



rec 2/17/11

The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

November 1, 2011

The Honorable John Lynch
Governor of New Hampshire
State House, Room 208
Concord, NH 03301

The Honorable Peter Bragdon
President of the Senate
State House, Room 302
Concord, NH 03301

The Honorable William O'Brien
Speaker of the House
State House, Room 308
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Lynch, Senate President Bragdon and Speaker O'Brien,

Re: SB 128, Chapter 147:1, Committee to study sources of funding for the search and rescue operations of the Fish and Game Department.

Pursuant to SB 128, Chapter 147:1, enclosed please find the final report of the study committee.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the report please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Senator Lou D'Allesandro
Chair

cc: Tammy L. Wright, Senate Clerk
Karen O. Wadsworth, Clerk of the House
Michael York, State Librarian
Members of the Committee

SB128

Chapter 147:1, Laws of 2011

Establishing a committee to study sources of funding for the search and rescue operations of the fish and game department.

FINAL REPORT

Findings

1. Revenue to the Fish and Game Search and Rescue Fund is derived from a \$1 fee on each boat, snow machine and all-terrain vehicle registered in NH. This fee was established in 1989 and has remained unchanged for the past 22 years.
2. The average yearly revenue to the search and rescue account is \$195,663. The average yearly expenditures for search and rescue are \$317,110. Money is taken from the fish and game fund, which includes fees from hunters and fishermen, to make up the deficit in the search and rescue account.
3. The 2011 fiscal year search and rescue fund deficit was \$166,992.
4. 56% of all search and rescue missions are for hikers.
5. 41% of all search and rescue missions occur within the White Mountain National Forest.
6. The lack of adequate funding for the search and rescue account over the years has led to cutbacks in equipment and training.

Proposals Presented

1. A \$2 surcharge on all motor vehicle violations to be dedicated to the Fish and Game Search and Rescue Fund. Based on the numbers for fiscal year 2011, there were 79,709 violations. A \$2 surcharge based on that number would yield \$159,418. Part of this proposal would also include repealing the \$50,000 transfer from the Cannon Mountain Ski Area to the Search and Rescue account.
2. Asking the hiking clubs who collect the meals and rooms tax to voluntarily remit back to the state the 3% they retain for collecting the tax and then dedicate that amount to the Fish and Game Search and Rescue Fund.
3. A \$500 minimum charge when called upon to do search and rescue.
4. A voluntary contribution option when one gets an ATV, hunting or fishing license
5. Hiking license plate

Recommendations

1. Increase Fish and Game fine amounts by \$10.00 to be paid into the Fish and Game Search and Rescue Account
Approximately 2000 issued each year on average

Estimated Amount: \$20,000.00

2. Recommended billing base line fees for all search and rescue services received under the following guidelines excluding individuals who show proof of a valid hunting/fishing license, OHRV/ATV or Boat registration. All others would be billed:

Any rescue costing between \$500.00 - \$999.00
Charge a flat fee of \$350.00
Average number of these per year: 90
(based on data collected over last 3 years)

Estimated Income: \$31,500.00

Any rescue costing between \$1000.00 - \$1499.00
Charge a flat fee of \$600.00
Average number of these per year: 60
(based on data collected over last 3 years)

Estimated Income: \$36,000.00

Any rescue costing \$1500.00 or more
Charge a flat fee of \$1000.00
Average number of these per year: 35
(based on data collected over last 3 years)

Estimated Income: \$35,000.00


3. Create a Voluntary Hike Safe Card. The card holder would not be billed for any rescue service unless negligent as long as the card purchase was prior to any rescue services being rendered. Make the purchase of the card on line only to limit administrative costs.

Hiking Card would cost \$18.00 each with \$3.00 being paid to the vendor
\$15.00 for each card would be deposited into the Fish and Game Search and Rescue Account.

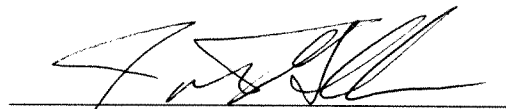
Estimated Income: \$77,500.00 (If we were to sell 5167 cards to Volunteers)

4. Exempt the Fish and Game Department from the 50% charge the Attorney General's Office retains for any delinquent charges they collect on behalf of the agency.

Total Estimated Income for Proposal 2: \$200,000.00




Senator Lou D'Allesandro (Chair)

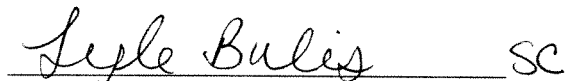


Senator John Gallus

Senator Jeb Bradley



Representative Gene Chandler



Representative Lyle Bulis SC

Representative Clifford Newton

Representative Jenna Roberts