



JULY-SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS BELOW!

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SAGE GROUSE LEK SURVEYS

Read about how SDGFP surveys the Greater Sage Grouse populations to help with conservation on this important species P. 02

HABITAT RENOVATION

Learn about how Phelps Pond is becoming a new fishing spot for bass and bluegill with the help of SDGFP. P. 04

PHEASANTS FOREVER

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CONSERVATION ISSUE

This newsletter has conservation topics as the main focus and highlights ways our biologists and partners are working for fish and wildlife. While it's great to get out and enjoy our natural resources, it's also important to know what it takes to make those opportunities possible. As sportsmen and women, understanding the natural world can help us connect to it with more appreciation and give it greater value.





SAGE GROUSE LEK SURVEYS

by Mandy Pearson (Resource Biologist)

Greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) are the largest North American grouse species. Though they historically inhabited much of Western South Dakota's sage steppe landscapes, greater sage-grouse populations now only occupy portions of Butte and Harding counties. Due largely to habitat alteration and fragmentation, South Dakota greater sage-grouse numbers have declined from approximately 600 males in 2006, to less than 200 in 2021. This is consistent with national declines.

Each year as winter ends and spring begins male greater sage-grouse congregate in breeding grounds known as leks to show off their dancing skills in the hopes to mate with an onlooking female. Males will suck in as much as a gallon of air and push it out through air sacks on their chest, projecting a loud water-droplet-like sound ("bloop").

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) has been conducting lek surveys since 1971 where surveyors observe the birds from afar, counting both males and females. SDGFP relies on these surveys to estimate population size.

Greater sage-grouse have been intermittently hunted in South Dakota since 1955, though the season has been closed since 2013. Consideration of reopening a hunting season is reliant on at least 300 males counted during lek surveys for two consecutive years. For more information, visit the SDGFP website to find the "South Dakota Greater Sage-Grouse Action Plan".

Greater Sage Grouse photo credit to Dennie and Mary Ann Mann



SUMMER FISHING RODS ON A BUDGET

by Scott Olson

With the amount of gear available in stores and online, one may think you won't catch fish without the very best fishing gear and tackle. However, this is not the case! Depending on the application, you can catch just as many fish with a \$20 combo as you can with a \$100+ combo!

Now, I would suggest shooting for a better-quality rod and reel combo in the neighborhood of \$50-\$60. Putting in this investment will help it last many years and may be more useful in various applications. That being said, the average hook and bobber fisherman or woman won't need to break the bank to enjoy fishing from a kayak, boat, or shore.

When looking for a rod, a 6' to 6'6", medium-light rod will generally be a good, all-around option to use for most fish species in the state. Whether you're going for panfish, trout, or even walleye, a medium-light power rod will suffice.

As far as brands, it's really up to the user and what feels good in your hands. Store name rod brands, like Scheels or Cabela's/Bass Pro, are made at the same places as higher end models, but are sold at a more affordable price. Giving them a look may help to select that perfect, budget-friendly and versatile combo for a summer of great fishing.



SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR PRACTICES

by *Kate Shelton (Intern)*

Sustainability and outdoor recreation are intricately linked. As we look forward to beautiful summer days in the Black Hills, it is important to remember how to recreate with minimal impact. Here are some reminders and tips for leaving no trace on your upcoming outdoor adventures!

1. Plan ahead and prepare one-pot meals to minimize weight, prep time and garbage.
2. Stay on trails whenever possible to protect natural areas. Going off trail causes trampling of vegetation and disruption of habitats.
3. Pack it in, pack it out! This includes organic waste like banana peels which take up to two years to decompose. Leaving trash behind negatively impacts wildlife and makes trails less desirable for others.
4. Help keep our waters clean by washing yourself and disposing of used dishwater at least 200 feet away from streams and lakes.
5. Leave natural spaces as you found them. Know the regulations. It may be illegal to remove rocks, antler sheds or other artifacts.
6. Fires are great to have during camping trips but can get out of hand quickly if not handled safely. Check fire regulations and bans before you begin your trip and make sure your fire is completely out before you leave an area.
7. Critters may be cute, but they aren't pets. Always view wildlife from a safe distance and practice quiet observation.

Happy trails!

Game, Fish
& Parks



MASTER NATURALIST

by *Cheyenne Parke*

Ever wonder what the South Dakota Master Naturalist program is? It's a volunteer program for adults interested in learning about nature and how to become a naturalist. It is a great group of adults with similar interests who share their knowledge with others through education outreach and service. This 12-week training program covers a wide range of nature related topics and ologies including ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology and many more.

The Master Naturalist Program also has amazing field trips organized by professionals with years of experience in their field. Once you have become a master naturalist, many opportunities become available such as volunteering to teach classes at parks, planting pollinator gardens, contributing to citizen science projects or even assisting biologists with field surveys.

For more information on the Master Naturalist Program contact the organization at admin@sdmasternaturalist.org.





HABITAT RENOVATION SUCCESS STORY

by Kris Cudmore (*Aquatic Habitat Biologist*)

Phelps pond is a small urban fishery located within the city of Box Elder off Villa drive. The pond is a small acreage catchment basin with a maximum depth of 10 feet. The renovation is a cost share project between the city and SDGFP using habitat stamp dollars. The ponds access suffered from an overgrowth of cattails and had only a few small windows between the cattails to fish from.

A longarm excavator was used to remove cattails from approximately 70% of the shoreline leaving the remaining cattails for cover for the many birds and fish that currently inhabit the pond. In addition, the remaining vegetation will also serve to slow any runoff and aid in sedimentation reduction.

A fishing pier will also be added for additional access and will be installed late May 2023. The city of Box Elder will maintain the shoreline and fishing pier and SDGFP will stock bass and bluegill late summer 2023 to complete the renovation. This pond is open to all legal means of fishing and will be a great addition to the Box elder community.



INTERN RECRUITMENT

by Lacy Elrod

The Game, Fish and Parks Outdoor Campus would not be as successful without the assistance of our interns.

Our internship program provides opportunities for students to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of teaching outdoor education, hunting, fishing, and shooting sports through pre-professional work experiences. Every semester the Outdoor Campus looks for energetic individuals who are passionate about the outdoors to come share and gain valuable experience.

To be eligible for an internship with the Outdoor Campus or Game, Fish, and Parks in general, students must: Attend an accredited college, university, or vocational-technical program. This includes students in undergraduate and graduate programs. Applicants must be a current part time or full-time student (minimum of 6 credit hours) in upcoming semester or in the immediately preceding semester. By the start of the internship students should have completed one year (9 months) of their chosen program. If you know someone looking for a great way to further their experience, have a great time fishing, hunting, and teaching outdoor education, earn a nice wage, and get their foot in the door with Game, Fish and Parks, then take a look at internship opportunities at the Outdoor Campus! Fall internship opportunities will be posted soon!

WILD GAME SPAGHETTI

by *Kat Moore (Volunteer)*

Spaghetti (makes 8 servings)

2 lbs ground meat
1 14oz can crushed/petite diced tomatoes
1 14oz can tomato sauce
1 lb pot sized spaghetti noodles
1 package frozen seasoning blend (or equal parts onion, bell pepper, and celery)
Italian seasoning
Garlic
Beef bouillon or beef broth
Salt and pepper to taste
Crushed red pepper (optional)
Worcestershire

Steps:

1. Brown meat, add in seasoning blend. Cook until translucent. Season to taste with garlic, salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning.

2. Once meat is browned, put the noodles on top of the meat, then cover with tomatoes and sauce. Rinse cans with water (just enough to clear the sides), then cover noodles with beef broth, or use water and add beef bouillon (I use better than bullion, but it is all preference).

**Optionally, you can use red wine for some of the liquid for a deeper, more complex flavor that will taste like it's been cooking all day.

3. Adjust your seasonings as needed at each step.

4. Allow sauce to come to a boil and cook until desired texture, stirring occasionally.

Sometimes, for something a little different, we like to add cream cheese to our spaghetti. You can add as little or as much as you like. You could also use cottage cheese, which is a huge protein boost. You can also use any noodle shape that makes you happy.



FAMILY FRIENDLY WILD GAME MEALS

by *Kat Moore (Volunteer)*

Food is my love language. I love sharing meals with friends and family and using my skills to nurture and build stronger ties in my relationships. Being able to share food that I have processed from the fields all the way to my table is even more special to me.

Many times, I have been asked what I cook from my wild game. The answer to that is easy. Absolutely anything I would cook with store bought meats. That is the whole point of this particular series of classes: to share with others that exact message. I can do anything with wild game that I would with beef, pork, or chicken. Spaghetti, burritos, stroganoff, stews, steaks, roasts, you name it, it absolutely can be cooked with any protein you have on hand.

Not only will you learn some of my favorite tips and tricks in the kitchen in general, but you will learn that wild game is not any more intimidating than anything else.

One of my favorite meals is spaghetti. It is so very versatile, and, honestly, an incredibly forgiving recipe in that you don't truly need much of a recipe. I know that everyone has their own methodology of making spaghetti, but this is mine.





INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Are you looking for a way to give back to your community? Do you like recreating in the outdoors and want to share your skills with others? Volunteer with us!

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Naturalist Assistant
- Landscaping/Gardening
- Information Desk/Greeter (18+)
- SD Wildlife Interpreter
- School Programs Assistant
- Volunteer Instructor
- Volunteer Mentor

The mission of volunteers at The Outdoor Campus is to cultivate stewardship and safely connect people with the outdoors by supporting and leading educational opportunities.

For more information on the volunteer program or to apply, click [here](#).

PHEASANTS FOREVER

by Isaac

Pheasants Forever is the leading non-Government outdoors organization in the country. It is often referred to as the Habitat Organization. Many state agencies, and NGOs are working towards the same goals and outcomes for the preservation of our nation's outdoor treasures.

South Dakota Game Fish and Parks and Pheasants Forever have been in partnership for well over ten years with both organizations bringing their unique backgrounds to the forefront of habitat advocacy in South Dakota. The partnership between Pheasants Forever and SDGFP has flourished through the collaboration and implementation of many unique habitat programs. There are currently 16 Farm Bill Biologist working for Pheasants Forever in partnership with GFP. Combined with 11 GFP Private Lands Biologists, these numbers boast the commitment of both organizations to continued partnership building, as well as creating sustainable, and unique habitats across the state.

A focus on education and outreach to maintain and proliferate the opportunities South Dakota has offered a new avenue to the Pheasants Forever and GFP partnership. Both organizations are committing resources to grow the base of outdoors users in the state through education and outreach with education professionals. The Pheasants Forever and GFP education staff are dedicated to reaching a multitude of demographics from historically underserved communities, urban communities, and the veteran community. Creating innovative and engaging outreach programs are showing their value through outdoors users.

The outdoor opportunities offered in South Dakota are immense and partnerships between organizations like Pheasants Forever and GFP ensure these opportunities stay available for years to come. If you have questions for employees working for either of these organizations or would like to learn more, their websites provide great, easy to follow information.

[Pheasantsforever.org](https://pheasantsforever.org)

[Gfp.sd.gov](https://gfp.sd.gov)

habitat.sd.gov

HAPPENINGS IN SIOUX FALLS

Check out our sister-campus in Sioux Falls!

Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls
4500 S Oxbow Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
toc@state.sd.us | 605.362.2777

Here is a list of some of the community programs the Sioux Falls campus will be offering. For the entire program booklet and more information, click [here](#).

Where can I hunt?

- June 15th 6-9
- July 13th 6-9

5 Things to do with wild game burger

- July 6th 6:30-8

Archery Basics for Families

- June 6:30-8:30
- July 6th 1-2:30

Fly Fishing

- June 15th 10-11 or 1-2:30
- August 5th 10-11:30

Fly Tying for Beginners

- June 27th 6-7:30
- July 11th 6-7:30
- August 24th 6-7:30

Women's try it night with Callie Russell (History Channel's Alone)

- June 22nd 5:30-9

FOLLOW US!

Stay up to date on program information in Rapid City by following us!



@outdoorcampus_rapidcity



Game, Fish & Parks Outdoor Campus-Rapid City



South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks-Education



DID YOU KNOW?

by Clint Whitley

There are many things we can and cannot do while enjoying our public lands and natural resources. It's important to know regulations before heading out on your next outdoor adventure.

Did you know you cannot leave your tree stand up on public land year round? Portable tree stands and blinds are only allowed from August 1st to March 31st.

Did you know you cannot drive your OHV or snowmobile off trail? Seems obvious right? However, there are many tracks left on public land showing otherwise. There are a couple exceptions in the Black Hills, but very few.

Did you know hunting in the wrong unit is a common occurrence game wardens run into? To prevent this, read your tags as soon as you get them in the mail to double check which tags you drew.

Did you know managing wildlife through hunting has many different layers? Hunting regulations and drawing tags can seem very complicated. And it really is. Wildlife biologists must constantly adjust tags to account for social issues, weather, disease, hunter success, and more to manage wildlife numbers. Stats of different flocks and herds can vary immensely from one area to another, adding further complication. Even two herds that are only a highway crossing apart can be completely different.

Becoming involved and staying informed are the best ways to keep up to date with current habitat and wildlife management. Sign up for GFP newsletters, listen to commission meetings and read the regulations every year to be in the know!





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

JULY PROGRAMS

Map Reading

Participants will use different types of printed and digital maps with a focus on the Black Hills area, using examples of topographic, road/trail, thematic maps, GPS and hunting maps.

July 6 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Intro to Fishing

Learn how to safely rig a pole, cast, hook a fish, unhook it, and clean it. All materials will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own gear to practice. Hats, eye protection and sunscreen are encouraged. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

July 6 12:00 – 1:00 PM

July 11 2:00 – 3:00 PM

July 13 1:00 – 2:00 PM

July 18 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

July 25 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Intro to Backpacking

Students will learn to meet the foundational challenges of traveling and camping in the backcountry. Instruction includes gear options according to individual preferences and needs, water filtration, navigation, trip planning, food choices and preparation, hygiene, proper trash and human waste disposal, and basic first aid and safety considerations.

July 7 5:00–8:00 PM

July 8 12:00–4:00 PM

Wild Game Cooking Series

Learn to integrate wild game into your everyday cooking with this hands-on series! Participants will gain knowledge on cooking wild game, such as Big Horn Sheep, Elk, and Mountain Lion. Participants are encouraged to come to as many of the following sessions as possible.

July 7 6:00 – 8:00 PM

July 14 6:00 – 8:00 PM

July 21 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Kayaking

Learn small watercraft safety and techniques in our kayaks on our front pond.

July 8 10:00 – 11:00 AM

July 22 12:30 – 1:30 PM

Canoeing

Learn small watercraft safety and techniques in our canoes on our front pond.

July 8 1:00 – 2:00 PM

July 22 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Introduction to Fly Fishing

The Black Hills is an amazing place to learn how to fly fish. Join us to learn the basics of a fly cast and try your hand at fishing our pond.

July 10 5:30 – 7:30 PM

July 17 5:30 – 7:30 PM

July 24 5:30 – 7:30 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

JULY PROGRAMS

Outdoor Severe Weather Preparedness

Come learn some outdoor meteorology skills! This course will include how to read radar, what cloud types tell us, watches vs warnings, and what to do if you are stuck outside in a storm.

July 12 6:00 – 7:00 PM

July 28 2:00 - 3:00 PM

Outdoor Survival Series

Come and learn the three elements of survival: Fire, Water and Shelter. This three-day class series will teach you how to build and start a fire, purify water, and shelter building techniques. This class will ensure you have the basic knowledge for outdoor survival.

July 12 6:00 – 8:00 PM

July 19 6:00 – 8:00 PM

July 26 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Trap Shooting

Participant will learn how to safely handle, load, unload and shoot a shotgun at the Rapid City Trap Club.

July 10 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Pellet Rifle Shooting and Gun Safety

Learn basic gun safety and shooting with scoped pellet rifles.

July 12 1:00 – 2:00 PM

July 27 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Stream Exploration

Come find different water critters (macro-invertebrates) in our campus creek and learn how they are used to monitor stream health.

July 14 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Paddling with Pets

Enjoy paddling with your pets in our front pond whether it's your first time or you're a seasoned paddler with your pet. Try out a canoe or one of our kayaks in a small area to get comfortable so that then you can take your pet to the lake with you for a fun day on the water.

July 15 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Intro to Archery

Learn the basic techniques of archery, learn the parts of a bow, range safety and how to safely shoot a compound bow. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Ages 8 and up.

July 18 12:00 – 1:00 PM

July 27 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Wilderness First Aid

Come and learn the basics of first aid so that you are prepared incase you ever find yourself in an emergency situation in the wilderness.

July 18 6:00 – 7:30 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

JULY PROGRAMS

3D Archery

Learn how to shoot and practice on our 3D animal targets. Equipment provided but all children must be accompanied by an adult. (8 to adult)

July 19 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Campfire Cooking

Try some recipes while learning campfire safety. You will be making food so come hungry! Closed-toed shoes are required for safety. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult.

July 20 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Let's Talk Talons

Discover the raptors of South Dakota! We will learn about South Dakota bird of prey species, habitats, and adaptations and meet a visitor or two from the Black Hills Raptors Center.

July 21 2:00 – 3:00PM

Bait, Lake, Plate

Learn about the types of fishing bait and fishing basics. Once fish are caught, we will cover how to clean and cook our catch. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (Ages 8 to adult)

July 22 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Fly Tying

Tie several flies that can be used to catch many species of fish in the Black Hills. Materials provided.

July 26 6:00 – 8:00 PM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Wildland Fire's Role in Nature

Come learn about how fire is vital to maintaining a healthy ecosystem and how it is important in the Black Hills.

July 26 6:00 – 7:00 PM

DIY Natural Tie-Dye

Come hike the campus to gather materials for natural tie-dyeing. Youth S-XL shirts provided.

July 28 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Fly Fishing Series

Learn the skills and techniques needed to catch fish on a fly rod through multiple classes. Hats, closed toe shoes, eye protection and sunscreen are encouraged. Must be present at all three dates.

July 29 9:00 – 12:00 PM

August 5 9:00 – 12:00 PM

August 12 8:00 – 2:00 PM

Wild About Bats

Bats are vital to our ecosystem. Come learn about their importance and conservation practices while decorating a bat house!

July 29 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Bugs and Brews

Join us at Spearfish Brewing Company to have a drink and learn how to tie the three main types of flies used for fly fishing in the Black Hills.

July 31 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

AUGUST PROGRAMS

Food Preservation - Canning

Enjoy your favorite fruits, veggies, and meats all year long through food preservation techniques. Learn the basics of canning, pickling, and dehydrating over the course of this 3-class series.

August 1 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Bait, Lake, Plate

Learn about the types of fishing bait and fishing basics. Once fish are caught, we will cover how to clean and cook our catch. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (Ages 8 to adult)

August 2 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Ladies Backpacking

Students will learn to meet the foundational challenges of traveling and camping in the backcountry. Instruction includes gear options, water filtration, navigation, trip planning, food choices and preparation, hygiene, proper trash and human waste disposal, and basic first aid and safety considerations.

August 3 6:00 – 8:00 PM

August 10 6:00 – 8:00 PM

August 17 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Map Reading

Come learn how to use different types of printed and digital maps with focus on the black hills area.

August 3 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Kayak Fishing

Learn basic kayak safety principles and how to use a spin casting rod from a kayak on our front pond.

August 4 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Early Season Waterfowl

Come learn the basics of duck hunting to prepare for the upcoming season. This includes identifying waterfowl, duck calling basics, and different types of decoy spreads.

August 4 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Maximizing Your Rifle's Effective Range

Learn how to be a better shot and know what your effective range is to take while hunting. We will spend time in the classroom and at the range.

August 4 6:30 – 9:00 PM

August 13 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Orienteering

Learn about the sport that requires navigational skills using a map and compass to navigate from point to point.

August 5 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Stream Exploration

Come find different water critters (macro-invertebrates) in our campus creek and learn how they are used to monitor stream health.

August 5 10:00 – 11:30 AM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>





OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA —

AUGUST PROGRAMS

Food Preservation - Pickling

Enjoy your favorite fruits, veggies, and meats all year long through food preservation techniques. Learn the basics of canning, pickling, and dehydrating over the course of this 3-class series.

August 8 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Intro to Fishing

Learn how to safely rig a pole, cast, hook a fish, unhook it, and clean it. Hats, eye protection and sunscreen are encouraged. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

August 9 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Trap Shooting

Participant will learn how to safely handle, load, unload and shoot a shotgun at the Rapid City Trap Club.

August 14 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Food Preservation - Dehydrating

Enjoy your favorite fruits, veggies, and meats all year long through food preservation techniques. Learn the basics of canning, pickling, and dehydrating over the course of this 3-class series.

August 15 6:00 – 8:00 PM

3-D Archery

Learn how to shoot and practice on our 3D animal targets. Equipment provided but all children must be accompanied by an adult. (8 to adult)

August 16 10:00 – 11:30 AM

ALL YOUTH ATTENDING PROGRAMS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A REGISTERED ADULT

Homeschool Paddling

Learn small watercraft safety and techniques in our kayaks on our front pond. Homeschoolers only.

August 21 10:00 – 11:30 AM

August 21 1:00 – 2:30 PM

DIY Natural Tie-Dye

Join us for a hike around the campus to gather materials for natural dyes for tie-dying shirts. White Youth S-XL t-shirts will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own!

August 25 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Wild Game Cooking

Do you have some wild game and don't know how to cook it? Learn cooking tips that are useful when cooking wild game.

August 30 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Register @ <http://southdakota.storefront.kalkomey.com/>

