

Great Places

Great people leave a legacy of outdoor heritage

By Sue and Dick Brown, Development Directors, South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation



The Department of Game, Fish and Parks has provided South Dakotans and their guests with

- * 13 Parks
- * 5 Nature areas and preserves
- * 1 Trail (with 1 and soon to be 2 extensions)
- * 1 Historic Prairie
- * 1 Outdoor Campus (soon to be 2)
- * 40+ Recreation areas
- * 60+ Lakeside use areas
- * Scores of game production areas

But many of these public treasures would not be on the map without the generosity of great people who want to enrich the lives of their fellow outdoor enthusiasts.

Two of these people are Maude and Mary Adams, who in turn inspired other people to great philanthropy. The Adams sisters owned 1500 spectacular acres of farm and undeveloped land along the Missouri River in southeast South Dakota. The land was left to them by their homesteading family, and it was their home, their livelihood, and their legacy.

Maude was a self-taught naturalist who knew well the wildlife, the trees and plants on the land. She shared her enthusiasm

and knowledge with children, including Sharon Hanson, whose family farmed the Adams' property. Sharon often accompanied Maude as she rode or hiked around the forests and meadows. Maude and Sharon together observed the animals, the river, the vegetation, and the cycles of nature. They came eye to eye with deer, tasted the wild berries, and enjoyed the serenity. Maude taught Sharon, and shaped Sharon's life. To Sharon, the Adams' land seemed a playground and an outdoor classroom that stretched forever.

Property around the Adams' land was gradually being converted to roads, homes, and businesses. The Adams sisters wanted to pass their legacy on to others and to preserve the history and unique opportunities for outdoor education and recreation they enjoyed. In 1985, they gave the first of several gifts of land to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to begin development of the Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve. GFP formed the Parks and Wildlife Foundation later in 1985 to facilitate such gifts. Maude and then Mary continued to live in their homestead.

The rest of the Adams' land was given in the '90s to GFP and the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation and converted



Maude (left) and Mary Adams, here accompanied by their brother, grew up on the Adams Homestead. When they decided to make the property a public wildlife habitat and outdoor education center, they found GFP and the SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation would best honor their charitable intent.

into nature and hiking trails. A visitor and education center was developed and a collection of historic buildings was moved to the property and restored. Many private gifts were made to the Foundation to make the property as accessible, educational, and peaceful as possible.

Twenty-five years after the Adams' gift, thousands of people enjoy the hundreds of species of animals, plants, and other unique features of the Missouri River bottom lands each year. Youth and adults benefit from historic and environmental interpretation offered at the site. Runners, bikers, and walkers benefit from the recreational trails.

Sharon Hanson-Gutormson is now a Brookings ag-related businesswoman, mother and farmer. She never outgrew her connection with the Adams sisters or their land. Her passions include humanitarian agricultural and self-sufficiency work in other parts of the world. She stays in touch with Mary Adams and frequently visits the Adams property.



Sharon Hanson-Gutormson also grew up on the Adams land and has subsequently made gifts to enhance education at the site.

She recently made a gift to the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation to enhance youth educational opportunities at the site. The gift is a tribute to the Adams sisters and their land, and is a way to pass on the legacy they created for her. The gift, she asserts, is in "good hands." Sharon talks with Adams staff and knows they share the vision set forth by the Adams sisters and to which she is also committed, a vision of using the property to instill a love and understanding of our natural heritage.

Are you another of these great people?

Hundreds of great people like Sharon, Maude, and Mary have given land, easements, money, and other gifts to create the public lands infrastructure we enjoy in South Dakota. Others will have still unknown impact. The legacy of South Dakota's rich outdoor heritage will endure.

If you are contemplating a gift to continue that legacy, please contact Dick or Sue Brown at 605-673-4017 or brownassociates@goldenwest.net. Those who make known their planned future gifts to the Foundation may elect to join the Foundation's "Legacy Society" and will receive a Black Hills gold stick pin to commemorate their plans.

Friends of Parks and Wildlife

A great way to help conserve and expand public access to great places in South Dakota is to contribute to Friends of Parks and Wildlife. Just contact us at 605-673-4017 or at brownassociates@goldenwest.net for a contribution form or make a contribution on the Foundation's Web site at parkswildlifefoundation.org.

Presentations about the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation

To schedule a 15-30 minute, colorful power point presentation and enthusiastic presenter on the Foundation's activities, contact the Browns at the phone or email address above.