

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
April 3-4, 2014

Chairman John Cooper called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM at the Cedar Shores Resort near Oacoma, South Dakota. Commissioners John Cooper, Cathy Peterson, Paul Dennert, Gary Jensen, and Scott Phillips were present and answered roll call. Answering roll call by teleconference was Jim Spies. Barry Jensen and Duane Sather did not answer roll call. A quorum was declared. Secretary Vonk was present along with approximately fifty public, staff, and media.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Cooper indicated that he reviewed the minutes of the March 6-7 meeting and called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6-7, 2014, GFP COMMISSION MEETING AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Cooper asked Commissioners for additional salary days and Gary Jensen and Scott Phillips each requested one.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS AS REQUESTED. Motion carried by unanimously roll call vote.

License List Requests

Director Chris Petersen indicated there were no license list requests for Commission consideration.

License Sales Report

Director Petersen presented the over-the-counter sales report as of March 27th indicating that fishing license sales remain strong.

Open Forum

Chairman Cooper read a letter from Caleb Gilkerson requesting the Commission to open waters above the Hwy 14/34 bridge in Pierre to the Oahe Dam for the week of August 11-17, 2014 for spearing game fish.

Cooper asked Chief Scott Simpson to serve as Public Hearing Officer and to accept comments from the attending public regarding this issue. Simpson indicated the Department received twenty comments with eleven in support of opening area and nine opposing. The written and email comments were provided to the Commissioners prior to the meeting and are reflected in Addendum A.

Oral testimony began with Chris McCarty of Pierre, SD, stating he manages Steamboats, Inc., is a scuba instructor, and participates in the spearfishing tournament. Last year he oversaw the tournament and everyone had a great time and the tournament was well received. Anglers and divers were informed prior to the tournament that the area would be larger and more congested.

Caleb Gilkerson, of Pierre, SD, stated this is his second request as he made this request last year and that the tournament has been held for many years. The tournament promotes the Pierre area and brings in as many as a 1,000 divers. The spearfishing divers have a "diver down flag" and divers can see boats before the boaters can see or hear the diver. This provides an opportunity for divers to hone and improve their skills to assist with other events where divers are needed. Safety is very important when diving and when spearfishing. The tournament is a great tool to network with Oahe Marina activities and the divers and families enjoy the event. Gilkerson requested approval for the Special Use permit for this event.

Cooper asked about the tournament and why the request for a full week if the tournament is actually two days; Saturday and Sunday of August 16 and 17. Gilkerson indicated that as with any fishing tournament anglers like to fish prior to the tournament.

Steve Rounds of Pierre, SD, owner of Oahe Marina Resort provided background of his business and how the tournament assists his business. The waters on the Missouri River are one of the top three fresh flowing waters for diving in the country. His cabins are booked by out-of-state divers and this is a great opportunity to share and to show off what we have below the dam. This is a no brainer and will bring fifty, 2-4 person teams into South Dakota to buy fishing licenses and park entrance licenses. He talked about the dangers of moving the tournament below the bridge where the public is recreating, as the fishermen moved further south, except for the evening bite. Rounds asked to please open the tailrace for the divers as this is great opportunity and an economic boost for him as he plans a fund raiser on the weekend.

Request for fish spearing exemption

Director Leif presented background and information on the two issues before the Commission: 1) Exception to allow spearing of game fish in the tail waters; and 2) the Special-use permit (tournament) request which has been received by GFP staff.

Director Leif indicated the Commission will decide about the special request to allow spear fishermen to take walleye and small mouth bass in the area north of the Hwy 14/34 bridge to the Oahe Dam. Currently, spear fishermen may take rough fish, catfish, and northern pike in this area.

Cliff Stone, Region 2 Supervisor, shared a copy of the letter Director Leif sent to Gilkerson last year to allow the exception. Stone showed the minimum size of a diver flag and shared laws governing boaters and divers. Stone indicated current rule defines the area open for the spearing of game fish and indicates the Commission "may open other areas to the public." This request is to open the area from Hwy 34/14 bridge to the Oahe Dam which currently is closed to divers for the taking of game fish.

Regional Supervisor Stone showed a map of the area for boats to travel and placed pins to show areas of divers. Stone mentioned the water released out of the dam and the prediction of water that could occur in August may be slightly increased this fall. Last year the biggest issue was user conflicts.

Leif provided clarification of possible Commission action. Discussion included the sandbar by Marion's Gardens and the public use in this area. Last year the tournament was open to the taking of game fish and that congestion is the biggest concern for this request. Leif indicated the Department recommendation is to deny the request and indicated the Special Use Permit for the tournament upon meeting criteria for the event would be approved when it reaches his desk.

Motion by Phillips with second by Jensen TO DENY THE REQUEST BY CALEB GILKERSON TO OPEN WATERS FROM THE HWY14/34 BRIDGE TO OAHE DAM NEAR PIERRE TO THE TAKING OF GAME FISH IN AUGUST. Roll call vote: Dennert-no; Gary Jensen-yes; Peterson-no; Phillips-yes; Spies-yes; Cooper-yes. Motion failed the required five votes to carry.

Motion by Dennert with second by Peterson TO APPROVE THE REQUEST BY CALEB GILKERSON TO OPEN THE WATERS FROM THE HWY 14/34 BRIDGE TO OAHE DAM NEAR PIERRE TO THE TAKING OF GAME FISH IN AUGUST. Roll call vote: Dennert-yes; Gary Jensen-no; Phillips-no; Peterson-yes; Spies-no; Cooper-no. Motion failed the required five votes to carry.

