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Current topics and issues affecting outdoor recreation in our State. Prepared by the North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, and the North Dakota Wildlife Federation.

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Protecting Public Lands

State and Federal lands used for conservation make up a small percentage (7%) of the total land base in North Dakota. These important public lands are a vital part of the state's outdoor recreation heritage and contribute to the economy of our state. For example, federal lands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the Missouri River provide critically important places for people to hunt, fish, bird watch, camp, and access the Missouri River for numerous outdoor pursuits. All these activities generate important revenue for main streets in Linton, Bismarck-Mandan, Washburn, Garrison, New Town, and Williston in North Dakota.

But all too often, shortsighted individuals and groups try to convert public lands, acquired and managed with taxpayers' dollars, to private ownership. When this happens, taxpayer investments in development and management are lost, North Dakota citizens lose access and outdoor recreation is imperiled.

So, public lands along the Missouri River and elsewhere in North Dakota must remain in public ownership. Protecting public lands benefits all citizens and ensures the future of our outdoor recreation heritage and support for the economies of our main streets.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (www.ndctws.wordpress.com)