



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

JANUARY 8-9, 2026 | PIERRE, SD
RAMKOTA CONVENTION CENTER

MEETING INFO

This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.

Date and Time: January 8, 2026, from 1-5 pm CST and January 9, 2026, from 8 am-12 pm CST

Meeting Location: Ramkota Convention Center, 920 West Sioux 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. License List Request
 - a. Request #1
 - b. Request #2
5. Election of Officers

Informational Items

6. 2026 Legislative Session
7. Staff Introductions

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.

Proposals

8. Public Water Zoning and Iron Creek Lake Access Improvements
9. Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge
10. Hunt for Habitat



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Division of Parks and Recreation

Informational Items

11. Custer State Park Storm Damage Update
12. Custer State Park R&M Project Update 2025 and 2026 Plan
13. Adventure 250: Make Your History
14. 2025 Year End Revenue and Camping Reports

Division of Wildlife

Action Items

15. CWD Action Plan Adoption
16. Bighorn Sheep Auction License
17. Turkey Hunter Recruitment License

Informational Items

18. Chronic Wasting Disease and Hemorrhagic Disease
19. Limited Draw Returned License Policy
20. Lake Oahe Fishery Update
21. Elk Action Plan
22. Canada Goose Action Plan
23. WDM Action Plan
24. License Sales Report

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 March 5-6, 2026 starting at 1 pm CST at the State Library Commons, in Pierre, SD.



Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

December 4, 2025 | South Dakota State Capitol Building, Room 414, Pierre, SD

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the South Dakota State Capitol Building on December 4, 2025. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Jon Locken, and Travis Theel, Jim White, and Julie Bartling were present. Commissioner Travis Bies was present online. With seven 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 42 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 the November 2025 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 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 additional days were submitted for approval.

4. 2026 Commission Schedule [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for the approval of 2026 commission meeting schedule.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE 2026 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE. The motion carried unanimously.

5. New Staff Introductions [Info Item]

Director Kirschenmann introduced two new staff to the Division of Wildlife: Nick Donnelly, Wildlife Damage Specialist, Chamberlain Office; and Mitchell Ulrich, Habitat Conservation Technician, Chamberlain Office.

6. Recognition for Meritorious Actions [Info Item]

Law Enforcement Deputy Chief Brandon Gust, along with District Conservation Officer Supervisor Tim McCurdy and Conservation Officer Austin Norton provided overviews of two lifesaving incidents from this past June. Individuals recognized for their life saving efforts included Richard Rausch, Jeff Oertel, Greg Kautman, Fredrick Walter, and Darren Walter.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 1:17 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance and online in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda, not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda. At that time, there was no one wanting to speak in person or online. The Open Forum was again opened at 2:05 pm CST.

2:07 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually in opposition of the nest predator bounty program.



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

7. Angostura 2-Year Rate Extension on BOR Property Cabins

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator, followed up from the November meeting and requested approval of a 2-year rate structure for the private, exclusive use cabins 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 provided a copy of the letter sent to all Angostura notifying them of the plan and requested approval of a 5.4% rate increase for the next two years which would result in a 2026 rate of \$3,130 and a 2027 rate of \$3,300.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE RATE EXTENSION. The motion carried unanimously.

8. City of Pierre Lease Agreement

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator presented an amendment document to extend the GFP's current lease to the City of Pierre for the waterfront property. Blanchette discussed the history of property ownership and current lease and provided maps and supporting information regarding storm damage at the local marina. The lease term extension was requested by the City to satisfy funding requirement of the marina owners for the costs of reconstruction. Blanchette explained that the Department reviewed the existing lease agreement and factored the City's management of the property and their partnership with GFP and regardless of the reason for the timing of the request, ultimately supports a continued lease the property to the City on a long-term basis and recommendation of the extension. Blanchette requested Commission approval of the Amendment document.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Central Region Capital Development Projects

[Info Item: Parks]

Regional Park Supervisor Pat Buscher provided an update on the Park's central region capital development projects that were completed in 2025 or are actively working towards completion. The presentation emphasized the Game, Fish & Park's staff lead projects, with the majority of work being completed by skilled park staff. All ARPA projects completed were addressed plus the additional highway and electrical work completed. Pat also spoke about upcoming CD projects in 2026 that should also be expected. Highlighting the Snake Creek modern cabin, West Bend comfort station expansion and shoreline restoration project.

10. LWCF 2026 Apportionment and Project Selection

[Info Item: Parks]

Kerri Richards, Grants Coordinator, presented the recipients of the 2026 LWCF apportionments. South Dakota received a record-breaking \$3.61 million in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) apportionment for FY2025—an increase of 31% over the previous year. Of this total, \$1,762,500 was allocated for 2026 State Projects, and \$973,365 was designated for local community projects. The remaining funds were set aside for future state projects and/or potential cost increases. This significant increase in funding was made possible through enhanced federal appropriations, the release of previously sequestered funds, and updated population-based formulas.



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In 2025, the state received 35 applications requesting a combined \$5.87 million in federal funding. From these, 12 projects were awarded, totaling \$973,365 in federal support. These projects span a wide range of community improvements, including new playgrounds, splash pads, ADA-compliant facilities, and park revitalizations. Letters are currently enroute to notify these cities of their awards.

The impact of LWCF funding in South Dakota is substantial, these investments strengthen South Dakota's outdoor recreation network and improve quality of life across the state.

11. Construction Partnership with the Aberdeen School District

[Info Items: Parks]

Regional Park Supervisor William Collignon provided an update on the partnership Camping Cabins build project with Aberdeen Central High School's ATEC Academy. ATEC is utilizing student training time in the classroom to teach students skills about residential construction and then provide those two cabins to the Game, Fish & Parks for placement at Roy Lake State Park for the cost of the materials to build the cabins. Also, ATEC is using this cabin build as a project for the Media Production students and a clip from project and student interviews was shared with the commission.

12. November Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the November monthly and year-to-date report numbers for the Division of Parks & Recreation related to camping units and revenue. November camping units were down 5% for the month and 5% YTD. The Parks Division revenue is up 7% overall for the month of November and 16% YTD. Park entrance license sales remain very strong especially daily license sales in general at Custer State Park specifically. 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.

13. Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Habitat Program Administrator, Ryan Wendinger, presented accomplishments completed during the past three years in relation to the 2023-2025 Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan. A new revised 2026-2028 Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan was shared along with updated objectives and plans by the department to improve, create and enhance waterfowl hunting opportunities in South Dakota.

14. AIS Summary

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, presented to the Commission a summary of 2025 Aquatic Invasive Species efforts by GFP. A 2025 AIS communications plan was implemented and utilized a variety of methods with the primary message of "Clean, Drain, Dry". Across the state, over 18,000 watercraft inspections were conducted from May-October with a plug compliance rate of approximately 98%. To date in 2025, five waterbodies have been confirmed to be positive for zebra mussels within the state.

15. Winter Ice Access

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Aquatic Habitat and Access Coordinator Jason Jungwirth provided an update on ice fishing access season. The update provided a brief overview of what GFP has for ice fishing access sites around the state, partnerships used, challenges faced, opportunities for ice anglers, and angler resources. Currently there are 240 managed sites around the state that takes partnerships from internal and external entities to make it happen. Mother nature is the biggest challenge to maintaining winter access open from ice heaves to snow depths and wind to location of the access site. The Aquatic Access map on the GFP website is an excellent tool for users to find up to date information on the conditions of each site. The hope is to provide winter recreational opportunities no matter the experience level. Hoping for a fun and safe ice season.



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16. GPA Vegetation Sampling

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Senior Grassland Ecologist Lucas Zilverberg provided an update on his summer work collecting aboveground vegetation data on our Game Production Area grasslands. He highlighted project goals, shared graphs, tables, and photos, and outlined anticipated outcomes to help improve grassland management on our GPAs.

17. SDSU Natural Resource Course

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Eric Magedanz, Senior Wildlife Biologist, introduced the SDSU Agriculture and Natural Resources Connections professional development course and explained the reasons why the course was developed. He introduced the individuals responsible for the overall development of the course, and also reviewed the curriculum and platform used.

John Mayrose, Wildlife Biologist who attended the course, explained why he was interested in taking the training. He described how it was beneficial, what was learned, and how he can apply it to his professional position.

18. License Sales Reports

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann provided the Commissioners an overview of license sales. Only 10 days remain until the current license year concludes and the new license year begins on December 15. Small game license sales remain strong. A full report on the current license year will be provided at the January Commission meeting.

24. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on January 8-9, at the Ramkota Convention Center in Pierre, SD starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY CULL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:58 PM CST ON DECEMBER 4, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary

SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH & PARKS

523 East Capital
Pierre, SD 57501
Chris.Petersen@state.sd.us
(605)773-3396



REQUEST FOR LISTS OF LICENSE HOLDERS

Type of List Requested deer archery license holders associated with private land archery activity at a specific parcel within Sioux Falls city limit ie 425 E twin Oaks Rd, if such records exist

Number of Licenses in list less than a hundred

Name of Person, Entity, or Organization requesting list:
Mary Slattery

Address of Person, Entity, or Organization:

808 e tomar place sfed

Purpose for which list will be used:

public safety accountability and traceability when weapons are discharged in a residential area within SFSD. SFPD confirmed that private land archery activity at a specific residential parcel was authorized but there is no written record identifying the individual hunters associated with that authorization the requested information is sought solely to determine whether the GFP maintains any records that links sissued licenses or special access permits to a specific parcel and authorization, and to clarify how such authorization are documented, verifed or traceable for public safety purposes.

The sale of lists by the Department of Game, Fish & Parks is authorized by SDCL 1-17-1 and ARSD 41:06:01:04, 05 and 06. A fee of \$100 per thousand names will be assessed for the sale of this list, or a minimum of \$100 whichever is greater.

Names will be provided on self-adhesive mailing labels unless otherwise specified. Unless requested and approved as part of this request, the license list will not include anyone under eighteen years of age. Names are for one-time use only and are to be used only by the person, entity or organization approved per this request.

Mary Slattery
Authorized Signature of Purchaser

dec 17 2025
Date

Date of Commission Action

Exhibit G

Concerns about Undocumented Weapon-Discharge Authorization and Administrative Expansion of Private-Land Archery Program

Purpose of This Exhibit

This exhibit analyzes the legal and administrative issues raised by the Sioux Falls Police Department (SFPD) in its responses to Public Records Request JustFOIA #2208-2025, as well as the undated document titled “*Private Land Access Permits in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.*” Particular focus is given to (1) the absence of written authorization required by ordinance for hunters/homeowners (2) the structure and delegation of authority claimed by Sioux Falls Animal Control, and (3) inconsistencies between City ordinance, SFPD FOIA responses, and the Animal Control document.

1. Ordinance Requirements for Authorization and Special Access Permits

City ordinance §§ **90.014** and **133.003(a)(2)** prohibit hunting and the discharge of weapons within city limits unless:

1. **The Chief of Police (or designee) authorizes a specific area, and**
2. **A special access permit is issued by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) for that area.**

These two conditions appear mandatory.
SFPD’s response, however, states:

“Sioux Falls city ordinances do not require a formal written authorization document to be created.”

This position implies that verbal or undocumented approvals may be used to authorize archery hunting inside residential neighborhoods. Such a practice effectively removes the transparency and accountability ordinarily associated with weapons-discharge authorizations and stands in tension with the ordinance’s structure, which contemplates a documented process involving both SFPD and GFP.

2. Lack of Written Authorization or Administrative Records

In response to FOIA, SFPD stated that it:

- Does **not** maintain written authorization records for private-land archery approvals.
- Does **not** maintain parcel-specific harvest data.
- Does **not** maintain neighbor-notification records.
- Does **not** maintain interagency agreements for the 425 E Twin Oaks Rd parcel.

If no written authorization exists and no written permit or GFP special access permit can be located, it is unclear how the required conditions under §§ 90.014 and 133.003(a)(2) were satisfied for the authorization dated “on or about October 15, 2025.”

This lack of documentation raises structural questions regarding:

- Compliance with ordinance,
 - Delegation of authority,
 - Public safety review,
 - Transparency,
 - Record-keeping obligations under SDCL ch. 1-27.
-

3. Administrative Expansion by Animal Control (Undated Document)

An undated document titled “**Private Land Access Permits in Sioux Falls, South Dakota**” outlines a process in which:

- Landowners submit yearly requests to **Sioux Falls Animal Control (SFAC)**.
- Requests are directed specifically to **Animal Control Supervisor Patty Beckman**.
- SFAC and GFP “determine” access for other hunters.
- The City approves parcels “based upon the needs of the City.”
- Hunters must pass GFP lifetime proficiency testing.
- Private parcels may be required to accept additional SFPD depredation activity.

This administrative structure does **not appear in any City ordinance** and represents an expansion of authority that is not clearly grounded in statute, Council action, or published policy.

Further, nothing in SFPD’s FOIA responses indicates:

- That SFPD relies on this Animal Control process,
 - That GFP confirms or supports this structure,
 - That written approvals, safety assessments, or parcel requirements exist as formal policy.
-

4. Absence of Date or Issuance Information on the Animal Control Document

The **Animal Control document contains no date**, no revision history, no approval signature, no policy number, and no departmental header indicating its adoption as an official City policy.

The absence of a date raises the following issues:

1. **Uncertain Origin:**
Without a date, it is unclear when this document was created, whether it predates or postdates the October 2025 authorization at 425 E Twin Oaks Rd, and whether it represents an established policy or a contemporaneous summary prepared in response to recent inquiries.
2. **Lack of Procedural Validity:**
For a municipal program affecting weapons discharge and public safety, written policies are ordinarily dated, approved, and archived.
The absence of these elements makes it unclear whether the document was officially adopted or simply drafted as explanatory guidance.
3. **Potential Post-Event Creation:**
Given SFPD's admission that no written authorization exists and that it does not maintain records relating to the approval process, the undated document may reflect a newly created or recently formalized description of a system that previously operated informally. This possibility is supported by SFPD's statement that private-land authorizations "began generally in approximately 2016" without reference to any governing written framework.
4. **Lack of Reference in FOIA Responses:**
SFPD did not reference this Animal Control process in its formal FOIA response, nor did it produce the document through FOIA; rather, it appears to have been provided through separate communication channels, suggesting it may not be recognized as a formal policy document.

This absence of dating and formal issuance complicates any assertion that this process constitutes an established administrative framework under §§ 90.014 and 133.003(a)(2).

5. Inconsistent Roles Attributed to GFP

The Animal Control document states that GFP:

- Participates in determining which hunters are granted access,
- Administers a lifetime proficiency test for all hunters (including landowners),
- Provides access permits required for private parcels within city limits.

However, in prior correspondence, GFP personnel indicated uncertainty regarding:

- The number of deer in Sioux Falls,
- The distinction between private-land and municipal hunts,
- Their role in parcel-specific authorization,
- Administrative oversight of private-land hunts.

SFPD's FOIA responses reinforce this uncertainty, noting that harvest totals and access permits are maintained by GFP, yet SFPD holds no records of such permits for the Twin Oaks parcel.

This inconsistency supports the need for clarification from GFP regarding:

- Whether any special access permit was issued for 425 E Twin Oaks Rd,
- Whether GFP has delegated any authority to SFAC or Ms. Beckman,
- Whether GFP recognizes the Animal Control document as an operative framework.

6. Conclusion

Based on SFPD's FOIA responses and the undated Animal Control document, the private-land archery authorization system appears to operate:

- Without written authorization from the Chief of Police,
- Without documented GFP special access permits for individual parcels,
- Without a formally adopted administrative policy,
- Without public notice to neighboring residents,
- Without parcel-specific harvest records,
- Without clear delegation of authority by GFP or City ordinance.

These gaps raise significant legal and administrative questions regarding compliance with Sioux Falls City Code, SDCL ch. 1-27, and standard municipal practices for weapons-discharge authorization.

GAME, FISH & PARKS

523 East Capital
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(605)773-3396

Chris.Petersen@state.sd.us

REQUEST FOR LISTS OF LICENSE HOLDERS**Application**

Type of List Requested Non Resident Pheasant

Number of licenses in list 2,000

Name of Person, Entity, or Organization requesting list:

Rock'n Diamond Outdoors / Tom Bottensek

Address of Person, Entity, or Organization:

13658 297th Ave Selby SD 57472

How would you like your list sent to you: (email or disk)

email

Phone Number

920 428 0453

Purpose for which list will be used:

List used for Advertise new Lodge Built in 2025

This list is Names and Mailing Addresses ONLY

The sale of lists by the Department of Game, Fish & Parks is authorized by SDCL 1-27-1 and ARSD 41:06:02:04, 05 and 06. The fee for a Game, Fish & Parks Commission approved exception is \$100, otherwise the fee is \$100 per thousand names or a minimum of \$100 whichever is greater.

Unless requested and approved as part of this request, the license list will not include anyone under eighteen years of age. Names are for one-time use only and are to be used only by the person, entity or organization approved per this request.

Thomas J Bottensek

Authorized Signature of Purchaser

1-2-26

Date

Date of Commission Action

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Public Waters Chapter 41:04:02

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 8-9, 2026	Pierre
	Public Hearing	March 5, 2026	Pierre
	Finalization	March 5-6, 2026	Pierre

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Recommended changes from last year:

1. Amend § 41:04:02:40 to restrict Iron Creek Lake in Lawrence County to a no-wake zone.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Iron Creek Lake and the associated Water Access Area (WAA), located in western Lawrence County, have been publicly owned since the 1930s. The lake was created by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Originally owned by Lawrence County, the property was sold to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) in 1969 for \$1, with the intent of preserving it as a WAA for future generations.

The WAA includes a 24-acre lake (within a 35-acre total area) that serves as a premier fishery for panfish and several trout species, which have been stocked by GFP fisheries staff since 1938. Iron Creek Lake is a small waterbody that attracts a wide range of recreational users, including anglers, paddleboarders, canoeists, and kayakers. Larger watercraft, such as pontoon and fishing boats, are also commonly used by Iron Creek cabin owners.

The owners of the Iron Creek campground and surrounding property (the Sleep family) have requested this regulation change. Their primary concerns are **safety** and **user conflict**. The lake is too small to safely accommodate jet skis or large boats operating at speeds above no-wake.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:04:02:40. Lawrence County public water safety zones. ~~Repealed.~~ Lawrence County public water safety zones are as follows:

- (1) The waters of Iron Creek Lake are a "no wake zone."

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue: On a small 24-acre lake, shoreline erosion and user disturbance are concerns when boats exceed no-wake speeds. During the busy summer months, high-speed activities such as jet skiing or tubing can disrupt shore anglers and non-motorized users, leading to recreational conflicts.
2. Historical Considerations: Current cabin owners, who typically use fishing or pontoon boats, already respect the lake's small size and are expected to support this rule change.
3. Biological Considerations: Reducing wake will help prevent shoreline erosion.

4. Social Considerations: The lake is heavily used in summer by a diverse group of recreators swimmers, paddleboarders, canoeists, kayakers, and anglers.
5. Financial Considerations: NA

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?
Opportunities should remain consistent. Other lakes in Region 1 support high-speed recreation such as tubing, skiing, and jet skiing.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Iron Creek Lake will remain a destination in the Black Hills to enjoy a quiet hills water body full of a variety of recreational uses.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? This will maintain the current atmosphere of Iron Creek Lake for the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

None or minimal.

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

State Game Refuges Chapter 41:05:02

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 8-9, 2026	Pierre
	Public Hearing	March 5, 2026	Pierre
	Finalization	March 5-6, 2026	Pierre

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Duration: Beginning during the 2026/2027 hunting season

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. "Waterfowl Refuge" means a refuge with a closed season for all migratory waterfowl.

Recommended changes from last year:

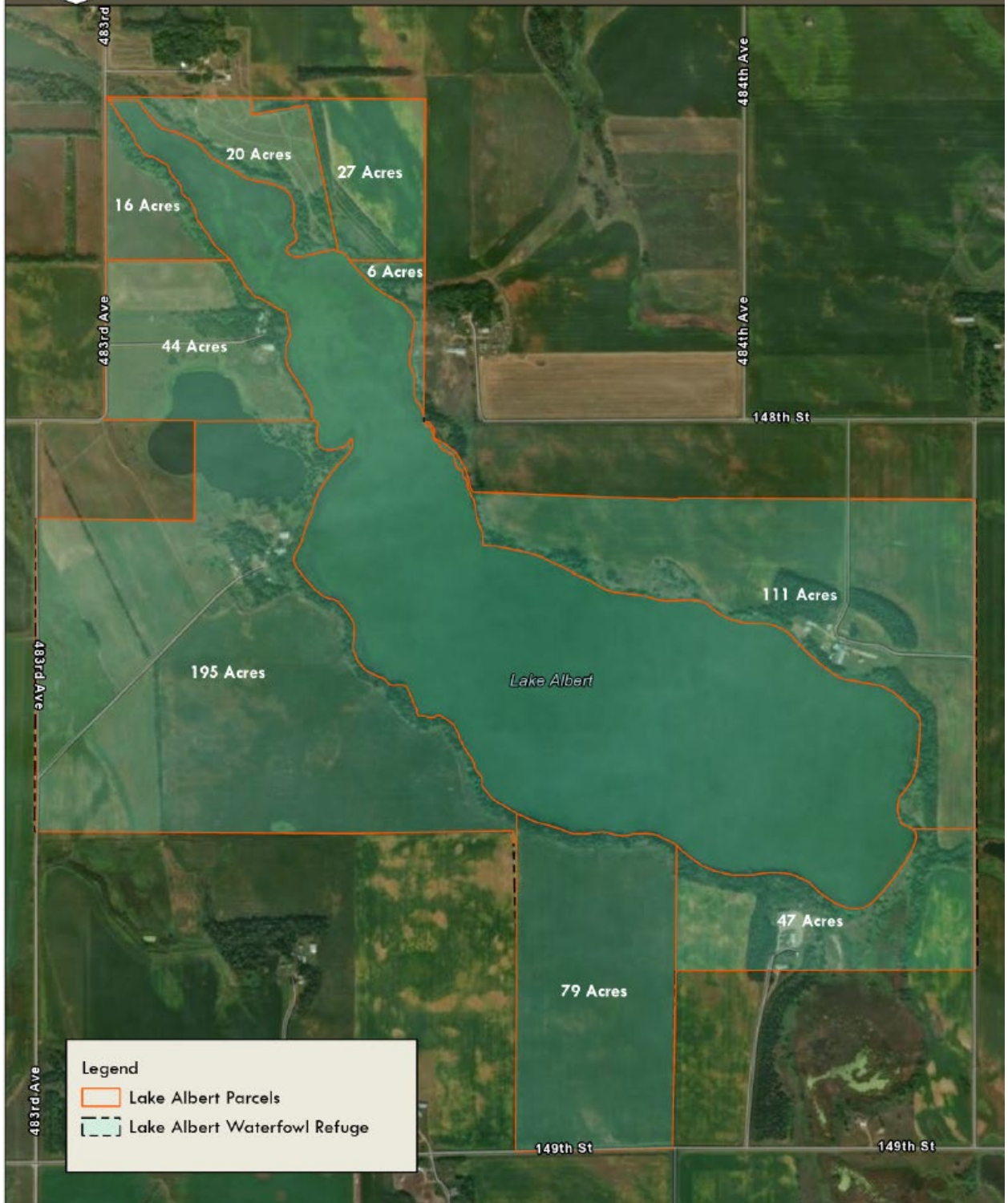
1. Modify § 41:05:02:25 to remove the Lake Albert State Waterfowl Refuge.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge is comprised of private property owned by eight landowners. The landowners formally requested that their property to be removed from the Waterfowl Refuge status and have provided signed consents to remove their property. By removing the refuge status, landowner control over hunting access on their property will be restored. Many of the landowners have faced goose depredation issues or had hunters asking to access their property, but due to the refuge status, they were unable to allow hunters to harvest waterfowl within the boundaries of the refuge. Most waterfowl in the area are actually taking refuge or using the Big Stone Power Plant Waterfowl Refuge as a resting stop, where water tends to stay open longer and is located just four miles north.



Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge - Grant County



DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:05:02:25. Grant County refuges. Grant County refuges are as follows:

(1) Eye State Game Refuge comprises outlet one of government lot three in the southeast quarter of section nine, township 121 north, range 48 west of the fifth principal meridian; and

~~—— (2) Lake Albert State Waterfowl Refuge comprises government lots one, two, four, and those portions of government lots three and five located in the southwest quarter of section 35, township 121 north, range 47 west of the fifth principal meridian; government lots one, other than the north 40 rods, two, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter and the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section one, township 120 north, range 48 west; and the north half of the southwest quarter and all but the north 40 rods of the northwest quarter of section six, township 120 north, range 47 west; and~~

~~(3)~~ (2) Big Stone Power Plant Waterfowl Refuge comprises all of section 12, township 121 north, range 47 west except all land and water within the fence surrounding the cooling pond; the evaporation pond in section 7, township 121 north, range 46 west and a 100-yard-wide area adjacent to the evaporation pond fence including road rights-of-way; the south 660 feet of section 1, township 121 north, range 47 west; the south 660 feet of the southwest quarter of section 6, township 121 north, range 46 west; the south 660 feet of the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter in section 6, township 121 north, range 46 west; and that portion of land in section 11, township 121 north, range 47 west that is enclosed by the railroad track unloading loop and that is bounded on the west and north by the railroad track unloading loop.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge consists of Lake Albert and surrounding privately owned property. Landowners have recently desired to take their property out of refuge status so they can allow hunting access and control who waterfowl hunts on their property.
2. Historical Considerations – Starting in 1975 Lake Albert Refuge was started on a trial basis. In 1980, landowners surrounding Lake Albert signed consent agreements to officially put their land into waterfowl refuge status.
3. Biological Considerations – Waterfowl – primarily Canada geese had been using Lake Albert as a resting area for many years when there was less available water on the landscape. Within the last 10 years, geese and other waterfowl more often utilize Big Stone Powerplant Waterfowl Refuge (4 miles north), Lake Farley (6 miles west), and Big Stone Lake (5 miles northeast).
4. Social Considerations – In the early years of the refuge, large numbers of waterfowl hunters would line the refuge boundaries and pass shoot. This activity is almost non-existent currently and landowners would like to give permission to waterfowl hunt on their properties now.
5. Financial considerations – N/A

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the proposed regulation inhibit a user's ability to participate? No
2. Does the proposed regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, taking property out of refuge status will give the landowners the ability to allow permission for waterfowl hunting on their property.
3. How does the proposed regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? It will provide another location to waterfowl hunt with permission.
4. Does the proposed regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, those landowners who own land within the waterfowl refuge have not been able to give permission to waterfowl hunters in the past. This will allow those landowners to give permission to waterfowl hunters, including family.

FISCAL IMPACT

None or minimal.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Hunt for Habitat Licenses

Chapter 41:06:61

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 8-9, 2026	Pierre
	Public Hearing	March 5, 2026	Pierre
	Finalization	March 5-6, 2026	Pierre

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Duration of Recommendation: Beginning in 2026.

Licenses: Licenses issued may not exceed 10 big game animals annually.

Season dates and open units: Valid during any dates and open units permitted by the requirements and restrictions for each hunting season.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. As authorized by SDCL 41-6-84, the Commission may provide for a special license that allows a person to hunt one or more game animals and shall promulgate rules, pursuant to Chapter 1-26, to establish the season and guidelines for the season, and to establish the fee provisions.
2. The Commission may establish a nonrefundable application fee, not to exceed ten dollars for any resident and not to exceed twenty dollars for any nonresident, to apply for the special license.
3. Any resident or nonresident who is eligible to hold a hunting license in this state may submit an unlimited number of applications for Hunt For Habitat licenses. Unsuccessful applicants will not accrue preference points for these drawings.
4. Successful applicants shall be selected by drawing.
5. Tags issued with a Hunt For Habitat hunting license are valid during any hunting season provided in Article 41:06 that allows the licensee to take any animal that is permitted if the licensee abides by the requirements and restrictions for the hunting season.
6. Each Hunt For Habitat license/tag shall be valid during the calendar year of drawing or subsequent calendar year.
7. Proceeds from the application fee collected shall be used for habitat programs.
8. The Commission shall, before the fourth Tuesday in January of each year, report to the Senate and House standing committees on agriculture and natural resources and on appropriations regarding the activities authorized by this section. The report shall include a description of the season established, the number of licenses issued, the amount of revenue generated, and the progress of the habitat programs funded under this section.

Recommended changes from last year: Modify ARSD 41:06:62:03 by removing the specific number and types of licenses available with no more than the maximum number of licenses authorized by the SDCL 41-6-84. GFP Commission would approve number and types of licenses available for the hunt for habitat raffle via administrative action.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The authority for the GFP Commission to create the Hunt for Habitat raffle was established by the South Dakota Legislature in 2019 to generate additional revenue for wildlife habitat.

Just over \$2 million has been generated from Hunt for Habitat raffle license application fees from 2019 to 2025.

Year	Revenue
2019	\$320,950
2020	\$392,210
2021	\$329,920
2022	\$194,580
2023	\$245,840
2024	\$268,310
2025	\$272,610

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:62:03. Number of licenses. ~~One "any bison" license, two "any deer" licenses, and three license packages with each having one "any deer" and one "any elk" tag may be issued. Both residents and nonresidents are eligible to receive the single "any deer" tag deer licenses, the license packages and the "any bison" license, provided no more than one license package may be issued to a nonresident.~~ No more than ten big game licenses may be issued for the hunt for habitat raffle. Both residents and nonresidents are eligible to receive a single license or license package containing more than one license type, provided no more than one same license package may be issued to a nonresident.

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? Yes, increases the number of licenses from nine to ten.
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

GFP anticipates approximately \$50,000 to \$100,000 of additional revenue in 2026.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Hunt for Habitat – License Raffle Package

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 8-9, 2026	Pierre
	Public Hearing	March 5, 2026	Pierre
	Finalization	March 5-6, 2026	Pierre

LICENSE ALLOCATION BY SPECIES

2025 Package

1 Custer State Park Trophy Bison
1 Any Deer
1 Custer State Park Deer
3 Any Deer and Elk Package

*Nine total licenses

2026 Recommended Package

1 Custer State Park Trophy Bison
1 Custer State Park Trophy Bison and Any White-tail Deer Package
1 Any Deer (Statewide – excludes Custer State Park)
3 Any Deer (Statewide – excludes Custer State Park) and Elk Package

*Ten total licenses

Completed	
Custer State Park Resort	
2025 R & M Projects	
STATE GAME LODGE	
Kitchen Flat Roof	\$ 59,762.07
Mickelson Chapel	\$ 373,318.19
Pavilion Storage	\$ 254,712.00
Historic Rooms Renovation	\$ 499,749.85
Creekside Cabin Frozen Water line and flooding	\$ 11,156.77
<i>HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, Building Repairs, Communications, Fire Suppression</i>	\$ 57,933.89
STATE GAME LODGE TOTAL	\$ 1,256,632.77
LEGION LAKE LODGE	
<i>HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, Building Repairs, Fire Suppression</i>	\$ 13,328.47
LEGION LAKE LODGE TOTAL	\$ 13,328.47
BLUE BELL LODGE	
<i>HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, Building Repairs, Tree Removal</i>	\$ 33,930.04
BLUE BELL LODGE TOTAL	\$ 33,930.04
COOLIDGE STORE	
Refinish Hardwood Floors and Kitchen Floors	\$ 22,986.94
COOLIDGE STORE TOTAL	\$ 22,986.94
SYLVAN LAKE LODGE	
Cabin Refresh 505 and 506	\$ 9,912.58
Auditorium Floor Refinish	\$ 9,378.00
<i>HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing, Building Repairs, Communications</i>	\$ 40,277.14
SYLVAN LAKE LODGE TOTAL	\$ 59,567.72
All Resorts	
PTAC Reserve	\$ 7,346.95
TOTAL FOR CSP RESORT	\$ 1,393,792.89
Expected 2025 Revenue	\$ 23,319,342.00
5% R & M Fee	\$ 1,165,967.10
Carry over from 2024 (Actual)	\$ (154,969.00)
Actual Balance at end of 2025	\$ (382,794.79)



December Camping

Agenda Item #14

12/1/2024 - 12/31/2024	12/1/2025 - 12/31/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
561	565

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	12	6	-50%
	Pickereel Lake Recreation Area	7	6	-14%
	Roy Lake State Park	65	67	3%
	Fisher Grove State Park	2	2	0%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	4	11	175%
2	Mina Lake Recreation Area	12	14	17%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	2	20	900%
	Hartford Beach State Park	5	5	0%
3	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	5	1	-80%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	4	2	-50%
4	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	0	4	NA
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	5	26	420%
5	Lake Herman State Park	4	33	725%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	29	35	21%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	31	0	-100%
6	Burke Lake Recreation Area	0	2	NA
	Buryanek Recreation Area	6	0	-100%
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	2	0	-100%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	6	4	-33%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	23	12	-48%
7	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	1	8	700%
	Palisades State Park	21	21	0%
8	Newton Hills State Park	40	29	-28%
	Union Grove State Park	1	0	-100%
9	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	14	24	71%
	Springfield Recreation Area	1	0	-100%
10	North Point Recreation Area	2	0	-100%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	3	0	-100%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Farm Island Recreation Area	34	4	-88%
11	West Bend Recreation Area	2	2	0%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	3	1	-67%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	21	25	19%
12	Spring Creek Recreation Area	0	70	NA
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	12	0	-100%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	8	0	-100%
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	0	4	NA
13	West Pollock Recreation Area	0	5	NA
14	Bear Butte State Park	7	0	-100%
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	0	1	NA
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	8	4	-50%
15	Shadehill Recreation Area	56	49	-13%
16	Custer State Park	93	43	-54%
	Angostura Recreation Area	10	14	40%
17	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	0	10	NA
Total:		561	565	1%



December YTD Camping

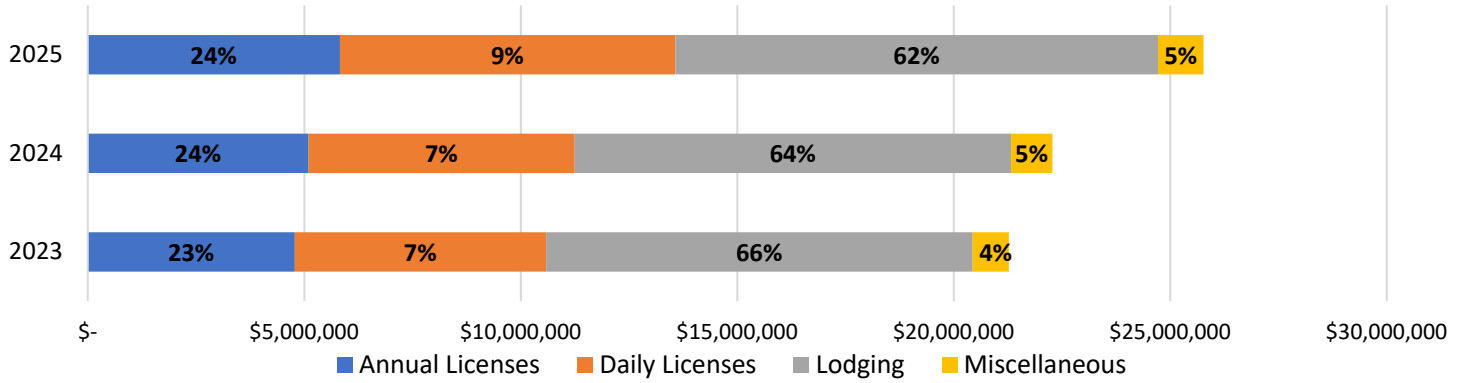
1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024	1/1/2025 - 12/31/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
357530	341084

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	1609	1605	0%
	Pickrel Lake Recreation Area	5929	5267	-11%
	Roy Lake State Park	8620	8493	-1%
	Sica Hollow State Park	301	297	-1%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	428	312	-27%
2	Fisher Grove State Park	1159	931	-20%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	2300	2296	0%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	3283	3410	4%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	1732	1829	6%
	Hartford Beach State Park	6799	6469	-5%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	2151	1958	-9%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	6507	6269	-4%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	1771	1773	0%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	7462	7155	-4%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	9356	8928	-5%
4	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	869	794	-9%
	Lake Herman State Park	5819	5828	0%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	7553	6913	-8%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	3049	2663	-13%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	104	63	-39%
5	Buryanek Recreation Area	2853	2624	-8%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	269	192	-29%
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	54	81	50%
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	1517	1275	-16%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	8315	7238	-13%
6	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	6981	7030	1%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	11410	11289	-1%
	Palisades State Park	9758	10569	8%
	Twin Lake Lakeside Use Area	0	30	NA
	Good Earth State Park	1	0	-100%
7	Newton Hills State Park	10769	10271	-5%
	Union Grove State Park	1349	1269	-6%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	12707	11827	-7%
	Clay County Park	2077	1783	-14%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	41100	39237	-5%
8	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	4764	4321	-9%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	98	139	42%
	Springfield Recreation Area	1439	1262	-12%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	77	58	-25%
	North Point Recreation Area	9895	9772	-1%
9	North Wheeler Recreation Area	896	940	5%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1829	1650	-10%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	6061	4800	-21%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	302	272	-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	7980	7244	-9%
	West Bend Recreation Area	7500	6715	-10%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	3193	3071	-4%
11	Minneconju Lakeside Use Area	0	15	NA
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	14118	13606	-4%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	1387	1184	-15%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	1173	1285	10%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	63	58	-8%
12	Indian Creek Recreation Area	8020	7598	-5%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	223	231	4%
	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	25	NA
	Little Moreau Recreation Area	0	31	NA
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	953	1205	26%
13	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	33	25	-24%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	1139	1145	1%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	4899	4873	-1%
	Bear Butte State Park	1464	1165	-20%
	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	394	NA
14	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	510	434	-15%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	7141	6595	-8%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	8277	7769	-6%
	Custer State Park	56564	55394	-2%
	Angostura Recreation Area	18526	16925	-9%
15	Bailey's Lakeside Use Area	0	51	NA
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	2430	2243	-8%
	Total:	357530	341084	-5%

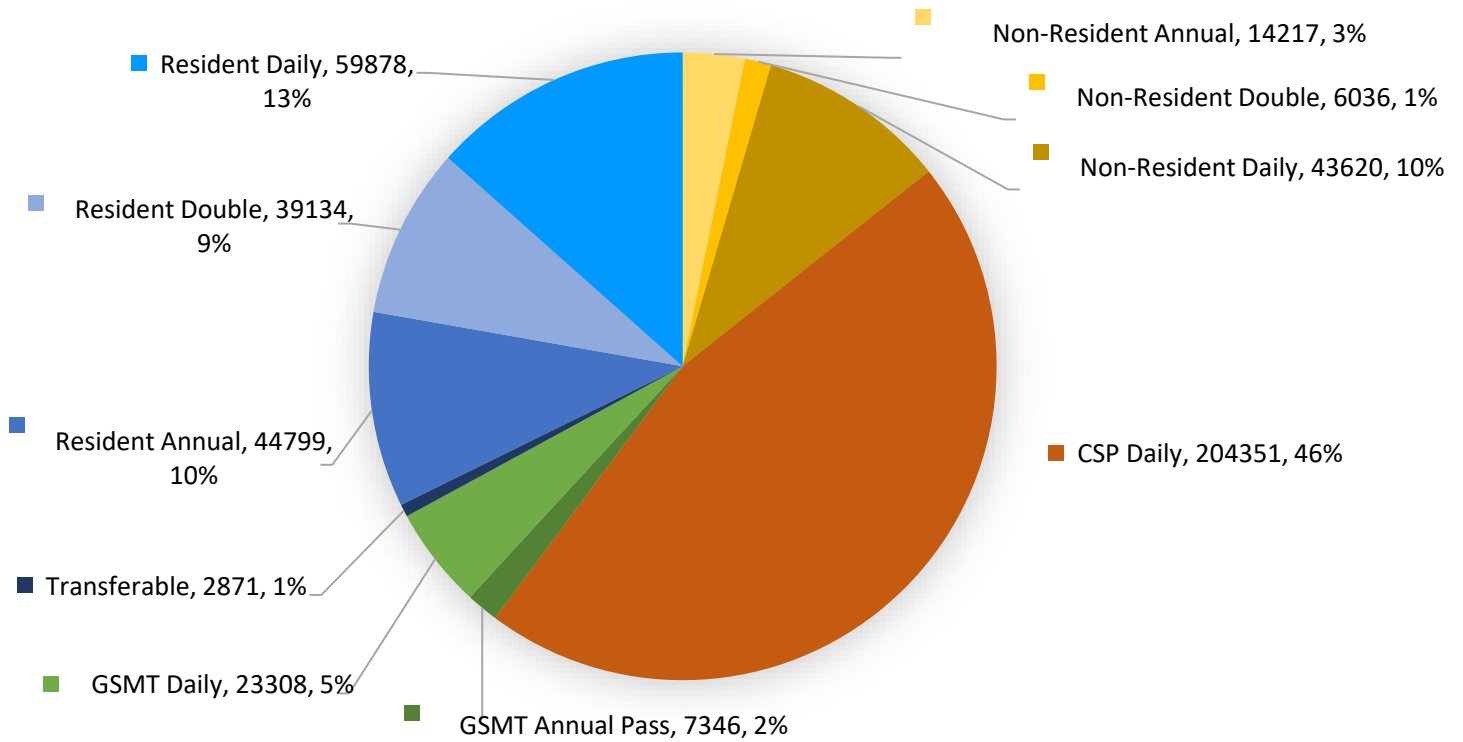
Division of Parks and Recreation					
December 2025 Revenue by Item					
	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	1,148	\$ 42,498	522	\$ 17,020	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	168	\$ 9,800	
Resident Double	2,703	\$ 149,678	1,932	\$ 112,350	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	212	\$ 18,450	
Transferable	183	\$ 15,270	130	\$ 11,320	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	283	\$ 4,580	112	\$ 2,240	
2nd Annual	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	4,317	\$ 212,026	3,076	\$ 171,180	-19%
Resident Daily License	1,586	\$ 14,348	279	\$ 2,930	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	200	\$ 2,745	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	26	\$ 435	10	\$ 200	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	507	\$ 2,030	22	\$ 110	
Motorcoach Permit	61	\$ 183	385	\$ 1,540	
CSP 7 Day Pass	2,007	\$ 42,860	136	\$ 13,700	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	43	\$ 860	442	\$ 200	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	-	\$ -	1	\$ 100	
Festival Daily	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
Daily Licenses	4,230	\$ 60,716	1,475	\$ 21,525	-65%
Licenses	8,547	\$ 272,742	4,551	\$ 192,705	-29%
Camping Services		\$ 136,235		\$ 143,435	5%
Pet Fees	20	\$ 200	25	\$ 249	
LODGING		\$ 136,435		\$ 143,684	5%
Picnic Shelters		\$ 20		\$ 825	4025%
Boat Rentals		\$ -		\$ -	
Firewood	106	\$ 639	42	\$ 255	-60%
Gift Card	199	\$ 16,910	202	\$ 15,668	-7%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ -		\$ -	
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ -		\$ 175	
Retail		\$ 2,022		\$ 2,148	6%
Call Center Fee	141	\$ 618	145	\$ 840	36%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 22,637		\$ 20,184	-11%
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 42,486		\$ 40,095	-6%
TOTAL		\$ 452,023		\$ 376,485	-17%

