

NORTH DAKOTA SPORTFISHING CONGRESS

NORTH DAKOTA SPORTFISHING CONGRESS' ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Saturday, April 3, 2004 ■ 11:00 A.M.

ELK'S LODGE ■ 900 South Washington Street ■ Bismarck, ND

MINUTES

Attendees: President Duaine Ash, Past President Bruce Hagen, Treasurer Rick Eagleson, Directors Richard Fink and Paul Haug; Mike Anderson, Dave Bement, Emil Berard, Ken Cumber, Ed Dosch, Steve Goldade, Steve Krenz (USFWS), Todd Lindquist (Corps of Engineers), Rob Holm (Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery), Rynee Kellar, Lee Klapprodt, Ron Sahr, Todd Sando (ND Water Commission), Lynn Schlueter (G&F, Devils Lake), Bryan Siegel, Terry Steinwand (Game & Fish), Gene Van Eckhout (G&F) and Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner.

- T** President Ash called the meeting to order and roll call was taken.
- T** Copies of the minutes from the last two meetings were distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mike Anderson, seconded Ed Dosch and approved.
- T** Treasurer Rick Eagleson distributed an annual report (4-3-03 to 4-3-04) for the NDSFC with a beginning balance of \$10,309.44 and ending balance of \$10,211.81. Income consisted of eight club dues at \$50 each, \$870 in individual dues, \$12,456.16 from the 2003 fundraiser and other income of \$250 for reimbursement of our web hosting fee. Expense items were postage, club insurance, lobbyist, membership, fundraiser, newsletter, executive secretary, website and miscellaneous. A summary of income and expenses from the 2003 Fund Raiser was also handed out revealing net income of \$3,899.39. A motion to approve both financial reports was made by Paul Haug, seconded by Lynn Schlueter and passed.
- T** A report from the Corps of Engineers was made by Manager Todd Lindquist. Lake elevations are at 1815.7 which is about 5 feet lower than last year at this time. Inflows have dropped a little bit – down to 18,000 but should pick up with the snow melt. South of the lake is quit a bit lower than normal. Levels should peek in June at 1818.5. The elevation is not high but should be adequate. Todd mentioned the navigation season is being shortened by 33 days this year. He also said an Annual Operating Plan meeting will be held on April 7 in Bismarck and encouraged attendance by club members.

Regarding ramps, the Corps is working with the State Park and Game & Fish. \$200,000 is going to state parks and ramps. The Corps is working at Government Bay this week, Wolf Creek is open and there should be decent access by the time the ice is gone.

Funding on Salt Cedar – \$175,000 level 2 project that was added into their budget. The Corps is trying to get money to county weed boards rather than contracting through the federal regs to reduce costs. About \$300,000 will be going into weed control with primary focus on Salt Cedar.

There are a lot of level 2 projects. Corps is working with Dorgan's office to get ads. Dorgan is trying to get fee retention. They tried to eliminate boat ramp fees, since it costs more to collect them. There will be no fees this year, since they were not consistent at collecting fees at all of the ramps. However, they may look to try to restore the fee costs.

The Lake Master Plan essentially is the plan they use to make decisions to the entire lake. The current plan was written in 1996.

Todd mentioned that Phil Brown will be the new lake manager, replacing Joe Hall, and that the Friends of Lake Sakakawea had input in the decision in filling this position.

As federal employees they can't lobby for funds, so they are attending our meeting to tell the NDSFC and Friends of Lake Sakakawea, etc. that we need to tell Congress what our needs are. The Corps is currently closing some campgrounds in other States and if budgets continue to decline in the coming years, they may have to consider doing the same here in North Dakota. They are not to that point yet, but Todd doesn't like the current budget trends or forecasts. He would certainly look at all other options before he recommends closing any of their facilities in North Dakota. If they get to that point, he would first solicit input from impacted stakeholders before making a decision.

Lee Klapprodt commended Todd and his staff for the time they put into work with the lake water problems and President Ash thanked Todd for taking time to attend our meeting.

T Report from ND State Water Commission (Todd Sando) – Todd said the Master Plan has been in the revision stage since 1989. He mentioned Missouri River Master Plan, in which all the states agreed but the state of Missouri (Missouri appears to be dictating the show). They have been strictly negotiating a plan with Missouri this past year. On March 19 they came out with the Master Plan. The Annual Operating Plan is based off the new Master Plan for this year.

Governor Hoeven took John Woodley, Assistant Secretary of Army for Civil Works and COE Brig. Gen. William Grisoli to the different areas (i.e. Fort Yates, Parshall, Garrison) with lake level problems. North Dakota is being impacted the most with the two biggest reservoirs in our state. It's impacting fisheries and water supplies, and politics has been a huge impact.

Corps is not releasing as much water this year, especially since they are not using the barges. Todd reiterated the shortening of the navigation season this year and that there is an Annual Operating Plan meeting in Bismarck on April 7. He said we are worse off now than the last four years, and we have one of the lowest run-offs. We will probably not get much run-off from the Yellowstone River, especially with the low soil moisture taking the run-off. The other lower states also have low water levels. Message to get across at AOP meetings – Fisheries are on the verge of clasp which will impact us for years. We need to do whatever we can to hold water in these reservoirs.

T Report from Lynn Schlueter on ANS & Red River issues – ANS are out there and are a problem. There are new ANS' being found all the time and we need to keep them out. Prevention is a lot easier than trying to eradicate them. They are trying to develop a plan to keep these out. NDG&F want to get the plan in place to prevent the movement of ANS in the state. With Lake Sakakawea waters being down, this is the time to get on the ANS problem. North Dakotans who go outside the state could bring ANS back. Need to monitor the areas that have a lot of non-resident problems. Their goal is to get an ANS Task Force up and running and get it approved by the Feds and then work on the laws. Game & Fish put together an ANS 13-minute video and they plan to put the video on their website. The video could be sent to all people handling tournaments. The first meeting of the Task Force will be with

DOT, Hwy Dept, US Forest Service, Tribal, County, Tourism, Bait Industry, pet industry, Friends of Lake Sakakawea and North Dakota Sportfishing Congress to name a few. Lynn mentioned Minnesota is not as ridged on some of their cleaning.

Red River issues – They agreed to a four-year experiment to see how reduced bag and slot limits would work; however the rules were complex; keep laws meaningful and simple.

T Rob Holm, Riverdale Hatchery Manager had a slide presentation on the fisheries in North Dakota. The hatchery is operated as a partnership between the North Dakota G&F and US Fish & Wildlife Service, which allows them to provide the anglers in the state the most cost effective hatchery program in the United States. The original structure was built in 1962, shortly after the completion of the Garrison Dam for just over \$500,000. The G&F salmon facility was built in 1988 (\$1.5 million) and a 40 pond expansion in 1989 (\$2.5 million) which is now funded by fishing sales & federal boat gas taxes. 2003 Fish Production – They produced over 7½ million walleye, in addition to 20 tons of trout and salmons. The 2003 operating budget is \$500,000. He showed the historical trout and salmon stockings from 1995-2004 (projected), which is down. G&F decides what type of fish they stock – the hatchery is like a store for the G&F.

Approximately 75% of walleye recovered in 2000 from the fall sampling in small and mid-sized reservoirs were from the hatchery. All trout and salmon caught in ND resulted from hatchery stockings.

Fishing is the most popular activity in US. There were 115,000 resident anglers last year and 28,000 non-resident anglers. Rob also reported on the “economics of fishing” in ND. Funding for 2003 was provided by: Fish & Wildlife Service (\$272,977), ND G&F (195,215) and US Army Corps of Engineers (\$34,7409). In addition, public support, the President’s budget, and Federal aid dollars from taxes on fishing related gear and gas help keep the hatchery operating.

The hatchery needs our continued support by contacting our congressional delegation and let people in the business community know that fishing is more than a good time on the water, it’s big business.

Rob encourages you to check out the following websites:

- * ND G&F – www.state.nd.us/gnf/fishing (Ramps, lake contour maps, fish stockings, license sales, etc.)
- * ND Hub Explorer – <http://web.apps.state.nd.us/hubexplorer/gamefishinfo/viewer.html>
- * US Fish & Wildlife – <http://fisheries.fws.gov>

Rob distributed brochures on Zebra Mussels, stickers on ANS, etc. to be handed out at the clubs. He also mentioned the Valley City and their hatchery are being run together, including funding and shifting funds between the two hatcheries. They are geared for sport fishing, but people in Washington believe sport of fishing should be funded by the state not the country. We can’t afford to loose the hatcheries in ND.

T Report from Terry Steinwand, ND Game & Fish Department – Terry said Bob Frohlich of G&F has worked with Todd’s staff. Hope to have 20-25 boating access sites available by Memorial Day and Terry gave an update on the progress of access of some of the bay areas around the state.

Game & Fish are very concerned about coldwater habitat with the low water levels and said there will be a domino effect if the low waters continue. We could have all the access sites, but it wouldn’t make a difference without fish. The new projected water levels should be up. As far as funding on Garrison Dam – with the war in Iraq, the funding from Congress could be limited.

Potential legislation – he has turned in one dealing with bait vendors; another on with ASN will be submitted, but are waiting for a report dealing with ANS laws.

Terry said that at the Advisory Board meetings no fishing issues are coming up, and asked us to please come and submit concerns.

Tournaments have grown to almost a money-making industry. G&F are seeing a lot of non-resident organizers coming in. No more than two major fishing tournaments per month are allowed and G&F has already denied some tournaments. Terry mentioned that non-tournament anglers are harvesting way more than the tournament anglers. Tournaments harvest about 3% of the total amount. He said the Governor's Cup is a kill tournament. Tournaments cannot put the harvest in one pot and take it home, as it would violate individual limits. Also, tournament fish cannot be donated to a nursing, etc., since the fish would have to be federally inspected. Terry said at this time, it is too early to determine the amount of winter kill and that we have been lucky the last few years with little winter kill.

T Lee Klappardt reported on Friends of Lake Sakakawea's meetings, saying they have been very active in the last few years as it's easy to motivate people with the low water situation. Friends worked with the Corps of Engineers. In fall of 2003, a public meeting was represented by Sen. Dorgan and Gen. Flowers to see first hand what the situation was. Lee talked about the meeting held in Pierre regarding the Annual Operating Plan. Friends put together a slide presentation on the low waters at the boat ramps and what we are dealing with in North Dakota.

In February, they arranged a meeting in Parshall with General Grisoli. In March, before the Master Manual was released, a public meeting in Garrison was held depicting what the concerns are. This meeting was a turning point in the Master Manual, in not supporting navigation in the spring. Sen. Dorgan has been working with Friends for extra funding for boat ramp work that was put in the Corps budget. Dorgan was instrumental in hatchery funding. They are also working with Corps and G&F in coordinating the ramp work and discussing priority areas, and working with Todd on the lake master manual. Governor Hoeven has been very outspoken in support of the lake water levels.

Lee mentioned signs on lakes will hopefully be put up this year, so people know the various lakes. Water management districts have been relatively inactive and they had their first meeting with them to working on the Missouri River corridor issues.

They hope to have a lobbyist in the next legislative session. It's not too early to start working on legislation for 2005. Friends coordinate with the Voices of Lake Oahe and they work together well. More and more people, including business groups, are getting involved.

T Report from Web Master Tony Burgan – Tony said there are empty spots for some of the clubs and he would like to contact them to get their information. He suggested starting a bulletin board for information purposes and to get people interested in what we do. Marie Hoerner and Tony will contact each club to see if they would like their information changed/added on the NSDFC website. The costs for the clubs' website would be incurred by the NDSFC. His hourly rate is \$25 per with no minimum fee (based strictly on time). He offered to develop each club's site with costs being picked by the club.

T Committee Reports and Assignments –
Fundraising (Mike Anderson) – Mike indicated there were record sales this year for dinner tickets (222); 216 was the next highest. Ticket sales – thanks to Dick Fink and Jim Nagel for their great efforts. There were still a few clubs that he hadn't heard from. Mike got volunteers from club members for cash raffles, auction, special raffle tables, and giving away prizes to work this evening.

T Old Business – President Ash said that we had discussed how to get more people involved and since our last meeting, letters were sent out and Congress has two new club members – Lehr Wildlife Club and Lure 'Em for Life.

T New Business

- * Fall Meeting – We will wait and see if there is any legislation that comes up. Duaine will stay in contact with Terry Steinwand.
 - * Newsletter – Article deadline is April 23 – please email or send articles to Marie Hoerner. (sportfishing@bis.midco.net or mail to: 311 Laredo Drive, Bismarck, ND 58504). We will target May 1 to mail the newsletter. Guests (G&F, Corps, etc.) were invited and encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter, as this is very important.
 - * Lobbyist – Committee members should submit names and then interview candidates. Names for lobbyist should be submitted by Nov. 1 to the Congress.
 - * Lee Klapprodt volunteered to write a letter on behalf of the Congress to be presented at the AOP (Annual Operating Plan) meeting on April 7 in Bismarck. Motion by Dick Fink, seconded by Rynee Kellar and passed.
 - * Duaine read a letter from Tracy Gartner who is interested in becoming a member of the North Dakota Advisory Board. We will submit a letter to the Governor nominating and endorsing Tracy, who would replace Barb Ash in the Devils Lake area, for a position on the Advisory Board. Motion by Ed Dosch, seconded by Bruce Hagen and passed.
 - * A motion to increase the executive secretary's month fee by \$100 was made by Ron Sahr, seconded by Ken Cumber and passed.
- < Election of Officers – Nominating Committee (Duaine Ash, Paul Kreige & Ed Dosch) – Ed Dosch conducted the nominations:
- * A motion to re-elect Vice President Paul Kriege of Dickinson for another term was made by Lee Klapprodt, seconded by Mike Anderson and passed.
 - * Nominates for “Directors at-Large” were current director Paul Haug of Fargo and Emil Berard of Dickinson. A motion to also elect (from the floor) Ed Dosch of Devils Lake was made by Lee Klapprodt, seconded by Rynee Kellar and passed. The by-laws allows for up to six “Directors at-Large”. The other two Directors at-Large are Don Baasch of Valley City and Richard Fink of Bismarck.
- < The following committees were formed and consist of:
- * Fundraiser – Mike Anderson, Richard Fink and Jim Nagel
 - * Website – Bruce Hagen, Duaine Ash and Marie Hoerner
 - * Newsletter – Duaine Ash, Ed Dosch and Marie Hoerner
 - * Membership (Individual and Club) – Paul Kriege and Emil Berard
 - * Selecting Lobbyist – Paul Kriege, Dave Bement and Duaine Ash
 - * Bylaws Committee (review) – Ron Sahr, Rick Eagleson and Paul Haug

Submitted by: Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner

Date submitted: April 5, 2004