

**WAFAWA Survey Questions:**

**December 2020**

1. Does your agency give landowners big game permits or vouchers that they can use or

## **Landowner public hunting access programs:**

<https://gfp.sd.gov/landowner-programs/>

### **Walk-in Area Program (WIA)**

The WIA program leases private land with valuable hunting opportunity for unlimited public hunting access (foot-traffic only) in exchange for an annual payment and immunity from non-negligent liability. The Walk-In Area program began in 1988 leasing public hunting access from 26 landowners on 23,161 acres, and has grown to partnering with over 1,400 landowners who provide public hunting access to over 1.2 million acres of private land. A [Legislative Commemoration](#) was issued in 2018 commending the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and the landowners of South Dakota on 30 years of partnership to provide public hunting access through the Walk-In Area Program. [More information.](#)

### **Cooperative Management Areas (COOP Areas)**

Similar to a Walk-In Area, but a COOP allows hunters to drive on harvested cropland for the purposes of placing & retrieving waterfowl decoys. Hunters with a disabled hunting permit are also allowed to drive on these areas to hunt any game. All other access is limited to foot traffic only and no hunting is allowed while farm machinery is present.

### **Controlled Hunting Access Program (CHAP)**

CHAP is a cooperative effort between private landowners and Game, Fish and Parks to provide limited public hunting access on private land. Landowners who enroll in CHAP control the amount of hunter use at a given time, set special provisions for use, and place restrictions on game species allowed to be harvested. For more information or assistance, visit the [Habitat Pays website.](#)

### **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (C.R.E.P.)**

Administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, this program is a "state-sponsored" Conservation Reserve Program providing additional, undisturbed habitat for wildlife that is open to public hunting and fishing access in the James River watershed.

### **Elk Hunting Access Program (EHAP)**

EHAP's purpose is to increase hunter harvest; specifically on private lands with higher than landowner-tolerable elk use. Private land anywhere in the Black Hills elk hunting units will be considered. Access to the property (how many, when, and where) is controlled by the enrolled landowner. This allows the hunting to take place where the best chance of success is, as well as with the best chance to diminish elk depredation. GFP does not sign the boundaries (as with walk-in areas), nor are maps of the enrolled properties made available. GFP provides the contact information for participating landowners upon request. License holders are responsible for making contact with the landowner, and making arrangements to hunt the enrolled property.

## **6. Does your agency provide damage payments or fencing for big game on private lands? If so, how much per year is paid and how is it funded?**

[https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/wdm\\_annualreport\\_2020\\_web.pdf](https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/wdm_annualreport_2020_web.pdf)

The South Dakota Legislature adopted legislation in 1999 which attached a \$5 surcharge to most hunting licenses in South Dakota to provide additional funding to help landowners and producers. One-half of the monies raised from this surcharge go towards hunter access programs and the other one-half is used to support the WDM program. This surcharge generates approximately \$1.7 million annually, again split

proceeds from Special Buck licenses to help fund WDM program services, which generates an additional \$400,000 each year. During the legislative session of 2017, the South Dakota Legislature increased the transaction fee for the sale of licenses. This increase allocated another \$200,000 for the program. Combined, the WDM portion of the program receives approximately \$1.5 million annually in funding support. These funds are used to alleviate or reduce impacts to agricultural and livestock producers as a direct result from wildlife depredation. In 2001, four wildlife damage specialists (one within each administrative region) were hired to help implement the initial program services. In addition, assistance is provided by wildlife conservation officers and other field staff across the state when needed.

As a condition to receive assistance, landowners and producers are asked to sign an agreement with GFP that states they do not charge for hunting access (for the species they are requesting assistance with), and they agree to allow reasonable free hunting access to people who obtain proper permission.

