
Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm CST at the Watertown Convention Center in Watertown, SD, on September 7, 2023. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Travis Bies, Jon Locken, Bruce Cull, and Charles Spring were present. With all eight members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff can listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 64 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Chair Rissler requested the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, but none were brought forward.

2. Approve minutes of the previous meeting minutes

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of July 2023 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

Motion by Bies, seconded by Bartling to APPROVE THE JULY 2023 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Additional Salary Days

Chair Rissler called for any additional salary days from the commissioners. Whitmyre and Springs reported one salary day and Bies and Cull reported two salary days.

Motion by Bartling, seconded by Bies to APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

4. New Staff Introduction

Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks & Recreation Director, and Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, introduced new staff to the Commissioners.

5. Park Entrance and Fishing Proposal

Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Division Director brought forth a proposal in which the department recommends removal of two dates (Mother's and Father's Day) from the park entrance license exemptions as well as the free fishing weekends.

Motioned by White, seconded by Whitmyre to APPROVE THE PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE EXEMPTIONS PROPOSAL IN WHICH REMOVES TWO DATES FROM THE PARK ENTRANCE LICENSE AND FISHING LICENSE EXEMPTIONS. The motion carried unanimously.

The department intends to present this change for finalization at the October 2023 Commission meeting, and the public can continue to provide comments about the proposal until then.

6. Nonresident One-Day Fishing License

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Division Director, brought forth an administrative action in which the department recommends removal of the one-day nonresident fishing license option beginning with the 2024 license year (December 15, 2023).

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Cull to APPROVE THE PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE NONRESIDENT ONE-DAY FISHING LICENSE OPTION. The motion carried unanimously.

The department intends to present the Administrative Action for final adoption at the October 2023 Commission meeting, and the public can continue to provide comments about the action until then.

Public Hearing

Jon Kotilnek, Senior Staff Attorney, opened the public hearing at 2:00 pm CST on September 7, 2023, for discussion from those in attendance on finalizations that the commission would be hearing for the day.

- 2:03 pm: Ken Edel of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the trout spearing.

- No other testimony was provided during the Public Hearing.

Mr. Kotilnek closed the public hearing at 2:07 pm.

Open Forum

Jon Kotilnek, Senior Staff Attorney, opened the floor at 2:08 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that may not be on the agenda.

- 2:09 pm: Tim Goodwin of Piedmont, SD testified in person in opposition to the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:13 pm: David Goodwin of Piedmont, SD testified in person in opposition to the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:17 pm: Finn Sacrison of Rapid City, SD testified in person in favor of the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:22 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion proposal and in favor of the mountain lion petitions.
- 2:28 pm: Dana Rogers of Hills City, SD representing the South Dakota Bowhunters Incorporated testified virtually in opposition of the mountain lion proposals.
- 2:30 pm: Trevor Davis of Sioux Falls, SD testified virtually in support of the mountain lion proposals.
- 2:34 pm: Zach Hunke of Watertown, SD, representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in person about the Waterfowl Access Plan.
- 2:38 pm: Jeremy Wells of Sturgis, SD representing the South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified in support of the mountain lion proposal, and the dog collar petition.
- 2:41 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:43 pm: Patrick Weiner of Spearfish, SD representing the Houndsmen of SD testified in support of the Proposal.
- 2:47 pm: Tate Wells of Piedmont, SD testified in support of the mountain lion proposal.

Mr. Kotilnek closed the open forum at 2:50 pm CST.

7. Hunt for Habitat Proposal

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, brought forth a proposal in which the department recommends modifying administrative rule to adjust licenses that are issued in the Hunt for Habitat drawing. These adjustments include the creation of two “any deer” single-tag licenses and the removal of one “any antelope” license from the three-license package that is currently available, resulting in a two-license package including one “any deer” and one “any elk” tag. As a result, only nine tags will be issued to six individuals, including one “any bison”, two “any deer”, and three “any deer” plus “any elk” packages. Previously, ten tags were issued to four individuals, including one “any bison” and three license packages with three tags each.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Cull to APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE HUNTING FOR HABITAT LICENSES. Motion carried unanimously.

The department intends to present this change for finalization at the October 2023 Commission meeting, and the public can continue to provide comments about the proposal until then.

8. Mountain Lion Hunting Season Proposal

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, made a presentation to the Commission that showed the mountain lion population is expected to decrease below the Black Hills population objective based on proposed changes to allow the use of dogs to hunt mountain lions in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The population objective was established in the 2019 Mountain Lion Management Plan.

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, brought forth the proposal in which would allow the use of dogs to harvest six female mountain lions and six male mountain lions (i.e., a total of 12 mountain lions) in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, in addition to the 15 access permits that allow the use of dogs in Custer State Park.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Spring to DENY THE PROPOSAL TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MOUNTAIN LION HUNTING SEASON. Motion to deny carried unanimously.

GFP will immediately begin the process to revise the management plan and evaluate the objective and hunting season strategies. Plan revisions and recommended changes to mountain lion management will be completed by July of 2024, so potential changes could be implemented for the 2024-2025 hunting season.

9. Petition #197: Mountain Lion Season: Lactation Female Protection

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #197 requesting a person using dogs to hunt mountain lions may not harvest a female showing obvious signs of lactation.

Motioned by Cull, seconded by Bartling to DENY PETITION #197. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Spring to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-23 DENYING PETITION #197. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Petition #198: Mountain Lion Season: Dog Collar Requirements

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #198 requesting the requirement that hunters using hounds must have GPS/Stimulation collars (e-collars) in place while hunting.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Spring to DENY PETITION #198. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by White to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-24 DENYING PETITION #198. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Petition #199: Mountain Lion Season: Guides

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #199 which would require an owner of trained hounds used to chase and hunt mountain lions to register with the department as a guide, if they offer to use that persons hounds to help others hunt mountain lions and charges for the services. For land that he will traverse while chasing lions, the hound owner guide shall meet all the requirements for guiding that are required by any public land management agency and/or get permission from private landowners. As well as require a person who has used a hound hunter guide to hunt mountain lions and kills a lion using this service, shall disclose the use of a hound hunter guide to SD GFP when they turn in the lion carcass.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Bies to DENY PETITION #199. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Spring to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-25 DENYING PETITION #199. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Petition #200: Mountain Lion Season: Lion Injuries

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #200 which requires hunters using hounds to report to GFP any injuries to hounds from fights with lions & approximately where & when such injury is believed to have occurred. It would require hunters using hounds to report any injury to mountain lion from hounds, if mountain lion escaped & approximately where & when such injury is believed to have occurred. And would amend existing rule to no person may release dogs on tracks indicating multiple mountain lions traveling together and must cease any chase of a family group of lions (mother with kittens) and report any evidence of family group of lions having been chased & location of chase.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Bartling to DENY PETITION #200. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Bartling seconded by Spring to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-26 DENYING PETITION #200. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Petition #201: Mountain Lion Season: Lions on Prairies

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #201 requiring that no person may release dogs on mountain lion tracks where there are no trees or rock outcroppings for lions to get out-of-the-reach of hounds. If hounds have chased the lion to such an area, the hound hunter shall use the GPS/stimulation collar to call the hounds back to the hunter.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Spring to DENY PETITION #201. Motioned carried unanimously.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Bartling to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-27 DENYING PETITION #201. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Petition #202: Mountain Lion Season: License Fee Rule Changes

Nancy Hilding, representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, submitted petition #202 which would require fees to be changed to the following: Mountain lion license, (a) hunting without the use of hounds, \$34. If a male mountain lion is killed, or a female mountain lion is killed, a \$10 fee for male and \$20 fee for female will be accessed as an extra fee, when the animals are turned in for inspection; (b) hunting with the use of hounds outside Custer State Park, \$80. If a female mountain lion is killed, an extra \$20 will be accessed as an extra fee, when the animal is turned in for inspection; and (c) hunting with the use of hounds within Custer State Park; \$100. If a female mountain lion is killed, an extra \$20 will be accessed as an extra fee, when the animal is turned in for inspection.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by White to DENY PETITION #202. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Spring to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-28 DENYING PETITION #202. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Fisheries Finalizations

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Manager, presented the Commission with the following finalizations for their consideration.

15a. General Provisions

Proposed changes to current rule: (1) Modify language to better clarify that a resident is not in violation of any season, daily, or possession limit established for the species of fish in a man-made water body on land owned by the resident provided the resident owns the bed of the water body in its entirety. (2) Allow invasive carps and rough fish to be taken with dip nets.

41:07:01:20. Authorization for landowner to perform fisheries management activities - Conditions. The Secretary may grant authorization without fee to a landowner, or the landowner's designee, to conduct fisheries management activities on created, manmade impoundments that only inundate private land under the following conditions: (1) Activities permitted under this authorization include the use of special equipment, stocking permitted species of fish, chemical control of vegetation, and fish removal beyond the allowance of the applicable fish limit; (2) The authorized landowner, or the landowner's designee, shall notify a Conservation Officer prior to transporting live fish or fish in quantities exceeding applicable fish limits away from the private land where the waters are located; (3) Persons Except as provided in SDCL 41-6-2, persons fishing in waters included in this authorization shall abide by applicable fish limits in accordance with § 41:07:03; and (4) That access to a requested water is entirely under the applicant's control by ownership, lease, or easement. If a requested water is not entirely owned by the applicant, then the applicant shall provide with the application a true and correct copy of the written lease or easement.

41:07:01:17. Liberalized take of silver carp, bighead carp, rough fish, smelt, and lake herring. Smelt and lake herring may be taken by hook and line, seines, lift nets, cast nets, and dip nets. Silver carp and bighead carp that inadvertently jump into any boat or are netted from the air using a dip net may be retained. Silver carp, bighead carp, and rough fish may be taken with dip nets. No person may transport live smelt, ~~live silver carp, or live bighead carp~~ or live fish defined as aquatic invasive species in 41:10:04:01, away from the water in which they were taken.

Motioned by Cull, seconded by Bartling to APPROVE THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION ON GENERAL PROVISION. Motion carried unanimously.

15b. General Provisions and Hoop Nets, Traps, Setlines and Floatlines

Proposed changes to current rule: (1) Include the cost of hoop net, trap and setline licenses with other fishing license fees. (2) Clarify that up to ten floatlines may be fished under a setline license.

41:07:01:12. Fishing license fees. Fishing license fees are as follows: (1) Resident fishing license, \$28; (2) Resident senior fishing license, age 65 or over, \$12; (3) Nonresident fishing license, \$67; (4) One-day fishing license, valid from 12:01 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, inclusive: (a) Resident, \$8; (b) Nonresident, \$16; (5) Nonresident three-consecutive-days fishing license, \$37; and, (6) Special paddlefish permit, \$25., (7) Resident hoop and trap net, \$10; and (8) Resident setline, \$5.

41:07:08:01. License requirements and fees. Hoop net, trap, setline, and floatline licenses may be sold only to residents of this state. The fee for each hoop net or trap license is ten dollars. The fee for each setline or floatline license is five dollars.

41:07:08:02. Maximum number of hooks allowed on setlines and floatlines – Mechanical devices prohibited. No more than 20 twenty hooks may be attached to any setline. No more than one hook maybe attached to any floatline. A person may not use a setline or floatline that operates by a reel or any mechanical device. One setline, or up to ten floatlines, may be used to fish at one time with a setline and floatline license.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Locken to APPROVE THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION TO THE GENERAL PROVISIONS AND HOOP NETS, TRAPS, SETLINES AND FLOATLINES. Motion carried unanimously.

15c. Fish Limits

Proposed changes to rule: 1. Establish a catch and release season for lake sturgeon on Big Stone Lake.

41:07:03:02. South Dakota-Minnesota boundary waters. In the South Dakota-Minnesota boundary waters no person may harvest in one day or have in possession at any time more than the following: (1) Six largemouth bass or smallmouth bass or combination thereof; (2) Six northern pike; (3) Four walleye of any species combined; however, no more than one may be 20 inches or greater in length; (4) Five catfish of any species combined; however, no more than one may be over 24 inches in length; (5) Ten crappie of any species combined; (6) Fifteen yellow perch, possession limit 30; (7) One hundred bullheads; (8) Twenty rock bass; (9) Ten bluegill or sunfish, or combination thereof; (10) An unlimited number of rough fish and white bass; and (11) The season for all species of sturgeon is closed, except on Big Stone Lake, a lake sturgeon season will be open for catch-and-release angling only from June sixteenth through April fourteenth.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Bies to APPROVE THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION TO THE FISH LIMITS. Motion carried unanimously.

15d. Paddlefish Season

Proposed changes to rule: Increase the number of resident paddlefish tags during the Lake Francis Case snagging/archery season from 350 to 500 tags.

41:07:05:02. Paddlefish season in special management areas. Any paddlefish angler ~~18~~ eighteen years of age and older shall obtain and have in possession a valid South Dakota fishing license and a valid, nontransferable paddlefish permit and associated unlocked tag to take or attempt to take a paddlefish with a bow and arrow or a crossbow or take or attempt to take paddlefish or rough fish by snagging. A Nebraska resident possessing a South Dakota nonresident paddlefish permit is exempt from the South Dakota fishing license requirement if the Nebraska resident angler possesses a valid Nebraska fishing license or is legally exempt from compliance with Nebraska license or permit requirements. Any paddlefish angler under ~~18~~ eighteen years of age shall have a valid paddlefish permit and associated unlocked tag in possession while shooting paddlefish with bow and arrow or a crossbow or snagging paddlefish or rough fish.

Each paddlefish caught and kept must have the tag immediately affixed to the fish and locked in the manner and place indicated in the instructions provided with the tag. Each paddlefish caught and not kept must be immediately returned, unharmed, to the water from which it was taken. All paddlefish anglers shall cast for and hook their own fish. No person may attempt to snag any fish after all paddlefish tags issued to the person have been locked.

(1) The snagging season for paddlefish and rough fish is open on the South Dakota-Nebraska boundary waters below Gavin's Point Dam and on the Big Sioux River from the I-29 bridge to the confluence of the Big Sioux River and the Missouri River from October ~~1~~ first through October ~~31~~ thirty-first.

The snagging hours on the South Dakota-Nebraska Boundary waters and areas of the Big Sioux River open to paddlefish snagging are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. central time daily. Only a legal angler with a valid paddlefish permit and associated unlocked tag may snag paddlefish and rough fish during this season.

For the South Dakota-Nebraska boundary waters the annual quota of ~~3,200~~ three thousand two hundred fish is allocated by a permit and tag issued by each state according to the following schedule: Nebraska ~~1,600~~ one thousand six hundred permits; South Dakota ~~1,550~~ one thousand five hundred and fifty resident and ~~50~~ nonresident permits. Permits and associated tags are available by lottery drawing after application. Any resident or nonresident permit remaining after the first lottery drawing is available on a first-come, first-served basis to any person not already holding

a paddlefish permit, who applies. After September ~~1~~ first, a person may apply for a second permit. A person may obtain a maximum of two permits a year.

Paddlefish may be taken from sunrise to sunset from June ~~1~~ first through June ~~30~~ thirtieth from the Missouri River below Gavin's Point Dam with a bow and arrow. In addition to a bow and arrow, a crossbow may be used to take paddlefish downstream from the Highway 81 bridge.

Except as provided in this rule, an archery paddlefish angler ~~18~~ eighteen years of age and older shall obtain and have possession of a valid South Dakota fishing license and a valid, nontransferable paddlefish permit and associated tag available from the licensing section of the department before participating in archery fishing for paddlefish. A Nebraska resident possessing a South Dakota nonresident archery paddlefish permit is exempt from the South Dakota fishing license requirement if the Nebraska resident angler possesses a valid Nebraska fishing license or is legally exempt from compliance with Nebraska license or permit requirements. Any paddlefish angler under ~~18~~ eighteen years of age shall have a valid paddlefish permit and associated tag in possession while archery fishing paddlefish.

Two hundred fifty-five archery permits and associated tags are available to residents by lottery drawing after application. Individual paddlefish archery anglers may apply for a second permit and associated tag if any are available following the initial lottery drawing. Anglers may obtain a maximum of two archery paddlefish permits and associated tags each year. An additional eight percent of the permits available to residents may be issued to nonresidents by lottery drawing after application.

Paddlefish and rough fish season is open on the waters of Lake Francis Case and the White River up to the Highway 47 bridge from May ~~1~~ first through May ~~31~~ thirty-first. Paddlefish may be taken by snagging, bow and arrow, or a crossbow.

The snagging and archery hours on the waters of Lake Francis Case and the White River up to the Highway 47 bridge are from 6:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m., central time daily. Only a legal angler with a valid paddlefish permit and associated unlocked tag may shoot paddlefish with a bow and arrow or snag paddlefish and rough fish during this season.

For the waters of Lake Francis Case and the White River up to the Highway 47 bridge, the annual quota of ~~350~~ 500 fish is allocated by a permit and tag. Permits and associated tags are available by lottery drawing after application. Any resident permit remaining after the first lottery drawing is available first-come, first-served to any applicant not already holding a paddlefish permit. After April 1, a person may apply for a second permit. A person may obtain a maximum of two permits a year.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Bies to APPROVE THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION TO THE PADDLEFISH SEASON. Motion carried unanimously.

15e. Spearing

Proposed changes to current rule: Allow for rainbow trout to be harvested by legal spearing and archery methods from reservoirs within the boundaries of the Black Hills Fish Management Area.

41:07:06:03. Areas open to spearing of game fish. Except as otherwise provided in this section, game fish, except paddlefish, muskie, and sturgeon, may only be taken with a spear gun, spear, crossbow, or bow and arrow, from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, in the following areas during the dates listed: (1) South Dakota-Nebraska boundary waters from the South Dakota-Nebraska state line downstream, July ~~1~~ first through December ~~31~~ thirty-first; (2) All inland waters, May ~~1~~ first through March ~~31~~ thirty-first, with the following exceptions: (A) The taking of salmonids within the boundaries of the Black Hills Fisheries Management Area is prohibited, however rainbow trout may be taken within reservoirs; (B) The taking of walleye from lakes with a daily limit of one walleye is prohibited; and (C) Northern pike and catfish may be taken for noncommercial purposes, year-round, from all inland waters, except from Lynn, Middle Lynn and Amsden Lakes in Day County, Lake Sinai and Twin Lake (east of U.S Highway 81) in Brookings County, Twin Lake (west of U.S. Highway 81) in Kingsbury County, and North Island and South Island Lakes in McCook and Minnehaha Counties; and (3) Northern pike and catfish may be taken from all South Dakota-Minnesota boundary waters, except the Bois de Sioux River, November ~~15~~ fifteenth through the last Sunday of February.

Upon written request, the commission may, by resolution, temporarily open other areas to the public.

Motioned by White, seconded by Bartling to DENY THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION TO SPEARING. Motion carried unanimously.

15f. Bait

Proposed changes to current rule: (1) Clarify that traps, seines, dip nets, lift nets, and cast nets may only be used to take bait species listed in the rule describing species that may be taken as bait for noncommercial use. (2) Remove the term "minnow" from the description of traps allowed for use to take bait species, as other types of traps are used to take non-fish bait species described in the bait chapter.

41:09:04:02.04. Species that may be taken as bait for noncommercial use. Species that may be taken as bait by lawful anglers for noncommercial use, by methods described in 41:09:04:04, are: flathead chub, western silvery minnow, plains minnow, fathead minnow, white sucker, creek chub, golden shiner, emerald shiner, spottail shiner, gizzard shad, tiger salamander (all subspecies), leopard frog (all subspecies), crayfish (*Cambarus diogenes*, *Orconectes immunis*, *Orconectes virilis*, and *Orconectes causeyi*), freshwater shrimp, and leeches. Live gizzard shad may not be transported away from the water in which they were taken.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by White to APPROVE THE FISHERIES FINALIZATION TO BAIT. Motion carried unanimously.

16. Turkey and Antelope Draw Finalization

Changes from last year: Modify administrative rule to restrict the number of applications a person may submit during the third draw for Prairie Spring Turkey, Fall Turkey and Prairie Antelope to one application for each season.

41:06:01:09. Application for unsold big game licenses -- Future eligibility. In antelope and turkey season units where resident and nonresident licenses are limited in number and licenses remain unsold following a second lottery drawing, a person ~~who does not have a license in a season~~ may apply for up to five one leftover licenses license in that season. ~~and a person who already has a license in a season may apply for up to four additional licenses in that season.~~ After the third drawing, a person may apply for an unlimited number of leftover licenses on a first-come first-serve basis. Nonresidents are not eligible for East River spring turkey or East River fall turkey licenses except for licenses unsold after the second lottery drawing. Purchase of an antelope or turkey license under this section does not affect the eligibility of the applicant in future lotteries.

A person who possesses two licenses for any of the Black Hills, East River, West River, Refuge, Custer State Park or Muzzleloader Deer Hunting Seasons may not apply for a license in the second combined lottery drawing for these seasons and a person who possesses one license may apply for one additional license for a season if the person does not possess a license for that season. A resident may submit one application for each season in the third lottery drawing if the resident does not possess a license for that season and in the fourth lottery drawing, a resident may submit no more than five applications. In the third and fourth leftover drawings, a nonresident who does not possess a license may submit two applications and a nonresident who possesses one license may submit one application for a season if the nonresident does not possess a license for that season. After the fourth lottery drawing, a person may obtain an unlimited number of licenses from a pool of remaining resident and nonresident licenses.

If licenses remain unsold after the initial lottery drawing for Black Hills Elk Hunting Season, Prairie Elk Hunting Season, and Archery Elk Hunting Season, a person who does not already have an elk license may apply for a license in a second or subsequent lottery drawing if the person submits the nonrefundable application fee and the applicable license fee with the application. Purchase and receipt of a first-choice elk license during the first lottery drawing counts as a successful application and affects eligibility in future first lottery drawings for the same season. Purchase and receipt of an elk license in the second drawing by the use of preference points is a successful application and affects eligibility in future lottery drawings for these seasons. Purchase and receipt of an elk license in the second lottery drawing without the use of preference points, or purchase and receipt of an elk license in subsequent drawings, does not affect eligibility or preference in future lottery drawings for these seasons.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Bies to APPROVE THE TURKEY AND ANTELOPE DRAW FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

[NOTE: Commissioner Cull was not in meeting attendance on September 8, 2023, due to scheduling conflicts.]

17. Fall Foliage Tracker

Heather Berg, Parks GIS & Asset Management Program Specialist, stated this is the third year the public can track state park fall foliage color changes using an interactive map. Color conditions and photos of the current autumn scenery are updated weekly by field staff. Marketing efforts will promote the foliage tracker and encourage fall visits and stays within the parks for hunters and park-goers.

18. Aquatics Access Map Update

Heather Berg, Parks GIS & Asset Management Program Specialist, announced that the Public Fishing Access map has been rebranded to focus on a variety of Public Water Access uses. Map content has been divided to highlight five main Aquatic Access Experiences: boaters and small watercraft users, shore anglers, ice anglers, waterfowl hunters, and Black Hills anglers. Interactions with the map provide information on current conditions and photos.

19. The Trails are Calling Update

Rachel Comes, Statewide Volunteer Coordinator, provided an update on the Trails Are Calling annual park theme activity aimed at encouraging visitors to hike designated trails in 46 participating state parks, where they can search for Sasquatch signs, submit photos, and earn prizes. An interactive map was created to identify the specific trails where Sasquatch sightings had been reported, helping participants plan their adventures. To date, there have been 2,471 submissions and 5,514 hikers on South Dakota State Park trails. Various trail programs were held across the state, and Sasquatch also helped promote park entrance license sales, as well as the Go Forth and Check Out South Dakota State Parks programs. The presentation concluded with a Sasquatch sighting.

20. New Hunting Opportunities in Parks

Al Nedved, Parks and Recreation Director provided the Commission with an update on the change to ARSD 41:03:01:16 that was finalized in March. This change allows park managers to designate areas within state parks and recreation areas for hunting opportunities in the months of September and October.

Staff has identified 3,221 acres in 15 parks that will provide new hunting opportunities starting on September 1, 2023, and continuing into the spring of 2024. Maps for these designated areas are available for download on park web pages and can also be obtained within the park.

Furthermore, staff will conduct an evaluation of the expansion, seeking public feedback and assessing opportunities for mapping improvements. They will also explore potential areas for further expansion in the coming year.

21. Fort Sisseton Master Plan

Jon Jacobson, Senior Principal of Confluence, and William Collignon, Regional Park Supervisor with Game, Fish, and Parks, presented information on the composition and purpose of the Governor's Commission on Fort Sisseton. They discussed the questions and issues that led them to pursue a master planning effort and outlined their goals for Fort Sisseton State Park's master plan.

Mr. Jacobson led a discussion through a slideshow presentation summarizing the master plan in several key areas: public input, current uses and event planning, interpretation, a special analysis of the property, an engineer-led building assessment, and financial feasibility.

The process identified several notable changes and additions, including relocating the park entrance from the north side to the south side of the berm, the need to expand technological capabilities, the creation of an interpretive museum area, and the relocation of administration facilities out of interpretive areas. These changes would be consolidated into a new visitor center, which would require fundraising efforts involving the Fort Sisseton Commission and Parks & Wildlife Foundation.

Additionally, there is considerable interest in expanding camping services based on public input and the necessity for additional operational revenue to support this growth.

22. Custer State Park Airport Decommissioning Update

Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Director provided an update on the status of the CSP airport. Four concerns were expressed: (1) The airport receives very limited use, with approximately 50-75 recreational pilots using it annually. (2) GF&P staff, Wildland Fires, and no other state airplanes utilize this airport. (3) Immediate repairs of approximately \$250K and eventual runway replacement, estimated at \$2-3 million, must be 100% funded by park entrance and camping revenue, as there are no Federal funds available for this airport. (4) There are two nearby airport options for pilots: Custer Co. Airport, which is 16 miles away, and Hot Spring Airport, which is 36 miles away.

Considering these concerns and GF&P's user pay philosophy, the department is strongly considering recommending the decommissioning of the CSP Airport or not renewing its license. Public comments will continue to be accepted through September 29th.

23. Camping, Visitation, and Revenue Report

Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Director reported that August was a successful month for camping, with the Division experiencing a 1% increase in camping units compared to last year. Additionally, the Parks Division saw a 10% increase in park entrance license sales, with the largest increases seen in combination, daily, and CSP license sales. Overall, park visitation numbers remained consistent with last year, with over 1 million visitors enjoying our state parks and recreation areas.

24. Elk Contingency Licenses

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, discussed with the Commission the Elk Contingency License Recommendation. South Dakota Administrative Rule (ARSD § 41:06:26:06) affords the GFP commission authority, by resolution, to allocate additional antlerless elk contingency licenses to provide short-term relief to producers during temporary drought conditions. The number of contingency licenses cannot exceed 20% of available Black Hills antlerless elk licenses. Further guidance is provided in strategy 1-C of the GFP 2021 Elk Action Plan which details using elk population objectives and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) forage production model to develop recommendations (see table above).

NRCS Forage Production (% of normal per elk unit)	Contingency Licenses (% of current year unit antlerless allocation)		
	Decrease Obj	Maintain Obj	Increase Obj
90-100%	none	none	none
80-89%	10%	5%	none
70-79%	15%	10%	5%
<70%	20%	15%	10%

Range conditions and model results are discussed with NRCS and US Forest Service (USFS) staff. Well above average growing conditions in 2023 resulted in a recommendation of zero contingency licenses in any antlerless elk hunting unit. The USFS agreed with forage predictions based on the NRCS model. Currently, the USFS has no intentions of requiring any producers to remove cattle from grazing allotments early because of inadequate range conditions due to poor forage production. The table below provides forage production by antlerless elk unit through August 15, 2023, in addition to unit population objectives and antlerless elk license allocation.

Elk Unit	Forage Production	Unit Objective	2023		
			Antlerless Licenses	Contingency Percent	Contingency Licenses
1B	117%	increase	65	0%	0
2BCD	103%	maintain	100	0%	0
2EFG	100%	maintain	120	0%	0
2HIJ	99%	maintain	30	0%	0
3BCD	99%	maintain	135	0%	0
3EFG	106%	maintain	180	0%	0
4B	104%	maintain	40	0%	0
5B	99%	increase	0	0%	0
7B	103%	maintain	20	0%	0
9B	104%	decrease	40	0%	0
All			730		0

Ultimately, the department recommended no changes to the Elk Contingency plan for this year.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Bies to APPROVE THE ELK CONTINGENCY LICENSE PLAN.

25. Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan Adoption

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, presented the board with the Waterfowl Hunting Access Plan.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Locken to APPROVE THE WATERFOWL HUNTING ACCESS PLAN. Motion carried unanimously.

26. Deer Management Plan

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, discussed that GFP staff is currently in the process of reviewing and revising the deer management plan. This revision involves a thorough public input process, including a public opinion survey to be distributed to landowners and hunters. Additionally, GFP has established a stakeholder group representing individuals and organizations from across South Dakota. The inaugural meeting took place in late August.

A draft of the deer management plan is expected to be ready in early 2024. Subsequently, this plan will be presented to the GFP Commission for further discussion, public comment, and ultimately, adoption by the commission.

27. Goose Depredation Update

Nick Rossman, Regional Wildlife Manager, provided a brief overview of the Electronic Canada Goose Depredation Hub, the Request for Service (RFS) process, and the internal dashboard monitoring page. He also gave a general overview of the different levels of crop damage caused by Canada Geese, along with the volume of work and materials involved in handling an RFS. Lastly, he discussed the hiring of post-secondary students as interns and highlighted their importance in meeting the demands of requests related to depredating Canada Geese in South Dakota.

28. Western South Dakota Shooting Sports Complex Update

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, updated the commission on the construction of a world-class shooting sports complex located in Meade County. Designed with safety as a top priority, this range complex will provide the public, families, and youth groups with a world-class opportunity to engage in multiple shooting sports. The facility will accommodate beginners and experts alike, offering space for education, outreach, and organized shooting competitions.

The mass grading and dirt work for the SD Shooting Sports Complex were put out for bid on August 3rd, and bids were accepted until August 30th. On August 31st, a bid opening was conducted, resulting in the receipt of four bids for this project. The lowest bid came in at \$5,878,008.00. Groundbreaking is anticipated to take place in early 2024.

29. Fall Hunting Forecast and License Sales Update

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, presented a concise summary of license sales compared to the previous month. While many license categories showed minimal changes, there was a notable increase in fishing licenses, making it a strong month for fishing enthusiasts. Kirschenmann also discussed the expectation of seeing a higher number of hunting license sales as the grouse and pheasant seasons approach.

Additionally, Director Kirschenmann provided a brief overview of what hunters can anticipate for the upcoming fall hunting season, including both upland and big game season.

Adjourn

MOTION TO ADJOURN was made by Bartling, seconded by Locken. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am on September 8, 2023.

Respectfully submitted.



Kevin Robling, Department Secretary