

GFP Commission Meeting Minutes

Prairie Shores Resort & Event Center | Madison, SD | November 2, 2023

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm CST at the Prairie Shores Resort and Event Center near Madison, South Dakota, on November 2, 2023. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, and Bruce Cull were present. With six commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff can listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 58 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 October 2023 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 2023 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Additional Salary Days [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. None brought forward.

4. 2024 Commission Meeting Calendar Approval [Action Item]

Secretary Robling brought forth the proposed 2024 commission meeting schedule from the Department.

Discussion was held on adding Yankton to the schedule for the 2024 commission meetings. Secretary Robling offered to bring the schedule back to the Commission at the December meeting with the addition of the Yankton location.

5. South Dakota GoOutdoors Update [Info Item]

Keith Fisk, Licensing Program Administrator, gave an update on the South Dakota GoOutdoors licensing system.

6. New Staff Introduction [Info Item]

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

Open Forum

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, opened the floor at 2:08 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

- 2:09 pm: Rosie Smith representing Glacial Lakes and Prairie Tourism testified virtually in opposition to the non-resident one-day fishing license.

Director Kirschenmann closed the Open Forum at 2:11 pm CST.

7. Nonresident Archery Deer Whitetail Only [Petition]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided information to the Commission on the petition submitted by Jarred Burleson from Lead, SD requesting nonresident archery licenses to be switched from Any Deer to Any Whitetail Deer in an effort to help bolster mule deer numbers. Kirschenmann discussed conversations the

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Commission has held over the past few years, the action taken last year to change the nonresident archery license structure, and how this change would only impact a few deer. The department recommendation was to deny as this will be discussed over the next year as the deer management plan is revised.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO DENY PETITION #205 WHICH CHANGE ARCHERY LICENSES FROM ANY DEER TO WHITTAIL DEER ONLY. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-32 WHICH DENIES PETITION #205. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Lake Byron Land Exchange [Action Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, provided a summary of 0.21 acres of Parks Division Land at Lake Byron in Beadle County and 61 acres of Kurkowski property in Day County was shared with the commission. The exchange process of these two properties was also shared and the commission was asked to act and adopt Resolution 23-31.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE LAKE BYRON LAND EXCHANGE BY ADOPTING RESOLUTION 23-31. Motion carried unanimously.

9. LWCF and RTP Final Project List [Info Item]

Randy Kittle, Grants Coordinator, presented two handouts with the 2024 approved grants. List of local grant recipients and award amounts were provided for each program.

10. October Monthly Reports – Parks Camping Units and Revenue [Info Item]

Parks & Recreation Director Jeff VanMeeteren gave the commission a quick overview of the November reports indicating that YTD PEL sales remain strong at 2% over last year while camping remains slightly down due to the late spring or slow start that most parks could not overcome. A bright spot has been the lodging units with rental use exceeding last year's numbers. Given the freezing temperatures throughout the state park staff are currently winterizing many of the facilities.

11. Nonresident One-Day Fishing Licenses [Action Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann reviewed the background and the on-going conversations around the nonresident one-day fishing license. Kirschenmann described additional comments have been shared by the tourism industry, guiding industry, and individual with many of the expressing the desire to retain a one-day fishing option. After receiving more public comment, including an in-person meeting with a tourism group from Pierre, the one aspect that is of high consideration for retaining a one-day license is for those individuals or families that may be visiting and want to include a day of fishing. Based on all the input, the department suggested to the commission a consideration to table the topic for now and conduct some additional alternatives, in particular the concept of incorporating a limitation on the number of one-day nonresident fishing licenses one person could buy in a given year. The Commission agreed that alternative should be given additional thought and asked the department to conduct additional analysis and bring this back for further discussion in the spring.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

12. Bighorn Sheep Action Plan [Action Item]

Andrew Norton, Senior Big Game Biologist, brought the proposed Bighorn Sheep Action Plan before the commission. The only change to the plan was a reduction in the minimum count of total sheep in a herd from 75 to 50 in order to recommend per hunting season. Hunting season recommendations usually are to harvest 10% of the adult rams, but those recommendations can be adjusted depending on other factors including disease. Respiratory disease resulting in pneumonia death continues to be the biggest threat to

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bighorn sheep herds, but a capture, test and remove procedure developed in the Black Hills has proven very effective in mitigating the disease.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE BIGHORN SHEEP ACTION PLAN. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Oahe Smallmouth Bass – Walleye Interactions [Info Item]

Mark Fincel, Fisheries Supervisor, presented virtually the findings of a study aimed at estimating the post-stocking consumption of Walleye eggs (WAE) by Smallmouth Bass (SMB) in Lake Oahe. The need for this investigation arose from the introduction of new WAE stocking in the lake. The study, conducted in 2019 and 2021, involved intensive sampling and modeling efforts to determine the extent to which SMB were consuming the stocked WAE. The results revealed that SMB do indeed consume stocked WAE, and the level of consumption varies, with as many as approximately 27,000 WAE being consumed in a bay during a given summer. The South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) fisheries staff are utilizing these findings to adjust stocking strategies, aiming to enhance the post-stocking survival of WAE in Lake Oahe.

14. Antelope Fall Classification Results [Info Item]

Andrew Norton, Senior Big Game Biologist, provided a virtual summary of antelope fall herd composition survey data was provided. Fawn to doe ratios (i.e., fall fawn recruitment rates) in September 2023 were nearly back to 10-year averages after well below average fawn recruitment rates in 2021 and 2022. The increase in fawn recruitment rates was expected because of good precipitation the preceding winter and spring resulting in an improvement of fawn hiding cover.

15. R3 Update [Info Item]

R3 and Relevancy Manager, Shala Larson, updated the commission on recent R3 successes and current projects. Updates included numerous supported hunts that have taken place statewide including a women-focused pheasant hunt with Pheasants Forever, dove hunts, youth deer hunts, and the ever-flourishing Hunting 101 program. Additionally, Larson shared about the IHEA hunting mentorship program, the fish passport with a target date of January 2025, and R3's role in the "Reeling in Memories" 2024 parks theme. Finally, Larson shared that the first ever R3 training video and newsletter was circulated to staff in late summer.

Maggie Lindsey, Education Services coordinator reported on the 2023 Becoming an outdoor Woman Event: Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) is a national education program that teaches beginning hands on outdoor skills to adult women in a non-threatening environment. South Dakota holds one even a year that is attended by 80 to 100 women and taught by 35-40 instructors. The event is planned and put together by a committee of staff and volunteers. Instructors are also staff and volunteers who are excellent teachers in their field. The event follows the 1/3 rule of 1/3 of the classes being hunting/shooting related, 1/3 fishing related, and 1/3 Other outdoor skills. The event offers four half-day class sessions over the course of two and half days. 47% of participants have a current hunting and/or fishing license.

16. Avian Influenza Update [Info Item]

Chad Switzer, Deputy Wildlife Director, provided an avian influenza update. Disease overview, history, public health and safety, and detections in wild birds and backyard/commercial flocks was presented. Reports and confirmations of wild birds this fall have been limited, with several confirmations of the disease detected in commercial turkey operations. GFP is working closely with South Dakota Animal Industry Board, commercial turkey operators, and USDA Wildlife Services in disease surveillance and harassment of migrating birds near commercial facilities.

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17. Pheasant Season Report and License Sales Update

[Info Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a quick update on license sales with a focus on nonresident small game licenses. Sales are strong through the opening weekend; up about 14% compared to opening weekend of 2022. Considering 30 days prior to opening weekend to date sales are also up about the same. Should weather conditions remain favorable it is anticipated that license sales will remain strong.

Adjourn

[Action Item]

Next meeting is scheduled for December 7-8, 2023, at the AmericInn in Fort Pierre, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT XXXX PM CST. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,



Kevin Robling, Department Secretary