



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2021

The June 10, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order at 2:02 PM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Paul Nettinga, Stuart Adrian, Matt Walsh, Tyler Tran, Julie Wheeler, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

The meeting minutes from May 14, 2021 and this meeting's agenda were approved after a motion by Oonagh and a second by Paul.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representative: Tyler Tran – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Tyler's detail will end in July. Justine is expected to be back in the office by our next meeting.
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe (via email) –
 - NWTF interest in CIS Resilient Forest Landscapes project:
 - Faryn's supervisor, Jared McJunkin, and the new NWTF district biologist, Clayton Lenk, have expressed interest in potentially contributing to the CIS project. They will be in Rapid City on July 13 and possibly the 14th and would like to meet with a CCCD representative(s) to discuss. Mike has a Weed & Pest Board meeting on the 13th at 1:00 PM so the 14th or early on the 13th works better for him. Other Board members are welcome to attend.
- SDDA Forester: Matt Walsh – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Upcoming RCF workshop on June 19 titled "Woodland Landowner Project Assistance Opportunities Workshop" – Oonagh will post flyer on Facebook.
 - Future State grants – future CCCD applications for thinning grants will be for two years instead of one. Work will continue to be planned for completion within first year, but will have a second year in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- Forest Service general:
 - Julie Wheeler, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland:
 - COVID: Black Hills NF offices opened to the public this week; however, it will probably be a couple more weeks for Nebraska National Forest

offices (includes Buffalo Gap National Grassland) to open to the public. Offices are still operating at max-telework and at 25 % staff capacity.

- Their Chief is retiring at end of August.
- Drought has improved somewhat from a month ago, but conditions could worsen soon.
- Visitation – they are seeing more visitors to the Grassland so far this year – increased OHV use at Railroad Buttes trail and agate hunters.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$13,024.92,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,458.41,
 - Savings = \$37,101.71.
- Bills to pay/approve:
 - Checks written: none.
 - Credit card purchases to approve: Vector Design Print & Tech \$125.12 (printing of additional postcards for CIS project)
 - Off topic note: forestry discussion by Board on desire to have developers perform thinning prior to property development. Easier and more effective to work with one owner (i.e., developer) than multiple owners post development. May be beneficial to speak with Planning Department about Board's thoughts.
 - Invoices to pay: none.
 - Other: liability insurance bill of \$549.78 was paid from county funds.
- Motion by Oonagh, second by Paul to approve financial report as presented, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Clayton Lenk (NWTF) – discussed in NWTF report above.
- SD Soil Health Coalition publication “Soil Visions” was received.

Old Business:

- Board Supervisor vacancy:
 - Candidate for the Board was a no-show, this candidate will no longer be considered. Another individual from the focus area has expressed interest and is expected to attend July meeting.
- CIS: Resilient Forest Landscapes:
 - As discussed in the NRCS report, postcards were mailed to 541 residents in the Argyle and Carroll Creek priority areas. Postage was paid for by NRCS.
 - The batching deadline was extended to July 1 to accommodate the NRCS news release, which went out on June 1.
- Resolution to dedicate new funding for forestry issues in the Black Hills:
 - A draft of the resolution was shared with the Hills Area Conservation Districts for discussion/consideration during the Hills Area meeting.

- Dave has been in communication with Angela Ehlers, SDACD, about the resolution and potential funding sources. Angela suggested unclaimed refunds from the non-highway use gas tax (i.e., fuel tax collected on fuel used for non-highway agriculture use can be refunded to eligible producers). Angela provided a 2-page history of the Conservation Fund and the non-highway fuel tax refund. Dave shared this document with the Board prior to today's meeting.

New Business:

- Hills Area meeting resource concerns:
 - A Locally Led Block meeting will be held at 1:00 PM prior to the Area meeting at 2:00 PM. Each District is asked to bring a list of resource concerns for their district. Mike shared a draft list of concerns with the Board.
 - Board discussed the list of resource concerns and settled on six to present at the Block meeting. The final list included:
 - Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
 - Plant productivity and health
 - Plant pest pressure
 - Feed and forage balance
 - Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
 - Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels.

Other Business:

- 2020-21 thinning grant:
 - Mike is preparing the reimbursement requests and the final report to be submitted to the State. Mike inquired about expenditures incurred by CCCD. Mileage and per diem expenses were discussed.

Next meeting: Thursday July 8th 2:00-4:00 PM – Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building (Note: the group reserving the room will likely cancel their reservation so it should be available. If something changes and the Pine Room is not available, we will have the meeting in the side room off of the Pine Room).

Adjournment: 3:45 PM



June 10th, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2012 – 2020: Five Active Contracts
- 2021: 27 Applications
 - Two Forestry Applications Selected 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
 - One application ranked and selected for obligation
- 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

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

- FSA currently accepting applications for drought conditions for alternative water sources
 - 55 applications currently
 - Heavy workload

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
 - FSA at 75% capacity, expecting customers for Acreage Reporting
 - Non-vaccinated employees & customers must practice safety precautions
- CIS 2020 (Resilient Forest Landscapes) – Postcards are mailed, no applications in RC
- CIS 2021 (Rangeland Health in Eastern Custer County) – Submitted and Reviewed
 - 39 New CIS Proposals for 2021 – Projects have been selected for funding but have not been announced
- 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

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**DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
and NATURAL RESOURCES**

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RCF Report for Custer County Conservation District

June 10, 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
 - Heyen Project has been completed and I certified it on Tuesday.
 - Svenkeson and Jarding Project are completed will be out next week to inspect and certify them.
 - Next Tuesday the 15th is the project deadline for the other project.
 - 2021
 - Have a few interested applicants I will be working with in the near future nothing set in stone but the outlook to fill all 80 ac looks good!
- Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) updates for Custer County:
 - I have requests for 3 FSP's from landowners in Custer county
 - Currently working on one just north of Custer
- EQIP Projects:
 - Have a landowner applying for the Custer CIS in the Elk mountain project area
 - Possibly a few applicants in other priority areas and I will be setting those up by the July first deadline.
- Upcoming workshops
 - Woodland Landowner Project Assistance Opportunities Workshop, June 19th 9-10AM. email Patricia.weyrich@state.sd.us to register.

Matt Walsh
Service Forester