

GREAT PLACES

South Dakotans Benefit from Public Lands, Water and Wildlife

By *Sue and Dick Brown, Development Directors, SD Parks & Wildlife Foundation*

A critical part of the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation's mission is to conserve South Dakota's unique lands, waters, and wildlife for the benefit of South Dakotans, their guests and future generations. The need to protect and preserve South Dakota's historic outdoor experience opportunities is a continuing public challenge and responsibility for all South Dakotans.

The outdoors is a good place to be.

There is now substantial research supporting the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual benefits of spending time outdoors. At the same time, private green space in South Dakota's urban areas is being developed and the natural world is more distant than ever. Adults and children alike are becoming more sedentary and are not spending time in the outdoors. The opportunities and entertainment afforded by things attached to electric sockets grow exponentially each year. New generations are missing out on a most enriching aspect of life.

Because South Dakota's outdoor heritage is so vital, the state will soon have two Outdoor Campuses dedicated to outdoor recreation and education. State employees and volunteers will share their love for the outdoors and skills needed to make the most of our time outside. The young people of South Dakota will grow up well exposed to the natural world - wanting access to the public parks and areas where they can enjoy the outdoor life.

Preserving lands, waters, and wildlife is good for South Dakota's economy.

People from all over the country – and the world – come to visit our Great Places. Our public outdoor recreation areas and hunting and fishing opportunities are sought out by visitors from around the globe. Custer State Park alone attracts nearly 2 million visitors each year and adds over \$30,000,000 to our state's economy. Blood Run near Sioux Falls has the potential to be a magnet for those interested in Native American culture and outdoor recreation.

Located at the doorstep of Sioux Falls, it is similarly positioned to be a robust economic engine for our state.

Many Great Places should be owned by the Public.

Our national, state, and local governments have done exemplary work in South Dakota by making treasures from Mt. Rushmore and Custer State Park, Falls Park in Sioux Falls, and Missouri River and lake access areas and many other Great Places available for everyone to use. However some important historic and natural places need protection and are currently inaccessible to the general public. For example, the public owns only 200 of the more than 1000 acres of the Blood Run National Landmark in South Dakota. Private donations are being sought to purchase an additional 300 acres so that a State Park including both historic and recreational elements can be created. Bear Butte State Park is being surrounded by Rally entertainment and other development, and ideally should encompass more protected lands through either outright acquisition or purchase of conservation easements. Every year, we learn of other natural areas that South Dakotans want to preserve and make available to the general public. Some of these areas have local, and others regional, state or even national importance.

Our commitment to protecting special habitats or cultural sites or providing for public recreation by acquiring lands for public ownership is a reflection of what is unique about us as South Dakotans. We are the land of Great Faces and Great Places, and the Foundation's mission is to help protect the best of these areas that once lost, will be gone forever. Whether private lands should become public depends on many factors: donor intentions, financial resources, political considerations, etc. and each land acquisition should be carefully considered before purchase or acceptance for donation.

Land donations are made with the intent of passing on an outdoor legacy.

The Foundation has accepted gifts of land for the benefit of South Dakotans by a generous living donor or his or her estate. Other properties are donated by the friends and family of someone they wish to honor. These donors and people honored by gifts are inevitably avid lovers of the outdoors or a particular South Dakota location and they wish to ensure that future generations have the same opportunities to enjoy South Dakota's Great Places and unique outdoor heritage.

Examples of such gifts are the hundreds of acres comprising the Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve near North Sioux City. This beautiful area on the Missouri provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and educational opportunities about South Dakota's history and natural resources. Another example is being made by Tony Dean's family and

friends, who have donated funds and are now seeking appropriate sites to be purchased by the Foundation and other project partners for wildlife habitat and public access hunting.

Join the Friends of the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

One way to support the Foundation's mission to seize opportunities to preserve South Dakota's Great Places is to become a member of Friends of the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Your charitable contributions provide the resources needed to make Blood Run a State Park, to expand the Big Sioux Recreation Area, add an extension to the Mickelson Trail, to provide educational materials and exhibits for the Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City, and so much more. Our hundreds of Friends are all advocates for maintaining our South Dakota quality of life – a life rich in the joys of the great outdoors.



Every donor of \$25 or more receives a free year's subscription to the Conservation Digest and a window decal!

Yes, I want to be a Friend of Parks and Wildlife in 2011!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ranger..... \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailblazer..... \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurer..... \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pathfinder..... \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explorer..... \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dakota Steward..... \$5,000+ |

If you would like to make a contribution by credit card, visit the Parks and Wildlife Foundation's website at www.parkswildlife foundation.org and click "Make a Contribution"

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address (optional) _____

Please call me to discuss the following Foundation project or gift _____

Phone _____

Mail this card with your check to: **South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation**
523 East Capitol - Pierre, SD 57501-3182

For further information, contact Dick and Sue Brown, Development Directors for the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 24866 Rocky Road, Custer, SD 57730, 605-673-4017, brownassociates@goldenwest.net.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!