

- SUBJECT:** Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission advisory boards
- COMMITTEE:** State Recreational Resources — favorable, with amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Kuempel, Cook, Crownover, J. Davis, Ellis, Homer, Hope, Ritter
0 nays
1 absent — Alexander
- WITNESSES:** For — None
Against — Jan Devault, San Jacinto Chapter of the Daughters Republic of Texas; Nell Hoover, San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board; Frank Calhoun; Jeffery D. Dunn
On — Ralph Rayburn, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
- BACKGROUND:** Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission currently has 23 advisory committees, with ten of these established by statute.
TPWD will go through sunset review in 2001, the next legislative session.
- DIGEST:** HB 2272 would allow the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission chairman to appoint advisory committees to advise the commission on issues under its jurisdiction. The chairman would be able to adopt rules for these advisory committees setting membership, terms of service, qualifications, operating procedures, and other standards. This bill would repeal the statutory requirements for five Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission advisory committees, including the:
- ! three-member Fannin State Park Advisory Committee, named by the governor;
 - ! nine-member Battleship “Texas” Advisory Board, named by the governor;
 - ! Texas Trails Advisory Council (an undesignated number of members appointed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission);
 - ! Falconry Advisory Board (three members appointed by the Parks and Wildlife Department); and the

- ! State Artificial Reef Plan Advisory Committee (at least nine members appointed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission).

The terms of these committee, commission, and board members would expire September 1, 1999.

HB 2272 also would provide that any money or property accepted by the Fannin State Park Advisory Commission would be transferred to TPWD on September 1, 1999. This bill would mandate that TPWD retain all data collected by Fannin State Park Advisory Commission, to be used to depict the history of the battleground. The committee amendment would remove the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board from this provision.

The committee amendment would require the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board to deliver all board meetings minutes, bylaws, and changes in bylaws to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, via a board member who also is a member of TPWD.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2272 would repeal statutory provisions on five advisory committees to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, helping TPWD get a jump start on its upcoming sunset review. HB 2272 would clarify the authority of the commission chairman to appoint and manage advisory committees on issues under its jurisdiction.

The advisory committees that HB 2272 would abolish could be re-established by the chairman if needed. The bill would ensure that the committees would operate under common procedures along with all other administratively established advisory committees, increasing efficiency and reducing any confusion about an advisory committee's function.

The Fannin State Park Advisory Council is not currently functioning because the battleground is managed by the Goliad Historical Park complex. The Battleship "Texas" Advisory Board has converted to a non-profit corporation to serve the needs of the battleship. Statutory authorization for these two advisory committees and the other three advisory committees simply is no longer needed. Any of these advisory committees could easily be retained by the chairman of the Parks and Wildlife Commission if they are needed.

It does not matter whether members are appointed by the governor or the commission chairman, they still would serve in an advisory capacity. An advisory committee member would not be removed from a given advisory committee just because of a differing opinion.

The governor appoints the Parks and Wildlife Commission members and entrusts them with making wise and fair decisions. It makes sense to let the commissioners decide who should serve as their advisors.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

It is an honor to be asked by the governor of Texas to serve on an advisory committee to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. While citizens would still be willing to volunteer their time to help their state, it is not quite the same to be asked to serve by a commissioner. It would be a shame to take that honor away just to allow the commission chairman to appoint members to these advisory committees. Furthermore, it would deprive the governor of a means to honor dedicated Texans wishing to serve in this capacity. Also, the bill would eliminate advisory committees that have been functioning well.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

Several Parks and Wildlife Commission advisory committees in sections of the statute would not be repealed by this bill. If the goal is to streamline the statute to provide more uniformity, all advisory committees in the statute should be repealed. The advisory committees in this bill should not be singled out and abolished while other similar committees remain untouched.

Furthermore, the committee amendment would exempt the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board from being repealed in statute and allow it to continue to exist, with members appointed by the governor. The Parks and Wildlife Commission could then establish a San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board under the authority this bill would grant. To be consistent, the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board also should be repealed, along with the other repealed committees.