



Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

October 3-4, 2024 | Huron Event Center | Huron, SD

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Huron Events Center in Huron, SD on October 3, 2024. On October 3, 2024, Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, and Bruce Cull, Julie Bartling were present, with Travis Theel joining virtually. Commissioners Theel and Whitmyre were not present on October 4. 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 98 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 September 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 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. Staff Introductions [Info Item]

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

Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:01 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as a finalization.

Agenda Item #7: Department Fee Adjustment

2:02 pm: Paul Lepisto of Pierre, SD representing the Izaak Walton League of America testified virtually as a proponent of the department fee adjustment.

2:04 pm: Kasi Haberman of Yankton, SD representing Southeast South Dakota Tourism testified virtually in opposition of the department fee adjustment.

2:07 pm: Josh Rosenau of Lake Forest Park, WA representing the Mountain Lion Foundation testified virtually in opposition to the department fee adjustment.

2:10 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually as a proponent of the department fee adjustment.

2:15 pm: Ron Kolbeck of Salem, SD representing the South Dakota Bowhunters Association testified as a proponent to the department fee adjustment.

2:18 pm: Emelie Havard of Pierre, SD representing the South Dakota Missouri River Tourism testified virtually as a proponent to the department fee adjustment.

2:21 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the department fee adjustment.



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2:22 pm: Trevor Davis of Sioux Falls, SD testified virtually as a proponent to the department fee adjustment.

2:25 pm: Dana Rogers of Hill City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified as a proponent to the department fee adjustment.

2:27 pm: Cody Warner of Webster, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association testified virtually as a proponent of the department fee adjustment.

2:29 pm: Paula VanMueller (sp?) of Deadwood, SD testified virtually in opposition to the department fee adjustment.

2:31 pm: Rosie Smith of Watertown, SD representing Glacial Lakes and Prairies testified virtually as a proponent to the department fee adjustment.

2:33 pm: Fritz Hoppe of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the department fee adjustment.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Public Hearing at 2:35 pm CST.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor following the conclusion of the public hearing at 2:35 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

2:35 pm: Patrick Weimer of Spearfish, SD representing South Dakota Houndsmen Association testified as a proponent to the mountain lion action plan.

2:36 pm: Kathleen Schmidt of Nemo, SD testified virtually as a opponent to the mountain lion action plan.

2:40 pm: Fritz Hoppe of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

2:44 pm: Helen McGinnis of Herman, WV testified in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

2:46 pm: David Goodwin of Piedmont, SD representing the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation testified in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

2:47 pm: Josh Rosenau of Lake Forest Park, WA representing the Mountain Lion Foundation testified in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

2:50 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion action plan, and the state endangered species list.

2:54 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

2:57 pm: Steve Charron of Huron, SD representing the South Dakota Lakes and Stream Association and the Enemy Swim Preservation Group testified about aquatic invasive species in South Dakota.

3:02 pm: Paula VanMueller (sp?) of Deadwood, SD testified virtually in opposition to the mountain lion action plan.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Open Forum at 3:05 pm CST.

5. Petition #223: Coyote Bounty Program in Black Hills

[Action Item: Petition]

Steve Cherkas of Edgemont, SD submitted petition #223 in which requested the Commission implement a \$100 bounty of coyotes in the Black Hills.



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Director Kirschenmann informed the commission that Mr. Cherkas had reached out to staff and informed them he would not be able to participate in person or virtually due to other conflicts. Thus, he requested the petitions be pulled and stated he will plan to submit at a later date for another commission meeting. No action was needed by the commission.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS MR. CHERKAS WITHDREW HIS PETITION PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

6. Petition #224: Removal of Nonresident Restrictions for Furbearer Participation

[Action Item: Petition]

Steve Cherkas of Edgemont, SD submitted petition #224 in which requested the Commission remove trapping restrictions to increase nonresident furbearer participation.

Director Kirschenmann informed the commission that Mr. Cherkas had reached out to staff and informed them he would not be able to participate in person or virtually due to other conflicts. Thus, he requested the petitions be pulled and stated he will plan to submit at a later date for another commission meeting. No action was needed by the commission.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS MR. CHERKAS WITHDREW HIS PETITION PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

7. Department Fee Adjustments

[Action Item: Finalization]

Scott Simpson, Deputy Secretary, provided the Commission with the department fee adjustment finalization.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO AMEND THE FINALIZATION TO ELIMINATE THE MODERN CABIN AND SUITES LINE ITEM FROM THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION AS AMENDED. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Ladies, Let's Fish

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Cassy Behnke, Naturalist, presented on the Ladies, Let's Fish program which is a 4-part series that was held throughout the summer at Pelican Lake Recreation Area designed to encourage women to confidently take part and enjoy the sport of fishing. The sessions were Women's Angler Academy (Intro to Fishing), Women on Water (Boating Basics), Women after Walleye (Targeting Specific Species), and Line and Dine (Catch, Clean, and Cook). With each session, participants not only gained valuable skills and knowledge, but also fostered a supportive community that promotes friendship and support in the great outdoors.

9. Emerald Ash Borer Update

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks and Recreation presented an update to the Commission on where park staff are at with the 10-year Division plan to remove the majority of ash trees within campsite areas of parks. Overall staff have removed on average 60-70%+ of the ash trees within the developed portions of our parks and are in-line with the 10-year plan which commenced in 2018. Goals of the program were to reduce the ash population to a manageable size if an outbreak were to occur at a specific park while at the same time re-planting a diversity of trees in the developed portions of parks.

10. Fall Foliage Tracker

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Heather Berg, GIS & Asset Management Program Specialist, presented on the 2024 Fall Foliage Tracker which provides weekly updates on current fall colors within state parks. The Tracker can be found under the Maps section of the GFP website and is a great tool to draw visitors into parks during the quieter shoulder season.



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11. 2024 Camper Survey

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Al Nedved, Deputy Director for the Division of Parks and Recreation provided a presentation on the results of the South Dakota State Park Camper Survey: 2024 Public Opinion Survey Results. This was a survey that was given to 3,500 recipients through email and direct mail. Nedved provided the results of the survey that covered topics such as camping preferences, facilities, attitudes, and future intentions. This data will help the Department prioritize management, policies and funds for campgrounds in the state park system in the future.

12. Camping Unit & Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks & Recreation]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks and Recreation presented the September and YTD camping unit and revenue reports. Sept. camping was strong but down compared to last year with one less weekend occurring in September 2024. YTD camping numbers remain strong and are very close to the 2023 season comparatively. Camping revenue was very strong for September with an increase of 13% over last year. YTD revenue remains strong and is 3% higher than last year with entrance license sales up 4% overall and camping up 1% YTD.

13. Mountain Lion Action Plan

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann and Wildlife Administrator, Andrew Norton, provided a short summary on the action plan. The commission had further discussions around the population objective and determined to go back to the original population objective of 200-300. Due to public comment and conversations several commissioners had with individuals over the past month, it was decided to not move forward with their amended population objective of 150-250 and voted to stay with the current population objective.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED TO BARLTING TO AMEND THE ACTION PLAN BACK TO THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL WITH A 200-300 POPULATION OBJECTIVE. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE MOUNTAIN LION ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

14. State Threatened and Endangered Species

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann described to the commission state law requiring them to review every two years the list and determine whether it needs to be adjusted. There is no requirement for public input or rule change should the list remain the same. Based on some public comment, the Director recommended to take no formal action until the November meeting to assure all individuals have the opportunity to comment should they choose. Because there is no time sensitivity, the commission agreed to hold over until the November meeting.

NO ACTION TAKEN TO PROVIDE MORE TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

15. Pheasant Hunting Outreach

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Nick Harrington, communications manager, provided an update on the messaging and marketing efforts leading up to the 2024 pheasant season. Harrington outlined the Upland Outlook, Prairie Grouse Forecast, partnership with Travel South Dakota through the Hunt the Greatest campaign, and partnership with Brandt for a drip campaign encouraging both residents and nonresidents to purchase their licenses prior to the upcoming hunting seasons.

16. Aquatic Invasive Species Curriculum

[Info Item: Wildlife]

David Parker, Visitor Services Coordinator, presented that the Game, Fish and Parks partnered with South Dakota State University and South Dakota State University Extension over the past year to create a 5-lesson Aquatic Invasive Species Curriculum focused on educating Middle School students. All the lessons are SD



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Education Standards based, hands-on, and built to either stand alone as single lesson or be used as a 5-day unit. Through a generous grant from SDSU Extension, these lessons were professionally printed, a series of videos were created as lesson plan aids, loaner kits were created, and a 2-day training for 8 teachers was hosted. Since completion of the pilot training, a 1.5-hour training was held in Mission for 78 teachers and a 3-hour training was held in Rapid City for 13 community foresters.

17. Fisheries Management in Southeastern South Dakota

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Dave Lucchesi, Area Fisheries Supervisor, provided a fisheries management update for Southeastern South Dakota.

18. GPA Management Partnership Projects

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Ryan Park, Regional Habitat Program Manager, presented on partnership projects on Game Production Area, specifically projects that occurred in 2024. Redstone Game Production Area tree project was a partnership between SDGFP and Pheasant Country Pheasants Forever Chapter. This project included a 16-row tree planting, fence removal and parking lot work. SDGFP and the Chapter partnered with neighboring landowners and the Conservation District to complete this project. It has also help to encourage other groups to work on similar projects.

19. License Sales Report

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a brief summary on hunting and fishing license sales. In general license sales remain strong. October is a big month for small game and habitat stamp sales with the pheasant season beginning in October. The department will provide a more detailed report of license sales from the opening weekend as that is typically used as barometer for license sales for the remainder of the season.

20. Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease and Blue Tongue Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

This item was not listed on the agenda, however, due to the timeliness of the topic, it was presented to the Commission. Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, provided a hemorrhagic disease update. Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) and blue tongue (BT) are diseases caused by related but genetically distinct viruses, collectively called hemorrhagic disease. Disease is seasonal and usually occurs in late summer and fall and expected to end shortly after the first hard frost. The effects of hemorrhagic disease on deer populations can range from isolated areas to regional or statewide. As of early October 2024, hemorrhagic disease has only been confirmed in five white-tailed deer in the south central and southeastern portion of South Dakota.

21. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on November 7-8, 2024, at the South Dakota State Capitol Building, Room 414, starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LCOKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:59 AM CST ON OCTOBER 4, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary