



# SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FORESTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JULY 2017

Bi-Annual Newsletter

## Keep South Dakota Green South Dakota Tree Farm's History

### Part 1 of 2 *By Bill Coburn*

Keep South Dakota Green was created in the early 1950's at the request of Governor Sigurd Anderson after a series of wildfires burned in South Dakota in 1949. Governor Anderson wrote a personal letter to E.L. "Paddy" Ingvalson, managing editor of the Rapid City Journal, asking for his assistance in creating an organization, later called "Keep South Dakota Green".

With "Paddy" Ingvalson agreeing to be its first president, KSDG was launched under the joint sponsorship of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. One of KSDG's strongest supporters was the members of Black Hills forest industry. KSDG's main mission was to make the public aware of the dangers of wildfire thereby becoming a valuable ally to USFS Smokey Bear program. KSDG also became a leading advocate for litter prevention and good forest management and environmental conservation. In 1952, it became the state sponsor for the South Dakota Tree Farm Committee. In that same year, Homestake Mining Company's forest in South Dakota was named the first state "Tree Farmer of the Year".

One of the most note worthy efforts that KSDG was involved in during it's 50 plus years of existence was providing Christmas Trees to our nation's capital. The first such effort was in 1955, when KSDG, under "Paddy's" leadership agreed to provide the "White House Christmas Tree" for the Eisenhower Administration.

State Forester Harry Woodward and his assistant George Kelly were instrumental in locating the right tree and coordinating getting the tree to Washington. Other important partners in this effort were Homestake Mining Company who provided the crane to load the tree. Home movers Glen and Warner Ghore provided the expertise along with the truck and trailer to get the tree moved to Rochford where it was loaded onto a special gondola railcar that was provided by a California mining company.

- Keeping South Dakota Green Part 1... ..Pg. 1
- Director's Stump .....Pg. 2
- Walk in the Forest.....Pg. 3
- Bridges to Forest Management.....Pg. 4
- Advocacy & National Program Update..Pg. 5
- Events & Collaboration Projects.....Pg. 6
- We Need & Thank You.....Pg. 7



Homestake Mining Company's tree farm dedication.

From left: H.A. Walker, assistant general manager of Homestake Mining Co.; Guy N. Bjorge, general manager; Gareth Moon, assistant state forester; Governor Sigurd Anderson of South Dakota; C.A. Polley, manager, Homestake timber division.



## DIRECTOR'S STUMP—Start of A Good Year

Paul Schipke, *SD Family Forests Association Chairman*



From my perspective, 2017 has the makings of a good year. It seems to be a different, yet a very interesting year. 2017 started with an open, mild winter in the Black Hills area; lumber prices and demand has picked up and political turmoil and change is occurring in Washington. Yes, it has the making of interesting times.

For me, the official declaration to the end of the mountain pine beetle epidemic was fantastic news. The epidemic seemed never ending going on for almost 20 years and affected more than 448,000 acres in the Black Hills. It definitely changed the landscape of the Black Hills forest and left challenges with areas of high fuel loading which will make the fire danger much higher. This will test the resilience and dedication of Tree Farmers in practicing good stewardship in the wake of this epidemic.

The state legislative session has ended for 2017 with no known changes or new regulations that greatly affect Tree Farmers. There was some minor “tweaking” of the ag land classification law that seems to be neutral to slightly beneficial to small forest landowners. In my opinion, the state of South Dakota continues to be very supportive of agricultural endeavors, even for small producers. Since most of our Tree Farmers own less than 160 acres, the application and administration of ag land classification laws remains in the hands of the various counties. Thus, no change this session is good news.

For the first time in many years, SD Family Forests Association has undertaken fund raising activities. As our organization continues to reach out and re-engage with current members and to recruit new members, it is very apparent that we need to provide more services and help than we have in the past. This means more communication, workshops, opportunities for field tours, and more advocacy at state and federal levels on issues that affect our members or the forest products industry. This means more expenses and the need for more support.

We have reached out to select corporate and potential individual supporters for financial support. It was pleasing to find this support and good progress has been made towards reaching our financial goal. We have a ways to go, but the response has been excellent.

Many thanks to our supporters during this time of growth and development. You are helping us become a more dynamic and serving organization.



# Walk in the Forest—South Dakota Project Learning Tree

SDPLT hosted two Walk in the Forest events for second grade students from Valley View Elementary and third grade students from Robbinsdale Elementary in Rapid City. The event was held at the Stonewall Overlook Trail in the Skyline Wilderness Area.

Take a class or two of kids, their teachers/leaders, a handful of natural resources professionals, some tree farmers, and a piece of forest near you and what have you got? A magical few hours of long-lasting learning and inspiration called A Walk in the Forest.

The Walk in the Forest Program utilizes community forests, local volunteers and resource professionals to provide a forest field day near you. Students, teachers and leaders rotate through “stations” set up in the forest which address such topics as forest wildlife, tree identification, soils types and why trees grow where they do, and forest management and tools of the trade. Knowledgeable professionals and volunteers provide active learning experiences which allow students to explore their local forest and learn about forestry and other natural resource professions first hand.

This event provides many benefits, such as:

- Teach children about forests, forestry, tree farmers, and foresters. Parents and educators also benefit from exposure to the information presented to the children.
- Provide the children with positive outdoor, hand-on learning experience about forests, natural resources, tree farms, forestry and foresters.
- Increase children's awareness, appreciation of, and respect for nature, forests and foresters.
- Expose the children to the many benefits of forests-biological, aesthetic, recreational, educational, environmental, and economical.



-Expose children to the many aspects of forestry, such as forest management, fire prevention, forest health, forest products, forest ecology, and wildlife management.

-Inspire students to become the future generation of resource professionals, tree farmers, and stewards of our lands.

If you would like to participate in a Walk in the Forest event or wish to utilize your property for this wonderful educational experience, please contact SDPLT State Coordinator Tracy Sigdestad at [southdakotaplt@gmail.com](mailto:southdakotaplt@gmail.com).

# Bridges to Forest Management

Bridges are in a state of disrepair within the Black Hills, and the related problems for neighborhoods around the Rapid City area have been receiving media attention. However, the issue of bridges in need of repair reaches much further than the Rapid City area. Having spent some time under a few bridges in the Black Hills recently, I can say some bridges are literally crumbling. From the bridge that was closed to all traffic on Base Line Road, to new weight limit signs going up, the issue has reached situation critical across the Black Hills. Not only a critical component of our transportation infrastructure, bridges are also critical to forest management.



Transportation costs is an important factor in determining the value of timber and the feasibility of managing a property. Weight restricted bridges mean trucks must find new, often longer, routes to haul logs to a mill. When that happens, it may result in significant reductions to the value of standing timber and, in some instances, preclude hauling to a mill altogether. In Pennington County, three bridges have recently been weight restricted and those restrictions have severely impacted log hauling. On Nemo Rd, the bridge over Boxelder Creek has been restricted to 30 tons.

Two bridges on Sheridan Lake Rd, near Spring Creek picnic area, have been weight restricted to 44 tons. In Lawrence county a bridge in Higgins Gulch has been posted and Vanocker Canyon may eventually be weight restricted also.

Available funding is often the roadblock to repairing bridge and road infrastructure in the Black Hills. It is not unusual for bridge repair costs to range from \$400,000 to \$600,000. In Pennington County, financial obstacles play a larger role in delaying repairs to bridges than other counties in the Black Hills. This stems



from the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, ballot question where the voters of Pennington County voted down a proposed wheel tax that would have provided additional funding for roads and bridges from within the county. Additionally, that wheel tax would have opened the door to accessing an addition pool of money from the State. Dodging one bullet (of many), Pennington County has been able to piece together some leftover funds from the previous fiscal year to repair the bridge on Nemo Rd. That repair is expected this summer. However, previous reports have identified 46 bridges as candidates for repair, including 25 bridges that went up in 1972 following the flood. Those bridges, and others, continue to age. Additional funding mechanism are needed to limit the impacts or it is only a matter of time until additional weight restrictions or bridge closures or put into effect.

-Ben Wudtke, South Dakota Family Forest Association

## **National Leadership Conference 2017**

The 2017 American Tree Farm System National Leadership Conference saw more than 215 attendees come together for three days of leadership development, fellowship, and shared learning in Greenville, SC.

It raised the bar of excellence by providing educational and inspiring presentations for our participants and highlighting AFF's many exceptional partners. Panel discussions and presentations included: *Family Woodland Landowners: Positioned for Impact in the South*, *Engaging a Cross-Generational Volunteer Force* (led by PricewaterhouseCoopers), and *Expanding Their Voice: Engaging Minority Landowners*. These are just a few among many other quality presentations and leadership development sessions that were provided at the National Conference this year.

## **South Dakota Tree Farm Legislative Watchlist**

South Dakota Family Forest Association has actively tracked legislation in South Dakota that may affect you. In the 2017 legislative session, a bill (SB 7) amended the criteria for lands to be classified as agricultural. This bill reorganized the criteria so that the first threshold to meet is principle use as an agricultural use. Second, the bill changed the monetary requirement to be an income of 10 percent of the taxable value in three of the last five years or \$2,500 annually. This was a step in the right direction of recognizing that not all agricultural products produce an income annually or provide the primary annual salary for the families that manage those lands. In the instance of forested agricultural lands, there may be many years of management actions without producing a salary contribution. However, costs associated with managing forested lands are incurred between harvests. This issue is not resolved and we expect further work in future legislative sessions. We will be certain to monitor this issue and work to advocate for forested land owners managing their lands for agricultural purposes.

Other legislation involved the placement of 50 foot buffer strips next to select waterways in the state. These buffer strips would be taxed at a lower rate than the assessed agricultural productivity but come with certain restrictions on activities within the buffer strips. Many of the waterways affected are in the Black Hills. However, as passed, the bill language makes this voluntary and there aren't any adverse effects foreseen at the time of passage.

If there are legislative issues that concern you and may affect Tree Farmers, please inform South Dakota Family Forests Association about your concerns.

## **South Dakota AgFest 2017**

In February, Bob Burns and Patricia Turbiville represented the SDFFA membership at the South Dakota AgFest; a social function where ag organizations have an opportunity to discuss issues pertaining to their industries and current legislation with legislators and concerned public attending the event. Importantly, this is also an excellent opportunity for ag industries to talk with one-another about issues affecting their members and producers. Some topics SDFFA promoted included property tax, important role of private land owners in the Black Hills, and forest management among others.





## Upcoming Events & Collaboration Projects

### South Dakota Family Forest Association 2017 Summer Social

- July 8, 2017 6:00-8:00 pm @ Hill City Senior Center
  - Please RSVP by July 1st

### Beginning Landowner Workshop & Field Day

- July 8, 2017 1:00-4:30 pm @ Circle Z Ranch in Custer, SD
  - Please RSVP by July 5th

If you having any upcoming activities that you would like in the newsletter please email the information to: [SDtreefarm@gmail.com](mailto:SDtreefarm@gmail.com).

## National Wild Turkey Federation Position

The South Dakota Black Hills Resource Conservationist position is a cooperative effort developed through a partnership consisting of the National Wild Turkey Federation, USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA - U.S. Forest Service, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department, South Dakota Department of Agriculture - Resource Conservation & Forestry Division, Custer County Conservation District, Neiman Timber Co., L.C. and American Forest Foundation. The position is designed to enhance the delivery of conservation programs resulting in increased active management of forest & riparian areas on private lands throughout the SD Black Hills region. The position will also work to promote private landowner forest & riparian project collaboration among agencies and organizations that share common conservation interests and goals.

## South Dakota Forestry Internship

The SD Family Forest Association has partnered with SD Resource Conservation & Forestry (SD RCF) to take on a very unique challenge – attracting qualified young foresters to the Black Hills. With a grant from the American Forest Foundation, the three year project will partner with the RCF Forest Stewardship Intern position to provide additional funding with the goal of attracting more forestry students from universities across the country. This partnership has already proved successful in its first year, as the number of forestry students applying for the position increased from previous years. A student from Clemson University in South Carolina will be in the position this summer. This is a very exciting program, both locally and nationally, South Dakota is grateful to serve as a pilot for this type of project. Hopefully you will get a chance to meet this year's intern over the course of the summer and help them see how wonderful the Black Hills truly are.

# WE NEED AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

Have you ever wondered who is looking out for your interests, as a private land owner, during South Dakota legislative sessions?

Or when the Black Hills County Commissioners consider changes that can affect the tax status, sustainability, and livelihood of your forested property?

South Dakota Family Forests Association is actively working to address issues across jurisdictional boundaries with the interests of forestland owners in mind. Concerned and dedicated individuals, like yourself, are what drive SDFFA and the organization is developing and growing to better support the tree farmers in the Black Hills. You can help by being an involved member, and by volunteering your time and talents to help the accomplish our mission.

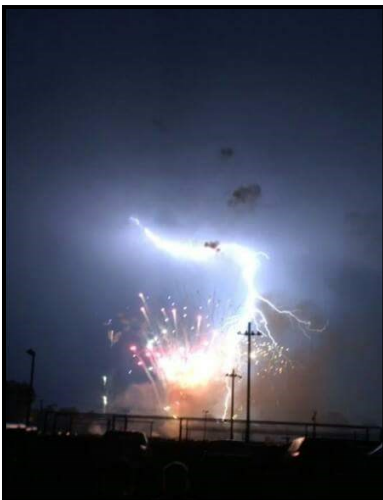
Visit the South Dakota Family Forests Association website at

<http://www.sdfamilyforests.org> to learn more.

Or

Email [SDtreefarm@gmail.com](mailto:SDtreefarm@gmail.com)

Call 605-939-8156



SEND US PHOTOS OF YOUR SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FOREST: WOOD, WATER, WILDLIFE, RECREATION, and **YOUR** FAMILY. Email your photos to: [SDtreefarm@gmail.com](mailto:SDtreefarm@gmail.com)

## **South Dakota Family Forests Association Board**

- Paul Schipke, Tree Farmer & Chairman
- Dennie & Mary Ann Mann  
- Executive Director & Treasurer
- Doug Miller, Tree Farmer & Secretary
- Bill Coburn - Industrial Forester
- Greg Josten, SD State Forester
- Parks Brigman, SD RC&F Forester
- Bob Burns, Tree Farmer
  
- Kory Bossert, NRCS
  
- Patricia Turbiville - Consulting Forester
- Ben Wudtke, BH Forest Resource Assoc.
  
- Tracy Sigdestad, South Dakota PLT

## **Committee Members**

### **Communication and Public Relations**

Bob Burns - Chairperson,  
Patricia Turbiville, Ben Wudtke, Stuart Adrian

### **Financial & Fundraising**

Dennie Mann - Chairperson,  
Bill Coburn, Doug Miller

### **Certification**

Parks Brigman - Chairperson,  
Bill Coburn

### **Membership & Education**

Doug Miller - Chairperson,  
Lynn Kolund, Paul Schipke

### **Contact Information:**

Executive Director – Dennie Mann

Phone: 605-939-8156

Email: [SDtreefarm@gmail.com](mailto:SDtreefarm@gmail.com)



P.O. Box 9576

Rapid City, SD 57709