

Natural Resources

AB 7 – Brunswweiler River

Rep. Sherman

Summary of Bill

Assembly Bill 7 - designates a portion of the Brunswweiler River as a wild river under the state's wild river program administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The bill requires the new wild river portion of the Brunswweiler River to be known as the Martin Hanson Wild River. The river is located in Ashland County primarily within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The last time a river received this designation was 1965.

The bill also allows for the maintenance and replacement of a small number of piers and a boat landing and the maintenance of an existing dam.

Fiscal Effect:

The Fiscal Estimate from DNR lists the cost as increased costs that can be absorbed within the agency's budget. The funding source is GPR. DNR states that management of the wild river can be covered by existing DNR staff as they do not anticipate significant changes because of the wild river designation as the river already flows through U.S. Forest Service land. DNR staff may be called upon to provide information to the public and a Memorandum of Understanding between DNR and the U.S. Forest Service will be necessary.

Supporters Message:

The intent of the State's wild river program is to "preserve some rivers in a free flowing condition and to protect them from development." This designation would prevent any human activity from changing the river channel, no new dams, piers or bridges (with the some exceptions) and no grading on the river bank over 10,000 square feet.

Much of the river is "trout" water.

AB 7 honors the life of Martin Hanson, a life-long advocate for the environment.

Opponents Message:

As the river is already in a U.S. national park, this designation is redundant.

Key Supporters:

Representative Sherman (author); Senator Jauch (Senate author) Nancy Larson, DNR; Lori Grant River Alliance of Wisconsin; Amber Meyer Smith, Clean Wisconsin; George Meyer, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation; Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

Key Opponents:

No one testified or registered against AB 7. No one registered against AB 7 with the Government Accountability Board.

Committee Vote:

On February 11, 2009, the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources voted unanimously that AB 7 be recommended for passage. Ayes 15 Noes 0

Ranking Member Author of Bill Summary

Ginger Mueller; Office of Rep. Jim Ott (6-0486)