## **Elk Damage Assistance**

GFP has several programs and services available to assist landowners and producers with elk damage. GFP offers up to \$15,000 worth of cost-share assistance to construct permanent protective stackyards or can provide protective, portable panels to protect stored livestock-feeds (i.e. hay, corn, silage, etc.) from elk damage during the winter months. These two programs are very popular and provide long-term solutions. GFP also offers up to \$15,000 worth of fencing materials and protective cable that when installed correctly can alleviate damage to fences from elk crossing them. GFP offers up to \$8,000 of cost-share assistance to landowners for growing-season food-plots where landowners have elk feeding on alfalfa fields or other growing crops. Landowners may also be eligible for up to \$4,000 of cost-share assistance for hay land contracts. These contracts are for grasslands that are annually hayed by landowners, not grazed by livestock and have elk feeding upon these areas. GFP also provides direct assistance when elk are causing damage to growing crops or causing other issues on private lands by utilizing hazing, temporary fencing, short-stop baiting, and in some situations, lethal control and/or depredation hunts. Every situation is unique and GFP staff, working cooperatively with the affected landowner, will determine the most effective approach.

## **Deer Damage Assistance**

GFP has several programs and services available to assist landowners and producers with deer damage. GFP offers up to \$10,000 worth of cost-share assistance to construct permanent protective stackyards or can provide protective, portable panels that protect stored livestock-feeds (i.e. hay, corn, silage, etc.) from deer damage during the winter months. These two programs are very popular and provide long-term solutions. GFP also provides direct assistance when deer are causing damage to growing crops, shelter-belts and other issues on private lands by utilizing hazing,

temporary fencing, short-stop baiting, and in some situations, lethal control and/or depredation hunts. Every situation is unique and GFP staff, working cooperatively with the affected landowner will determine the most effective approach.

## **Turkey Damage Assistance**

(Turkey is considered big game in SD)

GFP has several programs and services available to assist landowners and producers with damage caused from turkeys. The most popular service is the installation of protective netting which is installed on bales of oats, silage, etc. which GFP will install. GFP also provides direct assistance when turkeys are causing damage or other issues on private lands by utilizing hazing, temporary fencing, and alternate feeding sites and in some situations, lethal control and/or depredation hunts. Every situation is unique and GFP staff, working cooperatively with the affected landowner will determine the most effective approach.

### **7. What mitigation measures does your agency employ to reduce big game damage (e.g., provide temporary fencing, hazing animals, agency removals of big game)?**

We utilize hazing, temporary fencing, intercept-feeding, and in some situations, lethal control and/or depredation hunts. Agency removals is used as a last resort.

### **8. Does your agency have an urban deer program? If so, what does that entail?**

Yes. Before any urban deer control operation may be conducted in the State of South Dakota, the entity desiring to conduct the deer control operation must submit a written plan to the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks for approval. This plan must, at a minimum, provide details of the methods to be employed, the number of deer proposed to be removed, information on the personnel involved in the removal effort, the tentative costs of the removal effort, and an accounting of the disposition of each deer trapped or killed.

## **Sharpshooters**

Any entity desiring to use sharpshooters to control urban deer must also obtain written authorization from the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. At a minimum, this authorization will include the following restrictions:

1. The entity making the request will be responsible for conducting the shooting program under authorization from the Secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. They may perform this work by using their own employees or through a private contractual arrangement.
2. A written plan detailing the methods to be used (e.g. bait stations, artificial light), the names of the personnel participating in the shooting, the time of day the operation will be conducted and the locations where the operation will be conducted must be submitted to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the operation.
3. Department of Game, Fish and Parks staff will assist in site selection, safety recommendations and training of shooters, if requested.

4. The Department of Game, Fish and Parks reserves the right to witness any portion of this operation and will be guaranteed access to all sites involved.
5. Carcasses of all deer shot must be delivered to a locker plant for processing. All meat must be donated to a charitable organization for distribution to the needy. Distribution of field dressed carcasses, through social service agencies, may be acceptable. Records of the disposition of all carcasses must be provided to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks within 30 days following the completion of the operation for that year. The entity conducting the operation will make arrangements for all costs associated with processing or distribution of the meat and/or carcasses.
6. Shooting of deer may commence no earlier than December 1<sup>st</sup> of any year and may occur no later than March 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year.
7. A detailed report showing the number of deer shot and all costs associated with the operation will be supplied to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks within 30 days following the completion of the operation for that year.

### **No Feed Ordinance**

An integral component of any urban deer herd management program is the implementation of an ordinance to ban the artificial feeding of deer. Therefore, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks strongly recommends that communities experiencing urban deer population problems

Over the past several years, the City of Bloomington, Minnesota reports that they have experienced a great deal of success in reducing deer problems through the implementation of the following ordinance:

-half cubic foot of grain, fruit, vegetables, nuts, hay or other edible material on the ground or at a height of less than five feet above the ground that attracts deer on a regular basis. Living food sources such as fruit trees and other live vegetation are not considered deer feeding. Actions on violations will only be undertaken when a complaint is received and the

### **9. What other programs does your agency have in place to promote tolerance of big game on private lands?**

N/A

### **10. Does your agency respond to all wildlife conflict calls or is it limited to specific species or guilds of species?**

Yes. The degree in which we respond depends on the species. We may simply provide extension services for some species.

**11. What program(s) in your agency provide response to negative wildlife interaction (wildlife conflict) complaints and depredation. If the responsibility is split or shared between programs (i.e. Wildlife Program/Enforcement Program) or contracted or referred to another agency or private party, please describe how the work is assigned or shared. (e.g. by species, commercial agriculture versus residential, public safety versus property damage, etc.)**

Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) operates a multi-faceted Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) program designed to address human-wildlife conflicts involving most species of wildlife that occur throughout South Dakota. Currently, 28 wildlife damage specialists, -on-the-

deliver WDM program services. The WDM program is split into two programs, Animal Damage Control (ADC) and Wildlife Damage Management. The ADC side deals with predator and nuisance animals and the WDM with game animal damage. At times we do utilize an all hands on deck approach if we are receiving numerous requests for service. This is typically during a hard winter.

**12. Please describe what funding sources support wildlife conflict response and depredation payments if applicable in your agency. Please include specifics regarding where the funding comes from for expenses such as staff and equipment, commercial crop loss compensation, livestock predation compensation, non-lethal deterrent programs, outreach and education, or any other services or materials provided in response to wildlife conflict issues.**

Initially, GFP operated only the ADC program, which was mandated by state law in 1939. This program was then more formalized in 1974 by the South Dakota Legislature. The passage of this legislation established the program and funding which allowed GFP to employ personnel to control coyotes, fox, prairie dogs, and other wild animals injurious to landowners. This legislation developed a system to fund the program wherein state law provided for an assessment to each county based upon livestock numbers (i.e. cattle and sheep) located within the county. While the assessment amount is generated using the numbers of livestock, all taxpayers within a county contribute. This law also mandated that GFP match those county monies on a 1:1 basis initially, and beginning in 1999 the GFP match increased to a 2:1 rate. The county assessments generate approximately \$300,000 and coupled with the GFP match of 2:1, another \$600,000 is added. In 2013, the South Dakota Legislature enacted legislation that added an additional \$1 surcharge to most hunting licenses. This \$1 surcharge adds approximately another \$300,000 for ADC program funding. During the legislative session of 2017, the South Dakota Legislature increased the transaction fee for the sale of licenses purchased online. This increase allocated another \$200,000 for the program. Finally, the SD Department of Agriculture provides additional funding to the ADC program each year to assist with prairie dog control.

WDM - The South Dakota Legislature adopted legislation in 1999 which attached a \$5 surcharge to most hunting licenses in South Dakota to provide additional funding to help landowners and producers. One-half of the monies raised from this surcharge go towards hunter access programs and the other one-half is used to support the WDM program. This surcharge generates approximately \$1.7 million annually, again split

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