

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Mike Pederson <mpederson@siouxsteel.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 2:36 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land Purchases

Buy what you can..when you can !! they quit making it !!!

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Acs <acs@venturecomm.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 2:55 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** land purchases input

Hi, i believe my input was submitted this past year and half, just making sure you still have that. It was under the name Ryan Roehr. If you don't have it still i'll have to retype it then.  
Thank you, Ryan Roehr

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Twedt, Michael  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 3:10 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land buying guide

Paul:

I thought the policy was written well and I support the purchase of as much land as practical.

Regards,

Mike Twedt

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Stanton Family <stantonfamily@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 4:15 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul

Please continue with land and water purchases. Sportsmen are losing access at an alarming rate. Your current criteria looks suitable to me. Very important that our sportsmen's dollars be invested for future generations.

Forrest "Mick" Stanton  
Watertown, SD

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Lucas Nogelmeier <lucas@lewsfireworks.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 4:40 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Acquisition of Public Lands

Dear Secretary Hepler and member of the GF&P Commission,

I am writing today in support of the continued purchase and management of public lands in South Dakota by the GFP and Commission. It is my understanding that there are a number of action/information items before you and I urge you to move forward with the land purchase proposals, as well as all future proposals.

Rather than refer to the litany of talking points you have already seen or heard, I would like you to consider my personal testimony. I was born in South Dakota and lived here for all 36 years of my life. I have no intention of ever leaving. I spend at least forty days each September, October, November and December in the field. While I love to hunt, what I love more is spending time in God's creation with friends, family and my four legged hunting ally, Sage. While I do have access to private land, each year sees more and more of the shelterbelts and sloughs that I grew up hunting stripped and burned to make room for crops. I fully respect the landowners' right to do as they see fit with their private property, but these farming practices undoubtedly have a negative impact on wildlife. Additionally, it reduces available hunting ground to smaller and smaller parcels. The public lands in our state has afforded me the ability to spend more time in the field and I can safely say that the majority of my hunts occur on public land. By purchasing more land, the state is ensuring that the wildife will have a greater opportunity to thrive and we have quality places to hunt.

In closing, I would again respectfully ask that you continue to purchase available land for myself and the rest of the citizens of the great State of South Dakota. Thank you.

Lucas T. Nogelmeier  
Sales Manager  
Lew's Fireworks, Inc.  
605-882-1744  
[www.lewsfireworks.com](http://www.lewsfireworks.com)  
*Veritas vos liberabit*

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Scott Kuck <kucklaw@nvc.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 5:07 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land Acquisition Guidelines

Dear Paul: Just wanted to drop you a note regarding future land acquisition guidelines by GF&P and the Commission. I have attached a copy of the letter below sent by a number of sportsmen's/sportswomen's organizations to Secretary Hepler and the Commission back on November 4, 2015. It is very well written and I believe it echoes my thoughts on this issue very well.

The bottom line as far as I am concerned is that we can and will never have enough public land to meet the demand for the same for all of the various outdoor recreational activities the public is involved in on a daily basis. Continuing to obtain good, quality lands that will meet the department's acquisition guidelines from willing sellers should remain a top priority for the Department and the Commission.

I know that you have worked very hard in your efforts to carry out the land acquisition duties for the Department, and I applaud you on those efforts. Keep up the great work!

Take care and give my best to Steph!

Scott T. Kuck  
Kuck Law Office  
428 N. Hwy. 281, Ste. #3  
Aberdeen, SD 57401  
605-225-5891

November 4, 2015

South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks

South Dakota Game, Fish and Park Commission

523 East Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Secretary Hepler and GF&P Commissioners,

We are writing to express our continuing strong support for the acquisition and management of public wildlife lands and fishing access areas by the Department and the Commission. At your November, 2015 meeting, the Commission has before it several action and information items related to land acquisitions. We want you to know that we support all the land purchase proposals now before you and we add our full support for future acquisitions.

As you know, among the most numerous complaints by sportsmen and women is a lack of quality areas to hunt and fish. Access to private land has become increasingly difficult and commercialized. While charging a fee for hunting is certainly a right of the landowner, the net effect is that wildlife, a publicly owned and managed

resource, is becoming more and more privatized because most sportsmen and women are simply not able to pay the fees charged by commercial operators. As commercialization increases, so does pressure on public lands. South Dakota has 77,121 square miles, of which roughly 440 square miles are state-owned Game Production Areas (GPAs). This figure includes the thousands of acres along the Missouri river turned over to the GF&P by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers under Title VI. The total acreage of existing GPAs works out to be less than 1% of the total SD land mass, and these GPAs must also be shared with nonresident users.

We applaud Governor Dugaard's decision to ease his moratorium on land purchases after two years of potential acquisitions of new GPAs being put on hold. While many excellent projects were abandoned during the moratorium, the GF&P is now once again able to purchase land from willing sellers for the use and benefit of the public.

To be accurate and fair, the GF&P has large partnership programs with Federal agencies and some Non-Government Organizations to acquire access to land by lease and/or easement contracts. Some examples are the Walk In Area program (WIA), Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP) and the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). These public-private programs are effective in providing access at what is generally considered a reasonable cost with low maintenance responsibilities for the GF&P. Despite their effectiveness, these short-term contracts are only temporary. Contracts come and go, and the land is managed by the landowner. Most of these lands are open to public access for perhaps a decade, and in many years are released for haying, grazing or other uses that reduce or limit public recreation opportunities.

By contrast, land owned by the GF&P is managed for wildlife production and public use in perpetuity by the state. The wetlands will not be tiled and drained, tree belts wont be bulldozed, and virgin soils will not be plowed to make way for more crops. The natural features of the land will be there for generations to come, because management decisions are not made according to commodity prices or on how to raise more livestock. In general, public land managed for wildlife is far superior for GF&P purposes than are private lands managed for private profits, especially in the long term.

The undersigned groups are among just a few of the many NGOs who strongly support the GFP Department and GFP Commission in its legal and ethical responsibility to work with willing landowners to acquire and manage publicly owned land for the benefit of sportsmen and all the people of the state and its visitors. These organizations represent thousands of South Dakota sportsmen and many others who visit our great state each year. In summary, we wish to emphasize a very few major points:

Sportsmen are not against paying for access, as such; they simply ask to own the land, through the Department of Game, Fish and Parks and the GFP Commission actions and oversight. Sportsmen are more than willing to pay the costs collectively to make the best use of their license money and Pittman Robinson/Wallop-Breaux program excise taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment. Granted, not everyone who buys guns and ammunition will hunt on a GPA, but ALL have a right to access those areas and ALL benefit in some way.

Not every GPA has to be a showpiece of shelterbelts, food plots and native grass plantings. GF&P has a responsibility to post GPAs, pay the taxes and control weeds. Beyond that, sometimes land is best left alone; not every parcel of land must be a conservation showpiece. The hand of man may, in fact, do more damage than simply letting nature do what it has done for untold thousands of years in our prairie state.

Many farmers who converted grasslands to crops during recent periods of high commodity prices have now sold land into WRP easements or a combination of grassland and wetland easements to remain financially solvent. Some landowners have voluntarily decided to go a step further and sell the land in

fee title to GF&P for the benefit of all, and help bolster our second largest economic activity, tourism in the form of non-resident hunting and fishing. These landowners should have the long-held right to sell to the purchaser of their choice without government interference.

The annual cost of managing an average GPA is about the same average cost of renting land, although there are variables depending on the GPA and on the particular rental program. We understand there are also upfront costs, including the purchase price and closing costs. However, the long-term value of public land for sportsmen is almost always better than relatively short-term leases of private lands. In addition, GFP is required to pay the full amount of local property taxes just like any landowner in our State.

GF&P land managers have demonstrated the ability to manage these lands based upon the needs of those willing to pay through the purchase of licenses to hunt and fish. GFP Department Staff have a good record of land stewardship aimed at satisfying needs for game and non-game species alike, while also meeting the demands of weed control, fencing and working with adjoining and local landowners to provide best management practices.

These are but a few of the reasons why we fully support the purchase of more public land from willing sellers to be used and managed as GPAs. Thank you for your time and attention, and please continue with your work to increase the acreage of publicly owned land in the state.

Sincerely,

Rich Widman

President

South Dakota Wildlife Federation

929 8th Ave

Brookings, SD 57006

Bill Antonides

President

SDWF Camo Coalition

514 North Arch Street

Aberdeen, SD 57401

Kelly Kistner

President

SD Division Izaak Walton League

603 Lakeshore Drive

McCook Lake, SD 57049

Charles Dieter

President

South Dakota Waterfowl Association

P.O. Box 8381

Brookings, SD 57006

Jeff Heidelbauer

Regional Vice President

Bob Bucholz

President



Ducks Unlimited-Great Plains Region

PO Box 292

Custer, SD 57730

Whitetails Unlimited

Brown County Chapter

3208 Cyprus Street North

Aberdeen, SD 57401

Glenn Imberi

Past President/Co-founder

Northeastern South Dakota Walleye Club

1308 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St.

Aberdeen, SD 57401

James Peterson

President

South Dakota Bowhunters Inc.

PO Box 351

Pierre, SD 57501

Mike McKernan

President, SD State Chapter

National Wild Turkey Federation

46754 150<sup>th</sup> Street

Twin Brooks, SD 57269

Rocky Niewenhuis

State Director

South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited

P.O. Box 89514

Sioux Falls, SD 57109

Matt Pearsons

President

Whitetail Bowmen Archery Club, Inc.

PO Box 1225

Aberdeen, SD

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** JOHN GORS <JAGPAG1@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 5:24 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul

Mr. Coughlin

I write to express my strong support for a strong land acquisition program for the state of South Dakota. Public access continues to be diminished in the face of commercial ventures and if this continues, South Dakota citizens and their children will be foreclosed from many outdoor activities. How sad for something like this to happen in a rural state like South Dakota.

Thank you for your support!

John Gors  
507 Bulow St.  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
[jagpag1@msn.com](mailto:jagpag1@msn.com)

## **Comes, Rachel**

---

**From:** Dana Rogers <dana.rogers.1@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 7:44 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Purchase of Public Land

Mr. Coughlin,

I'm writing to comment in favor of the SDGF&P purchasing more land to put into the public trust and to be used by all citizens of SD and our visitors. It is imperative in this age of population increase and shrinking wildlife habitat that we have more land to hunt and recreate on. Please take these comments into consideration and I appreciate your efforts on behalf of SD wildlife and sportsmen.

**Dana R. Rogers**

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Steve and Becky Doyle <bs33doyle@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 8:24 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** GF P land

WEEDS, WEEDS WEEDS. Mostly THISTLES. KILL THEM!!!!!!!!!!!!!! They make a very effective spray now days. Your state property l;ooks like hell. We are supposed to control all ours on our property. Fields, yards and ditches. Do your part. I dont want to have to kill what you dont. Come on!!!!!!

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Ryan Johnson <rwillj@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 9:33 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Public Land Purchase

Dear sir,

I am writing to support the SD GFP policy on purchasing public lands. I rely on public lands for duck, pheasant, and deer hunting opportunities as I've found over the years its harder and harder to obtain permission on private property. I've also see a significant increase in the number of people using and enjoying public land over the years. I do have a couple comments on the propose policy letter for your consideration.

1. Consider paying more than fee value based on the quality of the habitat. (If you amortize the cost over forever - the payment amount is almost zero)
2. Focus on obtaining riparian, wetlands, and drainage areas. "Farm the best conserve the rest"
3. Partner with private partners to maximize dollars spent.
4. Parter with conservation districts on water quality initiatives to maximize public dollars for mutual benefits.

Thank you for all you do!

Ryan Johnson  
313 W 9th St.  
Dell Rapids, SD

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Dennes Barrett <biglenz@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 9:43 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Cc:** Chris Hesla; Chris Hesla  
**Subject:** Land purchases by the State

Dear Sirs,

As a lifelong wildlife photographer, conservationist, hunter and outdoorsman, I believe it is essential for the state of South Dakota to allow land acquisitions for the good of future residents of this fine state. Private landowners are becoming increasingly more restrictive with access including sensible hunting practices instead of the almighty pay hunting as an example.

It is up to YOU to save parcels that set a standard so OUR grandchildren's grandchildren can enjoy a wide range of lands our great state contains. Please look at this rule from our future generations standpoint. They will be glad you had the fore site to allow the purchase of these lands.

