



Department of Game, Fish & Parks

2009 Annual Report

**Serving People,
Managing Wildlife**



INTRODUCTION.

The Game, Fish and Parks Wildlife Division works diligently to protect and enhance outdoor resources and perpetuate outdoor recreation in South Dakota. This report summarizes the most notable of these activities over the past year. Wildlife Division staff accomplished many tasks and achieved objectives in 2009 too numerous to list here. The accomplishments presented in this report represent the highlights of these achievements.

The responsibilities and authorities of the Division of Wildlife originate in state statute. Beyond the statutory authority it is the obligatory service to the citizens of South Dakota and its visitors that motivates and guides our actions. While maintaining and enhancing the rich wild resources comes foremost in management decisions and policies, strong consideration is given to the desires of the people that enjoy these resources and the landowners that host wildlife on their property. It is essential that we allow the citizens of today to take full pleasure in the natural wonders of South Dakota and ensure that future generations are afforded similar opportunities.

Every set of successes brings an additional set of challenges. The gratifying accomplishments of 2009 are the inspiration for bigger and better things in 2010. We are committed to working with the people we serve to help us identify goals and will diligently pursue those goals in 2010 and beyond. We believe that we are extremely fortunate to be entrusted with the distinguished responsibility to manage wildlife and perpetuate wildlife-related recreation in South Dakota and take pride in telling you of our accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Tony Leif

Wildlife Division Director

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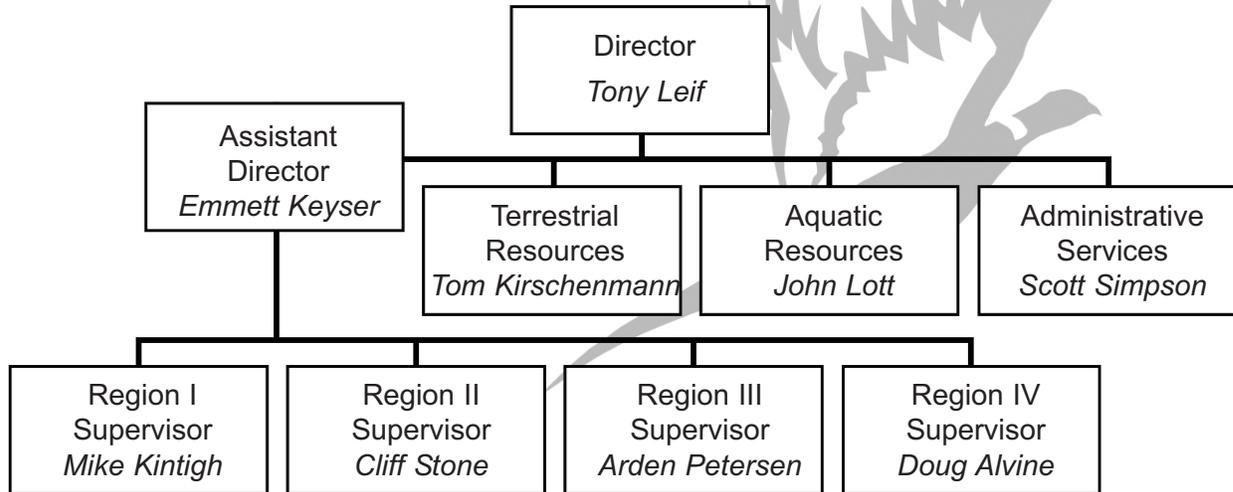
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I. WHO WE ARE.

DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH & PARKS

Jeff Vonk, Department Secretary

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



The Division of Wildlife is staffed by 272 employees organized in the following sections:

The Operations section includes conservation officers, law enforcement specialists and trainers, conservation technicians, wildlife damage specialists, and support staff.

Administrative Services includes the Federal Aid, Human Dimensions, Surveys, and Communications programs.

Aquatic Resources includes management of both recreational and non-game fish species, fish hatchery production, fish habitat development, fishing access development, aquatic nuisance species, and environmental review.

Terrestrial Resources includes management of wildlife for hunting, management of fur-bearing animals, management of non-game wildlife, habitat development on both private and public lands, and development of hunting access.

GFP COMMISSION

The Division of Wildlife works under the guidance of an 8-member citizen board. Board members are appointed by the Governor. Current members of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission are:

- Spencer Hawley, Brookings - Chair
- Randy Kemink, Gettysburg - Vice-Chair
- Jim McMahon, Canton
- Mert Clarkson, Buffalo
- Mike Authier, Vivian
- Susie Knippling, Gann Valley
- Jeff Olson, Rapid City
- Tim Kessler, Aberdeen

II. WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO.

MISSION

The statutory and social expectations of the Division of Wildlife are captured in its Mission Statement:

The Division of Wildlife will manage South Dakota's wildlife and fisheries resources and their associated habitats for their sustained and equitable use, and for the benefit, welfare, and enjoyment of the citizens of this state and its visitors.

Mission Motto:

Serving People, Managing Wildlife

VALUES

Wildlife enhances the quality of life in South Dakota.

We believe in providing for and sustaining the diversity of our wildlife heritage for present and future generations; that the future of wildlife depends on a public that appreciates, understands and supports wildlife; in education and involvement of youth and adults in wildlife and wildlife-related activities; in providing quality customer service.

Wildlife is a public trust resource.

We believe that wildlife must be managed for all citizens and visitors; that reasonable regulations are necessary for equitable distribution of the benefits of wildlife and to promote ethical and safe behavior; that the costs of wildlife management should be shared by all who benefit; in the public's right to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping are fundamental wildlife management practices and legitimate recreational activities.

We believe that the hunting, fishing and trapping heritage in South Dakota must be preserved; in fair and impartial wildlife regulations and law enforcement that serves and protects the public interest; in the management of wildlife in accordance with biologically sound principles; in professional and well trained staff who are competent, accountable and empowered.

Land stewardship and partnership with private landowners are critical to sustaining wildlife for the future.

We believe that wildlife benefits and economic progress are compatible; in people sharing in the responsibility for this resource; that the stewardship role played by landowners in South Dakota is critical to the future of wildlife and deserving of recognition and respect; that wildlife damage management is a cooperative responsibility of state, federal and private interests.

III. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUS - WEST

Several years of planning, design and public input culminated in December of 2009 with the awarding of a construction contract for The Outdoor Campus-West. This 33 acre facility will use the success of The Outdoor Campus-East as a blueprint for activities specialized to western South Dakota. When completed in April of 2011, this facility will be an entry point to the entire campus grounds where education will focus on environmental learning, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation activities. The campus will also function as a regional office for a large portion of western South Dakota.

This project will be completely funded using state license sales dollars and federal excise tax dollars collected on the sales of hunting and fishing equipment (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts). GFP and the Parks and Wildlife Foundation are also working with interested parties and to date have raised over \$410,000 in donations.

CREP PROGRAM

After two years of development, the James River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was finalized and now moves into implementation. The agreement between United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the state of South Dakota was signed by Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and Governor Rounds in October. November 23rd marked the official sign-up period for South Dakota producers. At full implementation, CREP will add 100,000 acres of wildlife habitat. The most unique component of the James River CREP is the requirement of public hunting and fishing access to all enrolled acres. Producers enrolled in the program receive an annual payment from USDA as well as from GFP. Within the first month of open enrollment, six contracts were approved and over 20 were in development.

FAMILY FISHING PARK OPENS IN SIOUX FALLS

In cooperation with the Jim Soukup Family and the City of Sioux Falls, a new 28 acre fishing pond and associated park, named Family Park, was created on the outskirts of Sioux Falls. Jim Soukup donated the land for the park, which includes a gravel pit that is being transformed into an urban fishery. GFP provided design and construction funding for the fishing access developments including road and walking trail development, parking, boat ramp, 14 stone shoreline angler fishing nodes and in-lake reefs, and four floating fishing docks (to be installed spring 2010). Sioux Falls will be developing the park portion of the property and making additional improvements in a few years.

Plans are to manage the water of Family Park as an urban fishery with expected high use, requiring intensive management. Populations of warm and cool water fish such as largemouth bass, panfish, and catfish will be maintained and spring and fall stockings of hatchery trout will be made to maximize angling opportunities. Providing an easily accessible, quality fishing opportunity within South Dakota's largest population center will give people the opportunity to participate in fishing on a regular basis and build fishing into their standard regime of outdoor activities.

REGIONAL ADVISORY PANELS

The Wildlife Division established the Regional Advisory Panels in each of four administrative regions of the state.

Each Regional Advisory Panels is comprised of eight or nine citizen representatives who are appointed by the Wildlife Division Director.

The basic objectives of the panels have been to provide an additional link between the Wildlife Division, the GFP Commission and the people we serve; identify challenges and opportunities in the management of fish and wildlife; develop ideas and potential solutions; and promote communication, increased awareness and understanding of the resource management challenges our state faces, both today and into the future.

Some of the accomplishments of the first year for the panels have been: discuss landowner and sportsmen relations; address issues of wildlife depredation, including problems created by Canada geese in the northeast; explore opportunities for youth hunting; hunting access issues; developing habitat programs to offset loss of Conservation Reserve Program acres; and promote good communication between all interested parties. Regular meetings for each of the four panels will be held throughout 2010.

IV. TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES.

GAME PRODUCTION AREA DEVELOPMENT/ENHANCEMENT

The GFP Commission approved a special allocation of Wildlife Division funds to address a backlog of habitat development and access improvement projects on Department owned Game Production Areas (GPAs); an initiative that reinvests hunting license revenues back into State owned public hunting areas. The \$1.70 million in development and improvement projects included practices such as native grass seeding, public access trail improvements and developments, small dam repairs and rehabs, grazing management improvements (e.g. cross fences and water developments), wetland restorations and developments, and general Game Production Area clean-up. To date, more than half of the approved projects have been completed, with nearly all the remaining projects under contract or in progress.

LAND ACQUISITION

The Wildlife Division acquired 16 tracts totaling 2,298 acres of Game Production Areas across the state, including the final 250 acres of federal transfer lands in Bon Homme and Yankton counties, at a cost of just over \$2.55 million. All but two tracts acquired were additions to existing GPAs. Several local conservation organizations provided \$29,000.00 to assist with purchasing these public hunting areas.

WETLAND/GRASSLAND PROJECTS

Fifty-one projects were completed through the Wetland/Grassland Program affecting 3,838 acres on private land. Twenty-seven wetland projects restored, enhanced or created 217 acres of wetland habitat, while 24 upland projects restored or enhanced 3,621 acres of grassland and riparian areas. Total cost of all projects was \$516,676 with cost share provided to landowners by GFP totaling \$295,110.00.

WILDLIFE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Woody Habitat: Working with 64 landowner cooperators, GFP partnered on 199.5 acres of woody habitat at a cost-share level of \$178,650.

Food Plots: Working with 980 cooperators, 11,407 acres of winter food plots were enrolled in the food plot program. Cost-share payments to landowners were \$245,032.

Nesting Cover: Approximately 490 acres of nesting cover was established, which included 21 landowner cooperators at a cost-share level of \$30,000.

Habitat Fencing: Twenty-eight habitat fencing agreements were developed with the Wildlife Division contributing approximately \$25,000 toward these projects.

RIPARIAN HABITAT PROJECTS

GFP contributed approximately \$24,000, with landowners contributing about \$34,000, toward larger scale riparian habitat enhancements on 551 acres. In addition, 8 landowners, Dept. of Agriculture, and GFP cooperated to plant 11,175 native riparian trees at small-scale sites totaling 10 acres.

MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT

Beginning in 2009, the mountain lion season dates were changed to January 1 - March 31 in an attempt to reduce the harvest of female lions with cubs three months of age or younger. In addition, the season was authorized year-round for landowners on their own land outside the Black Hills management area. Field work for one research study conducted by South Dakota State University on the effects of the last three hunting seasons concluded, while another study was initiated to evaluate lion prey selection in the Black Hills.

WILDLIFE RESEARCH

GFP continues to participate in numerous research projects, with the goal of obtaining results that provide management implications for improving wildlife and habitat management. Some research projects completed in 2009 include: deer preference for corn hybrids and husbandry practices during the growing season; effectiveness of Avipel as a repellent for pheasants on newly planted corn; influence of CRP and landscape composition on the distribution of prairie grouse in eastern SD; and population demographics of mountain lions in the Black Hills.

PRAIRIE DOG MAPPING

Using 1-meter resolution aerial photography, estimation of colony acreage (630,849 ac) and distribution of black-tailed prairie dogs in 30 South Dakota counties was completed. This monitoring is conducted every three years and continues to fulfill strategy 2.3 in the 2005 South Dakota Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation and Management Plan.

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

Teaming with Wildlife is a national legislative initiative to help identify a stable, long-term funding source for fish and wildlife and to hopefully help prevent future endangered species listings. The power of the coalition is its grass-roots nature, with most members joining at the state level. South Dakota's coalition grew by 35 members in 2009, making it the 10th largest state coalition in the nation.

OSPREY INTRODUCTION

South Dakota continued to reintroduce osprey chicks on the lower Missouri River in Yankton County during the summer of 2009. This project has created a tremendous amount of cooperation and interest among the public, partner organizations and cooperating agencies. The final year of reintroduction is 2010.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE PROGRAM

The Animal Damage Control (ADC) and Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) programs and personnel were merged into one program and creating a more comprehensive wildlife damage management program designed to bring higher levels of efficiency and quicker responses to landowners who deal with damage to crops, stored feed, livestock loss and other problems associated with wildlife.

Goose Depredation Assistance: In 2009, wildlife damage specialists, conservation officers and other department staff were contacted by 374 landowners and provided damage abatement assistance on 580 individual goose damage complaint sites. To respond to these landowner complaints, department staff drove a total of 97,381 miles, worked 7,886 hours, spent \$111,233 on equipment and supplies for a total program expenditure of \$457,600.00. The department paid \$64,111 to 64 landowners who installed temporary buffer strips or food plots on their land to help exclude geese from growing crops.

Big Game Depredation Assistance: In 2009, wildlife damage specialists and conservation officers worked with 88 landowners to pay for the construction of stackyards and installation of livestock panels to protect stored hay and feed supplies at a cost of \$201,725. The department assisted in protecting private property at seven individual orchards and commercial tree farms by installing permanent fences at a cost of \$16,141. Department staff worked with another 69 landowners to provide food plots to assist in reducing damage to growing crops and hay caused by elk and deer at a cost of \$131,729. In addition to these contract expenditures, department wildlife damage staff and conservation officers drove a total of 88,582 miles and worked 6,442 hours to assist agriculture producers with big game damage problems.

Elk Emphasis Program: In 2009, agency conservation officers and other staff worked with 15 landowners in the southern Black Hills and provided \$34,374 in contract payments to facilitate elk hunter access and provide for growing season food plots to assist in reducing elk damage to private lands.

Predator and Nuisance Wildlife Damage Assistance: Wildlife damage specialists and other agency staff responded to 728 individual coyote damage complaints, 435 beaver damage complaints, 22 fox complaints and 275 nuisance animal complaints in 2009. To assist livestock producers and other citizens in reducing losses to livestock and damage to private property, wildlife damage staff drove a total of 393,415 miles at a cost of \$243,935, worked 25,627 hours at a cost of \$554,879, and spent \$590,124 on equipment and supplies to assist agriculture producers with predator and nuisance wildlife damage problems.

STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS

State Wildlife Grants benefit fish and wildlife conservation, with an emphasis on preventing future endangered species listings. In 2009, this program helped attract new partners which broadened the agency's reach beyond traditional work. Example projects include an inventory of native bees in the Black Hills, the classification and mapping of riparian vegetation along the Big Sioux River, and the study of a disease called chytrid fungus that is threatening amphibian populations around the world.

VEGETATION MONITORING METHOD IN THE BLACK HILLS

A vegetation monitoring method was developed in the Black Hills to determine pounds per acre of forage available for wildlife. The three study areas covered the northern, central, and southern Black Hills. This method is a fast, accurate, and cost effective method for sound resource management to determine what forage is available for elk, deer, and bighorn sheep within the Black Hills.

DISEASE MONITORING

As part of national efforts to monitor wildlife diseases, the Division acquired 600 Avian Flu samples from migratory waterfowl and approximately 1,700 Chronic Wasting Disease samples from elk and deer. These efforts are conducted in cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies, non-government organizations, landowners, and sportsmen.

V. AQUATIC RESOURCES.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Ongoing fisheries management activities include determining fish population characteristics, angler use of fish populations, fisheries research, water management, and habitat and access management. This information is used to make management decisions such as appropriate harvest regulations and stocking numbers, water level recommendations, and the need for habitat and access improvements. Fisheries research allows management questions to be answered and stocked fish production and performance to be improved.

FISHING REGULATIONS

Fisheries regulation toolboxes were implemented for walleye and black (largemouth and smallmouth) bass during 2009, simplifying the number of regulations anglers need to remember without affecting fisheries quality. After using length limits to manage bass and walleye fisheries for the last 20 years, fisheries biologists and managers undertook the task of thoroughly evaluating existing length and daily limits. They were able to generate a smaller set of regulation options that would meet the need for harvest regulation for waters with fisheries characteristics common in South Dakota. These regulations have become options for fisheries managers to employ, should it be necessary to have harvest restrictions different than standard statewide regulations to maintain or improve the quality of a fishery. Regulations not in the toolbox may be utilized on an “experimental” basis given the need for them can be justified and a detailed evaluation plan is created.

EGG COLLECTION AND STOCKING

Approximately 21 million walleye, 56 million perch, and one million Chinook salmon eggs were collected to help meet fish hatchery production needs. Approximately 66 million fish were stocked by hatchery and fisheries staff during 2009, including 39 million walleye, 26 million yellow perch, 279,000 largemouth bass, 279,000 rainbow trout, and 180,000 Chinook salmon.

ANGLER USE SURVEYS

Angler use and harvest surveys were conducted on 17 waters during 2009 including all Missouri River reservoirs, Belle Fourche and Deerfield reservoirs, Center Lake, Brookings urban fisheries and a number of northeast lakes.

Angler use of small urban fisheries waters in Brookings was estimated and the number of angler hours for individual waters ranged from 600 - 1,300 hours per acre during the survey period. Angler hours were estimated at 11,600 hours for the 58 acres of Brookings ponds, and were similar to Lake Sinai, a 1,719 acre lake.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Fish population surveys were conducted on 102 lakes, reservoirs and small dams and 41 river or stream reaches during 2009 to determine fish population status.

Knowledge of yellow perch rearing techniques was increased and a study to determine the contribution of stocked perch fry and small fingerlings to perch populations in eight eastern South Dakota lakes was begun.

Forty thousand juvenile Chinook salmon were implanted with coded wire tags as part of a study to compare survival of salmon stocked at different locations in Lake Oahe to evaluate survival of salmon stocked at the shoreline versus the middle of embayments.

Evaluation of the contribution of largemouth bass advanced fingerlings (4-6 inches long) to populations in small impoundments was begun in 2009, in association with SDSU, with initial results suggesting survival is higher than that of smaller bass stocked.

Alternative fish feed diets were formulated with soy meal replacement in cooperation with McNenny Fish Hatchery and SDSU to evaluate viability of replacing fish meal with soy meal. Six different levels of soy meal replacement were evaluated. A study on feed additives which change the color of the flesh and skin pigments of rainbow trout was initiated to determine if anglers prefer the “colorized” fish and if “colorized” fish are caught by anglers at the same rate as fish on traditional diets.

Work continued on a number of projects on lakes in northeast South Dakota, including studies of the effectiveness of a 28-inch minimum length limit for walleye on Reetz Lake, determining if early spring or summer is the best time to sample black crappies, evaluating the impact of opening the fishery on Hazeldon Lake, and determining the best method of aging northern pike.

FISH PRODUCTION

Blue Dog staff concluded that hand spawning (manually stripped) yellow perch eggs resulted in a higher rate of fertilization than collecting eggs off natural or artificial structures, helping increase the potential for hatchery production of perch.

Blue Dog staff also determined that although the number of walleye produced in each rearing pond was the same, fish produced in ponds with rubber liners installed were two and a half times larger than those in unlined ponds.

VI. OUTDOOR RECREATION.

HUNTING ACCESS

The Walk-In Area (WIA) program continued to grow as 1,245,023 acres of private land were leased for public hunting access at a cost of a little more than \$2 million. A survey study of hunter use of WIAs was launched in September to obtain data on what factors influence use of WIAs and how we may be able to improve the program in the future. Thirteen cooperators enrolled 16,887 acres in Controlled Hunting Access Program (CHAP).

Approximately 14,000 acres in Day County and 2,454 acres in Marshall County were enrolled as Special Management Units within the WIA program in the northeast. These are working farmlands that are enrolled for public hunting of all wildlife species, but emphasize potential waterfowl (Canada goose) field hunting opportunities. Special Management Units are typically a mixture of farm fields, small to large wetlands, some tree belts, and some CRP.

The Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Hunting Program included approximately 35,000 acres from nine cooperating landowners in the Pierre area. These lands are leased primarily to provide waterfowl hunting opportunities, however much of the land is heavily utilized by upland game and big game hunters. There are 43 decoy-only registration fields and 74 pits available for pass-shooting hunts.

MENTORED HUNTING

The first full year of the Mentored Hunting program generated great interest as 1,612 deer, 422 spring turkey, 352 fall turkey, and 280 antelope mentored licenses were issued. The four seasons combined, over 1,900 individual youth participated in these big game hunts.

BACKYARD BIRDING BOOK

More than 400,000 people watch wildlife in South Dakota each year, many in the comfort of their own backyard. To meet this widespread and growing interest, the Wildlife Division produced a color guide to common backyard birds for free distribution to the public. The first 5,000 copies were exhausted within three weeks of release.

SHORE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES EXPANDED

Access to additional or enhanced shore fishing opportunities was a focus in 2009. Several projects were completed toward this goal.

Shore fishing access was improved at Loss Lake, Payne Access Area on Lake Madison, and the Worthing Kids Pond. Shoreline access was improved and signage installed on a canoe portage trail at Klondike PWA. Access for shore fishing was improved by removing trees at Stratton Access on Lake Madison, East Oakwood Lake, Mirandahl Lake, and Little Rush Lake and lease agreements were secured to provide fishing opportunity at Lakes Madison, Reid, Reetz, Antelope and Clear.

Urban fishing opportunities were maintained by stocking fish reared in hatcheries or collected through trap and transfer activities in many communities across the state.

Twenty-one new waters on private land were made accessible to the public through establishment of fisheries management agreements with landowners.

Five fixed elevation wood and steel fishing piers and one shoreline fishing platform were installed at Mirror Lakes (Lawrence County). A floating fishing dock was installed at American Creek in Chamberlain through cooperation with SD Walleyes Unlimited, the City of Chamberlain, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

DuMont Pond, a small impoundment in Lawrence County, was renovated in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service by installing a livestock enclosure fence and remote watering system in association with dam embankment repair, spillway repair and sediment removal from the pond.

Little Moreau #3, a small impoundment on the Little Moreau Recreation Area, was completely rebuilt, providing an additional fishing opportunity for north-central South Dakota.

VII. OUTREACH

GFP celebrated its 100th birthday in 2009. We provided information to various media sources highlighting our agency history and accomplishments, and also took the opportunity to focus on plans for the future.

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUS - EAST

The success story at The Outdoor Campus-East is evident in the numbers. Through 2009, a total of 869 programs were presented to 21,000 people at no cost to the participants. Most of these classes fill soon after they are announced. There are classes designed for pre-school-aged children, schools, and adults. The Campus is open most nights and weekends, and is a favorite meeting spot for many outdoor groups and organizations. The Campus is embraced by the Sioux Falls community as a feature that makes the city one of the top residential and business spots in the nation. Each year approximately 100,000 people visit The Outdoor Campus-East.

HUNTER SAFETY AND SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAMS

The HuntSAFE hunter safety program offered 160 courses in 2009 and graduated approximately 4,000 students. This level of service would not be possible without the assistance of 280 volunteers who provided 7,200 volunteer hours. There were 70 Bowhunter Education classes offered, with 1,700 graduates. There were 120 volunteers assisting with these classes providing 2,520 volunteer hours of service. The National Archery in the Schools program has reached 70 schools throughout the state, with 219 trained instructors and 5,000 students participating. "STEP OUTSIDE" is a community-based outdoor recreation programming to introduce individuals to hunting, fishing, and other activities. There were 11 events in 2009 reaching 800 participants.

BECOMING AN OUTDOORS WOMAN (BOW)

BOW has become a popular recruitment and retention program for our agency. We host a one weekend event in mid September for women. A variety of outdoor recreation classes are presented by volunteer instructors. This year's event was held at Lake Poinsett with 78 participants learning topics centered on hunting, fishing, boating, photography, shooting sports, cooking, as well as a number of other activities.

PROJECT WILD

Project WILD is a nationwide program that "teaches the teachers" about environmental learning and outdoor recreation lessons they can take to their classroom. Teachers are able to connect activities like hunting or wildlife management and connect them to state standard classroom lessons in math, history, reading and other subjects. GFP presented 12 workshops in 2009 to 243 participants. Classes were held in Sioux Falls, Custer, Sinte Gleska, Rapid City, Brownsville, Aberdeen, and three via the DDN to various parts of the state.

SOUTH DAKOTA CONSERVATION DIGEST

The “South Dakota Conservation Digest” magazine published by GFP produced six regular issues in 2009 plus one “Kid’s Digest” edition. There are approximately 7,200 paid subscribers to the magazine, and another 1,650 issues sent as complimentary subscriptions. The magazine reaches a broad audience of both sportsmen and people who just enjoy South Dakota’s outdoors. The “Kid’s Digest” is produced for a younger audience and is provided to school systems along with a curriculum plan that teachers may use in their class work.

LANDOWNERS MATTER NEWSLETTER

We are in the second year of publication for our “Landowners Matter” newsletter. This is mailed to a database as complete as we could compile of every landowner in South Dakota. The subscription list is approximately 14,000 with another 3,000 sent to GFP Division of Wildlife Offices and conservation officers for distribution. We offer information on programs and partnerships beneficial to this group. Among the topics addressed in 2009 were: goose depredation, reorganization of the GFP wildlife damage management program, private land habitat programs and their incentives, fish stocking for private ponds, and GFP land acquisition policies.

E-MAIL OUTREACH

A new outreach tool that GFP incorporated in 2009 was the use of an e-mail service to send messages to targeted audiences. We offer a variety of information items that a customer can sign up to receive occasional updates and messages, including: GFP Commission action, GFP News releases, Parks Information, hunting application information, and so forth. In addition, GFP is able to use an existing database of e-mail addresses from the sale of licenses to target audiences with specific messages. We e-mailed hunting information on specific seasons to license holders for those seasons, and received very positive feedback for the messages and reminders. For example, we recently sent a notice to over 116,000 previous hunting and fishing license buyers that the 2010 licenses were now on sale.

GPS PUBLIC HUNTING MAPS

GFP offered a new website application that connected our mapping system to a customer’s GPS device. This application allows a user to download the mapping information we offer through our website into their GPS so when they are hunting they have the information at their fingertips through their GPS device. We had nearly 3,000 individuals visit our website application. They are asked to share their e-mail address so that any changes or updates to the mapping program can be shared with them. We have had many compliments on the product, not just from sportsmen but from other fish and game agencies around the country. We will continue to expand these applications through other outdoor recreation avenues.

EASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA SHOREFISHING GUIDE

We produced a brochure guide to shoreline fishing opportunities in eastern South Dakota in 2009. This is the first of a series of guides that will cover the state. Our goal is to connect this information with some of our mapping and GPS applications and produce information a website visitor will be able to use in planning a fishing trip to a South Dakota destination of choice.

T.I.P.s PROGRAM

The South Dakota Turn In Poacher's Program continues to play an active role in the protection of fish and wildlife resources in South Dakota. The TIPs Board continues to work in close cooperation with the Division of Wildlife to actively promote the program and encourage citizens to report violations. A special display trailer was constructed this past year and has been used in several venues to share information on the TIPs Program and highlight program accomplishments.

Following is a summary of TIPs Program highlights for July 2008-June 2009: 481 investigations opened and 87 arrests made; \$13,271 fines paid to School Fund; \$3,000 civil penalties paid to GFP; 567 days in jail with 567 suspended handed down to violators; and \$6,545 paid to cooperators.

REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS/OPEN HOUSES

The Division of Wildlife held approximately 40 public meetings and open houses to seek public involvement for various topics related to wildlife management. Topics of discussion included waterfowl refuges, elk, deer, and Canada goose management, fishing regulations, and public land management. In addition, division staff participated in numerous sportsmen and outdoor shows, farm and ranch shows, county and state fairs, local club meetings, and citizen groups across the state.

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

Nine human dimensions studies were completed in 2009. All nine reports are available on the GFP Web site. Human dimensions surveys are used to provide a scientific understanding of our citizens' wants, needs, desires and opinions about management actions and programs. The surveys are also a valuable public involvement tool that provides an easy opportunity for citizens to provide input to the agency.

2009 surveys were: Evaluation of the use and value of the decoy-only hunting unit in the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Hunting Access Area (ongoing since 1998); survey of 2008 Black Hills Deer hunting season (ongoing since 1995) to look at deer management issues and hunter satisfaction; evaluation of 2009 mountain lion hunting season (ongoing since 2005) measuring hunting pressure, methods of hunting, and gain hunter's perspective of season; women deer hunters of South Dakota to gain understanding of female hunters and may identify strategies for increasing female participation in hunting; opinion survey of spring turkey hunters to provide feedback to GFP Commission on possible regulation to restrict firearms for hunting; waterfowl hunter survey to collect information and help evaluate problem of declining waterfowl hunter numbers; South Dakota bird hunter survey to evaluate potential for attracting bird hunters to participate in waterfowl hunting; future of waterfowl hunting

summary report to evaluate problems of declining waterfowl hunters and identify potential to reverse the trend; and Black Hills residents' attitudes towards wildlife summarizing findings from a survey completed in 2008.

Based on what was learned from the Resident Spring Turkey Hunter Opinion Survey, e-mail surveys were used to collect about half of the responses in the 2010 Black Hills Deer Hunter Survey and the same process will be used for the hunter survey evaluating the 2010 Walk-In Areas Program. Although this process is more complex and takes more up-front time to administer, it can save thousands of dollars in postage, printing and data encoding.

HARVEST SURVEYS

In 2009, we successfully completed the harvest survey process for the 2008-2009 big and small game seasons. We surveyed 92,000 hunters using 34 surveys, which included 11 for deer, nine for small game and waterfowl, eight for turkey, five for antelope, and one for elk. We also began using an email format for sending surveys for the first time. A total of 46,865 surveys were returned through postal mail and 26,797 (36%) were answered through our Internet response site.

FISHERIES OUTREACH

Wildlife Division staff made many presentations and interacted with the public in a number of venues during 2009.

Over 18,000 anglers were contacted by Wildlife Division staff during angler use and harvest surveys in 2009.

Presentations on fisheries-related topics were made to over 100 groups, including local and statewide angling and sportsman groups, lake associations, community clubs such as Rotary or Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, and grade and high school classes.

Fisheries staff participated in the Sioux Falls, Brookings, Pierre, and Aberdeen Water Festivals, exposing 4th graders from local schools to components of aquatic environments such as aquatic insect, fish identification and ecology and stream ecology.

Participation in Kid's fishing events sponsored by other groups was a common thing for staff in 2009. Staff participation included assisting with fishing and demonstrations on fish identification and management. Staff at McNenny State Fish Hatchery helped plan and conduct the Annual All American Kids Fish Derby, an educational fishing outreach event, which 175 children and 250 adults attended.

Hatchery-reared rainbow trout were stocked in support of a number of special angling events including the Sioux Falls "Catch a Rainbow" event, Brookings Trout Extravaganza, the kick-off event for fishing at Family Park in Sioux Falls.

Approximately 15,000 people visited South Dakota's three fish hatcheries and the Whitlocks Bay Spawning Station in 2009, with Cleghorn Springs Hatchery in Rapid City accounting for 11,000 of the visitors.