



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

South Dakota

OVERVIEW

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program in South Dakota uses a “grass roots” philosophy to develop partnerships and programs that simultaneously promote wildlife conservation and profitable agriculture.

The South Dakota PFW Program has utilized this philosophy to voluntarily restore, enhance, and establish tens of thousands of acres of grassland and wetland habitats with landowners throughout the state. A common thread through every South Dakota PFW project is the ability to be flexible and responsive to accommodate the site-specific needs and concerns of landowners. Since 1987, this approach has resulted in approximately 7,000 projects with landowners and the number of new landowner requests for assistance continues to grow.

PRIORITIES



The South Dakota PFW Program works with a variety of partners to implement high priority wetland and grassland conservation projects. Partnerships with livestock owners to conserve grasslands are particularly important. This priority scheme is consistent with and fulfills the implementation priorities of a variety of established conservation plans including the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Implementation Plan, and Partners in Flight.

LONG-TERM GOALS

To promote a sustainable future for rural communities, landowners and wildlife alike by restoring, enhancing, and conserving high priority wetland and grassland habitats.

Five-Year Goals:

- Restore 1,100 wetland acres
- Enhance 130,000 grassland acres
- Restore 5,400 grassland acres
- New partnerships with 1,000 landowners

ACTIVITIES

The four most common conservation practices implemented by the South Dakota PFW Program:

1. WETLAND RESTORATION

Primarily consists of closing drainage ditches with earthen plugs.

2. GRASSLAND ENHANCEMENT

Grassland enhancement via managed grazing systems are predominately implemented in native grassland tracts containing wetlands. Four cell, twice-over grazing systems are one of the more common grazing configurations. Grazing units are split into four pastures and each pasture is grazed twice through the course of the grazing season.

3. GRASSLAND RESTORATION

Primarily involves seeding of cropland back to a mixture of native grasses and forbs. Typically, 10 to 15 species of native grasses and forbs are used in the seed mix. Once the grassland is fully restored, these sites are often utilized as pasture.

4. RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT

Projects typically involve fencing of streams or riparian areas to exclude livestock during key portions of the growing season. Alternative livestock watering sources such as pipelines, tanks and solar panels are often installed in conjunction with the riparian exclusions.

HABITATS



A defining feature of South Dakota’s landscape is the unique mix of native grasslands and wetlands.

PRAIRIE POTHOLE REGION (PPR), eastern South Dakota:

Contains over 900,000 unique wetlands and over 5 million acres of native prairie. These wetlands host a wide variety of breeding birds including waterfowl. Much of eastern South Dakota hosts over 20 breeding duck pairs per square mile and certain areas host over 100 breeding duck pairs per square mile.

PRAIRIE COTEAU, northeast portion of South Dakota’s PPR:

Contains some of the largest remaining tracts of northern tallgrass prairie in the nation.

MISSOURI COTEAU, western portion of the South Dakota PPR:

Hosts some of the highest breeding duck densities in all of North America. Characterized by large tracts of mixed and shortgrass native prairie that contain many wetland and riparian features. A variety of peer-reviewed literature documented this area as extremely productive for many breeding bird populations.

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

The primary conservation strategy of the South Dakota PFW Program is to work with partner groups and landowners to foster actions that jointly further landscape conservation and profitable agriculture. The cornerstone of this philosophy is based on locally-led conservation.

Consistent with this philosophy, the South Dakota PFW Program tailors projects to facilitate both natural resource conservation and profitable agriculture. For example, wetland projects often provide waterfowl production, watershed restoration, and livestock water benefits, all on the same site. Managed grazing systems help to simultaneously enhance bird production, native prairie health and livestock performance. Furthermore, native grassland restorations provide immediate benefits to ground nesting birds and are also valued by ranchers as grazing land. With the vast majority of South Dakota's land in private ownership, these types of "win-win" projects are essential to an effective ecosystem conservation effort.

PARTNERS

- Landowners on approximately 7,000 individual projects
- More than 45 County-level Conservation Districts
- South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts
- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
- Pheasants Forever
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Yankton Sioux Tribe
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate
- Ducks Unlimited
- East Dakota Water Development District
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture
- South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA- Farm Service Agency
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The Conservation Fund
- South Dakota Izaak Walton League
- Belle Fourche Watershed Restoration Partnership

CONTACTS

Kurt Forman, State Coordinator

P.O. Box 247, Suite 520-B
3rd Avenue North |
Brookings, SD 57006
(605) 697-2500 | kurt_forman@fws.gov

Boyd Schulz, Assistant State Coordinator

(same address as Kurt Forman, above)
(605) 697-2500
boyd_schulz@fws.gov

Jen Briggs, Private Lands Biologist

Madison Wetland Management District
P.O. Box 48
Madison, SD 57042
(605) 256-2974
jennifer_briggs@fws.gov

Jesse Lisburg, Private Lands Biologist

420 South Garfield Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 224-8693 ext. 237
jesse_lisburg@fws.gov

Joe Nichols, Private Lands Biologist

D.C. Booth Historic
National Fish Hatchery
423 Hatchery Circle
Spearfish, SD 57783
(605) 642-7730 ext. 212
joe_nichols@fws.gov

Al Olson, Private Lands Biologist

Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, SD 57433
(605) 885-6284 ext. 222
allen_olson@fws.gov

Chuck Pyle, Private Lands Biologist

Huron Wetland Management District
200 4th Street, SW
Huron, SD 57350
(605) 352-5894 ext. 113
chuck_pyle@fws.gov

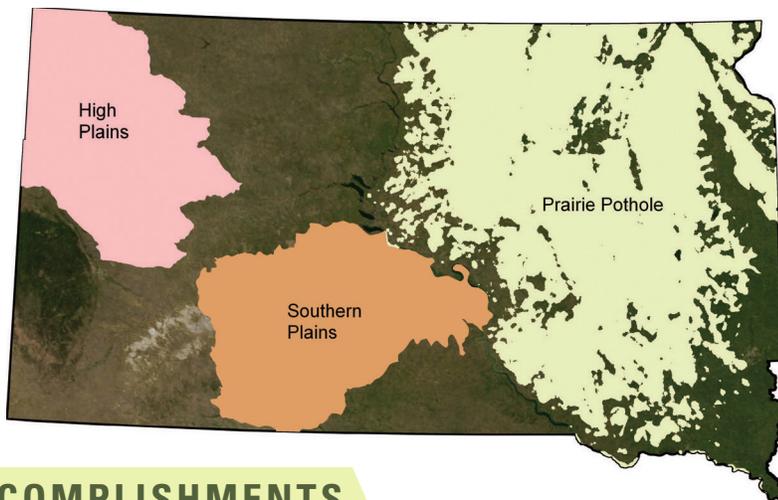
Steve Spawn, Private Lands Biologist

Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge
38672 291st Street
Lake Andes, SD 57356
605-487-7603
steve_spawn@fws.gov

Tom Wickstrom, Private Lands Biologist

Waubay National Wildlife Refuge
44401 134A Street
Waubay, SD 57273
(605) 947-4521
thomas_wickstrom@fws.gov

FOCUS AREAS



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed approximately 7,000 projects with private landowners throughout the state.

FY 2015 Habitat Accomplishments (Restored, established or enhanced)

53,588 upland acres
2,531 wetland acres

FY 1987-2015 Cumulative Habitat Accomplishments

(Restored, established or enhanced)
838,000 grassland and wetland acres