



P.O. Box 1442, Bismarck, N.D. 58502



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Current topics and issues affecting outdoor recreation in our State. Prepared by the North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, and the North Dakota Wildlife Federation.

## Conservation Notes #10, January 2017

### A Habitat Plan

Sportsmen and women from all parts of the State have met on six occasions in the past six years to discuss ideas on how the State can meet their needs for outdoor recreation. At each “Future of Hunting” conference, the discussion identified the need to have a targeted State habitat program to assist our wildlife populations. At the last meeting in January 2016 the attendees agreed that the State should be asked to design a million-acre habitat program that can be in place and implemented as funds become available. This plan would compensate in part for the loss of the highly successful federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which produced vigorous wildlife populations. That program has now shrunk from 3.4 million acres to about 1.4 million acres, and the precipitous decline in wildlife followed. Many of our communities and businesses depend on quality hunting seasons in their business models. Without abundant wildlife populations, they cannot benefit from this important contribution to the economy. The North Dakota Wildlife Federation consolidated the views of the six “Futures Conferences” and in January 2016 sent a letter to the Governor asking that the State develop the outline for the million-acre program request. The Game and Fish Department responded in April on behalf of the Governor that they could not accommodate the request. It makes sense that we should plan for our future and is short sighted not to have the programs in place when the time and funding is right. It is not an acceptable response to say now is not the right time, or funds are not available. We cannot afford to ignore this important aspect of our State. Therefore, protecting our existing habitat, and developing State conservation programs important to our sportsmen and women, our farmers and ranchers, and small town businesses will produce habitat to maintain our valuable wildlife, our quality of life, and our outdoor recreation economy.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: Mike McEnroe, President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, ([memcenroe@midco.net](mailto:memcenroe@midco.net)) or Rick Nelson, President elect, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, ([bluebill@bis.midco.net](mailto:bluebill@bis.midco.net)).

