

Winter 2025



Photo by 605 Video Co.



OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA —

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Fall 2025 Recap

Read about what happened this past Summer for Outdoor Campus programming (P. 4-7)

Campus Updates

Learn about what new things are happening at the Outdoor Campus (P. 8-10)

2025 Program Highlights

Find out what exciting classes are coming up for Winter 2025 (P. 12-13)



Photo by 605 Video Co

Region 3

Wildlife

Division Note

by Kip Rounds (Region 3 Supervisor)

As another South Dakota winter slowly, but surely, makes its presence known, we are reminiscing the memories made throughout the year and excited for those yet to come! The current pheasant season has certainly been one to remember and hunters should continue to find success into the late season as crops are out and birds gravitate towards typical winter cover, like cattails and shelterbelts. The traditional South Dakota pheasant season remains open until January 31. As expected, deer hunting success varied throughout the region in 2025. The southeast counties of Region 3 have been hit with Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) in recent years. As a result, deer license numbers have been reduced in those hunting units to help bolster the herd. If Mother Nature cooperates, we expect to see a quick rebound of those deer populations. Turkey numbers are trending in the same direction as pheasants and look promising for next spring. Until then, we hope everyone gets outdoors and enjoys the wonderful resources South Dakota has to offer!

Director's Note:

by David Parker (Outdoor Campus Director)

Hard to believe we are nearly into winter. This has been one of the most gorgeous falls with mild weather plenty of opportunities to get outside. That being said, the beauty of living here in South Dakota with winter is that it opens a whole new season of outdoor opportunities for us. From cross-country skiing and snow shoeing to ice fishing, winter affords us all a new way to get outside.

At the Outdoor Campus, we are here to help you enjoy the outdoors through: offering free classes to try new winter activities. We also provide snowshoes you can check out and use anywhere in the state. Along with this, don't forget that the trails at the Outdoor Campus are groomed when there is enough snow to allow for cross-country skiing (<https://www.siouxfalls.gov/activities-recreation/parks-trails/trails/nordic-ski-trails>). Please be mindful of others using the trail (see page 11).





Photo by Travel South Dakota

Notes from the Friends of The Outdoor Campus

by Tim Kromminga (Board Chair)

As the seasons shift from fall to winter, we invite you to take advantage of a wide range of outdoor winter educational programs offered at the Outdoor Campus. These opportunities include both indoor and outdoor activities designed to engage and educate. Enjoy inside experiences such as cooking classes, or venture outdoors for winter activities like ice fishing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. To view all available classes and programs, please visit our website at <https://gfp.sd.gov/toc-east> and sign up for our free offerings.

The improvements of the Outdoor Campus are progressing steadily. The current expansion project will feature an indoor archery and BB gun range, additional classroom space, an enhanced game processing area, an expanded kitchen, and an improved theater. Contractors are working diligently to enclose the new facilities, allowing for interior work to continue throughout the winter months. We anticipate that the expansion will be completed by fall 2026.

As you consider your year-end charitable contributions, please remember the Outdoor Campus. Your donations are vital in supporting our educational programs, particularly by providing transportation for local youth and fostering their connection to the outdoors.

On behalf of the Friends of the Outdoor Campus, we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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A Look Back at Fall 2025



Downtown Sioux Falls River Fest

The Outdoor Campus partnered with Pheasants Forever and SD Grassland Coalition to host a booth focusing on conservation. The Outdoor Campus brought a variety of furs, antlers, and shells for students to guess what animal it was and then learn about that animal's habitat and adaptations.

Conservation in the City

The Outdoor Campus attended the 2025 Conservation in the City event that was held downtown Sioux Falls. The event focused on teaching kids and adults about the importance of conservation within city limits.

The Outdoor Campus booth focused on education on aquatic invasive species and what they can do to slow the spread. The event saw over 300 kids and adults.

Over 350 kids and adults attended this outreach event.



A Look Back at Fall 2025



USF Project Wild

The Outdoor Campus partnered with the University of Sioux Falls to offer students in their Science Methodology Course a Project Wild Training. Students spent time understanding the Project Wild Curriculum book as well as implementing lessons in the curriculum book. Time was also spent discussing how lessons in the book could be scaled to meet the unique needs of their future classrooms.

Junior Achievement

The Outdoor Campus hosted a booth at the 2025 Junior Achievement Inspire - Middle School Career Fair. The Campus booth featured a fish identification activity using a dichotomous key to show the importance of observation and give students a sample of Biology in action. This year there were around 3,500 eighth graders who attended the event from the Sioux Empire.



A Look Back at Fall 2025



HuntSAFE in the Schools - Fall 2025

Since Fall of 2023, the Outdoor Campus has been partnering with the Sioux Falls School District and their afterschool program to provide Hunter Safety to students. The program runs for two weeks, Monday-Thursday from 4pm-5:30pm. The first week is hosted at the school for classroom instruction and the second week is hosted at the Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League for field training and a live fire day.

This year we partnered with Ben Reifel Middle School, Patrick Henry Middle School, the Sioux Falls YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Sioux Empire to certify 24 students



A Look Back at Fall 2025



Hunting 101 - Deer

The Fall 2025 Hunting 101 Program is well underway!

The program is comprehensive, teaching students everything they need to know about hunting. It covers the important aspects of hunter safety and allows participants to spend time practicing their skills at a local shooting range, provides hunting experiences in the field — and if a hunt is successful — hands-on lessons in caring for and processing the harvested deer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEazROSVfxo>).

So far this season 33 deer have been harvested by participants. The program will continue throughout the remainder of the Youth/Mentor/Apprentice Season and end January 1, 2026.

A huge thank you to all the Landowners and Volunteer Mentors that donate to make this program a success!

Hunting 101 - Disabled Veteran

In collaboration with the Grey Ghost Chapter of the South Dakota Mule Deer Foundation, the Outdoor Campus is once again conducting 10 Disabled Veteran Hunts. These hunts are done at no cost to the Veteran Hunter. 5 deer have been harvested thus far, with the plan to harvest the remaining 5 before the season ends. The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of South Dakota is paying for each deer harvested to be processed so that the Veterans can have the meat.



Campus Updates - Casting for Recovery



On September 12-14, the Casting for Recovery South Dakota was held at Outlaw Ranch in Custer. This free program welcomed 14 participants from four states, providing an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of fly fishing while connecting with others who share a similar experience. Over the course of the weekend, participants learned knot tying, fly tying, and casting techniques prior to applying those skills during a guided fly fishing experience at Stockade lake.



The Retreat was led by Outdoor Campus staff alongside a dedicated team of volunteers including fishing guides, medical professionals, and support staff.



Casting for Recovery - South Dakota remains committed to providing women facing breast cancer with unique, nature-based healing experiences that promote resilience, connection, and hope.

Applications are currently open for the 2026 retreat which will be held at NeSoDak near Waubay, SD on September 18-20. To learn more or apply: <https://castingforrecovery.org/>

Campus Updates

Waterfowl Signage

Over the past year, the Outdoor Campus has been partnering with the South Dakota Ducks Unlimited to design and print 3 waterfowl related signs. These signs cover the following topics:

- Common East River Waterfowl ID
- Wood Duck Restoration
- The Prairie Pothole Region “Duck Factory”

These signs are now located along the Riparian Trail just south of the pond. As you walk through that wooded section of the trail, take a look at the signs and perhaps a few ducks or geese enjoying the oxbow.

A big thank you to everyone who made this project a reality including: SD Ducks Unlimited for help in funding and design, Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation for sign installation, and Dr. Keith Anderson and Ducks Unlimited Ben Romans for their generosity in usage of waterfowl photos.



Outdoor Archery Range

It has been exciting to see the usage that the Outdoor Archery Range has seen since opening in March 2025. To date we have had 14,601 folks utilize the range as a resource to prepare them for target practice and the opportunity to prepare for hunting season.

As we move into winter, we want to remind folks that once there is snow on the ground, the range will close (we will not be removing snow).

Finally, as we continue managing this range, please give us feedback on any improvements you may have and we will do our best to accommodate them as we can.

Campus Updates - Expansion Construction

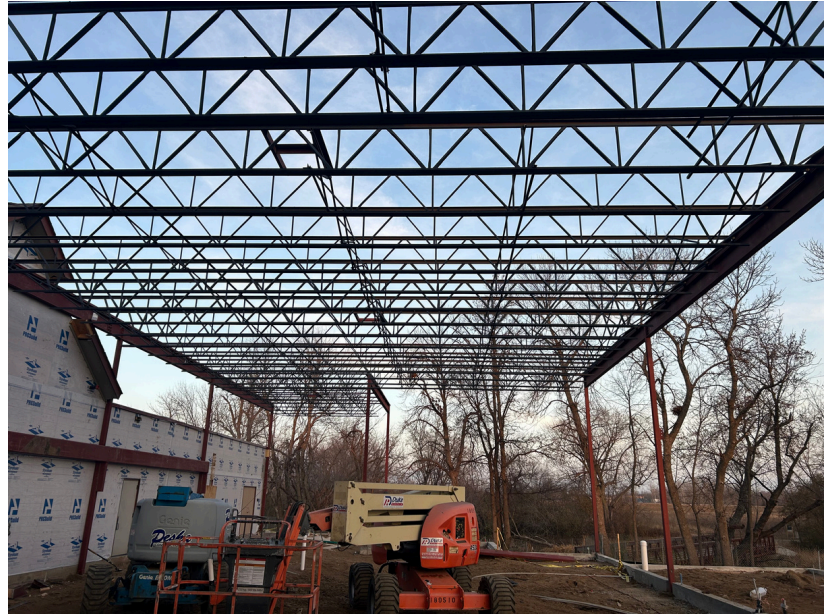
Phase 2

Construction is moving forward in great strides on our expansion project. A lot of spaces are taking form. The game processing space, restrooms, and new storage area have walls and sheet rock up (not pictured here).

Along with this, steel is being erected where the future indoor archery range will be placed. You can tell from the picture (top) where the range will be 20-yards in length and where it will be 30-yards in length.

Another area of rapid change is the classroom space (middle). This space will hold around 100 people when all the rooms are opened or can be segmented into 2 smaller classrooms and 1 larger classroom. This will allow for more classes for the Campus and more meeting space for the public.

One final space we would like to highlight is our outdoor cooking patio (bottom). The pad is already poured for space. We can't wait to use it for a number of classes such as Dutch oven cooking and meat smoking!



WELCOME TO SERTOMA PARK MULTI-USE TRAILS



FOR THE SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT OF OTHERS
PLEASE RESPECT THE TRAIL ETIQUETTE



TRAIL ETIQUETTE

- Ski in control and always yield to slower-moving recreationalists.
- When passing, slow your speed and politely call out, "On your left."
- Avoid skate skiing on or over the groomed classic lanes.
- Be respectful of wildlife and private property.
- Keep the trails litter free.
- Be courteous to other trail users.



Yield to grooming equipment at all times. For your safety, and the groomers safety, always move to the opposite side of the trail from the machine.



Dogs are allowed. Please keep them off the groomed classic lanes and scoop your poop.



Bicycles are not allowed on Sertoma Park's groomed trails.

Winter 2025 Programming

Our Winter 2025 Program

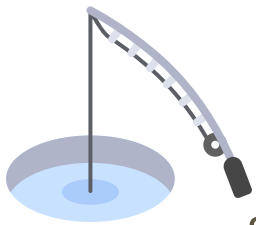
Registration is live and ongoing.

If you are looking to learn more about hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor skills, or conservation, The Campus has a class that is right for you!

Scan to Register:



Winter 2025 Programming Highlights



Ice Fishing

Saturday, January 10

10am-11:30am or 1pm-2:30pm

This class will focus on a discussion on ice fishing tackle, gear, fish species and ice safety. Then participants will get to fish at the Outdoor Campus Pond with the help of staff and volunteers.

Please make sure to dress for the weather with a coat, hat, gloves, and boots.



Cross Country Skiing

Saturday, January 17

10am-11:30am or 1pm-2:30pm

Get hands-on instruction in cross-country skiing and related equipment and then spend time on the trails. All equipment is provided, but dress for the weather.

This class is dependent on proper snow conditions.

Need Help with Registering?

Give us a call at 605-362-2777

or

Give the Brandt Help Desk a call at 1-800-238-4168

Winter 2026 Programming Highlights



Predator Calling and Hunting Virtual Online Program

Thursday, January 22

7:00pm-8:30pm

The coyote diet is adaptable to the food that is available throughout the year and can consist of small game, fawns, and livestock. Coyote hunting can help control the population, but can also be challenging. Learn some tips and techniques from the Department's professional Wildlife Damage Specialists in this virtual Zoom class.

Archery Turkey Hunting What You Need to Know

Tuesday, February 24

6:30pm-8pm

The Outdoor Campus is thrilled to have Justin Broughton from South Dakota Bow Hunters Association share his passion about archery turkey hunting and also give valuable guidance, tips, and tricks from gear to location for a successful turkey hunt. Justin is a lifelong bowhunter with over 35 years of archery turkey hunting experience and has served as the President of the SD Bow Hunters Association for the past 3 years.



Hunting 101 - Spring Turkey Hunts



With our Deer Hunting 101 Season reaching the final month of hunting, we are already looking forward to our next Hunting 101 program: Spring Turkey Hunting. This program is very similar to our Deer Hunting 101 in that students will learn how to hunt turkey, spend time at the range, and get the opportunity to go out into the field to try and harvest a turkey.

The Outdoor Campus Internal Application for this program will open in February 2026. Candidates chosen for the program will need to purchase a Spring Mentor tag or Successfully draw a Spring Turkey Tag. To learn more about this program, visit: gfp.sd.gov/toc-east and click on “Programming”.



OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA —

WE'RE HIRING!

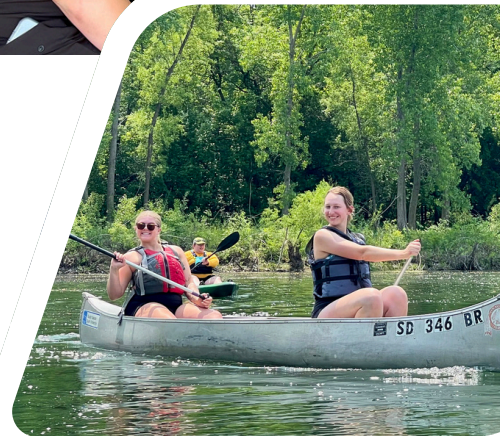
2026 SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Looking for an opportunity that's more than just a summer job? Join us as a Naturalist Intern, Horticulture Intern, or Volunteer Coordinator Intern. You'll get hands-on experience in education, conservation, and leadership, perfect for students who love the outdoors and want to build their resume.

AVAILABLE INTERNSHIPS:

- **GROUP NATURALIST INTERN**
- **COMMUNITY NATURALIST INTERN**
- **OUTREACH NATURALIST INTERN**
- **HORTICULTURE INTERN**
- **VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR INTERN**
- **FIRST CATCH CENTER INTERN**

**SCAN HERE
FOR
APPLICATION
LINKS:**



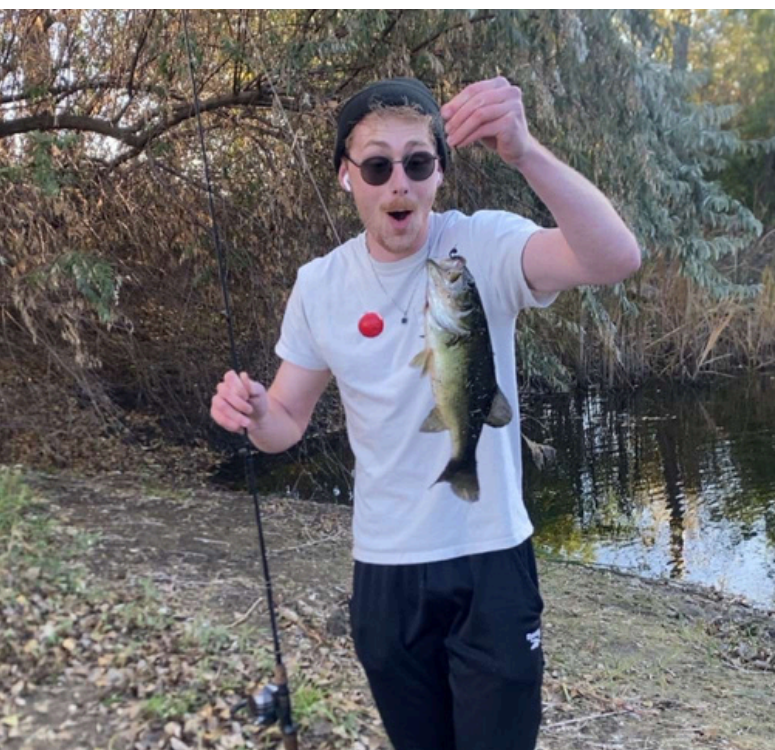
GFP Outreach

The Outdoor Campus has placed interns in both Vermillion and Brookings to help spread the opportunity for more folks to get outside and enjoy hunting, fishing, trapping, and Conservation Science. If you are a local community looking for programming, reach out to Jason Nelson (Jason.Nelson@state.sd.us) for free, outdoor education programming in your town.

Vermillion Happenings:

This Fall we started an internship partnership with the University of South Dakota. One fun event we have hosted this Fall is a Pond Clean Up followed by fishing. All participants had a great time and caught quite a few bass!

Be looking for more classes to come this Winter!



Brookings Happenings:

Programming in Brookings has been busy with classes including:

- Archery Classes at the Brookings County Outdoor Adventure Center
- Introduction to Fishing at the Brookings County Outdoor Adventure Center
- Winter Survival at the Larson Center of the Dakota Nature Park

Keep checking the Outdoor Campus, Brookings County Outdoor Adventure Center, and Dakota Nature Park social media pages for more classes!



Campus Volunteers

by Paige O'Farrell (Outdoor Campus Volunteer Coordinator)

Winter is here. Even with construction slowing down some of our classes, our volunteers have continued to show up consistently by teaching programs, leading mentored hunts, and helping us navigate a season with limited indoor space. Their steady presence has been a major support during this transition period.

As we move into the colder months, we're preparing for winter programs like ice fishing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. These remain some of our most popular offerings, and the volunteer involvement behind them continues to be essential.

I also want to highlight the work of our hunting mentors, who have dedicated hundreds of hours this year to guiding new hunters through the deer hunting process. The Hunting 101 program depends on their experience and commitment, and their impact shows in every participant who walks away more confident and informed.

This fall, we also welcomed eight new volunteers to the team. We're looking forward to getting them involved and seeing where they choose to contribute.

Thank you for all you've done throughout 2025. Your time and effort truly make a difference, and I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together in 2026.



Interested in Volunteering?

Scan the
QR Code:

