

Weed Watcher



Spring 2026

2026-2027

Tyler Page - President

Davison County
1224 W 5th Ave
Mitchell, SD 57301
tylerp@davisoncounty.org
605-995-8625

Ron Moehring - Past President

Codington County
315 7th Ave NE
Watertown, SD 57201
97ronm@gmail.com
605-280-3397

Darren Bauer - Vice-Chair

Corson County
25152 107th St
Mcintosh, SD 57641
Corson_commissioner_2@yahoo.com
605-850-4069

**William (Bill) Walker
Industry Representative**

5230 Airport Road
Spearfish, SD 57783
William.walker@nutrien.com
605-645-1636

**Michael Stenson
Association Government
Representative**

Pierre
michael.stenson@usda.gov
605-222-3557

**Gary Pribyl
Executive Sec/Treasurer**

19987 Homestead Lane
Wolsey, SD 57384
gpribyl@santel.net
605-354-1989
fax 605-883-4922

Highlights from the 2026 Weed and Pest Conference - Deadwood, South Dakota

The 2026 Weed and Pest Conference event was well attended, with [Number] counties represented and nine presenters sharing their expertise over the course of the three-day program.

The sessions covered a diverse range of topics, including pasture monitoring, Play, Clean, Go/NAISMA, the Sanford Underground Research Facility, and Ventenata control in Montana. We hope these presentations inspired new ideas and strategies for you to implement within your own county operations.

During the event, we were pleased to recognize several outstanding individuals. Awards were presented to Misty Moser and Dave Tatum for their roles as Outstanding Contributors, and Keith Gones was named Supervisor of the Year.

A new addition to this year's program featured presentations from a

supervisor within each district. These sessions were very well received and provided valuable insight into the activities taking place in Brown Co. (District 1), Minnehaha Co. (District 2), Potter Co. (District 3), and Pennington Co. (District 4)



One of the primary scheduling changes this year was moving the Weed & Pest Commission Meetings 1 and 2 to Wednesday morning. This adjustment was generally viewed as a positive move, as it allowed many participants to spend fewer days away from home and reduced lodging expenses for those not required to attend the full session.

We were also excited to

bring back Kahoot Trivia and door prizes. A special thank you goes to Jeremiah Phelps (SDDANR) and Mike Stenson (USDA APHIS) for keeping attendees engaged and challenging our more competitive participants. As a reminder for next year: the trick answer is "Canada Thistle," not "Canadian Thistle."

Our fundraising efforts were very successful this year. All the proceeds from both raffles goes towards scholarship awards. Jeff Haessig was the lucky winner of the 1911 9mm gun.], Additionally, Keith Gones won the 50/50 board. The silent auction was also a great success, providing continued funding for our scholarship program.

Events like these remind us why an Annual Conference is so vital. It provides time for fellowship, sharing, and encouragement, ensuring we can support one another in the challenges of working with the public to create a better South Dakota.

MAKE PLANS for the
28TH ANNUAL WEED AND PEST CONFERENCE
February 24 – 26, 2027
Aberdeen, South Dakota
Best Western Ramkota Hotel – 605-229-4040

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 31- Deadline to have your county annual weed board meeting (in Administrative rule 12:62:09:01.01. Number and time of board meetings)

March 31 – Deadline for FY2026 Competitive weed and Pest Grant Reimbursements – Original signed copy must be sent not emailed

March 31 – Complete and Return SDDOT Joint Powers Agreement – Two originals signed by Chairperson and submitted with copy of Commission Meeting Minutes.

April 1 – Suggested deadline/date to print your county’s legal Notice of responsibility to control Noxious weeds & declared pests

April 20th – SD Weed & Pest Control Commission Meeting at 10:30 am, Mathews Training Center, Joe Foss Building in Pierre.

May – Place Spongy Moth Traps and mail trap placement forms to APHIS

May 13 & 14– Seasonal/New Applicator Training and ATV Certification – Walt Taylor Bldg. in Rapid City – District 4 Project

May 20 – Deadline for FY2026 Contractual/Regular Weed & Pest Grant Reimbursements – original signed copy must be received by May 20, not emailed – **NOTE THE ENDING DATE FOR THE FY2026 REGULAR GRANT!!!**

Mid-May – Time to begin scouting for rangeland grasshoppers

June 11 – The Good, The Bad and The Similar Looking Tour - District 1 Project

Updated March 06, 2026

Eric Jones, Assistant Professor and SDSU Extension Weed Management Specialist

Written collaboratively by Eric Jones; David Vos; Jill Alms; Leon Wrage; and Paul O. Johnson, former SDSU Extension Weed Science Coordinator.

Herbicides for Noxious Weeds

Noxious Weed Recommendations: Herbicides for pasture, range, and non-crop areas, including roadside and other right-of-way that may be harvested for hay or grazed, are given a priority.

Non-Crop Areas: Non-cropland is defined for herbicide purposes as areas not used to produce food or feed crops during the time herbicide residue remains in the soil. Non-crop areas include parking lots, utility storage areas and some rights-of-way. Pasture, range and hay land are cropland.

Herbicides: Herbicides are listed by trade name except where the active ingredient is available in several products. The common name (in parentheses) follows the first listing of the trade name. Product labels for the same active ingredient vary. Herbicides included are those considered for most situations and those generally available. The order in which herbicides are listed does not reflect control results. Right-of-ways are frequently grazed or used for hay, therefore grazing and haying restrictions should be considered when selecting herbicides.



DOWNLOAD

2026 Weed Control: Noxious Weeds

Getting to know the Weed and Pest Supervisors: District 1 – Tim Huber

Congratulations to Tim Huber on his new role as the Weed & Pest Supervisor for Brookings County.

The Brookings County has 794 square miles of the county and the 394 miles of maintained roads provide a clear picture of his scope of work. The varied topography—spanning from the Buffalo Ridge hills to the Big Sioux River bottoms and the flat croplands—certainly presents

a diverse and challenging landscape for weed and pest management.

Canada Thistle is the county primary targeted weed at this time. Past education projects, the gopher trapping training the county has previously hosted for local youth has always been a success.



The Good, The Bad and The Similar Looking

As May turns into June that means that summer preparations of hiring help, getting equipment ready, making sure needed tools or chemicals are on hand for upcoming work. This is an annual occurrence regardless of where you work when it comes to noxious weed management. There is also another event that rolls around this time of year, the “Good, Bad, and Similar Looking Plant Tour” (imagine Clint Eastwood themed lyrics). This annual event started back in 2016 when a group of us from the Northeast identified a few needs and thought that this might address some of it. The needs were pretty basic, county budgets were generally not growing, there was a lot of attention on Monarchs, spraying was being put under the microscope, and we are continuing to lose diversity in our grasslands. We were receiving calls about purple flowers that the general public “thought” were thistles, but were “actually” native species that were being planted to increase diversity. Wild parsnip was around and Golden Alexanders were being targeted. Agencies and counties were hiring folks with not a lot of experience in plant identification, yet we were having them spray.

The solution quickly came to have a plant tour and address all these things listed above and it has been very well received. Generally each year 30 to 90 people show up for a day of looking at invasive and noxious species as well as the good natives that look similar. The focus isn’t the debate of spray or not to spray, but to make sure the correct species are

getting treated and minimizing the mistaken spraying of native beneficial species. Misty Moser from Brookings County has said many times, “I never knew....” This same notion has been repeated countless times at these tours.

The other benefit of this is that treating the correct species saves producers and counties money. Spot spraying is much more cost effective than blanket spraying, and in order to do that, one needs to know that not all purple plants are bad. Steve Molengraaf said I have “all kinds of good stuff at his place,” and he most certainly did, but he did not necessarily know how much



variety/diversity he had, particularly in his road ditch. Owen McElroy, has said a handful of times that historically there was more contentious relationships with habitat/conservation groups and now we are learning from each other on what is and isn’t working, and instead of treating a plant you don’t know, texting pictures and correctly identifying it, then figuring out a plan of action.

This tour has moved across eight locations and had over 370 people take time out of their hectic June schedules to come and learn and share information. The people is particularly interesting, because its not necessarily folks that are being paid while attending, it’s also landowners and inquisitive members of the general public. At times there isn’t necessarily an easy answer, but the fact that folks across different agencies and ownerships are there talking is a HUGE step in the right direction. While there is a strong team here in the northeast, that doesn’t mean others can’t start their own teams and expand on what seems to be working. It most definitely takes some time and skills, but the effort is well worth it when folks show up and learn.

None of this could be done without Owen McElroy (SD Game Fish and Parks), Joe Blastick (The Nature Conservancy), Steve Mollengraff (Codington County Weed Board), Nathan Mueller (Grant County Weed Board), Misty Moser (Brookings County Weed Board), Pete Bauman (SDSU Extension), and the SD Grassland Coalition and others.

Come take a look at what is in your pasture.

Getting to know the Weed and Pest Supervisors: District 2-Tyler Page

Name: Tyler Page

Title: Supervisor, Davison County

Years of service: 4.5 Years

County Size: 432 Square miles

Infrastructure: 180 miles of oil roads, 160 miles of County gravel Roads, and 441 township roads.

Professional Insights:

- Successes: Tyler finds the most rewarding aspect of his role to be educating landowners and engaging in reciprocal learning with them.
- Challenges: the primary difficulties include ensuring county-wide compliance with weed control and managing the logistical challenges of finding days with low wind speeds suitable for road spraying.
- Educational Outreach: Tyler actively contributes to public education by assisting with the association's booth at Dakotafest.

Personal Interests:

In his free time, Tyler enjoys camping and meeting new people.

" I would like to take this moment to thank everybody who attended the conference in February. It was a great turnout and was great time at a new location." Tyler Page, Chair of the SD Weed and Pest Board Association

Getting to know the Weed and Pest Supervisors: District 3 - Craig Hunter

Craig Hunter serves as the Corson County Weed and Pest Supervisor, a role he began in November 2024.

Corson County, located along South Dakota's northern border with North Dakota, features semi-arid rolling hills and agricultural land, with the Missouri River forming its eastern boundary and the Grand River flowing through its center. The entire county lies within the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and spans 2,530 square miles.

Craig manages both the county right-



of-way and State DOT areas, and he's passionate about community outreach and collaboration—key reasons he accepted the position. He finds the greatest reward in working with a diverse group of people and tackling the challenges that come with it, though he

notes that aligning everyone's efforts can be the toughest part.

Craig is organizing a public workshop in partnership with Sitting Bull College to focus on noxious plant identification, grass calibration methods, and best management practices. His primary weed control targets are leafy spurge and absinthe wormwood.

Outside of his supervisory duties, Craig is a full-time cattle and forage production rancher, bringing hands-on agricultural experience to his leadership in weed and pest management.

Getting to know the Weed and Pest Supervisors: District 4 – Nina Steinmetz

Nina has served as a Supervisor for Fall River County for 15 years. The county spans 1,740 square miles, including an estimated 580 miles of right-of-way roads. The topography is diverse, ranging from forested hills to rolling prairies, 46,000 acres of the Black Hills National Forest and 233,600 acres of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands. Additionally, the Cheyenne River runs 8 miles through the county from west to east.

In her experience, the most rewarding yet challenging aspect of this position is working directly with the local

landowners.

To support the community, she facilitates several key educational projects:

- Pasture Walk and Talks: Held annually in late May, these events invite landowners to learn about weed and pest management, best land practices, and forestry.
- County Fair Booth: We host an educational outreach booth every August during the County Fair to engage with the public.



TIME TO GET TO WORK: Sprayer calibrations

Boom and Boom-Less Sprayer Calibration

- 1) Fill the sprayer with **CLEAN** water (never add herbicides while calibrating).
- 2) Run your sprayer at your selected operating pressure "with your booms turned on".
- 3) Make sure all nozzles are spraying uniformly, **MEASURE** the **SWATH WIDTH** in "**FEET**" and write it down. This = _____ **feet width of sprayed area (SW)**.
- 4) Collect the spray volume from each nozzle(s) and measure the "**EXACT AMOUNT COLLECTED IN 1 (ONE) MINUTE**". Record the amount caught in gallons per minute (**GPM**) and write that down. This = _____ **gallons caught in 1 minute (GPM)** (If you wrote the amount down in ounces caught then divide by 128 to get gallons).
- 5) If your vehicle does not have a speedometer, do as follows. Determine the sprayer speed in miles per hour (**MPH**) over a 200 foot distance. *****Maintain the desired speed and measure in "SECONDS" the time it takes the sprayer to travel 200 feet (do this several times to get an average of your speed and to get used to a certain speed).** Write this time down in seconds to travel. This = _____ **seconds to travel 200 feet**.
- 6) You determine your miles per hour by taking 200 feet x 0.682 = 136.4 and then divide by the seconds to travel the 200 feet into that number. This = _____ **miles per hour traveling (MPH)**.
- 7) You determine your gallons per acre applying by doing the following:
$$\text{GPA (gallons per acre)} = \frac{\text{GPM (gallons per minute)} \times 495 \text{ (constant used)}}{\text{MPH (miles per hour)} \times \text{SW (swath width)}}$$

This = _____ **Gallons per Acre** applying.

Backpack Sprayer or Small Hand Sprayer Calibration

- 1) Measure out an area 10 feet x 10 feet = 100 square feet (sq. ft.). Fill your sprayer with **CLEAN** water only and spray the measured area. **RECORD** how long this takes in **SECONDS or MINUTES** to spray the 100-sq. ft.
This = _____ **Time to spray the area**.
- 2) Catch the spray from your sprayer for the "**SAME AMOUNT of TIME**" it took to spray the 100 sq. ft. area and record this amount in ounces or gallons.
This = _____ **ounces or gallons**
- 3) Take the amount of water caught and take that x 10 and write that down in either ounces caught, or gallons caught Amount of water caught _____ **ounces** x 10 _____ **divide by 128 = _____ gallons**.
- 4) **NOW**, to calculate the gallons per acre you are applying by doing the following:
We converted the gallons caught from 100 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft. by taking times 10
We work on 1,000 sq. ft. calculations / there is 43,560 sq. ft. in an acre
We divide 43,560 by 1,000 and get **43.56**.
- 5) Take the amount of spray gallons (water) you caught and take that x 43.56 and that will give you your **GALLONS PER ACRE** rate of application.
Gallons Caught _____ **x 43.56 = Gallons per Acre Applying** _____

Hand Gun Sprayer Calibration

- 1) Mark out an area 31.5 feet x 31.5 feet. This equals 1,000 sq. ft.
- 2) Setup your sprayer and uniformly spray the measured test area with your handgun sprayer (with **CLEAN** water) and **RECORD** the amount of time it took you to "**UNIFORMLY SPRAY the TEST AREA**".
Record this time in **SECONDS or MINUTES** and write that number time down.
Time to Spray Area = _____
- 3) Catch the spray (clean water) from your handgun sprayer or handwand sprayer in a container for the same period of time (seconds or minutes) that it took you to spray the 1,000-sq. ft. Record this amount in **gallons caught** and write that number down.
Gallons Caught = _____
 - If you wrote down the number in ounces than divide the number of ounces caught by 128 to get gallons applied.
- 4) Calculate the application rate per acre by taking the gallons of spray you caught and take it times **43.56** to get your application rate per acre in gallons applying.
Gallons per Acre Applying with the Handgun Sprayer = _____
- 5) Take the size of your sprayer tank and divide it by your application rate per acre to get how many acres you will apply with each full tank load.

Invasive Weed Management Training — 2026 Wednesday, May 14th

Hosted by Black Hills Area Weed Managers

Designed for herbicide applicators,
but open to all interested
participants * **FREE Training** —

No Registration Required

Location: 4-H Walt Taylor Building, 601 E. Centre Street,
Rapid City, SD 57701

Additional Training Opportunity —

ATV Safety Course — Thursday, May 15th

Registration Required

Contact: Scott Guffey — (605) 394-5320 scottg@pennco.org

Training Topics for Invasive Weed Management

- Noxious Weed Facts
- In the Field First Aid
- Weed Identification
- Fire Prevention
- Non-target Plants, Pollinators, & Additional Concerns
- Equipment Maintenance
- Record Keeping & Spray Report Requirements
- Herbicide Label Information / Toxicity & Safety
- Spray Application
- Spray Equipment Calibration

Join us for: “The Good, Bad, and Invasive Plant” Field Day



Cup plant
Native



Perennial sow thistle
State Noxious



Common dandelion
Invasive

When: **June 11, 2026 10:00 to 3:00**

Where: Thousand Hills Ranch, 19921 349th Ave, Ree Heights, SD 57371

What: The day will include conversations and learning opportunities about treatment options, land management, biocontrol, and plant id.

Cost: **Free and all ages are welcome**

RSVP: Not Required, but preferred in case of bad weather. jblastick@tnc.org

What to Bring: Sun screen, long pants, field guides, your own lunch

Transportation: We will have a trailer for transportation or have short walks at the sites.

Directions: From the intersection of 394th Ave and Hwy 14 (1/4 mile west of Ree Heights), travel south on 394th Ave 2.17 miles and meeting place is on the west side of the road.

Hosted by: Brookings, Codington, Deuel, Grant, County Weed Inspectors, The Nature Conservancy, SD Game Fish and Parks, SDSU Extension, SD Association of Weed Supervisors, and SD Grassland Coalition

2026 Weed Fighter's Scholarship Awards

The South Dakota Weed Fighter's Scholarship Program has announced its 2026 recipients, awarding a total of \$5,000 to students pursuing agricultural and natural resource careers. Funding for this year's scholarships was generated through the annual gun raffle, the 50/50 raffle, the silent auction, and interest earned from organizational investments.

Two students earned the program's top honor, receiving \$1,000 scholarships. James Kahnke of Codington County and Mercedes Jones of Jerauld County were selected for their commitment to agricultural studies and their strong academic and community involvement.

Six additional students were awarded \$500 scholarships. This year's recipients include Emma McNamara of Campbell County, Talon Ping of Hyde County, Tripp

Gaikowski of Day County, Keaton Fiedler of Walworth County, Jacob Kindelspire of McPherson County, and Rylynn Streich of Deuel County. Each student demonstrated a clear dedication to advancing their education in agriculture-related fields.

To be eligible for a Weed Fighter's Scholarship, applicants must be U.S. citizens and residents of South Dakota. Students must also be high school graduates and will receive their scholarship funds after completing one semester of post-secondary education. Eligible fields of study include agriculture production, precision farming, agronomy, entomology, and natural resources. Students may attend any South Dakota college, university, or technical school, as well as institutions in bordering states.

Applicants are also asked to submit an essay addressing the theme, "Why do we need to take care of noxious weeds and how does that affect the agriculture economy?" At the conclusion of the essay, students must list at least three members of their County Weed and Pest Board, if such a board exists in their county.

The Weed Fighter's Scholarship Program continues to support the next generation of agricultural professionals, emphasizing the importance of weed management and its impact on the state's agricultural economy.

WATCH WEED: Hoary Alyssum (*Berteroa incana*)

Hoary alyssum is an annual (occasionally biennial) plant with white flowers, notched petals, and round seedpods. It generally grows in disturbed, dry areas and is not thought to be a large threat to intact native plant communities.

However, it can be a nuisance in plant restoration efforts and it is toxic to horses.

Appearance

Hoary alyssum is an annual plant, but can occasionally be a biennial. Plants grow to two feet tall and have white flowers with deeply notched petals and round seedpods.

Leaves and stem

When hoary alyssum first germinates, its leaves are in a circular grouping (rosette) near the ground. The plants then send up stems. Leaves on the stems are alternate (come off the stem one at a time at each leaf node). Leaves have smooth edges and can grow up to 3 inches long and ½ inch wide. Leaves and stems have fine, grayish hairs.

Flowers

Hoary alyssum has small white flowers arranged in clusters. Each flower has four

deeply notched petals, giving the petals a heart shaped appearance that can make it look like there are eight petals upon first glance. Flowers bloom from June through August.

Seeds

Hoary alyssum seedpods are round and flattened and come off the stem on short stalks. Each seedpod can contain 4-12 seeds.

Roots

Hoary alyssum has a taproot.

Biology

Hoary alyssum is generally an annual plant that germinates in the spring, produces a rosette of leaves close to the ground, then sends up a flowering stalk, produces seeds, and then dies. Occasionally, plants germinate in late summer or fall and those plants will produce the rosette of leaves, but will not flower and produce seeds until the next year. Hoary alyssum grows well in dry soils with sparse vegetation. It is commonly found in disturbed dry areas such as along roads and railroads. It can be found in lawns, fields, and pastures. It displaces native species particularly in dry prairies

and sand blowouts where vegetation is sparse.
Origin and spread

Hoary alyssum is native to Europe and Asia. It was likely originally introduced to North America as a contaminant in clover and alfalfa seed. It spread in North America as a contaminant in seed mixes, hay, and gravel as well as along roadsides. Hoary alyssum is widespread in Minnesota and is especially common in areas with sandy soils.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/herbaceous/hoaryalyssum.html>





DISTRICT OFFICERS

<p>District1 Chair: Keith Gones Deuel County dcweed@itctel.com 419 3rd Ave S, PO Box 350, Clear Lake, SD 57226 605-874-2681 V-Chair: Ron Moehring Codington County 97ronm@gmail.com 315 7th Ave NE Watertown, SD 57201 605-280-3397</p>	<p>District2 Chair: Darwin W Kurtenbach Hutchinson County 27007 Hwy 37 Dimock, SD 57331 dwk0301@gmail.com 605-280-5184 V-Chair: Tyler Page tylerp@davisoncounty.org Davison County 1224 W 5th Ave Mitchell, SD 57301 605-995-8625</p>	<p>District3 Chair: Troy Beck Campbell County 31548 105th St. Artas, SD 57437 tcbeck87@gmail.com 605-848-0203 V-Chair: Larry Heath</p>	<p>District4 Chair: Nathan Jagim Meade County 20621 131 st Ave Sturgis, SD 57785 meadeweeder@meadecounty.org 605-347-2964 V-Chair: Nina Steinmetz Fall River County 709 Jensen Hwy, Suite C Hot Springs, SD 57747 fallriverweed@frcounty.org 605-745-5047</p>
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