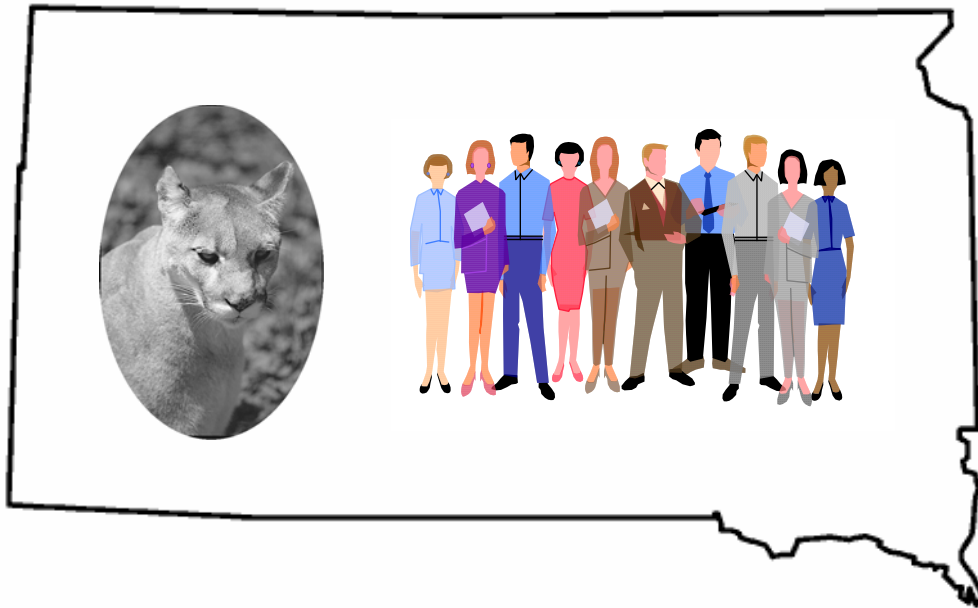


Mountain Lion Management in South Dakota

Analyses of Public Input

HD-4-10.AMS

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This report was produced for Game, Fish and Parks' wildlife staff and administrators to summarize the public involvement effort and input for use in developing an up-dated mountain lion management plan for South Dakota.

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Executive Summary

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Larry Gigliotti, Ph.D.

- Eleven public meetings were conducted around the state (from late March to mid-April, 2010) to provide information about mountain lion management and gather public input for up-dating South Dakota's Mountain Lion Management Plan.
- A total of 396 people attended the public meetings and 355 (90%) completed a questionnaire handed out at the meeting. In addition, unsolicited input was collected and summarized in this report.

Summary

This report provides a good description of attitudes held by people attending one of the eleven Mountain Lion Management Meetings held in 2010 and also summarizes input from some people that held attitudes very different from the majority of meeting participants. Neither set of input data is representative of South Dakota residents but does provide input from folks holding strong but conflicting attitudes towards mountain lion management.

Overall, South Dakota residents have a positive attitude towards mountain lions. However, there is considerable controversy surrounding how mountain lions should be managed. Most South Dakota residents support having GFP manage for a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota and want the effort to be guided by sound, scientific data. In conjunction with this attitude is a belief that mountain lions are a little bit too numerous and the population needs to be lowered. However, there are wide differences in beliefs regarding the amount of reduction needed and a sizable minority portion of the population that wants the population to remain at the current level. Also, peoples' beliefs about population levels are based on the recent past few years and thus do not take into account the reduction in the mountain lion population that occurred with the 2010 mountain lion season. With this public information in mind, GFP needs to use its best scientific data and training to select a target population number that will produce a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota.

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Mountain Lion Management in South Dakota

Analyses of Public Input

HD-4-10.AMS

Larry M. Gigliotti, Ph.D.

Introduction

In 2010 the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (Division of Wildlife) conducted public meetings designed to provide information to the public about mountain lion management and gather public input to use for up-dating South Dakota's Mountain Lion Management Plan at eleven locations around the state (Table 1). A total of 396 people attended the public meetings and 355 (90%) of the meeting attendees completed a survey questionnaire handed out at the meeting (Appendix A). In addition, some people made copies of the survey questionnaire and passed them around to be completed by people who did not attend the public meetings. A total of 110 of these 'unsolicited' responses were received and analyzed separately. Where appropriate, this data was compared with results from a scientific survey of Black Hills citizens conducted in late fall of 2008 (Gigliotti, et al., 2009) or results from a scientific survey of South Dakota citizens conducted in 2002 (Gigliotti, et al., 2002).

Table 1. Attendance at the 2010 public meetings on mountain lion management planning.

City	Date – 2010	Attendance	Returned Surveys
Spearfish	March 22	70	64
Sioux Falls	March 23	27	27
Yankton	March 24	41	36
Mitchell	March 25	23	19
Hot Springs	March 29	38	29
Buffalo	March 30	9	6
Custer	March 31	43	39
Rapid City	April 1	79	74
Aberdeen	April 12	23	20
Winner	April 13	21	19
Pierre	April 14	22	22
Total	-	396	355

Analyses & Discussion

Attitude towards a Mountain Lion Season in South Dakota. The Black Hills citizen survey data provides the most accurate, scientific measure of Black Hills citizens' general attitude towards a South Dakota mountain lion season (Table 2). The Black Hills citizen survey had a large, randomly selected sample with a good response rate and adjusted for non-response bias (Gigliotti, et al., 2009). Public meetings and unsolicited responses are not scientific measures and usually obtain biased results. One usual bias is that public meetings and unsolicited responses do not accurately measure the level of neutrality or no opinions found in the population because these public involvement techniques do not attract input from the portion of the public that has low interest in the topic. In other words, public meetings and unsolicited responses tend to over estimate the number of people with strong feelings towards a topic.

The public meeting responses had a much more favorable attitude towards a South Dakota mountain lion season compared to the general population of the Black Hills (87% vs. 63% favorable, or about 22% more favorable on the attitude scale) (Table 2). On the other hand, the unsolicited responses were much more opposed to a South Dakota mountain lion season compared to the general population of the Black Hills (78% vs. 24% opposed, or about 44% more opposed on the attitude scale). The two non-scientific input formats (public meetings vs. unsolicited responses) produced very different results: about a 65% difference on the attitude scale.

Meeting Location. All eleven meeting locations had an overall favorable attitude towards a South Dakota mountain lion season (Table 3). Meeting respondents from Buffalo had the highest mean favorable attitude supporting a mountain lion season (2.83) compared to Custer with the lowest mean favorable attitude supporting a mountain lion season (0.87): a 33% difference.¹

Information from a Regional Advisory Panel (Region 2) is included in some tables, but is not discussed in this report.

¹ To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 6.

Table 2. In general, do you oppose or favor a mountain lion hunting season in South Dakota?

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Oppose (-3)	18	5.2%	65	59.1%	486	11.1%
Moderately Oppose (-2)	11	3.2%	14	12.7%	248	5.7%
Slightly Oppose (-1)	7	2.0%	7	6.4%	300	6.9%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	11	3.2%	3	2.7%	593	13.5%
Slightly Favor (+1)	14	4.0%	7	6.4%	583	13.3%
Moderately Favor (+2)	28	8.0%	4	3.6%	754	17.2%
Strongly Favor (+3)	260	74.5%	10	9.1%	1,417	32.3%
Total	349	100%	110	100%	4,381	100%
Mean	2.20		-1.68		0.93	
95% C.I.	2.02 – 2.38		-2.07 – -1.30		0.87 – 0.99	
SUMMARIZED RESULTS						
OPPOSE	36	10.3%	86	78.2%	1,034	23.6%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	11	3.2%	3	2.7%	593	13.5%
FAVOR	302	86.5%	21	19.1%	2,754	62.9%

Table 3. Mean attitude (oppose or favor) towards a mountain lion hunting season in South Dakota analyzed by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Mean Attitude ^{1,2}	Number Responding
Spearfish	2.11	63
Sioux Falls	2.08	26
Yankton	2.74	35
Mitchell	2.79	19
Hot Springs	2.54	28
Buffalo	2.83	6
Custer	0.87	39
Rapid City	2.40	73
Aberdeen	1.50	20
Winner	2.47	19
Pierre	2.71	21
Region 2 RAP	2.71	7
Unsolicited	-1.68	110

¹Attitude scale: -3=Strongly Oppose, -2=Moderately Oppose, -1=Slightly Oppose, 0=Neutral/No Opinion, 1=Slightly Favor, 2=Moderately Favor, 3=Strongly Favor

²To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 6.

Preferred Management Action. If it was known that a mountain lion frequented the area where you live but had not caused any problems or exhibited any threatening behavior, which action would you want the state wildlife agency (GFP) to take? Although all three groups were significantly different in their overall preferred management action for this scenario, educating the public on how to safely live in lion areas had the highest percentage of responses for all three groups (public meetings, 37%; unsolicited responses, 52%, and Black Hills citizens, 39%) (Table 4). The key finding is that both input from the public meeting and from unsolicited responses produced biased results when compared with the scientific results from the Black Hills citizen survey.

Table 4. Preferred Action: If it was known that a mountain lion frequented the area where you live but had not caused any problems or exhibited any threatening behavior, which action would you want the state wildlife agency (GFP) to take?

Preferred action	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Take no action.	64	18.2%	36	32.7%	509	11.7%
Educate the public on how to safely live in lion areas.	128	36.5%	57	51.8%	1,668	38.5%
Take steps to chase the lion out of the area.	21	6.0%	7	6.4%	461	10.6%
Capture and remove the lion.	47	13.4%	7	6.4%	1,328	30.6%
Kill the lion.	83	23.6%	2	1.8%	305	7.0%
No Opinion.	8	2.3%	1	0.9%	63	1.4%
Total	351	100%	110	100%	4,333	100%
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				39.028	5	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				160.901	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				70.785	5	<0.001

Attitudes toward Wildlife Populations in the Black Hills. Desired population direction was measured on a 6-point scale (0=eliminate to 5=increase a lot) for six wildlife species (mountain lion, elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, coyote, and turkey) (Tables 5 – 10). The public meetings and unsolicited responses were significantly different on five of the six wildlife species (turkey was the exception). Responses for five of the six wildlife species were also compared with the results from the scientific survey of Black Hills citizens (mountain lion, elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, and coyote). All comparisons were significantly different except for the comparison between unsolicited responses and Black Hills citizens for desired elk population direction (Table 6).

Mean desired population direction for each of the six species are summarized and plotted for each of the three data collection methods (Figure 1). The overall conclusion is that neither public meetings nor unsolicited responses accurately measure general public attitudes. Also for this topic the two non-scientific data collection methods produced very different results from each other.

Mean desired population directions for each of the six species are tabulated for each meeting location (Table 11). Any value above 3 represents an average desire for an increasing population and any value below 3 represents an average desire for a decreasing population. This information can also be used to calculate the percent difference between any two points in the table. For example, the percent difference in mean population direction between mountain lions and elk for participants at the Spearfish meeting location is 48% [example calculation: $(4.23 - 1.82) / 5$]. Another example could be comparisons between locations within species, i.e., participants at the Buffalo meeting had the ‘lowest’ desired decrease for the mountain lion population while participants at the Pierre meeting had the highest desired decrease for mountain lion populations; a 27% difference [example calculation: $(2.80 - 1.45) / 5$].

Table 5. Preferred Mountain Lion Population in the Black Hills

Preferred Mountain Lion Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	21	6.2%	2	1.9%	133	3.1%
Decrease a Lot (1)	112	32.9%	3	2.9%	448	10.3%
Decrease Some (2)	93	27.4%	9	8.6%	1,312	30.1%
Current Level (3)	78	22.9%	40	38.1%	2,011	46.2%
Increase Some (4)	29	8.5%	41	39.0%	350	8.0%
Increase a Lot (5)	7	2.1%	10	9.5%	97	2.2%
Total	340	100%	105	100%	4,351	100%
Mean	2.01		3.38		2.53	
95% C.I.	1.89 – 2.13		3.19 – 3.58		2.50 – 2.55	
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				109.424	5	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				184.142	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				158.665	5	<0.001

Table 6. Preferred Elk Population in the Black Hills.

Preferred Elk Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13	0.3%
Decrease a Lot (1)	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	42	1.0%
Decrease Some (2)	3	0.9%	4	3.9%	282	6.5%
Current Level (3)	52	15.3%	51	49.5%	1,772	40.8%
Increase Some (4)	168	49.0%	29	28.2%	1,509	34.8%
Increase a Lot (5)	117	34.5%	19	18.4%	719	16.6%
Total	339	100%	103	100%	4,337	100%
Mean	4.17		3.61		3.59	
95% C.I.	4.09 – 4.24		3.45 – 3.77		3.56 – 3.61	
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				58.766	4	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				146.365	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				5.730	5	=0.333

Table 7. Preferred White-tailed Deer Population in the Black Hills.

Preferred White-tailed Deer Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens ¹	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	0	0.0%	2	1.9%	10	0.2%
Decrease a Lot (1)	13	3.8%	11	10.7%	593	13.6%
Decrease Some (2)	26	7.7%	17	16.5%	1,415	32.3%
Current Level (3)	100	29.5%	55	53.4%	1,598	36.5%
Increase Some (4)	111	32.7%	11	10.7%	496	11.3%
Increase a Lot (5)	89	26.3%	7	6.8%	265	6.1%
Total	339	100%	103	100%	4,377	100%
Mean	3.70		2.81		2.63	
95% C.I.	3.59 – 3.81		2.60 – 3.01		2.60 – 2.66	
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X ²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				60.308	5	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				373.867	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				27.433	5	<0.001

¹The Black Hills citizen survey measured general attitude towards ‘deer’ not specific species of deer.

