



MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

Volume 4, Number 1

Winter 2015

A message from President John Brinkman

The Minnesota Conservation Federation's Quarterly Meeting was held in Edina on December 13th. One of our affiliates, United Northern invited a representative from Enbridge Energy to address one of the seven resolutions, the Full Environmental Review of Enbridge Sandpiper Pipeline Expansion Proposal through Minnesota. She did an excellent job representing their company and is very passionate about the goals Enbridge has. As we heard from the "Friends of the Headwaters", they too, are passionate about their goals as well. Our resolution states that we encourage the State of Minnesota not to approve the pipeline proposal until a full Environmental Review is done on all alternative routes and encourages the Public Utilities Commission to provide for expanded public input, review, and comments on those alternative routes. Gary Botzek addressed concerns and an explanation of another resolution dealing with lead ammo and its possible impact on eagles and other birds. And finally, he provided an explanation to our resolution dealing with the Alaskan Coastal Plains. Much discussion followed and when we were done hopefully people left with a better understanding of why these resolutions are important to many of us.

Once again, Jason Dinsmore, of the NWF was present and updated us to upcoming events and the initiatives National Wildlife Federation is working on as they are adjusting to their new CEO, Collin O'Mara.

Our speaker for the morning was Maria Delaudrea, Floodplain Restoration Project Coordinator. Her presentation centered on the Mississippi River Cottonwood Restoration Project. They are studying the decline of the cottonwood trees along 72 miles of the Mississippi River from Ramsey (Sherburne County) south to just south of Hastings (Dakota County). She talked about the importance of the cottonwoods along the shores of the river, they will be working on various methods of helping these trees re-establish themselves again.

Not to sound like a broken record, we are asking clubs to host a fundraiser for MCF this year. I can help organize one in your area, together we can and will grow as an organization. Tammy in the MCF office says that memberships are coming in for the 2015 year. Send yours in ASAP so we can wrap up that portion of her responsibility.

THANKS Also, along those lines, I'll briefly mention that our new accountant is working out good and our Treasurer, Rylee Main, has made changes in how the Treasurer's Report is presented and printed – makes it much easier to understand and follow – THANKS Rylee!



We had seven clubs represented at our December 13th Quarterly Meeting, thank you to those clubs for sending someone to represent your clubs – we CAN do better. And finally on a personal note, since my last article back in September not much in terms of MCF work, except to watch the campaigns and who eventually won and to begin thinking how to approach them once the legislative sessions begin. Educating myself on each of the resolution issues is time consuming, but very exciting at the same time. Part of the reason I'm President of MCF is to assist whomever is working towards the same goals I have, which is cleaner water and air, improve environmental protections, protect wildlife, habitat, and the wilderness for all of us.

As you recall, October was a beautiful month to be outdoors, the weather was exceptionally nice this year. Going turkey hunting, bow hunting deer, or just walking across the fields and through the woods was easy to enjoy partially due to the nice weather. I cut a fair amount of firewood which I donate to our club for auction during our Fishing Contest in February. November was strange this year with the earlier than normal snow fall and the cold. The firearm season was an adventure in itself, wind and more wind, with many snow flurries and misty rain days. Here in the southeast corner of the state, much of the corn harvest didn't happen until after the first two seasons. Our farm was harvested November 30th and as I write this article, our neighbor is plowing in the snow (Dec. 17th).

As I look back at 2014, I can only remember the accomplishments and rewards I've had. Thanks to my family and many friends I've shared them with. In 2015, I plan to continue the work towards making the outdoors and all its activities better for everyone and into the next generation. – Happy New Year everyone.

Executive Director News

Ex. Director Report and Legislative Update

By Gary Botzek
Executive Director



Where did the summer (and fall) go! Winter has arrived and early this year (November 10) to be exact.

Part of my summer and fall involved “watching” the state legislative campaigns. With all 134 members of the Minnesota House up for election, as well as, the Governor and all the constitutional officers, a US Senate race and eight Congressional races there was a lot to follow. Lots of money and early voting. The results were pretty status quo except for the State House. The Republicans were able to wrestle control of the state House away from the DFL.

What does that mean for conservation, the environment, habitat, fish, and wildlife? We will be seeing new Republican chairs of the House committees. We have worked with many of these leaders in the past and look forward to working with them again as we hopefully pass a two-year budget for state agencies like DNR, MPCA, and the BWSR.

No doubt bills will be introduced and hearings scheduled regarding deer management and season control, moose preservation, AIS/Carp control, pheasant habit, wolf protection/management, a bonding bill for WMA’s and RIM Reserve, drainage law reform, wetland conservation act protection, and many, many other policy issues of interest to members of the MCF and others.

The MCF sets its public policy involvement (Botzek marching orders) through resolutions drafted and considered at the annual meeting. At the annual meeting held in Deerwood, MN last September the MCF passed seven resolutions:

- Stronger Enforcement of Drainage Ditch Buffers: The MCF considered expanding the current state law for drainage ditch buffers from one rod (16 and 1/2 feet) on both sides of the ditch but settled on calling for stronger enforcement of current law by federal, state, and local govern-

ments. The resolution also suggests the use of native seed mixes as cover in order to minimize invasive species.

- Better Public Awareness and Education of Minnesota’s Ditch Mowing Policy to Protect Nesting Birds: The current law calls for no mowing of roadside ditches until after August 1 but that law is clearly being broken daily. The resolution also calls for stronger enforcement by counties and the state of the non-haying laws/dates in order to better protect our wildlife, birds, and bees.
- Encourage federal and or state banning of lead ammo to protect eagles and other birds. There is growing concern over lead shot remaining in deer guts after harvesting that eagles and other birds consume. More and more people are seeing eagles eating road kill. They are not just fish eaters! With alternative shot readily available, this may well be the time to begin a transition to lead-free shoot. The MCF is supporting a LCCMR research project that may determine the best way(s) to deal with the lead shot and eagle (and other large birds) impacts.
- Ask Congress to pass legislation that would extent the protections of the Federal Wilderness Act to include the Alaskan Coastal Plains. The heart of the Alaskan Arctic Refuge, 1.5 million acres, MCF feels, should be protected as wilderness in order to better protect the land for caribou, wolves, muskoxen, and millions of birds from all 50 states that migrate and nest for the summer. Those acres are currently protected as a “refuge” but a “wilderness designation” would afford the Plains the same protection that the BWCA has in terms of mining and drilling.
- Ask Congress to make it clear that Pittman-Robertson funds can be used to establish, improve, and expand shooting ranges in Minnesota and other states. This change would provide additional dollars for the new DNR shooting range grant program

and would assist the State High School League clay target growth.

- Support a DNR proposal submitted to the LCCMR for research dollars for testing the use of CO2 (dry ice) inserted under the ice in shallow lakes to control rough fish.
- Full environmental review of the routing options of the proposed Sandpiper oil pipeline through northern Minnesota. While we do not oppose the pipeline we do support the need to place the line in a safe route to protect people and habitat.

MCF will share these resolutions with all 201 members of the State Legislature. We expect to draft legislation around some of these resolutions.

The MCF holds quarterly meetings around the state. We are looking for member clubs to host our quarterly meetings which are held in December, March and June. We have two more regional banquets set for 2015 at Prior Lake and Lake City. These events raise money for the local club or clubs and the MCF. They usually include a dinner, a speaker, and a silent auction. If your club is interested in hosting a fundraiser banquet let us know and we will work with you to set it up. We have dropped the money raffle (the old 21-gun raffle) after losing money this year.

In 2014 MCF President John Brinkman and I visited a number of member sportsmen’s clubs. We provided an update on the activities of the MCF including fund raising efforts and providing an update on legislative matters of interest and concern. We would like to visit more clubs and recruit additional new club members. Invite us to attend and speak at one of your winter or spring or summer club meeting.

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

More news....

The Trail of Goats

By Joe Hoffmann

My name is Joseph Hoffmann and this is my second term as Vice President for the Minnesota Conservation Federation. I'm also the Minnesota Senior Pro-Staffer for Vanishing Paradise, MCF affiliate conservation organization which deals with Mississippi River delta and gulf coast restoration. This past summer I had the opportunity to work for Iowa State University as a wildlife technician researching Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*; RMBHS) and Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*) behavior and disease research. This project is a partnership between Iowa State University and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).

In 1997, northeastern Nevada experienced a large pneumonia epizootic within Ruby Mountains Range. This outbreak resulted in large die off of Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep and was followed by a second outbreak in 2009 which continued into 2010 leaving the wild sheep herd in the Ruby Range and the East Humboldt Range severely depleted. "Pneumonia epizootics result in high all age mortalities initially and persistent lamb mortality in subsequent years, leading to population depression and in some cases extinction" (Chris Anderson). When an animal contracts this pneumonia their lungs tissue basically fill up with fluid and puss, in extreme cases fuse to their rib cage ultimately leading to death. In 2010, NDOW and cooperating organizations captured the surviving sheep within East Humboldt Range and transplanted them into the Ruby Mountains. Three years after this transplant occurred, NDOW reintroduced twenty bighorn sheep from Alberta Canada to the East Humboldt Range in hopes of repopulating the devastated herd. At the time the RMBHS were reintroduction NDOW tagged or radio collared all of the sheep along with 15 mountain goats. These animals were all tested for potential bacteria that could lead to pneumonia as well.

The problem is pneumonia

within RMBHS is not an isolated occurrence. Many of the western states are being plagued by these large die offs. The die offs have not only proved to be very costly to wildlife but have also hurt many states in terms of lost ecotourism dollars and hunting licenses revenues. To this point nobody's has been able to pinpoint the exact cause of the disease. Despite this fact, pneumonia epizootic has been associated with bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, *Mannheimia spp.* and *Bibersteinia trehalosi*, in combination with endoparasites, poor range conditions, high population densities, and climate condition among other stressors.

This is where MCF member and Iowa State graduate student Chris Anderson's thesis research comes into the picture. Chris is studying the potential implications of disease in Mountain Goats and their relation to pneumonia in sympatric RMBHS. By collecting data on mountain goat and sheep behavior, health, recruitment, movement, population, interspecies and intraspecies interaction, Chris hopes to provide a clearer image of what might be causing these large scale die offs. The beauty of Chris's study is its location. The East Humboldt mountain range provides a geographically isolated site with a controlled starter population. The site itself is like an island with little to no crossover from animals within the neighboring range. The East Humboldt range is close 15 miles long north to south and about 8 mile wide east to west reaching elevations of 11,000 feet.

The project started up in late May this season and ended in early September. Chris Anderson, Wade McCammond (Our 2nd Wildlife Technician), and I spent our summer following the trail of the goats and sheep camping, hiking, and living on the cliffs of the East Humboldt Mountains. We would go up for two to three days at a time and collect a population census and behavior data. In the end, we did notice kids disappearing, a sign similarly seen in bighorn sheep following die-offs, which up

to this point in time I believe was undocumented. We also recorded intra-species interactions, so, it is quite possible mountains goats may play an epidemiological role. I last saw the RMBHS herd growing with 18 adults, 12 juveniles, and 13 lambs. At the moment all of the season's data is being put together, reworked, and tested. All the data is preliminary and will be reported later, but the study will be continuing over the summer of 2015. With that being said, I will keep the MCF up to date on the issue that is affecting these beautiful animals. I would like to thank Nevada Department of Wildlife and Iowa State University for the amazing opportunity they gave me by allowing to be a part of this project. I would also like to give a special thanks to the U.S. Forest Service out of Wells Nevada for all the help they provided us throughout our research season.

Executive Director report continued from page 2..... Sportsmen's Club dues are \$2 per member per year with a maximum of \$250 per club. We are working hard to recruit new clubs especially shooting clubs. Over \$400,000 was awarded by DNR in the first round of shooting range improvement grants. This is legislation and funding the MCF led the way in securing. We would like to do more for the shooting clubs especially those that are hosting high school shooting leagues. Clubs are welcome and encouraged to donate additional funds to the MCF lobbying effort or to sponsor our youth magazine in schools. Please give generously! If you are interested in more information regarding items mentioned, 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!

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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**

**Upcoming Events with our local
club affiliates:**

Quarterly Meeting

South St. Paul Gun Club
600 Gun Club Rd.
South St. Paul, MN
Saturday, March 14
9:30am-1:30 pm

**Prior Lake Sportsmen's Club Annual
Fishing Contest: Sunday, January 25th
from 1-3 pm on Prior Lake.**

**Frontenac Sportsman Club Ice Fishing
Contest: February 14th 1-4 pm
Frontenac Pond**

**Marin County Conservation Club:
Annual Banquet for Habitat, February
28th at Fairmont National Guard
Armory. Contact Steve Maurice for
more information, 507-238-4013**

**United Northern Sportsmen's Club
Annual Banquet: April 10th. Contact
Sandy or Joe Roberts for more
information, jroberts205@charter.net**

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 March 20, 2015