

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

Flickertales

Fall 2019



Photo: Matt Patrias

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation is a grassroots organization, which protects and enhances North Dakota's wildlife, wildlife habitat and access to that habitat, and promotes hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife related activities through education, programs, and projects.

North Dakota Wildlife Federation

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) is North Dakota's oldest, largest, and most effective conservation organization. NDWF was founded in 1935 by hunters, anglers, landowners, and other conservationists who were concerned about the loss of North Dakota's natural lands, healthy waters, and abundant wildlife. Our dedicated affiliates, volunteers, and staff maintain this legacy.

Affiliates

Barnes County Wildlife Federation
Bottineau County Wildlife Club
Central Morton Sportsmen's Club
Eddy County Rod & Gun Club
Hannaford Conservation & Wildlife Club
Hiddenwoods Sportsmen's Club
Kindred Wildlife Club
Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club
Missouri Valley Shooting Sports Association
North Dakota Hunters Education Association
Red River Area Sportsmen's Club
Richland County Wildlife
Stutsman County Wildlife Federation
Tri-County Trap & Wildlife Club



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Kerry Whip, Vice President, *Pingree*
Mike McEnroe, Secretary, *Fargo*
Terry Allbee, Treasurer, *Bismarck*
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Photos: Mike LaLonde, Matt Patrias

From the Executive Director



As we move into the fall, the North Dakota Wildlife Federation can celebrate another successful season of fighting for North Dakota's fish and wildlife, our wild lands and clean waters, and public access to the outdoors. Like most of our members, NDWF has a full calendar for the next few months, including affiliate club youth hunts, legislative study meetings, and maybe a hunt or two. This is an exciting time for the Federation. We are partnering with National and other state affiliates under One Federation to protect public lands and wildlife from attacks at the federal level. We are empowering our local affiliates with their youth recruitment activities. And we are growing our presence and impact across the state through on the ground projects and partnerships. The NDWF Annual Convention is January 3rd and 4th in Bismarck, this is your opportunity to hear what we've been up to and influence our conservation policies. If you weren't planning to attend already, we are hoping that this newsletter convinces you that there is no better place to be in January.

Contact John Bradley at jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com

Message from our President

By: Dave Dewald, Board President

October is our favorite time of year with late season fishing, waterfowl migration coming down the flyway, and the excitement for the deer opener building with each day. With hunting season in full swing, it's hard to stay fully engaged with what is going on in the conservation world. That's where the North Dakota Wildlife Federation comes in. For 84 years, we've been the voice for North Dakota's wildlife, habitat, and access we make sure that hunters and anglers always have a seat at the table. We're a voting member of the Interim Access Study, we submit formal comments on federal management plans, and we are at the Capitol every day during the legislative session supporting good conservation policy and calling out the bad. We do all of this so that you can spend more time in the field and on the water – doing what you love. But we do need your help, by becoming a North Dakota Wildlife Federation member today you will help support this important work. The North Dakota Wildlife Federation is growing, we hope you'll join us.



2019 Interim Land Access Study

By: Dave Dewald, Sportsmen Representative



Here is the charge for the committee: *“Study access to public and private lands for hunting, trapping, fishing and related issues, including trespass violations and penalties, and provided recommendations regarding a land access database and the capability of electronic posting. At the direction of the Legislative Management, before August 1, 2020, the Information Technology Department and Game and Fish Department shall establish a trial electronic posting and hunter access information system in up to three counties. The Information Technology Department and Game and Fish Department may contract with a third party to assist with the electronic posting and hunter access information system development and operation.”*

The first meeting was filled with requested reports from NDGF, NDIT, ND Association of Counties and ND Association of States Attorneys. They outlined the issues associated with a trial electronic pilot posting. All expressed concern over the potential cost of electronic posting. Comments from some attendees made it clear that sportsmen and women should not bear all of this cost. Chairman Erbele did an excellent job of setting the stage to make sure all the issues that were brought forth during the testimony on SB2315 were not renewed. That strategy worked well.

It appears that there is agreement that all land is assumed to be open unless otherwise posted. Specific details regarding the pilot were not discussed but many comments after the meeting were centered on the need to “define” how the pilot will work and making sure no penalties for trespass can be attributed during the pilot. The pilot will need a lot of further discussion and development. A lot of work to do, but not much time.

I expressed concern that the entire meeting was basically centered on the pilot with some of following issues not yet being discussed:

1. A need for a discussion on the process NDGF goes through to purchase land and how the legislative committee denies purchase not based on merit but on retaliation. This process needs to be improved.
2. Need to have ND Department of Trust Lands talk about access. I feel we need to have all Trust Lands signed for access unless legally posted closed for grazing.
3. Need a discussion on land locked public lands in ND. <http://www.trcp.org/unlocking-public-lands> According to this TRCP report ND has 107,000 acres of landlocked lands. Unfortunately it does not give a detail on state vs. federal. My guess is that most is federal BLM and FS. This issue needs to be further discussed at our hearings on how to provide access to as much landlocked land as possible.
4. Other access issues, such as shore fishing need to be on the table. Appeared today many members were looking at hunting access only. I believe that would be a mistake to limit to hunting access only.

We need to hear from you. I will try to bring your concerns to the table. - Dave Dewald, President of NDWF

Affiliate Spotlight: Barnes County Wildlife Federation



With over 600 active members, the Barnes County Wildlife Federation is an organization devoted to promoting and preserving outdoors opportunities for the people of Barnes County. Through habitat programs, access projects, and beneficial additions throughout the county, BCWF helps thousands of people each year get more enjoyment out of hunting, fishing, camping and other recreational opportunities, and ensures that those opportunities remain plentiful in the area.

The BCWF is allied with the North Dakota Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Federation in protecting natural resources, promoting the heritage of hunting, fishing and trapping and giving a voice to the individual sportsman and conservationist in a time where commercialization of wildlife and wanton waste and destruction of our natural resources is escalating.

Through local conservation efforts and a tight-knit membership, BCWF is helping to make a difference in our outdoors by protecting and promoting the many natural resources, watchable wildlife, fish and game found throughout Barnes County and beyond.

Meeting Schedule: Second Wednesday of the Month at the Valley City Eagles Club
Free dinner for members at 6pm, meeting at 7pm

Upcoming Events: November 1, 2019: Fall Banquet and Auction at the Valley City Eagles Club, 5pm-10pm
January 11th, 2020: Winter Fishing Derby at Sibley.
February 1, 2020: BCW Predator Hunt



Photo: Barnes County Wildlife Ice Fishing Derby (left), Gaylon Hansen Youth Outdoors Day (right)

To learn more visit: www.barnescountywildlifeclub.org

Conservation Corner: Lead Free Landscapes



For many years, the only options for hunters and anglers were ammunition and tackle that contained lead, which is toxic to all living organisms. The result is untold tons of lead spread across our landscapes and waterways and concentrated at popular hunting and fishing spots. This situation has led to unintentional poisoning of songbirds, waterfowl, upland birds and other wildlife that ingest lead shot. It has also impacted predators, most specifically birds of prey, that either ingest poisoned animals or consume gut piles from game that has been shot with lead ammunition. In 1991, a ban on using lead shot for hunting waterfowl brought about the rapid development of steel and other non-toxic shot choices. As a result, there are now highly effective alternatives to lead shot, bullets, and fishing gear. Hunters and anglers have seen firsthand the impacts lead has had on the environment. Lead pellets and bullet fragments have been found in the meat hunters bring home, and in the field, hunters have observed lethargy, weakness, and muscle wasting in game birds.

Making the Change

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation is partnering with the National Wildlife Federation to educate hunters and anglers across North Dakota about safe and effective alternatives to lead shot, bullets, and tackle. Today's non-toxic ammunition and tackle are high performance alternatives to lead that are reliable, accurate, and affordable. The benefits of lead-alternatives include:

- Cost-effectiveness and proven performance of steel shot
- Better penetration and bullet retention of copper bullets
- Healthier game meat
- No poisoned non-target wildlife
- Better public perception of hunters as this country's leading conservationists



Pictured: A lead bullet vs. a copper bullet

To learn more go to: <https://www.nwf.org/Outdoors/Our-Work/Lead-Free-Landscapes>

A Disturbing Downward Trend; Where's the bottom?

By: Mike McEnroe, NDWF Board Secretary

I hate to bring up a problem, if I don't have a solution to offer. But if I had a solution, maybe there wouldn't be a problem. A couple weeks ago, we received the news that the Minnesota Waterfowl Association was disbanding as of September 30, 2019. This was a major statewide hunting and conservation organization in Minnesota that had been created by active sportsmen and women in 1969, fifty-two years ago. This was a big group that finally ceased to operate because of an aging and declining membership, declining access, and the difficulty in recruiting the next generation to step up and join or participate.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated event. My brother was chairman of a Delta Waterfowl chapter in a South Dakota city; their local group folded a couple of years ago because of a lack of committee members willing to do the work. Our own affiliate, the Grand Forks County Wildlife Federation, quit two years ago because their fewer remaining, older members could not keep the organization going. We see it also in a number of our other affiliate organizations; declining and aging memberships.

All these groups were made up of hard-core, passionate hunters and anglers, sportsmen and women and their families. They all did youth events, had annual membership dinners and fund-raisers, built wood duck and bluebird houses, planted pollinator gardens and supported local and statewide conservation programs. And they are declining and disbanding.

This is reflected in hunter numbers. Even in North Dakota where hunter numbers remain stronger than those across the Nation, about 16 % of our state's population hunts, there are some downward trends. The annual number of Hunter Education graduates has declined a bit in recent years in spite of more women and adults taking classes. The number of resident waterfowl and upland game hunters has also declined. Bowhunter numbers have increased, but this is likely due to firearms licenses declining from 150,000 licenses per year 10 years ago to 45,000-65,000 permits in recent years.



Hunting and wildlife both need hunters and conservation group members to survive. Hunters have always supported conservation programs and science-based wildlife management. If wildlife is to survive in huntable numbers, and if hunters are going to have places to hunt and have access to both public and private lands, there has to be enough hunters to matter. And those hunters have to be active and passionate about their sport, with their voices, their volunteering, and their votes. Agencies and organizations are realizing that hunter recruitment has to be more than taking our own kids hunting and having a couple of youth only hunts each fall. We have to recruit more than our own children into hunting. And we need to get new hunters to participate and support hunting and conservation more than just in the fall. We need both boots on the ground and more habitat on the ground.



Volunteers gather for the annual Youth Pheasant Hunt held by the Red River Area Sportsmen

Support for hunting is more than opposing bad gun control bills. It's more than just a prime rib dinner and a few raffle tickets at the annual membership dinner. Support means helping out with the youth conservation activities, not just bringing your kids or grandkids for someone else to babysit for a couple hours. It's getting your own hands dirty building and putting up (the hard part) wood duck houses or bluebird houses, putting up nest baskets, planting pollinator gardens and supporting conservation agencies and their funding to do more habitat development. It is supporting federal and state conservation programs through contacts with your local, state, and national elected representatives. It is participating in your local wildlife club or organization's annual activities and projects. And it is bringing someone new along with you to do all of these things. We must stay active and be willing to adapt. Our wildlife, wildlands and outdoor heritage depend on it.

Policy Update: Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Hunters and anglers are sometimes called the “original” conservationists. Starting with hunters who were profoundly disturbed by the impacts of market hunting near the turn of the 20th century, the community used their resources and influence to form the foundation of modern wildlife conservation. Today, the hunting and angling community remains committed to the conservation of all of America's wildlife, including those species that are not hunted or fished. But the crisis facing our nation's fish and wildlife is daunting. More than one-third of all species in the United States are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered. State fish and wildlife agencies have identified more than 12,000 species in need of proactive, voluntary conservation.



Luckily, a bill has been introduced to address this growing problem. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will help recover and conserve species at risk by dedicating \$1.3 billion for state-level conservation and \$97.5 million to Tribal nations for on-the-ground conservation projects. The legislation funds the implementation of the congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans, which outline specific conservation actions necessary to recover and sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations. Similarly, tribal nations will expand conservation efforts on their lands, which provide vital habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species, including more than 500 species listed as threatened or endangered.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will provide state fish and wildlife agencies and tribal nations with dedicated resources to address this pressing problem. Taking measures to restore species before they are on the brink of extinction and ensuring healthy populations will help prevent these species from needing costly “emergency room” measures under the Endangered Species Act in the first place. Further, ensuring healthy populations of species will also allow businesses and landowners to operate with more regulatory certainty and reduced risk. This collaborative approach to conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, good for landowners, and good for business.

Our nation is blessed with a diverse array of fish and wildlife. There is a lot at stake and a lot to be gained from the passage of this innovative solution to this growing problem. America has a proud history of coming together to bring species back from the brink of extinction. Only a few decades ago, species like bald eagles, wood ducks, and pronghorns were teetering on the brink of extinction. Now they are thriving because we made conservation action and funding a priority. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act builds on this legacy and presents a solution that meets the magnitude of the challenges facing our fish and wildlife in the 21st century. That's something we should all rally behind!

How can you help? Call North Dakota's Congressional Delegation and ask for their support of The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (202-224-3121)

R3: Mentoring Memories

By: Nick Simonson



As a hunter who started on his own at the age of 22, I was non-traditional to say the least, and my trip up the learning curve was about ten years behind those young people around me in my hunter's education class that summer. In the process though, I was mentored by a number of people – close friends, members of my local wildlife club, and extended family– who took the time to take me into the field, and for their help I remain thankful. Their encouragement, insight and pointers on not just the shot and the retrieve but on all of the aspects leading up to it like watching the dog, targeting certain habitats and areas for more success, and just enjoying the time outdoors were key in helping me through my early years and developing a passion for upland hunting. That in turn developed in me a drive to pass it on so others need not wait until after their teens to experience the excitement.

A Special Weekend

Around 2006, my native North Dakota opened its first youth pheasant hunting weekend, held the Saturday and Sunday before the general pheasant opener. It is a new tradition which continues this weekend, where licensed hunters age 12 to 15 can enter the field a week early with an adult (who is not carrying a firearm) and get the first shot at pheasants. Designed to recruit and retain more hunters, the special hunt gives kids a crack at a flushing rooster without having to worry about anyone else blasting away, making each day their own.

Back then, my now retired 15-year old lab was a fresh and hard-charging two-year-old and ready for another season. I recruited the two sons of a receptionist across the hall from where I worked for Saturday's hunt, and then tapped a buddy to grab his younger cousin along with my godson for the Sunday morning outing. Birds were plentiful in that era, even just a few miles south of Valley City, and the expanse of CRP acres at the time seemed to connect every stretch of PLOTS and unposted land with those places we had permission for in what seemed for miles of contiguous hunting. It was an easy ten-minute haul to a few choice areas of grass, and the weather was perfect for both days. All four boys bagged birds, and we ended the weekend with nine roosters, but more importantly, those kids continued hunting well after that adventure.

The Big Event

Starting in 2012, I helped coordinate my local Pheasants Forever chapter's mentor hunt in Lyon County Minnesota. Based out of the trap club where I also served as Vice President, I coordinated the assembly of 1,000 acres of private land, in parcels immediately adjacent to a five-mile stretch of various Wildlife Management Areas that reached from U.S. Highway 59 south of town all the way to the back door of the

clubhouse. Occurring the weekend after the state's general opener, the event was a production but always worth the work and the sacrifice of a day of hunting from so many adults, as the shared reward was bringing 20 new hunters or so into the fold with our strong staff of volunteers who would turn out to put on the event.

It was a two-month lead to gather up new and regular mentors and volunteers from our chapter's ranks and those from the Twin Cities who would bring a crop of novices from the east. We'd scout out the parcels and do drives along the gravel roads to check for birds ahead of the regular season's start and converse with the generous landowners to find out what they were seeing. We did our very best to keep the ratio of hunters to mentors at two-to-one so that the experience and the advice could be personal. The morning hunts around the trap club culminated in what we called "the big walk" where those who were interested would go up and then come back through the 100 acres of private grass behind the clubhouse.



Needless to say, some young hunters were exhausted, having not experienced a real, wild-bird walking hunt before, and I'd often come back to the club to find some of them sprawled out on the green fabric couches in the meeting area, panting and sweating from their morning hike. I'd announce the next segment of the event, and some would barely move as I invited them along for the big walk, while promising a fantastic chance at birds that had been pushed into the area by the previous weekend's hunters on the surrounding public land, and through their own morning activities.

With some prodding one year, I was able to get a pair of brothers off the couch and they reluctantly joined the line of ten other hunters as we spaced the mentors and dogs between them. The birds in the stretch of grass were thick, and we flushed more than 20 roosters as we made our way up from and back to the club, with every kid in the line getting a shot, and bagging six birds in the short time frame, including a rooster for one of the exhausted couch brothers. "I sure am glad you convinced me to come on that walk," I recall him saying, and I responded that I was happy he came along too, and the memory of that moment has stuck with me ever since and reminded me of the slight convincing my buddy needed to give me in order to get me to take hunter's education as an older-than-average student and start my adventures in the field.

Whether it's the special youth pheasant weekend in North Dakota, or any number of mentor hunts throughout the upper Midwest in the coming month or two, be it for ruffed grouse, waterfowl, deer or other game, now is the time to start making mentoring memories of your own. With a small group of close friends and neighborhood kids, or as part of a bigger event, providing a mentored hunt and sharing what you know and have learned is perhaps the best way to thank all of those who invested in us and help carry on the hunting tradition with the next generation...in our outdoors.

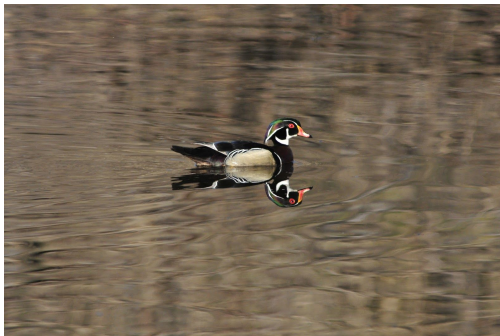
NDWF Events

NDWF and our affiliates host educational and social events throughout the year. Check out our Facebook events page for details. Visit www.northdakotawildlife.org for upcoming board meetings.

Mark your calendars! **Our Annual Meeting will be held January 3rd and 4th, 2020 in Bismarck.**

Make an Impact

For over 80 years, the North Dakota Wildlife Federation has depended on donations from conservationists like you to support our work to protect North Dakota's abundant wildlife, our natural lands and waters, and our unmatched public access to the outdoors for future generations to enjoy. We are able to do so much to protect North Dakota's outdoor heritage because people like you decide to chip in \$25, \$50, or \$100 to support our work. Your financial support is crucial to our ability to stand up to well-funded special interest groups at the North Dakota Capitol and in Congress. We need everyone who values North Dakota's outdoor heritage to get involved. Please donate to NDWF today!



Make Checks Payable To:

North Dakota Wildlife Federation
PO Box 1091
Bismarck, ND 58502-1091

Donate Online:

northdakotawildlifefederation.org



NDWF Membership Form

Individual Membership: \$15 - Associate/Business Membership: \$25 - Educational Organization: Free

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip

Email _____

Phone _____

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