



Black Hills RC&D 2009 Annual Report

The Cost of Community Services Study

The Black Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council recognize that development in the Black Hills region could be a threat to the natural resources that draw people to the Black Hills every year. The Black Hills RC&D has taken this issue to task and worked jointly with the Pennington and Custer County commissioners to complete the project in these two counties. In 2009 Jennifer Thorvaldson, a PhD candidate from Colorado State University, completed the first Cost of Community Services study in South Dakota. The results of the study was typical of others completed around the country where the cost of residential development exceeds the revenues taken in and the cost of open space and commercial development is much less than the revenues collected. With this information it is clear that the value of open land is an economic benefit to the counties.



WHIP Saltcedar Demonstration Project

The Cheyenne River in South Dakota has been identified by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture as an area highly infested with saltcedar. The Black Hills RC&D saw an opportunity through the NRCS WHIP program to develop a special demonstration project that could manage the saltcedar infestation and improve wild turkey habitat along the river. A partnership was organized by the Black Hills RC&D with the National Wild Turkey Federation, The Nature Conservancy, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the Fall River Weed and Pest and DuPont. In August of 2009 over 500 acres on 85 miles of the Cheyenne River in Fall River County was treated to eliminate saltcedar. 23 landowners signed up under WHIP and the remainder of the landowners were compensated through funds provided through the Wild Turkey Federation, The Nature Conservancy and the Fall

River Weed and Pest. As a result of this partnership 100% of the cost on private land was compensated for through a combination of programs and grants.



Fall River County Wind Association

The Fall River Conservation District had been overwhelmed with landowners interested in establishing wind farms in the county. The Black Hills RC&D partnered with the Southeastern Wyoming RC&D and organized an informational seminar on the establishment of wind associations. On January 14th we brought together the interested landowners from Fall River County and the leaders of six established wind associations in Southeast Wyoming to share ideas and experiences. Grant Stumbough, the Wyoming RC&D Coordinator, led a presentation on the process that has been used to establish associations that can level the playing field with wind developers. After plenty of questions and a few war stories between old ranchers, the Fall River Conservation District returned to take on the work of organizing wind associations. After several public meetings and organizing neighbors Fall River County has its first wind association.

Spearfish Alternative Energy Workshop

The Black Hills RC&D was approached by the Lawrence County Conservation District to organize an alternative energy workshop in Spearfish. After a number of organizational meetings we brought together a program that included general energy conservation with opportunities unique to Lawrence County. Steve Wegman spoke to residential conservation and big wind development, Todd Burke and Everett Follette covered the use of wood, Genpro Energy Systems explained the use of small wind and solar systems and Tom Berry from Black Hills Power discussed the benefits of geothermal heating and cooling. The Conservation Districts from Lawrence County, Butte County, Elk Creek and the Crook County Natural Resource District combined resources to provide a complimentary lunch to over 50 participants.



2009 South Dakota Forestry Best Management Practices Field Audits

In 2008 the Black Hills Forestry Association approached the Black Hills RC&D for assistance in locating funding to conduct field audits on six forest harvest sites in the Black Hills. The Lawrence County Conservation District saw the value in the project and agreed to submit a grant through the South Dakota Department of Agriculture as a Conservation Grant. The objective of these audits were to help federal, state, and private foresters, logging professionals, and resource managers gauge BMP effectiveness and identify weaknesses in implementation and compliance of BMPs. Users of these lands along with taxpayers will benefit from BMP Audits, by having a more effective use of appropriated funds for management projects that involve implementation of BMPs. This will ultimately lead to a mitigation in non-point source pollution, an increase in overall environmental health, and the ability to educate federal, state, and local agencies on the benefits of correct BMP implementation. Many thanks to Carson Engelskirger from the Black Hills Forestry Association for organizing and leading the project.