



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

MAY 2-3, 2024 | CUSTER STATE PARK | EVENT BARN

MEETING INFO

This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.

Date and Time: May 2, 2024, at 1 pm MT / 2 pm CST

Meeting Location: Custer State Park Event Barn at 13389 US HWY 16A, Custer, SD 57730

Zoom: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 928 2777 2568

Passcode: 421262

Call In: +12532050468,,92827772568# US

Video Conference ID: 92827772568@zoomcrc.com

AGENDA

Call Meeting to Order (1 pm MT / 2 pm CST)

Division of Administration

Action Items

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives>
3. Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Informational Items

4. New Staff Introductions

Public Hearing (2 pm MT / 3 pm CST)

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment finalizations.

Open Forum – following the conclusion of the Public Hearing

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment on petitions, proposals, and other items of interest not on the agenda.

Petition

5. #213: Air Gun Hunting
6. #214: Beaver Hunting/Trapping
7. #215: Beaver Hunting/Trapping
8. #216: Beaver Hunting/Trapping

Proposals

9. Annual Park Entrance License Options
10. Elk Raffle License
11. Antelope Hunting Seasons
 - a. Antelope Survey Presentation
12. Furbearer Seasons and Methods: Hunting Raccoons with Dogs (*Second Reading*)
13. Landowner Own Land Elk (*Second Reading*)

Finalizations

14. Custer State Park Hunting Seasons
 - a. Custer State Park Bison
 - b. Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season



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15. Small Game Hunting Seasons
 - a. Grouse Hunting Season
 - b. Partridge Hunting Season
 - c. Quail Hunting Season
 - d. Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season
 - e. Tree Squirrel Hunting Season
 - f. Snipe Hunting Season

Division of Parks and Recreation

Informational Items

16. History of the State Game Lodge
17. Custer State Park Airport Update
18. Missouri River Reservoir Update
19. Snowmobile Program Update
20. Fishing Access Mapping
21. Volunteer Outlook
22. Revenue and Camping Reports

Division of Wildlife

Action Items

23. Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan
24. Deer Action Plan
25. Bobcat Action Plan
26. East River Deer & Archery Deer License Allocation
27. Bon Homme County Land Donation
28. Krause Land Donation – Day County

Informational Items

29. Fishing Access Update – Eastern South Dakota
30. Fish Spawning and Stocking Update
31. Aquatic Invasive Species Operations Update
32. Pheasant and Grouse Harvest Report
33. License Sales Reports

Solicitation of Agenda Items

Now is the time to submit agenda items for the Commission to consider at a following commission meeting.

Adjourn

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on June 6-7, 2024, starting at 1 pm CST at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center in Yankton, SD.



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Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Matthews Training Center in Pierre, SD, on April 4, 2024. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, Travis Theel, and Bruce Cull were present. With eight commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff can listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 83 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure [Action Item]

Chair Rissler requested the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, but none were brought forward.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of March 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE MARCH 2024 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Additional Salary Days [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. The following additional days were submitted: Whitmyre (1), White (1), and Locken (1).

MOTIONED BY BARLTING, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

4. South Dakota Shooting Sports Complex Update [Info Item]

Secretary Robling provided the Commission with an update on the South Dakota Shooting Range Complex. A YouTube video of the progress can be found at https://youtu.be/H_Vd0iW3A3U?si=C1btpP78A0zzi0eh.

5. New Staff Introduction [Info Item]

Director Kirschenmann informed the Commission that the Division of Wildlife has two employees to introduce. Both employees are Wildlife Conservation Technicians working on our public habitat teams. John DeWit is based out of Mobridge and Dustin Hackens works from the Ft. Pierre office. Both staff members will work on habitat management activities on Game Production Areas in central South Dakota. And Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced several new staff. Those new staff introduced were Seth Hofer, KayCee Smith, Hannah Hansum, Seth Schilousky, Sunni Josephson, and Lee Isaak.

Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:03 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as a finalization.

2:04 pm: George VanDel of Pierre testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

Agenda Item #13: Use of Parks and Public Land: Tree Stands and Trail Cameras

No testimony provided.

Agenda Item #14: Time Restrictions for Use of Park Systems and Public Lands

No testimony provided.

Agenda Item #15: Bighorn Sheep Hunting

No testimony provided.



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Agenda Item #16: Elk Hunting Seasons

No testimony provided.

Agenda Item 17: Waterfowl Hunting Seasons

2:09 pm: Jake Sheffield of Brandon, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:13 pm: Chuck Dieter of Brookings, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association and the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:16 pm: Paul Lepisto of Pierre, SD representing the Izaak Walton League testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:18 pm: John Simpson of Pierre, SD testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:22 pm: Michael Mol of Brandon, SD testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:25 pm: Dana Rogers of Hills City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:28 pm: Cody Warner of Webster, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

2:32 pm: Zachery T Hunke of Watertown, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season finalization.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Public Hearing at 2:35 pm CST.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor following the conclusion of the public hearing at 2:36 pm for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

2:35 pm: George VanDel of Pierre testified in support of the grouse season extension.

2:37 pm: Tom Frier of Pierre, SD representing the Sunset Lodge in support of the Bush's Landing project.

2:39 pm: Chuck Deiter of Brookings, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association and the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the current guide structure in South Dakota.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Open Forum at 2:42 pm CST.

6. Petition #210: Landowner Muzzleloader Deer Preference

[Action Item: Petition]

Chris Hitzeman of Lake Andes, SD submitted petition #210 in which requested the Commission to apply landowner preference to muzzleloader tags.

Director Kirschenmann introduced the petition submitted by Mr. Chris Hitzeman from Lake Andes, SD. The petition submitted was asking the commission to consider incorporating landowner preference to the 1,000



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any deer Muzzleloader licenses or even possibly providing the allowance for East River landowner licenses to convert to Muzzleloader licenses. Mr. Hitzeman provided reasons for his request, including the opportunity to take advantage of the weather to harvest a buck with a muzzleloader versus archery. By incorporating landowner preference, it would greatly increase the odds of drawing this license versus waiting for up to 5-7 years. The department recommended not moving forward with the petition and discussed the many landowner opportunities for obtaining buck licenses above nonlandowners, the balance of fair and equitable distribution of licenses, how the current structure does not include landowner preference for statewide seasons, and the consideration of a license conversion creates a lot of confusion and complexity.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY THEEL TO DENY PETITION #210. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-04 DENYING PETITION #210. The motion carried unanimously.

7. West River Turkey Tag

[Action Item: Petition]

Kyle Gutormson of Brookings, SD submitted petition #212 in which requested the Commission a "West River Special" Turkey tag be created.

Director Kirschenmann introduced the petition from Mr. Kyle Gutormson from Brookings who requested the creation of a west river special turkey license for the spring turkey season. Mr. Gutormson was not present nor joined via remote options. Kirschenmann proceeded to describe the petition as submitted and then explained why the department recommended the commission to deny the petition. Reasons for recommending not to move forward with the petition included it only considered western SD, licenses would only be available to nonresidents, and that the licenses would be unlimited in number. The commission agreed with the recommendation but did acknowledge a level of some interest should the petition had included this approach statewide, included residents, and have a limited number available.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BIES TO DENY PETITION #212. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #24-05 DENYING PETITION #212. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Hunting Raccoons with Dogs

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented the proposal that would allow nonresidents to use a dog as an aid in taking of a raccoon.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO HUNTING RACCOONS WITH DOGS PROPOSAL, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE JUNE 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Firearm Deer License Unit Changes

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought forward the Firearm Deer License Unit Changes proposals.

9a. East River Prairie and Archery Deer Hunting Season

Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023. In response, changes are being recommended to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses. The recommended changes would result in a reduction of 860 firearm deer licenses (38% reduction) or 985 tags (650 fewer any deer



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tags and 335 fewer antlerless whitetail tags) among seven counties including: Bon Homme, Clay, Hutchinson, Lincoln, Turner, Union, and Yankton. In addition, archery and muzzleloader hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their archery or muzzleloader any deer license type (01 type).

Potential administrative action to modify deer license numbers would occur during the May Commission meeting.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

9b. Archery Deer Hunting Season

Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023.

In response, changes are being recommended to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses and this would modify the open unit for archery antlerless whitetail deer based on § 41:06:22:01.01 (4). Archery hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their archery any deer license type (01 type). Potential administrative action to modify deer license numbers would occur during the May Commission meeting.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

9c. General Muzzleloading Deer Hunting Season

Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023.

In response, changes are being recommended to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses and this would modify the open unit for muzzleloader antlerless whitetail deer based on § 41:06:45:02 (4). Muzzleloader hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their muzzleloader any deer license type (01 type). Potential administrative action to modify deer license numbers would occur during the May Commission meeting.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

10. Landowner Own Land Elk Application for License

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, brought for the Landowner Own Land License proposal to the Commission. He reported that currently there are landowners that are not receiving an elk license in Prairie elk hunting season units where GFP is seeking to mitigate depredation and landowner conflicts with elk. GFP recommends establishing a landowner own land elk license to ensure that landowners can hunt elk on agricultural lands they own or operate within some Prairie elk hunting season units. Landowner licenses help to build tolerance for elk and promote elk hunter access and serve to demonstrate the appreciation that GFP has for landowners and producers that help support elk populations, hunter access, the GFP's mission and other wildlife management objectives. Because antlerless elk harvest with landowner own land licenses is currently unknown, the Department recommendation is to be conservative initially. The Department recommends opening the Bennett and Jackson County units (PRE-11D and PRE-11E) and the West River Area unit (PREWRA) for landowner own land antlerless elk licenses. These units are almost



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exclusively privately owned and have a high potential for elk-landowner conflict from agricultural crop depredation, specifically in corn fields.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LANDOWNER OWN LAND ELK APPLCIATION FOR LICENSE, BRINGING THE FINALIZED VERSION BEFORE THE COMMISSION IN THE JUNE 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Custer State Park Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Proposal]

11a. Custer State Park Bison

Jason Gooder, Natural Resources Manager at Custer State Park, brought the Custer State Park Bison proposal before the commission for its second reading. proposal to clean-up administrative rule to remove "bull" and edit "nontrophy" for rule consistency when referring to non-trophy bison harvest in § 41:06:07:01. Will allow the use of archery equipment during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bison harvest season. Decreases the allowable hunting days for trophy bison from three to two days. Increases the number of trophy bison licenses available by random lottery drawing from eight to ten. Increases the number of non-trophy bison licenses from fifteen to twenty.

NO ACTION TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.

11b. Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought for second reading a proposal to extend the Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season to November 1 through April 30 and allow coyote hunting any time of the day or night. Previously, the season started December 26 and shooting hours were restricted to one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. In addition, a rule in the Custer State Park Hunting Season chapter was removed because it was redundant to a rule in the Custer State Park Restrictions chapter describing restrictions to hunting on roads and rights of ways.

NO ACTION TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.

12. Small Game Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought the Small Game Hunting Seasons before the Commission for their second reading.

12a. Grouse Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the grouse season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.

12b. Partridge Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the partridge hunting season end date to align with the end date of the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.

12c. Quail Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the quail hunting season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant hunting season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.



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12d. Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season

This proposal would extend the Cottontail Rabbit hunting season to September 1 through March 31 on publicly accessible land.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

12e. Tree Squirrel Hunting Season

This proposal would extend the Tree Squirrel Hunting Season to September 1 through March 31.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARLTING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

12f. Snipe Hunting Season

This proposal would remove the word “common” before snipe to allow harvest of all snipe species.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2024.

13. Use of Parks and Public Lands: Tree Stands and Trail Cameras [Action Item: Finalization]

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas presented the finalization to expand requirements on trail camera placement, tree stand placement and construction on Walk-In-Areas and all private lands leased by the Department for public hunting access. This proposal will allow an individual to hunt without permission from the landowner or lessee on all private lands leased for public hunting access by GFP. This was previously only described as walk-in areas. This proposal would also specify the restriction to only active hunting on lands leased for public hunting by GFP. In addition to all public lands owned, leased, managed, and controlled by GFP, on all private lands leased for public hunting access by GFP, this proposal would restrict an individual from constructing or using permanent tree stands, permanent blinds, and climbing devices. It would require an individual's name and address, or customer identification number (instead of big game license number) to be legibly labeled on the exterior of unoccupied portable blinds, tree stands, and trail cameras.

Schelhaas reported there was a singular amendment from the proposal to the finalization the commission in which would strike the words “or phone number” and the words “name and” from 41:03:01:19 and 41:03:01:36. This limits the amount of personal identifiable information that a person puts out for the public to see.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY CULL TO REPEND THE ACTION PREVIOUSLY TAKEN TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BARLTING, SECONDED BY CULL TO ADOPT AMENDED USE OF PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS: TREE STANDS AND TRAIL CAMERAS FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.



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14. Time Restrictions for Use of State Park Systems and Public Lands [Action Item: Finalization]

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas presented the finalization that would clarify that Oahe Downstream Recreation Area and West Shore Lakeside Use Area, and other areas north of Fort Pierre, observe the Central Time zone. This clarifies that while these areas are technically located within the Mountain Time zone, they operate on the Central Time zone as that is what the communities in which they are associated with operate.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE TIME RESTRICTIONS FOR USE OF STATE PARK SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC LANDS FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season Proposal [Action Item: Finalization]

Chad Lehman, Senior Wildlife Biologist at Custer State Park, recently shared an update with the Commission regarding the Hell Canyon Bighorn sheep herd. He noted that the herd has encountered exposure to *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* since March 1, 2024. Before this exposure, the herd boasted an estimated population of at least 85 bighorn sheep in Hell Canyon. From March 1 to March 31, staff have observed 26 mortalities, with pneumonia confirmed as the cause of death in 19 cases (73%). Despite these challenges, the survival estimate for March remains relatively promising at 53% (95% CI 34-70%). While the situation presents uncertainties, staff anticipate that approximately 25-30 sheep will likely survive at the conclusion of this initial period of mortality.

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought forth the finalizations for the Bighorn Sheep Hunting Seasons.

15b. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season

This finalization would modify administrative rule from last year to specify a maximum of 20 ram bighorn sheep licenses. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action item. It would also remove BHS-BH1. Expand the unit boundary for BHS-BH4 to include the former boundaries of BHS-BH1 and those portions of Pennington County west of Interstate 90, Elk Vale Road and SD Highway 79.

Amendments to the proposal would be to Rule (§ 41:06:56:02) clean-up to edit SD Hwy 16 and SD Hwy 18 to US Highway 16 and US Highway 18, respectively. And Rule (§ 41:06:56:02) clean-up to edit Highway 79 to SD Highway 79.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE AMENDED BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

15c. Bighorn Sheep Hunting License Allocation

Surveys resulting in a minimum count of 61 bighorn sheep in Custer State Park (CBS-CU1) suggest the ram population could sustain additional harvest without significantly affecting age structure. Although 85 bighorn sheep were counted in 2023 in the Hell Canyon unit (BHS-BH4), this herd is currently experiencing a *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* related die-off and projected losses before the upcoming hunting season are unknown. The March Commission proposal was to absorb the current Rapid City unit into the Hell Canyon unit (BHS-BH4). As a result, it is expected the resulting population between the two herds, even after projected losses as a result of the *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* related die-off will be enough to sustain the ram harvest.



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This administrative rule change would set the 2024-2025 Ram Bighorn Sheep License Allocation as follows: Custer State Park (CSB) – 4 licenses, Bighorn Sheep (BHS) BH2 – 3 licenses, Bighorn Sheep (BHS) BH3 – 0 licenses, Bighorn Sheep (BHS) BH4 – 2 licenses, Auction (All) – 1 license. A total of 10 bighorn sheep licenses to be allocated.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING LICENSE ALLOCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

16. Elk Hunting Season Proposals

[Action Item: Finalization]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought forth the finalizations and administrative actions for the Elk Hunting Seasons.

16a. Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would increase the maximum number of licenses from ten to twenty “any elk” licenses and provide the option for up to twenty “antlerless elk” licenses. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action item.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE CUSTER STATE PARK EARLY ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

16b. Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting License Allocation

This administrative rule change would update the 2024-2025 Custer State Park Early Archery Elk hunting season licenses from 4 to 5 resident CEE-CU1 “Any Elk” licenses and keep the resident CEE-CU1 “Antlerless Elk” at zero licenses.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE CUSTER STATE PARK EARLY ELK HUNTING LICENSE ALLOCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

16c. Custer State Park Firearm Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would increase the maximum number of licenses from twenty to thirty “any elk” licenses and the option to provide up to thirty “antlerless elk” licenses. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action item.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE CUSTER STATE PARK FIREARM ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

16d. Custer State Park Firearm Elk Hunting License Allocation

This administrative rule change would update the 2024-2025 Custer State Park Firearm Elk hunting season licenses from 11 to 15 resident CUE-CU1 “Any Elk” licenses, zero “Antlerless Elk,” and would keep the resident Raffle at one license.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE CUSTER STATE PARK FIREARM ELK HUNTING SEASON ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

16e. Special Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would specify the option to provide up to twenty “antlerless elk” licenses. No antlerless licenses are recommended for this season.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE SPECIAL CUSTER STATE PARK ANTLERLESS ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.



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16f. Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 200 to 300 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 150 to 300. It also cleans-up administrative rule to match unit boundary descriptions for Black Hills Archery Elk with Black Hills Firearm Elk.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE BLACK HILLS ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

16g. Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting License Allocation

This administrative action would update the total “Any Elk” licenses from 182 to 192 licenses and would keep 90 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for a total of 282 Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting licenses.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE BLACK HILLS ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

16h. Black Hills Firearm Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 600 to 800 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 1,200 to 1,500. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action. It would also provide a rule clean-up to include BHE-9A among units with a season that runs from October 1 through October 31. These season dates include all any elk licenses during the Black Hills Firearm Elk hunting season. It would also change BHE-2B and BHE-2E season dates from October 15 through October 31 and December 1 through December 16 to only occur from October 15 through October 31.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE BLACK HILLS FIREARM ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

16i. Black Hills Firearm Elk Hunting License Allocation

This administrative action would increase the Black Hills Firearm Elk hunting licenses from 535 to 570 “Any Elk” licenses and would keep 730 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for a total of 1,300 total Black Hill Firearm Elk hunting season licenses.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE BLACK HILLS FIREARM ELK HUNTING LICENSE ALLOCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

16j. Prairie Elk Hunting Season

This finalization would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 150 to 200 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 300 to 400. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action. It would also provide a minor rule clean-up to specify PRE-27A currently includes the portion of Fall River County not included in units BHE-H3 and BHE-H4. Previously, only BHE-H3 was listed as areas within Fall River County not included in PRE-27A.

An amendment to the finalization was proposed by the department to include the month of November in the elk season dates for units 15A, 35A, and 35B. The resulting season dates would be September 1 through December 31 for unit 15A and September 15 through December 31 for units 35A and 35B.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.



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16k. Prairie Elk Hunting License Allocation

This administrative action would increase “Any Elk” Prairie Elk hunting season licenses from 102 to 126 and the “Antlerless Elk” licenses from 175 to 210, increase the total Prairie Elk hunting season licenses from 277 to 336.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING LICENSE ALLOCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

17. Waterfowl Hunting Seasons Proposals

[Action Item: Finalization]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann brought the following finalizations to the Commission for consideration.

17a. August Management Take

This finalization provides changes from last year to remove Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Clay, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Sanborn, Turner, Union, and Yankton counties from the August Management Take Hunting season unit from the August Management Take Hunting Season unit.

Director Kirschenmann described the changes to the August Management Take season, which focused on removing 20 counties from the season from the southeast part of the state. The department has no recommended changes to the proposal and asked the commission to formally adopt.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE AUGUST MANAGEMENT TAKE FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

17b. Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season

The proposed finalization would add 210 additional licenses to NRW-00B, 50 additional licenses to NRW-00V, and 55 additional licenses to NRW-00Z for a total of 315 additional licenses added to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Seasons.

Director Kirschenmann described the details of the commission proposal and where the additional licenses would be distributed amongst the different hunting units. The commission discussed the numerous call, emails, and text messages over the proposal and through that conversation was the thought of finding some middle ground from the proposal to the concerns expressed by hunters. In particular, the commission discussions led to the question of how to avoid adding additional hunters in the northeast part of the state. The discussion then moved in the direction of adjusting the proposal so no additional licenses would be added to the 00Y unit, which would mean issue no additional licenses to the 00B statewide 10-day licenses. Director Kirschenmann again explained that by issuing zero additional license to the 00B would eliminate additional licenses in the 00Y unit and by moving forward with the 5% increase to the two units of 3-day licenses that the 105 additional licenses would be added in units that only have licenses available on private land. The commission collectively agreed it would be appropriate to amend their proposal and move forward with only a 5% increase to the 3-day temporary licenses (50 in 00V; 55 in 00Z) and remove the 5% increase to the statewide 10-day licenses.

MOTIONED BY COMMISSIONER WHITMYRE TO AMEND THE FINALIZATION BY REMOVING THE ADDITIONAL LICENSES TO THE NRW-00B FROM THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

This amendment results in the following licenses per season unit: NRW-00A (250), NRW-00B (3,925), NRW-11A (25), NRW-00V (600), NRW-00X (750), NRW-00Y (500), NRW-00Z (355) for a total of 6,405 licenses available for nonresident waterfowl hunter licenses.



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Matthews Training Center | Pierre, SD | April 4-5, 2024

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE AMENDED NONRESIDENT WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION WHICH WOULD INCREASE 3-DAY NONRESIDENT WATERFOWL LICENSES BY 5% FOR A TOTAL OF 105 ADDITIONAL LICENSES; 50 LICENSES ADDED TO 00V AND 55 LICENSES ADDED TO 00Z. The motion carried unanimously.

18. DOT Collector Road Program

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Adam Kulesa, Planning and Development Administrator, provided a verbal update to the commission about the DOT Collector Road project list from FY24 and the proposed FY25 projects. The update provided confirmation to the commission that the funding was approved through the department's annual agreement with the Department of Transportation and their DOT Commission.

19. Water and Sewer Project List

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Adam Kulesa, Planning and Development Administrator, provided a short presentation to the commission that highlighted the progress the department is making on the American Rescue Plan Act funds that were approved by the SD Legislature in 2022. The funds are required to be under contract by the end of the 2024 calendar year with several projects planning on getting out to bids within the next several months.

20. Fish Theme Marketing Update

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator, Shala Larson, R3 and Relevancy Manager, and Jason Jungwirth, Aquatic Habitat and Access Coordinator, shared updates on local park efforts in South Dakota State Parks to promote fishing opportunities with the ongoing 2024 'Reel in Memories' campaign. Currently, fish board signs are being installed in parks with great fishing to boost social media engagement and increase visibility of parks and fishing. More park fishing programs and events are currently being planned and will be listed on the GFP event calendar website. Shala Larson introduced the new 2024 First Catch Center events to be hosted statewide in many of the state parks, while Jason Jungwirth highlighted completed Habitat Stamp projects, including a new kayak launch at Pickerel Lake, shoreline cleanup at West Bend, and improved parking at Fort George Lakeside Use Area.

21. Parks & Recreation Revenue and Camping Reports

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Director of Parks & Recreation Jeff VanMeeteren presented the Commission with the revenue and camping reports for March 2024 and Year-to-Date.

22. Bon Homme County Land Donation

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, provided a short presentation on Snatch Creek Game Production Area. A county commissioner from Bon Homme County reached out to staff. The county has 0.21 acres that they acquired in 1938 at a tax sale for \$0.99, which is part of an old Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad right of way. The property is a triangle in the corner of the Snatch Creek GPA, which is owned by the department. Bon Homme County wants to remove this tract from their inventory of property. The county wants to sign a quit claim deed to GFP as part of the GPA. Acquiring this corner would straighten out the GPA boundary.



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

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523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

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23. Krause Land Donation – Day County

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, also provided a short presentation on the Krause Farm Game Production Area. The GPA is 237 acres near Roslyn, SD. 150 acres in southeast corner is very difficult to access due to a wetland across the township road. The cost to improve road to make it passable across wetland would be upwards of \$80,000. GFP currently has permission to cross Ryan Wagner's property to access GPA for management. Staff asked about formalizing an agreement for public access and Wagner proposed GFP purchase the corner from him. After staff met with Wagner, a couple of local NGOs, Whitetails Unlimited and Brown County Pheasants Forever, are willing to purchase 4.84 acres and donate it to the department. A draft purchase agreement between NGOs and Wagner has been developed. If acquired, staff will work with the township to improve the township road leading up to the new parcel by adding some gravel and create a parking lot for the public using habitat stamp funds.

24. Nest Predator Bounty Program

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Jacque Ermer, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, gave a brief update on results from the month of March during which only youth (17 and younger) were eligible to participate in the program. A total of 125 participating youth submitted eligible tails in March 2024 totaling 1,621 tails. Although youth participation slightly increased from March 2023, they submitted double the tails this past March compared to March 2023 which was likely the result of milder weather and snow conditions this year. Additionally, 79 free live traps were given to participating youth that did not receive a trap last year and 69 of the youth indicated they used their traps they previously received to harvest eligible species this year. Starting April 1, all ages of SD residents are eligible to participate in the program.

25. License Sales Update

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a short summary on the monthly licenses sales. Kirschenmann indicated there has not been a lot of change in small game licenses sales, however over the past month the department has seen about a 5,500 increase in resident and nonresident fishing license sales combined. It is anticipated that those sales will continue in a positive direction with temperatures and weather improving.

26. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Commissioner Governance Meeting will be held on May 2, 2024, starting at 9 am MT, at the Event Barn located in Custer State Park. The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on May 2-3, 2024, starting at 1 pm MT also at the Event Barn located in Custer State Park.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:40 AM CST ON APRIL 5, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary

From: info@gfp.sd.us
To: blakeroetman14@gmail.com
Cc: [Kierl, Liz](#); [Harrington, Nick](#)
Subject: Petition for Rule Change Form
Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 4:39:26 PM

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 213

Petitioner Name: Blake Roetman

Address: 1423 Firesteel Drive
Mitchell, SD 57301

Email: blakeroetman14@gmail.com

Phone: 712-348-0004

Rule Identification: ARSD 41:06:04:17-No person may hunt species listed in SDCL 41-8-31(1A) with an air gun that is factory-rated to produce a muzzle velocity of less than 1,000 feet per second. Only hunting pellets are permitted.

Describe Change: Reduce the required air gun factory-rated muzzle velocity of 1,000 feet per second to 600 feet per second.

Reason for Change: 1. Availability: Most larger bore air rifles (.25 caliber and larger) do not meet the 1,000 fps regulation. Air rifles that do produce 1,000 fps are typically .177 caliber air rifles and a limited number of .22 caliber air rifles. It is common for companies to use light alloy pellets to produce these velocities, not hunting pellets. Therefore, even air rifles that are marketed with 1,000 fps may not reach those velocities with lead hunting pellets. Manufacturers of high-end air rifles (mainly PCP air rifles (pre-charged pneumatic)) typically do not market or state a max fps and market the max energy instead. 2. Energy: (Foot pounds of energy (FPE) at the muzzle figured by online calculator) *Air rifles are short range weapons (typically 50-75 yards or less). a. 9.7 grains is a typical weight for .177 caliber hunting pellets. At 1,000 fps, this pellet will produce 21.54 foot/pounds of energy at the muzzle. b. 18.13 grain .22 caliber pellet, traveling 750 fps, has 22.65 foot/pounds of energy at the muzzle c. 44.75 grain .30 caliber pellet, traveling 600 fps, has 35.75 foot/pounds of energy at the muzzle d. In Summary, larger caliber rifles with heavier pellets can produce more FPE than smaller caliber pellets traveling +1,000 fps. The current regulation prohibits the use of these more hunting capable air rifles because of point 1. 3. Safety: The current regulation severely limits the air rifles that can be used, even though they are a safer alternative to firearms, especially when hunting on farmsteads or public land that is located near residential areas (common in eastern South Dakota). Following are reasons why they are a safer alternative: *These examples do not negate the need for proper firearm handling and shooting. They show that when handled properly, compared to traditional firearms, they can be a safer alternative. a. For smaller calibers, the lighter pellet and slower fps (when compared with a .22lr) reduces the risk for dangerous ricochet that could cause damage or injury. b. Pellets use drag for stabilization. When compared to a .22lr slug, air rifle pellets will travel and contain harmful foot pounds of energy for significantly less distance. c. PCP air rifles' power is adjustable. The fps and pellet weight can be adjusted to get the desired FPE to a lower number for safety, if the hunting situation dictates it. d. Air rifles, when calibrated to the situation, can be a good substitute for people who do not want to use a shotgun due to damage to the animal, especially small game. e. Air rifles can be used as a safer alternative when introducing youth to firearms and hunting situations. 4. Accuracy: Pellets are designed to use drag for stabilization. Pellets are the most stable, and the most accurate, when they are below roughly 950 fps. Above 950 fps, the pellets struggle to stabilize the faster they go, and it can cause them to be less accurate. 5. Other States: I reached out to multiple surrounding states to gather information about their regulations. The following states responded to my inquiry and the summaries are below: a. Iowa: Allowed without restrictions for rabbits and squirrels. b. Minnesota: Allowed without restrictions for rabbits and squirrels. c. North Dakota: Allowed without restrictions for squirrels, rabbits, and other varmint species. i. North Dakota also allows the use of PCP air rifle to hunt Moose, Elk, and Bighorn Sheep. The FPS requirement is that the air rifle must project a 350 grain projectile at a minimum of 600 fps for these species. 6. Summary: The current regulation of

a minimum 1,000 fps forces the use of less hunting capable air rifles. Air rifles that are larger than .177 cal. that shoot 1,000 fps are extremely limited. Larger caliber rifles with slower, heavier pellets can produce more FPE (foot pounds of energy) than smaller caliber pellets traveling +1,000 fps. Air rifles are a safer alternative to firearms, especially around populated areas. They could also be a good learning tool for youth. Pellets are the most accurate below 950 fps. Multiple neighboring states allow the use of air rifles to harvest small game and varmint species without any restrictions.

From: info@gfp.sd.us
To: nhilshat@rapidnet.com
Cc: [Kierl, Liz](#); [Harrington, Nick](#)
Subject: Petition for Rule Change Form
Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024 8:01:34 PM

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 214

Petitioner Name: Nancy Hilding

Address: 6300 West Elm St.
Black Hawk, SD, SD 57718

Email: nhilshat@rapidnet.com

Phone: 605-787-6466

Rule Identification: 41:08:01:07.

Describe Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 6:32 pm MT Sunday night 4/28/24. Please use that submission not this on-line form. This form does not allow strikeouts or underlined text. I seek a 3 year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the BHNH and for you to rewrite your description of the Black Hills Fire Protection District to be accurate.

Reason for Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 6:32 pm MT Sunday night 4/28/24. Please use that submission not this on-line form. GFP survey counting of beaver winter caches in fall of 2023 shows a 73% reduction of winter caches over an 11 year period and loss of beaver from many drainages. The Forest Service has control over habitat management and SDGFP has control over human hunting and collection of conflict beaver for relocation. A moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping is a quick way to do something concrete to address the threats to beavers in the Black Hills. Beaver are important to biodiversity, surface and ground water retention and water quality protection. They provide many values and GFP should be working at recovering them.

From: [Nancy Hilding](#)
To: [Simpson, Scott \(GFP\)](#)
Cc: [Bies, Travis](#)
Subject: [EXT] First Petition from PHAS on Beaver Rule Change Short#1
Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024 7:40:09 PM
Attachments: [Beaver rule change petition Final2024.short1.docx](#)
[December 2023 Commission BH Beaver final.pdf](#)

Nancy Hilding to Scott Simpson,
cc Travis Bies,

First Petition from PHAS on Beaver Rule Change Short#1

I am sending this as a MSW file, because when I try to save it as a PDF, (using 3 PDF creating methods - two of the indented paragraph's left margins shift and it breaks up the indented paragraph format and it looks icky.

You now have the petition and the attachment (the powerpoint on Beaver from the Dec Commission meeting).

But I am including it as an attachment to my Petition, rather than chop it up and insert parts of it into the petition.

I have yet to fill out one of those on-line Forms about petition for rule change. I will do that next.

Please give this formal version to the Commission not that on-line form. PHAS likes to submit formal stuff.

More beaver petitions are coming tonight.

=====
Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm, Black Hawk, SD 57718
or
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788, Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilshat@rapidnet.com
nhilding@rapidnet.com
n.hilding@icloud.com
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
605-787-6779, does not have voice mail
605-787-6466, has voice mail
605-787-2806, cell (rarely used)
<http://www.phas-wsd.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/phas.wsd/>
<https://phas-wsd.blogspot.com/>
Skype phone & name - 605-787-1248, nancy.hilding

From: info@gfp.sd.us
To: nhilShat@rapidnet.com
Cc: [Kierl, Liz](#); [Harrington, Nick](#)
Subject: Petition for Rule Change Form
Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024 10:38:36 PM

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 215
Petitioner Name: Nancy Hilding
Address: 6300 West Elm
 Black Hawk, SD 57718
Email: nhilShat@rapidnet.com
Phone: 605-787-6466
Rule Identification: 41:08:01:07

Describe Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 9:00 pm MT Sunday night 4/28/24 (with an attachment) Please use that submission not this on-line form. This form does not allow strikeouts or underlined text. I seek a 3 year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the BHNF and for you to rewrite your description of the Black Hills Fire Protection District to be accurate. I also seek for hunters/trappers to report the number of beaver & location of take on some public federal lands in SD

Reason for Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 9:00 pm MT Sunday night 4/28/24. Please use that submission not this on-line form. GFP's survey that counted beaver winter caches in fall of 2023 shows a 73% reduction of winter caches over an 11 year period and loss of beaver from many drainages. The Forest Service has control over habitat management and SDGFP has control over human hunting and collection of conflict beaver for relocation. A moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping is a quick way to do something concrete, that addresses one of the threats to beavers in the Black Hills. Beaver are important to biodiversity, surface and ground water retention , water quality protection & carbon storage. They provide many values and GFP should be working at recovering them. We want information on take of federal public lands to help understand one of the impediments to recovery of beaver on SD public lands. Your description of the Black Hills Fire Protection district is wrong, this makes your interpretation of your rule wrong. You need to fix it.

From: [Nancy Hilding](#)
To: [Simpson, Scott \(GFP\)](#); [Bies, Travis](#)
Cc: [Nancy Hilding](#)
Subject: [EXT] PHAS second petition on rule change for Beavers of medium length
Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024 10:08:36 PM
Attachments: [BeaverRuleChange PetitionMedium#1Final.docx](#)
[December 2023 Commission BH Beaver final.pdf](#)

Nancy Hilding
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

to Scott Simpson,
cc to Travis Bies,

Second Petition from PHAS on Beaver Hunting - Rule Change Medium#1

I am sending this as a MSW file, because when I try to save it as a PDF, one of the indented paragraph's left margins shift and it breaks up the indented paragraph format and it looks icky. I have yet to figure out a formatting solution.

You now have the medium petition and the attachment (the powerpoint on Beaver from the Dec Commission meeting). This adds hunter reporting of beaver take on some public lands to the moratorium on the Black Hills and the fix of geographic description of the Black Hills Fire Protection District - so it has 3 points instead of 2 points.

But I am including the powerpoint, as an attachment to my Petition, rather than chop it up and insert parts of it into the petition, as I like this report and I want the public to be able to see it.

I have yet to fill out one of those on-line Forms about petition for this second rule change. I will do that next. Please give this formal version to the Commission not that on-line form. PHAS likes to submit formal stuff, not fill out online forms

Another beaver petition is coming tonight (the long one)

=====
Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm, Black Hawk, SD 57718
or
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788, Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilshat@rapidnet.com
nhilding@rapidnet.com
n.hilding@icloud.com

phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
605-787-6779, does not have voice mail
605-787-6466, has voice mail
605-787-2806, cell (rarely used)
<http://www.phas-wsd.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/phas.wsd/>
<https://phas-wsd.blogspot.com/>
Skype phone & name - 605-787-1248, nancy.hilding

From: info@gfp.sd.us
To: nhilshat@rapidnet.com
Cc: [Kierl, Liz](#); [Harrington, Nick](#)
Subject: Petition for Rule Change Form
Date: Monday, April 29, 2024 1:16:01 AM

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 216

Petitioner Name: Nancy Hilding

Address: 6300 W Elm St
Black Hawk, SD 57718

Email: nhilshat@rapidnet.com

Phone: 605-787-6466

Rule Identification: 41:08:01:07

Describe Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 12:02 am MT Monday Morning 4/29/24 (with an attachment). Please use that e-mail submission not this on-line form. This form does not allow strikeouts or underlined text. I seek a 3 year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the BHNH and for you to rewrite your description of the Black Hills Fire Protection District to be accurate. I also seek for hunters/trappers to report the number of beaver & location of take on some public federal lands in SD. I also seek to change the length of the beaver season from 12 months to 5 months outside the Black Hills Fire Protection district.

Reason for Change: I have submitted a formally written petition to Scott Simpson by e-mail at 12:02 am MT Monday Morning 4/29/24 (with an attachment). Please use that e-mail submission not this on-line form. GFP's survey that counted beaver winter caches in fall of 2023 shows a 73% reduction of winter caches over an 11 year period and loss of beaver from many drainages. The Forest Service has control over habitat management and SDGFP has control over human hunting and collection of conflict beaver for relocation. A moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping is a quick way to do something concrete, that addresses one of the threats to beavers in the Black Hills. Beaver are important to biodiversity, surface and ground water retention, water quality protection & carbon storage. They provide many values and GFP should be working at recovering them. We want information on take of federal public lands to help understand one of the impediments to recovery of beaver on SD public lands. Your description of the Black Hills Fire Protection district is wrong, this makes your interpretation of your rule wrong. You need to fix it. Shortening the beaver hunting season will protect more beaver, especially for SD public lands, which should be managed for the many benefits beaver offer.

From: [Nancy Hilding](#)
To: [Simpson, Scott \(GFP\)](#); [Bies, Travis](#)
Subject: [EXT] PHAS third beaver rule change petition w/ most suggested changes
Date: Monday, April 29, 2024 1:10:29 AM
Attachments: [Beaver rule change petition long#1 2024Final.docx](#)
[December 2023 Commission BH Beaver final.pdf](#)

Nancy Hilding
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

to Scott Simpson,
cc to Travis Bies,

Third Petition from PHAS on Beaver Hunting - Rule Change Long#1 version

I am sending this as a MSW file, because when I try to save it as a PDF, one of the indented paragraph's left margins shift and it breaks up the indented paragraph format and it looks icky. I have yet to figure out a formatting solution.

You now have the long petition and the attachment (the powerpoint on Beaver from the Dec Commission meeting).

This has the second petition's requirement of hunters reporting their beaver take on some public lands. It has the first petition's moratorium on the Black Hills beaver killing and the fix of problems in the geographic description of the Black Hills Fire Protection District. It also restricts beaver hunting/trapping outside the Black Hills to 5 month, - so it has 4 points instead of the 2 or 3 points of the earlier petitions. It requests the most aggressive changes.

I am including your Black Hills beaver powerpoint, as an attachment to our Petition, rather than chop it up and insert parts of it into the petition, as I like this Dec. beaver report of yours and I want the public to be able to see it.

I have yet to fill out one of those on-line Forms about petitions for this third rule change request. I will do that next.

Please give this formal version to the Commission not that on-line form. PHAS prefers to submit formal stuff, not fill out online forms

This is the last petition tonight, but I might submit another alternative with different options or some change you all might want, after talking to you all tomorrow or Tuesday -after learning your reactions.

=====
Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm, Black Hawk, SD 57718
or
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788, Black Hawk, SD 57718

nhilshat@rapidnet.com
nhilding@rapidnet.com
n.hilding@icloud.com
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
605-787-6779, does not have voice mail
605-787-6466, has voice mail
605-787-2806, cell (rarely used)
<http://www.phas-wsd.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/phas.wsd/>
<https://phas-wsd.blogspot.com/>
Skype phone & name - 605-787-1248,
nancy.hilding

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Park Entrance License Fees Chapter 41:03:03:05 and 41:03:03:06

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Public Hearing	July 11, 2024	Sioux Falls
	Finalization	July 11, 2024	Sioux Falls

INFORMATION

Senate Bill 55 was introduced by the Department during the 2024 Legislative Session, and was passed and signed by the Governor. The new law amended SDCL 41-17-13 to eliminate the option to purchase a discounted second annual park entrance license through the stub/coupon method and also eliminated the ability to buy multiple discounted annuals through common vehicle registration.

