



## MINNESOTA OUT OF DOORS

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### A message from President Lance Ness

One of the Major topics of discussion this year will be about public lands and access. Questions are being raised about public lands, how much land should be held by the “Public” versus “Private Land” holdings. Along with that question also raises the question of access to “Public Lands and waters” who has access, what is the need, what is the best for the land and water. Access to private lands has already been determined, you cannot enter private lands without permission of the owner. Period.

This has led to lease agreements where one private entity leased another private entity’s land for hunting, fishing or trapping. It would be difficult to find a lease based just upon the purpose of “viewing” or “looking or sight-seeing”.

I’m going to invoke the old story of Robin Hood who shot the “King’s deer” and was branded an outlaw. In America we have always retained that the fish, game, and wildlife belong to the “Public”. No matter whose land they reside on.

Here begins the conflict. Most land is held in private holdings. The exception being “public Lands and waters”. So how does one get access to the “public fish & game” that reside upon private lands? You can ask for permission from the landowner, which was the typical way throughout the 20th century. You could lease the land from the owner, which is gaining momentum, (this calls into the question of only those that can afford to hunt, will be able to afford to), you can purchase land for hunting and fish-



ing and trapping, for those that can afford it. This is the present-day situation.

Some folks believe that there is “too much” public land. That it does not pay taxes. And that it would be better served in private hands, where taxes could be collected.

Others believe that “public lands and waters” should be held in “public trust” for protection and future generations. Natural habitat for fish & wildlife, water quality, soil protection.

Still others believe that these “public lands” should be developed for private use, industrial, business and agricultural use. Even if the are in public trust.

The debate is on. While some of the questions raised are not true. There is a wide spread movement that will affect “public lands” their use, quantity and quality of the remaining existing habitat on the land and in the water.

As a conservationist I have real concerns for the future of public lands. We need to remind ourselves of President Teddy Roosevelt who saw the destruction of our country’s natural resources for profit, and had the wisdom to set aside natural areas for future generations. From which we have all benefited from.

Will the next generation have the natural resources



## *Executive Director News*

# Ex. Director Report

**By Jason Dinsmore**  
*Executive Director*

Introducing oneself electronically is always difficult, especially when your job is as relationship driven as mine is. Knowing this, I like to use it as an opportunity to give a little background on myself, at least more than I would normally give during a brief conversation. As with most, my past experiences help to inform decisions I make in the future, both personally and professionally.

My earliest memories are riding through local parks on the back of my mother's bike and shore-fishing alongside my grandparents. Armed with a forestry degree from Michigan State University, my mother took every chance she could to get me outside, learning about the woods and wildlife that surrounded our home. A half-generation too late to be considered a hippy, she did all she could to instill in me the intrinsic value of woods, waters, and wildlife and empowered me to take my place in the world with an associated responsibility to protect it.

While mom was instilling a love of wildlife, my father and grandfather were teaching me how to use it responsibly. As soon as I could walk, I was following them into the deer woods. Learning the baseline principles of wildlife management was just as important as firearm safety. Game identification, habitat management (timber harvests, controlled burns, cover crops, etc.), maintaining proper age and gender structure for deer, and adaptive harvest management were active discussions at camp and the many weekends spent getting ready for the season. I have a lifetime of memories from deer camp, hunting alongside my dad and grandfather; memories I seek to replicate for my sons as they join me in the field, in the woods, and on the water.



My educational background is in wildlife biology, by way of Michigan State University. After MSU, I joined the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) as a wildlife policy specialist, lobbying at the state and federal level on behalf of their 70,000 members and 200 affiliated conservation clubs. After MUCC, my passion for wildlife policy led me to study law at Wayne State University School of Law, concentrating on environmental law and policy. After passing the bar, I was hired by National Wildlife Federation, where I have spent the last 7 years working with the federation's affiliates and conservation partners to advance state, regional, and national conservation goals on behalf of the organizations 4 million members and supporters.

We're transplants to Minnesota (2012), but we've done all we can to fully immerse ourselves in Minnesota's outdoor and sporting heritage. My son has been playing organized hockey since he was 4 and now his 4-year-old brother gleefully wears his "hand-me-down" skates and gear in his own practices. I've turned from a grouse hunter to predominantly chasing pheasant. We sold our lake fishing equipment

(including the boat) and adapted to river-based recreation and fishing. We're building new deer hunting traditions in Minnesota. All along, our sons have been front and center, getting them outside and instilling in them the traditions and conservation ethic of our parents and grandparents. My best day in the field has nothing to do with a harvest, it's measured by the smiles seen on my son's face and seeing his passion for the outdoors grow. We don't experience the outdoors with our children, we experience it through them.

As I work to grow the federation in Minnesota, I look forward to following up this electronic "introduction" with a personal one soon, talking about your vision for what MCF should/could be and the challenges you are facing. MCF and its board continues to work through the strategic planning process and you have an important part to play in the future of the organization. MCF is a federation, made stronger by the network of members and affiliated organizations within it. I look forward to helping you advance our common conservation and organizational goals in the coming year.

In the meantime, don't be a stranger. I can be reached directly at



# More news....

## *Executive Director Report*

*By Jason Dinsmore*

Happy New Year!

Greetings to 2018 and what hopes to be a banner year for Minnesota Conservation Federation (MCF) as we advance our common goals of protecting wildlife, habitat, and OUR outdoor heritage.

Last year closed out with some pretty exciting changes to the organization. None larger than Gary Botzek's retirement. Gary officially retired from the organization in November, ending his decade-long tenure as the organization's executive director and lobbyist. Gary's strong leadership in St. Paul and across the state ushered forward some amazing conservation milestones. During his tenure, MCF successfully lobbied for:

The passage of the Legacy Amendment ballot initiative, providing for over \$2 Billion (yes, BILLION!) in revenue for clean water, outdoor heritage, habitat, and access to natural resources since 2010.

State Range Improvement Grants to improve and increase access to shooting ranges around the state

Protecting northern Minnesota's lakes and sportfishery from invasive species such as asian carp by closing the lock and dam at St. Anthony Falls

Numerous wildlife and fisheries orders designed to promote vibrant stocks of fish and wildlife and better access to them for Minnesota's hunters and anglers

While we have amazing accomplishments to be proud of and look back upon, the organization must continue to look to the future. MCF has begun a strategic planning process that will be ongoing throughout the calendar year. In that time we will be surveying individual members, clubs and their affiliates, decision-makers at the local, state, and national level, funders/grant makers, and peer organizations to establish a baseline for what MCF is as well as what we

should aspire to be. Once the baseline is created, MCF will then work with our professional planners to chart the path we must take to achieve our goals. We will remain committed to the natural resources and outdoor heritage of the state, but we must make sure we are working sustainably and building an organization that can support the mission we want and need it to.

As we work through the strategic planning process, I am also committed to reconnecting MCF, YOUR statewide representative, to the grassroots network that gives us the ability to advocate at the state, regional, and national level...our clubs and affiliates. Without your voices, MCF couldn't have accomplished all I mentioned above.

We need your voice, energy, and passion for our outdoor heritage now more than ever. MCF's board, along with me and other representatives as needed, will be making ourselves available over the next year to attend club affiliate meetings and events. We want to know what challenges you're facing and want to make sure you know what part you can play in MCF's future. These are discussions that can't take place without a mutual trust that is developed through personal interaction and a willingness to engage. I'll be trying to reach out to our affiliated clubs and partner organizations to introduce myself and our upcoming plans personally, but this column is an open invitation to reach out to me as well.

MCF has a number of challenges ahead as we look to build a sustainable organization that remains the strong advocate for wildlife, habitat, and our outdoor heritage we all want it to be. The organization that emerges at the end of the strategic planning process will only be as strong as the bonds between the affiliated clubs, individual members, and partner organizations that build its base.

I'm excited for the upcoming year

and what it will mean for MCF and our affiliates.

### Upcoming Event

January 24 – MN Gubernatorial Candidate Forum – Hosted by Minnesota Environmental Partnership. MCF is a sponsor organization for the event.

WHAT: Governor Candidate Forum

WHEN: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 6:30-8:30pm Candidate Forum  
8:30-9:30pm Reception and Mingling

WHERE: Anne Smiley Theatre at Hamline University 1530 W. Taylor Ave, St. Paul, MN

HOW: Seating is limited, so please pre-register TODAY @ <http://mnenviroforum.eventbrite.com>.

Event Passcode: MNEnviroForum

We can submit candidate questions for the organizing committee to consider when developing the forum agenda. Please email me at [dinsmorej@mncf.org](mailto:dinsmorej@mncf.org) if you have a question you would like to submit to the candidates.



**MINNESOTA CONSERVATION  
FEDERATION**

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***Minnesota Conservation Federation  
2017-18 Officers***

Lance Ness, President  
Vacant, 1st Vice President  
Don Nickolay, 2nd Vice President  
Brad Gausman, Treasurer  
Steve Maurice, Secretary

**ANY ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION MAY BE E-MAILED  
OR SENT TO THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION  
FEDERATION — [info@mncf.org](mailto:info@mncf.org)**

**Quarterly Meeting**

Saturday, March 10th  
10 am  
Prior Lake Library

16210 Eagle Creek Avenue SE  
Prior Lake, MN 55372  
952-447-3375



**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](mailto:info@mncf.org). All submissions should be directed to Tammy. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is March 16, 2018