

## MINUTES

## WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE - NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE - 58th SESSION

March 7, 1975

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Mello at 8:00 A.M. in the Ways and Means Committee Room.

PRESENT: Chairman Mello, Mr. Bremner, Mrs. Brookman, Mr. Dreyer, Mr. Glover, Mr. Howard, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Weise and Mr. Wittenberg.

ALSO PRESENT: Bill Bible, John Dolan, George Zappettini, Elmo DeRicco Keith Grover, Norman Hall, Roland Westergard, Assemblyman Jean Ford and Senator Floyd Lamb, and John Richardson.

Motion was made by Mr. Howard to approve the minutes of February 26 and March 3. Seconded by Mr. Weise. Motion passed.

John Richardson gave a slide presentation showing the improvements that have been made to several State parks.

George Zappettini explained the Division of Forestry (page 533). He stated that the Division is responsible for the protection and management of some 9 million acres of State and privately owned forest and watershed land in Nevada. Their current programs are:

1. Forest and Watershed Protection - There were approximately 1500 fire safety inspections conducted and more than 10,000 school children instructed on fire prevention. During the biennium, 590 fires burned 24,287 acres and losses in resources and property amounted to \$1.5 million.

2. Rural Fire Protection - 86 volunteer fire departments and 18 fire districts are currently in operation throughout the State. These VFD's assist us in the wildland fire problem, but are primarily used for rural structures. There are 85 pieces of excess equipment on loan to VFD's at this time.

3. Cooperative Forest Management - During the biennium priority was given to making better use of over seven million acres of Pinyon-Juniper woodland. It is felt that programs yielding some \$10 million per year can be developed without harming this resource.

4. Forestry and Watershed Rehab - This project is only activated when needed and normally occurs after large fires, or when critical areas are burned and require immediate stabilization.

5. Tree and Shrub Nursery - the nursery in Reno produced and sold 240,995 trees and shrubs for conservation purposes during the past biennium.

6. Tree Insect and Disease Control - Yearly surveys were made and no serious insect or disease problems were detected.

Forty-two permanent employees carry out these programs in a cooperative effort with 544 other personnel throughout the State. This figure does not include federal or military cooperators. Substantial overtime is required by a majority of these employees to carry out these functions.

Mr. Zappettini stated that under New Positions, they are asking for 1 principal account clerk for Carson City, 1 pilot in cooperative air program, 1 senior clerk typist, 1 mechanic for 65 pieces of equipment, transfer 3 forestry firemen for Mount Charleston. They will also have two positions for the rural fire department as long as there are Federal funds.

Travel and Operating expenses will be about the same.

The equipment funds have been limited and will do the best they can with what has been allowed. The other office furniture and equipment is to provide tools for the mechanic and upgrade the equipment to meet Federal safety standards. The Special Equipment is for radios and a new bulldozer.

The Stand By expense was begun as the staff had to work six days a week during the fire season. This way, they will be on stand by and will only work if the hazard is high.

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The Special NIC funds are required as the firemen and the pilot have a special rate.

The Seasonals are college students who work during the fire season. They have 18 for the patrol station.

Air Craft operation was shifted to page 536.

Medical Expense - the firemen are required to have annual physicals due to NIC regulation and Federal Regulation. This is a new procedure that is required by law.

Instructional supplies are slides, film, charts, etc. for the training program.

The Farming and Raw Materials was put in the nursery budget on page 539.

The Inmate Program was explained. They had an honor camp at Spooner Lake which was closed because the warden did not like the location. This has been combined to the general budget.

Air Operation provides aerial fire fighting equipment and the state's contribution to the program is a plane and pilot and costs \$25,000 per year. The pilot is required to work seven days a week in the summer and this is against safety regulations, so the pilot requested would be used in this program. They would like to acquire a helicopter and convert it for their use. The cost of this conversion is in this item also. The helicopter would cost \$150,000 and \$25,000 would be required for the conversion. The second year of the biennium is a request for \$40,000 which would include a new engine for the 1973 airplane.

\$20,000 has been recommended for communication expenses, such as: telephones, postage and freight, and an intercom system. \$5,000 that was requested but not recommended would have been used for radio emergency supplies and a telecopier machine.

Mr. Bible stated that on page 536, Rural Fire Protection, the Governor is recommending two positions along with the other seven, provided that Federal funds are received.

Under Volunteer Fire Department, NIC insurance and physical examinations must be paid for from this budget for 160 men. There are seven fire stations that have more firemen, but the counties pick up the NIC.

The Forest Nursery budget was explained by Mr. Santini. \$90,000 was appropriated in 1973 for Washoe Valley, but this was abandoned due to a lack of water and only \$8,000 was spent. AB239 would provide for the establishment of a nursery in Las Vegas at a cost of \$119,907 per year. They will try to raise \$22,500 in revenue, but if they cannot, there will be some delay in the program.

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Assemblyman Jean Ford stated that she was on the advisory committee that prepared a study regarding land sites for this nursery. She stated that there is no nursery in Southern Nevada, commercial or otherwise and they have trouble with trees that are shipped to Southern Nevada from the north. She felt this might also encourage other nurseries. They found two attractive land sites that would be provided free to be used for this purpose, one is in Boulder City and the other is at Tule Springs.

Mr. Howard thought perhaps Spring Mountain area could be used for this purpose as there is plenty of water. Chairman Mello stated that water is being wasted because there is so much of it. Mr. Santini stated that this would not be a suitable site.

Mr. Robinson stated that he had received communication from Gilbert Construction Company regarding work they did for the state at a \$454,000 contract, but have only been paid \$300,000. He stated that the reason he was given for this non-payment was that the work was below standard.

Mr. DeRicco stated they have no specific details as the attorney is in Las Vegas, but stated that when the contract was issued, they expected them to live up to it. Mr. Robinson stated that he would pursue the matter in the sub-committee.

Mr. Zappettini then explained the Forest Fire Suppression budget. They

are requesting that any unused portion of funds be carried over to future years to establish an emergency fund. Mr. Bible stated that the recommendation is that the \$100,000 would be capable of being moved only into 1976-77 year.

Mr. Zappettini explained the Forestry Pest Control and the Forest and Water Shed Rehab.

Norman Hall explained the Committee on Federal Land Laws. He stated that a proposal is being introduced to change the number of the board and expand their duties. This budget would provide the travel and per diem needed for the proposal of this Legislation.

Senator Floyd Lamb explained the Hiel Wildhorse Bequest. He stated that Mr. Hiel requested in his will that wild horses be preserved and cared for. He stated their hands are tied as to just what they can do and suggested that the water holes be kept clean and traps be set. This would have to be done in conjunction with ranchers and the Bureau of Land Management. He stated that nothing has been accomplished and this was brought to them forcefully by the people. They counted 1300 wild horses in one area with only 25 colts and stated that the colts are choking and starving to death and felt that the intent of the will was to also save the colts. He felt that traps should be built to catch the stallions that are in bad shape and from the money they would receive from selling these horses, they could purchase other stallions to provide new blood. The Hiel grant has collected \$169,000 and the Hiel will left one-half million dollars. There is no way to spend the money, however, as the ranchers own the property. He stated that a good management program is needed. The horses would remain in a wild state, they would just like to get rid of the old horses and breed in new ones. He also stated that the colts are destroying themselves, and the wild horses are hurting the wild game and eating all the food. The area they looked at was in Stone Cabin Valley in Nye County. Mr. Howard stated that this problem was prevalent all over. Senator Lamb stated that something has to give to get a control on these horses.

Chairman Mello read BDR 23-1190 "Increases maximum allowances for subsistence and travel expenses of state officers and employees." Mr. Bremner made a motion for Committee Introduction and return to Committee. Mrs. Brookman seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.