

RECEIVED

MAY 30 2012

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

To Whom This May Concern,

This is a letter primarily concerning the Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>-Oct.14<sup>th</sup> West River antlerless deer season.

The last several years I have hunted that season and certainly had a lot of fun and the weather was so nice. Down here in south central Gregory County there certainly seems to be enough deer to handle the early hunt. In fact, whenever you shoot a doe, the neighbors "high-five" you!!! It should be noted here that when we have our grandson visiting us, we ride around in the evening, just before sunset, to see how many deer we can spot. On several occasions we counted over 50 deer and on one particular night, we counted 96 deer during our half-hour drive. And they were all heading to our neighbor, Eben Bailey's corn fields!! Actually, during that first early season, I mainly hunted on Eben's land. He REALLY hated the deer in his cornfield.

Also, that early season gave my friends from Minnesota an excellent opportunity to hunt with me in South Dakota.

I read an article in THE DAILY REPUBLIC, Mitchell's newspaper, that stated that one of the reasons the SDGF&P was opposed to the early season was that it interfered with the bow hunters. That did not seem to be the case for me or for my friends.

I managed to harvest 6 or 7 antlerless deer during last year's early season.

On another subject, this is to let you know that every time I call the Chamberlain office with any questions, they have an answer for me and are very thorough about getting me all the information I need.

Sincerely,



Allen Herzog

36223 Cabin Road

Bonesteel, SD 57317

From: brady\_howe@hotmail.com

To: jim.spies@state.sd.us, beatis@aol.com, susie.knippling@state.sd.us, jlcoop11@aol.com, barryj@gwtc.net, cathy.peterson@state.sd.us, bpcerny@gwtc.net, duane.sather@state.sd.us

Sent: 5/26/2012 10:29:10 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time

Subj: Black Hills Deer license proposed change

Hello,

I am writing in regards to the proposed decrease in the number of tags sold for Black Hills Deer to help increase the size of the deer herd. I believe that this is a good idea, but that it should not be the only step taken. I believe that the current reduction rate is a little on the high side though. By cutting a large number of tags you are decreasing the amount of revenue that you bring in to support your agency. Many business in the Black Hills as well will feel an impact from large numbers of decreased tag sales, such as motels and restaurants that rely on hunters coming during the "off" tourist season. I believe that in addition to a decrease in tags (though not as many as proposed) that the hunting season for the Black Hills be reduced from four weeks to two or three weeks. By having a shorter season you will be able to reach similar objectives in increasing the size of the deer herd as you would from reducing the number of tags sold. By shortening the season you would also reduce the strain on the Conservation Officers who are out there non-stop during the month long hunting season. Currently Black Hills Deer and West River Deer overlap and I know that puts a strain on the Conservation Officers trying to respond to multiple cases over a large area. The 1% of the public that has disregard for hunting laws knows this as well and they take full advantage of this. I believe that by shortening the season Conservation Officers will be able to better focus their attention to one hunting season/area at a time and will have a better chance of catching the 1%.

I also feel that that by shortening the season you will be increasing the success rate and safety for archery hunters. Currently, the season runs the entire month of November which is one of the prime rut times for deer. The rut as we all know is the best chance for an archery hunter to be able to get a deer into bow range. I don't know of many archery hunters though that hunt during November in the Black Hills. Most of the ones that I know, and myself included, do not feel safe trying to call in a deer to within 20-30 yards when there are gun hunters out in the woods. It just does not seem safe. Consequently, most archery hunters in the Black Hills do not hunt at all during the month of November, which is when they would have the best chance at success. I've gone out a few times this past November with my bow, and I wore more orange that what is required by law for gun hunters, and I still almost got shot and had other hunters come in way too close for comfort to me.

In summary I agree that the number of deer in the Black Hills should be increase through various management tools. I believe that the number of tags sold is one tool to use but that the season should also be shortened as well to help reach management objectives, decrease the strain put on Conservation Officers and thus increase compliance with hunting laws, and to increase success and safety for archery hunters. Thank you.

Brady Howe  
3920 Yucca Drive, Unit A  
Rapid City, SD 57702  
612-386-2127 - cell

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Brett Barnes [mailto:brettb@innovsys.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 24, 2012 4:50 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** •Eliminate antlerless deer hunting during the Antelope Rifle Season

I'm not sure of the reasoning behind this but I would like to express my feelings on leaving it the way it is. At this time of the year the fawns are big enough to survive on their own and in most counties (all that I hunt) keeping the doe population in check is a very big deal. This is a great time of year to harvest doe, unlike the January season you don't have to worry about the weather and if it's going to be so cold you can't get your son or wife out to hunt because they won't enjoy it.

I realize my vote doesn't count much but I would really like to see this season stay as is, more for the extra family time and enjoyment for them than for myself.