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

This rule proposal would remove ARSD 41:03:03:05 which authorizes the provision of a discounted half price second annual license, and the provisions for securing multiple discounted additional licenses through common vehicle registration. The proposal also amends 41:03:03:06 to formalize the availability of a double license option (one full price license and one half price license when purchased together). There are no limits on how many double licenses may be purchased.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

1. The popularity of using the coupon method has been declining for years. People often lose their stubs, throw them away, or give them away to other people. Eighty-five percent of these stubs go unused. Second annual sales have dropped by nearly 36% over the past 5 years.
2. The popularity of purchasing the second discounted license through the “combo” or “double” license has increased significantly. Double license sales have increased by more than 23% over the last five years.
3. Both of these options require the physical transfer of the coupon or the presentation of specific documentation that frequently causes customer frustration and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, neither of these options can be sold through the electronic kiosks, fee collection tubes, or online purchases.
4. There are still discount options for multiple car households such as buying the double licenses or the transferable license, both of which can be purchased at the kiosks or online.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

~~41:03:03:05. Limitations on half price annual park entrance license. Purchases of the annual park entrance license at full price and the first half price license may be made at any designated~~

~~license vendor without submitting vehicle registration certificates. All half-price annual park entrance licenses purchased must be affixed to vehicles owned by and registered in the name of the same person as the purchaser of the full-price annual park entrance license.~~

~~— An owner of two or more vehicles may buy the first half-price park entrance license by submitting the receipt from the purchase of the full-price park entrance license to a designated license vendor.~~

~~— An owner of more than two vehicles may buy the second half-price park entrance license and any subsequent half-price licenses at department offices by submitting copies of valid vehicle registration certificates for the owner's first two vehicles, whether or not park entrance licenses have already been purchased for them, and for the additional vehicles for which the owner wishes to buy half-price park entrance licenses. If park entrance licenses have already been purchased for the first two vehicles, the serial numbers of the park entrance licenses must accompany the applicable vehicle registrations. Repealed~~

Source: 10 SDR 120, effective May 16, 1984; 17 SDR 188, effective July 1, 1991; 46 SDR 74, effective December 2, 2019.

~~— **General Authority:** SDCL [41-17-13](#).~~

~~— **Law Implemented:** SDCL [41-17-13](#).~~

41:03:03:06. Park entrance license fees. Park entrance license fees are as follows:

(1) The fee for an annual park entrance license is ~~\$36 for the first vehicle~~ thirty-six dollars and ~~18~~ fifty-four dollars for two annual park entrance licenses when purchased together ~~each additional vehicle registered to the same owner;~~

(2) The fee for a transferable annual park entrance license is ~~\$80~~ eighty dollars;

(3) The temporary park entrance license fee at Custer State Park is ~~\$20~~ twenty dollars for a vehicle or a motorcycle and is valid for seven consecutive days from the date of purchase in any state park or recreation area;

(4) Except at Custer State Park, the daily park entrance license fee is ~~\$8~~ eight dollars per vehicle;

(5) For a vehicle that does not have a valid park entrance license displayed as required in § 41:03:03:02, the operator or the registered owner of the vehicle shall pay ~~\$15~~ fifteen dollars for a daily park entrance license for each day the vehicle is in the park, except at Custer State Park where the fee is ~~\$20~~ twenty dollars. The operator or registered owner may apply the entire amount of the cost of the daily park entrance license towards the purchase of an annual park entrance license;

(6) In lieu of the annual, daily, or temporary park entrance license fee, each person, except the driver and step-on guide, occupying a commercial motorcoach with a seating capacity of eight people or more in any state park or recreation area shall pay a park entrance license fee of ~~\$3~~ three dollars per person per day; and

(7) Any group or organization that hosts a private one-day event at any state park or recreation area may pay, in lieu of any other park entrance license fee, a special one-day events park entrance license fee of ~~\$50~~ fifty dollars for each increment of ~~50~~ fifty attendees, or any portion of attendees. The total fee is payable in advance and no partial refunds may be given. The fee does not extend overnight. One-day events must have written consent of the park manager at least ~~15~~ fifteen days prior to the event. Organized or hosted special one-day events include weddings, wedding receptions, meetings, class or family reunions, corporate or organizational picnics, and banquets. Competitive events are not eligible for a one-day events permit.

Source: 10 SDR 120, effective May 16, 1984; 11 SDR 69, effective November 21, 1984; 12 SDR 151, effective March 16, 1986; 13 SDR 128, effective March 22, 1987; 15 SDR 139, effective March 20, 1989; 16 SDR 114, effective January 18, 1990; 16 SDR 135, effective February 18, 1990; 17 SDR 78, effective December 10, 1990; 17 SDR 170, effective May 14, 1991; 18 SDR 223, effective July 13, 1992; 19 SDR 82, effective December 7, 1992; 20 SDR 87, effective December 13, 1993; 20 SDR 150, effective March 23, 1994; 21 SDR 86, effective November 10, 1994, and May 1, 1995; 22 SDR 89, effective December 26, 1995; 25 SDR 108, effective February 28, 1999; 26 SDR 85, effective December 26, 1999; subdivision (5), adopted December 26, 1999, effective May 1, 2000; 26 SDR 162, effective June 14, 2000; 27 SDR 85, effective February 26, 2001; 28 SDR 103, effective January 30, 2002; 29 SDR 147, effective May 6, 2003; 30 SDR 99, effective December 22, 2003; 32 SDR 31, effective August 29, 2005; 33 SDR 225, effective June 25, 2007; 34 SDR 179, effective December 24, 2007; 35 SDR 184, effective February 2, 2009; 36 SDR 112, effective January 11, 2010; 37 SDR 112, effective December 8, 2010; 38 SDR 213, effective June 19, 2012; 39 SDR 100, effective December 3, 2012; 42 SDR 97, effective January 5, 2016; 44 SDR 93, effective December 4, 2017; 46 SDR 74, effective December 2, 2019.

General Authority: SDCL [41-17-13](#).

Law Implemented: SDCL [41-17-13](#).

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – NA
2. Historical Considerations – NA
3. Biological Considerations – NA
4. Social Considerations – NA
5. Financial considerations – NA

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? NA
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

2023 Annual License Sales

License Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Annual	60,628	\$2,182,602
Second Annual	9,485	\$170,734
Double License	39,106	\$2,111,718

Projected Fiscal Impact

	2023 Actual	2023 Revenue	Total # Stickers	Projected Adjustment	Total Adjusted Permits	Adjusted Revenue	Net Revenue	Total # Stickers	Percent Change
Single	60,628	\$ 2,182,608	60,628	-6485	54,143	\$ 1,949,148	\$ (233,460)	54,143	
Stub Option	9,485	\$ 170,730	9,485	-9485	-	\$ -	\$ (170,730)	-	
Double	39,106	\$ 2,111,724	78,212	10500	49,606	\$ 2,678,724	\$ 567,000	99,212	
Total		\$ 4,465,062	148,325			\$ 4,627,872	\$ 162,810	153,355	3.4%

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:27

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park
	Public Hearing	June 6, 2024	Yankton
	Finalization	June 6-7, 2024	Yankton

SEASON INFORMATION

Duration of Recommendation: Beginning in 2024

Licenses: One elk license available by raffle.

One of the elk licenses allowed in § 41:06:27:01 may be provided to a successful entrant in a raffle to be conducted by a nonprofit organization organized for and devoted to providing big game management, preservation, propagation, habitat, and research and recognized as an exempt organization under § 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. A successful entrant is not eligible again for any Custer State Park rifle elk license obtained through a raffle similar to the raffle contained in this chapter.
2. The license received from this raffle does not bar future eligibility for a Custer State Park rifle elk license issued through the lottery selection process by the licensing division of the department.
3. The recipient of the license from the raffle may not apply for or obtain a Custer State Park rifle elk license through the state lottery for the same year.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Changes from last year:

1. Repeal § 41:06:27:02.07 to allow an individual to obtain more than one elk raffle licenses in a lifetime. All applicants will remain limited to only one elk license in a single year.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

With only one elk license available for draw from a nonprofit organization, the odds of drawing this license are very low and it is difficult for the nonprofit organization to determine whether or not an individual has obtained one of these licenses in the past and bar them from purchasing raffle tickets. In some years more than 7,000 raffle tickets are sold for this single license. The intent of this raffle license is to generate revenue for a nonprofit organization devoted to providing big game management, preservation, propagation, habitat, and research, and as such, the recommendation of the Department is to remove potential limitations to revenue generated by this raffle.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

~~41:06:27:02.07. Eligibility of successful entrant for other elk licenses. A successful entrant is not eligible again for any Custer State Park rifle elk license obtained through a raffle similar to the raffle contained in this chapter. The license received from this raffle, however, does not bar eligibility for a Custer State Park rifle elk license issued through the lottery selection process by the licensing division of the department. The restrictions of chapter 41:06:07 do not disqualify the successful entrant from obtaining a license through this raffle, but the recipient of the license from the raffle may not apply for or obtain a Custer State Park rifle elk license through the state lottery for the same year. Repealed.~~

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

- 1. The Issue – NA
- 2. Historical Considerations – NA
- 3. Biological Considerations – NA
- 4. Social Considerations – NA
- 5. Financial considerations – NA

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

- 1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user’s ability to participate? NA
- 2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? NA
- 3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
- 4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

Removing this restriction will allow individuals that have previously been successful in obtaining this license to purchase raffle tickets in the future and potentially generate additional revenue for the nonprofit organization selected to administer this raffle.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Archery Antelope Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:24

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park
	Public Hearing	July 11, 2024	Sioux Falls
	Finalization	July 11-12, 2024	Sioux Falls

SEASON INFORMATION

Duration of Recommendation: 2024 and 2025 hunting seasons

Season Dates: 2024 1st interval: August 18 – September 27
 2024 2nd interval: October 14 – 31

 2025 1st interval: August 16 – October 3
 2025 2nd interval: October 20 – 31

Open Area: See Figure 1.

Licenses: Last year there were:

1. Unlimited number of resident one-tag archery antelope licenses valid on public and private land;
2. Unlimited number nonresident one-tag archery antelope licenses valid on private land not leased by the Department for public hunting;
3. No more than four hundred and fifty nonresident one-tag archery antelope licenses valid on public and private land;
4. Five resident access permits by lottery drawing.

The Department will recommend specific number of licenses by tag types for the 2024 and 2025 hunting seasons at the June and July Commission meetings.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. A person may apply for and receive no more than one archery antelope license.
2. The archery antelope hunting season is open in those areas of the state with a firearm antelope season and in the portions of Custer and Pennington counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District with access permits from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day.
3. Archery antelope hunting is closed in Custer State Park.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Changes from last year:

1. Edit § 41:06:24:01 to remove five access permits for Custer and Pennington Counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Limited public hunting access to the low number of antelope in the Black Hills, mostly on Reynolds Prairie, provides very little harvest opportunity and the Department recommendation is to discontinue hunting this small antelope population.

License numbers and tag type recommendations for the next two years will be provided during the June and July Commission meetings, after population surveys have been completed.

Figure 1. Map of Archery Antelope hunting season units during 2022 and 2023. The portions of Custer and Pennington counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District where access permits are required are not depicted on the map.

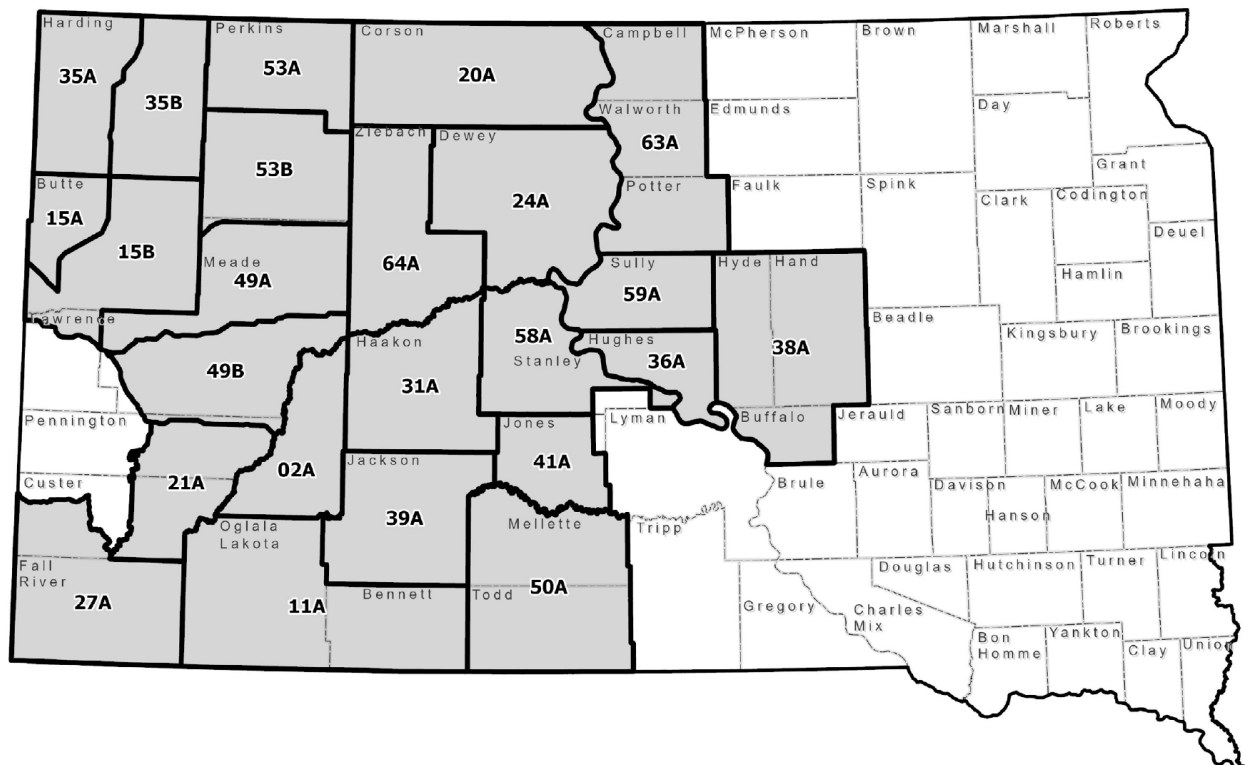


Table 1. Number of antelope licenses sold, tags issued, harvest and harvest success by year during the Archery Antelope hunting season.

Year	Resident Licenses	Nonresident Licenses	Bucks Harvested	Doe/Fawn Harvested	Total Harvest	Success
2019	1,781	663	533	72	605	25%
2020	2,141	720	719	92	810	28%
2021	2,142	877	642	94	736	24%
2022	1,830	1,021	671	16	687	24%
2023	2,127	832	590	16	606	20%

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:24:01. Archery antelope hunting season established -- Open area -- Number and type of licenses available. The archery antelope hunting season is open in those areas of the state with a firearm antelope season and in the portions of Custer and Pennington counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District with access permits from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day beginning on the third Saturday of August through October thirty-first, except during the firearm antelope season. Archery antelope hunting is closed in Custer State Park.

The department may issue:

- (1) An unlimited number of resident one-tag antelope licenses valid on public and private land;
- (2) An unlimited number of nonresident one-tag archery antelope licenses valid on private land not leased by the department for public hunting; and
- (3) No more than four hundred and fifty nonresident one-tag archery antelope licenses valid on public and private land; ~~and~~
- ~~(4) Access permits by lottery drawing.~~

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

- 1. The Issue – NA
- 2. Historical Considerations – NA
- 3. Biological Considerations – NA
- 4. Social Considerations – NA
- 5. Financial considerations – NA

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

- 1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? There will no longer be hunting opportunity for antelope in the Black Hills.
- 2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? There will be no antelope hunting in the Black Hills.
- 3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? No hunting in the Black Hills for antelope could result in better potential for this herd to grow and provide viewing opportunity or potential future hunting opportunity.
- 4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? If this allows the population in the Black Hills to grow, individuals may be more likely to go outdoors and view these antelope.

FISCAL IMPACT

Fewer licenses may be sold because hunting will no longer occur in the Black Hills.

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Furbearer Seasons and Methods

Chapter 41:08:01

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 4-5, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	June 6, 2024	Yankton
	Finalization	June 6-7, 2024	Yankton

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Recommendation: Beginning in 2024

Season Dates and Open Areas:

- Statewide:
- Residents – year-round.
 - Nonresidents – December 1 to March 15.

Licenses: Unlimited

Daily and Possession Limit: Unlimited

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Hunting and trapping are legal methods of take for raccoons.
2. Nonresidents may not use a dog as an aid in the taking of a raccoon.
3. A habitat stamp and one of the following licenses is required to hunt raccoons: predator/varmint license, furbearer license, any hunting license other than nonresident private shooting preserve license.
4. A habitat stamp and a furbearer license are required to trap raccoons.
5. Exceptions when residents do not need a license to hunt or trap raccoons:
 - a. Youth under 18 years of age.
 - b. Between April 1 and August 31.
 - c. Landowners or lessees upon land they own or lease.

Proposed Changes:

1. Allow nonresidents to use a dog as an aid in the taking of a raccoon.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

A petition (#203) was received during the October 2023 GFP Commission meeting stating the desire to allow nonresidents to use dogs as an aid in tracking raccoons during competitions to count the number of raccoons that could be bayed, usually in a tree, by a dog within a certain time interval. While this activity is currently legal for residents, the use of dogs as an aid in the taking of raccoons is not allowed per administrative rule § 41:08:01:12. Removal of this restriction will allow nonresidents with the appropriate licenses to use dogs in tracking competitions, in addition to attempted harvest of raccoons. Although the change is not expected to result in notably increased

competition with resident hunting opportunities nor an increased raccoon harvest, any additional raccoon harvest may result in benefits to waterfowl and upland bird nesting success.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:08:01:12. Nonresident restrictions. Notwithstanding the season dates established in this chapter, no nonresident may take any mink or weasel from February ~~4 first~~ through November ~~30 thirtieth~~, or take any muskrat, beaver, or raccoon from March ~~16 sixteenth~~ through November ~~30 thirtieth~~, or take any bobcat from February ~~16 sixteenth~~ through the Friday preceding the second Saturday of January. ~~No nonresident may use a dog as an aid in the taking of a raccoon.~~

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue
 - Nonresidents are not allowed to use dogs to aid in the taking of a raccoon.
2. Historical Considerations NA
3. Biological Considerations
 - Removal of additional raccoons may enhance waterfowl and game bird nesting success rates.
4. Social Considerations
 - Nonresidents will aid in the removal of nest predators by removing restrictions of their methods of take.
5. Financial considerations
 - More nonresidents may purchase habitat stamps, hunting, and furbearer licenses.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, it provides additional opportunity for nonresidents to take raccoons.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? This regulation would provide an increase in opportunity for current and new raccoon trappers and hunters.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional revenue may be generated if additional nonresidents purchase habitat stamps, hunting, and furbearer licenses.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Application for License
Chapter 41:06:01:07.03, 41:06:01:15 and 41:06:02:03

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 4-5, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	June 6, 2024	Yankton
	Finalization	June 6-7, 2024	Yankton

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

There is currently no landowner own land elk season.

During the 2024 South Dakota Legislative session, Senate Bill 173 enrolled an act to provide a landowner own land elk license for antlerless elk in the prairie elk season by adding a NEW SECTION to chapter 41-6:

The Game, Fish and Parks Commission shall, by rules promulgated to chapter 1-26:

- (1) Establish the number of resident landowner own land licenses available for the taking of antlerless elk;
- (2) Establish eligibility criteria for the license; and
- (3) Establish the fee for the license.

Upon receipt of an application, as prescribed by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, and payment of the requisite license fee, the department shall issue a landowner-on-own-land license that authorizes the holder to take one antlerless elk, from land owned or leased by the holder, for agricultural purposes, within a designated unit, during the prairie elk hunting season.

Duration of Proposal: Beginning in 2024

Changes from last year:

- (1) Describe a new prairie elk hunting season resident antlerless elk landowner own land license type in § 41:06:01:07.03.
 - a. The landowner own land elk license is valid in Prairie Elk hunting season units in Bennett and Jackson County (PRE-11D and PRE-11E) and the West River Area (PRE-WRA) as described in § 41:06:59.
- (2) Describe a qualifying landowner own land landowner or landowner-operator in § 41:06:01:15 (4).
 - a. A minimum of 240 acres of land within an elk unit.
 - b. Members of the qualifying landowner-operator's family including grandparents, parents, spouse, children, children's spouse, or grandchildren who live on the ranch or in the closest community and have an active role in the ranch operation also qualify.
 - c. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may purchase a landowner own land elk license.
 - d. A qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase a landowner own land elk license if any qualifying member of the ranch unit holds an elk license valid in that unit.
 - e. A ranch unit is described as all private property owned and leased for agricultural purposes by written agreement by an individual qualifying landowner in the state.
 - f. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner own land elk license.
- (3) Establish a fee for landowner on own land antlerless elk license of one-half the fee of the antlerless elk license in § 41:06:02:03 (15).

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

Minor changes to § 41:06:01:07 (4).

1. Change to: A qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase a landowner own land elk license if any qualifying member of the ranch unit holds an elk license obtained using landowner-operator preference in the prairie elk hunting season.
 - From: that unit
2. Change to: A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner on own land license.
 - From: landowner-operator preference.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Currently, there are landowners that are not successful in drawing an “any elk” license in the Prairie Elk hunting season units (Figure 1, Table 1) where GFP is seeking to mitigate depredation and landowner conflicts with elk. GFP recommends establishing a landowner own land antlerless elk license to ensure that landowners can hunt antlerless elk on lands they own or operate within some Prairie Elk hunting season units (Figure 1). Landowner licenses help to build social tolerance for elk on private lands, promote elk hunter access and serve to demonstrate the appreciation that GFP has for landowners and producers that help support elk populations.

Because antlerless elk harvest with the proposed landowner own land licenses is currently unknown, the Department recommendation is to be conservative initially. The Department recommends opening the Bennett and Jackson County units (PRE-11D and PRE-11E) and the West River Area unit (PRE-WRA) for landowner own land antlerless elk licenses. These units are almost exclusively privately owned and have a high potential for elk-landowner conflicts from agricultural crop depredation.

Figure 1. Map of Prairie elk season hunting units.

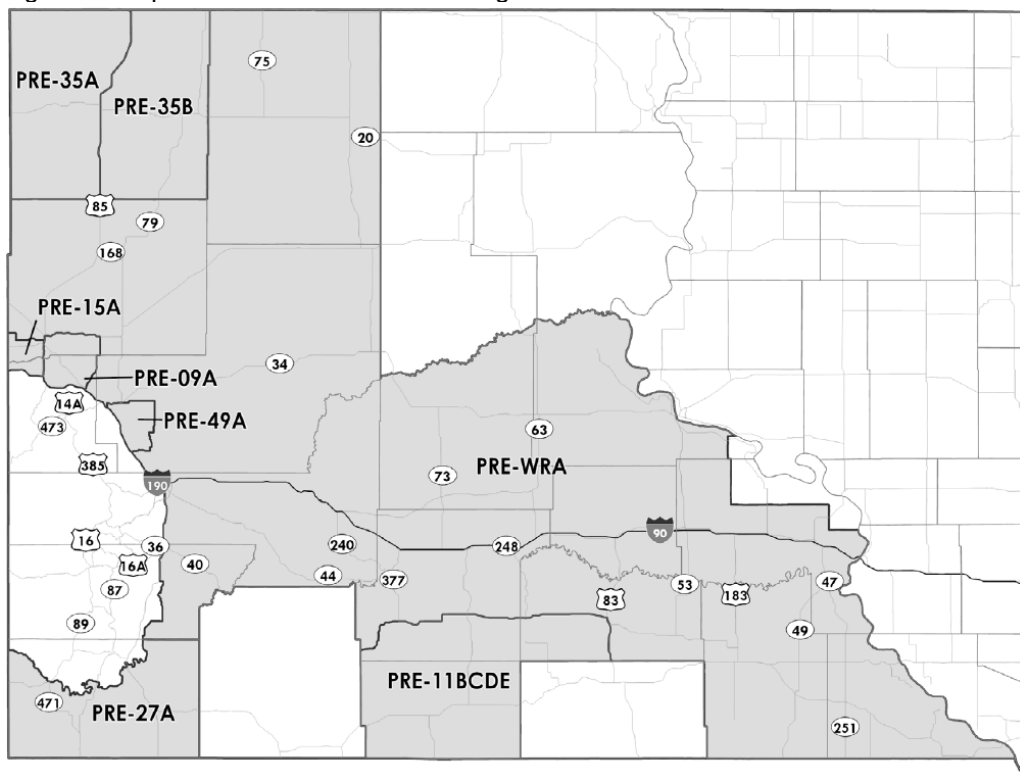


Table 1. 2024 and 2025 Prairie antlerless elk landowner own land open units and season dates

Units	Season Dates
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PRE-11D	Sep 1 - Oct 31
PRE-11E	Nov 1 - Dec 31
PRE-WRA	Sept 1 - Dec 31

Figure 2. Landowner elk comparison

LICENSE COMPARISON	LANDOWNER PREFERENCE (Current)	LANDOWNER OWN LAND (New)
Applicant Eligibility	Qualifying resident landowner-operators and qualifying family members whose owned or leased property is used for agricultural purposes	
Land Eligibility Requirements	Applicant must own or operate a minimum of 240 acres of land within elk unit	
Elk Use Requirement	Qualifying land must have experienced 500 days of elk use since the last day of the previous application period	None
Open Areas	Any land within the respective hunting unit	Elk must be harvested on applicant's land that is owned or leased within the respective Prairie Elk hunting unit
Number of Elk Hunting Licenses	No more than one license among qualifying members of ranch unit from limited draw elk licenses in that unit and landowner own land licenses. No individual may obtain more than one elk license in a single year, including landowner own land licenses.	
License Availability	Available for hunting units with an allocation of elk licenses	Available for Prairie Elk hunting season and units 11D, 11E, and WRA
License Type	Any elk or antlerless elk	Antlerless elk
License Fee	50% of regular license fee	
Season Dates	Regular season dates for the respective season and hunting unit	Any regular antlerless elk season and dates within the respective unit in designated Prairie Elk units

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:01:07.03. Landowner own land license types. For the West River, East River, and Black Hills firearm deer hunting seasons, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "any deer" license or one two-tag "any deer" and "any antlerless deer" license. For the antelope firearm hunting season, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "any antelope" license or one two-tag "any antelope" and "any doe-fawn antelope" license. For the prairie elk hunting season units PRE-11D, PRE-11E, and PRE-WRA, as described in § 41:06:59, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator, as described in § 41:06:01:15 (4), may purchase one "antlerless elk" license.

41:06:01:15. Elk application requirements. The following requirements and restrictions apply to all license applications for elk seasons:

(1) Only a resident of the state may apply for a license;

(2) Except for a qualifying landowner-operator applicant, and except as provided in § 41:06:01:09, a person who received an elk hunting license for this season in the first lottery drawing or the second drawing by using preference points in any of the nine preceding years may not apply for a license under this chapter for the next nine years; and

(3) Fifty percent of the licenses are available to persons who qualify for landowner-operator preference under the provisions of SDCL 41-6-21. A minimum of ~~240~~ two hundred forty acres of land within an elk unit which has had at least ~~500~~ five hundred days of elk use since the last day of the previous application period is required to qualify. An elk use day is any day an elk feeds or waters on private land. For purposes of elk preference eligibility, members of the qualifying landowner-operator's family including grandparents, parents, spouse, children, children's spouse, or grandchildren who live on the ranch or in the closest community and have an active role in the ranch operation also qualify. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may apply for a landowner-operator preference elk license in the first draw. A ranch unit is described as all private property owned and leased for agricultural purposes by written agreement by an individual qualifying landowner in the state. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner-operator preference.

(4) Landowners or owner-operators who qualify for landowner own land license types under the provisions of SDCL 41-6-21 and 2024 South Dakota Senate Bill 173. A minimum of ~~240~~ two hundred forty acres of land within an open prairie elk hunting season unit is required to qualify. For purposes of landowner own land eligibility, members of the qualifying landowner-operator's family including grandparents, parents, spouse, children, children's spouse, or grandchildren who live on the ranch or in the closest community and have an active role in the ranch operation also qualify. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may purchase a landowner own land elk license. A qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase a landowner own land elk license if any qualifying member of the ranch unit holds an elk license obtained using landowner-operator preference in the prairie elk hunting season. A ranch unit is described as all private property owned and leased for agricultural purposes by written agreement by an individual qualifying landowner in the state. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner on own land license. The elk must be harvested only on land that is owned or leased within an open prairie elk hunting season unit by the qualifying landowner-operator.

41:06:02:03. Hunting license fees. Hunting license fees are as follows:

- (1) Resident predator/varmint license, five dollars;
- (2) Resident small game license:
 - (a) Eighteen years of age and older, ~~\$27~~ twenty-seven dollars; and
 - (b) Under ~~48~~ eighteen years of age, five dollars;
- (3) Resident one-day small game license, ~~\$12~~ twelve dollars;
- (4) Resident combination license, ~~\$49~~ forty-nine dollars;
- (5) Senior combination license, ~~65~~ sixty-five years of age and older, ~~\$34~~ thirty-four dollars;
- (6) Resident furbearer license, ~~\$30~~ thirty dollars;
- (7) Nonresident furbearer license, ~~\$275~~ two hundred seventy-five dollars;
- (8) Resident spring one-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$19~~ nineteen dollars;
- (9) Resident spring two-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$29~~ twenty-nine dollars;
- (10) Resident fall one-tag wild turkey license, nine dollars;
- (11) Resident fall two-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$14~~ fourteen dollars;

- (12) Resident deer or antelope one-tag license, ~~\$34~~ thirty-four dollars;
- (13) Resident deer or antelope two-tag license, ~~\$44~~ forty-four dollars;
- (14) Resident antelope three-tag license, ~~\$44~~ forty-four dollars;
- (15) Landowner-on-own land elk, deer or antelope license, one-half the fee of the elk, deer or antelope license that has been applied for;
- (16) Resident one-tag antlerless deer or doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$14~~ fourteen dollars;
- (17) Resident two-tag antlerless deer or doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$24~~ twenty-four dollars;
- (18) Resident three-tag any deer and two any antlerless deer license, ~~\$44~~ forty-four dollars;
- (19) Resident three-tag three any antlerless deer license; ~~\$24~~ twenty-four dollars;
- (20) Resident three-tag any whitetail and two antlerless whitetail deer license, ~~\$44~~ forty-four dollars;
- (21) Resident three-tag three antlerless whitetail deer license, ~~\$24~~ twenty-four dollars;
- (22) Resident three-tag doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$24~~ twenty-four dollars;
- (23) Resident elk license:
 - (a) Any elk or bull elk, ~~\$169~~ one hundred sixty-nine dollars; and
 - (b) Antlerless elk, ~~\$110~~ one hundred ten dollars;
- (24) Resident landowner depredation elk, one-half the fee of the elk license that has been applied for;
- (25) Resident mountain goat license, ~~\$274~~ two hundred seventy-four dollars;
- (26) Resident Black Hills bighorn sheep license, ~~\$274~~ two hundred seventy-four dollars;
- (27) Canada goose special unit permit, ten dollars;
- (28) Nonresident small game license:
 - (a) Eighteen years of age and older, ~~\$115~~ one hundred fifteen dollars; and
 - (b) Under ~~18~~ eighteen years of age, ten dollars;
- (29) Special nonresident waterfowl license, ~~\$110~~ one hundred ten dollars;
- (30) Fall three-consecutive days temporary nonresident waterfowl license, ~~\$75~~ seventy-five dollars;
- (31) Spring snow goose temporary nonresident license:
 - (a) Eighteen years of age and older, ~~\$39~~ thirty-nine dollars; and
 - (b) Under ~~18~~ eighteen years of age, ~~\$15~~ fifteen dollars;
- (32) Early fall Canada goose temporary nonresident license, ~~\$39~~ thirty-nine dollars;
- (33) Nonresident youth waterfowl season hunting license under ~~18~~ eighteen years of age, five dollars;
- (34) Nonresident spring one-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$94~~ ninety-four dollars;
- (35) Nonresident spring two-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$119~~ one hundred nineteen dollars;
- (36) Nonresident fall one-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$84~~ eighty-four dollars;
- (37) Nonresident fall two-tag wild turkey license, ~~\$94~~ ninety-four dollars;
- (38) Nonresident deer or antelope one-tag license, ~~\$280~~ two hundred eighty dollars;
- (39) Nonresident deer or antelope two-tag license, ~~\$330~~ three hundred thirty dollars;
- (40) Nonresident antelope three-tag license, ~~\$330~~ three hundred thirty dollars;
- (41) Nonresident one-tag antlerless deer or doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$74~~ seventy four dollars;
- (42) Nonresident two-tag antlerless deer or doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$114~~ one hundred fourteen dollars;
- (43) Nonresident three-tag doe-fawn antelope license, ~~\$114~~ one hundred fourteen dollars;
- (44) Nonresident three-tag any deer and two any antlerless deer license, ~~\$330~~ three hundred thirty dollars;
- (45) Nonresident three-tag three any antlerless deer license, ~~\$114~~ one hundred fourteen dollars;
- (46) Nonresident three-tag any whitetail and two antlerless whitetail deer license, ~~\$330~~ three hundred thirty dollars;
- (47) Nonresident three-tag three antlerless whitetail deer license, ~~\$114~~ one hundred fourteen dollars;
- (48) Nonresident predator license, ~~\$40~~ forty dollars;
- (49) Custer State Park elk license:
 - (a) Custer State Park rifle any elk license, ~~\$300~~ three hundred dollars;
 - (b) Custer State Park early archery elk license, ~~\$300~~ three hundred dollars;

- (c) Custer State Park late archery elk license, ~~\$200~~ two hundred dollars; and
- (d) Custer State Park special antlerless elk license, ~~\$200~~ two hundred dollars;
- (50) Custer State Park deer license:
 - (a) Custer State Park any deer license, ~~\$150~~ one hundred fifty dollars;
 - (b) Custer State Park one-tag any whitetail deer license, ~~\$150~~ one hundred fifty dollars; and
 - (c) Custer State Park one-tag muzzleloader whitetail antlerless deer license, ~~\$25~~ twenty-five dollars;
- (51) Custer State Park bison license:
 - (a) Custer State Park trophy bull bison license, ~~\$6,500~~ six thousand five hundred dollars;
 - (b) Custer State Park nontrophy bull bison license, ~~\$3,250~~ three thousand two hundred fifty dollars; and
 - (c) Custer State Park cow bison license, ~~\$1,750~~ one thousand seven hundred fifty dollars;
- (52) Custer State Park bighorn sheep license, ~~\$500~~ five hundred dollars;
- (53) Custer State Park coyote license, ten dollars;
- (54) Custer State Park antelope license:
 - (a) Custer State Park any antelope license, ~~\$150~~ one hundred fifty dollars; and
 - (b) Custer State Park doe-fawn license, ~~\$25~~ twenty-five dollars;
- (55) Nonrefundable application fee:
 - (a) Archery and rifle elk, ten dollars;
 - (b) Mountain goat, ten dollars;
 - (c) Bighorn sheep, ten dollars;
 - (d) Resident hunt for habitat, ten dollars; and
 - (e) Nonresident hunt for habitat, ~~\$20~~ twenty dollars;
- (56) Resident special any deer, any whitetail deer, or any antelope license, ~~\$169~~ one hundred sixty-nine dollars;
- (57) Nonresident special any deer, any whitetail deer, or any antelope license, ~~\$554~~ five hundred fifty-four dollars;
- (58) Youth deer license:
 - (a) Resident, five dollars; and
 - (b) Nonresident, ten dollars;
- (59) Tundra swan permit:
 - (a) Resident, ~~\$12~~ twelve dollars; and
 - (b) Nonresident, ~~\$19~~ nineteen dollars;
- (60) Migratory bird certification permit, five dollars;
- (61) Nonresident shooting preserve license:
 - (a) One-day, ~~\$40~~ forty dollars;
 - (b) Five-consecutive days, ~~\$70~~ seventy dollars; and
 - (c) Annual, ~~\$115~~ one hundred fifteen dollars;
- (62) Mountain lion license, ~~\$22~~ twenty-two dollars;
- (63) Mentored youth deer, antelope, or turkey license:
 - (a) Resident, five dollars; and
 - (b) Nonresident, ten dollars;
- (64) Resident Apprentice hunter deer license, five dollars; and
- (65) Any unit, other than elk, bighorn sheep, or mountain goat, for which no licenses have been allocated for the purpose of acquiring a preference point or any unit for which a preference point is awarded for an unsuccessful application for license:
 - (a) Resident, five dollars; and
 - (b) Nonresident, ten dollars.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – The licenses are only available to residents.
2. Historical Considerations – Elk licenses have been available to residents only.

3. Biological Considerations – Little biological impact to elk populations is expected.
4. Social Considerations – Resident landowners will have additional hunting opportunity.
5. Financial considerations – There may be additional license sales from this license type.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional revenue will be generated from the sale of half price landowner own land resident only antlerless elk licenses.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Custer State Park Bison Chapter 41:06:07, 41:06:42, and 41:06:60

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

SEASON INFORMATION

Duration of Recommendation: 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 hunting seasons.

Season Dates:

Trophy: a licensee is restricted to three consecutive days for the hunt*

November 18, 2024 – January 17, 2025

November 17, 2025 – January 16, 2026

Non-trophy: a licensee is restricted to one day for the hunt*

October 7 – November 15, 2024

October 6 – November 14, 2025

*all licensees shall be accompanied by an authorized Custer State Park official while hunting.

Open Areas: Custer State Park.

Licenses:

Eight trophy bull licenses available by lottery.

Two licenses allocated to residents in a first draw.

One trophy bull license available by raffle.

§ 41:06:62:03

Fifteen nontrophy bull licenses available by lottery.

Seven allocated to residents in a first draw.

Zero nontrophy cow licenses.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Open to residents and nonresidents.
2. No person may hunt bison within 200 yards of any public access road or building in Custer State Park.
3. Bison may only be hunted with a firearm which is at least .270 caliber and which produces at least 2,200 foot-pounds of muzzle energy.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Recommended changes from last year:

1. Allow the use of archery equipment during the Custer State Park trophy and nontrophy bull bison harvest season.
2. Decrease the allowable hunting days for trophy bull bison from 3-2. Past hunters typically fill their tag within 2 days. The change will allow increased opportunity for scheduling of hunts.
3. Increase the number of trophy bull bison licenses available by random lottery drawing from 8 – 10. This would result in a total of 11 trophy bull bison licenses, including the 1 license available through the Hunt for Habitat raffle drawing.
4. Increase the number of nontrophy bull bison licenses from 15-20.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Archery equipment has not been allowed during the Custer State Park trophy and nontrophy bull bison harvest season. However, there is a desire to use archery equipment to harvest a bison during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bull bison harvest season.

Increase the trophy and nontrophy bull licenses to allow for additional hunting opportunities.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:07:03. ~~Minimum gun size for bison~~ Hunting bison – Equipment requirements. ~~Bison~~ Except as otherwise provided in this section, bison may only be hunted only with a ~~weapon which~~ firearm that is at

least .270 caliber and which produces at least ~~2,200~~ two thousand two hundred foot-pounds of muzzle energy.

During the Custer State Park trophy bull bison harvest season, as established in § 41:06:42:01, and during the Custer State Park non-trophy bison harvest season, as established in § 41:06:60:01, bison may be harvested with archery equipment as described in § 41:06:05.

41:06:42:01. Season established. The trophy bull bison harvest in Custer State Park is open for ~~64~~ sixty-one days, beginning on the third Monday in November. A licensee is restricted to ~~three~~ two consecutive days for the hunt.

41:06:42:02. Number of licenses. ~~Eight "trophy bull bison"~~ Ten trophy bull bison licenses are available by lottery, with two ~~"trophy bull bison"~~ trophy bull bison licenses allocated to residents in a first draw.

41:06:60:02. Number and type of licenses. ~~Fifteen~~ Twenty non-trophy nontrophy bull bison licenses are available by lottery, with seven non-trophy bull bison licenses allocated to residents in a first draw. No cow bison licenses may be issued.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? There will be more opportunity for hunting.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? There will be more hunting opportunities.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? The regulation is intended to increase the opportunity to harvest a bison.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

The sale of 2 additional trophy bull licenses and 5 additional nontrophy bull licenses will increase revenue from license sales.

