

Spring 2026



Photo by 605 Video Co.



OUTDOOR CAMPUS

— SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA —

605-362-2777 TOC@state.sd.us



Winter 2025 -2026 Recap

Read about what happened this past Summer for Outdoor Campus programming
P. 4

Campus Updates

Learn about what new things are happening at the Outdoor Campus
P. 5-8

2026 Program Highlights

Find out what exciting classes are coming up for Spring 2026.
P. 9-11



Director's Note:

by David Parker (Outdoor Campus Director)

What a unique winter we have had. With the way things started, I thought our winter would be filled with snowshoeing and cross country skiing. Nevertheless, we were lucky enough to have good ice for most of the season so we could ice fish.

With us nearing Spring, it is nice to set our sites on warmer classes such as archery and shore fishing. Our Spring Booklet is out and registration is open and ongoing, so register for all those classes.

One new thing we are starting up is offering "Open House," no registration required classes on most Saturdays for the Spring season. In recognizing that not everyone gets a chance to register for a class before it fills up or perhaps you are visiting from out of town, these opportunities should provide a chance to get outside with us. Hopefully, you enjoy the activity so much you pick up a program booklet and register for one of our other courses coming up.

Region 3

Wildlife

Division Note

by Kip Rounds (Region 3 Supervisor)

Spring is a special time of year in South Dakota. Farmers are busy planting, turkeys are strutting, walleye are spawning, and the outside world is coming alive with green after the long winter. Game, Fish and Parks staff across the state are busy preparing for another season of serving and connecting people and families to the outdoors! At the Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls, we're busy doing just that. We're serving and connecting through educational classes, through partnerships, and through creating outdoor opportunities and wild experiences. We hope you're able to join us this spring as we enjoy and celebrate everything the outdoors has to offer, right here in South Dakota!





Notes from the Friends of The Outdoor Campus

by Tim Kromminga (Board Chair)

The Friends of the Outdoor Campus recently enjoyed a hard hat tour to see the incredible progress on our campus expansion. We were thrilled to witness the transformation firsthand and began imagining the countless new opportunities this will bring to our community. With the education expansion, the staff will have access to modern technologies making lessons about nature and conservation more engaging for kids and families. This upgraded space is designed to spark curiosity and connect people to the outdoors in innovative ways.

The indoor archery and BB gun range is another exciting addition, offering a comfortable space for target practice regardless of the weather. It's the perfect spot for introducing young people to outdoor sports during winter months, encouraging skill development and teamwork in a safe, supervised environment.

Our expanded kitchen and game processing area is a highlight for the Hunting 101 and Mentorship Programs. During these classes, participants will learn safe game processing techniques and prepare meals together, fostering practical skills and a sense of camaraderie. Sharing food from field to fork not only builds confidence but also creates lasting memories among friends and family.

In addition to these exciting developments, all amenities will be open to everyone in our community this fall, and we can't wait to welcome you! As spring approaches, we invite you to explore the many free classes designed to expand your outdoor experiences. Check out all the offerings at the following link <https://gfp.sd.gov/toc-east/>. Our hiking trails and outdoor archery range remain open, so take advantage of this wonderful natural environment right in the heart of our community.

As we celebrate these milestones, we are proud to congratulate one of our Friends board members, Richie Hutchinson, on being named SD Assistant Middle School Principal of the Year. This well-deserved honor reflects his outstanding leadership and dedication to students and staff. Richie's passion for the outdoors has inspired many young people to connect with nature, and we're grateful for his positive influence. Congratulations, Mr. Hutchinson!

Board Members

Tim Kromminga - Chair
Emmett Keyser - Vice Chair
Amanda Oines - Member
Derek Maassen - Member
Drew Woelfel - Member
Brian Klatt - Member
Ryan Martin - Member

Royce Meritt - Member
Jeff Scherschligt - Member
Cheryl Ulvestad - Member
Eric Kurtz - Member
Kathy Anderson - Member
Ritchie Hutchinson - Member
Tyler Tordsen - Member

Jamie Simko - Member
Emily Oyos - Member
Josh Johnson - Ex Officio
Kristina Coby - Ex Officio
Kip Rounds - Ex Officio
David Parker - Ex Officio

A Look Back at Winter 2025/2026



Predator Calling and Hunting

On January 22nd, we hosted a virtual program that presented information on coyote diet and habits and then the use of hunting as a way to control populations.

During the program, Wildlife Damage Specialists provided key insights and tips into best practices for this type of hunting and Conservation Officers were available to answer any legal questions that arose. If you weren't able to make this class, we have it recorded:

https://youtu.be/TBrqh8i_MVo?si=JFY9KT6Tod9tGL2A

Creating Your Thermal Optic Setup

On January 15th, the Outdoor Campus partnered up with Scheels to offer a unique program on thermal optics.

Participants in the class were introduced to the different types of thermal optics and an understanding of pixel pitch, resolution, and NETD (Noise Equivalent Temperature Difference).

Following this, participants were given the opportunity to try handling and viewing through the different devices.

A Conservation Officer attended to help answer any hunting regulation questions that arose.



Campus Updates - Hunting 101



Traditional Hunting 101

This past Fall/Winter, the Outdoor Campus completed another successful Hunting 101 Program. This year:

- 53 hunters harvested 51 deer
- 34 were new hunters
- 39 were youth and 12 were adults

This program would not be possible without the:
Landowners and Mentors!

- 12 properties were hunted.
- 7 Mentors that gave numerous hours of service.

Disabled Veteran Hunting 101

Another unique opportunity the Outdoor Campus gets to help with is a Disabled Deer Veteran Hunt.

Once again, the Grey Ghost Chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation sponsored the tags for 10 disabled veterans. Along with sponsoring the tags, a couple of the chapters members helped out as Volunteer Mentors for the program to help with the hunts.

9 out of 10 of these folks were able to successfully harvest a deer.



Campus Updates - Women's Try It Night



Women's Try It Day - Winter Edition

Every summer around mid-June, the Outdoor Campus hosts a Women's Try It Night with the goal of introducing women of all ages to a variety of outdoor experiences. Typically this looks like: fishing, archery, kayaking, etc.

However, new this year, we tried a Women's Try It Day- Winter Edition. This program was held on January 3rd and took participants through all the outdoor recreation you can do in the winter. Participants took part in: pheasant processing, dark house spearing, basic compass reading, and paracord survival.

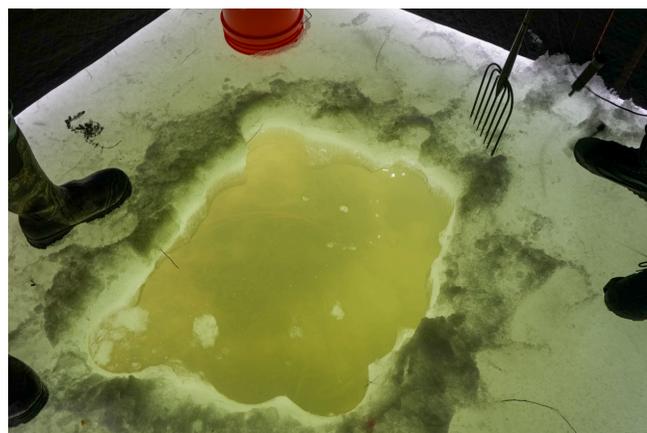
Further, thanks to a generous grant from Xcel Energy, participants were able to leave this program with: game shears, a boning knife, and a wild game cookbook. Participants also got to keep the pheasant they processed.

Here are just a few quotes from the class:

"The classes at The Outdoor Campus are the best way to get started in the outdoors because we don't have to buy all the gear right away." - Participant

"I have taken apart a Costco chicken but never thought I would be to take apart a pheasant; and now I can." - Participant

"I really enjoyed watching the confidence grow as they were processing the birds and realizing that they could do it." - Instructor



Campus Updates - Expansion Construction

Phase 2 - Indoor Updates

The Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus Indoor Expansion continues to move forward with some very exciting changes occurring!

First, installation has started on the walk-in cooler for the game processing space (top photo). This piece is a key feature because it will allow for the storage of wild game, indoors thus allowing for more processing classes.

The indoor archery range continues to move forward as well with a roof and wall being putting up (middle photo). The view on this photo is looking down range at where the targets will go. You will notice that the wall has a longer section and a shorter section. This is for will allow us to put half of the targets at 30-yards and half at 20-yards.

The final photo (to the lower right), shows the outside of the bird viewing area where a heated pond and bird feeders will be located. The below photo is a zoomed in picture of what this bird viewing area will look like from the outside when complete. (Continued on next page...)



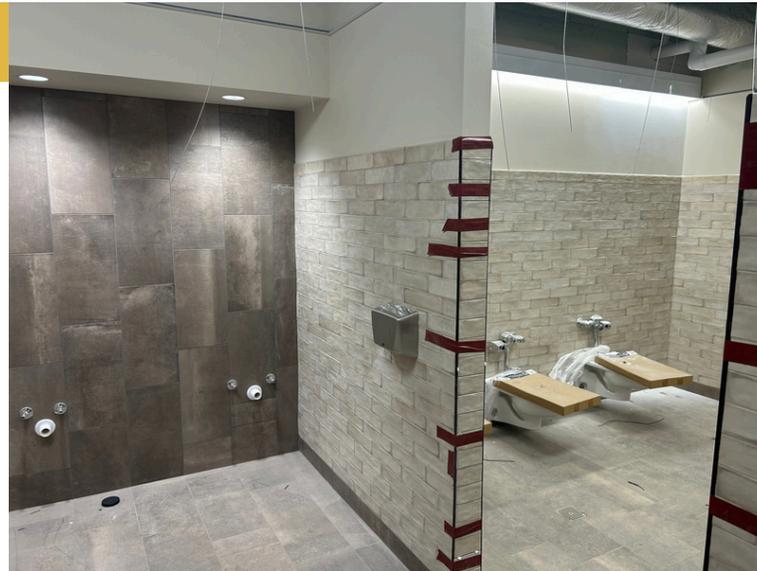
Campus Updates - Expansion Construction

Phase 2 - (Continued)

Further progress can be seen in the restrooms (top photo). Tile has been laid on the floor as well as the walls, toilets are in, and the ceiling is starting to be added. Once this area is complete, there will be more restroom stalls, a nursing mother's room, and a family restroom in the bathroom area.

The middle photo gives you a picture facing the backside of the classroom. The two doors lead into the main classroom that will hold 50 people.

The bottom two photos give you a feel for other parts of the classroom. As you can tell, the walls have been put up and are being mudded. The exposed roof trusses for the center room have gotten a nice coat of paint, which will make them stand out and give character to the vaulted ceiling. Further, you may notice a red beam running the length of the photo. This will hold a room partition. The whole classroom space will be three classrooms (the center one holding 50 and 2 side classrooms holding 25) that can be partitioned or opened to meet programming needs.



Spring 2026 Programming

Our Spring 2026 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:



Spring 2026 Programming Highlights



Deer Processing - Hind Quarter Break Down

Saturday, March 7 from 10am-12pm (Adult Only).

When the hunt ends, the fun begins. What are you going to do with all of that game meat? Let's break it down! This class will be elbows-deep in cleaning, cutting, packaging, and preserving the hind quarters of deer. The class will teach which cuts of meat make the best steaks, roasts, burger, and then how to use and package as much of the animal as possible with the least amount of waste.

Backyard Trapping

Saturday, March 28 from
10am-11:30am

Do you have nuisance critters you would like to remove? This class will cover the topic of trapping in your backyard including the do's and don'ts with trapping. The program is very interactive, so dress for the weather.



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

Spring 2026 Programming Highlights



Dog Hunting 101 with NAVHDA **Saturday, April 18 from 10am-12pm**

Discover the fundamentals of training versatile hunting dogs in this hands-on class! Learn about the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA), different dog types (flushing, pointing, retrieving), popular breeds, essential tracking equipment, and key skills like pointing, retrieving, backing, tracking, duck search and steadiness by blind. The class includes 1 hour of classroom instruction followed by 1 hour of live field demonstration with dogs.

This class is perfect for beginners interested in upland and waterfowl hunting!

The class will be split evenly into indoor and outdoor portions. Please come dress for the weather.



Channel Catfish and **Walleye Talks with Ted** **Saturday, April 18 from 1pm-** **2:45pm**

Fishing Walleyes
Simplified
1:00-1:45PM

Proven technique, rigs, baits, and common sense. Catching walleyes doesn't need to be complicated if you understand the basics.

Channel Catfish from
A to Z
2:00-2:45PM

These fish are available, willing, and fun. We will talk baits, rigs, and how to find these great sport fish. Then...hold on to your fishing rod!!!

- Ted Ellenbecker, multi-species angler, multiple world record holder, nationally renowned speaker, and developer of "The Theory of Three" is presenting two individual seminars in person.

Spring 2026 Programming Highlights

Open House Programming

Join us Saturdays this Spring for some no registration required programming! Below you will find a variety of topics and skills based programming that you are welcome to attend at any point during their respective times.

March 7 (1pm-3pm)	South Dakota Owls
March 14 (1pm-3pm)	Coyotes
March 21 (1pm-3pm)	Prairie Ecosystems
March 28 (1pm-3pm)	Spring Migration
April 11 (1pm-3pm)	Archery
April 18 (1pm-3pm)	Bats of South Dakota
April 25 (10am-2pm)	Fishing
May 2 (1pm-3pm)	Orienteering
May 9 (1pm-3pm)	Birdwatching
May 16 (1pm-3pm)	Archery
May 30 (10am-2pm)	Fishing

Dates:

April 21, 23, 25

May 12, 14, 16

May 26, 28, 30

June 9, 11, 13

June 23, 25, 27

July 7, 9, 11

July 21, 23, 25

August 4, 6, 8

August 18, 20, 22

September 15, 17, 19

September 22, 24, 26

September 19, October 1, 3

Logistics:

- Tuesdays and Thursdays are held at the Outdoor Campus.
- Saturdays are held at Crooks Gun Club.
- To Register:



Hunting 101 - Spring Turkey Hunts



Are you looking to learn how to turkey hunt? The Outdoor Campus is once again hosting its Hunting 101 Turkey program this spring. This program is similar to the Hunting 101 Deer program in that you will learn the basics of purchasing a tag, spend time at the gun range, and also spend time in the field working to harvest a turkey.

Students will also get the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of turkey hunting such as using a turkey call and using decoys.

Applications are available now for the Spring 2026 Hunting 101 Turkey Season. Deadline to apply is March 13, at 4:00 PM. To learn more and download the application, visit gfp.sd.gov/toc-east/ and click on "Programs".

Campus Volunteers

by Paige O'Farrell (Outdoor Campus Volunteer Coordinator)

Spring is here!

Outdoor Campus programming continues to ramp up each day, and summer planning is already underway. I'm excited for everyone to meet our new Volunteer Coordinator Intern, Olivia, this May!

I'm also looking forward to celebrating our volunteers in April for Volunteer Appreciation Month, as well as at the Helpline Center Spirit of Volunteerism event on April 8.

Thank you to everyone who supported programming this past winter. We truly appreciate how flexible our volunteers have been with program changes due to limited snow and variable weather. Winter programming can be especially challenging without consistent winter conditions!

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize everything our volunteers accomplished in 2025. Last year, 100 volunteers donated more than 4,900 hours of service to Outdoor Campus-Sioux Falls, with 14 individuals contributing over 100 hours throughout the year. It's always inspiring to see our volunteer program continue to grow.

Thank you for your dedication to our mission and your passion for sharing the love of the outdoors with others. I'm so proud of our volunteer community!



Interested in Volunteering?

Scan the
QR Code:

