



North Dakota Sportfishing Congress Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 12, 2008 – 10:00 a.m. (CT)
Eagles Club (1400 Collins Avenue) – Mandan, ND

Members Present: President Clark Williams; Board members Mike Anderson, Duaine Ash, Ed Dosch, Rick Eagelson, Richard Fink, Paul Haug, Rick Lee, Lynn Schlueter, and; Members: Randy Anderson, Dave BeMent, Miles Bobb, Dave Bement, Ken Cumber, Curt Decker, Loran Hibel, Dean Hildebrand, Perry Kapaun, R.A. Kellar, Doug Kelly, Ron Kraft, Joe Neuenschwander, Nathan Selchert, Tony Splonskowski, Ed Sweeney. Others Present: Terry Steinwand, Greg Power, Randy Hiltner, Paul Bailey and Dave Fryda, Game & Fish; Phil Brown, US Corps of Engineers; Steve Krenz, US Fish & Wildlife Services; Jesse Hanson, ND Parks & Rec; Bob Valeu, Office of Senator Dorgan and Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner.

- President Clark Williams called the meeting to order. He thanked everyone for attending. Since this was his first meeting as president, he told a little bit about himself and said that he was also president of the Lake Region Anglers Association in Devils Lake. All participants then introduced themselves and indicated who they represented.
- The minutes of the April 14, 2007 and August 18, 2007 meetings were approved as distributed. Motion was made by Duaine Ash, seconded by Lynn Schlueter and passed.
- Treasurer Rick Eagleson distributed the “Treasurer’s Report” and a motion to approve the Treasurer’s report was made by Lynn Schlueter, seconded by Paul Haug and passed.
- Past President Duaine Ash presented a plaque to Bob Valeu for his service and support of the fishing industry. He worked for Senator Dorgan for the past 15 years and will be retiring in May. Valeu appreciated the relationship in working with NDSFC and the other groups in the state, including the G&F. Reiny Kellar commented on the support at the Hazelton boat landing – electricity, playground.
- North Dakota Game and Fish Department:
 - Greg Power – State of Fisheries – Commented that the G&F got a \$1 million thanks to Sen. Dorgan and Bob Valeu's efforts. He touched on the administrative areas of G&F – nearly 50% of the fishing efforts are made up of Lake Sakakawea, Missouri River and Devils Lake. The G&F is made up of four divisions (fisheries is the smallest of all department) – Management/Research (most of staff); Development (boat ramp work), Habitat Protection/Rehabilitation (SOL and ANS); and Production (distribution and spawning of fish). Status of water bodies – approximately 285 active water bodies, very little winterkill expected on district lakes, and drought becoming increasingly serious statewide. Power talked about the new rules in the 2008 ND Fishing Guide effective April 1, 2008 (recap of the 36 changes), proclamation and administrative rules (ANS, private fish hatcheries, and bait vendors – ~ 230 retail and 30 wholesale vendors in the state). He said that North Dakota is a large exporter of fathead minnows (the most common bait). Power said that regarding potential legislation, fishing has a history of lack of legislative mandates and thus changes can be done by proclamation or administrative rule and gives more flexibility. He noted that the Department seldom sponsors bills on fishing. Division Budget – Approximately \$8.5M for 2007-2009 biennium (approximately \$6M are federal aid monies). Estimated anglers expenditures for fishing ND waters range between \$150-\$250M annually.

Power noted that resident and non-resident fishing license trends in ND has done okay, even though we've lost some lakes due to drought the last couple of years. About \$2M is generated in fishing license sales (and \$3M in federal aid) annually. Average angler spends \$952 a year on fishing. ND has one of the lowest license fees. Miscellaneous – The G&R has only one change in personnel and that was the addition of one staff member (Wes Erdle). Darkhouse spear fishing – be aware that if MN changes its law, than MN will be able to spear fish in ND next winter. The VHS virus is one of those ANS issues that we want to keep out of ND. It is not species specific; however Muskies and Perch are the most susceptible to this virus. Power said the lack of water continues to be a major issue for ND. Ethanol, oil industries use a lot of water. He mentioned that there are still five Advisory Board meetings to be held and he encouraged NDSFC members to attend.

- Dave Fryda – Status of Lake Sakakawea Management Activities and fisheries. Fryda showed a graph on the water levels and it has been at the 1825 drought level. He said we are coming on 6 years of low drought levels, and the challenges and opportunities are access (keeping anglers fishing; biggest challenge is keeping shore and ice fishing access). Lack of water and reservoir productivity is the base of their problems Spawning Habitat – White Earth Bay has low waters, thus not a good spawning habitat. The backbone of Lake Sakakawea is coldwater prey. Lake Sakakawea rainbow smelt population has been declining for years – about a 90% reduction. Status of the Fishery – walleye and goldeye are the most abundant of the adult fish population, but catfish is growing in numbers. Walleye growth in Lake Sakakawea has declined remarkably in recent years to due the forage issues. Most of the walleye population will be in the 14-18” range; have not seen any major decline in the sauger population; and have seen an improvement in the Chinook salmon in the past year, but nothing like in the good years.
- Paul Bailey (Moved to Bismarck about 1 1/2 years ago) – Missouri River/Lake Oahe Walleye Relative Abundance. In 1999, there was a lot of walleye, and have remained stable since. One of the main reasons the walleye are doing well is the forage base. Lake Oahe has a rebounding smelt population. Also, gizzard shad have also been helpful for the predators. G&F often electrofish the river for population surveys. Northern pike and perch numbers are relatively low in the Missouri River and Lake Oahe. Small mouth bass are good in the Bismarck area. Pike and perch numbers are down in South Central North Dakota, but excellent walleye populations. Walleye stocking has been essential to the South Central ND fisheries. The G&F have marked the stocked fish to determine the numbers from stocking or natural fish production, which helps determine where the stocking is needed. In 2007 paddlefish were sampled in the river – took samples of the paddlefish jaws to determine the age of the paddlefish. Paddlefish have the ability to live up to 50 years, and it was determined that there is an aging paddlefish population. Gizzard shad may be competing for food with paddlefish.
- Randy Hiltner – Devils Lake Update – Water level has dropped about 2 feet from the recent high. Devils Lake spawning has been based on 6-Mile Bay and the egg equality was about average. 1,000 walleye were tagged in 2007 and about 20% of tag returns have been reported to date. Stocked 931,000 perch in 2007, which was the 2nd year of a 3-year perch stocking of one million per year. In July, G&F does a netting survey – Highest catch rate for walleye since it began in 1992. White bass catch rate was high in 2007 and perch catch rate improved, but is still behind 16-year average. Results indicated there are a lot of walleye in the 15-20” range. Perch is low on the size. Hiltner said the perch, walleye and white base were all abundant at Devils Lake. Perch net catches were below average from 2002-2005, but were improving. Hiltner also reported on the Devils Lake Creel Survey 2007 and 2008 – May-October: 6% of walleye measured were greater or equal to 20 inches. They also conducted a Devils Lake Scud Survey, which was completed in January, with the same lake-wide average for the last two years. There will be a fair amount of

effort on Devils Lake boating access this summer including hopefully putting a ramp on the west side of Pelican Bay near Hwy 281. In summary, Devils Lake water levels are still relatively high, while most of the state has seen water levels drop significantly. Walleye, pike and white bass fishing should continue to be good at Devils Lake in the future as there are currently high numbers of young fish. The G&F is still concerned about carp, as well as VHS virus and zebra mussel, etc. coming from the east into Devils Lake.

- Lynn Schlueter –ANS – As an G&F employee, Schlueter thanked NDSFC for being on the ANS Oversight Committee dealing with regulations (prohibited species list), which came into effect with the new fishing regulations on April 1, 2008. He talked about the importance of controlling ANS and that the new laws are an extension of prevention. As far as monitoring, the G&F will continue to monitor the high use waters, as well as the bait fish ponds and the bait industry, talking to fishing tournament officials, and education efforts are being conducted (the reason why to control ANS). Schlueter said “the laws are in place and we have that to work with.”

Billings Lake – Schlueter said that \$56,000 in manpower went out to prevent carp and the G&F is working on getting permitting from the various agencies to prevent problem species from coming into Devils Lake. Billings Lake is located south of Loma (SW of Langdon).

- Corps of Engineers; Phil Brown, Lake Manager, Garrison Project – Brown thanked NDSCF for their participation in the Master Plan (how to manage the lands around the lake). Typically done in-house, but did it different for Garrison; a Steering Committee was formed to get a more quality product. He said the Master Plan wasn't updated since 1978. The forecast – Basin is sitting at 40% runoff; Yellowstone 100% runoff. He also talked about the conservation measures. Ramp Access – similar to the last 4 years; at 70%. Mentioned a committee was formed with a member from G&F, Friends, Parks & Rec, Jason Johnston and Clark Williams – to work on lake access. Shoreline Access – 54 areas to get access. The Corps regulations prohibit driving off established roadways. Coldwater conservation measures – Corps will be meeting with Terry Steinwand & Greg Power of the G&F.
- Parks and Recreation; Jason Johnston, Projects & Maintenance Coordinator – Johnston said the Capital and Major Improvement Budget for this biennium was \$2,025,000. There are new docks at Devils Lake with the help of G&F, and Beaver Creek State Park is putting in a courtesy dock. Parks & Rec has been working on campgrounds at Fort Stevenson State Park, the first one with sewer. \$675,000 is targeted for road improvements in this biennium. At Lake Metigoshe State Park, they are looking at a beach and boat parking expansion. Big ticket improvements are comfort stations (restroom facilities). Talked about other projects Parks & Rec are working on, including boat ramps. Grahams Island boat ramp is being expanded (doubling the width), along with the help of the G&F.
- US Fish and Wildlife; Steve Krentz – Fish & Wildlife manages the refuge fisheries. Will possibly see some kill on Lake Darling. Krentz said there are a lot of carp at Lake Ilo (by Killdeer) and talking about doing some renovation. Promoting good fishing on refugees. He also mentioned the Great Plains Prairie Partnership is to bring people together to pool their resources. They primarily focused on rivers and streams, but will provide more information as it becomes available and will keep President Clark updated.
- Hatcheries; Rob Holm, Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery – Holm mentioned they at Valley City are the only hatcheries in ND and they partner with the G&F. Their role is to provide recreational fishing opportunities, maintain native fish species where appropriate, develop partnerships to more efficiently preserve our fisheries resources and recover endangered aquatic species. G&F stock and survey the waters, and F&W raise fish. He said they are down on coldwater fish stocking (salmon, rainbow and brown trout). They have a request from G&F on stocking various species. Reviewed the

2007 Hatchery production at Garrison Dam and Valley City National Fish Hatchery. Garrison Dam exceeded coolwater requests. Holm said half of the ponds are lined and they received moneys through the efforts of Senator Dorgan's office. 12 of 24 ponds are completed with liners (liners increase production). G&F has built 40 new ponds for F&W. More walleye have been hatched, compared to chinook and pike. The Hatchery production helps with the G&F request for stocking. Pallid Sturgeon – 248,800 pallids stocked in Missouri River; 28% were stocked in 2007. Got back into paddlefish production, which were last stocked in 1997. Holm said it costs less to hatch a walleye than any other species because of the large volume of the requests.

■ Committee Reports

- Fundraiser; Mike Anderson – Anderson said the local ticket sales are down from other years, but out-of-town are up, so total sales are about the same. As in past years, volunteers are needed to help with special raffle sales. He said the fundrasier is where the NDSFC gets its operational funds for the years.
- Ron Liudahl Memorial Scholarship Fund; Ken Cumber – Cumber gave an update saying that the fund is doing really well. Whatever funds go into the funds, Liudahl's wife and daughter will match. He said that Voices of Lake Oahe, Dakota Anglers and NDSFC are the only clubs that contributed to the fund (\$8,200 in fund). He mentioned the scholarship fund is set up through the North Dakota Community Foundation and is tax-deductible. Scholarships will go for wildlife conservation or fisheries field. Names will be submitted by the G&F and then go back to ND Community Foundation for selection. Duaine Ash asked if the NDSFC was going to make an additional contribution to the Luidahl fund. President Williams encouraged the individual clubs to make contributions and not from NDSFC at this time. After discussion, it was decided that the individual clubs should be encouraged to support the scholarship fund.
- By-Laws Committee; Paul Haug, Rick Eagleson, Sahr – No changes are being recommended.
- Membership – It was noted that five current clubs have not yet paid their 2008-09 dues. Clark Williams said that Lake Region Anglers has the NDSFC membership dues on their application form.

■ Old Business

- Website – Clubs are encouraged to at least put their mission statement and officers, contact information, and application form on the NDSFC website. It would also be helpful to put your club events on the calendar of events.
- Elections – A motion was made by Ash, seconded by Neuenschwander and passed to re-elect Vice President Lynn Schlueter, and Board Members Paul Haug, Rick Lee and Ed Dosch for another two-year term.
- Lobbyist – NDSFC shared Duaine Ash's lobbying costs with Friends of Lake Sakakawea and there have been some differences, so Friends is going their own way. NDSFC will look at other alternatives, instead of having Ash represent the NDSFC, due to the travel costs.
- Newsletter – Club information/articles should be submitted by May 1, with the newsletter to be printed by mid-May.

- New Business – A motion was made by Ash, seconded by Haug and passed to increase the executive secretary's fee by \$50.

- The NDSFC Annual Meeting and Fundraiser is usually targeted for the 2nd week in April, although in 2009 Easter falls on that weekend. Following discussion, a motion was made by Haug, seconded by

Bosch and passed that the 2009 annual meeting and fundraiser be held Saturday, April 4, 2009, assuming the date is available at the Mandan Eagles.

- Reed Sporting Goods in Walker, MN supports the club with discounted prizes for the annual fundraiser. Jeff Arnold who is the owner was presented with a plaque for his efforts.
- A bill for the cost of awards and postage/paper to mail membership applications was submitted by President Williams. A motion to reimburse Williams for his expenses was made by Ash, seconded by Schlueter and passed.
- President Williams commented that he learned a lot in the last year since he was away from the fish for some time. He thanked past President Duaine Ash for his support, and Rick Eagelson and Paul Haug for their efforts in getting prizes for the fundraiser. Williams said we serve the fisherman in two ways – clubs and membership, as well as the G&F Department. We are basically a political organization as we work with clubs, G&F and the ND Legislature. He has been informing members via email and encouraged everyone to provide their email address. He said if there are issues of concern not addressed, to please let him know.
- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Marie Hoerner, Secretary

Date submitted: April 20, 2008