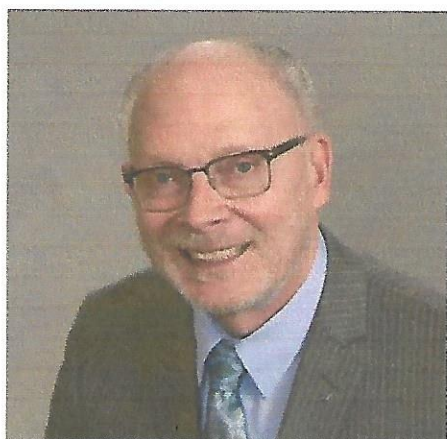


Letter From the Chair



I have been around DRC long enough to have read a few chairperson's columns, but this is the first time that I have written one as the chairperson! Many of the members know me from my long association with DRC, but for the ones who have not met me, I thought I would introduce myself.

I am originally from Cogswell, North Dakota, graduated from North Dakota State University with a BS with majors in sociology and political science, and I received my PhD and a MS in rural sociology from Iowa State University. I returned to North Dakota in 1987 to work for one year at the Economic Development Commission on the Alternatives for Agriculture project which became incorporated into the Growing North Dakota legislation. After the project ended, I took a one-year position in the sociology department at the University of North Dakota which turned into a nearly 30-year career there. At UND I taught courses in community, and environmental sociology, rural, development, research methods, and theory. My most recent research focused on cooperative conversions and about the community effects of industrialized agriculture. In 2017 when I was department chair, I took the buyout in order to save the positions of two young instructors and retired from the university.

I had been active in university governance, my professional society, and in farm organizations. I have been a long time DRC member, having served on several committees, since returning to North Dakota in 1987. I was active in university governance having
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Executive Committee

Curt Kralicek, Chair
Curt Stofferahn, Vice Chair
April Fairfield, Past Chair
Lisa DeVille, Secretary
David Rydell, Treasurer

At-Large

Linda Weiss
Bernie Parkhurst

Affiliate Reps

Pat Ashley, BARC
Delvin Rabbit Head, Sr, Ft. Berthold POWER
Donny Nelson, MCETA
Vacant, MVRC

DRC Affiliates

**Badlands Area Resource Council
(BARC)**

**Fort Berthold Protectors of Water
& Earth Rights (POWER)**

**McKenzie County Energies &
Taxation Association
(MCETA)**

**Missouri Valley Resource Council
(MVRC)**

**Dakota Resource Council
1720 Burnt Boat Drive, Suite 104
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-224-8587**

(Annual Meeting Cont.)

work towards eliminating biases, from an organizational and an individual perspective. Members broke out into small "virtual rooms" and discussed problems and solutions of biases and limited diversity within the organization.

Later in the day, DRC presented the Art and Grace Link Leadership Award. This award goes to members doing outstanding volunteerism work. This year it went to former DRC Chair, April Fairfield for her tireless work with DRC. She volunteered her time on all issues that affected DRC members....she even sewed a mascot costume, Dexter the Prairie Dog.



Dexter the Prairie Dog getting a bear hug.

The final event of the meeting was the business meeting where among other things, new board members were elected. Curt Stofferahn was elected as Chair to finish Curt Kralicek's term. Kralicek will still serve on the board as Past Chair. Linda Weiss of Belfield, ND will serve as Vice-Chair, Lisa DeVille of Mandaree will continue her term as Secretary, David Rydell of Grand Forks will still be treasurer for another year and the At-Large members will be Bernie Parkhurst of Mandan and April Fairfield of Bismarck.

Other business taken care of at the business meeting were some changes to the bylaws. Including a change to the required date for the annual meeting. For years, the DRC's Annual Meeting has taken place on the fourth Saturday of October. For the past few years, members seem to agree that schedules and lifestyles have changed and more flexibility was warranted. Curt Kralicek, DRC Chair, along with the Bylaw Committee persons David Rydell & Nicole Donaghy proposed a change. Now, rather than having to be held the fourth Saturday of October it can be held anytime during the

4th Quarter of the year. The Annual Meeting Committee will recommend a date for the annual meeting in 2021 and the DRC board will vote on a finalized date.

The annual meeting went smoothly, particularly for our first time hosting it on-line. It was quite different not being able to meet new friends and reconnect with long-time members. All DRC members and staff are keeping their fingers crossed for an in-person meeting in 2021.

(Chairperson Letter Continued)

served as a senator to University Senate senator from 1997-2017, and I was chairperson of the senate in 2011-2012. I remain active in the Rural Sociological Society (RSS) having been a member since 1979; I was an elected member of RSS Council for two years and RSS Secretary for three years. I was a two-year elected board member of Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society, and I served on the Grand Forks County Committee for the North Dakota Farmers Union for several years. After my post doctorate position, and before I began work with the ND Economic Development Commission, I worked for the North American Farm Alliance in Ames, IA as a grant writer, researcher, and newspaper editor.

My father, Warren, and my brother, Scott have had a long history of involvement with DRC going back the mid-1970s. In the early 1980s, with the assistance of DRC, they fought the siting of the MANDAN Line near our farm. Manitoba Hydro and the Nebraska Public Power District had proposed a line between Manitoba and Nebraska that would pass through the Dakotas to facilitate the flow of electricity to Nebraska from Manitoba in the summer when the demand for electricity from central pivot irrigation systems peaked in Nebraska, and then reverse the flow from Nebraska to Manitoba in the winter when the electricity demand peaked in Manitoba. With the assistance of an attorney hired by DRC, they proved that there was insufficient demand for electricity from the MANDAN Line, and the Manitoba Public Power District eventually shelved the project.

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(Chairperson Letter Cont.)

In the late 1980s, dad and Scott worked with DRC and other landowners in southern Sargent County, to stop the development of the Over the Horizon Backscatter Central Radar System. It was a Cold War relic that was no longer relevant to its original mission to detect incoming missiles from the USSR. The system design included an underlay of buried cables on a wide swath of land in northeastern South Dakota and southeastern North Dakota that would act as a receiver for signals bounced off incoming missiles from a radar site in Thief River Falls, MN. When the need for the system no longer existed with the collapse of the USSR, the Air Force proposed redeploing the system in the drug war by detecting drug-carrying planes incoming from Mexico or Central America. With the efforts of DRC and local members, they proved that the system was virtually worthless in detecting incoming planes. Members in Sargent County wrote a slew of letters to Sen. Daniel Inouye, chair of the Senate Military Appropriations Committee. After a while, the project was quietly shelved, but the General Accounting Office concluded in a 1991 report that the system was unworkable for the repositioned purpose.

Because DRC organizers spent so much time in Sargent County in the 1980s on these two projects, the farmhouse became known as DRC South because so many strategy sessions were held there, and the folks offered the guest bedroom for their use.

I come from a long background of farm movement activity, so it is probably no surprise that I have been involved in farm organizations. My father, Warren, was a member, director, and organizer for the National Farmers Organization. Later he helped to organize American Energy, Inc. (an ethanol cooperative) and American Grain and Cattle (a marketing cooperative). My great grandfather, Johann H. Mundt, was a populist member of the South Dakota State Legislature as well as an organizer of cooperatives and mutual insurance companies. My grandfather, Ed Stofferahn, was active in the Farm Holiday Movement in southern Minnesota. My grand uncle, Bill Strand was a member of the United Farmers Educational League at Forbes ND.

Upon moving to Fargo after taking the buyout from UND, I told Scott Skokos that I wanted to connect with DRC members in the Fargo area, and to establish relationships with Citizens Local Energy Action

Network, Red River Climate Action, and Fargo Local Foods. There is a significant number of DRC members in the Fargo area; I would like to see them engaged in these three groups or organize a new affiliate. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made those efforts at connecting and organizing quite difficult.

We face some particularly challenging organizing problems: how to organize during a pandemic, and how to organize in a state that took a decidedly right turn in 2016 that was reinforced in 2020 election. We have an ingenious staff at DRC who have learned how to do virtual organizing through Zoom and Go-to-Meeting calls, and they have become more reliant on email and phone calls for organizing more than ever before. During the last two elections, DRC has lost allies and friends in the legislature, and the political climate seems to be disadvantageous to our issues and concerns. The organizers and director, however, have drawn upon their experience in grassroots organizing to find common ground on some issues even with legislators and community members who would otherwise be antithetical to DRC in general.

Little did I imagine that I would be chair during a pandemic and during an orange wave that swept the state in two elections. Being a dialectician at heart, I am always looking for the contradictions between ideas and forces that offer opportunities for organizing, but I am also cognizant that sometimes the contradictions between ideas and forces must accumulate to the point that the thesis collapses and a new thesis emerges. DRC may be in a period of retrenchment fighting to hold onto gains we realized in prior years while simultaneously looking for those contradictions that permit us to make small, but perhaps not insignificant, gains.

Curt Stofferahn