

President's Message

As I stepped out the front door this morning the crisp, cool air was a clear reminder that fall is just around the corner. Living on the northern plains we know better than most how impressive the changes in the seasons can be. While driving around the countryside the signs are everywhere. The shorebird migration is in full swing, clouds of red winged blackbirds are appearing, and even a few ash trees are beginning to show a hint of yellow.

For me personally this is a time of anticipation and preparation. It's time to haul out the duck decoys and make needed repairs all the while with the sound of air being torn by wings in the back of my mind. It's also time for some refresher drills for my pup Avery with visions of that first rooster busting up through some thick cover on both our minds. For everyone the ritual is different but in the end it is this yearly process of preparing for the fall that is in large measure what connects us to the outdoors and allows us to pass down our passion to the next generation.

As my little girl gets older I can't wait to get her involved with all varieties of outdoor adventures. Along with many of our wildlife species the changing of the seasons also puts us in touch with something at our core telling us that lean times are coming. It's time to split fire wood, can tomatoes, and get ready for the cold, snow, and hardships to come.

However you celebrate the changing of the seasons make sure to make the time to get out and enjoy all the wonders a South Dakota fall has to offer.

Rocco Murano—President
SD Chapter of The Wildlife Society



Robert W Hines graphic from USFWS files

MEMBERSHIP

Know anyone who is a wildlife professional, who is in a field related to wildlife conservation, or anyone with an interest in South Dakota wildlife? Have you noticed co-workers or someone you know that has been missing at annual meetings?

Since 2010, we have listed annual memberships on the SDTWS website (contact information will remain confidential). If you see someone who is not on the list, take some time to share with those individuals what the SDTWS has to offer.



Membership is \$10/year for a regular membership and \$6/year for students. You can renew a membership by using the membership form included at the end of this newsletter.

Please make your payment to SDTWS. Please give Susan Rupp a call at 605-688-4779 or an email at Susan.Rupp@sdstate.edu if you have any questions.

Life Members: The full list of members is available on the website.



SDTWS can now be found on Facebook!

SDTWS is now on Facebook! Facebook is a social networking website and it is free! If you are currently not signed up for Facebook, you can use the following link and it will direct you to a page to sign up. If you are already a member, the link below will take you the SDTWS Facebook page, where you can join the group!

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/group.php?gid=375605397459>

Facebook is a great way to share information. Facebook can be used to post events, such as the upcoming Outdoor Expo, and to stimulate discussions on environmental issues or other topics of interest. The SDTWS Facebook page is also another way that we can reach out to recruit more individuals in the wildlife conservation field in South Dakota. We are very excited about this new tool and we hope as members that you will benefit from it too!

If you have any questions about the page or have some suggestions or ideas to post, please contact Nora Kohlenberg, nora.kohlenberg@state.sd.us.

**(Draft) Minutes of the September 22, 2011 Executive Board Meeting of the
South Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society (SDTWS)**

SDTWS meeting – Camp Lakodia, Madison, SD

The SDTWS Board met at Camp Lakodia in Madison, SD, on September 22, 2011. Several topics of interest to the membership were discussed. Included was the recent decision made by NRCS to allow “third party wetland determination.” On behalf of the Board and membership of SDTWS, President Murano submitted a letter expressing concerns about third party wetland delineations to Ms. Janet Ortely at NRCS. In that letter three items were noted: 1) issues of fairness and a “pay to play” atmosphere across producers, 2) the potential for reviews to certify determinations that would not necessarily have been made by NRCS staff, and 3) NRCS is legally obligated to provide technical assistance with regards to wetland determination and swamp buster compliance. President Murano reported that the letter essentially was stopped in its tracks at the NRCS office. Past-president Chad Switzer suggested waiting until the SDTWS meeting and addressing it with the membership during the business meeting.

Board member, Mark Norton noted he was on a conference call with various people from the America's Grassland Conference on Tuesday Sept. 20th to discuss grassland policy. They decided to draft a letter informing legislators on key committees, including the "super committee" of our 4 priorities identified at the conference:

- 1) Link conservation compliance with crop insurance
- 2) Adopt a strong national sodsaver provision.
- 3) Ensure a strong grasslands component to working lands programs
- 4) Maintain funding for easements on native grasslands.

They are going see how many organizations they can get to sign on to this letter and submit it by mid-October. The SDTWS board was in agreement to sign on to this letter once it is available. Norton agreed to send around a draft as soon as he got a copy.

The Board also reviewed and approved the May and September 2011 Treasurer's Reports. Secretary/Treasurer Susan Rupp commented that the prairie chicken mount recently sponsored by SDTWS for Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's visit had been well spent. According to producer, Jim Faulstich, the mount is currently on display in the Secretary's office in Washington D.C. and he appears to be very pleased with his recent visit to South Dakota.

Discussion also focused on the date and location for next year's state chapter meeting. The general consensus was that though the date is a bit challenging for faculty at SDSU, having the meeting a week before spring break has increased undergraduate student participation at the meeting. As a result, the Board has made a request to Cedar Shores Resort to hold next year's SDTWS meeting from February 27-29, 2012.



Save These Dates

SDTWS Annual Meeting

February 27 – 29, 2012

at Cedar Shores Resort
Oacoma/Chamberlain

Press Release

AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS: Salazar Highlights Efforts to Conserve Working Landscapes with Proposed Dakota Grassland Conservation Area

04/29/2011

Contact: Hugh Vickery (202) 208 6416

HIGHMORE, S.D. -- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today visited South Dakota to highlight the proposed Dakota Grassland Conservation Area as a model for conserving working agricultural landscapes while benefiting wildlife and its habitat under President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Under the proposal, the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will seek to acquire easements from willing sellers on approximately 2 million acres of native prairie habitat to benefit wildlife and support traditional economic activities, specifically livestock production. The proposal will expand land protection already provided by the National Wildlife Refuge System through several wildlife refuges and wetland management districts in the area, including the Audubon National Wildlife Refuge and Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Wildlife Management Area in North Dakota, and Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota.

“One of the major goals we have established for the America's Great Outdoors initiatives is to work in partnership with private landowners to conserve America's working landscapes,” Secretary Salazar said. “Under this proposal, we will join with agricultural communities and other partners here in the Dakotas to conserve wildlife and its habitat while ensuring the continuation of the regions' agricultural heritage.”

Salazar conducted a series of site visits to habitat restoration projects on private lands and met with conservation partners, including private landowners, who are working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve wildlife habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region, a grass- and wetland-rich area known as “America's Duck Factory” for its importance to the nation's migratory waterfowl population.

Salazar visited a working cattle ranch near Highmore, in Hyde County, where he met with representatives of the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition, Ducks Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League of America, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department, and other partners to discuss the proposed conservation area.

Service conservation easements are binding legal agreements that typically prohibit subdivision and commercial development activities, but allow for continued agricultural uses such as livestock grazing and haying. Under conservation easements, land ownership and property rights, including control of public access, remain with participating landowners. In addition, participating properties would remain on local tax rolls.

“Last year, federal conservation agencies held a listening session at Pierre to hear from conservation stakeholders about local solutions to key conservation issues in the state,” Salazar said. “I am pleased to see the Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners are listening to South Dakotans and have proposed the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area, which will keep ranchers on the lands and forever protect the vital natural resources of the Prairie Pothole Region.”



Photo: Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, Jim Faulstich (Hyde county rancher) and Chuck Pyle (USFWS private lands biologist) jointly sign a USFWS Wildlife Extension Agreement for grazing management on the Daybreak Ranch.

While meeting with partners in Highmore, Secretary Salazar signed two agreements with private landowners to restore and conserve wildlife habitat on their lands.

These voluntary agreements with the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (private lands) provide for cost-share technical assistance to private landowners and will achieve the twin goals of enhancing grazing regimes for cattle producers and wildlife habitat for federal trust species, especially migratory birds such as grassland-nesting birds and raptors.

In the morning, Secretary Salazar also met with South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard to explore how the Department of the Interior and South Dakota can work together to advance the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to support local recreation and conservation efforts.

The meeting was one of a series that Salazar is holding with the nation's governors to discuss potential partnerships in their states, ranging from revitalizing urban parks to restoring rivers to using conservation easements in rural areas to conserve wildlife habitat while allowing ranching and farming to continue.



Photo: Jim Falstich (Hyde county rancher) presenting prairie chicken mount to Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar.



Photo: Prairie chicken mount presented to Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, on behalf of SDTWS and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

Newsletter Submissions and Schedule

If you have an announcement, information item, or committee activity report that should be included in the next edition of *A Prairie Voice*, or if your email or mailing address has changed, send the information to: Charlene “Charlie” Bessken at ladyhawk155@hotmail.com or call 605-222-9445. Thanks.

The newsletter is published four times a year in February, June, September and December.

Special Note: If you change your mailing or email address please let Charlie or Susan Rupp know. Thanks.

Committee Reports

If a committee isn't listed here, it means there was no activity to report for this newsletter.

Resolutions and Public Statements Committee

If you have a resolution for the Chapter to consider you may send it to the Committee Chair at any time. In order to be considered, a resolution only needs to be sponsored by two voting Chapter members. You can send it, preferably as a Word attachment to an email, to the Chair, Dan Hubbard at daniel.hubbard@sdstate.edu. You needn't worry too much about format. As long as the draft has the appropriate background and facts, Dan can put it in the correct format.

If you have any questions, contact Dan (Phone: 605-688-4780). Additionally, if you have an idea for a resolution but aren't sure that you have enough of the "facts" to put one together, contact Dan anyway and perhaps the appropriate committee or person can be identified to help put together a credible resolution.

Submitted by Dan Hubbard

Certification Committee

A web page has been created for Certification on the state chapter website. Please feel free to visit it at <http://www.sdwildlife.org/Certification.HTM>.

Submitted by Dr. Susan Rupp

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is accepting 2011 and 2012 membership dues. Dues can be submitted to Susan Rupp via the mail using the Membership form on the last page of the Newsletter.

Submitted by Susan Rupp

Grasslands Committee

The first America's Grassland Conference was held August 15th through the 18th in Sioux Falls, SD. Dr. Susan Rupp, Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences at SDSU and Julie Sibbing, Director of Agricultural Programs at the National Wildlife Federation co-chaired the event and did a remarkable job of organizing the meeting and arranging for a diverse cadre of speakers that presented a wealth of information on the status and issues affecting our remaining grasslands. The conference was attended by over 250 individuals from all over the US and 3 foreign countries.

A grasslands policy meeting was held on the last day of the conference to review the issues and concerns and to determine grassland policy priorities going forward. From the vast array of issues that were discussed the four priorities that stood out were as follows:

- 1) Link conservation compliance with crop insurance.
- 2) Adopt a strong national sodsaver provision.
- 3) Ensure a strong grasslands component to working lands programs.
- 4) Maintain funding for easements on native grasslands

Submitted by Jim Madsen

Missouri River Issues Committee

I'm sure everyone is aware that this year has been "one for the record book" when it comes to the Missouri River. Record runoff, resulted in record reservoir elevations and water releases (over twice the previous highs in many cases) that will continue into the fall. As the event unfolded this spring, perhaps one "bright spot" on the human side was the spirit of volunteerism and the mid-west "let's get the job done" attitude that took place as levees and sand bag dikes sprung up in the flood zone almost overnight.

On the wildlife and fisheries side of the event, it will undoubtedly take more time to fully understand the effects of the record releases down the Missouri River system. With the flows begin to recede to more "normal" levels, the early observations, to no one's surprise, is that the river has changed. It will be very interesting to see how this year's event drives the fish and wildlife communities along it into the future.

For members of the SD TWS, the important part of this event maybe yet to come as the "politics" begin to evaluate the "cause and effects" and consider "new" ideas on how the Missouri River needs to be managed. The outcome of events, which may yet follow, may dictate the real long term effects of the Flood of 2011 on the fish and wildlife resources of the Missouri River.

Submitted by Cliff Stone

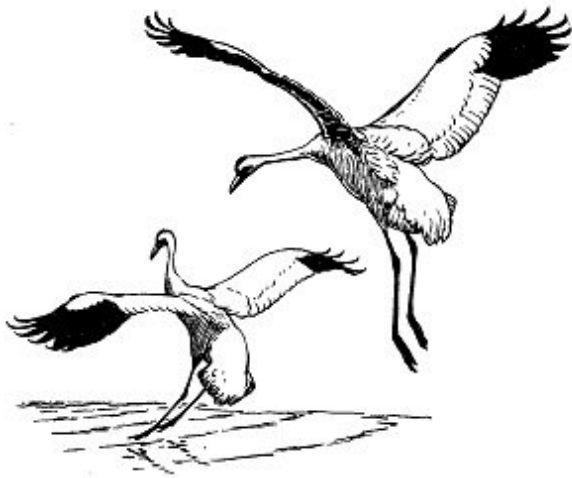
Wildlife Diversity Committee

Federal Funding For Wildlife Diversity

Budget cuts have the potential to drastically reduce funding for wildlife in the next two years, and wildlife diversity funding is no exception. Prior to the passage of the Budget Control Act, the U.S. House had recommended \$22 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. FY2010 State Wildlife Grants totaled \$75 million. The U.S. Senate had not yet passed a bill at the time of the Budget Control Act.

The Budget Super Committee is tasked with identifying \$1.2 - \$1.5 billion in cuts. If specific cuts are not identified, it is anticipated that there will be across-the-board cuts. The Chapter will continue to monitor this situation and call on members to express support for this program at appropriate times. A related area of concern is the match formula. Because this funding source originates from a Congressional appropriation each year, the federal to nonfederal match ratio can change each year. The formula has been 65% federal to 35% nonfederal in recent years, but a 50% federal share seems likely in the near future, placing a greater burden on state wildlife agencies and partners. State and Tribal Wildlife Grants have been a critical funding source for rare species and native habitat work in South Dakota. For more information on the national effort to secure long-term funding for wildlife, visit: <http://teaming.com/>. For details on State Wildlife Grant-funded projects in South Dakota, visit: <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/diversity>.

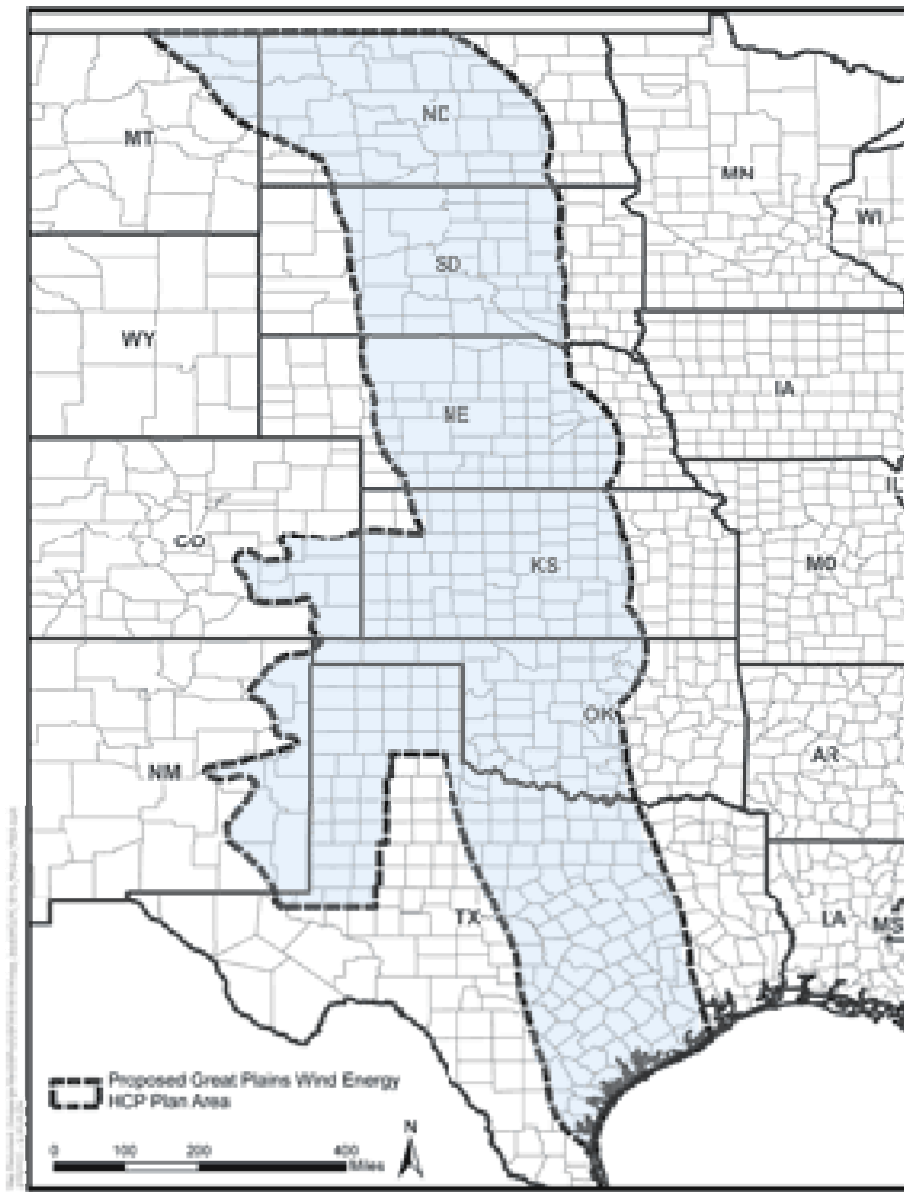
Great Plains Wind Energy Habitat Conservation Plan



A consortium of 19 wind energy development companies is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate wind energy development in the Great Plains. This consortium, known as the Wind Energy Whooping Crane Action Group (WEWAG) is preparing an application for a permit to incidentally take listed or candidate species. To offset impacts to species from any allowable take, a habitat conservation plan (HCP) is being written as required under the Endangered Species Act.

Robert W Hines graphic from USFWS files

Species currently being considered under this incidental take permit and HCP include whooping crane, interior least tern, piping plover, and lesser prairie-chicken. The plan area encompasses the 200-mile wide whooping crane migration corridor and the historic range of the lesser prairie-chicken and will cover wind development activities by the consortium companies on private land in 470 counties in nine states (see map). The proposed issuance of the incidental take permit and associated HCP is considered a major federal action and a NEPA analysis is being conducted. The public scoping comment period for the EIS and HCP will close October 12th. Please contact members of this committee if you have specific concerns with this proposal that you would like to see addressed in a Chapter response.



New Project Spotlight

Another project made possible by State Wildlife Grants funds is an evaluation of threats to the herpetofauna of South Dakota. Herpetologists Brian Smith of Black Hills State University (BHSU) and Hugh Quinn of BHSU/Oglala Lakota College will conduct this evaluation as part of South Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan revision. Herptile study lacked a source of federal match dollars prior to State Wildlife Grants. This project will also include suggested harvest strategies and collection policies for South Dakota. If you're interested in learning more about herps or herpers in the Dakotas, visit the website for DARN (Dakota Amphibian and Reptile Network): <http://www.dakotaamphibianandreptilenetwork.org/>

Submitted by Eileen Dowd Stukel and Silka Kempema



2012 SDTWS Award Nominations

The Awards Committee is currently soliciting nominations for the 2012 awards. The awards include the Wildlife Professional of the Year Award, the Citizen's Wildlife Award, and one MS for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Each year SDTWS recognizes one wildlife professional and one state citizen for their outstanding contribution in the arena of wildlife resource management. If you would like to nominate an individual for either of these awards, please submit a letter of nomination to the Awards Committee **no later than December 14, 2011**. This is a great opportunity to recognize those who go the extra mile in their stewardship of South Dakota's wildlife resources.

The SDTWS also recognizes academic and/or research excellence achieved by graduate students. This year there will be one (1) MS scholarship for the 2011-2012 academic year. If you would like to nominate a student for this award please complete and submit the nominations form to the Awards Committee **no later than December 14, 2011**.

Information regarding the nomination process for these awards and the student Award Nomination can be found on the SDTWS webpage at <http://www.sdwildlife.org/awards.htm>. If you have any questions regarding the nomination process or the formulation of nomination letters, please contact Nora Kohlenberg, (605) 222-9408 or nora.kohlenberg@state.sd.us.



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South Dakota Chapter TWS - Executive Board

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(605) 773-3096

Northern Great Plains Working Group Representative: Rocco Murano, 353-7185

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Awards - Nora Kohlenberg, 222-9408, Nathan Baker 773-4345

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Education & Information - Laura Hubers, 947-4521

Membership – Nora Kohlenberg, 222-9408

Program – Travis Runia, 353-8477

Nominations and Elections – Travis Runia, 353-8477

Resolutions & Public Statements - Dan Hubbard, 688-4780

South Dakota Chapter TWS - Special Committee Chairs*

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Certification - Susan Rupp, 688-4779

Chapter History - Corey Huxoll, 773-4195

Energy Subcommittee - Ad Hoc Biofuels - Susan Rupp, 688-4779

Energy Subcommittee - Wind Power - K C Jensen, 688-4781 & Silka Kempema, 773-2742

Fee Hunting & Ownership of Wildlife - Andy Lindbloom, 223-7709

Fund Raising – Heide Williamson, 685-6508

Grassland Issues - Boyd Schulz, 697-6041, Jim Madsen, 882-5250 & Lee Erickson, 347-4952

Missouri River Issues - Cliff Stone, 734-4530 & Greg Pavelka, 402-667-7873 ext 3334

Newsletter/Website - Charlene “Charlie” Bessken, 222-9445

Public Lands - Eddie Childers, 433-5263, Dennis Mann, 394-2391 & Tom LeFaive 223-2316

Tribal Fish & Wildlife - Diane Mann-Klager, 226-7621

Wetlands - Kurt Forman, 692-8359 & Peter Bergmann, 692-9820

Wildlife Diseases - Steve Griffin, 394-2391

Wildlife Diversity - Eileen Down Stukel, 773-4229, Silka Kempema, 773-2742

*Please see the Committees webpage to find the list of Committee members and email contact information.

SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
Application for Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (indicate home or work) _____

E-mail Address (for newsletter delivery) _____

Please Note:

SDTWS's newsletter, *A Prairie Voice*, is all-electronic. Therefore, an e-mail address must be provided above in order to receive it (paper copies will be provided only to individuals who do not have a computer, internet access, or an email address).

Please Check One: New Member* 2011 Dues Renewal 2012 Dues Renewal

* If you did not pay your dues in 2011, you will be considered a new member as per the SDTWS Bylaws.

Employer _____

Sponsor's Name _____

Send the completed application/renewal form and a check for \$10.00 (regular), \$6.00 (student) to:

Dr. Susan Rupp
Dept of Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences
Northern Plains Biostress, Rm 139B
Box 2140B
Brookings, SD 57005

Regular Dues: \$10.00

Student Dues: \$6.00

Life Membership dues are prorated by age as follows:

Age 20 to 35: 25 x annual dues (\$10 x 25 = \$250)

Age 36 to 45: 20 x annual dues (\$10 x 20 = \$200)

Age 46 to 65: 17.5 x annual dues (\$10 x 17.5 = \$175)

Age 66 to 75: 12.5 x annual dues (\$10 x 12.5 = \$125)

Age 76 and over: Free

For more information on becoming a life member, contact Susan Rupp (605) 688-4779.

