

MINUTES
SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 14, 2018

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bair, Vice Chairman Siddoway, Senators Brackett, Heider, Vick, Bayer, Johnson, Stennett, and Jordan

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Bair** called the meeting of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

PAGE RECOGNITION: **Chairman Bair** stated that the Pages that serve in the Legislature will be leaving Friday and a new group will be arriving. He asked Jack Sherlock, the Page for the Committee, to come forward to be honored. **Chairman Bair** presented Jack with an Idaho flag that has flown over the Capitol, a mallet carved by former Representative Max Black, a letter of appreciation signed by the Committee members, and a gift card to Barnes & Noble.

He wished Jack good luck in his future plans. Jack thanked the Chairman and said he enjoyed his time spent at the Capitol during the legislative session. He acknowledged that he learned much regarding how laws are made and the procedure they must go through. As to his future plans, Jack said he plans to become a medical doctor; he has been accepted to Idaho State University (ISU) as a premed student. After graduating from ISU, he plans to attend Vanderbilt University for further medical studies.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Chairman Bair** welcomed Doug Eastwood, Post Falls, Idaho, who was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Board to serve a term commencing July 24, 2017 and expiring July 1, 2022.

Mr. Eastwood stated he has a passion for outdoor public recreation, including public access. He feels the Parks and Recreation Board (Parks and Rec Board) have done great things for Idaho citizenry and visitors, but there is still plenty to accomplish. He would like to bring his skills and background to the Board to assist with the Board's short-term and long-term goals. Mr. Eastwood also sought and secured numerous grants, was overseer of land development, and managed multiple contractor agreements.

Mr. Eastwood noted he has over 35 years in parks and outdoor recreation planning that involved the acquisition and development of park land. He has written and implemented ordinances, amendments, and policies for parks, open space, and long-range planning. He also created three foundations for financial assistance and preservation of public park land. Other accomplishments include managing a multi-million dollar department budget with five divisions - parks, trails, urban forestry, buildings, and cemeteries. **Mr. Eastwood** noted he grew the Coeur d'Alene park system from five parks to 32 parks, sought and secured numerous grants, was overseer of land development, and managed multiple contracts.

Mr. Eastwood's experience includes six years with the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation as supervisor of a 2,000 acre park which included a swim park; events pavilion; 60 acre man-made lake with beaches, a boat launch, and docks; horse trails; a golf course; trails; and open space.

While Mr. Eastwood was with the City of Coeur d'Alene, he accomplished the following:

- developed 27 parks;
- managed 32 parks;
- managed two cemeteries;
- constructed 40 miles of pedestrian/bicycle trails;
- three miles of waterfront property;
- 14 municipal buildings, including city hall, fire, police, parks, streets, water, and library;
- hands-on planning and development for all municipal properties;
- created and implemented master plans for parks (2008), trails (2010), and natural open space (2013);
- wrote management handbooks for cemeteries and trails;
- negotiated land acquisitions for parks and special uses;
- secured grants with matching funds ranging from 50/50 match to 90/10 match;
- acquired and developed park land without tax dollars or General Fund assistance;
- excellent long-range planning with emphasis on a wider, more encompassing and long-term impact on areas including accessibility by vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrians.

Senator Stennett inquired of Mr. Eastwood as to what his first impression was of the Parks and Rec Board. **Mr. Eastwood** replied that he wondered as to where he would be able to help. After touring the southern part of Idaho, he stated that he was overwhelmed by all the tourist attractions, such as the Bruneau Sand Dunes. They are pursuing an international dark sky status. They also have a credible telescope that rotates 360 degrees to watch the stellar system, as well as skis and sleds to traverse the sand dunes.

Senator Brackett asked about the accomplishments achieved in Coeur d'Alene without tax dollars; he wondered how that was possible. **Mr. Eastwood** said with the help of a financial advisor, they created a capital improvement fund. Revenue generated through the parks was held in that fund and the money was used for acquisition and development only. He also was able to put into the fund their portion of impact fees and annexation fees. By the time he left, \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year was generated from that account. **Mr. Eastwood** said he leveraged that amount against park land development. **Senator Brackett** inquired if this procedure without tax dollars would be a viable model for the State's system. **Mr. Eastwood** said the Parks and Rec Board is doing a good job of getting things back in shape since the downturn of the economy. They are looking at methods to accelerate the cost-sharing and to have some alternative financial plans.

Senator Vick said Parks and Rec has been given some latitude in how they raise funds to support the parks. He asked if Mr. Eastwood has ideas as to how more revenue might be generated. **Mr. Eastwood** said partnerships and sponsorships are good and the Board is exploring that idea.

Chairman Bair thanked Mr. Eastwood for addressing the Committee and stated that consideration of his appointment would be at the next meeting. **Chairman Bair** recognized former State Senator and Committee member, David Langhorst, Director of the Parks and Recreation Board. **Mr. Langhorst** stated they were here in support of Mr. Eastwood. He then introduced some of the Parks and Rec staff - Tammy Kolsky, David White, Betty Mills, and Anna Canning.

Chairman Bair welcomed **Gretchen Hyde** and **Dr. Karen Launchbaugh** who presented information about Idaho's rangelands.

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Hyde, Executive Director, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission (IRRC), provided copies of the Commission's annual report, the 2018 projected profit and loss budget overview, and the 2017 audited financial statements. The IRRC has a volunteer board of five voting members, appointed by the Governor, who each serve a five-year term. There are ten advisory members named to IRRC.

Ms. Hyde said a new website was launched which combines the content from the IRRC into the "Life on the Range" website. This means that all educational materials for K-12 schools in Idaho will be on the same site. The latest stories showcase an education event at Sagehen Reservoir for about 100 Emmett 5th graders from Emmett Middle School; the Davis family who raise Akaushi cattle in Cascade; and a collaborative partnership at Rock Creek Ranch near Hailey.

Ms. Hyde stated that the big successes of IRRC are the partnerships assisting with the different projects. Without the support of the livestock producers, these programs would not exist. The assessment rates for State, federal, and private land are the same as in 1997. The total assessment for 2017 was \$177,845, with requests for refund of less than one percent. The expenses vary year-to-year, but are focused on education, public relations, and research opportunities. The board strives to get the most out of every dollar received.

Ms. Hyde gave credit to Chairman Bair and Senator Brackett for helping IRRC to obtain a rangeland license plate. The plates have generated approximately \$35,000 this year. A grant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will create a traveling educational exhibit that addresses grazing, livestock, and sage-grouse.

Ms. Hyde said IRRC received grants from both the BLM and the United States Forest Service (USFS) in 2017 to continue the Care/Share initiative. Under this program, IRRC produces educational signage for key trailheads to alert recreation users that livestock may be in the area. They also provide tips on what to do if they encounter sheep or cattle on the trail. This year, a record was set for outreach and sign production. Trailhead signs were posted at the Ketchum Ranger District, Sawtooth National Forest; Lost River Ranger District, Salmon-Challis National Forest; Challis area BLM, Salmon-Challis National Forest; Payette National Forest; Palisades Ranger District, Caribou-Targhee National Forest; and Idaho City District, Boise National Forest.

In closing, **Ms. Hyde** showed a five-minute video of the Rock Creek Ranch. The ranch is a partnership between the Nature Conservancy, the Wood River Land Trust, and the University of Idaho. It is a 10,400 acre ranch near Bellevue, Idaho, and collaborative research and management focuses on the intersection of ranching, wildlife conservation, and recreation. After just two years, there are nearly ten research projects taking place. The ranch also hosts field tours and workshops for those who want to learn more about rangelands.

Dr. Launchbaugh said the mission of the Rangeland Center empowers researchers and educators at the University of Idaho who strive to create insight and foster understanding for the stewardship and management of rangelands. Their innovative design promotes active partnerships with individuals, organizations, and communities who work and live on rangelands. As for the Rangeland Center's vision, they serve current and future generations by fostering understanding and stewardship of rangelands. Rangelands are vital to the ecological and economic health of the State and region. There are 35 faculty members at the University of Idaho who have broad backgrounds and who understand and address the topics regarding rangelands. About half are faculty of the College of Natural Resources and the other half are faculty of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Others are from the Extension Offices of the University.

