

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
June 6-7, 2013

Chair Susie Knippling called the meeting to order at 1 PM CDT in the Visitor's Center on Capitol Lake, Pierre, SD 57501. Commissioners Susie Knippling, John Cooper, Duane Sather, Jim Spies, Cathy Peterson, Gary Jensen, and Barry Jensen were present. Secretary Jeff Vonk was present along with media, staff, and public numbering about fifty.

Division of Administration

Chair Knippling called for any additions or corrections to the May 2-3, 2013, meeting minutes or a motion for approval.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Cooper TO APPROVE THE MAY 2-3, 2013, MINUTES AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Knippling called for additional Commissioner Salary days and Peterson requested two days for the Big Game Review and the Bonn Homme County open house.

Motion by Cooper with second by Spies TO APPROVE THE TWO ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS REQUESTED BY PETERSON. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Chris Petersen presented the following license list requests for Commission action:

Cabela's Inc. requested a list of the 2013 resident and nonresident small game license holders for a promotional mailing announcing the pheasant opener. This is a full fee request.

Motion by Spies with second by Sather TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST FROM CABELA'S AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Pheasants Forever, Inc. requested a list of resident, nonresident, and hunting preserve small game license holders to promote the Pheasants Forever organization and to educate and share the importance the Farm Bill. This is a reduced fee request.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second from Barry Jensen TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST FROM PHEASANTS FOREVER, INC. AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Mills Fleet Farm of Appleton, WI, requested a list of resident and nonresident fishing and hunting license holders to be used to market their sporting goods products and services by direct mail. This is a full fee request.

Motion by Spies with second by Barry Jensen TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST FROM MILLS FLEET FARM AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Scheels Sports requested a list of 500 Rapid City and 500 Sioux Falls resident archery hunting license holders to market their stores. This is a full fee request.

Motion by Spies with second by Cooper TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST FROM SCHEELS SPORTS AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Petersen presented the May 29, 2013, License Sales Report indicating fishing license sales were gaining ground and could reach the 2012 record levels during the next month.

Petersen presented a flow chart of current and proposed email notifications that are sent through the GFP licensing system after a big game draw is conducted. Petersen explained the email notification process and the error that occurred earlier this month on the bighorn sheep draw. Petersen described the new checks and processes that are being implemented to avoid email errors in the future.

Secretary Jeff Vonk stated the Governor will be announcing today that the moratorium on Game, Fish, and Parks acquiring game production lands has been lifted. GFP will begin working with willing sellers to acquire property to be managed as habitat for wildlife and the recreating public. There will be a minor change in the process with no changes to Commission authority. County Commissions will be notified of the pending transaction sixty days prior to GFP Commission approval. For transactions of eighty acres or more, a GFP representative will offer to meet with the County Commission. GFP will continue to pay full property taxes on all Game Production Areas in their respective county and public notification in local newspapers, the GFP website, and on the GFP Commission agendas will remain the same.

Open Forum

Chair Knippling opened the meeting to the attending public asking anyone that wished to address the Commission on matters not listed under Finalizations were welcome to come forward.

Steve Clements representing the South Dakota Sheep Growers Predator Management Committee expressed disappointment that the ADC program was not a part of the Wildlife Review process and he wondered if the Commission received the letter he emailed earlier this year. He expressed his concern for the additional costs for an ADC contract pilot and other administrative fees. He asked about the additional \$1 fee to licenses in rule 41-6-70.1 and funding from 40-36-11. Clements expressed his desire to have experienced trappers for the ADC program. Director Leif explained how the bill passed in the 1999 legislative session created the 2-1 match for ADC funding.

Mike McKernan from the South Dakota Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation thanked the Commission and GFP for the cooperation and working partnership.

The Public Hearing began at 2 PM on the items listed under Finalizations and concluded at 2:48 PM. (Minutes follow the minutes of the regular meeting.) Chair Knippling called for a fifteen-minute recess after the public hearing.

Finalizations

Golf cart use on park roads 41:03:02 and 41:03:03

Assistant Parks Director Bob Schneider presented the proposed changes to Motor Vehicles on Public Lands and Park and Trail Use Pass to allow golf carts, without motor vehicle licenses, to operate on roads within state parks and recreation areas; and to eliminate the park entrance license (PEL) exemption for mopeds and scooters. Schneider indicated most park users will purchase the PEL for golf carts, mopeds, and scooters as a second license which can be purchased for half price. Schneider presented an amendment to the proposal to include all-terrain vehicles (ATV) to the list of vehicles that are not required have the PEL affixed directly to the vehicle.

Add to 41:03:03.02 the inclusion of all-terrain vehicles to the list of vehicle types that the operator may have the vehicle license or serial number visibly recorded on the park entrance license (PEL) and available for inspection, as an alternative to affixing the PEL directly to the vehicle.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Spies TO AMEND PROPOSED CHANGES TO PARK AND TRAIL USE PASS AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Amend 41:03:03:02 regarding placement of a park entrance license on a motor vehicle.
2. Add 41:03:02:13 to define Exceptions to Restrictions on Motor Vehicles to meet the criteria defined in HB 1220.
3. Repeal 41:03:03:03.01(6) Park entrance license exemptions (mopeds).

Motion by Sather with second by Gary Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO MOTOR VEHICLES ON PUBLIC LANDS 41:03:02 AND PARK AND TRAIL USE PASS 41:03:03 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Custer State Park Deer Hunting Season 41:06:41

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Custer State Park Deer Hunting Season with no recommended changes to the proposal.

1. Reduce number of "Any Deer" licenses from 2 to zero.
2. Increase number of "Antlerless Whitetail Deer" muzzleloader licenses from zero to 20.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Sather TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO CUSTER STATE PARK DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:41 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

East River Deer Hunting Season 41:06:21

Switzer presented the proposed changes to the East River Deer Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal.

Offer 1,050 less one-tag licenses, 1,500 less two-tag licenses, and 1,300 less three-tag licenses (overall decrease of 7,950 tags) than 2012.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Duane Sather TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO EAST RIVER DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:21 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

West River Deer Hunting Season 41:06:20

Switzer presented the proposed changes to West River Deer Hunting Season with recommended changes to the proposal. A desire for increased harvest is the reason to adjust the number of tags in Tripp County and the management goals and objectives for mule deer led to the adjustment of tags in Corson and Dewey County to increase the herd.

1. Adjust resident license numbers by increasing three-tag licenses by 100 (300 tags).
2. Adjust nonresident license numbers by increasing three-tag licenses by 8 (24 tags).
3. Retain same number of licenses, but change license type for Corson and Dewey counties from 09 (two antlerless deer tags) to 19 (two antlerless whitetail deer tags).

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Peterson TO APPROVE CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Adjust resident license numbers by increasing one-tag licenses by 240, decreasing two-tag licenses by 1,260 (2,520 tags), and increasing three-tag licenses by 405 (1215 tags) compared to 2012.
2. Adjust nonresident license numbers by increasing one-tag licenses by 20, decreasing two-tag licenses by 102 (204 tags), and increasing three-tag licenses by 32 (96 tags) compared to 2012.
3. Retain same number of licenses, but change license type for Corson and Dewey counties from 09 (two antlerless deer tags) to 19 (two antlerless whitetail deer tags).

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Sather TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO WEST RIVER DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:20 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Black Hills Deer Hunting Season 41:06:19

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes with no recommended changes to proposal.

Offer residents 50 and nonresidents 4 fewer "antlerless whitetail" deer licenses in Unit 1 than in 2012.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO BLACK HILLS DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:19 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Refuge Deer Hunting Season 41:6:36

Switzer presented the proposed changes with no recommended changes to proposal.

1. Adjust the start date for Unit RFD-SL1 from the Saturday before East River deer hunting season to the second Saturday of November. Start dates for all other Sand Lake units would adjust accordingly.
2. Only unfilled Sand Lake "Antlerless Deer" licenses are valid during the 9-day season starting on the first Saturday after Christmas.
3. During any Refuge Deer seasons that are restricted to muzzleloaders, make an allowance for optics that do not employ magnification as defined in 41:06:04:14 Muzzleloading Restrictions.

Motion by Spies with second by Cooper TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:36 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Archery Deer Hunting Season 41:06:22 and
Uses of Parks and Public Lands 41:03:01

Chief Tom Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes to the Archery Deer Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal.

1. Only unfilled "Any Antlerless Deer" licenses are valid from January 1-15th.
2. Add Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Codington, Douglas, Grant, Hutchinson, Lincoln, Turner, Union and Yankton counties to the area where antlerless deer licenses are not valid.
3. Change the name of "Blood Run Nature Area" to "Good Earth State Park".
4. Reduce number of "Any Antlerless Deer" archery access permits for Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve from 45 to zero and Good Earth State Park from 5 to zero.
5. Increase the number of "Any Deer" archery access permits from 5 to 10 for Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve.

Motion by Peterson with second by Cooper TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO ARCHERY DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:22 AND USES OF PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS 41:03:01 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Muzzleloader Deer Hunting Season 41:06:45

Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes indicating there are no recommended changes to proposal.

1. Only unfilled "any antlerless deer" licenses are valid from January 1-15th.
2. Add Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Codington, Douglas, Grant, Hutchinson, Lincoln, Turner, Union and Yankton counties to the area where antlerless deer licenses are not valid.

Motion by Cooper with second by Gary Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE MUZZLELOADER DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:45 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Youth Deer Hunting Season 41:06:44

Chief Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes to Youth Deer Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal. The counties where youth hunters are limited to one license were areas with low numbers of deer due to EHD last year.

1. Add Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Hutchinson, and Union counties to those areas where only one license is valid.
2. Remove the youth deer restriction for Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge, and Waubay National Wildlife Refuge. This would make an allowance for the USFWS Refuge System to allow access for youth deer hunting at their discretion.

Motion by Peterson with second by Cooper TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO YOUTH DEER HUNTING SEASON 41:06:44 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Fall Turkey Hunting Season 41:06:14

Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes with no recommended changes to the proposal.

1. Offer 20 fewer one-tag licenses and 10 more two-tag licenses for resident hunters on the East River Prairie Units.
2. Offer 500 fewer one-tag licenses for resident hunters and 40 fewer one-tag licenses for nonresident hunters for the Black Hills Unit.
3. Repeal 41:06:14:04. Licenses valid for unit specified. In those units adjoining the Cheyenne River or White River a license is valid in the adjacent unit within one mile of the common river boundary.

Motion by Cooper and second by Gary Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE FALL TURKEY HUNTING SEASON 41:06:14 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Bobcat Trapping and Hunting Seasons 41:06:16

Chief Tom Kirschenmann and Keith Fisk presented the proposed changes to the bobcat seasons with no recommended changes to proposal. Discussion included types of harvest, season dates and number of days, public comments, sex ratio, value of pelts, a possible quota of harvest, and management goals. Fisk indicated this is managed for recreational opportunity including hunting, trapping, and snaring of bobcats. SDSU is in the first year of a three-year research project to determine the bobcat population.

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Gary Jensen TO AMEND THE WEST RIVER SEASON DATES TO RUN FROM DECEMBER 26 UNTIL MARCH 1 INCLUSIVE. Roll call vote: Cooper-no; Barry Jensen-yes; Gary Jensen-yes; Peterson-yes; Sather-yes; Spies-yes; Knippling-no. Motion carried with five yes votes and two no votes.

Discussion continued regarding a change to the current proposal by adding a quota; and Chair Knippling deferred action until the next morning allowing staff to obtain additional information requested from Commissioners about season quotas and number of bobcats taken by individual sportsmen.

Friday morning Keith Fisk reported nine people took ten or more bobcats in the last season and a quota of ten should not have much impact on the west river population. The 12-year average harvest take is 625 with 780 taken in 2012 and 650 taken in 2011. Discussion continued and included staff review, public input, and the rule making process.

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Cooper TO APPROVE BOBCAT TRAPPING AND HUNTING SEASON AS AMENDED. Roll call vote: Cooper-no; Barry Jensen-no; Gary Jensen-no; Peterson-no; Sather-no; Spies-no; Knippling-no. Motion failed.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Cooper TO PROPOSE THE EAST RIVER SEASON DATES TO BE DECEMBER 26 UNTIL THE THIRD SUNDAY OF JANUARY; THE WEST RIVER SEASON DATES BE DECEMBER 26 UNTIL MARCH 1 INCLUSIVE; AND A WEST RIVER HARVEST QUOTA OF 600. Motion carried unanimously.

August Management Take Goose Season 41:06:16

Chief Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes to the August Management Take of geese indicating started as a way to assist with urban and airport issues and the Department has no recommended changes to the proposal. Discussion included public comment and ethics.

Motion by Cooper with second by Spies TO REMOVE THE ALLOWANCE FOR UNPLUGGED SHOTGUNS AND THE MODIFICATION OF SHOOTING HOURS TO ONE-HALF HOUR AFTER SUNSET. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Modify the season dates to the first Saturday of August to August 31.
2. Increase the daily bag limit from 8 to 15.
3. Add those portions west of the Cheyenne River in Pennington County to the open area.

Motion by Cooper with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO GOOSE HUNTING SEASON AUGUST MANAGEMENT TAKE 41:06:16 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Archery Accompaniment 41:06:05

Assistant Division Director Emmett Keyser presented the proposed changes to Archery Restrictions with no recommended changes. Discussion included shotguns and firearms with similar restrictions.

1. Amend 41:06:05:03 to limit the scope of the rule to the possession of firearms by an archery hunter.
2. Create a new rule, 41:06:05:03.01, to address non-licensee armed accompaniment in the field and to place the responsibility for adherence on the unlicensed hunter.

Motion by Cooper with second by Sather TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO ARCHERY RESTRICTIONS 41:06:05 AS PROPOSED. Roll call vote: Cooper-yes; Barry Jensen-yes; Gary Jensen-yes; Peterson-yes; Sather-yes; Spies-no; Knippling-no. Motion carried with five yes votes and two no votes.

Hunting Season Proposals

Antelope Hunting Seasons

Director Leif requested the Antelope Population Survey Report be presented before the recommended changes to the Antelope Hunting Season.

Chad Switzer presented the dates, licenses, requirements, and restrictions for the Custer State Park Antelope Hunting Season. The antelope population in the park has increased slightly and the management goal is to increase viewability to the visiting public. There are no recommended changes to the season.

Switzer presented the season dates, open areas, requirements, restrictions, and license information since 2008 for the Firearm Antelope Hunting Season. The recommended changes are to offer fewer licenses and offer no licenses on the Fort Pierre National Grasslands and unit 45A in Lyman County.

1. Offer resident hunters 165 less one-tag licenses (165 tags) and 345 less two-tag licenses (690 tags) than 2012.
2. Units 45A (Lyman) and 45B (Ft. Pierre National Grasslands) will be issued zero firearm licenses. Therefore, Units 45A and 45B will also be closed to archery antelope hunting.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO FIREARMS ANTELOPE HUNTING SEASON AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Early Fall Canada Goose and Waterfowl Hunting Seasons

Chad Switzer presented the season dates, open area, daily and possession limit, requirements, and restrictions with recommend changes to move the start date to September 1st following the August Management Take and amend a boundary line. Supportive information included hunter numbers, harvest, average days hunted, and average bag per hunter.

1. Change the opening date from the first Saturday in September to September 1.
2. Amend 41:06:16:07 to modify the boundaries of Units 1 and 2 near the Missouri River to remove portions from Unit 1 (area open to Early Fall Canada Goose Hunting Season) and include in Unit 2. This modification would include all of Tripp County and that portion of Charles Mix County east of U.S. Highway 281 and north of S.D. Highway 46.

Motion by Cooper with second by Gary Jensen TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO EARLY FALL CANADA GOOSE AND WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASONS AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Season

Switzer presented the season dates, open area, daily and possession limit, requirements, and restrictions with no recommend changes.

Sage Grouse Hunting Season

Kirschenmann provided background and update information on the sage grouse population and decline of male grouse observed in the spring lek survey. The recommendation is to close the two day season in Harding and Butte Counties. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will determine in September of 2015 on the listing of sage grouse on the endangered species list. Many agencies have habitat management on the forefront and GFP is in the process of updating the sage grouse management plan.

Close the Sage Grouse Hunting Season.

Motion by Spies with second by Barry Jensen TO PROPOSE THE CLOSING OF THE SAGE GROUSE HUNTING SEASON AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Harvested Wolf Inspection Requirement

Tom Kirschenmann presented a recommendation to establish a requirement that harvested wolves be reported within 24 hours and submitted for inspection within 48 hours to verify species and acquire biological information. Gray wolves are under state management east of the Missouri River and GFP has no intention to manage for a wolf

population in South Dakota. The 2013 SD Legislature added wolves to the predator varmint list.

Establish in administrative rule a mandatory inspection of harvested wolves.

Motion by Cooper with second by Jensen TO PROPOSE MANDATORY INSPECTION OF HARVESTED WOLVES. Motion carried unanimously.

Division of Parks and Recreation

Good Earth State Park Land Acquisition and Resolution

Director Doug Hofer provided background for the purchase of the Blood Run parcels in 2011 and the partnership with The Conservation Fund, the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and GFP. The SD 2013 Legislature changed the name for the newest state park to Good Earth State Park at Blood Run. GFP has received notice from the federal government that \$1.2 million Forest Legacy Grant Funds has been awarded to the Blood Run project for the forested acres. The SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation raised an additional \$1.2 million to complete the purchase of the 254 acres of Blood Run currently held by The Conservation Fund.

Hofer presented Resolution 13-06 requesting authority to complete the acquisition of 254 acres at Blood Run from The Conservation Fund when the Forest Legacy dollars become available in the next few months. The Parks and Wildlife Foundation funds are available to complete the transaction.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 13-06 AS PRESENTED (Appendix A). Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Knipling called a recess at 5 PM with meeting to resume at 8:30 the next morning. Meeting resumed at 8:30 AM on Friday, June 7, in the same location with all Commissioners present. Secretary Vonk was present along with thirty media, staff, and public.

Park Improvement projects

Assistant Direct Al Nedved provided a PowerPoint showing Capital Development projects that include fish cleaning stations, comfort stations, shoreline stabilization projects, the Fisher Grove campground relocation, the Sylvan Lake wastewater treatment facility, and \$3.5 million in road projects as part of the more than 400 projects for this summer.

Nedved indicated flooding occurred at Lake Alvin, Newton Hills, Union Grove, and Roughlock Falls in the past few weeks.

Mt. Rushmore Connector Trail

Director Hofer stated the Mount Rushmore 18-mile extension is a big project from Hill City to Mount Rushmore costing \$8 million and federal grants are available to assist with funding. A partnership with the US Forest Service, SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation, the Mount Rushmore Society, the US Department of Ag Forest Service, and GFP are working together make this project happen following an Environmental

Impact Study (EIS). Hofer provided a history and background of the Mickelson Trail which was named the seventh best recreational trail in the world by Austin-Lehman Adventures. The 2013 SD Legislature provided \$500,000 for the EIS, the Mount Rushmore Society pledged \$1 million, the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation pledged \$100,000, and the GFP Recreational Trail Funds will provide \$400,000 toward the EIS that could take two years to complete.

Park Revenue and Visitation Reports

Director Hofer provided the May 2013 Revenue And Visitation Report indicating revenue is up 6% from May of last year and park entrance license sales are down 2.6%. Camping reservations are ahead of last year with the next 100 days being the busiest time for camping. Memorial weekend saw campgrounds full and reservations for Labor Day weekend are now open.

Division of Wildlife

Sportsmen Against Hunger and Resolution

Chief Tom Kirschenmann presented a handout of the Sportsmen Against Hunger (SAH) 2013 Donation and Expenditure Summary showing the number species of animals donated and expenditures for the program. Kirschenmann presented Resolution 13-07 requesting Commission authority to enter into and Memorandum of Agreement with SAH for an eighth year.

Motion by Peterson and second by Barry Jensen TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 13-07 AS PRESENTED (Appendix B). Motion carried unanimously.

Antelope Population Survey

Switzer and Lindbloom provided this report prior to the antelope recommendations. Switzer indicated Custer State Park population count is similar to last year.

Andy Lindbloom shared that aerial survey counts are conducted in May and June with a preliminary count of 24,000 adult antelope compared to 22,000 in 2012. Hunter success was 53% with approximately 2,600 antelope harvested last year.

Spring Canada Goose Take

Keith Fisk presented a PowerPoint on the Spring Goose Program indicating the population is approximately 270,000 resident geese which is above management goals. Approximately \$4.3 million has been spent on goose depredation. GFP is seeing low landowner tolerance and lots of water with lots of geese. Fisk outlined staffing and preventative efforts for goose depredation complaints. The landowner kill permits are working this year. Two different approaches were used in a special permit in the available in Region 3 and 4, these approaches will be evaluated for future opportunity and impact of the different approaches.

2013-14 Private Shooting Preserves

Janelle Blaha indicated the 2012-13 Shooting Preserve Season was another successful year with 203 preserves releasing 403,380 birds and 237,965 birds harvested. The coming season will have 206 shooting preserves with 175 operators on 199,379 acres.

Emmett Keyser indicated two operators received notice of warnings and he provided an overview of the process when preserves are not compliant in their operations.

2013 Fish Spawning Report

Mark Fincel gave a PowerPoint indicating the Lake Oahe spawning had a slow start. The statewide walleye egg take fell short of the goal for 2013 with 60.6 million eggs collected. Only 13.8 million eggs came from Lake Oahe and the northeast filled the balance of take for 2013.

Walleye Tagging Study

Fincel indicated the Walleye Tagging Study on Lake Oahe is a cooperative effort with SDSU, ND Game and Fish, and GFP to learn more about the annual exploitation and mortality of walleye, walleye movement, the walleye population, and how state regulations effect the population on Oahe. More than 9,300 walleyes have been tagged at ten different locations to-date. Some tags have a reward and all anglers reporting tags will receive a Certificate of Appreciation. There is signage at boat ramps on Lake Oahe informing the public of the project. The numbered tag includes a phone number to report the tag location.

Gizzard Shad Trap/Transfer Project

Gizzard shad were released last year in Lake Oahe with localized success and so far 1,678 have been stocked this year with three additional sites in North Dakota. Anglers have reported seeing schooling shad and shad in walleye diets.

Rainbow smelt eggs should have survived this spring, indicating better numbers than last year, and smelt are present in Oahe, nothing like 2009-2010. Some people were catching smelt and smelt have been seen in walleye diets.

Fisheries Strategic Plan

Chief John Lott indicated Regional Fisheries and Aquatics staff are working on a statewide Fisheries Strategic Plan to include all types of waters located in South Dakota. This includes an inventory of waters and species, development of a statewide data management system, establishment of a survey prioritization and review process, generation of a comprehensive fishing access needs assessment, development of standardized non-game surveys, updating the state fish health plan, and increasing reliability of egg resources.

The plan includes communications, human dimensions, and law enforcement as support programs, and public input will be solicited prior to finalizing the plan.

Shooting Range Projects

Chief Scott Simpson gave a PowerPoint presentation on shooting range projects across South Dakota that GFP administers a grant program to assist shooting clubs.

The Fall River County Shooting Complex near Hot Springs requested assistance at the October 2012 meeting. The Division of Wildlife budgeted for the project and approximately \$130,000 has been spent on the project. Simpson provided use and design details on the facility.

The Oahe Downstream range improvement includes relocation and expansion to have thirteen rifle stations, three pistol stations, and a shotgun shooting area for up to six people with their own space. The old shooting area will be closed and will need to meet US Corp specifications to close the range. The new range should be available late in 2014.

The Outdoor Campus air gun and archery projects in Sioux Falls and Rapid City are similar to a complex in Nebraska. The complex will have ten lanes to shoot air rifles and will include archery lanes that can be used for air guns as well. This is a concept plan and he is working with the city and engineers to make these facilities happen. Funding of \$200,000 has been budget for each project and private funds will be needed to complete the projects.

The Mobridge Shooting Range improvements include berm work, a shelter with an additional ten lanes for twenty lanes in all, update the benches, improve the access road, and expand the parking lot. Pittman Robertson funding of \$66,000 has been budgeted for the project.

Knippling shared the Outdoor Expo in Huron, Kids Fishing Day in Pierre, and Fort Sisseton Festival are this weekend. The Western Association meeting in July in Omaha and the July 8 meeting will include a Governance session at 10 AM in Pierre.

Motion by Sather with second by Cooper to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 11:59 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey R. Vonk, Department Secretary

Appendix A

RESOLUTION NO. 13-06

Whereas, the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) has entered into an agreement to acquire real property from The Conservation Fund, a Maryland non-profit corporation, of Arlington, Virginia, which property is located in Lincoln County, South Dakota, described as:

Parcel I: Government Lots 2, 3, and 4 in the West Half (W1/2) of Section 13, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, according to the Government Survey thereof, together with the East Half (E1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to the West line thereof.

Parcel II: The East Half of the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (E 1/2 SE1/4 NE1/4) of Section 14, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.m., Lincoln County, South Dakota, together with the West Half (W1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to East Line thereof.

Parcel III: The North Half of the South Half (N1/2 S1/2) of Section 14, Township 100 North Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, together with the West Half (W1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to East Line thereof, Except the West 3687.95 Feet thereof, and Except Lommen's Tract A, being a part of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NE1/4 SE1/4) of Section 14, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, according the recorded plat thereof, together with the West Half (W1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to East Line thereof contained therein.

Parcel IV: The Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4 SE1/4) of Section 14, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, together with the West Half (W1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to East Line thereof.

Parcel V: Lommen's Tract A, being a part of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NE1/4 SE1/4) of Section 14, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, according the recorded plat thereof, together with the West Half (W1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to East Line thereof.

Parcel VI: Government Lot 1 in the North Half (N1/2) of Section 24, Township 100 North, Range 49 West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, according to the Government Survey thereof, together with the East Half (E1/2) of the vacated highway adjacent to the West line thereof; and

Whereas, said property consists of approximately 254 acres and is to be acquired by and utilized by the Division of Parks and Recreation for the purpose of a State Park (Good Earth State Park at Blood Run); and

Whereas, SDCL 41-4-1.1 requires that before GFP acquires and purchases property GFP must notify owners of land located adjacent to the property sought to be acquired by publishing notice of the same once in each legal newspaper of the county in which the property to be purchased is located; and

Whereas, GFP has published the required legal notice at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of action by the Commission authorizing the intended purchase, which notice included the time and location of the meeting at which the Commission's action is expected and by giving notice of instructions for presenting oral and written comments to the Commission; and

Whereas, the Commission has reviewed any and all comments that may have been received relative to the intended purchase and after consideration of the same, the Commission approves of the same.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that GFP is authorized to complete its purchase of the above described real property from The Conservation Fund, a Maryland non-profit corporation, of Arlington, Virginia, to be utilized for the purpose of a State Park (Good Earth State Park at Blood Run).

