

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 27, 2018

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Gibbs, Vice Chairman Gestrin (Walton), Representatives Moyle, Raybould, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Miller, Burtenshaw, Mendive, Youngblood, Kauffman, Giddings, Blanksma, Erpelding, Rubel, Gannon(5)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Boyle

GUESTS: Sharon Kiefer, Michael Pearson, Sal Palazzolo, Ed Schriever, Martha Wackenhut, and Virgil Moore, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Brian Patton, Idaho Department of Water Resources; Norman Semanko, Parsons, Behle and Latimer; Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association; Brian Brooks, Idaho Wildlife Federation

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

Chairman Gibbs welcomed **Rep. Gannon**, the new Representative for District 5, to the committee.

MOTION: **Rep. Kauffman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2018 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

MOTION: **Rep. Kauffman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2018 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

S 1260: **Senator Keough**, District 1, stated this bill pertains to Lake Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake, and the Priest River Commission. This bill amends existing law to provide when federal decisions are being made relating to water quality and quantity, or other decisions impacting the Columbia River Basin system, the Albeni Falls Dam, and the Columbia River Treaty negotiations, the Commission shall have the authority to designate representatives to participate in those proceedings. It also provides that money in the Commission fund may be used to provide for participation in proceedings regarding Columbia River Basin issues.

Norman Semanko, representing the Lake Pend Oreille Alliance, stated this is a group of citizens and businesses who support the work of the Commission. He stated in the 1920's, the U.S. government proposed utilizing the waters in Lake Coeur d'Alene, Lake Pend Oreille, and Priest Lake to build an irrigation reservoir system for farmlands in Washington state. The Legislature didn't like that idea, so passed a bill in 1927 authorizing the Governor to file an application and appropriate all the unappropriated waters in those three lakes for the benefit of the people of Idaho. The license was issued in 1928. When the Albeni Falls Dam was built by the Corps of Engineers, the legislation was very specific that the operation of the facility would be consistent with the water rights held by the Governor, recognizing the multiple purposes of the waters. Mr. Semanko stated the current threat today is the Columbia River Treaty, which can change the operations of federal facilities, particularly Corps of Engineer facilities, for flood control and other purposes. So, the concern at Albeni Falls Dam and Lake Pend Oreille is that there will be more flood control operations and less water available for recreation, which will have a dramatic impact on the local economy. In summary, Mr. Semanko stated this bill authorizes the Commission to work directly with federal and state agencies and

local citizens to have a seat at the table during discussions regarding the Columbia River Treaty and the federal Columbia River power system operations.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **S 1260** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Dixon** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

S 1261: **Senator Keough**, District 1, stated this bill is specific to Priest Lake, Idaho's fourth largest lake. She stated this bill will clarify that the management of the state-owned dam on Priest Lake at Outlet Bay is under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Water Resources Board. Additionally, this bill will allow for flexibility of the management of the lake level from the current statutory water surface level of 3 feet to a range of 3 feet to 3.5 feet depending upon water supply and runoff of water into the lake.

Brian Patton, Idaho Department of Water Resources, stated the intent of the language in the statute, which authorized the construction and management of the dam, was to help stabilize the lake level during the summer and fall months to allow the recreational economy to develop on Priest Lake. He stated the lake level operations, dictated by this statute, currently require the lake level be maintained at 3 feet elevation. The primary purpose of this bill is to update the statute in order to provide flexibility in the management of the water surface level of Priest Lake.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **S 1261** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Dixon** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

HJM 14: **Rep. Burtenshaw**, District 35, stated with the passing of laws such as the Antiquities Act and the Wilderness Act, in Idaho there have been over 100 Presidential Proclamations establishing federal lands, and approximately 110 million acres set aside as wilderness by acts of Congress, totaling 62% of Idaho's lands. This Joint Memorial urges Congress to introduce legislation to oppose any more federal land designations that restrict land use unless there is a coordinated effort between the Idaho Legislature and Congress.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **HJM 14** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Reps. Erpelding, Rubel, and Gannon (5)** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY.** **Rep. Burtenshaw** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Virgil Moore, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, presented a report on the outcomes of **H 230**. The first area Director Moore discussed was the "price lock" implementation. The "price lock" maintains lower license tag and permit prices for residents that buy an annual license every year. With every license purchased, a fee of \$5.00 from each resident license and \$10.00 from each nonresident license goes into three accounts within the depredation program. Those accounts are: claims/compensation, prevention, and private lands access. Director Moore stated in the past 10 months, these fees have generated nearly \$1.7 million, putting \$500,000 into each of the three accounts, with the remaining funds transferred into the access program to be used in FY19.

Director Moore stated the Commission increased hunting opportunities to address wildlife conflict by having the hunts designed specifically to reduce numbers of depredated wildlife or by changing wildlife behavior. He stated depredation and landowner permission hunts were designed to provide more landowner oversight and control of hunters and earlier distribution of these hunter permission slips allowed landowners to prevent damages by initiating hunting on private lands sooner. The Department was able to issue approximately 7,000 additional tags this past year to address depredation concerns. They conducted 10 large scale antlerless depredation hunts in the Panhandle with over 800 landowners and designated hunters who harvested hundreds of elk and white-tailed deer. In Weiser, they were able to collar large numbers of elk that showed up in sugar beet fields in order to document movement patterns of depredated elk. With this information, the Department can focus increased hunting pressure during the regular hunting season. And, in Clearwater, they initiated the use of drones to investigate and estimate crop damage as well as provide herd information to enhance hazing efforts.

Director Moore stated under the Compensation and Claims program they paid out over \$1 million to 79 claims, which were all paid in full. They established six Continuing Use Agreements (renting private forage for wildlife use) and streamlined several processes resulting in quicker turn-around of claims and less work for landowners.

Director Moore stated under the Depredation Prevention program, over the last 3 years, they've built close to 300 stack yards with more planned for this spring, and have provided materials to landowners to protect stored forage. He stated they are testing new lure crops planted on Department-owned lands as well as on private lands to reduce widespread crop damage, and seeded public lands to increase/improve forage to entice wildlife away from private lands. In the Upper Snake, the Department bought a landowner's third cutting of alfalfa to provide a lure crop to reduce elk depredations and plans to explore additional lure crops in the area. Director Moore stated the Department has initiated work with the University of Idaho scientists to evaluate the effectiveness of new techniques such as various hazing methods and lure crops in order to improve depredation prevention.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25pm.

Representative Gibbs
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary