In part 4 of this 6 part series, we learned how pheasants change their behavior as the first taste of winter hits South Dakota in November and December. Birds begin to seek out heavy winter cover such as cattail sloughs and shelterbelts for protection from colder temperatures and the season’s first blast of winter weather. By December, pheasants are using more energy to stay warm and need to increase food consumption by 1/3 compared to October to generate the extra body heat. Pheasants easily overcome the challenging weather conditions of early winter and survival is typically high, especially where habitat quality already exists. But cany baby pheasants handle the heat of winter during January and February?

By January and February, the coldest temperatures of the year have arrived and brutal winter storms are the norm on the South Dakota prairies. The average high temperature is in the low 20’s and low temperatures commonly dip well below zero. People avoid outdoor activity as the bone-chilling temperatures and winds can penetrate even the thickest winter clothing. While people are eating hot soup and staying toasty warm in the comfort of their homes, pheasants must adapt to the changing conditions if they hope to survive a severe South Dakota winter. As snow blankets South Dakota’s landscape, large flocks of pheasants are often observed foraging throughout the day in harvested grain fields. While the snow does make finding food challenging, starvation is not the primary threat to pheasants during most South Dakota winters. The primary threat to pheasants is freezing to death during extreme winter weather events such as blizzards.

A pheasant’s body loses body heat through physiological processes. If body heat is lost at a greater rate than it is produced, the internal temperature declines from its normal 108ºF and a pheasant will freeze to death. At this point you may be wondering at what temperature does a pheasant freeze to death? This is not a simple question as multiple factors affect the rate at which a pheasant loses body heat. Pheasants could likely survive any low temperature possible in South Dakota under calm conditions and with some thick cover for protection. However, when gusty winds combine with cold temperatures to produce extremely low wind chill values, pheasants can lose body heat faster than they can produce it if no adequate protection. Two-row shelterbelts or small cattail sloughs that protected pheasants from early winter weather may not provide the protection needed to survive a severe winter storm in January or February. High quality habitat is the key to pheasant survival during severe winter weather. High quality winter habitat functions to block brisk winds and provide insulating thermal cover so pheasants lose body heat at a slower rate than they produce it! Examples of high quality winter habitat include 8 or more row shelterbelts with low-growing shrubs/trees, large cattail sloughs, and tall warm season grasses such as switch grass.

While high quality winter habitat assures pheasants have protection from dangerous winter storms, how do pheasants find enough food to survive the winter when snow covers the landscape? As January brings the coldest temperatures of the year, the amount of energy a pheasant needs to stay warm peaks, and the amount of energy in the form of food needed to stay warm may surprise you. In January a pheasant must consume daily amounts of food equivalent to two small hamburgers or three candy bars to stay warm and maintain its body weight! This would equate to nearly 300 kernels of corn, the most abundant food in a pheasant’s crop during winter. But what happens when severe winter weather prevents feeding for 2-3 days?

Fortunately, pheasants have been preparing for winter by storing energy in the form of fat during fall and early winter which provides a useful reserve when weather prevents feeding for a day or so. Pheasants can easily go 3 days without feeding by using energy stored as fat to stay warm. Once severe winter weather passes, pheasants emerge from thick cover a bit hungry, but well-conditioned pheasants were in little risk of starvation. But how do pheasants keep from starving to death when deep snow covers their food source for months at a time? A pheasant surely can not find 300 kernels of corn with two feet of snow covering the ground.

Every day that a pheasant can not find enough food to generate the same amount of body heat that it is losing, fat reserves must be used to make up the difference. During years with multiple winter storms that prevent feeding for many days, fat reserves which can make up 13% of a pheasant’s weight in early January can be quickly used up. If fat reserves are exhausted and a pheasant can not find enough food to generate body heat, the bird has no choice but to catalyze its own muscle tissue to generate heat.

While this is not an ideal situation for a pheasant, it is better than the alternative of starvation. In captivity, rooster pheasants have been found to survive 19 days without food and hens 16 during January. While these birds cannot expend energy searching for food and wild birds likely would survive fewer days without food, this does demonstrate how resilient pheasants can be in response to food shortages. In fact, a pheasant can lose 40% of its body weight before it succumbs to starvation. Hens are more likely to starve to death than roosters as they entered winter in poorer condition because nestling, brood rearing, and molting activities of summer and early fall were extremely energy demanding. Hens that have laid more eggs due to predated nests or had late hatching clutches also enter winter in worse body condition and will have an elevated chance of starvation during severe winters. Last year’s chicks also enter winter with lighter body weights and less fat reserves than adults, which will likely leave them more vulnerable to starvation during severe winters.

One way landowners and wildlife managers help boost pheasant winter survival is by providing food plots of unharvested grain, typically consisting of corn, milo, sorghum or millet. Even small food plots provide hundreds of bushels of readily available grain for pheasants to eat throughout the winter. Ideal food plots are placed adjacent to high quality winter cover so birds have protection from winter weather and available food in close proximity. While availability to food plots nearly eliminates the risk of pheasant starvation, predation is also increased because birds do not have to forage in open fields for days at a time where they are vulnerable to predators. Birds utilizing food plots are also likely in better body condition come spring which could result in higher reproductive effort, although this has never been investigated with wild pheasants.

By late February, most South Dakota’s are ready for a break from freezing temperatures and snow storms! Pheasants are no different as they are in their poorest body condition of the year during severe winters. The longer old man winter persists, the more vulnerable pheasants are to starvation. Fortunately, spring usually arrives just in time as pheasants rarely starve to death in South Dakota. During mild winters, pheasant survival can be very high and their body condition can be similar to December when 13% of their body weight was fat. Winter may come as a pleasant relief, March and April can be the deadliest months of the year for pheasants. Be sure to check out the sixth and final article of this series to see why spring can be so dangerous for South Dakota ring-necks.

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.
His youth spent away from the television, with some time in a barbershop,
preoccupied Kevin Hepler to fantasize what would seem the ultimate in
an outdoors environment: Alaska.
Hepler spent the last 35 years of his career in that northernmost outpost,
where it seems there is no indoors. But starting in March, he will be the
secretary of the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department, which he
considers his dream job.

That’s his dream job coming home. Hepler was born in Deadwood and
grew up in Spearfish.

“Trew spent just some wonderful years in Alaska,” Hepler said in a recent
telephone interview from Pierre. “It’s really a unique, wild place to be.”

But he added: “It’s just South Dakota is inside you. To come back, it all
comes back,” he said.

Hepler enjoys hunting moose and caribou in Alaska and plans to re-
ignite an interest in bow hunting and pheasant hunting, along with angling
for smallmouth bass and trout.

“I love eating venison. I’d love to go out hunting, not so much for the
trophy, but I just really need some venison to get through the winter,” he
said.

Along with taking advantage of the outdoor opportunities, Hepler said he
needs to travel the state to visit with landowners, conservation officers
and other outdoor enthusiasts.

“I didn’t spend as much time out in the field when I was with Alaska Fish
and Game as I should have,” he said. “I want to get out and listen. I need
to learn what the challenges are three, four, five months from now.”

Last week’s visit to Pierre served only to reinforce his decision to take the
new job.

“My wife said, ‘You seem really comfortable here,” he said.

“I said, ‘I am. It’s truly home.’”

“My wife said, ‘You seem really comfortable being here,’” he said.

“I think about it, I just it, seemed better and better,” he said. “This is
a dream job.”

He graduated from Spearfish High School in 1973 and attended Black
Hills State University in Spearfish for two years, later earning a Bachelor of
Science degree in fish and wildlife management from Montana State
University.

Hepler said listening to stories of hunting and fishing at Barney’s
Shop in Spearfish sparked his interest in a conservation career.

“In those days we didn’t pay attention to television or computers, we went
outside and did things. I grew up with the mystique, that true South Da-
kota tradition of hunting and fishing,” he said.

His time in Alaska included a stint as lead investigator of an infamous
1989 oil spill. The tanker Exxon Valdez ruptured after striking a reef and
dumped 11 million gallons of crude oil in Prince William Sound.

“Flying in a contracted plane at 10,000 feet over Prince William Sound,
you could smell the gasoline fumes. It was devastating to see all that oil,”
he said.

He said he learned lessons from that haunting experience.

“It taught me about human resilience, how people banded together, that
nature can be resilient. It’s amazing what man can do to nature and it still
comes back,” he said.

“I believe in responsible resource development. I think you can do it cor-
rrectly with the right safeguards. Every time something like this happens
we further our knowledge and make sure it doesn’t happen again,” he
said.

Coming back to his home state, Hepler said the main wildlife issue will
continue to be the loss of pheasant habitat through conversion of conser-
vation reserve program land to cropland.

That’s going to be a significant challenge. It’s not only going to affect
pheasants. It’s going to affect ducks, fish and water,” he said.

Also needed, he said, is ongoing discussion on management of the
mountain lion population.

“That’s not going to go away,” he said.

“We want to make sure all of our management plans are clearly defined
and science-based,” he said. “I think we do that well, but it can be im-
proved upon.”

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jig his interest in bow hunting and pheasant hunting, along with angling
for smallmouth bass and trout.

“It’s going to affect fish, and water,” he said.

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I've said before that one of the great things (and usually the best thing) that the outdoors and our hunting, fishing, hiking, and other activities give us is those memories. Good and bad, amazing and frustrating, even the “I can’t believe I made it out alive” kind of memories! Two hunts this year were a combination of beauty, awesomeness, panic and frustration.

The first adventure involves my daughter’s dog Pokey (aka Fang, aka Killer). He’s a cocker spaniel that loves to hunt. One problem with this dog (and there are many) is he only does two of the three F’s. He finds and flushes, but doesn’t fetch the pheasants. Case in point: we started out hunting some public lands overlooking the White and Missouri rivers south of Oacoma. It was just beautiful, but after seeing only a couple of roosters at quite a distance, we decided to try my cousin’s grassland by Pukwana. This is another place I’ve hunted for 40 years that used to have hundreds of birds but is way down on numbers these last few years. It started out well. 200 yards in, Fang finds and flushes, and I shoot a nice rooster. No need to fetch this one, as he lies dead with Fang at his side, waiting for me to pick him up. Walking a quarter-mile more, we come to the old dam that doesn’t hold much water, but usually has a bird or two. Before we get there, seven mule deer spot us and hop away with big fleeces showing how fit and healthy they are, as if to say, “Don’t bother chasing us!”

We walk another ½ mile and I see a sneaky ringneck run behind some round bales. As we sprint (okay, probably not the correct word, but work with me here) around the hay hoping for easy pickings, we find nothing. “What the hell?” Fang and I say in unison. Then another explosion erupts, and I pick out two of the six roosters and drop ‘em. Correction, I drop ’em. Correction, I don’t drop them, I load them, and Fang just picks them up. I scream, “Fang! It’s two roosters!” I demand, as Fang runs right behind the once-dazed bird is starting to make a run for it. “Fetch him!” Fang says, as the once-dazed bird is starting to make a run for it. “Fetch him up #^$%#^&#*!” I demand, as Fang runs right behind the bird, letting him dodge freely between the bales. By the time we get to the other side, I can’t find the bird, I’m mad at Pok- ey for not fetching him, and he’s mad at me for not shooting the bird dead. Oh well, it was still a beautiful day with great exercise, and it beats working! I still love that dog too.

As you’ve all read, I’ve complained about the pheasant numbers for the last two years. But this year I was lucky enough to find a landowner who has the perfect combina- tion of beauty, awesomeness, panic and frustration. I still got it,” I said to myself while I was trying to figure out how far to lead each bird without much success. When I next looked back to see how dad was doing, he was sitting on the ground (panic). I ran over thinking the worst and yelled, “Is it your heart?” He said his legs had just given out, so I helped him back to the truck. He’ll be fine. (Note: my brother kept hunting and is now out of the will!)

When the shooting was over, we headed back to the truck. Unfortunately, as we drove to meet the others, my brother got stuck, and it took everyone to get us out (frustration)! When we got back to the farm yard to strategize, “some- one” locked the keys in his pickup (extreme frustration)! With some good old-fashioned farm hand technology, we correct- ed that situation and the group limited out with some never- to-be-forgotten memories!

With the legislature in session again, you know that SDWF is there as the only conservation/sportsmen & women or- ganization that is going over each and every bill that affects us. We have two lobbyists (Dave Nauman and Chris Hesla) who are well-respected and very knowledgeable, with over 50 years of experience between them. How can we afford to keep being the watchdog for everyone and making sure we know what’s happening? We can’t, un- less each of you helps. That can mean asking “JUST ONE” buddy to join, or becoming a Legacy Member, or just throw- ing in an extra $10 with your membership.

I’d like to spotlight the Brookings Wildlife Federation for their contribution in 2014. BWF is my home club. They were the first to introduce me to how important SDWF is for our state. They were the first to become $5,000 “Big Dog” donors. And they were the first to host the Hunting Film Tour. They have backed me and helped keep the SDWF Camo Coalition strong, and I want to thank them for their support.

We have a lot of affiliates and individuals who have done amazing things over our 70 years of existence, but we can never stop. I’m wondering what business or affiliate will be our next Big Dog donor or Legacy member? Some of our members can’t do that but do throw in that extra $10, which is our bread and butter. I thank you all and wish all of you a very happy 2015!

P.S. To keep up with legislation and other news, please like us on Facebook and listen to a SDWF board member talk on the KELO AM Outdoors Show every Wednesday at 9 a.m.

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 2015 legislative session has opened and started to work. So far there hasn’t been any negative legislation introduced. I’m sure that will change as session gains speed. There will be some tough issues again this year. We will all need to be diligent and educate our legislators about the issues and our beliefs for or against the bills.

I ask every one of you to be involved. There are two ways in which you can be involved.

First, plan on attending Camo-Coalition Day at the legislature on Monday, February 9th, 7:30am until 1pm. Several other conservation organizations are spreading the word and host- ing lunch for the legislators. Lunch sponsors so far include SD Ducks Unlimited, SD Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, SD Walleye Unlimited and SDWF-Camo. Do- nate a day of your time to help protect your hunting and fish-

with us. We wanted to let him experience the good old days again, and after a long hiatus, see if he still had his deadly aim. (This story includes the awesomeness, the panic, and the frustration of hunting.) As the 16 of us surrounded the ¼ acre to try to trap the extremely wild pheasants, the shots came fast and furious. I looked over to see my dad knock down a rooster with a hell of a shot (awesomeness). “He’s still got it,” I said to myself while I was trying to figure out how far to lead each bird without much success. When I next looked back to see how dad was doing, he was sitting on the ground (panic). I ran over thinking the worst and yelled, “Is it your heart?” He said his legs had just given out, so I helped him back to the truck. He’ll be fine. (Note: my brother kept hunting and is now out of the will!)

I hope all of you experience some special moments in your outdoor pursuits this year.

We can and do make a difference!
**Beadle County Sportsmens Club Contest Winners**

The “Longest Fish Contest” was held at Beadle County Sportsmen’s Club on January 13, 2015. Winners are left to right, Craig Jones-Longest Walleye by Other Method (diving), Larry Picek-Longest Walleye by Other Method (diving), Justin Picek-Archery Whitetail, Justin Picek-Archery Mule Deer, and Ray Poffa-Rifle Mule Deer.

The “One-Stop Shop” Online Licensing Application

The GFP online licensing application to purchase general licenses (small game hunting, fishing, combination, etc) has now merged into the limited issue licenses (deer, antelope, turkey, elk, mountain lion, etc) application system.

Users (residents and nonresidents) are able to purchase any 2015 general license (deer, antelope, turkey, elk, mountain lion, etc) application system. Please know that this just launched today so there may be a few minor glitches that need to be ironed out as we move forward with this merge.

The Farm Bureaus Busselman said the proposal assumes there are wide spread violations of current buffering requirements on farmland when in fact no statewide investigation has been conducted. Wed be enacting a broad regulation without any real sense of whether its going to do anything good for pheasant populations, he said. We have concerns over the one-size-fits-all nature of the governors particular proposal .... and well obviously be engaged in the proposal as it goes through the legislative process.

Theres also a property rights issue that seems to be missed in all of this, Busselman said Its somewhat akin to the governor saying, Lets take the front 20 feet of your lawn and let anyone walk on it.

If Daytons proposed legislation is adopted, the benefits of such a regulation would go far beyond creating more pheasant habitat, said Pheasants Forevers Vincent.

Whether you hunt or are an outdoors person or not, everyone should understand water and what we need to do to protect it, Vincent said.

Dayton said he will make the proposal part of the budget he will propose to the Minnesota Legislature later this month.

“*The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe, the less taste we shall have for destruction.*” Rachel Carson

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**133-year-old Rifle Found Leaning Against Tree in Great Basin National Park**

The Winchester Model 1873 repeating rifle has often been called “The Gun that Won the West.” For 133 years, one of these rifles lay hidden in plain sight propped up against a tree in Nevada’s Great Basin National Park. Archaeologists found the rifle last November in a remote rocky outcrop hidden far away from human eyes, but questions remained over the history of the gun. Who left it there, and why? Were they in danger, or was the rifle left behind out of carelessness? Exposed to wind, snow, rain, and the constant beating of the sun, the weathered rifle offered a unique challenge to park officials, and they were eager to plumb its mysteries.

“Model 1873? distinctively engraved on the mechanism identify the rifle as the Winchester Model 1873 repeating rifle,” park staffers posted on Facebook after some sleuthing. “The serial number on the lower tang correspond in Winchester records held at the Center for the West, Cody Firearms Museum in Cody, Wyoming, with a manufacture and shipping date of 1882. Currently, the detailed history of this rifle is unknown. Winchester records do not indicate who purchased the rifle from the warehouse or where it was shipped.”

The Winchester Model 1873 was wildly popular during its time, and hundreds of thousands were shipped across the United States and abroad. Manufactured between 1873 and 1919, the Model 1873 was chambered for cartridges like .44-40, .38-40, and .32-20. The Model 1873 was sold in rifle, carbine, and musket forms, and could be had for as little as $25 (the equivalent of several hundred dollars today, accounting for inflation). Its affordability made it commonplace among frontiersmen who needed a reliable repeater, and by the end of its production run Winchester sold more than 720,000 Model 1873s. The company brought back the Model 1873 in 2013, which is now manufactured under license in Japan.

“In 1882 alone, over 25,000 were made,” stated Great Basin researchers. “Selling for about $50 when they first came out, the rifles reduced in price to $25 in 1882 and were accessible and popular as ‘everyman’s’ rifle. The Winchester business plan included selling large lots of rifles to dealers or ‘jobbers’ who would distribute the firearms to smaller sales outlets.”

Tracing the history of one particular firearm out of 720,000 is no easy task. The Great Basin staff is currently searching for mentions of the rifle or its owner in old local newspapers and delving into family histories in the hope of getting some answers. It would make a great story, and add to the deep mosaic of Great Basin National Park’s history. The park plans on eventually sending the rifle to expert conservators to restore it to museum quality, and it will eventually be displayed as part of the park’s 30th Birthday and the National Park Service’s Centennial celebration.

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**JUST ONE**
NONRESIDENT WATERFOWL LICENSE WORK GROUP HOLDS FIRST MEETING

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed several rules to prevent the introduction and slow the spread of existing populations of aquatic invasive species in the state.

One rule proposal would allow conservation officers to require the removal of vegetation and all aquatic invasive species from a boat and trailer, and to require all drain plugs and related devices be opened or removed from boats when being transported. Exceptions would be for entering and exiting the water, emergency response vehicles, and livewells while on lands owned, leased, controlled or managed by the Department or other government entities adjacent to the water.

Another part of the proposal would give the Department Secretary the authority to declare a body of water an aquatic invasive species containment water, describe the conditions that would necessitate this action and outline restrictions in place for that water to reduce or slow the spread of aquatic invasive species.

GFP Commission Proposes Aquatic Invasive Species Rules

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed a work group to review and discuss the future of license allocations for nonresident waterfowl hunters in South Dakota.

The work group consists of the following members: Representative Dick Werner, Representative Spencer Hawley, Senator Bill Van Gerpen, Chuck Dieter, Chris Hasla, Norb Barrie, Larry Steffen, GFP Commissioner Gary Jensen and GFP Commissioner Paul Dennert.

The first of a series of meetings was held Dec. 29, 2014, in Pierre discussing the history of the season’s license allocations as well as information on license and hunter distribution.

Future meetings will be held in Fort Pierre on Feb. 2 and March 2, 2015, in which members will discuss ideas as well as suggestions received from the public. Efforts from the work group will conclude with assisting the Department in formulating recommendations that will be presented to the GFP Commission on April 1-2, 2015, in Brookings.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and the members of this work group want to hear from the public. To provide suggestions on nonresident waterfowl license allocations in South Dakota, please send an email to NRWaterfowlLicense@state.sd.us and include your full name and mailing address.

Meeting minutes, dates, presentations as well as additional information can be found online at http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/waterfowl/nonresidentwaterfowl-workgroup.aspx.


Madison, WI lab finds rare avian flu in ducks from Washington state

In December, the USGS National Wildlife Health Center in Madison found a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in several ducks from the state of Washington.

“This was very surprising, because we’ve never detected a highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild waterfowl in the U.S. before,” said Dr. Valerie Shearn-Bochsler, pathologist at the lab.

Pathologists regularly detect low pathogenic viruses in waterfowl, which do not pose any threat.?

HPAI was found when checking dead waterfowl from a die-off involving more than 100 ducks at Wiser Lake in far northwestern Washington near the town of Lynden in Whatcom County. The ducks died from eating moldy silage.

But in conducting necropsies, biologists unexpectedly found H5N2, a mixture of an Asian and North American virus.

Eventually, Shearn-Bochsler and diagnostic virologist Dr. Hon Ip, at the lab in Madison, found H5N8 in a falcon that fed on a dead duck. That strain was also later found in a domestic flock of guinea fowl in Oregon and a duck harvested by a hunter in California.

Though these are not the H5N1 virus that has killed people and domestic fowl in Asia, health authorities are concerned, especially since waterfowl migrate and could spread the HPAI throughout the flyway.


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Though these strains are not known to have infected people, hunters are cautioned to: not pick up what appears to be sick waterfowl; clean waterfowl using disposable latex gloves; and cook meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees.


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**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 57591.

