



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – May 14, 2021

The May 14, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order at 9:01 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Stuart Adrian, Gladwin Paulsen, Mike Linde, Matt Walsh, Faryn Klebe, Justine Boerboom, Ryan Wilen, Nick Miller, Julie Wheeler (call in), and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

The meeting minutes from April 9, 2021 and this meeting's agenda were approved after a motion by Paul and a second by Oonagh.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representative: Justin Boerboom – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - CIS Forestry project – established deadlines for determining eligibility (7/15), ranking applicants (7/31), and obligation of funds (9/30).
 - Not many applicants to date for the CIS project. Might have to contact landowners in other priority areas or go county wide. Justin will check with Brad in Fall River to see if he received any applications.
 - Discussion about whether need to send out postcards to others or place an ad in the paper. Mike's time is limited. Justin offered to design a new postcard. Oonagh made motion to prepare another mailing to next top two priority areas, Tamarah seconded, motion carried.
 - NRCS State Conservationist is still open, panel rejected pool of applicants. The Regional Conservationist is expected to retire soon, which likely means the State Conservationist position will be vacant for some time.
- County Commissioner: Mike Linde –
 - Provided a brief review on the Commission's stance on the President's 30x30 executive order.
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe – Report attached
- SDDA Forester: Matt Walsh – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Matt discussed the thinning delays and the concerns with Ips engraver beetles. For future reference, Pennington County CD runs their thinning grants for 2 years. Board didn't know this was an option but will keep it in mind for future grants.
 - One application received for thinning grant. Board discussed waiting to approve applications after all applications have been received or as they

come in (i.e., first come, first serve). Tamarah motioned to approve current application now, second by Paul, motion carried.

- Forest Service general:
 - Julie Wheeler, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland:
 - Doors are still closed to the public due to COVID; however, we're gearing up for the field season and onboarding seasonals. The grazing season has already started on the grassland with some permittees turning cows out. Like the NRCS, we don't yet know what 30x30 may mean for us.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$14,033.15,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,458.41,
 - Savings = \$41,101.41.
- Bills to pay/approve:
 - Checks written: Bear Ridge Dozer \$150, Elk Mountain School \$75, Heart of the Hills Catering \$400.
 - Credit card purchases to approve: Vector Design Print & Tech \$89.03, Quill.com \$35.97
 - Invoices to pay: Laurie Arthur \$149.10, Dakota Greens \$334.38, Southern Hills Publishing \$174.75, Oonagh Wood \$14 (Sam's Club), Dave Thom \$11.36 (Dollar General & Lynn's Dakotamart), NWTF \$4,000. Note: Dave and Oonagh will be reimbursed at the end of the year.
 - Deposit made: \$225 for Mike attending SDACDE Leadership training. Check just received for \$250 SD Family Forests Association, but not yet deposited.
 - Financial review for period 1/1/2019 – 12/31/2020.
- Financial review (period of 1/1/2019 – 12/31/2020):
 - Financial review was completed by Laurie Arthur. Her report was shared with the Board. No issues were found.
- Motion by Oonagh, second by Tamarah to approve financial report as presented, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Thank you card received from the Elk Mountain School for CCCD's donation.
- 2020 annual reports received from NACD and NCF.

Old Business:

- Board Supervisor vacancy:
 - Other candidate did not show for today's meeting. Board decided to give candidate another opportunity to attend next meeting.
- RAC grant:
 - The Black Hills Resource Advisory Council held a meeting on April 22 to review project applications and recommend funding. Our application was approved by the council and was forwarded to the Forest Supervisor for approval.
 - Dave will request that thinning work is completed by private contractors.

- CIS: Eastern Custer County proposal:
 - The application was submitted. NRCS selection committee has not met to evaluate proposals. We hope to hear word by the end of May.
- CIS: Custer Highlands / Elk Mountain:
 - Dave thanked everyone for their help with the landowner workshop. The Board felt that the workshop was a success.
- CCCD Scholarship:
 - No applications were received. Appears to be a lack of interest in conservation and agriculture by current students.
 - Justin offered an idea to pool resources with other Black Hills area CDs – increased scholarship amount might attract more interest.
 - Application requirements will be revised for next year. Guidance counselor will be contacted.
- Arbor Day:
 - Oonagh picked up our 100 seedlings and 50 seedlings the City of Custer purchased from the Fall River CD. Paul, Dave, Oonagh, Mike, and Jessica Woodward (4-H) prepared the seedlings for handing out to 1st graders (CCCD's trees) and the public (City's trees). CCCD trees were given to students at Custer Elementary, Hermosa Elementary, and Elk Mountain School. Additionally, two large trees were planted at Custer Elementary. In attendance at the school plantings were Josh Larson (SDDANR-RCF), Faryn, Paul, Dave, and Mike.
 - City trees were handed out at the Custer dog park by Jessica Woodward.

New Business:

- Consideration on drafting a resolution asking the Conservation Commission to dedicate new funding for forestry issues in the Black Hills
 - Dave drafted a resolution and shared it with the Board. Any edits/comments should be shared with Dave. The resolution will be presented at the Hills Area meeting in June.
- Conservation Thinning Grant award for 2021-22:
 - The State Conservation Commission approved our grant request of \$26,175.00 to be used as cost-share funding for thinning and fuel reduction on private land. This grant will support approximately 80 acres of thinning.
 - Walsh is telling landowners that he recommends thinning occur between September and mid-April to avoid unintended tree mortality due to Ips engraver beetles.
 - One application received so far – discussed above. Application was approved.
- Newsletter:
 - The Weed and Pest Board denied producing a joint newsletter with the Conservation District. The Board was concerned that the added text/information would detract from the primary message/intent of the weed newsletter.
- Hills Area meeting – June 15:
 - The meeting will be held at 2:00 PM at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City. Mike, Dave, and Paul plan on attending. Mike will check on whether registration is required.

- There will be a Locally Led block session on resource concerns. Each District is asked to bring a list of resource concerns within their district. Mike will draft a list of concerns and then share with the Board.
- Leadership Conference – June 28-30:
 - This meeting was originally scheduled for early March but was rescheduled due to COVID concerns.
 - Mike cannot attend due to the meeting falling in the middle of the weed season.

Other Business:

- Resource Conservation Speech Contest:
 - Remington competed in the State Contest on April 24 in Pierre. He finished third and won a \$450 scholarship.
 - The Hills Area CDs will be reimbursing his family for mileage to and from Pierre. Oonagh will inquire whether the Board traditionally gives out awards as well.
 - Mike will send a news release to the Chronicle.
- County Commissioners briefing:
 - Dave and Mike briefed the Commissioners on April 14 about the District's current activities.
- USFS Timber study:
 - Dave and Paul met with the Black Hills National Forest Supervisor and Deputy Forest Supervisor to discuss CCCD's willingness to host a public meeting to answer questions about the recent USFS study. Their preference was to hold off until a later date.
 - Mike's work schedule is changing to four 10 hour days (M-Th). The Board decided to move future meetings (June thru September) to Thursday afternoons at 2:00 PM to accommodate his schedule. Mike will check on room availability.

Next meeting: Thursday June 10th 2:00-4:00 PM – Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building

Adjournment: 10:47 AM



May 14, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2012 – 2020: 9 Active Contracts
- 2021: 27 Applications
 - 2 Forestry Applications Selected for Funding
 - Both obligated for funding

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2015 - 2020: 23 Active Contracts
 - Preparing for 2021 field season by getting seed plans done, etc.
- 2021 Classic
 - Batching date was March 26th – 6 applications received
 - Prioritization deadline is May 14th
 - Ranking deadline is June 4th
 - Obligation deadline is July 9th
- 2022 Renewals
 - Batching date was pushed back to April 7th – letters went out to those that are eligible, includes those up for a 3rd contract
 - Further deadlines will be in late Fall/early Winter 2021

CIS- Forestry

- Batching 6/15/21
- Elig TBD
- Ranking TBD
- Obligation TBD

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- COVID-19: update in status (3 people in office – 50% capacity); masks and social distancing required in offices; vacates possible if cases within the building
- CIS 2020 (Resilient Forest Landscapes) – Applications have been
- CIS 2021 (Rangeland Health in Eastern Custer County) – Submitted
 - 39 New CIS Proposals for 2021 – Funding decisions should be done by Mid-May
- Ryan Wilen, Pathways Student Intern, started 5/10.
- A Direct Hire Soil Conservationist is going to be hired in Rapid City. If you know anyone interested, please let them know of this upcoming opportunity.

/S/

Tyler Tran
Acting District Conservationist



**NWTF South Dakota Cooperative Forester
Quarterly Report (January – March 2021)
Prepared by: Faryn Klebe, NWTF Cooperative Forester**

Landowner Engagement:

Since January I have mostly been working with landowners to get all their paperwork turned in on time and correctly before the deadline for EQIP this year. I visited a producer's property to work with him on where he wanted a fire break for his potential new EQIP contract. I walked the land with a GPS to mark the area and made maps later. I visited another producer's property with his contractor to explain the prescription in more detail and get an idea of how things look on the ground for a 2020 contract. This translates to roughly 98 acres influenced in the last three months.

Outreach:

March 20th, I participated in the "Women and Wildland Fire Home Defense" virtual workshop with my partners at SD RC&F. We spoke about how to protect your home from a wildfire and the different cost-share programs landowners can sign up for to help with the cost of completing these practices. We had 10 participants in the workshop, and we got great feedback from them.

Deliverables:

In January I completed a management plan for a property around 180 acres. I wrote five prescriptions for producers. These prescriptions allowed them to be ranked for their EQIP projects. I ran searches in different databases to get vital information needed before starting a project. We must determine if there are threatened and endangered species or cultural resources on the property. I then filled out the proper forms needed, made the maps, and the conservation plans.

Trainings:

- American Forest Foundation – Training was completed to become recertified to be a tree farm inspector for the American Tree Farm System. (Learned about new policies and forms)
- NRCS – Cultural Resource Survey Training. Need 8 hours of experience in the field with someone certified to become officially certified.
- Other – Attended a virtual workshop discussing Wetlands and Pollinators: How Water Quality Practices Can Benefit Pollinators and another one discussing windbreaks.



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY DIVISION

2202 University Ave

Hot Springs, SD 57747

Phone: 605-745-5820 ext. 211 Fax: 605-745-4553

sdda.sd.gov

RCF Report for Custer County Conservation District

May 14, 2021

The following is a summary of assistance provided to the Custer county conservation district and projects being worked on within the county.

- Thinning project updates:
 - 2020
 - Charlie Meiners has completed his 18ac thinning project.
 - The other four projects have been delayed because of covid, mechanical issues with the landowner's machinery, and the contractors have been delayed due to the late snows we had in the past 2 months.
 - The deadline for all the projects has been extended to June 15th. After June 15th I will certify what the landowners have done and that's what the county will reimburse them for.
 - I have confirmed that work is up and running on the projects and some may still be completed before June 1st.
 - 2021
 - Todd Dickens is applying for 6 ac of pre-commercial thinning.
 - Property is in Elk Mountain
 - No residence on the property, But the area to be thinned butts up to the neighbors property line and is very near their house and they would like to be good neighbors so they want to thin it to do their part in the community.
 - The project area has an average diameter of about 6in and a basal area of 106 sq ft/ ac
- Upcoming Workshops:
 - Saturday May 15, 9am-10am; "Forest Stewardship Plan 101"
 - Saturday June 19, 9am-10am; Available Cost-share Assistance Workshop
 - Both are online and to register email Patricia.weyrich@state.sd.us

Matt Walsh

Service Forester