

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE WATER COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 9:00 am on Tuesday, February 09, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Chris Waggoner, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Damien Gilbert, Committee Assistant  
Meredith Fry, Legislative Research Department  
Zach Fridell, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Heather O'Hara - KLRD

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Brad Loveless - Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism  
Kenneth Titus - Chief Counsel, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others in attendance:

No list available

**Presentation on: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism**

Brad Loveless, Secretary of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, introduced himself and the responsibilities of the KDWPT ([Attachment 1](#)). Its mission is to conserve and enhance Kansas' natural heritage, its wildlife and its habitats to ensure future generations the benefits of the state's diverse living resources; provide the public with opportunities for use and appreciation of the natural resources of Kansas, consistent with the conservation of those resources; inform the public of the status of the natural resources of Kansas to promote understanding and gain assistance with this mission; encourage the public to visit and travel in Kansas and stimulate tourism and travel-related spending in the state by promoting recreational, historic, cultural and natural attractions. It achieves these goals by monitoring, conserving, advocating for, and protecting the state's natural resources (primarily wildlife and its habitats) and promote the importance of these resources to our citizens. The majority of funding for this work is provided by hunters, anglers and campers through license and permit fees and excise taxes on fishing and hunting gear, so the department works closely with a variety of constituent groups to provide them with opportunities they desire to enjoy these wild resources and places. Secretary Loveless also presented on the budgets and staffing of various divisions within KDWPT ([Attachment 2](#)).

Secretary Loveless then stood for questions, including about cooperation with private partners to stock fish in more ponds, the spread of lyme disease and chronic wasting disease in deer ticks, damage costs from 2019 floods, the number of miles of park roads, and the effect of new cabin construction on local lodging.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Water at 9:00 am on Tuesday, February 09, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

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**Hearing on: HB2172 — Modifying water usage calculations and fees for multi-year flex accounts and permitting alternative base average water use calculations and prorated terms.**

Chairperson Highland opened the hearing on **HB 2172**.

Revisor Zach Fridell explained the meaning of the bill, which amends existing law concerning multi-year flex accounts and the ability for those who did not have a perfected water right by 2009 to now utilize these accounts. The bill would allow for water right owners to apply net irrigation requirements as a substitute for past use in order to establish flex account totals ([Attachment 3](#)). It would not have any fiscal effect on the Division of Water Resources of the Department of Agriculture or its budget ([Attachment 4](#)).

**PROPONENT**

Kenneth Titus, Chief Counsel of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, appeared before the committee and explained that **HB 2172** is a similar version of a bill that was introduced last year but small changes were made, which were explained in his testimony ([Attachment 5](#)).

Written-only testimony in favor of **HB 2172** was received from:

- Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau ([Attachment 6](#))
- Sean Miller, Kansas Groundwater Management Districts ([Attachment 7](#))
- Josh Roe, Kansas Corn Growers ([Attachment 8](#))

No neutral or opposing testimony was submitted.

Hearing no questions, Chairperson Highland closed the hearing and adjourned the committee at 9:57am.