

Project Story

West Central FFA

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I got started in my SAE when my parents purchased an acreage near Crooks, South Dakota. The 25-acre piece of land that they purchased had an old farmhouse on it that was in dire need of renovation. Along with the house came a rather large yard to mow and clean up because it hadn't been maintained very well by the previous owner. After moving in I soon began to notice all the wildlife that the creek that runs through the property attracts. This was a wonderful opportunity to do something closely related to one of my family's favorite pastimes, hunting.

Through renovating the house I have learned many useful skills such as how to put in electrical wiring, plumbing, hang sheetrock, frame out walls and install windows. I have also learned how to run many of the power tools needed to complete the tasks. The tools include; an air nailer, sheet rock drill and a circular saw. I think the work on the house will better prepare me for when I live on my own, so I don't have to call some one to come and fix it for me every time something breaks. I will be able to fix it myself.

I enjoy spending a lot of my time outdoors and one way I get to do is through turf and landscape management. The previous owner of the house hadn't taken very good care of the property so there was a lot of clean up work to do. This included reclaiming ground that had gone to weeds, leveling out parts of the yard, and planting over 1,700 trees along with flowerbeds. I have also planted a 1.2-acre garden for in home use and retail sale for the past three years. Willow Creek Produce is an enterprise owned by my mother where I earn a percentage or commission on the produce that we sell. The majority of that money goes into a college fund account for my post secondary education.

The tornadoes of June 24, 03 also left their mark on our home. Many trees were uprooted or snapped off and damage was done to our house and out buildings. Just when things were looking pretty good, clean up started all over again. All of this was a lot of work but now that the yard is cleaned up all I have to do is maintain it and this gives me time to start planning out other landscape designs such as flower beds, planting more trees, and putting in a granite retaining wall.

Nature is something that I love and that is why I enjoy wildlife management so much. So far I have recorded the wildlife that I have seen on our property, planted a clover food plot, and set up mineral lick and protein block stations. In 2005 I planted an additional 7-8 acres of foodplots all from seed that was donated to me through industry representatives. In 2004 and 2005 I expanded my Wildlife Management project to include wild turkeys. Each year I raised and released 15 Eastern Wild Turkeys. I build a flight pen out in the middle of my largest foodplot areas where the turkeys are kept until old enough to be let loose. I have special foodplots that are specifically for the upland game birds such as pheasant, grouse and turkey. This is one part of my SAE that I have really had a lot of fun planning and working on.

In the coming year I am going to plant additional flower beds and continue working on the landscaping around the house. We will be building new front and back decks. I also plan to start working on the dining room this spring and hopefully getting the majority of the renovation done before graduation.

I have worked in the Ag Ed Department of my high school since I was a freshman. I enjoy teaching others and helping with projects, lessons, greenhouse work and lab set up. I have also worked a great deal with our PALS program as its coordinator. Our PALS activities have helped to work toward our goal of increasing ag literacy in our students.

I am currently a senior at West Central High School where I maintain a cumulative GPA of 4.083 and rank number one in my graduating class. I serve as a chapter officer, class president and National Honor Society President. Upon graduation from high school I plan to attend SDSU pursuing a double major in Agricultural Education and Wildlife Management with minors in Horticulture and Spanish. My future goals include being a national proficiency winner, earning my American Degree, being named State Star in Placement and being elected a State and National FFA Officer.

Objective To be named a proficiency finalist.

Education **West Central High School** **Hartford, SD 57033**
 Graduated in May 2006. Significant courses: Honors English, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calc, AP Calculus, Biology, AP Chemistry, Anatomy, Physics, Natural Resources, Animal Science, Floriculture, Biotechnology and Spanish 1, 2, and 3. GPA as of 8 semesters 4.185.

South Dakota State University **Brookings, SD 57007**
 Currently enrolled pursuing a double major in Agricultural Education and Microbiology with a minor in Communications

Work experience **June 2006 – Present Clubhouse at Central Valley** **Hartford, SD 57033**
Waitress
 Responsibilities include cleaning, stocking supplies and products, operating the till, preparing meals, serving customers, answering questions, and recording inventory

June 2002-Present Lawn and Landscape Maintenance Crooks, SD 57020
Lawn and Landscape Maintenance
 Lawn mowing and general landscape design and maintenance. Tree Planting, flowerbed design and installation and care, control of weeds, fertilizing and reseeding of lawn areas, equipment maintenance, mowing, trimming, and pruning.

June 2002-Present Willow Creek Produce **Crooks, SD 57020**
Owner Operator
 One-acre organic fruit and vegetable garden. Produce for home use and sale to local customers. Planting, cultivation, harvesting and sale and processing of fresh fruits and vegetables.

June 2002-Present Willow Creek Wildlife **Crooks, SD 57020**
Owner Operator
 Planning and maintenance of thirty acres of wildlife habitat including shelter belts, raise and release Eastern Wild Turkeys, population studies on Whitetail Deer and Pheasants, 8 acres of various wildlife food plots.

Extracurricular activities **West Central FFA Chapter** - Chapter President, Chapter Vice President, Chapter Reporter, District VII Treasurer, District VII President, National FFA Creed Speaking CDE, State and National Proficiency Awards, State FFA Leadership Camp, State Fair Animal Nursery, State and National FFA Conventions, PALS "Partners in Active Learning Support", Coordinator. Washington Leadership Conference Scholarship Recipient.

West Central Athletics – Gymnastics, Football and Basketball Cheerleading Squads, Track, Cross Country.

ACES – "Actively Challenging Exceptional Students"- Gifted and Talented Program, member of Quiz Bowl Team

4-H – Club Vice President 2000-2001, Fashion Revue – State Fair, State Rabbit Judging, Home Economics, and Visual Arts Teams

West Central Student Council – FFA Chapter Representative 2005-06

Class of 2006 – Class President 2005-06, Valedictorian

Girls State Citizen – 2005, Nationalist Party Chair, appointed Secretary of Agriculture
National Wild Turkey Federation – NWTF - Extreme Jakes Member
National Honor Society- President 2005-06
South Dakota State University Collegiate FFA – Coordinator – Jackrabbit Invitational 2006-07
Block and Bridle 2006-07

Awards received

2002: State Creed Speaking CDE 1st place, State Ag Communications 5th Place, Turner County 4H Centennial Award Recipient

2003: National FFA Creed Speaking CDE 5th Place, State FFA Land Judging Gold Medal, , State Job Interview CDE 8th place, State Ag Communications CDE 5th Place, Star Chapter Greenhand, District VII Star Greenhand

2004: State Land Judging – Gold Medal, State Job Interview CDE 2nd Place, South Dakota FFA Proficiency Finalist in 5 areas, Turner County 4H Student Ambassador

2005: National FFA Agri Entrepreneurship Winner, National Finalist FFA Fruit Production Proficiency, South Dakota FFA Proficiency Finalist in 6 areas, State Land Judging Gold Medal, State Job Interview CDE 1st Place, State Ag Communications CDE 1st Place, West Central Student of the Year 2004-05, Discover Card Tribute Award

2006: South Dakota FFA Proficiency Finalist in 6 areas, State Wildlife Proficiency 1st place, National Wildlife Proficiency –Gold, District VII Star in Agribusiness, State Star in Agribusiness Finalist, State Land Judging Gold Medal, West Central Student of the Year 2005-2006, Touchstone Energy Student of the Week, National FFA International Travel Seminar to Costa Rica, AXA Financial Outstanding Achievement Scholarship, National Wild Turkey Federation State and National Scholarship Recipient.

Volunteer experience

First Lutheran Church – Sunday School Teacher, Christmas Pageant Assistant to the Director 1999-2002.

West Central High School – Tutor 2002-2006.

American Red Cross – Tomado Benefit 2003, Tsunami Relief Fundraiser 2005, Hurricane Relief Fundraiser 2005

Trojan Reading Bowl – 2003-2005 Reading partner and mentor for elementary children

First Grade Spanish Teacher – 2005-2006. Taught Spanish to first grade students two days per week.

References

Michael Gukeisen, Manager, Clubhouse at Central Valley Golf Course, 700 East Highway 38, Hartford, SD 57033, 605-528-3971

Gerri Ann Eide, South Dakota FFA Executive Secretary, 507 Wenona, SDSU, Brookings, SD 57007, 605-688-4380

Karin Renner, English Teacher, West Central High School, P.O. Box 730, Hartford, SD 57033, 605-528-6236