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**FEBRUARY
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OUT OF DOORS

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 2

New program aims to preserve 20,200 acres for pheasants

BARCODED FLATS

A new government-sponsored program will attempt to preserve 20,200 acres of land for pheasants in South Dakota.

It's one of 30 newly announced efforts in a nationwide Conservation Reserve Program practice called State Acres for wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

Daryl Campbell, conservation chief for the state Farm Service Agency, said the Pheasants SAFE project will protect some pheasant habitat acres that otherwise would be lost to the expiration of existing CRP contracts.

"The authors of this project had that in mind when they proposed it," Campbell said. "They realized that we were losing a lot of acres that were under expiring contracts and will expire in the next three years, and this is an attempt to replace some of those acres."

For the past 22 years, the federal government's CRP program has paid landowners to convert marginal agricultural parcels into areas of natural cover that protect wildlife and the environment. CRP acres in South Dakota have been credited with sparking a boom in the state's pheasant numbers.

Pheasant hunters have been concerned recently, though, about decisions by some landowners to let their CRP contracts expire. High grain prices, for example, have encouraged some landowners to rent their ground to farmers rather than re-enroll it in CRP.

As of last month, there were about 1.3 million acres of land in South Dakota enrolled in CRP. In recent times, that number has hovered around 1.5 million annually.

The new Pheasants SAFE program will be like existing CRP programs, in that it will pay landowners to convert agricultural land to areas of vegetative cover. But the Pheasants SAFE program, proposed by Pheasants Forever and the state Game, Fish and Parks Department, will focus specifically on conservation practices beneficial to pheasants and other birds such as sharp tail grouse, prairie chickens and upland nesting ducks.

A news release from the USDA states that "SAFE provides conservation partners the flexibility to create projects and install conservation practices that target the specific needs of high-value wildlife species."

The Pheasants SAFE program will be available in all East River counties and the West River counties of Gregory, Lyman, Tripp, Jones and Stanley. Sign-up dates have not yet been announced.

Another SAFE project in South Dakota will seek to enroll 500 acres in CRP to benefit the sage grouse population. That program will be available in portions of Harding and Butte counties.

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2008 SDWF Conservation Camp

The 45th annual SDWF Conservation Camp is now in the planning stage. June 1st through June 7th young people from across South Dakota will be arriving at Camp Bob Marshall in the beautiful Black Hills. They will be learning about conservation and striking up new friendships. The 2007 Conservation Camp was attended by near record numbers of students. It is our hope to repeat or surpass the 2007 event this year. With the help of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks personal, a unique opportunity is being planned for the young people of South Dakota.

If any of our readers know of young people who like the out of doors, hunting and fishing, or are interested in learning the message of conservation professionals the SDWF

Conservation Camp is a wonderful opportunity. Any student, girls or boys, in 9th, 10th or 11th grade who is in the upper half of their class scholastically is eligible to attend camp. Interested young people can apply directly to a local sportsman's club in their area or to their local Soil Conservation District office.

For more information about how you or someone you know can attend the SDWF Conservation Camp or to request a video presentation about the camp, contact Camp Director, Mike McKernan, PO Box 246, Murdo, SD 57559, phone 605-669-2829, e-mail hdmac@wcnenet.com or Chris Hesla, Executive Director, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501, phone 605-224-7524.

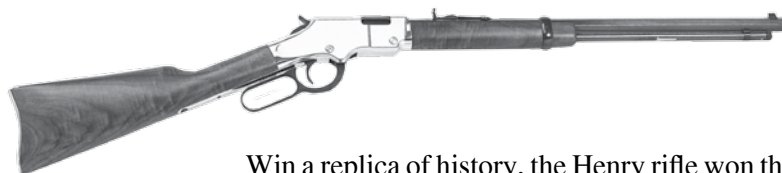
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Executive Director's Update *by Chris Hesla*

SDWF managed to defeat ALL legislation that would have harmed our outdoor pursuits here in South Dakota during this session.

Thank you again, for those of you who took time to contact your legislator(s) and/or by supporting us financially through our raffles and memberships. Together we can and do make a difference!

South Dakota's 83rd Legislative Session will be just about done by the time you receive your February Out-of-Doors. There is one day set aside to work on Governor vetoes. Outdoor issues fared very well again this year, there were no detrimental bills passed. SDWF worked every day protecting all of our rights to pursue and enjoy our outdoor recreation here in South Dakota. There were several bills discussed that would have harmed our outdoor enjoyment. Because of our daily presence in the halls and our lobbying power, we were able to persuade individual legislators that their idea perhaps is not in the best interest of their constituents. Also, the support shown through our dedicated membership helps to keep pressure on the legislators as issues arise.

SDWF managed to defeat ALL legislation that would have harmed our outdoor pursuits here in South Dakota during this session. SDWF also supported HB 1263 the 10 year old Mentoring Bill. This is a very controversial piece of legislation and we realize that not every 10 year old is ready or able to hunt. If the parents think their child is ready and capable to hunt, there will be the ability to teach and mentor their children into a safe and fulfilling hunting lifestyle. SDWF will be involved in the rule making and implementation of the Mentoring Bill through the GF&P

Commission process.

I want to thank everyone who signed up for the daily legislative updates, it is a very good way to stay informed and also participate in our great form of Government. I will from time to time send out anything that may be of interest to our members. If you would like to be a recipient, please just email me at sdwf@mncomm.com and write subscribe in the subject line.

