



P.O. Box 2472 • Bismarck, ND 58502 • www.ndsportfishingcongress.org

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May 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Clark Williams



Hello again,

As President of North Dakota Sportfishing Congress, I get to meet a lot of people who affect the fishing and outdoor opportunities in North Dakota. None are more influential than the politicians that you vote for. That includes local, state and national representatives.

Obviously our national Representative and Senators have great influence. They have acquired millions of dollars to help in times of hardship especially with Lake Sakakawea's low water and Devils Lake's high water.

But even more important, the North Dakota State Legislature and, especially the Governor's Office, set the tone for how money is spent in our state. In recent years, a disturbing movement has developed to raid Game and Fish money for projects not directly related to Game and Fish priorities. The presence of a large Game and Fish Reserve fund makes this seem easy pickins'. This is your money, generated through your license fees, your boat registration fees and your tackle and equipment purchases. Special interest groups in this state would like to tap this money for commercial development and other projects only distantly related to Game and Fish. Even Parks and Recreation which charges all users, taps Game and Fish money for ramp

and access development and then charges you to use them, even though Game and Fish policy prohibits this for all other recipients of Game and Fish dollars including tribal entities.

NDSFC urges all concerned sportsmen to use the political process to let your State Legislators and your Governor know that this policy is not acceptable to you as a sportsman or as a taxpayer. If Parks and Recreation needs more development money take it from the General Fund, if it is deemed politically important to promote commercial development use General Fund, Tourism or commercial development money.

Now is the time that the Governor's Budget is being formulated. Much of the way money is spent comes from the tone set by the Governor. Let him know if this is important to you. Contact information for Governor Hoeven can be obtained at www.governor.nd.gov/contact/.

Furthermore, let your legislators know how you feel. The contact information for your state legislators can be found at: www.legis.nd.gov/information/general/contacts.html.

And for the fall elections, find out how your candidates feel about outdoor issues. Sponsor an outdoor forum to have the candidates present their views and answer questions.

Finally, even your local politics, County Commissions and Water Boards have tremendous influence in what happens in and around your waterways and even hunting areas. We have found that out in spades in the Lake Region. The Ramsey and Cavalier County Commissions and their respective Water Boards hold the life of Devils Lake as a quality sportfishery in their hands over the issue of Carp. And most of the decisions makers are not fishermen. If we don't get involved we let others make decisions for us. If we don't like the decisions they make then it's our fault as much as theirs. In North Dakota, I've found you can make a difference.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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GAME AND FISH PERSPECTIVES

by Greg Power



The ice has left us and the waves reappeared ... spring is here and so is the 'itch' for many to wet a line. As predictable as the spring snow goose migration, another rite of spring is the curious angler inquiring about the need to protect walleye (especially brood females) using various length restriction possibilities (note: if needed, length restrictions are by far the most popular choice by North Dakota anglers for additional regulations, far surpassing spring closures, reduction in the daily limit, etc). Fishing regulations and compliance with regulations are an important everyday task of both the fisheries biologist and the angler. Because of the routine questions asked this time of the year from the fishing public regarding length restrictions, the Game and Fish Department included this subject on their eight advisory board meetings this past April. The following is a short narrative developed by some of our Department biologists that hopefully gives a little background and helps explain the process.

Generally, there are three basic types of length limits that are/have been implemented throughout the country: minimum, slot and maximum (often includes a one-over) length limits. Many of these length limits have become socially popular to some groups of anglers. However, it is critically important to understand that when not needed, length limits unnecessarily restrict anglers or may even be detrimental to the fishery. The Game and Fish Department strongly supports the philosophy that fishing should be fun and relaxing, and any additional regulation that interferes in an angler's enjoyment must have some biological justification.

