

Central Regional Advisory Panel
Mobridge District Office
June 18, 2015

Attendees:

Panel members Present (8):

Jack Broome - Burke
Fred Hubbard – Miller
Herb McClellan – Mobridge
Danielle McGee-Campbell – Onida
Lyle Perman – Lowry
Leonard Spomer – Pierre
Bill Waeckerle - Akaska

GF&P Staff:

Cliff Stone
Sandi Knippling
Arden Petersen
Dan Jost
Dan McCormick
Doug DeLaRoi

Welcome & Introductions

Cliff Stone opened the meeting at 10:00 am, welcomed the panel members, introduced Department Staff, and reviewed the agenda. Cliff informed the panel that member Cody Wilson has decided to step aside.

Panel Member Updates/Issues

Fred Hubbard: Lake Louise, in the Miller area, is a nice state park. Fishing in Lake Louise has been slow. They held a kids fishing event recently, weather wasn't real good but the 50 kids who did attend caught bullheads and a few bass. Saw lots of schools of bluegills. A few fish are being caught out of Jones Lake. Deer population appears to be in good shape, seeing a few fawns. Pheasant numbers appear to still be down and have seen no young ones yet; still seeing hens with roosters. Area has received some much needed moisture recently.

Herb McClellan: Elevation of Lake Oahe was going down due to no snow pack but now recent rains have resulted in the water rising a foot or so. Area recently hosted two large fishing tournaments (133 teams and 110 teams), 22 lbs was the winning weight in one of the events. Local fishing guides say can catch walleye anywhere but not the big ones, sizes have been 14-16". Speculation is that the larger walleyes are still up north, should have better fishing in about a month. Deer and antelope seem to be improving. Pheasant numbers still down but hoping for a good hatch. Some of the proceeds from the Mobridge ice fishing tournament are being partnered with GFP to enclose the fish cleaning station at Indian Creek. This will allow the fish cleaning station to be used during the winter ice fishing period. It is believed this is the first year round station in the state. Local Pheasants Forever Chapter is providing financial assistance for grass plantings at the Blue Blanket GPA.

Jack Broome: Local fishing has been very good. On Lake Francis Case there is a good catfish bite going on, hope is that the White Bass bite will also start. Deer population seems to be bouncing back, seeing lot more deer than in the past coming back and forth to the river. Pheasant population also looks like it is rebounding. Turkey numbers are down. On, the drive up to Mobridge, everything (crops/habitat) really looks great.

Bill Waekerle: Recently, fishing has been real good in the Akaska area. Really need another boat ramp/dock to accommodate all of the fishermen. Not only walleyes in the catch, but crappies, smallmouth bass and northern pike are being taken. Local group hosted a senior fishing event. Also an issue of poor road conditions in the area, working with the County, GFP, and Highway Department to see if they can develop solutions. Akaska/Swan Creek area pheasants are reneesting. Locally, deer numbers, both whitetail and mule deer, seem to be down. One other local issue is hunting trespass. In the past it was primarily during the small game seasons, but now is increasing during the big game seasons as well.

Lyle Perman: Similar wildlife observations as Herb and Bill. Lyle shared information with the group regarding farm and ranch costs, production input costs and dollars returned based on crop production versus pasture use. Local area was in a drought since Mother's Day and now we have had 8" of rain.

Danielle McGee-Campbell: In the Onida area, it was real dry until about mid-May, since then they have received pretty good moisture. Weather was warm during calving season. Pheasant numbers look good, but still some roosters chasing hens. Kids fishing tournament was held. Like Bill, trespassing also has been an issue. She is working with state representative so CO's can write a vehicle trespass. Local sheriff is reluctant to assist. We lost our CO, going to be a teacher at the school. Seeing a few deer with triplets this spring, hoping coyotes are not too hard on them. ADC plane was in the area recently and removed a number of coyotes.

Panel had a short discussion on CO recruitment/retention and the hiring process. A new Conservation Officer option within the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences program, at SDSU, will begin in the near future.

Leonard Spomer: Northern pike fishing was good in the Pierre area after ice out. Local High Plains Wildlife club hosted a youth fishing event, had 86 kids participate. Fishing success was only fair, but there were some nice walleye and bluegills caught. Walleye fishing, right now, in Pierre area is very good on Lake Sharpe, also good reports from Oahe in the Cheyenne River and at Sutton Bay. Most fish in the 16-18" range. Pheasants: came through the winter very well. Saw first young one's yesterday, however still seeing pheasant pairs together. Mentioned the new pollinator seed program, program seemed very popular and a lot of seed was distributed.

GFP Updates: In the central part of the state, antelope numbers are still generally below management goals, there for we will probably see either no increase or a decrease in tags in most of the units in Region 2. Grasslands/Lyman still remains closed.

GFP Commission finalized the East and West River deer seasons. The 9-day antlerless tag only extension after Christmas will only be open in East River units.

Cliff provided some information on the new Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) rules. GFP is making a significant effort at public education on the new rules, since changes occurred after publication of fishing/boating handbooks. Signs are being placed at boat ramps, rack cards are being handed out, ads placed in magazines, and lots of effort on social media. Rules governing the transport of bait seem to be the issue that needs further educational efforts. Bottom line is "don't move the water". Jack commented that he was fishing at Whetstone Bay and that GFP Officers were checking fisherman and educating them on the new AIS rules and explaining why. Jack indicated they were doing a very good job. Checking every boat and explaining why. It did a lot of good. Overall, angler/boater compliance with the new regulations has been fairly good.

Stakeholder Group Representatives for Geese and Turkey – Stone

GFP is organizing stakeholder groups that will provide input into development of goose and turkey management plans. Groups will function similar to the Elk Stakeholder group that Leonard represented the Central panel on recently. Both groups will probably meet in Pierre and travel expenses will be provided. Leonard will represent Central RAP on turkey group and Jack on the goose group.

Region 2 Fisheries Overview – Dan Jost, Region 2 Fisheries Program Manager provided an overview of the fisheries management work and activities that he and his staff are responsible for. Outside of the Missouri River reservoirs, most of the bodies of water they manage are 5-150 acres in size and are generally managed for largemouth bass and panfish. Lake surveys are done every three years and management plans prepared and updated every five years. Sixty waters, in the Region have active management plans. Fluctuating water levels make many of these fisheries “boom and bust”. They also have management agreements on 88 waters located on private lands that they provide assistance on. Crew also works on ponds on the Ft. Pierre National Grasslands, walleye/salmon spawning, Lake Oahe fish population surveys and walleye tagging project, fish flesh contaminant sampling, fish kill investigations, habitat/access projects and educational programs. Panel members then toured some of the specialized equipment and boats that the fisheries staff uses in their work activities.

Land Ethics Attitude Survey – Lily Sweikert, SDSU Graduate Student, provided an overview of a multi-state land ethics survey that she will be conducting. She provided a draft list of questions/statements for the panel members to review and comment on. Question list will be pared down prior to actual initiation of the survey.

Afternoon Field Trip – CO Doug DeLaRoi and Park Manager Dan Richards provided information and background on the newly developed shooting range in Moberge. The modern range has both handgun and long rifle stations and has been receiving a lot of use. Dan McCormick lead the group on a tour of the Blue Blanket Game Production Area, southeast of Moberge, and the tour stopped at several locations where Dan highlighted and discussed various wildlife habitat management practices.

Next Meeting: Suggestion is to hold the next meeting in October in Gettysburg and include a tour of the Whitlock's Salmon spawning facility.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM