

CUSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Teleconference

25363 US Hwy 385, Custer , SD 57730

The June 11, 2020 meeting of Custer County Conservation District was called to order at 9.00am by David Thom.

Available on the call were, Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Stuart Adrian, Tamara Caster, Oonagh Wood, Justine Reid and Matt Walsh.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

A motion to approve the Agenda and Minutes from May meeting was made by Paul and seconded by Tamara.

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS:

NRCS Representative: Justine Reid. There are 11 current contracts and 10 active Forest contracts. Matt has 8 pending in the Southern Hills. Ranking deadline is June 12 and contracts should be let out by end of July.

EQIP is in the contracting process. The NRCS office is currently having computer program problems which is causing delays. CSP has 3 active contracts in Pennington County.

Justine's office will be very busy through July.

Don Tomlinson has been hired as a Forestry intern and is doing inventory on applications and wildlife habitat assessments. Fehrin (NWTF) is working with Don on habitat assessments and also progressing in her duties.

EQIP could use more funding. Justine suggested an outreach to get more applications for CIS.

COVID 19 update: Office is functioning with 1 employee at a time, no public permitted in office.

They are moving to Phase 1 to allow a few more people in the office with social distancing.

After 14 days they may be able to move to next phase if the number of new cases in Pennington County is trending down, which Justine says is the case.

Dave wanted it to be noted for the record that Caley was super organized in having all the pertinent paperwork ready for this meeting. (Caley was unable to attend as she was spraying for Weed and Pest this morning).

FINANCIALS:

Stuart made a motion to pay a MC credit card bill of \$ 34.83 for supplies related to the Arbor Day Tree event, seconded by Tamara.

It was decided to wait until next meeting to discuss changes (updates), if any, that were made to the bank accounts.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Notice of Intent to Mine 22 miles W of Custer on Hwy 16, 1/2 mile down Dewey Road, on a 5 year contract, from Howe Well and Gravel. Caley will send the standard letter to Howe and DENR to remind them of the requirement to rehab the property after mining is complete and address weeds concurrent with operations.

Letter from SD Dept of Ag, to congratulate Remington Mikos on placing 4th in the State wide Essay contest and encouraging him to enter again in 2021. Note: Caley, if congratulation letter has not yet been sent to Remington from CCCD, can you please do this on our behalf ...thank you.

Thank you letter from Crazy Horse thanking CCCD for the \$200 donation and included a free entry card to visit the Monument.

SD Resource Conservation Forestry: Newsletter listed all grants awarded in 2019 to conservation districts.

OLD BUSINESS:

A Notice has been placed in CC Chronicle on June 10th and 17th informing public of opportunity to file petitions for vacant supervisor positions by July 1. It was suggested by the board that this Notice be placed on the CCConservation FB page. Stuart is unable to apply as his residence is in Pennington County.

NEW BUSINESS:

NWTF Partnership goals: Paul wondered if NWTF has any projects pending. Justine spoke with Fehrin (NWTF Representative fo the area) and she is interested in doing a project with us. The CCCD Board should come up with a plan and it was recommended that Board members bring their thoughts and ideas on this to the next meeting for discussion with Fehrin and Justine.

SD Conservation has asked for before and after photos of cooperative ventures. CCCD will try to provide photos to SDC. There may be a drone available from Pennington Conservation District to enable us to get some before and after photos of projects for SDC in the future. CCCD will look into this.

Riparian Reimbursement: \$3500 remains of the SDDA grant to the CCCD French Creek Riparian project. We need to review records and submit any reimbursement request to SDDA. Oonagh agreed to get with Caley and check 2019 expenses on the Riparian project and determine if there are qualifying expenses.

Matt Walsh gave this information on the SD Thinning Grant Applications: Charles Miener is the only applicant to date. He is asking for cost share on 17 to 18 acres. CCCD plans to advertise that there are funds available for thinning projects. Also, it was suggested that we send out notices to past participants in this program, to advise that funding is available again for thinning and include an application form. Is there any prescription program for smaller acreages? Board requested that Caley should outreach this program by advertising in CCCD, our FB page and advise past participants by email of fund availability. ?Will being Firewise give applicants more points?

Budget report by CC Auditor for 2021 for CCCD funds was accepted by Board and did not need amendment.

USFS and SDAG are requesting a review of last 5 years collaboration projects between the agencies. Dave following up with photos.

Discussions for July Meeting:

Custer County Fair: Will the Fair be held this year? Does CCCD want to participate?

Discussion about CCCD's opinion on supporting the NWTF for the next 3 years contract.

OTHER BUSINESS:

EQIP pays to qualified applicants \$615.81/acre on completed and approved thinning programs and \$872.42/acre for beginning farmer ranchers and for under served people.

The request for funding from Conservation Implementation Strategy submitted in April has been approved and will be used for the Elk Mountain project that is planned for this Fall. This is a 3 year program with \$31,000 available in 2020 and 2021 and \$50,000 in year 2022. Dave and Caley submitting a couple of minor additions to the application.

NRCS updated us on some staffing changes in the Northern Hills. Parks has taken a position as Regional Manager for Family Tree Farms and will still be based in Rapid City.

Meeting adjourned at 10.30am.

Next meeting will be held at the Weed & Pest Building, July 9 from 2 to 4pm.