

NORTH DAKOTA SPORTFISHING CONGRESS

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 23, 2005 – 11:00 a.m.

Elks Lodge (900 S. Washington St.) – Bismarck, ND

Members Present: President Duaine Ash; Board members Rick Eagelson, Paul Haug, Don Baasch, Richard Fink and Bruce Hagen; Mike Anderson, Dave Bement, Steve Goldade, Frank Kartch, Reinold Kellar, Doug Kelly, Lee Klapprodt, Steve Krentz, Todd Lindquist, Ron Sahr, Lynn Schlueter, Bryan Siegel, Gene Van Eeckhout and; Terry Steinwand, Game & Fish; Rita Greer, ND Game & Fish; Todd Sando, State Water Commission; Rob Holm, Garrison Dam Fish & Hatchery; Bob Valeu, Sen. Dorgan's Office; and Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner.

- The meeting was called to order by President Duaine Ash. All attendees introduced themselves at the start of the meeting.
- The minutes of the Jan. 8, 2005 meeting were approved. Motion Paul Haug, second by Bruce Hagen.
- Treasurer Rick Eagelson distributed the "Treasurer's Report" showing a beginning balance of \$11,048.76 on 1-8-05 and ending balance of \$11,787.14 on 4-23-05 (prior to the 4-23-05 fund raiser). This report revealed total income of \$2,880.00 and total expenses of \$2,141.62. A motion to approve the financial statement was made by Richard Fink, second by Mike Anderson and passed.
- Todd Lindquist, project manager for the Corps of Engineers, gave an update on boat ramps and Corps access. He said three ramps are open at this time, expecting 12 ramps open by Memorial Day and 19 by June which is about the best it will be and it will be back down to around 14 by the end of the season. He said they received Congressional funds of \$625,000 in special appropriations through Sen. Dorgan's office. Todd mentioned that bids have been coming in higher than government estimates, and road restrictions and fuel prices are making the prices higher. In some instances, the Corps is limited to the funds, but is hopeful the ramps will still be put in. Terry Steinwand commented that the Charging Eagle ramp probably will not be done this year. Terry thanked Bob Valeu from Dorgan's office for their efforts. As water levels decline by July 4, there will probably be about 14 boat ramps and some will be single usage due to water access. There will be decreased shoreline access, with some up to one mile. The Corps looked at 45 areas for shoreline access. They issued a policy for vehicle access at 14 areas of the lake and a contractor is out there now putting up signage to these areas. The current regulations do not allow vehicle access to the water, but the policy would allow this. The policy will be evaluated annually. Todd said the State Parks and Rec is supposed to be working on an ATV usage plan for the state but is not sure how far that plan has progressed.
- Report from ND State Water Commission (Todd Sando) — The Water Commission is working with the Corps and other agencies on the Master Manual. One issue not settled was the spring rise process and this is a big issue, so they are hiring a mediator. The Corps Planning Group will consist of basin state representatives, SD representative, Missouri Conservation – the rest will be tribal and two from the primary uses, i.e. water supply. The conflict resolution needs to be done by Sept. 1. The mandatory spring rise will be in the plan, which has created a lot of opposition. They plan to do a spring rise next spring, which needs to be determined when to do it and it could cost over a \$1 million. The first meeting will be May 9, 10 or 11 in Kansas City, so it may be hard to have North Dakota participate. Todd said they would like to have Lee Klapprodt involved in the meeting since he knows a lot of the issues and has been involved. He also mentioned that the number of representatives is limited for the Planning Group. The Corp group has to be small in order to get things accomplished — South Dakota has the biologist and Todd Sando as the water person. The Congress recommends that Lee Klapprodt be a part of the Corps Planning Group – motion by Bruce Hagen, second by Paul Haug and passed. Lee is to report back to the Congress.

Todd Sando mentioned that it is Lake Oahe's turn this year to maintain the reservoirs. He said the Corps had to crank up releases out of Garrison. Sakakawea will drop discharges by May and there will be record lows out of Garrison this year. They are forecasting a drop for all summer.

Modification of Garrison Intake to preserve cold water habitat – modifying the intake of water may help reduce the chances of total collapse of Lake Sakakawea's cold water fishery. Currently, Garrison's outlet draws the coldest water from the bottom of the lake significantly reducing coldwater habitat. There are a number of concerns over the modification; one being that the powerhouse needs the cool water for cooling turbine bearings. Another issue might be at the fish hatchery which also needs the cold water in propagating fish. The best solution seems to be a multi-level intake to blend the water. The governor is interested in pursuing this potential solution. Terry Steinwand said they estimate a 90% decrease in the cold-water habit that means a decrease in smelt.

- Lynn Schlueter reported on ANS & Red River issues. He said that through Duaine and the Congress' effort, the state plan has been signed by the Governor and the Feds are now looking at it. Hopefully the Fed will help fund it. Legislation passed that there is an ANS law on the book on moving ANS into the state. An ANS Committee is being developed and NDSFC may sit on it. Hopefully law by August 1. News releases of the plan will be coming out. Questions — *How do we get the cleaning of boats done? At what point do we have to quit holding your hand?* Lynn said they are going to try cleaning stations, working with Lewis & Clark and others, and also try to get grants and look at partnerships (possibly with the Corps). We are going to education groups – i.e. 4-H, fishing coordinator, school programs and adult clubs – to educate them on ANS. Lynn noted that education will be next year at the earliest, due to funding and producing the intended affects.

Red River Issues – Working on reconnecting the river and Minnesota is looking at three dams. Fishing regulations have been a big issue.

It was noted that preventing the carp from Pembina River to Devils Lake is of great concern. Funds are needed to plug the culvert to prevent carp from moving into Devils Lake. Duaine Ash said he would like to see funding from individual clubs and not the NDSFC (to the Devils Lake Joint Board). Lee Klapprodt suggested a motion be made that the Congress encourages individual member clubs support in the way of funding to the Devils Lake project to prevent carp from Pembina River by plugging the culvert, as the NDSFC is not set up to contribute to such projects. Motion by Mike Anderson, seconded by Rynee Kellar and passed.

- Reps. Todd Porter and Ron Carlisle presented a brief overview of the fishing issues in the Legislature and mentioned that there was not a lot of fishing issues, but more hunting issues. The main pushes from the House have been in the area of private lands and public access. Guides and outfitters are taking a lot of land and outfitters are claiming more acreage under their control. Created another program within Private Lands Initiative (PLI) that allows a local community more public access around their community. Rewrote a lot of the guide and outfitters section. Now the outfitter is the business owner and is responsible for their guides. They mentioned that 40 House bills dealt with hunting. HB 1018 was the money bill, which upped the funding of G&F — Money for boat ramp (19-20 ramps by Memorial Day and 3 more to work on) and more money in the Wildlife Services. Duaine thanks the Representatives for their support of SB 2338 (ANS bill). Terry Steinwand mentioned the Legislature controls hunting and fishing licenses fees throughout the state. The following question was asked — *What is Legislature feeling on fee increases?* Rep. Todd Porter said they looked at surrounding states and made them around their fees, but not above? He said it is hard to convince the legislators of an increase when there is so much money in reserves. Ron Sahr (MN resident) said the South Dakota nonresident license is \$65, while North Dakota's nonresident is only \$37. (Note: A summary of legislative bills can be found on our website at www.ndsportfishingcongress.org.)
- Rob Holm, Riverdale Hatchery Manager, showed a "PowerPoint" presentation on — Fishing Stocking 2005 Requests – Reduction of Chinook Salmon; release Cutthroat trout (40,000); Reported on the history of ND fish stocking; Spillway Lakes – East Unit Lake; Garrison Dam provides for the West Unit Lake; Showed pictures hatchery; Effects of Low Water – Water use at the hatchery peaks in May about 6500 gpm; To date they have kept up with production levels at those of previous years; For 2005, they see a significant drop in Chinook salmon stocking by at least a third and likely two thirds; picture of the Government Bay Boat Ramp.

A special thanks to Sen. Dorgan for hatchery appropriations which provided funding for pond liners.

Steve Krentz, US Fish & Wildlife Service, said he wants to get sportsman's group involved in fishing recommendations and he plans to contact the groups.

- Terry Steinwand, ND Game & Fish Department, said that due to the ramp situation, as it relates to fishing, they can cancel tournaments. He mentioned that four were cancelled last year. The G&F has a \$49 million budget – Fisheries get \$6 ½ to 7 million; less than a million to SOL (Save Our Lakes) program; and there is currently no dollars allocated for ANS, but they have asked for \$225,000 (through an internal process). If they get federal match through ANS sources, this budget will be 75% federal and 25% state monies. A minor amount that they hope to have grown in the next few years. For the upcoming 2007 legislative session, the G&F will pursue additional positions. There is a bill in Congress that, if passed, would mean \$.048 per federal boat gas that is currently going into the general fund would go into the Sport Fish Restoration account. This would mean \$1.1 million for North Dakota but that hasn't happened yet.. G&F has a \$25 million reserve fund in case there are tough years (i.e. hunting season). They are a special fund agency and are required to have \$15 million in reserve.
- Lee Klapprodt reported on the “Friends of Lake Sakakawea” meetings. He said Friends hired Duaine Ash to be their lobbyist for this current session and it has worked well, as Duaine was also the lobbyist for the NDSFC.

A major concern being addressed by the Friends in recent years has been boat ramp access and falling levels of Lake Sakakawea. They have been working with Sen. Dorgan's office and they are very thankful for the strong leadership and support he has been able to provide the past several years.

Senator Dorgan was able to earmark \$100,000 of the Fish and Wildlife Service's budget for weed control to be managed by the Friends. The Friends will start investing those dollars in weed control in key areas as the summer progresses. They are polling their membership so they can consider the total needs before the money is spent.

Friends of Lake Sakakawea are working with the Corps in updating their Lake Sakakawea Master Plan. Corps has opened the process to the public offering several organizations an opportunity to be directly involved through an advisory group. The Advisory Committee will have a lot of direct input in determining how the land around Lake Sakakawea will be developed and used in the future. Duaine Ash was asked by the Corps to be a representative for both the Friends of Lake Sakakawea and the ND Sportfishing Congress on the Advisory Committee. This will be about an 18-month process and they would like to incorporate additional public input through public meetings.”Friends” are in the process of evaluating its current membership and has initiated a program to increase membership and participation from folks concerned about the big lake.

- Bob Valeu from Sen. Byron Dorgan's office said Sen. Dorgan has a very strong interest in making sure the fisheries and fishing progresses in the state and they will be looking at other areas, although money will be very difficult. They will try to secure additional funds. They have issues with the Corps – habitat – and will deal with issues in a proactive way to help get through this drought. Bob said was in Fort Peck and he said they definitely have a water access problem. He said Dorgan's office is looking at a Federal Drought Declaration.
- Committee Reports and Assignments:
 1. Fundraising (Mike Anderson) – Mike said we should have a crowd similar to last year (225 advance ticket range) at tonight's fund raiser and said that tickets were still available. Paul Haug will be MC; Rick Eagleson will handle raffle tickets and volunteers are needed. Richard Fink and Rynee Kellar will help with the individual raffle ticket sales. Mike mentioned that five club members have donated items for auction.
- Other Old Business:
 1. Three By-Laws changes (as printed in the Oct. 30, 2004 minutes), with this being the second reading, passed unanimously.
 2. President Duaine Ash had a statement from Friends of Lake Sakakawea for membership renewal – NDSFC gave \$250 the previous two years. Richard Fink had a concern that it wasn't in our mission state that there is funding given from NDSFC for funding. After a short discussion, it was noted that the Friends renewal was approved at the January 2005 meeting.

■ New Business:

1. Set Fall Meeting – Executive Board meeting is tentative set for August with the date to be determined.
2. Newsletter – **deadline for articles for the next newsletter is Friday, May 27.**
3. Election of Officers:
 - ◆ President – Duaine Ash was re-elected – motion by Paul Haug, second by Mike Anderson and passed.
 - ◆ Treasurer – Rich Eagleson was re-elected – motion by Bruce Hagen, second by Mike Anderson and passed.
 - ◆ Board Renewals – Richard Finch and Don Baasch; and two additional Board Members – Mike Anderson and Rynee Kellar–motion by Paul Haug, second by Don Baasch and passed.
 - ◆ President Ash said questions were generated from the Executive Committee meeting on Friday evening, April 22, 2005 – 1) How do we go about young members? 2) Should the Congress go to club meetings in the hopes of generating additional memberships? 3) Congress is the voice for G&F to help maintain the fisheries for the future of the state. Ron Sahr recommended that we put a list together of what the NDSFC has done for you – legislatively, dues, working with state and government agencies to get funding.

- Paul Haug – would like a “thank you” letter from G&F and NDSFC be sent to Reeds Sport Shop of Walker, MN who has allowed us to purchase the items for the fund raising at reduced prices.
- Emil Berard and Paul Kriege were not present so Marie Hoerner reported on the club membership renewals. All but two of the 16 current members were current paid-up members. Rick Eagleson said the Red River Valley Muskies of Grand Forks is not an active club and they should be removed. Another billing statement should be sent to the other club.
- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner

Date submitted: May 5, 2005