

## **Legislature approves transfer of Champion Mill, Champion Lake**

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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**By Carolyn Lee**

### **The Imperial Republican**

Last Thursday the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 739, which would allow the transfer of ownership of Champion Mill State Historical Park and State Recreation Area (SRA) from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) to Chase County.

The bill passed with a vote of 45 in favor, none opposing and four abstaining.

The bill was sent to the Governor for his signature, with an emergency clause attached.

According to Sen. Mark Christensen's office, the emergency clause means that the law goes into effect immediately, rather than the usual 90 days following the signing of the bill into law.

Sen. Christensen introduced LB 739 on behalf of the Chase County Commissioners, after the NGPC approached them with the transfer of ownership proposal.

Commissioner Jodi Thompson said earlier this year that the commissioners still have the option of turning down ownership after the bill is approved.

"At that point we sit down with the Game and Parks and work out" details of the transfer and any repairs that need to be made.

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It was too late to get the issue added to the commissioners' agenda for the March 13 meeting.

Commissioner Don Weiss Jr. said "We got the first step done. Now we need to meet with the Game and Parks to get an agreement."

Last fall Kirk Nelson, West Regional Manager of the Parks Division for NGPC, said painting and roofing work at the mill were already contracted for this spring.

He said NGPC was searching for ways to keep some of its property open during economically difficult times.

Giving ownership of some land to local entities was one way NGPC was exploring. At least five other SRAs have already been transferred to local ownership.