Thank you  
Dennes Barrett  
Box 309  
Lead SD

Sent from my iPhone

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** wick@gwtc.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 12:10 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Future Game, Fish & Parks land acquisition

Dear Mr. Coughlin,

I live south of Hot Springs, SD. In the last 20 years I have been fortunate enough to be able to assist with Game, Fish & Parks land purchases in my area. I am a long-time member of the National Wild Turkey Federation and we have contributed financially to the Romey and Friendshu purchases. In addition I was able to provide input toward the Hill Ranch purchase. I can report that all 3 of those land acquisitions have been very beneficial to South Dakota outdoorsmen. I have personally seen them in use. As a sportsman and taxpayer, I appreciate the fact that South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks continues to pay the full amount of property taxes for purchased lands. As a grandfather of potential future grandkid sportsmen, I appreciate the availability of useable lands which do not require a user fee. Not all parents have the financial ability to pay the access fees for young outdoorsmen & outdoorswomen. Please encourage our state leadership to allow future land purchase opportunities for GF&P. All landowners should be able to sell their land to any willing buyer.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Roland Ted Wick

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Brad Bauer <bjbauer@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 8:37 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Public lands

Hello Paul,

Brad Bauer from Mitchell here. Paul, I am very fortunate to live in this great state. I think that the outdoor opportunities give us options that many people don't have. That said one option we need more of is more public land for people to be able to hunt on. That is one thing I miss about Montana where I lived for about 6 years. The western states have the advantage of all the National Forest, BLM state land etc. That is one thing we lack to a large extent. I would encourage the continued purchase of more land to give more people more options. I am lucky in that I have family and friends with farms. If I didn't my options would be more limited. Many people do not have that option and do not have the means to pay for a place to hunt.

I think the Game, Fish and Parks does a great job of managing the fish and wildlife.

Thanks,

Brad Bauer



## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** John P. Blackburn <jblaw@iw.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 10:23 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Purchase and public lands

I think South Dakota personnel and management folks have done a good job purchasing and dedicating land to the public for recreational purposes -- especially hunting! If I can help, please let me know. Please let the State -- have South Dakota continue purchasing public hunting ground . John P. Blackburn, 665-5550, 100 W Fourth St. Yankton, S. D. [jblaw@iw.net](mailto:jblaw@iw.net)

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Dan Anderson <hellmo@frontier.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 11:30 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land purchasing guidelines

To Whom it may Concern:

I have read your guidelines for GFP land purchases. It seems to be based on common sense and doesn't need much in the way of revision, in my opinion. I do have two comments:

1. I would support a land purchase program that is more aggressive than it has been in the recent past. With the pressures on wildlife habitat on private land, it makes sense to safeguard as much as possible. The pheasant economy can only be safeguarded with good habitat, and sufficient amounts of land managed specifically for wildlife is one of the best ways to do this.
2. I would encourage GFP to work more closely with the Office of School and Public Lands to manage its holdings in a more sustainable, wildlife friendly manner.

Thanks for your time and effort on this. – Dan Anderson, 330 Hove St., Vienna, SD 57271 [hellmo@frontier.com](mailto:hellmo@frontier.com)

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Mike and Diane Lang <midi89lang@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 11:08 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Yes, definitely do get back in the business of buying more land for the public

Greetings Mr. Coughlin,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude that the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department is finally considering purchasing more public land.

Governor Dennis Daugaard's policy of discontinuing this program years ago was poorly thought out and unfortunately demonstrates his priorities of favoring the few wealthy landowners in this state over the public.

Please continue to use our funds whenever possible and practical to acquire more land for the continuing enjoyment of the public.

Feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance in this very noble and worthwhile endeavor.

Mike Lang  
11836 Wildhorse Crt.  
Rapid City, SD 57703  
(605) 484-7174

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Kenneth Dulik <kenneth\_dulik@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 1:24 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** GFP land purchases

I live in Brown County, South Dakota, and am an avid outdoorsmen. In the last 5 years, we have seen a tremendous loss of habitat on private land which had had a direct correlation to the decrease of wildlife. We don't even have habitat along fence lines anymore on private land as every inch had been put into crops. A decrease in wildlife means a decrease in licenses that GFP sells. Please buy more GPA's or any other permanent lands you can before it is lost to tiling and more clear cutting.

Wildlife won't survive our winters without good cover. Most farmers around here destroy all potential winter cover, every year, in the hope they can plant it the next year. In reality they rarely can plant those areas because they will be too wet in the spring, but the wildlife didn't get to use that area in the winter.

I hunt on GPA's and other public land far more than I do on private land. My kids do as well and my granddaughters will start in a couple years. I don't have family land to hunt on and it is getting harder every year to find private land to hunt on.

Please buy whatever land you can from willing sellers and name the piece after their family if they desire.

Ken Dulik

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Kenneth Dulik <kenneth\_dulik@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 1:49 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** RE: GFP land purchases

You are welcome. I would be willing to discuss the issue further with them if they would like.

Ken

---

**From:** Coughlin, Paul [mailto:[Paul.Coughlin@state.sd.us](mailto:Paul.Coughlin@state.sd.us)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 1:46 PM  
**To:** 'Kenneth Dulik'  
**Subject:** RE: GFP land purchases

Ken –

Thank you for the response and encouragement. Because they'd like to see all comments received, I'll be sharing these with the GFP Commission as they consider adopting the proposed land acquisition priorities and guidelines.

Paul Coughlin | Habitat Program Administrator  
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks  
523 East Capital Avenue | Pierre, SD 57501  
605.773.4194 | [Paul.Coughlin@state.sd.us](mailto:Paul.Coughlin@state.sd.us)

---

**From:** Kenneth Dulik [mailto:[kenneth\\_dulik@fws.gov](mailto:kenneth_dulik@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 1:24 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** GFP land purchases

I live in Brown County, South Dakota, and am an avid outdoorsmen. In the last 5 years, we have seen a tremendous loss of habitat on private land which had had a direct correlation to the decrease of wildlife. We don't even have habitat along fence lines anymore on private land as every inch had been put into crops. A decrease in wildlife means a decrease in licenses that GFP sells. Please buy more GPA's or any other permanent lands you can before it is lost to tiling and more clear cutting.

Wildlife won't survive our winters without good cover. Most farmers around here destroy all potential winter cover, every year, in the hope they can plant it the next year. In reality they rarely can plant those areas because they will be too wet in the spring, but the wildlife didn't get to use that area in the winter.

I hunt on GPA's and other public land far more than I do on private land. My kids do as well and my granddaughters will start in a couple years. I don't have family land to hunt on and it is getting harder every year to find private land to hunt on.

Please buy whatever land you can from willing sellers and name the piece after their family if they desire.

Ken Dulik

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** sblackb@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 2:07 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** GFP Land Acquisitiin

Dear Paul and all GFP personnel,  
First, thank you all for doing the so many wonderful things that you do!

Unfortunately you have the the duty of trying to appease everyone, and unfortunately over my past 40-50 years of hunting and fishing related activities, the little guy with not much of a budget, and the farms getting bigger cuts out much availability to the average South Dakota hunter and even worse for the out of staters, and most importantly shrinks habitat to the point that our wildlife has had to change just to survive.

We sure don't want our current hunters AND our lineage to lose all oppportunity (unless you have big money) as has happened in many European areas.

My position may not be seen as favorable to some of my agriculturally connected friends, but we have to do something. I have even been precluded from some of my own grounds recently in order to allow others to hunt.

I have been a proponent of the state buying as much land as they can and I was very disappointed that Gov. Daugard was handcuffed by a budget into declaring a moratorium on new acquisitions.

I look to you folks to help this situation by purchasing and hopefully purchasing a lot. It seems this may be the only way to help the "little guy", the casual hunter, the guy that doesn't have time to go out and make contacts, and our out of staters that come in to enjoy our state's bounty while they spend a lot of money!

I worry more for the next generations than myself as I still have old way connections and have enjoyed more memorable hunts than most will ever take part in.

Thanks again for your efforts. If I can help in any way please contact me.

Scott Blackburn  
1608 Chalkstone Rd.  
Yankton, SD 57078  
(605) 728-2557=cell  
[sblackb@gmail.com](mailto:sblackb@gmail.com)

Sent from my iPhone

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Liliias Jarding <liliiasjarding@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 2:08 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land Purchase Priorities

Dear Mr. Coughlin:

I understand the Commission is looking for input on land purchases. As someone whose property is bordered on two sides by GFP land, I am very interested in the health and beauty of our state GFP lands.

My suggestions for priorities for land purchases would be:

- \* lands that provide recreational opportunities and silence, such as hiking, climbing, and enjoying nature
- \* lands that are roadless (or nearly so)
- \* lands that are close enough to population centers to provide additional opportunities for youth education and enjoyment. The Outdoor Campuses are wonderful, but the one here in Rapid City is very busy, and there is definitely room for additional hands-on youth education. The youth are the future of the GFP department and our healthy ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Liliias Jarding, Ph.D.  
Rapid City, S.D.

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** John H. Davidson <johnhenrydavidson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 2:36 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Agency Policy on Land Acquisition (July 1, 2016) Citizen Comment

7/21/16

Dear Mr. Coughlin:

This letter is in response to your Agency's recent publication of a Land Acquisition Policy, and is a message of strong support for an aggressive land acquisition policy, particularly for Game Production Areas, Parks, and Nature Areas.

The laws of South Dakota impose on the State and your Agency an *affirmative* trust obligation to avoid impairment of the State's natural resources, including air, water and wildlife. Yours is the obligation of a trustee, and every indication is that you are failing to protect the body of the trust. The evidence is undisputed that nearly every native specie is in decline at an unprecedented pace. Migratory waterfowl and other birds, plants, fish and, most especially, native grasslands, are in danger of becoming mere memories. Most of the evidence is available in publications of your Agency and other reputable sources with which you and your colleagues are familiar. For example, the Proceedings of the Third Biennial Conference on Conservation of American Grasslands was just published (your Agency was an active participant) chronicling the decline. Similarly your Agency participates in two comprehensive joint ventures -- Prairie Pothole and Northern Great Plains -- which also chronicle the decline in habitat and wildlife, proving, in effect, the State's failure to honor its Public Trust obligations.

This Public Trust obligation cannot be met by simply doing as little as possible, which seems to be the current situation. Inaction in the face of an obvious crisis is intolerable.

I also want to urge Park expansion. The "regular" people in the State -- those not fortunate enough to own river or mountain cabins or memberships in private resorts -- are hungry for outdoor opportunities. My visits to our Parks indicates that while they are competently managed, they are overwhelmed with potential visitors; an expansion is required. Fortunately, most parks are co-extensive with the trust obligation to provide protection for endangered flora and fauna.

Land acquisition policies such as those described in your Policy tend to be excessively cautious, overly concerned with potential political opposition. My experience indicates that there are many opportunities for voluntary land acquisitions, if you will only move and ferret-out these chances, and seize them.

Thank you for reading these comments, which I request be placed on the record.

John H. Davidson  
President, Northern Prairies Land Trust [www.northernprairie.org](http://www.northernprairie.org)



## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Jim Zeck <jzeck2@sio.midco.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 3:23 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Input on Land Purchasing Guidelines

I am writing in regards to a request for input on the Land Purchasing Guidelines for SD GFP.

I have reviewed the current guidelines and would like to make a few suggestions for improvement.

#1. In regards to disposal of surplus property, I see no surplus property. As our population grow and becomes more urbanized many people have lost access to lands. We should not be selling surplus land we should be adding land to accommodate an growing more urbanized citizenry.

#2. In regards to leasing lands for access on various programs such was the walk in, crep and other programs. I find many of these in areas far away from current population centers and many in poor a state in its ability to support wildlife. Many times cover has been removed for agricultural operations leaving little to attract wild life and providing little opportunity for the citizens of SD. The money on leases would be better spent to purchase land that could be more effectively managed for wildlife and our citizens.

Survey after survey has shown that the #1 reason for the decrease in the percent of the population who actively participate in hunting is access to quality habitat. Private lands are difficult to access and for many if access is available it is at a cost that they can't afford. As we expand opportunities for non-residents to enjoy SD we take away opportunity for residents who can't afford to compete monetarily with the deep pockets the non-resident hunter. Many of us have found ourselves priced out of quality hunting lands. We hunt the road ditches for the few pheasants who make the diurnal migration to the roadside.

Big game access is even harder, and as more and more non-residents find their way into SD to hunt it closes off even more areas to the average resident hunter.

In conclusion I do not support the disposal of surplus lands nor do I believe the current land lease programs are providing are residents a quality hunting experience. I do support the acquisition of more gfp land that can be set aside for the use of our citizens and managed in such a way to benefit all wildlife and offer and the resident hunters that aren't able to afford private access.

I thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

James Zeck  
4108 S Judy Ave  
Sioux Falls SD 57103  
Ph 605-371-0282

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Widman, Mark  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 7:25 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Seeking Input on Land Acquisition by the SD G,F&P

Paul

As a member of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, an avid pheasant hunter and a lifelong resident of this state; I strongly support the acquisition and management of public wildlife lands and fishing access areas by the Department and the Commission.

I can't say it better than the letter written by the SDWF and addressed to the Department and to the Commission on November 4th, 2015. "Land owned by the GF&P is managed for wildlife production and public use in perpetuity by the state. The wetlands will not be tiled and drained, tree belts won't be bulldozed, and virgin soils will not be plowed to make way for more crops. The natural features of the land will be there for generations to come, because management decisions are not made according to commodity prices or on how to raise more livestock. In general, public land managed for wildlife is far superior for GF&P purposes than are private lands managed for private profits, especially in the long term."

Sincerely,

Mark Widman  
2315 N. Devon Ave.  
Tea, SD 57064

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Jerry Wilson <wilson57069@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2016 8:58 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** public lands

Dear Paul,

I strongly support continued acquisition of lands for the public to enjoy. Besides this enjoyment, the program protects special lands from development so they will be available for future generations of South Dakotans.

Thank you,

Jerry Wilson  
Vermillion

Environmental writer and author and retired managing editor of South Dakota Magazine

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Jeff Smyrak <JSmyrak@cbpinc.biz>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2016 11:58 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** In my opinion...

Mr. Coughlin-

Our SD Game Production Areas are amazing and I fully support the continued acquisition and improvements of these lands for the benefit of all of our residents and non-residents. As a life-long resident and former GF&P employee that helped with controlled burns and native prairie grass seeding, I have first-hand experience with the sights and sounds that come from the wildlife that exists there and the enjoyment from the people that visit them and utilize them. I would have no problem paying more in license fees to support more acquisitions and also fully support raising non-resident license fees to reasonable levels to help support additional acquisitions. Everyone that visits and utilizes these resources needs to pay their fair share and non-resident fees have historically been extremely low when compared to neighboring states that don't offer the same experience as we always have.

Respectfully-

Jeff Smyrak/605-214-6576

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** matthew perkins <perkins260@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2016 12:22 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** License fees and public land

Hi Paul, just thought I'd throw this idea out there. If the gfp wants to purchase land for public use during a time when the opportunity exist due to crop prices and land prices being temporarily low, they could think about offering a lifetime license to residents. I for 1 would buy 1 immediately. I will be a lifelong hunter and that would generate a spike in income that could be used for the purchase of land. Also I'm not apposed to increase license fees, but the economics wouldn't change much unless there was s significant increase in annual rates. This may cause some less fortunate to elect not to get a license, and may cause them to take there chances and not purchase a license at all. I on the other hand am aware at how much nonresident hunters yearn for the opportunity to hunt waterfowl in South Dakota. That being said, it will turn into a mere memory if the # of nonresident license's sold continues to increase. In my mind the only way to accomplish the purchase of property is to increase nonresident license fees and offer a lifetime license to residents. A small increase in annual fees will not generate enough increased income to be worth it. At the same time the nonresident who do come here to hunt wouldn't even consider not coming due to the license fees being too high. The cost of a license is a drop in the bucket compared to what they spend each time they come here to hunt. Thanks for the consideration and let's keep South Dakota the best waterfowl and pheasant hunting state in the Union. Thanks, Matt Perkins.

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Larry & Janice Goetz <rjgoetz@gwtc.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2016 3:28 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** public land purchase

I am contacting you to voice my opinion on the issue of game, fish and parks obtaining land for public use. I am very much in favor of Game, Fish and Parks being able to buy land for the use of the public for hunting and fishing. This is good for all the residents of South Dakota as well as non residents who visit our state. Please do all you can to help the sportsmen and women of our state find places to hunt and fish.

Thank you very much.

Larry Goetz

912 7<sup>th</sup> St.

Springfield, SD 57062 Phone: 605-369-2419

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Leonard Spomer <leonard.spomer@beckmtr.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2016 3:59 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** comments on land purchases to Commission

July 22, 2016

GF&P Commissioners and Staff

I was glad to hear that Governor Daugaard finally lifted his ban on land purchases by the Department of GF&P.

Do to the high, and increasing use, of our public lands by residents and nonresidents, I would encourage the Department to purchase, or long term lease, as much land as they can possibly afford. And I would encourage them to purchase or lease not only for small game, but big game (especially deer) hunting as well.

The increase in commercial hunting and guides locking up leases on large tracts of private land has displaced countless deer hunters West River. My family just recently lost access to private land that we have hunted for over twenty years. And trying to find a new willing landowner is next to impossible.

We cannot blame the landowners for locking up their property for family, or commercial interests when they are paid a handsome sum. But, unfortunately it becomes increasingly difficult for residents who are not directly connected with the land, by family, to find a place to hunt.

Therefore, again I would ask that the GF&P purchase or lease as much land as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely  
Leonard Spomer  
20476 Browning Road  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605-222-1091

## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Jelene <jtilde02@triotel.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 22, 2016 4:02 PM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** GFP land purchase

*Rich Widman's letter pretty well covered the topic. I would only add that even though GF&P is a government agency, it's purchase of land is not only a benefit to the public as nature access, but also conserves our natural resources. I know this has been repeated time after time, but it seems there are many people who can't seem to grasp the concept of conservation. GF&P land is one of the few government agencies that does so much for so many and funded by the users. Kudos to the Game, Fish and Parks Dept. for doing a great job! Thanks!*

Larry Tilden



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)



## Comes, Rachel

---

**From:** Moisan, John  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 23, 2016 8:27 AM  
**To:** Coughlin, Paul  
**Subject:** Land Purchase Suggestions

Paul: I am a 35 years of service retired state employee and landowner of 640 acres in Northwest Tripp County. For my entire life, I have been an active sportsman including hunting small game, waterfowl, big game, and fishing. The subject of "the state buying land" has always been controversial among landowners and the public and I'm sure that won't change anytime soon. At the same time, the state implemented the "walk in program" which works for some landowners, but the truth is.....as most landowners go, it's not worth it for the price. That said, I'd like to make the following comments:

- The state should consider 10-15 year leases of appropriate lands which benefit sportsmen, wildlife, erosion concerns, and adjacency to state land factors.
- The state should consider paying "the per acre going rate" (as determined by the FSA and NRCS) which, in my area, is \$52 an acre (for CRP), depending on the soil, erosion factors, wildlife habitat potential, and so on.
- Under a "state lease program", the state would pay the "going CRP rate" with the landowners only responsibility being to spray weeds, fix the fence and pay the taxes. Because the FSA/NRCS restrictions are so cumbersome and paperwork heavy, a "state lease program" would be far better for the landowner and the state over the long term.
- Under a "state lease program", rules, regulations, and management plan would need to be developed for each leased plot and the landowner would need to agree and sign a 10-15 year contract with GFP.
- Under a "state lease program", GFP would develop the plan to benefit the necessary local factors.
- For example, (I'll use my land in Tripp County): The state would lease 120 acres from me for \$52 an acre for 15 years at a cost of \$6,240 per year for 15 years at a total cost to the state of \$93,600. On the 120 acres, the state could do whatever it wants to manage the property. As a landowner, my job is to spray the weeds, fix the fence and pay the taxes which vary depending on the location and type of land). In my case, the taxes are about \$6.40 per acre or \$770 per year. Over the term of the lease, my landowner costs would be roughly \$900 a year including taxes, fence maintenance and weed control while my annual profit on that land would be \$5340.00. The 15 year cost to GFP would be \$93,600 plus whatever management the state wanted to do on the property. Over that same time, I would make approximately \$80,000 with no worries except fence, weeds, and taxes. (As long as the state maintains a controlled access to that property.....ie parking lot and no vehicle traffic.)
- If I were to sell that same land to GFP (which I wouldn't do), the appraised price (as of March 1, 2016) is \$300,000 (\$2500 per acre). The state would save over \$206,000 over 15 years.....leasing vs buying.
- Basically, I still own the land, am getting the FSA/NRCS price, and I'm making a reasonable profit for my business.
- Basically, GFP has total control of the management of that same land for a substantially reduced price over purchasing.
- In this case, it's a landowner "business decision" and a GFP management/access decision.....everybody is happy and the Federal Government is out of the deal with no massive bureaucracy involved.

- I'm sure landowners and the public would be far happier with this arrangement rather than GFP purchased land.
- This is even more important with highly fluctuating land and crop prices, plus it locks the state and landowner into a 15 year agreement to be re-evaluated in 15 years.
- An "option to buy" could be added to the contract at the end of the contract and actual sale could be negotiated at that time.
- Call it a "State CRP" which fits in with the Governor's Wildlife Habitat Plan for South Dakota.

Those are my comments. I hope they help. John G. Moisan (605)280-1750