Table 8. Preferred Mule Deer Population in the Black Hills.

Preferred Mule Deer Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens ¹	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	10	0.2%
Decrease a Lot (1)	4	1.2%	7	6.8%	593	13.6%
Decrease Some (2)	23	6.8%	13	12.6%	1,415	32.3%
Current Level (3)	79	23.4%	51	49.5%	1,598	36.5%
Increase Some (4)	112	33.2%	17	16.5%	496	11.3%
Increase a Lot (5)	119	35.3%	14	13.6%	265	6.1%
Total	337	100%	103	100%	4,377	100%
Mean	3.95		3.15		2.63	
95% C.I.	3.84 – 4.05		2.93 – 3.36		2.60 – 2.66	
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X ²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				54.432	5	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				565.441	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				34.102	5	<0.001

¹The Black Hills citizen survey measured general attitude towards ‘deer’ not specific species of deer.

Table 9. Preferred Coyote Population in the Black Hills.

Preferred Coyote Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses		Black Hills Citizens	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	6	1.8%	1	1.0%	125	2.9%
Decrease a Lot (1)	62	18.4%	2	1.9%	441	10.2%
Decrease Some (2)	71	21.1%	4	3.9%	930	21.5%
Current Level (3)	155	46.0%	54	52.4%	2,284	52.8%
Increase Some (4)	34	10.1%	33	32.0%	427	9.9%
Increase a Lot (5)	9	2.7%	9	8.7%	118	2.7%
Total	337	100%	103	100%	4,325	100%
Mean	2.52		3.39		2.65	
95% C.I.	2.41 – 2.63		3.22 – 3.56		2.62 – 2.68	
SIGNIFICANT TESTS – PEARSON CHI-SQUARE						
Variables Compared				X²	df	p-value
Public Meetings – Unsolicited Responses				61.426	5	<0.001
Public Meeting – Black Hills Citizen				23.681	5	<0.001
Unsolicited Responses – Black Hills Citizen				83.214	5	<0.001

Table 10. Preferred Turkey Population in the Black Hills.

Preferred Turkey Population for the Black Hills (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminate (0)	2	0.6%	1	1.0%
Decrease a Lot (1)	11	3.3%	2	1.9%
Decrease Some (2)	36	10.7%	10	9.7%
Current Level (3)	169	50.1%	55	53.4%
Increase Some (4)	86	25.5%	25	24.3%
Increase a Lot (5)	33	9.8%	10	9.7%
Total	337	100%	103	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=0.916$; $df=5$; $p=0.969$				
Mean	3.26		3.27	
95% C.I.	3.16 – 3.36		3.09 – 3.45	
ANOVA: $F=0.011$; $df=1/438$; $p=0.918$				

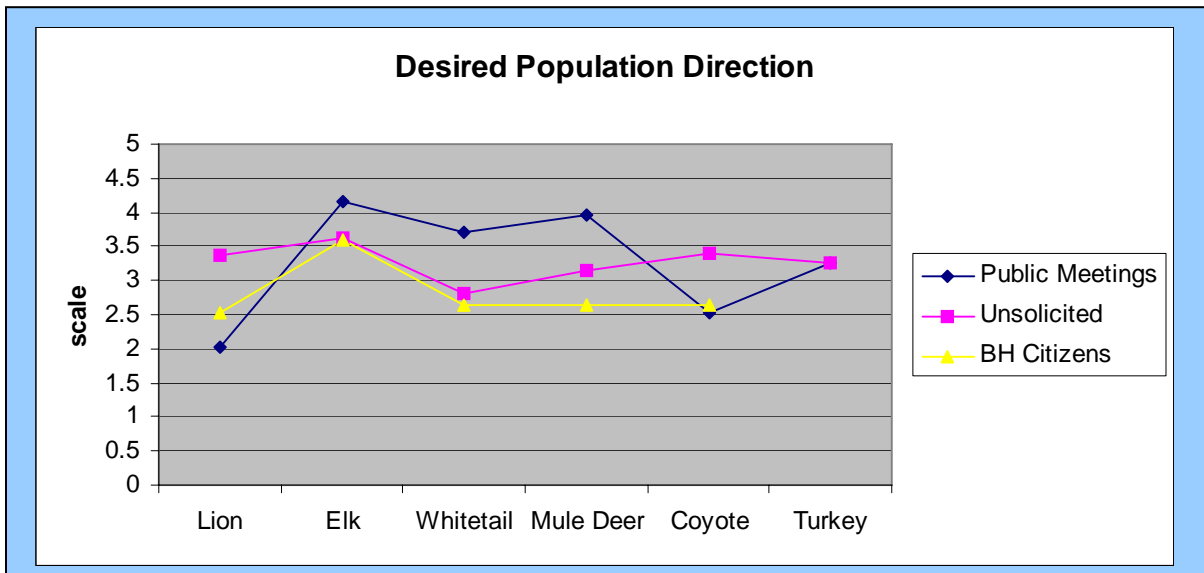


Figure 1. Mean desired population for mountain lions, elk, white-tail deer, mule deer, coyote and turkey measured for public participants, unsolicited responses and a representative sample of Black Hills citizens (see Tables 3 – 8). Scale: 0=Eliminate, 1=Decrease a lot, 2=Decrease some, 3=Remain at current level, 4=Increase some, and 5=Increase a lot.

Table 11. Mean desired population directions for mountain lion, elk, white-tail deer, mule deer, coyote and turkey analyzed by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Mean Desired Population Direction ¹ for...					
	Mountain Lions	Elk	White-tailed Deer	Mule Deer	Coyote	Turkey
Spearfish	1.82	4.23	4.00	4.00	2.20	3.39
Sioux Falls	2.00	4.24	3.84	4.17	2.33	3.64
Yankton	2.37	4.03	3.32	3.62	2.69	3.09
Mitchell	1.63	4.00	3.58	3.63	2.16	3.42
Hot Springs	1.75	3.86	3.75	3.89	2.76	3.04
Buffalo	2.80	3.40	3.40	3.80	2.20	2.80
Custer	2.50	4.05	3.03	3.89	2.95	2.92
Rapid City	1.85	4.27	3.99	4.18	2.56	3.21
Aberdeen	2.15	4.11	3.53	3.95	2.47	3.74
Winner	2.58	4.17	3.21	3.32	2.89	3.05
Pierre	1.45	4.77	4.23	4.36	2.27	3.50
Region 2 RAP	2.71	3.57	3.29	3.43	3.00	3.14
Unsolicited	3.38	3.61	2.81	3.15	3.39	3.27

¹Scale: 0=Eliminate, 1=Decrease a lot, 2=Decrease some, 3=Remain at current level, 4=Increase some, and 5=Increase a lot.

Attitudes toward Mountain Lion Management Options. About half of the meeting participants favored the use of hounds for mountain lion hunting compared to only 10% of the unsolicited responses (Table 12). Almost half of the meeting participants and 85% of the unsolicited responses opposed allowing lions to be taken with traps (Table 13). About 80% of the meeting participants favored having a mountain lion hunting season in Custer State Park while the same percent of unsolicited respondents opposed having a mountain lion hunting season in Custer State Park (Table 14). It is important to remember that neither set of input data accurately reflect attitudes of South Dakota residents, which likely fall somewhere in between the two sets of data reported here.

Table 12. South Dakota’s previous mountain lion hunting seasons have excluded the use of hounds. In general, would you oppose or favor the use of hounds for mountain lion hunting?

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Oppose (-3)	98	27.9%	86	78.9%
Moderately Oppose (-2)	25	7.1%	5	4.6%
Slightly Oppose (-1)	15	4.3%	0	0.0%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	39	11.1%	7	6.4%
Slightly Favor (+1)	24	6.8%	3	2.8%
Moderately Favor (+2)	47	13.4%	4	3.7%
Strongly Favor (+3)	103	29.3%	4	3.7%
Total	351	100%	109	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=94.368$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	0.19		-2.25	
95% C.I.	-0.06 – 0.45		-2.56 – -1.93	
ANOVA: $F=93.781$; $df=1/458$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
OPPOSE	138	39.3%	91	83.5%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	39	11.1%	7	6.4%
FAVOR	174	49.6%	11	10.1%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=66.660$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 13. In general, would you oppose or favor allowing lions to be taken with traps?

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Oppose (-3)	109	31.1%	84	77.1%
Moderately Oppose (-2)	35	10.0%	7	6.4%
Slightly Oppose (-1)	19	5.4%	2	1.8%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	63	18.0%	3	2.8%
Slightly Favor (+1)	31	8.9%	4	3.7%
Moderately Favor (+2)	30	8.6%	5	4.6%
Strongly Favor (+3)	63	18.0%	4	3.7%
Total	350	100%	109	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=74.988$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	-0.39		-2.22	
95% C.I.	-0.63 – -0.15		-2.54 – -1.90	
ANOVA: $F=60.282$; $df=1/457$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
OPPOSE	163	46.6%	93	85.3%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	63	18.0%	3	2.8%
FAVOR	124	35.4%	13	11.9%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=51.196$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 14. Custer State Park is also working on a mountain lion management plan that may have different objectives and use different strategies. In general, would you oppose or favor having a mountain lion hunting season in Custer State Park?

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Oppose (-3)	30	8.6%	78	72.2%
Moderately Oppose (-2)	7	2.0%	7	6.5%
Slightly Oppose (-1)	6	1.7%	1	0.9%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	28	8.1%	10	9.3%
Slightly Favor (+1)	21	6.1%	3	2.8%
Moderately Favor (+2)	45	13.0%	4	3.7%
Strongly Favor (+3)	210	60.5%	5	4.6%
Total	347	100%	108	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=208.762$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	1.82		-2.06	
95% C.I.	1.62 – 2.02		-2.40 – -1.73	
ANOVA: $F=355.628$; $df=1/453$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
OPPOSE	43	12.4%	86	79.6%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	28	8.1%	10	9.3%
FAVOR	276	79.5%	12	11.1%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=192.407$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Mean attitudes towards use of hounds for mountain lion hunting and trapping of mountain lions varied widely among meeting locations, ranging from an average favorable attitude to an average opposed attitude (Table 15). Although differences existed among meeting locations on average attitude towards having a Custer State Park mountain lion hunting season, all meeting locations had an average favorable attitude compared to the unsolicited responses, which had a very opposed average attitude.

Table 15. Mean attitude towards mountain lion management options analyzed by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Management Options – Mean Attitude ^{1,2}		
	Hunting with Hounds	Trapping	Custer State Park Lion Season
Spearfish	0.83	-0.37	1.70
Sioux Falls	-0.58	-0.68	1.69
Yankton	0.11	-0.39	2.34
Mitchell	1.00	0.74	2.44
Hot Springs	0.29	0.34	1.97
Buffalo	2.33	0.17	1.17
Custer	-0.44	-1.46	0.50
Rapid City	-0.11	-0.40	1.96
Aberdeen	-1.35	-1.40	1.53
Winner	1.32	0.63	2.16
Pierre	0.59	-0.23	2.73
Region 2 RAP	-0.57	-0.57	2.29
Unsolicited	-2.25	-2.22	-2.06

¹Attitude scale: -3=Strongly Oppose, -2=Moderately Oppose, -1=Slightly Oppose, 0=Neutral/No Opinion, 1=Slightly Favor, 2=Moderately Favor, 3=Strongly Favor

²To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 6.

General Attitudes toward Mountain Lions. Input from both the meeting participants and the unsolicited responses indicated general average positive attitudes towards mountain lions, although the meeting participants had a higher percent of people with a general negative attitude towards mountain lions (Tables 16 and 17). The meeting participants were somewhat divided on their attitude about ‘the right to exist wherever mountain lions occur’ while most (80%) of the unsolicited respondents agreed with this statement (Table 18). There was a very large difference between meeting participants and the unsolicited responses on their ‘concern about mountain lions killing too many big game animals’ (Table 19). These four general attitudes from the two sources of public input were compared with the results from a scientific survey of South Dakotas residents conducted in 2002. Although general attitudes may have changed a little over the past eight years since the 2002 survey, given the highly biased results that are generally gathered by public meetings and unsolicited input the 2002 survey results are probably closer to reflecting the current general attitude of South Dakota residents. Table 20 provides the mean general attitudes collected by meeting participants at each location.

As expected, the two sources of public input resulted in very different preferred management actions for responding to different types of mountain lion incidences and desire for maintaining a mountain lion season (Tables 21 – 24). Table 25 provides the mean preferred management action collected by meeting participants at each location.

Description of Sample. Probably a major reason for the large difference in attitudes related to mountain lion management between the two types of public input was the large difference in mountain lion hunting participation and interest (Tables 26 and 27). About one-third of the meeting participants had hunted mountain lions in South Dakota compared to only 2% of the unsolicited respondents. Also, only 25% of the meeting participants reported that they do not plan to hunt mountain lions in the future compared to 92% of the unsolicited respondents.

Because the public meetings were held at various locations around the state we had input from many counties, although about 53% of the public meeting input was from four Black Hills counties (Pennington, Lawrence, Custer, and Fall River) (Table 28). However, over 90% of the unsolicited input came from these same four counties.

Table 16. General Attitude: The presence of mountain lions is a sign of a healthy environment.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	53	15.1%	4	3.6%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	25	7.1%	1	0.9%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	22	6.3%	2	1.8%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	33	9.4%	3	2.7%
Slightly Agree (+1)	35	10.0%	3	2.7%
Moderately Agree (+2)	64	18.2%	7	6.4%
Strongly Agree (+3)	119	33.9%	90	81.8%
Total	351	100%	110	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=78.004$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	0.82		2.46	
95% C.I.	0.59 – 1.06		2.20 – 2.73	
ANOVA: $F=53.358$; $df=1/459$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	100	28.5%	7	6.4%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	33	9.4%	3	2.7%
AGREE	218	62.1%	100	90.9%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=32.515$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				
2002 South Dakota Public Opinion Survey				
South Dakota Residents				
Attitude (scale)	South Dakota Residents			
	Number	Percent		
Strongly Disagree (-3)	60	5.5%		
Moderately Disagree (-2)	31	2.8%		
Slightly Disagree (-1)	35	3.2%		
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	178	16.3%		
Slightly Agree (+1)	193	17.6%		
Moderately Agree (+2)	316	28.9%		
Strongly Agree (+3)	281	25.7%		
Total	1,094	100%		
Mean	1.27			
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	126	11.5%		
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	178	16.3%		
AGREE	790	72.2%		

Table 17. General Attitude: Having a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota in important to me.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	59	16.9%	3	2.8%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	31	8.9%	2	1.8%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	27	7.7%	2	1.8%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	17	4.9%	2	1.8%
Slightly Agree (+1)	36	10.3%	3	2.8%
Moderately Agree (+2)	62	17.7%	9	8.3%
Strongly Agree (+3)	118	33.7%	88	80.7%
Total	350	100%	109	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=75.625$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	0.71		2.48	
95% C.I.	0.45 – 0.95		2.22 – 2.73	
ANOVA: $F=57.908$; $df=1/457$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	117	33.4%	7	6.4%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	17	4.9%	2	1.8%
AGREE	216	61.7%	100	91.7%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=35.160$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				
2002 South Dakota Public Opinion Survey				
South Dakota Residents				
Attitude (scale)	South Dakota Residents			
	Number	Percent		
Strongly Disagree (-3)	125	11.4%		
Moderately Disagree (-2)	69	6.3%		
Slightly Disagree (-1)	76	6.9%		
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	308	28.1%		
Slightly Agree (+1)	210	19.1%		
Moderately Agree (+2)	164	14.9%		
Strongly Agree (+3)	146	13.3%		
Total	1,098	100%		
Mean	0.35			
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	270	24.6%		
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	308	28.1%		
AGREE	520	47.4%		

Table 18. General Attitude: Mountain lions should have the right to exist wherever they may occur.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	87	24.6%	5	4.6%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	60	17.0%	8	7.4%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	27	7.6%	6	5.6%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	23	6.5%	3	2.8%
Slightly Agree (+1)	51	14.4%	8	7.4%
Moderately Agree (+2)	63	17.8%	29	26.9%
Strongly Agree (+3)	42	11.9%	49	45.4%
Total	353	100%	108	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=78.815$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	-0.30		1.63	
95% C.I.	-0.53 – -0.07		1.28 – 1.98	
ANOVA: $F=68.398$; $df=1/457$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	174	49.3%	19	17.6%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	23	6.5%	3	2.8%
AGREE	156	44.2%	86	79.6%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=41.681$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				
2002 South Dakota Public Opinion Survey				
Attitude (scale)	South Dakota Residents			
	Number		Percent	
Strongly Disagree (-3)	148		13.5%	
Moderately Disagree (-2)	101		9.2%	
Slightly Disagree (-1)	149		13.6%	
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	87		7.9%	
Slightly Agree (+1)	176		16.1%	
Moderately Agree (+2)	230		21.0%	
Strongly Agree (+3)	205		18.7%	
Total	1,096		100%	
Mean	0.42			
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	398		36.3%	
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	87		7.9%	
AGREE	611		55.8%	

Table 19. General Attitude: I am concerned about mountain lions killing too many big game animals.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	45	12.7%	76	70.4%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	11	3.1%	8	7.4%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	18	5.1%	8	7.4%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	38	10.8%	5	4.6%
Slightly Agree (+1)	42	11.9%	4	3.7%
Moderately Agree (+2)	57	16.1%	2	1.9%
Strongly Agree (+3)	142	40.2%	5	4.6%
Total	353	100%	108	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=164.063$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	1.15		-2.12	
95% C.I.	0.93 – 1.37		-2.44 – -1.80	
ANOVA: $F=220.902$; $df=1/459$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	74	21.0%	92	85.2%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	38	10.8%	5	4.6%
AGREE	241	68.3%	11	10.2%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=149.106$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				
2002 South Dakota Public Opinion Survey				
South Dakota Residents				
Attitude (scale)	South Dakota Residents			
	Number	Percent		
Strongly Disagree (-3)	222	20.2%		
Moderately Disagree (-2)	178	16.2%		
Slightly Disagree (-1)	167	15.2%		
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	259	23.6%		
Slightly Agree (+1)	136	12.4%		
Moderately Agree (+2)	75	6.8%		
Strongly Agree (+3)	61	5.6%		
Total	1,098	100%		
Mean	-0.66			
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	567	51.6%		
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	259	23.6%		
AGREE	272	24.8%		

Table 20. Mean attitudes towards mountain lions analyzed by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Mean Attitude ^{1,2}			
	The presence of mountain lions is a sign of a healthy environment.	Having a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in SD is important to me.	Mountain lions should have a right to exist wherever they may occur.	I am concerned about mountain lions killing too many big game animals.
Spearfish	0.37	0.33	-0.81	1.24
Sioux Falls	1.23	0.88	-0.19	0.69
Yankton	1.50	1.17	0.42	1.03
Mitchell	0.00	-0.53	-1.11	1.53
Hot Springs	-0.04	-0.04	-0.66	1.59
Buffalo	1.33	0.83	-0.17	0.17
Custer	1.77	1.90	0.51	0.21
Rapid City	0.76	0.85	-0.16	1.72
Aberdeen	1.35	1.11	0.40	0.40
Winner	0.61	0.58	-1.05	0.89
Pierre	0.45	0.00	-0.86	1.73
Region 2 RAP	0.57	0.43	-0.14	0.00
Unsolicited	2.46	2.48	1.63	-2.12

¹Attitude scale: -3=Strongly Disagree, -2=Moderately Disagree, -1=Slightly Disagree, 0=Neutral/No Opinion, 1=Slightly Agree, 2=Moderately Agree, 3=Strongly Agree

²To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 6.

Table 21. Preferred Management Action: Mountain lions within city limits should be killed by GFP.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	27	7.7%	40	37.4%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	28	8.0%	22	20.6%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	16	4.6%	12	11.2%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	20	5.7%	3	2.8%
Slightly Agree (+1)	28	8.0%	8	7.5%
Moderately Agree (+2)	64	18.3%	8	7.5%
Strongly Agree (+3)	166	47.6%	14	13.1%
Total	349	100%	107	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=98.797$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	1.44		-1.03	
95% C.I.	1.22 – 1.65		-1.45 – -0.61	
ANOVA: $F=116.150$; $df=1/454$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	71	20.3%	74	69.2%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	20	5.7%	3	2.8%
AGREE	258	73.9%	30	28.0%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=90.063$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 22. Preferred Management Action: Mountain lions outside city limits but near developed areas where people live should be killed by GFP.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	55	15.7%	67	62.0%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	46	13.1%	11	10.2%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	40	11.4%	6	5.6%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	45	12.8%	2	1.9%
Slightly Agree (+1)	48	13.7%	7	6.5%
Moderately Agree (+2)	47	13.4%	8	7.4%
Strongly Agree (+3)	70	19.9%	7	6.5%
Total	351	100%	108	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=94.841$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	0.16		-1.71	
95% C.I.	-0.07 – 0.38		-2.10 – -1.33	
ANOVA: $F=65.493$; $df=1/457$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	141	40.2%	84	77.8%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	45	12.8%	2	1.9%
AGREE	165	47.0%	22	20.4%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=47.916$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 23. Preferred Management Action: Mountain lions found killing pets or livestock should be killed by GFP.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	15	4.3%	31	29.0%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	19	5.4%	14	13.1%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	13	3.7%	10	9.3%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	25	7.1%	9	8.4%
Slightly Agree (+1)	34	9.7%	9	8.4%
Moderately Agree (+2)	59	16.8%	13	12.1%
Strongly Agree (+3)	186	53.0%	21	19.6%
Total	351	100%	107	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=83.356$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	1.75		-0.31	
95% C.I.	1.56 – 1.93		-0.76 – 0.14	
ANOVA: $F=94.312$; $df=1/456$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	47	13.4%	55	51.4%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	25	7.1%	9	8.4%
AGREE	279	79.5%	43	40.2%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=71.399$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 24. Preferred Management Action: I would like GFP to manage for a self-sustaining population of mountain lions at a level that includes an annual hunting season.

Attitude (scale)	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree (-3)	22	6.4%	53	48.6%
Moderately Disagree (-2)	20	5.8%	13	11.9%
Slightly Disagree (-1)	15	4.3%	6	5.5%
Neutral / No Opinion (0)	19	5.5%	5	4.6%
Slightly Agree (+1)	24	7.0%	7	6.4%
Moderately Agree (+2)	52	15.1%	8	7.3%
Strongly Agree (+3)	193	55.9%	17	15.6%
Total	345	100%	109	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=127.076$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$				
Mean	1.70		-1.07	
95% C.I.	1.50 – 1.90		-1.52 – -0.63	
ANOVA: $F=153.995$; $df=1/452$; $p<0.001$				
SUMMARIZED RESULTS				
DISAGREE	57	16.5%	72	66.1%
NEUTRAL / NO OPINION	19	5.5%	5	4.6%
AGREE	269	78.0%	32	29.4%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=101.181$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 25. Mean management action attitudes towards mountain lions analyzed by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Mean Management Action Attitude ^{1,2}			
	Mountain lions within city limits should be killed by GFP.	Mountain lions outside city limits but near developed areas where people live should be killed by GFP.	Mountain lions found killing pets or livestock should be killed by GFP.	I would like GFP to manage for a self-sustaining population of mountain lions at a level that includes an annual hunting season.
Spearfish	1.14	-0.13	1.67	1.68
Sioux Falls	0.62	-0.12	1.36	1.38
Yankton	1.69	0.33	1.42	2.14
Mitchell	1.94	1.05	1.89	1.35
Hot Springs	1.93	0.24	2.00	1.38
Buffalo	0.83	-0.67	2.33	2.50
Custer	0.66	-0.68	1.21	1.44
Rapid City	1.62	0.12	1.89	1.92
Aberdeen	1.32	0.11	1.65	1.50
Winner	1.89	1.32	2.58	2.11
Pierre	2.36	0.95	2.23	1.43
Region 2 RAP	1.17	0.00	2.00	2.86
Unsolicited	-1.03	-1.71	-0.31	-1.07

¹Attitude scale: -3=Strongly Disagree, -2=Moderately Disagree, -1=Slightly Disagree, 0=Neutral/No Opinion, 1=Slightly Agree, 2=Moderately Agree, 3=Strongly Agree

²To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 6.

Evaluation of the Public Meetings. About 93% of the meeting participants rated the public meetings as good to excellent (Table 29).

Optional Comments. The survey instrument included a space for optional comments, which were typed and are included in the appendices of this report (Table 30).

Table 26. **Mountain Lion Hunting:** Have you spent any time hunting mountain lions in South Dakota?

Past Mountain Lion Hunting?	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
NO	221	62.8%	107	98.2%
YES	131	37.2%	2	1.8%
Total	352	100%	109	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=50.756$; $df=1$; $p<0.001$				

Table 27. **Mountain Lion Hunting:** Do you plan to hunt mountain lions in South Dakota in the future?

Future Mountain Lion Hunting?	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
NO	90	25.6%	100	91.7%
UNDECIDED	69	19.7%	5	4.6%
YES	192	54.7%	4	3.7%
Total	352	100%	101099	100%
Pearson Chi-Square: $X^2=150.562$; $df=2$; $p<0.001$				

Table 28. Survey participants' home county.

COUNTY	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Minnehaha	20	5.7%	0	0.0%
2. Pennington	64	18.4%	33	30.3%
3. Brown	18	5.2%	0	0.0%
4. Beadle	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
5. Codington	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
6. Brookings	1	0.3%	1	0.9%
7. Yankton	31	8.9%	0	0.0%
8. Davison	12	3.4%	0	0.0%
9. Lawrence	52	14.9%	13	11.9%
10. Aurora	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
11. Bennett	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
12. Bon Homme	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
13. Brule	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
14. Buffalo	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
15. Butte	4	1.1%	0	0.0%
16. Campbell	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
17. Charles Mix	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
18. Clark	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
19. Clay	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20. Corson	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
21. Custer	40	11.5%	51	46.8%
22. Day	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
23. Deuel	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
24. Dewey	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
25. Douglas	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
26. Edmunds	2	0.6%	0	0.0%
27. Fall River	30	8.6%	2	1.8%
28. Faulk	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
29. Grant	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
30. Gregory	2	0.6%	0	0.0%
31. Haakon	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
32. Hamlin	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
33. Hand	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
34. Hanson	4	1.1%	0	0.0%
35. Harding	4	1.1%	3	2.8%
36. Hughes	19	5.5%	1	0.9%
37. Hutchinson	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
38. Hyde	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
39. Jackson	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
40. Jerauld	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table continued on next page.

Table 28 - Continued. Survey participants' home county.

COUNTY	Public Meetings		Unsolicited Responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
41. Jones	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
42. Kingsbury	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
43. Lake	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
44. Lincoln	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
45. Lyman	3	0.9%	0	0.0%
46. McCook	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
47. McPherson	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
48. Marshall	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
49. Meade	14	4.0%	4	3.7%
50. Mellette	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
51. Miner	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
52. Moody	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
53. Perkins	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
54. Potter	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
55. Roberts	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
56. Sanborn	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
57. Spink	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
58. Stanley	2	0.6%	0	0.0%
59. Sully	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
60. Tripp	14	4.0%	1	0.9%
61. Turner	3	0.9%	0	0.0%
62. Union	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
63. Walworth	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
64. Ziebach	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
65. Shannon	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
67. Todd	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-residents (WY)	2	0.6%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	348	100%	109	100%

Table 29. Evaluation of the public meetings (2010).

Rating	Number	Percent
Very Poor (-2)	0	0.0%
Poor (-1)	1	0.3%
Average (0)	19	6.1%
Good (+1)	101	32.5%
Excellent (+2)	189	60.8%
No Opinion (0)	1	0.3%
Total	311	100%
Mean / 95% C.I.	1.54	1.47 – 1.61
Mean Rating by Meeting Location		
Meeting Location	Mean Rating¹	Number
Spearfish	1.60	57
Sioux Falls	1.82	22
Yankton	1.86	35
Mitchell	1.53	17
Hot Springs	1.54	26
Buffalo	1.80	5
Custer	1.47	34
Rapid City	1.24	67
Aberdeen	1.67	18
Winner	1.73	15
Pierre	1.33	15

¹To calculate the percent difference between any two locations: subtract the difference in mean attitude scores and divide by 4.

Table 30. Location (appendix) of optional comments by meeting location.

Meeting Location	Appendix	Page
Spearfish	B	31
Sioux Falls	C	36
Yankton	D	38
Mitchell	E	39
Hot Springs	F	40
Buffalo	G	42
Custer	H	43
Rapid City	I	47
Aberdeen	J	53
Winner	K	55
Pierre	L	56
Unsolicited	M	57

Summary

This report provides a good description of attitudes held by people attending one of the eleven Mountain Lion Management Meetings held in 2010 and also summarizes input from some people that held attitudes very different from the majority of meeting participants. Neither set of input data is representative of South Dakota residents but does provide input from folks holding strong but conflicting attitudes towards mountain lion management.

Overall, South Dakota residents have a positive attitude towards mountain lions. However, there is considerable controversy surrounding how mountain lions should be managed. Most South Dakota residents support having GFP manage for a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota and want the effort to be guided by sound, scientific data. In conjunction with this attitude is a belief that mountain lions are a little bit too numerous and the population needs to be lowered. However, there are wide differences in beliefs regarding the amount of reduction needed and a sizable minority portion of the population that wants the population to remain at the current level. Also, peoples' beliefs about population levels are based on the recent past few years and thus do not take into account the reduction in the mountain lion population that occurred with the 2010 mountain lion season. With this public information in mind, GFP needs to use its best scientific data and training to select a target population number that will produce a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota.

References

- Gigliotti, L.M., D. Fecske, J. Jenks. 2002. Mountain lions in South Dakota: A public opinion survey – 2002. Report # HD-9-02.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Pierre. SD
- Gigliotti, L.M., T.L. Teel, and A. Dietsch. 2009. Black Hills residents' attitudes towards place and wildlife: Preview of selected results. Report # HD-9-09.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Pierre. SD

Meeting Location: _____

Appendix A. Survey questionnaire used to collect input from meeting participants.

Note: The actual survey questionnaire was fit on a single legal-sized page (front and back).

Mountain Lion Management in South Dakota

OPINIONS – COMMENTS – QUESTIONS

1. People in South Dakota have many different attitudes towards mountain lions. How strongly do **you** AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements? *Please circle one number for each item.*

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Moderately Disagree</u>	<u>Slightly Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral or No Opinion</u>	<u>Slightly Agree</u>	<u>Moderately Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
a) The presence of mountain lions is a sign of a healthy environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) Having a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in South Dakota is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c) Mountain lions should have the right to exist wherever they may occur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d) I am concerned about mountain lions killing too many big game animals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e) Mountain lions within city limits should be killed by GFP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f) Mountain lions outside city limits but near developed areas where people live should be killed by GFP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g) Mountain lions found killing pets or livestock should be killed by GFP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h) I would like GFP to manage for a self-sustaining population of mountain lions at a level that includes an annual hunting season.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. If it was known that a **mountain lion** frequented the area where you live but had not caused any problems or exhibited any threatening behavior, which action would you want the state wildlife agency (GFP) to take? *Circle only one number.*

<u>Take no action</u> 1	Educate the public on how to <u>safely live in lion areas</u> 2	Take steps to chase the <u>lion out of the area</u> 3	Capture and <u>remove the lion</u> 4	<u>Kill the lion</u> 5	<u>No Opinion</u> 6
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3. In general, do you oppose or favor a mountain lion hunting season in South Dakota? *Circle one number.*

<u>Strongly Oppose</u> 1	<u>Moderately Oppose</u> 2	<u>Slightly Oppose</u> 3	<u>Neutral</u> 4	<u>Slightly Favor</u> 5	<u>Moderately Favor</u> 6	<u>Strongly Favor</u> 7
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4. South Dakota's previous mountain lion hunting seasons have **excluded** the use of hounds. In general, would you oppose or favor allowing the use of hounds for mountain lion hunting?

<u>Strongly Oppose</u> 1	<u>Moderately Oppose</u> 2	<u>Slightly Oppose</u> 3	<u>Neutral</u> 4	<u>Slightly Favor</u> 5	<u>Moderately Favor</u> 6	<u>Strongly Favor</u> 7
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5. In general, would you oppose or favor allowing mountain lions to be taken with traps?

<u>Strongly Oppose</u> 1	<u>Moderately Oppose</u> 2	<u>Slightly Oppose</u> 3	<u>Neutral</u> 4	<u>Slightly Favor</u> 5	<u>Moderately Favor</u> 6	<u>Strongly Favor</u> 7
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6. Have you spent any time hunting No Yes More questions on the back mountain lions in South Dakota?

7. Do you plan to hunt mountain lion in South Dakota in the future? No Undecided Yes

8. Custer State Park is also working on a mountain lion management plan that may have different objectives and use different strategies. In general, would you oppose or favor having a mountain lion hunting season in Custer State Park?

<u>Strongly Oppose</u> 1	<u>Moderately Oppose</u> 2	<u>Slightly Oppose</u> 3	<u>Neutral</u> 4	<u>Slightly Favor</u> 5	<u>Moderately Favor</u> 6	<u>Strongly Favor</u> 7
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9. Would you like the following **wildlife populations in the Black Hills** to increase, decrease, or remain at their current levels over the next five years? *Circle one number for each species below.*

	<u>Eliminate This Species</u>	<u>Decrease A Lot</u>	<u>Decrease Some</u>	<u>Remain at Current Level</u>	<u>Increase Some</u>	<u>Increase A Lot</u>
a) Mountain lion	0	1	2	3	4	5
b) Elk	0	1	2	3	4	5
c) White-tailed Deer	0	1	2	3	4	5
d) Mule Deer	0	1	2	3	4	5
e) Coyote	0	1	2	3	4	5
f) Turkey	0	1	2	3	4	5

10. Where do you live (county)? _____ County

11. Your evaluation of this meeting:

<u>Very Poor</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

Optional Comments/Questions about Mountain Lion Management in South Dakota:

Please do NOT sign your name as this information may be released to the public for review.

Appendix B. Optional comments from the Spearfish meeting.

ID: 2

Do what needs to be done based on professional opinions, biological data and opinions of those who help pay for conservation. Use emotional evaluations as a very secondary tool as many of them contribute very little in the way of conservation or management. Treat lions as we do other predators. Use hounds be selective and educate the cats

ID: 4

The use of dogs should be eliminated while hunting bobcats.

ID: 8

I ride a bicycle up and down Spearfish Canyon from early spring until late fall with the population of lions that are out there. How safe is my ride?

ID: 9

Allow use of hounds, at least a partial season. Put quota on season, but do not distinguish sex, a quota of 40 should mean 40 dead lions regardless if they are 40 females. Really good meeting Thanks.

ID: 10

I am strongly in favor of the use of hounds for the harvesting of mountain lions. If not in the Black Hills they should at least be able to be used in the prairie unit. If a unit was set up for the Custer State Park I think that would be a very good place to introduce the use of hounds.

ID: 11

Double or triple the lion harvest for the next season to bring them back into control.

ID: 13

With all the statistics shown at the meeting; and with all but one sub adult male lions leaving the Hills and the home ranges of the females getting smaller and smaller; there are obviously too many cats, in the Hills to be sustained at the current numbers. Deer numbers are way down and are going to continue to drop. The cat population needs to be greatly reduced to a level they are stable but the prey animals can also be at numbers that are acceptable.

ID: 17

We need to implement the use of hounds of mountain lions. I helped with the taxidermy of two mountain lions this year and both were females with kittens. That is only going to add to the depredation of domestic livestock and pets when these kittens need to find food.

ID: 18

Why not have Game & Fish kill problem lions with dogs. Then have a drawing for the pelts so that all South Dakota Citizens have a chance for a pelt. Advantages: Selective killing by experts, no more time spent having meetings around the state. I used to hunt but have no need for it anymore.

ID: 19

I would like to see the Black Hills and Western South Dakota populace have an input or decision making to help with the wildlife specific to that area.

ID: 21

Good meeting informative

ID: 22

You talk about males being more territorial, so that's why they leave our Black Hills, and said the females are more tolerant, so that their territories are shrinking. So what I don't understand is, why are you talking about immigration? Why are cats coming in when you are telling us that our Black Hills cats are leaving? Also, as I sit listening to these hunters, I drive down the interstate everyday to go to work and have hit several deer myself, plus see all the dead bodies on the shoulders of the highways, and we have had several deep snow dumpers that are starving the deer. So between vehicles are snow storms, why do all the hunters want to blame the mountain lions?

ID: 26

There are too many cats in the Hills of the deer population is going down. I have seen lion kills of deer and this year a bull elk. I think the use of dogs should be allowed! If these cats are moving out of the country there area to many in this area they should be lowered by at least 50 percent.

ID: 27

Try a hound chase season no kills should made lions wilder

ID: 28

My opinions are based on the 2009-2010 situation and population, hunting can be a valid control, but at this time I think the kill level is too high. Changing situations will require shifting kill levels. I hunt all game and non-game species year round with a camera. Hunting is necessary in many cases for proper control but allowed kills appear to be determined more by politics than by biology.

ID: 29

Why are the commissioners that made the decisions about mountain lions not using any science as far as I know none at present have any science background? Why are the mountain lions initially blamed for so many

things? Why is commissioner term going against state law in one case 17 years and the law says 8 years? The governor was questioned and he said he could decide the term and not true it is state law.

ID: 31

What if you are wrong about only 250 lions in the Hills. The stacking that seems to be happening with shrinking territories seems to support this. Deer and elk are much more important to our hunting traditions. Take the lion population down a minimum of 50 percent and preferably down 75 percent. Start the season during deer and elk seasons before roads are closed by forest service.

ID: 32

Disallow "electronic calls, just technologic "baiting" females with cubs, not fair chase, not legal for any other big game, not used by a real hunter, needed or much effort expended, vocal handmade calls, strokes camouflage by animal skin all ok! Lions need refuge CSP would be such a place. Nipple morphology should be included in aging you do to compliment your documentation mortality remove all human related losses. (It shows there do ok with out man!)

ID: 33

Why do we need lions I would rather see a herd of deer or elk.

ID: 36

Within the Northern Hills you have restricted our access by closing gates at the same time as the season. In four feet of snow you can't walk to the best areas.

ID: 38

Offer limited tags and/or season for hounds. You use them for control & predation.

ID: 43

Good Job; definitely need to maintain or control numbers. Deer herd was very low.

ID: 44

I am 93 years old in early 20's and 30's there was a \$100 bounty on lions.

ID: 45

Why hold meetings in Eastern SD? Suggest you contact other states and understand their policies and procedures and experiences. We certainly have a large number of dead deer on I 90 between Rapid City & Spearfish. We need more cats too many deer. I would like to see verification of cattle

killed. The Vast majority of attendees are special interest individuals and groups. You are not getting the general populations views.

ID: 47

Allow archery hunters a longer season to harvest a cat. Similar to deer seasons as it is only fair to archery guys due to the difficulty/challenge in archery verses rifle and I would highly disagree with the use of dogs as it welcomes bad publicity from certain groups.

ID: 48

If lions are killing pets some questions need to be asked. If the pet lives outside a city or is left outside unattended or protected, no, the lion should not be killed. We have way too many cats and dogs running at large, chasing wildlife. If the owner isn't controlling them then let the lions eat them. I would favor a lion season in Custer Park, but not with all the extra special restrictions they may impose. They should follow the wildlife division's management; I've asked some questions and was told Custer Park manages their own wildlife. No wonder the sheep are gone, elk have gone to pot and I can't hunt coyotes there anymore.

ID: 49

Good data, I do eat them. I would prefer a population 10 adult males, 20 adult females, 60 sub adults, as a target population. Lions are not a tourist species. Treat to have them, should hunters take problem animals?

ID: 50

I live at Onell pass area all summer and our deer population is probably down 75 percent. This is where a lot of the does have their young. You need to get the cats down to about 50 female total animals. We need to harvest a certain amount of cats with dogs. Try to get some of the adult toms.

ID: 51

Decrease the lion population, decrease deer tags and use dogs.

ID: 52

Decrease the lion population and decrease the deer tags.

ID: 53

Hunting with hounds takes hounds or money. I don't have either one, so then I don't get to hunt lions anymore? We meet our quota without hounds now. I like the idea of units for the lions. After seeing the dispersal information, I think maybe the target population should be lowered (even though I've never seen one). I have quit buying Black Hills deer tags, the Hills (northern at least) seem to be full of hunters, and no deer in the Hills. Lots of deer stand on private ground at the edge of the plains where pay

hunting is the only way to get in. These same people get depredation money for all the damage deer do why don't we live trap cats in town and drop them out on these ranches? Good Meeting, Keep up the good work.

ID: 54

Hunters seem to be most unhappy about elk and deer herds declining, yet your data shows it is not the mountain lion but the hunter taking these animals. Should the license reduced so our numbers of deer and elk can increase for the hunter.

ID: 55

Does GF&P operate to serve overall public interest or mainly the hunters?

ID: 56

Thanks, this has been a very calm and informative meeting the general public has been informed in all of the year's good work.

ID: 57

Are the facts that almost all the sub adults leave the hills, indicate that the adult make population is stable and saturated? This would not indicate the same for females.

ID: 58

Saw elk herds with no calves and don't like the fact you might not have elk in the Hills.

ID: 59

In several of the areas we (my children and I) hunt, we have seen a serious decrease in whitetail deer and a complete elimination of mule deer. This has coincided with a substantial increase in lion signs (tracks, kills, scat). This concerns me.

ID: 60

The management plan needs to have enough flexibility to be adjusted for weather factors. If late storm adversely affects prey species to the point of endangerment in certain areas, the predators need to be likewise reduced. Flexibility to set quotas for lions where there are definitely too many (with respect to) prey species in those same areas there should be a "unit by unit management".

Appendix C. Optional comments from the Sioux Falls meeting.

ID: 65

I would recommend a lion season that is just for the West River Deer/Antelope season that a resident hunter can hunt private, BLN & school hands and harvest a lion. This would be great Revenue for research money for lion management.

ID: 66

Great new research data, wildlife populations should be based on sound biological management recommendation need to maintain a healthy mountain lion population in South Dakota, with no hounds.

ID: 67

I think that you are doing a great job.

ID: 69

Very informative meeting enjoyed the presentation, well done. A mountain lion population should be maintained in the Black Hills.

ID: 70

Great Job!

ID: 72

I have learned a lot from your talks.

ID: 73

Great research and studies, interesting that the mean kittens this tells us the habitat and food source is excellent. The mountain lion numbers seem to be extensive for the amount of area.

ID: 77

I feel it is important to have a mountain lion hunting season. I feel you have done an excellent job managing the season, not allowing too many to get harvested. I very much appreciate this educational opportunities about mountain lions. If as many mountain lions migrate out of the area as you say we should add some mountain lions to the limit for the hunting season, not allowing them to migrate to areas where they have to look to livestock and pets for food. In the Black Hills it is more likely for them to eat deer and goats.

ID: 79

After being educated tonight I better understand the science as to how the lion season kill number is set. Excellent job! The public needs more information like what was presented tonight, through the media, newspaper, schools, or whatever. School age kid's 7th and 8th grade and high school

biology class would be a good place to present abbreviated version of this program.

ID: 82

This season was very informative and interesting.

ID: 83

I think 50 – 75 lions are enough in the Black Hills.

ID: 84

Decrease the lion population to point where territory per lion is not cramped and maintain that population.

ID: 90

I would like to see good healthy populations of deer, elk, and sheep. I would like mountain lions to be a very rare sight. I would like to see recruitment rates increase for elk, sheep and deer. I am concerned about declining big game populations in the Black Hills.

ID: 91

Give John a raise, or at least hazard pay.

Appendix D. Optional comments from the Yankton meeting.

ID: 92

Last falls cats were seen by two separate parties entering the tree shelter belt on our daughters and husbands acreage. They have two children (ages 6 and 8) along with horses, cats, and dogs. When calling the game warden (Freeman, SD) he just said to put bells on their children when they went outside to play. He didn't even drive to their place to investigate. I've watched the movie Dumb and Dumber, but this takes the cake, not very good public relations.

ID: 95

Please hold the mountain lion season concurrent with the Black Hills/West River deer season so we can hunt lions at the same time as deer. I think you will sell more licenses as well as I bet lots of deer hunters would buy a lion license just in case they had an opportunity to harvest while they were deer hunting. Maybe a split season with some lions allowed to be taken during deer season and the rest during the January season.

ID: 96

Yankton is 400 miles from the Black Hills. We would like more statewide data.

ID: 98

Excellent presentation, appreciate the "openness" presented at the meeting with various staff members. Public Safety far outweighs the need to increase the number or management level of cougars. Bottom line, I think the mountain lion level needs to decrease.

ID: 104

Decreasing the number of lions in the Hills would be good.

ID: 118

The Black Hills population 250 what is the estimate for the rest of SD outside the Black Hills area? How many sub adults were harvested in the latest season?

ID: 121

Good meeting John is very knowledgeable of the cat population.

ID: 124

The questions are not specific enough.

Appendix E. Optional comments from the Mitchell meeting.

ID: 130

Maybe in the Hills season but take more lions. Outside of the Black Hills fire district, maybe have a year round open season.

ID: 135

One of the first slides showed hunter kills or license down last three years. Number of lions showed increasing over same three years on later slide. Game numbers remaining constant. Maybe slides should be combined to show number of hunters being denied opportunity to hunt deer, elk or other game because the state wants a large population of cats.

ID: 136

If a lion is coming around populated areas, I think the animal should be given a chance to move on. If the animal becomes too comfortable around people or exhibits hostile behavior, then it should be put down.

ID: 141

I came because it sounded interesting, don't hunt much anymore.

ID: 142

I am in agreement that a hunt able population of lions is desirable, but not at the current level at the expense of reduced opportunities of deer and elk populations in the Black Hills.

ID: 144

East River rifle season is to go back to opening thanksgiving weekend. Try to manage whitetail deer for better and more trophies. Set the numbers and regulated to some degree by public input.

Appendix F. Optional comments from the Hot Springs meeting.

ID: 147

Please consider as many factors as possible in evaluating population balances. We know so little, really about our extremely complex environment and the various life forms we share it with. I feel strongly that the least considered factors may play the most pivotal roles in tipping our ecological boat.

ID: 149

John does a good un bias job, give him a raise.

ID: 151

I am 59 years old and have hunted the Black Hills, since I was 10. The last decade, the lion population has exploded. It is causing a huge effect on our other game populations. Every Year, the sign I see of mountain lions increases every year. Some areas I've hunted for years, no longer have good populations of deer. Sightings are no longer uncommon, therefore they go unreported. The quota for lion season, needs to increase, we are not keeping pace with reproduction. Man is one of the few predators of the lion. Please do not allow dogs to hunt lions. You've reached your quota every season to date without dogs, well before the end of the season. the dogs will only create commercialization of your hunting and many of the other seasons are already eliminating the average hunter due to commercialization. Keep your management aggressive or there will be no hunting opportunities for my children and grandchildren!

ID: 158

Make units in the Black Hills and Custer State Park.

ID: 159

GF&P should ask legislatures to change lion status from "big game" to furbearer or Predator. They are not "big game" as we traditionally known them! Lions killing or threatening domestic animals (or humans) should not be killed only by GF&P but by public scavenging.

ID: 160

Through the years we have seen evidence of lion's crossing over property. No problems have come up because of their presence. It has tempered over evening walks after dark.

ID: 161

Too many mountain lions, mule deer numbers have all but vanished in the higher hills. Elk numbers are lower every year, porcupine, mountain goats and other small game is also scarce. Put the mountain lions on predator list year round or longer seasons. The Black Hills is too small of an area to have a large population of predators.

ID: 163

I own 80 acres northwest of Hot Springs, in the last three years, and I have found 3 mule deer and one calf elk killed by a mountain lion. I would like to see the GF&P take more lions as I think they are killing too much big game. I think a reduced lion population would be better for the Hills. Southern Hills units are needed to manage the south end of the Hills as we are losing a lot of deer.

ID: 165

I think all lions should be killed. We got along fine for 60 years without lions. We don't need them now they will eventually kill a human probably a child.

ID: 166

When I see a mountain lion in my yard as I did last week, I want it killed so that my grandkids are not in danger.

ID: 169

Numbers and statistics can be made to look anyway you want them to look.

ID: 170

I think utilizing sections to manage harvest in specific areas is a very good idea.

ID: 174

We need to increase mountain lion harvest and increase deer and elk populations. I am strongly opposed to hound hunting for lions.

Appendix G. Optional comments from the Buffalo meeting.

ID: 176

I would like to see a hound season.

ID: 177

I think that to better manage lions the use of hounds should be allowed. I also would like to see fewer females and immature toms harvested. Possible chase only season in the Black Hills.

ID: 179

I think we got to be sure that we balance the lion population so that it leaves a healthy deer and elk population in the Hills.

ID: 180

Let us use hounds to hunt lions outside the Black Hills.

Appendix H. Optional comments from the Custer meeting.

ID: 182

I have children at home and do not need this threat whether you perceive it to be safe or not. Get them out of my yard.

ID: 183

A few years ago GF&P stated that they planned on collaring 100 cats a year. Since this has not happened I am wondering at the 250 estimated counts even if calls come in about sittings, it is very possible that it is the same animal if it is in the general area. I believe that there is a need to kill lions that are killing livestock and pets and if they keep wondering into a town, but I have a real hard time with a hunting season. I feel that the lion gets blamed for a lot of kills that they do not do last year in the Rapid City Journal there were two articles. One was about the record number of deer killed during hunting season and the other about hunters stating they were having a hard time finding deer because of lions killing so many it can't be both ways. How many deer are killed by cars every year? That is never mentioned. I know that you will continue to have a season but I feel that a limit of 25 should be the high. Thanks for having the meetings.

ID: 192

I am strongly opposed to the GF&P caring to pressure by so called sportsman to increase the lion quotas. The quota that GF&P proposed were based on science not on what a certain group wants. I hike almost daily in the Hills near my house. Are these "sportsman" who cried about the lions killing too many deer and elk the same ones who try to open my locked gate even though the land is posted. The sign is about four feet from the gate. Are these the same "sportsman" who during hunting season litter the trails with alcoholic beverages contained? Are these the same sportsman who decay the lack of large bucks because they road hunt in pickups and ATV's. I have never seen a hunter on foot in over 20 years of hiking, maybe the sportsman would find the big bucks which I see if they hunted. Please do not listen to special interest groups. Go with science provided by your employees. If the lions are truly wiping out the deer, why do Custer, Rapid City, and Hot Springs have special season to take out the deer that are causing problems in the cities?

ID: 193

Take out only problem lions! Hunters are generally careless regarding private property and littering. People who choose to live in lion habitat areas do so knowing hazards and do so realizing they must protect their livestock and pets. Increase mountain lion license fee. Too many deer, so why kill their only predator? Do not use hounds. Does GF&P board really

listen to recommendations and suggestions made by the public scientists, biologist or just hunters?

ID: 194

How can the numbers of lions to be harvested increase each year without data of how the previous year's season had affected the population? The more people more land is being developed, hence more sightings. That happens! Wouldn't the population control themselves even without a hunting season? If there has to be a season why not just offer a trophy hunt only allow 1 – 5 animals to be taken. Again no new information but lions are native, we cannot base hunting season on complaints by hunters that deer and elk are declining. If we choose to live in lion country, we need to be prepared to protect and accept that lions will be seen and they may take livestock, end of story. No reimbursement, no upping the limits because of complaints. Do not want to see hounds used for hunting. Good luck and also commissioners should listen to biologist recommendations.

ID: 199

My concern is with children and hikers in areas where mountain lions have been seen especially in and around city limits.

ID: 200

There is more emphasis needed on the human responsibility to keep domestic pets and barn yard pets safe. I agree with the removal of threatening cougars in conflict but more responsibility needs to be taken by the people living in cougar country. Also a sighting does not constitute a threat, need to cover this more with regards to education. I am against raising season quotas this year, we have raised quotas on a yearly basis and the population had stabilized and possibly is declining. Also need to account for a long time (ability to detect affect on cougar population) after a change.

ID: 201

Presumably there will be lion harvests into the future, thus I would suggest that GF&P designate lions as "trophy animals" and charge an appropriate fee for the "privilege" of billing lions. Suggest that lions be hunted only with hounds (to alleviate the "kitten problem" and dead mom and orphan cats) and that the license fee be more like \$3500 than \$15.00. Lions after all are not jackrabbits or squirrels.

ID: 202

If towns would have better pet laws and reduce the deer population in the city limits lions would be less likely to hang out in town. I have worked in the National Forest in CA, ID, MT, WY and SD. There are lion populations in all

these states. I've worked alone and seen tracks in the area I'm working in but never had a lion bother me even when I have encountered them.

ID: 207

I am most concerned by the pandering to public opinion meetings and comments are most likely skewed toward the extremes of opinion. Make determinations based on science!

ID: 208

The concept of "protecting" lions with a regulated hunting season only works if the "harvest" is conservative. How will GF&P respond to the irrational and incorrect passions of ranchers who believe there are too many lions (which for many would be any lions) and who attribute any livestock mortality to lions and others who see lions as a threat for beyond reason? Especially when some of the commissioners are ranchers and/or hunters who are lacking some objectivity. When the commissioner raise the quotas over the recommendations of GF&P wildlife biologists it shows that their agenda is not conducive to maintaining lions in the Black Hills. The educational material GF&P produce, is very good, but again there are many who will not be educated with facts. Killing a lion for killing a pet or small livestock, reinforces irresponsibility whole simple, common sense precautions should be taken. Maybe the big question is will management objectives be governed solely by hunters and ranchers or by conservative scientific methods to maintain a healthy lion population. Saw no to the use of dogs. How will you counter act the people who always bringing up what if they take the life of a child in argument presenting a possibility as inevitability.

ID: 210

I think GF&P is doing a fine job maintaining a safe level of all wildlife in the Black Hills. I realize the intense scrutiny brought upon GF&P staff when it comes to lion management. It's a very volatile subject and emotions run wild when it comes to our cat population. I'm just thankful that you do what you do for state wages.

ID: 213

I hunt lions with a camera! Limited sport harvest is fine. Hunting with dog packs is immoral; blasting a treed lion out of the branches from 20 feet away is cowardly and in no way sporting.

ID: 216

The use of dogs is not and will never be acceptable. Traps also not to be used on lions or any animals, they should be used on some humans.

- ID: 217
People have emotions concerning mountain lions and these feelings should be recognized while stressing facts and logic. Rather than increasing the number of lions taken in hunts or shot by GF&P only because they are near livestock tranquilize and live traps should be used rather than shooting a lion near livestock, protect the livestock by various means.
- ID: 218
Wild animals have a right to a habitat where they can perform as god created them to live. People who encroach on their habitat should be intelligent enough to weigh the dangers. If not they should live elsewhere.

Appendix I. Optional comments from the Rapid City meeting.

ID: 221

We do not understand the GF&P wanting lions in towns and subdivisions. You're just asking for more problems and possible human attacks. We want the season open during October and November and even December. We know of lots of lions that we can't get to because the roads are closed in January. Don't put some crazy low number of lions harvested to close the season. We feel there are more lions than the game department is acknowledging.

ID: 222

Why are you using a 56%-44% adult to Sub Adult/dependant youth ratio? Does the Division of Wildlife dell data to support the radical departure from the research data used by Colorado which uses a 66%-34% ratio in formulating their harvest quota? Why are the additional deer or other large ungulates killed by females with dependent young not included in the depredation number? Where in the Black Hills area lions finding enough road kills to provide 16% of their annual food needs by scavenging? Why, when you estimate the population at 220-280 lions do you estimate the depredation for the 250 level, rather than for the worst case scenario of 280, which is obviously could be? It appears there is a concerted effort by GF&P to understate the impact that lions are having on big game populations in the Black Hills. The hunters of South Dakota are going to pay a high price in lost hunting opportunities for you're to come as a result. What possible motive could you have?

ID: 223

Thank you for conducting the meetings I would rather see healthy deer and elk populations than mountain lions, I would hope your studies could provide data to achieve a better balance for big game and mountain lions. Thanks again I really do appreciate your hard work and efforts.

ID: 224

I'm 52 years old and have lived in the Black Hills all my life and have a place in Hill City. I spend a lot of time in the woods, hiking, photographing, and enjoying nature. In recent years I've noticed a great decline in deer, elk, sheep, and turkeys. I know it's because of increased numbers of mountain lions. We don't need to eliminate all of them, but I think if we had half as many as we do now it still might be too many. I've seen GF&P statistics, went to the meetings and think there area way more than 250 lions in the Black Hills. If we had 125 lions in the Black Hills that would be a great plenty.

- ID: 228
Would love to see way more info on the internet, you can't get enough info.
- ID: 229
The lion population probably needs to be reduced slowly and with studies to hit a better balance so the other wildlife populations can increase. Increase licenses slowly and watch the results. Maybe bring the population from the current 250 or so to down below 200. Thank you for the job you do and for these public meetings we need more of these.
- ID: 230
GF&P is doing their jobs, good job.
- ID: 232
Reduce the number of female lions kill in the season use of hounds allow more selective killing.
- ID: 235
Nice presentation but John came ill prepared to other any numbers to specific questions. Sadly most of the crowd seemed to feel they were more expert's biologists than the real biologists. The cat issue has been and will remain an emotional issue. South Dakota's management initiative will never satisfy people who base their opinions on emotion rather than facts.
- ID: 236
I have spent twenty eight years hunting deer in the Black Hills. This year past (2009) I saw less deer in the Hills than any other year. I hunt in the forest not on roads. The mountain lion population should be reduced! Very good population should be reduced! Very good presentation, thank you; I would be in favor of depredation tags for lions rather than GF&P killing the problem lions.
- ID: 237
Need a link from SDSU to the GF&P page as far as public access to the mountain lion numbers also in comparison with deer and elk numbers. It seems that we have passed the point of being proactive; it is now time to be reactive. I am greatly concerned about the political involvement in the management process of the GF&P ecosystem are we doing what is right for the balance of game in the Black Hills or are we doing what benefits the political gains of people who don't have anything to do with the situation? Public education is key.
- ID: 238
Lion management should mostly be based on scientific data collected by GF&P. Wildlife management should be driven by what is best for the state

with consideration to property owners and recreation. Although I generally favor a lion season I believe the state professional involved with this area should be listened to with strong favor to their data and advice.

ID: 239

I live 10 miles South of Deadwood and 1 mile back in the woods, certainly lion county. I have never seen a lion, dead or alive. I heard one once, my neighbor has been logging the Hills for 25 years all over the Hills. He has never seen one; I guess I question the supposed density of lions. Why all of a sudden are they a problem? We went through a period in the last 2 years when it was a lion sighting mania. Now all of a sudden it is not a problem. When you have a hammer, everything looks like an anvil. I think the lion hunting season is more political in nature and should be discontinued. The use of dogs is one of the questions! There is nothing sporting about using dogs. You might as well tie them to a tree and use the lions for target practice.

ID: 240

I would like to see hounds used to hunt mountain lions. Almost every western state that has a mountain lion season uses hounds. I can't believe that South Dakota does not currently use this method. I feel that a higher quality of cat could be harvested with the use of hounds.

ID: 241

John, you did a nice job keeping collected and dispersing info. I really feel education and debunking myths that people are talking about on the internet. I'd like to see these talks advertised to a wider audience, why is it only anti lion people represented here? How about NPR mid day interview?

ID: 242

Something to consider using hounds in the future, maybe open the 1st week of the season to the hounds men maybe in a specific area.

ID: 244

Keep South Dakota wolf free, we can't afford the problems that WY, MT and ID have. Wolves were eliminated for a good reason.

ID: 245

It seems the survey is leaning more towards keeping the same number of lions. I hope the GF&P is really considering dropping the number of lions in the Hills. In John Kanta's own words in one year to get the number of lions in the Hills to 200 we need to kill 100 lions.

ID: 248

The use of hounds

- ID: 249
Hunt lions in Custer State Park with dogs for trophy lions.
- ID: 252
Great job with the information and managing the meeting
- ID: 256
I would like to see a great increase in deer and elk populations. Don't think this can happen with the current lion population.
- ID: 258
I have been very disappointed with GF&P's biologist working with lions. I ranch 13000 acres in the Black Hills fire protection area and have had no contact from GF&P staff working with this prospect. We have lions on the ranch; I have lost calves to lions and see no recourse to deal with this loss. Due to this history I will not open our ranch to any GF&P staff in relation to lions, and that is a loss to both of us.
- ID: 261
We just need to limit the number of cats with a larger hunting limit. Thanks for the meeting and all your work.
- ID: 262
Thanks, keep up the good work.
- ID: 267
You must reduce lion population to 180 or less or ungulates will suffer, children will die, and the cat population will not remain healthy.
- ID: 269
Please don't annihilate black bear and wolves as they colonize the Black Hills.
- ID: 270
I am opposed to a longer hunting season. I would prefer GF&P remove targeted cats in a manner that allows them to select cats to be removed.
- ID: 273
Ad ranchers in Pennington and Custer counties, we need lions to controlled to protect people especially children. They should also control lions to allow our horses and cattle to survive. Economic pressures are already pushing our stock numbers down. Do not let lions push us out. Rapid City is already doing that strongly.

ID: 274

It seems to the people that enjoy the Hills, we don't see any deer or elk like we used to. It's getting harder every year to fill an elk tag as a deer tag during hunting. people that like to hunt are going out of state due to nothing left to hunt one going out of state due to nothing left to hunt here in the beautiful Black Hills. GF&P need to quit doing all the research and need to get rid of some of these cats to bring back our deer and elk populations. You people have these meetings to get the public to voice their opinions and my question is what are you going to do about it and when? You people are ruining our Hills.

ID: 275

Who pays your wages, anti sportsmen, tax payers; you already know you have too many spent millions in research. We have a decent population in the country where can you kill 40 cats in 40 days just out driving around. I'm convinced you people are just a bunch of politicians are not stewards for our wildlife. I will shoot everyone I see till you start doing you're flipping job you are hired to do by the people of this great state. No get off your ass and start managing these predators, and piss on the animal rights people you seem to care so much about deer, elk and hunters pay your wages.

ID: 276

The mountain lion hunting season benefits only hunters to the detriment of other outdoor enthusiasts. I'm an avid hiker who believes mountain lions should not be hunted as this leads to young lions left motherless and not able to properly hunt on their own (ultimately leading them to populated areas). If there are too many lion in the Hills, then GF&P should carefully reduce the population by first tranquilizing them making sure they don't have young and only then killing them. Hunters claim the big game population is down but there are still a very healthy population is down but there is still a very healthy population of deer elk and sheep in the Hills. An increase in these species just increase vehicle collisions and large herds competing for available food. Also any decline in these species probably due to the long cold winters rather than too many mountain lions.

ID: 279

At the rate its doing what will be here in three years.

ID: 280

As a big game hunter, I think your department is doing a very good job. I would like to have a continued opportunity to hunt lions, my foremost hunting interests though is deer and elk hunting and do not want cats competing for them.

ID: 282

I agree that we have achieved a good harvest without dogs and it allows more of us to participate.

ID: 285

Use of hounds would let the GF&P maintain, control, and manage the lions.

ID: 287

The mountain lion season is still a fairly new season; I think the parks department is doing a great job. It will take time to tweak the season but you have to by trail and error to make it right. Keep up the good work you guys are the professionals.

ID: 288

Please increase the number of mountain lions harvested in the next season. I have seen a drastic drop in deer numbers during the 2009 season and unless the lion numbers are reduced, this will continue.

ID: 290

Kill the bastards they will come back then manage them better wasting millions of dollars managing them.

ID: 294

My license dollars should go to manage by game species. We should not be feeding mountain lions at the expense of other hunting opportunities. We did fine for the last 80 years without them. We need to also keep more accurate deer and elk counts.

Appendix J. Optional comments from the Aberdeen meeting.

ID: 298

Harvest some, and keep a lot of them, we need the call of the wild.

ID: 300

We need a control area where ungulate hunting is allowed, but cougar hunting is not at least for now. Shoot spotted cats leave the mom along. Don't use dogs; keep the DNA from every cat killed. Compare DNA of problem animals killed.

ID: 304

I think we should go with John's idea and sustain the population at 170. I also believe you guys (in the department) have the science and the knowledge to do a good job. I hope Joe Blow public and the governor's office will let you do your job! I like to hunt and the only thing I ask for is a balance; and I'm sure you will work to achieve that balance. Thanks for the information.

ID: 306

If there is an increase in the mountain lion population wouldn't they keep a check on the ungulate population? Hunting cougars with dogs is inhumane and unnecessary! People are making a sufficient dent in the population without using dogs. I think hunting of female cougars should be decreased considerably. A young cougar orphaned is much more apt to be a problem cougar, without its mother to teach it to hunt deer and not livestock. Fines should be high on shooting females; lactating females should not be hunted. Electronic calls shouldn't be used in my opinion.

ID: 307

You need better management; we want more elk, deer, and big horn sheep, mountain goats, turkey and less mountain lions in the Black Hills.

ID: 308

Why do we need a GF&P Commission I see no reason for this we have trained and educated GF&P employees that are equipped to make these decisions. Excellent presentation answered questions well. We should have a quota of mountain lions include all kills not just by hunters.

ID: 309

I appreciate very much the opportunity to hunt lions in the Black Hills as a separate big game season. There are a few opportunities to get out and hunt hard without being saturated with other "hunters". I want to hunt in an area that is not infiltrated with vehicles lion hunting in my opinion is the only season in South Dakota to provide this opportunity on public land. I do not

want to see hunting lions with dogs in the future in the Black Hills. I do see the benefits of selective harvest, but the cost far outweighs the benefits.

ID: 310

Hunting with hounds is not hunting avoid the public walks away from hunting with hounds.

ID: 311

Open quota take females out of the closing of quota harvesting of too many cow elk in Custer may have more breeding than the lion predation.

ID: 312

Need to have a mountain lion hunt in Custer State Park, since the early 2000's when the lion population has increased, where as elk, big horn sheep, and mountain goat populations have decreased drastically. Elk numbers were well over 1000 animals and in the last 10 years the elk numbers less than 300. I know there are other factors involved but lions are impacting the elk herd.

ID: 472

Some of these questions can be taken two different ways. Our big game animals in the Black Hills are being depleted by predators faster than we can imagine. It is a shame, since we had quality numbers of big game animals in the Hills. It is also a disappointment that these cats have not been managed properly.

Appendix K. Optional comments from the Winner meeting.

ID: 314

I would like to see a hunt for the plains.

ID: 315

The season outside the Black Hills Fire District should be open to anyone with a tag (and permission) not just landowners.

ID: 317

The GF&P staff was very courteous and very educational and very informative. The lions that pass through our area are not problem lions that I know of.

ID: 318

Excellent presentation great to have a question and answer period

ID: 320

We should be able to use hounds outside the Black Hills.

ID: 324

Post a county by county listing on the websites of verified sightings. Allow dog hunting outside of the Hills.

ID: 325

GF&P should suppose a statewide vote on this issue.

ID: 327

Increase the number of tags and increase the number that can be killed.

Appendix L. Optional comments from the Pierre meeting.

ID: 336

I have hunted deer in the Black Hills for 35 years. The deer population is extremely low and the quality of a Black Hills deer hunt is poor right now. Please reduce the lion population to a taken population of about 50 no more.

ID: 340

Don't let the hound's men in need to let all people enjoy and recreate not just hounds men (the few that would to be all the lions) just look at WY.

ID: 343

Hounds in Custer State Park only

ID: 344

My main concern is human safety. There have been too many instances of human/lion contact where the lion shows no fear. Four western states have had people killed by lions because the cats don't fear people. South Dakota should not have to pin that group. We need to put more fear into the lions by more hunting/killing or pursuit seasons by dogs.

ID: 346

I hope you really listen and take this seriously. I hope we don't lose any humans because of the mountain lions.

ID: 347

Informative presentation

ID: 353

GF&P should manage mountain lions at the direction of the GF&P Commission. My opinion cut down the number of mountain lions by hunting.

ID: 354

Would like to see some hound use of some kind could be a late season or pursuit. The trespass issues could be addressed with an unarmed retrieval law that would let hound hunters retrieve their dogs unarmed off of private land.

ID 358 →from the Region 2 Advisory Panel

My son lives in Rapid City, he camps both winter and summer and also mountain bikes. We worry about an encounter with him and his dog in the Black Hills.

Appendix M. Optional, unsolicited comments.

ID 362

The agenda seems to be set by those who wish to hunt lions. The GF&P Dept seems to be more concerned about the rights/demands of hunters and a revenue stream from licenses than they are about the health of our environment. Why is the first response of GF&P to kill wildlife? I prefer an unbiased education.

ID 365

I think quotas are too high. I would agree with having a mountain lion hunting season if quotas are reduced. It was a good idea to wait with the season until January.

ID 371

1) I am not opposed to killing mountain lions that are causing problems, such as killing livestock or pets, but let's at least verify that it is a mountain lion. I and don't think that a ranchers or homeowners whose pet or person is threatened should have to contact GFP to take care of that lion. People who live here should be able to handle their own problems.

2) Hunting of mountain lions, as I see it, is only to raise money for GFP, sports stores and outfitters. I don't believe for a minute that it is in anyway a management tool.

3) I feel current policy of the hunting season for mountain lions only adds to the problem of more young, untrained by their mother lions that caused problems

4) I finally don't believe for a minute my comments or feelings will matter at all to GFP. From my time here in South Dakota, I've observed GFP's answer to every wildlife problem (from moose to lions) is to kill it, but what do I know, I would like to be proven wrong.

ID 372

Predators and prey will manage themselves very well without human interference.

ID 373

What's bad is a mother lion could have kittens they die or become trouble young lions. If there is a lion inside the City limits, why not tranquilize and move the lion?

- ID 374
Mountain lions are big game and should not be open to everyone with a gun. I suggest that each hunter should have a license and tag. It should cost \$1000.00 this would reduce the hunters to only experienced hunters who would know what they are doing and are serious about a trophy.
- ID 375
Education is the key. As responsible residents of the Black Hills we must learn how to safely live with mountain lions in our area. I do not object to a hunting season as long as the amount of lions harvested is not increased.
- ID 377
Just because we as humans can kill something doesn't mean we have to. All creatures are part of the ecosystem and play an essential role. It is our jobs as stewards of this system to maintain this essential balance.
- ID 378
I would favor a lion hunting season over trapping. Trapping is dangerous to more than lions. I feel you are hunting too many lions. Going into their safe areas to such a degree drives them out into contact with people. If livestock and/or pets are in lion habitat they are fair game. If a lion is leaving its safe habitat to go into a populated area to kill livestock/pets it should be killed.
- ID 380
I did not attend the meeting but followed it in print, radio and TV.
- ID 381
We love living in the Black Hills and we love to see all the wildlife. It is our responsibility to protect our animals (pets) and ourselves. We would rather live in an area with any and all wildlife instead of living in a big city with crime! Maybe, you should cut hunting quotas if you are worried about a decrease in big game animals. The hunters don't have to kill to survive but both mountain lions and coyotes do! They need to feed their young. How many cubs die each year due to your hunting season?
- ID 385
Building in mountain lion areas means living with their presence.
- ID 387
We live in a home south of Rapid City, off Sheridan Lake Rd. overlooking Spring Creek Canyon and have not seen a lion in the four years we have been here. We are, however, over-run with deer, turkeys and even big horn sheep have been of larger herds and stayed in our yard longer this past summer and fall and damaged the trees. We even have chickens and a pet

rabbit that are in an enclosure so I would think this would have drawn a lion by this time. I expect there is definitely something lacking in our top predators being shot. It has changed the ecosystem in the wrong way! Now, we expect it won't be long before we get a problem lion prematurely separated from its mother! It's a bad move to have increased the lions taken this season! Next time, base your decisions on facts!

ID 389

We should be appreciative that this great cat is living in the Black Hills and surrounding plains. Unfortunately the GFP treats it as if it is some kind of problem. How sad. Most of the lions that are killed by hunters are female, because the females are more visible, always trying to find food for their kittens. So then, the GFP has to spend even more money trying to rescue the orphaned kittens. The kittens either die or end up just as dead in a zoo. This great cat has evolved over millions of years. Instead of "managing" them, why not just let them be. Future generations will thank us for doing so.

ID 390

Mountain lion population in the Black Hills is self-regulating due to the large territories claimed by lions and by the solitary nature of lions. To allow hunting of lions drives them out of the Hills into range land. How many deer did Custer City destroy last year because of over-population?

ID 391

I believe the current GFP policies are sound in reason and science based. Large predators certainly belong in SD but need management. That is the job of GFP and I like the effort and diligence that the staff put into management decisions. Keep focus on good science decisions and you will always have my support.

ID 392

I feel there is no need for a mountain lion hunting season. Humans have not been threatened by mountain lions. If there is problem they should be re-located.

ID 394

I do not agree at all with the mountain lion hunting season. Mountain lions are not a threat in the Hills.

ID 397

My fear is that if we continue to increase hunting quotas before we have a real opportunity to see the effect of current quotas, we could do real harm to the lion population. Also, the hunters in Hills are spoiled! Hunting deer here

is like shooting fish in a barrel. If the deer population decreases due to lions, good! Old timers will tell you that they used to have to really hunt to get their deer and sometimes they didn't get one. Do the right thing; don't cave to greedy hunter pressure.

ID 401

Whenever a government entity opens any spigot, there is always a group wanting more, more, more. Wisconsin GFP allowed the bobcat (native) to be wiped out by hunters, who are never self disciplined. All bobcats in Wisconsin are of Michigan origins. If you thin that won't happen here to the mountain lions, think again. Also, there have been reports of problem lions where there haven't been before, giving credence to Dr. Sharon Seneczko's predictions of this occurring due to mother's being taken before the young are fully trained, left to their own to survive, why in the name of common sense would the state create even more?

ID 402

I'm not concerned as the main food for them is deer. People moving in from other states should know that lion's home is here and they should not expect every lion to be removed because of their fright. They are the ones that move in, the lions already existed here. By the way, we moved here from another state and we like the environment with the lions and therefore there are fewer deer to run into.

ID 403

I believe that this last mountain lion season took too many females.

ID 404

I believe deer herds should be smaller to encourage young male lions to disperse. I believe hunting lions only increases the problem lions.

ID 409

I believe that the whole purpose of the hunting season, increasing the quotas, killing of problem cougars, etc. is really an effort on the GFP to eradicate them in the Black Hills.

ID 410

No increases in the quotas! A decrease would be a lot better. No hunting with hounds, it's not fair! Do some research based on scientifically based methods, done by specialists (unbiased) wildlife management and statistical analysis.

- ID 411
GF&P's annual increase in quotas is not justified by sound scientific data. Hunting (killing) females, many of which have cubs under one year old is not only inhumane but results in more problems with nuisance younger cougars that have not learned to hunt. Hunting with hounds has been outlawed in other countries and should not be considered here in SD at all. Despite the pleas of the hounds men (whose interests is primarily in making money).
- ID 412
It is often difficult to be a resident of this state and the hunting that goes on makes it even more difficult. God meant for these animals to inhabit our planet so please don't let them all be killed!
- ID 413
I am very concerned about the increase in the quota of taking of mountain lions. I am also very concerned about leaving so many baby lions orphaned when the mother is killed. These baby lions suffer a cruel inhumane death, and if they survive they will become problem lions who do not have the necessary skills to hunt natural prey. They will take easy prey such as pets. The current policy is only creating more problems and a justification to increase the kill quota and to put down more "problem" lions. There has been no news release regarding orphaned babies any longer. There has been news releases about lions taking down too many deer and just a note about that, mountain lions take the old, sick and weak where as hunters and trophy hunters take the strongest and best weakening the gene pool.
- ID 414
Has the GFP considered an early morning guided bus rides into the wilderness to view mountain lions and other wildlife in their natural habitat? I believe such an adventure would be another experience that tourists and locals as well would enjoy. The additional revenue would be beneficial to GFP and our state. While visiting the beautiful state of Alaska, I took such a trip into the wilderness to view animals and spotted the big five, Caribou, Grizzly bear, Moose, Doll Sheep and one member of the canine. The bus was filled with enthusiastic tourists who paid for such an experience. The trip was safe, educational, and well managed. Would this be a possibility for the Black Hills and South Dakota? The Black Hills are home to mountain lion, elk, deer, coyote and turkey, we have a big five. Let's show the country how South Dakota can peacefully co-exist with nature instead of killing off a species of creatures that is part of the beauty and serenity of this area that animals and humans call home.

- ID 415
Maintain a healthy mountain lion population in the entire state. Harvesting should only be used when a population exceeds the ability to be self sustaining. Question 11: I was unable to attend any meetings this year, but generally the GFP conducts good meetings. People who cannot act live adults should be removed.
- ID 416
Why can't we peacefully exist in the ecosystem we have chosen to live in? Why do we kill everything? You can't eat a mountain lion, what makes you think you have the right to kill them? You are disturbing the balance that God created.
- ID 418
If we have too many deer, why kill the predators?
- ID 419
We need to seek what is best for nature, not for man (hunters, ranchers, politicians) as nature is much more vital to the survival of man than they are. Mountain lions are vital to the survival of healthy elk and deer herds. They bring tourists (\$\$) as do the other wildlife. That is why my family moved here – the wildlife. Let's learn from the lessons of Yellow Stone Park and the wolves. Big predators are important to the health of a wildlife area.
- ID 422
Killing female lions increases the problems with young lions.
- ID 423
Since we supposedly have a deer problem and have to have the city shoot deer it is only logical that killing more mountain lions is a bad choice as they help with the natural balance by killing deer. Let nature have a balance by allowing the mountain lion population to help with the deer population without man's intervention and killing.
- ID 425
Leave them alone! You would not have to "harvest" all our deer if you left the lions alone. You kill the deer and you kill the lions, it's ridiculous! If you let the lions take care of any over-population of deer, they will do so. Of course, you would have to deprive the blood-thirsty hunters. I've seen the look in their eyes when they talk about their "kill" and it's scary!

- ID 427
We have hiked in the Black Hills for many years. We have tried to find mountain lions but have only seen one up by Deer Field Lake. It was one of the most beautiful animals I have seen. Please save the mountain lions.
- ID 428
Mountain lions have their place in the forest but when they get into the city, they need to be destroyed. If you remove them, they have no territory of their own and will just come back into the city. So unfortunately when they have no territory, there are too many for the area and some have to be put to death.
- ID 430
Why does it seem like GFP only listens to the hunters? It's always about money and never about the wildlife. GFP should be ashamed of their track record.
- ID 431
Why can't we just chase away the problem lions? Leave the ones doing their job in the environment and everyone would be happy.
- ID 432
We strongly oppose killing mountain lions.
- ID 435
If you decide you are going to have a mountain lion season it should run at the same time as deer season and there should not be any calling devices used. That gives the lions a fair chance. We have too many months with hunters running around with guns in the Black Hills. They just tear up the roads and trespass on private property.
- ID 442
I believe problem cats should be terminated and using traps and hounds is okay. But I believe that a hunting season does not kill the problem cats and creates a different kind of imbalance.
- ID 447
Question 2: My answer is based on the assumption that GFP would in fact, provide the education needed in a manner that would reach as many people as possible. If adequate education would not or could not be provided, I would answer "take no action."
- ID 448
Do what California does!

- ID 449
Stop killing the mountain lions.
- ID 451
I'm not opposed to limited hunting but I am very uncertain of the level of understanding we have of 1) what the population look like. 2) How it changes over time and 3) what a healthy rebound population would be.
- ID 452
Why do I have this feeling that this is an exercise in "let's let the public think they had a say and then we still do what we had planned because we know what's best?" GFP couldn't even handle one moose without deciding to kill it. I don't have much faith in GFP's judgment. They seem to operate with "knee jerk" reaction. By the way, where are all the elk, another GFP snafu?
- ID 453
I am opposed to a mountain lion hunting season in South Dakota and Custer State Park. I strongly believe that people who hunt mountain lions do so simply because they enjoy killing them. This is tragic. Mountain lions have a self-sustaining system of population control that should keep their numbers stable over time, without human intervention. Lions found within city limits should be tranquilized and relocated to areas with abundant natural food sources. People with pets and livestock should demonstrate responsibility by keeping their animals contained. Don't blame the predator! The suggestion that lions kill too many big animals is odd. Having a mountain lion season so hunters can kill animals that might kill what they want to kill is an extremely misguided reason for interfering with nature.
- ID 454
I feel strongly that South Dakota should maintain a viable, self sustaining population of mountain lions. These magnificent creatures are part of our state's natural heritage and should continue to hold a place in its future. If they're going to be around in the future, we must manage them utilizing sound genetic and demographic principles. Scientific management of this fragile population is essential. I was disappointed to hear that we strayed from such principles regarding the total number to be killed by hunting this year. I support controlled hunting of certain species in our state, but not sport hunting of mountain lions. Killing such a magnificent animal simply for trophies sickens me. Lions will need to be culled when they present a danger to humans or kill livestock. Culling may also be necessary to manage the genetics and demographics of the population. Ranchers should be able to kill lions that eat their livestock, but culling lions for other

reasons should be done by professional lion hunters hired by SD Game, Fish & Parks. By doing this, it only targets problem lions.

ID 455

Everything including animals serves a purpose in this world. Animals are being pushed out of their natural environment by people moving in their territory and fires not being put out. If people want to live here or anywhere that have wild animals then they need to learn to co-exist with them peacefully. If people value their flowers and gardens so much but are too lazy to fence them then they can move to Chicago or someplace else where wild animals have been pretty much eradicated. I and many others value and enjoy seeing wild animals roam. I share my flowers and veggies and fruit with them, it's the circle of life.

ID 457

There is a huge need to expand the ADC program.

ID 458

Stop the hunting season.

ID 459

Give them a chance to live in SD.

ID 460

Education is a top priority. The public needs to know more about dangers and positives of mountain lions in their areas. Also, a county by county estimate of lion population would be very beneficial in all of this. As a rancher, I feel I do have the right to defend my property if there is an incident with livestock, pets or around children.

ID 462

Because of my health, I was unable to attend this meeting however my wife was able to attend. We have attended many such meetings in the past and felt that many of our concerns were met by deaf ears. We've felt that decisions had already been made, and that the hunting season was decided for political reasons. Lions are only killed for trophies. Killing more lions only increases the amount of deer and elk. If we had more deer & elk hunters, many problems would be solved. It is so obvious that mountain lions are of no danger to man compared to other threats. Hunting lions is simply for trophies which is so atrocious to me. Remember the years when buffalo almost became extinct? It was based on mostly so called humans than any predators. The same has occurred with eagles and wolves – the main problem with these animals is man. Is South Dakota going to let this happen to mountain lions?

ID 463

I applaud the Game, Fish & Parks for its extensive research on mountain lions. I believe that most of its agents want to see a healthy wildlife environment here and want to preserve wildlife (including mountain lions) in the landscape. Also, I appreciate very much the agency's efforts to rescue orphaned kittens. On the other hand, I feel that the GF&P Commission exhibits little or no interest in the opinions of non-hunters. The wildlife in the state belongs to all of us, not just to hunters. Many of us non-hunters enjoy seeing wild animals while they still are drawing a breath, we are tax payers too. Some states encourage citizens to donate to their conservation efforts. I for one would be more than willing to donate annually for non-hunting related wildlife conservation programs.

ID 464

As a rancher, I feel that the mountain lions are a threat to my way of life. As a grandparent, to have my grandkids riding in the Hills where lions are present is disturbing. We have to realize that having lions in SD is also affecting the way that we operate in an AG related state. If we don't have the young kids out there helping, AG will suffer and you say don't let kids out from dusk till dawn, well dusk is when most barn chores are done. I am not a big supporter of the lion program, after all our four fathers saw these animals as a threat to their way of life. We are still trying to continue our way of life with threats from all sides, the lions are just one side.

ID 465

I would like the GFP to acknowledge that there are more lions in Western SD than they knew. Lions like to be secluded and when they are pushed into towns by lack of territory and food they should be reduced. The only real predators that they have are disease, themselves and us. So if we mismanage them they will not only decimate livestock but also wild game and harm humans. When lions do establish themselves in town, I believe they should be relocated because if they show little to no fear of people they are dangerous. Those lions will kill livestock, pets and endanger people. A lion that kills livestock should be eliminated because of the huge loss of funds and time put into animals. I also do not agree with relocation. I simply do not like to put one person's problem onto the shoulders of another. There should be such a thing of out of sight, out of mind. Lets face it they are on the top of the predator list and we should treat them that way. I do agree they are a beautiful animal and have a right to live, but if they do not go unchecked by humans, Mother Nature will thin them out, and that is truly cruel and by that time wild game and livestock will be truly decimated.

ID 466
I believe we should keep all wildlife in balance. We shouldn't kill off all mountain lions, however, if they are causing harm something needs to be done. We need to learn how to co-exist with one another! The GFP are doing a great job at keeping a balance in our environment. We need to trust their efforts.

ID 468
My biggest concern with the current lion population is that it has grown too big and I feel it will be only a matter of time before there will be human casualties from lions and it will probably be a child. A yearly lion hunt is very good in that it reduces lion numbers and it creates a fear of humans in the lion population. The other concern is the large number of pets that are killed by lions. Hunting with dogs would cause lions to be more afraid of dogs and perhaps the killing of pets would be reduced. From all the info that seems reasonable and available to the public, the population of lions in the Black Hills is still too high.

ID 470
In most cases I'm willing to acquiesce in GFP game management decisions because of its presumed expertise. However, predators are universally despised by ranchers and I feel GFP may be influenced by political considerations when it comes to managing them. That is, the ranchers in SD want the mountain lions eliminated the legislation listens to the ranchers. GFP leans toward the legislative view point because of funding considerations and fails to collect or disregards scientific data which may run contrary to the ranchers "kill all predators" world view. If the scientific evidence justifying a hunting season isn't there, don't have one. On a related note, please stop using the word "harvest" when you really mean "kill." Corn is harvested, animals die.

Late Return:

My wife and I have lived in rural Custer Co. for the past 8 years. We spend a lot of time horse-back riding, walking our dogs, cutting firewood, hunting on foot (NOT in a pick-up) and have found very little sign of mountain lion activity. WE live surrounded by Forest Service, raise mini donkeys, mini horses, also chickens, cats and dogs....Lions have not been a problem!

- The following two pages (68-69) are of a letter received as part of this public input process.

Good day Larry.

My name is Troy Christie, I am a sportsman and Sioux Falls resident. I attended the Lion Management meeting held here in March. I feel it to be important for those South Dakotans serious about our States' resources to be as vocal as possible when issues as valuable as the debatable Lion season arise.

After viewing the form I returned that night and speaking to friends of mine who could not attend the meeting, I would like to elaborate on some of the responses I made and maybe even add to it the opinions of others I spoke to.

Though a minority in our State would believe that the Lion has as much right to live and flourish where ever it may happen to be as we do, I don't agree. After speaking to John at the meeting it was interesting to find that Lions cannot be rehabilitated. And as much as I would like to have a plethora cats for a better chance of filling my tag I do understand the common sense biology of habitat/territorial capacity in this regard. With such information I would trust that when a Lion poses a threat to an area either city or rural, the Dept. would make the appropriate decision when handling the matter. Be it leave or remove the cat I also believe local public opinion might play into future events and how they might be handled. I believe most would agree a policy of "Better safe than sorry" would appear sensible in these cases.

I love the Hills and travel there as much as I can, even putting a deer hunt in November each year. Over the past couple of years our hunting party has noticed what we consider to be a dramatic reduction of deer, elk herd sizes and turkeys we see during our three to four day hunts. We've considered the weather the past couple of years to be a factor also but in 2009 we saw far fewer numbers than in 2008. This past year we hunted for three days with White-tail doe tags and saw only three small Mule deer bucks and not one turkey where past years have yielded dozens. The weather was cooperative throughout the trip with a changing weather pattern approaching our last day of hunting.

It is my understanding that our Black Hills as well as Custer State Park has likely surpassed it's carrying capacity of Lions at this time. With Spring here I would think you would have a good sense of the population surviving the Winter we had. Myself along with other like thinking sportsmen and women would ask that you urge the Commission to allow another rise in the Female Lion harvest in the coming season. Frustrating as it is for me to hear rhetoric about over-hunting to extinction, I realize it is likely I don't know the half of it from your standpoint. I have put and will continue to put my complete and total trust in our States' Department to handle every aspect of our wildlife as management is concerned. The resources you utilize make you far more well informed as to the conditions of this than anyone else could be. I strongly believe Mountain Lions play a valuable role in our ecosystem and should be managed in a way that guarantees it to continue as such.

One area I wish to address further is the method of harvest. To this point we've had no hounds involved and I guess I'd like to see it continue that way. I haven't seen any issues with filling the quota by seasons' end and allowing hounds would only entice more attention to our hunt. I know it's common practice in other states but imagine the bunny-huggers' anger at our willingness to "harass" our game up a tree before "blowing it out of" said tree. I haven't heard much crap from these people regarding our wildlife management practices and hope for it to remain that way.

Additionally, hounds are a specialty hunt. If you don't or can't invest in the dog(s) you would naturally have to pay someone else to do it. Thus adding to the price of the hunt as it stands, substantially.

The "declining"? numbers of deer and elk a.k.a. too many Lions and the use of hounds are two pretty big issues to most of the sportsmen I spoke to. No one was in favor of allowing hounds to hunt Lions.

I returned to the Hills Dec. 31 of 2008 to hunt a Lion the following day. On my drive I called the Rapid City office for any tips in pursuing my prey there. Upon closing, the CO wished me well and reminded me to wear my blaze as I was pursuing a Big Game animal. Having seasons coinciding previous years it was never a thought not to.

In January 2009 I began pursuing the possibility of removing the requirement for blaze during Lion hunts. As many hunters know, predators hunt on sight as much as they do scent and sound. I found that in order to change this Statute I would have to find a Legislator willing to sponsor some sort of bill to change it. As it was nearing the end of a hectic session I had no luck whatsoever and postponed it for later. Since, I have been diagnosed with brain cancer. Things have been a little chaotic in my home and I haven't been able to tend to this as I would like to. Maybe this could be one way to assist the harvest during the season. I have heard some safety concerns from a Commissioner regarding this. As a Hunt Safe instructor I understand the angle but am confident it could be resolved. As with other seasons, we would also have to rely on the abilities of our States' hunters to assure it remains a safe hunt. One statement made was in regard to using calls and how turkey hunters are fired upon during the season. I explained that turkeys are hunted with same-species calls whereas predators are hunted with prey calls. I don't know how convincing I was.

The issue of trapping leaves me with little to comment. I am not a trapper and so I would rely on the decision made by the Department based on fact and knowledgeable opinion. I would suggest any season for trapping be after the hunting season closes to avoid any hunter/trapper conflicts yet likely be prime for pelts.

Having had a tag for this elusive prey each year since the inaugural, the closest I've come to one was finding a fresh deer kill site in 2004 while on my first elk hunt. Just knowing without doubt the cats existed in the State was almost as exciting for me as filling my cow tag a couple of days later.

Larry, as a life-time South Dakota outdoorsman I enjoy the beauty of our State Parks with my family camping in the Summer. I long for the cooler weather of the Fall seasons to spend time and stories with friends and other like minded individuals pursuing outdoor adventure. Then again for the wondrous winters(short winters) we sometimes have here in South Dakota. I'm sure many Sportsmen and women feel the same about their respective States but I am truly proud of the way my State embraces and nurtures it's natural resources. Not just for our future generations and those of the wildlife but because it's the right thing to do. Thank you for all you do and will continue to do. Please pass the same on to the rest of the Department. The work you do is very important to the citizens of South Dakota and those who would visit here.