, Bill Christensen, Debbie Goodman, and Jim Carter.

The fiscal analyst presented the Issue Brief - Nonlapsing Funds. Each agency that wishes to preserve any or all of its unrestricted fund appropriation balance must include a one-time projects list as part of its budget request. Agencies may not include a proposed expenditure that creates a new program, enhances the level of an existing program, or requires a legislative appropriation in the next fiscal year. The agencies have requested authorization to make one-time expenditures should any of their FY 2005 unrestricted appropriations remain unexpended at the end of the fiscal year.

MOTION: Rep. Gowans moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Evans, Sen. Allen, Rep. Ferry, Rep. Gibson, Rep. Lockhart, and Rep. Noel absent for the vote. Sen. Hatch adjourned the meeting at 3:34 p.m.