



2200 N. 33rd St. • P.O. Box 30370 • Lincoln, NE 68503-0370 • Phone: 402-471-0641

MINUTES
October 20, 2017

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met in the Innovation Space at Kiewit University 1450 Mike Fahey Street Omaha, NE for the transaction of business, advance public notice having been given through release to news media and official public notice published in the Lincoln Journal Star on October 4, 2017.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Fisher advised this meeting was being held in conformance with the State Open Meeting Act and the act was available for review on the table at the back of the room. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Members present were Norris Marshall, Kearney; Rex Fisher, Omaha; Rick Brandt, Lincoln; Dan Kreitman, Wahoo; Mark Spurgin, Paxton; Bob Allen, Eustis; Jim Ernst, Columbus; Pat Berggren, Broken Bow; and Dick Bell, Omaha.

Minutes of the business meeting held August 17, 2017 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve the minutes. Voting aye: Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for August and September were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Brandt to approve the financial vouchers. Voting aye: Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report Part 1

Director Jim Douglas thanked the Kiewit University for their hospitality and HDR for co-hosting the Commission the evening before.

The Omaha Mayor's Chief of Staff Marty Bilek was present to accept a Resolution of Appreciation on behalf of the City of Omaha which was presented by Chairman Rex Fisher.

Director Douglas requested agenda item #10 be moved up and he would continue his report after it was addressed.

Furbearer and Carnivore Program Manager Sam Wilson was present to review the Nebraska Mountain Lion Management Plan, which is intended to guide management decisions regarding mountain lions based upon the agency's mission, as well as the principles and goals laid out in the plan. Sam advised that current population data is not available at this time as DNA studies have not been completed yet. The most recent data suggested a total population of 33 lions.

TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT

OutdoorNebraska.org

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Bell and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Fisher shared that there have been over 38,000 mountain lion specialty license plates sold which have brought wildlife education dollars to the Commission. Director Douglas thanked Senator Ernie Chambers, who was present, for introducing the legislation which is making that possible.

Director's Report Part 2

General Manager John Winkler was present on behalf of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District to accept a Prominent Partners Award from Chairman Rex Fisher in appreciation of their continued partnership with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Representatives Scott Smathers and Chris Edwards of the Nebraska Sportsmen's Foundation were in attendance to present the Commission with a \$10,000 check for the Hunters Helping the Hungry Program.

Director Douglas reported that the Commission has been approved as a member of the Wildlife Violators Compact with an official start date of November 7.

The Commission has also gotten approval for a northern Nebraska Early Teal Season

End Director's Report

Chairman Fisher opened the public hearing to consider the creation of Commission Order C06 Sport Fishing at 8:33 A.M. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal was present to review staff recommendations to move open seasons, daily bag limits, possession limits, length limits, and open areas to Commission Orders. There was no public comment, the public hearing was closed at 8:39 P.M.

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mr. Spurgin to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Bell, Berggren and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal reviewed highlights of some of the Omaha area Natural Resource District Projects including Dam Site 15A, which was visited yesterday on the field trip, as well as other projects currently in the works.

Chairman Fisher opened the public hearing to consider amendments to Chapter 2, Fisheries Regulations, Section 006 Sport Fishing at 8:52 A.M. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal reviewed staff recommendations to remove the items that were just approved to go into Commission Order C06 from Fisheries Regulations Section 006 Sport Fishing. There was no public comment, the public hearing was closed at 8:56 P.M.

Motion by Mr. Kreitman and seconded by Mr. Ernst to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen,

Bell, Berggren, Spurgin and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Fisher read the staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the January Commission meeting to consider amendments to Administrative Regulations, Chapter 1, Section 006, Rules related to fees for licenses and permits and deployed military permits.

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Marshall to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Marshall and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Fisher opened the public hearing at 8:59 A.M. to hear staff recommendations to amend Commission Order C05, Game Birds (not including turkey, coots and migratory waterfowl), Furbearers, Cottontail Rabbit and Squirrels, regarding shooting hours. Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations to change shooting hours from sunrise to sunset based upon safety concerns due to low light conditions and the ability to correctly identify game before sunrise. She shared statistics from hunter surveys and presented a sunrise photo to show how difficult it is to see hunters in hunter orange. There is no regulation requiring hunter orange. Commissioner Kreitman expressed his opinion that the Commission should take steps to make that requirement.

Several people spoke in opposition to staff recommendations on behalf of organizations. These people were: Scott Smathers, Executive Director of the Nebraska Sportsmen's Foundation, Wes Sheets of the Nebraska Izaak Walton League, and Chris Edwards from Hardington of the Nebraska Big Game Association and Big Red Outdoors.

Josh Slaga of Omaha and Joe Herrod of Lincoln, NE spoke in opposition to the recommendations on their own behalf.

Chris Pokorny of Elkhorn, NE and Dr. Brent Steffen of Kearney rose in support of staff recommendations.

In addition to those testifying in person, 45 pieces of correspondence had been received prior to the hearing. Of those, 25 were opposed to staff recommendations and 20 were in favor of other hours, including staff recommendations. Twenty-seven of those commenting asked that their comments be made part of the public record. Their letters have been marked as exhibits and are attached to these minutes. The public hearing was closed at 9:23 A.M.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Bell to set shooting hours from sunrise to sunset beginning September 1, 2018. Commissioners discussed their viewpoints on either side of the issue. Voting aye: Bell, Ernst, and Fisher; voting nay: Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Berggren, Spurgin, and Marshall. Motion failed.

Chairman Fisher called for a break at 9:53 A.M., the meeting was reconvened at 10:06 A.M.

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed the staff recommendation to approve acquisition of 80+ acres in Lancaster County adjacent to the Commission's Jack Sinn WMA. Staff recommends approval and designation of this area as an addition to Jack Sinn WMA. This purchase will be made using Pittman Robertson funds as well as funding supplied by the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the City of Lincoln. There was a public hearing held on October 11 and no public attended.

