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NRM Newsletter

Natural Resource Management

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Winter 2010

## Wildlifer's Log

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Dave Willis, Emma Kanaan, Mike Kjellsen, Steven Chipps, Mike Brown, Melissa Wuellner, and Jon Jenks

# Wildlifer's Log

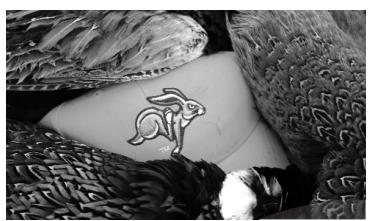
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES SCIENCES • SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Blazing Orange Cap

Alumni, friends, and students! We have an opportunity that you certainly will not want to miss! The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks; the SDSU Athletic Program; and our Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences have teamed up to develop a blaze orange hunting cap for your fall activities. It has the "mean bunny" logo on front. The caps are currently available at the SDSU Bookstore or online at [www.jackrabbit-central.com](http://www.jackrabbit-central.com). Click on the "accessories" link in the menu bar at the top to shop for caps.

In fact, we know that many of you already purchased these caps! The bookstore only ordered 500, and quickly had to re-order another 1,000!

Proceeds from this fund-raising activity will go to the Dr. Ken Higgins Waterfowl Legacy Research Endowment in our department, and to SDSU Athletics. All of our alumni, friends, and students are fully aware that SDGFP does many good things for natural resources in this state, and we certainly appreciate and acknowledge their initiative for this fundraiser.



ABOVE: Photo by Sam Stukel (M.S. 2003) displaying his new cap with some feathers from this fall's harvest.

RIGHT: Kristel Bakker (B.S. 1990, Ph.D. 2000) is pictured with her husband DeLon Mork and son Lucas



## Waterfowl Research Endowment

The Kenneth F. Higgins Waterfowl Legacy Research Endowment honors the life and the distinguished career of Kenneth F. Higgins, Ph.D., a former wildlife research biologist with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the South Dakota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research

Unit, and a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University (SDSU) at Brookings. Ken spent most of his career researching prairie and wetland ecosystems throughout the Prairie Pothole Region of North America. His research led to the development of many innovative techniques for monitoring waterfowl production, using prescribed fire to manage prairie landscapes, and prioritizing landscape-level conservation projects based on wildlife habitat needs. During his career, one of Dr. Higgins' true strengths was anticipating important research needs that were required to advance the field of wildlife conservation. More importantly, Dr. Higgins significantly touched the lives of the graduate students he mentored during his 20 years at SDSU. As a mentor, he always encouraged creativity and "thinking outside the box" for wildlife research and conservation. Further, he truly cared, both academically and personally, about the graduate students he advised. His concern for his students' welfare did not stop when they graduated from SDSU, but it continued well into their professional careers. Dr. Higgins' former students have carried his passion for wildlife conservation to many state, federal, and private conservation organizations as well as academia.

Dr. Higgins had a long-term goal that he could contribute toward some type of endowment that would provide an annual research/scholarship award to help supplement graduate student research projects, especially those projects with a demonstrated financial need. Ken has always worked and continues to work

for wildlife and students alike with a sense of humor, passion, dedication, purpose and generosity. Ken graciously provided \$25,000 seed money for this endowment, and the usually humble Higgins also allowed us to announce his gift in hopes of stimulating further donations. Former students and alumni have already responded with approximately \$14,000 in additional donations (through November of 2010).

The applied wildlife research education provided by Ken's former professors at Colorado State, South Dakota State and North Dakota State Universities, and the many habitat and waterfowl managers and research biologists that he worked and associated with in the U.S. and Canada, were responsible for the donor's interest in applied wildlife research and management with an emphasis on waterfowl



Dr. Ken Higgins (right) and Steve Erpenbach (left, CEO of the SDSU Foundation) shake hands as final paperwork is signed for the Kenneth F. Higgins Waterfowl Legacy Research Endowment, July 2010.

and wetlands. Therefore, the endowment is directed toward this type of research. Funds can be used for waterfowl research activities including, but not limited to, the following: purchase of field or laboratory equipment; purchase of field or laboratory supplies; travel support for graduate students on an applied research project; or for support directed as matching monies to acquire a larger grant to benefit wetland-dependent avian species (e.g., ducks, geese, swans, rails, coots, marsh wrens, etc.) identified earlier as may be approved by the committee.

Interestingly, the idea for the waterfowl research endowment was prompted by the success of our first research endowment – the Jesse W. West fisheries research endowment ([www.sdstate.edu/wfs/research-endowments/index.cfm](http://www.sdstate.edu/wfs/research-endowments/index.cfm)). Mr. Eric West, a lawyer from Jackson, MS, initiated this endowment and continues to support it, as does the *Pond Boss* magazine and online forum "family."

For further information on the Higgins endowment, contact Dr. David Willis at the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences (David.Willis@sdstate.edu). Tax-deductible donations to the Endowment can be made through the South Dakota State University Foundation (lucy.forman@sdsufoundation.org).

# A picture from the past

The following picture was printed in the Wildlife Society Bulletin in the winter issue of 1976. The Paul R. Errington memorial marsh was dedicated in April of 1976. Four former and retired faculty members completed the manual labor! The combined Waterfowl Production Area (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Game Production Area (SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks) are located about 20 miles northwest of Brookings.

## INSTALLING THE ERRINGTON MEMORIAL PLAQUE:

From left: Richard L. Applegate (no shirt), Charles G. Scalet (foreground, back to camera), Lester D. Flake (background), W. Alan Wenzel (far right).



## Richard's 20 year celebration

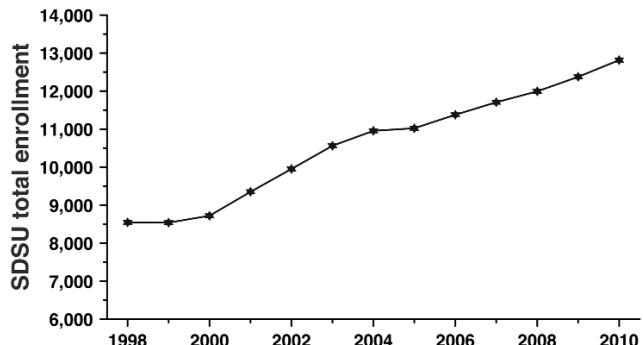
During August, the department had a cake social for Richard Sweeney, celebrating his 20-year service pin. Although there was some question about why only a 20-year pin, a good time was had by all. Richard takes his quarter-time position quite seriously, and truly enjoys working with our students. His pride in the Wildlife Farm is evident when you see the meticulous care he gives to the grounds.

**PHOTO:** Richard Sweeney and Dr. Dave Willis



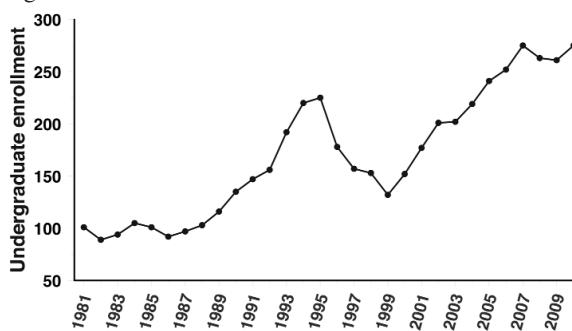
# Enrollment reaches 12,816 at SDSU

Another record freshman class and increased numbers of graduate students boosted fall 2010 overall enrollment at South Dakota State University to 12,816 students, the 11th consecutive record for enrollment at the state's Morrill Act land-grant university. The numbers show a 3.56 percent increase in fall semester headcount at SDSU, which include 2,247 new freshmen and a record 1,475 graduate students. The totals also include an 8 percent increase in students enrolled in Ph.D. programs from last year and a 32 percent increase from 2008. Approximately 42 percent of the new students scored a 24 or higher on the ACT entrance examination, qualifying them for a Jackrabbit Guarantee Scholarship. South Dakotans composed 67% of the student body at SDSU.



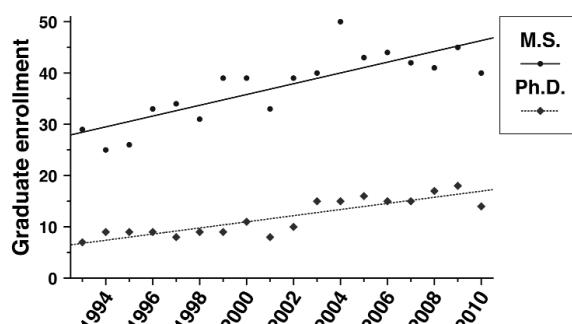
## Undergraduate Enrollment for Fall 2010

Official fall 2010 enrollment for the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences undergraduate program was 275 students, which keeps us at peak levels and brings both benefits and challenges.



## Graduate Enrollment for Fall 2010

Graduate enrollment for fall of 2010 remains relatively stable at 54 students, with 14 enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Our long-term goal for Ph.D. enrollment is 20 students. We anticipate an increase in graduate enrollment once the two vacant positions in the South Dakota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit are filled.



## New Jackrabbit Guarantee Scholarship

**Jeffery Donahoe** is a Sioux Falls, SD, native and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1971. Jeff grew up hunting and fishing with his father and is an Eagle Scout. He earned his bachelor's degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from SDSU in 1975. Jeff began his career with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 1978. He earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Georgia in 1987. Jeff went on to serve as the Chief of the Division of Realty in Washington, D.C. and served as the Secretary to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission from 1994 to 2003. He is currently a Special Assistant in the National Wildlife Refuge System with the USFWS. Jeff continues to be a Boy Scout leader and enjoys hunting and fishing with his sons. **Pamela Donahoe** is a native of Midland, Texas, and met Jeff while working in Atlanta, Georgia. Pam graduated from Angelo State University, now affiliated with Texas Tech University, with a degree in journalism and business. Pam's career included positions in marketing and public relations. She continues to work in public relations, is an active volunteer, and fundraises for the high school band in Arlington, VA. The Donahoe's have two sons, Joseph and Daniel. Joe is a sophomore at SDSU, majoring in mass communication. Dan is a sophomore in high school in Arlington, VA. While Jeff and Pam were in Brookings late this August, they established an endowed Jackrabbit Guarantee Scholarship for Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences! We greatly appreciate such a major donation as scholarship dollars have been tight with the economic downturn. The best part of the story might be that Jeff and Pam worked with Lucy Forman of the SDSU Foundation to establish the scholarship. Lucy's husband Kurt works for the USFWS in Brookings and is also one of our alumni.

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# Berry and Vaa honored by South Dakota Wildlife Federation

Spencer Vaa was awarded the South Dakota Wildlife Federation's Communicator Award for 2010 at the 65th Annual Convention held in Britton, South Dakota, on August 28th. Spencer worked for GFP for 30+ years as the Brookings County Conservation Officer and State Waterfowl Biologist, retiring in October of 2010. Spencer created public awareness of the importance of natural resource conservation by his 1) persuasive manner when talking to landowners or the public, 2) personal involvement in conservation organizations, and 3) willingness to speak to the public about conservation issues beyond the requirements of his job. His supervisors at GFP gave him high praise for willingly accepting the responsibility for attending hundreds of public meetings throughout South Dakota.

The nomination goes on to detail Spencer's ability to communicate with students, landowners, and peers. He received hundreds of requests from newspapers, radio, and regional hunting magazines. He has been active in local, regional, and national conservation organizations. Spencer has "been there and done that" when it comes to hunting and fishing. He is an accomplished hunter and angler who is educated in natural resource conservation, so he is a credible authority when he speaks about conservation, whether in Africa, Alaska, South America, or South Dakota – people listen.

Vaa's interest in the shooting sports, and his active membership in the Beacon Hill and Brookings gun clubs, have improved awareness of members about conservation as well as the importance of gun safety and shooting ethics in pre-



**Dr. Chuck Berry and Spencer Vaa**

serving South Dakota's hunting traditions. In summary, Spencer Vaa has a long track record of going beyond his job requirements to inform and educate the general public and he is effective. He has been loyal to state and local conservation groups. The members and Board of the Brookings Wildlife Federation enthusiastically nominated Spencer Vaa for the SDWF's Communicator Award for 2010.

**Dr. Chuck Berry** received the South Dakota Water Conservationist of the Year Award. Berry recently retired

after 34 years (25 at SDSU) as a fisheries researcher and educator. He and his students have written many scientific articles about South Dakota's aquatic resources and he recently was the senior editor of a 477 page book titled *History of Fisheries and Fishing in South Dakota*.

Chuck's comments on the award: "I have tried to do research and teaching at SDSU for 25 years that helped me, my students, and the public understand South Dakota's rivers and aquatic life. In Chapter One of the fishing history book I repeated a quote – 'In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught. Protecting our fishing heritage depends on educated biologists, anglers, and the public. It has been said that quality of the environment, like freedom, must be protected and achieved anew by each generation.' I hope this is not true. I hope that public interest in water issues leads to actions by government agencies that protect water quality and quantity so clean water will not have to be achieved anew by the next generation. I pledge to continue advocating for South Dakota's water resources and thank SDWF for all it does for water resources and for honoring me with this award."

## Dr. Berry Earns Emeritus Status



During the evening dinner for our summer faculty retreat, Dr. Ken Higgins (and the rest of the faculty and staff, of course) was able to poke a little fun at Dr. Chuck Berry relative to his retirement.

**PHOTO: Dr. Ken Higgins, Dr. Chuck Berry, Ginger and Dr. Chuck Scalet, and MaryLou Berry**





**ROBERT GLEASON** (Ph.D. 2001) will be the next Director of the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center (NPWRC). Robert began his career with the USGS as a SCEP student (1997–2001) and has since (2001 to present) been a Research Wildlife Biologist at the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. Robert holds degrees from Humboldt State University (B.S. and M.S. Wildlife) and South Dakota State University (Ph.D. Biological Sciences). His research has primarily focused on studies designed to quantify the environmental, biological, and ecological effects of wetland and grassland conservation practices in agricultural landscapes. These studies have included assessments of land use effects and restoration activities on changes in multiple-ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion, sedimentation, floodwater storage, water quality, and wildlife habitat. The results of these studies have addressed the science needs of partner agencies within US Department of the Interior and US Department of Agriculture, including the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Recently, Robert served a 120-day detail as Research Manager for NPWRC. Robert's official start day was June 7, 2010. Please join me in welcoming Robert to this critical leadership position. Submitted by Jeff Stoner, Acting Regional Executive, USGS North Central Area.

**DON HAMMER** (B.S. 1968) We spent much of the winter attending Elks, Cowbelles, Gem & Mineral Club and Historical Society functions. Joan maintains the scrapbook and chaired several Cowbelles' activities. We continue to compile ranch histories and copy old ranching photos she uses for displays at various events. Don is still secretary for the local birding festival [www.wingsoverwillcox.com](http://www.wingsoverwillcox.com) and he co-leads a Ghost Towns field trip. He served as newsletter editor and publicist this year for the Sunsites Gem & Mineral Club. Hoping this finds you in good cheer.

**MICHAEL HANAN** (B.S. 2006, M.S. 2009) Sept. 10 I was offered and recently accepted a permanent position as a Wildlife Biologist at Clarence Cannon and Great Rivers National Wildlife Refuges in Northeastern Missouri. This will be an inventory and monitoring position and will include duties on the refuge as well as planning and development involved with the new Inventory and Monitoring Program. I am looking forward to the new and exciting challenges of this position as I move ahead with my career to the next step. I have been provided with a multitude of opportunities to learn and try new things over the last 8 years of education and professional experience and I am very grateful to all of you that have made that possible. Without the guidance of the many people throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Dakota State University, USGS, and the partners along the way I would not have received the knowledge or experience to be offered this position. I can never thank you enough.

**DOUG HARR** (B.S. 1969, M.S. 1971) I retired at the end of May after more than 38 years with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. My first 29 years were spent as a Wildlife Management Biologist in northwest Iowa. In 2001 I transferred to the job of Wildlife Diversity Biologist at DNR's Boone Wildlife Research Station and in 2002 was promoted to DNR Headquarters in Des Moines to become the Wildlife Diversity State Program Coordinator. In retirement I'm continuing as a volunteer bird surveyor for DNR's chronically short-staffed Wildlife Diversity Program. I also currently serve as state president and Chief Operating Officer of Iowa Audubon. It has been a great career, which might have been impossible without the excellent education and training received at the SDSU Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. Keep up the good work, and Go Jacks!

**DANIELLE (JOHNSON) KEPFORD** (B.S. 1999) Amelia Purl Kepford arrived at 4:42 pm on Friday, Sept. 3, 2010 weighing 5 lbs. 13 oz. and was 18 1/2 inches long.

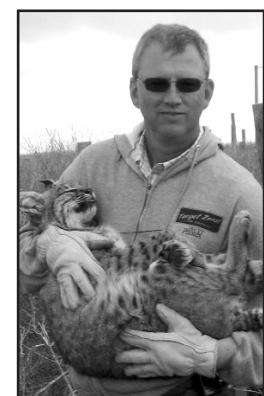
**RICHARD (DICK) KROGER** (B.S. 1965) Would like to introduce my book "Choosing a Conservation Vocation or a Bureaucratic Career: Personal Choices and the Environmental Consequences." This book was written specifically to help improve management of our renewable natural resources and public lands. It is based on the author's 47 years of experience working in federal, state, and non-profit organizations. Learn how professional and volunteer Conservation Vocationists can more effectively overcome the obstacles and challenges created by self-serving Bureaucratic Careerists within conservation, environmental, and land management agencies. 176 pages, softcover, \$9.95 (includes S&H). ISBN # 9781412070096. Book Website with reviews, excerpts, and discount ordering information: [rtconnect.net/~krogers](http://rtconnect.net/~krogers), phone 307-347-3047, [krogers@rtconnect.net](mailto:krogers@rtconnect.net).

**DR. JOSH MILLSPAUGH** (M.S. 1995) is an associate professor of fisheries and wildlife sciences in the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. He won their 2009 Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Working with wildlife ranging in size from elephants to salamanders, Millspaugh studies animals' habitat selection and their success in those habitats. One current graduate-student research project looks at black-backed woodpeckers' selection of nest sites in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Other projects investigate how the endangered black-footed ferret chooses sites on prairie dog towns and how animal-mounted environmental sensors can be improved to advance studies of wildlife. Millspaugh's research also is directed toward understanding wildlife response to human disturbances, including forest-management activities. Millspaugh is collaborating with professors at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in

South Africa to assess ecotourism's effect on elephants' stress and behavior. In Missouri, he works to help ensure the survival of hellbenders, large salamanders

whose population is declining. Josh was one of two educators in the U.S. to win the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2008 Food and Agricultural Sciences Excellence in College and University Teaching Award. It's the highest honor bestowed by the USDA for university-level achievement. In 2005, Millspaugh earned the William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, which is awarded to five MU professors each year. He has received numerous other MU teaching awards, including the Provost's Outstanding Junior Faculty Teaching Award and CAFNR's Golden Apple Award for Teaching Excellence. The Governor's Award recognizes one outstanding faculty member from each participating higher-education institution in the state. It honors effective teaching and advising, service to the university community, commitment to high standards of excellence and success in nurturing student achievement.

**JIM RAY** (M.S. 1990) has served the last 11 years as the Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration's 18,000-acre Pantex facility, outside of Amarillo, TX. Prior to that, he worked 9 years as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Regional Migratory Bird and Wetlands Biologist for northwest Texas. Jim recently received status as Affiliate Graduate Faculty member and Adjunct Professor within the wildlife program in the Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences at West Texas A&M University. Jim traveled with a group of students from West Texas A&M to Seligman, Arizona and conducted surveys and trapping for black-footed ferrets at a successful release site for ferrets (October 21–25).



Jim Ray



Ferret Trap

Their group caught five wild-born ferrets in their study plot, while the overall effort yielded around 50. Jim and wife Susan have three boys, Jordan (19), Jason (18), and James (15); all three are Eagle Scouts.

**DR. JEFF JOLLEY** (Ph.D. 2009) is a fishery research biologist with the Columbia River Fishery

Wildlife Researcher  
Joshua Millspaugh  
earns 2009  
Governor's Award



# ALUMNI NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Program Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Vancouver, WA. Jeff reports on one of those small-world stories. "I was at a meeting of engineers/biologists/policy people yesterday in downtown Portland, Oregon regarding impacts of a new interstate bridge project on lamprey. Of about 10 people in the room, 3 were Jackrabbits -- me, Jen Graham (Harrington), and Steve Morrow. Steve said he graduated many, many years ago. Jen is the lead biologist for the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. 30% SDSU grads...not bad."

**JOHN POPOWSKI** (B.S. 1954) has been a regular attendee at an annual SDSU West River Alumni banquet and auction hosted by the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences in Keystone, SD. John, former secretary for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, was Wildlife Club President in 1953. He also was Speaker for the Buffalo Banquet in 1973, and was honored as a SDSU Distinguished Alumnus in 1981.

**CARMEN (BLAUSEY) THOMSON** (M.S. 2001) was appointed to the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board in February 2010. Carmen is a native Nebraskan and grew up in the far western end of the state in small-town Gering. After graduation she attended Wayne State College for two years and then transferred to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. There she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife. After graduation she served as a biological technician on several research projects focusing on rainbow trout habitat preferences in Lake Ogalalla, and tracking pallid sturgeon movement in the lower Platte River. Carmen then accepted a graduate assist-

anship at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota, and earned her Master of Science degree in Fisheries Management. While at SDSU, her research focused on prairie stream ecology and habitat preferences of the federally endangered Topeka shiner. Carmen is currently a nine year veteran of the National Park Service. In her first position with NPS, she served as the Natural Resource Specialist for four years at Niobrara National Scenic River near Valentine, Nebraska. There she was responsible for all aspects of the natural resource program at the park including treatment and control of exotic invasive species, fire management, water quality monitoring, and creating a monitoring program for two federally threatened and endangered species- piping plovers and interior least terns. Currently, Carmen serves as the Midwest Region Inventory and Monitoring Program Manager- a position she has held for five years. She is duty-stationed out of the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska. Here she oversees the long-term natural resource inventories (e.g., fish, mammals, birds, plants, etc.), and coordinates the development of numerous long-term monitoring protocols for approximately 40 national park units within a 13 state area in the Midwest. Carmen currently resides in Council Bluffs, and has two small children- a son Ty (5), and a daughter Ashten (3). They spend their summers camping and fishing at the local county conservation parks, along with numerous national and state parks too. "I am a firm believer in getting children involved in the outdoors as much as possible. I love taking my kids for hikes at Hitchcock or spending time fishing at Arrowhead. The look on their faces when they see a new bird species or the thrill of catching even the smallest fish is priceless." Carmen said

she is excited to serve on the Board, and is looking forward to being able to work more close to home on natural resources issues. "I work on projects with numerous national park units that are several hundred miles from Omaha, so being able to assist with conservation issues again at a local level, and to watch those on-the-ground results unfold will be a nice change for me. I truly appreciate this great opportunity, and look forward to working with the fantastic County Conservation staff and Board." The Pottawattamie County Conservation Board staff welcomes Carmen to the board and looks forward to working with her to continue to provide unique habitat and recreation areas in Pottawattamie County. — *The Conservator, Summer 2010 issue.*

**SPENCER VAA** (B.S. 1968, M.S. 1972) retired as the SD Game, Fish and Parks state waterfowl biologist on October 8, 2010. We have it on good word that his retirement was indeed timed to coincide with his fall "activities," and followed a precedent set by USD grad Doug Hansen and SDSU grad George Vandel (M.S. 1980) upon their retirements during prior years.

**WALLY VAN SICKLE III** (B.S. 1986) is the President and Founder of Idea Wild. One activity for this organization is refurbishing old radio transmitters and receivers so they can be distributed to wildlife biologists for biotelemetry work in developing nations. If anyone has old telemetry/field sampling equipment, please consider donating it to Wally and his organization. They can pick up equipment depending on location, or provide FEDEX numbers to cover shipping costs. Following is the web address for Idea Wild. <http://www.ideawild.org/>



Teresa Zimmerman

**TERESA ZIMMERMAN** (M.S. 2005, Ph.D. 2008) April 9 - Chadron State College (CSC) assistant professor Dr. Teresa Zimmerman and her wildlife management students earned special recognition this spring. Zimmerman, who has taught all the

courses of CSC's wildlife management program since her hire in 2008, was awarded the Professional of the Year Award by Nebraska's chapter of The Wildlife Society in February. In addition, she was chosen to receive the Alumni Award by the Wildlife Club at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in April. The UNL Alumni Award is designed to reward Wildlife Club graduates who have made special contributions to their discipline of study. Zimmerman, who served as president and treasurer of the club as a student, is being recognized for her involvement in student chapters and the Nebraska conclave. The honor will be presented during the club's 50th annual banquet Saturday, April 17. "It's nice to be recognized by the college group that I was involved with and loved so dearly," Zimmerman said. The Wildlife Society's Professional of the Year award was presented as a surprise during the chapter's Feb. 26-27 meetings at Norfolk. Other institutions represented at the meeting were the UNL, Wayne State College, University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University of South Dakota. "This award came as a total surprise to me," Zimmerman said. "Usually it has been presented to mid-career professionals, so it is an honor to receive the recognition," she said. In addition to Zimmerman's hands-on approach to teaching and her contributions around campus and in the classroom, she was recognized for her support of CSC's Wildlife

Chapter in organizing the first student wildlife conclave in Nebraska in October 2009. During that event, students from CSC, WSC, UNK, Doane College, Northeast Community College and UNL gathered at Halsey, Neb., to learn from wildlife professionals from across the state. She also was instrumental in securing the donation of two semi-truck loads of taxidermy mounts from Cabela's last year. The collection, along with other features of the wildlife management program, were showcased 6-9 p.m. at Burkholder Complex during an open house Monday, April 19. In 2009, she and 14 other wildlife professionals were selected to participate in The Wildlife Society Leadership Institute at Monterey, Calif. Three students received special appointments during the meeting at Norfolk. Jason Clark, a freshman from Papillion, was elected to serve as co-chairman of the student chapter committee of NETWS. Cassidy Emerson, a freshman from Crawford, volunteered to serve as the student representative on the planning committee to host the Central Mountain and Plains Section of the Wildlife Society meeting in Scottsbluff in August 2011. Justin Powell, a junior from Scottsbluff, was asked by the chapter to create a bronze sculpture representative of Nebraska's wildlife. The sculpture will be donated to the Wildlife Society during its national meeting Oct. 2-6 at Snowbird, Utah. While at the Wildlife Society meeting, club members participated in a "bioblitz" at the Wood Duck Wildlife Management Area southeast of Norfolk. Each student group was assisted by professional biologists to identify as many species of birds, mammals, plants, fish, reptiles, amphibians or invertebrates in the area based on visuals, such as tracks and nests. Other students who attended were Christopher Loomis of Hyannis, Ethan Teter of St. Paul, Jessica Hovendick of Herman and Molly Seefus of Fort Calhoun. —Justin Haag, Information Services, Chadron State College

**DR. RICHARD ZWEIFEL** (Ph.D. 2007) has been named biology supervisor for the Inland Fisheries Research Unit of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife. The Inland Fisheries Research Unit is located in Hebron, Ohio and conducts statewide fisheries management and research in inland lakes and reservoirs, rivers and streams, and the Ohio River. Dr. Zweifel joined the Division of Wildlife in 2004 as a fisheries biologist at the Inland Fisheries Research Unit. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri, and a Ph.D. from South Dakota State University. He previously worked as a biometrist for the Missouri Department of Conservation and data analyst for the U.S. Geological Survey. Zweifel is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and now lives in Carroll, Ohio with his wife and three children.

## ALUMNI INFORMATION

We enjoy receiving news and photos from our alumni.

Have you moved, accepted a new position, married, given talks in your community, received an advanced degree, or had an addition to your family? Let us know. Send information to Wildlife and Fisheries, SDSU, Box 2140B, Brookings, SD 57007 or email [terri.symens@sdstate.edu](mailto:terri.symens@sdstate.edu).

We look forward to hearing from you.  
**NEW DEPARTMENT WEBSITE**

Our website is updated on a daily basis.  
CHECK OUT OUR NEWLY DESIGNED WEBSITE AT THE NEW ADDRESS:  
<http://www.sdstate.edu/wfs/>

# Buffalo Banquet Overview

The 62nd Annual Buffalo Banquet was held on October 14, 2010. This actually was a Thursday evening, and the first time in memory that we have not met on a Friday or Saturday night. For the alumni who remember a banquet with 300+ attendees, those days have changed. Given everyone's hectic schedules, not many parents make the banquet any longer, and the donors often have a hard time getting to the banquet. The Thursday evening banquet made it much easier to get the students to the banquet this year, though! That was quite a plus for me (Willis) personally.

We also had a new venue this year. We met at The Sanctuary (former Catholic Church) in Brookings. It proved to be a very cozy banquet location, and the roughly 115 attendees created a full house. Hy-Vee catered the bison roast meal this year, at considerable cost savings to the Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation Club (WFCC). All in all, it was a great banquet.

We recognized 39 individual scholarship winners at the banquet this year. Donors included the South Dakota Trappers Association, Brookings Wildlife Federation, Dr. Gerald

Spawn Memorial Scholarship, Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League Scholarship, Lake Campbell Wildlife Club Scholarship, South Dakota Conservation Officers Association Scholarship, Bjorklund Memorial Scholarship, Norgren Memorial Award Scholarship, McCook Lake Izaak Walton League Scholarships, Larry and Jo Kallmeyn Scholarship, David Bartling Scholarship, South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited Scholarships, Streeter Scholarship, Robert Eng Scholarship, Steven Zebarth Scholarship, Heartland Pheasants Forever Scholarships, Gay Simpson Memorial Award, Wildlife M.S. Graduate Student of the Year (no sponsor yet), Fisheries M.S. Graduate Student of the Year (Great Plains Fishery Workers Association), Lloyd Fredrickson Memorial Award for our Outstanding Ph.D. students in both Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Wilbur Allen Scholarships. I say "recognized" because students now are informed of their scholarships in April or May, and they receive part or all of their scholarship funds in their fall university account.

The Outstanding Club Junior (voted by the WFCC) was Dane Buysse, while the Outstanding Club Senior was Chris Houck. Emma Kanaan won the Kjellsen Hunting Heritage Award. Her winning essay is published elsewhere in this issue of the Log.

Our guest speaker at the banquet was **George Vandel** (M.S. 1980), who recently retired as the assistant director of the Wildlife Division for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. He spoke directly to the students, giving them sage advice on how to create the best possible career that they could. The presentation was well received by all in attendance, and I can honestly say that I've never had so many donors and spouses tell me how good the presentation was. The favorite moment for the faculty and retired Department Head **Chuck Scalet** was when George told the students in his presentation, and in front of new Agriculture and Biological Sciences Dean Barry Dunn, that SDSU was the "Harvard or Yale of the wildlife and fisheries profession." Thanks George.

# Kjellsen Hunting Heritage Award

*The Kjellsen Hunting Heritage Award, established in 1998, is an annual award consisting of a firearm given in honor of Mayo and Joyce Kjellsen and celebrating the tradition of sport hunting. The award is available to a junior or senior student in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University. To apply for this award, students must have junior or senior standing; have been a member of the Wildlife Conservation Club for a minimum of two years; have a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences curriculum; and, be an ethical hunter who believes in fair chase and equal hunting opportunities. This year's winner was Emma Kanaan. Her essay for the competition follows.*

## On the Tradition of Hunting

*Emma Kanaan*

The forest is hushed and dark, the scent of pine needles crisp and fragrant, and the ground still damp with crystal dew. On the horizon the sky gradually lightens, until the sun peaks from behind the distant gold-tinged prairie. And suddenly, the woods are alive with a cacophony of bird song, and the long low howl of a lone coyote. In the distance, a turkey gobbles, and suddenly you can feel it. It's the quiet excitement, the burgeoning sense of anticipation thrumming through your veins, making your pulse quicken and a small smile light your face. I passed many morning hours in places like this, and to me, this is the tradition of hunting. It's spending time in the outdoors with the ones you love, and it's about reminding ourselves of the deep connection we share with our planet and the creatures who share it. In my life, hunting has never been about trophy animals or record setting catches. It's about allowing yourself to return to a simpler plane of existence, where nature allows man and beast to meet once more on equal footing. Walking through woods, or slews, or prairies, we connect with our ancestors. As we struggle to keep pace, stay upwind, or hear the call of our quarry, we wrestle the same obstacles our forefathers faced before us. Hunting reminds us of our humanity, the fragility of life, and gives us a glimpse into the awesome power of nature. Furthermore, it lets us enjoy the thrill of the hunt as we engage in a battle of wits and stamina with our prey. Hunting allows us to see parts of the world seldom seen by human eyes — remote places where true wilderness still exists. In addition, hunting is more than a



Emma Kanaan with Joyce and Mayo Kjellsen

mere sport; but instead fulfills that inherent need we all possess to seek our place in the natural world. Hunting is a tradition we owe our children. They deserve to participate in their heritage and to experience their relationship with nature. Moreover, hunting is a practice that should be available to all. As humans, it is our right to fulfill our inherent place in the web of life. As such, equal hunting opportunities for all are essential. If a person has the capacity to hunt safely, lawfully, and ethically, they should be allowed to do so. Hunting should be enjoyed by men and women, the young and the aged, as well as by those with disabilities. The tradition of hunting is embedded within our identity as human beings. Sadly, in today's world of cities and streets, computers and cell phones, many will never experience the splendor of a sunrise in a quiet forest, or see the beauty in the dark iridescent feathers of a long-bearded tom turkey strutting in an aspen meadow. Instead, such experiences are left for those of us who still feel that ancient calling to the tradition of hunting.



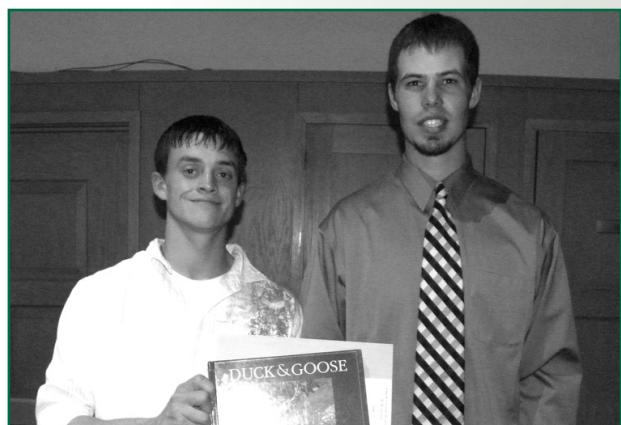
**BROOKINGS WILDLIFE FEDERATION:**  
Kelsey Bedford and Dr. Chuck Berry



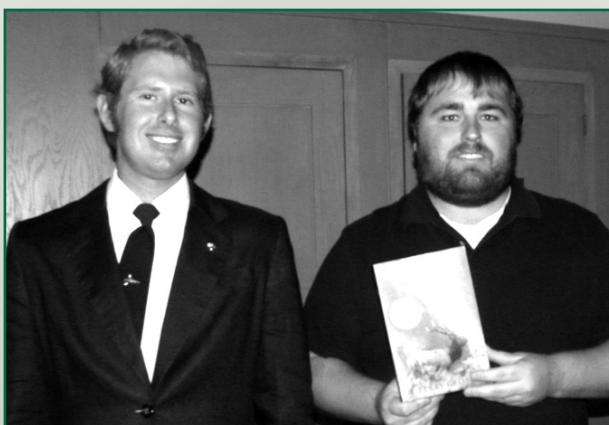
**HEARTLAND PHEASANTS FOREVER:**  
Casey Mehls, Alex Solem, and Dr. Susan Rupp



**LAKE CAMPBELL WILDLIFE CLUB:**  
Molly Skadsen and Dr. Susan Rupp



**OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE CLUB JUNIOR:**  
Dane Buysse presented by Eric Butz, Club Secretary



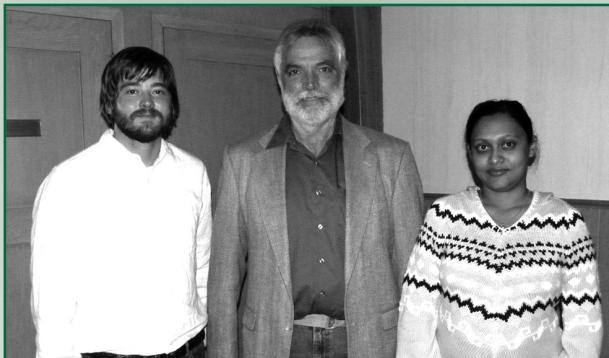
**OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE CLUB SENIOR:**  
President Vincent Koenig presents to Chris Houck



**LLOYD FREDRICKSON MEMORIAL AWARD**  
(Outstanding Fisheries Ph.D. Student):  
Mike Weber and Dr. Mike Brown



**SOUTH DAKOTA TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION:**  
Association Rep Russ Camber, Recipient Chris Houck,  
and Association Rep Aaron Doyscher



**OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE M.S. STUDENT AWARD** goes  
to Corey Mosby and the **LLOYD FREDRICKSON MEMO-**  
**RIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING WILDLIFE PH.D.**  
**STUDENT AWARD** goes to Indrani Sasmal. Both awards  
were presented by their advisor Dr. Jon Jenks.



**DR. GERALD SPAWN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:**  
Dr. Brian Graeb and Emily Gaston



**SOUTH DAKOTA WALLEYES UNLIMITED:**

Back row (l-r) Woody Tiggelaar,  
Rocky Niewenhuis (State Director for SDWU)  
and Darrel Solberg.

Front row (l-r) Kristopher Stahr, Brianna Gaughan,  
Nikki Hegna, and Julianna Gehant

# Wetland Inventory

BY MIKE KJELSEN

The Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences Department's wetlands inventory team have been conducting wetland research for 30 years. The current team is Mike Kjellsen (B.S. 1985, M.S. 1988), Pete Bergmann (M.S. 1992), and Dennis Hanson. The primary research has been for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). In 1974, the USFWS directed its office of Biological Services to design and conduct an inventory of the Nation's wetlands. The mandate was to generate and distribute technically sound scientific information on the types and extent of the Nation's wetlands. The purpose of this information is to foster wise use of the Nation's wetlands and provide data for making quick and accurate resource decisions. The NWI project became functional by 1979 and the Wildlife and Fisheries Department became involved in 1980. Since then the wetland teams has conducted wetland research in 20 states, including Alaska, an area of more than 500,000 square miles.

The wetlands are identified and categorized using remote sensing, in this case digital aerial photographs, along with other collateral data and extensive field checking. This detailed wetland information is very useful for site specific decisions by government agencies, state agencies, non-government organizations, and individuals. The NWI data can be downloaded at <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>. The wetlands data may also be viewed at the NWI site using the Wetlands Mapper feature or the view Wetlands w/google earth feature.

It became clear a very different kind of information was also needed to generate national statistics through statistical sampling of the Nation's wetlands. This information would provide support to guide Federal programs and policy. The USFWS Wetlands Status and Trends program was congressionally mandated through the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (Public Law 99-645) to promote the conservation of the Nation's wetlands. The Act requires the USFWS to conduct wetland

status and trends studies of the Nation's wetlands at a minimum of 10 year intervals. Status and trends has developed a historic database which indicates land use and wetlands extent back to the 1950s. The USFWS has published five national reports and several regional status and trends studies. Status and Trends information is widely distributed and used extensively. A recent assessment con-



**The NWI team is made up of Pete Bergmann, Dennis Hanson, and Mike Kjellsen**

ducted by the USFWS shows 375 private businesses, 94 state government agencies, 29 Federal agencies, and Congress are actively using Status and Trends reports or data summaries. For Status and Trends the USFWS samples randomly located four square mile plots of land throughout the country. This process also utilizes remote sensing of aerial photos along with topographic maps, soil surveys, and other collateral data. The Wildlife and Fisheries wetland team has conducted Status and Trends research in 19 states for three of the national reports. The wetland team identified and classified wetland and upland features on approximately 1500 four square mile plots for each report. Research was conducted for National status and trend reports for 1986-1997, 1998-2004, and 2005-2010 (in progress). One intensification study was completed in North Carolina and presently an intensification study is being done in the Prairie Pothole Region. Hard copy and digital versions of all the reports are available at <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>.

# News from the South Dakota Coop Unit

BY STEVEN CHIPPS

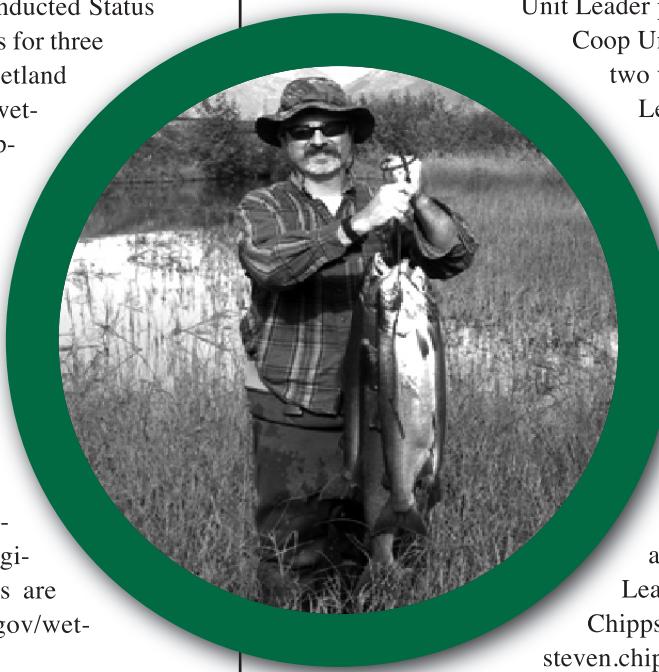
## Dr. Charles "Chuck" Berry retires:

In May 2010, Dr. Charles R. Berry, Jr. retired after 34 years, 7 months, and 9 days with the Cooperative Research Unit Program. Chuck began his distinguished career with the Unit Program at Utah State University, where he served as the Assistant Unit Leader-Fisheries from 1975 to 1984. Chuck and MaryLou moved to South Dakota in 1985, where Chuck served as Unit Leader for the combined Fish and Wildlife Coop Unit from 1985 to 2010. Chuck led the Unit for 25 years, mentoring assistant Unit leaders (Drs. Ken Higgins, Walt Duffy, and Steve Chipps), training graduate students (3 Ph.D. students; 45 M.S. students), developing strong relationships with state and federal agencies, and promoting technical assistance to address the needs of our cooperators. Chuck's many accomplishments in teaching, research and technical assistance include over 80 scientific publications, numerous awards in science and technical assistance, workshops for state and federal agencies, and dedicated service to the South Dakota Wildlife Federation. In 2010, Chuck received the South Dakota Water Conservationist of the Year Award from the South Dakota Wildlife Federation in recognition of his leadership in aquatic conservation initiatives (see article elsewhere in the Log). Thanks to contributions from alumni, faculty and staff, Chuck was presented a custom-made hunting knife as a token of our appreciation. Chuck left a strong foundation for the South Dakota Coop Unit as we head into our 48th year of service at South Dakota State University.

## Unit Vacancies Announced:

In June, 2010, Dr. Steven Chipps assumed the Unit Leader position of the South Dakota Coop Unit. The Unit currently has two vacancies (Assistant Unit Leaders) that we are happy to

report are in the process of being filled. To help address emerging issues in waterfowl management, land use, and energy development – the Unit is interviewing applicants with expertise in waterfowl ecology/wetland research and hopes to have this position filled very soon. For more information about our Assistant Unit Leader positions, contact Steve Chipps at [steven.chipps@sdstate.edu](mailto:steven.chipps@sdstate.edu) or 605.688.5467.



# Three-Year Update from the Head

BY DAVE WILLIS

It's hard to believe, but former Department Head Chuck Scalet has now been retired for 3 years. I continually get asked a familiar set of questions: how are things; how are you; how is the Department; are you glad you took an administrative position?

There is only one way to answer those questions. I am truly blessed, and thus by default so is our entire Department. We have a cordial, hardworking faculty who truly enjoy what they do. Don't get me wrong. We may have an occasional problem or squabble, but our problems are minor compared to those I see across other departments. The state supports our eight tenure-track and tenured faculty members (which includes me), and we have a non-tenure track assistant professor who very effectively manages our distance education program. Our faculty members are being asked to continually increase productivity, especially in research, while dealing with the extra classroom time required by our high enrollment. I certainly do not want to sound whiny, but we are very fortunate that our faculty members have maintained a positive attitude during the past two years of budget cuts and no pay raises. I wish I could paint an effective picture of the number of hours that these folks work, and especially the quality of that work in teaching, research, and service. You can be proud of their reputations within the professional societies for our various disciplines.

Surely all of our alumni and friends know how fortunate we are to have the South Dakota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (SDCFWRU) located in our Department! Formerly associated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Units are now under the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). When fully staffed, the Unit provides three scientists who provide graduate teaching and mentor graduate students. The value to our Department is extraordinary, and new Unit

Leader Steve Chipps is both a cordial individual, and a truly outstanding, productive scientist. See the Unit article elsewhere in the newsletter for an update on staffing. The USGS connection seems to have helped our interactions with the USGS EROS Data Center, which also has linked us more closely with the Geographic Information Science Center of Excellence here on campus (e.g., Dr. Mike Wimberly has a joint appointment in our department). Similarly, EROS scientist Dr. Bob Klaver assists our graduate students with research efforts, and has taught a graduate-level course for us on a regular basis.

We are also blessed because of our support staff, who are hardworking, productive, and truly proud of our Department. Office personnel Diane Drake, Carol Jacobson, and Terri Symens handle an amazing variety of tasks, and truly are overworked and underpaid. I am especially pleased at their continual efforts at cross-training to ensure that the inner workings of the Department remain smooth. Unfortunately, half of the salaries for our office staff come from indirect cost return funds (facilities and administration charges on grants and contracts). This is especially unfortunate in that the Cooperative Agreement which SDSU signed with the SDCFWRU includes a commitment from SDSU to provide 1.5 FTE of secretarial time. Now is not the time that additional resources can be provided to departments, but assuming an end to the current economic problems, obtaining hard dollar support for the office staff must be a high priority for our future departmental endeavors. Facility worker Richard Sweeney is similarly proud of his work for the Department. See the article on Rich and his years of service elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our new Dean for the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, Dr. Barry Dunn, is a positive, enthusiastic individual. He has true concern for the natural resources of South Dakota, is quite proud of the SDSU Land-Grant mission, and it is our pleasure to work with him. He returned to SDSU after

a stint as an endowed chair at Texas A&M Kingsville, and at a challenging economic time. For example, our college has taken a \$1.3 million total budget cut for the past two years. Despite those cuts, he remains optimistic and helpful. We like his ideas of "lean growth" that come from his days as a rancher, saying that they could not shrink their way out of the tough economic times for agriculture during the 1980s, but instead had to grow. He has a similar vision for our college.

Finally, our financial support from alumni and friends has truly been rewarding the past several years. The Jesse West Fisheries Research Endowment was initiated several years ago by friend Eric West, and has since been highly supported by Mr. West and the rest of our friends in the *Pond Boss* family, including *Pond Boss* magazine editor Bob Lusk. Taking a page from Eric's book, Dr. Ken Higgins similarly set up a research endowment for waterfowl and wetlands. See more on that endowment elsewhere in this newsletter. Next year, I will be able to announce the start-up of at least one more research endowment. Stay tuned as I cannot say more at this time. The long-term goal of these endowments is to provide graduate research assistantships for future students. Such assistantships are quite expensive, explaining why this is a long-term goal. In the meantime, proceeds from the endowments will continue to be used to support research at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. See our new departmental web page (<http://www.sdsstate.edu/wfs/>) for annual updates on research efforts from each of these endowments. Remember also that one-on-one mentoring by a faculty member is a truly effective means of teaching both our undergraduate and graduate students.

We are well aware that we have a proud group of alumni out within the profession! Let me assure you that the hard work and positive attitudes for which we are known continue today!

## Aquafeeds Research

BY MIKE BROWN

Traditionally, the largest share of high quality protein and oils found in fish feeds has come from commercially fished marine species (menhaden, anchovies, herring, and sardines). However, with increased aquaculture production, the reduced availability and high cost of fish meal has recently driven the need to explore the use of alternative products in feeds. Over the last few years, Mike Brown, Kurt Rosentrater (USDA ARS), and their graduate students have been conducting feeding trials to study the performance and nutrition characteristics of fishes fed various formulations containing plant feedstuffs as potential fish meal replacers.

To date, these studies have focused on use of distiller's grains with solubles (DDGS) soybean meal, and soy protein concentrates, each with and without other

nutritional supplements. Fishes used in these experiments thus far include yellow perch, tilapia, and rainbow trout.

In general, studies using DDGS indicate that, without further supplements, regular DDGS (29% protein, 10% lipid) can only replace up to 20% fish meal while high protein DDGS (42% protein, 4% lipid) with supplements may replace up to 100% of the meal. Newer soy protein concentrates have much higher amino acid levels than that found in soybean meals. Due to additional processing, some concentrates are also lower in anti-nutritional factors than soy meal and the amino acid balance is improved, more similar to fish meal. These attributes are providing better performance compared to standard soy meal. Upcoming trials will examine integrated (high protein DDGS + soy concentrates) feeds in the attempt to match long-term performance of fish-meal based feeds.



**Master's Student Aaron Von Eschen (B.S. 2009) and Dr. Brown**

## FACULTY NEWS

**DR. BOB KLAVER** (U.S. Geological Survey EROS Data Center) was promoted to adjunct associate professor after 7 years of high quality interactions with the department. In addition to serving on numerous graduate committees, Bob teaches a graduate course on mark-recapture modeling methods (including Program MARK) on an alternate-year basis. We sincerely appreciate all of his efforts on behalf of the department.

**DR. ROB KLUMB** (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre) was promoted to adjunct associate professor after 6 years of high quality interactions with the department. Rob has interacted extensively with all of the aquatic faculty members in the department, and has been especially active in graduate student research involving pallid sturgeon.

**DR. BRIAN GRAEB** is now president-elect of the Fisheries Management Section for the American Fisheries Society (AFS).

**DR. STEVE CHIPPS** is President of the Education Section for AFS.

**DR. MELISSA WUELLNER** was invited to be a Plenary Speaker for the Annual Meeting of AFS in Pittsburgh during September of 2010.

**DRS. BRIAN GRAEB and DAVE WILLIS** were co-authors, along with two Virginia Tech University faculty members, on *Case Studies in Fisheries Conservation and Management: Applied Critical Thinking & Problem Solving*. Both student and instructor versions of the book were published, and proceeds go to the Skinner Memorial Travel Award fund that supports student travel to AFS meetings.

# Wuellner Reflects on First Year



Melissa Wuellner

What a difference a year makes! As I write this, I think back to where I was one year ago. Twelve months ago almost to the day, I was an SDSU student anxiously counting down the hours to my dissertation defense and tentatively planning for my graduation day. After being in school for a quarter of a century (yes, my husband did the math for me one day), it's sometimes still hard to believe that I have no more educational milestones in my horizon and that all of my goals ahead of me professionally are focused on my career – administering the first big grant, the first graduate student, the first promotion. As those who have written this column before me can attest to, there is so much to learn in making the transition from graduate student to assistant professor, and certain events quickly remind you that you have finally made it to "the real world." Here, I list the "Top 5 Moments I Realized that I am Actually a Professional."

**1) THE FIRST RESEARCH PROJECT** – A few Ph.D. students get the opportunity to be a co-author on a big grant while others may get the

chance to write a small in-house or university travel or research grant. At SDSU, all Ph.D. students are even required to take a course on "Research Regulations and Compliance" offered by the Graduate School, which, as the title implies, is supposed to teach students about all of the regulations and compliance issues associated with research and grants. But I don't think you're ever fully prepared for the intricacies of writing your first grant. Determining what costs are allowable, how research equipment is categorized in a budget, using what seems like "new math" to figure out indirect costs, crafting the language in the Institutional Animal Care and Use proposals, and making sure the collector's permits are filled out exactly are just a few of the confusing hurdles that must be overcome. And just when you think you understand the rules, the game seems to change! I wonder some days if I'll ever fully understand all of the intricacies of grant writing and research compliance, and I don't anticipate that the rules will get any easier in the future, particularly in a time where fiscal transparency is becoming increasingly important. But it's good to know that there is always someone in the Department willing to answer questions and help clear up the fog of confusion!

**2) THE FIRST DISGRUNTLED STUDENT** – I love teaching, and my desire to provide students a quality educational experience is part

of what drove me to become a college professor. Like many bright and optimistic Ph.D. students, I had these grand dreams where all of my students would learn everything I was teaching, and my student evaluations would be high scores across the board. I had such positive teaching experience during my Ph.D. program that I thought this was the way it would always be. In January 2010, I began my first semester teaching three online courses – two sections of WL 110 (Environmental Conservation) and one section of WL 220 (Introduction to Wildlife and Fisheries). I had taught all three courses before, but never simultaneously. I meticulously revised the courses from what I had taught previously, thinking that students would enjoy the courses even more. I was nervously excited for that first semester, but that enthusiasm began to wane about three to four weeks into the class. Some students didn't log in the first week of class and missed the first assignments. Others emailed me and said I was "grading too hard for a low-level class" and that "spelling and grammar shouldn't count in a wildlife class". Often, I couldn't believe the rudeness of those few students who wrote angry, hasty e-mails to me. But other days, I would have a very positive interaction with a student during one of my office hours, or I

would grade a handful of really stellar work from my students. I quickly learned that teaching can be an almost bipolar experience and that it's not always going to be roses and sunshine like I had envisioned. Celebrating the connection you make with the one student or those small victories when that light bulb seems to click for that student who's been struggling in class is vital to maintaining the passion of teaching. On those not-so-great days, it's comforting to have the listening ear of a colleague or a supportive spouse. Thankfully, I have both!

See WUELLNER Page 12

## Pallid Sturgeon Research Update

Graduate students Tobias Rapp and Hilary Meyer have completed their first year of experimental work on pallid sturgeon early life history. Tobi is documenting food habits and factors influencing habitat selection (e.g., turbidity, velocity, substrate, and predation) of larval pallid sturgeon, and Hilary is examining physiological differences between juvenile sturgeon from the upper and lower Missouri River. Results from their project will be applied to the pallid sturgeon recovery efforts. Specifically, information about prey and habitat selection will be incorporated into shallow water restoration and results from the physiological comparison will be used to identify appropriate stocking strategies. This project is funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Hilary is an M.S. student who earned her B.S. at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Tobi is a Ph.D. student who earned B.S. and M.S. degrees at Humboldt-University of Berlin, Germany. Their advisors are Drs. Brian Graeb, Steve Chipps, and Rob Klumb (an adjunct associate professor with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Pierre).

# New Mountain Lion Project

BY JON JENKS

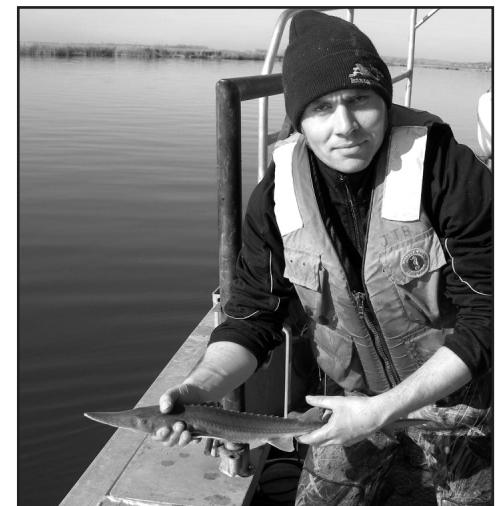
The 4th installment of mountain lion research presently conducted in the Black Hills is focused on the impact of this charismatic species on bighorn sheep and other prey. Survival and reproduction of bighorn sheep have declined in the Black Hills region based on field reconnaissance conducted annually by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks personnel. Cause of this decline is unknown but could be associated with the recent increase in the mountain lion population or diseases (pneumonia complex) that have been documented in bighorn sheep in this region and throughout the west. Mountain lion predation rates on deer and elk, two other potential prey species, also are unknown in the Black Hills. This past year, Ph.D. student Josh Smith (M.S. 2007) began working on the study and has placed hi-tech GPS collars on resident mountain lions, traditional VHF collars on ewe bighorn sheep, and has fitted the ewes with vaginal implants. The vaginal implants allow researchers to find and radio collar lambs within hours after birth.

Findings from the first year of the study indicate that disease is likely the major factor affecting reproduction in bighorn sheep in the Black Hills; although mountain lions were responsible for some of the deaths. Of the 25 lambs that were radio collared in spring, 7 or 25% succumbed to disease while 5 (20%) died due to lions. In addition, those GPS collars are allowing SDSU and SDGFP personnel to walk in on kill sites of lions to determine

prey use. The project will continue for two additional field seasons. Information gained from this study will allow an assessment of the role of mountain lions on the population dynamics of bighorn sheep, elk, and deer in the Black Hills region.



Ph.D. student Joshua Smith (M.S. 2007)



Tobi Rapp holds a shovelnose sturgeon during field sampling on the Missouri River.

# Fiscus Speaker Endowment

The Fiscus Speaker Endowment was established in 2004 through the generous contribution of **Clifford F. Fiscus** (B.S. 1950). His professional career was primarily with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Mr. Fiscus endowed this fund with a \$25,000 contribution. Earnings from the endowment assist the Department in bringing outside speakers/lectures onto campus and in supporting faculty international travel.

2004–FALL	Dr. Trent Sutton, Purdue University; Neil Haugerud, North Dakota Department of Health	2008–FALL	Dr. Lars Rudstam, Cornell University
2005–SPRING	Dr. John Dettmers, Illinois Natural History Survey	2009–FALL	Patrick Schmalz, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Dr. W. Daniel Svedarsky, University of Minnesota-Crookston (President of The Wildlife Society)
2005–FALL	Dr. Kyle Hartman, West Virginia University; Dr. Brian Murphy, Virginia Tech University		
2006–FALL	Patrick Martinez, Colorado Division of Wildlife	2010–FALL	Mark Porath, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Robert Lusk, private sector fisheries biologist and editor, <i>Pond Boss</i> magazine
2007–FALL	Dr. Mark A. Pegg, University of Nebraska; Robert Lusk, Editor, <i>Pond Boss</i> magazine		

## Donations to Wildlife & Fisheries Through the SDSU Foundation

NOVEMBER 1, 2009 TO NOVEMBER 17, 2010

3M– Matching Gifts	Clifford H. Fiscus	Gary E. and Pamela J. Larson	Erling B. Podoll	Rollin D. Sparrowe
Kristel K. Bakker	Kurt J. and Lucia B. Forman	Scott V. Larson	Morris L. and Marcene J. Radack	Robert G. and Karen M. Streeter
William E. Balda	Todd A. Frerichs	Donnie R. and Krecio L. Leddy	James D. Ray	Eileen Dowd Stukel
David A. and Pamela K. Beck	Thomas W. and Mary C. Gengerke	Alan K. Lounsbury	Eric D. Salo	Daryl E. Tasler
Pete and Lisa Bergmann	Doug and Trina Gilliam	Kerry A. Lucke	Sharon and Darrel Sauder	William C. Thorn
Charles R. and Mary L. Berry	Lou B. and Kathleen L. Gilliam	James W. and Geraldine Matthews	Charles G. and Ginger Scalet	Jared Thrasher
Katie N. Bertrand	Ronald D. Glover	Thomas S. McCormish	Diahann M. Schaefer	Ralph H. and Helen M. Town
Robert G. Best	Paul R. and Janice Y. Hamlet	Timothy J. McCurdy	Gladys Schmitt	Curtis M. and Sara C. Vacek
Richard N. Bjorklund	Michael R. Hannon	Steven W. Mero	Krysten L. Schuler	Paul A. Vohs, Jr.
Brian G. and Lorie A. Blackwell	Richard W. and Leslie A. Hansen	Dave E. and Corey L. Naugle	Boyd R. Schulz	Rick A. Warhurst
Vernon and Daphne Blaylock	Carroll Hanten	Harry T. Pawelczyk	Roger D. Shields	Eric and Ruth West
Todd R. and Kim S. Bogenschutz	Douglas C. Harr	Edward F. and Seliesa M. Pembleton	Rollin P. Siegfried	Zeno W. Wicks, III & Roxanne Savaryn-Wicks
Marvin L. and Jean Bouska	Michael J. Hawkins	Charles and Carol J. Peterson	David C. Simon	David W. and Susan E. Willis
Mary Brashier	Marcy Haworth	Donald G. Pfeiffer	Charles E. Sloan	Robert O. and Danielle Woodward
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# WUELLNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

**3) THE FIRST ROUND OF ADVISING** – I can't think of a Ph.D. program in wildlife and fisheries that allows Ph.D. students to advise undergraduates on curriculum nor offers a class on best practices in advising. Advising is trial by fire, and my trial began last week as students will soon be able to register for spring courses. SDSU doesn't assign many advisees to first-year assistant professors (thank goodness!), so my seven advisees pale in comparison to the numbers of advisees other professors in the Department currently carry. Balancing the requirements established by South Dakota Board of Regents, SDSU, and our professional societies (AFS and TWS) as well as the needs of the student (the athlete, the non-traditional student, the transfer student, etc.) can be confusing. I can understand why students are often confused when they come to my office to inquire about what classes they should be taking next semester. I'm learning as I go, and I certainly must work to stay ahead of curriculum changes as they come.

**4) THE FIRST "HELICOPTER PARENT"** – "Helicopter parent" is the affectionate name often attributed to parents of millennial students; these parents are so named because they hover over their children, micro-managing their lives, and are quick to swoop in at the first sign of trouble. I've read a lot about these parents and their perceived role in their child's life and heard stories from my colleagues about phone calls, e-mails, and office visits from these choppers. I've been in my position for 10 months now, and I had not had a single experience with a helicopter parent until last week. This particular parent was wondering why the child had a midterm deficiency in a math course. I told her that

I was aware of the deficiency and had already tried to contact the student with no response. The parent asked whether the student could make up the assignments in the course, to which I replied, "Your student will have to talk to the instructor." The parent persisted, "Is there tutoring available?" My response, "Yes, SDSU has many options to help students struggling in math, but the student will have to seek them out." After about 20 minutes, the parent requested again that I try to get in touch with the student. While I'm happy that helicopter parents are supporting their students through school, I often wonder if such involvement isn't detrimental in some ways. When I was an undergraduate, my parents said, "We'll help you pay for four years of school, and then you're on your own. So, you better do well." Answering phone calls or e-mails from helicopter parents is definitely something I'm going to have to become accustomed to.

**5) THE FIRST FACULTY RETREAT** – The Department has always had a policy of transparency in terms of the outcomes and decisions made at the annual faculty retreat. The minutes of the retreat have been around in the graduate student office for anyone to read, so I knew the types of topics that were discussed (student exit survey results, curriculum changes, future directions and goals for the department, etc.). But it's certainly different being on the inside rather than outside looking in! There are often so many factors to consider in making a single decision. For example, if "Item A" is going to happen, then "Factor 1" has to be approved by the University and the College needs to be able to support "Factor 2". In that one room, opinions of experienced faculty meet institutional history, administrative know-how, and good old-fashioned logic. Having a shared vision is important to the Department, so walking the tight rope where all of these things are balanced

can definitely be tricky! Yet we manage to come together while maintaining our collegiality. I also learned during my first faculty retreat a small inkling of the hard work your Department Head does on behalf of the people he works for (Thanks, Dave!).

The last year has definitely been a whirlwind of lessons learned while making the transition from poor grad student to fledgling professor! Most of the lessons are nothing that can really ever be taught during 25 years of school; some lessons just come from the "School of Hard Knocks". But I count myself incredibly fortunate that not only did I receive a quality graduate education from SDSU, I have the privilege to continue learning and progressing here in our Department, at SDSU, and in Brookings. I look forward to the next challenges and lessons waiting just around the corner!

## SDSU alumni at the WAFWA Sage Grouse Conference – June 2010



Back Row, Don Kemner – ID Fish & Game Dept;  
Steve Madsen – BLM, Salt Lake City;  
Rick Northrup – MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena;  
Jesse Hankins – BLM, Miles City; Stan Kohn – ND Game & Fish Dept., Bismarck. Front Row: Dale Tribby – BLM, Miles City; Dave Musil – ID Fish & Game Dept.; KC Jensen, SDSU; Tim Zachmeier – BLM – Dickinson, ND

At meeting but missing from photo:  
Tony Apa – CO Division of Wildlife;  
Joe Kraayenbrink – BLM, Idaho Falls