Cooper stated even the Commission were split on the issue and the rule would remain the same; therefore, the participants in the August tournament would not be allowed to take game fish for the tournament.

Open Forum Continued:

Gary English of Rapid City, SD, indicated he manages the Rapid City Airport and talked about the increasing number of Canada geese at the airport. This is a safety concern for the airport and public. He shared facts released by the federal government about the problem. He stated that the problem continues and currently about 5,000 birds are in the area and outlined logistics showing the city, the Ag fields where the geese feed, and the airport. There is a very real safety concern. He is thankful for the GFP permits and would like a special goose season for the area around the airport during the spring season to push the geese out of the area.

English also commented on the west river deer antlerless season and feels as a taxidermist that many of the late antlerless deer harvested are bucks that have shed their antlers. He believes that larger bucks shed their antlers earlier than younger bucks.

Russ Roberts of St. Onge, SD, talked about SD deer management and shared a plan he developed and he would be happy to share it individually with anyone. Roberts provided suggestions such as similar start dates, same application, real time management of the deer herd, one buck only license per hunter per year, application process or drawing, nonresident archery application and quota, archery season, special buck season, landowner licenses, and preference point system.

Vonk stated this is an issue that staff has been discussing the past few months and has been tasked to look at it. The plan is come to the Commission with time for an open discussion at the July meeting on this topic. Vonk indicated the Wildlife Federation has expressed similar sentiments.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began at 2:53 PM and ended at 3:04 PM. (Minutes follow the minutes of the regular meeting.) Chairman Cooper called for a recess at 3:04 PM and meeting resumed at 3:21 PM.

FINALIZATIONS

Custer State Park Any Elk Hunting Season 41:06:27

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes to adjust the number of any elk licenses in Custer State Park. Switzer shared information about efforts to move elk from Wind Cave National Park into Custer State Park and onto Forest Service land. The Department recommends adjusting the current three licenses to five as a result of the additional elk from Wind Cave.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO AMEND THE PROPOSED NUMBER OF ANY ELK LICENSES IN CUSTER STATE PARK TO FIVE. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Adjust the number of licenses available from 3 "any elk" to 5 "any elk" licenses.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Dennert TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO CUSTER STATE PARK ELK HUNTING SEASON (ANY ELK) 41:06:27 TO INCREASE LICENSES TO FIVE AS AMENDED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting Season 41:06:28

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes and recommended increasing the number of licenses to four due to the movement of elk from Wind Cave.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO AMEND THE PROPOSAL TO ADJUST THE NUMBER OF LICENSES TO FOUR FOR THE CUSTER STATE PARK EARLY ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON. Motion carried unanimously with roll call vote.

Adjust the number of licenses available from 2 "any elk" to 4 "any elk" licenses.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Phillips TO FINALIZE THE CUSTER STATE PARK EARLY ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:28 AS AMENDED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Archery Elk Hunting Season 41:06:43

Switzer presented the proposed changed to the Archery Elk Hunting Season with no recommended changes. Switzer stated that recommendations are determined by looking at what habitat can sustain, landowner tolerance, harvest quota, success rates, and the objectives of the management plan. Discussion ensued on the antlerless harvest, winter mortality, and calf recruitment.

Motion by Spies with second by Gary Jensen TO AMEND THE PROPOSAL TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF LICENSES AT 92 “ANY ELK” AND 15 “ANTLERLESS ELK.” Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

1. No change to licenses. Keep the number of license available at 92 “any elk” and 15 “antlerless elk” licenses (a total of 107 licenses).
2. Modify Unit 7 boundary as indicated on map.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:43 AS AMENDED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Black Hills Elk Hunting Season 41:06:26

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Black Hills Elk Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal. Discussion included room for adjustment to number of licenses, current management goals, and number of landowners in Unit 2. Andy Lindbloom indicated the current management goal of elk in the Black Hills is 6,000 until the elk management plan is completed.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Spies TO AMEND THE PROPOSAL TO ADJUST THE NUMBER OF “ANTLERLESS ELK” LICENES TO 250. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 445 “any elk” and 175 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 620 licenses) to 420 “any elk” and 250 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 670 licenses).
2. Modify Unit 7 boundary as indicated on map.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Dennert TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE BLACK HILLS ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:26 AS AMENDED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Prairie Elk Hunting Season 41:06:59

Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Prairie Elk Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 45 “any elk” and 51 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 96 licenses) to 57 “any elk” and 36 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 93 licenses).
2. Modify Unit 9 boundary as indicated on map.
3. Adjust the season dates for Unit 9 from September 15 – October 31 and December 1-15 to September 15 – October 31 and December 1-31.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:59 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Sandhill Crane Hunting Season 41:06:18

Chief Tom Kirschenmann presented the proposed change to the Sandhill Crane Hunting Season indicating there were no recommended changes to proposal.

Increase the possession limit for sandhill cranes from two times (2x) the daily limit to three times (3x) the daily limit as approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Motion by Dennert with second by Gary Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE SANDHILL CRANE HUNTING SEASON 41:06:18 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Mourning Dove Hunting Season 41:06:40

Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes to the Mourning Dove Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal.

