



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

DECEMBER 4 | PIERRE, SD
CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 414

MEETING INFO

This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.

Date and Time: December 4, 2025, from 1-5 pm CST

Meeting Location: Capitol Building, Room 414, 500 E Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501

Webinar Info: We will be using Zoom Webinar® for this meeting. As a participant, you will not have audio or video capabilities by default. During the open forum and public hearing, if you'd like to testify, please 'Raise Your Hand' using the button at the bottom of the screen, or by pressing *9 on your phone. To lower your hand via phone, press *9 again. When it's your turn to speak, the meeting host will unmute you, allowing you to have audio but no video. If your phone is muted when called upon, press *6 to unmute.

- *9 to 'Raise Your Hand' or 'Lower Your Hand.'
- *6 to Unmute or Mute

Please inform Gail Buus at gail.buus@state.sd.us by 1 pm CST if you plan to speak during the meeting. This helps us to accurately identify and call on speakers during the session. Thank you for your cooperation!

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

Call In: +16699009128,,91264176710# US

Meeting ID: 912 6417 6710

Passcode: 970458

Video Conference ID: 91264176710@zoomcrc.com

AGENDA

Call Meeting to Order (1 pm CST / 12 pm MT)

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
4. 2026 Commission Schedule

Informational Items

5. Staff Introductions
6. Recognition for Meritorious Service

Open Forum (2 pm CST / 1 pm MT)

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

Division of Parks and Recreation

Action Items

7. Angostura 2-Year Rate Extension on BOR Property Cabins
8. City of Pierre Lease Amendment

Informational Items

9. Central Region Capital Development Projects
10. LWCF 2026 Apportionment and Project Selection
11. Construction Partnership with the Aberdeen School District
12. November Camping Unit and Revenue Reports



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

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Division of Wildlife

Informational Items

- 13. Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan
- 14. AIS Summary
- 15. Winter Ice Access
- 16. GPA Vegetation Sampling
- 17. SDSU Natural Resources Course
- 18. 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 January 8-9, 2026 starting at 1 pm CST at the Ramkota Convention Center, in Pierre, SD.



Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

November 6-7, 2025 | Outdoor Campus West, Rapid City, SD

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 2 pm MT via Zoom Webinar on November 6, 2025. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Jon Locken, Travis Theel, Jim White, and Julie Bartling were present online, verified by a roll call. With six commission members present or online, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 110 total participants attending via Zoom or in person. On November 7, 2025 Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Jon Locken, Travis Theel, Jim White, and Julie Bartling were present in person at the Outdoor Campus West. Again, a quorum was established with six Commissioners present.

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

[Action Item]

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

Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:04 pm MT for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as finalization. No testimony was provided by the public, so the Public Hearing was closed at 2:05 pm MT.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the public hearing at 2:05 pm MT.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:06 pm MT 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.

2:07 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified in person regarding her concern of wildlife management.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the open forum at 2:11 pm MT.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of the October 2025 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 2025 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Additional Salary Days

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. No salary days were brought forward.

4. New Staff Introductions

[Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced three new employees, Mark Koch who serves as the Park Technician at Farm Island Rec. Area, Andrew Becker who serves as the Park Manager at Roy Lake State Park and Stacy Huisenga who serves as the Park Technician at Roy Lake State Park.

Director Kirschenmann introduced two new staff. Trey Kelderman, Wildlife Conservation Officer, stationed in Union County and Austin Hulsing, Resource Biologist, stationed at Cleghorn Fish Hatchery.



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5. 2026 Commission Schedule Review

Department Secretary, Kevin Robling, presented the commission with a proposed 2026 schedule for commission meetings. The schedule will be finalized at the December meeting.

6. Open Meetings Annual Review

General Counsel for the Department, Nick Michels, provided the Commissioners with "A Guide to South Dakota's Open Meetings Laws," which was prepared by the S.D. Attorney General's Office. Mr. Michels explained to the Commission that Senate Bill 74 from the 2025 legislative session (which is now codified at SDCL 1-25-13) requires an *annual review* of an explanation or other material published by the attorney general during an official meeting of any agency or political subdivision of the state that must provide public notice of its meetings. The Commissioners then took time to review the provided guide. Afterwards, each Commissioner present noted for the record that they had received the provided guide. It was also noted that the Commissioners reviewed the provided guide.

7. Custer State Park Bison Trophy and Non-Trophy Harvest [Action Item: Finalization]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the finalization of a rule package for the Custer State Park Bison Bull hunts that initiated from a citizen petition requesting a 60% resident only preference in the first draw with the remaining 40% of the licenses being open to both residents and non-residents. Additionally, park staff evaluated the bison herd and range health and set a new maximum number of bison bull licenses at 15 for Trophy and 30 for Non-trophy that could be issued on an annual basis.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE BISON BULL HUNTS. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Administrative Action for CSP Trophy and Non-Trophy Bison Hunt Seasons [Action Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, set the number of Trophy Bison Bull and Non-Trophy Bison Bull harvest rates at 12 and 25 respectfully for the 2026/27 and 2027/28 seasons. The Trophy number increased by 2 and the Non-Trophy by 5 from the past two season harvest years.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Division Meeting Awards Recognition [Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, reviewed the 2025 staff recipients for the various Park Division Annual Awards as follows: Awards of Appreciation – 1) Ryan Wendinger, and 2) Rachel Comes; Seasonal of the Year – Genee Dorn; Volunteer of the Year – Robert Rutten; Teamwork Award – 1) Fiscal Office Team, and 2) Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival Team; Innovative Programming – Jim Henning; and Distinguished Service – Pat Buscher.

10. Angostura Cabin 2-Year Rate Extension on BOR Property [Info Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator, provided the commission background information on the private cabins located at Angostura Recreation Area. Blanchette explained the most recent rate increase approval in late 2023 of 5.4% annually for the remainder of the permit. Rates are adjusted using the Bureau of Reclamation Construction Cost Trend - Land Index for South Dakota. The Parks Division would like to find consistency in the rate adjustments at Angostura and Shadehill Recreation Areas. Staggered permit terms and annual fluctuations do not allow for that. Parks intends to extend the existing permits for 2 years at Angostura to match the Shadehill permit expiration date of 12/31/2027, then issue new 5-year permits at both areas with the 5-year rate schedule determined at the onset of the new permit. Blanchette indicated that all permit holders will be notified by letter of the plan, and they will return to the



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Commission in December to present the 5.4% rate increase for the next 2 years at Angostura for their approval.

11. CSP Resort RFP Update

[Info Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator, provided an update to the Custer State Park Resorts RFP preparation process. Axias Inc. will conduct their final site visit the week of 11/17 for the facilities condition assessment with roughly 25 of 175 structures remaining to be inspected. Axias is on track to provide the final report in January, with the information to be incorporated into the upcoming concession lease. Blanchette stated that GFP has engaged C-BIZ to conduct the Personal Property valuation with a site visit scheduled for the week of November 17th and a report deliverable in early December. The Department and the Concessionaire have mutually engaged Simpson & Associate from Rapid City to conduct Possessory Interest appraisal. The site visit is complete, and a final report is expected in the coming days. Blanchette also reminded the Commission that they will be afforded time to review the draft RFP when completed in early 2026.

12. 2025 Mid-Week and Weekend Camping Units

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, reviewed data from this past summer indicating where decreases had occurred between mid-week and weekend camping units in 2025. Mid-week camping units saw a decrease of 9% as compared to the past 3-year average, with weekend units decreasing 2.9% for the same 3-year average. Park staff will be looking at individual park data to help them analyze what they might provide in incentives for the 2026 season to increase the mid-week camping unit numbers.

13. October Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the October monthly and year-to-date report numbers for the Division of Parks & Recreation related to camping units and revenue. October camping units were down 5% for the month and remain at a 5% decrease YTD. The Parks Division revenue is up 3% overall for the month of October and 17% YTD. The standard graphs and charts were shared with the Commission to depict how park revenue has come in for the Division overall and the impact of the new non-resident park entrance license fees as compared to other entrance fees. Information was also shared on shoulder season months (May, September and October) camping units for the past 14 years with the trend line increasing over that time period.

14. Jackrabbit Trapping and Hunting Seasons

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented on the general ecology of jackrabbits in South Dakota. He discussed their habitat needs regarding large intact grasslands and the effects of hunting on their populations. Regarding the request to close the season to allow populations to increase, Alex discussed the limited effect of hunting as a population regulator and the limited authority the Commission would have based on Codified law. GFP believes habitat is the limiting factor in jackrabbit populations.

15. Hemorrhagic Disease Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

GFP Senior Wildlife Biologist Byron Buckley provided a brief update on the current status of Hemorrhagic Disease in South Dakota. A brief biological background was provided on Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and Blue Tongue disease, collectively called HD. Currently, there are 269 reported/confirmed HD mortalities (263 white tailed deer, 5 mule deer, and 1 pronghorn). This is lower than the 2024 HD outbreak of 401 (398 white tailed deer, 2 mule deer, and 1 pronghorn). The HD outbreaks are generally localized in nature, which can significantly impact deer in specific locations. GFP biologists monitor the impact of these disease outbreaks and adjust the tag/licenses to correspond with loss of deer numbers or allow tag/license returns in these affected areas. With the colder temperatures projected for the entire state (Nov 9 -10), this should cause a die-off of the virus-carrying insects.



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16. CWD Action Plan

[Info Item: Wildlife]

GFP Senior Wildlife Biologist Byron Buckley provided the GFP Commission with the proposed CWD Action Plan for 2025-2029. Much of the action plan will remain the same, including regulations and CWD testing and sampling. Updates were made to the scientific information regarding a best management practice of not providing feed for cervids due to the increase in CWD prion transmission at these locations, and specifically on the feeder itself. An additional update to the action plan was to incorporate current CWD research on cow elk survival related to CWD and a companion study to assess environmental CWD in the Black Hills. Future endeavors will incorporate human dimensions work to understand public opinions and targeted outreach and communication for CWD management.

17. Hunting Reports From the Field & 18. License Sales Reports

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann provided the Commission a presentation providing information on opening weekend success, license sales for opening weekend of the pheasant season, license sales year to date, and landowner testimonials. Landowner testimonials came from across central and eastern SD and the general theme was an overwhelming response of seeing more birds this year than the past 10 years. Positive reports and excitement for the pheasant season. In general, license sales remain strong for the license year which will end on December 14. December 15 marks the beginning of the new license year.

19. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on December 4-5, 2025, at the South Dakota State Capitol Building, Room 414 in Pierre, SD starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:35 AM MT ON NOVEMBER 7, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary



Commission Meetings 2026

JAN 8-9	RAMKOTA CONVENTION CENTER PIERRE	JUL 9-10	WATERTOWN
FEB	NO MEETING	AUG	NO MEETING
MAR 5-6	STATE LIBRARY COMMONS PIERRE	SEPT 3-4	WINNER
APR 9-10	MATTHEW'S TRAINING CENTER PIERRE	OCT 8-9	OUTDOOR CAMPUS EAST SIOUX FALLS
MAY 7-8	EVENT BARN CUSTER STATE PARK	NOV 5-6	STATE LIBRARY COMMONS PIERRE
JUN 11-12	MADISON	DEC 3-4	PIERRE

For more details or previous meeting archives,
visit <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/>

All dates and locations subject to change with 30 days prior notice

Proposed 2026 & 2027 Rate Schedule **Angostura Cabins and Trailers**

**Adjusted in accordance with the Bureau of Reclamation
 Construction Cost Trends - South Dakota Land Index
 2023 5-Year Average (5.4%)**

Angostura			
Number of Units	32		
2025 rate		\$	2,970.00
	Revenue	\$	95,040.00
2026 rate (5.4%)		\$	3,130.00
	Revenue	\$	100,160.00
2027 rate (5.4%)		\$	3,300.00
	Revenue	\$	105,600.00



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE | PIERRE, SD 57501

November 12, 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

The current permit fee for your cabin on site [REDACTED] permitted to you at Angostura Recreation Area was most recently adjusted in late 2023 at a rate increase of 5.4% annually for the remaining two years of your permit term. The Department would like to achieve consistency with the annual rate adjustment percentage at private/exclusive cabin areas at Shadehill and Angostura Recreation Areas, which is not possible with staggered permit terms. Therefore, the Department is proposing to extend your existing permit for 2 years with a new expiration date of December 31, 2027, and continue to assess the rate adjustment of 5.4% for those two years.

A new 5-year rate schedule will be established for both Shadehill and Angostura at the beginning of the following 5-year permit term based on the Bureau of Reclamation Construction Cost Trends Land Index for South Dakota.

This change in fee amount requires the GFP Commission's approval. Below is the proposed rate schedule being considered at their next meeting on December 4th-5th, 2025 in Pierre.

2025 rate	\$ 2,970.00
2026 rate (5.4%)	\$ 3,130.00
2027 rate (5.4%)	\$ 3,300.00

If you would like to provide comment to the GFP Commission on the fee adjustment proposal, you can do so in person or by remote attendance at the meeting. Comments can also be provided online at the following page on the GFP website: <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/>.

Sincerely,

Sean Blanchette
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD, 57501
605.773.3391 | Sean.Blanchette@state.sd.us

**SECOND AMENDMENT TO LEASE
FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES
CITY OF PIERRE
ON LAKE SHARPE
HUGHES COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

THIS SECOND AMENDMENT TO LEASE is entered in to on _____, 2025 by and between the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (“State”) and the City of Pierre (“City”).

WHEREAS, the State and City entered a lease on May 30, 2004 for the City’s management of the Pierre waterfront property for parks and recreation purposes containing 357.99 acres, more or less for a term of twenty-five (25) years; and,

WHEREAS, the Department and City subsequently entered in to a written amendment to the lease on October 28, 2014 ; and,

WHEREAS, a portion of the lease property is sublet to a third party for commercial marina operations open to the public; and,

WHEREAS, the marina sustained significant storm damage in the summer of 2025, and is securing financing to rebuild the dock structures, for which long term security is needed; and,

WHEREAS, the City has requested an extension of the lease term to accommodate the marina operation in securing the necessary funding to ensure continued operations of the marina services; and,

WHEREAS, the State is supportive of the project as well as the City’s continued management of the lease property, and agrees to extend the lease for an additional twenty-five (25) years.

NOW THEREFORE, the LEASE FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES CITY OF PIERRE ON LAKE SHARPE is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section 3, “Term”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

3. TERM

The Recreation Area is hereby leased for a term of fifty (50) years beginning on May 4, 2004 and ending on December 31, 2054, or until terminated under conditions of this lease.

2. Except as modified by this FIRST AMENDMENT, all terms and conditions set forth in the LEASE FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES CITY OF PIERRE ON

LAKE SHARPE dated May 30, 2004, and as subsequently amended on October 28, 2014, shall remain in full force and effect.

END OF AGREEMENT TEXT

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunder subscribed their names this _____ day of _____, 2025.

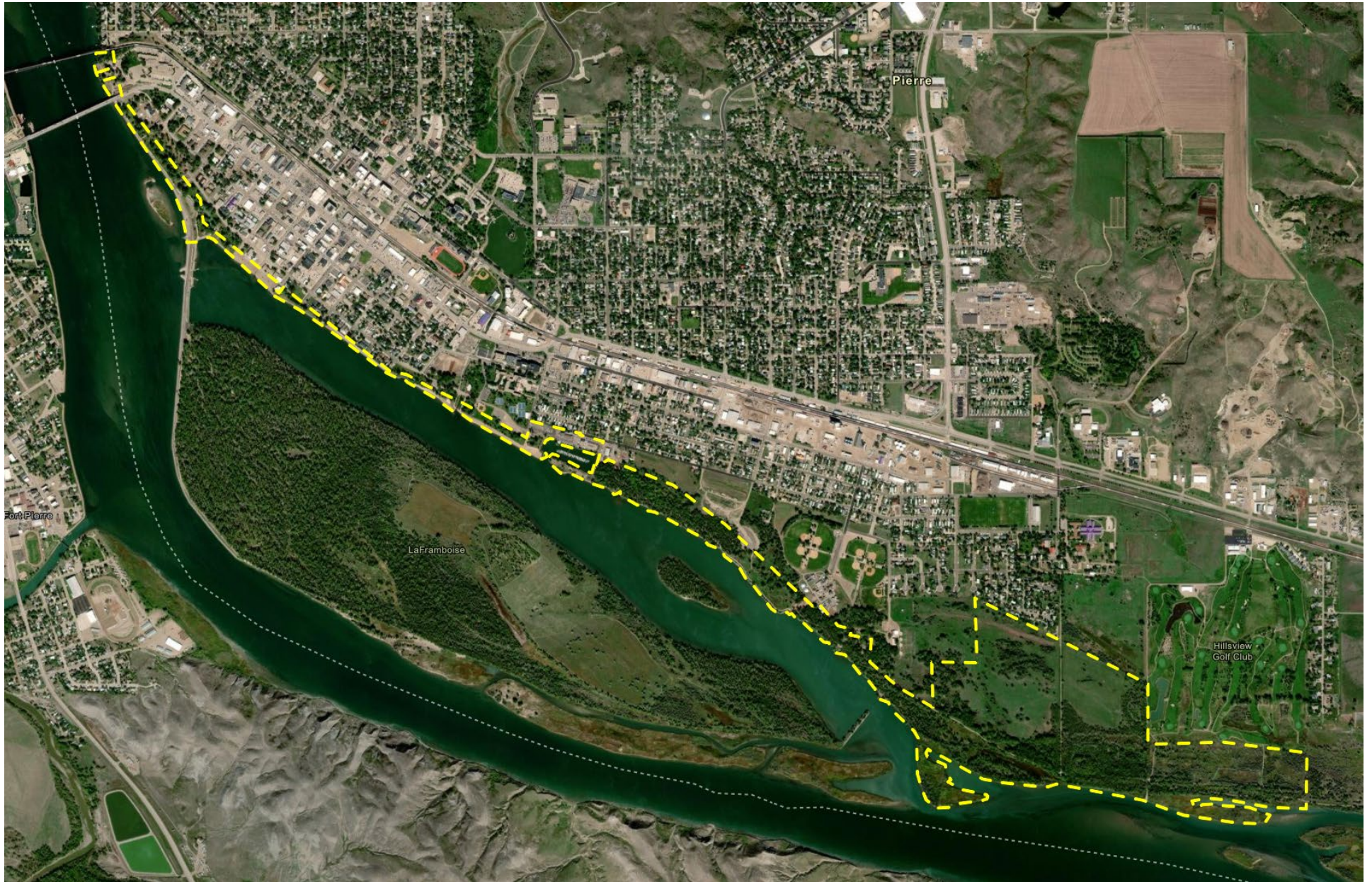
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

Jeffrey A. VanMeeteren, Director
Division of Parks and Recreation
(STATE)

CITY OF PIERRE

Steve Harding, Mayor
City of Pierre
(CITY)

City of Pierre – GFP Lease Boundaries (approximate)



City of Pierre Lease – Down's Marina area







Division of Parks and Recreation					
November 2025 Revenue by Item					
	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	620	\$ 21,610	417	\$ 15,015	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	148	\$ 8,700	
Resident Double	1,203	\$ 64,518	760	\$ 43,500	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	103	\$ 9,270	
Transferable	79	\$ 6,240	47	\$ 4,230	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	348	\$ 5,205	367	\$ 7,320	
2nd Annual	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	2,250	\$ 97,573	1,842	\$ 88,035	-10%
Resident Daily License	1,645	\$ 13,152	768	\$ 7,650	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	589	\$ 8,700	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	54	\$ 780	36	\$ 720	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	347	\$ 1,388	715	\$ 3,575	
Motorcoach Permit	3,620	\$ 10,860	2,852	\$ 11,408	
CSP 7 Day Pass	1,938	\$ 38,760	2,397	\$ 58,975	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	-	\$ -	22	\$ 460	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	176	\$ 8,750	68	\$ 6,800	
Festival Daily	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
Daily Licenses	7,780	\$ 73,690	7,447	\$ 98,288	33%
Licenses	10,030	\$ 171,263	9,289	\$ 186,323	9%
Camping Services		\$ 145,044		\$ 148,020	2%
Pet Fees	34	\$ 329	37	\$ 358	9%
LODGING		\$ 145,373		\$ 148,378	2%
Picnic Shelters		\$ 70		\$ -	-100%
Boat Rentals		\$ -		\$ -	
Firewood	239	\$ 1,382	280	\$ 1,875	36%
Gift Card	21	\$ 1,741	23	\$ 1,640	-6%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ -		\$ -	
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 32		\$ -	-100%
Retail		\$ 473		\$ 3,165	569%
Call Center Fee	268	\$ 516	165	\$ 960	86%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ -		\$ -	
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 4,214		\$ 7,639	81%
TOTAL		\$ 320,850		\$ 342,340	7%

