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## **South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation Elects Officers**

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PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation recently announced the election of officers for its board of directors for 2017. The foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable supporting organization for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP).

Karen Gundersen Olson of Rapid City will serve as president, Sarah Larson of Sioux Falls will serve as vice president and Tom Krafka of Rapid City will serve as secretary/treasurer for the organization.

Other members of the board include: Larry Ness of Yankton, Kevin Nyberg, Kathryn Anderson, Jeff Stingley and Jeff Scherschligt, of Sioux Falls; Spencer Hawley of Brookings; Dick Behl of Scotland; and Jack Lynass and William May of Rapid City. GFP Department Secretary Kelly Hepler and GFP Commissioner Barry Jensen of White River serve as ex officio members of the Board.

For the past five years, the foundation has focused primarily on raising public and private funds to support GFP in its efforts to establish and develop Good Earth State Park at Blood Run near Sioux Falls and has actively raised funds for a new visitor center and theater at Custer State Park.

The visitor center at Good Earth State Park is under construction and will be completed in the spring of 2017.

The new visitor center and theater at Custer State Park opened its doors to the public in May of 2016. The visitor center received more than 200,000 visitors in its first seven months of operation.

“The numbers speak for themselves,” said board president Karen Gundersen Olson. “Getting kids and families out of their cars and into South Dakota’s amazing parks is good for everyone. The South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation is dedicated to building public private partnerships that open South Dakota’s great outdoors to everyone.”

The foundation is currently raising funds to renovate the existing Peter Norbeck Visitor Center at Custer State Park and fund improvements at GFP’s Outdoor Campuses in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

In previous years, the foundation has raised funds to develop and support the Outdoor Campuses in Sioux Falls and Rapid City, the George S. Mickelson Trail in the Black Hills and the Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve near North Sioux City, as well as a number of smaller fundraising efforts.

Anyone seeking to support foundation projects or learn more about the Parks and Wildlife Foundation can call 605.773.4503 or visit [parkswildlifefoundation.org](http://parkswildlifefoundation.org).

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**GFP Mission:** *The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks provides sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities through responsible management of our state’s parks, fisheries and wildlife by fostering partnerships, cultivating stewardship and safely connecting people with the outdoors.*