

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
April 1-2, 2015

Chairman John Cooper called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. at the Days Inn Convention Center in Brookings, South Dakota. Commissioners John Cooper, Cathy Peterson, Jim Spies, Barry Jensen, Gary Jensen, H. Paul Dennert, and W. Scott Phillips were present. Duane Sather was absent. Department Secretary Kelly Hepler was present along with approximately forty-six SDSU students, and one hundred public, staff, and media members. Cooper welcomed the SDSU students and their instructor.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Approve minutes

Chairman Cooper called for any changes to the agenda and none were brought forward. Cooper then requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March Commission meeting indicating that the Ken in the blue shirt was Kenny Dell.

Motion by Peterson with second by Spies to approve the March minutes with the correction. Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Salary Days

Chairman Cooper called for additional salary days and Gary Jensen and Jim Spies each claimed one for media training in Pierre.

Motion by Dennert with second by Phillips TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS AS REQUESTED. Motion carried unanimously.

License List Requests

There were no license list requests for Commission consideration.

PROPOSALS

Chief Tom Kirschenmann shared that the season setting recommendations presented today would be starting a three-year cycle in the multi-season setting schedule the Commission agreed to earlier this year. Any recommended changes would be presented if or when an environmental or habitat concern should arise during the three-year cycle.

Tundra Swan Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, license numbers, requirements, and restrictions for the Tundra Swan Hunting Season along with harvest information. There were no recommended changes to the season and no action as required or taken.

August Management Take

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, license numbers, requirements, and restrictions for the August Management Take that included number of hunters, days hunted, and harvest for the past five years. There were no recommended changes to the season and no action was required or taken.

Grouse and Partridge Hunting Seasons

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, license numbers, requirements, and restrictions for the Grouse and Partridge Hunting Seasons that included number of hunters and harvest. Discussion included the request last year for a resident only season. There were no recommended changes to the season and no action was required or taken.

Pheasant Hunting Seasons

Chief Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, daily and possession limits, requirements, and restrictions for the Youth, Resident, and Pheasant Hunting Seasons with no recommended changes. Kirschenmann indicated the first pheasant season was in 1919 and will soon be celebrating the 100th anniversary. The 2014 season information and population information is later in the agenda. No action was required or taken.

Quail Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open area, daily and possession limits, requirements, and restrictions with no recommended changes to the Quail Hunting Season. Harvest information was included and no action was required or taken.

Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the season information with no recommended changes to the Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season. Harvest information was included and no action was required or taken.

Tree Squirrel Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the season information with no recommended changes to the Tree Squirrel Hunting Season. Harvest information was included and no action was required or taken.

Crow/Crane/Snipe Hunting Seasons

Kirschenmann presented the season dates, open areas, daily and possession limits, requirements, and restrictions for the Crow, Crane, and Snipe Hunting Seasons along with additional supporting information. There were no recommended changes to these seasons and no action was required or taken.

Mourning Dove Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented season dates, open areas, daily and possession limits, requirements, and restrictions for the Mourning Dove Hunting Season along with

harvest information. There were no recommended changes and no action was required or taken.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing for items listed under Finalizations began at 1:57 p.m. and ended at 2:16. Minutes of the Public Hearing follow these minutes.

Non-resident waterfowl work group information

Director Leif indicated a majority of the work group members were present today; and presented the PowerPoint Presentation that was given at a work group meeting. The presentation included the non-resident waterfowl history of legislative action.

Tom Kirschenmann gave a Power Point Presentation to showing license allocation and distribution information that was presented at a work group meeting.

Director Leif then used a PowerPoint to present the twelve recommendations developed by the work group members Representative Dick Werner, Representative Spencer Hawley, Senator Bill Van Gerpen, Chuck Dieter, Chris Hesla, Norb Barrie, Larry Steffen, GFP Commissioner Gary Jensen, and GFP Commissioner Paul Dennert. Leif indicated the work group members had no rule-making authority but were to work towards a consensus of recommendations. Leif stated that some recommendations had opposition and he noted those oppositions. Leif indicated GFP staff would prepare the work group recommendations into a proposal format for Commission consideration at the May Commission meeting.

Senator Bill Van Gerpen shared his concerns regarding the proposed changes and that he introduced SB164 last year for 300 3-day licenses for the southeast corner the state as shown in the history of the legislation. He thought it is logical that the GFP Commission have the authority and that why this issue is here today. Van Gerpen realizes compromise is important which is why he backed off from 300 to 50 licenses and supports the change. The recommendations are not creating new licenses but are reallocating the existing licenses. He encouraged favorable consideration of the work group recommendations.

Representative Dick Werner stated he was responsible to get this before the Commission and this is the only legislation of wildlife not governed by Commission and stated that the majority of legislature supported this change. The work group members treated everyone with respect during their meetings. Werner believes this is a social issue and that is what the GFP Commission manages. Werner indicated that pressure points were identified by the work group and he understands the pressure in those areas; and he believes there is opportunity to reallocate licenses to spread out the opportunity to hunt. He stated we are not here to increase the licenses but to redistribute the licenses; things have changed since the 1980's and migration patterns have changed; and there is a need to redistribute licenses in order to promote the sport. He realizes there is a decline of interest in the sport and there is a need to promote it for future of the sport. His request is to support the work group's recommendations.

Representative Spencer Hawley welcomed the Commission and staff to Brookings. Hawley mentioned the indoor archery range and that the old landfill is now a park and the ponds are stocked with fish and that canoers are enjoying it as well.

Hawley then shared his history of involvement of the waterfowl issue from the GFP Commission perspective and more recently as a Legislator. He believes the Commission can make more informed decisions on this issue. He stated there are important economic issues; and the quality of life issue which includes hunting and fishing. He likes the concept to reduce pressure in the northeast; and likes distributing licenses in the north central zone that would bring in 200 new hunters to waterfowl hunting with this distribution change. He is comfortable with recommendations and believes they are as good as options as could be recommended. He would like to see a 100 more youth licenses; and he understands that there will be an impact on resident hunters with these recommended changes.

Chuck Deiter, representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association (SDWA), representing 500 waterfowl hunters, stated their goal is to preserve the quality of waterfowl hunting in South Dakota for future generations. He believes the group was unbalanced as he and Hesla represent 1000s of hunters and each had one seat. He stated his concerns with the work group members in that some have commercial connections and are serving on the work group. He thought it was hard to get his point across. He counted the public comments, stating that ninety percent of resident's comments wanted reduction or no increase in licenses; the few residents that wanted more were licenses were commercial or business owners; and forty-five percent of the comments were against any increase and liked the current season and opportunity for non-residents. He believes the work group disregarded wishes of those representing the 1000s of hunters. He supports the youth licenses and that the 100 new licenses would mean a net increase of 400 new hunters in central South Dakota. He stated hunting is important to the quality of life and should not be commercialized; there is no justification to increase the number of hunters and that waterfowl hunters have been compromising on this. Residents are losing out each time there is compromise and he does not support increase licenses and he knows the Commission represents all hunters in South Dakota. Non-resident hunters can get a license about two out of three years and they do not want any more competition for licenses. The 1,500 licenses from Pierre area were okay with resident hunters and are not "left over" licenses but are dedicated to that area.

Norb Barrie, President of South Dakota Opportunity Group, shared his thoughts about serving on the work group. He stated HB1185 was supported statewide by some of the largest entities such as the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce, Shawn Lyons of South Dakota Retailers, Rosy Smith of the Great Lakes and Glacial Lakes Area of Watertown, and Chris Hesla of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation endorsed it. When in committee, Nathan Sanderson supported it as well as GFP, and Shantel Krebs, committee chairperson, supported HB1185 to get it passed. Individuals, small business owners, residents, and non-residents supported HB1185 to improve the economy of all South Dakota residents. He requested support for the recommendations of the work group. He believes the 5% increase should be used to encourage youth to hunt.

Rich Widman, President of South Dakota Wildlife Federation (SDWF), stated this organization started in 1945 to support hunting for residents. He stated his concern

about the makeup of the work group and that SDWF represented many hunters across the state. SDWF agrees that South Dakota waterfowl hunting should remain as it is because it is a hunting paradise and non-residents want to come here. Non-residents know they will get good hunting; and that they can get a license about every other year; and that it is hard to get quality hunts anywhere. He feels commercial interests do not realize ducks are not pheasants and that ducks will leave an area when continually hunted and then there will be no hunters and no revenue from hunters. He wants to keep things as they are.

Commissioner Gary Jensen shared his thoughts about keeping his neutrality as a GFP Commissioner member and that he heard the comments from SDWA and SDWF and appreciates their viewpoint. He realizes 90-98 percent of comments want no changes and he recognizes the recommendation would have an increase of about 400 new hunters. He understands the issue is not about the numbers of ducks and geese; but the issue may be access to have a place to hunt and access has not really been addressed by the work group. He believes CO's could assist with this issue.

Commissioner Paul Dennert stated he has dealt with this issue for many years and that South Dakota is a great state to live in and hunt in. He believes the recommendations creates 400 possible more hunters and the main recommendation was a consensus. He continues to have concerns as well. He believes there will be pressure all the time and he needs to consider all sides of the issue. He is happy this is before the Commission and believes no change would be appropriate depending on recommendations presented at the May Commission meeting.

Chuck Dieter stated he appreciated the efforts of all work group members and their hard work to reduce hunting pressure and tags in the northeast.

OPEN FORUM on non-resident waterfowl

Dave Bankers of Marshall County stated the hunting pressure has increased over past years; especially on weekends during the pheasant season and when ducks are flying. He appreciated the working group's efforts to manage pressure and believes central South Dakota could use more pressure. He likes involvement of conservation officers at access areas especially on weekends. He believes there is too much pressure in the northeast and he has a brother and son who are happy to come back on the lottery basis in order to have access to a quality hunt. He encouraged favorable support for the resident hunter and quality hunts.

Art Russo of Aberdeen, SD, owns and operates a lodge and is concerned about the recommendations of the working group. He made an investment to develop his business based on laws in effect at that time. He believes the working group recommendations will have detrimental effect on his business in the north central counties because hunters follow the ducks. He sees no reason why the working group would focus on north central South Dakota, as there is no pressure in his area. He believes this will add congestion to both units and not change pressure in northeast. He respectfully requested Commission consider no change to current allocations, He wants to leave it as is as non-resident hunters like the two to three chance for a license and it is working quite well. Do nothing, leave as is.

Bob Olson of Aberdeen, SD, remains in South Dakota because of the outdoor opportunity and believes we are losing opportunity as the northeast has reached saturation. He stated it is hard to find opportunity from landowners as it has been reserved by non-resident hunters. Resident hunters have a hard time to find place to hunt and please listen to the waterfowl hunters and understand the need for the reduction of licenses in northeast. Bob asked the Commission to listen to the passion of resident hunters.

Tom Curran of Yankton, SD, provided written testimony and commented that the Wildlife Division tried to quantify where hunter density is located. He does not believe this is an accurate comparison due to habitat and weather conditions. In the southeast, ninety plus percent of hunters hunt on the Missouri River. He talked about the quality of the hunt; and that non-residents that hunt with him are happy with a quality hunt every two to three years and they are okay with and like the current system.

Rich Barnett likes what was in statute as sportsmen have comprised over the years and given up more than their opponents give. HB1185 was passed and was hog hounded twice then reworked before it was passed. Now the burden is on Commission and he hopes the Commission will make a good decision and keep things the way they are.

Karen Kargo, is a landowner and animal sanctuary operator. She sees signs shot and trailers shot and vandalized by hunters. She likes to see the return of birds and wants springtime hunting abolished so the birds remain. Farming has altered seeds for planting and the ponds that birds and animals need to survive. She believes young people do not hunt for provision but that hunting is a business. She supports the preservation of animal life.

Bobby Cox of Ipswich, SD, moved here in 2002 from ND, he is a retired research biologist including hunting and movement of waterfowl and ducks. He moved here because of waterfowl hunting regulations and access. Habitat is needed to support waterfowl movement and he would like the Commission to keep the licenses as they currently are or more restrictive. Non-resident hunters like it the way is and have about an eighty percent chance to draw a license every four years. South Dakota is a great place to visit and to hunt waterfowl and better than most states. He supports the quality of life as that is why he moved here and he wants good duck hunting.

Alex Russo operates a non-resident waterfowl company in South Dakota. He served as a U.S. Marine and wanted to start a company to assist people who cannot afford to hunt. North central South Dakota has good hunting because the migration has moved to the west. People follow the migration to hunt. He does not want an influx of licenses and wants it left alone, it is a well-oiled machine, if it is not broken don't fix it, leave it as is. We do not need to change this stuff.

Paul Jensen of Dell Rapids has hunted waterfowl for sixty years. He lets kids hunt his sloughs, and believes local people need to be considered before non-residents.

Curt Tesch of Roberts County moved here 26 years ago for resident hunting privileges and moved his company here. The hunting pressure has increased in Roberts County and the public slough near his house; and with the 3-day license, many Minnesota hunters show up on his spot. The pressure last year moved birds out of his area. Minnesota hunters are day hunters and leave no tourist dollars here.

Martin Hesby of Brookings, SD, stated he wants the good quality of life in South Dakota; and the outdoor opportunity is why he lives here. He loves South Dakota and sees this as an opportunity to make a decision to draw a line to stand with residents or commercial and non-resident interests. Non-resident waterfowl hunters spend many dollars in South Dakota as do resident hunters who following the ducks. Simplify this issue and take to heart what South Dakota residents say. He believes this is a bad recommendation, to reallocate licenses, as it will increase hunters, and it is already a circus out there. Pressure and saturation is real. Please kill the recommendation and support SDWF and SDWA recommendations. The recommendations should be based on the residents' position on this issue. You can't have more than five percent increase each year and the reallocation recommendation is way above the five percent increase in that zone, he is concerned about the legality of this.

Clint Hagg of Brookings, SD, stated hunting is good and every year pressure has increased from Brookings to DeSmet to Webster. He was turned down thirty times last year when asking landowner permission to hunt and it was discouraging. Pressure is saturated in eastern South Dakota and many non-resident students come here just to hunt as they are grandfathered into hunting. The pressure from these students is great as they can hunt every day, not only the weekends. Keep things as they are or decrease licenses to keep the quality of life in South Dakota.

Casey Wiesman of Aberdeen, SD, stated waterfowl hunting is near and dear to his heart and that is why he returned to South Dakota. Commercial operations and landowners still own land and give people permission to hunt. He promotes South Dakota at travel shows and he gets lots of comments about waterfowl hunting and how hard it is to get a license. The non-resident never brings up access to lands to hunt. The reallocation is making it confusing for everyone and he wants things to stay as they are. This is a great working model and works for resident and nonresident hunters. There is a need to work with landowners, as habitat is key to good hunting. He would like to see things stay as they are. South Dakota is the number one destination for waterfowl hunting and North Dakota is not far behind. Keep things the same.

Jeff Smerak is self-educated with the presentations today and non-resident licenses are more abundant than he previously thought and the demand is lower than he expected. Of the recommendations brought forward today, he supports changes to address the pressure in the northeast region. He believes the season starts way too early and the youth season is used to educate youth and is too early for identification education.

OPEN FORUM other comments

Mike Cummings of Rapid City and owns a bait shop. He stated the fish management plan for the next five years provides for hatchery trout and he has 1000s of people who want panfish, northern, and walleye in the southern Black Hills lakes. There are two main streams managed for trout and that sportsmen want another unique opportunity to fish for walleye - something other than trout in lakes. He presented a petition with more than 341 signatures for walleye, 206 signatures for northern pike, and 204 signatures for pan fish support. Pan fish and northern are in Pactola with trophy pike fishing and there are visitors coming from all over to enjoy this.

He supports stocking walleyes in Black Hills lakes and believes Deerfield Lake is overrun with rock bass, stunted perch, and white suckers with no predator fish in it. He made requests two years ago for changes at Deerfield Lake and received no response. He suggested putting 5-10,000 adult walleye in Deerfield Lake to make a better fishery. Deerfield Lake does not allow live bait and is a no wake lake with no jet skis and motorboats.

Cooper asked about the process Cummings followed and if he provided written comments and recommendations to fisheries staff or the Department as social and biological issues need to be considered. Cummings reference Rapid City Journal article and he believes the people want the change to have additional opportunity to fish other species than trout in the Black Hills.

Chairman Cooper called a recess at 5:08 p.m. and the meeting would resume at 8 a.m. the next morning. The meeting resumed at 8 a.m. the next morning with Commissioners Cooper, Peterson, Barry Jensen, Gary Jensen, Jim Spies, Paul Dennert, and Scott Phillips present. Secretary Hepler was present along with about forty public, staff, and media.

FINALIZATIONS

Tom Kirschenmann reminded the Commission about the multiyear season setting schedule and that the elk hunting seasons will be brought back next year with recommendations to begin the multiyear season setting schedule for elk at that time.

Archery Elk Hunting Season 41:06:43

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes indicating the changes recommended last month and proposed by the Commission were within the 2015-2019 Elk Management Plan guidelines. Switzer indicated there are no recommended changes to Archery Elk Hunting Season proposal.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 92 "any elk" and 15 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 107 licenses) to 144 "any elk" and 56 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 200 licenses).
2. Repeal Unit AEE-ZZ1.

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Spies TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE ARCHERY ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:43 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Black Hills Elk Hunting Season 41:06:26

Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Black Hills Elk Hunting Season with no recommended changes to proposal and that the proposed changes are consistent with the 2015-2019 Elk Management Plan guidelines. Discussion included the desire to let the public know the unit/areas the Department plans to slowly grow the elk herd.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 420 "any elk" and 250 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 670 licenses) to 430 "any elk" and 500 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 930 licenses).

2. Allocate a pool of “antlerless elk” contingency licenses, up to 20% of antlerless licenses available from all Black Hills hunting units combined, which would be issued by GFP Commission resolution in August if summer range conditions dictate the use of contingency licenses.

Motion by Phillips with second by Dennert TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE BLACK HILLS ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:26 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Prairie Elk Hunting Season 41:06:59

Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Prairie Elk Hunting Season indicating there are no population or management goals for the prairie herd.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 57 “any elk” and 36 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 93 licenses) to 48 “any elk” and 50 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 98 licenses).
2. No licenses issued for Unit 30A (portions of Gregory County).
3. Add that portion of Jackson County south of SD Highway 44 and BIA Highway 2 to Unit 11A,B,C,D.
4. Change the season dates for Unit 11C from the second Sunday of October to December 31 to the second Sunday of October to November 30.
5. Repeal Unit PRE-ZZ1.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:59 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season (Any Elk) 41:06:27

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season (Any Elk) with no recommended changes to proposal.

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 5 “any elk” (including 1 “any elk” raffle license) to 8 “any elk” (including 1 “any elk” raffle license) licenses.
2. Repeal Unit CUE-ZZ1.

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE CUSTER STATE PARK ELK HUNTING SEASON (ANY ELK) 41:06:27 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Mountain Goat Hunting Season 41:06:29

Chad Switzer presented the proposed changes to the Mountain Goat Hunting Season indicating the changes will start the multiyear cycle for this season and will be set for the next two years.

1. Offer 2 “any mountain goat” licenses.
2. Change the season dates from the first Saturday of October- October 31 to September 1- December 31.

Motion by Spies with second by Peterson TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE MOUNTAIN GOAT HUNTING SEASON 41:06:29 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Hunting party size restriction - Hunting Requirements and Prohibited Methods 41:06:04

Andy Alban presented the proposed changes to clarify who is counted in the size of a hunting party and that this change came from a bill introduced in the 2015 Legislature.

Amend 41:06:04:02 to clarify that the 20 person limit on those who are engaged in party hunting only includes those persons in the party who are carrying a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow.

Motion by Dennert with second by Barry Jensen TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO HUNTING REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITED METHODS 41:06:04 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

Custer State Park Non-Trophy Bison Harvest 41:06:60

Matt Snyder presented the proposed season dates for the Custer State Park Non-Trophy Bison Harvest with no recommended changes.

Change season dates from 49 days beginning the first Saturday in October to 47 days beginning the 4th Monday in January.

Motion by Spies with second by Phillips TO FINALIZE CHANGES TO THE CUSTER STATE PARK NON-TROPHY BISON HARVEST 41:06:60 AS PROPOSED. Motion carried unanimously.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Elk Management Plan Action

Chief Tom Kirschenmann handed out the updated version of the 2015-2019 Elk Management plan and a sheet outlining the final edits. He indicated this is a work in progress that began a year and a half ago that started with a public survey that became the foundation to move forward for the drafting of the plan. The seventeen-member elk stakeholder group met four times to discuss size of herd and depredation issues as well as habitat, environmental conditions, and social tolerance. This is a guiding document for everyone, the Commission, the Department, and the public. Forage has become an important concern and staff will continue to work with the Forest Service on management and allocation of forage for livestock and elk.

Kirschenmann provided information on the license contingency plan as this approach is an emergency plan for such situations as drought or fire conditions; and the plan will allow an immediate action by the Commission to reduce the herd. The Department will provide information based on the current environmental conditions to the Commission annually in July with a briefing and discussion of possible action in August. A resolution will be presented to the Commission in August, if needed, regarding the contingency licenses to allow additional antlerless tags to be available for hunters to apply for. These licenses are for an immediate response and will begin the process that will include efforts to move the herd from the current population level. License allocations for the continued environmental conditions will come as a

recommendation the following year. The population objectives will be addressed during the regular season setting process as the contingency plan is an immediate response for emergency conditions. Discussion included how to get public or private insight when using the contingency plan before a resolution is considered. Kirschenmann indicated an approach will be developed before the resolution is drafted.

Kirschenmann indicated that this has been a long, healthy process with good collaboration; staff has worked hard to prepare this plan and Kirschenmann supported approval of the 2015-2019 Elk Management Plan.

Motion by Gary Jensen with second by Barry Jensen TO APPROVE THE SOUTH DAKOTA ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-2019. Motion carried unanimously.

Land Acquisition Report

Paul Coughlin provided information that the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation Board (PWF) has approved the assignment of a purchase agreement for 6.64 acres land owned by Harney Lumber Company adjacent to the Rapid City Outdoor Campus West and that PWF approved \$38,000 for the non-federal match needed for a federal aid grant to complete the purchase. The property will be used for overflow parking at the Outdoor Campus West and equipment storage. This may be an action item for the Commission at the next meeting.

Upland game hunting season and populations

Travis Runia provide a PowerPoint Presentation indicating the 2014 Pheasant Hunting Season saw 63,704 resident hunters harvesting 527,593 roosters for 8.6 birds per hunter. The 79,636 non-resident hunters harvested 706,145 roosters for 8.9 birds per hunter. The report showed the number of hunters since 1986, harvest estimates since 2002, and preseason population estimates since 2001.

The Prairie Grouse Hunting Season had 7,093 resident hunters and 4,532 non-resident hunters harvesting 39,179 grouse. The report showed the number of prairie grouse hunters and harvest beginning in 1945.

Elk depredation program report

Keith Fisk gave a PowerPoint Presentation that provided the history of depredation issues, social balance, pool hunts, expenditures of program efforts, and implementation of new funds and the future of the program as a result of an increase in the elk population.

Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center and Nature Park

Chief Scott Simpson introduced Dennis Hetrick, Manager of the Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center. Hetrick indicated the Center is busy with an archery program, a 4-H program, and membership use. The pistol and rifle ranges were recently updated and a 12-week shoot with 30 participants was recently completed. So far in 2015, 23 one-year memberships have been sold to the pistol-rifle range and 52 full facility memberships have been sold. Pittman-Robertson grant funds thru GFP were used to upgrade the retrieval system on the pistol range. This is a great addition to the community and the state. Hetrick extended an invitation for everyone to visit the center.

Chief Simpson indicated \$350,000 of federal grant funds were used for this facility along with \$25,000 of hard dollars and it is a great partnership for the Department and the Brookings community.

License Sales Report

Chief Simpson indicated resident and non-resident fishing license sales remain ahead of last year.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Roy Lake Resort Concession

Concession Manager Sean Blanchette indicated the current Roy Lake Resort concession owner, Janice K. Pitzl, submitted a "Letter of Intent to Sell" her interests in the business on March 16. The packet provided by Pitzl included a brief description, asset list, and purchase options.

The current lease is operating under the 1990 version of the ARSD 41:13 concession rules which allows the concessionaire to establish the sale price which Pitzl has set at \$1,195,000. The price includes the interest in the resort buildings, rental boats, personal property such as furniture, fixtures, equipment; as well as intangible assets such as business name and website, customer and marketing list, and ten years of sales receipts.

Blanchette stated the next step in the sale process is to issue and advertise a prospectus for the opportunity. The recommended requirements for a new lease to be advertised are: a 10-year term; same service levels and season as currently required; continue with current franchise fee structure of 4% on sales up to \$200,000 and 5% on sales in excess of \$200,000; and the addition of a 2% Repair and Maintenance reserve.

Blanchette requested permission to issue and advertise a prospectus for the Roy Lake Resort Concession opportunity. The prospectus would advertise for about three months with proposals due in late summer or early fall. If no proposals are received, Mrs. Pitzl would continue to operate the resort under the current contract terms. Discussion included the condition of the operation and buildings.

Motion by Spies with second by Barry Jensen TO APPROVE THE REQUEST TO ISSUE AND ADVERTISE THE PROSPECTUS FOR THE ROY LAKE RESORT CONCESSION AS RECOMMENDED. Motion carried unanimously.

Good Earth State Park

Director Doug Hofer indicated the geoglyphs were identified and the tribes did exercise their right to the cultural ties to ancestors. The tribes monitored the work at the site and formally notified the Department that they desired to know how this affects the construction process. A formal consultation meeting between the National Park Service, GFP, and the Ponca and Omaha tribes resulted in an agreement with the tribes that the Department will relocate the visitor center to the homestead site provided: 1) the Department could secure additional property to the west of the homestead site for the

visitor center; 2) the Department would replace top soil and return it to native grass to preserve the geoglyphs; and 3) the Department could use the area without disturbing the plow zone.

The South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation has purchased forty acres of property to provide access to Good Earth State Park. The adjacent landowner has agreed to a trade of about fifteen acres and a survey has been ordered. Later this month the PWF will be asked to consider and approve the trade and turn the property over to the Department. This transaction will provide the additional property needed to move the visitor center to the homestead site and meet the agreement with tribes. Hofer stated the additional acreage is needed as a buffer for the visitor center road and parking. The consultant engineer, HDR, has been asked to rework the design at the new location and be ready to move forward with the project.

The Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) process similar to the one followed with the Custer State Park Visitor Center will be used for the Good Earth State Park visitor center. Three Sioux Falls based companies have responded to the RFP for CMR services at Good Earth and next week the building committee will interview those firms and make a selection. Commissioner Peterson was appointed last year to represent the Commission on the building committee.

The construction process goal is to begin this fall developing the roads and the visitor center construction may be completed in July of 2016. Hofer indicated work continues to solidify the PWF pledge and financial commitment to the project and that the Department financial portion was completed in the FY2016 budget approved by the 2015 Legislature. Hofer indicated a cultural resource survey of the homestead property will happen in the next fifteen days to determine if there are any cultural resource limitations on the development adjacent to the new visitor center.

Oahe Downstream Concession

Sean Blanchette shared that an RFP was advertised last December with a deadline of March 1, 2015. No proposals were received and Steve Rounds will continue to operate the Oahe Marina Concession.

Department of Health project with fourth graders

Bob Schneider indicated the National Park Service, on their 100th anniversary in 2016, will offer every fourth grader a family pass to the National Parks. Schneider indicated the Department does not have the authority to give away annual park passes; however, the South Dakota Department of Health has agreed to provide a grant that will underwrite the cost of providing all South Dakota fourth graders a day pass into the state parks. The 12,500 fourth grade students in South Dakota will receive a certificate next month to exchange at a state park for a \$6 day pass allowing them to enjoy a state park during 2015. The American Heart Association and the South Dakota Parks and Recreation Association have partnered with the Parks Division to help promote the program in the media. Participation will be measured for future opportunity to promote healthier lifestyles.

Parks Revenue and Camping Reservations

Director Hofer reported revenue for the first three months shows 12-13% ahead of last year due to camping reservations for the coming season. He believes the two reasons for this increase is more midweek and shoulder season use; and people are making their reservations earlier in the year. Lake Francis Case parks, Lake Oahe parks, and Lake Sharp parks are all up 15-16%, above the statewide average increase. March use may be up due to the nice weather along the river and there could be additional gains in April.

Miscellaneous Updates

Director Hofer shared that 2019 could be a great year to celebrate for the Department as it is also the 100th anniversary of Custer State Parks and Peter Norbeck advocated both Custer State Park and the pheasant season.

Hofer shared that the Custer State Park Resorts winter getaway packages at Blue Bell Lodge were well-received and were great experiences. Hofer stated that at the May Commission meeting the Commissioners will see the schematic design of the Custer State Park Resort improvements that were authorized in the 2015 bonding legislation.

Sean Blanchette indicated the closing for the sale of the Lewis and Clark Resort Concession was completed on March 18 and that Jeff VanMeeteren is working with the new owner on a smooth transition. The restaurant sublease is being negotiated; and the boat slip contracts have been sent out with most of them returned. The convenience store preparation is in progress.

Cooper revisited the non-resident waterfowl work group recommendations asking for staff comments.

Hepler stated he asked staff to stay neutral on this issue as he believes the Legislature put this to the Commission. Hepler indicated the Commission and the staff can continue to review the work group recommendations. The Department will not be bringing recommendations; the issue is for the Commission to determine the implementation of the recommendations from the work group. Hepler stated this is a social issue and the Commission will need to make decisions on this issue.

Discussion ensued on the process and the timing of the process over the next couple of months. Legislature expectations were reviewed indicating there were no specific expectations; however, some legislators believed the Commission would take action to address the issue within the limitation of increasing licenses up to five percent per year.

Chief Kirschenmann shared that Avian Influenza has spread across the country, and that a poultry flock in Beadle County has been confirmed by a national laboratory. The Department has been in contact with APHIS, the Department of Health, and the Animal Industry Board, and GFP has been asked to monitor wild birds. The Department has an ongoing research project and staff will gather samples to assist with monitoring especially during the bird and duck banding projects and into the fall with regular staff

activities. The Ag community and trade side of the poultry business will be affected more than the Department but there may be an effect on migrating birds or other birds.

Hepler reported that he has traveled 1,700 miles to meet supervisors, staff, hatcheries and visited the outdoor campuses, Good Earth, Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, and Custer State Park. He indicated we have incredible staff and that the Commission is engaged in the business of Game, Fish, and Parks.

Motion by Barry Jensen with second by Gary Jensen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
April 1, 2015

Public Hearing Officer Scott Simpson began the Public Hearing at 2 p.m. at the Days Inn Convention Center in Brookings, South Dakota. Commissioners Cooper, Peterson, Barry Jensen, Jim Spies, Gary Jensen, H. Paul Dennert, and W. Scott Phillips were present. Written and email comments received prior to the meeting were provided to the Commissioners for consideration and will be reflected in these minutes. Oral testimony was limited to three minutes and each person provided their name, city, and state on the sign-in sheet at the microphone.

Elk Hunting Seasons

Jacob A. Sharp of Black Hawk, SD, emailed: "...If a state resident gets to the age of 80 years old and has never gotten an elk tag it should be automatic to get one. All residents should get a least 1 elk tag in their lifetime..."

Gary Hendrickson of Belle Fourche, SD, emailed: "...to voice my concern on the increased amount of cow elk tags that are being proposed. Last fall during all the elk seasons in H1 unit I did not see the number of elk that would warrant an increase in cow tags for that area. I do not understand the rationale behind the increase in those licenses..."

Richard D. Trapp of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "I do not feel that the proposed increase in hunting licenses is the proper thing to do as it appears the herd population appears to have finally taken a modest increase. I would suggest that the commission only do 25% of the proposed increase to hunting licenses..."

Tina Abrahamson of Black Hawk, SD, emailed: "I believe it would be beneficial to have a hunting season for elk, only if there is a high enough count to maintain enough here for a continued healthy population of them. However, there must be care taken in the sexes allowed to be hunted, so as to keep balance here in the hills."

Pat Coy of Custer, SD, emailed: "...I ranch in unit 2 I understand you are proposing to add 400 head of antlerless tags. That is a good place to start..."

Dylan Deuter of Ree Heights, SD, emailed: "I think you are still putting out too many cow tags..."

Jake Leibke of Garden City, SD, emailed: "I believe the proposed increase in cow elk tags would be detrimental to the South Dakota elk herd. It seems as though our elk herd is just starting to make a comeback and this increase would be major setback to the gains made in the past few years..."

Oral testimony:

Dillion Dueter of Ree Heights, SD, stated he liked the increase of archery elk tags as less impact than with additional the firearm elk tags. He does not like contingency plan and to remove cattle from grazing off pastures in August and then issue more elk tags, doesn't make for a good plan.

Rick Hanson of Spearfish, SD, stated in the archery season he agrees with the changes. He did not know about elk stakeholder group and is in the Black Hills taking photos, guiding, or hunting 100-120 days a year. He has a problem with the contingency

plan. The state is in charge of the elk and Forest Service has control of the forage and there will be plenty of forage in the next few years. The Forest Service has no contingency plan...He has concerns about the contingency plan and wants to kill it.

Custer State Park Non-Trophy Bison Harvest

No written or oral testimony was received.

Mountain Goat Hunting Season

Tina Abrahamson of Black Hawk, SD, emailed: "...if this commission feels that there is a high enough population to allow a few goats to be taken, then I would be comfortable with that..."

Vicki Schlieff of Silver City, SD, emailed: "...I don't understand why we need to always think about hunting them versa relocating them-so others can enjoy the beauty of these magnificent animals...I hope there's NOT a hunting season for them..."

Kathy McDaniel of Rapid City, SD, emailed: "I am very opposed to opening a mountain goat hunting season in the Black Hills...Please disapprove the proposed hunting season and leave these animals for all of us in the Black Hills to enjoy."

No oral testimony was received.

Hunting party size restriction

Charlie Johnson of Gregory, SD, emailed: "...I would like the party size limit of 20 be amended to count only weapon carrying pheasant hunters towards the party size and not count non-weapon carrying guides or non-hunting spectators..."

No oral testimony was presented.

The Public Hearing concluded at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary