



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

JULY 10-11, 2025 | YANKTON, SD
NFAA EASTON YANKTON ARCHERY CENTER

MEETING INFO

This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.

Date and Time: July 10, 2025, from 1-5 pm CST | July 11, 2025, from 8 am-12 pm CST

Meeting Location: NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center, 800 Archery Lane, Yankton, SD 57078

Webinar Info: We will be using Zoom Webinar® for this meeting. As a participant, you will not have audio or video capabilities by default. During the open forum and public hearing, if you'd like to testify, please 'Raise Your Hand' using the button at the bottom of the screen, or by pressing *9 on your phone. To lower your hand via phone, press *9 again. When it's your turn to speak, the meeting host will unmute you, allowing you to have audio but no video. If your phone is muted when called upon, press *6 to unmute.

- *9 to 'Raise Your Hand' or 'Lower Your Hand.'
- *6 to Unmute or Mute

Please inform Gail Buus at gail.buus@state.sd.us by 1 pm CST if you plan to speak during the meeting. This helps us to accurately identify and call on speakers during the session. Thank you for your cooperation!

Zoom Webinar: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 912 6417 6710

Passcode: 970458

Call In: +16699009128,,91264176710# US

Video Conference ID: 91264176710@zoomcrc.com

AGENDA

Call Meeting to Order (1 pm CST / 12 pm MT)

Division of Administration

Action Items

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives>
3. Additional Commissioner Salary Days

Informational Items

4. Staff Introductions and Awards

Public Hearing (2pm CST / 1pm MT)

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment finalizations.

Open Forum – following the conclusion of the Public Hearing

The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment on petitions, proposals, and other items of interest not on the agenda.

Petitions

5. #243 – Use of Hounds to Harvest Mountain Lions During Bobcat Season

Finalizations

6. Custer State Park Antelope Season
7. Shooting Sports Complex Fee Schedule

Proposals

8. AIS Species List
9. Mountain Lion Hunting Season



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

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Division of Wildlife

Action Items

10. Black Hills Beaver Action Plan
11. State Wildlife Action Plan

Informational Items

12. Midwest Walleye Challenge Summary
13. Bounty Program Summary
14. Fate Dam Habitat Addition and Assessment
15. License Sales Update and Deer Season Drawing Results

Division of Parks and Recreation

Action Items

16. City of Fort Pierre - Waterfront Lease Amendment

Informational Items

17. CSP Resort Concession Agreement Update
18. ADA Remodeling Projects Progress
19. Disc Golf Courses in SD State Parks
20. Reservation Customer Service Review Process
21. Southeast Region Park Projects
22. Upcoming Park Events for the Summer
23. June Camping Unit and Revenue Report

Solicitation of Agenda Items

Now is the time to submit agenda items for the Commission to consider at a following commission meeting.

Adjourn

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on September 4-5, 2025, starting at 1 pm MT at the Outdoor Campus – West, 4130 Adventure Trail, Rapid City, SD 57702.



Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

June 5-6, 2025 | Dakota Event Center | Aberdeen, SD

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Dakota Event Center, in Aberdeen, SD on June 5, 2025. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Jon Locken, Travis Theel, Jim White, and Travis Bies were in attendance. With six commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 68 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure [Action Item]

Chair Rissler requested the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, but none were brought forward.

2. Executive Session [Action Item]

Upon majority vote of the Commissioners, a closed Executive meeting was held to discuss contractual matters from 1:06 pm CST to 1:34 pm CST.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of the May 2025 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE MAY 2025 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Additional Commissioner Salary Days [Info Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. Additional days were submitted for approval for Commissioner Cull for one day and Chair Rissler for 3 days.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Budget Discussion [Action Item]

The GFP Commission reviewed the Department's FY2026 budget that now includes the distribution of the statewide salaries and benefits package that was adopted by the Legislature during the 2025 Legislative Session. The total FY2026 budget for the SD Department of Game, Fish & Parks includes \$6,245,753 of General Funds, \$38,332,957 of Federal Fund expenditure authority, \$85,664,417 of Other Fund expenditure authority for a total budget of \$130,223,127 and 583.9 FTE.

Three of the Department's budget units: the 0601 Division of Administration, 0620 State Parks and Recreation, and 0621 State Parks and Recreation – Development & Improvement were adopted by the Legislature during the FY2025 Legislative Session. The GFP Commission took formal action to adopt the FY2026 budgets for 0610 Wildlife – Informational, 0612 Wildlife – Development & Improvement – Informational and 0622 Snowmobile Trails – Informational

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE FY2026 BUDGETS. The motion carried unanimously.



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The budget unit levels set by the GFP Commission include:

0610 Wildlife - Info				
	General	Federal	Other	Total
Personal Services	\$ -	\$ 8,748,393	\$ 19,720,413	\$ 28,468,806
Operating Expenses	\$ -	\$ 15,342,477	\$ 21,335,924	\$ 36,678,401
Total	\$ -	\$ 24,090,870	\$ 41,056,337	\$ 65,147,207
FTE				297.50
0612 Wildlife - Dev/Imp - Info				
	General	Federal	Other	Total
Personal Services	\$ -			
Operating Expenses	\$ -	\$ 6,712,500	\$ 4,462,500	\$ 11,175,000
Total	\$ -	\$ 6,712,500	\$ 4,462,500	\$ 11,175,000
FTE				
0622 Snowmobile Trails - Info				
	General	Federal	Other	Total
Personal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 522,500	\$ 522,500
Operating Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 973,918	\$ 973,918
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,496,418	\$ 1,496,418
FTE				9.10

6. Staff Introductions

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced three new employees for the Parks Division. New staff introduced were Alexandria Schilling, Pelican Lake and Sandy Shore; Austin Zobel, Lake Herman; and Kaylee Boland, Angostura. Local staff in attendance were introduced to the commission.

Director Tom Kirschenmann introduced new employees for the Wildlife Division. The three new staff announced were: Brody Kirkeby, Blue Dog Hatchery; Garrett Baumgartner, Rapid City Office; Colby Tadra, Chamberlain Office. Local staff in attendance were introduced to the commission as well.

Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:01 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as finalization. After hearing comments on finalization items, the Public Hearing was closed at 2:12 pm CST.

Agenda Item #8: Purple Heart Rules

No Testimony Provided

Agenda #9: Furbearer Hunting and Trapping

9a. Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season

2:05 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually on the topic of the beaver hunting and trapping season and added testimony furthering restrictions on hunting and trapping.

9b. Mink, Weasel and Muskrat Hunting and Trapping Season

2:09 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually on the topic of mink, weasel and muskrat hunting and trapping season finalization and also added testimony on furthering restrictions on hunting and trapping.

Agenda #10: River Otter Season and Action Plan

2:12 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually in opposition to the river otter season finalization and also added testimony furthering restrictions on the hunting and trapping of river otters.



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Agenda #11: Eliminate Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

Kevin Swenson and Jack Freidel were unable to be connected virtually during the Public Hearing to testify in opposition. However, they were able to testify virtually as documented in the Open Forum section.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the public hearing closed at 2:15 pm.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:17 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda, not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

2:19 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually about reintroducing otter population to western South Dakota.

2:23 pm: Kevin Swenson of Chamberlain, SD testified virtually in opposition of eliminating the closed area on Lake Francis Case.

2:27 pm: Jack Freidel of Chamberlain, SD testified virtually in opposition of eliminating the closed area on Lake Francis Case.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the open forum at 2:30 pm CST.

7. #242 Application for Unsold Big Game Licenses

[Action Item: Petition]

Director Kirschenmann introduced the petition submitted by Mr. Brett Waibel. The ask was to change the draw structure, which currently allows an individual to submit one application for turkey and antelope in the third draw, to allowing up to two applications in the third draw. Kirschenmann explained that the commission made a change in 2023 to create the current structure. The purpose for the change was an attempt to get licenses in the hands of more individuals desiring to draw a preferred license. Over the past two years, Kirschenmann noted that the agency is seeing more individuals are obtaining a license, thus the structure appears to be working. Through discussion and adopting the department's recommendation, the Commission voted to deny the petition.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO DENY PETITION #242. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-09 DENYING PETITION #242. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 25-09

WHEREAS, Brett Waibel of Draper, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated June 2, 2025, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:06:01:09 (Application for unsold big game license) – allow an individual to apply for up to three licenses in the third lottery drawing for the reasons more fully set out in the petition (hereinafter referred to as “the Petition”); and

WHEREAS, all members of the Commission have been furnished with and have reviewed a copy of the Petition; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that a copy of the Petition has been served on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council as required by SDCL § 1-26-13; and



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WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that SDCL § 1-26-13 requires that within thirty (30) days of submission of a Petition, the Commission shall either “deny the petition in writing (stating its reasons for the denials) or shall initiate rule-making proceedings in accordance with SDCL 1-26-4.”; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised and is of the opinion that a hearing on the Petition is neither statutorily required nor necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed and carefully considered the requirements and procedures set out in SDCL §1-26-13 and the contents of the Petition, including the reasons advanced by Petitioner to allow an individual to apply for up to three licenses in the third lottery drawing; and

WHEREAS, the Department recommended a change to the draw structure in 2023 to reduce the number of applications in the third draw from up to five applications to limiting applications to only one to create more opportunity for more unique hunters, reduce complexity, and bring consistency among turkey and antelope season draws; and

WHEREAS, for turkey and antelope, an individual has two opportunities to obtain their preferred license in the first two draws, and they may obtain a 2nd license in the 3rd draw, after which licenses become available on a first come, first served basis, in the leftover draw; and

WHEREAS, allowing individuals to apply for two additional licenses in the 3rd draw will decrease the odds for other individuals, some of which would not hold any licenses; and

WHEREAS, the leftover draw provides an equal opportunity for each individual to obtain additional licenses, and licenses are awarded to individuals that apply for the leftover licenses first. Because every individual has the same opportunity to obtain these leftover licenses, the Department sees no benefit in altering the draw structure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission does hereby deny the Petition for the reasons hereinabove stated in this Resolution, which said Resolution as adopted by the Commission shall constitute the Commission’s written denial of the Petition and its reasons therefore.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Petition, a record of the Commission’s discussions concerning same, and this Resolution be made a part of the Minutes of the Commission meeting at which this Resolution is adopted, and further, that the Department be and it is hereby authorized and directed in compliance with SDCL §1-26-13 to serve a copy of an extract of that portion of the Commission minutes which pertain to the Commission’s discussion of the Petition and its adoption of this Resolution, including a copy of the Resolution, on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council with copies also to be provided to the Petitioner, Brett Waibel of Draper, South Dakota.

8. Purple Heart Rules (PEL & Camping)

[Action Item: Finalization]

Al Nedved, Deputy Director for the Division of Parks and Recreation, presented the finalization for a rule change that would include recipients of the Purple Heart to be included as eligible recipients of the free lifetime park entrance license currently authorized for 100% disabled resident veterans or prisoners of war. The change would also allow Purple Heart recipients to receive the 50% discount allowed for disabled veterans and prisoners of war as well. This proposal was a result of a petition from Connie Stone submitted and approved at the May Commission meeting.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO ACCEPT THE FINALIZATION OF THE PURPLE HEART RULES FOR PARK ENTRANCE LICENSES. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY CULL TO ACCEPT THE FINALIZATION OF THE PURPLE HEART RULES FOR DISCOUNTED CAMPING PERMITS. The motion carried unanimously.



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9. Furbearer Hunting and Trapping

[Action Item: Finalization]

9a. The commission took action to finalize changes to the beaver hunting and trapping season. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented changes including closing the beaver season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD) and to clarify the definition of the BHFPD.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE BEAVER HUNTING AND TRAPPING FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

9b. The commission took action to finalize changes to the muskrat hunting and trapping season. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented changes including clarifying the definition of Black Hills Fire Protection District for the muskrat season.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE MUSKRAT HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASON FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

10. River Otter Season and Action Plan

[Action Item: Finalization]

The commission took action to finalize changes to the river otter season and to adopt the river otter action plan. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented changes including increasing the harvest limit on river otters from 20 to 30 river otters. Kanta also presented comments on the river otter action plan and the commission adopted the plan with no changes.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE RIVER OTTER SEASON FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE RIVER OTTER ACTION PLAN FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Eliminate Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

[Action Item: Finalization]

Aquatic section chief John Lott presented the finalization action sheet for the proposal to remove the December 1 through April 30 fishing closure for the area of Lake Francis Case known as the Dredge Hole, to the commission. Chief Lott reviewed the proposed changes and addressed concerns submitted by the public related to removing the closure. Main points in support of removing the closure included that fisheries are managed at the population level and removing the closure would not reduce abundance or quality of the Lake Francis Case walleye fishery and the Dredge-Hole closure is the only regulation where anglers are prohibited from fishing for walleye in deep water, though this situation occurs at multiple locations throughout the state.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION TO ELIMINATE THE CLOSED AREA ON LAKE FRANCIS CASE. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Custer State Park Antelope and Status Update

[Action Item: Proposal]

GFP staff biologist, Byron Buckley, presented CSP Pronghorn Updates and Recommendation information to the commission. The presentation covered population estimates and biological data for pronghorn in Custer State Park (CSP). Current population estimates for the spring of 2025 is approximately 123 pronghorn in CSP, and a 50 bucks per 100 does ratio. The population estimate indicates a growing population of pronghorn in the park, and the buck-to-doe ratio suggests that the population can sustain a limited buck harvest. The department recommended a proposal for 5 buck pronghorn license, and zero doe/kid license based on spring population estimates for CSP.



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The commission took action to propose changes to the Custer State Park (CSP) antelope season. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented recommended changes including opening the CSP antelope season and modifying rule to allow for up to ten single tag licenses. Proposed changes included changing rule 41:06:07:02 from a reference to any antelope licenses to antelope licenses.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE CSP ANTELOPE SEASON PROPOSAL. THE FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION IN JULY 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THE CSP ANTELOPE ADMINISTRATE ACTION PROPOSAL DUE TO NO CHANGE. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN JULY 2025.

13. Sage Grouse Season and Status Update [Action Item: Proposal]

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented on Greater sage-grouse in South Dakota. Sage-grouse populations are tracked with lek surveys completed in the spring. All known, active sage-grouse leks are counted in Harding and Butte counties. Lek surveys have indicated a decline in sage-grouse abundance in recent years. In 2025, lek surveys indicated 70 males on the leks counted.

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented information on the Sage Grouse hunting season and a recommendation to keep the season closed. The commission took no action.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THE PROPOSAL TO KEEP THE SAGE GROUSE SEASON CLOSED DUE TO NO CHANGE.

14. Shooting Sports Complex Fee Schedule and Status Update [Action Item: Proposal]

The commission took action to propose rule to establish a day pass, annual pass and event fees for the Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex (PLSSSC). John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented an update on construction progress of the PLSSSC. Construction is on schedule and a grand opening is planned for the weekend of October 10, 2025. Kanta also presented recommendations for establishing fees for an individual day pass, individual annual pass, family annual pass, annual club pass, competitive event pass and a non-competitive event pass.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE FEE SCHEDULE PROPOSAL FOR THE PET LIEN & SONS SHOOTING COMPLEX. THE FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION IN JULY 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

15. Aquatic Access Public Comment Recorder [Info Item: Wildlife]

Aquatic access is a priority of the department but how do we track and know what comments are coming in from the public. A GIS application was established to do just that in provide a place for anglers and users to leave comments in what is called the Aquatic Access Comment Recorder. The Aquatic Access Comment Recorder mimics the Public Lands Comment Recorder that has been around for several years and has been successful. The Aquatic Access Comment Recorder went live on Thursday morning for a “soft” launch with a larger public outreach campaign with communication staff coming soon. The Aquatic Access Comment Recorder provides a platform for the public to go in and provide any comment on hazards, maintenance needs, additional amenities, or general comments to any access location from boat ramps, shore fishing, ice fishing, and others. They need to provide their name, email, and phone so staff can follow up if needed. The goal for the Comment Recorder is provide feedback on access amenities not to provide comments on lake management topics. Once comments come in, staff will look at each comment and address them accordingly.



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16. Fencing Options to Protect New Tree Plantings on GPA's

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Patrick Tate, Regional Habitat Manager, presented information on several different types of fencing options that staff use to protect newly planted trees on GPAs, including cost and design.

17. Pheasant Preserve End-of-Year Summary

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Mark Ohm, Wildlife Division Regional Supervisor, and Janelle Blaha, Private Shooting Preserve and Permits Coordinator, presented a summary of data from the 2024-2025 shooting preserve season. There were 234 permitted preserves that released a total of 632,021 pheasants and harvested 380,072, including 23,015 wild pheasants. 15,485 preserve licenses were sold during the 2024 license year. These numbers have been steadily increasing over the past 10 years, with the exception of the 2020-2021 season. Numbers are expected to remain steady or slightly increase for the 2025-2026 season.

18. Upland Game Bird Harvest and Fall Forecast

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented on pheasant and grouse harvest. Approximately 1.3 million pheasants were harvested in 2024, a 5.5% increase from 2023. Approximately, 98,000 prairie grouse were harvested in 2024, a 42.5% increase from 2023. He also spoke on pheasant nesting and brood rearing indicating the mild winter and average spring conditions experienced in South Dakota this year have set the stage for what hopes to be a great pheasant season in the fall of 2025.

19. Lake Alvin Spillway Construction

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Regional Supervisors Kip Rounds and Derek Dorr provided a presentation highlighting the successful completion of a major repair project at Lake Alvin Recreation Area. Staff were able to show and speak about the process of removal and reconstruction of the new spillway area. They also discussed a new chute design being tried for the first time with our department and work completed while this busy area had limited access and use rates were reduced. Staff also highlighted the wonderful engagement they have seen by our users with lake cleanup efforts while a larger area of exposed shoreline revealed debris that was under the water for many years. Discussion also touched on the fisheries management of the lake and some of the winter survival rates and stocking that has happened as the lake returns to normal pool levels.

20. License Sales

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann provided a short summary to the commission on small game, fishing, habitat stamp, and big game license sales and draws. Overall, license sales remain ahead of last year and going strong. Key message shared was the continued high interest in elk season licenses as demonstrated by the volume of applications submitted.

21. Bridge City Marina Concession Lease Extension Amendment

[Action Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator presented an Amendment to the Bridge City Marina Concession Agreement. Blanchette gave a brief summary of the history of the lease and the current fee and reserve structure. The presented amendment included the terms of the proposal submitted to GFP by the marina owners, Mike and Jessie Norder, which includes investments to new and existing lodging units of \$90,000 in exchange for a 10-year extension of the lease term. The amendment also includes revisions to the reporting requirements of the Repair and Maintenance requirements. Blanchette stated the Department's support of the proposal as well as retaining the Norders as the Concessionaire at Bridge City Marina for an additional 10 years. Blanchette requested approval of the lease amendment as presented, as well as authorization of Director Jeff VanMeeteren to execute the document on behalf of the Department.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE LEASE AMENDMENT AND AUTHORIZE DIRECTOR VANMEETEREN TO EXECUTE THE DOCUMENT. The motion carried unanimously.



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22. CSP Resort Concession Lease Extension

[Info Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator provided a follow up from the May meeting regarding the Custer State Park Concession lease extension opportunity. GFP has engaged CHM Government Services to consult GFP in the matter. Blanchette provided a summary of CHM's past experience in similar situations for GFP and nationwide. CHM will provide its services to determine an appropriate lease extension scenario based on investments and fee structures, with the findings intended to be used as the basis of discussions with the CSP Resorts company to structure an agreement for a lease extension. GFP's goal is to review the CHM Financial report and provide a recommendation during the July meeting to either proceed with a lease extension agreement or release an RFP.

23. Marketing Update - Make A Splash Promotion, Tagged Fish Promotion, Camping & Day-Use

[Info Item: Parks]

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator, and Chris Hull, Communications Specialist, provided a brief update on summer marketing efforts across the park system. The *Make a Splash* campaign continues to gain traction, with strong public engagement through photo submissions of water-based activities. Anglers are also reeling in tagged fish across nine participating waterbodies, earning free t-shirts as part of the ongoing promotion. An update was shared on the Dakota News Now paid campaign, which includes a commercial and park feature during the news broadcast. With the ongoing marketing efforts, current lodging reservations has seen a positive trend in 2025, outpacing those from 2024.

24. Fort Sisseton State Park Update and New Visitor Center Concept

[Info Item: Parks]

William Collignon, Regional Park Supervisor gave a presentation on recent projects that have been completed at Fort Sisseton including wooden shingle maintenance and replacements, tuckpointing on field stone and brick structures, window replacement, geothermal climate control systems and the Brownfield Grant in partnership with DANR for detailed facility assessment for lead based paint, asbestos and structural; along with work to start soon such as new roof for the Hospital, replacement of the boardwalk and the ARPA sewer updates to be completed this fall.

The presentation then shifted to a brief history of why this site is important to our history and then presented the architectural design concept for a new visitor center for the park crafted by designArch Group in partnership with the Governor's Commission on Fort Sisseton.

25. Spring Creek Golf Course

[Info Item: Parks]

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary for Game, Fish and Parks, provided an update on the sale of the Spring Creek Golf Course. The South Dakota Parks & Wildlife Foundation (SDPWF) sold the Spring Creek Golf Course to Fore Score LLC, a local group of investors led by Dann Grevlos. Proceeds from the sale will be reinvested to support future enhancements at Good Earth State Park and the surrounding area.

26. May Camping Units and Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the May monthly and year-to-date report numbers for the Division of Parks & Recreation related to camping units and revenue. May's cooler, wet weather affected the camping units which were down 7% for the month and 6% YTD. Parks are optimistic that with favorable weather the Divisions camping unit goal for 2025 can still be reached. The Parks Division revenue is up 20% for the month of May and 14% YTD with entrance license sales remaining strong and camping revenue starting to pick up. The standard graphs and charts were shared with the Commission to depict how park revenue has come in for the Division overall and the impact of the new non-resident park entrance license fees as compared to other entrance fees.



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27. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on July 10-11, 2025, at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center, in Yankton, SD starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:33 AM CST ON June 6, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Robling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary

South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

Petition for Rule Change

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

ID: 243

Petitioner Name: South Dakota Houndsmen Association

Address: 4821 Hickory Creek Dr
Rapid City, SD 57701

Email: kayossbbq@gmail.com

Phone: 605-786-6101

Rule Identification: 41:06:61:06 Use of dogs

Describe Change: We, as an association, propose to SD Game and Fish, along with the residents of South Dakota to open the use of dogs to harvest mountain lions in the BH Fire Protection District during the bobcat season of December 26 to February 15 of each year. Issuing general tags based on 20% of the mountain lion harvest limit (i.e. current limit is 60 = 12 dog tags). Along with this proposal, all dog handlers must be a current South Dakota Resident and carry a valid SD mountain lion tag.

Reason for Change: We are asking for this change to increase the opportunity for South Dakota outdoor sportsmen to utilize the use of dogs for big game hunting in the Black Hills.

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Custer State Park Antelope Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:07 and 41:06:10

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	June 5-6, 2025	Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	July 10, 2025	Yankton
	Finalization	July 10-11, 2025	Yankton

PROPOSED CHANGES

Duration: 2025 hunting season

Season Dates: October 4 – 19, 2025 *
** Recommendation to open the season in 2025 for a sixteen-day season beginning on the 1st Saturday in October.*

Open Area: Custer State Park

Licenses: Last year, there were no antelope licenses.

The Department's recommendation for resident-only licenses by tag type for the 2025 hunting season is included in the following administrative action item.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Resident only.
2. A person who received a Custer State Park "any antelope" license in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a license or purchase preference points for that season. *
** Recommendation to change "any antelope" to "antelope".*
3. No person may hunt any big game species or coyotes within 200 yards of any public access road or building in Custer State Park.

Proposed changes from last year:

1. Modify § 41:06:25:01 to open the Custer State Park antelope hunting season from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, for sixteen consecutive days, beginning on the first Saturday in October and allow for a maximum of 10 single-tag antelope licenses, with actual license number and type specified through administrative action.
2. Repeal § 41:06:25:02. Season date and license limit information. This will be described in § 41:06:25:01.
3. Modify § 41:06:07:02 to specify a person that receives an antelope license in CSP may not apply for that season for 9 years. The current rule is specific to "any antelope" license types and the Department is recommending "buck antelope" license types in 2025.
4. *Modify § 41:06:25:01 to remove the unit description "CUA-CU1" and simply reference Custer State Park as the area open to hunting antelope. **

5. Modify the order of § 41:06:07:02 to clarify elk application rules in Custer State Park. *

* Style and format changes from original proposal

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Based on annual ground survey data, the Custer State Park antelope population can provide some buck hunting opportunity. The count in 2025 was 123 total animals (Table 1), the highest since 2016. The Custer State Park hunting season has been closed since 2017 (Figure 1).

Table 1. Antelope ground count survey data from 2014 to 2025.

Year	Count	Method
2014	138	ground
2015	138	ground
2016	153	ground
2017	110	ground
2018	81	ground
2019	86	ground
2020	NA	no survey
2021	82	ground
2022	90	ground
2023	80	ground
2024	84	ground
2025	123	ground

Figure 1. License sales and hunter harvest information for the Custer State Park Antelope Hunting Season from 2011 to 2017. The season has been closed since 2017.

Year	Apps	Licenses	Harvest			Success	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
			Bucks	Does	Total			
2011	1,170	3	3	0	3	100%	1.3	NA
2012	916	3	3	0	3	100%	1.3	NA
2013	995	3	3	0	3	100%	1.0	NA
2014	1,086	3	3	0	3	100%	2.0	6.00
2015	1,223	3	3	0	3	100%	1.7	6.67
2016	1,243	3	3	0	3	100%	1.3	7.00
2017	Season Closed							

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:25:01. Custer State Park antelope hunting season established -- Number and type of license. The Custer State Park antelope hunting season is ~~closed~~ open in Custer State Park from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, for sixteen consecutive days, beginning on the first Saturday in October. No more than ten one-tag antelope licenses may be issued to residents for the season.

41:06:25:02. Number of licenses -- Type -- Dates. The Custer State Park antelope hunting season includes Unit CUA-CU1 where a maximum of 3 "any antelope" licenses may be issued. Antelope may be taken by any

legal means from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset each day beginning the Tuesday following Native American Day for nine consecutive days Repealed.

41:06:07:02. Eligibility of past licensees. A person who received a Custer State Park elk license or a Custer State Park early archery elk license in any previous year may not apply for that license again. ~~A person who received a Custer State Park bighorn sheep license or Black Hills bighorn sheep license in any previous year may not apply for a Custer State Park bighorn sheep license.~~ However, a person who previously received a Custer State Park elk license is eligible to receive a Custer State Park elk license awarded through a special fundraising raffle.

A person who received a Custer State Park bighorn sheep license or Black Hills bighorn sheep license in any previous year may not apply for a Custer State Park bighorn sheep license. A person who received a first-choice unit license for the special antlerless elk season in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a license in that season. A person who received a Custer State Park "any deer" license, "any whitetail deer," or "any whitetail deer plus antlerless whitetail deer" license in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a unit license for the Custer State Park "any deer," "any whitetail deer," or "any whitetail deer plus antlerless whitetail deer" in that season. A person who received a Custer State Park ~~"any antelope"~~ antelope license in any of the preceding nine years may not apply for a license in that season. Receiving a license for the special antlerless elk season does not affect a person's future eligibility for the Custer State Park elk license, nor does receiving the Custer State Park elk license affect future eligibility for the special antlerless elk license.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, hunting opportunity will be expanded.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? More individuals will be able to hunt antelope with minimal impact to population numbers.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, this change increases sustainable hunting opportunity.

FISCAL IMPACT

Up to ten single-tag antelope licenses may be sold and many individuals are expected to purchase preference points for this season. The license number recommendation is included on the following administrative action item.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex Fees Chapter 41:03:07

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	June 5-6, 2025	Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	July 10, 2025	Yankton
	Finalization	July 10-11, 2025	Yankton

PROPOSED CHANGES

1. Create rule to establish day permit, annual permit and event permits for the Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

To help offset maintenance and operation costs of the GFP Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex the Department is recommending modest fees to generate revenue that can be used to leverage federal funding to use for maintenance and operation of the complex. Revenue generated will help offset the costs for materials such as clay targets that will be offered at the complex.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE

41:03:07. Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex Fees. Fees associated with the use of the Pete Lien & Sons Shooting Sports Complex are as follows:

- (1) Individual day permit, twenty dollars;
- (2) Individual annual permit, one hundred dollars;
- (3) Family annual permit, one hundred and fifty dollars;
- (4) Annual club permit, five hundred dollars;
- (5) Competitive event permit, twenty dollars per competitor; and
- (6) Non-competitive event permit, five hundred dollars per shooting bay for two days and two hundred dollars for each additional day.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Chapter 41:10:04

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	July 10,2025	Yankton
	Public Hearing	Sept. 4,2025	Rapid City
	Finalization	Sept. 4-5,2025	Rapid City

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Recommended changes:

1. Add Prussian carp to the current list of Aquatic Invasive Species.
2. Create an exemption for red swamp crayfish to be possessed alive in certain circumstances.
3. Modify current listing for European rudd and snakehead species.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

1. Prussian carp have established self-sustaining populations in North America, including Canada. Prussian carp can resemble goldfish and cause harm to existing baitfish populations if established.
2. Red swamp crayfish are primarily imported for human consumption rather than use as bait.
3. The common name of "European rudd" was modified to "rudd" in the most recent American Fisheries Society publication.
4. Placing all Snakehead species into one grouping would simplify the rule and prevent the need for changes if additional snakehead species are introduced into North America or scientific species names are later changed.

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

The following are proposed draft changes that are intended to incorporate the changes recommended for Commission proposal.

41:10:04:01. List of aquatic invasive species. Species classified as aquatic invasive species in the state are as follows;

(1) Fish:

- (a) Black carp, **Mylopharyngodon piceus**;
- (b) Common carp, **Cyprinus carpio**;
- (c) Grass carp, **Ctenopharyngodon idella**;
- (d) Bighead carp, **Hypophthalmichthys nobilis**;
- (e) Silver carp, **Hypophthalmichthys molitrix**;
- (f) ~~European Rudd,~~ **Scardinius erythrophthalmus**;
- (g) ~~Giant sSnakehead,~~ **(Channa micropeltes Spp)**;
- ~~(h) Northern snakehead,~~ **Channa argus**;
- ~~(i) Bullseye snakehead,~~ **Channa marulius**;
- ~~(j) Blotched snakehead,~~ **Channa maculata**;
- ~~(k)(h)~~ Western mosquitofish, **Gambusia affinis**;
- ~~(l)(i)~~ Round goby, **Neogobius melanostomus**; and
- ~~(m)(j)~~ White perch, **Morone americana**; and

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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(k) Prussian carp, **Carassius gibelio**:

(2) Plants:

- (a) Brittle naiad, **Najas minor**;
- (b) Curly pondweed, **Potamogeton crispus**;
- (c) Didymo, **Didymosphenia geminata**;
- (d) Eurasian water-milfoil, **Myriophyllum spicatum**;
- (e) Purple loosestrife, **Lythrum salicaria**;
- (f) Flowering rush, **Butomus umbellatus**;
- (g) Common reed, **Phragmites australis**; and
- (h) Starry stonewort, **Nitellopsis obtusa**;

(3) Invertebrates:

- (a) New Zealand mudsnail, **Potamopyrgus antipodarum**;
- (b) Rusty crayfish, **Orconectes rusticus**;
- (c) Zebra mussel, **Dreissena polymorpha**;
- (d) Quagga mussel, **Dreissena rostriformis bugensis**;
- (e) Asian clam, **Corbicula fluminea**;
- (f) Red rimmed melania, **Melanoides tuberculata**;
- (g) Red swap crayfish, **Procambarus clarkii**; and
- (h) Spiny waterflea, **Bythotrephes longimanus**.

41:10:04:02. Aquatic invasive species exemptions. The following are exempt from SDCL 41-13A-2:

- (1) A person possessing a scientific collectors permit issued by the department;
- (2) A person authorized by the department to stock triploid grass carp for pond management purposes;
- (3) A person contracted by the department to conduct commercial fishing operations as authorized in SDCL 41-13-7;
- (4) A person in the process of removing an aquatic invasive species from a conveyance;
- (5) An owner or agent of the owner of a conveyance in the process of transporting the conveyance for decontamination using a department approved procedure;
- (6) An employee of a business approved by the department to transport and possess conveyances for the purpose of decontamination;
- (7) A commercial plant harvester operating within the requirements of a department approved work plan or a lakeshore property owner operating within the requirements of a department approved permit; ~~and~~
- (8) A lakeshore property owner in the process of transporting aquatic invasive species, for disposal, in a manner that minimizes possible introduction to new waters; and
- (9) A person importing, transporting, or possessing live red swamp crayfish solely for the purpose of human consumption and not at a location legally licensed to sell bait.

~~In the case of fish and crayfish~~ Except as provide in (9), only dead fish and crayfish may be transported or possessed.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

- 1. The Issue – NA
- 2. Historical Considerations – NA
- 3. Biological Considerations – Efforts to slow the spread of new Aquatic Invasive Species into South Dakota.
- 4. Social Considerations – NA
- 5. Financial considerations – NA

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

- 1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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- 2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? NA
- 3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? NA
- 4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Mountain Lion Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:02 and 41:06:61

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	July 10-11, 2025	Yankton
	Public Hearing	September 4, 2025	Rapid City
	Finalization	September 4-5, 2025	Rapid City

PROPOSED CHANGES

Duration: 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 hunting seasons

Season Dates: Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD):
December 26, 2025 – April 30, 2026
December 26, 2026 – April 30, 2027

* Access permit intervals that allow the use of dogs for hunting in the designated unit within the BHFPD during the 2025-2026 season:

- i. 3 permits: Dec. 26, 2025 – Jan. 15, 2026.
- ii. 3 permits: Jan. 16 – Feb. 5, 2026.
- iii. 3 permits: Feb. 6 – Feb. 26, 2026.
- iv. 3 permits: Feb. 27 – Mar. 19, 2026.
- v. 3 permits: Mar. 20 – Apr. 9, 2026.

* 2026-2027 season:

- i. 3 permits: Dec. 26, 2026 – Jan. 15, 2027.
- ii. 3 permits: Jan. 16 – Feb. 5, 2027.
- iii. 3 permits: Feb. 6 – Feb. 26, 2027.
- iv. 3 permits: Feb. 27 – Mar. 19, 2027.
- v. 3 permits: Mar. 20 – Apr. 9, 2027.

* *Recommended change to intervals and temporary access unit boundaries*

Outside Black Hills Fire Protection District:
December 26, 2025 - Dec. 25, 2026
December 26, 2026 – Dec. 25, 2027

Open unit: Statewide

Licenses: Unlimited (1 license per individual), residents only

Harvest Limit: BHFPD: 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions
Includes harvest using temporary access permits that allow the use of dogs

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. No person may harvest more than one (1) mountain lion in a season.
2. No person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of traps or bait.
3. Shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

4. No mountain lion with a spotted coat (kitten) and no mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion may be harvested.
5. A person may use an electronic call to hunt mountain lions.
6. All firearms, muzzleloaders, and archery equipment must meet the same minimum requirements as established in administrative rule for deer hunting.
7. The Game, Fish and Parks Commission, by resolution, may authorize the mountain lion season to extend beyond April 30.
8. The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is allowed:
 - a. Year-round outside of the BHFPD, and;
 - b. From December 26 to April 30 within the designated area of the BHFPD for a person with an access permit that will be issued by a random drawing.
9. A person using dog in the designated access permit area within the Black Hills Fire Protection District shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion they have a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition where the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation.
10. Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt thereafter until the hunt is completed.
11. All mountain lions harvested within the Black Hills must be presented to a department representative at the Rapid City Regional Office within 24 hours of harvest for inspection. Any person who harvests a mountain lion outside of the Black Hills region must present the mountain lion to a department representative within 24 hours of harvest.

Proposed changes from last year:

1. Modify § 41:06:61 to expand season dates and increase the unit size where hunting with dogs is allowed within the BHFPD (Figure 1), and no longer require access permits to hunt mountain lions in Custer State Park without the use of dogs. Hunting mountain lions in the designated area with the use of dogs will be allowed for a total of fifteen individuals with access permits, provided the harvest limit has not been met. Three access permits will be issued in each of five 21-day intervals, starting December 26, provided the harvest limit has not been met.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Three-year averaged population estimates using the Lincoln-Petersen (LP) method suggest the mountain lion population has remained within the population objective of 200-300 individuals since 2019 (Figure 2). While the most recent LP estimate suggests a population above objective, the 3-year average is a more reliable estimate because it mitigates potentially misleading inference resulting from sampling variation, especially when sample size are low as indicated by large confidence intervals in some years (e.g., 2017/18, 2024/25). The overall trend under the current management structure in the Black Hills and since 2009 suggests a stable population.

Dogs were used to aid the harvest of about one-quarter of mountain lions and success in Custer State Park with the use of dogs averaged 62%, while harvest without the use of dogs averaged 4% (Table 1). The recommended change to expand the area and time in which hunting with dogs may occur in the Black Hills is intended to promote additional mountain lion harvest in an area of the Black Hills that traditionally has relatively low mountain lion harvest (Figure 3). Harvest success with the use of dogs is expected to increase above the 62% average (Table 1).

While the population has remained relatively stable in the Black Hills, harvest has increased the past two hunting seasons, and this recommendation is expected to further increase harvest. Consistent harvest at the current rate may reduce the population. Department staff will continue to monitor mountain lion harvest and population trends to assess impacts of potentially increased harvest.

Table 1: Mountain lion harvest for the Black Hills Fire Protection District, Custer State Park, and Prairie with and without the use of dogs. Success rates, where available, are included in parentheses.

Year	Black Hills	Custer State Park		Prairie		Statewide		Total
	No Dogs	No Dogs	w/ Dogs	No Dogs	w/ Dogs	No Dogs	w/ Dogs	
2020/21	39 (3.6%)	0	9 (73.3%)	4	6	43	15	58
2021/22	34 (3.3%)	1	7 (66.0%)	2	8	37	15	52
2022/23	37 (3.4%)	0	7 (70.0%)	4	10	41	17	58
2023/24	42 (3.8%)	0	5 (46.7%)	2	6	44	11	55
2024/25	45 (3.9%)	0	7 (56.0%)	7	7	52	14	66
Average	39 (3.6%)	0.2	7 (62.4%)	4	7	43	14	58

Figure 1. Black Hills Fire Protection District boundary with recommended new unit where access permits will be available to harvest mountain lions with the use of dogs (black diagonal hashed lines).

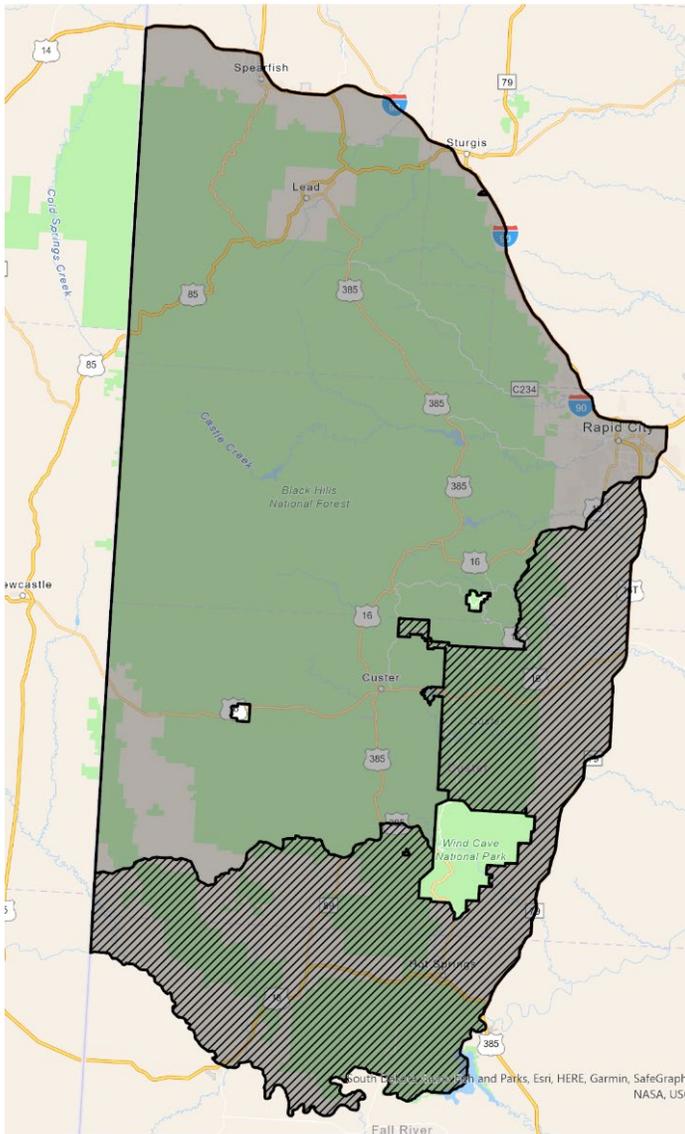


Figure 2. Mountain lion population objective (200-300), population estimates (dashed line), and inverse-variance weighted 3-year averaged estimates (solid line) for the Black Hills of South Dakota.

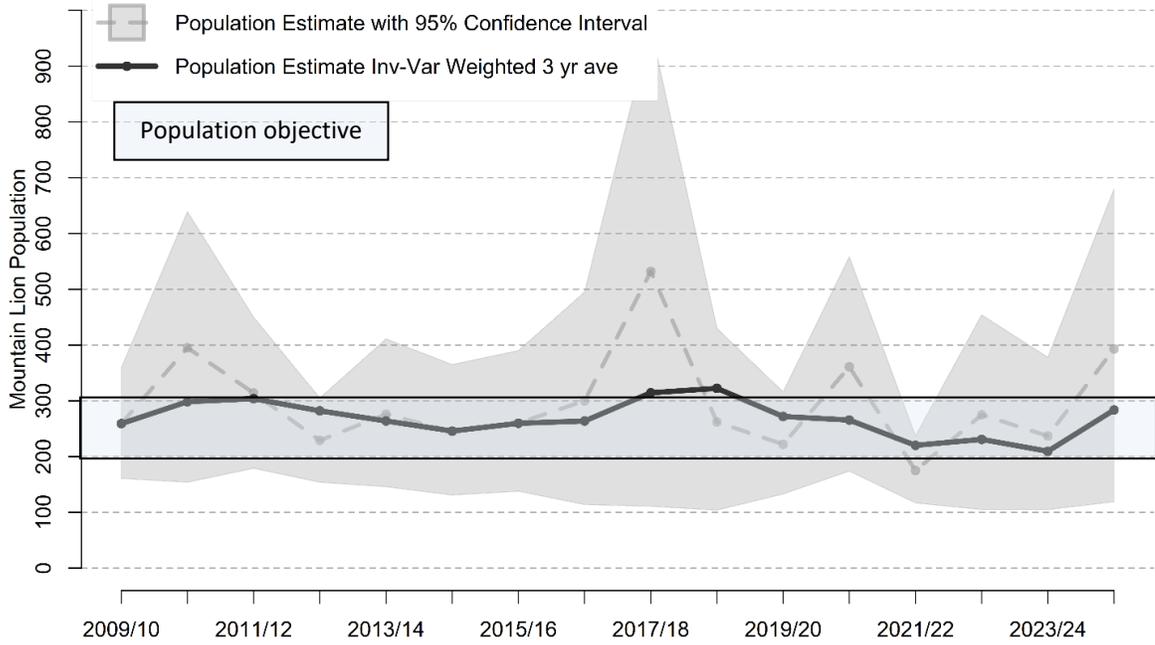
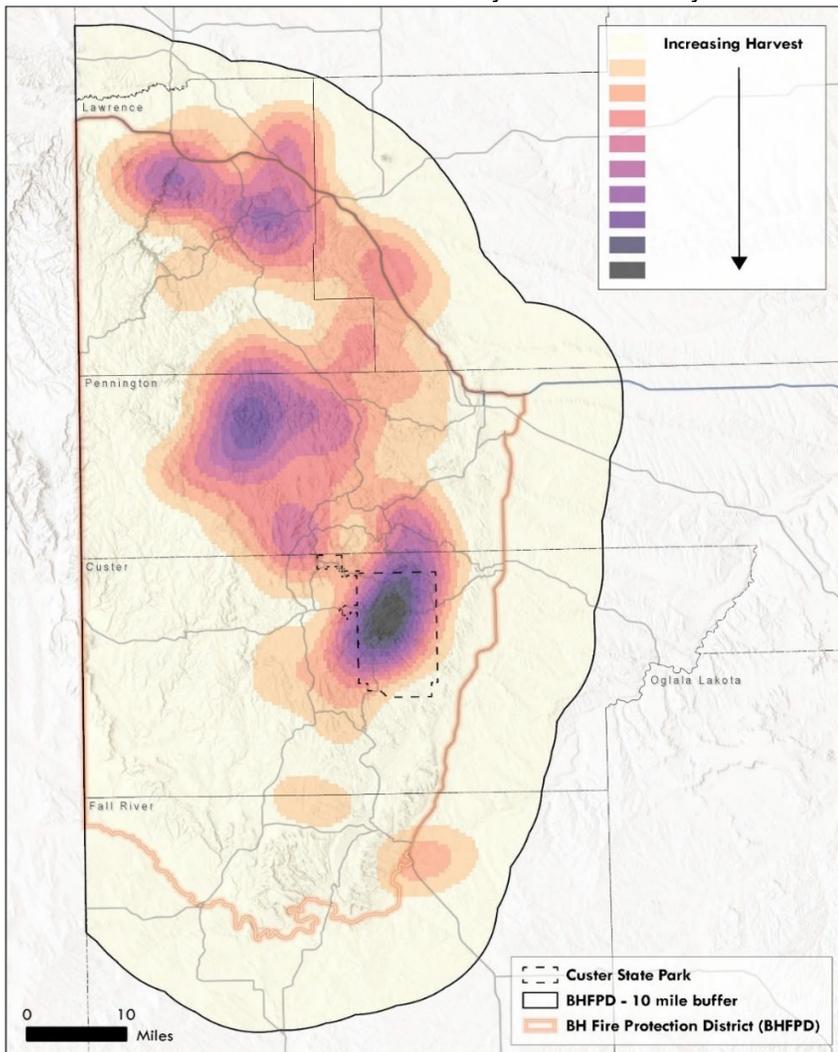


Figure 3. Harvest of mountain lions shaded by harvest intensity from 2020 to 2025.



DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:61:02. Black Hills Fire Protection District -- Harvest limit -- Season dates -- Season closure. The season harvest limit for the area within the Black Hills Fire Protection District is 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions. The mountain lion hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District is open December 26 through April 30, provided that the department shall close the mountain lion hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District if the harvest limit for that area is reached prior to April 30. ~~Custer State Park is closed to mountain lion hunting, except for 75 persons who possess a mountain lion license and a temporary access permit structured to include:~~

- ~~— (1) Four hunting intervals, each having 15 access permits in which hunting with dogs is not allowed; and~~
- ~~— (2) Five hunting intervals, each having three access permits in which hunting with dogs is allowed.~~

~~— Hunting in Custer State Park must begin with an interval that allows the use of dogs and must rotate every 14 days with an interval that does not allow the use of dogs, until the mountain lion season closes in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The temporary access permits are issued free of charge and may be issued by a random drawing.~~

Temporary access permits will be issued by a random drawing that permits an individual to hunt with the use of dogs in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. An individual must possess a mountain lion hunting license and temporary access permit to hunt with dogs in those portions of the Black Hills Fire Protection District within an area bounded as follows: beginning at the junction of State Highway 79 and U.S. Highway 16/East Catron Boulevard in Rapid City, then westerly along U.S. Highway 16 to its junction with the Black Hills National Forest boundary, then southerly along the Black Hills National Forest boundary to its junction with the South Rockerville Road, then southerly along the South Rockerville Road to its junction with State Highway 40, then easterly along State Highway 40 to its junction Pennington County Road 330 (Playhouse Road), then southerly to its junction with U.S. Highway 16A, then southerly along U.S. Highway 16 to its junction with the north boundary of Custer State Park, then westerly along the Custer State Park Boundary to its junction with the northwest corner of Custer State Park, then southerly along the west Custer State Park boundary and Wind Cave National Park boundary to U.S. Highway 385, then northerly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with State Highway 89, then southerly along State Highway 89 to its junction with 18 Mile Road (Forest Service 316), then westerly along 18 Mile Road to its junction with Pleasant Valley Road (Forest Service 715), then westerly along Pleasant Valley Road to its junction with Pilger Mountain Road/Dewey Road (Forest Service 769), then westerly along Pilger Mountain Road/Dewey Road to the South Dakota-Wyoming state line, then southerly along the state line its junction with the Cheyenne River, then easterly along the Black Hills Fire Protection District southern boundary to the southeast corner of the Black Hills Fire Protection District, then northerly along the Black Hills Fire Protection District eastern boundary to the point of the beginning.

Three temporary access permits will be available in each of five consecutive twenty one day intervals, beginning on December 26.

41:06:61:06. Application requirements -- License and season restrictions -- Special conditions -- Carcass check-in procedures. Only a resident may apply for a mountain lion hunting license. The following requirements, restrictions, special conditions, and procedures apply to all licenses issued under this chapter:

- (1) No person may harvest more than one mountain lion in a season;
- (2) No person may harvest or attempt to harvest a mountain lion with a spotted coat or any mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion;
- (3) No person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of traps or bait;

(4) The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is allowed only during those specified hunting intervals and specified area ~~in Custer State Park that allow the use of dogs;~~ within the Black Hills Fire Protection District for an individual with a temporary access permit; and year-round outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District;

(5) No person may release dogs on tracks indicating multiple mountain lions traveling together;

(6) ~~In Custer State Park~~ the Black Hills Fire Protection District, a person using dogs shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion the person has a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition in which the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation;

(7) Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt until the hunt is completed;

(8) A person may use any firearm, muzzleloader, or bow and arrow established by statute or administrative rule as legal implements for the taking of deer; and

(9) All mountain lions harvested must be presented to a department representative within twenty-four hours of harvest for inspection.

(10) Only residents of the state may apply for a license or an access permit.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, hunting opportunity with the use of dogs will be expanded.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? NA.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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Black Hills Beaver Action Plan 2025–2029



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2025-04

July 2025



This action plan will be used by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks staff on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated at least every five years. Plan updates and changes, however, may occur more frequently as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Action Plan Coordinator – Alex Solem, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

Action Plan Team – Trenton Haffley, Mike Klosowski, Andrew Norton, and Jacob Wolfe

Cover photo by Mike Klosowski, Castle Creek 2022. All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision from corrections, updates, and data analysis.

Recommended citation:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Division of Wildlife. 2025. Black Hills Beaver Action Plan, 2025–2029. Wildlife Division Report Number 2025-04. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, USA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A draft of the “Black Hills Beaver Action Plan, 2025 – 2029” was available for public comment from 11 May to 2 July, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

American beaver (*Castor canadensis*; hereafter, beaver) are an economically important furbearer valued for their pelt, castor, and other resources. Beaver occur in aquatic ecosystems throughout much of the continental United States, including South Dakota. Beaver are associated with specific features on the landscape such as perennial water (Novak 1987), food availability (Allen 1983), and topography with low gradients and flat flood plains (Retzer et al. 1956, Olson and Hubert and 1994).

Beaver are social animals that live in a family group typically consisting of a mating pair along with kits from the past two years. Dispersion from the family lodge occurs most often during the spring of the subadults second year. Dispersion distances from 2–17 km have been documented which are dependent on many factors including sex, population density and habitat (McNew 2005). Once a beaver reaches its new location at 2 years old, it is sexually mature and will breed that winter with a litter of 1–7 kits being born the next spring (Brenner 1964). Beaver range expansion is a slow progression due to these lifecycle and social structure factors.

Although ecological services provided by beaver are beneficial, their populations can reach a level where they exceed social tolerance. When populations reach this level, beaver can damage infrastructure, resulting in flooding or the destruction of valued trees or crops. Managing beaver populations requires the acknowledgement of their ecological value while also maintaining population levels that support recreational opportunity and minimize infrastructure damage.

Beaver serve as a vital role in ecosystems by altering wetland topography, vegetation, and other landscape features (Johnston 1994, Naimen et al. 1994, Wright et al. 2002, Rossell et al. 2005). These alterations provide positive impacts on stream hydrology by reducing sediment transportation, increasing water storage, reducing downstream nutrient transport, and attenuating high-flow events (Puttock et al. 2017, 2018, 2021; Westbrook et al. 2020), in addition to other biodiversity benefits (Rosell et al. 2005). Because of these positive environmental influences, beaver were selected as a Management Indicator Species (MIS) for the BHNF as part of the Phase II Amendment (USDA Forest Service 2006) to the revised 1997 Land and Resource Management Plan.

By the early 1900s, beaver were extirpated from many portions of their traditional range due to excessive harvest (Baker and Hill 2003). However, through the implementation of harvest protection measures and reintroduction efforts, beaver are generally abundant, and their populations are restored in much of their range (Rosell et al. 2005), including South Dakota. Nonetheless, more intensive survey efforts beginning in 2007 have indicated a decrease in beaver abundance and distribution within the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD; GFP and BHNF 2023).

The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) comprises approximately 1.2 million acres in western South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming. There are approximately 300,000 acres of non-National Forest System lands, mostly in private ownership, within the BHNF administrative boundary (USDA Forest Service 2005). Many of these inholdings occur adjacent to streams determined as suitable for beaver.

In the Black Hills of South Dakota, beaver were so numerous at the time of the Custer expedition that troops often had a difficult time crossing streams. By 1887, beaver populations had diminished to the point that a two-year closed season was implemented. The season

remained closed until 1909 when it was then re-opened, and beaver were protected from April 1 to November 15. However, the season was subsequently closed again in 1925, and only beaver causing damage were removed. In response, the South Dakota Game and Fish Department, now South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP), started a beaver relocation program. From 1936 to 1944, a total of 395 beaver were relocated to suitable sites across the northern Black Hills, a third of which were released at sites where a dam and lodge were artificially prepared by staff. By 1946 they were said to be well distributed throughout the northern Black Hills and the season was reopened. During that same time, 1,892 beaver were trapped and pelted across a 700 square mile area encompassing the northern Black Hills (Harris and Aldous 1946).

This is an action plan for all constituents interested in the conservation of beaver within the BHFPD of South Dakota. With careful coordination among stakeholders, South Dakota's trapping and outdoor heritage will be preserved for future generations. GFP will manage beaver populations within the BHFPD with scientific data and techniques to encourage occupation of suitable available habitats and to provide sustainable use and enjoyment within the social tolerance level for this species.

POPULATION DYNAMICS

Age-specific survival rates are major predictors in determining population growth in beaver (Boyle and Owens 2007). Survival rates are influenced by human induced mortality (Vanden Berge and Vohs 1977, Novak 1987, Wilson and Ruff 1999), habitat destruction (Henderson 1960) and environmental factors such as, drought, winter severity, and extreme water fluctuations (Henderson 1960, Novak 1987, Rutherford 1964). Outbreaks of diseases, such as tularemia, can affect beaver populations, locally (Novak 1987). Predation is generally not a significant cause of mortality (Boyla and Owens 2007). However, predation can have significant impacts on beaver populations locally (Baker and Hill 2003). Specific declines in the BHFPD are undetermined and more research is needed on this population to determine specific limiting factors and sources of mortality.

HABITAT SUITABILITY

Beaver are associated with features on the landscape including food availability, water conditions, vegetation, and stream gradient (Retzer et al. 1956, Slough and Sadleir 1977, Beiere and Berrett 1987, McComb et al. 1990, Fryxell 2001). Suitable habitat in the Black Hills include perennial water close to aspen (*Populus* spp.) or willow (*Salix* spp.) in areas of relatively shallow stream gradients (Beck et al. 2008). The northern portion of the Black Hills offers more suitable beaver habitat than the southern Black Hills (Beck et al. 2008).

POPULATION MONITORING

Historically, monitoring beaver in the BHFPD to collect baseline occupancy and abundance has been done via helicopter cache surveys in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) because of their MIS status. In addition, GFP annually conducts furbearer harvest surveys to estimate county-wide harvest in South Dakota. Harvest survey requests are sent electronically to all resident and non-resident furbearer license holders. Opportunistic reports of beaver and their sign are also used as indices to occupancy and distribution.

The first beaver MIS monitoring occurred October 22–26, 2007 (Table 1). The second round of beaver population monitoring occurred October 29 through November 2, 2012 (Table 1). The

third and most recent round of beaver population monitoring occurred October 23–31, 2023 (Table 1).

Survey methods follow the protocol prepared by Beck et al. (2008). This protocol identifies food caches as the indicator of both beaver abundance and distribution. Watersheds relating to forty-two, 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC12) are monitored in South Dakota (Figure 1). Hydrological Unit Codes are a nationwide system that delineate watersheds based on surface hydrologic features. Thirty-four of these are monitored for beaver abundance where all food caches observed are counted.

Table 1. Beaver abundance and distribution from 2007, 2012, and 2023 within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

Monitoring Indices	Year		
	2007	2012	2023
Number of caches observed	18	45	13
Distribution (% of watersheds occupied)	42.8%	54.8%	26.2%

There are two different strategies used when surveying HUC12s, abundance and distribution surveys. Once a food cache is observed in a distribution watershed, the survey proceeds to the next watershed because presence has been confirmed. Surveying HUC12s for abundance provides biologists with an estimate of the number of individuals within that given area, while surveying HUC12s for distribution provides biologists with an idea of how beaver are spread across the landscape. Abundance surveying includes the entire stretch of perennial stream within the HUC12. These watersheds surveyed for abundance are rated as having “high” and “moderate” habitat suitability. Abundance HUC12s were classified using habitat suitability modeling to stratify sampling effort (Beck et al. 2008). Twelve HUC12s are only surveyed for beaver distribution.

Reports of beaver are collected to help determine occupancy and distribution throughout the BHFPD. Reports of beaver are categorized based on the primary method used to identify the animal as beaver: sighting, sign, incidental trap, and vehicle kill. Sightings are based upon the actual observation of a beaver. Reports of sign are based on, but not limited to, tracks, slides, castor mounds, dens, circular or vertical chewing of trees, beaver dams, and food caches. Incidental trap reports are of beaver that were incidentally caught while targeting other species. Vehicle kills are reports of beaver found dead on the road or hit by a vehicle. A report can be of an individual animal or a group of animals.

Certain criteria are used to determine the reliability of each report:

- A **verified report** is one of a carcass or live-captured individual(s) or where evidence exists that proves the report was a beaver. Photos where the animal or sign can be clearly identified as a beaver may also be considered verified. Knowledgeable reviewers may include agency staff familiar with beaver or experts.
- A **probable report** is a sighting or presence of sign not accompanied by a photo but is observed by someone with beaver experience and knowledge.
- An **unverified report** is a report with no evidence to support or reject the report.

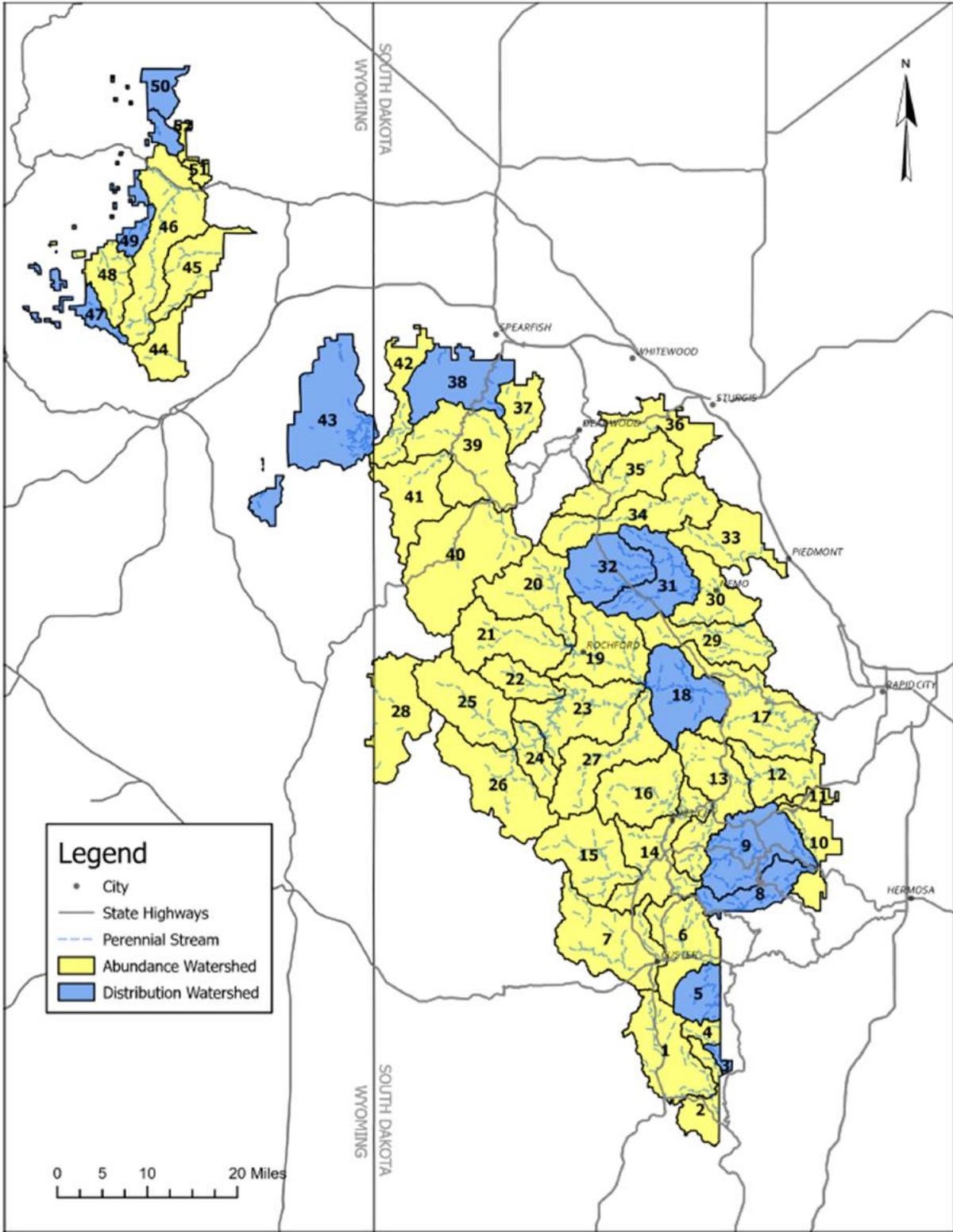


Figure 1. Fifty-two, 12-digit watersheds sampled for beaver abundance and distribution, forty-two of which are located and monitored in South Dakota.

HARVEST STRATEGY

Beaver populations are managed to maintain a level within social tolerance of the damage they might cause while allowing for the use of their carcass, primarily their valued pelt. Season length (Erickson 1981) and market prices influence beaver harvest more than the beaver population (Novak 1987). Harvest can negatively influence beaver population density (Nordstrom 1972, Parsons and Brown 1978); however, reproduction can replace annual mortality when habitat is adequate (Novak 1987).

Historically within the BHFPD, beaver trapping was open from January 1 to March 31 on USFS lands and on non-USFS lands from November 1 to April 30. Non-residents could only trap beaver from December 1 to March 15 within the constraints described above. Season dates were put in place to bridge the gap between a restrictive season on public lands in the Black Hills and unlimited seasons across the rest of South Dakota. These restrictive dates allowed trappers the recreational opportunity of fur harvesting and allowed them to address potential depredation issues. As of 2025, beaver trapping within the BHFPD was closed.

At low densities, a conservative approach to harvest is needed to sustain beaver in the BHFPD. When surveys indicate under an 80% distribution of beaver in HUC12 watersheds, a modified trapping season is recommended (Table 2). However, the trapping season can be closed if managers determine beaver abundance is too low to offer trapping opportunity. In addition, the trapping season will remain closed within the BHFPD if relocation efforts to increase beaver abundance are occurring. A less restrictive season can occur when distribution is 80% or greater in HUC12 watersheds (Table 2).

Table 2. Black Hills Fire Protection District harvest strategies for beaver trapping season recommendations, 2025–2029.

Monitoring Indices	BHFPD ^A Season Recommendation	Wildlife Damage Response
≥ 80% distribution of watersheds occupied by beaver	Option for trapping season open to private and public lands. Non-resident trappers may be restricted in their trapping dates.	Depredation issues are addressed with technical advice from GFP Wildlife Damage staff (WDS). Lethal removal can occur if WDS staff deem necessary, or trap and transfer may occur.
< 80% distribution of watersheds occupied by beaver	Option for restricted trapping season, including harvest limits, and open to private lands, but closed on public lands. Non-resident trappers may be restricted in their trapping dates. Trapping season may be closed. The season will remain closed if relocation efforts to increase beaver abundance occur.	

^A Black Hills Fire Protection District as outlined in statute, [34-35-15](#).

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

Beaver pond water, chew trees, and can negatively affect utilities, such as culverts. These actions can cause significant damage to private property and public infrastructure. GFP employs 28 Wildlife Damage Specialists (WDS) statewide in part to assist private landowners manage damage caused by beaver. Outside the Black Hills, where most of the land is privately owned, lethal removal is used to address requests for service involving damage or issues caused by beaver. In the Black Hills, WDS respond to depredation requests by providing technical advice such as recommending fencing or other deterrents to prevent damage. Lethal removal can occur on a case-by-case basis, typically when infrastructure is threatened, and other tools may cause undue delay. Where beaver threaten culverts or other infrastructure, devices such as a “Beaver Deceiver” are used to prevent water levels from reaching a level where they cause damage. Hog paneling or other welded wire paneling is used to block the mouth of culverts and prevent beaver from plugging culverts. In situations where deterrents or technical advice fail, or there is a need for supplemental beaver within remote portions of the Black Hills, beaver can be live trapped and relocated to suitable habitat.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

South Dakota will manage beaver populations within the BHFPD with scientific data and techniques to encourage occupation of suitable available habitats, and to provide sustainable use and enjoyment within the social tolerance level for this species.

Objective 1: Determine the status of beaver populations.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Annually monitor distribution and abundance of beaver throughout HUC 12 watersheds within the BBNF using various survey methods (i.e., ground-based and/or aerial observations) within the calendar year.
 - 1.1.1 Recommend trapping season harvest strategies, based on survey results (see Table 2).
- 1.2 Annually collect and summarize beaver reports of signs and sightings to improve knowledge of distribution and abundance using Survey 123; refine reporting process as needed.
- 1.3 Annually collect and summarize beaver depredation reports to improve knowledge of distribution and document abundance; refine reporting process as needed.
 - 1.3.1. Relocation of nuisance beaver to suitable habitat, when possible.

Objective 2: Coordinate with private landowners and conservation partners to promote the restoration of streams and riparian habitat.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Identify priority areas for habitat restoration projects based on beaver habitat suitability within the BHFPD.

- 2.2** Restore degraded beaver habitat through the construction of low-cost-low-tech devices such as Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs) or Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS) (Appendix 1), as well as planting native hardwood species such as willow and aspen.
- 2.2.1.** Increase BDA restoration monitoring efforts (e.g., habitat succession, water quality, beaver presence) with assistance from conservation partners. Strive for the influence of 2 miles of stream, annually, through these restoration efforts.
- 2.2.2.** Document locations of beaver habitat improvement projects to monitor effectiveness.
- 2.3.** Continue to work with interested private landowners to restore or enhance stream and riparian habitat, including adjacent grassland and forest habitats, across South Dakota, including the Black Hills, that support a myriad of wildlife species.

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APPENDIX

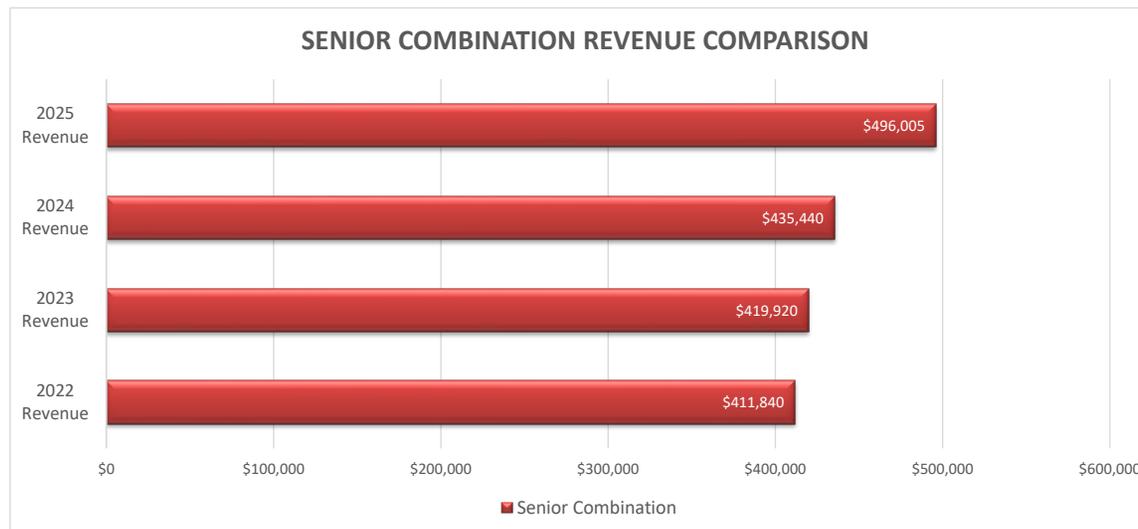
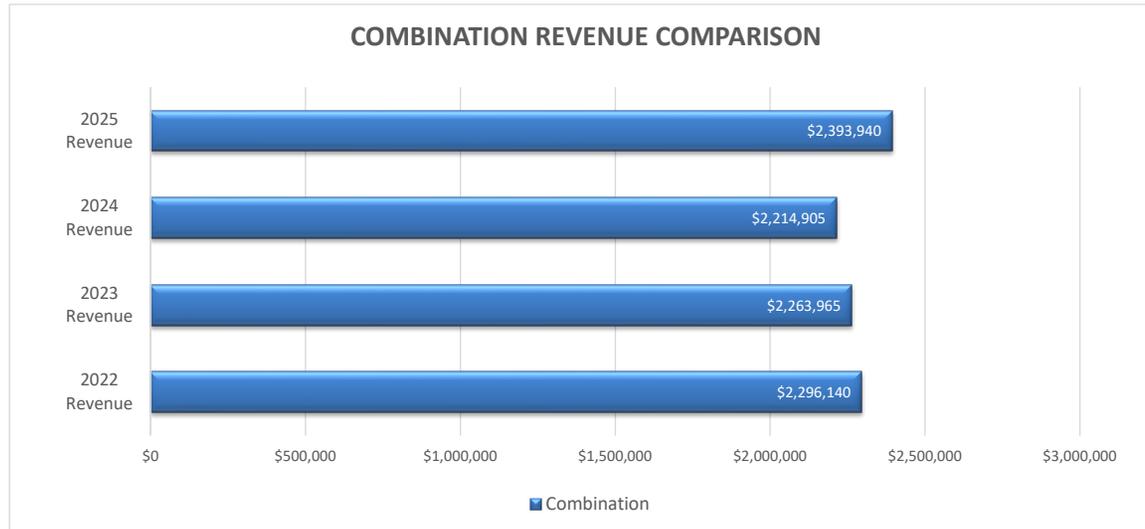
Appendix 1. Photo of a Beaver Dam Analogue installed in the Black Hills of South Dakota.



COMBINATION LICENSES

December 15 - June 30

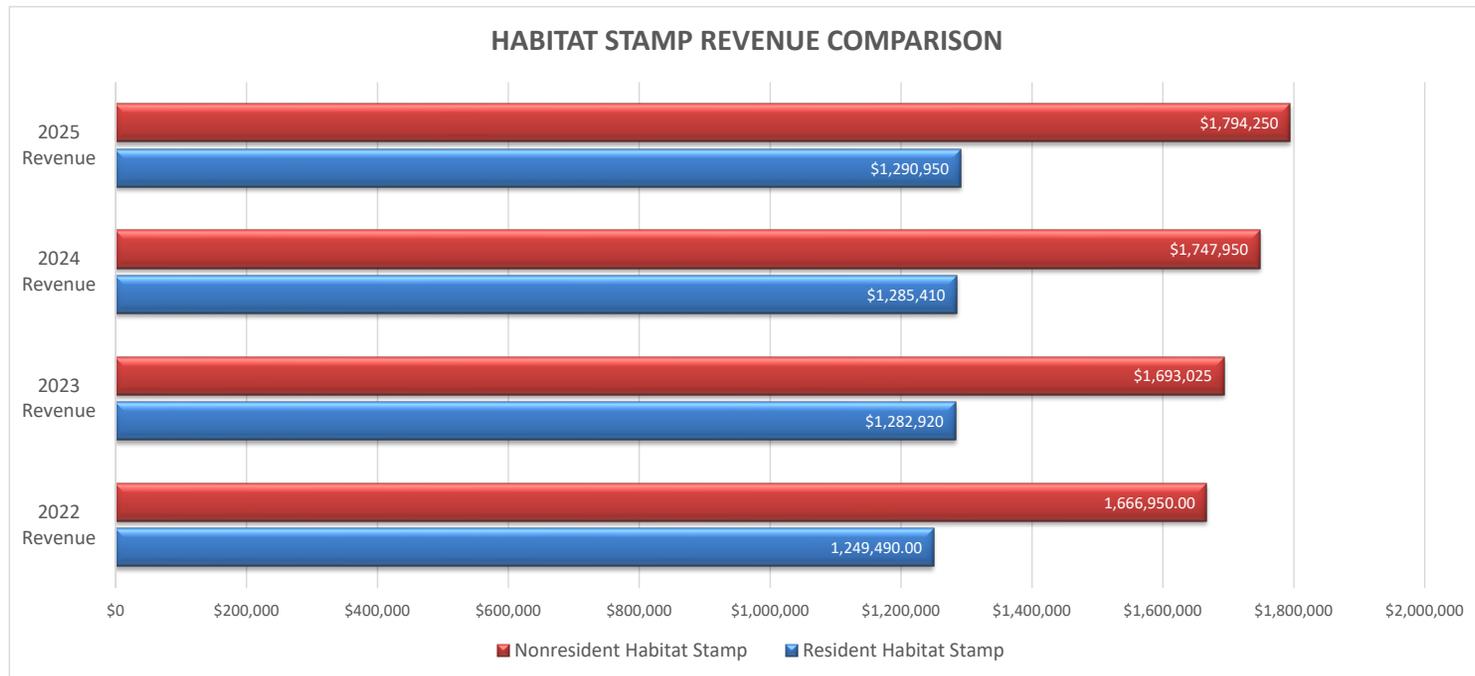
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Combination	41,748	41,163	40,271	41,061	39,899	\$2,393,940	(372)	(1,162)	\$179,035	\$135,603	-3%
Senior Combination	10,296	10,498	10,886	10,560	11,535	\$496,005	649	975	\$60,565	\$73,605	9%
Combination License Totals	52,044	51,661	51,157	51,621	51,434	\$2,889,945	277	(187)	\$239,600	\$209,208	0%



HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - June 30

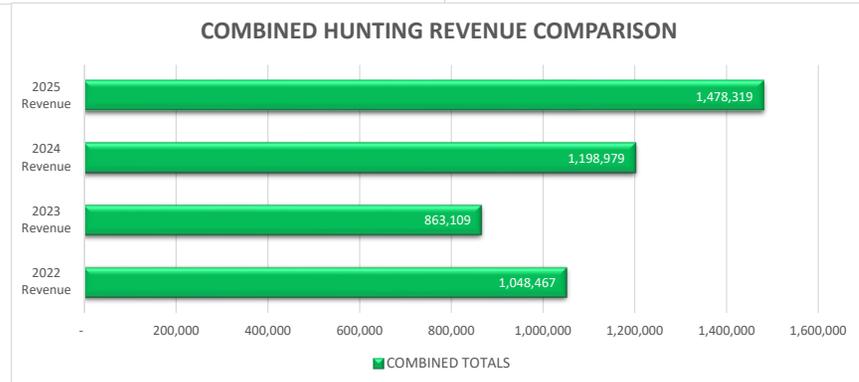
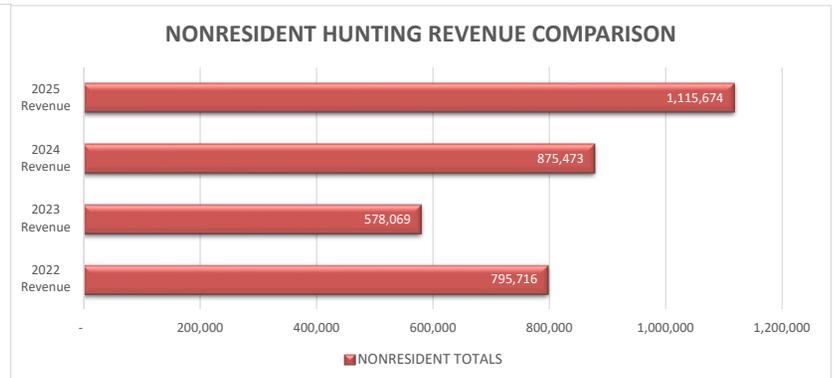
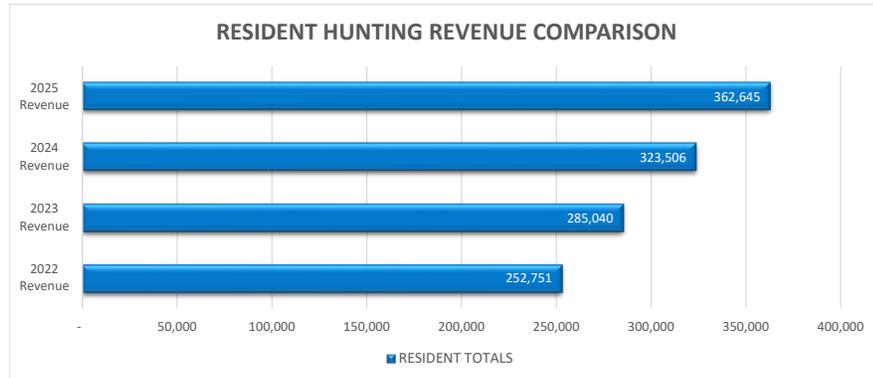
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Resident Habitat Stamp	124,949	128,292	128,541	127,261	129,095	\$1,290,950	554	1,834	\$30,470	\$100,888	1%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	66,678	67,721	69,918	68,106	71,770	\$1,794,250	1,852	3,664	\$74,080	\$146,573	5%
Habitat Stamp Totals	191,627	196,013	198,459	195,366	200,865	\$3,085,200	2,406	5,499	\$104,550	\$247,462	3%



SMALL GAME LICENSES

December 15 - June 30

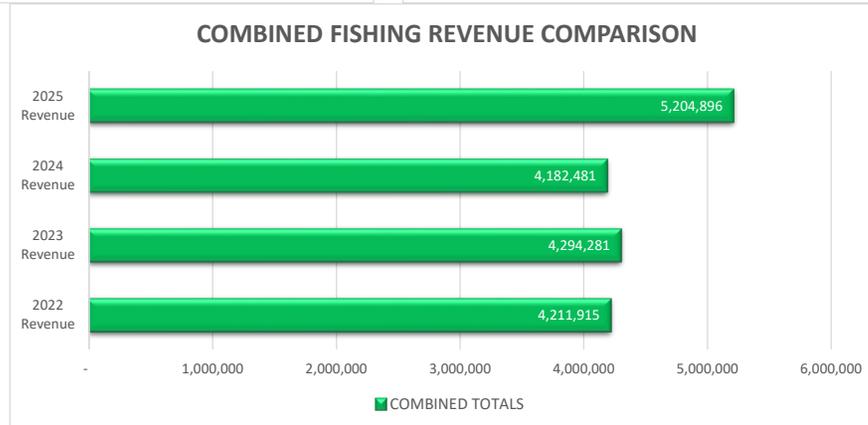
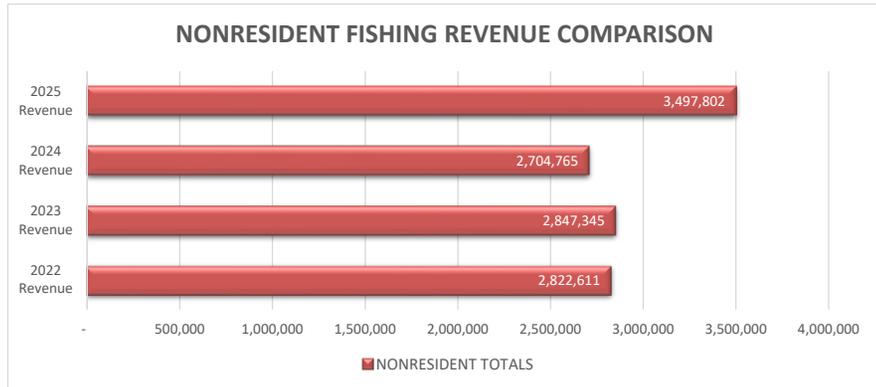
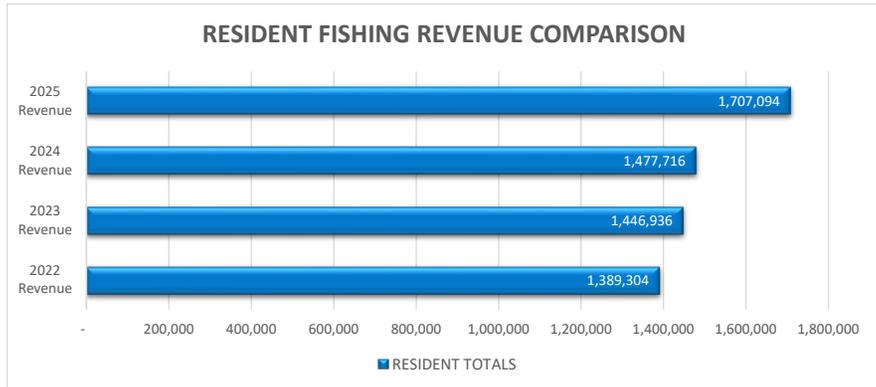
License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change	
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
Small Game	3,040	4,865	6,030	4,645	6,552	\$235,872	522	1,907	\$36,882	\$82,587	41%
1-Day Small Game	158	100	208	155	201	\$3,015	(7)	46	\$519	\$1,151	29%
Youth Small Game	1,602	1,416	1,520	1,513	1,317	\$6,585	(203)	(196)	(\$1,015)	(\$2,348)	-13%
Furbearer	3,076	2,853	3,029	2,986	3,170	\$98,270	141	184	\$7,400	\$8,690	6%
Predator/Varmint	1,603	1,493	1,283	1,460	1,053	\$6,318	(230)	(407)	(\$97)	(\$980)	-28%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	281	339	209	276	118	\$590	(91)	(158)	(\$455)	(\$792)	-57%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	8,165	4,293	3,218	5,225	2,399	\$11,995	(819)	(2,826)	(\$4,095)	(\$14,132)	-54%
RESIDENT TOTALS	17,925	15,359	15,497	16,260	14,810	\$362,645	-687	-1,292	\$39,139	\$74,176	-7.95%
Small Game	4,609	2,950	5,220	4,260	5,641	\$801,022	421	1,381	\$169,402	\$285,602	32%
Youth Small Game	334	204	355	298	368	\$3,680	13	70	\$130	\$703	24%
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	204	103	172	160	192	\$9,600	20	32	\$1,688	\$2,255	20%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	1,211	822	1,004	1,012	1,210	\$116,160	206	198	\$39,856	\$39,223	20%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	102	64	62	76	66	\$9,636	4	(10)	\$2,134	\$440	-13%
Furbearer	3	2	5	3	1	\$325	(4)	(2)	(\$1,050)	(\$592)	-70%
Predator/Varmint	2,937	3,112	3,148	3,066	3,391	\$155,986	243	325	\$30,066	\$33,359	11%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	16	79	32	42	113	\$565	81	71	\$405	\$353	167%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	508	3,740	4,226	2,825	3,740	\$18,700	(486)	915	(\$2,430)	\$4,577	32%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	9,924	11,076	14,224	11,741	14,722	\$1,115,674	498	2,981	\$240,201	\$365,921	25.39%
COMBINED TOTALS	27,849	26,435	29,721	28,002	29,532	\$1,478,319	(189)	1,530	\$279,340	\$440,098	5.47%



FISHING LICENSES

December 15 - June 30

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
1-Day Fishing	2,589	3,237	3,581	3,136	3,558	\$35,580	(23)	422	\$6,932	\$10,495	13%
Annual Fishing	43,885	45,552	46,427	45,288	47,224	\$1,463,944	797	1,936	\$163,988	\$195,880	4%
Senior Fishing	11,651	12,132	12,426	12,070	12,210	\$207,570	(216)	140	\$58,458	\$62,734	1%
RESIDENT TOTALS	58,125	60,921	62,434	60,493	62,992	\$1,707,094	558	2,499	\$229,378	\$269,109	4.13%
1-Day Fishing	18,961	18,826	18,365	18,717	13,717	\$356,642	(4,648)	(5,000)	\$62,802	\$57,165	-27%
3-Day Fishing	11,065	11,379	10,499	10,981	12,552	\$564,840	2,053	1,571	\$176,377	\$158,543	14%
Annual Fishing	31,490	31,718	30,186	31,131	32,204	\$2,576,320	2,018	1,073	\$553,858	\$490,521	3%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	61,516	61,923	59,050	60,830	58,473	\$3,497,802	(577)	(2,357)	\$793,037	\$706,228	-3.87%
COMBINED TOTALS	119,641	122,844	121,484	121,323	121,465	\$5,204,896	(19)	142	\$1,022,415	\$975,337	0.12%



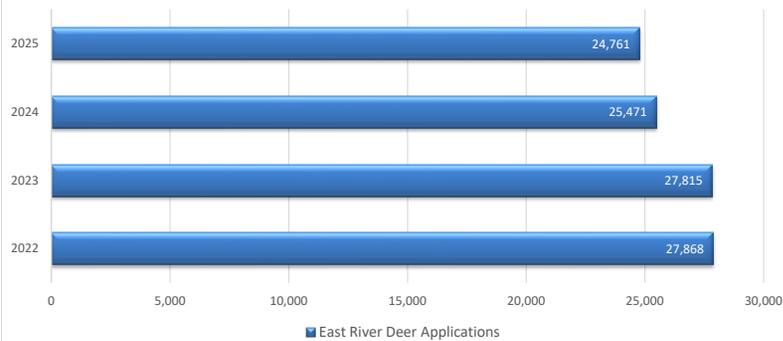
2025 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type						+/- Licenses			+/- Revenue			% Change
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg	
East River Deer	22,051	22,068	20,697	22,060	17,313	\$737,913	(3384)	(4747)	(\$25,877)	(\$55,650)	-22%	
Res West River Deer	14,706	13,907	13,427	14,307	12,791	\$600,888	(636)	(1516)	\$26,058	(\$895)	-11%	
NR West River Deer	1,397	1,377	1,342	1,387	1,194	\$424,775	(148)	(193)	\$49,199	\$42,152	-14%	
Resident Black Hills Deer	3,505	2,950	2,948	3,228	2,950	\$132,750	2	(278)	\$14,830	\$3,650	-9%	
NR Black Hills Deer	282	236	236	259	236	\$88,500	0	(23)	\$21,004	\$14,426	-9%	
Muzzleloader Deer	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	\$45,000	0	0	\$5,000	\$5,000	0%	
Resident Refuge Deer	131	135	127	133	119	\$5,355	(8)	(14)	\$4,455	(\$59)	-11%	
NR Refuge Deer	12	14	14	13	12	\$4,500	(2)	(1)	(\$750)	(\$375)	-8%	
Custer Deer	73	20	20	47	25	\$3,900	5	(22)	\$780	(\$3,354)	-46%	
Resident Archery Deer	6,306	8,671	8,192	7,489	5,845	\$245,510	(2347)	(1644)	(\$57,270)	(\$41,037)	-22%	
NR Archery Deer Public/Private	0	2,200	2,183	n/a	2,194	\$822,750	11	n/a	\$198,412	n/a	n/a	

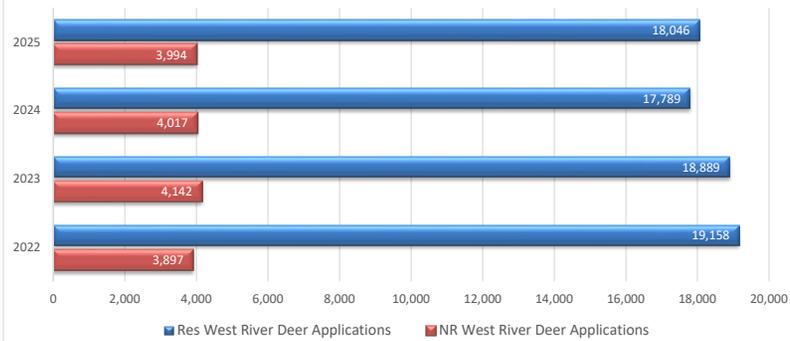
1st Draw Applications Submitted

East River Deer Applications	27,868	27,815	25,471	27,051	24,761		(710)	(2,290)			-8%
Res West River Deer Applications	19,158	18,889	17,789	18,612	18,046		257	(566)			-3%
NR West River Deer Applications	3,897	4,142	4,017	4,019	3,994		(23)	(25)			-1%
Resident Black Hills Deer Applications	12,138	12,017	11,409	11,855	11,379		(30)	(476)			-4%
NR Black Hills Deer Applications	1,802	1,955	1,858	1,872	2,023		165	151			8%
Muzzleloader Deer Applications	4,420	4,279	4,169	4,289	3,950		(219)	(339)			-8%
Resident Refuge Deer Applications	440	433	424	432	378		(46)	(54)			-13%
NR Refuge Deer Applications	114	127	126	122	133		7	11			9%
Custer Deer	1,145	1,064	1,022	1,077	1,197		175	120			
NR Archery Deer Public/Private	0	2,827	3,463	2,097	3,264		(199)	1,167			

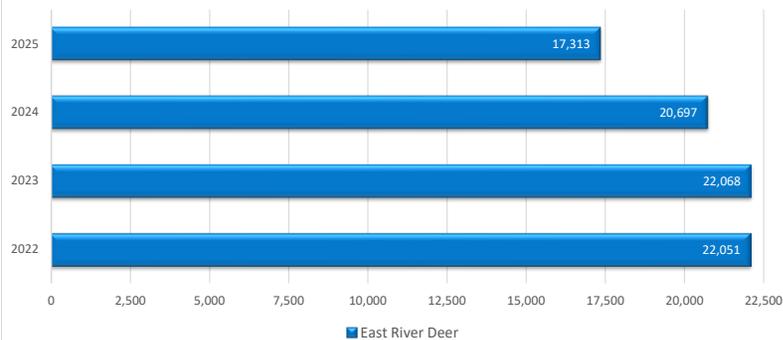
EAST RIVER DEER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED



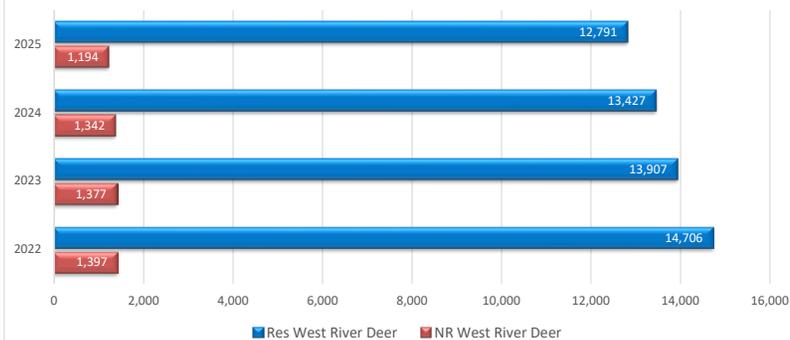
WEST RIVER DEER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED



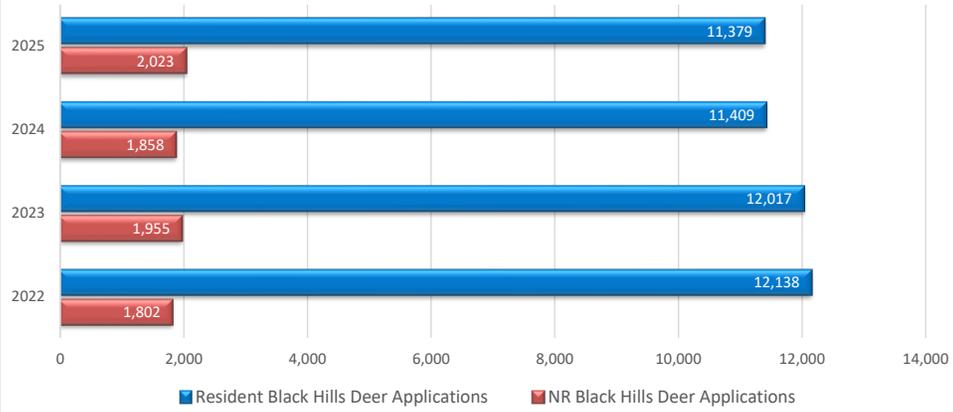
EAST RIVER DEER LICENSES ISSUED



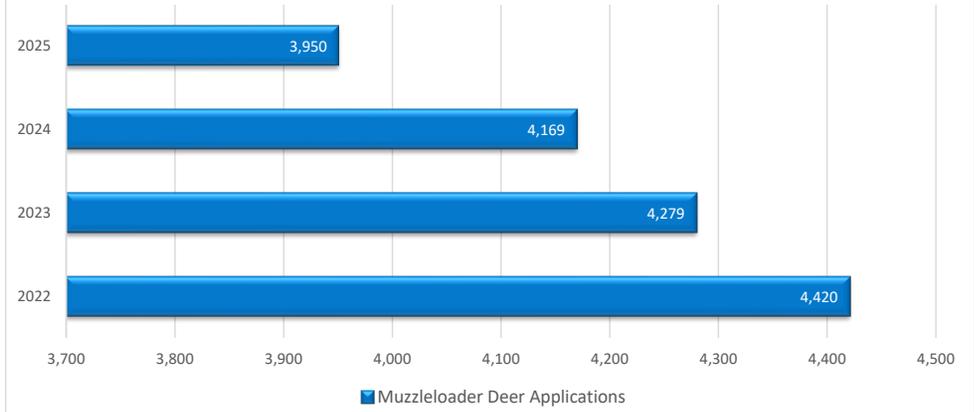
WEST RIVER DEER LICENSES ISSUED



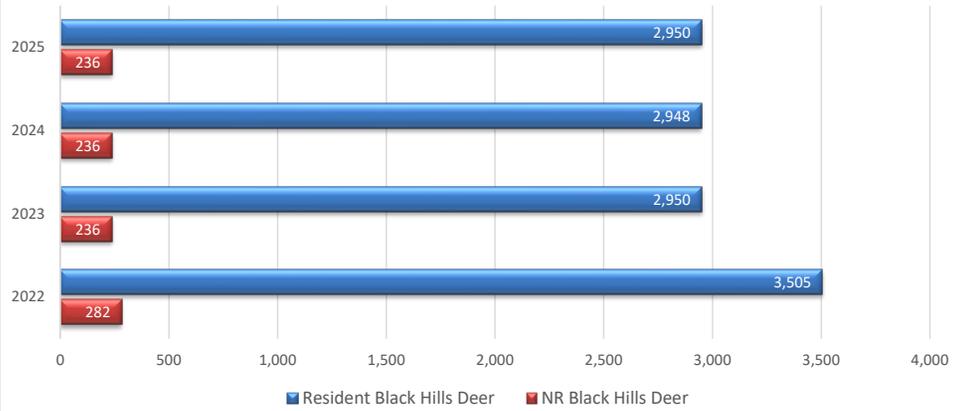
BLACK HILLS DEER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED



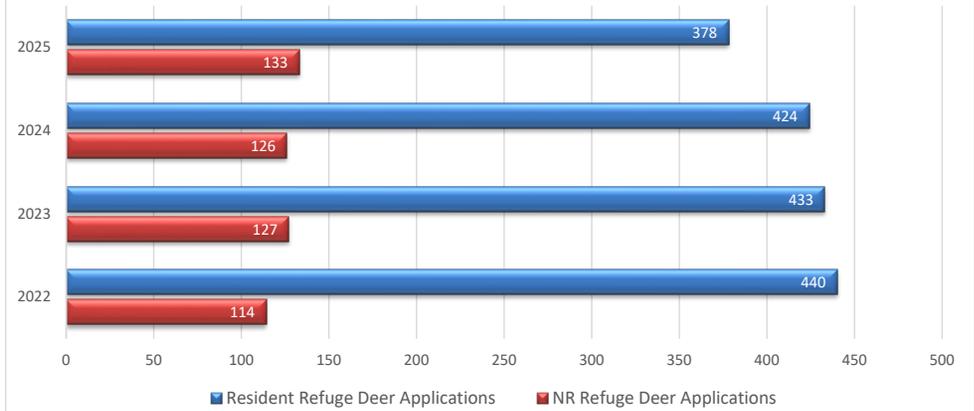
MUZZLELOADER DEER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED



BLACK HILLS DEER LICENSES ISSUED



REFUGE DEER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED



**FIRST AMENDMENT TO LEASE
FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES
CITY OF FORT PIERRE
ON LAKE SHARPE
STANLEY COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

THIS FIRST AMENDMENT TO LEASE is entered in to on _____, 2025 by and between the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (“State”) and the City of Pierre (“City”).

WHEREAS, the State and City entered a lease on October 17, 2003 for the City’s management of the Fort Pierre waterfront property for parks and recreation purposes containing 19.22 acres, more or less for a term of twenty-five (25) years; and,

WHEREAS, the lease property includes waterfront access and a recreational trail which City maintains; and,

WHEREAS, the recreational trail has been interrupted by the construction of a marina inlet, over which the City plans to construct a pedestrian bridge; and,

WHEREAS, the City has requested an extension of the lease term to secure the necessary grant funding for the construction of the pedestrian bridge; and,

WHEREAS, the State is supportive of the bridge project and agrees to extend the lease for an additional twenty (20) years.

NOW THEREFORE, the LEASE FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES CITY OF FORT PIERRE ON LAKE SHARPE is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section 3, “Term”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

3. TERM

The Recreation Area is hereby leased for a term of forty-five (45) years beginning on September 1, 2003 and ending on December 31, 2048, or until terminated under conditions of this lease.

2. Except as modified by this FIRST AMENDMENT, all terms and conditions set forth in the LEASE FOR PARK AND RECREATION PURPOSES CITY OF FORT PIERRE ON LAKE SHARPE dated October 17, 2003 shall remain in full force and effect.

END OF AGREEMENT TEXT

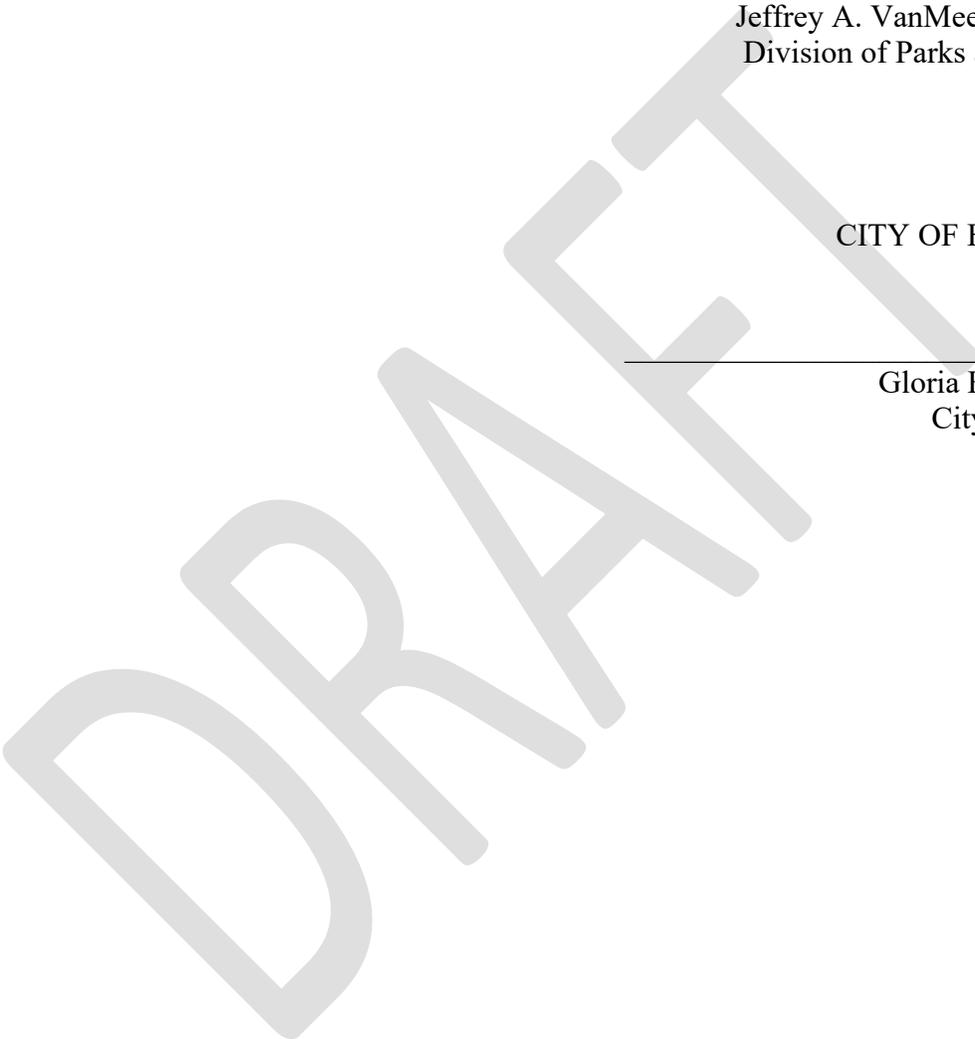
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunder subscribed their names this _____ day of _____, 2025.

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

Jeffrey A. VanMeeteren, Director
Division of Parks and Recreation
(STATE)

CITY OF FORT PIERRE

Gloria Hanson, Mayor
City of Fort Pierre
(CITY)





— Marina





June Camping Report

6/1/2024 - 6/30/2024	6/1/2025 - 6/30/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
77935	76122

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%	
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	418	691	65%	
	Pickrel Lake Recreation Area	1528	1273	-17%	
	Roy Lake State Park	1925	1922	0%	
	Sica Hollow State Park	30	33	10%	
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	95	64	-33%	
	Fisher Grove State Park	232	183	-21%	
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	438	464	6%	
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	673	650	-3%	
2	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	352	403	14%	
	Hartford Beach State Park	1466	1441	-2%	
	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	423	409	-3%	
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	1412	1420	1%	
3	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	376	385	2%	
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	1887	1819	-4%	
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	1902	1972	4%	
4	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	198	158	-20%	
	Lake Herman State Park	1093	1155	6%	
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	1741	1548	-11%	
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	577	565	-2%	
5	Burke Lake Recreation Area	3	7	133%	
	Buryanek Recreation Area	641	597	-7%	
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	3	4	33%	
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	3	26	767%	
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	443	378	-15%	
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	2146	1804	-16%	
6	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	873	1192	37%	
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	2059	2131	3%	
	Palisades State Park	1656	1961	18%	
7	Newton Hills State Park	1643	1567	-5%	
	Union Grove State Park	249	251	1%	
8	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	2573	2349	-9%	
	Clay County Park	312	198	-37%	
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	9040	9014	0%	
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	1035	951	-8%	
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	5	21	320%	
	Springfield Recreation Area	306	276	-10%	
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	3	6	100%	
	9	North Point Recreation Area	2316	2437	5%
North Wheeler Recreation Area		259	299	15%	
Pease Creek Recreation Area		540	469	-13%	
Randall Creek Recreation Area		1566	1407	-10%	
South Shore Lakeside Use Area		59	44	-25%	
Star Valley Lakeside Use Area		18	9	-50%	
Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area		128	116	-9%	
White Swan Lakeside Use Area		47	37	-21%	
10		Farm Island Recreation Area	1891	1568	-17%
		West Bend Recreation Area	1995	1859	-7%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	814	821	1%	
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	3344	3366	1%	
11	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	398	397	0%	
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	258	266	3%	
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	7	8	14%	
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	2415	2403	0%	
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	40	43	8%	
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	344	382	11%	
12	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	3	0	-100%	
	West Pollock Recreation Area	346	318	-8%	
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	1697	1752	3%	
	Bear Butte State Park	226	143	-37%	
	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	70		
13	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	86	62	-28%	
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	1549	1525	-2%	
	Shadehill Recreation Area	1955	1789	-8%	
14	Custer State Park	10982	10532	-4%	
	Angostura Recreation Area	4288	4106	-4%	
15	Bailey's Lakeside Use Area	0	14		
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	605	592	-2%	
	Total	77935	76122	-2%	



June YTD Camping

1/1/2024 - 6/30/2024	1/1/2025 - 6/30/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
138806	133299

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	948	892	-6%
	Pickereel Lake Recreation Area	2383	2076	-13%
	Roy Lake State Park	3224	3196	-1%
	Sica Hollow State Park	58	74	28%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	156	120	-23%
	Fisher Grove State Park	386	333	-14%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	865	887	3%
2	Mina Lake Recreation Area	1239	1304	5%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	614	656	7%
	Hartford Beach State Park	2630	2562	-3%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	702	665	-5%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	2583	2581	0%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	619	585	-5%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	3081	2944	-4%
4	Oakwood Lakes State Park	3346	3408	2%
	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	198	277	40%
5	Lake Herman State Park	2140	2190	2%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	3081	2756	-11%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	1123	1067	-5%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	46	24	-48%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	1448	1251	-14%
6	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	62	45	-27%
	Elm Creek Lakeside Use Area	44	63	43%
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	903	816	-10%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	3987	3194	-20%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	2607	2762	6%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	4311	4388	2%
7	Palisades State Park	3227	3979	23%
	Newton Hills State Park	3641	3526	-3%
8	Union Grove State Park	534	551	3%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	4646	4398	-5%
9	Clay County Park	756	554	-27%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	15231	14616	-4%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	1817	1792	-1%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	23	88	283%
	Springfield Recreation Area	544	553	2%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	39	29	-26%
	North Point Recreation Area	3906	3787	-3%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	527	528	0%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	954	769	-19%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	2523	2229	-12%
10	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	122	90	-26%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	25	9	-64%
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	238	262	10%
	White Swan Lakeside Use Area	77	77	0%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	3176	2769	-13%
	West Bend Recreation Area	4054	3467	-14%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	1270	1248	-2%
11	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	5629	5514	-2%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	600	574	-4%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	457	401	-12%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	28	21	-25%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	3745	3635	-3%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	71	84	18%
	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	2	N/A
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	472	566	20%
	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	3	8	167%
	West Pollock Recreation Area	651	663	2%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	2292	2360	3%
12	Bear Butte State Park	407	325	-20%
	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	91	N/A
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	146	120	-18%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	2875	2807	-2%
13	Shadehill Recreation Area	3091	2853	-8%
	Custer State Park	19542	18832	-4%
14	Angostura Recreation Area	7490	7063	-6%
	Bailey's Lakeside Use Area	0	25	N/A
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	1100	913	-17%
Total		138806	133299	-4%

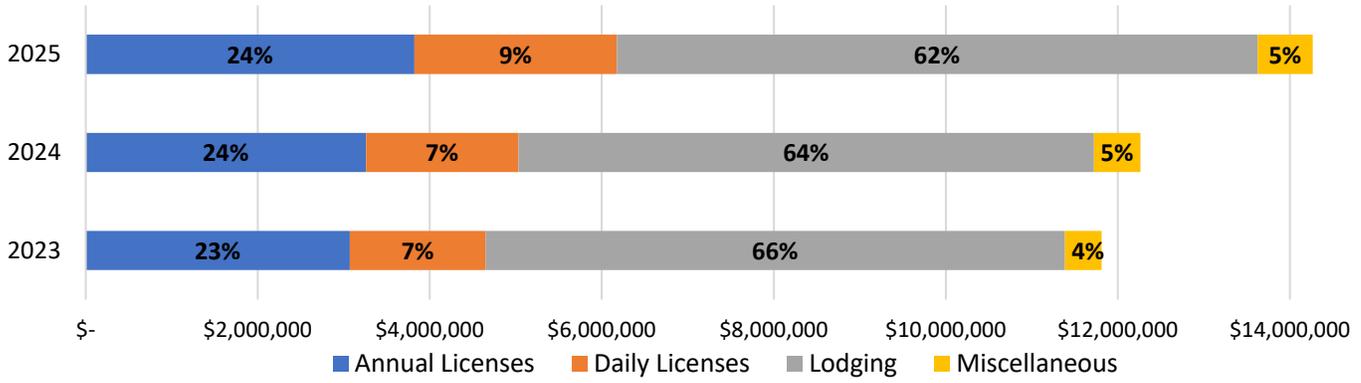
**Division of Parks and Recreation
June 2025 Revenue by Item**

	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	16,544	\$ 595,588	11,346	\$ 436,613	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	3,632	\$ 210,455	
Resident Double	8,330	\$ 449,802	8,614	\$ 510,982	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	1,446	\$ 128,742	
Transferable	662	\$ 52,986	565	\$ 50,298	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	1,835	\$ 27,525	1,514	\$ 30,190	
2nd Annual	2,472	\$ 44,502	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	29,843	\$ 1,170,403	27,117	\$ 1,367,280	17%
Resident Daily License	25,085	\$ 200,679	12,925	\$ 128,634	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	8,931	\$ 133,845	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	125	\$ 2,505	280	\$ 5,590	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	5,713	\$ 22,852	5,389	\$ 26,945	
Motorcoach Permit	2,607	\$ 7,821	10,111	\$ 32,608	
CSP 7 Day Pass	40,911	\$ 818,224	41,430	\$ 1,031,440	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	3,099	\$ 61,980	4,681	\$ 93,140	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	-	\$ 1,600	15	\$ 1,500	
Festival Daily			2,427	\$ 11,475	
Daily Licenses	77,540	\$ 1,115,661	86,189	\$ 1,465,177	31%
Licenses	107,384	\$ 2,286,064	113,306	\$ 2,832,457	24%
Camping Services		\$ 1,035,849		\$ 1,244,183	20%
Pet Fees	204	\$ 2,039	278	\$ 2,780	36%
LODGING		\$ 1,037,888		\$ 1,246,963	20%
Picnic Shelters		\$ 3,170		\$ 2,640	-17%
Boat Rentals		\$ 2,716		\$ 4,292	58%
Firewood	9,495	\$ 56,973	7,960	\$ 53,425	-6%
Gift Card	-	\$ 1,859	16	\$ 1,375	-26%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ -		\$ 11,790	
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 8,918		\$ 8,999	1%
Retail		\$ 55,997		\$ 57,293	2%
Call Center Fee	2,934	\$ 5,868	2,197	\$ 13,116	124%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ -		\$ 229	
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 135,502		\$ 153,158	13%
TOTAL		\$ 3,459,454		\$ 4,232,577	22%

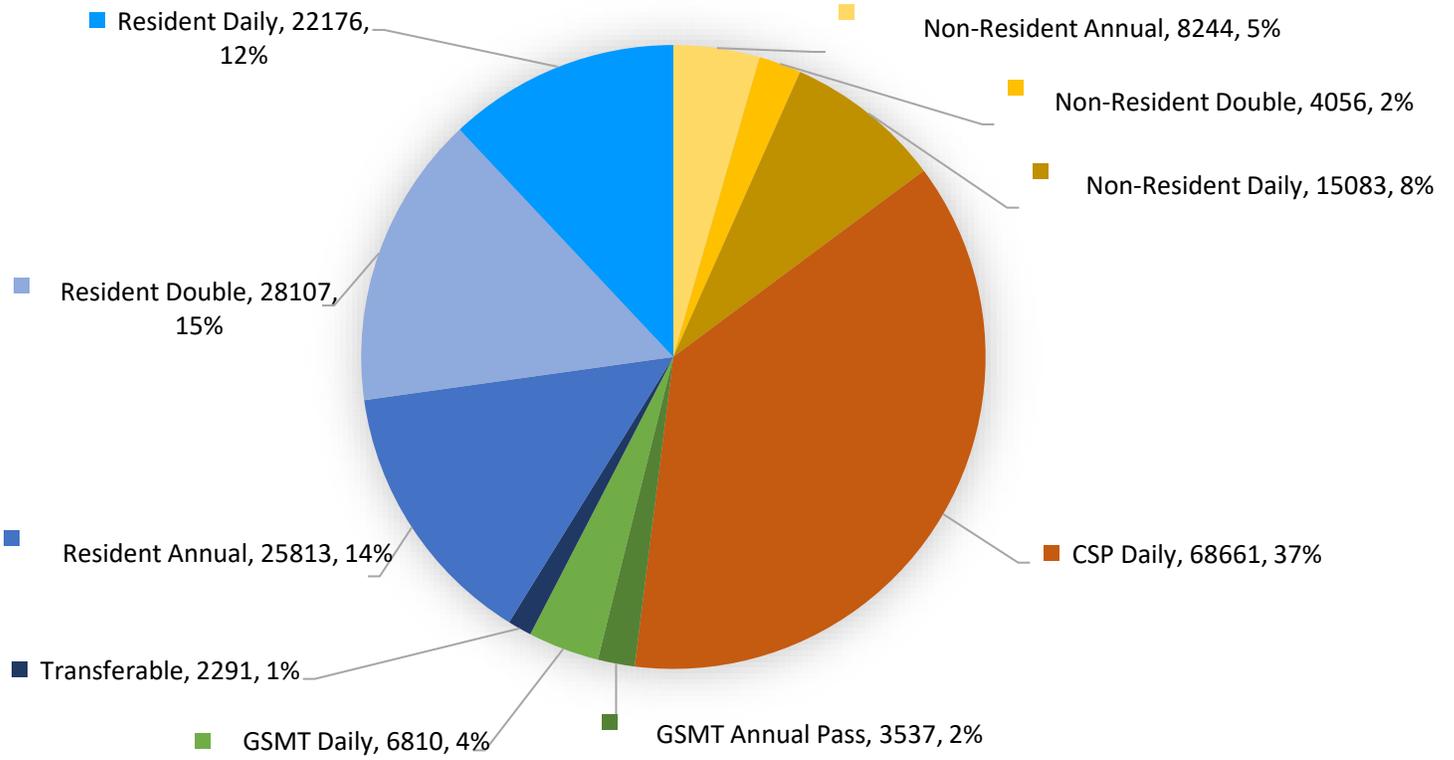
Division of Parks and Recreation
June YTD 2025 Revenue by Item

	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	37,996	\$ 1,367,868	25,813	\$ 1,035,964	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	8,244	\$ 477,325	
Resident Double	28,842	\$ 1,557,475	28,107	\$ 1,671,365	
Non-Resident Double		\$ -	4,056	\$ 361,227	
Transferable	2,320	\$ 185,616	2,291	\$ 204,833	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	3,483	\$ 52,245	3,537	\$ 70,435	
2nd Annual	5,293	\$ 95,274	-	\$ -	
Annual Licenses	77,934	\$ 3,258,478	72,048	\$ 3,821,149	17%
Resident Daily License	40,402	\$ 323,213	22,176	\$ 220,748	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	15,083	\$ 226,080	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	255	\$ 5,100	456	\$ 9,055	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	6,389	\$ 25,556	6,810	\$ 33,908	
Motorcoach Permit	3,788	\$ 11,364	11,574	\$ 38,369	
CSP 7 Day Pass	66,522	\$ 1,330,444	68,661	\$ 1,700,635	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	3,694	\$ 73,880	5,477	\$ 108,960	
Rally Bike Band		\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event		\$ 2,899	44	\$ 4,400	
Festival Daily			2,427	\$ 11,475	
Daily Licenses	121,050	\$ 1,772,456	132,708	\$ 2,353,630	33%
Licenses	198,984	\$ 5,030,935	204,756	\$ 6,174,779	23%
Camping Services		\$ 6,682,409		\$ 7,440,641	11%
Pet Fees	904	\$ 9,038	908	\$ 9,069	0%
LODGING		\$ 6,691,447		\$ 7,449,710	11%
Picnic Shelter		\$ 13,020		\$ 8,885	-32%
Boat Rentals		\$ 4,391		\$ 7,222	64%
Firewood	16,284	\$ 97,701	14,902	\$ 99,873	2%
Gift Card	77	\$ 9,919	91	\$ 8,286	-16%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 156,819		\$ 155,768	-1%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 11,809		\$ 12,892	9%
Retail		\$ 82,277		\$ 85,517	4%
Call Center Fee	10,194	\$ 20,388	7,815	\$ 46,580	128%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 143,788		\$ 217,097	51%
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 540,111		\$ 642,120	19%
TOTAL		\$ 12,262,492		\$ 14,266,609	16%

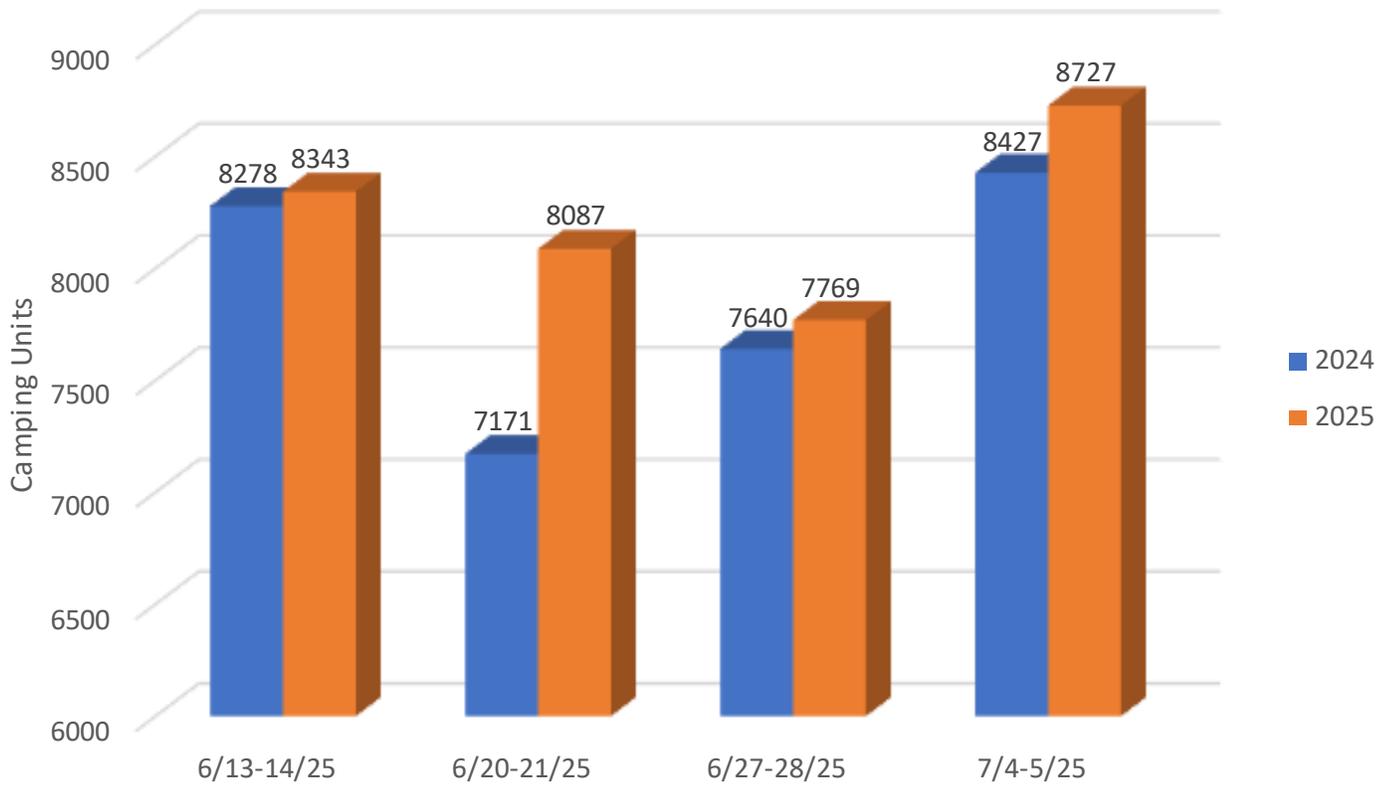
June 2025 YTD Revenue Comparison



June 2025 YTD License Sales



State Park Camping Unit Weekend Comparison



Public Comments

Black Hills Beaver Action Plan

Alexey Egorov

Brookings SD

Position: other

Comment:

I encourage GFP to apply a moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping also outside of Black Hills.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Attached as a PDF find the Prairie Hills Audubon Society's comments on the Black Hills Beaver Action Plan.

We thank the Department for planning to improve/increase the Black Hills population of beavers.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

We attach our comments on the Black Hills Beaver Action Plan Draft.

We thank the Department for plans to increase/improve beaver populations and habitat.

I tried to submit this already but I am not sure if I did it correctly, so if you end up with 2 versions you just need to use one of them.

Jeff Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

As you draft your Black Hills Beaver Action Plan, I would like you to consider more than just the number of beavers. The plan needs to include an evaluation of beaver habitat and where that habitat exists, private or public lands. If streams are suitable habitat and there is enough habitat on public lands for beaver to thrive in the Black Hills, then numbers on public lands may be sufficient to allow hunting and trapping to start again. If suitable habitat is only sufficient on private land, then when to start trapping needs more research to make sure the numbers on public land will not be negatively impacted beyond sustainable numbers.

The plan should also look at the value of beavers for tourism and wildlife viewing. The present plan only looks at beavers as a recreational form of trapping. Wildlife viewing and tourism will also add value to the Black Hills if a vibrant population of Beaver exist and the public is informed of the beaver viewing opportunities. Wildlife management plans need to look at all value of wildlife to the public. The plan should not restrict itself to looking only at the value of hunting and trapping to the public.

This value of beaver can also be used to set up a 5-month beaver hunting/trapping season in the entire West River area. A 5-month trapping season in the West River would also decrease pressure on river otters and help their population also increase. Then we could build on that and introduce river otters back into the Black Hills. There is value of Beaver and River otters beyond hunting/trapping.

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

I support the moratorium on beaver trapping and hunting. I vehemently oppose the killing these animals for commercial gain and so called recreational opportunities once SD GFP decides the population can sustain this cruelty.

Furbearer Hunting and Trapping Seasons

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose trapping and hunting fur bearing animals for commercial purposes, and consider it cruelty of the worst kind to not require a 24 hour check on traps, nor require identification on traps.

Wildlife Action Plan

Riley Bernard

Casper WY

Position: support

Comment:

Chapter 2: Northern Myotis listed as T (2014 version Table 2-1), should be updated to state 'E'. Otherwise this document looks to be fairly updated/relevant based on current research and information.

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

I oppose any increase in the number of mountain lions killed and oppose hound hunting, and outfitter guided hunts.

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
605-787-2806
July 2nd, 2025

SDGFP
503 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Draft Black Hills Beaver Action Plan

Public vs. Private

As we understand it, beaver don't like gradients above 4% and many of the streams and surrounding meadows in the Black Hills were homesteaded – thus are private inholdings. A recovery plan for beaver in the Black Hills should identify what percent of suitable streams, with appropriate stream gradient, are either in private or in public ownership. We also need to know what percent of streams with appropriate gradient, have the riparian or wetlands habitat that can support beaver and how these “ready streams” are divided between public & private lands.

As you plan to start trapping/hunting up again when certain precents of private streams are occupied by beaver, we need to know what the current ratio of beaver suitable streams with trees, bushes or reeds is between public vs. private. Is it possible that a vibrant and sustainable population of Black Hills beaver is dependent on their occupation or use of a certain percent of the private land and they can't be sustained just on public land? Before we decide what percent of beaver occupation of public vs private land triggers return to hunting/trapping, we need to know how suitable streams are apportioned between the two.

Fur trapping as commercial activity, Wildlife watching as recreational activity

You all keep saying that fur trapping/hunting is a recreational activity. While it may be that in part, it is primarily a commercial activity.

This was made blatant when in 2020 the SDGFP reduced the Nest Predator Bounty Program's bounty from \$10 to \$5 dollars per tail and then in 2021 returned the bounty to \$10/tail. In 2019 the tails submitted were 54,471 tails, in 2020 there were 26,390 tails submitted and again in 2021 53,741 tails. That low figure is 48.4% and 49.1 %

respectively of tails that were submitted when the bounty was twice as high. Indicating that a reduction in bounty by half the amount, reduced the tails submitted by half. As trapping is alleged to be “recreation”, what difference does size of the bounty fee matter? How can you honestly believe this is just recreation & not commercial activity?

One of the 7 pillars of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (NAMWC) is – “Elimination of Markets for Game, *Commercial hunting and the sale of wildlife are prohibited to ensure the sustainability of wildlife populations.*” So, do we all have to pretend that trapping/hunting for fur is not commercial hunting, so we can pretend to follow all the pillars of the NAMWC?

The Black Hills is impacted substantially by tourism. Beavers let you watch them without running and hiding, as the water around their habitat protects them. Beavers are fun to watch. They create beautiful moist places full of water and neat vegetation and marshes. Their habitat is rich with other animals to watch such as fish, amphibians & birds/bats. The value of beaver for wildlife watching & as creators of beautiful habitat is a recreational draw, eclipsing the commercial exercise of trapping/hunting for fur.

Abundance vs Distribution.

You need to explain why some drainages are monitored for abundance and others only for distribution. What caused these two different categories and why the different objectives?

Outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

We want beaver outside the Black Hills Fire Protection district managed for a 5-month beaver trapping/hunting season. This would be November 1st to March 31st. This allows beaver to recover in other areas of the state. It also reduces the incidental take of river otters, especially at times when otter moms are raising pups. It protects beavers when beaver moms are raising their kittens.

If this is too much of a stretch for you, you should require a 5-month beaver trapping/hunting season in any drainage west River that is occupied by river otters, working to recover their west River populations. You should have a plan for river otter recovery tied to a beaver recovery plan for the same drainage. You recover the beaver first & reduce length of their trapping season, to provide better habitat for otters you later reintroduce.

Other Public Lands in SD

We are thankful that you wish to recover beaver populations in the Black Hills. There are other public lands in SD. We look forward to SDGFP finding the will power and commitment to recovering beaver on other SD public lands were their populations are depressed.

Thanks,

Nancy Hilding

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hilding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

President,

Prairie Hills Audubon Society