



P.O. Box 1442, Bismarck, N.D. 58502



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Conservation Notes

Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our State.

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PRESERVING OUR ICONIC PRAIRIE

Mark Twain said – Buy land, they're not making it anymore. He was less clear about what to do with it once you bought it. Land is a precious commodity and how we use it and care for it affects us and everyone around us. Income generation using some form of agricultural production is a common denominator. But land is also developed for homes or businesses. Pouring concrete is long term lasting many generations. Not many Walmart parking lots, or subdivisions go back to crop or cattle production. Once native prairie is converted to annual crop production or parking lots, it never grows back.

Choosing to leave native prairie like it has been for tens of thousands of years through a **conservation easement** is a tool that provides assurance the land will stay in grassland agriculture. North Dakota policy makers should recognize the benefits native prairie provides; reducing soil erosion, improving water quality, improving soil health, storing carbon, and providing forage production and wildlife habitat. A **conservation easement** compensates a landowner for decisions to protect rather than destroy these benefits. North Dakota policy makers should promote land preservation and work to remove roadblocks that restrict landowners options for tax and estate planning opportunities, that in some cases, might be the difference of keeping the land in the family and passing it along to heirs. It's a weighty decision best left to each family. Long term – you bet. That's the point.

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)-articles.