

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2012

TIME: 1:30 PM or Upon Adjournment

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Stevenson, Vice Chairman Shepherd, Representative(s) Wood(35), Barrett, Moyle, Eskridge, Raybould, Bedke, Andrus, Wood(27), Boyle, Hagedorn, Harwood, Vander Woude, Gibbs, Pence, Higgins, Lacey

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Vice Chairman Shepherd, Representatives Wood(35), Moyle and Vander Woude

GUESTS: Tom Schultz, Idaho Dept. of Lands/Scaling Board; Karen Launchbaugh, University of Idaho, Max Greenlee, Risch Pisca; Zach Haug, Capitol West, Steve Thomas, Moffett Thomas

A quorum being present **Chairman Stevenson** called the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Boyle** made a motion to approve the minutes of Wednesday, February 15, 2012 and Tuesday, February 21, 2012. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 494: **Tom Schultz**, Director, Idaho Department of Lands, said this bill will update the membership requirements for the Scaling Board and creates one new member. He explained the responsibilities of the Board. He said the statute requires that logs be measured by licensed scalers. He said this bill comes from staff, members of the scaling board and constituent collaborative effort, who endorsed this Scaling Board legislation. He reviewed the composition of the Board and said there will be a total of seven members on the Board. He said board members continue to serve until they are replaced.

MOTION: **Rep. Bedke** made a motion to send **H 494** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Bedke** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Rich Garber, University of Idaho, introduce **Dr. Karen Launchbaugh**. He said there are some amazing faculty members at the University of Idaho and Dr. Launchbaugh is one of the stars.

Dr. Karen Launchbaugh, University of Idaho, said the Committee will see a bill establishing the Rangeland Resource Center coming soon, she gave some background on the bill. She said a lot has changed concerning range and the University administrations are changing too. She said it is important to understand the ecology of rangeland and the skills to manage the land. She explained how they need a multidisciplinary approach to get all the pieces working together.

Dr. Launchbaugh said they had ideas of what the Rangeland Center would be and now they are bringing that together. She reviewed the people who are involved, and said the Center is not a building, it is a network of people across the state who are experts. She said they have a good group of people at the table and a strong foundation of people who care about rangelands. She said they are scientists working with people doing outreach and solving problems. She gave an example of projects. Dr. Launchbaugh reviewed the staff and said they also have interns who are in the rangeland program. She said the students are engaged and interested in the program. They are training the next generation of rangeland managers.

Dr. Launchbaugh reviewed the Rangeland Center mission, saying it is science and solutions for the range. She said they are promoting the act of partnerships and want to form strong relationships through partnerships and individuals. She reviewed the process of creating partnerships. Dr. Launchbaugh said they have a clear understanding of range but want to go the next step to provide a reliable and relevant understanding of the range. She said when the University accepted the proposal for the Center it was good for the University. She said range is important and they are going to bring it front and center.

In response to Committee questions, **Dr. Launchbaugh** said their range program students have the highest rate of employment on campus. She said there is a wide range of employment opportunities with soil, plants, animals and fire. She also said there is faculty across the state doing interesting projects on the issue of sage grouse. They are working with agencies, trying to bring science to the table in the courts. She said there are non-dollar amounts to grazing that are not accounted for in regards to the endowment portfolio. She said they want to show that grazing is more than a dollar amount, with other ecological benefits.

In further response to Committee questions, **Dr. Launchbaugh** said sage grouse are part of the ecosystem. There are many tools to bring to the table and she is optimistic they won't be listed. She said there are many important things in a range ecosystem such as watershed health, wildlife habitat which include sage grouse, ranching and working landscapes that can be managed. She said fire and invasive grass are also an important issue.

Dr. Launchbaugh said in response to Committee questions that they have worked on several projects with the Department of Fish and Game and Fish and US Fish and Wildlife such as, sage grouse recovery after the Murphy Complex fire, wolf and livestock interaction, fish and riparian issues and elk depredation effects on depredation claims. She said the Center's members have regular updates and they discuss upcoming projects and opportunities. She said they are located all over the state and are a diverse group that have a real passion for rangeland.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Representative Stevenson
Chairman

Susan Werlinger
Secretary