Increase the possession limit for mourning doves from two times (2x) the daily limit to three times (3x) times the daily limit as approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Motion by Peterson with second by Phillips TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE MOURNING DOVE HUNTING SEASON 41:06:40 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

Archery Deer Season 41:06:22

Chief Kirschenmann presented the proposed changes to the Archery Deer Hunting Season dates and indicated the Department recommends retaining the current season structure for the archery deer season. The Department is developing a statewide deer management plan to start in 2015. The process to develop the plan is similar to the process used to develop the elk management plan. Discussion included the public comment, youth deer season, and the mule deer population.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Dennert TO REJECT THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE DATES OF THE ARCHERY DEER HUNTING SEASON. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

PROPOSALS

Preference point-only license applications

Chief Tom Kirschenmann indicated the Department recommends creating a new administrative rule to allow big game applicants to apply for a preference-only license and removed the preference-only language from the individual big game season rules as the rules are opened during the year. There is a recommendation to modify the application fee language for unsold big game licenses.

1. Modify application for unsold big game licenses-future eligibility.
2. Add new rule: Purchase and accrual of preference points.

Motion by Peterson with second by Dennert TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO APPLICATION FOR LICENSES - PREFERENCE POINT AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously with roll call vote.

Nonresident Waterfowl

Director Leif stated the 2014 Legislature made changes to the nonresident waterfowl regulations by giving the responsibility to the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission to promulgate allocations and number of nonresident waterfowl licenses. Leif indicated there would be no changes to nonresident waterfowl licenses in 2014 and a working group will assist the Department when making recommendations to the Commission for the 2015 season.

Chief Kirschenmann presented the current dates, units, and restrictions indicating there are no recommended changes. The Department will look at the number of licenses, distribution, and wants a Commissioner to participate in the working group.

Special Canada Goose Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, licenses, requirements, and restrictions. The Department had no recommended changes to this unique opportunity in Bennett County.

Tundra Swan Hunting Season

Chief Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open area, licenses, requirements, and restrictions with no recommended changes to the season.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Good Earth State Park Improvements

Parks Director Doug Hofer provided background on the development of the Good Earth State Park Visitor Center and included history and features of the area. Hofer shared funding sources, development of the master plan and Phase 1 Development, floor plans for the Visitor Center, and the schedule.

Parks and Recreation Revenue Report

Director Hofer presented the revenue report which reflects an increase in revenue of 25% over the first three months of 2013. It is early in the year so while this is a good sign, it is too early to determine how much of this increase is due to growth in use or simply campers making reservations earlier in the year than was the case last year. About half of the increase is attributable to the camping fee increases that were adopted by the Commission last fall and went into effect the beginning of the year.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Peterson TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LEGAL MATTERS. Motion carried with unanimous roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session began at 4:05 PM with a roll call vote indicating Commissioners Cooper, Peterson, Dennert, Gary Jensen, Phillips were present. Commissioner Spies and Sather were present on the phone. Secretary Vonk, Parks

Director Doug Hofer, Attorney Richard Neill, and Recording Secretary Debra Ascher were present. Executive session ended at 4:26 PM.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO END THE EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Chairman Cooper called a recess at 4:48 PM with meeting to resume at 8 AM the next morning in the same location.

Cedar Shore Resort and Marina Bank Stabilization Project and Tour

Parks Director Doug Hofer and Capital Development Assistant Director Al Nedved showed a few slides about the bank stabilization project at Cedar Shores Resort and Marina. Information included the funding sources that include bonds that will be repaid with resort franchise fees, Coast Guard funds, FEMA grant dollars, and additional cash from the franchise fees paid by the resort. Commissioners then went outside to see the project area.

The meeting resumed at 8:01 AM on Friday, April 4, 2014, at the Cedar Shores Resort near Oacoma, South Dakota. Roll call indicated Commissioners Cooper, Peterson, Gary Jensen, Phillips, and Dennert were present in the room. Commissioner Spies was present by telephone. Secretary Vonk was present along with about twenty five public, staff, and media.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Request for fish spearing exemption

See comments and action under Open Forum above.

Adopt statewide and management area fisheries management plans

Chief John Lott shared updates have been provided over the last year regarding the management plans and that the management plans were provided to the Commissioners following last month's meeting. Lott requested the Commission adopt The Statewide and Management Area Fisheries Management Plan.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Peterson TO ADOPT THE STATEWIDE AND MANAGEMENT AREA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Habitat Partner of the Year

Director Leif indicated partnerships are "key" to the success of the Wildlife Division. Leif shared the regional winners of the Habitat Partners awards and presented the Habitat Partner of the Year award to Dale and Linda Oschner of Huron. Oschner's provide native grass and pastureland for wildlife and balances management for cows, birds, wildlife, and water. His operations include providing stable banks and vegetation for wildlife and uses rotation that benefits birds and water quality. He recognizes

changes on the landscape in the agriculture area, is a member of the Regional Advisory Panel, and provides opportunity for hunters and young sportsmen.

Land acquisition updates

Paul Coughlin provided maps and stated a notice has been published indicating the Department is accepting public comment about two land acquisitions that will be presented for Commission approval at the May Commission meeting.

Coughlin appraisals and negotiations have been completed to 1) purchase 160 acres in Moody County to be used for a Game Production Area; and 2) to purchase a 5 acre in-holding on the Lynbye Game Production Area in Clark County.

