



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

OCTOBER 3-4, 2024 | HURON EVENT CENTER, HURON, SD

MEETING INFO

This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.

Date and Time: October 3, 2024, from 1-5 pm CST | October 4, 2024, from 8 am-12 pm CST

Meeting Location: Huron Event Center, 100 4th St SW, Huron, SD 57350

Webinar Info: We will be using Zoom Webinar® for this meeting. As a participant, you will not have audio or video capabilities by default. During the open forum and public hearing, if you'd like to testify, please 'Raise Your Hand' using the button at the bottom of the screen, or by pressing *9 on your phone. To lower your hand via phone, press *9 again. When it's your turn to speak, the meeting host will unmute you, allowing you to have audio but no video. If your phone is muted when called upon, press *6 to unmute.

- *9 to 'Raise Your Hand' or 'Lower Your Hand.'
- *6 to Unmute or Mute

Please inform Liz Kierl at liz.kierl@state.sd.us by 1 pm CST if you plan to speak during the meeting. This helps us to accurately identify and call on speakers during the session. Thank you for your cooperation!

Zoom Webinar: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 912 6417 6710

Passcode: 970458

Call In: +16699009128,,91264176710# US

Video Conference ID: 91264176710@zoomcrc.com

AGENDA

Call Meeting to Order (1 pm CST / 12 pm MT)

Division of Administration

Action Items

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives>
3. Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Informational Items

4. Staff Introductions

Public Hearing (2 pm CST / 1 pm MT)

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment finalizations.

Open Forum – following the conclusion of the Public Hearing

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment on petitions, proposals, and other items of interest not on the agenda.

Petition

5. #223 – Coyote Bounty Program in Black Hills
6. #224 – Removal of Nonresident Restrictions for Furbearer Participation

Finalizations

7. License Fee Package



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

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Division of Parks and Recreation

Informational Items

8. Women Let's Fish
9. Emerald Ash Borer Update
10. Fall Foliage Tracker
11. 2024 Camper Survey
12. Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

Division of Wildlife

Action Items

13. Mountain Lion Action Plan
14. State Threatened & Endangered Species

Informational Items

15. Pheasant Hunting Outreach
16. Aquatic Invasive Species Curriculum
17. GPA Management Partnership Projects
18. License Sales Reports

Solicitation of Agenda Items

Now is the time to submit agenda items for the Commission to consider at a following commission meeting.

Adjourn

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on November 7-8, 2024, starting at 1 pm CST at the State Capitol, Room 414 in Pierre, SD.



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South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

September 5-6, 2024 | Outdoor Campus | Rapid City, SD

Agenda Item #2

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm MT at the Outdoor Campus – Rapid City, SD on September 5, 2024. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, Travis, Theel, and Bruce Cull were present, with Julie Bartling joining virtually. With eight commission members present or online, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 89 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 July 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO APPROVE THE JULY 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. No additional salary days were submitted for approval.

4. License List Request

[Action Item]

Scott Simpson, Deputy Secretary, brought forth a license list request from South Dakota Access Guide Service submitted by Chad Cadwell for licenses ordered by Elk Unit 11B.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE LICENSE LIST REQUEST. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Staff Introductions

[Info Item]

Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director and Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks & Recreation Director introduced staff to the commission. Director Kirschenmann introduced the four new members of the Wildlife Division. New staff include Jen Haffley from Rapid City, Mike Kuzara from Rapid City, Dylan Urban from Mitchell, and Aaron Andrews from Waubay.

Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:04 pm MT for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as a finalization.

Agenda Item #8: Fishing Regulations

No testimony provided by the public.

Agenda Item #9: Bobcat Status Update and Hunting Season

2:06 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society provided a handout to the commissioners. She objected to 3-day trap times and hound hunting in the Black Hills.

2:09 pm: Steve Cherkas of Edgemont, SD, testified in opposition to the finalization.



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Agenda Item #10: Spring Turkey Hunting Season

2:14 pm: Paul Vinatieri of Rapid City, SD testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:17 pm: Cody Hodson of Rapid City, SD representing the Black Hill Sportsman's Club testified in opposition of the finalization.

2:19 pm: William Wills testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:21 pm: William Young of Rapid City, SD testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:22 pm: Dana Rogers of Hill City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:25 pm: Foster Bartholow of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the finalization.

2:29 pm: Ron Kolbeck of Salem, SD representing the South Dakota Bowhunters Inc testified virtually in opposition to the finalization.

2:31 pm: Tom Kuck of Aberdeen, SD testified virtually in opposition to the finalization.

2:35 pm: Terry Mays of Rapid City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and the Rapid City Wildlife Management Board testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:39 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:40 pm: Mike Schmeltzer of Sturgis, SD testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:42 pm: Tom Trimble of Rapid City, SD testified in opposition to the finalization.

2:46 pm: Pat West of Piedmont, SD representing South Dakota Landowners & Outfitter Alliance testified in opposition to the finalization.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Public Hearing at 2:48 pm MT.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor following the conclusion of the public hearing at 2:49 pm MT 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.

2:50 pm: David Goodwin of Piedmont, SD representing the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation thanked the Commission for holding additional stakeholder's meetings about the mountain lion season and testified in support of the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

2:51 pm: Chase Larson of Hill City, SD representing the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation thanked the Commission for holding additional stakeholder's meetings about the mountain lion season and testified in support of the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

2:52 pm: Jeremy Wells of Sturgis, SD representing the South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified on the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

2:54 pm: Tate Wells of Piedmont, SD representing the South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified on the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

2:56 pm: Patrick Weimer of Spearfish, SD representing the South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified on the Mountain Lion Action Plan.



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2:59 pm: Jeramy Amiotte of Piedmont, SD representing the South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified on the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

3:00 pm: Tom Frier of Pierre, SD representing the Sunset Lodge testified on the boat ramp at Bush's Landing.

3:02 pm: James Bialota of Piedmont, SD testified on the South Dakota Shooting Sports Complex.

3:06 pm: Josh Rosenau of Lake Forest Park, Washington testified virtually in opposition to the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

3:09 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified in opposition of the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

3:12 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawks, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society distributed several handouts and testified in opposition of the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

3:17 pm: Terry Mays of Rapid City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified on hound hunting in South Dakota.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Open Forum at 3:19 pm MT.

6. Petition #222: Spring Prairie Turkey Hunting Season

[Action Item: Petition]

Pat West of Piedmont, SD submitted petition #222 in which requested the Commission to limit residents and nonresidents to one turkey license through the first three drawings for Spring Turkey hunting season.

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided information from the department and a recommendation to deny the petition as Commission passed a new draw structure in September 2023 and only one season has occurred since that time. The Department suggested that it would be more appropriate to conduct another season or two under the current structure and evaluate at that time if adjustments are needed. The current draw structure did increase the number of unique individuals who obtained spring turkey licenses from 2023 to 2024. With the new draw structure, 316 more hunters obtained one license through the three-draw structure.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO DENY PETITION #222. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 24-16

WHEREAS, Pat West of Piedmont, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated August 26, 2024, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:06:01 (Application for License) – to limit residents and nonresidents to one turkey license through the first three drawings for the Spring Turkey hunting season (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 limiting applications by an individual for the Spring Turkey hunting seasons; and WHEREAS, the Commission passed a new draw structure in September of 2023 and only one season has occurred. It would be appropriate to conduct another season or two under the current structure and evaluate the need for adjustments; and

WHEREAS, the current draw structure did increase the number of unique individuals who obtained spring turkey licenses from 2023 to 2024. In particular, 316 more hunters obtained one license through the third draw with the new structure.

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 the 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, Pat West of Piedmont, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-16 TO DENYING PETITION #222. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Department Fee Adjustments

[Action Item: Proposal]

Scott Simpson, Deputy Secretary, Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Director, and Tom Kirschenmann, Wildlife Director, presented the Commission with the Department Fee Adjustments proposal. The Department is recommending adjustments to multiple fees within the both the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Wildlife. Rules are also being created to implement nonresident Park Entrance Licenses and associated fees as well as establishing fees for the sale of habitat conservation plate emblems for both vehicles and motorcycles.

Director Kirschenmann provided the background information for Wildlife hunting and fishing fees, described the importance of the fee package to maintain programs and services, the need to for these resources for asset management, and provided examples of where these funds would be used. Overall, projected revenue from the fee package would be approximately \$5.3M, with about \$1.1M from resident fee adjustments and \$4.2 from nonresident fee adjustments. These adjustments equal about a 13% increase for residents and a 24% increase for nonresidents.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR OCTOBER FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Fishing Regulations

[Action Item: Finalization]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, brought for the proposals for finalization. These included proposals about snagging of salmon, bait, fish limits and private hatcheries. Specifically, they include modifications to the walleye harvest regulation on Belle Fourche Reservoir and species of salmon that may



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be snagged on Lake Oahe, as well as updates to scientific names of crayfish species and reporting requirements for private hatcheries.

7a. Bait

Jake Davis brought forth the proposal for finalization on bait that would correct scientific names for certain species of crayfish to reflect updates in taxonomic classification.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

7b. Fish Limits

Jake Davis brought forth the proposal for finalization on fish limits that would modify the existing harvest regulation on Belle Fourche Reservoir where currently only those walleye less than 15 inches in length or 18 inches or greater in length may be taken. And also, of the walleye taken daily, no more than one may be 18 inches greater in length, to a two fish daily limit with a 15-inch minimum.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

7c. Private Fish Hatcheries

Jake Davis brought forth the proposal for finalization on the private fish hatcheries. The proposal would modify annual reporting requirement for private hatcheries by requiring an annual summary to be submitted rather than individual records.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

7d. Snagging of Salmon

Jake Davis brought forth the proposal for finalization on snagging salmon. The proposal would allow snagging of all salmon species during the months of October and November on Lake Oahe.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Bobcat Trapping and Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Finalization]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought forth the proposal to change the administrative rule to limit the number of bobcats to one per hunter or trapper in the Black Hills Management Zone. No changes were made to the West River Management Zone, which is currently unlimited bobcats per hunter or trapper or the East River Management Zone which is currently one bobcat per hunter or trapper.

The Department recommended to modify zone descriptions and reporting and registration requirements in § 41:08:01:08:01 to improve clarity.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT TO THE PROPOSAL. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION AS AMENDED. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Spring Turkey Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Finalization]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, brought forth the Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season proposals for a second reading. The Spring Turkey hunting regulations to limit the number of nonresident single tag "male turkey" licenses to 2,225 in the Black Hills spring turkey unit. The number of resident single-tag "male turkey" licenses is unlimited in the Black Hills unit. In addition, a unit name was changed from



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PST-18A to PST-10A and all of Lake County was included in the Archery Spring Turkey unit. License number recommendations by unit were approved by the Commission, which resulted in a 3.3% license number increase.

9a. Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season

Andrew Norton presented the Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season proposal which would (1) Modify § 41:06:13:01 to create a cap of 2,225 one-tag male turkey licenses for nonresidents in the Black Hills Turkey unit. (2) Modify § 41:06:13:02 to change Unit PST-18A to PST-10A to have the unit label represent one of the counties (Aurora) contained in the unit that includes Aurora and Douglas counties. Clark County is county number 18. (3) Modify § 41:06:13:02 to expand the statewide Archery Spring turkey hunting to include the portion of Lake County south of State Highway 34.

The Department recommended to modify § 41:06:13:01 to clean-up rule to describe three Spring Turkey hunting seasons, Prairie, Black Hills, and Archery.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT TO THE PROPOSAL. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION AS AMENDED. The motion carried unanimously.

9b. Custer State Park and Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Seasons

Andrew Norton presented the Custer State Park and Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Seasons license allocation to the Commission. An additional 8% of licenses are available to nonresidents for the West River Prairie Units. 2025-2026 license number for the other seasons are as follows: archery and mentor youth “male turkey” access permits: 5 archery to Good Earth State Park; 30 archery and 20 mentored youth to Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve. Custer state Park will have 100 “male turkey” licenses.

MOITIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY CULL TO ADOPT THE LICENSE ALLOCATIONS. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Black Hills Playhouse

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Linda Anderson, Executive Director of the Black Hills Playhouse, presented a brief history on the partnership between Custer State Park and the Black Hills Playhouse in the management of the playhouse that began in 1946. Anderson provided a summary on ticket sales, staffing and the overall operations of the playhouse for this past summer season and expressed her appreciation for the partnership with GF&P.

12. Reel in Memories Campaign Update

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator, shared an update on the Reel in Memories initiative, emphasizing its recent success in introducing new families to outdoor activities and increasing park entry and fishing license sales. As of the beginning of September, the program has received 1,003 submissions representing 2,870 anglers. In August, the annual Becoming an Outdoor Family event was hosted at North Point Recreation Area and offered a range of outdoor education classes for families, including an introduction to fishing utilizing the First Catch Center. The First Catch Center hosted 12 events in the state parks during the summer.

13. LWCF & RTP Board Award Selections

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Director of Parks & Recreation Jeff VanMeeteren presented the Commission with the award selections for this year’s RTP and LWCF programs. A total of \$1,584,687 in RTP funds were allocated to both City and GFP projects with 17 total applications received and 11 funded. A total of \$2,527,380 in LWCF funds were



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allocated to both City and GFP projects with 24 total City applications received and 10 City projects funded in addition to GFP projects. Funds from these programs have historically gone to City partners as well as GFP to fund outdoor recreation projects in South Dakota.

14. Pringle Land Acquisition for Mickelson Trail

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Matt Snyder provided the Commission with the Pringle Land Acquisition information. The Parks Division is proposing to purchase .482 acres of land within the City of Pringle to establish a new Mickelson Trail Head. The current water cistern, vault toilet and shelter will be relocated to the proposed new trail head. When the Mickelson Trail was first constructed there was a handshake agreement with the owner to use his property for parking. The land has since changed hands and the new owner is operating a business out this area and needs the parking lot. The total appraised value of the two parcels is \$42,000 and will be paid for using Mickelson Trail funds held by the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

15. Camping Unit & Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Director of Parks & Recreation Jeff VanMeeteren presented the Commission with the August and YTD Camping Reports. August was a great month with camping unit numbers up 8% compared to last year, most notably Palisades is up 78% from last year due to the new campsites. Camping unit YTD numbers are also up 1% with the parks hosting an additional 2,545 units compared to last year at this same point in time. Revenue reports for August and YTD were also shared showing continued strong sales in daily licenses for the month and YTD due to good weather and marketing of day-use opportunities. Camping services revenue for August was up 6% and YTD is right on track with last year. Overall, park revenue YTD is up 3%. West Regional Supervisor Matt Snyder highlighted the increased use in the west region at parks like Custer, Rocky Point, Shadehill, Shep's Canyon and the Mickelson Trail.

16. Elk Contingency Licenses

[Action Item: Wildlife]

South Dakota Administrative Rule (ARSD § 41:06:26:06) authorizes the GFP commission, by resolution, to provide additional antlerless elk licenses to mitigate the impacts of elk grazing during temporary drought conditions. Some drought conditions are being experienced in portions of the western and central Black Hills but average forage production in antlerless elk units ranges from a high of 104% to a low of 89% of normal forage production. Based on available forage and elk unit objectives there are currently no recommendations for elk contingency licenses.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN DUE TO NO RECOMMENDED CHANGES.

17. Antelope Action Plan

[Action Item: Wildlife]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, brought the draft pronghorn action plan that was reviewed with the Commission along with public input received. There were no changes made to the action plan.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE ANTELOPE ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

18. Mountain Lion Action Plan

[Action Item: Wildlife]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, brought forward the draft mountain lion action plan, which was reviewed with the Commission along with public input received. The Commission took action to change the Black Hills mountain lion population objective from 200 – 330 to 150 – 250 in the draft action plan. The current draft action plan will be available for review and public comments and the commission will act on the draft plan at their October commission meeting.



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MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE MOUNTAIN LION ACTION PLAN FOR ADOPTION AT THE OCTOBER 2024 COMMISSION MEETING. The motion carried unanimously.

19. Elk Virtual Reality Video

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Lydia Austin, David Parker, and Lacy Elrod received a grant from RMEF for an elk virtual reality video project. Chris Hull also played a big role in the development of this project. Staff created an immersive virtual adventure that highlights elk management. This informational video is done with a 360 camera allowing viewers to move throughout the screen to access different parts of the video. Staff focused on elk management, elk habitat, elk natural history as well as different careers within GFP and how they relate to elk management. The video link will be shared with primarily schools, but anyone interested in learning more about elk would learn something. The filming was done at the Outdoor Campus-Rapid City as well as Custer State Park. Staff also have some booklets that are being designed right now that will supplement the learning experience that will be available late this fall. Virtual Elk Reality Video can be found [here](#).

<https://spaces.wondavr.com/embed/?course=166cace0-4d99-11ee-87e9-0f8901db4b0b&presenter=true>

20. Threatened and Endangered Species Review

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Staff presented information about the Commission's roles in the South Dakota endangered species law, specifically their authority to list, delist or change statuses for state listed species and the requirement that the Commission review the list at least every two years. An updated document was presented to the Commission, with no recommended changes. The public will be invited to comment on this item during the next 30 days.

21. Deerfield Lake Management

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Jeremy Kientz, Area Fisheries Supervisor, discussed the Deerfield Lake Management plan with the Commission.

22. License Sales Report

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a short briefing on Wildlife hunting and fishing license sales. License sales remain strong for hunting and fishing. The department will monitor small game hunting license sales over the next two months with multiple small games seasons beginning soon with grouse in mid-September and pheasant in October.

23. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on October 3-4, 2024, starting at 1 pm CST at the Huron Event Center in Huron, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:31 AM MT ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary

Fw: Petition for Rule Change Form

Kierl, Liz <Liz.Kierl@state.sd.us>

Fri 9/6/2024 10:44 AM

To:Switzer, Chad <Chad.Switzer@state.sd.us>

From: info@gfp.sd.us <info@gfp.sd.us>

Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 10:38 AM

To: sacherkas@msn.com <sacherkas@msn.com>

Cc: Kierl, Liz <Liz.Kierl@state.sd.us>; Harrington, Nick <Nick.Harrington@state.sd.us>

Subject: Petition for Rule Change Form

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 223

Petitioner Name: STEVE CHERKAS

Address: PO BOX 18
EDGEMONT, SD 57735

Email: sacherkas@msn.com

Phone: 515-306-2592

Rule Identification: coyotes in black hills

Describe Change: I would like to see a bounty of \$100 implemented on coyotes.

Reason for Change: As someone who is in the field every day during trapping seasons I see the impact of nobody targeting coyotes on wildlife (deer, turkey, and bobcat kittens). As a landowner I see pets disappear and turkey chicks decimated. Has not been a fur market for coyotes in 4-5 years and population is dramatically increasing.

Petition for Rule Change Form

info@gfp.sd.us <info@gfp.sd.us>

Fri 9/6/2024 4:23 PM

To:sacherkas@msn.com <sacherkas@msn.com>

Cc:Kierl, Liz <Liz.Kierl@state.sd.us>;Harrington, Nick <Nick.Harrington@state.sd.us>

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 224
Petitioner Name: STEVE CHERKAS
Address: PO BOX 18
EDGEMONT, SD 57735
Email: sacherkas@msn.com
Phone: 515-306-2592
Rule Identification: NON resident trapping restrictions
Decribe Change: Give non residents the same privileges (start dates, etc) as residents
Reason for Change: What is everyone afraid of? Hardly any trappers in this state. Make it equal this is just not fair to them.

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Department Fee Adjustments

Chapters 41:01:03, 41:03:03, 41:03:04, 41:03:05, 41:06:02, 41:07:01

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	Sept 5-6, 2024	Rapid City
	Public Hearing	Oct 3, 2024	Huron
	Finalization	Oct 3-4, 2024	Huron

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE INFORMATION

The Department is recommending adjustments to multiple fees within the both the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Wildlife. Following documents outline the details of each license or fee that is being recommended for an increase.

Rules are also being created to implement nonresident Park Entrance Licenses and associated fees as well as establishing fees for the sale of habitat conservation plate emblems for both vehicles and motorcycles.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

1. Adjust fees according to recommendations lined out in the following documents associated to Parks and Recreation Division.
2. Create rule(s) to establish nonresident Park Entrance licenses and associated fees.
3. Adjust fees according to recommendations lined out in the following documents associated to Wildlife Division hunting and fishing fees.
4. Create rule for the department to sell habitat conservation plate emblems at \$50 per vehicle set and \$30 per motorcycle.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

Recommended changes: Remove the range increase for Modern Cabins and Suites.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The Division of Parks and Recreation and Wildlife Division have evaluated current fees for camping, park entrance license, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities and on-going expenditures with providing programs, services, and opportunities for residents and nonresident outdoor enthusiasts. From this evaluation and the current trend of growing expenses related to conducting business, it has been determined that it is necessary to adjust fees. The Division of Parks and Recreation last adjusted fees in 2019 and the Wildlife Division in 2014. Revenue generated from these fee adjustments will allow the Parks and Recreation Division to assure services and facilities are meeting the expectations of users of the state's park system and for Wildlife assure services, programs, operations, and staffing are meeting current and future needs/expectations.



South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

Parks and Recreation Fees and Permits

License Type

Park Entrance Licenses	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Annual	\$36	\$4	\$40
Nonresident Annual	\$36	\$24	\$60
Double	\$54	\$6	\$60
Nonresident Double	\$54	\$36	\$90
Transferable (Resident Only)	\$80	\$10	\$90
Daily	\$8	\$2	\$10
Nonresident Daily	\$8	\$7	\$15
George S. Mickelson Trail Annual Pass	\$15	\$5	\$20
George S. Mickelson Trail Daily Pass	\$4	\$1	\$5
Motorcoach, per person	\$3	\$1	\$4
One-Day Special Event, per 50 people	\$50	\$50	\$100
Custer State Park 7-day/vehicle	\$20	\$5	\$25
Custer State Unattended Vehicle PEL	\$20	\$5	\$25
Unattended Vehicle PEL	\$15	\$5	\$20

Camping	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Custer State Park Equestrian	\$36	\$1	\$37
Custer State Park Modern	\$26	\$1	\$27
Statewide Modern	\$16-\$22	\$1-\$7	\$23
Statewide Basic	\$11	\$5	\$16
Tent Only Non-electric	\$15	\$1	\$16
CSP French Creek Natural Area	\$7	\$1	\$8
CSP Game Lodge and Stockade Group	\$7	\$1	\$8
Camping Cabins	\$55	\$5	\$60
Modern Cabin and Suites	\$85-\$205	\$45	\$85-\$250
Group Lodge - Shadehill	\$280	\$20	\$300
Group Meeting Lodge - Oahe Downstream	\$125	\$25	\$150
Electrical Fee	\$4	\$3	\$7

Miscellaneous Fees	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Firewood	\$6	\$0.72	\$6.72
Nonresident online reservation fee	\$7.70	\$2.30	\$10
Nonresident call center reservation fee	\$9.70	\$6.30	\$16
Resident call center reservation fee	\$2	\$4	\$6
Lewis and Clark catamaran dry storage fee	\$325	\$25	\$350
Angostura catermaran dry storage fee	\$175	\$25	\$200

Boat Licenses	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
1-year under 19 ft motorized	\$25	\$5	\$30
1-year 19 ft and over motorized	\$45	\$10	\$55
1-year non-motorized/electric	\$15	\$3	\$18

Revenue Projection

\$4,386,283



South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
RESIDENT LICENSE FEES

License Type	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Fishing			
Annual	\$28	\$3	\$31
Senior	\$12	\$5	\$17
One-Day	\$8	\$2	\$10
Paddlefish Tag	\$25	\$5	\$30
Combination			
Combination	\$49	\$5	\$54
Combination Senior	\$34	\$3	\$37
Small Game			
Annual	\$27	\$3	\$30
One-day	\$12	\$3	\$15
Waterfowl			
Canada Goose Special Tags	\$10	\$5	\$15
Tundra Swan Tag	\$12	\$3	\$15
Turkey			
Spring One-tag	\$19	\$3	\$22
Spring Two-tag	\$29	\$5	\$34
Fall One-tag	\$9	\$5	\$14
Fall Two-tag	\$14	\$5	\$19
Deer			
One-tag "Any"	\$34	\$5	\$39
Two-tag "Any+Antlerless"	\$44	\$10	\$54
Three-Tag "Any+Two Antlerless"	\$44	\$10	\$54
Three-Tag "Any WT+Two Antlerless WT"	\$44	\$10	\$54
One-tag Antlerless	\$14	\$4	\$18
Two-tag Antlerless	\$24	\$6	\$30
Three-Tag Antlerless	\$24	\$6	\$30
Three-Tag Antlerless WT	\$24	\$6	\$30
Special Buck	\$169	\$25	\$194
Antelope			
One-Tag "Buck"	\$34	\$5	\$39
Two-Tag "Any+Doe-Fawn"	\$44	\$10	\$54
Three-Tag "Any+Two Doe-Fawn"	\$44	\$10	\$54
One-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$14	\$4	\$18
Two-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$24	\$6	\$30
Three-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$24	\$6	\$30
Special Antelope	\$169	\$25	\$194
Elk			
Any Elk	\$169	\$20	\$189
Antlerless	\$110	\$11	\$121
Mountain Goat			
	\$274	\$20	\$294
Bighorn Sheep			
	\$274	\$20	\$294
Mountain Lion			
	\$22	\$2	\$24
Furbearer			
	\$30	\$1	\$31
Predator / Varmint			
	\$5	\$1	\$6
Revenue Projection			\$1,140,669



South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
NON RESIDENT LICENSE FEES

License Type	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Fishing			
Annual	\$67	\$13	\$80
One-Day	\$16	\$10	\$26
Three-Day	\$37	\$8	\$45
Paddlefish Tag	\$25	\$25	\$50
Small Game			
Ten-Day	\$115	\$21	\$136
Waterfowl			
Ten-Day or Annual	\$110	\$29	\$139
Three-Day	\$75	\$25	\$100
Spring Light Goose	\$39	\$16	\$55
Early Fall Canada Goose	\$39	\$6	\$45
Tundra Swan Tag	\$19	\$15	\$34
Turkey			
Spring One-tag	\$94	\$21	\$115
Spring Two-tag	\$119	\$26	\$145
Fall One-tag	\$84	\$16	\$100
Fall Two-tag	\$94	\$31	\$125
Deer			
One-tag "Any"	\$280	\$89	\$369
Two-tag "Any+Antlerless"	\$330	\$89	\$419
Three-Tag "Any+Two Antlerless"	\$330	\$89	\$419
Three-Tag "Any WT+Two Antlerless WT"	\$330	\$89	\$419
One-tag Antlerless	\$74	\$20	\$94
Two-tag Antlerless	\$114	\$30	\$144
Three-Tag Antlerless	\$114	\$30	\$144
Three-Tag Antlerless WT	\$114	\$30	\$144
Special Buck	\$554	\$90	\$644
Antelope			
One-Tag "Buck"	\$280	\$89	\$369
Two-Tag "Any+Doe-Fawn"	\$330	\$89	\$419
Three-Tag "Any+Two Doe-Fawn"	\$330	\$89	\$419
One-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$74	\$20	\$94
Two-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$114	\$30	\$144
Three-Tag "Doe-Fawn"	\$114	\$30	\$144
Special Antelope	\$554	\$90	\$644
Shooting Preserve			
One-Day	\$40	\$4	\$44
Five-Day	\$70	\$20	\$90
Annual	\$115	\$25	\$140
Furbearer			
	\$275	\$50	\$325
Predator / Varmint			
	\$40	\$6	\$46
Preference Points			
	\$10	\$10	\$20
Revenue Projection			\$4,249,635

APPROVE

MODIFY

REJECT

NO ACTION



September Camping

9/1/2023 - 9/30/2023	9/1/2024 - 9/30/2024
Nights	Nights
48596	43859

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	264	122	-116%
	Pickerel Lake Recreation Area	687	606	-13%
	Roy Lake State Park	963	927	-4%
	Sica Hollow State Park	56	58	3%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	61	45	-36%
	Fisher Grove State Park	164	186	12%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	273	262	-4%
2	Mina Lake Recreation Area	438	400	-10%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	276	251	-10%
	Hartford Beach State Park	1208	983	-23%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	219	261	16%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	826	855	3%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	203	212	4%
4	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	912	720	-27%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	1353	1215	-11%
5	Lake Herman State Park	856	781	-10%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	929	843	-10%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	466	339	-37%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	9	13	31%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	235	184	-28%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	49	9	-444%
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	1	0	0%
6	Platte Creek Recreation Area	129	80	-61%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	799	616	-30%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	1190	1077	-10%
7	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	1992	1618	-23%
	Palisades State Park	961	1618	41%
8	Newton Hills State Park	1770	1576	-12%
	Union Grove State Park	222	203	-9%
9	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	1715	1360	-26%
	Clay County Park	325	363	10%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	5008	4218	-19%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	582	475	-23%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	29	25	-16%
	Springfield Recreation Area	174	242	28%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	5	12	58%
	North Point Recreation Area	968	859	-13%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	57	18	-217%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	197	124	-59%
Randall Creek Recreation Area	882	577	-53%	

	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	45	15	-200%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	7	2	-250%
	Whitestone Bay Lakeside Use Area	26	36	28%
10	White Swan Lakeside Use Area	11	2	-450%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	1072	884	-21%
11	West Bend Recreation Area	535	381	-40%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	400	313	-28%
	Cane Downstream Recreation Area	1983	1614	-23%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	97	53	-83%
12	Spring Creek Recreation Area	87	110	21%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	8	2	-300%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	984	759	-30%
	Lake Lindenwood Recreation Area	57	20	-185%
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	109	52	-110%
	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	15	2	-650%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	95	83	-14%
13	West Whitlock Recreation Area	513	331	-55%
14	Bear Butte State Park	132	162	19%
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	76	71	-7%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	941	835	-13%
15	Shadehill Recreation Area	891	818	-9%
16	Custer State Park	10435	10284	-1%
	Angostura Recreation Area	2378	2444	3%
17	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	246	253	3%
	Total:	48596	43859	-11%



September YTD Camping

1/1/2023 - 9/30/2023	1/1/2024 - 9/30/2024
Nights	Nights
332931	330809

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	1708	1451	-18%
	Pickerel Lake Recreation Area	5205	5593	7%
	Roy Lake State Park	7785	8081	4%
	Sica Hollow State Park	176	225	22%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	357	380	6%
	Fisher Grove State Park	1280	1074	-19%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	2125	2059	-3%
2	Mina Lake Recreation Area	3041	3019	-1%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	1738	1616	-8%
	Hartford Beach State Park	6550	6441	-2%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	2089	2108	1%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	6163	6153	0%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	1624	1692	4%
4	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	7913	7227	-9%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	8843	8756	-1%
5	Lake Herman State Park	5763	5398	-7%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	7543	7126	-6%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	2875	2866	0%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	56	87	36%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	2814	2723	-3%
6	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	309	203	-52%
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	57	48	-19%
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	1549	1494	-4%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	7893	7744	-2%
7	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	7014	6089	-15%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	11465	10598	-8%
	Palisades State Park	5561	8604	35%
8	Good Earth State Park	1	1	0%
	Newton Hills State Park	9871	9238	-7%
	Union Grove State Park	1347	1206	-12%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	11783	11225	-5%
9	Clay County Park	1807	1906	5%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	39428	38796	-2%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	4438	4420	0%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	118	75	-57%
	Springfield Recreation Area	1156	1388	17%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	84	70	-20%
	North Point Recreation Area	9154	9546	4%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	1044	874	-19%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1818	1764	-3%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	6564	5836	-12%
10	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	427	282	-51%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	105	48	-119%
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	432	391	-10%
	White Swan Lakeside Use Area	223	122	-83%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	7421	7301	-2%

11	West Bend Recreation Area	7438	7116	-5%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	2943	3034	3%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	12831	13065	2%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	1308	1370	5%
12	Spring Creek Recreation Area	833	1115	25%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	53	51	-4%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	7222	7533	4%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	161	172	6%
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	851	876	3%
	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	49	33	-48%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	1062	1097	3%
13	West Whitlock Recreation Area	4504	4594	2%
14	Bear Butte State Park	1542	1285	-20%
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	439	417	-5%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	6556	6751	3%
15	Shadehill Recreation Area	6827	6969	2%
16	Custer State Park	51652	51948	1%
	Angostura Recreation Area	17652	17725	0%
17	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	2291	2314	1%
Total:		332931	330809	-1%

Division of Parks and Recreation					
September 2024 Revenue by Item					
	2023		2024		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	Change
Annual	5,897	\$ 207,070	5,840	\$ 206,134	0%
2nd Annual	697	\$ 9,857	504	\$ 5,544	-44%
Double	3,541	\$ 184,402	3,545	\$ 189,688	3%
Transferable	39	\$ 3,040	29	\$ 2,300	-24%
GSM Annual Trail Pass	817	\$ 12,180	847	\$ 12,705	4%
Annual Licenses	10,991	\$ 416,549	10,765	\$ 416,371	0%
Daily License	15,682	\$ 125,083	15,894	\$ 126,944	1%
Unattended Vehicle Daily	210	\$ 3,150	230	\$ 3,450	10%
GSM Daily Trail Pass	3,828	\$ 15,312	4,325	\$ 17,282	13%
Motorcoach Permit	3,189	\$ 9,567	3,568	\$ 10,701	12%
CSP 7 Day Pass	34,154	\$ 682,960	34,109	\$ 681,216	0%
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	2,286	\$ 45,700	2,325	\$ 46,360	1%
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-
One-Day Special Event	42	\$ 2,100	44	\$ 2,150	2%
Daily Licenses	59,391	\$ 883,872	60,495	\$ 888,103	0%
Licenses	70,382	\$ 1,300,421	71,260	\$ 1,304,474	0%
Camping Services		\$ 664,413		\$ 750,034	13%
Pet Fees	46	\$ 460	137	\$ 1,363	196%
LODGING		\$ 664,873		\$ 751,396	13%
Picnic Shelters		\$ 1,015		\$ 680	-33%
Boat Rentals		\$ 1,147		\$ 1,437	25%
Firewood	4,880	\$ 29,208	5,488	\$ 31,604	8%
Gift Card	2	\$ 136	7	\$ 585	330%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 130		\$ 200	54%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 5,264		\$ 4,356	-17%
Retail		\$ 20,388		\$ 21,519	6%
Call Center Fee	570	\$ 5,490	2,470	\$ 4,930	-10%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 2,142		\$ -	-
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 64,919		\$ 65,311	1%
TOTAL		\$ 2,030,212		\$ 2,121,181	4%

Division of Parks and Recreation					
September YTD 2024 Revenue by Item					
	2023		2024		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	Change
Annual	58,188	\$ 2,056,918	60,388	\$ 2,142,289	4%
2nd Annual	10,270	\$ 166,061	8,405	\$ 131,814	-21%
Double	35,926	\$ 1,915,153	37,801	\$ 2,027,640	6%
Transferable	2,519	\$ 203,017	2,639	\$ 209,306	3%
GSM Annual Trail Pass	5,234	\$ 78,405	6,109	\$ 91,530	17%
Annual Licenses	112,137	\$ 4,419,554	115,342	\$ 4,602,579	4%
Daily License	103,658	\$ 819,870	108,874	\$ 862,540	5%
Unattended Vehicle Daily	925	\$ 13,845	1,062	\$ 15,930	15%
GSM Daily Trail Pass	15,688	\$ 62,752	17,174	\$ 68,678	9%
Motorcoach Permit	14,154	\$ 42,462	15,902	\$ 47,703	12%
CSP 7 Day Pass	175,774	\$ 3,514,566	183,444	\$ 3,665,612	4%
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	18,510	\$ 371,820	19,759	\$ 381,684	3%
Rally Bike Band	27,264	\$ 524,660	26,426	\$ 534,252	2%
One-Day Special Event	137	\$ 6,850	136	\$ 6,749	-1%
Daily Licenses	356,110	\$ 5,356,825	372,777	\$ 5,583,148	4%
Licenses	468,247	\$ 9,776,379	488,119	\$ 10,185,727	4%
Camping Services		\$ 9,307,306		\$ 9,376,883	1%
Pet Fees	276	\$ 2,760	1390	\$ 13,855	402%
LODGING		\$ 9,310,066		\$ 9,390,738	1%
Picnic Shelter		\$ 14,045		\$ 15,699	12%
Boat Rentals		\$ 6,296		\$ 13,916	121%
Firewood	35,812	\$ 214,395	39,372	\$ 226,849	6%
Gift Card	98	\$ 9,400	127	\$ 11,256	20%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 173,960		\$ 156,946	-10%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 40,532		\$ 39,766	-2%
Retail		\$ 192,795		\$ 227,378	18%
Call Center Fee	19,644	\$ 40,478	17,949	\$ 35,672	-12%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 15,148		\$ 143,953	850%
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 707,050		\$ 871,435	23%
TOTAL		\$ 19,793,495		\$ 20,447,900	3%

**SOUTH DAKOTA
MOUNTAIN LION ACTION PLAN
2024-2028**



**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA**

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2024-03

OCTOBER 2024

This document is for general, strategic guidance for the Division of Wildlife and serves to identify what we strive to accomplish related to mountain lion management. This action plan will be utilized by Department staff on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated at least every 5 years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a product of substantial discussion and input from many wildlife professionals. Comments and suggestions received from members of the South Dakota Mountain Lion Stakeholder Group, private landowners, hunters, and those who recognize the value of mountain lions and their associated habitats were also considered.

Action Plan Coordinator – Andy Lindbloom, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP).

GFP Mountain Lion Action Plan Team that assisted with plan writing, data review and analyses, critical reviews and/or edits to the South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan, 2019-2029 – Nathan Baker, Byron Buckley, Stephanie Buckley, Steve Griffin, Trenton Haffley, John Kanta, Mike Klosowski, Julie Lindstrom, Chad Lehman, Jim McCormick, Andrew Norton, Dan Sternhagen, and Lauren Wiechmann.

Those who served on the South Dakota Mountain Lion Stakeholder Group during this planning process included: Brian Dail (Greater Dacotah SCI); Sean Fulton (Black Hills Sportsmen Club); Nancy Hilding (Prairie Hills Audubon Society); Chad Kiel (Predator Hunter Association); Chase Larson (Black Hills Mountain Lion Hunters); Suzanne Martley (SD Chapter of the Sierra Club); Dana Rodgers (SD Wildlife Federation); Todd Russell (US Forest Service); Matt Tucker (Rosebud Sioux Tribe); Jeremy Wells (SD Houndsmen Association). In addition to those citizens that volunteered for the stakeholder group, Commissioner Travis Theel of the GFP Commission also attended and participated in the meeting.

Recommended Citation:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. 2024. South Dakota Mountain Lion Action Plan, 2024-2028. Completion Report 2024-03. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, South Dakota, USA.



INTRODUCTION

Mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) historically occurred throughout South Dakota and were considered numerous in the Black Hills. However, the population declined in the early 1900s due to unregulated hunting and bounties that were placed on mountain lions until 1966. In 1978, mountain lions were listed as a state threatened species. With a breeding population established in the Black Hills and a better understanding of population dynamics within the Black Hills, the mountain lion was removed from the state threatened species list and classified as a big game animal in 2003 with protection under a year-round closed season. The first regulated mountain lion hunting season in South Dakota was established in 2005 and continues today to provide hunting opportunities and manage populations towards desired social and biological objectives.

Overall, South Dakota residents have a positive attitude towards mountain lions. Public opinions on mountain lions vary, however, and there will always be a certain level of controversy surrounding the management of large carnivores. With the use of science-based knowledge to make management decisions, this plan will ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of mountain lions in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The current Black Hills population objective is 150-250 total mountain lions, but actual population abundance may range depending on a multitude of factors. Population objectives for mountain lions on the prairie habitats of South Dakota have not been established as these areas are managed primarily to abate potential livestock losses on private property, minimize human conflicts, and maximize hunter opportunity.

The “*South Dakota Mountain Lion Action Plan, 2024-2028*” will serve as the guiding document for decision making and implementation of actions to ensure mountain lion populations are managed appropriately, addressing both biological and social tolerances, while considering the needs of all stakeholders. Additional information regarding mountain lion management, research, and history can be found in the *South Dakota Mountain Lion Management plan, 2019-2029* (South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks 2019; https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/LionPlan_FINAL_2019.pdf).

POPULATION MONITORING

In general, mountain lions exhibit secretive behavior, occur in low densities, and occupy habitats with relatively dense vegetative cover and rough topography. These characteristics make estimates of population abundance and trends difficult. GFP uses numerous trend indicators to assess the mountain lion population in the Black Hills. The primary surveys and data used to assess trends include: 1) hunting season data, 2) documented mortalities, and 3) mark/recapture surveys. Analyses, results and detailed summaries of all mountain lion surveys and monitoring efforts are reported biennially (Lindbloom et al. 2023; https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/mountain_lion_status_report_2023.pdf).

Hunting Season Data

Hunting season dates and harvest limits are currently used to manage mountain lions in the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD), and a year-round season with no limit exists in the remainder of South Dakota. Harvest limits are established to ensure harvest does not exceed management objectives.

All harvested mountain lions in South Dakota must be presented to a GFP representative within 24 hours of harvest for inspection. Information is recorded about the harvest and tissue samples are collected from harvested mountain lions for genetic analyses used in mark/recapture population estimates. Trends in harvest age and sex proportions are evaluated annually in the Black Hills. Furthermore, harvest surveys are also sent to all licensed hunters to collect hunter effort (# days hunted) which is used to estimate harvest per unit effort.

Documented Mortalities

All known mountain lion mortalities in South Dakota are recorded and the BHFPD mortalities are evaluated for population trend assessments. For trend assessments of mountain lions in the BHFPD of South Dakota, GFP primarily evaluates total, harvest, non-harvest, and removal mortalities. Variation in recovery or detection probability among cause-specific mortalities prevents comparison among categories.

Harvest mortalities can be influenced by hunting season regulations, weather, and other factors. Non-harvest mortality trends may reflect increases or decreases in the mountain lion population. However, factors influencing non-harvest mortality can be variable and may influence trend assessments.

Population Estimation

Abundance of mountain lions in the Black Hills is estimated using the Lincoln-Petersen mark-recapture Chapman model. GFP uses biopsy-darting as the primary method to mark mountain lions immediately prior to the season, while the hunting season is considered the recapture event. DNA analyses are conducted by the USFS National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation, Missoula, MT.

Vital rates from radio-collared individuals and recruitment data from previous research studies in the Black Hills (e.g., Thompson 2009, Jansen 2011) are used as input variables to calculate the total mountain lion population. Age and sex composition of starting populations are based on the 3-year average composition of harvested mountain lions.

Population trajectories are an important management tool that enables a better understanding of harvest strategies dependent upon management objectives. Growth rates of mountain lion populations are primarily dependent on female survival and kitten recruitment. Understanding population rates of change allows managers to implement proactive management recommendations while practicing adaptive management techniques.

DEPREDAATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Mountain lion management in South Dakota is a complex and adaptive process that must include careful consideration of the biological, social, economic, and political impacts. Overall, the demand for mountain lion depredation services from GFP is low. The most significant factor that likely affects social tolerance and the demand for mountain lion depredation services in South Dakota are population levels and landowners' financial dependency on livestock or other personal property. Fortunately, few landowners have interactions with mountain lions because of the animal's secretive nature and relatively low densities.

Conflicts with mountain lions may occur any time of the year but more frequently in areas with more people, more mountain lions, more livestock production, and less available habitat. Outside of the Black Hills, mountain lion habitat is limited and the potential for an incident increases. All reported mountain lion observations from the public in areas outside of the Black Hills are recorded in a centralized database. Observations of mountain lions within the Black Hills that occur in a municipality, urban, or other area/situation of current or future potential conflict are also recorded.

In South Dakota, mountain lions may be removed by GFP due to livestock depredation, attacks on pets, or in situations where a mountain lion poses a substantial threat to public safety. GFP will remove a mountain lion for attacking domestic animals. However, GFP may not remove a mountain lion in conflict situations where a pet provoked a mountain lion or where domestic animals could be protected using exclusionary fencing. GFP will not relocate a mountain lion that previously attacked livestock to another area, because it may impact another livestock producer. In these situations, it is GFP's current position to utilize lethal removal as the most appropriate management technique. However, GFP does provide technical advice to livestock producers and homeowners regarding non-lethal techniques (e.g., protective fencing and additional livestock husbandry practices) to be proactive and hopefully minimize mountain lion conflicts with livestock and pets. Feeding of prey species, such as deer and turkey, in urban areas or near rural homes is discouraged as it can lead to an increased presence of mountain lions.

Lethal control is conducted exclusively by GFP staff when deemed appropriate. However, in certain circumstances, citizens may kill a mountain lion if necessary. Under SDCL § 41-6-29.2, killing of a mountain lion is permitted if reasonably necessary to protect the life of a person or if a mountain lion is posing an imminent threat to a person's livestock or pets. If a person kills a mountain lion pursuant to state law, they must contact GFP within twenty-four hours of killing the mountain lion.

While GFP management techniques and strategies have proven successful over the past 20 years, mountain lion depredation and the associated conflicts will continue to be a challenge. To help minimize these conflicts when possible, GFP must ensure that mountain lion populations are managed proactively and that management goals are being met. Defined

wildlife population objectives, management goals, and stakeholder opinions are critical to effectively manage wildlife populations (Leopold 1933, Riley and Decker 2000).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

Effective decision-making by wildlife agencies necessitates the need to consider public perceptions and opinions, as well as potential responses to management policies. Along with hunter harvest and biological data collected, public involvement is an important component in developing and implementing wildlife management plans. Public participation helps ensure decisions are made in consideration of public needs and preferences. It can help resolve conflicts, build trust, and inform the public about wildlife management in South Dakota. Successful public participation is a continuous process, consisting of a series of activities and actions to inform the public and stakeholders, as well as obtain input regarding decisions which affect them. No single citizen or group of citizens can represent the views of all citizens. Multiple avenues for public involvement and outreach, therefore, are used in the development of the Mountain Lion Management Plan. These approaches are designed to involve the public at various stages of plan development and to ensure opportunities for participation are accessible to all citizens.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks first began collecting public opinion information related to mountain lion management in 2002, at which time mountain lions were listed as a state threatened species (Gigliotti et al. 2002). Since that time GFP has administered multiple surveys regarding mountain lions in South Dakota: five state resident surveys (Longmire 2019, Gigliotti 2012, Gigliotti et al. 2009, Gigliotti 2002, and Gigliotti et al. 2002); three Black Hills deer hunter surveys (Gigliotti 2007a, 2006a, and 2005a); one elk hunter survey (Gigliotti 2006b); and 13 mountain lion hunter surveys (Huxoll 2018, Longmire 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012a, Gigliotti 2011, 2010a, 2009, 2008, 2007b, and 2006c). In addition to surveys, GFP has held multiple public meetings/open houses in 2005, 2010, and 2012 designed to provide information to the public and gather public input about mountain lion management in South Dakota. Additional public comment has been collected over the years in conjunction with management plan revisions; GFP Commission public hearings, open forums, and petition processes; and via informal avenues such as emails and phone calls to the Department. A stakeholder group was established in conjunction with the 2024 management plan revision process as an additional means for gathering input related to mountain lion management. Additionally, a public opinion survey was administered to both hunters (i.e., the most recent season resident applicants for statewide and Black Hills mountain lion hunting and Black Hills big game hunting) and Black Hills residents (i.e., residents within municipalities in and around the Black Hills and residents outside of municipalities within 15 miles of the BHFPD) in the spring of 2024 (Buckley 2024).

Attitudes toward Mountain Lion Hunting Season

Over the years South Dakota residents have been supportive of a mountain lion hunting season (Longmire 2019, Gigliotti 2012, Gigliotti et al. 2009, Gigliotti 2002 and Gigliotti et al. 2002). In the 2024 public opinion survey, hunters and residents were provided with a preamble detailing the Custer State Park (CSP), Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD), and Statewide mountain

lion hunting season characteristics. Participants were asked how satisfied they were with the structure of the mountain lion season in 2022 – 2023. Approximately half of hunters (51%) and residents (59%) were neutral about the CSP season, half of hunters (46%) and residents (55%) were neutral about the BHFPD season, and half of hunters (49%) reported some level of satisfaction with the statewide season outside BHFPD, while half of residents (57%) were neutral about the statewide season (Buckley 2024).

There is varied support for various mountain lion harvest strategies (Buckley 2024). Survey respondents were asked to report their level of support for different strategies that could be used if GFP needed to increase mountain lion harvest beyond current levels. Residents most favored expanding boot hunting opportunities (60%), allowing mountain lion harvest during deer season (45%), and allowing pursuit where multiple tracks are present (39%). Hunters most favored allowing mountain lion harvest during deer season (72%), expanding boot hunting opportunities (67%), and expanding hunting opportunities using dogs (62%). Residents were most opposed to allowing trapping/snaring (65%). Currently, state law and administrative rule do not allow the taking of any big game animal (including mountain lions) with traps or snares. Previous survey results showed resident opposition to this method (59%) (Longmire 2019). Finally, hunters were most opposed to allowing non-resident harvest (68%).

Social Tolerance

Research into the acceptance of wildlife indicates both objective and subjective factors shape beliefs about wildlife populations (Zinn et al. 2000; Decker and Purdy 1988). In addition to objectively measured population levels, risks, and benefits factors such as value orientations and perceptions of population levels, risks, and benefits have been found to be important in determining stakeholder acceptance capacity for wildlife (Zinn et al. 2000). Understanding attitudes is important since they can influence and predict behavior, and the more specific the attitude is toward a certain behavior the stronger the relationship between attitude and behavior (Vaske 2008, Fishbein and Manfredo 2003, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

The attitudes and beliefs about mountain lions held by SD residents are complex. Over the past 16 years surveys have consistently shown the full range of attitudes towards mountain lions is present among South Dakota residents, ranging from strong support to strong opposition toward mountain lions. Attitudinal statements have been used to measure SD residents' beliefs regarding mountain lions (Longmire 2019, Gigliotti 2012 and Gigliotti et al. 2002).

In the 2024 study, three items measured existence and environmental value of mountain lions. Over half of hunters (56%) and the majority of residents (74%) agreed that the presence of mountain lions was a sign of a healthy environment (Buckley 2024). The majority of residents in 2002 (72%) agreed that the presence of mountain lions was a sign of a healthy environment, while 12 percent disagreed and 16 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with it (Gigliotti et al. 2002). In 2018, a smaller majority (57%) agreed that the presence of mountain lions was sign of a healthy environment, 20 percent disagreed, and 23 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with it. Additionally, in the 2024 study, most hunters (61%) and residents (76%) agreed it is important to them that mountain lions persist in South Dakota for future generations. Most

hunters (66%) and residents (80%) also agreed it is important to them to know that mountain lions exist, whether they ever see one in the wild or not (Buckley 2024).

Attitudes towards mountain lion hunting were also assessed in the 2024 survey. Over half of hunters (63%) and a little less than half of residents (47%) agreed mountain lion hunting is an important tradition in South Dakota. The vast majority of hunters (96%) and residents (83%) agreed hunting is an acceptable way of managing mountain lion populations. Interestingly, 38% of hunters and 40% of residents were neutral that mountain lion hunting is important for South Dakota's economy (Buckley 2024).

The risks and threats of having mountain lions on the landscape were also captured in the 2024 survey (Buckley 2024). Hunters and residents were divided on many of these items. A little less than half of hunters (42%) agreed mountain lions pose an unacceptable threat to livestock, 40% of residents disagreed. Similarly, a little less than half of hunters (42%) agreed mountain lions pose an unacceptable risk to pets, while residents disagreed (42%). Half of hunters (50%) and over half of residents (55%) disagreed mountain lions pose an unacceptable risk to people. In previous surveys, the majority of SD residents disagreed that having mountain lions in SD is too dangerous a risk to people. In 2002, 62 percent of SD residents disagreed mountain lions were too dangerous a risk to people, 25 percent agreed with it, and 13 percent neither agreed nor disagreed (Gigliotti et al. 2002). Similarly in 2012, 57 percent disagreed that mountain lions were too dangerous a risk to people, 27 percent agreed and 16 percent neither agreed nor disagreed (Gigliotti 2012). More recently, in 2018, 53 percent disagreed with this statement, 28 percent agreed and 19 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. Over half of hunters (53%) agreed mountain lions pose an unacceptable threat to ungulates, while over half of residents disagreed (52%).

South Dakota residents' concerns about mountain lions killing too many game animals have fluctuated over the years. This fluctuation is likely due, in part, to fluctuations in mountain lion, deer, and elk populations in the Black Hills over the last 16 years. In 2002, a slight majority of SD residents (52%) disagreed with the statement that they were concerned about mountain lions killing too many game animals. One-quarter (25%) were concerned about this and 24 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (Gigliotti et al. 2002). The proportion of SD residents who indicated they were concerned about mountain lions killing too many game animals jumped to nearly half (45%) in 2012, while one-third (33%) were unconcerned and 22 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (Gigliotti 2012). In 2018, the proportion of residents who were concerned about this dropped to 33 percent, 42 percent indicated they were unconcerned, and one-quarter (25%) neither agreed nor disagreed that they were concerned about mountain lions killing too many game animals. Black Hills residents were more likely than residents on the prairie (52% compared to 39%) to disagree with this statement (Longmire 2019). In the 2024 study, over half of residents (53%) disagreed that mountain lions pose an unacceptable threat to ungulates, while over half of hunters (53%) agreed that they do.

Respondents were also asked whether they would prefer to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota decrease, stay the same or increase over the next five years in the following locations: Custer State Park [CSP], Black Hills Fire Protection District (excluding CSP) [BHFPD], and Statewide, outside of BHFPD (Buckley 2024). In CSP, 46% of hunters and 56% of residents wanted the population objective to stay about the same. In BHFPD, 46% of hunters wanted it to decrease to some degree, while 52% of residents wanted it to stay about the same. Statewide, 47% of hunters and 56% of residents wanted the population to stay about the same. In 2002, when mountain lions were still listed as a state threatened species, one-quarter (25%) of residents wanted the mountain lion population to increase to some degree, less than one-third (30%) wanted it to stay about the same, and 17 percent indicated they would like to see the population decrease to some degree. Over one-quarter (28%) were unsure about what the population goal should be (Gigliotti et al. 2002). In 2018 (13 years after the first mountain lion hunting season) residents were asked the direction they would prefer to see mountain lion populations go over the next five years within the Black Hills Fire Protection District and statewide (outside the fire protection district). Over one-third (39%) of residents preferred to see the population in the Black Hills Fire Protection District stay about the same, and 35 percent of residents would like to see the population statewide stay about the same (Longmire 2019). Over one-quarter (29%) of residents would like to see the population decrease to some extent over the next five years statewide, and 21 percent would like to see the population in the Black Hills decrease. A similar proportion of residents would like to see the population in the Black Hills and statewide increase (20% and 17%, respectively). About 20 percent of residents indicated they were unsure about mountain lion population goals over the next five years (Longmire 2019).

Survey results over the past 16 years have consistently shown that the full range of attitudes toward mountain lions exist in South Dakota. This finding is significant in it means managing mountain lions can be controversial, and mountain lion incidents have the potential to become contentious depending on how they are addressed. Understanding how various stakeholders perceive mountain lions in South Dakota is an important component of overall mountain lion management that is responsive to public values.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Mountain lions are a topic of interest and conversation throughout the state. GFP staff provide education and information in both formal and informal settings. This includes, but is not limited to, the Outdoor Campuses (Rapid City & Sioux Falls), GFP offices and parks, teacher trainings, and other staff presentations. While presentations occur throughout the state, they are more frequent in the western portion of the state, especially in and around the Black Hills. GFP will continue to be active in educating area residents, schools, and visitors about mountain lions.

Additional education materials are provided in the form of a GFP brochure entitled “Living with Mountain Lions”. This brochure has information about mountain lions in South Dakota along with general information about the species. A hunter educational brochure entitled “Mountain

Lion Identification and Methods of Determining Sex and Age” has also been created to inform hunters in South Dakota about mountain lions, and to assist with field identification of sex and age. Furthermore, GFP is currently working on an informational brochure which demonstrates successful techniques used to protect chicken and other domestic animals from mountain lions.

POPULATION GOALS

The GFP will manage mountain lion populations and habitats consistent with ecological, social, aesthetic, and economic values of South Dakota citizens while addressing the concerns and issues of both residents and visitors of South Dakota.

The Black Hills population objective is 150-250 total mountain lions, but actual population abundance may vary depending on a multitude of factors such as mountain lion vital rates, prey species population densities, mortality factors, public input, and the precision and accuracy of biological monitoring. This population objective range was developed and updated after thorough analyses of mountain lion population data, prey availability, recreational opportunities, livestock depredation issues, human safety and conflict issues, and substantial input from a wide variety of publics with an interest in mountain lion management in South Dakota. GFP will adopt harvest strategies that will allow the mountain lion population to stay within the objective range.

