

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
March 2-3, 2017

Chairperson Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. CT at the RedRossa Convention Center in Pierre, South Dakota. Commissioners Cathy Peterson, Barry Jensen, Mary Anne Boyd, H. Paul Dennert, Gary Jensen, Russell Olson, W. Scott Phillips and Douglas Sharp were present. Secretary Kelly Hepler was present along with approximately 30 public, staff, and media.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Chairperson Peterson called for conflicts of interest to be disclosed. None were presented.

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Peterson called for any additions or corrections to the January 12-13, 2017 and January 25, 2017 minutes or a motion for approval.

Motion by Boyd with second by Olson TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12-13 2017 and JANUARY 25, 2017 MEETINGS. Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Commissioner Phillips requested one additional salary days for participation in the deer management plan meeting.

Motion by Dennert with second by Sharp TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS AS REQUESTED. Motion carried unanimously.

License List Requests

Chris Petersen, administration division director presented a full fee license list request for all nonresident pheasant hunters from Dakota Prairie Lodge and Resort LLC of Kimball, SD to be used for marketing all-inclusive hunting packages.

Motion by B. Jensen with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST. Motion carried unanimously.

Outdoor Recreation Economics Study Report

Scott Simpson, wildlife administration chief, advised the Commission that the Department has request that Southwick Associates include some additional information in their final report on the Economics of Outdoor Recreation Study. A final report will be delayed until the April 2017 Commission Meeting in Watertown. Some of the more surprising information that will be contained in the report will include that direct spending for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation in South Dakota is valued at more than \$1.3 billion dollars, with a total impact of more than \$1.8 billion to the state's economy.

These and other facts that will be shared with the Commission certainly validate that hunting, fishing, boating, camping and other outdoor recreation pursuits are important economic drivers here in South Dakota.

Legislative update

Tony Leif, wildlife division director, provided a legislative update to the Commission on those bills pertinent to hunting, fishing, licensing and other agency business.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began at 2:10 p.m. and concluded at 2:20 p.m. and the minutes follow these minutes.

FINALIZATIONS

Duck Hunting

Rocco Murano, senior waterfowl biologist, and Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator, advised the Commission of the Federal Waterfowl Season Design Framework. Commissioners asked if it was possible to amend the duck season dates, as suggested by Mr. McCahren, at this meeting. Commission was advised their ability to amend the season dates, at this time, would not be allowed as this change would fall outside the scope of the public notice for this particular rule proposal. In terms of the season structure, the Commission was required to take action today to finalize the season dates, given the April 30th deadline for submitting State waterfowl season structure recommendations to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Following additional discussion with GFP staff and members of the public in attendance at the meeting, the Commission considered a motion to ask the public to submit 'proposals' regarding the structure of the waterfowl seasons, including season dates and nonresident waterfowl license allocation schemes.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by B. Jensen the Commission open A CALL FOR PROPOSALS from the public on waterfowl seasons and nonresident license allocations. Motion carried unanimously.

Tony Leif, Wildlife Director, discussed how the Commission and Department might move forward to solicit public comments or recommendations on season design alternatives from the public for consideration by the Commission. Recommendations may include ideas to amend waterfowl season dates, structure and nonresident waterfowl license allocations. The Commission requested that staff provide the Commission with a 'history' of changes made to waterfowl seasons with an emphasis on nonresident waterfowl license allocations. The Commission also requested the Department provide a review of the legislative authorities provided to the Commission to manage waterfowl seasons and nonresident waterfowl license allocations.

Switzer and Murano spoke to the finalization of the duck season which would decrease the pintail daily limit from 2 to 1.

Motioned by B. Jensen with second by Sharp TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:06:16 DECREASING THE PINTAIL DAILY LIMIT FROM 2 TO 1. Motion carried unanimously.

Goose Hunting

Switzer presented the recommended change from last year to increase the number of days for the light goose hunting season from 86 days to 105 days as allowed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Motioned by Olson with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:06:16 INCREASEING THE LIGHT GOOSE SEASON TO 105 DAYS . Motion carried unanimously.

