

# OUTDOOR CAMPUS SIOUX FALLS

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



## HELLO FROM SIOUX FALLS!

2025 is a year that the Game, Fish and Parks Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls will not easily forget. This past year marked the beginning of construction on the main building of the Outdoor Campus. This construction project will revolutionize the way we are able to do classes. With the addition of an indoor archery range, game processing space and the reimagining of the old classrooms, we will better be able to provide more hunting specific classes. By adding 3 new classrooms along with reimagining the auditorium, we will better be able to grow our programming, while also meeting the needs of groups wanting to use the Campus as a meeting space. With the addition of a new volunteer room and intern office, the Campus can help create a more robust space for those who help to make the Campus a welcoming space. Finally, with the creation of a new restroom, a family restroom, and a nursing mothers' room, the Campus will be an even more welcoming space for all our park users to enjoy.

With this construction, came quite the opportunity for flexibility in our programming. We want to thank everyone who has been patient with us as we go through this process.

First, thank you to our patrons who have continued to come to Outdoor Campus classes throughout this construction period. We know that sometimes classes were a little cramped, but that just made the outdoors a little more enticing.

Second, thank you to the volunteers who have diligently helped with classes and provided their expertise throughout the year. I also want to thank those volunteers who sat the front desk. Some days were louder than others, but you always came prepared to help the public.

Third, thank you to our interns and staff. Interns and staff stepped up throughout this year to help move programming supplies to new locations as other areas were absorbed by construction. Interns and staff also got very creative with classroom space from utilizing the lobby to space in our storage area.

Fourth, I would like to thank the Outdoor Campus Advisory Board and the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation Board for all their efforts to fundraise to help create this new expansion that will allow the Outdoor Campus to connect more families to the outdoors.

A final thanks that cannot be said enough, is a wholehearted thank you to the Greater Sioux Falls Community Donors. This project would not have gotten off the ground without the generous support found within this community and across the state of South Dakota. The Outdoor Campus Expansion was made possible through the sole support of the community and dollars from the Pittman-Robertson Act that the Game, Fish and Parks Department stewards.

Thank you everyone and we look forward to an exciting 2026!

**David Parker**

*Director of The Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls*

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## STAFF

**7**  
PERMANENT STAFF

**1**  
CONTRACTED STAFF

**2**  
SEASONAL STAFF

**5-11**  
INTERNS

Contracted positions include a School Coordinator, which is a partnership between GFP and South Dakota State University 4-H Extension Office.

**100**  
VOLUNTEERS

Internship positions include horticulture, naturalist, outreach, volunteer coordinator, first catch center, and school coordinator.

The Outdoor Campus has volunteer positions to help with gardening/landscaping, the information desk, educational assistance, and community service.



## OUR IMPACT

**911**

CLASSES OFFERED

**25,561**

PARTICIPANTS

**72,731**

PEOPLE HIKE THE TRAILS

**99**

HUNTERS PARTICIPATED IN  
THE HUNT 101 PROGRAM

**4,901**

VOLUNTEER HOURS  
DONATED

**71,667**

PEOPLE ENTERED THE  
OUTDOOR CAMPUS

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **Raptor Rendezvous (2/7)**

150 attendees learned about falconry from the F.A.R.E Group who brought a variety of raptors such as a Great Horned owl.

**150 attendees**

### **Water Festival (3/14-3/5)**

Focuses on the importance of water and conservation.

**2,200 local 4th grade students**

### **Hood Familyfest Fun Cruise (5/31)**

The Outdoor Campus was a unique stop where participants could pick up a "goodie bag" and then go fishing.

**700 individuals**

### **Women's Try It Night (6/26)**

Create a space for women of all ages to come and try some new outdoor skills.

**51 females**

### **4th Annual Gear Giveaway (8/9)**

The focus of this event is to accept donated outdoor gear, clean it up, and give it away to new outdoor users.

**100+ individuals donated 1,325 pieces of gear and 325 people attended**

### **Duck Days (8/9)**

The Outdoor Campus attended in Wallace, SD with a booth introducing students to native plants.

**30 participants**

### **Conservation in the Cities (9/13)**

This event focuses on educating students about organizations that are conservation focused.

**300 kids and adults**

### **Downtown Riverfest (9/20)**

The Outdoor Campus had a booth focused on education about streams, rivers, and lakes with a focus on habitat.

**350 kids and adults**

### **JA INSPIRES (11/18)**

This is an annual Middle School Career Fair. The Outdoor Campus booth focused on teaching students about fisheries through a dichotomous key activity.

**3,500 area 8th Graders**

## SPECIAL COURSES



### Casting for Recovery

South Dakota held their third Casting for Recovery retreat for women somewhere along their journey with breast cancer on September 12-14 at Outlaw Ranch in Custer. This year 14 participants from 4 different states spent time learning how to fly ty, fly fish, and spent time on a guided experience at Stockade Lake, while connecting with others who share similar experiences.