According to the news the snow pack in the Black Hills is looking good this year, which is a first in many years. Most of the big hills lakes are around 50% capacity and are in dire need of good run-off from a good snow pack. The mountains in Montana are showing a very good level of snow this year. Run off for the Missouri River Basin from the Mountains should be the best in several years, however the snow pack on the plains of Montana, North and South Dakota is non-existent, hopefully we will get some old fashioned spring blizzards that will cover the plains, I don't think I will hold my breath.

THANK YOU again, for those of you who took time to contact your legislator(s) and/or by supporting us financially through our raffles and memberships. Together we can and do make a difference!



President's Column *by Rieck Eske*

I just want to thank everyone who contacted their legislators either by phone or email, cracker barrel and let them know were you stand with the issues regarding hunting, fishing and conservation. With everyone's help we can and do make a difference.

Greetings everyone!

We have had a very interesting Legislative session so far this year. Things have been hopping. First of all I would like to thank all of you who came and helped out at Outdoor Enthusiast Day in Pierre on February 11th. We were well represented about 65 Outdoor Enthusiasts showed up representing 9 different groups and organizations. Thank You!

A few of the bills that we were working on were SB96-An act to provide for the issuance of landowner-sponsored big game hunting licenses. I am happy to report that it was defeated in the full Senate. Another one was HJR1005-Proposing and submitting to the voters at the next general election an amendment to Article XXI of the Constitution of the State of South Dakota, related to fishing, hunting and trapping. Its sponsor tabled this.

HB1208 - An act to reimburse certain motorists involved in vehicle collisions with wild life was passed to the 36th day. HB1183 - An act to establish a lifetime combination small game and fishing license and authorize the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to promulgate rules was also defeated.

I just want to thank everyone who contacted their legislators either by phone or email, cracker barrel and let them know were you stand with the issues regarding hunting, fishing and conservation. With everyone's help we can and do make a difference. We need to keep our eyes and ears open, as I'm sure a lot of these same issues will be back again next year.

CARRY ON THE TRADITION



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Sportsmen Brace for Farm Bill Setback

By Faith Bremner

WASHINGTON – Hunters groups across the country are worried that a federal program that encourages farmers to conserve wildlife habitat and protect water quality could lose ground under the new farm bill being negotiated. As House and Senate lawmakers tried to reach consensus on a final bill, the House Agriculture Committee recently proposed reducing the maximum number of acres that can be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program by 18 percent. If the proposal is adopted, a 23-year effort to protect wildlife and restore water quality on agricultural lands would suffer a serious setback, hunters say. The CRP was created in 1985 to pay farmers to retire environmentally sensitive lands under 10- to 15-year contracts. The program is already getting squeezed by high commodity and land prices that are luring farmers to convert their CRP acreage into croplands, groups say. About 300,000 acres of CRP land in South Dakota are being removed from the program and probably will be used to grow traditional row crops.

“We’re seeing market forces make conservation less attractive than it was two years ago,” said Tim Zink, spokesman for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, a coalition of hunting, fishing and conservation groups.

“We’re seeing that a lot of negative forces are converging on the back of CRP right now. It could send the program into a free fall.”

The program, now capped at 39.2 million acres nationwide, is credited with producing an additional 2.2 million ducks and 13.5 million pheasants annually, protecting 170,000 miles of stream banks and keeping 450 million tons of topsoil from washing away. Nearly 1.3 million acres of South Dakota farmland was enrolled in the CRP program at the end of January, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. “It’s the most significant thing that has happened for migratory waterfowl since we started managing ducks in the 30s,” said John Devney, senior vice president of Delta Waterfowl. South Dakota Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin said the proposal to trim CRP acreage would merely bring the program down to a level that it would reach anyway as contracts expire and farmers reconsider their options.

The House version of the farm bill contains a provision that would make it easier for the USDA to respond more quickly to high crop prices and land rental rates and increase CRP payments to make them more competitive, Herseth Sandlin said.

We’re seeing market forces make conservation less attractive than it was two years ago. We’re seeing that a lot of negative forces are converging on the back of CRP right now. It could send the program into a free fall.

It’s the most significant thing that has happened for migratory waterfowl since we started managing ducks in the 30s.

Gray Wolves Off Endangered List

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) -- Gray wolves in the Northern Rockies will be removed from the endangered species list, following a 13-year restoration effort that helped the animal’s population soar, federal officials said Thursday.

An estimated 1,500 wolves now roam Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. That represents a dramatic turnaround for a predator that was largely exterminated in the U.S. outside of Alaska in the early 20th century.

“Gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains are thriving and no longer require the protection of the Endangered Species Act,” said Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett. “The wolf’s recovery in the Northern Rocky Mountains is a conservation success story.”

The restoration effort, however, has been unpopular with ranchers and many others in the three states since it began in the mid-1990s, and today some state leaders want the population thinned significantly.

The states are planning to allow hunters to target the animals as soon as this fall. That angers environmental groups, which plan to sue over the delisting and say it’s too soon to remove federal protection.

“The enduring hostility to wolves still exists,” said Earthjustice attorney Doug Honnold, who is preparing the lawsuit. “We’re going to have hundreds of wolves killed under state management. It’s a sad day for our wolves.”

Plans submitted by Idaho, Montana and Wyoming indicate the states will likely maintain between 900 and 1,250 wolves for the foreseeable future, federal officials said.

Wolves have increasingly preyed on livestock as they expanded into new territories. At the same time, ranchers and wildlife agents have made more wolf kills, which are allowed under the Endangered Species Act in response to livestock conflicts.

Since the late 1980s, 724 wolves have been killed legally, and roughly the same number are estimated to have been killed illegally by poachers. Despite that, the overall population has continued to grow at the rate of 24 percent a year.

“We’ve been managing wolves pretty aggressively for livestock problems, but there are still a ton of wolves over a big area,” said Ed Bangs, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who led the wolf recovery effort.

The wolf was nearly wiped out in the West through a government eradication program in the 1930s that included widespread poisoning of wolves. In the late 1980s the wolf had just 200 square miles of territory around Glacier National Park, in Montana near the Canadian border.

Wolves were listed as endangered in 1974, and the government has spent more than \$27 million on recovery efforts in the Northern Rockies.

Since an initial 66 wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho in the mid-1990s, their population has grown rapidly. The wolf’s territory now covers an estimated 113,000 square miles, Bangs said.

The wolf will be formally removed from the endangered species list 30 days after the federal government’s decision is published in the Federal Register, which is expected next week.

Meanwhile, wildlife agencies in the three states have already begun crafting rules for wolf hunts. Officials say the hunts will be similar to those for other big game species such as mountain lions and black bears.

In Montana, state wildlife commissioners this week adopted regulations for a hunt to begin this fall. Idaho also is eyeing a fall hunt, and Wyoming plans to complete its plans in the next few months.

Limits on how many wolves could be killed in each state have not been set.

Gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains are thriving and no longer require the protection of the Endangered Species Act. The wolf’s recovery in the Northern Rocky Mountains is a conservation success story.

We’ve been managing wolves pretty aggressively for livestock problems, but there are still a ton of wolves over a big area.



GF&P Says it Believes Man Who Reported Mountain Lion Attack

By Kevin Woster, Rapid City Journal

The victim, Ryan Hughes, is believable. I don't think he's lying to us. I can't explain why we're not finding any physical evidence, or why our dogs weren't finding scent in that area.

State wildlife officials said Monday they believe a 33-year-old Rapid City man who said he was attacked by a mountain lion Saturday at Sheridan Lake, even though investigators did not find blood at the scene and trained dogs failed to locate the cat or its scent a few hours later.

"The victim, Ryan Hughes, is believable. I don't think he's lying to us," state Game, Fish & Parks Department spokesman Mike Kintigh said. "I can't explain why we're not finding any physical evidence, or why our dogs weren't finding scent in that area."

Hughes told investigators he was out ice fishing on Sheridan Lake when he was attacked by an 80- to 90-pound lion at about 2:30 p.m. Saturday as he stood on the shoreline.

He suffered lacerations on his right forearm and punctures on his right hand, as well as scratches on his face. But GF&P investigators did not find any blood at the site where Hughes said he was knocked down and wrestled with the cat for five minutes. Nor did they find any recent signs of lions, including tracks or kills or "scrapes" that mark their territory.

A trained pack of GF&P hounds worked the area Saturday afternoon and evening and Sunday morning without striking a scent trail. Kintigh said that was puzzling, particularly because scent conditions were excellent on Saturday -- a mild, calm day.

Hughes did not return a call from the Journal left on his cell phone Monday afternoon. He did tell investigators that he consumed four beers before the incident. But Kintigh said there was no indication that Hughes was impaired.

GF&P is tentatively calling the incident a confirmed lion

attack. If that designation sticks, it will be the first known attack by a wild mountain-lion on a human in South Dakota. Kanta said there have only been about 120 such attacks in Canada and the United States in the past century. About two dozen were fatal, and most resulted in more severe injuries than Hughes suffered.

A captive lion attacked a boy in Custer State Park in 1969, after vandals released it from its cage. And a 16-year-old boy reported a mountain lion attacked him near Ramona in eastern South Dakota two years ago.

GF&P officials ended up calling the Ramona incident a "near miss," at best. The boy, armed with a rifle, said he accidentally ran into the lion after he followed it into a farm shelterbelt. The boy said he fell down and accidentally discharged his rifle after the cat swiped at him with a paw and tore his shirt.

State trapper Jack Alexander and the GF&P dog team went to Ramona to search for the lion the next day. They located two coyotes and a house cat but no mountain lion.

On Saturday, Hughes drove himself to the emergency room at Rapid City Regional Hospital, after reporting the attack to authorities. He was treated for his wounds and given a rabies inoculation, Kintigh said.

GF&P officers did take some hairs from Hughes' fleece and are going to test them to determine whether they are from a lion.

People living in the area or recreating in the Black Hills shouldn't overreact to the reported attack, but they should use reasonable precautions, he said. GF&P has information on mountain lion behavior and tips on handling an encounter at its Web site, www.sdgfp.info.

People living in the area or recreating in the Black Hills shouldn't overreact to the reported attack, but they should use reasonable precautions.

12 percent of CRP Acres in North Dakota Converted to Cropland

BISMARCK ND - The conservation organization Ducks Unlimited says it's as if someone plowed up a three-mile swath of wildlife habitat across North Dakota, from its southern border to Canada. That's how many Conservation Reserve Program grassland acres were lost in just this one state this past fall. New federal figures show almost 420,000 acres of North Dakota CRP were converted to cropland in 2007. That's more than 12 percent of all CRP acres in the state. "If this trend holds for CRP contracts across the country, we won't have many acres of CRP left in a few years and wildlife populations will suffer serious declines," said Scott McLeod, Farm Bill specialist with DU's Great Plains Regional Office.

US Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency statistics compiled by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department shows 16 North Dakota counties have CRP losses greater than 15 percent. Stutsman County had the highest loss with 65.3 square miles. "We expected extensive losses, but this is about double what FSA originally indicated would be lost this year," McLeod said. With today's high commodity prices and focus on crop-based biofuels, Ducks Unlimited and other conservation groups have been concerned that restored wildlife habitat would go back into crop production when CRP contracts expired in 2007. CRP offers producers payments through 10 to 15 year contracts to convert highly erodible cropland to grass. "The rental rates paid for enrolling in CRP simply do not compete with what producers can get today by renting out the land for cropping or by farming it themselves," McLeod said. The US Fish and Wildlife Services credits

CRP with producing more than 2 million ducks a year. This steady stream of lost habitat will mean significantly lower production of ducks that migrate through or winter in all of the contiguous 48 states and provide an important part of the hunters' bags in those states. DU's director of conservation programs in the Prairie Pothole Region says conservation-minded people are concerned the country's new energy policy will wipe out billions of federal dollars invested in natural resources. "Conservation is in for a long swim against a strong current when trying to fight the tide of land rolling out of CRP," Jim Ringelman

said. McLeod says the number of CRP acres going back into crop production further emphasizes the need for a strong Sodsaver in the 2007 Farm Bill. "The loss of CRP is certainly a severe blow to waterfowl and other grassland-dependent wildlife, but native prairie cannot be replaced," he said. "Native prairie and wetland complexes are critical habitats for nesting waterfowl and ranchers alike." CRP encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to grass. Annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land are paid to the landowner under 10 to 15 year contracts. With more than a million supporters, Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest and most effective wetland and waterfowl conservation organization with almost 12 million acres conserved. The United States alone has lost more than half of its original wetlands - nature's most productive ecosystem - and continues to lose more than 80,000 wetland acres each year.

If this trend holds for CRP contracts across the country, we won't have many acres of CRP left in a few years and wildlife populations will suffer serious declines.

The loss of CRP is certainly a severe blow to waterfowl and other grassland-dependent wildlife, but native prairie cannot be replaced. Native prairie and wetland complexes are critical habitats for nesting waterfowl and ranchers alike.

Group Seeks New Missouri River Study

For decades, the Missouri River has been managed to benefit purposes first envisioned by the 1944 Flood Control Act.

Seemingly ever since, the varied interests along the river have been locked in arguments about which of the authorized purposes should be given the most weight in the management of the river.

Now, a group of states and tribes is asking for a first-of-its-kind study that could lead to a new list of purposes.

Representatives of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST) met this week at Nebraska City, Neb., and voted to request a "Section 216" study from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Section 216" is the section of the Flood Control Act of 1970 that allows for reviews of Corps projects that have been affected by changes in physical, economic or environmental conditions. In this case, the project is the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System.

For years, some people along the river's upper reaches have argued that its management should favor upstream recreation over downstream barge traffic. The Section 216 study would examine the modern status of those two uses and others authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944, which gave rise to the river's dams and reservoirs. Other uses include flood control, hydroelectric power generation and irrigation.

John Cooper, chairman of MoRAST and former secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, said Wednesday that a 216 study could be a first step toward better management of the river.

"We're not asking for the world to be turned upside down here," Cooper said. "We're asking for a federal agency to study whether or not it's truly meeting its goals, and whether we are expending water to the country's advantages."

David Pope, MoRAST's executive director, stressed that MoRAST is only asking for a study and is not advocating any particular changes in the control of the river.

"There were lots of different views about what ought to be done," Pope said in reference to Monday's meeting, "but there was agreement that it's a good idea to review the project and see whether or not it's meeting the contemporary needs in the Missouri River basin."

MoRAST consists of representatives from the governors of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas. The Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition also is a founding member of MoRAST but has not sent representatives to either of the two most recent meetings.

Monday's vote to request a 216 study was rooted in an exchange of letters last summer between South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds and John Paul Woodley Jr., a top Corps official.

Rounds wrote to Woodley in July seeking a study to compare

the river's current water control plan with a hypothetical alternate plan that would not support barge navigation.

Woodley wrote in his August response that "the normal process in reevaluating existing projects is to initiate a 'Section 216' study."

The Corps did not respond to an interview request Wednesday, but Pope said he thinks the Corps will be "very responsive."

The next step, Pope said, is for MoRAST and the Corps to determine the scope, cost and funding source for the 216 study.

Findings could be several years away.

"This is not something that's going to get done in a few months," Pope said. "This is probably a multi-year effort."

Many other river studies have been completed, but in recent times they focused mainly on the Corps' water control manual. As Pope explained, that manual can only be altered

to the extent that it still agrees with the authorized purposes of the 1944 Flood Control Act and some subsequent legislation.

In Rounds' letter, he explained the situation this way: "The Corps of Engineers finds itself in the unenviable position of having to operate a reservoir system in the 21st century constrained by the statutory and legal requirements of a 1944 vision."

The 216 study would be the first of its kind, Pope said, because it would scrutinize the authorized purposes of the reservoir system rather than the manual that the Corps uses to carry out those purposes.

"Many people can talk about things that are different from what they were in 1944, and everyone will probably agree that there are differences," Pope said. "But I'm not aware that there has been an actual formal review of the project in this way."

If the 216 study is completed, it could eventually be used by Congress to enact a modernized list of purposes for the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System. "Before Congress would actually change the authorizations," Pope explained, "they almost certainly would want this kind of study to be done."

Cooper said the continuing drought in the upper Missouri River basin lends urgency to the request for the 216 study. He noted that lower river flows are causing problems for upstream uses including hydroelectric power generation, water system intakes, irrigation and recreation.

"To continue to run water downstream, even if it's for minimal service on navigation, somebody needs to know whether or not that's reaching the socioeconomic goals that the project was originally set up to accomplish," Cooper said.



PHOTO BY SD TOURISM

We're not asking for the world to be turned upside down here. We're asking for a federal agency to study whether or not it's truly meeting its goals, and whether we are expending water to the country's advantages.

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South Dakota Wildlife Federation Donors

At the recent Winter Board Meeting the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the people who support SDWF above and beyond their membership and raffle donations.

Thank you to the following donors for their contributions to the SDWF. Please consider becoming a member of the Wildlife Legacy Council. SDWF is a 501(c3) non-profit, all donations are tax deductible.

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Alan Brevik, SD
Allen B. Brown, SD
Jeff Brown, MN
Kirk Brown, CA
Mark Brown, VA
William Buckner II, AR
Kendall Burns, CA
Howard Burns, SD
Donald Burton, CO
BN Butler, VA
John Butterbrodt, MN
Manny Buzzell, TN
Kenneth Carroll, SD
John Chickering, MI
ME Christopherson, SC
John & Lorraine Clemens, MN
Robert Cloyd, SD
Richard Connors, SD
Scott Conrad, MN
Earle Crissman, SD
Dennis Cummings, SD
Jim Dahlberg, SD

Gail Dieleman, MN
Duane Divich, TX
Mike Dombroski, SD
Bob Drake, SD
Tim Duncan, MN
Frederick Eichmiller, WI
Robert Elbe, WI
Elk Pass Ranch, CO
Farmers State Bank, SD
Kent Fewell, MO
Jim Fink, MN
Jim Fischer, IA
Forrest Flint, MN
Mark Freese, SD
Jim Frybarger, NM
Kevin Fuesrt, SD
Charles Gageby, SD
Chester Garness, MN
Dave Gilbert, SD
Dan Goede, SD
Richard Goodman, SD
Larry Gremminger, TX
John Griffin, OK
David Grove, CO
Myron Hagelstrom, MN
Shawn Hall, WY
Duane Hatch, SD
George Heffron, CO
Merrill Heim, SD
Lee Hennen, MN
Gregg Hepper, SD
Mr. & Mrs. HA Hetland, MN
Alan Hewitt, SD
Ray Hoheisel, MN
Dale Holm, SD
Mike Huss, IN
Dr. Tom & Kris Ivey, SD

David Jacobson, SD
Lee Jensen, SD
Roman Jungers II, WI
Carl Kasischke, MI
Lewellyn Keller, MN
Jeffery Ketter, WI
Robert Kiesecoms, IL
Arlie Klipstein, WI
Rev. Jack Koch, MN
John Koutsy, IL
Kurt Kraft, MI
Landon B. Lane, NC
Richard Larsen, SD
Greg Larson, SD
Scott Larson, SD
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Rodney Linton, IL
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Duayne Madl
Royce Madsen, SD
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William Matousek, SD
Fay Matsukage, CO
David Melby, MN
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Karlton Nagel, NE
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Kerry Parcel, SD
Stacy Paquin, MN
K Lynn Paul, SD
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Jerald Pedersen, SD
Philip Pickart, SD
Glenn Plumb, SD
Alan Polenz, OR
Robert Porisch, IA
Tony Quail, SD
Thomas Raney, KS
Ron Rekestad, SD
Charlie Rokusek, SD
James Ronfeldt, SD
Ron Sather, SD
John Schmid, CO
Robert Simmet, MN
Darrel Simon, SD
Orv Smidt, SD
Jim Snyder, SD
Howard Stanley, TX
Billy Strickland, SD
Gregg Styles, FL
Joe Swenson, SD
Michael Thomas, SD
Henry Travers, SD
Bob Turner, IN
Cecil Van Tuyl, KS
Stan Wahl, SD
Jim Walker, ID
Stephen J Wheeler, SD
Mark Widman, SD
Mark Wismer, SD
Walter Wolf, IL
Jerry Worsham, WA

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Mel Adams, TN
Andrew Anderson, GA
Lelan Anderson, SD
Rich Andresen, SD
Animal Medical, AL
Robert Bealka, WI
Harry Bell, MS
Curt Bisgard, SD
Steve Block, WA
W. Harrold Boring, GA
Carl Brakebush, WI
Dick Brown, SD
Everett Buckner, AR
John Burrows, NV
Stuart Cambell, SD
Chuck Clayton, SD
Craig Connell, SD
Gary Cowles, AL
Larry Denison, VA
John Dennis, NV
John Dillon, UT
Brian Dressing, SD
Thomas Eaney, KS

Dennis Eckert, SD
Dave Eisenbeisz, CO
Kenton Eisenbeisz, SD
Larry Eisenbeisz, MN
Robert Elbe, WI
Kurt Forman, SD
Robert Foxworthy, KY
Miles Gannon, IL
Fred Garland, SD
Ken Greenwood, OK
Dean Fitzler, SD
Cy Haatvedt, SD
Carl Hall, KY
Howard Hanson, MN
Jerry & Mary Hay, WI
Roger Heedum, NE
Jim Hellebusch, MO
Alene Hix, MO
Ron Island, SD
Darell Johnson, SD
Jarrod Johnson, SD
Roger Johnson, MN
Virgil Johnson, SD

James Juckette, MO
Robert Knode, MD
Frank Kocvara, NV
John Kunze, MN
James LaMaack, CA
Dan Lewis, MN
Jerome Loucks, AZ
Jerome Lulewicz, SD
Bob Lutz, ID
Patrick Lyons, SD
Jon Madland, SD
Harvey Malon, SD
Pat McGarry, SD
Leigh McMasters, SD
Loyal Messerschmidt, SD
Larry Mette, SD
Bill Meyers, SD
Gerald Mohs, ND
William Mudd, KY
Norm Neilan, SD
David Nordby, CA
Larry O'Reilly, MO
Gary Palmer, SD
Joe Pauletto, Jr., WA

Ron Pesek, SD
Peter Prokop, MI
Tim Rainey, MN
Dan Roach, SD
Tom Roberts, SD
Troy Ryan, MN
Arnold Sattler, SD
Donald Sattler, SD
Carey Schave, SD
Jeff Scherschlight, SD
Bob Schluter, MN
David Schubauer, SD
Terry Schupp, AZ
Steven Shoemaker, NE
Curt Tesch, SD
Paul Vinatieri, SD
Gary Wald, SD
Harvey Welch, IL
Dale Wilms, CA
Winter Brothers, SD
Brian Wiswall, SD

Level III Elk \$250-\$499

29-90 Sportsmen's Club, SD
G. John Gilbertson, MN
Kenneth Halstrom, SD
Eric Johnson, MN

James Juckette, MO
Karl O. Lee, SD
Jim Lemond, SD
Herb McClellan, SD
Mike Myers, FL

Jan Nicolay, SD
Mark Parr, SD
Pheasants Forever Northern Oahe Chapter
Chuck & Ginger Scalet, SD

Craig Stadtfeld, SD
Marlin Stammer, CA
Vic Toscano, SD
Ilo Vanderboom, SD
Rich Widman, SD
Yankton Area Pheasants Forever, SD

Level IV Buffalo \$500-\$999

Black Hills Sportsmens Club
Richard Dillon, MN
Dennis Hullinger, UT

Harry Mansheim, SD
Sportsman's Club of Brown Co.

SD Walleyes Unlimited, SD
Roger Steinberg, MN

Level V Eagle - \$1000 and above

Beadle Co. Sportsmans Club
John Chapman, PA
Dakota Sportsmen Inc., SD

Richard Dillon, MN
High Plains Wildlife, SD
Kenneth Michalek, WA

Steve Roberts, MN
Gary Seeley, KS
SD Chapter of NWTF, SD

These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF's Wildlife Legacy Council! Please consider your donation today. Names in ARIAL indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2007 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. Names in ITALICS indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2008 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council.

South Dakota Antelope Harvest Up Again in 2007

PIERRE, S.D. – The 2007 pronghorn antelope harvest in South Dakota is the highest since 1984, and is the third highest on record.

According to harvest surveys compiled by the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department, last year was the highest recorded antelope harvest in the state since the 1984 season and the fifth straight year that the antelope harvest has increased.

GFP Game Harvest Survey Coordinator Corey Huxoll said that estimates indicate approximately 13,700 antelope were harvested during the 2007 hunting seasons. That is an increase of more than 2,000 antelope from 2006 and an increase of more than 12,000 antelope just after the severe winter of 1996-1997.

“We have harvest records back to 1941, when only about 500 antelope were harvested,” Huxoll said. “The highest harvest on record was 17,000 in 1984.”

Overall harvest success remained high at 62 percent despite a 24 percent increase in the number of tags issued from just under 20,000 in 2006 to more than 24,000 in 2007. Survey results indicate that there was a 16 percent increase in buck harvest and a 17 percent increase in doe harvest from 2006.

“It is only through the cooperation of hunters completing harvest report cards that we are able to assess the success of the antelope harvest,” Huxoll noted. “Unlike some states South Dakota does not have mandatory check stations which require hunters to travel upwards of 20 to 30 miles or more only to wait in line to have someone visually document their harvest.”

The 2007 Firearm Antelope Harvest Report is complete and can be accessed through the GFP Web site at <http://www.sdgfp.info> in the “What’s New” section, or can be requested by mail or in person in printed form from the Pierre office at 523 E. Capitol Avenue.

Old Black Hills Deer Camp Stories & Photos Wanted



I am doing research on Black Hills Deer Camps past to present. It sounds like this was a popular activity years back. If there are enough responses in the way of stories and photos, I would like to try and put these down on paper.

Thanks, Joe Hill
email: jdhill@rap.midco.net
(605)381-3139.

Government Starts Anew on Question of Sage Grouse Listing

BOISE, Idaho (AP) -- Federal officials are again seeking the latest in scientific data and public comment as they revisit whether to extend Endangered Species Act protections to the sage grouse.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the new review Tuesday, two months after a federal judge in Idaho condemned the agency for failing to use the best available science when it decided not to list the bird two years ago.

In January 2005, the agency determined the chicken-sized bird was not in danger of extinction. The bird's traditional habitat stretches across the West, from eastern California and Washington to Colorado, North Dakota and southern Canada.

Diane Katzenberger, spokeswoman for the wildlife agency, said federal researchers will spend the next 90 days gathering information on the bird's numbers and habitat, and the results of conservation efforts.

"I think it's the right thing to do," said Laird Lucas, a lawyer from the Western Watersheds Project, which led the lawsuit to overturn the agency's 2005 decision.

In December, U.S. District Judge B. Linn Winmill ruled that the agency ignored expert advice during its 2005 decision-making process. The judge also rebuked top Interior Department for meddling in the process, finding they used pressure and intimidation tactics to keep the bird off the endangered list.



Across the West, how the federal government treats the sage grouse or extends protections to its habitat could influence key economic decisions on the development of oil and natural gas, farming, urban growth and plans to build gas pipelines and power lines.

Conservationists contend the sage grouse's numbers continue to decline, so much so that the bird now occupies about half its original, year-round habitat. In January 2005, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimated there were between 100,000 and 500,000 greater sage grouse.

Tuesday's decision by the Fish and Wildlife Service to reopen its review sets off a 90-day public comment period.

Katzenberger said federal scientists will review information used in 2005 as well as new data. She provided no timetable on when a decision to extend full or partial protection to the bird.

Setting the timetable could be one result of a hearing schedule Friday in

Winmill's courtroom in Boise, Lucas said.

Earlier this month, the wildlife agency filed a motion seeking the judge's permission to withdraw from an agreement reached with Western Watersheds Project and other plaintiffs that set deadlines for a listing decision.

Agency attorneys contend they inadvertently entered into the deal, but Lucas claims the wildlife agency wants to set its own timeline independent of a report due out later this year with more bleak news for declines in sage grouse habitat from development, wildfires and other pressures.

Conservationists contend the sage grouse's numbers continue to decline, so much so that the bird now occupies about half its original, year-round habitat. In January 2005, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimated there were between 100,000 and 500,000 greater sage grouse.

U.S. House Gives Renewable Energy a Boost with Passage of Tax Credits

Production tax credits nourish our growing renewable energy markets, and help provide Americans with affordable, homegrown, clean energy. These credits are, however, set to expire at end of 2008 unless Congress passes legislation to extend them. Solar and wind companies have cautioned that their booming growth will slow significantly without the ongoing support of the production tax credits. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi further warned that 116,000 jobs would be lost.

Fortunately, the U.S. House recently passed the Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008 by 236-182. The bill would extend more than \$17 billion in tax credits and other incentives to boost the ongoing production of energy from solar, wind and other renewable sources, and to promote energy efficiency measures. If passed into law, it would be financed by ending a tax break that the five biggest oil and natural gas producers currently enjoy.

"Just yesterday oil prices reached another new record at \$101 per barrel," said Pelosi. "This is at a time when oil

companies are making record profits. Last year, ExxonMobil earned \$40.6 billion in profits, the largest corporate profit in American history, and yet the administration refused to repeal billions of dollars in subsidies to big oil."

"We don't think it's asking too much to ask them to assist in a partnership to help find out whether there's a better way to meet our energy needs," said Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.). He further called the subsidies being redirected from oil and gas companies "grains of sand on the beach," because they would amount to less than 2 percent of the companies' annual profits.

While the House passed the bill easily, it still needs approval by the Senate, and ultimately the White House where President Bush has threatened a veto.

With the House taking a strong step toward building a clean energy future, the National Wildlife Federation urges the Senate to quickly follow suit in redirecting tax subsidies from oil and gas to clean energy.

We don't think it's asking too much to ask them to assist in a partnership to help find out whether there's a better way to meet our energy needs.



Officials Explore Trail Possibilities to Mount Rushmore

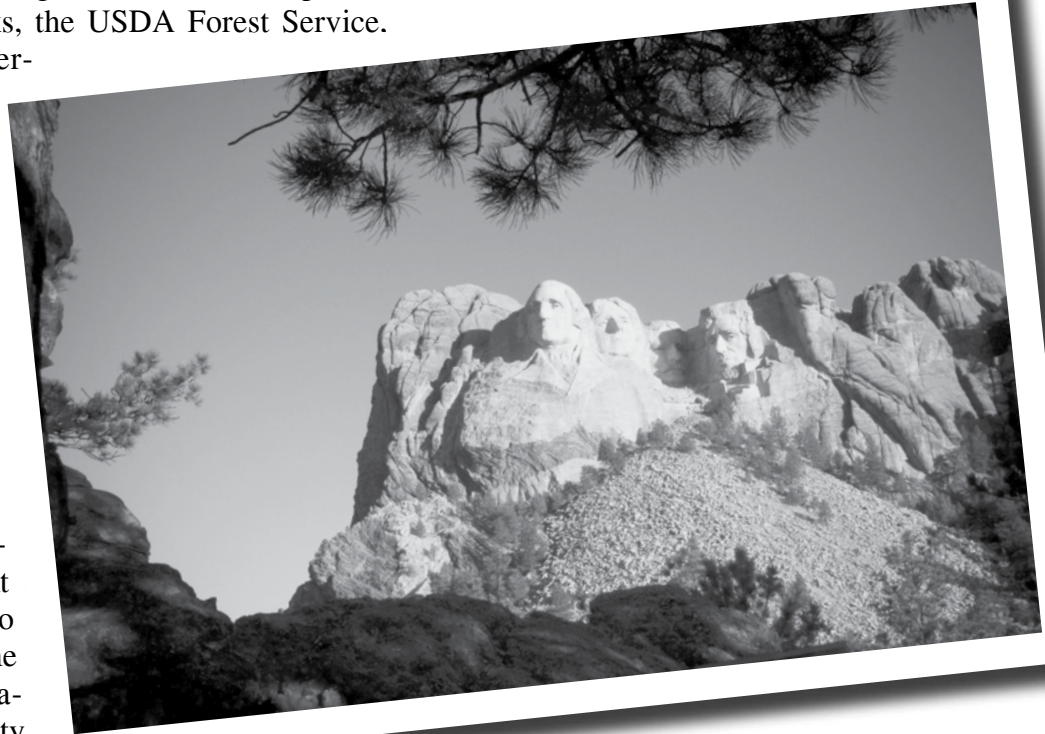
One of the key issues will be identifying potential trail routes. This proposal presents a great opportunity, but we will need to give careful consideration to the important values of the Peter Norbeck Wildlife Preserve.

The system will provide new opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the natural and cultural resources of Mount Rushmore National Memorial and its representative central Black Hills landscape

PIERRE, S.D. – A group of state, federal and nonprofit entities is exploring a possible link between the 114-mile George S. Mickelson Trail and South Dakota's Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

State Park Director Doug Hofer said the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society are working cooperatively to develop a feasibility study for the project. The study will identify potential trail routes, as well as potential environmental and engineering challenges. A federal Transportation Enhancement grant was recently awarded to complete the study. The Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society has committed the necessary matching funds.

"One of the key issues will be identifying potential trail routes," said Black Hills National Forest Supervisor Craig Bobzien. "This proposal presents a great opportunity, but we will need to give careful consideration to the important



values of the Peter Norbeck Wildlife Preserve."

The link would be an extension of the existing George S. Mickelson Trail which was completed in 1998. The trail spans the entire length of the Black Hills and is open to non-motorized

users. If the extension becomes a reality, Mount Rushmore National Memorial Superintendent Gerard Baker said it could also connect with an 8-mile hiking trail system that is proposed at the national memorial.

"The system will provide new opportunities for visitors to

experience and learn about the natural and cultural resources of Mount Rushmore National Memorial and its representative central Black Hills landscape," Baker said.

Hofer said the group is currently seeking a qualified firm to conduct the feasibility study. The group's goal is to complete the engineering and environmental study in 2008.

PHOTO BY SD TOURISM

Firearms Must be Stored Safely

The owners of firearms are responsible for safely securing firearms in their homes.

If a child approaches a firearm without safety knowledge in advance, it is an invitation to tragedy.

The rights of firearm ownership also come with important responsibilities. Communication about firearms safety will ensure that tragedies can be avoided.

PIERRE, S.D.—With most of South Dakota's hunting seasons closed, hunters should be taking extra precautions to make sure that their firearms are stored safely.

"The owners of firearms are responsible for safely securing firearms in their homes," according to Curt Robertson, HuntSAFE coordinator for the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department. "While accidents have decreased in the last 20 years, a consistent review of safety procedures involving guns and ammunition is always a good idea whether you're a longtime or a first time firearms owner."

Robertson notes a few easy-to-follow firearms safety rules that include:

- Always unload sporting firearms carefully and completely before taking them into the home. Never load a sporting firearm in the home.
- Always make absolutely sure that firearms in the home are securely stored in a location inaccessible to children. Ammunition should be stored in a separate location, locked and also inaccessible to children.
- Always place firearms in their proper storage location immediately after returning from a hunting trip or a day at the range.
- Always re-check firearms carefully and completely to confirm that they are "still" unloaded when they are removed from storage. Accidents have occurred when

a family member has borrowed or loaned a firearm and returned it to storage while it was still loaded.

- Always remember that it is your responsibility to make certain the firearms in your home are not casually accessible to anyone--especially curious young people.

Open communications about firearms safety is crucial if there are children in the home. Most fatal accidents in the home involving firearms occur when youngsters—often children who do not live in the home—discover firearms that adults thought were inaccessible. "If a child approaches a firearm without safety knowledge in advance, it is an invitation to tragedy," Robertson said.

Parents and guardians must explain firearms safety procedures to their children. Those procedures include:

- Never handle firearms without permission.
- Never play with firearms.
- Never touch a found firearm; immediately tell an adult.
- Obey all safe handling rules.

"The rights of firearm ownership also come with important responsibilities," Robertson said. "Communication about firearms safety will ensure that tragedies can be avoided."