Thanks for reading this and please consider my plea to leave the season in place.

Thanks for you time.

***Brett Barnes***

Innovative Systems, LLC

1000 Innovative Drive

Mitchell, SD 57301

Office: 605.995.6120

Direct: 605.990.7209

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Brian R\*\*\*\*\* [mailto:acsfea@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012 2:22 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** west river deer hunting proposed changes

re. west river deer hunting regulation changes.

I am writing to comment on the proposed changes to the west river deer regulations. I have no objections to the proposed changes, however, I do have a comment regarding the ability of a new resident to South Dakota being able to apply for resident big game licenses in two states, while a lifelong resident of South Dakota may only apply for resident tags in one state.

This loophole exists because the gfp will not enforce the provisions of SDCL 41-1-1 (22) which states that a person may not apply for a resident license if they are claiming resident hunting privileges in another state. If a new resident had purchased something known a lifetime resident license before taking up residence in SD they are currently allowed to apply for resident deer or elk licenses in both their old state of residence and in SD. This is not right nor is it fair that a new resident may claim more privileges than a lifelong SD resident. This is stated in the bill of rights in our state constitution, "Equal Privileges and Immunities".

I think that this non-enforcement of our law needs to be brought to the attention of our resident big game hunters so that they may contact the gfp and their legislative representatives and demand that our law be enforced regarding this.

Thank you,

Brian Reynolds  
Monroe, SD

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barb & Chris Braley [mailto:bcbraley@siouxvalley.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 29, 2012 5:11 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** West River Antlerless Tags - June Commission Meeting

Dear GFP Commission:

I am writing in response to the GFP commission's decision to eliminate the provision that allows use of antlerless West River Deer licenses during the Firearms Antelope season. What is the reasoning behind this decision/position? I have attempted to find the audio recording of this discussion at your last meeting, but cannot find it on the GFP website.

I see no difference if a tag is filled in October, November, December or January. In my experience, it allows greater access to private ground for those of us who are willing to fill antlerless tags. During the regular rifle season, landowners that hunt or have family members that hunt, deny access of their property until such time as these hunters have filled their tags. Rightfully so. They should have the primary access. However, I have had the privilege to hunt antlerless deer on this type of property during the antelope season because it doesn't interfere with the landowner/family hunters season. We have been welcomed by the landowners. I think it is a mistake to eliminate this provision. As I stated above, why does it matter when a tag is filled?

Thank You.

Chris Braley

Parkston, South Dakota

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jim Dahlberg [mailto:broadheadshovel@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Friday, May 18, 2012 11:44 AM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Proposed season and unit changes

Commissioners:

I am definitely in favor of eliminating firearms antlerless deer season during the firearms antelope season. Mule deer in several of the areas I hunt in the southwest corner of the state have been impacted by this season in the past. I see fewer mule deer every year in these areas. Eliminating the antlerless deer season during antelope season would help rectify this problem.

I am also in favor of the proposed unit boundary for unit 27L in south Fall River county.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Jim Dahlberg  
Hot Springs, SD  
605-745-5650

-----Original Message-----

**From:** jdt [mailto:jdt@bonasapress.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012 3:26 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Against the proposal to eliminate West River antlerless deer hunting during rifle antelope season...

GFP:

I'd like to voice my opinion **against** eliminating West River antlerless deer hunting during rifle antelope season.

I might be in favor of this if you could persuade me, from a biological perspective, that this is an unsound practice for managing West River deer herds. However, I've studied enough deer biology to know that, except for pregnant does delivering fawns during the spring, *when* antlerless deer are removed from a herd doesn't matter. The important thing for a deer manager to consider is that enough deer are removed to allow the overall herd to sustain themselves within their habitat. In that respect, I believe eliminating antlerless deer hunting during rifle antelope season would be an unsound biological practice, and that it would reduce a recreational opportunity for no sound reason.

I don't know why someone proposed this idea (I could understand how this might be a law enforcement issue) but I believe it will eliminate a potential source of deer herd reducers--particularly in the case of whitetailed deer--when it would seem not enough antlerless deer (especially whitetails) are being taken in the West River area to begin with.

My own circumstance might offer you additional insight:

I am a non-resident hunter who during the last five years has developed a strong passion for South Dakota's big game--particularly deer and antelope. I travel more than 1,500 miles each autumn to spend several weeks in South Dakota chasing sharptails, Huns and pheasants over my English setters, and enjoying antelope hunting.

Last year I expanded this to include deer hunting, by getting some antlerless tags. I discovered that I could use these during antelope season, and frankly this prevented me from going home with empty coolers. Granted, this is not the most important part of the hunt, but when you travel as I did, it's important to be able to augment the cost of the trip with something to take home. In some ways, the antlerless deer tags I had were the only game in town.

