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AIS PREVENTION NEEDS DEDICATED STATE FUNDING

By Dan Loveland, SD Lakes and Streams Association Treasurer

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) continue to spread across South Dakota dramatically changing the lakes and rivers that are so important to our fish, wildlife and economy.

Yet South Dakota has no funding source dedicated toward AIS prevention, early detection and containment. It is time that changes as the problem and demands for mitigation efforts will only expand.

All of the six states surrounding South Dakota have state funding mechanisms for AIS prevention. With the exception of Iowa, the surrounding states all have fully dedicated funding mechanisms. Iowa has a portion of a funding mechanism allocated to AIS prevention programs.

Wyoming

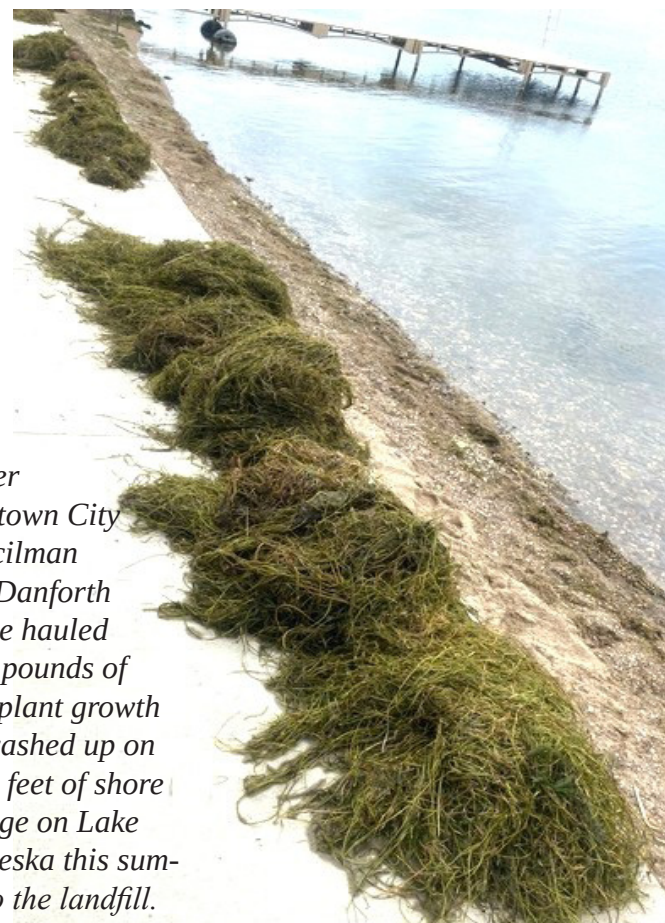
- All watercraft using Wyoming waters are required to display an Aquatic Invasive Species decal. Costs for the decal are \$10 for motorized watercraft registered in Wyoming, \$30 for motorized watercraft registered in other states, \$5 for non- motorized watercraft owned by Wyoming residents, and \$15 for non-motorized watercraft owned by non-residents. Non-motorized inflatable watercraft 10 feet or less in length are exempt. Fees collected for the AIS decal are used to fund the AIS program in Wyoming along with a General Fund Appropriation. These fees will pay for outreach and education, watercraft inspections, and monitoring.

Montana

- An AIS Prevention Pass (AISPP) is required for all individuals who fish in Montana. Non-resident watercraft launching in Montana must purchase a Vessel AIS Prevention Pass (AISPP). The Angler AIS Prevention Pass (AISPP) is required for all individuals who fish in Montana. This program was initiated by the 2017 Montana Legislature to help fund the fight against aquatic invasive species in Montana.
- The Angler AISPP is \$2 for residents and \$7.50 for nonresidents and is required with the purchase of a fishing license. There is no fee for youth age 15 and under.

Individuals who don't fish but would like to help in the fight against aquatic invasive species may also purchase the AISPP.

- Nonresident watercraft launching in Montana must purchase a Vessel AIS Prevention Pass (AISPP). Motorized watercraft fee is \$30. Required for all watercraft that have a motor. Non-motorized watercraft fee is \$10. Required for all nonmotorized watercraft. Proof of purchase can be electronic (cell phone) or paper receipt, there is no decal. All watercraft entering Montana are required to be inspected for aquatic invasive species. You must obtain an inspection before launching on Montana waters.



Former Watertown City Councilman Mike Danforth said he hauled 4,000 pounds of dried plant growth that washed up on his 92 feet of shore frontage on Lake Kampeska this summer to the landfill.

North Dakota

- An Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) fee of \$15 is required for each motorized watercraft registered in ND, concurrent with the 3-year resident watercraft registration period (I.e. \$5 per year). For nonresident watercraft, an ANS fee of \$15 to be paid each calendar year. An ANS sticker is provided, which must be displayed on the watercraft

Minnesota

- In 2014, a county tax bill was passed that provides funds for aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention. Each year, \$10 million will be provided to Minnesota counties to support AIS prevention programs. County board representatives designate AIS program oversight to a local government within the county. The designated local government works closely with local, state and federal governments, as well as nonprofit and private organizations, to develop and implement AIS prevention programs. Individual counties make decisions on how funds are to be used. Funds must be spent according to state statute, while still abiding by all current laws and regulations.
- An affirmation card reminds boaters and nonresident anglers of Minnesota's aquatic invasive species laws. Watercraft owners and nonresident anglers must read and sign the affirmation during their regular license renewal, then keep it in their possession with their license. The affirmation, enacted by the Minnesota Legislature is another positive step in the state's proactive efforts to keep 95% of Minnesota lakes off the infested waters list.

continued on page 2

AIS PREVENTION NEEDS DEDICATED STATE FUNDING

Iowa

continued from page 1

- The Iowa DNR’s AIS program uses revenue from boat registration fees to fund its initiatives. These funds support public outreach efforts, including advertisements, informational postings, and the installation of cleaning stations. In Iowa, there is no specific dollar amount from each boat registration fee dedicated solely to combating aquatic invasive species (AIS). Instead, all revenue from the increased registration fees, established in 2005, is used to support a combination of programs, including AIS control, boating law enforcement and water safety education. The total amount of money directed to AIS programs is reported annually, it is not a set portion of a boater’s individual registration fee. In fiscal year 2022, for example, the DNR reported spending \$383,860 on AIS programs, which was covered by the overall boat fee revenues.

Nebraska

- In 2016, Nebraska implemented an Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp to fund programs aimed at combating aquatic invasive species. Boaters who register their motorized watercraft in Nebraska have a \$5 fee added to their three-year boater registration fee. Boaters who register their motorized watercraft in any other state will be required to obtain a \$15 Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp each year in which they boat in Nebraska. This stamp is available for purchase online. A temporary stamp may be purchased at some state parks and recreation areas.

Weeds



The plant growth occurred following the clearing of the lake caused by zebra mussels.



Two different loads. Getting ready for another.

“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predators; you cannot conserve the waters and waste the ranges; you cannot build the forest and mine the farm. The land is one organism. Its parts, like our own parts, compete with each other and co-operate with each other. The competitions are as much a part of the inner workings as the co-operations. You can regulate them - cautiously - but not abolish them.” From *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

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President's Column *by Brad Johnson*

Dramatic changes to our website have occurred since our last newsletter, so please make it a priority to visit sdwf.org and check it out.

We have made it easier to learn about our activities, become a member and most of all donate to our cause. Individual and corporate donations are essential to our success. Please include us in your year-end giving and talk to your friends and family and recruit new members.

Don't forget our challenge match from the Brookings Wildlife Federation, which is discussed in another story in the newsletter. We need to raise at least another \$5,000 to unlock a \$5,000 donation from Brookings.

Why should you support the South Dakota Wildlife Federation? We are the largest and most effective statewide voice for the 200,000 outdoors men and women who hold licenses. More importantly, our affiliates statewide are often the first to introduce young people to all forms of outdoor activities.

Our annual summer conservation camp in the Black Hills exposes 100 to 120 young people annually to the importance of conservation and the joy of hunting, fishing, hiking and water sports. We would love to continue growing that camp but need more support.

We represent you on important issues at Game, Fish and Parks commission meetings and at the State Legislature through our Camo Coalition. Our goal is to continue to improve access and create more habitats for wildlife and expand hunting and fishing opportunities for all.

We work with a large variety of other active conservation organizations in the state, and we are part of the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition.

What happens nationally has a huge influence on our outdoor experiences and our wildlife. Whether it deals with migratory waterfowl and birds or aquatic invasive species

and the health of our lakes and streams, we advocate for the resource.

It's important to remember that we are an affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, the largest conservation organization in the United States with about 7 million members.

The NWF has a large staff of more than 400 that is dedicated to defending and enhancing our great outdoors.

As your representative, I serve on the NWF Board of Directors, and I also represent North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas to the board. We are working to align state federations in the Great Plains/Central Flyway corridor to be more influential on common issues.

I participate in Hunter Angler, Farm Bill, Clean Water, Grasslands, Conservation Funding and Philanthropy work groups. I also serve on the NWF Board's Finance Committee and Conservation and Partnership Committee. SDWF Executive Director Dana Rogers is also a member of several of those workgroups.

The NWF's influence is significant, and it is relying on our help because of the powerful position that our U.S. Sen. John Thune holds as Senate Majority Leader and the influence of Sen. Mike Rounds and Rep. Dusty Johnson. The national conservation movement runs through South Dakota. Many of us have personal relationships with Rounds, Thune and Johnson and it is important we exercise our influence.

There are powerful organizations and industries aligned against the protection of the outdoors, our wildlife and fisheries. Our wildlife, grasslands, lakes, rivers and streams are challenged as never before.

We must counter those forces by expanding our numbers and creating more effective coalitions.

We have a lot of work ahead, but we have the capabilities, and we must make a major difference.

YEAR-END PUSH NEEDED TO SECURE BROOKINGS CHALLENGE GRANT

Brad Johnson

As we enter the final three months of 2024, please consider including the South Dakota Wildlife Federation (SDWF) in your year-end giving plans.

Many members already have contributed, but we need a major year-end push. Please check out our newly updated website at sdwf.org and click on the donate button.

The Brookings Wildlife Federation generously has instituted a challenge grant opportunity by donating \$5,000 and pledging to donate another \$5,000 on the condition that other chapters raise a minimum of \$20,000.

As of this printing, we are about \$15,000 toward securing an additional \$5,000 from Brookings.

The SDWF's budget is about \$140,000, not counting the summer Conservation Camp expenses. Most of the money goes toward our executive director's salary and expenses, as well as funding our back office support staff, software,

newsletter printing, annual banquet and a number of other expenses. It is a bare bones budget.

The vast majority of our income, about \$60,000 has to come from general fund raising. It's a constant challenge to keep up, but we have a long history of success.

We are expanding our efforts this years into becoming more active in wide-ranging conservation efforts as part of the SD Grassland Coalition, interaction with most of the major conservation groups in South Dakota and next year we will be expanding our efforts with Tribal engagement.

As always, our primary goal is to enhance access and preserve hunting and fishing opportunities for the 200,000 plus sportsmen and women in South Dakota.

The SDWF is the state's oldest conservation organization and the state's only conservation organization actively involved in developing legislative policy impacting outdoor sporting activities.

SDWF Executive Directors Column *by Dana R. Rogers*

As I sit here overlooking the gorgeous Black Hills outside Hill City, I'm reminded yet again how beautiful and valuable our natural resources in South Dakota are. We've had a fair amount of moisture in the Black Hills of late but we can always use more to fill our reservoirs, creeks and streams. A small forest fire has been contained west of Hill City of late and some great bull elk have been taken by some fortunate and patient archers and rifle hunters. Our VP George Vandel has reported some good prairie grouse numbers he's working his pups with. I've yet to get afield with my Hoyt in hand but plan to rectify that very soon. Here's hoping that you have been out to enjoy God's beautiful creation whether it's fishing, hunting or just hiking or touring our great public lands.

I had the privilege of speaking with affiliates at meetings in Brookings, Aberdeen and Watertown in the past several weeks. Thanks to all you members for being passionate about our outdoor recreational opportunities, wildlife and the habitats they call home. We got some great news from Tom Kirschenmann one of our great GFP Directors during August's meeting. They recently entered into a substantial walk-in property contract with a wonderful rancher near Faith South Dakota. You'll note Director Kirschenmann has submitted an article discussing the great efforts our GFP staff have been working on in this issue. We really appreciate having stories like this submitted that show how much success is happening within our state agency.

Aquatic invasives continue to be a huge threat to our lakes, rivers and streams and the piece submitted by Dan Loveland with SD Lakes and Streams Association will help to inform you on these concerns. Zebra Mussels and invasive carp are two of the leading threats we face in eastern Dakota Watersheds, we need to keep them from moving further west!

Fundraising is in a better place than it was just a few months ago, but we certainly aren't out of the woods by any stretch of the imagination. Huge thanks to the Brookings Wildlife Federation and past President Rich Widman for their challenge. Please consider making a legacy donation or at least purchasing raffle tickets each time we run a new drawing. We are continuing to run out 21 Gun raffle and \$3,000 cash raffle. We will draw for a new gun for every 100 tickets sold, and your tickets remain in the drawing until all 21 are drawn. Most recently we drew Bob Buchholz's name from the spinning wheel. Bob is a director and very active with the Sportsmen Club of Brown county.

Politics is always at the forefront of Wildlife Conservation. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Conservation Reserve Program component of the Farm Bill are two areas where bipartisan support 'could' be achieved to do great things for American's on both sides of the political isle. Contact Senators Thune and Rounds and make your thoughts heard folks! Rep.



Johnson is still in the house another year and his bid for Governor will certainly bring him into the direct fray as a potential Executive in charge of the SD GF&P's direction and efforts for our wildlife, habitat and sportsmen interests. It's absolutely vital that we South Dakota sportsmen VOTE and express our opinions to our prospective elected leaders. We've been trying to highlight the fact that South Dakota leads the nation with 24% of our citizens holding a hunting/fishing license. That's well over 200,000 citizens and potential voters. Politicians need to know our views and wishes. While George Vandel and I were walking the halls in Pierre lobbying on behalf of the SDWF, it continued to dawn on me how little the people that actually vote on our state laws understand when it comes to conservation, wildlife and sportsmen interests.

Commercial, Tourism and Retailers interests are front and center with tourism being SD's #2 right after Agriculture. It's certainly important but we sportsmen need to make sure those of us that live here 365 days a year are held at the highest levels of conscious decisions that affect us.

Please mark your calendars for the 2026 annual meeting and convention. It will be held May 1st and 2nd in Huron at the Beadle County sportsmen/Izaak Walton League building. They've just recently completed their own shooting range and it's going to be available for trap shooting Friday late afternoon and early evening. I'll be putting together a link on our new and improved SDWF website for early ticket purchases. Hope to see you there for some great camaraderie, shooting, food, fellowship and auctions/raffles on either side of the directors meeting on Saturday.

I'm soliciting and collecting donations for prizes for the annual banquet and always looking for some great trips. If you are a skilled angler or a sportsman with your own property, please consider donating a hosted trip on the water or in the field. If we can get Rich and Mark back to Huron to run the auctions, I'm sure the "WILDMAN" brothers will make it an evening you won't forget with lots of laughs and good-natured banter.

At last notice, Rep Roger DeGroot still plans to draft a few bills we plan to support during the upcoming legislative session in January. The guide/outfitter bill may be partitioned into 2-3 separate bills and another to require snow bears to be licensed (plated) have been seriously discussed by Rep DeGroot. Keep your legislators in contact and watch for the Camo Coalition's legislative updates I'll be compiling once "silly season" begins. George and I will certainly do our best to work on your behalf, but you getting to know your representatives and communicating with them is what can make the biggest difference.

As always, if your affiliate, sportsmen group or another areas sportsmen group would like me to come speak on behalf of the SDWF, I'm happy to. Here's hoping you'll have a wonderful fall season in God's great outdoors. As always, respect the land, respect the landowner and respect the wildlife.



CATTAIL-KETTLE LAKE ACCESS CLOSURE PETITION DEFEATED **From Dana Rogers**

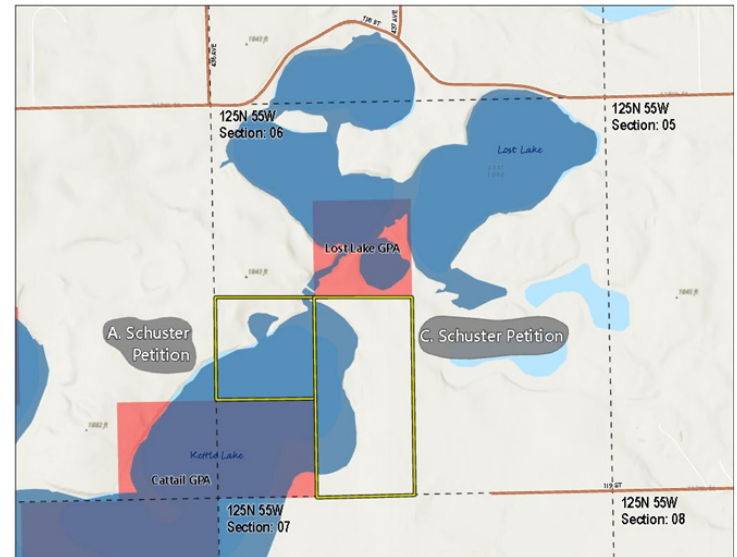
On September 22nd, the SD GF&P received a petition from two Marshall County landowners to close access to water over their private lands on the north end of the Cattail-Kettle Lake complex north east of Ft. Sisseton. SDWF became aware of those 3 days prior to the hearing date of October 10th.

Several Directors and I worked to gather as much information as we could to head off the public closure. The time crunch and commission location in Lemmon SD was a challenge, but that's the process. I have to credit the SD GFP senior staff and attorney for being very helpful in trying to understand the contested hearing process. VP Emmett Keyser for being a fantastic source of legal research as well as other directors and members of the public for rallying to testify remotely and send in public comments opposed.

The crux of the issue appears to be complaints of trespassing on private lands as well as access to the Lost Lake GPA. We aren't insensitive to any trespassing concerns, but we have to make public land access and historical public water use our primary focus for the public. Sportsman's dollars have been used to put in a boat launch near Ft. Sisseton and it's been stocked by GFP with those funds since 1996.

The process went forward with a contested hearing Thursday morning October 10th in Lemmon, just prior to the regularly scheduled commission meeting. Petitioners and those that testified were sworn in and provided their inputs. Questions were asked from the commissioners as well as from four in opposition that were also sworn in. Most of the information that hadn't really been known or public prior to the meeting was answered in the effected landowner's testimony.

For brevity, I highly recommend listening to this legal process once it's posted to the GFP website. In the end, the petition was defeated unanimously by the GFP Commission. This is an example of why the South Dakota Wildlife Federation is absolutely critical. Please encourage all your sportsmen friends to JOIN and please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Without your generous donations, we can't continue to work on behalf of the public. Join or donate on our website at www.sdwf.org



WOMEN IN THE OUT OF DOORS

From Rich Widman

The Brookings Wildlife Federation helped the Beacon Hill Rifle and Pistol Range volunteers host the "Women in the Outdoors" event at their newly improved facility northwest of Volga, SD. Women and girls of all ages enjoyed the experience of learning gun safety and then shooting all sorts of firearms. Archery was also included in this free event along with hotdogs, chips, cookies and water. Although it's hard to attract participants some years, BWF loves the smiles and the conversations about what they loved the most and we will continue to donate and help make this 10-year event a great place for women to come try a new outdoors thing!



DAKOTA SPORTSMEN (WATERTOWN) GLACIAL LAKES YOUTH SPORTSFEST



Dakota Sportsman members Greg Hoftiezer (right) and Austin Seim (back left) help a couple of young people properly position shotguns at the Watertown Trap and Skeet range. About 120 area youth gathered Sept. 3 for the daylong Glacial Lakes Youth Sportsfest. The event is a unique opportunity for youth to learn about shotgun shooting, .22 shooting, muzzleloader shooting, turkey hunting tactics, waterfowl hunting skills, and archery. It was sponsored and coordinated by the Watertown office of South

Dakota Game, Fish and Parks office. Some of the organizations involved included the Dakota Sportsmen, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation. The event builds confidence in novice hunters and allows them to advance their skillsets toward becoming an independent hunter. It is open to youth ages 8 to 14.

Madison Grimm (back right) tells a group at the Glacial Lakes Youth Sportsfest attendees about her effort to rescue and hatch duck eggs. Madison, from Wallace, SD, is an 18-year-old wildlife artist and passionate waterfowl conservationist. She has established a



Dakota Sportsman member Mick Stanton helps a young participant in the Glacial Lakes Youth Sportsfest establish proper shooting posture prior to attempting to hit a clay pigeon at the Watertown Trap and Skeet range.

non-profit organization called Second Chance Flight. Her mission is to rescue and raise ducklings from nests that are accidentally destroyed during routine farming operations like tilling and haying. She launched the non-profit after discovering how many viable duck eggs are left behind or damaged each spring as fields are worked. Area producers who notice nests that may have been affected by farming operations are encouraged to contact Grimm, who will hatch the eggs, raise the wild ducklings and once mature, release the birds into local wetlands.

"Every duckling we raise and release is getting a second chance at life," Grimm said. "None of these birds would have survived without our help, and every life we save adds hope to the future of waterfowl conservation."

Madison has the necessary permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct the rescue effort.

In addition to her conservation work, Madison is also a nationally recognized wildlife artist. Among other honors, she has won the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competition three times and holds national records for both youngest winner and most wins in the history of the program. To view Madison's artwork, visit www.madisongrimmart.com.

Her father, Adam Grimm, is likewise no stranger to accolades in the world of waterfowl art. He is one of the most recognized names in contemporary wildlife painting, having won the prestigious Federal Duck Stamp contest three times, including the most recent 2024 competition. He has also twice been named Ducks Unlimited Artist of the Year. His work is featured in museums, private collections, and galleries nationwide. To view Adam's artwork, visit www.adamgrimm.com.

You can learn more about Madison's duck rescues effort at www.secondchanceflight.com.

29/90 SPORTSMEN

Jeff Clow

The twenty first recipient of the Sioux Empire Sportsman/Conservationist of the Year Award is Jeff Clow of Harrisburg, South Dakota. Jeff grew up in a family that enjoyed the outdoors through hunting and fishing, and it became an integral part of his life. Jeff has found his way of giving back and that has been through his involvement with other outdoor organizations. He is a life member of the S. F. Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and Midwest Tri-State NAVHDA. As with all leaders there is always someone behind the scenes who helps with this passion and that's Jeff's wife Deb who encourages his efforts. Jeff has been a strong advocate of getting our youth involved in the SDWF Youth Conservation Camp and other related youth programs and a strong advocate for funds for these events and programs to be successful. He is also a strong advocate of promoting the conservation and the wise use of our natural resources and the protection of our outdoor heritage for everyone to enjoy.

(Jeff's Memberships)

- Life Member S. F. Izaak Walton League of America
- Life Member Midwest Tri – State NAVHDA
- Life Member Sioux Falls VFW Post 628
- Pheasant Forever
- 29 – 90 Sportsman's Club
- South Dakota Wildlife Federation
- American Legion Post 45 (Harrisburg) – Life Member
- 15 Gallon Donor S. F. Community Blood Bank

Some of Jeff's Achievements and volunteering:

- SD Wildlife Federation Water Award
- Izaak Walton League Save our Streams Award
- Judge John W Tobin Award
- SD Izaak Walton League Eakins Ensberg Award
- Post 45 Legionnaire of the Year Award
- Certified as a Save Our Streams Monitor
- Midwest Gas Association Life – Sustaining Award



ED Dana Rogers presents President Brad Johnson with his Mark Anderson Cardinal Print he won in the raffle.



Emmett Keyser Presenting checks... Emmett Keyser presenting a \$350.00 from 29 - 90 Sportsman's Club to David Parker of the GFP for their GFP VR Hatchery Project.



Jeff and Debra Clow of Harrisburg accept Jeff's award as the twenty first recipient of the Sioux Empire Sportsman/Conservationist of the Year Award. Congratulations Jeff and thanks for all you do for conservation and wildlife in South Dakota. (article included)



Emmett Keyser presenting artist Mark Anderson his 50/50 split pot proceeds for the Cardinal print raffle.

TOUCHSTONES AFTER 30 YEARS (BY CHUCK BERRY)

FYI: I wrote this article in 1996 as the new writer/editor of the Brookings Wildlife Federation's newsletter. I was flattered when SDWF Exec. Secretary Chris Hesla reprinted it in OUT-of-DOORS. I think the sentiments are still relevant today, some 30 years later. BTW, I am still writing the Brookings newsletter. Whew!

Hunting, fishing, and conservation issues are so complex these days that we usually can't get all the facts we need to form opinions. Sometimes even with the facts, the right choices are not clear. In such cases, many people turn to their touchstones. My thesaurus says touchstones are gauges, tests, criteria, standards, yardsticks, and reference points.

As debate on a complex issue goes on and is dissected into smaller and smaller conflicting pieces, we sometimes throw up our hands in despair and "cut the issue with an axe." That means we gauge or test our understanding of the overall issue against our personal yardstick or standard or touchstone.

People interested in resource conservation sometimes use touchstones written by the father of the modern conservation movement, Aldo Leopold. He inspired generations through his writings, teachings, and scientific principles. His book, Sand County Almanac, was about his purchase of a tiny, abused, abandoned farm in central Wisconsin. The book was published posthumously after he died helping a neighbor fight a brush fire.

Among the many touchstones he offers is the following "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

With a burgeoning human population requiring food, shelter, clothing, energy, and recreational space, the temptation is to exploit land for human use without regard for consequences is great. Leopold was not "blindly against progress," but he was against "blind progress."

Can we use this touchstone in making decisions about hog farming, Black Hills mining, and other environmental issues in South Dakota?

How about issues of hunting licenses and access that are the focus of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation's efforts to preserve our hunting and fishing heritage? Are there touchstones? Some people say that there is one in the Declaration of Independence – the phrase is all about "all people being equal."



Others point to Teddy Roosevelt's terms for the restoration of America's wildlife. "The movement for the conservation of all of our natural resources is essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method." Some people have translated that sentence into contemporary prose as follows "Hunting doesn't depend on owning an estate – being an American is enough."

We have heard many times that "the hunter pays for conservation." That's true. Over the last 100 years we've put up about 19 billion dollars in licenses, excise taxes, stamp purchases, and donations to conservation organizations. Nationwide, about 75 percent of the funding for state game and fish agencies comes from the user group that is the hunter and the angler.

Some authorities say that "when fee hunting replaces free hunting, public participation in hunting and their general interest in wildlife will likely decline." Does it follow that the interest in and money for conservation will decline also?



Caption: Chuck Berry won the SDWF's Communicator of the Year award in 2001.



NEW RAFFLE OFFERING for 2026!

2026 2-Day Private Land Pheasant Hunt with Lodging offered by President Brad Johnson. This hunt will take place in the fall of 2026 and the winner will be drawn at the 2026 annual meeting in Huron on May 2nd 2026.

Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased by mailing them to our address at SDWF, P.O. Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501 or online at <https://sdwf.org/sdwf-raffle-events/>

NEW RAFFLE!

2026 2-Day Pheasant Hunt Giveaway Ticket

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RAPID CITY'S JIM SCULL IS A MAIN FORCE BEHIND NEW SHOOTING RANGE

By Brad Johnson ♦ SD Wildlife Federation Board President

The new \$20 million Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex north of Rapid City is set for a Nov. 8, grand opening, an event that likely never would have occurred without the dedication and vision of avid hunter Jim Scull.

The state-of-the-art facility may be one of the top three shooting ranges in the United States and is expected to drive significant tourism and economic business to western South Dakota.

But long before it was designed, Scull started scouting in 2019 for a place to increase youth participation in hunting.

Prior to the range's opening, about the only places to shoot were on private property or out in the Black Hills "shooting up trees," Scull said.

As a key founder of the non-profit South Dakota Youth Hunting Adventures, Scull had been looking several years for a place to build a gun range. He knew that the South Dakota Division of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) had been seeking land for a range, but it was unable to find a good location and "money had come up short."

One day, Scull went for a drive looking for a property that had decent roads and was within a 20 minute drive of Rapid City.

About 12 miles northeast of Rapid City on Elk Vale Road, Scull found the perfect spot and began talking with the landowner and GFP. Ultimately, Scull negotiated a deal to buy the land on behalf of GFP and work on the range would soon begin.

In 2021, GFP floated a proposal that had strong support from former Gov. Kristi Noem but had drawn opposition from some nearby landowners and some legislators. Despite turbulent waters, range construction proceeded.

The range now includes 160 shotgun, rifle and handgun shooting bays, a tactical shooting range, sporting clays and a 10,000 square foot main building that can house events. Of those bays, 140 will be free to the public. Some areas will require an annual pass.

There are archery ranges and the facility will be able to host a variety of local, state and national archery competitions, Scull said.

In addition, there will be a wide variety of regional and national competitions that will use the range.

An economic analysis showed the range would have a \$3.5 million annual economic impact on Rapid City.

"People who do shooting competitions travel all over the country," Scull said, adding that national shooting organizations indicated the Rapid City range may be among the three best in the nation.

"It should bring lots and lots of tourism to South Dakota. Competitive shooters like to go to places that have other tourism activities like the Black Hills."

GFP strongly backed the range and estimated there were 159,400 shooting sports participants who spend almost 1.34 million days of shooting annually.

Scull considers it all gravy to his original goal of finding a place for the participants in the South Dakota Youth Hunting Adventures program to learn to shoot.

It was back in 2007 when Scull solicited other hunting and conservation leaders to found the youth hunting group, which now provides mentors for 70 to 80 youth annually.

Each of those young people are paired with a mentor and learn how to shoot before going on a deer hunt on one of the 25 to 30 area participating ranches.

A lot of those youth never would have had a chance to hunt because of their family situations.

"After deciding to create a mentoring program, we went to all of the conservation organizations we could find in the Black Hills and created a non-profit and a leadership board consisting of board members who are very active people."

Work began to find mentors, equip the youth participants with hunting gear, teach them skills, line up participating ranches and make the young people successful hunters.

"It has worked incredibly well," he said. "We just keep getting more interested young people. It has been pretty rewarding. It is the best thing I have ever done."

Being the early catalyst to making the Rapid City shooting range become a reality is probably a really close second.

For more information on the shooting range go to <https://gfp.sd.gov/south-dakota-shooting-sports-complex>.

For information on South Dakota Youth Hunting Adventures go to <https://sdyouthhunt.com>.



Jim Scull

Shooting Range Layout



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SD WILDLIFE FEDERATION LEGACY DONORS FROM
APRIL 2024 – OCTOBER 2025

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 \$401-\$999; Level III Elk \$301-\$400; Level II Deer \$201 - \$300; and Level I Pheasant \$100-\$200.
APRIL 2024 – OCTOBER 2025

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29-90 SPORTSMAN'S CLUB - SD
BEADLE CO SPORTSMAN CLUB - SD
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NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION - VA
SOUTH DAKOTA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - SD
SPORTSMAN'S CLUB OF BROWN CO - SD
YANKTON AREA PHEASANTS FOREVER - SD

LEVEL IV BUFFALO

BLACK HILLS SPORTSMEN - SD
CHUCK AND GINGER SCALET - KS
EMMETT KEYSER - SD
HECLA COMMUNITY SPORTSMEN - SD
HIGH PLAINS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION - SD
JEFF OLSON - SD
JOHN COOPER - SD
MARLING STAMMER - SD
SE SD QUALITY DEER - SD
WHETSTONE SPORTSMEN - SD

LEVEL III ELK

BIG SIOUX APPRAISALS - SD
BLACK HILLS FLY FISHERS - SD
DAN LIMMER - SD
DICK & SUE BROWN - SD
JAMES FREDRIKSON - SD
JEFF OLSON - SD
LAKE CAMPBELL WILDLIFE - SD
RICHARD MILLER - SD
STEVE BERBERICH - SD

LEVEL II DEER

ARLO LEVISEN - SD
CHUCK DIETER - SD
BILL CLAYTON - SD

APRIL 2024 – OCTOBER 2025

LEVEL I PHEASANT

ANDREW O'CONNEL - MN
ARLO LEVISEN - SD
BARRY JOHNSON - SD

LEVEL I PHEASANT

CHUCK LEBEDA - SD
CHUCK SHERMAN - SD
DAVID HOWARD - SD
DAVID JACOBSON - SD
DICK & SUE BROWN - SD
DON LEPP - SD
DUSTY MILLER - SD
EVERETT HOYT - SD
FORREST FLINT - MN
GEORGE VANDEL - SD
GRADY JOLLEY - SD
HERB WISWALL - SD
JAMES EIDSVOLD - SD
JEFF CLOW - SD
JEFF KETTER - WI
JIM BARNETT - SD
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JIM LEMONDS - SD
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Resident Only
Pheasant Hunt
Promotes Conservation



Case Schilken, participated in a recent residents-only pheasant hunt in northeast South Dakota. Case encourages everyone to take care of our public resources. South Dakota has more than 5 million acres of land open to public hunting. The South Dakota Wildlife Federation hopes you have a great hunting season and encourages you to clean up your own hunting cartridges, as well as any litter left by others.



HABITAT AND ACCESS – DEPARTMENT PRIORITY

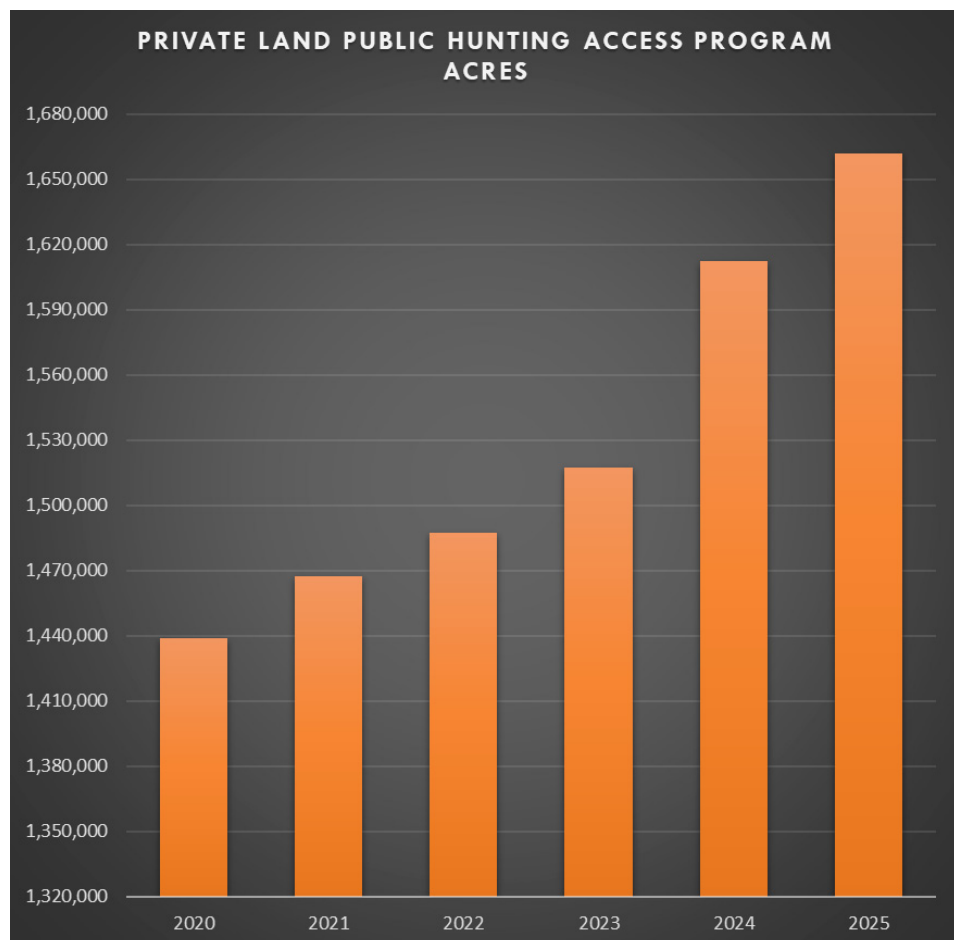
By Tom Kirschenmann, Director Wildlife Division

Greetings Wildlife Federation members! It's a pleasure to provide information from Game, Fish and Parks through your newsletter and share some exciting news and efforts within the agency. Our agency speaks frequently about our strategic plan and its four priorities: 1) Habitat and Access, 2) Asset Management, 3) Customer Service, and Operational Excellence, and today I want focus on the Division of Wildlife's top priority of Habitat and Access with an emphasis on access.

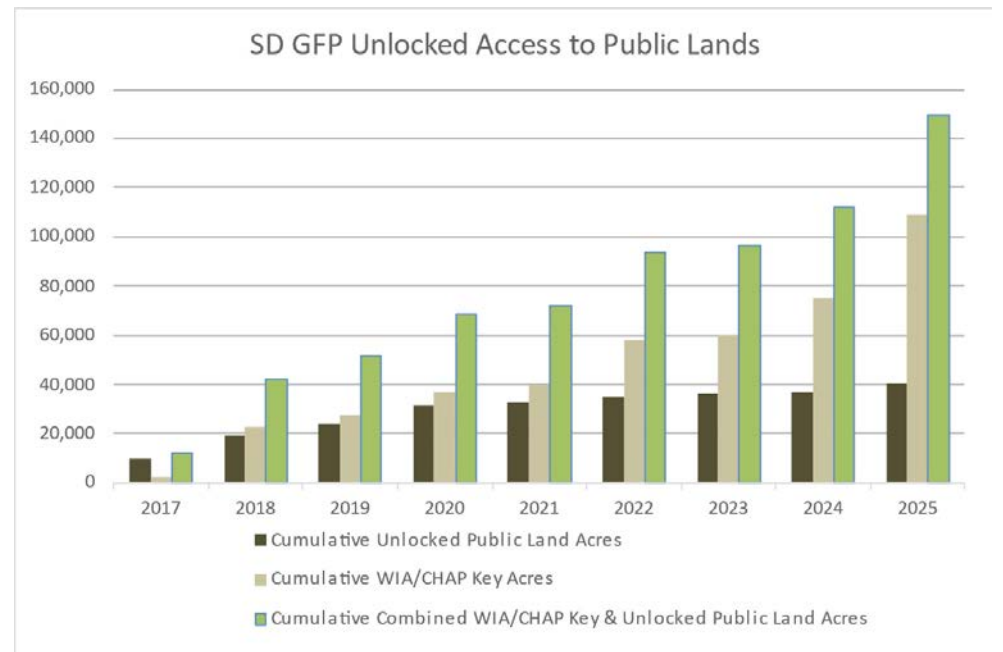
Habitat and access has been our top priority over the past five years, with over \$20 million spent annually on these efforts. From a fiscal perspective, that equates to one-third of the total annual budget for the Wildlife Division. Efforts in this include private lands habitat work, public land establishments and improvements on Game Production Areas and other public lands, and providing hunting and fishing access on private lands through multiple programs. Funds to accomplish these efforts come from hunting and fishing licenses, habitat stamp revenue, and federal resources through Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds.

Time and time again we hear from hunters that one of the most important aspects to keep hunting are places to hunt. Our agency will continue to stress the importance of building relationships with landowners before hunting seasons begin, however we recognize the importance of our programs to provide access to hunting lands is essential to the South Dakota hunting heritage and a significant means of recruiting and retaining hunters.

Our staff (biologists, Conservation Officers, land crew, and wildlife damage specialists) and partnership positions (example Pheasants Forever biologists) all play a major role in building relationships with landowners which lead to agreements for opening private land to public hunting. The Walk-In Area program is over 30 years old and to this day continues to gain momentum because we have prioritized this program. In fact, in just the past 5-6 years we have expanded those total acres of access from 1.44M to more than 1.65M acres across the state. This includes land enrolled into our standard Walk-In Area program, the Big Sioux River and James River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Controlled Hunter Access Program (CHAP), Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access, and Elk Hunter Access Areas program. Collectively, access programs provide hunting opportunities for a suite of game species.



Part of these statistics include another important focus area of GFP and that is to enhance hunting opportunities by providing access to public land which is land-locked by private land. In recent years our goal has been to identify parcels which possess quality hunting opportunities and work with private landowners to enroll acres into our access programs to provide access to these land-locked public lands. I am pleased to report these efforts have paid great dividends, but more work is to be done. That said, looking at 2025 we now have over 40,000 acres of public land now available by enrolling about 110,000 acres of private land for a total of about 150,000 acres of land open to public hunting.



While this short summary focuses on the success of our access programs, we are committed to stay the course on these efforts. Our goal is to eventually reach 2,000,000 acres and our staff and partners are working tirelessly to meet with landowner partners to make that happen. GFP looks forward to sharing details in future newsletters on the other half of our top priority (Habitat and Access) and discuss habitat efforts on private and public lands.

Until then, GFP hopes everyone has an enjoyable fall. Whether you are hunting or fishing, please take the initiative to introduce someone new. South Dakota has a lot to offer, and the resources of this state are second to none.



CONSERVING AMERICA'S PRAIRIE

By Dana R. Rogers

This summer I had the privilege to attend the National Wildlife Federation's Great Plains Working group at the Tall Grass Prairie Preserve in Pawhuska, OK. Then a few weeks later, the "Party on the Prairie" put on by South Dakota's grasslands initiative. Both were amazing!

On the Oklahoma side of the great Flint Hills is historically where the Eastern Forests meet the prairies. America's Tallgrass Prairie once covered 170 million acres of North America, but within a generation most of it had been transformed into farms, cities, and towns. Today less than 4% remains intact, mostly in the Kansas and Oklahoma Flint Hills. Established on November 12, 1996, the preserve protects a nationally significant remnant of the once vast tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Here the tallgrass makes its last stand.

The Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve at 39,650 acres is the largest protected piece of tallgrass prairie left on earth. Urban sprawl and conversion to cropland have left this once expansive landscape, originally spanning across 14 states from Texas to Minnesota, at less than 4% of its original size.

Since 1989, The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma has worked to restore this fully functioning portion of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem with the use of 2,500 free-ranging bison and a "patch-burn" model approach to prescribed burning.

The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve offers excellent wildlife watching opportunities and exceptional views of a variety of natural habitats. Over 700 plants, 300 birds and 80 mammals make this prairie home. Managed by fire and bison or beef cattle grazing only, it's an amazing habitat.

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition is a producer-driven organization with an emphasis on management of private land. The volunteers on the nine-member board are all landowners involved in production agriculture. They work with a number of other partners to bring up-to-date, science-based, production proven educational opportunities and information to grass managers and the general public in our state.

The South Dakota Grassland Initiative is a collaborative network of diverse organizations, agencies, and individuals who support grasslands as a means of retaining prairie ecosystems, both native and restored, while sustaining rural economies and healthy communities.

The initiative aims to promote South Dakota grasslands, through elevating public awareness and supporting those who want to make an impact, for the benefit of current and future generations.

The priorities are to retain South Dakota's native prairie ecosystems through science-based education and decision making. By working with and support for producers & landowners who want to improve grasslands, restoration and improvements can occur.

There does have to be recognition that diversified income streams are essential to sustainable agricultural operations for the benefit of all South Dakotans.

They provided a great educational experience with the South Dakota Grasslands initiative at their "Party on the Prairie". Before we stepped off the wagons to explore the prairie firsthand, Shawn Freeland gave us an inspiring talk about his family's conservation journey at Dry Creek Farm & Ranch near Caputa. The Freelands hosted dozens of conservation partners to study the various positive soil, water and wildlife benefits of cover crops, rotational grazing and no till practices.

South Dakota is blessed with some wonderful grasslands, but they continue to dwindle. Keeping them healthy and protected is critical to soil, water and the conservation of myriad species.

The NRCS provided some fantastic demonstrations and in the field examples of best practices. Ranchers, conservation leaders, and community members came together to celebrate and protect our grasslands. Rancher Dan O'Brien and Representative Scott Odenbach

spoke to us about why South Dakota's grasslands matter: healthy soil, clean water, wildlife habitat, and strong rural communities.

The Tall Grass Prairie Preserve and organizations like the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition are doing outstanding things in the prairie and grasslands habitats here. Our prairies are absolutely critical to so many native plant and wildlife species.



PROPOSED CONGRESSIONAL PERMIT ACT THREATENS OUR SURFACE WATER

By Brad Johnson ♦ SD Wildlife Federation President ♦ NWF Board Member

Congress is considering passing the PERMIT Act, a bill that abandons a host of key Clean Water Act safeguards that protect our waters from pollution and destruction.

The legislation is House Resolution 3898 and it passed the U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee on June 25. If it becomes law, we will have more rivers, streams, wetlands, and other waters that are unsafe for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

Instead of requiring dischargers to prevent pollution before it enters our waters, Americans will have to pay more to clean and treat our water to make it safe for drinking, farming, washing, and cooking.

Without healthy headwater streams wetlands to absorb floodwaters, we will be more susceptible to flooding, drought, and other natural disasters. More pollutants in our surface waters and fewer healthy wetlands and streams also means that fish and wildlife – and the fishing, hunting, and outdoor economies that rely on them – will suffer as well.

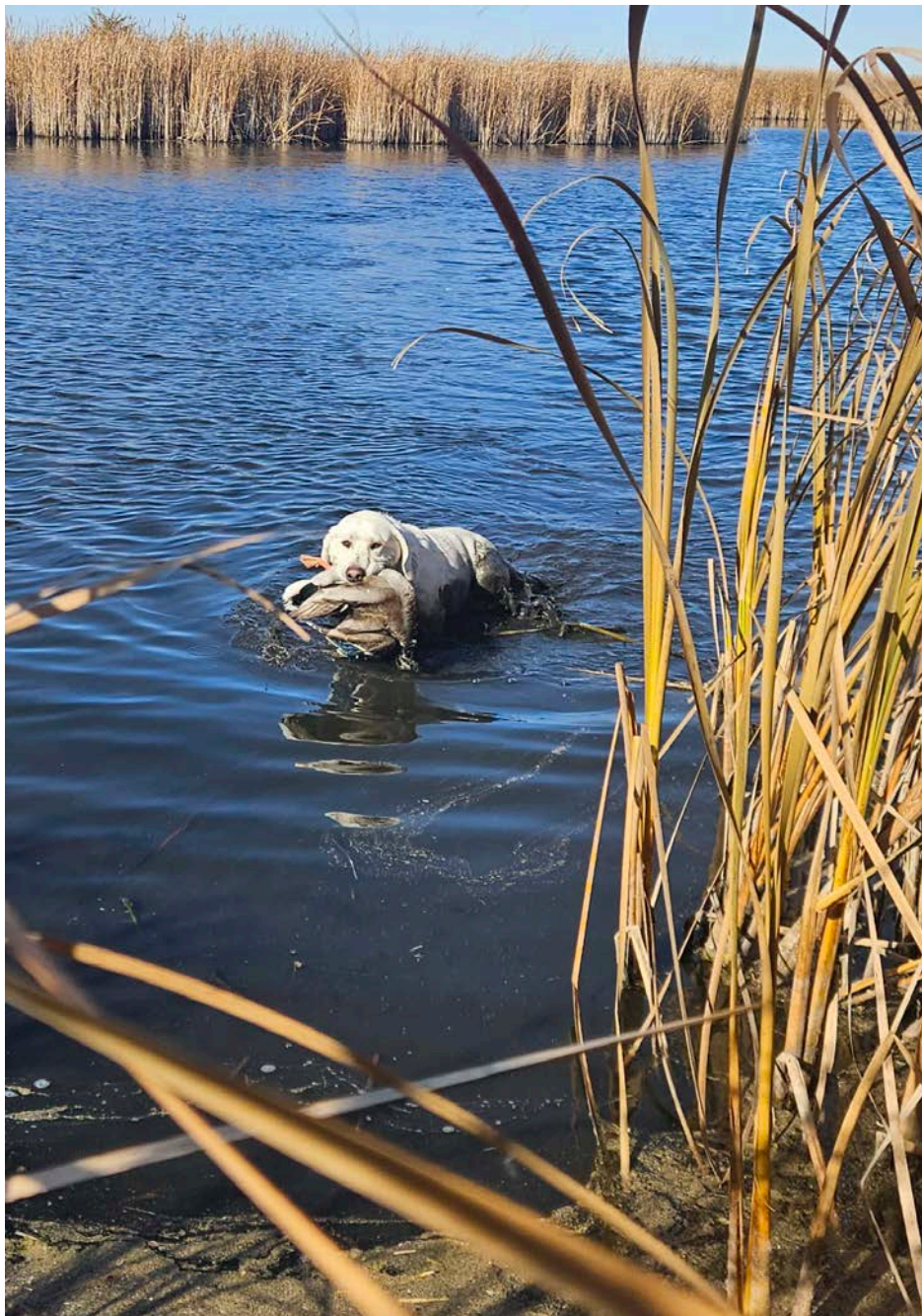
More than a third of all federally endangered or threatened species live only in wetlands and half use wetlands at some point in their lives.

Here are some of the concerning provisions in the PERMIT.

Sec. 11: Allows the spraying of poisonous pesticides into rivers, lakes, and streams without clean water safeguards. This section eliminates common sense protections for people and wildlife from harmful pesticide discharges into water bodies, giving polluters free rein to spray or discharge harmful toxins into our rivers and streams without Clean Water Act limitations.

Pesticides discharged into surface waters can contaminate our drinking water supplies and kill or cause severe harm to fish and wildlife. The EPA has already identified 2,000 waterbodies that are impaired by pesticide contamination and a significant portion of our drinking water across the country contains pesticides.

Sec. 8: Makes it easier for cancer-causing chemicals to be dumped into our water supply. This section makes it easier for industrial operations to dump toxic “forever chemicals” like PFAS into our waters by shielding dischargers from Clean Water Act liability. Instead of holding polluters accountable, it lets them off the hook, even if they are aware of pollutants in their waste streams. It would no longer require dischargers to even disclose this information. Concerning levels of PFAS – which have been linked to cancer, reproductive issues and other major health concerns – are already alarmingly prevalent in the environment, people, and wildlife. In some areas, the concentration of PFAS chemicals has gotten so high that Do Not Eat advisories



Brad Johnson's dog, Frisco retrieving a mallard

have been applied to game and fish species, limiting hunting and fishing opportunities. South Dakota is just beginning to study the effects of these pollutants.

Sec. 2 and Sec. 4: Gives bureaucrats a green light to use irrelevant cost considerations to distort the science and say water is safe when the science says it is not. These sections would prevent EPA from developing accurate water quality criteria by requiring regulators to consider the “cost and commercial availability” of pollution control technologies when setting standards. This means that EPA would be allowed to say that unsafe levels of pollution are in fact safe, if it would cost polluters too much to clean and treat it.

Sec. 18: Strips all federal pollution and destruction protections for many of the streams that supply our drinking water. This section weakens the scope of the entire Clean Water Act by removing protections from important streams and wetlands across the country. Of particular concern, it would mean ephemeral waters would no longer be protected from pollution and destruction.

These streams provide the drinking water for millions of Americans and are particularly critical sources of

drinking water in the Western United States. It would also allow the Army Corps of Engineers to remove any category of wetlands and streams from Clean Water Act protection, compromising the quality of downstream drinking water supplies and wildlife habitat. The Clean Water Act's ability to protect small streams and wetlands was already weakened by a 2023 Supreme Court decision.

Section 13: Makes it easier for wetland and stream destruction and degradation to occur without considering the harm to habitat, drinking water, and communities. This section weakens the Army Corps of Engineers' nationwide permitting program, including by restricting the Corps from considering harms caused by activities as a whole, and forces them to look only at narrow footprint where fill activity takes place, as well as exempting the permit program from the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

Sec. 17: This section would fast-track determinations of whether specific waters are protected by the Clean Water Act, leaving important waters at risk.

All of these changes should concern those of us who interact with our surface water for hunting, fishing, boating, swimming and other reasons. Contact U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds and U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson and urge them to oppose or modify this legislation to better protect our water.

CRP PROGRAM HITS 40 YEARS, PROVIDES IMPORTANT BENEFITS TO STATE

By Brad Johnson ♦ SD Wildlife Federation President ♦ NWF Board Member



It is harvesting time in South Dakota and for nearly 140 thousand pheasant hunters, it is an opportunity to wander fields of grass, edges of wetlands and pockets of overgrown weeds.

All across the state, farmers are growing and selling corn, wheat, soybeans, cattle, and other products, contributing billions of dollars to the state's economy.

Hunters this fall will likely harvest more than 1.3 million pheasants, 47,000 deer, 220,000 ducks, and 300,000 geese in South Dakota, along with antelope, elk, grouse, turkey, rabbits, and other wildlife.

Our beautiful landscape and abundant wildlife provide a huge boon to local communities as hunters fill hotel rooms and restaurants helping make tourism South Dakota's second largest industry.

These twin economic pillars – farming and tourism – both benefit greatly from the federal Farm Bill and its voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. These programs provide farmers with funds and advice needed to put in place much-needed systems that conserve our soil, water, and wildlife.

In South Dakota about 80 percent of the land is privately owned, which means the vast majority of sportsmen and women are hunting in habitat on private lands.

Most landowners want to be good stewards, but many do not have resources to create or restore wildlife habitat. Through the Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) can help provide those resources.

In July Congress extended four major Farm Bill conservation programs, and in a big win for wildlife increased the long-term funding for the programs by about 50 percent.

Congress also extended some smaller programs like the Voluntary Public Access & Habitat Incentives Program that has supported our state's Walk-in Area Program which provides hunting access on more than 1.25 million acres.

Unfortunately, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was the one major Farm Bill conservation program that did not get extended in July. It and many other Farm Bill programs expired on Sept. 30.

Until Congress finishes the work to write a new Farm Bill or extends the current one, USDA will be unable to enroll any new acres in CRP contracts. CRP is a popular and effective tool that helps farmers protect existing grassland or plant marginal cropland with grasses, shrubs and trees. The program has three major purposes: soil conservation, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

According to a March 2024 report on pheasant

management by SD Game, Fish and Parks, "The CRP represents one the most successful conservation programs ever implemented in the United States offering private landowners the opportunity and incentive to enroll cropland into perennial cover."

The report continues, "This grassland habitat offers essential nesting, brood-rearing, and winter habitat for pheasants. Pheasant and other upland nesting bird populations have thrived in response to the CRP and other cropland retirement programs."

To complicate matters, when Congress failed to pass any appropriations bills by the start of the new fiscal year, USDA sent 96 percent of its conservation employees home and closed offices around the country.

USDA even stopped issuing checks, like the annual CRP payments to landowners that were supposed to go out October 1. USDA has already lost nearly one-quarter of its conservation staff since the new Administration took over in January, and the government shutdown will put USDA employees even further behind and make life more difficult for farmers.

South Dakota's hunters, anglers, farmers, and ranchers are some of the top beneficiaries of the CRP in the country, with over 2.6 million acres enrolled in the program. CRP contracts bring over \$145 million annually to more than 14,000 South Dakota farms. That doesn't include the myriad other benefits from the program, like the boost in the outdoor economy that comes from the wildlife produced on those lands.

Over 542,000 acres of CRP contracts in South Dakota are wetlands, providing nesting and migratory habitat for ducks, geese, and other waterfowl. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates CRP acres in the northern Great Plains add about two million ducks to the fall flight every year.

Despite the popularity and success of CRP in South Dakota, Congress is considering proposals that would reduce the program's benefits for producers, sportsmen, and wildlife. The program doesn't need a major overhaul. It just needs a few common-sense improvements.

Thankfully, Senators John Thune (R-SD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Tina Smith (D-MN) recognize the benefits of the program and its value. They introduced the Conservation Reserve Improvement and Flexibility Act which would add to the program's ability to meet producer needs.

The bill would streamline the application process for CRP State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement, an increasingly popular option in South Dakota where over 235,000 acres are planted to grass species that benefit pheasants and other grassland birds.

Their bill would provide federal payments for fencing and water facilities to encourage sounder grazing of CRP acres and would increase the annual limit on CRP payments that has not been raised since CRP was created in 1985.

The CRP Transition Incentives Program has already helped more than 2,900 farmers acquire over 400,000 acres of expiring CRP land nationwide, but the program could do even more to help new and beginning farmers if Congress would prioritize them in awarding new CRP

contracts as it now does for other USDA conservation programs. With some minor changes the CRP could also be a stronger tool for establishing and maintaining migratory corridors for wildlife.

As Members of Congress consider these and other changes to the program, they should ensure that there are no cuts – we need more acres, not less – and that any changes do not come at the expense of South Dakota's wildlife populations.

Forty years after its creation, the Conservation Reserve Program is still working for wildlife, water, and people in South Dakota.

The South Dakota Wildlife Federation is working for you to ensure Congress extends and improves the program, so the next Farm Bill builds on its many successes.



SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN NEED TO MAKE LEGISLATORS AWARE OF OUTDOOR ISSUES

In preparation for the 2026 legislative session and next year's elections, sportsmen and women should ASK QUESTIONS. Not as many legislators are actually sportsmen/women as we would hope. Thus, many don't really understand the effects on resident sportsmen when issues with wildlife, water, GFP and access laws come up for debate.

Here are a few items/topics you may want to talk to your local legislators about. Also, when attending cracker barrels or in the event you get a chance to engage a candidate or legislator.

Guide and outfitter legislation - what needs to be done to get the **Governors support**? The Governor certainly heard the opinion of a segment of the constituency that's opposed. We sportsmen and women need to let him know the reasons we need some type of licensing and what the negative effects have been because of lack of regulations. We believe Rep. Roger DeGroot, R-Dist. 7, Brookings, will introduce new legislation to address this during the 2026 legislative session.

Nest predator bounty program and its \$500,000 annual "hard dollar" cost. It is time end this waste of money. The SDWF is not against trapping; in fact, we fully support it. However, unless predator trapping is specifically targeted and annually consistent, it does little to achieve the intended goals of improving nesting success. Our youth could trap before the program and they still can when it finally ends. The funds spent on trapping could be put to far better use improving habitat and encouraging more public access acres.

In the past, SDWF had meaningful impact on selection of new GFP Commissioners. Could a formal process be developed to help ensure the **220,000 resident license buyers** have at least a modest **equal representation on the Commission** as do commercial interests. The requirements are understandable for the East River/West River, Republican Democrat and Producers. Why not have equal representation for grass roots resident sportsmen groups somewhere in the other three non-producer positions?

Annual August pheasant brood count surveys are a critical part of determining pheasant populations. Knowing a science based pheasant population is critical to proper pheasant management. Annual brood count surveys must be reinstated. The only reason they were discontinued was criticism from tourism interests who believed out-of-state hunting dropped when lower bird numbers were reported. The truth matters when it comes to sound management decisions. This brood count should be reinstated.

Water and soil conservation efforts help improve wildlife habitat. Lowering property tax burdens for producers that plant and leave native grasses along waterways needs to be encouraged. Help legislators become aware of the importance of investing in our habitat.

Aquatic Invasive Species increasingly are negatively affecting our lakes, rivers and streams and the state is investing very little in either containing the spread or mitigating the aftermath. This is perhaps the most dramatic environmental threat to our surface water and the economic impacts are huge. South Dakota needs a dedicated funding source to deal with the issue. Make your legislators aware that this is an important issue.

MOMENTUM BUILDS TO HELP OUR AT-RISK WILDLIFE

By Brad Johnson ♦ SD Wildlife Federation President ♦ NWF Board Member

The disfunction in the US Congress has cracked open the door to the possible passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), according to National Wildlife Federation (NWF) leadership.

At a time when Congress struggles to accomplish much of anything, Senate and House leadership is looking for areas of possible agreement and conservation is one of those areas.

Top of the list is RAWA, which previously has passed the House but stalled in the Senate. A new push is underway that may break that logjam. This is a top priority of the NWF and the South Dakota Wildlife Federation.

As originally proposed, the bill would have generated about \$1.4 billion annually in conservation funding and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks would have received about \$16.7 million annually to help the 104 species in need through conservation action including habitat restoration, outreach, species reintroductions, research and more.

Nationally, one-third of all U.S. wildlife species currently face an elevated risk of extinction. A problem with the original bill was that a dedicated funding source had not been identified. It is now reported that a source has been found, but that it might not reach the full \$1.4 billion.

Details are evolving but the momentum is building.

The species at risk in South Dakota are listed in GF&P's South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan, which is in the process of being updated. Details on the plan can be found on GF&P's website.

The act would provide dedicated funding for the following:

- **Protecting private lands:** Technical and financial assistance to large and small private landowners from farms to backyards will allow these important lands to become wildlife habitat.

- **Tribal Nations:** Provide funding to tribal nations to manage their more than 500+ threatened and endangered species and millions of acres of land and water.
- **Stewardships of existing habitats:** Many of the challenges facing wildlife demand management actions such as habitat restoration including prescribed fire, elimination of invasive species, and replacement of culverts for fish passage.
- **Species Reintroductions:** Some species have declined to the point that they need supplemental populations to save them from extinction or greatly hasten their recovery. Great successes using this approach include Bald Eagle, Peregrine falcon, New England cottontail rabbit, freshwater mussels, and many more.
- **Health and status of wildlife:** Funds will be available to find out where wildlife live and how they are faring ensuring we can detect declines early and thus take early preventative action.
- **State Wildlife Action Plans:** these funds will allow states to implement their Congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans that identify Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the actions necessary to safeguard them.
- **All 50 states and territories:** The bill would focus efforts on local solutions through on the ground projects on public and private lands.

Please make it known to U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds and U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson that it's critical that they support this effort to finally pass this bill.

"The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little is known about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: 'What good is it?' If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of eons, has build something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts: To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering" From *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

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\$3000 Cash Raffle

\$15 each or 3 for \$35



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- ♦ 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.

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Grand Total..... Total \$ _____