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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Duaine Ash

Where has the summer gone?? Seems just vesterday that I was writing the spring article, but in a short period of time, many things have happened. The moisture situation hasn't improved; in fact it has gotten worse and has spread over much of the state. As we know in this past year, many of the state's reservoirs went down. In Lake Sakakawea, the water levels are to the point were the cold water habitat in Lake Sakakawea is all but gone. With some late spring snows in the mountains and above average spring rainfalls in the upper basin, there was just enough runoff to save our forage base for another year. But this coming year doesn't look good for us. We are lucky to have a Game & Fish Fisheries Division that is doing as much as they can with what they have to work with. They can only do so much, so the next time you meet a fisheries employee, tell them we appreciate everything they are doing for us.

We are facing another big issue in the state, ANS (Aquatic Nuisance Species). With our state being the state that fishermen want to come to, this is creating a possible ANS problem. If we don't educate and provide examples to the public on what needs to be done to disinfect boats when entering the state, we stand a good chance of having some ANS brought into our state and infecting our waters. Once infected or introduced to our waters, it will almost be impossible to contain. The Game & Fish is working with local clubs to promote the cleaning of boats that have been out of state or out of state boats coming into state before being launched in our waters. One thing we must do is to make sure that ANS isn't spread or introduced. If you load or see someone's boat with weeds hanging from the trailer or motor, take the time to do the right thing for our lakes. **Remove the weeds**

and dispose of them in an appropriate way. PLEASE: Clean the weeds off your boat and equipment before leaving our lake and rivers and disinfect the bilge and livewells.

In the western part of the state, they are finding Saltcedar, a noxious weed. Take time to find out what it looks like and when you are out fishing or hunting and come across the suspicious weed, mark it with a ribbon or get a GPS position and report it to the local weed board. You can find out what this problem plant looks like by doing a search on the internet, or using the North Dakota Game and Fish Dept homepage.

(http://www.state.nd.us/gnf/fishing/ans-plants.html)

I had the opportunity this past summer to spend a day with a Lure-m For Life organization. It was a very rewarding and enjoyable day. I had a blast working with young adults and the other volunteers. If any of you would have the time, I am sure they would appreciate and could use the manpower. Barnes County Wildlife Federation could also use some boats to take kids fishing on Lake Sakakawea. We have to remember that a lot of these kids have never had the opportunity to spend time on the water fishing. If we don't get the kids introduced to the outdoors when they are still young, they will more than likely never experience the great



North Dakota outdoors. Finally, I would like to thank all the people that took time from their busy

Congressman Earl Pomeroy

schedules to attend our Fall NDSFC meeting held in Bismarck on September 27. A special thank you to Congressman Pomeroy, Lynn Clancy representing Senator Conrad & Dorgan, Rob Holm-Garrison Fish



Lynn Clancy Office of Sen. Kent Conrad

Hatchery, Terry Stienwand-ND Game & Fish and Joe Hall-Corps of Engineers for your attendance.

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POMEROY SUPPORTS NDSFC



Congressman Earl Pomeroy

Some of my fondest memories of growing up along the Sheyenne River in Valley City are the times I spent on its banks with my Dad and my brother Glenn. I still enjoy the opportunity to get out on Lake Sakakawea with friends.

Earl Pomeroy Unfortunately, mismanagement of the Missouri River system by the Army Corps of Engineers often serves to limit these outdoor recreation activities. North Dakota, South Dakota, and other upstream states have for too long been given the short end of the stick by the Corps when it comes to regulating the release of water from the Missouri's system of dams. At the heart of the matter is the Corps' protection of an outmoded barge industry that operates in downstream states like Missouri.

As a member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, I know that hunting and fishing are an important part of our heritage, as well as important sources of economic activity. Recent studies have shown that the recreation industry has a \$90 million annual impact on upstream states like North Dakota compared to a barge industry that has a \$7 million dollar impact downstream. Yet even in extremely dry periods like we experienced this year, the Corps continues to order the release of water downstream to keep just a few barges moving in Missouri.

This is simply unfair and doesn't make sense. The Corps should stop pretending that navigation is more important than recreation.

I am pushing the Corps to fulfill their mission by implementing a new Master Manual and annual operating plan that more accurately reflect today's uses and benefits of the Missouri River. I encourage groups like yours to add pressure in every way you can and to make your voice heard. Working together within North Dakota and with our allies in other states, I believe we can put forth a strong voice that the Corps cannot ignore.

The rivers and lakes in North Dakota serve many needs in our state – they provide fresh drinking water, they irrigate our crops, and they drive a strong tourist industry. But they also bring people closer together to share in a common heritage. I will never forget this as I fight to protect our rivers and lakes from misguided downstream states and a fundamentally flawed Corps policy.

DORGAN SECURES HATCHERY FUNDING

Across the West, anglers had another great year in 2003 harvesting walleye and other coldwater species that came from the Garrison Dam Fish Hatchery. Lake Sakakawea alone received more than 3.4 million walleye from the facility, and pike, walleye and pallid sturgeon were sent to lakes from Idaho to Missouri to Arizona.

Sport fishing means more than good times and good eating. For North Dakota, it also means 30,000 out-of-state and 115,000 resident anglers, with an economic impact on the state of more than \$300 million a year, according to a North Dakota State University study.

But the fish don't come free or easy, and the Garrison Dam Hatchery needs upkeep. In Washington, D.C., North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan (D) has let his colleagues know the importance of the fishery to the state and the region. As ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Dorgan secured \$300,000 for Fiscal Year 2004 to help with some needed maintenance. That's in addition to \$200,000 in FY 2002.

"Sportfishing is part of what makes North Dakota great. It not only provides wonderful recreation for our residents, but out-of-state anglers bring in dollars and jobs and help businesses grow," Dorgan said.

Many of the ponds at the hatchery are more than 40 years old, built on clay soil seals that separate the ponds from the sand below. But that clay has deteriorated over time and now the ponds lose as much as 280,000 gallons of water through seepage every day, jeopardizing the continued success of walleye production. With water levels at nearby Lake Sakakawea at historic lows due to years of drought and management by the Army Corps of Engineers, which favors downstream barge traffic over upstream fisheries, lost water means fewer fish.

A 2003 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) study installed a new liner in a single pond to see how it would affect fish production. The results were dramatic: The lined pond produced 172,800 walleye fingerlings – an increase of 236 percent. USFWS officials estimate that liners on the remaining ponds could increase walleye production by 2.29 million fish – a 28 percent increase.

To say that much of the region's fishery depends on the Garrison Hatchery is no exaggeration. Walleye from the hatchery have increased the population of Lake Sakakawea by 50 percent. Elsewhere in the state, Garrison walleye are up to 75 percent of the stock. In Wyoming, the entire population of stocked coldwater fish comes from Garrison. You can pallid sturgeon, the North Dakota native, upstream below Montana's Fort Peck Reservoir and in the Missouri River from Nebraska to Missouri.

Garrison Dam Hatchery Manager Rob Holm credits a great partnership among anglers and state and federal officials for much of the hatchery's continued success, and keeping the hatchery in top shape is part of that effort. There are several parts of the operation – heat exchange devices and water filtration systems, for example - in need of upgrade or replacement in the future, Holm said.

Dorgan, in his role as a senior appropriator, vows to keep the hatchery in the Senate's long-range fishery management plans for the nation. "The hatchery managers and the sportfishing community have worked hard to make sure the Garrison Hatchery is a world-class facility, and it's important that we do everything we can to make sure it stays that way."



Senator Byron Dorgan

GAME AND FISH PERSPECTIVES

by Terry Steinwand

Another open water fishing season is coming to an end and we'll soon be sharpen-



ing the auger blades and getting ready for another North Dakota winter. Overall, I'd have to rate this past fishing season as average to a little above average. I know I'd get some argument on both sides on the subjective rating but overall it was fairly good. I really don't want to say we're moving into a drought period but there are areas of the state that are in dire need of moisture while others are in good shape with lake levels holding their own. Everyone knows the plight of the Missouri River system with low waters and the predictions not looking good, at least within the current forecast. As we know from 1993, however, this can quickly reverse itself. In any event, we'll do what we can to insure that adequate access is available and work within the limitations given to us by Mother Nature and government.

As mentioned during the last Sport Fishing Congress meeting in Bismarck, we're currently working on the fishing proclamation for the 2004-2006 fishing seasons. My philosophy has been to keep the regulations as simple as possible while still protecting the fishery. Sometimes this just isn't possible and the regulations become a little complicated but we do the best we can. I received some good input during the last Congress meeting and we'll be discussing them internally, then taking those deemed necessary out on the fall Advisory Board circuit for public comment. Although I don't have a comprehensive list of items, some of the issues up for consideration are daily and possession limits on white bass, review of dark house spearing lakes, size limits on select lakes, etc. I don't know if any changes will result from the review but we have to be sure that they meet biological criteria first, that is, do they meet the expectation of the angling public. As an example, if we place a length limit on a particular lake because the public wants it, there should be good biological rationale behind it. If not, we won't reach the desired goal which may be more fish or larger fish and the public won't be satisfied with the fishery or our performance. If the regulation doesn't meet expectations it is meaningless and we should get rid of it. There are, of course, many variables that we have no control over, such as moisture, water levels in many situations, temperatures, etc. We just have to work with the tools available to us.

The past year has been relatively productive for the Fisheries Division. During spring spawning, staff obtained sufficient number of eggs and we had plenty of fingerlings to stock in statewide waters. Although not the 'cure all' for fishery management it certainly is important in our ability to manage many waters in the state. More important is the habitat availability for fish, and I don't just mean water. Habitat can be cover, temperature, oxygen and all those physical factors that go into insuring fish survive and grow. The Save Our Lakes program has not been without challenges but we currently have a biologist on staff, Scott Elstad, that has been diligently working to accomplish what he can. Since he started about ten months ago he's initiated about 17 separate projects across the state. They involve everything from stabilization of shores to prevent those soils from entering the lake, fencing to exclude livestock, planting of trees to hold soils, to sedimentation dams to reduce the amount of soil entering from the watershed. As I've said many times, it won't be a quick fix. It's taken decades for these lakes to reach their current status and it will take a few years to reverse that trend. I have no doubt in my mind that Scott is the guy that will do whatever it takes to accomplish that.

What can we look forward to next year? A lot of that prediction will depend on Mother Nature and what kind of moisture she decides to give us. Good winter snows will certainly provide moisture to raise lake levels across the state but will also increase the possibility of winterkill in those lakes where water levels are marginal. However, without the snow it's going to be a challenge to provide adequate boating access on Lake Sakakawea. So, as always, it's a double edged sword. We need the moisture but in receiving it we'll have to take the bad (high potential for winterkill in the smaller lakes) in order to get the good (better water levels) for the future. As always, if we can sustain a fishery in the smaller lakes we can provide some good fisheries.

One of the bright spots for the foreseeable future will continue to be Devils Lake. Although fish populations are beginning to stabilize it still contains a tremendous fishery and has not yet realized its full potential. We're getting a good handle on the population dynamics of Devils Lake. It looks like we can have a good perch fishery with reproduction once every three years. If we go longer than that it begins to get a little tenuous. We haven't stocked walleye in Devils Lake for the last four years but natural reproduction has been great and our reproduction netting shows good success.

Even though water levels declined slightly this year on Devils Lake it wasn't enough cause us concern on boating access. There are also still many good lakes across the state and all you have to do is look back about 10 years ago. We were managing 171 lakes and currently manage 361 across the state. This has stretched personnel to the maximum but has certainly provided some good fishing recreation. As with all good things we can't expect it to last forever. It will slowly decline and sometime in the future we'll once again be managing about 200 lakes. These are the ones we need to guard jealously for the current and future generations. That doesn't mean the 'run' of fishing lakes we've had for the past eight years is coming to an end. They'll decline in numbers and fish populations will stabilize below the level they were at the beginning of the lake's life but we still have many good years left in many of those lakes. Let's make the most of it and effectively manage those we possess.

Pond Liner Project at Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery —

by Rob Holm

Hatchery ponds at Garrison Dam NFH support walleye, pike, and smallmouth bass fisheries across the State of North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana. Twenty-four of the sixty-four ponds at this hatchery were built in 1962 over the old Missouri River channel. The soils in this area are primarily sand. A clay soil used to create a water seal in those ponds has degraded over time and today we have ponds that loose in excess of 280,000 gallons of water each day through seepage. Walleye production in those ponds is poor since they cannot provide food and water temperatures needed to promote growth of the fish. Plastic liners are needed to remedy the problem.

In 2003 the Fish & Wildlife Service funded the installation of a liner in a single pond to evaluate how the liner would effect fish production. The results were impressive. This year that lined pond produced 172,800 walleye fingerlings weighing 240 pounds. This production represents a 236% increase over the average walleye production of the remaining 23 ponds! If we were able to install liners on the remaining ponds, we have the potential to increase walleye production by 2.29 million fish – a 28% increase in the hatchery's total walleye output.

What effect will the increased production have? North Dakota has 115,000 resident anglers. Another 30,000 anglers come to North Dakota from other states to take advantage of the tremendous fishing opportunities we have. One million seven hundred thousand angler days were provided to anglers in North Dakota waters last year. Those opportunities generated in excess of three hundred million dollars total economic impact!

Biologists from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department singled out two factors responsible for providing quality fishing opportunities in this state; 1) climatic changes, 2) increased hatchery production. Data from recent marking efforts on stocked walleye fingerlings document that hatchery stockings have bolstered the walleye population in Lake Sakakawea by 50%. Across the state in other small and mid-sized impoundments, walleye stockings account for 71-76% of the total walleye population. Increased hatchery production made feasible through pond liners and a shot of water from Mother Nature will allow us to maintain the quality fishing opportunities North Dakotans have come to enjoy.

HATCHERY PRODUCTION -

by Rob Holm

Garrison Dam NFH had another great year of fish production providing over seven and a half

million walleye fingerlings for stockings across North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and even Arizona. Three million four hundred thousand walleye fingerlings

were stocked in Lake Sakakawea alone. Over a half million walleye fry were air shipped to Idaho to help them maintain their fisheries as well. Northern Pike requests were down due to the continued drought and lack of suitable stocking locations. Still, over 600,000 pike were stocked out where conditions were favorable to keep the fishery going.

The trout program here is also going well. Nearly eighteen tons of trout were stocked into North Dakota waters. Thirty eight thousand cutthroat trout were released in the Garrison Dam tailwaters to maintain that trophy fishery. Another sixty four thousand rainbows were stocked across the state. The Chinook salmon fishery in Lake Sakakawea was given a boost with 318,500 four to five inch smolts released in June. If you are a salmon fishermen with limited success this year, don't feel too bad. We had a hard time coming up with fish this fall too. The ladder wasn't too impressive luring in the broodstock needed to collect the million eggs we hoped for, but we did turn up about 700,000 eggs. Thanks to our neighbor to the south, we were able to obtain an additional 300,000 plus eggs at Whitlocks Bay on Lake Oahe to meet out salmon egg goals. The quality of the eggs collected looks good with egg eye-up in the 50-60% range so far. All indications are that we will be able to provide at least 300,000 salmon for next spring provided the water levels in the lake will support the stocking.

The endangered pallid sturgeon program is moving along well. This spring we were able to stock five thousand three hundred ten inch sturgeon. Captures of year old fish in the Missouri River above the Lake Sakakawea indicated that the sturgeon stocked in 2002 are adjusting well to their new home. We just recently moved 10,000 five inch pallids to hatcheries in South Dakota and Missouri for them to grow out. An additional 5,000 will be stocked next week in the Missouri River below Lewis and Clark Reservoir and as far south as Booneville, Missouri.

The Valley City and Baldhill Dam hatcheries continue to provide support to the state's fisheries as well. There was a push to increase northern pike production at Valley City to free up pond space for walleye at Garrison Dam. The hatchery came through with a production of over a million and a half northern pike fingerlings. In addition, the hatchery took care of the entire state's requests for black crappie, bluegill and largemouth bass producing over a million fingerlings. To ensure we meet our walleye commitments, an additional 400,000 walleye fingerlings were raised.

FALL CAN BE A TIME WHEN HUNTERS SPREAD AQUATIC NUISANCE **S**PECIES

By Lynn Schlueter

While we might think summer is the only time when boaters could be moving aquatic nuisance species (ANS)

from one location to another, fall has its own risks. Waterfowl hunters enjoy their opportunity to hunt marshes and on wetlands, frequently make floating blinds by covering boats with readily available plant materials. Upland hunters often pursue pheasants along the edges of marshes and wetlands, or nearly dry potholes. With all this, it is hard not to imagine a little water in the bottom of the duck boat, a few weeds tangled on the decoy lead lines, some mud on the equipment and waders or boots, a few seeds stuck in the coat of the faithful retriever, and a plant stem or two in the hunting vest. These are the opportunities for ANS to get a free ride to a new location when we are not aware that ANS can be a fall problem.

With this in mind, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department reminds hunters to help prevent the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species within or into North Dakota.

ANS are exotic plants and animals that have great potential to damage aquatic recreational resources, including waterfowl production and hunting areas near wetlands. Simple prevention can keep ANS from reaching your favorite hunting waters.

North Dakota does not yet have an overwhelming ANS problem and will remain that way if hunters follow these simple guidelines:

- ✓ Do not use exotic plants when camouflaging a boat. Use terrestrial plants that will not be a problem in other areas
- ✓ Remove all aquatic plant materials from boats (inside and outside) and trailers after each waterfowl hunting trip.
- ✓ Disinfect the bottom of the boat with a 20-to-1 solution of common chlorine bleach mixture; or rinse thoroughly with water at least 110 degrees.
- ✓ Clean off mud, which may harbor seeds or plant fragments, from the boat, all hunting equipment and waders or boots.
- ✓ Make sure that the hunting dog is not carrying seeds in their coat by brushing out their coat after each hunt.

ANS prevention methods should be routine for all trips to lakes in other states, and for trips to North Dakota lakes. reservoirs and rivers. All outdoor recreators should encourage others to take precautions and set a good example by cleaning boats and equipment after each outing.

LAKE REGION ANGLERS **DEVILS LAKE. ND**

By Ed Dosch

Another season of fishing has passed and we in the Lake Region Anglers would have to say that it was a good year of summer fun. We did have to cancel our Spring Northern Outing because of bad weather, but that is a chance one takes when you schedule something in early

hitch, and a record number of members and guests taking part in the clubs other scheduled outings. THANK YOU to all who participated. Tentative dates for 2004 are as follows:

✓ Spring Northern • 15 May Minnewaukan Ramp

May. All other outings went off without a

- ✓ East Bay Outing 6 June Black Tiger Bay Ramp
- ✓ Devils Lake Open 20 June Lakewood Ramp
- ✓ Adult-Child 18 July Grahams Island State Park Ramp
- ✓ Walleye Widow 8 August Grahams Island State Park Ramp

(All afore mentioned dates must be approved by NDG&F.)

Lake access on East Devils Lake remains on the agenda of the board of director. The club will continue to work with the NDG&F to establish a workable plan to get access on that side of the lake.

The yearly LRAA Fund Raiser Calendar was once again successful, and a thank you to all who supported this annual event and congratulations to those who were drawn. Thank you to Ed's Bait Shop for allowing us to post the weekly winners.



RED RIVER AREA SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

Wayne Beyer

The Red River Area Sportsmen's Club, located in Wahpeton, sponsored three fishing tournaments this past summer, attracting 100 youths on its Annual Youth Fishing



Derby on May 3, 35 participants in its June 14 Catfish Tournament and 20 young fishermen at its August 6 Carp & Sucker Derby on the Red River. The club partners with the ND

Game & Fish Department and local

Parks & Recreation Department to make rods and reels available on a loan basis. They are used frequently by 4-H programs, Scouting events, visitors to our city and during the fishing tournaments.

The club provided a boat and labor for water quality samples at Mooreton Pond, which has deteriorated as a fishery. The samples were conducted by the North Dakota Health Department and will hopefully provide a scientific snap shot on future improvements.

One of the club's most successful ventures was forming a Junior Wildlife Club, which meets monthly to experience outdoors activities or classes.

BIS-MAN REEL & REC

Errol Behm, President

It appears as if summer 2003 has come to an end with the arrival of several inches of snow. This has not stopped

fishing on the Missouri River though. I saw a boat heading out with both fishing poles and a shotgun on board. ONLY IN NORTH DAKOTA!!!

Our club has had another busy year so far and there are more activities planned. We've had our regular activities such as Member Steak Fry in January, Ice Fishing Extravaganza in February, Spring Fishing Derby for members in May, Take-a-



Kid Fishing in June, and the shelter improvement projects at Swenson Park, Desert and Rifle Range. Without wonderful sponsors, volunteers and leaders, none of the activities would have been able to be completed.

The first activity that is planned for 2004 and open to anyone is the 21st Ice Fishing Extravaganza. It will be at Lake Audebon and Totten Trail Arena on February 21, 2004. The entry fee is still just \$5.00 per person – any age – everyone is invited.

Hope you all have a great Holiday Season and pray the US Army Corps of Engineers save some water for us next year!

Southwest Anglers

Association

A non-profit organization P.O. Box 1473 • Dickinson, ND 58601

Fellow anglers,

Well, I guess winter is coming in as the same as

the summer did, fast and furious. We were sure hoping for some in depth fall boat fish'n now we're looking forward to ice thick enough to fish on. I guess you don't want to put off a trip to the



lake in hopes to reclaim it next weekend cuz then it snows!! Ha!

A huge thanks to President Ash and the rest of the NDSFC staff for a great meeting in Bismarck. We covered a lot of ground and it was great to see our congressional delegation participating in the meeting as well.

I know it sometimes seem like a relentless effort to try and sway the thinking of those that seem to answer to no one, but we don't want to ever give up. Keep up the pressure and hold steadfast to what we believe in!

My petition to all the other clubs in our great state still remains; develop and maintain a good relationship with your local politicians and continue to support the one ones that support you. Then you will see the difference a voice can make! If you need help putting together a sportsman's forum, feel free to contact any of the SWAA or NDSFC staff and we'll get you fixed up.

> **Good fish'n** SWAA, Paul Kriege



ANNUAL DUES AND SPONSORSHIP 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 renewal date is at the top of your mailing label listed as the month/year, e.g., 04/04.)

Club Member's dues are \$50 and were due on or before the annual meeting that is held in April of each year. To maintain your club's voting rights for 2003, 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 sponsorship for individual members. For convenience, an individual may choose to prepay several years' sponsorships 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!

NORTH	INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	
CONGRESS DE	Name	
P.O. Box 2472	Address	
Bismarck, ND 58502	CityStateZip	
□ \$5 - 1 Year	Phone () Email	
 \$15 - 3 Years \$25 - 5 Years 	Signature Date//	
Enclosed: \$	Club Affiliation	
L		
	CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	
NORTHS CAROTA	Club Name	
	Address	
P.O. Box 2472	CityStateZip	
Bismarck, ND 58502	Current President	
🗖 \$50 - 1 Year	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		
Phone ()	Phone ()	
Email	Email	



At this time of thanksgiving, we pause to count our blessings. The freedom of this great country in which we live. Its opportunity for achievement Our best wishes to all for a HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

