

SOUTH DAKOTA

GAME, FISH AND PARKS

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



As we look back on 2022, it was a great year for the South Dakota outdoors.

Anglers hitting the water enjoyed incredible fishing, it was a spectacular pheasant season, big game seasons resulted in many happy hunters and our parks across the state were filled with campers and day use visitors.

The outdoors are my passion and I cannot express how thankful and proud I am to be a part of Team GFP. Each day, we live out our mission:

We serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries and wildlife resources.

We want to continue to remind folks the outdoors are open and open to everyone. We are working hard to recruit, retain, and reactivate outdoor enthusiasts but most importantly, we are striving to ensure the outdoor traditions we enjoy in South Dakota remain strong for future generations.

The next question you may ask is, how do we do this? We focus on four priorities that guide Team GFP in our decision making.

One of the most critical priorities is Habitat and Access. If we are going to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters, anglers, campers and trappers, they need places where they can enjoy these activities. Habitat is the foundation to wildlife management and is the key ingredient for abundant wildlife populations. Just as important as habitat is ensuring people have access to these areas; not just now, but for generations to come.

Another priority is Asset Management. We are privileged to have a world-class state park system in South Dakota. Visitors enjoy first-class recreational experiences whether they are camping, fishing, hiking, or hunting, and we strive every day to keep it that way.

Customer Service will continue to remain a priority for as long as I am serving in this role. We operate a user pay, public benefit system. Ensuring we deliver excellent customer service and meet our customers where they are

will help us continue to grow and foster the creation of outdoor families, which benefits everyone who enjoys South Dakota's resources.

Rooted in all of this is our priority of Operational Excellence. Accomplishing what we set out to do is a team effort, and we need everyone on our team striving to make a positive difference each day. By offering increased skills training, enhanced internal communications, effective recruitment and onboarding tactics, we will continue to strengthen and maximize Team GFP's productivity.



Our natural resources are second to none here. Whether individuals want to enjoy the greatest pheasant hunting in the country, spend time in our world-class state parks, or simply relax and enjoy time outdoors, we want everyone to feel welcomed as they make outdoor memories.

Serve. Connect. Manage. Thank you for supporting conservation and ensuring our outdoor traditions remain strong for current and future generations.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Kevin Robling.

Kevin Robling
GFP Secretary

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EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

464 PERMANENT STAFF
499 SEASONAL WORKERS
151 SUMMER INTERNS
450+ VOLUNTEERS

Each year, our staff work tirelessly to collaborate across department lines, with local, state, and national partners along with private landowners. Through this, they accomplish new priorities and tackle other challenges without hesitation or complaint.

INTEGRITY COLLABORATE STEWARDSHIP RECREATION
FUTURE GENERATIONS
LANDOWNERS DEDICATION EXCELLENCE

DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP



KEVIN ROBLING
DEPARTMENT SECRETARY



SCOTT SIMPSON
DEPARTMENT DEPUTY
SECRETARY



TOM KIRSCHENMANN
WILDLIFE DIRECTOR



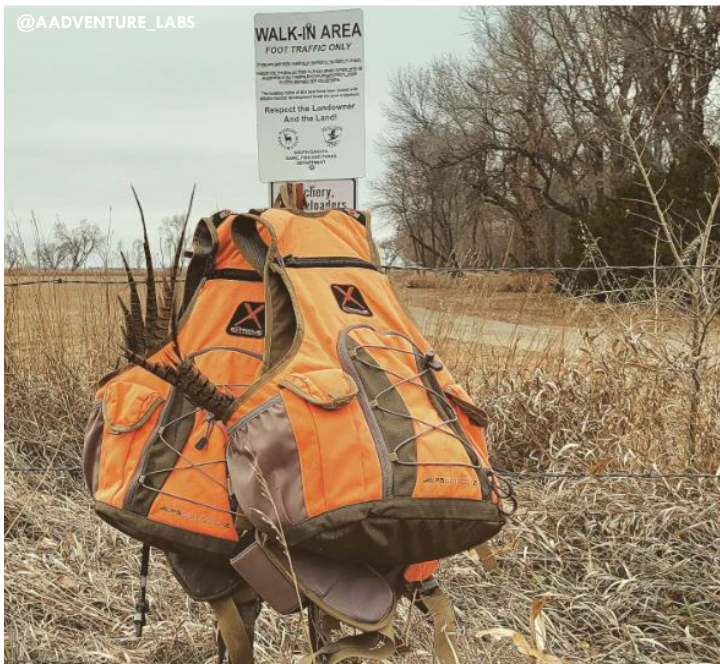
CHRIS PETERSEN
ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR



@TAMMY_BASHORE



@_MAKENZIE.HALL



@AADVENTURE_LABS



@DAKOTABLUELODGE



@SODAKCLOTHING

#SDINTHEFIELD

2023 COMMISSIONERS



ROBERT WHITMYRE
WEBSTER



JON LOCKEN
BATH



TRAVIS BIES
FAIRBURN



STEPHANIE RISSLER
VERMILLION



JULIE BARTLING
GREGORY



CHUCK SPRING
UNION CENTER

2023 COMMISSION MEETING DATES

JANUARY 12-13
MARCH 9-10
APRIL 13-14
MAY 11-12

JUNE 8-9
JULY 20-21
SEPTEMBER 14-15

OCTOBER 19-20
NOVEMBER 16-17
DECEMBER 14-15

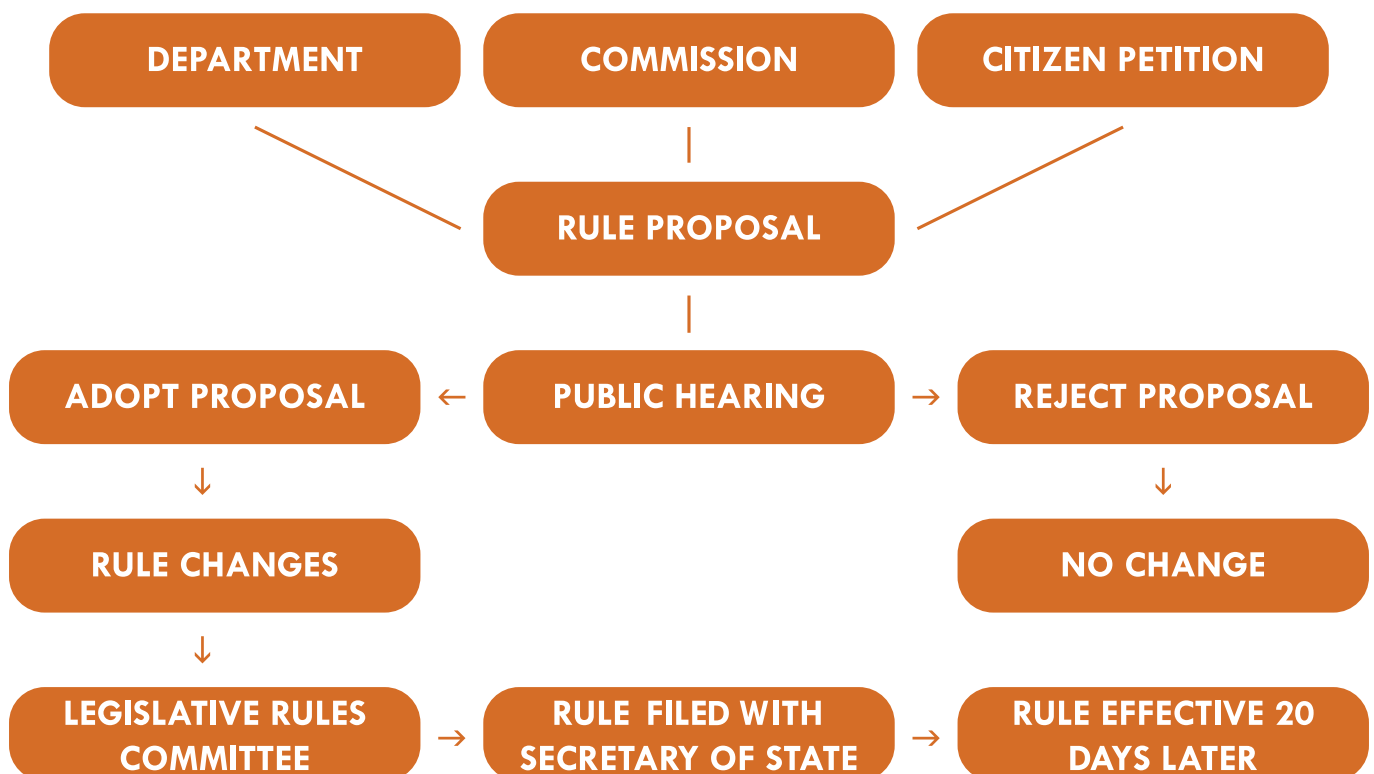
HOW THE COMMISSION WORKS

The GFP Commission is committed to fulfilling their responsibility to serve the state of South Dakota through open and transparent processes. The Commission welcomes correspondence throughout the year and encourages citizens to provide comments directly to commissioners at every commission meeting. While the commission leans heavily on the Department for the science of managing outdoor resources and recreation, public comments shape commission decisions on many issues that have social implications such as the equitable distribution of available licenses and setting of fees for access and use of state parks.

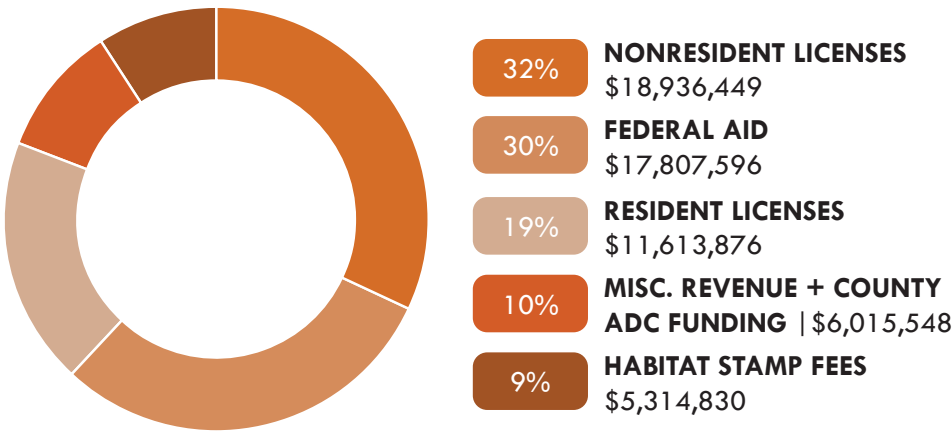
commissioners themselves can propose a change. After a proposal is made, the commission provides proper public notice of the proposed change, accept public comment and make a final decision to adopt or reject the proposal.

If adopted, all rule changes are reviewed by a committee of legislators who make sure the commission acted within their authority and that the public was given sufficient opportunity for input into the final decision. After that, the new administrative rules are filed with the Secretary of State and become effective 20 days later.

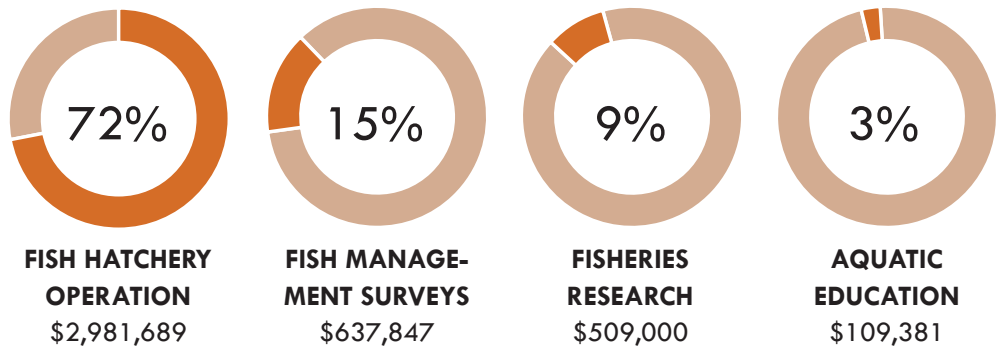
The formal process the commission uses to adopt administrative rules is typically initiated by a recommendation from the Department, but can also originate from receipt of a citizen petition, or



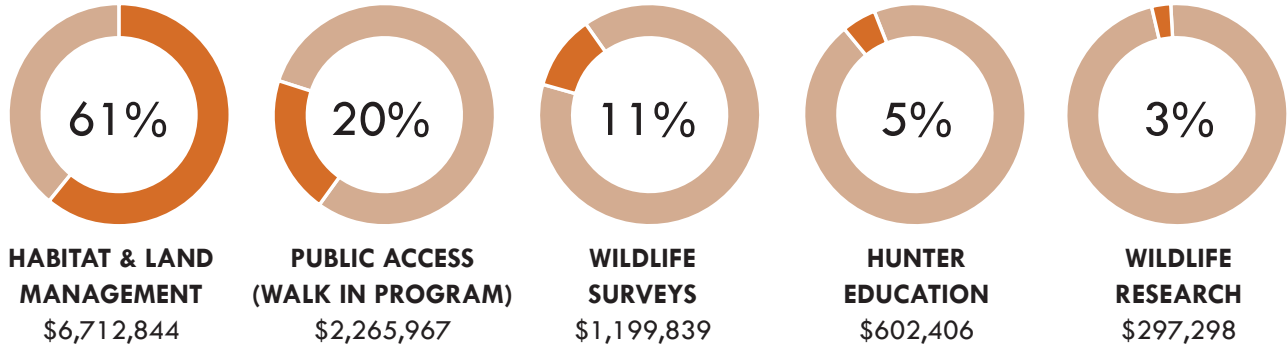
WILDLIFE REVENUE | \$59,688,299



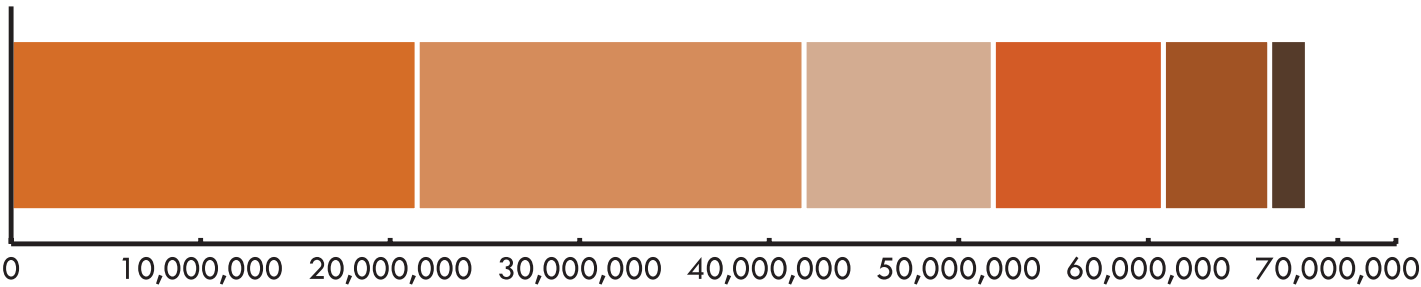
DINGLE JOHNSON | \$4,119,198



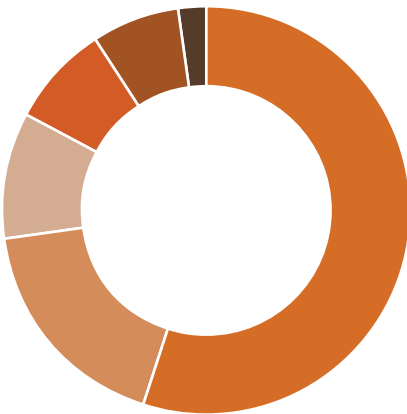
PITTMAN-ROBERTSON | \$11,078,354



WILDLIFE EXPENSES

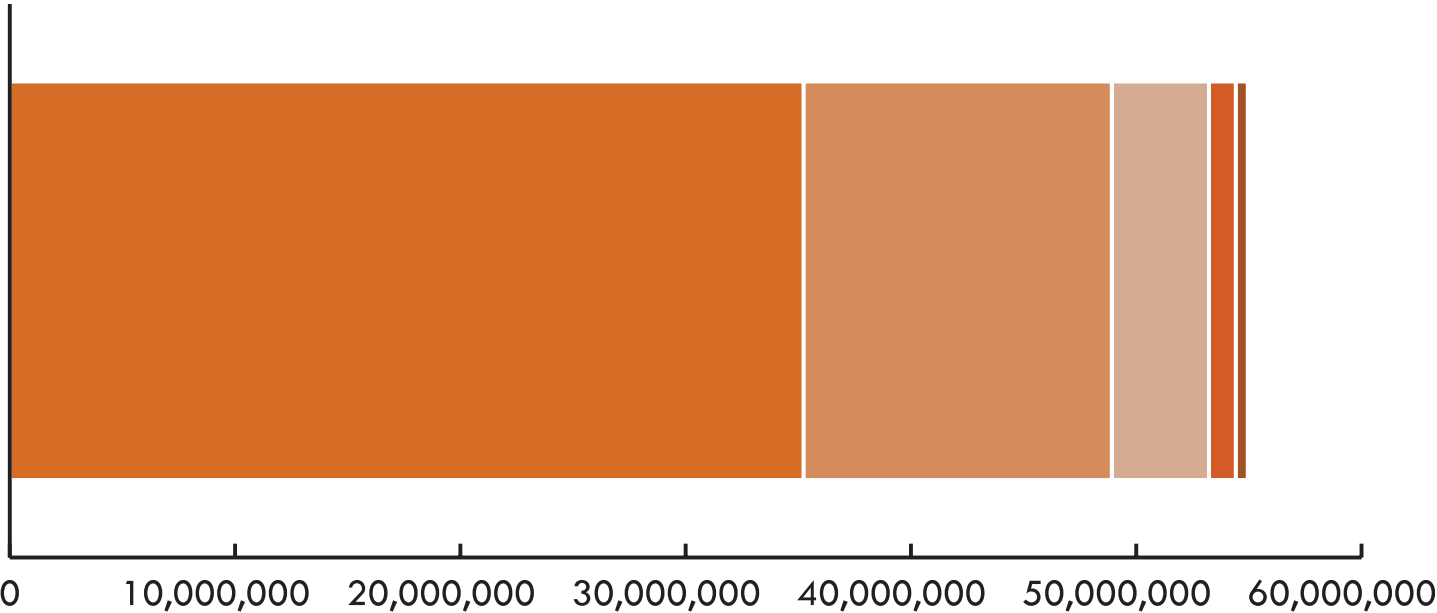


PARKS AND RECREATION REVENUE | \$44,005,580



- 55% PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE & CAMPING FEES | \$24,466,273
- 18% GENERAL FUNDS | \$7,753,074
- 10% DEDICATED TAXES AND LICENSES | \$4,328,384
- 8% MISC. | \$3,355,720
- 7% FEDERAL FUNDS | \$3,255,917
- 2% SNOWMOBILE TRAILS LICENSES, TAXES & FEES | \$846,212

PARKS AND RECREATION EXPENSES



- 64% MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS
- 25% PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE
- 8% NEW DEVELOPMENT
- 2% WATERBASED DEVELOPMENT
- 1% SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

OUTDOOR CAMPUS SIOUX FALLS EXPANSION

DAVID PARKER | DIRECTOR - OUTDOOR CAMPUS SIOUX FALLS

“Have Fun and Get Outside” has been a recurrent slogan for the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls. Now, 25 years later, The OutdoorCampus still reverberates this same theme through hunting, fishing, conservation science, and outdoor skills classes made available free to the public.

The Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls opened its doors on June 7, 1997. This collaborative project between the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department focused on the goal of offering programming to the public that would allow them to enjoy the outdoors in a safe manner. Based out of Sertoma Park, this wilderness facility is in an ever-expanding metropolis.

With two classrooms, a museum space, miles of trails, and a fishing pond, the Outdoor Campus has offered over 19,582 programs. Through the efforts of both staff and volunteers over 500,000 participants have been reached through school, home school, group, and community experientially based programming. Now, the Outdoor Campus is ready to expand. The Outdoor Campus’ programming opportunities have expanded as the City of Sioux Falls has grown. To meet this need, the Outdoor Campus will be doubling its size by creating:

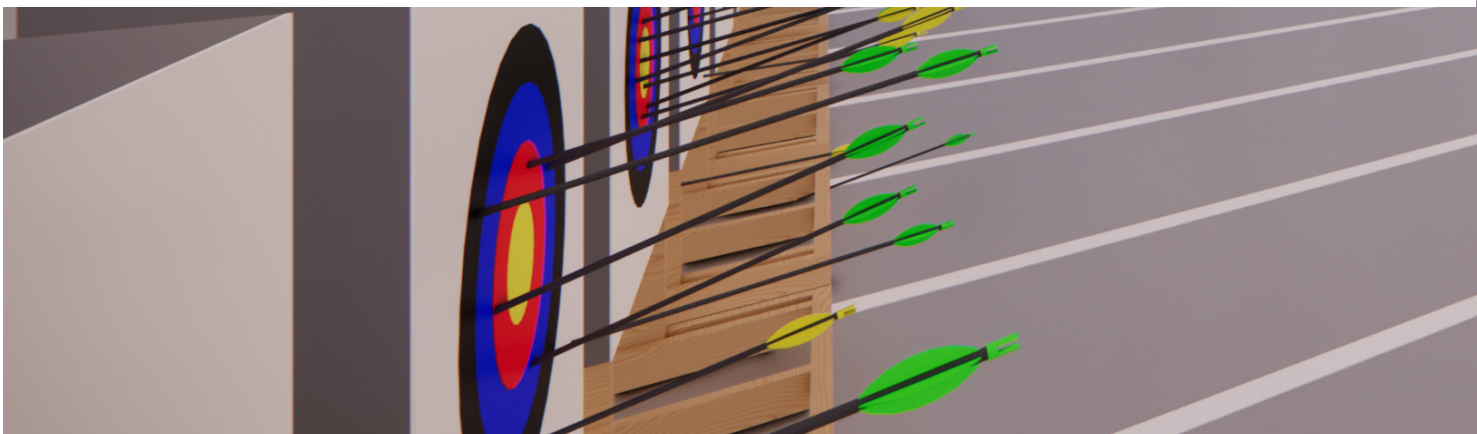
- » A 5,000-square-foot 20-yard-long indoor range with 12 shooting lanes for both archery and bb guns along with spectator space;
- » An additional 2 classrooms for increased programming along with remodeling the original 2 classrooms;
- » A dedicated intern office space for collaborative work on projects;
- » A public nursing mothers’ room;
- » A game processing space with a walk-in cooler;
- » Updated restroom facilities and a new family restroom;

- » Partner storage area by the range;
- » An outdoor meat smoking and grilling space;
- » Improved bird viewing area with aerated and heated pond; and,
- » And an outdoor 60-yard-range covered by a canopy for archery and bb-gun classes and public use with spectator area behind the firing line.

With the goal of beginning work on the expansion in a matter of a few years, The South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation (PWF) has agreed to partner in fundraising \$3 million dollars. This \$3 million will help offset the cost of this over \$6-million project.

“25 Years and Growing Strong” is the slogan chosen for the Capital Campaign Project. This slogan encapsulates what this project is about: looking backwards to look ahead. On August 30, 2022, the Outdoor Campus hosted its quadranscentennial celebration to highlight what has been done in the past. Regional Supervisor Emmett Keyser, Sioux Falls Parks Department Director Don Kearney, GFP Secretary Kevin Robling, Friends Board Chair and former legislator Jan Nicolay, and PWF Executive Director Kristina Coby all spoke on behalf of the Outdoor Campus. This event was punctuated by the attendance of Governor Kristi Noem and her words about the importance of the outdoors and the proclamation of August 30, 2022, being “Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus Day.”

Looking backwards, the Outdoor Campus is honored by the efforts of so many that led to its success. Looking ahead, the Outdoor Campus is excited for another 25 years of growing strong.





AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES UPDATE

JAKE DAVIS | FISHERIES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

2022 was a busy year for the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program. In 2022, increases were made with outreach and education activities, partnerships with other organizations and field operations. Additional planning efforts were also made, which resulted in the development of the first GFP AIS Rapid Response Plan, as well as development of a revised GFP AIS Strategic Management Plan set to be implemented in 2023.

As in 2021, an AIS Communications Plan was developed for 2022. Efforts of the plan focused on reaching as many surface water users of the state as possible. Essentially, any individuals who use waters of the state were the target audience. As such, AIS messaging was incorporated in many communication efforts, including the “Fishing South Dakota” campaign. The primary AIS message was “Clean, Drain, Dry”; however, other targeted messages were highlighted, such as not moving lake and stream water when transporting bait or fish and stopping at AIS inspection stations. These messages were disseminated on a variety of communications platforms which included both virtual (e.g., social media and email) and hardcopy versions (e.g., informational rack cards). New this year was a “Communications Kit” for Lake Associations. This included informational content that could be provided to Lake Associations that could then be distributed to their members through their internal channels.

Partnerships were also a large part of the 2022 GFP AIS program. These included state agencies such as Department of Transportation who helped install signage on zebra mussel infested waters and use of large interstate signage to flash messaging during peak boating season. The South Dakota Department of Revenue again assisted with distributing informational rack cards to county treasurers to include with watercraft renewal registrations. Similar to 2021, a partnership existed with the Enemy Swim Preservation Association for work at that waterbody. In general, an increased effort was made to work with Lake Associations. As a result, increased communication and collaboration between these groups and GFP resulted in the form of dissemination of information, as well as increased monitoring at multiple waterbodies by Lake Association members.

In western South Dakota, continued partnership with local County Conservation Districts resulted in access-based inspection stations at the 6 largest reservoirs. Funding for these was provided through grants from US Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Reclamation, along with GFP funds and a contribution from the West Dakota Water Development District. Due to the high number of waters and access points in eastern South Dakota, the majority of the WID stations were roving stations that targeted throughfares to increase the number of contacts made. A continued partnership with the Enemy Swim Preservation Association provided for an access-based WID at that waterbody.

One issue that arose in 2022 was in regard to hiring intern and seasonal staff. In western South Dakota, a total of 17 of the 34 posted positions were unfilled with the County Conservation Districts. In eastern South Dakota, five vacancies were unfilled. This did impact field operations as WID locations and hours of operation were adjusted to available staff. Moving forward in 2023, increased efforts will be made to recruit applicants for all available positions.

Expansion of AIS was observed in 2022 within the state. In total, five new waterbodies were determined to be infested with zebra mussels: Enemy Swim Lake, Blue Dog Lake, South Rush Lake, Clear Lake, and Pactola Reservoir. The majority of these waterbodies are located in northeastern South Dakota; however, Pactola Reservoir is located in the Black Hills and is the farthest west that zebra mussels have been documented in the state.

Looking to 2023, GFP will continue AIS efforts in the state. Some of the primary actions will be implementing the AIS Strategic Management Plan as well as operational and communications plans. Partnerships will again be a large part of implementing fieldwork, specifically the WID program. Additionally, partnerships will play a role in increasing monitoring efforts and disseminating outreach and education materials.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE

OVER 18,500 WATERCRAFT INSPECTIONS OCCURRED ACROSS THE STATE, THE HIGHEST NUMBER TO DATE.

STATION	2022 INSPECTIONS
Ft. Pierre	1,277
Webster	680
Enemy Swim	1,223
Sioux Falls	1,707
Angostura	4,493
Pactola	4,552
Deerfield	81
Sheridan	1,826
Belle Fourche	2,154
Shadehill	589

ENFORCEMENT INCREASES COMPLIANCE

Issuance of warnings and citations for violations of AIS statutes and administrative rules helps increase compliance with boat plug, vegetation, and fish and bait transport rules. **In 2022, approximately 72 warnings and 57 citations were given out.**

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

GFP partnered with Lawrence and Schiller Marketing and Advertising to increase awareness of AIS in South Dakota.

2 MILLION
EMAILS SENT

43
GAS STATIONS
RUNNING ADS

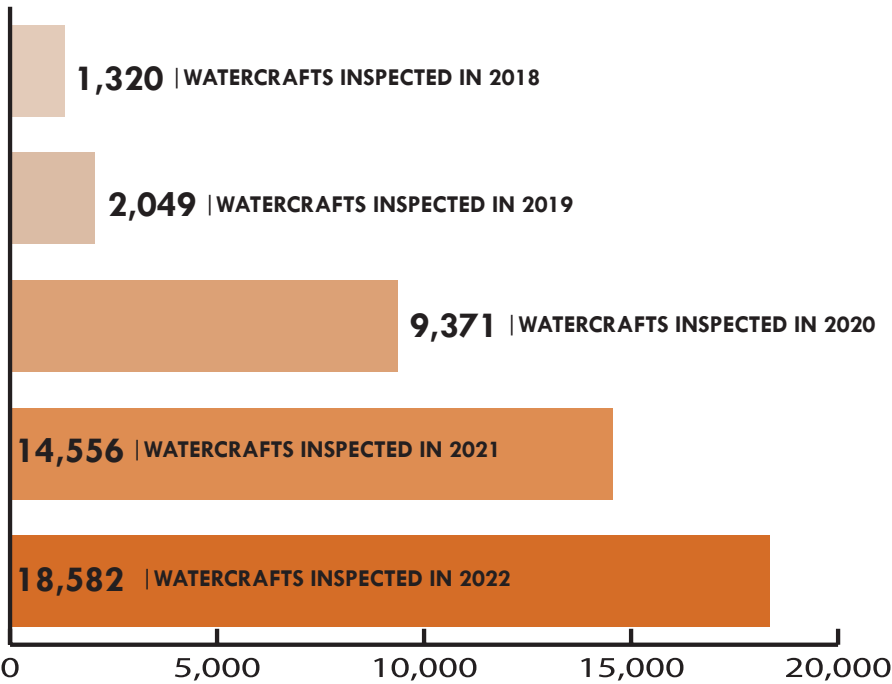
340,000 +
INDIVIDUALS REACHED
ON SOCIAL MEDIA

11%
INCREASE IN VIEWS ON
GFP YOUTUBE PAGE

12

INSPECTION STATIONS ARE SET UP ON ANY
GIVEN WEEK THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER.

2018-2022 WATERCRAFT INSPECTIONS



93-100% BOAT PLUG COMPLIANCE AT ALL LOCATIONS IN 2022.

LAKE OAHE WALLEYE FISHERY UPDATE

MARK FINCEL | UPPER MISSOURI RIVER AREA FISHERIES SUPERVISOR

17

DIFFERENT LOCATIONS
STOCKED SINCE 2017

5 MILLION

NEWLY HATCHED WALLEYE
FRY STOCKED SINCE 2017

4.7 MILLION

1-2 INCH WALLEYE
FINGERLINGS STOCKED
SINCE 2017

Following the Missouri River flood of 2011, condition, growth, and abundance of walleye in Lake Oahe declined appreciably. By 2015, the walleye fishery was hitting all-time lows, and this was most apparent on lower Lake Oahe. GFP initiated a two-tier intensive walleye stocking program in 2017. The stockings were concentrated on lower and middle Lake Oahe.

Along with walleye, GFP began stocking gizzard shad, an important food item for walleye, in 2012. Adult gizzard shad are stocked in the spring, prior to spawning, allowing the stocked fish to reproduce within the lake. This generates many young gizzard shad to feed sportfish shortly after stocking. From 2012 through 2022, roughly

4,500 adult pre-spawn gizzard shad were stocked. Information gathered by GFP and angler reports indicate these stockings produced a good number of young gizzard shad in localized areas. However, strong winters have prevented these fish from surviving a second year, necessitating annual stockings to aid in prey fish recovery.

Recently, the growth and condition of walleye in Lake Oahe has improved. Walleye stockings have benefited lower Lake Oahe and abundance has been increasing in this management zone. However, upper Lake Oahe continues to see a slow decline in abundance, and this is most noticeable for fish less than 20 inches. Therefore, GFP is concentrating future stockings on upper and middle Lake Oahe. Next

year, the goal is to stock 2.8 million walleye fingerlings in upper and middle Lake Oahe, the largest stocking to date. Stockings will continue until natural reproduction improves or walleye growth declines.

GFP also plans to continue stocking Lake Oahe with pre-spawn adult gizzard shad annually. Currently, the plan is to stock 1,200 adult pre-spawn gizzard shad in upper and middle Lake Oahe in 2023. However, GFP is working with Kansas Wildlife and Parks to acquire an additional 4,500 adult pre-spawn gizzard shad to stock in Lake Oahe next year. If successful, this would be the largest gizzard shad stocking to date.

Contrary to the low numbers of fish less than 20 inches, the current number of trophy walleye in Lake Oahe is staggering. Anglers caught numerous walleye greater than 8 pounds. Last fall, several walleye approaching the state record were caught with the largest topping the scales at just over 16 pounds. Though a new state record walleye has not been caught yet (16.2 pounds is the current record), there is definite potential that this record won't last long.

GFP held a public meeting in Mobridge, SD, on October 12 focusing on the Lake Oahe walleye fishery. A video of this meeting can be found on the GFP YouTube channel. Additional public meetings will be scheduled across the state in January and/or February of 2023.



RESIDENT ANGLER REACTIVATION EFFORTS

SHALA LARSON

R3 AND RELEVANCY MANAGER

A large upcoming effort in the R3 realm is the reactivation of resident anglers. In 2020, the whole nation saw an influx of new anglers. However, in the last two years, those numbers have significantly dropped. Due to this decrease, in addition to several marketing efforts, an internal work group was created to produce effective research questions for a survey that will then be sent out to the lapsed anglers. DJ Case and Associates was hired to assist with this effort through refining the questions, implementing the survey, analyzing the data, and creating a report. The overarching goal for this study is to find the “why” of anglers lapsing. Ideally, the survey results will be reported out by the beginning to middle of February 2023.

A RECORD YEAR FOR FISH STOCKING

MIKE BARNES

HATCHERY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

**A
RECORD
220,000
POUNDS
OF TROUT
AND
SALMON
WERE
STOCKED.**

South Dakota public fishing waters were stocked with a plethora of fish in 2022. Novel stockings included large juvenile walleyes from Blue Dog State Fish Hatchery in the fall. These stockings took the place of walleyes typically produced by natural rearing ponds. The first stockings of intensively-reared juvenile walleyes from Cleghorn Springs State Fish Hatchery also occurred this year. These walleyes, along with the adult hybrid sunfish and juvenile bluegill, were produced at Cleghorn using new Recirculating Aquaculture System technology. Some other unique stockings this year included 115, 10-to-20-pound muskellunge given to South Dakota by Utah, and kokanee salmon, which were obtained as eggs from Wyoming.

56 MILLION

WALLEYE AND
SAUGEYE FRY
RELEASED

19

FISH SPECIES
STOCKED AROUND
THE STATE

58 LAKES

STOCKED WITH
WALLEYE AND
SAUGEYE FRY

138

LAKES AND STREAMS
STOCKED AROUND
THE STATE

**NEARLY SIX MILLION JUVENILE
WALLEYE AND SAUGEYE WERE ALSO
RELEASED INTO 48 LAKES.**

R3 UPDATES

SHALA LARSON | R3 AND RELEVANCY MANAGER

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks R3 Strategic Plan was published in May of 2022. The plan highlights different department efforts that fit within the four strategic pillars: habitat and access, asset management, customer service, and operational excellence. Some efforts that have been in motion since publishing the plan are as follows: increasing funding efforts to distribute trackchairs throughout the state, creating a heat map for community fisheries, marketing available education resources, identify underserved populations and putting forth marketing efforts to those individuals, and ensuring the education strategic plan aligns with the department's strategic goals and R3 goals.

The pursuit of gaining more funding for trackchair distribution has been heavily carried by Regional Supervisor, Emmett Keyser, Kristina Colby from the Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and Michael Samp, the Volunteer Fundraising Coordinator for the project. Operation Mobility was kicked off by the Steve Peterson Family of Salem, South Dakota. The gift is in memory of their wife and mother, Cathy. Operation Mobility will have acquired two trackchairs for the state by the end of 2022, the overarching goal of this team is to have approximately 30 trackchairs scattered throughout the state for various customer use.

The creation of a community fisheries heat map was put into motion by aquatic habitat and R3 staff to identify these locations. The main goal of the published map is to highlight available fisheries for residents who may not be aware of where they can legally fish. Beyond the marketing of the new heat map, a new pamphlet has been made with information including where to find FishSD curriculum, available check-out kits, the Going Fishing Guide, and a link to the GFP Education YouTube page.

Education supplies available in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City have been inventoried and uploaded to the education section of the GFP website under "education resources". Various critter crates and loaner equipment are available to help aid educational instruction so teachers and club leaders can check out the equipment when supplemental material as needed while teaching various sections of natural resources.

In early 2022, GFP was awarded the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) Small Game Diversity Toolkit grant which came with a library of photos of women, families, and folks of color in the outdoors along with \$30,000 grant to hire an outside marketing company to create a campaign for underserved individuals in our state to get active in the outdoors. Marketing company Lawrence and Schiller was hired to help with this project as GFP was already actively working with them on our existing pheasant campaign in years past. The campaign produced 533 goal completions, which included video views, articles read, email sign ups, guide requests, and displaying interest in hunting content. Individuals visiting the Sportswomen and Beginner Resources pages from the campaign had a higher average time on page and viewed more pages per session than the average website visitor.

Lastly, regular check-ins with the Education Strategic Plan team have commenced to gauge the progress of various objectives. The team that actively participants in progress check-ins consist of the two outdoor campus directors, Custer, Adams Homestead, and Good Earth park managers, and the R3 and Relevancy manager. The Education Strategic Plan was also published in the spring of 2022. Progress will be presented and discussed at the 2023 Education Conference in Chamberlain on February 7-9.



FALL SUPPORTED HUNTS

This fall there were several supported hunts throughout the state. To ensure retention in the sport of hunting, new users need support to refine and refresh their outdoor skills. Hunts this fall included but were not limited to five pheasant hunts, two duck hunts, a deer hunt, dove hunt, hunting 101 programs, and an upcoming coyote hunt.

Supported hunts are integral in creating future hunters, whether hosted by GFP staff or not. Think about the first time you experienced the outdoors: did you go out alone or did you have a mentor

with you? Many times, this looks like a family member or friend; however, some folks do not have immediate access to someone who has those

SUPPORTED HUNTS ARE INTEGRAL IN CREATING FUTURE HUNTERS.

interests. These hunts can offer some supportive education for folks that may not have that mentor in place. Another way for new hunters without

an active outdoor support system to become connected is through our thriving Hunting 101 programs. These individuals not only go thorough class time, but they get paired with a mentor to continue with their hands on experience. After they have completed the program, there are Facebook groups created for these participants to then join in the conversation of other fellow novice hunters.



HUNTSAFE PROGRAM UPDATE

BRANDON MAAHS | HUNTSAFE COORDINATOR

2022 has been a year of growth for the HuntSAFE Program. In January, GFP reinstated a mandatory Field Day requirement for HuntSAFE students 16 and under. Having a mandatory Field Day provided an opportunity for students who were new to shooting to have their first time handling a firearm be with a certified volunteer instructor or Wildlife Conservation Officer.

With reimplementing the Field Day requirement, the HuntSAFE Program was back up to full capacity compared to 2021 and 2020. There were over 100 traditional in-person classes and 30 Field Day classes across the state which occurred at various times between spring and mid-fall. While there were many opportunities for students to attend a class, GFP encouraged students to plan and take a class as early as possible due to limited space and varying times of availability depending on location.

In April, volunteer HuntSAFE instructors met for an Instructor Conference. The conference brought instructors under one roof to discuss plans on how to keep improving the program with the growing need of more classes and instructors. In response to the growing pressure for more classes in Sioux Falls, GFP hired two contract employees whose sole duties are to teach traditional and Field Day HuntSAFE classes in Sioux Falls. The addition of these

two employees has lifted the burden of providing enough HuntSAFE classes in that region. With this success story, the program will continue to explore options for additional contract employees in other population centers. Additionally, over 20 volunteer instructors were onboarded across the state this year. This is a great start but as the program continues to grow, the need for volunteers also continues to grow. Additional efforts to recruit new instructors are also planned for early 2023.

Another area of growth has been the HuntSAFE in the Schools program. With over 31 schools participating there were 34 new teachers trained as HuntSAFE Instructors in 2022. By bringing HuntSAFE into schools we are normalizing conversations about firearms and reaching students that may not otherwise have an interest in a traditional HuntSAFE class. This also provides a way for students to complete their HuntSAFE requirement during their school day and not compete with other extracurricular activities.

31 SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATING IN HUNTSAFE IN
THE SCHOOLS

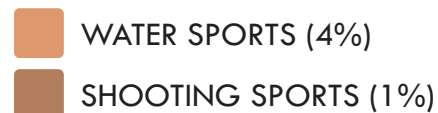
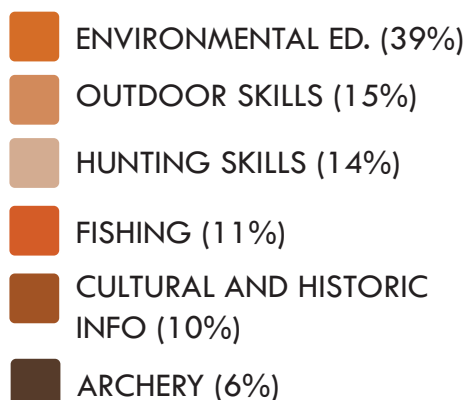
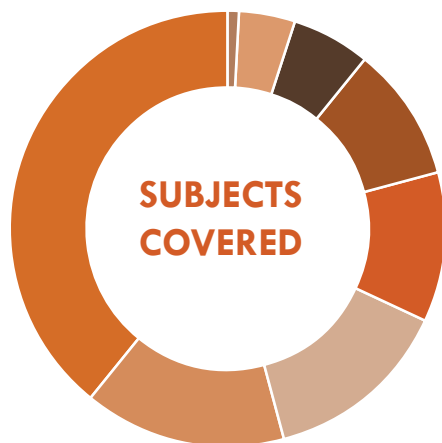
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

KELLY FETTIG | COMMUNITY R3 PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

CLASSES
3,824

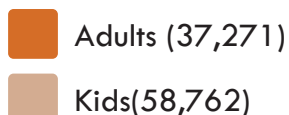
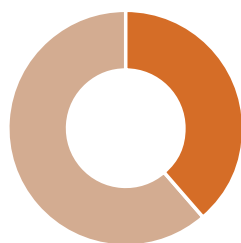
PARTICIPANTS
97,966

33%
INCREASE IN PARTICIPANTS FROM 2021



In addition to regular programs that were held there were also 90 live virtual presentations 123 rotational programs (multiple topics) and 106 special events.

# OF PROGRAMS	2020	2021	2022
ARCHERY	93	162	200
CULTURAL AND HISTORIC INFO	127	194	341
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	326	816	1,372
FISHING	165	354	371
HUNTING SKILLS	132	268	508
OUTDOOR SKILLS	134	374	540
SHOOTING SPORTS	26	35	36
WATER SPORTS	36	80	134



The most popular event for both youth and adults was the Fort Sisseton Historic Festival followed by the LaFramboise Island Trick or Treat Trails.

Statewide, staff is focusing on recruiting, retaining, and reactivating individuals into hunting, fishing, and outdoor skill activities. The goal being to create more hunters, anglers, and park users. The wildlife division has made a goal to have 1/3 of their classes fishing, 1/3 of classes hunting related, and the remaining 1/3 is everything else. The parks division has put a focus on teaching skills that will bring users back to the parks such as birding, kayaking, fishing, or geocaching.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

PAIGE O'FARRELL | VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR/NATURALIST - OUTDOOR CAMPUS EAST

KATIE SCHLAFKE | VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR/NATURALIST - OUTDOOR CAMPUS WEST

RACHEL COMES | STATEWIDE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUSES

The Volunteer Mentor Program has proven to be very valuable thus far. Education staff is excited to see the program expand in the coming months. The mission of the Volunteer Mentor Program is to have passionate and knowledgeable volunteers help recruit, retain, and reactive future generations of hunters, anglers, trappers, and participants of various outdoor skills. So far, the Outdoor Campus-Rapid City has focused on recruiting mentors to assist with the Hunting 10, Bowhunting 101, and Turkey Hunting 101 programs. Following the pilot year of the Mentor Program, 2021, the Outdoor Campus-Rapid City recruited, onboarded, and trained 10 volunteer mentors. These mentors inspired and taught 37 new hunters and sportsmen and women. The Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls currently has six volunteer mentors assisting with both Turkey and Deer mentored hunts. Alongside Campus staff, these six mentors have introduced 60 people to the sport of hunting.

As the Outdoor Campuses look to expand our 101 programs into fishing, trapping, and other outdoor recreational skills, staff will continue to seek out passionate and knowledgeable volunteers, looking to teach someone new and pass on their skills.

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUS-RAPID CITY

The Outdoor Campus-Rapid City wants to thank and recognize its volunteers for helping the Education staff in 2022. Volunteers graciously spent time assisting staff with several hunting, shooting sports, fishing, trapping, and other outdoor skills programs, gardening and landscaping projects around the Campus, greeting visitors at the front desk, interpreting South Dakota wildlife artifacts to visitors, instructing programs themselves, and mentoring new participants in the outdoors. As of November 17, volunteers have contributed 1,817 hours in 2022, helping visitors and class participants safely connect with and experience the outdoors. Several of these programs and opportunities would not be possible or run as smoothly without the help of volunteers, and we're very thankful and fortunate to have their assistance. In the upcoming year, we are looking forward to adding more volunteer opportunities to assist with our school programs with the newly created Schools Programs Coordinator staff addition.

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUS-SIOUX FALLS

2022 was a busy year for volunteers at the Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls. Staff and participants had the privilege of working with 97 amazing volunteers. These volunteers donated a combined total of over 4,200 hours to the Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls. Among the 97 active volunteers, 32 of them began serving the Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls in 2022. Volunteers serve in roles such as education assistants, front desk greeters, animal care, and trail/garden maintenance. The Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls also had the opportunity to work with numerous volunteer groups throughout 2022. These groups were essential in cleaning up our trails and garden as well as revamping the playscape area.

The classes held at the Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls would not be possible without the assistance of our devoted volunteers. They impress staff and participants each day with their incredible dedication to sharing their passion and knowledge of the outdoors with the people of the Sioux Falls area.

PARKS

In 2022 the state park system attracted 345 volunteers for a total of 93,000 hours and a fiscal impact of \$637,000. These dedicated individuals donate their time and talents contributing to a quality user experience by ensuring our parks are pristine and providing educational programming.

Parks offer a variety of volunteer opportunities across the state including campground hosts, maintenance, visitor centers, special projects, programming, and events. Specific job duties are determined based on the volunteer's interests and skills and the individual park's needs. There are also group volunteers typically consisting of local civic groups who help with special projects and events as well as clean up and restoration.



SPRING STORM CLEANUP IN THE PARKS TAKES THE WHOLE TEAM

WILLY COLLIGNON

REGIONAL PARK SUPERVISOR

We learned a new word this year, Derecho, which essentially is a widespread, long-lived, straight-line windstorm and this last May 12 showed us in great detail what this word meant.



May 12 at 6:00p.m. a massive storm that produced near 100 mph winds swept through Lake Herman State Park and as it moved it way north and east it also greatly affected the landscape of Oakwood Lakes State Park and Hartford Beach State Park and left its mark on many public and private lands. The damage resulted in countless numbers of trees broken off and pushed over throughout the entire area, between these three parks alone an estimated near 800 trees were lost just within the maintained areas.

Comparatively minimal damage to facilities occurred which included the Luce Historical Cabin, an intern camper, a few RV support facilities, roof damage to shingles and shakes from vault toilets, shop buildings, picnic shelters and cabins, signs blew over, asphalt bike trails, and some roadways were up turned from tree roots. Luckily very few campers were in the parks this evening as most all received some damage that night and no one was seriously hurt.



Once the storm was over the work began clearing the roads, bucking trees, hauling, and managing all the other issues. Thankfully Wildland Fire was able to be redirected with a crew of 33 to help the parks out, in 7 days cut and piled much of the downed timber within the prime use areas. We were then able to obtain support from the South Dakota DOT who spent 6 days hauling to brush piles, and also the internal support from Team GFP; crews from fisheries, law enforcement, land crew, Richmond, Fort Sisseton, and Oahe Downstream. Within one week all three of these parks were open for use.

We will be cleaning up remnants of this storm for years to come in our more native landscapes.

BISON CENTER COMPLETION

LYDIA AUSTIN

VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAMS MANAGER

This year was the Grand Opening of the Bison Center in Custer State Park and it had a wonderful first year. The center was made possible through a donation by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. Opening on May 20, the Bison Center saw 100,721 visitors by the time it closed on October 2.

The Bison Center attracts tour buses, the safari jeep tours and families that travel the Wildlife Loop. There is no better place to tell the story of the park's bison than at the corrals. The most engaging exhibits and programs in the park are ones that could not be located anywhere else; they are a mixture of real places, objects, stories and people. The corrals are the very location where our bison story began and continues today.

This Bison Center is an excellent complimentary building to the Visitor Center. Educating visitors about bison at the southern end of the park will allow the Visitor Center to enhance current displays and develop an overarching theme telling a more complete story of Custer State Park as a whole. The park will be updating displays, showcasing more information.

The Bison Center area will also undergo a little more construction during the off season. The road to the center is currently in the process of being paved and also widened. The park is also adding a working barn for the corral staff. The plan is to have this completed by May and the Bison Center opened for the 2023 season on May 19.

BUFFALO ROUNDUP

LYDIA AUSTIN

VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAMS MANAGER

This year the park had 20,905 visitors attend the 53rd annual buffalo roundup. The visitation of the event was about the same as the last several years. The weather for the day was perfect and the event was deemed a success across the board and had a large variety of news coverage from international outlets and local outlets. Once again SDPB hosted the event online.

Condition of animals overall was excellent. Grass production was good this year even though our water year data indicates a deficiency. The park rounded up approximately 1,439 animals, including the 411 calves that were born in 2022.

On November 5 the park auctioned off 399 animals, which was similar to the number of animals sold in 2021. The Bison Auction brought in \$392,000 and buyers came from South Dakota, Wyoming, Tennessee, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Kentucky, and Alabama.



MODERN LODGING OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS

JEFF VAN MEETEREN | REGIONAL PARK SUPERVISOR

Over time the South Dakota state park system has acquired several modern facilities designed to offer visitors a unique lodging experience within the various state park areas. Visitors flock to these for family reunions, weddings, business retreats, fishing/hunting trips and many other purposes. These units all offer kitchens, bathrooms and generally two or more bedrooms that distinguish these facilities from the very popular camping cabins throughout the state that do not offer these modern amenities.

The parks systems modern facilities can be broken out into 3 groups:

1. Modern Cabins (24 units) – are designed to be used by 1-2 families depending on the family size and unlike camping cabins, they have indoor bathroom and kitchen facilities, in addition to a family room for gatherings.
2. Suites (18 units) – are 1-2 bedroom units within one building sleeping 2 to 8 people. Some suites have kitchens and others do not. These work well for the single family, two small families and hunting or fishing groups.
3. Group Lodges (6 overnight lodges and 1 meeting lodge) – are set up for larger groups offering multiple bedrooms, full kitchens and typically two or more bathrooms. These work well for family retreats, weddings, or small business groups looking to meet in an outdoor setting.

*The park systems modern lodging facilities do not offer full housekeeping services, providing an element of rustic flavor and self-reliance.

Park lodging offer visitors without traditional RV's or those who prefer modern facilities, a camping option within the park system. Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) sees this form of lodging as an opportunity to expand the user base of visitors utilizing State Parks. Many folks want to experience parks maybe once or twice a year but have no desire to invest in camping equipment or may have family members that are not comfortable with primitive facilities and desire more modern amenities. The modern lodging facilities strategically get many first-time visitors into the state park areas to experience the outdoors, trails, and numerous amenities with the idea of creating repeat users.

Affordability is also a goal of the Department in providing these opportunities for our resident and non-resident visitors. Modern cabins can be rented for \$120 -150 per night, suites for \$85-210 (depending on the unit) and lodges at \$280 per night. In comparison to many resort locations these are extremely cost effective, especially when the cost can be split out amongst the group members.

Each park lodging facility offers a unique purpose or setting based on the park in which they are in and allow for visitors to match up with the recreational experience they desire. An example of this is the Lake Thompson Lodge which can serve as a great location for a family reunion, but also an excellent facility for a large fishing group to utilize, much like the suites at Roy Lake and Oahe Downstream. Shep's Canyon offers a beautiful viewshed of the Angostura Reservoir and has a great kitchen and gathering area but could also serve as a wonderful small group business retreat setting with a golf course located 13 miles away in nearby Hot Springs. Lodges at Palisades and Newton Hills hosts many family gatherings, but are also used for family Christmas gatherings, weddings, or birthday parties. The new Scout Lodge at Newton Hills is set up with two corrals and offers equestrian users the opportunity to ride the trails at the park and stay in comfort. Mountain bike enthusiasts could set up a very similar experience and enjoy the multiple miles of trails at the park as well. The lodge at Shadehill Reservoir hosts dozens of fishermen and hunters every fall who make this an annual tradition.

Marketing of these facilities has come in various forms from local managers using Facebook, open houses and the development of brochures or handouts to help inform visitors of the opportunities the park system offers. GFP continues to look for new ways and advertising opportunities to get the word out on these wonderful facilities. This is especially critical for new or first-time visitors to State Parks and offers them an affordable, comfortable way to enjoy the outdoors.

GFP encourages visitors to use their imaginations when planning vacations that utilize our modern facilities. Any of these units can serve as a lodging base for their trips and offer a unique twist on what they are looking for in a high quality outdoor recreational experience.

GROUP LODGES

PARK NAME	NUMBER OF NIGHTS RENTED/YEAR	
	2021	2022
Lake Thompson	103	92
Newton Hills	100	116
Newton Hills Scout Lodge*	-	35
Palisades	118	117
Shadehill	153	170
Sheps Canyon	81	90
Oahe Downstream**	N/A	N/A

* New with reservations starting in July, 2022

** No overnight lodging provided. Meeting and retreat space only.

MODERN CABINS

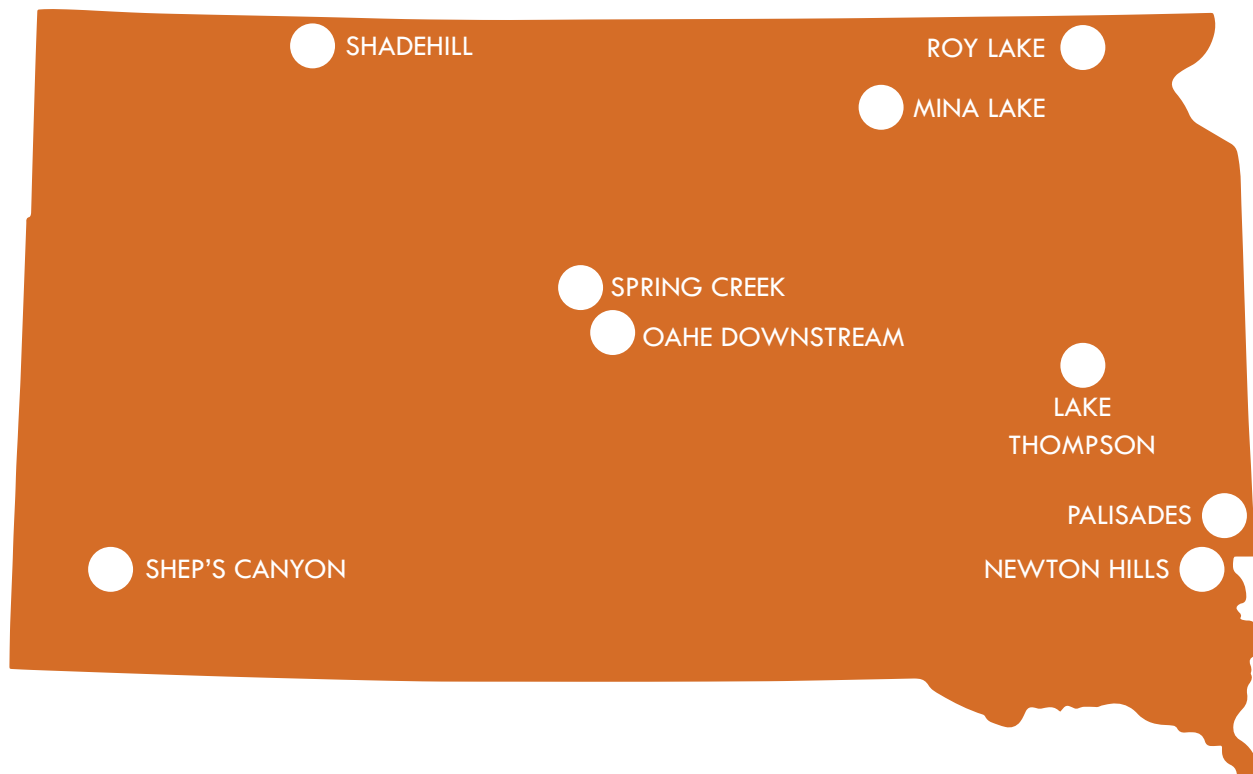
PARK NAME	NUMBER OF NIGHTS RENTED/YEAR	
	2021	2022
Mina Lake	95	103
Roy Lake (8 Unit Avg.)	95	106
Newton Hills	175	155
Oahe Downstream (4 Unit Avg.)	127	111
Spring Creek (10 Unit Avg.)	63	54

SUITES

PARK NAME	NUMBER OF NIGHTS RENTED/YEAR	
	2021	2022
Roy Lake (6 Unit Avg.)	108	112
Spring Creek (12 Unit Avg.)	36	28

3% INCREASE
IN MODERN LODGING
STAYS IN 2022

PARKS WITH MODERN LODGING OPTIONS



LAKE HIDDENWOOD RECREATION AREA REOPENS AFTER FLOOD

Lake Hiddenwood reopened this summer after the park had previously been closed after a flood washed out the dam and park entrance road in May of 2018.

Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area offers both day use opportunities and camping. Currently, most hiking trails and walking bridges are open, along with a picnic shelter and playground. Work is still ongoing to restore the Hidden Beauty walking bridge, as well as, the 50 amp electrical service to the campsites. The dam and lake have not been restored from the 2018 flood.

Primitive camping is currently available at the park. Reservations for these sites can be made through the Go Outdoors South Dakota reservation system.

“The building of the new entrance road would not have been possible without the contributions of the contractor Oban Construction and many individuals, landowners, and businesses that donated money, equipment and/or volunteered at the park,” said Dan Richards, District Park Supervisor. “The community organized a 501c “Friends of Lake Hiddenwood” to fundraise about \$115,000 towards repairing the \$233,000 road to the park.”

“We would like to extend a special thank you to the members of “Friends of Lake Hiddenwood” who have been advocates for the reopening of the park,” concluded Richards. “Their assistance includes helping to create temporarily access into the park, spending countless hours fundraising, and organizing the many volunteers who assisted in keeping the park maintained.”

GFP encourages visitors to visit Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area and hike the beautiful trails, experience the quiet solitude, and natural serenity that is in abundance here in this jewel of the prairie.

VISITATION

6,185

CAMPING NIGHTS

126

- TOP 10 MOST VISITED PARKS IN 2022
1.

CUSTER STATE PARK
2.

LEWIS & CLARK RECREATION AREA
3.

SPRING CREEK RECREATION AREA
4.

OAHE DOWNSTREAM RECREATION AREA
5.

LAKE ALVIN RECREATION AREA
6.

COW CREEK RECREATION AREA
7.

ANGOSTURA RECREATION AREA
8.

SPRINGFIELD RECREATION AREA
9.

NEWTON HILLS STATE PARK
10.

PLATTE CREEK RECREATION AREA



2022 PARKS VISITATION

CUSTER STATE PARK

**2.1 MILLION
VISITATIONS**

STATE PARK SYSTEM

**7.8 MILLION
VISITATIONS**

1%

INCREASE IN CAMPING
NIGHTS FROM 2021

CAMPING NIGHTS

396,000

**149,112 annual park
entrance licenses** were
purchased along with more
than **290,083 temporary
park entrance licenses.**

**Park Lodging saw a 3%
increase in stays in 2022.**



GO OUTDOORS SOUTH DAKOTA

KEITH FISK | LICENSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

JODI BECHARD | PARKS BUSINESS MANAGER

Every single year, thousands of GFP's customers rely on an online system to purchase hunting and fishing licenses, make a camping reservation or purchase a park entrance license. As such, a monumental change to GFP's online system occurred on December 15, 2021. GFP officially launched Go Outdoors South Dakota, a new one-stop shop e-commerce system. The transition into this new system was a focus on our GFP's strategic plan priority of providing excellent customer service. This one-stop shop allows customers to purchase their hunting or fishing licenses while also making a camping reservation and purchasing their park entrance license all in one transaction. Customers immediately began purchasing their 2022 fishing, and hunting licenses, as well as applying for limited-draw hunting opportunities. Soon after, customers also began making reservations and purchasing park entrance licenses for the upcoming summer camping season. Customers were introduced to new features such as the 360-degree campground view and ability to save frequently used equipment. As customers continued to use the system through the year for their reservations and limited draw hunting applications, they got to know the system more and began to utilize the benefits the system has such as linked accounts.

GFP sold over \$20.4 million dollars of resident and nonresident fishing and small game licenses, which was nearly identical to license sales in 2021. Combined with limited-draw license sales, application fees, preference points, and Habitat Stamp purchases, nearly \$35 million dollars of revenue was generated!

The 2022 elk application period saw a record number of applications taken through the new system with **over 40,000 total applications received across all five elk seasons**. The 2022 deer application period also saw high numbers of applications, with **over 70,000 applications received for the six major**

firearm deer seasons. Whether they were visiting the parks, fishing, or applying for limited-draw licenses customers were able to interact with the new system and do all of their business with GFP, through one stream-lined platform.

The State Park and Recreation areas saw **over 394,000 camping nights reserved** in Go Outdoors South Dakota. This was almost identical to number of camping nights reserved in 2021. **Park entrance licenses sales totaling \$586,261, through the Go Outdoors system, in 2022** were also very comparable to the amount sold in 2021. With 76,581 nonresident small game licenses and 38,549 fishing licenses sold, license sales are on par with 2021. Staff worked through a few bugs and learned

the new system all while still providing the best experience possible for those people in parks, on the water, and in the field. Front line staff, park staff, and licensing staff were monumental with helping those first-time visitors through new territory.

OUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO GET OUR CUSTOMERS OUT DOING WHAT THEY LOVE THE MOST, WHILE CREATING MEMORIES AND HELPING SUSTAIN OUR STATE'S OUTDOOR HERITAGE.

GFP staff continues to listen to our customers on what they want to see with the new system. Staff are working diligently to make the system even more user friendly.

Hunters and anglers will also be able to auto-renew their licenses for 2023, will see all eligible preference points for 2022 applied to their accounts for the 2023 application seasons, and will continue to see enhancements to system performance.

As with any technology upgrade, it has taken time for customers to adjust to the new system and to have the new system working the way we intended. We continue to be committed to our main focus of combining customer service with innovative technology to enhance the users experience online to get them outdoors. Our ultimate goal is to get our customers out doing what they love the most, while creating memories and helping sustain our state's outdoor heritage.

1.5 MILLION
USERS ON GO OUTDOORS

3.4 MILLION
SESSIONS ON GO OUTDOORS

2.27
SESSIONS PER
USER

PHEASANT MARKETING

HUNT THE GREATEST

To date, our Hunt the Greatest campaign has produced:

11.2 MILLION IMPRESSIONS

952,000 ENGAGEMENTS

400+ EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

1.7 MILLION SESSIONS ON HUNTTHEGREATEST.COM

TOP PERFORMING MARKETS

- » Dallas/San Antonio/ Houston
- » Minneapolis/St. Paul
- » Chicago
- » Detroit
- » Sioux Falls
- » Indianapolis
- » Cleveland

UPLAND OUTLOOK

The main goal of this campaign was to encourage early license purchasing and to inform nonresident hunters of our new licensing system, *Go Outdoors South Dakota*. The secondary goal of this campaign was to educate new hunters about places to hunt, what to look for when choosing a place to hunt, different classes available, and tips for hunting upland game.



THIS FALL'S FORECAST;
ABUNDANT ROOSTERS
AND 100% CHANCE
OF GREAT MEMORIES.
IT'S TIME TO HUNT
IN SOUTH DAKOTA.

SET UP YOUR
ACCOUNT ON OUR
NEW LICENSING SYSTEM
TO PURCHASE YOUR
LICENSE TODAY.
GoOutdoorsSouthDakota.com



The following postcard was sent to 117,946 nonresidents who had previously held a license within the last three years but had not yet purchased a 2022 license. **Since the postcard delivery began on September 13, there were 2,857 scans on the QR Code to purchase a license and can be attributed to approximately 7,300 licenses sold.**

FISHING MARKETING

EMAIL

2,303,792 EMAILS SENT REGARDING FISHING IN SOUTH DAKOTA

604,078 EMAILS OPENED

20,426 CLICKS WITHIN THE EMAILS SENT

SOCIAL MEDIA

2,024,953 IMPRESSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA REGARDING FISHING IN SOUTH DAKOTA

2,039,535 PEOPLE REACHED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

156,213 ENGAGEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The number of resident anglers has been declining since a spike in 2020. To help recruit and reactivate anglers around the state, GFP increased communication and marketing efforts to reach out to lapsed anglers. A strong push on social media and through email took place during the main fishing months, March through August along with several classes that took place at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City and Sioux Falls targeted towards new anglers.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE

ANDREW NORTON | WILDLIFE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal brain disease that has been documented in wild deer and elk (cervids) in South Dakota across 17 West River counties and Union, Sully and Buffalo counties east of the Missouri River. Once a deer or elk becomes infected, although always fatal, it usually takes around two years for the animal to die from the disease. CWD is caused by an abnormal protein called a prion. The protein prion persists in the environment and CWD cannot be eradicated once established in a herd. Prevalence rates in deer and elk populations will continue to increase and spread across South Dakota.

Fortunately, across much of South Dakota, prevalence has not reached high levels, although some elk herds in the Black Hills, where CWD was first documented over 20 years ago, are at levels that could limit future hunting opportunities. It

is likely prevalence is highest in elk in Custer State Park, an area where the elk population has shown little to no growth in the past 10 years, despite very limited cow harvest and the most aggressive mountain lion hunting regulations in the Black Hills.

GFP continues surveillance monitoring to evaluate the spread of CWD. Most of the current surveillance counties are east of the Missouri River. Hunting regulations in South Dakota require all deer or elk carcasses that are transported outside the county of harvest to be disposed of at a waste management provider or landfill. CWD spread can also be reduced by not feeding and baiting deer and elk, because those practices artificially concentrate animals. Baiting is illegal in South Dakota and GFP strongly discourages winter feeding of big game.

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA

ROCCO MURANO | SENIOR WATERFOWL BIOLOGIST

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses are contagious and extremely variable viruses that are widespread in birds. Several avian species during this current outbreak of HPAI appear to be quite susceptible and transmission of the virus quite high. Unlike past outbreaks of HPAI wild birds appear to be more susceptible and exhibit clinical symptoms and mortality.

As of December 2022, HPAI been confirmed in 60 commercial poultry facilities, 1 waterfowl breeding facility, and 14 back yard poultry flocks. More than 3,804,730 commercial poultry have been impacted by HPAI in South Dakota during the current outbreak.

Regarding wild bird mortalities during the fall of 2022, GFP and federal agencies have confirmed HPAI in Canada geese, snow geese, ross geese, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, turkey vulture, several duck species, common crow, and pelican, in multiple areas of mainly eastern South Dakota. All positive results have been confirmed as H5N1 through NVSL. Additionally, we recorded 56 mortality events that samples were not collected but were suspected as HPAI mortalities. These totals include the following numbers: 157 Canada geese, 11 assorted ducks, 2 red-tailed hawks, 4 swans, and 23,133 snow geese. Total reported mortality numbers are estimated at 23,307 birds with many more suspected of dying.

Federal and State partners have been and will continue to work to document this disease through surveillance and mortality documentation. USDA-APHIS has developed a surveillance plan based on watersheds and time of year to test for prevalence in wild birds. GFP has assisted with this effort, allowing USDA employees to test a subset of ducks captured for banding. Hunter harvested birds throughout the fall and winter will also be sampled.

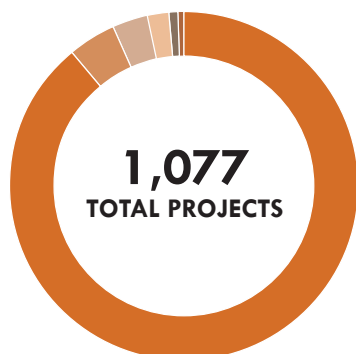
GFP continues to work with the South Dakota Animal Industry Board (AIB), (USDA-APHIS), veterinarian at Dakota Provisions, and other management agencies to monitor and respond to additional outbreaks of HPAI. GFP, in cooperation with USDA-APHIS, are assisting commercial turkey farms by providing technical assistance and deterrent supplies for poultry owners keep migrating waterfowl and other wildlife away from their operations.

Visit gfp.sd.gov/avian-flu/ to learn more about HPAI.



PRIVATE LANDS HABITAT PROGRAM SUMMARY

2022 HABITAT PROGRAM SUMMARY

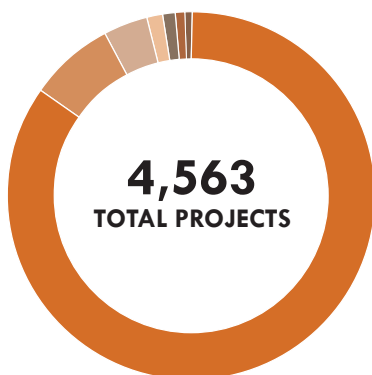


- 933 | FOOD HABITAT PLOTS
- 46 | GRASSLAND ENHANCEMENT
- 31 | WOODY COVER
- 23 | WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FENCE
- 9 | GRASSLAND RESTORATION
- 5 | HABITAT PROTECTION FENCE
- 1 | WETLAND ENHANCEMENTS

ONE YEAR HABITAT MANAGEMENT	
Food Habitat Plots	11,389 Acres
Woody Cover	109 Acres
Habitat Protection Fence	421 Acres
Grassland Enhancement	39,871 Acres
Grassland Restoration	370 Acres
Wetland Enhancements	17 Acres
Wildlife Friendly Fence	19,262 Acres

\$1.41 MILLION
TOTAL GFP AND LANDOWNER FUNDS

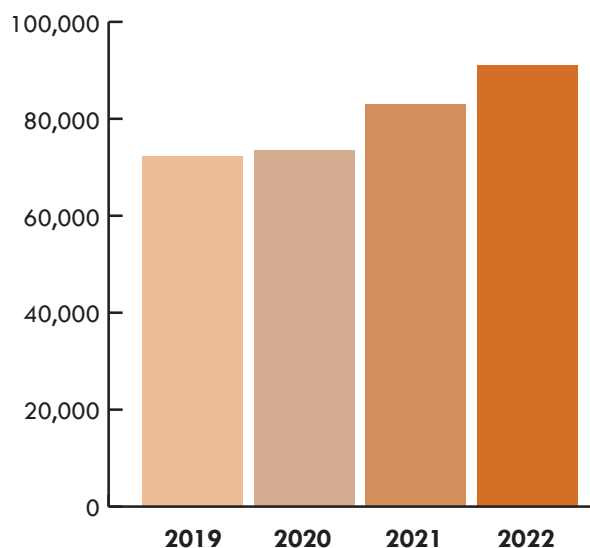
4 YEAR HABITAT PROGRAM SUMMARY



- 3,816 | FOOD HABITAT PLOTS
- 398 | GRASSLAND ENHANCEMENT
- 177 | WOODY COVER
- 72 | WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FENCE
- 52 | GRASSLAND RESTORATION
- 39 | HABITAT PROTECTION FENCE
- 20 | WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

\$8.6 MILLION
TOTAL GFP AND LANDOWNER FUNDS

2019 - 2022 TOTAL ACRES



COOPERATIVELY FUNDED POSITIONS

DUCKS UNLIMITED
AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY
BIRD CONSERVANCY OF THE ROCKIES
PHEASANTS FOREVER | FARM BILL SPECIALIST
SOUTH DAKOTA GRASSLAND COALITION
NAT. WILD TURKEY FED. | BLACK HILLS FORESTER

GFP partners with several conservation organization to support 21 private lands habitat specialists across South Dakota who deliver programs - including farm bill conservation programs and GFP private lands programs - and technical assistance to thousands of private landowners each year, impacting hundreds of thousands of acres. GFP's financial contributions to these positions are matched several times over with federal, state, and local funds that both support the positions and the important conservation work they provide to South Dakota landowners.



GAME PRODUCTION AREA MANAGEMENT

723

GPA_s/WAA_s

57

COUNTIES

285,919

ACRES



Grasslands | 50%

Wetlands | 30%

Farmland | 10%

Trees and Shrubs | 10%

ANNUAL HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Food plots planted	4,500 acres/year
Tree and shrub plantings	70 acres/year
Nesting cover seedings	1,200 acres/year
Pollinator plots planted	200 acres/year
Noxious weeds controlled	12,000 acres/year
Roads and trails maintained	320 miles/year
Parking areas and boat ramps maintained	675 sites/year
Boundary posts and signs maintained	900 miles/year

ANNUAL MANAGEMENT COSTS

\$4.1
Million

Average annual
management costs

\$14.35

Average annual
cost per acre

ANNUAL PROPERTY TAXES PAID

\$1.59
Million

Annual property
taxes paid

\$5.85

Property taxes
paid per acre



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS

PRIVATE LAND PUBLIC HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM SUMMARY

2022 ACCESS PROGRAM SUMMARY



- 1,490 | WALK-IN AREA (WIA)
- 753 | JAMES RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
- 17 | CONTROLLED HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM (CHAP)
- 14 | ELK HUNTING ACCESS AREA
- 6 | LOWER OaHE WATERFOWL ACCESS AREA

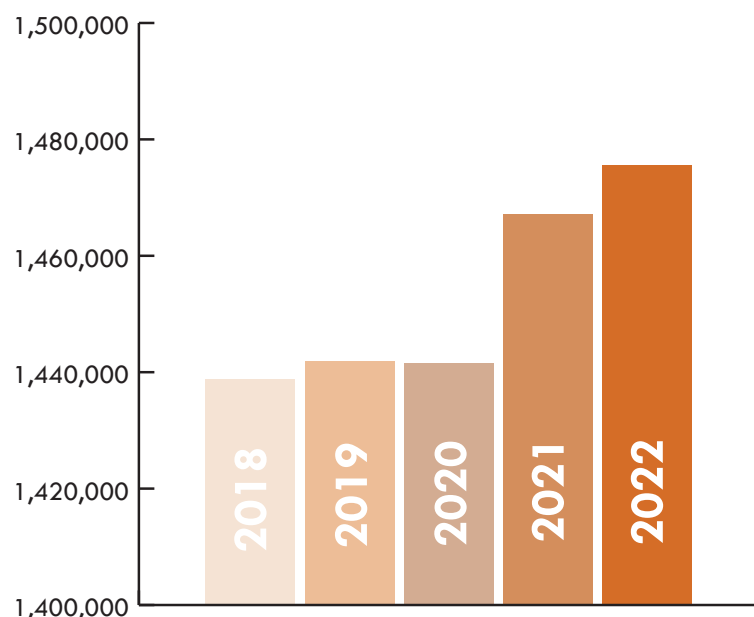
\$7,714,484

TOTAL PAYMENTS TO LANDOWNERS

1,475,457

TOTAL ACRES ENROLLED

PRIVATE LAND PUBLIC HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM ACRES



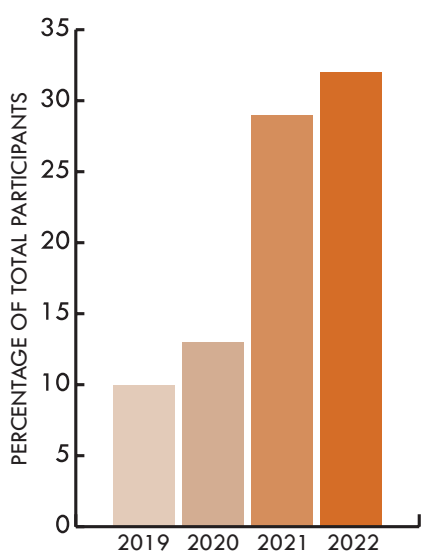
\$30.9 MILLION 5 YEAR TOTAL PAYMENTS TO LANDOWNERS

BOUNTY PROGRAM UPDATE

JACQUIE ERMER | REGIONAL WILDLIFE SUPERVISOR

2022 was the fourth year of the Nest Predator Bounty Program. New for 2022 the month of March was open exclusively for youth under the age of 18. The program then opened on April 1 to all South Dakota residents. The goal of the program is to enhance nest success for pheasants and ducks at localized levels by removing primary nest predators while at the same time getting families and youth outside. Similar to 2021, GFP drew the name of a youth participant to receive three live traps, a knife, and a trapping handbook each week; 16 names were drawn. Youth made up 32% of the total participants, which was higher than in 2021 at 29%. GFP continues to partner with SDSU extension and 4H to offer ETHICS SD, a hands-on all-inclusive trapping education program. Overall, South Dakota’s trapping traditions remain strong across South Dakota with the next generation excited to hit the field.

2019-2022
YOUTH PARTICIPATION



143

YOUTH PARTICIPATED
IN THE YOUTH-ONLY
MONTH OF MARCH

2,100

NEST PREDATORS
SUBMITTED DURING
THE YOUTH-ONLY
MONTH

2,367

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

55,220

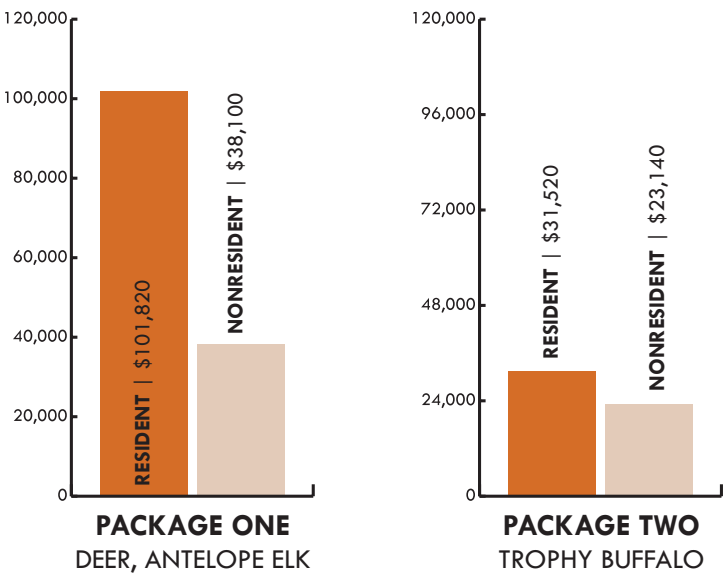
PREDATORS REMOVED

2022 HUNT FOR HABITAT

NICK HARRINGTON | COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

OVER
\$1.2 MILLION
RAISED FOR
HABITAT
SINCE 2019

2022 RAFFLE PROCEEDS | \$194,580

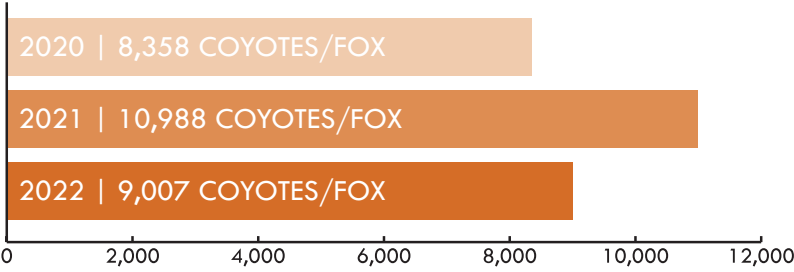


WILDLIFE DAMAGE PROGRAM UPDATE

EMMETT **KEYSER** | REGIONAL SUPERVISOR

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has operated a multi-faceted Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) Program designed to address human-wildlife conflicts involving certain species of wildlife. Staff provide the “boots-on-the-ground” to help deliver WDM program services directly to South Dakota ag producers and other citizens too. Staff work directly with South Dakota’s livestock and agricultural producers to alleviate or reduce livestock loss from predators (primarily coyote), they might work with other ag producers across the state to help alleviate damage to growing crops, stored feed, fences and hay supplies caused beaver, Canada geese, deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, turkeys, and other nuisance wildlife. GFP also provides financial assistance to conduct prairie dog control on private lands lying adjacent to public lands to help reduce range damage caused by those animals that encroach onto private property from public lands.

NUMBER OF COYOTES/FOX REMOVED



27
WILDLIFE DAMAGE SPECIALISTS

2,985
REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

2,000+
LANDOWNERS ASSISTED

3.8 MILLION
SPENT ON THE WDM PROGRAM

SUBMITTING ELECTRONIC ‘REQUEST FOR SERVICES’ VIA ONLINE DEPREDATION HUB

NICK **ROSSMAN** | REGIONAL WILDLIFE MANAGER

The Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) Program implemented a new online Request for Service (RFS) process during the Summer of 2022. This Canada Goose Depredation Hub allows landowners the ability to request depredation services while experiencing crop damage caused by resident Canada geese. This electronic submission process was introduced with the expectation that it would internally streamline our data organization and greatly improved our overall efficiency during our most consistently busy depredation season in eastern South Dakota.

When a landowner experiences Canada goose depredation, they are now directed to our website where the Canada Goose Depredation Hub can be found. This hub allows the landowner to submit a RFS by filling in their general contact and field information. Some of the more detailed information they are asked to enter include coordinates to single or multiple field locations, crop type, presence or absence of goslings, whether they own or operate the field, as well as a comment section where they can add additional notes. Once an entry is submitted, it immediately updates an interactive map that South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) employees and interns monitor throughout the day.

This allows the department to be prompt and efficient with our time and travel, as well as inventory management of equipment in the field via a mobile app on a smart phone.

The mapping features it provides allows GFP staff to accurately visualize the distribution of the RFS as it helps identify areas of high concentration of problematic resident Canada geese. Therefore, allowing us an opportunity to focus in on areas and individual landowners where we can initiate more permanent and longer-term solutions to help their farm operations in the future.

We fully understand that not all landowners have access to the internet or have the ability to operate a smartphone. However, to ensure everyone still can utilize the same depredation resources, we still provide alternative services to get the data entered through either our front office support staff or over the phone submissions. Based on the positive feedback from landowners in support of this new process, will continue to improve this system in the years to come.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY PROGRAM

EILEEN DOWD STUKEL | SENIOR WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

Wildlife Diversity staff perform a wide variety of duties to help identify and address the needs of the full spectrum of the state's fish and wildlife and related habitats. Summarized below are a few examples of ways staff fulfilled these responsibilities for species and habitat protection and advocacy in 2022.

ADVISE

GFP biologists review development projects and other activities that could impact rare species or native habitats to inform people of locations of these resources in hopes of avoiding negative impacts. During the spring of 2021, GFP officially released an online Environmental Review Tool for public use at ert.gfp.sd.gov/. This tool was developed by Wildlife Diversity staff in collaboration with NatureServe to help streamline the Environmental Review process. Users can view a map displaying a variety of information on sensitive species and resources for use in conservation planning or submit a project for department review and receive an automated customized report. Since the tool's release, over 500 project have been submitted for review.

PLAN

The South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan is a strategic document that identifies ways to address fish and wildlife species challenges and restoration needs in the state. GFP is part of a broad coalition of conservation partners advocating for stable, long-term funding to translate these strategic plans into true, on-the-ground action plans. Meaningful legislative progress was made in 2022 to address this funding need of state and tribal wildlife agencies. Wildlife diversity staff have begun a minor revision of this plan to add plants to the priority species list, making them eligible for funding. Work will begin in 2023 on a major revision of the Wildlife Action Plan to incorporate new science, project results, and improved coordination approaches for working across state boundaries.

MONITOR

Monitoring wildlife species through surveys and marking provides information that guides conservation actions. Each spring and fall, wildlife diversity biologists capture and place leg bands on migratory songbirds along the Missouri River. This long-term monitoring effort has helped illustrate the importance of riparian habitat to migratory birds and the potential impact of habitat loss. By

individually marking birds, we can also obtain information on bird movement, behavior, life-span and population changes as well as educate the public. Over the last 30 years, more than 25,000 individual birds of 126 species have been banded at two banding stations near Pierre.

RESTORE

GFP helps coordinate restoration and many aspects of species recovery to help sustain them for future generations. During the summer of 2022, GFP began a project to assess and prioritize barriers to fish movement and habitat connectivity in eastern South Dakota streams. In the Midwest, roads cross streams approximately once per mile. Most road crossings include steel culverts, which can impede fish movement, resulting in loss of access to food, shelter, temperature refuges, and spawning habitat necessary for survival. This project is expected to provide resource management groups with a cost-effective solution to enhance aquatic habitats and improve stream fragmentation benefiting many aquatic species including the Topeka Shiner, a federally endangered minnow.



Blue-headed Vireo banded at Farm Island State Recreation Area in central South Dakota

AN EXCITING TIME TO BE A CONSERVATION OFFICER IN SOUTH DAKOTA

SAM SCHELHAAS | LAW ENFORCEMENT SECTION CHIEF

Like many wildlife agencies across the Midwest the recruitment and retention of conservation officers has been on the forefront of the Department's attention and efforts over the past year. This has been an ongoing concern for almost 20 years. The number of vacant Wildlife Conservation Officer (WCO) positions has ebbed and flowed throughout that time, but in the summer of 2022, there was an all time high in the number of vacancies when that number reached 20. While this was concerning there was some good news on the horizon as the number of job offers made to qualified applicants was in double digits, setting another record with 12 conditional offers being made in one year! There has been a lot of time, effort, and discussion about what is the cause of the increase in WCO vacancies across the state. Is it pay? Is it the rural nature of South Dakota? Is it a lack of qualified applicants? Is it the unique nature of the job requiring many hours of work during the weekends and holidays? Nobody really knows what the answer is, but it is more than likely a combination of all of those. While 20 vacant WCO positions is extremely

concerning there have been several steps taken to try and increase the number and quality of applicants. First, WCOs were part of a targeted pay increase that increased the starting salary of a new WCO to a much more competitive rate and increased the salary for veteran officers. Second, there has been a much greater emphasis put in the recruitment phase. There are many seasonal employees and interns that work for the Department and a great effort was made by WCOs to contact as many of those individuals to see if they have an interest in becoming a WCO someday and if they were, a ride-along opportunity was presented. Third, social media platforms were strategically used to generate interest and announce open positions. Finally, there was a broadening approach in the examination of prior work and educational experience in the applicants that were being selected. There is momentum right now and it is truly and exciting time to be a Conservation Officer for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks!



HABITAT STAMP UPDATE

JAKE DAVIS | FISHERIES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

RYAN WENDINGER | HABITAT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Senate Bill 75 was passed during the 2020 legislative session to create a habitat stamp that added an annual fee to most license buyers to be used solely for terrestrial and aquatic habitat and access projects in South Dakota. Habitat stamp purchases generated just over 5.4 million dollars in 2022. During 2022, staff worked diligently to push critical habitat and access projects forward on the landscape benefiting wildlife habitat and outdoor recreationalist.

Terrestrial habitat projects included seeding 1,628 acres of native grass and pollinator plots, 220 acres of food plots, and 28 acres of woody habitat. There was 1,521 acres of grassland and forest enhancements completed that involved removing non-desirable woody species. Lastly, 18 Game Production Areas (GPAs) had infrastructure installed to implement grazing management. All these projects wouldn't be possible without the funds generated with the habitat stamp. These funds allow staff to improve habitat above and beyond what they would normally be able to do.

These habitat improvements have a large impact on all species both game and non-game. Grassland and pollinator seedings create quality nesting and brood rearing conditions for game birds as well as provide non-game bird species and pollinators habitat they need to survive. Big game species also benefit from these plantings. The same goes for food plots and woody habitat plantings as they provide habitat for a broad range of species and are important for winter protection and survival. Enhancement and management of grasslands and forest is vital to the long-term success of wildlife. These projects help keep these habitat types healthy and productive that will have a positive impact on wildlife species utilizing them.

With access being the second part of these funds, on the terrestrial side, 22.4 miles of roads and trails on 26 GPAs were created or improved for hunter accessibility. In addition to this, waterfowl access trails and ramps were installed at 11 different sites on 10 GPAs. These projects are important for our users as they provide better access to public lands

and increase opportunities. Funds were also used in 2022 to enrollment of approximately 600 acres into the James River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Enrollment of these acres creates new habitat available to wildlife and are also opened to public hunting increasing opportunities for our users.

Annually, aquatic habitat and access staff work to identify opportunities to improve aquatic habitat and user access. In 2022, a number of projects were completed and many more are in the planning and coordination stages. In northeastern South Dakota, work occurred at the Lynnwood access area of Lake Kampeska in Codington County. As use increased at this location, it became apparent that improvements were needed. As a result, a new large-plank ramp was installed. The parking area was also expanded to handle approximately four times as many vehicles and trailers, along with a larger turnaround area. In southeastern South Dakota, a new lake access area was created at Whitewood Lake in Kingsbury County. The new access includes an access road, single-lane boat ramp, dock, and oversized parking lot. Additionally, ramp lighting and a vault toilet will be added

ALL THESE PROJECTS WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE FUNDS GENERATED WITH THE HABITAT STAMP. THESE FUNDS ALLOW STAFF TO IMPROVE HABITAT ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT THEY WOULD NORMALLY BE ABLE TO DO.

in 2023. In central South Dakota, one of the highlights included the addition of a fishing pier at Corsica Lake in Douglas County. This was a collaborative effort between a private family, Rexwinkel Construction, the Douglas County Highway Department and GFP and included a 350-foot ADA accessible concrete walkway to the pier. Additionally, a partnership between GFP and the City of Murdo resulted in a new and expanded boat ramp at Murdo Lake. In western South Dakota, a number of different efforts were initiated and completed at Wicksville Dam in Pennington County. This small impoundment between Wall and Rapid City was suffering from both habitat and access issues. As a result, the lake was dredged, and multiple tree root wads were sunk within the fishery for fish habitat. Additionally, the boat ramp was improved, cattails were mechanically removed from the majority of the shoreline and two fishing platforms were installed for increased access.

While it is important to highlight these aquatics projects, it is important to note that they are only a fraction of the overall work that happened across the state in 2022. In regard to improving fish habitat, over 13 waters in 12 counties received fish habitat structures. These are artificial structures that, when placed, provide habitat as well angling opportunity. Access was also improved across at many fisheries, and this included fishing docks or piers at eight fisheries, almost 2.5 miles of road and trail improvements to three waters and 26 additional small access improvements that spanned 16 counties. To address infrastructure improvements, issues at nine small dams were addressed in seven counties and five boat ramps projects were completed.

The revenue generated from the sales of habitat stamps has without a doubt, increased the volume and quality of habitat and access projects across the state. This work will continue in 2023 and planning and coordinate are well underway. Additionally, the implementation of a three-year Habitat Stamp Plan will occur. Both now and into the future, the wildlife and users of South Dakota's natural resources will benefit from them.

OTHER PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY HABITAT STAMP FUNDS

- » Dam repairs and maintenance
- » Small access improvements
- » Boat ramp improvements
- » Fishing piers and docks
- » Shoreline improvements

\$5.4 MILLION
GENERATED IN 2022
TO SUPPORT HABITAT
IN SOUTH DAKOTA

1,521 ACRES
OF GRASSLAND AND
FOREST ENHANCE-
MENTS COMPLETED

1,628 ACRES
OF NATIVE GRASS
AND POLLINATOR
PLOTS PLANTED

28 ACRES
OF WOODY HABITAT
PLANTED

220 ACRES
OF FOOD PLOTS
PLANTED

18 GPAs
HAD INFRASTRUCTURE
INSTALLED TO
IMPLEMENT GRAZING
MANAGEMENT

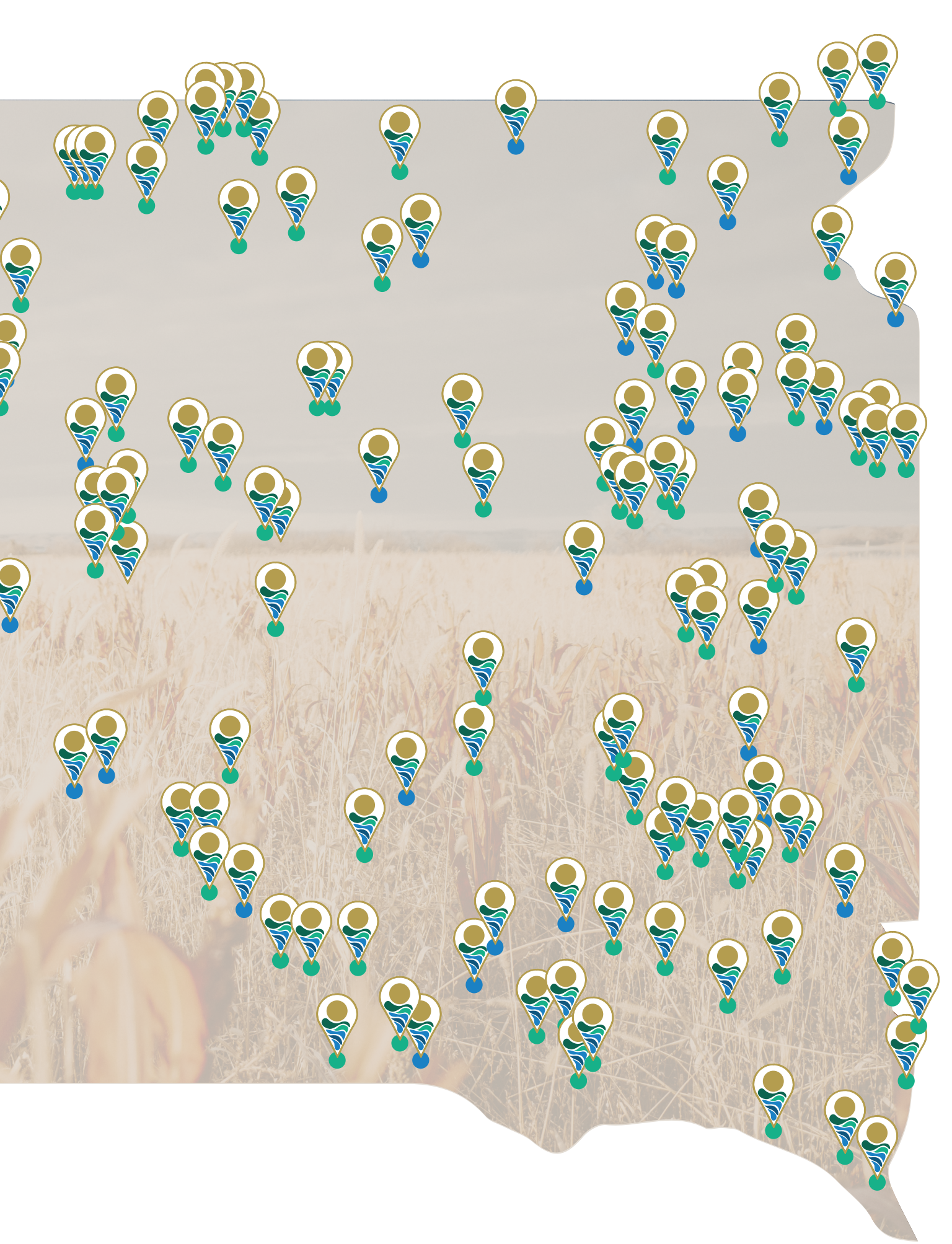
13+ WATERS
IN 12 COUNTIES
RECEIVED FISH
HABITAT STRUCTURES

2.5 MILES
OF ROADS AND TRAIL
IMPROVEMENTS TO
THREE WATERS





- TERRESTRIAL
- AQUATIC



WE SERVE AND CONNECT PEOPLE AND FAMILIES TO THE
OUTDOORS THROUGH EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF OUR STATE'S
PARKS, FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES.



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