

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department
NEWS RELEASE

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For more information, contact Gordon Weixel, 328-5358

The Special Consensus performs at Cross Ranch **Local favorite Cotton Wood opens for nationally renowned bluegrass band**

The Special Consensus, a Chicago-based four-person acoustic bluegrass band, is performing at Cross Ranch State Park on Aug. 8 as part of its Midwest tour. North Dakota's Cotton Wood will open the evening of entertainment which starts at 6:30 p.m. Central Time.

The Special Consensus began performing in the Midwest in the spring of 1975. The first band album was released in 1979 when the band began touring nationally. In 1984, The Special Consensus initiated the Traditional American Music (TAM) Program in schools across the country and began appearing on cable television and National Public Radio shows.

Band members are: Ashby Frank plays mandolin and sings lead, baritone and tenor vocals; David Thomas, plays bass and sings lead, baritone, tenor and high baritone vocals; Greg Cahill banjo and sings baritone and tenor vocals. He formed The Specials Consensus in 1975; and Justin Carbone on guitar and vocals.

The band has since appeared on The Nashville Network "Fire On The Mountain" show, toured for three seasons as 4/5 of the cast in the musical Cotton Patch Gospel (music and lyrics by Harry Chapin), and released twelve additional recordings. Songs from the 1998 Our Little Town, the 2002 Route 10 and the 2004 Everything's Alright releases appeared on the National Bluegrass Survey chart in Bluegrass Unlimited and on the Gospel Truths chart in Bluegrass Now.

In November 2003, The Special Consensus received a standing ovation after the first band performance on the Grand Ole Opry at Nashville's historic Ryman Auditorium. The 2005 Everything's Alright release was included in the Top 10 Recordings of 2005 in Bluegrass Now. The Special Consensus is included on the touring rosters of the Illinois Arts Council (Artstour) and the Heartland Arts Fund and continues to participate in the Arts Midwest Performing Arts Touring Program.

Cotton Wood is a local favorites and performs in many bluegrass festivals in the four state regional area of North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana. Cotton Wood plays a variety of music using traditional bluegrass instruments. Everything from lively bluegrass, to popular, to country flavored music is their trademark. Cotton Wood includes Dan Foster-mandolin/guitar, Keith Koch-guitar, Jill Wiese-bass/mandolin/guitar, Lee Benjamin-banjo/dobro/guitar.

The cost to attend is \$12 per adult with children age 16 and under free. The \$5 park entrance fee will be in effect. For more information contact Cross Ranch State Park at 701-794-3731.