WMI Big Game Action plan update

Wildlife Director Tony Leif indicated there are seven items on the WMI Big Game Action plan update and each presenter would share about the process and results/changes for their topic. Chad Switzer shared about biometric and statistical assistance; Andy Lindbloom reported on establishing a draft deer data analysis unit; Switzer report on draft management options of deer populations; Emmett Keyser reported on the leadership and career development program; Scott Simpson shared about the use of social media; Tom Kirschenmann talked about use of management plans to guide the rule making process; and Cindy Longmire shared about enhancing the use of human dimensions in management plans.

Review of elk license preference system

Chief Scott Simpson gave a PowerPoint Presentation showing how the draw of the elk licenses preference works in the different tiers or levels for the draw, and how the chances for one person with preference points are considered in each level.

Elk depredation assistance programs

Keith Fisk gave a PowerPoint that outlined the different types of conflicts with elk and landowners; programs available to assist landowners; the history of expenditures; and future plans in the program.

Kirschenmann indicated the Department is developing an Elk Management Plan that will include elk depredation. The plan will be the guiding document for managing elk into the future and will be presented to the Commission for adoption sometime in 2015.

Wind Cave elk movement

Switzer indicated elk were moved out of Wind Cave on March 13-14 into Custer State Park (CSP) and onto other federal lands. Approximately 120 elk were moved into Unit 3 and 27 mature bulls and twelve cows and calves were moved into CSP. This will meet Wind Cave and GFP management objectives. Helicopters helped move the elk further into the CSP nearer to the wildlife road loop and dispersed the elk further away from Wind Cave. This was a cooperative effort with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wind Cave National Park, and Game, Fish, and Parks.

Mountain lion hunting season summary

Andy Lindbloom indicated the mountain lion season ended on March 31 with 53 lions harvested; 22 males and 31 females. Nine lions were harvested in Custer State Park with eight taken with the use of hounds. There were 1,000 fewer licenses sold at the end of March this year compared to the end of March 2013.

Salmon program update

Mark Fincel gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the history of salmon in South Dakota indicating there is consideration to bring Atlantic salmon into Lake Oahe. Fincel shared the benefits and potential as well as drawbacks and objectives. Discussion included other states involvement, effect on walleye growth rates, and nonresidents desire to fish for the salmon.

Shooting Preserve investigation report

Andy Alban and Scott Mikkelson had a Power Point Presentation about the Investigator Program and specifically the investigation of 56 deer taken illegally in 2011 that involved 19 defendants that resulted in \$241,000 of state and federal fines with additional consequences. The investigation involved the Fish and Wildlife Service; tribal authorities; Game, Fish, and Parks; and four states.

Use of Drones

Emmett Keyser showed a video of a drone with a camera. A handout showed the statute that prohibits the use of drones in South Dakota.

Bobcat recommendation

Director Leif indicated additional biological DNA study is underway and the bobcat recommendation will be delayed until the August meeting.

Spawning activities

Chief John Lott indicated spawning activities will soon start and it is hoped to collect 114 million walleye eggs and 30 million perch eggs. There will be two crews working on lakes in northeast South Dakota and two crews on the southeast lakes. Testing for winterkill will affect what the stocking needs are. Trap and transfer activities will continue this year as will the muskie netting project using the larger nets.

Federal Aid dollars

Scott Simpson gave a handout showing the past ten years of federal funds the Department has received. The Sport Fish Restoration and Wildlife Restoration funds are allocated to states from the federal government based on land size and number of anglers and hunters. These dollars are used on specific projects up to 75% of the project cost and the additional 25% is the responsibility of the department or a sponsor such as a sportsmen's organization. Leif indicated wildlife restoration dollars are used on projects and land acquisitions and must be spent within two years.

Bighorn Sheep Auction License

Chief Kirschenmann was complimented on his presentation at the Midwest Wild Sheep Conference in Minneapolis on March 21 by Spies. Kirschenmann attended the

conference and on March 22 the South Dakota Bighorn sheep license sold for \$80,000; the North Dakota license sold for \$70,000, and the Wyoming license went for \$74,000. He is waiting to receive the funds after which the application from the nonresident winner will be processed.

Governance

Chairman Cooper asked Commissioners for availability on the afternoon of June 4th for a Governance meeting at Lewis and Clark prior to the regular meeting of the Commission on June 5 and 6. Consensus indicated it would work and more information would be forthcoming.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Peterson TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. Motion carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 12:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey R. Vonk, Department Secretary

Addendum A

Open Forum Spearfishing Written Comments

Joanne Hegg emailed: "close the fishing season to ALL out of staters, at least until their season is open so we, here in SOUTH DAKOTA can fish while the lakes are NOT so dam full with people from every other state. Could you really start to think of your fellow South Dakotans??? Especially because we need to have SOME quality time, at the lakes in our own backyards!!! If you do have a spearing license make sure they spear ONLY CARP!!! Help us Living here in SD for a change."

Dennis Pfimmer of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I support the request for a Spearfishing Tournament. I disagree that the water should be open to other Spear fishers during the Tournament. The only problem that I'm aware of from last year's tournament was caused by divers, who were not in the tournament. Divers in the tournament are coached and cautioned about the rules and are less likely to have negative encounters with anglers."

Dean Fitzler of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "fine with me."

Ryan Weekly emailed: "...Leave as is CLOSED!"

Andy Vandel of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I support the request to open the upper end of Lake Sharp to spearfishing for one week in August."

Lowell Noeske of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I think this is a good idea. Opening that stretch of water for an even longer but controlled time period would be good."

Chad Carda of Pierre, SD, emailed: "Recommend approval."

Eric Eneboe emailed: "...I encourage you to vote yes on this and thank you for the opportunity to comment."

Justin Nagel of Fort Pierre, SD emailed: "I am opposed to the opening the area north of the highway bridge to the Oahe dam because this area has heavy boat traffic, and the current is the strongest here. Inexperienced diver could end up well away from their dive area and other boaters would not know it. PLEASE DO NOT OPEN THIS HEAVILY TRAFFICED AREA TO DIVERS/SPEARFISHERMEN."

Aaron Miler of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I am opposed to the GF&P Commission temporarily opening the area of Lake Sharp from the U.S. Highway 14 bridge at Pierre to the Oahe dam to the spearing of game fish..."

Dennis Ulvestad emailed: "Am against spear fishing during that time. What time would the next request be for, May-June? No need to increase the use of a public resource for private gain by some tournament, we have enough of that already with the open water tournaments."

Chuck Byrum of Highmore, SD, stopped by the office and shared that he is adamantly against spearfishing for walleyes in general and definitely against a spearfishing tournament allowing for expanded opportunities for spearfishing for walleye.

Chuck Clayton emailed: "There are plenty of waters open to spearfishing now. We don't need any more..."

Mark Frickson emailed: "Plain and simple, no if they want to spear game fish move to Minn...."

Dan Miller of Pierre, SD, emailed: "You've got to be kidding me!!! Not again!!!! The regulations book clearly makes this a no no...Now they want a whole week?"

Chris McCarty emailed: "It has come to my attention that the GF&P law enforcement is opposed to the spearfishing tournament that the commission is voting on Thursday April 3rd. The reason stated for the opposition is because of safety reasons due to increased recreational boaters in the area at that time of year...Thank you for taking time to read my support for this year's spearfishing tournament.

Troy Wiebe emailed: "I encourage you to support local businesses such as Steamboat, Inc. in being able to host spearfishing tournaments...The Commission needs to approve the spearfishing tournament since it is a legal sport in our state with set rules, safety guidelines, and licenses..."

William Schiefen emailed: "I would start out by thanking you for allowing spearfishing tournament in the past. As a future spearfishing enthusiast I would like you to seriously consider allowing this year's tournament...I think it is very important that you allow us to continue with the new tradition knowing that we take every precaution possible. Thank you for listening to my concern and hope that you will vote for keeping this growing tradition alive."

Mark Haugan of Pierre, SD, emailed: "Just a quick note supporting the continuation of the spearfishing tournament in the Lake Sharpe tailrace this summer..."

Ryon Berry of Phillip, SD, emailed: "...I am expressing my support for approving the tournament and hope it is considered in making your decision..."

Richard Pibal emailed: "I am writing in support of the Spearfishing Tournament..."

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
April 3, 2014

Chief Scott Simpson serving as Public Hearing Officer began the Public Hearing at 2:52 PM at the Cedar Shores Resort in Oacoma, South Dakota. Simpson indicated public comments for items 6-13 of the Agenda would be accepted at this time. Persons wishing to comment were to approach the microphone, provide their name, city, and state on the sign-in form, and introduce themselves when providing comments to the Commission. Written and email comments were provided to the Commission prior to the hearing and will be reflected in the Public Hearing Minutes.

Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season (Any Elk)
No oral or written testimony was received.

Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting Season
No oral or written testimony was received.

Archery Elk Hunting Season

Susie Knippling provided testimony that she has concerns and does not want the antlerless tags increased; the increase should be changed to additional 25 any elk and leave the doe population.

Black Hills Elk Hunting Season

Susie Knippling stated she does not want antlerless tags increased; if there are enough elk out there to increase the tags then the increase of tags should be 25 "any" elk tags. The winter was bad enough and believes fewer elk were bred. She does not want increased elk tags and this would be same for the deer in the Black Hills.

Jesse McMillian of Hot Springs, SD, emailed: "I would like to see the elk population grow and see the age structure of the bulls harvested higher, average 7 plus. Please keep the tag numbers down until the BH reaches 7000-8000 elk."

Mike and Angela Jarding and Paul and Penny Svenkeson of Hot Springs, SD, emailed: "We believe that the Black Hills can maintain a herd of 7,000 to 8,000 elk and suggest that you manage for a higher population of mature aged bulls. We ranch in Unit 3, south of Pringle, and we want more elk on our property and are working hard towards providing habitat for elk."

Carson Smith of Hot Springs, SD, emailed: "Please keep the tags low in the elk unit 3 so the population will grow. Also please set your goals higher so when hunters get a bull tag we have an opportunity to harvest a mature bull, six plus year old bulls."

Joe Jarding of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "Please consider the environmental capabilities of Elk Unit 3. This area can withstand a greater number of elk and maintain a healthy herd. The numbers of elk which were harvested in the past have exceeded what should have been a proper reduction. To wait 10 plus years and draw a tag and not have a greater number of trophy bull elk to hunt, has been the case in this unit. 60% of bull elk harvested in the past have been three years or younger. This unit has the capabilities of producing an abundance of trophy animals with the right management."

