

*South Dakota Chapter*

**The Wildlife Society**

December 2006

### **President's Message**

It is with pleasure that I bring you an update on the happenings of the executive board of SDTWS. I say that because I am bolstered by the progress the board has made in addressing committee function and involvement since we first started this process with a questionnaire in August. The progress made is largely thanks to the many committee chairs who have worked hand-in-hand with the executive board to make this process as smooth as possible. At our most recent board meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, the executive board spent a large portion of the meeting delving into the various questions and comments raised within the individual committee questionnaires. To that end, we have made some changes where we felt change was needed and we left well enough alone when committees did not identify specific issues or request assistance from the board.

In fact, throughout this entire year the board has been taking the rare opportunity to step back and review the overall function of the chapter. Even before we delved into committee function, Past-President Will Morlock began a process to clarify and record the specific responsibilities of each board member. This was a deserving project, as many of the smaller duties each board member traditionally performs are not included in the by-laws. As a valuable tool to help orientate new board members, Will's end-product will be archived for use by future boards.

Therefore, it was an opportune time to assess committee function and involvement as an extension of the work the board was already doing to "get organized". The board first considered the need for additional committees by assessing whether there were any conservation issues that were not adequately addressed. Energy rose to the top as an identified need. Thus, a special committee on Energy was formed with 2 current sub-committees. Kent "KC" Jensen volunteered to chair the Wind Power sub-committee and Art Smith volunteered to chair the Ethanol sub-committee. Finally, the board recognized that there were endless options for other valuable committees to address conservation issues currently not addressed by the chapter. However, the board felt it necessary that proposals to form new committees should come from the members themselves, as opposed to being created via a top-down approach.

Additionally, the chapter may wish to designate a tenure status of 2 to 4 years for new committees. This may be particularly applicable if the committee was formed for the sole purpose of delivering a specific end-product (such as a resolution) or if the chapter is uncertain whether the conservation issue under which the committee is formed will continue to be an issue into the future. At the end of a committee's designated term, the chapter would have the opportunity to revisit the progress and con-

tinued applicability of the committee and grant an extension or permanent status if deemed appropriate. Relevant to this situation, both the committee chair and board identified the Resource Activism committee as a committee that lacked applicability in recent years. It had been many years since the committee had been contacted by a chapter member regarding a relevant issue and anti-hunting activism is no longer posing the threat it once was in South Dakota. Therefore, the Resource Activism committee was appropriately dissolved, with the provision that the committee could be recreated should the issue rise again.

Further, the board looked for overlap between committees to identify areas where committees could be more efficient. Several adjustments were made in this area. First, the board honored the chair's request and combined the Fish & Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative committee and Non-game & Endangered Species committee, now known as the Wildlife Diversity committee. Second, the board voted to change the Public and Private Lands Committee back to just the *Public* Lands Committee to make the committee focus more clear. To further re-organize this committee, Eddie Childers volunteered to switch from co-chair of the Grasslands Committee to co-chair of the Public Lands Committee. Eddie's SDTWS focus on the National Grasslands, combined with his position with the National Park Service made his expertise a much better fit with the Public Lands Committee. Finally, the focus of the Grasslands Committee was re-defined to include just grasslands on private lands. This would allow the Grasslands Committee to spend appropriate amount of time and energy on high-concern topics such as sod-busting and Farm Bill programs such as CRP and the proposed SodSaver.

Currently, the chapter has two committee chair positions that are vacant – Missouri River Issues and Certification. The Missouri River Issues committee has not been chaired for several years. Should this committee continue to remain open, the board may assume that there is no current interest and/or need for such a committee and consider dissolving the committee. The Wetlands and Waterbirds Recognition Honor Roll committee is an example of one committee that was dissolved due to an extended period of inactivity. My suggestion, as President, would be to begin recruiting actively to fill the chair positions on these committees. If, by the end of the annual meeting in March, a chair has not come forward for these committees, and hearing no comments from the membership regarding the importance of these committees to the mission of the chapter, the board will re-visit the need to retain these committees at their June board meeting.

Finally, I'd like to offer that there are plenty of opportunities to become an active member of SDTWS in addition to filling one of the vacant chair positions. Through the committee review process, we have identified other committees that would be open and willing to expand their membership. Outreach and Education, Wildlife Diversity, Public Lands, and Wind Power are just a few of the committees that would be receptive to additional members. To enhance members' ability to contact and query committee chairs in the future, SDTWS will be adding new functionality to its website whereby members can e-mail each of the chairs through a link on the Committee webpage.

In the meantime, if any of the outlined opportunities to participate have caught your eye, you can find the committee chairs' names and phone numbers on SDTWS' webpage at: <http://sdwildlife.org/committee.htm> or contact me at 605-352-5894 Ext.14 or Bridgette\_Flanders-Wanner@fws.gov. It is my firm belief that the strength of our chapter comes from the contributions made by our committees. It is my hope that the process of evaluation we went through this year will further strengthen our committees and keep them active. Thanks again to the many committee chairs that assisted the board during this process.

Bridgette Flanders-Wanner  
President, South Dakota chapter of The Wildlife Society

# **Minutes of the September 5, 2006 Executive Board Meeting of the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society**

President Bridgette Flanders-Wanner recognized a quorum & called the meeting to order at 11:22 am at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Wetlands Office, Brookings, South Dakota. Board members present were Bridgette Flanders-Wanner, Will Morlock, Kurt Forman, KC Jensen, Tom Kirschenmann, & Art Smith.

June meeting minutes and treasurers report were not presented because a vital folder was left in Pierre. Group agreed to delay any action on these items until November meeting.

## Old Business

### Correspondence Sent

- A letter was sent to U.S. Forest Service (USFS) regarding outfitters guiding on Fort Pierre National Grasslands.
- A letter was sent to U.S. Senator Tim Johnson asking him to sign onto the letter being sent to President Bush on the problems associated with global warming.

### Correspondence Received

- Response letter from Sen. Johnson regarding greenhouse gas emissions.
- Response letter from Sen. Johnson regarding drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Response letter from Rep. Stephanie Herseth regarding drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Letter received from USFS asking for comments on outfitter guiding on Fort Pierre National Grasslands.
- Invitation to Leaders Lunch at annual the Wildlife Society Conference.
- Letter from Fundraising Solutions regarding non-dues revenue through Chapter's website.
- Letter from U.S. Public Interest Research Group on President Bush and global warming campaign.
- Letter from School and Public Lands Secretary Healy requesting comment on public land exchange.

### Sponsorship/Contributor Levels for Chapter Annual Meetings

Kirschenmann led the discussion. The desire of some for categories often is balanced by others non-desire for the same. Group discussed several options. "Chapter Sponsor" with a significant contribution of dollars above everyone else and "Conservation Partner" which are contributions/donations in the several hundred-dollars range or merchandise value equivalent, were decided as being the most relevant. The "Contributing Donor" concept, which is individuals, organizations, or companies that provide items for the auction, was rejected as this would be too inclusive and would cover someone who buys a raffle ticket. Sponsors and Donors would be mentioned at the business meeting and put into the program if possible.

### South Dakota Conservation Alliance Activities (SDCA)

Forman led the discussion. SDCA asked the Chapter if there were any issues to work on. It was agreed by the group that SDCA is a noticeable group, and good to have in the Chapter's pocket. SDCA's current focus of the Farm Bill, but the group was initiated due to the attempted conservation easement legislative action two years ago. The group discussed what items SDCA could work on that the Chapter feels are important; conclusion was there is nothing at the moment, but there is a keen desire to stay in regular contact with the SDCA. Flanders-Wanner would send a note to the

SDCA indicating there is nothing to work on now, but will stay in contact with them and that the Chapter appreciates their group.

Overview of SDCA's meeting with Rep. Herseth:

Forman summarized the meeting regarding the importance of Sodsaver. He thought the meeting went well, but it was a hard group to read. The House Agriculture Committee directed for an "issue brief" which shows some interest. Herseth will host a meeting between agriculture and conservation groups. The previous week the House Agriculture Committee proposed a stronger Sodsaver resolution unanimously. Forman suggested that the Chapter's action at this time is to wait. No one knows whom the House/Senate Ag Committee Chairs will be in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and if the 2007 Farm Bill will be an extension or a new bill.

There were some concerns about using state and federal e-mails as contacts. Legislative advocacy is prohibited for federal e-mails. This and other associated problems were discussed, along with Chapter and national policy conflicts. Flanders-Wanner will contact Laura Bies at the Wildlife Society regarding Sodsaver and will include talking points. Smith will send e-mails to all addresses asking for home emails because of advocacy concerns, and also ask if the newsletter needs to be received at a different email and to provide that one as well.

#### Northern Great Plains Working Group (NGPWG) Activities

Forman led the discussion. Chad Switzer is willing to chair this working group. NGPWG is an umbrella group with about 20 members representing many non-government organizations (NGO), but also some agencies. Agencies provide technical assistance to the NGO groups – an example is the Farm Bill for North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana. This group has been found to be the best source for Farm Bill information and provides good coordination and communication abilities between states on mowing/emergency haying issues.

#### Jones Land Exchange

Forman and Jensen led the discussion. The exchange proposal was passed around and updated information was discussed. Necessary details are not known (total acreages, locations). Group decided that we needed to wait and see outcomes of upcoming meetings to decide a direction for the Chapter to take.

#### Committee Involvements: Summary of Committee Chair Responses

Flanders-Wanner led the discussion. The group decided to consider combining both of Eileen Dowd-Stukel's committees (Fish & Wildlife Diversity and Non-game & Endangered Species) after contacting Eileen. After reviewing some of the other committee responses, the group decided to take a step back and review the questionnaires again with a two step process: 1. Decide what are quick fixes by Sept. 15 via e-mail, and 2. Decide what are other changes such as joining, dissolutions, and evaluating committee responsibilities. These thoughts are to be discussed at the next Board meeting.

It was also decided that the Board should develop minimum specific responsibilities for each committee, and these be presented to each committee chair for their review.

Also, Pete Bergman was assigned as the Chair of the Wetlands Committee, replacing Kurt Forman who would remain as a regular committee member.

#### Sale of Public Lands vs. Increasing Grazing Fees on Public Lands Draft Letter

The sale of public lands as a state policy appears to be a dead issue, as it was poorly received. No further action is planned on this issue at this time.

#### New Business

Invitation to TWS Leaders Lunch

Jensen, Flanders-Wanner, Emily Lorenzen (SDSU Student Chapter President) and Smith are going to the lunch. Kirschenmann moved to sponsor these people, Jensen seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

#### Newsletter items

- Synopsis on Boards progress on Committee updating – Flanders-Wanner.
- CMPS Section meeting summary – Smith.
- Student Chapter update including Buffalo Banquet info – Jensen.
- SDCA summary report – Forman.
- Calls for officer nominations (Board, Pres-Elect, Sec./Treas.) and papers – Forman.

#### 2007 Meeting

March 5-7, 2007. General theme of grasslands and have ethanol production representatives present. Forman is working on a banquet speaker, with several potential candidates identified.

#### Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting was set for November 9<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) in Brookings, 11:00 am CDT.

Morlock moved to adjourn, seconded by Kirschenmann. Motion passed (5-0). Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Smith  
Secretary/Treasurer, SDTWS

### **Keynote Speakers Selected for the 2007 SDTWS Annual Meetings**

The future of South Dakota's grasslands will be the theme of the general session at the 2007 SDTWS annual meetings in Oacoma on March 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>. Special emphasis will be placed on issues being addressed in the ongoing farm bill deliberations which will culminate in 2007. Keynote speakers will include Brian Jennings, Executive Vice President of the American Coalition for Ethanol, and Jarrod Johnson, incoming Commissioner of the South Dakota School and Public Lands Office. Terry Grosz will be the speaker at the annual awards dinner. Terry spent a colorful career in wildlife law enforcement that spanned three decades at a wide variety of locations across the nation. More recently he has authored several books and has been the feature of a television series recounting some of his most memorable experiences. Suggestions for additional general session presentations should be provided to Kurt Forman at [sdtws@brookings.net](mailto:sdtws@brookings.net) or 692-8359.

# Committee Reports

## Book Services

The SD-TWS Book Service Committee might be able to help you with updating your professional library. I will be happy to check the discounted price + cost of mailing books of interest for you to compare with your local bookseller or favorite website.

Here are four books that might stimulate your interest.

Prairie Ghost: Pronghorn and Human Interaction in Early America. Richard E. McCabe, Bart W. O'Gara, Henry M. Reeves, and Daniel P. Metz. 2004. University Press of Colorado. 175pp.

Pronghorn: Ecology and Management. Bart W. O'Gara, James D. Yoakum, Richard E. McCabe. 2004. University Press of Colorado. 903pp.

Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation. L. David Mech and Luigi Boitani. 2003. University Of Chicago Press. 472pp.

North American Elk: Ecology and Management. D. E. Toweill. 2002. Smithsonian. 1128pp.

Bob Klaver (605-594-6067 or [bklaver@usgs.gov](mailto:bklaver@usgs.gov))

## Fundraising Committee

Each year our annual fund-raiser relies on unique items donated by chapter members and sponsors for the live auction. Although we are still three months out from the annual meeting, it's not too early to start gathering those items for this year's event. Any and all donations are welcome. If you know of a business, company, or individual that may be willing to donate an item, please ask them soon as they typically like to know in advance. Thank you for your assistance in obtaining items for our auction.

Tom Kirshenmann, Chairperson

## Wildlife Diversity Committee

### **SOUTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN APPROVED**

For the past several years, SD Game, Fish and Parks worked on a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan for South Dakota, with input and assistance from many individuals and agencies. All states and territories completed these plans as part of a promise following acceptance of State Wildlife Grants funding. South Dakota's plan was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and it is now known as the South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan.

This voluntary guidance document provides a planning framework to accommodate the needs of all fish and wildlife species, using a habitat and ecosystem diversity approach. New State Wildlife Grants projects must be tied directly to a state's wildlife action plan, so in South Dakota, SWG projects will have more of a habitat focus and less emphasis on individual species.

To learn more about South Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan, visit: [http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/Comp\\_Plan.htm](http://www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/Comp_Plan.htm). There you can download the plan or view an article called "South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan: The Big Picture," which explains the plan's background and technical approach. You can request a CD of the plan by contacting Larry Gigliotti, SDGFP, 605-773-4231, [larry.gigliotti@state.sd.us](mailto:larry.gigliotti@state.sd.us)

Eileen Dowd Stukel, Chair

### **Resolutions and Public Statements**

If you have a resolution for the Chapter to consider at the next annual meeting you may send it to the committee chair at any time. In order to be considered, a resolution only needs to be sponsored by two voting Chapter members. You can send it, preferably as a Word attachment to an email, to the Chair, Dan Hubbard at [daniel.hubbard@sdstate.edu](mailto:daniel.hubbard@sdstate.edu). You needn't worry too much about format. As long as the draft has the appropriate background and facts, he can put it in the correct format. If you have any questions, contact him (PH: 605-688-4780). Additionally, if you have an idea for a resolution but aren't sure that you have enough of the "facts" to put one together, contact Dan anyway and perhaps the appropriate committee or person can be identified to help put together a credible resolution.

Dan Hubbard – Chairperson

### **SDTWS AWARD NOMINATIONS**

The Awards Committee is currently soliciting nominations for the 2007 awards. The awards include the Wildlife Professional of the Year Award, Citizen's Wildlife Award, Master of Science (MS) scholarship, and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) scholarship for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Each year SDTWS recognizes one wildlife professional and one state citizen for their outstanding contribution in the arena of wildlife resource management. If you would like to nominate an individual for either of these awards, please submit a letter of nomination to the Awards Committee no later than February 3, 2007. This is a great opportunity to recognize those who go the extra mile in their stewardship of South Dakota's wildlife resources.

The SDTWS also recognizes academic and/or research excellence achieved by graduate students. This year there will be one (1) MS scholarship and one (1) PhD scholarship for the 2006-2007 academic year. If you would like to nominate a student for this award, please complete and submit the nomination form to the Awards Committee no later than February 3, 2007.

Information regarding the nomination process for these awards and the Student Award Nomination Form can be found on the SDTWS webpage at <http://www.sdwildlife.org/awards.htm>. If you have any questions regarding the nomination process or the formulation of nomination letters, please contact Nora Kohlenberg.

SDTWS Awards Committee  
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e-mail: [Nora.Kohlenberg@state.sd.us](mailto:Nora.Kohlenberg@state.sd.us)

## **SDTWS Joins the Northern Great Plains Working Group**

The South Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society recently became a formal member of the Northern Great Plains Working Group (NGPWC). The NGPWC is a local coalition of organizations and agencies who provide wildlife and habitat resource data, and consultation relative to Farm Bill statutes, regulations, and programs to ensure the wildlife benefits in the Dakotas and Montana.

During the past year, members of the NGPWC have communicated almost on a daily basis by phone or e-mail, primarily in preparation for the 2007 Farm Bill. In a nutshell, other issues have included re-enrollment and extensions of expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, emergency CRP haying and grazing, native grassland conversion, grazing opportunities for expiring CRP acres, developing a formal Farm Bill position on issues related to wildlife habitat, bio-fuels development, carbon credit programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Swampbuster and Sod-buster provisions, CRP's Environmental Benefit Index, Wetlands Loan Act, re-authorization of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and new/modified continuous CRP practices.

Back in 2005, USDA provided a public comment period on certain issues pertaining to the 2007 Farm Bill. To summarize, NGPWC provided the following comments: reauthorize Swampbuster compliance provisions as provided for in the 2002 Farm Bill; reauthorize and strengthen Sod-buster compliance provisions; reauthorize CRP and increase enrollment cap to 45 million acres; maintain the geographic distribution of CRP at or near its current enrollment; reauthorize and expand the Grassland Reserve Program; and reauthorize and expand the Wetlands Reserve Program.

U.S. Representative Ron Kind of Wisconsin (D) introduced a new bill (H.R. 6064, Healthy Farms, Food, and Fuel Act of 2006) on September 13, 2006. This calls for the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this paragraph and ending on December 31, 2013, that the Secretary of Agriculture shall establish a goal to enroll not less than 7,000,000 acres of eligible land through the continuous enrollment program and the conservation reserve enhancement program; and to maintain enrollment of at least 7,800,000 acres in the Prairie Pothole Region National Conservation Priority Area.

Among other provisions, the bill would increase funding for renewable energy development on farms; provide more incentives for farmers and ranchers to protect drinking water supplies and make other environmental improvements; protect and reform the Conservation Reserve Program, the nation's most popular program; remove the cap on the Conservation Security Program, a popular working lands stewardship program; expand and reform the Grasslands Reserve Program from two million acres to five million acres; expand the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; restore nearly three million acres of wetlands through the Wetlands Reserve Program; and fund efforts to protect six million acres of farm and ranch land from urban sprawl. The full text of the bill is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. With the elections now complete and a shift of control in both the Senate and the House, discussions on the re-authorization of the Farm Bill will begin to pick up steam.

The recent announcement of a new continuous CRP wetland practice, known as CP-37 or the Duck Nesting Habitat Initiative, was only made available to landowners due to the hard work and testimonies of the NGPWC on Capitol Hill and close communication with USDA officials. CP-37 will allow landowners in the Prairie Pothole Region who own/operate land located outside of the recognized 100-year floodplain and support greater than or equal to 25 breeding duck pairs per square mile, to put another 100,000 acres of nesting habitat around prairie pothole wetland complexes (South Dakota was allocated 40,000 acres). This practice will allow producers to enroll up to ten upland acres for every one acre of cropped and non-cropped wetlands. The main emphasis of this practice is to now get our 40,000 acres on the ground well before North Dakota!

Chad T. Switzer, SD TWS Representative

## **The Wildlife Society Signs Global Warming Amicus Brief to U.S. Supreme Court**

On November 29, 2006 the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments for its first-ever case on global warming, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al v. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At issue is whether EPA, under the Clean Air Act, should regulate greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks due to their contributions to global warming. The EPA in 2003 determined that greenhouse gas emissions are not air pollutants as defined by the Clean Air Act. Massachusetts, eleven other states and three cities filed suit challenging that determination. The National Wildlife Federation in August 2006 filed a 43 page amicus brief that was signed by 74 conservation organizations, state fish and game departments, scientific and professional societies, zoos and aquariums and religious organizations. The Wildlife Society was among the signatories.

The brief summarizes scientific research on how global warming affects wildlife and is expected to do so in the 21st Century. Species like the golden toad are likely extinct due to direct or indirect impacts from climate change. Others like the polar bear could be victims if current trends are not reversed. In 2004, an article published in the journal Nature estimated that as many as one-third of species might face extinction due to global warming within the next half century.

"Global warming presents a profound threat to this country's fish and wildlife resources. It is our job as wildlife professionals to manage how human activities impact wildlife and their habitats, and we must act now," says Michael Hutchins, TWS executive director. "If we fail to take action, the world that our grandchildren will inherit will be much different from what it is today."

The Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision on the case in 2007. Persons wanting further information on the TWS position can contact Laura M. Bies, Associate Director of Government Affairs, The Wildlife Society 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 200 Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-897-9770 x303, [laura@wildlife.org](mailto:laura@wildlife.org).

## **Electronic Newsletter Update**

One of the problems with switching this year to an electronic only transmitted newsletter is that the newsletter is not going to all the SDTWS members. This is due to incorrect or no longer valid e-mail addresses. As a way to address this problem, the SDTWS newsletter, in addition to being sent directly to chapter members, will now also be posted on the chapter's web page at <http://www.sdwildlife.org/awards.htm>. If you have stopped receiving the newsletter please check the chapter web page for the latest and past issues. The newsletter is published quarterly. Over the past few years the publication schedule has been inconsistent. In 2007 I will endeavor to publish the newsletter on a more rigid and reliable schedule with the newsletter going out during the first week in February, May, August and November. If you have not received the newsletter during those times, please check the Chapter web page for the newsletter. If you change your e-mail address during the year, please send me the new address if you want the newsletter sent directly to you. Thank you for your assistance.

Greg Pavelka  
Newsletter Editor.

# Dinosaur Ramblings

by Chuck Scalet\*

03/2006 (Revised 11/2006)

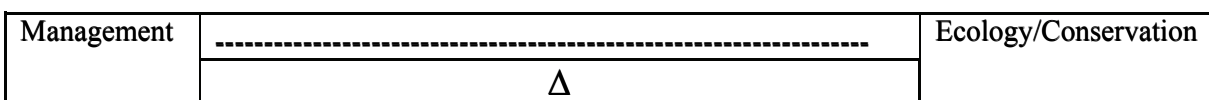
\*Editor's Note: Dr. Charles Scalet is a Professor and Head of the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Science at South Dakota State University.

First, the following represents what I believe has happened and is happening within the area of wildlife and fisheries education and research. These are my opinions and I provide no specific data as a basis for these opinions. However, I believe that supporting data could be obtained for much of this if the time and effort were expended to obtain such. Second, my comments that relate to university educational programs have a greater likelihood of being accurate than my comments about agencies, but even my comments about university educational programs are susceptible to my biases. Because of my lack of background, my comments on agencies will be briefer. Third, I am a dinosaur. With about 35 years of experience in wildlife and fisheries education, I am a member of the "old" group in the profession – a group who will soon take its place in the scrap heap of history. We will not know if we have been successful educationally; that evaluation will be made by those in the future. Fourth, I make no value judgments on whether these changes are good or bad. Arguments can be made both for and against; beauty is in the eye of the beholder. My intent is to note what I perceive the changes to be, why they came about, and describe some of their ramifications. Lastly, I am sure I have missed items – many people could add important salient features to this assessment.

## National Scale (Universities)

### The Shift! (or shift happens)

There has been and continues to be a shift in university academic programs and faculty directions away from traditional wildlife and fisheries management to what I will categorize as an ecology/conservation ethos. This shift has occurred in research and also in course and program content. I believe that for future reference it will be easier to describe this shift if I provide a visual model (hereafter referred to as the scale).



Thirty-five years ago all major wildlife and fisheries academic programs in the U.S. were to the left of the fulcrum on the scale. There was program variation, with some being to the far left and others arranged rightward, but if all programs were averaged that average would have been well to the left of the fulcrum. Individual faculty members in those programs would have had an even broader range, but would have still averaged well to the left of the fulcrum.

In the last 35 years all major wildlife and fisheries academic programs have moved rightward on the scale, some more so than others. There are still some to the left of the fulcrum, but I believe the tipping point has been reached and the overall university program average is now to the right of the fulcrum. Again, this does not mean that all individual faculty members in a particular program are at the same location on the scale as the program of which they are a part. As a further indication of this shift, many academic programs have modified their department, program, and degree titles to reflect the change.

## **Why the Shift?**

There have been multiple factors that have contributed to the shift. Following are ones that I believe have primarily helped drive the change (not in any order of perceived importance). I am sure others could be added.

1. There has been increased pressure on faculty to expand research programs – university expectations for faculty have increased dramatically in all mission areas, not just in research. As research expansion occurred it was more often in research areas directed toward the ecology/ conservation side than toward the management side. That is where the new money was usually located. Whoever said it was correct; if you want to know why something has happened the best advice is to “follow the money.” This is not the only section of this document where “follow the money” applies. Faculty will go in a direction in which they can be successful in terms of promotion, tenure, recognition, and reward. To expect otherwise would be naïve. If this means shifting, they shift.

2. There has been increased pressure on faculty to expand overhead income to the university. Public institutions of higher education (where most major wildlife and fisheries academic programs reside) are being squeezed between reduced state funding support and increased needs and expectations. One method to address this funding shortfall is to increase overhead income. Universities are looking less favorably on research projects that produce reduced overhead income. State and federal natural resource agency overhead rates for management research are generally low. In addition, some faculty perceive that they are viewed and evaluated based on the overhead they generate from external grants and contracts. Finally, most universities share some percentage of the overhead with the researchers who generate it. “Follow the money.”

3. Management research is now generally viewed by many universities and faculty members as being less prestigious than ecology/conservation research. Management research is often viewed as just being beneficial to anglers and hunters and species of interest to them. The term “hook and bullet crowd” is now not generally used in a laudatory fashion. Greater numbers of faculty are avoiding this association.

4. More faculty are taking what they perceive (rightly or wrongly?) to be a more holistic approach to natural resource management and conservation. Often this approach has been at the expense of management research. There has been a shift in thinking from the population level to the community or landscape level. As faculty shift, programs shift – sometimes purposefully, sometimes accidentally.

5. Public universities are now, more than ever, pressured by states to be economic engines (while decreasing their support to these institutions?). Thus, pressure increases for research that generates tangible economic benefits, often immediate benefits. While wildlife and fisheries resources have major economic values, such benefits are usually not viewed as being very important by many decision makers. Often natural resources are only viewed as economically beneficial if they are privatized, something most natural resource supporters are against. In addition, many of the primary benefits of these resources relate to quality-of-life issues, words that state legislatures and the business community seldom if ever use. We lack in-depth information about the true economic value of wildlife and fisheries resources, especially as these benefits relate to quality of life. Additionally, by following an ecology/conservation ethos a faculty member may say “my research is more basic in nature, it is for others to do the application part,” thus trying to get off the “economic hook.” Economic pressure affects research direction in a myriad of ways – some are not positive for wildlife and fisheries management research. “Follow the money.”

6. As more faculty move and have moved toward the ecology/conservation side of the scale, they tend to produce students oriented to that portion of the scale. Faculty produce students in their own image and that is affected by research fund sources. This is also reflected in the course content faculty provide. A cascade effect has played a role in the scope and speed of this shift to the right of the scale.

7. Once a faculty member is successful and becomes attuned to obtaining their research funding from particular sources, they seldom change, unless forced to, especially if they already have enough support. There is a comfort level in dealing with people and funding entities they know. Thus, once faculty go in a particular direction, they tend to continue in that direction. Once a faculty member moves away from management research the likelihood of their going back to it is reduced.

8. As the ethos of faculty members has shifted, fewer and fewer faculty members are consumptive users of wildlife and fisheries resources. This helps further distance them from agencies and the type of research they perceive these management agencies support.

9. There are other things that have contributed to the shift. Some of these may seem peripheral, but they have played important roles.

Shifts in the biological sciences at universities toward the molecular/cellular level away from the organismal level. This has reduced faculty numbers in the latter group, at least as a percentage of “biologists” on university faculties. This has been a problem especially where wildlife and fisheries programs depend on curricular components from biology departments for courses such as vertebrate biology and botany. Wildlife and fisheries programs imbedded in biology departments have also been affected by this faculty shift.

There are fewer students nationally in undergraduate wildlife and fisheries programs. This affects summer positions, permanent positions, and graduate school applicant pools.

Student demographics have changed appreciably, especially in such areas as male/female, urban/rural, and consumptive/non-consumptive user student ratios. Overall, students come to universities with less “background” information in natural resources.

Student priorities concerning for whom they would like to work and the type of work they would like to do has shifted. That shift has been away from management. Money is also an issue in this area.

Because of time pressures on faculty, they see efficiencies in having one large research project rather than numerous small projects. Management research programs are often developed by faculty in bits and pieces. These bits and pieces increase planning and paperwork appreciably.

There has been a recent academic trend to combine fisheries and wildlife programs with other natural resource programs such as forestry, range, etc. This trend has reduced faculty focus, shared vision, and collegiality. For some the term “identity crisis” is not inappropriate.

## **National Scale (Agencies)**

### **The Shift!**

Yes, agencies have also shifted on the scale. But first I should describe what I mean by agencies. These are federal agencies with major wildlife and fisheries responsibilities, such as the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the Park Service. State natural resource agencies that have primary wildlife and fisheries responsibilities are also a major component of this agency grouping.

Agencies traditionally were on the left side of the fulcrum – but all have shifted rightward. Federal agencies have moved further rightward than most state agencies. In reality, the federal agencies may now even be to the right of the fulcrum. This may be primarily a reflection of funding source. Federal agencies receive funding from all citizens; state wildlife and fisheries agencies receive all or a lot of their funding from users. It may also be a result of reduced research flexibility. It may also be a reflection of less funding for research in these agencies. Funding affects research. However, I believe that with all agencies averaged they are still to the left of the fulcrum, but not as left as they were 35 years ago. Note: I believe that agencies still average to the left of the fulcrum and I believe that the university programs now average to the right of the fulcrum – that is a disconnect. Remember that university programs not only do research for these agencies (and others), but also educate the students the agencies hire and provide the agencies with technical services. This disconnect is a growing problem at the national level.

### **Why the Shift?**

Again, multiple factors come into play. Following are some, in no particular order of importance. Others could no doubt be added.

1. Agencies have received many mandates from congress and state legislatures that have moved them rightward on the scale; usually these have been unfunded mandates. This has probably been more of a problem for federal agencies, but states have not been immune. These mandates modify the type of the research that is conducted, often at the expense of management research. Some major mission shifts have occurred in the last 35 years. “Follow the money.”

2. There are fewer discretionary dollars for research in most agencies. Just as in university programs, flat or reduced budgets (especially federally) result in more resources needed to cover uncontrollable costs (salary increases, etc.), reducing research capabilities. Thus, the continual effort to find new funds. “Follow the money.”

3. The need to answer more complicated research questions, especially those that address landscape-level issues, has moved agencies rightward on the scale. Much of the “simpler” applied research has been completed, leaving more difficult questions to answer. As less management research was conducted it eroded the number of faculty involved with this type of research.

4. The cost of doing research continues to go up. This negatively affects agencies, regardless of the type of research, and reduces how much can be done. “Follow the money.”

5. As research needs get more complicated more of the research done at universities require Ph.D.-level students – again reducing the amount of research (but not depth) done.

6. As university faculty shifted to the right, their students shifted to the right. This has had an effect, sometimes negative, on agency perceptions of the student educational quality, at least in reference to management capabilities. However, these students have still been hired and this has moved the agencies rightward. Do such students need more agency orientation and continuing education efforts? Who does this? How much does it cost? How is it done?

7. Agencies have not embraced The Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society certification programs. Both of these certification programs require “management” coursework. By not using

these certifications (or at least their coursework requirements), agencies have disregarded their most effective tool in directing university academic programs to provide the expertise they say they desire in employees. Arguments could be made for things such as national tests, program certification, etc., but these are not in place. The society certifications are currently available and not effectively utilized by agencies.

8. I am not sure where this fits into the overall picture or how it has affected things to date, but political leadership (or a lack of) has had major negative effects on agencies and their research. This has greatly impacted federal agencies, but states and universities have also been involved. “Anti-science” political leadership has not made agencies and universities and their functioning more effective – the results have been the opposite. Not wanting to find the “wrong information” has often led to not doing anything or only doing research that will not give the “wrong information.” In addition, when the “wrong things” have been found they have often been suppressed. The manipulation of science and scientists has had a chilling effect and the long-term ramifications of this problem are little understood. Filtering science through political and religious dogma has a long history of failure for world societies that have practiced this filtering. This issue has massive future implications for the nation and its position of research leadership in the world. In reality, we may no longer hold the position of research leadership in the world because of this problem coupled with long-term reduced expenditures on research of all types.

## **Conditions in South Dakota**

### **Current**

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences (WFS) at South Dakota State University (SDSU) has remained to the left of the fulcrum on the scale, but this does not mean we do not do research to the right side of the fulcrum. The Department has continued to work effectively with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and other agencies. We have been successful on the left and current plans call for us staying there into the future. WFS has three major missions – teaching, research, and service – and all still interface well with agencies. We produce undergraduate and graduate students who are well versed in management; we conduct a lot of management-type research; and, we provide a large amount of technical services to agency personnel across the state. This latter contribution is often below the radar-screen, but represents a substantial time/energy investment and is in much greater volume than many realize. WFS improvement is possible and desired in all three areas, but we have remained on the left. Our intention to work with agencies remains strong.

GFP has many and varied responsibilities and are still to the left of the fulcrum on the scale. Their interface with WFS is in hiring graduates, providing research funding (so that they can implement the needed management practices), and seeking technical assistance. No matter what changes occur in the future the need to answer management questions will always be one of GFP’s responsibilities, they will always need employees to do this, and these employees will always need technical assistance.

There is currently no major disconnect between WFS and GFP; not all states can say that. In reality we are now one of a minority of states without this disconnect. However, many in the state do not understand how and why the national picture at universities has changed (one of the reasons for these ramblings).

### **Specifics About the WFS/GFP Research Interaction**

WFS and GFP have always worked closely together to coordinate activities, including research activities. We must not only continue this effort, we must strengthen the relationship. Not doing so will

place both at peril.

An effective research program requires a lot of planning. I believe there are three distinct types of research.

1. Progression research.
2. Brushfire research.
3. Look-forward research.

Progression research is the step-by-step type. For example, “we know this, this, and this about eastern South Dakota yellow perch, now we need to know this.”

Brushfire research is the “I have an immediate problem and I need to know this now” research. For example, “I am getting severe pressure to institute such and such a regulation, but I do not know what it will do.”

Look-forward research involves those things that one believes will need to be known five, ten, or fifteen years down the road; these need to be started now. Effective efforts in this area reduce the need for brushfire research. A few recent research areas represent good examples. One is the river research conducted at SDSU for the last number of years. The same could be said about starting the mountain lion research before the animal was ever an issue and the development and maintenance of a captive deer herd.

All three of these types of research must be discussed at any research planning meeting. Another important discussion item is the mix of organismal, habitat, and human dimensions research needed in the three types of research. None can be ignored and proactive thinking is usually more effective than reactive thinking.

### **Challenges to GFP/WFS Interactions**

Many challenges could be listed for WFS and GFP interactions. However, I am going to limit my list of challenges to those that specifically interface between both entities. In these areas, what happens to one will surely effect the other. To further demonstrate the interfacing I will put them in side-by-

#### Game, Fish & Parks

1. What effects will GFP leadership changes have on WFS?
2. What will future political changes bring? Federal and state? What can be expected?
3. How will the ecology/conservation ethos affect GFP in the future and its relationship to those who currently pay the bills (users)?

#### Wildlife & Fisheries Science

1. What effects will WFS leadership changes have on GFP?
2. What will future political changes bring? Federal and state? What can be expected?
3. How will the ecology/conservation ethos affect the direction of WFS in the future?

## Game, Fish & Parks

4. Will GFP be able to compete nationally for the type of employees they want? Will there be sufficient numbers of the type they desire? This involves both summer and permanent employees
5. Will GFP be able to capture some research time for two new WFS hires, while still maintaining commitments to current faculty?
6. Will GFP demand for technical services from WFS continue to increase? What is the role of the two new WFS faculty in this area?
7. What happens if (when?) GFP revenues slump, pheasants die off, \$6 gasoline, CWD, etc.?
8. How will changing employee demographics affect program direction in GFP?
9. How will GFP research needs be affected by future needs in law enforcement, information transfer, land and water management, and all their other responsibilities?
10. How is the GFP/WFS interaction affected by changing state mandates, water law, public access, etc.?
11. How will changes in state population demographics, habitat issues, global climate change, etc., affect GFP?

## Wildlife & Fisheries Science

4. Will WFS be able to produce the number and type of employees agencies want? This involves both summer and permanent employees
5. Will the two new faculty members have to follow money elsewhere if management research funding is unavailable and, therefore, change WFS direction?
6. Can WFS continue to provide the current level of technical services to GFP in light of the ever increasing pressure on faculty time demands by the University? What role can the two new faculty play?
7. How would a GFP revenue slump ripple into WFS?
8. How will changing student demographics affect program direction in WFS?
9. How will WFS be affected by future GFP needs in areas other than research? What of GFP research needs beyond what WFS can provide?
10. How is the WFS/GFP interaction affected by changing University mandates, such as indirect costs, economic development, etc.?
11. As GFP is affected by changes in state population demographics, habitat issues, global climate change, etc., how will those changes affect WFS?

side pairs. Again these are in no particular order of importance and others could be added.

## **South Dakota Chapter TWS - Executive Board**

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If you have an announcement, information item, or committee activity report that should be included in the next edition of *A Prairie Voice*, or if your address has changed, send the information to: Greg Pavelka at Gregory.a.pavelka@usace.army.mil, or call 402-667-2581, or fax the information in at 402-667-2588.

**SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
Application for Membership/Renewal

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Indicate Home or Work) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (*for newsletter delivery*) \_\_\_\_\_

Home E-mail Address (*for list serve*) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note:**

The SDTWS List Serve is a one-way, non-conversational list serve used on an infrequent basis solely to inform members about important conservation issues and legislation. Due to the sensitive nature of some list serve content, we strongly advise that you provide us with a home e-mail address.

SDTWS' newsletter, The Prairie Voice, is all-electronic. Therefore, an e-mail address must be provided above in order to receive it (paper copies will be provided only to individuals who do not have a computer, internet access, or an e-mail address).

Please Check One:       New Member       2006 Dues Renewal

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