



MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

Volume 4, Number 2

Spring 2015

A message from President John Brinkman



As I reflect back on the happenings of the past few months, I'm thinking "WOW". In January our local club completed our upstairs and bar remodeling project. We gave it a whole new look with knotty pine and log cabin siding complete with a new walk-in cooler. A major part of our clubs' funding comes from renting our facility out for weddings and receptions, anniversaries, and many other types of events. We will be hosting the June 13th Quarterly Meeting for MCF, come down to see our newly remodeled club which sits on the banks of Lake Pepin. In February we had our 47th Annual Fishing Contest. Our fish Cribs are finally showing some promise, the winning fish caught was a 3 pound 8 ounce small-mouth bass and the second place was a 15 ounce 14 inch sauger; pretty exciting to see that maybe the crib habitats are holding the larger fish here throughout the winter months rather than going north towards the nuclear plant's warmer discharge water. (just our theory)

Also in February, I flew to Washington DC for the "Teaming with Wildlife" Fly-In event again this year. Minnesota had only two representatives, MCF and the Wildlife Society. I represented MCF and Greg Hoch again represented the Wildlife Society. Our main goal was to advocate Congress to continue their funding for the "State and Tribal Wildlife Grant". Funding this budget year is \$70M. Last year this project received \$58.7M of which Minnesota got about two and a half million of it. President Obama's federal budget was out earlier this year and he proposed the \$70M level, which is positive to see. Greg and I were able to see both Senators, but only the Representative's staffers because the House was in session to try and resolve the Department of Homeland Security budget deadline. This year we had breakfast with Senator Franken. This grant program is aimed at preventing species in greatest conservation need (SGCN) from becoming threatened or endangered and in the recovery of those already listed. Over the past fourteen years, Minnesota has received about \$18M in State Wildlife Grants to support over 60 projects benefiting SGCN and their habitats. All-in-all, I feel our Minnesota delegation was very successful in getting the message to our legislators in Washington.

Now back here in Minnesota, the legislature is back in session and Gary Botzek is working hard to get our 7 resolutions and their messages to all state senators and representatives. Gary's report and updates is in this issue of MOOD, so read on. As many of you know and read or heard, Governor Dayton is working hard in getting the ditch buffers statute enforced and perhaps strengthened somewhat. This is one of the seven resolutions we passed last September at our Annual Meeting, so we are excited to see the Governor's office focusing on that same concern we have. I love Governor Dayton's quote, "the land belongs to you, but the water belongs to all of us". Thank You Governor! Along with being at the Capitol every day, Gary helped organize the Regional Banquet with Belle Plaine, Fish Lake, New Market, and Prior Lake Sportsman's Clubs. The 25th Annual Banquet was held at the Prior Lake VFW on March 21st. I assisted Gary with the auction items and drew the winners of the many raffles the clubs had. A big "THANK YOU" to all the clubs for hosting this very successful event with the MCF, let's keep the great tradition going.

Just a reminder to all the clubs, we will NOT be doing the "Money Raffle" this year. Last year's participation was really low so we decided to discontinue it for this year. Keep thinking of ways the MCF could raise some much needed funding to continue the great work that we are doing for wildlife, habitat, conservation, education, waters, air, soils, etc., etc., etc.

And finally, March 14th was our last quarterly meeting which was held at the South St. Paul Gun Club. Our attendance was very low again, only 6 clubs represented. Please appoint someone from your club to attend these quarterly meetings and then encourage them to attend; be pro-active and not re-active to our issues that affect all of us.

President's message continued on page 3.....

Executive Director News

Ex. Director Report and Legislative Update

By Gary Botzek
Executive Director



The 2015 Legislature reached its first deadline on March 20. By that date policy bills had to have passed all policy committees in one body or the other. On March 27 the second deadline requires all bills to have passed policy committees in both the House and the Senate. Then the attention turns to the money bills and more floor action on the bills that have cleared committee will begin in full earnest. The legislature has to adjourn by May 19.

The following is a summary of legislation affecting hunting, fishing, habitat, conservation, and the environment.

Buffers for Water Quality & Habitat: The Governor's buffer protection bill (SF1537/HF1534) has been introduced and has had one hearing. The proposal has generated a great deal of interest and questions regarding implementation. Turns out that no one or no group is against buffers! However, the devil is indeed in the details of this bill. The Governor attended the December Pheasant Summit in Marshall and at the DNR Roundtable in January he announced new legislation requiring a 50-foot "buffer" on all lakes, rivers, and other public water bodies. It is believed that an increase in buffering of waters would provide habitat opportunities for birds and animals, as well as, assist in improving the water quality of these bodies of water. The Governor bill calls for increased enforcement by DNR and includes aerial flyovers. The Governor has provided money for BWSR to implement the new law. Under current law requires a 50 foot buffer around lakes and a one rod (16.5 feet) from the high point of a drainage ditch berm on both sides of the ditch. Five counties appear to be implementing the good buffer laws. Local soil and water conservation and watershed implementation will be key to the success of this legislation. This will be a tough bill to get passed this year!

Wetlands Conservation Act Changes: The Governor has also brought forth a bill that would amend the current Wetlands Conservation Act which was passed in 1991 and amended a number of times since that date. SF1515/HF1489 would require BWSR to identify high priority wetland restoration areas across the state, would require transportation projects to follow the same watershed-based criteria as all other projects, implement a new in-lieu fee program in conformity with the 2008 Federal Mitigation Rule, increase the types of activities eligible for preservation within the greater than 80% counties areas, and require the inclusion of stakeholders to foster mutual understanding of the law and process and make future recommendations as needed. Most of the debate and reason for the changes is to allow mining projects to move forward by providing more flexibility in the statewide process of migration of destroyed wetlands.

Shooting Range Enhancement Grant Program: MCF is sponsoring a bill for \$5 million for the DNR run Shooting Range Improvement Grants program. Last year we were able to secure over \$2 million and the DNR distributed \$400,000 in the first round of applications and has an RFP out for the remainder of the dollars. This money is designed to provide matching state dollars to shooting ranges will the ultimate goal of expanding high school clay target shooting teams. The Governor put \$1 million for two year in his budget. The bills are HF608/SF631. Jim Sable and John Nelson for the MN High School Clay Target League have joined the MCF in testifying for the bill and the High School Clay Target Program. MCF held its quarterly meeting on March 14 at the South St. Paul Gun Club. That club received just over \$23,000 in the first round of DNR grants and works with nine metro high schools with their clay target teams and leagues.

Legislation has been introduced (HF460/SF914) to provide \$25 million in state bonds to build a metro area indoor-outdoor shooting facility. This "world class" facility would serve as the training center for state, regional, state, national,

and international clay target and skeet and more. It would also be used for the state high school clay target tournaments. The money would begin the planning and design work on the facility.

Budget for DNR, MPCA, and BWSR: The governor presented budget totals \$42 billion for two years. With a larger surplus he added more money to certain agencies and programs. Legislative finance committees are currently holding hearings. Changes in the Governor's proposed budget are expected. Oversight hearings are almost done on DNR, MPCA, BWSR, and the Department of Agriculture budgets.

Lessard-Sams: The next round of Lessard-Sams funding for conservation, habitat, and other hunting and fishing projects is ready to move. There is over \$100 million in this one year bill and another \$200 million for clean water projects for the next two years. This bill will also include parks and trails money and dollars for arts and history projects. The bill HF181/SF242 also contains language that would move the selection process of the Lessard-Sams Council from the Council itself to the Legislative Coordinating Council. This move is opposed by the MCF and other conservation and environmental groups.

Lottery Money: The money from the lottery totals about \$35 million this year and includes research projects that affect hunting and angling. This bill (HF390/SF698) also contains similar language to move the hiring and firing of the staff head from the LCCMR to the LCC. MCF opposes that language, as well!

Executive Director report continued on page 3.....

More news....

Meet our Scholarship

Winner:

Chris Anderson



Chris Anderson is a Master's student at Iowa State University, researching the disease ecology of mountain goats and bighorn sheep. He grew up in a very outdoors oriented atmosphere on a farm near St. Cloud, MN. His parents encouraged him to play outside as a kid, though it didn't take much. His mother taught him how to hunt and fish, and more importantly, the ethics of harvesting animals. Chris chose to pursue higher education in the natural resources field at the University of Minnesota. College allowed him to travel and volunteer on many habitat and wildlife projects; prairie restoration at the Agassiz Audubon Society, wildlife research on black bears, mountain lions, and bighorn sheep with state wildlife agencies of Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana. He continues his education at ISU, but still finds time to volunteer to restore some of the little wild lands remaining in Iowa. The scholarship will greatly help pay for books, because it seems that they are carved from gold.

President's Message continued from page 1....

Our quarterly meetings are always hosted by various clubs around the state, so please consider hosting one of these meetings, we would all love to see your clubs. They are very informative and educational on some of the issues we are interested in. Mike Schrage, Wildlife Biologist with the DNR from Cloquet, MN was our quest speaker. His topic was "Elk Restoration in Minnesota". I felt the presentation was excellent in informing us the DNR's intentions in restoring elk herds in Minnesota. Thank you Mike, keep up the great work you do!

Gary and I are still willing to visit your club meetings if our times work, call the MCF office or us personally to set a time – we love to travel. Our next Quarterly Meeting will be hosted by my club here in Lake City on June 13th, plan now to attend. We will provide coffee, juices, and rolls in the morning and a fine lunch of lasagna and salad after the meeting. Have a Wonderful Spring and get outside to enjoy the great outdoors of Minnesota.

Executive Director report continued from page 2....

Wolf Delisting/Management: The federal district court returned the gray wolf to the Endangered Species list. State management by the DNR are now illegal. The Governor included \$125,000 in his budget for wolf depredations compensation. Federal legislation has been introduced to take the gray wolf off the Endangered Species list in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Representative Collin Peterson (D-7th District) is a co-author of that bill. Rep. Kline (R-MN) has introduced legislation that would exempt wolves from the Endangered Species Act all together.

A number of wolf management bills have been introduced at the State Capitol ranging from reinstating the wolf hunting moratorium to increasing the payments to land owners for animals killed or threatened by wolves.

Baiting and Trapping: Bills have been introduced that would restrict body-gripping trap use near public roads and trails to a bill that would prohibit

the trapping and baiting of wolves or the use of snares to take wild animals. This bill is SF1070/HF1325.

Omnibus Game & Fish Policy Bill: The annual omnibus Game & Fish policy bill is HF1406/SF1303. This bill starts off as a DNR agency bill and grows from there! Bills have been introduced to allow scopes on muzzleloaders for the elderly or everyone, changing big game requirements, ban lead shot, and changes in the trespass laws when hunting private lands, and allowing residents 84 years or older to take a deer of either gender. Some of these individual bills have been rolled into the bigger omnibus bill and others are expected to be offered as amendments as the bills move forward and into a conference committee.

Road Ditch Mowing: HF1598/SF1852 would make changes to the current law regarding when and where we can mow road ditches for hay. MCF has always been concerned about the habitat that is destroyed and the killing of nesting and young birds in road right of ways and ditches. This legislation would serve as stronger buffer language as it relates to roads and roadways. MCF has long been a defender of protecting habitat in ditches and road right-of-ways for wildlife, birds, and pollinators.

Bonding Dollars for Conservation: The Legislature is still expected to put together a bonding bill this session. The MCF is working for additional dollars from the bonding bill for Wild Management Areas, Aquatic Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas, and RIM-Reserve lands.

If you are interested in more information regarding items mentioned in this report, please call me at 651-293-9295 or email me at gary@capitolconnections.com. Thanks for your continued interest, involvement and participation in the MCF, NWF, conservation, habitat and the environment!

**MINNESOTA CONSERVATION
FEDERATION**

542 Snelling Ave. S. #104
St. Paul, MN 55116

Phone: 651-690-3077
Email: info@mncf.org

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2014-15 Officers***

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Joe Hoffmann, 1st Vice President
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**ANY ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION MAY BE E-MAILED
OR SENT TO THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION
FEDERATION — info@mncf.org**

Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, June 13th
9:30 am

Lake City Sportsman's Club
2200 South Oak St.
Lake City, MN 55041
651-345-2901



Our next Quarterly Meeting will be hosted by John Brinkman's club in Lake City on June 13th, plan now to attend. We will provide coffee, juices, and rolls in the morning and a fine lunch of lasagna and salad after the meeting.

Submit your club's news to *Minnesota Out of Doors* Newsletter

The Minnesota Conservation Federation's *Minnesota Out of Doors* newsletter is a place for member clubs to present news about their accomplishments. Club news and/or photos can be submitted to: Tammy Abrahamson Minnesota Conservation Federation, 542 Snelling Avenue South #104, St. Paul, MN 55116, or by e-mail to info@mncf.org. All submissions should be directed to Tammy. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is June 19, 2015.