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South Dakota Wildlife Federation

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OUT OF DOORS

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WHY RECENT HUNTING & FISHING INCREASES



Scott Slepikas, Northeast Region Vice President of South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (left) accepting a \$2000 donation to the South Dakota Ranchers Relief Fund from the Beadle County Sportsmen's Club President Dave Eichstadt (right). Beadle County Sportsmen's Club donated \$2,000 to the South Dakota Ranchers Relief Fund to support those who have been affected by the blizzard of October 4-7, 2013 providing direct benefit to the livestock producers impacted by this devastating blizzard.

Water, Water Everywhere, But Not A Drop To Share

Reprinted by permission of Dakota Country and the author. Bill Antonides is a retired SD conservation officer and president of the SDWF Camo Coalition.

About 135 years ago, which believe it or not was well before I was born, some folks who were in charge of opening up new territories in the USA had the good sense to think about future generations. I admit they were probably not thinking specifically about me, but that is just fine. The important point is they noticed problems developing in the rush to populate the arid regions east of the Rockies by giving away government land. Some of the rules of the various homestead acts were actually counterproductive.

A variety of methods and ruses were too often used to allow a small number of people to tie up vast areas of land by controlling much needed resources, including water. Where one rancher and his family had control of the water, they also had control of the yet unclaimed public land surrounding their claim. It was darn hard for other ranchers to homestead when they didn't have water for their livestock or themselves.

After a little head scratching and pondering, not to mention range wars, the U.S. Congress passed the Desert Land Act of 1877.

The act still allowed homesteading, but decreed all water was public, regardless of who owned the land underneath. As you might expect, this did not sit well with the ranchers and farmers who had first staked their claims. In 1881, the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Dakota in 1881 gave rights limited to appropriations but not ownership, for mining, milling, agricultural or domestic purposes. The legislation allowed settlers the rights to water they lawfully appropriated and actually used, and released all other water for public use.

This still didn't make everyone happy, but the range wars evolved into debates in rule-making bodies and the courts. In 1882, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark opinion regarding a state's title to its submerged lands, noting the title is held in trust for the people of the State that they may enjoy the navigation of the waters, carry on

commerce over them, and have liberty of fishing free from obstruction or interference from private parties. Most important, the court held the public trust places a duty on the state to protect the people's heritage of submerged lands for their common use.

Shortly after statehood, new SD laws reflected the thinking of most men and women trying to make a life in the new frontier. Laws passed by the SD legislature in 1905 and 1907 stated all the waters within the limits of the state

from all sources of water supply belong to the public. Our earliest state legislators, realizing travel was also critical to everyone, set aside 66 feet as a public highway on each section line. This didn't mean an asphalt road would be built every mile, but simply gave the public the right to use the section lines.

A few decades later I was born, but the legislature did absolutely nothing to recognize the fact. However, on or about my second birthday when I was really, really cute dressed

up in my cowboy outfit, the 1955 legislature reaffirmed the notion all water is public property in the Water Resources Act. It is possible the legislation was not just a present to me, as I've heard many thousands of really cute kids were born after the soldiers came back from WWII. Still, our legislators exhibited remarkable foresight. We would have been happy with a shiny new tricycle, but instead they fought hard to maintain rights we wouldn't come to appreciate for many years.

Twenty years later, just to be perfectly clear about how our water was to best be used, South Dakota assigned the beneficial uses of fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering to all waters in the state. Granted, they did so in part because the federal Clean Water Act demanded action, and the EPA would enforce it. Still, there was nothing in the regulations not already in state and federal law and



BARCODED FLATS

Farmers- need a tax deduction this year? Consider donating some grain or land to the SDWF. You will get a tax break and your support of the SDWF will help protect the land and wildlife you love.



Executive Director
Chris Hesla

Executive Director's Update by Chris Hesla

I hope all of you had a Joyous and Safe Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

Without each and every one of you, SDWF would not be what we are today; we can and do make a difference here in South Dakota. THANK YOU for your support.

The 2014 legislative session opens Tuesday, January 14th. There will be some tough issues again this year. We will all need to be diligent and let our state legislators know our beliefs in fighting or supporting legislation.

I ask each and every one of you to become involved. There are two ways to become involved. First, plan to come to Pierre on Monday, February 10 and join us at the 6th annual legislative "Camo-Day" from 7am until noon. The second way is to sign up for the daily legislative update. Just go to sdwfcamo.net and hit the Join button. It's free and you'll get updates on

pertinent legislation with links to legislators.

When you do email legislators, please include your name, where you live, BE COURTEOUS, and to the point. SDWF Camo Coalition will provide some talking points on most bills but we ask you to personalize them. Legislators have told me several times they do not like form emails.

The 21-Gun Giveaway tickets and the 2014 Buffalo Shoot tickets are being printed and due to mail very soon. If you do not receive them in the mail, the next issue of the Out-of-Doors will have tickets or you can go to sdwf.org to purchase Buffalo Shoot tickets. Please support SDWF by purchasing chances. SDWF gives away one gun for every 100 tickets sold.

I hope all of you experienced some special moments this year in your outdoor pursuits and had a great and joyous holiday season.

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear."
Mark Twain

Beadle County Sportsmen's Club Scholarship Program

Press Release

Release date: January 2, 2014

The Beadle County Sportsmen's Club (BCSC) recently created a scholarship program in April 2013. This scholarship program was formed to encourage, promote, and recognize students continuing their undergraduate education with an understanding of the importance to conserve and protect our natural resources. "This was an easy program for club members to support and demonstrate the importance of protecting and conserving our natural resources", stated Dave Eichstadt, BCSC president, "especially our soil, water, and wildlife." The BCSC scholarship was designed to further support undergraduates from recognized conservation or environmental-related degree programs.

For the inaugural year, BCSC selected Andrew Quintana of Sioux Falls, SD to receive the \$500 scholarship. Mr. Quintana is attending South Dakota State University with a Major in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. Mr. Quintana received the scholarship during the Club's September meeting.

Qualifying undergraduate studies may include, but are not limited to, those such as: environmental science/engineering/education, natural resource management, forestry, wildlife, fisheries, parks and recreation, range management, soils, animal science, and other related sciences such as ecology, biology (conservation/field/marine), geology, hydrology, and zoology, including mammalogy, ornithology, and entomology. Interested students should contact Dennis Moldrem, BCSC Treasurer, 528 5th ST SE, Huron, SD 57350, for additional information and an applicant package. Applicants for the 2014 BCSC Scholarship must have applications postmarked by May 2, 2014.



**Beadle County
Sportsmen's Club
Huron, South Dakota**

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Farmers- need a tax deduction this year? Consider donating some grain or land to the SDWF.

You will get a tax break and your support of the SDWF will help protect the land and wildlife you love.



President,
Rich Widman

President's Column *by Rich Widman*

By the time you get this newsletter, we'll be done with most hunting, we'll still be catching some fish through the ice, but most importantly, we'll be gearing up for the 2014 legislative session. Now most folks who hunt, fish or otherwise enjoy our great outdoors wouldn't think that what happens in Pierre could possibly be more important than getting out and harvesting a deer or reeling in a nice perch. Here's the thing—it is MORE important. If you and your friends want to continue to hunt and fish and have wildlife in this state, it doesn't just magically happen; it always starts in Pierre. SDWF members know why, but the vast majority of sportsmen and women don't have a clue! They think being able to hunt and fish just happens. It doesn't! SDWF has fought since 1945 to make outdoor activities available for all people to enjoy, and we'll continue to fight to make sure the average Joe doesn't lose that right. We have to keep working, because each year special interests in Pierre try to turn South Dakota into the old European model where only the Lords own the land, water, and wildlife, and the rest of us are merely servants—not worthy because we don't have enough wealth.

A good example of that kind of thinking is the out-of-state funded groups trying to limit access to non-meandered water association. This year, they are bringing back their bill with the eventual goal to privatize all non-meandered waters and commercialize all wildlife. We absolutely cannot let that happen! Sportsmen/women (and all South Dakotans) need to realize this small group has millions of dollars, but we always have the backing of the people of South Dakota. To put their funds vs. our funds into perspective: they paid just one of their lawyers about five times what we paid our two lobbyists last year! Again, they may have money to push their privatization agenda, but we have the leverage of doing what's right for South Dakotans.

Water and wildlife is owned by the public in America. The U.S. and SD Supreme Courts have without a doubt proclaimed that fact time and time again in their rulings. The bill brought by these few people would affect all South Dakotans and would close down and make illegal any fishing, hunting, boating, floating, trapping, bird watching, and other activities on thousands of bodies of South Dakota waters.

Now, a lot of these non-meandered waters are not accessible to the public anyway because they are surrounded by private land, but thousands are available through public access (i.e. public land, section lines, or township roads). These waters provide a huge benefit both recreationally and economically for people of all ages, as well as for our towns.

SDWF Executive Director Chris Hesla and the SDWF Camo Coalition volunteer board have put in a lot of time attending meetings with the Governor's staff, GF&P, legislators, ag groups and the non-meandered waters folks. We are, and have always been, willing to listen to see if there is room for compromise. So far, the other side has the "My way or the highway" attitude. I hate that kind of mentality.

Yes, we know that excess water has been a problem for landowners, especially in the northeastern part of our state. Some farmers have lost income due to flooded fields. But there are solutions to help these farmers. The taking away of legal public access onto the public's water is not the answer.

SD Pheasant Summit

Several of us drove to Huron for the Governor's Pheasant Summit in -18 weather! I know some of the 400 folks there were a bit skeptical that this was a campaign ploy to get sportsmen back on the Governor's side. After all, this was the same Governor that banned private landowners from selling their land to GF&P at a time when we desper-

ately needed more habitat because of all the draining, plowing, burning and bulldozing of wetlands, grasslands and shelterbelts.

However, thanks to all the hard work that volunteers for Pheasants Forever and other organizations, along with unaffiliated sportsmen, put into the meeting, I think it resulted in a great "To Do" list" for the Governor. Unfortunately, most of the ideas brought forward were things we have been talking about for years; if implemented earlier, they could have prevented the 65%-85% drop in the pheasant population. Still, I applaud the Governor for setting up this summit. A plus was that Senator John Thune showed up and is pushing for the Senate version of the Farm Bill that ties conservation compliance to crop insurance subsidies. That provision will not only save habitat, but will save U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars of wasteful spending.

Here are a few other ideas that came up at the summit:

- Lowering taxes for landowners who have grasslands (After all, they shouldn't be paying the same taxes as a farmer who has cropland!)
- Setting up a Conservation Fund to buy new habitat using a percentage of sales tax and/or license fees.
- Farm the Best, Save the Rest
- Create an excise tax of \$5/acre for nonresident landowners
- Increase incentives for landowners for conservation programs

If you go to this link, you can watch the whole Summit and see the other recommendations:

<http://www.gfp.sd.gov/pheasantsummit/default.aspx>

Who wants to be a "BIG DOG"?

As you all already know, we need your financial support!

So here's what I need you to do: become, or ask your friends or your company to become, a SDWF "Big Dog" supporter. For \$5000, you will receive a Browning Maxus 12-gauge (or equivalent shotgun) and 10 free entries into each of the SDWF raffles. You or your company will also receive a business card size ad in each issue of the "Out of Doors" newsletter for a year and be listed as a "Big Dog" sponsor at our state convention. A "Big Dog" will receive a different gun each and every year they donate, all while protecting what they love—that South Dakota outdoor experience!

