

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

The Chase County Commissioners Tuesday reviewed a revised bill that addresses the transfer of ownership of the Champion Mill State Historical Park and State Recreation Area (SRA) from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) to Chase County.

The bill adds some language that was not contained in LB 739, the bill approved last year making that transfer.

Added was the following: "Title to the property described...shall remain with Chase County unless (a) Chase County ceases to operate the property as a public park and recreation area or (b) a financial need arises pertaining to the park that is detrimental to the county. In either case title to such property shall revert to the Game and Parks Commission."

The Chase County Commissioners had asked the NGPC for the change to protect the county from possible financial problems, Commissioner Don Weiss Jr. said.

Kirk Nelson, West Regional Manager of the Parks Division, said earlier that NGPC "had no problem with the proposed change. There's no hurry. We'd rather do this and take our time."

State Park System Administrator Roger Kuhn said NGPC wants Chase County to feel comfortable with the transfer, so the commissioners' request for the change in the bill was made.

The bill, which will receive a number when the Legislature convenes in January, will probably be introduced by State Sen. Mark Christensen.

The process to transfer ownership of the Champion Mill State Historical Park and SRA began over a year ago when NGPC approached the commissioners with the idea. NGPC has already transferred ownership of five other sites in Nebraska to local entities, as a budget-cutting measure.