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Conservation Notes

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

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One Million Acres of New Habitat- Now or When?

In 2015-16, the North Dakota Wildlife Federation with the input of all the major State conservation organizations, developed the concept of adding a million acres of new wildlife habitat in North Dakota. The concept would include working lands for wildlife, and planting grass cover managed for wildlife habitat. Reestablishing habitat invigorates our State's outdoor recreation industry and benefits the State's economy. The million-acre concept was sent to both Governors Dalrymple and Burgum and to Game and Fish Department Director Steinwand. The concept was rejected or ignored by the Governors. The NDGF Department, through their PLOTS program and private lands biologists, and various NGO's, and the Outdoor Heritage Fund, have continued to add small acreages of habitat across the State. But these small additions to the habitat base from these programs do not stop or keep pace with continuing losses. Natural resource impacts continue from oil development and spills, increased tile drainage of wetlands, conversion of 2 million acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands and native prairie to cropland, and urban expansion. It is now more crucial than ever to move forward with replacing converted wildlife habitat. Therefore, with new tools like "precision agriculture", an increased cap in the Federal CRP acreages, and opportunities for a State CRP like program through the State's Outdoor Heritage Fund, and the State Legacy Fund, the time is right to address habitat needs and the impacts on our outdoor recreation industry. Developing 1 million acres of new wildlife habitat using the diverse number of tools in agricultural and conservation programs will benefit our citizens, our landowners, and our natural resources.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), 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.

