

# SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR'S HABITAT WORK GROUP

# 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

ADVANCING HABITAT EFFORTS ACROSS SOUTH DAKOTA

*Recommendations: Status update as of October 2015*

## 1 Facilitate greater collaboration among conservation partners to better utilize available resources for improving habitat management.

**Status Update:** A working group made up of conservation partners was formed in May 2015 to further discuss the layout and development of the habitat-central website. Five meetings took place over the course of the summer 2015.

**Current Status:** Completed. The Habitat Pays website launched on October 2, 2015. Maintenance and management efforts will be ongoing.

**Status Update:** The development of a web-based assessment tool to help landowners identify habitat and ag production acres on their property. Current Status: GFP is collaborating with SDSU and the Department of Natural Resource Management on a comprehensive evaluation of pheasant ecology and habitat needs. One of the objectives is the development of a digital mapping tool linking habitat-agricultural decisions wildlife production and economic outcomes. The project begins this fall.

## 2 Establish a long-term, dedicated South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund and appropriate \$1 million dollars in one-time funds to bolster private fundraising efforts.

**Status Update:** Governor Daugaard appointed a 20 member Board of Directors to govern the South Dakota Habitat Conservation Fund.

**Current Status:** Governor Daugaard announced a \$1 million dollar challenge grant to be matched 1:1 with funds raised for the Fund at the first meeting on August 26, 2015. Small and large grant programs were finalized by the Board and the application period for these grants is October 1 - November 30, 2015. It is anticipated that \$640,000 will be available for 2016 grant projects. More information about the Fund can be seen on page 31 of this issue.

## 3 Develop and implement the South Dakota Conservation Certification Program.

**Status Update:** In fall of 2014, a request for one full time employee (FTE) and base funding for FY2016 was submitted by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture to initiate the South Dakota Conservation Certification Program. Funding may be pursued in future fiscal years when favorable state budgetary conditions return.

**Current Status:** Ongoing.



## **4 Create a Habitat Pays education and awareness campaign.**

**Status Update:** Habitat Pays is a joint effort between the South Dakota Departments of Game, Fish and Parks and Agriculture to connect farmers and ranchers to the appropriate habitat resources and help them implement wildlife habitat where it makes the most sense.

**Current Status:** Completed. The Habitat Pays education and awareness campaign launched on October 2, 2015. Public relations and digital marketing strategies will be ongoing.

## **5 Revisit the current practices pertaining to mowing public rights-of-way.**

**Status Update:** The South Dakota Department of Transportation Commission held a public input session on November 20, 2014, to discuss current roadside mowing regulations. The Commission continues to review this topic and will determine whether new administrative rules are necessary to bring forward for public testimony.

**Current Status:** Ongoing.

## **6 Petition the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) to include all South Dakota counties as eligible for crop insurance coverage on winter wheat.**

**Status Update:** The South Dakota Department of Agriculture submitted a letter to USDA-RMA in support of the winter wheat insurance recommendation on January 30, 2015. This letter accompanied materials also submitted by South Dakota Wheat, Inc. and South Dakota State University. In late July 2015, USDA-RMA announced that all South Dakota counties will be eligible for crop insurance coverage for the 2016 crop.

**Current Status:** Completed.

## **7 Encourage South Dakota School and Public Lands to include a land management plan as a condition for securing a lease.**

**Status Update:** The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks began discussions during the winter of 2014 with School and Public Lands on the implementation of this management plan.

**Current Status:** Ongoing.

## **8 Support Congressional efforts to raise the federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25.**

**Status Update:** Legislation passed and signed by the President.

**Current Status:** Completed.

For More Information: [habitat.sd.gov/resources/habitatsummit.aspx](http://habitat.sd.gov/resources/habitatsummit.aspx)

