

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

February 23, 2026

2 **AS AMENDED**

3 SENATE BILL NO. 2157

By: Bullard and Burns

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5  
6 **[ scenic rivers - Southeast Scenic Rivers Commission**  
7 **- funds - membership - powers and duties -**  
8 **promulgation of rules - codification - effective**  
9 **date ]**

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

11 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
12 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 898 of Title 82, unless there is  
13 created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

14 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Southeast  
15 Scenic Rivers Act".

16 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
17 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 898.1 of Title 82, unless there  
18 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

19 The Legislature finds that certain free-flowing streams and  
20 rivers of Oklahoma possess such unique natural scenic beauty, water,  
21 fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreation value of present and future  
22 benefit to the people of the state that it is the policy of the  
23 Legislature to preserve those areas for the benefit of the people of  
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1 Oklahoma. For this purpose, the following are hereby designated as  
2 southeast scenic rivers:

3 1. The Glover River in McCurtain County;

4 2. The Kiamichi River in Choctaw, Pushmataha, and Le Flore  
5 Counties;

6 3. The Little River in McCurtain, Pushmataha, and Le Flore  
7 Counties; and

8 4. The Mountain Fork River in Le Flore and McCurtain Counties.

9 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
10 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 898.2 of Title 82, unless there  
11 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

12 A. There is hereby created the Southeast Scenic Rivers  
13 Commission for the management of designated scenic river areas or a  
14 combination of areas for which operating areas for planning and  
15 management have been delineated. The Commission shall be an agency  
16 of the state. State funds for the Commission shall be provided for  
17 by a separate line-item appropriation through the Oklahoma Wildlife  
18 Conservation Commission. The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation  
19 Commission shall disburse the funds to the Southeast Scenic Rivers  
20 Commission in the amount and pursuant to the conditions prescribed  
21 by the Legislature.

22 B. The Commission shall consist of eleven (11) members. The  
23 term of office for each member shall be four (4) years. The  
24 Commission shall be composed of the following members:

1           1. Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall  
2 be a representative of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission or the  
3 Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission from a list provided by a  
4 Senator or a Representative, chosen by the Governor, representing  
5 the affected county of the scenic river designation;

6           2. Two members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the  
7 Senate, one of whom shall be a member of a statewide citizens'  
8 conservation or environmental group and one of whom shall be a  
9 member of an accredited state-supported college or university  
10 specializing in agricultural sciences and natural resources from a  
11 list provided by a Senator, chosen by the President Pro Tempore,  
12 representing the affected county of the scenic river designation;

13           3. Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
14 Representatives, one of whom shall be from the membership of a  
15 federally recognized tribe in one of the counties containing the  
16 scenic river area, and one of whom shall be a representative of the  
17 agriculture industry from a list provided by a Representative,  
18 chosen by the Speaker, representing the affected county of the  
19 scenic river designation; and

20           4. The remaining four members of the Commission shall be  
21 selected from the constituency of the Senator or Representative  
22 chosen by either the President Pro Tempore or Speaker of the House  
23 of Representatives, as follows:

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- 1 a. from the registered voters who reside, own real  
2 property, or own permanent residential structures  
3 within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Glover  
4 River within McCurtain County,
- 5 b. from the registered voters who reside, own real  
6 property, or own permanent residential structures  
7 within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Kiamichi  
8 River within Choctaw, Pushmataha, or Le Flore County,
- 9 c. from the registered voters who reside, own real  
10 property, or own permanent residential structures  
11 within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Little  
12 River within McCurtain, Pushmataha, or Le Flore  
13 County, and
- 14 d. from the registered voters who reside, own real  
15 property, or own permanent residential structures  
16 within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Mountain  
17 Fork River within Le Flore or McCurtain County.

18 C. The Commission shall promulgate all rules necessary for the  
19 conduct of appointments for Commission members.

20 D. A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled for the  
21 unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment. Each  
22 appointed member shall serve at the pleasure of his or her  
23 appointing authority. Each appointing member shall not have more  
24 than one selection in the event of an appointment or vacancy.

1 E. The Commission shall elect a chair and such other officers  
2 as the Commission deems necessary to conduct the affairs of the  
3 Commission. Six members of the Commission shall constitute a  
4 quorum, and the vote of the majority of members present shall be  
5 necessary for any action to be taken by the Commission. No vacancy  
6 in the membership of the Commission shall impair the rights of a  
7 quorum to exercise and perform all the rights and duties of the  
8 Commission.

9 F. The Commission shall hold meetings not less than once each  
10 quarter, at such times as may be fixed by call of the chair or as  
11 determined by a majority vote in advance of the meeting. It is the  
12 responsibility of the Commission to encourage the general public to  
13 participate in the formation and adoption of plans, standards,  
14 procedures, and regulations.

15 G. 1. A Commission member to whom some private benefit, direct  
16 or indirect, financial or otherwise, may come as a result of some  
17 public action shall not be a participant in that action. The  
18 possibility, not actuality, of a conflict of interest shall govern.

19 2. A Commission member, pursuant to paragraph 1 of this  
20 subsection, shall declare his or her interest publicly, abstain from  
21 voting, and refrain from deliberation on the matter. The Commission  
22 member shall not discuss the matter with any fellow member for the  
23 purpose of influencing a decision thereon.

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1 H. The meetings of the Commission shall be subject to the  
2 Oklahoma Open Meeting Act and the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

3 I. 1. The Southeast Scenic Rivers Commission shall prepare and  
4 establish minimum standards for planning and other ordinances and  
5 rules for the implementation of this act by counties,  
6 municipalities, or any political subdivisions in the operating area.

7 2. The standards shall be developed and executed in such a  
8 manner as to protect and enhance the values that caused the area to  
9 be designated a scenic rivers area without limiting other uses that  
10 do not substantially interfere with the protection, public use, and  
11 enjoyment of these values.

12 3. Primary emphasis on the standards shall be given to  
13 protecting the aesthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic, and  
14 scientific features of the scenic river area with due consideration  
15 being given to the orderly development of the lands adjacent and  
16 contiguous to the scenic river area.

17 4. Standards set pursuant to the provisions of this act shall  
18 not exceed those established by any other federal or state agency  
19 possessing jurisdiction of the designated area.

20 Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as authorizing the  
21 Commission the power of eminent domain.

22 J. The Southeast Scenic Rivers Commission shall have the  
23 additional powers and duties to:

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1           1. Appoint and fix the salary of an administrator experienced  
2 in land resource planning and management who shall serve at the  
3 pleasure of the Commission and in accordance with its policies,  
4 budgets, powers, and responsibilities. Such administrator may be  
5 commissioned as a peace officer. The administrator may select,  
6 appoint, and employ individuals to fill personnel positions  
7 authorized, budgeted, and deemed necessary by the Commission to  
8 implement the purposes of this act;

9           2. Act in cooperation with all federal, state, and local  
10 governments and agencies;

11           3. Coordinate with the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation  
12 Commission for the enforcement of this act;

13           4. Prepare and adopt a management plan or plans to guide and  
14 control private activities and public programs and to include  
15 varying degrees of protection and development based on the special  
16 attributes of the area;

17           5. Provide for the review and consideration of the impact on  
18 the natural and aesthetic environment within the designated area  
19 related to any existing or proposed action by public agencies,  
20 private individuals, or any other activity;

21           6. Accept real and personal property that is granted,  
22 bequeathed, devised, or conveyed to the Southeast Scenic Rivers  
23 Commission to implement the purposes of this act, upon such trusts  
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1 and conditions as may be prescribed by the grantors or devisors,  
2 upon approval of the Commission;

3 7. Enter into contracts on behalf of the Commission to  
4 implement the purposes of this act, and may accept gifts and grants,  
5 including real or personal property;

6 8. Identify public or private nuisances that are adverse to the  
7 purposes of this act and take such action as permitted by law to  
8 remove the public nuisances;

9 9. Own and control public access points to the scenic river  
10 area, issue use permits, and purchase easements and fee title to  
11 land within the designed area. Legal title to the property shall be  
12 held in the name of the Southeast Scenic Rivers Commission;

13 10. Review any action taken by any local, municipal, or county  
14 authority within the designated area of the Commission in an  
15 administrative adjudicatory proceeding brought upon the petition of  
16 any office or agency of this state, including the administrator, or  
17 of any person acting on behalf of the public interest, to determine  
18 whether such action conforms to the standards promulgated by the  
19 Commission or has an adverse effect upon the proper achievement of  
20 the purposes of this act. Upon a finding that such action does not  
21 conform or does have an adverse effect, the Commission order that  
22 the action be nullified, superseded, or amended to the extent  
23 necessary to produce such conformity or eliminate such adverse

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1 effect. The Commission may issue such orders as may be necessary to  
2 effectuate its primary order;

3 11. Hire an attorney or request legal assistance from the  
4 district attorney or the Office of the Attorney General when  
5 appropriate and if there is no conflict of interest;

6 12. Bring an action in the district court of any county of this  
7 state where service can be obtained on one or more of the  
8 defendants, to enjoin the acts or practices that appear to  
9 constitute a violation of any provision of this act or any rule  
10 promulgated, and to enforce compliance with the provisions of this  
11 act. Upon a proper showing, a restraining order, permanent or  
12 temporary injunction, writ of mandamus, or other appropriate  
13 remedies including damages shall be granted. The court may not  
14 require the administrator or Commission to post a bond; and

15 13. Suspend the effectiveness of any action taken by a  
16 municipality or county within the designated area of the Commission  
17 when it appears the action has or may have an adverse effect upon  
18 the provisions of this act, whereupon all proceedings thereunder  
19 shall be held in abeyance upon receipt of written notice from the  
20 administrator pending a final determination of the Commission in  
21 regard to such action. If it is determined that such adverse effect  
22 exists, the Commission may nullify, supersede, or amend the action  
23 only to the extent necessary.

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1 K. The Commission shall promulgate all rules necessary to  
2 implement the provisions of this act.

3 SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 29 O.S. 2021, Section 3-103, as  
4 amended by Section 1, Chapter 6, O.S.L. 2024 (29 O.S. Supp. 2025,  
5 Section 3-103), is amended to read as follows:

6 Section 3-103. A. The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation  
7 Commission shall constitute an advisory, administrative and  
8 policymaking board for the protection, restoration, perpetuation,  
9 conservation, supervision, maintenance, enhancement, and management  
10 of wildlife in this state as provided in the Oklahoma Wildlife  
11 Conservation Code.

12 B. The Director shall consult with the Commission regarding the  
13 administration of the affairs of the Department of Wildlife  
14 Conservation. The Commission is authorized and empowered to require  
15 from the Director complete reports and information relative to the  
16 affairs of the Department at the time and in the manner the  
17 Commission may deem advisable.

18 C. The Commission shall meet in regular session at least nine  
19 times per year not to exceed one meeting per month with not more  
20 than two consecutive calendar months between meetings and in special  
21 sessions as may be called by the Chair or a majority of the  
22 Commission. The Commission may hold any regular or special session  
23 at any location within this state. Should a location be chosen  
24 other than Commission headquarters in Oklahoma City for a regular or

1 special meeting, notice shall be posted at Commission headquarters  
2 in Oklahoma City and advertised in the local newspaper of the city  
3 in which the meeting is to be held, at least one time during each of  
4 the two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. The advertisements shall  
5 include time, date, and address of location of the meeting.

6 D. In addition to the other powers and duties prescribed by  
7 law, the Commission shall:

8 1. ~~Institute an affirmative action plan for hiring women and~~  
9 ~~minorities throughout the agency;~~

10 ~~2.~~ Elect a chair, vice chair, and secretary, who shall perform  
11 the duties required of them by statutes, rules of the Commission,  
12 and the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma. The chair, vice  
13 chair, and secretary shall receive no extra compensation;

14 ~~3.~~ 2. Appoint a Director, and determine the qualifications of  
15 the Director and all assistants and employees. A Commissioner shall  
16 not be eligible for employment in any position within the  
17 Department;

18 ~~4.~~ 3. Prescribe rules and policies for the transaction of its  
19 business and the control of the Department;

20 ~~5.~~ 4. Develop and implement a plan to provide step raises for  
21 Commission employees so that discrepancies of pay levels within a  
22 pay grade are eliminated;

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1       ~~6.~~ 5. Acquire by purchase, lease, gift, or devise, waters, real  
2 property, and personal property incident to the exercise of its  
3 functions and to maintain, operate, and dispose of the same;

4       ~~7.~~ 6. Acquire real property by condemnation only when the  
5 Attorney General or other counsel deems it an appropriate means of  
6 clearing title from willing or unavailable sellers;

7       ~~8.~~ 7. Supervise the establishment, extension, improvement, and  
8 operation of the wildlife refuges, propagation areas or stations,  
9 public hunting areas, public fishing areas, game management areas,  
10 and fish hatcheries;

11       ~~9.~~ 8. Prescribe the manner of cooperation with the Oklahoma  
12 Tourism and Recreation Department, colleges and universities within  
13 the state, other state agencies, any agency of the federal  
14 government, and any city, town, school district, or any other agency  
15 or organization in study of conservation and propagation of wildlife  
16 and in the establishment, maintenance, and operation of visual  
17 educational facilities, recreational facilities, and hunting and  
18 fishing facilities, in the study and propagation of wildlife;

19       9. Prescribe the manner of cooperation with the Southeast  
20 Scenic Rivers Commission created in Section 3 of this act;

21       10. Supervise the letting of all contracts and purchases for  
22 the Department, with all purchases of personal property to be made  
23 through the Office of Management and Enterprise Services;

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1 11. Authorize all claims or expenditures prior to incurring  
2 payment except as otherwise provided in this Code;

3 12. Prescribe rules on the use of Department-owned vehicles by  
4 the Director, department heads and other essential employees as the  
5 Commission deems necessary in order to perform their duties;

6 13. Prescribe rules for the sale of all regular or special  
7 licenses;

8 14. Publicize and encourage the conservation and appreciation  
9 of wildlife and all other natural resources;

10 15. Regulate the seasons and harvest of wildlife;

11 16. Promulgate rules to sell fishing and hunting licenses via  
12 the Internet;

13 17. Annually report to the Governor and the Legislature on the  
14 complete operation, activities, and plans of the Department,  
15 together with such recommendations for future activities as the  
16 Commission may deem to be in the best interest of the state; and

17 18. Provide the Governor and the Legislature with an annual  
18 inventory of all property and equipment.

19 E. Five (5) years after the effective date of this act, and  
20 every five (5) years thereafter, the Commission shall prepare a  
21 report for the Legislature with proposed licensing fees based on the  
22 latest Consumer Price Index year-to-date percent change release as  
23 of the date of the annual average county wage data release from the  
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1 Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce for  
2 Legislature approval or rejection.

3 SECTION 5. This act shall become effective November 1, 2026.

4 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND WILDLIFE  
5 February 23, 2026 - DO PASS AS AMENDED  
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