Rangelands cover nearly half of Idaho (26 million acres) and provide many goods and services, including livestock forage, wildlife habitat, water, and outdoor recreation. These iconic western landscapes influence the lives and livelihoods of nearly all Idahoans because 90 percent of Idaho citizens live amidst rangelands or in areas that were rangeland prior to cultivation and development.

Dr. Launchbaugh said the economy of Idaho depends heavily on rangelands. Sixty-five percent of the total land area of Idaho is grazed by domestic cattle and sheep that support rural communities and agricultural enterprises.

Rangelands generate significant hunting revenue and are home to countless birds, mammals, fish, and insect species, including species threatened by habitat loss, such as the Greater sage-grouse.

Over 300,000 Idahoans recreate outdoors, often within the wild, open spaces of rangelands. Idaho's outdoor economy creates 37,000 jobs, \$154,000 in State tax revenue, and \$2.2 billion in retail sales and services annually. The vast rangelands generate sustainable energy including wind, solar, and geothermal. These energy resources are valued in the billions of dollars.

Livestock production yields over one billion dollars annually. This represents 20 percent of commodities production, making it the second-largest source of revenue in Idaho. Grazing, which occurs on nearly all rangelands, fuels local economies. Beef, lamb, and wool are Idaho's second-largest agricultural commodity.

Senator Siddoway thanked Dr. Launchbaugh for all the work she has done regarding the rangelands. As a user of the rangelands, he stated appreciation for her and Gretchen for what they do and for attending the meeting.

Chairman Bair said the rangelands in Idaho are critical. There are some who would remove livestock from the land and he said he is very grateful for the work she and Gretchen do by providing sound science.

S 1275

Senator Lee said this proposal codifies the practice of collaring wolves as part of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. The intent is to reduce livestock depredation in Idaho. **Senator Lee** said this proposal aligns with the Department of Fish and Game's Wolf Management Plan of 2002.

MOTION:

Senator Siddoway moved to send **S 1275** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Brackett** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Lee will be the floor sponsor.

H 370

Tim Luke, Water Compliance Bureau Chief, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), stated the purpose of this legislative amendment is: 1.) to lengthen the period of time in which State water districts can hold annual meetings, and 2.) to add language clarifying that absentee voting and proxy voting are prohibited.

Mr. Luke explained that current law specifies that water districts may adopt a resolution at any annual meeting to hold the annual meeting in subsequent years to any weekday between the second Monday of January and the third Monday of March. Several water districts hold meetings after the third Monday of March and as late as the fourth Tuesday of May. This amendment will align the law with current practice and remove any conflict that water districts may have with the current statutory requirement.

Mr. Luke said the second change is needed as IDWR frequently receives questions regarding absentee and proxy voting. This amendment will help clarify that such voting is prohibited. He also noted the Idaho Water Users Association (IWUA) supports this legislation.

MOTION:

Senator Brackett moved to send **H 370** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Heider** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Bayer will be the floor sponsor.

H 371

Mathew Weaver, Deputy Director, IDWR, stated the proposed legislation will make curtailment in a Critical Ground Water Area the same as curtailment in a Ground Water Management Area. This amendment would give more clarity and certainty to water users during times of administration. This legislation would ensure that administration standards in a Critical Ground Water Area are the same as the standards for a Ground Water Management Area, which was amended by the Legislature in 2016.

MOTION:

Senator Heider moved to send **H 371** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Siddoway** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Brackett will be the floor sponsor.

H 372

Shelley Keen, Water Rights Section Manager, IDWR, presented **H 372** which proposes to change the fee schedule for some water right transfer applications. Depending on the amount of water, transfer application filing fees range from \$200 to more than \$13,000. The significant fee deters some water right owners from filing the needed transfer application. With no change in the physical world, a transfer to change only the point of diversion or place of use description on paper, the filing fee would be a flat fee of \$50 per water right. This would encourage water right owners to update their water right records.

MOTION:

Senator Vick moved to send **H 372** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Bayer** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Vick will be the floor sponsor.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Bair** adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Senator Bair
Chair

Juanita Budell
Secretary