My antelope tags (any antelope and a doe/fawn) were for Tripp County, a place I had not hunted before. Scouting prior to the season revealed only two small herds of antelope on the public grounds available to me. (I tried to get on some private ground, but met with no success there). Although I had shooting opportunities at antelope, I really didn't want to take anything other than a buck because of the low number of does available. Removing a buck who had fulfilled his biological imperative made sense; removing a doe, who might represent several generations of additional antelope in an antelope-poor region didn't. So I followed the ethical stance, despite having shots at

does.

Since essentially no antelope were available to me last fall, those Tripp antlerless deer tags salvaged the meat end of the trip. I took two does and had a landowner thank me for removing one of those "alfalfa-eating whitetailed rats" from his fields.

Again this spring, during South Dakota's turkey season, I talked to several West River (Fall River County) landowners who encouraged me to come back in the fall and hunt whitetails on their properties, because they had too many deer. I was looking forward to hunting antelope and tagging a few whitetails to boot--something I cannot do if you eliminate antlerless deer hunting during antelope season.

I would think many West River ranchers and landowners would be against this proposal because one of the sources of antlerless deer hunters would be combination people who are hunting antelope and deer. How will enough antlerless deer be removed if you eliminate a source of antlerless hunters?

My question to GFP regarding this proposal would be a simple one: What harm does allowing antlerless harvests during antelope season do?

If the answer to this question is that a lot of yahoos are out shooting antelope and calling them deer, or a lot of illegal deer taking is being done, then maybe there is reason to consider it.

If your answer is simply that it's a law enforcement hassle, then maybe GFP ought to consider hiring a few more Conservation Officers or deputizing people or finding some other way to enforce the law, rather than eliminating this altogether.

Why take something good away when it does no harm and helps manage the deer herds? Isn't getting enough antlerless deer hunters already a problem,,, considering that you have to extend the antlerless seasons following the regular buck season now? Why?

I would appreciate a follow-up on any votes taken for this, etc.

Sincerely yours,  
John D. Taylor  
462 Chestnut Street  
Columbia, PA 17512  
717-684-4215  
[jdt@bonasapress.com](mailto:jdt@bonasapress.com)

Sportsman's input: I agree with all these changes EXCEPT increasing W river deer tag #'s. I understand the reducing 3 tag # licenses, but believe they should be totally eliminated, and NO increases in other license #'s. Based on what I've seen in Stanley & Butte counties, and what I've heard about Jones (all from landowner input) deer herd #'s need to rebuild. Tough to do that when most tag #'s are increased. Personal opinion is at this point in time it's wrong to increase tag #'s when herd was hit so hard by 3 consecutive tough winters. Thanks.

John Simpson, Pierre

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Mike Jarding [mailto:MikeJarding@GoldenWest.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 29, 2012 8:47 AM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:**

I have hunted deer in the North Fall River Co. Unit 27a all my life and I would like to tell you the deer population is extremely low. I would like to thank you for lowering the tags from 300 to 150. We have great mule deer habitat and there are some large public areas that have no deer. I do believe lowering the tags will bring back the deer, so thank you.

I need to bring up the elk problem. The commissioners voted to allow 80 cow elk tags in Unit 3 due to Wind Cave trying to get some elk out of the park so hunters could harvest them. A week after you said you are going to allow the elk to travel in CSP. Those elk belong to Unit 3. We hunters and wildlife watchers in Fall River and Custer Co. would like to have them back. We enjoyed listing, watching, learning, and hunting them.

You have been told the elk population in Unit 3 is stable, and has a good population. I challenge you to go out with the GF&P employees and find them. There are some ranches that have elk, don't get me wrong we aren't as bad as some other units. But most private and public land do not, so go and look, you won't find elk. 5 years ago there was a great population in these areas.

The age of the elk is the lowest I have ever seen it. It is extremely difficult to find a 5 plus year old bull. Please look up the research and studies done on age structure bulls. You need 7 plus year old bulls to substance a healthy heard.

Thanks you.

Mike Jarding

27201 Valley Rd

Hot Springs SD 57747

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sarah Wilson [mailto:sdwilsons@goldenwest.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 16, 2012 8:38 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** hunting comments

First,,,many thanks for the good job you all do managing the game and fish of the State. The walk-in program is vital to the future of hunting and as I always say I would gladly pay extra in taxes or tags if it would support more walk-in or public land hunting opportunities. Also the mentor and youth programs are vital...my kids will always have a tie to the land and the sport of hunting because of these programs.

One of my dreams as a bow hunter is to harvest a nice mule or whitetail buck in velvet. Would you please consider letting tag holders hunt for two weeks in late August (perhaps in conjunction with the antelope bow hunting season) or the first two weeks in September for velvet bucks. I not requesting more tags...just an opportunity for hunters to hunt a little earlier if they choose.

Thank you...and keep up the good work.