Tundra Swan Hunting

Switzer presented the recommended changes from last year to Increase the total number of available licenses from 1,300 to 1,675 and of the adjusted total number of available licenses, increasing the number of nonresident licenses from 200 to 250.

Motioned by Boyd with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:06:16 TO INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER LICENSES AVAILABLE TO 1,675 AND INCREASE NONRESIDENT LICENSES TO 250. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Water Zoning

Emmett Keyser, wildlife regional supervisor, and Bob Schneider, parks and recreation assistant director, appeared before the Commission to finalize public water zoning regulations. There was one slight change from proposal regarding the location of the no wake zone on Horse Creek Bay on Sheridan Lake. The Commission voted to accept the Department's recommended change from proposal and then to finalize the rules.

Motioned by Dennert with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Keyser presented the recommended change from proposal to modify public water safety zone regulations for Sheridan Lake in Pennington County to adjust starting point for no wake zone in Sheridan Lake Horse Creek Bay or North Marina as follows:

41:04:02:51. Pennington County public water safety zones. Pennington County public water safety zones are as follows:

(3) Sheridan Lake:

(a) The waters of Horse Creek Bay, commonly known as the North Marina, ~~west northwest~~ of a line beginning approximately ~~600~~ **1240** feet east of the boat ramp on the north shoreline, and extending approximately in a straight line southwesterly to the opposing shoreline, are a "no wake zone";

Motioned by Phillips with second by B. Jensen TO AMEND THE PROPOSED RULE CHANGE ADJUSTING THE STARTING POINT FOR NO WAKE ZONE IN

SHERIDAN LAKE HORSE CREEK BAY OR NORTH MARINA. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Olson TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:04:02:51 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Sharp with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:04:02:66 TO ADD A NO MOTOR ZONE ON LEWIS AND CLARK LAKE. Motion carried unanimously.

Boating

Brandon Gust, law enforcement training coordinator, appeared before the Commission to finalize the proposed rules on careless boat operation and eluding a law enforcement officer. The Commission voted to accept the Department's recommended change from proposal and then to finalize the motorboats and watercraft rules.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Olson TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:04:05 AS PRESENTED. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Dennert TO RECONSIDER THE ACTION TAKEN ON CARELESS BOAT OPERATION AND ELUDING A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Phillips with second by G. Jensen TO AMEND THE RULE TO REMOVE REDUNDANT LANGUAGE. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF 41:04:05 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Aquatic Invasive Species

John Lott, aquatic resources chief, and Mike Smith, aquatic invasive species coordinator, appeared before the Commission to finalize the aquatic invasive species regulations. There was a change from proposal recommended by the Department under ARSD 41:10:04:09 intended to clarify that decontamination is required for any boat where any part of the boat has continuously been in a containment water for 3 days or more. This clarified that boats moored, for example, in Lewis and Clark Marina that are on lifts are required to decontaminate should any part of those boats on lifts be continuously in the containment water for 3 days or more.

Motioned by B. Jensen with second by Sharp TO AMEND THE RULE 41:10:04:09 TO REQUIRE THE DECONTAMINATION OF MOORED BOATES. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION OF AIS RULES 41:10:04 AS AMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

PROPOSALS

Good Earth State Park Rental Fees

Jeff VanMeeteren, parks and recreation regional supervisor, spoke to the Commission rule proposal on fees for meeting space rental at the Visitor Center and associated special events held on the nearby park grounds at Good Earth State Park.

Motioned by Olson with second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR PARK FACILITY USE FEES AT GOOD EARTH STATE PARK. Motion carried unanimously.

Mountain Goat Hunting Season and Mountain Goat Population Status Update

Switzer, appeared before the Commission to share information on the status of the population of Mountain Goats in the Black Hills. He shared information on survey methodology used to survey goats and the occupancy model used to predict the growth status of the herd. No action was taken by the Commission on the Mountain Goat Hunting Season, so the season will remain the same as it was in 2016 for both the 2017 and 2018 seasons with 2 any mountain goat licenses being issued.

Authorization for Terminally Ill to Hunt

Tom Kirschenmann, assistant wildlife director, appeared before the Commission to propose an amendment to the rules governing the issuance of permits allowing terminally ill residents to make application for a permit to take one antelope, turkey and/or deer as authorized by the Department Secretary. The rule change would allow the Secretary to authorize a terminally ill resident to hunt and take the above species outside established hunting season dates should the person's illness advance to a point justifying this special allowance.

