

South Dakota Chapter The Wildlife Society



A Prairie Voice Fall 2016



What's Inside...

- **President's Message**
- **Committee Reports / Board Meeting Minutes**
- **TWS Happenings**

A Message From the President

Nathan Baker

As wildlife professionals, I think that I speak for most of us, when I say that fall is my most anticipated season of the year. The vibrant fall foliage is being expressed across the state, temperatures are starting to cool down, and many of our hunting seasons have begun. I mentioned in our spring newsletter, that spring/summer is a very busy time of the year for our field work, and I encouraged everyone to take a moment to step back and look at the accomplishments that you are achieving, as all of our work is very important and does matter in developing and promoting sounds stewardship of our wildlife resources and the environment upon which they depend. We are the leaders in wildlife science, management and conservation. I really encourage you to take time this fall to enjoy the outdoors and the wildlife resources that we have in South Dakota, and know that all have a part in conserving them.

Over this past summer, the board has been following a couple of items, and we have expressed some of our concerns and support as they relate to our chapter objectives. The board contacted Representative Kristi Noem to urge her support for H.R. 5650 (Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016), which would secure crucial federal funding to support wildlife conservation at the state level to assist in implementing State Wildlife Action Plans. We also worked closely with our Public Lands Committee to formulate a comment letter on the proposed Rushmore Connector Trail. The board was also contacted by the Friends of the Big Sioux River urging us to become engaged in their conservation efforts. Specifically, they are working on a conservation strategy for South Dakota, and are urging our congressional delegation in Washington to support riparian buffer strip programs and

funding, as well as to create a state bill that would focus on riparian buffers, which they would like to introduce during the 2017 Legislative Session. They held a meeting in Sioux Falls, and our Secretary/Treasurer Julie DeJong was able to attend this meeting to become more fully aware of their efforts, and how we may be able to become involved. I encourage any members that are aware of any potential bills, project proposals, conservation projects, etc. that you feel the Chapter should weigh in on, to please contact myself or a board member.

The 51st Annual SDTWS meeting will be held at Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma, from February 27th - March 1st, 2017. The theme of this year's meeting will be "PRECISION CONSERVATION: THE INTERFACE OF WILDLIFE, AGRICULTURE, AND PEOPLE". I am already looking forward to our annual meeting, and I think we will have some great presenters and lively discussions. As a reminder, if you have any specific topics or presentations that you or someone you know would like to give, please don't hesitate to pass those along to President-Elect, Josh Stafford (joshua.stafford@sdstate.edu).

To continue will our goal of sending one board member to the Annual TWS Conference each year, I will be representing our Chapter at the 23rd Annual Conference on October 15th - 19th, this year in Raleigh, North Carolina. I am excited to be able to attend this conference and network with other state chapters and wildlife professionals. The board also decided to support South Dakota students again this year through the TWS Student Travel Grant Program. Three students applied for grants and we will be supporting each of them in the amount of \$200 each.

Have a great autumn everyone!

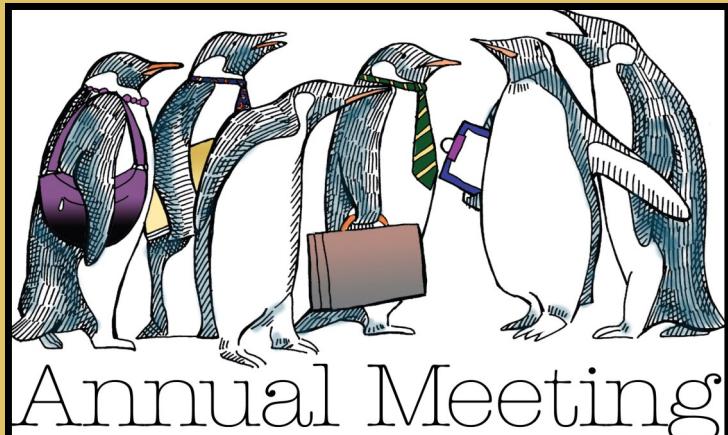
Nathan Baker, President - SD Chapter of The Wildlife Society

2017 SDTWS Annual Meeting

Cedar Shore Resort

Oacoma, SD

February 27th -
March 1st, 2017.



The theme of this year's meeting will be "PRECISION CONSERVATION: THE INTERFACE OF WILDLIFE, AGRICULTURE, AND PEOPLE".

The Board is looking forward to our annual meeting and we will have some great presenters and lively discussions. As a reminder, if you have any specific topics or presentations that you or someone you know would like to give, please don't hesitate to pass those along to President-Elect, Josh Stafford joshua.stafford@sdstate.edu





2017 PHOTO CONTEST

Keep those camera's handy this year. The Executive committee has once again decided to host a photo contest for the 2017 annual meeting. We need your photos....and they can be submitted anytime during the year.



Entry fee: \$5 per photo—no limit on number of entries

Size: 8x10 attached to 10x12 black cardboard / foam board mat

- Photos can be submitted prior to the meeting to any board member or can be brought to the annual meeting
- Winner will be chosen by popular vote at 2017 Annual Meeting & receive 50% of the entry fees.
- The winning photo will be displayed on the SDTWS website and will be made into a canvas to be auctioned off at 2018 annual meeting.

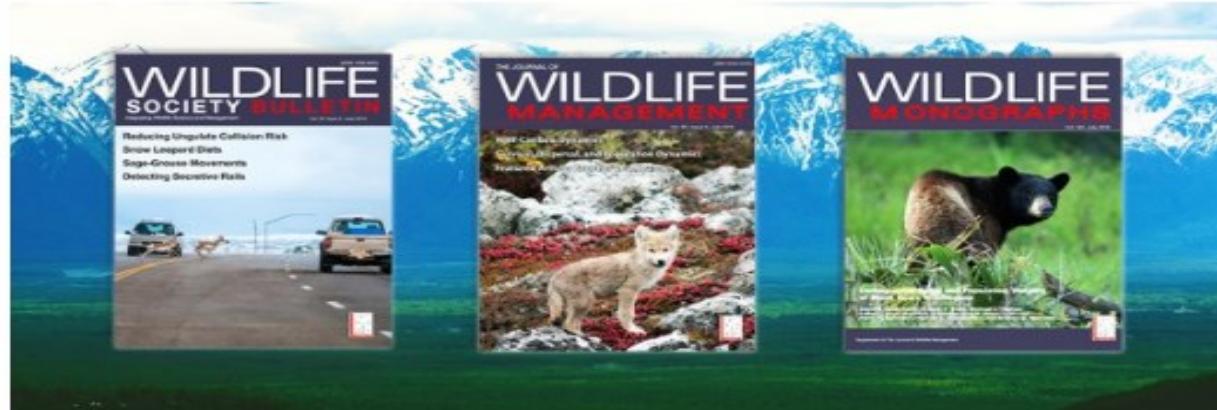


All current and new TWS members will soon have online access to the latest wildlife science published in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs*, and the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. [Click here to check it out](#)

Announcing a major, new addition to TWS membership benefits

By Gary E. Potts, President The Wildlife Society

Posted on July 27, 2016



Today, I am pleased to announce that your TWS membership just became more valuable. As part of our effort to expand partnerships within the wildlife community, all current and new TWS members will soon have online access to the latest wildlife science published in our premier journals — *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs* and the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. Previously, members had to pay an additional \$75 for online access to both journals, nearly the cost of a full TWS membership.

We recently notified current subscribers about this change, and now we are rolling out the news to all members.

This new benefit, which will start in January 2017, means that everything TWS publishes will be free to all members. It is yet another step toward our commitment to increasing member engagement in TWS and reconnecting wildlife science with management and conservation.

TWS's 2015-2019 strategic plan is built around five broad themes, namely the conservation and sustainability of wildlife, leadership in the conservation community, service to our members, integration and networking among the Society's organizational units, and sound business management for the Society. The new journal benefit promotes these themes.

I want to encourage you to spread this news to your colleagues who might not be TWS members, so that they, too, can benefit from all that TWS offers to those engaged in the sustainability of wildlife.

[The Journal of Wildlife Management](#)

[Wildlife Monographs](#)

[Wildlife Society Bulletin](#)

Check it out...

- SDTWS website..

<http://wildlife.org/south-dakota-chapter/>



SDTWS is on Facebook!

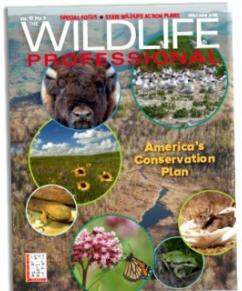
Click [here](#) to join the group! Facebook is a great way to share information, post events, to stimulate discussions on environmental issues or other topics of interest.

Contact Chuck Pyle at goosemansd@hotmail.com if you have events, pictures, or topics you would like posted to the site.

The Wildlife Society News

Popular Articles on the TWS website

- [What would Aldo Leopold think of our profession?](#)
- [Tiny but tough: Fire ants reduce rodent numbers, ticks](#)
- [How bats hunt in noise pollution](#)



For the latest TWS News Center

<http://wildlife.org/learn/news-center/>



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

Executive Board Meeting

August 11th, 2016

On the call:



President: Nathan Baker, President elect: Josh Stafford, Secretary/Treasurer: Julie DeJong, Board members: Alex Solem, Ben Lardy

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

- Approval of minutes from last executive board meeting (4/14/16), Motion to approve: Alex Solem, Second: ben Lardy, All in favor
- Approval of treasurers report, Julie DeJong will check on why CMPS has not cashed dues check from SDTWS. Motion to approve: Alex Solem, Second: ben Lardy, All in favor

Old Business

- 2017 Annual Meeting Date and Location—Feb. 27th – March 1st , Cedar Shore Resort – Oacoma, SD (reserved)
- Review duties/responsibilities of board members for new board—use Google Drive Information. Website Documents File
- TWS Annual Conference – Raleigh, North Carolina

SDTWS Chapter Representation Nathan Baker will be attending and we will reimburse both Registration and Airfare (already paid by him), Registration = \$475, Airfare = \$528.20, Julie DeJong will send a check to Nathan Baker to cover expenses.

SD Student Travel Grants, 3 SD Students (\$200 each), Katherine Moratz, October Greenfield, Kassondra Hendricks, Will be required to send in a 1 page review of the conference,

- South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund, Provided Funding in the amount of \$1,000.00, Will be waiting for another call for -proposals and update on how the money is being utilized

New Business

- 2017 Annual Meeting Theme Working on something in the arena of the interface of Conservation, Agriculture and Human Populations. Keynote Speaker—Fred Errington and wife Debra, won't work for a presentation in person but a Skype talk may work. Other options – Gabe Brown/ Brown Ranch (Bismarck) Human Dimensions component, precision conservation
- Meeting Registration Fees—Increased fees in 2016 due to 50th anniversary and additional components for the meeting. Stay with the fees from last year, they are very reasonable compared to other conferences. Allows for better meals, snacks, and options for supplies, take home gifts, etc. Add a hardship/scholarship option? Allows for the extra funds to be utilized for conservation donations, etc. Review Meeting Checklist. Date set, Cedar Shore is contacted and rooms reserved. Josh – planning and agenda
- CMPS Annual Meeting – Slated to be held in South Dakota - 2017. Silka Kempema spoke to the board. State Chapter involvement is varied/flexible. Maintain good communication with CMPS board. Shelly Deisch elected to board now. Meeting is usually in August. Last time in SD, with Great Plains Natural Science Society. Andrea Orabona – president of CMPS board. Need to set up a meeting with CMPS to discuss plans. Bob Lanka – section rep.
- Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016. Letter to SD Representatives – Nathan Baker will take the lead on this letter, approved to go forward with the letter
- Mount Rushmore Connector Trail. Comment Letter. Will check more with John Kanta and others in the region
- Friends of the Big Sioux River. Conservation Groups Meeting. We will try and learn more about this group and have some representation from the board to sit in on a meeting
- Upcoming SDTWS Newsletter (September/October). Meeting Theme. TWS New Member Benefits. Online Access to all of TWS's Journals

Meeting Adjourned: 1:43 CST

Motion to adjourn – Julie DeJong, Second - Alex Solem

Public Lands Committee Report

Dennie Mann

Stony Butte Assessment—Public Scoping Comments

The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (SDTWS) submits comments concerning an Assessment of the Stony Butte Project Area on Fort Pierre National Grassland north of Vivian, South Dakota. Our organization has an interest in this project and we appreciate the opportunity to comment. The Wildlife Society is an international non-profit scientific and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. The South Dakota Chapter achieves this mission in part by evaluating the principals involved in proposed public actions that affect wildlife and habitats. Our Chapter goals and objectives are more clearly outlined at: <http://wildlife.org/south-dakota-chapter/>

The members of our public lands committee, and Chapter Board, have considerable experience with federal NEPA processes and procedures. Our understanding of the elements of an assessment include the identification and evaluation of existing resource conditions as they relate back to current Forest Service Plan directives. However, the fact that the Stony Butte Assessment also includes recommendations for possible actions to either stay the course or change management to better meet Plan direction, are in our opinion, the appearance of a scoping document which will be used to support future NEPA analyses and an ultimate project Decision. In that case, we request that our comment letter be included in the Stony Butte Project Area administrative file and that our Chapter be included on all future mailings for this Project. Thus, our comments are presented with

future NEPA in mind.

We commend the Fort Pierre National Grassland Forest Service (USFS) staff for efforts to implement the management guidance and direction prescribed in its Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Range Allotment Management Plan (RAMP) for the project area. In addition, we support the focus on invasive plants and using a variety of tools, including prescribed fire, for managing the national grassland. The work to monitor or assess flora and fauna has not escaped us and we recognize the efforts made by FPNG staff to accomplish these inventories. The richness and ecological services of intact grassland ecosystems, such as FPNG, are more important as native grasslands are being converted for other land uses.

In several of the issue discussions, future detailed NEPA analyses are recommended for vegetation treatments such as prescribed fire, haying and mowing. Yet, a considerable amount of discussion in the report for several issues is about livestock grazing. Was livestock grazing included in the recommendation for future NEPA analysis?

Conservatively stocked rest rotation grazing systems have proven to be good grazing systems for enhancing grassland structural diversity on FPNG and balancing the needs and desires of grazing permittees and upland bird hunters. The USFS already has the directives to achieve this. We request that future NEPA analyses include livestock grazing and evaluate options for increasing the number of rest rotation grazing systems in the project area.

Reference is made in the assessment about possibly modifying forage production models if future precipitation levels trend above average. We assume these modifica-

tions are to support possible increases in authorized AUM levels over current levels in the project area. If this is a correct assumption, we propose that it is good land stewardship and range management to stock for average or slightly below average precipitation years, not for above average years. This is especially important since USFS grazing permits are generally for 10-year terms. Drought is a very common event on the Great Plains and wise livestock grazing for private operators consistently offer drought planning which includes the assumption that the environment is: going into drought, in drought or coming out of drought. Because the Assessment is asking for a response, our response is that FPNG's time is better spent conducting the necessary monitoring and grazing implementation as outlined in USFS directives, rather than try to find another model or methodology. Current methods have not been shown to be ineffective to achieve proper range management or quantitatively measuring vegetation responses due to grazing (among other grassland disturbances such as fire, etc). The authorized use of AUMs and stocking rates has already been established (Appendix I of LRMP and elsewhere). The scientific, peer-reviewed literature related to VOR models and predictions of residual forage have been tested and take into consideration the band-height for residual vegetation for proper ecological functioning. New models are not necessary and we know of no new models that are superior to the tools currently available to USFS grasslands. Finally, in response to monitoring results and considerable public concern over heavy forage utilization in the past; USFS reduced past grazing levels to more moderate and con-

servative levels. It is our understanding that the reduced stocking level remains in place today, and we request that authorized AUMs for the term grazing permits not be increased above the specified level.

Recommendations are made to increase the number of water wells on FPNG, rather than relying on several private wells for FPNG pipelines. Range infrastructure maps, in addition to showing more wells on FPNG, also show new tank locations on USFS. Given current LRMP direction to enhance grassland structural diversity and not increase livestock water densities on FPNG, future detailed NEPA analyses should evaluate and disclose how increased water densities (new tank locations) will help enhance grassland structure diversity within individual pastures and between pastures in the project area. Also, future NEPA evaluations should provide a comparison of the new proposed water density in the project area with the density that existed when the LRMP for FPNG was first revised in 2001.

Quantitative data is critical and the information presented in Table 14 exhibits efforts made to monitor vegetation responses. The information indicates that desired grassland structural diversity is not being met in the project area. Unfortunately, trend is difficult to accurately assess with the data presented in the table, and the sample sizes shown in the table are also very small. Future NEPA analyses should disclose how increased livestock water densities will help to enhance grassland structural diversity and heterogeneity within and between pastures in the project area. The LRMP also prescribes, in addition to periodic annual rest, implementation of a variety of livestock grazing intensities (light, moderate and heavy) to help achieve

desired grassland diversity (Appendix I and elsewhere). If livestock grazing is included in future NEPA analyses, we propose that it include an evaluation of options for using different livestock grazing intensities to enhance grassland diversity and heterogeneity in the project area.

Concerning water for livestock and wetlands, Stony Butte has a playa (wetland) that appears has not been converted to a dugout or stock pond. Every effort should be made to preserve and conserve this seasonal wetland from livestock impacts. A grassland-wide inventory of playas that still exist may be necessary to demonstrate the uncommon attributes this hydrological element adds to grassland diversity.

Reliable science is clearly part of this Assessment and we recommend an additional reference. A review of long-term research on the effects of different grazing intensities and stocking rates on rangelands by Holechek et al. (1999) is a good solid reference. This review is titled "Grazing Studies: What We've Learned" and is published in volume 21(2) of *Rangelands*. We also recommend that USFS review many of the vegetation tables with Dr. Daniel Uresk, USFS Range Scientist in Rapid City, SD. There is a significant amount of information in the assessment tables, which is greatly appreciated. Because we are not privy to the raw data, sample size, and so forth, it is difficult at this time to comment specifically on some of the table summaries which are used to draw conclusions. For example, Table 11; did USFS average already averaged percentages (Daubenmire)? Also, Tables 9 and 11; comparing one year of data to more than one year may skew the representation of vegetation any monitoring method offers. Variations

such as precipitation, banner years for sweet clover, proximity of drought or coming out of drought, etc. all weigh heavily on vegetation responses in concert with animal herbivory.

In closing, we would like to thank the FPNG for the amount of work and effort that went into this assessment. It has a good start but is, in our opinion, still preliminary. The areas we feel need a better review will hopefully help focus where knowledge gaps remain. The assessment gives the appearance of a potential change in the current LRMP direction, which, in an assessment, is not open to revision or amendment. The current LRMP was approved through intense public scoping and ultimately upheld in the FS Administrative Appeal process, District Court and finally, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2001. The efforts that many public land users participated in over the years to ensure that FPNG be managed for its current directives with an emphasis on prairie grouse and other attendant habitat conditions, stands strong. FPNG has the tools already in place for adaptive management and flexibility for the multiple uses which the grasslands offer.

The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to provide commentary and suggestions to the assessment. Please continue to send correspondence to our Chapter on this important proposed project.

Sincerely,
Dennie Mann
Public Land Chairman
downtoearth15@rap.midco.net

SDTWS Executive Board 2015

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[John Kanta](#)

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[Josh Stafford](#)

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(605) 214-1779

Board Member

[Ben Lardy](#)

Pheasants Forever
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Webster, SD 57274
(605) 461-8249

Board Member

[Alex Solem](#)

SD Game, Fish & Parks
895 3rd Street SW
Huron, SD 57350
(605) 353-7319

Northern Great Plains Working Group Representative: Rocco Murano, 353-7185

The South Dakota Chapter TWS Objectives are:

- To develop and promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources and of the environment upon which wildlife and humans depend.
- To undertake an active role in preventing human-induced environmental degradation.
- To increase awareness and appreciation of wildlife values.
- To seek the highest standards in all activities of the wildlife profession.

To aid in the achievement of these objectives, the South Dakota Chapter proposes to:

- Provide opportunities for better liaison among individual members, their Section, and The Society.
- Evaluate and respond to the principles involved in proposed or enacted societal actions that could affect wildlife or its habitats.
- Recognize and commend outstanding professional achievements in maintenance, restoration and enhancement of habitats for wildlife.
- Focus the aims and objectives of The Society and the Central Mountains and Plains Section upon professional wildlife needs, problems, and events in local situations.
- Encourage communication between members and nonmembers to facilitate understanding and effectiveness of research and management of wildlife resources.

Evaluate the principles involved in proposed or enacted public or private actions that could affect wildlife and to make these evaluations known to the public and public officials.

SDTWS—Standing Committee Chairs *

Audit - Mark Norton, 773-3096
Awards - Nathan Baker 223-7709
Conservation Review - Paul Coughlin, 773-4194
Education & Information - Laura Hubers, 947-4521
Membership - Chuck Pyle, 353-5753
Program - Nathan Baker 223-7709
Nominations and Elections - Nathan Baker 223-7709
Resolutions & Public Statements - Vacant

SDTWS - Special Committee Chairs *

Arrangements - Mark Norton, 773-3096 & Tom Kirschenmann, 352-1874
Certification - Troy Grovenburg, 688-5064
Chapter History - Corey Huxoll, 773-4195
Energy - K C Jensen, 688-4781 & Silka Kempema, 773-2742
Fee Hunting & Ownership of Wildlife - Andy Lindbloom, 223-7709
Fund Raising - VACANT
Grassland Issues - Lee Erickson, 347-4952
Missouri River Issues - Nathan Baker, 223-7709
Newsletter - Jennifer Briggs, 256-2974
Website - Charlene "Charlie" Bessken, 222-9445
Public Lands - Dennis Mann, 939-8156, Eddie Childers, 433-5263
Tribal Fish & Wildlife - Mike Gutzmer, 402-910-3533
Wetlands - Randy Meidinger, 380-0380
Wildlife Diseases - Steve Griffin, 394-6786
Wildlife Diversity - Eileen Stukel, 773-4229, Silka Kempema, 773-2742
Workshop - Travis Runia, 353-8477 & Casey Heimerl, 773-4345

*Please see the Committees webpage at [SDTWS](#) to find the list of Committee members and email contact information.

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Application for Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (indicate home or work) _____

E-mail Address (for newsletter delivery) _____

Please Note:

SDTWS's newsletter, *A Prairie Voice*, is all-electronic. Therefore, an e-mail address must be provided above in order to receive it (paper copies will be provided only to individuals who do not have a computer, internet access, or an email address).

Please Check One: New Member* 2016 Dues Renewal

* If you did not pay your dues in 2015, you will be considered a new member as per the SDTWS Bylaws.

Employer _____

Sponsor's Name _____

Send the completed application/renewal form and a check for \$10.00 (regular), \$6.00 (student) to:

Julie DeJong
304 North Cherry Street
Lennox, SD 57039
(605) 214-1779

Regular Dues: \$10.00

Student Dues: \$6.00

Life Membership dues are prorated by age as follows:

Age 20 to 35: 25 x annual dues (\$10 x 25 = \$250)

Age 36 to 45: 20 x annual dues (\$10 x 20 = \$200)

Age 46 to 65: 17.5 x annual dues (\$10 x 17.5 = \$175)

Age 66 to 75: 12.5 x annual dues (\$10 x 12.5 = \$125)

Age 76 and over: Free

For more information on becoming a life member, contact Chuck Pyle (605) 353-5753.