



Pennington
Conservation
District



Fall 2025

NEWSLETTER

Contact Us



(605) 503-5299



PenningtonCD@SDconservation.net



www.penningtonconservation.com

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SILVICULTURE FOR A CHANGING WORLD

“Hi, I’m Rayma Daigle, and I am the 2025 Chair for the Dakotas Society of American Foresters (DSAF). I would like to invite you to our annual conference taking place this September 3rd & 4th in Rapid City. This year’s theme is “Silviculture for a Changing World”. Silviculture is just a fancy word that refers to things you can do to make your forest healthier, happier, and, in this case, more resilient for changing environmental stressors, such as more intense and frequent drought, wildfire, insects, etc.

How are you going to prepare your forests for these challenges? If you don’t know the answer to that, this conference is for you!

Join us as we break down the methods you can implement to prepare your forests for a changing world. Day 1 will be at the Journey Museum and will consist of speakers at the cutting edge of this science and management, including renowned landscape ecologist Dr. Paul Hessburg. Day 2 is a field day where we will look at what these various treatments look like and how they differ from more traditional forest treatments. Stops include Sawyer Memorial Park and the Black Hills Experimental Forest.

To find out more and register, please visit dakotassaf.org You can also email me at rayma.daigle@usda.gov”

Dakotas SAF is a professional society of foresters and natural resource professionals covering North and South Dakota. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit and an affiliate with the Society of American Foresters (SAF) national. Our mission is to advance sustainable management of forest resources through science, education, and technology, promoting professional excellence while ensuring the continued health, integrity, and use of forests to benefit society in perpetuity.



A NOTE FROM PHEASANTS FOREVER: BLACK HILLS CHAPTER

Article by JB Brown, Chapter President

Back in May the Black Hills Chapter of Pheasants Forever (PF) put their hands in the dirt on a habitat project that was over a year in planning. The project involved Chapter members collaborating with one of the 34 PF farm bill biologists within the state of South Dakota, a very welcoming land owner, the Pennington County Conservation District out of Wall, and Cabela's. After our Chapter made mention of a really nice property to the biologist, he made contact with the landowner and the beginnings of a really amazing project began! The landowner and the biologist discussed options to help improve the already great habitat, there were many programs kicked around, none stood out as a good fit. This is where our partnership with the PF biologists really gets to shine.

The PF biologist made a presentation to our Chapter at a board meeting, discussing the opportunity for us to increase foraging, nesting, and cover at a location that is already enrolled in Walk-in, surrounded by National Grasslands, and already has a variety of wildlife on it. Our Chapter put up funds for shrubs and trees which we sourced from the Pennington County Conservation District. The District staff also helped with sourcing the varieties to meet our project goals. The Black Hills Chapter also wrote and were awarded a grant from Cabela's which doubled the project. In total 1,100 shrubs were planted by PF volunteers, 169 trees, and 2 acres of PF pollinator seed mix designed by PF for western South Dakota were planted. The landowner is keeping his cattle out of that area to allow things to take root and become established over the next couple years.

Our Chapter is always looking for projects to improve habitat, we raise funds locally that we control to deliver our mission. If you have a potential habitat improvement project or land that you would like to see what could be done to improve it contact us via email at blackhillspf@gmail.com.



START PLANNING NOW FOR YOUR SPRING 2026 SHELTERBELT

Shelterbelts are more than just rows of trees—they're a smart, long-term investment in the health and productivity of your land. A well-designed shelterbelt can make a big difference. The Pennington Conservation District is here to help with planning, planting, and guidance every step of the way!

HOW IT WORKS

Now:

Contact the Pennington Conservation District to start planning your shelterbelt.

By October 1:

Site must be fully prepared to qualify for spring 2026 planting.

Plow 12-24" deep and 12' wide (if installing fabric)

Disk or rototill again before spring

Remove sod, perennial weeds, and chemical residue

Costs:

Machine planting (includes tree): \$3.00 per tree

Fabric installation: \$0.80 per linear foot

Minimum order: 200 trees

Deposit: 50% required before tree order is placed

Spring 2026:

District staff will machine-plant your shelterbelt (weather permitting).

After Planting:

Landowners should heel in trees and water immediately to increase survival rates by up to 30%.

NEW FACES

PAIGE UHER NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST



“My name is Paige Uher, and I started as the NRCS District Conservationist in the Rapid City Field Office in July, 2024. I am working alongside the Pennington and Custer County Conservation Districts to assist landowners with their conservation efforts.

I’m from the Rockerville area, so it’s great to be working in the area I grew up in. In 2021, I graduated from University of Wisconsin – River Falls with my Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Studies with minors in Crop Science and Ag Business. Before joining the NRCS, I worked in retail ag near Chamberlain. My career with NRCS started in 2022 when I became a Soil Conservationist in the Plankinton Field Office. In my free time, I enjoy exploring the Black Hills, spending time with my husband, and traveling.

I look forward to meeting more of you, and I encourage you to stop by our office or give us a call at (605) 342-0301, ext. 3.”

EVA CHASE PCD DISTRICT MANAGER



“Hi everyone! My name is Eva Chase, and I’m thrilled to be stepping into the role of District Manager here at the Pennington Conservation District.

I live in Rapid City with my partner and our two adventurous dogs, Ada and Briggs. I originally hail from Pennsylvania, but I’ve lived all over the country and have called the Black Hills home since 2018.

My background is in environmental management, with a master’s degree in the field. Outside of work and school, I’m an SDSU Extension Master Gardener, a certified Pollinator Steward through the Pollinator Partnership, and the president of the Black Hills Wild Ones chapter, an organization that promotes native landscapes through education, advocacy and collaborative action. I also coach figure skating, which is a longtime passion of mine. When I’m not in the office, on the ice, or in the garden, you can usually find me reading, skiing, riding my motorcycle, or exploring the trails with my dogs.

I’m truly excited to take on this role and contribute to the stewardship of our incredible natural resources, while also supporting the agriculture community that’s so vital to our region. I look forward to working with all of you and being part of the amazing conservation work happening across Pennington County.

Looking forward to meeting many of you soon!”



Pennington Conservation District
414 E Stumer rd STE #300
Rapid City, SD 57701

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your logo on this page—right in front of our engaged, conservation-
minded readers.
Call 605-503-5299 or email penningtoncd@sdconservation.net to
reserve your spot today!

SAVE THE DATE

Join us at our 2nd annual Pennington Conservation District conference!

September 24th, 2025
Best Western Ramkota Hotel
Rapid City, SD

Topics include...

- Urban Agriculture
- Rotational Grazing
- Forest Thinning
- Composting
- Soil Health
- Shelter Belts
- Wildfire Mitigation
- No-Till Growing
- Cover Crops

Registration and more information: penningtonconservation.com