PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) announced today that the next couple of years will be dedicated to celebrating 100 Years of Tradition. In 1918, South Dakota established its first pheasant hunting season which was held in Spink County in 1919. Also, in 1919, Custer State Park was named the first official state park.

“In South Dakota, we know that traditions come in all forms of outdoor recreation,” stated Kelly Hepler, department secretary. “Over the next two years, we will highlight our hunting, camping and outdoor recreational traditions as well as yours, but also focus on where we all want to go in the next 100 years.”

“With celebrating 100 years, there will be a strong digital push using #MySDTradition; focusing on the outdoor opportunities that provide us all with great memories of the past. As we reach 100 years of pheasant hunting and state parks in South Dakota, we encourage our recreational users, residents and nonresidents, to take us for a trip down memory lane. We want to learn about your new and old traditions and how they got started,” stated Hepler.

In addition, two new partnerships are underway with South Dakota breweries and the South Dakota RV industry. The New Brew Competition asks all breweries in South Dakota to develop a brew honoring the 100 year celebration and focusing on the close relationship with nature, strong ties to community and how the outdoors play a strong role in our future. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent to all South Dakota RV dealers this week requesting a donation of a new camper to be given away in 2019. Additional events, partnerships and opportunities to commemorate the 100 years will continue to be announced as they are finalized.

For more details on how you can get involved, visit https://gfp.sd.gov/100-years/.

Beadle Count Sportsmen members are supporting SDWF’s lobbying efforts, to keep public water open for recreation, SDWF President, Mark Widman (R) is accepting their check from their members.
South Dakota is blessed with a diverse array of fish and wildlife, and more than 660,000 people spend $800 million a year enjoying wildlife-related recreation here. However, while many of S.D.’s wildlife species are thriving, others are declining in numbers.

State fish and wildlife agencies have identified 8,000 species nationwide in need of conservation action. In S.D. alone, there have been 101 animal species identified as species of greatest conservation need.

Nearly two decades ago, Congress created a program that would help prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. However, this program has remained woefully underfunded. S.D. received $480,000 in 2016, it is a fraction of what is needed. This means hundreds of species continue to slip through the cracks and could possibly become endangered.

But it doesn’t make sense to wait until a species is on the brink of extinction before stepping in. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story that has benefited thousands of species in need of protection, including the bald eagle, golden-tailed Sapphire and southern sea otters. But it would be better — and generally cheaper — if we could prevent at-risk wildlife from needing the Endangered Species Act’s expensive and occasionally restrictive measures in the first place.

Game, Fish & Parks regularly assesses the health of wildlife in S.D., and what it would take to stop the decline of species in trouble. This document, required by federal law, is known as a State Wildlife Action Plan and it is created collaboratively with input from scientists, landowners, conservation groups, the outdoor recreation community and a variety of businesses. But GF&P lacks the money to implement this plan the way it would like to.

There is a solution on the horizon. The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, introduced by Reps. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska) and Debbie Dingell (D-Michigan), would direct existing revenue from oil and gas activities on federal lands and waters towards state-led efforts to help wildlife species in decline. If it passes, S.D. will receive $16 million without any tax increases or new fees.

The legislation builds upon the successes of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson) and the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson) that have allowed America to lead the world in the conservation of game species, such as deer, elk, bighorn sheep, wild turkeys and many species of waterfowl and sportfish. State agencies have a proven track record of using those funds wisely and effectively. This approach has support from diverse interests including outdoor enthusiasts, the recreation and energy industries and much more.

Without dedicated funding, hundreds of species will face increasing risks. Taking action before at-risk wildlife requires listing under the Endangered Species Act makes sense fiscally and morally. Using existing revenues from our non-renewable natural resources is a pragmatic solution that will allow us to help protect our natural heritage without burdening taxpayers.

The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act is the solution we need to address America’s wildlife crisis. This type of proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers and good for business. I hope Rep. Kristi Noem, along with Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds, when introduced in the Senate, will co-sponsor and support this groundbreaking bill.
By the time you read this, we are well into the 2018 Legislative Session. The SDWF continues to work on a fix for HB 1001…the Non-Meandered Water bill. This bill allows landowners to close publicly-owned, non-meandered waters with no ability for the public to challenge the closing and no ability for the public to petition to open the subsequently closed public waters. If we don’t fix it, this bill will lead to the privatization and commercialization of South Dakota’s waters and fish. The other issue at hand is this law does not recognize that “recreational use” of public waters is beneficial. Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming do… so what’s our problem?

