



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### GOVERNANCE MEETING

Chair Rissler called the Governance Meeting to order on May 2, 2024, starting at 9 am MT. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, Travis Theel, and Bruce Cull were present. With eight commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with no additional public attending.

Secretary Robling, Deputy Secretary Simpson, Staff Attorney Michels all presented on various topics for the commissioner consideration.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN DURING THE MEETING.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE GOVERNANCE MEETING AT 11:44 AM MT. Motion carried unanimously.

### REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

#### Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm MT at the Event Barn in Custer State Park, SD on May 2, 2024. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, Travis Theel, and Bruce Cull were present. With eight 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 82 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. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of April 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARLTING TO APPROVE THE APRIL 2024 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. Additional Salary Days [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. The following additional days were submitted: Bartling (1) and White (1).

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

#### 4. New Staff Introduction [Info Item]

Director Kirschenmann and Director VanMeeteren introduced new department employees.

#### Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:00 pm MT for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as a finalization.

#### Agenda Item #14a: Custer State Park Hunting Seasons: Custer State Park Bison

No testimony provided.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### **Agenda Item #14b: Custer State Park Hunting Seasons: Custer State Park Coyote**

No testimony provided.

### **Agenda Item #15: Small Game Hunting Seasons**

2:06 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified in opposition to the small game hunting seasons as proposed for finalization.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Public Hearing at 2:10 pm MT.

## **Open Forum**

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor following the conclusion of the public hearing at 2:11 pm MT 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.

2:12 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing the Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified in opposition to the Wildlife Action Plans. She presented the commissioners with a letter submitted to President Biden requesting an Executive Order that closes all federally managed public lands (public lands) in the United States to beaver trapping and hunting. She stated that the Mountain Lion Stakeholder Group should include animal welfare groups and environmental diversity groups. She distributed a letter to the commission with the Mountain Lion Plan-Stakeholder group makeup.

2:16 pm: Kim Kelly of Deadwood, SD representing the Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action testified in support of the Beaver Hunting and Trapping petition and the reducing the 12-month beaver trapping season outside the Black Hills Fire Protection Area.

2:20 pm: Sandra Seberger of Rapid City, SD representing the Sierra Group of the Black Hills testified in support of the Beaver Hunting and Trapping petition and in support of the above-mentioned Executive Order request submitted to President Biden.

2:22 pm: Dana Rogers of Hill City, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation testified in opposition to the Landowner Own Land Elk proposal.

2:26 pm: Tim Goodwin of Hill City, SD testified on support of the mountain lion hunting season and separating the bobcat hunting season from the mountain lion season.

2:30 pm: Josh Rosenau of Lake Forest Park, WA representing the Mountain Lion Foundation testified in concern of the makeup of the Mountain Lion Stakeholders group.

2:33 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified in opposition to the Pheasant, Bobcat, and Deer Action Plans.

2:37 pm: Chuck Spring of Union Center, SD testified in concern of the white tail deer on the west side of the state.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Open Forum at 2:40 pm MT.

## **5. Petition #213: Air Gun Hunting**

[Action Item: Petition]

Blake Roetman of Mitchell, SD submitted petition #213 in which requested the Commission to reduce the required air gun factory-rated muzzle velocity of 1,000 feet per second to 600 feet per second.

Petitioner Blake Roetman from Mitchell, SD shared his reasons and justification with the commission why he is requesting the change to the air gun rules and asking for the 1,000 feet per second criteria to be reduced to 600 feet per second. Mr. Roetman talked about air guns meeting the current feet per second



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

criteria, safety, utility of air guns near and around places like farmyards, and the fact that air guns are a great way to introduce young people to the sport of hunting. Director Kirschenmann shared with the commission that the agency discussed and based on the facts and information provided by the petitioner the department recommended the commission adopt the petition and begin the rule process.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE PETITION #213. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Kirschenmann will have staff put together a proposal to be brought back for the commission to consider at the June 2024 commission meeting.

### **6. Petition #214: Beaver Hunting/Trapping**

[Action Item: Petition]

Nancy Hilding submitted three petitions requesting changes to the beaver trapping season. Each subsequent petition contains the same request as the previous but then adds additional requested changes. The commission considered and discussed all three petitions at one time, however voted on each petition individually.

Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD submitted petition #214 in which requested the department and commission to impose a three-year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the Black Hills National Forest and rewrite the definition describing the boundary of the Black Hills Fire Protection District to assure it matches what is defined in state law. Director Kirschenmann addressed the petition by referring to the presentation provided to the commission back in December of 2023 and where it was discussed and recommended not to close beaver trapping in the BHFPD at this time until more information can be collected. Kirschenmann also described to the commission that the area used to define beaver trapping season dates does follow and aligns with the definition of the BHFPD in state law. For those reasons, the department recommended not to accept the petition.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO DENY PETITION #214. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-08 DENYING PETITION #214. The motion carried unanimously.

### **7. Petition #215: Beaver Hunting/Trapping**

[Action Item: Petition]

Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD submitted petition #215 in which related to beaver trapping in the Black Hills. This petition included the same requested changes in the first petition but also added the requirement of individuals harvesting beaver on certain public federal lands need to report to the department the location of the harvest. The department also recommended to the commission to deny this petition for the same reasons of the first petition and that requiring the harvest on only federal public lands and not all other areas is not a sound approach and that trappers could avoid reporting by saying the beaver were harvested on other properties. The enforcement of such requirements would be next to impossible.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO DENY PETITION #215. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-09 DENYING PETITION #215. The motion carried unanimously.

### **8. Petition #216: Beaver Hunting/Trapping**

[Action Item: Petition]

Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD submitted petition #216 in which related to beaver trapping in the Black Hills which included all the requests from the first two petitions and then added another rule change which asked for adjusting the beaver season across the entire state from 12 months to 5 months outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District. Director Kirschenmann described to the commission why there is a year-round



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

season outside the Black Hills and that is to allow individuals to address beaver depredation and damage. The department spends considerable time and manpower addressing beaver damage and this year-round approach assists in addressing those issues. The department recommended to deny the petition.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITYMYRE TO DENY PETITION #216. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITYMYRE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-10 DENYING PETITION #216. The motion carried unanimously.

### 9. Annual Park Entrance License Options

[Action Item: Proposal]

Parks and Recreation Director Jeff VanMeeteren presented a rule proposal that would clean up the department administrative rules (§ 41:03:03:05 and § 41:03:03:06) dealing with Park Entrance License options following a change to SDCL 41-17-13 that came out of SB55 this past legislative season. The law was amended eliminating the options to 1) purchase a discounted second annual park entrance license through the second annual coupon method and 2) the ability to buy multiple discounted annuals using the multiple vehicle form and vehicle registrations. Going forward there are no limits as to how many double park licenses may be purchased.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR JULY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 10. Elk Raffle License

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented the Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season proposal in which would release § 41:06:27:02.07 to allow an individual to obtain more than one elk raffle licenses in a lifetime. All applicants will remain limited to only one elk license in a single year.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR JUNE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 11. Archery Antelope Hunting Season

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, presented the Archery Antelope Hunting Season proposals.

The Antelope (Firearm) and Mentored Youth Hunting Season proposal was presented in which would edit § 41:06:23:01 to allow an individual that applies for a "special antelope" license to apply for another antelope license in the second lottery drawing instead of the third lottery drawing. It would edit § 41:06:23:02 with minor unit boundary adjustment to use Interstate 90 instead of the Black Hills National Forest as the boundary for unit PRA-15B in Butte County. It would provide a rule clean-up for unit boundary descriptions to exclude unit PRA-45B (Ft. Pierre National Grasslands) from PRA-41A (Jones County) and PRA-58A (Stanley County). It would also provide a rule clean-up to § 41:06:01:12 to specify mentored antelope licenses are only valid on private land that is not leased by the Department for public hunting access.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR JULY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

The Archery Antelope Hunting Season proposal was presented in which would edit § 41:06:24:01 to remove five access permits for Custer and Pennington Counties within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

MOTIONED BY WHITYMYRE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR JULY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### 12. Hunting Raccoons with Dogs

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented the proposal for a second reading that would allow nonresidents to use a dog as an aid in taking of a raccoon.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WAS NO CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

### 13. Landowner Own Land Elk Application for License

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, presented the Landowner Own Land Elk Application for License proposal for a second reading. The department did submit minor changes to the original proposal which modified § 41:06:01:07 (4) to a qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase a landowner own land elk license if any qualifying number of the ranch unit holds and elk license obtained using landowner-operator preference in that unit the prairie elk hunting season. It also updated to: A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner-operator preference landowner own land license.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE PROPOSAL. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO APPROVE THE AMENDED PROPOSAL FOR JUNE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 14. Custer State Park Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Finalization]

#### 14a. Custer State Park Bison

Matt Snyder, Regional Parks Supervisor, presented the Commissioners with the Custer State Park Bison hunting season finalization. This finalization would allow the use of archery equipment during the Custer State Park trophy and nontrophy bull bison harvest season. Decrease the allowable hunting days for trophy bull bison from 3 days to 2 days. Past hunters typically fill their tags within 2 days. The change will allow increased opportunity for scheduling of hunts. It would increase the number of trophy bull bison licenses available by random lottery drawing from 8 to 10. This would result in a total of 11 trophy bull bison licenses, including 1 license available through the Hunt for Habitat raffle drawing. It would also increase the number of nontrophy bull bison licenses from 15 to 20.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 14b. Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Seasons

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, presented the Custer State Park Coyote Hunting seasons finalization to the commissioners. The department recommended a single change from the proposal to remove reference to Unit CUC-CU1 in § 41:06:37:01 because that unit is not defined.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE AMENDMENT TO THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION AS AMENDED. The motion carried unanimously.

### 15. Small Game Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Finalization]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, brought the Small Game Hunting Seasons before the Commission for finalization.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### 12a. Grouse Hunting Season

This finalization had no changes from the proposal. It will modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12b. Partridge Hunting Season

This finalization had no changes from the proposal. It will modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12c. Quail Hunting Season

This finalization had no changes from the proposal. It will modify the season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximately 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12d. Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season

This finalization had no changes from the proposal. It would extend the cottontail rabbit hunting season to September 1 through March 31 on publicly accessible land.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12e. Tree Squirrel Hunting Season

This finalization had no change from the proposal. It would extend the Tree Squirrel Hunting season to September 1 through March 31.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12f. Snipe Hunting Season

This finalization had no changes from the proposal. It would remove the word “common” before snipe to allow harvest of all snipe species.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

## 16. History of the Game Lodge

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Aaron Douglass, Visitor Services Program Manager, gave a presentation about the history of the Game Lodge located in Custer State Park. He focused on the construction, presidential visits, and physical changes to the building over time.

## 17. Custer State Park Airport Update

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Matt Snyder, Regional Parks Supervisor, gave a brief update on the Custer State Airport.





# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### 18. Missouri River Reservoir Update

[Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Pat Buscher, Regional Parks Supervisor, presented the commission with an overview of the Missouri River Reservoir levels and how it will affect state parks and the boat ramps.

### 19. Snowmobile Update

[Parks & Recreation: Information Item]

Ryan Raynor, District Park Supervisor, gave a presentation on the snowmobile trails for the winter of 2023-24.

### 20. Fishing Access Mapping

[Parks & Recreation: Information Item]

Heather Berg, Parks GIS & Asset Management Specialist, showed the commissioners how the Field staff are dedicated to keeping the Public Water Access map updated in addition to posting timely updates on dock placements. The Reel in Memories campaign has its own interactive map to aid new or less experienced anglers find great fishing opportunities. Both the Public Water Access and State Parks and Trails maps can be taken offline in the free Go Outdoors South Dakota app.

### 21. Volunteer Outlook

[Parks & Recreation: Information Item]

Rachel Comes, Statewide Volunteer Program Coordinator and Levi Van Sambeek, Custer State Park Business Manager, briefed the commission on volunteer numbers for the 2024 season including average hours of service, fiscal impact and how volunteer service contributes to the park. They discussed volunteer recruitment, orientation, and housing specific to Custer State Park and highlighted four outstanding volunteers with over 20 years of experience volunteering in Custer State Park.

### 22. Parks & Recreation Revenue and Camping Reports [Park & Recreation: Information Item]

Parks and Recreation Director Jeff VanMeeteren presented the camping and revenue reports for the month of April and YTD. Camping numbers continue to come in strong with the great spring weather we have been experiencing. Camping units for the month of April saw a 1,300 unit increase over last year and YTD camping unit numbers are up 36%. Park revenue also remains strong both for April and YTD with park entrance licenses sales up 25% YTD due to the great spring weather and a marketing push to cross sell PEL to users purchasing other department items. YTD camping services revenue are also up 3% from 2023.

### 23. Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan

[Wildlife: Action Item]

Alex Solem, Senior Upland Game Biologist, discussed the comments received regarding the public comment period for the Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE RING-NECKED PHEASANT ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

### 24. Deer Action Plan

[Wildlife: Action Item]

Andy Lindbloom, Senior Big Game Biologist, presented the commissioners with the Deer Action Plan. The South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan outlines priorities, objectives, and management strategies to focus GFP's efforts over the next 4 years. Development of the plan has been an expansive process, to include numerous internal committee meetings, a public opinion survey, and public stakeholder meetings. The current objectives of the draft action plan focus on managing deer for biologically and socially acceptable levels, distributing hunting opportunity fairly and equitably, working with private landowners to alleviate depredation, and increasing deer habitat and hunter access. The draft of the action plan was presented to the GFP Commission in March and has been out for public comment.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE DEER ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

### 25. Bobcat Action Plan

[Wildlife: Action Item]

Chad Lehman, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented the commission with the Bobcat Action Plan.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE BOBCAT ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

### 26. East River Deer & Archery Deer License Allocation

[Wildlife: Action Item]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, provided a brief overview of the department recommendation on 2024 Archery Access Permits. Harvest data and observation reports from GFP staff, landowners, and hunters all suggest deer numbers are low in southeastern South Dakota following die-offs because of the severe 2022-2023 winter and hemorrhagic disease in 2023. In response, changes are being made to the numbers and types of East River Deer Hunting Season licenses. This would also modify the open unit for archery antlerless whitetail deer based on § 41:06:22:01.01 (4). Archery hunters in Clay, Lincoln, and Union Counties would no longer be allowed to harvest antlerless deer using their antlerless whitetail deer license (LM1 type). However, they would still be allowed to harvest a deer using their archery any deer license type (01 type).

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE EAST RIVER DEER AND ARCHERY DEER LICENSES ALLOCATIONS. The motion carried unanimously.

### 27. Bon Homme County Land Donation

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, provided an update on the Snatch Creek Game Production Area. A county commissioner from Bon Homme County reached out to staff. The county has 0.21 acres that they acquired in 1938 at a tax sale for \$0.99, which is part of an old Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad right of way. The property is a triangle in the corner of the Snatch Creek GPA, which is owned by the department. Bon Homme County wants to remove this tract from their inventory of property. The county wants to sign a quit claim deed to GFP as part of the GPA. Acquiring this corner would straighten out the GPA boundary.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE LAND ACQUISITION THROUGH RESOLUTION 23-06. The motion carried unanimously.

### 28. Krause Land Donation – Day County

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, also provided an update on the Krause Farm Game Production Area. The GPA is 237 acres near Roslyn, SD. 150 acres in southeast corner is very difficult to access due to a wetland across the township road. The cost to improve road to make it passable across wetland would be upwards of \$80,000. GFP currently has permission to cross Ryan Wagner's property to access GPA for management. Staff asked about formalizing an agreement for public access and Wagner proposed GFP purchase the corner from him. After staff met with Wagner, a couple of local NGOs, Whitetails Unlimited and Brown County Pheasants Forever, are willing to purchase 4.84 acres and donate it to the department. A draft purchase agreement between NGOs and Wagner has been developed. If acquired, staff will work with the township to improve the township road leading up to the new parcel by adding some gravel and create a parking lot for the public using habitat stamp funds.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE LAND ACQUISITION THROUGH RESOLUTION 23-07. The motion carried unanimously.

### 29. Water Access Update – Eastern South Dakota

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, presented to the Commission an overview of current issues related to watercraft access in eastern South Dakota that may result from low-water situations. In some cases, certain larger watercraft may experience difficulties in launching at certain ramps when water levels





# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Event Barn | Custer State Park | May 2-3, 2024

reach a certain point. Staff will post signs indicating low water, as well as update the Public Water Access map with current conditions.

### **30. Fish Spawning and Stocking Update**

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, presented to the Commission an update on current walleye spawning and fish stockings efforts by Aquatics staff. Walleye egg collections were below the desired goal of 110 million primarily due to poor weather conditions, which affected both staffs' ability to work in the field and catchability of fish. Additional eggs were secured from neighboring states to ensure that enough eggs are hatched to meet stocking requests. Staff have also been busy transferring fish from hatcheries and one state water to another and have stocked fish into over 100 waterbodies within the state.

### **31. Aquatic Invasive Species Operations Update**

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, presented to the Commission an overview of 2024 Aquatic Invasive Species efforts by GFP. A 2024 AIS communications plan has been developed and implemented and will again focus on the message of "Clean, Drain, Dry". An AIS Awareness Week is planned leading up to the free fishing and park entrance weekend and will feature AIS content daily. The 2024 AIS Operational Plan outlines field activities by staff, such as detection and monitoring. Across the state, watercraft inspection/decontamination stations will be operated starting prior to Memorial Day weekend.

### **32. License Sales Update**

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a short summary on the monthly licenses sales. Kirschenmann indicated there has not been a lot of change in small game licenses sales, however over the past month the department has seen about a 5,500 increase in resident and nonresident fishing license sales combined. It is anticipated that those sales will continue in a positive direction with temperatures and weather improving.

### **33. Pheasant and Group Harvest Report**

[Wildlife: Information Item]

Alex Solem, Senior Upland Game Biologist, discussed the harvest statistics for prairie grouse and ring-necked pheasants for their respective 2023-24 seasons. A projected 1,243,194 pheasants (572,159 by residents; 671, 036 by nonresidents) and 64,443 prairie grouse (46,228 by residents; 23,241 by nonresidents) were harvested.

### **34. Adjourn**

[Action Item]

A Commissioner Governance Meeting will be held on June 6-7, 2024, starting at 1 pm CST at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center in Yankton, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:10 AM MT ON MAY 3, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary