



Inside  
Finding and photographing our state  
flower. Page 2

# Black Hills Snapshots

A monthly newsletter of the  
Black Hills Photographic Society

## Club Outing to Meeker Ranch and Custer State Park

### Black Hills Snapshots

Published monthly  
by the Black Hills  
Photographic Society

#### Editor

Sue Gannaway  
Spearfish, South Dakota  
605-641-0573  
suegannaway@yahoo.com

#### Mission

An organization dedicated to  
furthering the art of photography

#### Officers

President: Ted Ayers  
Vice President: Betty Bonawitz  
Secretary: Frankie Hofer  
Treasurer: Krista Hofer  
Program Coordinator: Carol Ness

#### Meeting Information

The Black Hills Photographic  
Society meets on the second  
Tuesday of each month at the  
Rapid City City/School  
Administration Building  
300 6<sup>th</sup> St., Rapid City, SD  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor East Community Room

By Krista Hofer

On Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, eleven BHPS members participated in a field trip to the Meeker Ranch near Custer and a drive into Custer State Park. We started the morning by visiting the Meeker Ranch, an old abandoned ranch now owned by the Forest Service. There is current movement, lead by painter Jon Crane, to preserve the ranch. We wandered around taking photographs of the many out buildings, barn and house. The day was a little brisk and after many of our trigger fingers were frozen, we decided to head back to Custer to finish up the day in the Park. The warmth and shelter of our vehicles was much desired by all.

We decided to head south of



*More pictures page 4*

Custer and enter CSP through the Wind Cave National Park entrance. Our goal of the day was to see the baby buffalo. As we drove around the Wildlife Loop we saw antelope, deer, turkeys and adult buffalo—no babies. So, we stopped for a quick picnic lunch at Badger Clark's cabin. After much nudging, Harry Blanks, BHPS member, led us on some of the public dirt roads in the park in our search for some buffalo calves. Still nothing. (cont page 4)

Website <http://www.bhphotographicsociety.org>

## **Spring Photo Opportunity: Black Hills Crocus Blooms**

By Dave Vaughn

The pasque flower, its abundance and its spring wake-up call made it a natural choice for the floral emblem of South Dakota. The pasque flower, along with the motto "I lead," was approved as the official floral emblem of South Dakota on May 5, 1903. The pasque flower is known by many names. The Lakota name for the flower is "hosi cekpa" meaning "child's navel." Others refer to this flower as anemone, wind flower, blue anemone, Hartshorne plant, gosling plant, American pulstilla, prairie crocus, blue tulip, wild crocus, prairie smoke, sand flower, rock lily, headache plant, Coventry bells and the May Day flower. Attention to the pasque or wind flower in South Dakota dates back to a time long before Europeans settled in the area. As the first blossom to show itself in the spring, the pasque flower lent itself to legend and an endearing place in the hearts of early settlers. My family has always referred to the flower as simply "crocus" and they are quite common for a short time in the spring.

I recommend the Spring Creek drainage below Sheridan Lake as a destination to shoot images of crocus flowers in bloom. These images were captured the first week of May 2009. It seems like they can be there one day and gone the next. This particular bed of crocus' was approximately 20' by 30', right next to the creek, containing many plants, a person had to be careful not to step on them while trying to compose a photo. This area is below the Sheridan Lake spillway and can be accessed by several means, all of which require a bit of a hike, more or less.

The easiest and fastest way to access the area is to take your boat or canoe across



Sheridan Lake to the dam, make land nearby and hike downstream looking for flowers.

There are at least four other ways to access the spillway area:

Sheridan Lake Dakota Point, park in the day use area and follow the lake shoreline to the left or easterly direction to the spillway, then proceed downstream. Rough, rocky and strenuous... roughly +/- 2 miles round trip.

Sheridan Lake Dakota Point trailhead for the Centennial Trail. Parking is located off of Sheridan Lake Road on the Dakota Point access road. The trail is marked and somewhat strenuous with steep terrain, and just guessing , +/- 2 miles to the spillway and back. There is a fork in the trail that can be confusing, stay to the right, remembering that the lake and creek are to the south.

The "Calumet Point" trailhead Centennial Trail Access comes in from the south side of the lake, I personally have not used this portion of the trail so be prepared for anything.  
Cont. Page 3

### *May Birthdays*

May 26 – Krista Hofer



## **Welcome New Members**

Dave Vaughn  
Doug and Carol Pavel

## **Welcome Back**

Linda Foster

## **Photo Tip of the Month**

### **Shooting back yard birds**

#### Camera Gear

To get 'pro' shots in the wild you will need a SLR/DSLR with a 300mm (or more) lens, but in the back yard the rules change. You can even get good shots with an advanced point and shoot with 10x Zoom as I did with my Minolta Dimage Z5.

You will need a tripod to steady yourself also I some times set my camera up in the yard closer to the feeders, sit back away from the camera and use my remote to fire off the shutter. So I recommend you have at least a 10x zoom or a 200mm lens, a Tripod/Monopod, remote shutter release and most of all patience.

I recommend using either continuous focusing or manual focusing with pre-focusing on the branch/perch or feeders.

I set my white balance manually although as I do tend to forget that sometimes I always shoot in RAW. That way if I do forget to set my white balance or my exposure is off a little I can fix within my image editing software.

I tend to shoot in Aperture Priority Mode when shooting birds that are feeding, that way you can control the depth of field.

With in flight birds I shoot in manual mode, setting the shutter and aperture. This is all a learning curve that takes practice and patience.

Read more: <http://digital-photography-school.com/backyard-bird-photography->

## *Spring Photo Op – cont from page 2*

The Fishing Access on Spring Creek at Burnt Ranch Draw below Sheridan Lake AKA "Upper Spring Creek" trailhead Centennial Trail Access is also an excellent starting point for a nice hike. This easy route follows Spring Creek upstream from the parking area to the spillway, also offering good photo ops along the way. There are several creek crossings so expect wet feet or wear appropriate footwear, the last climb from the creek bed to the spillway proper is quite steep so be prepared and use caution. Again +/- 2 miles. The entry from the lower end following the creek upstream is my personal favorite route offering excellent scenery all along the way, staying with the creek all the way to the spillway. If unable to locate any blooming crocus' the entire area still offers nice birding, wildlife and scenic photo opportunity.

Use Trails Illustrated map # 751 or USFS BH National Forest maps.

(historical content taken from [www.netstate.com](http://www.netstate.com))

**From Ted:** Another spot for Pasque Flowers is on S Rockerville Road. The best stands were on the left side of S Rockerville Road, south of Neck Yoke Road intersection.

## **Next Meeting**

**May 11 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Photo Contest**  
Open Photos – subject  
matter your choice

**Meeker Ranch – Cont from page 1**

Then Sharon Blanks spotted a couple calves up on a distant hill side. So, off we went, winding our way back on the dirt roads behind where Sharon saw the calves. We found them! The buffalo cows and calves were protected in a fenced off area to allow the calving process to happen without disturbance. We were then able to set up our camera gear safely and proceeded to take pictures of what we were in search of. We were even able to witness the birth of a buffalo calf, and see a couple of them take their first steps. Despite the chilly, cloudy day, members felt the field trip was successful. We spent the day taking pictures and making memories. I know I'm looking forward to the next trip and the opportunity for members to get together again. We are lining up trips for the coming months and details will be shared once we finalize. Thank you to everyone who attended. I know I had a lot of fun. We are asking everyone that participated to bring a couple pictures from that day to share with the rest of the society at the May meeting.

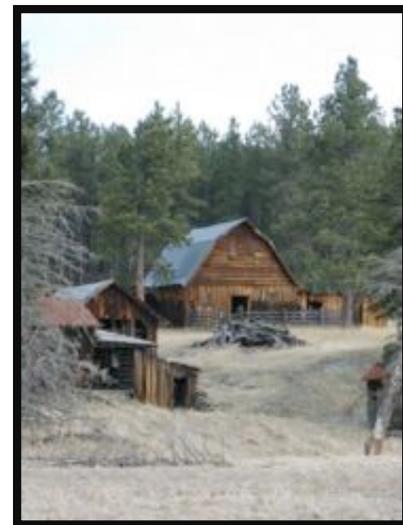


Photo credits: Frankie Hofer, Ted Ayers, Pam Cranfill and Becky Fish