

SOUTH DAKOTA

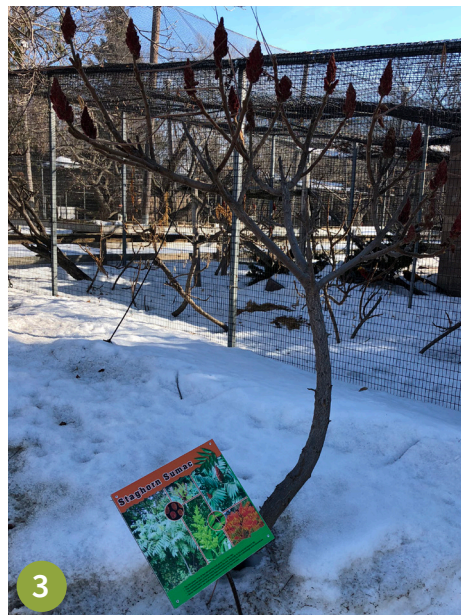
South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (Department) provides special project funding through the Community Forestry Challenge Grant. In recent years, this grant has made it possible to add informational tree and nature signs to the Kuhnert Arboretum in Aberdeen and the Bramble Park Zoo in Watertown.

If there is anything to be learned from the recent quarantine, it is the importance of green space for the health of body and mind. In South Dakota communities, the Department's grant funds continue to add trees and special enrichment to those green spaces. It just so happens that in recent years, the Kuhnert Arboretum and the Bramble Park Zoo have utilized grant funds to add educational signs to their facilities. These places provide a place for children and adults alike to get fresh air and decompress from the stress of everyday life. The Kuhnert Arboretum also boasts an outdoor playground for kids to run off their energy. The Department realizes just how important these recreational areas are and this past spring has really put things into perspective. Without normal social outlets, many people have turned to gardening and spending their time among the trees and green space.

The informational signs range from tree identification signs to general nature information. It is truly interesting to see the informational signs incorporated with the zoo animals and their environment as well as the general information signs placed throughout the arboretum. Grant funds were awarded twice to both the Kuhnert Arboretum and the Bramble Park Zoo for signage projects. In the near future, the Department will add QR codes on the signs so that people can use their phones to easily look up information on certain trees. These small innovations get people more interested in spending time outside, and they become more aware of how their environment enriches their everyday lives.

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1. Kuhnert Arboretum bee sign. Photo Credit: Aaron Kiesz. **2.** Kuhnert Arboretum path during sunset. Photo Credit: Aaron Kiesz. **3.** Tree Sign at the Bramble Park Zoo. Photo Caption: Dan Miller. **4.** Kuhnert Arboretum nature sign. Photo Credit: Aaron Kiesz.