

# North Dakota Wildlife Federation

## *Flickertales*

Summer 2026



*Advocating for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users.*

# 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 advocated for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users. Our dedicated affiliates, volunteers, and staff maintain this legacy.*

## **Affiliates**

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

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Photos: Mike LaLonde, Matt Patrias, Nick Simonson, John Bradley, Spring Bakke, Seth Owens



## *From the Executive Director*

### ***Protecting our "Duck Factory"***

North Dakota is home to the heart of the Prairie Pothole Region, often called North America's "Duck Factory." These shallow prairie wetlands produce the majority of the continent's ducks and provide critical habitat for countless other species, including pheasants, deer, shorebirds, grassland birds, and pollinators. They also support our hunting heritage, improve water quality, reduce flooding, and strengthen North Dakota's outdoor economy.

Today, these wetlands face an important challenge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has opened a public comment period on the regulations governing federal wetland easements in the Prairie Pothole Region. While this may sound like a technical issue, the outcome could have lasting consequences for wildlife habitat across North Dakota.

For more than 60 years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has managed these voluntary wetland easements under a science-based "No Impact" policy. The easements prohibit activities that would diminish the wildlife value of protected wetlands while allowing landowners to continue farming and ranching around them. When landowners wish to install drain tile, the Service uses site-specific evaluations of soils, hydrology, slope, and topography to determine appropriate setback distances that protect the wetland's function.

Just as importantly, the current system provides certainty for landowners. Those who follow the Service's science-based recommendations are protected should unforeseen changes to a wetland occur. This approach respects private property rights while ensuring that the conservation purpose of these easements is fulfilled.

These protections did not happen by accident. The easements were voluntarily purchased from willing landowners using Federal Duck Stamp dollars—funding provided primarily by generations of duck hunters and conservationists. Sportsmen invested in these easements with the understanding that the wetlands they protected would remain productive habitat for migratory birds in perpetuity. Maintaining the existing science-based standards honors that investment while protecting one of the most important breeding landscapes in North America.

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation believes the current system works. Throughout its 90-year history, NDWF has supported voluntary, incentive-based conservation that benefits both wildlife and private landowners. Today, our organization works with producers across the state to improve habitat through prescribed fire, woody encroachment removal, grazing management, and other conservation practices. Our experience has shown that conservation is most successful when landowners are partners and decisions are guided by sound science rather than politics.



Weakening the current wetland easement protections would put that success at risk. North Dakota has already lost millions of acres of wetlands over the past century, and the remaining prairie potholes have never been more important. Every protected wetland contributes to duck production, healthier wildlife populations, cleaner water, flood storage, and stronger rural communities.

### **Make Your Voice Heard**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is accepting public comments for a limited time (Comments are due 8/7/2026), and the North Dakota Wildlife Federation encourages every member to participate.

When submitting your comments, consider emphasizing:

- Federal wetland easements were voluntarily purchased using Duck Stamp dollars to permanently protect wildlife habitat.
- The current science-based setback process has successfully balanced conservation and private property rights for decades.
- Landowners who follow U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance already receive certainty through the existing safe-harbor approach.
- Weakening these protections would reduce habitat in North America's most important breeding grounds for ducks and countless other wildlife species.

Future generations deserve the same healthy wetlands and hunting opportunities that previous generations worked so hard to conserve. Together, we can ensure that North Dakota remains the heart of North America's Duck Factory for generations to come.

*-John Bradley, Executive Director*



## Message from Our President

### Protecting Our Public Lands Means Protecting the Public Interest

One of the principles that makes our country great is that our public lands belong to all Americans. They provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, grazing, energy development, recreation, and wildlife conservation. The challenge has never been choosing one use over another—it has been finding the right balance so these lands continue to serve current and future generations.

Today, that balance is being tested. [The Dept. of Interior has proposed rescinding important oil and gas leasing reforms that were finalized just a few years ago.](#) Those reforms modernized regulations that, in some cases, had not been meaningfully updated since the 1950s. While technology, production, and reclamation costs have changed dramatically over the last seven decades, some of the financial safeguards protecting taxpayers have remained frozen in time.

One of the most important of those safeguards is bonding. When an energy company develops oil and gas resources on public lands, it is required to post a bond—a financial guarantee that ensures wells will be properly plugged and disturbed lands restored once production ends. If a company fulfills its obligations, it receives that money back. But if a company walks away, those bonds help ensure the cleanup doesn't become the responsibility of American taxpayers. The proposed rule, unfortunately, would reduce bonding requirements back to levels established in 1951 and 1960: just \$10,000 for an individual lease and \$25,000 for a statewide bond. Those amounts simply do not reflect today's realities. The Bureau of Land Management estimates that plugging and reclaiming an abandoned well now costs, on average, approximately \$71,000 per well. With roughly 16,000 abandoned wells already on public lands, taxpayers face well over \$1 billion in cleanup liabilities. Bonding requirements should reflect the actual cost of reclamation—not the cost of doing business more than 60 years ago.

This is not about opposing energy development. NDWF supports responsible, multiple-use management of our public lands. In fact, the United States recently became the world's leading producer of oil and natural gas while operating under modern bonding standards. That demonstrates something important: we do not have to choose between producing American energy and protecting the lands and waters that sustain wildlife, recreation, and local communities.

The [proposal](#) also raises concerns about public participation. It would significantly shorten the time available for citizens to review and comment on many proposed energy development projects—from 60 or 90 days in some cases to as few as 10 days. Public participation has long been one of the cornerstones of public land management. Ranchers, landowners, hunters, conservationists, tribes, local governments, and outdoor rec all deserve a meaningful opportunity to understand proposed projects and explain how they may affect the places they know best. Ten days is not enough time for many citizens to review complex proposals and provide thoughtful input.

Public lands are one of America's greatest gifts. They belong to every one of us, and with that ownership comes a shared responsibility. As members of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation, I encourage you to stay informed, [participate in public comment opportunities](#), and continue being strong voices for responsible stewardship. The future of our public lands depends not only on the decisions made in Washington, D.C., but also on citizens who care enough to engage.

Thank you for your continued commitment to North Dakota's wildlife, public lands, and outdoor heritage. - **Kerry Whipp, NDWF President**

# Deer Cameras Up

By: Nick Simonson



It's morning in deer country. With the lottery application process complete for this fall's firearms deer season in North Dakota, many hunters' minds are already turning to the cool days of autumn, despite the confirmation from a warm, sweaty seat in the fishing boat that summer is just truly getting underway. But with the official pre-dawn alarm buzzer sounding, the proverbial feet in the slippers to start yet another deer season comes next – scouting. No other tool is more important in the process of previewing what's to come than the trail camera. With the right deployment and a few tips, getting the best pictures of the herd to be hunted this fall will provide crucial information on patterns that lead to success.

## **Know How**

It is important for every hunter to understand how each model of trail camera works before setting foot in the field and hanging it on a chosen tree. Effective range, day and night shooting options, video and still photo settings and resolution can all impact the output on a given model make a difference between getting a blurry mess and big buck when the shutter goes click. Be certain to understand the settings on a given camera before heading out and try a few test shots in the backyard by walking past the trigger and lens at different speeds, so it's clear what will come when photos are downloaded from an SD card for review.

Sensitivity and trigger delay are two major considerations when working with a new camera. Knowing if the surrounding vegetation in an area will set off the trigger can mean the difference between a memory card filled with a month's worth of visiting deer or a day's worth of grasses blowing in the wind. Additionally, understanding the

sensitivity and the timing between when the motion sensor is tripped and when the shutter clicks provides a better idea as to where to set a trail camera up. If it's a longer delay, consider a camera site that provides an angled view of the trail, or head on, so what comes into view and sets the device off stays in view when the picture is taken.

### **Take Direction**

With a basic understanding of a chosen camera, it's important to know how to hang it. With the sun rising in the east and setting in the west at dawn and dusk, a north-facing camera is best with south-facing cameras being good too, up until the days begin to shorten. This positioning helps eliminate glare and prevent the early morning and evening rays from back-lighting any deer in the frame and washing them out, providing a better picture during those peak periods of activity around dawn and dusk when deer are on the move and most likely to be caught on camera. The north side of a tree helps provide the most shade as well, allowing for better pictures throughout the day, if deer are active in full light.

### **Hanging Around**

Much like putting a stand out before the season, it is key to place a camera in an area on or near a trail where deer frequently come in and out. Attractants such as mineral licks can help bring them off a trail and linger in photo range as well, so give some consideration to that option and a possible move if the photos aren't piling up by mid-summer. Try to center the portion of trail or the mineral lick in the middle of the camera's angle and a suitable distance out, allowing for a fuller view of the bucks to be pursued this fall. The pictures provided will help with antler counting, body-size analysis, and even age estimates if practicing quality deer management in a certain hunting area.

Placing a camera in a location that provides access to it without disturbing a natural path or getting a bunch of unwanted human or household scent in the area is also vital to success, now and in the future. Treat each trip out to the camera to adjust position or change batteries just like a trip to the deer stand. Be quiet, go when there is not a great deal of animal activity (such as mid-day) and practice scent control methods, just like during the hunt. The wisest bucks know when something is amiss and can carry that wariness into the season especially as summer wanes; steering clear of a hunting area for the next few weeks or even months if they detect something is off.

With these ideas in mind, approach this hyperbolic hunting morning like that of opening day, with good preparation and with plans to get the most out of every second and every shutter-snap of a trail camera setup.

*Simonson is the lead writer and editor of Dakota Edge Outdoors.*



# GOVERNOR'S *Legacy* SOIL HEALTH AND HABITAT PROGRAM

Helping North Dakota farmers strengthen cropland productivity and resilience with perennial grass cover.



## Program Administration and Delivery

The program is administered by North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts and North Dakota Game and Fish, with local delivery through Soil Conservation Districts and partners.



## Guiding Principles – The LEGACY Framework

- ✓ Land Stewardship
- ✓ Ecology and Energy
- ✓ Growth and Governance
- ✓ Agriculture and Access
- ✓ Conservation and Collaboration
- ✓ Yield and Your Future



## Benefits of Perennial Cover

- ✓ Improved Soil Health
- ✓ Water Retention
- ✓ Wildlife Habitat



**OPEN TO ALL CROPLAND**

## Program Details

- 5-year agreement to establish and manage grass.
- Annual rental payment based on the average county rental rate.
- Cost-share for grass seed and seeding - \$50/acre for seed | \$50/acre for establishment.
- \$10 per acre crop insurance premium reduction for every acre of perennial grass established.
- Optional \$15 per acre public access incentive through NDGFD's Private Land Open To Sportsmen program.

## Contact Us



### North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts

- ✉ [lincolnnoakes@lincolnnoakes.com](mailto:lincolnnoakes@lincolnnoakes.com)
- 🌐 [ndascd.com/district-offices](http://ndascd.com/district-offices)

### North Dakota Game and Fish Department

- ✉ [privatelands@nd.gov](mailto:privatelands@nd.gov)
- 🌐 [gf.nd.gov/private-lands/contact](http://gf.nd.gov/private-lands/contact)

# Near Record Walleye Production Will Bolster Fisheries

*Wed, 07/13/2026, NDG&F Staff*

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department stocked nearly 12 million walleye fingerlings statewide earlier this summer, about 11 million of which were raised at Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery and 1.1 million at Valley City National Fish Hatchery.

The record combined walleye production from both federal hatcheries was more than 12 million in 2017.

“Traditionally, on large production years, significant numbers of walleye fingerlings would go to big systems”, according to Jerry Weigel, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fish production and development section supervisor, “but this year, 2.3 million walleye went into Lake Sakakawea and just under 500,000 into Stump, Darling and Ashtabula, with the remaining fish stocked into over 150 other lakes”.

Each spring, walleye eggs are collected by fisheries personnel and taken to Garrison Dam and Valley City national fish hatcheries where they are hatched. Shortly after, the walleye fry are stocked into production ponds and after a month of growth, 1-inch or larger fingerlings are collected and stocked across the state.

Distribution trucks traveled more than 12,000 miles over a two-week period in June to stock fingerlings.

“Stocking conditions in 2026 were optimal given the unusually cool temperatures over the weeks in June when fish were being stocked,” Weigel said.

