



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

JULY 20, 2023 | OACOMA, SD
ARROWHEAD RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm CST at the Arrowhead Resort & Convention Center in Oacoma, SD, on July 20, 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 77 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 June 2023 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

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

3. Additional Salary Days

Chair Rissler called for any additional salary days from the commissioners. Commissioner White reported one.

Motion by Locken, seconded by Whitmyre to APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

4. License List Request

Joel Black from Tucson, AZ requested the small game list for researching and finding trends of who is hunting pheasant that are non-resident.

Motioned by White, seconded by Bartling to APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST. The motion carried unanimously.

5. South Dakota Go Outdoors Update

Keith Fisk, Licensing Program Administrator, updated the Commission on the Go Outdoors Licensing systems.

Jodi Bechard, Parks Business Manager, told Commissioners that the Go Outdoors system focused on internal updates as to keep the customer side stable through the heavy reservation season. The next update in October will again focus on issues affecting the customer facing side.

6. Nest Predator Bounty Program Update

Jacque Ermer, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, provided an update on the 2023 Nest Predator Bounty Program, which concluded on June 29 after reaching the 50,000-cap limit. This marked the program's fifth year and the second year it was open exclusively to youth during March. Overall participation increased by 5% compared to the previous year. Youth accounted for 46% of all participants, the highest percentage since the program's inception in 2019 when it was only 13%. Raccoons were the most commonly submitted nest predator. Additionally, this year, over 1,000 free live traps were distributed to participating youth. Sixteen youth were also selected to receive the Benton Howe Youth Trap Giveaway package, which included a raccoon trapping starter kit.

7. New Staff Introduction

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

Open Forum

Jon Kotilnek, Senior Staff Attorney, opened the floor at 2:00 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that may not be on the agenda.

- 2:00 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD addressed concerns with GFP Late Agenda Posting. Also discussed opposition to the nest predator bounty program as well as the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:03 pm: Bruce Shaffer of Gregory, SD testified regarding cost of out of state fishing and hunting licenses.
- 2:06 pm: Brett Waibel of Draper, SD testified on the turkey & antelope draw proposals.
- 2:07 pm: Jason Kral of Yankton, SD testified on the turkey & antelope draw proposals.
- 2:10 pm: Foster Batholow of Rapid City, SD testified on the turkey & antelope draw proposals.
- 2:14 pm: Josh Rosenau of Lake Forest Park, WA representing the Mountain Lion Foundation testified on the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:17 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified on the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:21 pm: Finn Sacrison of Rapid City, SD testified on both mountain lion proposals.
- 2:25 pm: Patrick Weimer of Spearfish, SD representing the Houndsmen of SD testified on the mountain lion proposal.
- 2:28 pm: Jeremy Wells of Sturgis, SD representing the Houndsmen Association testified on both mountain lion proposals.
- Corey Jones of Rapid City signed up to provide testimony but wasn't present when called upon.

Mr. Kotilnek closed the open forum at 2:30 pm CST.

8. Mountain Lion Proposal – Expanded Use of Hounds

Jeremy Wells of Sioux Falls, SD, submitted petition #194, requesting the use of dogs within the fire protection district of the Black Hills exclusively for residents. The proposed harvest limit is set at 12 mountain lions, with an equal distribution of 6 males and 6 females.

Andy Lindbloom, Senior Wildlife Biologist, discussed that GFP conducts and evaluates numerous population abundance and monitoring surveys to manage mountain lions in South Dakota. An update on the current management objectives, as well as the status and trends of mountain lions, was provided.

A motion by Cull, seconded by Bies, was made to APPROVE PETITION #194 IN WHICH PROPOSES THE EXTENDED USE OF HOUNDS DURING THE MOUNTAIN LION HUNTING SEASON PETITION. The motion passed unanimously.

The Department will submit a proposal in reference to this petition at the next September Commission meeting.

9. Mountain Lion Proposal – Expanded Use of Hounds

Patrick Weimer of Spearfish, SD submitted petition #195 requesting the ability to use hounds to pursue Mountain Lion within the fire protection district and surrounding public lands.

Motion by Whitmyre, seconded by Spring to DENY PETITION #195 IN WHICH EXTENDS THE USE OF HOUNDS TO PURSUE MOUNTAIN LIONS. The motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Spring to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-22 TO DENY PETITION #195 TO EXPAND THE USE OF HOUNDS DURING THE MOUNTAIN LION SEASON. The motion passed unanimously.



10. Fisheries Proposals

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, brought for the Department proposals from the Fisheries Division. These proposals included proposals about general provisions, bait, fish limits, hoop nets, traps, setlines, and floatlines. They also include paddlefish season revisions, as well as updates to spearing.

Motion by Cull, seconded by Bartling to APPROVE THE FISHERIES PROPOSALS. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Mountain Lion Proposal

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, discussed modifications to the harvest limit in Black Hills Fire Protection District to 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions (includes Custer State Park).

As there was no change requested to the proposal, THE COMMISSION TOOK NO ACTION.

12. Turkey and Antelope Draw Proposal

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, discussed modifying 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.

As there was no change requested to the proposal, THE COMMISSION TOOK NO ACTION.

13. Custer State Park Airport Update

Deputy Secretary Scott Simpson presented an update on the Custer State Park Airport, which is currently facing an estimated \$250,000 in immediate repair needs. The SD DOT Aeronautics staff recommends that within 7-10 years, the runway (paved in 1985) must be lifted and replaced, with an estimated cost ranging from \$2 million to \$3 million. On average, the airport sees approximately 50-75 private planes using it for recreational traffic annually. Park staff and Wildland Fires have not used the airport for many years, and the State no longer has a need for this facility.

As a state-owned airport, there are no federal funding sources available for repairs or eventual replacement. Using park entrance and camping fee revenue to maintain the airport for recreational pilot use appears inappropriate. Therefore, GF&P would like to initiate the process of exploring the decommissioning of this airport by offering a public comment period over the next 60 days.

14. Top Three Park Marketing Priorities

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator, presented the top park marketing priorities: modern lodging, fall camping, and day use. The goal is to boost reservations by promoting year-round stays in modern lodging, fall camping, and the utilization of day use facilities, such as picnic shelters. During the presentation, April also discussed the current and upcoming efforts for each marketing priority.

15. Trail Events

Dana Garry-Reiprich, GFP Mickelson Trail Manager, reported on the Mickelson Trail, its railroad history, how it transformed into a bicycling trail, and the efforts in place to maintain its premier status. The Mickelson boasts 109 miles of limestone-surfaced trail, 4 hard rock tunnels, over 125 trestle bridges, 16 trailhead/trail stops, and offers unsurpassed scenery.

Garry-Reiprich also mentioned a Fall Trail Trek scheduled for September and other ongoing events, such as 'Trolley on the Trail.'

16. Camping, Visitation and Revenue Reports

Al Nedved, Deputy Director for the Division of Parks and Recreation presented the June reports for camping, visitation, and revenue. Overall, June was a good month for the state parks. The weather was fantastic, and there is good fishing throughout the state. Camping numbers are roughly on par with 2022, with visitation slightly behind last year by 2%.

17. Depredation Pool Hunt Resolution

Resolution 23-21 was brought before the Commission to designate the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks or his designee is authorized to establish when and where each permit is valid and the number, species, and sex of the big game animals permitted to be taken by the holder of each big game depredation permit for the next three years (2023-2026).

Motion by Bies, seconded by Bartling to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-21 TO DESIGNATE THE SECRETARY OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ESTABLISH DEPREDAATION POOLS. The motion carried unanimously.

18. RMEF Elk License Raffle

Director Kirschenmann explained the selection process to the Commission for granting an entity the elk raffle license to support big game conservation. He mentioned that the only entity in consideration was the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. After approving the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for the 2023/2024 raffle license, the Commission requested the department to explore ways to enhance the license's fundraising potential for habitat and conservation. This includes considering options such as using it for raffles or auctions and potentially extending eligibility to nonresidents.

Motioned by Locken, seconded by Bartling TO APPROVE RMEF AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE OF THE 2024 ELK RAFFLE LICENSE. The motion carried unanimously.

19. Aquatic Invasive Species Update

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, provided the Commission with an update on the Departments Aquatic Invasive Species program. Thus far, 12,834 watercraft inspections have occurred statewide, compared to 12,094 at the same time last year. The Sand Lake Wildlife Refuge and the James River are now considered infested with zebra mussels, as well.

20. License Sales Update

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Division Director, provided a brief update on license sales comparing the last report as of the end of May to end of June. Of greatest significance over the month of June was the noticeable increase in licenses sales associated with fishing opportunities.

Adjourn

Motion by Bartling, seconded by Locken to ADJOURN THE MEETING. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned on July 20, 2023, at 5:14 pm CST.

Respectfully submitted.



Kevin Robling, Department Secretary.

