In part 4 of this 6 part series, we learned how pheasants change their behavior as the first taste of winter hits South Dakota in November and December. Birds begin to seek out heavy winter cover such as cattail sloughs and shelterbelts for protection from colder temperatures and the season’s first blast of winter weather. By December, pheasants are using more energy to stay warm and need to increase food consumption by 1/3 compared to October to generate the extra body heat. Pheasants easily overcome the challenging weather conditions of early winter and survival is typically high, especially where high quality habitat exists. But how do pheasants handle the heart of winter during January and February?

By January and February, the coldest temperatures of the year have arrived and brutal winter storms are the norm on the South Dakota prairies. The average high temperature is in the low 20s and low temperatures commonly dip well below zero. People avoid outdoor activity as the bone-chilling temperatures and winds can penetrate even the thickest winter clothing. While people are eating hot soup and staying toasty warm in the comfort of their homes, pheasants must adapt to the changing conditions if they hope to survive a severe South Dakota winter.

As snow blankets South Dakota’s landscape, large flocks of pheasants are often observed foraging throughout the day in harvested grain fields. While the snow does make finding food challenging, starvation is not the primary threat to pheasants during most South Dakota winters. The primary threat to pheasants is freezing to death during extreme winter weather events such as blizzards. A pheasant’s body can only produce so much body heat through physiological processes. If body heat is lost at a greater rate than it is produced, the internal temperature declines from its normal 108°F and a pheasant will freeze to death.

At this point you may be wondering at what temperature does a pheasant freeze to death? This is not a simple question as multiple factors affect the rate at which a pheasant loses body heat. Pheasants could likely survive any low temperature possible in South Dakota under calm conditions and with some thick cover for protection. However, when gusty winds combine with cold temperatures to produce extremely low wind chill values, pheasants in lose body heat faster than they can produce it without adequate protection. Two-row shelterbelts or small cattail sloughs that protected pheasants from early winter weather may not provide the protection needed to survive a severe winter storm in January or February. High quality habitat is the key to pheasant survival during severe winter weather. High quality winter habitat functions to block brisk winds and provide insulating thermal cover so pheasants lose body heat at a slower rate than they produce it. Examples of high quality winter habitat include 8 or more row shelterbelts with low-growing shrubs/trees, large cattail sloughs, and tall warm season grasses such as switch grass.

While high quality winter habitat assures pheasants have protection from dangerous winter storms, how do pheasants find enough food to survive the winter when snow covers the landscape? As January brings the coldest temperatures of the year, the amount of energy a pheasant needs to stay warm peaks, and the amount of energy in the form of food needed to stay warm may surprise you. In January a pheasant must consume daily amounts of food equivalent to two small hambugers or four small hambugers can be seen changing to December when 13% of their body weight was fat. While spring may come as a pleasant relief, March and April can be the deadliest months of the year for pheasants. Be sure to check out the sixth and final article of this series to see why spring can be so dangerous for South Dakota ring-necks.
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Out Of Doors 3 September 2012

President’s Column by Rich Widman

Its hunting season and I love it! If you are getting the “Out of Doors” newsletter chances are you love this time of the year also. But do you love it enough to take the time to get your buddies signed up for a SDWF membership? Do you love this great experience that South Dakota has offered in your lifetime enough to write a check for the SDWF Legal Fund, and for the SDWF Camo Coalition lobbyists that work to protect that experience?

I understand the SDWF needs to do a better job of letting sportsmen/women know about the extremely important work we do. They aren’t aware the SDWF has been protecting their outdoor rights for 67 years, and I’m afraid they think no one has to fight for those rights! Do they really believe South Dakota will always be hunting and fishing paradise for all to enjoy without the SDWF? How wrong they are

Those folks have let the 3300 members of the SDWF carry the burden for them all these years. And, what’s worse is that they are our friends! I don’t understand how some can spend every season hunting all sorts of games with a passion, but won’t give $25 for a SDWF membership to protect their outdoor heritage. I’ve got some friends that spend more than that at the bar in one night. I don’t begrudge them their night in the bar, but also think about the future of our natural resources.

Alright, so here’s the deal. SDWF is strong, but we have to be stronger. If everyone asks “JUST ONE” of your buddies to join this year, we’ll have doubled our membership for 2013. “JUST ONE” every year you can, and now we’re talking. Each of our board members has signed up at least one new member this month, and I’ve brought five. Let’s get er done!

Have you noticed its election time? “**%#$%^ Politics! We sometimes hate it, (OK we all mostly hate it) but what happens in Pierre can either help us or hurt us. And SDWF is the only outdoors organization that has two lobbyists there during session to make sure we don’t get hurt. We will have a new crop of legislators to educate next session, and we already see bills being prepared that could mean the demise of untold thousands of acres of grasslands and wetlands, reduced access to public waters, and other bills that will forever impact our outdoor traditions. Make sure you vote for those candidates that will protect our traditions and what we love! (Note: they may not be in your party, but it’s a secret ballot, so no one will know.) Please write a check to the SDWF Camo Coalition to help pay for our lobbyists.

I hope every hunter has a great season and enjoys the wonderful natural resources we are blessed with. However, our past-president and retired conservation officer Bill Antonides has these words of advice: “Because of the Governor’s policy changes to the Open Fields Doctrine, it is incumbent on all real sportmen to keep a watchful eye for violations and report them immediately. There are strong forces who do not want the laws protecting our wildlife, land and waters to be enforced. Perhaps politicians can cover our conservation officers’ eyes and ears, but they can’t stop us from reporting what we see and hear. Poachers and slob hunters are stealing from every citizen of the state, and they make all sportsmen look bad. The Turn in Poachers number is in the Hunting Guide and on your hunting license. Use it.”

I agree. Thanks Bill.

Also, there have been certain things that have happened these last years that SDWF has decided we need a Legal Fund set up to challenge in court the items we feel are unlawful and/or unfair to the people of our great state. But guess what? That needs funding also.

As I mentioned in last months column, I am proud that my Brookings Wildlife Federation started the Legal Fund, the SDWF Camo Coalition, and the SDWF Legacy Fund, along with bringing in “JUST ONE” new member. But I know you know what SDWF does, and I know you’ll help.

Besides, I could have asked you to send in your Gold and Silver, sign over your stock certificates, and put SDWF as the beneficiary on all your Life Insurance policies. … But that’s for another column! Safe hunting everyone and thanks!

Executive Director’s Update by Chris Hesla

By the time you read this article it should be very close to the third Saturday of October. To many of us, this marks a very special time with family, old friends, and new friends at the pheasant opener. We can’t hunting until noon, when I think hunting is a tradition more than a biological reason. In the early days of pheasant hunting, a noon start gave landowners time to get their chores done, eat a good lunch, and rest a spell before hitting the field to hunt with their guests. Opening weekend remains an important part of our hunting heritage. We appreciate our environment, our wildlife, and access to that wildlife. Our experiences create a lifetime of memories and friends for which I am thankful. It is extremely dry everywhere this year so please be careful with any type of flame or sparks. Please be safe and have fun!

SDWF testified on two GFP rules that were finalized at the October GFP&F Commission meeting in Deadwood. SDWF supported a successful proposal to create a 3rd Big Horn Sheep tag in the Black Hills (when the herd numbers support the third tag). This third tag (when sheep numbers support a 3rd tag) will be available for auction and the money will be dedicated to funding a sheep biologist, help with expansion of the herd, and habitat improvement with hopes to expand hunting opportunities for everyone in the future.

SDWF also testified on the proposed 2013 mountain lion season. SDWF understands the desires of people who want to reduce the number of mountain lion in the Black Hills. The number of deer, elk, and other game are at very low numbers and mountain lions are a contributing factor to those low numbers. However, mountain lions are not the only factor, and any reduction in the lion population must be based on the best science available. As conservationists who are concerned with the viability of all wildlife species, SDWF supports the current proposed lion quotas if they are based on science, not on politics or fear. We also recognize there are other forces that help depress the ungulate populations in the Black Hills. We may need to reduce lion numbers until elk, deer, and sheep rebound in the Hills, but we should not go overboard.

SDWF does not support the yearlong statewide shoot-on-site proposal for licensed hunters. We do not believe the mountain lion should be treated as a varmint and allowed to be shot on sight statewide. They are a magnificent animal and deserve some protection when they are out of the Black Hills. We also oppose the use of dogs as we do not believe that’s a fair chase for the mountain lions.

In passing the rules, the Commission included the use of dogs in Custer State Park during certain times (season to be announced) and supported the statewide shoot-on-site option for licensed residents. The SDWF Camo-Coalition has set the date for our 11th annual Camo-Coalition Day at the legislature in Pierre. We encourage anyone who enjoys the natural resources and the beautiful outdoors here in South Dakota to give one day and attend the legislature. This year’s Camo-Coalition Day is Monday, February 4, 2013 from 7:30 am until noon. This is a great opportunity to visit with the people you elected to watch out for your interests.

If you do your hunting or Christmas shopping online, please visit www.SDWF.org 1st and click on one of our sponsors like Amazon, Expedia, Sportsman’s Guide, etc. When you are redirected to their website from our site and buy something, we get a percentage of your purchase back to help SDWF.

Out Of Doors 3 September 2012

President, Rich Widman

Executive Director Chris Hesla

There must be limits, somewhere, to the human footprint on this earth. When the whole of the world is reduced to nothing but human project, we will have lost the map that can show us how we got here, and can offer our spirits an answer when we ask why. Surely we are capable of declaring sacred some quarters that we dare not enter or possess. Barbara Kingsolver, from Small Wonder.
Project Water Watch: Another Citizen Science Experience

In the May 2012 edition of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation's Out of doors newspaper, Mary Lou and I wrote about our latest adventure as citizen scientists -- we had volunteered to listen to the frog and toad chorus from a wetland to determine what species were present and when they were mating. We learned that wetlands are noisy places.

I have written half a dozen articles about citizen science and so far, a total of one person has told me that they might take my advice and volunteer as a citizen scientist. I'm encouraged!

So here is more advice as we undertake our next citizen scientist mission. We've watched birds, bats, bees, ice, nuts, and listened to frogs. Our new assignment is to "watch" water.

Dakota Water Watch

The Dakota Water Watch volunteers make simple water quality measurements on rivers, lakes and wetlands. The goal is to fill gaps in existing data about South Dakota's waters, and identify waters that need additional testing. The photo shows Mary Lou watching water from a pontoon boat, but you can watch water from a dock or shoreline.

Dakota Water Watch is different from other citizen science programs that we have tried. Instead of sending our observations to far-away scientists for analysis of mega-trends, our water watch data stays in South Dakota to help understand the State's water quality. In other programs, we simply watch or listen. Our only equipment is a pencil and a note book. For Water Watch, we are given equipment and financial support for travel or mailing samples to Brookings or Pierre.

In other programs we receive training by computer; for Water Watch, we attended a hands-on training session taught by an actual person. Our "person" was Jeremy Hinke, from the East Dakota Water Development District (EDWDD), which sponsors the program.

The Water Watch scientists analyze our samples and add our data to that of other volunteers. The annual reports, which are available on the EDWDD web site, show interesting summary statistics about South Dakota waters. For example, in 2011, 41 volunteers monitored 55 sites on 19 different bodies of water. The 2011 data show that rivers and streams have higher counts of pathogenic bacteria than do lakes. Water Watch samples alerted authorities to unhealthy conditions at some public beaches.

During the early years of the Water Watch program, one of the goals was to determine if citizen scientists could successfully and accurately collect water quality data, especially bacteriological data. The answer was "yes" and the program has been growing ever since. Don't stop reading if you are not in the Big Sioux River Basin. Dakota Water Watch is going state-wide.

Getting Started Water Watching

We registered our site, Lake Campbell, at one of the four training sessions held this spring. Otherwise, we could have registered using a simple form on the Water Watch web page. The Water Watch staff supplied us with a training manual, clip board and data sheets, a cooler, sampling equipment (thermometer, pH meter, Secchi disk), and containers to hold the water samples. The photo shows Alex Town lowering a Secchi Disk to measure water transparency.

I'll admit that the standard procedures and paperwork seemed complex initially, but with a little practice and by following the check lists, the procedures became easy. One of the benefits of being a citizen scientist is improving your understanding of the process of science. Participating in Water Watch gives you more of an insight to scientific methods than do other projects because you make the measurements, which is quite a responsibility. As the cliché goes "One accurate measurement is worth a thousand expert opinions."

Precision and accuracy -- every deer hunter understands these words in terms of marksmanship. However, precision and accuracy are also critical for "sound" science. For example, in Water Watch, we take duplicate water samples and readings to determine precision. We adjust the accuracy of the pH meter using reference solutions to insure that we are measuring the true value (hitting the bull's eye).

First Sampling Trip

On June 19 I filled out paper work and labeled bags for the water samples that would be analyzed by the EDWDD staff for bacteria. Our job was to sample at three locations: my dock, a swimming beach, and a state boat ramp where we poured water samples into sterilized "whir-pac" bags. These ingenious sample containers (photo) get their name because you seal in the contents by whirling the bag around the reinforced top.

At each site, we completed two data sheets that provided local weather and water conditions, and identified the sample. The process reminded me of the sign in the rest room that says "No job is finished until the paper work is done."

The EDWDD scientists inoculated agar plates with our water samples to look for colonies of the bacteria named Escherichia coli (E. coli). The presence of E. coli indicates contamination by feces of warm-blooded animals, including humans. In South Dakota, swimming is prohibited if the concentration of E. coli exceeds certain standards, so Water Watch data helps protect the health of swimmers and skiers and other folks enjoying what is called "first class" water in South Dakota's lakes. The bacteria samples we took this summer indicated very low bacterial counts – nothing approaching "beach closure" thresholds.

Other Water Watch tasks

Bacteriological monitoring was only one type of sampling in the Water Watch program. On our own schedule, we made routine temperature and transparency measurements from our dock. We also took samples from mid-lake and mailed them to the state water quality laboratory in Pierre for more comprehensive analyses of the health of the lake. We could have even volunteered to watch for invasive plants and animals and other critters.

Contact the Water Watch office and tell them your interest area – they might have a data sheet for you! This is a great science project for kids, but don't pass off the project to the kids, you get involved. As citizen scientists, Mary Lou and I have benefited greatly because we have learned new things about our yard, gardens, and surrounding environs. And, we have learned that most projects have connections to hunting and habitat conservation.

It doesn't take a PhD to be a Citizen Scientist and there is certainly a project that will interest you -- weather, astronomy, wildlife, plants, ice, water, bugs and butterflies, even road-kill counts and gravestone weathering!

Berry is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Natural Resource Conservation, SDSU. Berry has written other advice articles about his experiences as a citizen scientist.

We joined Frog Watch (http://www.aza.org/frogwatch/), our article was in Out of doors (525)4, 4.

The South Dakota DEMN uses regulations to control pollution from industries, cities and towns, which is called "point source pollution." However, runoff from ranches, farms, yards, and gardens, called "nonpoint source pollution" is from private land. If the public wants to improve water quality further by reducing nonpoint source pollution, they'll have to be actively involved.

On the opposite end of the water watching spectrum is world water watch, a one-day (Sept 18) program http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/default.aspx with people in 77 countries involved.


The Annual Reports are short, easy to read primers on SD water quality standards, lake waters (lmmology), sampling and data interpretation, and quality of lakes from Alvin to Waubay.

Alex is attending a Minnesota high school specializing in environmental education; Granddad Ralph also helped with sampling; I thank Ralph (a former wildlife biologist), Jeremy Hinke, and Mary Lou Berry for editorial comments on this article.

Poll: Hunter, angler concerns include global warming

Forty-two percent of hunters and anglers who consider themselves Republicans, and an even greater percentage who say they are ideologically conservative, agree with hunters and anglers of more independent and liberal persuasions that global warming is occurring and that the nation’s natural resources should be protected for future generations.

These and other findings of a nationwide poll conducted for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) were released Tuesday in an effort to inject conservation into discussions leading up to November’s local, state and national elections.

“Hunters and anglers have a strong desire to pass on this incredible (outdoor) legacy,” NWF supporter Theodore Roosevelt IV said in a conference call with reporters. “We want to encourage sportsmen to raise their hands and ask questions (of candidates) this fall.”

A high percentage of hunters and anglers vote, the poll found, and while gun rights are important to them, natural resource conservation is also important.

NWF Minnesota spokesman Gary Botzek said the poll was conducted because, “We need to get (conservation) on candidates’ agenda, their radar screen. Now is the time to talk about our favorite issues, ranging from clean air to clean water to all of the hunting and fishing issues.”

Kathleen Hadley, a NWF national board member from Montana, told reporters that warm weather in recent years has contributed to “turning our forests into tinder boxes.”

“Ranchers are worried about feeding their livestock, and hay prices are out of sight,” she said. “We need to ask our political candidates to lay out their plans for wildlife and our public lands.”

- Most (59 percent) respondents believe global warming is occurring, and 66 percent agreed that, “We have a moral responsibility to confront global warming to protect our children’s future.”
- Most (57 percent) favor the government’s effort to limit carbon dioxide and other air pollutants that affect the public’s, and wildlife’s, health.
- A clear majority (87 percent) worry kids today don’t spend enough time outdoors.
- And 79 percent favor restoring clean water protections to smaller creeks, streams and wetlands — safeguards that were undercut by a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision.

The poll did not ask its 800 respondents where conservation fits among their hierarchy of political issues. Other polls have shown the economy dominates voters’ concerns.

In Minnesota, Botzek said, hunters and anglers were most recently politically energized in 2004 and 2008.

The constitutional right to hunt and fish passed in the earlier election, and approval of the Legacy Amendment followed four years later.

But neither hunters, anglers or other conservationists seem motivated this election cycle, despite big issues “left hanging” in Washington and St. Paul, Botzek said.

“On the federal level, the farm bill didn’t get done, CRP is going away, and clean water legislation didn’t get done,” Botzek said. “Here in Minnesota, wetland protection needs to be strengthened, as do invasive species and drainage laws.”

Conducted Aug. 27 through Sept. 1, the poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.

BIG GAME HUNTING OVER BAITS PROHIBITED

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is reminding hunters that hunting big game over bait is prohibited on all lands.

A person may not establish, utilize, or maintain a bait station when hunting from August 15 to February 1 to attract any big game animal, including wild turkey.

A bait station is a location where grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals, or any other natural food materials, commercial products containing natural food materials, or by-products of such materials are placed or maintained as an attractant to big game animals for the purpose of hunting.

The use of scents alone does not constitute a bait station. In addition, this restriction does not apply to foods that have not been placed or gathered by an individual and result from normal environmental conditions or accepted farming, forest management, wildlife food plantings, orchard management, or similar land management activities.

For more information, contact a local conservation officer or GFP Division of Wildlife Office.
Some of South Dakota’s fishing rules might change for 2013, including a big shift on policy regarding Lake Oahe walleyes, under proposals made Friday by the state Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

The commission is considering whether to let anglers take more fish, such as smelt that are a primary food source for walleyes. Smaller walleyes can survive on tiny invertebrates in the river’s eco-system, but bigger walleyes need a steady diet of smelt and other small fish to survive.

Oahe saw high reproduction of walleyes in previous years and the population is out of balance with the declining food base. That is why biologists want to allow more of the smaller walleyes to be taken.

A public hearing will be held on the afternoon of Nov. 1 during the commission’s next meeting at Madison.

Higher walleye limit possible on Lake Oahe
CRP pays off for pheasants in eastern SD

Re-printed with permission from Pierre Capital Journal

A master’s degree student at South Dakota State University has assembled the science to quantify what hunters already know: CRP lands are vitally important for pheasants. Josh White, who is already working for Pheasants Forever in Idaho, formally defended his research earlier in September and will graduate this December with a degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from SDSU.

White’s study looked at 84 routes used by biologists to do August brood surveys east of the Missouri River in South Dakota. Each route is 30 miles long. He then correlated pheasant locations with other sources of information about what was going on within a 1,000-meter buffer of a pheasant location. 

“We created these habitat maps to assess land use within a 1,000-meter buffer of a pheasant location,” White said.

One take-home message is that CRP has a greater or lesser effect on pheasants by region. It’s very important in the eastern parts of South Dakota, where CRP represents the dominant nesting cover in a landscape dominated by row crops. But near the Missouri River in central South Dakota, CRP is still important, but it is only one factor that makes for good pheasant populations. Wheat production and rangeland, or cattle production, provide additional nesting cover and thus contribute toward pheasant populations.

The study also quantified the effect of CRP as measured in pheasant production.

“We found that for every additional 94 hectares of CRP, there were an additional five pheasants produced on the landscape,” White said.

A hectare is equal to 2.47 acres, so 94 hectares is about 232 acres.

White said the differences in pheasant production in different parts of South Dakota highlight differences biologists have already observed. In areas where row crops make up 70 percent or more of land use, and grass makes up 30 percent or less, species such as pheasants don’t fare as well.

Travis Runia, a senior upland game biologist for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, said White’s study was labor-intensive because of all the mapping of data required to assess where the pheasants were and what the landscape was like around them.

“It was really important to quantify that relationship between CRP and the pheasants, and that’s what Josh’s study was all about,” he said.

Ninety-five-year-old still looking forward to pheasant season

Re-printed with permission from the Rapid City Journal

(Editors note) SDWF recently honored Stan as Educator Conservationist of the year for 2012.

At age 95, Stan Lieberman has certainly earned the right to rest on his very considerable laurels.

After all, the long-time Rapid City resident has donated countless hours to a wide variety of community service projects, been an active participant in wildlife and conservation educational activities, and earned a multitude of city, state, and national commendations and service awards for meritorious service toward the betterment of his community.

That rest will wait until another day said Lieberman while sitting in the den of his home, the wall surrounding his easy chair full of awards and faded newspaper clippings, although most prominent are the numerous pictures of the large family he has raised with his wife, Cuny.

“I’m a guy who has to be doing something,” Lieberman said in a voice softened by one of his few concessions to age. “For that reason, I still train dogs with my friend Paul Vinatieri, and will as long as I live. And my grandson who lives in Pierre just called me just the other night to make sure that I’m coming out for the pheasant season in a few weeks, which of course I am, since I never miss pheasant season.”

Before his arrival in Rapid City in 1943 to begin his new posting as an aerial photographer at Ellsworth Air Force Base following a tour of duty in the Pacific — and a rather fateful day at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 — Lieberman had never hunted or fished while growing up in Worcester, Mass.

“Actually, I hadn’t ever fired a gun before Pearl Harbor. I didn’t know what a gun was growing up in the city and had never fired one until Dec. 7, though I’ve made up for it since,” Lieberman said with a wry smile.

Shortly after arriving in Rapid City, Lieberman had the good fortune to meet his future wife at an outdoor dance pavilion in Baken Park. One thing led to another, and soon Lieberman visited the family ranch in Shannon County for a get-acquainted meeting with Cuny’s family, and the beginning of what would become a lifelong love affair with South Dakota and its hunting and fishing lifestyle.

“They had cows and everything down there, and everybody rode horses and hunted and fished,” Lieberman said. “After that, I learned to love the prairie and to hunt and fish and raised my kids so that they could enjoy the outdoors, too... and I love South Dakota. My happiest days are when I’m out hunting birds in the grasslands.”

During his 75 years in Rapid City — and a 50-year stint as an account executive with KOTA — Lieberman did much more with his time than simply hunt and fish. Community service became a passion as well. In time, Lieberman did a stint as president of the local chapter of the American Red Cross, helped to start up Little League baseball in Rapid City, and served on the board of the first Range Days Rodeo committee — “They actually put me on a horse and had me ride in a parade.” Throughout, he took an active role in wildlife and conservation issues, including serving on the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Commission.

In September, Lieberman added another lifetime service award to his collection – perhaps an honor that he prizes most of all – when he was chosen as the 2012 Conservation Achievement Award as South Dakota Educator of the Year by the South Dakota Wildlife Federation for his many years as a South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Hunt Safe instructor.

“I’ve gotten a lot of things back that I didn’t ask for and, sometimes, I think I got a lot more out of these activities than the people I was doing it for,” he said. “You can’t imagine what a thrill it is to work with kids and take them out hunting.”

When asked which of his many lifelong accomplishments he is most proud of, Lieberman thought for a moment before responding with a sentiment that seemed to reflect perfectly the essence of what an “Educator of the Year” should be.

“I’ve had the chance to raise a family with a wife who wouldn’t lie if her life depended upon it,” Lieberman said after a moment of reflection. “Sometimes I might have told a fib or two, and I’m not very proud of that. So I pride myself in always trying to tell the truth. I tell myself every day that I’m going to tell the truth and do nice things, whether it’s opening the door for a lady or saying nice things to people. I don’t always do it maybe, but I’m sure going to keep on trying.”

JUST ONE
Alaska challenge still pending

The decision means there’s just one more legal challenge pending against the rule. The challenge filed by Alaska is pending in federal court in Washington, D.C.

Danowitz expressed confidence that Monday’s Supreme Court decision would mean the demise of the Alaska challenge, too.

“When you get an action by the highest judicial body in the land that validates Protections to stay for wilderness areas

CHEYENNE, WYO. — Environmental groups hailed the U.S. Supreme Court’s rejection of an appeal challenging a federal rule that bars development on 50 million acres of roadless areas in national forests, ending one of the main legal battles that had left the rule in doubt for more than a decade.

“The Supreme Court action validates arguably one of most important public land conservation policies in a generation,” said Jane Danowitz, a director of the Pew Environment Group, which has worked on the rulemaking since 1998. “Without the roadless rule and its national standard of protection these millions of acres of pristine forest land could be opened to a variety of development, including logging, mining and drilling.”

The justices said Monday they will leave in place a federal appeals court decision in a case brought by the state of Wyoming and the Colorado Mining Association that upheld the so-called roadless rule that took effect late in the presidency of Bill Clinton.

Wyoming and the Colorado Mining Association said closing so much forest land to development has had serious consequences for residents of Western states and the logging, mining and drilling industries.

Supporters of the rule said the nation’s forests need protection from development to preserve forested areas that provide wildlife and natural resource habitat for hunting, fishing and recreation as well as other benefits. They note the rule has exceptions to allow logging to protect the forest from severe wildfires and for public safety.

“We’re glad the Supreme Court put the final nail in the coffin of Wyoming’s case,” said Tim Preso, a lawyer with the environmental law firm Earthjustice.

Wyoming’s challenge contended that the U.S. Forest Service essentially declared forests to be wilderness areas, a power that rests with Congress under the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Three roadless areas in South Dakota

The U.S. Forest Service manages more than 190 million acres of land used for multiple purposes that must comply with strict rules on land use changes spelled out in the federal Wilderness Act and National Environmental Policy Act. There are three roadless areas in South Dakota — parts of the Black Hills National Forest, Buffalo Gap National Grasslands and Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

Salmon station open for egg collection

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department has opened the Whitlock Bay Salmon Spawning Station for the 2012 season, but the flood of 2011 may make it a challenge to gather enough adult salmon for egg collection.

Fisherman caught fewer salmon this year, and GFP personnel expect fewer salmon than usual to show up at the spawning station.

“The low number of salmon in Lake Oahe is due to a loss of salmon during the 2011 flood,” said GFP fisheries biologist Robert Hanten. “The extremely high water release from Lake Oahe pulled salmon congregating near the face of the dam through intakes into Lake Sharpe. We did gain some North Dakota salmon, but fewer angler catches this year indicate low salmon numbers in Lake Oahe.”

Fisheries crews will electrofish on Lakes Oahe and Sharpe in an attempt to collect additional adult salmon for egg collection.

Chinook salmon do not naturally reproduce in Lake Oahe and would not exist there without GFP collecting eggs, raising young salmon and stocking them back into the lake for anglers.

Each year, juvenile Chinook salmon are stocked throughout Lake Oahe. They then disperse throughout the reservoir until becoming sexually mature. Flowing water down the fish ladder attracts the mature fish to the station where GFP personnel collect, sort and spawn the salmon.

The Oahe salmon fishery is very popular with anglers. Surveys show a high percentage of salmon anglers travel more than 200 miles one way for the chance to catch the hard-fighting fish.

Whitlock Bay Salmon Spawning Station is 18 miles northwest of Gettysburg by West Whitlock Recreation Area. The station is open for tours from 9-11 a.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays during October; the fish ladder observation deck is open to the public at any time. Group tours can also be arranged by calling 605.223.7681.