The SDWF Camo Coalition, our sister organization which is a 501(c)(4) lobbying group, is working to introduce amendments to Special Session House Bill 1001 that clearly articulate the public’s right to use publicly-owned waters. If this law is allowed to be “Sunsetted” this session, it will be even harder to make any changes in the future. The time to make common sense changes is now! This is the most important battle we have ever fought and we need your help. Tell your state representatives to fix this bill during this session to allow for public input on closings and to make “recreation” a beneficial use of water.

Another bill that will be brought up this year is an amendment to the state constitution proclaiming a right to hunt and fish in South Dakota. We plan to support the bill again this year, which was defeated in last year’s session. “Hunting, fishing, and trapping wildlife is a valued part of our heritage that shall forever be preserved for the people; water, wildlife, and other natural resources held in the public trust shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good but do not create a right to trespass on private property except as allowed by law, regulation, easement, or contract.” [HJR 1001, Section 2, introduced 2017.01.20]. “As of November 9, 2016, 21 states had constitutional provisions providing for the right to hunt and fish. Vermont was the first state to constitutionalize such a right in 1777. The other 20 states have all adopted right to hunt and fish amendments since 1996.”

As of November 9, 2016, 21 states had constitutional provisions providing for the right to hunt and fish. Vermont was the first state to constitutionalize such a right in 1777. The other 20 states have all adopted right to hunt and fish amendments since 1996. (1) Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and Kansas are six surrounding states that have proclaimed hunting and fishing as a right. If it’s anything like last years, the AG groups will fight it again.

(1) www.Ballotpedia.org
Ballotpedia is the online encyclopedia of American politics and elections. Our goal is to inform people about politics by providing accurate and objective information about politics at all levels of government. As always, we need to continue building our membership and raise money to pay for our lobbying effort in Pierre! Unfortunately, we still are not recognized as other, high profile wildlife conservation organizations, so money doesn’t come easy to us. We are the ONLY wildlife conservation organization fighting to protect the rights of sportsmen/women and outdoor enthusiasts at the state legislature and have been doing so for over 65 years.

We need you to impress upon your hunting, fishing, mountain biking, paddle boarding, kayaking, outdoor photography and bird watching buddies to JOIN the SDWF (which costs less than $2.00/month). If you love our outdoors as much as the other 3,300 SDWF members, then consider donating $100 to our cause as well. Donate through one of our raffle giveaways, where you have a chance at winning some great prizes.

It’s sad to say, but my hunting season is now over. I hope you enjoyed your time outdoors and made some memories. My four legged partner, Charlie, fully recovered from his porcupine incident back in October. We were able to get some quality pheasant hunting up until the last day, where I shot two out of three. However, I did step into a snow covered badger hole up to my knee. Now I’m the one limping and trying to recover… but at least I have another good memory of being in the outdoors.

Ice fishing season is now upon us, so remember to be safe out on the ice, PICK UP THE LITTER and keep the places we hold near and dear clean.
WHY PUBLIC HUNTING LAND IS MORE VALUABLE THAN MANY REALIZE

by Tony J. Peterson

Most of us are aware of the threat from glad-handing politicians who would love to get their greedy mitts on our public land. We’ve seen these attempts come and go a few times over the last decade, and the ripple it causes — particularly among western hunters — is palpable. The pushback from the hunting crowd on these nefarious deals has been impressive.

We know the enemy there. It’s politicians who want to transfer federally controlled land to the state. The end goal is to deem the land an asset that simply doesn’t pay its own way, and therefore needs to be sold off. Once that happens, it is gone from the hunting public forever.

Lately, I’m witnessing a different kind of enemy that makes me much more nervous than the suits in D.C. It’s our fellow hunters, who make no bones about saying that public land is worthless. Their reasoning? Either they don’t need it because they have private ground, or there aren’t any critters on public so what’s the point of keeping it? This is mostly a midwestern and eastern whitetail philosophy, and it’s quite possibly the most selfish mindset out there.

Defending public land has been largely a western hunter endeavor, but midwestern and eastern whitetail bowhunters need to fight the good fight as well.

