

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
FISH AND GAME COMMITTEE
MONTANA STATE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 7, 1985

The meeting of the Fish and Game Committee was called to order by Chairman Bob Ream on March 7, 1985, at 3:15 p.m. in Room 317 of the State Capitol.

ROLL CALL: All committee members were present.

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18: Senator Dave Fuller, District 22, Helena, appeared before the committee as the sponsor of Senate Joint Resolution No. 18. He said that many of the people in his area are avid upland game bird hunters. He said that this resolution would direct the department to gather data, so that they could then decide what can be done to enhance upland game bird habitat and propagation.

Senator Fuller had to return to the Senate session, so Chairman Ream asked if there were any questions from the committee for Senator Fuller before he left. Representative Ellison said that he was concerned about all the fees that were being added for bird hunting. He said that if the duck stamp bill passes and then another fee was assessed from this resolution, duck hunters would be hit really hard. He asked Senator Fuller if he would be agreeable to changing some part of the required license fees, so that the duck hunters would not be hit so hard. Senator Fuller said that he was not aware of the duck stamp bill and said that if Mr. Flynn figures that there is a workable way to do that, then he would be agreeable.

PROPONENTS: Jim Flynn, Director of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, appeared before the committee in support of Senate Joint Resolution 18. He handed out a copy of his testimony to all committee members. (See Exhibit No. 1)

Fred Easy, Helena, representing himself, said that he was an avid upland game bird hunter and fisherman in support of Senate Joint Resolution 18. He distributed a copy of his testimony to all committee members. (See Exhibit No. 2)

Janet Ellis handed in a copy of testimony from the Montana Audubon Council. (See Exhibit No. 3)

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There were no further proponents.

OPPONENTS: Robert Van Der Vere, a concerned citizen lobbyist, who lives on the outskirts of Helena, said that for years and years our birds have been taking care of themselves, and without the benefit of a lot of fish and game money. He said that he felt that the only thing this resolution was doing, was setting up an increase in the bird fees. He said that if what they wanted was an increase, then they should wait until the next session and bring it up the proper way. He said that he felt this resolution would be a waste of money and a waste of time. He urged the committee to take a good look at this before they took action on it.

There were no further opponents.

DISCUSSION OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18: Representative Grady asked Mr. Flynn if this resolution was talking about a different kind of preservation from that of the duck stamp bill. Mr. Flynn said that this resolution is different, but they are talking about an added cost to the sportsman. He said that he felt this added fee should not be initiated this session, and he wanted to have the time for his department to talk to the sportsmen. He said that they did not want to add another five or six dollars to the license fee before they could talk to the sportsmen. Representative Grady then asked Mr. Flynn if this would be added to the same license that the duck stamp would be on. Mr. Flynn said that it would not be on the same license.

Representative Ellison told Mr. Flynn that his concern was for the person who hunts both game birds and ducks, because they would be hit pretty hard with all the license fees they would have to pay. Mr. Flynn told the committee that this was the reason they had a resolution before them instead of a proposed law change. He said that Senator Fuller and his Department felt it was wise to talk to the sportsmen before they proposed an added fee.

Representative Eudaily asked Mr. Flynn if they could do this study right now without a resolution. Mr. Flynn said that they could but this resolution could be called a "security blanket" to make certain that they would do it. Representative Eudaily stated that if there was to be a license fee increase, then he felt it should come in on its own merits. He also stated that he felt a study should

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be made, but it should be made without a resolution.

Representative Ellison cited some of the problems that they had with the last fish and game interim study in trying to get the sportsmen to come to the interim study meetings. He asked Mr. Flynn how they would manage to get these people to the meetings to get input from them. Mr. Flynn said he felt that if they would explain what the program was to be and what the benefits would be, then they would have more response. He said that they have had a good response from the sportsmen about the Miles City Hatchery project, and he felt that they could also have a good response with this study.

Representative Grady asked Mr. Flynn what would be done with the findings of this study. Mr. Flynn said that he wished each member of the committee had a copy of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Pheasant Habitat Enhancement Program which outlines what such a study and program might do. A copy was handed in to the secretary. (See Exhibit No. 4)

Representative Ellison asked Mr. Flynn if Pitman-Robinson federal funds could be used on a project such as this. Mr. Flynn said that enhancing this type of habitat would be considered a part of their game-management program and it would be eligible for federal funding.

Representative Jenkins asked Mr. Flynn what the current license fee was used for. Mr. Flynn said that the revenues that they get now go to the upland game bird management program. He said that he does not want to leave an impression that the program is now self-sustaining. He said that they do not create enough revenue today to pay for what they are doing, so the program that they would propose if it was acceptable to the sportsmen, would be implemented with the extra revenue. He said that he would suppose that today the upland game programs are being subsidized to one degree or another, by the sale of elk licenses. Representative Jenkins then asked Mr. Flynn if his Department would be interested in making a deal with landowners where they would get their licenses free if they would support a program such as this. Mr. Flynn said that they have a problem issuing any free licenses because it is a concept that causes certain difficulties.

Representative Montayne asked Mr. Flynn if he knew how many licenses were not used that had been purchased by the sportsmen. Mr. Flynn said that it was a difficult question to answer with the issuing of any license. He said that several years ago the state did issue a stamp for upland game bird hunting, but many of these were purchased by stamp collectors so there is really no way to know how many are used.

Representative Ellison asked Mr. Flynn if he had a "ball park" figure of how much they would have to raise the license to institute a viable program. Mr. Flynn said that with the Ravalli county program, they spend no more than about \$1500.00 a year. He said that if they could find 20 chapters to work with this program and each one would raise the \$1500.00, then they would have twenty to thirty thousand dollars to work with each year.

There were no further committee questions, so the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 36: Representative Grady, District 47, Helena, appeared before the committee as sponsor of this resolution. He said that this was a committee bill that originated from some game damage bills that were turned down in this Fish and Game committee. He said he felt that this resolution was a way to start to address the game damage problem. He said he felt that there should be an indepth study of the game damage problem, and how the Department is set up to handle such things as assigning seasons, issuing permits and perhaps taking some other control measures. He said that they would have to work as a full committee to try to push this resolution through. He said that millions of dollars worth of damage is being done, and it is a problem that cannot be ignored.

PROPOSERS: Representative Tom Asay, District 27, Forsyth, said that he is in support of this resolution, provided that it can be amended to stipulate who can be on the study committee. He said that he felt he needed to point out the actions or reactions by many people to various landowner bills this session. He said he felt that landowners were being bypassed for any protection of their land. He said that there are many bills for propagation and none for decreasing the large population of some species. He said he felt that the Department has not looked at the carrying capacity of what Montana land can support. He said that he felt most landowners had been responsive and responsible in the wildlife relationship, but that there had been no reciprocation.

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Mr. Jim Flynn, Director of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, appeared before the committee in support of House Joint Resolution No. 36. A copy of his testimony was distributed to all committee members. (See Exhibit No. 5)

Robert Van Der Vere, a concerned citizen lobbyist, said that he is in favor of the resolution with the amendment of Representative Asay.

Representative Ray Brandewie, District 49, appeared before the committee in support of House Joint Resolution No. 36. He said that there has been a lot of deer damage in the Flathead area, and he feels that this resolution is overdue. He said that it is time to figure out how much economic damage game in this state are doing. He urged the committees support.

Lorna Frank, representing the Montana Farm Bureau, appeared before the committee in support of House Joint Resolution No. 36. She said that her Federation would like to be a part of the study committee and assist in any way that they can. She handed in a copy of her testimony to the secretary. (See Exhibit No. 6)

Janet Ellis, representing the Montana Audubon Council, was unable to be present during the hearing, but handed in a copy of her testimony to the secretary. (See Exhibit No. 7)

Representative Montayne, District 96, Billings appeared before the committee as a proponent. He said he wished he had known that this resolution was taking place because he has all kinds of statistics about game damage from the state of Wyoming. He said he felt it would be beneficial to the study committee to gain some of the knowledge that they have in Wyoming.

Stuart Doggett, representing the Montana Stockgrowers, Woolgrowers, and Grazing Districts, appeared before the committee in support of this resolution. He said that he felt an interim committee would give some answers to the game damage problems and help alleviate this severe problem.

Hal Price, representing the Montana Wildlife Federation, said that they are very supportive of this resolution. He said that as far as they are concerned, it is a very

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important resolution. He said that with this resolution, his Federation perceives some potential problems being resolved. He urged the committee's support.

There were no further proponents and no opponents.

DISCUSSION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 36: Representative Pavlovich asked Representative Asay how he would suggest the different people be picked to serve on this interim committee, if he wanted people from different sectors to serve. Representative Asay said that he was not as concerned about the physical makeup of the committee, as how the study is being done. He said that he would like to have input from the people who are affected all around the state, so that an honest concern can be expressed.

Representative Ellison said that he felt this was a good resolution, but the chance of it being funded was pretty slim. He said that he felt they would run out of funding before they got down to this resolution and asked Mr. Flynn if they had any other suggestions for funding such a study. Mr. Flynn said that Representative Ellison's question was a hard one to answer because he does not know how much it costs to run an interim committee and such a committee would be supported by the Legislative Council staff. He said that the Legislative Council has their budget, and he assumes that it is general fund money. He said that he did not know how they could run money out of the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks budget to fund this study. Representative Ellison then asked that if this resolution failed to get funded, is there some other source that could fund this study such as a governor committee. Mr. Flynn said that the governor was set up under the last director and he had not continued the practice. He said that the Department has budgeted \$2000 for each year for the next biennium to conduct landowner/sportsmen meetings to discuss various issues. He said that they do have that funding source for that intent in mind.

Representative Rapp-Svrcek asked Representative Asay how he would like the committee to amend the resolution. Representative Asay said that he did not know how the funding or provisions would be made through the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, but his main concern is the input that would go into this study. He said that he

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wants to see the input widespread and valid enough so that they come up with the right results.

Representative Jenkins wanted to know if the meeting with farmers and ranchers that Mr. Flynn was referring to, would be considered in line with the study done in this proposed resolution. Mr. Flynn said that the invitation to the group of people who got together during the winter was at the request of the Fish and Game Commission. He said that this was the body who extends the invitations and who determines who will attend. He said that the Commission is the policy setting group for the Department, and he feels that they should make those decisions because they are the citizen representatives as far as the Fish and Game is concerned. He said that they would probably be receptive to having game damage as the topic of one of their meetings. Representative Jenkins referred to Mr. Flynn's testimony and asked him what had been done about the game damage issues that were discussed in the last three legislative sessions. Mr. Flynn said that the issues were not only alfalfa fields or Christmas trees, but instead they encompassed a broad range of activities that were going on out there. He said he felt the intent of this resolution is to find out how big the problem is and what can be done about it. Representative Jenkins then asked Mr. Flynn if there was any elk or deer damage brought out in the 1981 or 1983 discussions. Mr. Flynn said he thought there was none brought out in 1981 and he could not remember if there was any in 1983.

Representative Grady asked Mr. Flynn if he had heard anything from Appropriations, concerning the matter of more money being appropriated for survey. He noted that the Fish and Game committee had sent them a letter about their concern. Mr. Flynn said that committee was meeting at four o'clock today, and that matter was being discussed.

Representative Phillips said that it seemed the tone of what is being talked about is that somewhere along the line they need to establish what level of wildlife can be supported by the state of Montana. Representative Phillips asked Mr. Flynn if the Department's biologists could be working in that area to get a good count and then start working from that aspect as to what the study committee would need. Mr. Flynn said that this is starting to be done now. They are trying to determine what the best wildlife count is for the state, and for all people concerned.

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There being no further questions from the committee, Chairman Ream asked Representative Grady to close. In closing, Representative Grady commented on the makeup of the committee. He said that he felt the leadership did a good job in selecting people from all sects of the states population, and that this would happen in the selection of this study committee. He said that he felt in agreement with Representative Asay that meetings should be held around the state. He said he also thought that some people would be willing to donate their time to such a study. He said that game damage was a multi-million dollar problem in our state and it is a very important issue.

Representative Asay added that one of the aspects of this resolution would be inclinational in that many people are not aware of what is happening from game damage in our state. He said the he felt that getting information out to the overall population would also alleviate some stress on the Department.

EXECUTIVE ACTION: Representative Grady made a DO PASS motion on HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 36. Representative Phillips seconded the motion.

Representative Rapp-Svrcek said that he was not sure how they go about getting these things funded, but he urged this committee to lobby as much as they could because this is such an important issue.

Representative Ellison explained to the freshmen committee members how the resolution assignments were issued through a priority list.

Representative Ream questioned the word "tolerate" on line 1, line 21. He said he felt this should be changed to "enjoy" or "sustain." The other committee members were opposed to a change.

Question was called. The motion of DO PASS passed unanimously.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18: Representative Jenkins made a motion to TABLE Senate Joint Resolution No. 18. The motion was defeated 7-6. Those voting against tabling the motion were Representatives Ream, Phillips, Hart, Grady, Rapp-Svrck, Ellison, and Eudaily. Representative Grady made a DO PASS motion. Representative Cobb seconded

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the motion. Much committee discussion followed.

Representative Eudaily stated his concern over the fact that the Department can do this study without a resolution, and he felt that it was totally unnecessary.

Representative Grady said that the 4-H supports this because it involves them to quite an extent. He said that he felt it would not do anything but mandate the Department to do the study, and there would be no raise until the next session.

Representative Eudaily once again stated his concern about the fact that the Department is already doing this in Ravalli county and they are using the 4-H and other youth groups, so he feels that there is no need for this resolution.

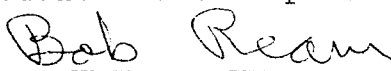
Representative Montayne wanted to know how many of the upland game birds could be reproduced in captivity. Representative Ellison said that he felt it was not reproduction that was at question, but instead a concern over habitat. He said he agreed with Representative Eudaily, because this type of study is already being done and can be done without a resolution mandating the department to do so.

Representative Phillips said that he felt that bird licenses were already high enough. He felt the revenue from these licenses should be aimed in the direction of enhancing habitat and propagation.

Representative Ream said that he was in favor of this resolution because little attention had been paid in the past to upland game birds by the Department. He said that this would make the Department do something in that direction.

Representative Jenkins made a substitute motion of DO NOT PASS. Question was called. A roll call vote was taken. (See roll call vote) The DO NOT PASS motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.



BOB REAM, Chairman

DAILY ROLL CALL

Fish and Game COMMITTEE

49th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1985

Date 3-7-85

[illegible]

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 7

1905

SPEAKER

MR.

We, your committee on **FISH AND GAME**

having had under consideration **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION**

XX 36
Bill No.

FIRST

WHITE

reading copy (.....)
color

**REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WAYS OF ALLEVIATING DAMAGE
CAUSED BY WILD ANIMALS TO AGRICULTURAL CROPS, LAND, AND
FIXTURES THEREON**

Respectfully report as follows: That **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION**

XXZ 36
Bill No.

~~DO PASS~~

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 7

85

..... 19.....

SPEAKER

MR.

FISH AND GAME

We, your committee on

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

XX 13

having had under consideration Bill No.

THIRD

reading copy (**BLUE**)
color

**STUDY OF FEE INCREASE TO ENHANCE UPLAND GAME BIRD HABITAT
AND PROPAGATION**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

XX 13

Respectfully report as follows: That Bill No.

BE NOT CONCURRED IN

XXXXX
DO PASS

HOUSE COMMITTEE Fish and Game

DATE 3-7-85

5JR #116 Bill No. 18

Time _____

NAME	YES	NO
Bob Ream, Chairman		✓
Orval Ellison, Vice Chairman	✓	
John Cobb	✓	
Ralph Eudaily	✓	
Edward Grady		✓
Marian Hanson	✓	
Marjorie Hart		✓
Loren Jenkins	✓	
Lloyd McCormick	✓	
John Montayne		✓
Janet Moore		✓
Bob Pavlovich	✓	
John Phillips		✓
Paul Rapp-Svrcek	✓	
	(8)	(6)

Billie Flamm
Secretary

Rep. Ream
Chairman

Motion: Do Not Pass Motion on 5JR #116

SJR 18

Testimony presented by Jim Flynn, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

March 7, 1985

The department appears in support of Senate Joint Resolution 18 requesting the department to study the feasibility of increasing upland game bird license fees to fund improvement of upland game bird habitat. The question of the State's role in providing basic stock for bird populations has been discussed at length over the past four years. The result of this discussion has been a termination of the historic bird farm management to a system of habitat enhancement and trapping and transplanting of wild stock.

The department is currently involved in such a pheasant habitat enhancement program on a very limited basis. The program is designed to assist sportsman's groups and special organizations with pheasant habitat enhancement efforts.

The goal of the program is to permanently improve habitat which will result in increased natural production and survival.

As an example, we have been cooperating with the Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association to establish permanent cover throughout the Bitterroot Valley.

We have had a few additional requests for information concerning the enhancement program but, to date, participation has been limited. We have not done a lot of promotion on this particular project mainly because of our funding capabilities.

The attached summary gives details of the department's existing habitat enhancement program. A few other programs for upland bird habitat improvement are being implemented through sharecropping, conservation easements and small shrub plantings. In addition, I have attached some background information on the State's bird farm program throughout the years.

If this resolution were to pass, we would spend the interim period between now and 1987 discussing an expanded program and the additional cost of such a program with bird hunters in Montana.

Exhibit #2
3-7-85
SJR#18

Fred Easy
PO Box 34
Helena, MT

My name is Fred Easy, I am a resident of Helena, MT. I favor passing SJR18. I am presenting myself before you as an example of an avid upland game bird hunter and fisherman. It is safe for me to say that I haven't purchased a big game tag in over 10 years.

Over the years of hunting game birds I have asked my fellow sportsmen for ideas about how we could as a group best help our sport of hunting upland game birds. This resolution best address some of our attitudes on how we can move towards increasing upland game bird populations and their habitat for sustaining the birds year round.

It is fairly well known that severe winter kills and habitat loss results in little or no game available for hunting. Upland game bird populations are very sensitive to these conditions. For example, if there are not any breeding populations due to winter kills then large areas of habitat are devoid of game birds until the birds migrate into the area or they have been reintroduced by other means.

Habitat and weather widely varies throughout our state. Different conditions can exist without a great deal of miles separating communities or areas. It is because of this that we feel that local projects could be designed to improve local upland game bird populations and habitat. Other wildlife would also benefit by these conservation efforts.

Ron Aasheim at Fish, Wildlife and Parks informs me that his department can conduct a quality study and produce recommendations based upon materials presently at the department. This study would provide the direction which is needed to identify realistic projects for helping the upland game birds to increase in population.

If government were to attempt to provide this assistance by itself the cost would most probably become so expensive that the effort would not be justified and as such it is realistic to believe that there would be no effort extended at all. This appears to be the situation that currently exists in management of our upland game birds today.

We believe Landowner-hunter relationships can also be addressed and improved through funding of projects local to a community. Most communities in Montana have organization such as Sportsmen Clubs and youth agricultural groups that are involved in project serving their communities. We believe that involving these groups as sponsors of projects funded by hunter license fees is a good device for providing a degree of continuity. In other words, "Ideas have Consequences" and if labor is voluntarily provided by sponsoring groups upon projects funded with sportsmen fees it would accomplish some worthy objectives.

For Example;

1. Educate our youth in conservation practices, respect for private property and instill more pride in their community and organization.
2. Landowner-hunter and community relationships would benefit from improved communication in involvement upon locally sponsored projects for improving upland game bird habitat and populations.
3. Habitat for upland game birds and other wildlife would be increased.
4. A sustainable recreational resource for sportsmen would be created or improved upon.
5. Business would benefit from the improvement of recreational opportunities that would attract sportsmen to a local area.
6. Management of upland game birds would become attractive and affordable for the state.

DO SOMETHING "WILD"--- PROVIDE A HOME FOR WILDLIFE



202 PRACTICES

RECEIVED

DEC 12 1984

CON. EDUC. DIV.

With a flash of brilliant plumage a pheasant explodes from its fencerow thicket. The sound of the ringneck rock silences the score of songbirds in the nearby windbreak. The mallard at the pond glides her downy yellow brood to shelter among the cattails.

Anyone who has seen or can imagine these things knows something about the value of wildlife on farms and ranches. There is no need to miss such sights and sounds, since they are easy to create. Simply match what the land is producing to the needs of wildlife, and wildlife will respond.

You can have wildlife on your land and have a better farm or ranch because of it. Every farm and every ranch is a complex community of living things supported by the soil. In this community are the plants and animals that convert nutrients, moisture, and sunshine into food and fiber for man's support and into trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers, and wild creatures for his use and enjoyment. It is a successful community only if the living elements are working in harmony for the benefit of the community as a whole.

In Montana, wildlife belongs to all the people, but the land that wild creatures need as habitat to survive is mostly in private ownership. What a farmer or rancher does with his land can have a tremendous impact on wildlife.

Many species of upland and wetland wildlife are found on farms and ranches used mainly for cultivated crops, livestock production, or the production of wood products. This means that farmers and ranchers are the key to wildlife abundance. Farms, farmers, and farm programs influence the existence of wildlife because wild animals react quickly to agricultural management practices--good or bad.

Of course it is realized that if farmers or ranchers are to make a go of their business, their first priority must be crop or livestock production. Sometimes wildlife must, by necessity, take a back seat.

But often, with little or no cost, a landowner can easily adjust his regular farming or ranching operation to encourage and help production of pheasants, prairie grouse, doves, partridge, songbirds, and waterfowl. On most agricultural lands wildlife is a crop to be enjoyed by the landowner, his family, and friends. It is a secondary crop from which he doesn't expect or receive an income, but the beauty provided by patches of shrubs, trees, and grassland scattered throughout wheat or fallow enhances the value and appeal of the land. The pleasures derived from wild creatures inhabiting such areas is part of the heritage of farm and ranch life.

MANAGEMENT HINTS

Here are some do-it-yourself hints for managing your land to provide habitat for wildlife. Keep in mind that many practices used on farms and ranches help wildlife. Others are harmful.

The most beneficial contribution landowners can provide for wildlife is a farm pond. An ideal pond is one-half acre or larger that is fenced and the surrounding area planted to grass with some trees and shrubs. Native vegetation should be encouraged to grow around the edge of the pond to serve as escape cover. Farm and ranch ponds are beneficial in many ways. They can provide livestock water, fire protection, recreation, fishing, and beautify the farm and ranch.

Cropland practices helpful to wildlife are cropping systems that include grasses and legumes, grass waterways, cover crops, stubble mulch tillage, no mowing or delayed mowing of roadside rights-of-way and ditchbanks until after the nesting season, and leaving unharvested areas of small grain adjacent to good cover.

Cropland practices harmful to wildlife include fall plowing, mowing grass waterways before ground-nesting birds have hatched, drainage of marshes, and burning of ditchbanks, fencerows, and crop residues.

Practices can be designed to contribute to the whole of good land use without detracting from the objectives of a farm or ranch operation. Most conservation practices have multiple values. Those essential to wildlife production also improve agricultural operations by contributing good soil and water conservation.

GOOD PRACTICES

Here are examples of cropland practices and conditions that can frequently spell the difference between abundance or scarcity of farmland wildlife:

Stripcropped fields contain more "edge" where food and cover are close together and attract about twice as many ground nesting birds as undivided fields.

Grass waterways provide nesting cover and, if not mowed or mowed in late June, ensure better survival of pheasant broods.

Field hedgerows used to control wind erosion and conserve soil moisture make a "living fence" which provides travel lanes for many species of wildlife and are used as homesites by birds, small mammals, and pollinating and predaceous insects of benefit to man. Field hedgerows are useful as irregular contour fences, particularly in areas where permanent fence lines are needed.

Windbreaks and shelterbelts provide protection from prevailing winds, especially during the severe winter months, and are soon populated by many wildlife species seeking cover furnished by the trees and food produced by the shrubs. The larger and older the shelterbelt, the greater its value to wildlife. Shelterbelts can reduce heating fuel costs when planted to protect farm dwellings.

Plantings of grasses and legumes with woody plants such as conifers and fruit-producing shrubs make worn-out gullies, rock outcrops, fence corners, and similar idle

areas highly productive for wildlife and reduce the opportunity for weeds to establish.

Pastureland and rangeland practices helpful to wildlife are livestock grazing which leaves adequate cover, reseeding, renovating or overseeding with legumes, and the building of ponds for livestock/wildlife water.

Woodland practices useful for wildlife habitat improvement include protection from wildfire and harmful grazing, selective cutting in small woodlots, leaving snags for den trees when cutting timber or firewood, piling brush, and seeding grasses and legumes along roads, trails, and in openings following timber harvest.

If you are serious about increasing wildlife on your farm or ranch, draw a plan for the wildlife habitat improvements you are willing to make--whether your land is used for crops, pasture, range, or woodland. A plan doesn't have to be fancy, just something that will help you keep track of what's being accomplished. Give thought to involving your family, especially the children. You can get help in developing a plan from your Soil Conservation Service conservationist or Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist.

Because wild animals have differences in their requirements for food, nesting areas, winter shelter, cover, and daily living quarters, your first step is to inventory your land. At this time you should identify the species of wildlife you would most like to benefit. In designing your wildlife plan you will want to include the types of habitat attractive to the animals you want to increase. Could additional cover be of benefit? Does your ranch or farm operation provide sufficient food in the form of waste grain or fruit-bearing shrubs? Would additional food

supplies help wildlife through the stress of the winter months? How about water--would a pond or watering facility be of help to wildlife?

A worthwhile wildlife plan can be developed for virtually any farm or ranch, even if it is only a fencerow, a field corner development, or a small planting of shrubs and trees. Every increase in permanent cover and food for wildlife will help.

The theme of a successful plan for more wildlife should be to increase the variety of vegetation types and to attain a wider diversity of land types and more edges where a number of habitats meet. Plants are the key to animal abundance. In many ways plants are the basis of all animal life.

Here are habitat requirements for some of Montana's important wildlife species and successful practices and techniques for improving the farm and ranch environment for them.

PHEASANTS

The ring-necked pheasant is at home in agricultural areas that grow grain and feed crops. In fact, the better the agricultural area the better the opportunities for improving habitat for pheasants.

A favorable land use pattern for pheasants is diverse and consists of 60 to 80 percent cultivated crops such as corn, wheat, and barley; 10 to 30 percent hay and rotation pastures; 5 to 10 percent hardwood trees and shrubs; and 3 to 5 percent permanently protected uplands and wetland marshes. The ringnecks' greatest need in Montana is for undisturbed nesting cover and good winter cover near food supplies.

The daily home range of a pheasant is about 200 acres. It is reasonable to use this size area as a basic management unit and establish or maintain the following or similar vegetation types that are adapted to your area:

- Grain and seed crops consisting of barley, corn, wheat, and proso millet (120 to 160 acres).
- Grasses and legumes including alfalfa, clover, or pasture grasses (20 to 60 acres).
- Wild herbaceous plants such as cattails, smartweed, sedges, sweetclover, and sunflowers (6 to 10 acres).
- Trees and shrubs such as Russian-olive, rose, honeysuckle, plum, willow, buffaloberry, serviceberry, snowberry, blue spruce, and juniper (10 to 20 acres).

A variety of improvements can be planned and applied where these basic vegetation patterns exist or have been established.

- Allow some standing grain to remain near cover.
- Leave crop residue on the field until spring.
- Protect areas such as brushy fencerows, field corners, waterways, marshes, and weed patches. Many native plants such as wild rose, willow, snowberry, and chokecherry provide fine wildlife food and cover and should be encouraged whenever possible.
- To control weeds, idle areas can be planted to a permanent cover of grasses and legumes. Mow only one-half of grassy areas each year. Delay mowing until the

nesting season is past, usually late in June.

- Cattail marshes and dense tangles of low-growing shrubs where birds can avoid snow and cold as well as hide from enemies serve as ideal winter cover. Native rose, plum, willow, and snowberry fencerows, brushy hillsides, coulees, and creek bottoms containing thorny trees and shrubs provide excellent wintering habitat and should be retained wherever possible.
- Where brush thickets and tangles have been removed or are in short supply, shrub and tree plantings can provide essential habitat and control soil erosion. Conservationists of the Soil Conservation Service are willing to provide you with information on wildlife plants suitable for establishing on your farm or ranch. When creating habitat, it is better to plant an assortment of shrubs and trees rather than only one or two species to provide the variety of food and cover combinations needed. Wildlife-attracting trees and shrubs are available from commercial nurseries across the state.

PARTRIDGE

The gray or Hungarian partridge is distributed throughout the plains and croplands of Montana with greatest numbers occurring in the eastern two-thirds of the state. Preferred habitat consists of a mixture of cultivated and uncultivated lands, grasslands interspersed with wheat fields, weed patches, and brushy cover. Partridge select nesting sites in alfalfa, weed patches, grassy fencerows, and on grass-covered rangelands.

If food is available, these birds will remain on the open prairies throughout the winter and are capable of scratching through the snow for food. Brushy cover is important for escape and protection when the prairies are mantled with snow. Their preferred foods include barley, wheat, corn, millet, barnyard grass, pigweed, clover, and smartweed.

A highly beneficial practice for Huns is to leave grain stubble unplowed through the winter. This will provide food in the form of waste grain as well as deter soil erosion when spring runoff occurs.

The proper management of rangeland is of benefit to gray partridge as well as prairie grouse. Good management is likely to be attained where a grazing system is planned and followed.

SHARPTAILS

The sharp-tailed grouse is the most important native upland game bird of Montana's prairies. Although the ring-necked pheasant receives more publicity, the less colorful sharptail is held in high esteem by many ranchers and farmers.

Preferred sharptail habitat is primarily grassland interspersed with brush-filled coulees. Sharptails do not rely on cultivated crops for food at any time of the year, but prefer to feed on a wide variety of seeds, leaves, flowers, and fleshy fruits of wild plants.

Grazing management is the key to maintaining sharptail habitat. Proper range use that assures good forage production and maintenance of the best forage-producing native grasses will provide adequate nesting sites, rearing

areas, and roosting cover. This level of grazing will maintain woody vegetation present in stream bottoms, coulees, and side-hill draws.

Establishment of shelterbelts and field windbreaks, in addition to meeting their primary conservation objectives, can provide cover and food for sharp-tails, pheasants, and a variety of songbirds. This can be especially true if shelterbelts and windbreaks are properly maintained and care is given to the design and selection of plant materials of value to wildlife.

WATER AND MARSH BIRDS

Regardless of where you live in the northern plains, chances are good that you can attract waterfowl and marsh birds to your farm or ranch. To do so you may need to build a farm pond or marsh or improve the ones you now have.

The center of wild duck production in the United States is in the northern Great Plains and includes a portion of Montana. The numerous natural and man-made ponds, potholes, and marshes make much of our state ideal duck habitat.

Wetlands of every description are used by ducks, shore birds, and other wetland wildlife throughout the seasons of the year. Habitat for ducks can best be achieved through protection or improvement of existing wetlands. Improvements may include manipulation of water levels with control structures; managing wetland vegetation through cutting, burning, and draglining to create open-water areas; and fencing to exclude livestock.

In non-wetland areas, shallow manmade ponds attract ducks during the spring

and fall migration periods and may be used by local nesting birds if sufficient food and cover are available to meet nesting and brood-rearing needs. Such ponds should be excluded from livestock. Utilization of manmade ponds by ducks increases as ponds become older. Adequate shoreline vegetation is important to ducks using ponds or marshes. It provides cover and areas for escape for many species.

Proper vegetation management of the pond or marsh environment is of major importance in attracting ducks and other water birds. Aquatic plants that provide food are desirable and should be encouraged. A cover of grasses and legumes on uplands near a pond or marsh is the preferred nesting habitat for puddle ducks like the mallard, pintail, and gadwall. Small grain grown in nearby fields can provide an attractive source of food during late summer and in fall.

The best nesting performance by upland nesting ducks occurs in blocks of dense cover 40 to 150 acres in size. Large square blocks of cover are preferable to strips in reducing the impact of nest predators.

SONGBIRDS

Who doesn't enjoy having songbirds around our homes and farmsteads? Their striking colors and pleasing songs appeal to our eyes and ears. Wildlife plantings in your farmstead, garden, or in conjunction with your shelterbelt, whether large or small, can help to attract birds. A surprising variety and number of birds can be seen in yards and gardens, especially those that have the kinds of trees, shrubs, and flowers that appeal to birds. If feeders and bird houses are used as part of the landscape, your home and

farmstead becomes even more inviting. Your imagination and ingenuity will allow you to put together what is referred to as "habitat." The more diverse you make the habitat, the more varied will be the wildlife attracted. Some of the species that are attracted are permanent residents. Others are migrants that may be seen in spring as they migrate northward or in fall when they return south for the winter. A few species are found only in winter, returning to Canada or Alaska for summer.

When making wildlife plantings, use a number of different kinds of plants, since one or two species are seldom sufficient to attract a variety of birds. Plants of different growth forms, height, flowering times, and fruits are most appealing and will bring a number of species to your farmstead. Birds need places to feed, sing, court, nest, roost, and hide. They like a choice of places for these activities--crowns of tall trees, dense shrubs, and low-growing flowers and grasses. They also like a choice of foods--seeds, fruits, berries, flower nectar. You can help meet these needs through a variety of plantings.

Yards and farmsteads that have only deciduous trees or shrubs can be improved by adding evergreens such as spruce, pine, and juniper that provide winter shelter. Where fruit-bearing shrubs are scarce, they can be planted with new shelterbelts or on the inside of already established shelterbelts. By intermingling different species, shapes, and sizes, you can develop varied and attractive landscape patterns. Shrubs and trees such as elderberry, sumac, sandcherry, hawthorn, golden currant, Nanking cherry, mountain ash, and American plum are especially attractive to songbirds. A small pool, pond, or bird bath will further enhance your farmstead for birds by making water available.

3-7-1985

SUMMARY

Most wild creatures ask little of the property owner. To survive, they need only a place to hide, find shelter, and nest--protection that biologists call cover. Wild creatures also need food, preferably close to cover so they can scurry back to safety quickly when in danger. And they need water to drink or to live and feed in. All this is little enough payment for the pleasure and benefits they provide.

The preservation and enhancement of farm and ranch wildlife lies with you--the landowner. Incentives come in many forms--added soil and water protection, the joy of abundant wildlife, and good will.

Look around your farm, ranch, or rural home. Could you encourage better land use and more habitat for wildlife? You can do something "WILD"--improve your property for wildlife!

For more information contact your local Soil Conservation Service office. The SCS maintains specific habitat management guides for many species of Montana wildlife. They also have specifications for establishment and maintenance of conservation practices adaptable to your area. You can obtain practical help in planning and developing habitat for the kinds of wildlife you wish to favor.

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Soil
Conservation
Service

Bozeman,
Montana



Exhibit #3
3-7-1985
SJR #18

Testimony on SJR 18
Montana Audubon Council
7 March, 1985

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,
My name is Ann Humphrey and I represent the Montana Audubon Council.
The Council supports the study proposed in SJR 18. We believe that
habitat maintenance and improvement is important for all wildlife
species. Improving habitat for upland game birds will also benefit
other wildlife, including nongame species.

The Council also supports the involvement of local organizations in
managing wildlife habitat in their areas. We feel this involvement
would provide an excellent educational opportunity for the participants
and the local communities on the values of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
Additionally, wildlife species stand to benefit through increased
participation in habitat management on the local level. We urge you
to consider this resolution. Thank you.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

PHEASANT HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Exhibit #4
3-7-1985
SJR#36

The closure of the Warm Springs Bird Farm in FY'83 will not affect the department's ability to assist and advise sportsman's groups and special organizations in local pheasant habitat enhancement efforts. Habitat enhancement is acknowledged as preferable to the put-and-take planting of pheasants because of the long-term benefits both to the pheasant populations and the hunting public. The objectives of the program include:

- 1) Assisting and advising sportsman's groups or special associations in their efforts to improve pheasant habitat in areas with potential for supporting self-sustaining and huntable populations.
- 2) Promoting general public understanding of the role of habitat as the crucial element in establishing and maintaining pheasant populations.

In this regard, a fund of \$5,000 will be established for FY'83 to be used for the following purposes:

- 1) Provide technical assistance and expertise to interested organizations on habitat enhancement.
- 2) Assist the successful applicant with funds and/or supplies and materials to:
 - a) enhance or improve habitat (i.e., seed, etc., for planting permanent cover and/or food);
 - b) provide eggs, chicks and/or adult birds to be raised and released in habitat enhancement project areas for incentive purposes; and
 - c) trap wild pheasant stock and release on project areas.

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

The applicant must be an established organization (i.e. sportsman's groups, association, etc.) with a sizeable membership capable of generating the interest and completing the project.

To qualify, projects must:

- 1) Emphasize habitat improvement that will have long-term benefits to pheasant populations and the hunting public; and
- 2) Be located in areas with potential for supporting huntable pheasant populations.

It should be understood that the goal of the program is to permanently improve the habitat and to increase the natural propagation of game birds. The release of pheasants would only be used to establish populations in newly created habitat areas.

Anyone interested in more details of this program should direct their inquiries to the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Helena.

BIRD FARM BACKGROUND

Exhibit #4
p.2
3-7-85

The game farm approach to upland bird management has been utilized in Montana and elsewhere. However, costs became prohibitive and this approach was terminated in 1982. The first pheasants¹ were probably introduced into Montana prior to 1895. Between 1909 and 1929 approximately 7,000 pheasants were released in Montana. By 1926 they were abundant enough in some areas of the state that Ravalli County residents asked the Fish and Game Commission to open a pheasant season - the first pheasant season was held November 24 and 25, 1928. A predicted slaughter failed to materialize as few birds were killed. Until 1930, pheasants released in various locations were purchased from out-of-state stocks or wild birds were trapped and transplanted within the state.

The department's first game farm was constructed at Warm Springs in 1929 on 15 acres leased from the State Mental Hospital. The second game farm was built at Billings in 1935 on 14 acres purchased for \$2,800. A third farm was operated on land leased from C of E from 1940 to 1962 at Ft. Peck. Land for a fourth farm was acquired at Moiese in 1946.

Although the primary objective was to raise and plant pheasants to replace the declining native upland birds (sharpshooters) because of increases in farming, other exotics were raised and/or planted. Quail, chukars and few other species of pheasants were introduced on an experimental basis.

From 1930 through 1982 (the last year Montana raised any birds) 883,731 pheasants were planted in the state. About half of these (450,298) were raised at the Warm Springs farm from 1930 through 1982. The farm at Billings raised 218,777 pheasants until closed in 1959, while Ft. Peck raised 214,656. Ft. Peck closed operations in 1962. A serious outbreak of botulism at the Ft. Peck farm in 1960 resulted in the 1962 closure.

Prior to 1950, chukars were either purchased from out-of-state sources or raised at the several instate farms. Approximately 229 were raised in Montana. From 1951 through 1958, six thousand eight hundred eighty-seven (6,887) chukars were raised mostly at Moiese. The last chukars were raised in the state in 1958.

From the mid 30's until around 1950, it cost about \$1.00 to raise a pheasant at the farms. By 1979 the costs had risen to \$7.42/bird (pheasant). In 1981 the costs were approximately \$10/bird. It is estimated that only 15 percent of planted birds are harvested, therefore, the cost increases to \$66/bird.

¹ Montana's ring-necked pheasants (Phasianus colchicus) belong to a mixture of races descended from Asian Ancestors. Most introductions into the United States were either English or Chinese pheasants with a sprinkling of Mongolian and Japanese Green pheasants.

3-7-1985

Rising costs helped to emphasize that raising and planting pheasants after once established was not economically sound. It had also been demonstrated that trapping and transplanting wild birds was a more effective method of introducing birds where none exist, than using game farm birds. Biologically, without adequate habitat most birds (65 to 85 percent) do not survive the winter.

So, in 1982 over fifty years of game farm operations ended in Montana and the state joined the ranks of most others which finally abandoned a costly and inefficient operation.

Exhibit #5
3-7-1985
HJR #36

HJR 36

Testimony presented by Jim Flynn, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
March 7, 1985

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks supports House Joint Resolution 36.

During the last three legislative sessions, I have appeared before this committee several times to discuss bills related to the broad issue of game damage. This recurrence is a reflection of the on-going and frustrating nature of this problem.

Many of the causes of game damage are deep-rooted, intertwined with tradition and with strong feelings on both sides of the issue. On two occasions it has been a topic deliberated by the Montana Supreme Court. Solutions, to be effective and long-term, must be developed with all factors in mind.

The broad and complicated issue of game damage needs and deserves a thorough and close scrutiny. We would welcome the opportunity to assist in this endeavor over the next two years.



502 South 19th

Bozeman, Montana 59715

Phone (406) 587-3153

TESTIMONY BY: Lorna Frank

BILL # HJR 36 DATE 3/7/85

SUPPORT XXXX OPPOSE

Mr. Chairman, Committee members and Representative Grady, for the record my name is Lorna Frank, representing the Montana Farm Bureau, we are in support of this resolution.

There has been several bills before the legislature this year requesting compensation to the land owners for wild life damage. Farm Bureau has policy regarding this matter and we have supported all of these bills.

We would like to be a part of the study committee and assist in any way we can..

Lorna Frank
SIGNED

Exhibit #6
3-7-1985
HJR#36

Montana Audubon Council
Testimony on HJR 36
March 7, 1985

Exhibit #7
3-7-1985
HJR #36

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Janet Ellis and I'm here today representing the Montana Audubon Council. The Council supports HJR 36.

Game damage and game damage compensation seems to be discussed more and more frequently in Montana. It is particularly important to discuss this issue today when farmers and ranchers are facing difficult economic times and game animals are seen in record high populations throughout the state. We think that an interim committee studying this problem is a positive step. Hopefully this study will develop numerous solutions to the problem and serve as a powerful education tool for all parties involved.

Page 2, Line 15 sets up an "appropriate" interim committee be set up to examine the game damage problem. We want to go on record in support of a well balanced interim committee. The Audubon Council feels that landowners and sportsmen should be represented as well as rural and urban philosophies. Game damage is a problem that landowners are directly affected by. Sportsmen and/or urban Montanan's will also potentially be affected by this study if monetary compensation is recommended for game damage. We hope that the Legislature, in its wisdom, takes this matter into consideration when it appoints this important study committee.

Thank you.

VISITOR'S REGISTER

HOUSE FISH AND GAME COMMITTEE

BILL HJR 36

DATE 3-7-85

SPONSOR GRADY

[illegible]

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

WHEN TESTIFYING PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

VISITOR'S REGISTER

HOUSE FISH AND GAME

COMMITTEE

BILL SJR 18

DATE 3-7-85

SPONSOR FULLER

[illegible]

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

WHEN TESTIFYING PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

WITNESS STATEMENT

NAME Rep. Ray B. Lowe BILL NO. HJR 36
ADDRESS East Shore Bigfork DATE 3-7-85
WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT? HO 49
SUPPORT X OPPOSE _____ AMEND _____
PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

Comments: