



NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

The mission of the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society is to provide a forum for discussion of ecological issues among natural resource professionals; to enable its membership to pursue conservation of natural resources; and to inform the public on ecologically wise uses of natural resources in support of a conservation ethic.

AUGUST 1997

BLOMEKE WILL BE MISSED

On July 17th the Chapter lost one of our newest members and the wildlife community lost something even more important, an outspoken advocate for our cause. Steve Blomeke, Director of the National Wildlife Federations Prairie Wetlands Resource Center in Bismarck, was only fifty years old and died much too young. Steve presented a paper entitled "Environmental Legislation after 40 years of Democratic Control" at our annual meeting in 1996. I'm incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to work closely with Steve on numerous issues over the last four years including such issues as western lands, wetlands, Garrison and flooding. Steve was one of those rare individuals that performed a tough job with class and integrity, earning him respect, even among those who did not share his conservation beliefs. Most of us are unwilling to take the risks Steve did by voicing opposition to environmental policies or projects supported by outspoken groups or politicians. Steve was not intimidated by numbers of people or the level at which the debate took place. During a recent Devils Lake meeting Steve was asked "How does it feel to be responsible for the pain and suffering of the citizens of Devils Lake?". There were those who insisted on pointing the finger at him or his organization, but as always, Steve could roll with the punches, doing so with an uncommon sense of purpose, commitment, and a passion. Thanks for your help Steve, we'll all miss you. (A tribute to Steve written by Gary Pearson is included in this newsletter)

The next executive board meeting will be held at Lonetree on September 16th beginning at 10:00. I'm mentioning it here so that those of you who have always looked for an excuse to become more active in the Chapter have now found one (or two). A morning of upland bird hunting followed by a lively discussion of the environmental issues of the day and a barbecue lunch hosted by Scott (Is this heaven? - No, it's Lonetree) Peterson. If you plan on attending, please call Scott at Lonetree so that he knows how many hamburgers to make and how many grouse to raise.

It's not too early to start thinking about funding requests, award recipients, volunteering for an executive board seat or assisting with the annual meeting. The summer is going by much too fast, and all those things you put off until fall will soon be pressing. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Mike Olson, President

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER TWS - 1997

Executive Board Officers:

Mike Olson Karen Kreil Scott Peterson
Bill Bicknell Paul Halko Harris Hoistad
Darla Lenz Dave Hirsch

President Portfolio: Mike Olson

Secretary/Treasurer: Dave Hirsch
Newsletter: Tammy Fairbanks*
Finance: Nancy Dietz*
CMPS Rep: Jerry Heiser
Student Chapter Adviser: Rick Nelson*
Wetland Trust Adviser: Harris Hoistad

Past President Portfolio: Karen Kreil

Arrangements 1998 Mtg: Karen Kreil
Audit: Larry Lysne*
Membership: Kevin Johnson
Program 1998 Mtg: Karen Kreil
Nominations: Karen Kreil*

President Elect Portfolio: Scott Peterson

Planning: vacant
Bylaws: vacant
Fundraising: Darren Bruning
Legislative: Kevin Johnson, Nancy Dietz
Awards: Scott Peterson

Portfolio A: Bill Bicknell

Wetland Resources: Bill Bicknell
Sec 404 Subcommittee: Alexis Duxbury, Mike Ell,
Mike Olson
Fishery Resources: Eric Pearson*
Environmental Contaminants: Rick Nelson*
Youth Ed/Habitat Contest: Jack Lalor*
Historian: Chris Grondahl*

Portfolio B: Harris Hoistad

Western Lands: Bill Jensen*
Forest Resources: John Schulz*
Devils Lake Basin: Roger Hollevoet*
Education/Information: Kristine Askerooth

Portfolio C: Darla Lenz

Water Projects: Mike McEnroe*
Garrison Diversion Subcommittee: Mike McEnroe*
Red River Watershed Subcommittee: Mike Ell*
ND Action Group: Scott Peterson
Prairie Resources: Karen Smith*
Prairie Chicken: Paul Van Ningen
Teaming With Wildlife: Chuck Bosch

Portfolio D: Paul Halko

Land Use: Kevin Willis
CRP Subcommittee: Arnold Kruse*
Endangered Species: Mike North
Law Enforcement: Paul Freeman*
Wildlife Damage Mgt: John Paulson, Dave Bergman

* no report submitted

**ND CHAPTER - THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**By Dave Hirsch
July 8th, 1997**

The Executive Board meeting of the ND Chapter of The Wildlife Society was called to order at 10:05 am on Tuesday, July 8th, 1997 at the ND Game and Fish Department conference room in Bismarck, ND. The meeting was attended by board members: Mike Olson, Karen Kriel, Scott Peterson, Bill Bicknell, Harris Hoistad, Paul Halko, and Darla Lenz.

President's Portfolio

Secretary/Treasurer - The Secretary-Treasurer reported a checking account balance of \$15,232.81 as of June 25, 1997. The John G. Kinnard Life Membership Fund has a balance of \$7,532.80 as of the last statement.

The signature card for the chapter's checking account needed to be updated to reflect the current board members. Mike Olson made a recommendation to have the following names listed on the checking account signature card: President Mike Olson, President Elect Scott Peterson, and Secretary/Treasurer Dave Hirsch. Other names in the signature file at the bank would be deleted. There was a motion by Karen Kriel, a second by Darla Lenz, and a unanimous vote in favor.

CMPS Meeting - See report under Old Business.

Wetland Trust Advisor - Harris Hoistad reported that the governor has on his desk the first long term grasslands management easement. The trust held a meeting and also met with the governor in April. Harris projected that there may be two other grassland easements completed by the end of the year.

Past President's Portfolio

Arrangements: 1998 Joint North Dakota/Minnesota Chapter Annual Meeting - Karen reported that there is a signed contract with the Double Wood Inn of Fargo for the meeting site. Karen is working with the Minnesota chapter on arrangements.

Program: 1998 Annual Meeting - Karen has organized a program committee consisting of herself and Darla Lenz from the ND chapter and two Minnesota Chapter members. The committee met May 19th to develop a preliminary outline for papers and has contacted potential banquet speakers.

Membership - Kevin Johnson reported that the chapter has 272 members in good standing consisting of 63 life members, 10 students, and 199 regular members.

The board reviewed a new membership application for Gerhard Raedeke, an attorney with the ND Supreme Court. Scott Peterson made a motion to approve the application, second by Bill Bicknell. The motion passed unanimously.

President-Elect Portfolio

Planning - Scott reported that the chapter does not have a chapter-wide planning document. At the present time it is up to each committee to create their own planning document.

Bylaws - Scott is contacting members to find someone willing to serve as the committee chair. Please contact Scott if you are interested in the bylaws committee.

Fund Raising - Darren Bruning has agreed to serve as our 1997 Fundraising Committee Chairperson. Other new committee members include Kent Luttschwager, Tom Pabian, Randy Renner, Mick Erickson, and others yet to be named. Thanks to all who have agreed to serve. If anyone is interested in assisting on this committee, contact Scott Peterson.

Legislative - Kevin Johnson has written a letter for the chapter to the Wildlife Federation thanking them for providing lobbyist office space and other support during the past session.

Awards - It is not too early to begin thinking about nominations for the various 1998 Chapter awards which include, Student Scholarship Awards for graduates and undergraduates, Habitat Award, Case of the Year Award, Special Recognition Award, and North Dakota Award. Further information will be forthcoming in subsequent newsletters but again, be giving some thought to nominations for these worthy awards. Written nominations must accompany nominations for any Chapter Awards. Also, the Greater North Dakota Association has asked for nominations for the GNDA Natural Resources Award. This award recognizes outstanding leadership in development and/or judicious management of natural resources, generally construed to include minerals, water, soils, vegetation, wildlife and the environment. The deadline for nominations is August 31, 1997. For nomination form, contact Scott Peterson.

Portfolio A

Wetland Resources - Bill reported that the Governor's

Wetland Working Group has met and progress on the State conservation plan is progressing very slow. Although progress is slow with the groups current leadership, Bill stated that it is very important for the chapter to continue to participate in future meetings.

Bill also provided a Garrison Project update. See those notes under Old Business.

Portfolio B

Education/Information - Harris reported that Kristine Askerooth has been representing the chapter at meetings of the Coalition For Conservation and Environmental Education. The coalition has published a directory of environmental educational resources available to teachers, and attends the State teachers convention to promote environmental education. Karen Kriel motioned to pay the 15.00 dollar annual membership dues to the coalition so the chapter will receive voting privileges, obtain meeting minutes, and a newsletter. The second was by Darla Lenz with a unanimous vote in favor. Harris will ask Kristine if she will continue to represent the chapter at coalition meetings.

Portfolio C

Action Group - The June meeting of the North Dakota Action Group was canceled. The group usually meets in August or September.

Prairie Chickens - The Forest Service is continuing to develop a management plan for prairie chickens on the Shyenenne National Grasslands. The committee will be reviewing the plan as it is developed and draft comments during the scoping process.

Teaming With Wildlife Initiative - The chapter has received response back from Senators Dorgan and Conrad regarding support for the Initiative. Senator Dorgan said the proposal makes good sense and will watch for the legislation when it is introduced and try to be helpful. The chapter is attempting to set up a meeting with Senator Dorgan regarding the initiative. (Since the board meeting a meeting was held with Senator Dorgan and Teaming With Wildlife was discussed. Senator Dorgan has not committed to sponsoring the legislation but did recognize the program would benefit North Dakotas wildlife resources). Keep those letters coming in to his office in support of the program.

Portfolio D

Land Use - Paul reported that the committee is tracking the rules being developed for the CRP contracts and projected funding. For contracts that were not accepted, there will be an appeal process. North Dakota is again far ahead in the number of acres being enrolled. There has been some modifications to the seed mixture in new CRP planting due to shortages in certain varieties and high costs for seed. Paul stated that the seed mixtures on contracts being approved are either a wildlife dense nesting cover or native grass species mix.

Endangered Species - The committee is tracking the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

Wildlife Damage Management Committee - The committee is in the process of developing a white paper on deer and waterfowl depredation.

OLD BUSINESS

Garrison Diversion Update - Bill Bicknell provided an update on the Garrison Diversion Project. Recent informal doughnut club meetings and other meetings regarding Garrison do not seem as productive as in the past. Possible reasons for this may be that there seems to be different representatives from each entity attending the meetings so a solid core group of individuals has not formed. The recent flood disasters have also distracted efforts away from Garrison for the time being. Another reason for the lack of progress is that the Garrison project is still being formulated making it difficult to analyze issues. Some of the groups in attendance at the meetings are mainly there to learn and not necessarily to resolve issues. Another meeting will be sometime the last part of July, usually about the time the Governors Wetland Working Group meets. It was hoped that July of this year was the time when a clearer direction for Garrison may be known but this has not happened. Draft legislation for the project has not been updated.

Badlands Mineral Exchange - Mike Olson provided information that Senator Dorgan introduced a bill to facilitate the exchange on May 15th. It is number SB 750. There has been some recent press calling the exchange a win-win situation between conservation groups and industry. During the hearing on the bill, a Justice Dept. representative argued that the NEPA

process had not been followed. Because of this, the bill will not get out of committee until that issue is resolved. NEPA concerns may have been adequately covered in the Southern Little Missouri Oil and Gas EIS. NEPA issues may also be addressed by a categorical exclusion or by administrative processes. It is uncertain at this time when the bill will move forward. Senator Dorgan continues to work on this although Burlington Resources may not be as patient as in the past.

Northern Great Plains Research Lab Funding - The lab has received funding to operate for the next fiscal year. The chapter previously wrote a letter of support for the lab and asking for more research directed to conservation practices. A follow up letter will be drafted reaffirming support now that funding has been restored for at least one year.

Livestock Grazing Act - The act has been reintroduced with a new name and number (S 749 the National Grasslands Management Act of 1997). Senator Dorgan's office said the reason for introduction of the act was to force the Forest Service to give more attention to the grasslands. The chapter has previously sent numerous letters stating our concerns regarding the act.

Air Quality Standards Referral - The referral effort came up short in the number of signatures required. The chapter participated in the referral by helping to circulate petitions. The two bills which were the subject of the referral effort will now go into law. The chapter received a letter from Dr. Robert Wentz, former officer of the State Health Department, thanking the chapter for help with the referral effort. He also asked the chapter for ideas for new legislation in the next session. Anyone interested in working on this project is asked to contact Dr. Wentz.

CMPS Planning Meeting - Karen Kriel reported that planning is complete and presented a meeting agenda. The meeting will start Thursday, July 31st at 1:00 pm at the Comfort Inn Motel in Bismarck. Friday evening will include a 6:00 pm social hour prior to a prairie luau and auction all at the Ft. Lincoln State Park Commissary. Friday will consist of three tour options in the morning and a business session in the afternoon. Saturday will be a paper presentation session at the Comfort Inn with adjournment at noon.

BLM Proposed Land Transfer - Several responses have been received on a letter the chapter sent to the congressional delegation and the Secretary of the

Interior. The BLM currently has regulatory inspection and enforcement authority over approximately 600 oil wells on Federal land in North Dakota and the proposal will transfer that authority to the State. The response from the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission did not indicate the future course of action on the proposal.

NEW BUSINESS

Letter to State Engineer Regarding Water Management - The chapter sent a letter to the State Engineer on May 22nd. The letter asked the engineer to revisit the issue of a moratorium on draining wetlands in the Devils Lake Basin and the Red River valley. The letter also asked what specific administrative and legislative changes are being looked at to change how water is being managed in the systems due to the flood disaster. This is a follow up letter to one written sent several years ago in which the chapter asked the engineer to close drains in these systems to help alleviate potential flooding. Paul Halko informed the board on recent efforts in Ramsey County to identify illegal drainage. In one test township, 22 drains (approximately 3.0 percent of the township drainage) may be illegal. Stay tuned...

Letter to the State Geologist Regarding Water Management - A letter was sent asking clarification on comments made in a recent issue of the ND Geological Survey Newsletter regarding flooding this spring. In the State Geologists response to the chapter's letter, he asked chapter to provide more information on the amount of drainage in the Devil's Lake and Red River Basins. A response is being prepared citing information distributed by the chapter at the last legislative social. The FEMA report on this years flood disaster lists short term storage of water in wetlands and other places in the watershed a high priority to help alleviate problems.

Water Tours - The chapter has received a list of water tours sponsored by the State Water Commission. Anyone interested in the tour schedule can contact a board member for information.

Red River Group - An alliance of natural resource organizations has formed to discuss flooding in the valley. Mike Olson provided some background information to the board. A symposium sponsored by the National Association of Floodplain Managers is tentatively scheduled for September 2nd through 4th in

Fargo. It should address issues in the Red and Minnesota River Basins. People who are interested in presenting information can contact Cheryl Miller from Audubon in St. Paul at 612-225-1830.

Missouri River Initiative - The Sierra Club will adopt the Missouri River as its focus for the next year. The hope is to develop and organize a plan for development along the river to help protect natural resources. The chapter will draft a letter of support for this initiative to help open the debate. We will also participate on a Missouri River informational float trip with the media, politicians, and conservation groups in early September.

ND Landowner Sportsmen Council Membership - The chapter received a request from the council to renew chapter membership in the council. Dues are 25.00 dollars. Bill Bicknell motioned to renew membership, second by Karen Kriel. There was a unanimous vote in favor to renew.

ND Wildlife Federation Camper Funding - The chapter received a request to contribute 200.00 dollars to the annual Youth Conservation Camp at Lake Metigoshe as the chapter has done in the past. This amount has supported one camper for the event. Scott Peterson motioned to contribute 200.00, second by Karen Kriel. There was a unanimous vote to contribute.

Request for Contribution for a Conservation Planting - The chapter received a request from a landowner toward costs incurred in establishing a conservation tree planting. The board denied this request based on other more appropriate funding avenues the landowner can pursue. A letter from the chapter will be sent to the landowner relating the boards discussion on the request.

The next executive board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 16th at Lonetree Wildlife Management Area at 10:00am**. All members are urged to attend...

STEPHEN L. BLOMEKE
1947-1997

*There are some who can live without
wild things, and some who cannot.*

---Aldo Leopold

Steve was one of those who could not live without wild things; waterfowl hunter, defender of prairies, protector of wetlands, conservationist.

Steve grew up in northern Indiana, after the Indiana prairie had been converted to corn and soybeans. He graduated from Purdue University in 1970 with a Bachelor's degree in political science. His first job was as a grass-roots organizer with the National Farmers organization where he honed his "people" skills. Then he worked as legislative assistant for South Dakota U.S. Senator James Abourezk where he had the opportunity to develop his political skills. Next, he became the executive director of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission where he gained experience in the operations of government agencies. In 1981, Steve was appointed executive director of the Colorado Wildlife Federation where he became involved in environmental issues with the private conservation community. It is important to know these things about Steve in order to understand how he became such a dedicated and effective force in the conservation movement.

Steve came to North Dakota in November 1993 as Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Prairie Wetlands Resource Center in Bismarck, where he was responsible for planning and implementing the Federation's conservation advocacy program in a nine-state area. For those in North Dakota who had been dealing with such perennial issues as wetland drainage, Devils Lake stabilization and the Garrison Diversion project, the prospect of a new person coming in and mastering their historical, technical and political complexities appeared daunting. But, Steve's experience and dedication enabled him to move easily into a leadership role in these conservation controversies. Just two months after he arrived in North Dakota, Steve was steadfastly and effectively representing conservation interests on the Executive Steering Committee for the newly-established North Dakota Water Management Collaborative Process seeking to resolve the Garrison controversy by addressing the contemporary water needs of the State.

Steve quickly demonstrated, not only his mastery of the issues, but his ability to articulate the conservationists' position, to develop strategies to advance that position, and to organize and motivate people to support it. Where others would say, "Someone should...", Steve did. He was uncompromising and tenacious in his advocacy of wetlands and other natural resources, but his straightforward, rational and reasonable approach enabled him to argue for those wetlands and natural resources without being argumentative, to disagree with his opponents without being disagreeable. Senator Kent Conrad once commented that Steve left his adversaries "looking like deer standing in the headlights." The willingness and ease with which he would "walk into the lion's den" to present his position to a hostile audience won him the respect of his allies and his opponents, alike. Both friends and adversaries knew that he would not betray their trust. He almost immediately became the leading spokesman for the conservation movement in the area, and he carried the conservation flag with equal poise in prairie towns, in state capitals and in the nation's capital.

NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE
WILDLIFE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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BISMARCK, ND 58501

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**ND & MN CHAPTERS OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
JOINT ANNUAL MEETING**

FEBRUARY 11-13, 1998

DOUBLEWOOD INN, FARGO, ND

THEME: PRAIRIE ECOLOGY, MANAGEMENT, AND CONSERVATION

The theme for the 1998 meeting is intended to inform North Dakota and Minnesota Chapter memberships of prairie issues. Potential topics on prairie to be addressed include: Values/Ecology; Wildlife (Invertebrates, Reptiles/Amphibians, Birds, Mammals, and Plants); Management and Restoration; Conservation; and Education/Outreach.

If you would like to present a paper or poster at the Annual Meeting, please send the paper/poster title, author(s) name, address and phone number, audio-visual equipment needed and a brief description of the paper to: Program Committee, NDCTWS, P.O. Box 1442, Bismarck, ND 58501. **The deadline for paper/poster submittal is November 15, 1997.**

Plenty of room is available for posters and you do not need to restrict the topic to the conference theme. Here's your chance to show-off your pet project, introduce a new concept, idea, management effort, or to present research results.

Program Committee Members:

Karen Kreil, NDCTWS (701-250-4401)

Darla Lenz, NDCTWS (701-328-5368)

Peter Buessler, MNCTWS (218-739-7576)

Brian Winter, MNCTWS (218-498-2679)

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