APPROVE

MODIFY

REJECT

NO ACTION

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Custer State Park Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:04, 41:06:07 and 41:06:37

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: Beginning November 1, 2024

Season Dates: November 1 – April 30

Open Areas: Custer State Park.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Open to residents only with one of the following licenses: predator/varmint, furbearer, or any resident hunting license.
 - a. No license is required for youth under the age of 18.
2. No person may hunt coyotes within 200 yards of any public access road or building in Custer State Park.

Changes from last year:

1. Extend the season to start November 1 and continue through April 30.
2. Remove closure of season from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise and allow coyote hunting throughout the day and night.
 - a. Based on SD statute § 41-8-17, from January 1 to August 31, a person may use night vision equipment, but not artificial light, to take coyotes on public land between sunset and sunrise.
 - b. From November 1 to December 31, a person may only use natural light to take coyote, and neither night vision nor artificial light are permitted.
3. Repeal § 41:06:37:04 because the hunting area restrictions are redundant to restrictions described in Custer State Park restrictions § 41:06:07:10.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

A primary objective in Custer State Park is to provide maximum wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. Coyote predation may adversely affect some prey populations and limit wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. This recommendation will allow additional coyote hunting opportunity in Custer State Park during the deer hunting season in November, the entire month of December, and allow hunting of coyotes at night. Removal of additional coyotes may result in higher survival and subsequently larger populations of prey species including white-tailed and mule deer, elk, turkey, bighorn sheep, and antelope.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:37:01. Season established. The coyote hunting season in Custer State Park is Unit CUC-CU1 and is open from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset each day from December 26 November 1 through April 30.

~~41:06:37:04. Open area — Exceptions. The fenced area of the park is open to coyote hunting in this season. However, the roads and rights-of-way of U.S. Highway 16A are closed to hunting.~~

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? The regulation provides additional hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? The additional opportunity may encourage more people to go outdoors and hunt coyotes in Custer State Park.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Grouse Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:09

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Areas: Statewide
 September 21, 2024 – January 31, 2025
 September 20, 2025 – January 31, 2026
 September 19, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Daily Limit: 3 grouse

Possession Limit: 15 grouse

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.
2. “Grouse” includes sharp-tailed grouse, ruffed grouse, and prairie chicken.

Changes from last year:

1. Modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season end dates. The Department recommends extending the grouse hunting season end date to January 31. With the pheasant hunting season end date extended to January 31 during the 2020 hunting season, hunting opportunity for grouse could also be extended without having any negative impact on the population. South Dakota is one of just a few other states that offer an opportunity to harvest ring-necked pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie-chicken, partridge, and quail. Limited harvest is expected to occur during the month of January, and it would provide an opportunity for pheasant hunters to opportunistically harvest grouse.

Comparison of the 2013 - 2022 prairie grouse season statistics

Year	Residents					Nonresidents				
	Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction	Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction
2013	7,149	19,858	4.28	2.76	4.11	4,523	7,840	3.87	1.73	4.95
2014	6,503	25,847	4.55	4.01	4.85	4,254	9,943	3.99	2.31	5.52
2015	7,866	34,506	4.72	4.40	4.98	5,032	15,388	4.05	3.08	5.49
2016	7,199	31,611	4.88	4.40	4.72	5,203	11,294	4.04	2.18	5.43
2017	5,703	15,863	4.57	2.80	4.23	3,645	6,290	3.81	1.73	5.06
2018	5,868	16,431	4.36	2.83	4.64	3,979	7,429	4.08	1.87	5.38
2019	5,583	18,601	4.45	3.33	4.67	4,637	11,452	3.74	2.47	5.28
2020	10,487	48,947	5.14	4.78	5.06	6,389	18,314	4.33	2.88	5.75
2021	8,680	36,583	5.55	4.28	4.75	6,597	16,636	4.22	2.53	5.38
2022	9,149	40,263	5.53	4.46	5.09	7,616	23,354	3.97	3.10	5.85

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:09:01. Grouse hunting season established. The grouse hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day beginning on the third Saturday of September. The season remains open through the first Sunday end of January. "Grouse" includes sharptail grouse, ruffed grouse, and prairie chicken.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Extending the season would allow additional hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Partridge Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:12

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Areas: Statewide

September 21, 2024 – January 31, 2025

September 20, 2025 – January 31, 2026

September 19, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Daily Limit: 5 partridge

Possession Limit: 15 partridge

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.

Changes from last year:

1. Modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season end dates. The Department recommends extending the partridge hunting season end date to January 31. With the pheasant hunting season end date extended to January 31 during the 2020 hunting season, hunting opportunity for partridge could also be extended without having any negative impact on the population. South Dakota is one of just a few other states that offer an opportunity to harvest ring-necked pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie-chicken, partridge, and quail. Limited harvest is expected to occur during the month of January, and it would provide an opportunity for pheasant hunters to opportunistically harvest partridge.

Comparison of the 2013 - 2022 partridge harvests

Year	Residents				Nonresidents			
	Hunters	Harvest	Ave Days Hunted	Ave Bag	Hunters	Harvest	Ave Days Hunted	Ave Bag
2013	2,666	2,990	7.09	1.13	1,926	2,761	4.23	1.43
2014	2,355	5,942	6.27	2.43	1,985	3,609	4.13	1.82
2015	3,189	5,840	5.63	1.85	2,133	5,019	4.05	3.08
2016	2,516	7,053	5.87	2.73	2,204	3,272	4.21	1.48
2017	2,005	2,496	5.44	1.24	1,682	2,224	3.93	1.32
2018	1,672	1,223	4.82	0.75	1,904	3,900	4.38	2.05
2019	1,850	1,703	5.48	1.04	1,565	2,478	4.34	1.58
2020	2,432	3,505	6.85	1.46	1,806	2,177	4.32	1.21
2021	1,851	2,766	4.78	1.50	2,398	3,448	4.47	1.44
2022	2,236	4,362	6.70	1.99	2,318	4,379	4.15	1.94

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:12:01. Partridge hunting season established -- Open area and dates. The partridge hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day beginning on the third Saturday of September and remains open through the ~~first Sunday~~ end of January.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Extending the season would allow additional hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Quail Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:11

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Areas: Statewide

October 19, 2024 – January 31, 2025

October 18, 2025 – January 31, 2026

October 17, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Daily Limit: 5 quail

Possession Limit: 15 quail

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.

Changes from last year:

1. Modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season end dates. The Department recommends extending the quail hunting season end date to January 31. With the pheasant hunting season end date extended to January 31 during the 2020 hunting season, hunting opportunity for quail could also be extended without having any negative impact on the population. South Dakota is one of just a few other states that offer an opportunity to harvest ring-necked pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie-chicken, partridge, and quail. Limited harvest is expected to occur during the month of January, and it would provide an opportunity for pheasant hunters to opportunistically harvest quail.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:11:01. Quail hunting season established. The quail hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day beginning on the third Saturday of October and remains open through the ~~first Sunday~~ end of January.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Extending the season would allow additional hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:34

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 4-5, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Areas: Statewide; September 1 – February 28.

Daily Limit: 10 cottontail rabbits

Possession Limit: 30 cottontail rabbits

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.
2. A landowner and any person with permission may take cottontail rabbits on the landowner's property year-round without restriction.

Changes from last year:

1. Extend the Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season to September 1 through March 31 on publicly accessible land.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Comparison of the 2013 - 2022 cottontail and squirrel harvests

Year	Cottontails				Squirrels			
	Hunters		Harvest		Hunters		Harvest	
	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres
2013	4,199	516	21,682	846	2,911	116	10,962	61
2014	5,366	754	28,276	1,591	2,552	150	9,587	241
2015	5,779	1,020	37,407	2,397	2,870	171	13,311	180
2016	5,584	754	35,649	2,224	2,786	181	11,614	262
2017	4,628	607	22,711	1,561	2,571	87	9,850	260
2018	4,341	475	19,386	937	2,302	141	8,241	293
2019	3,563	437	19,329	604	2,542	87	12,077	116
2020	4,871	597	27,026	928	3,174	119	12,757	239
2021	4,063	754	19,385	754	2,248	74	8,014	59
2022	5,333	796	33,910	1,943	2,466	80	9,949	48

Survey design changed in 2010 and 2014 so results may not be directly comparable to previous years.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:34:01. Cottontail rabbit hunting season established. The cottontail rabbit hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day beginning on September 1 through the last day of ~~February~~ March except as provided in § 41:06:34:04.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user’s ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? The recommendation will provide more hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Young hunters would have more opportunity to hunt in March.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Tree Squirrel Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:35

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 4-5, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Area: Statewide; September 1 – February 28.

Limit: 5 tree squirrel

Possession Limit: 15 tree squirrels

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.
2. Only red squirrel, gray squirrel, and fox squirrel may be hunted.

Changes from last year:

1. Extend the Tree Squirrel Hunting Season to September 1 through March 31.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Comparison of the 2013 - 2022 cottontail and squirrel harvests

Year	Cottontails				Squirrels			
	Hunters		Harvest		Hunters		Harvest	
	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres
2013	4,199	516	21,682	846	2,911	116	10,962	61
2014	5,366	754	28,276	1,591	2,552	150	9,587	241
2015	5,779	1,020	37,407	2,397	2,870	171	13,311	180
2016	5,584	754	35,649	2,224	2,786	181	11,614	262
2017	4,628	607	22,711	1,561	2,571	87	9,850	260
2018	4,341	475	19,386	937	2,302	141	8,241	293
2019	3,563	437	19,329	604	2,542	87	12,077	116
2020	4,871	597	27,026	928	3,174	119	12,757	239
2021	4,063	754	19,385	754	2,248	74	8,014	59
2022	5,333	796	33,910	1,943	2,466	80	9,949	48

Survey design changed in 2010 and 2014 so results may not be directly comparable to previous years.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:35:01. Tree squirrel hunting season established. The tree squirrel hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day from September 1 through the last day of ~~February~~ March. Only red squirrel, gray squirrel, and fox squirrel may be hunted pursuant to this section.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? The recommendation will provide more hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Young hunters would have more opportunity to hunt in March.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Snipe Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:17

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	March 7-8, 2024	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 2, 2024	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 2-3, 2024	Custer State Park

COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Duration of Proposal: 2024, 2025, and 2026 hunting seasons

Season Dates and Open Area: Statewide; September 1 – October 31

Daily Limit: 5 snipe

Possession Limit: 15 snipe

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset.
2. Nontoxic shot rules apply to snipe hunting.

Changes from last year:

1. Remove the word “common” before snipe to allow harvest of all snipe species.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The common snipe is generally found in Europe and the Wilson’s snipe is generally found in North America. The snipe season is not intended to differentiate among species of snipe.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

CHAPTER 41:06:17

~~COMMON~~ SNIPE HUNTING SEASON

41:06:17:01. Snipe hunting season established. The ~~common~~ snipe hunting season is open statewide from sunrise to sunset each day from September 1 through October 31.

41:06:17:03. Daily bag limit. The daily bag limit is 5 ~~common~~ snipe.

41:06:17:04. Possession limit. A person may have in possession at one time no more than 15 ~~common~~ snipe taken according to the daily limit.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

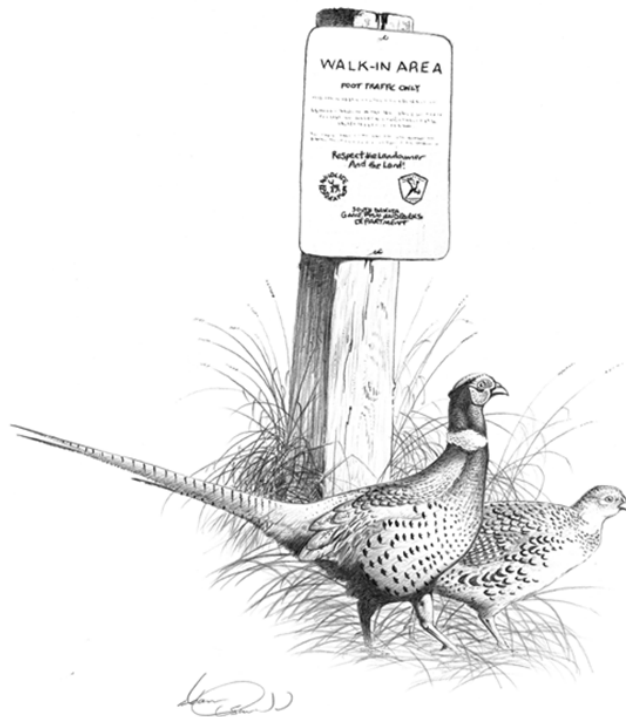
None

FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan, 2024–2028



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND
PARKS PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA
WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2028-08

April 2024



This action plan will be used by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks staff on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated at least every five years. Plan updates and changes, however, may occur more frequently as needed.

A supportive document to this action plan, the “Management of Ring-necked Pheasant in South Dakota,” provides a historical background, research, management surveys and population monitoring, best management practices, challenges and opportunities related to ring-necked pheasant and can be found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Action Plan Coordinator – Alex Solem, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

Management Plan Team – Nathan Baker, Ryan Wendinger, Julie Lindstrom, Trenton Haffley, Alex Solem, Eric Magedanz, Dan Sternhagen, Mark Norton, Jacob Wolfe, and Andrew Norton of South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Cover art by Adam Oswald, 2009. All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision for corrections, updates, and data analyses.

Recommended citation:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Division of Wildlife. 2024. South Dakota ring-necked pheasant action plan, 2024–2028. Wildlife Division Report Number 2024-08. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, USA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A draft of the “South Dakota ring-necked pheasant action plan” was available for public comment from March 20 – April 19, 2024.

INTRODUCTION

The diverse landscape of South Dakota is characterized by an array of habitats and abundant natural resources. For many outdoor enthusiasts, no other wildlife species in the state is as recognized or valued as the pheasant. Though the ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*; hereafter, pheasant) is not native to South Dakota, they have become naturalized to the mosaic of grassland and agricultural land habitat found in much of the state.

From the first successful releases of pheasants in 1908 to the most recent estimated population of over 7.1 million birds in 2018, South Dakotans and our visitors have built a rich and deeply rooted tradition around pheasants and pheasant hunting. The opening weekend in October is an event anticipated not only by pheasant hunters, but also family and friends who are reunited during this social gathering.

With a high rate of annual mortality, pheasants are a short-lived bird with the capability of high reproductive rates. The quantity, quality, and distribution of season-specific habitats and weather conditions are the primary factors that influence pheasant populations. As a result, wildlife managers focus on the development and management of suitable habitat to meet the needs of pheasants throughout their annual life cycle, including nesting, brood-rearing, and winter cover.

Since their introduction and expansion in areas of interspersed cropland, grassland and other habitats, pheasant populations have been notably high on 4 occasions: the early 1930s following the Great Depression and drought period when much farmland was idle; the mid-1940s during and just after World War II when again much habitat was unintentionally created on idled cropland; the early 1960s at the peak of the Soil Bank Program; and most recently, during the first 10 years of the 21st century, as a result of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres and favorable weather conditions. Periods between these population peaks experienced large scale declines in available upland habitat across much of the pheasant range.

Pheasant management in South Dakota primarily involves: working with cooperating agencies and landowners to develop and manage quality pheasant habitat; monitoring populations through harvest surveys and hunter satisfaction; and developing season structures that allow harvest of surplus roosters and maximum hunter participation. August roadside surveys, otherwise known as pheasant brood surveys, were conducted to develop a population index and fall pheasant hunting forecast. This survey was discontinued in 2020 to focus on a new department priority promoting habitat and access. Currently, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) uses hunter harvest surveys to evaluate pheasant and pheasant hunter demographics. Significant efforts by wildlife managers, biologists, and private landowners to develop and manage pheasant habitat, and provide access on both public and private lands are the current focus of GFP. In addition, a wealth of knowledge has been obtained through previous research and survey results on pheasant biology and their response to various habitat management techniques and land use changes.

While South Dakota historically and currently supports high pheasant populations, there could be significant issues and challenges ahead for South Dakota's state bird. The loss of high-quality habitat provided by CRP, accelerated conversion of native prairies and wetlands to cropland agriculture, reduction in acres and funding available for conservation programs in the Farm Bill, changing of landowner and hunter demographics, budget and funding sources, and the need for additional public hunting access are issues that face wildlife managers today that will continue in the future.

Held in public trust, GFP is responsible for the conservation and management of pheasants and their associated habitats for the benefit of this wildlife resource and for the citizens and visitors of this state. Undoubtedly, the strategic and responsible conservation practices intended for pheasants will have benefits to other wildlife species located in South Dakota. Therefore, a proactive approach is necessary to address these emerging issues to ensure abundant pheasant populations will be available to provide and support our hunting heritage for present and future generations.

HUNTER HARVEST SURVEYS

Pheasant harvest has been estimated since the inaugural pheasant season established in 1919. As many as 6,439,000 pheasants have been harvested in a single season (1944), although season lengths have differed through time. The hunter harvest surveys are conducted annually and sent to approximately 15,000 residents and 15,000 nonresidents. Small game license holders are randomly selected and surveyed to estimate total harvest, number of days hunted, harvest distribution, and hunting satisfaction. No shooting preserve license holders are surveyed for these estimates and none of their harvest is included in any data for estimates regarding pheasant harvest. Historic survey response rates are approximately 30% for resident and nonresident hunters.

HUNTER AND HARVEST TRENDS

As expected, there is correlation between pheasant populations, pheasant harvest, and the number of pheasant hunters. An estimated 1,000 hunters participated during the inaugural pheasant season in 1919, with approximately 212,000 hunters participating during the high pheasant year of 1963. During the past 10 years (2013–2022), the average number of residents, nonresidents and total hunters are reported as 56,712, 72,843, and 129,555, respectively (Figure 1). During the same seasons of 2013–2022, pheasant harvest averaged 1,054,900 with a high of 1,255,878 in 2015 (Figure 2).

HABITAT AND ACCESS

Pheasants are a product of South Dakota's diverse agricultural landscape and pheasant populations are strongly associated with land use trends and farmland habitat. In addition to the effects of weather conditions, the quantity, quality, and interspersions of habitat types are major factors in the seasonal and annual survival and reproductive capability of pheasants. Since much of the land base in South Dakota is privately owned (80%), private landowners are the primary stewards of habitat and the wildlife it supports. Recognizing that high quality habitat on private land is necessary to sustain good pheasant populations, GFP has focused much effort on agricultural land use issues (e.g., Federal Farm Bill and agricultural policy), as well as habitat development and management on private land. This collaborative approach between private landowners, GFP, and other conservation partners has been and will continue to be critical in providing excellent pheasant management and public hunting opportunities at a statewide level.

GFP delivers a comprehensive private lands habitat and access program, with numerous options available to private landowners for habitat management and development. Cost-share and incentive programs, as well as technical assistance, are available for food habitat plots, woody habitat, habitat fencing, grass seedings, grazing systems, wetland creations, wetland restorations, and riparian area enhancement (Table 1). GFP added an additional eight private lands habitat biologists to the existing four in late 2021 to increase the delivery of these habitat programs and promote public access options to landowners across South Dakota. Extensive

descriptions of these conservation programs can be found on the Private Lands page of GFP's website (<https://gfp.sd.gov/landowner-programs/>).

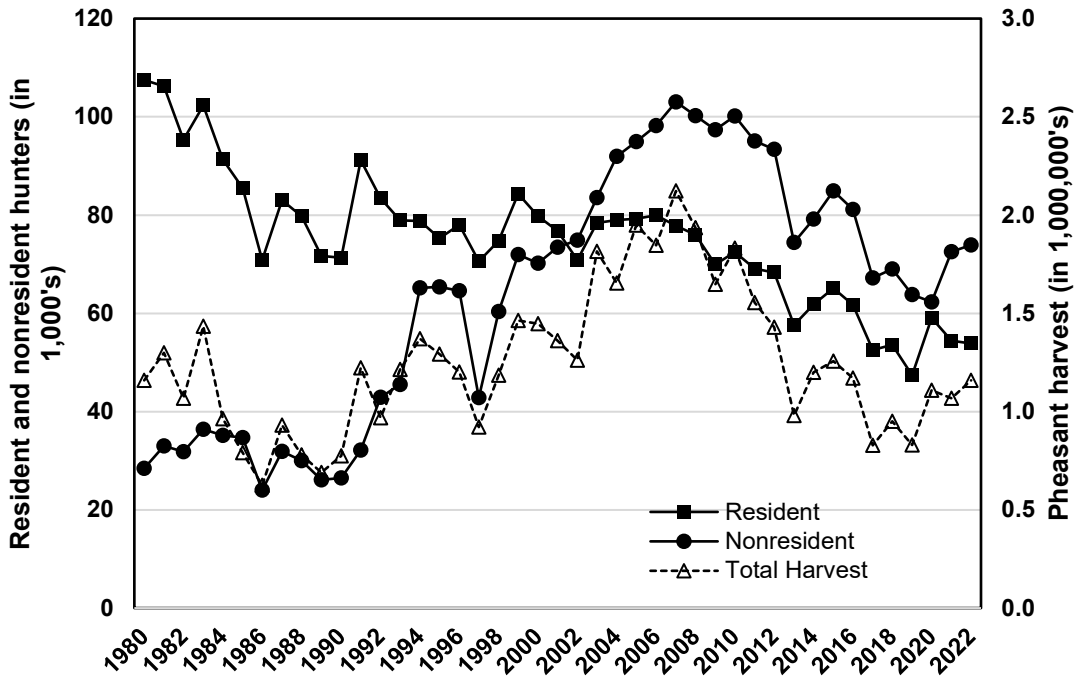


Figure 1. Total pheasant harvest and resident and nonresident hunters, 1980–2022.

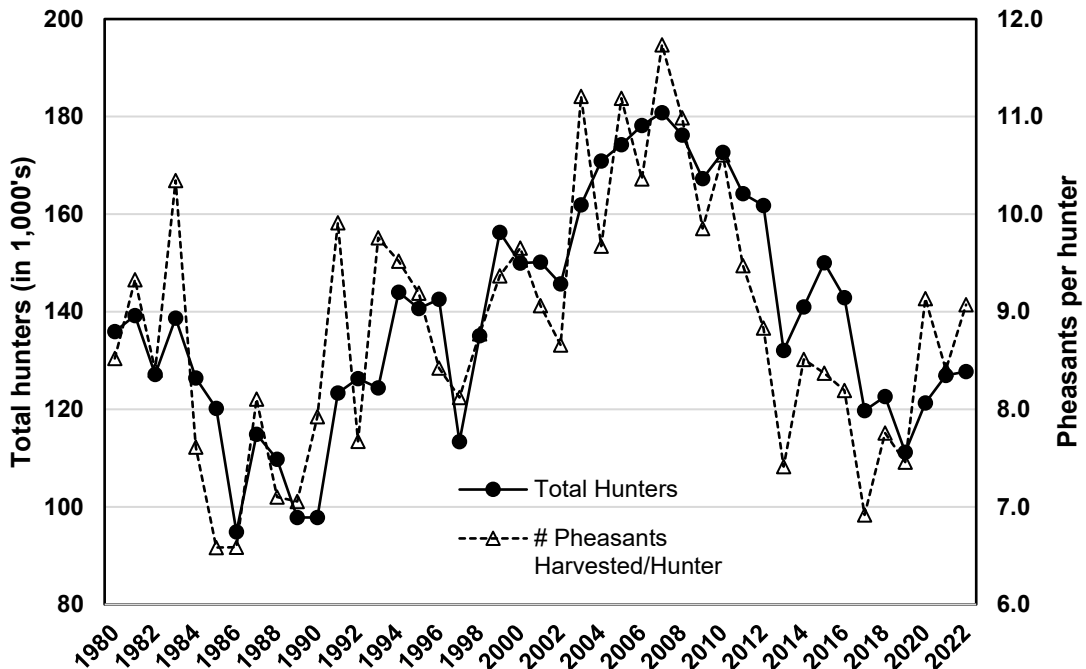


Figure 2. Total pheasant hunters and pheasants harvested per hunter, 1980–2022.

Table 1. Statewide totals for cost-share and incentive project types delivered by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks' Private Lands Habitat Biologists, 2020–2023. Wetland enhancements and woody cover project types are measured by the total number of projects. Grassland restoration is measured by the number of acres restored. Food plot is measured by the number individual of food plot cooperators.

Project type	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average^a
Wetland enhancement	2	3	1	10	4
Grassland restoration	1461	328	370	1331	873
Food plot	940	1019	933	907	950
Woody cover	54	41	31	41	42

^a Rounded to nearest value

SECOND CENTURY INITIATIVE

Pheasant hunting is a major economic source for South Dakota, as well as a significant contributor to tourism. Revenue from pheasant hunting makes a difference in many rural communities for families and small businesses. The heritage associated with pheasant hunting is deeply engrained in South Dakota's culture. To ensure this heritage lives on, Governor Kristi Noem committed to conserving South Dakota's natural resources by proactively enhancing and establishing habitat through the Second Century Initiative, which launched in 2019.

This initiative is a strategy to increase resources for habitat management. As part of this plan, a \$1 million state investment was implemented to expand habitat and pheasant hunting opportunities. The South Dakota Legislature approved this bill so these dollars can be used to leverage additional funds from private donations and federal conservation programs.

Additionally, on April 1, 2019, GFP launched the nest predator bounty program. The primary goals of this program were to increase trapping education and awareness, getting youth and families outside, and enhancing duck and pheasant nest success. Participation is open from March 1 to July 1 for resident youth under 18 and April 1 to July 1 for all South Dakota residents, or until the maximum annual payout of \$500,000 is reached. Eligible species to be taken include raccoon, striped skunk, badger, opossum, and red fox. To date, over 240,000 nest predators have been removed and recorded during this program.

A Hunt for Habitat was also established under the Second Century Initiative to raise money for habitat efforts across South Dakota through raffle licenses. To learn more, visit <https://gfp.sd.gov/hunt-for-habitat/>. A crowdsourcing effort for habitat solutions launched in February 2019 and sparked a conversation that led to over 750 emails and an online dialogue that had over 300 group members thinking, talking, and exploring habitat solutions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Provide hunting access to quality pheasant habitat on public and private lands.

Strategies:

- 1.1 By 2026, develop a web-based tool to inform interested hunters on harvest and public land availability to better inform hunters of potential pheasant hunting locations.
- 1.2 Annually lease an additional 5,000 acres of private land for public hunting to provide high quality pheasant hunting opportunities through the James River Watershed CREP, Big Sioux Watershed CREP, or the Walk-in Area program.
 - 1.2.1 Provide financial commitment to the 82,000 acres enrolled in the James River Watershed CREP and utilize funding sources as they become available to enroll the project goal of 100,000 acres.
 - 1.2.2 Provide financial commitment to the project goal of 25,000 acres to be enrolled in the Big Sioux River Watershed CREP.

Objective 2: Promote the establishment, restoration, and enhancement of high-quality habitats critical for pheasants on state-owned Game Production Areas (GPAs).

Strategies:

- 2.1 Where pheasants are the primary habitat management species, best management practices for pheasant habitat management (page 17 in the Management of Pheasants in South Dakota document) will be used with discretion to guide development and updates of GPA management plans within fiscal, biological, and land use constraints.
- 2.2 Evaluate and improve existing woody habitat design on GPAs. Adjust woody habitat accordingly to improve overall winter habitat according to best management practices for pheasant habitat management (page 19 in the Management of Pheasants in South Dakota document).
 - 2.2.1 Renovate existing woody habitat deemed appropriate in size and configuration with the addition of low growing tree or shrub rows to improve thermal cover.
 - 2.2.2 Replace existing woody habitat that does not meet the appropriate best habitat management criteria, with a high diversity grass and forb planting or a new woody habitat planting that meets best habitat management criteria.
- 2.3 Evaluate and improve current nesting and brood rearing design on GPAs, while striving for large (> 40 acres) unfragmented blocks of grassland.
 - 2.3.1 During grassland restorations, use grassland management techniques that promote diversity of grassland species.
 - 2.3.2 When establishing grassland habitat, use diverse seed mixes considering fiscal and logistical constraints.
- 2.4 Evaluate existing food plot design and landscape position to optimize pheasant survival and production relative to adjacent nesting cover.

- 2.4.1 Replace food plots in undesirable locations with high diversity grass and forb plantings to function as brood habitat.
- 2.4.2 Explore the utility of second-year food plots in locations with lower pheasant and deer use.
- 2.5 Maintain existing partnership with Habitat Forever/Pheasants Forever to fund the appropriate level of habitat specialist positions to conduct habitat work on GPAs.
- 2.6 Foster relationships with adjacent landowners and local Conservation Districts to assist with habitat renovation, maintenance, and establishment on GPAs.

Objective 3: Protect and enhance pheasant habitat on private lands.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Continue to support the Second Century Initiative to promote pheasant management and raise funds for the enhancement and restoration of pheasant habitat.
- 3.2 Strive for at least 1 million acres of undisturbed CRP grassland habitat on private lands in South Dakota through the duration of this action plan.
 - 3.2.1 GFP Private Lands Biologists will provide technical assistance to landowners interested in new and re-enrollment CRP options while also providing technical assistance to current CRP participants for management options of existing contracts that benefit pheasant habitat.
 - 3.2.2 Continue to advocate for the strategic use of existing and new continuous CRP practices that provide quality pheasant nesting habitat and/or establish/maintain adequate thermal cover to improve winter survival.
- 3.3 Double the previous 4-year average to annually complete eight wetland restorations/creations through the department cost-share programs to provide dense emergent vegetation for winter cover habitat.
- 3.4 Increase the previous 4-year average by 35% to annually restore 1,200 acres of grassland habitat through department cost-share programs while also providing technical and financial assistance for proper grassland management.
- 3.5 Increase the previous 4-year average by 150 cooperators to annually strive for at least 1,100 Food Plot Program cooperators.
 - 3.5.1 Work with existing cooperators on proper food plot design and landscape position that optimize pheasant survival and production.
 - 3.5.2 Provide education and outreach on the utility, proper size, and location of food plots through various media outlets.
- 3.6 Increase the previous 4-year average by 55% to annually strive for at least 65 Woody Habitat Program cooperators.

- 3.6.1 Provide education and outreach on the utility, proper size, and location of woody habitat relative to other winter cover sources and nesting/brood rearing habitat through various media outlets.
 - 3.6.2 Focus on supplementing the current woody conservation practice Field Windbreak Establishment (CP5A) and renovating shelterbelts outside of Conservation Reserve Program practices by providing technical and financial assistance to add additional and/or replacement rows of woody cover while meeting GFP's Woody Habitat Program Guidelines.
- 3.7** Annually work with Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists, local United States Department of Agriculture offices, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and other partners to promote and deliver habitat cost-share programs and voluntary wetland and grassland easements in South Dakota.
- 3.7.1 When appropriate, provide pheasant habitat management training to willing conservation groups and partners for habitat cost-share programs.

Objective 4: Use current harvest and public opinion surveys to monitor the economic impact of pheasant hunting, harvest levels, and hunter satisfaction.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Annually conduct and summarize hunter harvest surveys to project pheasant harvest, number of pheasant hunters, economic impact at a county level, and hunter satisfaction.

SOUTH DAKOTA WHITE-TAILED AND MULE DEER ACTION PLAN 2024-2028



DRAFT



**South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
Pierre, South Dakota**

Wildlife Division Report 2024-01

March 2024

All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision for corrections, updates, and data analyses.

A supportive document to this action plan, the “South Dakota White-tailed Deer and Mule Deer Management Plan, 2017-2023” (SDGPF 2017), provides a historical background, research, management surveys and monitoring, challenges and opportunities, and citizen involvement related to deer and can be found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/>. Additionally, biennial population status updates for deer in South Dakota are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/deer/> under “Related Documents”.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This action plan is a product of substantial discussion, evaluation, and input from many wildlife professionals, constituents, and the 2023-24 South Dakota Deer Stakeholder Group. In addition, comments and suggestions received from private landowners, hunters, and those who recognize the value of deer and their associated habitats were also considered.

Action Plan Coordinator – Andy Lindbloom, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP).

GFP Deer Action Plan Team that assisted with plan writing, data review and analyses, critical reviews and/or edits – Nathan Baker, Byron Buckley, Stephanie Buckley, Steve Griffin, Trenton Haffley, John Kanta, Julie Lindstrom, Andrew Norton, Dan Sternhagen, and Lauren Wiechmann.

Those who served on the South Dakota Deer Stakeholder Group during this planning process included: Representative Jessica Bahmuller (SD Legislator), Travis Bies (GFP Commissioner), Justin Broughton (South Dakota Bowhunter’s, Inc.), Paul Coughlin (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Dave Eichstadt (Beadle County Sportsmen’s Club), Brenda Forman (South Dakota Ag Unity), Gordon Heber (East River landowner), John Hemmingstad (East River Landowner), Cody Hodson (Black Hills Sportsmen’s Club), Megan Howell (South Dakota Wildlife Federation), Josh Larson (East River landowner/Sportsman), Ronn McDaniel (Sportsman), Valerie McKean (U.S. Bureau of Land Management), Dave Niemi (West River landowner), Casey Nordine (Mule Deer Foundation), Senator Herman Otten (SD Legislator), Jerry Petik (West River landowner), Dan Rhykus (East River landowner), Russ Roberts (Landowner and Outfitter Alliance), Todd Russell (U.S. Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest), Jim Scull (West River landowner/South Dakota Youth Hunting Adventures), Dean Siem (Dakota Sportsmen’s Club), Matt Skjodal (West River landowner), Chuck Spring (GFP Commissioner), Dan Svingen (U.S. Forest Service, Ft. Pierre National Grasslands), Cheyenne Tant (South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources), Andy Vandel (High Plains Wildlife Association), and Robert Whitmyre (GFP Commissioner).

Recommended Citation:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. 2024. South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan 2024–2028. Completion Report 2024–01. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, South Dakota, USA.

INTRODUCTION

South Dakota's diverse landscapes of grassland, wetland, cropland, and timbered areas host white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) across the entire state and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) primarily adjacent to and west of the Missouri River breaks. Deer hunting is a popular outdoor activity for many sportsmen and women in South Dakota. Approximately 62,800 residents and 8,700 non-residents hunted deer in 2022, and hunting remains the number one tool for managing deer populations across South Dakota. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) staff develop harvest strategies to ensure sustainability of each deer species and its habitat while maintaining populations at levels compatible with human activity and land use.

Involving the public in the development of the "*South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan, 2024-2028*" has been a high priority of GFP. Numerous opinions and suggestions have been received, and all were carefully considered in identifying the action plan objectives and strategies. Multiple avenues for involvement and outreach were used to engage the public at various stages of plan development and to ensure opportunities for participation were accessible to all citizens. In 2023, GFP conducted a public opinion survey of South Dakota landowners and hunters to collect and evaluate opinions on numerous topics related to deer management. GFP also put together a South Dakota Deer Stakeholder Group, which included representation from deer hunters, private landowners, agricultural interests, commercial hunting interests, legislators, GFP commissioners, and conservation organizations. This group met multiple times to discuss many topics and issues related to deer management in South Dakota.

The "*South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan, 2024-2028*" will serve as the guiding document for decision-making and implementation of actions to ensure deer populations and their habitats are managed appropriately, addressing both biological and social tolerances, while considering the needs of all stakeholders. This action plan will be formally evaluated every four years, however, updates may occur more frequently, as needed. Additional information regarding deer management, research, and history can be found in the "*South Dakota White-tailed Deer and Mule Deer Management Plan, 2017-2023*" at <https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/deer-mgmnt.pdf>.

POPULATION MONITORING

White-tailed and mule deer herds are monitored frequently across their range in South Dakota. Survey efforts are completed to assess herd status and predict population trends in 8 data analysis units (DAUs) for mule deer and 11 DAUs for white-tailed deer (Figure 1). A DAU is an aggregate of management units that serves as representation of a similar population at a large geographic extent, but potentially large amounts of heterogeneity may exist in deer abundance within a DAU. GFP currently conducts harvest surveys, abundance surveys, survival monitoring, herd composition surveys, disease monitoring, winter severity evaluation, and population

modeling to assess deer populations. For the latest survey data and population updates, see GFP’s Biennial Status Updates (Lindbloom et al. 2023) at <https://gfp.sd.gov/deer/> under “Related Documents”.

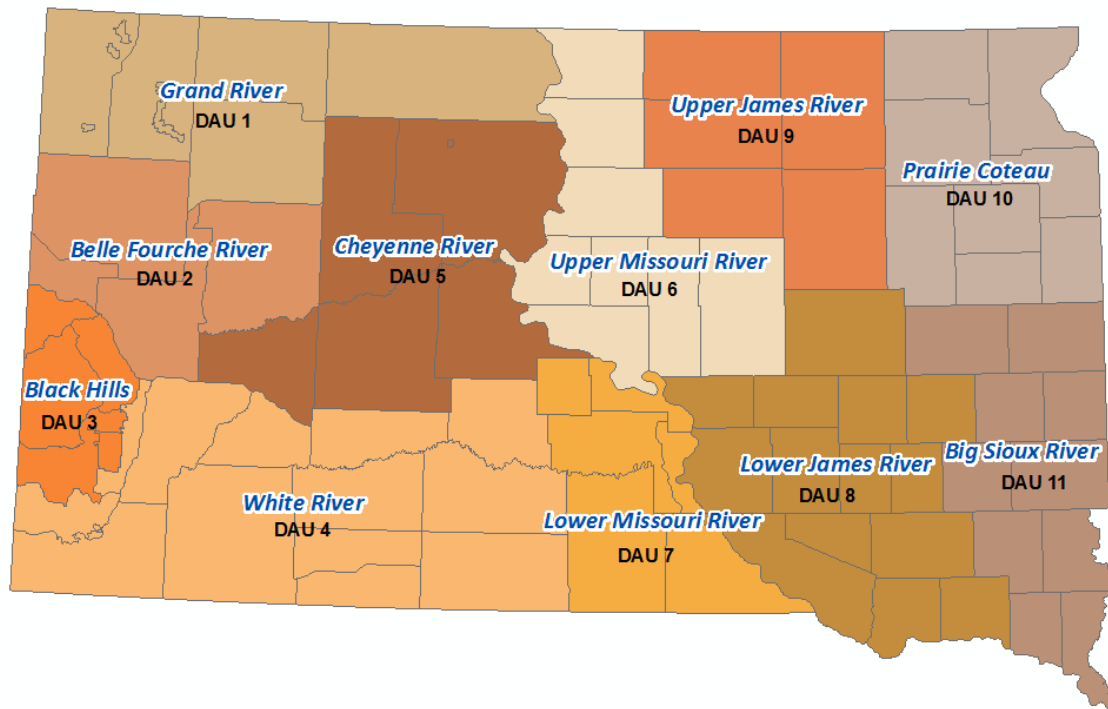


Figure 1. Data Analysis Units (DAUs) for deer management in South Dakota.

Harvest Surveys

Surveys are used to estimate hunter harvest of both mule deer and white-tailed deer. All hunters with a valid email address are surveyed each year using an electronic survey. Information from respondents is used to estimate total harvest by species, age, and sex, and harvest success of respondents is assumed to be similar to nonrespondents. GFP staff provide multiple survey reminders to improve response rates and ensure reliable harvest estimates. Harvest by season is estimated at the deer management unit scale.

Abundance surveys

Abundance surveys provide important data to manage both white-tailed and mule deer populations in South Dakota. GFP currently uses 2 methods (aerial surveys and spotlight road surveys) to estimate abundance in certain areas within the state. Aerial surveys are an efficient way to estimate deer abundance. However, few surveys accurately count all animals, due mainly to visibility biases (i.e., unobserved animals). One approach used to correct for visibility bias of ungulate populations are sightability models (Samuel et al. 1987). GFP has developed a sightability model that is valid for surveying white-tailed deer in most habitats found in eastern

South Dakota (Robling 2011). Aerial surveys are conducted at the DAU level on a scheduled rotation for DAUs 9 and 10 east of the Missouri River, when snow conditions exist.

Spotlight road surveys are conducted within the boundaries of the Black Hills, and distance sampling methods are used to estimate detection rates and abundance for white-tailed deer (Cudmore 2017). Sixty transect routes have been selected by General Randomized Tessellation Stratified sampling (Stevens and Olsen 2004), with transect lengths varying from 3.5 km to 16 km. Variability and low precision make interpretation of road surveys challenging, but results suggest that white-tailed deer are below the objective established for the Black Hills of 70,000.

Survival Monitoring

Survival rates aid in estimating deer abundance and trend as the result of changes in winter conditions, disease outbreaks, or harvest strategies. Since 2013, over 4,600 deer have been radio-collared to evaluate survival in South Dakota for both sexes and all age classes of white-tailed and mule deer. GFP staff are currently monitoring previously GPS-collared mule deer and white-tailed deer in DAU 1. Survival studies have been instrumental in providing area specific biological data for evaluating deer populations and management options.

Herd Compositions Surveys

Pre-hunting season herd composition ground surveys are completed by driving roads or hiking in areas of known deer concentrations in September and October. All deer herds that are observed in their entirety are classified to numbers of fawns, adult does, and adult bucks. A minimum sample size of 200-400 independent group observations per deer species per DAU is currently obtained to ensure sufficient precision in herd composition estimates. Quantifying deer recruitment for each DAU is critical to estimate growth rates and determine appropriate license allocation for deer herds throughout the variable landscapes of South Dakota.

Disease Monitoring

Numerous diseases and parasites can impact individual white-tailed and mule deer in South Dakota; however, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Hemorrhagic Disease are the primary diseases that may affect populations and herd growth. The South Dakota Chronic Wasting Disease Action Plan (SDGFP 2023) was approved by the GFP Commission in 2019 and most recently updated in 2023

(https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/sd_cwd_action_plan_south_dakota_june_2023.pdf).

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease and Blue Tongue disease (collectively called hemorrhagic disease) may cause substantial but usually localized mortalities of ungulates in South Dakota. White-tailed deer are primarily affected by these viruses, but GFP has documented mortalities in other ungulate species. When reported losses from hemorrhagic disease are substantial, GFP may remove leftover tags in affected units and reduce future license allocation. Hunters may also return deer licenses before the hunting season begins if they feel disease has negatively affected their opportunity to harvest a deer.

Winter Severity Evaluation

Winter severity is an important metric which can impact survival of white-tailed and mule deer populations (Verme 1968). Weather data are obtained through an annual data request via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Program R, a software programming package (R Core Team 2015), is used to extrapolate weather data across all deer units using an inverse distance weighted interpolation function. In addition, GFP collects and maintains a database of deer mortalities reported to staff from the public during hard winters. The combination of weather and mortality data provide a relative assessment of overwinter mortalities and represent an approximate spatial distribution of where those losses occur.

Population Modeling

Harvest-based population models are used to reconstruct the previous year's pre-hunting season population and project abundance to future years for each DAU while considering various harvest management strategies for each management unit (Norton et al. 2021). Future antlerless harvest strategies are manipulated to achieve the desired population growth rates based on population projection models. The projected (model generated) and objective growth rates are compared and future antlerless harvest strategies are manipulated to achieve the desired growth rates derived from the DAU population objective. In the population projection model, antlerless harvest is assumed to be additive, and the number of antlerless deer added or removed from the population is calculated at the DAU level and then distributed to the unit level in accordance with the defined unit objective (increase or decrease lambda). Three-year average harvest success rates are calculated for all previously used license types within the management unit and license combinations needed to achieve unit level antlerless harvest recommendations are selected for future harvest season license recommendations. This process is repeated for all white-tailed and mule deer firearm management units across the state.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

GFP understands that cooperative partnerships with private landowners are an essential component to deer management and that private lands serve an important role regarding deer management in South Dakota. With about 80% of the state being held in private ownership, GFP relies heavily on private land for wildlife production and hunting access. Buckley (2024) reported that 50% of responding landowners who were surveyed indicated that they experienced deer damage within the past year. The ability to effectively address deer depredation (i.e., impacts on crops, trees, landscaping, and land used for livestock production) fluctuates annually because of weather events (e.g., severe winters and deep snow), deer population levels, and changes that occur to deer habitat (e.g., habitat loss, human encroachment, and agricultural development).

Primary management techniques include loaner panels to construct temporary stackyards around stored livestock food sources, cost share assistance with permanent stackyards and protective fencing, and direct assistance with hazing deer away from problem areas and other

damage concerns. Over the past 10 years, GFP has spent considerable resources (nearly \$5 million) providing long-term solutions (i.e., protective stackyards and panels which permanently protect hay and stored-feed supplies) to address deer damage. GFP is continually striving to find the balancing-point between recreational opportunities and impacts on private lands caused by deer. While many of GFP's damage abatement techniques have proven successful over the last 20 years, deer depredation and the associated conflicts will continue to challenge landowners and GFP. GFP acknowledges that its programs will not be able to completely resolve all issues regarding deer depredation; however, GFP has a proven history of working with private landowners and is committed to cooperatively working with private landowners to implement reasonable solutions to address most concerns.

In addition to direct mitigation of deer damage as described above, a primary GFP priority is habitat management which proactively mitigates deer damage. Specifically, GFP strives to provide adequate deer habitat on public and private lands to reduce damage impacts during severe winters. Some of these strategies include providing adequate winter forage and thermal cover to reduce reliance of deer consuming stored feed, standing crops, and generally aggregating near feed lots and farmyards where anthropogenic food sources are abundant. Woody habitat provides an ideal source of thermal cover, but more importantly it provides a source of browse when persistent, deep snow makes waste grain, forbs, and grasses inaccessible. In addition, strategically placed food plots can provide an alternative food source during severe winters.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

Understanding public attitudes is important since they can influence and predict behavior, and the more specific the attitude is toward a certain behavior (i.e., same target, context, action, and time) the stronger the relation between attitude and behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980, Fishbein and Manfredo 1992, Vaske 2008). As part of developing this deer action plan, and as a first step in identifying the interests and needs of South Dakota landowners and hunters, GFP conducted comprehensive opinion surveys in the fall of 2023 (Buckley 2024). The results of this survey are discussed below.

Hunters were asked to report their perceptions of the white-tailed deer and mule deer populations in the units they hunted in the most. Forty-three percent of hunters indicated the white-tailed deer population was *just about right*. Most hunters indicated the mule deer population in the unit they hunted the most was either *far too few* (32%) or *slightly too few* (32%). Thirty-eight percent of landowners reported that the white-tailed deer population in the unit they owned property in was *just about right*. Additionally, the largest percentage of landowners had no opinion of the mule deer population in the unit where they owned property (34%), followed by *far too few* (26%).

Landowners reported on the positive and negative aspects of deer in South Dakota. Landowners agreed with the benefits of deer. Sixty-eight percent agreed that having a healthy

self-sustaining population of deer in South Dakota is important to them. Fifty-one percent agreed the presence of deer near their property improves their quality of life. Fifty-five percent agreed deer support local economies through hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. Landowners also expressed concerns about the potential risks of deer in South Dakota. Seventy percent agreed that they worry about deer-vehicle collisions. Forty percent agreed deer damage to tree plantings, landscaping, and gardens reduced their quality of life. Forty-five percent agreed deer damage to private feed supplies and agricultural crops threatens people's livelihoods.

Furthermore, half of landowners experienced crop or property damage caused by deer (50%). Respondents were asked to rate the damage they experienced on a Likert scale (1 = Not a problem, 4 = Major problem). However, for those who experienced damage, they rated the damage as only a minor problem (i.e., crop damage/consumption [Mean = 2.44], fence damage [Mean = 2.09]) or a moderate problem (i.e., livestock feed damage/consumption [Mean = 2.45], tree damage [Mean = 2.46]).

Respondents were asked whether they generally supported limiting the total number of deer licenses a hunter can obtain to increase the chance an individual hunter can obtain their preferred license. Forty-six percent of landowners and 53% of hunters were supportive. Respondents were also asked how strongly they would support or oppose a process that would increase resident hunters' chances of getting at least one buck deer license per year, knowing it would limit some hunters' chances of getting multiple buck licenses in a year. Sixty-nine percent of hunters and 58% of landowners were supportive.

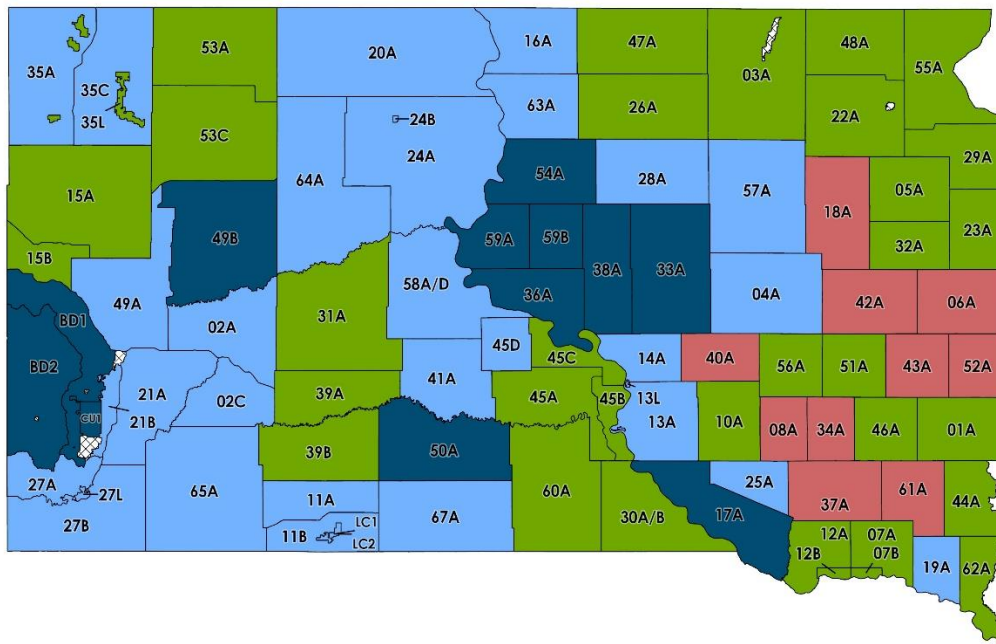
POPULATION OBJECTIVES

Population objectives (increase, maintain, or decrease) for each firearm deer hunting unit are set every 2 years when season recommendations are brought forward to the GFP commission (Figure 2). Deer population objectives for each unit are based on population assessments, habitat conditions, and social considerations.

Within the Black Hills DAU, GFP has estimated white-tailed deer abundance for multiple years and therefore was able to define a pre-season abundance objective of 70,000 (range 65,000-75,000) white-tailed deer. Since hunter satisfaction is strongly correlated with hunter success, GFP has established minimum success thresholds for firearm licenses containing "any deer" or "any whitetail" firearm tags. Furthermore, in Limited Access Units, harvest must meet either hunter success or license density thresholds (see objectives and strategies section).



South Dakota White-tailed Deer Unit Objectives (2023-2024)



South Dakota Mule Deer Unit Objectives (2023-2024)

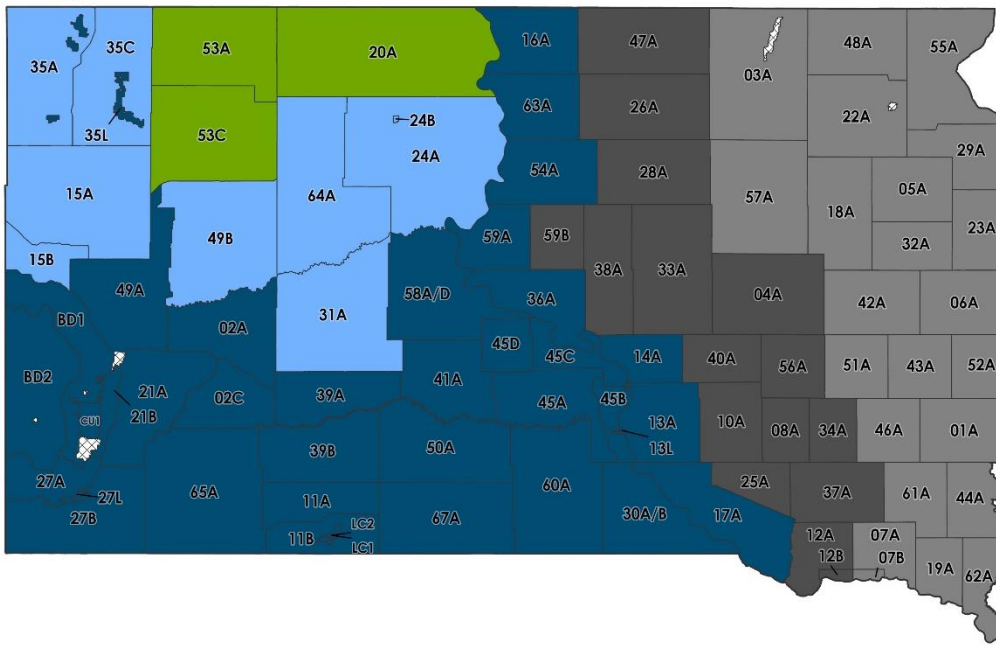


Figure 2. Population objectives for white-tailed and mule deer, 2023-24. Areas in gray are outside the primary range of the species and have limited suitable habitat.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Manage for biologically and socially acceptable white-tailed and mule deer populations in each firearm deer management unit within South Dakota.

- a) Gather hunter input on white-tailed and mule deer population unit objectives.
 - Annually survey hunters to assess objectives as desired by hunters.
- b) Gather input from landowners and the general public on white-tailed and mule deer population unit objectives.
 - Evaluate current database for contacts, sampling strategies, and costs needed to collect data at the unit level.
 - Biennially survey landowners and the general public to further evaluate deer populations, objectives, management needs, and social tolerance.
- c) Survey all hunters to estimate annual white-tailed and mule deer harvest statistics.
- d) Annually conduct and assess fall white-tailed and mule deer herd composition surveys.
- e) Assess and monitor white-tailed deer abundance by completing aerial surveys in DAUs 9 and 10 at least every six years and spotlight surveys annually in DAU 3.
- f) Monitor and assess the impacts of severe winter and drought conditions on deer populations.
- g) Monitor and evaluate impact of disease to white-tailed and mule deer herds.
- h) Further evaluate the utility of trail camera surveys in the Black Hills and other appropriate areas to estimate abundance and population parameters of mule and white-tailed deer.
- i) Further assess deer-vehicle collision data from SD Department of Transportation to evaluate deer trends and coordinate potential mitigation strategies.
- j) Further evaluate methods to reliably monitor changes in deer abundance.

Objective 2: Manage hunting opportunity fairly and equitably among various user groups and interests within South Dakota.

- a) Modify and adopt future hunting season structure as needed to maximize hunting opportunity for unique hunters and minimize regulation complexity.
- b) In Custer State Park, “Any whitetail” licenses will be set at 1% of the current CSP white-tailed deer population estimate (calculated as CSP acreage x Black Hills white-tailed deer density). No more than 50 “any whitetail” licenses will be issued in any year. “Any deer” licenses will be set at 1% of the current Black Hills Type 01 license allocation.

- c) Manage Limited Access Units (27L and 35L) and CSP for a quality hunting experience by using the following established thresholds:
 - Maintain a minimum 1st tag harvest success of 75% (3-year average) for licenses containing “any deer” or “any whitetail” firearm tags; or
 - Maintain firearm license densities no greater than 1.5 licenses/square mile for “any deer” licenses and no greater than 2.5 licenses/square mile for “any whitetail” licenses.
- d) Manage for a minimum 1st tag harvest success (3-year average) for licenses containing “any deer” or “any whitetail” as follows:
 - 60% in the Black Hills firearm deer season
 - 60% in each West River firearm deer season unit
 - 50% in each East River and National Wildlife Refuge firearm deer season unit
 - 40% (3-year average) for muzzleloader licenses containing “any deer” or “any whitetail” tags in each National Wildlife Refuge deer hunting unit.
- e) Archery and muzzleloader antlerless harvest opportunities will be managed as follows:
 - If 0-50 firearm antlerless tags are offered – the management unit may or may not be open to archery and muzzleloader antlerless-only white-tailed deer hunting.
 - If >50 firearm antlerless tags are offered – the management unit will be open to archery and muzzleloader antlerless-only white-tailed deer hunting.
- f) Other antlerless harvest opportunities will be managed as follows:
 - Antlerless-only firearm tags may be used during late seasons in units with > 0 firearm antlerless licenses offered.
 - Landowner free antlerless-only tags available in units with > 0 firearm antlerless licenses offered.
 - Youth/Mentor/Apprentice antlerless-only tags – always available, but unit boundaries for any deer and white-tailed deer only tags may be changed based on population growth objectives.
- g) Manage mule deer populations according to habitat available and range designation (see Figure 2 objectives map for delineation):
 - Primary range – Population objectives established, continuous population monitoring, and all license types available to meet management needs.
 - Secondary range – No established objectives, no population monitoring (except harvest), and antlerless license types limited to Type 13 (antlerless-only whitetail). No restrictions on antlered license types.
 - Tertiary range – No established objectives, no population monitoring (except harvest), and license types limited to Type 13 (antlerless-only whitetail) and Type 01 (any deer) for antlered any deer.

Objective 3: Cooperatively work with private landowners to resolve white-tailed and mule deer depredation to growing crops, stored-feed supplies, trees, and private property.

- a) Continue to respond to all white-tailed and mule deer depredation concerns on private land in a timely manner.
- b) Encourage the enrollment of willing landowners that are experiencing chronic deer depredation issues into Walk-In Area and Controlled Hunting Access Programs to allow public hunting access.
- c) Utilize deer depredation pool hunts when warranted to address white-tailed and mule deer depredation concerns.
- d) Expand hunting opportunities where/when possible, to address white-tailed and mule deer depredation on private lands.
- e) Evaluate additional depredation management strategies to increase acceptance of deer population goals.

Objective 4: Cooperatively work with private landowners and public land managers to create, enhance, restore, and protect white-tailed and mule deer habitat.

- a) Annually strive for at least 65 Woody Habitat Program cooperators.
- b) Promote the establishment, restoration, and enhancement of high-quality woody habitats critical for deer on private lands, state-owned Game Production Areas (GPAs), and other public lands.
- c) Annually strive for at least 10 cooperative projects of riparian habitat development or restoration.
- d) Annually strive for at least 5 hardwood release projects primarily in the Black Hills.
- e) Develop program options to restore deer forage and security cover in shrub steppe habitats through plantings and management assistance.
 - Investigate and identify forb and browse enhancement options that are specific to each ecoregion.
- f) Annually strive for at least 1,100 Food Plot Program cooperators.
 - Promote food plots for big game species utilizing west river and east river GFP seed mixes.
- g) Support grassland and wetland establishment or restoration that may provide benefits to white-tailed and mule deer.

Objective 5: Cooperatively work with private landowners and public land managers to provide and enhance hunting access for white-tailed and mule deer.

- a) Annually lease an additional 5,000 acres of private land for deer hunting opportunities through the James River Watershed CREP, Big Sioux River Watershed CREP, Controlled Hunting Access Program, or the Walk-in Area program.

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SOUTH DAKOTA BOBCAT ACTION PLAN 2024–2028



**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA**

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2024–01AP

FEBUARY 2024

This document is for general, strategic guidance for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) and serves to identify what we strive to accomplish related to bobcat management. By itself this document is of little value; the value is in its implementation. This process will emphasize working cooperatively with interested publics in both the planning process and the regular program activities related to bobcat management. This plan will be used by Department staff and Commission on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated every four years. Plan updates and changes, however, may occur more frequently as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a product of substantial discussion and input from many wildlife professionals and the South Dakota public sector. In addition, those comments and suggestions received from private landowners, trappers, hunters, and those who recognize the value of bobcats and their associated habitats were also considered.

Management Plan Coordinator – Chad Lehman, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP).

SDGFP Bobcat Management Plan Team that assisted with plan writing, data review and analyses, critical reviews and/or edits to the South Dakota Bobcat Management Plan – Nathan Baker, Keith Fisk, Trenton Haffley, Julie Lindstrom, Brady Neiles, Andrew Norton, Kylie Sinclair, and Dan Sternhagen.

All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision for corrections, updates, and data analyses.

Cover photo courtesy of Brady Neiles.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) is an impressive predator that can hunt by stalking or ambush and can survive in a wide variety of different terrain and habitat. Their uncanny ability to get close to prey is remarkable and such behavior has been described in detail as a “hunting bed” or a lookout where they lay and wait for prey to walk by. This species is a member of the mesocarnivore guild in North America and plays a vital role in ecological communities through trophic cascades as well as nutrient and energy cycling within food webs. Trophic cascades can occur through population-level effects where predators prey on herbivores and consequently decrease the abundance of herbivores that may negatively impact certain plant communities. Bobcat population abundance and growth rates may be tied closely with prey availability and predator-prey relationships.

This management plan provides important historical background and relevant biological information for the sustainable management of bobcats in South Dakota. Current bobcat research information, survey information, and relevant biological literature are presented, along with a thorough discussion of objectives and strategies to guide management of this important resource into the future. This plan is intended to guide managers and biologists over the next five years but should be considered a working document that will be amended as new biological and social data provide opportunities to improve management of the bobcat resource in South Dakota.

The following objectives have been identified for the successful management of bobcats: 1) Annually determine status of bobcat populations; 2) Bi-annually review and set bobcat management objectives and use harvest strategies to maximize sustainable recreational opportunity; 3) Maintain, manage, and protect existing bobcat habitat and prey base in South Dakota. Bobcats occur across a wide range of habitat types which makes it difficult to manage for specific habitats. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to manage for wild turkey and lagomorph (e.g., eastern cottontail rabbit [*Sylvilagus floridanus*]) habitat needs as a primary prey base; 4) Continue to use science-based research and surveys to answer questions related to public attitudes towards bobcat management; and 5) Inform and educate the public on bobcat ecology, management, and research.

The “*South Dakota Bobcat Management Plan, 2024-2028*” will serve as the guiding document for decision making and implementation of actions to ensure bobcat populations and their habitats are managed appropriately. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP) will work closely with United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), private landowners, and sportsmen and women to overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities regarding the management of bobcats in South Dakota.

Introduction

The bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) is an impressive predator that can hunt by stalking or ambush. Their uncanny ability to get close to prey is remarkable and such behavior has been described in detail as a “hunting bed” or a lookout where they lay and wait for prey to walk by (Rollings 1945, Marshall and Jenkins 1966, McCord 1974). This amazing behavior was observed by researchers in the Black Hills where a radiomarked bobcat was waiting for a prairie dog to emerge for over 45 minutes before successfully capturing its prey (personal observation, SDGFP). This species is a member of the mesocarnivore guild in North America and plays a vital role in ecological communities through trophic cascades as well as nutrient and energy cycling within food webs (Lesmeister et al. 2015). Trophic cascades can occur through population-level effects where predators prey on herbivores and consequently decrease the abundance of herbivores that may negatively impact certain plant communities (Schmitz et al. 1997). Bobcat population abundance and growth rates may be tied closely with prey availability and predator-prey relationships; undoubtedly lagomorph (i.e., rabbits [*Sylvilagus* spp. and *Lepus* spp.]) abundance plays an important role in bobcat survival and reproduction (Anderson and Lovallo 2003).

Population Modeling

A study was conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota where adult and yearling bobcat survival was monitored from 2016 through 2023 and kitten (first 90 days) and juvenile (275 days) survival were monitored from 2019-21. These vital rates were combined into a matrix projection model and the mean population growth rate was 0.85 (95% CI = 0.72, 1.02; Lehman et al. 2024). Elasticity and sensitivity analysis both indicate that population growth rate is most strongly influenced by female adults. Both analyses also indicate the transition of kittens and juveniles to yearlings and adult reproductive contribution were the 2nd and 3rd most influential variable, though the rank of each matrix element is different between the two analyses. Both analyses agree that the remaining matrix elements have little influence on population growth rates (Lehman et al. 2024). Life stage simulations indicate that adult survival is important, but also illustrate how the lower-level juvenile portion of year 1 (91 days to 1 year) is more important than the kitten phase (first 90 days).

Harvest Strategy

The use of genetic structure from harvested bobcats in South Dakota identified distinct eastern and western populations based on 2 genetic clusters being most supported statistically (Fetherston 2021). However, management should also take into consideration easily definable geographic areas and bobcat demographics to potentially provide for management at finer levels of structure. Research has also identified unique demographic characteristics for bobcat populations from the Black Hills and West River areas (Tycz 2016, Morrison 2022, Lehman et al. 2024). Using a combination of genetic structure, geographic area, and demographic characteristics harvest management could be strategically implemented in 3 management zones (Figure 1). The Black Hills area is unique in that the forested system differs from the open habitats further east. The West River area is unique in that the open rugged terrain has much

less agriculture when compared to the East River system (Figure 1). Each management zone has two harvest strategies that can be implemented: 1) Moderate Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for unlimited bobcat harvest per trapper or hunter in that zone; and 2) Low Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for the harvest of only one bobcat per trapper or hunter in that zone.

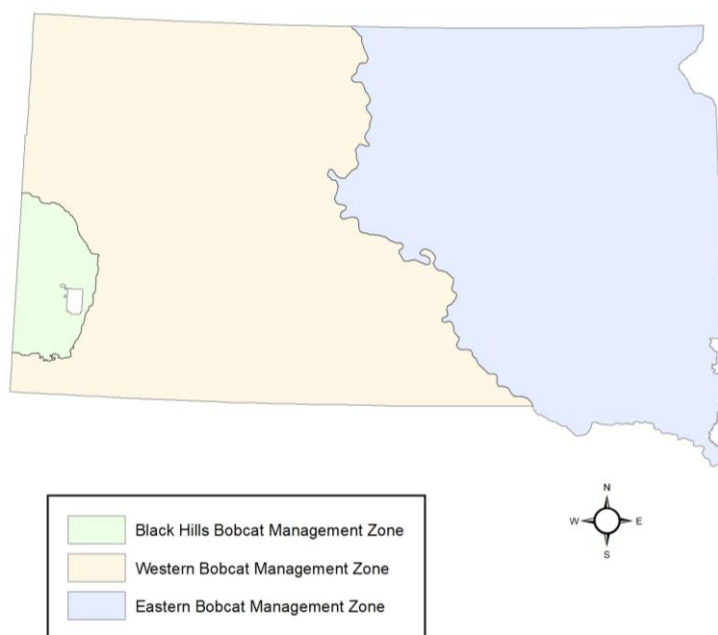


Figure 1. Bobcat management zones based on geographic features, bobcat demographics, and genetic structure. Management zones also differ in vegetation and topography for bobcats in South Dakota.

Black Hills Management Zone

In the Black Hills of South Dakota research demonstrates that juvenile survival (91 days to 1 year) is important in bobcat population growth and highly correlated with low juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios (Lehman et al. 2024). Life-stage simulation analysis also demonstrated that the ratio of juveniles and yearlings to adults is highly correlated with population growth rate. Harvest of juveniles in the Black Hills population was 4% in 2020 and 0% in 2021 (Lehman et al. 2020, Lehman et al. 2021), while the probability a juvenile survives its first year was 18% during those 2 years (Lehman et al. 2024). A portion of South Dakota trapping and hunting methods such as snaring and shooting are a random method of take (35-37% of harvest; Lehman et al. 2020, Lehman et al. 2021) and juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios should provide an indicator of age structure in the population. In Montana, the best predictor of population growth was the ratio of number of juveniles per adults harvested with higher ratios indicating positive growth rates (Newell and Podruzny 2018).

For the Black Hills Management Zone, if the juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio falls below 10% for two or more consecutive years the Black Hills zone will enter into a “Low Harvest” strategy (Table 1). Managers have the flexibility to use a more conservative strategy (i.e., Low Harvest) even if the zone has data to support a “Moderate Harvest” strategy such as $\geq 10\%$ juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio and $\lambda \geq 1.0$. It could be possible to have $\geq 10\%$ juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio and $\lambda < 1.0$ based on research. If that occurs the strategy should default to the “Low Harvest” strategy. If the Black Hills Zone stays below 10% for 4+ years, it should be a candidate for additional research and survey monitoring. For instance, in the Black Hills, infrared cameras could provide supplemental survey information which would inform abundance, or research information could provide growth rate information. If the additional research or survey information confirms a negative growth rate for 4+ years, harvest closure would be considered. It could potentially be reopened 2 years after the closure to collect juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios and additional research information could be collected which would inform future management direction.

Table 1. Decision support table to guide harvest strategy of bobcats in the Black Hills, South Dakota.

Guiding Factors	Low Harvest ^a	Moderate Harvest ^b
Juvenile-to-Adult harvest ratio (two-year trend)	<10%	$\geq 10\%$
Demographic data available	$\lambda < 1.0$	$\lambda \geq 1.0$

^aA 52-day season that allows for the harvest of only one bobcat per trapper or hunter.

^bA 52-day season that allows for the harvest of an unlimited number of bobcats per trapper or hunter.

West River Management Zone

Research from within the West River Zone has provided vital rate information for use in a Leslie matrix population growth model (Tycz 2016). Adult female survival with harvest mortality removed in combination with juvenile-to-adult ratios, and harvest percentages provide estimates of λ values, or growth rates. Growth rates are displayed as they relate to low (0.79), moderate (0.84), and high (0.89) survival rates. Also, as it relates to poor (0.05), low (0.10), moderate (0.20), and high (0.30) recruitment rates (i.e., juvenile-to-adult ratios), and as it relates to 0%, 5%, and 10% harvest rates (Table 2). It should be noted Table 2 should be used as a general guide as adult survival is not up to date and the percentage of harvest was reported at 8% from collared bobcats when sample sizes were highest the final year of the study (Tycz 2016). Our modeling allowed for flexibility in juvenile-to-adult ratios, annual female survival, and harvest rates so managers could examine potential population growth rates at varying levels (Table 2).

Using the growth rate table (Table 2) managers can utilize the juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio collected from harvested bobcats from the West River Zone. Managers would apply the collected juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio, as well as a 5% harvest rate, and a moderate adult survival rate. If the juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio falls below 10% (or below the low

recruitment category) for two or more consecutive years, the West River Zone could enter into a “Low Harvest” strategy. If the juvenile-to-adult harvest ratio falls below 10% it would equate to $\lambda < 0.98$ when at a 5% harvest rate and at a moderate adult survival rate (Table 2).

Table 2. Leslie matrix growth rate estimates based on adult female survival, recruitment, and percentage of harvest for the management of bobcats in the West River Zone of South Dakota.

		Poor Recruitment (5 juv:100 adults) ^a			Low Recruitment (10 juv:100 adults) ^a			Mod. Recruitment (20 juv:100 adults) ^a			High Recruitment (30 juv:100 adults) ^a			
		Low	Mod	High	Low	Mod	High	Low	Mod	High	Low	Mod	High	
Annual Female Survival ^b	Population Growth Rate Based on	10%	0.83	0.88	0.93	0.88	0.93	0.99	0.94	0.99	1.05	1	1.06	1.12
	Female Harvest Rate ^c	5%	0.87	0.93	0.99	0.92	0.98	1.04	0.99	1.05	1.11	1.05	1.12	1.18
		0%	0.92	0.98	1.04	0.97	1.03	1.1	1.04	1.11	1.17	1.11	1.18	1.25

^aPoor recruitment at 5% or at 5 juv:100 adults would be adjusted to 33 juv:100 adults.

Pregnancy rate 35% at 2.7 kittens/adult with a simulation of 30 females would add 28 kittens to our ratio and would now be 33 juv:100 adults.

Low recruitment at 10% or at 10 juv:100 adults would be adjusted to 46 juv:100 adults.

Pregnancy rate 44% at 2.7 kittens/adult with a simulation of 30 females would add 36 kittens to our ratio and would now be 46 juv:100 adults.

Moderate recruitment at 20% or at 20 juv:100 adults would be adjusted to 63 juv:100 adults.

Pregnancy rate 53% at 2.7 kittens/adult with a simulation of 30 females would add 43 kittens to our ratio and would now be 63 juv:100 adults.

High recruitment at 30% or at 30 juv:100 adults would be adjusted to 80 juv:100 adults.

Pregnancy rate 62% at 2.7 kittens/adult with a simulation of 30 females would add 50 kittens to our ratio and would now be 80 juv:100 adults.

^bAnnual female survival rates in the absence of harvest are categorized as follows:

- 1) Low=0.79.
- 2) Moderate=0.84.
- 3) High=0.89

^cPercent of female pre-hunt population that is harvested.

East River Management Zone

Research from within the East River Zone has been limited. However, a survey studying the spatial patterns of bobcats in Charles Mix and Brule counties indicated bobcats were most likely to use woodland and shrubland patches (Dart 2021). This type of habitat is very limited in eastern South Dakota and a Low Harvest Strategy should be implemented unless demographic information is collected that suggests a growing population that can support a more liberal harvest strategy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following statements have guided the development of bobcat management goals and objectives (Table 3) and reflect the collective values of the SDGFP in relation to management of bobcats in South Dakota:

- Wildlife, including bobcats, contributes significantly to the quality of life in South Dakota and therefore must be sustained for future generations.
- Recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of bobcats and must be encouraged and preserved.
- Collaboration among various agencies, including NPS, USFS, BLM, Tribes, and the State, is critical for the future of bobcats and their habitats in South Dakota, and is deserving of recognition and respect.
- Reasonable regulations are necessary for equitable distribution of the benefits of wildlife, including bobcats, and to promote ethical and safe behavior.
- Future of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands, and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public's right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

The goal for bobcat management in South Dakota is to maximize user opportunity while maintaining populations consistent with ecological, social, aesthetic, and economic values of the people of South Dakota and our visitors.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1. Annually determine status of bobcat populations.

Strategy A. Where adequate data exist, use statistical population reconstruction and matrix projection models to predict abundance and population growth.

Strategy B. Where feasible, utilize surveys including mark-recapture, hunter harvest, and harvest composition.

Strategy C. Supplement survey data with research findings when available.

Objective 2. Bi-annually review and set bobcat management objectives; use harvest strategies to maximize sustainable recreational opportunity.

Strategy A. Bi-annually review bobcat harvest strategies, which will be used to develop 2-year recommendations based on available biological data, public input, and staff recommendations.

Strategy B. Generally, bobcat harvest will be monitored relative to population estimates, vital rates (when collected), and juvenile-to-adult ratios. We will take into account the following criteria: 1) Statewide population size based upon statistical population reconstruction or other estimates; 2) Vital rates such as adult and kitten survival from research conducted in areas across the state to estimate population growth rates (when collected); and 3) Juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios.

Strategy C. Each bobcat management zone will implement a harvest strategy based on criteria if data are available. Two harvest strategies that can be implemented include: 1) Moderate Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for unlimited bobcat harvest per trapper or hunter; and 2) Low Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for harvesting only one bobcat per trapper or hunter. Strategies will be guided by juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios and demographic data if available.

Objective 3. Maintain, manage, and protect existing bobcat habitat and prey base in South Dakota. Bobcats occur across a wide range of habitat types and makes it difficult to manage for any specific habitats. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to manage for wild turkey and lagomorph (i.e., rabbit) habitat needs as a primary prey base.

Strategy A. Maintain existing partnerships with the USFS, BLM, NPS, private landowners, and other state, local, and private conservation partners to support programs and practices encouraging proper bobcat habitat management on public and private lands.

Strategy B. Manage for wild turkey (*Meleagrididae*) and lagomorph (e.g., eastern cottontail rabbit [*Sylvilagus floridanus*]) habitat needs as a primary prey base.

Objective 4. Continue to use science-based research and surveys to answer questions related to public attitudes towards bobcat management.

Strategy A. Annually evaluate and prioritize research and survey needs for bobcats. Develop research and survey proposals and seek funding opportunities.

Strategy B. Use research and survey findings to guide bobcat management where available and feasible.

Objective 5. The GFP will inform and educate the public on bobcat ecology, management, and research.

- Strategy A. By March 2024, provide an electronic copy of the “South Dakota Bobcat Management Plan 2024–2028” on the GFP’s website. Printed copies will be available upon request.

- Strategy B. Use all available media to educate and inform the public regarding bobcat status, ecology, and harvest.

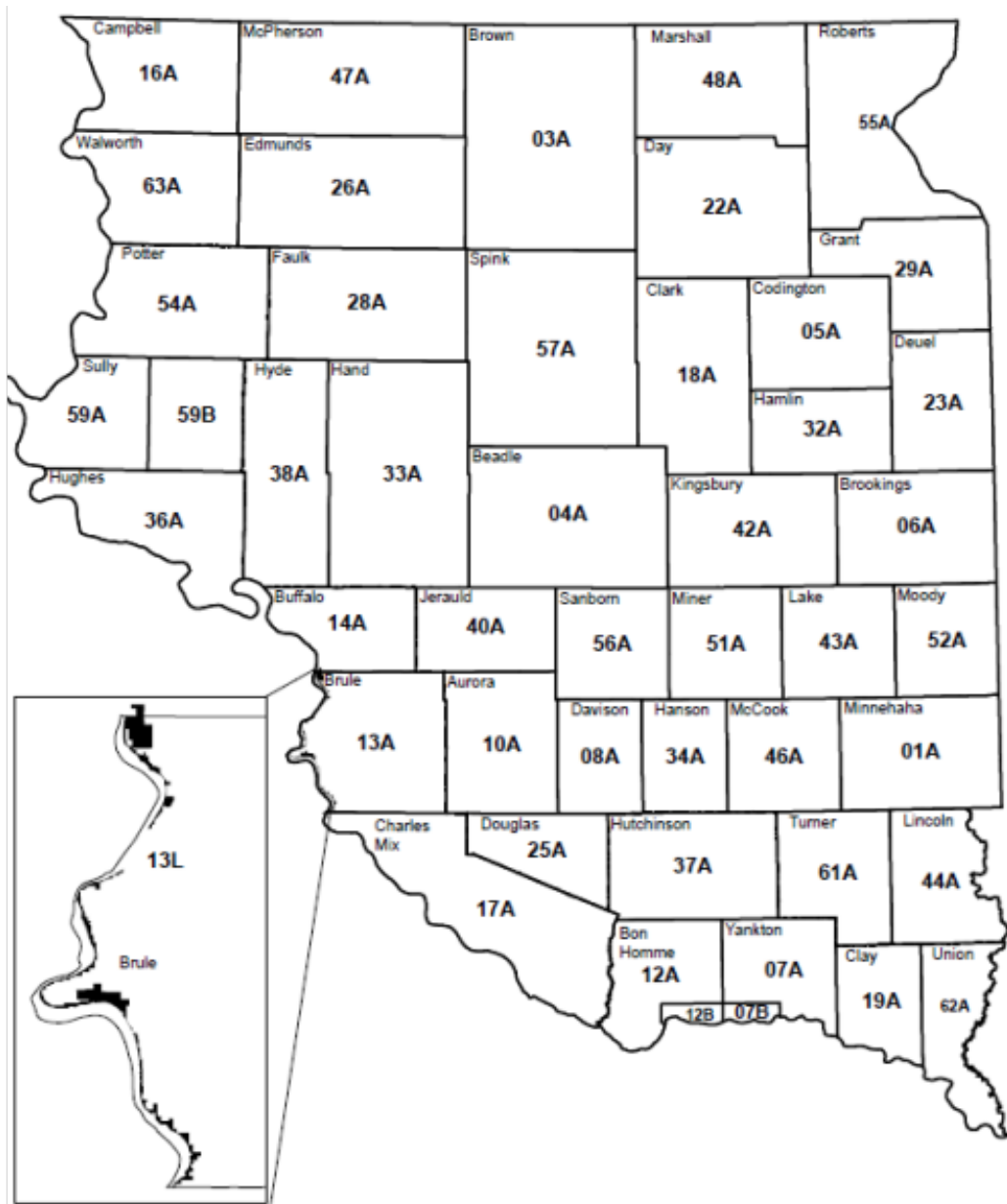
Table 3. Implementation schedule and primary responsibility, 2024-2028.

Goals, Objectives & Strategies	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Primary Responsibility
GOAL: The goal for bobcat management in South Dakota is to maximize user opportunity while maintaining populations consistent with ecological, social, aesthetic, and economic values of the people of South Dakota and our visitors.						
OBJECTIVE 1: Annually determine status of bobcat populations.						
Strategies						
Strategy A: Where adequate data exist, use statistical population reconstruction and matrix projection models to predict abundance and population growth.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Regional Staff Senior Biologists Game Survey Coordinator
Strategy B: Where feasible, utilize surveys including mark-recapture, hunter harvest, and harvest composition.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Senior Biologists Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors
Strategy C: Supplement survey data with research findings when available.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Senior Biologists
OBJECTIVE 2: Bi-annually review and set bobcat management objectives; use harvest strategies to maximize sustainable recreational opportunity.						
Strategies						
Strategy A: Bi-annually review bobcat harvest strategies, which will be used to develop 2-year recommendations based on available biological data, public input, and staff recommendations.	✓		✓		✓	Senior Biologists Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration
Strategy B: Generally, bobcat harvest will be monitored relative to population estimates, vital rates (when collected), and juvenile-to-adult ratios. We will take into account the following criteria: 1) Statewide population size based upon statistical population reconstruction or other estimates; 2) Vital rates such as adult and kitten survival from research conducted in areas across the state to estimate population growth rates (when collected); and 3) Juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios.	✓		✓		✓	Senior Biologists Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration
Strategy C: Each bobcat management zone will implement a harvest strategy based	✓		✓		✓	Senior Biologists

<p>on criteria if data are available. Two harvest strategies that can be implemented include: 1) Moderate Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for unlimited bobcat harvest per trapper or hunter; and 2) Low Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for harvesting only one bobcat per trapper or hunter. Strategies will be guided by juvenile-to-adult harvest ratios and demographic data if available.</p>						<p>Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 3: Maintain, manage, and protect existing bobcat habitat and prey base in South Dakota. Bobcats occur across a wide range of habitat types and makes it difficult to manage for any specific habitats. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to manage for wild turkey and lagomorph (i.e., rabbit) habitat needs as a primary prey base.</p>						
<p>Strategies</p>						
<p>Strategy A: Maintain existing partnerships with the USFS, BLM, NPS, private landowners, and other state, local, and private conservation partners to support programs and practices encouraging proper bobcat habitat management on public and private lands.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Regional Staff Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration</p>
<p>Strategy B: Manage for wild turkey (<i>Meleagrididae</i>) and lagomorph (e.g., eastern cottontail rabbit [<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>]) habitat needs as a primary prey base.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Regional Staff Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 4: Continue to use science-based research and surveys to answer questions related to public attitudes towards bobcat management.</p>						
<p>Strategies</p>						
<p>Strategy A: Annually evaluate and prioritize research and survey needs for bobcats. Develop research and survey proposals and seek funding opportunities.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Senior Biologists Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration</p>
<p>Strategy B: Use research and survey findings to guide bobcat management where</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Senior Biologists</p>

available and feasible.						Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisors Administration
OBJECTIVE 5: The GFP will inform and educate the public on bobcat ecology, management, and research.						
Strategies						
Strategy A: By March 2024, provide an electronic copy of the “South Dakota Bobcat Management Plan 2024–2028” on the GFP’s website. Printed copies will be available upon request.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Communications Administration
Strategy B: Use all available media to educate and inform the public regarding bobcat status, ecology, and harvest.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Communications Administration

Figure 1. Map of East River Deer (ERD) Hunting Season units.



2024 ARCHERY ACCESS PERMITS

Designated Area	Number of Access Permits		
	Any Deer	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	Total
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10	0	10
Good Earth State Park	5	0	5
WRD-27L (Residents)	20	0	20
WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5	0	5
WRD-35L (Residents)	400	0	400
WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100	0	100

2023 vs. 2024 Comparison

Designated Area	Number of Access Permits		
	Any Deer	Antlerless Whitetail Deer	Total
2023 Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10	60	70
2024 Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10	0	10
2023 Good Earth State Park	5	0	5
2024 Good Earth State Park	5	0	5
2023 WRD-27L (Residents)	20	0	20
2024 WRD-27L (Residents)	20	0	20
2023 WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5	0	5
2024 WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5	0	5
2023 WRD-35L (Residents)	400	0	400
2024 WRD-35L (Residents)	400	0	400
2023 WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100	0	100
2024 WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100	0	100

2024 EAST RIVER DEER

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident Licenses											License Totals					
		AnyD 01	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES 3-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags
01A	Minnehaha	400						200						600	0	0	600	600
03A	Brown	800						600						1400	0	0	1400	1400
04A	Beadle						500	150						650	0	0	650	650
05A	Codington	400						200						600	0	0	600	600
06A	Brookings	450						150						600	0	0	600	600
07A	Yankton	250												250	0	0	250	250
07B	Yankton							50						50	0	0	50	50
08A	Davison						250							250	0	0	250	250
10A	Aurora						250	150						400	0	0	400	400
12A	Bon Homme	225												225	0	0	225	225
12B	Bon Homme							50						50	0	0	50	50
13A	Brule	100					800		150					1050	0	0	1,050	1,050
13L	Brule	20												20	0	0	20	20
14A	Buffalo	100							50		250			150	250	0	400	650
16A	Campbell	30					400							430	0	0	430	430
17A	Charles Mix	25					250							275	0	0	275	275
18A	Clark	600										200		600	200	0	800	1,000
19A	Clay	100												100	0	0	100	100
22A	Day	600						300						900	0	0	900	900
23A	Deuel	500						200						700	0	0	700	700
25A	Douglas						250	100						350	0	0	350	350
26A	Edmunds	600						300						900	0	0	900	900
28A	Faulk	600						500						1100	0	0	1,100	1,100
29A	Grant	400						100						500	0	0	500	500
32A	Hamlin	600						200						800	0	0	800	800
33A	Hand	10					350							360	0	0	360	360
34A	Hanson						250	50						300	0	0	300	300
36A	Hughes	150					250							400	0	0	400	400
37A	Hutchinson						200							200	0	0	200	200
38A	Hyde	10					300							310	0	0	310	310
40A	Jerauld						250	150						400	0	0	400	400
42A	Kingsbury	500						200						700	0	0	700	700
43A	Lake	300						150						450	0	0	450	450
44A	Lincoln	150												150	0	0	150	150
46A	McCook	350						300						650	0	0	650	650
47A	McPherson	500						500						1000	0	0	1,000	1,000
48A	Marshall	500						150						650	0	0	650	650
51A	Miner	400						350						750	0	0	750	750
52A	Moody	300						250						550	0	0	550	550
54A	Potter	50					400							450	0	0	450	450
55A	Roberts	500						200						700	0	0	700	700
56A	Sanborn						350	300						650	0	0	650	650
57A	Spink	900						300						1200	0	0	1,200	1,200
59A	Sully	100					200							300	0	0	300	300
59B	Sully	20					200							220	0	0	220	220
61A	Turner	150												150	0	0	150	150
62A	Union	250												250	0	0	250	250
63A	Walworth	50					400	100						550	0	0	550	550
	TOTAL	11,990	0	0	0	0	5,850	6,250	200	0	250	200	0	24,290	450	0	24,740	25,190
Unit #	Unit Name	AnyD 01	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES 3-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags

EAST RIVER DEER 2023 vs. 2024 Comparison

Unit #	Unit Name	2023 Resident Licenses	2024 Resident Licenses	# Change	% Change	2023 Resident Tags	2024 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
01A	Minnehaha	600	600	0	0%	600	600	0	0%
03A	Brown	1,400	1,400	0	0%	1,400	1,400	0	0%
04A	Beadle	650	650	0	0%	650	650	0	0%
05A	Codington	600	600	0	0%	600	600	0	0%
06A	Brookings	600	600	0	0%	600	600	0	0%
07A	Yankton	350	250	-100	-29%	350	250	-100	-29%
07B	Yankton	75	50	-25	-33%	150	50	-100	-67%
08A	Davison	250	250	0	0%	250	250	0	0%
10A	Aurora	400	400	0	0%	400	400	0	0%
12A	Bon Homme	300	225	-75	-25%	300	225	-75	-25%
12B	Bon Homme	50	50	0	0%	100	50	-50	-50%
13A	Brule	1,050	1,050	0	0%	1,050	1,050	0	0%
13L	Brule	20	20	0	0%	20	20	0	0%
14A	Buffalo	400	400	0	0%	650	650	0	0%
16A	Campbell	430	430	0	0%	430	430	0	0%
17A	Charles Mix	275	275	0	0%	275	275	0	0%
18A	Clark	800	800	0	0%	1,000	1,000	0	0%
19A	Clay	250	100	-150	-60%	250	100	-150	-60%
22A	Day	900	900	0	0%	900	900	0	0%
23A	Deuel	700	700	0	0%	700	700	0	0%
25A	Douglas	350	350	0	0%	350	350	0	0%
26A	Edmunds	900	900	0	0%	900	900	0	0%
28A	Faulk	1,100	1,100	0	0%	1,100	1,100	0	0%
29A	Grant	500	500	0	0%	500	500	0	0%
32A	Hamlin	800	800	0	0%	800	800	0	0%
33A	Hand	360	360	0	0%	360	360	0	0%
34A	Hanson	300	300	0	0%	300	300	0	0%
36A	Hughes	400	400	0	0%	400	400	0	0%
37A	Hutchinson	250	200	-50	-20%	250	200	-50	-20%
38A	Hyde	310	310	0	0%	310	310	0	0%
40A	Jerauld	400	400	0	0%	400	400	0	0%
42A	Kingsbury	700	700	0	0%	700	700	0	0%
43A	Lake	450	450	0	0%	450	450	0	0%
44A	Lincoln	300	150	-150	-50%	300	150	-150	-50%
46A	McCook	650	650	0	0%	650	650	0	0%
47A	McPherson	1,000	1,000	0	0%	1,000	1,000	0	0%
48A	Marshall	650	650	0	0%	650	650	0	0%
51A	Miner	750	750	0	0%	750	750	0	0%
52A	Moody	550	550	0	0%	550	550	0	0%
54A	Potter	450	450	0	0%	450	450	0	0%
55A	Roberts	700	700	0	0%	700	700	0	0%
56A	Sanborn	650	650	0	0%	650	650	0	0%
57A	Spink	1,200	1,200	0	0%	1,200	1,200	0	0%
59A	Sully	300	300	0	0%	300	300	0	0%
59B	Sully	220	220	0	0%	220	220	0	0%
61A	Turner	200	150	-50	-25%	200	150	-50	-25%
62A	Union	450	250	-200	-44%	450	250	-200	-44%
63A	Walworth	550	550	0	0%	550	550	0	0%
	TOTAL	25,540	24,740	-800	-3%	26,115	25,190	-925	-4%

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION INFORMATION ITEM

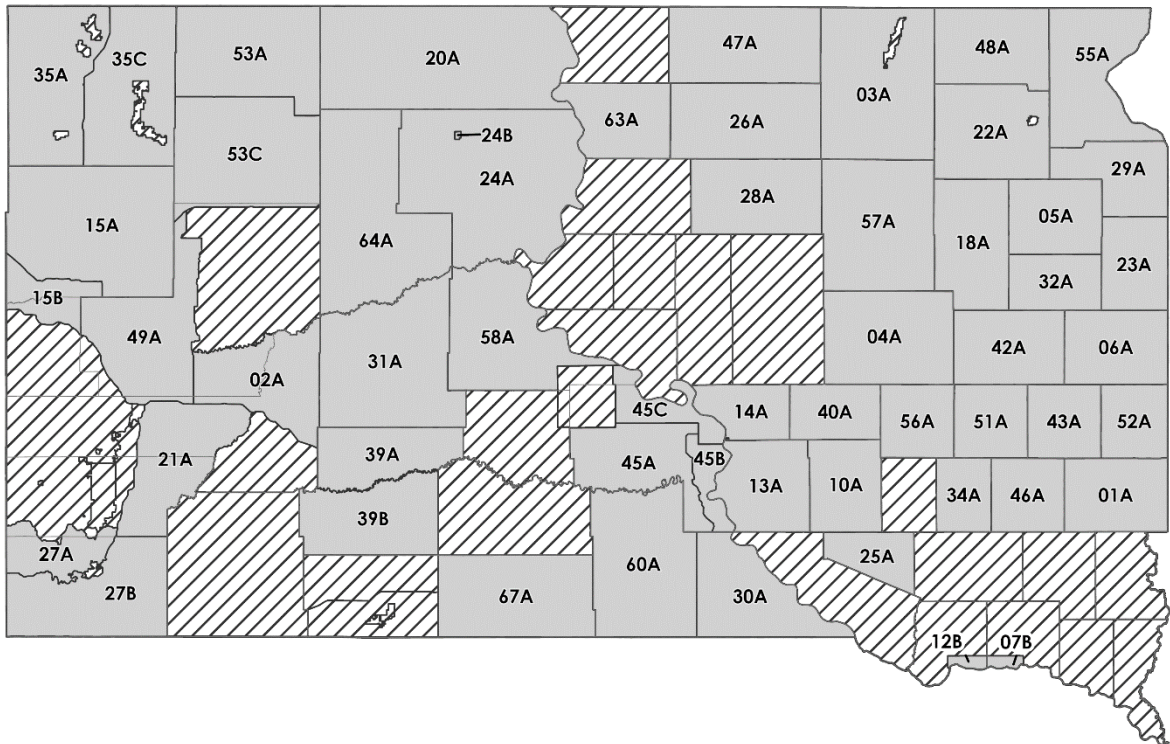
Archery Deer Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:22

Commission Meeting Dates: Information Item April 4-5, 2024
Information Item May 2-3, 2024

Pierre
Custer State Park

INFORMATION ITEM

2024 Archery Deer Hunting Season Antlerless Whitetail Deer Map (gray units license is valid)



SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023.

In response, changes are being recommended to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses and this would modify the open unit for archery antlerless whitetail deer based on § 41:06:22:01.01 (4). Archery hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their archery any deer license type (01 type).

Potential administrative action to modify deer license numbers would occur during the May Commission meeting.

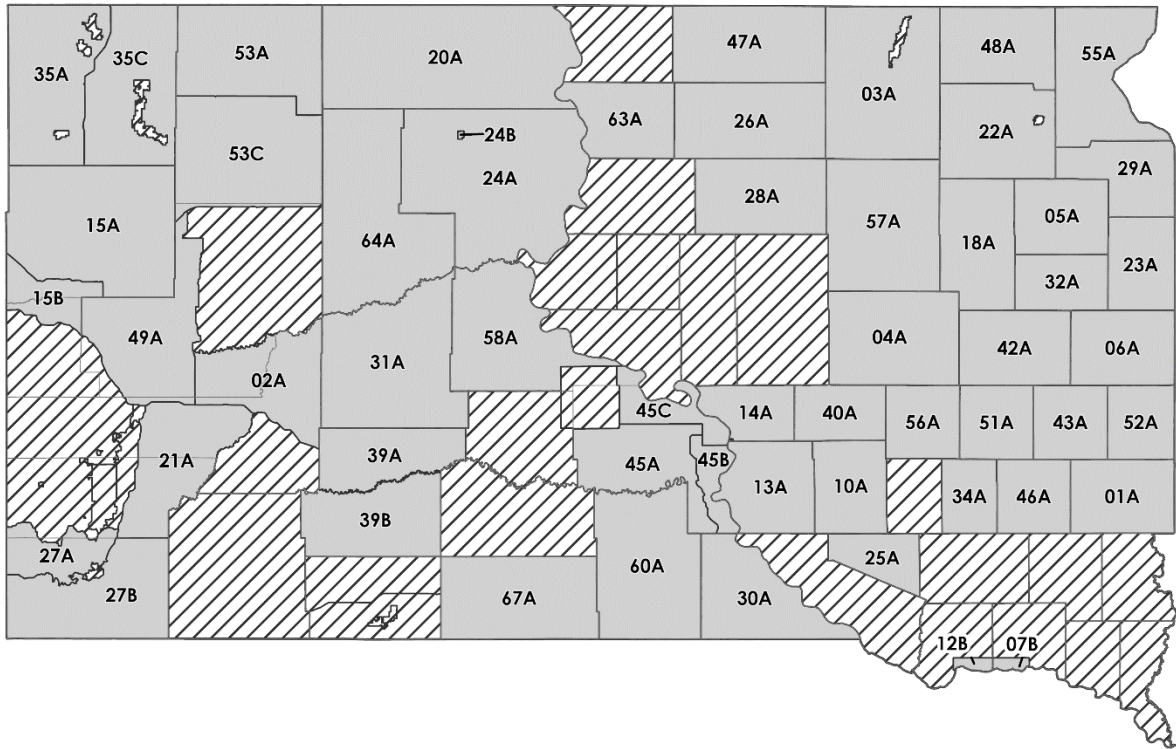
GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION INFORMATION ITEM

General Muzzleloading Deer Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:45

Commission Meeting Dates: Information Item April 4-5, 2024 Pierre
Information Item May 2-3, 2024 Custer State Park

INFORMATION ITEM

2024 Muzzleloading Deer Hunting Season Antlerless Whitetail Deer Map (gray units license is valid)



SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023.

In response, changes are being recommended to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses and this would modify the open unit for muzzleloader antlerless whitetail deer based on § 41:06:45:02 (4). Muzzleloader hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their muzzleloader any deer license type (01 type).

Potential administrative action to modify deer license numbers would occur during the May Commission meeting.

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks - Wildlife Division Land Acquisition and Disposal Report May 2024

Action Items

Wagner Property (Day County)

Location: Approximately 1.25 miles north of Roslyn in Day County.

Size: 4.84 acres (3.09 acres wetland, 1.75 acres of cropland).

Management Objective: Game Production Area – Creates permanent access around a wetland for the public to access 150 acres of upland habitat on Krause Farm GPA that has been only accessible in dry years or by boat. Will also allow department staff permanent access for management purposes and planting food plots.

Easements: None.

Previous Use: Wetland habitat and remaining upland habitat was cropped.

Appraised Value: Not appraised.

Acquisition Cost: Donation to GFP by the Day County area chapter of Whitetails Unlimited and Brown County Pheasants Forever – NGO groups negotiated a price of \$20,000 to purchase the property and donate it to the department. A purchase agreement has been signed by both the landowner and NGO's.

Commission Acquisition Priorities: Parcels that improve public use on and access to existing Department lands; round-out parcels that consolidate or connect existing public lands open to hunting, fishing, and other recreational related activities; parcels that facilitate more efficient and effective wildlife habitat or recreation management and development activities on existing Department lands; parcels that provide buffers or are necessary for maintaining or enhancing the integrity of existing Department lands; and parcels containing significant wetland habitat complexes.

Expected Closing: June 2024

Requested Commission Action: To adopt RESOLUTION 24–06 confirming the decision by the Department to accept the property and acknowledging appreciation to the Aberdeen Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited and Brown County Pheasants Forever for their generosity.

Property Map



Bon Homme County Property (Bon Homme County)

Location: Approximately 3 miles north and 3 miles east of Tyndall, South Dakota.

Size: .21 Acres

Management Objective: Game Production Area – Rounds out the corner of the existing Snatch Creek Game Production Area.

Easements: None

Previous Use: Old railroad right of way. Currently grass/trees.

Appraised Value: Not appraised.

Acquisition Cost: Donation by the County

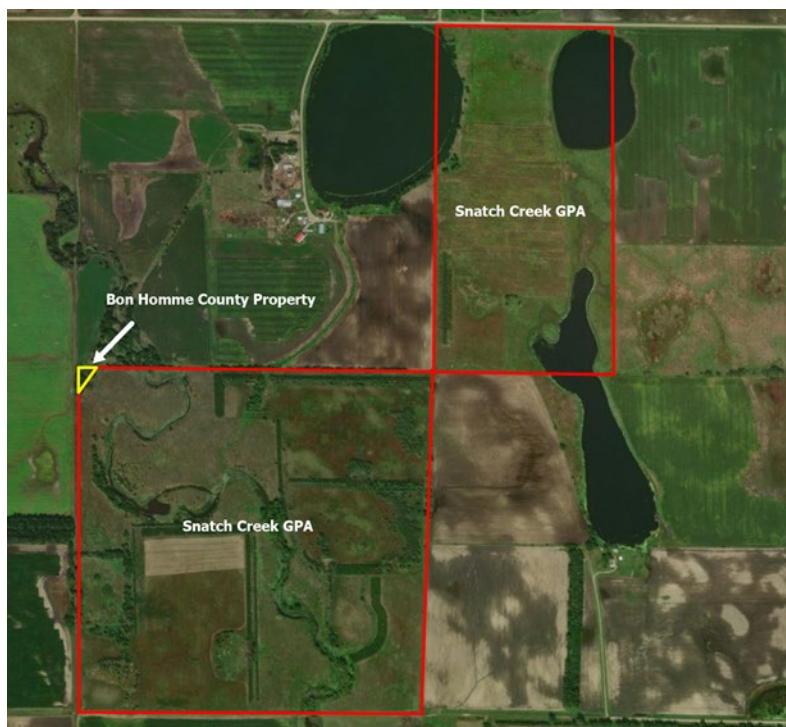
Commission Acquisition Priorities: In-holding and round-out parcels that consolidate or connect existing Department lands or other public lands open to hunting, fishing, or other recreational related activities. Parcels that improve public use on and access to existing Department lands.

Additional Information: Bon Homme County acquired this property in 1938 at a tax sale for \$.99. The property is part of an old Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad right of way. The county wants to get it off their books. It rounds out the corner of the GPA to straighten the boundary out.

Expected Closing: June 2024

Requested Commission Action: To adopt RESOLUTION 24–07 confirming the decision by the Department to accept the property and acknowledging appreciation to Bon Homme County for its generosity.

Property Map



Public Comments April 1 to April 29, 2024 at 12 pm MT

Nonresident Waterfowl

Greg Fischer

Lake City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Adam Frick

Yankton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

We already deal with land access issues the way it is, why do we need too increase out of state hunter numbers? Specifically down here we deal with Nebraska out of state license holders able to purchase UNLIMITED numbers of licenses, which creates a HUGE access problem on the boundary water area that both states seem to turn a blind eye to. It is becoming harder and harder to secure land, and I'm afraid in the not too distant future, we will be paying to hunt land because of the actions of out of state hunters, making it harder for people to get into the sport, which I thought with the three duck limit, was a priority for the central flyway.

Joe Long

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

During Daugaard's administration the commissioners held a public meeting in Pierre. There was over a 100 people in opposition to expanding NR licenses in SD, including 2-3 NRs from MN and ND. They talked about how the expansion of NR tags destroyed the waterfowl hunting in their states. Only a couple people were in support of it, namely guides and landowners who rent out their land to NRs. All the commissioner voted against the expansion. That meeting was taped by the GF&P. Maybe that tape recording can be found and watched by the current commissioners. Please stop the continued efforts to expand NR resident licenses, in the name of commerce.

John Simpson

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Also plan to attend open forum.

Jeff Olson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

This is the third time I have commented on this issue but I have yet to see it in the comments posted for the meeting?

Aric Olson

Inwood IA

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose raising the non resident licenses the quality of the hunting is great and think raising the licenses would hinder that. Also think it is one step close to commercializing duck hunting as other states have done

Mark Carda

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Quintin Biermann

Groton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Jenece Holzbauer

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Dylan Herr

Huron SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Currently there is plenty of nonresident waterfowl hunters in the state. With the last couple of years being a drought the birds are in very few areas and there is multiple hunters hunting the same group. It makes landowners annoyed. This is a resource that should be protected. They are allowed to come in the spring with out limits and it is a nightmare. Let's not make the fall the same.

Eric Paulson

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Not sure why my comments didn't show up. I emailed them a couple weeks ago and submitted in the comments link. So let's try this again. Hopefully you get to read this before the meeting.

GFP Commissioners,

At the last Commission meeting, the GFP Wildlife director I believe it was said that most of the nonresident licenses are for duck hunting purposes. So let's look at the just the duck hunter numbers for South Dakota and cut out the goose hunters using GFP survey data. Here is the most recent duck hunter survey <https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/Ducks.pdf> from the GFP. According to data from the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, from 2016 to 2021 the resident duck hunter numbers INCREASED! Total waterfowl hunters have dropped yes, but clearly that drop in the last decade or so is primarily goose hunters. Now consider residents hunt the peak migration and non-residents try to time their trip for peak migration, when you hit that peak duck migration each year there are 100 more resident hunters in 2021 than 2016 and over 600 more nonresident duck hunters. This doesn't include the 300 nonresident licenses added last year. Now you want to add another 315 non-residents to hunt for 3 or 10 days? Now you go from 100+ more residents since 2016, plus 600+ more nonresidents since 2016, plus 300 added last year, plus 315 more this year, that's over 1,300 more resident and nonresident duck hunters since 2016! You'll be just adding to the congestion and to the problems that people have been complaining about for years.

Another common message at the last meeting was issues with NR waterfowl hunters so I'll share some issues we've encountered. Multiple times the last few years nonresident hunters have hunted a state refuge in Brown County, they get turned in every time we see them and I hope other hunters in the area who see them turn them in as well. The illegal hunters always claim they thought the refuge was public land so they can hunt it even though its very very clearly marked as a refuge. That blows the area for miles around for everyone for probably 2 weeks. But what do they care? They are only here for 3 days or 10 days at most. The rest of us are around all year and get to suffer but hey at least the refuge hunters got a good hunt in right? And for \$125 fine the game warden takes their birds from them so they don't count against their possession limit and they can go out and shoot even more the rest of their time here!

Now also take habitat into consideration. Yes, South Dakota has a lot of public land, but not all public land is created equal. In the northeast part of the state for example, walk in fields that are all grass or sloughs bottoms with little to no water is pretty much worthless when it comes to hunting ducks. Great for nesting and for deer and pheasants but not good for duck hunting. Take bean fields that may be walk in too. Very rarely will you see ducks choosing bean fields over corn fields. So, removing those categories of public land and you have now drastically reduced the amount of quality duck hunting land/water with, statistically increasing numbers of duck hunters since 2016.

If duck populations were at their peaks this might not even be a discussion. But as in my previous comments for the March meeting, duck numbers have been drastically dropping the last 10 years. Dropping from 49.5 million in 2013 to 32.32 million in 2023, according to Duck Unlimited. Couple quickly dropping duck numbers with increasing resident and nonresident duck hunters since 2016 and you have a mess and a lot of frustrated hunters!

It sure doesn't seem, based on reading comments and listening to comments at the GFP meeting last month that there is much if any resident or non-resident support for this increase. Maybe from outfitters but they want as many non-resident hunters as possible because that's how they make their money. Even the GFP staff saw no need to propose it in February. South Dakota is one of the last great destinations for duck hunting. Making the licenses like an open checkbook with 5% annual increases will make it just like every other state and in the long run very well could hurt overall hunter numbers coming to and hunting in South Dakota. I would urge you to deny this proposal and leave the numbers as is.

Thanks,
Eric Paulson
Pierre, SD

Michael Pistulka

Deer Creek MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tyler Frick

Yankton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not increase the NR waterfowl tags. Nebraska has made enough of a problem in the Appletree area already. Have hunted there for over 20 years now and have seen what the competition has done to the area. I rarely go there anymore because of the population of hunters. The birds are hunted all day long. These hunters get up and out there by 2 am on some days and if you get there by 4 am, you are not likely to get a good spot. This past year was the worst waterfowl year of my life. At least with the number of NR tags in South Dakota, we are still able to enjoy waterfowl hunting off of the boundary waters without too much crazy competition. There are definitely guide boats out in the Springfield/Appletree area as well.

John Wrede

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

State Versus Kemp is still good law. I am vehemently opposed to this non-resident license increase.

Michael Undeberg

Rochester MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

Regarding the proposed changes to non-resident waterfowl regulations, I stand in opposition. I feel South Dakota has a reasonable and equitable system which provides ample opportunity, while maintaining a quality experience. The proposed changes will inevitably lead to further private monetizing and monopolizing of a precious public resource. This in turn will reduce access for the average hunter, and have a detrimental effect on hunters numbers in general. This is short term gain for the few, at the expense of the resource. Additionally, as waterfowl numbers have proven to be difficult to increase artificially, I believe this would have a negative effect on waterfowl numbers. Please retain the current system to protect the resource, and support the average hunters who are the backbone supporting fish and game management and the businesses which benefit from their participation. Thank you for you consideration.

Ryan Elliott

Watertoen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Justin Goodroad

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

We have plenty of non resident hunters as it currently stands. Non residents have additionally lowered the amount of private land opportunities due to poor respect of grower land and abuse of hunting permission.

Other

David Holthus

Woonsocket SD

Position: support

Comment:

Dear commissioners, I am a member of the Jerauld county Fish and Game club. We had a meeting and discussed the development of campgrounds And the fishing in the Missouri river. With the new electronics we will need to change the limit on walleyes from 4 to 3 per day until further notice. David Holthus

Brian Pauly

Woonsocket SD

Position: support

Comment:

Prairie Grouse Season Extension - I know this comment is late, but I support the extension of the prairie grouse season to close the same time the pheasant season closes.

Darrel Reinke

Ft. Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

Support making partridge, quail, and grouse end the same day as pheasant. Thank You

Rick Kuchta

Yankton SD

Position: support

Comment:

My crossbow permit expires this year and I would like to apply for another one.

Mark Fuhr

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I OPPOSE the decommissioning of 3V0. I've flown to 3V0 and everyone deserves the unique opportunity to fly there and see its beauty, both locals and visitors. Keep 3V0 open!

Andy Vandel

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the proposal to extend the prairie grouse season to the end of January. Great opportunity to harvest the occasional grouse while on a late season pheasant hunt and also simplifies the upland game seasons.

Anthony Anderson

Sartell MN

Position: support

Comment:

The ability for nonresidents To coon hunt in South Dakota.

Davy Hobson

Grapeland TX

Position: support

Comment:

Support legislation allowing Non-resident coonhunting in the State. Especially, those that may be competing in Kennel club events in the Summer, Spring and Fall of the year.

Mark Schneeman

Gillette WY

Position: support

Comment:

I support the change of seasons to use hounds for raccoon to allow non resident hunters to participate in these events with other houndsmen

Patrick Weimer

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

Being the person behind the petition to open nonresident raccoon take with the aid of hounds I'd like to touch on a few things.

The reason for allowing nonresident to take raccoon with the aid of hounds is simply to make UKC/PKC competitions to be more easily held in our state. These competitions are held in the spring, summer, and fall months. By only allowing take from dec 1-mar 15 these competitions will be completely missed and makes it much more difficult for nonresidents to attend these events, the sole reason for the rule change is to make these events easier to attend by nonresident houndsmen. During these events 2-3 dogs are let loose in search of a raccoon to show their ability to hunt and tree game, there are no guns allowed and the raccoons are not harmed in any way due to competitions rules. But in the the chance a raccoon has to be harvested a license is still needed and it is still considered a hunt. As houndsmen we are simply asking to not have to tip toe around these rules that are set in place by sdog. With all that being said I ask you to please consider allowing nonresidents the ability to legally hunt raccoon with dogs throughout the spring, summer, and fall months in order for them to attend these events.

Jacob Jones

Floris IA

Position: support

Comment:

I strongly support SD to make the changes necessary to allow nonresident hunters to pursue raccoons with their hounds year round. Being able to host sanctioned night hunts with groups like UKC and PKC provides us hound hunters the chance to travel to and hunt your state. That in turn opens up potential revenue for the small communities where the hunts would be held. I loved turkey hunting South Dakota, I would bring my hounds out in a heartbeat if I could!

Larry Emery

Badger MN

Position: support

Comment:

larryemery65@gmail.com open a season for racoon hound hunting to non residents, would allow for clubs to get out of state people in to help make money for the state

Larry Emery

Badger MN

Position: support

Comment:

larryemery65@gmail.com open a season for racoon hound hunting to non residents, would allow for clubs to get out of state people in to help make money for the state

Lance Parrow

Gwinner ND

Position: support

Comment:

They need to change the rule on non residents hunting with coon hounds I can't even go with my dad because he lives in South Dakota this rule needs to change

Ron Brewer

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Please allow non resident raccoon hunters to compete. In many states they do not require hunting license for sanctioned events. Many hunters come for the hunt and return to buy license and other tags.

Cody Johnson

Belle Fourch SD

Position: other

Comment:

I support the non resident coon season but not the dates. Coons aren't out in the winter months and hunts are not held in the winter, this would do little to nothing to benefit South Dakota hunters as well as non residents. Make it a year round season, at least to run dogs.

Max Hess

Meridian ID

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see a none resident raccoon season with use of hounds

Colton Benson

Montrose SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support non-residence hunting raccoons

Jordan Stewart

Bemidji MN

Position: support

Comment:

Let non residents run hounds on coon

Richard Bisbee

Spokane WA

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Michael Bency

Whitewater CO

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please don't take away non resident coin hunting.

William Villers

Buckhannon WV

Position: support

Comment:

I support the extension of out of state hunters to hunt raccoons with hounds to all year around.

Gene Parrow

Britton SD

Position: support

Comment:

The time frame needs to be adjusted to allow out of state hounds men to come to SD and enter the sanctions hunts. There are no raccoons killed during these hunts, they are ran and treed and left to run again. This would help the state with tourism money, food and lodging,ect.

Andy Johnson

Attachment# 12575

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

The Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action supports a three year moratorium on beaver hunting and trapping, and after the moratorium, a reduction in the beaver season.

Jon Olson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

Something has to be done about non residents invasion of the black hills for turkey season. It's out of control. Myself and my family are done with buying tags until you cap and draw NR. I'd suggest 8% of previous years resident license sales. Trust me when I tell you all residents feel this way regardless of the almighty revenue they bring in that you and Travel SD adore.

Nancy Hilding

Attachment# 12577

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

I am posting this SDGFP power-point shown at the December 2023 Commission meeting. It is called "Black Hills Beaver Information Item". I will be referencing it during my testimony on our Beaver Trapping/Hunting rule change proposals and I wanted everyone to have a chance to look at it in advance. Please pay special attention to chart and maps on pages (or slides) 10-12.

Nancy Hilding

Attachment# 12578

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

I am attaching pages from a SDGFP power-point - "Black Hills Beaver Information Item" that was shown at the SDGFP Commission meeting in Dec. 2023. It is 3 pages consisting of a chart & maps that I will reference in testimony on Thursday May 2nd during testimony on our rule change petition on beaver hunting/trapping rule.

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to comment on the up coming proposals to bobcat, deer and pheasant management programs.

In your bobcat proposal, the following is stated in your guiding principles:

“future of of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public’s right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues”.

I see nothing in these proposals that includes non-hunting public amendments, such as designating areas free from hunting and trapping, including biologists from an agency such as the Humane Society of the United States to give input on management practices, establishing wildlife corridors and other non-lethal methods of dealing with wildlife conflicts and the right of the public to object and ban cruel hunting methods such as trapping. I respectfully request at this meeting that the above mentioned proposals be incorporated into these plans as part of the guiding principles.

The other principle mentioned is:

“recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of bobcats and must be encouraged and preserved”.

I object to this principle’s requirement that hunting and trapping must be encouraged and preserved. I formally request that this statement be removed and replaced with “humane treatment of animals in conservation must be primary”. Habitat, animal behavior and maintaining ecological balance are crucial elements to a healthy ecosystem and should be used to correct any population imbalance. These elements should be the guiding principle in conservation, not hunting and trapping. Also, I object to the wording “recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of Bobcats”. Bobcats are sentient beings and this wording categorizes them as inanimate objects to be used as if they were a supply that could be replaced, which is unacceptable.

Regarding white tail deer season, the use of hounds to hunt other species should be looked at as a detriment to prey species. The scent of dogs will deter animals from a given area and those impacts should be studied.

Regarding pheasant season, with a seasonal harvest of over one million birds, the Nest Predator Bounty Program serves as nothing more than recruiting tool for the SD Trapping Association and should be abolished.

So, for the above mentioned reasons and arguments presented, I respectfully ask that the public be included in the writing and implementation of these management programs.

Secretary Kevin Robling
Director Kirschenmann
Chairman Rissler and fellow GPF commissioners

RE: Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan 2024-2028

Black Hills Sportsmen Club Comments

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on pheasants in South Dakota. There have been some decisions made in the past few years that our club and many sportsmen across the state do not agree with. No data has been provided to prove us wrong. The simple request is to please go back to using proper science and research to manage our upland resources.

Bounty Program

There is no data to state that the nest bounty program has done anything to help pheasant nesting success. However, there are many previous studies that state it does not work. Could you provide us the data? Where has every predator been harvested in the bounty program? What was the rooster population before and after the trapping of the area? What is the habitat like in the area? This data needs to be provided moving forward or the program must be dropped or renamed. We are not opposed to getting kids into trapping. “The primary goals of this program were to increase trapping education and awareness, getting youth and families outside and enhancing duck and pheasant nest success.” This program really has little affect if any on rooster populations. You must strike “enhancing duck and pheasant nest success” from the nest predator bounty program primary goals since we have no data or research proving that. The name of the whole program should be changed or the program completely dropped. This is a bounty program to get kids outside and learn trapping and it should be for kids only of course.

Habitat and Access

Objective 1 Not a mention of any West River areas? CREP on the James and Big Sioux River area is great goal but it appears that there is little focus west of the river.

Objective 2 We would certainly like to see the strategies put in place and monitored for their effectiveness. What areas will be chosen for this work? What is the budget, and will each GPA have its own management plan? How will it be monitored?

Objective 3 We understand that good habitat on private land helps all wildlife. However, we cannot support using public funds to enhance wildlife populations on lands where public access is not allowed.

Objective 4 “improve existing population monitoring programs” We are not sure how you are monitoring the pheasant population since you dropped the brood count. We feel that method was effective, and you should go back to that system. The count needs to be honest and as scientific as possible. Tourism and money to the state should not play any role in the science of managing our resources. Please manage our wildlife based on sound science, research and data.

Cody Hodson
President Black Hills Sportsmen Club

From: [Dalzell, Jackie](#)
To: [Kierl, Liz](#)
Cc: [Fisk, Keith](#)
Subject: FW: Duck Hunting Limit Change
Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 10:19:33 AM

From: Murphy, Caleb E (S-Sioux Valley) <CM4224@k12.sd.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 9:57 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: Duck Hunting Limit Change

Hello South Dakota Game Fish & Parks,

My name is Caleb Murphy I am a senior from Sioux Valley High School. I am writing to you to discuss a change for the South Dakota duck season. Currently for the first 16 days of the South Dakota duck season, we are allowed two bonus teal to are daily bag limit. I am looking for this to be eliminated and have an early teal season added a week or two before duck season. This would allow for only blue-winged teal to be shot.

Being a duck hunter myself, having the chance to hunt earlier with no bad effects would be awesome. With including this early teal season a week or two before duck opener, this would allow us to have more of a chance to kill blue-winged teal as they migrate early. This would also improve people's identification of ducks because they need to know what they are shooting.

I believe adding an early teal season is beneficial in many ways. This is also a common practice in states that surround South Dakota.

Could you please send this to the proper people that could move forward with this.

Thanks

Caleb Murphy
Sioux Valley Schools

Game, Fish and Parks Commission
Joe Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501

Attachment# 12575

April 28, 2024

Commissioners:

The Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action recognizes beaver as an important keystone species in South Dakota. By stabilizing streams and other activities, beaver are very beneficial to biodiversity, surface and ground water supplies and to water quality protection. SDGFP should be doing everything in its power to recover this species in the Black Hills and across South Dakota.

SDGFP's own fall 2023 survey of beaver winter caches in the Black Hills found a 73% reduction in winter caches between fall 2012 and fall 2023. SDGFP's data also shows that beaver have disappeared from many drainages in SD and Wyoming over the last 11 years. While the National Forest controls many of the management decisions related to providing riparian habitat for beavers, GFP controls a major cause of beaver mortality - hunting and trapping. Restrictions on hunting and trapping can quickly reverse the decline in beaver populations.

We strongly support the petition for rule-making to be submitted at the May 2024 Commission meeting, asking for a three-year moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping in the Black Hills National Forest.

We are also concerned about the SDGFP 12-month beaver trapping/hunting season that is allowed in areas outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The increase from 6-months to 12-month season for much of SD purportedly allowed killing of "conflict beavers". However, this is unnecessary as SDCL 41-8-23 allows landowners to get permission from SDGFP to kill "conflict" beaver.

The 12 month season is of special concern on public land, where the agency has multiple objectives and land managers should be managing to promote beavers for ecosystem health, not helping to destroy the remaining population.

Beavers are strongly associated with river otters which are currently not found in western SD. The river otter population should be helped to recover in western SD. Otters are strongly associated with beaver habitat and are accidentally killed in beaver traps. Otters breed in April -- thus beaver trapping should end in March.

We support reducing the beaver hunting/trapping season from 12 months to 5 months. This would still allow trapping from Nov to the end of March in SD outside of the Black Hills National Forest. If other public land agencies ask for shorter seasons or temporary moratoriums on trapping, we would support these as well.

We endorse both of Prairie Hills Audubon Society's petitions for a moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping in the Black Hills National Forest and also their petition for that moratorium and for a reduction in season length outside Black Hills National Forest to a 5-month season.

