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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.

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Living in the Past

Hunting in North Dakota is pursued by more than 100,000 residents and non-residents across the State contributing hundreds of millions of dollars to local economies, especially small-town main streets. Although North Dakota's hunting opportunities were good for many years, the habitat resources that support hunting are declining significantly, heading down the path to mediocrity. Unfortunately, when addressing sportsmen's concerns the common excuse given "it's still better here than anywhere else." With that reasoning, North Dakota is not doing much to stem the decline. The numbers paint the picture: pheasant harvest in 2007 of 907,000 birds dropped to just over 300,000 in 2017. As habitat and game populations decline, so is hunter participation. The real question is not about when will the numbers increase, but how much farther they will decline without a substantial state sponsored conservation and habitat program. The Governor, Legislature, and Departments of Game and Fish, Tourism and Economic Development need to step up and address the loss of habitat and declining populations of game species before it is too late. Otherwise, living in the past will be our future.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (www.ndctws.wordpress.com)