The Legacy Council consists of five different donation levels. These donation levels were revised October 2011 to: Level I Eagle $1,000 & Above, Level II Buffalo $301 - $999, Level III Elk $301 - $500, Level II Deer $201 - $300, and Level I Pheasant $100 - $200.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 2014</th>
<th>No legacy donations for the month.</th>
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| November 2014 | **LEVEL I DEER**
|              | EDDIE, ARNOLD - SD                  |
|              | **LEVEL II DEER**
|              | BURNS, JESS - CA                    |
|              | **LEVEL III DEER**
|              | JONES, RICHARD - SD                 |
|              | **LEVEL IV DEER**
|              | BENDER, ROBERT - CA                 |
|              | **LEVEL V DEER**
|              | JOINER, JAMES - SD                  |
| October 2014 | No legacy donations for this month. |
| September 2014 | **LEVEL I EAGLE**
|               | BUCKLEY, BILL - NT                  |
|               | **LEVEL II EAGLE**
|               | BOWMAN, ELIZABETH - SD              |
|               | **LEVEL III EAGLE**
|               | JORDAN, JAY - SD                    |
|               | **LEVEL IV EAGLE**
|               | JONES, RICHARD - SD                 |
|               | **LEVEL V EAGLE**
|               | HICKMAN, JAY - SD                   |
| August 2014  | No legacy donations for this month. |
| July 2014    | **LEVEL I EAGLE**
|              | JOHNSON, MARK - SD                  |
|              | **LEVEL II EAGLE**
|              | JOHNSON, MARK - SD                  |
|              | **LEVEL III EAGLE**
|              | JOHNSON, MARK - SD                  |
|              | **LEVEL IV EAGLE**
|              | JOHNSON, MARK - SD                  |
|              | **LEVEL V EAGLE**
|              | JOHNSON, MARK - SD                  |

| June 2014 | No legacy donations for this month. |
| May 2014  | **LEVEL I ELEK**
|          | BERNSTEIN, THOMAS - CA              |
|          | **LEVEL II ELEK**
|          | BERNSTEIN, THOMAS - CA              |
|          | **LEVEL III ELEK**
|          | BERNSTEIN, THOMAS - CA              |
|          | **LEVEL IV ELEK**
|          | BERNSTEIN, THOMAS - CA              |
|          | **LEVEL V ELEK**
|          | BERNSTEIN, THOMAS - CA              |

| April 2014 | No legacy donations for this month. |
| March 2014 | **LEVEL I EAGLE**
|           | TRUMBY, JAMES - SD                  |
|           | **LEVEL II EAGLE**
|           | TRUMBY, JAMES - SD                  |
|           | **LEVEL III EAGLE**
|           | TRUMBY, JAMES - SD                  |
|           | **LEVEL IV EAGLE**
|           | TRUMBY, JAMES - SD                  |
|           | **LEVEL V EAGLE**
|           | TRUMBY, JAMES - SD                  |

| February 2014 | No legacy donations for this month. |
| January 2014 | **LEVEL I ELEK**
|              | KINER, MARTY - SD                   |
|              | **LEVEL II ELEK**
|              | KINER, MARTY - SD                   |
|              | **LEVEL III ELEK**
|              | KINER, MARTY - SD                   |
|              | **LEVEL IV ELEK**
|              | KINER, MARTY - SD                   |
|              | **LEVEL V ELEK**
|              | KINER, MARTY - SD                   |

**SDWF Membership Application**

To continue our conservation efforts - we need your help! Please donate generously.

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: ____________________________  State: ________  Zip: ________
Phone: __________________________ e-mail: __________________________
SDWF $20/Yr Membership Fee $__________
SDWF Camo-Coalition lobbying donation: $__________

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

☐ Check - makes checks payable to SDWF

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**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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**“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!
Outdoor Recreation Projects Funded

PIERRE, S.D. -- Several South Dakota communities will be a better place to live, work and play thanks to Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) money. Gov. Dennis Daugaard has awarded a total of $368,779 to fund projects in eleven locations. "These cities have taken the initiative to improve the quality of life for their citizens," Gov. Daugaard said. "I commend project sponsors for their commitment. Future generations of South Dakotans will benefit because of their efforts." The following local sponsors were awarded LWCF grants for outdoor recreation projects: Deadwood - Gordon Park playground rehabilitation, $40,000 Eureka - baseball complex improvements, $40,000 Hartford - wading pool and zero depth splash park, $40,000 Huron - Crown Park playground, $11,000 Lennox - park land acquisition project, $40,000 Parkston - East Park playground equipment replacement, $27,750 Plankinton - Eastside Pool Park playground replacement, $30,029 Salem - park renovation project, Phase I, $40,000 Tyndall - tennis/basketball court surface replacement, $20,000 Wagner - Chapman Park playground equipment, $40,000 Yankton - Riverside Park playground replacement, $40,000 Land and Water Conservation Funds come from the National Park Service and are administered in South Dakota by the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The federal assistance program provides up to 50 percent reimbursement for outdoor recreation projects. For more information on the LWCF program, contact grants coordinator Randy Kittle at 605-773-5490 or randy.kittle@state.sd.us.

South Dakota Moves to a multi-year schedule for setting hunting seasons Rules

PIERRE, S.D. -- With the start of the new year, comes the start of a new multi-year season setting schedule for several hunting seasons and regulations in South Dakota. Historically, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and the Commission reviews and discusses all hunting and fishing seasons as well as other regulatory items at monthly Commission meetings held across the state. At times, season date changes and regulation changes occur; especially to big game hunting seasons and corresponding license and tag allocations. At other times, no changes are made for several seasons for multiple years. The multi-year season setting process was a recommendation of the independent big game management review in 2013. "This revised process will help us be more efficient with our time and more effective with our management strategies," stated Tony Leif, director of the GFP Division of Wildlife. "Setting multi-year seasons allows us to spend more time collecting important data and drafting plans to guide the direction of big game management and ultimately the structure of the hunting seasons." Hunting seasons for big game species such as elk, deer, antelope, mountain lion, turkey and fishing regulations will now be reviewed and set in two-year intervals. Hunting seasons for species such as pheasant, quail, grouse, dove and partridge will now be reviewed and set in three-year intervals. Depredation hunts and any refuge seasons will also be reviewed and set in three-year intervals. Waterfowl and nonresident waterfowl hunting seasons will continue on an annual cycle due to the federal framework set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the new authority granted to the Commission to set nonresident license numbers and license distribution. "An important aspect of this new approach is that the Department and the Commission will continue to have the ability to react to unforeseen circumstances that occasionally impact wildlife populations any time those circumstances arise," explained Leif. The multi-year season setting schedule was presented to the Commission by the Department and was approved this past November. To view this new season setting schedule, visit: http://gfp.sd.gov/agency/commission/meetings.aspx. GFP also provides monthly information on what has been approved and/or rejected at each of the monthly Commission meetings (no meetings held in February or September). To receive the latest news and information distributed by GFP via email, subscribe today at: http://gfp.sd.gov/agency/services/news-sign-up.aspx. - See more at: http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/january/5.aspx#sthash.Lk5LphHmq.dpuf

GFP Commission Adopts the Use of Hounds when Hunting Mountain Lions outside the Black Hills

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission adopted a proposal originating from a petition received from the South Dakota Houndsman Association to allow the use of hounds for hunting mountain lions outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District. This new rule allows resident hunters to use hounds to pursue mountain lions year-round on private land only with permission of the landowner or lessee, however, hunters may continue on School and Public Lands or Bureau of Land Management lands if the pursuit originates on private property. Licensed hunters are only allowed to harvest one mountain lion during a season and they are not allowed to harvest a lion with a spotted coat. Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt thereafter until the hunt is completed. This new rule will not be effective until 20 days after filed with the Secretary of State's Office. All mountain lions harvested must be presented to a GFP representative within 24 hours of harvest for inspection. To learn more about the mountain lion hunting season rules and regulations, please visit: http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/big-game/mountain-lion-season-harvest-status.aspx. - See more at: http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/january/16.aspx#sthash.gdp6WRs1.dpuf
An Idea We Should Look into Here in SD?

BROOKLYN PARK, Minn. Gov. Mark Dayton announced Friday that he will propose legislation calling for vegetative buffer zones 50 to 60 feet wide bordering all waters of the state, with the regulation to be enforced by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Dayton made the announcement to about 325 people attending the 25th annual Roundtable meeting sponsored by the DNR in Brooklyn Park, Minn. The proposal grew out of a statewide Pheasant Summit called by the governor and held Dec. 13 in Marshall, Minn.

I believe people should be good stewards of the land, Dayton said. They own the land, but the people own the waters.

Minnesota's pheasant numbers have declined significantly in recent years as farmers opt out of the federal Conservation Reserve Program, which pays landowners to take land out of crop production and to plant grasses. Pheasants need grasslands for nesting and for cover.

But Dayton emphasized that his proposal would improve the state's water quality and benefit all species that rely on grassland habitat.

Duluths Frank Jewell, a St. Louis County commissioner and also a member of the Clean Water Council under the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, welcomed Daytons proposal.

This is so exciting, Jewell said. The issue of riparian buffers is huge.

Current law requires buffers on many waters, but enforcement usually falls to individual counties and has been inconsistent, conservationists say.

It's been a soft policy, and its been viewed as a soft policy, said Howard Vincent, president and CEO of Pheasants Forever.

Vincent supports the governors proposal.

There's not a better practice than buffers for wildlife, water and soil, Vincent said, but its still a starting point.

Doug Busselman, director of public policy for the Minnesota Farm Bureau, said the governors proposal would be a hardship for many of the groups 30,000 members.

In many cases where there are buffer requirements, now its 16 feet and now your be going to 50 and thats going to take considerable land out of production, said Busselman, who attended the governors speech at the Roundtable.

CREP in the James River Valley

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP) has a long and highly successful history of working with private landowners to develop wetland and grassland habitat within the PPJV. As an active partner within the PPJV, SDGFP recognizes that the majority of wildlife habitat is held by private landowners, making successful partnerships with producers is critical. In recent years one of its most successful conservation efforts has been the James River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency, CREP is simply a "state-sponsored" Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) designed for a specific geographic area to address resource concerns identified by state partners.

In South Dakota, the focus of CREP is improving water quality, reducing soil erosion, and providing flood control, while creating additional pheasant nesting habitat in the James River Watershed. The state of South Dakota provides CREP participants an additional incentive payment on top of their CRP rental rate as well as cost-share assistance for habitat establishment. In all, the state is providing over 20% of the total funds to implement the James River CREP. The first CREP program of its kind, every acre enrolled in the James River CREP is open to public hunting and fishing.

As of the fall of 2013, over 82,000 acres were enrolled into this highly successful habitat and access program. The SD James River CREP has provided a strong boost for resident and migratory wildlife in eastern South Dakota, while providing hunters with high quality hunting areas within South Dakota's primary pheasant range.

SDGFP private lands staff also work cooperatively with farmers and ranchers to better manage wetland and grassland habitats through the department's Wetland and Grassland Habitat Program. Private lands biologists located across the state work with landowners – primarily producers engaged in grass-based livestock operations – to plan and implement a variety of on-the-ground conservation practices. Technical and financial assistance is provided for the following practices:

- Wetland Restorations
- Wetland Creations and Enhancements
- Water Development
- Grassland Restorations
- Grassland/Grazing Enhancements
- Riparian Pastures
- Wildlife Friendly Fences

Since 2009 biologists have completed 135 projects with private landowner cooperators to enhance or restore 15,193 acres of upland habitat and 180 acres of associated wetland habitat within the PPJV portion of South Dakota. SDGFP's cost share totaled nearly $708,000 with total project funds exceeding $1.4 million.

Cooperative efforts with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, local conservation districts, and others are also important to efficiently and effectively deliver program funds through partnerships.

To learn more, contact Tom Kirschenmann at Tom.Kirschenmann@state.sd.us.

DNR ENFORCEMENT

From 2007 to 2013, Minnesota lost 600,000 acres of grassland that had been enrolled in CREP, DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr said.

The buffer proposal would protect about 125,000 acres of land, or just under 200 square miles, along rivers, lakes and wetlands, the governor said.

A key provision of the proposal is that the DNR, not local or county officials, would enforce the buffer requirements, Dayton said.

It will be enforced and I mean enforced by the DNR through aerial and other inspections, the governor said.

Jewell said he has made tours in farm country where he has seen land farmed right up to waterways, with water running from farmland directly into the water.

There should be fines for not complying (with the regulations), Dayton said.

We have to have real consequences.

The Farm Bureaus Busselman said the proposal assumes there are wide-spread violations of current buffering requirements on farmland when in fact no statewide investigation has been conducted.

Wed be enacting a broad regulation without any real sense of whether its going to do anything good for pheasant populations, he said. We have concerns over the one-size-fits-all nature of the governors particular proposal, and well obviously be engaged in the proposal as it goes through the legislative process.

Theres also a property rights issue that seems to be missing in all of this, Busselman said Its somewhat akin to the governor saying, Lets take the front 20 feet of your lawn and let anyone walk on it.

If Daytons proposed legislation is adopted, the benefits of such a regulation would go far beyond creating more pheasant habitat, said Pheasants Forever's Vincent.

Whether you hunt or are an outdoors person or not, everyone should understand water and what we need to do to protect it, Vincent said.

Dayton said he will make the proposal part of the budget he will propose to the Minnesota Legislature later this month.

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." - Native American Proverb

Sportsmen/women- Want to help fund SDWF and the Youth Conservation Camp plus reduce your taxes this year? Donate stock 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!

JUST ONE