



SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FORESTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

December 2017

Bi-Annual Newsletter

Beginning Landowner

Workshop and Field Day

This field day was held on the location of the 2016 SD Tree Farm of the Year, Circle Z Ranch, located south of Custer. In addition to having the owner Julie Oswald talk about the history of owning and managing the ranch, there were experts from SDSU (Dr. Ball) and SDGFP (David Mallett) to share their expertise, as well as other foresters, public and private, and other program managers from the SD Department of Conservation & Forestry. After the presentations, there was a walking tour where examples of different forest management techniques could be observed and discussed, and which presented a great opportunity to ask questions of the many experts assembled in one place. Later that same day, the Summer Social was held in Hill City. After a really great BBQ dinner, both the Tree Farmer of the Year (Bob Burns of Piedmont) and the Inspector of the Year (Patricia Turbiville of Quality Services Inc. in Rapid City) were named and recognized for their achievement.

General Membership Meeting

Members could either attend a meeting held at Crazy Horse Memorial, or at The Lodge in Deadwood on the following day, whichever was more convenient. In addition to the updates and reports from the SDFFA, a major part of the meeting was devoted to a topic that the membership had previously determined to be a priority, identifying resources that are available to members for cost sharing on thinning projects, fuel reduction and weed control. If you missed this meeting, a summary of the various programs and their contact information can be found on page 4.

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Tax Planning for Forest Landowners

In July, the Wyoming Tree Farm Program invited the South Dakota membership to attend this seminar in Newcastle. This is a good subject to know if you are planning a timber sale.

By Mr. Stuart Adrian

DIRECTOR'S STUMP—Start of A Good Year

Paul Schipke, *SD Family Forests Association Chairman*

It has been a productive and busy summer for SDDFA. A technical workshop for the Black Hills County Tax Assessors, two landowner workshops, two general membership meetings, and a recognition dinner for donors were conducted this summer. Our partners and volunteers did an excellent job and it provided an opportunity to network and learn. Thanks to all of you for a job very well done.

The Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic is officially over. The US Forest Service has started the process of recovery by undertaking an amendment to the forest management plan for the entire Black Hills. The first step has been taken by drafting an Environmental Impact Statement on this amendment. The amendment is called, "Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project". Its purpose is to reduce existing hazards, move forest structure and composition towards the original plan objectives, and increase the forests resilience to disturbance (fire and insects).

I would encourage each tree farmer to review their own plans and assess their forest resilience to a disturbance in a similar fashion. Fire and insects can be extremely devastating especially when it is in our own backyard. State foresters and consulting foresters can help. It will not be a wasted undertaking, as fire and insects still abound!!

The Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic is Over – Now What?

The most recent mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills has finally come to its official end. Both aerial photo analysis and ground surveys show overall mountain pine beetle populations declining from prior years. The surveys reveal the mountain pine beetle epidemic is over and populations have returned to normal levels.

Aerial surveys conducted indicate that approximately 2,500 acres have been affected last year, while approximately 17,000 acres were affected in the year prior. About 448,000 acres have been affected since the epidemic started nearly 20 years ago. While the end of the epidemic is apparent, the mountain pine beetle continues to be a native insect in the Black Hills. As such, trees or groups of trees will continue to be killed each year, which is natural and expected.

The epidemic posed a significant and immediate threat to private landowners for several years, and in some cases, challenged conventional wisdom. "Treat your infested trees every year, hold on and hope for the best" was a strategy that was repeated all too often over the past 10 years. But now, landowners' focus can shift back to creating forest stands that can withstand the next epidemic.

The most effective defense against the mountain pine beetle is maintaining well-managed tree stands. The most susceptible stands are those with trees more than eight inches in diameter and a basal area greater than 120 square feet. As the average diameter and density decreases, the risk of mountain pine beetle attack also decreases. Adults may select trees as small as one-inch in diameter for attack but will not reproduce in them. Attacks in four to six inch trees are common during outbreak conditions and they can complete their life cycles within trees of this size.

The primary focus trees, the ones initially attacked and from which the infestation spreads, are usually greater than 10-inches in diameter. Greater importance, however, should be placed on the density of the stand. Crowded trees, those in stands with a basal area exceeding 120 square feet, are much more susceptible to attack due to two reasons. First, the trees are competing with one another for water, nutrients and light and are generally not growing as vigorously as more open-grown trees. Second, the lower light intensities and cooler temperatures found in dense stands influence the attack behavior of the insect. Stands that have a lower density are much less susceptible to attack due to the more open light conditions and individual health of the trees. So, read through your management plan, talk with a forester, and see how good forestry and your stewardship can make a difference! *By Mr. John Parks Brigman*

Keep South Dakota Green South Dakota Tree Farm's History

Part 2 of 2

In 1970, Keep South Dakota Green (KSDG), still under “Paddy’s” leadership, provided the Nixon White House with their Christmas Tree. It is interesting to note that Jack McBride, a state district forester, was an important contributor to this effort.

