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Wildlife Management Area Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Casey Snider	
Senate Sponsor: Michael K. McKell	
LONG TITLE	
General Description:	
This bill addresses wildlife management areas.	
Highlighted Provisions:	
This bill:	
 directs the creation of a wildlife management area known as the Bear River Bay 	
Waterfowl Management Area;	
 provides limits and requirements related to the Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management 	
Area;	
 removes restrictions on impounding structures in certain waterfowl management areas; 	
removes prohibitions related to the regulation of airboats or small watercraft in certain	
waterfowl management areas;	
• requires the creation of an advisory committee for the Willard Spur Waterfowl	
Management Area under certain circumstances; and	
makes technical changes.	
Money Appropriated in this Bill:	
None	
Other Special Clauses:	
None	
Utah Code Sections Affected:	
AMENDS:	
23A-6-403, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 103	
23A-12-301 as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2023. Chapter 103	

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

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28 Section 1. Section **23A-6-403** is amended to read: 29 23A-6-403. State-owned lands authorized for use as wildlife management areas, 30 fishing waters, and for other recreational activities. 31 (1) The Wildlife Board may use any and all unsurveyed state-owned lands below the 1855 32 meander line of the Great Salt Lake within the following townships for the creation, operation, 33 maintenance and management of wildlife management areas, fishing waters, and other 34 recreational activities: 35 Township 2 South, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 2 South, Range 4 West, 36 S.L.B. and M.; Township 1 South, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 1 South, Range 4 37 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 1 South, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 1 North, 38 Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 1 North, Range 2 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 2 39 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 2 North, Range 2 West, S.L.B. and M.; 40 Township 2 North, Range 1 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 3 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. 41 and M.; Township 3 North, Range 2 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 3 North, Range 1 West, 42 S.L.B. and M.; Township 4 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 4 North, Range 2 43 West, S.L.B. and M.; Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, and 24, Township 4 North, Range 4 44 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 5 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 5 North, 45 Range 4 West, S.L.B. and M.; Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, and 12, Township 5 North, Range 5 46 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 6 North, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 6 North, 47 Range 4 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 6 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 7 48 North, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 7 North, Range 4 West, S.L.B. and M.; 49 Township 7 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 7 North, Range 2 West, S.L.B. 50 and M.; Township 8 North, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 8 North, Range 4 West, 51 S.L.B. and M.; Township 8 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 8 North, Range 2 52 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 9 North, Range 5 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 9 North, 53 Range 4 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 11 North, Range 11 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 54 11 North, Range 10 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 11 North, Range 9 West, S.L.B. and M.; 55 Township 11 North, Range 8 West, S.L.B. and M.; North 1/2 of Township 10 North, Range 10 56 West, S.L.B. and M.; North 1/2 of Township 10 North, Range 9 West, S.L.B. and M.; North 57 1/2 of Township 10 North, Range 8 West, S.L.B. and M. 58 (2)(a) The Wildlife Board shall establish a wildlife management area known as the 59 "Willard Spur Waterfowl Management Area" on the unsurveyed state-owned lands 60 below the 1855 meander line of the Great Salt Lake in Sections 26, 35, 36 of 61 Township 8 North, Range 4 West, S.L.B. and M.; Township 8 North, Range 3 West,

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62	S.L.B. and M.; Sections 1, 2, 11, 12 of Township 7 North, Range 4 West, S.L.B. and
63	M.; Township 7 North, Range 3 West, S.L.B. and M.; Sections 20, 21, 29, 30, 31 of
64	Township 8 North, Range 2 West, S.L.B. and M., except for the following:
65	(i) lands within the May 14, 2019, boundaries of the Bear River Migratory Bird
66	Refuge;
67	(ii) lands within the May 14, 2019, boundaries of Harold Crane Waterfowl
68	Management Area;
69	(iii) lands within the May 14, 2019, boundaries of Willard Bay Reservoir; and
70	(iv) lands within the May 14, 2019, boundaries of state mineral leases.
71	(b) The division shall execute a memorandum of understanding with the Division of
72	Forestry, Fire, and State Lands recognizing the division's use of the state-owned
73	lands described in Subsection (2)(a) as a wildlife management area.
74	(c) The division shall manage the state-owned lands described in Subsection (2)(a) as a
75	wildlife management area and consistent with:
76	(i) the beneficial purposes identified in Subsection (2)(d); and
77	(ii) a management plan created consistent with the procedures in this chapter for a
78	management plan.
79	(d) The division shall manage the Willard Spur Waterfowl Management Area for the
80	following beneficial purposes:
81	(i) propagating and sustaining waterfowl, upland gamebirds, desirable mammals,
82	shorebirds, and other migratory and nonmigratory birds that use the Great Salt
83	Lake ecosystem and the Great Salt Lake ecosystem's surrounding wetlands;
84	(ii) preserving and enhancing the natural function, vegetation, and water flows under
85	existing or acquired water rights to provide productive habitat for the species
86	listed in Subsection (2)(d)(i);
87	(iii) providing recreational opportunity for traditional marsh-related activities,
88	including hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing; and
89	(iv) providing public access in the [management area] Willard Spur Waterfowl
90	Management Area for purposes of hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife
91	viewing, including access with airboats and other small watercraft.
92	(e) The division shall provide the habitat, recreational opportunities, and public access
93	described in Subsection (2)(d)[-without construction or use of an impounding dike,
94	impounding levee, or other impounding structure].
95	(f)(i) The division may construct a structure within the Willard Spur Waterfowl

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96	Management Area only after the division forms and meets with an advisory
97	committee concerning the structure.
98	(ii) The advisory committee formed by the division under this Subsection (2)(f) shall
99	include representatives of users of airboats, users of other small watercraft,
100	hunters of waterfowl, and other stakeholders in the Willard Spur Waterfowl
101	Management Area.
102	[(f) Notwithstanding the purposes identified in Subsection (2)(d), the division may not
103	prohibit year-round public airboat and small watercraft access in the management
104	area except in selected areas during limited periods of time to protect habitat, nesting
105	birds, or vulnerable wildlife.]
106	(3)(a) The Wildlife Board shall establish a wildlife management area known as the
107	"Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management Area" on the unsurveyed state-owned lands
108	below the 1855 meander line of the Great Salt Lake in Bear River Bay or as mutually
109	determined by the division and the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.
110	(b) The division shall execute a memorandum of understanding with the Division of
111	Forestry, Fire, and State Lands recognizing the division's use of the state-owned
112	lands described in Subsection (3)(a) as a wildlife management area.
113	(c) The division shall manage the state-owned lands described in Subsection (3)(a) as a
114	wildlife management area and consistent with:
115	(i) the beneficial purposes identified in Subsection (3)(d); and
116	(ii) a management plan created consistent with the procedures in this chapter for a
117	management plan.
118	(d) The division shall manage the Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management Area for the
119	following beneficial purposes:
120	(i) propagating and sustaining waterfowl, upland gamebirds, desirable mammals,
121	shorebirds, and other migratory and nonmigratory birds that use the Great Salt
122	Lake ecosystem and the Great Salt Lake ecosystem's surrounding wetlands;
123	(ii) preserving and enhancing the natural function, vegetation, and water flows under
124	existing or acquired water rights to provide productive habitat for the species
125	listed in Subsection (3)(d)(i);
126	(iii) providing recreational opportunity for traditional marsh-related activities,
127	including hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing; and
128	(iv) providing public access in the Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management Area for
129	purposes of hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing, including access with

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130	airboats and other small watercraft.
131	(e) The division shall provide the habitat, recreational opportunities, and public access
132	described in Subsection (3)(d).
133	Section 2. Section 23A-12-301 is amended to read:
134	23A-12-301 . Definitions.
135	(1) The definitions in Section 58-79-102 apply to this part.
136	(2)(a) As used in this part, "waterfowl management area" means real property owned or
137	managed by the division that is:
138	(i) primarily used for the conservation, production, or recreational harvest of ducks,
139	mergansers, geese, brant, swans, and other waterfowl; and
140	(ii) designated as a waterfowl management area by the Wildlife Board in accordance
141	with Section 23A-12-303.
142	(b) "Waterfowl management area" includes the following referenced in Section
143	<u>23A-6-403:</u>
144	(i) Willard Spur Waterfowl Management Area[-and the];
145	(ii) [-] Harold Crane Waterfowl Management Area[-described in Section 23A-6-403.]
146	<u>and</u>
147	(iii) Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management Area.
148	Section 3. Effective date.
149	This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.