Mike Wilson and Family  
Custer and Fall River County Hunters

From: randyrmink@yahoo.com

To: barryj@gwtc.net, beatis@aol.com, jamesemcm@gmail.com, jim.spies@state.sd.us, jlcoop11@aol.com, mlauthier@hotmail.com, suec@ndgateway.com, susie.knippling@state.sd.us  
Sent: 5/23/2012 9:57:47 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time  
Subj: BH deer season continued

I have hunted the Black Hills for 53 years, took my first whitetail buck just off the Nemo-Piedmont trail in 1959. I have put on more than a few miles in the BH since. I hunt with a black powder (primitive cap and ball) rifle, I also hunt with both a compound and stickbow, and I hunt with a 300 win mag.

I feel you as a commission have made several mistakes over the last few years. I would like to give you my take on some of these.

1. You should have never stopped the unlimited BH deer season. The deer herd was controlled quite nicely with doe seasons when needed and antler restrictions when needed.

2. You should have had a 100 lion limit season the first year like I told several of you at the commission meeting in Pierre when the first season was being debated. On the QT one of your game biologists told me the secretly felt there were 500 lions in the BH then.

3. Do not allow Black Hills hunters of any kind to take does until you get the lions in check. I hunt at times in the BH for does with my Black Powder rifle and my bows but stop it. Don't allow it. Put a simple line on the apps in red saying "the Black Hills unit is closed to the taking of does". SIMPLE, CHEAP, and yes you can do it...

4. I'll go out on a limb here and suggest that all protections be taken off lions anywhere in the state of SD. There was a reason lions were hunted down historically. Treat them the same as coyotes period...and I guarantee you we will still have lions in SD just not hundreds of them. As Mr. Kanta once they need 100 square miles (some biologists believe 300 sq mi) this means we should have no more than 50 lions in the BH. An adult lions kills and eats one deer (elk) per week. with a conservative estimate of 250 adult lions in the BH that is about 13,000 deer per year as many or more than the hunter take in the BH.

5. We had lions in the BH when you could shoot them on sight and we will even without protecting them. My own mother had one in her sights in 1961 and the rancher we crossed west of Custer to hunt had killed one and had it mounted the year before.

6. You need to work with the BH forest service to maintain access to many areas of the BH. With all of the private land being developed many areas are being shut off for various reasons, mostly new landowners wanting to claim the Bh as far as their eye can see. We have a public access law in SD. Access trails and trailheads can be put on any section line on private property in the BH.

7. and last. What is up with the BH roads and trails being locked to law abiding sportsman from Dec 15 to May 15 to protect wildlife?? If I wanted to protect wildlife I would lock them before the first big game season of the year and let us access them by walking in. (by the way most roads locked gates are driven around by poachers, people who don't respect the law).

Thanks for listening, Randy Mink

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Bob Keeler [mailto:bobkeelerdc@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012 10:03 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** No need to reduce three tag licenses.

With regards to deer season specifically West River. I as a non resident landowner of just over 3000 acres in central SD take the Lyman County Herald a nice small town newspaper that reports weekly accidents that involve deer around Lyman County that law enforcement responds to. I also have a pretty good idea of the deer that I have on my property in Lyman and Tripp counties. My observation is that you would do the public a favor by trying to keep the deer herd more under control. Reducing your three tag licenses in my observation is not doing anyone any favors. Even with the die off of a number of deer last year I saw no decline of numbers. Putting the driving public at such a risk of striking a deer with their vehicle only puts their lives at risk with tremendous expense to property. I would suggest someone should challenge why you keep such high deer numbers when they cause so much damage to the public. Allowing the people the chance to shoot a couple extra doe per buck license just makes good sense for what I have seen.

Robert D Keeler  
86 Fairway Drive  
Douglas, Wyoming 82633  
307 358 4418

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ross Swedeen [mailto:reswedeen@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 24, 2012 1:49 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Comment for Changes Proposed for West River Deer Season

South Dakota GFP,

For what is worth, I would like to comment on the proposed changes for West River Deer Season. The only item of the proposed changes for the West River Deer Season that I have a concern about is the closure of hunting antlerless deer during the Antelope Firearms Season. My family, friends and I have taken advantage of the extra opportunity to hunt antlerless deer during the Antelope Firearm Season for the past three years. That hunt has become one of my favorite hunts of the year.

The antlerless deer season during Antelope Firearms Season gives me one more additional hunting opportunity to enjoy the South Dakota fall. The main reason I enjoy hunting this period is because of the beautiful weather that we usually have here in South Dakota that time of the year. The weather is ideal for the young kids that hunt with us. The season allows me to put delicious deer meat in my family's freezer a little earlier in the year. I really enjoy hunting this period because it allows me to avoid most of the hunter orange army present during the regular West River Deer Season, as I hunt mostly public land.

In conclusion, I would be very disappointed if we were no longer able to hunt antlerless deer during the Antelope Firearms season. I truly enjoy hunting antlerless deer during that time frame. Please do not make any changes to this aspect of the West River Deer Season. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Ross Swedeen  
617 Indiana St.  
Rapid City, SD 57701

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sam Huewe [mailto:srhuewe@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2012 2:14 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Black Hills Wildlife

Dear Wildlife Dept,

I have hunted the Black Hills (BH) pretty consistently since the 90's. I have had good success and seen some amazing animals. I recently drew a Custer State Park tag and my wife I liked the park so much in the Winter, we are coming back to do some camping and see the park during the Summer months. CSP is a very nice park with lots to offer every age group, excellent job.

I am writing this email to express my disappointment in the wildlife management the state is handing out. I keep reading articles about how the deer population is down and elk numbers are at a all time low.

[http://www.keloland.com/NewsDetail6162.cfm/Fewer\\_Licenses\\_Likely\\_For\\_Black\\_Hills\\_Deer\\_Season/?Id=131256](http://www.keloland.com/NewsDetail6162.cfm/Fewer_Licenses_Likely_For_Black_Hills_Deer_Season/?Id=131256)

I am trying very hard to understand the state's position on why these numbers are low. Years ago, a person was able to buy licenses over the counter, then thru drawing and now it appears hunting is going to be at a stand still. If this article from Keloland's website is correct, I can't believe the state can possibly think anything other than mountain lions are killing the big game in the BH.

Hunters have killed about 4k antler-less deer over the last 4 years in total. The herd is down over 20k. Now assuming there were 0 fawns born the other 16k - where could have they gone. Studies say a lion kills a deer every 10 days. If there's 250 lions like the SD estimate then they kill over 9,000 deer per year. Hunters killed 2500 last year in total. Please help me understand the states method on these statistics

Couple of points - if BH had say 8,000 deer about 4 years ago. If the state issued say a 1000 licenses a year, I am assuming that there should be 7k left if there was 100% harvest rate (and also considering no fawns were born). Just wondering how if the article is correct saying that hunting pressure has caused the numbers to be lower. Hunting pressure is a predictable number by the number of licenses issued. What what could be killing the deer ? why are the elk numbers so low they are giving out less than 5 tags a year in CSP. Over the past 10 years we have seen the deer population decrease, elk numbers are way down, antelope counts dropped - the only number that seems to increase every year is the number of lions in the BH. These lions numbers are increasing at a number that has to be controlled.

I got an idea - take the mountain lion licenses and x 10. I have a little nephew who if he starts applying now at age 17 for a elk tag, he would probably draw Social Security before he would be drawn for a elk tag.

Please take a hard second look at number of licenses for big game and make sure there are enough in the right categories.

Sincerely,

Sam Huewe

-----Original Message-----

**From:** STANLEY M FISCHER [mailto:smfischer653@sbcglobal.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2012 6:27 PM

**To:** SDGFPINFO

**Subject:** Fw: GFP News for May 15

Dear Sirs:

I do not know if this response will get to the proper place, but just wanted to offer my opinion on the elimination of antler deer hunting during rifle antelope season.

For me, this has been a great bonus to my trip to SD. Most important, the landowner where I hunt, simply loves the idea of me shooting some doe deer!

Why would you eliminate a season that doesn't seem to have any downside and only good!

Thank you!

Stanley Fischer

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Steven Nash [mailto:eiminem\_slimshady\_00@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** Friday, May 11, 2012 5:02 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:**

To whom it may concern,

Hello my name is Steven Nash. I would like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to voice my opinions on these amendments to the hunting seasons, especially, those of the West River deer season. While I think management is important, I would also like to mention the success in management of doe to buck ratios. In many states such as Michigan does are harvested at a rate of one to one with bucks. I myself am guilty of not harvesting a doe and filling my available tag. Growing up in Perkins county of South Dakota I think most people of that area have the mindset "I want to shoot a nice buck". Less than half of the people I have talked to in my 9 years of hunting (since I was 14), are meat hunters. Most of us are horn hunters or sport hunters. The venison that I harvest is always gone by the next hunting season, so I don't want to take two deer and have left over meat. Having said that, I think more antlerless licenses could be issued with fewer "any" (buck) licenses. I believe this to be especially true in the mule deer populations. In my hunting area of Perkins County (12-14 miles square) my estimate is four mule deer herds ranging from 10 to 18 each. Of these four herds the ratio is 9-11/1 in favor of does or yearling bucks. The bucks never reach maturity, and are generally harvested by someone I have never met. In my opinion, reducing the number of mule deer antlered licenses would allow the bucks to mature.

On the topic of late season licenses; I feel that if antlerless licenses are the only tags eligible, more hunters are going to harvest immature bucks on the last weekend of the regular season. Two years ago I did not find a mature buck, so I decided not to take a buck but rather wait till the late doe season and harvest does when the weather was cooler. Finally, I think the late season may be a little "too late". In our area the many of the buck had shed their horns by December 26, therefore my brother harvested a buck who had shed two years in a row.

I would also like to propose an antler minimum, where hunters would check their game with a conservation officer to allow young bucks mature to age four or five. Finally, I feel that the number of hunters whom "drive" pastures, fields, draws, and any other place they desire to hunt "big game", has increased. Also, that it is very disruptive to other hunters who are participating in "fair chase" hunting. I think actions should be taken to lessen this abuse to the sport of hunting, the animals, and those trying to preserve hunting.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the constant evolution to hunting season and the regulations I feel that the SDGFP is doing a great job as a whole for the people of South Dakota, and its wildlife.

Sincerely,

Steven Nash, Prairie City SD

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Timothy Alley [mailto:[timalley@fsbparkston.com](mailto:timalley@fsbparkston.com)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 10:35 AM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:**

I don't understand why you are eliminating the opportunity to take an antlerless deer during the antelope season! The number of tags is already set, so what difference does it make when they are harvested. The landowners that we hunt on have more than welcomed us to shoot a doe during the antelope season the past several years. It has been a great experience for my son the past four years to go with a group of us on our antelope and or grouse hunts. He looks forward to this every year, as do a couple of the older gentlemen that go along with us. I realize we can still harvest a doe during the regular season, but like a large majority of the other hunters out there, we like to concentrate on harvesting a buck during the regular season.

Thank you guys for all the hard work you put into wildlife management. Just a side note, my son is seriously thinking of going into wildlife and fisheries at SDSU the fall of 2013, so I think being able to hunt with the people we have the past few years and doing it the right way has made a big impact on his life!

Tim Alley, Parkston SD  
[timalley@fsbparkston.com](mailto:timalley@fsbparkston.com)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Kim McClelland-Knippen [mailto:kimarcticcircle@wat.midco.net]

**Sent:** Sunday, May 20, 2012 4:12 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Muskrat shooting

05/20/2012

Game, Fish and Parks Commission

523 E. Capitol Ave.

Pierre, SD 57501

To Whom it May Concern:

From the muskrat trappers view, we feel it is not proper to shoot muskrats on the eastern part of South Dakota, as it is taking the sport away from those that enjoy trapping.

Please take this in to consideration before making this decision.

As this affects all the trappers on the eastern side of South Dakota.

Thank you,

Muskrat trapper

Al Knippen

951 Colgate St  
Big Stone City, SD 57216

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Brian R\*\*\*\*\* [mailto:acsfea@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Saturday, May 19, 2012 6:35 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Opposition to Trapping Prohibitions: restricted use of 220 body grip traps

## **Opposition to Trapping Prohibitions: restricted use of 220 body grip traps**

I am writing to express my **opposition** to the restricted use of body grip traps on public land and ROW's. There are three reasons why I am opposed to this proposed rule.

1. The proposal would not have prevented the reported incidents from occurring.
2. The **proposal goes against our legislative intent** regarding the use of 220's.
3. he proposal is not warranted at this time and should be addressed in the legislature not the gfp.

In regards to **Item 1** from what I have learned regarding the incidents, one of these dogs was running loose on private property. This proposal does not address or prevent 220's from being set on private land, therefore the dog that was running loose would still have encountered the trap even if this proposal were to be adopted. The other incident seems to have occurred because of a trap which was illegally placed in a restricted area (a boat ramp). The proposed restriction will not prevent traps from being illegally placed. So again this second incident would not have been prevented by the proposed restriction. The incident regarding a cat is not of real concern because feral cats are everywhere and they are very hard on our wildlife, especially our game birds.

In regards to **Item 2** it was just a few years ago that this matter was addressed in the legislature by the introduction of bill to restrict the use of 220's on our ROW's because of an incident regarding a loose dog. The bill was defeated because the people of our state and our legislature did not want the bill passed and they did not want any restrictions of this nature imposed upon us. This clearly defines that **our legislative intent and the will of our residents is to not have this restriction regarding the use of 220's imposed upon us.** It greatly disturbs me that the gfp has brought this matter up before the commission to try to enact a rule that the legislature has said No to. It is almost like the gfp is trying to do an "end run" around our legislature and our residents for some reason.

In regards to **Item 3** I am not aware of any actual incidents of hunting dogs being killed in 220's ever occurring on our public land or in our ROW's. Since no incidents like this have ever occurred (to my knowledge) the gfp seems to be addressing an issue which does not exist.

Someone from the gfp said that this is a "preventative measure", which really makes no sense to me. If we were to accept this preventative measure reasoning as valid maybe we should eliminate the pheasant season in its entirety to prevent hunters from shooting hens or from being able to shoot more than their limit. Clearly that makes no sense, nor does this reason for the proposed restriction. Just because a potential problem exists does not mean that an actual problem exists. If in the future a real problem arises this matter could again be brought up in the legislature (where this should be addressed) and be given the careful consideration it deserves.

As was noted these baited cubbies and 220 sized traps are very effective at capturing raccoons, skunks, opossums, and even bobcats. The removal of these animals increases the nesting survival rate of our pheasants, ducks, and geese which provides a direct benefit to our hunter friends. The removal of these animals also helps prevent crop damage, reduces the spread of infectious diseases such as rabies, EPM (a disease carried by opossums which can kill horses), and distemper. The use of the 220 provides a direct benefit to the safety of our residents and the success rate of our bird hunters. This last year I would estimate that around 200,000 raccoons, skunks, and opossum were removed and to my knowledge no incidents regarding hunting dogs occurred on public land or in our ROW's. This seems like a very good track record to me.

I was also told that the dept only had 10 to 20 hunters raise any concern at all over the use of 220's so that seems like a very low number compared to the 180,000 or so hunting licenses sold. This would make a complaint percentage of around 0.01%, in other words 99.99 % of our hunters had no complaints at all about the use of 220's as they are currently used. I say that is pretty good, leave things alone, everything is fine as is.

To summarize I would ask the commission to **reject** this proposal because it will not be effective to prevent any incidents, it is unwarranted because the issue does not exist, and it is contrary to our legislative intent and the will of our residents.

Thank you,

Brian Reynolds

Monroe, SD

From: sdcowboy59@gmail.com  
To: jim.spies@state.sd.us, beatis@aol.com, Susie.Knippling@state.sd.us, jlcoop11@aol.com, barryj@gwtc.net, cathy.peterson@state.sd.us, bpcerny@gwtc.net, duane.sather@state.sd.us  
Sent: 5/11/2012 11:46:16 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time  
Subj: Muskrat Hunting Season

Game fish and Parks commissioners

In regard to

*Muskrat Hunting Season*

*Chapter 41:08:01*

*Commission Meeting Dates: Public Hearing June 7, 2012 Pierre*

*Finalization June 7-8, 2012 Pierre*

**COMMISSION PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS**

*Create a new administrative rule to initiate a limited hunting season for muskrats statewide to address damage to roads and other infrastructure as well as private property.*

- 1. The season would be open from April 1 - August 31 statewide.*
- 2. Only landowners and/or operators on their own property and state, county, or township highway Officials within public road right-of-ways may shoot muskrats.*
- 3. Nontoxic shot is required for shotguns.*

**I would like to give some input to the above.**

I have been a trapper for over 50 years.

1. Muskrats season does not end till May1 on most years so I think the season opening should be May 1 instead of April 1

Reason..... Many trappers are still trapping right of ways, road ditches in April.

We do not need gun happy County or township officials or landowners, blowing our catch to bits.

At \$11.00 for a finished muskrat (prices quoted April of 2012) it could be a sizable detriment to a trapper.

It could create lawsuits if not other problems.

Moving the date ahead to May 1 would eliminate many now unforeseen problems.

2. I think that should be changed to read. Only Qualified permit carrying officials, limited to 2 per county or two per township/ depending on the size of the county, may shoot muskrats.

If you let every county official carry a gun and shoot muskrats you are going to have some real idiots in the field creating other problems and other wildlife will suffer.

3. I think it should be mandatory that shotguns only with shot shells be used.

Rifles or slugs can ricochet when shooting on water and so endanger other people, livestock and wildlife.

I think caution should be taken on these issues and not create a bigger problem than muskrats raising havoc with the roads.

A road is repairable, a life is not.

Kenny Konechne, Kimball SD 605-778-6697



# School and Public Lands

Jarrold Johnson, State Land Commissioner

RECEIVED

MAY 15 2012

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

May 14, 2012

Secretary Jeff Vonk  
Department of Game, Fish and Parks  
523 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Secretary Vonk:

I am writing this letter to express the need for School and Public Lands' surface lessees to have the authority to shoot muskrats upon the respective access roads leading to State Trust lands upon which they hold a current lease.

Due to the high levels of water in areas of South Dakota, my office has had numerous calls from lessees voicing concern with roads accessing trust acres. Many parcels are accessible only by single township roads which have water up to the shoulder grade on one or both sides. Muskrats have burrowed under these roads in areas and are causing instability and disrepair. These roads are used to haul hay crops, stock trailers, and farm equipment necessary to harvest the resources agreed to in the terms of the leases. Lessees must have all available tools to help maintain the integrity of access roads, and the authority to shoot muskrats is one of those tools.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jarrold Johnson  
Commissioner

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Paul Draper [mailto:pauldraper@nvc.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012 8:15 PM

**To:** GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** new trapping regs

I am a serious trapper. A member of the NATA and SDTA.

I applaud banning baited #220 conibear on public lands. All conscientious trappers agree accidental dead-dogs are not acceptable collateral damage.

Sadly, some inconsiderate trappers ignore potential hazards.

Sincerely,  
Paul draper  
Bristol, SD.

Hello, Mr. Secretary....

Visited with Tom Kuck about the lack of turkeys in the hills...specifically near Moon Camp.....it is our thought your department might give consideration to closing the Fall Season on turkeys for a couple of years until the population rebound. We have a place between Hill City and Deerfield Lake – from my observation the population is down considerably the past two years.

Thank you for your consideration, John!

John Rozell

Sioux Falls/Hill City

Original Message-----

**From:** Rusty's [mailto:rustysstore@alliancecom.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 03, 2012 8:27 AM

**To:** Spies, Jim; beatis@aol.com; Knippling, Susie (GFP); jlcoop11@aol.com; barryj@gwtc.net; Peterson, Cathy; bpcerny@gwtc.net; Sather, Duane; GFP Wild Info

**Subject:** Black Hills fall turkey

Just a note about the fall Black Hills turkey season. After having hunting turkeys in the spring for over 25 years, the fall season has a very negative impact on the spring season. The number of hens killed in the fall reduces breeding stock and after the last three falls seasons the number of available toms on public ground is by far the lowest I have ever seen. I am not the only person to think this. Why do we need 120 days in the fall for people to shoot hen turkeys. I know the money may be nice but at what expense? A few years back when the fall season was suspended the effect on the spring season was immediate and very positive. In the fall turkeys do not respond well to calling thus the off the road hunting results in a very high percentage kill of hens. Reduce season length and the number of tags a person can get in the fall and the results will be positive. Thank You,

Rick Hiltunen, Howard, SD

From: jerry@mesadev.org  
To: jlcoop11@aol.com  
Sent: 5/24/2012 9:53:13 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time  
Subj: Fall Turkey

Mr. Secretary,

It is my understanding that your department might give consideration to closing the fall turkey season to allow the population to rebound. I would just like to offer my support to that proposal. Although I live in Colorado at present, I grew up in South Dakota and have hunted spring turkey for the last 43 years in the Summit Ridge/Moon Campground area and have noticed the population to be down considerably in the last few years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jerry Miller  
VP Human Resources  
Mesa Developmental Services  
950 Grand Avenue  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
(970) 243-3702 (Main)  
(970) 256-8607 (Direct Line)  
(970) 243-4919 (Fax)

-----Original Message-----

From: bob dinger [<mailto:bobcat57456@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 7:41 PM

To: GFP Wild Info

Subject: Archery Deer Hunting Season

Dear GFP Commission-

I've been bowhunting in our great state of South Dakota for over 20 years and have seen a tremendous increase in the number of NONRESIDENT BOWHUNTERS! My son and I hunt only public land and every year we see more and more NONRESIDENTS hunting on these areas. Last fall we went to our favorite public land area and there were 7 trucks in the parking lot, all from other states!!!!

I'm asking the GFP Commission to reduce or limit the number of NONRESIDENTS BOWHUNTERS in South Dakota. If things keep going like they are, we'll be unable to find unpressured areas for hunting, due to the NONRESIDENTS!!! I do not think that it is unreasonable to ask that South Dakota reduce the NONRESIDENTS the way that many other states do.

Thank you for your time!

Jared Petersen  
Tea, South Dakota

Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 7:46 PM  
To: GFP Wild Info  
Subject: West River Deer Hunting Season

Dear GFP Commission--

Please keep the doe antlerless season (in October) closed to rifle hunters. Over the last few years, my son's and I hunt has been severely messed up because of rifle doe hunters. Areas where we bowhunters think are to ourselves become full of rifle hunters on their way home trying to pop a doe! Several times we have even had rifle hunters shoot at doe deer that we we stalking, which created a real safety hazard!

Please do away with the early doe season!

Thank you for your time--

Jared Petersen  
Tea, South Dakota

-----Original Message-----

From: bob dinger [<mailto:bobcat57456@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 7:53 PM

To: GFP Wild Info

Subject: 220's and Public Lands

Dear GFP Commission--

Please do not allow 220s to become restricted on public land. About 5 years ago there was a bill in the Capitol that was very similiar to what is going on here. It was defeated by a large number! I believe that the GFP Commission needs to honor the intent of the folks that represent our state as was done in the Legislature several years ago. The people spoke at that time, and the message was --do not restrict 220s!!!! Who cares about a feral cat? I see hundreds of them every year, which eat our birds and other wildlife.

GFP needs to honer the folks decision in the Capitol and leave our 220s alone!

Thank you for your time----

Jared Petersen  
Tea, South Dakota