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Conservation Notes

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

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Irreversible Loss of Farmland

A study by the American Farmland Trust covering the period 2011-2016 shows that 11 million acres of the Nation's farmland, including 4.4 million acres of "nationally significant" or the best farmland for food production disappeared for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.. One need look no further than the urban expansion around Fargo, in the productive Red River Valley, or around Bismarck, or look at the industrial land development for energy facilities near Williston, Dickinson, or Watford City, to realize that the loss of prime farmland is occurring in North Dakota at an alarming rate. Land buried under concrete for shopping malls or covered in houses is lost to any agricultural use forever.

But, for five decades North Dakota politicians and agricultural groups have fought against land acquisition by conservation groups and wildlife agencies. If land is purchased for conservation purposes then it can be used for grazing, haying, and easily restored for food production if needed. We have been looking in the wrong direction for threats to agricultural lands.

Therefore, if we are serious about **permanent** loss of our best farmlands we should concentrate on preventing the totally irreversible losses and support programs that will permit restorable ecologically beneficial projects.

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.