

State Welfare System To Be Studied

North Carolina's 100 counties may find a solution to their financial problems by getting out of the welfare business if a study to be conducted for the state takes over the administration and financing of these programs proves feasible to the next session at the General Assembly.

Such a study was authorized Wednesday of last week at the meeting of the State Board of Social Services in Raleigh.

Robert L. Lyday, a member of the board from Bryson City, in a motion that was unanimously approved by the board proposed that a study be made to determine the

feasibility of the state taking over the complete financing and administration of the social services program in North Carolina.

Lyday stated he had met with various county commissioners from the western part of the state and that they stated rising welfare costs were creating a financial crisis in their counties.

Under the present system the state and counties share the non-federal share of the program. When the General Assembly approves the total welfare budget, it makes the county's share of the funds mandatory.

The only real source of income for counties is the ad valorem property tax which has limitations.

Commissioner of Social Services Clifton M. Craig told the board that 36 states already have a state administered welfare system and the Virginia legislature just recently voted to change their system. He also stated that some counties have already run out of welfare money for this year and are faced with a significant budget increase for the next year.

Under a state system the state would maintain offices throughout the state to provide social services and financial aid to its citizens. This would relieve the counties of all financial responsibility in maintaining its present county departments of social services and these funds could be converted to other critical needs.

The State Board of Social Services Wednesday approved a record budget request for the next biennium of \$569 million. This means an increase of \$178 million over the current biennium budget of \$391 million.

The counties will face an

Animal Protection Laws Cited

This week is being observed as "Be Kind to Animals" Week and the Cherokee-Clay Humane Society, Inc. reminds that there are a number of laws in North Carolina against cruelty to animals.

A chapter spokesman said reports have been made to the society of dogs being badly mistreated at Peachtree and also in the Bealtown section.

He pointed out that state laws make it a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than \$50 or jail term of not more than 30 days, to cruelly beat, torture, torment, overload or deprive of necessary sustenance any useful beast, fowl or animal.

State laws also forbid bearbaiting, cockfighting and similar amusements and prohibit the transportation of animals in any cruel or inhuman manner.

Cancer Clinic

The cancer detection clinic for Cherokee, Clay and Graham counties will be held at the Murphy Health Department on Friday at 1 p. m. Call the Health Department for an appointment.

increase of approximately \$28 million, the state \$33 million, and the federal government \$117 million.

Under a state administered program the counties would save approximately \$82.8 million during the next

biennium if the total budget request is approved by the General Assembly.

Major items that are causing the increase are the rising number of recipients and increased medical assistance costs.

RALIEGH -- The black bear is in trouble in North Carolina if recent hunting reports prove accurate.

The next few years may be critical, and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is currently conducting a four-pronged study to determine ways in which the bear can be saved.

"The bear should be saved because he is not only a superb big game animal for hunters, but also because of the part played by the bear in our wilderness, and for observation by future generations," said

Division of Game Chief Frank Barick.

The most important finding by the commission is that most of the bear population in the state may be under the breeding age.

"If these studies are correct, it could mean that most of our bears are being killed before they reach the breeding age," said Barick. "Bears have little breeding success before the age of three and a half years old, and tooth studies indicate that most of the bears killed last season were three years old or younger."

"Each year for the past few seasons, there has been a significant drop in the bear kill," said Barick. "This is further indication of the rapidly dwindling population."

Because of the crisis in the bear population in the state, the current restrictions on the hunting of bear are not being recommended for change. The proposed regulations for bear -- and other 1970-1971 hunting and trapping regulations -- go before the public in a series of public hearings in May.

The first part of the study being conducted by the Wildlife Commission consists of an investigation of the some 29 captive bears in North Carolina to collect information about feeding habits, growth rates, hibernation and the breeding and care of young.

The commission is also carrying out an intensive search to locate all habitable bear range in the state and to determine which areas now have bear populations and which do not.

