



NORTH DAKOTA SPORTFISHING CONGRESS BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 27, 2014 • 9:30 a.m.

JAMESTOWN GAME AND FISH OFFICES

Present: Vice President Ken Cumber, Past President Duaine Ash, Treasurer Rick Eagleson; Board Members Mike Anderson, Paul Haug and Ed Sweeney; Club Members Barb Ash, Wayne Beyer, Rick Mohan; and Game & Fish Representative Greg Power.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Ken Cumber.

A motion to approve the April 5, 2014 NDSFC meeting minutes was made by Duaine Ash, seconded by Paul Haug and passed unanimously.

Rick Eagleson presented the Treasurer's Report, indicating that there should be about \$6,000 going into Fundraiser on April 5, 2015. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Ed Sweeney, seconded by Mike Anderson and unanimously approved.

Game and Fish Update – Greg Power

Fishing this past summer was good at Lake Sakakawea; the longer term prognosis is even better as the fishery is in great shape. Meanwhile the Missouri River and Lake Oahe continues to struggle due to the 2011 flood. License sales for 2013 barely set a record for both non-resident and residence licenses; 2014 numbers won't be available until next summer. ANS issues are much easier to deal with in ND than in Minnesota due to there are so few. Curly Leaf was found in Raleigh Reservoir but came as no surprise. The Game & Fish will have a press release on Zebra Mussel this week, which are slowing coming down the Otter Tail River (also present in Lake Winnipeg). Silver Carp still found in the James River. This time of the year, it's urged to check for ANS as boats/docks are pulled out of the water. The University of Minnesota is the research center for a lot of ANS, especially Zebra Mussel.

There was a record number of tournaments held in 2014 (pushing 150 tournaments); many of the new ones were held mostly on our small lakes. The G&F has a tournament committee, which deals mainly with policies. Normally there is a new fishing proclamations every other year, but in 2015 it may need to be amended to address a couple matters. One issue that has again come up is possession limits. People are complaining about the high panfish possession limits. Many locals feel reducing the limits would extend the fisheries.

Number of new walleye lakes continues to grow and remain very promising; however, the G&F is trying to get public access for ramps is a challenge as some locals are not supportive. It's not as much as a money issue, but they don't want attention to the new lakes. G&F needs to have landowner acceptance and it's getting harder to get lake access. The bureaucracy has also increased dramatically. Power noted three recent challenges for the G&F to illustrate the point – 1) Twin Lake in LaMoure County is dealing with a blow out at the end of the boat ramp caused by boat prop wash; 2) Sibley Lake in Kidder County is being developed with cabins; however the G&F finally got the green light after two years to put in a boat ramp; and 3) Kraft Slough in Sargent County finally will get the parking lot fixed.

Greg noted that tickets issued for ANS violations doubled last year. He asked the members if they would like to see an administrative issue that plugs need to be pulled all the time when out of water. Currently, self-draining plugs are legal in Minnesota. When questioned about signage – Greg indicated DOT has the call on highway signs. All lakes have an ANS sign, but by large, the G&F does not do a lot of signage, other than what is required by law.

Gene Van Eeckhout has retired from G&F in Jamestown and the position is hoped to be filled by December. Randy Kreil also retired and interviews for his position are being held at this time.

Duaine Ash addressed the following topics:

- 1) Hatchery funding for Riverdale and Valley City. There is a congressional bill (HR 5171) that will help with some long-term deficient funding issues and would encourage writing a letter to ND Congressional delegation in support of the bill. The G&F has until October 6 to comment on a FWS strategic plan. H.R. 5026 – Fish hatchery protection act which protects the hatchery system and puts the power back into Congress. Ash suggested:
 - Track and support (perhaps letters to ND delegation) US House legislation (i.e. H.R. 5025 – Fish Hatchery Protection Act and H.R. 5171) strengthening USFWS Hatchery funding;
 - Write the USFWS asking what the Sportfishing Congress and anglers in North Dakota can do to better control the double-crested cormorant population in our state;
 - Provide general support to the Governor and legislative leaders of the Departments/Divisions fishery programs. Stress the economic value/importance of fishing in North Dakota. Also could emphasize the fishery success in ND is largely due to the flexibility provided in the Governor’s Proclamation – and not additional law; no need for new legislation;
 - Urge the Governor to support the Departments “customer first” approach and ensure it doesn’t become just another bureaucratic agency.

Following discussion, Rick Mohan volunteered to draft a letter to circulate with the clubs regarding HR 5171 and HR 5026 (hatchery issues) that can then be sent to the ND Congressional delegation. Ken Cumber said the biggest thing is to take this back to your local clubs to write. Rick Eagleson said the US Congress has high priority addressing other issues, so the hatchery issue may not get any attention at this time.

- 2) Duaine suggested we contact the USF&W on how to address the Cormorant issues in North Dakota. Greg Power said USF&W has no plans to collect data on the number of cormorants in the state and until they do it, there is no reason to address the issue. Cormorants are protected migratory species. Power said most people don’t have nothing against cormorants, but their numbers need to be controlled.
- 3) Provide general support to the Governor and legislative leaders of the Departments/Divisions fishery programs and stress the economic value/importance of fishing in North Dakota. Make sure the G&F budgets are not touched. Terry Steinwand goes in front of the Audit Committee next week to provide an update. It was the consensus of the NDSFC to go back to the clubs and encourage them to provide support to the G&F on fisheries issues.

Duaine Ash made a motion for Ken Cumber to replace Clark Williams on the ND Game & Fish Tournament Committee. The motion was seconded by Mike Anderson and passed.

Following discussion on the open “President” seat on the ND Sportfishing Congress Board (due to the resignation of Clark Williams), Vice President Ken Cumber will step up as President and Past President Duaine Ash will take the VP position. A motion was made by Mike Anderson, seconded by Ed Sweeney and passed to accept these appointments. A search for board candidates will continue.

Mike Anderson and Duaine Ash reported there was no interest or recommendation for a lobbyist during the 2015 legislative session. It was suggested to contact Terry Fleck to see if the Friends of Lake Sakakawea lobbyist would also be interested in lobbying for NDSFC. Greg Power said that Friends will likely be meeting next month. Wayne Beyer will also contact the Wildlife Federation at their meeting in Wahpeton next month and determine their interest in lobbying for the NDSFC as well.

The NDSFC Annual Meeting/Fundraiser is set for Saturday, April 18, 2015 at AMVETS Club in Bismarck. Marie Hoerner will confirm the dates with the AMVETS. It is the committee's understanding that Dave Bement and Richard Fink will coordinate the details again in 2015. Rick Eagleson and Paul Haug will be securing merchandise for the April fundraiser in December. Rick Eagleson said he was required to provide details for tax purposes on the prize winners, so he recommends getting a permit in December 2014.

No meeting date was set for early 2015, but will be determined if necessary pending legislative issues addressed during the 2015 legislative session.

New Business – It was the feeling of the majority of the members that Measure 5 on the November ballot be opposed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m..

Date Submitted: September 28, 2014

Submitted by: Marie Hoerner