Annual Licenses					
December YTD 2025 Revenue by Item					
	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	64,792	\$ 2,297,257	44,799	\$ 1,744,047	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	14,217	\$ 817,582	
Resident Double	43,056	\$ 2,314,102	39,134	\$ 2,321,556	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	6,036	\$ 536,788	
Transferable	2,962	\$ 235,660	2,871	\$ 256,198	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	7,907	\$ 118,820	7,346	\$ 146,355	
2nd Annual	8,409	\$ 131,886	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	127,126	\$ 5,097,725	114,403	\$ 5,822,526	14%
Resident Daily License	120,744	\$ 959,096	59,878	\$ 596,668	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	43,620	\$ 653,355	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	1,275	\$ 19,140	1,399	\$ 27,865	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	22,921	\$ 91,668	23,308	\$ 116,396	
Motorcoach Permit	20,083	\$ 60,246	27,203	\$ 87,197	
CSP 7 Day Pass	203,926	\$ 4,077,520	204,351	\$ 5,084,840	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	20,114	\$ 388,784	24,558	\$ 480,630	
Rally Bike Band	26,426	\$ 534,252	33,780	\$ 675,595	
One-Day Special Event	319	\$ 15,799	160	\$ 16,000	
Festival Daily			2,427	\$ 11,475	
Daily Licenses	415,808	\$ 6,146,505	420,684	\$ 7,750,021	26%
Licenses	542,934	\$ 11,244,230	535,087	\$ 13,572,547	21%
Camping Services		\$ 10,066,991		\$ 11,127,908	11%
Pet Fees	1528	\$ 15,216	1778	\$ 17,718	16%
LODGING		\$ 10,082,208		\$ 11,145,626	11%
Picnic Shelter		\$ 16,009		\$ 15,190	-5%
Boat Rentals		\$ 14,203		\$ 16,828	18%
Firewood	42,832	\$ 246,871	36,635	\$ 245,479	-1%
Gift Card	373	\$ 33,262	371	\$ 30,219	-9%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 156,946		\$ 155,768	-1%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 40,769		\$ 35,421	-13%
Retail		\$ 236,123		\$ 225,795	-4%
Call Center Fee	19,520	\$ 39,124	14,337	\$ 89,604	129%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 166,591		\$ 238,154	43%
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 949,897		\$ 1,052,457	11%
TOTAL		\$ 22,276,335		\$ 25,770,630	16%

December 2025 YTD Revenue Comparison



December 2025 YTD License Sales



Midwest Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

1448 Eastlake Drive - Chaska, MN. 55318 - (612) 940-1979

Website: www.midwestwildsheep.org - Email: midwestwildsheep@gmail.com

December 15, 2025

Secretary Monae L. Johnson
South Dakota Game Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Secretary Johnson,

I present this application to the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks for the purpose of applying for the opportunity to auction sale the coveted South Dakota's Bighorn Sheep tag. If selected, WSF - Midwest Chapter is prepared to enter into an agreement with SDGF&P as referred to in 41:06:56:11

This past March, our chapter once again had the privilege to nationally auction the South Dakota Bighorn Sheep tag at our annual Midwest Chapter Banquet and Fundraiser. The Bighorn Sheep tag sale continued to reflect the quality of South Dakota's Bighorn Sheep with a strong sale price. The Bighorn Sheep auction tag has raised over 1.7 million dollars for South Dakota's Bighorn Sheep and other wildlife conservation.

The Midwest Chapter has been in existence for nearly five decades and maintains a MN. 501c3 non-profit status, number 41-1628899. A certificate of Existence and Registration (formerly Certificate of Good Standing) copy has been attached for reference.

Our Midwest Chapter is committed to the fulfillment of our mission statement: "To enhance, expand and preserve wild sheep populations; to educate the public about wild sheep and conservation efforts surrounding wildlife; to encourage lawful hunting and hunters' rights and to encourage youth participation in hunting.

In 2025, the Midwest Chapter reached an all-time high in total contributions to conservation and has passed the \$9.6 million dollar mark. We have contributed over the years to all wild sheep states and provinces, along with many tribal agencies and regions throughout Mexico. This year, the Midwest Chapter has impacted wild sheep in many jurisdictions throughout North America. For example: South Dakota State University Bighorn Sheep monitoring facility expenses, New Mexico water development, British Columbia and Oregon Bighorn Sheep relocation, Colorado Bighorn respiratory disease strain typing. Some GIA contributions are on multi-year commitment. Additional GIA funding documents are attached for referencing.

We hold an annual two-day spring banquet and fundraiser each March with approximately 400 sportsmen and women in attendance. Our auctions have raised strong revenues for many years, with 2025 topping one million dollars in revenue. Our chapter takes great pride in the national reputation we've built over the years of top-quality auctions which have allowed us to make significant contributions in wild sheep conservation.

Within the application, you will find current and past yearly GIA documentation to review, along with recent endowment/membership fund financial positions. The Midwest Chapter's endowment fund has given our chapter a tremendous foundation and ability to fulfill our mission statement in perpetuity.

Thank you for this opportunity and for your review of our application. We truly appreciate the partnership that we have with SDGF&P and our joint effort to "Put and Keep Wild Sheep on South Dakota's Landscapes".

Respectfully,

Mike Bouton
Midwest Chapter WSF
Executive Director

CC: John Kanta

December 31, 2025

South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
John Kanta Terrestrial Section Chief
4130 Adventure Trail
Rapid City, SD 57702

Dear John,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. On behalf of the Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (Iowa FNAWS), I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to present our application to auction one bighorn sheep license, valid for the 2026 season.

At Iowa FNAWS, our mission is crystal clear: we are dedicated to promoting outdoor hunting and fishing activities, natural resource stewardship, and wildlife conservation. Our goals are multifaceted, encompassing the enhancement of the image of outdoor enthusiasts, the expansion of our conservation community, the promotion of ethical hunting and fishing practices, and the provision of additional opportunities for all who share our passion. Our unwavering commitment to engaging with youth and veterans underscores our dedication to nurturing the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.

Below are some of our key initiatives:

*Big Game Management: Iowa FNAWS has been instrumental in supporting numerous guzzler projects across states like California, Utah, Arizona, and Texas. Furthermore, we have dedicated significant resources to fund studies aimed at addressing bighorn diseases, a critical aspect of wildlife conservation.

*Alaska Advocacy: We have partnered with the Alaska Professional Hunters Association to safeguard access for non-resident hunters and protect the right to hunt in Alaska, preserving this cherished tradition for generations to come.

*Canadian Conservation: In Canada, Iowa FNAWS has made meaningful contributions to ungulate enhancement projects, as well as habitat reclamation and restoration initiatives, playing an active role in preserving wildlife habitats.

*Veterans and Youth Engagement: We have proudly sponsored numerous veterans and youth in various hunting activities, providing them with opportunities to connect with the great outdoors and experience the thrill of hunting and fishing firsthand.

*Local Collaboration: Closer to home, we have forged a strong partnership with Nebraska Game and Parks. Our support has facilitated the translocation of bighorn sheep into Nebraska, aided in capturing, collaring, and monitoring these animals, and contributed to the annual auction of premier elk and bighorn tags. We've also provided essential funding to the Nebraska Land Trust, helping to open new big game habitat and fishing opportunities. Funding was also provided towards the South Dakota Shooting Complex.

Our primary source of funding for these impactful projects is our annual fundraiser, which, for several years, has consistently generated over a million dollars in the one evening. What sets us apart is our commitment to stewardship, exemplified by our 100% volunteer staff – a rarity in our industry. This dedication has resulted in remarkably low overhead costs, enabling us to allocate substantial funds towards our various initiatives. In the current year alone, Iowa FNAWS has invested a total of \$675,000 in these critical projects with more funds to be presented from the 2025 fiscal year. For your reference, we have also made available our IRS Tax Exempt Status documentation, including our EIN and DLN upon your request. The latest 990 form will be available as soon as our accountant has it completed, however it is not at this time.

We stand ready to pledge 100% or more of the proceeds from auctioning off the South Dakota Bighorn Tag towards projects in line with the purpose of your department, and our own mission. In addition to our unwavering commitment to directing 100% of the proceeds from the auction of a Bighorn tag towards conservation, education, and advancing our shared objectives, we are eager to forge a lasting partnership with South Dakota, mirroring the successful cooperation we have cultivated in Nebraska.

Thank you for taking the time to consider Iowa FNAWS as a potential partner. Should you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to either myself or any of our Board members. We are eager to engage with you and explore the possibilities of working together for the betterment of our shared natural heritage. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Regards,

Greg Schultz
Vice President, Iowa FNAWS

John Kanta
South Dakota Game Fish and Parks

Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, if selected to auction one Bighorn Sheep License in South Dakota, and pursuant to ARSD 41:06:56:11, agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep shall make available for auction and shall issue one bighorn sheep license to a successful bidder;
2. Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep shall ensure the successful bidder is of legal hunting age and is not otherwise prohibited from possessing a valid hunting license because of any other legal prohibitions and restrictions;
3. Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep shall ensure the total amount of the winning bid is accounted for within 14 days of the date the license is auctioned;
4. Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep shall ensure the name and address of the successful bidder shall be provided by the bidder to Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep within 14 days after the auction and Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep shall issue the successful bidder one Bighorn Sheep License if all terms of the agreement and rules have been complied with; and
5. Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep acknowledges and agrees that the Bighorn Sheep Auction License is subject to all applicable hunting laws and rules in SDCL Title 41 and ARSD Article 41:06.

Greg Schultz - Vice President
Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep

TURKEY HUNTING RECRUITMENT LICENSE APPLICATION

Background: In an effort to encourage youth to become more involved with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that promote turkey conservation and the recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is offering NGO's the opportunity to sponsor youth turkey hunters in obtaining a turkey hunting recruitment license and mentoring these hunters.

Eligibility: Any NGO committed to wildlife management; preservation; propagation; habitat; research; hunter retention, recruitment, and reactivation; and recognized as an exempt organization under § 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code may apply for such licenses. Youth less than sixteen years of age and accompanied by a hunting mentor are eligible for the licenses as described in SDCL 41-6-81.

Availability: No more than ten male turkey hunting recruitment licenses may be issued with no more than two of the allocated licenses issued per sponsoring NGO. The sponsoring NGO shall be responsible for associated license fees.

Open Area: The turkey hunting recruitment license is valid statewide, excluding Custer State Park, and hunting is open from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset each day beginning on the open dates for the Prairie and Black Hills seasons, respectively.

Application Deadline: The completed application must be received by GFP no later than December 31, 2024.

NGO's applying for these licenses must provide the information requested below:

NGO NAME: Lake County Landward

ADDRESS: 201 Lake Ridge Drive Westwood

NGO REPRESENTATIVE: Russell Olson NUMBER OF LICENSES REQUESTED: 2

EMAIL: Russell@RussellOlson.com PHONE: 605 530 7877

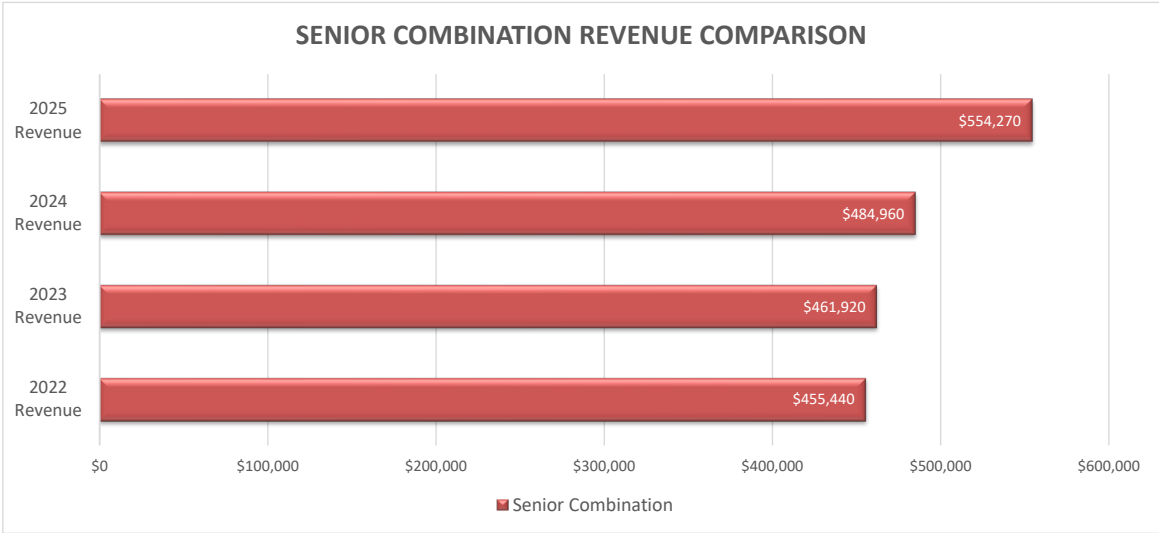
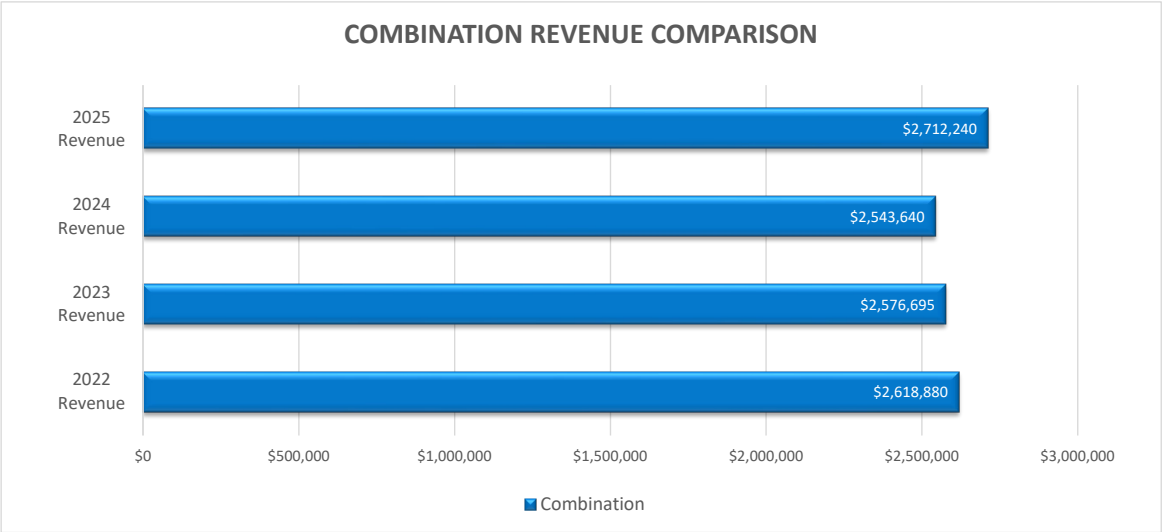
Please provide evidence of the organization's goals and objectives relating to promoting wildlife conservation and the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. To meet the criteria listed under eligibility, provide examples and details of the activities or on-going efforts that describes how your organization meets these requirements.

Please provide evidence of exempt organization status under § 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Applicants will be reviewed and selected by the GFP Commission at their January 2025 meeting. GFP will notify all applicants regarding the commission's selection.

COMBINATION LICENSES
December 15 - December 14

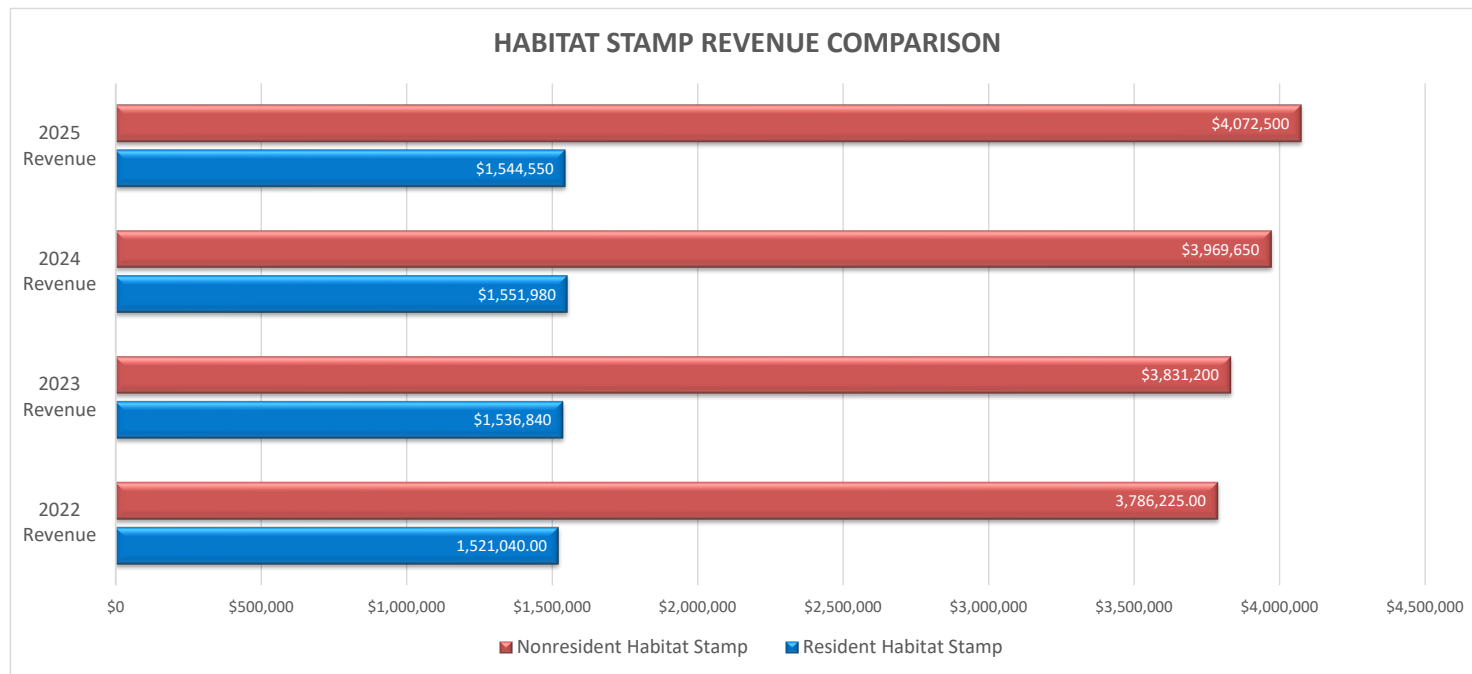
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Combination	47,616	46,849	46,248	46,904	45,204	\$2,712,240	(1,044)	(1,700)	\$168,600	\$132,502	-4%
Senior Combination	11,386	11,548	12,124	11,686	12,890	\$554,270	766	1,204	\$69,310	\$86,830	10%
Combination License Totals	59,002	58,397	58,372	58,590	58,094	\$3,266,510	(278)	(496)	\$237,910	\$219,332	-1%



HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - December 14

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	152,104	153,684	155,198	153,662	154,455	\$1,544,550	(743)	793	(\$40,865)	\$43,615	1%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	151,449	153,248	158,786	154,494	162,900	\$4,072,500	4,114	8,406	\$164,560	\$336,227	5%
Habitat Stamp Totals	303,553	306,932	313,984	308,156	317,355	\$5,617,050	3,371	9,199	\$123,695	\$379,842	3%

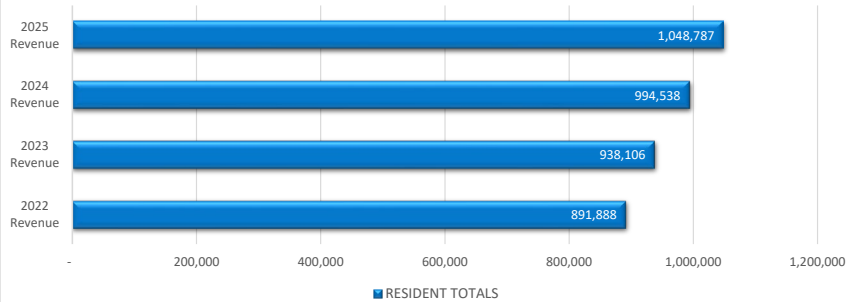


SMALL GAME LICENSES

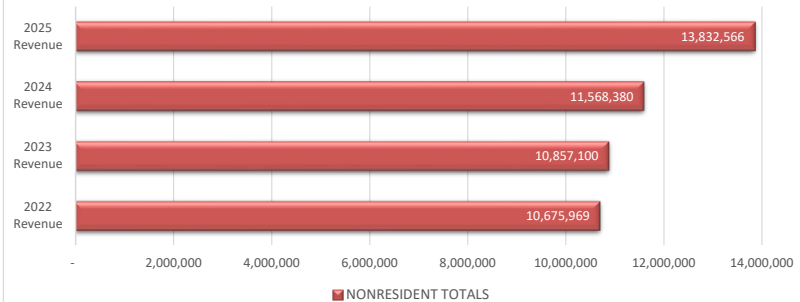
December 15 - December 14

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	18,511	20,154	21,676	20,114	21,180	\$762,480	(496)	1,066	\$47,172	\$98,729	5%
1-Day Small Game	935	917	935	929	1,052	\$15,780	117	123	\$4,560	\$4,632	13%
Youth Small Game	6,004	6,058	6,318	6,127	5,873	\$29,365	(445)	(254)	(\$2,225)	(\$3,044)	-4%
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	950	\$4,750	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Furbearer	3,625	3,383	3,564	3,524	3,634	\$112,654	70	110	\$5,734	\$6,934	3%
Predator/Varmint	2,040	1,906	1,642	1,863	1,338	\$8,028	(304)	(525)	(\$182)	(\$1,285)	-28%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	1,419	1,791	1,463	1,558	1,130	\$5,650	(333)	(428)	(\$1,665)	(\$2,138)	-27%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	22,748	22,351	22,795	22,631	22,016	\$110,080	(779)	(615)	(\$3,895)	(\$3,077)	-3%
RESIDENT TOTALS	55,282	56,560	58,393	56,745	57,173	\$1,048,787	(1,220)	(94)	\$49,499	\$100,751	-0.17%
Small Game	76,517	78,266	83,988	79,590	84,744	\$12,033,648	756	5,154	\$1,871,100	\$2,403,218	6%
Youth Small Game	3,226	3,303	3,484	3,338	3,145	\$31,450	(339)	(193)	(\$3,390)	(\$1,927)	-6%
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	501	\$5,010	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	1,231	1,161	1,118	1,170	1,220	\$61,000	102	50	\$9,572	\$7,180	4%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	14,409	13,852	14,019	14,093	14,555	\$1,397,280	536	462	\$331,836	\$326,187	3%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	362	301	275	313	344	\$50,224	69	31	\$16,949	\$12,391	10%
Furbearer	4	3	6	4	6	\$1,950	0	2	\$300	\$758	38%
Predator/Varmint	4,194	4,286	4,309	4,263	4,609	\$212,014	300	346	\$39,654	\$41,494	8%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	375	561	561	499	496	\$2,480	(65)	(3)	(\$325)	(\$15)	-1%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	3,781	7,247	8,806	6,611	8,003	\$40,015	(803)	1,392	(\$4,015)	\$6,958	21%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	104,099	108,980	116,566	109,882	117,623	\$13,835,071	1,057	7,240	\$2,261,681	\$2,796,245	6.59%
COMBINED TOTALS	159,381	165,540	174,959	166,627	174,796	\$14,883,858	(163)	8,169	\$2,311,180	\$2,896,995	4.90%

RESIDENT HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



NONRESIDENT HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



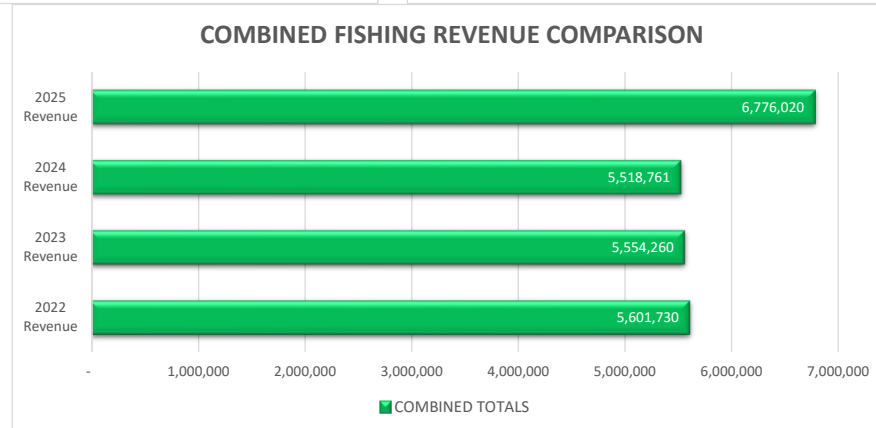
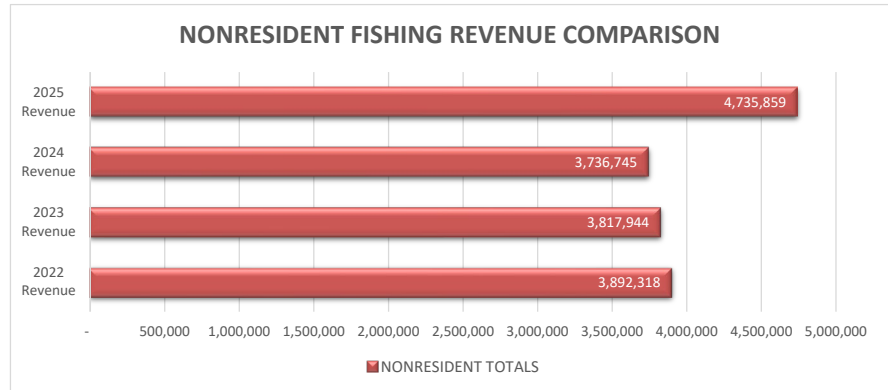
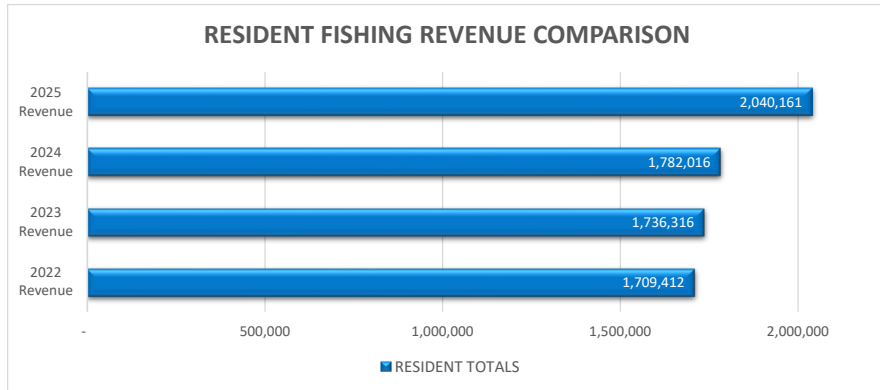
COMBINED HUNTING REVENUE COMPARISON



FISHING LICENSES

December 15 - December 14

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	6,614	7,082	7,968	7,221	7,237	\$72,370	(731)	16	\$8,626	\$14,599	0%
Annual Fishing	53,345	54,014	55,255	54,205	55,837	\$1,730,947	582	1,632	\$183,807	\$213,216	3%
Senior Fishing	13,570	13,939	14,261	13,923	13,932	\$236,844	(329)	9	\$65,712	\$69,764	0%
RESIDENT TOTALS	73,529	75,035	77,484	75,349	77,006	\$2,040,161	-478	1,657	\$258,145	\$297,580	2.20%
1-Day Fishing	37,984	37,050	37,309	37,448	26,764	\$695,864	(10,545)	(10,684)	\$98,920	\$96,701	-29%
3-Day Fishing	18,980	18,750	18,515	18,748	21,351	\$960,795	2,836	2,603	\$275,740	\$267,107	14%
Annual Fishing	38,542	37,782	36,638	37,654	38,490	\$3,079,200	1,852	836	\$624,454	\$556,382	2%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	95,506	93,582	92,462	93,850	86,605	\$4,735,859	(5,857)	(7,245)	\$999,114	\$920,190	-7.72%
COMBINED TOTALS	169,035	168,617	169,946	169,199	163,611	\$6,776,020	(6,335)	(5,588)	\$1,257,259	\$1,217,770	-3.30%



2025
December 15 - December 14

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
Combination License Totals	59,002	58,397	58,372	58,590	58,094	\$3,266,510	(278)	(496)	\$237,910	\$219,332	7.20%
Small Game License Totals	55,282	56,560	58,393	56,745	57,173	\$1,048,787	(1,220)	(94)	\$49,499	\$100,751	10.70%
Fishing License Totals	73,529	75,035	77,484	75,349	77,006	\$2,040,161	(478)	1,657	\$258,145	\$297,580	17.08%
RESIDENT TOTALS	187,813	189,992	194,249	190,685	192,273	\$6,355,458	(1,976)	1,588	\$545,554	\$624,188	10.89%

Small Game License Totals	104,099	108,980	116,566	109,882	117,623	\$13,835,071	1,057	7,240	\$2,261,681	\$2,796,245	25.34%
Fishing License Totals	95,506	93,582	92,462	93,850	86,605	\$4,735,859	(5,857)	(7,245)	\$999,114	\$920,190	24.12%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	199,605	202,562	209,028	203,732	204,228	\$18,570,930	(4,800)	(5)	\$3,260,795	\$3,721,445	25.06%

Public Comments

Chronic Wasting Disease Action Plan

Christopher Allen

Aberdeen SD

Position: other

Comment:

Need more sampling options for deer in east River. If you don't sample you will not id issue in a timely manner.

Establish a process to sample deer from deer/ vehicle collisions across state.

Protect meat processors / get them out of deer processing. The CWD prion can't be removed from butcher shop equipment. Yes it's a money maker but it needs to be separated out from beef & pork processing facilities.

Check for cwd in coyotes and other predators.

Make testing easy for hunters / I'd be open to paying for test. My price point preference is \$25 but willing to pay up to \$50. Could have testing worked into tag fee.

Consider human sampling for cwd. I'm not sure cdc or nih have really looked all that deep at this area. SD Dept of health could inquire with HHS to get study started.

CWD crossing over to cows, hogs, sheep? Id think if this was found to be a possibility we would remove deer. Has this been evaluated? Again if we don't test we will never know.

William Bushong

Faith SD

Position: support

Comment:

Deer license quota's in each hunting unit cannot be set for two year periods. With CWD, EHD and coyote depredation on fawns, (same for antelope Kids), drastic change can happen annually. There is not a landowner in Western SD that's going to report losing too many deer or not having enough deer or antelope. Our mule deer have been gone for 10 years, our antelope are nearly gone, and whitetail numbers this are at an all time thirty year low due to CWD and EHD die off.

Other

Kevin Ryan

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose using dogs to hunt mountain lions. It is unfair to those who do not have trained dogs. Besides, I do not want to be hunting and have a group of howling dogs come running in on a cat I have been hunting and take my cat that I actually worked to find and hunt. It's totally unfair. Please consider the hunters that do not have dogs or the ability to train and prepare those dogs. Dogs should NOT be allowed due to the unfairness of hunters that do not have dogs.

Thomas Ecker

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

My comment is in reference to a recent letter we received that addresses approval of a 5.4% annual increase in the cost of leasing a cabin site at Angostura Recreation Area. Given the fact that Angostura Reservoir is barely above a 50% capacity level resulting from severe drought, wouldn't a lowered lease adjustment rate be more acceptable? My own water well has been dry since August, and I'm not alone among my Cabin Area A neighbors. This has only occurred twice in our 35 years at Angostura. Navigating the lake in a boat is obviously challenging, with sand bars, galore, rocks, and even tree stumps. It would not be a good year to sell a cabin at Angostura Reservoir along with its accompanying lease and future lease cost increase rate. We are understandably very concerned about the lease increase rate facing us in 2028.

Ji Montgomery

Shiremanstown PA

Position: other

Comment:

Oppose hunting wolves as so many wolves and puppies have been killed already they need protection

Thomas Calhoun

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

I have disabled veteran hunting/fishing reduced license yellow card it is due to renew Dec 31 how do I do that

Daniel Knevel

Clarklake MI

Position: oppose

Comment:

Why do non-resident hunters first have to purchase a deer hunting license (if drawn) before they can put in for the drawing to hunt specific public land?

Ex. I would like to hunt unit 35L Harding County & have a preference point to do so. But first I need to put in for the license & hopefully get drawn and then if drawn, I have to then put in for an access permit (Only 100 NR hunters allowed). A big gamble on my part. What a scam to have to buy a \$375 license and \$25 stamp and then not get drawn to hunt the area I want to hunt.

That's like buying a plane ticket and hotel to Orlando Florida not knowing if I can get into Disney World or not. Disney World would go broke in a quick hurry.

Please do something about this. It upsets me enough as a two time Iraq Marine Corps veteran that there are such tight regulations on Federal Ground. Unfair to citizens of the United States, especially veterans. The least you can do is fix your backwards licensing system.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718
January 5th, 2026

I have been checking the "Current Meeting" page of SDGFP to view the Agenda for the January 8th-9th., 2026 Commission meeting. It has not been published. It is now 9:01 pm Sunday night, about 2 hours before the written comment deadline. THERE IS NO AGENDA. This is not the first time this has happened.

The Legislature passed a law that we must submit comments 72 hours before the day of the hearing, which is a Sunday midnight for a Thursday meeting. SDGFP shuts down the written public comments, even for matters that are not related to rule-making on Sunday night.

If you are shutting down public comments 72 hours (3 days) before the day of the meeting, you should have at least a draft agenda published at 5 days before the meeting..

Some significant things such as your votes on resolutions, like the Nest Predator Bounty Program funding are not rules and don't have an advance public notice requirement. We can be blind sided.

We request that you have a draft agenda for the Commission published on Friday, before you all take off for the weekend.

Janét Moore
2212 7th Ave.
Rapid City, SD 57702
arrowstraighterthan@yahoo.com
541-391-6708

South Dakota Game Fish & Parks Commission
523 East Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
605-773-3212

Subject: Request an end to the ineffective and wasteful Nest Predator Bounty Program

Dear GFP Commissioners,

I am writing to respectfully request your consideration to end the Nest Predator Bounty Program, and support legislation to do that, if necessary.

In 2019, at the direction of Gov. Noem, GFP created the Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP), in hopes of boosting pheasant and duck populations by paying bounties to the general public for killing native animals that eat eggs and hatchlings, namely 5 native species: red fox, badger, striped skunk, opossum and racoon. I oppose the NPBP because bounty programs have been shown by wildlife biologists not to work. The GFP acknowledges that there is no data showing that NPBP has increased the pheasant population. Research shows that predator control programs lack efficacy, and money would be better spent on habitat conservation. Even Pheasants Forever and all the major conservation groups, support habitat management, rather than trapping and killing.

There are many reasons why predator bounty programs do not improve nesting success. Common sense might tell you that killing predators leads to less predators. However, when their numbers dip, predators have more babies. **Compensatory reproduction** is a biological phenomenon where a population increases its birth rate (by lowering the breeding age, or allowing more individuals to breed due to reduced competition for food/territory), increases litter size, or increases offspring survival in response to population decline (often from predation or human removal) to offset losses, effectively making population control efforts ineffective or even counterproductive

In the 1960's sixteen states had fox bounty programs. In **no state** did the bounty program reduce fox populations, and in North Dakota the bounties had the opposite effect and actually increased fox numbers.

Ground nesting birds and nest predators co-evolved together over eons. These predators are an important part of the ecosystem. They also eat insects, grubs, and rodents, and are meant to be on the landscape keeping everything in balance. When mesopredators are removed, the ecological niche is very often filled by a feral cat or a bird from the Corvid (crow) family, predators not targeted by the NPBP.

The public has never been given a full audit of the cost of this program. We know that **at least \$4.5 million has been spent on implementing the program and paying bounties** (\$1.7 million in 2019 includes live trap give aways¹ and \$2.3 million in bounty payments²) but this doesn't include staff time. According to a former GFP staff that I talked to, NPBP staff time is considerable and very unpleasant (having to go through bags of rotting maggoty tails). They informed me that ample GFP staff hours have been spent driving up and down the highways to spray paint the tails of road kill, so bounties could not be collected on them, rather than performing the conservation duties that GFP staff have trained for.

Non-target species are trapped, such as the Plains Spotted Skunk and Swift Fox, which are priority conservation species at the state level. The former GFP staff I know said there was no way to tell if the rotting tails he processed were from one of these priority conservation species or one of the 5 eligible species.

The reason why bounty systems fail is because their impact is haphazard and too diffuse to work. Predator removal *can* have a small, short-term positive effect on nesting success only under specific conditions: when it is carried out at small nesting sites (not statewide), conducted by a dedicated team (not the general public), and when all nest-predator species are removed including feral cats and corvids, not just these 5 native species. This is entirely different from what the NPBP does. A cost-effective alternative is habitat improvement projects, which have proven to be effective in increasing ground nesting bird populations, and can leverage an influx of substantial federal dollars into the state.

I work in grassland ecology and understand that grassland birds face steep population declines. Creating and preserving connected habitat is the scientifically sound action that yields results. These birds need tall native grassland to hide from all predators (not just these 5), for winter grains, and a diversity of forbs. Ranchers are increasingly learning to defer grazing on more land each year, which provides bird habitat, while creating a stockpile of forage that can be utilized outside the nesting season, increases plant species diversity, and overall increases the forage production per acre. In fact, one of the highest indicators of nesting success currently is the proximity to Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. Many studies show that nesting success is not a function of predator abundance, but rather the availability of protective habitat^{3, 4, 5}.

If the \$4.5 million+, that has been essentially wasted on the NPBP, were instead spent on habitat restoration, the state would have qualified for a 75% reimbursement through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (PR Act), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for state wildlife conservation projects. If the \$4.5 million+ were leveraged to pay for 25% of conservation projects, and the other 75% were paid by the federal PR Act, this would have meant \$13.5 million in federal monies invested in developing healthy ecosystems in South Dakota.

Without arguing over whether trapping itself is cruel, either by a live trap or lethal trap, it is a shame that the life of any animal would be taken simply for \$5-10 dollars, while the body is discarded and

not utilized for meat or fur. Even live traps need to be checked constantly to not cause harm. Also, as the NPBP season corresponds to the breeding and brooding season for these native mammals, when nursing mothers are taken, their babies die from cold and starvation. All the sadder knowing that this state sanctioned suffering occurs in vain by the 10,000's annually. Traditional trapping is done in the winter, when fur is prime, and young are independent, and the fur should not be wasted; to do so otherwise is unethical.

Bounty systems are not supported by legislators in other Great Plains states: 1) state bounty programs ended in Minnesota in 1965 (SF2016); 2) North Dakota Legislature discontinued state-funded bounty programs in 1961 (HB610); 3) a similar nest-predator bounty program was rejected in legislative session 2023 (LB400) in Nebraska; 4) raccoon bounty program was effectively defeated in Iowa's state legislature in 2024 (HF2665).

This bounty program is not accepted by South Dakotans. In 2019-2020, the GFP received hundreds of public comments from hunters, scientists, wildlife professionals, NGOs, sportsmen clubs and local residents, over 90% of which opposed the NPBP. The 2019 survey that SDGFP paid for⁶, conducted by Responsive Management, has scandalous methodology. Few respondents knew anything about the NPBP at the start and their opinions were shaped by the survey itself. Furthermore, 92% of the respondents were men. I hope GFP knows that the state of South Dakota is comprised of more than 8% women, and that they are charged with serving all residents. A detailed analysis of the Responsive Management survey is listed below⁷. A much larger and more representative survey was conducted by the Remington Research Group in 2020 and shows that a vast majority of South Dakotans do not support this program⁸. Their research methodology can be found here⁹.

Your support would emphasize the importance of funding strategies that produce measurable outcomes, rather than continuing to spend well over \$500,000 annually on a program that has shown no evidence of success.

Sincerely,

Janet Moore

P.S. I'm also a free-range chicken enthusiast. I've always locked my chickens up every evening in their coop, and so have never had a problem with any of the 5 NPBP species. The only predator that has ever gotten one of my chickens was a magnificent hawk!

1. Second Century Initiative Live Trap Give Away Program:

https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/2020_Bounty_Information_-_Fisk_and_Robling.pdf

2. SD Nest Predator Bounty Program "Tail Tracker" Dashboard:
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/e7bbbd6fa93b48c6a31985aa7c57c5ff>
3. Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3782962.pdf>
4. Clark, W.R., Schmitz, R.A. and Bogenschutz, T.R., 1999. Site selection and nest success of ring-necked pheasants as a function of location in Iowa landscapes. The Journal of wildlife management, pp. 976-989. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3802812.pdf>
5. Intensive Seasonal Predator Removal Had Little Effect on Duck Nest Success in Waterfowl Production Areas <https://npshistory.com/publications/wildlife/nbs-rib/94-80.pdf>
6. 2019 Survey by Responsive Management
https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/2019_Nest_Predator_Bouny_Program_Survey_Report.pdf
7. Analysis of 2019 Responsive Management survey <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/03SocialSurveyAnalysisNPBP.Alexey.pdf>
8. 2020 Survey by the Remington Research Group
<https://www.humaneworld.org/sites/default/files/docs/South-Dakota-General-Election-Survey.pdf>
9. Remington Research Group methodologies <https://remingtonresearchgroup.com/about/>

I am writing to encourage you to end the Nest Predator Bounty Program. As a life-long hunter and conservationist I know that this program does not work. It is a waste of money that should be directed to improve and enhance existing habitat.

Sincerely,

William M. Young

Pheasants Forever Chapter 87 Habitat Specialist.