



## MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

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### A message from President John Brinkman



It still amazes me on how fast time goes by, it's been three months since I sat down to write my article for this MOOD paper. Our last quarterly meeting was at the South St. Paul Gun Club and the legislature was in full swing, Gary will give us a complete report later in this issue. April's regular monthly meeting in St. Paul was pretty routine with general housekeeping issues and an update on capital progress. We decided to hold our regular monthly meeting in May at the Ridges at SandCreek in Jordan. Our New Market Sportsman's Club wanted us to come and look at where they would like to host a banquet next spring. The Ridges is a beautiful facility and could easily handle a banquet for us. We decided to try having two banquets next spring, one in Prior Lake on April 2nd and one at the Ridges in Jordan on April 9th. Hopefully we can attract more members from other clubs West of New Market.

On June 13th, the quarterly meeting was at the Lake City Sportsman's Club in Lake City. Our guest speaker was Kevin Auslund, President of Sportsmen Take Action. His topics included ethanol, CRP, traps and dogs. As with many of our speakers, he was informative and interesting to hear the effects they play in regards to the environment and wildlife. After our business meeting and Kevin's talk, we were treated to a great lunch of lasagna, salad, and desserts made by one members, Valerie Ahlers, THANKS Valerie – it was delicious! Some of you may recall one of MCF's past President, Russell Breuer, he was Valerie's dad. She and her mom, Shirley, are still very strong supporters of our local club .

Looking ahead to fall, our Annual Meeting will be in St. Cloud on September 12 and 13th. Your packet of information will be sent out soon – look for it. Be sure to send two or three of your members to this important meeting to represent your club – we act as your voice in the legislature. Three main things happen at these Annual Meetings: we get an update of how our resolutions fared in this spring's legislature, we elected new officers for the upcoming year, and we generate ideas of new resolutions for adoption for the upcoming year. I, we, the MCF, are still asking all of our affiliate clubs to find that special person(s) to be your MCF representative to keep you and your

club informed on the happenings in the MCF and NWF. There are so many interesting things happening in our state and nationally that we feel your club would be very grateful to know and perhaps then feel they are making a difference for the environment, for the wildlife and their habitat, education for all, etc. We need to all work harder and put more effort in promoting the ideals of the MCF. Information is power. Please make the effort to get someone to this year's Annual Assembly in St. Cloud, you won't be disappointed.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it has been a pleasure to serve on the MCF Executive Board the past five years and being your President the past two years. Gary works really hard in communicating our resolutions at the capitol every spring and works hard the rest of the year getting educated on the current issues. He continues daily or at least weekly to stay "in the loop" with specific people and/or organizations that could and hopefully will be assets to our organization in the future. Pro-active is still easier than being re-active. One thing I learned was that the environment and wildlife can't wait, we need to be constantly achieving our goals with these issues.

And thanks to Tammy for her dedication to the MCF office and all of our local clubs, she is always available if any of us need something done or sent out to the clubs. Lastly thanks to our Treasurer, Rylee, for her true commitment to MCF these past three years. I believe we now benefit from a easier to understand Treasurer's Report, especially the transition to using a CPA and her help in making that important change in the way we do accounting. Also, thanks to Joe, our current First Vice President, who has proved to many of us his commitment to the environment and his love for animals and wildlife. He has tentatively agreed to serve as your next President, he'll definitely get my vote in September. Have a great rest of the summer and see you in St. Cloud on September 12th and 13th.

*Executive Director News*

# Ex. Director Report and Legislative Update

By Gary Botzek  
*Executive Director*



Many people predicted a special session may be needed to “work out the differences” between a Republican controlled House of Representatives, a Democratic controlled Senate, and a Democrat Governor. Turns out they/I was right!

With a special session now in the books it is time to get on with the pleasures and chores of summer! But first a summary of legislation that was dealt with in the regular and special sessions affecting hunting, fishing, habitat, conservation, and the environment.

**Buffers for Water Quality & Habitat:** The Governor was able to keep his buffer proposal alive and signed it into law! The proposal will require 50-foot buffers on public waters by November 2017 and 16.5-foot buffers on public ditches by November 2018.

The Governor predicts that this new law will attract 110,000 acres of land into buffer strips. According to the Governor, only 20 percent of public ditches currently are required to have 16.5 foot buffers. The new law will make that 100%.

It is widely believed that adding buffers around water bodies will provide additional protection from pollution runoff, as well as, provide badly needed habitat opportunities for birds, animals and pollinators. BWSR will receive over \$22 million from the Legacy Amendment Clean Water Fund to implement the new law using the 90 local soil and water conservation districts that cover the entire state. The DNR will be actively involved with mapping all the public waters and ditches.

A few counties are already implementing good buffer programs in their county. These county programs can be used as models for the rest of Minnesota counties. The conservation and environment community worked hard to get this proposal passed. I predict it will be successful but will be amended/improved upon in years to come!

**Wetlands Conservation Act Changes:** Also included in the Natural Resources Finance bill (SF5) is language that amends current Wetlands Conservation Act. These changes will require BWSR to identify high priority wetland restoration areas across the state, will require transportation projects to follow the same watershed-based criteria as 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 with their mining plans by providing more flexibility in the statewide process of migration of destroyed wetlands. The Wetlands Conservation Act was first passed in 1991 and has been amended a number of times since!

**Shooting Range Enhancement Grant Program:** An additional \$2 million from the game and fish fund will be made available to shooting ranges in the next two years. MCF worked hard for a \$5 million appropriation for the DNR run Shooting Range Improvement Grants program. These dollars are intended to provide matching state dollars to shooting ranges with the ultimate goal of adding opportunities for expanding

high school clay target shooting teams—the fastest growing high school sport! Jim Sable and John Nelson from the MN High School Clay Target League joined the MCF in testifying for our \$5 million bill.

**DNR, MPCA, and BWSR Budget:** The new budget, finished in special session, totals \$42 Billion for two years. Some money was left in reserve for next session due to begin on March 8, 2016. The last bill passed in the special session was SF5 which provides money for DNR, MPCA, BWSR, and the Department of Agriculture. The bill contains the buffer language, the changes to the Wetlands Conservation Act, and 34 sections on Game and Fish policy items. There was no separate Game & Fish policy bill this year. This bill also contains the repeal of the citizen’s board at MPCA and changes the wild rice water quality standard for mining purposes.

**Game & Fish Policy Changes:** Article 5 of SF 5 contains 34 sections of game and fish policy changes. Highlights include approval of scopes on muzzleloaders for hunters 60 year old or older during muzzleloader season, allows residents age 84 or over to shot either a doe or a buck, and directs the DNR to remove remaining spearing bans for northern pike on all lakes--but one. There were no changes in the Zone 3 deer management approach, wolf management and PILT payments remain the same, and citizens will remain involved in management decisions on both the Lessard-Sams Council and the Environmental Trust Fund (lottery) Council.

*Executive Director Report continued on page 3.....*

## More news....

### Executive Director Report continued from page 2...

A bill, SF1825, that would have modified trapping regulations to reduce the chance that body-grip style traps inadvertently catch and kill hunting dogs and other pets, received a number of hearing in the Senate this session. The changes were included in the Senate Game & Fish Policy bill but were not included in the Natural Resources Finance bill. The bill remains alive for next year.

Lessard-Sams: It took the special session to get the Legacy Amendment Bill (SF1) passed this year. This round of dedicated sales tax passed as a constitutional amendment in 2008 will provide over \$97 million over the next year for outdoor projects including forestry, wetlands, habitat, and prairies habitats. The Legacy Bill also includes \$228 million over two years for clean water projects from the Clean Water Fund. The bill also provides \$87 million over two years for parks and trails and \$124 million over two years for arts and history projects. The second year for the Outdoor Heritage portion of the bill will be considered next session.

Lottery Money: The money from the lottery that goes into the Environmental Trust Fund totals \$46 million for 65 projects. These projects tend to be more research oriented than Lessard-Sams projects. SF698, did pass in regular session. This funding source has been in place since 1991 with funding recommendations based on a 17-member council.

WolfDelisting/Management: The federal district court returned the gray wolf to the Endangered Species list. State management by the DNR are now illegal. 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. Both the US Senate and House are considering amendments to appropriation bills in order to get action on these two approaches yet this year.

Bonding Dollars for Conservation: A bonding bill totaling just under \$400 million passed in special session. The biggest funding project is a new road in mining country to by-pass a town that the mining company wishes to mine under and through. The only bonding dollars to the DNR were granted for flood hazard mitigation in Otter Tail County and a few other locations. There were no additional bonding dollars for Wild Management Areas, Aquatic Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas, and RIM-Reserve lands.

The 2015 legislative session was a tough one. A special session was needed to rescue the regular session. Just as slowly as the dust settles on this session a new one is not far away!

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](mailto:gary@capitolconnections.com).

Thanks for your continued interest, involvement and participation in the MCF, NWF, conservation, habitat and the environment!

Happy summer!



### Annual Meeting changes and information...

This year's annual meeting will be held in St. Cloud, MN on September 12th and 13th at the Quality Inn & Suites located at 4040 2nd St. S. in St. Cloud. We are currently planning our meetings for September 12 & 13th along with a great banquet on Saturday night.

You can join us for part of it, all of it or just come for the banquet on Saturday night. For more information visit our website at [www.mncf.org](http://www.mncf.org), check under events for more information or you can call the office at 651-690-3077 and we will get you the information.

### Changes....

This year we will be not giving out the Roz Gunderson scholarship until our December quarterly meeting, this will allow for us to better communicate with the local colleges and our membership on this great scholarship opportunity. We have the scholarship information available on our website and the deadline to apply for a scholarship is October 1, 2015, with us awarding it in December. We hope this will grow our applications for this scholarship..

**MINNESOTA CONSERVATION  
FEDERATION**

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***Minnesota Conservation Federation  
2014-15 Officers***

John Brinkman, President  
Joe Hoffmann, 1st Vice President  
vacant, 2nd Vice President  
Rylee Main, Treasurer  
Steve Maurice, Secretary

**ANY ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION MAY BE E-MAILED  
OR SENT TO THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION  
FEDERATION — [info@mncf.org](mailto:info@mncf.org)**

**Annual Meeting**

Saturday & Sunday  
September 12 & 13, 2015

For registration information,  
please visit our website!

[www.mncf.org](http://www.mncf.org)

Check under Events for more  
info!!



This year's annual meeting will be held in St. Cloud, MN in September. Join us for the day or the weekend. We have lots of great things planned to keep moving MCF forward in conservation.

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

**T**he 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](mailto:info@mncf.org). All submissions should be directed to Tammy. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is December 18, 2015.