### HuntSAFE in the Schools

The Outdoor Campus has recently been working with the Sioux Falls School District through their Afterschool Programs with the Sioux Falls YMCA and Boys and Girls Club of the Sioux Empire to offer HuntSAFE in the Schools. This year, the program was held with Patrick Henry Middle School and Ben Reifel Middle School in both the Spring Semester and Fall Semester.

*The class held in April had 40 participants and the class in August had 27 participants.*

### Fishing at Family Park

Every year the Outdoor Campus partners with Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation to offer free, family fishing at Family Park on Saturdays in June and July.

*This year 8 classes were offered reaching 315 participants.*

### Fishing at Lake Lorraine

Over the past few years, the Outdoor Campus has had a unique partnership with Friessen Construction to offer free fishing during classes at Lake Lorraine. This year, the Outdoor Campus held 6 traditional fishing programs at Lake Lorraine reaching 569 participants. The Outdoor Campus also held 2 snorkel spearfishing classes at Lake Lorraine reaching 10 participants.

### Hunting 101

2025 proved to be another successful year for the Hunting 101 program in Sioux Falls. 36 hunters took part in the spring turkey season, 53 took part in the fall deer season, and 10 disabled veterans took part in a special deer hunt in the fall. These programs are supported not only by the Department, but also by landowners (12 separate properties were hunted in 2025) and volunteer mentors (7 volunteers gave 668 hours of service).

## OTHER SERVICES

### ROOM USAGE

The Outdoor Campus encourages the use of our facility as a free meeting space for the public.

*135 meetings were held by nongovernment organizations, city departments, state departments, and other clubs.*

### LOANER EQUIPMENT

The Outdoor Campus has a wide range of loaner equipment available for the public to use for free including Critter Crates, snowshoes, live traps, life jackets, waterfowl decoy bags, waterfowl decoy trailers, and action track chairs.

*The most popular option were the critter crates with 85 check outs.*

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



## Construction began on the Outdoor Campus Facility

In March, Construction began on the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls Phase 2. Phase 2 includes an indoor archery range, new classrooms, new restrooms, a game processing space, and more. This construction is slated to continue until completion in October 2026.



## Archery Range Opened

On March 16, 2025, the Outdoor Campus Outdoor Archery Range officially opened to the public. This 60-yard archery range is equipped with both traditional and 3D targets and is free for the public to use anytime Sertoma Park is open (5am-10pm). Since opening, the range has had 14,770 members of the public utilize it.



## Addition of Grassland Crate

In May 2025, the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls was one of four initial locations that received a SD Grassland Initiative Education Tote. The Outdoor Campus along with other member organizations of the SD Grassland Initiative worked to help create these grassland totes to help spread grassland education throughout South Dakota. In its first year, the Sioux Falls tote was checked out 4 times, reaching 363 individuals.



## Big Sioux Fly-Fishing Club

In its second year of existence, the Big Sioux Fly-Fishing Club continues to be a big hit within the greater Sioux Falls Community with over 70 active members. Each month, members meet up to fly ty at the Outdoor Campus or, weather permitting, go fly fishing. The group has gone to a variety of different locations including Rollings GPA, Lake Vermillion State Park, and Heritage Pond in Crooks. This Outdoor Campus/Friends of the Big Sioux River sponsored and led Club is a great way for folks of all experience levels to join a group of like-minded anglers.



Photo by: Sioux Falls Development Foundation

## SPECIAL THANKS

### Friends of The Outdoor Campus Advisory Board

The purpose of this Board is to serve in an ongoing advisory role and to work collaboratively with the Director of the Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus to provide advice and insight on facility needs and potential improvements, projects, initiatives, and education programming priorities at the Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus.

#### Board Members:

Tim Kromminga, Board Chair  
Amanda Oines, Board Member  
Cheryl Ulvestad, Board Member  
Ryan Martin, Board Member  
Jeff Scherschligt, Board Member  
Royce Meritt, Board Member  
Josh Johnson, SFPR – Ex Officio Member  
Kristina Coby, SD PWF – Ex Officio Member  
Kip Rounds, SD GFP – Ex Officio Member  
David Parker, SD GFP – Ex Officio Member

Emmett Keyser, Board Vice-Chair  
Kathy Anderson, Board Member  
Eric Kurtz, Board Member  
Brian Klatt, Board Member  
Derek Maassen, Board Member  
Jamie Simko, Board Member  
Richie Hutchinson, Board Member  
Drew Woelfel, Board Member  
Tyler Tordsen, Board Member  
Emily Oyos, Board Member

### South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation

The board in cooperation with the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation helped to finalize the \$3 Million Capital Campaign Project.

#### NAI AWARD:

In 2025, the Friends of the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls were awarded the National Association of Interpretation Heartland Region's "Excellence in Interpretive Support" Award. This award was given to them for their "superior level of excellence in sustained support of the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls.



**South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks** serves and connects people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.