

SDTWS meeting – Camp Lakodia, Madison, SD
Sept. 22, 2011

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.