



LANDOWNERS MATTER

Every acre in South Dakota has potential to grow crops, to feed cattle and to support wildlife. Every acre of habitat has the ability to improve forage quality and soil health, the ability to help farmers and ranchers achieve their goals as land stewards, and the ability to preserve our hunting heritage for future generations.

“Habitat conservation is important in South Dakota. Through these efforts, we conserve our land, enhance our wildlife population and preserve our outdoor traditions,” Governor Dugaard said.

Farmers and ranchers across South Dakota understand the importance of establishing and maintaining wildlife habitat. For many landowners, the decision to improve wildlife habitat on their property is personal as well as economical. Turning land into habitat can improve soil health and increase land values. Plus, a wide variety of financial incentives are available for landowners.

In 2015, based on direction from Governor Dugaard, the website *Habitat.sd.gov* was created to centralize habitat resources for all South Dakotans.



A section of the website is dedicated to the stories of South Dakota landowners. A collection of videos highlights featured habitat processes landowners implemented.

“*Habitat.sd.gov* provides landowners with the resources and financial incentives they need to achieve their individual habitat development goals. Habitat truly does pay because of opportunities for improved soil health, increased land value and abundant wildlife for all South Dakotans,” explains GFP Secretary Kelly Hepler.

The site includes a comprehensive list of resources, along with a list of habitat advisors who are experts in

**WITHOUT THE SUPPORT
OF LANDOWNERS, MUCH
OF THE ABUNDANT
WILDLIFE HABITAT WE
ENJOY WOULD NOT EXIST.**

GFP SECRETARY HEPLER

to increase the acres of habitat or better manage existing habitat, the solutions are available on the site.

Habitat advisors are available to assist landowners in designing, developing and funding habitat improvements on private lands. These guys and gals are experts in conservation programs and habitat planning. They possess the knowledge of federal, state and local programs to assist landowners in finding the right program(s) to meet their

conservation programs and habitat planning.

Resources target specific habitat attributes and provide the landowner with detailed programming options.

Whether the overall goal is

personal habitat and land use goals. They are available to assist landowners anywhere across the state in designing, developing and funding habitat improvements on private lands.

“It’s a way of connecting with farmers and ranchers and helping them implement wildlife habitat where it makes sense to do so,” said GFP Secretary Hepler.

RESOURCES FOR LANDOWNERS

Dozens of federal, state and non-governmental programs are available to help landowners establish or maintain habitat.

Assistance is provided in the form of funding, resources and expertise. See full descriptions of these types of habitat programs online at *habitat.sd.gov*.

- Grassland Habitat
- Wetland Habitat
- Woody Habitat
- Food Plots
- Wildlife Habitat Management
- Hunting Access Programs
- Watershed Protection
- Forestry Programs
- Resource Conservation
- Other Habitat Practices



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HABITAT ADVISORS

WHAT IS THE OVERALL ROLE FOR HABITAT ADVISORS?

To assist landowners or interested individuals in educational information or technical assistance on any type of wildlife or habitat question they may have. - *Cody Rolfes*

The overall role is to provide guidance about conservation programs that are available throughout the state. Not only this, but also to answer questions pertaining to plants, soil health, and wildlife. - *Alisha Grams*

Using our collective knowledge to provide landowners with the resources and/or funding to create or maintain quality habitat for desirable wildlife suited to the region while not displacing other sensitive non-game or indigenous wildlife in the process. - *Cody Grewing*

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICE YOU PROVIDE?

There are numerous agencies and cost-share programs available for landowners interested in completing habitat projects. Knowing which agency programs are the best fit for a project can be next to impossible for a landowner removed from the wildlife profession. Habitat advisors can provide information to landowners about which programs might be the right fit to help a project get completed at the lowest cost to the landowner. - *Brian Pauly*

Knowledge of habitat management practices, the different conservation programs available, and who they need to work with to achieve their land management goals. - *Mark Norton*

By having a strong working knowledge of the wildlife conservation related issues in my landscape, I can provide guidance to landowners as to the most practical options available to address their concerns whether it be funding a project or technical assistance with management. - *Cody Grewing*

WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON QUESTION/REQUEST YOU RECEIVE?

Fencing. Game, Fish and Parks has a very active fencing program that helps landowners establish and maintain rotational grazing systems. - *Brian Pauly*

If I do this project with GFP's assistance, what kinds of strings are attached? The answer to that is: You have to maintain the project for at least a 10 year period, only GFP projects must allow a reasonable amount of public access in the vicinity of the project since a good portion of the program funds are derived from hunting and fishing licenses. - *Tim Olson*

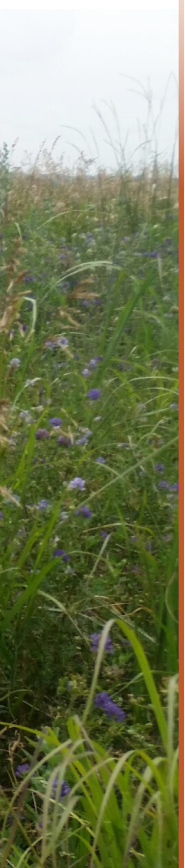
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE LANDOWNERS TO KNOW?

Grass Grows Game. If you're interested in producing more wildlife, you need to maintain as many acres of high-diversity grasslands as you can on your property. - *Brian Pauly*

I would like landowners to know that they can come and talk with us about conservation, even if they aren't enrolled in a program. We would love to help them in any way possible if they are looking at improving any aspect of their operation, from soil health to grazing to pheasant food plots. We are an available resource for landowners to use. - *Alisha Grams*

There have been a number of innovative ideas and practices that have been developed recently in range/ranch management that are economically and environmentally profitable. Because these western prairies are some of the last refuges for a number of species, there are many groups interested in investing time and money into the region in order to maintain these populations. Conservation groups recognize that having grazing animals on the landscape is important to grassland wildlife. There is a lot of opportunity available to landowners. - *Cody Grewing*

VISIT [HABITAT.SD.GOV](https://habitat.sd.gov) TO LOCATE A HABITAT ADVISOR NEAR YOU.





LANDLOCKED PUBLIC LANDS

JOSHUA DELGER | TERRESTRIAL RESOURCE SUPERVISOR

We all care deeply for our rural areas, our open country, wild places and a lifestyle that connects us to the land. When you mention the word heritage, ranching, farming, hunting and fishing all come to mind. They have important traditions and uniquely rely upon the natural resources of our rural areas. There are many values and common ground amongst the people of South Dakota.

As a department, Game, Fish and Parks is responsible for providing outdoor recreation opportunities and access to the abundant South Dakota resources to the public. Gaining additional access to lands for the public to recreate on is a high priority for the agency.

Nearly 300,000 acres of public land, predominately in the western half of the state, are essentially landlocked and directly inaccessible to the public. While these lands are owned by the public, there is not direct access from a publicly maintained road into these areas. Many landowners hold the keys to accessing these areas, and as a department, we would like to work together and develop mutually beneficial solutions to provide reasonable access for sportsmen and women.

Guidance from our strategic plan directs GFP to develop opportunities with private landowners to access inaccessible public lands in an effort to increase

public hunting land access by 50,000 acres by 2020. As mentioned, the vast majority of these acres are in western South Dakota and are predominantly managed by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and SD Office of School and Public Lands (SPL). BLM manages 274,000 acres in South Dakota with 98,460 of those acres with no direct public access. SPL manages 760,000 acres in South Dakota with 200,550 acres that are not directly accessible to the public. There are also a few thousand acres of US Forest Service lands that remain inaccessible, as well.

Currently, staff have engaged this topic by identifying inaccessible parcels across



neighboring landowners who will be uncomfortable with that idea.

In many South Dakota cases, the public has legal section-line access to landlocked parcels. However, it is reasonably understood that affected landowners have reservations about accessing public lands in this manner as it can be difficult for hunters to navigate section lines without (knowingly or unknowingly) trespassing. Landowners and hunters alike express frustration with this situation. A continual burden to patrol these access points will be an unending issue until we can partner together. A mutually beneficial access agreement between a landowner and GFP would be a reasonable solution. Other options could potentially include an access easement, the willing sale of a private land parcel to create access, or a land swap involving the respective public land management agency. Access

easements create a common point of entry that can be obvious yet discreet, and they can be customized to suit landowner needs and interests. Rights to public access areas are retained by landowners, who maintain the right to close trails outside of hunting seasons or use them for agricultural purposes. Lands swaps can be accomplished to either block together scattered parcels of public land into a common location and/or relocate landlocked pieces to a location directly accessible to the public. This ultimately benefits everyone and removes the burdens associated with landlocked areas for landowners.

The option of providing Walk-In Area access ensures hunters have a clear point of entry and knowledge of the boundaries. Many landowners are concerned with hunters not knowing where boundaries are on landlocked public parcels. GFP is committed to signing those perimeters where needed. GFP also creates unique access agreements with every landowner who enters into a contract with GFP. Rental rates are not all created equal and are dependent on a number of parameters including the size of the area, habitat quality, game species present, the length of the contract, and of course, adjacency to landlocked public lands. Again, contracted acreages can be as large or small as a landowner wishes and contract lengths are negotiable.

Properties are walk-in only and non-hunting activities are prohibited; additionally, landowners can specify types of hunting allowed. It is important to note that no liability is assumed by the landowner when free access is allowed to the public as compared to when pay hunting is occurring on a property. Allowing public use on areas of private property is sometimes met with hesitancy, but the department maintains that the rights and privacy of landowners will always be held in high regard as we work through these agreements.

Many wildlife conservation and sportsmen/women's groups have a high interest in this initiative as well. Access to private hunting land has been seemingly more and more difficult to obtain over time for the average hunter. Public lands are increasingly important to provide opportunities for those who otherwise would not have access. In other western states wildlife conservation

the state and prioritizing them based on a number of important metrics (e.g., size of the contiguous parcel, distance from an access road, potential for recreational opportunity, etc.). GFP field staff have been busy neighboring landowners to some parcels of inaccessible public lands, but there are many parcels across the state to address and it is a time consuming process. Until now, there has not been a dedicated effort to work with adjacent landowners to secure public access to inaccessible public lands.

Where there is public land, there will always be a desire to access that land, and where there is private land inhibiting that access, there will be

GFP REMINDS LANDOWNERS TO CONSIDER HAY PROTECTION MEASURES

groups are partnering on creative projects with landowners and state agencies to obtain public access to new lands. Conservation groups can help in cooperative agreements with (but not limited to) sign-up bonuses, funding and/or labor for a wide variety of habitat projects, fencing projects, and habitat/wildlife management plans. Other methods such as voluntary land trades, purchases, and access easements have also been jointly negotiated. In South Dakota, we need to identify opportunities and work together in an effort to have a positive impact for all stakeholders.

As of 2017, GFP programs provided access to approximately 75,000 acres of landlocked parcels. Our department began work directly on this initiative in early 2018, and since that time we've worked with nine new cooperators signing a total of 18,070 acres of new Walk-In Areas which have unlocked 8,745 acres of formerly inaccessible public land parcels. If you are interested in working with GFP on this initiative, please contact us.

Granting public access allows landowners the unique opportunity to connect the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts with our irreplaceable hunting heritage. We look forward to the potential for collaboration regarding this endeavor and more importantly, to the chance to work with landowners and the sportsmen and sportswomen of South Dakota as partners for public access. ●

Landowners across South Dakota had an abundant hay season this past summer, which was very welcome after the drought conditions experienced during 2017. Abundant moisture created a tremendous hay crop and many landowners have large amounts of hay to store this winter. GFP kindly reminds landowners to consider their storage locations carefully as deer can easily damage supplies of stored hay.

GFP offers programs and services that assist landowners who experience deer damage to stored-feed supplies. Within the past year GFP has worked with over 60 landowners to construct permanent stackyards or purchase protective panels to protect hay from deer during the winter months. Additionally, GFP has cooperatively worked with over 500 landowners to protect hay and other

stored-feed supplies from deer damage in the past two years.

If a landowner has a protected location to store hay and simply runs out of room, GFP can loan temporary panels if deer damage is experienced. GFP also recommends that if possible, landowners move their hay out of fields to areas that be easily accessed. If deep snow is experienced and hay is left in the field, the hay can be nearly impossible to protect. Locations that are level and near roads or farmyards are best and make protection much easier and effective.

