



October 2015

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Rapid City Chapter President's News

Cal Modlin
Rapid City Chapter President

The midsummer has slowed the projects for our area, but we still continue to discuss and look at future projects at our monthly meetings. A few being partnering with Game Fish & Parks on future purchase and placement of docks, area lake cleanups, working with the Commissioners on the Black Hills Fishing Management Plan, the Spring Banquet, upcoming fishing tournaments, and many of our annual projects.

Member Participation

We have a good number of members in our organization. Many are long-timers and have enjoyed helping and reaping the many benefits that come along with being involved. Our need for new involved members is great. As a group we have the opportunity to make a difference in the future operation of our outdoors. SDWU is not just about fishing for Walleyes as some may think. We are about making and keeping access for boaters, canoers, kayakers, hunters, fisher-persons, hikers,

bikers, bird watchers, swimmers, campers, many other outdoor enthusiasts...and all of our future generations. So I'm calling out now to members and anyone interested in the outdoors to please get involved. Our meetings are the third Monday of every month at the Outdoor Campus at 7:00 p.m., they last about two hours or less and are open to all. New faces and ideas are always welcome! Feel free to give me a call at 605-430-2937 with any question or suggestions.

Thought for the Quarter: We all only have one Great Outdoors. Let's help take care of it.

Calendar of events:

- Creek Cleanup will be September 28 and 29, 2015 Call Cal to sign up to help at 430-2937.
- Sheridan Lake Ice Fishing Tournament will be Sunday, January 31, 2016 For more information, contact Cody Warren at 605-381-9457. Remember – this is the "hot" one, so get it on your calendar and get your information early!
- Dates to be set for March Annual Fish Fry Banquet, April Spring Classic Walleye Tourney, and more events to follow.

Zebra Mussels Discovered on Boat at Rocky Point Recreation Area

Courtesy of SD GF&P

Early in July, a small number of young zebra mussels were found attached to a boat exiting Rocky Point Recreation Area at Belle Fourche Reservoir in western South Dakota. The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) immediately performed sampling at the reservoir.

"Examination of the water samples determined no veligers were present nor were any juvenile or adult mussels found during the shoreline search," stated Tony Leif, director of the Division of Wildlife. "Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) took water samples at the reservoir in June that were also determined to be free of veligers."

These results indicate that Belle Fourche Reservoir was likely not the source of the mussels found on the boat. GFP fisheries biologists obtained water samples from 15 locations throughout the Belle Fourche Reservoir and searched approximately one mile of suitable shoreline habitat for adult zebra mussels. GFP and USBR continue to monitor the reservoir for zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species.

"This event highlights the need for all anglers and boaters to take responsibility and make sure their boats are free of aquatic

invasive species. The primary way that many invasive species are spread to new lakes is by attaching to boats or trailers, so anglers and boaters are urged to inspect their boats before they leave a boat ramp and power wash their boat and trailer as often as possible," concluded Leif.

Anglers and boaters are reminded to stay informed about the regulations regarding aquatic invasive species; which require all drain plugs to be removed from a boat during transport and prohibit the transportation of fish or bait in water from a lake, river or stream. Regular boat inspections, boat cleaning and compliance with these regulations will help to slow the spread of aquatic invasive species in South Dakota.



Central South Dakota Chapter President's News

By Bret Afdahl
President, Central South Dakota Chapter

It was a busy summer in the Pierre area with three important events that the Central Chapter of SDWU helped with or co-sponsored. The first event for us in 2015 was the 4th annual South Dakota Kid's Fishing Weekend, held in Pierre June 5-7 at Down's Marina. This event was sponsored and hosted by many local individuals, businesses, GF&P, Izaak Walton League of America, and the Pierre Chapter of SDWU. A list of sponsors can be found at the following link: <http://gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/kids-fishing-weekend/>.

On Friday evening at the Ramkota, every youth participant was given a rod, reel and tackle box, plus other items. On Saturday from 9-12 or 1-4 and Sunday from 9-12, local anglers took two to four kids per boat out on the water each for three hours of fishing on Lake Sharpe. As was the case

in 2014, over 250 kids participated again this year. It is always rewarding to see all of the kids running around with big smiles on their faces telling their parents or friends about all of the fish they caught or the one that got away.

Continuing the tradition started last year, booths were set up next to Downs Marina which provided all kinds of fun activities from 10-2 on Saturday. These activities gave everyone a chance to participate while waiting to hit the water or after a morning of fishing. Again this event was a huge success!

The next big event was our annual Lake Sharpe/Missouri River Cleanup held on July 8. Our chapter once again worked with the Izaak Walton League of America to put on our 6th Lake Sharpe Clean Up in seven years. In less than three hours of work, 2.38 tons of debris and trash was collected by 135 volunteers using boats and walking the shoreline. Volunteers collected 1,880

pounds of garbage, 1,880 pounds of lumber and other rubble, 680 pounds of scrap metal and 320 pounds of tires.

Thanks to all that came out, including: SD GF&P, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service, Izaak Walton League, SDWU, various community-based organizations, and members of the public at large. Also, a special thanks to KCCR & KGFX Radio and the Capital Journal in Pierre for their coverage of this event. The City of Pierre provided three large dumpsters and John Henderson at TMA disposed of the tires we collected, both for no charge.

Then on August 15, SDWU undertook a new adventure by helping the Pierre Chapter of Pheasants Forever with their Great Outdoor Youth Adventure. This event had four activity stations in the morning for kids aged 7-9, and six stations in the afternoon for 10-16 year olds. Three
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Central South Dakota Chapter President's News

Continued from Page 2
 members of SDWU helped with the morning session to teach over 20 kids how to cast a fishing rod and how to tie two basic fishing knots. Every kid, no matter the age, went home with all kinds of outdoor gear. The young kids in the morning all received a tackle pack courtesy of Runnings and SDWU and a choice of a BB gun or a

set of two-way radios. The kids in the afternoon had better than a 50% chance of winning a brand new shotgun in addition to many other prizes. A list of all of the generous sponsors can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/greatoutdoor/youthadventure/sponsors>.

We would like to give a special thanks to the SDWU members in the Pierre area that

helped make these events possible. In addition to volunteers from the Pierre/Ft. Pierre area, we had people drive in from all over the state to take kids out fishing and help with our cleanup. I cannot thank them enough for taking the time to help out. Without all of the great volunteers and sponsors, these events simply would not be possible!

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Sioux Empire Chapter President's News

Jeff Decker

Sioux Empire Chapter President

Hello South Dakota Walleye members!!! As we start up our monthly meetings again beginning September 17, at 7:00 PM outdoor campus in Sioux Falls. This also kicks off the season for planning for 2016 activities from Sport shows – Banquet – Annual Walleye Tournament at Platte creek.

This will be my last chapter president update after four years. Beginning in October ,Todd Trumm will the incoming Sioux Empire Chapter President. Todd, for the past year ,has served in the role of Chapter Vice President and has done a super job of leadership and mentoring. Todd will be a tremendous asset in providing leadership to our chapter as he also has much experience with the local Ducks Unlimited Chapter of Canton, SD.

Ralph Kitson of Tea has already stepped forward as a project coordinator for our chapter. Ralph has developed a relationship with Rhet Russell of the Eastern South Dakota GF&P project developer. Through Ralph and Rhet, there will be projects related to access and overall improved fisheries enjoyment that Walleyes Unlimited can take part in.

Positions that we need to focus on filling:

Chapter Vice President: In the role the individual will be responsible for assisting the Chapter President in providing guidance and direction for the chapter. With this role it allows for a smooth transition for becoming the next chapter president and always bringing a fresh view.

Chapter Secretary: This role is fairly self-explanatory. The role is filled by attending monthly meetings as often as possible. The responsibilities are to take notes, being able to read those notes back at follow up meetings helping to keep the meetings focused. Assisting in monthly mailings by perhaps writing up brief notes and sending them to Sisson Printing for publication which are then sent out by Sisson Printing.

Banquet Chairman: With the retirement of the legend Mark Mattison, this is a strategic position that we are asking to fill with three to four folks that would like to work together in organization for our annually sold out banquet. Mark has documented all steps of the process for the past 13 years so there really is no trial and error. The map for success is complete but your personal touch and

ideas will bring forth another chapter of a fresh look.

As a note of giving, this past month, Sioux Empire Chapter made a donation of \$1,000 to the local Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls. This was done due to an act of arson that had burned down their activities storage area. Lost was the equipment that was used in their teaching of students for all ages as it related to water including kayaks and canoes. The local 29-90 organization had also given a \$1,000 in support of obtaining new items for the campus. Great job to all the organizations that gave!!!!

As we move forward to another chapter of SDWU – I will challenge all of you to please consider volunteering perhaps a small amount of your time to filling our open positions. Please consider the enjoyment that you have had and the friendships that you have made as a member of the Sioux Empire Chapter of South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited. You will be assisting your friends! If a friend asked you for help what would you do?

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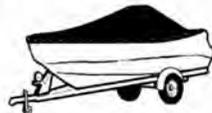
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SD GFP Commission Removes Bald Eagle From Threatened Species List

Most of us have seen it...and when we do, we feel lucky...our majestic national bird, the Bald Eagle, swooping down to do some fishing.

At the August SD GF&P Commission meeting, the bald eagle was removed from the state's threatened species list. Really, this is great news for the bald eagle. Because this species has exceeded the state management goal, the SD GF&P recommended that protection is no longer necessary. In 2003, bald eagles were moved from endangered to threatened. In 2005, a goal was established for 25 active nests per year, every year for five years on the Missouri. Nest monitoring and aerial surveys done this year estimate the number of active nests to be 140-150, although that is a conservative estimate because not all nests can be visually located.

Bald eagle fan? Don't worry! Bald eagles are still protected by the Federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



GFP Discovers Invasive Rusty Crayfish in South Dakota Waters

Courtesy SD GF&P

A new aquatic invasive species (AIS) has been discovered in South Dakota waters.

A South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) conservation officer in the southeastern part of the state encountered an angler who had illegally trapped crayfish for bait from the Missouri River below Gavins Point Dam. Among that illegal bait was what the conservation officer suspected to be rusty crayfish. Additional GFP samples were obtained from the area and experts confirmed the invasive species.

While its impacts may not be as immediately drastic as their AIS counterparts such as Asian carp or zebra mussels, rusty crayfish are an extremely



aggressive crayfish species. They typically grow much larger than native crayfish species and directly compete with these species for food and suitable habitat.

"Native crayfish are an important food item for many sport fish, so establishment of rusty crayfish may not only reduce the availability of an important food source, but the larger size of rusty crayfish can make them unsuitable for fish to eat," said GFP

AIS program coordinator, Mike Smith. "Rusty crayfish have also been found to uproot and limit vegetation growth in water bodies they inhabit. Diverse vegetation provides important habitat for many aquatic organisms including fish and aquatic invertebrates."

Anglers are reminded that live rusty crayfish are illegal to possess and/or transport. Furthermore, anglers should be aware that no live bait may be harvested in the portion of the Missouri River below Gavins Point Dam. If an angler believes they have found a rusty crayfish in a new water body, they should contact their local GFP office as soon as possible to report the sighting.



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GFP Asks Anglers to Report Tagged Salmon on Lake Oahe

Courtesy SD GF&P

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) wants to know how stocking salmon in different locations improves their survival. Anglers can help GFP gather information and be entered to win \$100.

GFP is encouraging anglers to turn in heads of tagged Chinook salmon caught on Lake Oahe and the Oahe tail waters.

"Research projects are currently underway to evaluate salmon on Lake Oahe," said GFP fisheries biologist Robert Hanten. "Having anglers who report tagged salmon that they caught is a critical component of the research process."

According to Hanten, thousands of specially-tagged Chinook salmon have been stocked in Lake Oahe. A small, coded-wire tag, only a millimeter long and the diameter of human hair, was implanted in these fish. Although tags cannot be seen by anglers, tagged fish can be identified by the absence of a tiny fin on their back.

"Salmon have a small fleshy-lobed adipose fin directly in front of their tail, but this fin is removed as part of the tagging process," Hanten said.

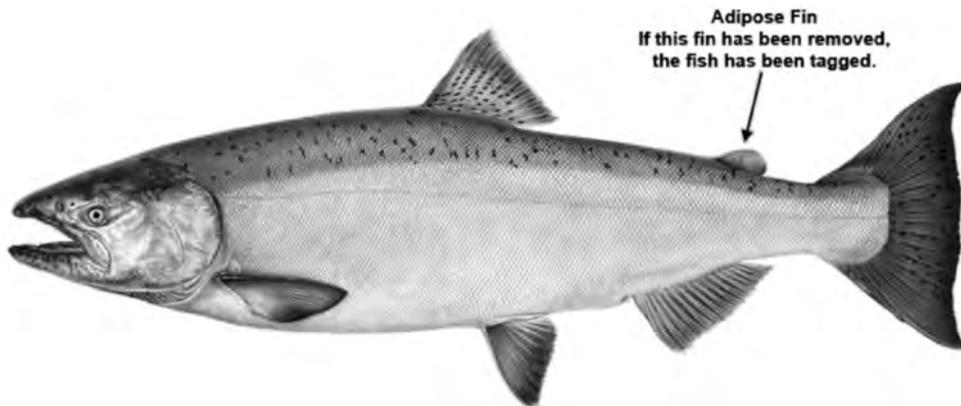
If anglers catch a salmon missing the adipose fin, Hanten asks that they turn in the fresh or frozen head of that salmon at any of these locations: GFP Fort Pierre District Office, Oahe Marina, Spring Creek Resort and Deep Water Marina, Carl's Bait Shop or West Whitlock Recreation Area.

Information on where and when a salmon was caught along with the angler's address and phone number must be included when submitting salmon heads. In addition, a coded-wire tag must be found in

the head of the fish to be entered in the cash drawing.

Ten \$100 rewards will be issued each calendar year with a maximum of three rewards per person, per year. The annual drawing for winners of the \$100 prizes is held by Jan. 1.

For more information, visit: gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/salmon-tags.aspx, Fort Pierre District Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532 or call 605.223.7681.



Smashing State Record Salmon

Gordon Sampson might consider himself lucky. Five minutes into fishing, he smashed the state Chinook salmon record. Sampson launched his boat onto Oahe on August 14, when a 24 lb., 8 oz. fish hit his lure. The salmon was verified by SD GF&P fisheries biologist Hilary Meyer. Large numbers of bait fish, including herring, are contributing to large salmon being caught.

At right, Highmore fisherman, Gordon Sampson, with the record 24 lb. 8 oz. salmon



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Is There a Need for an ROV in South Dakota?

A recent tragedy at Pactola Lake has brought attention to a pressing need in Western South Dakota. On August 14, 33 year-old Gabrielle "Gabby" Fisher was thrown from the boat she was a passenger in after the boat was struck by a jet ski. She was missing for four days. Her body was eventually recovered through the valiant efforts of the Pennington County Sheriff's Department, SD Highway Patrol, SD GF&P, US Forest Service, Rapid City Fire Department, Johnson Siding Volunteer Fire Department, Pennington County Search & Rescue, and the Rapid City/Pennington County Water Rescue Team (RCPC WRT). The family is able to properly grieve her unexpected death, thanks to the sacrifice and dedication of the fine people in these organizations.

The recovery of Gabby's body was possible in no small part due to the assistance of the Burleigh County Sheriff's Department and Bismarck Fire Department Water Rescue Team (North Dakota) and their ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle). The team arrived four days after the incident, and within hours of deployment, discovered her location. Divers were then able to reclaim her from the dark, murky water of Pactola Lake.

ROV's can vary in size and capability depending on the need and budget resources available. The unit used in the search for Gabby Fisher was a compact, portable type operated from a tether. Unlike a human diver, who must descend and ascend at a measured pace to avoid decompression sickness, otherwise known

as the "bends", an ROV can plunge to the bottom of a lake to investigate a sonar finding, allow the operator to classify it, and immediately be retrieved if the visual findings do not warrant further review. This allows the searchers to cover more water in a shorter time. It also alleviates some of the risk to the divers, allowing them to focus their extraordinary efforts on precise areas with a higher margin of return and safety.

Three ROV's are available in North Dakota, and while we are grateful for their invaluable assistance during the recent search and recovery effort, one has to ask; why don't we have one in South Dakota? The ROV's available to the various agencies in North Dakota range in price from \$80,000 - \$130,000. They were acquired after their

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Continued from Page 8

value and need were recognized by using Federal Grant Money, civic fundraising, or through private donations. A family in Stutsman County, ND donated an ROV after they waited eight days for a team to arrive from Minnesota to recover the body of their deceased loved one following a drowning incident.

In Western South Dakota, the Rapid City/Pennington County Water Rescue Team (RCPC WRT) responds to about 20 incidents each year. Not all of these calls for service involve diving or deep-water recovery, but when that is necessary, the tools should be available to them in a matter of hours, not days. As recently as 2011, a search at Pactola Lake for a missing swimmer was called off on the day of his disappearance due to darkness. The next day divers succeeded in recovering his body in 20-25 feet of water. In 2012, a teen-



aged boy disappeared while kayaking at Deerfield Reservoir and the search for his remains took 16 days. Having an ROV would not have saved any of these victims, but if the technology used to locate Gabby Fisher had been available, these searches could have been completed much sooner. The psychological and financial toll these extended operations exact upon the families and rescuers is immeasurable.

The Rapid City Area Chapter of South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited has recognized an immediate need for this resource. We are extremely fortunate to live where emergency agencies have cooperative response agreements, and work and train together regularly. Primary jurisdiction for water recreation areas is the responsibility of the Game Fish and Parks. Therefore, the GF&P is the logical custodian for this piece of equipment. They continue to work closely with other agencies when incidents require mutual aid. Not only would the ROV be available to local law enforcement and the RCPC WRT, it could aid in the education, research and management of our fisheries. While the ROV would most likely be kept in Rapid City where the deep reservoirs mandate the need, the GF&P is a state-wide organization. It could be utilized anywhere in the state, including Oahe

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Drainage of PPR Can Increase Flooding and Degrade Ecosystem

Courtesy SD Wildlife Federation

"The drainage of small wetlands can decrease wildlife habitat and contribute to flooding in the Prairie Pothole region (PPR), according to a recent U.S. Geological Survey study.

USGS scientist analyzed data on 141 large PPR wetlands in North Dakota from the 1930's through 2010 and found that they have increased significantly in size. Most of the increases in surface water were due to drainage of smaller wetlands, likely for more efficient agriculture production. This drainage moves surface water into fewer wetlands, making them larger and degrading their abilities to reduce regional flooding and provide productive habitat for animals.

Small wetlands in the PPR are economically and environmentally important because they help recharge local

and regional groundwater. They also provide habitat for 50 to 80 percent of North American Ducks.

While the loss of small wetlands has its own effect on the ecosystem, consolidation of their water into larger wetlands can fundamentally change valuable ecosystems in the PPR, said Michael Anteau, USGS scientist and an author of the paper. Our findings are relevant to policy makers and managers making wetland conservation decisions.

The scientists used historical aerial photographs to measure and compare the water surface area of wetlands during the study period. They found that current water surface areas were an average of 86 percent greater than they were historically and that the increase could not be attributed to climate change. Wetlands in highly drained

watersheds had nearly three (3) times greater water surface area than those in areas with little drainage.

Other effects include loss of habitat for animals that depend on smaller and dynamic wetlands. These now consolidated wetlands historically dried out during droughts, making stored nutrients available in sediment. Nutrient surges provide for aquatic plants and invertebrates after wetlands fill up with water again. Amphibians and waterfowl, including migrating ducks, feed on these plants and invertebrates.

The Plains and Prairie Potholes Landscape Conservation Cooperative provided research funding. For more information about wetland research in the PPR, please visit the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center Website. www.npwr.usgs.gov

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Annual Banquet _____, Kids Fishing Day _____, Annual Member Fishing Tournament _____,

Program Committee (help arrange guest speakers etc. for monthly meetings) _____,

Other _____

MISSION STATEMENT: SDWU is a statewide membership driven organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and improving fisheries in the state of South Dakota. We are committed to promoting the sport of fishing and outdoor activities through education, conservation, activism, and fiscal responsibility to ensure opportunity, access and habitat for anglers of all ability levels.



Webpage sdwalleyesunlimited.org Email info@sdwalleyesunlimited.org



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All SDWU Members
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Is There a Need for an ROV in South Dakota?

Continued from Page 9

Reservoir and the Missouri River in a matter of hours, instead of days.

Some might argue that this expenditure is too extravagant, or that it should be funded from an agency's own budget. Which agency would be responsible? Whose budget would pay for it? What programs might suffer because of it? We, as outdoor enthusiasts, share a responsibility to ensure that first responders have the tools necessary in a timely manner to respond to our needs. Taking money away from other budget items for this equipment could deprive the public of other resources, including personnel, which is the most valuable asset at our disposal.

There are over 10,000 watercraft registered in Western South Dakota. That does not include kayaks, canoes, or non-motorized boats less than 12 feet in length. It also does not take in to account every individual that benefits from the fantastic water recreation opportunities that

surround us. If every West River boat owner pledged just \$10 to this effort, SDWU could purchase a state of the art ROV for the GF&P without the need for protracted



Bismarck Fire and Rescue's ROV

budget debates or diminishing the services currently available. That is less than four gallons of gas on a weekend outing. If every registered boat owner in the state participated, the contribution drops to \$2 each!

Why should SDWU get involved in this? The opportunity to be part of a solution is what this club is all about. SDWU is dedicated to promoting the sport of fishing and outdoor activities for anglers of all abilities through education, conservation, activism and fiscal responsibility. It is our obligation as the largest organized group of anglers in the state to take the lead when a deficiency in the available resources becomes apparent. If we don't take action, who will?

Please follow the progress of this developing project on our website and Facebook page for donation instructions at www.sdwalleyesunlimited.org or on Facebook at: South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SDWU!