Les Wolff of Lead, SD, emailed: "I am against the increase in antlerless elk licensing. We do not get bull numbers up, or for that matter our elk population back by killing the factory. Cows and young bulls are a necessary part of regaining our herd and our trophy bulls."

Prairie Elk Hunting Season

No oral or written testimony was received.

Sandhill Crane Hunting Season

No oral or written testimony was received.

Mourning Dove Hunting Season

No oral or written testimony was received.

Archery Deer Hunting Season Dates

Oral testimony:

Chris Hesla, Executive Director of SD Wildlife Federation stated: "The Federation believes a management plan should be in place before season dates are changed and asked the Commission to defeat this proposal at this time. It is not that they do not support the change just that this is not the time to do it."

Written testimony was provided to Commission and public testimony included:

Gale Paulson of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "I would again strongly urge you to end all deer season on /December 31 instead of extending them into January. I see no good reason to have the deer season go into January."

Barry Tschumper of Watertown, SD, emailed: "My concern for an earlier archery date is would this be a buck only 2 week early hunt because I think if we were to hunt doe's at that time are the yearlings weaned out as to not have to rely on the doe to take care of them."

Corey Hokanson of Huron, SD, emailed: "I think archery dates should remain the same as last year so the youth could have the first chance at hunting during the youth deer season."

Tom Braun of Hot Springs, SD, emailed: "No early opening of archery deer, and no easing of equipment regs."

Robert Lester of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I would be against this for two reasons. 1. The archery season weather would be just that much hotter. 2. I love to hunt in January, it's kind of a slow month for outdoor activity."

Matt Rippentrop of Oelrichs, SD, emailed: "The early archery season that is proposed will be detrimental to South Dakota's mule deer population, because they are on their summer range during early September and become much easier to pattern at this time With the mule deer numbers so low across western South Dakota right now ew should not want to find another way to decrease their population even further. Please consider not approving the early archery season. This idea could possibly work for whitetail only and removing the January archery season is a great idea."

Joe Henderson of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "I strongly support the proposed date changes for an archery season that will have it open and close approximately 2 weeks earlier."

Alan Freng of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I am writing to you in regards to the proposed change of starting the archery deer season two weeks early. Frankly, I think this is an awful idea. I moved to Pierre in late fall of 2007 but really did not start archery hunting here until 2008. I am not fortunate enough to be a land owner and therefore I hunt exclusively on public land; primarily on the river system from West Bend all the way up to Sutton Bay."

Troy Hanson of Pollock, SD, emailed: "I would like to show my support for and earlier start date for archery deer. My concerns are probably the same as all the other bowhunters, mainly you have a very small window to hunt patternable deer before pheasant season opens."

Jason West of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I just wanted to express my concern for the archery deer opener dates being moved up. I feel the season dates being moved up is a terrible idea and shouldn't be considered as an option. If anything the date should be shortened in December and not opened until October."

Dennis Ulvestad of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "I am against changing the archery deer season to an earlier start/end. I look forward to the January "quiet" time after most other season have closed and the outdoors have had a chance to settle down once again."

Jim Gruber of Estelline, SD, emailed: "I really do not understand the logic in such a proposal...as avid bowhunter and landowner, I find it hard to believe there is any reason to open the season any earlier, but to close it on December 31st sounds a little bogus to me. There are not many of us out at that time of year but those of us who do appreciate the snow and cold, it is our time to hunt. While this may not appeal to all but to some it is the best time of the year to be out and we do not road hunt with bows."

Ronald Bonnemann of Fargo, ND, emailed: "I am a nonresident land owner with 680 acres of land in prime deer and pheasant hunting territory in McPherson County near Eureka. I do not want to see you move up the archery season. There is little deer movement during the day in early September, and I like getting out in late season after most other hunters have quit for the year, it is very peaceful out in the field that time of year. The South Dakota bow hunters association does not speak for me. If they would like an earlier season because of other hunters hunting public land, open up public land for a limited hunt early, just like you do for pheasant hunting, but leave my late season hunting privilege alone. Remember when you change something to make it better for someone you are taking something away from someone else"

Brian Kidman of Harrisburg, SD, emailed: "Please leave archery deer season as is or extend to end of January. Reason is that deer bunch up and move around in January making it actually easier to find and take does with a bow. That enables better doe control in regards to managing herds."

Curtis Kline of Aberdeen, SD, emailed: "I would like to see the archery deer season in South Dakota open sooner than the traditional late September start date that has been in effect for several years."

Daniel Kasuske of Milbank, SD, wrote: "I strongly support the proposed season changes for archery deer from the fourth Saturday of September to the second Saturday of September and to end the season December 31st instead of January 15th."

Dave Grevlos of Brandon, SD, emailed: "I am in favor of the proposed archery deer season change to beginning the second Saturday in September. Simply, it is a great time of year to be in the field."

Aaron Roeber of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "I would like to comment on the proposed season change to the Archery deer season. I would be in favor of the new season changes. I would enjoy the opportunity to hunt earlier in the season to possibly get a deer in velvet."

Thomas J. Dice of Mitchell, SD, emailed: "As a 40 year plus archery hunter I want to congratulate you on the suggested change. Makes good sense to me! Competition for private land is much different today than it was years ago due to the popularity of bow hunting and extending into January isn't often of much help. Those wishing to harvest a doe should have had plenty of opportunities. The long season for archery has been and continues to be a real part of my quality of life. The opportunity to be outside watching game and enjoying the SD fall means a lot to me."

