

## South Dakota Walleye Classic

### Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Gregg Yonkovich. The following members attended: Bill Waeckerle, Dana Randall, Marissa Gilyard, Chad Schilling, Craig Mehlhaff. Bryan German and Bob Heier attended via MS Teams Meeting.

A copy of the February minutes was handed out to those in attendance. Bill Waeckerle made a motion to approve and seconded by Craig Mehlhaff. Motion carried.

Gregg gave a Treasurers report on behalf of Steve Mann. Recent expenditures included \$5000 to GF&P for maintenance of Swan Creek all-weather fish cleaning station, and Avid Hawk for SDWC web site maintenance. Craig made a motion to approve, and seconded by Chad Schilling. Motion carried.

#### **New Business**

1. 2026 Tournament updates & follow up items:
  - a. 35 entries YTD.
  - b. Large advertising posters arrived and were distributed to members in attendance. Waiting for 8.5\*11" versions.
  - c. Group discussed supporting Gunner Latham concert Saturday evening of the tournament weekend at the Community Center. Free will offering to help cover expenses, possibly have a food truck outside that evening. Community Center group has agreed to support bar concessions at event. Bill W. made motion to financially support concert. Dana seconded. Motion carried. Chad Schilling to follow up with Gunner's booking agency to work out details.
  - d. Reviewed quote from Duvan Polygraph services for testing 3 competitors at 2026 tournament. Bill W. made motion to approve use of this service. Chad S. seconded motion. Motion carried. Bryan G. to confirm date with polygraph service provider.
  - e. Marissa published weekend tournament schedule on SDWC website. Schedule updates will be published as details continue to be finalized.

- f. Fish donations: Potter County Sportsmans Club added to tournament permit to take fish donations from Whitlocks both Saturday and Sunday. Gregg will contact Mike Vandervorst with Akaska FD to see what day they want to get donated fish at Swan Creek Landing. Hoven FD will get other date.
- g. Insurance- Bryan is working with Brady Fiedler at Marin Biel for our insurance. Insurance quote unavailable until 60 days prior to the event. AFTCO policy used to get GF&P permit approval.
- h. Conflict with second tournament operating out of Whitlocks landing on Saturday has been resolved through GF&P. Other tourney is starting at 8am and ending at 3:30 pm on Saturday. May want to use a different landing at Whitlocks next year (no services, but useable with many different wind directions).
- i. Missouri River advertising discussion. Decided on one square ad for Missouri River upper and lower river maps. Cost \$900. Includes QR link to SDWC website.

### **Old Business:**

- a. Bob Heier reported that 7 guide pontoons confirmed for Senior Fishing day (Wednesday June 17). Has inquiries out to a dozen additional boats waiting for a response. Hoping for 15 pontoons total. Bob will send list of assignments for various helpers, similar to past events.
- b. Weekly gun drawing on-going. 4 guns unclaimed from 2025. Gregg to follow up with those winners.
- c. LOWC update from Bill W. - Bill Hinds working with GF&P on potentially buying tracking tags to survey mortality on fish caught & released in deep water.

### **New Business from the floor:**

- a) Marissa presented TAP grant opportunities through the State to help pay for marketing and advertising tournament activities. Grant writing assistance available through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor. TAP grant deadline 3/31/26. Group decided not to apply this year, but track spending associated with marketing for potentially applying for grant next year.

- b) Discussed 2027 tournament dates, with most of discussion focused on Fri/Sat format vs Sat/Sun format. Gregg to check with Mike Valster if AFTCO, or weigh station operators have a preference. Possibly survey 2025/2026 entrants via email or social media to see if there's a strong preference.
- c) Discussed inquiry from Shonda Schilling regarding formally sponsoring Chad and/or Beau Schilling during their professional walleye tournament circuit activities to increase awareness of Akaska area and specifically the South Dakota Walleye Classic tournament. Dana made motion to sponsor Chad, Bryan German second. Motion carried.
- d) Lisa German and SueAnn Yonkovich to take over Calendar sponsor contact responsibilities from Craig Mehlhaff.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Bill Waeckerle and second by Dan Randall. Motion carried.

Next meeting- **Tuesday, April 14 @ 7pm.**

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Gregg Yonkovich, President