

OUTDOORS DIGEST

New Operator Named For Lewis & Clark Marina Near Yankton

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission has selected a new operator for the Lewis and Clark Marina near Yankton.

Earlier this month the commission formally accepted the proposal received from Chris Donlin of Pickstown for the purchase of the marina's assets and approved a new ten-year concession lease.

"Chris has a strong history of customer service and management skills in a service-oriented boat business," said Jeff VanMeeteren, regional parks supervisor for GFP. "We're excited to have Chris bring his service experience to the marina operations and look forward to the planned facility improvements he has shared with us."

Donlin has owned and operated Donlin Marine in Pickstown for over 17 years, offering boat sales, service and rentals, as well as parts and boating merchandise.

The Game, Fish and Parks issued a prospectus seeking proposals for the management of the Lewis and Clark Marina earlier this fall. According to VanMeeteren, Donlin's was the only proposal received by the deadline and it met all prospectus requirements.

The Lewis and Clark Marina includes over 400 seasonal boat slips, a convenience store, service department and a full-service restaurant. Donlin has committed in the approved lease to all the required lease fees, annual expenditure requirements towards dock repairs and maintenance and multiple facility improvement projects, including a renovation to the gas sales dock by 2017. The lease also requires a detailed plan for operating the marina restaurant.

The lease will go into effect once the financing is final and the transfer of assets is complete, which is anticipated for early March. The timeline will allow for a new appraisal to be conducted, which is required by the lender.

Lewis and Clark Marina is located on just above Gavin's Point dam within Lewis and Clark Recreation Area approximately 5 miles west of Yankton off of Highway 50.

Cabela's To Host NRA Weekend Feb. 7-8

MITCHELL — Cabela's announced Friday plans to partner with the National Rifle Association to host in-store NRA Weekend events at the company's Mitchell location Feb. 7-8. The annual event will feature an NRA membership drive, along with a series of firearm safety courses, educational workshops, in-store product demonstrations and more.

All new and current NRA members who join or renew their membership during NRA Weekend will receive a \$25 Cabela's gift card.

Cabela's also will offer a full schedule of free workshops and in-store demonstrations Saturday and Sunday on a variety of topics, including firearm safety, and concealed-carry options; ammunition selection; firearm and ammunition storage solutions; and rifle sights and optics.

Visit www.cabelas.com/Mitchell or call 605-996-0337 for a full schedule and more information on Cabela's NRA Weekend event. Cabela's Mitchell is located at 601 Cabela Drive, Mitchell, SD 57301.

Become A Certified Youth Fishing Instructor

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will certify youth fishing instructors on Saturday, March 7 at Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, 21502 W. Neb. Hwy. 31, Gretna, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Youth fishing instructors will receive training and tools to conduct fishing clinics. These volunteers will have access to Game and Parks' loaner fishing equipment and educational materials for events, as well as receive program incentives. They also are encouraged to volunteer for such Game and Parks programs as Family Fishing Nights and the Outdoor Expos.

To reserve a spot in this free workshop, contact Lindsey Chizinski at 402-471-5591 or lindsey.chizinski@nebraska.gov.

Big Equipment, Big Projects At Chadron SP

CHADRON, Neb. — Chadron State Park is visited by multitudes of big RVs and pull-type campers in the summer. It is getting a good share of its winter traffic this season from other types of big vehicles. They include a Caterpillar track hoe, six-wheeled dump trucks, a Timbco tree feller and a skidder.

The big vehicles have been contracted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to renovate the park's pond and thin trees. The separate projects are expected to be substantially complete in April and make the park more attractive to visitors when tourists begin arriving in the spring.

The pond, which was drained for repairs in fall 2013, is being deepened by a contractor. Years of erosion had caused the pond to fill with silt, lessening the water capacity to four acre-feet instead of the 10 acre-feet allocated by the Department of Natural Resources.

Even though the pond has been empty for more than a year, navigating the mucky bottom is still a challenge for the big equipment. Construction workers created a temporary road over the muddy surface of the empty pond in order for the dump trucks to pick up loads from the track hoe.

Gregg Galbraith, park superintendent, said the renovation will greatly improve the 2-acre pond, which is fed with water from nearby Chadron Creek.

The previous depth of the pond's deepest points was about the same as what will be the shallowest areas after the renovation. When finished, most of the pond will vary in depth from 4 to 14 feet, and a new clay liner will help combat seepage. The dilapidated outlet structure, which prompted the renovation, will be repaired and rainbow trout will again be stocked for anglers.

The pond will also be laid out a little differently when construction ends. The plans call for moving the paddleboat boat dock closer to the park's headquarters from its previous location on the north side of the wooden fishing deck. The new location will be more convenient for both paddle-boaters and staff, Galbraith said.

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

'In' Between Time Of The Year

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

This is the time of the year, we call the "in" between" seasons because hunting is winding down and in some areas; the weather has not been cold enough to build what I would call good ice. We are in between seasons or things we can do in the outdoors.

If you are going to do any ice fishing, you will have to head north to find any "good" ice.

The ice fishing in northeastern South Dakota is going strong, as there is good ice and good fishing on most of the Glacial Lakes and sloughs.

If you are going to ice fish anywhere, exercise caution, as the ice in some areas is thin!

There have been reports indicating from Iowa of vehicles going through the ice; Caution needs to be used when venturing out on the ice since the thickness can vary greatly from one location to another.

Call me a little too cautious, but I like to have plenty of ice before I before I even think about driving my vehicle on it.

We recently made a trip north into South Dakota to do some ice fishing where we fished on several lakes and slough, where we had plenty of ice and some great walleye and perch fishing. Team Member Eric Brandreit (Big Stone City) has also been doing well on perch on Big Stone on the Minnesota-South Dakota border.

If you are not into ice fishing, you might want to give predator calling a shot, as there are plenty of hungry predators out there looking for an easy meal. My team and I really get excited about predator calling once temperatures turn cold and the ground is snow covered.

Numerous manufacturers make mouth and electronic calls that will do an excellent job at bringing coyote and fox into rifle range.

Light caliber rifles such as 22-250, 223 and 243 all are excellent choices when calling predators. Shotguns also work well when loaded with heavier loads for close range shots.

If you are more into indoor events this time of the year, there are numerous things going on in the area you might want to check out.

The Gun Shows and Boat, Sport, Outdoor and Travel shows are just getting started.

Some of the Gun Shows in the upper Midwest will be held in Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Pierre, Rapid City, Watertown and Yankton.

At these shows, you will be able



Gary HOWEY



No matter what you are looking for in the outdoors, you will find an exhibitor, which has it at the Boat Sport and Travel Shows.

TEAM OUTDOORSMEN ADVENTURES PHOTO

to look over and purchase about any type of gun, parts, collectables, reloading supplies and ammunition.

Listed below are some of the guns shows and information on when they are held.

Dakota Territorial Gun Collector's Association Gun Shows

- Feb. 7-8: Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center, Aberdeen

- Feb. 14-15: Ramkota Conference Center, Sioux Falls

- Feb. 21-22: Ramkota River Event Center, Pierre

- March 14-15: Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall, Sioux Falls

- March 21-22: Codrington City, Watertown

Several other events that are held during the "in" between time of the year include Big Buck Classics, which are opportunities for hunters to display the hunting trophies they have taken over the years as well as opportunities to see some of the newest deer hunting products.

This is also when the Boat Sport and Travel Shows will kick off in Nebraska and South Dakota, where outdoorsmen and women will have the opportunity to visit with guides, resorts and outfitters from throughout the Midwest and Canada. At these shows, there will be hunting and fishing seminars as well as exhibitors highlighting the new gear.

As I have mentioned in previous columns, we need to support conservation groups including Pheasants

Forever, Whitetails Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as well as others.

These conservation groups are very instrumental in helping to developing government farm programs dealing with habitat. Through their local chapters, they help promote youth mentoring programs, habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. By attending their banquets, needed dollars is raised, much of which stays in our area.

Listed below are a few of these events that held in our area.

- Jan. 31-Feb. 2: Nebraska Big Buck Classic, CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

- Jan. 31: Bazille Creek Pheasants Forever Banquet, Bloomfield Pavilion-Fairground, Bloomfield, Nebraska

- Jan. 31-Feb. 2: Boat, Sport & Travel Show, Lancaster Event Center, Lincoln, Nebraska

- Feb. 6-8: Nebraska, Boat, Sports & Travel Show, Lancaster Event Center, Lincoln, Nebraska

- Feb. 7: Nebraska Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever Banquet, Younes Conference Center, Kearney, Nebraska

- Feb. 7: Lewis & Clark Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Banquet, Minerva's Bar & Grill, Yankton

- March 12-15: Sioux Empire Sportsmen's Show, Convention Center, Sioux Falls

- March 20: Northeast Nebraska Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited, Wausa Fire Hall, Wausa, Nebraska

Once we get through January and into February, the snow geese migration will begin as the birds make their way north and light goose hunting conservation season will be open. With the warming weather, we will have the opportunity to get our boats out and do some early spring open water fishing, followed by the spring turkey season and we will have the opportunity to once again, be out in the outdoors.

Until things open up stay warm, stay safe and have a great 2015.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Nebraska, is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, seen in the Yankton area on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday@ 7:00, on KTTM/KTTW-TV Fox-Sioux Falls and Huron at 6:30 am Saturdays and on the MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. He and Simon Fuller Co-Host the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3, ESPN Sports Radio 1570 in Southeastern South Dakota and Northeast Nebraska. In Northwest Iowa, it airs on KCHE 92.1 FM. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Where Bald Eagles Feed During The Minnesota Winter

BY KATY READ
© 2015 Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

When Minnesota's bald eagles head south for the winter, they don't go far. Like the hardy Northerners they are, they're content to bask in the less-than-balmy breezes along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota, which on the day these photos were taken had cooled the air, already struggling to reach zero degrees, to a 20-below windchill.

Birds don't migrate for warmth but for food, said Scott Mehus, education director of the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minn. And eagles from northern Minnesota, as well as Wisconsin and even Canada, head toward stretches of open water on the river to enjoy what Mehus calls a "floating buffet line."

It's a buffet of eagle-style sushi: dead fish that float down the Mississippi under the ice and then bob to the surface of a 5-mile stretch of water that always stays open. The main course is tiny gizzard shad, fish "so small you can hardly see them," Mehus said. "The eagles grab them with their feet and eat them on the fly."

Thanks to a blood-chilling



An immature bald eagle grabs a fish from the water Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2015, on the Mississippi River in Red Wing, Minn.

DAVID JONES/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/TNS

mechanism involving the veins in their feet, eagles don't mind standing for hours on the edge of ice, peering into the water for these tidbits.

Still, Mehus noted, "everybody likes fresh fish" now and then. In winter, eagles get their by harassing ducks that dive underwater for live fish. It's basically a mugging; eagles have been known to

eat actual ducks, so the ducks are pretty quick to hand over their catches instead.

Eagles can be spotted along the river from Red Wing, where these photos were taken, on south. Reads Landing near Wabasha is a particularly good viewing area, some days drawing hundreds of eagles, Mehus said. Even slower days bring

10 or 20.

He's especially grateful for their presence considering how close they came to disappearing altogether.

In the early 1960s, the population of bald eagles in the Lower 48 states had dwindled alarmingly. By

1968, only one nesting pair remained along more than 300 miles of river from Red Wing to Rock Island, Ill.

"We came very close to losing this bird, this magnificent symbol of our country," Mehus said.

The culprit? DDT, Mehus said. The then-popular insecticide kills bugs but then climbs the food chain; when it gets to eagles it weakens the shells of their eggs. Mother and father eagles would sit on the eggs (eagles share this parenting duty) and inadvertently crush their offspring.

DDT was banned in 1972. By 2007, the bald eagle came off the endangered species list. Nesting pairs in the Lower 48 states have climbed from 417 in the 1960s to over 10,000.

Minnesota leads with 2,300. As for the stretch of river that once held only one nest, Mehus said, "you could safely say there are over 350 on that same stretch today."

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