



DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS

Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

Resident Non-resident Discussion Notes
Dec 17, 2018
Matthews Training Center, Pierre

Members Present

Commissioner Gary Jensen
Natasha Bothun
Jim Faulstich
Rocky Niewenhuls
Chris Hesla
Sen. Mike Vehle
George Vandell
Commissioner John Locken
Sean Fulton
Rosie Smith
Scott Simpson
Dana Rogers
Matt Morlock
Nathan Sanderson
Sec. Hepler
Tom Kirschenman
Kevin Robling

On Phone

Michele Thomson
Nick Foster

Comm Jensen – Brief thank you. Discussed how Sports have a belief in how the Commission should make decisions and difficulty of some issues. One of the biggest challenges is between residents and nonresidents. Decisions on opportunities for when, where and how these opportunities should occur are getting increasingly difficult and more sensitive. The roll of this work group is to create a list of criteria the commission should use when making decisions.

This group wont be making specific decisions, but will be very important going forward:

Example: biological, social etc., habitat, safety, access, too much pressure now...how much time and money should we spend researching and surveying?

Should Commission criteria be financial impacts on department, main street, guides/outfitters?

21 percent of our residents hunt; that is #1 in country 26 percent of our residents fish.

In 2017, the GFP received 11 million dollars from resident licenses and 17 million from nonresidents

This is a big impact. There is much interest and disagreement on these criteria

We will have 2 meetings and then take criteria to commission.

Scott Simpson lead staff introductions.

Sec. Hepler – This has been an interesting time. The commission has been aggressive on issues. Lots of passion on these issues...deer, nonmeandered waters, refuges, boating restrictions. This is a natural progression on these issues. Being able to have these discussions is important. Social media plays a roll as well. This is an important topic. Where did the 8% of nonresident allocations come from? These criteria are important to have. We need to have sideboards...for commission, public and legislature. I appreciate your time and effort.

Group introductions

Crowd in attendance:

Paul Lepisto – SD Isaak Walton League

Mike Shaw – representing Flatland Flyways
Alex Russo – Flatland Flyways
Matt Eldridge – 2 Rivers Outfitters-Midland

CHARTER

Simpson - Group Responsibility – This group is not going to address specific topics/issues. The focus is to come up with a list of guidelines for the commission to use when making decisions on nonresident license allocations. Commission will then use these recommendations to assist them in making their list of criteria.

Nick Fosness – Wants the group to be a guiding force, not a scapegoat.

Simpson – I agree. Ultimately the commission will use these as a starting point. Ultimately, this is a commission decision.

Commissioner Jensen – We are good at leading and wearing the hat.

Simpson – This group won't be the decision makers. There will be no rule change proposals. Group will make suggestions of guidelines and then the commission will then take this up. At that time, public comment will come in to play.

Commissioner Jensen – There is an entire other group, sports groups, that have been asked for their opinions. Many more people have been asked.

Simpson- Decision making lies in the Commission. This would probably end up as commission policy. Simpson then discussed make up of commission with Comm. Jensen's assistance.

Comm Jensen- discussed commission procedure.

Vandel – I'd like to see the number of nonresident hunters, looking for a breakdown of small game hunters.

Group would like the breakdown of small game, big game, fishing, etc.

Comm Jensen – WHO are the non-residents....family? etc.

Simpson – What is our goal, what are our responsibilities?

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Simpson- I don't want anyone to feel that the commission can't make a decision without looking at economic impacts. We want to have that discussion of the importance of the numbers.

1.3 billion dollars in spending. This has to compete on an economic level. At the end of the day, we have to be able to answer "How are you contributing?". We would like to see this number grow.

This is a piece of the conversation, but it is much more than that.

Vandel – 94% target small game. This is the big gorilla that drives the economic piece. We will be talking about 18% of the nonresident participation.

Simpson – we are only talking about a list that talks about allocation. This could expand down the line to fishing or whatever. I don't want to discount the work we do. the work we do will apply to all decisions going forward.

Comm Jensen – Does the public want us to consider economic impact? What does the public think?

Jim Faulstich – Getting mixed signals. Do we really want to talk about it? We need to take care of species #1 and economic #2. This is a wide trail...Everything is economics. We need to take care of resources first. My hope would be that statewide management mentality would focus on all species. Allocation of non vs res should be at bottom of the totem pole, not the top.

Nathan Sanderson – As commission looks at these proposals, and the process goes through for every single species, this is complex. Allocation process is very complex. We are taxed with assisting commission by providing criteria. We aren't here to be specific to species. We are here to assist with how we divvy up the licenses available.

Simpson – Yes, giving commission criteria ideas to go forward.

Jensen – what we are trying to get to...is it valid to take economic factors into account?

Vehle- are we going to discuss different criteria for different species ? are we looking at one set of criteria for all wildlife or separate for different.

Simpson – hoping for a single list, but we also know it would take something special to limit nonresident fishing opportunities. A little different with the pheasants, not limiting, but if there was a proposal to come in front of commission to limit pheasant hunters, hopefully this set of criteria would assist commission.

Vehle – would ruffed grouse have a different set of criteria?

Sean Fulton – OR have different sets of limits for species. Move limit down to 2 for pheasants when populations are down? Doesn't want to see limits go down, but maybe that is a solution.

Comm Jensen – maybe we need to look at refuge list criteria. Is there a way to analogize from that? This criteria wont come up with a formula we can plug with a computer.

Dana – I don't know if we can do separate animal criteria – Very concerned with financial impact. It is a big deal but these are public trust resources and owned by every citizen of SD, the more the financial comes into discussion, but I don't know if that is something the commission should be looking at.

Simpson – I think we will get into the discussion.

LICENSE ALLOCATION HISTORY

Simpson – Provided a background of where nonresident small game hunters come from. Minnesota and neighboring states are high on list.

Vandel – Where did 8% come from? 8% was safe number to not hurt population and would still be accepted by our resident hunters. WR Deer, antelope, turkey, black hills deer. With limited number licenses like elk bighorns etc...not applied because of such a small number.

Sec. Hepler – That is the first time I have heard that. This history is good to know. Our hunters are comfortable with these numbers.

Vandel – The only thing that changed is commercial hunting. That is where Special buck licenses came into play. It gets harder to find places to hunt.

Jensen – this percentage is for the commission to decide. To this group, our goal is to help decide how do we set it? Not what do we set it at.

Vandel – my group would like to set criteria for all licenses like Senator Vehle said.

Vehle- preserves, provide own birds, should we allocate differently for them? Each species has their own peculiar differences, so that criteria should different. One criteria would be difficult.

Sanderson – The Department has management plans for all species. Have one bighorn auction tag....is the allocation for bighorn sheep currently written in management plans? Are any of them in the management plans?

Kirschenmann-The only species is antelope.

Simpson – I think where we need to go is, maybe what is our population of that critter look like? Walleyes vs bighorn sheep? Maybe this becomes part of the criteria...demand on resource.

Jensen-or are there any current resident restrictions.

Vehle – maybe a different order of priorities of criteria for different species?

Sean Fulton – other states hard to get licenses – allocate 1 or 2% for nonresidents apply. nonresidents don't always receive tags. Allocation of that tag isn't guaranteed to go to a nonresident.

DISCUSSION ON DECISION MAKING CRITERIA

Simpson – We need to start with high level criteria:
Demand for licenses
R3 (recruitment, retention, reactivation)
Biology

Sean Fulton – Demand – west river public archery hunting – cap licenses, double fees? Purchase a small game license even to be eligible for big game license application.

Faulstich – There is a big difference between public and private license demand.

Simpson – remember, lets focus on the criteria we want the commission to focus on? If residents are restricted should non....if nonresidents are restricted

Demand for quality access

Mike Vehle – are all nonresidents the same? Family, former residents?

Scott- We are going to have some of those discussions.

Vehle- if you own land, do you have maybe a little more access.

Vandel – There has to be some recognition/advantages of being a resident of this state...we pay taxes we raised kids, etc. Residents of this state are the most important people.

Simpson – That is the case now. Residents get the first crack. How do we form that into a statement.

Sanderson – Social acceptance has to play a part. We are at 8% now we aren't going to 45%.

Vandel – At some point the number of nonresidents limit the opportunity for residents.

Morlock – Have to consider economics – these things all need to be paid for.

Morlock – Biology sets the tone for the licenses. Allocation numbers are set by biology.

Rosie – The quality of habitat and access needs to be a factor.

Commissioner Jensen – Economics...is it department and/or mainstreet?

Bothun – Economics for state does need to be considered. Hunting season is tourism season.

Rosie – That adds into the quality of life. Hotels in small towns are there for your wedding because of hunting and fishing. More sales tax means roads, swimming pools etc.

Vandel – Economics to the department have to be the highest of concerns. If cuts are made, programs are cut. Have to maintain healthy economics. That has to be overriding issue. I don't know if it is commissions job to make sure every outfitter a living.

Jensen- Others have other beliefs.

Rosie – Our outfitters have an economic impact on communities.

Simpson – Are we saying then that the commission? How do they decide? Decisions impact mainstreet, department, outfitters. We need to put criteria on this. Im not asking us to all agree, but we need to put all these thoughts together and frame them in a package to help commission make decision? Eventually that is where we want to get us.

Rosie-We need a ranking of criteria.

Sanderson – Ranking by species. 33 million budget on a 1.033 billion impact.

Falstich – When I hear comments on we need to not think about preserves/outfitters...in 70's when bird numbers were in the tank, preserves were the only ones doing habitat land management. The bottom line is habitat. If we continue to lose habitat...license allocation wont mean much. Landowners need motivation to provide habitat.

Jensen – Commercialization is always in every conversation.

Dana Rogers – Habitat costs money – less cattle, less bushels per acre.

Commissioner Loeken – A lot of hunters flocking in and technology changing so fast. They can get to places farther and easier than in the past. Hunters travel more. Should trends/technology should be a criteria?

Vehle- Should landowner be a criteria?

Dana- That is a criteria now

Commissioner Loeken – That is state statute now.

Dana – Some states allow that, some don't.

Nathan – Certainly something to consider, but we have to follow state statute.

Jensen – Like waterfowl allocations

George – But biology not driving that. Its the opportunity. Opportunity is different than demand for licenses and demand for access. if there are too many nonresidents then residents lose opportunity.

Scott – What if there are too many residents?

Vandel – Well that is another issue.

Scott – What we are talking about allocation and conflict.

Nathan – We need to think big bucket on this. Demand for licenses, r3.

Bothun – Landowners rely on hunters...resident and nonresident, they add to their habitat, I think landowners need to be part of this.

Simpson – all makes sense and everything you talked about is up on the board. Now next step is to boil this stuff down.

Vehle- Where does migratory play into this? does it make a difference?

Nathan – There are species we have very limited numbers and opportunities.

There are species where there are a ton of like fish and pheasants.

Then there are a mix – deer, turkey, antelope.

What I wonder is if we should start with species abundance?

SPECIES ABUNDANCE

Sean – down the road we might have to worry about reciprocity?

Simpson- Do we go down the list and talk about restricted/nonrestricted.

Nonresidents are only restricted when residents are restricted?

We talked about antelope management plan and the population triggers, the nonresident allocation; is there something about a species abundance in plans the commission should not restrict res or nonres if that population is at a specific level?

Kirschenmann – At one time antelope were exploding in population. We couldn't harvest enough. Then bad winters came. It got to point the commission decided to cut nonresident licenses. We didn't have a good reason except to look at history of antelope licenses. There were different numbers of licenses available to nonresident,

so we went back to drawing board and looked at every unit objective and tied license numbers for nonresident to that. It is reasonable approach.

Scott – We don't have management plans for all critters.

Matt – What if we said if there is a management plan then they are tied to that?

Scott – If populations are above management levels, more opportunity may exist.

Vandel – Its more than that. During high populations you need to harvest does.

Scott – But it is still an opportunity to hunt.

Vandel – Abundance is still driven by landowner tolerance.

Kirschenmann- That is a factor.

Sanderson- Tolerance is a huge part of your management plan. Private landowners have a say. How did you get to that happy medium level. How do you navigate?

Kirschenmann – It really comes down to 1 on 1 discussions at a local level. With elk we did very specific calculations of forage based on forest service models. Then took that concept and added to social tolerance with permittees and landowners. When conditions are good, higher numbers. Then added contingency license made available when conditions go bad. This allows us to respond quicker.

Jensen – the old forest service plan allowed for 4500 elk. We had fire, so there was more forage available. we worked those numbers and discussed with landowners and ranchers and focused on forage increase.

Kirschenmann- Management plans, what is directed in those are the biological aspects. What we are talking about here is social aspects. The social aspects are not discussed in these plans. In the antelope plan, the levels of nonresident allocation was included because of the history of the species.

Vehle- Species abundance also takes into play the age of the critter. A pheasant is 1 year, while a deer can live to be 7.

Nathan – So in my mind there are 3 categories...unlimited opportunities like fishing and pheasants; extremely limited - bighorns elk mountain goats; then mixed opportunities like deer, antelope turkeys etc. The specific species have highly restricted numbers are fundamentally different than deer. We also don't want the same restrictions on pheasants. In my mind 3 buckets make sense.

Simpson- So looking for a statement...**fewer restrictions should be placed on species when they are abundant or above pop objective in management plan.** This statement is flawed. But I think other criteria can assist with decisions.

Vandel – This plays more to big game, but waterfowl, fed regulations come into play.

Commissioner Loeken – I would think we aren't going to mess with those high high demand licenses.

Sanderson – My list is basically deer, antelope, turkey and waterfowl.

Sean- Mountain lion?

Sanderson – There have been more conversations on mountain lions than you can imagine.

Sean- I would like to see an increase the popularity of mountain lion hunting.

Sanderson – Lions are completely unique.

Faulstich – Demand question, How many archery deer licenses do we issue nonresident vs resident?

Simpson- I will get that for you.

Sanderson – I think we need to have a species differentiation. Pheasants vs deer vs elk

Dana – nonresident public pheasant hunters affecting resident public land pheasant hunters.

Sanderson – For the limited/restricted...the commission should manage the species within the constituencies and the management plans.

Unlimited - Any statement related to res /nr shouldn't apply to these.

Mixed bucket – Fewer restrictions should be placed on species when they are abundant or above pop objective in management plan.

Simpson – Next meeting – Friday jan 11 afternoon

Reminder on reimbursement packets.

Kirschenmann – gave the group land acquisition guidelines.

Themes for criteria

Demand for licenses – if high demand...what then?

R3

Species abundance

Demand for access

Nonresident allocation meets resident acceptance

Economics

Habitat and status of habitat