



COMMISSION MINUTES

Game, Fish and Parks Commission

June 8-9, 2023
Good Earth State Park | Sioux Falls, SD

CALL MEETING TO ORDER AT 1:00 PM CST

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm CST at Good Earth State Park located near Sioux Falls, SD on June 8, 2023. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Travis Bies, Jon Locken, Bruce Cull, and Charles Spring were present. With seven commissioners present, a quorum was established. The public and staff can listen via SDPD Livestream, and participate via conference, or in person, with approximately 52 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Chair Rissler called for a conflict of interest to be disclosed. Commissioner Cull expressed that he may have a conflict of interest as it relates to the Commission's decision regarding the adoption of the wildlife budget. Out of abundance of caution he stated he would abstain from voting on the current budget proposal.

2. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

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

Motioned Bies, seconded by Whitmyre to APPROVE THE MAY 2023 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER SALARY DAYS

Chair Rissler called for any additional salary day from the commissioners. *None were submitted.*

4. BUDGET DISCUSSION

Finance Officer, Chris Petersen, presented the Commission with a proposed FY24 budget.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Locken to APPROVE THE 0601 WILDLIFE BUDGET FOR \$62,665,532.00. Voting AYE – Rissler, Bies, Locken, Spring, White, and Whitmyre. Abstaining – Cull. The motion carried.

Motioned by Locken, seconded by White to APPROVE THE 0612 WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET FOR \$7,362,875.00. Voting AYE – Rissler, Bies, Locken, Spring, White, and Whitmyre. Abstaining – Cull. The motion carried.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by White to APPROVE THE 0622 SNOWMOBILE TRAILS BUDGET FOR \$1,460,416.00. Voting AYE – Rissler, Bies, Locken, Spring, White, and Whitmyre. Abstaining – Cull. The motion carried.

5. SOUTH DAKOTA GO OUTDOORS UPDATE

Keith Fisk, Licensing Program Administrator, provided the commission of the recap for the 2023 elk draws where we broke another record with just over 40,000 apps and spoke about upcoming draws and deadlines.

Jodi Bechard, Parks Business Manager, reported that the GFP marketing team has been working with Brandt on the launch of Merchandise on Go Outdoors SD, where they are currently offering cups and hats with the Parks 'Trails are Calling' theme and Go Outdoors South Dakota logos. This adds no workload to GFP as the items are drop shipped from the factory to the customer. GFP will receive 10% of the profits. Marketing has also been working on onboarding and promotional emails. When a customer purchases a park entrance license through their profile, they will receive a series of three emails with ways to enjoy their recent purchase. We'll be cross promoting between divisions. Examples being "Fish Where You Camp" or advertising the modern cabins for those fall hunts. Our 24-hour day kiosks are still very popular with the public as they allow customers to purchase their Park Entrance Licenses at any time of the day with a credit card, which is time saving from both staff and customers.

6. SECOND CENTURY HABITAT FUND GALA

Brian Bashore, Executive Director of South Century Habitat Fund, gave an update on the Second Century Habitat Funds' inaugural Gala that took place on June 3rd. The Gala was a huge success and Bashore shared a short video that highlighted the event. Second Century raised 320k from the night's event which was also the conclusion of the Toyota truck and AlumaCraft Boat raffle which brought in \$32,000 and the winner Ross Gaulke was announced that evening. In total, \$700,000 was raised for habitat across South Dakota.

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 1:58 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that may not be on the agenda.

