

# Public Comments

## Other

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**Anthony Filholm**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The petition to develop an age plus preference system that favors older people who have applied a long period time should be rejected. It is already heavily weighted in their favor with the cubing. We cant keep bending to every special interest in the me-me crowd. It is a chance drawing, accept that.

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**Bruce Smith**

**Burlington WI**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

TO INCREASE REVENUE FOR THE STATE'S SMALL BUISNESS, WHY NOT EXPAND THE NUMBER OF NON-RESIDENT WATERFOWL LICENSES, SPLIT THE 10 PERIOD. THIS WILL MAKE UP SOME OF THE MILLIONS LOST NOW THAT NON-RESIDENT PHEASANT HUNTERS THAT HAVE QUIT COMING DUE TO PATHETIC POPULATIONS

## West River Spring Turkey-Use of Rifles

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**Donald Massa**

**Edgemont SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose allowing the use of rifles for turkeys during any spring season in SD whether on public or private lands.

This is a safety issue, not an R3 issue. The quality of turkey decoys, the improvements in camo clothing and the increased use of ground blinds has made it much more difficult to identify the proper targets at longer ranges. I have only been "shot at" in the field once and it was by a rifle turkey hunter on private land that was "stalking turkey calls"...he missed, thankfully.

The argument that a rifle is easier to handle than a shotgun is not valid as both of my sons have harvested turkeys with shotguns since they were 8 years old during Nebraska's season. If these hunters aren't able to handle a shotgun than they probably aren't ready to turkey hunt.

I am also a landowner and don't expect to have the state regulations changed for the same season just because it's on private land. It just adds more confusion to an already hard to understand regulation book.

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**Charles Anderson**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I think this is great for senior citizens and when we do mentored hunts for our grand children.

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**Dale Gregg**

**Whitewood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This may be the most ridiculous proposal submitted. Using optics during muzzle loader season was denied yet this proposal shouldn't even see the light. Turkey hunting is about the experience of bringing them in close. Additionally, the use of a rifle creates too much of a safety issue. Even if it's private land, the potential of someone getting shot is real. You want to do something positive for hunters? Legalize crossbow which will bring in more hunters and legalize optics for muzzle loaders.

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**George Bogenschutz**

**Nunda SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I have never hunted turkeys with a rifle altho I am well qualified to do so. My experience hunting with others who tried was disappointing as they were shooting at ranges approaching 300 yards in a crosswind and wounded at least one jake, possibly 2 and hit a third well enough that it sought cover in some brush. As my partner has a slight disability moving very fast I was the designated coup de grace guy to hoof it over there and dispatch it with the 870.

I think this would be a scene repeated far too often if rifles are reinstated. Please vote NO on this proposal.  
Thank you, George Bogenschutz, Nunda, SD

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**Jim Gruber**

**Estelline SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

give me a break... let me get this right.. the fellow on the other side of the fence, and anybody hunting his land can use a rifle on turkey.. yet, the guy on the other side on gfp leased or owned sd land is not allowed to use a rifle.. what kind of operation are you people trying to run... as usual,, catering to a few cry babies.

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**Randy Rysavy**

**Wagner SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I wish it would be state wide on private land. If turkeys are to be considered BIG GAME then we should have the optin to use a rifle. I am an east river land owner and on the state chapter committe of the Natinal Wild Turkey Federation for the last 10 years. If you want to regulate State and Federal land that is fine.

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**Ron Koth**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support the hunter option of using a rifle for west river spring prairie turkey. Preclusion of the use of a rifle seems arbitrary and should be at the discretion of the hunter.

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**Ron Schara**

**Ramsey MN**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Let's see if I understand this action. The joy of turkey hunting is to call a gobbler within shotgun range. You are choosing to allow hunters to avoid that thrill and shoot a gobbler at what...50 yards, 100, 200 yards. To have a low angle so bullet may ricochet? And to turn a sportsman into nothing more than a marksman. I've hunted South Dakota turkeys for 50 plus years. I can tell you about the danger, prairie or Black Hills. When will you stand up for Fair Chase? You should be ashamed.

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**Don Doty**

**Divide Co 80814 CO**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I was born and raised in Wagner SoDak. I still own a farm in Charles Mix county. I have applied for nonresident west river spring turkey licenses for more than 30 years. I have had great success with hunting on private land with my turkey caliber rifle. The main reason I choose to hunt in SoDak as a non resident is that I can use a rifle during spring turkey season. I was very disappointed when I found out the state has changed the law. By doing this it presented ME and my hunting GROUP to having to now look for another state that offers us the opportunity to hunt with our my rifles. We are older retired hunters that have built great relationship with landowners, restaurant owners, hotel owners, gas station owner over the many years we have hunt in Gregory county. It sadden me to know that I will have begin to build new friendships and relationships in another state that offers our group the ability to hunt in ethical and successful manner. I hope that my voice is being heard and that the state of SoDak will hear the people that have supported the landowners and state for so many years. The decision the state will make will determine to where myself and or my group will apply this coming spring rifle turkey hunting. Especially since we have support the NWTF and the state for so many years.

Respectfully.

DON DOTY

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Divide CO 80814

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**Michael Brown**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Greetings SD GF&P Game Commission,

My name is Michael Brown. I live in Sioux Falls and am a committee member of the East Dakota Chapter of the NWTF.

I understand that a proposal has been brought up to bring back the use of rifles for turkey hunting west river. I would like to share my thoughts on the topic.

I have approximately 36 years of experience turkey hunting in South Dakota, from the Black Hills to the Prairies (east and west river), and safety, not the harvesting of a bird, is the most important thing out there.

I remember being asked approximately 25 years ago to submit my opinion by the SD GF&P on this subject...and my answer then, as it is now is...NO RIFLES ALLOWED.

I have several reasons. Safety is the biggest. I was in the Black Hills at approximately the same time there was a fatal incident involving a spring turkey hunter using a rifle.

The following year, I was again in the Hills when I was working some birds down a logging road, the hunt was interrupted by another hunter driving down the road in his vehicle, when he got out and pointed his gun (a rifle) in my direction. Needless to say I was scared to death that I would be the next casualty. As I walked by the hunter, I showed my disgust...not only because he was driving his vehicle in an area that was closed to vehicles...but the fact that he did not apologize or feel embarrassed for his actions.

I also witnessed back in the mid 80's a rancher shoot at a turkey from the road. My thought then, as it is now...that is not very sporting or challenging. The whole idea about turkey hunting is to get the bird right in your face so you can experience the fullness of a turkey hunt. Not pick them off at 200 yards like a sniper, because you don't want to or are too lazy to get out there and do the work it takes to bring the bird closer.

If the hunter has physical limitations...there are ways to set up blinds and transport the hunter to the blind so they can sit and wait for the birds.

I have had other incidences during my years of turkey hunting where I have witnessed (but could not able to identify) a hunter shoot at turkeys from the road with a rifle.

I feel that if this proposal is approved, it will mean that SD and the GF&P will have taken a huge step backward in ensuring the safety and integrity of turkey hunting in South Dakota.

Turkey hunting in South Dakota should be by shotgun and / or archery only. In an age where we want everything yesterday...cutting corners...to harvest a wild turkey should not be one of them. Hunters need to get out there and burn a little shoe leather and experience the fullness that a spring turkey hunt brings. The up close and personal feeling you get from being out in the woods or open prairie. To pat yourself on the back when you as a hunter, you had to work a little harder to get and hopefully harvest your bird. And if successful, the feeling of carrying your prize back to your vehicle.

And don't forget, how we teach our youth on how traditional ways of hunting turkeys...still work.

I would also say that there are times that the land I hunt west river has state and private land next to each other. I can't image a stray bullet heading my way if I was on Public Land from someone hunting on private land.

If asked, I would gladly testify at the commission meeting about this topic.

Michael Brown

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**John Moisan**

**Fort Pierre SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Dear Commission Members: I am OPPOSED to the use of rifles for Spring Turkey Hunting ANYWHERE in South Dakota. Details on attached Word Document.

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**John Moisan**

**Fort Pierre SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I OPPOSE the use of rifles for West River or anywhere in SD. Word document originally sent failed delivery. New document attached.

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**Caleb Kervin**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a hunt safe instructor and a hunter this is unsafe and just a waste of game. The rifle round will not be stopped by a turkey it will still have a large amount of energy when it leaves the bird that is unsafe or could result in an accidental overbag of game.

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**Roger Thue**

**Colman SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the use of rifles for any form of turkey hunting. I feel it is a safety risk, even if only on private land. Those that are in favor of it are not likely in favor of it for sport. They are likely just wanting to eliminate turkeys or are just plain lazy. Let's keep the sport in hunting and make everyone use shotguns or bows that want to harvest a turkey.

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**Mike Kervin**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I'd like to express my disappointment with the commission if they were to allow rifles for the hunting of wild turkeys.

I compare the opportunistic hunter who shoots wild turkey with a rifle to the criminals who shoot at geese feeding in a field, which we know has led to deaths.

Hunting turkeys is a sport which sportsmen/sportswomen study and call the game bird within range for a good shotgun kill shot, they don't look for the opportunity to shoot long distance at a bird; just as a waterfowl hunter lures the birds close with calling and decoys, true turkey hunters do the same.

I have been hunting turkey for almost 43 years and, as I was trained, I don't take long shots that could injure the bird. I fear that rifle hunters if they don't feel they got a kill shot will not even check out the site for blood, and YES turkeys can be wounded by a rifle bullet and limp off and die without the rifle shooter even checking for blood.

Please do NOT recommend this change, keep turkey hunting a sport, like waterfowl hunting one that the hunter needs some skill to harvest a bird.

Mike Kervin  
1608 Buffalo Trail  
Brookings

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission  
Comments: Use of Rifles for Spring Turkey Hunting

Dear Commission Members:

Please allow me to make the following points regarding my 47 years of experience hunting turkeys in South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and Missouri.

- I first hunted turkey in Gregory County, South Dakota in 1972
- I have harvested 154 Wild Turkeys: 100 with a 12 gauge, 53 with a 20 gauge, and one with a rifle (fall turkey). I have hunted 6 years for Archery Spring Turkey with no success.
- I hold the #12 NWTF World Record Merriam's Wild Turkey shot in Jackson Co. in 1990
- I have hunted wild turkey in 16 west river counties and 4 east river counties.
- In 1980, I was nearly shot by a hunter using a 270 caliber rifle in Gregory County, north of Bonesteel, SD on Scalp Creek. The hunter, who had permission on adjacent private property, shot a gobbler a mere 47 steps in front of me as the turkey was coming to my call.
- In about 1988, my friend and I witnessed 4 gobblers shot out of the tree with rifles, 30 minutes before legal shooting hours in Custer State Park. This event happened after we had made a 90 minute stalk through the woods in the dark to get into position for a close in shotgun hunt. We were 30 yards from the turkeys when they were killed at long range.
- In about 1990, on a fall turkey hunt in Custer State Park, a rifle hunter killed a turkey from the road at a distance of over 200 yards, while I was positioned in the woods 25 yards from a small flock of birds
- In 1997, a hunter with a rifle stalked my 13 year old twin boys and I as we hunted over decoys on Cherry Creek in Haakon County, SD. It was only when we came screaming out of the woods waving orange flags, did he stop, jump into his pickup and speed off.
- In short, I have personally had numerous close calls at being shot with a rifle, all of which were west river. Rifle hunting is **NOT SAFE** and presents **EXTREME DANGER** to others at distances over one mile.
- I am a landowner in Tripp County, South Dakota.
- Considering the use of "modern" turkey hunting equipment such as advanced calls, blinds, turkey fan decoys, realistic turkey decoys, high tech camouflage clothing, and other devices, hunters using traditional shotgun methods or archery are placed in **EXTREME DANGER** by unknowing hunters with a rifle at extraordinary distances.
- The use of a rifle does not provide a quality outdoor experience for the sportsman, especially young turkey hunters who need to get the "up close and personal" experience of having a wild gobbler in a full strut, gobbling at 20 yards. This majestic bird deserves better than being killed at 300 yards by an unseen shooter.
- Finally, as table fare, there is no wild game that surpasses wild turkey with dressing, gravy, mashed potatoes, and other side dishes. When a turkey is body shot with a rifle, no matter the caliber, no matter the bullet grain, no matter the distance or circumstances, there is very little left to eat after the hunt. Killing a turkey for the substantial challenge and table fare is one thing. Killing to be killing with a rifle is wrong. This amazing bird deserves better.

(END)

John Mosian, Pierre, SD