

# South Dakota Chapter

## The Wildlife Society



# A Prairie Voice

## June 2016



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# A Message From the President

## Nathan Baker

With spring now upon us and summer fast approaching, it seems like this is one of the busiest times of the year for wildlife professionals. However, this is also one of the most enjoyable times, as this is when a significant portion of our fieldwork occurs, i.e. conducting bird surveys, neotropical bird banding, prescribed burns, vegetation sampling, planting habitat and food plots, capturing fawns, and the list goes on. As everyone seems to become busier and busier each year, I encourage you to take time this summer to step back and look at everything that you have accomplished and know that it does matter. As Shane Mahoney and The Wildlife Society President, Gary Potts mentioned in their addresses at our 50th Annual Meeting, Wildlife Conservation Does Matter, and we are Wildlife Professionals that have devoted ourselves to wildlife conservation. President Potts reiterated that The Wildlife Society is our professional organization, and emphasized that "We are The Wildlife Society!!" President Potts has challenged each Chapter and Section to increase their Wildlife Society Membership numbers at the National Level. At last check, we are 178 members strong, and have 40 South Dakota Chapter Members that are also National Members of The Wildlife Society. If you are not a current member at the National Level, I encourage you to consider it, as well as to consider becoming certified as an Associate or Certified Wildlife Biologist through The Wildlife Society.



Our 50th Annual Meeting celebration went really well, with 152 registered attendees, and I want to thank everyone for pulling together to make that meeting what it was. Secretary/Treasurer, Julie DeJong put together a financial summary of the 2016 Annual Meeting for the SDTWS Executive Board at our last meeting on April 14th. Some additional expenses were incurred for the annual meeting, but we also had additional sponsorships

this year, as well as the increase in registration fee. All-in-all, we ended up needing to dip into our saving for \$2,410.72 to cover meeting expenses. At this time last year the board reviewed our budget and planned to utilize some of our saving to put on a few extras at the 50th annual meeting, and in the end we came out well. We are now looking forward to planning our 51st Annual Meeting and have secured the meeting location again at Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma. Meeting dates are February 27th - March 1st, 2017. President-elect Josh Stafford will be taking the lead on lining up our agenda, and 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 Josh (joshua.stafford@sdstate.edu) or myself at any time. We are also planning to have another photo contest at the annual meeting, so have your camera ready while in the field this year. It was really nice to see all the photos that were submitted at the annual meeting.



Finally, as habitat loss and degradation is a real and ever increasing issue here in South Dakota, the board discussed making a monetary donation to the newly created South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund, as this fund provides a permanent funding source for habitat work in South Dakota, and was a result of one of the recommendations from Governor Daugaard's 2013 Habitat Summit. Two of the SDTWS Objectives are "to develop and promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources and of the environment upon which wildlife and humans depend", and "to undertake an active role in preventing human-induced environmental degradation". As this is an opportunity for direct on-the-ground conservation to restore and enhance wildlife habitat, the board felt that we could support this fund and the associated habitat projects with a monetary donation of \$1,000. For more information about the South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund and the projects funded thus far please visit: <http://habitat.sd.gov/resources/habitatconservationfund.aspx>

Be sure to take time this summer to enjoy South Dakota's Great Outdoors!

Nathan Baker, President - South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society

# 2016 Annual Meeting Central Mountains and Plains Section of TWS

*"Seeing the wildlife through the trees: challenges and conservation of forests and wildlife"*



The 2016 Annual Meeting for the CMPS will be in Steamboat Springs, CO from August 8-11, 2016. Join us!

For more details and registration click [here](#)

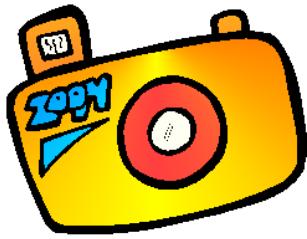
Highlights of this year's conference will include:

- R for Wildlife Biologists and Conservation Detection Dog workshops
- Plenary speakers on the contemporary challenges of forest and wildlife management
- Contributed papers and posters, and a new session of Ignite Talks
- Four fun field trips exploring Steamboat's ecosystems and wildlife



## 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.



## 2016 Annual Meeting Highlights

Shane Mahoney was our keynote speaker and gave an engaging address titled "Conservation Matters" during our awards banquet. The YouTube video can be viewed [here](#).



## 2016 TWS Awards



**Wildlife Professional of the Year - Chuck Berdan**

# 2016 TWS Awards



**M.S. Student of the Year—Matt Gottlob**



**Best Open Presentation—Adam Janke**

# 2016 TWS Awards

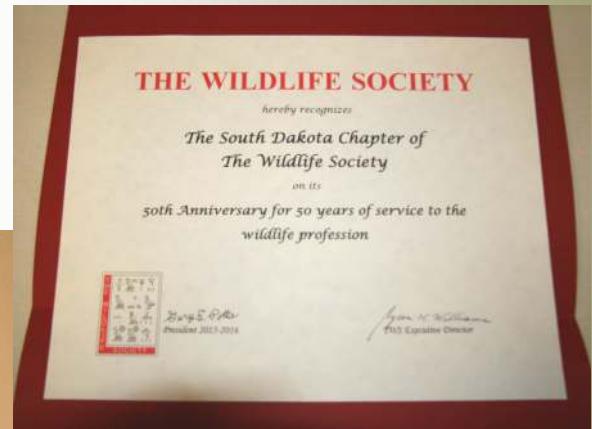


**Best Student Presentation—Matt Gottlob**



**2016 Photo  
Contest  
Winner -  
Laura Huber**

# 2016 TWS Awards



Gary Potts  
presentation of  
the SDTWS 50th  
Anniversary  
Certificate



Gary Potts and the Past Presidents (L to R) Bob Lanka, Silka Kempema, Tom LeFaive, Dennie Mann, Gary Potts, Nathan Baker, John Kanta, Paul Coughlin, Chad Switzer, Mark Norton, Thomas Tornow, Dan Hubbard, Carl Madsen

## SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Annual Business Meeting - 1 March 2016 – Cedar Shore Resort, Oacoma, SD

Call to order – President John Kanta, Recognition of a quorum, Recognition of a Parliamentarian Paul Coughlin

Minutes from 2015 Annual Meeting – Julie DeJong

Discussion on unclear wording at the very end of the 2015 meeting minutes. The end of annual meeting minutes from 2015 will be amended to show that we decided to go with parent chapter for our website rather than a private contractor, Motion to approve with edits discussed: Nathan Baker, Second: Alex Solem

Annual Treasurer's Report – Julie DeJong, Motion to approve: Dennie Mann, Second: Lee Erickson

### Old Business

Standing Committee Reports:

#### **1. Nominations and Elections – Nathan Baker,**

\*Comments from the Candidates, President – Josh Stafford, Board – Nick Markl, Ben Lardy.  
\*Casting of the Ballots, Audit – Mark Norton - approved, Awards – Nathan Baker

Three nominations were received for the Wildlife Professional of the Year Award and no nominations were received for the Citizens Award. We also received two nominations for the MS student of the year award. The PhD student award is offered every other year, and will not be offered this year. Awards will be presented tonight during the Awards Banquet. Student and open presentation award plaques were again procured, as was one for our outgoing chapter president.

#### **2. Conservation Review – Paul Coughlin**

As outlined in the Chapter Bylaws, the Conservation Review Committee is charged with reviewing legislative proposals and NEPA related documents that may affect wildlife or wildlife habitat in South Dakota, then making recommendations to the Executive Board regarding possible action by the Board or Chapter.

*2015 Activities:* In 2014, no specific issues were brought to the Conservation Review Committee for its consideration.

*Conservation Affairs Network:*

In June 2014, the Chapter's Executive Board tasked the Conservation Review Committee to serve as the Chapter's representative to the newly formed Conservation Affairs Network (CAN). The CAN - launched in early 2014 under the leadership of TWS - serves to engage and unify efforts by Chapters, Sections, and the parent Chapter in wildlife conservation policy issues at the national, regional, and local levels. The CAN is a venue for streamlined communication, collaboration, and cooperation on policy matters important to wildlife professionals.

The overall Network operates through Conservation Affairs Committees (CAC) within each Section and Chapter. These Chapter and Section committees are charged with identifying and addressing policy priorities within their state or region, and communicating their activities and needs with other CACs and TWS staff via the Network. This way CACs and TWS staff support each other in their policy activities, lending experience and expertise to enhance individual Chapter and Section efforts. SDTWS's Conservation Review Committee functions as our Chapter's CAC, with the role of communicating "up" to the CMPS CAC, as well as functioning as the "policy issues" pipeline from the CMPS CAC to the SDTWS Executive Board and Chapter.

**2016 Activities and Committee Priorities:**

While the Committee continues to monitor a variety issues, the Executive Board and Chapter membership are encouraged to engage and utilize the Committee as a resource for addressing legislative, policy, and environmental issues affecting South Dakota wildlife and their habitats, and take full advantage of resources available through the Conservation Affairs Network.

**3. Education and Information – Laura Hubers**

Nothing to report at this time.

**4. Membership – Chuck Pyle**

Annual membership 2012-2015, Accomplishments:

SDTWS Board approved setting up electronic membership payment online. Julie DeJong set up electronic payment system with PayPal and is online/ functioning. Letter for membership support and annual meeting attendance went out to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Dakota Refuge Supervisor, Denver, CO, February 2016. 80 Members signed up to receive information through SDTWS Facebook Group Site (February 29, 2016). Please send information to Chuck Pyle, via email (goosemansd@hotmail.com) for information to be posted on Facebook site (Events, information links, etc.) If other members think of possible opportunities to retain or gain membership please feel free to pass information on to SDTWS Board.

**5. Program – Nathan Baker**

Report presented concerning arrangements for the program.

**6. Resolutions and Public Statements – Vacant**

**7. Arrangements – Mark Norton**

Report presented concerning arrangements for the meeting.

**8. Certification – Troy Grovenburg**

Nothing to report at this time.

**9. Chapter History – Corey Huxoll**

Nothing to report at this time.

**10. Energy –KC Jensen and Silka Kempema**

Nothing to report at this time.

**11. Fee Hunting and Ownership of Wildlife – Andy Lindbloom**

No report

**12. Fundraising – Vacant**

**13. Grassland Issues –Lee Erickson**

As in the past years many of the threats to South Dakota grasslands remain the same. Last year we were asked to generate a list of three of the top issues that South Dakota faces. Those issues have remained the same for 2016. In 2016 multiple bills have caught our attention this year but none have passed. We are still monitoring the legislative session.

Native Grassland Conversion, Taxation – promotes conversion. Continued Annual Challenging of Perpetual Easements, Management of CRP – Currently there are restrictions that prevent fires from occurring at optimum times because of overlap of nesting season dates.

#### **14. Missouri River Issues – Nathan Baker**

Nothing to report at this time.

#### **15. Newsletter – Jennifer Briggs**

Nothing to report at this time.

#### **16. Public Lands – Dennie Mann / Tom LeFaive / Eddie Childers**

Deadman Trail Addition and Sturgis BAM-15miles of non-motorized trail expansion, impacts on Davenport cave. Trails would be used by mountain bikes during summer months.

West Hell Reforestation CE- We believe this project is ill-advised because of the impacts it would have on the bighorn sheep currently inhabiting the Hell Canyon area, identified as West Hell Reforestation East. The Elk Mountain Reforestation project was postponed, which we greatly appreciate. We hope a similar resolution can be made for West Hell Reforestation. We urge BHN to use every available directive and law to avoid irretrievable, detrimental impacts to this population of bighorn sheep in Hell Canyon.

Cheyenne River Area Range Allotment Management Plan-With the evaluation of the proposed alternatives the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society is supporting Alternative 3 (Adaptive Management). Adaptive management has the options to address various issues as listed in our above comments. Alternative 3 will be successful only with proper and intense monitoring of the allotments to achieve desired ecological conditions for riparian areas (with incorporation of additional triggers and backing off from >60% use), vegetative structure, and native species composition.

Mystic Ranger District MVUM 2016-Comments were mostly agreeable to the motor vehicle management plan but proposed changes to include vehicle use to provide access to some areas during hunting seasons.

Sportsman's Act of 2015-South Dakota has a rich history of hunting and fishing opportunity for both resident and non-resident sportsmen and women. Access to public lands is the number one issue for America's sportsmen and women. The Sportsmen's Act includes a broad array of bipartisan measures to enhance opportunities for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts, reauthorize key conservation programs, improve access to public lands, and help boost the outdoor recreation economy.

#### **17. Tribal Fish & Wildlife – Diane Mann-Klager**

Haven't been able to reach Diane – do we need a new chair?

#### **18. Wetlands – Randy Meidinger**

Report presented by Steve Huber, Report prepared by Randy Meidinger – Committee Chair

In June of 2016 the wetland committee considered a request for the SD Chapter to sign on to a letter encouraging State Representative, Kristy Nome, to support the reauthorization of NAWCA by co-sponsoring H.R. 2346. This bill was intended to extend the authorization of appropriations for allocation to carry out approved wetlands conservation projects under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through fiscal year 2020. It was recommended by the wetland committee that the SD Chapter sign on to this letter. This bill was eventually passed by the US House and the US Senate, and signed into law by the President.

In June of 2016 the wetland committee reviewed a 7-page letter containing comments and suggested changes to the draft agricultural wetland mitigation bank framework developed by the South Dakota Farm Bureau. This mitigation bank project resulted from a \$75,000 Conservation Initiative Grant awarded by the NRCS. The letter indicated the current draft framework should be modified

to adopt the following suggested important changes (and other framework modifications not listed here):

1. Improve transparency on how the final framework process will be developed and ultimately implemented.
2. Ensure NRCS does not automatically adopt framework without further formal comments and external review from other stakeholders.
3. Allow mitigation bank locations to become public knowledge.
4. Adopt a broader and more diverse list of potential members of a Technical Evaluation Panel to represent a wider array of stakeholders and technical experts.
5. Mitigation banks must avoid consolidation of multiple smaller lost wetlands being mitigated for as one large wetland. Also, the Geographic Service Area of individually mitigated wetlands should be limited to the same USGS watershed boundaries in which the original wetland was lost.
6. Wetland mitigation should involve restoration of quality wetlands similar in type and function to the converted wetlands, with replacement at a minimum of a 1:1 acreage ratio.
7. Previously restored or preserved wetlands must remain ineligible as bank sites, and wetland creation projects should be limited or ineligible for credit development.
8. Reduce the percent of credits available for initial release prior to attainment of ecological performance standards of restored wetlands from 30% to 20% of the estimated total credit yield for approved mitigation banks.
9. At a minimum, all mitigation bank sites should be monitored for 5 years and until all ecological objectives are met.
10. Approved mitigation banks must meet high ecological performance and monitoring standards outlined in the Mitigation Bank Instrument.
11. Bank sponsors should be required to provide USDA with a warranty deed for mitigation bank lands, and these easements should be perpetual in nature.

It was recommended by the committee that the SD Chapter sign on to this letter to join other conservation groups that had already done so, or indicated their willingness to do so.

## **19. Wildlife Diseases – Steve Griffin**

*Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD):* From July 1, 2015 to February 15, 2016 a total of 188 samples (162 elk, 7 mule deer, and 19 white-tailed deer) were collected from southwestern South Dakota, northeastern South Dakota, and the Black Hills of South Dakota. As of February 15, 2016 all results are in except for 2 pending results, and we have found 4 CWD positive elk, 4 CWD positive white-tailed deer, and 4 CWD positive mule deer. Since testing began in 1997, South Dakota has documented 294 cases of CWD (108 elk and 186 deer) in free ranging deer and elk. Wind Cave National Park accounts for 77 of these animals (67 elk and 10 deer). Custer State Park has found thirteen elk and one deer. A total of 25,485 wild deer and elk have been tested for CWD since 1997.

We are collecting all voluntary hunter harvested elk samples as we have in the past, but only sample deer heads from CWD units that are submitted to the Rapid City Regional Office. We continue to test any suspect animals from across the state.

*Hemorrhagic Disease:* The State of South Dakota experienced one area of significant white-tailed deer mortality due to Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) or Blue Tongue (BT) in 2015. This occurred in Sully County where a documented 108 deer were found dead, and one white-

tailed deer was confirmed with the EHD virus. Other areas of South Dakota did not experience any significant die-off of deer during 2015, although one positive EHD white-tailed deer was confirmed in Pennington County. Overall, there were a total of 127 deer reported as suspect EHD in South Dakota in 2015. Region 2 reported a total of 114 dead deer in 2 counties (Sully and Dewey), and Region 1 reported a total of 13 dead deer in 3 counties (Bennett, Custer and Pennington). Region 3 and Region 4 reported no suspected EHD in 2015. The two samples that were confirmed with EHD from Pennington County and Sully County were confirmed at the lab at SDSU as the most common serotype of the EHD virus (ehdv-2).

Due to the large number of white-tailed deer that were being lost to the disease in western Sully County, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks offered refunds to hunters who previously received a license for western Sully County if they voluntarily returned their licenses. License returns included a total of 122 licenses (211 tags).

*Pneumonia in Bighorn Sheep:* SDGFP is working on research investigating the occurrence of pneumonia in our bighorn sheep herds in Custer State Park, Rapid City, Spring Creek, and Hill City. This research will look at bighorn sheep as potential shedders of the pneumonia complex. Research started last summer, and is really getting started in all areas of the Black Hills with the capture of bighorns for radio-collaring and disease testing this winter.

*Other:* Diseases that we are aware of and monitoring for in South Dakota include White Nose syndrome in bats, plague in prairie dogs, rabies, and west nile virus. Another disease that resurfaced in 2015 was avian influenza, and an update was not available at the time of this report. A lot of this monitoring is done through the South Dakota Department of Health, and we continue to work with the Animal Industry Board on other disease issues.

## **20. Wildlife Diversity – Presented by Eileen Dowd Stukel and Silka Kempema,**

Committee Members: Casey Heimerl, Laura Hubers, Tom LeFaivre, Mike Gutzmer

South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan revision: In return for accepting State Wildlife Grants funding, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) completed a revised Wildlife Action Plan. The plan is available on the GFP website along with additional information on South Dakota wildlife, habitats, conservation challenges and solutions. Legislative efforts continue to promote State and Tribal Wildlife Grants while working on more permanent funding sources.

Blue Ribbon Panel: The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources continued meeting during the past year. This effort to identify long-term funding for wildlife is led by Co-Chairs John Morris of Bass Pro Shops and former Wyoming Governor David Freudenthal. According to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' website: "The Panelists will work together over the course of a year to produce recommendations and Congressional policy options on the most sustainable and equitable model to fund conservation of the full array of fish and wildlife species."

Bald Eagle Awareness Days: Our chapter continues its support for this educational event. The 2015 event was held in late February with the total audience estimated at 1,200 people. The event featured presentations in Sioux Falls and Pierre, with school programs in Pierre, including live birds of prey brought by educators from The Raptor Center, located at the University of Minnesota. The 2016 event took place from February 25 – 27, again featuring programs at the SDGFP Outdoor Campus East in Sioux Falls, school programs in Plankinton and presentations at the Ramkota River Centre in Pierre. The SDGFP Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City holds a companion event called a Raptor Open House during Bald Eagle Awareness Week.

SDGFP status reviews of state listed species: SDGFP Wildlife Diversity Program staff have been examining the status of species listed as state threatened or endangered. A status review includes a summary of what is known about a species, relevant conservation or research actions,

and a recommendation as to whether the species should continue to be listed. If sufficient information is available, a review also includes recommended delisting and recovery criteria. This effort will add accountability to the process of delisting and downlisting species. Draft status reviews will soon be shared with Wildlife Division staff, with a goal of making these reviews available for public review during 2016.

Recent federal listing activities pertaining to South Dakota:

- Greater Sage-Grouse: Following a status review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced in September 2015 that listing of this species under the Endangered Species Act was not warranted. The FWS cited landscape-scale conservation efforts across the western U.S. as justification for this decision, which means this species is no longer a federal candidate.
- northern long-eared bat: This species was listed as a federal threatened species in April 2015 due to the impact of white-nose syndrome in eastern North America. The northern long-eared bat likely occurs through much of South Dakota, with known breeding along the Missouri River and in the Black Hills. This bat hibernates in caves and mines. Maternity roosts may be in buildings or under loose tree bark. The FWS recently released a final 4(d) rule for this species. A 4(d) rule is an option for federal threatened species that helps prioritize conservation actions that have the most impact on threats. The rule offers more flexibility for activities that have limited impact on identified threats. At this point, the white-nose syndrome zone only includes extreme southeastern South Dakota. This disease and the fungus that causes it have not yet been documented in the state.
- monarch: The FWS continues to review the status of this species to determine whether listing is warranted. Concern about monarchs and pollinators in general has resulted in greater emphasis among conservation organizations, landowners and government entities. The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies hosted a Monarch Conservation Workshop in Des Moines, Iowa in October 2015. Many states have hosted or plan to host monarch or pollinator workshops to improve coordination among partners, including commitments to produce state monarch or pollinator plans.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog Colony Mapping: The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks finalized its most recent survey report of prairie dog colonies through visual interpretation of aerial photographs taken in 2012. Photographs were obtained from the USDA's Farm Service Agency National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP). The final report can be viewed or downloaded from the SDGFP website (<http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/docs/prairiedogmappingreport.pdf>).

## **21. Workshop – Travis Runia and Casey Heimerl**

The falconry workshop last year was well received. Ask members to submit new ideas.

Other Reports:

### **Central Mountains and Plains Section Update – Bob Lanka**

The TWS President's Challenge is to expand partnerships and outreach to sections and chapters. The Upcoming Annual Conference Schedule is Raleigh NC from October 15-20 2016, and Albuquerque NM from September 23-27 2017. The Budget and Finance committee needed work to get back in order and now 2015 was the second year in the black. The Membership was declining 7%/yr in 2013, and in 2014 – 2015 there were 9403 members. The goal is to increase membership by 3.2%. Demographic analysis of the membership shows that it consists of 94% Caucasian, 70% Male/30% Female, 14% are students, 5.5% from CMPS, and only 0.4% (40) are from SD). The goal is to increase 1-5 new members this year. Bob also gave brief reports on Policy (Government affairs and partnerships), Awards (Fellows and Group Achievement Awards Nominations are Due Feb. 15, 2017). He also spoke about the Leadership Institute which includes 10-15 people/year. There is a need for new leaders in the organization and the cost is paid by TWS.

## **SDSU Student Chapter Report – Josh Goeman**

The SDSU Student Chapter has been busy but the President states he has even more ideas to get the students involved with the public and outdoor activities. They assisted with Ag Day in Sioux Falls, Water festival in Sioux Falls, Buffalo Banquet, held a trap shoot recruitment event, sent 3 members to the TWS National Meeting, and went to student conclave. They have a camping trip for recruitment in the fall, and would like to increase involvement with the Boys and Girls club in Brookings, increase volunteer classes at the Outdoor Adventure Center in Brookings, and help with Step Outside program, and NASP (National Archery in the Schools Program).

**President Gary Potts** – The President had suggestions for the chapter. He suggested that students need speakers at meetings and that they should utilize retirees for these speakers. Some interesting workshops that foster these relationships are “Beginning your professional journey” by John Logering Uof M Crookston. Bob Lanka does a great job with CMPS as representative. Please support the parent society and check out the website regularly. We should use the COWCH program, which interviews retirees and then put an article together and play the video throughout the conference next year. As for people on committees, estimate how much time it takes per year and let people know that. We should also encourage relationships between retired professionals and students.

Election Results – Nathan Baker and John Kanta

President Elect -Dr. Josh Stafford

Board – Ben Lardy

Other Old Business - none

New Business

Approval of New Members – John Kanta

Meeting site/dates for the 2017 Annual Meeting - Cedar Shores most likely, no other suggestions at this time

Other New Business

Environmental Assessment at Badlands NP, expand bison range, open for comments soon, NPS Centennial this year - Eddie Childers

Transfer of Gavel to President-Elect Nathan Baker

Presentation of Past-President plaque

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Silka Kempema

Second by: Corey Huxoll



# **Tribal Fish & Wildlife Report - Dr. Michael P. Gutzmer**

*From the 2016 Standing Rock*

*Game and Fish Department—Spring Newsletter*

## **Wildlife Commission approves hunting season recommendations for 2016.**

Tribal biologist and staff prepared and met with the Wildlife Commission Meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> and



all recommendations were generally agreed to and passed. There may be a need to have another briefing or meeting with the asst. chairman and we will be prepared to do so. All grant work is on hold until payment in early April.

Tribal biologist and staff have decided to help create awareness & educational opportunities within the tribe and have come up with an idea called the SRST Game & Fish Department newsletter. We will draft Winter-Spring 2016, Volume No. 1. for your review. It will contain survey results and talk about why we do them. Photos and special interest stories will also be included.

Numerous recommendations have been compiled regarding habitat improvements across the reservation. It appears the wildlife commission has much interest in this and will wait when the Director says the word to start. In the mean time we are gathering information for the plan as it will take the rest of this year to complete.

## **Reasons for biologist and surveys**

New Century Environmental uses the best and most up to date survey techniques to determine the status of game species population on the Reservation. Over time, our biologist will compare each year using trending data. State information is also gathered and analyzed by our biologist to gain the best understanding on what is happening to the game species population on and around the Reservation. The whole goal of the biologist is to sustain the population of game species for future generations, so they too can enjoy the Reservation's natural resource. Our biologist has plans on creating habitat improvement areas which will increase the trophy size of our animals. Standing Rock's Reservation is located in an area that harnesses big trophy sized deer, our biologist wants to ensure these trophy bucks keep thriving around the Reservation from year to year

## **2015/2016 spotlight surveys**

Three spotlight surveys were conducted thus far on Standing Rock to correlate and compare deer population estimates from previous years. The Wakpala route was conducted two different times, once during the pre-rifle season on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October then again during the post-rifle season on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January. Another post-rifle spotlight survey was conducted on the Walker Bottom route on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January. The raw data comparing the 2014's vs. the 2015/2016's data can be shown below. Overall, there were more numbers seen during this year's surveys as compared to last year's surveys. We had a new high record of deer recorded during the pre-rifle spotlight survey with 6.05 deer seen per mile.

### **Ground Counts**

An additional survey technique was added in 2013 and it will take several years before we can build a reliable trending database. This survey provides additional data not gathered from aerial surveys. The table below shows ground counts to this year's (2015/2016).



### **Dusk Surveys**

In the effort to get the most accurate count of deer and other wildlife on the reservation, a new technique was added this fall/winter 2014-2015. These new surveys will be conducted at dusk; during the dusk hours, deer and other wildlife such as coyotes, raccoons, porcupine, etc. are more likely to be seen. Or dusk surveys reveal a more accurate count on wildlife, deer in particular. This technique provides a more cost effective way of surveying wildlife.

### **Aerial 2016 biological/survey data:**

We conducted 1 aerial flight throughout the Southwest portion of the reservation and along the Grand River Corridor, these areas we believe to be the most represented area of big game species. A total of 6.55 hours of surveying flight time was recorded. The overall winter aerial surveys indicate dramatic increasing numbers in white tail and mule deer, antelope showed fewer number than last year's survey. The whitetail deer to mule deer ratio appears to be 75:25. This is a desirable ratio between the two species of deer. The rise in big game species will bring good recruitment for fawns in the coming years. The table below compares last year's aerial count in the Southwest region to this year's (2016) counts.

## **Habitat Management plan Improvements**

- Develop a habitat improvement plan for the entire Reservation to enhance the Tribe's natural resources that thrive within the land.
- Installing food plots and mineral blocks wherever agriculture is scarce to provide additional nutrition to deer and other wildlife which would increase carry capacity and size/quality of deer. Locations will be selected upon approval of recommendation.
- Sampling the biomass in areas of high concentration of deer to figure available nutrition the deer have to forage on. Obtaining trending data on biomass production on a year to year basis will give a good indication on amount of nutrition available to the deer population. Designated locations will be chosen upon approval of this project.
- Implement prescribe burns on designated areas to promote healthy growth of native grasses and forbs the deer use to feed and cover from native elements such as predation and exposure. Members of NCE staff are certified and will oversee the prescribe burns at the designated locations chosen upon approval of this action.
- Close a section of the Reservation for a minimum of 1 year, preferably 2 years to implement a trophy sized deer management area. Location will be formulated based on approval, possible revenue booster to raffle off permits within the area.

## **Awarded grants for Standing Rock**

Our biologist has successfully written various grants from the Tribal Wildlife Program as well as BIA that have been awarded. These grants include an in depth look for all of Standing Rock's small mammal population in particular surveys for the federally endangered black footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) which have been documented by our biologist back in October of 2012. Another grant is for documentation of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) on Standing Rock. There have been some suspected sightings by various accounts including a game and fish game warden. Other studies include an elk habitat study in the location the elk thrive on the Reservation. All grant work is at a stop until funding is reached to our biologist.



# Documentation of the Northern Long-Eared Myotis, *Myotis septentrionalis* on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Sioux County, North Dakota

Christopher J. Shank, Kurt Tooley, Michael P. Gutzmer and Jeffrey C. Kelly

New Century Environmental LLC

Columbus Nebraska

Spring 2016

## Abstract

Since 2006, the northern long-eared myotis has declined by 98 percent in the U.S. Northeast, where white-nose syndrome first appeared. Because of the species' strong association with large blocks of older forests, forest fragmentation, logging and forest conversion (such as clearing trees for agriculture and development) are also major threats to the species. In 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the northern long-eared bat meets the Endangered Species Act's definition of threatened. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, located centrally in South and extending into North Dakota, was awarded a US Fish and Wildlife Tribal Grant to assess all small mammals on the Reservation, including bats. Surveying for bat species on SRST included the use of Pettersson D500x passive terrestrial ultrasonic recorders, one of which was installed at a Moreau Prairie location in Sioux County, North Dakota, known as Unit 41. A site visit was conducted on Unit 41 on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015. The monitor had recorded a total of 37 trap nights. The results revealed 143 total bats recorded, from ten different species. Most significantly, the federally threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was unequivocally documented. More sampling will be conducted to further investigate the diversity and abundance of bat species on Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and will contribute to the development of crucial conservation management programs on the Reservation.

## Introduction

The northern long-eared myotis is one of the bats most impacted by the epidemic disease white-nose syndrome. Of the six species known to be affected by white-nose syndrome, the northern long-eared bat is among the hardest hit. Since 2006, the northern long-eared has declined by 98 percent in the U.S. Northeast, where white-nose syndrome first appeared. Because of the species' strong association with large blocks of older forests, forest fragmentation, logging and forest conversion (such as clearing trees for agriculture and development) are also major threats to the species. In 2012, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) was awarded a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Tribal Wildlife Grant to assess the diversity and abundance of small mammals on the Reservation, including bats. The Reservation lies within the level III Northwestern Great Plains eco-region, while the specific site where the northern long-eared bat was detected is in the level IV Moreau Prairie eco-region, within a mile or two of the adjacent level IV Missouri Plateau eco-region (US Environmental Protection Agency 2015).

## Background

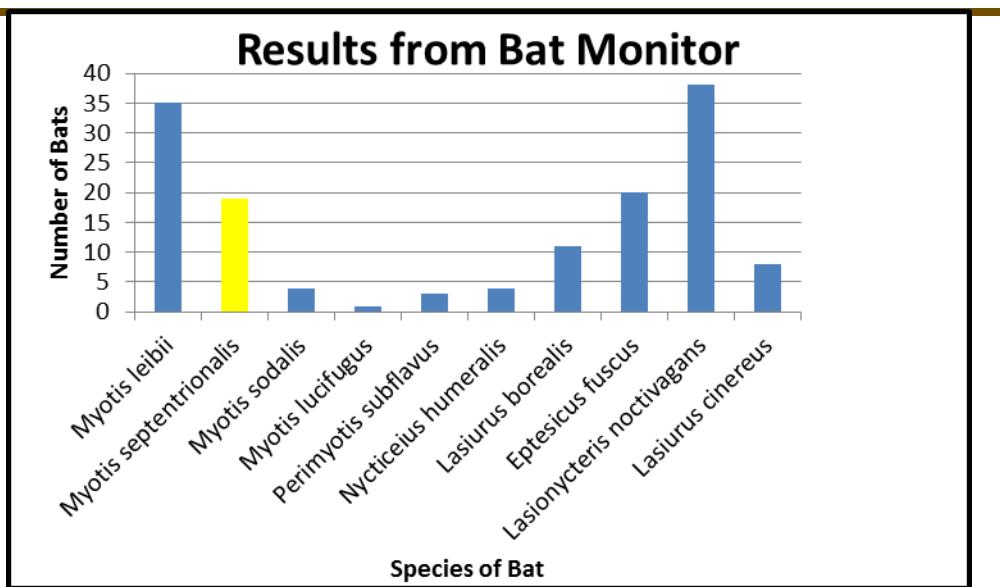
The northern long-eared myotis, *Myotis septentrionalis*, is a medium-sized bat with a body length of 3 to 3.7 inches and a wingspan of 9 to 10 inches. Fur color ranges from medium to dark brown on the back and tawny to pale-brown on the underside. As its name suggests, this bat is distinguished by its long ears, particularly in comparison to other bats in the genus, *Myotis*. In 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the northern long-eared myotis meets the Endangered Species Act's definition of threatened. Under the Endangered Species Act, a threatened species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future, while an endangered species is currently in danger of becoming extinct (US Fish and Wildlife Service 2015).

## Methods

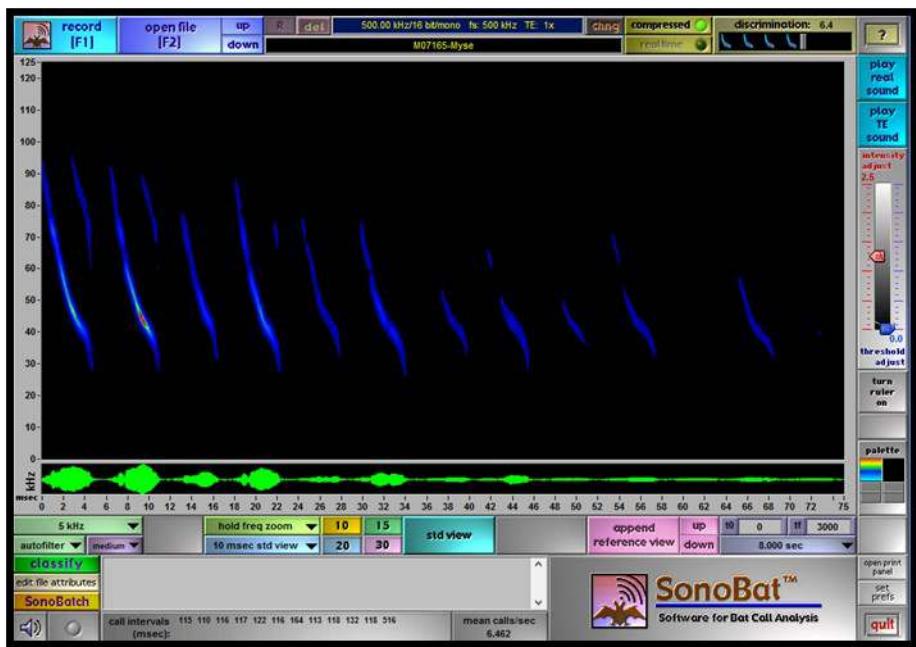
Surveying for bat species on SRST included the use of Pettersson D500x passive terrestrial ultrasonic recorders, one of which was installed at a Moreau Prairie location in Sioux County, North Dakota, known as Unit 41(GPS coordinates N 46° 10.18' W 100° 54.51'). An ultrasonic microphone was installed on a telescoping microphone mast, approximately 6 m high to minimize noise from vegetation and other interference. The data recording devise was placed on the ground at the base of the microphone mast and protected from bison with field expedient means. The recording device was operated by 20Ah, 6-volt rechargeable batteries. Data was stored on compact flash cards. Data was processed and analyzed using the bat species identification software, SonoBat 3.2.1 NE. Bat presence, in the form of vocalizations, was determined by frequency of occurrence of identified bat calls, thereby allowing us to estimate species presence, distribution, and relative abundance.

## Results

A site visit was conducted on Unit 41 on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015. The monitor had recorded a total of 37 trap nights. The results revealed 143 total bats recorded, from ten different species. This extraordinary diversity suggests that the monitor recorded the passage of migratory bats in the process of their fall migration. Most significantly, the federally threatened northern long-eared myotis (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was unequivocally documented. The results table shows the results from the data after analysis from SonoBat 3.2.1. Notice the high diversity of bat species documented, with the northern long-eared bat highlighted in yellow.



Summary Chart of Petterson D500x results from Unit 41.



Northern long-eared bat Sonogram from SonoBat software.

## Summary

These newly found populations may provide a valuable contribution to the understanding and science of the northern long-eared bat in North America. Important documentations such as this increase the credibility of the survey method of use of passive terrestrial ultrasonic recorders. More sampling will be conducted to further investigate the diversity and abundance of bat species on Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and will contribute to the development of crucial conservation management programs on the Reservation.

### Future Monitoring and Research Questions

1. Is there hibernacula activity occurring within the habitat at the study area?
2. Are the population of northern long-eared bats affected by white nose syndrome?
3. Would sampling be more effective and credible if the use of mist netting were to take place?
  - Would radio-tagging be a possibility for further migratory/hibernacula studies?
4. From where did these individuals of northern long-eared bats come from?
  - Are they migrants or local bats?
5. What habitat improvement/protection needs to take place to help the species?

### Literature Cited

Center for Biological Diversity. 2015. Mammals: Northern long-eared bat. Retrieved 7 December 2015. <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>.

US Environmental Protection Agency. 2015. Western Ecology Division. Eco-regions of North and South Dakota. Retrieved on 6 December 2015: <http://archive.epa.gov/>.

US Fish and Wildlife Service. Endangered Species Midwest Region. 2015. Retrieved on 6 December 2015. <http://www.fws.gov/>.

Shank, C.S., Tooley, K.T., et. al. 2015. *New Century Environmental*. Documentation of the Northern Long- Eared Myotis, *Myotis septentrionalis* on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

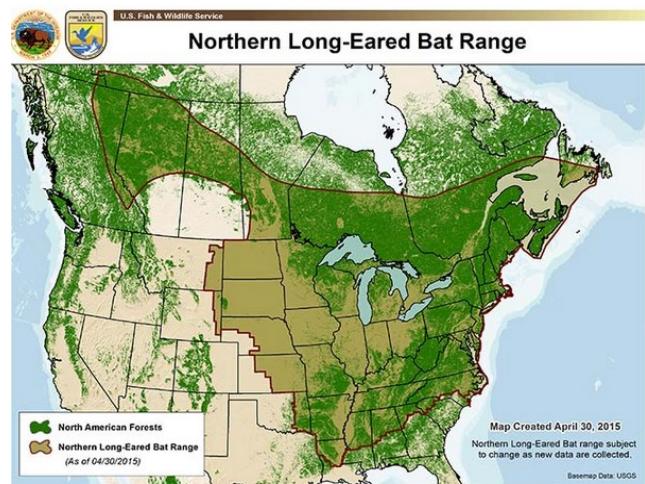
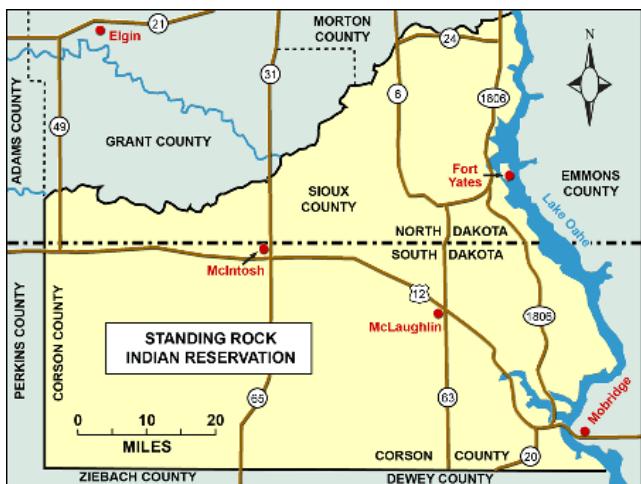
### Acknowledgments

All resources for this effort to have been supplied by the Standing Rock Game & Fish Department of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of Ft. Yates, North Dakota.

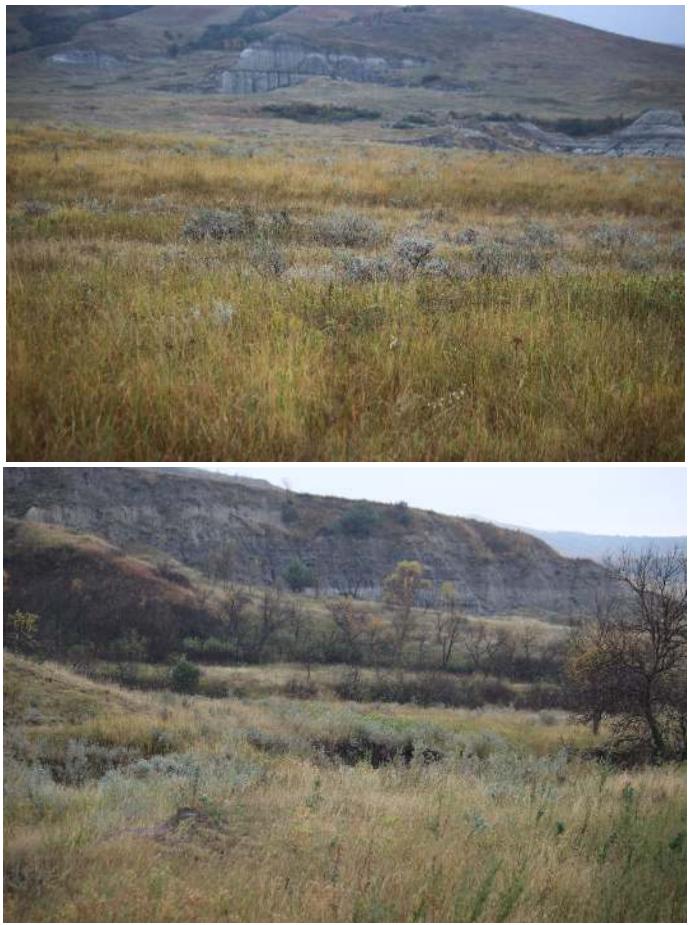
Director Kelly and Tribal biologists Gutzmer & staff are seeking funds from the UFWs, World Wildlife Fund, BIA and other entities who are interested in understanding the presence, science and future management of the northern long-eared bat population on Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The Tribe graciously appreciates any support possible. Jeff Kelly: 701-226-5048, Michael Gutzmer: 402-562-9155





**General habitat conditions at Unit 41**



# Check it out...

- SDTWS has a new 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](mailto:goosemansd@hotmail.com) if you have events, pictures, or topics you would like posted to the site.

**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

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South Dakota Chapter



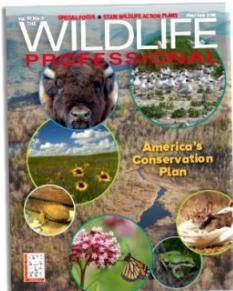
Membership

Chapter Home About Membership Annual Meeting News Contact

## The Wildlife Society News

### Popular Articles on the TWS website

- [Report shows steep declines for North American birds](#)
- [Epic wolverine journey ends in North Dakota](#)
- [TWS' 23RD Annual Conference](#)



For the latest TWS News Center

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

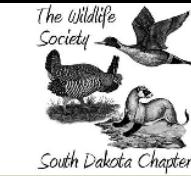


**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

# Executive Board Meeting

April 14th, 2016



## On the call:

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

### Secretary/Treasurer's Report

- Approval of minutes from last executive board meeting (2/28/16), Motion to approve: Alex Solem, Second: Josh Stafford, All in favor
- Approval of treasurers report, Square and paypal do not show on here – they are removed automatically from the amount before it is deposited – should it be? This follows the bank statements only. They are shown on the 2016AnnualMeeting-Financials document. Julie will put in Square and Paypal in the treasurer's report and send to board a revised treasurer's report (done). Agreed on approval of Cedar Shores Bill: \$14,145.16, Motion to approve after changes to include Paypal/Square: Alex Solem, Second: Josh Stafford, All in favor

### Old Business

- Annual Meeting Review, Reviewed a financial breakdown of the meeting, Discussed comments from participants – all good reports, Could look into Josh Goe-man (student member) for auctioneer next year. Did we forget pop for breaks? Yes, overlooked this and will try to remember it for next year.
- Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes, Questions on unclear wording from 2015 Business minutes. Will edit the end to reflect that we are using parent TWS website rather than a private contractor Red Lizard and will repost to website. Motion to approve: John Kanta, Second: Josh Stafford, All in favor
- CMPS Section Dues for SDTWS Chapter Members (\$1), Currently have 177 members, On registration form we state that the CMPS membership is free with state dues. Each Chapter pays \$1 per member to be a member of CMPS. Nathan will check with Bob Lanka on whether it's required or not. All board agreed to pay for this year and last year to catch up.
- Committee Vacancies/ Discussion on Committees

Fundraising Committee Chair, Casey Heimerl stepped down, Looking for a new chair

Tribal Fish and Wildlife, Dianne Mann-Klager is chair – unable to contact her but she is still a member – John Kanta will continue trying to contact her

Resolutions and Public Statements Committee Chair, WY changed the name to Science Committee, Would take a change in the by-laws – is there support

to doing this?, Nathan Baker will look further into it from Wyoming folks on why they changed.

## **New Business**

- 2017 Annual Meeting Date and Location, Rapid City is more expensive, No comments about location or Cedar Shores itself, ND Chapter interested in holding a joint Dakota meeting at some point, All agreed to stay with Cedar Shores, Dates: work around Spring Break (March 6-10<sup>th</sup>), other meetings.... Goal: Feb 27<sup>th</sup> - March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017
- 2017 Annual Meeting Planning, Josh Stafford in charge of this, Possible Workshops, tracking, Speakers/Theme, Training versus meeting, Hold training the day before or Monday morning
- Annual Meeting Photo Contest – Purchase of Canvas (2016 Winner) to raffle off next year, Get an inexpensive one on sale, Ben Lardy will look into this and send sites to Julie DeJong
- Review duties/responsibilities of board members for new board, Information sent to board members, Google Drive Information stores documents
- TWS Annual Conference, SDTWS Chapter Representation, Several Chapters (MT,WY) pay full amount for the President or other board members, Decision and Travel approval by end of July, Board supports sending a member, Connections and ideas for state chapter are important, Motion to send one board member per year, with SDTWS paying up to the full cost depending upon , Input from employer of individual: John Kanta, Second: Julie DeJong, All in favor
- Increase TWS Membership at National Level, 9/30/15 = 40 SD Members, President Potts Goal = 41 (+3.2%), CMPS Rep. Lanka's Goal = 45, Ideas for getting more members
- Committee Guidance from Executive Board, i.e. Certification, Chapter History, etc., board needs to provide some guidance on some tasks and time limits for certain boards
- “Couch” Interviews – Silka Kempema may be able to assist, Ideas from board on who could be interviewed, Forward names to Nathan Baker, Play them at annual meeting
- Facebook Group, Should we convert to a Facebook Page, Yes, should convert – Nathan will look into it
- South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund “Habitat Pays”, One suggestion for use of SDTWS funds for board to think about – get more information on where the funds are going

**Motion to adjourn at 2:30 CST: Alex Solem**

**Second: Ben Lardy**

## Public Lands Committee Report

Dennie Mann

### Cheyenne River Area Range Allotment Plan

The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (SDTWS) submits comments concerning livestock grazing on 6 grazing allotments on the Cheyenne River area of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands. 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/>

In the Review of your proposed actions:

1. Combining Indian Creek and Big Corral allotments: This could improve rest rotation and allow managed grazing with movement to the other pasture when monitoring and evaluation of the pasture dictates movement of livestock.
2. Fence along the Cheyenne River: Good management practice but difficult to achieve during high-water years and flooding. Keeping bison and cattle from repetitive movements to riparian areas will require monitoring and maintenance of fence to limit impacts to the riparian community. Other metrics in addition to percent utilization should be itemized in the monitoring table. Utilization of >40% in riparian areas will not allow adequate riparian vegetation growth to stabilize river banks and improve wildlife habitat
3. Dam repair, well placement, pumps and tanks: Water placements are critical and will improve grazing management. Placement away from the riparian areas will limit use on those corridors and allow for better grazing utilization on the upland areas.
4. Herding: This is an excellent direction to limit overuse but requires increased monitoring and knowledge to improve grassland health and its re-

productive potential throughout the grazing season.

5. Prescribed Fire Utilization: Fire is an appropriate management tool in prairie ecosystems and when utilized can increase native grass and forb production. Planning is critical to achieve desired goals and a one year rest after the burn from grazing (except where cool season non-natives need to be suppressed) will limit negative impacts and improve grassland health and vigor.

6. Salt and Minerals: This is a way to reduce impacts along sensitive areas and can be utilized in similar ways such as water locations to distribute grazing pressure. Salt and minerals must be kept far from wet meadows, saturated soils and riparian areas.

7. Adaptive Management Grazing: Priority should be given to monitoring to ensure adaptive management grazing is effective at meeting range condition goals.

8. Allotment Management and condition: We appreciated the enclosed maps but noticed that key monitoring areas were not highlighted. What is the desired condition for each allotment?

9. Drought. We are extremely supportive of a RMP which includes drought management. Timing and grazing pressure are crucial outside of drought, but even more important during and following drought. We encourage that the attached drought article by Reece et al. remain in the EA and be incorporated into individual operating plans. With the evaluation of the proposed alternatives the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society is supporting Alternative 3 (Adaptive Management). Adaptive management has the options to address various issues as listed in our above comments. Alternative 3 will be successful only with proper and intense monitoring of the allotments to achieve desired ecological conditions for riparian areas (with incorporation of additional triggers and backing off from >60% use), vegetative structure, and native species composition. The South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. Please continue to send correspondence to our Chapter.

# SDTWS Executive Board 2015

## President

Nathan Baker

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## Past-President

John Kanta

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## President-Elect

Josh Stafford

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(605) 688-5759

## Secretary-Treasurer

Julie DeJong

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Lennox, SD 57039  
(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\*  2015 Dues Renewal

\* If you did not pay your dues in 2014, 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.