



NRCS South Dakota NRCS Update

April/May 2004

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Federal Building, 200 Fourth Street SW, Huron, SD 57350**

As a service to NRCS personnel and the agency's partners, "South Dakota NRCS Update" offers the following news. To add a news item, please send the information to Tim Tushla, State Public Affairs Specialist (tim.tushla@sd.usda.gov), or Colette Kessler, Public Affairs Specialist (colette.kessler@sd.usda.gov).

In this issue:

NRCS Celebrates National Wetlands Month	2	Badlands RC&D: Tourism Conference Traveled to Martin	6
National Volunteer Week and the Earth Team.....	2	Civil Rights <i>Fast Fact</i> Elephants, Donkies and Me...Where's the Line?	7
New Earth Team Shirts	2	Federal Women's Program News.....	9
Volunteer Spotlights.....	3	National Women's Health Week May 9 thru 15th, 2004	9
Soil Smiles	3	Federal Government Faces Major Crisis in Hispanic Employment:	9
Brusse Honored as Earth Team Volunteer.....	3	Wisdom of The Elders Celebrates Nationwide Launch Of New Radio Series	10
State Office Volunteer Event.....	3	News from the Field.....	11
Pasture and Forage Day in Lyman County.....	3	Soil Critters Info Leads to Spring Planting.....	11
Western South Dakota Grazing Tour Set for July	4	Earth Day at Citibank	11
WANTED: Grassland Management Interns.....	4	Painting with Soil	11
News from Across South Dakota	4	New Information on the Web.....	12
Special Training Efforts.....	4	State Scholarship Offers High School Seniors a New Opportunity	9
Partnership Efforts For Wildlife	4	Horizontal lines and Digital Cameras.....	13
PI-566 Watershed Maintenance Efforts	4	Calendar	14
Emphasized Training Efforts	5		
NRCS Recruits at Native American Youth Leadership Conference.....	5		
Resource Conservation and Development News			
North Central RC&D: SD Discovery Center Receives Grant to Conduct Art/Science Programs ..	6		

National Wetlands Month

NRCS Celebrates American Wetlands Month by Helping Landowners Restore Wetlands

Colette Kessler, Public Affairs Specialist, Pierre

During American Wetlands Month, private landowners and local groups who work together for stewardship can be spotlighted for their efforts. Conservation programs, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), help keep wetlands healthy so everyone can enjoy the benefits that wetlands offer.

Wetlands store water and slowly release it over time helping to maintain water flow in streams, especially during dry periods. The forage produced on wet areas can be nutritious for livestock. Some wetlands are also important for



recharging aquifers, a vital source of water supply. Perhaps the world's best filters, wetlands have been called the 'kidneys of the watershed' for their ability to degrade or break down pollutants and improve water quality.

From piping plovers to bald eagles, more than 300 bird species rely on these small wetlands as resting places and feeding grounds. During their difficult migratory journeys, waterfowl stop to rest and feed (re-fuel) at a variety of small wetlands. Almost three-quarters of the waterfowl, including many species of ducks and geese, in North America are hatched in the Prairie Pothole Region. This region covers almost a third of South Dakota. Many producers gain supplemental income from hunting and fishing supported by the biologically diverse ecosystem.

Students and homeowners who want to use the same conservation techniques, scaled down for home use, can tap into Backyard Conservation to create yards that support a greater diversity of desirable plants and animals. "Conservation in Your Backyard Tips" sheets are available by calling 1-888-LANDCARE or can be downloaded from the NRCS national web site: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/for_homeowners.html. The 10 tip sheets contain details on locating and constructing conservation practices, such as a backyard pond or wetland, selecting plants, maintenance tips and types of wildlife to anticipate in the area. Backyard Conservation is making homes everywhere more earth friendly.

NRCS is working with landowners everywhere to achieve the greatest conservation functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in conservation programs. Through programs like the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. Learn more about wetlands at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/wetlands/>.

National Volunteer Week and the Earth Team

Tim Tushla, State Earth Team Coordinator, Huron

National Volunteer Week, April 18-24, 2004, celebrated a 30-year tradition and designated a special time to recognize and celebrate the tremendous efforts of volunteers. Nationally, the Earth Team saw another increase in FY2003 with a total of 43,834 volunteers donating over 1 million hours to conservation work. The total value of that volunteer time to the agency was over \$16.5 million. 73 percent of all NRCS offices are currently using Earth Team volunteers

Last year, 220 volunteers donated 5,177 hours to South Dakota Earth Team efforts and the mid-year report for FY2004 shows an increase in local participation. 247 volunteers totaling 1,928 hours have already been recorded compared to 103 volunteers totaling 1,900 at the same time last year.

New Earth Team Shirts

A T-shirt with a new design depicting "Volunteers Mean the World to Us" is available as a recognition item for volunteers. It has the NRCS and Earth Team logos. A limited supply of the Earth Team shirts are available from the State Office.



Volunteer Spotlights

Colette Kessler, Public Affairs Specialist, Pierre

Soil Smiles

Fifteen-year-old Tony Boyer, Sioux Falls, S.D., taught children (and their parents) that “Soil is the Basis of Life” at the South Dakota National Agriculture Day



event on March 20 at the Washington Pavilion. As an Earth Team volunteer, he staffed the “Soil Game” which is available through the Public Affairs Staff. The interactive game leads people to identify the many ways that soil has provided us with things we use in our everyday lives. For example, soil grows wheat from which we get flour to make bread. Soil grows trees to make logs for lumber to build houses. The colorful game pieces attach to the display board with velcro. Boyer is a frequent volunteer for the Sioux Falls Field Office.



Brusse Honored as Earth Team Volunteer

John Lentz, District Conservationist, Hayti

John Lentz, District Conservationist at the Hayti Field Office, presented Larry Brusse, Earth Team Volunteer, with an Earth Team Certificate of Appreciation. The award was presented at the Hamlin County Conservation District’s April Board Meeting.



Mr. Brusse is a retired engineer who lives in Hayti and enjoys being involved in conservation related activities. He has been an Earth Team Volunteer since 1993. Lentz says, “Larry is always willing to come in and help when needed. It is especially nice to have someone like Larry in a small office like ours because during the field season NRCS or CD staff may be out of the office. At times like this, Larry pitches in and mans the office and phones until we return.” Lentz continues, “Larry is also a big help when we put together newsletters or mailings and is the only one who can make the automatic folding machine work properly (must be the engineer in him).”

State Office Volunteer Event

Lori DePauw, Office Automation Assistant, Huron

State Office NRCS employees joined 27 volunteers on May 3 at the Pizza Ranch in Huron to honor the volunteers during National Volunteer Week. The theme was “Volunteers: Planting the Seeds of Tomorrow.” Fun was had by all.

Pasture and Forage Day in Lyman County

On June 21, the Lyman County Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Dakota Grassland Management and Planning Project, and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition have organized a “Pasture and Forage Day” in Lyman County. Lunch is provided free of charge sponsored by Dakota Prairie Bank in Presho. The workshop runs from 1 PM through 4 PM and covers the following topics:

- Roger Gates - Welcome and Introductions
- Justin Jessop - Ranch History, Current Ranch Goals
- Bob Fanning - Fertilizer Study
- Roger Gates - Fertilizer Precautions on Native Range
- Rod Voss - Pasture Allocation & Use
- Roger Gates - Wrap Up & Thank You

Directions: Exit 220 on I-90, then go six and ½ miles south. Look for a tan house on the east side of the road. The site will be marked. Notify Judge Jessop if you want a lunch.

Western South Dakota Grazing Tour Set for July

Justin Jessop, South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts

The South Dakota Grasslands Coalition is planning a two-day bus tour July 20-21, 2004 of several ranches in western South Dakota. The tour aims to help people learn about grazing management opportunities by visiting ranch operations with innovative grazing programs.

“This tour is unique in that it will showcase ranches and producers who have implemented management grazing strategies that have proven to be successful,” says Dan Rasmussen, a director with the SD Grassland Coalition who is assisting in coordinating the July event. He adds, “Attending the tour will provide an opportunity for others to learn from these cutting edge programs.”

Two of the featured ranches on the tour will include Blair Bros. Ranch near Sturgis, SD and Mark Kieffer’s ranch near Rapid City. Blair’s are participants in the on-going Grasslands Management and Planning Project sponsored by the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition with partnership support from the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts. Kieffer is a director on the SD Grasslands Coalition.

Through grant monies from several state and national agencies these ranches, and others across the state, have received technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement conservation practices and grazing demonstration sites for other producers to learn from educational tours such as this.

The July tour will headquarter out of the Alex Johnson Hotel in Rapid City, SD. Cost for the tour is \$50 per person with registration deadline June 15, (or when the two buses are filled). In addition to the ranch tours, an evening session will be held with a speaker and a question and answer session centered on grazing management issues.

For more information or to pre-register contact: Dan Rasmussen, HC 76, Box 20, Belvidere, SD 57521, Ph: 605-344-2251 or Justin “Judge” Jessop, 24690 299th Ave., Presho, SD 57568, Ph: 605-895-2301 or cell phone 605-280-0127.

For more information about the South Dakota Grassland Coalition and the six grazing demonstration sites within the state, visit <http://www.sdgrass.org>.

WANTED: Grassland Management Interns

Two interns are needed for the Grassland Management and Planning Project. One position will work with the Tom Scott site north of Redfield and another intern at the Mark Sip site south of Platte. If you know anybody that would be willing to do this please have them contact: Justin "Judge" Jessop, 24690 299th Ave, Presho, SD 57568. Phone: (605) 895-2301 home, (605) 280-0127 cell, e-mail: justin-jessop@sd.nacdnet.org.

News from Across South Dakota

Special Training Efforts

Richard Vaughn, NRCS Biologist, Milbank Field office, is a member of a national team designing the training course “Environmental Compliance for Programs and Projects”. Other design team members are from Oregon, Arkansas, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. The team met in San Antonio, TX in early March and will continue their efforts by various ways of communication. The course will be available to NRCS employees throughout the nation.

Partnership Efforts for Wildlife

In southeastern South Dakota, the Parker NRCS Field Office staff, Turner County Conservation District, and the South Dakota Pheasants Forever worked together and conducted a public meeting for landowners and operators to encourage wildlife habitat development on privately owned land. Topics covered included the services of conservation planning; USDA, state and local programs that are available for wildlife habitat development; as well as implementation of the conservation practices. The partnership efforts of local, state and national organizations working with producers in South Dakota have proven to be very successful. These efforts are currently being expanded by adding more Pheasants Forever personnel.

PL-566 Watershed Maintenance Efforts

South Dakota NRCS district conservationists and engineering staff are participating in annual meetings and field inspections conducted by local watershed boards. There are special efforts underway to provide timely maintenance

and repairs on PL-566 watershed structures and individual producer conservation systems. By using high-level maintenance and timely repairs, many of the conservation measures will function well beyond their life expectancy.

Emphasized Training Efforts

NRCS in South Dakota is making a concerted effort to provide the most up-to-date technical training for NRCS and partnership employees. During a two-week period in April 2004, 170 NRCS and other specialists such as SD Pheasants Forever employees were trained on the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2). NRCS agronomists provided the training. This training assists NRCS staff to provide timely and high-quality conservation planning for the Conservation Security Program, as well as current ongoing activities.

NRCS Recruits at Native American Youth Leadership Conference

Kim Brannen, Assistant State Conservationist (Operations), Huron

More than 600 Native American youth and youth leaders participated in the recent 2004 Youth Leadership Conference in Rapid City. NRCS staff provided career information to participants at the conference, which focused on developing leadership skills and living healthy lifestyles. Participants were from South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Nebraska.



Mike Stirling, American Indian/Alaskan Native Special Emphasis Program Manager, along with Marlene Elko, Human Resources Manager, and Kim Brannen, provided information to the youth and leaders on careers, educational requirements for NRCS jobs, the Earth Team, using the OPM USAJOBS website, and the Student Career Experience Program. Interest in agricultural careers expressed by some of the youth was related to grazing management, GIS and animal health.

As a result of conversations with youth leaders, some of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe 'Gear Up' program students are interested in participating in this year's Rangeland Days in Martin. The 'Gear Up' program provides mentoring and skill development for a group of students from 7th grade through 12th grade and tracks their progress. NRCS has also been newly invited to participate in the St. Francis School Career Day and next year's Youth Leadership Conference.

Soil Science Featured at Huron Middle School Career Day

Tim Tushla, State Public Affairs Specialist, Huron



NRCS State Office staff recently participated in the 10th Annual Career Day at the Huron Middle School. Soil Scientist Jim Millar and Soil Database Specialist Barb Hall showed the children a pickup equipped with a soil probe

and three different samples taken from a local field. Discussions were held on how and why the soils could be so different even though they were located very near each other. Each class had its own presentations and demonstrations from businesses throughout the community.

Resource Conservation and Development News

North Central RC&D: SD Discovery Center Receives Grant to Conduct Art/Science Programs

Submitted by Joby Timm, North Central RC&D, Pierre

North Central RC&D assisted the SD Discovery Center & Aquarium in their application for an Arts and Science Summer Program. The Discovery Center & Aquarium has been selected to receive a 2004 Arts and Rural Community Assistance Initiative Grant in the amount of \$4,000 from the Western States Arts Federation. The funds will support separate art and science workshop series for elementary students (club RAINBOW), teens (Art-ology), and adults during the summer of 2004. Through these workshops, participants will learn from local artists and will explore traditional arts significant to South Dakotans and South Dakota history, and explore the natural environment of the Missouri river through the arts. Workshops are being scheduled for the summer of 2004. They will be posted on the SD Discovery Center website, www.sd-discovery.com, by May 15. Registrations will be accepted beginning May 15.

The Ft. Pierre National Grasslands Office, the North Central Resource Conservation & Development Association, the SD Arts Council, the City of Pierre Recreation Department, Pierre/Ft. Pierre Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth Committee, and Photos to Go all supported the SD Discovery Center's application for this award. These same organizations will be instrumental in the success of the project.

Funding for the WESTAF Arts and Rural Community Initiative is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the United States Forest Service. The purpose of these grants is to help grantees demonstrate the importance and value of the arts in rural economic diversification and cultural resource conservation in forest and/or natural resource dependent areas. Through shared projects, this partnership has improved federal and state efforts to support sustainable, community-based activities.

Badlands RC&D: Tourism Conference Traveled to Martin

By Tim Huether, Bennett County Booster, reprinted with permission

Submitted by Geri Liver Mont, Administrative Assistant, Badlands RC&D

The Indians & Pioneers Tourism and Marketing Conference touched down in Martin April 23 and 24 with a wide range of ideas kicked around at the meeting. Twila Witt, Nebraska Department of Tourism, and Kerry Frei, South Dakota Department of Tourism and State Development, discussed tourism and what is available. Witt said one problem in Nebraska is that there are few rest areas where tourism brochures are placed that are not on the interstate. She said Nebraska's tourism guides are instructed to try to get tourists off the interstate, by trying to entice them to the more rural roads.

Frei said South Dakota has a farmer and rancher workshop, designed to give them information on starting a business in addition to their regular ag operation. Some of the information provided is regarding loan programs, historic preservation, insurance, and more. She said the next farmer and rancher workshop is scheduled during Dakota Fest in Mitchell at the end of July. She said this is a program a lot of farmers and ranchers are very interested in.



Mike Kesselring, far right corner, speaks to the group during Round Table Discussion on wildlife concerning fee hunting and discussion concerning the laws, area business and how it builds the economy. Photo by Geri Livermont

Frei said they have printed two Native American guides, one with information on tribes and one on Indian art which is very popular. Jeanine Woodward of White River asked if we sometimes under price our services. "A lot of times that's so true," Frei responded. "Our prices are much cheaper than the east and west coast." Witt said the outside person is used to paying higher prices, especially on vacation. Frei and Witt both said that pricing too low sometimes may give the impression of low quality to these tourists.

Tim Donahue an experienced marketing leader talked about the elements of marketing your business from start to running smoothly. Donahue talked about looking at the market, seeing what the needs are, attitudes, which are the customers and where they are. He discussed the product and service you offer, the place, promotion of your product or service and pricing.

Hospitality discussion was led by Larry and Betty Swick and family. Their group discussion covered ideas visitors to our area can explore. The importance of all employees knowing what sites and adventures are available in your home area to visit and enjoy were highly stressed, as well as knowing what area businesses and tourism sites have to offer. This knowledge among your employees will encourage people to not only visit your business establishment, but keep them in the area longer, knowing that there are more exciting things to see and do. FAM tours with other businesses in your area such as what Badlands RC&D offers were highly recommended for folks to attend.

Federal and State Parks (Historic and Cultural Tourism) was led by Dr. Ruthann Knudson, superintendent of Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in Sioux County, Nebraska.

A lively art discussion was led by Mark St. Pierre, Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce. Mark encouraged people to know the history of the product they sell. Knowing the story behind the product is what draws the attention of the customer, making the purchase dear to the heart.

Wildlife-Discussion on fee hunting opened the round table discussion concerning the laws, area business and how it builds the economy. This discussion was led by Mike Kesselring of High Plains Homestead in Northwest Nebraska, and Matt Sprenger with Lacreek National Refuge.

On Friday evening, Claudette Sabor presented a Hoop production sponsored in part by the W. H. Kellogg Foundation called "Unci" which is Lakota for Grandma. This endearing takes place on the afternoon preceding a naming ceremony and giveaway. As Grandma sorts through the items she has chosen for the give-away, she reminisces about her life. She recalls her days as a schoolgirl and the difficulty she had learning English. She remembers fondly her courtship and marriage during the depression. She shares her plans for a demonstration at the BIA offices with the audience. Finally, she honors the memory of the son she lost in Korea, and the grandson that survived Vietnam. It is her strength of spirit that allows this Grandma to be funny and touching by turns.

On Saturday, Tom Dunn with Black Hills State gave a presentation on marketing trends. Dunn explained the impact that tourism has on our economy, as well as the importance of businesses being diverse in what they offer the consumer.

Conference participants requested that the next tourism conference be held in February 2005 to provide for early preparation of next year's tourism. Badlands RC&D will be publicizing the date soon for early preparation!

The next FAM Tour (Familiarization Tour) to know your neighboring businesses and attractions will be held October 1 & 2, 2004. Badlands RC&D is the contact to receive more information on this lively adventure tour at (605) 685-6629.

Civil Rights *Fast Fact* · Elephants, Donkeys and Me...Where's the Line?

Wilmer Brandt, State Administrative Officer, Liaison to the Civil Rights Committee, Huron

With 2004 being an election year, the line between what is "ok" and what "crosses the line" can be confusing. The following is a Quick Reference Chart on political activities as they apply to all NRCS employees in South Dakota.

OFF DUTY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES	ALLOWABLE - YES/NO
RUNNING FOR/SERVING PUBLIC OFFICE	
In a Non-Partisan Election	Yes
In a Partisan Election (Generally)	NO
Where Permitted by OPM as an Independent	Yes
Retain Office Won Prior to Federal Appointment	Yes
FUNDRAISING	
Attend a Fundraiser	Yes

Contribute to a Candidate or Party	Yes
Give a Political Speech (No Solicitation Involved)	Yes
Host, Invite Others to, or Sponsor a Fundraiser	NO
Solicit, Accept, Receive Contributions (Generally)	NO
In a Non-Partisan Campaign	Yes
For Labor Organization Political Action Committee*	Yes
As an Independent Candidate (locality rules)**	Yes
Use/Allow Use of Official Title in Invitations	NO
POLITICAL PARTY/CLUB INVOLVEMENT	
Attending as Member of General Public	Yes
Joining/Voting on Issues	Yes
Holding Office	Yes
Influencing Members on Partisan Issues	Yes
Precinct/Ward Committee Member	Yes
Act as Accredited Checker, Watcher, Challenger, etc.	Yes
Serve as Officer of a Political Action Committee	Yes
Be Employed or Paid by a Political Committee	Yes
PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL EVENTS	
As a Member of the General Public	
Attending Rallies & Meetings	Yes
Vote on Question Presented	Yes
As a Party Member	
Organize, Manage, Act in Rallies & Meetings	Yes
Play Prominent Role in Primaries, Caucuses, Conventions, etc.	Yes
Serve as Delegate, Alternate, or Proxy at Party Conventions	Yes
Address Rallies & Meetings on Partisan Matters	Yes
Organize/Participate in Political Parade	Yes
Engage in Activities Using a Government Vehicle	NO
CAMPAIGN DUTIES	
Organize, Manage, Serve as Officer of Campaign	Yes
Make Partisan Campaign Speeches (No Solicitation)	Yes
Endorse a Candidate/Oppose a Candidate Publicly or Through	
A Paid Advertisement	Yes
Be Employed or Paid by a Campaign	Yes
VOLUNTEERING	
Distribute Literature, Badges, Buttons, etc.	Yes
Register & Vote Yourself	Yes
Registered Voter in a Non-Partisan Effort or for a Party	Yes
Drive Voters to Polls – Non-Partisan or Partisan Effort	Yes
Circulating a Nominating Petition & Signing a Nominating Petition	Yes
Serve as Non-Partisan Election Officer	Yes
Act for Party at the Polls	Yes
Recruit Others to Work on a Campaign	Yes
POLITICAL EXPRESSION	
Making Partisan Campaign Speeches (No Solicitation)	Yes
Displaying Partisan Buttons or Signs (Not at Work)	Yes
Expressing One's Personal Opinion Publicly on Issues & Candidates	Yes

* Only to/from organization members if not subordinates. ** May not solicit, only may accept and receive

ON DUTY POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON FEDERAL PREMISES, IN UNIFORM, OR ON OFFICIAL TIME

Taking an Active Part in/Managing Campaigns or Political Activities	NO
Endorse Candidates Publicly in Official Capacity	NO
Engage in Mixed (Official/Political) Travel	NO
Hold Occasional Campaign Meetings in Office	NO
Attend Political Events on Official Time	NO
Write Political Speeches on Official Time	NO
Engage in Political Activities Using Government Vehicle	NO
Be Employed By a Campaign	NO

Federal Women's Program News

National Women's Health Week May 9 thru 15

Mary Lou Lacey, Soil Conservationist, and FWP Member, Sioux Falls

The goal of National Women's Health Week is to encourage women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. The week runs from May 9-15, 2004, and kicks off with National Women's Check-Up Day on May 10, to encourage women to schedule an appointment with their doctor or other health care provider for an annual check-up and health screenings. Gaining support from as many women and groups as possible is crucial to the success of the week.

What is National Women's Health Week?

National Women's Health Week is a national effort by an alliance of government organizations to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of incorporating simple, preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life. It encourages awareness about key health issues among all women, including women with disabilities, and especially African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinas, and American Indian/Alaska Native women, since research has shown there are significant health disparities among these groups compared to white women.

When is National Women's Health Week?

We will celebrate the 5th Annual National Women's Health Week May 9-15, 2004. The week will start on Mother's Day and end on the following Saturday, a time when there is much attention already being focused on women.

Where is National Women's Health Week?

Across America—in communities, neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, the Internet, job sites, places of worship, recreation centers, and wherever people choose to celebrate the role of good health practices in the lives of women.

Who Participates in National Women's Health Week?

National women's groups, local and national health organizations, businesses, social service agencies, and others will participate in a national education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the week and its goals. In short, it will include anyone who wants to help make women's health a top priority. Founding partners of National Women's Health Week hope that each year it is celebrated, more groups will join in a groundswell of activity that will lead to healthier women and a healthier America.

Why celebrate National Women's Health Week?

When women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant. But women need to be able to choose the most effective steps for their individual lifestyles and circumstances. They need to be informed and take responsible actions to improve their own health. For example, heart disease is the number one killer among women, but cancer ranks first among Asian/Pacific Islander women. When it comes to lung cancer, however, white women have the highest mortality rate, while African American women have the highest mortality rate from heart disease. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women, but it occurs at a higher rate among African American and Latina women. These differences show the importance of taking appropriate health actions based on individual backgrounds and risk factors.

For more information about National Women's Health Week activities, visit the National Women's Health Week Web site at www.4woman.gov/whw or call 1-800-994-WOMAN (9662), or TTY: (888) 220- 5446.

State Scholarship Offers High School Seniors a New Opportunity

Editor's Note: Please share this information with youth in your area who might be interested in a natural resources career.

Beginning today, applications are available at high schools and colleges for the state's new South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship. State lawmakers this year funded the program, which awards a \$5,000 scholarship over four years to high school graduates from South Dakota who complete a challenging high school curriculum and maintain certain academic standards. High school seniors graduating this spring become the first students eligible for the scholarship.

"This is a great day for South Dakota," said Gov. Mike Rounds. "This guaranteed scholarship offers significant financial incentives to students who take a set of demanding courses in high school and stay in state for college. If we keep our talented young people in South Dakota, it can only enhance long-term economic development," Rounds said.

To qualify in high school, students must take four years of English, four years of algebra or higher mathematics, four years of science, three years of social studies, two years of the same foreign language, and a half-year each of computer science and fine arts. Their final grade must be no lower than a C (2.0 on 4.0 scale) in any of those courses and have a cumulative high school grade point average of at least 3.0.

Eligibility is based on an application submitted to the South Dakota postsecondary institution by the student, along with an official high school transcript and verification of a 24 or higher ACT score. The scholarship may be used at any South Dakota university, college, or technical school accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

“The message to high school students is—prepare for postsecondary education by taking the right courses and you will be rewarded. In turn, the state is rewarded when those students stay in South Dakota to attend college and hopefully begin their careers,” said Harvey C. Jewett, President of the South Dakota Board of Regents, which will administer the state scholarship program. “We expect the state’s investment in these scholarships to pay long-term dividends.”

Information and applications are available from South Dakota high schools and South Dakota postsecondary institutions. Or go to the Board of Regents’ Web site at www.sdbor.edu and click on the link to “South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship.”

Federal Government Faces Major Crisis in Hispanic Employment

National Hispanic Coalition to Demand Results in Employment and Contracting

From the Hispanic Emphasis Program Listserv

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A broad coalition of Hispanic leaders is calling on the White House and Congress to hire, promote and contract with more Hispanics. According to recent studies, Hispanics are the only underrepresented ethnic group in the government workforce accounting for only 7 percent of federal employees, while representing 13.1 percent of the civilian workforce. "Action needs to be taken now," says Gil Sandate, Vice-President of the National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE). Latinos comprise only 3.3 percent of federal senior executives, the government's decision making positions.

The coalition is led by the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, America's premier network of Hispanic leaders. It includes a growing partnership among Hispanic business leaders, professional advocacy and labor groups, joined in a common commitment to dramatically increase the number of Hispanics in federal services.

Wisdom of the Elders Celebrates Nationwide New Radio Series

(Portland, Oregon) Wisdom of the Elders - the new public radio program series from Native America - is celebrating a nationwide launch. The new program series, “Wisdom of the Elders,” airs nationwide on NPR (National Public Radio) and AIROS (American Indian Radio) on satellite stations in May. Learn more about the program series at www.wisdomoftheelders.org.

The audio and transcripts, complete with photos and maps, for Program One: “The Sacred Earth” is already available to the public. One new program will be added weekly for eight weeks from early May through late June 2004.

The purpose of these programs is to strengthen traditional cultural values among current and future generations of Native Americans. WOTE also acknowledges the need for reconciliation between Indian and non-Indian. A second goal for this series is to increase the national public radio listener's knowledge of and appreciation for Native American oral history, art, story and song. Funding for the series has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail at National Park Service, and Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Grand Ronde, Oregon.

WOTE was founded in 1992 by the late Martin High Bear, Lakota medicine man and spiritual leader, and Rose High Bear, Deg Hit'an Dine (Alaskan Athabascan). This series is the first in several series of eight one-hour radio programs produced by WOTE, who, with their mission of cultural preservation, education and race reconciliation, records and preserves indigenous oral history and cultural arts from exemplary indigenous elders, Tribal historians, storytellers and song carriers. Other projects of this non-profit organization include documentary and publishing projects and cultural arts events. FOR MORE INFORMATION: Rose High Bear, Wisdom of the Elders, Inc., 5518 SE Flavel Dr., Portland, OR 97206 or wote@pcez.com or Anne Morin, 790 SE Webber St. #304, Portland, OR 97202 at (503) 234 3878 or rave_n_howl@yahoo.com.

News from the Field

Soil Critters Info Leads to Spring Planting

Deron Ruesch, District Conservationist, Vermillion Field Office, presented three sessions to local children recently. “We talked a little bit on what soil looks like and what kind of bugs, worms, and other creatures are in soil.” The kids made “Soil Profile” pudding cups using the “Better Soil Recipe” from the CTIC website. After making snacks, the kids went through the worm tunnel. The children received little zip lock bags with a pinch of Black-Eyed Susan wildflower seed. With their parent’s permission, they could plant the seed in their soil.



Earth Day at Citibank

Citibank partnered with the Minnehaha Conservation District to provide thousands of their employees with a tree in honor of Earth Day 2004. Employees learned about the NRCS Backyard Conservation tips for a healthier backyard while the Family Center children learned about soil and butterflies and made a Farm Charm.



Painting with Soil



The 2004 Soil Planners are inspiring artists across South Dakota. The Planner features the soil paintings of Jan Lang based on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Artists, teachers and students are interested in the medium and asking questions ranging from “Where can I get soil?” to “What does soil have to do with the Lewis and Clark expedition? The answer to this question is EVERYTHING! The purpose of the expedition was to determine if the land was a garden or a desert. Would the natural resources provide food and fiber for a young, growing nation?”

At their Lewis and Clark all school event, Tri-Valley School District students and teachers learned about the Missouri River and the soils referred to by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Students painted a scene on a greeting card with soil.



Cheyenne Elementary School students in rural Stanley County learned about “Soil - the Basis of Life” through an interactive game and soil painting. The Hughes/Stanley County Conservation Districts and local NRCS personnel led the lesson.



Georgia Morris Middle School 8th grade students in Pierre studied petroglyphs (cave drawings) and used soil paints to complete their project.

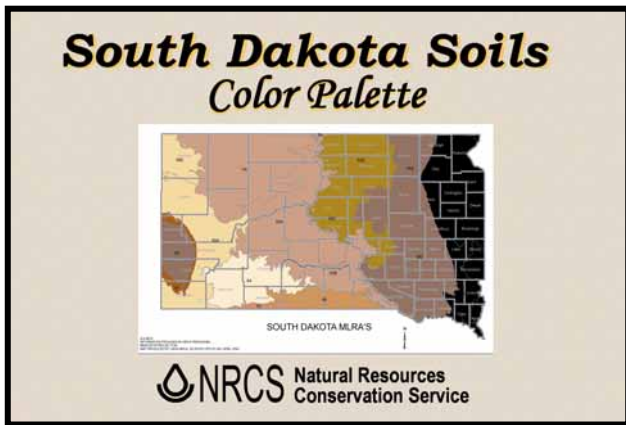




Pierre's McKinley School 4th and 5th graders studied Lewis and Clark and natural resources in their South Dakota history unit. Then, they painted landscape scenes with soil paint.



The introduction to the soil painting art activities is a science lesson. The Houdek Soil Quickscreen and the map graphic (shown below) help convey



general soil characteristics, such as depth of topsoil, and some colors of South Dakota soils.

Also discussed are South Dakota topography and agricultural practices as related to soil productivity.

The Houdek Soil Quickscreen products are available through the Public Affairs Staff. The image on the pop-up screen is a life size photograph of a soil profile.



Quickscreen Side view.

New Information on the Web

Colette Kessler, Public Affairs Specialist, Pierre

- **Conservation Security Program** Information - The national office has recently placed information about the Conservation Security Program on the My.NRCS website. Employees can find an overview, PowerPoint presentation, fact sheets, and other information under the "Programs" tab.
- An interagency group of public and private organizations have published: "[Rural Living: a Guide for South Dakota Rural Homeowners](#)." This publication is designed to help people make an educated and informed decision before purchasing a rural home site and help people manage the property after they move in. Everyone is part of a watershed. Individual actions often affect others. The things people do can either improve or degrade the health of our natural resources. The information included in this publication is intended to create an awareness of environmental concerns associated with living on a rural development or a small acreage, and guide the reader to sources of additional information and assistance. The document is hosted on the web by the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts.

- California NRCS has just posted two new publications on the California NRCS website. <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/> The publications are **Living in the Foothills** and **Native Uses of Native Plants**.
- **New Getting In Step Watershed Outreach Guides Available** - EPA announces a set of valuable new resources designed to assist local governments, watershed groups, watershed management agencies, and others to plan and conduct effective watershed outreach campaigns: “Getting in Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns” (Publication # EPA 841-B-03-002), and “Getting in Step: A Video Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns” (Publication # EPA 841-V-03-001)

These two companion guides offer advice on how to effectively raise citizen awareness of non-point source pollution and to motivate individual behavior change to develop more water-friendly habits and practices that will lead to cleaner waters for your community and our nation. The 100-page book, plus appendices, expands upon a 1998 publication by the Council of State Governments and includes new information from the growing field of community-based social marketing. The book is intended as a reference that pulls together principles, techniques, and information for effective watershed outreach into a single, user-friendly source. The 35-minute video reinforces the six-step process outlined in the book, and showcases four successful outreach programs from around the United States. For a free copy of this guide and its companion video, please contact the National Service Center for Environmental Publications via phone at 1-800-490-9198 (from outside the U.S., call 1-513-489-8190) or via the web at www.epa.gov/ncepihom. The book is also available as a PDF download at <http://www.epa.gov/nps/outreach.html>.

- **USDA Economic Research Service STATE FACT SHEETS** - The ERS State Fact Sheets contain frequently requested data for each state and for the total United States. These include current data on population, per-capita income, earnings per job, poverty rates, employment, unemployment, farm and farm-related jobs, farm characteristics, farm financial characteristics, top agricultural commodities, top export commodities, and the top counties in agricultural sales. The ERS State Fact Sheets have been updated with more recent data on Farm and Farm Related Employment. In addition, the Population, Income, and Employment data now reflect the June 2003 metro and nonmetro definitions. (Released Friday, April 2, 2004) <http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/>

FARM AND FARM-RELATED EMPLOYMENT - Estimates of farm and farm-related employment by State, farm production region, and farm resource region provide valuable information about the importance of agriculture in various geographic areas of the country. Farm and farm-related industries, such as farm production, processing and marketing of agricultural goods, and agricultural wholesale and retail trade, are generally identified as industries having 50 percent or more of their national workforce employed in providing goods and services necessary to satisfy the final demand for agricultural products. The estimates are derived by combining farm employment data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis with an enhanced file of the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns.

Farming and its related industries provided 25.8 million jobs, or about 15.6 percent of total U.S. employment in 2000, the latest year for which detailed industry-level data is available. More than one-quarter of farm and farm-related employment came from farm production and its closely related industries, which provide agricultural services and inputs, and process and market agricultural goods. Farm production employment, which includes farm proprietors and hired farm workers, provided 3.1 million jobs. Agricultural services, forestry, and fishing employed 479,000 workers. Agricultural input industries, including farm machinery and equipment manufacturing, provided over 477,000 jobs. Agricultural processing and marketing industries, which prepare agricultural products after they leave the farm, contributed more than 2.8 million jobs. (Released Friday, April 2, 2004) <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmandRelatedEmployment/>

Horizontal lines and Digital Cameras

Tim Tushla, State Public Affairs Specialist, Huron

For some reason, people seem to have a hard time holding the camera level when using the LCD monitors on their digital cameras. The result can be cockeyed sunsets, lopsided landscapes and tilted towers.

Part of the problem is the camera's optics introduce distortion when trying to fit a broad panorama on a tiny, two-inch screen. Trees may be standing straight when you look at them with the naked eye, but they seem to be bowing inward on the LCD screen.

First of all, be aware that it's important to capture your images as level as possible. Look for nature's horizontal lines and use them as guides. Sometimes you can use the line where the sky meets the water, other times you can use a strip of land as your level. In this case, the field border was used to align the composition - not the horizon or crop rows.

If you're having difficulty framing the scene to your liking, then take your best shot at a straight picture, reposition the camera slightly, take another picture and then maybe one more with another adjustment. Chances are very good that one of the images will "feel right" when you review them on the computer.



Macro mode

Even the simplest object takes on new fascination in macro mode. And the best part is that it's so easy to do with digital cameras.

These days, you might not want to lie on your belly in the field, but if you use the close up mode on your digital camera and begin to explore your world in finer detail, you'll be able to get fresh new images unlike anything you've ever shot before.

Just look for the close up or macro mode icon, which is usually a flower symbol, turn it on and get as close to an object as your camera will allow. Once you've found something you like, hold the shutter button down halfway to allow the camera to focus. When the confirmation light gives you the go ahead, press the shutter down the rest of the way to record the image.

Keep in mind that you have very shallow depth of field when using the close up mode, so focus on the part of the subject that's most important and let the rest of the image go soft.



Calendar

NRCS South Dakota has an online schedule to coordinate training and meetings. Visit: <http://www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/TrainingSchedule.html>

May – **National Asian American Pacific Islander Awareness Month**

May – **National Wetlands Month**

June 1, 2004 - **Susan B. Anthony Award nominations** due to Vicki Supler or Karen Cameron-Howell, Co-FWP Managers, at the Huron State Office or Brookings Field Support Office.

June - Agriculture in the Classroom **Summer 2004 Teacher Institutes** focusing on making agriculture and natural resources fun for kids. Two graduate credit workshops with hands on activities. Check web site for schedule and details: <http://www.sdagclassroom.org>.

June 6-9 – **Ag Lenders' Range Camp**, Haakon County. Contact: Haakon County Conservation District.

June 21-24 - **National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPHNRCSE) Conference** in conjunction with the Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPMs) Conference 12th Annual Training Conference in Sacramento, California.

June 21-24, 2004 - **5th Annual National CREP Forum**, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA Forum registration and hotel contact information is located on the Internet at www.crepforum.state.pa.us.

July 12-16 - **American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association of NRCS Employees 7th Annual Training Conference.** Hosted by Oneida Indian Nation Homelands in Verona, New York.

July 24-28 - **Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference,** St. Paul, Minnesota. Contact: <http://www.swcs.org/> or 1-800-THE SOIL.

July 26-29 - **National Asian Pacific Islander Organization NRCS Employees 6th Annual Training Conference.** St. Paul, Minnesota.

August 10 – **Civil Rights Committee Meeting,** Pierre.

August 10-15 – **Sioux Empire Fair,** Sioux Falls.

August 11-13 – **South Dakota NRCS All Employee’s Meeting.** Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, South Dakota. Contact: Vicki Supler at vicki.supler@sd.usda.gov or Kathy Irving at kathy.irving@sd.usda.gov.

August 25 - **Lewis and Clark Commemoration at Spirit Mound.** Contact: Deron Ruesch at deron.ruesch@sd.usda.gov.

August 27-29 - **Rosebud Sioux Tribe Fair and Pow Wow,** Rosebud.

September 4 – **Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Fair and Pow Wow,** Eagle Butte.

September 4-12 – **South Dakota Stat Fair,** Huron.

September 18 – “**Rural Women in America - Women Helping Women**” Conference at Bowman, ND. Contact: Linda Matthews at linda-mathews@sd.nacdn.org.

October 23 - **Make A Difference Day** is the most encompassing national day of helping others -- a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. For more information visit <http://www.makeadifferenceday.com>

November 20 - **National Family Volunteer Day** is designed to showcase the benefits of families working together, to introduce community service and encourage those who haven't yet made the commitment to volunteer as a family. Volunteering as a family provides quality time, strengthens communication, and provides opportunities for family members to be role models, while making significant contributions to their communities. For more information, visit <http://www.pointsoflight.org/familymatters.org>.

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