- 1:59 pm: Ron Kolbeck testified online in ~~support~~ opposition to the crossbow for paddlefish petition.
- 2:00 pm: Corey Hansen of Brandon, SD testified in person about adding a high fence to I90 near Brandon, due to the damage caused by deer. He also testified in favor of moving the southern Minnehaha County to non-rifle.
- 2:04 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified in opposition to ruling on any proposals for the June meeting siting due process, and in opposition to otter trapping.
- 2:09 pm: Trevor Davis testified virtually in ~~opposition~~ support to the crossbow for paddlefish petition.
- 2:12 pm: Justin Broughton of Sioux Falls, SD representing the South Dakota Bowhunters Inc testified virtually in ~~support~~ opposition to the crossbow for paddlefish petition.
- 2:14 pm: Robert Fahey of Sioux Falls, SD testified in person with ~~support~~ opposition crossbow for paddlefish petition.
- 2:17 pm: Dana Rogers of Hills City, SD representing the South Dakota Bowhunters Inc testified virtually in ~~support~~ opposition to the crossbow for paddlefish petition.
- Jim Dahlberg of Hot Springs, SD attempted to testify, however was unable to due to technical difficulties.

Mr. Kotilnek closed the open forum at 2:21 pm CST.

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8. LEADERSHIP GRADUATION

Commission Chair Stephanie Rissler and Secretary Kevin Robling acknowledged the graduation of 17 participants from the 2022-2023 GFP Leadership Development Program (LDP), marking the fourth cohort of the program. LDP, coordinated by Emmet Keyser (Division of Wildlife) and Jeff VanMeeteren (Division of Parks and Recreation), has successfully graduated nearly 80 participants since its launch in 2018. The program aligns with GFP's vision and mission, aiming to foster professional excellence by empowering staff through leadership development. The curriculum, provided by Dr. Tori Littlefield and Dr. Anna Erickson from Lumin Consulting, covers various aspects, including self-awareness, situational leadership, organizational structures, and change management. LDP graduates often recommend staff for future LDPs, and many have been promoted after completing the program. Participants gain valuable insights into themselves, become more efficient and effective leaders, and build strong relationships across disciplines and divisions, contributing to the overall strength of the Department.

PETITIONS

9. PETITION #191: NO WAKE ZONE AT CEDAR SHORE BOAT LAUNCH AND REC AREA

Jonathan Magyar of Sioux Falls, SD, submitted Petition #191 requesting a no wake zone be put in place at the Cedar Shore boat launch and recreation area.

Department Position: The department recommended denying the petition.

Motioned by Locken, seconded by Whitmyre to DENY THE PETITION TO IMPOSE A NO WAKE ZONE AT THE CEDAR SHORE BOAT LAUNCH AND RECREATION AREA. The motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Bartling to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-19 TO DENY THE PETITION TO IMPOSE A NO WAKE ZONE AT THE CEDAR SHORE BOAT LAUNCH AND RECREATION AREA. The motion carried unanimously.

10. PETITION #192: RESTRICTING CROSSBOWS FOR PADDLEFISHING

Richard Hoff of Sioux Falls, SD submitted Petition #192 requesting the department restrict crossbow as a method of harvesting a paddlefish, unless the person has a disability.

Department Position: The department recommended denying the petition.

Motioned by Bartling, seconded by Spring to DENY THE PETITION RESTRICTING CROSSBOW USE ON PADDLEFISH. The motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Whitmyre seconded by Locken to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-20 TO DENY PETITION TO RESTRICTING CROSSBOW HARVEST OF PADDLEFISH. The motion carried unanimously.

PROPOSALS

11. RIVER OTTER TRAPPING & HUNTING SEASONS

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, outlined tool used in river otter management. These tools included the use of opportunistic observations, information gained from harvest surveys, necropsies, and the use of non-invasive genetic sampling.

The department had no recommended changes to the River Otter Trapping and Hunting Season (Chapter 41:08:01).

Since the department had no recommended changes, THE COMMISSION TOOK NO ACTION ON THE PROPOSALS.

12. SAGE GROUSE HUNTING SEASON

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, outlined the challenges and opportunities associated with greater sage-grouse management in South Dakota. The information outlined the collaboration with conservation partners, as well as the hunting season recommendations based on spring lek surveys.

The department had no recommended changes to the Sage Grouse Hunting Season (Chapter 41:06:10).

Since the department had no recommended changes, THE COMMISSION TOOK NO ACTION ON THE PROPOSALS.

13. TURKEY AND ANTELOPE DRAW

Chad Switzer, Deputy Director of Wildlife, outlined the turkey and antelope draw proposals.

The department recommended the following 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.

Motioned by Locken, seconded by Whitmyre to APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL. The motion carried unanimously. The Proposal will again be brought before the Commission at the July Commission meeting.

DIVISION OF PARKS & RECREATION

14. PALISADES STATE PARK UPDATE

Luke Dreckman, District Park Supervisor, presented on the Palisades State Park expansion status. There is a lot of construction going on this year, headlining a welcome center, comfort station, and dump station. The expansion is in Phase 3 and plans to open the new entrance and camping sites are in place for Spring 2024. Future amenities are planned over the next couple of years, possibilities include Modern Cabins, Disc Golf, and an Archery Range.

15. UPCOMING PROJECTS IN THE PARKS

Planning and Development Administrator, Adam Kulesa, gave a short presentation was provided about capital development projects happening throughout the parks system in 2023 as well as a brief look into projects that are being scoped and cleared for permitting to complete in calendar year 2024. There were a couple of questions from the commission and were answered appropriately with no follow up needed.

16. ADAMS HOMESTEAD INTERPRETIVE PROJECT

Park Manager, Jody Moats, provided an overview of the new interpretive displays and signage at Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve. The redesign of Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve included exhibits inside the visitor center as well as outdoor wayfinding and interpretive signage. The design team, BrownKnows Designs, envisioned a set of experiences to deepen the site's impact and relevance and provide the park's visitors with access to new recreational and learning opportunities. The past and the future are blended very nicely in the exhibits and signage. The mission of Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve is to foster inner renewal and connection to place through active learning experiences with history, nature and recreation. The new exhibits were tested by 2500 school-aged children and were enjoyed by many others.

17. PARK TRAILS AND EVENTS

Al Nedved, Deputy Director for the Division of Parks and Recreation and Jen Stahl, Park Naturalist at Good Earth State Park presented information about trails in South Dakota State Parks. This year theme is "The

Trails and Calling” and trails provide great ways to enjoy the outdoors and the Division of Parks and Recreation provides 417 miles of non-motorized trails. There are many events schedule this summer and fall in addition to the “Find Sasquatch” activity that also provide fun ways to enjoy trails all over the state.

18. LODGING OPPORTUNITIES IN PARKS

Parks & Recreation Director, Jeff VanMeeteren, provided the Commission with an overview of the 3 different lodging opportunities that the Parks Division offers the public (group lodges, modern cabins, and suites) throughout the State Park System. All of these units offer indoor bathroom and kitchen facilities that attract a new user group that may not normally camp or stay in parks. A Park’s Division goal is to better market these units to new and existing customers as well as cross-sell them to hunters and fishermen looking for this type of modern lodging.

19. OPEN HOUSE AND MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND PARK RESERVATIONS

Parks & Recreation Director, Jeff VanMeeteren, provided the Commission with an overview of camping use on Open House and Memorial Day Weekend along with day-use traffic. Open House weekend saw campsite occupancy at 65% and camping cabin use at 91%, which is average for this annual event. Fishing pressure, especially along the Missouri River, saw record breaking levels at many boat ramps like West Bend and Platte Creek Recreation Area. Memorial Day weekend saw campsite occupancy at 98.7% and camping cabin use at 97%, which is in reality full when you factor in last minute cancellations. The weather was beautiful over the 3-day weekend and park staff saw record numbers of campers and day-use over the weekend which serves as the annual kick-off for the summer season. Park entrance license sales have rebounded and are now ahead of last year’s pace and camping continues to gain from the slow spring start due to the prolonged cold weather South Dakota experienced.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

20. LAND ACQUISITION: DAVIS PROPERTY (DAVIS COUNTY)

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, gave an overview on the 320-acre Davis property in Day County and requested approval of resolution 23-17 authorizing the purchase of the property.

Motioned by Whitmyre, seconded by Locken to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-17 AUTHORIZING THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PUCHASE OF THE DAVIS PROPERTY AND ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY AT A PRICE OF \$24,000 FOR USE AS A GAME PRODUCTION AREA. The motion carried unanimously.

21. LAND ACQUISITION: PHEASANTS FOREVER DONATION PROPERTY (STANLEY COUNTY)

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, provided information on the 560-acre property in Stanley that Pheasants Forever has offered to donate to the department.

Motioned by Cull, seconded by Bies to ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-18 ACCEPTING THE TRANSFER OF THE GIFT PROPERTY TO BE USED AS A GAME PRODUCTION AREA AND THANKING PHEASANTS FOREVER, INC FOR THEIR GENEROSITY. The motion carried unanimously.

22. HABITAT AND ACCESS UPDATE

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, provided the commission with first quarter numbers from work being done by Private Lands Habitat Biologist. Shared new goal for 2023 of 1.5 million acres of public hunting access and updates on CREP enrollment in the Big Sioux River and James River Watershed CREP programs. Shared updates on private land food plot seed handouts and tree plantings taking place this spring along with some feedback from the field on how things are going. Lucas Zilverberg shared two project spotlights, one being in Brookings County that involved wetland

restorations along with several other types of projects and a wetland restoration project in Lake County on a Walk-In Area.

23. AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES OPERATIONAL EFFORTS UPDATE

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, provided an update on the current GFP Aquatic Invasive Species program field operations. Outreach and education continue to be the primary tool used to educate users on ways to slow the spread of AIS. May 22nd-28th was "AIS Awareness Week" and included targeted emails and communications to users in preparation for the Memorial Day weekend. As of June 5, 2023, 2,947 inspections have been conducted, compared to 2,380 at the same time last year. Additionally, 55 citations and 43 warnings have been issued related to AIS regulations by law enforcement. While monitoring and detection will occur throughout the boating season, no new infestations have been documented in 2023 at the time of the presentation.

24. PHEASANT HARVEST REPORT 2022 HUNTING SEASON

Alex Solem, Senior Upland Game Biologists, provided information on ring-necked pheasant, and prairie grouse harvest and hunter estimates for the 2022 hunting season.

25. SPRING SPAWNING AND STOCKING SUMMARY

Aquatics Section Chief, John Lott, provided the commission with a summary of walleye spawning and fish stocking so far in 2023. Approximately 141 million walleye eggs were taken and 71 million newly hatched walleye fry stocked into state waters. The stocking request for small walleye fingerlings was approximately 4.1 million, though it will not be surprising if more than that number are stocked. As of May 31, 168,364 adult fish, 967,319 juvenile fish, and 77 million fry have been stocked into 182 different waters. Chief Lott also reviewed how to use the GFP website to access stocking and other fishing information to help anglers plan their fishing trips.

26. ADA TRACK WHEELCHAIR PROGRAM

Emmett Keyser, Regional Supervisor, gave the Commission a briefing on the ADA Track Wheelchair program that the GFP provides throughout the state. The Commission thanked Emmett Keyser on his 40 years of service to the SD Game, Fish and Parks and wished him the best in his retirement.

27. LICENSE SALES UPDATE

Wildlife Director, Tom Kirschenmann, provided a summary of license sales through the month of May. Most license sales are similar to last year at this time, however nonresident fishing licenses still remain behind. No change in small game license sales however this is expected as not many are being purchased during this time of the year. Also shared application information for several big game seasons and trends indicate continued high interest for these licenses.

ADJOURN

Motioned by Bies, seconded by Locken to ADJOURN THE MEETING. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting ADJOURNED ON JUNE 9, 2023, AT 11:44 AM CST.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Robling, Department Secretary