



# LANDOWNERS *Water*

## LANDOWNER POND MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION

Landowners have been managing fisheries in stock dams and small impoundments since the first ones were built in the early 1900s. These dams have historically provided numerous fishing opportunities for rural South Dakotans. After droughts or winterkill, landowners moved fish around to restart fisheries in dams that had dried up and to provide new fishing opportunities. Some dams were managed for trophy bass and panfish while others were managed to provide lots of action by having a high abundance of small bass. The fisheries we currently have in small impoundments on private land are the result of fisheries management by landowners, sometimes in coordination with local GFP staff.

As a manager of public resources, GFP has specific authorities for which it is responsible. With regards to fisheries, these authorities include authorizations to stock fish or remove fish in numbers greater than applicable

limits, use of special equipment like gill nets or trap nets to sample fish populations, and use of chemicals to control vegetation. There is currently a separate application that must be completed for each of these activities, each time they are conducted. To make the authorization process simpler for landowners, the GFP Commission created a Landowner Fisheries Management Authorization in 2016.

The main purpose of the Landowner Fisheries Management Authorization (LFMA) is to facilitate a landowner continuing to do what they have been doing for years; managing fisheries in man-made, created impoundments on their own land. The authorization also includes adding the opportunity for landowners to hire a consultant or company to help manage the fisheries on their land, which was not previously an option.



# SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THE LANDOWNER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION:

## OVERVIEW

- Only created, man-made impoundments that have no legal public access can be included in a LFMA.
- All landowner dams can be included on one authorization.
- There is no fee or expiration date for this authorization.
- The landowner must control access to waters included in the authorization by ownership, lease, or easement.
- The landowner's agent or designee may perform management activities and possess authorized gear.
- Any employee, agent, or contractor of the landowner must have a copy of the authorization when conducting fisheries management activities.
- Licensing requirements and applicable fish limits apply to non-landowner/operators fishing these waters.

## MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ALLOWED

- Management activities allowed under this authorization include:
  - Use of special netting gear and equipment
  - Stocking of authorized fish species or eggs
  - Removal and transport of fish above applicable limits for management purposes
  - Chemical control of Aquatic plants (*on waters not spilling*)

## ACTIVITIES REQUIRING A SEPARATE PERMIT

- Chemical renovation of water with fish toxicants like rotenone.
  - Importing fish from outside South Dakota.
- Chemical control of aquatic plants.

## STOCKINGS AND REMOVALS

- Fish may be transferred from one LFMA impoundment to another.
- Notification of a Conservation Officer is required when transporting fish in excess of applicable limits away from the private land where the waters are located even if going to another property of another landowner who has a fisheries management authorization.
- Game fish removed as a part of management activities cannot be sold.
- Common fish species authorized for stocking include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, black and white crappie, pumpkinseed sunfish, northern pike, walleye, yellow perch, rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and legal bait fish species.
- Other fish species can be stocked after consulting with GFP.

The main reason for GFP consideration of species not on the list above is that some fish species can have negative impacts to waters downstream of the water in which they are stocked. High flow events or dam breaches can result in fish ending up where they were not intended.

## SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Special equipment authorized includes gill, fyke, dip, trap, cast, and hoop nets, seines and electrofishing equipment.
- Sampling gears not listed above would require separate consideration by GFP.

## TRANSPORT OF FISH

All aquatic invasive species regulations apply to these waters and fish removed from or stocked into authorized waters as part of fisheries management activities cannot be transported in water from a lake, river, or stream. Only well or treated domestic water may be used for fish transport. To learn more about Aquatic Invasive Species and associated regulation please visit [sdleastwanted.com](http://sdleastwanted.com) or contact your local conservation officer.

As mentioned previously, the purpose of the LFMA is to help landowners continue to do what they have been doing for years; manage fisheries in man-made, created impoundments on their own land. If you are interested in applying for a Landowner Fisheries Management Authorization, please reach out to any one of the following staff across the state:

Rapid City: Jake Davis

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# REVISED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT FORMAT

While the development of the Landowner Fisheries Management Authorization (LFMA) will help facilitate the management of fisheries on private land by the landowner, it is important to remember that Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) can still provide assistance in managing waters on private land if desired. In many cases, waters on private land provide excellent fishing opportunities. As a result, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has a history of working with landowners, through the Fisheries Management Agreement (FMA) program, to help manage ponds on private land. Often, management assistance comes in the form of stocking fish. Many landowners are interested in managing waters on private land to provide a quality fishery and this program is a great way for GFP staff to help make that happen.

Beginning this spring, a revised FMA format will be available for landowners. In general, many aspects of the previous FMA program will remain the same. However, there will be some aspects that are different. One of the biggest changes in the program will be that GFP will only enter into agreements for waters with open access, meaning that permission would not have to be obtained prior to a member of the public accessing the fishery. As a result of this, a payment program will also be established to provide financial compensation for landowners who participate in the revised FMA program. As increasing public knowledge of fishing opportunities is one of the primary goals of this program, FMA's will now be included in an online access map which will allow the public to more easily find FMA's. This will be in addition to the current landowner contact information that is provided on

the GFP website. Signage will also be provided to help anglers correctly find these fisheries. Current FMA's will be handled on an individual basis, where the landowner has the option to continue under the previous agreement for the duration of the contract or complete a new application form for the new FMA format.

From a fisheries management standpoint, GFP will take a more active role in managing these ponds, similar to any other public fishery. This would include fish stocking, but also monitoring of the fishery through surveys. In fact, GFP staff work with the landowner to provide the type of fishery that is desired, within the constraints of what the water can support.

## THE FOLLOWING FISHERIES OPTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO BE OFFERED:

- Largemouth Bass only option: bass are the only sportfish
- All-Purpose option: a variety of sizes and species to catch
- Panfish option: goal is to produce large panfish through high numbers of small bass
- Big Bass option: goal is to produce large bass through high numbers of panfish
- Channel Catfish only option: catfish are the only sportfish
- Trout Pond management: if conditions are suitable, rainbow trout would be stocked
- Walleye and muskellunge will not be provided

In many cases, FMA's can be important fisheries for the general public. This is particularly true in areas where limited fisheries options are available, such as western South Dakota. Due to this, the FMA program can be a great way for landowners to get assistance in managing ponds on private land as fisheries and provide additional angling opportunities for the public. For landowners who are interested in conducting fisheries management on waters on private land, but not interested in being part of the FMA program, GFP also provides the Landowner Fisheries Management Authorization. This authorizes landowners to conduct specific fisheries management activities on created waters on their land. ●





# HIGH DEMAND FOR GFP'S ASSISTANCE WITH WINTER DEPREDATION

There was a significant demand this winter for wildlife depredation assistance. GFP worked with landowners across South Dakota to address wildlife damage that involved deer, elk, and turkey. Deep snow and cold temperatures were experienced for several months in western and north-central South Dakota. These tough winter conditions forced wildlife to seek shelter and food in nearby farmyards and in many areas, deer congregated into very large herds (300 to over 1,000 animals).

Statewide, GFP provided assistance to more than 300 landowners who experienced deer damage. GFP also provided assistance to over 20 landowners with turkey depredation and eight landowners who requested assistance with elk. The majority of requests for assistance with deer damage were located in western and north-central South Dakota where there were higher deer numbers and deeper snow and ice. Many areas in south-central and southeastern South Dakota were impacted by epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) this past fall and overall deer numbers were lower than expected. Most deer and elk depredation assistance involved the use of protective fencing and panels as well as hazing techniques and short-stop feeding. In addition, GFP authorized over 963 deer depredation tags on 37 different depredation hunt locations, all in western and central South Dakota.

With warmer than average temperatures experienced across South Dakota in late-February, snow completely melted in most areas. This warm spell helped deer have access to food and shelter in fields and greatly reduced the work activities of GFP. While the final figures regarding GFP's overall expenditures from the past winter are not complete yet, substantial figures are expected. Since 2000, GFP has spent over \$7 million cooperatively working with landowners to reduce deer depredation. GFP encourages landowners that experienced deer damage to hay or other stored-feed supplies to visit with their local wildlife damage specialist about GFP's cost-share assistance with the construction of permanent stackyards or protective panels. These programs are long-term solutions to deer damage on hay and stored-feeds. Hundreds of landowners across South Dakota have participated in these programs which have proven successful.

Over the summer, GFP will be organizing a meeting with stakeholders to evaluate and possibly adjust programs and services to better meet the demand from private landowners. Coming off a severe winter with a large amount of deer depredation assistance being utilized is an excellent time to evaluate programs and receive feedback from landowners and other stakeholders. ●





# GFP PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO LANDOWNERS WHO EXPERIENCE CROP DAMAGE FROM CANADA GEESE

Every year, GFP provides assistance to hundreds of landowners who experience Canada goose damage to growing crops. This assistance includes temporary electric fence, cost-share assistance with protective bufferstrips, and various forms of hazing. The most widely used program component is the construction of temporary electric fence along the edges of wetlands. This fence serves as an effective barrier to flightless Canada geese and has proven effective at reducing crop damage.

Another popular management technique for landowners is the use of a permit issued by GFP. Each year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorizes GFP the authority to permit landowners that have Canada goose damage the ability to remove small numbers of Canada geese, in an effort to reduce crop damage and haze Canada geese away from damage locations. “Canada geese can cause significant damage to growing crops,” said Keith Fisk, wildlife damage program administrator. “By allowing landowners the ability to protect their crops with an effective tool, we hope to minimize the negative impacts from these birds.” For the past several years, GFP has authorized approximately 350 landowners in eastern South Dakota a permit to harvest Canada geese in areas where crop damage is experienced. It’s important to understand that these permits are not a population reduction tool, but rather an effective hazing technique. “On an average year, permitted landowners remove approximately 1,000 Canada geese,” said Fisk. “This tool has successfully reduced crop damage in many areas and at the same time has had no negative effect on the overall population.” GFP law enforcement staff will be conducting compliance checks with permitted landowners, again this year. The ability to continue to utilize these permits into the future depends on landowners following the provisions of the permit.

Since the year 2000, GFP has spent over \$5 million cooperatively working with landowners to reduce crop damage caused by Canada geese and GFP remains committed to providing these important services. Landowners that need assistance with Canada goose damage should contact their local GFP office. ●



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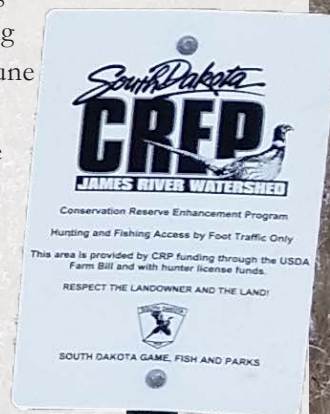
# U.S. FARM BILL'S IMPORTANCE TO SOUTH DAKOTA'S WILDLIFE

The federal farm bill impacts South Dakota wildlife habitat more than any other federal, state or local program. The conservation programs created by the farm bill like the conservation reserve program (CRP), environmental quality incentive program (EQIP), conservation stewardship program (CSP), and the agricultural conservation easement program (ACEP) annually contribute over \$90 million to South Dakota private landowners to create, manage and protect wildlife habitat. In comparison, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' annual budget for wildlife habitat work on private land is less than \$5 million. Farm bill conservation programs provide a variety cost-share, incentives, and other payments to help landowners and agricultural producers sustainably operate while providing important public environmental benefits like clean water, clean air, soil health, and wildlife habitat. Some of the wildlife habitat practices these programs help fund include: conversion of cropland to grassland, restoration of wetlands, managed grazing, use of cover crops, livestock water development, pollinator habitat and many others.

The farm bill also includes a conservation provision, known as "Swampbuster," which makes agricultural producers eligible to receive farm bill benefits if they do not convert wetlands to make production of agricultural commodities possible. In 2016, South Dakota agricultural producers received farm bill benefits of roughly \$167 million in conservation program payments, about \$250 million in commodity safety-net payments, and another \$475 million in crop insurance premium discounts. A wide variety of South Dakota's wildlife benefit from the

diverse wetland habitats protected and enhanced through farm bill programs. Besides the obvious source of water, South Dakota's prairie wetlands provide internationally important breeding habitat for ducks, important food for wildlife, which feed on the insects and other aquatic invertebrates found in wetlands, and some of the best winter habitat for resident wildlife like deer and pheasants.

There is about a year and a half until the current farm bill expires. Congressional hearings have started to collect public input on what changes are needed for the 2018 Farm Bill. Many people are asking for a larger CRP and more funding for EQIP and ACEP. Senator Thune has proposed a new program called the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP). It would allow farmers to enroll up to 15% of their least productive cropland into a conservation cover for 3 to 5 years in return for an annual rental payment and an additional 2% discount on their crop insurance premium. All of these things could enhance wildlife habitat in South Dakota. We encourage you to reach out to your South Dakota congressional representative and senators with your comments, concerns and priorities for conservation in the 2018 farm bill. ●







# LANDOWNERS MATTER

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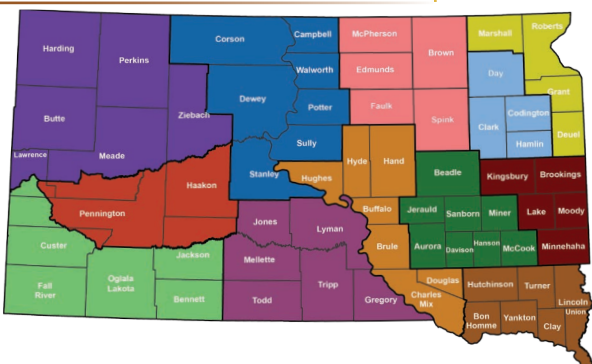
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