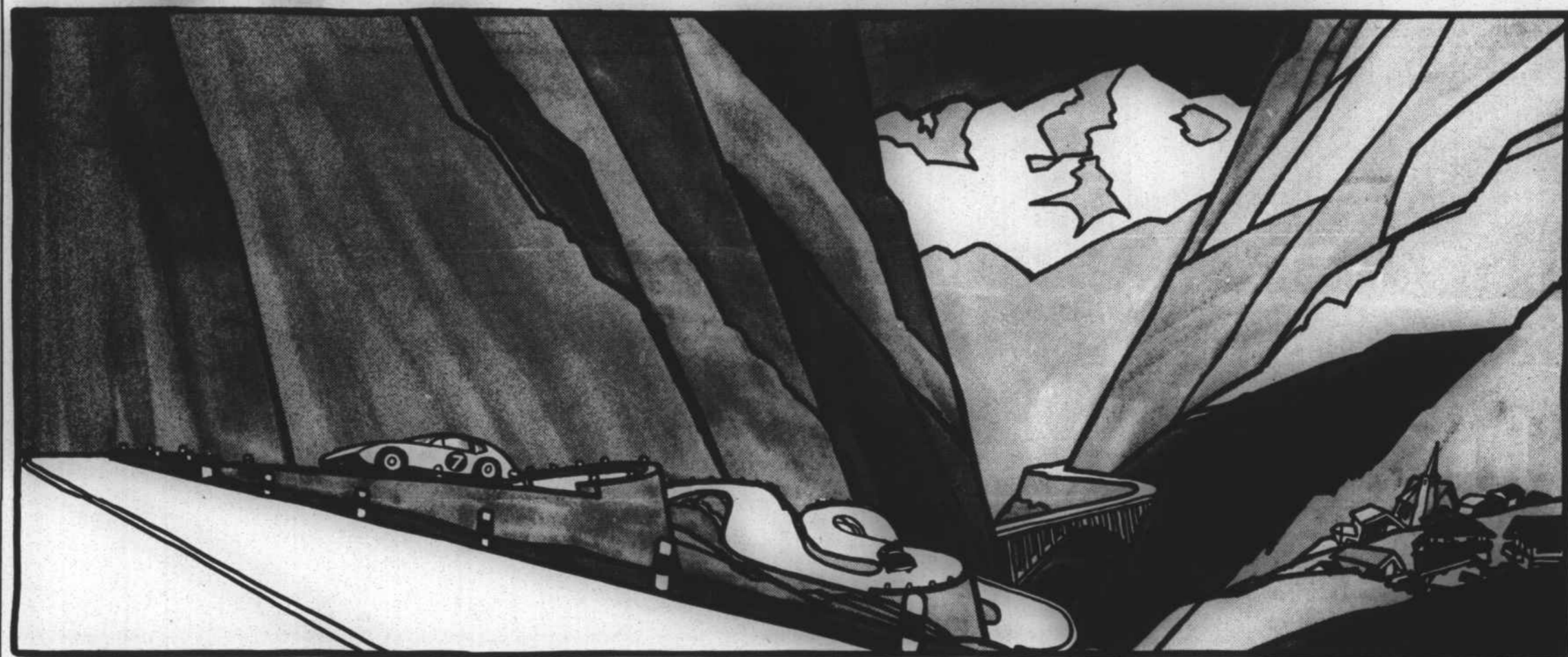
Also, a study is being made to find out how many bear

hunters there are in the state, and to learn significant details about their hunting.

Finally, the Wildlife Commission is in contact with game departments in other states in an effort to share information and possibly apply proven methods of bear management to North Carolina.

"We admit that the outlook is not too bright, but this study may mark the turning point, and with the help of the hunters in this state, we may be able to save the bear," said Barick.

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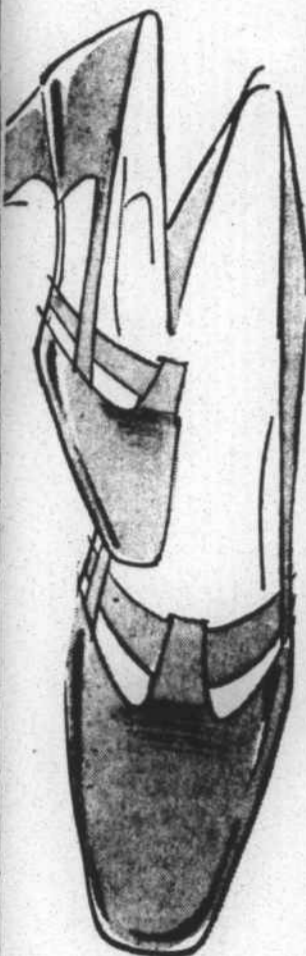
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