The following is a list of these basic types of length limits and the criteria that must be met for their appropriate application to a fishery:

Minimum length limits are likely to benefit fisheries that meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- 1) Low reproductive or stocking success
- 2) Good growth
- 3) Low natural mortality
- 4) High angling mortality

Slot length limits are likely to benefit fisheries that meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- 1) Good natural reproduction
- 2) Slow growth, especially for small fish
- 3) High natural mortality of small fish
- 4) High angling effort

Maximum length limits (a one fish limit over a given length such as 20" or 22" is a derivative of a maximum length limit) are likely to benefit fisheries that meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

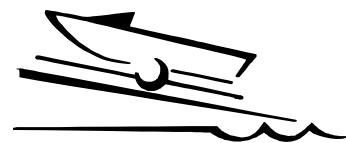
- 1) Recruitment of fish is limited by the number of brood fish
- 2) High angling mortality of large fish

Over the years, North Dakota has imposed 14-16" minimum length restrictions for walleye on a number of lakes as well as 24" minimums for northern pike on a few lakes, and a 14" minimum for largemouth bass on even fewer lakes. In recent years, there has been a one-over 24" (maximum length limit) in place for channel catfish on the Red River. Other than these instances, North Dakota does not have a strong past tied to implementing length restrictions.

In reality (in an effort to try to keep regulations as simple as possible for the angling public), the Game and Fish Department often takes other actions before we consider additional regulations on a fishery. For example, we may alter our stocking numbers if small fish are not abundant, or even, in some cases, if they're too plentiful. Another example is the introduction of forage (such as fathead minnows or yellow perch) to increase growth rates to produce larger fish.

Staff biologists routinely evaluate the need for additional regulations, including size restrictions. Using the criteria listed above, the Department has a 12-page paper, available upon request, evaluating the need for length restrictions on Lake Sakakawea, the Missouri River and Devils Lake. In addition, interested anglers can find more information on this matter on pages 2-3 of the spring issue of the North Dakota Outdoors. Rest assured the Department has and will continue to closely monitor the various fisheries across the state and if/when needed, specific regulations will be considered and possibly implemented.

Now go experience some of the very best North Dakota has to offer...get out and wet a line!!! Happy angling!



AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES (ANS)

LOSE the HITCHHIKERS

or

LOSE the LAKE

It's YOUR CHOICE!

If you have any questions about ANS, please contact:

North Dakota Game & Fish Department

100 N. Bismarck Expressway

Bismarck, ND 58501

(701) 328-6300; Email: ndgf@nd.gov

More information can be found at:

<http://www.gf.nd.gov/fishing/ans.html>

PROTECT OUR FISHING RESOURCE



A lot of discussion has gone on this winter and spring about protecting our outdoor resources. Concerned about people double dipping, snagging spawning female walleyes, poaching, and other illegal activities? It was suggested that we close off certain areas to fishing, close the season again during spawn as it used to be, increase the number of wardens, etc. Probably none of these things are going to happen in the foreseeable future.

We have a large state and one the smallest staff of wardens in the country. They do a good job but have a lot of area to cover and many responsibilities. As concerned sportsmen we can help. The Game and Fish Department has set up a program to encourage attentive sportsmen report suspected violators and even get rewarded for their efforts. An informal survey of NDSFC members shows that anglers overwhelmingly support getting involved.

RAP (Report All Poachers) works. Game and Fish doesn't actively publicize their effective efforts but take my word for it, many of the wardens most successful busts start with a RAP report. The penalties are severe also. We will have more information on the number of citations and the penalties imposed in the future since we feel that successful deterrence through public information is as important as apprehension. If we can prevent people from raping the resource in the first place its even more effective that catching them after they violated the law. You can get more information on the RAP program by going to the North Dakota Game and Fish website www.gf.nd.gov on the home page click on "report a violation" on the right side.

We have a credit card size section in this newsletter that you can cut out and include in your wallet that has all the important phone numbers on the front and the information that law enforcement will find most helpful on the back. Use it; protect your fishing and hunting resource.

R.A.P.
REPORT ALL POACHERS

1-800-472-2121

THE MISSOURI RIVER & UPPER LAKE OAHE

By Paul Bailey, ND Game & Fish

Last year provided some of the best fishing we've seen on this stretch of the Missouri River System in recent years and anglers should have a lot to look forward to in 2008. Based upon our standard electrofishing surveys, walleye abundance has been fairly consistent since the early 2000s. However, as Lake Oahe began to recover from the smelt crash that occurred in 1997, the size structure of this walleye population steadily increased. In 2000, only 10% of the walleye we sampled were 15 inches or longer due to slow growth and low forage abundance. By 2007, forage abundance and walleye growth had dramatically improved and over 60% of the walleye that we sampled were 15 inches or longer.

Lake Oahe has been able to maintain a healthy forage population in spite of historically low water levels. Unlike Lake Sakakawea, which has a bottom discharge that passes the coldest, deepest water through the dam, Lake Oahe has a mid-level discharge which enables it to provide coldwater habitat throughout the summer. As a result, Lake Oahe has not suffered the severe declines in rainbow smelt abundance during the present drought that Lake Sakakawea has. Other forage species, such as emerald shiners, spottail shiners, fathead minnows, white suckers, longnose suckers, and a host of others are also abundant in the Missouri River and Upper Lake Oahe.

Gizzard shad have recently become established in this portion of the Missouri River System and were very abundant in 2007. We are not certain how gizzard shad were introduced but we suspect they may have escaped from some small western South Dakota reservoirs where they were intentionally stocked. We first documented gizzard shad in Upper Lake Oahe in 2002 and by 2005 these prolific fish were extremely abundant. Shad cannot tolerate prolonged exposure to cold water and our winters are currently preventing shad from having a year-round presence in North Dakota. The shad we see in North Dakota were likely hatched in South Dakota and then made their way upstream into our state. In 2007 we first saw shad near Ft. Yates in early July and it took several more weeks for shad to show up near Bismarck. As water temperatures cool in the fall, the shad either die or head downstream. We are not certain if gizzard shad are here to stay or if the next harsh winter in the Dakotas will eliminate them from Lake Oahe.

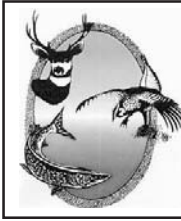
Walleye clearly receive the most attention from anglers but there is good opportunity for other species as well. Sauger and channel catfish are abundant throughout the river. Chinook salmon, rainbow trout, brown trout, cutthroat trout and burbot are commonly caught in the Garrison Dam Tailrace and smallmouth bass are abundant in and around Bismarck. Unfortunately, northern pike numbers have been severely impacted by low water levels and white bass still have not recovered from a bacterial outbreak and subsequent fishkill that occurred in 2005.

Overall, the Missouri River and Upper Lake Oahe fishery is in excellent condition in spite of the historically low water levels. We anticipate a great year of angling in 2008!

FISHERIES DIVISION WAS BUSY ON DEVILS LAKE IN 2007

By Randy Hiltner

Northeast District Fisheries Supervisor



Spawning/walleye tagging:

Fisheries crews collected 87% of the statewide total of northern pike eggs from Devils Lake/Lake Irvine last April. The pike eggs were then brought to the Garrison Dam and Valley City National Fish Hatcheries for rearing to fingerlings. Walleye spawning operations began at Devils Lake April 25th and continued through May 1st. A total of 137 quarts or 56% of the statewide egg-take were collected at Devils Lake. For the most part, the weather cooperated and the egg collecting went well.

Last spring marked the first year of a three-year walleye tagging project at Devils Lake. Walleye tagging began while we were spawning northern pike in Six-Mile Bay and continued after the walleye spawn was over. We tagged 500 female and 500 male walleye. The majority were tagged in Six-Mile Bay but some were also tagged at various bays around the lake. To date, anglers have reported catching about 20% of the total number tagged, which is about what I expected. Future tagging efforts will provide more information on angling mortality. The tagging study also has helped shed some light on walleye movements. Tag returns literally came in from all corners of the lake as fish dispersed widely, showing no real pattern. For example, some fish tagged in Six-Mile Bay were caught by anglers in East Devils Lake.

Freshwater Shrimp (Scuds) Trapping Survey:

In mid-winter, the fisheries crew takes a break from capturing fish and instead traps scuds. Anglers theorize that if the scud numbers are down, perch fishing will get easier. According to this winter's survey, the overall lake-wide catch of scuds was similar to last winter. When trapping scuds, it appears common that at a certain bay you may find high scud numbers one year and low numbers the next. We have found that there is a lot of variability in the trap catch among sites and years.

Creel Survey:

Creel surveys are scheduled every three years at Devils Lake. These surveys provide a lot of valuable information such as, estimates of fish catch and harvest, angling effort, angler demographics, etc. The current survey began May 1st and will continue through April. Some highlights of the survey: the amount of fishing pressure (effort) for the May-October period was the highest on record at Devils Lake, almost 800,000 angler/hours; June was the busiest month during this time frame with about 340,000 hours of effort; and the May-July walleye harvest was estimated at 157,000 fish.

Walleye fishing during the open-water season could be considered good by most standards as the harvest rate on average was above one-quarter fish/hour. Walleye fishing in 2007 was slower than in 2006, which was an excellent fishing season. Pike and white bass fishing was also very good. Nonresident anglers have definitely "discovered"

Devils Lake as they comprised 62% of the anglers interviewed by the creel clerk in June.

Fish Stocking:

Devils Lake was stocked with walleye and perch fingerlings in 2007. This was the second year of a three-year perch stocking effort of about one million fingerlings/year. All of the stocked fish were marked so one can determine how much the stocked fish actually contributed to the fall net catch. A total of 1.7 million walleye were stocked last summer. This was actually more than the Devils Lake stocking request called for, however the hatchery production was very high so additional fingerlings were available.

Standard Netting Survey Results:

Each July we conduct an adult population netting survey across Devils Lake. This survey provides lots of information on the fish populations and how things change from year to year. The netting survey in 2007 produced the highest catch rate of walleye in the past sixteen years. Many of which were smaller fish, less than sixteen inches. However, the catch rate for fifteen-twenty inch walleye was still above the five-year average. The pike net catch rate was similar to recent years, they are still abundant. White bass numbers were up considerably this year. White bass densities are increasing as a result of a couple of recent good hatches. The yellow perch catch rate was up slightly from the last two years but is still below the management plan objective level.

In the fall, we set small mesh gill nets to catch young-of-the-year (yoy) game fish that were either hatched naturally or stocked as fingerlings during the summer. Last fall's netting survey results are very encouraging. We had the highest catch rate of young game fish since the survey began in 1992. Perch, walleye and white bass yoy were all abundant. The vast majority of the perch and walleye were from natural reproduction, even though high numbers of fingerlings for both species were stocked. Many of these small fish will wind up in a bigger fish's stomach, but usually when you start with this many, some will reach adulthood and provide fishing opportunities.

R.A.P.

Law Enforcement will need: Nature of violation; Location (GPS coordinate will help); Violators name and address if known; description of violators (age, build, clothing, other features); Vehicle or boat description (license number, etc.); date and time of offense; your name and address and phone number; names and address or other witnesses.

DAKOTA ANGLERS

by Nathan Selchert



2008 CALENDAR OF DAKOTA ANGLERS EVENTS

- **May 17-18** – 32nd Annual Dakota Anglers Walleye / Northern Tournament
- **June 7** – Little Britches Tournament for kids/adults, Jamestown Reservoir (Free fishing weekend)

See our website for more information.

www.ndsportfishingcongress.org/Dakota_Anglers.htm

OUTINGS—(Fishing tournaments followed by a potluck meal)

- **June 21** – Fish Fry at Spiritwood Lake
- **July 19** – Pig Roast at Jamestown Reservoir (Joos Grove)
- **August 16** – Steak Fry at Jamestown Reservoir (Pelican Point Campground)

BIS-MAN REEL & REC

by Dave Bement

Bis-Man Reel & Rec Club is participating with The Missouri River Users Group whose objective is to promote boating safety on the Missouri River. To introduce new boaters to safety regulations and encourage people to become certified through Boating Safety Courses.

The annual boating safety event, "Missouri River Splash" will be held at Moritz Sport & Marine, 2540 Marina Road, Mandan, ND on **Saturday, May 31**, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be displays, activities, demonstrations and registration for prizes. The primary goal is boaters' awareness from the ages 12 to 24. This is a cooperative effort between Bis-Man Reel & Rec Club, Burleigh County Sheriff's Dept, Cumulus Broadcasting, Missouri River Users Group, Moritz Sport & Marine, NDGF, ND Safety Council, and the US Corp of Engineers.

Saturday June 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., is our 27th Annual Take a Kid Fishing Day at Sweet Brier Dam, 17 miles west of Bismarck. This year in addition to fishing there will be more emphasis will on shore activities such as: Minnow racing, fish painting transfers, casting instructions and contests, introduction to Ham Radio demonstrations, scavenger hunts and boat rides.

If anyone is interested in getting involved or has any further questions, please feel free to contact Wayne Blohm 224-8004 camber13@msn.com or Dave BeMent 258-3583 davebement@hotmail.com.



RED RIVER AREA SPORTSMEN'S CLUB WAHPETON, ND

by Wayne Beyer

Three fishing tournaments are planned this spring and summer on the Red. The Kidder Recreational Area serves as the headquarters for all three tournaments. The Red River Sportsmen's Club provides equipment, bait, door prizes and trophies for place winners.

May 10 – The 25th Annual Youth Fishing Derby
Prizes for the Strangest Catch, Youngest fisherman to catch a fish, and other fun things. Over 16 different species of fish have been caught over the years.

June 7 – The 10th Annual Catfish Tournament.
Entry fee \$5 for 18 and under, \$10 19 and over. Also ages 1-18 can enter a youth division for free with trophies for 5 largest catfish. 7:00AM to 3:00 p.m.

Prizes will be awarded on a 100% payback. \$100 for the largest catfish, donated by the RRASC. Also cash prizes for the 5 largest catfish with fishermen only eligible for one prize. 10% of the proceeds will be used for Red River development projects at the Kidder Recreation Area.

August 6 – 23rd Annual Carp and Sucker Derby
1-5p.m.; rough fish only allowed.

BOB VALEU RECOGNIZED

Bob Valeu was given a plaque of appreciation and a heartfelt thanks for the many important contributions he has engineered for North Dakota fishermen over the years.

Bob Valeu has served as State Director for Senator Byron Dorgan for more than 15 years. Bob has chosen to retire from his position this year and will be missed.

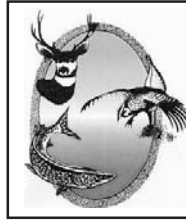
Bob has been instrumental over the years in securing federal support and funding for so many projects, to numerous to count, that we as sportsmen are unaware of or discount because we have become so used to it. Many of them would not have happened without Bob's diligence and perseverance. Thanks for all you've done and keep in touch.



NDSFC Past President
Duaine Ash (right)
presents a plaque to Bob Valeu

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES – GOOD NEWS

By LR Schlueter,
NDGF ANS Coordinator

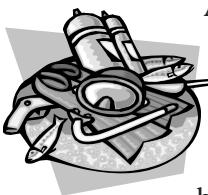


Regulations are now in place that requires boats/trailers/motors to be free of vegetation, livewells (unless used to transport gamefish or baitfish) and bilges drained, and not to dump bait in the water. As regulations, all anglers, hunters, boaters, and commercial operators now have to take precautions. It only takes a few minutes to clean off the vegetation, and drain out the boat. That is what keeps ANS from being spread to other waterbodies

These simple precautions are being followed by many, but not all are making the effort to protect our waters. In a recent statewide survey, 70% of the contacted resident anglers were aware of ANS as a problem. Only 45% were taking needed precautions to keep ANS out. A bigger worry is that about 53% of the contacted anglers thought ANS was only an inconvenience or not that big of a problem. It is this level of non concern that causes ordinary anglers to not take preventions.

As discussed many times, ANS is a real problem for the state's waters. ANS results in lost recreation and more monies not spent on needed fish management. As an upper Midwest state, we know that the lack of water is a real problem. When the lake is about dry, there is less quality and quantity of habitat for fish. When the lake fills, you would expect habitats levels to return to former levels. If ANS are introduced into a lake, these infestations reduce quantity and quality of habitats which means less fish in the full lake. ANS infestations cause problems that more water in a lake or stocking more fingerling fish will not cure.

Simply put, ANS is not a problem that will go away once it is established in a waterbody or in the state. As we move about and fish new waters, ANS could be hitchhiking a ride with us. North Dakota has few ANS problems at this time – and we (all of us) need to keep it that way. Prevention is cheaper, easier and much better than fighting a never ending problem. Over the past few years, the prevention theme has been – Clean the aquatic vegetation from the boat and livewell or bait bucket, drain the livewell and bilge, and do not stock or dump bait.



THANKS TO REEDS AND JEFF ARNOLD

Jeff Arnold, owner and President of Reeds Sporting Goods in Walker, Minnesota has personally helped the North Dakota Sportfishing Congress for the past 12 years by supplying NDSFC with quality door prizes for our Annual Fundraiser. Without Jeff's help we would never have been able to raise the money we do to do the things we do. Thanks Jeff.



Paul Haug (left) presents award to Jeff Arnold

PAUL HAUG RECOGNIZED

Paul Haug was presented a plaque of appreciation from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department Director Terry Steinwand and Fisheries Chief Greg Powers for his years of service to North Dakota fishermen, the North Dakota Sportfishing Congress and Muskies Inc of Fargo. Paul, a member of the Muskies, Inc Hall of Fame, has been instrumental in helping the Congress become what it is today. Paul has coordinated the fundraising efforts for NDSFC for more than 12 years and Muskies, Inc for more than 30. He also MC's our fundraiser and does a super job. Congratulations and thanks Paul.



Terry Steinwand (right) presents award to Paul Haug



2008-09 ND Sportfishing Congress Executive Board

(Front l to r) Past President Duaine Ash, Executive Secretary Marie Hoerner, Mike Anderson, Vice President Lynn Schlueter, President Clark Williams, Rick Lee
(Back l to r) Paul Haug, Treasurer Rick Eagelson, Ed Dosch, Richard Fink; Not Pictured: Don Baasch

ANNUAL DUES NOW DUE

This newsletter will serve as a notice to the Club Members and the Individual Members (who have not already paid their dues) that the annual dues are now due. (Your membership paid-up date is at the top of your mailing label listed as the month/year, e.g., 04/09.)

Club Member's dues are \$50 and are due on or before the annual meeting that is held in April of each year. To maintain your club's voting rights for 2008-09, please complete the *Club Membership Application* in this newsletter and return it along with your payment to North Dakota Sportfishing Congress, P.O. Box 2472, Bismarck, ND 58502.

NOTE: Don't forget to list the names, addresses, and e-mail addresses of the club delegates.

Individual Member's dues are a minimum of \$5. Please complete the *Individual Membership Application* in this newsletter and return it along with your payment to the same address indicated above.

You will note there is a checkoff for payment of multiple years' dues for individual members. For convenience, an individual may choose to prepay several years' dues at one time.

NOTE

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please email Marie Hoerner at sportfishing@bis.midco.net with a Subject of "Sportfishing Newsletter".

The year/date above your name on the mailing label indicates your membership renewal date. Your support is needed!



P.O. Box 2472
Bismarck, ND 58502

- \$5 - 1 Year
- \$15 - 3 Years
- \$25 - 5 Years

Enclosed: \$ _____

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____)____-____ Email _____

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Club Affiliation _____

I would like to receive the newsletter via email. (please check if applicable)



P.O. Box 2472
Bismarck, ND 58502

- \$50 - 1 Year

CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Club Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Current President _____

Phone (____)____-____ Email _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Date Paid ____/____/____

Each Club Member is represented on the Executive Board by two delegates. Please provide the following information on your current delegates:

Delegate 1

Delegate 2

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Phone (____)____-____-____

Phone (____)____-____-____

Email _____

Email _____



14TH Annual Sportsmen's Smoker & Raffle
 Sponsored by: **North Dakota Sportfishing Congress**



Dave Muhlbradt

Cash Winners:

- \$500 – Dave Muhlbradt, Underwood
- \$100 – Tom Pederson, Thief River Falls
- \$50 – Pete Haug, Fargo
- \$50 – Lynn Schlueter, Devils Lake

- Shot Gun – Keith "Kip" Greig, Bismarck
- Air Gun – Mark Anderson, Bismarck

- \$250 Drawing – Tom Abrahamson, Bismarck
- \$250 Drawing – Candice Blohm, Menoken



Tom Abrahamson

Rod and Reel

- Wade Anderson, Bismarck
- Roger Kolling, Bismarck
- Lynn Schlueter



Board Member Ed Dosch presenting Candice Blohm with her \$250 winnings!



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