



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

3200 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-3478
Fax: (605) 773-3194

Emergency Response Exercise Deemed a Success

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(Pierre) - When tragedies like the Spencer or Oglala tornadoes strike in the future, South Dakota will be better prepared to spring into action following a recent weekend exercise.

Nine crews of nearly 160 state prison inmates were mobilized during an Emergency Response Training exercise Saturday, April 29th. The exercise was designed to test the Department of Corrections response time in case of an emergency and help cleanup a number of state and federal recreation areas across the state.

In the areas around Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, a forty-man team cleaned up approximately 17 dump truck loads of brush, dead logs, and hazardous trees, formed and poured five yards concrete and rebuilt 56 picnic tables.

In the northeast, forty trustees were assigned to Fort Sisseton and Roy Lake state parks. Crews at Fort Sisseton removed trees to clear an area for a new maintenance shop, picked up litter, pruned trees and removed hazardous trees from the lakeshore. The crew also replaced plastic weed barrier in a tree planting. At Roy Lake the focus was cleanup of shoreline debris caused by high water levels in recent years. Thirty truckloads of debris were hauled to a burn pile.

Along the northern reaches of the Missouri River, similar cleanup and repair tasks were accomplished. At West Whitlock Recreation Area, fifteen trustees trimmed trees in the campground and split and stacked firewood. At Indian Creek Memorial the focus was on facility repair. Trustees removed a broken concrete beach sidewalk, constructed a limestone path and replaced 60 picnic tables in the campground. They also added surfacing at the horseshoe pits, volleyball court and playground. As in other areas, tree trimming and firewood cutting rounded out the day's activities.

At Farm Island Recreation Area and Okobojo Point, ten trustees cleaned up five truckloads of trash, removed old hazardous fences and wrapped trees with fencing to protect them from beaver damage.

Major work was accomplished on Lake Francis Case, in particular at Buryanek Lakeside Use Area. A crew of 21 trustees installed seventy-three rolls of erosion control fabric to stabilize slopes created by reclamation of the old gravel mine. They also planted more than 1200 trees and shrubs to further improve the aesthetics of the site for recreation. The timing was perfect, as rains fell on Sunday to give the new trees a good start.

At nearby North Point, a 20-man crew scraped and stained the picnic shelter, playground equipment and toilet building. They also hauled away twenty truckloads of trees and branches from the shoreline and breakwater.

"The inmates did a great job and it was a pleasure working with the DOC staff," said Hofer. "We were pleased to be a partner with the Department of Corrections on this exercise, and are appreciative of the valuable help we received as we prepare the parks for another busy summer."