

Custer County Conservation District

Meeting Notes

Pine Room Custer County Annex Custer, SD 57730
605-673-5680

The December 11, 2020 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order at 9:05 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Gladwin Paulsen, Matt Walsh, Tom Patterson, Bob White, Caley Buckert, and Mike Baldwin. In virtual attendance via Teams: Justine Reid, Stephenie Rittberger, Stuart Adrian, and Faryn Klebe.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

November 13, 2020 meeting minutes and this meeting's agenda were approved after a motion by Paul with a second by Oonagh.

Partnership Reports:

- NRCS Representative: Justine Reid – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Re: CIS – choose either EQUIP or CSP is Justine's recommendation.
 - Best chance of selection when including partners (e.g., Weed & Pest Dept.).
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe – Report attached
- SDDA Forester: Matt Walsh – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Re: newsletter and notice of workshop – Matt will check if there is another newsletter in the spring – better to have notice closer to workshop date.
 - Re: workshop date – Set for Friday, May 7. Potentially held at Elk Mountain School or at the fire station.

Financial Report:

- Account balances
 - Main Checking
 - \$8,642.74
 - Grant Checking
 - \$1458.41
 - Savings
 - \$41,099.70
- Mileage and stipends
 - Discussion on whether to approve direct expenses for attending virtual meetings (e.g., telephone bill for long distance call, stipend). Motion made by Paul, seconded by Tamarah to approve direct expenses for virtual attendance. Motion carried.
 - Per diem for all 2020 meetings at \$20/meeting.
- NACD annual membership: Paul made motion to approval \$250 renewal of membership, Oonah seconded, motion carried.
- 2021 budget: Oonah, Stuart, and Mike will work on 2021 budget and present at January meeting.

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- Account access for Mike
 - Credit card: Motion by Tamarah, second by Paul to allow Mike to have a credit card in his name for CD expenses. Motion carried.
 - Oonagh assisting Mike to obtain online access to bank account.

Correspondence:

- Rapid City Gravel, LLC notice of intent to expand mining. Mike will send response letter.

Old Business:

- Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) -
 - Custer Highlands/Elk Mountain: no additional discussion beyond what was discussed in Justine's report.
 - Eastern Custer County
 - Applications due 4/15.
- CCCD thinning grant – award letters were sent.

New Business:

- Supervisor vacancy
 - Need to replace Stuart on the CCCD Board. Looking for someone from eastern Custer Co.
- Community Wildfire Protection plans – Mike Carter, Emergency Services, was not able to attend. Hope to reschedule for next meeting.
- Planning Department – Terri Kester, Department Head
 - Terri discussed Planning Dept. responsibilities: building permits, septic/wastewater permitting, property access issues, not zoning.
 - Planning does not provide fire precaution information to land owners
 - Winter 2021, CCCD to work on draft brochure for new county residents. Brochure to include information on fire safety/precautions, road maintenance, noxious weeds. Terri is willing to provide input on brochure.
 - Hermosa growth discussed.
- Winter/Spring Newsletter – plan for March/April release
- Tree Order for 2021
 - Go with 100 seedlings: 4 bundles of 25 each. 1 bundle of ponderosa pine, 1 bundle of Rocky Mountain juniper, and 2 bundles of Black Hills spruce.

Other Business:

- Annual work plan for 2021 – start thinking about what needs to be included. Seek input on natural resources concerns from Justine and Matt.
- Reflections:
 - Oonagh made suggestion to have invited guests speak first or give them a later time to attend the meeting. Move guests towards start of agenda near partnership reports.
- Tom Patterson & Bob White (Weed & Pest board members)
 - Significant part of range management program in county is balancing small and large landowners and getting more landowners engaged.

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- Issue of noxious weeds in county
 - Significant geographic differences across county: East (ag. majority) versus rest of county.
 - Weeds on federal lands – Buffalo Gap National Grassland adjacent to private land.

Next meeting: Friday January 8th 9:00-11:00 AM – Pine room

Adjournment: 10:40 PM

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December 11, 2020

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2012 – 2012: 10 Active Contracts
 - Working on contract management for practices not completed
- 2021: Batching date is December 11th
 - Expected to be last year for special state fund pools such as Forest and High Tunnel
 - Will be using a new Screening/Prioritization tool
 - Eligibility deadline is January 29, 2021, letters will go out after batching deadline
 - 27 applications (6 Custer) – 1 Forest, 5 General
 - *Hot Springs FO 12 applications in Custer – 3 High Tunnel, 4 Forest, 5 General*

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2015 - 2020: 29 Active Contracts
 - 2020 payments by November 6th – still a couple left that had issues
 - 2021 payments after New Year
- 2021 Renewals: 7 Applications
 - Screening completed
 - Funds reduced in SD – working with highest applicant only
 - Obligation goal of December 31st, may need to extend contracts because of short timeline and obligate after the new year

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- COVID-19: no change in status; masks and social distancing required in offices; vacates possible if cases within the building
- Maternity Leave / Acting DC in spring 2021
- CIS 2021 – Call for proposals, deadline of April 15, 2021; will include CSP style contracts

/S/

Justine Reid

District Conservationist

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NWTF South Dakota Cooperative Forester Quarterly Report (July – September 2020) Prepared by: Faryn Klebe, NWTF Cooperative Forester

In July I was enrolled in the UTV safety training with NRCS and got my driving certificate. I also took the training to become a tree farm inspector through the American Tree Farm System and am now certified to inspect tree farms on behalf of the American Forest Foundation. I assisted the Sturgis NRCS office with the large load of CRP projects they had. We had a training session on how to do the analysis. I went to the field to identify grasses and plants in the area. Then I created all the maps and inserted all the practices being done into Conservation Desktop. Then I created a detailed report and grazing plan then had the producer sign off on it. This allowed me to get practice in Conservation Desktop for future projects. I attended some virtual workshops on low-tech, process-based riverscape restoration and living with wildland fire.

Matthew Walsh and I were amid planning a Women & Wildland Fire Home Defense Workshop for September. However, we had to postpone it due to COVID-19 restrictions. I completed my first management plan for a private landowner named Dale Gadbois. He has a 40-acre plot of forested land near Keystone, South Dakota. I assisted an NRCS coworker with a couple of cultural resource surveys. I attended a few meetings for the Custer County Conservation District. I also attended a meeting for the Black Hills Resilient Forest Partnership. At this meeting we discussed how to use ArcGis data to make a map of the most critical areas where forest restoration can be done to limit fire hazard. I was assigned a new producer to write a management plan for from SD RC&F. It is a forested 180-acre property in Rapid City. The forestry intern and I had to go out and mark the whole property boundary on the GPS. Then I took the time to make the proper maps for me to take inventory of the property. I reached out to a few new producers to begin the process of inventorying their property and getting them signed up for EQIP. I assisted a coworker on a forest stand improvement checkout. I assisted the forestry intern with a forestry project we created for the other interns in the office. We went out into the field and taught them various methods of forest mensuration. I assisted a landowner with some questions he had about the property and his EQIP project. I also was there to make sure they were following the prescription correctly. They were following the prescription correctly they just needed to remove a lot more trees and I instructed them on the spacing they should have.

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RCF Report for Custer County Conservation District

December 8, 2020

The following is a summary of assistance provided to the Custer county conservation district and projects being worked on within the county from 11/13/2020-12/8/2020.

- Thinning project updates:
 - Boundaries for all projects have been flagged.
 - Landowners Kyle Heyen, and Randy Guggisberg have begun work on their projects.
 - Landowner Charlie Meiners has begun looking for a new contractor as his original contractor isn't available until later this spring.
 - Landowners Jarding's and Svenkenson's plan to start work come sometime January when the contractor is available.
- Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) updates for Custer County:
 - Still working on Jarding and Svenkeson FSP's.
 - 3 more Landowners waiting on plans in Custer County
- EQIP Projects:
 - Currently working on 6 more projects to get ready for march's batching date 4 of which are in Custer County.
- Tree Farm Newsletter:
 - Rural Forestry team lead Patricia Weyrich will be putting together the newsletter for Tree farm and wants to know if the board would like to put something in it about the workshop in the spring.
- Women and Wildland Fire Home Defense Workshop
 - RC&F is beginning to plan a workshop in cooperation with the Women Owing Woodlands Forestry Guild, and National Wild Turkey Federation Forester Faryn Klebe, and South Dakota Wildland Fire.
 - Still in the early planning process but we will be looking for a location potentially in Custer or Fall River counties to host one of the workshops.
 - Planning tentatively for this spring.
 - Topics covered will be; how to asses the defensibility of your home, identifying hazards, what you can do to improve your home, and what resources are available to help.

Matt Walsh

Service Forester