



SDALT NEWSLETTER

July, 2022 / Vol 1

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SDALT 2022 Update

Across the prairie, we see a familiar sight bouncing down our state highways and interstates, out-of-state license plates. It seems that more and more South Dakota is becoming a destination for families looking to reconnect with nature, experience scenic views, and explore our state's western heritage. Thanks to a partnership between a Lawrence County landowner and the South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust, a South Dakota scenic view will be protected forever.

If you look to the west when traveling on Interstate 90 through Spearfish, you will see green mountain meadows framing Crow Peak, one of three peaks that form a crown surrounding Spearfish valley.



The green mountain Meadows are home to the Oak Hills Ranch, the first agriculture conservation easement held by the SDALT.

This past March, SDALT Executive Director Tony Leif, SDALT Board Members, and Oak Hills Ranch Landowner Johanna Meier Della Vecchia gathered to finalize the easement agreement. The agreement ensures the property will stay productive agricultural land and always provide a beautiful view to those visiting Spearfish.

South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust

SDALT is an organization founded by South Dakota farmers and ranchers for South Dakota farmers and ranchers.

We work with landowners to conserve South Dakota's agricultural heritage and working landscapes for the benefit of future generations.



Oak Hills Ranch Host Easement Celebration

The South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust (SDALT) celebrated its first conservation easement with a gathering on Thursday, June 23rd. Individuals from across the state were invited to the recently conserved Oak Hills Ranch. The Ranch is located directly adjacent to the city of Spearfish and borders privately-owned and public land. The SDALT Board of Directors could not have envisioned a more beautiful setting to celebrate South Dakota's open spaces, wildlife habitat, picturesque views, and agricultural heritage.

SDALT partnered with ranch owner Johanna Meier Della Vecchia to establish a conservation easement on Oak Hills Ranch in the spring of 2022. The agreement conserves 762 acres of forests and mountain meadows, adding to the scenic character of Spearfish while maintaining the local agricultural landscape.

"We all need to be grateful for the opportunity of stewardship," Johanna Meier Della Vecchia expressed during the easement celebration. She discussed why she chose SDALT to hold the easement, noting that the agricultural-based trust ensures the land would be kept in its pristine productive state.

The Oak Hills property will continue to be a working ranch grazing cattle and horses under the direction of ranch managers Mark and Terri Weber. The protected property will also provide critical watershed protection to the ecological and recreational values of Spearfish Creek and contribute to a clean and abundant natural water supply for the DC Booth Fish Hatchery.

The easement celebration consisted of short presentations on the mission of SDALT, the history of the Oak Hills Ranch, and a discussion of the value of conservation easements. Those in attendance had the opportunity to visit the historic ranch outbuildings and participate in a walking tour to the top of Lone Tree Hill, located near the center of the property. The view allowed everyone to survey the sprawling residential developments surrounding the ranch.

"The best way to keep land healthy is to protect it from encroachment and have it continue to stay productive," Karl Jensen, SDALT Secretary said. "This hill will always be here, it's a glorious moment to see what can be done in an area of intense urbanization.

"We all need to be grateful for the opportunity of stewardship," Johanna Meier Della Vecchia, Oak Hills Ranch Landowner



2022 South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award Winner Tour

Neil & Muriel Bien and Family
 Tuesday, August 9, 2022 - Veblen, SD
 Guest Speaker: SDSU President, Barry Dunn
 For more information contact Judge Jessop



First Dakota National Bank, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation, South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks, SDSU-College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Audubon Dakota Bad River Ranches, Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership, Blair Brothers Angus Ranch, Cammack Ranch, Daybreak Ranch, Ducks Unlimited (SD), Jim & Karen Kopriva, McDonald's, Millborn Seeds, North Central SARE - Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education, Professional Alliance, South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust, South Dakota's Conservation Districts, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, South Dakota Pheasants Forever, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, South Dakota Soybean Association, The Nature Conservancy, Todd Mortenson Family, US Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Wagner Land & Livestock

RSVP to Judge Jessop at jljessop@kennebectelephone.com
 or 605-280-0127 call/text

SDALT Board Member Highlight

SDALT is governed by a volunteer board, comprised of individuals representing each of the founding organizations, South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, South Dakota Farm Bureau, South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts and South Dakota Grassland Coalition. Directors serve three-year terms, and may serve up to three consecutive terms.



Lyle Perman
SDALT President
Lowry, SD

Lyle's family has been involved in the ranching business in South Dakota since the 1880s. The family's Rock Hills Ranch has received an SD Leopold Conservation Award and the NCBA Environmental Stewardship Award. He and his wife, Garnet, have two children and eight grandchildren.

"SDALT was created because it's founders saw a need for a land owner led non-profit organization capable of holding conservation easements"

SOUTH DAKOTA LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD SEEKS NOMINEES



News Release Provided by Sand County Foundation

The South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust is a sponsor of the South Dakota Leopold Award.

Nominations and applications are now being accepted for the 2023 South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award®. The \$10,000 award honors ranchers, farmers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 24 states. In South Dakota, the award is presented with the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association and the South Dakota Grassland Coalition.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat management on private, working land. In his influential 1949 book, "A Sand County Almanac," Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may nominate themselves. The application can be found at sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA. The application deadline is March 6, 2023. Applications can be emailed to toaward@sandcountyfoundation.org.

If mailed, applications must be postmarked by March 6th, 2023 and mailed to:

Leopold Conservation Award
c/o South Dakota Cattlemen's Association
P.O. Box 1258
Pierre, SD 57501



Trevor Williams
Kodaka, SD

Trevor Williams is a third generation rancher located Cactus Flat, SD. He is very passionate about helping fellow ranchers keep their land as working agricultural ground. Trevor runs a black Angus cow/calf operation and runs a feed supplement business. Trevor likes to travel across the Nebraska state line and share his ranching passion with his girlfriend on her family's operation.

"I believe SDALT is important because our member organizations are producer ran and have the best interests of the landowner at heart. We listen and implement as landowners see fit. Conservation and working lands are what we all strive for"

Conservation Easement FAQ's

Find the most asked questions regarding conservation easements on SDALT's website!

The webpage highlights the process including:

- Financial Aspects
- Types of Easements
- Landowner Rights
- How to Get Started



To learn more visit: <https://sdaglandtrust.org/conservation/faqs/>

Contact Us

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Together we can help preserve South Dakota's working lands for future generations

I would like to support the South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust!



My one-time gift is enclosed

My annual pledge is enclosed (We will bill you each November unless you request otherwise.)

\$100-\$249 Friend Annual pledge signature: _____
 \$250-\$499 Advocate
 \$500-\$999 Steward
 \$1,000+ Champion

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Payment: Check enclosed Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

My company will match my gift: Company Name: _____

Please contact me. I have other thoughts to share

Return this form with your contribution to: South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust, 116 N Euclid Ave. Pierre, SD 57501. To donate online, visit our website: <https://sdaglandtrust.org/>

The South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. A contribution to SDALT is a tax-deductible, charitable contribution.