

## Smell the Burning Leaves

As outdoorsman we are now in the period of Fall's great bounty. Most of our Hunting seasons are now or soon to be open. Pheasant Hunting of course being the biggest draw for us and the countless numbers of Foreigners that have discovered our wonderful natural resources.

We are fortunate to have high numbers of Birds due to several mild winters. While this is a good thing, it has also drawn the attention of anyone who has ever had an inkling to hunt and a high limit on their credit card.

Can you say Cabela's Cowboy? We've all seen them; the big city, camouflage clad, orange safari hat, status symbol SUV driving crowd. Don't forget the brush popper clothing they don as uniforms immediately upon arrival. Do you question why all of this is necessary? Maybe it impresses the wily Pen Raised Pheasants? (colored chickens) most will be shooting. Unfortunately, many have the attitude that if they are spending money, us native peasants should bow and curtsy. I've had the pleasure to meet and hunt with many fine non-resident gentlemen over the years and I'm not trying to stereotype them all but it is definitely a growing and alarming trend.

Mostly gone are the days when out of state hunters formed lasting friendships with the Farm Families with whom they shared the hunt. These bonds were relished and quite often spanned generations. With tight margins, farming has become extremely intensive and competitive. It's increasingly difficult to find a full width grassy section line in Eastern SD. This spells for more lost habitat and opportunity available to the general public.

I don't begrudge anyone the opportunity to enjoy themselves or earn money on local resources and realize the economic impact for our communities. But I am seriously concerned at the price paid for progress. I can't help but to believe that as residents, we are losing a great deal of the flavor of South Dakota's outdoor heritage and traditions. Without close personal ties to someone who owns land, it's difficult for the average citizen to gain access. While these issues are controversial, they *must* be addressed by a coalition of Sportsman, Landowners, and Game Fish and Parks if we are to retain anything other than sales tax revenue.

If you would like to step back, catch your breath and get away from the fray of all of this, I can share with you something that is still available to all of us. It's about as simple as it gets. I'm talking about shore fishing at our Glacial Lakes. Compliments of Mother Nature; no high dollar lease or land purchase needed here.

Grab a rod and reel, some shallow diving crankbaits and an attitude to be content with simpler pleasures. Perhaps a five gallon pail to sit on and throw a few fish in will round out your equipment requirements. To my understanding, they still can be had for nothing and they don't require a blaze orange Cabela's logo to work properly.

Begin a little before Sunset and fancast a stretch of shoreline. If you really want to go high tech, a pair of waders can be employed to gain you a little more coverage. You'll likely be rewarded with some above average to very large Walleye's. As a bonus, you're probably going to have the spot all to yourself and your senses. A Harvest Moon lit night, the smell of burning leaves, the sting of crisp air on your face, the sound of ducks coming in for the evening, etc. This simply cannot be bought at any price.

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