

# **Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee**

—Authorized under *Minnesota Statutes*, sec. 97A.055, subd. 4b—

## **CITIZEN OVERSIGHT REPORT ON GAME AND FISH FUND EXPENDITURES FISCAL YEAR 2009**

**July 2010**



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This report was approved by the Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC) by an e-mail vote completed on July 21, 2010.

**BOC MEMBERS:**



Joe Duggan  
Budgetary Oversight Committee Chair



John Schneider  
Fisheries Operations Subcommittee Chair



Terry Johnson  
Wildlife Operations Subcommittee Chair



John Hunt  
Ecological Resources Subcommittee Chair



Scott Roemhildt  
Pheasant Stamp Subcommittee Chair



Randy Goetsch  
Enforcement and Operations Support  
Subcommittee Chair



Brad Nylin  
Waterfowl Stamp Subcommittee Chair



John Lenczewski  
Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee Chair



Dennis Fuchs  
Wild Turkey Management Subcommittee Chair



Scott Nagel  
Big Game Subcommittee Chair

Tom Neustrom \*

Walleye Stamp Subcommittee Chair

*\* Note: The new Walleye Stamp Subcommittee did not yet have any expenditures to review during FY 2009 and declined to participate in the BOC this year.*

# Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee

—Authorized under Minnesota Statutes Section 97A.055 Subd. 4b—

## Joe Duggan, BOC Chair

### Subcommittee Chairs:

John Schneider—Fisheries Operations Subcommittee

Dave Bennett—Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee

Tom Neustrom—Walleye Stamp Subcommittee

John Hunt—Ecological Resources Subcommittee

Scott Nagel—Big Game Subcommittee

Terry Johnson—Wildlife Operations Subcommittee

Eran Sandquist—Pheasant Stamp Subcommittee

Brad Nylin—Waterfowl Stamp Subcommittee

Dennis Fuchs—Wild Turkey Management Subcommittee

Randy Goetsch—Enforcement and Operations Support Subcommittee

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July 21, 2010

Commissioner Mark Holsten  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Sen. Satveer Chaudhary  
Chair, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Sen. Ellen Anderson  
Chair, Senate Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Budget Division

Rep. Kent Eken  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Rep. David Dill  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee – Game, Fish, and Forestry Division

Rep. Jean Wagenius  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division

Ladies and Gentlemen:

*Note: The Game and Fish Fund Budget Oversight Committee (BOC) is charged by legislative statute to review Game and Fish Fund expenditures and make recommendations on the use of those funds. The BOC also makes recommendations on the biennial budget during budget years, and serves an important role as citizen reviewers of game and fish policies and legislation. This report relates to the expenditure review. Although the BOC legislation expires on June 30, 2010, the Governor and the Commissioner have asked the committee to complete the report called for by the expiring statute. The report on budget recommendations will be finalized and released in mid- August, 2010.*

Enclosed you will find the Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC) report for Fiscal Year 2009.

The Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC) and its subcommittees found the Game and Fish Fund expenditures complied with the overall requirements of the Game and Fish Fund. However, key issues that have been reported by BOC in the past remain unresolved.

- There remains an imbalance of revenues versus expenditures between fish and wildlife sections. The expenditures for fisheries management exceeds the revenues from fishing, resulting in wildlife revenue from hunting license sales and federal aid related to hunting paying for fisheries management. Current legislation does not require balance between hunting and fishing funds, but the BOC feels that it is very important to balance them. We recommend that the DNR implement a plan to bring the expenditures for fish and wildlife management into balance with the revenues associated with those activities.
- Statutes require the Game and Fish Fund remain solvent. The current trend indicates the fund will be out of balance by 2015 perhaps. The BOC recommends that the DNR examine license fees and fee structure, increases and other changes if necessary to ensure that the Fund remains solvent. Any proposed changes should consider the potential impact upon youth recruitment and retention of anglers and hunters.
- In this time of very tight budgets, it is very important for the DNR to continue to pursue funding and partnerships from other entities, such as federal agencies, non-government organizations, business, and others, in order to leverage game and fish funds. The DNR has done much to collaborate with the federal farm bill conservation programs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs and various organizations. It is critical these efforts be increased.
- The quantity and quality of fish and wildlife habitat is the key to fish and wildlife abundance in Minnesota. Therefore, the BOC recommends that on-the-ground results continue to be the key performance.

The attached report provides recommendations from the individual sub-committees related to their respective accounts.

In closing it should be noted that hunting, fishing and wildlife-related activities generate nearly 3 billion dollars of economic activity in the State of Minnesota, and provide recreational enjoyment for over 2.9 million people (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). The related fish and wildlife management activities provide significant environmental benefits for soil, water, and air. The Game and Fish Fund is derived from fishing and hunting license sales, and almost entirely underwrites the state's fish and wildlife management activities. It is important that this fund is adequate to support the management of this important natural resource.

The members of the BOC are fully aware that the legislative authority creating the Committee has expired. We firmly believe the work of the committee provides an important service to the DNR, legislature, and citizens of this great state. We stand ready to assist you and legislative leaders in determining the future role of the BOC in maintaining the health and abundance of fish and wildlife habitat and populations in Minnesota.

Finally, on behalf of the committee, thank you and your staff for your support in developing this report. The Budgetary Oversight Committee members are available to discuss any of these recommendations.

Yours truly,



Joe Duggan  
Chair, Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee

# FISHERIES OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: John Schneider (Roseville, MN)  
Jeff Bergeron (Andover, MN)  
Jeff Byrne (Victoria, MN)  
Michael Scott Dosch (Waconia, MN)  
Terry Peltier (Forest Lake, MN)  
Peter Perovich (Ramsey, MN)  
Betty Wilkens (Mora MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Operations Subcommittee wishes to thank the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff for providing their assistance to the subcommittee in completing its charged duties. A special thanks to both Dirk Peterson and Peter Skwira for providing the subcommittee with requested information, documents and reports.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

#### Fishing Tournaments

The tournament angling public is supportive of the direction the department made in response to supervision and management of tournaments.

**Subcommittee Response:** *The subcommittee continues to believe that the department needs to improve its interaction with tournament anglers. More can be done. Issues continue to be: a reduction of tournament management costs/process, appropriate fee structures for all tournaments to recover this cost, and beneficial management interaction with tournament anglers. The subcommittee continues to believe that tournaments must cover the cost of their management expenses, but are a resource that the department poorly utilizes.*

#### Division support costs

Cost coding across the DNR for this area still is not uniform.

**Subcommittee Response:** *The subcommittee applauds the DNR's undertaking to better understand this issue. Since Fisheries is charged as much as 4 times as much as other divisions for support costs, we look forward to a speedy clarification and remedy of the imbalance.*

### Ongoing Issues

#### Loss of shoreline habitat

Our state's lakes are still losing an alarming amount of shoreline habitat due to development. The DNR's new shoreline management rules may help. We applaud these efforts.

**Subcommittee Response:** *We ask that an update on the success of these rules changes be assembled and discussed. The angling public needs to more deeply understand this large and complex issue. The subcommittee is not satisfied with the pace of solving it.*

## **Recruitment of new anglers**

The number of anglers has remained steady over the past few years; however the number of potential anglers has increased. This reduced percentage of the state's overall population that fishes is a worrisome trend and needs attention.

**Subcommittee Response:** *We strongly believe that efforts at recruiting new and retaining old anglers are a justified expense for the GFF. But these efforts need to show success at revenue generation. If we spend money that does not generate more dollars to the fund than are being spent, we waste dollars that could be better spent on improving the fisheries resource.*

## **Treaty costs**

The subcommittee is frustrated by the ever-increasing cost of treaty management, and the escalating drain on the GFF.

**Subcommittee Response:** *Since the legislature is unwilling to appropriate General Fund dollars for treaty management effort, we believe that the DNR must identify cost savings/reductions that can be made. The subcommittee requests a thorough review of these efforts with an eye towards changing process to achieve cost savings. Agency efforts that can be better labeled large lake management activity or research should be cost coded under these more appropriate labels.*

## **Stocking**

**Current Situation:** Stocking management effort by specie appears uneven. Walleye stocking expenditures continue to escalate, while efforts for muskellunge and Trout/Salmon seem consistent.

**Proposed Solution:** *The subcommittee wants the DNR to review the cost effectiveness of stocking various species in regards to "effort compared to fish caught within the creel". The changes in funding for fisheries activities means that dollars spent on effort must be maximized for enhancement of angling experience. The subcommittee is concerned that we are unwisely spending dollars on stocking at the loss of spending on other efforts. A better understanding of the cost per fish caught may impact opinions as to the value of stocking.*

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report**

The Fisheries Operations Subcommittee has found the expenditures listed within the FY 2009 Game and Fish Report to be compliant with the legislative intent of Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.075, subd. 3.

### **Issues surrounding an angling license Fee increase**

**Subcommittee Recommendations:** *The subcommittee understands that an inflationary increase in the cost of angling licenses is due next year, and support discussions and efforts in this regard. We remind DNR managers and legislators that funding from other sources [LCCMR, bonding, Legacy funding, etc] need to pay their fair share of the fisheries management costs. The imbalance between license sale revenue and fisheries expenditures must be addressed.*

*The surcharge to license sales that goes to the "license seller" should be deleted. The outdoors industry should be supporting fisheries management as an investment in their financial future. The Game and Fish Fund should not be subsidizing the industry that benefits from angling. The*



*subcommittee believes this is a diversion of license dollars. We offer that if needed, it should be replaced with a General Fund tax rebate “sellers” would be granted based on number of license sales. This tax rebate should be considered an investment by the state in tourism and resource management.*

*Angling license expenditures should first and foremost cover the costs of sport angling related management costs. The subcommittee wants to participate in a discussion with the DNR about Fisheries activities that fall under this narrowly defined definition. We believe we need to better understand what activities are being funded outside of this narrow definition.*

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Subcommittee members continue to believe that DNR management is becoming more introverted in its management decision making process. We applaud the increased effort to inform anglers of issues – i.e., species management workgroups. However, we remain concerned about “decision making” open engagement.



# TROUT AND SALMON STAMP SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: John Lenczewski (Eden Prairie, MN)  
John Eaton (Walker, MN)  
Tom Helgeson (Minneapolis, MN)  
Gary Meier (Duluth, MN)  
Chuck Prokop (Hugo, MN)  
Sue Rousseau (Golden Valley, MN)  
Scott Thorpe (Minneapolis, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee (“TSSC”) wishes to thank the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff for providing their assistance to the committee in completing its charged duties, especially Mark Ebbers and Linda Erickson-Eastwood. We also wish to thank John Jaschke, Executive Director of BWSR, and Doug Peterson of the Minnesota Farmers’ Union, for their willingness to educate the committee on water regulation and the possible role of agriculture in efforts to improve water quality. A special thanks to outgoing Chair, David Bennett for his valuable contribution to the TSSC, and his willingness to continue sharing his perspectives with the committee this year. We welcome new members Gary Meier, of the Izaak Walton League, and Scott Thorpe, of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

Not applicable this year.

### Ongoing Issues

#### Lake Superior Cormorant Control

The relationship between increasing cormorant populations and the poorer than expected improvement in the Knife River steelhead fishery, the declining kamloops fishery, and the destruction of vegetation on Knife Island has been identified as an ongoing concern of the TSSC since FY 2004. In 2005 a limited cormorant stomach sampling study conducted by the USDA-APHIS showed predation of rainbow trout by cormorants in the Knife River. Proposals and counter-proposals for cormorant control involving the MNDNR, the Minnesota Cormorant Coordination Group, USDA-APHIS, the Lake Superior Steelhead Association, the Knife River Citizens Group and the Lake County have yet to yield action. The Lake Superior Steelhead Association is offering to provide financial support for a more comprehensive study of the extent of cormorant predation on steelhead and kamloops trout. The MNDNR Fisheries Section, Lake Superior Area Office has requested that staff and researchers in St. Paul assess the tasks and costs associated with conducting such a study.

**Proposed Solution:** *The TSSC recommends that the MNDNR take advantage of this opportunity to partner with a conservation organization to design this study, and implement if feasible. The results should allow further management decisions to be based upon scientific evidence.*

## Aquatic Invasive Species

**Current Situation:** Two recent discoveries highlight the need for the State and federal governments to act more aggressively to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species: VHS was detected in Lake Superior fish, including in St. Louis Bay, and evidence of DNA from Asian carp was discovered in the Great Lakes basin near Chicago.

**Problem Statement:** Researchers in January 2010 confirmed that the VHS virus has been introduced into Lake Superior, including St. Louis Bay. While a decade of prodding state agencies and conservation groups has now led the U.S. Coast Guard to finally begin rulemaking in 2009 to meaningfully regulate ballast water discharges in the Great Lakes, it has come late to prevent the introduction of VHS into Lake Superior. However, we can limit its spread and perhaps spare our inland waters. In April 2010 it was revealed that VHS had also been found in herring near the Apostle Islands, and the MNDNR announced that it would enforce a ban on the use of smelt taken from Lake Superior, to prevent spreading VHS into inland waters. The Legislature, working with the MNDNR, passed SF 2900, which contained provisions enabling the MNDNR to more swiftly and effectively regulate the bait industry and bait users to prevent the spread of VHS. The TSSC supports those measures, including a ban on fresh or frozen bait from Lake Superior being used elsewhere. SF 2900 was vetoed for reasons unrelated to the invasive species provisions.

In late November 2009, scientists announced they had discovered Asian carp DNA upstream of an electric fish fence just six miles from Lake Michigan and nearly 20 miles closer than previous tests had shown. More recently, Asian carp DNA has been found in at least three of the five channels that connect the canals to Lake Michigan and in Calumet Harbor of Lake Michigan. Minnesota legislators, the MNDNR and Minnesota Attorney General have been vocal leaders of the growing consensus in the Great Lakes region that stopping the movement of invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River is critical to maintaining the area's ecological and economic vitality. The TSSC greatly appreciates this leadership. Asian carp and other invasive species which could transit the Chicago canal would eventually reach Lake Superior, disrupting the food chain and damaging the fishing, boating, and tourism industries. The only sure solution to this ongoing threat is to restore a permanent, hydrologic separation of the two basins.

**Proposed solution:** *We recommend:*

- (1) the MNDNR swiftly exercise its emergency rulemaking authority to adopt those measures to prevent the spread of VHS and other invasive species which it sought legislative action to more easily facilitate, and the Legislature pass a bill at the start of next session making the measures permanent;*
- (2) the MNDNR enforce a ban on the use of fresh or frozen bait from Lake Superior on other waters, and consider additional rules requiring the preservation of such bait;*
- (3) the MNDNR and Legislature push for rapid adoption, implementation and enforcement of strong federal rules and standards for all ballast water discharges;*
- (4) the MNDNR and Legislature push for restoration of the permanent, hydrologic separation of the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins; and*
- (5) the Legislature ensure adequate funding of the invasive species fund, including via raising surcharge rates.*

## Revision of the Timber Harvesting Guidelines

**Current Situation:** Forested watersheds can provide the favorable water storage and gradual runoff, water quality, and in-stream habitat essential for healthy trout populations. Riparian forest management, including timber harvesting practices, influences these forest benefits. Without these benefits, many of Minnesota's northern trout streams could no longer support trout. The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) is beginning the process of revising its site-level timber harvesting and forest management guidelines (1999), this time considering changes to BMPs for timber harvesting in riparian areas, including along trout streams and lakes. In 2005

revisions urged by MNDNR Fisheries personnel, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, and conservation groups were shelved in favor of more study by riparian science technical committee. In August 2007 that team of scientists completed its review and suggested changes in order to better protect riparian forest functions.

**Proposed Solution:** *The TSSC requests that throughout the revision process the professional judgments of the Fisheries Section and Ecological Resources Division of the MNDNR be forcefully conveyed directly to the MFRC and the public, without alteration by other Division.*

### **Sulfide Mining**

The TSSC has previously expressed concerns regarding sulfide mineral mining operations proposed for Northeast Minnesota because of the potential effects which exploitation of this new type of ore body may have, especially the associated acid mine drainage (AMD) that has occurred elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada. Mines are proposed for the Lake Superior basin, as well as locations which drain into the fragile inland lake trout lakes located in and around the BWCAW. Given the high concentration of trout waters in the area we remain very concerned about possible effects of AMD, toxic heavy metals and other pollutants on the valuable aquatic resources here. We previously urged the MNDNR to apply the greatest possible oversight and expertise in reviewing the Polymet EIS and project permits. During its review of the draft EIS for Polymet, the EPA highlighted significant deficiencies with this project, and recommended that the MNDNR and the Army Corps of Engineers address numerous deficiencies and problems through a supplemental draft EIS, or a revised EIS.

**Proposed Solution:** *The TSSC recommends the MNDNR follow the EPA's guidance and require a revised or supplemental draft EIS before proceeding to the final EIS stage or permitting. Given that the PolyMet mine will set a precedent for other similar mining operations, we urge the Legislature to safeguard the public waters of the state by closing any loopholes and requiring greater assurances that mining company (and not taxpayers') dollars will be available to mitigate and clean up future environmental damage.*

### **Impact of Inappropriate ATV Use upon Trout Waters**

Although conversion of the North Shore State Trail to an ATV trail has not been funded, the TSSC remains concerned about the possibility of this trail being converted or otherwise used, legally or illegally, for this purpose. Use by ATVs of this and other trails (legally and illegally) in the upper and middle portions of trout streams flowing into Lake Superior threaten to significantly degrade these sensitive coldwater systems.

**Proposed Solution:** *We urge the MNDNR to identify alternative trail locations in Northeast Minnesota to provide safe and environmentally responsible ATV use by this recreational user group. We recommend increased enforcement to discourage and stop irresponsible and destructive riding.*

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report**

The Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee has reviewed the following accounts and expenditures of the FY 2009 Trout and Salmon Management Account (234):

Habitat Improvement.....	\$216,148
Fish Culture and Stocking .....	464,280
Easement Acquisition and Identification.....	116,644
Lake Superior Research and Special Projects .....	110,801

Cancel to account.....	<u>6,000</u>
Total.....	\$913,873

The Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee has found the above expenditures to be compliant with the legislative intent of Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.075, subd. 3.

The FY 2009 Game and Fish Report was acceptable to the Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee.

## Policy Issues

### Impacts of Decreasing Core Funding Levels

**Current Situation:** The Subcommittee and the thousands of coldwater anglers we represent recognize that effective, efficient and sustainable management of trout and salmon populations requires decisions based upon sound science and good data collection. We believe that basing fisheries management decisions on other factors can too often result in the waste of scarce funding and staff time, and even cause irreparable damage to the resource. For the past decade funding, or the purchasing power of available funding, for the Fisheries Section have been declining. The TSSC is particularly concerned about the impacts of these reductions on coldwater fisheries activities, and on the ability of the MNDNR to work for the benefit of all fish and water resources in a state uniquely gifted with these resources. Funding cutbacks have resulted in the significant staff reductions in regional fisheries offices around the state, fewer habitat improvement projects, reduced creel survey crews checking harvest rates and other population metrics, reduced longer term monitoring of fish populations, and reduced stocking of trout around the state. Important research activities (e.g. identification of prey fish assemblages in Lake Superior, determination of genetic compatibility between endemic and planted fish stocks) involving highly skilled staff are being reduced, jeopardizing the quality of data necessary to make good science-based decisions.

**Problem Statement:** The Trout and Salmon Stamp Subcommittee is very concerned about the continuing decline in core funding to the Section of Fisheries, exacerbated by years of declining purchasing power. Fishing license fees were last increased a decade ago and it would take an increase of more than \$4 just to restore the Fisheries Section's buying power to where it was in 2000. The MNDNR has failed to push for a needed increase, and the Legislature has declined to act to provide adequate funding through license fee increases.

On top of this, the Legislature has cut all General Fund dollars from the Fisheries budget. It is particularly troubling that Fisheries has not received state General Fund dollars, while other divisions such as Forestry have. Yet many Fisheries Section activities benefit the general (non-angling) public through activities such as environmental review, permitting of land use activities, and cooperation with the MPCA in clean water activities. The loss of general funds, coupled with a freeze on license fees means that fisheries and other water-related management activities will have to be reduced.

Some Fisheries activities could be funded from sources other than the Game and Fish Fund, such as LCCMR funded research projects. However, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council has been reluctant to recommend OHF money for activities typically done by DNR personnel, even where they supplement current levels of activity. Thus the new dedicated funding cannot be used to lessen the impact of inadequate core funding, even as the projects funded with the new monies place greater demands on the time of Fisheries personnel.

The Subcommittee is pleased with the MNDNR's efforts to utilize the voluntary labor and funding brought by individuals and conservation groups such as Minnesota Trout Unlimited and Muskies Inc. We urge the MNDNR to continue to look for and promote cooperation with outside

entities in order to further diversify funding sources and better coordinate activities with user groups. However, such efforts cannot replace the pressing need for greater core funding for the Fisheries Section.

**Proposed Solution:** *The TSSC recommends: (1) the MNDNR, the Legislature and the Governor work with the citizen Budgetary Oversight Committee to develop a sensible package of fishing license fee increases for adoption in the next legislative session, and consider adopting a method for regular fee increases tied to increasing operating costs of the MNDNR; (2) the Legislature and Governor work with the MNDNR to determine what is an appropriate amount of General Fund money necessary to cover the cost of MNDNR Fisheries activities that benefit the general public, and earmark this additional amount for the Fisheries Section in future budgets; and (3) the MNDNR and legislature examine ways to eliminate roadblocks to the MNDNR receiving the new dedicated funds.*

### **Importance of Continuing Accelerated Acquisition of AMA Easements**

**Current Situation:** Increased acquisition by the State of conservation/fishing access easements along trout streams is critical to preserving and improving the health of coldwater streams, and securing permanent angling access to them. The typical AMA easement permanently secures the following benefits: (1) protection of riparian area, shoreline and in-stream habitat; (2) public fishing access; and (3) management access for future restoration and enhancement work when needed.

Despite much effort by many citizens and MNDNR personnel, Minnesota does not have regulations which mandate adequate timber harvesting buffers along forested trout streams, nor enforceable vegetative “buffer strip” regulations in agricultural areas. AMA easements contain permanent prohibitions against tree removal, tilling and building within a specified distance from the stream. While many, even most, eased stream corridors do not require active management actions in the near term, the State and its conservation partners also gain perpetual access to undertake restoration or habitat enhancement work in the future.

AMA easements also provide the immediate benefit of perpetual public fishing access to coldwater streams. Angling access has been rapidly decreasing as riparian lands which once allowed “permissive” access have been sold or divided. Oftentimes a single access point on a stream may be of little practical value for accessing many miles of water located away from bridges or other accesses. The scope of the public’s historical right of access to navigable waters is unsettled, and does not permit walking on the bank to access distance stretches. AMA easements permanently solve these problems, securing good public access to otherwise practically inaccessible waters.

**Problem Statement:** In 2007 citizens developed a thoughtful 25 year plan for AMA acquisitions, which called for accelerating the purchase of trout stream easements between 2008 – 2017 to counter increasing habitat loss and rising land costs. The passage of the “Legacy Amendment” in November 2008 demonstrated that citizens want to fund just such accelerated protection efforts, supplementing (not supplanting) existing acquisition efforts. However, recent efforts by LSOHC members to strip out AMA acquisition projects from funding proposals, and attempts by some legislators to prevent the funding of all MNDNR acquisitions, including AMA easements, demonstrates a misplaced hostility toward these easements. This is likely due to an over-generalized “anti-acquisition” sentiment by a segment of the public, as well as by concerns over some poor land management by the MNDNR. While some criticisms of the MNDNR’s land acquisition and management efforts are justified, they are largely inapplicable to the AMA easement program. In any event the “remedies” proposed are overbroad or do not address the problems, and instead hurt the resource, anglers and local economies.

**Proposed Solution:** *The Subcommittee makes the following recommendations: (1) the MNDNR should accelerate the development and implementation of an easement monitoring and enforcement program, and include stakeholders in this effort; (2) the MNDNR should work with*

stakeholders to further prioritize areas and watersheds for acquiring trout stream easements; (3) the Legislature should refrain from blanket bans on additional state acquisitions of AMA easements, including any “no net gain” policies respecting these easements; (4) the Legislature should increase appropriations for accelerating the acquisitions of AMA easements, including through appropriations from the new dedicated funds; and (5) the MNDNR, the Legislature and Governor should work together to ensure adequate funding for personnel to identify and facilitate acquisition of priority easements.

### **Greater Regulation of Agricultural Practices which Impact Water Quality**

**Problem Statement:** Despite considerable and sincere efforts to regulate and/or alter farm practices to protect the streams and rivers and lakes of Minnesota, the threats of chemical pollution and excessive erosion/siltation continue, and are profound. Affected are both surface and ground water. It is unrealistic to believe that conservation practices such as buffer strips between fields and streams and rivers will be adopted voluntarily. No doubt there are conservation-minded farmers; most, however, for whatever reasons do not consider conservation a priority. Farmlands contiguous to the Whitewater River Valley, for instance, once protected to some degree by conservation set-aside acreage, have been turned back to row-crops as corn and soybean prices have increased. In addition, the trend toward mega-farms and distant and impersonal ownership grows. This leads to a gamble with chemicals and our water just as risky and insidious as off-shore drilling has proven to be.

**Proposed Solution:** *The TSSC recommends the state begin an aggressive investigation of the impacts to the state’s ground and surface waters as a result of the use of farm field chemicals, including Atrazine, and manure drainage from feedlots. We suggest that the state consider regulating the use of dangerous chemicals on farm fields and that it accelerate the purchase of conservation easements that will protect the vitality and diversity of our aquatic environments. The TSSC also supports a vigorous public education effort to describe this vision to citizens.*

### **MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**

- **Long Term Goal:** Argument over the realities of climate change has tended to neutralize reaction to evidences that many believe put our cold water resources at risk. Because so much is at stake and because we need answers, the MNDNR should be increasingly vigilant and proactive.
  - **Short Term Goal:** The state must begin or expand ( and accelerate where it has already begun) a comprehensive monitoring of our cold waters to detect and quantify warming that affects plant, animal and fish habitats and the temperatures of streams and rivers.
  - **Short Term Goal:** As effects of climate change become known — whatever their origins —the public should be informed and data presented so that there can be a unity of accord going forward.



# WILDLIFE OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: Terry Johnson (New Brighton, MN)  
Kevin Hisey (Chatfield, MN)  
Michael Hunziker (Lakeville, MN)  
Rob Theobald (Owatonna, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Wildlife Operations Subcommittee wishes to thank Dennis Simon of the Minnesota DNR for his valuable support and contributions. The Wildlife Operations Subcommittee reviewed the FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report and the appropriations, budgets and expenditures for the Wildlife Operations and Maintenance in the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Land and Minerals.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

Not applicable this year.

### Ongoing Issues

#### Fishing Overspending and Wildlife Underspending

**Current Situation:** Fishing expenditures from the Game and Fish Fund (G&FF) continue to exceed fishing revenue into the G&FF, while wildlife expenditures from the G&FF continue to be less than wildlife revenue into the G&FF..

**Problem:** The spending imbalance continues to be a concern of the Wildlife Operations Subcommittee because we believe that wildlife/fishing expenditures should be proportional to the revenues for these activities. We do not believe that either the DNR or the Legislature are making this issue an urgent enough priority.

**Proposed Solution:** *We are again recommending that both hunting and fishing license fees be increased to ensure the financial wellness of the Game and Fish Fund. In addition to this increase, we are recommending that any increases or decreases in appropriations to the Fish and Wildlife Division of the DNR take into account the current imbalance and be used to reduce this imbalance.*

#### Fishing and Hunting License Fee Increase

**Current Situation:** When the dedicated accounts are removed, the forecasted amount of appropriations out of the Game and Fish Fund currently exceeds the forecasted amount of revenues coming into the Fund, thus creating an imbalance.

**Problem:** With the imbalance of appropriations/revenues within the Game and Fish Fund, the current forecast has a projected negative fund balance within a few years. By statute, the Fund cannot operate with a negative balance.

**Proposed Solution:** *The Wildlife Operations Subcommittee recommends license fee increases sufficient to restore the Game and Fish Fund balance, provide for sufficient carry-over balances and provide for inflationary increases for the next 4 biennia. We are recommending a time period of 4 biennia (8 years) because historically license fee increases occur on average about every 8 years.*

### **WMA Acquisitions Goals**

**Current Situation:** In 2002, the DNR adopted the Citizen's Advisory Committee recommendation to acquire 210,000 acres in a 10-year time frame. This goal is not being met. In fact, instead of an average of 21,000 acres per year being acquired, the average is between 5,000 to 6,000 acres and this includes both purchased and donated land.

**Problem:** The DNR's response to last year's Budgetary Oversight Committee's recommendations made it clear that increased land costs are one of the primary reasons WMA acquisition goals are not being met. Another factor that needs to be considered is the capacity of DNR to properly develop acquired land into WMAs suitable for public use. Currently the DNR has the capacity to acquire and develop WMA's at a much higher level than is currently being accomplished. Using today's average land acquisition prices, the DNR has the capacity to acquire and develop approximately \$20 million dollars worth of land and the current amount of funding is only at the \$10 million-dollar level.

**Proposed Solutions:** We recognize that the WMA acquisitions goals are not being met; however there still exists the capacity within the DNR staff to acquire and develop more land than is currently being funded. *We recommend that the Legislature increase funding for WMA acquisition from all available sources (Game and Fish Fund, Small Game Surcharge Account, RIM, Bonding, L-SOHC, LCCMR) to the \$20 million dollar level which would better align actual WMA acquisitions with the Citizen's Advisory Committee recommendation and also recognize the current capacity of the DNR to properly develop WMA's.*

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report**

The Wildlife Operations Subcommittee reviewed FY 2009 expenditures from the Game and Fish Fund for the Wildlife Operation Section and the Lands and Minerals Division and found them to be compliant with the language in Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.055.

### **Fiscal Issues**

#### **Role of the Wildlife Operations Subcommittee and the Budgetary Oversight Committee**

**Current Situation:** In addition to other responsibilities, the Wildlife Operations Subcommittee and the Budgetary Oversight Committee are responsible for reviewing proposed work plans and budgets affecting the Game and Fish Fund for the coming year.

**Problem Statement:** Proposed work plans and budgets are not being provided by the DNR and consequently no opportunity exists to review or make recommendations for improving the management and use of money for planned expenditures out of the Game and Fish Fund.

**Proposed Solution:** *Either clarify the roles of the Budgetary Oversight Committee and its Subcommittees or have work plans and budgeting information provided to them.*

## Policy Issues

### Game and Fish Fund Appropriations

**Current Situation:** By constitution, the Legislature is wholly responsible for making appropriations out of the Game and Fish Fund.

**Problem Statement:** Appropriations are being made out of the Game and Fish Fund which do not directly benefit either the fishing or hunting stakeholders. An example of this is the “Let’s Go Fishing Program.” The purpose of this program, as worded in the House Bill is “to provide community outreach to senior citizens, youth, and veterans and for the costs associated with the establishment and recruitment of new chapters”. This obviously is not a direct benefit for the fishing or hunting stakeholders.

**Proposed Solution:** *Ensure that all appropriations out of the Game and Fish Fund have either a current or future benefit to the fishing or hunting stakeholders.*

### Minnesota Land Use Policy

**Current Situation:** A critical component to creating outdoor recreational opportunities and the sustaining of a viable game population in Minnesota is habitat. The Wildlife Operations Subcommittee sees this as a quality of life issue for our citizens and strongly encourages the acquisition of additional land for Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

**Problem Statement:** There does not exist an agreed upon high level plan for WMA acquisition between the DNR and the legislature.

**Proposed Solution:** *The legislature should endorse a policy of Minnesota land use which includes goals for WMA land acreage that would provide a long term blueprint for funding and acquisition.*



# BIG GAME SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: Scott Nagel (Little Falls, MN)  
Carrie Mellesmoen (Inver Grove Heights, MN)  
Jack Peck (Rochester, MN)  
Doug Strecker (Hackensack, MN)  
Darwin Vicker (Austin, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Big Game Subcommittee would like to thank Mr. Lou Cornicelli and Mr. Grant Wilson with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their assistance with this year's report. The committee would also like to thank Todd Grimes who left this year and welcome Jack Peck as a new addition to our committee.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

#### Moose management and research

The committee appreciates the work of the moose advisory committee and the commitment from DNR to enhance their understanding of moose habitat and populations. We continue to support LCCMR and other funding sources that benefit moose habitat and population recovery.

#### Deer feeding / Cervid health future balance

The committee appreciates the elimination of the requirement to repay the Game and Fish fund. We also appreciate the \$600K that was appropriated by the legislature in FY10 to address wildlife health issues.

### Ongoing Issues

#### Ban big game shooting preserves

**Current Situation:** The DNR response was 'see cover letter' but there was no mention of the issue in the cover letter.

**Proposed Solution:** *The Big Game Oversight Subcommittee continues to feel strongly that these facilities pose a threat to wild cervid health and impose significant annual costs to the cervid health account. The FY09 expenditures incurred for CWD testing in southeastern Minnesota was a direct result of the Pine Island positive elk farm. We are concerned funds used to look for CWD near captive facilities will exhaust the fund prematurely.*

#### Improve and develop new WMA maintenance programs

**Current Situation:** The committee is appreciative of the effort towards WMA acquisition and management.

**Proposed Solution:** *Continue to pursue the purchase and enhancement of WMAs throughout Minnesota. WMAs are popular and provide opportunity for Minnesota hunters.*

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report on Expenditures**

The Big Game Subcommittee has reviewed FY 2009 expenditures from the deer management account, deer/bear account, and the deer feeding/cervid health account and found them in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section section 97A.055.

#### **Fiscal Issues**

Not applicable this year.

#### **Policy Issues**

Not applicable this year.

# PHEASANT STAMP SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

CHAIR: Scott Roemhildt (Janesville, MN)  
Gary Duncomb (Eden Valley, MN)  
John Maile (Paynesville, MN)  
Roel Ronken (Minneapolis MN)

## **INTRODUCTION**

The PSOC would like to thank Bill Penning, our DNR Liaison for his help and expertise.

In 2009-10 the PSOC had one committee members depart and welcomed one new PSOC member.

Scott Roemhildt is the newest member of the PSOC. He is a Regional Field Representative with Pheasants Forever and brings a diverse background to the PSOC. He is actively involved with upland game management, as well as habitat protection, enhancement and restoration. He is an avid outdoorsman who hunts, fishes and camps.

The PSOC wants to recognize departing Committee member Eran Sandquist. His knowledge of pheasant biology and habitat, as well as his leadership and dedication to wildlife conservation will be greatly missed. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

## **PREVIOUS REPORTED ISSUES**

### **Satisfactorily Addressed Issues**

Not applicable this year.

### **Ongoing Issues**

Not applicable this year.

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Report**

The Fiscal Year 2009 Pheasant Habitat Stamp Improvement Program (PHIP) report to the PSOC was reviewed in February and March 2010. The PSOC has reviewed the FY 2009 expenditures for the PHIP account and found them to be compliant with language in *Minnesota Statutes*, section 97A.075 Subd.4. This action was completed and voted on by the entire subcommittee on March 25, 2010.

## Policy Issues

### Farm Bill Promotion

**Current Situation:** Minnesota has, in recent history, experienced 40 year highs in the pheasant population. However, the PSOC recognizes the current pressures being placed on those grasslands as a result of commodity prices, politics and competing interests.

**Problem Statement:** Grassland complexes which exist, especially through our Federal Farm Bill Conservations Programs, are set to decline drastically over the next several years. The PSOC believes the general public doesn't fully understand the negative consequences of this trend. In addition, many successful grassland conservation programs aren't being given additional acreage allotments.