Sincerely,

Andy Johnson
Chair, Black Hills Chapter, Dakota Rural Action
610 Nellie Lane
Spearfish SD 57783
605-645-3332

Attachment# 12577

GAME, FISH AND PARKS

Black Hills Beaver Information Item: Trenton Haffley & Mike Klosowski

Black Hills Beaver Info Item:

Purpose:

- GFP Commission and the public requested an examination of beaver populations in the Black Hills

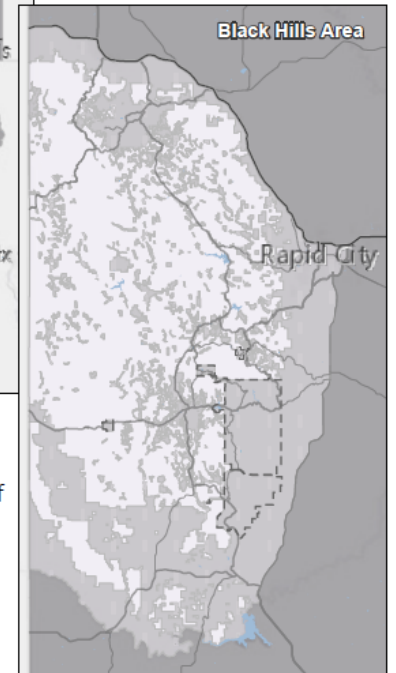
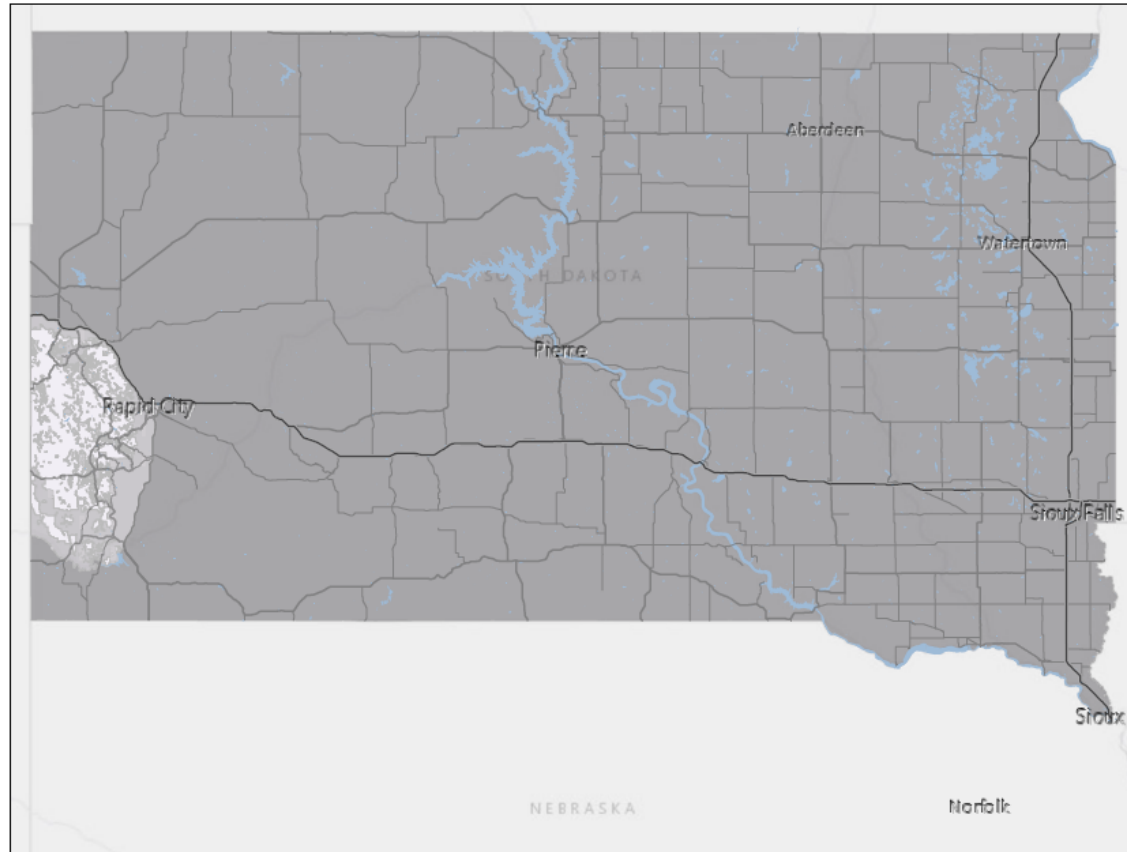
As a result:

- GFP formed a stakeholder group and met
 - Collaborated and shared info with multiple agencies
 - BLM, FS, TNC, NRCS, WY GFP
- Implemented a beaver survey and analyzed data
- Changed direction on problem beaver removal
 - Only remove beaver causing infrastructure issues
- Implemented riparian habitat improvements
 - Woody plantings (willows)
 - Installed fake beaver dams referred to as beaver dam analogs (BDA)
 - Evaluating virtual fencing in riparian areas (FS collaboration)

Reminder:
Last rule
change was
July 2021



**Beaver
Trapping
Seasons**



Area	Season Dates	Open Areas
Black Hills	Jan. 1 - March 31	U.S. Forest service land within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of I-90 and west of SD Hwy 79
Black Hills	Nov. 1 - April 30	Non-U.S. Forest service land within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of I-90 and west of SD Hwy 79
Statewide	Year-round	Statewide excluding land within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of I-90 and west of SD Hwy 79

Beaver Biology

- Typically build a series of dams and a bank den or lodge.
- Fall family group consists of an adult pair, offspring from the current year and offspring from the previous year.
- Construct a cache of deciduous material prior to freeze up to feed the beaver family through the winter under the ice.
- Following the spring thaw, the two-year-old beaver will get kicked out and are forced to find a new home.
- Beaver are territorial and do not allow new beaver to move into their area.



Beaver Ecology

- **Require herbaceous and deciduous woody material for food and construction**
- **Beaver Dams**
 - **Create escape habitat for beaver**
 - **Slow water flow**
 - **Trap sediment**
 - **Raise water table**



Beaver Ecology

- **Fast flowing water means stream incision and erosion:**
 - Little to no riparian habitat
 - Short flow duration
- **Slow moving water spreads out and saturates soil:**
 - Creates micro-habitats with a riparian area
 - Expands riparian habitat
 - May cause streams to flow more consistently



Incised Streams

- Process takes many years
- Beaver are not meant to be present the entire time
- Roads and development in the flood plain can present problems



Low Tech Devices

- **Beaver Dam Analog (BDA)**
 - Meant to slow water and simulate beaver dams
 - Spans the entire stream width
 - Temporary (1-10) year lifespan

- **Post Assisted Log Structure (PALS)**
 - Adds complexity to stream reaches
 - Typically, only partially block stream flow
 - Temporary (1-10 years)



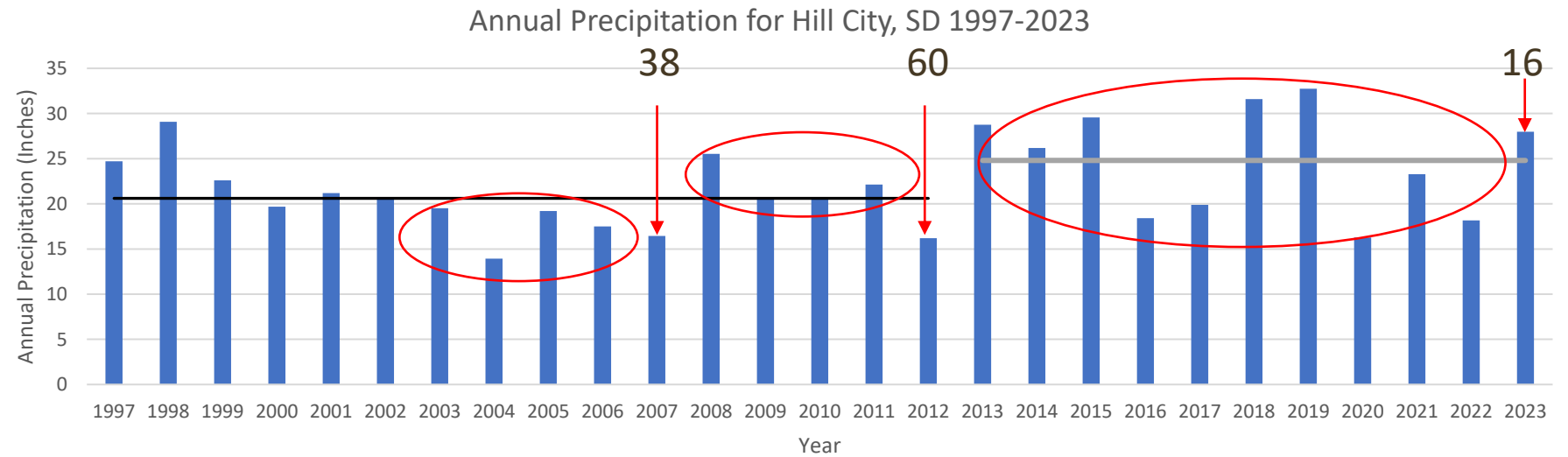
Aerial Survey

- Flown in late fall just prior to freeze up:
 - Leaves have fallen
 - Caches are built and above water
- Survey 52 watersheds deemed to have moderate to high beaver habitat
- 1600 stream km
- 25 hours of flight time:
 - Due to weather, survey was spread out over 6 days
 - Flown in 4.5 days in 2012
 - Total staff time 124.5 hours
- Flight cost was 15K

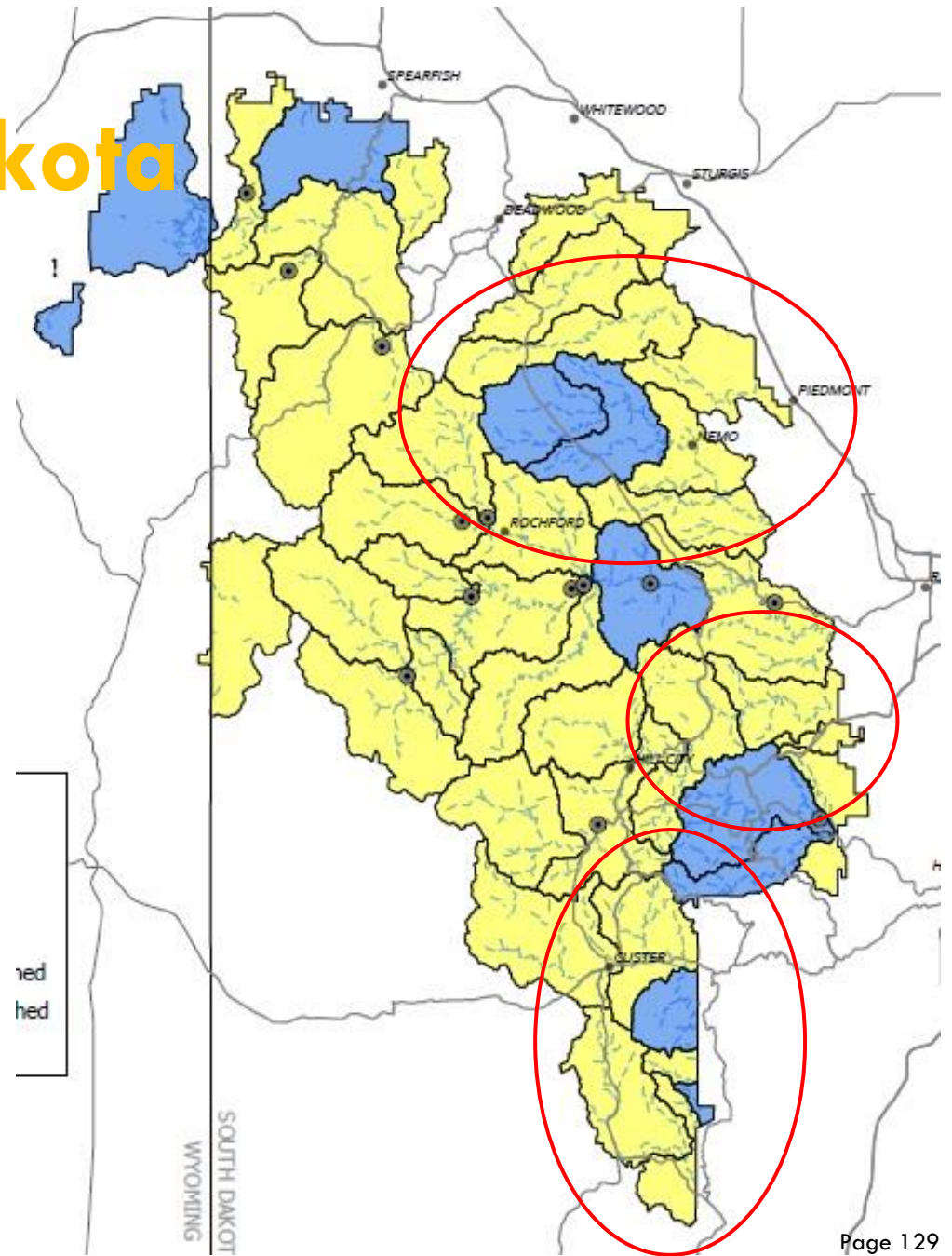
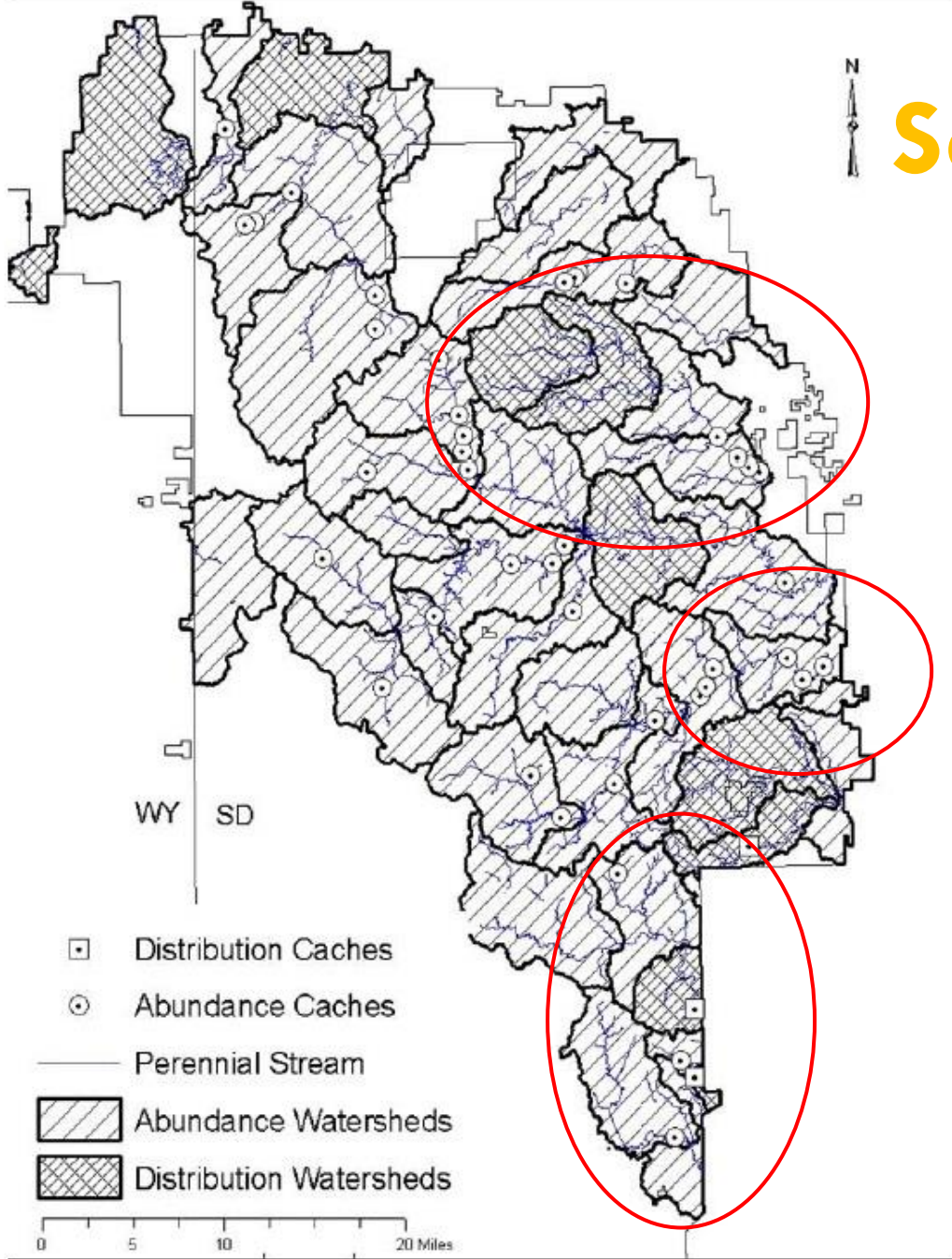


Survey Results

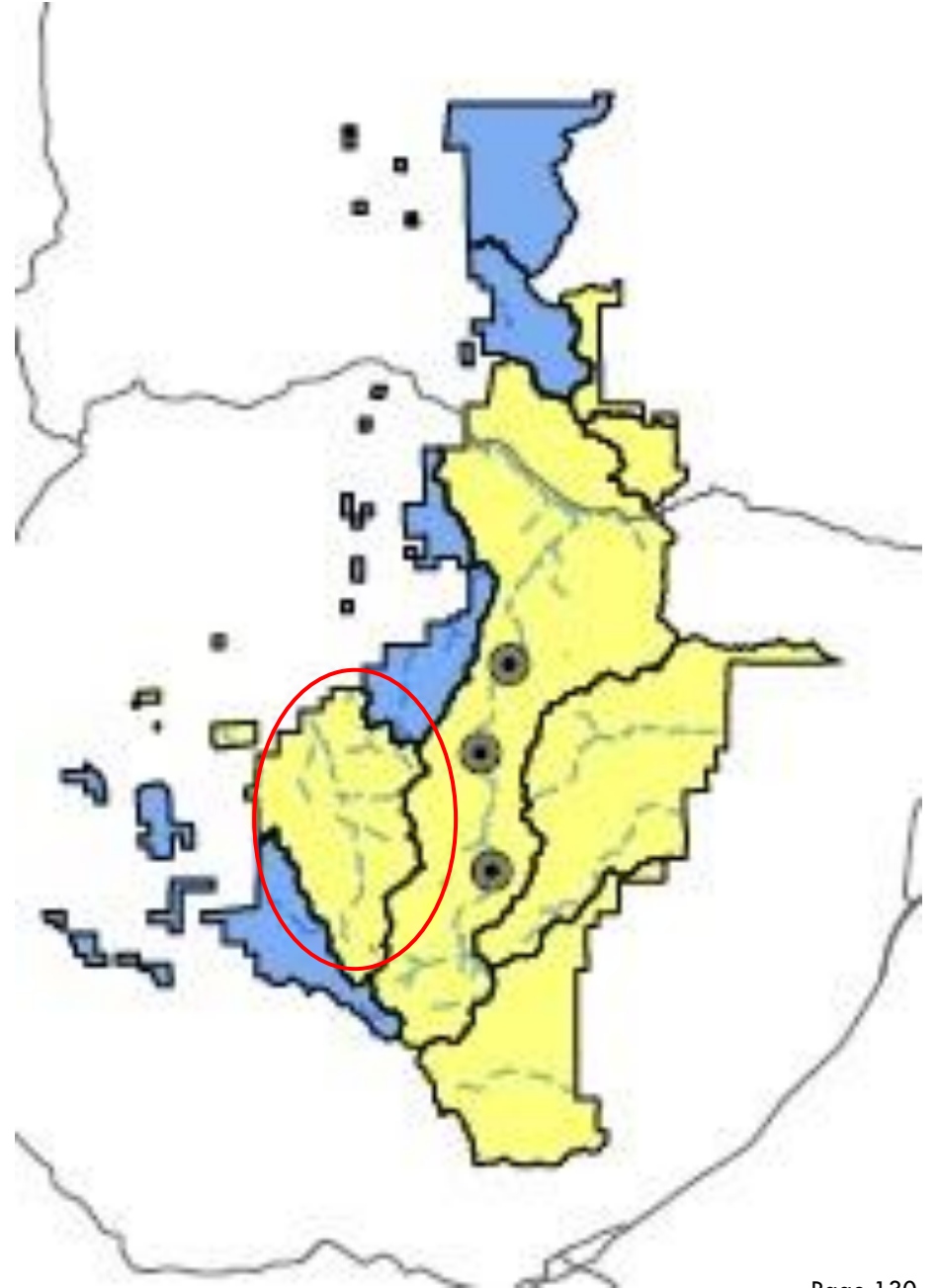
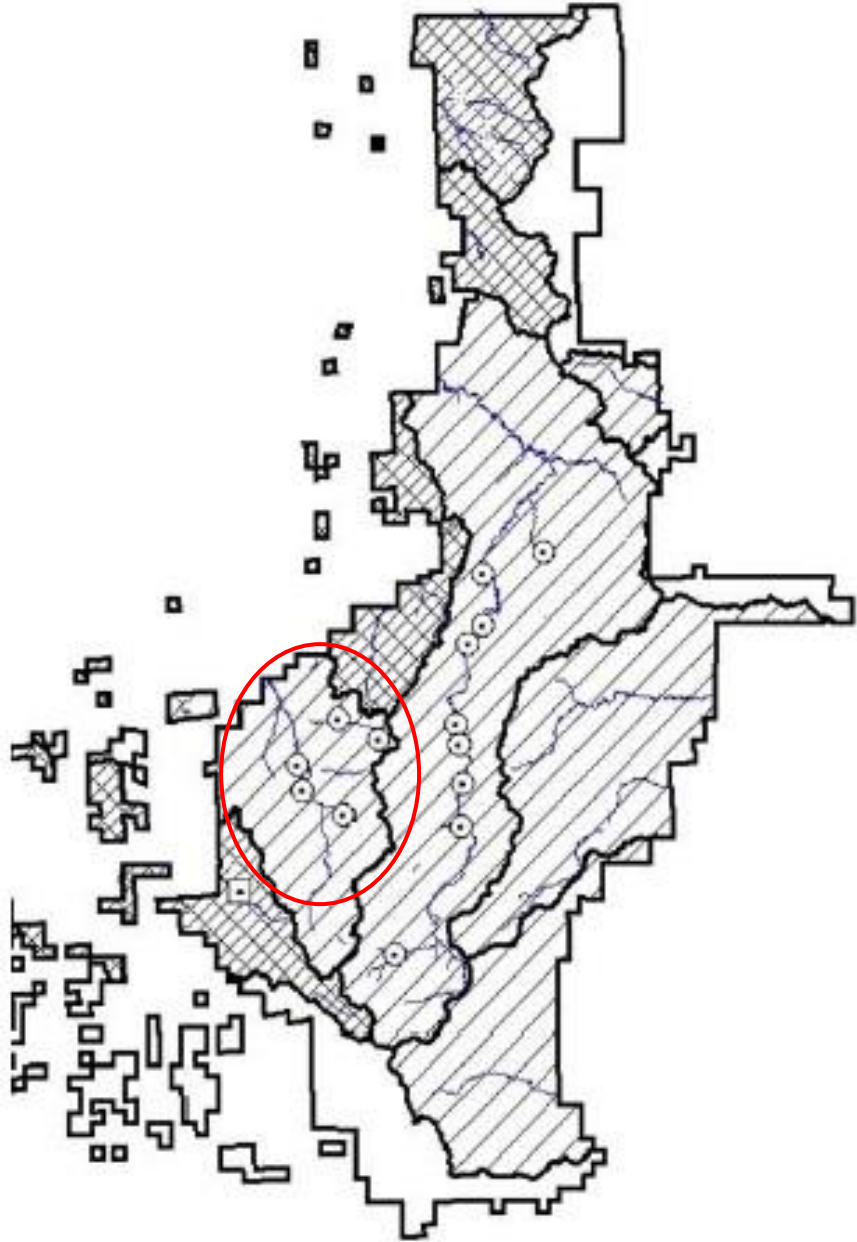
Monitoring Indices	Year		
	2007	2012	2023
Number of Caches Observed	38	60	16
Abundance (Cache/km)	0.0189	0.0373	0.0100
Distribution (% of watersheds occupied)	42.3%	51.90%	23.1%



South Dakota



Wyoming



Potential Issues Affecting Beaver Populations:

- **Habitat degradation (incised streams, over grazed riparian areas)**
- **Low social tolerance on private property**
- **Disease (tularemia as an example)**
- **Predation (are they an easy target?)**
- **Legal hunting and trapping (localized affect?)**
- **Environmental (scouring rains & drought)**



Where do we go from here?



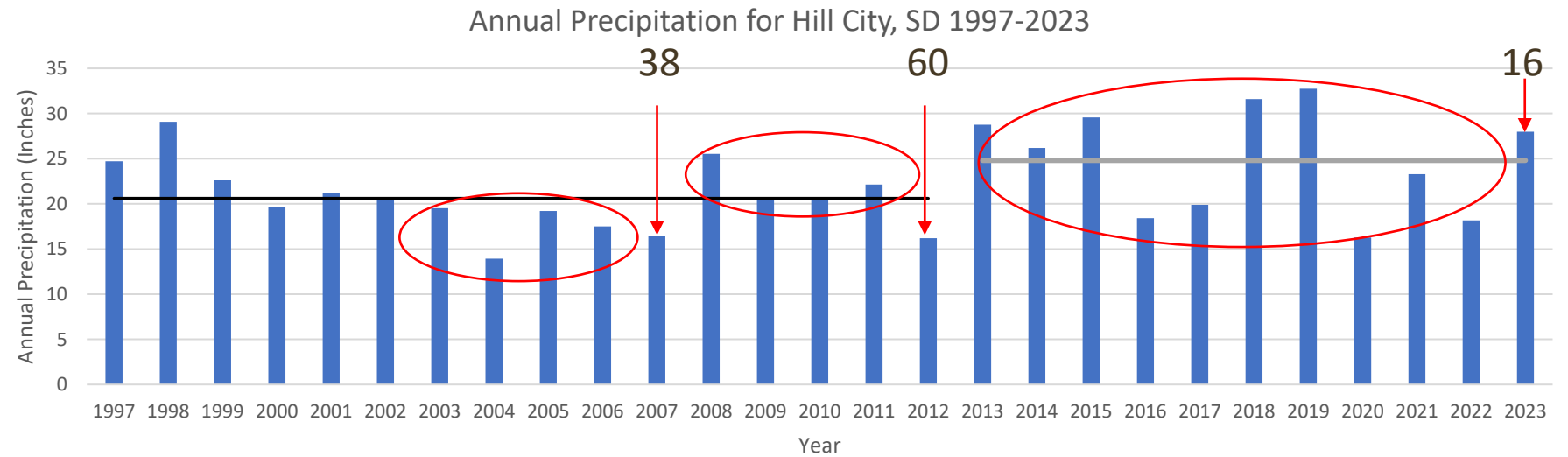
- **Continue Habitat Improvements:**
 - BDA or fake beaver dams
 - Grazing system improvements
 - Woody vegetation plantings
- **Restrict Problem Beaver Removal**
 - Remove only when infrastructure is threatened
- **Potential Research**
 - Disease
 - Mortality
 - Habitat issues
 - Collaborate with other conservation partners
- **Continue Emphasis on Monitoring**
- **Unfortunately, no smoking gun as to an exact issue**



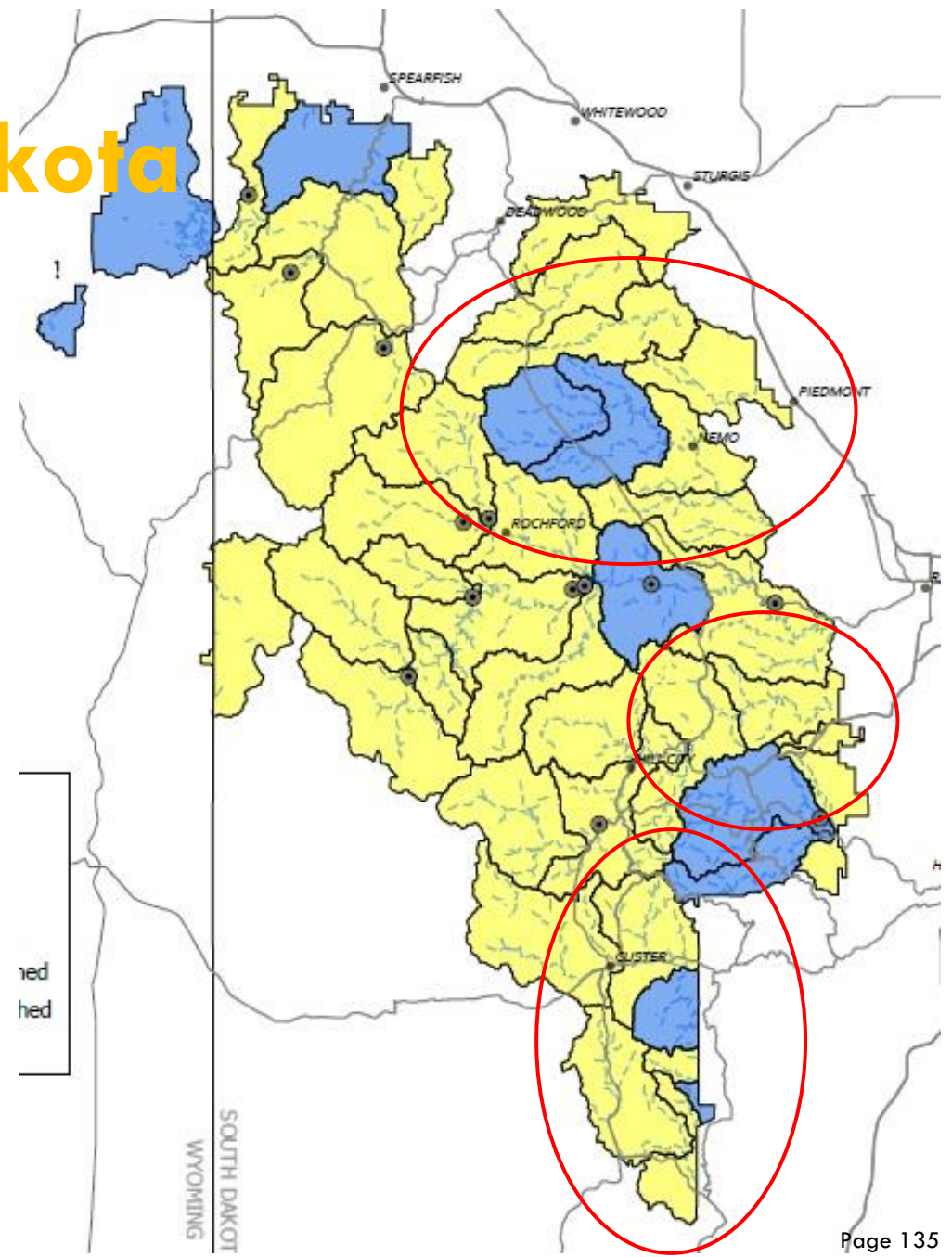
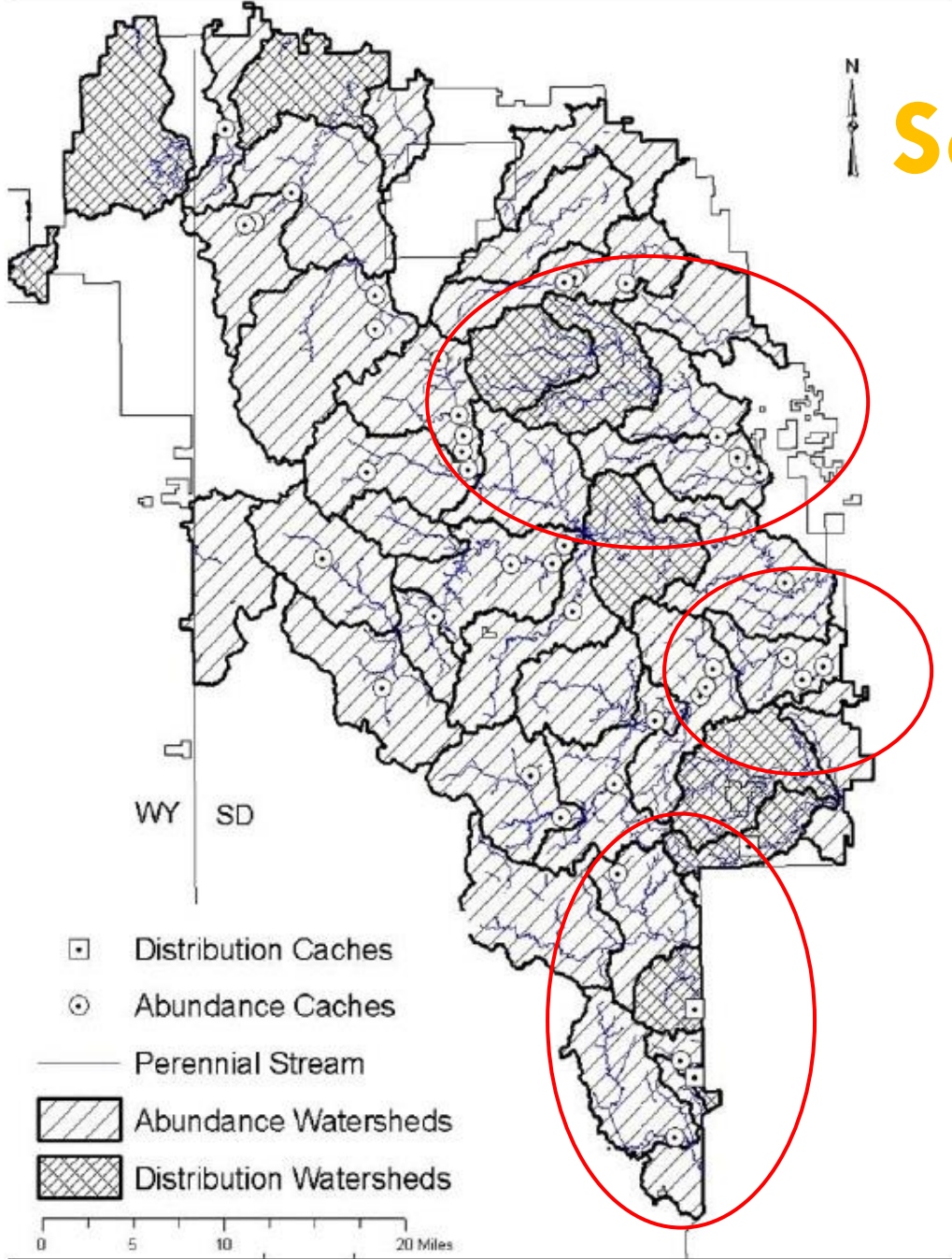
Questions?

Survey Results

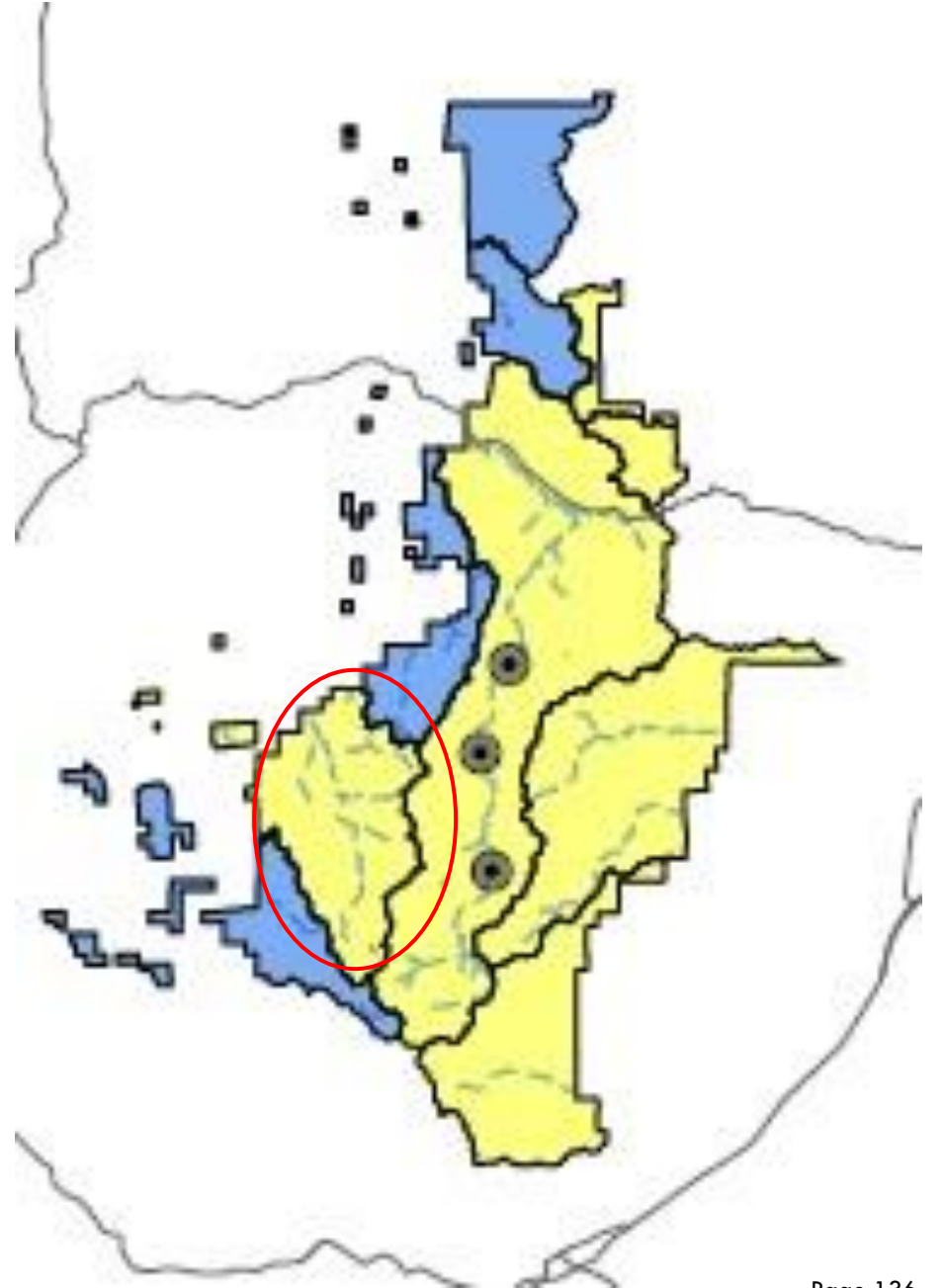
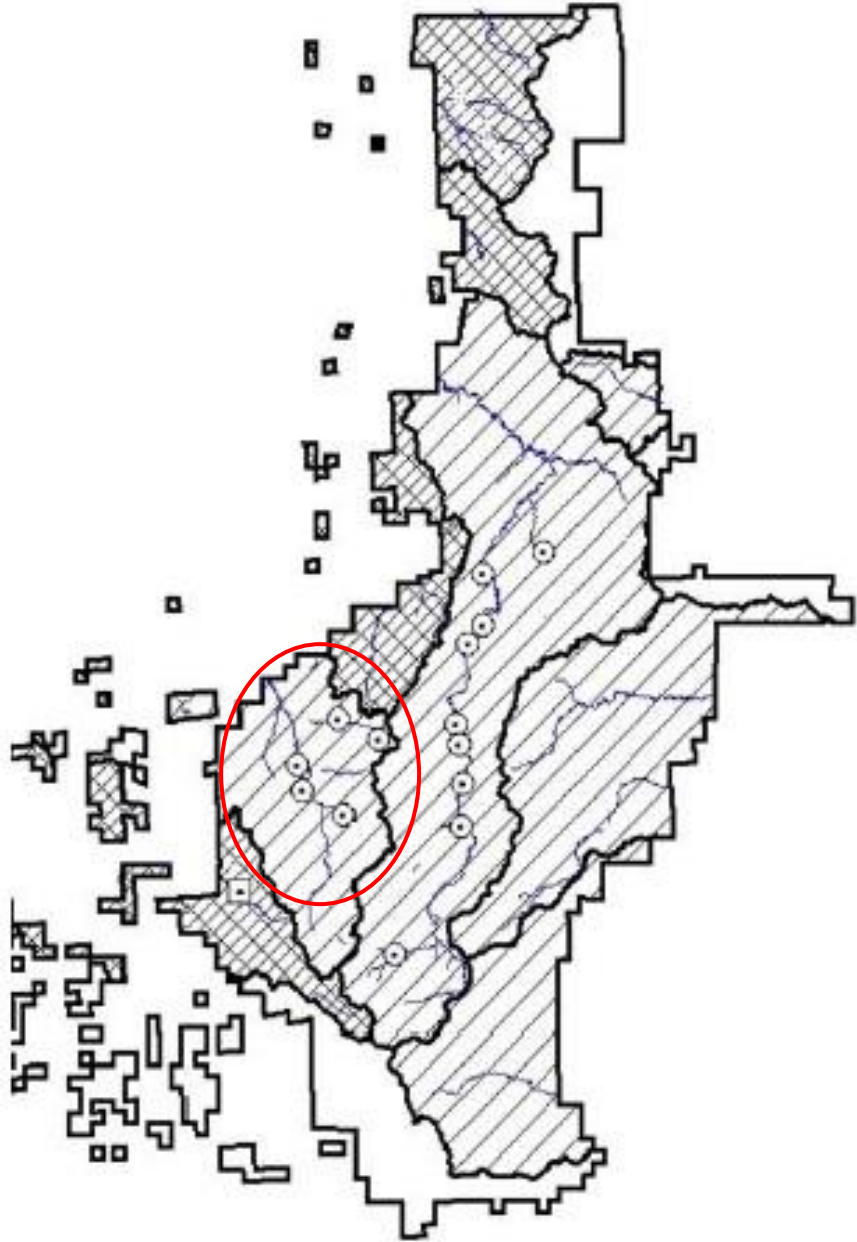
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South Dakota



Wyoming



Pheasant Action Plan Public Comments

Bill Barnett

Comments

- Nice Paper
- Not sure on the Ap but why not
- Federal Farm Bill Programs = I have been trying for 10 years working with the NRCS office in Redfield to enroll Spink County crop ground in a continuous CRP program. No success. I don't even know how to explain to you the level of frustration. I am now waiting for a new farm bill so the nracs office may use my most recent consecutive years of row crop history as opposed to the current guidelines looking back at 2012-2017 when we had alfalfa.
- First CRP wanted the erodible ground now wants the quality crop ground. No worries things change. I got it. Come and get it enrolled please.
- I don't Farm I rent and need full assistance with well in advance plans to notify my operator.

Having a hard time believing the action plan paper will drive results when non-operating landowners can't leverage the current conservation programs to implement our government services within reason – programs that WE enact, fund & own!

Private Landowner trying to do the right thing!

Sara Parker

- Please end the unnecessary and inhumane Nest Predator Bounty Program. There is no scientific evidence this bounty program has helped to increase South Dakota's pheasant population. Killing 240,000+ wildlife native to state could have damaging consequences to our ecosystem.

Brad Schutt

Good day,

My name is Brad Schutt from Huron. I am a former habitat specialist who worked with GFP in a Habitat Forever partnership and am now the owner of Dakota Conservation who works closely with GFP on many projects ranging from noxious weed control on GPAs to invasive tree removal projects and wetland restorations. I wish to extend my gratitude for this partnership and for the opportunity to comment on the proposed pheasant action plan.

Please see the attached document entitled, "The effects of trees and shrubs on grassland nesting birds: an annotated bibliography" as supporting documentation for my comments.

Overall, I believe this Ring-Necked Pheasant Action Plan is well composed. The concerns I have may be based on a deeper management level rather than the basic level the action plan is

written even as it refers to the "Management of Pheasants in South Dakota document". In both the action plan and management guide there is much emphasis placed on woody cover as thermal cover. The management guide places the priority on the retention of emergent wetland vegetation as of the "utmost importance". Wetland restoration/creation is not discussed throughout section 2 of the action plan. Why? Can we not make wetland restoration/creation a priority on state owned GPAs? Does woody cover creation really have any base for inclusion in this action plan? I believe it can have a place but not based on thermal winter cover. As stated in the document attached, pheasants only rely on "tree cover at the end of a severe winter (a 1 in 10 year event)". It even provides evidence that nest success and food plot use are decreased near shelterbelts. There is language in both the management and action plan that alludes to proper planning and location but is that enough? I understand the department has taken a "net zero tree loss" stance. How can this be when trees are generally demonstrated to have a negative impact on nest success and survival of many species of game and non-game ground nesting birds?

Take for instance one of the newer GPAs, Bob Roe GPA, there are various shelterbelts out there that do not meet the 8-16 row recommendation. Will those be removed in an effort to defragment the habitat and be replanted near some of the other thinner/older shelterbelts on the property? The cedars are starting their march across the grasslands. I removed many of those volunteers 6 years ago and they are back in full force. The arrangement of the shelterbelts fragment the grasslands and makes any sort of fire management for cedar control near impossible. What about investigating the drainage ditch in the SW corner? Could it be partially plugged so as not to disturb the neighbors and yet be more beneficial to nesting and brood rearing? Can that same question be asked on GPAs throughout the state? This is more of a hunter friendly GPA. Many birds are raised in the surrounding hay and pasture ground and come to the GPA by default after the crops and grass have been removed in the surrounding area. Great for hunting, could be better for brood rearing.

I was once asked by a habitat manager in NW Kansas why they didn't have the pheasant population that we had in South Dakota? They have a very similar approach to management with large grassland tracts for nesting and shelterbelts for thermal cover. The one glaring difference is their lack of wetlands. I believe this is the key to pheasant success in the prairie pothole region and yet in the action plan we have the "lofty" goal of 8 wetland restorations/creations meanwhile we want to increase the woody habitat cooperators up to 65. Why is there so much money spent on tree establishment and food plots and so little spent on nesting and brood rearing? Wouldn't it be better to lose a percentage of 10 million birds than a percentage of 5 million birds? Wetlands have the ability to provide thermal cover and necessary insect population needed for brood rearing. Both of those were lacking for my Kansas counterpart.

As I stated earlier, woody plantings can have a place in the habitat mosaic. In my opinion it's the species composition of the woody cover that is most pertinent. Flowering and fruit bearing shrubs are beneficial while cedar trees (used for thermal cover) create more issues than solutions. On one hand departments like GFP and NRCS/FSA are paying cooperators to plant

cedars then on the other they are paying me to stop the woody encroachment by either fire or mechanical removal. Wouldn't it be easier to have a "no cedar planted" policy? Replace the cedars in plantings with other less prolific species of conifer? Look at some of the worst examples of tree removal projects. The worst one I have been involved with has been directly adjacent to a GPA where the seed source for the neighbors cedar infestation can only be attributed to a state owned GPA. I'm pretty surprised the department hasn't been sued for something like that. Why should the neighbor who raises cows share the expense for mitigating an issue created by the state? These aren't seeds that blow in the wind, they are spread primarily by birds. Not something you can blame another neighbor for (such as thistles). Furthermore, the only likely reason the eastern red cedar is not considered a statewide listed noxious weed is due to its native status. At least the canadian thistle provides a much needed pollinator presence on our largely brome grass dominated grasslands. These discussions are often led by politics and not science. I would be willing to bet I can create a better more wildlife friendly habitat with generic roundup than can be created with a tree planting with considerably less cost associated. The problem is public perception. People don't like weeds. The reality is weeds grow pheasant populations! That's why early successional stages of grass plantings are so beneficial to wildlife.

The GFP resource biologists and private lands biologists walk a narrow edge balancing science with public perception. The public doesn't only hunt pheasants. They also hunt deer. This however, is the "Ring-Necked Pheasant Action Plan" not a big game plan. If you want pheasants, create wetlands and if you want deer, plant trees (people don't flock here to shoot a deer). If you want more input from me I would be happy to come discuss any of this testimony more in depth or give further examples of anecdotal evidence acquired while working on GPAs. Give me a call at [CENSORED].

Thanks for your time!

Jerry LeClair

I am writing these comments on the RINGNECK MPLAN. I would suggest that all state highways only have one strip mowed closest to the highway until October first. This would accomplish three objectives: 1) provide nesting habitat and cover for pheasants 2) provide grasses for carbon removal from the atmosphere. 3) save the state manpower hours, equipment usage, and fuel. I also would prevent any mowing of waterfowl and game protection areas. This may not fit well with farmers but they should not plan on using public lands and right of ways for a source of hay. I grew up on a farm up until the 1970's and fence lines and shelterbelts served as pheasant nesting and wintering sites. In eastern SD, many of the shelter belts and fence lines are now gone, there is no pigeon grass in the corn rows. Everything is being killed by roundup including early cancer in humans.

Brad Vail

Your draft plan presents several laudable goals for the next few years. My opinion is that the pheasant management goals should be broken down to what is good for the bird and secondarily, what is good for the hunting. I will leave the habitat plans to the professionals. Instead, I would like to speak as a very avid resident pheasant hunter.

The public land is getting entirely too much pressure. SDGFP laments the loss of resident hunter numbers. Why would many residents remain active when they work all week only to arrive at a public access on the weekend finding tire ruts and piles of feathers. The state has sought the entirety of the country's wild bird hunters and tried to shoehorn them into a relatively small portion of the state. This has resulted in too much pressure on the available ground.

Without question the pheasant is the marquis species in SD. Other states charge much higher fees to pursue their marquis species. SD could charge a MUCH higher fee for non-residents and make the same or more money while reducing the pressure on public lands. SD could also implement unlimited private land licenses while reducing the available non-resident public land licenses. Something has to be done to decrease the amount of pressure on public lands. Non-residents are running residents off their own state's resources.

Mark Fiegen

I suggest that the GF&P include a study of the occurrence of Bird Flu in wild pheasant populations.

I suggest that the GF&P include some means of monitoring Bird Flu in commercial pheasant raising operations.

Dana Andersen

There is no scientific evidence this bounty program has helped to increase South Dakota's pheasant population. Killing 240,000+ wildlife native to state could have damaging consequences to our ecosystem. And as mentioned above, trapping is inhumane & poorly regulated.

Louise McGannon

Please stop the totally unnecessary and cruel Nest Predator Program. There is no evidence this has any affect on the pheasant population. Just a total waste of MY tax dollars and very cruel. The animals being killed are necessary to our environment. Opossums killed ticks by the thousands. I witnessed a man cutoff the tail of a raccoon that had been run over. You cannot monitor this program by those committing fraud and the cruelty that the animals suffer.

Tom Urban

One thing you may consider is to change the licensing terms for non-residents over 65. I have the time to make multiple trips to SD each year to hunt Pheasant. I often find myself using 6 or 7 days of a 10 day license then having to buy another 10 days for the next trip and the next and so on.

I would happily pay a premium for a seasonal NR Senior license.

Veronica Fee

I am writing to express my concern regarding the inclusion of opossums in South Dakota's nest-predator bounty program that is planned to be conducted until 2026. Additionally, I would like to share some thoughts on the pheasant action plan.

Opossums are the only marsupials that are native to North America. They have a relatively short lifespan of 2-4 years due to their vulnerability to predators. They are slow-moving and are often hit by cars. They are generally docile and prefer to escape or play "possum" to avoid confrontation.

The below text is from an article by the Opossum Society of the US.

<https://opossumsocietyus.org/general-opossum-information/>

Whether rural, residential or in the wilderness, opossums are a benefit to any area they inhabit. Their diet includes all types of bugs and insects including cockroaches, crickets and beetles. They love snails. They also eat mice and rats. The nocturnal opossum is attracted to our neighborhoods by the availability of water, pet food left out at night and overripe, rotting fruit that has fallen from trees. The opossum in turn helps keep our neighborhoods clean and free of unwanted, harmful garden pests and rodents, which may carry diseases.

Pheasants eat a varied diet that includes insects, seeds, grains, berries, and green plant matter. Although there are other factors affecting the pheasant population, the opossum does not pose a threat to their food sources, except for insects. However, the destruction of habitat such as groves/ground cover and conversion to cropland could be contributing to the decline in pheasant numbers. Lack of quality winter cover (wetlands, shelterbelts) near an adequate food source would contribute. I have observed this happening more frequently year after year while living in Eastern South Dakota.

Thank you for your time!

Larry Fredrickson

Dear Sir: I should be getting a consulting fee from you for this information. I have more experience and knowledge on SD pheasants than anyone alive here today. I guess this will be a freebee. Forget everything you know so far and just do what I say now and you will be back to a 11 million pre-hunt population like in 2007 instead of less than one million like today.

I feel Christy Noem has set back Pheasant Management in South Dakota to the dark ages. Since I believe she runs a pheasant hunting area for money, this is a direct conflict of interest for management of wild birds. I have testified at a commission meet on some of this, so they heard much of it before. The only practical, possible solution is providing adequate HABITAT. Four things to do:

1. Use the pheasant tail program money for habitat. We have data from our pheasant/predator research in SD to prove this is a waste of ¼ million dollars per year.
2. Reinstate the statewide pheasant annual brood survey. How can you evaluate use of the Habitat Stamp money without a survey?
3. Provide CRP Or Soil Bank undisturbed nesting cover with a goal of 1.5 million acres statewide. PHEASANT ARE BIRDS OF LARGE BLOCKS OF COVER and this insures predators cannot find all the nests or kill too many birds. Even if you cannot reach this goal you should be working towards it. You could do smaller demonstration areas to study and charge a fee to quota hunt them.
4. Resume a pheasant research program. For example we need to know such things as does Round-up and other cocktail chemical applications affect pheasants. Does release of game farm birds effect pheasants negatively? We need to know many other things also. Why do agriculture groups continually research crops. If we were really interested in pheasants, we would do this also.

Mark Schaefer

I wish the state would use the habitat money to improve habitat on public lands. There are many public areas with poor CRP grass or over taken by brome grass which is pretty much worthless cover. Bring back the brood survey. As a public land hunter it was very beneficial for me. It would be nice to know where the habitat money is being spent? I travel the state and hunt many public areas. I've seen no evidence that anything is being done to improve habitat.

Grant Bosier

I just saw the news about soliciting public comment or opinion about a pheasant hunting action plan. I know the deadline was April 1st but I wanted to send my opinion anyway. I am a non-resident that has hunted almost every year since 2013. In that time I fell in love with

pheasant hunting and have a special place in my heart for the state of South Dakota and upland hunting. In that time I have observed the following:

1. Good land management is key! I have briefly read the management report and agree that habitat, weather, and food source plays a major role in the success of the pheasant populations from year to year. You can't control the weather, but the state can continue to do better each year in developing and maintaining public land access and habitat. I don't mind paying an additional fee that goes to purchasing and improving habitat
2. As a non-resident hunter I looked forward to the Annual Brood Survey each August. I follow news and other info on a pheasant hunting forum, and it was always much anticipated. I believe that the state stopped doing the survey in an attempt to boost the number of hunters after a few lean years and dismal reports, but I think it had the opposite effect. I think most people are wanting transparency even if it's not the news they were hoping for.
3. Most of all, keep it simple. Don't overthink it! Hunters don't require a bunch of frills and fluff. Tradition, well managed accessible public land, and good bird numbers made SD the number pheasant destination.

Jordan West

Please stop allowing ranchers to have cattle feeding and killing off all the pheasant cover on public owned hunting ground. Kinda stupid when we can't even hunt it but we pay for it.

Gary Rowley

Owner of land in Day County

Beneficiary and manage pheasant habitats in Sanborn , Davison and Hanson counties.

Much public ground in Day county. No visual evidence of any pheasant management. Not letting no residents hunt that early opener is all I see. If that is the big strategy then extend the period of no hunting for nonresidents until December 15th. If there are so many birds there at that time then many some should be harvested.

Across from my property the Public land has no pheasants on it. Because there is no management. Yet we sell licenses to nonresident to come and walk ground where there is no birds. So they shoot across the fences on private property. Where you state they can illegally trespass to retrieve.

I ask you. Where is management? Let me guess. Some 1 acre food plot on some random public spot?

I am 70 years old and all in favor of nonresidents coming and spending money in South Dakota. But the real revenue will come when there is something managed on public lands. I have been a farmer for many years. I see what baby birds need all the way to breeding nesting and winter habitat. I will help and volunteer my time to get the wild birds flourishing again. From predators control to areas where there is organic farming. Use me. I have a great relationship with landowners. You do not.

Gary Rowley: [CENSORED]

Call me if you really want help. Otherwise shame on you.

Matt Onoforio

As a non-resident pheasant hunter I appreciate and applaud the efforts to protect and improve hunting opportunities in South Dakota. My home state, Kansas, has experienced the same boom and bust cycles described in the plan, but does not seem to have a strategy like that described in the Action Plan.

I have two specific suggestions:

- I believe strategy 1.1 would prove to be counter-productive. Collating harvest estimates and public land availability into a single data source would focus hunting pressure. I believe the increased pressure on these areas would make it difficult to maintain satisfactory hunting success.
- It's well known that commercial pheasant hunting operations in South Dakota release large numbers of pheasants, even those that advertise wild birds. Recent research on mallards shows significant "pollution" of wild mallard genetics via survival of released birds that subsequently mate with wild birds. For more information please see the work of Phil Lavretsky of University of Texas-El Paso or listen to The Meateater Podcast episode 490. I believe similar work needs to be done with pheasants to determine if the survival and successful breeding of released birds is polluting the genetics of wild pheasants. While the survival of released birds is low, it is NOT zero.

Otherwise, I applaud the goals defined in the document for improvement of existing habitat and establishment of new habitat. I wish my home state had the array of GPAs and WPAs of South Dakota.

Anthony Hauk

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the pheasant plan.

Re. Objective 4, please reinstitute the Pheasant Brood Survey. The public deserves information, good and/or bad. It flies in the face of sound wildlife management to have had this survey and resulting data shuttered in favor of "marketing." Use science & data to influence and improve your marketing. Otherwise, you're just blowing hot air around, which the planet already has enough of.

Rob Eddy

Please bring back the road survey!

Mark Thompson

I briefly reviewed the action plan indicated below and wanted to provide my thoughts accordingly.

1. I was impressed to see the scientific reference targeted to further move forward in the action plan.
2. It was encouraging to see the reference to working with private land owners in building pheasant habitat.
3. I think I understand the minimum number of acres priority from a work load standpoint, however, perhaps a simplified process would open more available acres based upon eliminating the minimum number of acres.

Overall, it looks like a great step forward.

Pat Pasek

Utilize the current fish hatchery locations and personnel to raise pheasants. Release those chicks and/or young adult pheasants on public grounds to supplement the natural pheasant populations. The state would have minimal costs by using existing locations and could utilize prison population from Pheasant Industries/Gov House building unit to build the pens. This would allow better control in areas hit hard by weather.

David Larson

We need to change the last day of pheasant season to be on January 1. Also the daily limit should stay at 3 roosters.

Gene Opbroek

There is a reason that resident hunting numbers are down. Until you put a stop to Preserve Hunters hunting on CRP and other public lands you are doing a huge injustice to the resident hunter who struggles to find a place to hunt. This is happening all over the State. I hunt all over the State to try and find a public hunting place that is not "shot out" or simply does not have

any birds. In almost 70-80 percent of the time, I will speak to Preserve hunters who have been told by their Guides to go hunt an area that is Public Hunting.

In one instance a few years ago a gentleman and his 14-year-old son and I were going to hunt a small (20-30 acre) piece on the opening day near Harrison SD. About 5 minutes before legal shooting time thirty-four hunters from a neighboring preserve, who owned the cornfields surrounding the Public Hunting area engulfed the area. Their guide stood in the parking area with no gun and did not hunt. He laughed and said, " Got to move them to my cornfields for my clients " I told him it was illegal for him to guide on public land. He commented back " I'm not guiding, just watching". I was not happy, the other gentleman was not happy, and his young son was not only disappointed, but I am sure had a very sour taste in his mouth from the experience. I called it into the Game Warden, but nothing ever happened to Preserve owner. I am not unhappy at all with the Game Warden, those guys are stretched way too thin anyway. I am unhappy about all the catering to non-residents and Preserve owners. South Dakota needs more land for residents to hunt, we live here, we put up with the non-residents throwing trash on our public hunting areas, drinking while they are hunting and a lot of other illegal activities.

For once can we make this about the SD Hunters who support the habitat, the laws, the Game Wardens and the GF&P and not about spending more money on land for the non-residents and preserve owners, please!

Thanks for all you do for South Dakota, it is appreciated, but I have not hunted for about 3 years due to the above. I am retired and my plan was to do a lot of hunting, but I am not going to walk all day and not see any pheasants.

Thank you for your time.

Darrel Reinke

I would strongly recommend that you utilize the very in depth plan put together a few years ago by some very good experts. Let's don't reinvent the wheel. Lean on and implement their recommendations. Habitat is everything. Tiling and drainage is eliminating huge amounts of pheasant habitat. Thank you for taking my comments

Bernard Tysdal

Fish need a safe place to lay there eggs and have them hatch, pheasants are the same they need cover to survive , pheasants will end up just like the grouse we had east river they'll be gone all for a bushel of corn. If people don't think pheasants need cover just sit back and do nothing and see where wild life is in ten yrs.

John McDermott

Dear GFP,

I am submitting this comment on behalf of the silent majority - the 73,887 non-resident pheasant hunters (in 2022) who make up 58% of the pheasant hunters in the state and yet whose opinions are overlooked and whose input is not sought in recent pheasant program policymaking.

I am a non-resident pheasant hunter who has hunted in South Dakota for 34 of the last 40 seasons. Although I am a non-resident, my parents are from South Dakota, I still have family there, and I consider the state a second home. I also receive all of the GFP email communications and follow pheasant developments in the state closely.

I continue to be amazed and disgusted that GFP no longer conducts the summer brood count survey. I used to look forward to that every summer and used it to help plan my trips to the state in the fall. I enjoyed watching the annual variation in numbers in the different regions, and it has helped me develop a sense of where the highest numbers of birds are in the state. In this respect, the survey served a helpful public information purpose.

I hunt a lot in Roberts County, where my mother is from, and learned over the years that the northeast corner of South Dakota has a higher variation in pheasant numbers than other parts due to the more severe winter weather. Without guidance from the summer brood count, I am flying blind on where to go in the state.

Last November, for example, I hunted in Roberts County and found hardly any pheasants anywhere within the county. The previous winter, apparently, had nearly wiped them out. I made a game-day decision to head to Pierre instead but felt misled by the lack of accurate data from the state. Far from promoting greater hunter satisfaction, the information blackout actually leads to more unhappy hunters, which is exactly the opposite of the intended outcome.

I find it incredibly cynical that the committee that decided to kill the brood count survey thinks that hunters are so stupid that they won't come if the pheasants numbers are down. It was never a question of coming or not coming for me - it was always a question of where to go once I was out there. It is far better to be honest than to seek to deceive, which the current policy does.

Placing responsibility for hunter communication with the Department of Tourism is also insulting. I don't need happy-talk emails trying to lure me to the state. I would prefer professional communications from professional wildlife managers with a realistic outlook on the status of the game population. What I've been receiving since the brood count survey was discontinued is nothing but embarrassing (for South Dakota) propaganda that cannot be trusted, with vague references to "abundant birds" even in down years like last year.

I don't understand how GFP can manage the pheasant population without good data on nesting success rates. In a professionally managed state, wouldn't it be helpful to understand data on the reproductive success of a key game population? I just can't believe that this data blackout can be helpful in sustaining an abundant pheasant population, which further erodes

confidence that South Dakota knows what it's doing in game management. I do distinguish between the good work that GFP does and the political decisions that are foisted upon it, but at the end of the day, GFP gets tarnished all the same.

For hardcore bird hunters, the data blackout has made South Dakota a joke because its official, grifting communications are not credible. Compared to all of the surrounding states that provide accurate forecasts, South Dakota is an outlier, in a bad way. It appears that the state has something to hide, and it calls into question the claim to be the pheasant capital of the world. Can it still claim that title? I don't know because there is no data on current conditions each fall. And I don't care about the previous season's statistics that were recommended as an underused resource to make up for the lack of current-year data; the weather has a way of making last year's numbers irrelevant.

Finally, this lack of data makes the state unfriendly to out-of-state hunters for the reasons I've mentioned above. We're not a bunch of sheep to be led to slaughter for the benefit of the state's businessmen. Every time I see the bird forecasts in the pheasant hunting and bird dog magazines in August and September, and the discussion from South Dakota refers to vague niceties without any real information, I become enraged, at a state I consider my second home. If you want to drive non-resident pheasant hunters away, you're doing a helluva job.

In summary, I have these comments:

- I support the plan.
- I especially support item 4.2 that calls for the restoration of an accurate, science-based fall hunting forecast.
- I believe that the forecast should be developed sooner than 2028 and should be implemented as soon as possible; how about develop in 2024 and launch in 2025?
- I support removing pheasant hunter communications from the Department of Tourism and returning them to professional game managers.
- I recommend that the state of South Dakota apologize to non-resident pheasant hunters for the cynicism and lack of transparency caused by the data blackout.

I still plan to hunt in South Dakota, but the lack of respect for non-resident hunters - from the several weekends of resident-only hunting (my state doesn't do that), to the high 10-day license cost (my state doesn't do that), to the blackout on information to lure hunters to the state under misleading circumstances (my state doesn't do that), to the insulting, carnival barker communications from the Department of Tourism (my state doesn't do that) - leaves a bitter taste in my mouth that says South Dakota is all about the money and doesn't give a damn about acting decently to people who may not be residents but who still have their own traditions and ties to the state.

Shame on you, South Dakota, for giving up your integrity to chase non-resident dollars under misleading circumstances. Your reputation for honesty is in the trash can. You can and should do better.

Robert Friedrichsen

I would like to add comments to the draft Ring-necked Pheasant Action plan.

Please remove opossum and red fox from the statewide listing of the nest predator bounty program. These 2 species can be listed in counties where the population is a problem, however in other parts of the state, we need these 2 species for a balance in nature.

On habitat management on GPA's; please stop the cattle grazing. It leaves little cover remaining for habitat of any kind for any species.

GPA establishment of dogwood woody habitat on easterly sides of juniper & cedar structures helps pheasants to warm in the winter sun & provides protection for the hens from hawks.

Nancy Hilding - Prairie Hills Audobon Society

Dear SDGFP staff,

This letter will have short comments on Pheasant Action Plan,

Comment period is too short.

The public notice to comment on three Action Plans (deer, bobcat and pheasants) was released on March 27th, 2024 with a deadline of April 19th, 2024. The link to the public notice is below: <https://gfp.sd.gov/news/detail/1599/>

This provides 23 days to read and comment on the documents. The Action Plans are shorter and are the documents that you link to in the public notice but they are tiered to longer management plans that can be found in the March Commission Book (This location is not explained in the public notice). 23 days is not enough time for public comments.

Nest Predator Bounty Program

On page 86 of the March Commission Book it says:

“Additionally, on April 1, 2019, GFP launched the nest predator bounty program. The primary goals of this program were to increase trapping education and awareness, getting youth and families outside, and enhancing duck and pheasant nest success. Participation is open from March 1 to July 1 for resident youth under 18 and April 1 to July 1 for all South Dakota residents, or until the maximum annual payout of \$500,000 is reached. Eligible species to be taken include raccoon, striped skunk, badger, opossum, and red fox. To date, over 240,000 nest predators

have been removed and recorded during this program.”

We find this summary of the nest predator bounty program (NPBP) to be inadequate. The Action Plan should disclose the total amount of money spent in the past 5 years and how it was spent on various aspects of the NPBP such as bounties, staff salaries, transportation and trap or other giveaways/awards. It should disclose the total number of each species taken.

We object to the NPBP, believing it to be ineffective at protecting nest success, as it is applied over too broad an area – if meso-carnivore control works at all to protect nesting success, it needs to be in a smaller, more focused area. The Action Plan or the Management Plan should review whatever scientific evidence SDGFP relies on to justify killing these 5 species for alleged impact to nesting success and should disclose controversy over whether it even works and what conditions/actions make it more likely to work.

SDGFP keeps saying that hunting, fishing and trapping are very popular recreational pastimes in SD. If trapping is a very popular recreational activity, why do we need to spend 5 years paying people about a half million to trap? Is this the best use of GFP assets? Paying them makes it primarily a commercial hunting activity – not recreation.

Greater Prairie Chicken conflicts

The action plan should disclose conflicts between the greater prairie chicken and the pheasant, which is an introduced species. The male pheasants drive off male greater prairie chickens and the female pheasants lay

their eggs in greater prairie chicken nests. Pheasant eggs hatch sooner and prairie chickens abandon their own eggs and raise pheasants instead. In the greater USA, greater prairie chickens are at risk – losing about half their population every 10 years.

SD GFP should have a plan to harvest more pheasants and drive the pheasant populations way down, in the areas where pheasants and greater prairie chicken’s habitats overlap. This is in part about helping nesting success for the prairie chickens. Via the NPBP, you are killing predators for nesting success, why not pheasants to increase nesting success of greater prairie chickens?

More Comments later.

I hope to send more comments later.

Public Comment for Deer Management Plan

Received from March 26, 2024-April 26, 2024

From: lew culberson
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 6:15 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT]

The mule deer population is in decline in the blackhills, and other parts of the state, due to habitat degradation. Over population of whitetail deer pushing the mule deer out of historic ranges! Mule deer need a two year moratorium, and increased whitetail deer tags state wide to help balance the herds. Making Your South Dakota residents wait 5 years to hunt a deer in the Black Hills, is Not working!! More predator management is an absolute must! I own and operate Western Slope Guide Service LLC located in the blackhills. My name is Lew Culberson. Feel free to contact me to discuss the advantages and disadvantages advantages to making Your residents wait 4-5 years to drW a tag..? I ride these roads everyday! My concession granted to me by the federal government is over populated with whitetail deer. Also i would like to discuss the reasons behind making my elderly neighbor wait 8 years to draw a deer tag in the hills?????

Thank you!
I'll be waiting to hear from you.

From: sara parker
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 8:48 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Bobcat, Deer & Pheasant Action Plans

I'm writing about the three wildlife draft management plans up for review:

Deer Action Plan

- The use of dogs to other species should be looked at as a detriment to prey species, such as deer. The scent of dogs will deter animals from a given area and those impacts should be studied.

Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan

- Please end the unnecessary and inhumane Nest Predator Bounty Program. There is no scientific evidence this bounty program has helped to increase South Dakota's pheasant

population. Killing 240,000+ wildlife native to state could have damaging consequences to our ecosystem.

Bobcat Action Plan

- Regarding this Guiding Principle: “Future of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands, and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public’s right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues.” There is nothing in this draft plan that includes non-hunting public amendments, such as designating area free from hunting and trapping. Biologists from objective organizations, outside of the GFP, should give input on management practices.
- Regarding this Guiding Principle: “Recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of bobcats and must be encouraged and preserved.” I ask that you remove “must” from this statement and add “Humane treatment of animals in conversation must be primary.” as a Guiding Principle.

Finally, efforts should be made to minimize the pain and suffering to hunted/trapped animals. Trapping regulations are currently very weak in our state. I urge you to shorten trap check times and require identification on traps (in order to enforce regulations).

Sara Parker
Sioux Falls, SD

From: Kevin Hansen
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 9:04 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Hello.

After having read through the proposed Deer Action Plan I would like to thank you for your work in managing our SD deer herd.

In addition I would like to suggest implementing mandatory harvest reporting, something along the lines of what MN and AK have. I have hunted both states on numerous occasions and am always impressed with the efficiency of their harvest reporting system.

Thank you.

Kevin Hansen
Zell, SD

From: Terry Holland

Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:17 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

I agree that landowner tags are warranted, I do not agree that 160 acres should be the threshold. I own 50 acres of land and have designated it all to habitat. I have planted over 8,000 trees and put the rest into grass spending thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours on new tree plantings and food plots per year. Why is there no 'special exceptions' to this rule when someone dedicates a lot of time and money to the cause? Would/could this ever be considered? I appreciate your feedback.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Dave Bosmoe
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 6:16 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Hello,

Although I support the majority of things in the draft there are a couple of key things that I would like to touch on.

I would like to say that until there is a registration requirement for harvested whitetails It will be very difficult to ever have a accurate harvest count. I have been both a resident of South Dakota and now and currently a non-resident. I know that there are plenty of people that are residents in South Dakota that hunt their own land that harvest more than one animal and in most cases don't have tags to harvest more than one. Now, although registration doesn't stop people from breaking the law It is another prevention measure that has been proven to work. The voluntary harvest reports are just that, voluntary. People use those as a way of trying to convince the game and fish that the populations are better than they are to increase the number of tags that are released. And many people simply ignore filling them out. I believe that the South Dakota game and fish would benefit from looking at other states where they have online and phone in registration. people in those states can do that while still a field and are actually required to do so. It is not an inconvenience and is very easy to do. I think this would be a great tool to assist the game and fish in more accurately recording harvest numbers year to year.

I do like the new map with the multiple zones on the way that the borders are drawn up. I do believe that the East River sometimes is overlooked when it comes to regulations being made in the state of South Dakota and that new ordinances that come out and changes to licensing strategies are more geared towards West River numbers. Call though not related to this study the new non-resident needing to put in for a draw for archery I feel was more based on the dwindling numbers of animals in the Black hills and other parts of the West River. I've been hunting East River myself again as both a resident and a non-resident and populations hold

steady in those areas they do fluctuate due to illness and severe weathers occasionally. But overall the hardest is pretty But overall the numbers have stayed pretty consistent, and more importantly the number of hunters East River as far as archery in the Northeast corner where I hunt have not increased. So in that area I do not believe there was any necessity to require a drawing for non-residents to hunt public land. Again I've been hunting for more than 30 years as an archery hunter in South Dakota and have never seen an increase in the number of non-resident or resident archery hunters in that area. And I believe harvest numbers would back that up. Thank you for all the work that all the employees of the game and fish and the volunteers do to make the decisions on habitat and wildlife in South Dakota. It is an outdoorsman's Paradise and I hope it continues that way for generations to come.

Regards,
Dave Bosmoe

From: tyler donahue
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:59 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

In reading the deer action plan I believe the commission is on the right track I especially like the proposed changes to the license allocation system and including archery into a two buck tag limit. Overall I believe South Dakota game and fish does a good job managing the deer herds considering challenges with winters, relatively limited public lands, eh, and drought conditions that can all affect the deer herds. I do think we should look to eliminate most if not all antler less tags to help populations rebound.

An additional consideration with hunting technology advancing as it is we should consider changes to the rifle season that falls in the peak of the rut most western states shy away from rifle hunts in the heart of the rut as much as we all love hunting deer in the rut. I would love to see a split rifle season that is two 9 day seasons rather than one long season with one being in the rut and the other being in early to mid October this would allow those that want a rut tag to pursue a higher point option for a more quality hunt while an early season would allow more tags and a lower buck harvest at a lower point level. All big game has a hard enough time with natural conditions to deal with and as technology changes we need to think about managing game differently to continue the quality hunting South Dakota is known for.

Tyler.

From: Scott McKane

Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 6:21 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

The Action Plan states that the goal is to substantially increase the deer population in the Black Hills. If that is the case I don't understand why you continue to issue "any deer" permits during the bow & rifle season. The taking of approximately 400 does per year will slow the population growth. I can understand why you would allow it during the muzzleloader season in December since some bucks could shed their antlers making it difficult to determine sex

Thank You

Scott McKane
Sent from my iPad

From: Will Brown
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 4:48 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to oppose the statements of "limiting the total number of deer licenses a hunter can obtain to increase the chance an individual hunter can obtain their preferred license", "a process that would increase resident hunters' chances of getting at least one buck deer license per year", and "modify and adopt future hunting season structure as needed to maximize hunting opportunity for unique hunters and minimize regulation complexity" as stated in the "South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan 2024-2028". Our issue lies in the number of deer on the landscape and public access to herds rather than limiting access to tags as outlined in the plan.

I believe the statements quoted in the first paragraph inherently go against the verbiage of Objective 2 - "Manage hunting opportunity fairly and equitably among various user groups and interests within South Dakota" on page 10. The draw system that is currently in place does not favor one group over another, excluding landowner privilege. However, the landowners should be given preferential access to the resource due to most of the lands within our state being private land. The draw is currently equitable. No one person or group is given priority over another except for by years of preference points. The draw odds, public hunting atlas, and application process for every unit are available to the public. I agree that some units take time to draw, but longer draw times almost always correlate to

mule deer tags in areas with high public land (35L01, 02C01, 21A01, 27L01, 45D01, BH101 as examples), high demand hunts such as National Refuge and Custer State Park, or East River units containing population centers. Accepting this reality is part of the beauty of an opportunity state. South Dakota does not limit access to anyone. A lesser desired unit is available to all, but the public is given the option to apply for high priority units and risk not hunting for a couple seasons. In the West River Unit according to the 2023 draw statistics, 29 of 38 individual units were a 0-point draw to obtain a buck tag. Understandably, these tags are primarily whitetail tags, but these tags allow hunters to spend time in the field chasing a buck. Access to buck tags is not our issue. Too many tags in one individual's hands are not the issue.

I am sending this comment in as a deer hunter with access to minimal private land across the state. Of the last five deer that I have taken, four have been on public lands. Of those five deer, three were taken in three separate West River units with one coming from private land, one in the Black Hills National Forest, and one in an East River unit. Our issues are the strength of our herds, access to those herds, and declining habitat conditions. The state of South Dakota needs to focus on core issues rather than to focus on minor details such as distribution of tags amongst resident hunters. More hunters will be on the landscape if there are more deer on the landscape. Deer herds are bolstered primarily by doe survival rates. Reducing take will increase the amount of does heading into winter. Deer herds are bolstered by improved habitat. Whether done through increases in water through the addition of water tanks to arid landscapes or increased grass and tree cover to help deer through tough winters, better habitat equals more deer on the landscape. Finally, the amount of public land available to hunters, whether through CREP, WIA, or CHAP lands alongside our national grasslands and forests and BLM ground, increases satisfaction of hunters by dispersing pressure and increasing access to deer herds. If the state can better address the concerns stated above, the statements outlined in the proposal will be alleviated while not creating a new set of problems for everyone already enjoying the current system.

On another note, by limiting access to the number of licenses, the public is being disincentivized from spending time hunting. The current system allows access to two rifle tags across the three regions and access to two bow licenses as well. I believe the proposal to limit total buck tags to two per hunter will be a detriment to the South Dakota resident. I believe that a solution to reduced take, if number of tags per individual is such a concern, is limit of three buck tags per individual per season as defined below:

1. Ability for an individual hunter to apply for two rifle "buck" tags across the three deer regions; however,
 - a. If successful in both "buck" rifle tag draws, an individual hunter is only granted the ability to purchase one statewide "any buck only" archery tag.

- b. If successful in one "buck" rifle tag draw or neither draw, an individual hunter is granted the ability to purchase both an East and West River archery tag or one statewide archery tag.

This would allow for a maximum of two higher success rifle hunts while allowing for the enjoyment of the four-month, low success archery hunt.

To further my point on increased doe survival as a solution, according to the 2022 harvest projections, 9,023 deer were killed by archery hunters with 2,638 being does. Cutting the LM1-13 whitetail antlerless archery tag alone that year would have cut the doe harvest to 1,039. Making all archery tags "any buck only" would have saved 2,638 does. It is common knowledge that one buck can and will breed more than one doe. I think that due to this biological capability, the commission should consider cutting archery doe tags and replacing language on all other tags from "any deer" to "any buck only" for the foreseeable future just as they did for pronghorn. I believe cutting or reducing doe tags is necessary in the muzzleloader season and in multiple rifle units as well. Personally, I would like to see a revision to the apprentice tag and mentored tag as well to change the tag to an "antlerless whitetail only" as whitetail does are capable of breeding in the first year of life where mule deer does will not breed until their second fall. My goal is not to limit youth and novice hunters but to get them included in a way that is beneficial for all parties.

To be fair to my arguments stated above, I believe that the state of South Dakota should consider cuts in buck tags in certain units as well, meaning it may become more difficult, but still possible, to obtain two rifle tags and an archery tag. Maintaining a proper ratio of bucks to does is still an important statistic in herd recruitment. A doe that is not bred does nothing to increase the population or resolve the problem at hand. By backing off take for a couple of years, the herds would benefit greatly. I believe that the state does not need to limit the access to the number of licenses per individual, but that it is time to consider limiting the total number of individual licenses until the landscape holds more deer. As South Dakota hunters, we need to maintain the resource not only for ourselves but for future generations. I believe that by reducing or eliminating doe harvest in most units and reducing buck harvest in some units that we are a few decent weather years from seeing a rebound in herd numbers.

To summarize my argument, I am a proponent of the continued access to the diverse hunting opportunity that is granted through access to 3+ tags a season for every hunter, but I believe that three buck tags per individual is a good cap. I am also a proponent of strong herds, increased habitat, and diverse public land opportunity. I believe that addressing herd and habitat health alongside increasing public land acreage and access will alleviate the problems quoted in the first paragraph. The "unique hunters", as stated under Objective 2 - point A, will not be helped through a restructuring of the system. Instead, this revision will harm the ability of the South Dakota resident hunter to spend more time in the field hunting. The commission should consider lowering or removing doe tags in most units statewide alongside removal of buck tags in some units until herds are at or above

objective. This will hurt hunting opportunity for the near future but will increase tag opportunity for all and get hunters into their desired units faster in the future. I believe this is a better solution than pushing the resident South Dakota hunter away from greater hunting opportunity as currently stated in the 2024 Action Plan revisions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Will Brown, Brandon, SD

From: Jake Paulsen

Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 5:08 PM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>

Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jacob Paulsen. I have lived in South Dakota my whole life and take great pride in the amazing access we have to many hunting opportunities. We are all very fortunate to live in a state where this is a reality; however, this draft action plan threatens this privilege. I struggle to understand how limiting resident hunters to two deer tags per season would provide any more access to drawing a tag for some people. The units that see the most applications for tags will continue to see the most applications. My friends and I routinely hunt every year as much as we can including rifle, archery, and muzzleloader. If there is such difficulty in acquiring buck tags, how is that we are able to do so every year? When we know we will be unable to draw a particular unit, we don't apply there and we find a unit we can draw. It's as simple as that. If we want to hunt a particular unit no matter what, then we save up preference points by hunting first draw second choice units where we are still able to get a buck tag while acquiring a preference point. When a guy can routinely find buck tags in the second or potentially even third or fourth draw, I find it very hard to believe that there are people who struggle to get a buck tag on any given year and if that is the case then it is a matter of either unwillingness to hunt less sought after units or just complete lack of education/knowledge on how the South Dakota draw system works and what their options are for units to hunt. In either case, why would you want to punish the people who do go out of their way to hunt less sought-after units and put in the work combing through draw statistics? The fact of the matter is that South Dakota is an opportunity state for deer and that is how our herds have always been managed. I hunt only public land and I put in miles upon miles throughout the course of the season to earn very solid deer that are at the very least trophies to me. I have invested thousands of dollars in equipment including archery and rifle equipment that I will potentially have to choose between now to hunt in our state. Not to mention that I and so many others who love to

hunt in all corners of our state bring a lot of money into smaller communities during hunting season and with this proposal threatening to clamp down on the opportunities to hunt in-state, I will have no choice but to look towards out-of-state hunts and bring my money there. This is not something I want to do as it is exceedingly expensive to hunt out-of-state but I feel with this proposal, I will be stuck between a rock and a hard place since my own state is saying I can't hunt like I could in the past. On top of all this, how can this draft claim to want to increase hunter opportunities at a time when hunting seems to be a dying sport while simultaneously taking away hunter opportunities? I do agree with this proposal in the sense that mule deer numbers are down and that there needs to be action to improve their population. Why not just cut mule deer doe tags except for youth hunters? There are plenty of opportunities to hunt antlerless whitetails so I can't see any reason that we should be shooting antlerless mule deer. One buck can breed many does so harvesting bucks is not the primary problem when it comes to mule deer. All in all, I sincerely hope the commission looks at this proposal to only allow a max of two tags and see how illogical it is. Essentially, you would be decreasing most hunters' opportunities to appease a small portion of the populace who simply don't or aren't willing to hunt certain units where they can easily draw buck tags. In doing so, you will also be taking money away from small communities, driving resident hunters to having to hunt out-of-state or just outright hunt less, decreasing GFP revenue off hunting tag sales, and disincentivizing hunting in less sought-after units which will result in difficulties managing deer populations utilizing hunting as a management method. This will all happen while having virtually no effect on making difficult-to-draw units any easier to draw or potentially making them even harder to draw and hurting the next generation of young hunters who will not have the same opportunities to hunt as we did making it less likely they will maintain the sport. Taking away hunting opportunities for the majority of the populace in the name of potentially providing a slightly higher chance that someone will draw their first choice buck tag is a very slippery slope and one that seems to cater to trophy hunters, guides, and presumably non-residents. These people will be the ones that benefit from the proposed changes and it is in my opinion as a passionate resident of this state a very bad look. Working within state government, I understand the difficulty in making everyone on both sides of an issue happy but taking away hunting opportunities is not something that should be taken lightly. It is my sincere hope that this proposal is removed and more focus is instead placed on the education of the many options people have to draw a buck tag in places and ways they may not be aware of along with the acquisition of more public hunting land in underutilized units to incentivize increased interest in hunting there. South Dakota is a great state for enjoying the outdoors and we are fortunate to have the hunting opportunities we have so please don't turn your back on those of us who put forth the effort and time to find more opportunities to hunt just to appease those who don't.

Thanks for your time,
Jacob Paulsen
Brookings, SD
Sent from my iPhone

From: Cullen Moyer
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 6:26 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Cut down on non-resident deer licenses, all of them, every single season. There's a reason you can't shoot decent deer on public land in this state and it's because of you guys letting way too many non-residents in here and ruining it for the residents!

From: Nate Soupir
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 6:07 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Many locals would like to see mule deer included in this action plan for the secondary and possibly some tertiary areas as well. It seems like the numbers and quality have severely diminished along the Missouri River breaks over the last 5 years. Including the east side.

Sent from my iPhone

From: tyson allen
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 5:58 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

As a lifelong resident and avid big game hunter in South Dakota. I believe there are changes that need to be made to our deer season/structure. However, I believe this comes on the nonresident side. Limiting non-residents on the amount of tags would be ideal. And if money is a concern, increase the tag price for nonresident and even residents. People might complain for a short amount of time but everyone that hunts, will pay it. Furthermore, limiting residents to just apply for only one or two tags in the state is a giant disservice. The majority of hunters that are residents hunt private land so you'd be affecting those that are hunting private, managed property. When I hunt PRIVATE land for east and west river rifle and archery deer, I shouldn't have to adjust my hunting strategy as there is an abundance of deer on all of those properties. The same goes for many other resident big game hunters in this state. Thanks

Tyson Allen
Sent from my iPhone

From: David Meyer
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 10:19 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Please limit LI Mule Deer tags greatly for both residents and non-resident hunters. We need some serious management to bring neck numbers in western SD.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: Mark Miller
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:47 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

I would like to see a change for the any deer license. To see it only good for white tail buck or doe or mule buck. The mule deer population is low and we need to give them a chance to recover.

Change the mentor license to white tail doe only.

Archery tags should be issued by unit like the prairie rifle tags are. They should also be drawn like the current rifle draw and you are only given 2 choices.

M Miller

From: Dustin Aske
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 7:34 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

How can anyone put a proposal together when none of the people see what is going on in the field. Honestly I think they should hold a landowners meeting in each county to see where the most problems are. Not only that but they also need to get it where only one hunter can only hold one license clear throughout the state you would be able to help the deer population where they are low. In the past five years I have seen the mule deer population go up and back down has fast has it went up because of way to many licenses given out. Nobody in ther right mind can write a proposal plan and expect it to

work unless you talk to the land owners they are the ones that see everything. And most landowners are getting feed up with all the extra licenses that are given out for no reason. We get tired of all the Tom Jim and Harry's out there asking for permission to hunt when there is no deer. We the landowner do feed them and care for them. But also like to try and see the population to come back.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Tyler

Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 6:46 PM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>

Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Significantly decrease the non resident pressure both archery and rifle. The number of mule deer licenses need to be reduced by 75% at least all across the state. Even better stop mule deer hunting across the state. Don't harvest any for 5 years and see if it makes a difference in bringing up the numbers even if it doesn't you are not losing anything. However the GFP commission as well as the governor only see \$\$\$ and could give a !@#\$ less about the wildlife so I highly doubt that any public input will make a difference....it never has!!

Sent from my iPhone

From: Martin Hunt

Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 5:24 PM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>

Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

When evaluating deer populations to determine the number of tags issued, I understand Harvest numbers, Winter kill estimates, Disease kill estimates are all used. It seems Vehicle/ Deer accidents (road kill) should have a larger impact on reducing tags. Traveling the roads in the BH the number deer killed by vehicles is astounding. As South Dakota's populations continues to grow it is only going to get worse. In high Vehicle/ Deer accident areas could fencing be used or animal over/under passes be used to reduce the kill numbers?

Thank You

Martin Hunt

From: Michael Krein

Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 9:57 AM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Deer numbers are entirely too low across the western half of the state. Landowners who do not allow public hunting on their land should not be getting deprivation tags. Nonresident deer tag prices should be raised to a minimum of \$500 for rifle and \$450 for archery. Nonresident tag numbers need to be reduced especially for the black hills and West River deer units.

From: Jim G
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 8:54 AM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: Re: [EXT] deer management plan

On Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 08:50:56 AM CDT, Jim G wrote:

as a landowner in brookings county... some 282 acres... every year we watch as more and more land is turned into ag land production... tilling and irrigated crop land is taking over... i am guessing over 90 percent of the corn stubble is turned over in the fall , that ten years ago remained till spring...

bottom line is we give 50% of the allocated deer licenses to land owners.. and over the winter months nothing remains, no cover, no food.. then we expect the numbers to rebound from what is left over... it doesnt work..

why not require every land owner who applies for the guaranteed landowner tag to set aside a percentage of unharvested grain or corn to remain standing during the winter till april.... if we did this it would lower the damage to the farmers stocks, provide food and cover, and help increase the survival rate of all wildlife... what is so hard about this.. its a no brainer win for all jim gruber

From: Rob Freese
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2024 5:38 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer plan

I just finished reading the 2024-2028 Deer Plan and the proposed changes to the drawings. As a life long resident of this state and a hunter here for over forty years, I am very disappointed in the veiled push to increase deer hunting for out of state hunters. Resident hunters should be the GFP and the commission's priority. Residents not only pay for licenses, habitat stamps, etc., but

also provide the lion's share of revenue for the GFP through our taxes. Limiting residents to a total of two buck tags is a slap in the face for hard working South Dakotans. In addition, including archery tags in this total is not right. The number of archery hunters in this state is a fraction of the total deer hunters and more often than not archery tags either go unfilled or get filled with antlerless deer due to the extreme difficulty of getting close enough to a decent buck to take it. I implore the commission to disregard the proposed changes. I love this state. I love the hunting opportunities that residents have here. Please remember that it is the duty of the GFP and the commission to take care of residents first, not to make money on out of state big game hunter. Thank you for your time. Rob Freese

From: Kevin Kurtenbach
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 2:15 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Draft Deer Action Plan

I read the 2024-2028 deer Action Plan
It was informative and great detail I have hunted deer in SD for past 44 years this plan is the best I have seen Thank you SDGFP for your service and hard work Sent from my iPhone

From: Joshua Hagemann
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 10:21 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Draft Deer Action Plan Comment

I have reviewed the South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan 2024-2028.

While the draft plan is vary vague and lacks any real substance, I do have some input.

Regarding the stakeholder group meetings: It states within the plan that the group met "multiple times" and discussed "many topics" and "issues" related to deer management.

In this case "multiple times" is a bit of a stretch. They met twice. While that technically is "multiple times," more could have been done.

In addition, the public was not informed of these meetings nor were they invited. No one knows what "many topics" and "issues" were discussed. The public has no idea who brought up any of these topics or what their thoughts and motives were.

For citizen involvement and outreach, The plan states that GFP conducted "comprehensive opinion surveys."

Only about 3600 surveys were sent out for 68,742 resident deer applicants from 2022 (5.2%). It's ridiculous that every hunter with a valid email address is sent a harvest survey, but only 3600 surveys were sent to hunters. The survey respondents for the hunter survey equated to about 2% of the total resident deer applicants. Yet 2% of hunters are speaking for all of us (a sample size that doesn't seem statistically significant). I'm not sure how you call it "comprehensive."

On the other hand, 3500 surveys were sent out to a landowner pool of 36,973 listed on the landowners matter mailing list (9.5%). Additionally 700 more surveys were sent out to areas with low response rates, bumping the total to 11.4%.

Why is there such an extreme favoritism to landowner opinions?

I find the questions misleading as well. Respondents for both surveys were asked about increasing a hunter's chances of getting a "preferred" tag or at least one buck tag, while stating that it would decrease another hunter's chances of getting multiple tags. However, the issue of increasing non-resident hunters getting tags was not brought up.

If you decrease a resident's opportunity to draw multiple tags there will definitely be more tags that go to non-residents in the leftover period. I'm certain the survey response would have been much different if the respondents had been informed of that.

It's already proven to be true in the years following the draw restructuring of 2019. From the data I was provided, 2020 and 2021 had an average increase of 268 individual non-resident hunters over the pre-2019 3 year average. 2019 showed a decrease in non-resident hunters from the previous years. However, this can be explained by the change in application deadline. Many non-residents most likely missed the deadline.

This flows right into the management objectives of this plan.

The biggest issue is Objective 2. Managing hunting opportunities "fairly and equitably among various user groups and interests" is not the department's job as a Trustee. It is to manage the trust for it's beneficiaries (South Dakota residents).

The definition of "fair" and "equitable" may vary greatly depending on whom the subject is. For instance, I felt it was fair when everyone could apply for every deer tag. Everyone had the same chance. The current system isn't "fair" to me.

A change that absolutely needs to be made is the wording of 2a.

2a) *Modify and adopt future hunting season structure as needed to maximize hunting opportunity for **unique hunters** and minimize regulation complexity.*

This needs to state "**Unique Resident Hunters.**" That is who you are supposed to be managing these resources for, not for tourism dollars from non-resident hunters.

I look forward to reading all of the public comments that have been submitted for this plan.

Please respond to this email let me know where they will be posted.

Regards,

Joshua Hagemann
Resident Hunter
Beneficiary of the SD Public Wildlife Trust

Mission Hill, SD

From: Dana Andersen
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 2:20 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Help be humane to the animals

In the **Bobcat Action Plan**, the following is stated in the guiding principles:
"Future of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands, and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public's right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues." There is nothing in these proposals that includes non-hunting public amendments, such as designating area free from hunting and trapping. Biologists from objective organizations, outside of the GFP, should give input on management practices.

***Establishing wildlife corridors and other non-lethal methods of dealing with problem wildlife should be included in this plan. We request that these principles be incorporated into the Bobcat Action Plan.**

"Recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of bobcats and must be encouraged and preserved" is also listed as a Guiding Principle in the proposal.

***We object to the to the principles requirement that hunting and trapping MUST be encouraged and preserved. We formally request that "Humane treatment of animals in conservation must be primary" be added as a Guiding Principle.** . Habitat, animal behavior

and maintain ecological balance are crucial elements to a health ecosystem and should be used to correct any imbalance that may cause an uptick in certain animal populations.

Finally, **efforts should be made to minimize the pain and suffering to hunted/trapped animals**. Trapping regulations are currently very weak in South Dakota. **We urge SDGFP to shorten trap check times and require identification on traps** (in order to enforce trapping regulations). Current trap check times are too long - animals caught in traps for several days can be attacked by other animals, starve, dehydrate, or mangle their mouths & limbs in futile efforts to free themselves.

"41:08:02:03. Trap checking required. A trapper shall check all traps and snares in the field belonging to the trapper and remove any caught animal prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the second full calendar day east of the Missouri River, and prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the third full calendar day west of the Missouri River, following a previous check or when the trap was initially set. However, any trap or snare entirely submerged in water that remains set beneath the ice shall be checked and any caught animal removed prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the fifth full calendar day statewide, following a previous check or when the trap was initially set."

Following a previous check or when the trap was initially set. However, any trap or snare entirely submerged in water that remains set beneath the ice shall be checked and any caught animal removed prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the fifth full calendar day statewide, following a previous check or when the trap was initially set."

Regarding the Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan, we urge the GFP to end the cruel and unnecessary Nest Predator Bounty Program. There is no scientific evidence this bounty program has helped to increase South Dakota's pheasant population. Killing 240,000+ wildlife native to state could have damaging consequences to our ecosystem. And as mentioned above, trapping is inhumane & poorly regulated.

Regarding the Deer Action Plan, the use of hounds to hunt other species should be looked at as a detriment to prey species. The scent of dogs will deter animals from a given area and those impacts should be studied.

From: L. McGannon
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:43 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Management Plans

Regards,

Bobcat Action Plan:

There should be wildlife corridors and other non-lethal methods for dealing with problem wildlife and should be included in your plan.

Recreational hunting and trapping:

Wildlife is crucial to maintain the ecological system. All treatment of animals should be humane.

Deer Action Plan:

There should be no hounds allowed in hunting. Not fair to the hunted.

Ring-Neck Pheasant Action Plan:

Please stop the totally unnecessary and cruel Nest Predator Program. There is no evidence this has any affect on the pheasant population. Just a total waste of MY tax dollars and very cruel. The animals being killed are necessary to our environment. Opossums killed ticks by the thousands. I witnessed a man cutoff the tail of a raccoon that had been run over. You cannot monitor this program by those committing fraud and the cruelty that the animals suffer.

Please shorten the trap times to minimize the animal's suffering while they lie in the traps.

Louise McGannon

Sent from my iPhone

From: Paul Lepisto

Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 4:39 PM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>

Subject: [EXT] SD IWLA Comments on Draft Deer Action Plan

Please see the attached comments from the South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America on the Draft Deer Action Plan.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Paul Lepisto

Regional Conservation Coordinator

Izaak Walton League of America



Stay connected to the League!

[Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

From: Terry Holland
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:17 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

I agree that landowner tags are warranted, I do not agree that 160 acres should be the threshold. I own 50 acres of land and have designated it all to habitat. I have planted over 8,000 trees and put the rest into grass spending thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours on new tree plantings and food plots per year. Why is there no 'special exceptions' to this rule when someone dedicates a lot of time and money to the cause? Would/could this ever be considered? I appreciate your feedback.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Rob Eddy
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 8:36 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan

Thank you for the hard work! Here is my 2 cents.

- Access to private land is a HUGE issue. Paid hunting/Outfitters continue to decrease access to residents.
 1. Establish a set number of outfitter allowed in state with a maximum size. Insurance proof and bonded with a license from state to operate.
 2. Eliminate Special Buck licenses all together. This is confusing and allows special treatment for those who take away opportunities for residents.
 3. Increase easements to access current public ground.
 4. Increase NR tags to 10% to compromise.
- Allow 1 Any Deer/Any Whitetail application for BH/WR/ER first draw. Left-overs available after 3rd drawing. Everyone has a chance for a tag.
- CSP/MZL/RFG deer available as a bonus tag.

- Unlimited archery for residents. Limit non-residents to percentage of sold tags the previous year. NR not allowed until Oct 1.
- Eliminate 50% of tags in unit to landowners. If they can hunt the whole unit, they can compete like everyone else. Landowner tags only for their own land!
- Give free doe tags to landowners to control herd population on their own property.
- Non-resident landowners are NONRESIDENT, they can compete on that level or hunt in their own state.
- Deer tag options, draw system, ect, are becoming too complicated. Simplify!

Thank you! I know it's tough to please everyone.

Robert Eddy

On Thursday, April 18, 2024, Lisa Hagemann <lmhagemann83@gmail.com> wrote:

In the Deer Action Plan, page 7 and 8 discusses Citizen involvement and outreach. It states a survey was done to gauge the perceptions of deer population, whether the deer are a detriment or benefit to landowners, and respondents were asked if they would support limiting the total number of deer licenses a hunter can obtain to increase the chance an individual hunter can obtain their preferred license. This survey had a very small margin of support at only 53% of hunters and 46% of landowners. Please provide the statistical analysis on these responses with the r value of statistical significance because with the information being incomplete in the draft form, it leads to assumptions that are either not statistically significant or may not be reflective of what the true data shows. This could in turn show that the draw system may not be as comprehensive and "fair" to help hunters get their preferred licenses.

On Page 10, "Objective 2: Manage hunting opportunity fairly and equitably among various user groups and interests within South Dakota." The management of wild game at the state level is to protect this asset and maintain it for the beneficiaries of the state. The beneficiaries of the state are the residents of the state of South Dakota, why are we adjusting and managing for fair and equitable among various interest groups. This statement will make the legislation and game laws vulnerable to non-resident hunters that would like to be treated fair because this statement opens the door to them. For follow up please research Baldwin v. Fish & Game Comm'n (1978). Also if this statement stays broad without a very specific group identified could allow for management to be shifted to aid in the privatized industry of guided hunting on public land that is to be trusted to the beneficiaries.

Regards,

Lisa Hagemann
Mission Hill, SD
SD Resident Hunter
SD Landowner
SD Beneficiary

From: Nancy Hilding
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2024 11:56 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Cc: N Hilding
Subject: [EXT] Deer Action Plan comments
Nancy to SDGFP
PHAS Deer Action Plan Comments,

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD
Friday, April 19th, 2024

SDGFP
523 E. Capitol Ave.,
Pierre, S.D. 57501
WildInfo@state.sd.us.

Dear SDGFP staff,

This letter will have short comments on Deer Action plan.

The comment period is too short.

The public notice to comment on three Action Plans (deer, bobcat and pheasants) was released on March 27th, 2024 with a deadline of April 19th, 2024. The link to the public notice is below:

<https://gfp.sd.gov/news/detail/1599/>

This provides 23 days to read and comment on the documents. The Action Plans are shorter and are the documents that you link to in the public notice but they are tiered to longer management plans that can be found in the March Commission Book (This location is not explained in the public notice). 23 days is not enough time for public comments.

Killing of predators to maximize human hunting of deer

PHAS objects to hunting of predators to increase number of prey species (deer) available for human hunters to kill. Humans should be respecting the role and place of predators in the environment.

CWD

There is recent research in Wyoming into mountain lions culling deer herds of CWD infected deer. We believe that recent research shows that when mountain lions cull deers sick with CWD, the prions are substantially absorbed inside the lions and not much passed on to exterior environs. You should find that research. I will try to find a citation and send it to you later.

Conflict of deer hunting season with non-hunting recreators.

I lead an environmental group and have heard from lots of people about their fear to recreate in the Black Hills during deer season (they might get shot). The document should explore the intensity or distribution of hunters during deer season on public lands and how that impacts the not-hunting out-door recreators.

Thanks,



South Dakota Division



The Izaak Walton League of America

Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters, and Wildlife

April 15, 2024

Re: SD IWLA Comments on Draft Deer Action Plan

South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

The South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan. The plan will guide deer management for 2024-2028. Many members of the Division, as well as thousands of other South Dakotans, enjoy deer hunting.

This action plan will attempt to provide sustainable numbers of both deer species and their habitat. The plan states deer populations should correspond with human needs, land use and carrying capacity. The plan will be evaluated every four years and updated as needed.

The Division requests your consideration of our comments on the following topics:

Disease Monitoring

The Division is concerned about the diseases impacting deer populations in South Dakota. We're especially troubled by the continuing spread of Chronic Wasting Disease. We consider CWD to be the biggest threat to deer, and deer hunting, in the nation today. We urge GFP to continue to inform hunters on what they must do to stop the spread of this always fatal disease.

Epizootic Hemorrhagic and Blue Tongue cause localized losses of deer in South Dakota. Hot, dry conditions increase midge populations and can result in higher incidents of these diseases. We support removing all leftover tags in the affected units and reducing future license allocations in disease impacted areas. We also support continuing a hunter's ability to return a license before the season if he or she feels that disease has negatively affected the opportunity to harvest a deer.

Working with Landowners

The Division supports cooperative partnerships with private landowners on deer management. Landowners can experience crop and other damage. We support the use of loaner panels, other fencing, and depredation hunts - when needed - to protect livestock food sources. We appreciate GFP's attempts to balance deer hunting opportunities with landowner tolerance of the impacts deer can have on private land and property.

Habitat Management

Abundant high-quality habitat, on private and public land, will reduce deer damage, especially during severe winters. The ongoing conversion of grassland, wetland, and woody habitat further exacerbates deer damage to private property across the state.

Deer, and other wildlife, must have readily available food sources and thermal cover to survive what can be harsh winter conditions. Well-designed and placed food plots can provide a viable winter food source for deer and other wildlife and will help decrease deer depredation.

Objective 1

The Division supports an acceptable deer population in every management unit. This includes increasing deer numbers in units that are below management objectives. We favor surveying landowners, hunters, and the public on deer populations and management needs. We support surveys that assess populations, and impacts of disease, drought, habitat loss, and severe winter conditions.

1 i.)

This states that GFP will access deer-vehicle collision data provided by the South Dakota Department of Transportation to evaluate deer trends and coordinate mitigation strategies. The Division asks how the deer-vehicle collision information is collected. Does the information also include the many “unreported” deer-vehicle collisions? We believe deer-vehicle collision data should be considered as a management factor in all management units.

Objective 2

We agree with efforts to maximize hunting opportunities and simplify license regulations. We also support managing mule deer populations according to the habitat available and increasing mule deer numbers in all units that are below management objectives.

The Divisions asks how is the recently adopted license draw system working? Is it producing the results that were hoped for? Is the new system putting more hunters in the field as predicted? Prior to the change, all special buck tags were sold. The last few years there have been special buck tags left over. In addition, in the first draw, a hunter is only allowed two choices. This change has left many doe tags unallocated while all buck tags are sold. How is this impacting herd management?

Objective 3

We support collaborating with the landowners experiencing deer depredation and encourage their enrollment in the Walk-In Area, Controlled Hunting Access, or the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). All these programs allow free public hunting access and expanded hunting opportunities while helping landowners address depredation issues on their land.

Free public access to high-quality habitat is key. If the average hunter cannot find access to hunt deer, they will stop applying for licenses and even quit hunting. This could explain some of the tag situations we cited above, we hope this isn't the case. But if it is, in the future, hunting and hunter harvest, could become a less meaningful tool in deer herd management.

Objective 4

The Division supports working with landowners and public land managers to create, enhance, restore, and protect deer habitat. This includes enhancing high-quality woody habitats on private and public lands. We support striving for at least 10 cooperative riparian habitat development or restoration projects, and at least 5 hardwood release projects in the Black Hills. We also support

enrolling at least 1,100 Food Plot Program cooperators with seed mixes for east and west river and the restoration or establishment of grassland and wetland habitats.

Objective 5

We support leasing an additional 5,000 acres of private land for deer hunting annually through the James River Watershed and Big Sioux River Watershed CREP, Controlled Hunting Access, and the Walk-in Area programs. Voluntary enrollment by landowners in these programs will provide the average South Dakotan places to hunt and will help obtain the goal of the R3 Initiative, to Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate more hunters in the state.

Summary

The Division recognizes the difficulty in balancing the need of deer management for landowners, hunters, and the public and trying to keep all interests happy. Future management decisions must consider landowner tolerance along with the tradition and the tremendous economic impact deer hunting has to the state and local economies. We urge continued and expanded communication with hunters, conservation, and ag groups on deer management objectives.

The South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan and for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul Lepisto
Regional Conservation Coordinator
Izaak Walton League of America
1115 South Cleveland Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
plepisto@iwla.org - 605-220-1219

Bobcat Action Plan Comments

Total Comments Received: 6

1)

Steve Cherkas - Comment taken on website

Edgemont SD

Position: other

Comment:

I listened into the bobcat management action plan 3/7. The plan is primarily based on juvenile harvest. IMO this is not accurate data to base the plan on. I (common among cat trappers) release all juvenile (if foot not frozen) bobcats along with any stained (from feeding kittens) adult females. This thereby makes your statistics flawed. The primary factor on cat numbers is rabbit population. I saw nothing in plan relating to rabbit population. We recently (last 10 years) went thru a major wipeout of rabbits (hemorrhagic I believe) but they are now on the comeback the last 2-3 years. And cat numbers are also coming back with them. Lots of kitten sign last 2 seasons. I also do not believe your black hills bobcat population estimates (have been told by biologist twice as many lions as bobcats in black hills). I have caught 20+ black hills bobcats each of last 2 seasons myself which would be over 15% (per season) myself in just a small portion of the hills. Females and kittens also have a small territory (1-2 sq miles) compared to the males. When I see kitten tracks in snow I try to avoid those areas. I am strongly opposed to a per trapper limit in black hills and west river. BTW ... where is the 2022 furbearer harvest? Usually online by Sept and still not on website.

2)

Larry Rossum- phone call taken by Chad

I've been a trapper for the last 50 some years and somebody got a hold of me the other day and said there's maybe some talk about doing something with the Bobcat season. And I don't know if that's just a rumor or just or just what. I know you guys have an annual meeting and kind of go over your big game strategies or whatever. But I was, I just had some questions about it. I guess somebody talked about a quote in the hills and I just kind of wondering what you guys were thinking or if things are just going to stay the same with the Bobcats. So anyway, if you want, you can give me a call back 605-585-88055.

3)

From: Dana Andersen <danaandersen27@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 2:20 PM

To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>

Subject: [EXT] Help be humane to the animals

In the **Bobcat Action Plan**, the following is stated in the guiding principles: *"Future of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands, and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public's right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues."* There is nothing in these proposals that includes non-hunting public amendments, such as

designating area free from hunting and trapping. Biologists from objective organizations, outside of the GFP, should give input on management practices.

***Establishing wildlife corridors and other non-lethal methods of dealing with problem wildlife should be included in this plan. We request that these principles be incorporated into the Bobcat Action Plan.**

Response:

***We object to the to the principles requirement that hunting and trapping MUST be encouraged and preserved. We formally request that “Humane treatment of animals in conservation must be primary” be added as a Guiding Principle.** Habitat, animal behavior and maintain ecological balance are crucial elements to a health ecosystem and should be used to correct any imbalance that may cause an uptick in certain animal populations.

Finally, **efforts should be made to minimize the pain and suffering to hunted/trapped animals.** Trapping regulations are currently very weak in South Dakota. **We urge SDGFP to shorten trap check times and require identification on traps** (in order to enforce trapping regulations). Current trap check times are too long - animals caught in traps for several days can be attacked by other animals, starve, dehydrate, or mangle their mouths & limbs in futile efforts to free themselves.

“41:08:02:03. Trap checking required. A trapper shall check all traps and snares in the field belonging to the trapper and remove any caught animal prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the second full calendar day east of the Missouri River, and prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the third full calendar day west of the Missouri River, following a previous check or when the trap was initially set. However, any trap or snare entirely submerged in water that remains set beneath the ice shall be checked and any caught animal removed prior to 12 o'clock midnight of the fifth full calendar day statewide, following a previous check or when the trap was initially set.”

4)

From: L. McGannon <l.mcannon@ymail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 6:43 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Management Plans

Regards,

Bobcat Action Plan:

There should be wildlife corridors and other non-lethal methods for dealing with problem wildlife and should be included in your plan.

Recreational hunting and trapping:

Wildlife is crucial to maintain the ecological system. All treatment of animals should be humane.

Louise McGannon

5)

From: sara.parker perceptivemedia.net <sara.parker@perceptivemedia.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 8:48 PM
To: GFP Wild Info <WildInfo@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Bobcat, Deer & Pheasant Action Plans

Bobcat Action Plan

- Regarding this Guiding Principle: “Future of wildlife, including bobcats, depends on a public that appreciates, understands, and supports wildlife and wildlife conservation and in the public’s right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues.” There is nothing in this draft plan that includes non-hunting public amendments, such as designating area free from hunting and trapping. Biologists from objective organizations, outside of the GFP, should give input on management practices.

- Regarding this Guiding Principle: “Recreational hunting and trapping are legitimate uses of bobcats and must be encouraged and preserved.” I ask that you remove “must” from this statement and add “Humane treatment of animals in conversation must be primary.” as a Guiding Principle.

Finally, efforts should be made to minimize the pain and suffering to hunted/trapped animals. Trapping regulations are currently very weak in our state. I urge you to shorten trap check times and require identification on traps (in order to enforce regulations).

Sara Parker

Sioux Falls, SD

6)

Nancy Hilding

President

Prairie Hills Audubon Society

This letter will have short comments on **Bob Cat Action plan, The comment period is too short.**

The public notice to comment on three Action Plans (deer, bobcat and pheasants) was released on March 27th, 2024 with a deadline of April 19th, 2024. The link to the public notice is below:

<https://gfp.sd.gov/news/detail/1599/>

This provides 23 days to read and comment on the documents. The Action Plans are shorter and are the documents that you link to in the public notice but they are tiered to longer management plans that can be found in the March Commission Book (This location is not explained in the public notice). 23 days is not enough time for public comments.

PHAS objects to hound hunting of bobcats

We object to hound hunting of bobcats, as bobcats are small about the size of the hounds and hounds could set on and kill bobcats easily. We want hounds to have e-collars.

Bobcats can breed year-round. What is SDGFP doing to insure that hounds don't chase bobcats when kittens are traveling with them. We want hound hunting not allowed in areas where there are not trees for the bobcats to climb up on to escape hounds.

Unlimited take

Due to the high price bobcat pelts can earn, we object to a season that allow unlimited take of bobcats in western SD and the only limit is the length of the season.

Due to the high price bobcat pelts can earn, we object to a season that allow unlimited take of bobcats in western SD and the only limit is the length of the season.

More Comments Later

We hope to send more comments later.

Sincerely

Nancy Hilding

President

Prairie Hills Audubon Society

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS**

On May 2, 2024, at 9:00 AM (Mountain Time), a quorum of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission will be present at Custer State Park - Event Barn, 13389 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, to participate in a Governance Meeting.

A Public Hearing will be held at Custer State Park - Event Barn, 13389 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, May 2nd, 2:00 (Mountain Time), to modify deer license numbers for the East River Prairie and Archery Deer Hunting Seasons.

A Public Hearing will be held at Custer State Park - Event Barn, 13389 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, May 2nd, 2:00 (Mountain Time), to consider adoption, amendment and repeal of Rules pertaining to:

1. ARSD 41:06:07:01. Eligibility.

Effect: Clean-up administrative rule for the terms “bull” and “nontrophy”.

Reason: Allows for rule consistency in Custer State Park Non-Trophy Bison Harvest.

2. ARSD 41:06:07:03. Minimum weapon size for bison.

Effect: Consider the use of archery equipment during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bison harvest season.

Reason: Archery equipment has not been allowed during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bison harvest season. However, there is a desire to use archery equipment to harvest a bison during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bison harvest season.

3. ARSD 41:06:37:01. Season established.

Effect: Modify the season dates and times of the Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season.

Reason: A primary objective in Custer State Park is to provide maximum wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. Coyote predation may adversely affect some prey populations and limit wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities.

4. ARSD 41:06:37:04. Open area -- Exceptions.

Effect: Modify § 41:06:37:04 because the hunting area restrictions are redundant to restrictions described in Custer State Park restrictions § 41:06:07:10.

Reason: A primary objective in Custer State Park is to provide maximum wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities.

5. ARSD 41:06:42:01. Season established.
Effect: Modify the allowable hunting days for trophy bison.

Reason: The change will allow increased opportunity for scheduling of hunts.
6. ARSD 41:06:42:02. Number of licenses.
Effect: Modify the number of licenses for trophy bison.

Reason: Allows for additional hunting opportunities.
7. ARSD 41:06:09:01 – Grouse hunting season established.
Effect: Modify the season date.

Reason: The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season end dates.
8. ARSD 41:06:11:01. Quail hunting season established.
Effect: Modify the season end date.

Reason: The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season end dates.
9. ARSD 41:06:12:01. Partridge hunting season established -- Open area and dates.
Effect: Modify the season date.

Reason: The proposed change will simplify season dates and provide consistency among grouse, partridge, quail, and pheasant season dates.
10. ARSD 41:06:17:01. Snipe hunting season established.
Effect: Modify the word “common” before snipe.

Reason: The common snipe is generally found in Europe and the Wilson’s snipe is generally found in North America.
11. ARSD 41:06:17:03. Daily bag limit.
Effect: Modify the daily bag limit.

Reason: Allow for the harvest of all snipe species.
12. ARSD 41:06:17:04. Possession limit.
Effect: Modify the possession limit.

Reason: Allow for the possession limit of all snipe species.

13. ARSD 41:06:26:01. Black Hills elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify the number of “any elk” and “antlerless elk” licenses and units.

Reason: The number of elk licenses and units are established in administrative rule.

14. ARSD 41:06:27:01. Custer State Park elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify the number of “any elk” licenses and the option to provide up to thirty “antlerless elk” licenses.

Reason: The Commission will review the number of licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units.

15. ARSD 41:06:28:01. Custer State Park early archery elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify the number of “any elk” and “antlerless elk” licenses and units.

Reason: Allow the GFP Commission to alter the number of elk licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units.

16. ARSD 41:06:34:01. Cottontail rabbit hunting season established.

Effect: Modify the Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season on publicly accessible land.

Reason: Allow for a longer season to hunt cottontail rabbit.

17. ARSD 41:06:35:01. Tree squirrel hunting season established.

Effect: Modify hunting seasons.

Reason: Allow for a longer season to hunt tree squirrel.

18. ARSD 41:06:37:01. Season established.

Effect: Modify the Custer State Park coyote hunting seasons.

Reason: Removal of additional coyotes may result in higher survival and subsequently larger populations of prey species including white-tailed and mule deer, elk, turkey, bighorn sheep, and antelope.

19. ARSD 41:06:37:04. Open area -- Exceptions.

Effect: Modify redundant Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season restrictions.

Reason: Removal of additional coyotes may result in higher survival and subsequently

larger populations of prey species including white-tailed and mule deer, elk, turkey, bighorn sheep, and antelope.

20. ARSD 41:06:43:01. Archery elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify archery elk hunting licenses and tag types

Reason: Allow the GFP Commission to alter the number of elk licenses.

21. ARSD 41:06:43:02. Open units.

Effect: Clean-up Administrative Rule to match unit boundary descriptions for Black Hills Archery Elk with Black Hills Firearm Elk.

Reason: Allow the GFP Commission to alter the units of elk licenses.

22. ARSD 41:06:47:01. Special Custer State Park antlerless elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify “antlerless elk” licenses.

Reason: The proposed number of elk licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units is established in administrative rule.

23. ARSD 41:06:59:01. Prairie elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates.

Effect: Modify the number of “any elk” and “antlerless elk” licenses.

Reason: The proposed number of elk licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units is established in administrative rule.

24. ARSD 41:06:59:02. Open units.

Effect: The proposed number of elk licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units is established in administrative rule.

Reason: Modify elk season hunt units and dates.

25. ARSD 41:06:60:02. Number and type of licenses.

Effect: Modify the number of non-trophy bison licenses.

Reason: The proposed change offers trophy and nontrophy bull licenses to allow for additional hunting opportunities.

Interested persons will be given reasonable opportunity to submit amendments, data, opinions, arguments, and their views, either orally or in writing (or both) at the hearing. Persons unable to attend the hearing may mail amendments, data, opinions, arguments, and their views to the office of the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Foss Building, 523 East Capitol, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, or by going to the GFP website at <http://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions>. All persons who desire to submit written amendments, data, opinions, arguments, and their views by mail or email are encouraged to mail or transmit the same in sufficient time so that it is received by and in the office of the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks 72 hours prior to the date of the hearing. Interested persons will be given reasonable opportunity to submit amendments, data, opinions, arguments, and their views, either orally or in writing (or both) to the Commission for their consideration. All written and email comments must include the name, hometown/city, and state of the person submitting the comments.

The above rule proposals are available for review on the internet by going to <https://rules.sd.gov/> and copies of the proposed rules may be requested from the office of the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Foss Building, 523 East Capitol, Pierre, South Dakota 57501. Notice is further given to individuals with disabilities that this hearing is being held in a physically accessible place. Any individuals with disabilities who will require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the hearing should submit a request to the undersigned at 605.773.3718 or 605.223.7684 (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf).

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2024.

(SEAL)

Kevin Robling, Secretary

This Notice of Public Hearing is published at the approximate cost of \$_____.

DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

This meeting will be held in person, via zoom/conference call, and Livestream. Listen to the meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. MT via Livestream at <https://www.sd.net/remote1/> or join via zoom by clicking on the link below. Depending on your application, you may be required to enter the meeting ID and password. Remember to **enter your display name and mute your microphone**. To help keep background noise and distractions to a minimum, make sure you **mute your microphone and turn off your video** when you are not speaking.

Thursday, May 2, 2024, starting at 1 pm MT and Friday, May 3, 2024, starting at 8 am MT,

Zoom Meeting Link <https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/92827772568?pwd=cHByUFlQNi8rRXJ0dGlEazNRbjBqZz09>

or join via conference call Dial 1 253 205 0468 Meeting ID: 928 2777 2568 Passcode: 421262

Public Input: To provide comments, join the meeting in person, via zoom, or via conference call per the info above. To conduct the public hearing and/or open forum as efficiently as possible, we ask those wishing to testify to **register by 1:00 pm MT the day of the meeting by email to Liz.Kierl@state.sd.us**. **Testifiers should provide their full names, whom they represent, their city of residence, and which proposed topic they will address.**

Written comments can be submitted at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/>. To be included in the public record, comments must include the complete name and city of residence and meet the **submission deadline of seventy-two hours before the meeting (not including the day of the meeting)**.

Dated this 25th day of April 2024.

Stephanie Rissler

Stephanie Rissler, GFP Commission Chair