Population objectives for mountain lions on the prairie habitats of South Dakota have not been established. Survey data are lacking for mountain lions on the prairie and these areas are managed primarily to abate potential livestock losses on private property while at the same time to provide recreational hunting opportunity.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Monitor and assess mountain lion populations by conducting scientifically based biological surveys within South Dakota.

- a) Annually survey hunters to estimate harvest statistics.
- b) Annually conduct mandatory checks for all harvested mountain lions to collect and assess harvest and other biological data.
- c) Annually collect and evaluate reported mountain lion mortalities.
- d) Estimate abundance of mountain lion population in the Black Hills.
 - Evaluate alternative methods to improve estimate of abundance.
 - Evaluate alternative indices to improve detection of population trend.
- e) Investigate, document, and collect biological samples from sick and/or dead mountain lions demonstrating symptoms of concern.

Objective 2: Manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs.

- a) Manage for a sustainable population of mountain lions within the Black Hills of South Dakota.
 - The winter population objective will be 150-250 total mountain lions.
 - Collect scientific-based public input from hunters, landowners, and the general public during every management plan revision to assess public perceptions regarding mountain lion management, better define social tolerance levels, and re-evaluate objectives and strategies.
- b) Modify and adopt hunting season structure as needed to minimize regulation complexity:
 - In the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD), excluding Custer State Park (CSP): maximize hunting opportunity for unique hunters allowing unlimited boot hunting with harvest regulated primarily through restricted season lengths and harvest limits.
 - In CSP: maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs with harvest regulated primarily through limited permits and restricted season lengths.
 - Outside BHFPD: emphasis to minimize potential human conflicts with mountain lions and maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs allowing unlimited permits and a year-round season.

Objective 3: Cooperatively work with private landowners, municipalities, and the general public to resolve mountain lion depredation to livestock, human safety concerns, and urban mountain lion conflicts.

- a) Continue to document and respond to all mountain lion depredation and human safety concerns in a timely manner.
- b) Educate the public and public municipalities on the potential for increased mountain lion human safety issues from feeding deer and other wildlife.
- c) Utilize mountain lion kill permit authority (see *Depredation Management* section) when warranted, to address mountain lion depredation and human safety concerns.
- d) Provide technical assistance to municipalities regarding mountain lion-human conflict management.
- e) Annually collect and evaluate reported mountain lion observations in areas of potential human and/or livestock conflict.

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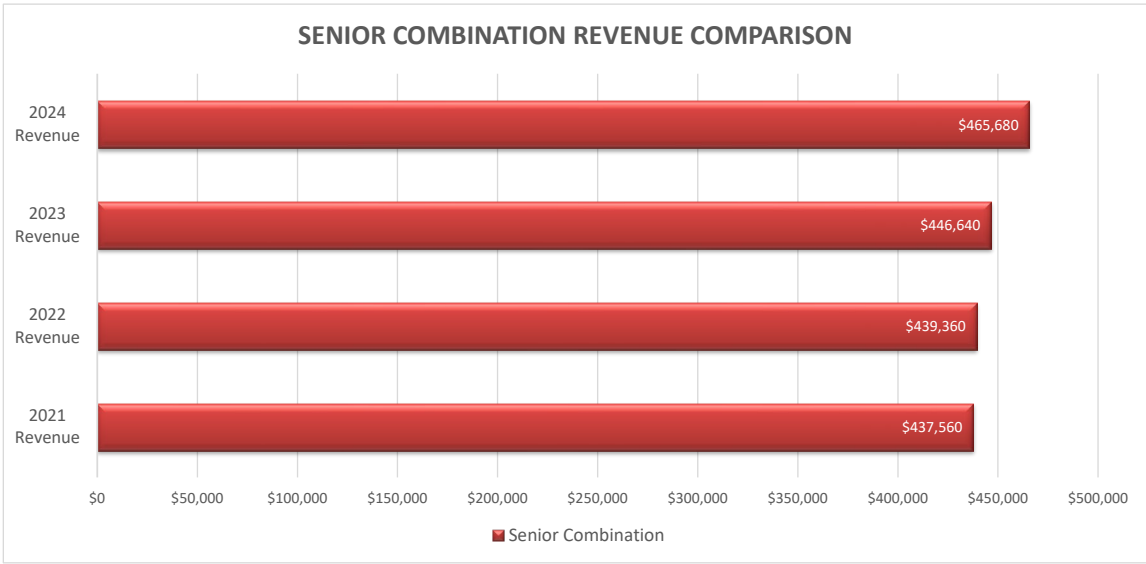
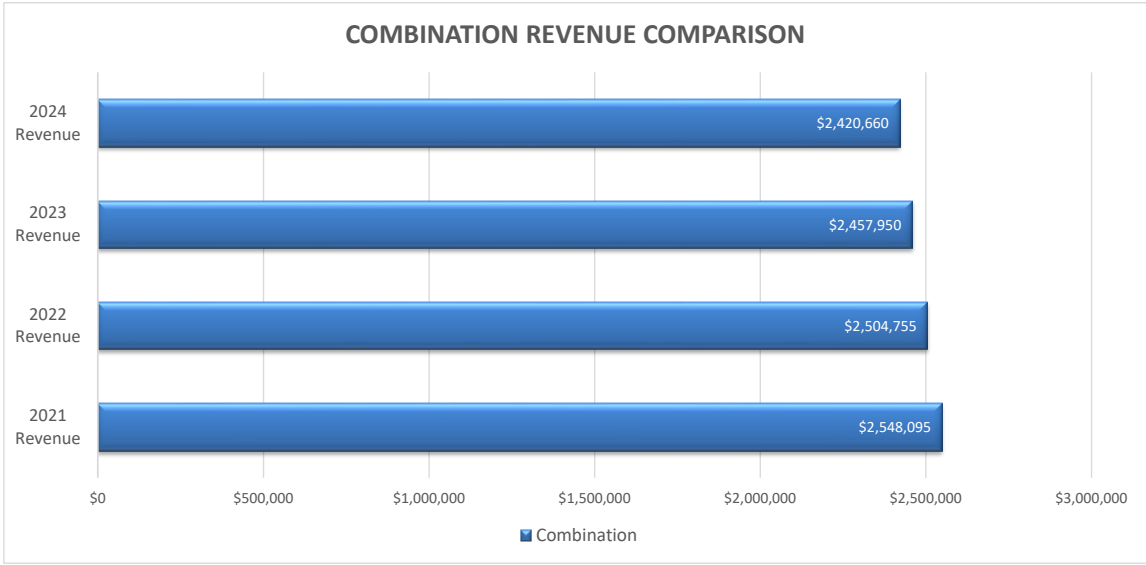
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COMBINATION LICENSES

December 15 - September 30

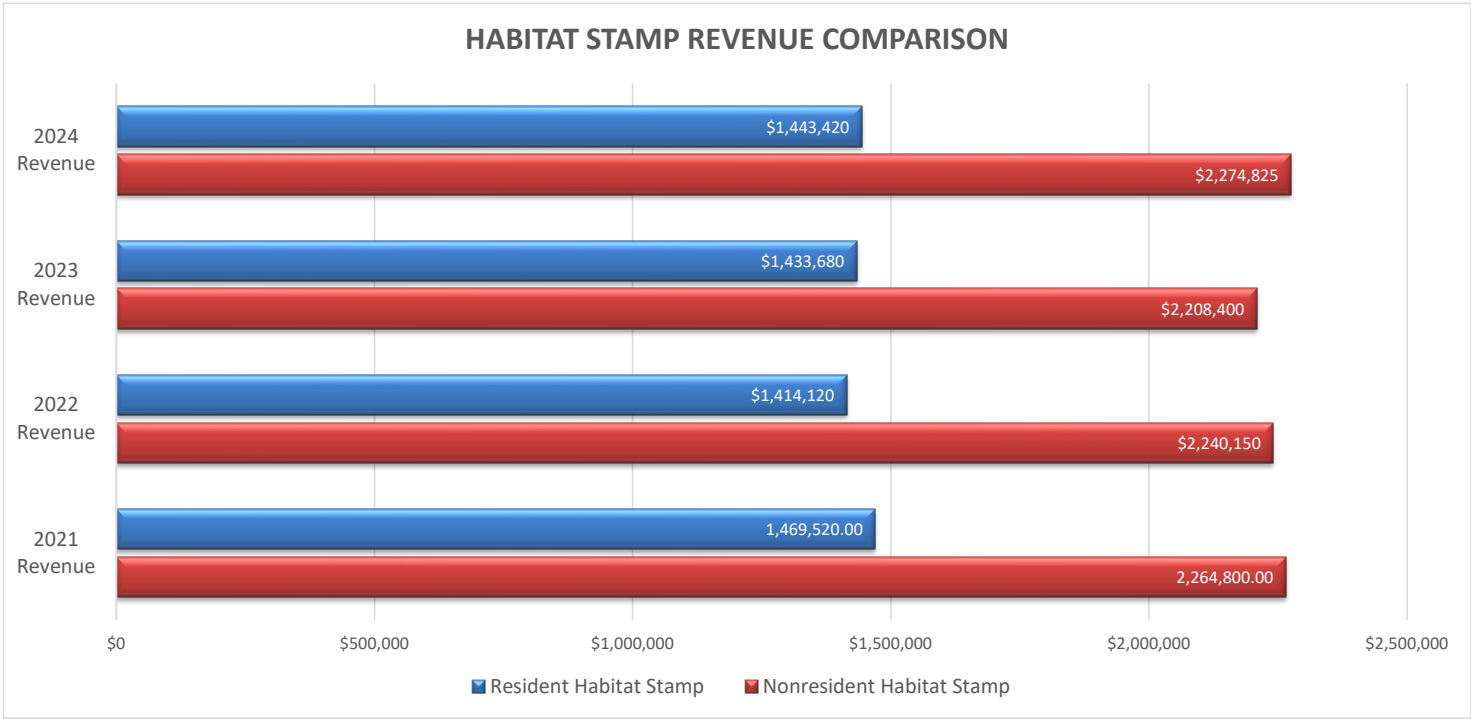
License Type	2021	2022	2023	3-yr Avg	2024	2024 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		
							2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	from 3 Yr. Avg
Combination	46,329	45,541	44,690	45,520	44,012	\$2,420,660	(678)	(1,508)	(\$37,290)	(\$82,940)	-3%
Senior Combination	10,939	10,984	11,166	11,030	11,642	\$465,680	476	612	\$19,040	\$24,493	6%
Combination License Totals	57,268	56,525	55,856	56,550	55,654	\$2,886,340	(202)	(896)	(\$18,250)	(\$58,447)	-1.58%



HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - September 30

License Type	2021	2022	2023	3-yr Avg	2024	2024 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		
							2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	from 3 Yr. Avg
Resident Habitat Stamp	146,952	141,412	143,368	143,911	144,342	\$1,443,420	974	431	\$53,570	\$23,723	0%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	90,592	89,606	88,336	89,511	90,993	\$2,274,825	2,657	1,482	\$106,280	\$59,267	2%
Habitat Stamp Totals	237,544	231,018	231,704	233,422	235,335	\$3,718,245	3,631	1,913	\$159,850	\$82,990	1%

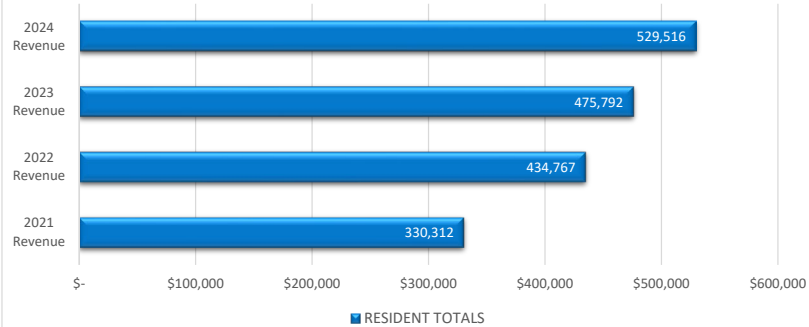


SMALL GAME LICENSES

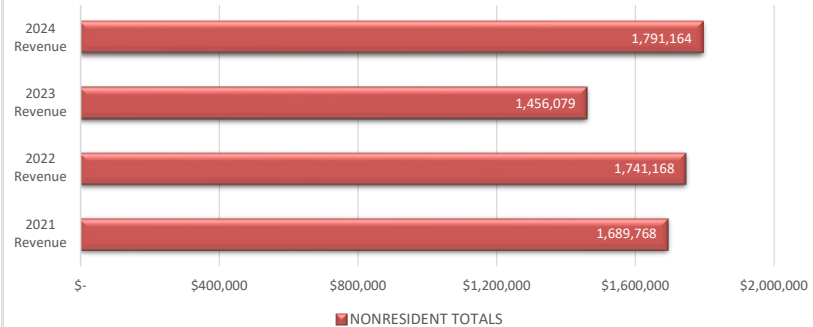
December 15 - September 30

License Type	2021	2022	2023	3-yr Avg	2024	2024 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	
Small Game	4,224	6,332	8,002	6,186	9,373	\$309,309	1,371	3,187	\$45,243	\$105,171	52%
1-Day Small Game	436	213	133	261	231	\$2,772	98	(30)	\$1,176	(\$356)	-11%
Youth Small Game	2,515	3,470	3,355	3,113	3,595	\$17,975	240	482	\$1,200	\$5,780	15%
Furbearer	3,640	3,327	3,044	3,337	3,228	\$96,840	184	(109)	\$5,520	(\$3,270)	-3%
Predator/Varmint	1,165	1,807	1,656	1,543	1,438	\$7,190	(218)	(105)	(\$1,090)	(\$523)	-7%
Res Migratory Bird Cert - 3 Duck	332	1,013	1,259	868	1,104	\$5,520	(155)	236	(\$775)	\$1,180	27%
Res Migratory Bird Cert - Traditional	20,856	18,399	17,492	18,916	17,982	\$89,910	490	(934)	\$2,450	(\$4,668)	-5%
RESIDENT TOTALS	33,168	34,561	34,941	34,223	36,951	529,516	2,010	2,728	\$53,724	\$103,313	7.97%
Small Game	9,733	9,776	7,865	9,125	10,523	\$1,273,283	2,658	1,398	\$321,618	\$169,198	15%
Youth Small Game	457	551	427	478	580	\$5,800	153	102	\$1,530	\$1,017	21%
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	465	479	316	420	397	\$18,262	81	(23)	\$3,726	(\$1,058)	-5%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	3,547	4,237	3,474	3,753	3,564	\$270,864	90	(189)	\$6,840	(\$14,339)	-5%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	190	222	158	190	129	\$15,609	(29)	(61)	(\$3,509)	(\$7,381)	-32%
Furbearer	5	3	2	3	5	\$1,375	3	2	\$825	\$458	50%
Predator/Varmint	3,926	3,802	3,947	3,892	3,980	\$159,200	33	88	\$1,320	\$3,533	2%
NR Migratory Bird Cert - 3 Duck	140	106	263	170	298	\$1,490	35	128	\$175	\$642	76%
NR Migratory Bird Cert - Traditional	2,822	2,155	5,517	3,498	6,601	\$33,005	1,084	3,103	\$5,420	\$15,515	89%
Nonresident September Goose	462	401	344	402	279	\$12,555	(65)	(123)	(\$2,925)	(\$5,550)	-31%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	21,747	21,732	22,313	21,931	26,356	\$1,791,443	4,043	4,425	\$337,945	\$167,586	20.18%
COMBINED TOTALS	54,915	56,293	57,254	56,154	63,307	\$2,320,959	6,053	7,153	\$391,669	\$270,899	12.74%

RESIDENT SMALL GAME REVENUE COMPARISON



NONRESIDENT SMALL GAME REVENUE COMPARISON



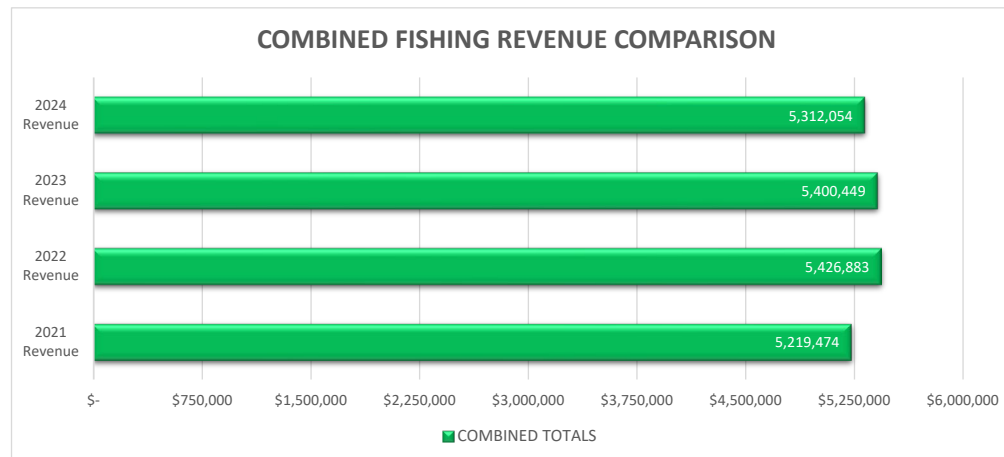
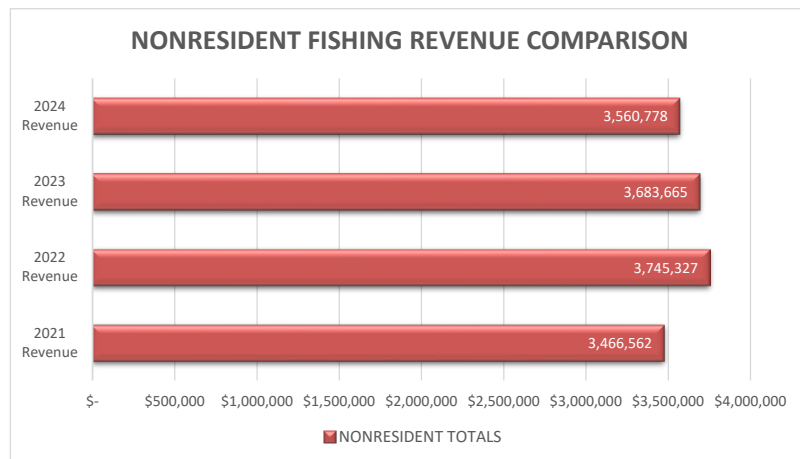
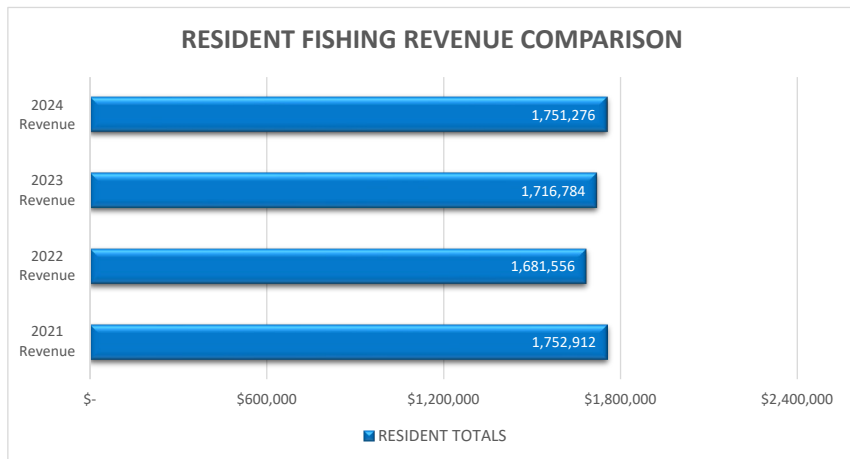
COMBINED SMALL GAME REVENUE COMPARISON



FISHING LICENSES

December 15 - September 30

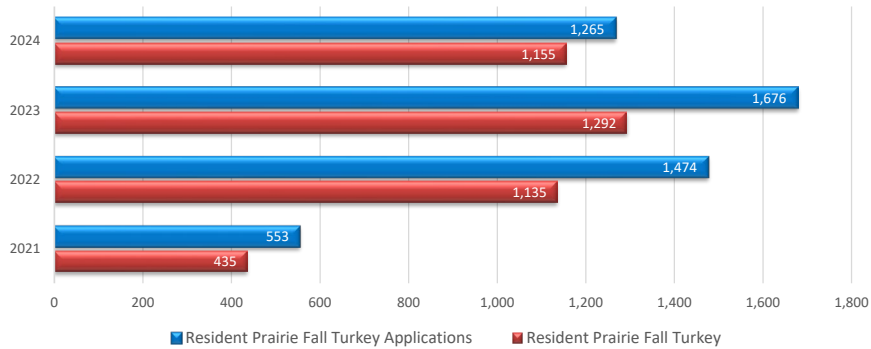
License Type	2021	2022	2023	3-yr Avg	2024	2024 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	
1-Day Fishing	6,112	6,003	6,565	6,227	7,308	\$58,464	743	1,081	\$5,944	\$8,651	17%
Annual Fishing	54,949	52,580	53,519	53,683	54,410	\$1,523,480	891	727	\$24,948	\$20,365	1%
Senior Fishing	13,787	13,441	13,811	13,680	14,111	\$169,332	300	431	\$3,600	\$5,176	3%
RESIDENT TOTALS	74,848	72,024	73,895	73,589	75,829	\$1,751,276	1,934	2,240	\$34,492	\$34,192	3.04%
1-Day Fishing	40,806	35,018	34,393	36,739	33,860	\$541,760	(533)	(2,879)	(\$8,528)	(\$46,064)	-8%
3-Day Fishing	18,521	17,619	17,541	17,894	16,893	\$625,041	(648)	(1,001)	(\$23,976)	(\$37,025)	-6%
Annual Fishing	31,767	37,808	37,080	35,552	35,731	\$2,393,977	(1,349)	179	(\$90,383)	\$12,015	1%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	91,094	90,445	89,014	90,184	86,484	\$3,560,778	(2,530)	(3,700)	(\$122,887)	(\$71,073)	-4.10%
COMBINED TOTALS	165,942	162,469	162,909	163,773	162,313	\$5,312,054	(596)	(1,460)	(\$88,395)	(\$36,881)	-0.89%



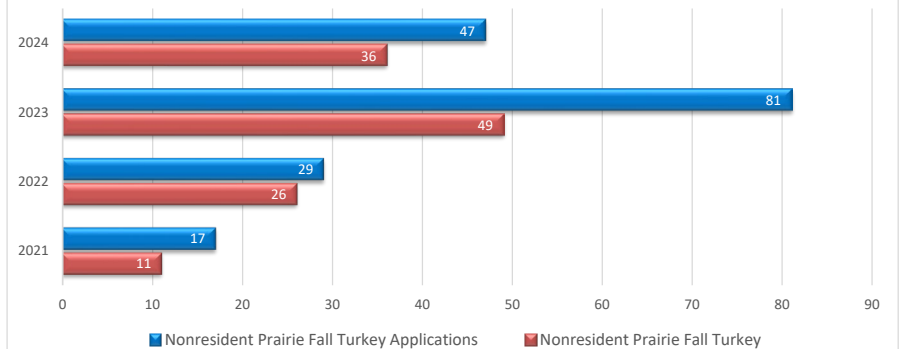
2024 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type	2021	2022	2023	3-yr Avg	2024	2024 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	2023 vs 2024	3 Yr. Avg vs 2024	
Resident Prairie Fall Turkey	435	1,135	1,292	954	1,155	\$17,755	(137)	201	(\$1,745)	\$3,298	21%
Nonresident Prairie Fall Turkey	11	26	49	29	36	\$3,310	(13)	7	(\$1,120)	\$710	26%
Resident Custer Trophy Bison	3	2	2	2	2	\$13,012	0	(0)	\$0	(\$2,169)	-14%
Nonresident Custer Trophy Bison	5	5	6	5	8	\$52,048	2	3	\$13,012	\$17,349	50%
Resident Custer NonTrophy Bison	7	9	11	9	7	\$22,792	(4)	(2)	(\$13,024)	(\$6,512)	-22%
Nonresident Custer NonTrophy Bison	8	6	4	6	12	\$39,072	8	6	\$26,048	\$19,536	100%
Resident Mentored Fall Turkey	151	194	320	222	296	\$1,480	(24)	74	(\$120)	\$372	34%
Nonresident Mentored Fall Turkey	1	4	7	4	10	\$100	3	6	\$30	\$60	150%
Resident Mentored Deer	3,370	3,647	3,871	3,629	3,798	\$18,990	(73)	169	(\$365)	\$843	5%
Nonresident Mentored Deer	56	98	132	95	163	\$1,630	31	68	\$310	\$677	71%
Resident Archery Deer	25,684	24,296	24,119	24,700	23,523	\$864,420	(596)	(1177)	(\$18,480)	(\$40,327)	-5%
Resident Archery Antelope	1,874	1,570	2,113	1,852	2,146	\$85,840	33	294	\$1,320	\$11,747	16%
Nonresident Archery Deer Private Only	n/a	n/a	1,459	n/a	1,478	\$422,708	19	n/a	\$5,434	n/a	n/a
Nonresident Archery Antelope Private Only	n/a	n/a	395	n/a	384	\$109,824	(11)	n/a	(\$3,146)	n/a	n/a
1st Draw Applications Submitted											
Resident Prairie Fall Turkey Applications	553	1,474	1,676	1,234	1,265		(411)	31			2%
Nonresident Prairie Fall Turkey Applications	17	29	81	42	47		(34)	5			11%
Resident Custer Trophy Bison Applications	89	172	460	240	468		8	228			95%
Nonresident Custer Trophy Bison Applications	547	670	971	729	981		10	252			35%
Resident Custer NonTrophy Bison Applications	79	200	410	230	463		53	233			102%
NR Custer NonTrophy Bison Applications	387	520	752	553	784		32	231			42%

**RESIDENT PRAIRIE FALL TURKEY
APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED VS LICENSES ISSUED**



**NONRESIDENT PRAIRIE FALL TURKEY
APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED VS LICENSES ISSUED**



Public Comments - September 2-September 29, 2024

Antelope Action Plan

Bret Mattice

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support an antelope action plan that aims to increase South Dakota's antelope population through targeted means. As rifle tag allocations remain at low numbers, I believe that nonresident opportunity for both rifle and archery antelope hunting needs to be increasingly limited. While rifle tag allocations are currently limited, archery hunters in particular congregate in certain units (Harding, Fall River) and pressure these populations immensely. I believe that some archery opportunity should still exist for hunters in South Dakota, just under a more regulated structure to better manage our struggling antelope populations. I hope this action plan and the SDGFP can help "right the ship" when it comes to antelope population and hunting opportunities in South Dakota.

Fishing Regulations

Matt Neisen

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Belle Fourche Res.

I am opposed to changing the regulations on BFR. These walleyes have been starving to death for the last 20 years. Just in the last few years there has been an increased effort to provide forage for the walleyes. From 2006-2020 there were 7,400 adult perch stocked. From 2021-2024 there were 79,300 perch stocked with 40,000 being stocked just this spring. This is a huge effort by GFP and a great step in the right direction. Changing regulations before seeing what happens from these stocking is bad science approach to management.

Shad are another wonderful food source for walleye. BFR has near 100% die off of young of the year shad every winter. The next years shad spawn aren't big enough for walleye to eat until mid July or August. Walleyes have already lost half a growing season by this time they are able to eat the new shad spawn. This is why the walleyes have had stunted in BFR. That is why these perch stocking are so important. Perch bridge the gap from shad spawns to give walleye a full growing season. I 100% agree we have had some stunted growth and increased cannibalism from lack of spring forage. These perch stocking will help with both of these issues.

Changing to a 2 fish limit is going to greatly INCREASE the number of walleye that are taken out of BFR. The fishing pressure that lake sees in early spring and summer is enormous. Changing this regulation will lead to 2-3 times the amount of fish being kept out BFR.

Let's monitor walleye conditions from these perch stockings for a couple of years and see how walleye recruitment is from less cannibalism and then revisit the situation after a couple years. The current lake regulations have been in effect for 20 years, waiting a couple more years to get good data from perch stockings will only help make an informed decision.

Personally in my boat, I saw just over 20 walleyes this spring that were at or over 20 inches. Last year I saw 2. I also saw a few 6-7" walleyes that I have only ever seen one other year. I believe this to be from walleyes eating more perch and less walleye cannibalism. This is with the same number of fishing days at the same time of year.

For the HPA spring tournament there were numerous reports of perch getting puked back up into the livewell. There was also many walleyes in the 6-8" range that were caught that shows increased recruitment for the future. The walleyes like the perch!

High Plains Anglers would love to be able to sponsor trucking for a couple additional loads of perch to get stocked from Deerfield next spring.

Matt Neisen

Matt Neisen

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Belle Fourche Res. I am opposed to changing the regulations on BFR. These walleyes have been starving to death for the last 20 years. Just in the last few years there has been an increased effort to provide forage for the walleyes. From 2006-2020 there were 7,400 adult perch stocked. From 2021

James Slater

Bellevue NE

Position: other

Comment:

My wife and I are from Nebraska and retired. We are coming up to fish for a week at the end of this month. First time visiting South Dakota. We have checked the fishing licenses and noticed appears there are the whole year, 1 day and 3 day. No options for a week or 7 days.

A great number of people vacation for a week. A whole season wouldn't be so bad if purchased at the beginning of the year, and may return again that year, in which we may in the future return if we enjoy our time. But this late in the season having to pay the full price is sort of ridiculous when we only need 7 days. Also Senior Citizens don't much get a break anywhere. Another thing is why nonresident need to pay more when states are trying to get people to vacation and visit their state. With all due respect I guess we have no choice at this time and have to pay the price.

License Fee Package

Todd Anderson

Miles City MT

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to comment on my strong support for the proposed fee increase for fishing, hunting, and camping fees. Specifically I strongly support fee increases for non-residents. SD provides quality opportunities and should be proud of those of those opportunities by valuing them because we do. In fact, they are not increased enough in proposed language. If passed please use additional license fees for access and employee pay. Thanks.

Tina Bradley

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

WHY DO YOU NEVER SEE ANY FOREST RANGER OR PARK OFFICER OUT ON THE ROADS MAKING SURE TGE ATVS ARE LICENSED AND NOT TEARING UP THE ROADS, OR ON BOATS MAKING SURE THE WATER RULES ARE BEING FOLLOWED. WHY NOT TAX THE OUTER STATERS OR THE COMPANIES THAT RENT ATV . WHY ARE YOU WANTING TO CHARGE MORE FEES FOR THE PEOPLE OF SD WHEN YOU NEVER EVER SEE AND OFFICAL OUT IN THE AREAS, YES EVEN ON WEEKENDS AND EVENINGS,? I DONT SEE WHERE THE FISH ARE IN ABUNDANCE, OR THE PARKING LOTS ARE MAINTAINED, OR ANY THING ELSE. TO ME YOU JUST WANT MORE MONEY TO PAY FOR THE DEAD BEAT OFFICSLS IN THOSE DEPARTMENTS.

Michelle Deyo-Amende

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

I fully support fee increases. It seems more than reasonable to do so every 5 years.

Regarding the increase in firewood fee: Please increase by even increments, to \$7 per bundle not \$6.72. It may not seem like a big deal, but it will be a pain in the rump for campground hosts, staff, and people purchasing firewood to have to deal with the odd dollar amount.

Mark Smedsrud

Hartford SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the license fee increase proposal. However, I feel the nonresident fishing license fee should be increased at least as much as the NR small game hunting license fee (\$21) or more. This license is valid for the entire year as opposed to the small game license (10 days) and is still a small cost when considering all the expenses to go on a fishing trip. I spent my career working as a SDGFP Conservation Officer and have always felt this license fee was under-valued for the opportunities it provides. Thank You, Mark Smedsrud

Robert Koski

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have seen GFP spending increase so much. Why do you do things like completely repave the road into Rocky Point when it was a good road? Too much needless spending is going on in my opinion. South Dakota is still a wage poor state for the working class. At some point you will tip the scales and people will stop hurting and fishing. I can camp in the National Forests for a fraction of what a State Park costs. All I can say is think before you spend! Thanks for your time, Bob Koski

John Reints

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The large fee increases for various recreational activities and areas are not simply "reaching into people's pockets," as your official tries to excuse them. RATHER, THEY ARE EXCLUDING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME SOUTH DAKOTANS FROM THESE AREAS AND ACTIVITIES.

The greed of some of you is what lies behind these proposed fee increases. You are placing expansion of a bureaucracy before actually serving ALL the people of South Dakota. You should be ashamed of yourself. DIMINISH YOUR BUREAUCRACY!!

Sherry Spicer

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

People coming from out of our state one of the major draws are the state parks. That's in any state. If you keep raising the entrance prices people will stop visiting the parks. How long does anyone really stay maybe a day or two. I believe with prices of gasoline and hotels our state parks should be reasonably priced to draw tourists into them.

Wade Morris

Deadwood SD

Position: other

Comment:

I understand the reasoning for raising rate BUT I am wondering why aren't the NON RESIDENT rates being raised substantially? The non resident influx during fishing season is getting increasingly frustrating, especially on the Missouri. I get the State tourism focus on Pheasant season but at least that is managed in some ways but the out of state fishing arrivals is overwhelming at times. Wyoming and Montana non resident annuals are over \$100. I think the non resident fees should be increased more than than resident fee increases

Rodney Putnam

Piedmont SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

\$10 million increase in fees??? Guess that will be used to finish gun range north of Rapid???

Michael Shafer

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the fee increases for parks and recreation as proposed by the GF&P Commission. The fee schedule seems fair and the increases are targeted appropriately. In particular, I would gladly purchase an outdoor-themed license plate for my vehicle.

Todd Crownover

Tyndall SD

Position: support

Comment:

I know that its been a long time since SD has had a license fee package increase. Everything in the last 10 years that we need has increased and this is needed for the state to continue to keep giving us the same great quality of service they have been. I do hear folks saying that the Non-residence fees should be increased even more. Firewood should just be increased to \$7 not \$6.72, no one, even the camper wants to make change. Thank you for all you do.

Allen Zent

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Stop with the fee increase initiative. I couldn't be more opposed to this idea. Find a way to perform the mission within the budget. Here's a novel thought— how about looking at places where fees can be reduced?

Doug Wanttie

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

You are getting into the pockets of the already stressed out sportsman. By doing this you will be ending some people's adventure in the outdoors as it is to costly. It may only be a small increase but no guarantee it is the last, only a hope and prayer it will last five years. Just another way to deplete resident hunters is all this is appearing to be.

Bill West

Hartford SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

You expect the sportsmen of South Dakota to pay more when you continue to use a [REDACTED] website that won't even allow people to buy a license and then when you call you have to talk to someone in Florida? I don't think so. I will be contacting every legislator and the governor to stop this. Give me a break, I'll pay more for licenses when the GFP starts to use our license money responsibly!!!!

Justin Allen

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

Overall i support the increase in the license, camping fees. However I believe the cost of the Non resident year long fishing license is still way, way to cheap. It should be closer to \$100. Too many NRs take severe advantage of the cheap license cost. Glad to see the large increase in NR big game license.

Rick Meere

Dell Rapids SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Who is asleep at the wheel? How about before you start asking us sportsmen to pay more for hunting licenses when the cost of inflation is at a 50 year high, you start doing a better job of managing our money. I mean come'on! GFP has spent millions on a [REDACTED] Florida website that never works and a bounty program that is a complete waste of money. Before you increase costs, tighten the belt or find a director that knows how to effectively manage a multimillion dollar budget. Unreal. I plead the commission to vote these increases down and reexamine the existing budget and save face for the people that will have to pay for this.

John Zarycki

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the increase unless the money is going to get more acres of public land to hunt. Some of the counties have little public land to hunt and its almost impossible to get permission to hunt form the landowners, they want you to pay for access and they get their tags for free.

Mark Peterson

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Cut the increases in half, people are struggling with inflation, this will reduce people in the outdoors.

Andrew Ferris

Wall SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I can go to other states surrounding and residents prices are lower however nr tags are much higher

Dylon Schaeffer

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Why are you asking for more money when you are unable to manage the current funding? Stop wasting money on your pathetic outdoors site and get a website that actually works.

Renee Allen

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the license fee increase but NR big game and NR fishing licenses need to be increased even more.

Renee Allen

George Vandel

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the fee increase package. A couple of suggestions, you may want to consider some fee increases annually, especially nonresident fees, to adjust annually for increased costs so as not to fall behind and then require larger increases. It's also time to reconsider funding for the nest predator bounty program -it's simply biologically unjustifiable. These funds should be used for programs that have proven scientific and data supported increases to wildlife habitats and their populations.

Black Hills Flyfishers Olson

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

The Black Hills FlyFishers Board of Directors, 300 plus strong in membership, have voted in favor of the proposed License Fee Package

Jeff Olson
Co-Chairman

Susan Sanders

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I learned this summer that you are not going to charge people to enter part of the new shooting range east of Rapid City. If someone wants to use it, they should have to pay for an entrance pass to support the costs of the facility, just like everyone who drives through Custer State Park.

Aaron Rogers

Huron SD

Position: support

Comment:

The preference points for residents should also see the same increase as non residents

Tate Gulliker

Tea SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Worst time to raise prices when people already cannot afford groceries. I hunt for meat to feed my family of 6. Please do not raise fees for residents. Cut out the unnecessary spending like the worthless website that never works to buy licenses, shooting range that is not needed and the bounty program. Poorly managed money has led to the need for a price hike and why aren't you looking at better budgeting. Please do not raise these fees.

Paul Lepisto

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

Please see the attached comments in support of this proposal.

Attachment 13292

Stetson Lippert

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Mountain Lion Action Plan

Joshua Rosenau

Lake Forest Park WA

Attachment 13019

Position: other

Comment:

August 16, 2024

Stephanie Rissler, Chair

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

221 Lake Ridge Drive

Wentworth, SD 57075

RE: Mountain Lion Action Plan

Dear Chair Rissler and members of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

We write to you on behalf of our South Dakota members with comments on the draft Mountain Lion Action Plan for 2024-2028. While there is much in this plan to praise, we also feel that there is room for improvement.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) prepared this plan with input from a stakeholder group which was weighted heavily toward hunting groups and livestock owners. There was limited input from conservationists or from scientists outside the department. The Mountain Lion Foundation requested a chance to participate in that meeting, but the request was declined. That group ultimately did not recommend reducing the population target for mountain lions, nor increasing the harvest limits. We are pleased that these recommendations to maintain the status quo are reflected in the current draft of the Action Plan.

While the current rate at which mountain lions are killed by hunters is higher than we would recommend, and higher than is necessary for the ecology of mountain lions (which do not require hunting to maintain their population), the decision to hold hunting steady is a recognition that the current hunting regime is at the limit of what the comparatively new mountain lion population in South Dakota can sustain, and that in order for mountain lions to recover the population that was extirpated by excessive hunting in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it is necessary not to further increase hunting. Mountain lions have slowly spread east into the Dakotas and Nebraska in the last decades, and there is a strong desire to see mountain lions recover further east in those states, and indeed throughout the eastern United States. Current policy in South Dakota unfortunately does not protect mountain lions outside of the Black Hills, a policy which necessarily limits the natural spread of that population.

Discussing those areas outside the Black Hills, the Action Plan notes that there is no population objective for populations in the prairie, in part due to the lack of substantial population surveys of those areas. The Action Plan notes that "these areas are managed primarily to abate potential livestock losses on private property while at the same time to provide recreational hunting opportunity." We would suggest that developing scientific surveys of the prairie populations would be a valuable contribution to the scientific literature, documenting the behavior and ecology of the species as it recolonizes former territory. It would also allow development of management objectives that reflect the ecological benefits mountain lions provide, and not merely address the risk of livestock conflict. We urge that such research be added as an objective in the action plan.

The Action Plan correctly observes "To help minimize [livestock] conflicts when possible, GFP must ensure that mountain lion populations are managed proactively and that management goals are being met." Minimizing conflict is an important goal and one that SDGFP can play a critical role with. Research throughout the range of mountain lions shows, consistently across states and multiple independent studies, that increased hunting does not reduce conflict. Indeed, multiple research groups independently find that hunting tends to increase conflict with livestock. There are several proposed reasons for this phenomenon, rooted in the biology of the species. While it is a somewhat counterintuitive finding, it is important to emphasize that the intuitive believe that killing mountain lions reduces conflict is not borne out by empirical study. We urge that management goals for mountain lions reflect the best available science and not rely on the hunting of mountain lions as a mechanism for addressing conflict. Instead, management should emphasize the use of nonlethal deterrents, especially livestock guardian dogs, adequate fencing, and well-designed enclosures for livestock, and a combination of public education and landowner outreach to ensure that livestock owners understand the tools available to help them and their livestock live safely and confidently alongside these native carnivores as the species recovers its population.

The Action Plan notes that SDGFP is pursuing exactly that course. It explains: "Furthermore, GFP is currently working on an informational brochure which demonstrates successful techniques used to protect chicken and other domestic animals from mountain lions." The Mountain Lion Foundation has worked with state fish and wildlife agencies in several states to develop exactly such brochures, and it would be our pleasure to collaborate with SDGFP as well, or to share our experience in writing and distributing those educational materials. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance in those valuable efforts.

We also reiterate longstanding areas of concern with mountain lion management in South Dakota. The Action Plan Objective 2 sets out the goal to "manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs." Maximizing human killing of

mountain lions is not ecologically necessary, and as discussed above, poses a real risk of increasing conflict and potentially harming ungulate populations. As apex carnivores, mountain lions do not require hunting to maintain stable populations in balance with their prey. Research throughout the West has shown that increased hunting does not benefit deer or elk populations. Because of their territorial behavior, killing established resident lions can cause local populations of mountain lions to actually increase, placing further pressure on prey populations temporarily. Those overhunted populations can also be more prone to conflict with livestock, as they tend to be dominated by younger, inexperienced male mountain lions. Numerous studies show that this is the most conflict-prone demographic. Reducing objectives for human killing of mountain lions would benefit this ecologically-sensitive species, and could bring benefits for hunters and livestock owners.

In this vein, we also have concerns about part b of Objective 2, which sets a goal to “maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs” in the Custer State Park unit. Hound hunting poses risks to other wildlife, livestock, and pets. Hounds travel across park boundaries, and can become distracted by pets or livestock on the property they are trespassing on and can attack or injure park visitors, pets, or livestock. In addition, hound teams that encounter a female who is caring for young are more likely to kill the cubs or to drive the mother far from her family, making it harder for hunters to avoid orphaning those cubs. When a pack of GPS-collared hounds are set to chase a mountain lion, the chances of a kill on that hunt is higher than for a boot hunt. This higher killing efficiency is particularly challenging for a small and recovering population like South Dakota’s. Prioritizing boot hunting would do more to protect park visitors, neighbors, and wildlife in the park.

Instead of managing primarily with the goal of maximizing hunting today, we urge the Commission to set a goal of long-term recovery of mountain lions throughout South Dakota, and the health and stability of the metapopulation of mountain lions throughout the Plains states. South Dakota’s population is essential to the future recovery of mountain lions in states further east, and its mountain lions disperse to and sustain the genetics of surrounding states including North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana, and is in turn sustained by immigration of mountain lions from those states. The killing of lions in South Dakota affects all those states. Managing with an eye toward overall stability would, as emphasized above, require further study of the prairie populations outside the Black Hills. It would also require coordination with Tribal governments to monitor the number of mountain lions killed by all hunters and all responses to conflict within South Dakota’s borders. And it would require the state to consider dispersal corridors and highway crossings to ensure the ready movement of mountain lions between population in and around South Dakota. Restoring the statewide range of mountain lions, and allowing the species to recover in neighboring states as well, would have ecological and social benefits, discussed above. While we would hope the state would consider the wisdom of this choice, we note that this recovered population could also allow greater hunter opportunity throughout the state than would be possible with a population limited to the Black Hills.

Sincerely,

Joshua Rosenau
Director of Policy and Advocacy
(916) 442-2666 ext. 107
jrosenau@mountainlion.org

Bret Robertson

Box Elder SD

Position: other

Comment:

How many years has it been since the quota been met for mountain lions? There is a quota set for a reason, that there is that select # of cats that could be taken that wouldn’t deplete the population to not have a future season! Why is there not a lottery draw for a month long season or so at the end of BH forest district season for houndsman to help meet the quota?

Patrick Weimer

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the amended changes to the current mountain lion action plan with the use of a reduced population objective this will likely have a large positive effect on our deer, elk, turkey, and mountain goat numbers that have drastically dropped in the last several years. I appreciate the efforts brought forth by the commission and their continued efforts in this matter.

Andy Jackson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

In my opinion, the only complaints about lower deer and elk numbers are coming from the trophy 'big buck and monster bull elk' hunters. If these hunters had to harvest a doe or cow, a good portion of them most likely wouldn't buy a SD tag. As stated, lion numbers are down. Appears to me mother nature and the current system are working!

Ryan Strand

Wagner SD

Position: support

Comment:

Population needs to be reduced. Deer, turkeys and Elk could use some predator control.

Jeremy Nedved

Plankinton SD

Position: support

Comment:

I elk, deer, bobcat (with my beloved hounds) and in the last few yrs the amount of bobcat tracks we used to see has went to maybe one every three days and the amount of lion has went to 5 or 6. Exact opposite as it used to be.

Nathan Kress

Whitewood SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think the implementation of other hunting tactics in the Hills such as hounds would benefit the overwhelming majority of hunters. My self and many others would like to see the lion and predator population decreased in the hills. Not whipped out but significantly decreased to benefit the deer, elk, sheep, and mountain goat populations.

Jan Wood

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

Houndhunting is the most efficient and safe way to hunt lion. Treeing a lion and identifying gender will keep the population robust, as females and adolescent lions can be left alive.

Caleb Schroth

Buffalo Gap SD

Position: support

Comment:

Have been seeing alot of lions on trail cameras and in person plus one that is hanging around the town of buffalo gap. I believe using hounds will allow a more precise kill of bigger lions or easier to kill them in areas they are causing problems

Christopher Burrows

Gilman City MO

Position: support

Comment:

This will bring more revenue to the state and help the deer and elk herds tremendously. Hunters will be able to harvest target mountain lions that aren't nursing cubs this way. It will also allow houndsmen to get out and do what they love to do while helping control the mountain lion population. I hope you all consider allowing the use of hounds. Thank you.

Ed Vance

Posey CA

Position: support

Comment:

Any animal that will kill humans for food , NEEDS TO BE CONTROLLED! Take a look at California, and the number of Mountain Lion attacks and deaths to humans. During the bounty years there were no attacks at all.

Andrew Bressler

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Lions are at a healthy population size. Introducing house is only going to add more poaching opportunities. As an avid and successful boot hunter myself I see no need for a change in population. This world is just getting to [REDACTED] lazy and money hungry. Washington and Oregon have shut down dog seasons long ago and added more boot opportunities And have been extremely successful. In their efforts. The hills have far too many roads and access for it to even be a "fair chase" for the lion. When you tree a cat within 20 min of dumping the box how is that fair chase to the lion?

Brandon Pearson

Box Elder SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see a reduction of lions in the area for multiple reasons but most importantly to increase herd numbers in deer and elk for more hunting opportunities and less predation on ranchers beef herds. I've been seeing a steady increase in sitings year after year and they are spreading further out into prairie lands now. We need to minimize the lion numbers and they should be able to be hunted by dogs and open the season during general rifle season so more people could have a better opportunity of filling a lion tag when they're out deer or elk hunting.

Craig Canard

Marshall VA

Position: support

Comment:

I support lion hunting with hounds. Been a long time houndsman. I'm moving to the area and would like to have a pack of hounds to hunt lion. Thanks.

Bill Tatom

Zahl ND

Position: support

Comment:

I believe in conservation, population control on a species that has grown out of control. However I don't believe in over kill, killing females with kittens and young lions with spots.

Tate Wells

Prairie City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the mountain line action plan in the reduce population objective. I am a South Dakota Houndsman and this will give great opportunity for everyone. As Houndsmen we would eventually like to see the use of Hounds in the Black Hills and public lands of South Dakota. One of our goals is to preserve hound hunting and teach and grow our youth and give them the opportunity to hunt with Hounds in the Black Hills and public lands. Moving forward if there is ever an opportunity, I would be more than willing to be part of a stakeholders meeting and work towards a plan that works for everyone.

Jeremy Longland

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

What about all the guys who can't afford dogs also what about all the private land how do u keep your dogs off others land when they chase lions

Leslie Soring

Whitewood SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the decrease population action plan, particularly the use of hounds in the FPD of the Black Hills. The impact the current population is having on wildlife and livestock is definitely something to be concerned about. Mountain lion sightings in heavily populated areas has also significantly increased over the last few years and is becoming a major safety concern. If mountain lions become less afraid of humans and continue to feel comfortable killing livestock and wandering into town, it's only a matter of time before they harm someone. If we don't do something to better manage the population then more serious issue will arise. It is unfortunate that their habitat is shrinking and not something that they have caused. But it is happening so our conservation efforts need to adapt to this. My sister lost a 3 week old colt to a mountain lion in Whitewood last spring. He was extremely well bred and worth about \$10,000. He was big for his age, strong, and loved to run. She will also have to put the mare down soon due to the injuries she sustained in her attempts to protect her foal. It was a devastating loss for my sister and her business. Not to mention the emotional pain it caused her and her young family. This was not the first time this cat had killed a horse. It had taken a neighbor's pony just a few weeks prior but this was not publicized, nor was the cat dealt with. It was a big female and her 2 adolescent cubs captured on cameras. No one in particular is at fault but it serves as an example as to why the way we manage the mountain lion population is in need of reform.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts,
Leslie Soring
Whitewood, SD resident

Ted Stacey Stacey

Aldrich MN

Position: support

Comment:

Let the people manage the population before the lions become brazen enough to kill a hiker or a child

B.T. Pickens

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the 150 - 250 mountain lion population objective proposed by the Commission. The new objective will reduce depredation of the deer and elk population and add additional opportunities for hunters.

Christian Hagen

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support Commissioner Theel's proposal to reduce the population of Mountain Lions in the BHFPD. I think this is a sound decision that reflects a biological and social need to maintain a lower number of lions. I also support the use of hounds to pursue and hunt Mountain Lions within the BHFPD. Hunting with hounds is a humane and efficient way to properly manage the Mountain Lion population while giving our resident houndsmen a seat at the table to enjoy their method of hunting! I believe a lower number of Lions will also help our struggling turkey, deer, and elk populations. Thank you

Raymond Tibbs

Ft. Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds to control Mt. Lion population.

Casey Ellerton

Custer SD

Position: support

Comment:

Strongly support the use of hounds in black hills.

Stacey Baertsch

Helena SD

Position: support

Comment:

The only truly effective way to manage mountain populations is through the use of hound hunting. Animal's can be identified for sex and maturity when treed, harvesting can be evaluated. In some situations it may be appropriate to harvest females if there is a high population of lions in a given area. Quotas would need to be established and monitored closely.

In addition to help control populations this also opens opportunities for hunters to harvest a magnificent predator. Having a season is a win for everyone, including the deer hunters who are seeing a reduction in deer population.

Mark Oster

Buffalo SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Jeramy Amiotte

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds to manage mountain lion populations throughout the state of South Dakota. Particularly in the Black Hills and surrounding areas where Mt lion populations (in my opinion) have gotten to high. The use of hounds allows us to meet quota numbers with better control over what animals are harvested. Once an animal is treed you are able to study it, and determine sex and a better idea of age. At that point only mature targeted animals will be harvested. Any others can be left to continue to grow. Leaving a hunter with still a great experience, and many pictures. It seems that all of our herds and flocks continue to have numbers issues. A great way to help that is predator control. From raccoon to my lion all of our predators need to be controlled. I'm not asking for them to be eradicated. They simply just need controlled the way that all of our big game is.

Jasmine Sborov

Reva SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of the reduced population objective and the use of Hounds to help manage that.

Emily Jerde

Reva SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds to track and hunt mountain lions in order to keep these amazing predators in their natural habitat, away from school zones and small pets. It would avoid the event of needing to euthanize a lion due to harming humans. Creating safety for mountain lions and humans alike.

Brody Oldfield

Summerset SD

Position: other

Comment:

The state needs to not let donors make the rules for hunters. There is no reason there shouldn't be a separate season for hounds in the black hills. I don't think they should have free rain the entire season but a two to three week hound season would benefit other animal population.

Shanon Vasknetz

Sturgis SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Noah Dickson

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

Use of hounds to help reduce the population of mountain lions

Sam Stoddard

Norris SD

Position: support

Comment:

I fully support the use of hounds in any and every management plan.

Kyle Wilen

Bryant SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like the opportunity to harvest mountain lion in South Dakota. This initiative would provide me with better opportunities to harvest a mature male lion.

Raine Tapani

Hayti SD

Position: support

Comment:

This initiative would help others to harvest a mature male

Henry Casteel

Vale SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Marcy Barber

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Elida Benson

Montrose SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hound dogs for mountain lion hunting/tracking

Brian Webb

Reva SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Bret Mattice

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of a mountain lion action plan that manages current population objectives through regulated means, while providing increased opportunity for hound hunting. The success of mountain lion boot hunters has been declining for several years with harvest quotas not being met. The addition of a limited draw hound hunting structure in the Black Hills (similar to that of CSP) would be a successful way to allow additional take of mountain lions in the Black Hills while reaching set quotas. The use of hounds also allows for more selective take of lions which can be beneficial to wildlife managers. A structure that provides opportunity to both hound and boot hunters will increase participation in lion hunting in South Dakota while better managing lions in the Black Hills.

Jeffrey Krolikowski

Winner SD

Position: support

Comment:

I believe the use of hounds is the only way to control population. Truly the only way to fill any quota could even be female or male quota. Also could just have a pursuit season that will keep lions away from towns.

Shane Ryals

Palermo ND

Position: support

Comment:

Decreasing the mountain lion population objective would benefit deer and elk herds, decrease livestock depredation, and could provide hound hunting opportunities. Hound hunting mountain lion is the best method to achieving healthy populations.

Robert Quickstad

Whitewood SD

Position: support

Comment:

It only makes sense that if the lion population is going to be selectively controlled and maintained that the use of hounds should be approved.

Craig Bartling

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

You used to see many turkeys when in the hills. Now you don't see hardly any. I think the reason why could be the mountain lion population. Also I have been told the deer population is way down. This is why the gfp has closed the antlerless deer season in parts of the black hills.

Brian Lundquist

Deadwood SD

Position: support

Comment:

Cut License's #

Martin Hunt

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Reading the plan I see no reason to reduce the population goal of Mountain Lions. Let nature control the population. I would vote to stop the hunting of Mountain Lions completely and for sure the use of dogs should not be allowed for hunting. As mentioned in the study Mt Lions are very seclusive and of very little risk to humans. I would also believe livestock loss would be pretty rare. Thank You

Jason Wurst

Sutherland NE

Position: other

Comment:

I would like to see some nonresident oppportunity added to this plan even if it is a small number of draw tags. I think this would be a great way for nonresidents to come explore South Dakota's beautiful landscape and spend some money in your state.

Nellie Duprel

Newell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I've typed something up numerous times, but haven't quite found the right words. There is no "easy answer." Wildlife management is a tricky and fine line, but so dang important.

I completely respect wildlife. I was raised by a game warden in MN and saw the good and the struggles of managing populations.

But I've also experienced the heartache of "problem areas" where lions have plenty of natural food (turkeys, deer, etc.) but instead, killed my perfect and strong month old foal. They killed and ate him, and my mare got cut up bad trying to save her baby. The pain that mare went through physically and emotionally/mentally was awful. She will never be able to have another baby and will have to be put down soon (she ruined her leg kicking at the cat). For now, daily meds and frequent joint injections are helping her, but they are starting to not work enough and I'm not about letting animals suffer.

I'm not a vengeance hunter. I wanted that cat dead (trapper tried but couldn't get it), but I don't want all cats dead. I want her dead because she now has the taste for horse meat (confirmed lion kill) and is good at it.

I understand that nothing will ever "fix" wildlife wanting to eat livestock, but when there populations are growing, and habitat shirking, it's a deadly combination.

Lions are neat creatures. The loss of my foal still weighs heavily on me. The financial burden it added is awful, but watching my kids have to try and understand what happened, and watching my mare run/limp off scared at every noise and hang over the fence looking at the other babies (knowing she'll never have another and her time is coming) is a wound that just keeps breaking open.

I've raised foals (even mini horses and foals) in that area for years and never had an issue. I haven't stepped foot back down that road even, because one time of having an issue was too much.

John Zarycki

Brookings SD

Position: support

Comment:

Lion hunting season should be open year round in the hills just like the rest of the state. I feel it would allow more opportunity to hunt them.

Michael Richards

Madison SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Keith Fortin

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Michaela Carlson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't believe managing a large predatory species such as the mountain lion largely for hunting/recreational purposes is the correct move. I believe that the mountain lion population is likely fairly sustainable if the numbers are continuing to grow- they obviously haven't reached their carrying capacity for the environment yet and they are a species that was in SD long before you and I. I think that halving the number of individuals within the area is irresponsible as a wildlife management entity-- especially when all of the sources in your management plan are closer to 15-20+ years old. You need updated studies to prove that there is good reason to increase the number of removal before you do it.

Ryan Gruber

Brandon SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Leave as-is. The current population goal and hunting opportunities are fine. We don't want additional "boot hunting opportunities" and the current population density is working just fine. I can assure you there's no shortage of deer. And yet other than on camera, I've never seen a mountain lion while hiking, hunting or otherwise...it's not like there ubiquitous.

Josh Moore

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Years ago I remember this state legislator talking about how wolves aren't cuddly and if we had any we should hunt them to extinction.

A myth of the old West is animals like big cats and wolves mostly prey on livestock.

Anyone with a basic knowledge of ecology knows that's a fallacy.

Animals aren't as dumb as we think they are. The wolves and cats figured long ago to avoid humans. We have guns and [REDACTED]

A century ago a slight argument could be made that they would prey on domestic sheep but that's no longer a major economy and even if it was easily mitigated. Donkeys and mules seemingly enough enjoy duking it out with the cats.

Cattle are social and even a lion wouldn't typically seek to have any conflict with a domestic bull.

Beyond that we have technology, 1880 was a very long time ago. Perpetuating this myth the natural ecosystem predators are harmful to human economic interest is patently false. There was incidents in Europe centuries upon centuries ago where wolves would prey on humans but a wild animal trying to kill a healthy adult human and eat them is about as likely as getting hit by lightning and winning the Powerball the same day. Bear attacks are still fairly common up north but they typically don't eat us. Oh wait the big reptiles occasionally try devouring us but the only humans mammals would be attack would be at greater risk from the range itself. Sure old sick or very young people are potentially targets but the range has a way with the weak.

Anyway sorry I digress

My cats aren't hurting nothing removing them paradoxically is bad for the range (do you like hitting 3 deer each year in your minivan?) and makes less look bad. We should leave the cats alone let them be a symbol of our state. I may they are very sacred to the various Sioux tribes. Each time you murder those cats it's Wounded Knee 6,11, & 87. You shouldn't do that. Those poor Indians have a hard enough way [REDACTED] it

Jeremy Nedved

Plankinton SD

Position: support

Comment:

lion tracks are becoming easier and easier to find in the southern hills. Bobcat tracks are becoming fewer and fewer. We notice this while out trying to find bobcat tracks with our hounds. The fact that houndsman have had zero opportunity to hunt lions in the Black Hills because of another faction hunting them is a little ridiculous and selfish. We are all sportsman and should be on the same team.

James Twamley

Parker SD

Position: support

Comment:

In addition to reducing the number of lions in the Black Hills, it would make more sense to have the Lion Tags available during the Elk and deer seasons in addition to their own season. For the past several years the quota of lion taken has not been achieved, so reducing the number of lions in the Black Hills will not be achieved.

Aaron Taylor

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The reduction of the mountain lion population is unnecessary and immoral. The lion population is an essential part of the ecosystem and something we should cherish and protect.

The fact that there has only been one documented human injury and zero fatalities in the last 150 years of our state, should be evidence enough that they pose no significant danger to the general population.

Leland Brokaw

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not support the expanded use of hounds to aid in the harvest of mountain lions in the Black Hills.

Bobbi Doerfler

Parker SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Attachment 13109

Jim Kranhold

Peever SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Relocate if feasible!

Mark Anderson

Brandon SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of reducing the numbers of mountain lions to 150 in the black hills.

Ron Miller

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Don't believe you are harvesting enough lions with your new plan. With the decline of turkeys and deer in the hills more lions should be removed. Other species of animals (such as porcupines and bobcats) have also been severely affected. Nice to have a few but you have too many lions!

Jayda Wells

Prairie City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am a South Dakota youth hound woman I support the use of Hounds to help the reduced population adjective. With the much needed reduction of lions in the black hills fire protection district I think there is a great opportunity for youth and others to capitalize on. I would like the opportunity to use Hounds in the Black Hills and public lands of South Dakota.

Michael Trier

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

300 is not too many. I live in Custer and I've never seen a lion. Ranchers need to be able to protect their livestock, but reducing the guideline will only reduce the opportunity for hunters to harvest one (after the initial reduction). The current lion population isn't significantly problematic. There is not a valid reason to reduce it. Personally, I'd prefer that the population be allowed to increase.

Aaron Buchholz

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

If there are opportunities for resident hunters in South Dakota to help harvest a Mountain Lion to help reduce the numbers of animals, please let me know if a season will be available. Thank you for your consideration.

Lyndon Bucher

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

I believe the Mountain Lion population should be reduced in SD

Julie Maliske

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I live in Rapid City city limits and have lost two cats to mountain Lions. The latest was about a year ago. I live half a mile from an elementary and middle school. A neighbor with three small children has had a mountain lion peeking in her windows. Clearly we need fewer of them. Thank you for your professionalism and expertise in understanding the problem.

Robert Brown

Custer SD

Position: other

Comment:

Being an avid hunter/trapper, I would like to see mountain lion license to used for either hunting or trapping. Most people do not have the time to get out and chase cats. days are shorter and usually dark when we get off work. I personally check traps between 4am-8am. I think it would increase the harvest each year. May not be enough but it's a start.

Kurt Krietlow

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have personally not seen evidence that the cat population is on the increase, if anything it is getting tougher to cut tracks in the areas i hunt. If it gets to the point where more need to be killed open season earlier, do not allow dogs!

Edyie Stika

Iowa City IA

Position: oppose

Comment:

I grew in the state of South Dakota and as an adult traveled back to the beloved Black Hills for 36 summers. Mountain Lions are beautiful animals and should left alone. If you continue to not respect the land or the animals that inhabit it as Chief Seattle once said "continue to contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste."

Mike Peterson

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

Yes, please cut the numbers!

John Culberson

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Lions kill deer. There are too many deer. SD ranks in the top 5 nationally in car deer accidents. If the Hills were segregated from that data we would be higher. Leave the lion population alone. Please start managing the deer population for the majority of SD people and not out of state trophy hunters.

Marvin Bouska

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

Obviously the lion population is out of control and there is no practical way to reduce it. The wt population in the BH is very low as a result. The plans look like a way to enhance CVs rather than manage game for the benefit of resident hunters. What is a "healthy environment"? In 1824 a healthy environment looked a lot different than today. Lions, wolves, grizzley bears and beaver etc were in abundance . Is it the goal of GFP to try to recreate that "healthy environment" in the 2024 urban forest that is currently the Black Hills? I would like to see a true operational definition of this term. I would like to see more wt and mule deer hunting opportunities rather than have a "sustainable" population of apex predators in our current urban forest. Deer tags are becoming scarcer and scarcer over the years. Hunting is becoming a sport for the elite only - e.g. the evolution of ranch permits decades ago to the present special buck permits that benefit commercial hunting at the expense of the SD resident. I would encourage you to consider this perspective in future plans, as I am not the only SD sportsman that feels this way. Thank you sincerely for your attention.

Gary Witt

Lead, SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I believe we have established the baseline for lions and do not wish to see it reduced further.

Charles Baldwin

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a resident of the Black Hills for 76 years and active outdoor user, I feel that the lion population in the Black Hills of 150 - 250 is too many. As the population has increased over the past 30/40 years, the population of deer, porcupines, and bobcats has decreased substantially. I think the reason we see so many deer and turkeys in the cities now is due to the threat from lions to these animals and they are driven into safe areas.

Dede Farrar

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I live in the Black Hills near Pactola Lake. I support management of the mountain lion population. The plan sounds sensible. Too many lions is no good. None is sad. I've seen mountain lions near my home. That's amazing but let's keep it under control. Thanks!

David Belmonte

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am not in favor of reducing the population any further.

Shari Kosel

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't know why you offer public comments because you never support the comments of hundreds of people versus a few. No research, pure speculation, and you change these rules.

I have been commenting since you implemented the first kill plan on lions and no matter how many people oppose, you pass it anyway. It's very discouraging when you live in the Black Hills and know the ecosystem, yet GFP doesn't listen to those that actually live in their environment.

Please DO NOT increase kill limits.

Carson Smith

Winner SD

Position: support

Comment:

Hunting mountain lions with hounds requires dedication, skill, and respect for the wilderness. It's a tradition that helps manage wildlife populations and ensures a balanced ecosystem.

Beth McIntyre

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not agree with decreasing the number of lions in this area. I am not sure who the reduction would benefit. Hunters???

Joseph Hall

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I see no science (game management) evidence that decreasing the lion population from current levels (200-300) to (150-200) is necessary. I submit that the carrying capacity is adequate for current lion populations. I feel there is a downside to reducing the population by decreasing the genetic diversity and health of our lions. We don't need to encourage a lion population such as that in Florida. South Dakota deserves more science and less politics. Respectfully submitted. Joseph E. Hall

Robert Eddy

Spearfish SD

Position: other

Comment:

I would encourage the mountain lion population be managed to an even lower number, 50-100 in the BH. The mule deer population in the Black Hills is struggling and the Bighorn sheep herds are having difficulty expanding. I do believe in having a Mountain Lion population that is thriving and manageable, but the current population is too high. Please consider lowering the objective. Thank you!

Ralph Tuschen

Hartford SD

Position: other

Comment:

As a sportsman and hunter if your going to increase the quota and give the dog hunters a chance to harvest lions inside the black hills you should also give us the chance to harvest mt lions by trapping

Andrew Ferris

Wall SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose allowing dogs first off. Second off the quota has not been met for several years due to weather. I recommend opening season 1 week earlier or closing 1 week later if you want more animals taken

Jenna Wells

Prairie City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds in the black hills

Dianna Torson

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

We need more wildlife, not less. It is wrong to justify wildlife killing so hunters can have fun.

Justin Hammer

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a life long Black Hills resident and avid big game hunter I oppose the decrease in population objectives for Mountain Lions within the BHFPD. Deer and elk hunting opportunities in the Black Hills have never been better and there is no valid reason for decreasing our Mt Lion population. Every time I'm out deer or elk hunting I relish the opportunity to have an encounter with a Mt. Lion.

As someone who has also hunted Mountain Lions I enjoy the opportunity to potentially harvest one alone without the help of dogs. It appears to me our population is stable and at a healthy level. Decreasing the population objective will lead to less opportunities for interactions and a bigger push to open the entire Black Hills to hound hunting.

Keep things the same.

Cassie Zeimet

Pringle SD

Position: support

Comment:

I have lived here all my life and I am an avid hunter here and far. When I was a senior in high school, graduating in 2004, my Senior Writing class had to pick a current topic that was found in the newspaper, and I chose the topic of introducing the mountain lion season. It went over so well with all my research and interview with Blair Wait that I got a very high percentage on it of 102%. I learned a lot and follow the mountain lion situation with great interest still to this day. I can say I am 38 years old and have seen only 4 lions in my whole life; I've seen their tracks and scat and found kills but only have seen 4. I do think that the population is at a very healthy standpoint right now, but with issues to the public. I also think that we all have a common problem and that is of the big cats coming into town and close to our homes where we live with our families. I have never heard of (doesn't mean it hasn't happened) of a lion taking down livestock other than horses (probably because they look so much like elk). I have heard and seen coyotes take down livestock, even my own. I also have not heard of a lion attacking people in our area (and of course it probably is a matter time for that to happen). I believe in the hunting season full heartedly and support it 100%. I do believe there is room for change in the program. I feel that Option #2 is the best option:

1. With the unlimited permits that are issued in either season based or all year we NEED to allow dogs to be used in ALL areas. I truly believe that this will help with the lions coming into populated areas so much. Once they are hunted with dogs a few years then they will be less likely to enter populated areas that have dogs in them (which anymore seems to be most areas) as they'll hear the dog and think maybe they should steer clear and go back where they came from. I run a hotel in Keystone and right now there is a very large male lion wandering around town and with people feeding the deer it is a matter of time before something bad happens. Unfortunately, you can't fix stupid with towns people feeding the deer in their yard, in winter it is bound to happen with a mountain lion taking down a deer, someone's pet, or worse a small kid waiting for bus. Hunting with dogs just might put more fear in them to stay away and out of town and away from homes and people.
2. The only concern I do have with lowering the population is the fact that the lion is our number one predator that we have in the Hills. If we lower the population, could we be opening up more opportunity for the black bear and/or wolves to move in. We have all seen them. We all know they come through, how long they stick around...probably not too long but nonetheless is this something we should be considering as a potential future problem.

Dave Green

Deadwood SD

Position: other

Comment:

NO DOGS!!!! That is not sport!!!!

Sue Hayes

Deadwood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Oppose ALL options on this plan.

Julie Hansen

Freeman SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Erik Tilton

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tiffani Tilton

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not increase hunting on mountain lions. It is a small population already, and their habitat is being over run by humans which may make it seem there are more of them than there really is.

Paulette Callen

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I was born and raised in SD, and I have long been sick and tired of the hunters and ranchers having the final say in wildlife issues. Mountain lions are America's CAT. We should protect them, not cull and control them for the benefit of humans who enjoy killing for killing's sake. And don't tell me there is any other reason. Subsistence hunters are few and far between. And cats don't kill healthy deer...they keep deer populations healthy. They don't prey on livestock if livestock are adequately protected. A mature cat will steer clear of protected livestock, while a younger cat will not. Science and research do not support your desire to reduce the cat population. Clearly you are just being controlled by the ranchers and hunters, and once again, this is my state too.

Kim Huhnerkoch

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't at this time you need to increasing hunting on the mountain lions, I am in the woods all the time and never really see signs of them. They are not a problem. Side note..... your OHV TRAFFIC is the PROBLEM, they are ruining the Black Hills trails !!!

David Reffner

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

i've been hunting the northern hills for around 25 yrs mostly deer, in the last 9 yrs i've been using trail cams and have captured allot of Lions on my cams, they are spread out for miles but there seems to be way too many cats and i know they take a toll on deer, i see cats all the time and i know some could be the same ones but i'm seeing all different size cats including small cats, just putting in my 2 cents, thanks...

Marianne Bentley

Nashville TN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tom Laffey

Attachment 13157

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

To GFP,

I would like to see a longer hunting season for mtn lions and the use of hounds to tree them.

I lived in Alaska for over 20 years and I know that importance of predator control, especially in rural areas.

I do not think game managements should be dictated by ballot initiatives.

Thank you,

Tom Laffey

Evelyn Horner

Attachment 13158

Belle Fourche SD

Position: other

Comment:

Dear

I think mountain lion save zoo Sioux Falls will be good.

Thank you,
Evelyn Horner

Write me. Let me know!

Heath Weavill

Attachment 13160

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The proposal of a reduction in the Mountain Lion population in the BHFPD goes directly against the "Mountain Lion Public Option Survey". The following is a direct statement made by Stephanie Buckley with the SDGFP. "Respondents were also asked whether they would prefer to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota decrease, stay the same or increase over the next five years in the following locations: Custer State Park [CSP], Black Hills Fire Protection District (excluding CSP) [BHFPD], and Statewide, outside of BHFPD (Buckley 2024). In CSP, 46% of hunters and 56% of residents wanted the population objective to stay about the same. In BHFPD, 46% of hunters wanted it to decrease to some degree, while 52% of residents wanted it to stay about the same. Statewide, 47% of hunters and 56% of residents wanted the population to stay about the same." I have attached a screenshot from her presentation of this material to the SDGFP Commission as well.

In the "Mountain Lion Population Status Update" shows that using the current Mountain Lion Action Plan and harvest methods are keeping the Current population management within objective, but that the population is showing a downward trend in recent years using this method. (https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/mountain_lion_status_report_2023.pdf).

Prepared by:

Andrew J. Lindbloom, Senior Big Game Biologist

Steven L. Griffin, Big Game Biologist

Lauren Wiechmann, Big Game Biologist

Byron Buckley, Senior Big Game Biologist

I strongly encourage the commission to look at the facts being provided by the states top Big Game Biologists and to listen to what the majority of South Dakota residents would like to see done with the Mountain Lion Population where residents "wanted the population to stay about the same."

Tania Taylor

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

1. Oppose hound hunting, especially on public land. Using dogs to chase animals down to exhaustion is cruel to the animal & dangerous for the dogs.
2. Remove "Modify and adopt hunting season structure as needed to minimize regulation complexity". In the past, they have used the goal of simple regulations to oppose changes to regulations designed to address animal cruelty issues.
3. Oppose unlimited harvest and year-long hunting on the prairie unit.
4. Remove "maximum" from "Manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs."
5. Oppose reducing the population objective from 300-200 cougars to 250-150 cougars.

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose hound hunting, especially on public land. Using dogs to chase animals down to exhaustion is cruel to the animal & dangerous for the dogs.

I oppose unlimited harvest and year-long hunting on the prairie unit.

I oppose reducing the population objective from 300-200 cougars to 250-150 cougars.

I petition to remove “maximum” from ??????????? ?????????????????? ?????????? ?????????????????????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????????????? ?????????? ?????????????????????? ?????????????????????????? ?????????????????????????? ??????????????????????????, ?????????????????????????? ?????????? ?????????????????? ?????????? ?????????????????????????? ?????????????????????.”

I petition to r????????????? the entire “????????????????? ?????????? ?????????????????? ?????????????????????? ?????????????????? ?????????????????????????? ?????????????????????? ?????????????????????????? ?????????????????????????? ??????????????????????????”. In the past, the goal of simple regulations has been used to oppose changes to regulations designed to address animal cruelty issues.

Most of all, I oppose the blatant disregard non-hunters have been given in the final draft of this plan.

Richard Horak

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

We have lived in the Mountain Plains subdivision above Spearfish for nearly 30 years. In the last several years we have seen lions walking over our deck. The last one I called the conservation officer here and reported it. He told me that young lions were searching for a territory of their own - right on my deck! There are too many lions in the Hills causing conflicts that did not exist when we first moved here. Please reduce the numbers of lions and reduce such conflicts as well as protect the dwindling numbers of deer and elk. My observation is that the numbers of elk and deer have been negatively affected by the lion population.

Dean Parker

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm writing to provide feedback on the 2024-2028 South Dakota Mountain Lion Action Plan:

1. I strongly oppose hound hunting, particularly on public lands. Using dogs to chase animals down to exhaustion is cruel to the animal and dangerous for the dogs.
2. Remove the entire "Modify and adopt hunting season structure as needed to minimize regulation complexity" line from the plan.
3. I oppose an unlimited harvest and year-long hunting on the prairie unit.
4. Remove "maximum" from "Manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs."
5. I also oppose reducing the population objective from 300-200 mountain lions to 250-150 mountain lions.

Thank you for taking the opinions of all South Dakotans into consideration when finalizing the Mountain Lion Action Management Plan.

Judy Love

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am opposed to hunting lions with hounds anywhere as well as to any increase in the number of lions that may be taken next season either in the Black Hills or in the prairie unit.

Dave Love

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Apparently as long as there is one mt. lion left and one hunter who wants it, you'll give in. And this is game management? Not too different from "Jew management" by the Nazis.

Scott Triggs

Rapid City, Sd SD

Position: other

Comment:

I oppose the use of bait or traps to be used to hunt Mt. Lions. I support the lower harvest numbers. Dan Casey is the owner of Double D Trophy Outfitters and has a major conflict of interest.

Beverly Taffee

Brandon SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the hunting of mountain lions with dogs. It doesn't give the lion a fair chance.

James Hunt

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Dear GF&P,

Your proposed plan to decrease the mountain lion population is ridiculous. There is no need to reduce the population as they help to control the high deer population that we have. I would be in favor of moving them from a high population area to an area where there is less chance of human interaction.

On another note, I am absolutely opposed to baiting, trapping, or using dogs to tree lions so a hunter can shoot them out of a tree like fish in a barrel. That is not sportsmanship, but rather a cowardly way. I put that in the same category as using dogs to hunt coyotes. I would shoot the dogs if I saw this being done as that is not sportsmanship, but a purely inhumane.

I see you aren't interested in promoting sportsmanship, but are just greedy in wanting to take in more money. If you are worth your salt, you will leave the population limits alone. If not, then you have failed as an organization.

James Hunt

Rebecca Byrne

Custer SD

Position: other

Comment:

We live in Custer County near the city limits of Custer. I hate the thought of mountain lions being at our place and in our neighborhood as well as in the woods where we hike. Many neighbors have shown fear when discussing lions. We've seen them on our trail cameras at our home. We spend a lot of time outdoors hiking/hunting/walking etc. It would be great to have less lions in the area. I would support a lot lower numbers of lions in the Black Hills region. Allowing lion hunting during deer hunting would help lower numbers. Growing up on a farm makes me worry for livestock. I'm sure lions wreak havoc on livestock. Pets are at risk. People love their pets. Children are at risk. High lion numbers should not trump people, livestock, and pet safety. There are too many lions! Please recognize that some people that filled out your survey never leave their house or never hike in the woods. Their opinion of lions is misinformed. High lion numbers don't affect them until Fluffy disappears. Those of us who hike and hunt (as my husband does) in the woods would greatly prefer less chance of running across a lion while trying to enjoy the beauty of the Black Hills.

Dillon Grose

Hunter ND

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Brandon Squires

Waverly NY

Position: support

Comment:

The use of hounds to aid in a hunt for lions is more beneficial for all party's, a hunter can judge a lion more accurately and be able to pass on taking young cats or females, the use of hounds is just an all around better option for both taking and collecting data on the lions

Zaine Wood

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I'd like to see a boost in our elk population

Cody Johnson

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support lowering the population of mountain lions in the black hills. The only way to do it right is with hounds. Stop the killing of lactating females and kittens with electronic game calls and cell cameras, and start managing this population with ethical and traditional hunting methods.

Sarah Johnson

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support lowering the mountain lion population in the black hills. Boot hunters are not capable of properly managing lions. We must use hounds. The killing of baby lions must stop!!

Sara Parker

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Attachment 13176

Steven David

Harrisburg SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am a 71 year old and appreciate everything that the GF&P does for our wildlife, hunting and fishing in the state. I have seen a lot changes over all the years of hunting and fishing in my life. For me dogs are not the answer. I will not hunt with dogs and I understand that's my choice. But who wants to hunt with dogs running around and how would I even be able to compete with dogs. I would be in favor of working with mentor deer hunting to help with the deer population. Also maybe allow trappers to trap lions the rest of the year.

Wesley Olsen

Aladdin WY

Position: support

Comment:

It would ease pressure in WY
SD residents all have to go to WY to pursue lion. When a good part of the lions are crossing the state line anyway.

Hunter Bleck

Catawba WI

Position: support

Comment:

Let the use of hounds

Brenda Belmonte

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not feel that reducing the lion population is necessary or warranted. We need to understand that we live in their home, not the other way around.

I am NOT opposed to hunting. The limits are rarely, if ever, reached during the established season. Mountain Lions help keep the population of deer and other species in check. Population reduction could prove to be problematic if natural controls for deer, elk, and turkey population are unbalanced.

Richard Thorpe

Deadwood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm against killing these beautiful creatures that have been here much longer than we have. They pose no real threat and should be left alone.

Jim Scherrer

Hill City SD

Position: other

Comment:

While I support the idea of reducing the total number of mountain lions in the Black Hills, I am adamantly opposed to the use of dogs! The fact that we have 20% of the Black Hills as privately owned property, it is not practical for dogs to be. Jason lions, running through fences and disturbing horses, cows, and other properties of private landowners.

In order to lower the number of lions in the Hills, my recommendation is to modify the hunting dates to begin on November 1st and proceed through January 31st until quotas are met. The month of November has thousands of hunters in the Black Hills and will accomplish two things. The first is increase opportunities for the siding and the subsequent harvesting of additional Lions, and secondly, significantly increase the number of licenses purchased for hunting mountain lions. Jim Scherrer

Ryan Flick

Hill City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Just allow any large game hunter holding another tag to purchase a cat tag for any open season. Still have the yearly quota but just give more time and season to fill.

Paula Von Weller

Deadwood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a resident of Deadwood, South Dakota, I strongly oppose reducing the mountain lion population in the Black Hills. The Black Hills population is still recovering and sensitive to overhunting. Science should drive policy making, not the will of hunters who are just a small fraction of the stakeholders involved. Reducing the population target to allow for hound hunting, which is more effective than boot hunting, could devastate the population. Lions should be allowed to recover statewide before increasing hunting quotas or lowering the target population. Overhunting has also proven to increase conflict with humans and livestock.

Knowing that lions are part of the landscape here is part of the intrigue of the Black Hills. I have had many conversations with other local residents who admire lions and believe they belong on the landscape with us. Seeing signs of lions is really special and something I look for on my daily hike. I have been fortunate enough to see a lion and it was an experience I will never forget. Most people dream of seeing a lion in their natural habitat. They are amazing, beautiful animals.....more so alive than dead.

I hope that you will base your decisions on science and consider giving lions an opportunity to recover and continue doing their part on the landscape to ensure a healthy and balanced ecosystem.

Gavin Turbak

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Me and many others would really love to see more opportunities for Houndsman in the Black Hills.

Joshua Rosenau

Attachment 13186

Lake Forest Park WA

Position: oppose

Comment:

We strongly oppose the proposed reduction of population targets in the amended action plan. Please see the attached letter for detailed comments.

Carolyn Plotkin

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am opposed to lowering the limit to 150 to 250 because the predator / prey balance regulates itself and the deer population will increase.

Brian Walters

Three Springs PA

Position: support

Comment:

The use of hounds is the most effective way to control the population of lions.

Sheldon Domagala

Bowman ND

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds for aiding in a mountain lion hunt. The use of hounds is the only effective way to study a cat that has kittens and or is a female in the tree before harvest.

Jillian Murphy

Vermillion SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The plan to increase allowable hunts for mountain lions does not make ecological sense. It will lead to a higher number of orphaned and "unsupervised" young, ultimately posing a threat to humans, instead of having the intended effect. A better approach would be regulation of development and prevention of sprawl - something that I recognize is beyond the scope of GFP, but would be the only practical solution.

Arlene Pixley

Moorcroft WY

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Guy Kempthorne

Missoula MT

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Chris Morgan

Boukder MT

Position: support

Comment:

I support the reduced population objective and allowing the use of hounds to pursue mountain lions. Hound hunting has proven time and again to be the most conservation-minded tool when it comes to managing lion populations.

Tim Mckenrick

Boulder MT

Position: support

Comment:

Thank you for allowing us to comment on this issue. The best method for controlling lion populations is the use of hounds. The handler can discriminate on the size, sex and age of a treed lion and eliminate problem and adult animals.
Thank you for your time.

John Eckman

Greybull WY

Position: support

Comment:

I strongly support hounds hunting for lions in SD. Using hounds offers the ability to be selective on which animals will be harvested.

Jim Thompson

Madison SD

Position: other

Comment:

The use of hounds should be allowed throughout the Black Hills. It would allow hunters to pick larger, older males to harvest and allow female lions to survive to teach the younger cats how to hunt.

Dave Birkoski

Great Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds to keep mountain lions at a sustainable level.

John Bullion

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Currently we only allow spot and stalk and with that they shoot a lot of females and young cats .As a proponent of sustainable utilization, it's a terrible thing to see year after year. I would like to see this change to allow a healthier harvest of mature male lions and for us to see a more sustainable population without the major dispersal rates South Dakota has always been known to have. The use of hounds on all of our National Forest land will be beneficial.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Diane Holman

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

"As a South Dakota resident, I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered."

Charles Brackney

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am writing in opposition to the plan to lower the mountain lion population. I don't think this action should be taken to placate hunters. I don't find the reasons in support of this plan to be convincing. The population of mountain lions is already dangerously small and this is definitely a step in the wrong direction. Thank you. Charles Brackney, Sioux Falls

Ira Elenko

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Lorna Luther

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Julia Natvig

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Healthy mountain lion populations are important to ecosystem balance and control of rodents and other prey species. Please focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered."

James Cox

Brady MT

Position: support

Comment:

I fully support the use of hounds for the take of mountain lions and trapping of all predators. Predators are raising havoc all over the country and they need to be properly managed.

Nicole Bartscher

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

As a South Dakota resident, I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered

Linda Palzkill

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I live in the black hills and miss my mountain lions. We use to have a female that hung around our subdivision and every year she would bring her cubs around so we could see them. She would walk up and down the sidewalk and keep the coyotes at bay. She was a beautiful animal but I haven't seen her in years. I know she was probably killed. Such a waste. Now there are so many deer because she's gone that the deer are either eating everything or starving. You should think of the consequences of not having lions before you allow anymore to be killed.

Martha Suarez

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

There is no reason to slaughter these mountain lions. Ecology over economics and politics, please.

Kim Tysdal

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a South Dakota resident, I strongly urge Game, Fish and Parks commission to reject the proposed mountain lion reduction objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered.

Barbara Joyce

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Andreea Picioroaga

Vermillion SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please protect the mountain lions! And all critters/ animals in our state. We should be their guardians, not their oppressors. Do not put profit before them, nature and all animal souls.

John Chamberlain

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a South Dakota resident, I urge the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting to maintain stable social structures for mountain lions will reduce livestock conflicts. Mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered, with only a few hundred of these beautiful creatures left. Mountain lions weren't brought here from China or India; they are Indigenous to this region, and we have a responsibility to protect their existence; the mountain lions have a right to live on the lands they were born on, a gift from Mother Nature.

Kim Redlin

Watertown SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

We can't do the killing off

Barb Wright

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not increase the number of mountain lions to be killed. They should not be hunted at all. We build in their space and then kill them for being there. Makes no sense.

Julie Hansen

Freeman SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Pls do NOT increase the cougar hunting quotient. They are already scarce enough in the state; & have an important role in removing diseased deer; elk ect from the states herds; thus keeping them healthier. Thank you.

Jerri Johnson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a South Dakota resident, I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered. Please stop any hunting of SD mountain lions.

James Tirey

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Brad Huffaker
Rocksprings WY
Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of hounds

Christopher Brown
Fruitdale SD
Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Mike Jarding
Hot Springs SD
Position: support

Comment:

Now the plan is to maintain 250-350 Mt Lions in the BH. Data indicates one lion kills 1 deer per week, that is around 15,000-16,000 Black Hills deer a year. There is only around 3000 BH deer tags issued every year. Mt Lions are taking 5x more deer than hunters are. As a hunter I truly believe we need Mt Lions in the ecosystem, but this number is way too high. I totally support lowering the Mt Lion population and completely support using hounds.
Thank you

Preston Munk
Colman SD
Position: support

Comment:

There is no more effective way to manage and have the ability to harvest Mountain Lions than with hounds.

Greg Heier
Rapid City SD
Position: oppose

Comment:

Leave the Lion season and hunting quota as it currently is. I believe there are a proper amount of lions in the Hills to sustain population and not be destructive to other wildlife. Additionally, I am not in favor of using dogs to hunt unless we ever get to a point of over population, and then only just enough to balance the population.

Zane Tibbs

Fort Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I've been a hound hunter for 25 years. It's been a lot of work and a lot of fun to use hounds. When hunting big game like mountain lions I truly believe that there's no better way to do it. If the GFP wants a better managed lion population in the Black Hills by allowing hounds they won't be disappointed. It's been easy to see the success of the hound seasons in Custer State Park in the last ten years since the hound seasons were put in play. Especially on the elk population in the park. The same thing will happen in the general black hills if hound hunting is allowed and hopefully that leads to better populations of deer and elk and sheep which will give more hunting opportunities for those animals overall.

Chris Halleman

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The mountain lion hunting regulations should stay the way they are right now. I have had a lion tag the past few years, and I have not shot a lion by choice. If a person is willing to hunt, they can find lions. I have seen many lions in the past few years while hunting, but they just haven't been the lion I want. I would like to see the regulations stay as is.

Kevin Muilenburg

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think allowing a certain amount of lions hunted with hounds is a great idea

James Weyh Jr

Watertown SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I feel, the mountain lion population is at acceptable levels and that using any type of dog to assist a hunter is not necessary. This not only will make Mountain lions more secluded and they will become harder to hunt on foot without dogs. They will be almost impossible to call in due to the increased pressure of being continually chased by dogs. Thank You.

Ronald Harrell

Rapid Citu SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not approve of lowering the population objective for Mt. LIONS

Shannon Ims

Clark SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support a plan to lower mountain lion populations in South Dakota, particularly the Black Hills. There's way too many. Too many reports of them in contact with humans. Too many taking wildlife and livestock.

I also support the use of hounds statewide, including the Black Hills.

Kyle Schulz

Philip SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not want to compete with hounds man when trying to hunt mountain lions in the hills.

If more harvest is needed why can't the season just be extended? Why do we need to add dogs and ultimately commerical hound hunting?

Will Littau

Winner SD

Position: support

Comment:

The mountain lion population needs to come down in the black hills.

Andrew Albers

Rapod City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please to not go through with this. We already have enough hunting opportunities disappearing in our state for people that hunt public land.

Mary Jassman

Belle Fourche SD

Position: other

Comment:

"As a South Dakota resident, I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered."

Richard Holso

Deadwood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Joel Jorgensen

Lennox SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Stacey Sturma

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a SD resident, I urge the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to reject the proposed reduction in mountain lion population objectives. Instead, focus on science-based conservation that protects mountain lions and maintains their essential role in healthy ecosystems. Minimizing hunting so as to maintain stable mountain lion social structures will reduce livestock conflicts. With only a few hundred left, mountain lions must be protected, not further endangered.

Drew Sacrison

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I'm just n favor of harvesting more lions also we need to harvest mature lion not lactating females and kittens.The big mature males are what need harvested and currently we kill more females than males.The use of hounds would allow selective harvest and the harvest of mature cats not the young starving cats that come to electronic calls.

Tyler Haddix

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am not a fan of reducing the population. Especially with the population trending down.

Becky Dwire

Wells NV

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Nathan Nichols

Dell Rapids SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not support any changes to the current plan for mountain lion population control.

Doug Kozak

Vermillion SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Patrick Veurink

Emery SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Surveys say numbers of cats are where they should be, why do we need to reduce population more and take away opportunities of all sportsmen to get out to chase them..Don't want outside influences to effect this, or if numbers do have to go down slightly to bring deer numbers back up. Could another special quota be set to have a season for cats during deer or elk(Oct/ Nov.) seasons like WY?

Sam Stoddard

Norris SD

Position: support

Comment:

I strongly support the use of hounds in any and all management plans

Fritz Hoppe

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Are there any photos or evidence by people telling far fetched stories of mountain lion coming in their home?

I have seen less and less cat tracks every year since 2019.

Urbanization of the Black Hills should not be a reason to decrease mountain lion population. That is simply the definition of greed.

If you live in cat country, keep your pets by your side, carry protection, and accept that you live in the woods with wild animals.

This proposal is not only founded on what appear to be mostly baseless claims, but it decreases hunter opportunity.

Hunter opportunities for big game are already extremely limited in South Dakota.

Let everyone have a fair chance to pursue one of the most challenging and rewarding big game animals in North America.

Darin Cooper

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the reduction in the amount of lions in the Black Hills, but I do not agree with allowing the use of hounds to lower the number. I strongly believe that starting the season earlier, like November 1st as the most effective way to reduce the numbers. Unlike other western national forested states, South Dakota has way more private property scattered through the Black Hills and the use of hounds will create a tremendous amount of issues with private landowners and will eventually give all types hunting a bad rap. The anti hunting groups put most of their focus on states that allow baiting, trapping and hound hunting, because that is the easiest way to get the general public to side with them.

Darell Lethcoe

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Why should people want to hunt more mountain lions especially with dogs. I've hunted with dogs down in FL and I've seen the carnage . If the hunters can't track the lions on there own then they shouldn't be called hunters using dogs to run the cat to a frothing mess is just cheating if they want to use dogs take there weapons and let there be even odds .

John Knapp

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

There is success in controlling numbers without the use of dogs. I believe that was the purpose of the hunting season to begin with. Sounds like it is already a successful strategy.

Joe Hawthorne

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm pro hound hunting, but not in the Black Hills. To many logging roads and to many people living in them who don't understand hunting with dogs. It's a start to and of all Mt lion hunting in the hills. It's also a very unique opportunity for just boot hunting, if you feel the need for the quota to be filled why not have a 10 day hound season after the normal bot hunter season is closed?

Craig Reeder

Laurel MT

Position: support

Comment:

I support the Mountain Lion Action Plan.

Coral Hart

Edgemont SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please stop killing these animals. We need mountain lions.

Jeff Johnson

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

The use of dogs is a sound management tool to make sure pregnant, or current female cats with cubs, aren't harvested.

This being said, hounds-men should not be able to charge a fee to guide cat hunters on national forest property.

Chad Kiel

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the use of hounds in the black hills fire district. The cat population has been managed with boat hunting. The numbers show that. If you allow the use of hounds. These hunts will become trophy hunt. This will also cause conflict with hunters. If I'm on a cat track and some one drop hounds on it. I would definitely be very unhappy. Please do not screw up the already good thing we have out in the hills. The hound hunters are a very small group. Please rethink adding hound hunting in the fire district.

Scott Nielsen

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steven Niles

Coon Rapids MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose lowering the population objective but I support opening up the methods of take on mountain lions. Hound hunting in particular allows for easier and more conclusive identification of the animal to be taken while at bay (by dogs) allowing hunters to take adult males and letting the females go to reproduce and properly rear their offspring with a healthy fear of humans having just been chased and cornered by people and their dogs. I also do not oppose trapping or baiting as they also allow for a better ID and a more responsible harvest as well. Hunting adult male lions opens up territory for young males that would otherwise disperse and are the most likely to make a nuisance of themselves thereby also reducing conflict. If the state of South Dakota does not require the utilization of the meat from a hunter-killed lion I believe that they should, as a hunter I believe in eating what I kill and I personally aspire to eat a lion that I harvest one day.

Payton Reynolds

Watertown SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I highly oppose this measure due to the fact that it would be a huge detriment to the avid boot hunters trying to compete with hounds in a small area like the black hills. I recently talked to Trenton Haffely, one of your biologists, and he stated as long as there are 200-300 lions in the hills there wouldn't be a need for a change. Hounds in the hills will be a pay to play and benefit very few hunters. \$28 mountain lion tag and a good attitude is all a guy needs and it would be heartbreaking to have that opportunity taken away. Highly opposed to this measure!

Thomas Undlin

Faulkton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The use of dogs will ruin Mt. Lion hunting in the black hills. If you want to further reduce the population, either extend the season to when archery season starts for Deer, or make it open all year round. Adding dogs is a money game, and most people can't afford that. The area of the Black hills is too small to get away from people using dogs, so you might as well say goodbye to any traditional hunting that most people long for. Black hills is one of, if not the only, place you can hunt Mt. Lions and get away from the dog hunting. Please preserve the ethics and what we all should love. Hunting isn't just about killing. If you bring dogs into it, that is all its about. That's not what you want to teach our younger generations.

Kathy Ebsen

Creighton NE

Position: oppose

Comment:

So humans moving into once natural wild land is the lions fault?????? NEED to learn to co- exist!!!!!!

Ashley Waldorf

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

This is [REDACTED] Leave the mountain lions alone!

Kevin Perkins

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a South Dakota resident, I am writing to urge the Game, Fish and Parks Department to end or significantly reduce mountain lion trophy hunting and hunting with hounds as the Mountain Lion Action Plan is updated. Maintaining stable mountain lion social structures is known to reduce conflicts with livestock, and mountain lions are vital for healthy ecosystems. With only a few hundred remaining, it is crucial to protect their population.

Matt David

Harrisburg SD

Position: other

Comment:

I have been told that this is a push for the use of dogs in the hills. As someone who enjoys boot hunting, don't let our state be a sell out to commercial and guided hunting. It has ruined other types of hunting through the state by limiting the chances of the average middle class South Dakotan that can't afford guided hunts on private land. Don't let the hills become a financial decision. Take a stand for the average middle class hunter.

Jeff Strub

Madison SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Ian Williams

Whitewood SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support this

Tamara Stands And Looks Back

Parmelee SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Need to figure out a solution, then murdering sacred animals in lands that are sacred to the Lakota people.

Jeremy Olesen

Brandon SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Nichole Freilino

Belle Fourche SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of dogs for hunting mountain lions on public land in South Dakota for both residents and Non residents.

Ron Watson

Hot Springs SD

Position: other

Comment:

Please allow the use of dogs state wide (including the Black Hills). It really is the effective humane way. We also need to reduce even more total numbers of cats in the Black Hills. 50% of our mule fawns have been killed in the first 3 months of this summer. It's not coyotes either. We have resident lions, that kill too many deer and they are so difficult to hunt, it's frustrating. Too [REDACTED] many lions in my opinion.

Louise Mcgannon

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Wrong on so many levels! The method of the killing plus we need to leave nature alone, let it do what it is the best at. Man's interference disrupts the who ecosystem.

Leave wildlife alone.

Brody Weavill

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Attachment 13276

Dale Houser

Kimball SD

Position: support

Comment:

I'm for reducing the number of mountain lions in the black hills to help increase the deer and elk population numbers. I also support the use of dogs for mountain lion hunting in the black hills

Mike Martinz

Big Timber MT

Position: support

Comment:

Hounds are the most effective way to manage mountain lions.

Starla Graves

Whitewood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am not in favor of this plan, the system we have works just fine

Erin Olesen

Brandon SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Howard Smith

Winner SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Toepfer

Oacoma SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would support this if you start the season early (Nov 1). And give it two years to see if this has the needed effect. Perhaps letting big game hunters use their carcass and gut piles as bait stations.

Linda Thorpe

Garden Valley CA

Position: oppose

Comment:

I visit Deadwood frequently to see my ex-husband, Steve Thorpe, and son, Richard who live at 66 Taylor Avenue in Deadwood. I believe that the wild population of mountain lions should not be hunted. Their numbers will be limited by the abundance of prey. They are magnificent animals and for many, the Black Hills are their home.

Jacob Gomez

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Additionally, a short hound season should be added to the bhfpd allowing only mature cats be harvested.

Austin Cooper

Spearfish SD

Position: support

Comment:

Leave it the way it is. If you want to meet the annual harvest quota, start the season earlier, like November 1st.

Kenny Danielson

Rapid City Sd SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I believe we have a healthy mountain lion population. They have an important role in our ecosystem so reducing they're numbers would reduce they're impact. This decision to reduce their numbers I strongly oppose. These decisions should be based off numbers and science and I don't believe that is what is happening.

Braidyn Buchholz

Hermosa SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Curtis Danielson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tanah Oestmann

Hermosa SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Bobbi Wells

Prairie City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of the reduction in mountain lion population in the BHFPD. Although difficult to track an accurate population, these are not caged animals and can travel great distances. That being said, when they are traveling into more human populated areas and choosing domesticated animals as prey, they need to be managed differently. As I support the reduction in population, I also support the use of hounds in the State of SD. Identifying a treed lion prior to decisions of dispatching it can male the population healthy and help deter cats from wanting to love into town.

Stian Efrainson

Bryant SD

Position: support

Comment:

Let dogs in the hills for mountain lion

Story Warren

Bend OR

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Attachment 13294

Stetson Lippert

Sturgis SD

Position: other

Comment:

I can tell you that your use of verbiage to describe an estimated population is "varied". There is nothing varied about the mountain lion population. The plan admits that it's difficult to estimate population. I will tell you that when you say your prediction of 200-300 cats in the hills is way off. There are trail cam pictures of 6 cats traveling in one pack, that's so destructive to the deer and Elk. As a hunter spending more time in the hills than any biologist I will tell you there are more cats that anyone wants to admit. They are the most destructive threat to our deer and elk populations but yet all these lobbyist are tying to protect them for some reason. Deer and elk tags generate more money and put more food on them table to even consider keeping mountain lions in the picture. Allow mountain lion hunting all year round in the hills, allow dogs, and have unlimited tags. You will Never remove these destructive predators from the hills because they are so elusive, but they need to be brought under control.

Steve Moses

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

WHT south dakota game and fish can █████ up a wet dream pull your head out of your █████. If you want more deer in the hills stop shooting the does that includes youth hunting

Shawn Larsen

Sturgis SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Linda Larsonbiers

Piedmont SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Mountain lions are an integral part of our ecosystem. Hunting them down with dogs is inhumane and reflects SD attitude towards hunting. It is revenue and not what is necessary to keep balance in nature

Theresa Shay

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

While all aspects must be considered of course, I am particularly opposed to any cruel hunting practices affecting these magnificent creatures.

Gavin Turbak

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am for hounds in the hills

Keith Trout

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I think the quota of lions is good the way it is.

Patrick Shay

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Nancy Hilding
Black Hawk, SD
Position: oppose

Attachment 13305

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718

We attach our comments as a PDF file

Nancy Hilding
Black Hawk SD
Position: oppose

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm
Black Hawk, SD 57718

Mountain lions are an apex predator and a keystone species. I want more of them not less. I absolutely object to the goal of maximizing hunting and minimizing the complexity of hunting regulations

Other

Colton Benson
Montrose SD
Position: support

Comment:

I support the use of dogs in the black hills fire district

Adam Golay

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

I didn't realize that when I was 12 years old that I might die of old age before I draw H2 black hills elk tag but after talking to several gf&p employees about it I realized that is a possibility of never drawing it ever no matter how many preference points you have. I think the commission needs to change the drawing & weight the preference pints higher when you get to 30+ or even 20+ points. Also why is there a 5% drawing for people who have 0 points? The only people who draw out of that pool are the ones that didn't draw in the 10+ or the 1+ pool anyways. That makes no sense at all. Instead they should move the 5% up to 30+ points or at least 20+ points but I feel like it should be 30+. Also it should be looked at as possibly changing the black hills elk tag to a once in a lifetime tag rather than lettting all these hunters back in the draw after 9 years. Also they could look at making your preference points when you get to 30+ by the 4th power instead of cubing them. So example would be someone with 30 pref points would have their name in the draw 923,521 times (31x31x31x31) instead of just 29,791 times (31x31x31). There is no advantage to having tons of points right now. It does you no good. I feel like the game, fish and parks is steeling from me. Those are elk that I own & a lot of them are public land. Also why does a landowner get to hunt off their own land. If they want to hunt elk on a landowner tag then make it a true landowner tag so they can only hunt their own land not the public land that I own & you are allowing land owners to hunt my elk thad I own on my public land every single year some of them & I can't even do it once. This needs to be looked at & changed.

Brian Lundquist

Deadwood SD

Position: other

Comment:

Minimize or eliminate out of state hunters. Most have little respect for landowners or the off road travel rules.

Fred And Karen Steffen

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The Mickelson trail is listed as a non motorized trail. E-bikes have a motor. Period. We sometimes walk the trail with our disabled son. Those bikes coming around corners at 30 miles per hour are a problem. Someone is going to get hurt. Additionally, with them being a motorized vehicle they should be required to carry insurance on them just like a motorcycle.

Jason Piebenga

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Restricting non resident licenses

Glenna Johnson

Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not support e-bikes on Michelson Trail, they are dangerous at the higher speeds and as much trail etiquette as get puts out there, people don't care about horses or riders and sometimes treat us like we don't have a right to be there.

Richard Bailey

Waccabuc NY

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the closing of Custer State Park airport

Spring Turkey

Mark Smedsrud

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

Dear commissioners,

I am writing today in strong opposition of the current proposal to limit nonresident tags to 2225 tags. The sportsman's of South Dakota came to the commission through the SD wildlife Federation with hopes of leveling the playing field in regards to hunting opportunities within the state following limited science that's has addressed populations. According to proposals in 2022 the SDGFP staff admitted populations were declining, yet tag allocations in the hills allowed to go unchecked, with last years nonresident tags exceeding our own residents. We left the meeting in July with the discussion that we could come up with a number that would appease the petitioners and still allow nonresidents opportunities. In the spirit of debate, I thought a more realistic number could be reached. I thought Dana Rogers did an outstanding job laying out the data supporting a lower quota. The current proposal needs to be lessened to find a better common ground. Let me be clear, I am not in opposition of nonresident opportunities. I realize they provide a key component to budgets and tourism dollars. What I am opposed to is residents that live here, pay taxes here and support local economies more frequently than nonresident infusions. More importantly we should not allow the dollar to drive the science behind population and conservation. With that said I would like to see more studies on populations within the hills that could consist of MANDATORY harvest surveys to help support our license quotas across the board. I urge the commission to allow the public through a working group and GFP staff to come up with a better nonresident quota. Other states have followed the same path in limiting nonresident opportunities within reason and I urge our state to do the same! We don't have to be the leading "come on down" state for the almighty dollar and we can become the leading "welcome to our state" because we follow common sense conservation practices while urging people to move here because of what we maintain!

Thank you for your time.

Mark Smedsrud

Julie Keeton

Laconia IN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm opposed to selling Black Hills non-resident spring turkey licenses on a lottery basis and limiting non-resident licenses.

Tom Condon

Aberdeen SD

Position: support

Comment:

The turkey population in the black hills has fallen so much in the last few years that this is a necessary first step. I believe we should be going even farther to allow the populations to rebound. I hunted the 2023 spring black hills season, and it is appalling how few turkeys are left out there. Lots of prairie units are better than the black hills right now, and it doesn't have to be this way.

Peter Koupal

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The reduction of non-resident licenses is a start..... but not enough of a reduction

Gary Nelson

St. Charles MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have hunted Black Hills turkeys for 45 years and have not observed any problems with too many hunters. Turkey numbers, in my opinion has increased the past two years but overlogging is a major disgrace.

Gary Nelson

St. Charles MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

How many spring Black Hills turkey non-resident licenses have been purchased over the past 20 years? Thank you.

Gary Nelson

St. Charles MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

My hunting party deliberately waits to purchase our groceries at your local establishments to help them out abit plus our renting a place to stay. One fact the complaining resident hunters need to remember is the fact wild turkeys are not native to the Black Hills as they were introduced from out- of-state.

Terry Mayes

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

As an individual and Vice President of the South Dakota Wildlife federation I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to speak on the turkey issue. Your vote to reduce the out of state applications for Black Hills spring turkey licenses was appreciated. I am sure this issue will considered again in the future and I am confident that you will give the matter a similar hearing if and when that happens. The meeting was well run and fair to all who testified.

Threatened and Endangered Species Review

Mary-Betty Mullner

Aberdeen SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Terri Pepper

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Starla Graves

Whitewood SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

unsustainable populations of predators will result in USFW taking away State Management of more large predators

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society (PHAS)
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718

Dear Commission,

Thanks to SD for having a State Threatened and Endangered Species law and to GFP for administering it. We care very much about the protection of rare species.

We listened to Eileen Dowd Stukel's presentation on the Biennial Review/Status report - which was cursory. We however could not find any copy of her report on-line or in the Commission Book. We had to contact staff to get a copy of the review. As we doubt the public has it - how can they comment on a report they can't read? We posted a copy to the PHAS web site - Here is a link:
https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/TE-status-reviews_2024.pdf

We will testify on the report during finalizations and we will reference our petitions to list the lake chub and greater sage grouse from 2020. We include links to those two petitions and an attachment for the lake chub petition and your resolution when rejecting the lake chub petition.

Petition to list lake chub - https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/TE-status-reviews_2024.pdf

Attachment to petition for chub
https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/TE-status-reviews_2024.pdf

Your resolution on the petition:
https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/TE-status-reviews_2024.pdf

Our petition to list the greater sage grouse
<https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/SD-Petition-to-List-the-GRSG-final.pdf>

Thanks, Nancy Hilding, President, Prairie Hills Audubon Society



MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION

Saving America's Lion

The mission of the Mountain Lion Foundation is to ensure that America's lion survives and flourishes in the wild.

August 16, 2024

Stephanie Rissler, Chair
 South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
 221 Lake Ridge Drive
 Wentworth, SD 57075

RE: Mountain Lion Action Plan

Dear Chair Rissler and members of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

We write to you on behalf of our South Dakota members with comments on the draft Mountain Lion Action Plan for 2024-2028. While there is much in this plan to praise, we also feel that there is room for improvement.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) prepared this plan with input from a stakeholder group which was weighted heavily toward hunting groups and livestock owners. There was limited input from conservationists or from scientists outside the department. The Mountain Lion Foundation requested a chance to participate in that meeting, but the request was declined. That group ultimately did not recommend reducing the population target for mountain lions, nor increasing the harvest limits. We are pleased that these recommendations to maintain the status quo are reflected in the current draft of the Action Plan.

While the current rate at which mountain lions are killed by hunters is higher than we would recommend, and higher than is necessary for the ecology of mountain lions (which do not require hunting to maintain their population), the decision to hold hunting steady is a recognition that the current hunting regime is at the limit of what the comparatively new mountain lion population in South Dakota can sustain, and that in order for mountain lions to recover the population that was extirpated by excessive hunting in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it is necessary not to further increase hunting. Mountain lions have slowly spread

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Sacramento, CA 95812
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info@mountainlion.org
 (916) 442-2666

east into the Dakotas and Nebraska in the last decades, and there is a strong desire to see mountain lions recover further east in those states, and indeed throughout the eastern United States. Current policy in South Dakota unfortunately does not protect mountain lions outside of the Black Hills, a policy which necessarily limits the natural spread of that population.

Discussing those areas outside the Black Hills, the Action Plan notes that there is no population objective for populations in the prairie, in part due to the lack of substantial population surveys of those areas. The Action Plan notes that “these areas are managed primarily to abate potential livestock losses on private property while at the same time to provide recreational hunting opportunity.” We would suggest that developing scientific surveys of the prairie populations would be a valuable contribution to the scientific literature, documenting the behavior and ecology of the species as it recolonizes former territory. It would also allow development of management objectives that reflect the ecological benefits mountain lions provide, and not merely address the risk of livestock conflict. We urge that such research be added as an objective in the action plan.

The Action Plan correctly observes “To help minimize [livestock] conflicts when possible, GFP must ensure that mountain lion populations are managed proactively and that management goals are being met.” Minimizing conflict is an important goal and one that SDGFP can play a critical role with. Research throughout the range of mountain lions shows, consistently across states and multiple independent studies, that increased hunting does not reduce conflict. Indeed, multiple research groups independently find that hunting tends to *increase* conflict with livestock. There are several proposed reasons for this phenomenon, rooted in the biology of the species. While it is a somewhat counterintuitive finding, it is important to emphasize that the intuitive belief that killing mountain lions reduces conflict is not borne out by empirical study. We urge that management goals for mountain lions reflect the best available science and not rely on the hunting of mountain lions as a mechanism for addressing conflict. Instead, management should emphasize the use of nonlethal deterrents, especially livestock guardian dogs, adequate fencing, and well-designed enclosures for livestock, and a combination of public education and landowner outreach to ensure that livestock owners understand the tools available to help them and their livestock live safely and confidently alongside these native carnivores as the species recovers its population.

The Action Plan notes that SDGFP is pursuing exactly that course. It explains: “Furthermore, GFP is currently working on an informational brochure which demonstrates successful techniques used to protect chicken and other domestic animals from mountain lions.” The Mountain Lion Foundation has worked with state fish and wildlife agencies in several states to develop exactly such brochures, and it would be our pleasure to collaborate with SDGFP as well, or to share our experience in writing and distributing those educational materials. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance in those valuable efforts.

We also reiterate longstanding areas of concern with mountain lion management in South Dakota. The Action Plan Objective 2 sets out the goal to “manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs.” Maximizing human killing of mountain lions is not ecologically necessary, and as discussed above, poses a real risk of increasing conflict and potentially harming ungulate populations. As apex carnivores, mountain lions do not require hunting to maintain stable populations in balance with their prey. Research throughout the West has shown that increased hunting does not benefit deer or elk populations. Because of their territorial behavior, killing established resident lions can cause local populations of mountain lions to actually *increase*, placing further pressure on prey populations temporarily. Those overhunted populations can also be more prone to conflict with livestock, as they tend to be dominated by younger, inexperienced male mountain lions. Numerous studies show that this is the most conflict-prone demographic. Reducing objectives for human killing of mountain lions would benefit this ecologically-sensitive species, and could bring benefits for hunters and livestock owners.

In this vein, we also have concerns about part b of Objective 2, which sets a goal to “maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs” in the Custer State Park unit. Hound hunting poses risks to other wildlife, livestock, and pets. Hounds travel across park boundaries, and can become distracted by pets or livestock on the property they are trespassing on and can attack or injure park visitors, pets, or livestock. In addition, hound teams that encounter a female who is caring for young are more likely to kill the cubs or to drive the mother far from her family, making it harder for hunters to avoid orphaning those cubs. When a pack of GPS-collared hounds are set to chase a mountain lion, the chances of a kill on that hunt is higher than for a boot hunt. This higher killing efficiency is particularly challenging for a small and recovering population like South Dakota’s. Prioritizing boot hunting would do more to protect park visitors, neighbors, and wildlife in the park.

Instead of managing primarily with the goal of maximizing hunting today, we urge the Commission to set a goal of long-term recovery of mountain lions throughout South Dakota, and the health and stability of the metapopulation of mountain lions throughout the Plains states. South Dakota’s population is essential to the future recovery of mountain lions in states further east, and its mountain lions disperse to and sustain the genetics of surrounding states including North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana, and is in turn sustained by immigration of mountain lions from those states. The killing of lions in South Dakota affects all those states. Managing with an eye toward overall stability would, as emphasized above, require further study of the prairie populations outside the Black Hills. It would also require coordination with Tribal governments to monitor the number of mountain lions killed by all hunters and all responses to conflict within South Dakota’s borders. And it would require the state to consider dispersal corridors and highway crossings to ensure the ready movement of

mountain lions between population in and around South Dakota. Restoring the statewide range of mountain lions, and allowing the species to recover in neighboring states as well, would have ecological and social benefits, discussed above. While we would hope the state would consider the wisdom of this choice, we note that this recovered population could also allow greater hunter opportunity throughout the state than would be possible with a population limited to the Black Hills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rosenau', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joshua Rosenau
Director of Policy and Advocacy

(916) 442-2666 ext. 107

jrosenau@mountainlion.org

September 13, 2024

South Dakota Dept. Game Fish and Parks
523 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre SD 57501

Re: Mountain Lion Action Plan

Dear Agency:

Your Mountain Lion Action Plan has the following fatal errors:

1. What are the credentials of the individuals making this major decision for the State of South Dakota?
2. What was the total number of participants in the studies?
3. Explain precisely how you determine the number of mountain lion that are currently living in the Black Hills.
4. Do you have some sort of backup plan should the population be decimated by a virus or something similar?
5. What is the purpose for the reduction?
6. Provide statistics demonstrating you have completed a cost benefit analysis.
7. Why was the participation of the other Lakota Tribes not actively sought?

You discuss “social tolerance”. A hunter’s social tolerance is much different than a non-hunter, and it appears you are catering to the hunter. Let’s discuss the Agency’s wonderful plans which have been touted over the past several years. I reside on a remote acreage. When I moved to the area I would see numerous possums, raccoons and an occasional fox. But then your agency came up with this brilliant idea to place a bounty on red fox, skunks, badgers, possums and raccoons in order to protect the interests of pheasant hunters. Your plan has resulted in pets being poisoned as well as at least one endangered animal. And guess what? I still don’t see any pheasants nor do I see any other animals that I used to enjoy. Further, I do not believe your agency has any idea how you are affecting the populations of these animals you seek to destroy. My social tolerance for making major decisions without supporting evidence is very low.

You have a responsibility to ensure these majestic animals survive for future generations. Your responsibility does not run toward individual hunters who believe that people enjoy seeing a stuffed head on a wall. I want to see more substance behind your decision which at this time is completely lacking.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bobbi J Doerfler
Bobbi J. Doerfler, Esq.

Tom Laffey
2023 10th Ave
Belle Fourche SD
57717

9/18/24

Attachment 13157

RE: MOUNTAIN LION ACTION PLAN
TO GFP,

I WOULD LIKE TO ^{SEE} A LONGER
HUNTING SEASON FOR MTN
LIONS AND THE USE OF HOUNDS
TO TREE THEM.

I LIVED IN ALASKA FOR OVER
20 YEARS AND I KNOW THE
IMPORTANCE OF PREDATOR
CONTROL, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL
AREAS.

I DO NOT THINK GAME MANAGEMENT
SHOULD BE DICTATED BY BALLOT
INITIATIVES.

THANK YOU

Tom Laffey
TL

(605) 210-1553

SEPT 18, 2024

DEAR

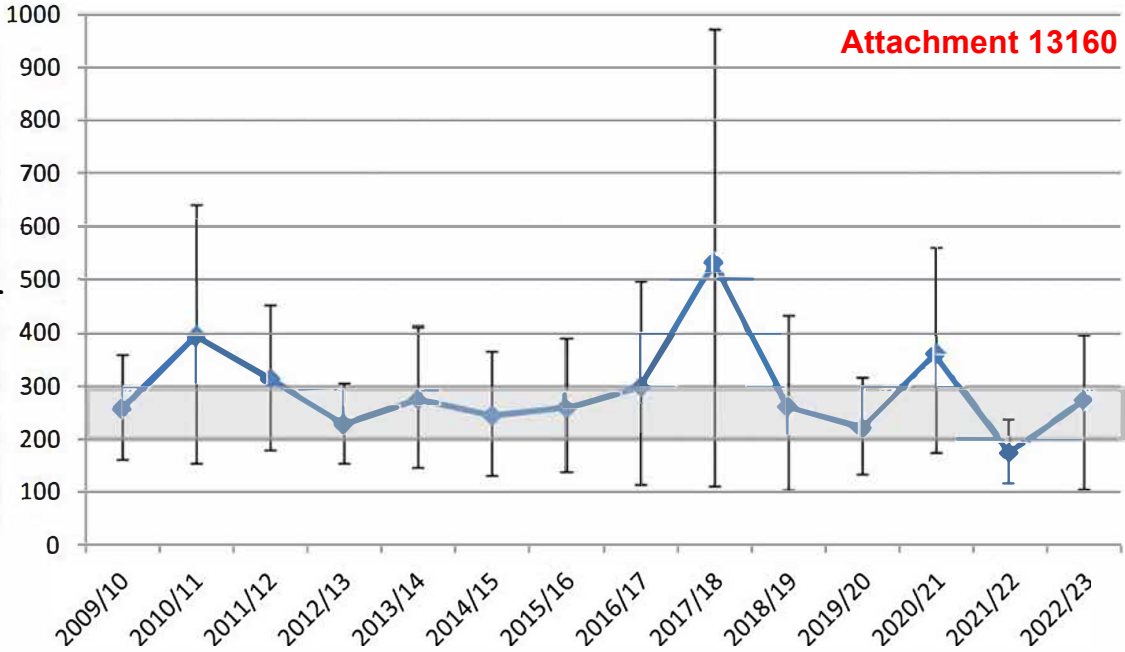
I THINK MOUNTAIN LION
WEE ZOO SIOUX FALLS WILL BE
GOOD.

THANK YOU
EVERYONE HORNER

WRITE ME LET ME KNOW!

Mountain Lion Population Estimate

Attachment 13160



I'm writing with feedback on *Objective 2* in the 2024-2028 South Dakota Mountain Lion Action Plan:

- 1) **Remove “maximum” from “Manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities.”** Providing recreational hunting opportunities must be balanced with ecology and keeping a sustainable mountain lion population. Care should be taken that hunting does not impede the public's enjoyment of public lands. Wildlife watchers exceed hunters in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studies that count wildlife associated recreators nationwide. A hunted lion or its tracks are not available for watching.
- 2) **Remove the phrase “Modify and adopt hunting season structure as needed to minimize regulation complexity.”** Simplifying regulations should not take priority over letting the public have a voice in regulations that affect public lands and animals.
- 3) **Remove “maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs”.** Hound hunting is inhumane – it not only results in the injury and death of the wild animal, but sometimes the dogs themselves. Animals are run to exhaustion and can be mauled if unable to climb a tree in time. Packs of dogs chasing wild animals are also a public safety and a private property issue - dogs can run miles away from their handlers and are not under their control at that time.
- 4) **I oppose reducing the population objective from the original 300-200 mountain lions to 250-150 mountain lions.**
- 5) **I oppose unlimited harvest and year-long hunting on the prairie unit.**

Finally, I want point out that **animal cruelty is implicit if hunting of female mountain lions is allowed, as there is no time you can schedule the hunt to avoid orphaning kittens.** According to the National Wildlife Federation's website: *"Mountain lions can breed year-round. Female mountain lions usually give birth every two years. Litters can range in size from one to six cubs. The young may stay with their mother for as long as 26 months, but usually separate after about 15 months."*

SDGFP's 2024 Black Hills Mountain Lion Count shows 30 female mountain lions killed. If we assumed that each female has an average of 3 mountain lions in her care, killing those 30 females resulted in 90 kittens that died of starvation.

Wildlife is a public resource meant for the enjoyment of all, not just a small group of trophy hunters.

Thank you for considering the opinions of all South Dakotans when deciding wildlife policy.

Sara Parker
Sioux Falls, SD



MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION

Saving America's Lion

The mission of the Mountain Lion Foundation is to ensure that America's lion survives and flourishes in the wild.

August 16, 2024

Stephanie Rissler, Chair
 South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
 523 East Capitol Ave
 Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Mountain Lion Action Plan and proposed population reductions

Dear Chair Rissler and members of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

We write to you on behalf of our South Dakota members to voice our concerns with the draft Mountain Lion Action Plan for 2024-2028. While there is much in this plan to praise, the proposal to reduce population targets is deeply concerning and risks reversing progress South Dakota has made in restoring this species. We urge you to reject the proposed reduction in target population and retain the current goal of 200-300 mountain lions and set a goal for further research on South Dakota's unique mountain lion population to set science-based targets for the Black Hills and other areas of the state with breeding populations.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) prepared this plan with input from a stakeholder group which was weighted heavily toward hunting groups and livestock owners. There was limited input from conservationists or from scientists outside the department. The Mountain Lion Foundation requested a chance to participate in that meeting, but the request was declined. That group ultimately did not recommend reducing the population target for mountain lions, nor increasing the harvest limits. There was no such recommendation from agency staff and scientists at the stakeholder group, no such request was raised by others at the stakeholder meeting, and no scientific grounds were presented to justify this change in population target at the commission meeting of September 5, 2024.

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The prior population target was based on the department's field research and accumulated wisdom and research from states with a longer history of managing mountain lions. Mountain lions self-regulate their densities, and do not generally require hunting by humans to manage their population size. Research in many western states, from Washington to Arizona, has confirmed that independent-aged mountain lions (18 months and older) generally operate at a density of roughly 2.2 mountain lions per 100 km². In the Black Hills, that would place a stable population at 200-300. Research has shown that it is difficult to maintain a population well below that density, and that doing so often results in severe disruption to the social structure of mountain lions. That disruption has several harmful consequences beyond the immediate harm to the big cats.

Healthy, stable mountain lion populations self-regulate in part because older, established males drive off younger males as they disperse in from more distant areas. Young females tend to find home ranges near their mothers'. High mortality rates, especially from trophy hunting by humans, tends to remove the oldest individuals, those who are most effective at driving out younger males. Young male mountain lions are statistically the most prone to conflict. Young mountain lions are also less experienced and may be less physically able to kill their preferred prey: deer and elk. Starving young mountain lions can thus be more likely to pursue other prey, including rabbits, raccoons, and other wildlife, but sometimes also domestic animals. In addition, because they are less effective at defending a territory, local densities can actually *increase* after older individuals are killed. High rates of hunting mortality thus open up territory that will be occupied by more young individuals which are more prone to conflict. This tendency increases as mortality levels rise, with numerous researchers across multiple states finding this same pattern: increased killing leads to more conflict.

That substantial research literature was developed in states and Canadian provinces where mountain lions were never extirpated. In those areas, individuals could disperse into heavily-hunted sink habitats from multiple areas. South Dakota is unusual in being one of the few states where mountain lions have returned since their extirpation a century ago. The brief window in which the state has had a breeding population has not allowed rigorous study that might be compared directly to the research conducted further west, and so the results of this uncontrolled experiment on the population is harder to predict than it might be elsewhere. Rushing into this decision without a scientific basis is risky and ill advised. It creates new and unpredictable risks for the state's livestock owners.

The proposal to reduce this population by up to half also threatens the growth and restoration of this beloved species within South Dakota and in other states. Dispersers from South Dakota often are found to be the pioneers heading east into Minnesota and states further east where the species has not yet returned to breeding. In addition, South Dakota's mountain lions operate in a metapopulation of relatively isolated patches of high quality habitat ranging from

Nebraska to North Dakota. Those states, like South Dakota, have relatively new breeding populations, and this dramatic increase in mortality could threaten the stability of the populations in those neighboring states as well.

In short, this proposal creates unnecessary risks and will provide no clear benefits. It is unlikely to significantly reduce conflict rates, and may increase them. It will undercut the progress South Dakota has made to restore ecological balance that apex carnivores provide to ecosystems. Mountain lions have been documented as having more ecological connections to other species than any other carnivore, standing as a key “ecological broker” in ecosystems where they live. Harming them harms the entire ecosystem. Rather than a rushed move, the Commission and staff should move deliberately to evaluate the ecological and social risks from this dramatic change in management that was not requested by the department’s stakeholder group.

We urge that you return to the draft plan’s recommendation to hold hunting rates steady. While the current rate at which mountain lions are killed by hunters is higher than we would recommend, and higher than is necessary for the ecology of mountain lions (which do not require hunting to maintain their population), the decision to hold hunting steady is a recognition that the current hunting regime is at the limit of what the comparatively new mountain lion population in South Dakota can sustain, and that in order for mountain lions to recover the population that was extirpated by excessive hunting in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it is necessary not to further increase hunting. Mountain lions have slowly spread east into the Dakotas and Nebraska in the last decades, and there is a strong desire to see mountain lions recover further east in those states, and indeed throughout the eastern United States. Current policy in South Dakota unfortunately does not protect mountain lions outside of the Black Hills, a policy which necessarily limits the natural spread of that population.

Discussing those areas outside the Black Hills, the Action Plan notes that there is no population objective for populations in the prairie, in part due to the lack of substantial population surveys of those areas. The Action Plan notes that “these areas are managed primarily to abate potential livestock losses on private property while at the same time to provide recreational hunting opportunity.” We would suggest that developing scientific surveys of the prairie populations would be a valuable contribution to the scientific literature, documenting the behavior and ecology of the species as it recolonizes former territory. It would also allow development of management objectives that reflect the ecological benefits mountain lions provide, and not merely address the risk of livestock conflict. We urge that such research be added as an objective in the action plan.

The Action Plan correctly observes “To help minimize [livestock] conflicts when possible, GFP must ensure that mountain lion populations are managed proactively and that management goals are being met.” Minimizing conflict is an important goal and one that SDGFP can play a

critical role with. Research throughout the range of mountain lions shows, consistently across states and multiple independent studies, that increased hunting does not reduce conflict. Indeed, multiple research groups independently find that hunting tends to *increase* conflict with livestock. There are several proposed reasons for this phenomenon, rooted in the biology of the species. While it is a somewhat counterintuitive finding, it is important to emphasize that the intuitive belief that killing mountain lions reduces conflict is not borne out by empirical study. We urge that management goals for mountain lions reflect the best available science and not rely on the hunting of mountain lions as a mechanism for addressing conflict. Instead, management should emphasize the use of nonlethal deterrents, especially livestock guardian dogs, adequate fencing, and well-designed enclosures for livestock, and a combination of public education and landowner outreach to ensure that livestock owners understand the tools available to help them and their livestock live safely and confidently alongside these native carnivores as the species recovers its population.

The Action Plan notes that SDGFP is pursuing exactly that course. It explains: “Furthermore, GFP is currently working on an informational brochure which demonstrates successful techniques used to protect chicken and other domestic animals from mountain lions.” The Mountain Lion Foundation has worked with state fish and wildlife agencies in several states to develop exactly such brochures, and it would be our pleasure to collaborate with SDGFP as well, or to share our experience in writing and distributing those educational materials. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance in those valuable efforts.

We also reiterate longstanding areas of concern with mountain lion management in South Dakota. The Action Plan Objective 2 sets out the goal to “manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality recreational hunting opportunities, considering all social and biological inputs.” Maximizing human killing of mountain lions is not ecologically necessary, and as discussed above, poses a real risk of increasing conflict and potentially harming ungulate populations. As apex carnivores, mountain lions do not require hunting to maintain stable populations in balance with their prey. Research throughout the West has shown that increased hunting does not benefit deer or elk populations. Because of their territorial behavior, killing established resident lions can cause local populations of mountain lions to actually *increase*, placing further pressure on prey populations temporarily. Those overhunted populations can also be more prone to conflict with livestock, as they tend to be dominated by younger, inexperienced male mountain lions. Numerous studies show that this is the most conflict-prone demographic. Reducing objectives for human killing of mountain lions would benefit this ecologically-sensitive species, and could bring benefits for hunters and livestock owners.

In this vein, we also have concerns about part b of Objective 2, which sets a goal to “maximize hunting opportunity for hunters with dogs” in the Custer State Park unit. Hound hunting poses risks to other wildlife, livestock, and pets. Hounds travel across park boundaries, and can

become distracted by pets or livestock on the property they are trespassing on and can attack or injure park visitors, pets, or livestock. In addition, hound teams that encounter a female who is caring for young are more likely to kill the cubs or to drive the mother far from her family, making it harder for hunters to avoid orphaning those cubs. When a pack of GPS-collared hounds are set to chase a mountain lion, the chances of a kill on that hunt is higher than for a boot hunt. This higher killing efficiency is particularly challenging for a small and recovering population like South Dakota's. Prioritizing boot hunting would do more to protect park visitors, neighbors, and wildlife in the park.

Instead of managing primarily with the goal of maximizing hunting today, we urge the Commission to set a goal of long-term recovery of mountain lions throughout South Dakota, and the health and stability of the metapopulation of mountain lions throughout the Plains states. South Dakota's population is essential to the future recovery of mountain lions in states further east, and its mountain lions disperse to and sustain the genetics of surrounding states including North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana, and is in turn sustained by immigration of mountain lions from those states. The killing of lions in South Dakota affects all those states. Managing with an eye toward overall stability would, as emphasized above, require further study of the prairie populations outside the Black Hills. It would also require coordination with Tribal governments to monitor the number of mountain lions killed by all hunters and all responses to conflict within South Dakota's borders. And it would require the state to consider dispersal corridors and highway crossings to ensure the ready movement of mountain lions between population in and around South Dakota. Restoring the statewide range of mountain lions, and allowing the species to recover in neighboring states as well, would have ecological and social benefits, discussed above. Reducing the state's mountain lion population would be a move in the wrong direction, harming all of those goals, risking increased conflicts with livestock, and harming the many South Dakotans who sincerely wish to see this beloved species fully recover in South Dakota and throughout its historic range. While we would hope the state would consider the wisdom of this choice, we note that this recovered population could also allow greater hunter opportunity throughout the state than would be possible with a population limited to the Black Hills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rosenau', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joshua Rosenau
Director of Policy and Advocacy
(916) 442-2666 ext. 107
jrosenau@mountainlion.org

South Dakota Division



The Izaak Walton League of America

Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters, and Wildlife

September 29, 2024

Re: Support Proposed Fee Increase

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America (Division) thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Game, Fish, and Parks' proposal to increase fees within the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Wildlife. The Division urges your full support of this proposal.

An evaluation was done of the expenses GFP incurs when conducting its business. This determined that this fee increase is needed and necessary. The last time the Division of Parks and Recreation increased fees was 2019. The Wildlife Division has not increased fees since 2014. The Division believes these modest increases are long overdue.

Revenue generated from the increased fees is expected to be between \$5-5.5 million annually. That additional revenue is needed for GFP to maintain the services, facilities, programs, operations, and staffing to meet the growing demand and the high expectations of the users of the state's park system and for the people that enjoy fishing and hunting across the state.

The cost of a license and the other associated fees are usually the smallest expenditure for most people when spending time in the outdoors. Approving this proposal will help GFP continue to work to achieve its two top priorities, improving habitat and increasing access across the state.

The South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America urges your support, and we thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul Lepisto
1115 South Cleveland Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
605-220-1219
pauldonna2@pie.midco.net



September 25, 2024

Stephanie Rissler, Commission Chair
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
501 Bulow Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Draft 2024-2028 Mountain Lion Action Plan (Updated: Population Objective Reductions)

Dear Chair Rissler, Director Kirschenmann and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our supporters in South Dakota, I thank you for this opportunity to submit comments on South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) Draft 2024-2028 Mountain Lion Action Plan. We strongly oppose the proposal to decrease the so-called mountain lion "population objective" from 200-300 to 150-250. Any population objective is completely arbitrary, and lowering the population objective to excuse unsustainable, unjustifiable, and counterproductive levels of trophy hunting is counter to science-based wildlife management and the ethics and values of South Dakotans. Further, it risks inbreeding depression and threatens the long-term viability of mountain lions in South Dakota. Gilbert et al. (2016) even found that mountain lions protect human life by reducing deadly vehicle-deer collisions, saving South Dakotans \$1.1 million annually.

We oppose the use of hounding to pursue mountain lions, and the year-round season outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD). These practices harm the small mountain lion population in South Dakota and potentially increase conflicts with livestock. We urge you to revise the Draft Action Plan to end, or at the very least significantly reduce, these practices so that hunting opportunity is not privileged to the detriment of conflict reduction and the ecological and social value of mountain lions.

The Humane Society of the United States is categorically opposed to the trophy hunting of mountain lions in South Dakota. This practice is not only cruel and unnecessary, but researchers have found that excessive hunting of mountain lions leads to increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock.¹ Furthermore, trophy hunting and predator control of mountain lions indirectly harms ungulates because predators target sick animals, including those with chronic wasting disease.² Finally, a national survey conducted by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management show that only 29% of Americans approve of trophy hunting.³

For these reasons, and those outlined in Appendix A of these comments, we request that SDGFP revise the Draft Mountain Lion Action Plan, end the use of hounds to pursue or hunt mountain lions, and protect mountain lions from trophy hunting now and in perpetuity.

If GFP is to continue allowing the trophy hunting of mountain lions, we request the agency limit the practice to sustainable levels (defined below) to protect South Dakota's iconic mountain lion population from excessive killing and to limit conflicts caused by indiscriminate hunting of these native cats. Specifically, we request the following changes:

1.) At the very least, do not lower the population objective, and ideally, lift the arbitrary population objective of 200-300 total mountain lions. The annual hunting limit should not exceed 14% of South Dakota's adult and subadult mountain lion population. GFP estimates that 176 adult and subadult lions live in South Dakota as of January 2024. GFP should count its lions using contemporary methods and not allow hunters to kill



more than South Dakota's mountain lion population growth rate. Non-spatial population models overestimate mountain lion populations by an average of 63%, and many jurisdictions count dependent kittens in their estimates.⁵

According to GFP's current, and likely unreliable, estimate of adult and subadult mountain lions, hunter kill exceeded 25% of the adult and subadult population in the 2023-2024 season. Beausoliel et al. (2013) suggest that in the absence of population data, agencies should not set quotas that exceed 14% of the mountain lion population to avoid destabilizing social structures and increasing conflicts.⁶ Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) recently adopted a cap of 14% on mountain lion hunting quotas as part of their new West Slope Mountain Lion Management Plan.⁷ Additionally, CPW has adopted a cap of 16% on total human-caused mortality to account for other sources of lion deaths. Washington state has also recently adopted a conservative more conservative mountain lion quota in order to maintain stable mountain lion social structures to minimize conflicts.⁸ Since South Dakota's mountain lion population is especially isolated from dispersal to and from other populations, an even more conservative hunter offtake should be implemented.

GFP's Draft Action Plan continues to authorize trophy hunting of mountain lions that exceed sustainable levels, threatening the stability of South Dakota's mountain lion population To quote directly from materials provided by GFP itself to the Commission at its July 2023 meeting:

If the four-year average of 26 females is harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to just over 200 by December of 2024.... Alternatively, if the harvest limit is achieved and 40 females are harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to under 200 mountain lions, and below the population objective of 200 to 300.¹⁰

The Commission's reaction to this information should be to seriously reconsider the truly excessive level of recreational hounding and trophy hunting of mountain lions. Any population objective, especially one that was already low, is entirely arbitrary and does not allow for a species to fulfill their essential ecological niche. Just lowering a population objective when a population is disastrously declining is simply backward. Not only would this move destabilize social structures, increase conflicts, and put unnecessary stress on an already small population, it also flies in the face of so-called "sustainable yield" hunting principles to ensure wildlife remains for future generations. Even if hunting opportunity is the only priority of the Commission, lowering the population objective without scrutinizing human-caused mortality is harmful in the short and long term.

Any species needs robust numbers to maintain genetic fitness. Small populations experience inbreeding depression, bottlenecking, and genetic drift, increasing the incidence of detrimental traits, potentially reducing reproductive success, and increasing susceptibility to disease.¹¹ Other large carnivore populations that are larger and more connected experience this risk. *Effective population size*—that is the number of individuals who are participating in the genetic health of the population—is just a fraction of the number of individuals counted (or population census).¹² The effective population size could be just 10% of the census population, or lower.¹³ For example, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears was found to be at risk of genetic drift due to their isolation from other populations and low effective population size, with their population numbering approximately 1,000.¹⁴ South Dakota's mountain lion population is already isolated and precariously low. The state's efforts must urgently go toward stewarding South Dakota's few remaining mountain lions to ensure their short- and long-term survival and fitness.



We therefore call on the agency to count South Dakota's mountain lions using contemporary spatial-model methods, implement at most a 14% cap on hunting mortality and a 16% cap on total human-caused mortality based on adult/subadult population estimates while doing away with the agency's arbitrary population objective, and instead direct resources toward conserving the remaining population and educating and assisting residents in nonlethal strategies. Please see Section 4 of Appendix A for a detailed discussion of how excess hunting destabilizes mountain lion social structures, exacerbating conflicts, as well as effective nonlethal strategies to prevent conflict.

3.) Prohibit the hunting of mountain lions with hounds throughout South Dakota and reject any proposed rule that would expand hound hunting.

As detailed in Appendix A, using radio-collared hounds to chase mountain lions and bay them into trees or rock ledges so a trophy hunter can shoot at close range is unsporting, unethical and inhumane.¹⁶ Hounds kill kittens, and mountain lions often injure or kill hounds.¹⁷ The practice is exceedingly stressful and energetically taxing to mountain lions.¹⁸ Furthermore, hound hunting is not considered "fair chase" hunting by most.¹⁹ Hounds also chase and stress non-target wildlife, from porcupines to deer,²⁰ trespass onto private lands,²¹ and have adverse interactions with the public.²² If GFP is to continue allowing the hunting of mountain lions, the agency must prohibit the use of hounds and reject hound hunting in the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

In conclusion, the Humane Society of the United States strongly urges GFP to revise its Draft Mountain Lion Action Plan as it seeks only to maximize trophy hunting opportunities, not conserve mountain lions. South Dakota's mountain lions are a vital component of our natural wild heritage and deserve reasoned management for long-term conservation.²³ If GFP is to continue allowing hunting of mountain lions, the agency must limit the practice to no more than 14% of the adult/subadult population so that it does not exceed sustainable levels. Additionally, total human-caused mortality must be limited to no more than 16% of the mountain lion population. Lastly, hound hunting of mountain lions must be prohibited throughout South Dakota. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Story Warren
Program Manager, Wildlife Protection
The Humane Society of the United States
swarren@humanesociety.org



Appendix A

1. Mountain lion trophy hunting is unsustainable, cruel and harmful to family groups

Trophy hunting is the greatest source of mortality for mountain lions throughout their range in the United States.²⁴ The practice is harmful to more than just the wild cats who are killed. Conservation biologists have condemned this practice as unnecessary and wasteful. Batavia et al. (2018) write that compelling evidence shows that the animals hunted as trophies have sophisticated levels of “intelligence, emotion and sociality,” which is “profoundly disrupted” by trophy hunting.²⁵ For these reasons, GFP must not allow trophy hunting of mountain lions in South Dakota.

- A. *Trophy hunting is unsustainable and cruel:* Large-bodied carnivores are sparsely populated across vast areas, invest in few offspring, provide extended parental care to their young, have a tendency towards infanticide, females limit reproduction and social stability promotes their resiliency.²⁶ Human persecution affects their social structure,²⁷ and harms their persistence.²⁸

Conservation biologists have shown that trophy hunting results in *additive mortality*, meaning that trophy hunting and even other human-caused mortality increases the total mortality to levels that far exceed what would occur in nature.²⁹ In fact, the effect of human persecution is “super additive,” meaning that hunter kill rates on large carnivores has a multiplier effect on the ultimate increase in total mortality over what would occur in nature due to breeder loss, social disruption and its indirect effects including increased infanticide and decreased recruitment of their young.³⁰ When trophy hunters remove the stable adult mountain lions from a population, it encourages subadult males to immigrate, leading to greater aggression between cats and mortalities to adult females and subsequent infanticide.³¹

Biologists Wolfe et al. (2015) recommend that states manage mountain lions at a metapopulation level rather than at the single population level—which is critical for South Dakota’s tiny mountain lion population that is reliant on dispersers from Wyoming. They further add, “We recommend a conservative management approach be adopted to preclude potential over-harvest in future years.”³² Instead, South Dakota’s mountain lions experience *additive* levels of mortality.³³ Extensive research shows that this additive mortality caused by high levels of hunting results in population sinks.³⁴ High hunting mortality does not result in decreased numbers and densities of mountain lions because of compensatory emigration and immigration responses, typically by dispersing subadult males.³⁵

- B. *Trophy hunting is particularly harmful to kittens and their mothers:* In heavily hunted populations, female mountain lions experience higher levels of intraspecific aggression (fights with other cats) resulting in predation on themselves and their kittens.³⁶ Over-hunting harms a population’s ability to recruit new members if too many adult females are removed.³⁷ A Utah study shows that trophy hunting adult females orphans their kittens, leaving them to die of dehydration, malnutrition, and/or exposure.³⁸ Kittens are reliant upon their mothers beyond 12 months of age.³⁹
- C. *Trophy hunting harms entire mountain lion communities:* A recent study on mountain lions shows that mountain lions are quite social and live in “communities,” with females sharing kills with other females, their kittens and even with the territorial males. In return for these meals, the adult males protect the females and their kittens from incoming males.⁴⁰ Disrupting these communities leads to deadly



intraspecific strife, including infanticide and social chaos within the family groups.⁴¹ Trophy hunting destabilizes mountain lion populations, which may cause increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock.⁴²

- D. *Trophy hunting is unnecessary, as mountain lions are a self-regulating species:* Mountain lions occur at low densities relative to their primary prey, making them sensitive to bottom-up (prey declines) and top-down (human persecution) influences.⁴³ Their populations necessarily stay at a much smaller size relative to their prey's biomass or risk starvation.⁴⁴ They do this by regulating their own numbers.⁴⁵ When prey populations decline, so do mountain lion populations.⁴⁶ Mountain lion populations also require expansive habitat, with individual cats maintaining large home ranges that overlap with one another.⁴⁷
- E. *Killing large numbers of mountain lions halts their ability to create trophic cascades in their ecosystems, which benefits a wide range of flora, fauna and people:* Mountain lions serve important ecological roles, including providing a variety of ecosystem services.⁴⁸ As such, conserving these large cats on the landscape creates a socio-ecological benefit that far offsets any societal costs.⁴⁹ Their protection and conservation has ripple effects throughout their natural communities. Researchers have found that by modulating deer populations, mountain lions prevented overgrazing near fragile riparian systems, resulting in greater biodiversity.⁵⁰ Additionally, carrion left from mountain lion kills feeds scavengers, beetles, foxes, bears and other wildlife species, further enhancing biodiversity.⁵¹
- F. *Hound hunting is harmful to mountain lions, hounds and non-target wildlife:* Using radio-collared trailing hounds to chase mountain lions and bay them into trees or rock ledges so a trophy hunter can shoot them at close range is unsporting, unethical and inhumane.⁵² Hounds kill kittens, and mountain lions often injure or kill hounds.⁵³ The practice is exceedingly stressful and energetically taxing to mountain lions.⁵⁴

To escape from the hounds, mountain lions use evasive maneuvers such as running in figure eights, scrambling up trees or steep hillsides and using quick turns to evade the pursuing pack of barking hounds. As a result, mountain lions could exceed their aerobic budgets causing their muscles to go anaerobic—while hounds are capable of running a steady pace with little ill effect.⁵⁵ For every one minute the hounds chased a mountain lion, it cost the cat approximately five times what would have been expended if the cat had been hunting. A 3.5-minute chase, according to Bryce et al. (2017), likely equaled 18 minutes of energy the mountain lion would have expended on hunting activities necessary to find prey.⁵⁶

Hounding is not considered “fair chase” hunting by most.⁵⁷ Fair chase hunting is predicated upon giving the animal an equal opportunity to escape from the hunter.⁵⁸ The use of hounds provides an unfair advantage to trophy hunters who rely on hounds to do the bulk of the work in finding and baying a mountain lion. GFP Wildlife Program Administrator Andrew Norton stated to the Commission in 2023, “As you can imagine, success is much higher with hounds. We see on average about twenty times as high success when hounds are used compared to boot hunting in South Dakota.”⁵⁹ In Custer State Park, hunters relying on hounds experience an astounding 63% success rate in killing mountain lions, compared to a success rate of 3.5% for boot hunters.⁶⁰ Hounds also chase and stress non-target wildlife, from porcupines to deer,⁶¹ cause adverse interactions with bystanders, and trespass onto private lands.⁶²



Grignolio et al. (2011) found that hounding was highly costly to non-target deer. Hounding changed deer behaviors, including deer inside a protected refuge.⁶³ While the hounds were chasing other species, they caused non-target deer, especially younger animals, to panic and huddle in an inferior habitat (in this case: a protected, high-elevation, snow-covered reserve during the wintertime hunting season when foraging was difficult). Hounds also significantly increased deer home range sizes—meaning deer had to expend extra energy to distance themselves from the hounds. Furthermore, Grignolio et al. (2011), citing several others, indicated that hounding highly disturbs deer, likely reducing individual fitness and reproductive success while harming deer populations on the whole. If GFP’s conservation goals include conserving deer populations, then unleashing packs of loose dogs in their habitat to spook, harass, and chase wildlife during a sensitive time of the year is quite counter to that goal.

2. Hunting mountain lions does not boost prey populations

Research shows that ungulates are ultimately limited more by their food resources and other habitat factors (“bottom-up” limitations) than by their predators (“top down” regulators).⁶⁴ However, when herds lose their predators, they suffer poorer health and body condition, as well as more degraded habitats.⁶⁵ With a healthy assemblage of native carnivores, ecosystems enjoy the benefits from top-down regulation, which increases the health of ungulate herds with which they are integrally coevolved.⁶⁶

The best available science demonstrates that killing native carnivores to increase ungulate populations is unlikely to produce positive results. Numerous recent studies demonstrate that predator removal actions “generally had no effect” in the long term on ungulate populations.⁶⁷ Because ecological systems are complex, heavily persecuting mountain lions will fail to address the underlying malnutrition problems that deer face. Research also shows that disruption by oil and gas drilling does, in fact, greatly harm mule deer populations.⁶⁸ If South Dakota wants to grow its ungulate populations, then GFP must foster survival of adult female mule deer and elk to stem declines; and it must improve nutritional conditions for ungulates as these factors are the most important for mule deer survival.⁶⁹ It must also eliminate hound hunting of mountain lions as it is an unnatural stressor on deer.⁷⁰

Persecuting mountain lions will not help bighorn sheep recruitment, either. It is clear from the literature that bighorn sheep populations are in decline in the U.S. because of unregulated market hunting, trophy hunting, disease from domestic sheep,⁷¹ resource competition by livestock, and loss of habitat.⁷² Sawyer and Lindzey (2002) surveyed more than 60 peer-reviewed articles concerning predator-prey relationships involving bighorn sheep and mountain lions, concluding that while predator control is often politically expedient, it often does not address underlying environmental issues including habitat loss, loss of migration corridors, and inadequate nutrition.⁷³ The best available science suggests that persecuting mountain lion populations is not a solution for enhancing bighorn sheep numbers. That is because mountain lion predation upon bighorn sheep is a learned behavior conducted by a few individuals who may not repeat their behavior.⁷⁴ Similar behavior has been documented on endangered mountain caribou in the southern Selkirk Mountains, where trophy hunting disrupted sensitive mountain lion communities, female lions took to higher altitudes to avoid incoming, infanticidal young males, and preyed upon mountain caribou there.⁷⁵

South Dakota can better plan for bighorn sheep management by selecting relocation sites for bighorn sheep that have little stalking cover.⁷⁶ Escape terrain that contains cliffs, rocks, and foliage makes excellent ambush cover for a mountain lion and should be avoided.⁷⁷ The amount of mountain lion predation is also generally greater on



small-sized bighorn sheep populations (those with fewer than 100 individuals) than on other larger bighorn sheep populations.⁷⁸ A host of authors reviewed by McKinney et al. (2006) and Ruth and Murphy (2010) recommend only limited mountain lion removals to benefit bighorn sheep populations.⁷⁹

3. Mountain lions provide significant ecosystem benefits to their prey and other wildlife, as well as economic benefits to South Dakotans

Mountain lions help prevent deadly deer-vehicle strikes⁸⁰ that can result in numerous human mortalities and pose significant financial and ecological costs to society.⁸¹ In fact, by reducing vehicle collisions with deer, mountain lions saved drivers \$1.1 million in collision costs annually in South Dakota.⁸² Additionally, highways fragment wildlife habitats, which can lead to both genetic inbreeding problems and direct mortality from vehicle collisions.⁸³ The cost of vehicle-animal collisions can be mitigated with the construction of highway structures that are designed to draw specific species such as deer across them, not only preventing vehicle strikes but protecting species and people while saving millions of dollars annually.⁸⁴

Moreover, mountain lions help maintain the health and viability of ungulate populations by preying on sick individuals, reducing the spread of disease such as chronic wasting disease (CWD) and brucellosis.⁸⁵ For example, during a study in Rocky Mountain National Park, researchers found mountain lions preyed on deer infected with CWD.⁸⁶ The study concluded that adult deer preyed upon by mountain lions were more likely to have CWD than deer shot by hunters. According to the study, “The subtle behaviour changes in prion-infected deer may be better signals of vulnerability than body condition, and these cues may occur well before body condition noticeably declines.”⁸⁷ This demonstrates that mountain lions select for infected prey and may be more effective at culling animals with CWD, including during the early stages of the disease when they are less infectious, than hunters who rely on more obvious signs of emaciation that occur in later stages of the disease, when they are more infectious. Moreover, the mountain lions consumed more than 85% of carcasses, thereby removing a significant amount of the disease from the environment.⁸⁸

This ecosystem benefit is increasingly important as CWD infection continues to grow in prevalence and distribution in South Dakota⁸⁹ and neighboring states. Hammering our state’s mountain lion population through extremely high and irresponsible levels of trophy hunting relative to the estimated population, and the setting of an arbitrarily low population objective for mountain lions, undermine one of our best defenses against the spread of this deadly disease.

4. Trophy hunting increases human-mountain lion conflict and livestock losses

Trophy hunting and predator control of mountain lions results in increased conflicts because lions’ social structure are destabilized.⁹⁰ A review of predator-removal studies found that the practice is “typically an ineffective and costly approach to conflicts between humans and predators” and, as a long-term strategy, will result in failure.⁹¹ Instead, the authors concluded, non-lethal alternatives to predator removal, coupled with coexistence (husbandry techniques) may resolve conflicts.⁹²

A Washington state study shows that as mountain lion complaints increased, wildlife officials lengthened seasons and increased quotas to respond to what they believed was a growing lion population. However, the public’s perception of an increasing population and greater number of livestock depredations was actually the result of a declining female and increasing male population.⁹³ Heavy hunting of mountain lions skewed the ratio



of young males in the population by causing compensatory immigration and emigration, even though it resulted in no net change in the population.⁹⁴

Study authors found that the trophy hunting of mountain lions to reduce complaints and livestock losses had the opposite effect. Killing mountain lions disrupts their social structure and increases both complaints and livestock losses.⁹⁵ Peebles et al. (2013) write:

. . . each additional cougar [i.e. mountain lion] on the landscape increased the odds of a complaint of livestock depredation by about 5%. However, contrary to expectations, each additional cougar killed on the landscape increased the odds by about 50%, or an order of magnitude higher. By far, hunting of cougars had the greatest effects, but not as expected. Very heavy hunting (100% removal of resident adults in 1 year) increased the odds of complaints and depredations in year 2 by 150% to 340%.⁹⁶

Similarly, a study published recently shows the very same result – lethal removal of mountain lions is associated with increased conflicts, especially on small hoofstock including sheep and goats.⁹⁷ Dellinger et al. (2021) state:

Removals can thus create a negative-feedback loop that leads to increasing conflict and lethal removal, which could begin to negatively impact the mountain lion population via reduced gene flow and population viability (Hiller et al. 2015, Vickers et al. 2015, Benson et al. 2019). Thus, maintaining an older age structure by reducing lethal removal of resident adults could mitigate depredations (Logan 2019).⁹⁸

Hunting disrupts mountain lions' sex-age structure and tilts a population to one that is composed of younger males, who are more likely to engage in livestock predation than animals in stable, older populations.⁹⁹ In 2019, the Humane Society of the United States published a report on livestock losses from mountain lions using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's data.¹⁰⁰ For South Dakota's cattle and sheep ranchers, 2015 data show that most livestock losses came from illnesses, birthing problems, weather and theft, with far fewer losses coming from native carnivores and domestic dogs combined.¹⁰¹ In 2015, nearly 96% of unwanted cattle losses in South Dakota were from maladies with only 0.17% coming from mountain lions, according to the USDA.¹⁰² And USDA data show that in 2014, zero sheep were lost to mountain lions in South Dakota.¹⁰³

Rather than allowing mountain lion trophy hunting, GFP must make a concerted effort to utilize non-lethal methods (described below) when rare conflicts occur, prioritizing these tools above lethal removal of mountain lions. The current reliance on lethal removal of mountain lions that enter a human community is cruel, unsustainable, and not in line with best management practices for mountain lion conservation.¹⁰⁴ A recent Utah study found that mountain lions selected for native prey even within urban-wildland interface habitat, with only 2% of 540 prey animals consisting of domestic animals.¹⁰⁵ Techniques such as hazing and relocation are viable options that prevent unnecessary killing and are largely supported by the majority of South Dakotans, as detailed within the Plan.¹⁰⁶ According to surveys of South Dakota residents in 2018, public education, relocation and hazing are by far the most widely supported methods for addressing human, pet and livestock conflicts with mountain lions.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, GFP must work with livestock owners to ensure they are adequately and appropriately employing nonlethal predator deterrence techniques. Installing predator-proof enclosures, using livestock guardian animals, or utilizing frightening devices are all effective strategies to prevent conflicts with mountain lions and



other carnivores. Other livestock husbandry practices are also essential at reducing conflicts with carnivores. Livestock operators should:

- Practice sanitary livestock carcass removal to avoid scavenging and habituation.
- Keep livestock, especially in maternity pastures, away from areas where wild cats have access to ambush cover.¹⁰⁸
- Keep livestock, especially the most vulnerable—young animals, mothers during birthing seasons and hobby-farm animals—behind barriers such as electric fencing and/or in barns or pens, or kennels with a top.¹⁰⁹ The type of enclosure needs to be specific to the native carnivore to prevent climbing, digging or jumping.¹¹⁰
- Move calves from pastures with chronic predation problems and replace them with older, less vulnerable animals.¹¹¹
- Concentrate calving season (i.e., via artificial insemination) to synchronize births with wild ungulate birth periods.¹¹²
- In large landscapes, use human herders, range riders and/or guard animals.¹¹³ Guard dogs work better when sheep and lambs are contained in a fenced enclosure rather than on open range lands where they can wander unrestrained.¹¹⁴
- Suspended human clothing, LED flashing lights (sold as “Foxlights”) and radio alarm boxes set off to make alarm sounds/noises near pastures are some of the low-cost sound and/or visual equipment that deters wild cats.¹¹⁵
- Studded leather collars can be very effective at protecting cattle from big cats.¹¹⁶

According to USDA data from 2015, only an estimated 11.2% of cattle and calf operations in South Dakota used any nonlethal predator control methods.¹¹⁷ Expanding the use of suitable techniques that are landscape and animal specific is essential to reducing conflicts and preventing the death of livestock as well as wild carnivores. We urge GFP to focus resources on further educating the public on how to share the landscape with carnivores, rather than only attempting to maximize trophy hunting opportunity.

5. Trophy hunting of mountain lions is not economically sound or supported by the majority of Americans who want to see wildlife protected

Trophy hunting of mountain lions is not in the best interest of this iconic species, nor does it represent the interests of the public majority. The practice deprives citizens of their ability to see, view tracks of, or photograph wild mountain lions, and deprives them of the important ecosystem services mountain lions provide in our landscapes. Nonconsumptive users are a rapidly growing stakeholder group that provides immense economic contributions to the communities in which they visit.¹¹⁸ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2016 survey on wildlife recreation indicates that wildlife watchers nationwide have increased 20 percent from 2011, numbering 86 million and spending \$75.9 billion, while all hunters declined by 16 percent, with the biggest decline in big game hunter numbers, from 11.6 million in 2011 to 9.2 million in 2016.¹¹⁹ Altogether, hunters spent \$25.6 billion in 2016, about one-third that spent by wildlife watchers (Fig. 2).¹²⁰



Figure 2: Wildlife recreation participation & expenditures, 2011 vs. 2016 data			
Numbers	2011	2016	Change
Wildlife watchers	71.8M	86.0M	+14.2M (+20%)
All hunters	13.7M	11.5M	-2.2M (-16%)
Big game	11.6M	9.2M	-2.4M (-20%)
Small game	4.5M	3.5M	-1M (-22%)
Migratory birds	2.6M	2.4M	-0.2M (-8%)
Other animals	2.2M	1.3M	-0.9M (-41%)
Expenditures	2011	2016	Change
Wildlife watchers	\$59.1B	\$75.9B	+\$16.8B (+28%)
All hunters	\$36.3B	\$25.6B	-\$10.7B (-29%)

The public values mountain lions and views them as an indicator of healthy environments while posing little risk to people living near them.¹²¹ A new study indicates that Americans highly value wildlife, including top carnivores such as mountain lions, and are concerned about their welfare and conservation.¹²² The landmark America’s Wildlife Values report found that the percentage of South Dakotans who fall into the traditionalist values system – those who view wildlife as a resource to be used for human benefit – decreased by four percent between 2004 and 2018, while the percent of mutualists – those who value living alongside wildlife - rose significantly, with an increase of 7.5% in the same time period.¹²³ South Dakotans increasingly value their wildlife alive and thriving. Surveys also show that the majority of Americans do not support trophy hunting.¹²⁴ An additional study showed that most believe mountain lions are the best representative of the Southern Rockies heritage and landscape.¹²⁵ A continued trophy hunting and hounding season is not in the best interest of South Dakotans who prefer that these large cats remain on the landscape, without threat of persecution.

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Nancy Hilding
President
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P.O. Box 788
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605-787-6466
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SD Game, Fish and Parks
523 E. Capitol Ave.,
Pierre, S.D. 57501,
<https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/>

Dear SD GFP Commission,

Prairie Hills Audubon Society objects to the reduction in the population objectives for cougars. We think you should be cooperating with tribes to inventory the cougar populations on their lands and cooperating with them on goals for cougar management in overlapping zones of tribal cougar populations that can have cougars with territories in both GFP and tribal jurisdictions. We object to maximizing hunting being a core objective and to minimizing complexity of hunting seasons. We think the license fees should be much higher than \$24.

1. We object to reducing the population objective from 300-200 cougars to 250-150

cougars. This will result in a population decline. It will be over hunting of cougars. Excessive cougar hunting increases conflicts with humans/livestock. It will increase orphaning of and infanticide of kittens. It will reduce the number of cougars sent out as migrants to re-populate other areas to the east of us. It will be less cougars for wildlife watchers to watch. It will reduce the role of an apex predator and keystone species. It will result in less killing of sick prey animals by cougars.

2. We support managing for a stable or source population of cougars in the Black Hills. If we have a sink population then we draw in cougars from other states. With a source population, then our cougars can emigrate & help recover extirpated cougar populations, where suitable habitat exists across the USA. (A cougar from the Black Hills was killed in Connecticut)

3. We support managing for some viable populations of mountain lions on the prairie unit (outside the BH Fire Protection District) where the habitat is suitable and we support maintaining connectivity corridors to such populations from the Black Hills. We support iGFP helping to inventory these populations – if tribes wish for help. There are breeding populations on at least 2 Reservations (Oglala Sioux Tribe & Rosebud Sioux Tribe) and there could be resident lions at more reservations. Habitat could exist along some rivers and at Custer Gallatin National Forest's units in SD.

GFP needs to learn about and to treat Reservation wildlife objectives with respect. Small cougar populations need resupply from other populations to keep genetic diversity. Checker board ownership and mixed jurisdictions on or near reservations happened due to historic Allotment Acts and reduction in reservation sizes by courts. Male lion territories can be 400 square miles. SDGFP lion policy can impact Reservation policies.

4. We oppose unlimited harvest, year-long on the prairie unit, using hounds.

5. We oppose hound hunting of mountain lion, especially on public land. (Talking points against hound hunting – <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Hound-hunting-objections.pdf>)

6. We object to your goal to “manage mountain lion populations for both maximum and quality hunting opportunities considering all social and biological inputs” . (*Emphasis added*)

This makes biological and ecological functions secondary to providing humans with hunting recreation. Lions are an apex predator and a keystone species. Hunting means killing animals, who may suffer before death, bleeding out from bullet or arrow - this is to be our primary goal for cougar management?

This ignores that hunting is much less popular than wildlife watching and a dead lion can't be watched. For more information on relative popularity of hunting vs wildlife watching visit: <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/WildlifeWatcher.v.hunters9.2024.pdf> – Or compare expenditures for hunting v. wildlife watching: <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/COMPARING-EXPENDITURES-WW-Hunt.pdf>

Mountain lions give birth year-around and thus cougar hunting will always be orphaning kittens. Kittens live with mom for about 18 months. Implicit in cougar hunting is orphaning kittens to starve to death, be killed by predators, male lions or survive for a while with inadequate training after loss of their mom & perhaps have more conflicts with people. Link to learn more about orphaning kittens – see when they are born – <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/WHEN-DO-MOUNTAIN-LIONS-GIVE-BIRTH2.docx>

Over hunting of cougars results in increased conflicts with humans/livestock. The male population increases relative to females. Young males migrate in and replace older more experienced lions that were killed. The young males are more likely to prey on livestock than older experienced lions and to move around more – for more info watch this You/tube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ZD-PAKhSo

Mountain lions remove sick prey animals.

7. We object to a goal of “Modify and adopt hunting season structure as needed to minimize regulation complexity“ (*Emphasis added*) Staff will use that argument to refute any proposed changes to hunting rules for that we ask for, for animal welfare reasons – alleging that the changes will make regulations more complex. Here are some petitions for rule-making that PHAS submitted to mitigate hound hunting that were denied <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Denied-petitions-to-mitigate-hound-hunting-of-lions.pdf>

Any rules approved by SDGFP are designated as not animal cruelty by state statute – SDCL 40-1-17, <https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/40-1-17>

8. We object to hunting mountain lions to maximize the numbers of prey population (such as deer and elk) so that more prey animals will be available for hunters to kill.

9. Cougars remove sick animals from ecosystem. Studies show that cougars don't catch chronic wasting disease (CWD) when they eat an infected ungulate:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34753180/>. Captive cougars have been fed meat infected with CWD and they don't pass on most of the prions in their ██████. Only 2.8 to 3.9% of input CWD prions remain after passage through the mountain lions' gastrointestinal tracts:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34878289/>

Here is a 2024 summary of literature: <https://catsarenttrophies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Natures-Check-Against-Disease-Report-08-21-24.pdf>

10. **We question allegations that there are increased sightings of cougars or increased intrusion of cougars to human spaces.** This is just allegations by some individuals. In it's July 2024 data presentations on cougars, SDGFP did not update most of 2023 data charts it had provided with data on cougars. However, the data that was displayed to the public in the fall of 2023 did not show people reporting increased sightings of cougars to GFP nor did it show an increased killing of "conflict cougars". Thus no statistical evidence has been offered by GFP or others to prove increased interactions by cougars with humans/livestock in 2024.

11. We ask for **increased fees** for mountain lion hunting licenses, especially if hounds are used. The current cost is \$22. We suggest \$43 dollars for "boot hunting" license & \$63 dollars for hound hunting license. Hound hunters are more likely to be successful than boot hunters. Folks could ask for more expensive licenses. We actually asked for more cost in a petition for rule-making, that the Commission rejected: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/lion_fees_rule_change_petition_Final.pdf.

Sincerely,



Nancy Hilding



DAKOTA TROUT UNLIMITED
PO Box 270
Harrisburg, SD 57032

Email: dakotatu@sio.midco.net
Web: www.dakotatu.org

Date: October 1, 2024
To: SD Game, Fish & Parks Commission
Re: Fee Adjustments

Dakota Trout Unlimited understands that license and user fees are used to support recreational and wildlife conservation activities in South Dakota. Because there has not been an increase in license and user fees since 2014, it would seem that revenue from license sales and user fees has not kept pace with increasing costs.

Dakota Trout Unlimited supports the fee adjustments proposed by South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks. We feel that the increased revenue generated by these fee adjustments will provide needed funds to allow Game, Fish, and Parks to better serve the state of South Dakota in a way that aligns with the mission of Dakota Trout Unlimited to preserve South Dakota's cold-water fisheries.

Respectfully,

Board of Directors
Dakota Trout Unlimited



10/01/2024

To: SD GFP Commissions

From: SD Walleyes Unlimited – PO Box 9244 – Rapid City, SD 57709

RE: Department Fee Adjustments

Dear Commissioners,

First, we want to thank you for all the hard work you do for our state in helping us have one of the best states in the country for hunting and fishing opportunities. We have worked closely with the SD GFP on a few projects in the past and we appreciate the collaboration in helping where we can. We, SD Walleyes Unlimited - as a non-profit fishing organization, have discussed these proposed fee adjustments and we are in support of the proposal.

We thank SD GFP for all they do for our fisheries for our generation and the next generation of anglers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rocky Niewenhuis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "R" and "N".

Rocky Niewenhuis

SDWU – State Director

[EXT] Black Hills Sportsman Club Full Support of GFP Fee Increases

From Cody Hodson <codyh@soundprorc.com>

Date Wed 10/2/2024 11:33 AM

To Rissler, Stephanie <Stephanie.Rissler@state.sd.us>; Bies, Travis <Travis.Bies@state.sd.us>; Locken, Jon <Jon.Locken@state.sd.us>; Whitmyre, Robert <Robert.Whitmyre@state.sd.us>; Theel, Travis <Travis.Theel@state.sd.us>; Bartling, Julie A (GFP) <JulieA.Bartling@state.sd.us>; White, Jim <Jim.White@state.sd.us>; Cull, Bruce <Bruce.Cull@state.sd.us>; Robling, Kevin (GFP) <Kevin.Robling@state.sd.us>; Kierl, Liz <Liz.Kierl@state.sd.us>

Cc Kirschenmann, Tom <Tom.Kirschenmann@state.sd.us>

Good Morning Commissioners,

The Black Hills Sportsman Club would like to offer our full approval and support for the GFP fee increase package. The Board and Membership was 100% in favor of increasing the fees due to general inflation. The BHSC fully understands the current economic situation and puts its trust in the GFP when it comes to distributing the fee increases to the appropriate departments.

Please vote to approve this fee increase package.

Thanks!

President of the Black Hills Sportsman Club
Cody Hodson

DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The October 2024 South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Regular Commission Meeting will be held October 3-4, 2024, at the Huron Events Center located at 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD 57350. This meeting will be held in person, Zoom Webinar, and Livestream.

Listen to the meeting beginning October 3, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. CST via Livestream at <https://www.sd.net/remote1/> or join via Zoom Webinar by clicking on the link below. Depending on your application, you may be required to enter the Zoom Webinar ID and password. Meeting attendees will not be able to have video and will be muted upon entry.

Meeting Dates and Times:

- **Thursday, October 3, 2024, starting at 1:00 p.m. CST**
- **Friday, October 4, 2024, starting at 8:00 a.m. CST**

Zoom Webinar Link: <https://state-sd.zoom.us/j/91264176710?pwd=Vm00NEowdGV6N09lb1hnVUkMUF3Zz09>

Or join via phone:

- **Dial:** 1-669-900-9128
- **Webinar ID:** 912 6417 6710
- **Passcode:** 970458

Public Input: To provide comments, join the meeting in person, via Zoom, or via conference call using the information above. To ensure an efficient public hearing and/or open forum, those wishing to testify should register by 1:00 p.m. CST on the day of the meeting by emailing Liz Kierl at liz.kierl@state.sd.us. Testifiers should provide their full names, whom they represent, their city of residence, and the topic they will address.

Online and Phone Testimony: Testifiers wishing to speak online during the commission meeting will be asked to ‘raise their hands’ during the public hearing and open forum if they’d like to testify. The meeting hosts will call your name and give you permission to unmute when it is your turn to speak. Those joining online will not be able to share video and will be granted audio only. Those joining via phone can raise and lower their hands by pressing *9 and unmute or mute by pressing *6.

Written Comments: Written comments can be submitted at <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/>. To be included in the public record, comments must include the complete name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of seventy-two hours before the meeting (not including the day of the meeting).

Dated this 26th day of September 2024.

Stephanie Rissler

Stephanie Rissler, GFP Commission Chair