

Ready For Spring At Lewis & Clark Recreation Area

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

Shane Bertsch, District Park Supervisor at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area near Yankton and his staff recognize the importance of landscape at this state park. Rows of blooming lilacs, white limestone cliffs, water expanse big enough to get away and easy access to the lake, sand beaches, manicured trails, green tidy lawns and spacious tree shade are all parts of the visual trademark that draws visitors to camp, boat, play, picnic and enjoy bike and horse trails here.

What's new is planting a hundred extra trees beyond the usual 150 replacement trees, removing invasive trees or pruning along trails, adding native grasses and wildflowers, and plants and hardscape in the marina area and park entrances. They plan to add plants that grow well here, are appealing but that don't require a lot of upkeep.

"We're at a point now where we can detail some areas," Bertsch said. "We've been in development mode for quite a few years. Now we can put icing on the cake."

NEW NON-ASH SHADE TREES

They plan to replace or add 260 additional trees to the state park this season. They chose shade trees that are attractive, hardy, and low maintenance to complement trees already here. They avoided trees susceptible to known diseases.

They selected 220 deciduous trees including "Princeton," Valley Forge, and "Acolade" elms (Dutch Elm Disease resistant), Harvest Gold linden, American linden, Basswood, Fall Fiesta sugar maple, Red maple, "Sienna Glen" maple, Amur maple, Hackberry, Kentucky Coffeetree and several others.

"We plant oaks every year. They're solid trees for campgrounds, but we may not see them mature. It is for future generations," Bertsch said. Oaks they intend to plant include White oak, Swamp oak, Northern Pin oak, Northern red oak and Burr oak.

No walnut trees are on their planting list. A walnut twig beetle carries a fungus that causes the Thousand cankers disease, and the common Black Walnut tree is susceptible. See Iowa State Extension publication for more information:

<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/thousandcankers/>

Most of the trees here were planted back in the 1960's after Gavins Point Dam was built, such as Green Ash, Black Walnut, Hackberry, Russian Olive,

Chinese elm and seedless cottonwoods. These conservation grade trees were widely available and would grow without extra water. Some of them are past maturity at the state park.

"We're constantly pruning and shaping them," Bertsch said. "Now we get 5-6 feet high quality trees. We used to plant them all in tree belts (nurseries) and move them to the campground with a tree spade. It takes a lot of labor and the tree is shocked a couple of years before it starts growing."

"Now we do it both ways," Dale Dawson said. He is the Conservation Foreman at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area. "We maintain some new trees on the original site to get established and others are planted in a tree belt."

"Evergreens do well in a tree belt," Bertsch said. "We're planting more Ponderosa pine, not instead of Scotch or Austrian pine, due to the Pine wilt disease." This year they intend to plant a total of 40 evergreens, including Black Hills spruce, Colorado blue spruce, and Ponderosa pine.

Referring to the Pine wilt, Bertsch said, "It only takes several months to kill a tree. It's killed about half the pines coming into the park entrance at Gavins Point Road. We're losing some on the Gavins Point Nature Trail and some along the multi-use trail. There's a treatment available but it's too expensive to treat every pine tree in the park."

For more about this disease, search "Pine wilt disease in Nebraska" online for this publication of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

No Green ash trees (Fraxinus sp) are being planted at this state park due to the emerald ash borer. This pest is predicted to eventually infest trees in South Dakota. Infected firewood moved from state to state is thought to be a likely infection source and ash is a common tree in the region.

"We have not planted any ash trees in 10 years," Bertsch said. "Our goal is to diversity the species of trees we plant in the campground to help prevent massive tree loss due to a disease affecting one species." Regulations for firewood in South Dakota State Parks are posted on our department website and campsite reservation website.

South Dakota State Parks' policy on firewood states: No out-of-state firewood may be brought in to state park areas due to the threat of emerald ash borer and other bug infestations. Firewood is available for purchase in the parks.



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON
A New England Aster wildflower photo from last season at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area. Side Oats Grama will be one of the grasses drilled this spring in the park entrance area.

For general information on emerald ash borer: Search "nfs.unl.edu/eab-faq" online for a Nebraska Forest Service fact sheet. For ash borer in S.D. information see:

<https://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/forest-health/emerald-ash-borer/>

TREE REMOVAL

Part of park tree management for visitor safety and landscape renovation is removing trees past maturity and pruning damaged ones. Dawson observes trees over seasons to determine need for action.

"We take out a hundred trees or more a year and I want to stay ahead of the curve," Dawson said. Overly mature seedless cottonwoods and Russian Olive trees are now commonly 40-50 years old in the park.

"No one knew how long they would last when they were planted. But they have worked well and have resisted disease." Felled trees that are not diseased are chipped for mulch.

"We top dress around the base of trees every year," Dawson said. "Of course mulch decomposes and some of it blows away. Birds use some to make nests. Snow mats the mulch. (Top dressing) freshens it. It's recycling our resources."

In some areas of the park thick clusters of Eastern Red Cedars have been removed to allow other trees to grow. Cedars were replaced with native grasses near the entrance to the Gavins Point Nature Trail and in some areas along the horse trail. Other clusters of cedars remain.

"We sheared over 1,000 cedars (by the nature trail)," Dawson said. Cedars were very close together and had choked out other trees. They planted native grasses there.

"When you look at native grass areas once they are established, you don't see as many cedars coming back,"

Bertsch said.

"Last fall we cleared the edges of the multi-use trail. It had been about ten years since we had cleared them back. We put crushed asphalt on the trail surface and repaired some drainage areas so it should be in good shape for years to come," Bertsch said.

"We sheared some cedars there too," Dawson said. In some areas Eastern Red Cedars have choked out other trees. They plan to do more along the south of the multi-use trail.

"It seems that areas not disturbed are not as susceptible to invasive cedars. It seems like you end up with more if you don't burn them." Solutions for some unwanted plants can be challenging. Native plant development is occurring in steps.

BUTTERFLY HABITAT UPDATE

Pam Kallis, seasonal park naturalist and Kim Brannen, seasonal grounds maintenance worker, were the inspiration to set aside areas at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area for butterfly habitat four years ago. With the help of staff and conservation partners, they found areas in sight, of, but away from trails and campsites and planted a wide variety of native grasses and wildflowers to provide food and protection for butterflies. They expect the native plants to take about three years to become established under their natural conditions, depending on weather. Several sites were located adjacent to existing milkweed stands especially for monarchs.

Brannen mentioned one of the butterfly habitat locations between Midway Amphitheater and West Midway boat ramp parking lot. That is where they released monarch caterpillars. A living monarch life cycle was displayed in the park Welcome Center.

Last season the cool summer weather delayed growth of the warm season perennial

grasses and wildflowers. Brown wooden posts were installed around the developing butterfly habitat sites so that visitors may find butterfly habitats.

This year is the third growing season and wildflowers should be showier. "We'll be mowing early in the season to reduce the competition with cool season plants," she said.

"We continue to plant lots of zinnias in the planters at the Welcome Center that attract so many butterflies," Brannen said. "We had monarchs at the end of last season," Bertsch said. "We have signs to put up once the butterfly habitat areas are established."

ENTRANCE LANDSCAPE DETAILS

The park entrance area remains groomed but is trending towards natural landscape. Innovations reflect the state park's unique attributes with hardy, low maintenance trees, shrubs, perennials, native grasses and wildflowers. Plants near the park entrance have full sun and wind exposure and mostly rely on natural rainfall for moisture. The drought of 2012 killed some of their hardy fescue blend turf in this area.

The island in front of the Welcome Center up to the visitor stop sign now is irrigated but the green space is surrounded with asphalt and cement in full weather exposure. The long narrow island has berms, limestone boulders, perennial grasses, and trees that made tractor mowing difficult. Dawson tried a push mower over the area but it was labor intensive.

"We killed the area with glyphosate and later we planted buffalo grass and prairie dropseed," Dawson said. The short grass is then mowed only occasionally to keep its groomed but natural appearance. He explained how he installed the grass.

"I used a walk behind seed drill. There is no setting for native seed but we worked with it until it dropped at the rate we wanted. We went back and forth and then at right angles until the seeds were gone. The seed was planted about 1/8th of an inch or so below the surface. This spring I'll spot spray the cool season grasses with glyphosate as soon as they come up. After a couple of weeks, I'll overseed with more buffalo grass."

Another native plant area is in process for either side of the park entrance. A total of 4.4 acres of Great Plains native grass and wildflowers will be maintained in two groomed native plant areas. The two full

sun open spaces of forbs and grasses will have contrast boundaries of trees and mowed lawn. Away from campsites and trails, these areas will be part of the visitor's first visual experience of nature in the park.

"We will initially start with native grass only for the first couple of years (in the entrance area). In order to control weeds we can't use chemical controls with wildflowers. After the grass is established we will plant plugs of wildflowers around the edges to improve the aesthetics," Bertsch said. The area will take three years or more for the native plants to establish. The area receives only natural rainfall.

Bertsch and Dawson were inspired to consider the natural areas by the park entrance after seeing how native plants looked at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run near Sioux Falls. This area will take three years or more to develop.

Grasses they chose for this space include about 50% Little Bluestem, about 30% Side Oats Grama 'Pierre', and the rest Blue Grama, and Prairie Dropseed. These mid height to shorter grasses also provide seeds for songbirds and upland gamebirds and wildlife cover.

"This park district runs from Running Water to Clay County Park and includes mowing about 500 acres. We're looking at ways to improve our natural resources and eliminate some of the mowing and save on fuel," Bertsch said. "We're thinking the cost (of this grass and later wildflower area) will be about \$1,400. We look at the payoff of not having to mow it (except for yearly management), equipment, and fuel."

MARINA AREA AND PROJECTS

Landscape projects in the marina area are underway soon with retaining walls near the gas dock, irrigation for plants around the marina, and comfort station by the Hobie cat beach. They plan to deal with erosion by steps near C Dock.

Other entrances to the park will receive landscape attention. Irrigation is due for the entrance booth plantings by Chief White Crane. Plants that call attention to the Gavins Point Road entrance to the park are needed. Bertsch and Dawson are considering plants and hardscape similar to the area Pierson Ranch entrance booth that they completed.

Getting ready for spring is the same all over: lots of plans, too much to do, not enough time before spring. Visitors will be here before you know it.

MEETINGS

ROY ANDERSON UNIT NO. 12 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Roy Anderson Unit No. 12 American Legion Auxiliary met Feb. 16, 2015, with President Betty Adam presiding. Chaplain Theresa Brandt presented the opening prayer followed by the Pledge to the Flag. Members sang a verse of The Battle Hymn of the Republic, recited the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary and observed a moment of Silent Prayer for our honored dead.

Six officers answered Roll Call after which 17 members present introduced themselves. Minutes of the January meeting were read and approved. Priscilla Mazourek presented the Treasurer's report that was approved on motion by Natalie Frick seconded by Shirley Juffer.

Helen Simpson reported that membership has reached goal with 113 paid members. Poppies have been delivered. Gert Boyles reported that Girl's State interviews have been scheduled. Bake-less Bake Sale continues. Members are to send their contributions to Priscilla Mazourek. A motion made by Helen Simpson, seconded by Gert Boyles that the Auxiliary make a donation to the Legion towards the membership dinner passed.

Marlys List gave a report on the Mid-Winter Conference that was held in Watertown in February. Spring District meeting will be held in Parker on April 18. State Convention will be held June 26-27 in Huron.

The next meeting will be held March 16, 2015. Legislators will be on hand for the program.

Chaplain Theresa Brandt presented the closing prayer and meeting was adjourned.

Theresa Brandt and Natalie Frick served refreshments.

VFW LADIES AUXILIARY

The Ladies Auxiliary to Ernest Bowyer V.F.W. Post 791 was opened by Joyce Stahlecker. Roll call was taken, followed by opening prayer by Slowe, and patriotic instructions by Olson. The pledge to the flag and the star spangled banner was sung. Draping of the Carter Conducted by President Stahlecker and Conductress Schramm read the names of the past year deceased.

January minutes were read by Schramm, and treasurer's report was giving by Stoddard. Bills were read by Schramm, followed with correspondence and general.

Committee reports: Patriotic instructor: Olson reported on window banners for service personnel, Church by Christensen, cancelled stamps when to Catholic Daughters. Funerals by Schramm, they had one, Hospital by Slowe, monthly visit to State Hospital, Nation Home by List, thanks for Campbell labels, continue to save. Yankton care center and ERTH by Gwen and Majestic Bluffs by Mellan.

New Business: President Stahlecker has the St. Patrick's Day raffle tickets made ready and may be picked up to sell. Stahlecker and Stange will go shopping for raffle prizes. A donation is going to be made to the After Prom Party and also the

Veterans in Sioux Falls V.A. Center. There will be no Breakfast or bingo the first Sunday of April on Easter Sunday, the Post will be closed.

Stoddard read a dues memo from National Headquarters: an annual continuous member must have her 2015 dues received at National Headquarters by June 30, 2015, in order to maintain her continuous years of membership. If an annual continuous member's 2015 dues are not received by June 30, 2015, her membership will end. She must: Rejoin the organization, prove her eligibility, be voted on and start her continuous years over. There is No Reinstatement Category for membership. That will also affect her eligibility for a Cancer Grant, she will have to wait a year after rejoining to be eligible.

Next meeting will be March 9 at 7:30 p.m.

INTERCHANGE

Interchange met on Monday, Feb. 23, 2015, at noon at Minerva's. The meeting was called to order by President Ann Clough and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Members gave the following announcements:

Interchange Past President Frani Kieffer introduced new member Sheila Kuchta, Executive Director of the Avera Sacred Heart Foundation.

Georgina Macias-Carson, assistant warden of the federal prison, informed members that she will host our March 9 program at the prison camp. The program will include a panel discussion by the female department heads and topics such as affirmative action. Members are to RSVP to Sherri Rodgers-Conti.

Sheila Kuchta of Avera Sacred Heart Foundation announced the "Roses Just Because" fundraiser now going on with tickets available for \$25. Proceeds go to support hospice care.

Jean Hunhoff, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, was today's hostess. Her guest speaker was Ryan Brunner, Commissioner of School and Public Lands for the State of South Dakota. Commissioner Brunner gave a very informative talk about the role of his office. Established at the time of South Dakota's statehood, The Office of School and Public Lands manages 3.5 million acres of state trust lands which are leased out to generate revenues for the State's public schools. This past year, \$9.9 million was paid out to South Dakota schools.

The next meeting of Interchange will be held Monday, March 2, 2015, at noon at Minerva's with Jennifer Larson as hostess. Her speaker will be Ben Hanten giving a program about the Wire Me Awake Conference.

TOASTMASTERS CLUB 6217

Eileen O'Connor called Toastmasters Club 6217 to order Feb. 19, 2015, at noon in the Pavilion Conference Room, a warm invocation was given by Greg Stach to start off the meeting.

Muriel Stach presented the word of the day, "amulet" meaning lucky charm, token.

Jen Hovland evaluation team included timer Jane Miller and "ah" counter Jesse Bailey.

Speaker Jan Schiferl gave a very insightful speech on negative thinking, using childhood characters from Winnie the Pooh to help recognize the difference in personalities of people. Schiferl was evaluated by Steve Anderson, who praised her for the great examples and phrases like "there is nothing positive about negative thinking."

Table Topics were led by Eric Taylor with weather as his topic. Jennifer Suing is not a fan of being cold so she is ready for the warm weather any day now. Stan Sudbeck isn't sure what normal weather is anymore in South Dakota and he blames it on global warming. Joyce Stevens remembers her crazy childhood days in the snow riding a terra tiger. Chelsi Hames would move to Arizona if she could get her entire family to go with. Miller believes it's good for other parts of the US to get a taste of snow like South Dakota has had. Gale Vogt recalls a snow day when playing in a snow made tunnel and it collapsing on him. Jennifer Wubben would like take her family to Austin as a fast fun trip.

Evaluator Hovland gave the meeting overall good marks.

Toastmaster O'Connor then turned the meeting over to President Greg Stach, with updates on the club goal of being a distinguished club and the officer training this coming Saturday.

NORTHEAST NEBRASKA RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (RC&D)

The Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council held its recent meeting in Winside at their public library. Board members reviewed their mission statement to a more "user-friendly" version which is to conserve and develop natural, human, and financial resources in northeast Nebraska.

The Radon Kit Distribution project resulted in 75 kits being given out so that citizens could test for radon in their homes. Radon is a radioactive gas that naturally occurs in the environment which can build up in enclosed spaces such as houses. It is odorless and colorless and can pose a serious health risk. The project, valued at \$1275, was done in partnership with the North Central District

Health Department.

Two new projects were approved. A Knox County Cemetery Tour will be put together for this summer or fall. Judy Carlson and Brad Kellogg, both historians who've focused their efforts in documenting cemeteries, are working with the RC&D Council on the project. Watch for more information on this event.

The RC&D office will again be the host site of the Farmers Market in Plainville. The market will be open from early June through the end of September on Wednesdays from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Pearl Laycock will serve as the manager.

This year the W.O.W. - Wings on Wildflowers Tour will be Saturday, June 27. It will focus mainly on sites in Pierce County. Participants will learn about the importance of native wildflowers to pollinators, they'll get to try some edible wildflowers and be instructed on how and what to look for when hand-harvesting native seed. For more information or to register, contact the RC&D office at 402-582-4866.

The RC&D Council looks forward to continuing their service to citizens through projects that will make life better for people in the area of Antelope, Cedar, Dixon, Knox, Madison, Pierce and Wayne counties.

KEYSTONE CHAPTER NO. 33, OES

Keystone Chapter No. 33, OES, met Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Masonic Temple, Yankton, for a stated meeting.

Chris Bryan, Worthy Matron, presided at the meeting. Reports of the annual Official Visit held jointly with Starlight Chapter No. 41 in Mitchell on Feb. 14 were given.

It was decided to give the monthly coin march proceeds to the OES Home in Redfield. Bryan conducted a humorous activity at the beginning of the social. She and Charles Bryan hosted the social hour.

The next regular meeting will be at the Masonic Temple in Yankton on Thursday, March 19, 2015, beginning with a potluck supper at 6:15.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

United Way

'Last Blast' Final Push Campaign Set March 26

BY MARC BIES AND JAY GRAVHOLT

United Way & Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton, Campaign Co-Chairs

In September, United Way set a record breaking goal of \$500,000 for our 2015 Campaign which supports over 35 local programs. We increased this goal due to the tremendous need and requests for additional support from our Partner Agencies and the confidence that we could rely on the support and generosity of the Greater Yankton community. As we wind down the 2015 Campaign, we are close but not yet to 100% on our thermometers throughout town. Therefore, we are about to embark on our Last Blast, Campaign Final Push, during the month of March to solicit help from the Greater Yankton Community to raise the remaining 5% to reach that goal!

Please consider supporting our efforts which will include asking small businesses in Yankton to "Give \$100 to help us reach 100%", challenging businesses to be creative in a Last Blast fundraiser with their employees, participating in "Dine United" events at various restaurants, and contributing to our raffle during Last Blast Day on March 26th. We will also be launching a TEXT to GIVE option making giving to United Way that much easier and giving donors an efficient way to make United Way part of their yearly giving.

As Board Members and Campaign Co-chairs, we know the IMPACT your investment to United Way makes on the community and on our Partner Agencies. We have been brought to tears by their stories of the good work and want to be able to support them in any way we can.

Please consider helping us reach this record breaking goal and as always LIVE UNITED.

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