

FALL MEETING
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2003 10:00 AM
BEAUDOIN ROOM ELKS CLUB BISMARCK, ND

Attendees: President Duaine Ash, Treasurer Rick Eagleson, Directors Don Baasch, Richard Fink, Paul Haug and Paul Kriege, Mike Anderson, Randy Bosch, Dave BeMent, Ed and Elaine Dosch, Rita Greer (Game & Fish Advisory) Joe Hall (US Army Corps of Engineers), Joe Herda, Rob Holm (Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery), Rynee Kellar, Lee Klapprodt, Doug Kelly, Mark Lamprecht, Lynn Schlueler (G&F, Devils Lake), Tony Splonskowski, Terry Steinwand (Game & Fish), and Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner.

- * President Duaine Ash called the meeting to order and everyone introduced themselves.
- * The minutes of April 12, 2003 minutes were approved as distributed.
- * Duaine mentioned that clubs in North Dakota dealing with fishing were invited to join North Dakota Sportfishing Congress via a letter; however, some clubs don't meet during the summer and still may consider membership. We did get two new club members Lure Em for Life and Lehr Wildlife Club.
- * Rick Eagleson gave the treasurer's report from April 12, 2003 through Sept. 27, 2003 showing income of \$13,626.16 with total year-to-date income of \$23,935.60, total expenses of \$12,195.46 and an ending balance on 9-27-03 of \$11,740.14. Rick also presented the 2003 Fund Raiser income and expense statement revealing a net profit of \$3,899.39. A motion was made by Mike Anderson, second Paul Haug and passed to approved both statements.
- * North Dakota Game & Fish Report (Terry Steinwand)
Review fishing proclamation The fishing proclamation was discussed at the last meeting and Terry asked what NDSFC would like to see in the proclamation. He said they will be reviewing all non-standard regulations. Regulations are used to optimize fishing. ND is getting a little complicated as before.

Paddlefish has a decreasing population and G&F will likely continue with current regulations no limit on the number of tags available but have the ability to close down the fishery if it appears that harvest in excess of 1,000 is likely to occur. Lottery system was discussed but decided to give the current format two more years. Terry mentioned paddlefish spawn about every three years.

Dark house spearing has a mandatory registration, which they will continue it in order to collect another two years of data as they want to know how many are being speared. The Game & Fish will be looking at the possibility of increasing the number of lakes where it's allowed, especially those lakes currently classified as opportunistic. The G&F wants to evaluate the impact of spearing, but there may be some minor changes. They received a request from a group to discontinue dark house spearing on Spiritwood Lake and they will take a look at this and see if it's appropriate.

Red River spring conservation season They met about four years ago, to have standard regulations with MN on board-line fishing. They are considering dropping this based on the information garnered from creel surveys that show North Dakota residents are 80% of the users during that time of year and harvest is very small.

Euland Dam G&F will be discussing this to see what the best approach would be to alleviate concerns. Wardens don't believe the harvest is high. Possibly a creel census and if a high harvest is occurring, the G&F could post it as closed. Other possibilities include closing it completely but this would reduce recreational opportunity, reduced time of fishing, and others. This is very similar to complaints heard in Devils Lake the past few springs.

The Division will meet at the end of October to discuss any changes to the proclamation and larger issues will be brought forth at the fall Advisory Board meetings for comments. They are mandated to have recommendations to the Director by the first of the year. Terry said the fall Advisory Board meeting is consumed primarily by hunting issues and he recommends special meetings with clubs to discuss fishing issues.

Youell Head Dam by Cooperstown The walleye were heavy because the water was low and people were catching more than their limit. They may close it 150 feet down from the dam and would like to have the impact of reducing harvest. Could consider to have the Water Commission to put rock in, but it would be costly. They are not considering any slot limits at this time, but are waiting for some information before making the final call.

G&F is trying to get a daily limit on white bass which would be statewide, but more for the Devils Lake area.

Lee Klapprodt asked if the number of lines could be increased to more than two lines for Salmon fishing. Steinwand said he would bring it up, but may not be changed.

Ed Dosch brought us freezer limits, which prevents people from getting more than one limit a day. If there is no freezer limit there is no way of monitoring it. Possession limit is only in transport. Paul Kreige felt a possession limit would be good. Steinwand will try to push a freezer limit at a residence if NDSFC would like to see one added. SD and Wisconsin have freezer limits. You may have to break the limit down into cabin, residence limits. Brought up doing a sting operation to monitor those people who you know are breaking the limit regulations of catching more than one limit a day. Terry Steinwand said freezer limit was brought to the Advisory Board about four years ago, but was turned down. Terry would like to see letters from the clubs to the Advisory Board saying what each club would like to see regarding freezer limits. You are not going to catch everyone, but you may detour many from misuse. Terry needs our recommendations before January 1, 2003. Terry said 80% of anglers never catch their limit, so this may not be a big issue. Dave BeMet said if the limit is two, this may be too strict and may prevent G&F from passing any freezer limit. Felt we need to set a liberal freezer limit since there is no limit at the current time.

Paul Haug made a motion the freezer limited be put at two possession limits per license holder and this be changed in the fishing proclamation (i.e. 20 walleye one possession limit is 10 walleye, as the limit is different for each species) seconded by Mike Anderson and passed.

Trout designation lakes Terry passed out a handout summary of trout issue and preliminary recommendation (includes for absent members). He thanked Barnes County Wildlife, Duaine and Ed for attending this meeting. He said the cost of the proposal may not be that substantial, but the cost is complicating the regulations. Duaine asked if G&F would like anything from Sportfishing Congress. Mike Anderson said that unless we are adamantly opposed to the proposal, should we take any action on it? Ed Dosch moved that Terry's recommendations in his proposal that he presented is acceptable to NDSFC; seconded by Reiny Kellar. After discussion, Ed Dosch amended his motion to accept the concept of providing quality single species fisheries, but not at the expense of other resource users is the recommendation. Seconded by Mike Anderson and passed.

Fishing tournaments Handout on issues to be addressed by Fishing Tournament Committee was distributed (included for absent members), as well as an article from Dakota Outdoors. They hope to have a tournament committee meeting toward the end of October and any recommendations need to be presented before then. G&F has not seen an increase in the number of tournaments, but have had to deny some permits. Of the participant fees, 75% goes back to participants in prizes, 10% to G&F and 15% for resource fee. Terry would like to remove the \$5,000 cap on conservation fees. Terry asked whether G&F should try to reduce the number of fishing tournaments that are held. How are G&F going to deal with fish fries from tournament? A suggestion was made to make it a line item on the application for a designated fish fry. Should the angler be responsible for their fish or make it an angler-keep tournament, so people don't throw away their fish? It was mentioned you can't give the fish to senior citizen groups. Rynee Kellar asked how G&F controls Devils Lake with the reservation. Terry said the reservation has agreed to discuss with G&F before they bring in any kind of a fishing tournament.

Paul Haug said Minnesota cannot hold a two-day tournament which is held on both Saturday and Sunday. No live release rule was implemented this year. It was asked if we should allow fish fries to occur and for which organizations can they be held? Paul Kriege made a motion to allow the use of tournament fish to be used by nonprofit organizations. The motion was seconded by Ed Dosch and passed.

Drought impact on State Fisheries Terry passed around a lengthy weekly report prepared by Bob Froelich. Terry said water levels on the Missouri River system speaks for itself impacts on access and complaints on

salmon. Salmon is one of the biggest things in the drought this year. G&F was asked why don't you stock more salmon, but this is not simply the answer if they don't have the food (smelt). Why aren't salmon bigger? depends on habitat and if the food is not available impacts this. May look at genetics of the salmon which could cause a reduction of size. They were on a 3-year stocking rotation, but it may need to be adjusted depending on Sakakawea. Terry said the salmon ladder is in, to try to get Salmon eggs.

Statewide water levels are down and there is concern about winter kill this year, which will depend on severity of winter and snowfall amounts. They will be discussing the possibility of liberalized limits on lakes that may have larger winter kills. Terry mentioned the G&F had four new state records set this year - carp, 46# muskie (which shattered the old record), trout and small mouth bass.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Lynn Schlueler, G&F from Devils Lake, said people bring things with them by not cleaning properly. He talks to tournaments saying we need to get the boats, equipment and bait clean. He is a one-man show dealing with ANS and he needs your support; need to have people for staffing, extra man power. Game & Fish is going to put together a training video for clubs to use that tells what to look for. It was mentioned that Manitoba has had short-term spot checks for ANS. The easiest way to control ANS is to educate people to clean up after themselves. The amount is changing and more is being found. Lake Region Anglers are doing what they can and Terry applauds them for this effort. ANS will make fishing worse.

* Joe Hall, Corps of Engineers, said to call your local Weed Board if you find any salt cedar, since it is hard to kill. Joe passed around the latest forecast. He said a number of ramps were extended this past year, but cannot be extended any further. Requests for funding have been requested. He also said water levels are worse on Lake Oahe than on the Missouri River. Joe mentioned nothing is being done for boat ramps for next year and there is nothing in the budget for funding.

* **Other questions from attendees**

Randy Bosch asked about Salt cedar problem and suggested when selling hunting licenses, brochures be given to hunters to make them aware. Terry said this is already being done.

* Congressman Earl Pomeroy and Lynn Clancy, representing Senators Conrad and Dorgan, addressed our group. Pomeroy is concerned about low flows on the Missouri River system. He said fishing is the greatest growth industry in North Dakota so far. North Dakota benefits from those that come from out-of-state from fishing and hunting, which brings business to the state and its economic development. Sound use of our river system is critically important to us. Fisherman are hearty individuals. He talked about how NDSFC helped with the navigation of water legislation. The Missouri Master Manual is operating under the plan devised in the 60's. There have been delays to get better upstream protection. Important meeting held in South Dakota this past week, which Gov. Hoeven attended regarding the Missouri River system. We have other states getting involved with upstate management. We may be heading for the lowest levels this year.

Pomeroy said the Administration has not helped us in the litigation. Hope to come out with a drought management plan to help with the system and the circumstances need to be addressed. The Corps, the management of the system, has been unfair. Pomeroy said there is a cork in the cork tariff - preserve the sportfishing industry to keep the industry here in our country and not push it overseas. Pomeroy appreciates the suggestions of the SFC and will use them. He is supportive of the NDSFC's concerns.

Lee Klapprodt said with the drought situation, we fight inadequate boat access and it's difficult for the sports-related industry to get loans due to the poor fishing. Pomeroy said Ross Keys from his office is addressing the issue. Now when the reservoirs are low, it would be less costly to make the improvements to the boat ramps.

Fish kill in Devils Lake was a concern. Pomeroy asked if there is a concern about fish reproduction in the Sakakawea area? Terry Steinwand explained the low-water level situation which is of great concern to the fisheries. He said if the water levels stay low, it will be hard to maintain the fisheries.

Mike Anderson asked what North Dakota delegates do to get the Master Plan finished? Pomeroy said they have seen some success with the environmental lawsuits. Without question, the state of Missouri wants the water and thinks we are taking their water and they want it their way all the time. There is a nominal impact in the water levels in Missouri.

Randy Bosch, chairman for Voices of Lake Oahe, told Pomeroy they have been in contact with his office for over a year and have not had a response back to the letters written. Pomeroy said he was not aware of the communication and said he would have a response by Monday, Sept. 29. Pomeroy apologized that no contact had been made and assured he would find out why no contact was made. Pomeroy said they are on the same page and he wants to assist NDSFC as best as they can.

Lynn Clancy, Conrad's state director from the Bismarck office, spoke on behalf of Senators Dorgan and Conrad, since Bob Valeu was unable to attend since he was traveling with Sen. Dorgan. Lynn said they have people working on these issues, with the Governor and State Water Commission. Conrad believes North Dakota needs to know why the downstream representatives are being favored. Upper Basin states should be given as much consideration in the time of drought as the lower Basin states are given in the time of flood. Should reduce the season by five weeks, which has been disputed with the Corp. The upper Basin states are taking a greater hit. With the Corps past record, it is not hopeful we'll see something by next spring. We are dealing with a drought that no one can control and despite that, we are not going to be able to have an even flow of water. Clancy said birds and nature trails along the river are other ways to enjoy the river and they did get authorization for a Missouri River trust for the purpose of the Corps to deal. It's important to get your support to help get support at the national level.

- * Lee Klapprodt asked Clancy if both Senators could be at the Garrison meeting on Oct. 7 and we could have the congressional delegation help promote the meeting, we could boost attendance at the meeting.
- * Lee said our impacts from drought can last a decade or more. American river group said the Corps is not managing adequately to pick up the spring rise, which was part of their lawsuit. We are faced with low water levels; even if we get snowfall, the runoff wouldn't affect us until June. He said we are most concerned about management of the Missouri River in the new Master Manual. Lee passed out a handout summarizing the Sept. 25 meeting, which Gov. Hoeven attended (copy included for absent members).

An Annual Operating Plan (AOP) meeting is scheduled for October 27 in Pierre and everyone is encouraged to attend. A letter of testimony will be written for presentation at the meeting.

Annual Operating Plan is based on the Master Manual which is to be out by March 1, 2004, the date the court has said the new MM has to be released. The Corps could be fined if the deadline was not met. Keep pressing the Corps to make a change through letters, meeting, media, i.e.

* Organization Reports

Friends of Lake Sakakawea (Lee Klapprodt) Lee Klapprodt said a town hall meeting is tentative set for Oct. 7 at Garrison and we should attend and express our concerns. Lee said representatives of Friends of Sakakawea were invited to the Governor's office. Lee mentioned that signs were made and put out to mark the bays, and they continue to work with Dorgan to get money on the boat ramp extensions.

Voices of Lake Oahe (Randy Bosch) Voices of Lake Oahe was organized on Feb. 22, 2003, with a mission to provide leadership in developing recreational, agricultural, economic and environmental opportunities for Lake Oahe. The group's goals are to provide a unified voice, promote and develop Lake Oahe, provide recommendations for developing access to the lake, inform and educate others about the economic and environmental impact of maintaining adequate water levels, and to influence the Corps in updating the Master Plan for Lake Oahe. Membership dues for a business is \$50, and \$25 for individuals and families. They want to inform people and groups that the club exist, although they don't have the exposure that Sakakawea has, although the Sakakawea club has included them. They want to work with groups and want to be included with Master Plan. They are trying to get four low-water ramps put in this year. The group started in North Dakota and hope to expand to Pierre, SD after the bylaws are finished.

* Old business

SFC website President Ash asked if we would like to have a committee to oversee the site and if we need to set a budget to maintain it? Lee Klapprodt asked how many hits the website has received, but the information on hits was not available. Lee has a website with popup commercials through Tripod, which offers free website using popups; however, popups can be eliminated for an annual fee of approximately \$80. Lee and Marie will look at setting up a new website through Tripod and report back to SFC at the spring meeting.

* New business

Newsletter Deadline for articles for the next newsletter is November 1, with distribution by November 15. Articles should be emailed to Marie at sportfishing@bis.midco.net.

Spring meeting/Fund raiser Mike Anderson will check on a new date since the second week in April is Easter weekend.

Other new business Rynee Kellar will write a letter to support the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce project (know as The Desert , south of Bismarck). Lynn Schlueler made a motion that SFC support the project and the motion was passed.

Duaine Ash asked if NDSFC would renewed its membership with Friends of Lake Sakakawea (\$250). A motion was made by Lynn Schlueler to renew membership, seconded by Dave BeMent and passed.

There being no further business, President Ash adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner

Date Submitted: September 29, 2003