Annual Licenses					
November YTD 2025 Revenue by Item					
	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	63,644	\$ 2,254,759	44,277	\$ 1,727,027	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	14,049	\$ 807,782	
Resident Double	40,353	\$ 2,164,424	37,202	\$ 2,209,206	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	5,824	\$ 518,338	
Transferable	2,779	\$ 220,390	2,741	\$ 244,878	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	7,624	\$ 114,240	7,234	\$ 144,115	
2nd Annual	8,409	\$ 131,886	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	122,809	\$ 4,885,699	111,327	\$ 5,651,346	16%
Resident Daily License	119,158	\$ 944,748	59,599	\$ 593,738	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	43,420	\$ 650,610	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	1,249	\$ 18,705	1,389	\$ 27,665	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	22,414	\$ 89,638	23,286	\$ 116,286	
Motorcoach Permit	20,022	\$ 60,063	26,818	\$ 85,657	
CSP 7 Day Pass	201,919	\$ 4,034,660	204,215	\$ 5,071,140	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	20,071	\$ 387,924	24,116	\$ 480,430	
Rally Bike Band	26,426	\$ 534,252	33,780	\$ 675,595	
One-Day Special Event	319	\$ 15,799	159	\$ 15,900	
Festival Daily	-	\$ -	2,427	\$ 11,475	
Daily Licenses	411,578	\$ 6,085,789	419,209	\$ 7,728,496	27%
Licenses	534,387	\$ 10,971,488	530,536	\$ 13,379,842	22%
Camping Services		\$ 9,930,756		\$ 10,984,473	11%
Pet Fees	1508	\$ 15,017	1753	\$ 17,469	16%
LODGING		\$ 9,945,773		\$ 11,001,942	11%
Picnic Shelter		\$ 15,989		\$ 14,365	-10%
Boat Rentals		\$ 14,203		\$ 16,828	18%
Firewood	42,487	\$ 246,232	36,593	\$ 245,223	0%
Gift Card	174	\$ 16,352	169	\$ 14,551	-11%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 156,946		\$ 155,768	-1%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 40,769		\$ 35,246	-14%
Retail		\$ 234,101		\$ 223,647	-4%
Call Center Fee	19,379	\$ 38,506	14,192	\$ 88,764	131%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 143,954		\$ 217,969	51%
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 907,051		\$ 1,012,362	12%
TOTAL		\$ 21,824,313		\$ 25,394,146	16%



November Camping

11/1/2024 - 11/30/2024	11/1/2025 - 11/30/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
3171	3025

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	29	22	-24%
	Pickrel Lake Recreation Area	41	40	-2%
	Roy Lake State Park	96	105	9%
	Sica Hollow State Park	13	6	-54%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	21	31	48%
2	Fisher Grove State Park	25	27	8%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	69	69	0%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	39	113	190%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	28	55	96%
	Hartford Beach State Park	15	16	7%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	2	2	0%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	34	49	44%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	20	57	185%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	30	16	-47%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	47	30	-36%
4	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	0	6	NA
	Lake Herman State Park	33	65	97%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	68	51	-25%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	35	9	-74%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	0	7	NA
5	Buryanek Recreation Area	60	53	-12%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	5	21	320%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	127	68	-46%
6	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	91	119	31%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	42	49	17%
	Palisades State Park	113	137	21%
	Twin Lake Lakeside Use Area	0	5	NA
	Newton Hills State Park	144	178	24%
7	Union Grove State Park	11	12	9%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	66	37	-44%
	Clay County Park	0	1	NA
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	149	97	-35%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	6	8	33%
8	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	14	0	-100%
	Springfield Recreation Area	2	12	500%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	2	0	-100%
	North Point Recreation Area	43	27	-37%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	0	8	NA
9	Pease Creek Recreation Area	6	10	67%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	14	0	-100%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	0	4	NA
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	13	9	-31%
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	14	4	-71%
10	Farm Island Recreation Area	103	18	-83%
	West Bend Recreation Area	52	32	-38%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	48	30	-38%
	Minneconju Lakeside Use Area	0	7	NA
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	170	165	-3%
11	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	0	2	NA
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	23	90	291%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	1	3	200%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	84	35	-58%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	11	19	73%
12	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	6	NA
	Little Moreau Recreation Area	0	13	NA
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	26	52	100%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	23	5	-78%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	76	82	8%
13	Bear Butte State Park	51	0	-100%
	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	13	NA
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	37	8	-78%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	47	39	-17%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	438	422	-4%
14	Custer State Park	312	271	-13%
	Angostura Recreation Area	52	56	8%
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	50	22	-56%
	Total:	3171	3025	-5%

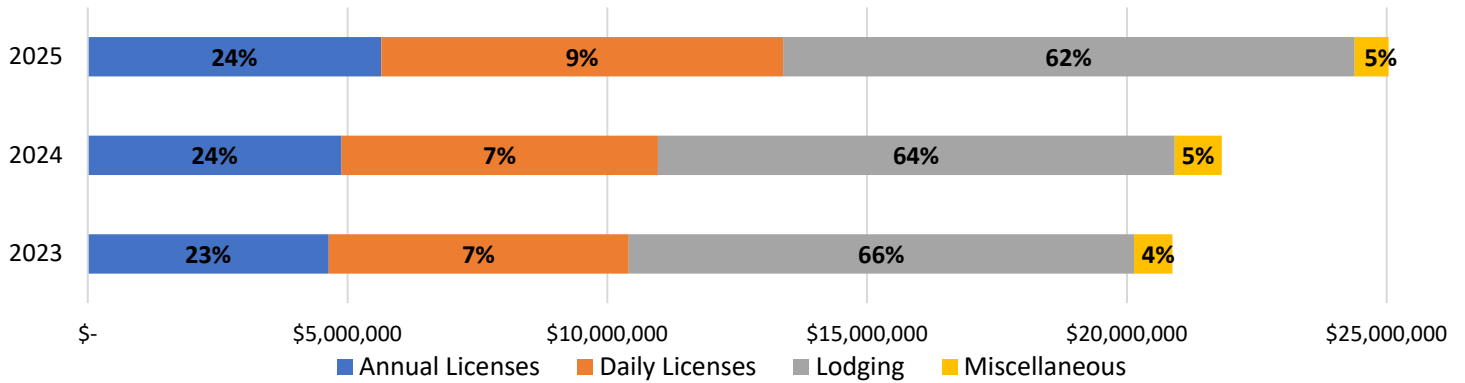


November YTD Camping

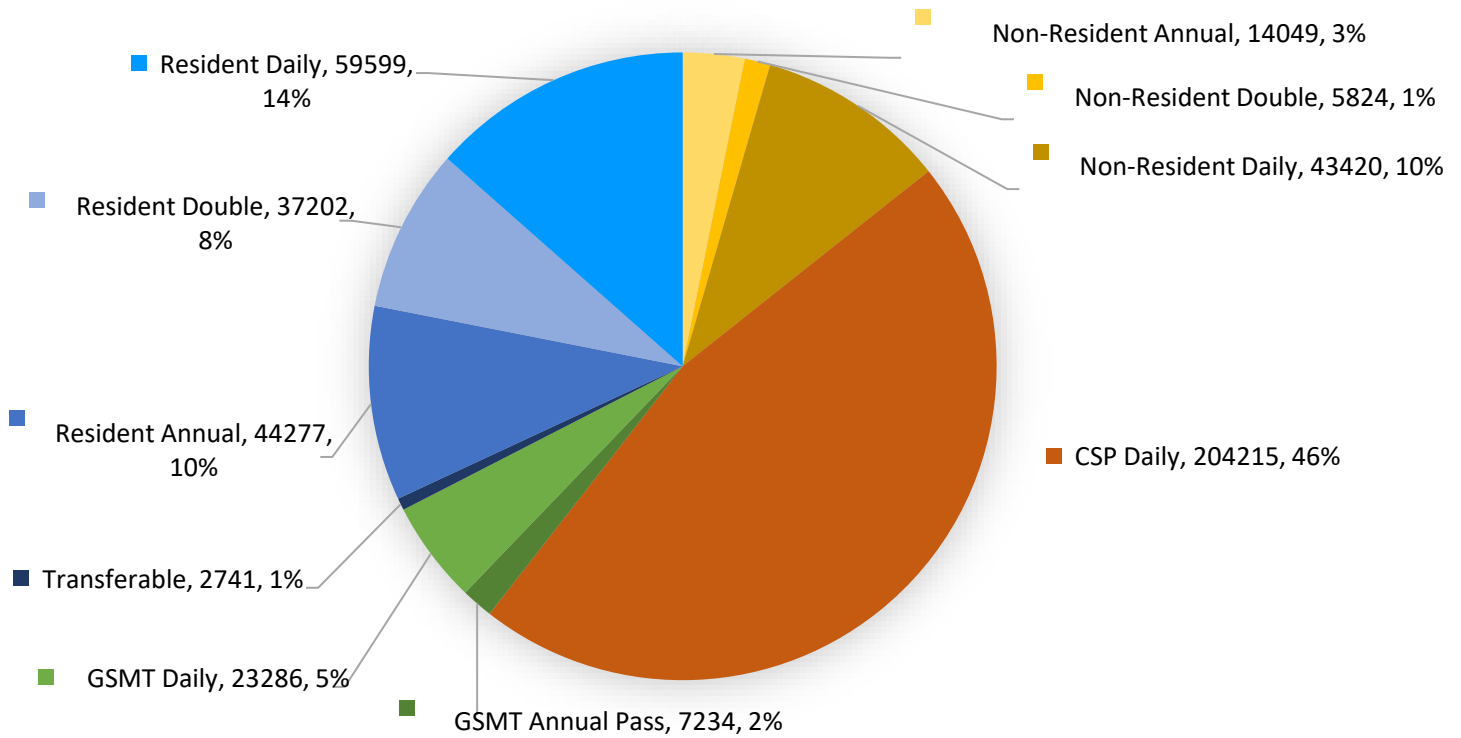
1/1/2024 - 11/30/2024	1/1/2025 - 11/30/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
356925	340511

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	1597	1599	0%
	Pickereel Lake Recreation Area	5922	5261	-11%
	Roy Lake State Park	8555	8426	-2%
	Sica Hollow State Park	301	297	-1%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	428	312	-27%
2	Fisher Grove State Park	1157	929	-20%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	2296	2285	0%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	3271	3396	4%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	1730	1809	5%
	Hartford Beach State Park	6794	6464	-5%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	2151	1958	-9%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	6502	6268	-4%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	1767	1771	0%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	7462	7151	-4%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	9351	8904	-5%
4	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	869	794	-9%
	Lake Herman State Park	5815	5795	0%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	7524	6878	-9%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	3018	2663	-12%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	97	61	-37%
5	Buryanek Recreation Area	2847	2624	-8%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	256	185	-28%
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	52	81	56%
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	1515	1275	-16%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	8309	7234	-13%
6	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	6958	7018	1%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	11409	11281	-1%
	Palisades State Park	9737	10548	8%
	Twin Lake Lakeside Use Area	0	30	NA
	Good Earth State Park	1	0	-100%
7	Newton Hills State Park	10728	10242	-5%
	Union Grove State Park	1348	1269	-6%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	12707	11827	-7%
	Clay County Park	2077	1783	-14%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	41086	39213	-5%
8	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	4755	4321	-9%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	98	139	42%
	Springfield Recreation Area	1438	1262	-12%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	77	58	-25%
	North Point Recreation Area	9893	9772	-1%
9	North Wheeler Recreation Area	892	940	5%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1826	1650	-10%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	6061	4800	-21%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	302	271	-10%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	63	42	-33%
10	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	411	434	6%
	White Swan Lakeside Use Area	141	145	3%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	7944	7240	-9%
	West Bend Recreation Area	7498	6713	-10%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	3190	3070	-4%
11	Minneconju Lakeside Use Area	0	15	NA
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	14097	13581	-4%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	1386	1183	-15%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	1173	1215	4%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	63	58	-8%
12	Indian Creek Recreation Area	8008	7598	-5%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	215	231	7%
	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	15	NA
	Little Moreau Recreation Area	0	31	NA
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	953	1201	26%
13	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	33	25	-24%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	1139	1140	0%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	4899	4877	0%
	Bear Butte State Park	1457	1165	-20%
	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	394	NA
14	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	510	433	-15%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	7133	6591	-8%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	8221	7720	-6%
	Custer State Park	56473	55355	-2%
	Angostura Recreation Area	18516	16911	-9%
15	Bailey's Lakeside Use Area	0	51	NA
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	2423	2233	-8%
	Total:	356925	340511	-5%

November 2025 YTD Revenue Comparison



November 2025 YTD License Sales



South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

2026-2028

Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan



Executive Summary

Waterfowl hunter numbers in South Dakota have declined since the mid-1990s, with limited access to quality hunting areas often cited as a key barrier. To address this, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP), in partnership with the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and the South Dakota Waterfowl Association, developed this plan to expand and improve hunting access on both public and private lands.

As of January 2026, GFP has over 464,000 acres of private land enrolled in public hunting access programs east of the Missouri River and has enhanced opportunities on 118 Game Production Areas across 42 counties. By 2028, GFP aims to add another 25,000 acres of private land hunting access focused on waterfowl hunting in eastern South Dakota, develop waterfowl hunting access infrastructure at 10 new public sites, and maintain all existing waterfowl access sites annually. Lastly, GFP will continue to offer detailed maps through print or online interactive map platforms to the public, making them aware of all waterfowl hunting access opportunities.

Supported by Habitat Stamp, license dollars, and federal funds, these efforts will strengthen waterfowl hunting access, support hunter participation, and sustain South Dakota's waterfowl hunting tradition.

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Background

South Dakota has experienced a decline in waterfowl hunters since the mid-1990's. Many factors likely contribute to this decline, but adequate hunting access and opportunity in locations that hold waterfowl and have suitable cover is often cited as one important barrier to hunter participation. Public lands either owned or leased by state and federal agencies in South Dakota are very important to most waterfowl hunters who indicate they hunt on public lands much of the time. In a 2017 survey, 41% of respondents who hunt waterfowl in South Dakota indicated that a lack of public places for waterfowl hunting was a moderate, severe, or very severe problem. Similarly, 37% of survey respondents indicated that crowding at hunting areas was moderate, severe, or a very severe problem for them in South Dakota (DJ Case & Associates & U.S. Geological Survey, 2017).

This plan was developed with assistance and input from the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and the South Dakota Waterfowl Association - both valuable partners with GFP in a combined effort to provide adequate and sustainable waterfowl hunting opportunities for both residents and non-residents. The purpose of this plan is to specifically address waterfowl hunting access opportunities in South Dakota through implementing strategies that support both current and future hunting access efforts and programs offered by GFP and other agencies and organizations.

The Need

Determining goals to provide adequate waterfowl hunting access can be difficult, as properly defining adequate is highly subjective. Not every location open to public hunting access will be a heavily used destination for waterfowl hunters, and likewise not every desirable waterfowl hunting destination will have public access. Public access to private lands and waters desirable for waterfowl hunting varies across South Dakota due to many reasons, not the least of which is controlled trespass by private landowners. Private lands once accessible with landowner permission have now become difficult to access where hunter competition and monetization of hunting access have become more prevalent.

Enhanced efforts by GFP to address waterfowl hunting access and opportunity needs to public and private lands have been underway for over a decade. These efforts are driven by requests from waterfowl hunters to ensure the sport of waterfowl hunting and access to waterfowl hunting opportunities remains a priority with GFP. This plan outlines department efforts going forward that can ensure adequate opportunities are available for both resident and non-resident waterfowl hunters while encouraging new participation in the sport.

As of January 2026, GFP has completed and is annually managing more than 1,000 contracts with landowners to provide over 464,000 acres of public hunting access to private lands in eastern South Dakota. These public hunting access opportunities are comprised of the following:

- Over 121,000 acres enrolled as Cooperative Hunting Access Areas (COOP) targeted specifically for waterfowl hunting access,

- Over 86,000 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the James River watershed,
- Over 4,600 acres enrolled in the Big Sioux River Watershed CREP,
- 4,995 acres enrolled in the Controlled Hunting Access Program (CHAP),
- 25,787 acres enrolled in the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Program,
- Remaining 222,496 acres enrolled as general WIAs. While not all WIA enrolled acres provide waterfowl hunting opportunity, a vast majority do provide some level of over-water or field waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Across South Dakota, GFP has enhanced waterfowl hunting opportunities on 118 Game Production Areas (GPAs) in 42 counties through targeted efforts to improve hunting access. These projects have taken place during the last approximately 18 years with a vast majority in the last 8 years. Revenue being generated annually since 2020 with the enactment of the Habitat Stamp has accelerated efforts and project completion to improve waterfowl access on GPAs. These efforts include developing and annually maintaining boat ramps, roads, trails, parking areas, and equipment drop off sites near boat ramps and shorelines. Various boat ramps have also been developed, with many designed and put in place specifically for small boats used by waterfowl hunters. Finally, GFP has also developed waterfowl hunting access opportunities on five Game Production Areas specifically for disabled hunters, including restricted use vehicle trails and accessible hunting blinds. A complete list of areas with opportunities for disabled hunters for all game species can be found on GFP's website at <https://gfp.sd.gov/hunt-accessible-areas/>.

In evaluating what constitutes sufficient waterfowl hunting opportunities, consideration must be given to the balance between waterfowl populations and the number of hunters competing for those opportunities. Overall waterfowl populations, both nationally and in South Dakota, have maintained or increased in the past two decades, while the number of licensed waterfowl hunters continues to decline, particularly the number of South Dakota resident waterfowl hunters. During the same period, South Dakota has seen an increase in public lands available for waterfowl hunting through both purchase of additional public lands by GFP and leasing of private lands through various GFP programs. Given this simultaneous increase in waterfowl populations, added access opportunities, and decreasing hunter numbers it seems imperative to reexamine barriers to participation. This plan, however, acknowledges that a lack of adequate access opportunities remains a primary barrier, and as such, works to address opportunities where GFP has influence and available resources.

Addressing the Need

Providing adequate public access for waterfowl hunting is a challenging endeavor but is a priority for GFP in its efforts to address overall dwindling hunting participation through initiatives to recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) hunters. Issues specifically affecting adequate and sustainable waterfowl hunting access in South Dakota include funding for access programs, continued loss and degradation of waterfowl habitat, and changing waterfowl hunter and landowner demographics.

To help address waterfowl hunting access needs, the following objectives and accompanying strategies were developed with input from the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and the South Dakota Waterfowl Association:

Objective 1: By December 2028, increase and improve waterfowl hunting access opportunities on private lands by an additional 25,000 acres.

Strategy 1.1: Enroll new lands and renew expiring contracts in the James River Watershed CREP (100,000 acre cap).

Strategy 1.2: Enroll new lands the Big Sioux River Watershed CREP (25,000 acre cap).

Strategy 1.3: Identify opportunities to lease additional waterfowl hunting access acres on private land through existing program efforts such as the WIA program, CHAP, COOP areas, or targeted efforts like the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Area.

Strategy 1.4: Identify opportunities on existing and new WIAs that in addition to other hunting opportunities also accommodate waterfowl hunters to drive on marked trails and harvested crop fields for decoy and gear drop off.

Strategy 1.5: Identify opportunities to acquire, via lease or easement, exclusive waterfowl hunting access routes across private lands to public water bodies, including designated vehicle access corridors for decoy and gear drop off.

Objective 2: By December 2028, increase and improve waterfowl hunting access opportunities and infrastructure at an additional 10 sites on public lands and waters.

Strategy 2.1: Inventory Game Production Areas and other water bodies to identify opportunities to improve and develop waterfowl hunting access via vehicle and/or foot travel corridors to allow transportation of boats and gear to designated drop-off sites and/or launch area, including opening shorelines, placement of rock, plank, or landing mat ramps combined with mowed turn around sites at the water's edge.

Strategy 2.2: Coordinate with local US Fish and Wildlife Service units to inventory Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges to identify opportunities to improve, develop, and maintain waterfowl hunting access via vehicle and/or foot travel corridors to allow transportation of boats and gear to

designated drop-off sites and/or launch area, including opening shorelines, placement of rock, plank, or landing mat ramps combined with mowed turn around sites at the water's edge.

Strategy 2.3: Promote GFP's Public Hunting Land Recorder portal as a means of allowing hunters an opportunity to suggest specific public lands and waters where waterfowl hunting access improvements and development could take place.

Strategy 2.4: Conduct outreach and engagement programs targeted at local waterfowl interest groups (e.g. sportsman's clubs, Ducks Unlimited Chapters, Delta Waterfowl Chapters, etc.) to promote waterfowl hunting access strategies for private lands, assist with identifying local public lands and waters where waterfowl hunting access improvements and development could take place, and to assist GFP financially and through volunteer workdays with developing waterfowl access improvements on public lands.

Strategy 2.5: Support acquisition of additional public lands as Game Production Areas and Waterfowl Production Areas where waterfowl habitat and waterfowl hunting opportunities can be emphasized.

Objective 3: Annually, maintain existing waterfowl access points, trails, decoy drop points, and ramps.

Strategy 3.1: Annually mow waterfowl trails, ramps, decoy drop points, and parking lots to ensure adequate access by the public.

Strategy 3.2: Inspect and add gravel or other aggregate material where needed on trails and ramps.

Strategy 3.3: Replace missing signage, including trail markers, to guide public use of waterfowl access areas.

Objective 4: Annually, prior to the hunting seasons, update GIS map layers with any additions or changes to enhanced waterfowl access sites, trails, and features while continuing to provide mapped sites to users in an interactive online map format.

Strategy 4.1: Update the authoritative water access point layer and access trails line layer to add any missing or undocumented access points and trails. Evaluate and update existing points to determine suitability as a waterfowl access site. Map any undocumented enhanced waterfowl access sites. Evaluate existing access trails and map any undocumented access

trails. New access sites or trails will be entered by field staff or supervisors as soon as they become available.

Strategy 4.2: Offer the public mapped sites, trails, and features via an interactive online public map product(s). Products may include the public hunting atlas, public water access guide, standalone web maps, or static print and/or digital maps for distribution.

Funding the Need

Current hunting access efforts managed and operated by GFP (e.g. Game Production Area operation, maintenance, and development activities and private land hunting access programs) are funded using a combination of hunting license funds and Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration grant funds. Additionally, the Habitat Stamp provides funds directed towards hunting access improvements on both private and public lands. While these same funding sources may also be limited in their scope and application based on the specific improvements and developments being proposed, ownership of the lands involved, available delivery capacity, and long-term operation and maintenance of such improvements, GFP will continue to direct resources to developing and maintaining waterfowl hunting access opportunities to both public and private lands. Rather than identifying a specific amount of time and resources to devote to enhancing waterfowl access opportunities, GFP remains committed to putting enough resources forward to address the needs and opportunities identified jointly by GFP staff and the waterfowl hunters whom such developments benefit most.

Marketing and Outreach Efforts

Ensuring awareness of waterfowl hunting access opportunities created through efforts outlined in this plan is critical for its success. Communication efforts will be directed specifically to waterfowl hunters but also include other outdoor users and GFP staff using social media and targeted emails.

See strategies 2.3, 2.4, and 4.2

2023-2025 Plan Period Accomplishments

This section reviews the 2023-2025 plan period objectives and provides information as to what was completed to meet those objectives.

Objective 1: By December 2025, increase and improve waterfowl hunting access opportunities on private lands by an additional 25,000 acres.

Accomplishments -

Staff enrolled and added approximately 54,000 acres of hunting access in eastern South Dakota during the last plan period. This was over double what was set for an objective.

Of those additional acres that were added, 31,000 acres were added to the COOP access program that is focused on field hunting opportunities for waterfowl. Approximately 6,000 acres were added to the James River Watershed CREP bringing that program's total enrollment acreage to 86,000. In the Big Sioux River Watershed, 3,600 acres were added to that CREP program which now has 4,600 acres enrolled. Acres enrolled in the CREP program in both watersheds offer wetlands and other waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Objective 2: By December 2025, increase and improve waterfowl hunting access opportunities and infrastructure at an additional 20 sites on public lands and waters.

Accomplishments – During the 2023-2025 plan period 23 different areas were developed for waterfowl access opportunities in 15 different counties. This included adding 24 primitive rock ramps for small watercraft to launch. A large majority of these sites had gravel access trails and parking areas developed as part of the project. Additional projects included leasing private land for a public water access on the James River with improved access feature development as well as improvement of a township road to allow vehicles to travel to a GPA that provides good waterfowl hunting.

Objective 3: By the start of the 2023 hunting seasons, map all existing enhanced waterfowl access sites and trails, and provide mapped sites to users in an interactive online map format.

Accomplishments – Staff updated and added any missing or undocumented waterfowl access features to the GIS authoritative water access point layer and access trails line layer. They evaluated and updated existing points to determine suitability as a waterfowl access site. Any new waterfowl access sites, trails, and features were entered in this layer by field staff or supervisors as soon as they became available.

Using the GIS authoritative water access point layer and access trails line layer, GIS staff created an online interactive waterfowl access map that is available to the public that can be found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/maps/>

Other notable accomplishments with marketing and outreach included social media posts on new projects that were completed. Annually, just prior to the waterfowl hunting season, a GFP email is distributed on the seasons that includes information about the waterfowl access sites and a link to the online interactive map. Including this information in the email is an effort to promote those waterfowl access sites, so all hunters are aware of those opportunities.

Literature Cited:

DJ Case & Associates, & U.S. Geological Survey. (2017). 2017 survey of waterfowl hunters in South Dakota. Report submitted to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, October 2017. Mishawaka, IN: DJ Case & Associates.



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Agenda Item #17



ANR Connections

The ANR Connections program provides early-career Ag & Natural Resources professionals with a sense of belonging and the skills to build a satisfying career in South Dakota. Our mission is to build career confident professionals through a variety of curriculum experiences.

June - October, 2025

Program curriculum will be delivered through an online course, weekly Zoom meetings, presenters and participation in hands-on agricultural activities. The timeline of this curriculum follows the growing season of major crops and livestock grown in South Dakota from planting and birth to harvesting.

Registration

- Cost: \$100
- Limited spots available.



[https://extension.sdstate.edu/
anr-connections](https://extension.sdstate.edu/anr-connections)

Topics

- Crop Production
- Cover Crops
- Rangeland, Pasture and Hayland
- Confined Feeding Operations
- Pesticide Use
- Water Resources
- Conservation Practices
- Community Engagement
- Farm Business Management
- Producer Advisor and Consultants
- Supporting Organizations
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Field Days

Contact Information

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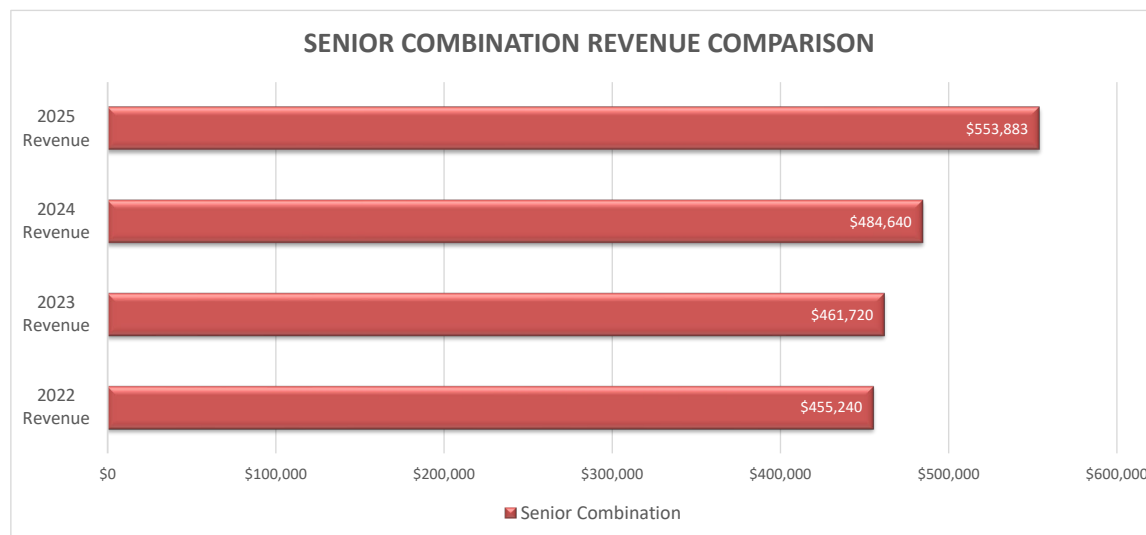
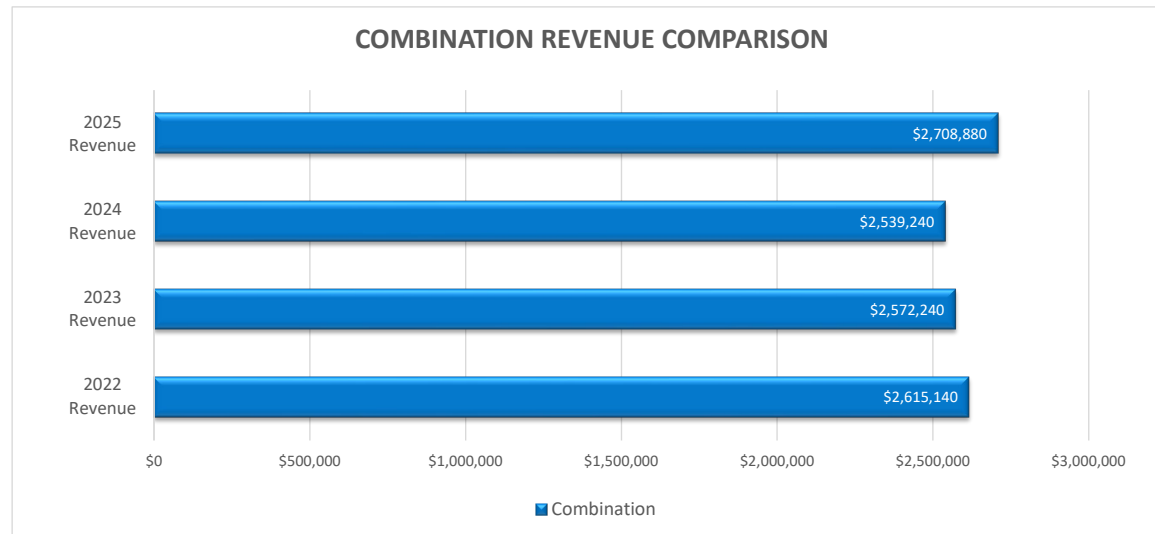
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MC-03712-02

COMBINATION LICENSES

December 15 - November 30

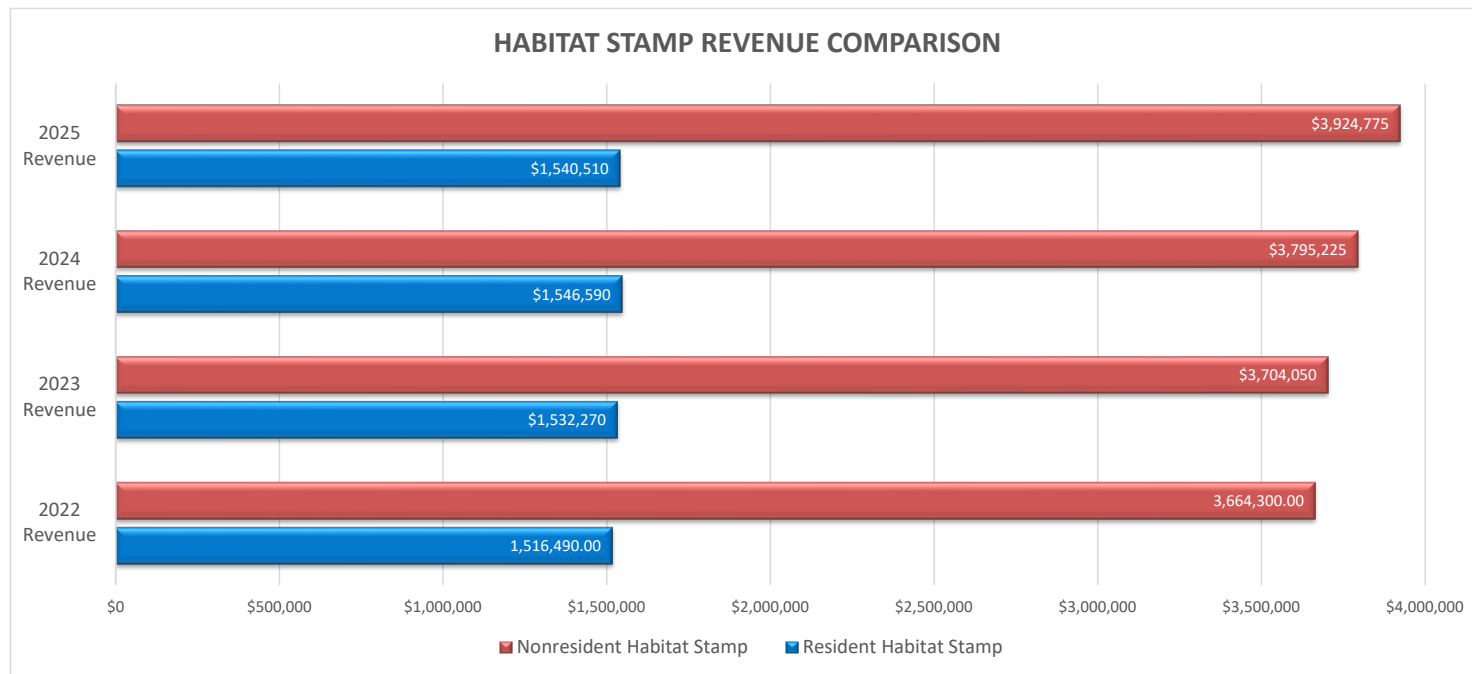
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Combination	47,548	46,768	46,168	46,828	45,148	\$2,708,880	(1,020)	(1,680)	\$169,640	\$133,340	-4%
Senior Combination	11,381	11,543	12,116	11,680	12,881	\$553,883	765	1,201	\$69,243	\$86,683	10%
Combination License Totals	58,929	58,311	58,284	58,508	58,029	\$3,262,763	(255)	(479)	\$238,883	\$220,023	-1%



HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - November 30

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Resident Habitat Stamp	151,649	153,227	154,659	153,178	154,051	\$1,540,510	(608)	873	(\$33,440)	\$47,997	1%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	146,572	148,162	151,809	148,848	156,991	\$3,924,775	5,182	8,143	\$207,280	\$325,733	5%
Habitat Stamp Totals	298,221	301,389	306,468	302,026	311,042	\$5,465,285	4,574	9,016	\$173,840	\$373,730	3%

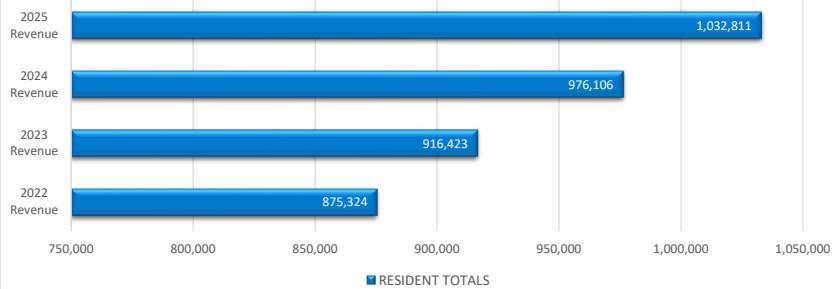


SMALL GAME LICENSES

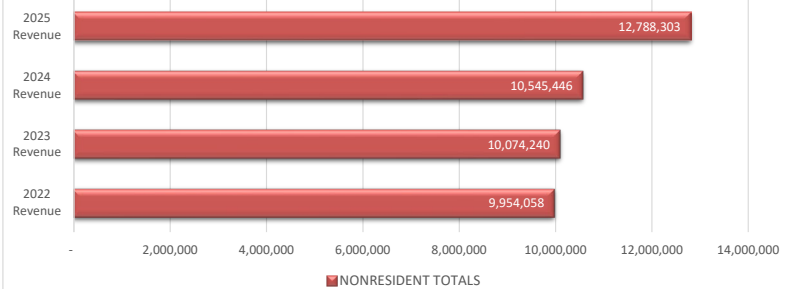
December 15 - November 30

License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change	
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
Small Game	18,097	19,648	21,231	19,659	20,820	\$749,520	(411)	1,161	\$48,897	\$100,784	6%
1-Day Small Game	864	782	849	832	987	\$14,805	138	155	\$4,617	\$4,825	19%
Youth Small Game	5,963	5,984	6,256	6,068	5,822	\$29,110	(434)	(246)	(\$2,170)	(\$2,948)	-4%
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	933	\$4,665	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Furbearer	3,599	3,327	3,511	3,479	3,589	\$111,259	78	110	\$5,929	\$6,889	3%
Predator/Varmint	2,004	1,866	1,632	1,834	1,452	\$8,712	(180)	(382)	\$552	(\$458)	-21%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	1,408	1,759	1,453	1,540	1,115	\$5,575	(338)	(425)	(\$1,690)	(\$2,125)	-28%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	22,582	22,160	22,652	22,465	21,833	\$109,165	(819)	(632)	(\$4,095)	(\$3,158)	-3%
RESIDENT TOTALS	54,517	55,526	57,584	55,876	56,551	\$1,032,811	(1,033)	167	\$52,040	\$103,809	0.30%
Small Game	71,151	72,485	76,332	73,323	78,166	\$11,099,572	1,834	4,843	\$1,863,400	\$2,227,529	7%
Youth Small Game	3,052	3,100	3,257	3,136	2,972	\$29,720	(285)	(164)	(\$2,850)	(\$1,643)	-5%
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	472	\$4,720	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	1,122	1,013	1,006	1,047	1,127	\$56,350	121	80	\$10,074	\$8,188	8%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	13,576	12,907	12,871	13,118	13,437	\$1,289,952	566	319	\$311,756	\$292,984	2%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	359	295	272	309	339	\$49,494	67	30	\$16,582	\$12,145	10%
Furbearer	4	3	6	4	6	\$1,950	0	2	\$300	\$758	38%
Predator/Varmint	4,145	4,244	4,281	4,223	4,710	\$216,660	429	487	\$45,420	\$47,727	12%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	370	544	540	485	487	\$2,435	(53)	2	(\$265)	\$12	0%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	3,738	7,205	8,746	6,563	7,962	\$39,810	(784)	1,399	(\$3,920)	\$6,995	21%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	97,517	101,796	107,311	102,208	109,678	\$12,790,663	2,367	6,998	\$2,240,497	\$2,594,695	6.85%
COMBINED TOTALS	152,034	157,322	164,895	158,084	166,229	\$13,823,474	1,334	8,145	\$2,292,537	\$2,698,504	5.15%

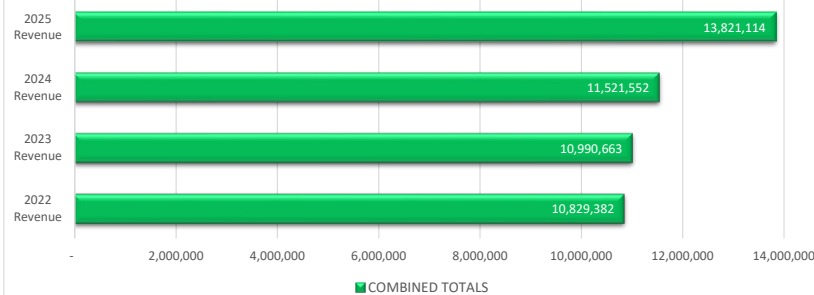
RESIDENT HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



NONRESIDENT HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



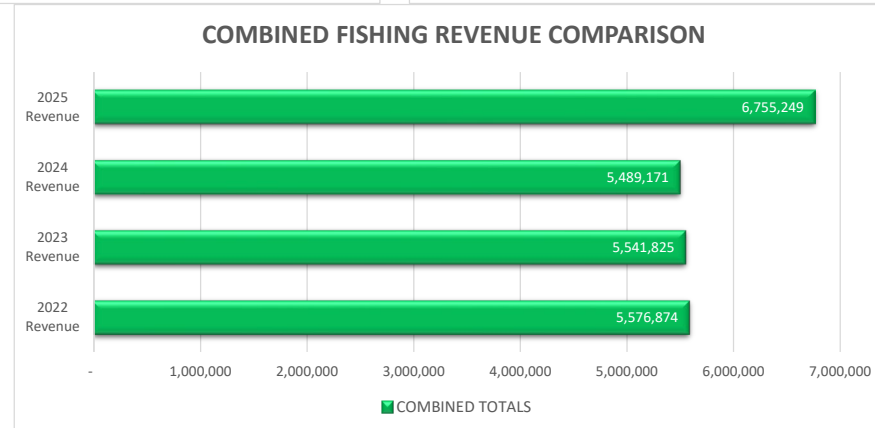
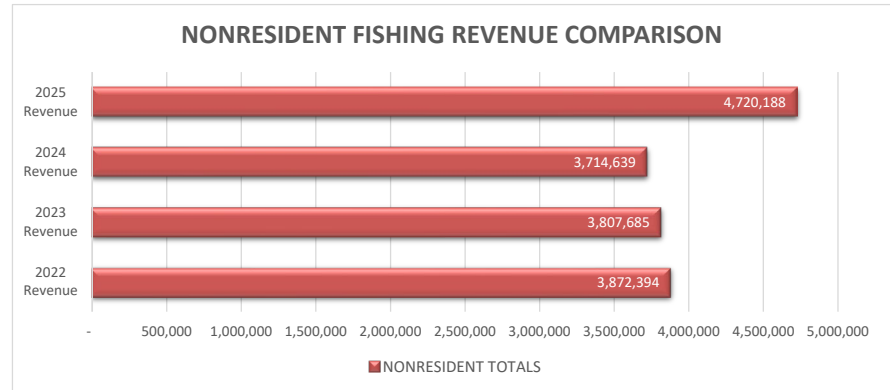
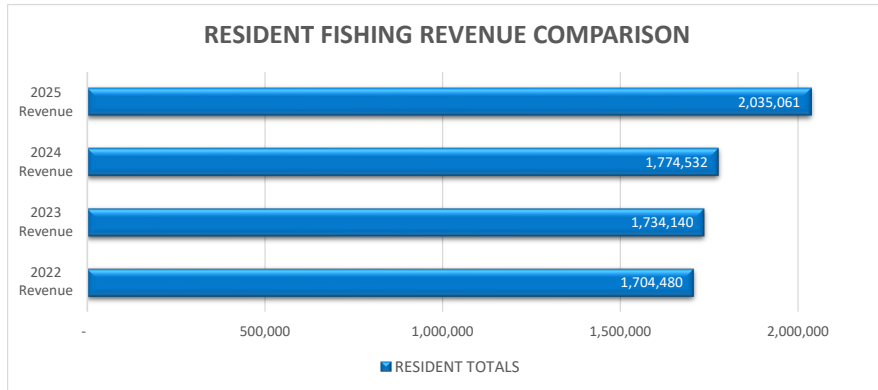
COMBINED HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



FISHING LICENSES

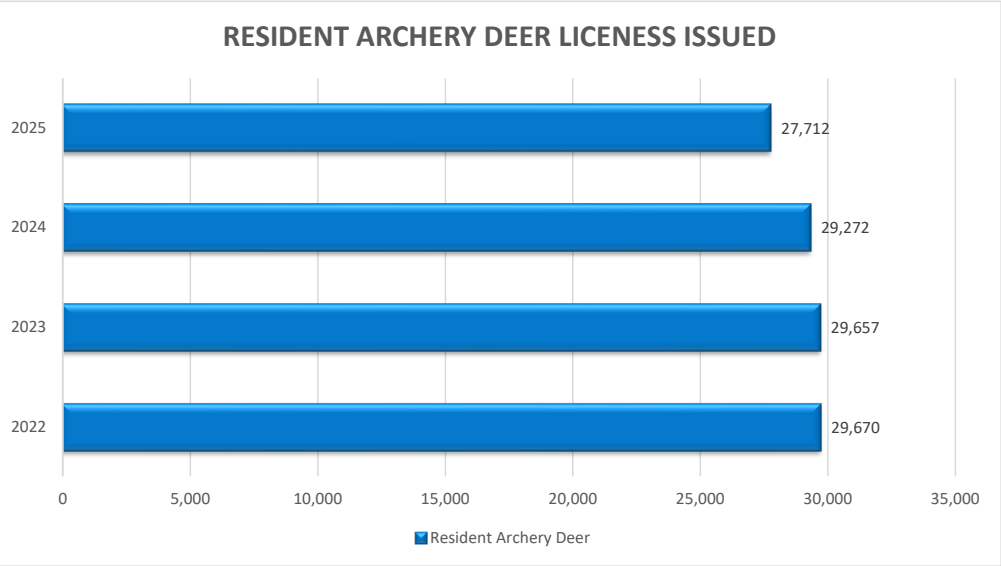
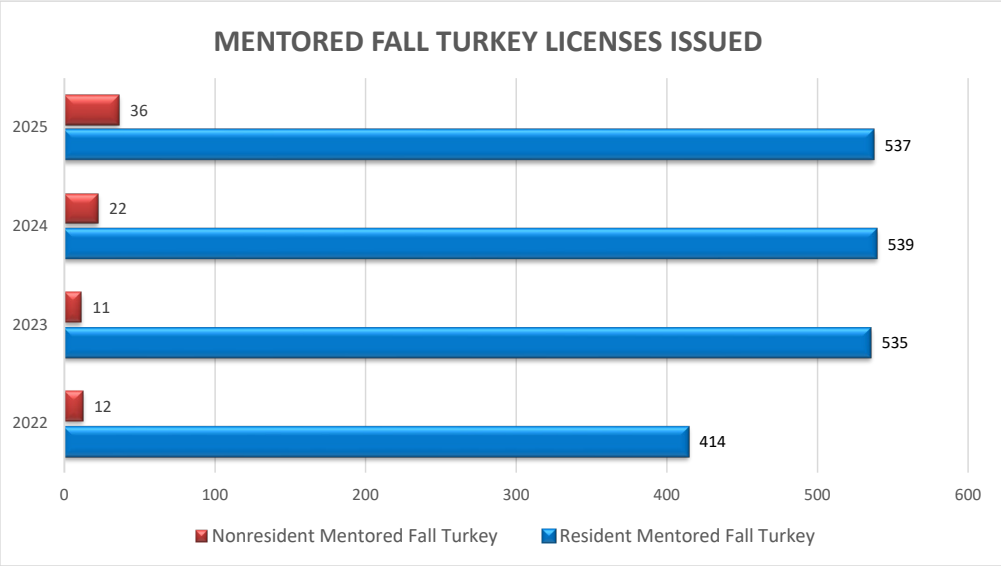
December 15 - November 30

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
1-Day Fishing	6,535	7,041	7,875	7,150	7,205	\$72,050	(670)	55	\$9,050	\$14,847	1%
Annual Fishing	53,194	53,951	55,019	54,055	55,685	\$1,726,235	666	1,630	\$185,703	\$212,704	3%
Senior Fishing	13,564	13,932	14,250	13,915	13,928	\$236,776	(322)	13	\$65,776	\$69,792	0%
RESIDENT TOTALS	73,293	74,924	77,144	75,120	76,818	\$2,035,061	-326	1,698	\$260,529	\$297,344	2.26%
1-Day Fishing	37,682	36,908	37,012	37,201	26,683	\$693,758	(10,329)	(10,518)	\$101,566	\$98,547	-28%
3-Day Fishing	18,822	18,679	18,352	18,618	21,222	\$954,990	2,870	2,604	\$275,966	\$266,136	14%
Annual Fishing	38,404	37,702	36,469	37,525	38,393	\$3,071,440	1,924	868	\$628,017	\$557,265	2%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	94,908	93,289	91,833	93,343	86,298	\$4,720,188	(5,535)	(7,045)	\$1,005,549	\$921,949	-7.55%
COMBINED TOTALS	168,201	168,213	168,977	168,464	163,116	\$6,755,249	(5,861)	(5,348)	\$1,266,078	\$1,219,292	-3.17%



2025 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Resident Mentored Fall Turkey	414	535	539	496	537	\$2,685	(2)	41	(\$10)	\$205	8%
Nonresident Mentored Fall Turkey	12	11	22	15	36	\$360	14	21	\$140	\$210	140%
Resident Mentored Deer	6,435	6,555	6,526	6,505	4,236	\$21,180	(2,290)	(2,269)	(\$11,450)	(\$11,347)	-35%
Nonresident Mentored Deer	175	241	317	244	387	\$3,870	70	143	\$700	\$1,427	58%
Resident Archery Deer	29,670	29,657	29,272	29,533	27,712	1,160,645	(1,560)	(1,821)	\$87,765	\$81,518	-6%
Nonresident Archery Deer Private Only	n/a	2,237	2,376	2,007	2,213	829,163	(163)	n/a	\$149,627	n/a	n/a



Public Comments

Chronic Wasting Disease Action Plan

Paul Svenkeson

Hotsprings SD

Position: other

Comment:

Please stop feeding the deer and let Natural selection run its coarse as a means to cull the herd of the sick animals.

Peter Makoweski

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

The CWD problem has now been around for many years, and most likely longer than we know., since the recent reliable testing has only recently been accepted. The state has done what most other states have done to control the spread and yet the problem is still there. There are no known treatments to controlling the prions that cause this condition. The only natural control of these prions are environmental factors. We can't control this and yet we keep spending the GFP dollars to control what can't be eliminated only curtail the spread what is now being done.

Other

Aaron Lewandowski

Waubay SD

Position: other

Comment:

I think we need to cut tags in South west Robert County deer numbers are way down. U need to work with the tribe in sisseton sd and have them cut back

Mike Kluth

Mount Vernon SD

Position: other

Comment:

What are we doing to control the EHD out breaks every year? I have never in my life seen the amount of deer that have died since 2012 when I first heard of EHD. And the population just keeps getting less and less every year. I have 20

Cell cameras out and I am lucky if I get 10

Deer pictures in a night. Years prior I have had to change batteries in my camera this year I have not.

Mark Boddicker

Hermosa SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see in the CWD Management report state that the State of SD's Disease Control is doing further research to find a cure for CWD.

I also believe this is critical to SD tourism and the Dept. of Tourism should help pay for this research.

Justin Newton

Lennox SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Topic is CWD.

I oppose the state getting involved with CWD. How about we allocate funds towards fixing a much larger problem like EHD. I come from a CWD county in MN where they literally brought in sharpshooters to decimate the population and it took at least 10-15 years to recover. I don't know how a disease like CWD can even be talked about right now when EHD has been massacring deer populations in South Dakota. Less deer = less disease. Right now the deer populations are horrible after the last 2 years of EHD so I'm not sure how CWD is even on anyone's radar. Deer that have CWD can live up to 6-7 years old. EHD kills 90% of deer immediately. How can we be so blind to the actual problems that exist. I see gfp is saying this CWD issue is important because it will affect hunters, photographers, etc. EHD is affecting these groups of people a whole hell of a lot more.

Ban gravity feeders all you want, that I have no issue with. I'd also ban mineral blocks and when doing so please ban it from being sold in the stores to people without some sort of livestock farming identification card.

Bring some deer genetics from southern states to stop the EHD problem. Put money towards researching other solutions.

- If a house with a squeaky door is on fire. You don't fix the squeaky door till you put out the fire or the fire will end up fixing the squeak for you.

Rob Neuenfeldt

Flandreau SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

CWD has been around for decades and the deer populations keep increasing. Why are ALL the cervids not dead in Colorado by now??

Completely opposed to CWD regulation without better scientific proof.

Troy Becker

White Lake SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am talking about the CWD and not feeding deer. Is the SDGFP going to listen to what they are preaching about the feed of the deer? I know that they buy hay and feed hay to different winter deer herds across the state. This should stop as you are pulling deer from miles away to a location with other deer in winter herds spreading disease. Two hay areas that you give hay to they do not allow hunting. You are pulling deer from other hunters areas and some deer don't return and you are submitting them all to different diseases.

Sam Benne

Rapid City SK

Position: oppose

Comment:

The raise in lease fees at Angostura is unnecessarily high at 5.4% and to take that into future lease years seems to be a grab at additional fees that are not justified. Why would the rate be set at 5.4% when inflation has been decreasing

Drew Carlson

Fargo ND

Position: other

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Eugene Opbroek

Spearfish SD

Position: other

Comment:

I do a lot of hunting all on public land. I don't understand why the GF&P pays farmers and ranchers for walk-in areas that have no cover for wildlife and have virtually no wildlife on them. I have hunted the same walk in areas for years and I have never seen any wildlife on them. I hunt predators year round so it is not that the wildlife uses the areas on a seasonal basis. Are these areas ever checked for the amount of cover, food, water etc. for wildlife or is it a deal if you are getting paid one year you will continually get paid every year. Are they checked by GF&P officials or is this left entirely up to the landowner. Looks like a lot of abuse and waste of money that could be spent elsewhere.

Karen Haynes

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

To Members of the Commission

I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to the Nest Predator Program for the following reasons:

- There is no scientific evidence of any benefit whatsoever. Our neighboring states have abandoned nest predator programs which they conducted due to a number of reasons, including citizen votes against it as in Iowa. Additionally, other states found that scientific evidence did not support the continuation of the program.
- At \$10 per animal tail, the cost is extreme and clearly not sustainable. Ideally, children should be learning about ecosystems and the role that each individual plays in those systems and not killing animals for money. That just sounds so very wrong.
- Since it's implantation approximately 350,000 animals have been killed. With the program starting each year in the spring, many offspring are left unable to survive after the parent is killed.
- The best way to ensure survival of ground nesting birds is habitat protection and that is not being sufficiently emphasized when the focus is on the elimination of predators.

In conclusion, I suggest that South Dakota follow the lead of our neighboring states and abandon this cruel and senseless program.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: support

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

We submit a formal letter in opposition to the Nest Predator Bounty Program. We ask you to terminate it's funding for 2026. This letter will likely end up towards the bottom of the public comment section, as formal letters are normally placed there.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm St.
Black Hawk, SD
605-787-6466

It is Sunday night and written comments are due, but you don't have the agenda published on "Current Meeting" web page.. You all should publish the agenda before the written comment deadline, so we know what actions you might be considering

I oppose the Nest Predator Bounty Program. I believe it is a prime example of FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE.

It is fraud because GFP in 2019 knew statewide bounty programs wouldn't work. Your Ring Neck Pheasant Management Plan at that time advised against predator control and preferred habitat management.

You have wasted probably 5 million dollars over 7 years on an in effective program, at least with regards to protection of ground nesting birds.

You maintain trapping is recreation, when it is really done to raise money or protect gardens/livestock/property. Why do we need to spend state dollars bribing people to engage in a business endeavor.

It is abuse because of all the dead animals who suffered in traps for up to 3 and a partial days west River and 2 and a partial day east River and all their dependent young who starve to death, die of thirst or are preyed upon. There was no valid justification for this suffering.

Thanks Nancy

Paula Vonweller

Deadwood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am adamantly opposed to the nest predator bounty program because it has failed to protect ground-nesting birds. The staggering \$4.5–5 million poured into this initiative in recent years could have made a meaningful impact if invested in habitat restoration and protection—measures that actually strengthen bird populations. Instead, this program wastes public money on the indiscriminate and inhumane killing of 50,000 mammals every year, relying on outdated and unacceptable practices.

Wildlife Action Plan

Heath Weavill

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to see this action plan include both CWD and EHD response, treatment and preventative measures.

Dustin Sperlich

Lennox SD

Position: support

Comment:

Chronic Wasting Disease continues to challenge deer herds across the Midwest, but there are several practical steps our state can take to help slow its spread and protect future hunting opportunities. One of the most effective strategies used by wildlife agencies is to reduce the number of older deer within infected areas. Mature bucks carry CWD at much higher rates than younger deer, and they travel more widely during the rut, increasing the chance of moving the disease across the landscape. By encouraging targeted harvest of older deer—through additional tags, extended seasons, or management-zone regulations—our state can lower disease prevalence, slow transmission, and help stabilize long-term herd health.

Beyond harvest strategy, there are several other tools we can adopt to limit environmental contamination and deer-to-deer exposure. These include tightening carcass-transport rules from known CWD areas, providing clear and convenient disposal sites for high-risk parts, expanding hunter-harvest testing opportunities, and reducing practices that unnaturally congregate deer, such as baiting and feeding. Coupled with good communication between landowners, hunters, and wildlife managers, these steps create a science-based approach that supports both conservation and our hunting heritage. With the right combination of targeted harvest and smart management, we can keep our deer herd strong for generations to come.

Mitch Mehlhaf

Menno SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

EHD is 100x the problem that CWD will ever be.

Check out all the research that says that CWD prions do not degrade in any kind of timely fashion in the soil.

We will never dream of controlling CWD much less eradicating it.

South Dakota deer numbers are what they are for one reason and that is EHD. I'll never understand why our government officials can't understand that. Year after year total deer herds decimated up to 90% while deer with CWD can live out their entire life cycles be harvested and consumed safely or even die of old age.

Wake up and start using our license fees and tax money effectively!!!!

Mike Jarding

Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Supplement deer feeding needs to stop. What more proof do you need. Deer feeders spread CWD. We can't stop the disease, but we can slow the spread. SDGFP biologist indicated last meeting that deer feeding is one of the biggest CWD spreaders. please make a regulation to stop supplement feeding deer.

Ross Wright

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

Please make it a law to stop supplemental feeding of deer and other cervids in South Dakota to slow the spread of CWD. This practice is leading to the urbanization and human habituation of deer statewide while facilitating the spread of this disease. If the department were to outlaw this practice, it would help spread deer and other cervids out, slow the spread of CWD, and keep game out of urban areas where they can not usually be legally or safely harvested by hunters.

Christopher Kessler

Brandon SD

Position: support

Comment:

The number of archery and rifle tags allocated to hunters, resident and non resident alike should be cut period. Archery tags especially because the season runs for an extended period of time. At least until deer numbers can rebound in the affected areas of our state.

Keep a ban on harvesting the does in those counties until the numbers increase. In the areas of the state that have the most severe population loss, or eliminating a season all together to give the deer a chance. People will be ok not shooting a deer for a year or two in specific areas affected by EHD and CWD.

Best regards, Chris Kessler

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
November 30th, 2025

SD Game, Fish and Parks Commission
523 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 5701

Dear SD GFP Commissioners.

Please revoke your approval of the Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP) . Please do not continue it's 2026 funding.

Nest Predator Bounty Program Doesn't Work - Habitat Improvement Does

Kristi Noem during her 2018 campaign for governor promised a predator control program to protect pheasants. It is questionable if nest predator bounty programs work to protect ground nesting birds.

In 2019 the SDGFP had the Management Plan for Ring Necked Pheasants. 2016-2020 (<https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/pheasant-mngmnt-planpdf.pdf>) Page 11 of the Plan is about predator control. It concludes:

"We recommend that habitat management be used as the primary tool to encourage pheasant population growth (see pheasant habitat best management practices section of this plan). Predation likely has an exaggerated impact on pheasant populations where sub-optimal habitat exists. Where predator control may be considered as a management option, managers should be aware that cost, logistics, and lack of effectiveness often limit success when compared to habitat management."

We wonder why SDGFP did not follow the direction of it's management plan in 2019.

The impacts of the Nest Predator Bounty Program's statewide bounty are too diffuse. The number of predators the Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP) killed in 2019, when overlapped with pheasant range, was 1.07 predators killed per square mile of their range. We provide a link to a 2020 letter submitted to SDGFP Commission, by Larry Fredrickson, a former Pheasant Research Biologist and State Furbearer Biologist (1960-1996) Chamberlain, SD. He objects to the Program and explains in 2 and a fifth pages, why this bounty program won't work to enhance pheasant populations: https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Fredrickson.2.16.2020_LettersNPBP-Public_Comments_2020.pdf

Improvement of habitat enhances ground nesting bird's nesting success & populations. Habitat improvement reduces predation on the birds. Habitat improvements get matching funds, thus doubling or tripling the impacts.

If your goal is to help increase bird populations, habitat improvement not predator control is the best investment.

Trapping Promotion

SDGFP will try to defuse arguments about the NPBP' effectiveness at protecting birds, by explaining you are also trying to recruit persons, especially youth, to become trappers. Nothing in the statute that gives authority for GFP's bounty programs ([SDCL 40-36-9](#)) enables GFP to use bounties to bribe persons to become hunters or trappers.

There was substantial public comment in opposition in 2019 & 2020, to the NPBP with at least 90% of commentators opposed to the bounty program. In 2020 the Commission responded by reducing the bounty bribe from \$10/tail to \$5/tail. In 2020 the number of tails submitted was cut about in half. \$5/tail was not enough to entice to the desired levels of trapping participation. GFP promptly reverted to the earlier \$10 bounty bribe.

SDGFP provides a leasing agreement, that people who want to reserve a room at Outdoor Campus West must sign. On the second page of the agreement is the following statement, that applicants must agree with if they want to reserve a room: "Groups using the room must be clubs or organizations that(c) support and promote fish and wildlife conservation/management which recognizes that hunting, fishing and trapping are highly coveted recreational activities and important tools of wildlife management;" (yellow emphasis added). (Link to room rental policy - <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Room-Policy-2022-2023-.pdf>)

So SDGFP wants groups to affirm trapping is a **"highly coveted recreational activity"**, while it also justifies spending probably 5 million over 7 years to bribe people to trap. If it is a "highly coveted recreation activity, why is a \$5 bounty inadequate to turn out trappers? Are they in it for recreation or are they motivated by money earned? Why do we have to spend so much treasure to bribe people to trap, an activity that GFP wants OCW room renters to affirm is a **"highly coveted recreational activity"**?

Prairie Hills Audubon Society has opposed the Nest Predator Bounty Program since its' inception.
Thanks



Nancy Hilding
President ,
Prairie Hills Audubon Society