

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1514

SPONSOR: Senator Bronson

SUBJECT: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

DATE: March 19, 2001 REVISED: 03/27/01 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Branning</u>	<u>Voigt</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>TR</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AGG</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill would eliminate the state subsidy to landowners in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission' User-Pay Program. Under this program, certain recreational use permit fees go directly to landowners who in turn keep their lands open for public hunting.

This bill amends s. 372.57, F.S.

II. Present Situation:

Currently, s. 372.57, F.S., provides that, except for certain stated exemptions, no person shall take game, freshwater fish, or fur-bearing animal within this state without having first obtained a license, permit, or authorization and paid the required fees.

In addition to any license required by ch. 372, F.S., other permits and fees for certain hunting, fishing, and recreational uses are required. Such permits include management area permits to hunt, fish or otherwise use for outdoor recreational purposes, land owned, leased, or managed by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or the State of Florida for the use and benefit of the commission. The fees for the management area permits may be up to \$25 annually. Permits, and fees thereof, for short-term use of land which is owned, leased, or managed by the commission may be established by rule of the commission for any activity on such lands. These permits and fees may be in lieu of or in additional to the annual management are permit.

A recreational user permit fee is required to hunt, fish, or otherwise use for outdoor recreational purposes, and leased by the commission from private nongovernmental owners, except for certain specified lands. The fee for this permit shall be based upon economic compensation desired by the landowner, game population levels, desired hunter density, and administrative

costs. The permit fee shall be set by commission rule on a per-acre basis. On property currently in the private landowner payment program, the prior year's landowner payment shall be used to augment the recreational user permit fee so as to decrease the permit fee for the users of that property.

Recreational use permits were developed to provide more revenue to private landowners in the Type I wildlife management area system. Money set aside by the commission to pay landowners for use of the hunting rights on their lands were not sufficient to compete with private leases. Rather than watch as wildlife management area after wildlife management area dropped out of the program, the commission was authorized by the legislature to introduce the recreational use permit. Fees collected for recreational use permits go directly to the landowner, who in turn, keep their lands open for public hunting.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends s. 372.57, F.S., to eliminate the state subsidy to landowners in the user-pay program.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Private landowners would no longer be able to receive subsidies from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as an inducement to keep their lands open and available for public hunting. For fiscal year 2000-2001, the amount of the subsidies was estimated to be \$379,568.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The money available for the subsidies currently is funded from the State Game Trust Fund. By eliminating the subsidies, there will be a savings realized in this trust fund. As part of the

Governor's proposed 5 percent reductions, the commission is offering to use these trust fund savings as a way to reduce the amount of General Revenue Funds that would be needed for general operations. The amount anticipated for fiscal year 2000-2001 is \$379,568.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

#1 by Natural Resources:

This amendment rewrites the bill to amend s. 320.08058, F.S., to change the distribution from the proceeds from the Panther License Plates. Currently, 15 percent of these proceeds are transferred to the Department of Community Affairs to pay the cost of operating the Florida Communities Trust. This amendment would provide that all of the proceeds from the Panther License Plates would go to benefit the protection of the Florida panther. (WITH TITLE AMENDMENT)

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
