

## Meanwhile, up on The Hill (not Center Hill)

Posted on Feb 22, Posted by [Webmaster](#) Category [John Sloan - Outdoors](#)

### By JOHN L. SLOAN

Guy called me and tipped me off to this. I thought I would share it with you. See, to me it seems like it happens just about every year. Some legislator with an axe to grind sponsors a bill or four that are just plain stupid and are for the soul purpose of self-something. By that, I mean they only serve his sense of self.

Here, let me give you an example. How about a bill that would make it possible for my neighbor or me to pull out of our driveway and hit a deer or an opossum on Palmer Road or Highway 70 and TWRA gets a bill for having it removed? Said deer lays there a day and the city comes and picks up the carcass. The city could then bill TWRA for that service as if it was TWRA's fault or TWRA owned the animal.

That would be stupid, would it not? That would also be House Bill #3169 sponsored by Frank Nicely R-Knoxville, (lives in Strawberry Plains), you might remember him from last year. It would allow any state government entity to charge TWRA for any animal they remove from a roadway, median, right-of-way or berm of the road. Seems to me it would not take too long for some town in Tennessee to realize they can make some real money charging TWRA \$50-\$100 for picking up skunks or squirrels or any wildlife. Pretty soon, TWRA is broke. Just plain stupid, I call it. Unless you look a little deeper.

How about this one? Every deer killed on a TWRA wildlife management area has to be tested for chronic wasting disease-CWD. Not only is that impossible and not needed, it is just plain an attempt to bankrupt TWRA. TWRA has a testing program in place and to date Tennessee is CWD free. However, if it were not, there is nothing that can be done about it anyway. That is house bill #3170, sponsored by Frank Nicely

Mr. Nicely, you might recall, is the fellow who wanted it to be legal to farm deer commercially in Tennessee and that was sorta sidetracked last year. So this year, he brought it back, House Bill 3164 and 1112 and once again, he wants to have commercial deer farming legal in Tennessee. It was supposed to come up on Feb. 14th. I heard due to inundation with calls and emails opposed to the bill, it was postponed again. I also heard a couple of the co-sponsors or whatever they are called took their name off the bill, too.

Of course, deer farming is most likely the reason we have CWD in the U.S. to start with. Just recently, two states, Missouri and Texas both directly and indirectly attributed deer farming to cases of CWD, so I am told. Mr. Nicely is the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and badly wants to make it legal to farm deer commercially here. I am starting to wonder why? Surely he doesn't really think it will create that many jobs.

Well, while we are talking dumb, let us look at House Bill # 3159, again one of Mr. Nicely's. The bill would limit wildlife officers to enforcing only wildlife laws. What is wrong with that, you say? They would have no jurisdiction to deal with anything that is not a wildlife or boating law. Keep in mind, wildlife officers are called upon for trespassing issues, work drug cases, crowd control and any manner of duties.

As for myself, I want more law on the streets and in the woods, not less. A wildlife officers stops a suspected poacher and sees a woman tied hand and foot in the back of the truck, I'd like for him to be able to inquire about that. If they see someone setting a house on fire, I would think it would be nice for them to be able to do something besides roast a hotdog. Not Mr. Nicely. Of course those are ridiculous examples but this is not. What about a wildlife officer responding to call from a deputy for backup? The wildlife officer would then be acting outside the scope of his authority.

Well here is a dandy. House Bill #3158 would put an end to hunting and fishing on any land managed as a wildlife management area not owned by TWRA because it would prohibit the designation of safety zones. See, if you can't have a safety zone, you can't protect workers, namely humans in areas of population or work. The following areas would quickly stop all hunting without safety zones AEDC (owned by the Air Force), Oak Ridge (owned by the DOE and UT), Enterprise South (owned by the city of Chattanooga), Mt. Roosevelt and Standing Stone and several others (owned by The Division of Forestry) and many more. Yep. Nicely again. Dang, you reckon he has an axe to grind.

Now you see, House bill 3449/Senate Bill 3450 is an attempt to remove TWRA from the season setting process and make the agency entirely political. I will not go into all the mechanics but we end up with a person appointed by the Governor running the agency and the agencies trained biologists have no voice in the job they are hired to do. Reckon there would be some politics played there? Next thing you know, we have someone who does not know a fox from a fix running the wildlife agency and probably a card-carrying member of PETA to boot.

Old Frank has been working hard. He had to have been to come up with all these ideas. I reckon he is still smarting after getting his hand spanked last year. I'm going to work hard, too. I'm going to make sure the people I vote for are aware of all this foolishness. Maybe you might, too. You can look all these bills up online and read the whole thing.

There are several more bills introduced by Frank that are equally stupid.

In case you are interested here are the bills affecting outdoor usage that Mr. Nicely is involved with: HB 3170, 3169, 3168, 3167, 3166, 3165, 3164, 3163, 3159, 3158, 1112 and 3449 and I think there are probably some I missed.

### **NWTF's annual banquet slated Mar. 1 in Lebanon**

The Cedar Roost Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will hold its annual banquet Thursday, March 1 at the Lebanon Golf and Country Club.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Cost of tickets are \$50 for a single ticket that includes one membership and one meal or a double ticket for \$80 that covers one membership and two meals. There will be a silent auction and a live auction following the dinner. For information contact: Jimmy Sloan at 615/943-4207 or [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](#) .

**CONTACT outdoor columnist John L. Sloan at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](#)**

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