



Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

December 5, 2024 | SD State Capitol Building | Pierre, SD

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the SD State Capitol Building in Pierre, SD on December 5, 2024. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Bruce Cull, Travis Theel, and Julie Bartling were present, with Commissioner Bies absent excused. With seven commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 90 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure [Action Item]

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

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of November 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 2024 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Additional Salary Days [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners, but none were brought forward.

4. 2025 Commission Schedule [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for the approval of 2025 commission meeting schedule.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE 2025 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE. The motion carried unanimously.

Open Forum

Wildlife Division Director Tom Kirschenmann opened the floor at 2:01 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization.

2:01 pm: Justin Broughton of Sioux Falls, SD representing South Dakota Bowhunters Association testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:06 pm: Dana Rogers of Hill City, SD representing South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:08 pm: Todd Craig of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:10 pm: Tyler Pickett of Sturgis, SD testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:13 pm: Phil Lentz of Sioux Falls, SD testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:14 pm: Robert Mahaffey of Rapid City, SD representing South Dakota Bowhunters Association and South Dakota Antelope Foundation testified virtually in support of mandatory big game reporting.

2:17 pm: Brian Kraus of Reliance, SD testified in person on the growing elk population concern in Lyman County.



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2:19 pm: Charlie Boe of Chamberlain, SD testified in person on the growing elk population concern north of Reliance, SD.

2:22 pm: Brad Korlen of Reliance, SD testified in person on adding an additional unit to the prairie elk season.

2:32 pm: Tyler Frederick of Reliance, SD testified in person on the growing elk population concern in Lyman County.

2:34 pm: Bill Hinds of Pierre, SD representing Lake Oahe Walleye Restoration Coalition testified in person on the Lake Oahe fisheries management.

2:37 pm: Bill Waeckerle of Pierre, SD representing Lake Oahe Walleye Restoration Coalition testified in person on Lake Oahe fisheries management.

2:40 pm: Alexey Egtrov of Brookings, SD testified virtually in opposition to the nest predator bounty program.

The open forum closed at 2:45 pm CST.

Petition #227: Mandatory Big Game Harvest Report

[Action Item: Petition]

Ron Kolbeck of Salem, SD submitted petition #227 in which requested the Commission require all licensed big-game hunters to submit a mandatory harvest report.

Director Kirschenmann introduced the petition requested by Mr. Ron Kolbeck asking the commission to require mandatory big-game harvest reporting. This would include the restriction of purchasing a license in the following year. One of the primary reasons for the request was to provide better data to the biologists and public for a management tool. The commission determined to deny per the recommendation of the department. Primary reasons included the Department currently developing a mandatory electronic tagging system that will result in real-time harvest reporting.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO DENY PETITION #227. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 24-23

WHEREAS, Ronald Kolbeck of Salem, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated November 26, 2024, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission create a new rule within ARSD § 41:06 (Hunting Seasons and Methods) – to require that all licensed big-game hunters submit a harvest report in order to apply for a similar license (hereinafter referred to as “the Petition”); and

WHEREAS, all members of the Commission have been furnished with and have reviewed a copy of the Petition; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that a copy of the Petition has been served on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council as required by SDCL § 1-26-13; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that SDCL § 1-26-13 requires that within thirty (30) days of submission of a Petition, the Commission shall either “deny the petition in writing (stating its reasons for the denials) or shall initiate rule-making proceedings in accordance with SDCL 1-26-4.”; and



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WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised and is of the opinion that a hearing on the Petition is neither statutorily required nor necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed and carefully considered the requirements and procedures set out in SDCL §1-26-13 and the contents of the Petition, including the reasons advanced by Petitioner to require licensed big-game hunters to submit a harvest report in order to apply for a similar license; and

WHEREAS, the Department is currently developing a mandatory electronic tagging system that will result in real-time harvest reporting; and

WHEREAS, currently 100% of big game hunters are sent an electronic harvest report questionnaire, thus all big game hunters are censused and not subsampled; and

WHEREAS, imposing a mandatory harvest report requirement with penalties of removing the ability to submit future applications jeopardizes relationships and customer service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission does hereby deny the Petition for the reasons hereinabove stated in this Resolution, which said Resolution as adopted by the Commission shall constitute the Commission's written denial of the Petition and its reasons therefore.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Petition, a record of the Commission's discussions concerning same, and this Resolution be made a part of the Minutes of the Commission meeting at which this Resolution is adopted, and further, that the Department be and it is hereby authorized and directed in compliance with SDCL §1-26-13 to serve a copy of an extract of that portion of the Commission minutes which pertain to the Commission's discussion of the Petition and its adoption of this Resolution, including a copy of the Resolution, on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council with copies also to be provided to the Petitioner, Ronald Kolbeck of Salem, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-23. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Petition #230: Paddlefish Snagging at Gavins Point [Action Item: Petition]

Tad Reiner of Humboldt, SD submitted petition #230 in which requested the Commission to all South Dakota residents to snag paddlefish beyond the mouth of the James River up to the Highway 50 Bridge.

Director Kirschenmann introduced the petition requested by Mr. Tad Reiner requesting for South Dakota residents with the proper permit to snag paddlefish beyond the mouth of the James River up to the Highway 50 bridge. The department recommended to deny the petition for several reasons, primarily because of the challenges associated with changing this rule require multi-state agreement.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY THEEL TO DENY PETITION #230. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 24-24

WHEREAS, Tad Reiner of Humboldt, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated December 2, 2024, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:07:05:02 (Paddlefish season in special management areas) – to allow those with the proper permit to snag paddlefish beyond the mouth of the James River up to the Highway 50 bridge (hereinafter referred to as “the Petition”); and



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WHEREAS, all members of the Commission have been furnished with and have reviewed a copy of the Petition; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that a copy of the Petition has been served on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council as required by SDCL § 1-26-13; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that SDCL § 1-26-13 requires that within thirty (30) days of submission of a Petition, the Commission shall either “deny the petition in writing (stating its reasons for the denials) or shall initiate rule-making proceedings in accordance with SDCL 1-26-4.”; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised and is of the opinion that a hearing on the Petition is neither statutorily required nor necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed and carefully considered the requirements and procedures set out in SDCL §1-26-13 and the contents of the Petition, including the reasons advanced by Petitioner to allow those with the proper permit to snag paddlefish beyond the mouth of the James River up to the Highway 50 bridge; and

WHEREAS, the paddlefish fishery below Gavins Point Dam on the Missouri River is jointly managed by the States of South Dakota and Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, a South Dakota-Nebraska reciprocal access agreement exists, which states where licensees from each state may fish on the border waters and is beneficial for the State of South Dakota to maintain; and

WHEREAS, the reciprocal access agreement does not apply to the James River, meaning Nebraska licensees could not snag by boat there; and

WHEREAS, the petition specifically asks for the area of the James River from the Hwy 50 bridge downstream to the confluence with the Missouri River to be open for paddlefish snagging by South Dakota residents, meaning the 50 South Dakota permits issued to nonresidents could not be used in that area; and

WHEREAS, safety issues exist when navigating watercraft through the mouth of the James River and with people parking near the Highway 50 bridge to snag paddlefish from shore;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission does hereby deny the Petition for the reasons hereinabove stated in this Resolution, which said Resolution as adopted by the Commission shall constitute the Commission’s written denial of the Petition and its reasons therefore.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Petition, a record of the Commission’s discussions concerning same, and this Resolution be made a part of the Minutes of the Commission meeting at which this Resolution is adopted, and further, that the Department be and it is hereby authorized and directed in compliance with SDCL §1-26-13 to serve a copy of an extract of that portion of the Commission minutes which pertain to the Commission’s discussion of the Petition and its adoption of this Resolution, including a copy of the Resolution, on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council with copies also to be provided to the Petitioner, Tad Reiner of Humboldt, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BARLTING TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-24. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Volunteer Report for the 2024 Season

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Rachel Comes, Statewide Volunteer Program Coordinator, updated the Commission on the state park volunteer program statistics. In 2024, a total of 384 volunteers working in the state park system provided



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over 95,600 hours of service. This equates to 50 FTE and an estimated fiscal impact of \$1.4M. Other information provided included types of volunteers, recruitment, recognition, and survey results which indicates overall satisfaction to be high.

7. CSP Buffalo Auction Results

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Matt Snyder, Regional Parks Supervisor provided the Commission with bison auction results, how many buyers were in person compared to online and what States the buyers were from. Discussed the current market being strong which led to an increase in the overall sell over last year.

8. CSP Resort Repairs & Maintenance Fund

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Matt Snyder, Regional Parks Supervisor, along with Josh Schmaltz President Ramkota Company and Tom Morris Vice President Ramkota Companies shared the 2024 Repair and Maintenance report and touched on the significant improvements that were completed in 2024. Also discussed the proposed 2025 Repair and Maintenance projects that will be conducted during 2025.

9. Oahe Downstream Deer Hunt

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Pat Buscher, Regional Park Supervisor, provided an overview of the Department of GFP through Oahe Downstream field staff, collaboration with the Oahe Project office (Corps of Engineers) to offer a deer hunt for hunters that are limited through use of a wheelchair for mobility. This past November 23rd & 24th, marked the 32nd year of this special hunt. The deer hunt is limited to a total of 10 licensed hunters and are guided to a hunt on the recreation area by agency staff, volunteers, and family co-sponsors. The event is possible only due to local and statewide sponsors such as the PVA North Central chapter in Sioux Falls, American Legion Post 8, Pizza Ranch, Scheels, Coke Bottling of Pierre, Jerome Beverages, and Dakotamart. Annually the event requires 12-15 volunteers to effectively manage the hunt for the participants.

10. 2025 Construction Projects

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation provided the Commission with a list of the major capital development and preventative maintenance projects slated for the 2025 construction season. He also shared with the Commissioners how a project moves from an idea at the park level to being proposed in a fiscal year budget.

11. November Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

[Parks & Recreation: Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation provided the Commission with an overview of camping units for November and YTD. Camping was up 25% in the month of November and YTD camping units were up 2% overall or 6,336 units over last year's numbers. Weather and cross-marketing of camping with hunters and fishermen were credited for these increases. Revenue was on par with last year's November with strong entrance license and camping sales. YTD Revenue is 5% above last year with much of this increase due to expanded entrance license sales to new park users.

12. Charles Mix County Game Production Area Land Donation

[Wildlife: Action Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, asked the commission to approve Curtis R. Kaberna willed GFP 80 acres of property located near Delmont in Charles Mix County. Per the will the property must be used for wildlife management and public hunting purposes and be identified as the Curtis R. Kaberna Game Production Area. The property currently has 75 acres enrolled in CRP through 2032 and has great habitat cover. The commission was asked to take action to accept the donation. The commission adopted resolution 24-21 accepting the donation and thanking the family and estate for their generosity.



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RESOLUTION 24-21

WHEREAS, Curtis R. Kaberna Estate owns real property (Property) described as: The Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (SW1/4NW1/4), and the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (SE1/4NW1/4), all in Section Thirty-six (36) in Township Ninety-seven (97) North, Range Sixty-three (63) West of the 5th P.M., in Charles Mix County, South Dakota, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Curtis's wishes and will, Curtis desired to gift and transfer title to the Property to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (Department) for use as a Game Production Area; and

WHEREAS, the Department has evaluated and determined that the Property would serve very well as a Game Production Area, offering wildlife habitat, public hunting, and other wildlife related outdoor recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Department is authorized to accept gifts of property for a Game Production Area as per SDCL 41-2-19 and desires to accept the gift of the Property upon confirmation of the gift by the Game, Fish and Parks Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission desires to acknowledge the Department's acceptance of this gift of property from the Curtis R. Kaberna Estate for use as a Game Production Area, and further acknowledge the extreme generosity by the late Curtis R. Kaberna and family; and WHEREAS, the Department will title the Property the Curtis R. Kaberna Game Production Area use it exclusively for wildlife management and public hunting access.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission does hereby confirm the decision by the Department to accept the transfer and gift of the Property from the Curtis R. Kaberna Estate to be used as a Game Production Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission, on behalf of the citizens and sportspersons of South Dakota, does hereby acknowledge and express its deepest appreciation and gratitude to the late Curtis R. Kaberna and family for their generosity, and further acknowledge the outdoor recreation opportunities this gift will provide to South Dakotans for many years to come.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-21. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Cotton Slough Land Exchange

[Wildlife: Action Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, has asked the Commission to approve the land exchange of the Cotton Slough Game Production Area, located northeast of Lake Kampeska by Watertown. The department has worked with local landowners on an exchange that would trade 12.32 acres that is difficult for the public to access and use for 21.64 acres of property. These properties are of equal value determined by an appraiser. The 21.64 acres that the department would acquire in the trade would be very accessible by users and allow for a GPA boundary that is located in a place it can be better maintained. The current boundary runs through some wetlands and is difficult to identify with fencing and signage for users. The commission was asked to take action to approve the property exchange. The commission adopted resolution 24-22 approving the department to move forward with the steps needed to exchange the properties.

RESOLUTION 24-22

WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota (held by and for the use and benefit of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) owns an interest in real estate described as: Lot 1 of Cotton Slough Addition in Government Lot 5 in Section 33, Township 118 North, Range 52 West, of the 5th P.M, in the Sisseton and Wahpeton



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Indian Reservation, Codington County, South Dakota.; containing 12.32 acres, more or less, hereinafter referred to as GFP PROPERTY, which is valued at\$17,900.00; and

WHEREAS, Clay Schuchard (SCHUCHARD), of 16755 452 Ave., WATERTOWN SD 57201, owns an interest in real estate described as: Lot 2 of Cotton Slough Addition in Government Lot 3 and 4 in Section 10, Township 117 North, Range 53 West, of the 5th P.M, in Codington County, South Dakota, containing 21.64 acres, more or less, hereinafter referred to as SCHUCHARD PROPERTY, which is valued at \$17,900.00; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota law (SDCL 41-2-29.2) provides that GFP has the power, authority, and duty to trade or exchange real property owned by the State and held by GFP if the GFP Commission shall first determine that real property more suitable to GFP purposes may be obtained by an exchange, provided the parcels of real property to be exchanged are of equal value; and

WHEREAS, GFP and SCHUCHARD desire to exchange interests in GFP PROPERTY and SCHUCHARD PROPERTY, and the GFP Commission having determined that SCHUCHARD PROPERTY is more suitable to GFP for GFP purposes than GFP PROPERTY, and that GFP PROPERTY and SCHUCHARD PROPERTY are of equal value as determined by a qualified appraiser; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota law requires that the conveyance of GFP PROPERTY be approved and executed in the manner provided by SDCL 5-2-11.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the GFP Commission hereby takes final action on and approves the above referenced exchanges of the above described parcels of real property and hereby directs GFP to take all steps necessary to effectuate the exchange of GFP PROPERTY for SCHUCHARD PROPERTY under procedures mandated by statute.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GFP Commission does hereby ratify and confirm the Department's designation of the SCHUCHARD PROPERTY being acquired pursuant to the exchange authorized by this Resolution for utilization by the Division of Wildlife for the purpose of game production and, further, does hereby expressly designate and classify the SCHUCHARD PROPERTY being acquired pursuant to the exchange authorized by this Resolution for use as a game production area.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-22. The motion carried unanimously.

14. Mountain Goat Action Plan

[Wildlife: Info Item]

This item was deferred to the January 2025 Commission meeting due to time constraints.

15. Chinook Salmon Spawning Overview

[Wildlife: Info Item]

Robert Hanten, Fisheries Biologist, provided an overview of the Lake Oahe Chinook Salmon program and spawning results. South Dakota has been maintaining a Chinook Salmon sport fishery in Lake Oahe for over 40 years. Salmon are the second most targeted fish species on Lake Oahe and anglers will travel 200 plus miles one way to fish for them. No natural reproduction of salmon occurs in Lake Oahe, so fisheries crews collect eggs from returning adults. The eggs are hatched and raised at state fish hatcheries and stocked back into Lake Oahe the following spring. This year's egg collection efforts with assistance from North Dakota Game & Fish was 1.6 million eggs. Roughly one third of the eggs collected will become fish and should equate approximately 500,000 salmon to stock in 2025. The Whitlock Spawning Station provides a secondary benefit of education and outreach with approximately 600 folks each October touring the station. Numerous school groups visit and 25,000 plus individuals have learned about the salmon program since 1984.



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16. Third-Party Shooting Range Grants

[Wildlife: Info Item]

Graham Larson, Assistant Federal Aid Coordinator Wildlife Division, provided the Commission an overview and history of the Third-Party Shooting Range Program. He provided the criteria of how third-party cooperators are selected for the competitive grant and the different types of improvements and developments the grant covers. He also provided how much GFP has helped the Third-Party Shooting Ranges from the past five completed fiscal years and this current fiscal year.

17. Outdoor Campus East Expansion Update

[Wildlife: Info Item]

This item was deferred to the January 2025 Commission meeting due to time constraints.

18. License Sales Reports

[Wildlife: Info Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a summary of licenses sales through the end of November. Overall, license sales remain strong for both fishing and hunting. Kirschenmann pointed out a few examples such as resident and nonresident small game sales as well as resident fishing. It was indicated by Kirschenmann that at the January meeting a year-end summary will be provided as the current license year ends December 14. It was also pointed out that with the new license year beginning on December 15, so will the new fees for hunting and fishing licenses passed in October.

19. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on January 9-10, 2024, at the Ramkota Convention Center, in Pierre, starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:59 PM CST ON DECEMBER 5, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Robling".

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary