

Audubon News

Newsletter of Prairie Hills Audubon Society of Western South Dakota Inc.
April-May, 2019



UPDATES ON PHAS LITIGATION TO PROTECT GREATER SAGE GROUSE

In spring of 2016 PHAS, Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity & WildEarth Guardians filed litigation to protect the greater sage grouse. The Obama Administration had amended management plans to improve the protections the Forest Service and BLM provided for the sage grouse. While the new management was an improvement over the past, we believe that too many compromises/concessions had been made and not enough progress existed to protect grouse from extinction in the long term. We did not ask for a stay against the amendments in 2016, but sought to ask for changes if we won.

This litigation was put on hold, when Trump won the election and announced his intention to rewrite the Obama era plan amendments. In March 2019 the Trump administration finalized those changes, which would have terrible impacts to sage grouse. We filed to supplement the existing litigation in order to oppose the new Trump era proposals and to ask for a preliminary injunction to return the BLM to the Obama era decisions until the Court issued a final decision on our claims.

This litigation effort represents at least 6 years of work. To achieve standing to sue, we and co-clients had to comment on multiple documents (15 EISs in 2013) and appeal decisions, in 10 states for 2 agencies, through 2 administrations. We are represented by Advocates for the West, a non-profit, public interest law firm and are very grateful to our lawyers and co-clients.

You can find more information about the lawsuits on our web site, on the home and project web pages. Links to filings in the lawsuit are provided or Nancy can send you documents or links.

Nancy Hilding would love to hear from any members concerned about the greater sage grouse and/or have experience with them or have visited, watched or photographed them in any state in the west. Nancy's phones and e-mails - 605-787-6466 or cell 605-877-2620, nhilding@rapidnet.com

Friday, May 17th, 6:15 pm Endangered Species Day Celebration Outdoor Campus West

PHAS always organizes an Endangered Species Day Celebration on the third Friday in May. **Turn to the outside flap for more details on topics and speakers.**

Other Events Sat, April 27th, Earth Day Expo.

Rapid City, 4H Building at Central State Fair Grounds
10 Am - 3 PM - PHAS WILL HAVE A BOOTH
<https://www.facebook.com/Annual-Earth-Day-Expo-Rapid-City-246799732410497/>

Sat, April 27th
Raptor Center Fundraiser,
Canyon Lake United Methodist Church at
3500 Canyon Lake Drive, 4-7:30pm.
<https://www.blackhillsraptorcenter.org/events/>

May 2nd/3rd
SD GFP Commission meeting
Creekside Lodge at US Hwy 16A in Custer State Park
<https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/schedule/>

May 17th-19th, 2019
South Dakota Ornithologist Union Spring meeting in Sioux Falls.
Events will be at both the Good Earth State Park and the Great Bear Arboretum, -Field trips, meals, speakers
<https://sdou.org/SDOU/NextMeeting.aspx>

May 18th
Ideawild Benefit, Rapid City
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-idea-wild-benefit-auction-2019-tickets-58041644120>

May 23rd, 2019
Sierra Club is having an upcoming meeting on the **American dipper**, at the Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, Nancy Drilling is the speaker

ACTION ITEMS

May 8th, May 10th & maybe May 11th, Croell Sand Gravel Mine Application -

Also called "PERLI PIT ROCK QUARRY "

Hearings on the new application

Pennington County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners

May 8th at 3 pm before the Planning Commission & before the Full Board of Commissioners hearing(s) on May 10th & maybe May 11th, at 9. am, Hearings will be dedicated just to this issue.

This is a controversial Project that has been subject to 2 past litigations and a citizen's group was formed to oppose it & PHAS supports their opposition. SD law and the County's ordinance are inadequate to protect the locals and the environment from adverse impacts from sand/gravel mining. Last year the County adopted new ordinances, that we believe are still inadequate. They were sued over the process used in adopting them and lost. The County appealed their loss to Supreme Court. We copied the Black Hills Concerned Citizens 6 page Alert on the issue to the PHAS web site's home page and have other information on the web page. Also for info: -Black Hills Concerned Citizens - duane.abata@gmail.com, <https://bhcc.group/support/> - <https://www.facebook.com/BlackHillsConcernedCitizens/>

May 13 & 28th, Pennington County Comprehensive Plan Revision - Draft

The draft is up on Pennington County web site for review - The Planning Commission will review it first, in more detail, before final review and approval by the County Commission. A link to web page and draft Plan. - <http://www.viewto2040.com>. You can download it and comment from links on the web page or send comment by emailing the County's Project Manager, P.J. Conover at pj.conover@pennco.org. Postal mail address is: PJ Conover, Planning Department, 130 Kansas City St., Suite 200 Rapid City, SD 57701-- The Plan revision had the first hearing in January. The Planning Commission is going through it section by section and in May are now moving to Sections 10 & 11, which includes Cultural and Natural Resources, but you can show up and verbally comment on any part or send written comments. There have been 4 past hearings and future dates are **Monday, May 13, & Tuesday, May 28**, Meetings start at 9am, but you need to consult the agenda to see what time they will discuss the Plan revision.

Prairie Hills Audubon Society is run by volunteers, we need new volunteers to help run organization, but we are especially looking for new Board Members. For information contact Nancy or Mary Jo whose contact info. is listed on the label fold. Visit our web site to stay updated on our & other organization's functions. Please send us your e-mail address so we can send you PHAS announcements. If members are interested in having meetings in other towns besides Rapid City, let Nancy Hilding know, if we had a few interested folks we could at least have a social meeting

Endangered Species Day Celebration, 5/17/2019

At SD Game, Fish and Parks' Outdoor Campus West,
Adventure Trail, Rapid City

**"Meet & Greet" starts at 6:00 pm,
introductions/announcements at 6:15 - 6:20 pm
Presentations to start at 6:20 pm.**

Snacks will be provided

Endangered Species Day is a celebration of our nation's wildlife and wild places. Started in 2006 by the US Congress, Endangered Species Day is the third Friday of May.

Topics and speakers include:

Matt Schwarz - Environmental Contaminants Specialist from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre, SD, will give updates on SD's federally listed species and also discuss the **pallid sturgeon**.

Dan Snethen - Science Teacher from Kyle, SD on **American burying beetle**.

Climate Watch 2019 - May 15 - June 15

Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report predicts that over half of North American bird species will lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080. To test these predictions, Audubon is running the new citizen and community science project - **Climate Watch**.

Like the Christmas Bird Count, birders help the National Audubon Society (NAS) collect data on birds...Only this one means you bird in warm June... not cold winter. Birding occurs at 12 points in a 10 kilometer square area. Each volunteer chooses one or more small circle(s) within the square area from a grid supplied by the NAS. Volunteer(s) needs to bird for 5 minutes at one or more of 12 points (small circles) and collect data on all birds seen and someone must send the data into NAS. NAS is trying to understand climate changes effects to birds better.. For more info. visit NAS or PHAS web pages or contact Nancy Hilding 605-877-2620 (cell) or 787-6466, nhilding@rapidnet.com

Prairie Hills Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society; our territory is much of West River SD. Nancy Hilding - President, nhilding@rapidnet.com, 605-787-466 or 6779, Helen McGinnis - Treasurer, hissyhelen38@gmail.com, Doris Respects Nothing - Secretary, drn.6501@gmail.com, MaryJo Farrington - Board member, 605-716-2151, Jim Petersen - Board member, nfearndesire@gmail.com, Dan Licht - Web site designer. PHAS web site : <http://phas-wsd.org/> - We have a Facebook page....google - Prairie Hills Audubon Society of Western South Dakota, Facebook. Our e-mail address is phas.wsd@rapidnet.com.

Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718

**La Creek Field Trip
Saturday, May 4th, 2019.
Earth Day 4/27 Rapid City.**

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Saturday, May 4th, 2019

**Prairie Hills Audubon Society's & Black Hills Group of Sierra Club's
Annual Spring Field Trip to La Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, SD,**



Field Trip to La Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, SD,

Rapid City Car Pool - car pool leaves - 7:30 a.m. (MT) - From Eastside Family Fare (Family Thrift) parking lot

Refuge meeting - 10:00 a.m (MT). - LaCreek NWR refuge headquarters

We believe it is a 2 1/2 hour trip from Rapid City to LaCreek.

For info.: Nancy Hilding (605) 787-6466 (home land-line) or 605-877-2620 (cell phone), nhilding@rapidnet.com, Sam Clauson (605) 390-9180 (cell phone)