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GOEHRING CRITICAL OF STUDIES FOR GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AREA

HISTORY OF NONTOXIC SHOT REGULATIONS IN SOUTH DAKOTA

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRESIDENT COLUMN

SDWF’s 66th Annual Convention

SDWF’s 66th Annual Summer Convention is scheduled for August 26-28, 2011, this year the hosting club is Brookings Wildlife Federation.

All convention functions are located at the Staurolite Inn in Brookings. Except for the Friday night meal and trapshooting which is located at the Brookings Gun Club east of town.

This year’s Convention has no official business happening on Friday the 26; however there is a no-host mixer at the Gun Club with a light meal starting at 6pm for those traveling in early. Trap shooting starts at 3 pm.

Saturday, August 27 - Staurolite Inn

8 am: Official opening of Convention with business meeting
10 am: Tony Leif, Director of the GFP Wildlife Division give state of wildlife address
1:20 pm Speakers
Alaska fishing with two Chucks – Chuck Dieter and Chuck McMullen
Budget Cuts and SDSU Wildlife Education and Research – David Willis, Dept. Head

Sunday, August 28 - Staurolite Inn:

8 am Business meeting continues
Those who are bringing their families might want to considered seeing the Children’s Museum of South Dakota, Agricultural Heritage Museum, South Dakota Art Museum, McCrory Gardens, and Hillcrest Aquatic Center or shopping downtown or at our Malls.

Tentative Agenda for SDWF Convention in Brookings

Friday, August 26 - Brookings Gun Club:
• 3pm Convention Registration
• 3:15 Start shooting - skeet and trap at $4/round (bring your own shells or purchase at the gun club for $5/box)
• 6pm BBQ supper, Potato Salad, Watermelon, and beverages

Saturday, August 27 - Staurolite Inn

Lake herring and rainbow smelt are cold-water fish that inhabit the deeper, colder waters of Lake Oahe. High water releases, combined with the deep locations of the outlet structures, have made those species vulnerable to being flushed through the dams.

While some fish pass through unharmed, many die due to drastic pressure changes or physical trauma from the hydroelectric turbines. Many of the dead fish are being found along the shores of Lake Sharpe and the upstream reaches of Lake Francis Case.

Lake herring and rainbow smelt make up the vast majority of dead fish found below the dams; however, some walleye, catfish and carp have been reported as well.

“While some walleye have been found among the dead fish, 99 percent of them are lake herring,” said Robert Hanten, wildlife biologist for South Dakota Game Fish and Parks.

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Biologists will continue to monitor fish on Lake Sharpe and Lake Francis Case this summer and fall during scheduled surveys. As flows through the dams diminish, the number of fish passing through the dams should also decline.

GFP monitors loss of fish through Missouri River dams

PIERRE, S.D. - Large volumes of water being released from Missouri River reservoirs have resulted in lake herring and rainbow smelt being flushed through Oahe and Big Bend Dams.

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Goehring critical of studies for grassland conservation area

BISMARK, N.D. – Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring says a draft environmental assessment (EA) and draft land protection plan (LPP) for the proposed Dakota Grassland Conservation Area (DGCA) show a marked bias against agriculture and rely on outdated information.

"The statements made against agriculture are troublesome," Goehring said in a letter to the Division of Refuge Planning of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), "I believe these statements are biased, and the documents fail to recognize agriculture’s many benefits to wildlife." Goehring pointed to a statement in the EA draft that claimed “grassland conversion rates will undoubtedly accelerate with increasing prices for cereal grains and low cattle numbers.”

"Crop prices have risen in the recent past, however, farmers and ranchers make a living based on profit margins," Goehring said. "Input costs for agriculture have risen at a similar rate as commodity prices, squeezing out any large profit margin."

Goehring said the draft EA recognizes that the beef cowherd declined 11.3 percent from 2010, but failed to mention that beef cow carcass weights has increased by 8.6 percent in that period, consequently requiring more pasture to produce a cow-calf pair.

Goehring said the research and studies used in the drafts are outdated and should be ignored.

"For example, the draft EA relies on 1985 and 1986 studies that claim some crop species avoid nesting in cropland, and nesting success in cropland is not sufficient to support population," he said. "Production practices have changed greatly since then. We now use conservation production practices like no-till and minimum-till which leave more residue on the land."

Goehring also pointed to the use of a 20-year-old study on the effects of pesticides on wildlife.

"That study mentions the impact of carbofuran on ducks and geese, but the EPA virtually ignored the use of carbofuran in most crop production in 2009," he said. "It is a non-issue."

Goehring said USFWS’s own 2011 Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey showing the second highest number of ducks since 1955 completely refutes the federal agency’s argument that agriculture has had a negative impact to waterfowl production.

The commissioner said USFWS should look at short-term agreements with landowners for wildlife conservation purposes.

"We are borrowing this land from future generations, our children, and we should not tie their hands through perpetual easements," he said. "Perpetual easements emplace barriers and restrictions that do not allow the agriculture community to adapt to the needs of society when it comes to the production of food, feed, and fiber."

The Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area would take $588 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to buy easements on more than 240,000 acres of wetlands and 1.7 million acres of privately-owned grasslands in North Dakota, South Dakota, and eastern Montana.

History of Nontoxic Shot Regulations in South Dakota

Toxic lead shot has been deposited by waterfowl hunters into South Dakota’s marshes, lakes and fields for many decades clear back to the settlement of the prairies. As few as 1 or 2 lead pellets can be lethal to a duck, goose, or swan and estimates of 2 million waterfowl annually dying of lead poisoning are common in waterfowl literature. The wake-up call in South Dakota was a large scale die-off of waterfowl primarily Canada geese, in central South Dakota along the Missouri River during the winter of 1979-80. More than 4,000 sick and dead geese were found along the river and attributed to lead poisoning. These geese were feeding in corn fields adjacent to the river and received heavy gunning pressure from waterfowl hunters. To find a leadless substitute to toxic nontoxic shot, which was one of the most dangerous feeding habits, the grinding action of the gizzard quickly absorbed the toxic compound into their body tissues. Due to the cold winter-like conditions and a diet of corn many of the geese died over a period of several weeks.

The South Dakota Department of Game and Parks Commission took a bold step and decided to do something about it. For about the first time, during the 1980 waterfowl hunting season, the Commission enacted a nontoxic shot zone along the Missouri River where the die-off occurred. This area included portions of Potter, Sully, Hughes, Hyde, Buffalo, Brule, Lyman, and Stanley counties including all water, islands, and bars of the Missouri River and it’s embayments from the north potter County line downstream to the south Brule County line, including the Cheyenne River embayment downstream from Minnehaha Couy. This nontoxic zone for waterfowl in central South Dakota varied a bit in size over the years as areas were either added or deleted. During this time period GFP staff worked with natural resource partners and learned from waterfowl experts about lead poisoning, crippling issues, and steel shot ballistics. From 1979 – 1984, GFP staff visited with virtually every sportsman’s club in South Dakota to discuss this issue. I was part of this effort and still remember the concerns expressed by those opposed to nontoxic shot. Arguments that sound lead was virtually inferior to lead shot and would result in more crippled birds, cause gun damage to barrels, and too expensive were heard from some hunters. Armed with the facts we were able to explain to sportmen that switching to nontoxic shot was the responsible thing to do and that a viable alternative, steel shot, was available. On February 11, 1984, the Commission directed the staff of the Department of Game and Parks to prepare and recommend a steel shot implementation schedule to reduce lead poisoning in our waterfowl and upland bird resources.

Key components of the Nontoxic Shot Implementation Schedule included:

- Toxic lead shot has been deposited by waterfowl hunters into South Dakota’s marshes, lakes and fields for many decades clear back to the settlement of the prairies.
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- Arguments that sound lead was virtually inferior to lead shot and would result in more crippled birds, cause gun damage to barrels, and too expensive were heard from some hunters.
- Armed with the facts, we were able to explain to sportmen that switching to nontoxic shot was the responsible thing to do.
- A viable alternative, steel shot, was available.
- On February 11, 1984, the Commission directed the staff of the Department of Game and Parks to prepare and recommend a steel shot implementation schedule to reduce lead poisoning in our waterfowl and upland bird resources.
I hope you all have a safe hunting season this Fall!

Executive Director’s Update by Chris Hesla

Mark your calendars for the dates of August 26-28 for the SDWF Annual Convention to be held in BROOKINGS. Brookings Wildlife Federation will be our hosts. See the schedule printed in this Out-of-Doors for times and planned activities. We will be honoring three Conservation leaders from South Dakota on Saturday night at our dinner/auction. All members and any interested in our doings are welcome and encouraged to attend. During the Convention, we will be drawing the winners for the 2011 Pheasant Hunt and the 2010-2011 Buffalo Shoot. Good luck and a big THANK YOU to all of you that purchased chances on both of these exciting hunts.

The dog days of summer have definitely arrived here in Pierre. It has been over 100 degrees several days with up until now plenty of moisture but it does not take very many 100 degree days to change that. The good thing is that South Dakota experienced plenty of moisture this Spring, which in turn has created good conditions for the crops. I have been noticing a phenomenal amount of young pheasants in the ditches and roadways. It looks like SD may again have a tremendous pheasant hatch for this year. GF&P should be releasing their brood samples survey in August; it will be interesting to see their numbers.

Nearly a year has passed since I was elected President of the SDWF. Like my predecessors, I had aspirations to do many great things. Like my predecessors, I found the majority of available time must by necessity be devoted to the many mundane tasks required to keep an organization the size of the Federation going. If nothing else, there are bills to pay, and money to pay those bills is becoming increasingly harder to raise. By and large, most of our members are average folks. I think I can safely say that none of our members light cigars with $100 bills. Frankly, a good many of us have not had a $100 bill in our wallets for quite some time.

Our budget is a drop in the bucket compared to certain organizations that are constantly battling to privatize and commercialize the publicly-owned natural resources we so much cherish. We certainly can’t buy the advertising time some do to proclaim themselves God’s gift to the environment. Still, we manage to get things done. We succeed by maintaining a strong and diverse membership, working with affiliate clubs, and relying on a network of volunteers across the state to make things happen. Our legislators and the SD Game, Fish and Parks Commission know what the South Dakota Wildlife Federation is and what we stand for, and perhaps just as important, what we will not stand for.

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Many of our board members have served for decades, and the good Lord willing, will serve a few more years. However, the battles we fight are endless—the lure of easy money at the public’s expense is just too great for those who would misuse and abuse our land and wildlife. There are also skirmishes in the middle of these deeply divided factions. We harvest only the surplus Mother Nature provides us, and if we must err, we err on the side of conservation. We touch the earth lightly, lest there be nothing left for future generations.

Our need the support of every true sportsman, every true conservationist, and every true environmentalist in the state. If you care about our natural resources, our wildlife, and our land and waters, we need you. If you wish to ensure our children and grandchildren have the same rights, privileges and opportunities we have enjoyed, we need your support. Please give what you can to other organizations working hard to put habitat on the ground and protect the few wild places we have left, but remember, these places are of little value to the average person if the rich and landed can enjoy them. The SDWF works not only to protect our natural resources, but to make sure everyone has equal and reasonable access.

But seriously, what can you do? Chances are if you are reading this, you are a member of an affiliate club. First, keep paying your dues to that club, and maybe twist the arm of a nonmember to also join. Second, support the Federation directly with an added gift, perhaps to our Legacy Council (see the SD Wildlife Federation Donors list elsewhere in this paper). Third, sign up on the SDWF Camo Coalition website to get the latest information on legislation and directions on how to contact your legislators.

Elections for open positions, including the Executive Committee, are held at the annual meeting. We are always looking for people to fill open positions. No, we don’t take just anyone, but we also don’t discriminate based on gender, age, religious beliefs, race, political party, or whatever. We are simply looking for good men and women who have a vision for the future of South Dakota and a love for our outdoor heritage. They should have a basic understanding of the workings of our ecosystem, or at least the willingness to learn that not everything is as simple as it may seem. (Those who profess to know all the answers are often those who know the least.) Finally, they must understand that in a democracy compromise is sometimes essential, but there is a difference between compromise and abandoning core values—we have learned that compromise too often means the sportsmen of this state give up something in return for nothing except demands to give up more.

Do you meet these criteria, and are you willing to give of your time for the good of all? If so, talk to me. I can be reached by e-mail at billantonides@abe.midco.net. The more people we have working, the more we can spread out the workload, and the more we can get done. There are so many issues to deal with, including (but certainly not limited to) management of the Missouri River, overgrazing and other abuse of our public lands, water quality concerns, access to public lands and waters, and the privatization and commercialization of our natural resources. You don’t have to be an expert on any of these issues. You just have to care enough to get involved.

The Brookings Wildlife Federation is hosting the annual meeting this year, and has put together an interesting and informative event, including time off for trapshooting, sightseeing, and some excellent cuisine. All SDWF members are welcome to attend, and please bring a friend or two. If they light their cigars with $100 bills, all the better. Maybe we can talk them into using twenties and giving the rest to the cause.

Questions? Answers? Wildlife blog at sdwfcamo.net

The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.

John Muir 1838-1914-Naturalist and Founder of the Sierra Club.

We humans must come again to a moral comprehension of the earth and air. We must live according to the principle of a land ethic. The alternative is that we shall not live at all.

N. Scott Momaday, Kiowa

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

Aldo Leopold
Welcome SDWF!

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
The College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences and
the Department of Natural Resource Management

Welcome the South Dakota Wildlife Federation
66th Annual Convention in Brookings
August 26-28, 2011

U.S. Geological Survey
EROS Data Center (Sioux Falls)
Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (SDSU)
Geology Division (USD)

USGS Mission: Provide relevant, timely, objective knowledge and
information on natural resources, hazards, environment.

U.S. Geological Survey
EROS Data Center (Sioux Falls)
Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (SDSU)
Geology Division (USD)

South Dakota Examples:
Fish and wildlife ecology; satellite photos
help plan developments; stream gauges warn
of flooding; geology of Black Hills caves
discovered.

Wildlife News at sdwfscamo.net
At the 2003 Winter Board Meeting, the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the people who support SDWF above and beyond their membership and raffle donations. Thank you to the following donors for their contributions to the SDWF. Please consider becoming a member of the Wildlife Legacy Council. SDWF is a 501(c3) non-profit, all donations are tax deductible. These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF’s Wildlife Legacy Council. Please consider your donation today. Donations can be sent to SDWF, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501.

The Legacy Council consists of five different donation levels: Level V Eagle $1,000 & Above; Level IV Buffalo $500 - $999; Level III Elk $250 - $499; Level II Deer $100 - $249; and Level I Pheasant $50 - $99.

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**July 2011**
- Level II Deer: Bealke, Steven - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Gaskinwood, Ken - OK
- Level I Pheasant: Hanson, Howard - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Nelson, Lawrence - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Sampsip, Terry - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Snyder, Adam - IN
- Level I Pheasant: Welch, Harvey - IL
- Level I Pheasant: Wheeler, Stephen J. - SD

**June 2011**
- Level II Deer: Johnson, Virgil - SD
- Level II Deer: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
- Level II Deer: Raney, Thomas - KS
- Level I Pheasant: Roberts, Tom - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Winter Bros. Under
- Level I Pheasant: Pearsall, Robert - IA

**May 2011**
- Level V Eagle: Roberts, Brian - MN
- Level IV Buffalo: Olson, Jeff G. - SD
- Level IV Buffalo: Sportsman’s Club of Brown Co. - SD
- Level III Elk: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, SD
- Level II Deer: Anderson, Edmoin - TN
- Level I Pheasant: Bell, Bob - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Crann, Neil - LA

**April 2011**
- Level IV Buffalo: Dakota Sportsman, Inc. - SD
- Level III Elk: Kooystra, Frank - NV
- Level I Pheasant: Reddy, Craig - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Halls, Carl - KY
- Level I Pheasant: Mayes, Terry & L. Rees - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Worsham, Terry - AZ

**March 2011**
- Level III Elk: Bealke Co. Sportsman’s Club - SD
- Level III Elk: Hecla Community Sportsman - SD
- Level III Elk: Pheasants Forever Northern Game Chapter - SD
- Level II Deer: Anderson, Edmoin - TN
- Level II Deer: Bell, Bob - MN
- Level II Deer: Crann, Neil - LA

**February 2011**
- Level III Elk: Stammer, Hal - SD
- Level I Deer: Campbell, Stuart - SD
- Level II Deer: Divx, Duane - TX
- Level II Deer: Hempl, Todd - SD
- Level II Deer: Leisven, Arlo - SD
- Level II Deer: Anderson, B. - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Pesek, Ron - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Anderson, J. R. - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Anderson, J. R., Ralph - NE
- Level I Pheasant: Bormann, Daniel - WI
- Level I Pheasant: Par, Mark - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Mural, Paul - CA

**January 2011**
- Level IV Buffalo: Olson, Dr. Jeffrey - SD
- Level II Deer: Abigail, Gene - SD
- Level II Deer: McCarison, Paul - SD
- Level II Deer: McCarthy Properties - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Melch, Terry - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Wolmers, Paul - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Miller, O. Larry - SD

**December 2010**
- Level III Elk: Schroeder, Jr. Kenneth - SD
- Level II Deer: Cooper, John - SD
- Level II Deer: Dabber, Jay - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Pederson, Tim - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Pederson, Paul - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Waldrum, Howard - MA

**November 2010**
- Level II Deer: Goggin, Robert - MN
- Level II Deer: McCarison, Paul - SD
- Level II Deer: Kugmer, Pat - SD
- Level II Deer: Greif, John - SD
- Level II Deer: McGraw, Tom - SD
- Level II Deer: Braddick, John - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Neubert, Mark - WI
- Level I Pheasant: Neubert, Dan - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Streeter, Donald - FL
- Level I Pheasant: Mann, David - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Murray, Paul - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Chadwick, John - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Johnson, Dan - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Schmid, John - CO

**October 2010**
- Level II Deer: Dressing, Brian - SD
- Level II Deer: Gilbert, James - CA
- Level II Deer: McDonald, LeRoy - SD
- Level II Deer: Sattler, Arnold - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Birklund, Dean - MN
- Level I Pheasant: Burns, Kendall - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Gassett, John - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Hartley, James - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Larson, Scott - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Larson, Greg - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Low, Steven - MI
- Level I Pheasant: Metcalf, Robert - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Riley, Mike - MO
- Level I Pheasant: Schrader, Eric - MN

**September 2010**
- Level IV Buffalo: Block, Steve - IA
- Level II Deer: Beck, Tom - SD
- Level II Deer: Kugmer, Pat - SD
- Level II Deer: Mahaffy, Brian - SD
- Level II Deer: Sattler, Arnold - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Gassett, John - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Hartley, James - CA
- Level I Pheasant: Larson, Scott - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Larson, Greg - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Low, Steven - MI
- Level I Pheasant: Metcalf, Robert - SD
- Level I Pheasant: Riley, Mike - MO
- Level I Pheasant: Schrader, Eric - MN

Welcome SDWF Members!

605-692-3111
337 22nd Ave. S
605-696-5000
Brookings, SD
The Dakota Chapter
American Fisheries Society

wishes the
South Dakota Wildlife Federation
a successful annual convention in
Brookings, South Dakota

Thanks for your support for fisheries
resource conservation in the Dakotas

Renew your membership online at sdwf.org
1. In 1986 - nontoxic shot would be required for all shotgun hunting of waterfowl on or within 100 yards of the water’s edge of the Missouri River from Choteau Creek (Charles Mix-Bon Homme County line) all the way to the Iowa border, including Lake Yankton and all islands and bars.

2. In 1987 - nontoxic shot would be required statewide for all waterfowl hunting.

3. In 1989 – nontoxic shot would be required for all shotgun hunting of waterfowl, upland game birds, and small game on most public lands, most notably state Game Production Areas and federal Waterfowl Production Areas.

This effort was a giant undertaking for GFP with some bumps along the road but in 1988 nontoxic shot was required for all waterfowl hunting, statewide, with no exceptions. And, beginning on September 1, 1988 nontoxic shot was required for all small game hunting on most public lands in South Dakota, notable exceptions being private land walk-in areas, state school lands, and national grasslands. I firmly believe that the Department and Commission deserve a lot of credit for being proactive on this issue and commend the majority of sportsmen for abiding by and supporting nontoxic regulations.

In the years since the lead-steel shot wars hunters have adapted quite well to nontoxic shot regulations. Many of our younger hunters have grown up using steel shot exclusively. Steel loads have evolved and have shown significant improvements from earlier loads and are comparable in cost to the old duck/pheasant lead loads. In addition there is a profusion of other nontoxic loads that feature a combination of tungsten, iron, copper, tin, bismuth, etc but these are only niche markets due to their high cost, up to $4 per shell. Hunters have benefited from shooting clinics sponsored and currently run by GFP staff. For many years Shooting Consultant Tom Roster, arguably America’s foremost shotshell ballistic expert, conducted numerous ‘Shooting Skills and Reducing Wounding Loss Clinics’ for GFP department staff and hunters. Hunters learned about the unique properties of steel shot and received individual shooting instruction from an expert. These classes were widely accepted by hunters and currently are conducted by the Department’s own highly trained shooting instructor, Mark Grovijahn, Resource Biologist out of Watertown. Today most hunters are confident that any of the nontoxic loads on the market are up to the task of efficiently harvesting game.

No discussion of nontoxic shot would be complete without mention of the Nontoxic Shot Lethality Table printed each year in the South Dakota Hunting Handbook. This Table was created and copyrighted by Tom Roster and offers the hunter proven nontoxic shot loads for waterfowl and upland game birds as well as wild turkeys. The data base is scientific in nature and originates from approximately 20,000 harvested waterfowl, upland game birds & turkeys and serves to guide the hunter in selecting loads that are optimal for harvesting various game species. Hunters also need to pattern test and practice shooting clay targets with the shotgun they normally use for hunting and limit their shooting to distances at which they are proficient. For most hunters, myself included, this means inside of 45 yards. This is the prescription to limit wounding losses to 10% or less.