I am proud to be a member of BCA. I feel good about being a conservationist. I even admit, out loud, to being an environmentalist. I feel good about doing my part to try to make our community and state a better place for ourselves and our kids and our babies yet unborn.

But in the last few years—feeling outnumbered, outmaneuvered, and definitely outgunned—I have often hesitated to say anything about my deeply-held belief that we must preserve wilderness. I have been reluctant to speak my mind about the destruction of our wild places. Why the hesitation? I felt, well, alone.

Then, out of the blue, on Sunday, October 11, reinforcements arrived from an unlikely quarter—a British comedian. John Oliver devoted his whole show, Last Week Tonight, to basically begging the kind and polite people of North Dakota to buck up already and get angry: “This has gone too far, people!” And what would be the target of all this ire? Rampant human and environmental destruction brought about by the Bakken oil boom!

In the days and weeks since then, the debate has been all about billboards. Are we, as a state, going to continue to “Be Nice” and stay silent? Or will we choose to do as John begged—wake up to what is going on and “Be Angry?”

To make his point, John ticked off a lot of facts and figures that ought to make North Dakotans angry: the millions of gallons of oil, chemicals, and saltwater spilled or leaked since the boom began; the scores of oilfield deaths and injuries in recent years; the lax laws and policies that hold companies harmless from the death, injury, and environmental havoc they cause; and the utter lack of accountability that follows when a state is constantly patting itself on the back for its business-friendly climate. While conceding that other oil-boom states have experienced workplace safety problems and environmental disasters, he saved his sharpest criticism for the one thing that makes North Dakota’s oil boom unique: “What is unique to North Dakota is the level of regulatory friendliness to oil companies,” he said, calling our state a “magical pro-business utopia.”

He hit a nerve. We ought to cringe when we hear that. It’s not fun being the butt of a national joke. It is embarrassing to know the country is laughing at us and wondering what kind of rubes we must be to let the oil companies get away with such mayhem.

But might this signal a shift? Might getting called out by a popular comedian on national television help bring about a change in our citizens’ attitudes that the New York Times’ series of Bakken Boom exposés could not? Suddenly, it seems our polite communal silence is not “North Dakota nice” anymore—it just looks like dumb naïveté.

My take on this? I’m not saying we need to get angry. I’m not even saying we should stop being polite. This is still, after all, North Dakota. But it is time to take heart. It is time to end the silence. As BCA members, we believe in something. We believe in the majesty of our wild places. We believe in preserving the Badlands. These things are worth the fight. In the words of The Doors: the time to hesitate is through. Let’s support our executive director, Jan Swenson, and show our appreciation of her hard work testifying before the Department of Mineral Resources, bird-dogging the Industrial Commission, and pleading our case at countless hearings and meetings. We can all take pride in Jan’s unfailing efforts on our behalf. But let’s each do our part as members as well. We can all stand up for sane development policy in the Badlands. We can all talk to our legislators and state leaders about the need for preservation. We can all tell our friends about what we are doing and encourage them to become BCA members.

It turns out we are not alone. The rest of the country is watching us—and probably hoping we will get angry. And, okay, we can get a little bit angry.
Badlands Conservation Alliance
Annual Fall Meeting

November 1, 2015

The Annual Fall meeting of the BCA was held on November 1, 2015 at the Discovery Center of the Bismarck Dakota Zoo. Forty members attended including the following Board members: Christine Hogan (president), Rich Brauhn, Lillian Crook, Craig Kilber, Lynn Morgenson, and Tama Smith. Also in attendance were Jan Swenson (executive director), Connie Triplett (past president), and Bonnie Palecek (grants person). After a pot-luck dinner and introductions, the business meeting was convened by President Hogan at 2:05 PM CST.

A. Minutes of the November 1, 2014 Annual Meeting read and approved.
   1. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Jim Fuglie, seconded by Debi Rogers; motion approved unanimously.

B. Annual Financial Report
   1. Executive Director (Jan Swenson) outlined the financial report which was provided in the documents given to the membership. The report covers the period from December 31, 2014 through October 24, 2015.
   2. Jan reported the following figures: Total Receipts-$129,006.79; Total Expenditures-$30,850.68; Balance remaining for unrestricted use-$54,320.11.
   3. A question was raised regarding whether the gift from the Tortuga Foundation would be continued.
      a. Jan informed the group that the family owned foundation has or will soon be changing directors. The Tortuga Foundation Board will be meeting in November and BCA should have an answer regarding continued funding by the end of the year.
   4. Motion to approve Financial Report made by Connie Triplett, seconded by Mary Ann Brauhn; motion approved unanimously.

C. Comments from President Hogan:
   1. President Hogan acknowledged all the work that Jan Swenson, Executive Director, has done on behalf of BCA.
   2. She further commented that conservation groups in North Dakota will have greater impact on tempering the oil play and preserving natural resources in the coming years because of all the groundwork done by these groups and with growing national awareness.

D. Report by Past President, Connie Triplett:
   1. EPA enforcement priorities will include looking at the negative impact of effluent and emissions from oil production and refining.
   2. The practice of self-reporting of emissions and effluent will be re-examined.
   3. The EPA has sent out an alert to the energy industry regarding compliance of emissions and effluent regulations. The North Dakota Department of Health has oversight of this regulation and will need to enhance their efforts in this regard.

E. Report from the Executive Director, Jan Swenson:
   1. Board member Craig Kilber and BCA member Tom Schmeichel were recognized for their efforts organizing the Elkhorn Ranch camping outing which included several young people from Fargo.
   2. There will be public meetings in Belfield and Watford City regarding the proposed widening of Highway 85 from Belfield to Watford City. This likely will include proposed widening of the highway through the Long X bridge area and the eastern edge of the North Unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Also jeopardized will be the proposed Wilderness areas Long X Divide and Lone Butte. BCA members are urged to attend these meeting and express their concerns regarding the negative impacts on the Park, adjacent National Grasslands, and the environment in general.

F. Election of Board Members:
   1. Board member Tama Smith counted the ballots for the three Board positions open and reported that the new Board member would be Laura Anhalt and that two former Board members, Lynn Morgenson and Rich Brauhn, were re-elected for their second terms.

BREAK- 2:45-3:00 pm
G. Presentation of Tangible vs. Intangible; Values and Vision
by Wendy Ross, Superintendent of the Theodore Roosevelt
National Park (TRNP):
1. Jan Swenson introduced Superintendent Ross as
   a valuable partner in BCA’s efforts to preserve the
   Badlands and noted the excellence of her appointment
   as Superintendent.
2. Superintendent Ross explained that her vision of large
   scale landscape conservation would be her theme during
   the upcoming 100 year anniversary of the National Park
   Service.
   a. This vision would include tangible and intangible values
      and include such projects as preserving natural sound,
      viewsheds, and dark skies in TRNP.
   b. There will be opportunities during the centennial of
      the National Park Service to form new partnerships to
      preserve TRNP as the “cradle of conservation” in the
      United States from which President Roosevelt drew inspiration and formed his conservation ethic.

   1) A question was proposed to Superintendent Ross regarding the status of the proposed Little Missouri River crossing
      near the Elkhorn Unit of TRNP. Ms. Ross explained that no new sites had been added and the crossings at the
      Elkhorn Ranchlands site have been deleted from the options. The remaining alternatives are under EIS development
      and public meetings are expected in the spring of 2016.

H. Rod Fried from the Dakota Zoo welcomed the BCA Annual Meeting attendees.
1. Mr. Fried pointed out that the Dakota Zoo provided funding and staff support for such projects as the raptor
   rehabilitation center at the zoo, ferret reintroduction in South Dakota, and Mexican Wolf reintroduction in the
   Southwest.

I. Door prizes with a “Be” theme awarded at the end of the meeting. Also, some additional “Tangible and Intangibles”:
1. Scott Ross - Medical Bag
2. Larry Dopson - Bug Repellant
3. Eve Suchy - Bear Bell
4. Chris Dopson - Bird Feeders and Suet
5. Tracy Potter - Book by Paul Bogard
7. Buel Sonderland – Owl (bird) Plant Stand
8. Larry Heilmann - Head Lamp for Bathroom Use
   When Camping in the Badlands
9. Christine Hogan - Broom for Tent Cleaning
10. Lillian Crook - Bent Tent Peg Replacements
11. Mary Ann Brauhn - Book on Animal Tracks
12. Debi Rogers - Hanging Wall Vase
13. Betty Morgan - Badlands Coaster
14. Bonnie Palecek - Glass Bowls
15. Jim Fuglie - Night Sky Pottery Wine Cup
16. Connie Triplett - Night Sky Pottery Wine Cup

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM CT.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Brauhn, Board Member and Secretary, November 3, 2015

After adjournment of the formal meeting, interested BCA members remained to participate in an hour long open discussion of
current issues.
• Trying something new, BCA held our 2014 Annual Meeting in central ND to even out driving demands. It seemed to work - with our largest ever annual gathering held in the main room of Makoche Recording Studio in downtown Bismarck. Thanks to Mike and David for providing a delightful space complete with BCA visuals and to Lynn, Graham, Mike, Robert and David for the extra help with logistics. It was a cozy and exuberant crowd with no one throwing a better potluck than BCA.

Geographic information analyst Chad Sexton from TRNP provided us with a great learning experience about the processes and application of viewed mapping and Park efforts to mitigate oil and gas impacts. Chad’s commitment and expertise are pretty amazing and we are fortunate to have him at TRNP.

• Elected at our annual meeting, Christine Hogan, Great vittles and their own conservation

- Officers were elected: Christine Hogan, president; Craig Kilber, vice president; Rich Brauhn, secretary and Lynn Morgenson, treasurer. Committee assignments were made: Education, Tama Smith as chair; Funding and Development, Craig Kilber as chair; Communications, Rich Brauhn as chair. Members at large are always encouraged to get in touch as you see yourselves adding to effectiveness of committee work!

• BCA’s twice yearly newsletter Wild Badlands is the work of the Communications Committee with Rich Brauhn taking the lead. Thanks, Rich, committee and contributors! Again, feel free to submit ideas for stories, articles and photographs pertinent to BCA’s mission.

• It’s been a busy and demanding year. The BCA Board held a second face-to-face meeting on March 22 and again on July 29. Thanks to Lynn and Lillian respectively for hosting the gatherings, and to Craig for insisting on the Skype option. In the interim directors make good use of email and phone.

• The Tortuga Foundation continued to provide generous funding to BCA in 2015. They have been good to us, but we cannot depend on them into the future as their sources this year include the National Parks Conservation Association, Patagonia and the ND Natural Resources Trust (funds dedicated to educational outreach, particularly in eastern ND). We have found that ND is not considered part of the West (funds dedicated to educational outreach, particularly in eastern ND). We have found that ND is not considered part of the West.

• BCA held outings:

• Earth Day at the Ice Caves – Saturday, April 25, 2015

Woe is me! It is rare indeed, but the winds were blowing, and lightning and rain forecast for a 50 degree day did not promise celebration. Calling off the day’s adventure was particularly disappointing for scouts Tama and Jan who had done the legwork earlier to insure that all was in order for a hike from Magpie Camp to the Ice Caves. BCA will have to revisit this outing another season. The Ice Caves have been a destination before, and the scouting trip (on a beautiful spring day, mind you) only proved the glory of the idea. Next time!

• Elkhorn Ranch Weekend – Saturday and Sunday, May 30 & 31, 2015

Oh, what a difference a month can make! The chill was still on in the evening, but the days were just what we’d hoped for.

Tom Schmeichel and Craig Kilber took charge of this outing and did a bang up job. We didn’t get enough water in the Little Missouri River to canoe, but all proved flexible and backup explored were many.

Attendees were a wonderful mix of first
timers - some to The Ranch, some to a BCA outing — and long time members. Thanks to Craig and his eastern ND friends, all of whom arrived Friday evening, we had the pleasure of four exuberant youth in our crowd, always an outing enhancer! Thanks, Julia (13) & Grant (10) Tchosik, and Taylor (13) & Christian (11) Dietz for joining us, and for bringing your dads. Both new and old benefited from being on the land that TR knew, and gained firsthand familiarity with Billings County’s ongoing proposal to build a bridge and connector roads across the Little Missouri State Scenic River. BCA will continue to oppose this proposed intrusion on the Elkhorn and the river valley, contesting the industrial oil and gas traffic and development that will surely follow. Meanwhile, we had a beautiful weekend!

Sheyenne River Valley — Saturday and Sunday, October 3 & 4, 2015

Topping off BCA’s warm season outings, Tama Smith with help from Lillian Crook can take credit for a great trip to public lands in the Sheyenne River Valley of southeast ND. Camping overnight at Ft. Ransom State Park — the primitive area, of course — we also hit the Sheyenne State Forest and the Sheyenne National Grassland - three different land management jurisdictions, but all public lands.

Local naturalist Jean Legge took us to the only natural waterfall in ND on Saturday — a 4 mile roundtrip hike on State Forest that defied the idea that eastern ND is flat. Fall color and a moment of silence at the falls balanced nicely with the energy and chattiness of new and old friends. Again we welcomed the younger set with special recognition of Carson — and, yes, Penny and Willow were good company, too.

Sunday meant an early rise to break camp and head an hour east to the Sheyenne National Grassland where Sheyenne Ranger District guides Colleen Rufsvold and Bernadette Braun awaited. Here the 4 mile loop of the Oak Leaf Trail grace us with the more subtle rises of sand dune and oak savannah. We put our guides to work answering public lands questions befitting a conservation group and let them know that tallgrass prairie should have some ungrazed height to it. The Oak Leaf trailhead neighbors the new USFS Jorgenson Hollow campground that opens next spring (water but no electricity) and is just across the road from the 5,400-acre non-motorized parcel that is part of BCA’s Prairie Legacy Wilderness proposal.

- A morning does not go by but that we check the ND Oil & Gas page for Applications to Drill (APDs) in one of the Extraordinary Places under the NDIC Areas of Interest policy. With only 10 days to submit comments, we have to be quick! Since going into effect in May of 2014, there have been 13 APDs in 4 different locations; the first in November of 2014, the most recent in June 2015.

- BCA continues to monitor monthly hearing dockets for oil and gas activities coming before the ND Oil and Gas Division of the ND Department of Mineral Resources. Cases of note are researched, a letter written to reserve our place at the table, and BCA testimony (commonly 2 to 10 per month) is provided the day of the hearing.

While our focus is protecting public lands, BCA also monitors and testifies on flaring exceptions. A March 2015 precedent-setting series of XTO applications was cut back nearly a third. Not enough, but making it worth BCA’s time to be there.

TRNP regularly testifies on cases impacting the Park. At BCA’s encouragement, ND Parks and Rec is sporadically engaged and the USFS in Bismarck has assigned a staff person.

- Likewise, BCA routinely attends the oil and gas portion of the monthly ND Industrial Commission meetings. Frequently our intent is to follow up on previously docketed and heard cases, but it is also the go-to-place for riding herd on policy, new technology, pipeline and rail transport, oil and gas research & development and the frequent issues that only appear on the agenda as “other business.”

- The first Tuesday of each month the Elkhorn Ranch team shares issues, updates and planning strategies focusing on the three units of TRNP and most specifically on the Elkhorn Ranch, the Elkhorn Ranchlands, and the Elkhorn Ranchlands Historic District. Nearly 20 individuals and organizations are represented with the National Park Conservation Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation serving as facilitators. (It is of note to BCA members that former superintendent of TRNP Valerie Naylor is currently working as a consultant for NPCA.)

Issues include oil and gas impacts, the proposed bridge crossing of the Little Missouri River in Billings County, proposed 4-laning of HWY 85 as it passes through the NU of TRNP, the newly initiated Grasslands Plan amendment for management of the Elkhorn Ranchlands, etc.

In late September of 2015, just prior to an annual face-to-face meeting of the Elkhorn group, the NPCA filed a federal lawsuit against the USFS for violation of the NEPA process on the gravel pit Decision Notice signed in 2014. The Environmental Law and Policy Center, another participant in the Elkhorn group will serve as legal counsel.

- Initiated as the Special Places working group, a number of dedicated representatives of local conservation continue to meet every couple weeks at the ND Natural Resources Trust office to share their individual work, broaden the group’s scope and understanding, and coordinate mutual efforts. We address a range of topics from wildlife fragmentation and Endangered Species to ND politics and communication strategies to flaring and spill statistics and impacts.

- The Dakota Prairie Grasslands Oil and Gas Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and a to-be-updated Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario are a major focus. This is one area in which we have benefited from the support and coordinated efforts of the Northern Great Plains program of the World Wildlife Fund, a national and global organization. The SEIS is one of the opportunities that has brought the attention of WWF into the state.

The original Notice of Intent on the project appeared in the Federal Register December 19, 2012. A backlog of USFS projects and staff shortages did little to encourage needed action. In November of 2014 seven signers wrote to DPG supervisor Dennis Neitzke insisting that a deep and
members who also submitted personal comments! In simple words, our intent is to make the USFS do its job to protect the Little Missouri National Grassland from oil and gas development. We'll keep pushing!

- Covenant Consulting, located in Bismarck and owned by Rod Backman, is leading a project To Create Strategies for How Best to Develop Mineral Resources with Responsible Stewardship of the Badlands. Backman and his diverse team were initially approached by WWF. Leaders and representatives from four areas—government, conservation, ranching and industry—are participating in a formal interview process and the findings will be delivered in a report expected in late November.

BCA feels especially fortunate in having had the opportunity to participate in development of this project, including recommendation and interviews of potential consultants, review of preliminary interview questions, and participation in the process as an interviewee. Thanks, Claire and Martha, for your trust.

WWF is the lead on this project, but its potential benefits for conservation strategies in the Badlands has resulted in additional funding from several local groups, including BCA, and a sizable contribution from the USFS.

- BCA continues to monitor ND Department of Trust Lands quarterly oil & gas lease auctions and we submitted recommended safeguards and stipulations for February, August, and November, 2015 sales.

- Similarly, we submit USFS comments on Dakota Prairie Grasslands projects as needed - whether well sitings near Bear Den Research Natural Area, excessive flaring in Bully field impacting the viewshed of the NU of TRNP, proposed well sitings immediately south of Lake Sakakawea, reclamation of roads no longer needed, Road System Analysis on the Little Missouri National Grassland, or a proposal to grant a Billings County easement to Mikes Creek Road near the Elkhorn Ranchlands. Projects range from small to large and include both the Medora and McKenzie ranger districts.

- Needing your and BCA’s particular attention:

The downturn in oil prices has led to concentration of drilling rigs in the hot spots of the Bakken where the prospects for production are highest. Low prices have also led to employee layoffs and less frenzied schedules allowing for forward movement on infrastructure projects that threaten the Badlands.

It is clear that Billings County and their engineering firm Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson (K LJ) are moving on the proposed bridge crossing of the Little Missouri River. While route alternatives on the Elkhorn Ranchlands itself have been dropped from consideration, the ones remaining will still impact the Elkhorn and the Little Missouri River Valley. It has been and is BCA’s position that the no build alternative is the only alternative. Industrial traffic, noise, associated infrastructure, dust, impacts to night skies, wildlife fragmentation, public health and safety, and impacts to traditional agriculture and Park & Grasslands visitor experience are all concerns; not only by the proposed bridge itself, but by the connector roads associated with a crossing.

K LJ is busy scheduling agency meetings and completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in which they have revised the Purpose and Need to gain momentum. Public meetings for the DEIS are on a track for early spring of 2016.

A map of the current alternatives may be found here: http://www.billingscountynd.gov/klj/index.html.

The posted schedule is incorrect, but watch for updates.

The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, which would 4-lane HWY 85 from the South Dakota border to Montana (or Canada) was already an economic developers’ dream even prior to the Bakken. The boom has 4-laned Williston to Watford City and the leg south to Belfield and the border is next on the agenda.

BCA’s concern is with the stretch that threads the eye of the needle between Long X Divide and Lone Butte before crossing the Little Missouri River Valley where HWY 85 is actually within the boundaries of TRNP. Public meetings are already scheduled and BCA needs to be there to stand for the Park and Grasslands:

Nov. 9 from 5 to 7:30 PM MDT, City Hall,
Belfield. Formal presentation at 5:30 MT.
Nov. 10 from 5 to 7:30 PM CT, City Hall, Watford City. Formal presentation at 5:30 CT.

• Other important upcoming:

BCA is continuing to work with legal counsel Earthjustice on the section line and “roads” lawsuit filed by the four Little Missouri National Grassland counties and the state of North Dakota.

BCA will be taking the lead on educational outreach in the Red River Valley working with the ND Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the National Parks Conservation Association to overcome misconceptions that “the Badlands” are protected from oil and gas development impacts. We spent time this summer scouting venues, exploring current attitudes and evaluating how best to proceed. Our aim is to get folks out there – both virtually and literally. BCA knows there is nothing like seeing the threats firsthand.

• Bits and pieces:

* November 11 thru 15, 2014 BCA staff joined recently retired TRNP superintendent Valerie Naylor and four NPCA staffers as NPCA hosted a whirlwind road trip in Pennsylvania and the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River valley in order to share ND experiences of Bakken impacts on National Park Service properties through meetings with shale gas public and activists in their part of the country. Great travels, good outreach in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Narrowsburg, NY.

* BCA attended the ND Chapter of the Wildlife Society legislative mixer and participated in the first biennial ND Outdoors Day hosted by Ducks Unlimited in the Great Hall of the Capitol.

*In February BCA executive director Swenson received a Special Recognition Award at the NDCWS annual meeting for his work with TRNP.

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*In February BCA executive director Swenson received a Special Recognition Award at the NDCWS annual meeting; so that means all of you did, too. The Chapter’s 2016 annual meeting is titled Beyond Better Biology and will include Conservation Storytelling workshops with communicator and author Randy Olson. BCA has had the good fortune to meet Randy in his preliminary exploration of conservation in ND, and we look forward to the event.

* A six-part series on Smithsonian Channel, Bootstowners came off as more of a boisterous reality show than perhaps anticipated (or desired), but conservation did get a few serious words in edgewise thanks largely to Jim Fuglie. Other recognizable names included Ellen Chaffee, David Schwalbe, Mike McEnroe, Lilian Crook, and Jan Swenson. Fulfilling many roles, but all BCA members.

* After a raft of ND meetings in late April, Martha Kauffman and Claire Hood with the Northern Great Plains program of WWF joined BCA members for a picnic in the stone shelter at Double Ditch Indian Village overlooking the big bend of the Missouri River. Nothing like sharing time together outdoors to reinforce our mutual goals.

* Several of us had conversations with University of Alaska-Fairbanks professor emeritus Jerry McBeath regarding a book he is authoring: Big Oil in the United States: Industry influence on institutions, policies and politics. Ten states, ten case studies. He was particularly interested in the evolution of the NDIC Extraordinary Places policy in ND. Can’t wait to read THAT chapter.

* An email from native Minnesotan now professor of English at James Madison University in Harrsiburgh, VA, Paul Bogard, led to a couple intriguing hours as he passed through Bismarck seeking advice and best routes on his way to the Bakken. He is currently working on a new book tentatively titled The Ground: The Life, Death, and Future Beneath Our Feet. An earlier book titled End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light is a MUST READ in flaring country. Bogard teaches creative nonfiction and environmental literature, and he has captured his topic while making reading a fascinating and educational experience. This should be a sell-out at TRNP’s Dakota Nights Festival!

* Thanks to Jim Fuglie for every time he plugs BCA in his Dakota Country magazine column and to Ken Rogers in the Summer 2015 issue of ND History Magazine: Speaking of State Parks Today and Tomorrow.

* The iconic High Country News is beginning to include western ND in its coverage of the US West – a big deal to long time readers and advocates, and BCA got a mention in HC’s April 27, 2015 issue featuring rancher/naturalist John Heiser - Lost Frontier.

* Here’s a fun one – past BCA president and executive director Swenson attended a September 2015 roast for Fargo Forum editorial page editor Jack Zaleski in Devils Lake. Zaleski has been a friend to conservation in western ND and we took this opportunity to mingle East.

* BCA member Sterling D. Evans, professor at the University of Oklahoma-Norman, presented at the Great Plains History Conference in Bismarck on October 1. An avid lover of our kind of country, Evans is working on a volume that could well be The Book on Badlands Across the Great Plains: Towards an Environmental and Cultural History. It is always a pleasure to hear what Evans is up to and to enjoy the vigor of his conversation. Good to see you Sterling!

* It was a chilly but glorious October 17th evening at Riverbend Overlook in the NU of TRNP where BCA met with 18 students and three instructors from St. Thomas College in St. Paul to discuss everything one might want to know about fracking, flaring, federal vs. state regulatory authority, the Bakken, Buffalo Commons, public lands, and Wilderness. What a group! They’ll be contacting their MN congressional delegation to push our ND delegation for Prairie Legacy Wilderness. “After all, we are a university,” claimed lead geology professor Dr. Melissa Lamb.

Despite these students being beyond the formal measure of childhood, one couldn’t help but think of the Richard Louv quote: Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart. It was lovely to be with these people of heart. As it is with BCA.
BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS

Three Board members were elected at the Annual BCA meeting. Both Lynn Morgenson and Rich Brauhn were elected for their second two-year term. However, a new member to the Board was elected for her first term; Ms. Laura Anhalt from Mandan.

Laura is the spouse of Tracy Potter and has been married for 37 years. Laura and Tracy have two children, Vaughn and Jenny. Until recently, Laura worked at the State Tax Department as the receptionist and Wellness Coordinator for 23 years until retiring in April 2015. An avid yoga practitioner and fitness advocate, she is drawn to primitive camping in the Badlands. According to Laura, “wilderness is important for us to maintain our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health.”

She is especially interested in preserving and restoring the silence and dark night sky in our special places. This love of the Badlands and its special places is what attracted Laura to the Badlands Conservation Alliance. We look forward to working with Laura and welcome her talents and expertise on the Board.

http://badlandsconservationalliance.org/