

Sandhills Task Force

"Where the people and land are one"

P.O. Box 787

Wood Lake, NE 69221

Next Task Force Meeting:

The next Task Force meeting is on Thursday, April 12th, at Brahmer's in Thedford. **Please note, at board request, meeting convenes at 10:30 central time.**

Agenda Items:

10:30 Meeting called to order

Introductions

Approval of minutes

Financial Report (Barb Cooksley)

- Board approval for check signature policy (Cooksley)

Project Coordinator update (Van Winkle)

- 2012 NETF Award Update
- FRPP Project-Loup County
- FRPP Project-Sheridan County
- Corp Permits granted
- Willow stream bank re-establishment
- Potential STF water quality partnerships

12:00 Lunch

Craig Utter (Sand County Foundation funding request)

Gordon Creek Restoration (Graham)

Website update (Graham)

FWS Partners Program 25th Anniversary (Dinan)

3:00 Adjourn



FRPP Project Site

STF/FWS initiates large scale Gordon Creek restoration project.

An opportunity to use a new model of stream restoration exists on a stretch of Gordon Creek that has not fit the traditional technique of using instream water control structures. Several partners have come together in support of this concept which will involve the use of LIDAR technology and reconstructing an old channel.

Leopold Award

Jim participated in the selection process for the 2012 Leopold Conservation Award, to be given to a Nebraska landowner who have become conservation leaders in their communities. The selection team reviews applications from across the entire state and recommends landowners to the Sand County Foundation, who will select a winner. The STF has contributed \$3,000 annually towards the monetary award in the previous two years. Craig Utter, a Sand County Foundation employee will be in attendance at the April board meeting.

STF receives two NETF grants.

The STF applied for two separate NETF grants during the 2012 grant funding period. NETF received a total of 93 grant applications last fall and with less total funding available, the competition was intense. The "Price Ranch Conservation Easement," application was funded at \$395,627. The "Sandhills Native Ecosystem Project" application was funded at \$361,200 over a period of three years. This grant will provide the funds needed for a wide array of conservation projects funded by the STF and partners.

STF submits Cross L Cattle Company into FRPP.

Last board meeting, the STF board authorized Jim to pursue a conservation easement on the Cross L Cattle Company ranch in Sheridan County. The 3,700 acre ranch was submitted into the USDA's Farm and Ranch Protection Program for approximately one-half of the funding needed to purchase the conservation easement. The STF has a long and successful history of assisting this landowner in the development of a management plan that resulted in a much improved grassland resource.

USFWS develops a new environmental review process.

The USFWS has developed a new process to evaluate the environmental impact of projects conducted on private lands. The new process appears to eliminate much of the paperwork and additional time required by the previous process. Ultimately, a smoother FWS and NGPC environmental review should speed up the Army Corp of Engineer review process required on most all stream/wetland restoration projects.

New Pine Ridge landowner group seeks to use STF partnership model.

Jim Van Winkle has been asked to speak to group of landowners and agency people in Chadron on April 16th. The group is currently focusing on building a partnership consisting of rangeland users, varying from recreational to long-term ranches in the Dawes, Sheridan, and Sioux Counties.