



# GRASSROOTS

DR ALEXANDER "SANDY" SMART, INTERIM-EDITOR • SDSU • BOX 2170 • BROOKINGS, SD 57007 • alexander.smart@sdstate.edu • (605)-688-4017

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(605) 754-6718

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26314 350<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
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## **Blessed to be a Blessing**

As I celebrated this year's Independence Day, I couldn't stop thinking about how fireworks and cookouts were a distraction to the real reason why millions of Americans got the day off to celebrate their freedom. The blessing of having a day off, watching kids and grownups enjoy fireworks, and eating grilled food is great, but if we focus too much on the blessing, we forget why we received them in the first place. Many of you didn't get the day off because of the responsibility that goes with farming and ranching. The same goes for people in medical and service occupations. This analogy is not that different from the role the South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGLC) plays. Members, the Board of Directors, and folks assisting them are working hard in the background to bring the grassland stewardship message to the public arena. Sometimes this work goes unnoticed, and sometimes it receives a "pat on the back". This past May, the SDGLC received the 2007 Excellence in Conservation Award from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This award is the highest award that the NRCS gives to honor individuals for their work in conservation. This was the first time that a group received this award. The blessings we receive are actually an outgrowth of our responsibilities. That's why we thank you (members), the Board of Directors, and individuals assisting the SDGLC for championing the grassland stewardship message. Our responsibilities as stewards of the land are a blessing to all. It's your hard work and dedication on your farm and ranch that blesses your family, South Dakota, and the United States.

For more information or other events the **SOUTH DAKOTA GRASSLAND COALITION** is involved with, please feel free to contact Sandy Smart or visit the website: <http://sdgrass.org>.

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**Annual Ranch Tour  
Bill and Pennie Slovek**

**July 24<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 to 3:30 (MDT)  
Free**

The SDGLC Annual Bus tour, minus the bus, will be held at Bill Slovek’s Ranch northwest of Philip on July 24<sup>th</sup>. This is in conjunction with the South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management’s annual ranch tour to honor the winner of the Excellence in Range Management Award. Bill Slovek received the Excellence in Range Management Award from the SD Section for SRM last fall and went on to win the international award this past February in Reno, NV at the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual SRM meeting.

Registration is from 9:00 to 9:30 (MDT) followed by a presentation from Gabe Brown (9:30 to 11:00). Gabe Brown owns and operates Brown’s Gelbvieh near Bismarck, ND. His goal is to increase soil health and productivity of his land rather than increasing acres. Lunch will be served at 11:00-12:00. The ranch tour will be from 12:00 to 3:30. Please come join us on this excellent tour.

*Directions to ranch*

From Wall: take I-90 to Hwy 14 Exit. Go 13 miles east then turn onto Grindstone Road (gravel road) and go 12

miles north, 6 miles east, 6 miles north, and 3 miles west.

From Philip: take Hwy 73 north 10 miles, turn right and go 9 miles west, then 1 mile north, and 3 miles west.

From Hwy 34/73 Intersection (Billsburg): go 15 miles south, 9 miles west, 1 mile north, and 3 miles west.

**Follow up of Bird Tour**

As part of a new strategy to reach the public about grassland stewardship, the SDGLC with partners (SD Game Fish and Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NRCS, and local conservation districts) successfully held its first “Birds. At Home, on the Range Tour”. Organized by Dave Steffen and numerous committee members, over 50 participants visited the ranches of Mark Kieffer, near Rapid City, and Ellen Reddick, near St. Onge on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. We were treated to wonderful hospitality by both ranches. Mark Kieffer provided lunch and supper which showcased his own beef.



Mark Kieffer cooking burgers

Wildlife experts provided guided tours on pastures. They helped birders identify 59 different species.



Eastern kingbird on Kieffer’s ranch

Participants expressed sincere appreciation to the ranch hosts for providing history, current management philosophy, and future concerns about their operations. Participants were quite impressed at the level of cooperation between the SDGLC and state and federal agencies.



Ellen Reddick explaining her management philosophy.

This fall the bird tour will be featured on *Dakota Life* on South Dakota Public Broadcasting Television.

**Eastern SD Pasture Tours**

Four eastern South Dakota pasture tours are coming up in July and August.

*Orient, SD*

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, a tour grazing will be held near Orient, SD. Ann Price, county educator from Hand County, and Range Specialist, Sandy Smart from SDSU will provide information on the benefits of rotational grazing. Lunch will be provided and registration is free. For more information on this tour call Ann (853-2738).

*Britton, SD*

On July 20<sup>th</sup> near Britton, SD from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, county educators Lanette Butler and Tyler Melroe and Range Specialist, Sandy Smart from SDSU will be presenting information on pasture fertilization, manipulating animal grazing behavior, and range plant identification. Mid morning snack will be provided. For more information on this tour call Lanette (439-3331) or Tyler (448-5171).

*Forestburg, SD*

On July 31<sup>st</sup> near Forestburg, SD from 10 AM to 3 PM, county educator, Irene Graves from Sanborn County will host the tour. Featured speakers are Marion Judy, Sandy Smart, and Judge Jessop. They will cover history of grazing in Sanborn County, restoring native prairie, and fencing and water developments. Lunch will be provided and registration is

free. For more information contact Irene (796-4380).

*Bristol, SD*

On August 16<sup>th</sup> near Bristol, SD from 3 PM to 7 PM, NRCS District Conservationist, Darrel DuVall is sponsoring a pasture tour at Darwin Peckham's ranch. Featured speakers are Darrel DuVall, Dennis Skadsen, and Sandy Smart. Topics will include prescribed fire, rotational grazing, pasture fertilization range plant identification, and importance of plant diversity. Supper will be provided and registration is free. For more information contact Darrel (345-4661).

**Land EKG Workshop**

The Grand River Grazing Association is sponsoring a 3-day hands-on workshop September 5-7 2007 in Lemmon, SD. Fourth generation Wyoming rancher, Charley Orchard created Land EKG, and his instruction will focus on grassland monitoring, which ties all land and ecological factors into a single, easy-to-understand picture. Topics covered include: monitoring myths, site establishment, data collection/analysis, production calculations, grazing index, annual monitoring, riparian monitoring, and rapid assessment techniques. Participants will gain the

confidence to choose, establish, and maintain monitoring sites that may be beneficial for future programs. The end result will be your ability to document findings and interpret rangeland function for short and long-term management decisions.

This workshop is limited to 30 participants. The cost of this workshop is \$525 per person plus \$190 for a monitoring kit (optional). The first 20 who register will receive 70% financial support for the class and 50% for the monitoring kit.

Registration deadline for this workshop is August 1, 2007. If interested please contact Ryan Beer at 605/244-5222 extension 3.

**Dakota Fest**

Dakota Fest will be held August 21-23 at Mitchell, SD. The SDGLC will be sponsoring a booth. Please visit and show your support for SD agriculture and help spread the news to the public about the importance of good grassland management.



Sandy Smart  
Box 2170, ASC 219, SDSU  
Brookings, SD 57007

**Calendar of events:**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
Pasture Tour	July 17	Orient	Ann Price	605-853-2738
Pasture Tour	July 20	Britton	Lanette Butler	605-439-3331
			Tyler Melroe	605-448-5171
Annual Ranch Tour	July 24	Philip	Tate Lantz	605-347-4952
Pasture Tour	July 31	Forestburg	Irene Graves	605-796-4380
Pasture Tour	August 16	Bristol	Darrel DuVall	605-345-4661
Dakota Fest	August 21-23	Mitchell	Sandy Smart	605-688-4017
Land EKG Workshop	Sep 5-7	Lemmon	Ryan Beer	605-244-5222

Please remit any comments, suggestions, or topics deemed necessary for further review to: Sandy Smart, SDSU Box 2170, Brookings SD 57007, [alexander.smart@sdsu.edu](mailto:alexander.smart@sdsu.edu), (605) 688-4017