

Public Comments

Dog Training on Public Lands

David Williams

Beech Bluff TN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the petition to change the training days to MWF from FSS on the basis that this will result in further restricting the use of public lands by out of state participants. The current restrictions were put into effect after your 3 year study showed that dog training had NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT on game bird populations. These rules are to placate local hunters while restricting the use of Federal Lands by out of state tax payers. The change to MWF will only limit usage further. The current restrictions have all but eliminated training on public lands already. Check the records.

Jeffrey Gillaspie

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

I've seen no armies of horseback riders and dogs on the public land where I train my dogs. I follow the regulations that are in place and strive to make these grounds better than they were when I arrived. Pressure from a mounted trainer to "disturb" coveys multiple days in a row is minimal.

Most trainers who use horses are stewards of the land and will opt to use multiple courses so as not to disturb the same birds day after day. Not only does this help preserve the birds, it helps preserve the trainer's livelihood.

"Scientific studies indicate that the horse may be more benign to wildlife than hikers, nature studiers and photographers.

There are no studies that significantly implicate trail use by horses with spreading weeds. Horses on trails are not detrimental to water quality according to the latest studies by NAHMS, University of Colorado and UC Davis-Tulare.

The horse has been defined as a passive, low impact or light weight user, even in the most sensitive environments: Natural Preserves." - Environmental Aspects of Horses on Trails, by Adda Quinn, EnviroHorse, May 27, 2004, <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/environmental-aspects-of-horses-on-trails>

Maybe focus to people on foot being allowed to train dogs 7 days a week. It seems that would have more of an impact than a horseback rider doing it three mornings a week.

My point being: Why the focus on just the horseback trainers? The fact is: regardless of your mode of transportation, the running of a bird dog is still the reason for covey disturbances. Our multi-use parks and grasslands are managed for the people equally, and there should be no regulation governing one type of usage that wouldn't apply to another. In addition, training dogs is a tradition that hails back to the days of the settlers, as is hunting the birds.

Proper habitat management is more key to a healthy population than a small window of training days for dogs, yet, year after year we see the short-grass prairie grazed down to the roots by cattle on a grazing lease. The birds don't like bare ground, they move on, there is less habitat, there are fewer birds.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions that I might be able to help with.

Thank you for receiving my comments.

Hoop Nets and Set Lines

Richard Jongewaard

Wood SD

Position: support

Comment:

Be great to also trap all tributaries thru out the state.. people have creeks out there back door east of the Missouri that would be great to get kids started in the outdoors
Thanks for your time

Dan Erikson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

This would devastate small bodies of water and make them unfishable for years to come. It will ruin fishing in our great state for our future fishermen and women.

James Dumas

Hudson SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not legalize hoop nets and set line's on our small fisheries in South Dakota it will deplete or catfish and other species and take all enjoyment out of using a rod and reel to catch these fish

Robert Garner

Vermillion SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Free Bump

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly disagree with this proposal it will negatively affect aquatic life and over harvest will devastate local fishing grounds especially to bank fisherman/women. Please reconsider

Mountain Lion Hunting Season

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The hunters of South Dakota complain because they claim the deer population in the Black Hills is too low because of mountain lions. The ranchers claim the mountain lions are killing their livestock. People living in the Black Hills complain because there are mountain lion sightings in their backyards or close to schools. The hound hunters want to kill mountain lions for recreation, as do trophy hunters.

Since a mountain lion season in the Black Hills was initiated, every year there are more and more complaints. This is because you are allowing the taking of the healthiest animals who would never come into conflict with humans for trophy and hound hunters, thus creating juvenile lions with no hunting skills who will predate on anything that will sustain them. The 2nd Century Initiative has thrown out science as any basis for wildlife decisions and now GF&P endorses killing to preserve hunting and trapping traditions as its priority.

The majority of the public abhors trophy and hound hunting, and giving the majority a voice should be a main priority of this agency. Mountain lions are self-regulating in their numbers and hunting them to sustain the population is a false premise. I call into question the population of lions estimated in the Black Hills, as the killing quotas in the past 2 seasons have not been met.

This agency needs to reassess the science involved with their decision making and give these animals a place to live where they won't be hunted, and their natural life cycles and habits can be observed. You also need to consult other agencies like the Humane Society of the United States and work in conjunction with their biologists to estimate the mountain lion population. They also have information that would help reduce conflicts with lions and people.

GF&P also needs reassessment of what drives their decisions to kill mountain lions, like quality mountain lion recreational opportunities (page 80, Strategy 2E). Trophy hunting of mountain lions should be prohibited.

Lastly, it is never stated in your plan that these animals feel, raise families and show love and affection like all felines. This is never taken into consideration when factoring in a season. Mountain Lions have a right to exist without human interference, especially in Custer State Park. There is absolutely no need to kill any of these animals in the park to satisfy the blood thirst of trophy or hound hunters.

I implore you to please, listen to your constituents who do not hunt, and wish to see these animals alive and in their natural habitat, not on someone's wall.

Christopher Spatz

Kingston NY

Position: oppose

Comment:

Congratulations, Gentlemen! With SDGF&P's best estimate of 532 mountain lions (the number, of course, reported in the papers <https://apnews.com/e00e347c529c4905b2105aeb217ce809>) in the 5,000 km² Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota's mountain lion management plan has achieved over twice the mountain lion density ever documented in North America: p.132 <http://carnivoractionplans1.free.fr/wildcats.pdf>

Oh wait. But the number may be higher, as many as 975, four times the highest mountain lion density ever documented in North America. Which means that home ranges among Black Hills mountain lions must be some of the smallest ever recorded. Oh wait. "Home range analysis has not been evaluated in several years."(p.36)

Never mind, "Population estimates have low precision, but appear to be above management objective the past few years."(p.30) With that stated objective between 200-300 mountain lions (p.76), and given the curious failure of hunters to achieve harvest limits for six consecutive years despite reducing the harvest limit every few years, with several hundred mountain lions roaming around above the objective, what on Earth to explain such an anomaly for six consecutive years?

Could it be that the lower end of the admittedly "low precision" population estimate hovering just above 100 mountain lions might explain the sinking harvest numbers? And could it be that harvests are dropping because, "Over the past 6 years, there has been a shift from a majority of hunters wanting to see the population decrease, to approximately one-third of hunters wanting to see the population decrease."(p. 14) Could it be that hunter interest in harvesting mountain lions might reflect the lower end of SDGF&P's mountain lion estimate, which is 100-200 below the population objective?

Could it be that mountain lion hunters understand that mountain lions are being overharvested in the Black Hills?

With compliments,

Christopher Spatz
Rosendale, NY

Suzan Nolan

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am writing in opposition to the hunting season for lions, to increasing the number of licenses to out of state hunters and to using dogs to hunt lions. I also am in favor of making the checking of traps more stringent so that ensnared animals don't suffer.

Lisa Petri

Elizabeth CO

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please protect our wildlife

Amanda Dickinson

Yakima WA

Position: oppose

Comment:

This draft plan is designed to manage mountain lions for maximum trophy hunting opportunity, not for conservation.

Mountain lions regulate their own numbers and do not require intense management to limit their populations.

Hunting is a bad tool, killing the lions least likely to come into conflict with people, pets and livestock, and creating more space for young dispersing lions that are most likely to come into conflict.

Non-lethal methods are more effective and last longer.

Killing female mountain lions results in the orphaning of their kittens. Hunting leaves kittens to die from starvation, dehydration, and exposure.

Mountain lions are a keystone species in their ecosystems, maintaining biological diversity and other benefits to people.

Don't allow up to 250 out-of-state trophy hunters to hunt South Dakota's mountain lions.

Don't extend South Dakota's hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection district from March 31 to April 30.

Austin Eidahl

Brookings SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Mary Armour

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Unless they become a problem, which is rare, they and other predators must be left alone. They control diseased and weak prey, producing a healthy balance. Why can't SD do what's right instead of always supporting destruction for profit.

Rehanna Morgan

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

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Leif Larson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Stephanie Samavarchian

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

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Tonia Wagoner

Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

You should be very selective on the lions you hunt and stick with problem ones. You hunt randomly you leave orphan kittens only to have to be shot later. Please leave the good lions alone.

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Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

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Kris Stapelberg

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I've lived here in the Black Hills for 95% of my life and I have not even seen a lion in the wild. If these hunts continue, I never will. This is not a good thing, IMO. On that note, allowing the use of dogs to track and tree them is unfair to the lion and dangerous for the dogs. There is no 'sport' in it, so please don't allow it.

Thomas Mangelsen

Jackson WY

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tanner Hall

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Paulette Kirby

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose use of single or packs of dogs for hunting mountain lions. I oppose extending the season or total number of lions allowed to be hunted.

Maureen Lavelle

Bayonne SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose the hunting or increasing the hunting area for more Mountain Lions to be murdered or mauled to death. After reading some articles, most Mountain Lions killed by hunters were 6 years old and weighed 98lbs. I can't believe the SD Wildlife Management allows for a decreased populations of 187 Mountains Lions in 2018. I am strongly against hunting Mountain Lions to extinction, hunting with dogs is barbaric and cruel. Some dogs are killed or mauled and the cats are driven off cliffs or into trees to be shot. That's not hunting that is animal cruelty! I think protections should be put in place for Mountain Lions, also the stopping the encroachment by building homes into the forest and decimating the Mountain Lions' habitat.

Muzzleloader Scopes

Jerry Jones

Arlington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I against any change to the Muzzy restrictions proposed.

Brandon Tekrony

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like no changes to the current Muzzleloader Scope regulation, 41:06:04:14.

Quintin Biermann

Groton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to see the muzzleloader scope rules stay the same and try to keep it as primitive as it has been in the past. It is a great season with tag numbers and requires a hunter to work a little harder than would be required with new muzzleloading technology. Please keep it the way it is.

Chet Barney

Vermillion SD

Position: support

Comment:

I fully support adding telescopic sights, especially a 3x9 scope to muzzleloaders. I hunt other states with my muzzleloader, and having to switch scopes/sights for each state is difficult to do, so that you are aiming consistently and killing ethically. We should match other states by allowing any telescopic sights.

Jordan Miller

Canton SD

Position: support

Comment:

Hello,

I would like to express my support of allowing powered scopes on muzzleloaders with no limitation.

Thank you.

Jordan miller

Chad Bjerke

Bruce SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am in strong opposition to changing the muzzle loader optics rules. I feel that this is a coveted tag. Allowing guys/gals to upgrade scopes would be taking the hunt out of it. This is a hard tag to draw and sometimes an even harder tag to fill. Most guys/gals who shoot muzzle loaders are comfortable out to 100 yds. Upgrading optics would allow them to double or triple that distance. So in turn would that double or triple the success rates?? The deer need to have a chance also. With the ever increasing technology that is put into firearms, they don't stand much of a chance anymore. I am also curious why the Commission has even considered this change. Why fix something that isn't broken?? Thanks for you time and listening.

David Hicks

Twin Brooks SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in favor of using magnified sites on muzzle loaders as it will greatly increase the ability of hunters to make precisely placed and ethical shots on game.

Mark Smedsrud

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose the addition of scopes to the muzzle loader season. The intent I thought was to provide another opportunity to hunt big game within the state not increase the harvest rates for said season. I feel it is Pandora's box if this is allowed. Does the archery community come before the commission next and ask for scopes on their sights. I know I would love to have a 2 or 4 power scope on mine archery bow to allow those 100 yard shots that I am more capable with shooting my competition bow. I feel the intent truly was another opportunity with a traditional muzzleloader. Just because today's guns and bows are much more capable than some original equipment, doesn't mean the is the road we should follow. Just because the guns of today with original sights can kill welll beyond a 100 yards, doesn't mean that should be the case in this season. We might as well call this the extended gun season at this point if allowed. The only exception I would add as in the case of archery, would be by medical permit. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion
Mark Smedsrud

Tim Schrank

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Leave the law as is or revert to original rules.
Optics use on muzzleloaders breaks down the "spirit of the hunt".
Lots of equipment options are out there and affordable.
Seems like an attempt to turn it into a modern big game rifle extra season.

Other

Kristen Levander

Hermosa SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please stop this barbaric program.

Robert Coyne

Middleton WI

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Kristi Quaintance

Garretson SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am in total opposition to allow non South Dakotan hunters to come in and kill the Mt. Lions. After Noem's trapping program and stripping GFP of about half their \$, I get that she doesn't value wildlife. But she is not the Queen here and she needs to listen to South Dakotans. We don't want every critter in our state wiped out. Please do something to protect the wildlife.

Lynn Maass

Corona SD

Position: other

Comment:

I think your new website sucks tremendously. Too long to bring up stuff and can't find stuff I want been on it several times and still can't find sunrise and sunset tables. Whoever oked this needs to be fired. Get it fixed. Totally unusable.

Park Entrance and Camping Fees

Pam Dibbert

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Are you raising other fees in the South Dakota GFP systems? You just raised the campsite fees this year by \$2. If you raise your prices to far, it could cause campers not to camp in the South Dakota State Parks. We used to camp more but as the prices keep going up, we camp less.

Lee Stroschine

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Instead of raising the fee for every visitor, maybe increase the fee for out of state visitors. Wyoming and Nebraska have a higher fee for out of state visitors than residents.

Denise Nawaa

Box Elder SD

Position: support

Comment:

As full-time RVers, we've noticed South Dakota has some of the lowest camping fees for their state parks in the nation. We support a modest increase to help repair and maintain the parks. The ones we've visited so far have been amazing, and we realize it takes money to keep them up. We also support the lowering of fees for tent-only sites. It's only fair that the ones making the least impact (hopefully) should have affordable access to the parks. We used to tent camp with our kids when they were young, and it's difficult to find affordable options for recreation when you're supporting a family. Camping should be easy and inexpensive so more young people can be exposed to the outdoors and develop an appreciation for it at an early age.

Robert Tomac

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose the increase in entrance and camping fees. the damages sustained due to the excessive rain and flooding is part of the normal upkeep, and subsequent repairs should have been already been worked into the annual budget. A typical business, to include farming and ranching, do not have the latitude or option of increasing their fees when they have a disaster.

And given that the parks in the eastern part of the state received almost all of the damage, I would think that those of us in the western part of the state will get little, if any, benefit out of the increases.

As a recap to my previously submitted comments, good management would have had disaster issues included in its annual budget. Don't punish the users for poor management.

And I don't mind paying for increases for service, if I was receiving something. I would be surprised if anything in the west got any improvements.

I see reports that campground usage has been down, but find that very hard to believe as reservations had to be made very near the 90 limit if you wanted a camping spot, especially at Angostura or Shadehill. It appears Custer State Park is always that way.

Please turn down this increase, and if not, make it applicable to the affected campgrounds.

Trap Check Times-East and West

Jamie Al-Haj

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am opposed to extending the trap check time to 72 hrs statewide. East River trappers have stated that they have not asked for this extension. Why this proposal would even be considered is incomprehensible! When 36 states have regulations requiring 24 hr check times because they recognize the ethical responsibility a state has to treat it's wildlife humanely, why is South Dakota GFP proposing to extend the check time to 72 hrs statewide???

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support moving the trap check time to at least once every 24 hours. If trappers cannot minimize the time an animal has to endure the cruelty of a trap, it should be abolished. This is the bare minimum of comfort an animal who is facing death can be provided, and it is the duty of the GF&P to enforce this regulation. Extreme weather, loss of limb, mutilations and extreme pain are part of trapping and to not minimize the time an animal is subjected to these conditions is unacceptable.

Margaret Schmidt

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Trap time 3 days is too long.

Lorae Cox

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

If South Dakota could join the rest of the world in the 21 century maybe people would live here

John Mathys

From: John Mathys
Sent: Sunday, September 29, 2019 9:17 PM
To: dougby1957@gmail.com
Cc: John Mathys
Subject: FW: Response to Grasslands petition on horseback training

RECEIVED

OCT 01 2019

Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

To Whom it may concern

My Name is John Mathys, I'm from Wisconsin and I have been training on the grasslands for over 18 years. It has come to my attention that there has been a proposal to change the training days and eliminate a three day weekend for amateur dog trainers. Please see my comments below as I have collaborated with other amateur trainers. Please see the below notes

1) A larger majority of the individuals that come to the Grasslands are still gainfully employed working a 40 work week and it is much easier for them to come on a three day weekend to work dogs and return home on Sunday. Changing these days would create an undue stress on amateurs who work for a living

2) The empirical data generated by both the Forest Service and Game Fish and Parks have both indicated that the current schedule has had very little to no effect on the grouse and sharptail populations. The petitioner has provided no data to support his assumptions.

3) A large number of the permittees come from a variety of states across the country and incur travel, lodging, food and other miscellaneous costs while visiting the state and supporting small town economies

4) Regarding training grounds and overuse of pastures due to running dogs on them three days in a row. This is absolutely not true and factually incorrect. As a trainer, everyone I know refrains from running dogs two days in a row on any one pasture as we have so much ground to work that it simply would not be to our advantage to do that. This is obviously a false theory to sway the grassland officials to change the dates.

5) I also believe the individual who filed the petition is a professional dog trainer for the Mayhaw Plantation near Boston Georgia. He received his first permit in 2014 and has had one every year sense. Under the current permit rules I believe he is not eligible to run dogs on any of the Grasslands listed on the permit You may find his bio on Facebook under Trey Mills.

I will mention that it is common knowledge by many of the amateur trainers that grounds are often used by professional trainers in a covert manner, especially in the northern areas of the grasslands.

In closing, I feel the petition to change the training days is purely an effort to remove a majority of an already limited number of amateur trainers from the use of these grounds to benefit professional trainers and those hoping to limit access to grounds we pay personal taxes to finance.

I would ask that you do not adopt a revised policy and keep training dates and days as is currently in place.

Sincerely,

John Matrhys
4411 County road W
De Pere, WI 54115
920-639-8811

My name is Thomas Mangelsen, I have spent a lifetime inspiring the public to connect to the natural world through photographic images, and more recently through public speaking and advocacy events to thousands of people across the nation.

I work with many equally renowned conservationists including my dear friend and fellow Cougar Fund Board member, Jane Goodall

I have great concern about the provision of opportunities to offer sport hunting of large carnivores by any state run Game Agency.

In 2000, myself, and writer Cara Blessley-Lowe, founded the non-profit organization The Cougar Fund to educate, advocate and promote management based on science.

At that time South Dakota did not hunt mountain lions for recreation. But, since that time the regulations have allowed for ever increasing slaughter of lions in the Black Hills Fire Prevention District, the Custer State Park, and also on the Prairie, where there is no monitoring of population, just year round hound hunting opportunity with no oversight or regulation by South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (SDGFP). I have studied the resources provided by SDGFP that go with the current regulation recommendations and present the following points and observations to you here.

- Interest in lion hunting was at a high in 2012 and since then has gradually declined. I suggest that you are expanding the season to try and provide greater access to lions for hunters and also to increase their chances of success with a longer season. This does not indicate evidence of scientific management, but more of hunter enticement.
- Adding the opportunity for out of state hunters to participate in the hunt also suggests that SDGFP is more interested in stimulating hunter interest than science based management.
- Extending the hunting season beyond its current March 31st closure threatens to have impact on the late gestation stage of the ungulate reproductive cycle. Human presence, especially when shooting guns, during parturition and the neonatal stage in ungulates is contrary to successful fawn and calf production,

which depends largely on maternal health, maternal nutrition and timely 'green-up' for foraging resources.

I understand that your revised Mountain Lion Management Plan will allow for a greater number of mountain lions in your stated objectives. The harvest mortality limit has not been met for the past several years and I suggest that this is more representative of over suppression of the lion population for which you are now offering greater access for hunting.

This bifurcation of your intentions is very hard to understand. The recreational hunting of mountain lions causes many unintended consequences, not least of which are the orphaning of dependent kittens; the increase in juveniles because the taking of 'trophy' toms disrupts the hierarchy of the population; the inability of natural dispersal to occur to previous home range and appropriate habitat to the east because of the 365 day hound hunt on the prairie; and the lack of substantiated widespread conflict between lions and livestock. The idea that predators must be controlled to provide bigger ungulate herds is anathema to the principle of hunting. Ungulates are game animals and not free ranging livestock with a guaranteed harvest for every license sold.

It is with great conviction that I urge you to review, reduce or preferable eliminate the provision of killing mountain lions for recreation in South Dakota.

Thomas Mangelsen PhD.