Landowners who are concerned about deer damage to hay should contact their local wildlife damage specialist right away before the problem worsens or draws in larger numbers of animals.

**UNPROTECTED ALFALFA HAY LEFT
IN THE FIELD THAT EXPERIENCED
SIGNIFICANT DEER DAMAGE.**



WILDLIFE DAMAGE SPECIALISTS

Wildlife damage specialists work directly with South Dakota's livestock and agricultural producers to alleviate or reduce livestock loss from predators (primarily coyote) as well as crop, tree and road damage caused from beavers. They help to minimize or alleviate damage to stored-feed supplies caused by deer, elk and turkey, and work to reduce damage to growing crops from Canada geese, deer, elk and pronghorn.



TRAPPER GOLTZ

Coverage Area: Statewide.

Fun Fact: Trapper is my real name.

Contact: 605.223.7605

Trapper.Goltz@state.sd.us



DAN NELSON

Coverage Area: Codington, Hamlin and Deuel Counties.

Fun Fact: I am fortunate to have a job that I look forward to everyday of the week.

Contact: 605.881.4881

Dan.Nelson@state.sd.us



BRAD BUESCHER

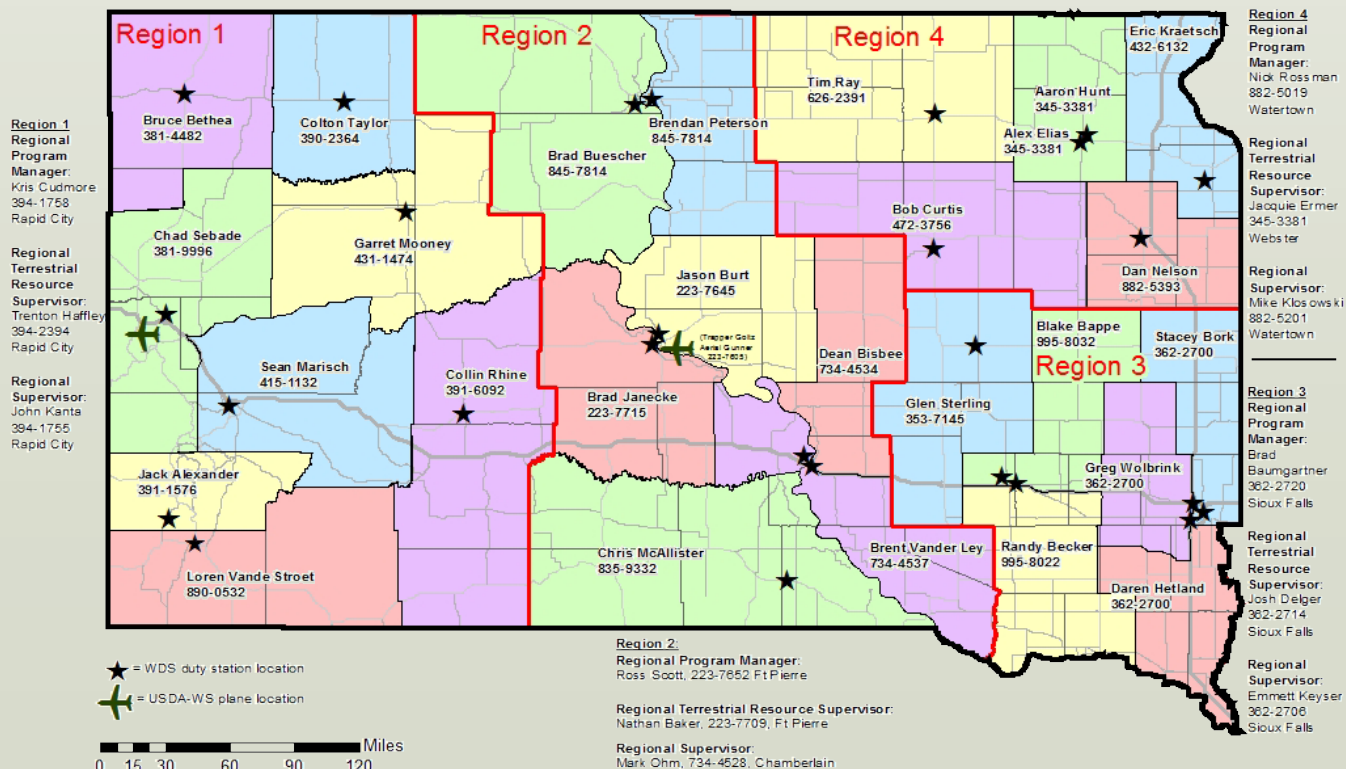
Coverage Area: Dewey and Corson Counties.

Fun Fact: I like to fish.

Contact: 605.845.7814

Brad.Buescher@state.sd.us

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Wildlife Damage Management Program





LANDOWNERS MATTER

GAME, FISH AND PARKS | 523 EAST CAPITOL AVE | PIERRE, SD 57501

CONSERVATION OFFICERS

*DENOTES DISTRICT CONSERVATION OFFICER SUPERVISOR

Martin	Tom Beck	605.381.6433
Hill City	Jeff Edwards	605.381.9995
Hot Springs	D.J. Schroeder	605.381.6438
Custer	Ron Tietz	605.431.7048
Spearfish	Brian Meiers*	605.391.6023

Rapid City	Chris Dekker	605.390.0923
Rapid City	Jacob Hasz	605.415.6462
Rapid City	Adam Geigle*	605.390.1230

Belle Fourche	Bill Eastman	605.391.1575
Faith	Ross Fees	605.381.3734
Lemmon	Keith Mutschler	605.391.7364
Sturgis	Ryan Pearson	605.391.0836
Spearfish	Josh Thompson	605.381.4704
Spearfish	Mike Aplan*	605.391.1574

Ft. Pierre	Tyler Krekelberg	605.730.3774
Mobridge	Trevor Laine	605.845.6286
Ft. Pierre	Josh Carr*	605.730.1574

Miller	Jon Dunlap	605.730.1570
Chamberlain	Diana Landegent	605.730.1578
Platte	Jeff Martin	605.730.1575
Ft. Pierre	John Murphy	605.730.1571
Miller	Cory Flor*	605.680.0003

Chamberlain	Travis March	605.730.1573
Presho	Spencer Downey*	605.730.0774

Aberdeen	Jenna Capper	605.237.9878
Aberdeen	Nick Cochran	605.881.7594
Redfield	Shane Pederson	605.460.0450
Ipswich	Eric Voigt	605.380.4376
Ipswich	Joe Galbraith*	605.380.4563

Britton	Casey Dowler	605.881.3775
Webster	Austin Norton	605.881.2177
Sisseton	Dean Shultz	605.881.3773
Webster	Michael Undlin	605.730.1384
Aberdeen	Tim McCurdy*	605.380.4572

Clear Lake	Adam Behnke	605.881.3780
Watertown	Kyle Lenzner	605.881.3777
Clark	Zach Thomsen	605.881.2260
Milbank	Blake Swanson	605.881.3779
Estelline	Dan Sternhagen	605.881.0018
Milbank	Jamie Pekelder*	605.881.3778

Plankinton	Lynn Geuke	605.220.6943
Huron	Trevor Johnson	605.941.4552
Howard	Evan Meyer	605.553.4299
Mitchell	Andy Petersen	605.770.0340
Salem	Matt Talbert	605.360.0491
Sioux Falls	Jeremy Roe*	605.940.3519

Brookings	Jeff Grendler	605.360.0509
Humboldt	Jared Hill	605.941.0181
Sioux Falls	Chris Kuntz	605.350.1669
Madison	Cody Symens	605.480.3364
Lake Preston	Shane VanBockern	605.360.0514
Flandreau	Chad Williams	605.530.7085
Sioux Falls	Jeremy Rakowicz*	605.941.0074

Yankton	Dan Altman	605.941.4549
Tyndall	Todd Crownover	605.360.0497
Olivet	Brian Humphrey	605.941.4735
Elk Point	Tony Stokely	605.677.7814
Canton	Josh VandenBosch	605.940.0222
Yankton	Sam Schelhaas*	605.941.4540

The Game, Fish and Parks' mission is to provide sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities through responsible management of our state's parks, fisheries and wildlife by fostering partnerships, cultivating stewardships and safely connecting people with the outdoors.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICERS

