

OGLALA LAKOTA COUNTY UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2026

The Oglala Lakota Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on February 26, 2026. Present: Allyssa Comer, Art Hopkins, Wendell Yellow Bull, Ramon Bear Runner and Stacy Schmidt, Deputy Auditor. Anna Takes the Shield (Dubray) via telephone.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Chairwoman Comer. The agenda was reviewed for conflicts. ALL MOTIONS RECORDED IN THESE MINUTES WERE PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve the agenda as written.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve February 12 and February 17th, 2026, meeting minutes.

Motion made by Hopkins, seconded by Yellow Bull, to approve Auditors account with the Treasurer for January 2026.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve two Non-Owner Real Estate Tax payment agreements, one for James Twiss in the amount of \$200.00/ month, for Hatti M. Twiss; one for and for Travis Loafer in the amount of \$200.00/ month, for Richard Loafer.

Lynx Bettelyoun, Highway Superintendent, met with the board.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to accept Bob Lee Trucking Agreement for 2026.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve Lynx Bettelyoun's payout for 120 unused vacation hours.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve Banner Associates to advertise for the 2026 Oglala Lakota County Aggregate Production Project.

State's Attorney Lance Russell said that since the proposed property to purchase for the county is assessed as agriculture, the county must have 3 landowners to appraise the land. Suggestions were made for that purpose. Russell will draft a form for the reappraisal. There will be a special meeting on 3/3/2026 to appoint 3 landowners.

Bryan Kehn, County resident, called in at 1:19pm. Motion by Bear Runner, seconded by Yellow Bull to approve late application for Agriculture status for tax year 2025, pay 2026, and approve the abatement in the amount of \$1,637.78, pay 2026 tax, parcel number 17000-03741-03300.

Anna Takes the Shield, called in at 1:20pm

Ramon Bear Runner, arrived at 1:27pm

Bettelyoun also provided Updates.

Jerlene Arrendondo, VSO, met with the board.

Motion made by Hopkins, seconded by Yellow Bull, to approve GDx report (Summary of Direct and Indirect Expenditures).

Daylon Black Bull, Sheriff, met with the board.

Motion made by Bear Runner, seconded by Yellow Bull, to approve purchase of software called Omnixx, in the amount of \$390.00 per month for background searches, and issuing pistol permits.

Commissioners spoke on the change of venue meeting in Pierre. Commissioner Comer attended the meeting and mentioned they were very vague about previous. 13 interveners were present, but concerns were voiced about the lack of notifications concerning the date and time of the hearing. Representatives of the Rosebud and Oglala Sioux Tribes weren't present; however, the Rosebud Tribe sent an Attorney. The Board went into executive session, when they came out of executive session they filed a continuation until March 18th, with a possible meeting in April also.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to schedule a special meeting for Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.

Bear Runner left meeting at 2:45p.m.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to approve the bills as follows:

GENERAL FUND		
ARREDONDO, JERLENE	MILEAGE TO/FROM COMM	\$70.00
BEAR RUNNER, RAMON	MILEAGE TO/FROM COMM	\$91.00
HOPKINS, ARTHUR L	MILEAGE TO/FROM COMM	\$148.40
MASTERCARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASE	\$315.89
\$12.65 EVIDENCE POSTAGE, \$53.39 SUBWAY/COMM MTG FOOD 2/12/26, \$52.35 SHER FUEL, \$73.30 SHER FUEL, \$89.95 INV 1-671352 GR W TIRE 4WHEEL, \$3.00 " " SHOP SUPPLIES ALIGNMENT, \$24.00 " " ROTTIRES, \$7.25 " " SALES TAX		
SD ASSN OF COUNTY COMM.	CATASTROPHIC LEGAL E	\$309.00
SD ASSN OF COUNTY COMM.	2026 SDACC & NACO ME	\$4,208.00
SOUTHERN HILLS LAW PLLC	COURT APPT ATTY SERV	\$859.70
YELLOW BULL, WENDELL	MILEAGE TO/FROM COMM	\$91.00
COMER, ALLYSSA	TRAV TO/FROM PIERRE/	\$286.00
COMER, ALLYSSA	MILEAGE TO/FROM COMM	\$134.40

COMMISSION	WAGES & BENEFITS	\$3,100.02
ST ATTY	WAGES & BENEFITS	\$568.26
	TOTAL FOR GENERAL FUND	\$10,181.67
COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE FUND		
BUCHE HARDWARE & LUMBER	TOOLS/PARTS/SUPPLIES	\$89.54
\$16.99 INV 250896/1 WEDGE TOOL 12", \$24.99 " " IMPCT MGNTC DRV GD ST 6", \$19.99 " " DW SGMNT DIAMOND 4.5", \$6.59 " " STAPLE NM PLSTC 3/4"BG50, \$7.99 " " NIPPLE GALV 2"X3", \$12.99 " " COUPLING GLV 2X2"		
GREAT PLAINS COMMUNICATIO	TELEPHONE & INTERNET	\$222.62
GREAT WESTERN TIRE INC.	SERVICE	\$149.50
GREAT WESTERN TIRE INC.	VOID/PREV PD W/ EMAIL	-\$10,270.00
LONGBRANCH CIVIL ENGINEER	PREPARATION OF PLAT/	\$3,874.00
MASTERCARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASE	\$4.06
\$1.99 CLOUD STORAGE CELL PHONE, \$2.07 GOOGLE ONE,		
MENARDS	SUPPLIES/TOOLS	\$71.71
\$25.49 INV 95316 CHARMIN STRONG 24MR, \$17.97 " " 1" QUAD TIP GLASS&TILE, \$2.10 " " BIC HIGHLIGHTER ASRT, \$2.99 " " SHARPIE HIGH-LT ASST 4 CT, \$1.19 " " MAJOR ACCENT LARGE FL YLW, \$10.99 " " ANGEL SOFT MEGA, \$10.98 " " 1-1-5/8" PIPE CUTTER		
CRBR ADMIN	WAGES & BENEFITS	\$6,852.32
MICROFILM IMAGING SYSTEMS	SCANNING EQUIP MONTH	\$75.00
TRIMIN SYSTEMS, INC	LAND SOFTWARE	\$2,733.00
	TOTAL FOR COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE FUND	\$3,801.75
	TOTAL FOR BILLS PAID BETWEEN 02/13 & 02/26/2026	\$13,983.42

There was no public comment.

Motion made by Yellow Bull, seconded by Hopkins, to adjourn the meeting at 3:11 p.m.

/s/Allyssa Comer
Allyssa Comer, Chairwoman
Board of Oglala Lakota County Commissioners

ATTEST:
/s/Sue Ganje
Sue Ganje
Oglala Lakota County Auditor

OGLALA LAKOTA COUNTY SPECIAL UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF MARCH 3RD 2026

The Oglala Lakota Board of County Commissioners met in special session at Fall River County Courthouse on March 3rd, 2026. Allyssa Comer, Art Hopkins, Anna Takes the Shield (Dubray), Wendell Yellow Bull, Sue Ganje, County Auditor were present. Ramon Bear Runner was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 1:12 p.m. by Chairwoman Comer. The agenda was reviewed for conflicts. ALL MOTIONS RECORDED IN THESE MINUTES WERE PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Motion made by Takes the Shield, seconded by Yellow Bull, to amend the agenda to add a letter to the Forest Supervisor, Nebraska National Forest in reference to the Jinx Project Proposal.

Motion by Yellow Bull, seconded by Takes the Shield to appoint Donald Buffington, David E Cuny and Mark Donovan to appraise the Lynx tract, located in the NE1/4 of section 3, T35N, R43W, 6th p.m., Oglala Lakota county, South Dakota as per SDCL 7-12.

The board reviewed a letter addressing concerns on behalf of the county to protect the environment of the citizens of Oglala Lakota County and the ancestral home of the Lakota People.

Motion by Yellow Bull, seconded by Takes the Shield the Motion made by Takes the Shield, seconded by Yellow Bull, to approve the October Jinx Project #67625 Formal Comment, and formal opposition letter, and to further submit the letter to the Forest Supervisor to request that the Forest Service complete an Environmental Impact Statement, as the Commission believes that the National Environmental Policy Act Planning documents prepared by the Forest Service are inadequate and violate the act.

Motion made by Hopkins, seconded by Yellow Bull, to approve Yellow Bull going to meet with the Badlands Conservation District on services provided to the county.

The board also discussed various items. Yellow Bull spoke on the need to have financial documents at the next meeting to prepare for the proposed land and building, including cash balances, expenses, revenues and cash designations. Hopkins spoke on the Oglala Lakota – Fall River County contract and presented his thoughts on the possibility of commissioners funding a scholarship program; discussion was also held on the need for a flashing speed limit sign on the tribal road where accidents/recent deaths have occurred. Yellow Bull spoke of the NaHa program, and the board discussed a possible fire truck and trained firefighters

Motion made by Takes the Shield, seconded by Yellow Bull, to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 pm.

/s/ Allyssa Comer
Allyssa Comer, Chairwoman
Board of Oglala Lakota County Commissioners

ATTEST:
/S/ Sue Ganje
Sue Ganje, Auditor



**Board of Minerals
and Environment**

523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182
(605)773-3886

The public may participate in-person or via telephone by dialing 1 605-679-7263 and entering Conference ID 536933764#. The full board packet, the link for live streaming, and instructions for joining the meeting are available on the South Dakota Boards and Commissions Portal at <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=67>.

AGENDA

Board of Minerals and Environment
State Capitol Building
Room 414
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD

March 18, 2026

10:00 a.m. Central Time

Call to order and roll call

Approve agenda

Approval of February 19, 2026, meeting minutes

Transfer of Small Scale Mine Permit 397 from Wade's Gold Mill, Inc. to Robert Wade – Eric Holm

Annual update of post closure financial assurance for Homestake Mining Company, Mine Permits 332 and 456 and Mine Permit 445 – Eric Holm

Mining issues consent calendar – Tom Cline

Requests for the Board to overrule Pre-hearing Orders issued by Hearing Chair Morris in the matter of Clean Nuclear Energy Corporation Uranium Exploration Permit Application; EXNI 453.

Public comment period in accordance with SDCL 1-25-1

Upcoming board meetings

Adjourn

Notice is given to individuals with disabilities that the meeting is being held in a physically accessible location. Individuals requiring assistive technology or other services in order to participate in the meeting or materials in an alternate format should contact Brian Walsh, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, by calling (605) 773-5559 as soon as possible but no later than two business days prior to the meeting to ensure accommodations are available.

weeks in advance by the employee to their supervisor. Every effort will be made to ensure that all employees are treated equally and fairly. In some instances, it may not be possible to grant all leaves requested during busy times or emergency situations; however, every effort will be made to grant requests.

An employee anticipating a leave of absence is encouraged to apply for such leave as soon as possible. Appointed Officials must submit paper leave slips to be signed by the Commissioners for all sick and vacation leave time.

6.3.2 Sick Leave:

Sick Leave: Full-time employees in their first year of employment shall be entitled to a half (1/2) day per month, six (6) days per year, after completing sixty (60) days of employment are allowed to start using their sick leave balance. Beginning with the second year of employment, the employee shall be entitled to one (1) day per month, twelve (12) days per year. Sick leave accrual is calculated and credited at the end of each pay period. Sick leave may be used for doctor, dentist, chiropractor, counseling, etc. appointments, to include travel time, but is not allowed for personal business. The County may request a letter from a physician if out for more than three consecutive days. Eligible employees may take FMLA concurrently with sick leave when the reason for leave qualifies under both this policy and the FMLA policy.

6.3.3 Vacation

Vacation: Full-time employees are eligible for vacation. Vacation is available on the annual anniversary of hire date. Hours are based off an eight (8) hour workday.

After one (1) year of service	Nine (9) days [72 hours]
After two (2) years of service	Twelve (12) days [96 hours]
After five (5) years of service	Fifteen (15) days [120 hours]
After ten (10) years of service	Eighteen (18) days [144 hours]
After fifteen (15) years of service	Twenty-One (21) days [168 hours]
After twenty (20) years of service	Twenty-Four (24) days [192 hours]

Vacation will be prorated upon the discharge or dismissal of the employee. Employees in their probationary period are not eligible.

Unused vacation time of 120 hours is allowed to be carried over on employee’s anniversary date. Upon Commissioner approval the remainder of vacation leave above 120 hours may be paid out on their paycheck if requested. Update 02/26/2026 and approved on 03/12/2026.

6.3.4 Funeral Leave

In the event of a death in the immediate family, employees will be allowed to take up to five (5) days of funeral leave a year. New employees need to wait until they are out of their probationary period. An employee may, upon approval of their supervisor, take additional annual leave or leave without pay. For the purposes of defining ‘immediate family’ is defined as: spouse (partner), son, daughter, hunkapi (adopted) children, mother,

2026 APPEAL PROCESS TIME FRAME

- March 1 - assessment notices must be mailed
- March 15 - last day to file for owner-occupied status with Director of Equalization

Local Board of Equalization

- March 12 - last day to mail or file¹ written appeal with clerk of local board (SDCL 10-11-16)
- March 16 - local board begins (SDCL 10-11-13)
- March 20 - local board ends (SDCL 10-11-14)
- March 27 - last day to receive written notice of local board's decision (SDCL 10-11-16.1)

County Board of Equalization

- April 7 - last day to mail or file¹ written appeal with county auditor (SDCL 10-11-23)
- April 14 - county board begins (SDCL 10-11-25)
- May 5 - county board ends (SDCL 10-11-25)
- May 8 - last day to receive written notice of county board's decision (SDCL 10-11-26.1)

Consolidated Board of Equalization

- April 7 - last day to mail or file¹ written appeal with county auditor (SDCL 10-11-67)
- April 14 - consolidated board begins (SDCL 10-11-71)
- May 5 - consolidated board ends (SDCL 10-11-71)
- May 8 - last day to receive written notice of consolidated board's decision (SDCL 10-11-73)

Office of Hearing Examiners

- May 15 - last day to mail or file¹ a written appeal (SDCL 10-11-42) with:

Chief Administrative Hearing Officer

523 E. Capitol Ave

Pierre, SD 57501

Circuit Court

Appealing from County Board - you must appeal within 30 days after notice has been served of the decision.

Appealing from Office of Hearing Examiners - you must appeal within 30 days after notice of the decision.

¹ Use of the term "file" means in the hands of the official with whom it is to be filed. Postmarked by deadline is considered timely mailing.



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Fall River / Oglala Lakota Counties

Director of Equalization

1029 North River Street, Hot Springs, SD 57747

Ph. 605-745-5186 Email: doe@frcounty.org



Travel Accommodations

Motel Reservations Made:

Event: SDAAG Conference

Dates: June 2-5

Location: Sioux Falls, SD

Motel Name: Holiday Inn Sioux Falls-City Centre

Rate Quoted: \$110 x 3 nights

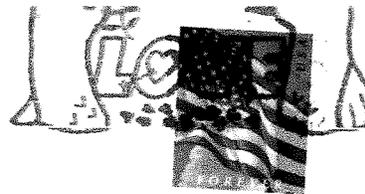
of Rooms: 1

People Attending: Morgan Erickson

Date made on: 2/27/26

Confirmation #: 62179053

Billing Info: _____



RECEIVED
FEB 27 2026
BY: _____



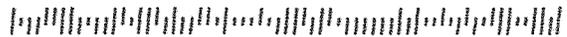
Badlands Conservation District
706 W. Bennett Ave.
Suite 2
Martin, SD 57551

Phone/FAX - 605-685-1243

OGLALA LAKOTA CO. COMMISSIONERS
906 N RIVER ST
HOT SPRINGS SD 57747

*An Equal Opportunity Employer
Education programs and materials offered without
regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap or
national origin. Oglala Lakota County, State of
South Dakota and USDA cooperating.*

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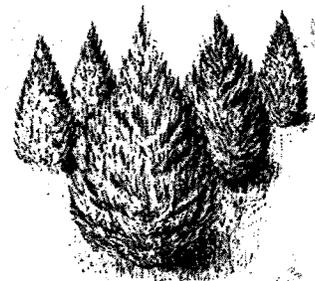
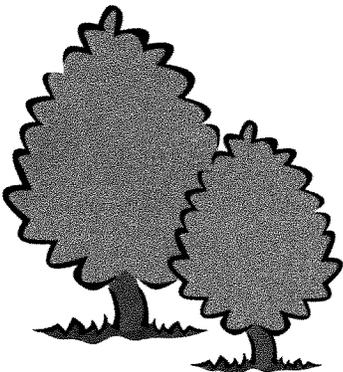


Still Time to Order Trees & Shrubs!

Were you planning on ordering trees for planting this Spring? It's not too late. The District is still taking orders and the nurseries have a good assortment of stock available. The District will continue to take orders through the end of March.

Are you considering a tree planting? The benefits of windbreaks are evident throughout the county. A properly installed windbreak can collect and hold snow on a field, reduce evaporation in the summer, protect livestock from wintry winds, help prevent soil from blowing and enhance the natural beauty of the countryside while providing a suitable habitat for wildlife.

If you have a shelterbelt and wish to add a few rows around the outside or plant a new windbreak, contact the Conservation District office. We will help you to draw up plans for the planting, identify the species of trees and shrubs needed and order them for you. Cost-share may be available to help with the costs.



Cover Up!

One soil health building approach gaining interest is the inclusion of cover crops in rotations. Cover crops can be used to meet specific goals such as minimizing soil erosion, moisture management, weed suppression and improving soil conditions.

Cover crops can also provide an opportunity for producers to both extend the grazing season and provide a rest period for cool-season pasture or rangeland. Following small grain harvest, cover crop mixtures can provide high quality forage late into the fall.

The cover crop species generally called brassicas, which includes turnips, canola, radishes and rape, make excellent forage for livestock. Brassicas are short

season root crops that produce an abundance of top growth.

Other benefits to grazing cover crops include additional rest for pastures, soil quality improvement and greater ease of springtime planting.



2026 Resource Conservation Speech Contest

Each year the Bennett County Conservation District sponsors the local portion of the Resource Conservation Speech contest. The 2026 topic is, **“Urban Conservation: Healing Our Communities**

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation and Forestry Division, sponsors this resource conservation –oriented speech contest statewide each year. Any South Dakota student in grades 9-12 is eligible to enter. This includes public, private and home-school students.

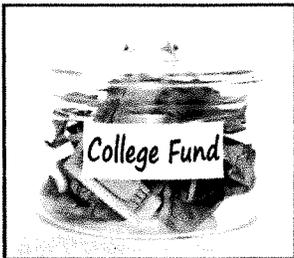
The contest consists of three levels—local, area and state.

Two winners from each of the local contests advance to the area contests. Two winners from each of the seven area contests advance to the state competition. Contestants compete for one of three scholarships—

- ◆ First Place: \$1,200 Scholarship
- ◆ Second Place: \$800 Scholarship
- ◆ Third Place: \$500 Scholarship

East River Electric Power Cooperative, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and South Dakota Rural Electric Association present the winners with scholarships to be used at any college, university or accredited vocational technical school within South Dakota. Other sponsors include the South Dakota Dept. of Agriculture & Natural Resources and the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts.

For more information contact the Bennett County Conservation District at 605-685-1243. The local contest must be completed by February 28, 2026 with the area contest completed by March 14, 2026. The State contest will be held in Pierre on March 28, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. (CDT) in the State Capitol building.



Snowed In?

Plant a living snow fence!

Plant conservation trees to keep snow off your driveway, farmyard, or feed lot. Living snow fences can also be used to help keep county and state roads free of snow.



Remember: Replace Dead Trees & Shrubs!

It is important to the basic design of your tree planting to fill in any gaps.

Even though your trees are dormant, you can still tell if a young tree is alive by **gently** bending the stem over. If it bends without cracking or breaking, the seedling is still alive.

If you completed your planting with some form of cost-share, you are required to replace missing trees. If found in non-compliance, you could be required to pay back any and all payments you received for the planting. If you are having prob-

lems with a particular species, give us a call and we will see if a different species can be worked into your site.

Also, while you are out there, take some time to make sure the trees are not being girdled by the weed barrier fabric. The fabric has made an important contribution to the health and growth of your planting. It is important that you remove fabric restrictions now for the continued success of your windbreak.

Why Both USDA-NRCS and the Badlands Conservation District?

Overlooked or unknown by many is that there are actually two government agencies represented in the Martin office. One, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is a federal agency manned by federal employees—Sandra Huber, Joe Eastman and Jordon Cano. The other, the Badlands Conservation District, is a legal subdivision of the state. Patty Beck is a district employee. Even though everyone works out of the same office, doing the same kind of work, there are some fundamental differences.

The Badlands Conservation District was organized in 1954 under state law by a vote of the people within Oglala Lakota County. The NRCS was then invited to come in and assist the District.

As a subdivision of the State, the District is managed by a board of elected supervisors. These supervisors, under current law, serve four-year terms. Nathan Kehn, Marion Schultz, Virgil Rust, Larry Kehn and Sam Smith presently comprise the board. At the Board's discretion, they can appoint non-voting advisors.

The District's number one responsibility is carrying out a program of conservation within the District. Whereas planning and advising are more of a responsibility for NRCS, the District's role is to help implement conservation practices. To that end, the District provides trees, drills, and tree planting services to the people of Oglala Lakota County. It is also the District's responsibility to approve proposed conservation plans.

Much of the money the District uses to operate must come from money earned from the services it provides. New services have been offered in the past few years and existing ones expanded. Grants from the State's conservation grant have helped make these improvements possible.

The best time to plant trees was 20 years ago. The next best time is now!

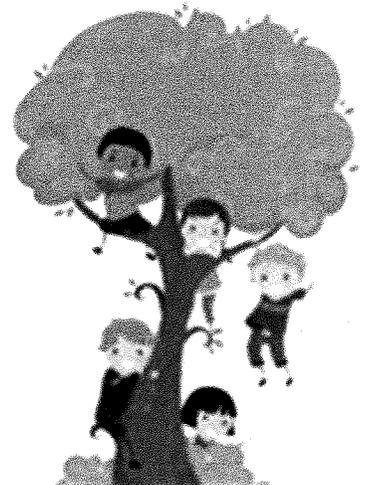
Check for Power Lines Before You Plant!

It is always a good idea to check for overhead and/or buried lines prior to planting. There is also a state law (SDCL 49-71, also known as SD One-Call) which requires that no excavator may begin any project without first notifying the One-Call Notification Center of the proposed excavation.

Even if you are only planting one tree in your backyard, it is a good idea to check for both overhead and buried lines. Tiny trees turn into far-reaching flora whose branches can touch power lines.

Trees in contact with power lines can easily conduct electricity, putting tree-climbing, kite-flying children at risk of injury.

So before you begin to plant, make sure to find out if there are any power lines in the area.



I Am Proud to be a District Cooperator Because...

...I am a partner in the first, the largest, the most active, and the most effective organization ever conceived and dedicated to the conservation and development of our natural resources.

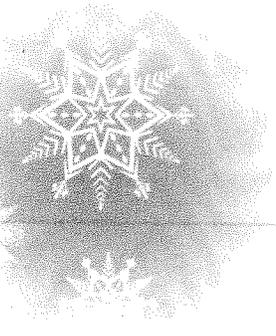
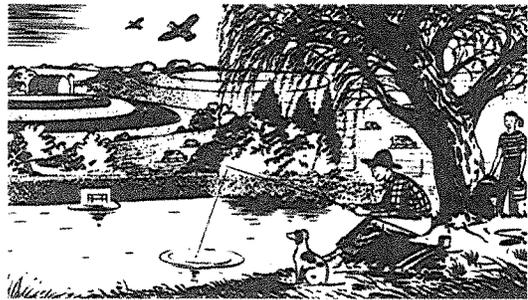
...I, as an individual, am involved in a program designed specifically to improve the land on which I work and I am aware that the benefits which accrue to me are also benefits which affect citizens throughout SD and the nation because they are making this nation a better place in which to live.

...I am aware that our natural

resources are both vital and vulnerable...more so than at any time in world history...and I realize the tremendous importance that each Conservation District bears in relation to the enormous task of providing proper and orderly resource management for this nation.

...I know that my fellow cooperators in SD have pooled their efforts in practical programs which have changed the face of our state in the past 75 years...more than 169,182,644 trees and shrubs have been planted as shelterbelts and

windbreaks on more than 346,755 acres, and more than 100,000 of our dams and dug-outs now hold water on 350,000 acres to provide a reliable supply of water for livestock and irrigation, minimize flood danger, enhance wildlife habitat, and furnish recreation.



Planting For Pollinators



Native grasses and perennial flowers provide an attractive, environmentally friendly landscape while reducing water and maintenance requirements. One of the greatest benefits of using native plants in your landscape is that they provide much-needed habitat for our pollinators. They are also usually self-sufficient once established.

Perennials can bring texture and softness into a landscape design. A wide diversity of perennial plants provides endless opportunities for adding color, an assortment of sizes and shapes, and offer relatively low maintenance.

Perennial flowers offer something for everyone and are relatively easy to maintain. They vary greatly in size, shape, color, bloom season and duration of bloom and, due to this, their use in the landscape is unlimited. To be the best benefit to pollinators, it is best to choose a variety of plants to provide blooms during the entire season, from spring through fall.

Loss of habitat is one of the biggest issues contributing to the decline of pollinators. With the loss of prairies, forests, and other natural areas to development and agricultural use, pollinators are having a harder time finding the resources they need.

While a backyard butterfly garden will never be a substitute for acres of prairie, even small-scale gardens, thoughtfully planted and protected from pesticides, can add up to meaningful habitat.

While it may seem contrary to commonly held beliefs, recent research suggests that pollinators do better in environments where

they are protected from the types of pesticides and monocultures that degrade habitat in agricultural areas.

It's time to get creative about where to plant for pollinators. Think about the lands you have influence over. Spaces that you may not think of as habitat such as scruffy undeveloped spots, disturbed spaces between buildings, and areas along roadsides and trails, may often be vital to protecting pollinators in the landscape. While these spaces may seem void of any resources, aggressive native and non-native plants are often first to move into these spaces, thriving in tiny cracks and compacted soils. These "weeds" often provide valuable sources of pollen and nectar. It's also important to note that 70% of native bee species are ground nesting, tunneling into hard earth like ants. In our overly manicured landscapes, these undeveloped or disturbed sites may provide the best, and sometimes only access to bare ground. Protecting these spaces from pesticide use and clearing trash and debris can help maintain these habitats while beautifying the area.

As we carve up the landscape, habitat becomes fragmented. Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators don't need large patches to live in, and the fact that they can fly means they can move easily from one patch to another. Filling in the gaps can sustain this biodiversity, and create corridors back to nature.



2025 NRCS

Requests for assistance increased in 2025 at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Martin. The field office staff worked hard to help producers and landowners preserve natural resources by identifying resource concerns and implementing practices to solve those concerns. Unfortunately, funding was tight and with the rising costs to implement the practices only a few applications could be funded.

We would still like to encourage producers to take a close look at our programs and see if there are natural resource concerns we can help them address through programs and technical assistance. While there are still a lot of unknowns with a continuing Farm Bill and new administration, we are still here to serve you. Stop by or call with your concerns and if we can't assist you, we may be able to refer you to someone else that can. We were fortunate to team up with Ducks Unlimited on a Regional Conservation Partnership Agreement to help one producer, that we were not able to fund, through our Classic EQIP Program. So, there may be other opportunities out there if you let us know your needs.

We take applications year around and can also provide technical assistance. Below is a recap of the funding that producers in our area received in 2025 and the practices that were completed.

EQIP

- 36 - EQIP applications
- 7 - Classic Applications Funded
- 1 - RCPP Application Funded
- \$960,945.05- Total Funded
- 19,510 - Total Acres

CSP

- 3 - CSP Classic Applications
- 0 - Application Funded

Practices completed under all active EQIP and CSP contracts:

- 69,687 feet Fence
- 6,129 feet Livestock Pipeline
- 72,389 acres Prescribed Grazing
- 8 Pumping Plants
- 9 Watering Facilities (Tanks)
- 7 Wells
- 2 Well Decommissionings
- 2 Spring Developments
- 2 - Fabricated Windbreaks

- 900 acres Cover Crops
- 158 ac Forage Harvest Management
- 1512 ac Nutrient Management
- 5914 ac Pest Management
- 12 ac Herbaceous Weed Control
- 122 acres Range Planting
- 896 acres Pasture and Hay Planting
- 4 acres Critical Area Seeding

Total Cost Share for all Practices completed in FY 2025 = \$768,191

In addition, to the NRCS programs available, we also assist Farm Service Agency (FSA) with technical assistance on programs such as CRP. The CRP CREP program is a newer program, which targets grazing land on the reservation. This program is similar to the Grasslands CRP Program. Last year we completed the field work and wrote 5 conservation plans for CRP CREP, which covered 14,919.53 acres.

While CRP SAFE hasn't been quite as popular, we still wrote 4 CRP SAFE conservation plans on 366.21 acres for re-enrollment in the program and one managed haying and grazing plan.

Field status reviews were completed on 19 active CRP contracts. These reviews are conducted to ensure the grass or trees are established, no weeds are encroaching, and acres under contract are maintained as agreed to in the contract.

In addition to programs, Martin NRCS staff held a Youth Horticulture, Crops, and Range Judging Contest for kids ages 8-18 at Bennett County Fair. Thirty-three youth participated in the contests. We also set up a booth at the fair encouraging attendees to test their knowledge of rangeland plants.

If you have a natural resource concern, we are here to assist you whether it's with technical assistance or programs. NRCS can provide assistance to small scale producers as well as larger farm and ranch operations. We can also provide workshops and school programs. Reach out to us and let us know how we can help you. Give us a call at 605-685-1239 Ext 3. We look forward to working with you in 2026.

Sandy Huber - District Conservationist

Joe Eastman - Soil Conservationist

Jordan Cano - Soil Conservation Technician

"The USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer"

2025 Financial Report

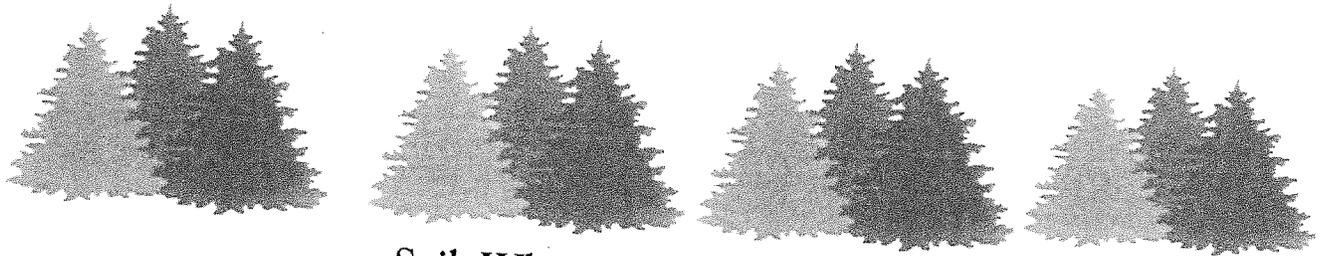
Badlands Conservation District

Income:

County Funding	\$ 3,000.00
Charges for Goods & Services	\$ 2,144.50
Other Income	\$ 80.84
Total Income	\$ 5,225.34

Expenses:

Office Expenses	\$ 1,138.14
Membership & Dues	\$.00
Supervisor Expenses	\$.00
Employee Expenses	\$ 2,832.59
Information & Education Expenses	\$ 70.00
Tree Planting Expenses	\$ 1,138.67
Equipment Expenses	\$.00
Depreciation Expenses	\$ 43.00
Other Expenses	\$.00
Total Expenses	\$ 5,222.40



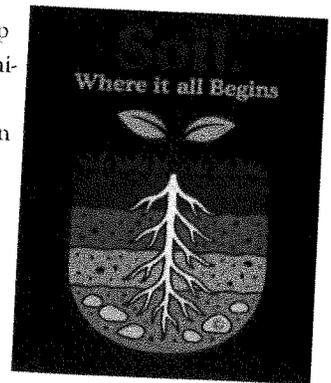
Soil. Where It All Begins

The 2026 NACD Stewardship Week theme, *Soil Where It All Begins*, celebrates the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. Soil is not just the ground we walk on. It is the starting point for healthy food, clean water, thriving habitats, and resilient communities. From backyard gardens to forests and city parks, everything begins with what is beneath our feet.

Soil does a lot more than grow plants. It holds water, cycles nutrients, and provides homes for billions of living organisms that help keep nature in balance. It keeps roots in place, helps prevent flooding, and supports wildlife and people alike. The trees in our neighborhoods, the food on our tables, and the natural places we love all depend on healthy soils.

Conservation districts across the country work every day to protect this vital resource. Through education, technical support, and local partnerships, they help landowners and communities keep soil healthy, productive, and resilient. Districts also provide educational resources to schools, families, and community groups to inspire the next generation of soil stewards and help people of all ages connect with conservation in meaningful ways. Whether it is helping farmers manage erosion or supporting school gardens in town, conservation districts lead the way in caring for the land.

When we take care of soil, we are taking care of everything it supports. This is why soil is where it all begins.



SDACD Memorial Scholarship

The South Dakota Association of Conservation District Employees (SDACDE) is offering three \$ scholarships. The purpose of this scholarship program is to encourage those students concerned with their natural resources by furthering their education in an agricultural/conservation related field. The scholarship is available to graduating high school seniors who will be attending a 4-year college or a vocational school. Recipients will be a current year graduate of a South Dakota High School and have graduated in the upper 50% of their graduating class. The SDACDE set up the SDACDE Memorial Scholarship in 1995 to honor the memory of past employees and their passion, dedication and commitment to the conservation movement.

For more information or an application form, please contact the Conservation District at 605-685-1243. All applications must be postmarked on or before March 31, 2026.



2025 District Year in Review

The Badlands Conservation District continued several successful programs through out 2025. Included were the following: Sponsored the local portion of the Resource Conservation Speech contest; the local Arbor Day Essay contest; promoted Stewardship Week; supplied 923 trees and shrubs to area producers; rented out the CrustBuster drill; published the Annual Report and Newsletter and annual Tree Newsletter; assisted producers in the management of their resources; promoted conservation programs; and, assisted the USDA-NRCS.

Windbreaks and Soil Health

Soil health management systems can include single or multiple conservation practices that contribute to the four basic soil health principles:

- ◆ Use plant diversity to increase diversity in the soil;
- ◆ Manage soils more by disturbing them less;
- ◆ Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil; and,
- ◆ Keep the soil covered as much as possible.

The most common practices include conservation crop rotation, cover crop, no-till, mulch tillage, nutrient management, and pest management. Implementation of other conservation practices, such as field windbreaks, can also improve soil health and provide long-term environmental and economic benefits.

Windbreaks are strips of trees and/or shrubs planted and maintained to alter wind flow and microclimate, thereby protecting a specific area. Field windbreaks can protect a variety of wind sensitive crops, control wind erosion, and increase bee pollination and pesticide effectiveness. It has long been known that while establishment of a windbreak requires taking some land out of crop production, the result is typically a net increase in crop production. It is important to note that windbreaks also have the potential to positively influence soil health on the protected cropland acres.

Field windbreaks reduce wind erosion by providing a zone of wind reduction on the leeward side of the trees and shrubs. The size of the area protected is determined by windbreak height and density. Windblown topsoil can contain high levels of organic matter which plays a key role in providing nutrients to plants improving soil structure, increasing water capacity, and feeding soil microorganisms. Windbreaks with properly spaced tree and shrub rows reduce erosion across the field and keep organic matter on field benefits both the crops and soil biology.



Example of the Effects of a Windbreak on Wind Speed

Windbreaks reduce erosion where it

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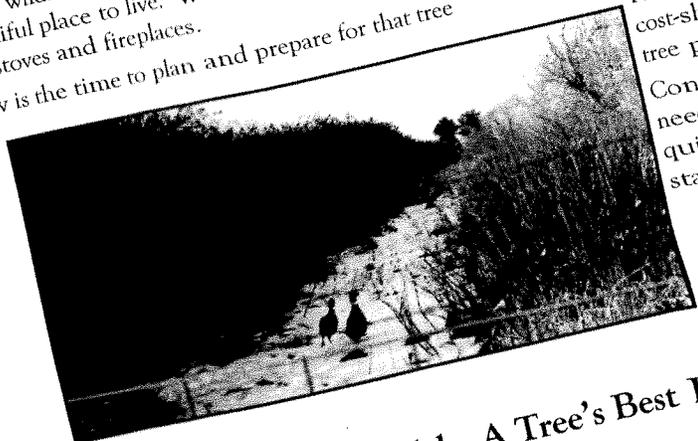
LANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2025 Annual Report & Newsletter

Trees, Anyone?

...re an investment in the future and play an important role in the agricultural landscape and logging operations. ...make our lives better. They benefit us in many ways, including making our homes easier to heat and cool and protecting our livestock from extreme cold or hot temperatures. They can reduce erosion and protect crops and provide habitat for wildlife. They also make our world a more beautiful place to live. We even burn them in our stoves and fireplaces. Now is the time to plan and prepare for that tree

planting you have been wanting. Don't continue to put it off. Prices keep going up and the years keep sliding by. Don't go into a tree planting with your eyes closed though, either. It will take some effort to grow a stand of trees you will be proud to show off, but you can do it. Trees are great but their placement needs to be planned. What areas do you want to protect from snowdrifts? Do you plan to enlarge the feedlot? Where might you want a new building? It can be painful to plant a tree, nurture it and then have to tear it out because it's in your way. Financial assistance in the form of cost-share may be available for your tree planting. Contact us for your tree planting needs. You will be surprised how quickly your well cared for trees start repaying you for your labors.



Mulch—A Tree's Best Friend

Mulch is any material placed on the soil to cover and protect it. Common mulches include bark, wood chips, decorative gravel and crushed lava. Mulch covers a portion of a tree's trunk and can significantly improve growing conditions. Some mulches are toxic to young trees and can deplete nitrogen in the soil as some decompose.

It is especially important to keep mulch a few inches back from the trunk of the tree. Overall, most of the problems are preventable and are easily balanced by the many benefits. Benefits of mulch include:

- * Retention of soil moisture;
- * Weed and grass control;
- * Protection of the trunk and surface roots from mowing equipment;

- * Erosion control as mulch breaks the impact of rain;
- * Improved soil structure;
- * Simplified maintenance and improved appearance; and,
- * Reduced soil cracking that can damage small roots and speed drying and help in prevention of soil compaction.

Board of Supervisors:

- ◆ Nathan Kehn, Chairman
- ◆ Marion Schultz, Vice-Chairman
- ◆ Virgil Rust, Treasurer
- ◆ Larry Kehn, Supervisor
- ◆ Sam Smith, Supervisor

Assisting the District:

- ◆ Patty Beck, District Clerk

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service:

- ◆ Sandra Huber, Dist. Conservationist
- ◆ Joe Eastman, Soil Conservationist
- ◆ Jordon Cano, Soil Cons. Technician

