



CONSERVATIONCORNER



Gov. Dugaard Challenges Board To Raise Habitat Conservation Funds; Pledges To Match Fundraising Goal

In late Aug., Gov. Dennis Dugaard issued a challenge to the South Dakota Habitat Conservation Board to raise \$1 million more in private money for habitat conservation. The Governor pledged to match the donations for the South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund with \$1 million in state funds, if the group can meet the goal.

“Habitat conservation is important in South Dakota. Through these efforts, we conserve our land, enhance our wildlife population and preserve our outdoor traditions,” Gov. Dugaard said. “With privately raised funds, the \$1 million dollar challenge grant and the funding provided by the Legislature last legislative session, we can begin a new legacy of habitat conservation in South Dakota.”

The South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund was established in Nov. 2014 as a result of the Governor’s Habitat Work Group. The Fund provides a permanent funding source for wildlife habitat work in South Dakota. Private donors have contributed a total of \$425,000 to the Fund in the last year and state government has dedicated \$350,000. The Board would need to raise an additional \$1 million in private donations to meet the Governor’s challenge.

“We are grateful for Gov. Dugaard’s offer to match donations to the habitat conservation fund,” stated Jeff Scherschligt, board president. “We intend to do all we can to rise to this challenge and secure \$1 million in private donations to meet the goal.”

The Governor made the announcement at the South Dakota Habitat Conservation Board’s first meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 26. Gov. Dugaard recently established the Board to raise money for habitat conservation and administer habitat conservation programs. The 15 board members met in Pierre to approve bylaws, elect officers, assign term limits and discuss communications, financial reporting and the facilitation of two grant programs.

The Board will use Fund dollars to award grants to eligible non-profit organizations that improve or create wildlife habitat in South Dakota. The Board has established two grant categories: small grants from \$5,000 and \$40,000 and large grants from \$40,000 to \$100,000.

Applications are being accepted for consideration beginning Oct. 1, through Nov. 30, 2015.

The Board will hold its next meeting in late Oct. to discuss communications and fundraising strategies. An additional meeting will be held in Dec. to vote on project proposals for funding. Grant awards will be announced by Dec. 31, 2015.

Individuals serving on the new South Dakota Habitat and Conservation Board include:

Jeff Scherschligt of Sioux Falls, president
Bob Roe of Brookings, vice president
Steve Halverson of Pierre, secretary/treasurer
Doug Balvin of Huron
Tony Bour of Harrisburg
Dr. Barry Dunn of Brookings
Barry Grossenburg of Winner
Christine Hamilton of Kimball
Tim Kessler of Aberdeen

Scott Lawrence of Sioux Falls
Les Lindskov of Isabel
Delon Mork of Madison
Dick Muth of Mitchell
Larry Ness of Yankton
Jan Nicolay of Chester
Hunter Roberts, Governor’s Office, ex-officio member
John Cooper, GFP Commissioner, ex-officio member