

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 54th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISH & GAME

Call to Order: By CHAIRMAN BILL TASH, on March 6, 1995, at 7:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Bill Tash (R)
Rep. Hal Harper (D)
Rep. Dick Knox (R)
Rep. Bob Raney (D)
Rep. Paul Sliter (R)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Doug Sternberg, Legislative Council
Patti Borneman, Subcommittee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Discussion is paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Discussion on amendments for HB 349.

(This meeting was not tape recorded.)

Discussion:

REP. RANEY said the amendments they worked on had to do with river restoration language and funding.

Pat Graham said it would be better to direct the legislature to fund the project without specifying an exact amount at this time.

REP. RANEY said he thought it would be best to have the Appropriations Committee consider the amount. He walked the subcommittee through the amendments as follows: 1) The title was changed to include information on the review panel; 2) the economic benefits of fishing opportunities on page 2, whereas statements were changed and the voluntary participation of landowners was added; 3) the makeup of the review panel was changed to include a high school student, which he said was considered to provide a young person's perspective on the project goals; and 2-year terms were proposed for members of the panel.

Mr. Ochenski stated that he envisioned bottom-up involvement of local groups such as 4-H clubs, etc., and how this involvement would contribute toward public awareness of the project.

REP. KNOX agreed that the landowners' involvement must be voluntary and there was discussion about this language in the bill.

CHAIRMAN TASH mentioned that the word "functioning" had been removed per **Mr. Bloomquist's** request and the subcommittee discussed why this was removed.

SEN. LORENTS GROSFIELD commented on the latest version of the bill and was in agreement that it was moving in the right direction.

The subcommittee discussed various aspects of the bill, including how the review panel would prioritize projects and if this would be one of their responsibilities; the frequency of review panel meetings throughout the years (every 6 months); and involvement of people on the local level.

REP. RANEY said it was important that language cover funding for water leasing and wondered if it could also go through this project. **Mr. Ochenski** said that not every water leasing project should, but if related to fish spawning habitat, then it might.

CHAIRMAN TASH said that the two bills are different. One is related to the administration of water leases, transfers.

Mr. Ochenski explained the amendment to subsection (b).

SEN. GROSFIELD said the review panel should meet every 6 months and wondered where that was in the bill.

REP. RANEY wondered if it would be possible to authorize two new FTEs for FWP.

REP. HARPER said the project was dependent on providing enough personnel to run it.

SEN. GROSFIELD said it didn't bother him to add the two FTEs.

REP. KNOX asked if there could be "internal restructuring" at FWP to provide personnel needs.

REP. RANEY said FWP probably couldn't "juggle" the existing river restoration staff around and perhaps they should go to the Governor to ask for FTE funding.

Mr. Ochenski asked if the new FTEs would be the contact person "on the ground" or office staff at the Department and if they were the staff that should have an agricultural background.

REP. KNOX said it was essential for both types of jobs.

CHAIRMAN TASH agreed and said they could accommodate this need by contracting with someone to do the job.

REP. RANEY wondered where this was addressed in the amendments.

Mr. Graham made several comments regarding the amendments and the panel discussed several issues including Mr. Graham's belief that the "on-the-ground" contact person have the commercial ag background and not the administrative person; the length of time for the project and whether it should sunset at a certain time (a period of 10 years was discussed).

REP. RANEY said he thought this project should continue indefinitely.

Mr. Ochenski said that the sunset would allow for fiscal accountability and a progress review after a period of time.

REP. RANEY asked some questions about the review panel's primary function and if they would be running the program and developing the criteria for project priority and acceptance.

Most felt the Department should do this.

Mr. Ochenski said he thought the review panel would follow the criteria set forth by the Department and described the process as he saw it.

Mr. Sternberg said that the language in the bill was too broad and the Department should have the ability to prioritize in a systematic way.


Mr. Graham summarized what he thought they should focus on: "fixing what's broke," stabilizing the streambank, conserving what's already there, and preventing further problems in the future.

The subcommittee decided to meet again on Wednesday, March 8, to discuss the updated amendments.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 8:00 a.m.



REP. BILL TASH, Chairman



PATTI BORNEMAN, Secretary

BT/pb

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Fish and Game Subcommittee

ROLL CALL

DATE 3/6/95

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Rep. Bill Tash, Chairman	✓		
Rep. Hal Harper	✓		
Rep. Dick Knox	✓		
Rep. Bob Raney	✓		
Rep. Paul Sliter	✓		

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VISITOR'S REGISTER

Fish & Game Sub - COMMITTEE BILL NO. HB 349
 DATE 3/6/95 SPONSOR(S) Rep. Bob Raney

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