Of course, not everyone has the financial resources to be a Big Dog; we represent the average person who agrees with our mission, regardless of his or her bank balance. However, with enough "puppies" throwing \$10 or \$20 our way, we'll continue to get the job done. Please, do what you can to help.

Send your donation to:

SDWF Camo
PO Box 952
Pierre, SD 57501



As seen from the highway just west of Watertown, not all landowners are "true environmentalists". This landowner had taken out nearly a mile of shelterbelt by bull dozing them over and digging a big hole and burning the wood and I assume will cover it up and grow a crop next Spring. It is sad to see this happening.



Water, Water Everywhere, But Not A Drop To Share cont from page 1

the Public Trust Doctrine. It was simply another affirmation of the public's ownership of water.

Then came the rains, as they are wont to do even in arid states. Dry land became puddles, puddles became wetlands, and wetlands became lakes. The opportunities for fishing, fowling and every other activity for which people use water expanded exponentially. However, the fact that some of the best waters for recreation were over inundated private lands once again set the stage for conflict. Existing laws and court decisions had tied limited water rights to land ownership, but also made clear the ownership of the water remained with the public. Just as clear was the directive stating the general welfare requires that water resources be put, to the fullest extent capable, to beneficial uses.

A few landowners, upset by the idea of the public using public water in what they felt was a private property taking, took the issue to the judiciary, where it ended up in the SD Supreme Court. In 2004, after a year to chew on the arguments from both sides, the SD Supreme Court did not come out and say there was an affirmative and absolute right to access the disputed waters, but they also did not say there was an affirmative denial of access.

Instead, they left it up to the legislature to decide how best to use the waters of the state, but gave a very clear admonition to all concerned: "The public trust doctrine imposes an obligation on the state of South Dakota to preserve water for public use. It provides that the people of South Dakota own the waters themselves, and that the state...controls the water for the benefit of the public...We conclude that all water in South Dakota belongs to the people in accord with the public trust doctrine and as declared by statute and precedent."

After nearly a decade with the access issue still being debated, the legislature was pushed to action when nonresident landowners sent hired guns to argue their case. Although they didn't win the first time around, it was close and they're gearing up for a bigger fight. The argument seems to be what is good for the landowner is good for the public, even if it means the public loses use of public water. The public, albeit it was mostly sportsmen and women who spoke up, is naturally chagrined.

Somewhere in the area of 97% of our 1.1 million public waters are already closed because they do not lie on a section line. To make it worse, many township and county boards were and still are closing public roads leading to the best fishing and hunting areas. As often as not, they are doing so in apparent violation of state law, and with the clear intent of stopping the public from using public waters and even public land to hunt and fish for publicly owned game and fish. Surprisingly enough, the public generally has no legal standing to fight these road closures, and the 97% of waters we can no longer access is rising.

This is the dilemma we face in South Dakota, and in a great many other states. As painful as it is, we can learn our history and make decisions based on law, doctrine, court decisions, tradition and the public good. We can consider future generations and the needs they may have for areas to recreate, whether it is hunting and fishing or simply floating a canoe and watching birds. We can be part of a larger community and share our natural resources in a reasonably fair and impartial manner.

Or, we can sit quietly and allow those with the money and political power to take it all. Our grandkids will have to be content with a shiny new tricycle; they certainly won't need a fishing pole.

REMAINING DEFENDANT IN POACHING GROUP PLEADS GUILTY

PIERRE, S.D. - The last defendant of a group of six individuals from Yale, S.D., who had been charged with poaching deer, was sentenced in state court in Dewey County on Oct. 25.

John P. Tschetter, 32, pled guilty to eight criminal offenses stemming from a two-year investigation conducted by the Game, Fish and Parks Department. The offenses included two counts of conspiracy to unlawfully possess big game and six counts of unlawful possession of big game.

"Our officers received numerous complaints from local citizens over the years concerning illegal hunting activities occurring in Dewey County," Andy Alban, GFP law enforcement program administrator, said. "It's important for us to follow up on these types of complaints, and in this situation the concerns were valid."

Wildlife officers acted on tips from concerned citizens and began documenting trips the group took to the Timber Lake area in western South Dakota. Officers documented violations during the 2011 and 2012 West River Deer seasons. According to officials, Tschetter and his associates violated numerous game laws including big game tag transfers, chasing big game with motor vehicles, shooting at big game from motor vehicles, hunting without licenses, failing to tag big game animals, improper use of radios to hunt big game, taking over limits of game and wanton waste of game.

Circuit Judge Jerome Eckrich sentenced Tschetter to pay \$4,000 in fines/costs, \$15,000 in civil damages and \$4,500 in restitution for the cost of investigation. Tschetter received 240 days of jail for all of the counts, with all but 28 days suspended. The judge ordered him to serve four days at the opening of each of the next four West River Deer seasons as part of those 28 days.

Additionally, Tschetter was ordered to complete a hunter safety class and his hunting privileges were revoked for six years. He was also placed on unsupervised probation for four years and forfeited two hunting rifles.

Prior to Tschetter's court appearance, five other defendants had previously plead guilty in Dewey County.

- * Jeff Tschetter, 55, Huron - big game tag transfer; fined \$584 and 1 year license revocation
- * Kayce Tschetter, 32, Yale - big game tag transfer; fined \$584 and 1 year license revocation
- * Scot Eckmann, 53, Cavour - unlawful possession of big game; fined \$334 and 1 year license revocation
- * William Fast, 49, Yale - unlawful possession of big game; fined \$2,336 and 1 year license revocation plus \$2,000 civil penalties
- * Adam Doerr, 28, Huron - unlawful possession of big game; fined \$1,752 and 1 year license revocation plus \$2,000 civil penalties

Big trouble for Bighorn Sheep

Re-printed with permission from Rapid City Journal

Dan Ray is always among the first people to spot the bighorn sheep that come down from the Black Hills each year during their winter mating ritual along the western fringes of Canyon Lake.

"It's just an 'oh wow' deal," said Ray, an avid sheep-spotter who starts his search for the bighorns in November every year. "I just love the way they look; it's a wonderful animal."

But this year's search proved challenging for Ray and other local sheep enthusiasts, who say they are seeing fewer of the sheep and less often.

Many are noticing the thinning herd's hacking cough — a symptom of the pneumonia that recently has killed almost half of the state's bighorn sheep lambs, according to officials with the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department.

Another 28 percent of the state's bighorn lambs are killed by predators, a figure that also is boosted by the sickness because it makes the lambs weaker and easier to catch.

"We're still having pretty bad effects from the pneumonia," Game, Fish & Parks Wildlife Biologist Lauren Wiechmann said. "Most of the rams and ewes are able to survive. They can build up an immunity in their body to fight off the pneumonia. Our population is trending toward the older generation so we only have a couple yearling rams coming up a year and very few yearling ewes."

The aging aspect of the bighorn herd means that very few newborns survive to replace the older, dying sheep. The result is a progressively smaller herd, which will make spotting the majestic horned sheep even harder in the coming years.

Wiechmann said there is no current treatment for the pneumonia, aside from a newer vaccine that's being tested in labs and surrounding states with bighorn populations.

"Once it's in our wild population, we can't get rid of it. It's there for good," she said, adding that other states see large die-offs but herds sometimes rebound. "A couple years down the road it may turn the corner and we get rams back again but we're not quite around that corner yet. So really, it's kind of hope and wait."

But even with a new treatment, Wiechmann said, inoculating the state's wild population is difficult. She said it's hard to ensure every bighorn gets a shot and that others don't get double-dosed.



The Rapid City herd of around 55 to 80 bighorn sheep includes the 35 to 40 animals that gather near Cleg-horn Canyon west of Canyon Lake, and another herd near Spring Creek south of Sheridan Lake Road. There are four known bighorn herds statewide. South Dakota overall has between 275 and 300 bighorn, which are a non-native species, according to Game, Fish & Parks.

Wiechmann said an exact number of the bighorn suffering from pneumonia is hard to tell, but she said the majority of them are carriers of the bacteria that causes it. GF&P suspects that the bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*) predisposes wild bighorn to pneumonia. Once the sheep are infected with that strain of bacteria, other normally harmless strains in the sheep's nose, throat or gut are believed to descend into the animal's lungs and cause the disease, according to the department.

Wild bighorn get *M. ovi* from making contact with domestic livestock. For Ray, it's disappointment to see the wild bighorn suffering. He's hoping that the sheep will make a rebound so he and others can continue to marvel at the annual spectacle.

"If people don't go out and look at them, they're really missing something," he said. "I just really appreciate looking at them"

"Because we don't think about future generations, they will never forget us."
Henrik Tikkanen

Out-of-state pheasant licenses drop by 19,000

Luke Hagen, Mitchell Daily Republic

Out-of-staters bought about 19,000 fewer small-game hunting licenses in South Dakota during 2013, dropping sales to their lowest point in 11 years.

It was also the third consecutive year the state has experienced a decline in both nonresident and resident small-game license sales.

Chris Petersen, director of administration with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, said there were 76,301 nonresident small-game hunting licenses sold in 2013, below the 95,298 sold in 2012 and 96,983 sold in 2011.

"The last time it's been this low was in 2002 when there were about 73,000 sold," Petersen said.

The nonresident small-game license is most associated with out-of-staters coming to South Dakota to hunt pheasants.

Last year, the cost of a nonresident small-game license rose to \$121. Previously, the license was \$110. By selling 18,997 fewer nonresident small-game licenses in 2013 than in 2012, the state lost out on about \$2.3 million in potential revenue.

The decline is likely tied to a report released prior to the pheasant season that showed statewide pheasant numbers had decreased 64 percent, the second largest drop from one year to the next in the history of the state's brood survey, dating to 1949. The drop has been blamed mostly on a loss of habitat and unfavorable weather conditions.

Not as many locals chased pheasants in 2013, either. There were 21,015 resident small-game licenses sold in 2013 at \$30 apiece. That's 6,861 fewer than in 2012

and \$205,830 in lost potential revenue compared to 2012, when 27,876 licenses were sold. In 2011, there were 31,882 resident licenses sold, which was 10,867 more than 2013.

The recent peak in small-game license sales came in 2010, a year when the preseason pheasant population estimate was 9.84 million and 1.8 million birds were harvested. There were 102,010 nonresident small-game licenses sold that year and 35,096 resident licenses sold. Combined, there were about 40,000 more small-game licenses sold that year than in 2013. Even though the pheasant season concludes at sundown Sunday, last year's license numbers are "99.99 percent finalized," Petersen said, because any licenses that are purchased now go on next year's figures and can also be used next season. On Dec. 16, the GF&P started offering its 2014 licenses.

The 2014 statewide pheasant season is tentatively set to begin Oct. 18.

Small-game license numbers

The number of resident and nonresident small-game hunting licenses sold in South Dakota during the past five years, according to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks:

- 2013: 76,301 resident, 21,015 nonresident
- 2012: 95,298 resident, 27,876 nonresident
- 2011: 96,983 resident, 31,882 nonresident
- 2010: 102,010 resident, 35,096 nonresident
- 2009: 98,643 resident, 34,418 nonresident

SD Wildlife Federation Donors

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. These donation levels were revised October 2011 to: Level V Eagle \$1,000 & above; Level IV Buffalo \$501 - \$999; Level III Elk \$301 - \$500; Level II Deer \$201 - \$300; and Level I Pheasant \$100 - \$200.

November 2013			
LEVEL I PHEASANT AYLER, JOHN - KS BURTON, DON - CO	HEEDUM, ROGER - NE HOCH, JAMES - CA JOHNSON, DARRELL - SD	JONES, DONALD - CO MILLER, RICHARD - SD VAA, SPENCER - SD	
October 2013			
LEVEL II DEER HALLSTROM, KEN - SD	SATTLER, ARNOLD - SD TOSCANA, VIC - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT RUENGER, RON - WI	
September 2013 No legacy donations for this month.			
August 2013			
LEVEL III ELK LEMONDS, JIM - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT BUCKNER, EVERETT - AR BUCKNER II, WILLIAM - AR GREGORY, J.T. - GA	KLUSMANN, JAY - SD MUDD, WILLIAM - KY NELSON, LAWRENCE - SD OCHOCKI, ROBERT - CA	PAQUIN, STACY - MN PAUL, K-LYNN - AZ SWANSON, EARL - MN
LEVEL II DEER JACOBSON, ROBERT - SD			
July 2013			
LEVEL IV BUFFALO WORDEN, JAMES - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT ADAMS, MEL - TN EBERSPACHER, DAVID - IL ELBE, ROBERT - WI GEBHART, RONALD - AK	KLUTTZ, HENRY - NC LULEWICZ, JERRY - SD LUTZ, BOB - ID MAYES, TERRY & LAREE - SD OGDEN, JERRY - MS PAUL, K-LYNN - AZ	PETERS, DUANE - SD RAINEY, TIMOTHY - MN WELCH, HARVEY - IL WILLMOTT, HARRY - MN
LEVEL II DEER MCGUIRE, ARVID - WI WHEELER, STEPHEN J - SD			
June 2013			
LEVEL V EAGLE CHAPMAN, JOHN W. - PA ROBERTS, STEVEN - MN	LEVEL II DEER EISENBEISZ, DAVID - SD MCGUIRE, ARVID - WI	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANDRESEN, RICH - SD BEALKA, ROBERT - SD KASISCHKE, CARL - MI	KIEFT, LARRY - MI KOSKI, GARY - AZ MATOUSEK, WILLIAM - SD SCHERSCHLIGHT, JEFFRY - SD
LEVEL III ELK CAPITAL CITY BASS CLUB - SD			
May 2013			
LEVEL I PHEASANT DENNIS, JACK - NV	FLINT, FORREST - MN KEELER, CHARLES - MN	RANDALL, KEVIN - SD ZOELLNER, KENNETH - CA	
April 2013			
LEVEL IV BUFFALO OLSON, JEFF - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT BROWN, ALLEN B. - SD BURNS, HOWARD - SD CONNELL, CRAIG - SD	KURTENBACH, AELRED - SD LARSON, DORRANCE - SD LINDNER, RONALD - SD LOHRMAN, JIM - SD	MELBY, DAVID - MN
LEVEL II DEER GREENWOOD, KEN - OK			
March 2013			
LEVEL V EAGLE BROWN CO SPORTSMEN - SD	NATURE CONSERVANCY - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANTONIDES, BILL & LILA - SD DEER MT. CATS TRUST - SD DIVICH, DUANE - TX	SCHULTZ, JIM - TX
LEVEL IV BUFFALO DUCKS UNLIMITED - SD HIGH PLAINS WILDLIFE - SD	LEVEL III ELK CARLSON, JR., HENRY - SD		
February 2013			
LEVEL V EAGLE BEADLE CO. SPORTSMEN - SD NAT'L WILD TURKEY FED - SD	SD CHAPTER OF THE IKES - SD	YANKTON AREA PHEASANTS FOREVER - SD	HECLA SPORTSMAN CLUB - SD HOBBY, CHARLES - GA HOFTIEZER, GREG - SD PHILLIPS, DR. KENNETH - NC RUMPCA, HAL - SD SIMPSON, JOHN - SD STULTS, MARK - SD
LEVEL IV BUFFALO BLACK HILLS SPORTSMEN - SD	LEVEL II DEER BIG SIOUX CHAPTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUND. - SD BRICK, RICHARD - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT BORMANN, DANIEL - WI DENISON, LARRY - VA ELBE, ROBERT - WI GRASS LAKES CONSERVATION CLUB - SD GRIFFIN, DEL - SD	
LEVEL III ELK BROOKINGS WILDLIFE FED - SD COTEAU PRAIRIE PHEASANTS FOREVER - SD	PESEK, RON - SD WHETSTONE SPORTSMEN CONSERVATION CLUB - SD		
January 2013			
LEVEL III ELK JOHNSON, ERIC - MN	BOWAR, PAT - SD CAMPBELL, STUART - SD DAVIDSON, JOHN - SD	GOGGINS, ROBERT - MN HAY, MARY & JERRY - WI HOCH, JAMES - CA HOFFMAN, CHARLES - SD KRETCHMAN, CHARLES - SD LEPP, DONALD - SD MCQUEARY, PETER - TX METRY, MARK - WI	OLSON, MURDEAN - SD OLSON, RICHARD - MN PICKART, PHILLIP - SD POLENZ, ALLAN - OR RANEY, THOMAS - KS RITER, JR., ROBERT - SD ZOELLNER, KENNETH - CA
LEVEL II DEER CAMPBELL, STUART - SD LEVISEN, ARLO - SD	DRESSING, BRIAN - SD ECKERT, DENIS - SD EVANS, RALPH - FL FAST, DAVID - OH FICK, HAROLD - CA		
LEVEL I PHEASANT BAGAU, TERRY - MN BECKMAN, LEON - SD			
December 2012			
LEVEL IV BUFFALO OLSON, JEFF - SD SCALET, CHUCK & GINGER - SD	DRAKE, ROBERT - SD FORMAN, KURT - SD FOXWORTHY, ROBERT - KY FRYBARGER, JIM - NM FUERST, KEVIN - SD HEEDUM, ROGER - NE HEPPER, GREGORY - SD JOHNSON, LYNN E. - SD	KALLEMEYN, LARRY - SD KING, T. CLEVE - MI KRODINGER, LAWRENCE - MO MILLER, O. LARRY - SD MILLER, RICHARD - SD MUNDON, KENT - SD PARCEL, KERRY - SD PETERS, DUANE - SD	PICEK, LARRY - SD PORISCH, ROBERT - MN RILEY, MIKE - MO SATTLER, ARNOLD - SD STANFORTH, WINFIELD - CO

"JUST ONE"

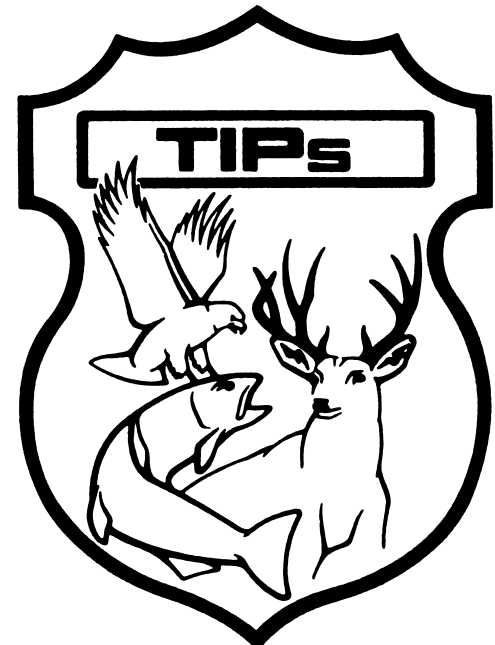
New Member Program

The SDWF has approximately 3,000 members. We are constantly fighting to keep our outdoor heritage and to conserve our natural resources. We can't continue without our members and we can't keep fighting unless we grow our membership.

Encourage your friends that enjoy the outdoors to join the SDWF directly or through a local affiliate club. "JUST ONE" new member can make a world of difference!



Love the outdoors and need a tax deduction this year? If you have a car, van, truck, ATV, or boat that's in reasonably good shape and you aren't using, donate it to the SDWF. You'll get a nice tax break and will feel great knowing you helped our great organization protect South Dakota's outdoors.



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 SDWF \$20/Yr Membership Fee \$ _____
 SDWFCamo-Coalition lobbying donation: \$ _____

Send Donation and Membership Application to:
 SDWF
 P.O Box 7075
 Pierre, SD 57501-0952



CC _____ EXP _____ CV _____
 Check - make checks payable to SDWF

There's an old North American Indian saying:
 The sky is held up by the trees. If the forest disappears, the sky-roof of the world collapses. Nature and man then perish together." M.S. Swaminathan

Pheasant summit: 'Make every single acre count'

Re-printed with permission from Peter Harriman, Sioux Falls Argus Leader

An 80-year-old precept from a visionary wildlife biologist helped introduce Gov. Dennis Daugaard's pheasant habitat summit Friday in Huron, and it became a dominant theme of the event.

Game, Fish and Parks Secretary Jeff Vonk, in opening remarks, referred to Aldo Leopold's 1933 book "Game Management." In it, Leopold asserts the fire, ax, cow, gun and plow that transformed the U.S. landscape and threatened wildlife populations as the country was settled could be the same tools that bring wildlife back.

Three other speakers updated Leopold's concept for the 21st century. Intensively managing South Dakota's most productive land for crop yield and similarly managing conservation land for maximum wildlife production might help the state stabilize falling pheasant numbers and preserve South Dakota's signature hunting tradition, they said.

Daugaard convened the summit in the wake of GF&P pheasant population estimates that bird numbers statewide had declined 64 percent from a year ago and were down 76 percent from the 10-year average.

While the drop is explained in part by a summerlong drought in 2012 and an unusually cold, wet spring this year that interfered with nesting, the pheasant decline also tracks land-use conversion. That conversion has seen 1 million acres taken out of the federal Conservation Reserve Program since 1997 and planted to row crops, and perhaps more than 2 million acres overall converted to crops when native grassland that has been plowed is figured in.

The pressure to produce crops will only intensify as the world's population continues to grow, said Barry Dunn, a dean at South Dakota State University, and Bruce Knight, a conservation consultant and former undersecretary with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In the face of that, in the wildlife habitat that remains, "we need to make every single acre count," said Dave Nomsen, a Pheasants Forever vice president. "The days of pheasant management as an incidental benefit to various other policies and practices are over."

More than 500 people registered for the summit, and more than 400 made their way to the Crossroads Convention Center and Huron Arena on a subzero morning. Daugaard and Vonk want to keep them all in the loop. The governor said he will form a work group to prioritize ideas that emerge, and Vonk said these will be shared by email with everyone who registered.

Daugaard applauded the fact the summit included landowners, hunters and experts in agriculture and wildlife management.

"Understanding one another is the first step in agreeing on commonly supported solutions," Daugaard said to close the event.

"It's important to maintain the strength of our agricultural economy and the heritage of our hunting tradition. They are very important to South Dakota. We want to keep both of them."

Pursuing solutions instead of blame

Participants hailed the format.

Paul Lepisto, regional conservation coordinator for the Izaak Walton League of America, said he was "quite pleased with it. I thought there were some good ideas and opinions expressed, solutions. It was not just finger-pointing."

Keith Alverson is a sixth-generation farmer from Chester: "I always think it is good when you get multiple stakeholders in a setting like this to talk issues. This is something that impacts all of us in South Dakota. We can't have pheasant habitat without the participation of farmers."

Steve Halverson of Kennebec has a foot in each camp. The Lyman County farmer also offers commercial pheasant hunting for wild birds. He said the summit "helps everybody understand where everybody else is coming from. In the breakout sessions, you could listen to everyone's concerns about what they think needs to be done."

An array of ideas were generated in small-group discussions, including suggestions for new state revenue sources to acquire wildlife habitat: devoting a portion of sales tax to habitat; estab-

lishing a habitat trust fund with higher hunting license fees; rounding sporting goods purchases up to the next highest dollar and using the money for habitat; taxing commercial hunting lodges; and creating a \$5 per acre tax on land owned by nonresidents.

Proposing tax breaks for conservation

Other ideas centered on conservation incentives for landowners, such as tax breaks for keeping land in grass. Another class of ideas dealt with giving landowners greater flexibility to manage land set aside for conservation. In a panel discussion, Knight said this could be accomplished by modifying conservation implementation rules in the next farm bill.

Sen. John Thune picked up on that idea in a brief address. States could be given authority, he said, to set payment rates to landowners within the framework of the federal CRP budget. He cited an example of a farmer who would not be enticed to set aside 320 acres for what CRP could pay him but might be inclined to conserve 160 acres for the same amount.

Thune said he has watched "with great concern" the loss of CRP acres in South Dakota. "There is a direct correlation between habitat and pheasant production," he said.

Pheasant numbers in South Dakota hit modern highs of more than 10 million birds in 2007-2008 when there were about 1.5 million acres of CRP land in the state's most productive pheasant habitat. In 2008, 32 million acres enrolled in CRP throughout the country, said Thune. Now it's down to 25.6 million acres, and the House and Senate are considering a CRP cap of 24 million to 25 million acres in the next farm bill.

Emphasis on efficiency

"How do we take a smaller budget, a smaller number of acres and use them in the most efficient way possible to get the most recreational opportunity?" Thune asked.

The tools for precision management exist. Where the current generation of farmers manages acres, said Knight, the next generation will farm inches as technological advances will allow them to make land-use decisions that precise. Dunn spoke of genetics breakthroughs that drive yields so substantially higher they can be fully realized only on the most productive soil.

Lepisto is on board with the idea of intense management.

"I completely agree with Leopold. It is absolutely the way. Farm the best. Save the rest," he said.

Halverson, too, hopes the idea resonates.

"Every farm out there has some marginal acres that honestly are best devoted to conservation. Obviously, the top tier of ground needs to be farmed. That's the best use for that. But every farm has marginal land. Hopefully, we can get producers to think that maybe instead of farming this and producing a poor crop every year, I should devote some of this to conservation use."

Alverson agreed that state flexibility in interpreting farm bill rules would allow for the most efficient management decisions benefiting wildlife.

"Having more localized control is important," he said. "While we understand some of these rules are made with the best intent, to put a local twist on them is beneficial."

Nomsen said he hopes the summit is the first step in creating "a comprehensive mosaic" for managing federal, state and private land cooperatively for the benefit of pheasants and other wildlife.

"We're all from different backgrounds," Halverson said of summit participants. "But we all want one thing, and that's more birds."



Factors Related to the Recent Increases in Hunting and Fishing Participation

Responsive Management

After two decades of decline, hunting and fishing participation among Americans increased between 2006 and 2011, and a recent major research study pinpoints 10 major reasons for the increases. Hunting and fishing participation rates are up due to: 1) the economic recession, 2) higher incomes among some segments of the population, 3) hunting for meat and the locavore movement, 4) agency recruitment and retention programs, 5) agency access programs, 6) agency marketing and changes in licenses, 7) current hunters and anglers participating more often, 8) returning military personnel, 9) re-engagement of lapsed hunters and anglers, and 10) new hunters and anglers, including female, suburban, and young participants.

The Background

Throughout the latter half of the 2000s, numerous state-level trend surveys conducted by Responsive Management consistently showed increases in hunting and fishing participation. Given this clear pattern emerging across multiple states and regions, in 2011 Responsive Management initiated a project with the American Sportfishing Association, Southwick Associates, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife under a Multi-State Conservation Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify and better understand factors related to increases in hunting and fishing participation throughout the United States.

The Indicators

Two major data sources are available for measuring hunting and fishing participation trends on a national level: license sales data collected by the individual states and compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which are known as "Federal Aid" data, and the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, conducted every 5 years since 1955 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

At the time the grant proposal was submitted in 2011, the only available measurement supporting the research team's hypothesis of a nationwide increase in hunting and fishing were Federal Aid data measuring license sales for the two activities from recent years; the other critical indicator, the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, had not yet been released. However, shortly after the grant was secured, results from the 2011 National Survey determined that, between 2006 and 2011, hunting participation among Americans increased 9% and fishing participation increased 11% nationwide.

The Research Methodology

With the evidence in hand, Responsive Management and its partners began implementing the study, which entailed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research components. To examine factors responsible for the upswing in hunting and fishing participation, the researchers collected data from multiple stakeholder sources, accounting for perspectives ranging from agency professionals to hunters and anglers themselves. Overall, the study methodology included a comprehensive review of past research examining hunting and fishing participation; personal interviews with and a survey of fish and wildlife agency personnel representing hunting, freshwater fishing, and saltwater fishing divisions; a multivariate analysis of national hunting and fishing license sales data; and a scientific telephone survey of hunters and anglers in the states with the most notable increases in participation between 2006 and 2011.¹ For the telephone survey component, a total of 1,400 interviews were completed with hunters in seven states that saw some of the most growth in hunting during the period of interest (Alabama, Alaska, Indiana, Idaho, Mississippi, New York, and South Dakota) and anglers in seven states that experienced some of the largest increases in fishing participation over the same period (Alaska, Idaho, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington). The survey of hunters and anglers explored various demographic and behavioral characteristics of new and returning participants in the two activities and also measured the relative importance of various factors that influenced participants to either take breaks from or return to the activities.

The data were collected and analyzed over an 18-month period, with the results from each study component examined independently and as a whole. The overall data eventually revealed that hunting and fishing participation increased between 2006 and 2011 not because of a single major reason, but because of a combination of factors, a perfect positive storm of reasons ranging from nationwide economic conditions to efforts on the part of individual state agencies to the confluence of key participant groups entering or re-entering the sports.

Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, notes, "The fact that a variety of factors was responsible for the increases should not take away from the importance of each individual factor. The research isolated each of these factors as having a substantial impact on the increase in hunting and fishing participation between 2006 and 2011."

Reason 1: The Economic Recession

The study found a negative statistical correlation between hunting license sales and increases in housing starts--as housing starts decline, hunting participation increases.² The mortgage crisis and economic recession that took hold of the country at the end of 2008 resulted in fewer housing starts as fewer building permits were issued. Because some of the top occupations of hunters include building-related fields (e.g., construction, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and craftsman), a disproportionate percentage of hunters were under- or unemployed during the period between 2006 and 2011, leaving them with more free time in which to hunt. This is in contrast to Responsive Management research conducted during the height of the housing boom, when many hunters were not hunting due to a lack of time because of work obligations.

Reason 2: Higher Incomes Among Some Segments of the Population

Interestingly, the research indicates that hunting and fishing increased because of both the lower end of the economic spectrum as well as the upper end: the multivariate analysis also identified a positive association between increasing per capita income and participation in one or both outdoor activities, suggesting a scenario where some hunters and anglers have more to spend and can thus afford to take more hunting and fishing trips.

Reason 3: Hunting for Meat and the Locavore Movement

Somewhat related to the country's economic downturn was growth in the segment of sportsmen motivated to hunt or fish primarily for the food: the period between 2006 and 2011 saw an increase not only in the proportion of participants who hunted or fished as a means of putting meat on the family table, but also in the percentage of "locavore" hunters and anglers, that is, individuals who go afield for reasons of self-sufficiency and a desire for organic, local, chemical-free meat. When hunters in the survey were read a list of factors that may have influenced them to go hunting, the top factor that was a major or minor influence was interest in hunting as a source of natural or "green" food, with 68% of hunters naming this as an influence. When a similar list was read to anglers, 51% said that fishing as a natural or "green" food source was an influence in their decision to go fishing. Finally, in an open-ended question (where no answer set was read and respondents could name anything that came to mind), 56% of hunters said that they hunted for food, and 32% of anglers fished for fresh fish to eat. The desire for food, whether for economic reasons, locavore motivations, or a hybrid of both, played an important role in the recent increases in hunting and fishing participation. (Click here for a summary of research examining the growing motivation of hunting for meat.)

Reasons 4 and 5: Agency Recruitment and Retention Programs and Access Programs

A few key efforts on the part of individual state fish and wildlife agencies also helped clear a path for more robust participation in hunting and fishing. Of particular importance was the implementation of hunting and fishing recruitment and retention programs, which provide instruction to participants of all age levels and, in many cases, offer program events year-round. After a decade of states' implementation of recruitment and retention programs, the intended results are beginning to manifest. (Click here for more information about Responsive Management research on recruitment and retention programs.)

More hunters also made it into the field thanks to programs that opened up access to hunting lands: the analysis revealed that the percentage of hunters in the state rating the quality of overall access to hunting lands as excellent or good had a positive effect on participation. Access is one of the most important issues that acts as a constraint to hunters; when access is good, participation is unimpeded. With ample research on the potential value in these types of programs having been conducted in recent years, the study was able to show definitively that these efforts are now taking effect and producing results. (For more information, please visit Responsive Management's summaries of research on hunting and fishing access.)

Reason 6: Agency Marketing and Changes in Licenses

Many agencies in the survey and personal interviews emphasized the importance of their marketing efforts in recent years, not only for programs designed to boost participation but in the advertising of new or repackaged hunting and fishing licenses. Additionally, hunters and anglers were also asked about factors that prompted them to hunt and fish. Among hunters, 22% said that marketing efforts collectively had been an influence in their decision to go hunting. Among anglers, 20% said that marketing had been an influence in their decision to go fishing.

The marketing aspect of efforts to increase sales of hunting and fishing licenses dovetails with previous Responsive Management research that has established a correlation between increases in license sales and changes in license structure (i.e., the availability of new or modified hunting and fishing licenses). Such changes, which can include repackaging of licenses or a recombination of various privileges, can have the effect of marketing because the hunter and/or angler may perceive that a better deal is available, that the license is "new and improved," or he or she may simply be reminded of the opportunities to hunt and fish.

Reasons 7 to 10: Key Groups Driving the Increases

In pinpointing the specific markets that helped drive the increases in hunting and fishing participation, the survey was able to isolate several groups of particular importance: current and longtime hunters and anglers simply participating more often, returning military personnel resuming their participation in the activities, the reactivation of former and lapsed hunters and anglers, and new female participants.

The project examined the characteristics of these new and returning hunters and anglers. Crosstabulations of established hunters and new/returning hunters highlighted some differences that help reveal who the new/returning hunters are. Compared to established hunters, these new/returning hunters are slightly more often female, are somewhat younger, are more often in the military or college, are slightly more suburban, have not been living in the same state for as long, and are more often hunting to be with friends.

Likewise, compared to established anglers, the group of new/returning anglers again are slightly more often female, are markedly more often retired with new free time, are slightly more often identifying themselves as homemakers, are slightly more suburban, have not been living in the same state for as long, and are more devoted to fishing in freshwater (i.e., did not fish in saltwater as much as established anglers--because anglers could fish in both types of waters, established anglers fished in freshwater about as much as new/returning anglers, but they fished in saltwater much more often than did new/returning anglers).

Sportsmen/women- Want to help fund SDWF and the Youth Conservation Camp plus reduce your taxes this year? Donate stocks and land to the SDWF. You not only won't have to pay taxes on those assets, you will pay less tax because of your generosity!