Motion by Mr. Kreitman and seconded by Mr. Ernst to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Brandt, Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin,

TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT

OutdoorNebraska.org

Ernst, Marshall Kreitman and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations to approve the gift of the Ardyce Haring Nebraska Prairie Revocable Trust tract in Franklin County, Nebraska from the Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation. Staff recommends the acceptance of this gift of 312± acres and designation of the area as the Alfon C. Haring Memorial Wildlife Management Area. This item had been brought before the Commission over a year ago, prior to getting approval from the Executive Committee of the Nebraska Legislature to accept this gift.

Motion by Spurgin and seconded by Mr. Allen to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall Kreitman, Brandt and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Deputy Director Tim McCoy reviewed staff recommendation for Commission approval of the 2018-2022 Land Strategies Plan. This five-year plan provides information and strategies to guide decisions concerning acquisition, management and/or disposition of lands into the future. Currently, the Commission owns 154,153 acres of the 250,891 acres that it manages. One of the goals would be for the Commission to limit acquisition to 1,500 acres a year for the next five years. Commissioner Spurgin voiced his preference that numbers for acquisition should be left out of the plan.

Motion by Mr. Marshall and seconded by Mr. Allen to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Bell, Berggren, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen and Fisher; voting nay: Spurgin. Motion carried.

Planning and Programming Division Administrator Michelle Stryker reviewed Staff recommendation for Commission approval to seek a different location to develop an ATV Trail system other than the existing study area that is directly south of Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area. Staff conducted a variety of studies and some public meetings to consider the impacts of this type of development to the area. They discovered the presence of burrowing owls and prairie dogs, there were three areas of concern in the cultural survey which would lead to additional design requirements, EMS availability was a concern, and 40% of the adjacent landowners opposed the project. These reasons are the basis of the staff recommendation.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Bell and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Dr. Brent Steffen of Kearney had requested to be on the agenda to address his concerns regarding the NPPD R-Line Project in the Sandhills. He strongly opposes the project and the impacts he sees it will have on the Sandhills. He asked for Commissioners to take a stand and formally issue a position statement to the Governor, Legislature and others. Chairman Fisher asked Director Douglas and Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Michelle Koch to explain the role Nebraska Game and Parks has in reviewing projects that require permits from another state agency and that NGPC does not have any regulatory authority in that process.

Wildlife Big Game Manager Kit Hams was present to share the Big Game Update. He reviewed hunter success numbers for pronghorn, deer and elk which have been good and are in line to match and/or possibly exceed last year. He showed photographs of some of the animals taken so far this season.

Parks Division Administrator Jim Swenson shared a power point presentation showing the progress of the Venture Parks projects currently underway. A tour of the Venture Parks projects will likely be part of the Commission meetings in January.

TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT

OutdoorNebraska.org

Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Michelle Koch shared information on two projects currently under environmental review. The first was the NioCorp-Elk Creek Resources Mine south of Tecumseh. This proposed 30-year project will involve deep mining for Niobium, Scandium, and Titanium, and will require a 30 mile long pipeline to discharge into the Missouri River.

The second project is the Lower Loup NRD Instream Flow which will involve 35 miles of the river and involves seasonal requests to provide adequate flow for fish, wildlife, and recreation.

Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal presented a paddlefish and a pallid sturgeon for Critter Moment.

Commissioner Committee Chairs each gave a brief report of their meetings the day before.

Outgoing Commissioners Rex Fisher and Mark Spurgin were presented with resolutions recognizing their service to the commission along with comments from each of the Commissioners.

Executive Session

Motion by Commissioner Ernst and seconded by Mr. Berggren to go into Executive Session at 11:54 AM for the purpose of discussing pending litigation and personnel issues. Voting aye: Kreitman, Brandt, Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

The meeting was re-convened at 12:07 PM.

Motion by Commissioner Marshall and seconded by Mr. Berggren to leave Executive Session. Voting aye: Brandt, Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Kreitman and seconded by Mr. Ernst to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 P.M. Voting aye: Allen, Bell, Berggren, Spurgin, Ernst, Marshall, Kreitman, Brandt and Fisher; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

I hereby certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at its meeting held October 20, 2017.


James N. Douglas, Director

NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING RE:
UPLAND GAME SHOOTING
HOURS

OCTOBER 20, 2017

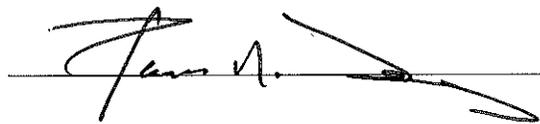
EXHIBIT LIST

The following constitute a complete list of all exhibits received in association with the above captioned public hearing:

2. Email from Shawn O'Conner 49770 Hwy 56 Greely, NE 9/25/2017 No change in shooting hours
3. Email from Jennifer Prenosil 1700 N 12th Beatrice NE 9/25/2017 No change or move to sunrise to sunset shooting hours
4. Email from Steve Woitaszewski 528 W. Keating Cr. Lincoln, NE 9/25/2017 No change in shooting hours
5. Email from Christopher Ellis 15721 Seward St. Omaha, NE 9/27/2017 No change in shooting hours
6. Email from Jay Canada 14030 S Union Ave. Glenvil, NE 9/27/2017 No change in shooting hours
7. Email from Jeremy Meyer 905 W York St. Blue Hill, NE 9/28/2017 Change to 10 AM shooting time.
8. Email from Corey Thornton 2116 Osage St. Sidney, NE 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
9. Email from Gary Broiller 1006 Hogan Drive Papillion, NE 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
10. Email from Brian Brasch 903 Woodcrest Norfolk, NE 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
11. Email from Kevin Wolverton 2422 Shelby Dr. Sidney, NE 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
12. Email from Kert McKeone 1215 Burlington Blvd. North Platte, NE 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
13. Email from James O'Conner no address given 9/28/2017 No change in shooting hours
14. Email from Steven Gewecke no address given 9/30/2017 No change in shooting hours
15. Email from Colby R. Collins 3548 Schroeder Ave. Grand Island, NE 10/2/2017 No change in shooting hours
16. Email from Brad Hershiser 7131 Walker Ave. Lincoln, NE 10/3/2017 Opposed to a significant reduction in shooting hours

17. Email from Erik Prenosil 1700 N 12th Beatrice, NE 10/3/2017 Support sunrise start time but no later.
18. Email from Ken Hamele 12969 N. 264th St. Valley, NE 10/5/2017 Wants to change shooting hours start time to 8 AM
19. Email from Michael Gehman 4356 W Capital Ave Grand Island, NE 10/9/2017 Wants to change shooting hours to start at sunrise instead of ½ hour before
20. Email from Aric Werner 503 Webster St. Naponee, NE 10/10/2017 No change in shooting hours
21. Email from Brison G. Kuhn 1009 9th Ave. Kearney, NE 10/10/2017 No change in shooting hours
22. Email from Griff Latter 1367 33 Rd Minden, NE 10/12/2017 No change in shooting hours
23. Email from Dale Rueling 1504 Independence Ave. Grand Island, NE No change in shooting hours
24. Email from Ron Vonderohe 401 Bazile Main Street Creighton, NE 10/15/2017 No change in shooting hours
25. Email from Chad Garcia 338 North 11th Ave Broken Bow, NE 10/17/2017 No change in shooting hours
26. Email from Donald Dealey Holdrege, NE 10/17/2017 Sunrise to Sunset
27. Email from Tehl Keslar 1125 E Washington St. West Point, NE 10/17/2017 No change in shooting hours
28. Email from Dan Kathol 106 W Ken Miller Circle Hardington NE 10/19 Sunrise to Sunset.

**NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS
COMMISSION**



James Douglas,
Director

LEGAL NOTICE



In accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. 84-907, a public hearing, conducted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, will be held Friday, October 20, 2017, at the Innovation Space at Kiewit University, 1450 Mike Fahcy Street, Omaha, Nebraska, prior to consideration and/or enactment of the following:

Pursuant to the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. 37-301, 37-304, 37-305, 37-308, 37-314, 37-315, 37-344, 37-411, 37-426, 37-4,104, 37-4,107, 37-4,109, 37-4,111, 37-501 through 37-504, 37-508 and 37-543 through 37-545, a public hearing will be held at 8:30 a.m., to consider the implementation of statutory authority for the Commission to create new Commission Order C06, Sport Fishing Regulations, that will contain open seasons, daily bag limits, possession limits, length limits and open areas.

Pursuant to the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. 37-301, 37-304, 37-305, 37-308, 37-314, 37-315, 37-344, 37-411, 37-426, 37-4,104, 37-4,107, 37-4,109, 37-4,111, 37-501 through 37-504, 37-508 and 37-543 through 37-545, a public hearing will be held at 8:45 a.m., to consider amendments to Chapter 2, Fisheries Regulations, Section 006, Sport Fishing Regulations, regarding the deletion of open seasons, daily bag limits, possession limits, length limits and open areas which are included in Commission Order C06. Section 006 will contain definition of terms; bag, possession and length limits on snapping turtles; bag, possession and length limits on mussels; unlawful actions regarding transportation and possession; crossbow use while archery fishing; application requirements, permits and tagging for paddlefish; required device for surface water spearfishing; regulations for underwater fishing; set lines, limb lines and ice fishing regulations; regulations for snagging; use of live or baitfish on Valentine National Wildlife Refuge lake; use of live or baitfish on Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge lake; regulations for the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge; regulations regarding border waters; legal nets, traps and other devices; and special area regulations.

Pursuant to the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. 37-304 and 37-314, a public hearing will be held at 9:00 a.m., to consider amendments to Commission Order C05, Game Birds (not including turkey, coots and migratory waterfowl), Furbearers, Cottontail Rabbit and Squirrels, regarding changes in shooting hours.

Copies of the proposed regulations and fiscal impact statements shall be available for public inspection at the Game and Parks Commission office and the Office of the Secretary of State.

James Douglas, Director



Hardin, Alicia

From: O'Connor, Shawn (SII) <shawno@oconnorandassoc.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 1:52 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: shooting hours

Alicia,

It is my understanding that the NG&P Commissioners will consider changes to the shooting hours for upland game at their Oct meeting. I am not in favor of any change in shooting hours. Our current hours allows anyone wanting to get outdoors to do so at their convenience, shorting the hunting day will only take away opportunity for some.

Please make this part of the public record for the commissioners.

Thank You,
Shawn O'Connor
49770 Highway 56
Greeley Ne 68842

Shawn J. O'Connor
O'Connor & Associates, Inc.
2536 N. Diers Ave.
P. O. Box 5560
Grand Island, NE 68802-5560

Telephone: 308-381-2303
Toll Free: 800-532-0469
Fax: 308-381-2485

Please do not place trade requests via email or voicemail, as they will not be processed. Trade requests must be taken either in person or over the telephone.

Securities are offered through SII Investments, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. SII Investments, Inc., and O'Connor & Associates, Inc., are separate companies.



Hardin, Alicia

From: Jenny Prenosil <jennyprenosil@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 5:41 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting hours

Ms. Hardin,

I am Jennifer Prenosil at 1700 N 12 St Beatrice NE 68310. I am requesting the information discussed at the October meeting regarding the shooting hours be made public. I also wish to inform the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission that I **STRONGLY OPPOSE** changing the legal shooting hours on pheasant, quail, rabbit, and dove to 9 or 10 am. I do however support shooting hours be left the same or moved to sunrise to sunset.

Regards,

Jennifer Prenosil



Hardin, Alicia

From: Steve & Judy Woitaszewski <swoitaszewski@windstream.net>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 6:22 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Hunting start and end times

I would like to be put on record that I'd like the starting and ending hunting times to remain as they are currently. We are all trying to retain and add hunters and this will only can have a negative effect on that goal.

Steve Woitaszewski
528 West Keating Cr.
Lincoln, NE 685221
swoitaszewski@windstream.net

Hardin, Alicia

From: Chris Ellis <ChrisEllis@arborbanking.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 10:47 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Hunting Hours Change

To whom it may concern,

I wish to make it public record that I, Christopher Ellis, am opposed to changing the shooting hours for pheasants, quail, partridge, dove, rabbits, or any other species that are under consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Ellis
15721 Seward St.
Omaha, NE 68118

Chris Ellis
Mortgage Originator NMLS # 1482248
Strategic • Relator • Analytical • Futuristic • Includer



16949 Lakeside Hills Plaza • Omaha, NE 68130
w: 402.800.3519 • f: 402.964.0856 • r: 402.641.0906
[Website](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [LinkedIn](#)

[Start Your Mortgage Application Here](#)



Please consider the environment before printing this email. Thank you.

Privacy Notice: The accompanying materials are confidential and are intended for receipt by the above addressed individual only. Any further use or distribution of this privileged information is prohibited by law. If you have received this information in error, please contact the sender at the phone number listed above.



Hardin, Alicia

From: Jay Canada <j.canada@industrial-irrigation.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 11:17 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Pheasant Shooting hours

Alicia,

I am writing about my concern for the proposed changes to Pheasant and small game shooting hours. I would like my testimony to be made part of the public record. Please ensure that my views and those of other fellow hunters have their voice heard by the commission.

Changing the shooting hours for Pheasants and other game will not produce more pheasants or better the hunting in Nebraska. It will only detract from the number of people choosing to use this resource and enjoy our outdoors hunting heritage. States like South Dakota have more pheasants than we do because they release thousands more pheasants than we do and also because they have a tremendous amount more habitat than we do. The only way we can increase our pheasant population would be to create more habitat and to crack down on their natural predators I.E. coyotes, owls, hawks, etc. Changing our shooting hours will not have the desired effect. It will only prove to push more people away from our sport which we cannot afford to have happen.

Sincerely,

Jay Canada
14030 S Union Ave
Glenvil, NE 68941
402-469-8982



Hardin, Alicia

From: Jeremy Meyer <jeremy@meyeragents.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 11:18 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: 10 AM Upland Hunt Time

I request that my statement be made part of the public record.

Jeremy Meyer
905 W York St
Blue Hill, NE 68930

I am an avid pheasant and quail hunter. I have been hunting since I was a small child. Over the years I have witnessed the decline of our bird populations. Agricultural practices have changed over the years leaving less habitat for our birds. This is something which is very hard for us to control with regulation. However, one thing we can control is how much pressure the birds have. I look at our neighbors to the north who have a 10 AM shooting time, and their pheasant population is thriving. I do not believe this is the sole answer to increase our bird population, but I firmly believe changing the shooting time to 10AM would help bring our population back. I believe this would be a positive step in the right direct.

Thank You,

Jeremy Meyer



Hardin, Alicia

From: Corey Thornton <Corey.Thornton@cabelas.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 11:38 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Proposed Change to NE Shooting Hours

Alicia,

I would like to make sure my opinion is made part of public record and request that there be **no change** to the "current" shooting hours regulations.

Thanks,
Corey Thornton
2116 Osage St.
Sidney, NE 69162



Hardin, Alicia

From: Gary Brollier <gary.bro64@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 11:45 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Proposed changes to shooting hours in Nebraska for upland birds

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To Whom it Concerns:

My name is Gary Brollier. I have lived in Nebraska for almost all of my life. I have been hunting upland birds, mainly pheasant and quail since my father started taking me about 40 years ago. To say that hunting in Nebraska, and all of its joys, memories and traditions, is important to me is an understatement.

I am writing to express my opposition, at this time, to the proposed changes in shooting hours. Two questions which come to my mind. Why change the shooting hours? What is driving the idea to change them?

Is there a documented benefit to changing from 30 minutes prior to beginning at sunrise? If so, what is it?

Is there evidence that being able to shoot at sunrise (or a later time) would enhance public or hunter safety? Have there been accidental shootings withing 30 minutes of sunrise? If so, is there evidence that a later shooting time would have prevented these accidents?

Perhaps there is a reason based in conservation for changing the hours? Is there documentation regarding a significant number of misidentified targets being shot? (I.e., hens being mistaken for roosters or other birds being mistaken for game birds.). Has there been any suggestion by Game and Parks or Pheasants Forever wildlife biologists that beginning shooting hours at sunrise would be beneficial to the population of upland birds in Nebraska? Is there data to support such an assertion?

I would submit that if the answer to these questions is no, then there is no reason to change shooting hours in Nebraska.

You may make my comments part of the public record. Should anyone have any questions or concerns about my comments they may contact me at this email address.

Sincerely,
Gary Brollier
1006 Hogan Drive
Papillion, Nebraska



Hardin, Alicia

From: Brian Brasch <brianb@asinc.net>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 12:12 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting hours changing

Alicia

I would like to make this apart of the public record for the upcoming vote. I am unable to attend the meeting in person.

I would like shooting hours to to remain the same as they are now.

Thanks,
Brian Brasch
903 woodcrest
Norfolk NE. 68701
402-649-9399



Hardin, Alicia

From: Kevin Wolverton <Kevin.Wolverton@cabelas.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 12:53 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Vote on Upland Shooting Hours

Hi Alicia,

I understand that there will be a vote taking place in Omaha on October 20 to decide next year's upland shooting hours. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend.

Please let it be made part of public record that my vote is to leave shooting hours 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset.

Thanks!

Kevin Wolverton
2422 Shelby Drive
Sidney, NE 69162

Kevin Wolverton
Associate Category Manager
Small Game Hunting
308-255-2895
Kevin.wolverton@cabelas.com





Hardin, Alicia

Subject: FW: hunting time change

From: Big Mac [mailto:fishnhunt247@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 9:10 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia <alicia.hardin@nebraska.gov>
Subject: hunting time change

Alicia, I hear it a lot, "a later shooting time will save a lot of birds. South Dakota does it and look what they have". The late shooting time in SD is not about saving birds, it's about money. By having a later start it allows tourist hunters to eat drink and be merry then sleep in. It has nothing to do with saving birds. If saving birds was the goal then maybe there shouldn't be a hunting season. Which by the way, I am not in favor of that idea at all. There is no biological reason to have a later hunting start time. I vote NO CHANGE! Kert McKeone

I see that I was supposed to request my email be part of the public record. Please do so. Kert McKeone, 1215 Burlington Blvd., North Platte NE 69101



Hardin, Alicia

From: James O'Connor <jamesoconnor753@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 9:49 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Fwd: Shooting hours change

Please make this part of public record for the upcoming meeting for the Game and Parks Commission's meeting on shooting hours.

I have been hunting in Nebraska for over 20 years. I can honest say that I have shot upland birds from early morning until sundown. So it is not that I think that you are taking away the best shooting hours for hunter, but changing the shooting hours your are not trying to help with bird numbers your limiting the hours in which hunters are able to go hunting. I as well as friends of mine only have early morning to get out and go hunting a lot of the time with our kids extra curricular activities. I know that your thinking that this is just my attempt at making things fit my schedule, well its not. I know to many friends that go because I'm able to take them some morning as well as sometimes able to get their kids to come along as well because we have to time that morning. If you limit the hours of hunting you ultimately lose more and more hunters. If the number of hunters goes down so does you income from hunters. This will not just affect Nebraska game and parks it will also hurt the number of people that contribute to other conservation organizations that hunter play a vital role in. I personally think that if the commissioners would like to see bird numbers up they should concentrate on more habitat. If you have habitat you will have birds.

I hope that you will take this into consideration when making decisions about shooting hours.

Sincerely,

James E. O'Connor



Hardin, Alicia

From: Steven Gewecke <geweckespg@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2017 8:31 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Upland game start time Oct meeting

Hello,

I would like this to be part of the public record regarding the talk of move the start time for upland game hunting.

A later start will not make more Pheasants... More Habitat will make more Pheasants! South Dakota has more Pheasants because they have more Habitat!

I would like the start times left as they are.

Thank you,

Steven Gewecke



Hardin, Alicia

From: Colby Collins <Colby.Collins@5pointsbank.com>
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2017 4:17 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Proposed shooting hour changes

I would like it be made part of the public record that I'm against the changing of shooting hours for game birds. I believe they should remain the same as in past years.

Thank-you!

Colby R. Collins
3548 Schroeder Ave.
Grand Island Ne 68803

Colby Collins | SVP/ Branch Manager
Five Points Bank
Direct: 308-389-8785
colby.collins@5pointsbank.com

NMLS ID#: 472681 **DISCLAIMER:** This email, including attachments, is covered by the Electronics Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2521, is confidential, and may be legally privileged. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message (or responsible for the delivery of the message to such a person), you may not copy or deliver this message to anyone. In such case, you should delete this message, and notify us immediately. If you or your employer does not consent to this form of delivery for messages, please advise us immediately. Improper use of this message may result in civil or criminal prosecution up to the fullest extent allowed by law. Opinions, conclusions, and other information expressed in this message are not given or endorsed by my firm or employer unless otherwise indicated by an authorized representative of Five Points Bank. It is the responsibility of the addressee to scan this mail and any attachments for computer viruses or other defects. The sender does not accept liability for any loss or damage of any nature, however caused, which may result directly or indirectly from this email or any file attached.

Hardin, Alicia

From: Brad Hershiser <bradshiser@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2017 8:45 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Changes in Shooting Hours.

Ms. Hardin, please forward as appropriate.

To: Commissioner Brandt,
To: Commissioner Fisher,

Reference: Change in Shooting Hours for Upland Game.
I request the following be made part of the public record concerning the above referenced issue.

From: Brad Hershiser
7131 Walker Ave.
Lincoln, NE 68507

As a lifelong resident and hunter in Nebraska I would like to take this opportunity to state that I am opposed to the significant reduction of legal shooting hours for upland game here in Nebraska.

I believe this would only lead to less participation. Many young people (therefore, their parents) have competing interests and obligations. By shortening the daily window of opportunity many will choose not to hunt thus leading to less recruitment of young hunters. Young hunters who hopefully become the adult hunters that purchase permits and pass the tradition along to their children.

If, as they say, 'young people are the future of hunting' why would we limit their opportunity?

If the reasoning behind changing shooting hours is based upon possibly increasing the upland bird population, I believe this is a fallacy. Good habitat increases bird populations, not less hunting.

If we lose more upland hunters who will support and fund habitat improvement projects?

I am 54 years old, I have a 13 year old son. I have purchased Nebraska hunting and fishing licenses along with all the associated stamps, park permits, etc. for the better part of 38 years. My son and I enjoy the outdoors including hunting and fishing, and would like to continue to do so.

Again, I am opposed to significant reduction in shooting hours for upland game.

Thank you for your service to Nebraska Game and Parks and thank you for considering my opinion.

Respectfully,
Brad Hershiser
Lincoln, NE



Hardin, Alicia

From: Erik Prenosil <erikprenosil@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2017 4:48 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting Time

Alicia,

I would like my following comments to be made part of the public record about the proposed shooting times, my name is Erik Prenosil and my address is 1700 N 12th Street Beatrice, NE 68310.

I am writing this email to voice my thoughts on the proposed shooting time change. I have heard the proposed morning shooting times being considered are sunrise, 8:00am, 10:00am, and 12:00pm. I am opposed to anytime after sunrise for multiple reasons. My first question is why is this being considered? I have a strong feeling it is because South Dakota does a later start time and "everyone" wants to be like South Dakota "because they have birds" Is there any literature or research that shows support/correlation between later shooting time and number of birds? I know there are studies done in SW Nebraska that show hunting pressure does not affect overall pheasant survival (at least this is what I was told at habitat meetings). So if hunting pressure does not significantly change the survival of pheasants compared to no hunting pressure how does moving the shooting time back do anything? Also, I do not support a later shooting time as, many times I will go duck hunting and if the ducks are not flying I will pick up and walk for birds. Or if I am deer hunting I will often do some squirrel hunting after I am done with my morning sit. I will not be able to do this if we pick a later shooting time. Another reason I do not support a later shooting time is opportunity/chances to hunt. With many people having busy schedules, the morning might be the only time they are able to hunt and I have heard many times from the NGPC staff that NE is all about opportunity...hence why rifle deer season is in the middle of the rut, to give people opportunity to shoot deer. Well, if NGPC is about opportunity, making the starting shooting time later is just taking opportunity away from those who may not be able to hunt in the afternoon. Lastly, why are species like dove, rabbit, squirrel and furbearer included in this (these make even less sense). I am fine and would support a sunrise start time but think anything later than that is unnecessary.

Thank you for your time,
Erik Prenosil

Hardin, Alicia

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2017 9:44 AM
To: Henderson, Sheri; Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Fwd: Shooting Hours start time for Upland Game Hunting

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Ken Hamele <kvhamele@gmail.com>
Date: 10/5/17 9:31 AM (GMT-06:00)
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
Cc: Dick Bell <dbell@hdrinc.com>, Jim Ernst <jernst@ernsttoyota.com>
Subject: Shooting Hours start time for Upland Game Hunting

Jim,
Just want to send you a short email to let you know I am in 100% support of changing the shooting hour's start time for upland game in general and pheasant hunting in particular from 30 minutes before sunrise to 8:00am. There are three reasons why I support such a change:

1. Target identification - It is much easier to ID the target when it is lighter outside. In particular on an overcast morning it is much more difficult to distinguish the coloring for a male from a female.
2. Safety - The lighter it is the easier it is to see your hunting partners blaze orange off to your left or right. Safer conditions and you have less chance of having a tragic accident.
3. Economic - When shooting hours start later people will be more inclined to have breakfast at the local restaurant in the morning and even frequent the local establishments for dinner the evening before. This is a definite financial plus for the towns where the hunters will be staying.

I have hunted pheasants and upland game all over Nebraska and am really in favor of a change in start time for shooting hours. If you or any of the commissioners wish to discuss please give me a call at 402-936-0229. Jim I would also ask that you make this email a part of the minutes at your meeting on October 20th.

Regards,
Ken Hamele
12969 N. 264th Street
Valley, Ne. 68064



Hardin, Alicia

From: Michael Gehman <gehmanm25@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 9, 2017 8:57 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting hours change

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

I would like my opinion made as part of the public record that start of legal shooting time be moved from one half hour before sunrise to sunrise. My thoughts are it is still often dark enough especially on cloudy days you cannot easily determine pheasant type.

Thank you
Michael Gehman
4356 W. Capital Ave
GI NE 68803
308 380 3484

Hardin, Alicia

From: Werner, Aric E CIV USARMY CENWK (US) <Aric.E.Werner@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2017 7:38 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: shooting time (UNCLASSIFIED)

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Completed

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Alicia:

I am writing to voice my concern over the proposal to change shooting time to sunset. I have dogs and we enjoy hunting prairie chickens in early September. As you know, the weather can be warm in September. We can only hunt the first couple hours due to the heat. Please make it part of public record that I am against changing shooting time to sunset or any other later start time.

Thank you,
Aric Werner
503 Webster St
Naponee, Ne 68960
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED



Hardin, Alicia

From: brison kuhn <kuhnbg@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2017 8:02 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Change in shooting hours

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Brison G. Kuhn
1009 9th Ave
Kearney, NE 68845

October 5th, 2017

Ms. Hardin,

Today I became aware of a proposal that will be voted on concerning a change to the shooting hours for some small game species. On the date of the proposed vote I will be at a training exercise as a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard so please allow this letter to be a part of the public record.

As an avid Nebraska hunter and a person that happily pays the rising costs of hunting permits in the name of conservation, I absolutely oppose this. I have a very demanding career in the military and an equally demanding role as a father and husband. The time that I spend afield is truly cherished and I take extraordinary measures to schedule my hunts, as small as they may be, to squeeze them into my agenda. I usually travel from my home in Kearney to hunting spots at least an hour away. By changing the hours to begin at sunrise, not only will you be taking away my opportunity to witness Nebraska sunrises in the field, which are a sight to behold, and memories that I can remember since carrying a BB gun with my father and uncle when I was 10. You will also be stripping me and my fellow hunters of prime hunting time and shortening my hunts. If you add all the time that this proposal is threatening to strip from permit paying Nebraska citizens, you will be cutting 2 days off the season- 2 days worth of prime time to flush pheasants, run our gun dogs and enjoy Nebraska fellowship.

I am one of the few people that stand-up for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commision when friends and family start complaining about the rising costs of permits and tags. I happily defend the price hikes because I understand that every dollar you increase is for the improvement of our state's hunting habitat. I am curious how this even became a proposal. Who would benefit from this? Because I know it is not the hunters. The hunters and outdoorsmen that spend their money for the right to hunt and for the purposes of conservation are the same hunters and outdoorsmen that you will be negatively affecting.

I urge you to ~~vote against this proposal~~. If you would like to discuss my opinions further, please feel free to contact me at [\(308\) 760-3447](tel:3087603447) or brison.g.kuhn.mil@mail.mil.

Brison G. Kuhn



Hardin, Alicia

From: GRIFF AMY LATTER <griffandamy@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2017 2:39 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Nebr. Game and Parks Oct. meeting

Hi Alicia,

It is my understanding that I can give you a testimony for the October meeting on the Nebraska Game and Parks. I would ask that the letter below be made a part of the public record for the meeting.

Dear Nebraska Game and Parks Board,

I have significant concerns regarding the proposed shooting hours change you are considering for upland game birds. First, I have talked to four or five commissioners regarding the time change and all of them indicated to me that there is absolutely no science behind the time change being better for the birds. Second, I am an avid bird hunter that uses dogs. I do what is best for my dogs, if the weather is warm, I hunt early and go home. If I am made to wait until mid-morning, it could be extremely detrimental to the health of my dogs when the weather is too warm. Do you know how many dogs are used in South Dakota with their ridiculous 10:00 am start? Very few. Maybe you should consider a later start for turkey, waterfowl and deer season, at least they would not have to worry about overheating and losing their dogs.

If this discussion is over safety or game identification, a later start time will not help with that. Oftentimes, identification is most difficult when the sun is in your eyes more than any other lighting conditions. As responsible hunters, we are taught that if you can't identify your target, you don't shoot.

I have heard that the biggest reason for considering the time change is to boost tourism in the State. There is a misconception that if people are not able to get in to the field to hunt until mid-morning, they will spend their time eating breakfast at local cafes and restaurants. Breakfast is not the only meal of the day and if there are hunters in the area, there are bellies to fill. They will eat lunch and dinner or even a big breakfast after their morning hunt in the cafes and restaurants. There is absolutely no guarantee that moving the start time back will cause people to eat breakfast out.

It seems to me that changing the start time serves only to penalize all of the hunters that use dogs and need to get out of the field when it warms up. It also penalizes all of the parents, grandparents, etc. that need to attend kids events on the weekend or even those wanting to go to or watch a Husker game. If the start time is left at a 1/2 hour before sunup, it doesn't mean a hunter has to be in the field then, you are welcome to start when the ideal time is for you.

Please reconsider changing the start time, it will only put limits on those that already enjoy hunting and could cause the amount of permits sold to decrease rather than increase.

Thank you,
Griff Latter
1367 33 RD
Minden, NE 68959

308-830-1525

Exhibit 22 pg. 2

Hardin, Alicia

From: Dale Ruehling <daleruehling@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2017 6:45 PM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting hours
Attachments: 14918790_10207713693376350_4648020702082833849_o.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Just sending you a copy of what I sent the G&P commissioners. And a picture of opening day last year on my 40 acres.

October 13, 2017

To whom it May Concern

My name is Dale Ruehling. I grew up on a farm near Bancroft, NE, lived in Iowa for ten years, Schuyler for 30 years, and currently living in Grand Island. I grew up at the time when you could hunt all the pheasants you wanted to within walking distance of our house. As time went by I lost my urge to hunt partly due to work commitments but mainly due to the inability to find anywhere to hunt with any decent number of birds. My father died several years ago and I retired five years ago. At that point I was able to take control of our family farm and renew my desire to hunt. I currently have set aside 40 acres that is split up into 15 tracts of CRP, buffer strips, meadow hay, alfalfa, shrub plots, pollinator plots, food plots and some marsh areas. I make a 300 mile round trip almost weekly to take care of these areas. I have started an unbelievable population of pheasants and also butterflies in an area of intensive row cropping where there are virtually no pheasants in the area.

It is my understanding that there is a move by the state to change the shooting hours for upland game. In the past few years I have done a lot of reading, attended pheasant forever conferences, prescribed fire workshops and many other similar information sessions. I have heard many reasons for the decline in pheasant populations but I must have missed the one that showed any evidence that shooting hours had any significant impact on pheasant populations.

I realize that some neighboring states have set times for their hours. This makes no sense to me especially if there is a change from daylight savings time in the middle of the season. And lets discuss South Dakota for a minute. I have bought dog training birds from five or six growers. They have all stated that 80% of the birds pen raised in Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota end up going to South Dakota. I have also talked to hunting outfitters and their workers from South Dakota. In spite of what the outfitter might tell you, the workers know that there is a better than 50% chance that any bird you shoot in South Dakota is pen raised. Those birds will sit in the fields that they are released in and will not follow the same flight patterns that our wild birds do. If we want to move to hours similar to South Dakota, than Nebraska better spend the time and money that South Dakota does to promote pheasant populations. Outfitters there are also required to replace any wild birds shot with boughten birds.

I am very opposed to any change in shooting hours. One of the things I have noticed over the last sixty years is that there is a big decline in the number of casual hunters and road hunters. When we hunt and I think many of the hard core hunters also will not start if the light is not sufficient to discern between and rooster or a hen. Most hunters now are conservationists and do not want to endanger the pheasant populations.

Anything that I have stated so far is subject to debate, but there are two things that I will not allow anyone to argue with. First is the fact that the live birds on my farm leave within thirty minutes of sunrise to feed in the neighbors fields. At that point they are pretty much impossible to hunt. Partly because of the type of habitat they are now in and because the neighbors have no use for hunters. Quite honestly some of my neighbors don't appreciate my CRP and wild flowers next to their meticulously manicured fields of corn and soy beans.

Secondly, if I can't hunt my own birds, I see no reason to put the time and effort to maintain the population that I have. I lose thousands of dollars every year keeping that forty acres the way I do. There are few people in this state that are as dedicated to promoting pheasant populations as I am. Again, if I am unable to hunt my own birds, I will be inclined to have the neighbors come into this forty acres with a disk and a sprayer and destroy everything I have started. At that point I will take my boat, shotgun, and money I have made, to South Dakota where there are birds and fish, even if I have to wait till ten to shoot their pen raised birds.

I would invite you to respond to this letter by email (daleruehling@yahoo.com) or phone (402-615-1102) and at least indicate you have received this and have read it. I would really like to attend the meeting but my schedule may not allow it. Also, it is another 300 miles worth of gas for me. Thanks for reading. Please enter this into public record.

Exhibit 23 page 2

Dale Ruehling
1504 Independence Ave.
Grand Island, NE 68803



Hardin, Alicia

From: nebron_2000 <nebron_2000@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2017 8:28 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia
Subject: Shooting hours

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Alicia, please make this part of the public record. I am adamantly opposed to any changes to the shooting hours. If this is an effort to increase game bird population I believe it will have little impact. Habitat, Habitat, Habitat! Also public access. One thing people love about Nebraska is that the hunting laws are minimal compared to many states, let's keep it that way!

Sincerely,
Ron Vonderohe
401 Bazile Main St.
Creighton, NE 68729

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Henderson, Sheri

From: Hardin, Alicia
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 3:42 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Douglas, Jim
Cc: Henderson, Sheri
Subject: FW: Shooting hours possible changes

From: Melissa Garcis [mailto:chadmelgarcia@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 9:36 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia <alicia.hardin@nebraska.gov>
Subject: Shooting hours possible changes

Good morning, I would like to voice my opinion on the discussion of small game start times. I would like to have on public record that I would not be in favor of any changes and would like it to remain the same.

Thank you,

Chad Garcia
338 North 11th Avenue
Broken Bow Nebraska 68822
308.530.3433.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Henderson, Sheri

From: Hardin, Alicia
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 3:43 PM
To: Douglas, Jim; McCoy, Tim
Cc: Henderson, Sheri
Subject: FW: huntinghours

From: Donald [mailto:donald@rcom-ne.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 9:49 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia <alicia.hardin@nebraska.gov>
Subject: huntinghours

Game commissioners

the majority of hunters would be "IN FAVOR " of a change in the start of hunting hours for upland game and likewise waterfowl.

reason being that the majority of hunters in the field before good light can not distinguish the sex of the bird in flight . Shooting hours should be changed to " sunrise to sunset. "

Respectfully submitted to the public record for admittance to the commision meeting.

Donald Dealey Holdrege, Ne



Virus-free. www.avast.com



Henderson, Sheri

From: Hardin, Alicia
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 3:46 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Douglas, Jim
Cc: Henderson, Sheri
Subject: FW: Proposed Changes to Shooting Times- District 3

From: Tehl Keslar [mailto:keslar@live.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 10:06 AM
To: Hardin, Alicia <alicia.hardin@nebraska.gov>
Subject: Proposed Changes to Shooting Times- District 3

Good Morning,

My name is Tehl Keslar and I live at 1125 E Washington St., West Point, NE, which is District 3. I would like this email to made part of the public record for discussion regarding adjusting proposed shooting times for the meeting on 10/20/17. I ask that this be forwarded to my G&P commissioner, Jim Ernst and all other commissioners.

I have hunted all my life and our family raises top level hunting labs, Keslar Kennels. I grew up in the western end of the state (Hyannis) and now reside in northeast NE, but have spent many hours in the field since I was a boy. I heard through several friends on Facebook that there is a proposal to change the shooting times to later. I very much oppose this and I can provide several reasons for this proposed change hurting field harvest results, and with the limited number of birds in eastern NE, the early bird gets the worm is very much an issue.

Many times, especially with warmer winters we've been having, some of our biggest success has come right in the first couple fields we hit due to birds not having went out for feeding. As a dog guy, I can tell you having that little bit of moisture in the early AM right at sunrise or earlier has a big difference in the ability of picking up quality scent. Even a few hrs later, depending on the morning can really start to affect the ability of dog work. Also, with pushing these times proposed later, it shrinks the window of prime hunting for even in shape dogs. By early afternoon, if no moisture is on the ground, the noses and stress of the heat becomes a lot more heat time work for the dogs, and makes it harder to get on birds.

I also have heard that some believe that by not starting til later like SD, that it might improve communities economically by hunters having breakfast, etc. The hunters that want breakfast are in blinds, cooking and hunting waterfowl. Those of us that love to hunt pheasants, quail, etc., are at the field an hr prior to sun up to secure our hunting spot before other breakfast hunters arrive. Again, the early bird gets the worm, and all you would be doing in moving later is making that time slot whatever it would be a more difficult field to secure. If you are willing to get to the field well before the sun gets up, you should be rewarded with that to hunt first, and not have to compete with those that are strolling in from eating breakfast. If there were more birds, and public areas to hunt that had birds, I can promise the economic impact felt would be much greater than having breakfast.

I also am the father of two young hunters to be, and I can tell you with all the activities that will be coming in the upcoming years, the days of all day hunts are becoming harder to make reality. The idea of a morning hunt, spend a couple hours in the field, and back to other activities is something that I feel is attainable. By moving to 8am, 10am, etc., that is making those type of hunts unrealistic and unfortunately folks will have to choose, which is not what we want as hunters.

Lastly, I heard that this was also being proposed for safety. In 25+ years of hunting, I can say with 100% certainty there has never been a safety related accident in any of the hunts I've went on with regards to not seeing shooters at normal shooting times. I would question that before safety is used as a factor for this, that the G&P's have data drive this need for change. If the G&P's can provide concrete data to back up the amount of shooting related safety instances due to 30 minute before sunrise incidents, then I would hear that data. I do not, and have spoke to many people that are hunters that have not had a single incident happen due to the "perceived" problems seeing in the field which leave me to be this is more opinion than fact based.

I hope that everyone realizes how delicate the balance of a good hunt is with our current setup. We are not South Dakota, and our bird hunting/investment \$'s, and other conditions are much different. My opinion is to focus energy and time to other areas that will help improve the experience for our hunter in NE. This is not one of those areas, and should leave as is.

Sincerely,

Tehl Keslar
keslar@live.com
402.658.5983

This is to go on the record that I would recommend shooting hours be changed to sunrise to sunset and that later shooting hours moved to 10 am or noon not be considered. Our bird population is not the draw that South Dakota enjoys and the hunters ability to limit out with shorter hours. We need to keep the early start just to have some advantage over South Dakota or we may lose our only advantage and lose many out of state hunters. Many of Nebr. Family traditions are built around an early start with early morning breakfast and the enjoyment of watching the hunt come up and then begin the hunt. Don't mess with changing this tradition.

Dan Kathol
106 W. Ken Miller Circle
Hartington, NE 68739 402=640-3334