

SRM SD Section member **Krecia Leddy** was recently recognized at the Society for Range Management meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota as the **2018 Recipient of the Central Region Earth Team NRCS Employee Award**. Each year the NRCS recognizes an employee by region for their volunteer efforts. Krecia Leddy was selected for the Central Region which covers 12 states from North Dakota to Texas.

Krecia has served the past fifteen years as the District Conservationist for NRCS at the Ortonville Field Office in Big Stone County, Minnesota and has worked with local youth to ignite their passion for natural resources. As a 4-H Leader and FFA alumni volunteer she has impacted youth development in her community. Working with a local FFA Chapter, she coached a team of 5 youth for the regional range judging contest this past fall.



Krecia began working with the youth in August 2018 on range plant identification with encompassed 122 possible plants. The youth met twice a week for 3 hours each over a six-week period to hone their skills learning plant characteristics such as season of growth, and ecological resource ratings for grouse and beef cattle. In addition, Krecia taught the students to do range ecological site assessments and working through management scenarios for grouse and beef cattle. Krecia flagged plants and set up mock contest sites on rangeland and worked on-on-one with the youth to prepare them for the contest the end of September. She took the team to a practice day and accompanied them to their contest. The team won their event and Krecia will continue to coach them as they compete in the 2019 National Range Judging Contest in Oklahoma in April.

Krecia's support of natural resources extends to supporting youth to attend and participate in the two-day South Dakota Rangeland Days event. This past summer three youth attended, and she mentored one youth to prepare a speech for the student talk competition and he was selected to participate in the High School Youth Forum (HSYF) of the Society for Range Management event in February in Minneapolis, MN. This will be the fourth high school student that Krecia has mentored to participate in the HSYF activities. Several students have gone on to major in range science due to their exposure in the natural resources field from Leddy's involvement. In addition, Krecia has presented annually at the Bonanza Education Center for the Big Stone Area 6<sup>th</sup> grade Ag Day, she also annually promotes natural resource careers at a local middle and high school career day and presents to numerous students in a classroom setting.

Krecia's involvement in the development of youth toward the natural resources field has been outstanding, and this year she has donated over 200 hours in natural resource youth development. In addition, as a 4-H Leader for over ten years, she has led a group of youth to complete monthly community service activities which include: food drives, packing Mercy Meals, packing backpack meals for students, road ditch trash pick-up, cleaning an ag heritage museum, and entertaining residents at an assisted living center. Helping guide and direct youth activities in her community and county Krecia annually volunteers over 500 hours of service.