

President's Report –

Legislative Session – While the session is nearing its end, you should know that we continued to monitor the legislative session daily. It is remarkable to see how legislative bills change (for better and worse) as well as the legislators themselves. There were some bills that involved the Game and Fish Department, and fortunately nothing was in our wheelhouse. Some license fees will go up in April 2026 and there was the addition of a waterfowl habitat stamp. I'm all for improving any type of waterfowl habitat because it has a mutually beneficial impact on what we do and love. I do get around this country a bit teaching and see where the "stamp" gets abused. In some states, every harvestable mammal, bird, and fish has its own "stamp", which is a personal cost over and above the normal hunting or fishing license. As North Dakotans, we need to make sure this "stamp" mentality doesn't grow any further. The other takeaway from this session is we need to make damn sure our legislative session stays at 90 days every other year. I see with every session that legislators somehow feel they are seemingly more important, and North Dakota needs a year-round legislature, every year. That mentality is nothing but foolishness.

Wild Outdoor Women – North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department hosted a Wild Outdoor Women winter event at Lake Metigoshe State Park near Bottineau on February 7 - 9. We participated and sponsored a fur handling session for 10 ladies. Each had the opportunity to skin, flesh, and board a muskrat and a mink. It is something they took home with them and can be tanned after the pelts are dry. The comments at the end of the day expressed appreciation for the opportunity we provided.

Donations – since the last issue of the Dakota Skinner, we've received 4 coyote pelts with the feet on from Chris Tischaefter. Keep us in mind for future donations.

Tanned Pelts for Sale – check out our website (www.ndfhta.com) for the latest in available tanned pelts.

Summer Rendezvous - The summer rendezvous is a family and friends' event being held on Saturday June 21st at the Velva Wildlife Club. Velva Wildlife Club sits on 52 acres of Mouse River bottomland three miles west of Velva on Hwy. 52. The club is a multi-activity location that includes an education facility, rifle range, 3 house trap shooting range, 3 bag target archery range, 23 target 3D archery range, and a new catch and release pond stocked with northern pike. The archery ranges and fishing pond will be open during our rendezvous. The river bottomland provides a variety of habitats which make it a great place for education classes and demonstrations. Primitive camping exists on the grounds, and Ceder (yep, that's the way it is spelled) Lodge (701-338-3080) in Velva has both motel rooms and hook-ups for campers. Velva also has a city park which has camping.

Demonstrations – let me know what you'd like to see. The habitat and facilities at the Velva Wildlife Club will suit just about anything. Make your suggestions known so we can plan some excellent demonstrations.

Auction Items – we are always in need of new, slightly used, and used items for our auction. Past auctions have been a blend of stand-up comedy and opportunities for a deal or two. In all honesty, it is an important event that benefits the association and the education program. Items that have already been donated include rifle scopes; traps; trapping equipment; stretchers; snowshoes; Mr. Heaters; hard and soft water fishing equipment; woodworking equipment; and cable. If you know you will be donating some items, let me know so we can include the information in our advertising.

Vendors – are welcome and vendor space is free. Let me know if you have any questions or special needs.

Election Cycle - The positions of Vice President (Travis Leier), Secretary (Chris Tischaefter) and Directors for Districts 1 (Garrett Volk - NW) and 3 (Chris Flann - SE) are up for election in 2025. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in one of these capacities, you may nominate them for a position. Please check with them beforehand to ensure they are interested. All nominations must be received by May 31 of this year and can be mailed to "NDFHTA", PO Box 334, Butte, ND 58723. A District Director maintains the lines of communication with the membership and the association, works with other Board members on matters between membership meetings, and takes care of events within the respective district. If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

Although printed before, these words serve as a reminder for all. Many of our officers and directors have been in leadership positions for quite some time or have returned to them out of necessity. Like other entities – townships, churches, schools, and similar associations or organizations struggle with finding folks for their leadership positions. A position of leadership should not be a life sentence. Our association is blessed with members who are talented, skilled, and passionate about our future. Consider helping when and where you can.

Annual Meeting - Our annual meeting will be held during our summer rendezvous on Saturday, June 21, 2025. The meeting will begin at 12:30 PM. The location is the Velva Wildlife Club, Velva, North Dakota.

Dakota Skinner Survey – we included a membership survey in the last issue of the Dakota Skinner. The response rate was low, but we do take everyone we did receive seriously. Some important notes from the results included we like firearms and money for raffle prizes; the 25% of the membership who renew annually were not in favor of having a recurring debit to pay their annual membership; most favored a mail versus a digital copy of the Dakota Skinner; most chose the mink to adorn our next edition of our education manual; the returns rated the performance of the association at 4.86 on a scale of 1 (lowest) through 5 (highest), with no score being lower than 4; and there was one suggestion for our summer rendezvous demo schedule – how to do ears when preparing a pelt. If you have a copy of the survey yet, please fill it out and send it back to me. We are always interested in what you have to say.

Dakota Skinner – there was a reason to ask you how you'd like to receive the newsletter in our last membership survey. We must financially figure out how we can continue to deliver the information in the Dakota Skinner to each of you. Even though we receive some benefit from our printer and PreSort bulk mailing, today's costs are not allowing us to make ends meet. A couple of known options are to provide a .pdf document to you through an email and post the same on our website. A cell phone text and a posting to our social media page could also be used to notify you of a new issue posted to our website. Granted, it will take a little bit of getting used to, but this will allow us to even out financially. Another option is to raise dues across all membership categories, and I would like to leave that as the last resort and used only when everything else failed.

Education Program Highlight – We have two dog release kits for folks that spend their outdoors with a four-legged friend. One kit contains our three dog release brochures and an additional information sheet that explains how to use a 24" heavy duty cable tie to compress a spring of a bodygrip trap. This is done to help aid removal of the bodygrip trap from a dog. This kit contains two heavy duty 24" cable ties to perform this task, one for each spring. The other kit mirrors the first but also includes a cable cutter in case the dog encounters a cable device. Each kit is enclosed in a see through 5" x 10" ziplock pouch and can easily be stored in a jacket pocket, hunting vest, cargo pocket, or backpack. These are available to anyone, so please spread the word. The information about each kit and how to obtain it will be posted to our website shortly (www.ndfhta.com).

Spring Advisory Board Meetings – The spring advisory board meetings will be in mid-April. Special thanks to Travis Leier for asking us to sponsor the district 2 meeting at the Velva Wildlife Club on April 14th. Sponsors usually provide snacks and drinks for the meeting. We bolster the event by having all our educational materials and a pelt collection for everyone to touch and talk about. It's a great place to network and just listen to stories. Everyone usually has one when it comes to furbearers.

In closing - That's about it for now. Let me know if you'd like to purchase any of the tanned pelts we have – again, for our education program. Remember to keep your membership current and be informed. As we go about our business calling or trapping, consider sharing your travels and experiences with someone who has yet to know about these activities. Fur hunt and trap as much as you can. You will run out of years before you run out of the love you have for it. Until next time, take care, be safe and responsible, and enjoy what Mother Nature and North Dakota have to offer.
Respectfully, Rick Tischaefter