Appendix B

RESOLUTION 13 – 07

WHEREAS, in a continued effort to meet harvest objectives of deer and resident Canada geese in South Dakota, the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department (Department) recommends that the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Commission (Commission) and Department enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (a true and correct copy of which is attached to this Resolution) for an eighth year with an incorporated non-profit organization entitled Sportsmen Against Hunger, Inc. (a South Dakota corporation referred to as SDSAH) for the joint and mutual purpose of managing the antlerless deer and Canada goose population and providing assistance in facilitating payment towards expenses incurred in processing, packaging, and freezing of antlerless deer and Canada goose meat donated by hunters for distribution to needy persons and families free of charge; and

WHEREAS, the Commission and Department desire to participate in this worthwhile program in conjunction and alliance with SDSAH.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in an effort to assist in the management of antlerless deer and resident Canada goose populations in South Dakota, the Commission endorses the Department's participation in this program with SDSAH for an eighth year and hereby authorizes the Department, acting by and through Anthony P. Leif, Wildlife Division Director, to execute the Memorandum of Agreement in substantially the same form as is attached to this Resolution. In providing this endorsement, the Commission recognizes the Department's participation in this program will involve providing partial financial assistance utilizing Division of Wildlife license revenue and implementing a voluntary check-off on license applications whereby applicants could elect to financially participate therein by donating money towards the program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department negotiate with and participate with SDSAH in efforts of the Commission and the Department to assist in the management of antlerless deer and resident Canada geese and the efforts of SDSAH to encourage and facilitate delivery of harvested antlerless deer and Canada geese by hunters to meat processors in South Dakota for donation, processing of the donated deer and goose meat, and distribution of the processed meat to needy families through charitable food distributors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department shall, from time to time, report to the Commission and furnish information and results of the program as the same relates to over-all success of the program, data, statistics, and information regarding harvest of antlerless deer and Canada geese, donations of antlerless deer and Canada geese for the stated purpose, monetary donations received from the license application check-off, and expenses incurred therein. The Commission shall during the eighth year of the program fund the Department's agreed contribution to the project (if required and deemed necessary), make budget adjustments thereto, and make recommendations to the Department relative to administration of the program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that prior to the conclusion of the eighth year of the program the Department shall report to the Commission which report shall include a review of the over-all success of the program and any recommendations that the Department might have as to continuation of the program.

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
June 6, 2013

Public Hearing Officer Chuck Schlueter began the Public Hearing at 2 PM at the Visitor's Center on Capitol Lake in Pierre, South Dakota. Schlueter indicated items listed under Finalizations on the agenda numbered 6-18 were open for public comment with written comments read prior to oral testimony from the attending public. Individuals wishing to provide oral testimony are to approach the microphone, state their name, provide their name and city on the sign-in sheet, and keep comments to three minutes.

Golf cart use on park roads

No written or oral testimony was received.

Custer State Park Deer Hunting Seasons

No written or oral testimony was received.

East River Deer Hunting Season

Andrew Huebert of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "In response to this I would like to say that you really need to rethink the deer tag numbers. We lost a lot more deer than you think and you need to limit tag numbers more. I am an avid deer hunter and I know from managing the deer heard on my property that to get your numbers up an have a healthy heard you need to limit what you take. Don't think about the money end of things. Think about a healthy deer population. Because right now if I were to send in for every tag I could I cloud get 20 tags just for myself and that is crazy. Think about it more you need to manage things because I know I am. Because I will only get 4 deer tags this year because I will do my part in helping you need to do the same."

Daniel Schaal of Brookings, SD, emailed: "Our family farm that I am a part owner of is in McCook County. I hunt for deer every year exclusively on our land, the farm is just under 160 acres so I do not qualify for a landowner license. I much preferred the old method where both "any deer" and "antlerless only" converted to "antlerless only" licenses for the second season after Christmas. I usually draw an "any deer" tag every other year when I have a preference point and on the off years I get my second choice (antlerless deer) and earn the preference point. I harvest a deer in about 40% of the years and have never gotten a buck. The current system makes me choose between requesting an "antlerless deer" license so I can hunt in the second season to increase my chances of getting a deer or requesting an "any deer" license to give me some chance of harvesting a buck someday. If the new method is designed to protect the deer herd during the current blue tongue crisis I understand that, but I hope we revert to the old system when the blue tongue crisis is over."

Tom Jensen of Harrisburg, SD, emailed: "In regards to East river deer recommendation for 48A (Marshall County)...strongly support this recommendation as deer numbers are still quite obviously below even an aggressive management objective. Please vote to pass this proposal."

Dave Vavruska of Tyndall, SD, emailed: "I really haven't seen the numbers but I heard 100 Buck tags are all that would be available in Bon Homme County. My thought

is this why even have a season at all and let everything build back up and the Bucks could mature into bigger and better animals for next year. If there is a season it should be left wide open for Bon Homme residents no preference to anyone not even the farm owner operator. The farmer already gets a Landowner preference and then yet give him half of the 100 tags only leaves 50 for everyone else. No youth tags as well they too must suffer and understand why the cutting back in numbers is being done as we have to. I enjoy hunting as well and do not own land and it is getting harder to obtain land but I deal with it. I know the reason giving the farmer half the tags because they supposedly feed them they are already getting landowner preference so why more tags towards them. I feel we need give the animals a break and not have a season or open to everyone with no special preference. “

CJ Kraemer of Aberdeen, SD, emailed: “I would like to comment on the deer season. I hunt in McPherson County. A lot of the farmers told me there were not a lot of deer on their land. To me it does not make a lot of sense to extend the doe season only in January. If we are short on deer, why extend the season. For many years we didn't extend the season and we got along just fine.”

Ken Cordingley of Aberdeen, SD, emailed: “Twenty plus members of Whitetails Unlimited strongly feel that the starting dates of West River and East River Deer seasons should be left at the normal starting dates of the 2nd & 3rd Saturdays of November! We can see no benefit in moving them each a week later, and as for running East River Season until the 8th of Dec., we feel this would create more stress on the deer heading into the winter ! As for the benefit of being able to take advantage of the hunting over Thanksgiving holiday, we have always been able to do that anyway! We respectfully request of the commission that they reconsider and start West River on the 2nd Sat. of Nov. and East River on the 3rd Sat. of Nov. Counting the members, their spouses, children , and other relatives that hunt deer , we number 58 hunters!”

Jeff Flood of North Mankato, MN, emailed: “I would like to see you consider Mule Deer License again for Brule County. I know you increased the Any Deer License numbers when you discontinued the Mule Deer License. The problem as a Non-Resident Hunter is all the Any Deer License are already sold before we can even apply! If you offered Mule Deer Only License we could again enjoy Firearms Deer Hunting for Mule Deer in Brule County.”

Daniel Zach of Rosholt, SD, emailed: “I just received your email stating that you are holding a meeting to propose the East river deer season. Last year you cut the number of tags in Roberts County. Many people complained that we are no longer seeing deer in our area. I think that you made the right choice and would encourage and beg you to leave the number of tags for Roberts County at this lower number. I have seen a few more deer this spring, but it appears they have had a rough winter. Every deer I've seen this spring is very thin and they all seem to be the same size; small. Please keep the number of tags low, we cannot maintain a deer herd that satisfies all of the hunters if we continue shooting off all our does.”

No oral testimony was received.

West River Deer Hunting Season

Gene and Sue Chytka of Burke, SD, wrote: “We understand at your May 2-3, 2013, Game, Fish & Parks Commission meeting that you are going to set the WRD

Hunting Seasons. We would like you to consider letting the landowner or outfitter sell the tags so we can know how many deer we can take off our property and the hunters will know in advance if they have a tag or not.

Also please consider having the antlerless season immediately after the regular gun season. The reason for this request is because the bucks have already started dropping their antlers by December 15 and there are too many bucks being harvested because of the late antlerless season. If you would talk to the landowners you would find they would rather have the antlerless season right after the gun season.

We know there were areas in Gregory Co that had a large die off of deer last year. In our area (12 miles north of Burke, SD) we did not see this problem. We had a larger die off in 2011 and no one seemed too concerned. Once again-no one has come to talk to us or any of the landowners around us. If you reduce the licenses in all of Gregory Co (which will include our area) this will be a deterrent to us as landowners. We have lost crops and hay in our area due to the large number of deer this winter. Once again, this goes back to letting the landowner have control for the licenses for his land."

No oral testimony was received.

Black Hills Deer Hunting Season

Hugh Toenjes of Custer, SD, emailed: "I was not able to attend the public meeting at the State Park on May 4 th. 2013.I would like to express my thoughts and suggestions at this time. I am an avid hunter who has spent many yrs. hunting both big game and waterfowl from Minnesota to the wilderness of northern Canada. I have confronted grizzlies, been surrounded by a pack of wolves, charged by angry moose and spent many days interacting with big game who had never seen a human! I have just had my 72nd. birthday and am quite disappointed that because of the "broken" "point" system associated with big game hunting in the Black Hills of SD. ,where I have now made my home for the last 10 yrs., I am not allowed to hunt in the county where I live. I am also disabled which means that I need to hunt from my vehicle and not on foot! For the last 3 yrs. I have had to load my gear and travel many 100's of miles to another county where there is enough cover on public land where I can use a vehicle to hunt from. This in my opinion is "discrimination" against a senior citizen and the disabled! My suggestion is that any senior over 70 yrs. of age and disabled should have first pick of where he wants to hunt and not be required to put in for a draw! I am your eyes and ears in the Black Hills! Over the past several year I have been instrumental in providing information for the conviction of poachers! If I have to hunt out away from the Black Hills I can no longer provide that kind of service to wildlife law enforcement! Also I suggest that a solution to limiting the number of tags for any species is to not allow a hunter to "aggregate" his hunting methods. In other words the hunters will have to choose which season to hunt- they should not be able hunt archery, regular rifle, and muzzle loading - but only choose ONE of the three! These are my recommendations for future hunting regulations. I hope someone in the department of wildlife will listen to what I have to say because this is the voice of someone who has 60yrs, of hunting and wilderness experience behind him!"

No oral testimony was received.

Refuge Deer Hunting Season

Tom Jensen of Harrisburg emailed: " Adjust the start date for Unit RFD-SL1 from the Saturday before East River deer hunting season to the second Saturday of November. Start dates for all other Sand Lake units would adjust accordingly. I read this as meaning the open date is November 9th, and I strongly support this proposal as it better fits with the way the dates in November work out in 2013. Great proposal, please vote to pass this proposal!"

No oral testimony was received.

Archery Deer Hunting Season

Matthew Sailor of Pierre, SD, wrote: "First, I ask that you seriously consider opening archery deer season on September 1. If landowners are opposed to this change in regulation, much like pheasant season, SDGFP could open Archery Deer Season early, in this case September 1, on (1)state-owned ground only and/or (2)place access restrictions on public ground that is privately owned (WIA, CREP, etc...). I am not lobbying for a longer archery deer season, only a shift in season start and close dates. Access is permitted for archery antelope hunters and upland bird hunters in August and early September, respectively, so many of these areas are already open to the public hunting making the "landowner argument" null...

Please consider these important factors before making a final decision on the start date for the Archery Deer Season. South Dakota has the potential to be a top destination for western bow hunters. The growing trend in archery hunting is to open seasons earlier because of the trophy potential it provides and the because of the undesirable conditions associated with late season archery hunting. Poll any western bowhunter where their dream archery hunt would be and they would spout-off about early season mule deer hunting in WY, CO, UT, NV, and the like, while not even throwing SD into the conversation; and it all boils down to opportunity not the quality or quantity of game present between the states. Even closer to home, many bow hunters are traveling across SD to take advantage of the September 1 opener in ND and WY where they provide a unique opportunity to harvest a whitetail deer in velvet. This state is losing money to its neighbors because of the "social issues" mentioned by Mr. Lindbloom. Any earlier archery deer opener would help boost struggling rural economies and put SD back on the map nationally for its trophy deer hunting potential. Please seriously consider these slight alterations to the archery deer season and represent the majority of the public who have entrusted you to uphold our hunting privileges. I know this is a reoccurring issue that has been brought before the commission before and there is a reason; South Dakotans are tired of missing out.

In closing, there are countless ways to protect landowners' rights and provide further archery opportunities for all sportsmen. I ask you to explore additional avenues before proceeding and please do not sacrifice my sporting opportunities for a small vocal contingent of landowners that offer their land for public hunting solely for additional income. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please let me know if you would like to further discuss this topic; I would be happy to elaborate why I feel a shift in the archery deer season start date would greatly benefit our state."

No oral testimony was received.

Muzzleloader Deer Hunting Season

No written or oral testimony was received.

Youth Deer Hunting Season

Matthew Sailor of Pierre, SD, wrote: "...youth season should have no bearing on when archery deer season opens. Based on the current regulations youth deer season is already the longest season in South Dakota. South Dakota youth have nearly 4 months to hunt antlerless deer which is more than enough time and opportunity to bag their animals. Further, many youth are now archery hunting and are extremely passionate about this growing sport; they would benefit from an earlier archery season as well."

Jason Quam of emailed: "Have you considered a "youth antelope" season with rules similar to the "youth deer" season? I would think this would be a great opportunity to get some younger hunters afield in pursuit of a doe antelope. As a father of a soon to be 12 year old hunter, I would certainly like to see this available."

No oral testimony was received.

Fall Turkey Hunting Season

Rick Hultunen of Howard, SD, emailed: "Having hunted in the Black Hills since 1970 I would like to make a request as to why the Fall Black Hills turkey season even goes on? I have personally hunted BH spring turkey for over 25 years and can say that the population in the Custer area is at an all-time low. The fall season runs 4 months and also allows the shooting of any turkey. It also allows people to purchase multiple tags. Knowing many people who purchase this tag the vast majority of birds being killed are hens and are also shot with a rifle which makes a decent percentage of killed birds not fit to consume. The past two years have been terrible for gobbler numbers. I also know of many non-residents who used to come in the spring who are not coming anymore. This year alone I talked with a group of 14 Minn. hunters who will not be coming back. These non-residents spend a large sum of money in the Black Hills for spring turkey hunting. They come at a time of the year when it is a boost the Black Hills communities. A few years back the fall season was eliminated and immediately the gobbler numbers rose. I'm not saying to eliminate the fall season, maybe make it a month long or allow shotguns only. In the 1970's it was the month of Oct. only, in my view 4 months is way too long. The spring season is a great time to be in the Black Hills and to hear the gobblers sounding off and calling them in close is like elk hunting. It would be nice to have that back like it used to be 5 plus years ago. Turkey populations can rebound fast, but with the killing of a large number of hens in the fall it makes it difficult. Thank You."

Gary Colbath of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "I am an avid turkey hunter and have been guiding as well for the last 8 years. I hunt in the Hills, on the prairie and during the archery season. I guide during each of these seasons in the spring as well. Additionally, I have hunted annually with friends from a cabin in the Moon area since the early 90's. I am writing to urge the GFP to CLOSE the fall Black Hills season, at least in the H2 area of the central hills. I spent several days scouting and 21 days actually hunting this past spring and covered lots of ground in the

process. There are decent bird numbers on the fringe areas of the hills particularly around Rapid City and many of the communities within the hills where there is shelter, food and protected zones. However, in many of the traditional hills areas I hunt, where birds are truly wild, the populations are way down, some to the point of non-existent. The higher hills around Moon, Six-mile road, Gillette Canyon, all the way down to Jewel Cave are particularly bleak. I believe this is the result of bad winters, fires, increased hunting pressure, and the gratuitous killing of turkeys in the fall by deer and elk hunters or those hunting with them. There are areas I hunt from Hill City to Moon where I used to see birds and multiple broods of young birds regularly but have seen rapidly declining numbers in the last few years. Our primary area around Moon and south along Custer Limestone is all but void of birds at this point. Something must be done to help these populations recover.

I also would like to see an end to rifle hunting in the hills. This allows people who I consider "non-turkey hunters" in the fall, primarily hunting deer or elk to shoot turkeys while in the field even though they aren't really hunting turkeys. In the spring, it creates dangerous situations and contributes to a higher harvest again by non-turkey hunters. I am only one guy and this year I had 3 actual occasions where someone shot at a turkey from over 100 yds that me and a hunter were working and had close. During one incident, I had called a bird in to about 40 yards and the hunter with me was waiting for a clear shot when another guy shot the bird right in front of us from a distance of almost 200 yards. He crossed the field to retrieve the bird and was shocked to see us. He said he never saw us and "was having trouble getting close to birds" so he switched to a rifle after opening weekend. He had missed two earlier rifle shots at different birds as well. Rifles may have a place in turkey hunting, like on the prairie, but not in the hills, for a number of reasons.

My friends, business partners, and family seriously promote and participate in turkey hunting in western South Dakota and love the sport. Our population seems pretty fragile in the Hills and needs some help if the bountiful days of old are going to return. Please take the needed steps within the agency to make this happen, these birds are the only spring hunting we have and are a great resource for the state and its sportsman.

I have lots of friends and fellow guides that could provide a wealth of information similar to my comments if anyone at the Commission is interested."

Adam Grulay of Sioux Falls, SD emailed: "If you want to sell more turkey tags in the fall then make the season date start either the first day of antelope season or Oct 1st whichever comes first. This is only an issue when antelope season opens in September."

No oral testimony was received.

Bobcat Trapping and Hunting Season

Evan Anderson of Pennington County emailed: "I am writing this in regard to my concern about our current regulations on bobcat trapping and hunting. With bobcats being more and more valuable every year, I'm concerned that our population is going to become very low and may be impacted severely by overharvesting.

In the 2012-2013 trapping season I only pursued one bobcat because of a low population of bobcats in my area. I trapped mainly coyotes from Wasta north to the Belle Fourche River along the Cheyenne River and Elk Creek. I also ran a line on the Big Cheyenne catching a total of around 150 coyotes. I probably could have trapped 10-15 bobcats, but because of my desire to have a higher population in the future, I chose not to. During my trapping season I caught five bobcats, four accidentals and one intentional, releasing some and selling three. I received a total of \$2300 for my cats. I truly fear for our bobcat population with the elevated prices.

My hope is that someone in our game and fish department will put some serious thought into one or more of my ideas on how to retain our local bobcat population listed below:

- An overall quota on bobcats, so when the number is reached the season would be closed
- An individual limit (maybe five bobcats per license holder)
- County quotas (more structure, but possibly the best results having to tag bobcats currently regardless)

With this issue, time is of the essence. I cover a very large area trapping, and the bobcats are already scarce. Please seriously consider this letter because any change at all could be a step in the right direction. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I look forward to many more successful trapping seasons in the future.

Joshua Delger of Interior, SD, emailed: "There currently is a definite concern for the status of bobcat in this state. I believe the best resolution would be to put some sort of limit on take. The average person harvesting cats only takes a few (less than 5, maybe 2-3?). It's the guys that are taking 20+ cats that are capable of doing damage. Shortening the season could help, but shortening seasons usually results in the "tragedy of the commons" type situations. Cat density are very low in comparison to something like a coyote, and should require a little more regulated management. Right now, they are not managed. I think a 10 cat limit would be reasonable."

Leisl Reuwsard of Black Hawk, SD, and a trapper testified during Open Forum that if the season was going to be shortened he wanted it at the beginning of the season not the end. He questioned the population management objective, if there is one, and when would it be revisited. He stated he worked sixteen-hour days, seven days a week to harvest his forty bobcats. He questions if the proposal is to reduce the number of female cats taken or the number of harvesters, and stated it is hard to distinguish the sex of bobcats. He wants a later season and not shorten the West River season by two weeks.

Anna Hermanson, President of the SD Trappers Association stated the Association recommends the season dates of December 28 until March 1. As more male cats will be caught shifting the male/female ratio and reduce overall harvest numbers, while pelts will be "more prime" and valuable.

Hermanson has a Masters' Degree and presented her analysis of the Bobcat Harvest report which included significant factors and factors that do not statistically contribute to the number of harvested bobcats. Male/female ratio and percent of juvenile impact was included in the packet. Hermanson suggested a later season and not shorten the season. The study did not indicate the population and why not, and she would like to see a population estimate model.

Larry Bowden, President of the Western SD fur Harvesters Association, indicated the association opposes the proposed changes. Bowden read the handout he provided the Commission indicating the harvest of more females than males is biased toward classifying more bobcats as female. The classifying of juveniles error rate is higher as well. The later season would see more males moving in the breeding season, better pelt quality, and bigger toms all during the harsher winter conditions.

Brad Tisdall, a Houndsmen Coordinator WSDFH, council member, and opposes the proposal and read his handout. Tisdall indicated a shorter season would not help sustain the bobcat population, taking away the first two weeks will hurt the houndsmen and callers, not the trappers. He supports a management plan for a sustainable population and a per license limit of bobcat. Tisdall asked the proposal be rejected.

Kris Weinberger of Rapid City testified that he strongly agrees something needs to be done and oppose season date change, keep full season term and limit number of take, or limit the source of where 85% of take comes from. Minimal number are shot, leave the dates alone, regulate the number, or separate hunting and trapping season. He supports a limit of five per person.

August Management Take Goose Hunting Season

Cody Warner of Brookings, SD, emailed: "I took a look at the upcoming commission meeting and noticed a proposal to start the August season on the 3rd. If the overall goal of the season is to harvest as many birds as possible, this is a big mistake. Most small grain will not be harvested and geese will be in small groups many may not be able to fly. Give these geese a chance to congregate and allow hunters to do their best work. Hopefully the GFP realizes this and pushes the season back."

Neil Haase of Webster, SD emailed: "I have followed with interest efforts to reduce the nesting population of Canada geese.

As a landowner in the heart of the nesting population I wholeheartedly agree with the fact that reduction is necessary. I would like to inject some of my findings from the last August seasons. First: August is normally a hot month in South Dakota.

Secondly spoilage is rapid with foliage attached to the edible meat due to the warm temperatures. The opportunity to hunt geese brings hunters from other parts of the state. Transporting these goose parts with foliage attached is not the best way to use the edible portion of the goose. If the rules could be relaxed to allow transport of breasted geese, in coolers and on ice to preserve the edible quality of the meat it would enhance the success of the effort. I am suggesting this only for the August season when the temperature is the warmest.

I totally understand the plumage requirement for sex and species. With Canada geese there is no sex consideration. As to species the size of the goose breast should be enough to determine that it is not a duck breast. During August other species are not

found in abundance or would be obvious in their shape and texture. I offer this in an effort to enhance the success of the early reduction season which I agree is necessary.”

Dennis Fischer of Webster, SD, emailed: “When the commission meets to establish the dates and regulations for the upcoming season I would like them to consider opening the entire goose problem zone to non-residents. You have some counties that have enough of a problem to be open in August, and in some instances this past March, but yet when September comes they are closed to non-residents. I would like to see you put all sportsman on an even playing field. Living in the northeast corner I realize the majority of non-residents will still come here because they have come in the past and have established relationships and the like. But I feel the entire goose problem zone should be open to non-residents or closed, no preferential treatment.”

Scott Simon of Watertown, SD wrote: “This letter is being written to voice concern and opposition to the proposed early Canadian Goose season that is currently under discussion within South Dakota departments. I understand that the Game and Fish is under pressure from certain farmers in regards to what is considered to be an over population of Canadian Geese in our area. Claims of crop damage seem to be taking the limelight, and dollars seem to be driving the issue...

I understand that wildlife can have great impacts on production in certain areas, but these are few and far between. Certainly NOT WORTHY of implementing a season on the entire area. The Game and Fish needs to look at these areas on an individual basis! Any farmers that are seeking help from the S.D. Game, Fish, and Parks, need to be willing to make their so called “problem area” open to public hunting as a walk in area, and surrender all hunting rights of their property to the public until the problem is resolved. If this criteria is not met, the complaint should be disregarded altogether! ...

I don't envy the task at hand of the Game and Fish to satisfy the general public, but that is not the responsibility of your department. Your job is to preserve wildlife in this state for this, and future generations to enjoy. Big dollars should not win out to heritage. With climates changing, farming practices impacting habitat, and the almighty dollar driving decisions, all wildlife is under the gun. Common sense needs to be applied to lead to good decisions and problem areas should not be generalized. Specific problem areas need specific solutions, plain and simple.

Thank you for allowing me to table my input. I sure hope something can be done to eliminate this early goose season on a unit basis and address those few problem areas with open hunting to the general public whose license fees pays for the wages you make and for promotion of wildlife habitat. Wealthy farmers should not be making policy, but should instead be promoting for the general good of wildlife and be thankful for all blessings they have and the resources they have to be prosperous.

Richard Madsen of Pierre or Wolsey, SD, provided oral testimony as he is an avid hunter and waterfowl hunter. His goose decoys have been repainted many times and his duck decoys introduce young hunters to duck hunting. In the 1960's, he worked for Forrest biologist and grew up on family farm and believes it is essential the Commission consider the opportunity or problems we have and believes that Canadian geese are a trophy species. Several issues are on his heart one of which is of most important aspect of hunting of is ethics and making sure the next generation understands the need to care for the hunting resource and learn hunting ethics. This is

critical to him. The season for Canada geese lasts longer than the August Management Take and the hunting hours should not be changed as kids should be taught to not hunt after sundown. He has problem with unplugged shotguns, it is not ethical to hunt waterfowl with unplugged guns and asked to change the proposal. If a hunter asked to hunt waterfowl often times they are welcomed to do so. Often when hunting in the regular season, he will take kids with him. He requested to change the requirement to not allow an unplugged gun, more consistency in reduction season and regular season, and use ethics in all season setting.

Archery Accompaniment

No written or oral testimony was received.

The Public Hearing concluded at 2:48 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Jeffrey R. Vonk, Department Secretary