Another interesting event that also occurred in 1970 was the naming of James Arness, “Matt Dillon” of Gunsmoke, as a honorary member of KSDG during the filming of the “Snow Train” in the Black Hills.

Jack repeated his Christmas Tree efforts by heading up the 1997 Holiday Tree undertaking as president of KSDG. It is important to note that a major part of the fundraising for getting the tree to Washington came from the John Crane’s generous donation of the proceeds from his painting “The Holiday Tree”. Not only did these earnings pay for the Holiday Tree effort, the remaining proceeds ultimately provided a significant revenue source for South Dakota Project Learning Tree and the South Dakota Tree Farm Committee.



Paddy Ingvalson and Jack McBride presenting James Arness with a Keep South Dakota Green Membership Certificate.

Some of the programs that KSDG sponsored or participated in during its existence were the Arbor Day programs, Woodsey Owl/Smokey Bear poster contest, South Dakota Fire Service Award and the South Dakota Tree Farm program. Beginning in the early 1990’s, KSDG also became the state sponsor for Project Learning Tree, one of the oldest environmental educational programs in the US. In 1974, KSDG became a 501c nonprofit organization.

In 2014, Keep South Dakota Green became part of the South Dakota Family Forest Association.

I would like to recognize my friend, Jack McBride. Jack’s energy and commitment to KSDG over 40 years kept it going and relevant. Jack’s middle name was “raffle”. He sold more raffle tickets than any person I have known. Much of the information for this article comes from his book “South Dakota Christmas Trees Go to Washington”. Jack passed away in 2016. The black and white picture is from the South Dakota State Historical Society. The Holiday Tree picture is from Jon Crane’s website.

By Mr. Bill Coburn



Timber Management Assistance

Thinning can be one of the most expensive endeavors that a tree farmer undertakes. There are programs available that can reduce this cost to the landowner. Most thinning projects can be cost-shared through the United States Department of Agriculture Division of Natural Resources Conservation Services' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (USDA NRCS EQIP).

From time to time, the local Conservation Districts will also have funds available for cost-share assistance for forestry practices. When available, these programs are similar to the USDA NRCS EQIP since they will pay either a set amount or a percentage of the cost per acre. Which are restricted to activities that the local Conservation District wants to support at that particular time.

Forest Stewardship Plans

Cost-share assistance is awarded on a competitive basis, meaning that your application is competing against other applications for funding. In order to rank high enough, a Forest Stewardship Plan is almost always necessary in order to qualify for assistance.

Both the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry and the South Dakota Family Forest Association have cost-share assistance available to help landowners reduce the cost of having a Stewardship Plan developed and written.

Fire Hazard & Fuel Reduction Programs

Another activity that tree farmers should consider is a fuel reduction program to decrease the threat of catastrophic fire. South Dakota Department of Agriculture Division of Wildland Fire has cost-share programs available.

Noxious Weeds

Management Assistance

The disturbance to the ground that occurs during a thinning project can result in an opportunity for weeds to establish. Weed control is best done early in the process, before they spread and become more established. County weed and pest offices normally have funds available to help with the cost of chemicals to control weeds.

The first step in securing assistance is a telephone call to the appropriate office.

USDA-NRCS EQIP Program

Belle Fourche, SD:	605-892-3368
Hot Springs, SD:	605-745-5716
Rapid City, SD:	605-342-0301
Sturgis, SD:	605-347-4952

Conservation Districts

Custer:	605-673-4971
Lawrence:	605-642-3590
Pennington:	605-342-0301

Weed & Pest Offices

Custer:	605-673-5680
Fall River:	605-745-5047
Lawrence:	605-642-1976
Meade:	605-347-2964
Pennington:	605-394-5320

Forest Stewardship Plans—SDDA

Lawrence:	605-584-2300
Pennington:	605-394-2395
All Other Counties:	605-394-2395

Fuels Reduction Program

Division of Wildland Fire	605-394-2584
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New Member Sign-Ups Increase Almost 75%

Over the past two years, your South Dakota Family Forests Association (SDFFA) has made a concerted effort to increase our membership, without compromising our organization's values of forest stewardship and sustainability. Along with actively-involved stakeholders (State foresters, professional foresters, inspectors and current tree farmers), we have been able to identify landowners, who would be outstanding additions to our tree-farmer organization. Once identified, these landowners were approached regarding tree-farm membership.

The results, from our collective efforts, have been positive, as the below table indicates.

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Member Sign-Ups</u>
2014	6
2015	5
2016	8
2017	11

Over the two-year period of 2014-2015, new memberships averaged 5.5 members/year, compared to the two-year period of 2016-2017, which has averaged 9.5 members/year. Thus, over the past four years, SDFFA membership sign-ups have increased by almost 75%!

A special "thank you" and "congratulations" to the following new, tree-farm members!

Mike Alley – Lawrence County.
County.

Meadows, LLC / Geri Konenkamp – Lawrence

Black Hills Health & Education Center (Willard Werth-Manager) - Pennington County.

Dr. Robert Ferrell – Butte County.

Margie Hilgeson – Pennington County.

Brian Linneman – Lawrence County.

Alfredo Ramirez MacDonald – Custer County.

Gordon Family Properties / Karen Murphy – Pennington County.

Gerald Schmidt – Pennington County.

Paul Zweifel – Pennington County.

Margaret Sager – Lawrence County.
County.

Erica Spurrier / John Strand – Lawrence

Morgan / Seth Miller – Lawrence County.

Chuck / Vicki McClain - Pennington.

Mike Wytosick / Cathy Edler – Lawrence.

Greg Kimmel – Pennington.

Jane Lockwood – Lawrence County.

Greg Harmon – Meade County.

Jack Marton – Pennington County.

Please join me in welcoming this outstanding group of dedicated, tree farmers!

By: Doug Miller, Membership & Education Committee

Upcoming Events & Collaboration Projects

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

Next summer, watch your inbox for announcements of the general meetings and the field trips that are put on for the SD Tree Farmers.

Donors' Appreciation Barbecue & Cannon Shoot

On Sept. 9th, South Dakota Family Forest Association hosted a **Donors' Appreciation Barbecue and Cannon Shoot** at Paul and Julie Schipke's Tree Farm in Two Bit Gulch. This event was attended by 11 people who ate well and enjoyed seeing the Schipke's "Tower of Power". Attendees were mesmerized with the story about the construction of the international stone tower built with stones from all over the world. After the tower tour, attendees then witnessed the awesome fire power of Paul's 17th century cannons being shot across the gulch at a target about 500 yards away with the sounds echoing down into the hallows of Deadwood Gulch. Several attendees actually got to set up and light the cannons.



Following the cannon shoot, Parks Brigman treated everyone to his fantastic barbecue cooking. In addition to this delectable barbecue, Julie Schipke and several others provided great baked beans, potato salad and "fixins" that left everyone wanting to take some of the leftovers home. What a wonderful meal that topped off a great day of recognition of our very important donors who helped SDFFA meet its fund raising goals for 2017. By Bill Coburn

Tree Farmer of the Year—2017

Bob Burns and Mary LaHood have been and continue to be conscientious, pro-active, hands-on partner stewards of their forested land. They have been a certified tree farm for over 20 years and have operated under an approved management plan since 1994. Their management of the land is focused on multiple use that includes a comprehensive array of management activities occurring over past years and planned for the future. These include: timber harvest incorporating a variety of silvicultural treatments; considerable timber stand improvement efforts; mountain pine beetle sanitation and control management; wildlife habitat improvement work; recreational use—hiking, family camping/recreating; hunting; protection of special sites (spring, historical site); cooperation and co-management with adjacent landowners (US Forest Service, private entities); noxious/invasive weed control efforts; wildfire hazard reduction/mitigation.

They are not only dedicated stewards of their own forested property, but have demonstrated a broader leadership commitment to responsible natural resource management in the Black Hills area. As noted above, Bob is currently serving as President of the local Norbeck Society; Co-chair of the National Forest Advisory Board Black Hills National Forest, and a South Dakota Tree Farm Committee Member.

By Philip D. Grumstrup



Dakota Rental & Chain Saw Center generously gives a gift certificate to Tree Farmer of the year. Shown is Bob Burns and the equipment he purchased with that gift certificate.

WE NEED AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

WANTED!!!!

**YOUR TALENTS, YOUR SKILLS, YOUR ENERGY!!!
PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING YOUR SDFFA BY
VOLUNTEERING FOR ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

Communication & Advocacy Committee.

Fundraising Committee.

Membership & Education Committee.

Please call Doug Miller at 605-578-1102 and volunteer today!



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

SDtreefarm@gmail.com

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www.sdfamilyforests.org