



MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

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A message from President Joe Hoffmann

Being the new president of the Minnesota Conservation Federation I feel it is only proper that I introduce myself. For those of you that may not have had the chance to meet me my name is Joseph Hoffmann. I'm 26 years old and I grew up in Clear Lake Minnesota on forty acer hobby farm. Growing up I spent most of my time hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, and camping. At fifteen I became the owner and operated of a licensed pheasant farm which really jump started my love for conservation. In 2013 graduated from St. Cloud State University with a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology and a minor in geographic information systems. After graduation I worked for the Minnesota department of natural resources as an intern for the shallow lakes program out of Sauk Rapids Minnesota. For the past two summers, I have conducted behavior, species interaction, and population census research on Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goats in Nevada's East Humboldt Mountain range for Iowa State University in partnership with Nevada Department of Wildlife. Now, I look forward to spending more of my time working on conservation issues in my home state.

My history with the Minnesota Conservation Federation begins in 2012 when I became 2nd vice president. Since then, I have held the vice president position for the last 2 years and I was elected president this September at our annual meeting in St. Cloud Minnesota. I have represented the MCF and its affiliates both in DC and throughout Minnesota for many of years and I look forward to continuing to do so. I would also like to make a quick note on some of the other organizations I hold memberships to and or represent including: Vanishing Paradise, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance, Minnesota Leave no Trace, and the American Canoe Association.

As the MCF's new president I look forward to meeting with affliets over the next couple of months. My first goal for the MCF is to increase recruitment efforts both though our affiliates and through a new program that the MCF is piloting called the Minnesota Conservation Leadership Corp (MCLC). This program is being coordinated by Elsa Litecky and is intended to target young

minds interested in conservation issues. "Students enrolled in the leadership program, will be guide through a one-year program which will expose them to conservation issues, past and current conservation leaders, and then assist them in become strong advocates for conservation and environmental issues that they believe are important to young people their age," said Litecky at our December quarterly meeting. The MCF is modeling our program after Wisconsin and Missouri's conservation leadership programs which have been very successful in training youth in conservation as well as retaining youth evolvment in different affiliate groups. The best part is this program will be all expense paid for accepted applicants! We want to create a learning environment that promotes active involvement. The application process will be starting up very soon. So, I think it is safe to say that the board is very excited to see what MCLC will bring to our organization.

My second major goal is to raise money for the MCF, MCLC program, and our affiliate clubs. I want to do this because I think it is important that we continue to work toward saving the natural resource of Minnesota its air, soils and minerals, its forests waters and wildlife for future generations to come. One of the easiest ways to help the MCF is to take the time to promote and attend your local MCF affiliates banquets. Help us help you! The better our affiliates do the better the MCF does. Two local events that are coming up include the Prior Lake VFW banquet on April 2nd and the New Market Ridges banquet in Jordan Minnesota on April 9th. So, please come on out and support your local conservation affiliates and the MCF for a fun night of prizes, food, and drinks in the name of conservation. Also we will be looking for applicants and potentially local clubs to help sponsor MCLC accepted applicants. Ideally, we are hoping that local clubs would be interested in helping sponsor local applicants if accepted into the program.

With that I would just like to say I'm excited to see 2016 unfold. At our December quarterly meeting in Rogers Minnesota I was thrilled to see fresh faces in the crowd as well as old friends. I hope to see representatives from all our affiliate clubs attending MCF meetings.



Executive Director News

Ex. Director Report and The Passing of Two Gan-

By Gary Botzek
Executive Director



Happy New Year to MCF members and friends!

As we enter and move through into the New Year let us not forget that God not only created man and women but also the birds and animals we love so. God created Heaven and the Earth including the natural resources; its air, soil, and minerals, its forests, waters, and wildlife! We are but stewards of the land, the habit, the people, the birds, and the animals that live together on Earth. Let us continue to pledge to be worthy stewards of our habitat!

Turning to state business, the 2016 legislative session is not scheduled to begin until March 8. This “late start” is designed to get the latest economic information so that the legislative knows best how much money they have to spend or give back to the people. The early estimates look good with a budget surplus in the \$1.8 billion range. One-third of that amount must be moved to the reserve account based on current law. The rest of the growing surplus will be invested in Minnesota needs or returned to Minnesotans in tax relief measures. By the end of May we will know what combination of the strategies will be implemented.

In terms of natural resources investments the following is a summary of where we are at and where we might be going in the 2016 legislative session:

Buffers for Water Quality & Habitat: Interest in the new buffer law remains high! The BWSR is in charge of implementing the law and they have been busy meeting with local soil and water conservation district organizations, as well as, state and regional interests ranging from the MCF to the Farm Bureau. Portions of the law are already going into effect including the excessive soil loss law. A good summary of the new law can be found on the BWSR’s website.

DNR has an important part to play in the implementation of the new law, as well. They are in charge of producing Buffer Protection Maps for the

BWSR and others. These maps will identify all the lakes and ditches that probably need to be buffered. Local review will modify the maps findings. These maps are posted on the DNR website.

The new law will require a minimum average of 50-foot wide buffer on public waters with a shore land designation by November 2017 and a minimum of a 16.5-foot wide buffer on both sides of public ditches by November 2018. While these numbers are not new in terms of the statutes the new law squarely puts the BWSR in the leadership role to build and implement a program that works with farmers and other land owners by providing incentives, using federal and state dollars, to put buffers in place. The new law will be enforced by the local soil and water conservation districts. Enforcement, needless to say, has been lacking in the past.

The Governor predicts that this new law will attract 110,000 acres of land into buffer strips. Only 20 percent of public ditches currently are required to have 16.5 foot buffers, according to the Governor’s office. The new law will make that 100%.

It is widely believed that adding buffers around water bodies will provide additional protection from pollution runoff, as well as, provide additional habitat opportunities for birds, animals and pollinators.

A few counties are already implementing good buffer programs in their county. These county programs can be used as models for the rest of Minnesota. The conservation and environment community worked hard to get this proposal passed. I predict it will be successful but will be amended/improved upon in years to come—just like the Wetlands Conservation Act.

Water Quality Summit in February called for Governor:

With the buffer law in his back pocket, Governor Dayton is now calling for a statewide water quality summit in February. Siting serious challenges facing Minnesota’s water supplies in both rural and urban areas of the state, Dayton wants to continue a statewide dialogue focused around ways to deal with water quality

issues. Interested and affected parties will be invited to the summit. One year ago December the Governor held a Pheasant Summit in Marshall, MN resulting in the buffer law. Water quality fixes may be next!

Shooting Range Enhancement Grant Program: On December 3 the DNR announced another round of shooting range enhancement grants totaling \$371,000 to 22 shooting range projects.

These dollars and projects were enabled by an appropriation of the Legislature in 2015 of an additional \$2 million. These dollars are from the game and fish fund and will be available to shooting range enhancements over the next two years. MCF has worked long and hard for additional appropriations to the DNR run Shooting Range Improvement Grants Program. These dollars are intended to provide matching state dollars to shooting ranges with the ultimate goal of adding opportunities for expanding high school clay target shooting teams—the fastest growing high school sport! The second State Clay Target Tournament took place on June 20 at the Minneapolis Gun Club in Prior Lake. Over 6,000 students participated in the high school team leagues this past year. With the death of Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) we lost a champion for this effort and funding levels. We will honor him and his efforts by continuing our support and leadership in this important youth recruitment effort.

Continued on next page

More news....

Executive Director Report continued....

Mille Lacs Lake Management:

While a special session has yet to be called one almost came about in August centered on the walleye fishing problems and concerns on Mille Lacs Lake. DNR closed the lake to walleye fishing on August 3 after the state exceeded the agreed upon quota of 28,600 pounds. The Governor organized a Task Force to investigate the situation and make recommendations for the special session. The Task Force, led by key legislators, suggested that a special session was not needed or the best way to proceed. However, from the work of the task force and DNR the state has and will be making changes in the way Mille Lacs Lake will be managed for walleyes and other fish. Those changes include a pilot walleye stocking program, a new fisheries nursery on Mille Lacs, and new staffing in the Mille Lacs area. The Governor has indicated that he wants to see the lake reopened for ice fishing on December 1. Additional policy and funding options will be considered in March as part of the 2016 legislative session. Also established was a Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee that meets again on December 17 in Isle.

Lessard-Sams Dollars: In the 2016 legislative session the Legislature is expected to pass its annual Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Legacy bill generated from the sales tax revenues and constitutionally dedicated to natural resources. The Councils' recommendations for this round of spending call for investment of another \$111 million in habitat projects! Last session the Legislature appropriated \$97 million for outdoor projects including forestry, wetlands, forest habitat, and prairie habitat. Last year's Legacy Bill also included \$228 million over two years for clean water projects from the Clean Water Fund. The bill also provided \$87 million over two years for parks and trails and \$124 million over two years for arts and history projects. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage portion of the dollars is appropriated annually to provide flexi-

bility and allows for the ability to shift gear and or direction with the money.

An interesting note on the \$111 million recommendations from the Council is that about \$60 million of the dollars is scheduled to go to habitat projects. According to Kevin Lines, chief of the DNR's pheasant restoration plan, the funding package calls for \$20 million to be used to acquire public lands, \$25 million for private land easements, and \$15 million to enhance grasslands and wetlands on public and private lands. Sounds like a darn good investment!

Bonding Dollars for Conservation: A big bonding bill can be expected in the 2016 session. The bill could reach \$1 billion! The MCF will work to see that the bill invests in WMA's, SNA's, and AMA's, and RIM-Reserve lands.

Sportsmen's Club Leader Passes: On September 25 we lost Bayliss L. Swanson, age 92, of Pine City. Bayliss was a long time member of the Snake River Valley Conservation Club. Bayliss was born on the family's farm home of Pine City and attended a one-room country school to which he would ski to and from in the winter months. He graduated from Pine City High School in 1941. He served in the U. S. Army from 1944 through 1946 and graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Pharmacy in 1955. Bayliss and his lovely wife Margery Stratte were wed in 1950 together they raised four kids and now eight grandchildren. The Swanson's moved to St. Cloud in 1959 well they purchased Molitor Drug on St. Germain Street. In 1964 they added a Hallmark gift shop. In 1968 or 1969 they hired a young energetic guy named Gary Botzek to stock shelves and eat their candy bars!

While going to college at SCSU Gary was able to work Saturday's and Sunday's and parts of other days during the school week. I have a great deal of respect for a successful business and family partnership like Bayliss and Marg had. I went on the graduate and go to work for Congressman John Zwach and the Swanson's closed Molitor Drug in 1979. Upon retirement they returned to

Pine City and the beautiful Snake River. Gordy Meyer and I visited the club a number of years ago and Bayliss and Marg were just the same great people. I will miss him.

If you are interested in more information regarding items mentioned in this report, please call me at 651-293-9295 or email me at gary@capitolconnections.com. Thanks for your continued interest, involvement and participation in the MCF, NWF, conservation, habitat and the environment!

Upcoming Banquets to show your support!

Martin County Conservation Club Banquet
February 20, 2016
National Guard Armory,
Fairmont, MN
5 pm social 7 pm dinner
For ticket info: contact Steve M.
at smaurice@frontiernet.net

Prior Lake Sportsmen's Club
Saturday, April 2, 2016
Prior Lake VFW,
Prior Lake, MN
5 pm cocktail hour,
6:45 pm dinner
Tickets: \$25
Contact Wade Brua;
wbru29@gmail.com

MCF Regional Banquet
w/Fish Lake and New Market
Sportsmen's Clubs
April 9, 2016
Ridges at Sand Creek
Jordan, MN
5 pm Social hour
6:45 pm Dinner
7:30 pm Program
Tickets: \$25
Contact: Tom V. 952-288-5169
or Ken H. 612-5478-8222

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***Minnesota Conservation Federation
2015-16 Officers***

Joe Hoffmann, President
vacant, 1st Vice President
Don Nickolay, 2nd Vice President
Rylee Main, Treasurer
Steve Maurice, Secretary

**ANY ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION MAY BE E-MAILED
OR SENT TO THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION
FEDERATION — info@mncf.org**

Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, March 12, 2016
10:30 am

Minneapolis Gun Club
20006 Judicial Rd. Prior Lake, MN
952-469-4386

We hope to see you there!



Submit your club's news to *Minnesota Out of Doors* Newsletter

The Minnesota Conservation Federation's *Minnesota Out of Doors* newsletter is a place for member clubs to present news about their accomplishments. Club news and/or photos can be submitted to: Tammy Abrahamson
Minnesota Conservation Federation, 542 Snelling Avenue South #104, St. Paul, MN 55116, or by e-mail to info@mncf.org. All submissions should be directed to Tammy. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is March 18, 2016.