

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
October 1-2, 2015

Chairman Cooper called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. MDT at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Spearfish, South Dakota. Commissioners John Cooper, Cathy Peterson, H. Paul Dennert, Barry Jensen, Gary Jensen, Duane Sathers, Jim Spies and W. Scott Phillips were present. Secretary Kelly Hepler was present along with approximately fifty public, staff, and media.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Cooper called for any additions or corrections to the August 6-7, 2015, minutes or a motion for approval.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spied TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 6-7, 2015, MEETING AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Vice Chair Peterson requested one additional salary days and Dennert requested two additional salary days.

Motion by B. Jensen with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS AS REQUESTED. Motion carried unanimously.

License List Requests

Staff attorney Dick Neill presented a license list request from High Prairie Lodge and Outfitters of Whitewood, SD. The request is for a list of 3,000 non-resident waterfowl hunters. The list will be used to mail marketing materials for their lodge and guide services. This is a full fee request.

Motion by B. Jensen with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUESTS FROM HIGH PRAIRIE LODGE AND OUTFITTERS AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Neill presented a license list request from Mark Motz of Prairie Sky Game Ranch and Guest Lodge, LLC of Veblen, SD. The request is for a list of all available hunting license holders. The list will be used to mail marketing materials to people who hunt in South Dakota.

Motion by Dennert with second by Sathers TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUESTS FROM MARK MOTZ AND PRAIRIE SKY GAME RANCH AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Neill presented a license list request from Tom Roster of Klamath Falls, OR. The request is for a list of Private Shooting Preserves in South Dakota and their contact information. The list will be used to obtain research in the testing of new nontoxic shot loads and shot types to determine effectiveness and limitations for the taking of pheasants. Data sets when complete will be added to Tom Roster's Nontoxic Shot Lethality Table which has been included in the SD 2015 Hunting and Trapping Handbook.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUESTS FROM TOM ROSTER AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Neill presented a license list request from the South Dakota Wildlife Federation of Pierre, SD. The request is for a list of all 2015 Black Hills Elk, West River Deer, Antelope and East River Deer hunters. The list will be used to sell gun tickets and for membership recruitment.

Motion by Phillips with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUESTS FROM THE SOUTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

PROPOSALS

Park, Trail and Boat License Fee Increases

Assistant Director Bob Schneider informed the commission that user fees are utilized to cover costs of operation and preventative maintenance in the state park system. Revenue from boat licenses is used to develop and maintain boating access throughout the State. He indicated staff review the fees each year and recommend adjustments as needed. This year fee increases are recommended in four areas: Custer State Park (CSP) 7-day entrance license fee, campsite reservations made through the call center and the George S. Mickelson Trail daily pass and boat license fees. Schneider provided information regarding how the new revenue would be utilized. Schneider noted that the proposed \$2 fee to make a camping reservation through the call center would be a discretionary fee since online reservations could still be made at no additional cost. Phone center reservations are more costly to the department than online reservations.

Division Director Doug Hofer noted that revenue from park fees also aids in improving habitat in the parks systems such as the pollinator plots projects planned for several parks next year.

Schneider presented the proposed changes in park entrance license fees and trail use passes as specified below.

Increase the fee for a 7-day Custer State Park entrance license from \$15 to \$20; and Increase the one-day fee for a motor vehicle in Custer State Park that does not have a park entrance license from \$15 to \$20.

41:03:03:06. Park entrance license fees. The park entrance license fees are as follows:

- (3) The temporary park entrance license fee at Custer State Park is ~~\$15~~ **\$20** for a vehicle or \$10 for a motorcycle. This license is valid for visits of one to seven consecutive days, inclusive, from the date of purchase in any state park or recreation area;
- (5) If a vehicle does not have a valid park entrance license displayed as required in § 41:03:03:02, the operator or the registered owner of the vehicle shall pay \$10 for a daily park entrance license for each day the vehicle is in the park, except at Custer State Park where the fee is ~~\$15~~ **\$20**. The operator or registered owner may apply the entire amount of the cost of this daily park entrance license towards the purchase of an annual park entrance license;

Motion by G. Jensen with second by Spies TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE 7-DAY CUSTER STATE PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE FEE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

41:03:04:05.01 Campsite reservations – Payment of camping fees – Cancellation fees:

Campers who are residents of South Dakota shall pay an additional reservation fee of \$2.00 for a reservation made through the telephone call center. Campers who are not residents of South Dakota shall pay an additional reservation fee of \$7.70 for a reservation made online and shall pay \$9.70 for a reservation made through the telephone call center.

Motion by B. Jensen with second by Peterson TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE CAMPSITE TELEPHONE RESERVATION FEE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Increase the daily George S. Mickelson trail fee by \$1 from \$3.00 to \$4.00.

41:03:05:03 Trail use service fees and issuance of trail user pass. The trail user service fees are as follows:

- (1) Annual pass fee, \$15 a person;
- (2) Daily pass fee, ~~\$3~~ **\$4** a person; and
- (3) Annual pass late fee, \$15 a person.

Motion by G. Jensen with second by Sather TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE GEORGE S. MICKELSON TRAIL USE FEE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Increase the fee for licensing motorboats and watercrafts.

41:04:05:01.01 Boat license fees:

- (1) Nonmotorized boats over 12 feet and boats propelled solely by electric trolling motors: 1 year ~~-\$12.50~~ **\$15.00**. Nonmotorized canoes owned by nonprofit youth organizations are exempt from license requirements when being used for organizational activities;
- (2) Motorboats under 19 feet: 1 year ~~-\$20~~ **\$25**;
- (3) Motorboats 19 feet and over: 1 year ~~-\$40~~ **\$45**;
- (4) Temporary fishing tournament boat license: 10 consecutive days-\$50.

Motion by Spies with second by Dennert TO PROPOSE THE CHANGE TO BOAT LICENSE FEES AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Spring Turkey Hunting Season

Wildlife Program Administrator Chad Switzer presented information on the current Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season including dates by type, licenses, access permits, requirements and restrictions. Hunter success rates for each type of season were provided.

Switzer presented the proposed changes in spring wild turkey hunting seasons as specified below.

- (1) Offer residents 205 more one-tag "male turkey" licenses and 480 less two-tag "male turkey" licenses for the Prairie Units than 2015 for an overall decrease of 755 tags. Offer nonresidents 1 less one-tag "male turkey" licenses and 39 less two-tag "male turkey" licenses for the Prairie Units than 2015 for an overall decrease of 79 tags.
- (2) Establish a new unit (Unit 16A) for Campbell and Walworth counties.
- (3) Change county name of Unit PST-65A from Shannon County to Oglala Lakota County.

Motion by Peterson with second by Phillips TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE SPRING WILD TURKEY HUNTING SEASON AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Custer State Park Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season

Switzer noted the one recommended change from last year to reduce the number of licenses and provided supporting information indicating hunter success rates back to 2005.

1. Reduce the number of one-tag "male turkey" licenses from 135 to 100.

Motion by G. Jensen with second by Phillips TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE CUSTER STATE PARK SPRING WILD TURKEY HUNTING SEASON AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Spring Light Goose Hunting Season

Deputy Director Tom Kirschenmann explained the recommended changes to the spring light goose conservation order noting that the recommended changes for consideration would be for a three year period as last year the dates were adjusted to utilize federal framework and avoid an overlap in seasons.

1. Adjust the start date of the Conservation Order as described below

Motion by B. Jensen with second by Peterson TO PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE SPRING LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing began at 2:00 p.m. and concluded at 3:13 p.m. and the minutes follow these minutes.

FINALIZATIONS

**Fishing Limits, Regulations and Bass and Walleye Management 41:07:03,
41:07:01**

Wildlife Program Administrator Geno Adams provided informative update from the four public meetings held by fisheries staff to obtain public comment in regards to regulations for Opitz and Bitters Lakes.

Adams presented the proposed changes to white bass fish limits on Nebraska boarder water noting the Departments recommended changes to the original proposal.

1. From the Ft. Randall Dam tailwaters down to the South Dakota-Nebraska state line, change the limits for white bass from 25 daily and 50 possession to 15 daily and 30 possession to mirror white bass limits on border waters with South Dakota and Nebraska. This recommended change would standardize the white bass regulations on all of Lewis and Clark Lake from Ft. Randall Dam downstream to Gavins Point Dam.

Motioned by Sather with second by Dennert TO AMEND PROPOSED CHANGES TO STANDARDIZE WHITE BASS REGULATIONS ON LEWIS AND CLARK LAKE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by G Jensen with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO STANDARDIZE WHITE BASS REGULATIONS ON LEWIS AND CLARK LAKE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously

1. **41:07:03:02.01. South Dakota-Nebraska boundary waters.** In the South Dakota-Nebraska boundary waters a person may not catch and keep in any one day or have in possession at any time more than the following:

(4) ~~Twenty five~~ Fifteen white bass, possession limit ~~50~~ 30;

Motion by G Jensen with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES AS AMENDED REDUCING THE WHITE BASS LIMITS ON LEWIS AND CLARK LAKE AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Dennert with second by G. Jensen TO AMEND BY REMOVING ITEM 2D. PERTAINING TO WALLEYE RESTRICTIONS IN OPITZ LAKE. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Modify **41:07:03:03. "Daily, possession, and length limit restrictions on special management waters -- Additional restrictions described."** to:
 - a. Remove the restriction allowing only largemouth and smallmouth bass that are less than 14 inches in length or 18 inches or greater in length to be harvested from Lake Cochrane in Deuel County and Waubay Lake in Day County.
 - b. Remove the 15 inch minimum length restriction exemption in July and August for walleye from Ft. Randall Dam down to the South Dakota-Nebraska state line on the Missouri River.
 - c. Remove the 15 inch minimum length restriction for walleye from the Cattail/Kettle Lake Complex in Marshall County and Bitter Lake in Day County.
 - d. Remove the 15 inch minimum length restriction and remove the two fish daily limit restriction for walleye from Opitz Lake in Day and Marshall Counties.
 - e. Add a 15 inch minimum length restriction for largemouth and smallmouth bass in Bismarck Lake, Custer County.

- f. Change the name of the “Black Hills Trout Management Area” to the Black Hills Fish Management Area”.

Motioned by Dennert with second by Phillips TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO FISH LIMITS 41:07:03 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Modify 41:07:03:05. “Anglers restricted to one day's limit while on the water or actively fishing.” to add language that allows for the removal of fish eyes for use as bait while on the water and to specify that the stipulation requiring fish to remain whole only applies to gamefish.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by B. Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO FISH LIMITS 41:07:03:05 AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Adams explained the proposed change to the name of the Black Hills Trout Management Area to the Black Hills Trout Management Area making it accurate as they manage many different fish species.

Motioned by Dennert with second by Spies TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE BLACK HILLS TROUT MANAGEMENT AREA 41:07:01:01 AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Lott clarified that in order to prevent unnecessary waste of white bass this change would allow commercial fisherman to retain and sell the fish.

Motioned by B. Jensen with second by G. Jensen TO DECLAIR WHITE BASS AS ROUGH FISH FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTRACTED COMMERCIAL FISHING 41:07:01:09 AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Paddlefish Season Dates and Regulations 41:07:05, 41:07:06

Adams presented the proposed changes to the Paddlefish Season to mirror the Iowa season allowing South Dakota anglers to snag paddlefish in the Big Sioux River up to the I29 Bridge. Iowa is also working to make this adjustment. Additional changes proposed would allow the replacement of tags to align with current practices and adjust the archery season dates providing hunters a better chance to harvest paddlefish.

Motion by Sather with second by Dennert TO FINALIZE CHANGE TO THE PADDLEFISH SNAGGING AND SPEARING SEASONS 41:07:05, 41:07:06 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Private Fish Hatchery Application Requirements 41:09:04, 41:09:07

Adams explained these changes would modify the name of the Black Hills Trout Management Area and require private fish hatcheries to submit annual fish health inspections as a condition for issuance of a license.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE BAIT AND PRIVATE HATCHERIES 41:09:04, 41:09:07 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Cooper called recess at 5:15 p.m. indicating the meeting would resume at 7:30 a.m. the next morning.

The meeting resumed at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, October 2 in the same location with Commissioners Cooper, Dennert, B. Jensen, G. Jensen, Sathers, Spies and Phillips present along with 20 public, staff and media.

Bobcat Hunting/Trapping Season 41:08:01

Keith Fisk, Wildlife Damage Management Program Administrator presented harvest data to support the proposed change to adding five counties: Clay, Hughes, Hutchinson, Hyde and Union to the East River Bobcat Season.

Motion by Sather with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE BOBCAT HUNTING SEASON 41:08:01 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried.

Mountain Lion Hunting Season 41:06:02, 41:06:61

Switzer presented the proposed changes to the mountain lion hunting season noting the modification of the harvest limits, allowing participation of nonresident hunters, establishing a nonresident hunter license fee and regulating the use of dogs.

Motion by G. Jensen with second by Spies TO AMEND RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE MOUNTAIN LION HUNTING SEASON 41:06:02, 41:06:61 BY STRIKING ITEMS 2 AND 3 WHICH IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NONRESIDENT HUNTING OF MOUNTAIN LIONS.

Roll call vote: Dennert-no; B. Jensen-yes; G. Jensen-yes; Peterson-absent; Phillips-no; Sather-no; Spies - yes; Cooper-yes. Motion failed with 4 yes and 3 no votes.

Recommended by Phillips to revote

Roll call vote: Dennert-no; B. Jensen-yes; G. Jensen-yes; Peterson-absent; Phillips-no; Sather-yes; Spies - yes; Cooper-yes. Motion carried with 5 yes and 4 no votes.

Motioned by B. Jensen with seconded by G. Jensen TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MOUNTAIN LION SEASON 41:06:02, 41:06:61 AS AMENDED. Motion carried.

PETITIONS FOR RULE CHANGE

Nonresident Waterfowl License

Barrie Norb presented his petition, via conference call, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission make changes to Nonresident Waterfowl Licenses by adding Spink County to the current 9-county northeast SD license unit; Retain the

allocation of 500 3-day licenses for the NE SD license unit; Allocate 2,250 10-day licenses for the NE SD license unit; and Allocate 1,500 10-day licenses for the unit comprised of that part of the state not included in the NE SD and SE SD license units.

Chairman Cooper outlined the options for Commission action on petitions then requested input from the Commission. It was noted that Norb's petition failed to include any new information only what was presented in HB 1185 (2014).

Per the request of the Chairman Director Leif presented a resolution outlining reasons for denial of the petition for the Commissions consideration

Motioned by Sather with second by Dennert TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 15-15 AS PRESENTED (Appendix A). Motion carried unanimously

Purchase and Accrual of Preference Points

Director Tony Leif presented the petition received from Eric Kolda on September 20, 2015 requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission remove (i.e., repeal) ARSD 41:06:01:16 pertaining to the purchase and accrual of preference points in lieu of applying for a license for any hunting season with a limited license allocation.

Per the request of the Chairman Director Leif presented a resolution outlining reasons for denial of the petition for the Commissions consideration

Motioned by Dennert with second by Sather TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 15-16 AS PRESENTED (Appendix B). Motion carried unanimously

Director Tony Leif presented the petition received from Mike Schuldt on September 16, 2015 requesting the Game, Fish and Parks Commission remove (i.e., repeal) ARSD 41:06:01:16 pertaining to the purchase and accrual of preference points in lieu of applying for a license for any hunting season with a limited license allocation.

Per the request of the Chairman Director Leif presented a resolution outlining reasons for denial of the petition for the Commissions consideration

Motioned by Phillips with second by B. Jensen TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 15-17 AS PRESENTED (Appendix C). Motion carried unanimously

OPEN FORUM

Chairman Cooper invited those who wished to visit with the Commission on matters other than the items listed on the agenda under Finalizations. No persons came forward.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation Good Earth State Park Land Donation

Wayne Winter, Foundation Director and Doug Hofer presented Resolution 15-12 requesting transfer of property adjacent to Good Earth State Park owned by the South

Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks as a site for the visitor's center.

Motioned by Peterson with seconded by Spies TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 15-12 AS PRESENTED. (Appendix E). Motion carried unanimously.

Custer State Park Private Cabin Transfer

Matt Snyder presented Resolution 15-13 requesting sale of a private cabin located in Custer State Park. The owners are aware of the date in which they will need to either remove the cabin or surrender it to the state.

Motioned by Phillips with seconded by G. Jensen TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 15-13 AS PRESENTED. (Appendix F). Motion carried unanimously.

Concessions Prospectuses for Roy Lake and Lewis and Clark Resorts

Al Nedved, Assistant Director of Planning and Development updated the Commission on the requests for sales of Roy Lake and Lewis and Clark concessionaires. Nedved explained to the commission how these two concessionaires operate under old commission rules that allow them to request sale and establish prices set by them and not an appraisal. Both are currently under contract. While interest was discussed neither concessionaire received a proposal. Roy Lake intends to work with GFP and reissue another request to sell the property under new terms. We have not received any information on intent to reissue a request to sale from Lewis and Clark

September Visitation and Revenue Report

Hofer provided a year to date comparison of parks revenue indicating a continued growth in camper units sold to be up seven percent from last year. Also provided was a park comparison list by district. Hofer thanked parks staff for all their hard work especially for the quick response to storm clean up at Farm Island and handling of Rally and Roundup.

Custer State Park Resort 2016 Repair and Maintenance Plan

Hofer introduced Tom Biegler, president /CEO and Josh Schmaltz, vice president of Ramkota the parent company for CSP concessions. Snyder provided a recap explaining the overall plan to make improvements and enhancements to CSP Resort over the next five years. The goal is to have the current list of projects completed by the next operating season beginning with the lodge to be demolished next week.

Schmaltz walked through the 2016 repair and maintenance plan in detail. He noted they will work to make the necessary repairs while keeping the historical integrity of the State Game Lodge. They will also have new and renovated cabins at Sylvan Lake Lodge and be mindful to plan for emergency repairs as needed.

Biegler stated their vision going forward is to expand to the parks. He noted CSP was the first concession for the Ramkota

Miscellaneous Updates

Snyder reported out on the 75th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally noting accidents and fatalities and 50th Buffalo Round up showing a YouTube video that provided a few highlights of the event. Snyder indicated the minor change in scheduling for events appeared successful.

The Mountain Pine Beetle has been a problem in the Black Hills area for some time. Snyder stated that with aid of funding and staff efforts since 2012 the number of trees needing to be treated has reduced from 100,000 to 50,000.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Land Acquisition Projects

Program Administrator Paul Coughlin presented a land acquisition and disposal report to the Commission. Coughlin invited the Commissioners to view the properties and noted that every acquisition in the past 13 years began by a landowner contacting the Department. The Cutler property will be brought forward for final action at the November meeting to create a game production area in Brown County. Three other properties discussed could be additions to current game production areas. The DOT Water River Access Area could provide water access to the Big Sioux River and is currently being appraised

Management Plans in Development

Switzer provided an update on the pheasant management plan noting in development of the plan they utilized comments and suggestions from the Governor's Pheasant Summit as well as recommendations received from the public. At this time a draft plan has been presented to Secretary Hepler with the next step being to bring the plan forward to the Commission in conjunction with the 30 day public comment period.

The existing wild turkey and Canada goose plan management plans are currently under revision. The 30 day comment period has been provided and stakeholder groups were established and have held their initial meetings. A timetable will be brought forward in November to identify dates for plan completion and setting season schedules.

The statewide deer management plan is in the early stages of development. Staff are working develop an outline and distribute assignments. A draft stakeholder workgroup has been established. The next step will be to develop a survey for distribution

Deer Fawn Survival Research

Andy Lindbloom, Senior Wildlife Biologist provided an overview of the multiple statewide deer research projects. He stated they are hopeful that these research projects will aid in identifying more accurate information that is not possible due to variability in current data methods. Kevin Robling, Wildlife Biologist provided a powerpoint presentation on the deer fawn survival survey.

Zebra Mussels in Lewis and Clark Lake

Emmett Keyser, Regional Supervisor and Will Sayler, Program Administrator provided the commission an update on the zebra mussel infestation at Lewis and Clark Lake and the decontamination protocols for aquatic invasive species. Due to the size of Lewis and Clark Lake decontamination would be monumental so the plan is containment. A user group and work group has been established to find funding sources for enforcement and compliance.

Habitat Partner of the Year Award

Leif presented the Habitat Partner of the year award to Dr. Robert and Janet Ferrell. Ferrell worked in cooperation with GFP to provide quality habitat management practices on his land as well as providing opportunities to naturalists, hunters and anglers.

License Sales Report

Leif provided license sales report as of September 25 for residents and non-residents. He stated the numbers show we are seeing a shift from the purchase of fishing license to that of a combo license. We continue to see good sales and anticipate an increase in sales within the next month with the pheasant season.

Adjourn

Motioned by Spies with second by Sather to adjourn the meeting. Motioned carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Appendix A

RESOLUTION 15 - 08

WHEREAS, the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) has expressed an interest in acquiring real property presently owned by Merlin Dale Kirschenman and Shirley Nagel Kirschenman, Moorhead, MN, which property is described as:

Lots Four (4), Five (5) and Six (6); The West Half of the Northeast Quarter ($W\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$); and the South Half of the Northwest Quarter ($S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$); all located in Section Fourteen (14), Township Ninety-six (96) North, Range Fifty-seven (57), West of the 5th P.M., EXCEPT those portions Of Lot Four (4), the South Half of the Northwest Quarter ($S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$), and the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter ($SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$), lying south of the County road, in said Section Fourteen (14), Township Ninety-six (96) North, Range Fifty-seven (57), West of the 5th P.M., Yankton County, South Dakota, containing 175 acres, more or less, and hereafter referred to as KIRSCHENMAN PROPERTY; and

WHEREAS, said property is to be acquired by and utilized by GFP as a Game Production Area; 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 purchases, which notice included the time and location of the meeting at which Commission 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 the purchase of said property for use as a Game Production Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that GFP is authorized to complete negotiations for the purchase of the KIRSCHENMAN PROPERTY and execute and consummate an agreement with Merlin Dale Kirschenman and Shirley Nagel Kirschenman, which is acceptable to GFP to acquire by purchase, at the price of \$665,000.00, the KIRSCHENMAN PROPERTY for use as a Game Production Area.

Appendix B

RESOLUTION 15 - 09

WHEREAS, the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) has expressed an interest in acquiring real property presently owned by the Heirs and Devisees of Virginia Randall, c/o Carol Gaikowski, Personal Representative of the Estate of Virginia Randall, deceased, which property is described as:

Northeast Quarter (NE¼) of Section 14, Township 121 North, Range 55 West of the 5th P.M., Day County, South Dakota, including and subject to the Randall Conservation Easement, containing 160 acres, more or less, and hereafter referred to as RANDALL PROPERTY; and

WHEREAS, said property is to be acquired by and utilized by GFP as a Game Production Area; 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 purchases, which notice included the time and location of the meeting at which Commission 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 the purchase of said property for use as a Game Production Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that GFP is authorized to complete negotiations for the purchase of the RANDALL PROPERTY and execute and consummate an agreement with the Heirs and Devisees of Virginia Randall, c/o Carol Gaikowski, Personal Representative of the Estate of Virginia Randall, deceased, which is acceptable to GFP to acquire by purchase, at the price of \$215,000.00, the RANDALL PROPERTY for use as a Game Production Area.

Appendix C

RESOLUTION 15 - 10

Whereas, the State of South Dakota (for the use and benefit of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks) owns property described as:

Lot A of Isensee's First Clear Lake Subdivision, located in Government Lot 2 of Section 12, Township 126 North, Range 54 West of the 5th PM, Marshall County, SD, and

Lot B of Isensee's Second Clear Lake Subdivision, located in Government Lots 1 and 2 of Section 12, Township 126 North, Range 54 West of the 5th PM, Marshall County, SD (hereafter GFP PROPERTIES); and

Whereas, SDCL § 41-2-29.1 provides that the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks shall sell real property owned by the state and held by the department if such real property is no longer needed for game, fish, or parks purposes, with such sale to be conducted pursuant to the procedure more fully set out in SDCL § 41-2-29.1; and

Whereas, the combined total 0.5 acre GFP PROPERTIES were acquired in June 1964 as part of a larger 12 acre Water Access Area and are owned by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks – Wildlife Division and intended to provide fishing access to Clear Lake; and

Whereas, the GFP PROPERTIES have over time been encroached upon by private developments, are physically isolated from other currently utilized portions of the Water Access Area, and are of no significance to continued public access and use for South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks – Wildlife Division; and

Whereas, the GFP Commission hereby determines that GFP PROPERTIES no longer serve the purposes for which they were originally acquired and are no longer needed for Game, Fish, and Parks purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the GFP Commission hereby directs the Department to sell and transfer title to the GFP PROPERTIES in conformity with the procedures provided in SDCL § 41-2-29.1, and that the Department is authorized to execute and consummate an agreement relative to the sale deemed appropriate by the Department.

Appendix D

RESOLUTION NO. 15 - 11

Whereas, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission has been advised that Rae-Hope Putney was the owner of a cabin located in Custer State Park (Custer County) on property described as:

No.2 Sylvan Lake Paradise Gates in the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼) of the Southwest Quarter (SW ¼) of Section Twenty nine (29), Township Two (2) South, Range Five (5) East, of the Black Hills Meridian, Custer County, South Dakota; and

Whereas, the property upon which the cabin is located is owned by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and has been leased to Rae-Hope Putney by permit by reason of a Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal entered in Craft v. Wipf, Civil Action No. 85-5092, U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota, Western Division, and subsequent agreements and permits executed thereafter based on said Stipulation and Dismissal; and

Whereas, the Commission has been advised that Rae-Hope Putney desires to transfer and assign all of her interest in said cabin and cabin site permit to Geoff Putney and Jessica Putney, husband and wife, as joint tenants; and

Whereas, the Commission has been requested to approve said Transfer and Assignment.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that in the event the Department receives an executed Agreement and Assignment of the above described cabin site permit and cabin and appurtenances located thereon and which further provides that said Assignee agrees to abide by all of the terms and conditions of the aforementioned Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal and all subsequent agreements relative thereto, including but not limited to Cabin Site Permits, Addendums, and all agreements relative to establishing the lease or rental payments due the Department, then in that event, the Department is authorized to execute a Consent to the requested Assignment.

Appendix E

RESOLUTION NO. 15 - 12

WHEREAS, South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation owns real estate (Property) described as:

Tract 1 of Good Earth Park Addition in the South Half (S1/2) of Section 14, Township 100 North, Range 49, West of the 5th P.M., Lincoln County, South Dakota, as platted in Book 9 of Plats, page 148; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Inc. desires to gift the Property to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (Department) as an addition to Good Earth State Park at Blood Run; and

WHEREAS, the Department has evaluated and determined that the Property would serve very well as an addition to Good Earth State Park at Blood Run, providing land for the Visitor Center building site and for parking and road access to the Visitors Center; and

WHEREAS, the Department is authorized to accept gifts of property for park and recreational purposes per SDCL §§ 41-2-19 and 41-2-24;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission does hereby authorize the Department to accept the gift of the Property from South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation to be used as an addition to Good Earth State Park at Blood Run.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Commission, on behalf of the citizens of South Dakota, does hereby acknowledge and express its deepest appreciation and gratitude to South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation for its generosity, and further acknowledge the benefits this gift will provide for the development of the Visitor Center at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run.

Appendix F

RESOLUTION NO. 15 – 13

WHEREAS, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission has been advised that Alyce Bennett was the owner of a cabin located in Custer State Park (Custer County) on property described as:

No. 4 Birchlawn Lot in the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4) of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twelve (12), Township Four (4) South, Range Five (5) East, of the Black Hills Meridian, Custer County, South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the property upon which the cabin is located is owned by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and has been leased to Alyce Bennett by permit by reason of a Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal entered in Craft v. Wipf, Civil Action No. 85-5092, U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota, Western Division, and subsequent agreements and permits executed thereafter based on said Stipulation and Dismissal; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that Alyce Bennett desires to and has transferred and assigned all of her interest in said cabin and cabin site permit to Robert Metcalf and Lucienda Metcalf, husband and wife, as joint tenants; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been requested to approve said Transfer and Assignment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in the event the Department receives an executed Agreement and Assignment of the above described cabin site permit and cabin and appurtenances located thereon and which further provides that said Assignee agrees to abide by all of the terms and conditions of the aforementioned Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal and all subsequent agreements relative thereto, including but not limited to Cabin Site Permits, Addendums, and all agreements relative to establishing the lease or rental payments due the Department, then in that event, the Department is authorized to execute a Consent to the requested Assignment.

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
October 1, 2015

The Public Hearing Officer Cindy Longmire began the public hearing at 2:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Spearfish, South Dakota with Commissioners Cooper, Peterson, Dennert, Jensen, Jensen, Phillips, Sather, and Spies present. Longmire indicated written comments were provided to the Commissioners prior to this time and will be reflected in the Public Hearing Minutes. Longmire then invited the public to come forward with oral testimony.

Fishing Limits, Regulations, and Bass and Walleye Management

Oral testimony:

Joe, Honer, Eden, SD, said he attended the meeting held by fisheries staff, but still does not agree with the proposal. He thinks Opitz lake has been fished hard and is now in a difficult situation. Honer stated Bitter lake had a huge population of large fish that ate down the food and the bite was tremendous creating a huge influx of anglers. He is concerned that removing the minimum will create an influx that will harvest the population down to a serious deficit. He said this is not the right time to remove limits and would like the opportunity to continue to work with fisheries staff.

Danny Michlitsch, Eden, SD said he routed the petition at his grocery store and that people seem to be happy with the two fish limit. He stated that they did their own survey of the lakes and they all appear to see a lot of use. Michlitsch noted this is good for the businesses and their community.

Written testimony:

Tom Knase, Eden, SD, emailed "I own a house in Eden SD and I fish Opitz offend, Recognizing the lake it an outstanding walleye fishery, I would prefer caution on the side of removing the 2 fish per day limit. Removing the 15" length limit will guarantee that everyone fishing will have fish to take home. Increasing the 2 limit per day to 4 per day, will guarantee the lake will be fished out. Please proceed with caution and change one limit item at a time. The 2 per day limit can be addressed after fish netting result are examined.

Pat Malcomb, Sioux Falls, SD, emailed" I am all for the proposed walleye rule changes, and would like to see Lake Poinsett do away with the 15 inch size limit also. There are so many 14-3/4 to 14-7/8 inch walleyes being caught it is sometimes hard to get a few over 15 inches to keep, not to mention the ones we see floating belly up because they are under 15 inches. I hate to see these fish floating because they are 1/8 under 15 inches, what a waste as they are really nice looking walleyes."

Vern Prosocki, Avon, SD, emailed" I am writing to plead with you to NOT remove the slot limits on these two lakes. As a Minnesota resident I realize these two lakes are not part of my regular haunts. They are however important to me as I try to get to the Glacial Lakes region 1-2 times per year and during these trips I look forward to the quality of fish they produce. The prospect of quality walleye fishing is what attracts many of us non-residents to your great state. The probability of negatively affecting these resources is reason enough for a NO vote. Minnesota has seen more than our

share of mis-managed fisheries. Please don't make changes to these lakes which represent an example of what your people have done well.

Rick Sommers, Aberdeen, SD, emailed" I am writing to voice my opposition to changing any of the regulations on Opitz Lake. It has been an excellent fishery that has been fished heavily with the existing regulations. Even as recently as this past weekend, there were over 30 boats at the ramp. The fish that were caught this past weekend were healthy and fat, and also at least half were over 16" long. It is not broken. No need to fix it.

Bill Leonard, Eden, SD, emailed" Just a short message to pass on my feelings about reducing the length limit on Walleyes on opitz, and bitter lakes. It's pretty obvious that these two fisheries have been hurt in the past few years due to the increased harvesting. Both lakes are faced with large numbers of smaller fish that seem to be on a slow growth pattern. However I have seen an increase in the lengths of both fisheries in the past two months. It is now very common to catch several fish in the 15/12-16" class. It's my feeling that we need to hold off on reducing the length limits to less than 15", let's see what these fish do by the end of next yr before a decision is made. Another short note about another lake in the NE cattail. I might be way off on this one and it may not be finically feasible. I don't think it's a secret that the fishery has been hurt because of high water and the fish moving dn stream through the outlet tiles. How about a fish trap to prevent this in the future. Thanks for listening to me, and thanks for all your efforts to protect our fisheries.

Scot Hanson, Shoreview, MN, emailed" The 30 inch walleye was by far my biggest walleye in NE SD, caught on Swan Lake in Sept. Prior to that, several 24-25 inch walleye in several lakes. But I mostly catch nice 'eater;' walleye. However, last year, hard to catch a walleye on Bitter over 15 inches. One day, I bet we caught 50 walleye, but all under 15 inches, at the boat ramp talked to 5 other boats all with the same story. I do not think any of us had a fish over 15 inches. But that was last year, have not fished Bitter in 2015. Much was the same for Opitz, hard to catch over 15 inches. But those fish seem to have grown in 2015. Biggest I get is around 17 inches. Still many under 15, but I am ok with that. Several year classes on Optiz. No northern, a few jumbo perch and a few crappie, hard to target those. Catch by accident walleye fishing. I fish NE SD until ice up. Let me know if you want to hear anything more. I will tell you my experience. Keep my boat stored there and fish all the lakes in the NE. Then to Chamberlain for spring. I have lots of photos I can send if interested. This photo from last spring in Chamberlain. I fear the great fishing of NE SD is going to be ruined by excess limits. I would prefer a 2 fish limit. With 4 in possession. I do like only one over 18 inches.

Joe Honer, Eden, SD, emailed" Boys did a survey at Opits this weekend during there fireman's tourney. Boon also did one over last three days at bait shop he owns, which had A great amount of traffic including five different states. The over wellming response was that they thought the minimum should stay in place. They also reported the keeper to catch rates on Opits were at or above fifty percent and that the total numbers of fish they were catching was down from last year. At the stake dinner afterward I worked the crowd and found that the guys after given the info I was given still felt very strongly that the bitter and Opits should be left in place also the 2 fish limits. Some of thees guys felt so strongly that they said they were going to call the media in.

