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**JUNE
2007**

South Dakota
**Wildlife
Federation**

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OUT OF DOORS

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

VOLUME 47, NUMBER 6

Fish, Wildlife and the Farm Bill

BARCODED FLATS

The reauthorization of the 2007 Farm Bill will be the most important piece of conservation legislation this year. Not only does it benefit multiple conservation objectives, but it works to sustain America's rural economy and improves our quality of life through clean water, clean air and healthy places to live.

More than 40 hunting, fishing and conservation organizations, representing millions of outdoor enthusiasts, agree that the conservation programs of the Farm Bill represent a tremendous opportunity to deliver fish and wildlife conservation. For the 2007 reauthorization, the challenge is to ensure a higher level of integration of fish and wildlife benefits into all conservation programs that continue to benefit our natural resources and provide societal benefits that improve quality of life for Americans.

The following conservation focus areas describe successes achieved through Farm Bill conservation programs across our nation's diverse rural landscapes and offer ways the enclosed "Conservation Priorities" can be applied to improve fish and wildlife and facilitate rural economic gains for future generations.

Conserving Wildlife

What's good for wildlife is also good for our citizens. By restoring degraded lands and waters, cleaning the air and conserving quality wildlife habitat we're also creating opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. Here are a few Farm Bill success stories:

- Five billion dollars a year for improved soil, water and wildlife resources on 2.1 million farms.
- Conserved more than 40 million acres of important habitat for quail, pheasant, prairie grouse and waterfowl, which in turn, enhance our rural economies.
- Restored hundreds of thousands of wetlands and upland habitats that serve as natural filters to improve water quality and abate flood waters.
- Improved habitat for many declining grassland-dependent wildlife; helping reduce threats identified in state wildlife action plans that may preclude the need for federal threatened or endangered species listings.

- Restored and improved habitat for wildlife of all sizes from farmer-friendly pollinators, bog turtles and bats to black-tailed prairie dog, river otter and Sonoran pronghorn.

- Seventy-nine million hunters and wildlife viewers contribute \$77.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

Challenge: The 2007 Farm Bill must continue its successful voluntary, incentive-based approach and provide the needed authorized funding levels to all qualified farmers, ranchers and forest owners that wish to participate in these successful conservation programs.

Sustaining Forests

Private forest owners, many of whom are also farmers and ranchers, are faced with increasing challenges as land prices and development pressures rise; markets for their products go overseas; and insects, disease, and wildfires threaten their livelihood. The Farm Bill, with its focus on helping rural landowners stay on the land, produces benefits for all citizens, and provides tools to overcome these challenges. Here are a few Farm Bill success stories:

- Improved fish and wildlife habitat through forest steward-

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PHOTO BY SD TOURISM

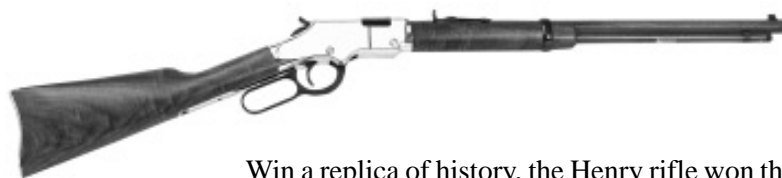
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Executive Director's Update *by Chris Hesla*

As stated on the front page, the new Farm Bill in congress right now is the single most important congressional bill that affects the quality of wildlife and habitats in South Dakota. Without strong conservation programs included in the Bill, private landowners are forced to produce on their lands, and here in South Dakota that may mean corn fence-row to fence-row with very little habitat left for wildlife.

I urge every member of SDWF to contact their congressional delegation and ask them to support the following provisions in the current Farm Bill talks;

• **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

• Reauthorize USDA's most successful conservation program and ensure the competitive viability of the program. Overall, CRP acreage should expand to 45 million acres.

• **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

• Increase America's number one wetlands restoration program to 300,000 acres per year to improve wetlands conservation, mitigate wetlands loss, provide migratory bird and fisheries habitat and improve water quality.

• **Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)**

• Increase GRP to 2 million acres per year. Require that a minimum of 60 percent of the agreements are long term easements of 30 years or more. Provide incentives for large tract non cropland native grasslands.

I urge every member of SDWF to contact their congressional delegation and ask them to support the following provisions in the current Farm Bill talks.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Gradually increase the WHIP funding from \$100 million to \$300 million over the course of the 2007 Farm Bill with a significant portion of new funds targeted for aquatic restoration activities, including instream habitat improvement projects. Enhance conservation partnerships and program benefits by incorporating the assistance of states, municipalities and non-government organizations to deliver and manage WHIP.

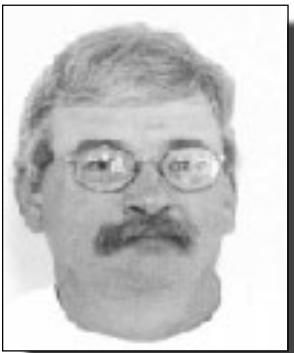
Access

Include a provision based upon "Open Fields" legislation, S.548/H.R.1351 in 109th Congress, to provide \$20 million per year in grants to fund state-managed voluntary access programs. Program funds shall be used to enhance wildlife management and improve recreational opportunities on land enrolled in farm bill conservation programs.

Forestry

Increase technical, education, and outreach to forest landowners through existing programs such as the Forest Stewardship Program and others that provide much needed funding for cost-sharing of forest management practices on private lands. This will enhance management for fish and wildlife habitat, air and water quality, recreation and timber production. Increase funding for the Healthy Forests Reserve

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Presidents Column *by Jeff Albrecht*

It's hard to believe another year at SDWF has nearly passed. The dog days of August will soon be upon us yet it only being July and things are terribly hot and dry makes me believe that July also has dog days.

As the year winds down the SDWF is challenged with a couple of activities that we could use everyone's help with. August 1-11 the Federation will be in Rapid City, SD at the Black Hills Harley Davidson showroom. We will have the Rooster Special on display to promote the sale of raffle tickets. This is an important venture for us and we can use all of the affiliates and members help in selling these tickets. If you are planning to attend the Rally we can use help manning our booth. We have limited lodging accommodations but will do what we can to procure a place to rest your weary head after a hard day of selling tickets. If you are planning on traveling to the rally, please consider taking some time to help the SDWF make this a successful endeavor. If you would be willing to help out please contact Executive Director Hesla and let him know when you would be available to help.

A special thanks to Ken Schroeder for making the arrangements with the Black Hills Harley Folks and to the Black Hills Harley for providing a spot for us.

Shortly after the Rally Beadle County Sportsmen will be hosting this year's annual meeting in Huron. If you have never attended one of the annual meetings please take a

moment and consider attending. The Beadle County folks are notorious for serving some tremendous steaks at their clubhouse. I don't know if they have steaks on the menu but I would bet sometime during the weekend you will be served a steak second to none. This years event is scheduled for August 25 and 26. Saturday evening is the fundraiser auction which invariably will have something of interest for everyone. It seems like there is an owl that usually generates a bickering of bids from several of the longtime members. I am not sure the history of this lovely specimen but I have to believe that there is some sort of wacky history behind the hot bidding action.

Again if you have never attended please consider taking the time you may find it a lasting experience. I remember my first annual meeting and the opportunities that I have been provided since becoming involved. My involvement is a small price to pay for the enjoyment that I receive from all of the resources in our great state. You will meet some great individuals who have a very strong desire to protect and provide our valuable resources for future generations.

I hope to see you at either one or both of these events. Why is your involvement important? I have written a short article about my Grandsons first camping experience. Without our youth's involvement the future of our resources are in jeopardy.

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Bittersweet

by Land Tawney — NWF Regional Organizer, Missoula, MT

For more than two and a half years I have had the great opportunity of traveling to South Dakota and working with dedicated individuals on behalf of

conservation at a local, state and national level. From Farm Bill conservation to the Grasslands Wilderness Proposal to Global Warming and much more, South Dakota Wildlife Federation (SDWF) continues to be the strongest hunter/angler grassroots organization in the state. "I admire the man and woman who take the next step, not those who theorize about the 200th." SDWF must carry on and take the appropriate steps to become and even stronger, more effective organization. I have full confidence in Chris and the board to do just that.

Life is full of steps and I myself have embarked on a new path. I will continue working with the National Wildlife Federation but in a different capacity as the Senior Manager for the Sportsmen for Sensible Mining Campaign. That's a fancy way of saying that I am running a national hunter/angler campaign involving the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership to revise the 1872 Mining Act. This is a great opportunity for me to continue to live in Montana, yet contribute at a national level.

It's hard to believe that after 135 years, hard rock mining companies continue to claim federal land for five dollars or less per acre as they did in the 1870's, avoid paying any royalties, pollute the nation's waterways with mining waste,

and have no real obligation to clean up their mess. Our natural resources are there for us to use in a sensible manner. I take to heart the wisdom of Theodore Roosevelt, "There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country! The conservation of wildlife and our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose and method." Congress is moving. The new House Natural Resource Committee Chairman, Rep. Nick Rahall-D (WV), has introduced a bill calling for sensible reform of the 1872 Mining Act. Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid-D (NV), son of a miner from a major mining state, has indicated his interest in working with Rep. Rahall on sensible reform. We have a fighting chance to revise this relic of the past. I look forward to working with all of you to make sure that another year doesn't pass with a 21st-century mining industry being regulated by 19th-century laws.

My work has always centered on relationships. Whether it was my first lobby day at the state capitol, gambling at Deadwood, visits to the proposed wilderness at Red Shirt, shooting ring necks in more places than I want to admit, or late night policy discussions, I cherish my times in South Dakota and thank you all for showing this Montana native the tempered hospitality of the great prairie.

As I embark on my new position, with all of its challenges and opportunities, I hold my memories tight and look forward to many more. Look me up if you are ever in Montana - I know a few places to wet a line and chase critters.

Onward and Upward,
Land
tawney@nwf.org, (406)370-3243

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Black Hills, West River Deer Seasons Finalized



PIERRE, S.D.—The S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Commission finalized the Black Hills deer season at its June meeting in Pierre, eliminating the "two-point" provision and directing the GFP staff to embark on an education program to explain the change to hunters.

Last year, the department offered 5,500 resident and 440 nonresident "any buck with two points or more and any antlerless deer" licenses. The commission's action means that in 2007 the department will have available 500 resident and 40 nonresident "any deer" licenses and 5,000 resident and 400 nonresident "any whitetail deer" licenses.

An additional 2,750 resident and 220 nonresident antlerless licenses will also be offered in 2007. A similar number of antlerless tags were offered in 2006.

GFP staff advised the commission to eliminate the two-point provision even though it was popular with some hunters and credited as a reason why the deer populations in the Black Hills have made a comeback.

George Vandel, assistant Wildlife Division director, explained to the commission that the two-point provision was one of many changes made about 10 years ago when the Black Hills deer season was overhauled. "We made that change in negotiation with hunters and sportsmen's groups," Vandel said, "but we made it clear at the time that one day the two-point rule would need to be eliminated."

GFP personnel in the Black Hills estimate that the two-point rule does not protect very many deer. According to information provided to the commission, the rule protects about 10 percent of bucks who "spike" in their first year. Another 70 percent develop "fork horns" in their first year with 20 percent developing "basket racks."

"Protecting deer that fail to produce a forked antler in their first year as an adolescent buck is counterproductive to managing the Black Hills for buck quality," said game program administrator Tony Leif. "Our hunters have repeatedly told us they want the opportunity to harvest nice bucks in the Black Hills."

Vandel told the commission that there's no biological basis for the two point rule, noting that deer herds have made a comeback in the Black Hills because of harvest restrictions and limited licenses. If the rule is eliminated, Vandel said, "They're not going to see any difference in the deer herd."

The 2007 Black Hills deer hunting season will run from Nov. 1 to Nov. 30.

At the meeting the commission also finalized the West River deer season with small adjustments in the number of tags issued in six units that resulted in no change in the number of resident tags to be issued in 2007. The West River season will run from Nov. 3 to Nov. 6 and Nov. 19 to Nov. 25 in Gregory and Mellette counties; from Nov. 3 to Nov. 25 in Dewey, Ziebach and Corson counties; and from Nov. 10 to Nov. 25 in all other units. Antlerless tags may be filled from Nov. 26 to Dec. 2 and from Jan. 1 to Jan. 9, 2008.

Protecting deer that fail to produce a forked antler in their first year as an adolescent buck is counterproductive to managing the Black Hills for buck quality. Our hunters have repeatedly told us they want the opportunity to harvest nice bucks in the Black Hills.

Some Walleye Regulations Change on July 1

In July and August, fishing pressure on those areas of the Missouri River isn't typically as heavy. With the lower fishing pressure, dropping the minimum size limit for two months won't significantly reduce the number of walleyes.

Removing the minimum length limit allows anglers to keep smaller, deep-hooked walleyes that might not otherwise survive.

PIERRE, S.D.—Anglers are reminded that July 1 marks a change to temporarily eliminate the minimum size limits on Lakes Sharpe and Francis Case and on the Missouri River below Fort Randall Dam downstream to the South Dakota/Nebraska border.

The 15-inch minimum size limit will go back into effect on Sept. 1.

The change in minimum size limits allows the harvest of smaller walleyes. "In July and August, fishing pressure on those areas of the Missouri River isn't typically as heavy," said Jim Riis, Missouri River fisheries program manager. "With the lower fishing pressure, dropping the minimum size limit for two months won't significantly reduce the number of walleyes."

Anglers are more apt to land walleyes longer than the 15-inch minimum during the spring and fall but fish longer than 15 inches can be hard to find during the summer. Removing the minimum length limit allows anglers the opportunity to harvest a few walleyes on each fishing trip during a time of the year when harvest generally isn't very high, Riis explained. "Maintaining the quality of the fishery has to be balanced with allowing anglers the opportunity to harvest fish during a day on the water," he said.

Removing the minimums for two months during the heat of the summer is also good stewardship of the resource. "During those months the water is warmer and fish are deeper," Riis said. "Removing the minimum length limit allows an-

glers to keep smaller, deep-hooked walleyes that might not otherwise survive."

Anglers often ask why the minimum length limit can't be removed in June as well. According to Riis, late May and June represent the times when the walleye harvest is at its peak. Without minimum length limits in place, more walleyes would be harvested than those lakes could sustain on an annual basis. "The minimum length limit is a safeguard on the walleye population at a time of year when fishing pressure can be excessive," Riis said.

While the minimum length limit has been lifted, anglers are reminded that the regulation allowing only one walleye over 20 inches in length on a daily basis is in effect year-round on Lakes Sharpe and Francis Case and on the Missouri River below Fort Randall Dam downstream to the South Dakota/Nebraska border. The daily walleye limit in those areas is four with a possession limit of eight.

On Lake Oahe, walleye regulations remain the same year-round. The daily limit is four with a possession limit of eight. Anglers are allowed one walleye over 20 inches within the daily limit.

Riis advises anglers who reach their limit of walleye to try for other sport fish such as smallmouth bass and channel catfish. Smallmouth bass length limits on Lake Sharpe are in effect year-round with anglers allowed to keep bass less than 12 inches long or 18 inches or longer. Of those fish, only one in the daily limit may be longer than 18 inches.

2006 Big Game Harvest Projections Report Available

The report certainly could not be produced without the input from literally tens of thousands of hunters. The report provides vital information used by our game managers to make decisions related to setting season regulations as well as evaluating past hunting seasons.

PIERRE — South Dakota's big game harvest projections from 2006 seasons are now available online at <http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/hunting/Harvest/Projections.htm>.

S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department Game Harvest Survey Coordinator Corey Huxoll said the complete report, which includes unit-specific harvest information, has been completed from survey cards which are mailed to randomly-selected hunters at the conclusion of each season. The report, which summarizes harvest information from all 2006 big game seasons, has been separated into sections to facilitate access by hunters and other interested parties.

"The complete report holds a lot of information, and was initially developed for use only by state game managers," Huxoll said. "It has been developed on an annual basis for quite a few years, but until a few years ago, was not published on the Web. Since making the report available through the Web, we have had a marked increase in requests, indicating that hunters have found the information useful as well."

The information in the report is available through the efforts of hunters and Game, Fish and Parks personnel. "The report certainly could not be produced without the input from literally tens of thousands of hunters," Huxoll noted. "The report provides vital information used by our game managers to make decisions related to setting season regulations as well as evaluating past hunting seasons."

Conservation Officers Donate to New Outdoor Campus

PIERRE, S.D.—The Rapid City Outdoor Campus is still in the early planning stages, but the work has already begun on ensuring that it's well-stocked.

The campus, a project of the Wildlife Division of the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department, recently received \$1,000 worth of equipment from the S.D. Conservation Officer Association. The equipment was presented to the GFP Commission at its June meeting in Pierre by C.O. Association representative Casey Griffith of Onida.

The money was raised through the sale of raffle tickets that had a top prize of a buffalo hunt on the Turner Ranch. The raffle, a fundraiser to enhance an existing scholarship presented by the association, was set up with a series of incentives available to the C.O.s and their agents who sold the tickets.

When the raffle was complete, \$600 worth of incentives were donated back to the association. An addition \$100 Cabela's gift card came from a C.O. who had received it from an out-of-state hunter but believed that he could not accept such a gratuity.

Purchases for the Rapid City Outdoor Campus were made during a Cabela's promotion that offered discounts to law enforcement and emergency services personnel. Consequently, \$700 worth of donations resulted in \$1,000 worth of equipment for the campus.

The C.O.s made their purchases based on recommendations from the Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus and the Rapid City GFP staff. The donation included:

- Five BB/pellet gun combinations.
- 12,000 BBs.
- 14 fishing rods.
- Two nine-quart Dutch ovens.
- Two pop-up hunting blinds.
- Two turkey decoys.

Fish, Wildlife, and the Farm Bill . . .

continued from page 1

ship, planting ecologically important tree species, management. Farm Bill Conservation Programming understory vegetation, and promoting stand regeneration through burning and thinning.

- Replaced old culverts on logging roads making forests more accessible for management and outdoor recreation while improving water quality and fish habitat.
- Reduced risks of wildfire and disease while improving timber quality and profitability to protect forest owner investments and vital wildlife habitat.
- Restored tens of thousands of acres of longleaf pine ecosystem and 34,000 acres of endangered bottomland hardwood ecosystem promoting healthy forests.
- Managed forests provide two-thirds of the nation's drinking water and \$230 billion in annual sales from U.S. paper and wood manufacturing.

Challenge: The 2007 Farm Bill must recognize private forests and their fish and wildlife resources as part of the rural landscape, improve the effectiveness of programs for private forest management and thereby promote sustainable private forest conservation.

Improving Fish Habitat

The Farm Bill works to improve water quality and quantity in our nation's waterways. This is not only important for fish, aquatic wildlife and their habitats, but for people as well. The biological diversity of American's aquatic habitats is astonishing, while the ecological importance of water supply and flood control are incalculable. Here are a few Farm Bill success stories:

- Restored 2 million acres of wetlands and adjacent buffers, cleaning our drinking water, creating fish habitat, and protecting our fragile estuaries.
- Conserved 170,000 miles of streams, reducing nutrient runoff, preventing 450 tons of topsoil erosion and stabilizing streambanks.
- Restored historical fish migrations and populations of

salmon and native trout by removing dams, providing fish passage, and restoring streams that support actions identified in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

- Restored native seagrasses, coastal marshes and riparian buffers improving marine ecosystem health and our quality of life.
- More than 44 million anglers in America generate in excess of 1 million jobs and contribute \$116 billion annually to the US economy.

Challenge: The 2007 Farm Bill must continue to recognize the benefits that conservation programs accrue toward our nations' goal of clean water and healthy fish habitat and provide incentives to landowners to protect and improve wetlands, streams and riparian habitats.

Controlling Invasive Species

The 2007 Farm Bill presents an opportunity to steer more funding to the conservation of native species on agricultural lands by controlling harmful invasive species. Here are a few Farm Bill success stories:

- Controlled invasive species that out-compete native plants and animals, causing heavy losses in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.
- Improved rangelands by removing invasive plants increasing agricultural grazing values and habitat quality.
- Managed invasive plants, diseases and pests found in forests reducing infestations while improving timber quality and ecosystem health.
- In the U.S. •invasive species cost Americans more than \$120 billion annually. The Asian longhorned beetle alone threatens to devastate 48 million acres of forests from New England to the Great Lakes and beyond.

Challenge: The 2007 Farm Bill must recognize that invasive species are a primary threat to our agricultural, fish and wildlife resources and greater attention is needed to control and manage these increasing threats.

Ex. Dir. Column . . .

continued from page 2

Program and modify HFRP to include options for permanent easements.

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP)

Reauthorize at \$300 million per year. Allow transfer of water rights on enrolled land consistent with state law. Allow landowners the right to prohibit non cropland conversion on land subject to the easement.

"Sodsaver" or Non-cropland Conversion

Any land that does not meet the definition of cropland, as determined by the USDA/Farm Service Agency, converted from non cropland status to cropland should be made ineligible for any federal benefit, including but not limited to price and income support payments, crop insurance, disaster payments, conservation program enrollment, and FSA farm loan benefits. To preserve its identity, non cropland converted to cropland shall be reconstituted as a separate farm by FSA.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Reauthorize EQIP, increase allocation percentages for fish and wildlife practices, and increase opportunities for private forestland owners. Require that any water saved through conservation practices remain instream or contribute to increased groundwater flow.

Biofuels and Renewable Energy

Research and development funding should promote the next generation of biofuels and renewable energy technology

based on sustainable polycultures that are consistent with fish, wildlife, soil, nutrient management and water conservation goals. Taxpayer investment in conservation and wildlife gains accomplished during the past 20 years under farm bill conservation programs should not be sacrificed or diminished.

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Reauthorize CSP and ensure it provides increased measurable and consistent benefits for fish and wildlife conservation. CSP should require fish and wildlife habitat improvement components for all program tiers and require that NRCS engage federal and state fish and wildlife agencies and non-government conservation organizations when developing fish and wildlife and habitat criteria and assessments. CSP should enhance other USDA conservation programs and not replace or reduce their funding.

Conservation Compliance Sodbuster swampbuster compliance should be linked to all federal farm program benefits including crop insurance and disaster program eligibility. A farm shall be ineligible to receive federal benefits for the year noncompliance is discovered. Following year eligibility may be approved if noncompliance is rectified and restoration certified within 6 months of discovery.

Conservation Performance Measures

Identify and authorize specific mechanisms for tracking the success of conservation measures.

The 2007 Farm Bill must recognize private forests and their fish and wildlife resources as part of the rural landscape, improve the effectiveness of programs for private forest management and thereby promote sustainable private forest conservation.

The 2007 Farm Bill must continue to recognize the benefits that conservation programs accrue toward our nations' goal of clean water and healthy fish habitat and provide incentives to landowners to protect and improve wetlands, streams and riparian habitats.

The 2007 Farm Bill must recognize that invasive species are a primary threat to our agricultural, fish and wildlife resources and greater attention is needed to control and manage these increasing threats.

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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(c)3 non-profit, all donations are tax deductible.

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These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF's Wildlife Legacy Council! Please consider your donation today.

Names in BOLD indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2005 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council.

Names in ITALICS indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2006 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council.

Names in ARIAL indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2007 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council

President's Col.

continued from page 1

Back in June my wife and I took our grandson on his first camping trip. We made reservations at Lake Thompson Recreation Area and off we went. It was so exciting to see the excitement in Dylan's greetings to everyone announcing that he was going camping.


Dylan helped pitch the tent and his excitement not diminishing. He was so excited to be camping. We pumped up the air mattresses and spread out the sleeping bags. Grandma and I wondering how the night was going to go or if we were going to make a mid night run back home. We built a campfire roasted marshmallows, built smores and turned in for the night. In the wee hours of the night Dylan awoke exclaiming how cold he was so he crawled into Grandma and Grandpas bed to complete the nights rest.

The next day when we asked Dylan if he wanted to spend another night camping he was game for trying another night. Our plans were to do some fishing on Saturday but strong winds prevented us from taking Dylan out in the boat. He was content to walk the beach and discover things new to him. Digging in the sand and climbing on the bank stabilization rock was right up his alley.

The biggest disappointment of the weekend was the water quality. With the strong south winds the shoreline was coating with a thick green goo of some sort of algae. It is unfortunate that a park with the possibilities of Thompson does not have better quality water. As the pea soup rolled in, coating the beach you had to wonder why or if there is something that can be done to eliminate this bloom.

We did eventually launch the boat and spent some time catching a few walleyes. Grandma told Dylan to pick a spinner to catch a fish with. Of course he picked a very large orange spinner that Grandma cynically laughed at yet Dylan insisted and of course caught the first fish of the day. We cleaned our catch and had to hose the green goo off the boat and headed back to camp.


Dylan enjoyed the campfire and had to do some more exploring on the beach. He hung in there for entire weekend. Grandma and Grandpa enjoyed Dylan's excitement and are anxious to try it again. Take a moment to take a kid camping, you may not find anything more rewarding than to share this great outdoor activity with someone.



South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Co-sponsored by **Petersen Motors Inc.**

"Rooster Special"



Harley Davidson Giveaway

- ◆ 2007 FXDB Dyna "Street Bob"
- ◆ two-tone olive pearl/vivid black
- ◆ to be given away November 2007
- ◆ winner must pick bike up at Petersen Motors Inc. Pierre, SD
- ◆ winner responsible for tax and license

Tickets: 1 ticket for \$10, 3 tickets for \$25, 15 tickets for \$100

Proceeds will be used to sponsor youth conservation camp and poster contest and will help ensure the natural resources of South Dakota are protected and available for everyone to use in a responsible manner. The SDWF is a 501(c)3 non profit organization.

Questions Contact:
 Chris Healy, Executive Director, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501
 605-224-7324 or sdw@sdwf.org

South Dakota Outdoor Expo Coming May 2008!

Whether you have never been on a camping trip or if you are an active outdoor enthusiast who wants to pick up a few new skills, you won't want to miss the first-ever South Dakota Outdoor Expo!

The SD Outdoor Expo will introduce thousands of families and children to the outdoors. Through hands-on activities, children and families can learn how to shoot a gun, cast a fishing line, cook over a campfire, attract birds and wildlife and dozens of other outdoor activities! There will be something for everyone and every skill level.

The SD Outdoor Expo will be held on May 17-18, 2008, on the State Fairgrounds in Huron. The SD Outdoor Expo is a free family event!

The Outdoor Expo will be divided into five major skill areas:







- Camping and Outdoor Recreation
- Hunting and Wildlife
- Wildlife Management
- Shooting Sports
- Fishing and Aquatic Education

"Hunting, fishing and camping are some of the most popular pastimes in our state, but as our population becomes increasingly diverse, we realize that many people have never had the opportunities to learn these popular pastimes. The SD Outdoor Expo is a perfect opportunity to learn about hunting, fishing, camping and many other outdoor activities. I invite all families to mark the date now and then make some great memories by attending the Outdoor Expo," said Jeff Vonk, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

The founding agencies behind this event are the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, the South Dakota State Fair, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and the Weatherby Foundation, International. Several other agencies and organizations from across the state are involved in the planning of the event.

Major sponsors who have already committed to the SD Outdoor Expo are: the Weatherby Foundation, South Dakota Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Spader's RV Center, and the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

Hunting, fishing and camping are some of the most popular pastimes in our state, but as our population becomes increasingly diverse, we realize that many people have never had the opportunities to learn these popular pastimes. The SD Outdoor Expo is a perfect opportunity to learn about hunting, fishing, camping and many other outdoor activities.

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Birds, Hunters Plentiful in South Dakota



PHOTO BY: SD TOURISM

PIERRE, S.D. – Survey information captured by the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department estimates that 179,000 people hunted upland game birds in South Dakota in 2006.

“The vast majority of these people were pheasant hunters,” Corey Huxoll, harvest survey coordinator for GFP said. “We estimate we had 80,000 resident pheasant hunters and 98,000 nonresident pheasant hunters.”

Huxoll said that the total pheasant harvest for 2006 was just under 1.85 million roosters compared to 1.95 million harvested in 2005. Nearly 300,000 pheasants were harvested the opening weekend of the 2006 season. The early resident only pheasant season, the weekend before the traditional pheasant season opener, had just under 25,000 hunters harvest 50,000 pheasants.

and northeast parts of the state are reporting some of the highest grouse numbers in the past 15 to 20 years,” Kirschenmann said. “It’s not surprising that a large portion of those reports come from areas where CRP has provided additional undisturbed nesting habitat needed by many of our upland game species.”

Hunter surveys also indicate that other upland game bird seasons did well in 2006.

- The grouse season had 8,000 residents and 6,000 nonresidents hunt, with a harvest of 41,000 grouse.
- There were 2,600 resident partridge hunters and 2,000 nonresidents with a harvest of 9,000 birds.
- There were about 600 resident quail hunters and 1,200 nonresidents with a harvest of 1,800 quail.

Without the assistance of hunters reporting their activity through harvest surveys, the department would not be able to track this valuable information. “For upland game, this survey data is extremely important and useful as it is used to estimate the fall harvest and hunter distribution, as well as determining preseason populations,” Kirschenmann said.

Not all hunters are surveyed. Twelve percent of license holders are randomly selected for the upland game survey portion, which can be completed online or by filling out the survey and mailing it in. It only takes a few minutes to complete the survey and the department encourages every survey recipient to fill it out and submit the information.

Most small game hunting season dates will be similar to those available in 2006. One change will combine the two pheasant units so there is one uniform statewide regular season. Another change concerns the date when the starting time for hunting changes from noon to 10 a.m. Traditionally this was on the Sunday when Daylight Saving Time ends and it has been changed to the fourth Saturday in October, which is Oct. 27 in 2007.

Small game hunting seasons in 2007 will be:

- Youth pheasant: Oct. 6-8.
- Resident only pheasant: Oct. 13-15.
- Traditional pheasant: Oct. 20 – Jan. 6.
- Grouse: Sept. 15 – Jan. 6.
- Gray partridge: Sept. 15 – Jan. 6.
- Quail: Oct. 20 – Jan. 6.
- Cottontail rabbit: Sept. 1 – Feb. 29.
- Tree squirrel: Sept. 1 – Feb. 29.
- Mourning dove: Sept. 1 – Oct. 30.
- Common snipe: Sept. 1 – Oct. 31.
- Sandhill crane: Sept. 22 – Nov. 18.

Habitat and favorable weather conditions are obviously the keys to our current population level.

Coupled with habitat, the past few years have also experienced open winters and favorable weather conditions during the peak hatch, providing an ideal environment for pheasants to be successful.

• The pheasant population and the pheasant harvest for 2005 and 2006 remain the two highest seasons in the past 40 years, according to Tom Kirschenmann, GFP upland game biologist.

• “You need to go back to the early ’60s and the end of the Soil Bank era for higher totals,” Kirschenmann said. “Habitat and favorable weather conditions are obviously the keys to our current population level. Conservation Reserve Program acres have played an instrumental role in pushing our state’s pheasant population to where it is today. Similar to the set aside acres of the Soil Bank Program, CRP acres are critical sites for nesting and brood-rearing. Coupled with habitat, the past few years have also experienced open winters and favorable weather conditions during the peak hatch, providing an ideal environment for pheasants to be successful.”

• Other upland game species have benefited from CRP, sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chickens in particular. “The central

Third Mountain Lion Season Approved

PIERRE, S.D.—The S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Commission approved the state’s third consecutive mountain lion hunting season at its June meeting in Pierre. In the process, commissioners and GFP staff were reminded that mountain lions continue to spark keen interest in the citizens of South Dakota.

• A lengthy public hearing offered commissioners a wide variety of opinions about the lions and the hunting season that has been in place for the past two years. Those opinions ranged from shutting down the season to protect the big cats to shooting even more of the mountain lions.

• Commissioners finalized a season that GFP personnel believe will be consistent with the department’s goal of maintaining a sustainable mountain lion population in the Black Hills. The 2007 season will run from Nov. 1 to Dec. 31 or until 35 lions or 15 female lions are harvested. In 2006 the season limits were 25 lions or eight females.

• Another change in the 2007 is creation of one statewide unit instead of using Black Hills and prairie units. GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk explained that the department’s management

plan for lions does not extend beyond the Black Hills. “The decision to go with a statewide season is, in essence, a decision to manage the lion population only in the Black Hills,” Vonk said. “We are not going to manage beyond the Hills.”

Using a variety of methods, GFP estimates that the current population of mountain lions in South Dakota is between 200 and 225. That population is estimated to include 15 to 25 adult males, 75 to 80 breeding females and 110 to 120 dependent young.

GFP estimates an annual recruitment of 62 to 66 lions into the population with documented adult mortalities of 46 in the Black Hills in 2006.

One indicator of the growing size of the mountain lion population is the number of lions killed by other lions. GFP Game Program Administrator Tony Leif said there were four documented cases of one cougar killing another in the previous 10 years. So far in 2007 there have been five such cases. “It’s another indicator of the size of the mountain lion population,” Leif said.

The decision to go with a statewide season is, in essence, a decision to manage the lion population only in the Black Hills. We are not going to manage beyond the Hills.