

Brookings Wildlife Federation

Box 104, Brookings, SD 57006

Affiliated with: South Dakota Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Federation

Board: Spencer Vaa, President; Rich Widman, Past-President;
P. Wagner, D. Micko, Bob Kurtz, T. Wieczorek, Bd Members;
L. Novotny, Treas.



Newsletter Editor: C. Berry

January 2019

January 4 Infolunch: Meeting with Legislators

The Brookings Wildlife Federation will host legislators from Districts 4 and 7 at an Infolunch to be held at the First Lutheran Church's Coffeeshouse on Friday, January 4 at noon. The meeting is a chance for the local Federation to provide their legislators with information and concerns about conservation issues.

District 4 is represented by Jason Kettwig and John Mills (House), and John Wiik (Senate). All are Incumbents. District 7 will be represented by Tim Reed and Doug Post (House) and V. J. Smith (Senate). Only Reed served previously.



Tim Reed



Doug Post



V.J. Smith

New District 7 legislator Doug Post, a dairy farmer from the Lake Campbell area, ran on a conservative, prolife, limited government platform. V. J. Smith, a former SDSU official, says that he is primarily interested in SDSU and education. Tim Reed returns to the House with mental health and accessibility as his primary interests. The BWF and our parent society, the South Dakota Wildlife Federation may have to educate these legislators about the few conservation issues that are mingled with hundreds of bills and resolutions that come up in the short legislative session.

The Dakota Rural Action 2018 Legislative Review has this:

The South Dakota legislative session lasts nine weeks. At times, it seems interminable, but it is in reality incredibly fast-moving and intense. There's no real way to illustrate all that happened during that time period: the breadth of the issues we work on, the complexity of procedure and what happened after the mikes turned off, the "sure thing" that wasn't and the impossible thing that somehow came to be."



The Legislature usually receives 12 – 24 proposed bills relating to fish and wildlife conservation annually. Most proposed legislation is about who can or cannot hunt when and where. Occasionally the legislature entertains bills about actual conservation and fish and wildlife habitat. A good example is a 2017 bill (SB66) encouraging buffer strips around streams on private property, and a 2018 bill (HB1119) that adds more waterways eligible for buffer strip tax benefits.

Dominating last year's agenda was legislation about public use of non-meandered lakes (public water over private land). GFP had been stocking fish and building boat ramps on some non-meandered waters. The Legislature declared that lake water over private lands does belong to the public, but said private landowners could ask the state GF&P Commission to close all or part of the non-meandered water to public use without any public input (due process). The law will be revisited in 2020.

Also last year, the SDWF supported a resolution that would allow the public to vote on a constitutional amendment that stated that hunting and fishing were a right, and also supported a bill that established outdoor recreation a beneficial use of the public's water (as other states have done). Both initiatives failed.

What about River pollution? Outgoing Governor Dugaard lists water pollution as one of the problems he wishes his administration did more about. Water pollution from bacteria was also mentioned on the TV show *Prairie Doc*, citing a School of Mines study that found bacteria that affect human health. An *Argus Leader* investigation found DENR unable to control pollution. Gov. Dugaard implied that the problem was coming from watersheds and said that stopping it with regulation or payments would be "difficult politically."

Just as a reminder, the \$90 million budget for GFP gets only \$6 million from the State's general fund **for parks**, the Wildlife Div. is funded by our "user pay" licenses, fees, and taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.

December 7 Infolunch: DU and cover crops

The Brooking Wildlife Federation hosted Brad Schmidt, an agronomist with Ducks Unlimited (DU) at the December Infolunch. Schmidt talked passionately and with authority about cover crops and their potential to increase soil health and provide habitat for ground nesting birds. Schmidt is a 2017 graduate of SDSU with a BS degree in Agriculture Science. He works with producers all over Eastern SD helping them implement soil health practices. Brad is part owner and operator of his family farm in Minnesota where he has been implementing Regenerative Agriculture/Soil Health practices.



Don Lockwood. RIP.

Jeeze! What are the kids at Trout Extravaganza going to do this year without Don to teach them how to fish. Long-time supporter of the BWF, always congenial...RIP.

Mike Kervin into SD National Wild Turkey Federation Hall of Fame



Mike, a long time member and active supporter of the BWF, was recognized for his education programs about wild turkeys. Mike tended the Brookings Longbeard Chapter of NWTF for many years. The Longbeards held guided hunts for youth, led hunter safety classes (HuntSafe instructor for 15 years), and held educational classes at schools and events (Mike has even set up his table at our Trout Extravaganza).

Brookings Wildlife Federation: 2018 In Review

In 2018 the BWF was led by President Spencer Vaa and our Board of Directions (Past-President Rich Widman, P. Wagner, D. Micko, Bob Kurtz (appointed in March to replace Bill Flynn), and T. Wiczorek). Treasurer Lawrence Novotny monitored membership and money. C. Berry began his 22nd year as the monthly newsletter writer and editor; newsletters are emailed to 136 boxes, and snail-mailed to 10 addresses.

One way to review the many activities of the BWF is to review the newsletters, which show that we held meetings monthly and hosted speakers on a variety of subjects. Infolunches were attended by 30 – 50 people and were held for the first time at the First Lutheran Church's Coffeeshouse in September. We had met for 10 years at the HyVee Club room. The Infolunch is BWF's main public information and education service. The BWF posted monthly articles in the *Brookings Register* about Infolunch topics and speakers.

State Policy: The non-meandered waters debate dominated the state policy news, and the hunting and fishing community suggested a constitutional amendment stating the right to hunt and fish (rejected). Outgoing Governor Daugaard suggested that river pollution should be addressed by the next Governor.

Federal happenings: The Federal environmental legislation was in the news as the Trump Administration worked against the Clean Water Act (defining the waters of the US), Clean Power Plan, ozone and methane emission rules, and stream protection rules (https://ballotpedia.org/Federal_policy_on_energy_and_the_environment,_2017-2020). Positive legislation being discussed was the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In the Department of Interior, Secretary Zinke began carried out the Administration’s policy of getting more energy from Federal lands, but by the end of the year, Zinke was gone because of ethics violations, as was EPA Secretary Pruitt for the same reason (apparently the swamp was not drained, just restocked).

Brookings Area: The BWF presented an SDSU scholarship, backed the city’s pollinator plot program, supported the Bobcat Clay Target team, donated wildlife magazines to schools, helped with the Trout Extravaganza and other local events (e.g., Women in Outdoors field day at Beacon Hill Shooting Range; Bob Roe Memorial Dedication), sent area youth to Conservation Camp, and donated to local conservation projects and advocacy groups. We lobbied the city Parks and Rec to burn the Brookings Prairie, which they did, and we followed its spectacular re-growth in monthly photos.

Review of 2018 Infolunch and Newsletter Articles		
Jan	Legislators Tideman, Hawley and Reed	Annual Review of 2017, last year’s state legislation, heads up on non-meandered waters issue,
Feb	Dr Lungren’s regenerative agriculture at Blue Dasher Farm	13 bills introduced concerning wildlife, all talk was about the controversial bill on non-meandered lakes that was passed in a Special Legislative Session last summer. Great Backyard Bird Count, new BWF Board Member Bob Kurtz, Lake Campbell and Lake Hendricks Ice Derbies
Mar	Dr Kent Jensen on banding Saw-whet owls	GFP drafts new deer license plan, SDWF participates in deer plan focus group, 13 House Bills and 5 Senate Bills, non-meandered water bill most controversial, also Constitutional Amendment on right to hunt, fish and trap (not passed). CCLobby advocates carbon tax and dividend
Apr	Jeff Grendler talks about law enforcement	Eleven F&W bills passed, non-meandered water bill passed. Blizzard cancels Lake Campbell fish fry and Earth Day, Federal CWAct and WOTUS reviewed, Gene Miller Memorial for youth, BWF Award at SDSU banquet
May	GFP biologists speak about Farm Bill, wildlife habitat on private lands	Trout Extravaganza, Highway Clean Up, Lake Campbell fish fry May 5, Prairie Pothole Joint Venture web site a good one! Big Sioux River watershed in grassland video, EPA Chief Pruitt rolls back CAFÉ standards, Rachel Carson history, BWF banquet history photos from 1985?
June	GFP fish biologists talk spring fishing, closure of boat ramps, fish stocking	SDWF Conservation Camp June 4-8, Brookings Prairie burned, Land and Water Conservation fund reviewed because funding in jeopardy, GFP geofence on line, From newsletter archives – The 2006 Vanity Fair article, new BWF member upgrades announced, DOI Sec. Zinke news
July	Summer Picnic	Clay Target Club gets BWF support, Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, DU partnership on cover crops, GFP getting some lakes open, CWD update from states restricting carcass movement, Brookings Prairie blooms, Trade War might help wildlife, DOI Sec. Zinke grand pivot

Aug	GFP's Ben Schall talks about trophy catfish of the Jim River	Review of fish research on the Jim River, Earth Day Take Two, BWF supports Women in Outdoors event at Beacon Hill, more BWF history photos found, Blue Dasher Farm field day on ecological approaches to farming, Brookings Prairie grasses grow tall, Recovering America's Wildlife Act – contact congress! BWF historical Vikings cheerleaders, HyVee closes Club room
Sept	GFP speakers talk about hunting and fishing this fall	First meeting at Lutheran Coffeehouse, a 1952 <i>Outdoor Life Magazine</i> cover shows hunter and a polling place, review of current election issues and candidates, South Dakota river pollution issues. Jackrabbit Football players hunt and fish
Oct	Don McCrea speaks about law enforcement, new SDSU program	Dave McCrea book titled <i>The Forgotten Lawmen</i> reviewed, Carol Peterson donates vintage hunting equipment as fund raiser, Bob Roe Memorial dedicated, Gov Candidates answer SDWF questions, news Land and Water Conservation Fund.
Nov	Big Game hunting stories	GFP Commission approves new scheme for deer licenses, VOTE, news from Senator Rounds on federal wildlife conservation legislation, historical BWF newsletter article about Higgins and pheasants
Dec	Brad Schmidt from DU talks about cover crops	BWF hanky history, Higgins historical story from 2006, BWF then and now reviews 4 articles from 2008 newsletter

Keep in touch with Legislation and Legislators

Contacting Legislators: <http://legis.sd.gov/>. This website is great and easy to use. Gives phone, and takes you right to an email form to send a message.

Personal Visits: Cracker barrel meetings on Saturday morning at the Brookings CyCo building. Travel to Pierre to be part of the SDWF's legislators' coffee, conversation, and lunch at the Capitol. The SDWF is one of 7 conservation groups that will lobby for natural resources conservation that day!! Contact SDWF Executive Director, Chris Hesla at 605-224-7524.

Our Lobbyists: Chris Hesla and Dave Nauman are at the Capitol most days. Contact Chris at sdwf@mncomm.com. Part of your membership fee and BWF raffles goes to support our lobby efforts.

The CamoCoalition: The SDWF's lobbying arm called the *Camo Coalition* is 6-years old; go to www.sdwfcamo.net to sign up for free membership and get up-to-date info on legislation.

Clip and save

Review of Fish and Wildlife Legislation from Past Years

Last year 18 conservation bills were filed; 11 passed while 7 (and one resolution) failed. The CamoCoalition was disappointed with the non-meandered waters bill and resolutions pertaining to the right to hunt, and value of recreational use of public water. Among the 11 passed bills were 3 about licenses, and one each about adding river otter to fur bearer list, riparian buffer zones, eligibility to serve on the GFP Commission, allowing use of night vision equipment, and county road closures. On the topic of Democracy or “protecting the people’s process”, the legislature generally made it harder to bring forth an initiative or referendum or constitutional amendment, and harder to have public input into county-level conservation decisions.

In 2017, there were 12 bills about hunting (6 about licenses, 2 about GFP land, and the remainder about the Missouri River, buffer strips, fish limits, and big game depredation). A Resolution **failed** that proposed an amendment to the Constitution of South Dakota acknowledging hunting, fishing, trapping as a right.

In 2016, 23 bills had to do with fish and wildlife. There was the disappointing passage of HB 1075 that allowed more nonresident waterfowl licenses. “What a slap in the face to the Commission and sportsmen.” We lost on HB 1040 that makes it harder for citizens to participate in zoning decisions.

In 2015, there were 12 wildlife related bills. One landmark bill that was good in principal but short on action was the “watershed bill,” which recognizes watersheds as the natural feature that governs water flow (not county boundaries). At a BWF Infolunch, speaker Jay Gilbertson said that this bill is not needed because it required too much change – he said that our current water development districts represent major watersheds.

In 2014, there were 25 hunting bills; 7 about license numbers and qualifications, 4 about how to hunt lions and coyotes, 3 about archery hunting, and 6 about land use and taxes. An effort to divert GFP funding was stopped again. Governor Daugaard formed a pheasant habitat working group.

Farm Bill Signed with Great Conservation Provisions (and SDWF helped!)

This is huge for conservation in the coming years - the elephant in the room because of its power. Everyone is taking credit for getting the Farm Bill passed with important conservation provisions and our National Wildlife Federation does mention a good working relationship with Senator Thune. The NWF also “especially thanked” the SDWF for our cooperation. The NWF says about the Farm Bill “.... it has the highest wildlife funding levels and some of the best conservation provisions (and fewest bad provisions) in any Farm Bill, ever.” Here are some of the key wins:

Full conservation funding: this bill holds the line in maintaining strong funding for conservation programs that will help farmers and ranchers protect soil, water and wildlife.

Increased wildlife funding: The bill increases the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds dedicated to wildlife habitat practices from a minimum of 5 percent to a minimum of 10 percent of total EQIP funds. This will dramatically increase the amount of money available to create wildlife habitat.

Clean bill: The bill is free from attacks on the Clean Water Act, ESA and other enviro- laws.

Wetland conservation provisions intact: maintains wetland conservation compliance provisions, known as Swampbuster, that require protection of wetlands as a condition of retaining eligibility for federal subsidies.

Cover crops: provides vital improvements in the federal crop insurance program regarding the management of cover crops, providing clarity to farmers using cover crops to reduce risk while protecting water quality.

Ag data use: This bill takes some important first steps for collecting and putting USDA data to use in improving conservation practices and helping farmers make important land management decisions.

Grasslands and grazing management: The bill includes numerous provisions to help provide ranchers with the tools needed to advance sustainable grazing management. And while the “Sodsaver” provision to protect native grasslands through discouraging conversion to cropland was unfortunately not expanded beyond the current six-state region, the bill does close a damaging loophole in current law.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program: Mandatory funding for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program is increased and administration is improved to better enable partner and landowner participation.

Conservation Easements: The Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) is funded at strong levels and provisions are added to ensure greater flexibility in participation. Unfortunately however, the bill makes a

change to no longer require conservation plans for agricultural conservation easements, potentially undermining the conservation value of this program.

Conservation Reserve Program: The bill increases the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to 27 million acres, achieved through lowering the rental rates paid to landowners while maintaining some incentive payments. Expanded use of CRP for haying and grazing is allowed, but key safeguards are added to help protect vegetation and wildlife. However, it will be critical to ensure that these changes are implemented in a way that does not reduce demand for the program or threaten the habitat value of the land.

Increased Access: The bill includes \$50 million over 5 years for the Voluntary Public Access- Habitat Incentives Program – an increase of \$10 million from the last Farm Bill. This program will help farmers and ranchers restore habitat and open up private lands for walk-in hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation.

Watershed Protection on Forest Service Land: With nearly half of the watersheds on national forests classified by the Forest Service as “functioning at risk” or “impaired,” targeted watershed restoration will be essential to ensure clean, abundant water for fish, wildlife and people. The Farm Bill includes important measures to support such efforts: the Water Source Protection Program and the Watershed Condition Framework.

Addressing pressing wildlife threats: provides funding to deal with pressing threats to wildlife, including funding for feral swine eradication and for making research around chronic wasting disease a high priority.

From Senator Thune (*Brookings Register*, Dec. 18, p 4) “The provision I’m most proud to have had included in the bill is the establishment of the Soil Health and Income Protection Program. SHIPP, as it’s known, is a 3 – 5 year enrollment alternative to the CRP...that locks up enrolled land for a decade or more.”

From SDSU President Barry Dunn (*Brookings Register*, Dec 14, p 1) Two items in the Farm Bill were influenced by SDSU leadership. The areas include education for Native Americans and provisions for research and extension funding for soil health...closely tied to SDSU’s new precision agriculture initiative.

BWF – SDWF – NWF Newsbytes



Infolunches: Have an Infolunch speaker or a story to tell? Contact Spencer Vaa 692-7219.

BWF Board: Thanks to our Board members P. Wagner, D. Micko, Bob Kurtz, and T. Wiczorek for their contributions of time and talent to the BWF. Past Pres. Rich Widman and Treasurer

Lawrence Novotny usually attend also.

Membership: Membership Year: July 1 – June 30; membership categories are: 1) Trophy (\$100), 2) Magnum (\$50), and 3) Regular (\$30 single, \$40 family) to BWF, Box 104, Brookings SD 57006. Thanks to Treasurer Lawrence Novotny for keeping member lists. Members renewing in December were Steve Donovan and Mike Monnens.

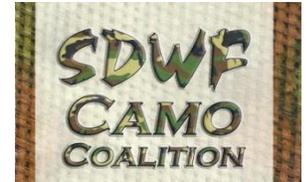
BWF Newsletter: Posted at the SDWF website <http://www.sdwf.org/>, and mailed monthly to 137 email and 10 snail mail addresses; Contact cberry@itctel.com with news or photos for the next newsletter or address change. Thanks T. Wiczorek and Barbara Horten for copying and mailing paper copies.

South Dakota Wildlife Federation: <http://www.sdwf.org/> and <http://www.sdwfcamo.net/>,



The SDWF is the oldest wildlife conservation advocacy organization in South Dakota with membership of over 3,400 sportsmen and women in 16 affiliate clubs across the state. The newspaper titled *Out of Doors* is mailed 6 times/yr.

A partner to the SDWF is the CamoCoalition (<https://www.sdwfcamo.net/>). Their website says “We have set up this site so that we together can take action that includes following key legislation, contacting decision makers and meeting others involved.” Their legislative tracking system during session is really great.



Sportsmen in Pierre: When you get the CamoCoalition groups together in Pierre, it must represent a lot of votes. Here are the groups that the SDWF can usually count on to support our views on legislation about outdoor pursuits and the natural resources of South Dakota.

The Nature Conservancy	SD Waterfowl Assoc.	SD Ducks Unlimited	East River Sierra
SD Bowhunters	Dakota Trout Unlimited	SD Pheasants Forever	SDWF Camo
Isaac Walton League	Wild Turkey Federation	SD Walleye Unlimited	

National Wildlife Federation: The *National Wildlife Magazine* is from the National organization (\$15/yr at www.nwf.org or write to NWF 11100 Wildlife Center Drive, Reston, VA 20190-5362). \$5 goes to the magazine, \$10 deductible. Membership for \$15 includes 6 issues of *National Wildlife Magazine*.



NWF Action 2018 Report. At a time when people say that politics are so broken that nothing can get done, the NWF reports conservation victories in their annual report titled *Action Report 2018: Advancing a Common Agenda for Wildlife*. South Dakota doesn’t get much mention in the report, but we do know about the Farm Bill that the NWF worked on. The report is 31-pages of short “bullet” statements about accomplishments which are interesting reading if you follow national conservation news.

NWF relationship with former DOI Sec. Ryan Zinke (from NWF article in *Washington Post*; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ryan-zinkes-most-lasting-failure>). The NWF supported Zinke’s appointment because he was a conservationist and outdoorsman, but Zinke talked conservation but did not walk the talk - then came his “swampy” ethics issues. Following is part of the NWF’s opinion article in the *Post*.

“Theodore Roosevelt once said of a successor, “He means well, but he means well feebly.” No one expected an appointee of this administration to emulate a conservation giants like Stewart Udall, but Zinke’s dogged pursuit of unfettered fossil-fuel extraction makes James Watt look timid. Zinke never lived up to the Rooseveltian conservation standard he set for himself on his first day in office. (BWF Editor says “Zinke might have tried to change toward more conservation.”)

(more from the NWF). Recognizing this massive chasm between his conservation rhetoric and his first-year reality, Zinke announced a “grand pivot” toward conservation in May 2018. He increased his attention on reconnecting fragmented wildlife migration corridors, expanding recreational access for hunting and fishing, and improving collaboration among federal and state wildlife agencies. He championed fixing the crumbling infrastructure of our national parks, national wildlife refuges and other public lands. He strongly promoted offshore wind energy. These were important conservation pursuits, but in reality, most were woefully under resourced, compared to the strong execution of his energy dominance agenda.”

“Halt!” After less than a year, his feeble “about pivot” was stopped by his ethics issues and he pivoted out the door of public service. We can’t expect much from his replacement either! David Bernhardt is expected to step in as acting head. He is low-profile and smarter with years of gov’n’t experience and lawyer/lobbyist for oil companies. Read a real good summary of the Zinke administration and his ethical missteps in <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/us/ryan-zinke-interior-secretary.html>.

FYI Just seconds after Zinke said “now is not the time to point fingers” in the devastating wildfires in California, he declared that the fires were entirely the fault of “radical environmentalists.”

Brookings Wildlife Federation

Celebrating 40 years in Brookings

Affiliated with: National Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Interests: Conservation, hunting, fishing

Activities: Kids Fishing Weekend
SDSU Scholarships
Information meetings, seminars
Monthly newsletter
Black Hills Conservation Camp
Brookings County Conservation
State Policy Watch
Conservation Small Grants
Public information, education, awards

Inside the January Newsletter

January Infolunch: Legislator visit
December Infolunch review: DU cover crops
Don Lockwood RIP
Mike Kervin recognition
BWF Year in Review
Review of Past SD game and fish bills
New Farm Bill Conservation provisions
NWF Action Report for 2018
NWF review of DOI Secretary Zinke
BWF/SDWF/NWF Tidbits



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