The receiving waters were rich in invertebrates, critical food for the survival of the newly stocked walleye. Conditions are favorable for good survival and growth of young walleyes.

Additionally, 1.1 million northern pike fingerlings were stocked into 37 waters statewide. These pike stockings are generally limited to waters that do not support walleye but provide unique fishing opportunities and enjoyment from the fast-growing pike.

Department partnerships with national hatcheries, department stocking efforts and favorable conditions continue to bolster excellent fishing opportunities across the state for years to come

# Yaks for Healthy Soils and Habitat

By: Cara Greger, NDWF



Improving habitat and soil health has been shown to help wildlife. Ranchers provide this valuable habitat in much of North Dakota. In Western ND, near Alexander, Diamond E ranch is using yaks to graze their grasslands. You may ask, “What do yaks and improving wildlife habitat have to do with one another?” Why yaks? Ashley, owner of Diamond E along with her husband Cody, explains, “Yaks tend to graze differently than cattle and can be lighter on the land, especially when grazing is managed carefully. Diamond E has seen areas where plant diversity seems to improve, along with good regrowth in grasses.” Ashley and Cody notice more wildlife using the pasture — pheasants, birds, and other wildlife seem to benefit when there is good cover and a variety of plants available.

Healthy grasslands support much more than just livestock, and it has been rewarding to see the prairie continue to provide habitat while still being productive for grazing. With the help of North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) and United States Fish and

Wildlife (USFWS) Working Lands program, Cody and Ashley will be able to break their 480 acres from three pastures to ten 40-acre pastures. This ensures more rest and recovery for the plant communities and better habitat.

At the ranch, 7,040 feet of fence was identified to be installed to improve the rotational grazing system. Using the Holmes funds from NDWF and the USFWS funds, Cody and Ashley will be able to add fencing and water sources to better utilize the pastures and increase the herd size. Cody and Ashley have been raising yaks on the property since 2023, and both grew up on family ranches. Ashley’s brother is now running her family’s ranch and Cody’s Dad is still ranching on the family ranch. Cody has a master’s degree in Agricultural Education and spent 7 years teaching secondary and post-secondary agriculture. This background is helping Ashley and Cody to also use their ranch to do outreach and education to their local communities.

On the property, the family have observed mule deer, pheasants, grouse, songbirds (western meadowlarks, bobolinks, chestnut-collared longspurs, clay-colored sparrows, upland sandpipers, horned larks, vesper sparrows, grasshopper sparrows), Canada geese, duck species (mallards, teals, shovelers, pintails), and coyotes on the property. Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), out of Watford City, ND helped with 400 acres of grass planting. The Eastern

most pasture was once a wheat field that has been planted to a cool season mix in 2021, while the western pastures were planted to a warm season and more diverse mix.

In the warm season planting, Canada wild rye, big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, purple prairie clover, white prairie clover, Maximilian sunflower, yellow sweetclover (invasive not planted in the mix), purple coneflower, and others have been observed. Cody and Ashley are hoping with the addition of cross fencing and water supply, they can better utilize forage and move the yaks more frequently. Areas that do not get as much use by the animals show thick litter build up and some areas there is over utilization due to the lack of available water.

During a visit, Chad Maier of United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) part of the United States Department of the Interior (USDOI) and Cara Greger, NDWF western ND Conservation Coordinator, were able to meet with Cody and Ashley and tour the ranch.. Chad gave suggestions to improve the warm season planting which will use the forage better. In the native pastures, some areas of smooth brome were not being touched by the yaks. Chad suggested bale grazing or rolling out their bale in that area for better utilization and healthier grasslands. With the proposed infrastructure projects, Cody and Ashley can achieve better management goals. The native prairie pastures could benefit from the new management plans and wildlife would benefit and better nesting habitat, foraging habitat and pollinator habitat could be created. Turkeys could potentially use this rangeland although they have not observed any at this point.

The objective of the project is to install stock water tanks to make water more available in more places so the yaks are forced to graze certain areas at specified times. With limited water sources, the yaks currently have approximately 150 acres to roam at each rotation. This gives the yaks free choice to eat their preferred vegetation down to the ground leaving much other vegetation untouched. Yaks are similar to goats and sheep; they will consume undesirable plants such as thistle when forced to. The project will decrease pasture size to 40 acres per rotation resulting in better utilization and increased stimulation of the vegetation and give more rest to pastures increasing plant vigor and overall environmental benefits while maintaining a sustainable ranch operation.

Ashley and Cody's land is currently a part of a research study being conducted by UND, Meadowlark Initiative, and the Smithsonian, focused on grassland bird use. The study is comparing use of native grasslands, restored native mix grasslands, and croplands by 8 key grassland songbird species. Cody has shared preliminary data gathered from the study. The research collection started in 2024 and will continue through 2026.

Ashlyn Herron, researcher for University of North Dakota (UND), has been leading the study on Ashley and Cody's land. Ashlyn states, "We are seeing increased species presence for many sensitive grassland birds such as grasshopper sparrows and bobolinks on our replanted grasslands in as little as three years post planting. While no two species that we are monitoring respond in the exact same way, the majority of species are showing positive responses to these manufactured habitats over time. These areas have become usable habitat for wildlife because of private landowners and supportive genuine partnerships that have help connect dollars to the earth. Partnership with the folks who hold and manage the grasslands is essential to ensure that grasslands continue to exist for future generations to enjoy."

The UND researchers are working closely with landowners who are actively working with conservation organizations to replant marginalized croplands to native grasslands. The habitat improvements have shown to benefit both game and nongame grassland species, while creating areas that can and will be grazed by livestock. Researchers have observed 71 unique bird species (waterfowl, gamebirds, shorebirds, raptors and songbirds) on the property during 2025 point count surveys. Ashlyn says, “The replanted grasslands especially, show what is good for the herd is also good for the bird. Both the herd and the bird need the grass. Replanted grasslands grow both grassland birds and livestock, much better than any soybean or sunflower field. Livestock grazing makes these areas profitable to be returned to or kept in grass, while also playing essential roles of functioning biological diversity on an ecosystem scale. Ranchers that partner with conservation organizations are the key to keeping grass green side up on the landscape.”

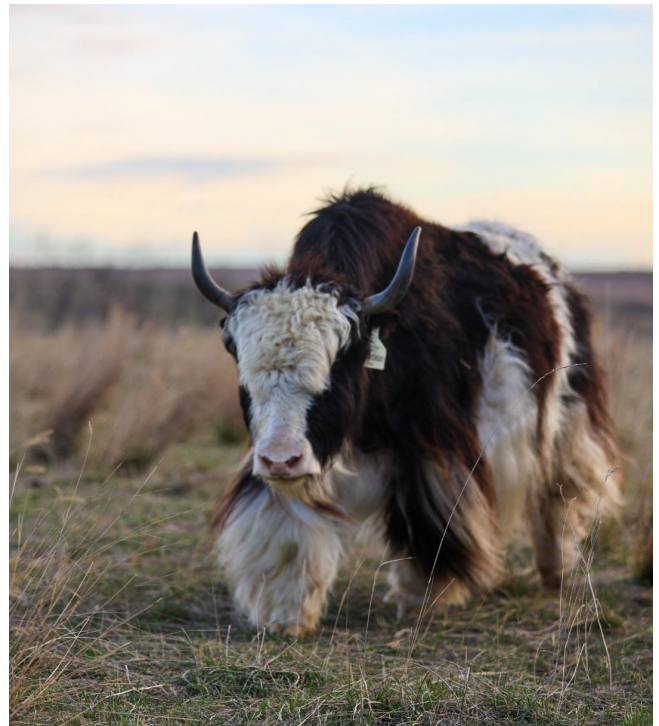
If Diamond E had not purchased the property, the 480 acres would probably have continued in traditional agricultural production. The purchase gave Ashley and Cody the opportunity to look at how the land could remain productive while also being used in a way that supports long-term grass health and grazing. They value keeping land productive, but also want to be thoughtful about how it is managed for future generations.

The grazing system goal is to continue improving grazing management so both the animals and the land benefit. This means to keep learning how to rotate grazing in a way that allows plants time to recover, encourages plant diversity, and supports healthy soil. Long term, the hope is to continue building a system where livestock production, land stewardship, and wildlife habitat all work together.

Cody is not enrolled in PLOTS but gives permission to people he knows and trusts to hunt on his land. While deer hunting on the ranch is not as popular, Cody, his family and people he knows have had success hunting pheasants. They like to take their dogs out on their pastures. When Chad and I were there about 10 pheasants popped up in front of us and then we could hear roosters in the distance.

In addition to operating the ranch, Ashley does education about yaks to local school groups. She has hosted groups at their pastures about the health benefits of yak and how to use their fibers. She hopes to expand this education program and get more youth and kids connected to farming. They also sell their Diamond E Ranch branded meat products at local farmers’ markets and to a venue in Bismarck.

Together conservation groups and landowners can protect and improve the grasslands of North Dakota for future generations.



# Going Baitless for Summer Crappies



It's hard to beat the action that a school of summer crappies brings. Whether in that ideal place from shore or a dock, or that same secret spot on your boat's GPS where slabs stack up and feed when the dog days set in and the action gets as hot as the weather, crappies make for fun fishing. While watching a bobber drop brings its own rush, catching crappies without bait adds a bit of a challenge and a whole lot of forearm snapping fun on each hook set – sometimes subtle, sometimes a slam – triggers a reactive rip and a solid connection with fish. Having a few go-to tackle items always helps seal the deal no matter what water you might be fishing specks on this summer.

## Feather and Flash

Some of my favorite jigs are those small 1/16- and 1/32-ounce options that incorporate small selections of hackle or marabou in a variety of colors along with a touch of tinsel or krystal flash to give the bait some sparkle under the water. Classic options like the Flu-Flu

and Northland's Gypsi jig come in a variety of colors and help provide a start in a selection of summer crappie offerings. These commercial lures are easily imitated with a few collarless ballhead jigs or other lead-head styles, and a pinch of the chosen material in a prime crappie-catching color tied in, if one prefers creating these patterns by hand on the vise.

## Perfect Plastics

As with all other species, plastic bodies and tails are great options when going the baitless route, and with crappies the options are generally cheap allowing for a wider variety of selections on the water. The ubiquitous crappie tube is a solid go-to dressing, and can be rigged on a ballhead jig or an insert jig. If starting a crappie collection, consider getting a few packs in baitfish patterns: silver glitter, blue glitter, or salt-and-pepper. Add in some brighter options like pink, chartreuse, and purple and a few natural patterned options. A few packs of curly tailed grubs in one- and two-inch lengths will provide a good fallback as well, and size can be adjusted to match the baitfish slabs are schooling on. After those basics there are a variety of small creature and fish shaped plastics that round things out. Try a few of each and build a good selection for each day's varying conditions.

## Crank and Clank

Finally, having a few small crankbaits and metal accessories to add to your offerings will give you the most complete tackle pack for crappies. A few favorite crankbaits to consider start with the Rapala Countdown in sizes of one to two inches. Simply cast it out, count it down with one second equaling about a foot of fall, and reel it in with a few

twitches through the school of feeding crappies for a connection. Any small sinking crankbait will work, so find your brand preference in a pattern that matches the baitfish hatch or those confidence colors for crappies, and you'll be in business.

Finally, adding a bit of flash to a lure via a small spinner blade will help provide the imitation of a fleeing baitfish and that added flicker crappies fiend for. Simple arm-based spinner blades in small sizes, or options provided with classic crappie lures like the Beetle Spin, can be easily attached to any favorite jig for additional flash. Keep a few handy to seal the deal with a little more vibration and shine.

These lures are just the beginning. There are a wide variety of jigs, plastics, crankbaits, small spinnerbaits and other crappie-focused offerings that help connect with summertime fish in a way that doesn't require bait. The best part is they don't carry a hefty price tag and get the job done efficiently. Keep them in mind this summer and explore all of your options to maximize the slabs that come to hand all season.

Simonson is the lead writer and editor of Dakota Edge Outdoors.





The North Dakota Industrial Commission, consisting of Gov. Kelly Armstrong, Attorney General Drew Wrigley and Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring, approved \$6 million in Outdoor Heritage Fund grants. The program is funded solely by oil and gas production tax revenue. The Outdoor Heritage Fund was established in 2013 to provide grants for projects that enhance outdoor conservation practices in the state. The approved Outdoor Heritage Fund projects include:

- \$175,000 to the LaMoure County Water Resource District for its Limesand Seefeldt Dam Reparation Project.
- \$1 million to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department for its Donation-Supported PLOTS program.
- \$2.5 million to Audubon Great Plains for its Conservation Forage Program II.
- \$1.5 million to North Dakota Natural Resources Trust for its Bakken Development and Working Lands Program 4.
- \$700,000 to North Dakota Natural Resources Trust for its Working Grassland Partnership 8.
- \$125,000 to the North Dakota Wildlife Federation for its North Dakota Open Prairie Initiative.

Any political subdivision, corporation, partnership, cooperative, association, or consortium of such parties is eligible to apply for Outdoor Heritage Fund and Renewable Energy Program funding. Funds are required to be matched by private dollars. The next submission deadline for Outdoor Heritage Fund grants is Sept. 8, 2023, and the deadline for Renewable Energy Program grants is Oct. 2, 2023. More information about the two programs may be found on the Industrial Commission's website at <https://www.ndic.nd.gov>.

For more information, contact the Industrial Commission at 701-328-3722.

# Certified Wildlife Habitat

By: Kali Lee, NDWF



Create a wildlife-friendly landscape or garden space and the National Wildlife Federation will recognize it as a Certified Wildlife Habitat®.

Everyone can enjoy and protect wildlife where they live, learn, work, play, and worship. This program provides simple steps and a wealth of resources to create beautiful spaces that make a big impact for local and migratory species from small window boxes to vast habitat corridors. Implementing climate smart sustainable gardening practices benefits people and communities across North America.

Explore options below for the ways you or your organization can be part of the movement to increase even more wildlife-friendly acres across backyards, public gardens, school districts, corporate campuses, colleges and universities, places of worship, and community spaces across the country and at select sites across the world. All these efforts incorporate **Habitat Essentials** with **native plants**.

Learn how anyone, at any age, in any place, can help and receive recognition for their efforts through a few different certification options. Check out the list of benefits individuals receive when they certify at [www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Create-and-Certify](http://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Create-and-Certify)



P.O. Box 1442, Bismarck, N.D. 58502



P.O. Box 1091, Bismarck, N. D. 58502

# Conservation Notes

## *Burgum's End Game for Public Lands*

**Issue #132, July 2026**

Secretary Burgum, former Governor of the great state of North Dakota manages the Department of Interior (DOI). DOI includes 3 major public land management agencies: National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that have large land holdings in North Dakota. It is in Secretary Burgum, former Governor of the great state of North Dakota, manages the Department of the Interior the public's interest to have professionally managed public lands that are vital for uses such as grazing, wildlife habitat, energy development, recreation and many other economic and social uses. The DOI land management agencies are experts in managing OUR public land for multiple uses that benefit all Americans.

But, Secretary Burgum's budget cutting and arbitrary staff reductions, under the guise of finding "waste, fraud, and abuse" have left these vital land management agencies without the personnel, funds, and tools to properly manage these public lands. These cuts were not meant to save money, reduce or eliminate fraud, waste and abuse. These cuts were made to make these land management agencies incapable of doing the job they are required to do by law, managing OUR public lands. Making them look bad in the public's eyes leaves these agencies vulnerable to factitious criticism, ridicule, and much worse divestment of the land they are required to manage.

Secretary Burgum's end game isn't to have leaner, more efficient land management agencies. Secretary Burgum's end game is to convince the public OUR public lands will be better managed by the private sector and need to be sold to the highest bidder, which will likely be rich millionaires and billionaires.

Therefore, North Dakota public officials, including Governor Kelly Armstrong must demand that Secretary Burgum and Congress follow the laws for funding, staffing, and managing Our public lands.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, ([jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com](mailto:jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com)), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation([memcenroe@midco.net](mailto:memcenroe@midco.net)) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, ([bluebill@bis.midco.net](mailto:bluebill@bis.midco.net)). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit ([ndctws.org](http://ndctws.org))-library

## Make an Impact

*For 90 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 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.*



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

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