



NORTH DAKOTA SPORTFISHING CONGRESS

ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

APRIL 20TH, 2013 – 10:00 AM • Mandan Eagles Club

Participants: President Clark William; Vice President Ken Cumber; Past President Duaine Ash, Treasurer Rick Eagleson; Board members: Dave BeMent, Ed Dosch, Paul Haul, Ed Sweeney; Members: Randy Anderson, Brian Dahlin, Richard Fink, Jason Kohlman, Clayton Schumaker, Tony Splonskowski; ND Game & Fish representatives Terry Steinwand, Greg Power, Duane DeKrey, Scott Gangle, Fred Ryckman, Cory Uork; Rob Holm, Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery; Steve Krentz, USFWS; and Secretary Marie Hoerner.

President Clark Williams called the meeting to order.

PRESENTATIONS

- Rob Holm, Project Leader, Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery
Holm said that last year was a great year for the ND hatcheries. They exceeded both pike and walleye requests stocking out 2.5 million pike and 10 million walleye. The Chinook salmon program provides some unique opportunities for the anglers and visitors as well. The salmon return to the hatchery in October allowing opportunities for visitors to see the adult salmon on their spawning run up a creek into the hatchery. Holm said the G&F also shocks fish from Lake Sakakawea for spawning at the Hatchery. The NDG&F assists with other programs at the hatchery including spawning and stocking pike and walleye and on occasion crappie and bluegill. When the paddlefish population is down, the hatchery will also stock paddlefish; the last time was in 2011 when 38,000 eleven inchers were stocked in Sakakawea. They are also doing some shovelnose sturgeon restoration, and now starting a sauger restoration program – both in Wyoming. Pallid sturgeon recovery continues – over 200,000 juveniles have been stocked. The program has been very successful over the past decade and now with a fairly stable population in the river, work on the species at the hatchery is less intense. Holm mentioned that kids from around the state are coming to tour the Hatchery. There are tanks set up specifically for the kids, so they can touch the fish and eggs. The Hatchery sponsor a kids' fishing derby, with the help of the Great Planers. They also sponsor a derby for the nursing home residents. Other outreach includes a 1.3 mile hiking trail along the river which doubles as a groomed cross country ski trail in the winter.

Holm also gave an update on the Valley City National Fish Hatchery production, including some renovations in the facilities and ponds. Valley City NFH is getting more involved in other non-traditional species including lake sturgeon and mussels. The Hatchery will be stocking out muskies for the first time in many years – Red Willow, and Garrison Diversion.

Holm mentioned that of the US Fish & Wildlife Service 2013 Budget, only 4% is dedicated to the Fish Hatchery System. The majority of the Hatchery budget from the FWS (\$296,000) is tied up in salaries/benefits with four permanent employees. If they want to continue with recreational fishing programs, they need funding from other agencies. G&F is being asked to provide \$280,000, up \$30,000 from last year. The US Army Corps of Engineers is also now contributing \$125,000 for stocking in Corps reservoirs. The US Fish & Wildlife Service policy continues its focus on native species and habitats. FWS hatcheries (Garrison and Valley City) will support native fish stockings (walleye/pike/perch/sturgeons) as a priority, however other non-native recreational fish stockings (trout/salmon) will need financial support from the G&F. 2014 budget request for USFWS has an overall increase of 4.8% with the hatchery system seeing a 1% increase.

- Steve Krentz: Project Leader, USFWS, Missouri River Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
Krentz mentioned their main focus is working with the endangered species program and to determine what the stocking activities should be. They work with the refuge system and the tribes. The tribes have the responsibilities to manage their own (Turtle Mountain and Spirit Lake by Devils Lake). Also working with the Fish Passage Program and Fish Habitat Program. Fish Passage Program works with the local communities, landowners

to try to keep the fish on the landscape, while the Fish Habitat Partnership work together to conserve aquatic resources of rivers and streams throughout the prairies of the central United States. Working with the G&F on some of their efforts. The last couple of years they were working on conservation projects.

- Greg Power, ND Game & Fish, Fisheries Division Chief
Power gave a “state-of-the-state” recap on the fisheries in the state of ND. About one-half of all statewide fishing participation and effort occurs on Lakes Sakakawea, Oahe (including Missouri River), and Devils Lake. Two of the big three fisheries continue to be in very good shape Status of fishing water bodies – currently 400 active water bodies, which is a record. . Winterkill – initially not thought to be many, but numbers are likely rising on district lakes. Dry conditions – south and west of Ashley-Crosby line is becoming increasingly concerning (although recent snow will be helpful), north and east conditions much better.

Fisheries Divisions are divided into four sections. Management matters – more of the usual, although there are some sampling challenges with so many lakes: ANS monitoring; and Special studies, VCSU and SDSU studies anywhere from ANS, river tagging studies, etc. . Development Matters – Missouri River System and Devils Lake and are in decent shape thus able to get to more of the district lakes this summer. Fish cleaning stations are very costly and need local sponsors, which are hard to find. Award – NDSFC received an award from AFS. Devils Lake has a heated, indoor fish cleaning station, which is a one-of-a-kind station. The Corps states that the tailrace fishing cleaning station will be up and running again this year.

Wahpeton Park Board – Award from G&F Production Matters – Federal hatcheries continue to meet all requests; VC updates are impressive; spillway work; newer work on walleye “fry” stockings; concerns regarding FWS direction/prioritization coming from D.C. NDSU fishing/hunting expenditure study – Estimated annual expenditures for anglers fishing ND waters range at \$425M (and hunting expenditures at \$217M); according to study, fishing generates \$904 M.

Legislative Recap – Fishing and hunting licenses fees will increase in April 2014; Boat registration fees increase in January 2014; Fishing License Structure – currently about \$2M is generated in license sales (and \$4M in federal aid) annually. New pricing structure will likely generate an additional \$1M. ND fishing license costs, even with the increases, will remain the lowest for all surrounding state.

Power said the G&F want northern pike to be caught and harvested, since there are so many pike in the lakes. He also mentioned the G&F website has been updated and has a lot of mobile apps. Also, lists all of the fishing lakes are on their website and over 250 lakes have contour maps. Power said that each of the six district supervisors determine which of the lakes get stocked.

- Scott Gangl reported for Dave Fryda, Missouri River System Fisheries Supervisor on the Missouri River System Upper Lake Oahe and the Garrison Reach of the Missouri River – record predator abundance (walleye and pike); low forage abundance.
SD G&F monitoring of Oahe's rainbow smelt population which declined. Walleye condition – not good with many more skinny walleye. Garrison Reach and Lake Oahe walleye mortality was very stable until 2012, which increased. Walleye abundance decreased quite a bit in 2012. The walleye length structure has also declined in 2012. ND G&F are working with SD to restock Gizzard Shad. They are currently embarking a tagging study on walleye and are working with SDSU/SDGFP on this project. Tagging from Garrison Dam to Oahe Dam – tagging about 10,000 walleye and monitor mortality, in order to make management adjustments. This is a five-year study, so it will take some time to get the results.
Gangl showed slides on how the Missouri River has changed around the Hoge Island from 1938, 1950 and to the current day.
Lake Sakakawea fishery – summer of 2011, a large number of smelt came out of the dam but not as bad as Oahe Dam. Smelt decreased in 2012, compared to 2011 and 2010. Sauger abundance has maintained, as well as walleye. Northern pike are at record high levels on Lake Sakakawea in 2012. Salmon fishing in 2012 has been very good, even though quite a few did flush through the dam in 2011. He said the tag returns from anglers was higher. G&F electro fished for 10.3 hours on Sakakawea for salmon spawning and collected salmon from the hatchery channel on 7 different days. Sent 585,000 eggs to South Dakota and 70,000 eggs to Montana. We

collected 1,705,000 eggs from 553 good females. He mentioned the Corps provides a Mountain Snowpack Water Content on their website.

- Fred Ryckman, ANS Coordinator & NW Fisheries District Supervisor
Ryckman said a lot has happened since last year with ANS. In 2012, the G&F sampled for ANS over 250 waters across the state (400 total lakes). Mentioned that the number of actual inspections were higher in 2006 and 2009 (150 at Devils Lake). ANS was found in 2012, Common Carp (dozens of waters; few new), Curley Leaf pondweed (Metigoshe, MR System, Elsie, only new frustration) and Silver Carp (James River). ANS not found in 2012 – Eurasian water milfoil, rusty crayfish and didymo. No documentation for rusty crayfish in ND, but they will do more checking. Ryckman said they are working on report of biological assessment of existing ANS impacts and the report should be completed in the next couple of weeks. If interested let Fred know. They also plan to conduct an intensive crayfish sampling effort in 2013, in conjunction with VCSU. The ANS risk assessment report by Brooks and Schleuter was conducted in 2003 needs to be revised and determine what has changed in the last 10 years. Zebra mussels on rocks at Orwell Dam on Ottertail River. Did not find any Zebra mussel in ND last year, larvae or adults. Zebra mussels and sulfates or perhaps other chemical, physical or water quality parameters, which may limit invasion. G&F has put up ANS signs at boat docks and will continue to replace them. Ryckman said that ANS issues associated with oil and gas is a real issue. Boat Inspection Issues in 2013: Inspection and decontamination training will be conducted (likely during district warden meetings), with Fisheries and some other department staff attending. Numerous inspections for ANS were completed on commercial equipment in the past several months, and nonresidential wholesale bait site and facility inspections will occur within the next month in ND. Friends of Lake Sakakawea was again awarded a fairly substantial grant to conduct a variety of public outreach and education sessions. Said the Public Awareness Survey reveals that the public awareness is increasing. Feedback from everywhere else is to focus on prevention and more prevention!
- Legislative Update: Duane DeKrey, ND Game and Fish Deputy Director
DeKrey said the G&F had an overall good session, but not all bills are settled as of April 20. He then highlighted a number of bills of interest to the G&F:
 - HB 1017 – budget bill (starts in house or senate every other year). Governor signed a bill with fee increases at the request of groups such as the NDSFC and others, requesting the need for an increase. Fee increase will take effect in the next biennium, providing around a \$5M increase. G&F is required to carry a \$15M balance into the next biennium. The ND House added a game warden into the agency and eliminated some of the Wildlife Services funding. Did have \$200,000 for housing in the western part of the state, but was taken out to pool through somewhere else. Senate put the \$200,000 back in the budget along with the game warden, but are waiting to see the results. Special funds agency – all income comes from the federal government (44% of budget). With the gun issue, the federal funds have been going up. The balance of the budget comes from fishing/hunting licenses and boat registrations.
 - HB 1130 – fee increase bill – changed to an electronic licensing bill. There are a lot of issues to iron out before being finalized. The bill has been signed.
 - HB 1161 – Proof of residency – When you buy a license on line, need a drivers license, student ID, or state-issued ID.
 - HB 1336 – Paddlefish lottery – assure you have a full season to get and may go into effect in 2014.
 - HB 1338 – Return of the Corps lands to State. Got changed over to a \$100,000 study being conducted by the State Land Department, with input from the G&F.
 - HB 2231 – Hunting and fishing license fees – provides for an increase of numerous hunting and fishing fees.
 - HB 2175 – Governor's Heritage Bill (questions regarding fishing on bill) – signed by governor.
 - SB 2232 – disabilities fishing bill and they are trying to amend HB 2175. Senate and House are pretty far apart on the issues.
 - SB 1278 – Duaine Ash talked to Representative Porter about the NDSFC being one of the supporters.

Duaine Ash, lobbyist for the NDSFC, will provide a summary of the bills in the North Dakota Sportfishing Congress newsletter, which will be mailed in late May. DeKrey and Power said that the NDSFC has been one of the organizations that has been listened to by the legislators. Power said the fee increases were the exact amounts recommended by the NDSFC.

Terry Steinwand – Flood Control Act of 1944 – encouraged NDSFC members to send a letter in US Congressional members Hoeven, Heitkamp and Cramer.

REPORTS/APPROVALS

- A motion to accept the 12/8/12 NDSFC Board minutes as written was made by Duaine Ash, second by Paul Haug and unanimously passed.
- Treasurer Rick Eagleson provided a written financial report as of April 20, 2013 including the current fundraiser income and expenses, as well as an income/expense comparative on the past three fundraisers. A motion to approve the report was made by Paul Haug, seconded by Ed Dosch and unanimously passed.
- President Williams said that Duaine Ash has \$6,600 of expenses in lobbying expenses during the 2013 legislative session. A motion to approve the reimbursement of \$6,600 to Ash for lobbying expenses was made by Ed Dosch, seconded by Ed Sweeney and unanimously passed. Clark thanked Ash for the great job he has done during the legislative session.
- Mike Anderson provided a brief update on the fundraiser this evening. He said that ticket sales are up – over 200 tickets sold and there may be a problem if the last minute door sales go up.
- Marie Hoerner gave a membership report, indicating there are currently 585 members on the mailing list, with 89 paid members.
- E-tree (individuals & clubs) – Let President Clark Williams know who is the best person at your club who he should be contacting.
- Ken Cumber reported that \$650 was given this year to the Ron Luidahl Scholarship Fund and that about \$20,500 remains in the fund. Cumber mentioned that contributions can be given to ND Community Foundation (309 N. Mandan Street, Bismarck, ND 58501).

ELECTIONS – President, Treasurer, 4 Board Positions (Don Baasch, Mike Anderson, Dave Bement, Ed Sweeney)

- Ken Cumber, VP and member of the Nomination Committee presided over the President nomination and elections. The Nominating Committee nominated Clark Williams, incumbent. There were no further nominations from the floor. Paul Haug motioned that nominations cease and that a unanimous vote be cast. The motioned was seconded and unanimously passed.
- Clark presided over the rest of the Elections.
- Nominating Committee nominated Rick Eagleson, incumbent Treasurer, for Treasurer and incumbent Board Members: Don Baasch, Mike Anderson, Dave Bement and Ed Dosch for the Board Again. No further nominations for Treasurer. Dave Bement nominated Richard Fink and Clark nominated Jason Kohlman from the floor for the Board. The number of Board Positions for the Congress is flexible up to 9. A motion was made by Paul Haug that all nominations cease and that a unanimous vote be taken for the candidates. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

NEWSLETTER – Articles for the next newsletter should be submitted to the secretary by Wednesday, May 15 (sportfishing@bis.midco.net). The newsletter is scheduled to be mailed and posted on the NDSFC website by the following week.

NEW BUSINESS

- The 2014 Annual Meeting and Fundraiser is currently set for April 5th 2014 at the Mandan Eagles.
- Greg Power said there is renewed interest in establishing a fishing club in Minot (Nodak Anglers Association). This group could be approached for possible club members of the NDSFC. Power also said there are two bass groups in ND (Minot – transplant from down south), as well as the Bass Bandits in Dickinson.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Submitted by: Marie Hoerner, Secretary
Date Submitted: April 28, 2013