Just because you may have had a few bad experiences on crowded public land doesn’t mean all of it is unworthy of your field time. Or, although none of us would ever admit it, maybe the hunting is just too difficult for some of us so we get salty and storm off of the playground. If you want to go either route, that’s perfectly fine with me, just don’t volunteer away my chance to hunt the same land. If you do, that makes you a thousand times worse than the politicians with the same goal because you should know better.

The Good/Bad Ratio

Here’s the thing about public land — it’s all about equality of opportunity, not outcome. We all get the chance to hunt it, but not all of us will walk out of the woods with a freshly notched tag. In fact, most of us won’t. When it comes to whitetail hunting public land in most states, a 20-percent success rate would be really high. For the elk hunter in Colorado carrying around an over-the-counter tag on public ground, 10 percent would be an almost unbelievable year.

Judging the value of public land solely on the chance for a mature animal is a bad idea. The best thing about public ground is it gives everyone a chance to hunt.

That means at best one-in-five deer hunters or one-in-10 elk hunters might end up with a freezer full of meat. And obviously, there is no guarantee that those successful hunters will kill 150-inch bucks or 320-inch bulls. Far from it. The odds of taking animals of that caliber is not worth speculating on. Just be happy you can hunt somewhere where it might just be possible.

Now, I know that hunting public land is usually far more difficult than private ground, at least when we’re talking generalities. I spend more time each fall on public than I do on private, so I’ve heard the .22s zinging by and had more encounters with other hunters than I’d choose. It’s the nature of the beast.

I’ve also had plenty of amazing sits on public and had the good fortune of taking turkeys, mule deer, antelope and plenty of whitetails, including my largest ever. I’ve had so many enjoyable sits on public that they end up weighing the scale on the positive
side much more than the negative, so it gets me feeling a little feisty when I hear a fellow bowhunter mention that he’d give up public land in a heartbeat because it doesn’t mean much to him.

**The Future**

If you’re privy to any of the inside scoop concerning the hunting industry, then you know there is a general unease about the future. Our numbers are not growing and that’s not good. We already have a very small voice in this country, and the smaller it gets the easier it is for us to lose opportunities.

We have a new world upon us that involves widespread CWD, and what exactly that means is far from set in stone. We’ve got dopamine traps stuck in our pockets that we stare at all day long and thus far, are doing a great job of outcompeting Mother Nature for our time and focus. We are drifting downstream in an unfavorable direction.

The anchor that will keep us in place, or at least let us hold our position, is access to ground for all. It’s not the ability to lease a prime piece of ground, or take out a second mortgage and buy a 40-acre chunk down the road. It’s the fact that many decades ago a few truly prescient individuals realized that our land was special and that at least some of it should belong to everyone.

It still does, and that is something that should be celebrated by all of us and vociferously defended whether you hunt solely on public, rarely, or never. It doesn’t matter, because what’s truly good for some of us is, in fact, good for all of us.

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**OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECTS FUNDED**

February 13, 2018

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard has awarded a total of $424,862 in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to several communities. The federal assistance program provides up to 50 percent reimbursement for outdoor recreation projects.

The following communities were awarded LWCF grants for outdoor recreation projects:

- Aberdeen – Wylie Park Land of Oz playground development, $50,000
- Blunt – City Park playground equipment replacement, $38,383
- Box Elder – Community Park playground equipment replacement, $70,000
- Colton – Redway Park playground equipment replacement, $15,935
- Doland – City Park splash pad development, $59,120
- Freeman – Lions Park playground equipment replacement, $30,000
- Herried – Karl Deibert Park playground equipment replacement, $54,408
- Sisseton – development of 2 baseball fields, $75,000
- Tabor – Takota Park playground equipment replacement, $20,000
- Viborg – Glood Park playground equipment replacement, $12,016

“I commend these project sponsors for their strong commitment to improve their communities and make South Dakota a better place to live, work and play,” Gov. Daugaard said. “Their efforts will benefit future generations of South Dakotans.”

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.

For more information on the LWCF program, contact grants coordinator Randy Kittle at 605.773.5490 or randy.kittle@state.sd.us.
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.
2018 South Dakota Wildlife Federation’s
Custer State Park Buffalo Shoot

$10 each or 3 for $25

Drawing to be held at Annual Convention, August 2018. Winner will receive $3,300 cash and will need to apply to Custer State Park to enter the non-trophy buffalo lottery, or they may spend the money as they wish. If they draw a license, the cash prize should cover the cost of the license and included guided rifle or bow hunt in Custer State Park for the year in which they apply.

Void where prohibited by law. Your presence or contribution not necessary to win.

SDWF
PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 224-7524 • www.sdwf.org

2018 South Dakota Wildlife Federation’s
21 Gun Giveaway

$20 each

1. Browning X-bolt
   with Leopold 3-12x scope...std. cal.
2. Winchester XPR 6.5 Creedmore
3. Taurus Judge revolver .45/410
4. Glock 17 9mm
5. Ruger American rifle .270
6. Ruger LCP 9mm
7. S&W bodyguard .380
8. Savage Axis .308
11. Remington 597 Scoped .22 combo .22
12. DPMS Ar-15 style .223 cal.
13. Remington 870 Express 12 ga.
14. Ruger 77R 25.06
15. Savage 9317-DXP 17 cal
18. DPMS Ar-15 style .223 cal.
19. Savage 9317-DXP 17 cal
20. Remington BDL .22-250
21. Remington 597 Scoped .22 combo .22

One gun will be awarded for each 100 tickets sold.

21 guns will be awarded if 2,100 or more tickets are sold.

SDWF reserves the right to offer a cash settlement or substitute a gun of equal or greater value.

*Drawing to be held at Spring Board Meeting, May 2018.

Void where prohibited by law. Your presence or contribution not necessary to win.

SDWF
PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501
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2018 SDWF 21 Gun Giveaway Ticket

Name
Address
Phone

2018 SDWF 21 Gun Giveaway Ticket

Name
Address
Phone

2018 SDWF 21 Gun Giveaway Ticket

Name
Address
Phone

1 Year Membership @ $20
1 Buffalo Shoot Ticket @ $10
3 Buffalo Shoot Tickets @ $25
21 Gun Giveaway Ticket @ $20 ea.
6 Buffalo Shoot Tickets and Membership @ $45
6 Buffalo Shoot Tickets and 3 – 21 Gun Tickets @ $90
6 Buffalo Shoot Tickets, 3 – 21 Gun Tickets and Membership @ $100

Total $ ______
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Food Plot Program Offers Free Seed

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) food plot program was developed nearly 50 years ago to assist landowners in providing winter food sources for wildlife. Landowners can receive free corn or sorghum seed to plant each spring, plus a payment to help offset planting costs. The program took a step forward in 2015, offering landowners a third seed option, called the brood mix.

The brood mix is an annual mixture of cover crop species (i.e. canola, flax, millet, radish, sunflower), designed to flower from spring through fall and produce seed for wildlife to forage on during winter. By flowering, the brood mix provides pollinator habitat that traditional corn and sorghum food plots lack. Pollinating insects (i.e. bees and butterflies) thrive in areas with flowering plants. Insects comprise nearly 100% of a pheasant chick’s diet, therefore making habitats with high insect numbers for pheasant chicks to forage a key component of pheasant production.

Landowners enrolled in the program still retain and may regulate all hunting access privileges; however they cannot charge anyone a fee in exchange for hunting access. For more information and to find a habitat advisor in your area, visit http://habitat.sd.gov/or contact a GFP biologist at 605.353.7145.

Seed is typically distributed in May, so it is important that interested landowners get signed up as soon as possible.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks inviting Hunters, Anglers, Campers to try new Apps

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is inviting hunters, anglers, campers and all other outdoor enthusiasts to update, download and explore its new mobile app.

“The new mobile app features a digital backpack so users can customize it with favorite maps, licenses, handbooks and key dates,” stated Calley Worth, GFP digital content strategist. “The app provides the ability to view maps offline if the user is in an area with little to no cell phone service. This is one of the main features users asked for prior to developing the app. Users must download or sign into their account before heading out to the field to receive the most up-to-date information from these features. We also want residents and nonresidents to know that they can sign up for notifications regarding hunting season start and end dates and application opening and closing dates.”

Reminders to App Users:

* Allow the app to send or push notifications and also opt into allowing location access. These will be prompted upon opening the app. Accepting this feature will allow users the ability to use the GPS and key dates feature.

* If users had the old version of the GFP Outdoors app on their phone, the new version will be available as an update in the App or Google Play Stores.

* If users did not previously have the app, it is available by searching ‘GFP Outdoors’ in the App or Google Play Stores. “The mobile app is designed for Android systems 6 and up and iOS systems 10 and up. Users may need to update.