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC realizes the benefit of efforts in Washington DC to promote the Farm Bill. More grassland acres can be created or destroyed with the stroke of a pen than any other way. The PSOC recommends that the PHIP account maintains the current level of funding for promotion and evaluation efforts (used by PF).*

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC also recognizes the importance and places a high priority to the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) that provides local technical support to landowners who want to enroll in conservation programs. The PSOC recommends that an appropriate amount of PHIP funds be used to continue this valuable program at current or expanded levels.*

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC recognizes the importance of managing the current existing habitats to maximize it productivity. The PSOC recommends the DNR offer various opportunities (workshops, etc) where landowners can learn different habitat management techniques and how to conduct best practices.*

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC believes incorporating a wildlife friendly rotational grazing plan into the "Farm Bill supported grasslands" as a contract management option or as a standalone Grazing/CRP program will help maintain grassland complexes thus supporting the rural community and protecting pheasant habitat.*

### Food Plot Guidance

**Current Situation:** Food plots are used extensively as an easy, feel good approach that leads participants to believe they are impacting pheasant populations. This is reinforced by sightings of pheasants near these areas during hunting season. The PSOC commends the DNR for their efforts to continue to study the benefits and cost effectiveness of food plots.

**Problem Statement:** Food plots tend to trump the limiting factor to pheasant populations in Minnesota: nesting and brood rearing cover. Too much emphasis is being placed on a single short term survival strategy at the expense of longer term land management practices.

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC recommends that DNR continue their effort to study the effectiveness of food plots and create best practice guides designed to maximize the effectiveness of food plots. In addition we recommend private land food plots demonstrate a significant public benefit.*

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC recommends reducing or eliminating the use of PHIP dollars for food plots on private lands and reallocating these funds for private land management, increased FBAP, and/or Roadside Habitat funding.*

### Roadside Habitat Management

**Current Situation Overview:** There are roughly 500,000 acres of roadside habitat located in Minnesota's pheasant range. Many of these acres are mowed recreationally, cut for hay or illegally farmed.



**Problem Statement:** In some areas roadsides constitute the majority of the nesting habitat available.

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC recommends strengthening the roadsides statute as suggested by the Roadsides for Wildlife Committee to better manage roadsides grasslands.*

**Proposed Solution:** *The PSOC recommends a continued study of roadside habitat in relation to wildlife production. The PSOC recommends continuing or increasing funding of roadside habitat with an emphasis of restoration back to native grass forb mix and a continuation of the media campaign meant to educate landowners on the benefits of roadsides.*

## MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

- **Long Term Goal:** The PSOC believes that we should be using tactics and strategies that will eventually lead us to a Minnesota pheasant harvest averaging 750,000 roosters per season. This will require 6 million acres of grassland in the Minnesota pheasant range as outlined in the Long Range Pheasant Plan. We believe that we need proactive approaches to offset the considerable loss of grassland habitat occurring in the state through expiring CPR contracts.
  - **Short Term Goal:** A higher priority by the state on fee title acquisition and permanent easements to offset habitat losses.
  - **Short Term Goal:** We support examining the increase of a Minnesota Pheasant Stamp from \$7.50 to \$10.00 in order to generate additional dollars for habitat.
  - **Short Term Goal:** We recommend that the DNR work to maintain and better manage existing acres aimed to produce maximum potential.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Fully maintain or increase FBAP staff to maximize landowner education and participation in our Federal Farm Bill Conservation Programs. Additional look into key national partners like NRCS or FSA which will result in additive benefits.
- **Long Term Goal:** Develop a state fee title program or conservation easement program that establishes grass based production for biofuels, hay or grazing in to key locations as a tool to connect already established grassland complexes.
  - **Short term Goal:** Identify already established grasslands where row crop or expiring CRP is subdividing potential large grassland complexes.
  - **Short term Goal:** Locate areas within the state where grassland based agricultural is already popular and implement a pilot project in those locations.
  - **Short term Goal:** Use TNC, PF, DU or other nonprofits to help design and obtain LSOHC dollars to fund the program.
- **Long Term Goal:** Look into alternative strategies and low cost solutions for grassland management in the state.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Examine a wildlife friendly rotational grazing plan into the “Farm Bill supported grasslands” that will help maintain grassland complexes.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Consider managed haying and grazing of some WMA units as an alternative to burning and a means to generate revenue and maintain rural community support.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Consider managed harvest of some WMA units for biofuels.
- **Long Term Goal:** Strive to reduce acres of negative food plots, but also indentify and maintain the food plots that help pheasants survive through stressful winters..
  - **Short Term Goal:** Create best practice guide for food plots that is aimed at educating landowners to planting only the most effective food plots.

- **Long Term Goal** – Have a working roadside for wildlife habitat program that enhances and protects our current roadsides.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Strengthen the roadsides statute as suggested by the Roadsides for Wildlife committee to better manage roadside grasses.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Create high visibility demonstration plots that act as a guide to further enhance roadside acres. Continue to educate landowners on why roadside is so important, and offer financial assistance to willing landowners wanting to improve their roadside habitat.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

We again wish to thank the DNR and partners for their efforts. In recent years we have seen high pheasant populations due to favorable weather and increased habitat. However, we are losing tens of thousands of the grassland acres that we all worked hard to acquire. We need to stop further losses and ensure that the remaining habitat is managed to achieve its full potential. We believe the PHIP Account can help mitigate these issues as outlined in the above in the report.

# WATERFOWL STAMP SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: Brad Nylin (Plymouth, MN)  
Tom Kowal (St. Cloud, MN)  
Win Mitchell (Northfield, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Chair of the Waterfowl Stamp Subcommittee (WSS) would like to recognize the ongoing efforts of Mr. Ray Norrgard, Wetland Wildlife Consultant, with the Department of Natural Resources for his contribution and technical assistance to the Subcommittee in preparation of this report.

The Chair would like to welcome Mr. Win Mitchell to the WSS. We are very glad that Win is part of our committee and look forward to working together on our oversight tasks in the future. I would also like to recognize Mr. Tom Kowal for his ongoing efforts and contributions to the committee.

The Chair would like to thank departing Committee member Mr. Ryan Heiniger for his leadership and dedication to waterfowl conservation and wish him all the best.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

It was recommended that the Department of Natural Resources conduct a waterfowl survey. The DNR response said that they will be doing one in cooperation with the Minnesota Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit following the 2010 hunting season. The WSS feels this is very timely and important information to be used going forward.

### Ongoing Issues

#### Waterfowl Stamp

The WSS recommended that everyone that buys a waterfowl stamp get's the physical stamp. We have addressed this for the past two years, to no avail. If you want the physical stamp, you must pay \$2.00 in addition to the cost of the stamp. This fee is specified in state statute. The WSS looked into the total cost to produce the stamp vs. the price that is charged. The cost at the time was \$.76. The DNR said they concur and that the fee should reflect the cost of issuing the stamp. They went on to say that the DNR would re-evaluate actual costs of production and fulfillment and propose changes. These changes were proposed by the DNR to be included in the Game and Fish Omnibus bill considered by the 2010 legislature. Unfortunately the language allowing the DNR to charge a fee more in line with the actual costs of producing and mailing the stamp was removed from the bill. The WSS would like to hear how this will be addressed going forward.

## NEW ISSUES

### FY 2009 Game and Fish Report

The Duck stamp Subcommittee has reviewed FY 2009 expenditures from the Habitat Improvement Account (233) and agree that all expenditures are compliant with the governing Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.075, subd. 2.

#### Declining revenue in Waterfowl Stamp Account

**Current Situation:** The waterfowl stamp account is continuing to experience a decline in both revenue and purchasing power. This is being caused by a combination of declining numbers of waterfowl and the negative impacts of inflation on the cost of implementing waterfowl conservation projects and programs.

**Problem Statement:** The number of waterfowl hunters has declined by more than 20 percent since 1998. In 2009, the total number of waterfowl hunters below 90,000. The price of the waterfowl stamp is currently \$7.50. The last increase was in 2004. In 2009, approximately \$674,625 was generated from the sale of 89,950.

**Proposed Solution:** *WSS feels that it is time to raise the waterfowl stamp fee from \$7.50 currently to \$12.50 starting with the 2012 hunting season. With the projected shortfall looming, the WSS feels the Department needs to do more, and the only way to do more is to increase the cost to off-set the work that needs to be done.*

### Policy Issues

#### Goose hunting regulations

**Current Situation:** Canada goose hunting regulations are too complicated currently. It's doesn't make sense to have different zones for goose hunting anymore.

**Problem Statement:** The WSS believes that by simplifying the goose hunting regulation and using the Department's direction in setting season bag limits, it will benefit waterfowl opportunities for more people.

**Proposed Solution:** *The WSS would like to see the Mississippi Flyway Council allow the DNR the flexibility to set season frameworks and do away with "goose zones" in Minnesota. The WSS believes that this would simplify goose regulations. The WSS would encourage the DNR to set the Goose hunting regulations to allow maximum opportunity for hunters in Minnesota.*

## MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

- **Short Term Goals –**
  - Annually enhance 36 shallow lakes by installing/replacing water control structures and adding fish barriers.
  - Designate two shallow lakes per year for wildlife management purposes.
  - Annually restore and protect 40,000 acres of wetlands and prairies through a combination of WMA acquisitions, RIM easements, farm bill programs and other conservation measures in areas of highest importance to breeding waterfowl.
  - Annually prevent loss of existing natural habitats and land currently enrolled in federal farm programs.

- **Long Term Goals –**
  - o Enhance 1,800 shallow lakes for waterfowl migration habitat. –
  - o Restore and protect an additional 2 million acres of wetlands and grassland complexes beyond what existed in 2006.
  - o Maintain a breeding duck population of 1 million birds and achieve a recruitment rate of 0.6.
  - o Retain an average of 140,000 waterfowl hunters.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The future of waterfowl hunting continues to be at a crossroads in Minnesota. There is good reason to be optimistic given the progress made in the last few years under the Duck Recovery Plan and with the passage of dedicated funding for the outdoors and the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council that will provide a major infusion of new funding into shallow lake programs, working lands initiative, acquiring new wildlife management areas, etc. However, steadily declining numbers of waterfowl hunters coupled with uncertainties in federal farm programs and accelerating pressures to maximize crop production continue to be serious threats to habitat conservation and will need to be addressed accordingly. That is why the Waterfowl Stamp Subcommittee is recommending to raise the cost of the waterfowl stamp from \$7.50 , to \$12.50 starting in 2012.

The Waterfowl Stamp Subcommittee is recommending that the Department of Natural Resources add “duck” zones in the state, or use split zones for duck hunting. This would allow for the changing weather conditions from north to south and could add to the quality of the hunt as conditions change during the fall.

The WSS believes that there are great hunting opportunities available for hunting Canada geese in Minnesota. The Department of Natural Resources believes that the geese that come through Minnesota can withstand further hunting pressure and the WSS believes that by simplifying goose hunting regulations, this will have a significant impact on hunting these thriving waterfowl thereby helping in the recruitment and retention of hunters. We believe that the Mississippi Flyway Council would be well- served if they approved the Department’s recommendations on hunting geese in Minnesota.

The WSS also feels strongly that the waterfowl opener be moved from the traditional, Saturday closest to October 1, to Saturday closest to September 24. The WSS believes that this will help in recruitment and retention as there should be more waterfowl in the area. The main migration for blue-wing teal and wood ducks is generally before October 1, and we know that waterfowl hunters want to see more ducks while hunting and we feel this will help in that.



# WILD TURKEY MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

**CHAIR:** Dennis Fuchs (St. Cloud, MN)  
Tom Glines (Coon Rapids, MN)  
Dave Mahlke (Winona, MN)  
David Maier (Royalton, MN)  
Al Kokesch (Morton, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

We wish to thank Bill Penning, DNR Farmland Wildlife Program Leader, for his assistance with our review of spending in this account.

The Department of Natural Resources has done a great job of taking our previous recommendations and considering them in regards to the wild turkey resource and its management.

Highlights:

- Special Youth Turkey Hunts and reduced license charge
- The long-term goal of 50,000 wild turkey hunter opportunities was reached a new goal of 75,000 Wild Turkey hunter opportunities was established
- For the spring season of 2010, there was a 57,000+ increase in permits available with practically unlimited tags for the last two seasons.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

- The DNR has released turkeys in northwestern Minnesota in January-March of 2007 and is continuing with the study of bird movements and survival.
- The DNR continues to implement the Long Range Wild Turkey Management Plan.
- Under the guidance of Jay Johnson, Hunter Recruitment/Retention Supervisor, the DNR, in partnership with National Wild Turkey Federation volunteer mentors and hunt coordinators, has increased the youth turkey hunt opportunities through Mentored Hunts in spring of 2010 to over 305 permits. With mentors, 268 youth went afield and harvested 114 birds in 2010.
- Physically Challenged hunts continue to increase as demand increases.
- The successful Trap and Transplant Program has been suspended. The wild turkey populations will be monitored to determine if additional work will need to be done in the future. A wild turkey population assessment will be conducted in the fall of 2010.

### Ongoing Issues

The Wild Turkey Management Subcommittee would like to recommend the following changes to the policies governing the Wild Turkey Account Fund.

#### Turkey Habitat Increase

**Current Situation:** Continued effort needed to increase turkey habitat in South Central, Southwestern, and West Central Minnesota on public and private lands.

**Problem:** During the last several years DNR has primarily focused on grassland and wetland habitat work. We would like to see additional emphasis placed on increasing the commitment to forest management and restoration work throughout the turkey range.

**Proposed Solutions:** *Cooperate with DNR and NWTf Wild Turkey Biologists to develop a wild turkey habitat management and restoration plan and implementation strategy. This plan should focus especially on the riparian corridors in the above named areas as well as the blufflands of southeastern MN as identified in the North American Wild Turkey Management Plan. Provide and identify training for SWCD and others in wild turkey habitat management. Local SWCDs and partners could then provide workshops and field days for interested private landowners located along river/stream corridors, riparian areas, and historically wooded areas to complement grassland and wetland management providing additional turkey habitat. Funding for training, workshops, fieldwork, and staff should be pursued through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment. Farm Bill Assistance grants should include opportunities to promote wild turkey habitat management. We strongly encourage interagency (DNR, BWSR, USFWS, USDA FSA, USDA NRCS, SWCD, NWTf, and others) cooperation in wild turkey habitat management.*

### **Information & Education about Wild Turkey Management**

**Current Situation:** There is increasing need to inform and educate the general public, land owners, and hunters about the management of wild turkeys, especially in the areas of the State where wild turkeys have been recently introduced.

**Problem:** A major success story of wild turkey population increases through habitat and management improvements needs to be shared with the public.

**Proposed Solutions:** *Increase the number of landowner workshops/land owner appreciation days. Continue to hold hunter education classes and provide wild turkey information to press and other media aimed at the general public. Develop new wild turkey management information that school teachers could use in the classroom. Produce media releases for mass distribution. Also the wild turkey success story should be told in the DNR Conservation Volunteer magazine and other media outlets.*

**Current Situation:** With increasing wild turkey populations in urban areas there is an increasing need to inform and educate the general public, land owners, and hunters about the management of wild turkeys in urbanized areas.

**Problem:** Wild turkeys have caused some concerns in the seven county metro areas. Landowners have encouraged wild turkeys by localized feeding resulting in large numbers of wild turkeys in an urbanized area. In some areas this has resulted in property damage.

**Proposed Solutions:** *Increase the awareness of wild turkey management in an urbanized areas including, special landowner workshop and other educational activities. Also, the DNR should explore wild turkey population management opportunities, such as, multiple tags and special hunts.*

### **Turkey Habitat Acquisition**

**Current Situation:** There are more turkey hunters in the state than we have current opportunity for permits.

**Problem:** Lack of public lands in which to turkey hunt.

**Solution:** *Continue to identify and acquire prime parcels and improve existing public land open to hunting for wild turkeys.*



## **Public Lands Inaccessible for Public Recreation**

**Current Situation:** The State owns forest land in prime wild turkey habitat areas of Minnesota that are landlocked by private lands making them unavailable for public hunting and recreation.

**Problem:** Prime public wild turkey hunting areas are inaccessible to hunters and others.

**Proposed Solution:** Develop a program to purchase “walk in” access easements to the landlocked public parcels to provide wild turkey hunters and others access to the landlocked public Forestry lands.

## **NEW ISSUES**

### **FY 2009 Game and Fish Report**

The Wild Turkey Management Subcommittee has reviewed FY09 expenditures from the Turkey Stamp Fund and found them to be compliant with the language of Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.05, subd. 4b (9).

### **Fiscal Issues**

In FY09 the annual budget was \$172,000. In 2009 with rollover dollars from 2008, there was \$228,215 to spend in the final year of the biennium. \$165,007 was spent and the remaining \$63,208 was rolled back into the Wild Turkey Management Account.

### **Policy Issues**

No new policy recommendations at this time.

## **MEASUREABLE OBJECTIVES**

- **Long Term Goal - Spring Season** – 75,000 Wild Turkey Hunter Opportunities for Spring Hunting (increased from 50,000)
  - **Short Term Goal** – Expand size of permit areas by merging existing permit areas into larger units.
  - **Short Term Goal:** Allow over-the-counter permits for the last four permit seasons for archery and the last two permit seasons for gun.
  - **Short Term Goal** – Consider multiple tags for a hunter during the spring season, especially in the seven county metro area and other areas with high populations of wild turkeys.
- **Long Term Goal - Fall Season** – 10,000 Wild Turkey Hunter Opportunities for Fall Hunting
  - **Short Term Goal:** Allow over-the-counter permits for a 30-day hunt open to all hunters (explore “turkey dogging” as an option for hunters).
- **Long Term Goal** – Increase wild turkey habitat on WMAs and other public lands with existing wild turkey populations.
  - **Short Term Goal** – Purchase lands that have wild turkey habitat (mature forest stands)
  - **Short Team Goal** – Use wild turkey management account fund to improve and create hardwood stands on existing WMAs and other public lands open to hunting if in the appropriate ecoregion and in the wild turkey range.

- o **Short Term Goal** – Purchase easements to access public lands open to public hunting surrounded by private land.
- **Long Term Goal** – Sufficient funding for financial and technical assistance for turkey management and habitat on private lands.
  - o **Short Term Goal** – The DNR should provide or identify training for staff and other partners to facilitate private landowner wild turkey habitat management workshops. Workshops should also illustrate Federal, State, local, and non-government organizations financial assistance programs available to private landowners to implement wild turkey habitat management projects.
  - o **Short Term Goal** – Maintain SWCD and other agencies technicians to assist private landowners with habitat management goals. Technical assistance staff should be funded with the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment funds. The Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council should be informed of the need for additional technical assistance at the local level. Also, the DNR BWSR Farm Bill Assistance Grant should be leveraged to increase technical assistance to landowners. This would provide landowners with additional education and information about USDA Farm Bill programs to promote turkey habitat.
  - o **Short Term Goal** – Increase the awareness of elected officials and other stakeholders of the technical assistance delivery deficiency that is occurring. Many landowners interested in pursuing land management options to restore and protect wildlife habitat have limited access to technical assistance to help develop a conservation management plan for their property. An additional dedicated SWCD staff person to provide technical assistance to private landowners would accelerate conservation and wildlife management plan development.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The wild turkey management account is an important resource to sustain the sport of wild turkey hunting in Minnesota. Much more can be done to increase the recreational opportunities into the future by leveraging additional funds from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment.

Two factors that will be critical in the future are improving the wild turkey habitat and providing ample areas for Minnesota's sportsmen and women to hunt and recreate. Public lands, both state and federal, and private lands need to be managed with interagency cooperation to maximize our efforts for turkey habitat which includes mature roost trees, fruit and nut bearing trees and shrubs for natural food sources, sufficient nesting cover, and brood rearing habitat. The agency, along with its conservation partners (public, private and non-profit), need to continue to work with private land owners, improve access and habitat on existing WMAs and public lands open to hunting, and identify prime wild turkey habitat that should be purchased or protected with conservation easement.

# ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: John Hunt (Big Lake, MN)  
Kevin Bigalke (Lakeville, MN)  
Steve Chaplin (Roseville, MN)  
Mark Peterson (Birchwood, MN)  
Paula West (Merrifield, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The subcommittee wishes to thank Division of Ecological Resources Director Steve Hirsch of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for his assistance in arranging meetings and providing background data and information as the committee prepared its FY09 expenditures report.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

#### A. Wildlife Management Planning

**Current Situation:** The 2006 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a strategic plan to be used by conservation organizations and agencies to help focus their efforts on species of greatest conservation need. Recognizing the differences in missions, funding etc., it was acknowledged that each agency and organization may approach implementation of the plan differently. A subset of the key habitats identified in the SWAP, including prairies, shorelands, savannas and upland and lowland coniferous forests and rivers and streams, have become the focus of DNR implementation efforts. Increasing our knowledge about rare fish, reptiles, amphibians and insects has also been established as a priority. Additionally, the DNR has provided three opportunities for external partners to apply for implementation funds.

**Problem Statement:** Although each partner involved in the development of the SWAP is responsible for the implementation of the SWAP within their agency or organization, no formal process for documenting and sharing implementation efforts and priorities exists.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR indicated that they would reconvene the Partnership Team formed during development of the SWAP to discuss implementation activities, accomplishments, and partnership opportunities. The DNR did reconvene representatives of the original Partnership Team in early 2010. The group, now called the Executive Steering Committee, has met twice and is close to finalizing the membership and functions of the committee. At the next meeting, the committee will consider a proposal to establish an implementation work group that articulates the SWAP implementation priorities for each of the member organizations for the next 4-5 years. We appreciate this step, but encourage DNR (and the Executive Steering Committee) to include more emphasis and focus on actual near-term implementation of elements of the SWAP (not just sharing organizational priorities for future implementation).*

## Ongoing Issues

### A. Lead as an Environmental Pollutant

**Current situation:** Over the past decade there has been increasing recognition that elemental lead in the environment poses a significant hazard to nongame avian species. DNR has led efforts to reduce the use of lead shot and fishing tackle in Minnesota but additional progress is needed.

**Problem Statement:** Neither sportsmen nor the fishing and hunting equipment industry appear ready to completely ban the use of lead in hunting and fishing products. A step-by-step process to find ways to further reduce the use of lead without impacting the enjoyment of outdoor recreational activities is needed.

**Proposed Solution:** *DNR should continue to educate the public at opportune forums and through various media about the known impacts of lead in the environment and solutions other states have used to reduce lead's usage. This effort should target a broad spectrum of hunters and anglers with information regarding the negative impacts of lead in aquatic environments and the availability of suitable alternatives.*

### B. Identifying Sensitive Lakeshores

**Current Situation:** Sensitive lakeshores provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, but are increasingly threatened by development.

**Problem Statement:** DNR has established objective, science-based criteria to identify sensitive lakeshores and assembled the protocol in a manual that describes the criteria, process and methodology. Local units of government have been slow to adopt and/or apply the manual within their jurisdictions.

**Proposed Solution:** *DNR should continue to seek out opportunities to disseminate this new tool (or the related rapid identification model that is reported to be under development) to counties and other local units of government to increase local habitat protection efforts and reduce the potential impacts of future shoreland development. Game and Fish Fund dollars should be considered as a source of partial funding for this effort.*

### C. Updating Minnesota's Shoreland Rules

**Current Situation:** As stated previously, Minnesota's remaining undeveloped shorelands are under increasing development pressures and many developed shorelands are being re-developed with larger structures.

**Problem Statement:** It has been almost 20 years since statewide shoreland development rules were revised and the current rules are not adequate given the current and future potential for development of these critical habitat areas.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR identified a goal of completing this work by June 30, 2010. Our current understanding is that the revised rules have been drafted and are under review by the Department. We appreciate the update, but request that DNR commit to completing its internal review of the draft rules by June 30, 2010.*

### D. Terrestrial Invasive Species Management

**Current Situation:** The presence of terrestrial invasive species on state-owned lands continues to be an expanding problem. The Division's role is to help other divisions within DNR inventory and manage terrestrial invasive species on DNR-managed lands.

**Problem Statement:** Currently, funding provided to DNR for terrestrial invasive species management is provided 100% from the state's General Fund. In addition to the funding levels

being inadequate to address the issue on state-owned lands, General Fund support is particularly vulnerable to reductions during times of budget deficits as we are currently experiencing.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR indicated that it would consider new, dedicated sources of funding as part of the next biennial budget process. To adequately address the growing problem of terrestrial invasive species (both those species now in Minnesota and those on the doorstep), however, the DNR first needs to determine the level of funding needed to aggressively prevent both the introduction of new species and control the spread of current species. Only then can consideration of potential funding sources (OHV license surcharges, utility trailer license surcharges, etc) lead to proposal of a specific source or sources of new revenue to provide funding for these programs.*

## **E. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management**

**Current Situation:** More than thirty-five percent of Minnesota's primary recreational lakes (general development and recreational development lakes) contain at least one AIS, and the number of infested lakes continues to grow each year.

**Problem Statement:** AIS displace native aquatic plants, disrupt fish and wildlife habitat, compete for food sources, and interrupt the food chain, leading to shifts in both forage and game fish populations. In addition, despite the \$2 surcharge on non-resident fishing licenses for AIS management, there is a structural deficit in the funding for AIS management. This deficit must be solved while finding ways to increase enforcement of current AIS-related laws, respond to newly discovered infestations, and more effectively manage established infestations.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR indicated that it would consider new, dedicated sources of funding as part of the next biennial budget process. As in the case of terrestrial invasive species, to adequately address the growing problem of AIS (both those species now in Minnesota and those on the doorstep), the DNR needs to determine the level of funding needed to prevent both the introduction of new species and control the spread of current species. Only then can consideration of potential funding sources (boat license surcharges, out-of-state angling license surcharges, etc) lead to a proposal of a specific source or sources of new revenue to provide more stable funding for AIS programs.*

## **F. Endangered Species**

**Current Situation:** Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (Section 84.0895) requires DNR to designate species meeting statutory definitions of endangered, threatened, or species of concern. The statute also requires a review of this list every three years to keep the list current. There are currently a total of 439 species on this list.

**Problem Statement:** While statute requires review of this list every three years, this list has not been updated since July 1, 1996. The status of some species, such as the bald eagle, has changed since this was last updated.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR indicated that the revised rule and accompanying Statement of Need and Reasonableness would be submitted by September 30, 2009 and the rule process completed by early to mid-2010. Our current understanding is that the rules have been drafted and are under review by the Department, but that the mid-2010 timeline will not be met. We appreciate the update, but request that DNR commit to completing its internal review of the draft rules by June 30, 2010.*

## **G. Biofuels**

**Current Situation:** While the rate of growth in the biofuel industry has slowed dramatically in the last 2 years, production of ethanol and biodiesel from corn and soybeans remains an important economic factor for rural Minnesota. Both the federal and state government are considering mandates that would increase use of biofuels.

**Problem Statement:** The growing of corn and soybeans for conversion into ethanol and biodiesel can require large amounts of groundwater and fossil fuels to produce. In addition, many of the biofuel production facilities are located in areas with limited groundwater resources and the impacts of large-scale groundwater withdrawals on sensitive groundwater receptors (i.e. wetland complexes, trout streams, fens, etc) are not always well understood or characterized during the environmental review process.

In addition, increased demand for biofuels has led many agricultural producers to take marginal cropland out of the CRP to produce row crops for fuel. This loss of grassland habitat will have a negative impact on wildlife populations (especially game and non-game birds) and on groundwater and surface water quality within watersheds.

**Proposed Solution:** *We appreciate DNR's comments to this issue in their response to our FY08 report, but the subcommittee believes that DNR should more aggressively exercise its permitting and environmental review authority (i.e. groundwater appropriations and EAW/EIS preparation) to ensure that the potential impacts to the state's groundwater resources and fish and wildlife habitats (both immediate and cumulative) are adequately identified, evaluated, and minimized and that water conservation strategies are required in all biofuels-related groundwater appropriation permits and EAW/EIS documents.*

## **H. Protection of High Significance, Biologically Diverse Habitats**

**Current Situation:** The County Biological Survey has identified hundreds of thousands of acres of land of high biodiversity significance across the state. Many of these lands are also high quality game, fish, and forest habitat.

**Problem Statement:** Too many acres of the remaining high quality natural lands and habitats are lost each year to development or conversion.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR indicated that a GAP analysis of the protected status of each Native Plant Community by Ecological Section has been completed in 4 of 10 sections in the state and that this analysis will serve as the basis to prioritize future land acquisition efforts. We encourage DNR to complete this analysis and then begin targeting lands with the highest biodiversity value for each category of recreational lands.*

## **I. Prairie Landscape Protection and Restoration**

**Current Situation:** Less than 1% of Minnesota's original prairie survives intact, and many of the remaining prairies are under threat of conversion to other land uses or from encroachment by woody plants or terrestrial invasive species.

**Problem Statement:** The Minnesota County Biological Survey (CBS) has yet to complete its initial surveys in eight counties in the prairie province. Until that work is finished, the prioritization and coordination of prairie protection activities will not be as comprehensive as they could be.

**Proposed Solution:** *To meet the goal of prairie protection in Minnesota, concentrations of native prairie and grasslands across the state have been identified. DNR now needs to undertake a multi-divisional and multi-partner planning process to develop a protection and restoration plan for each identified prairie landscape area with the goal to protect remnants of high-quality native habitats, reduce fragmentation, and improve wildlife populations within a working system.*

## **J. Fire Management and Training**

**Current Situation:** Many native prairies and savannas in Minnesota need additional management to impede the encroachment of woody plants and invasive species. Prescribed fire is the treatment that can cover the largest acreage at the lowest cost. DNR and other agencies can hire fire crews to do the burning directly but are limited by budgets, and hiring restrictions from

employing enough fire crews to meet the prescribed fire need. One solution is to encourage private businesses and nonprofits to expand their capability to provide fire services.

**Problem Statement:** Private business and nonprofits must overcome several hurdles to provide prescribed fire services. The biggest hurdles deal with liability issues and the training of burn crew members and burn leaders required to safely conduct prescribed burns.

**Proposed Solution:** *In their response to our FY08 report, DNR detailed its efforts to provide fire management training to both DNR employees and potential project partners and contractors. We advise DNR to continue this effort to ensure that adequate numbers of properly trained personnel are available to conduct these critical prairie management activities. We also encourage the DNR to more actively engage with the Legislature to evaluate the benefits of establishing a "Prescribed Fire Insurance Fund" and to change statutes to reduce potential liabilities for properly trained individuals using approved prescribed fire practices.*

## NEW ISSUES

### FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report

The format for the FY09 Game and Fish Fund report for the Division of Ecological Resources was acceptable.

#### Fiscal Issues

The Ecological Resources Subcommittee has reviewed the Division's FY09 Game and Fish Fund expenditures and has found the expenditures to be compliant with legislative intent (M.S. 97A.057, subd. 2) and that to the extent we can determine, the dollars have been appropriately spent on activities that support game and fish related activities.

The Subcommittee notes that the Division's total FY09 expenditures (combined Game and Fish Operations and Heritage Enhancement funds) represent only 3.9% of the total expenditures made from the Game and Fish Fund during the fiscal year and that Game and Fish funds provided approximately 16% of the total FY09 non-bond expenditures for the Division.

#### Policy Issues

Comments on new policy issues have been organized by the four key resource areas of the Division and then prioritized within each resource area.

#### A. Change in Management of School Trust Lands

**Current Situation:** Minnesota's School Trust lands are currently managed by DNR as part of their greater natural resources management responsibilities. There has been discussion at the Legislature regarding ways to increase the financial return to the School Trust, including creating a new state agency to more aggressively manage School Trust lands.

**Problem Statement:** Creation of a new, state-level agency will complicate natural resource management on both School Trust lands and surrounding parcels owned by federal, state, and local units of government. In addition, more intensive land management could threaten the old-growth forests and other communities of biological significance that are found on some School Trust lands. Finally, the development of an alternate fee-based system to charge for recreational use of School Trust lands has the potential to reduce revenues to the Game and Fish Fund.

**Proposed Solution:** *DNR should compile and provide information to key members and committees of the Legislature regarding the potential negative impacts of a change in*

*management of School Trust Lands on natural resource management and on Game and Fish Fund availability for support of such activities.*

## **B. Conservation Grazing**

**Current situation:** Prairie and savanna landscapes developed in the presence of both fire and large herbivore grazing. While prescribed fire is one tool to restore and maintain these landscapes, conservation grazing is another tool in DNR's "toolbox" of prairie management that should be used both on public lands and privately owned prairies.

**Problem Statement:** Conservation grazing is not always allowed or utilized to the extent possible. There are some new experimental programs in the Lac Qui Parle and Pope County areas that are good models for new approaches.

**Proposed Solution:** *DNR should continue to expand its use of conservation grazing to better manage state-owned prairie habitats and work with private owners of native or restored prairie to use this valuable land management tool. Lease income from grazing on state-owned lands should be used at the management unit generating the funds to pay for the costs of administering and overseeing the leases and to pay property taxes on the land.*

## **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

Given the Division's broad spectrum of both game and non-game programs and funding sources, the Ecological Resources Subcommittee believes that establishing measurable objectives for all program areas and activities of the Division is beyond the scope of our oversight.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Ecological Resources Subcommittee has found the FY09 Game and Fish Fund expenditures in the Division of Ecological Resources appropriate and justified within the context of the Game and Fish Fund.



# ENFORCEMENT AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR: Randy Goestch (Andover, MN)  
Lee Borash (Minneapolis, MN)

## INTRODUCTION

The Enforcement and Operations Support Subcommittee lost three members last year. This subcommittee would like to recognize departed Committee Members Sven Lindquist, Dan Ross, and Jeff Coombe for the direction and contributions to our committee.

The subcommittee thanks the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff member Beth Carlson, Office of Management and Budget Services, for her continued service, support and assistance.

## PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

### Satisfactorily Addressed Issues

#### Conservation Officer Attrition

The current Conservation Office count was down by 16 Officers with two additional Officers eligible for retirement by the end of calendar year 2009. Calendar year 2010 will see an additional 14 to 16 Officers eligible for retirement. *DNR responded as follows* – The Division of Enforcement has been evaluating staffing structure and exploring administrative ways of addressing the issue of Conservation Officer vacancies. We continue to explore funding options for a Conservation Officer academy to facilitate filling vacant stations.

#### Fleet Costs

The Division of Enforcement spent \$1.61 million for fleet operational expenses from the Heritage Enhancement Account. *DNR responded as follows* – Fleet rotation is determined on optimal cost structure as determined by our Management Resources Bureau. The Department currently operates one of the top 10 fleets in the country. Our fleet composition is based not only on cost but also on providing the best vehicle for the job as well as officer safety considerations. Changes in the Division's fleet have already occurred using the above criteria and have provided savings in acquisition and operating costs.

## NEW ISSUES

### FY 2009 Game and Fish Fund Report

The Enforcement, Support Services and Administration Subcommittee reviewed the Enforcement as well as the Operations Support & Indirect Costs sections of the Game and Fish Fund Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30 2009. The Subcommittee accepts the expenditures as reported in this document.



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Cost of Preparation

## NAME OF LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

Citizen Oversight Report on Game and Fish Fund Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2009

Based on: Vote of Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee conducted via e-mail and completed on July 21, 2010; preceded by 6 months of volunteer work by citizen appointees.

Minnesota Statute Reference: *Minnesota Statutes*, section 97A.055, subdivision 4b

Prepared by: Elizabeth P. Carlson, Facilitator, Department of Natural Resources

Phone: 651-259-5531

E-Mail: beth.carlson@state.mn.us

Description of Cost	Further explanation if necessary	Amount
Staff Time		
OMBS	12 hours by facilitator @ \$32.69/hr	\$392
Duplication Cost (includes paper)	produced by Minncor	\$590
Postage Cost	87 @ \$1.56per piece	\$136
Other: mailing envelopes	1 box	\$35
<b>TOTAL TO PREPARE REPORT:</b>		<b>\$1,153</b>