When I told them they needed to e mail u or others there response was they don't listen. I tried to encourage them that that is not the case. I tell u this so u know and I'm sure u do already but this is part of why u don't get an overwhelming response directly from the public. As far as the bitter lake. The word is out and the landings were pretty much full this weekend with every one I talked to having there limits of keeper fish. After thinking about what I was told on the phone. The things that don't add up are. One of the biggest reasons they don't want to wait a year on bitter is that after waiting 9 years on Waubay then taking the minn off. We r experiencing a slow growth rate even on new fish stalked. I would agree, but I believe it is from the exact thing we r proposing to do. Once the minn were taken off the harvest was very heavy leaving a void in wich the white bass exploited. The population of white bass is now higher than population of walleye in bitter. So if u look at the chart the high numbers in bitter are 13-1/2 and biggest being 14-1/5. After that it goes down considerably. So we take and knock those fish down to 12-13 we will be providing that very fertile opportunity for those bass. Brian commented on they think it is heading that way now but we r not seeing that In catch rates and actually the opposite this year as they r very rare. Also the other thing I hear a lot is that our lakes are not as fertile as in the past and we should be careful not expect as much out of them. That makes sense from what I see in there consumption. My confusion is that we r making part of this decision based on an expected growth rate from the past also. Maybe we have to modify that in certain situations. I hope this helps and again I am with u guys not against. I have complete respect for all of u. I am just not able to make sense of the whole pic and am very concerned that we may make a decision that will ruin bitter or sentence our fisheries to 15 inch or LESS on our average to big fish size. Thanks again and have a good day. Here is some of what we see and feal about minimums. I have been guiding on bitter for the last month. I have also been canvassing other guides and frequent fisherman of bitter and Opits lakes. Most of this info is from bitter. We r all in agreement that the fish have shot up a solid inch in the last month or so and expect that to continue through sep. we r seeing catch rates of 25-40 percent of keepers to none keepers in a lot of areas in the lakes. There are also a lot of fish about to clear the 15 minn. we feel strongly that a significant percentage of fish can and will be harvested to clear the way for the rest of the fish to come out of the stunted stage. I would strongly hope that we could hold off a year on the rule change. It would be a considerable set back to have thees fish cropped down to 12-13 inches at this point. We r also very concerned that there is no plan or goal in place to reinstate the minimum. We feal that in itself would sentence is to a far inferior fishery in to of our most important body's of water. The consensus of the boys I know around here is that our fisheries boys up here r top notch but r limited at times in how much info they have available to them. We have much more input to share but in an effort to keep this message manageable I will stop here My number is 320 260 6143 if any of the commissioners would like to hear more I would love to talk. Thanks much. If there is anything I or we can do feal free to call.

Blake Anderson, Groton, SD, emailed, "I fish the waters to the NE of me very regularly especially Bitter and Opitz. I attended 2 of the informational meetings that were put on in Aberdeen and Britton regarding the proposed length limits. The guys did a very good job of putting the meetings on and getting the information to us. Although I am seeing the lengths of the fish differ from what they are seeing, especially in Bitter

and Opitz lake. I fished there in middle of July and there was plenty of short fish with few keepers but a lot of the fish were close. Currently the fish we are catching have jumped 1-1.5" at least in 45 days. Making catch rates of 1 out of 3 keeper vs. Short fish, some days have been better than that. Hopefully the next 45 days show the same jump or close too. Not only are most of the fish above the 15" limit but they are in great shape also. Even the 13-14.5" fish are very healthy with a occasional thinner fish that comes out of deeper water. Catch rates in deeper water are showing 1 out of 10 keepers. With that being said I believe they need to table the length limits for a year to make sure it is the right thing to do. I think when people see these nicer fish being caught that the populations will be knocked down some with the current limits in place. I worry that if the limits change then they cannot easily be put back into place in the future. As far as the size limit on Cattail, I don't see a population of walleyes below 20" in that water right now so why change the minimum length? I think it should stay in place in case that water does get a good "take" of walleyes and they get to that 15" size very rapidly. From what I've seen from the boat on Cattail there is plentiful food, if those walleyes get going in there they will grow fast. If you have any questions for me don't hesitate to call

Thomas Tobin, Aberdeen, SD, emailed" I am Thomas Tobin. My phone number is 605-380-6348. I am contacting the department relating to the proposed fishing rules changes for Opitz slough. I live in Aberdeen SD and am 66 years old. I fish Opitz Slough about 20 times per year. I am opposed to removing the 2 fish limit or to reduce the size limit. The fishing was real good into June, then it was a little slow for about 6 weeks and now is is very good. If you change the rules on this lake you will have it fished out in no time. I was there last week and there were 17 boat on the lake when we got there. Several more came after we were there. Only 3 boats were from SD. The same thing happened 2 days later. First of all Opitz can't handle that many boats and if change the limit to four the boats will multiply until the fish are gone. I take two disabled people with me to fish most of the time and I took all of my Grandkids (9) to fish there. It is a nice quiet lake where you can catch fish and have fun. I was upset to see so many boats on the lake last week. If you change the limit the out of state boats will have it so you can't get on the water because of the limited parking and you will have the same thing happen there that has happened at some of the other lakes. With the low cost out of state season fishing licenses and many of the people coming more than once to fish the out of state fishing appetite is insatiable. I have fish a lot in the glacial lakes over the past 25 years and I have seen how fast the fishing pressure comes to the hot lakes i.e. Waubay, Bitter, Pyus. I am asking you to leave the rules as they are for Opitz. Thanks"

Martin Tarby, Rapid City, SD, emailed" WHAT? You have got to be kidding! White bass is a SPORT FISH! I and many other fishermen thoroughly enjoy fishing for white bass with rod and reel. I am fervently opposed to any attempt to commercially fish for white bass or any other sport fish. Please do not vote to reduce the recreational opportunities available to South Dakota anglers.

Doug Hansen, Webster, SD, emailed" I support the proposed fishing regulation changes for 2016 on the lakes in northeast SD in general, with particular reference to Bitter Lake. Over the past few years, I've had the good fortune of "processing a lot of data" on walleye harvest and condition in Bitter Lake. These data were not collected in

a scientific manner, unlike the Wildlife Division's data. Nonetheless, my observations of and conclusions from these data are consistent with those of the Division. Walleyes from the abundant 2011 year-class of walleyes are not growing like they should be. Neither are many of the other walleyes in the population. Removal of the 15-inch minimum size restriction on Bitter Lake is soundly based in fisheries management science and is supported by reliable scientifically collected data. It is also supported by anecdotal observations by active anglers. I encourage the Commission's approval of the proposed fishing regulation changes for Bitter Lake. Although I have no personal observations of the fisheries on the other lakes in question, I have seen the data collected by Wildlife Division staff. I believe they have collected compelling data to support the recommended regulations. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Marc Paulson, Hermosa, SD, emailed "We now have a fishery where you can take kids fishing and they can catch fish. Younger kids have trouble catching some types of fish and get bored easily but in the spring when the white bass are running they have a lot of fun and enjoy fishing because they can catch these more aggressive fish. I do not believe we need to reduce the population of white bass by allowing commercial fishing. If you want to allow commercial fishing let them take the cat fish there are lots of them and no one seems to fish for them as much. I hope more fisherman are against this also."

Tom Mahan, Groton, SD, emailed "I'm sorry I couldn't make the meeting Tuesday night in Eden concerning the walleye limits and length restrictions on Opits and Bitter Lake in Northeastern South Dakota. It is my understanding that you want to increase the limit from two walleyes to four on Opits and let fishermen keep any fish under 20" and one over 20". The reasoning is to lower the population of walleyes in the lake so the fish can get bigger faster. I really enjoy fishing Opits because it is not usually crowded and you can always catch fish, a very nice combination. I always thought that the state must be thinking along these same lines because the boat landing will accommodate just a few boats and the people who are concerned about keeping more than two fish can go some place else to fish. Bitter on the other hand has a great landing area and the lake has all sorts of structure and different venues to accommodate any type of fisherman and the walleyes are usually very accommodating, we always catch fish on Bitter. Both of these lakes offer great fishing because they both have a good population of fish and I can't see why the state wants to destroy that population by removing the lower slot and allowing fishermen to keep fish under 15"s. Game and fish has done a great job in creating our fishing recourses in the state and I think all SD residents agree along with the countless out of starters that our fishing attracts year around. The economy's in the towns in and around where the fish are biting have grown to really rely on the traffic fishing has created and I hope you take that into consideration when making your decisions. Have you explored the idea of putting more bait fish or fresh water shrimp into these waters to help these fish grow bigger faster? Most of the Northeast lakes that grew to what they are today started that growth back in the early 90's and the bottoms of those lake have matured to resemble most any ordinary glaciated lake and the habitat in those lakes is not what it was after the flooding started. If you make a mistake on this I think you know how long it will take to rebuild the numbers from fingerlings, let's just feed what we have and see if that works first. Thanks for reading what I had to say!"

Bob Woerman, Brandon, SD, emailed" Walleye rules and regulations: Visiting with several fishermen comments are all the same, "Make the Walleye regulations more uniform from one lake or stream to the next in South Dakota." Right now regulations are confusing and it is easy to make a mistake when keeping or releasing a Walleye."

Arden Price, emailed" I am all for removing the 15 inch limit and going to a 4 a day limit there is just to many small fish being caught numerous times and also to much of a problem to inforce when that many small fish"

Byron Petersen, Lake City, SD, emailed" I would encourage the Commission to leave the current fishing restrictions in place for Opitz Lake in Marshall County. The few SD residents that can fish it during the week are happy with their results and I see know reason to change as it only will help out of state fishermen who are already often surpassing their limits; especially those who remain on the lake past nightfall . Thank you

A petition signed by 149 individuals was submitted by Danny Michlitsch, Eden, SD "we the disagree with the Game Fish & Parks decision to increase the fishing limits on Opitz Lake in Marshall County. It is our belief the lake has already been over fished and that the limits should remain at 2 fish per day. We further would encourage increased enforcement of the 2 fish limit and size restrictions."

Robert E. Wright, Sioux Falls, SD, emailed," White bass are a highly prized game fish everywhere, it seems, except South Dakota. They are the state fish of Oklahoma and are so closely related to striped bass ("stripers"), the state fish of Maryland, Rhode Island, South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and New Hampshire, that they can be successfully hybridized with them to create superfish called wipers.

[\[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Striped_bass\]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Striped_bass) White bass and their various kin are voracious predators; feeding schools of them are among the most exciting environments in which one can fish in fresh water. I urge you watch this YouTube video of white bass "boiling" on Lake Mead [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m8E_8WCPR4\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m8E_8WCPR4), where fishing guides like Adventure in Angling [\[adventureinangling.com\]](http://adventureinangling.com) earn thousands guiding fishers to hotspots. White bass also fight like the dickens. I have often had on line what I thought was a 2 lb. white bass only to pull out a 4 lb. walleye. Unlike walleye, white bass strike with force and will often jump. Even throwbacks fight hard. Despite a myth to the contrary, white bass are excellent table fare when properly prepared by avoiding the lateral line or mud line. This guy knows what he is doing [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcb3dYWiXcs\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcb3dYWiXcs). These stuck up walleye fishers also have a clue: [\[http://www.walleyecentral.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-200335.html\]](http://www.walleyecentral.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-200335.html) though I have found that nothing but salt, pepper, and butter are needed. The owner of M&W bait shop in Sioux Falls once told me that she silently served white bass (and drum) to some friends and they found it the best "walleye" they had ever eaten! Most importantly, though, white bass can be caught with *regularity from shore* throughout the temperate part of the year. (I don't ice fish so I don't know if they hit hard in the winter.) I stress *from shore* and with *regularity* because they are in many ways a poor man's fish. No boat required, just a pole, a simple hook, and \$2 worth of minnows and a guy can limit out in two hours any evening in the summer. And, thanks to the generous limit, a successful white bass outing can feed a family (well) for several days while walleye fishers get skunked completely or have to scrape

together a meal out of four "smalleye." This brings me to a bigger issue: "class" rules. I use this term with trepidation because by "class" I do not mean just socioeconomic class (rich, poor, or in between) but also class of outdoors folk. Some of us do not have the money or time or frankly patience to buy, maintain, pull out of storage, launch, etc. an 18 foot Lund with a fish finder, a live well, etc., etc. Some of us just want to run out to East Vermillion or Thompson or Poinsett on a whim on a long summer evening and catch some fish. We don't know where the precious walleye are biting or what color jig is hot this week. If this "class" of fisher catches a decent walleye while out fishing (for whatever bites), yeah, it'll go on the stringer. But we are just as happy with some perch or crappie or, yes, white bass. And this class is not happy that if he is with a buddy and one of them catches fish over his limit, he can't legally share with his buddy because they happen to be standing on shore instead of lounging in a boat (one typically laden with high tech equipment ... how fair is that? For the fish I mean). Some other "class" rules on SD's books include the 5-day limitation on ground blinds on public land. Why is it okay for a guy to put up a tree stand and leave it in the same spot the entire season but another guy, too old, fat, afraid, or poor to use a tree stand, can't? When I called GFP to inquire about this, I was told that the ground blind seems to "claim" an area more than a tree stand does. I'd like to see some empirical research on that (and I know there isn't any because the officer I spoke to admitted there was not clear policy on tripods because no one had ever asked), and if it is in fact the case, then why not make clear to everybody that blinds, stands, tripods etc. do not given preference to the owner, only a vehicle in the appropriate parking space does? Half of all states allow the use of crossbows during whitetail deer archery season (24 w/o restriction, 1 on private land only): <http://www.tenpointcrossbows.com/united-states-crossbow-regulations/>. Why is SD one of the half that does not allow them? Again, it appears that there is a class bias to the decision because bows are generally more expensive than crossbows in terms of initial purchase and subsequent kit (arrows, sights, etc., etc.) but especially in terms of practice time to become proficient. Some of us simply do not have the time to shoot 100+ arrows per week for weeks on end while others, city dwellers, cannot practice in their backyards (rightly so) or afford to give \$7.50 per day to use the ranges at Archery Outfitters. So why not allow archers to use crossbows, if only for part of the full archery season? Crossbows would draw more females and kids into the sport. Or is that why it is illegal (except in firearms season, which really isn't all that useful)? SD GFP's policies also seem to discriminate against hunting lessees. Special buck tags are not made available to them (unless they are also ag. lessees, which in this day and age is rare) so they have to take the risk of the draw as most such leases are concluded in the spring/summer and not after GFP's September lotteries. This raises yet another issue: why is it in most states, hunters are guaranteed a shotgun/rifle buck tag but have to enter a lottery for antlerless tags while in SD the antlerless are doled out liberally and the lottery is for bucks? Only landowners get buck tags with regularity. Again, whatever the rationale for the system was/is, it reeks of "class" legislation, in this case rural vs. urban. Finally, hunting lessees on annual leases (as most seem to be) can't invest in the sorts of technologies that allow people to hunt all day in the state's harsh climate (e.g. the wooden "condos" that dot the landscape) because they are too costly to put up for only one season. But hunting lessees could invest with confidence, if allowed by law, in moveable elevated blinds. By the current regulations, a moveable elevated blind would

have to have the wheels removed or be detachable from the vehicle. The types of vehicles used in Texas are illegal (for deer) even if the engine is off and the operator is not in the cab. (See <http://texaspredatorposse.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=23790> for several of many examples.) Why? It can still be illegal to drive on public land, to shoot at deer out of a cab, or out of a moving vehicle while allowing people to drive to a spot, hunt it, and drive away when the day is done. I think by liberalizing these rules (and there are probably many others I have yet to discover) you could INCREASE hunting and fishing tourism into the state and get more residents interested in hunting and fishing and hence buying licenses and paying sales taxes on kit, etc. Instead of commercializing the white bass harvest, GFP should encourage more outfitters to offer white bass/fishing packages, maybe combined with doves (the season for which seems to start too late, btw) or geese. You wouldn't think about allowing the commercial harvest of walleyes or pheasants, right? So use the same techniques that generate revenue to the state from those sources to build up the markets for white bass, archery, hunting leases, etc. That boils down to being more INCLUSIVE rather than EXCLUSIVE, without, of course, endangering the reproductive success of the underlying resource. For example, instead of allowing Asian and European carp to collect in their masses at the Vermillion spillway (where I saw people catching and RELEASING them over the summer), sponsor a bow fishing contest where the deceased carp are mulched for fertilizer instead of becoming a burden on the archer/fisher (or a stinky mess when illegally left on the bank). You could run the contest yourself and keep the profits or license it to entrepreneurs for a fixed fee. I've written a book called *Little Business on the Prairie* [http://www.amazon.com/Little-Business-Prairie-Entrepreneurship-Prosperity/dp/0931170680/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8] that shows how entrepreneurial South Dakotans can be *when allowed to innovate*. Free them up, as you did decades ago for the pheasant industry, and the state soon will be known for more than roosters, bison, and snobby walleye-or-nothing fishers.

Taylor Anderson, Groton, SD, emailed, "I am emailing you in regards to the proposed removal of the walleye length restrictions on Bitter, Opitz and Cattail Lake. I am against the removal of the restrictions on Bitter and Opitz. The fish in Opitz, in my opinion, will be exploited by fishing pressure if that changes. I also believe that there are big fish in the lake, and that the creel surveys are not reflecting this. In regards to Bitter Lake and the year class that is causing trouble. I believe it has grown recently, and many of the fish are, or soon will be, over the 15 inch minimum. Thus will be available for harvest. As far as Cattail Lake goes, personally I am okay with whatever you decide to do. The fishery there is really struggling. I am also 100% in favor of removing the protective slot on the small mouth bass. If you have any questions feel free to email me back, or contact me at 1-605-380-4059. Thanks for your time"

Blair Healy, Langford, SD, emailed, "I attended the recent meeting at Eden SD. I appreciate Paul Dennert, commission member, attending the meeting and able to relay our concerns with changing the limit and size restriction for the walleye fishery. While I am not an avid fisherman, I do enjoy fishing with family and friends. Our recent outing was an annual family fishing weekend at Opitz Lake. We enjoyed the numerous catch of walleyes, many below the 15" size restriction, which were returned to the water, but did catch enough over 15" to eat that evening. While we were not able to limit out, we had a fine time. The GF&P fishery representatives did a good job of explaining their

recommendation of changing the rules a Opitz, but this is our local Lake, which we feel should be preserved for the local people. It is not the large fishery of Bitter and Waubay Lakes, and could not handle the influx of SD and out of state fisherman who would fish out 12", 13" and 14" fish, with an increased limit. Soon to be, another lake, without a walleye population. Please reconsider the recommendation of the biologist's to do away with the 15" size restriction and adding additional fish to the creel limit."

Mike and Mary Dunn, Eden, SD, emailed, "We feel that the fishing restrictions on Opitz Lake should be kept as they are now in place. It is a small lake and we feel it will be "fished out" in a very short time."

Paddlefish Season Dates and Regulations

No oral or written testimony was received.

Private Fish Hatchery Application Requirements

No oral or written testimony was received.

Bobcat Hunting/Trapping Season

Oral testimony:

Larry Bowden, Hot Springs, SD representing SD Fur Harvesters Association, testified that the membership overwhelming supports the proposal and are willing to aid GFP in collecting data. They promote and encourage the release of females and juveniles. Bowden also submitted a letter in support.

Brad Tisdall, president of the SD Houndsmen Association stated his group strongly agrees with the proposal.

Nancy Hilding, president of the Prairie Hills Audubon Society spoke against the proposal. Hildings group is concerned about the crulty of hunting animals with dogs. She also requested a trap ID for all traps and a reduction in trap check regulations. Hilding submitted a facts sheet on trap check time

Written testimony:

Steve Cherkas, Johnston, IA, emailed "I just listened to the August audio with commission concerned to the point of putting a limit per trapper on bobcats. I agree with the state biologists to leave the season as is and NOT put limits per trapper or quotas in place. I have trapped bobcats in many states for the last 10 years including South Dakota, Wyoming, Missouri, Iowa, and New Mexico. First let me say that I believe South Dakota has a healthy population of bobcat. I base this on the amount of sign I seen in Feb 2014 in the southern Missouri river breaks west river, and my couting Dec 2014/Jan 2015 in the Black Hills and prairie area to the south and southeast. I bought some land (153 acres in Fall River in southern hills) last December and plan to build and move there in 2-3 years (seeing bobcat regularly on trail cameras). In comparing the amount of sign in South Dakota I find it more than what I have seen in Wyoming trapping the last 10 years, and also more than New Mexico. Both of these states do not have quotas and much longer seasons. I also see less trappers in south dakota in comparison to any of the states I trap. When you look at the shorter season, less trappers, and lower market prices (down 35-40% this past seasons which also was down 25% from 2 seasons ago) I would expect even a smaller harvest in the coming

2015-2016 season. Do not let the harvest numbers sway your opinion. I urge you to NOT implement any quota and let science be your guide. I was planning on trapping this past season but chose not to due to the market conditions. I do plan on trapping this upcoming season but that could change as the current market (commodities like oil, precious metals, and copper) indicates it could get worse before it gets better. On the other hand California recently banned bobcat trapping (all political against biologist recommendations with recent Cecil the lion news adding to the left leaning views) which will reduce the supply of quality western cats to the market by about 10%. If you need assistance in attaining your cat goals for the study let me know and I may be able to help you depending on the time of year.

Terry March, Hot Springs, SD, emailed" I wish the bobcat season to remain the same with no changes from last year. Thank You."

James Birdsall, Hot Springs, SD, emailed" I would like to say I am in favor of the gfp proposal to leave the bobcat season the same as last year."

Owen Meadows, Hot Springs, SD, emailed" Please leave trapping regulations , as proposed, unchanged."

Roland T Wick, Hot Springs, SD, emailed" I respectfully request that no changes be made to the SD bobcat trapping season. The increased running of hounds risks the potential of accidental bobcat depredation, in particular of kittens during the young bobcat season. Please accept the SDGF&P proposal to continue the trapping season dates and regulations the same as the past two seasons."

Larry Bowden, Hot Springs, SD, emailed," I would like to voice my opinion regarding the west river bobcat season for 2015-2016. I would like to see game, fish & parks current proposal accepted and keep the same season and regulations as we have had the previous two seasons. I am an avid hunter and trapper. Last winter was a typical season on the trap line as far as bobcat sign and harvest. I released several juveniles and females. My observation of being on the trap line in the areas I trap is that the population is about normal. I have heard some people say that they drive the roads in the Black Hills without seeing many bobcat tracks. My suggestion to them is to get out of your trucks and hunt on foot and they might be surprised at the sign you see. Fur prices were down which also had an affect on the harvest total last season. Also having a six week season instead of the 8 weeks we used to have makes a difference in the harvest totals. Thank you"

Ken Johnson, Newell, SD, wrote," I support the GFP proposed bobcat season. Wildlife management is a complex issue, one size does not fit all. I hope special interest groups, animal activists, political and economics don't dilute sound management."

Henry (Toby) Peters, Sturgis, SD, wrote," I support the proposal to have the bobcat season the same as last year."

James Brost, Hot Springs, SD, emailed," I support the proposal as submitted by the game, fish & parks to the Commission to duplicate the same season dates and regulations as the past two seasons. thank you"

Ray Maize, Pierre, SD, emailed" I support the proposed season of 2015-2016 of Bobcat Trapping West River to be the same as in the past two seasons. I also support the proposal of opening up the counties of Clay, Hughes, Hutchinson, Hyde and Union for East River trapping."

Ed Wahlert, Oral, SD, emailed "I think the Commission should support the proposed Bobcat Season submitted by the GF&P with No changes made from last year's season."

Donald L. Massa, Edgemont, SD, emailed, "I support the current Bobcat season being proposed by the SD Game, Fish and Parks."

Mountain Lion Hunting Season

Oral testimony:

Tim Goodwin, Rapid City, SD, testified he is a mountain lion hunter and recommends we stay with the current season dates and limits. He agrees with dog use in the park, but not the Black Hills forest district.

Darwin Jones, Rapid City, SD stated he support hunting to control certain species and agrees with hunting mountain lions, but says the Commission should halt the season until a comprehensive study on the heath and accurate population can be obtained. He also is opposed to hunting with dogs

Chris Hesla, Executive Director of the SD Wildlife Federation testified his organization support wildlife management based on science therefor they support the proposal excluding the recommendation to allow nonresident hunters.

Lloyd Goings, Black Hills resident and property owner opposes the use of dogs and allowing nonresident hunters. He does agree with the reduction in harvest limits because he thinks the population low.

Brad Tisdall, SD Houndsmen Association stated his organization support the proposal as presented, but recommends an increase in the cost of the nonresident license. Tisdall also noted the use of dogs are aiding in reduction of the elk calf crop.

Taysiana Novikava, an environmentalist from Spearfish, SD said is against sport hunting and is concerned with the decrease in population of the mountain lion. Novikava encouraged the Commission to halt Mountain Lion hunting until more information can be gathered as to the population to avoid extinction.

Nancy Hilding, president of the Prairie Hills Audubon Society stated she is delighted to hear of the appointment of Ron Skates as GFP tribal liaison. Hilding provided a handout on future population estimates noting that a reduction is only a cosmetic fix and that the season length needs to be reduced. She objects to nonresident hunters, the use of hounds and the two year delay in the management plan. Hilding also submitted a letter.

John Hauce, Deadwood, SD, said he doesn't agree with the statistics and would like to see the season halted for a year to gather accurate data and preserve the species. Hauce opposes nonresident hunters and the use of hounds.

Ross Rohdel, Rapid City, SD, member of the SD Houndsmen Association stated he supports the proposal, but recommends an increase the fee for nonresident hunters.

Terry Mayes, Rapid City, SD, vice president of the SD Wildlife Federation Camo Coalition stated his group is opposed to allowing nonresident mountain lion hunting as it is a rare big game species. Nonresident hunting of mountain lions could allow for the inadvertent use of hounds and may cause conflicts with landowners.

Written testimony:

Andrew J. Jackson, Rapid City, SD emailed "I oppose issuing non-resident

licenses for mountain lion hunting. The only reason I can see for this is monetary! I'd rather pay additional for a resident license and keep this season for South Dakota residents only, especially since the quota is recommended to be reduced! Thank you for allowing my input!"

Jenna Brager, Nevada City, CA emailed "It has come to my attention that you are allowing the legal hunting of mountain lions and are in fact setting quotas. This is an extremely outdated practice. It is common knowledge in this era that mountain lions, as top predators, are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem. All animals and plant species, as well as humans, depend on healthy ecosystems for survival. There is absolutely no need to manage mountain lion populations. As a top predator, their population manages itself and also is crucial for maintaining healthy populations of prey species. By allowing hunting of top predators such as mountain lions, you are jeopardizing the health of the entire ecosystem, including human survival. Please wake up to these facts. Mountain lions are a threatened species - they must be protected from hunting, therefore hunting should certainly not be encouraged or allowed. With all due respect for your life and the lives of mountain lions across North America,"

Pamela Williams, Boise, ID, emailed "I oppose all hunting with hounds and ask that you enact permanent prohibitions. Please do NOT expand hound hunting in Custer State Park. I ask that you eliminate mountain lion hunting. There is no excuse for recreational killing, and few if any people consume mountain lion flesh. South Dakota doesn't need to declare itself a heartless place where wildlife is cruelly killed to give someone a thrill. Please show mercy to these shy, beautiful, rare animals. Thank you."

Ray Malphrus, Simi Valley, CA, emailed "Please stop the Mountain Lion Hunting. I've hunted most of my life but see no need to kill such a beautiful creature as a mountain lion. Thank You"

Steve Cherkas, Johnston, IA, emailed "As a non-resident land owner I look forward to an opportunity to hunt mountain lions. I have a nice big male showing up regularly on my trail camera. He seems to have thinned down the mule deer population quite a bit this year. Are you on track to finalize this at the next meeting so that the first season will be this coming Dec 15 - Mar 16?"

Edh Stanley, Sacramento, CA, emailed, "Please stop killing mountain lions to meet someone's (hunters') expectation of a kill. Let them learn to do without that manly trophy. Let Nature's top of the hill animals live their lives in peace, not murder."

Ellyn Berner, Mountain View, CA, emailed, "I think you should stop hunting mountain lions for one season. The population has been decimated by your allowing so many of the shy reclusive cats to be slaughtered, which is why your bounty hunters can't find them. And \$121 for a permit? Why bother? Do you think the lives of these top-of-the-food-chain predators is worth nothing, as evidenced by your willingness to let hunters use dogs now, too?? If you canceled one hunting season, who would be mad? I'm guessing the ranchers and the gun lobby, right? I hope you can stand up to such pressure, and do the right thing for these beautiful cats who need our protection. Thank you for listening and at a minimum do not allow the cats to be hunted with dogs. Too barbaric and awful to even think about."

Dee Peters, Rapid City, SD; Anne Mettler, Rapid City, SD; Mary Jo Canonico, Emery, SD; Cesar Lopez, Madrid, SD; Kim Tysdal, Rapid City, SD; Susan Smith, Sioux Falls, SD; Beverly Hyland, Madison, SD; Melissa Johnson, Sioux Falls, SD; Susan

Roselles, Black Hawk, SD; Cathy Merrill, Brookings, SD; Sherry Korthals, Sioux Falls, SD; Pam Merxbauer, Iroquois, SD; Thomas Martin, Custer, SD; Shelia Martin, Custer, SD; Sherry Horton, Sioux Falls, SD; Kurt Seamans, Draper, SD; Linda Biers, Piedmont, SD; Leslie Ranum, Rapid City, SD; Ryan Fossum, Sioux Falls, SD; Michelle Teets, Black Hawk, SD; Vanessa Carlson, Wakonda, SD; Kerma Cox, Custer, SD; Ruth Steil, Yankton, SD; Elaine Dodson, Spearfish, SD; Roberta Rotherham, Sioux Falls, SD; Melissa Martin-Schwarz, Rapid City, SD; Margaret Dixon, Mobridge, SD; D. Madsen, Milbank, SD; Josh Hopper, Watertown, SD; Louise McGannon, Mitchell, SD; Alair Altiero, Sioux Falls, SD; Lacey Jackson, Sioux Falls, SD; James Jensen, Sioux Falls, SD; Mary Bowers, Hot Springs, SD; Jo Kephart, Vermillion, SD; Denise Maher, Rapid City, SD; Claire Svanda, Rapid City, SD; Patricia Claussen, Brandon, SD; Glen Gregus, Hirata, SD; Angela Randle, Black Hawk, SD; Nicole Gonzalez, Black Hawk, SD; Nicky Busutil, Milbank, SD; Elisabetta Costagli, San Vincenzo, SD; Aaron Gayken, SD; Cate Cork, Rapid City, SD; Patty Cummins, Alpena, SD; Tonia Wagoner, Hot Springs, SD; Connie Ryan, Rapid City, SD; Zackeriah Horn, Rapid City, SD; Tim McGannon, Mitchell, SD; Tammy Bentson, Sioux Falls, SD; Mary Affinito, Sioux Falls, SD; Dawn Wipf, Aberdeen, SD; Peggy Jakopak, Scotland, SD; Tana Koch, Rapid City, SD; Rangaswamy Ramakrishnan, Mysore, SD; Jennifer Kalenze, Mobridge, SD; Liza McCann, Sioux Falls, SD; Jörg Jakubowski, Siegen, SD; Janet Malsom, Milbank, SD; Lori OCull, Mobridge, SD; James Zeman, Deadwood, SD; Lori Mccann, Sioux Falls, SD; Geneva Costa, Sioux Falls, SD; Joan Thompson, Piedmont, SD; Debbie Letsche, Humboldt, SD; Janice Hallahan, Box Elder, SD; Joyce Flax, Sioux Falls, SD; Rebecca Darland, Spearfish, SD; Ada Courtney, Rapid City, SD; Rhonda Doyscher, Sioux Falls, SD; Richard Stockert, Pierre, SD; Julie Berry, Vermillion, SD; Neutral Zone, Campinas, SD; Stephanie Arbach, Watertown, SD; Leslie Skinner, Custer, SD; Melodee Pattee, Hot Springs, SD; Julie Anderson, Rapid City, SD; Corinne Conry, Spearfish, SD; Heather Nearman, Sioux Falls, SD; Donna Watson, Deadwood, SD; David and Judy Love, Custer, SD; Sara Parker, Sioux Falls, SD; Patty Jenkins, Brandon, SD; Dawn Freidel, Corsica, SD; Ann Naber, Meckling, SD; Teresa Hicks, Rapid City, SD; Terry Newman, Rapid City, SD; Denise Meyerink, Chamberlain, SD; Brittany Jacobson, Aberdeen, SD; Trish Scriptor, Rapid City, SD; all emailed, "South Dakota's mountain lions are wild icons who deserve far better protections for future generation. As an official managing South Dakota's greatest cat, I ask you to uphold your public trust duties to manage mountain lions for all. South Dakota Game Fish and Parks proposes to reduce its mountain lion hunting "harvest limit" on the Black Hills Fire Protection Unit by a modest amount. While going from a limit of 75 to 60 and female sublimit of 50 to 40 is a good first step, it is not nearly enough. Since 2010, South Dakota's mountain lion population has declined by 40 percent with far too many females dying. This kind of management suppresses the population, which has terrible conservation and ethical consequences. I would like to emphasize that female cats should especially be protected. Killing mother cats puts their dependent kittens into jeopardy. Without their mothers, young kittens will die from dehydration, malnutrition or predation, which are all ethical problems. Second, female cats do not disperse far from the areas of their births, so killing them can limit population recovery, which is a conservation concern for South Dakota. South Dakota's mountain lions deserve to be managed using the best available

science, with their populations protected from heavy levels of trophy hunting, and managed for all citizens so that they will be protected for future generations.”

Wendy Keefover of The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, DC, emailed” Although we are not in 100% agreement with the GFP position (we think the harvest limits should be further lowered), I want to say how much I appreciate your cordial and professional manner.” and a letter

Bob Woerman, Brandon, SD, emailed” Mountain Lion Hunting: Total number of Mountain Lions that can be killed is approaching the limit in the Black Hills. It is time to trim the kill numbers back or we will not have this resource in the Black Hills. You do not hear about lions as a nuisance like we did a few years ago.”

Pat Malcomb, Sioux Falls, SD, emailed,” I was reading the public comments on this issue and just had to write in. Most of the negative comments were from out of state people that have no interest in South Dakota what so ever, they are just all anti hunting and there is no reasoning with them so I wont even try. Then you have the Humane society sending in the same E-Mail with mostly fictional people to try a persuade you from doing the right thing, I am sure you will see right through the scheme. I would propose that the state captures and sends a SD mountain lion to anyone who wants to stop the hunt, this would be a win win as we could reduce the numbers without hunting, and the anti-hunters get to save and take care of a mountain lion, who knows maybe those cute lions would make a good pet. Thanks for listening”

Brian Jorgensen, Aberdeen, SD, emailed” WE do not need to open this up to non-residents. We are restricting the residents enough on this, why would we allow more non-residents to the mix. Leave it the way it is.”

Joe Arbach, Hoven, SD, emailed” Please do not allow out of state hunters. I am still trying to get a lion.”

Dan Thayer, Aberdeen, SD, emailed” I understand there is a move afoot to let non-residents in to hunt mountain lions. Why would anyone propose this when there is a move to cut back on the number of resident tags? The system is working fine and a sound management program is in place, I suspect this is all about more dollars for non-resident licenses and likely more dollars in the pockets of professional guides. If you are cutting back on resident licenses and allowing non-residents in, seems like it speaks for itself! I am opposed to any non-resident access. Thank you”

Rod Sather, Vivian, SD, emailed” I think is a good idea”

Timothy R Goodwin, Rapid City, SD, emailed” In regard to upcoming Lion Season, I make the following recommendations: 1. Keep dates of season from Dec 26 to March 31. 2. Keep Quota the same 75 Lions or 50 Females whichever comes first. 3. Do not allow dogs in Black Hills Forrest District keeping this a foot season for any hunter to attempt his skills. Last years season was very difficult as there was virtually no snow of any tracking depth to hunt in from Jan2015 thru March2015. Lion kills go up when there's snow!!”

Scott Hed, Sioux Falls, SD, emailed,” Thank you for considering my comments. South Dakota's mountain lion seasons have been backed by scientific data, and the take has been conservatively managed. The lion seasons have been deemed successful, and the opportunity to hunt these big cats should be a sustainable one for South Dakota hunters. Why would we want to increase the number of overall tags, when the current way of doing businesses seems to be working just fine? Why would

that increase come at the expense of South Dakota resident hunters, whose numbers would be cut, and simultaneously change policy to allow non-resident hunters? While I don't hunt mountain lions personally, I do support my fellow South Dakota resident hunters, whom I believe ought to continue their opportunity while not losing that opportunity to non-resident hunters. Thank you again."

Jim Twamley, Parker, SD, emailed," Please do not approve of expanding the existing Mountain Lion Season to non residents. The current program is meeting the goals of the Department and provides residents with the opportunity to harvest a truly unique animal. If the Department wishes to increase the harvest numbers that could be accomplished by reopening the season during the Black hills Deer seasons."

Bruce Mair, Sioux Falls, SD, emailed," It just boggles my mind that South Dakota would even consider opening lion hunting to nonresidents. It makes absolutely no sense to cut back on South Dakota licenses and then turn around and open it up to nonresidents. It makes us wonder who you actually represent. Please don't even consider allowing nonresidents to hunt lions in South Dakota."

Curt Tesch, Rosholt, SD, emailed," I do not understand how you can consider opening up mountain lion hunting to nonresidents when at the same time you are reducing the chances of resident hunters by reducing license quotas. If reducing the quotas is appropriate, please do so but do not open the state up to more nonresident hunting."

John Morgenstern, Rapid City, SD, emailed," Please, DO NOT open the SD mountain lion season to non-residents. It is apparent the lion population is not as robust as previously thought since the number of lions being taken has been going down and the number of permits is being reduced. Why would we want to allow non-resident lion hunting when the opportunity for residents is being reduced? Certainly the limited number of non-resident tags would not be a financial boom for GF&P. Let's keep our lions for our residents. Thank you for your consideration. May I also add, there are many other states that have a larger and more sustainable lion population that offer lion hunting opportunities to non-residents. Thanks again for your consideration."

Jerome Besler, Piedmont, SD, emailed," Leave the lion season to the residents. Start bring in the non-residents and they will want us to allow them to bring in dogs to hunt lions. I think the residents do a good job of keeping the lion population in check. I hunt behind Piedmont and around Nemo and I have noticed since the lion season started is the increase in Elk and deer in those areas again."

Terry Harmel, Watertown, SD, emailed," Vote No on allowing non resident lion hunting. Thankyou."

John Henderson, Pierre, SD, emailed," please count my vote as a no."

Judy Love, Custer, SD, emailed," Like many other South Dakotas I choose to live in this state because of its abundance of natural beauty. More than anything else I enjoy watching wildlife in its parks and national forests. Along with some of the prominent cougar experts who have been keeping track of the state's lion management program, I am concerned that these beautiful animals once again are being extirpated here. I believe that the number of cats to be taken in the next hunting season should be reduced, and I oppose any plan that would allow non-residents to hunt lions here."

Harry Mitchell, Hot Springs, SD, emailed," would like season dates remain as last year. thank you"

Ron Binger, Lake City, SD, emailed," I would recommend that non-residents are not able to get a SD Mt Lion tag. I feel these tags should all be give to the residents of the state."

Gary Gardner, Pringle, SD, emailed," Regarding the lion hunt season for the next two years, allow me to make some observations and comments. 1. I Object to licenses being sold to as many as 250 out-of-state folks for only \$121 dollars per each. I especially object to out-of-state hunters being allowed to hunt on the prairie unit, which means out-of-state folks can hunt with hounds. 2. I especially object to Commission's January 2015 approval of hound hunt on the prairie --which allows such hound hunt for 365 days of the year on private land and on some public lands. 3. I object to the 60 lion harvest "cap" as too aggressive, especially as it is being set for two years. At this rate, you might as well admit your true goal and announce total removal despite the importance of a cornerstone species. 4. I object to extension of the SD Mountain Lion Management Plan for 2 more years. 5. I object to the 365-day, unlimited season on the Prairie Unit. 6. I object to the hunt in-toto on the basis that your figures and plans are not based on science or the need for a healthy lion survival program. Your numbered are unsustainable and therefore illogical, unnecessary and based on the desires of a few hunters to kill for sport rather than any kind of safety issues. Thank you for your attention and consideration."

David R. Love, Custer, SD, emailed," How difficult it is to write to you commissioners knowing that your decisions are already set and no amount of reason, logic, science, compassion, common sense or respect for the Creator can sway you. And this pathetic state of affairs will continue until you commissioners are replaced by people who are not hunters and ranchers or beholden to those two groups; by people who have the intelligence and moral attributes that you all lack. Your comments to the contrary, it seems clear that you are well on your way to eradicating mountain lions from the Black Hills and the state for the 2nd time. How proud you must be to have and exercise such power. You are all contemptible. So, for what it is worth, I am against setting the season for two years, I am against the use of hounds anywhere, I am against the idea of letting people from out of state hunt SD lions, and if they must, then the tag should be no less than \$500.. I am against the "harvest" (what a despicable term) numbers which are far too high to insure a healthy population (but, of course, that is what you are aiming at), and I am against the whole concept and practice of killing lions in the prairie unit. You are catering to hunters who are totally selfish and ranchers who are ignorant, backward, fools. You are overseeing the destruction of a beautiful creature which has a beneficial part of the ecology of the Black Hills and for no good reason other than because you can and want to. You have no shame."

Christopher Spatz, emailed" In SDGF&P's August 2012 commissioner meeting video reviewing revised mountain lion estimates and the proposed increase of hunting quotas, one commissioner notes that an indication of population decline is the failure to meet quotas. At the close of the 2015 mountain lion hunting season, 22 females from a harvest limit set at 50 marked the sixth consecutive season the female harvest limit/quota had not been reached. The total mountain lion take of 43 was short by 32 of the limit set at 75, marking the third consecutive season in which the total limit was not

reached. 6 years and 3. While SDGF&P biologists have attributed the declining harvests recently to poor tracking conditions, the August 2015 Mountain Lion Management and Season Recommendation video notes that the population is indeed "trending down." How else to interpret failing to meet quotas/harvests limits for 6 years and 3, especially when they are consecutively undershot by as much as 56%, as they were in 2015? Mr. Kanta notes in the August 2015 presentation to the Commissioners that not only are hunters finding sign of fewer mountain lions on the landscape, but hunters are now commenting that the 2010 - 2015 SDGF&P Mountain Lion Management Plan has been far too effective at reducing the population. Hunters are concerned for the very viability of mountain lions in the Black Hills. "We need to back off," says Mr. Kanta, "die-hard hunters are saying be careful, we don't want to lose this resource." The Commissioners have chosen not to heed cougar biologists and cougar advocates recommending best-practice, peer-reviewed hunting protocols. The Commissioners have chosen not to heed SDGF&P polls showing a majority of South Dakota citizens and Black Hills residents who wished for no reduction in South Dakota's mountain lion population. Will the Commissioners listen then to your primary constituents, hunters? The proposed quota/harvest limit reductions for 2016 of 60 total and 40 females continues the trend in unsustainable mountain lion harvests. SDGF&P considered but rejected Washington State University's peer-reviewed research findings that over-harvest disrupts mountain lion social order, and that a 14% take matching the reproduction rate is the established harvest rate to ensure both pet, livestock and human safety, and for population sustainability. Representing our board of directors and members, and every taxpayer of the United States who own the Black Hills National Forest, the Cougar Rewilding Foundation recommends that the commissioners reject the proposed mountain lion harvest limit for 2016 and permanently adopt Washington State University's harvest threshold of 14% of the total population estimate.

Leslie Williams, El Cajon, CA, emailed, "I understand that you are in the process of deciding whether or not to make changes to mountain lion hunting policies in South Dakota. I'm glad you are considering lowering the quota - which would be a step in the right direction. But if you are also allowing out of state visitors to hunt lions, please consider the following: Allowing out of state hunters will commercialize South Dakota's wildlife, over-exploiting an extremely limited natural resource. A few hunting guides may get rich from allowing nonresident hunting, at the expense of South Dakota residents and local hunters. Sport hunting increases conflicts for local residents through increased depredation and potentially dangerous encounters with young transient lions. Ideally, All mountain lion hunting should be stopped until we know the health of the lion breeding population in South Dakota, and the health of the populations in neighboring states expected to provide dispersing lions into South Dakota. Hounding has been banned in two-thirds of the United States. This is an archaic and cruel practice for both wild animals and domestic dogs that should be banned in South Dakota. Thank you for your attention to this vital matter"

Judy Carroll, Redfield, SD, emailed "I'm writing in support of welcoming out of state hunters to our state of South Dakota. I believe the economy benefits greatly from their days they spend in South Dakota. South Dakota has a lot to offer the hunters and their families when they are visiting. The friendships and lasting relationship that have

developed over the years are irreplaceable. Please open up our state and arms and "WELCOME" the hunters and families to our great state of South Dakota! Thank you."

Dean Hyde, Pierre, SD, emailed," I AM OPPOSED TO NON RESIDENTS HUNTING MOUNTAIN LIONS IN SOUTH DAKOTA! IF MORE MOUNTAIN LIONS NEED TO BE HARVESTED, INCREASE THE NUMBER ALLOWED TO BE TAKEN! PS: This will open the door to guided hunts with dogs and everything associated with non sporting harvests."

Rich Widman, emailed," The SDWF is against issuing out of state licenses for Mt. Lions. We feel the lion numbers are too low to also support out of state hunters, and that out of state licenses will promote more commercialization -which will eventually lead to including hounds. South Dakotan residents should be the only folks allowed to hunt this trophy animal.

Deb Springman, Brookings, SD, emailed," Please vote NO to the issuing of 250 non-resident mountain lion hunting licenses. Our state's population of mountain lions is not out of control. We can keep the number of mountain lions down with the resident licenses we issue. If we need to issue more licenses, then do so for the residents of South Dakota. Please do not commercialize this animal, by allowing non-residents to hunt it. Thank You for listening."

Boyd Schulz, Brookings, SD, emailed," I am writing to urge you NOT to allow Non-Residents to hunt mountain lions in SD. Hunting opportunities for SD residents are becoming increasingly more difficult. If non-residents are allowed to obtain mountain lion licenses in SD they will only compete with our current resident mountain lion hunters. I do not hunt mountain lions but can attest to how our resident opportunities are getting more limited. During this year's youth waterfowl season, I tried to obtain permission for my 12 year old son to hunt waterfowl on private land. I was denied by 66% of the landowners I asked with at least one denying me because they were saving the spot for non-resident waterfowl hunters the following weekend. If we are to maintain our hunting heritage in SD, we need to afford hunting opportunities for our residents and youth. By allowing non-residents to hunt mountain lions in South Dakota, you will assuredly have a negative impact on our resident hunters for years to come. Thank you for your time,"

Penny Maldonado from The Cougar Fund, emailed," We appreciate your efforts to reduce harvest mortality. We respectfully ask you to consider a lower mortality limit and commit to closely monitoring and reviewing the season's harvest so that you can respond swiftly if it indicates that the pressure on lions continues to be too high.... We recommend that the Commissioners firmly reject adding out-of-state mountain lion hunting opportunity for the following reasons: Lowering the mortality limit is a positive response to harvest trends. By rejecting out-of-state hunting you will unify support from in state, for science-based management. Added competition from out-of-state hunters at a time of decreased mortality limits increases pressure on South Dakota constituents. The majority of South Dakota's hunters want to maintain or even increase current mountain lion populations. (https://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/docs/surveyreports/PublicSurvey_MtLion.pdf). Out-of-state hunting fosters commercial expectations that can exert political rather than scientific influence on the decision making process in the future. Significant changes to policy were made just this year, when the Commission approved the use of hounds on the Prairie Unit for year-round, unlimited hunting. Please consider

averting further rapid and significant change by not allowing out of state hunting of mountain lions. We realize that the South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan was due this year. When your staff is able to give their undivided attention to this very important review, we will be anxious to participate via the state's policies for public comment and insight. We encourage you to look for a document based on current best science, rather than on speed of production. In this regard, we strongly urge you to delay the proposal for biennial season setting until the Plan has been reviewed and approved."

George Bogenschutz, Nunda, SD As there has been no indication that South Dakotans have not been able to harvest sufficient Mt Lions under the current regulations to meet GF&P harvest goals I see no need to open the season to non residents at this time. Thank you for your consideration."

Julie Anderson, Rapid City, SD, emailed," I am opposed to the mountain lion hunting season for the the following reasons: 1. Allowing out of state licensees to hunt with hounds on the prairie unit. 2. Allowing the use of hounds anywhere. 3. Allowing hunting in Custer State Park – this is a state owned park and as it is part of my park, I do not want hound hunting of mountain lions where they are not causing any problems. 4. People who do not want to see mountain lion hunting in South Dakota have no voice, despite attending meetings and voicing input on the subject. 5. Allowing Betty Olson to set the GF&P policy on hunting lions. 6. Research suggests killing mountain lions doesn't resolve conflicts with human populations. 7. This season allows the killing of kittens either by being on the prairie or by abandonment of a mother who is killed. 8. There is no talk on a quota as to when this killing will stop. 9. This is being marketed to hunters as trophy hunting, especially out of state hunters. 10. The GF&P cave in to special interest groups. 11. Mountain Lions have no place to safely roam and will be shot on site if someone complains. It is my sincere hope that people who oppose this season will be given a voice and a new season will not be allowed, as the number of lions killed every year is declining. Thank You for your time,"

Wendy Luedke, Lead, SD, emailed," I am AGAINST the mountain lion hunting in South Dakota. Trophy hunting should not be legal. Please: 1 .Lower the quota 2. Do not allow out of State hunters to hunt mountain lions 3.Do not allow dogs when hunting mountain lions or any other animal"

Valerie D. Face, Santa Clara, CA, emailed," I am not a resident of South Dakota, but I wanted to comment on your proposed changes to mountain lion hunting policies because I deeply appreciate mountain lions and the crucial role they play, as apex predators, to keep ecosystems in balance. While reducing the mountain lion hunt quota is a step in the right direction, and I approve of it, it would be better to stop all mountain lion hunting until the health of the breeding population in South Dakota, and the health of the populations in neighboring states (sources of mountain lions dispersing into South Dakota), is known. I am very troubled by the proposals to authorize the issuance of nonresident mountain lion hunting licenses and establish those licenses at a fee of \$121. \$121 is a paltry sum for an affluent, out-of-state hunter, and it is alarming to think of what is truly being given away for that fee. Commercializing and incentivizing the killing of South Dakota mountain lions will likely lead to their rapid over-exploitation. A handful of guides and hunting ranches may profit, but South Dakota residents and local hunters will have less say in what happens to these iconic cats and the ecosystems that

they keep healthy. Nonresident hunters will not have to live with the consequences of their actions; local hunters will be more likely to support South Dakota's goals for healthy long-term breeding populations. Finally, please do not allow the inhumane practice of hunting mountain lions with hounds. It is cruel to the cat being hunted and it endangers the hounds as well as any mountain lion kittens that may be hidden in the area. Hounding has been banned in two-thirds of the United States for good reason, and I urge you to ban it in South Dakota as well. Thank you very much for your time and consideration."

Nancy Hilding, PHAS, Black Hawk, SD, emailed " We object to the SD Lion season parameters and have done so for years; we have sent letters in to all hearings since 2005 and testified at all but one hearing in the last 10 years. This is an important issue to us. We want the Black Hills cougars managed as a source population. We want lions to be recovered on the prairie, especially on tribal lands, if the tribes want the recovery. We object and have repeatedly objected to your cougar season for many reasons: 1. We desire to know cougars exist on the land - both in the Black Hills and on the prairies of SD. We want to "wildlife watch", see tracks and just know that they are there. We believe your aggressive season seriously reduces lions in Black Hills and your goal seems to be to eradicate lions on the prairie. 2. We are concerned about the cruelty to kittens when moms die and with the creation of orphaned and undertrained sub-adults, that may become "conflict" lions. 3. We believe the danger from cougars is exaggerated and that cougar opponents promote and exploit people's fear of cougars; a fear not supported by facts. 4. We want the Department to seriously review the new cougar research out of Washington State that challenges the assumptions that heavy hunting of lions reduces lion conflicts with human/livestock. We want answers from SDGFP about how this research in NW coast applies to SD and Wyoming Black Hills. We need more information on cougar-human conflicts and if these conflicts are increasing or decreasing with time and how this relates to the Black Hills aggressive harvest. 5. We believe that wild predators deserve a fair share of the harvest of wild ungulate prey. We object to killing predators to maximize hunter harvest of "prey" animals. 6. We want you to give equal weight to concerns of wildlife enthusiasts who value cougars – we want the same respect you give to "hunter/fishers" and large agricultural producers. A licensee fee is not a donation. With their license fees, hunter/fishers purchase a thing of value from public -- access to take wildlife from the land. Wildlife is owned by all SD citizens. Also much of the Black Hills is federal land and belongs to all American citizens -- it does not belong to a few large agricultural producers. However Native Americans claim it also, with the moral claim of broken treaties and theft. At any rate, the Black Hills that supports most of our lion population is substantially public land. So this is about a public resource grown substantially on public land. Specific Objections/Requests for 2015-2017 Seasons We thank you for the fifteen lion reduction in Black Hills harvest "cap", but believe this "cap" is irrelevant, cosmetic or disingenuous, as it is unrealistically high. Hunters have not reached your "caps" for the last 3 years. We believe your staff does not expect them to kill all 60 lions. You set the "caps" way above what can be harvested, thus the "brake" you place on the season is actually the season length. Several years ago the Commission proposed "caps" on bobcat harvests. But as we understood it, the staff felt too uncertain about population levels, so wanted the "brake" to be the length of the bobcat season. Which is

what you chose. You need to reduce the "cap" at least to 43 lions (last harvest) or as Cougar Rewilding suggests in their letter -- 14% of population, the value suggested by Wielgus. SD GFP has not shown us a chart with the estimate of the lion population after the 2014-2015 hunt, so we can't calculate what 14% of today's population would be. We object to the 60 lion harvest "cap" as too aggressive, especially as it is being set for two years. We question the uncertainty of the population estimates and lack of transparency -- at the very least, you do not share the anticipated 2017 lion population levels with the public, if you even have created an estimate. We object to a 2-year season, especially given lack of transparency with respect to the anticipated kill levels and anticipated populations at end of seasons. A. We object to licenses being sold to any out-of-state folks, especially for only \$121 dollars each. We especially object to out-of-state hunters being allowed to hunt on the prairie unit, which means, they can hunt with hounds. The approval of hound hunting was controversial. It was allegedly so livestock producers could be appeased. Please don't make this controversial decision worse by allowing out-of-state hunters to increase the number of hound-hunters. allows such hound hunt for 365 days of the year on private land and on some public lands. We request that you repeal this recent rule change. C. We object to extension of the SD Mountain Lion Management Plan for 2 more years. Why? So many of SDGFP's assumptions and goals that we object to are made policy in this Plan. D. We have seen some new Lion Populations. Several tribes believe they have seen the recent creation of resident or breeding mountain lion populations. This is a changed circumstance for some tribes since 2010-15 Mt. Lion Management Plan was adopted. SDGFP new Secretary Hepler has appointed a tribal liaison. We look forward to a new future of much improved GFP consultation with tribes. Once you are satisfied with the information you receive from tribes, we believe you will determine the 2010-2015 Plan is outdated, with its assumptions of no habitat, no breeding and no resident lions on the prairie. We believe that Tribal authority to manage for lions will change your perception that property owners in the prairie don't want lions. We believe that National Forest, BLM, USFWS, NPS and State School Lands in the western part of SD challenge the assumption that the concern in prairie is just about private lands. We also want the Black Hills to continue to be a source population for Nebraska's small lion populations. We believe these populations are connected to SD tribal lion populations. E. We object to the 365-day, unlimited season on the Prairie Unit. We once again ask you to break the prairie unit up into geographic subsets to allow for different management objectives in different parts of prairie unit. This could allow aggressive cougar hunting in some areas and reduced or no hunting in other prairie areas. We believe that the boundaries of Black Hills lion habitat are too small and that areas with breeding lions around BHs are currently inappropriately excluded from the Black Hills unit. We also hope for management buffers outside reservations for cooperation of GFP with tribes on lion management. We want connectivity corridors to small disjunct populations.... We attach a visual aid to this letter we will use during our testimony today. In attached document, we have taken your staff's "Total Population LP Estimate" chart (from August Commission Meeting) and continued the population line out towards the end of the season in 2017. It shows population dropping below 150 lions. The last date point on this chart (2015), really refers to Christmas 2014. So the last season used to determine this population trend was the 2013-2014 season, where you had a higher harvest and

higher cap than is currently proposed. We suggest if you continue the tradition of -- setting not realistic caps, that are way above what you believe the hunters can catch, you may end up in 2017, with less than 150 lions and be outside your 2010-2015 goals. As the majority of people in your poll (2010-2015 Plan) wanted no change in the population levels and a minority wanted slight change , we do not see how a harvest that drops lions below 150 is consistent with either the Plan's objections or the public poll.

Lindsay Wollmann, Brookings, SD, emailed, " I urge you to vote against issuing mountain lion licenses to non-residents. The mountain lion population in South Dakota is to small to support non-resident hunters, along with SD residents. Mountain lions are a trophy animal the the opportunity to hunt them should be reserved for residents."

Leon Fenhaus, Rapid City, SD, emailed, " The current management of mountain lion hunting in the Black Hills has been successful in controlling the population and providing a quality hunting experience. The addition of non-resident hunters will increase the number of hunters and hunting pressure and dilute the experience for all hunters. The increase in hunters will also negatively impact the other big game populations during the time of the year they need to conserve their resources for the winter and reproduction. Lion hunting is the newest big game hunting opportunity in SD and residents are far from exhausting their interest. It is for these reasons I oppose expanding lion hunting to non-residents. I strongly encourage you to do the same."

The Public Hearing concluded at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "K" and "H".

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary