MINUTES OF THE LONG RANGE BUILDING COMMITTEE February 7, 1983

Side 11 The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in Room 108 of the Capitol Building.

Members present were Sen. Mark Etchart, Sen. Matt Himsl, Sen. Jack Haffey, Sen. Bill Thomas, Sen. Donald Ochsner, Rep. Rex Manuel, Rep. Francis Bardanouve, Rep. Gene Donaldson, Rep. Bob Thoft, and Rep. Steve Waldron.

Also present were Ron Holliday, administrator of the Parks Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Curt Nichols of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's Office.

Priority #27 (015)

This project is for \$125,000 from the Renewable Resource Development Project to conduct studies of two dams owned by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. These dams received a cursory examination which identified problem areas and recommended further study. Failure to act on the reported problems could increase Department liability.

If there are funds left over after the studies, the remaining funds will be used to implement some of the recommended repairs. The two dams to be studied are the Bearpaw Reservoir located south of Havre and the Gartside Reservoir near Sidney. It is likely that the Department will have to come before this committee next Legislature to request funds to implement the repairs found necessary by the studies.

This funding would provide for feasibility studies, hydrologic investigations, geotechnical investigations, geologic and groundwater investigations, and some engineering analysis.

(053) Frank Gerney of Sidney, Montana, told the committee what the problem was with the dam. A retired civil engineer from North Dakota looked at the dam and said it would take \$25,000 to \$50,000 to repair the dam. Mr. Gerney gave the committee forms signed by the people of Sidney who want to see the dam fixed (see Attachment 1).

Mr. Gerney noted that Gartside is the only recreation center near Sidney and that many people use this reservoir for swimming and fishing. He noted that the reservoir is 50% spring fed and it also has a creek running into it.

The committee discussed the dimensions of the reservoir and the dam.

Long Range Building Committee February 7, 1983 Page 2

Mr. Holliday explained to the committee that the federal specifications for the dams have become stricter in recent years and it would take a full study of the dam to see just what is wrong with the dam and how much money it would require to repair the dam to meet federal specifications. Rep. Bardanouve inquired as to the potential property damage that would be caused if the dam should break. Mr. Gerney responded that there was a highway and some houses below the dam. Mr. Holliday stated that this dam is classified as a Category 1 dam by the federal government, which is their highest hazard dam.

(173) Dudley Thiel of Sidney told the committee that this dam is the only real recreation center within 45 miles of Sidney. There is no motor boating allowed on Gartside reservoir so people can fish in peace. The dam is accessible to the handicapped and the elderly and is used by many people.

Mr. Thiel is a scuba diver and was the first to alert officials that the dam was in need of repair. Mr. Thiel went into a lot of detail regarding what repairs need to be done to the dam. The spillway was never planted and is eroding. He feels something should be done about that erosion.

- (330) Rep. John Shontz, District #53, explained to the committee that he has never seen so many people use a 30 acre lake. He feels the project to study and repair the dam is a good idea and he asked the committee to favorably consider this appropriation.
- (360) Sen. Larry Tveit, District #27, told the committee that his father uses the dam daily in the summer time as do many of the senior citizens of Sidney. He noted that with the population increase in Sidney that there is a great demand on the reservoir. He reiterated the convenience of the reservoir and the accessibility to the people of Sidney.

Mr. Holliday told the committee that the study of the dam would take at least a year if not longer.

There was no public testimony on the Bearpaw Reservoir.

Priority #32 (533)

This request is to fund an ongoing project to aid private individuals with streambank preservation (see Attachment 2).

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The program, commonly called the 310 program, was approved by the Legislature about six years ago. The Department goes with officials designated by law to give advice to landowners on how to preserve streambanks. Many times the landowner is willing to do the work but doesn't have the money to implement the advice. This program helps the landowner defray some of the costs.

(593) Ken Knudson of the Montana Wildlife Association voiced his support of this program. He feels this program is a positive step that allows landowners and the Department to work together to enhance a good habitat for fish and wildlife.

Mr. Holliday explained in detail what is actually done in this program and gave an example of some of the things that are implemented by the program.

(677) Darrel Hanson, a rancher from Powder River County and a member of the Soil Conservation District Board, voiced his approval of the program. He said he doesn't know much about the 310 program but he feels it would be a good idea.

Priority #33 (005)

This project is for fence repair, road repair, and bridge repair on the Mt. Haggin Management Area (see Attachment 3). In the past, funds for these repairs has come out of the management budget for Mt. Haggin. This request is for \$65,000 to build half of the fence needed for the rest rotation program.

Sen. Ochsner asked about fees paid to the Department for grazing. It was established that the Department receives \$8.32 per AUM per month and this money goes toward the management of Mt. Haggin. There are 55,000 acres of land on Mt. Haggin Management Area, most of which is deeded property. Management of Mt. Haggin costs over \$100,000 per year and supplemental money must go to the management of Mt. Haggin. This parcel of land has been paid off by the State.

(093) Greg Sitz is a rancher in the Anaconda area. He feels this program is a good program, not only for the Department, but for the ranchers and the public. Some of the funds generated by the grazing fees is used for payment-in-lieu-of-taxes.

Long Range Building Committee February 7, 1983
Page 4

Rep. Bardanouve inquired if it would be a worthwhile project to only build half a fence. Mr. Sitz responded that the section of fence that will be replaced by building all new fencing is in very poor condition and is costing a lot of money just to patch.

Mr. Sitz stated that the 4,000 AUMs that graze Mt. Haggin are his cattle. He feels this pilot program has taught him a lot about elk and has taught the Fish and Game Field Biologist a lot about cattle. It really is a cooperative effort and Mr. Sitz feels it should continue.

(162) Mons Tiegen, representing the Montana Stockgrowers and Cowbelles, wanted the committee to know that his organization fought the purchase of Mt. Haggin because they felt it was a disservice to the community when the State made a payment in lieu of property taxes but didn't make a contribution to personal property taxes. They did support the grazing of cattle on the property and the rest rotation concept being implemented on the property. Mr. Tiegen felt the Department is doing an excellent job but in order for the continuation of this effort, the fence must be repaired.

Priority #34 (245)

This request is for \$125,000 to repair the dam at the South Sandstone State Recreation Area (see Attachment 4). This area is widely used as a recreation area and for irrigation benefits to local ranchers. There was some approval among members of the committee to repair this dam due to its benefits to the local community.

The problems with this dam are already known to the Department. When the dam was built, there was not enough money to adequately finish the rip-rap.

There are 453 acres of water spreading systems used out of this reservoir. Nine farmers use this water for irrigation. Mr. Holliday stated that this was a cooperative project and the water spreaders shared some of the cost of building the dam (see Attachment 5).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Rex Manuel, Chairman

Approva1

VISITORS' REGISTER

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IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR LONGER FORM.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

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We the undersigned people from the local area surrounding Gartside Resevoir are very much in favor of having the Resevoir repaired and restocked with fish. This has been the only recreational resevoir for several miles around and it is very much model.

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Mr. + Mrs. Danny DeShaw Crane

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Streambed Preservation

Streambed preservation is an ongoing program that aids private individuals with design, planning, and construction of streambed and bank projects so that the fishery and other public interests is not impaired. Project grants would be limited to \$5,000 per individual land occupier and would have to be matched with at least a 50% cost sharing. To continue to assist these Montana land occupiers to help protect their fisheries resources, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks requests an appropriation of \$50,000 from the Renewable Resources Development Fund.

MT. HAGGIN FENCE TESTIMONY

The Mt. Haggin Management Area was acquired by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in 1975. When we acquired this property we also inherited a grazing contract for 8,000 AUM's. At that time, the cattle were allowed to graze over the entire area, including some critical big game use areas. Two years ago the grazing contract was renegotiated and the contract was cut back to 4,000 AUM's to be administered under a rest-rotation system. The system was designed to improve range conditions and be compatible with the wildlife resources.

When the Department acquired this property there were a number of things that needed attention, either for public safety or convenience, to protect the resource from such things as trespass cattle, or in relationship to the existing timber contract which was also acquired with this property. Activities include boundary fence repair, road work, bridges, etc.

At the time of project acquisition, the source of the funds for these activities was not identified in the long-range management plan. Consequently, each year, a small part of what is needed has been done out of the regular operations budget. In most cases this has only addressed the bare necessities.

While most of the routine maintenance and development necessary on this property has been able to be accomplished, at this time there is one large item without funding necessary to complete and properly administer the rest-rotation grazing system - the internal pasture fencing. In this area, the most effective type of fencing is jack-leg.

Approximately 15 additional miles are necessary to complete the fence at an estimated cost of \$8,000 per mile. This \$65,000 request would be a good start on this necessary remaining fencing and allow the proper administration of this rest-rotation system.

This is a pilot program and the first of a project areas where the Department has gone to a great deal of effort to design a rest-rotation grazing system that would be properly implemented and administered. How fast the results are extrapolated and expanded to livestock grazing on other management areas will depend upon the success of the experience with Mt. Haggin. The completion of the pasture fences is a crucial part of this project and could be a large determining factor on whether or not the Department will recommend expanding grazing to other game ranges.

South Sandstone State Recreation Area

Water for agriculture and recreation is a benefit of South Sandstone State Recreation Area near Plevna, Montana. This southeastern Montana reservoir was created several years ago by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in cooperation with some local groups and federal agencies. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's 1981 Dam Safety Report identified several construction problems with South Sandstone's dam which have developed over the past years. Among the problems pointed out by the report were the need for the dam's rip-rap to be upgraded in order to eliminate erosion and that some of the drains should be replaced.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting \$125,000 from the Renewable Resources Development program to upgrade South Sandstone State Recreation Area so that it can continue to provide multi-purpose resource benefits.

Reduced Scope

SOUTH SANDSTONE STATE RECREATION AREA

Cost Estimate

Dam Repairs, L.S.

\$125,000

1-31-83 DM:sue February 4, 1983

Rep Rex Manuel Long Range Building Committee Capitol Station Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Chairman,

The Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is presenting a funding proposal for repairs on the South Sandstone Recreation Dam on 2-7-83, in Helena.

I am one of nine farmers that use excess water from the South Sandstone Dam to flood irrigate hayland. These nine farmers have developed approximately 453 acres of waterspreading systems during the late 1970's. Most of these were developed with SCS technical assistance and cost-share through the GPCP program.

Since then, the principle spillway has settled about 1/2 foot and is starting to crack. This 1/2 foot settling is reducing our available water for waterspreading as well as reducing the quality of fisheries habitat in the lake. Also, the beach area and parts of the picnic area are eroding drastically.

This is the major recreation area and fishery in Southeastern Montana. In addition to my need and use for agriculture, the people of Southeastern Montana need this recreation area and fishery.

Please support this funding proposal that the Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is submitting.

Sincerely,

cc: Hubert Ambrams

James Shaw

February 4, 1983

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Plana Mt.

Sincerely,

cc: Hubert Ambrams James Shaw