



# South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

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**Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee**  
January 2024



# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW



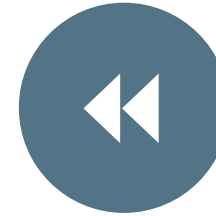
WHO WE ARE



VISION AND  
MISSION



PRIORITIES &  
DIVISIONS



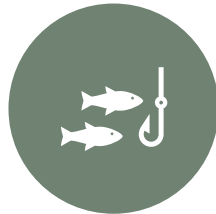
2023 YEAR IN  
REVIEW



HABITAT  
MANAGEMENT



WDM & ADC



AQUATICS



PARKS &  
RECREATION



LOOKING  
AHEAD

# WHO WE ARE

**At our core, we provide incredible opportunities and experiences that keep our customers coming back to the South Dakota outdoors. We are the number one brand that conserves our state's outdoor heritage to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations. That's us. That's GFP.**





# OUR VISION AND MISSION

## Mission

We serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.

## Vision

We will conserve our state's outdoor heritage to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.

**SERVE.  
CONNECT.  
MANAGE.**







# DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES



## **Habitat & Access**

Expand habitat acres across South Dakota.

Create new partnerships with landowners and conservation groups.

Enhance South Dakota's strong outdoor heritage by providing additional public access to privately owned lands while continuously improving access to existing public lands.



## **Asset Management**

Provide superior outdoor recreational experiences by showcasing South Dakota's natural landscapes and world class state park system.

Ensure sustainability of the resource and actively recruit, retain, and reactivate outdoor enthusiasts.



## **Customer Service**

Deliver excellent customer service and meet our customers where they are.

Foster a culture of continuous improvement, focusing on employee training, proactive issue resolution, and utilizing customer feedback to enhance overall customer satisfaction.



## **Operational Excellence**

Focus on growing employee engagement through enhanced internal communications, increased skills training, effective recruitment, and onboarding tactics to maximize Team GFP's productivity.

# OUR DIVISIONS

## Administration

- Office of Secretary
- GFP Commission
- Legal Counsel
- Engineering
- Communications & Marketing
- Finance & Budget

## Wildlife

- Fisheries Management
- 3 Fish Hatcheries
- Wildlife Management
- 723 Game Production Areas
- Habitat & Access Programs
- Wildlife Damage Management
- Law Enforcement
- Licensing & Education Services
- Environmental Review & Heritage Program

## Parks & Recreation

- 13 State Parks
- 43 Recreation Areas
- 4400 Camp Sites
- 5 Nature Areas
- 1 Historic Prairie
- 69 Lakeside Use Areas
- 10 Marina/Resorts
- 240 Public Water Access Areas
- Mickelson Trail
- Snowmobile Trail Program

**464** PERMANENT STAFF ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT





# 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW





# 2023 IN REVIEW

**Completed \$3.6 Million  
in Habitat Stamp  
Projects**

**Record Acres  
(1.51 million acres)  
of Private Land Enrolled  
in Public Hunting Access**

**Statewide Shooting  
Range Development And  
Collaborative  
Enhancement Efforts**

**2,985 Landowners  
Assisted with  
Depredation Issues on  
Their Operation**

**2,509 Acres Enrolled in  
Big Sioux River  
Conservation Reserve  
Enhancement Program**

**Benchmark Year For  
Habitat Acres (81,400+)  
Through Private Lands  
Program**



# 2023 IN REVIEW

**3,000+ Additional  
Park Acres  
opened to Public  
Hunting in the Fall  
of 2023**

**13% Increase in  
Lodging from  
2022**

**Record number of  
AIS inspections  
conducted: 18,582**

**Planted 6,350  
Trees in our State  
Parks in 2023**

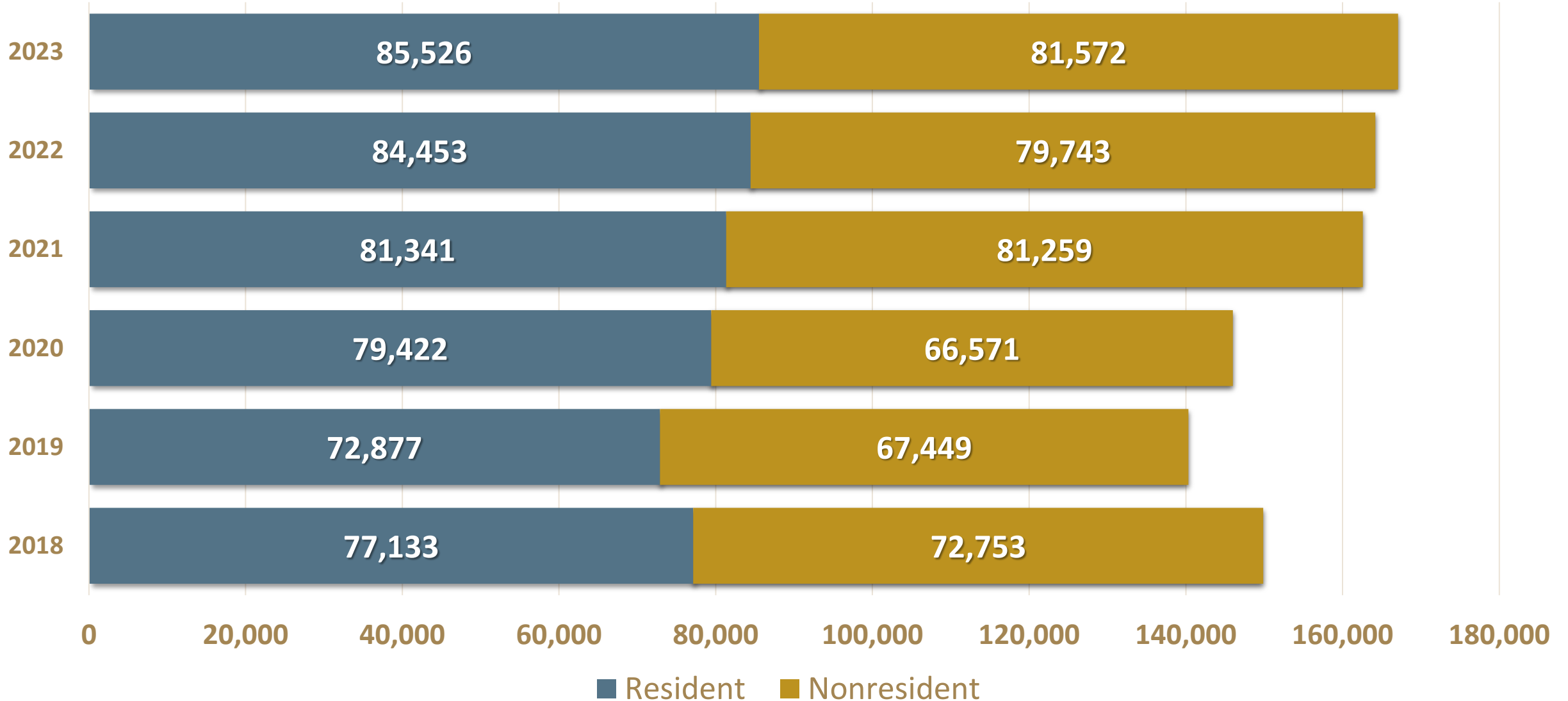
**Park Visitation for  
2023 exceeded  
7.99M and  
remains strong at  
11.4% over 12-  
year average**

**Buffalo Auction  
Sales Increased  
from  
\$392K in 2022 to  
\$634K in 2023**

**Record Buffalo  
Roundup  
Attendance  
22,590**



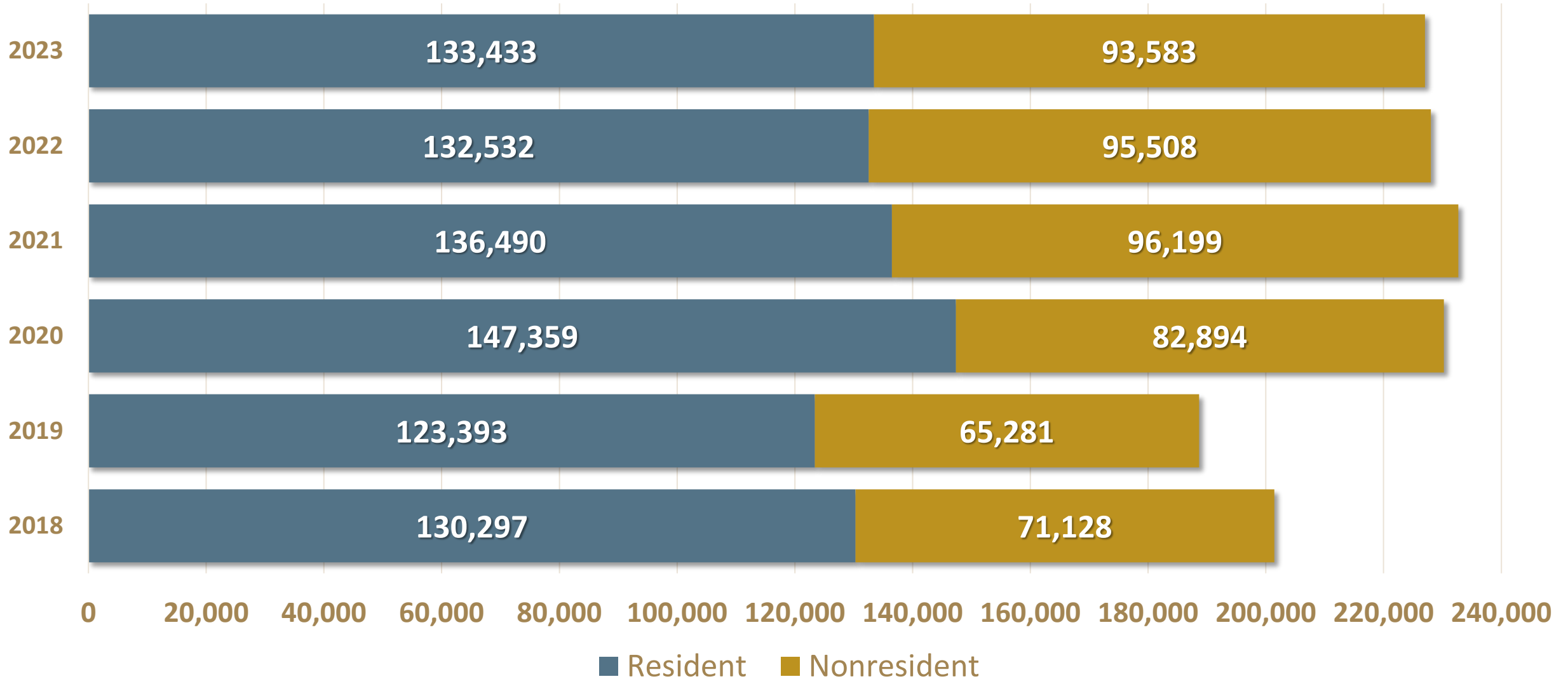
# LICENSES SOLD TO HUNT SMALL GAME





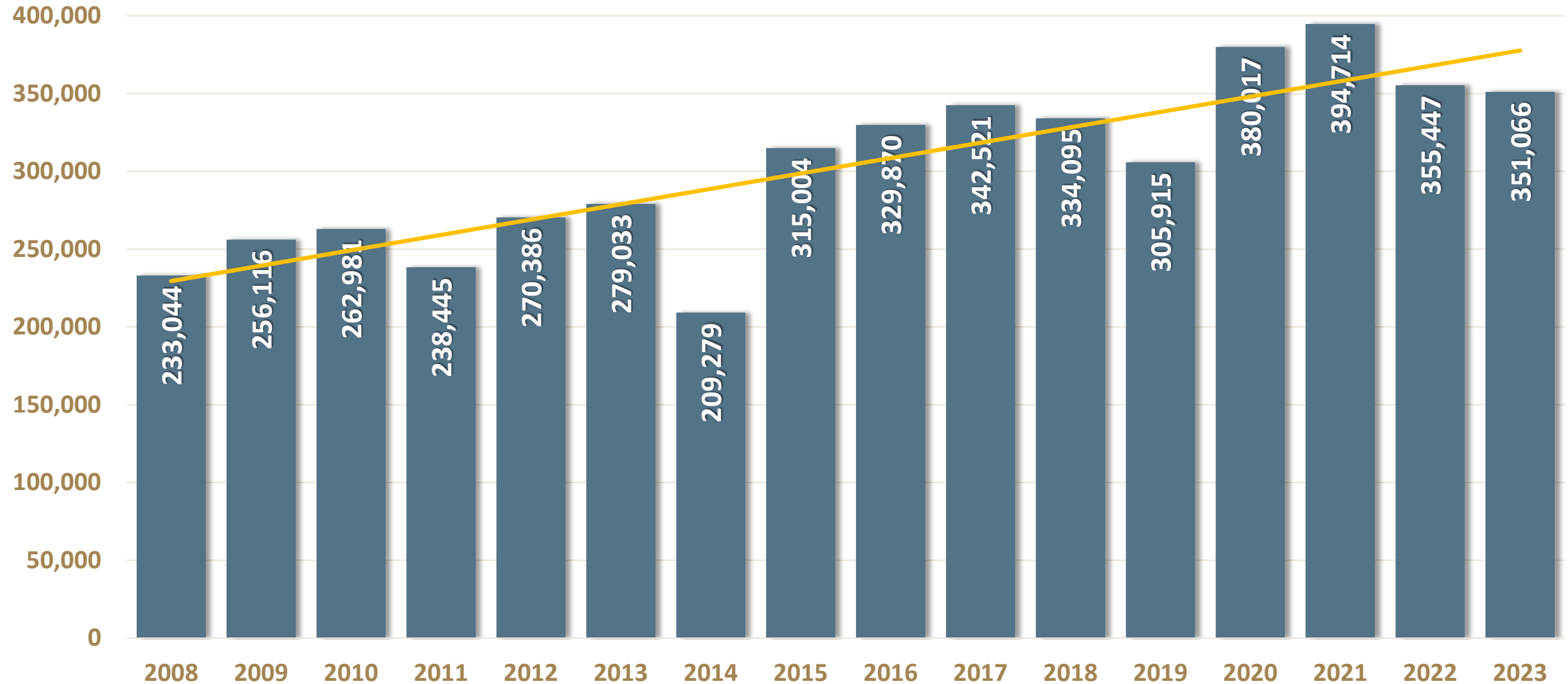


# LICENSES SOLD TO FISH





# PARKS CAMPING



# GO OUTDOORS SOUTH DAKOTA

- Processed over 350,000 total applications in 2023
  - Over 40,000 first draw elk applications
  - Over 72,000 first draw deer applications
- Generated over \$60 million in total revenue in 2023
- Over 2.3 million transactions completed since inception.
- To make this system more efficient and customer-friendly, work will continue in 2024.







# HABITAT MANAGEMENT



# PRIVATE LANDS PROGRAM

**Total GFP &  
Landowner  
Funds**

**\$2.8 Million**

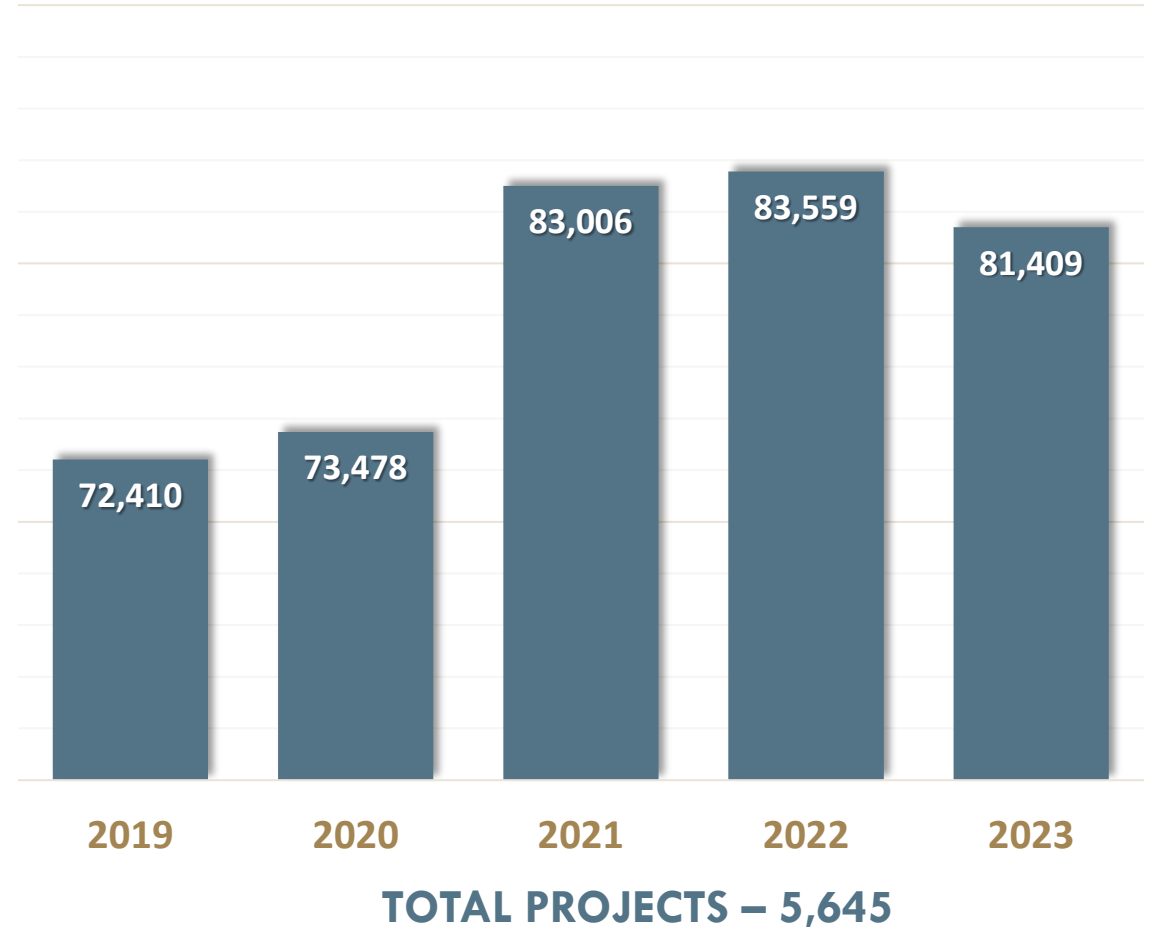
*2023 Habitat Program Summary*

**\$13.3 Million**

*5 Year Habitat Program Summary*

2023 Habitat Management	Projects	Acres
Food Habitat Plots	907	11,096
Woody Cover	41	102
Habitat Protection Fence	5	121
Grassland Enhancement	67	41,728
Grassland Restorations	19	1,331
Wetland Enhancements	10	70
Wildlife Friendly Fence	36	26,961

## Program Acres Enrolled





# PRIVATE LANDS ACCESS

Walk-In Areas  
(WIA)

1,539 cooperators

James River Watershed  
Conservation Reserve  
Enhancement Program  
(CREP)

785 cooperators

Big Sioux River  
Watershed CREP

43 cooperators

Controlled Hunting  
Access Program  
(CHAP)

15 cooperators

Elk Hunting Access  
Area

17 cooperators

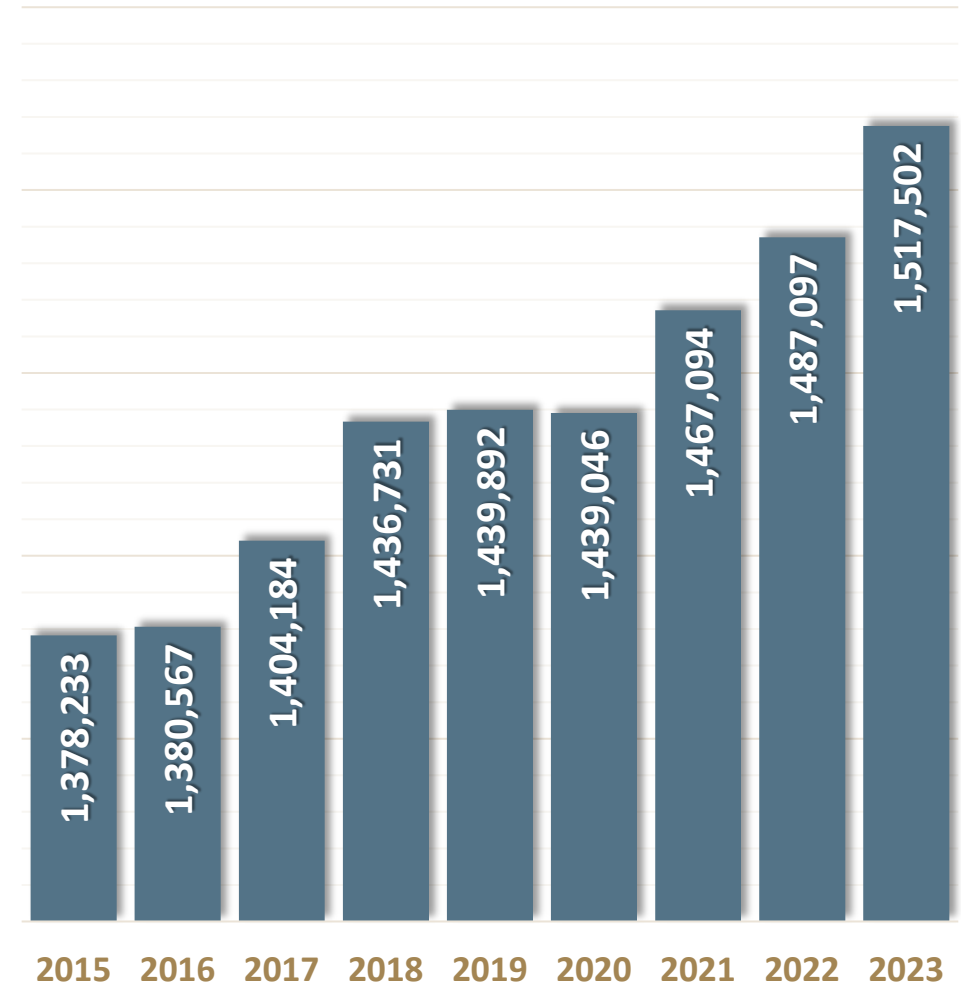
Lower Oahe Waterfowl  
Access Area

6 cooperators

**\$7,631,978**  
Total  
Payments to  
Landowners

**1,517,502**  
Total Acres  
Enrolled

## PRIVATE LAND PUBLIC HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM ACRES





# CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS

## James River Watershed CREP

*100,000-acre goal*

Current Enrollment: 81,838  
2023 Re-enrollments: 5,629  
2023 New Enrollments: 5,500

## Big Sioux River Watershed CREP

*25,000-acre goal*

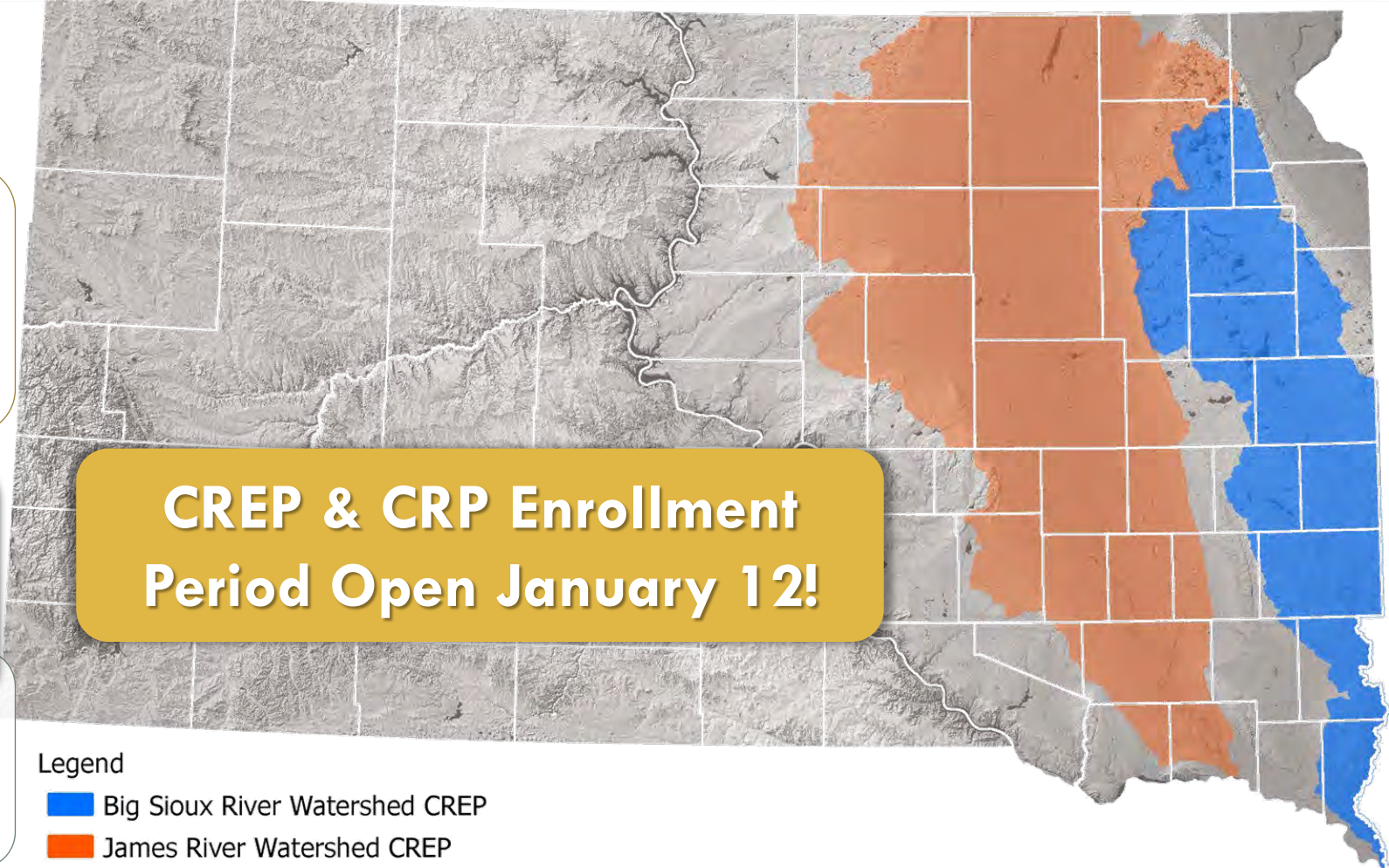
Enrollment Opened in 2023  
Current Enrollment: 2,509 acres



**CREP & CRP Enrollment  
Period Open January 12!**

Legend

- Big Sioux River Watershed CREP
- James River Watershed CREP





# GAME PRODUCTION AREA (GPA) MANAGEMENT

723 GPAs

57 Counties

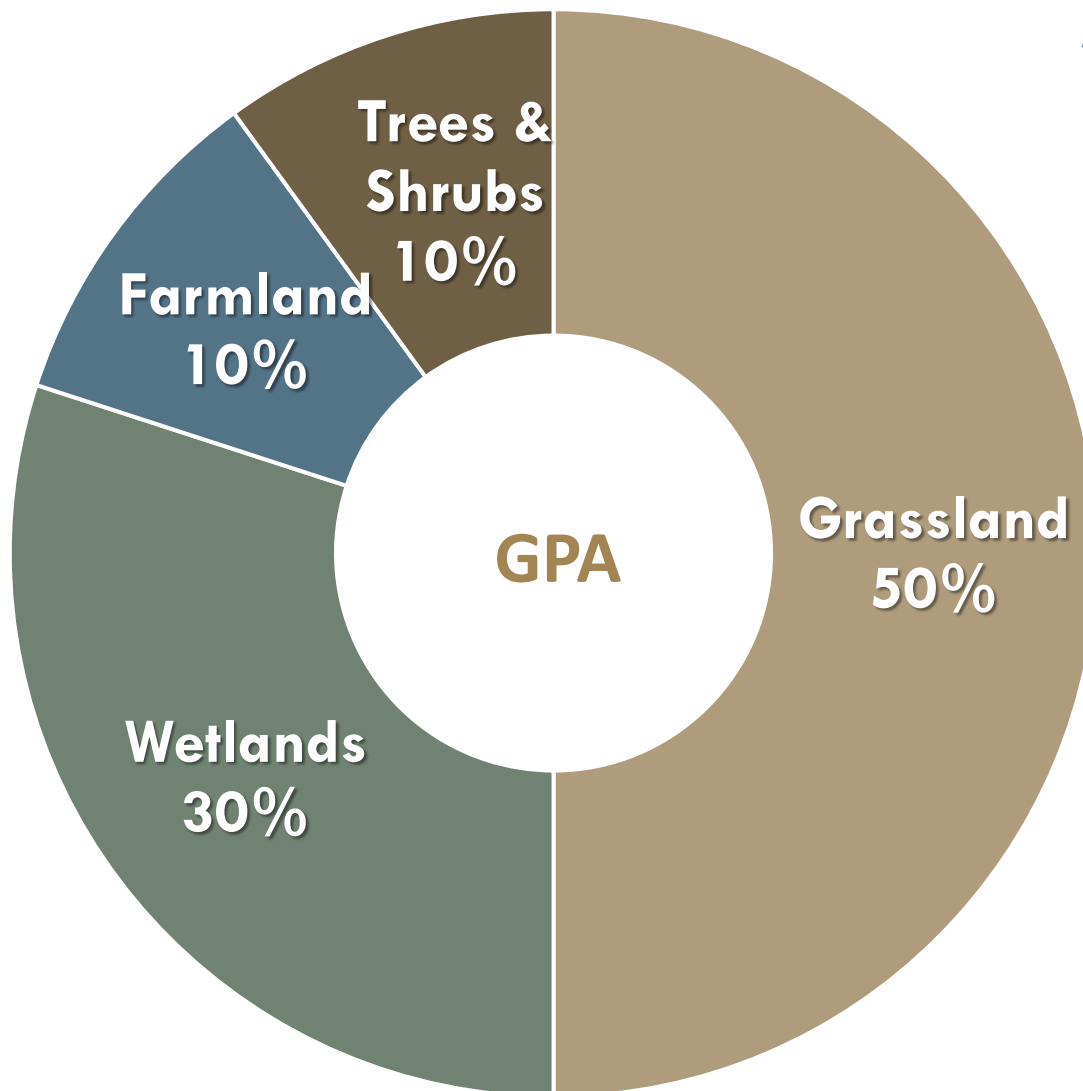
286,239 Acres

**\$5.5 Million**

Average Annual  
Management Costs

**\$1.57  
Million**

Annual Property  
Taxes Paid



## Annual Habitat Management And Development

Food Plots Planted

4,500 acres

Trees & Shrub Plantings

138 acres

Nesting Cover Seeding

1,000 acres

Pollinator Plots Planted

200 acres

Noxious Weeds Controlled

12,000 acres



# HABITAT STAMP TERRESTRIAL & AQUATIC PROJECTS

Calendar Year Expenditures = \$3,687,346

## Grassland & Pollinator Plantings

- 888 acres
- 24 GPAs

## Food Plots

- 257 acres

## Woody Habitat Plantings

- 68 acres
- 12 sites

## Woody/Invasive Management

- 50 acres
- 2 GPAs

## Grazing Management Infrastructure

- 3 GPAs

## Terrestrial Access Roads & Trails

- 4.6 Miles
- 6 GPAs

## Walk-In Areas Signing Bonuses & James & Big Sioux River CREP

- 51,446 acres
- 200 contracts

## Boat Ramp Development

- 4 projects

## Dam Maintenance

- 19 dams
- 10 counties

## Aquatic Habitat Improvements

- 1 aeration project
- 1 fencing project
- 1 dredging project
- 7 fish structure projects

## Aquatic Access/Trail Improvements

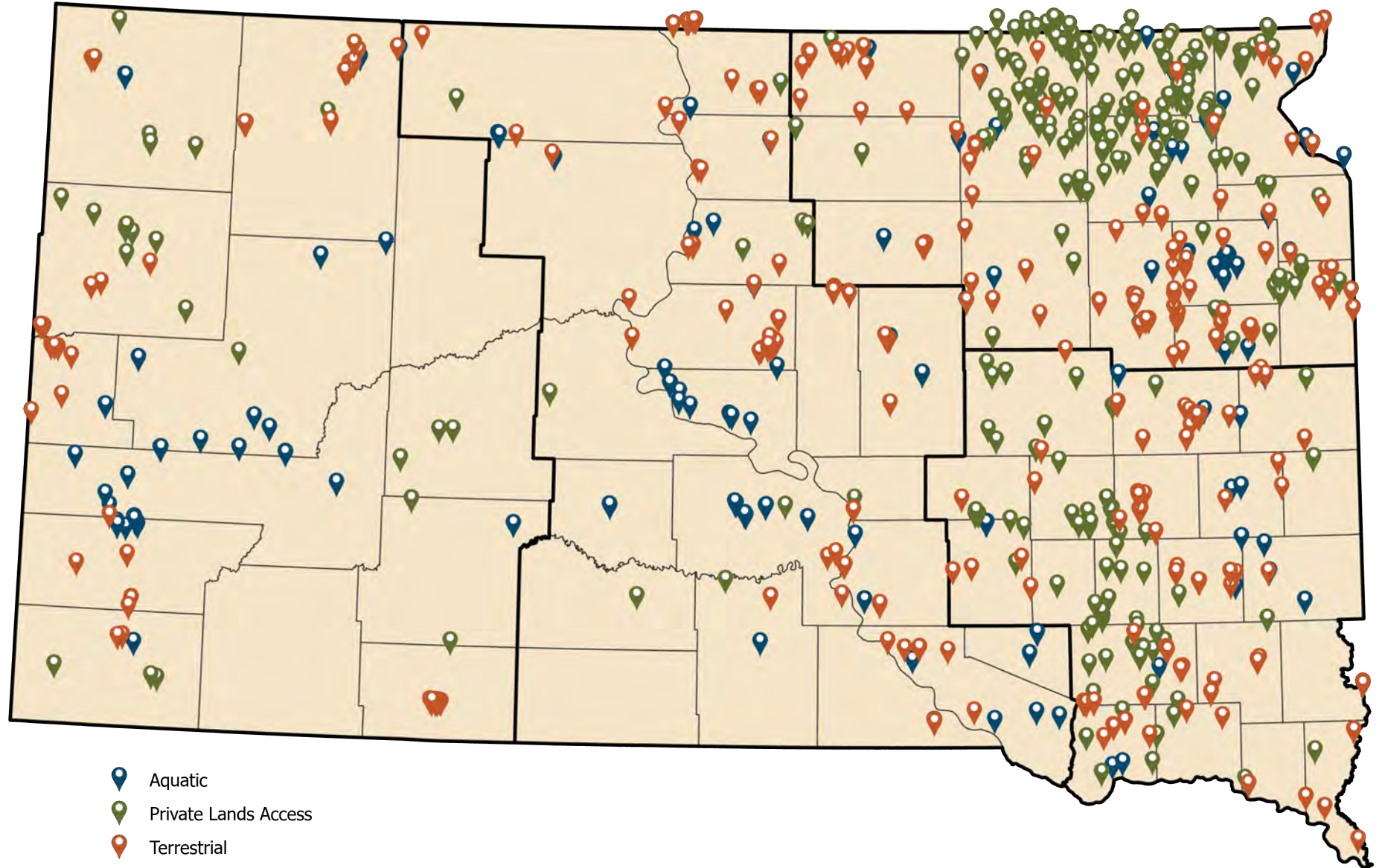
- 39 projects
- 17 counties





# HABITAT STAMP PROJECTS

Completed  
2020 to  
2023



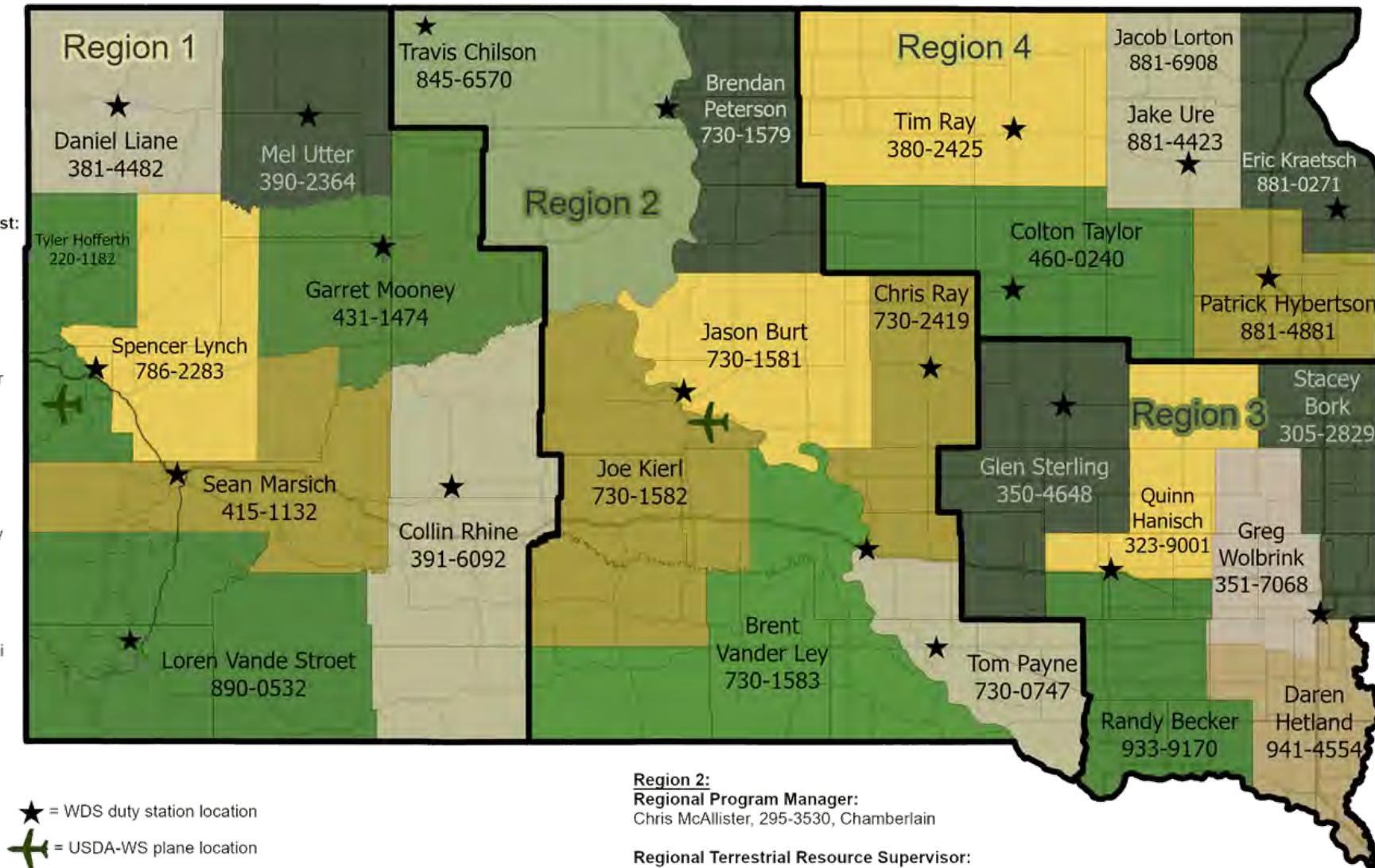




# WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT AND ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL



# WILDLIFE DAMAGE SPECIALISTS



**Region 1**  
Houndsman  
& Black Hills  
WDM Specialist:  
Chad Sebade  
381-9996  
Rapid City

**Regional Program Manager:**  
Jack Alexander  
391-1576  
Rapid City

**Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisor:**  
Trenton Haffley  
320-224-3572  
Rapid City

**Regional Supervisor:**  
Mike Klosowski  
880-1175  
Rapid City

**Region 1**  
★  
Daniel Liane  
381-4482

★  
Mel Utter  
390-2364

★  
Travis Chilson  
845-6570

**Region 2**

★  
Brendan Peterson  
730-1579

**Region 4**  
★  
Tim Ray  
380-2425

Jacob Lorton  
881-6908

★  
Jake Ure  
881-4423

★  
Eric Kraetsch  
881-0271

**Region 4**  
**Regional Program Manager:**  
Nick Rossman  
881-8404  
Watertown

**Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisor:**  
Dan Sternhagen  
695-3718  
Watertown

**Regional Supervisor:**  
Jacquie Ermer  
265-0140  
Webster

**Region 3**  
**Regional Program Manager:**  
Brad Baumgartner  
941-1578  
Sioux Falls

**Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisor:**  
Julie Lindstrom  
214-1779  
Sioux Falls

**Regional Supervisor:**  
Kip Rounds  
222-5503  
Sioux Falls

Tyler Hofferth  
220-1182

★  
Garret Mooney  
431-1474

★  
Spencer Lynch  
786-2283

★  
Sean Marsich  
415-1132

★  
Collin Rhine  
391-6092

★  
Loren Vande Stroet  
890-0532

★  
Jason Burt  
730-1581

★  
Joe Kierl  
730-1582

★  
Brent Vander Ley  
730-1583

★  
Chris Ray  
730-2419

★  
Glen Sterling  
350-4648

★  
Tom Payne  
730-0747

★  
Colton Taylor  
460-0240

★  
Quinn Hanisch  
323-9001

★  
Randy Becker  
933-9170

★  
Greg Wolbrink  
351-7068

★  
Daren Hetland  
941-4554

★  
Stacey Bork  
305-2829

**Region 2:**  
**Regional Program Manager:**  
Chris McAllister, 295-3530, Chamberlain

**Regional Terrestrial Resource Supervisor:**  
Nathan Baker, 280-1468, Fort Pierre

**Regional Supervisor:**  
Mark Ohm, 680-4389, Chamberlain

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT



## Deer

**\$1,152,214**

655 requests for service  
↑ 358% from 2022

59 permanent stackyards,  
panels, secure covers  
and protective fencing  
contracts



## Beaver

**\$304,251**

430 requests for service  
↓ 17% from 2022

1126 beaver removed,  
↓ 23% from 2022



## Elk

**\$358,562**

114 requests for service  
↑ 7% from 2022

Primarily in the Black  
Hills and Bennett  
County

94 Contracts for food  
plot, hayland, stackyard,  
and cable



## Canada Geese

**\$166,979**

720 requests for service  
↑ 7% from 2022

Authorized 422 kill  
permits for landowners,  
similar to 2022







# ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL



## Coyotes & Fox \$1.5 million

Requests for service: 1,385  
↑ 6% from 2022

11,599 coyotes and foxes  
taken via ground and  
aerial control methods



## Prairie Dogs \$277,768

Requests for Service: 112  
↓ 10% from 2022

Acres treated 15,459

Entity	Animals
GFP Employees	3,273
Wildlife Aerial Services	4,322
Predator Control Districts	1,879
Contract Pilots	1,558
Permitted Pilots	567
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,599</b>



# COYOTES & FOX REMOVED

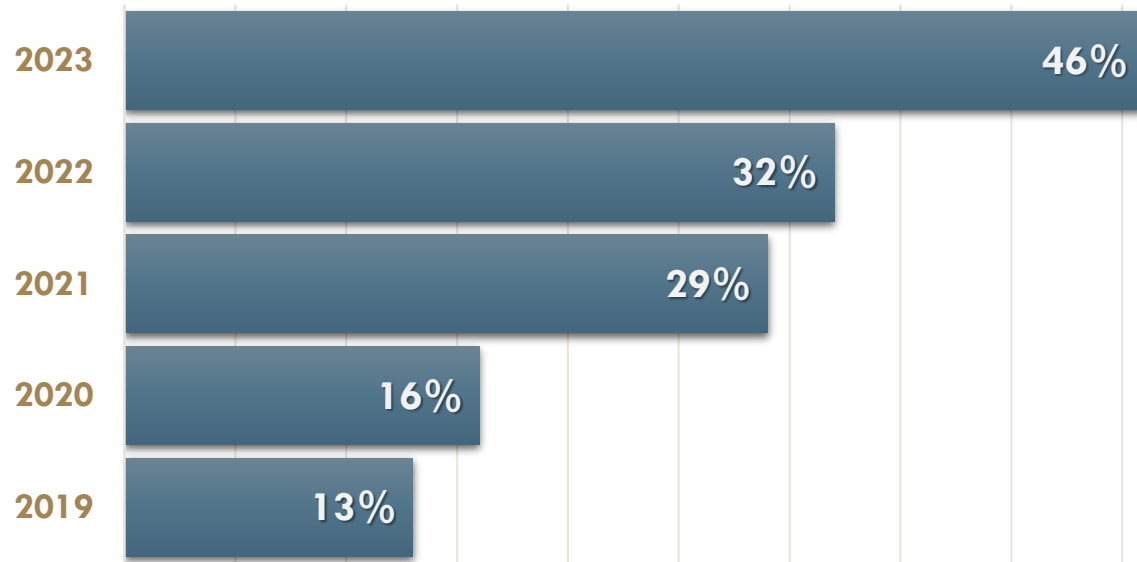
## REQUESTS FOR SERVICE





# NEST PREDATOR BOUNTY PROGRAM

## Percentage of Youth Participation



**240,620 Tails Collected from 2019-2023**

**188,877**  
Raccoon

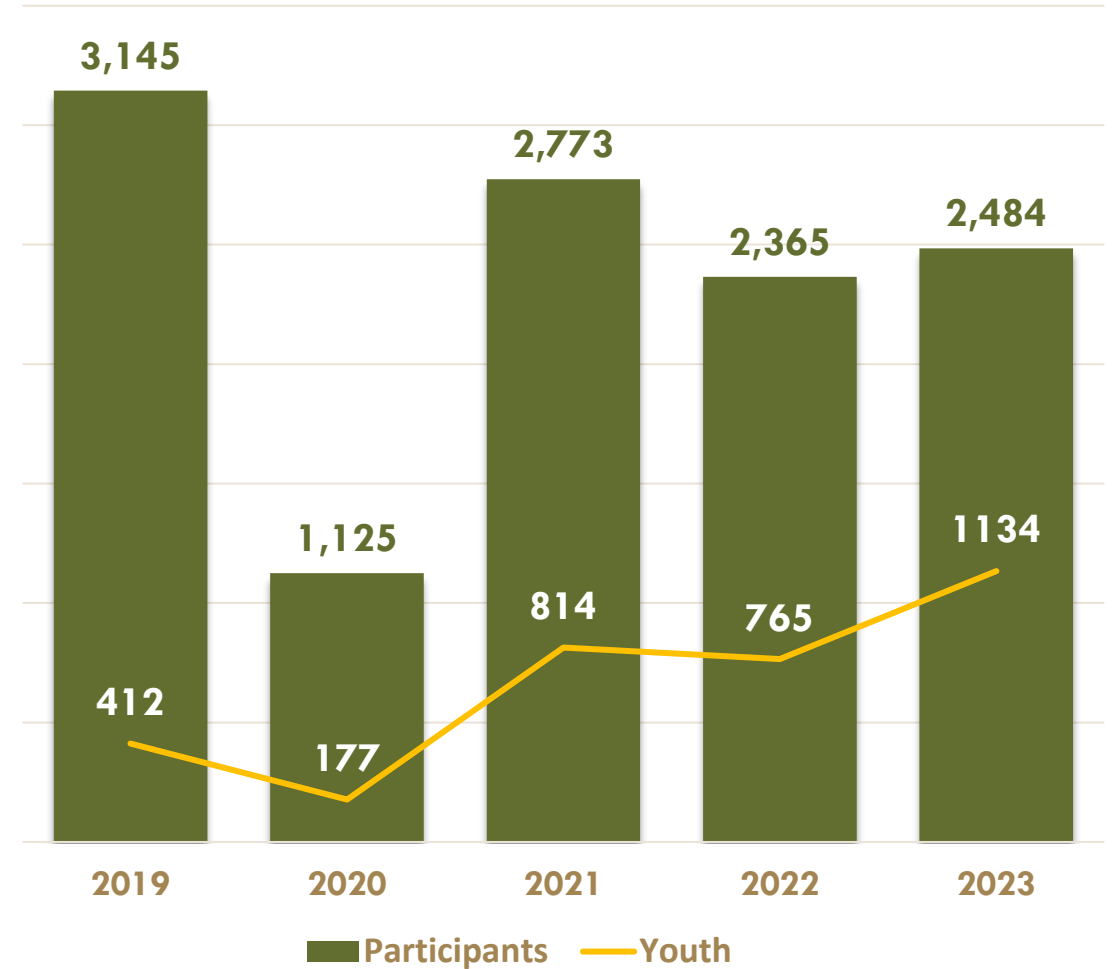
**26,604**  
Skunk

**21,249**  
Opossum

**1,986**  
Badger

**1,904** Red  
Fox

## Participation Totals





# AQUATICS





# FISH STOCKING EFFORTS



1. Maximize Angler  
(Customer) Satisfaction



2. Maximize Angling  
Opportunities



3. Meet or Exceed  
Defined Fishery Objectives





# 2023 FISH STOCKINGS



**Walleye Fry**  
92,000,000



**Walleye Juveniles**  
6,000,000



**Trout & Salmon**  
>260,000 lbs



**Catchables**  
14 Species

100,000,000 fish (19 species) into 249 waters



# RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS (RAS)

## EMBRACING THE FUTURE

- **Cleghorn Springs Hatchery**
  - Increasing RAS capacity – finish 2024
  - 2023 stockings include - 6" bluegill, 10" largemouth bass, 14" walleye, 16" musky
    - 531,151 juvenile walleye
- **Further RAS expansion/collaborations**
  - Blue Dog and McNenny Hatcheries
  - Western Dakota Tech
  - SDSU





# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

CLEAN.  
DRAIN.  
DRY.



ZEBRA MUSSELS ARE IN THIS LAKE!



DO YOUR PART TO SLOW THE SPREAD.  
**CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**



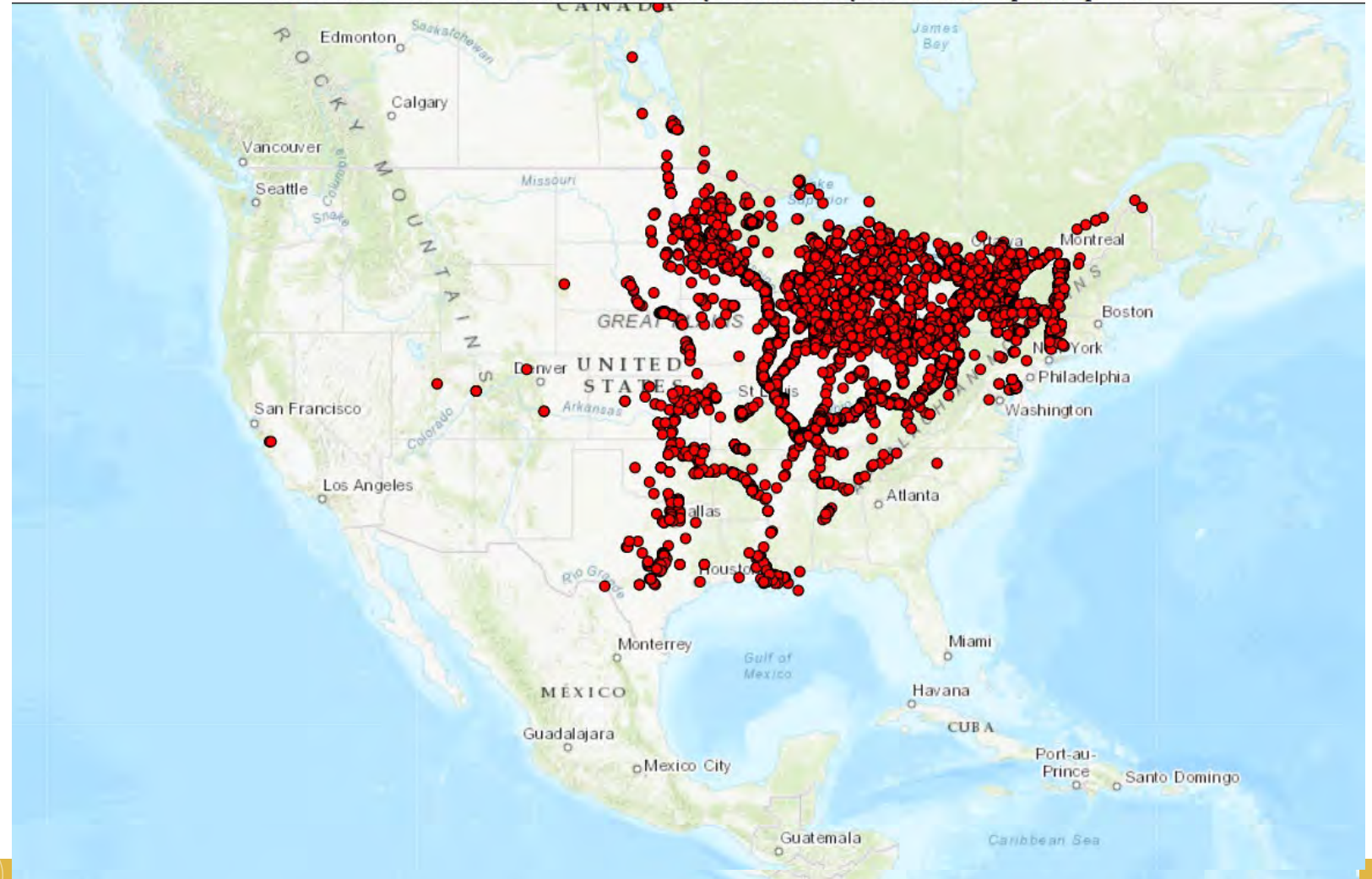


# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

**Annual spread  
within North  
America.  
Ex: Zebra Mussel**

**2023**

**Note: Time series reflects NAS data and may not accurately reflect actual species spread.**







# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

13 Watercraft Inspections Stations during any week

## January 2023 Commission Adopted Revised AIS Strategic Management Plan

- Workforce Recruitment Plan
- Rapid Response Plan
- Monitoring/Detection
- Outreach and Education

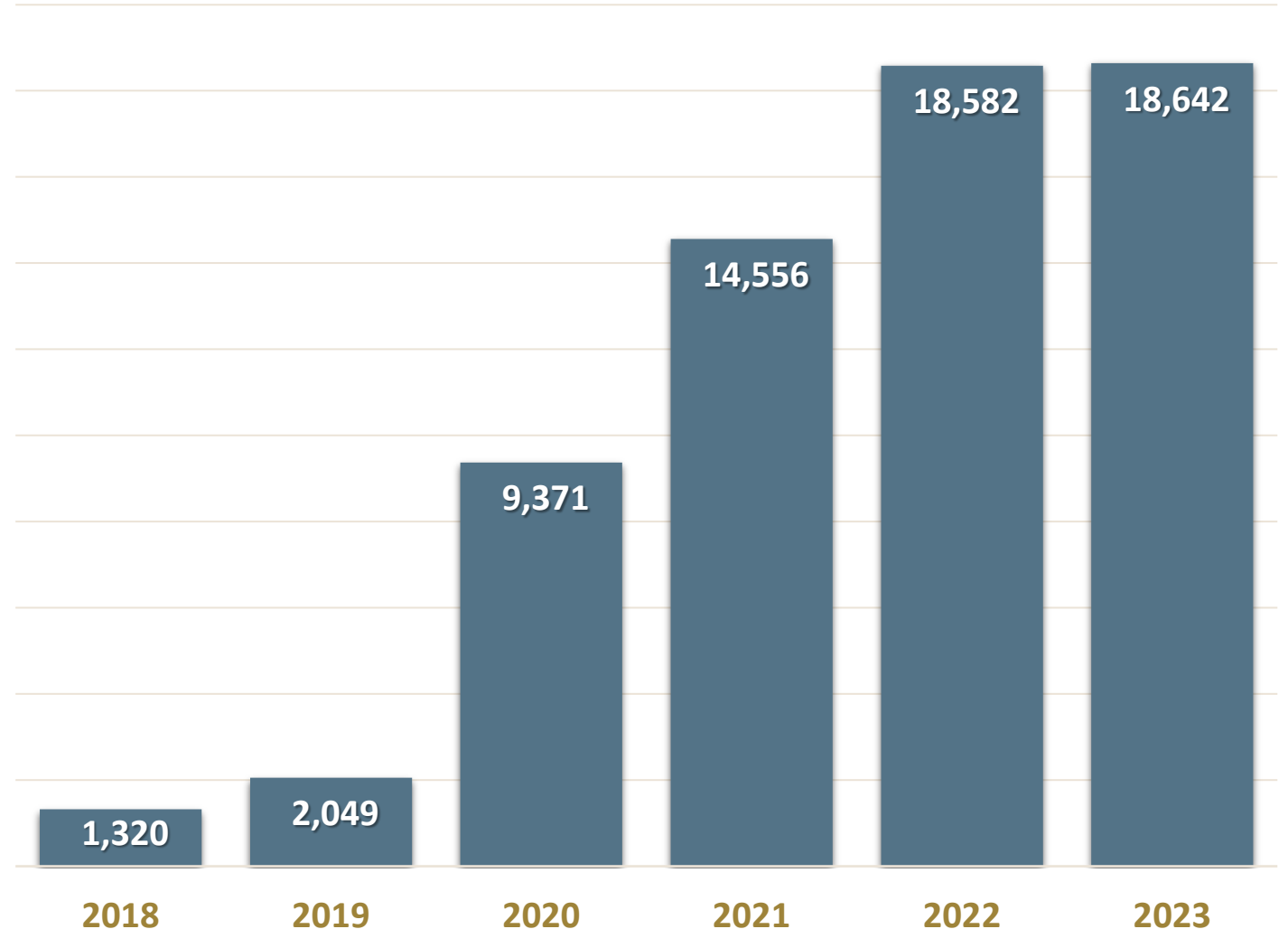
## Compliance

- 98% plug compliance
  - 198 Decontaminations
  - 136 Citations
  - 147 Warnings

## Communications

- Over 2.4 million emails sent
- 43 gas station TVs
- Over 340,000 individuals reached on social media
- 96 GFP-Led Classes on AIS Education

## Watercraft Inspections





# SD SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

## PROJECT TIMELINE

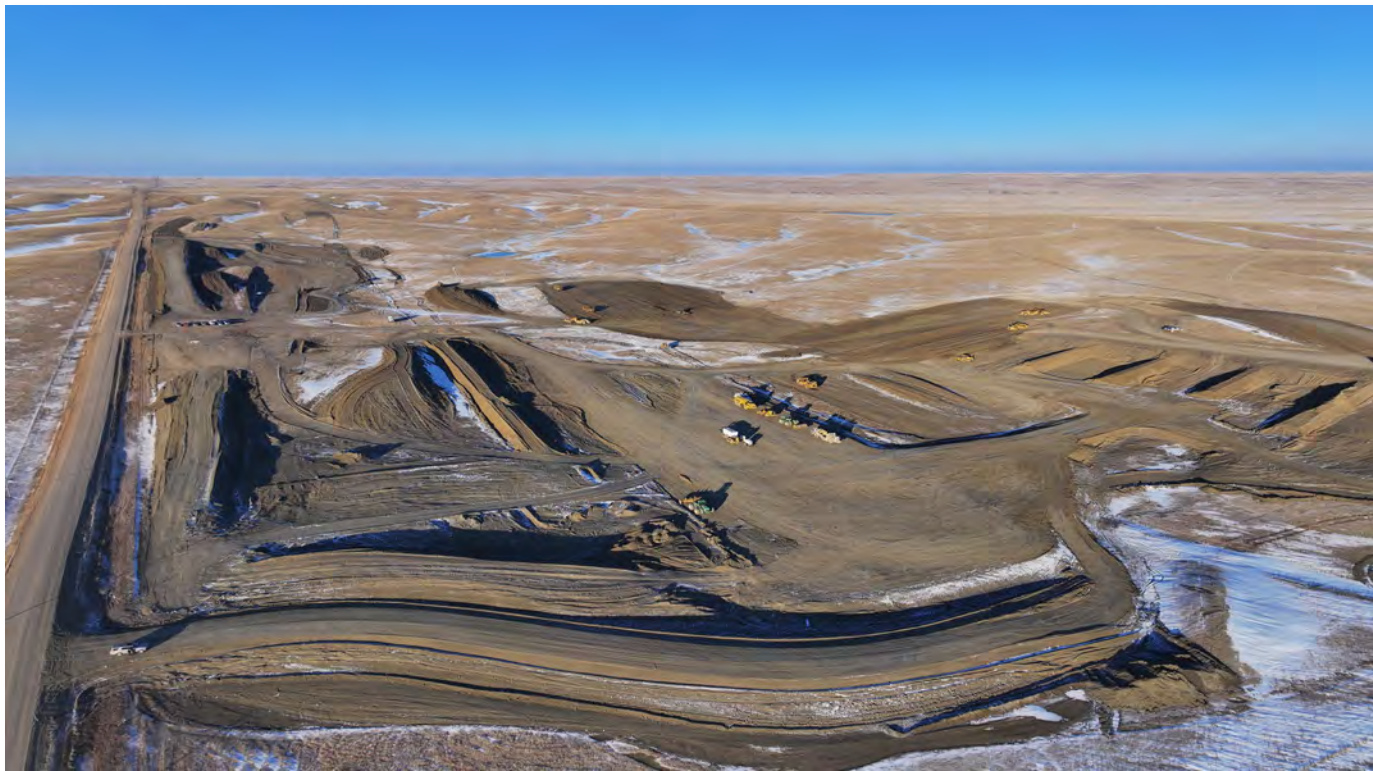
Construction has started

Project split into two parts: Contracts are currently in place

Dirt work and roads

Structures and finish work

Projected completion: Fall 2025











# PARKS & RECREATION





# PARKS BY THE NUMBERS



- 351,066 Camping Nights
- 7.99 Million Park Visitations in 2023
- 400 Seasonal Positions Utilizing 105 FTE
- 350 Volunteers Donated Over 96,400 Hours (46 FTE)

## Top 5 Most Visited Parks

1. Custer State Park
2. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area
3. Spring Creek Recreation Area
4. Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
5. Cow Creek Recreation Area



# PARKS INVENTORY

- 4,400 camp sites
- 168 boat ramps
- 1304 miles snowmobile trails
- 10 visitor centers
- 105 playgrounds
- 14 archery/shooting ranges
- 171 picnic shelters
- 43 fish cleaning stations and 41 fishing piers
- 432 miles of hiking, equestrian, bike, and snowshoe trails







# LOOKING AHEAD



# ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION



- Continue to Prioritize Habitat and Access
- Nest Predator Bounty Program
  - Youth Trap Giveaway
- Shooting Ranges
  - South Dakota Shooting Sports Complex
- Expansion of East Campus
- Outdoor Introduction Classes
- Community and Urban Fisheries
- Reel in Memories
- Palisades Campground Expansion





THANK YOU!