Steven Frank of Huron, SD, emailed: "I am for the Archery Deer Season change proposals, start archery deer the 2nd Saturday of September."

Kevin Bruzelius of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I like the extended archery time frame proposal, for the purpose of those who also mentor or have young children who also hunt; the extended period would let archery hunters under these conditions have a little more time to make it out hunting, before and after, they take time with their kids hunting."

Brady Retterath of Mobridge, SD, emailed: "I am for the earlier bow season start because it gives a guy more of an opportunity to spend more time in the walk in and public land provided by the state before pheasant season opens. It seems like a person starts bow hunting and able to pattern the deer and then pheasant season opens a couple weeks later and then people are stomping all over the public making it very difficult to bow hunt."

Lloyd Griswold of Phillip, SD, emailed: "I would agree with the change to start earlier and end on December 31 for the archery deer season."

Anthony Galbraith of Spearfish, SD, emailed: "I think that it is becoming more and more important for the future of hunting that we get youth involved in the outdoors and away from tvs and video games. I think if the season starts the second week of September it will give the youth more time in the outdoors in stands and blinds without being too cold for them to join their family member in the field."

Sam Kezar of Lennox, SD, emailed: "I support the moving of the archery deer season up to the second weekend in September. I would like to see it moved to September 1. Has this ever been considered? The earlier dates will allow archery hunters more time on public ground to hunt without completion from the other game hunters. Plus, if September 1, there will be opportunities for the harvest of bucks in velvet."

Gary G. Colbath of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "I am an avid bowhunter and have held bow licenses in the state for more than 20 years. I would urge you to adopt the season change proposals to the archery deer season which would start the season two

weeks earlier and eliminate the January portion of the season at the end of the hunting year. This is far less stressful on the deer (early hunting rather than later) allows for better management, and in certain cases would provide an opportunity to shoot a velvet buck.”

Scott Guffey of Rapid City, SD, emailed: “I support the archery deer season date change, except for the Black Hills. I would recommend making the archery deer season start date for the Black Hills October 1. During September in the Black Hills you have archery elk hunters and some of them have waited over 20 years to draw this coveted tag. An earlier archery deer season start date would create more hunting traffic in the Black Hills during September and potential conflicts between elk and deer archery hunters.”

John Duffy of Brookings, SD, emailed: “I think the start date change is an excellent idea and my friends and I have wanted something like this for a very long time. Actually, I think the archery season should even begin earlier on September 1st like many other western states.”

Andy Carlson of Brookings, SD, emailed: “I am fully supportive in moving the start of the archery deer season in South Dakota to an earlier date in September. I would even favor a Sept 1 start, as common with many other western states.”

Eric Witt of Brookings, SD, emailed: “I am in full support of the proposed change to move the archery deer season start date to the second weekend of September and eliminating the last two weeks in January.”

Andy Vandel of Pierre, SD, emailed: “I am in support for adjusting the archery deer season. I feel this will give archery hunters more opportunity for a quality hunt.”

John Header of Rapid City, SD, emailed: “I approve of the change - not because of the earlier start but to eliminate the January portion of the season. I know of 2 buck deer that had shed their antlers and were killed in that time period. Hate to kill potential trophy deer.”

Lennard Hopper of Spearfish, SD, emailed: “I just began bowhunting last year. My season was severely compromised by the large accumulation of snow my area had in October. ...I think moving the season up would provide a better opportunity for bowhunters to get out and hunt deer in their more natural patterns without the risk of early weather complicating an already challenging venture...I would strongly support the move.”

Elmer Hamburger of Seneca, SD, emailed: “I would support opening archery two weeks earlier and closing earlier. It gives more time to hunt when the weather is nice and the deer aren't affected by the harvest or other hunting.”

Ryon Berry of Phillip, SD, emailed: “I support changing the archery deer season to the proposed earlier dates.”

Mark Frickson of Milbank, SD, emailed: “I think the early start and end as is proposed would be better. It makes it better as to the pheasant hunters not making some places so spooky.”

Mark Peterson of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: “I like the proposal for second Saturday in September, but I still think it should be open to January 15.”

Tom Jensen of Harrisburg, SD, emailed: “I strongly support the proposed date changes for an archery season that will have it open and close approx. 2 weeks earlier. This allows hunters to begin chasing deer earlier when they are fully developed but less

stressed, and prevents unnecessary late season pressure when deer are beginning to become stressed by weather, some bucks are shedding antlers already, and deer are overall difficult to pursue after multiple gun seasons. I see this proposal as a good change and would fully recommend approval.”

Ben Hoffmann of Brookings, SD, emailed: “I think this is a great idea on changing the date earlier and ending sooner. The deer already have enough stress in the late season to have hunting pressure that late in the season.”

James R. Heuer of Arlington, SD, emailed: “I support the proposed season changes to the archery deer season.”

Jon Olson of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: “I support the petition to change dates of archery deer season.”

Cyrus Mahmoodi of Clark County, SD, emailed: “I believe adjusting the archery deer season to an earlier start and end is a good idea.”

Mike Jarding of Hot Springs, SD, emailed: “I am not in favor of the early archery season. I do appreciate looking into different options to the archery seasons, but I believe shooting deer earlier will only hurt the deer population that is already alarmingly low...”

Ronald Arbach emailed: “I believe the season should stay the same. The deer are very strong to their pattern and habit early in the season which would make it easier to harvest the bigger bucks. I think we should leave some big bucks for the rifle season. I’ve noticed that most of the bigger bucks are taken early by out of state archery hunters. I’ve been archery hunting since 1973.”

Ryan J Gruber emailed: “Please leave the season the way it is. Late season bow hunting is a time we cherish. Finally there’s a relative peace in the woods! Please don’t change these dates!”

Dennis Clemens of Redfield, SD, emailed: “I would like to say I am in favor of starting the archery deer season earlier. This would give hunters a chance to hunt deer and antelope in the same trip and I believe produce more revenue for the state.”

Scott T. Kuck of Aberdeen, SD, emailed: “I am strongly in favor of moving the archery deer season to the 2nd Saturday in September and ending on December 31st. I am in favor for the many reasons which have been adequately stated by others. More importantly, it will allow me to continue to introduce my two young daughters to the great sport of archery hunting and to do so when the weather is not bitterly cold and the hunting pressure from other seasons has not yet started.”

Josh Ranek of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: “I think this proposal would be beneficial for youth especially. I have three kids: 8, 6, and 3 and they love to come out and sit in tree stands/blinds with me. However, once the weather turns cold, they are less likely to come along. The additional two weeks in September would give us more time together as a family.”

Richard Pearson of Webster, SD, emailed: “I’m in favor of the earlier archery deer season. More quality time before other seasons interfere.”

Kyle Villa, of Pierre, SD, emailed: “I am for opening archery deer season two weeks earlier. Surrounding states to the north and west, open two weeks earlier than that. I cannot think of a downside to this change. Having the better opportunity of harvesting a buck in velvet may boost our nonresident license sales which is good for everyone.”

Dale Penning of Harrisburg, SD, emailed: "Please consider the proposed changes to the Archery Deer Season. Starting the 2nd Saturday in September and ending December 31. This would allow some Archery hunting on Public land before the pheasant hunters start, allowing an Archery Antelope and Mule Deer combo hunt, and take the pressure off the herds in the late season, when they are herding up. It also would eliminate the taking of a buck after he has shed his antlers."

C. Hunter Roberts, of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I support the new archery deer season proposal. I think it will provide more quality deer hunting opportunities for people on both public and private lands...I also like the proposal to end the season early, but would be much more supportive of a proposal to close all doe seasons by the first of the year...."

Ryan Filehs emailed: "I would like you to consider moving the opening date of archery deer season to September 1st. This consistent date would allow hunters to pursue both pronghorns and deer in an early season hunt...it is proposed to move the start date to the third weekend of September. This does very little for hunters for the state of South Dakota. If you want to increase participation and tag sales, which I know is important to the SDGF&P; a significant move in the start date is required. This is why I feel September 1st start date is the best move for both hunters and the GF&P's pocket."

Doug Boer of Madison, SD, emailed: "I would also be in favor of this proposal for 2 reasons one is the same mentioned regarding hunting public land, every year I have one stand on public property, as soon as the duck hunters and dove hunters hit the area the deer I see all season are pretty much gone. This would give us longer to enjoy the public land. Other than that many states already have archery seasons that start in early September. I would very much like this change for our bow hunters. I believe are still "hunters". It's pretty hard to take a deer out of the pickup window! If you want to cater to any group of hunters this is the group."

Dana R. Rogers of Box Elder, SD, emailed: "I am absolutely for this initiative and it will be very well received by the bowhunters of South Dakota. Eliminating the January season for all weapons is also long overdue in my opinion...Please approve the change but we do need to consider limiting number of NR in the future to protect our resource for the majority of our residents just al all other states in the west do."

Terry Goehring of Sioux Falls, SD, emailed: "I think this season should be left as is and not change the current season structure."

Nicholas Renemans of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I would completely support the proposal to move the deer archery season up from where it is now. As an archery hunter I find it more challenging to hunt once grouse season has opened. I also think it would bring more archery hunters to SD from other states at the opportunity to hunt that early."

Aaron Rogers of Huron, SD, emailed: "It would be nice to have the same earlier season dates like some of our surrounding states. It would also give us a chance at a velvet buck. It would also take pressure off our deer herds when the weather turns bad and they need to worry about feed and shelter."

Justin Allen of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I'm 100% against the bow season starting any earlier than it currently does....I fail to see why we need to make it easier to kill deer by opening the season earlier when deer are easiest to pattern."

Joe Arbach of Hoven, SD, emailed: "...I don't think starting archery season earlier will benefit residents."

Bryce Baker of Ft. Pierre, SD, emailed: "...I am in favor of starting the season earlier to give us some better opportunities ahead of the shotguns and dogs hitting the fields. I also question the need to move the end up to the end of the year..."

John Gutenkauf of Pierre, SD, emailed: "I am in favor of moving the start of the archery season to September 1st. That would allow archery hunters more time to hunt before pheasant season begins. One pheasant season begins, deer are more nervous and tend to move more after dark."

Dennis Schmig of Stockholm, SD, emailed: "I am against starting the season any earlier than it is now. These guys are already losing too many wounded deer that they are unable to track due to lack of potential snow cover and standing crops. By going to January 15, if we have depredation problems, they can help out in that department. You have let that group have way too much influence on deer hunting."

The public hearing concluded at 3:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey R. Vonk, Department Secretary