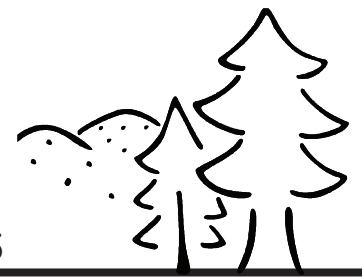


Spearfish Canyon Owners Association

Spearfish Canyon News

March 2015



Spearfish Canyon Owners Association Members,

As I am writing my piece of the SCOA newsletter we in Eastern South Dakota are headed for 60 degree weather and what might be a permanent reprieve from Winter. It actually has been a mild winter without much snow although we have had an adequate supply of cold temperatures. As we look toward the official start of Spring and for many the thoughts of opening cabins and homes for Spearfish Canyon season there are a few items to remember.

When we are looking at building and remodeling projects be sure and contact the Architectural Review Committee with your plans. This will avoid problems for all parties later. The building, landscaping and home guidelines are available on line at our website if you don't have a hard copy. Another item to be aware of is the rental policy for SCOA members which is 14 days to non family members. Since 100 of the 300 Spearfish Canyon properties were not part of the Homestake land sale to cabin owners there is often confusion about why a neighbor does not comply with SCOA guidelines, but those 100 properties are not required to be SCOA members. Cooperation is voluntary on their part.

Canyon activity for most of us is quiet in the Winter season but for ARC members it has been a different story. They have been working throughout the Winter on some matters that have involved our attorney and will have an impact on creek integrity and quality. There also have been challenges on some building projects. As we go forward it is our hope that Spearfish Canyon and Creek will be protected and development insured to be in compliance with and in the spirit of the Homestake land exchange that we have all agreed to by purchasing a property in Spearfish Canyon. In a previous newsletter Jim Nelson has written about the history of the land exchange and how SCOA was formed and why. If you are unsure of SCOA's formation take the time to look back and read Jim's article.

On some other topics: the mountain pine beetle cutting program did go forward this winter again and SCOA was a contributor to the funding of this project. The proceeds on sales of the Spearfish Canyon cook book was the largest portion of our contribution. This has been a very successful fundraiser and the County has appreciated our financial help. We also owe a hearty thanks to all the people that contributed recipes, organized the book and continue to spearhead this effort. Thanks to you all. The County ended

SCOA members may rent their property to non-family members for no more than 14 days per year.

cutting in January but plans to continue next season as funding from a variety of sources is available.

There has been a development in the Northern Hills area that may affect our Deadwood Standard Mine focus. Wharf Mine has been sold to Coeur Mining Inc. by Goldcorp Inc. Coeur is a Chicago based company and has expressed plans to expand production at the Black Hills site. This ownership change could impact the plans of the Deadwood Standard group and their proposed mining project. SCOA has been active on the Deadwood Standard Mine front since it's proposal and will need to watch developments going forward to insure impacts on the Canyon and Creek are minimized. I would ask that membership keep their eyes and ears open on this matter.

I think it is now time to end this letter. I hope this finds everyone eagerly getting ready to repopulate Spearfish Canyon and resume the activities and enjoy the beauty available there. Enjoy the Spring and we will see you in the Canyon.

Steve Paula, President

Annual Meeting Notice

Spearfish Canyon Owners Association annual meeting is July 11, 2015, at the Lead Country Club. Happy Hour is at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. and the meeting will commence at 7 p.m. Make plans now to attend.

Dues Notice

SCOA dues are \$100.00 payable before, or at the annual meeting on July 11. As a member of the association, you will receive the SCOA newsletter. If you wish to order other newsletters, you may pay an additional \$5.00 and let us know who is to receive it, and their current address. Please mail your fee(s) to: SCOA, PO Box 480, Lead, SD 57754.

Birds of Spearfish Canyon

'Blend Zone' Brings Many Bird Species to Area

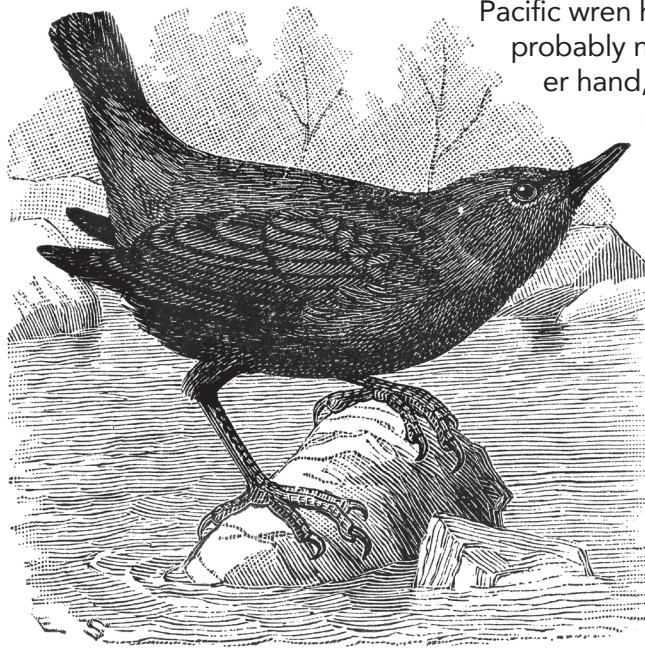
We live in a remarkable place, at an interesting time. This statement could apply to an array of subjects, but this column is about birds.

The Black Hills are remarkable simply by virtue of geographic location. Biologists separate North America into eastern and western regions, generally along the 100th meridian. This puts the Black Hills in a "blend zone" where east meets west. The "true west" is considered to start along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains. The ecosystem which defines the Black Hills – extensive aspen, pine, and spruce forest; clear running water; moderate climate; and higher altitude – means that many of our common bird species are representative of the western region. This "island on the prairie" is the most eastern location to find many bird species that we may take for granted, such as black-headed grosbeaks, western tanagers, violet-green swallows, mountain bluebirds, gray jays, three-toed woodpeckers, and cordilleran flycatchers. For this reason, the Black Hills has always been an attractive destination for bird enthusiasts – birders – from areas to the east.

However, there are some interesting changes taking place. Many bird species are expanding their normal range. This is due to a variety of factors, climate change; competition from other species; disruptions from human activity; and habitat loss on both their breeding and wintering grounds.

As a result, we are witnessing changes in bird density and diversity. These changes are both interesting and in some cases concerning.

In recent years, Northern cardinals have been seen and heard in the Lead/Deadwood area. A species introduced from Europe, the Eurasian collared-dove is now common in most urban areas of the Black Hills. The presence of black-backed woodpeckers is on the rise due to the ease of making a living from the pine beetle infested forest. A small, secretive bird, the



Fewer and fewer American dipper or water ouzel birds are being observed along Spearfish Creek.

Pacific wren has been on the increase and is probably nesting in the hills. On the other hand, birds such as shrikes, kestrels, evening grosbeaks, and most thrush species are becoming harder to find as their overall numbers decrease.

Of particular concern – to this birder – is our beloved American dipper, commonly called the water ouzel. Fewer and fewer of these birds are being observed along Spearfish Creek and its tributaries. Since this is a non-migratory species - found nowhere east of here and only as close to the west as the Bighorns and Rocky Mountains – the diminished numbers are probably due

to a combination of factors such as nest disturbance, human activity, or decreased water quality.

Easily, the most interesting and surprising bird news happened along Iron Creek in Spearfish Canyon, a few years ago. A bird from Central America, the orange-billed nightingale thrush, was present for a couple of months during the summer. Remarkably, this is only the third confirmed sighting of this bird in North America, with the other two being from areas very near the Mexican border! As a birder friend of mine likes to say, "Birds have wings. They can be anywhere."

Those interested in birds should consider joining the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. Though the organization name may seem a bit intimidating, this is a statewide group of birdwatchers, accepting of any level of experience or interest in birds. One of the nice perks of this organization is the list serve, where members post sightings and share information about bird activity in the state. For more information go to sdbirds.org.

– D George Prisbe

D George Prisbe is a resident of Hanna, at the upper end of the Spearfish Canyon Travel Management Area. To share your observations, questions, or comments he can be contacted at przybysz@hughes.net.

Fly Fishing Spearfish Canyon Area Offers Fast Moving 'Pocket Water'

Spearfish Creek is one of the best trout streams in the Black Hills. It is home to populations of wild naturally reproducing brown and rainbow trout. Population studies by the game fish and parks department continue to show that these populations are very healthy. However, changes in stream habitat from multiple high water events have made fishing a bit trickier in the past decade. Many of our favorite runs and pools have turned into fast moving riffles, which at first glance appear to hold very few fish.

In order to successfully catch fish on the fly in Spearfish Canyon anglers have to learn to fish fast moving "pocket water". In fly fishing terms "pocket water" refers to swift moving sections of stream broken up by rocks and boulders of varying sizes. Pocket water is typically one to two feet deep. "Pockets" of holding water for trout occur behind each rock that breaks up the stream's current. Spearfish Creek is littered with pocket water, and learning to fish this fast moving water correctly will vastly improve any angler's catch rate.

The two most important techniques for fishing the pocket water in Spearfish Canyon are improving drift and getting the fly down to the fish.

Getting a better drift improves the number of strikes an angler gets on any type of trout water, but in pocket water it is critical. Drift is the speed that your fly moves downstream. The slower and more natural the drift, the better the presentation. Improving drift is more important than fly selection. A good presentation always trumps having the perfect fly.

To improve the drift in fast moving water, don't make long casts. Most presentations are only a rod length away from the angler. Keep as much line out of the water as possible. Line caught in the swift water causes the fly to be "dragged" downstream too quickly for the fish to see the fly.

A great technique to improve drift in pocket water is called high-sticking. Start by making a short cast to the pocket of holding water you would like to fish, then hold the rod tip high above the water to keep line from being dragged downstream. When fishing this technique properly, the fly line will seldom be in the water. Only a few feet of leader and tippet will be in contact with the water. High sticking will slow down the drift dramatically and improve your odds at fooling the trout.

Most often success in Spearfish Creek depends on fishing a sunken fly well. Dry fly fishing can be extremely good in the canyon, but day in and day out nymphs and wet flies are the ticket. While using the proper technique is most important, choosing the right fly will add to your overall success. Nymph fishing pocket water effectively requires flies that sink quickly- tungsten weighted nymphs fit that bill perfectly. A selection of tungsten weighted nymphs in size 14-18 is a must for fishing Spearfish Creek. Some of our current favorite flies are tungsten jig Pheasant Tail nymphs and Tungsten Jig Assassins.

Learning to fish pocket water and having quick sinking flies is the key for fishing most parts of Spearfish Canyon. Get out and try high sticking with a tungsten nymph tied on your tippet. You will find more fish in the "pockets" of Spearfish Creek than you might have thought possible.

– Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler & Outfitter

Environmental Chair Update

Spring is always more than welcome in the canyon especially for those that live here full-time. We can put away the shovels and snow blowers, turn down the heat and lower our power bills and we can enjoy our yards again! Come on summer!

But, spring brings with it the continuing battle of the beetle. It is time to make your appointment for the annual tree bug spraying. Any Ponderosa within the boundaries of your property that you want to protect need to be sprayed in the spring and demand for this service is always high, so get your call in as early as possible to get on the list.

If you need help finding a tree spraying service or other info on fighting the Mountain Pine Beetle, contact Dave Heck, the Lawrence County pine beetle point guard. His number is: 605-580-5789. If you feel the need to spray for weeds or insects this summer, check carefully that you or your service are using environmentally friendly products, and that no spraying is done along the stream banks. Our properties are in a fragile area, so always treat with care.

– Dave Palmer

Continued Report on Pine Beetle Battle

This is an update of the article published in the last Newsletter, wherein there was a summary of the beetle tree cutting in Spearfish Canyon as done by Dave Heck's county crews.

In that summary, it was pointed out that the policy had been that Dave used SCOA-supplied funding over the past two years to defray the direct tree-cutting costs. Unfortunately, for the cutting done in winter-2015, with the reduced funding available to the County for all of the Lawrence County activities, Dave applied the full burden of the activities for cutting infested trees to our SCOA funds of ~ \$20,000. The direct tree-cutting costs for the total County program was ~\$438,000, the direct tree-cutting costs were ~\$238,000+(about \$15/tree) and the costs of initial recon., admin., equipment/fuel, paint, work comp.,etc., totaled ~\$199,000+, or 45% of total costs.

600 Trees Cut in Canyon

Thus, the fully burdened costs/tree is essentially twice that of the direct cutting costs in the Canyon(~\$30+), since the average cutting cost/tree is also higher in the Canyon due to terrain, access, etc. The net result for SCOA funding for Canyon cutting is that we got ~600 trees cut in the Canyon versus an expected cut of twice that number, based on our past two years' experience. Dave Heck told the County Commissioners that it was hard to take out only 600 trees when there are 100,000 that need to be cut in that area(In Lawrence County, 15,907 trees were cut, with a Forest Service contract taking out another 15,000 in the Limestone area this winter.

Dave was emphasizing the scale of the problem and the current emphasis on the beetle battle. The latest annual survey indicates that beetle activity is declining, especially in the southern Hills, BUT it is still increasing in the Northern Hills, and will potentially continue to do that for several more years.

State Government Provides Some Funds

This overall picture of reduced infestation trends may have influenced the Governor when he provided no funding for beetle mitigation in his proposed State budget for the coming year. Fortunately, our State representatives(Ewing, Romkema and Johns), along with some others in the Black Hills districts submitted a bill in the legislature to provide \$1,950,000 for the continuing beetle battle. The Legislature, on the last working day of the Session, provided \$750,000 after lengthy debate. The details of how that will be administered by the State Forest-

er, including the amounts available by County are as yet unknown. Thus, the actual available for Lawrence County and the priorities for use are yet to be set for cutting next winter.

The SCOA Board will stay in contact with Dave Heck and the County Commission as the total funding available for Lawrence County is known and what priorities will be set for areas to be treated. As in the past, cutting in Spearfish Canyon will be limited to that SCOA/other contributors can provide.

Cutting Has Helped Slow Spread

Although the scale of the problem is huge, those areas of the Canyon where needed treatment is obviously growing, can be positively affected by selective cutting. Where trees have been cut, adjacent areas have been found to be relatively free from spread the following year. The Board will be assessing the moneys that can be made available for cutting in the Canyon, coordinating with Dave Heck on best possible areas to do the cutting as this year's aerial survey is completed, followed by assessment for priority mitigation, recon/surveys done for those areas, hiring the crews, etc., for actual cutting next winter.

As a related item, it is important that you do spraying of your "trophy" trees on your properties in the early spring to protect and save those trees, especially as the beetles spread more rapidly now below the Canyon rim. That spraying must be done each year before the beetles fly in the late spring/summer months.

– Jim Nelson/13 March 2015

Billington Memorial

A group of canyon friends of John and Doris Billington is proposing a plan to place a memorial to John Billington ,who passed away this winter, in Spearfish Canyon. The memorial type and placement will be decided upon in consultation with the Billington family and will include names of contributors as a reminder to the family of their friends in and around Spearfish Canyon.

Those interested in contributing to the memorial should send pledges with name and amount pledged to davidpalmer@centurylink.net or wanstedt@gmail.com by May 1st, 2015, at the latest.

The Land

So you would like me to gift my
land to the Foundation

I expect your Investment
Committee would sell the land

Invest the money in stocks, bonds,
and hedge funds

I don't think you understand the
land

That is, understand my
relationship with it

Together, my husband and I
worked the land for 40 years

Picking rocks, raking hay, fixing
fence; hard work, deep love

It was my garden, where the
pasque flower's bloom

Assured me of winters close

Long winters, of feeding cattle,
fighting snow, playing cards

This is where we built our lives,
raised our family, watched his
mother die

Celebrated: births, baptisms,
graduations

Buried loyal dogs

He was a strong man, big clumsy
hands, a gentle touch,

A devoted father, good farmer,
caring neighbor. My companion

This land was our love

The patter of breath, on summer
mornings

Soft, like spring rain on wooden
shingles



The scent of fresh cut hay

As he gently lay it down, in perfect
windrows

Windrows, stretched tight across
June's morning

Windrows, gracefully draped into
August's nightfall

And, that youthful spirit; a spirit
that ran wild in the wind

Oh, you say you would hold the
land, care for it

Tend to its' needs; as he did, and
as I have tried

There is a quiet space in me, that
now walks the land

Looks for him. As nights grow
longer, deeper, slower

Take it. We place it in your hands,
your stewardship

We never really owned the land

Any more than we owned the sun
that lit our days

Or owned its' breath that we held
within us. I long to hold it still

That breath; that breath that blew;
blew recklessly over us

I loved the wind, that strong vigor-
ous wind, of the Dakota prairie

He loved it too

Gordon Ommen 2011 ©

"The purpose of this organization shall be to maintain the beauty, serenity and attractiveness of the Spearfish Canyon, and monitor and protect the water quality and flow of Spearfish Creek and its tributaries and to preserve in perpetuity the covenants and conditions placed upon said property by Homestake Mining Company of California."

(Section A, Article III, Articles of Incorporation. Spearfish Canyon Owners' Association)

Spearfish Canyon News...

is a newsletter by and for the homeowners of Spearfish Canyon Owners Association.

Send comments and articles PLEASE to Carol Reausaw: Caroljeanie@yahoo.com.

Many thanks to Dee Sleep with Chicken Creek Communications, LLC, for printing our newsletter.

Our website is: <http://www.canyonowners.org>

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