



## MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

Volume 5, Number 2

Summer 2016

### A message from President Joe Hoffmann

Hello, affiliates! I hope all is well! Since, the last time I updated you the Minnesota Conservation Federation and its executive board have been busy working toward keeping our clubs and affiliates ahead of the curve supporting conservation in the Minnesota and across this great nation. Gary Botzek the MCF's executive director has been working on legislation as the legislative season closes. Elsa Litecky (MN Conservation Leadership program coordinator), Ryle Main (MCF Treasurer) and I have reviewed the 23 MN Conservation Leadership program applicants and we have selected ten applicants for our first season. The MCF had our quarterly meeting on June 11. Keith Blomstrom and I attended the 80th Annual National Wildlife Federations Conference in Colorado from June 16th to the 19th.

The MCF is excited to announce that after an impressive reviewing process the MCF has selected 10 applicants for the MN CLC program. Elsa Litecky has notified the chosen applicants and we are currently waiting there confirmations emails. Once all of the applicants have responded to the program acceptance invitations the MCF will announce some of their information. Remember that the MN CLC is a program that the MCF is modeling after the Wisconsin Wildlife federations and Missouri wildlife federation youth program and is intended to train the next generation of conservation leadership in the state. The program will have four training sessions including Leadership, Communication, Policy and advocacy, and the final session the students will present resolutions they have created to the MCF for passage. I would like to take this time to thank the programs sponsors National Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, New Market Sportsmen Club, and Byron's Sportsmen Club. This great program would not have made it to this point without your continued backing. If any of our affiliates or individual members like to become a sponsors we are still looking for additional funding. I would also like to make a special thanks to the executive board of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation for helping guide our program and for another resent donation of two hundred and fifty dollars. The MCF and MN CLC would gladly welcome any additional help that our affiliates are willing to give. The MCF is continuing its search for grants as well.

MCF had its quarterly at REI in Bloomington on

June 11, 2016. At the meeting, we had Michelle Graff and her husband as our guest speakers. George Meyer Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation recommended her as a speaker. Michelle Graff is the District 6 Director for the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. Her husband is also very active in their club. They spoke to our group about how the WWF run banquets, raise money, runs raffles, what work best for them, how to land sponsors, and how they getting donations. I believe that some of the ideas that they presented will help the MCF with some of our future events.

The 80th annual meeting for the National Wildlife Federation was held June 16th through the 18th at the YMCA of the Rockies- Estes Park Center in Estes Park, Colorado. The resolution topics covered included: Conservation Funding, Water Protection, Natural Disaster Funding, Climate Transitions, Public Lands and water Rights, and Natural Resource Extraction. There was very little in opposition to any of the resolutions this year and everyone seemed to agree on the issues for the most part. I was the voting delegate and Keith Bloomstrom was the Alternate Representative for the MCF.

The only resolution that the Minnesota Conservation Federation abstained from in the voting process was The Carbon Pricing Pathway to meet our Climate Goals resolution. Even though the MCF was a sign on sponsor to this resolution, I felt that the WWF and a few other neighboring affiliates had brought up some concerning language issues within the resolution. The number one issue being there was no mention of putting a carbon trade tariffs on imported goods. This theoretically would tax our domestic producers for their carbon footprint but not our foreign trade partner's. This resolution did pass though the general assembly. If you have not had a chance to view the resolutions, they are all located at the URL below:

<http://www.nwf.org/Who-We-Are/Affiliate-Partnership/Conservation-Policy-Resolutions.aspx>

On a final note, the MCF annual meeting is coming up September 9-11<sup>th</sup> at Rutter's Sugar Lake Lodge located in Grand Rapids MN and deadlines for early reservation is August 6 so get those reservations made, visit our website for a registration form. We hope to see a representative from all of your affiliates make it. Thanks for all of your support and I hope your summers are going well.



## Executive Director News

# Ex. Director Report

**By Gary Botzek**  
**Executive Director**



The 2016 Legislative Session is in the books! Not finished, however!

The late starting date of March 8 allowed the Governor and legislative leaders to wait for the most current economic information available in order to determine which new investments or tax relief could be provided. A tax bill and a small budget spending bill were passed. But a bigger bonding bill and a transportation financial plan was not. Probably a Special Session to finish the work on these two issues.

In terms of natural resources investments and policies, the following is a summary of what did and did not happen in the 2016 legislative session:

### New Buffer Law Clarified:

The legislature passed legislation that is designed to “clarify” the buffer bill passed in special session last year. The BWSR is in charge of implementing the law and they have been busy meeting with local soil and water conservation district organizations, as well as state and regional interests ranging from the MCF to the Farm Bureau. Portions of the law are already going into effect, including the excessive soil loss law. A good summary of the new law can be found on the BWSR’s website at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/>.

DNR has an important part to play in the implementation of the new law as well. They are in charge of producing the Buffer Protection Map for the BWSR and others. These maps will identify all the lakes and ditches that probably need to be buffered. Local review will modify the map findings and DNR expects to have the Buffer Protection Map finalized by July 2016. More information can be found at <http://dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html>.

The impact of the new buffer law took a hit early in the year when the Governor agreed with the Farm Bureau and the Republicans and limited the DNR mapping project to public water ditches only. By not requiring the mapping of private ditches (ditches on private property) thousands of miles of waterways will not be covered by the new law. Accord-

ing to statutes all ditches are on private property. However, all water is public waters and should be covered by the buffer requirements.

The new law will require a minimum average of a 50-foot wide buffer on public waters with a shoreland designation by November 2017 and a minimum of a 16.5-foot wide buffer on both sides of public ditches by November 2018. While these numbers are not new in terms of the statutes, the new law squarely puts the BWSR in the leadership role to build and implement a program that works with farmers and other landowners by providing incentives and using federal and state dollars to put buffers in place. The new law will be enforced by the local soil and water conservation districts. Enforcement, needless to say, has been lacking in the past.

In the tax bill the 2016 legislature provided a \$10 million per year appropriation for any or all of Minnesota’s 87 counties. If counties agree to implement and enforce the new buffer law they will receive state tax dollars to assist them in their efforts to a maximum of \$200,000 per year. However, the tax bill was vetoed so the funding remains in question.

It is widely believed that adding buffers around water bodies will provide additional protection from pollution runoff, as well as provide additional habitat opportunities for birds, animals and pollinators.

### Mille Lacs Lake Management:

Based on angler discomfort and area resort pressure DNR changed the walleye fishing regulations on Mille Lacs to a catch and release only lake. A new Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly and is making recommendations to the DNR and the legislature. A new fisheries facility in Garrison, priced at \$3.5 million, is in the bonding bill that did not pass.

### Lessard-Sams Dollars:

The legislature did pass its annual Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Legacy bill generated from the sales tax revenues and constitutionally dedicated to natural resources. The Councils’ recommendations for this round of spending call for investment of another \$110 million in habitat projects! Last session the Legislature

appropriated \$97 million for outdoor projects including forestry, wetlands, forest habitat, and prairie habitat. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage portion of the dedicated sales tax dollars is appropriated annually to provide flexibility and allows for the ability to shift gears and/or direction with the money. About \$29 million of the \$110 million is this year’s bill is scheduled to go to habitat projects, \$6.7 million to RIM/Buffers, \$41 million to prairie habitat, \$31 million to enhance grasslands and wetlands through the RIM Buffers program, and \$7.5 million going to the DNR managed Conservation Partner Grants Program. This is the program where local sportsmen’s clubs can apply directly for matching dollars for habitat and other type local efforts.

### Bonding Dollars for Conservation:

A big bonding bill was expected in the 2016 session. The bill just under a \$1 billion level failed to pass on the last night of session. A special session is possible over this bill. In the bill was bonding money for flood hazard migration, DNR buildings asset preservation, dam renovation, repair, and replacement, money to clean up the St. Louis River, money for Redwood-Cottonwood River Joint Powers Lake Redwood Reclamation and Enhancement Project, and \$6 million for RIM. Also in the bill was big money for roads and bridges, money for drinking water infrastructure, and the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System.

### LCCMR Lottery Dollars:

The legislature passed its annual LCCMR funding bill. This bill, funded by lottery dollars, totaled \$46 million. This bill is heavy on research projects including \$5.8 million for the AIS Research Center on the St. Paul Campus of the U of M but also includes \$2.2 million for RIM. Also funded in this bill is the elk restoration project to be led by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa tribe. This two part project will research and explore the willingness and ability to restore the elk herd in NE Minnesota. Governor Dayton line item vetoed projects totaling \$8.4 million including money for aggregate mining mapping, studying changes from forest land to cropland along the Crow Wing River, a University of Minnesota study of ecological issues including reducing sulfate, a pollinator habitat development along Minnesota interstate highways and money for the

# More news....

## Executive Director Report continued....

enhancement of parks and trails. These were projects that were adding in the House committees that were not part of the commission's recommendations. This vetoed money goes back to the commission for reserves and to be re-committed next year.

### Supplemental Budget/Spending Bill:

Included in the \$167 million budget bill adjustments was new money for Avian influenza and ag emergency response, a new water draw permit from the DNR to Cold Spring Brewery, new carbon monoxide detector language for enclosed boats, a new Zebra mussel study on Lake Minnetonka, and tougher AIS boat movement inspection regulations.

### Northern Pike Zones:

The DNR proposed a three-zone size structure on northern pike to the legislature this year. The plan would implement different sets of regulations regarding size and number of northern that could be taken in the northeast, north-central, and south areas of the state (three zones). This bill did not make it. If DNR chooses to go through a rule making process on the three zone concept it would take two years to complete.

### Hunting/Angling Poaching Fines:

The Governor proposed stronger penalties for grossly illegal overtaking of fish and wildlife in the state. The proposal included higher restitution shares per animal or fish and substantially longer game and fish license revocations for poaching offenses. This bill did not make it to the Governor's desk.

### Lead Shot on WMAs:

The DNR has proposed a new rule that would ban hunters of small game and upland birds from using lead shot on certain agricultural area wildlife management areas. Legislation that would have stopped the DNR in this project passed the House three times but did not make it out of the Senate.

### Blaze Pink Deer Hunting Gear:

Both the House and the Senate passed bills to add blaze pink clothing to the current usage of blaze orange for deer hunting in the state. That bill died, as well.

### Muskie Stocking:

Bills that would have taken away the DNR's management responsibilities for

stocking muskies in certain listed lakes passed both the House and Senate but died with the game and fish bill. Currently DNR stocks muskies in 90 lakes across the state. The legislative effort was prompted by concern that the DNR is not listening to local lake associations. DNR is expected to spend more time with local lake residents. This issue will be back, as well.

### Dog Protection/Trapping Conflicts:

While no hearings were granted to bills that would have changed the law relating to the design of animal traps or their placement in forests or fields policy amendments were offered on the floors of the House and Senate. Good debate took place. In the center of the controversy are the "body-grip" traps that are popular in the taking of raccoons, beavers, bobcats, and other fur-bearers. Proposed changes include modifications to the entry point of the enclosed traps. This issue will be back next year.

### Shooting Range Grants:

The MCF, along with Jim Sable of the State High School Clay Target League, testified for a bill that would have provided \$25 million in bonding dollars to build a metro area "world class" shooting range facility. This new facility would be used for state tournament play, leagues during the shooting year, and Olympic training and tournaments. The bill was not included in the bonding bill. Money from the game and fish fund remain in the DNR administered shooting range grant program. Shooting ranges can apply to the DNR, and if selected, would receive matching funds to improve or expand their shooting range operations assuming there is an increased usage by high school teams and leagues. The MCF will be asked the legislature for more money in 2017.

### Aquatic Invasive Species:

Additional research funding was made available to the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center located on the St. Paul campus of the U of M. Concern over the "up river" movement of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species the U of M is leading the way in terms of control methods and chemical control research. That research is targeting controlling the northern movement up the Mississippi River using sound, light, and water movement to slow or control carp movement. Chemical research to stop reproduction continues as well.

The closing of the St. Anthony Lock & Dam in Minneapolis has provided some additional time to find the combination of strategic and technologies. However, both the Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers are currently "unguarded" in terms of northerly movement.

I am honored to represent the MCF and serve on the University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center Advisory Board that provides input and feedback into the research that is being done on carp and other aquatic invasives. We will need a "research miracle" to stop or control the many aquatic invasives that continue to enter Minnesota waters through our rivers and the Great Lakes.

### Waukesha Water Diversion Plan:

The MCF, working with the NWF and others, continue to call on Governor Dayton to say "no" to the Wisconsin City of Waukesha's proposal to draw water from Lake Michigan for drinking water purposes. The City is requesting the withdrawal of up to 10 million gallons of water per day from Lake Michigan to be used for their drinking water. They have a radium contamination problem and are looking for a new drinking water source. The City is considered part of a "straddling" county and is therefore eligible to apply for an exemption under the 2008 Great Lakes Compact. MCF supported the state law passed in 2008 that set up the Compact. Minnesota was the first state to vote to join! The NWF and MCF testified against the Waukesha proposal at a Minnesota DNR hearing held in Duluth in March. Any one of the eight governors signed to the Compact can veto the application. A decision is expected by late June.

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.

We are all in this together!

**MINNESOTA CONSERVATION  
FEDERATION**

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***Minnesota Conservation Federation  
2015-16 Officers***

Joe Hoffmann, President  
vacant, 1st Vice President  
Don Nickolay, 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 10 & 11th  
9:30 am start both days  
Sugar Lake Lodge  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

To register visit our website at [www.mncf.org](http://www.mncf.org)  
and look for registration under about MCF  
and click on board meetings.

Registration Deadline is August 6th!

Registration form is on our website: [www.mncf.org](http://www.mncf.org)  
**We hope to see you there!**



**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](mailto:info@mncf.org). All submissions should be directed to Tammy. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is September 16, 2016.