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL ALLOWING TERMINALLY ILL RESIDENT HUNTERS TO HUNT OUTSIDE THE ESTABLISHED SEASON PER SECRETARY AUTHORIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

Black Hills Elk

Kirschenmann and Andy Lindbloom, wildlife senior biologist, appeared before the Commission to share an update on the harvest of elk during the various elk seasons. The Black Hills Elk proposal would adjust the number of antlerless elk licenses available from 1,255 issued in 2016 to 1,150 for the 2017 season. The proposal would once again allocate 443 any elk licenses for this season. He also reviewed the 2016 elk aerial survey that showed approximately 7200 elk in the Black Hills, 460 elk in Custer State Park and 700 elk in Wind Cave National Park. The survey indicated a decline in the number of bulls per hundred cows. The survey also indicated a slight decline in the fall age ratio of calves per 100 cows. In terms of survival monitoring of collared elk, we currently have 114 cows currently with collars and under monitoring. Elk cow survival in 2015 was 87% while in 2016, cow survival dropped to 77% as was expected given the additional cow harvest. At present, the population model indicates the elk population is stable (lambda growth rate of 1.00).

Motioned by G. Jensen with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL ADJUSTING THE NUMBER OF ELK LICENSE AVAILABLE. Motion carried unanimously.

Archery Elk

Kirschenmann and Lindbloom also spoke to the archery elk proposal and indicated the department would propose to adjust the number of antlerless elk licenses for this season from 140 to 130 for the 2017 season. Once again, there will be 147 any elk licenses available to archery elk hunters.

Motioned by Phillips with second by Dennert TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL TO ADJUST THE NUMBER OF ARCHERY ANTLERLESS ELK LICENSE AVAILABLE. Motion carried unanimously.

Prairie Elk

Finally, for the prairie elk season, the Department proposed to add a portion of Todd County west and north of the Little White River to the Bennett County elk unit, 11A. A total of 59 any elk license and 90 antlerless elk licenses were again issued for the 2017 Prairie Elk Season. The Commission proposed all 3 elk hunting seasons with tag allocations as recommended by the Department.

Motioned by Sharp with second by B. Jensen TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL TO ALLOCATE ELK LICENSES BY SEASONS AND UNITS. Motion carried unanimously.

Motioned by Sharp with second by Olson TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL TO ADD PORTIONS OF TODD COUNTY TO SPECIFIC UNITS FOR THE PRAIRIE ELK SEASON. Motion carried unanimously.

OPEN FORUM

Chairwoman Peterson opened the floor for discussion from those in attendance on matters of importance to them that may not be on the agenda

George Vandel, vice president of the SD Waterfowl Association spoke in regards to the letter sent to the Commission from his organization and the SD Wildlife Federation expressing their concerns on the decreased numbers of resident waterfowl hunters in South Dakota. Vandel stated they are not opposed to nonresident waterfowl hunters or commercial hunting but, they want a fair mix as resources are limited. He emphasized the need to have habitat, birds, access and limited pressure to provide opportunity. Vandel said his organization appreciates the work the Commission does, but they think the Commission needs to maintain the ability to do their job separate from the Governor's Office and Legislature. He said they want the Commission to adopt a rule to cap the number of nonresident hunters

Chris Hesla, executive director of the SD Wildlife Federation addressed the Commission with an additional item that was not included in the letter. Hesla informed

the Commission that a deal was made in the past to trade 3 day licenses for walk in area access and that last year legislation moved those licenses north. Hesla stated they would like the Commission to adopt a rule to keep 500 protected licenses in the central part of the state otherwise these licenses would be sold up north before the central area residents would even have the opportunity to obtain the licenses.

Kit McCahren, spoke on behalf of Bill Willroth, Dakota Decoy recommending the Commission consider stopping the waterfowl hunting and shooting in the Springfield Bottoms area at 1:00 pm starting at the beginning of the season until the first week of December. He also recommended the Commission consider allowing nonresident hunters from Nebraska to enter border waters from the South Dakota boat landings allowing easier access to border waters and increasing state revenues.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Land Acquisition - Good Earth State Park

Al Nedved, parks assistant director, provided information to the Commission on a pending acquisition of 1.23 acres (a residential lot) adjacent to Spring Creek Country Club in Lincoln County as part of the consolidation of lands in relation to Good Earth State Park. This small lot abuts to the 2016 Forest Legacy Acquisition lying to the southeast of Spring Creek Country Club. Final action on this acquisition will likely take place at the May Commission meeting.

Good Earth State Park Update

VanMeeteren and staff from Good Earth State Park (Jim Henning, park manager and Jen Nuncio, naturalist), provided an update on the visitor center project, movie and interpretive displays at Good Earth State Park.

Spearfish Canyon and Bismarck Lake Project Update

Katie Ceroll, parks division director, presented an overview of the Volunteer Advisory Committee and their role in developing a Master Plan for both Spearfish Canyon and Bismarck Lake. Meetings of the Volunteer Advisory Committee will commence in March with the anticipation that the final draft of the Master Plan will be completed by September 2017.

Camping Reservation Report

Bob Schneider, parks assistant director, provided an update to the Commission on the camping reservations. At this point, camping service permits are up 10%. Other permit sales are on par with sales in 2016 at a similar point in the year.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Land Acquisition Projects

Paul Coughlin, wildlife program administrator, presented information to the Commission on Wildlife Land Acquisitions. Two acquisitions have been advertised and will be brought to the Commission Meeting in April for final approval. These include purchase of Bob Roe property (320 acres in Beadle County) and the MTR Land Partnership property (106 acres in Stanley County). Both projects will be used as game

production areas and utilize Pittman-Robertson grant program funding to help support the purchases.

Missouri River Fisheries Management Plan Update

Hilary Meyer, fisheries biologist, provided the Commission with an update on the Missouri River Fisheries Management Plan. She shared an overview of the various fisheries research and management projects being lead by GFP Aquatics staff throughout the Missouri River reservoir system and highlighted work taking place within the various objectives in the Missouri River Management Plan.

Elk Management Plan Update

Switzer and Lindbloom appeared before the Commission to provide an update on the Elk Management Plan and highlighted several areas where progress has been made on several objectives. In particular, they provided an overview of how 'elk contingency licenses' would be used as one management strategy to help maintain the elk population. As outline in the Plan and GFP rules, this pool of licenses would be issued by GFP Commission Resolution in August of a given calendar year if summer range conditions in the Black Hills dictate an adjustment in harvest strategy is necessary. Lindbloom reviewed information related to the Drought Monitor affecting the Black Hills area in 2016. By August 2016, severe drought conditions did exist over a large portion of the Black Hills, especially in the northern Black Hills. The SD Grasslands Forage Production Model was also examined and it showed reduced forage production, however, it was much different than conditions indicated by the Drought Monitor. Lindbloom explained the USDA NRCS Grasslands Forage Production Model which utilizes a weighted 2-year average of the precipitation in a particular area as compared to the historic average (indicates 75% current year and 25% precipitation from previous year). Weighting values, a precipitation cap and a calibration of the various equations are all used to help predict the Forage Production Model. Using this information, the staff developed an 'Elk Unit Contingency License Decision Table' based upon the NRCS Forage Production numbers looking at the respective elk management unit objectives for each hunting unit (e.g. decrease, maintain or increase the population). Fires may also be considered as a factor, however, on a case by case basis in determining the use of elk contingency licenses.

Deer Management Plan Update

Kirschenmann presented the Commission with and update on the status of the Deer Management Plan and planning process. Recently, GFP Staff met with the Deer Stakeholder Group one last time to share the current draft of the Deer Management Plan. Members of the Stakeholder Group provided suggestions and asked staff to revisit and refine some specific sections of the Plan. Staff will continue to review staff comments from the Stakeholder Group as well as other GFP Staff as they work to refine the Draft Plan, prior to sending it out for widespread public comment in April 2017.

Fisheries Management Agreements

Jake Davis, senior fisheries biologist, updated the Commission on the Fisheries Management Agreement Process with private land owners. Davis reviewed the

application, pond inspection and application review process. Under this program, the landowner agrees to allow 'reasonable' public access, with permission. Angling must be by legal methods and the waters cannot be part of a commercial fisheries operation. Davis described the fisheries management options which could be implemented, including a largemouth bass only option, an all-purpose management option, a panfish option, a 'big bass' option, a channel catfish option and a rainbow trout option. At present, no walleye or musky are included in the list of management options. Fisheries Management Agreements are generally signed for a 10 year period. Davis discussed the habitat criteria necessary (min. size – 1 acre, min. depth – 15 ft. over 25% of pond, with constant inflow). Stocking rates follow general fish stocking rates, however, this is may be dependent upon fish availability. Information listing the locations for these ponds can be found on our GFP website and includes very basic information (location, landowner contact number, etc.). A GFP staff workgroup was created to review the current program and the group identified pros and cons of the current program. Pros included: good for PR, provides increased angling opportunity, potential sources of fish for future trap and transfer, urban fisheries are very beneficial. Cons included: low use by public of these areas at present, there has been relatively poor dissemination of these opportunities to the public, staff are aware that access has been restricted by landowners at times, some areas have low fisheries management potential, limited ongoing management of the fishery (one time stocking only), resource limitations (no fish available for stocking), and fishery simply did not appear to be viable. Work group recommended continuing with the program with some changes. Open access will be required, including signage, we will work to better disseminate information (including providing maps), staff will conduct more active management of these waters (including surveying the waters), and staff will develop an access compensation scale for this program, similar to the WIA Program.

Wind Cave Elk Reduction Update

Arden Petersen, special assistant, provided an update to the Commission on the elk culling operation taking place in Wind Cave National Park. Wind Cave had a desire to reduce the elk population in the Park due to needs to provide forage for other animals and as a way to reduce the potential for spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). There was consideration to move elk once again from Wind Cave, however, Staff recommended against moving additional elk into Custer State Park due to concerns over CWD. Petersen advised the Commission that staff worked with Wind Cave staff (1800 applicants, 48 volunteers drawn). 4 volunteers were used each week to help cull elk. Wind Cave created certain criteria that were required to be met by volunteers, including the ability to walk a certain distance along with a shooting proficiency requirement. About 25 percent of the volunteers did not show up or pass the proficiency tests. Park staff reported that those who did participate were effective in implementing the program. Elk that were harvested were brought to a site in the Park, quartered, and then tested for CWD. Animals were stored on site in a refrigeration truck while staff awaited CWD test results. Elk not testing positive were taken to processors by GFP staff. Ground elk meat was then provided to the Feeding South Dakota Program for distribution to various food pantries throughout the state. One elk was found to have been injected with an antibiotic and was included in one lot of meat and

as a result, the meat was taken to the Great Plains Zoo to be used as feed for animals there. CWD test results were slow, at times, and some elk were not adequately cooled down and so some spoilage did occur on some elk. Otherwise the program went fairly well and Wind Cave received positive comments from their volunteers. The National Park Service goal was to harvest 260 elk within the Park and a total of 262 elk were removed during culling efforts. The Park feels they have now reached their desired elk population management goal. It is anticipated that well over 10,000 lbs. of elk meat will be distributed through Feeding South Dakota at the conclusion of this year's culling efforts. Petersen also made the Commission aware that primary donations to help cover processing costs for the program were received from the Sportsmen Against Hunger Program, the Black Hills Sportsman's Club and SCI. Of the 262 animals taken, results on CWD testing were received to date on 218 animals. Of those, 28 elk tested positive for CWD with an incidence rate of approximately 12%.

Winter Depredation Update

Keith Fisk, wildlife damage program administrator, provided the Commission with an update on Winter Depredation Management activities conducted by GFP Staff statewide. He shared information on WDM Program services expenditures for 2017 that he estimates at approximately \$750,000. A wide variety of staff provided important assistance, including wildlife damage specialists, conservation officers, habitat program staff, parks staff and others. Snow persisted over much of west central South Dakota through December and January with a welcome thaw occurring in February. Staff worked with 294 producers on deer depredation, with 8 on elk depredation and 24 producers on turkey depredation. He reviewed the various abatement techniques used by staff, including the utilization of hunters, various methods used to provide protection to stackyards, use of panels or netting to protect stored feed, use of hazing, use of short-stopping with alternative feed and the use of depredation pool hunts in some locations. A total of thirty seven deer depredation hunts were implemented with 963 tags being issued this past winter. Fisk expressed appreciation from the Department and staff for the working partnerships we've had with landowners across the state in working to address these challenging winter wildlife depredation issues.

Aerial Animal Damage Control Update

Fisk also updated the Commission on recent changes made to the Animal Damage Control Aerial Predator Control Program following another aircraft crash incident during an aerial predator control hunt in Wyoming. Following the crash, all aerial predator control activities were ceased by USDA APHIS Wildlife Services for a period of 3 months, including both federal aircraft here in SD. GFP initiated a contract with a predator control pilot out of ND to conduct aerial predator control work out of Spearfish during this interim time, flying 120 hours for the Department and taking several hundred coyotes. The Multi-County Predator Control District provided \$5,000 to the Department to help assist with costs for this contract predator control effort. Following the review of the Wyoming crash, USDA APHIS Wildlife Service reinstated aerial predator control activities and initiated a number of important changes to the program, including the maximum flight hours allowed per day (6 hours per day),

changes to ammunition used, implementation of a 'black box' program for all aircraft and others.

License Sales Update

Simpson provided an update on hunting and fishing license sales. Just two months into the new calendar year, the sale of resident licenses appears to be slightly ahead of 2016 while nonresident license purchases are slightly behind sales in 2016. Simpson also provided information on the numbers of nonresident waterfowl applications received by the Department in 2016. In 2016, there was a substantial increase in the sales of nonresident waterfowl licenses in Unit X in the northeast SD unit. In 2015, 374 nonresident waterfowl licenses were sold in this unit while there were 628 licenses sold in this unit in 2016. Statewide nonresident waterfowl license applicants numbered 4,211 for 3725 licenses available. In the Low Plains South Unit along the lower portion of the Missouri river, there were 331 apps for 250 licenses. For Unit 00Y, there were 707 applicants for 500 nonresident waterfowl licenses available.

Adjourn

Motioned by Sharp with second by Phillips TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 11:00am

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission
March 2, 2017

The Public Hearing Officer Scott Simpson began the public hearing at 2:10 p.m. at the RedRossa in Pierre, South Dakota with Commissioners Peterson, Boyd, B. Dennert, Jensen, G. Jensen, Olson, Phillips, and Sharp present. Simpson indicated written comments were provided to the Commissioners prior to this time and will be reflected in the Public Hearing Minutes. Simpson then invited the public to come forward with oral testimony.

Duck Hunting

Kit McCahren, avid duck hunter spoke to the Commission in regards to concerns for lack of waterfowl hunting due to multiple changes such as irrigation, crops, water, overhunting and change in migration. His recommendation would be for the Commission to consider starting the low plains south zone two weeks later and add two weeks to the end of the season to allow for more opportunity.

Written testimony:

David Rous, Tyndall, SD emailed "I would really like to see our duck season in southern Bon homme county get an overhaul. You need to consider a split season or an extended season into January and start the season later. We never see the northern mallards show up until the last two or three days of our season. I am a field hunter and want nothing to do with the nightmare out in the islands of Lewis and Clark lake. We need a season extended into January when the birds are here. I am hunting geese now the end of January and we are still seeing large flocks of mallards feeding in the evening. I am roughly two miles north of the lake and watch our waterfowl extensively as I am a farmer in the area our seasons have changed over time we use to see the ducks show in early November not any more they are showing up in late December last year the season was closed before they showed up same thing the year before that. We need to consider pushing the season later in the year I have visited with a conservation officer who was also of the same opinion. Thanks for your time"

Taylor Mohr, Wagner, SD emailed "Good afternoon, I am sending this email to voice my opinion on the duck hunting dates for low plains south zone. I think it would benefit the hunters who are passionate about this sport if the close dates would be pushed back further. I've hunted for many years and there are no ducks until the last couple days of the season and that is weather depicting. The only way it benefits us is if there is a bad storm up north. Thank you for your time and I hope this will help."

John Lacika, Brandon, SD emailed "I support decreasing the daily bag limit on pintails to one. Now, see what you can do about the other states which harvest the vast majority of pintails."

Dave Funke, Lily, SD emailed "With the drought in NE South Dakota you should drop limits on all species!!! The possession limit (of three days bag) is also wrong!!! Go back to 2 days bag limit. Are you trying to ruin duck hunting so the anti-hunters will say "told 'ya so"???"

Andrew Schuman, Geddes, SD emailed "Why does the High Plains Season run a month longer than the Low Plains South Season. I think the Low Plains South Season should be extended to match the high plains season or push the opening date back a couple weeks. There are never any ducks around in October besides the small local population. Then when the season ends in mid December we get to watch the northern ducks fly around for a month and can't hunt them. Please consider my recommendations."

Paul Hansen, Brookings, SD emailed "I would hope that Duck Season would open September 23 instead of September 30th to be able to hunt more Blue-Wing Teal before they migrate. Thanks for your consideration. I have no disagreement with changing the Pintail limit from 2 to 1. I think you could also consider changing the Scaup limit from 3 down to 2."

Larry Minter, Jefferson, SD emailed "Dear Sirs, It doesn't matter what you do. Obviously the state legislatures will probably over rule whatever you do. After all when the 1500 extra nonresident waterfowl hunters find out they can only shoot one pintail a day they will put pressure on the state legislatures and they will probably increase the limit to 10 a day. If you have noticed I'm one of many upset resident waterfowl hunters that hunt on the lower Missouri River. Also changing our Goose season to be the same as the Pierre area doesn't make any sense, unless one of our legislatures has hunting interest \$\$ down here. As every one knows Pierre hunting is all about the money, not the hunter or the game animals."

Tyler Haddix, Pierre, SD emailed " Keep the limit at 2."

Duke Remitz, Frederick, SD, emailed " Good day. I'm fine with the one pintail daily limit. My question is why 2 hen mallards? Latest research from Delta and DU is that there is low recruitment of young hens back to the nesting area in the spring. I'm ok with a "mistake" hen but not 2. It is not conservation minded."

Jay M. Johnson, Brookings, SD emailed " Thanks for your E-mail concerning the proposed waterfowl seasons and limits. First and foremost, I would like to ask you if it is only the farmer comments that you are using to determine seasons and limits. Do you contact some of the major gun dealers in Eastern S.D. to get their comments? One in particular, have you visited with Vic Carter up at Kones Korner south of Watertown about the seasons and limits. He is a major gun dealer in Eastern S.D. , about 10 miles south of Watertown located on highway 81. He has many hunters that have done business for some 45 yrs at his business. Newly appointed to the GFB Commision, Doug Sharp will sure know Vic Carter. Vic, shared with me two weeks ago that this past fall 2016 was his poorest year yet for the sale of guns and ammunition. The hunters all share the same thoughts, what has happened to our wildlife population? He said his ammunition sales have declined as much as 80% from past years. You can talk with the Wilkes at Kampeska Lodge and hear the same comments from them. I believe you could talk with numerous dealers and hear the same comments elsewhere. Does

anyone within the GFP really care about our wildlife populations and what we could do to bring back the populations? When we set season terms and limits as we have these past several waterfowl seasons at the proposed numbers, I have to question who is out of touch with reality? I'm a 68 year old farmer from Moody County owning two farms, one in Grovena Township and the other in Blimsmon Township and my brother and I farm our farms with much respect for wildlife. We have not pulled out our fence lines, nor have we tiled on land for drainage, and our 14 acre tree stand still stands intact with plenty of deer and some turkey. It saddens me greatly to see the disrespect from so many farmers concerning wildlife and the habitat that they need to survive. And, finally our GFP dept. that is so out of touch with reality and the attitude that the hunter comments aren't being taken as anything of value! My proposal on the goose season is as follows, concerning our local Canada Goose population; season to open the first Saturday in October 2017, with one being the daily limit and no more than two in possession and the season ending in December. I truly hope my comments will make it to the commisison but even have my doubts about that."

Chris Gerber, Delmont, SD emailed" To whom it may concern, I have been a avid waterfowler for my whole life. At 48 I have seen a lot of changes and have hunted in multiple states as well as my conservation mind from my father. The other fact is I have a extensive grain , seed , agriculture background. Waterfowl migrations have a lot to do with hunting seasons or should. Migrations have to do with food and weather (for most)

The increased seed genetics that are available now have increased the planting, harvest times and bushels per acre by 25-50% in the last decade. This technology has provided waterfowl with more food in Canada than ever before. So even with cold temps and freeze we know even in South Dakota birds find open water and stay if there is a good food source. This is why I think waterfowl migrations are slower to start and quicker to end in our state. As much as I hate to bring this up I am going to. The two young hunters that passed away outside of Brookings this year were avid waterfowlers and since it was the last day for hunting they pressed the issue due the birds were finally getting here right when season was closing. I have done it and if you hunt waterfowl we have ALL done it. There is no reason SD cant modify the days the Feds give us. Make a couple 1 week splits or 3 splits, and extend the seasons longer, in all units. Get some input from the hunters. We are all feeling it. Even now the duck numbers are very hunt able in this state with no season to help. Lets find away to change with the birds, be a little proactive instead of reactive. Thanks for listening"

Goose Hunting

No oral testimony was received.

Written testimony:

Scott Christopherson, Volga, SD emailed' Dear GF&P Commissioners, In this brief note, I would hope you would consider changing the start and ending date of the Low Plains North and Low Plains Middle zone. With the change in agricultural practices in the Dakota's and Canada, warmer longer growing season, and later migration it is my opinion that the season for this zone move back by a minimum of four-five days. This

date shift to this zone would run close in concert with the proposed Unit One Canada goose season as well. Thanks for your Consideration”

Eric Anderson, Spearfish, SD emailed” Dear Commissioners, I would like to provide my input on the Canada goose season dates in Unit 1 that were proposed during the January meeting. I would like to suggest that the end date of the season be moved to the end of December. There are a few reasons that I suggest this--Much of Unit 1 is also in the High Plains duck zone. This allows two more weeks of overlap where both species can be hunted at the same time. -Even with a cold and snowy winter compared to years past, there are ample Canada goose opportunities in Unit 1 through the end of December. On mild years, much of the best hunting occurs during the late part of the season. While I was not able to fully research the Federal framework, I understand the season length is specified, starting with the Saturday closest to October 1st. This could prove to be difficult because the start of the season would have to be moved back to make sure the season fits into the framework. Personally, I would be fine with the season starting mid-October as goose numbers are often low in early October. The September season allows early season hunting opportunities for resident geese. A two week closure would add some complexity to the regulations but I believe the trade off would be worthwhile. Late season opportunities are unique and often provide the best hunting of the year. Even with cold winters, opportunities have existed well beyond the close of the season. Adding two weeks will greatly increase hunter opportunity. Thanks for your time.

Tundra Swan Hunting

No oral or written testimony was received.

Public Water Zoning

No oral or written testimony was received

Boating

No oral or written testimony was received

Aquatic Invasive Species

No oral testimony was received

Written testimony:

Ed Nelson, Sioux Falls, SD emailed” Border Waters again !!!! The invasive species were brought to South Dakota waters probably by Non-Residents !!! All (3) of the bordering States (Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska) have the same invasive species Problem, especially Minnesota. Now, it's South Dakota's problem to control and clean up, right ??? Who's going to pay to cleanup the problem ??? South Dakota Residents, again ??? Here's a unique idea !!! Triple the Non-Resident Fees i.e. Fishing, Camping / State Park entry fees and Hunting !!! The Non-Residents are South Dakota's Biggest Consumptive Users it's time for them to pay their FAIR SHARE !! Quit raising the Residents Fees !!!! Non-Residents caused the problem, make them pay to clean it up !!!!”

Dr. Nancy L. Reddy and Dick J. Reedy, Watertown, SD emailed" Dear Commission Members: Having recently returned to South Dakota after living for 15 years in Traverse City, Michigan; we have observed and experience the damage that can be caused by zebra mussels and other identified invasive species. We fully support the proposed new and modified regulations. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

The public Hearing concluded at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary