



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2021

The July 8, 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, Tamarah Caster, Matt Walsh, Julie Wheeler, Justine Reid (call-in), Faryn Klebe (call-in), and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Dave asked to amend the agenda by adding CCCD County Fair participation to Old Business.

The meeting minutes from June 10, 2021 and this meeting's agenda were approved after a motion by Paul and a second by Tamarah.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representative: Justine Reid – Report attached.
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe – nothing to report at this time.
- SDDA Forester: Matt Walsh – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - Re: 2021-22 State grant extension: If board is interested, Matt will draft a letter asking for a grant extension and share it with the group for approval. If we had an extension for the 2020-21 grant, we could have funded another thinning project due to less than expected contractor costs. Motion made by Oonagh to request a grant extension for the 2021-22 State grant, Tamarah seconded, motion carried.
 - Re: Oonagh Tree Farmer of the year: the award presentation will be on September 11 at her ranch.
 - CIS forestry proposals in Fall River and Lawrence counties were approved.
- Forest Service general:
 - Julie Wheeler, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland:
 - COVID: most employees will be back in the office by October 1.
 - Stage 1 fire restrictions are under consideration for Buffalo Gap National Grassland.
 - Black Hills National Forest: Traci Anderson, Hell Canyon District Ranger, is retiring at the end of July. A detail will be coming soon to fill the position for the short-term.
 - Buffalo Gap NG and Custer County Weed & Pest now have a spraying agreement for weeds on the Grassland adjacent to private property.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$12,899.80,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,458.41,
 - Savings = \$37,102.05.
- Bills to pay/approve:
 - Checks written: none.
 - Credit card purchases to approve: none.
 - Invoices to pay: none.
- Motion by Oonagh, second by Tamarah to approve financial report as presented, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- SD Office of Attorney General:
 - Several items addressed to Angie pertaining to the PowerTech Uranium Mining Water Permit Hearings were received from Angie. A motion was made by Tamarah, second by Oonagh to change the contact information from Angie to Mike.
- USFS RAC grant:
 - We received official notification from the USFS that our RAC grant was selected for funding at \$30,000. More discussion on the RAC grant occurred under New Business.

Old Business:

- Board Supervisor vacancy:
 - Via Dave:
 - Stuart reached out to someone but had no response.
 - Dave contacted the person that expressed interest but had no response.
 - Stephenie is going to follow up on a couple names.
- CIS: Resilient Forest Landscapes:
 - Enrollment update:
 - 6 applications were received in the Rapid City office and 3 more applications were collected in Hot Springs. NRCS will have a meeting tomorrow, July 9, to discuss prioritization and ranking of applications.
 - Ranking tool:
 - Mike asked for any comments on the NRCS ranking tool that was emailed to the board. No comments were received.
- Hills Area meeting:
 - Resource concerns:
 - Area CD's shared their highest resource concerns with the group. A final list will be shared with the board when the meeting minutes are received.
 - Resolution for dedicating new funding for forestry issues:
 - A draft of the resolution was shared with the Hills Area Conservation Districts for discussion/consideration during the Hills Area meeting. Comments received included:

- Avoid fuels treatment verbiage,
 - Do not limit to the Black Hills, broaden scope for state-wide appeal – forestry issues exist across the state (e.g., emerald ash borer, red cedar invasion),
 - Remove “potential” from line “...funding is not meeting potential.”
 - Hills Area group supported the resolution with the suggestion changes.
 - Dave made the suggested changes and sent document to Bill Smith and Greg Joston for review.
- County Fair in August:
 - Motion made by Paul, seconded by Oonagh to not host a booth at this year’s County Fair in Hermosa, motion carried. Dave asked Justine if possible to reserved rainfall simulator for 2022 Fair. Justine will look into it.

New Business:

- Meeting with NWTF personnel in Rapid City
 - NWTF interest in CIS Resilient Forest Landscapes project:
 - As discussed at the last board meeting, Jared McJunkin and Clayton Lenk with NWTF have expressed interest in potentially contributing to our CIS forest project. They will be in Rapid City on July 13 and were interested in meeting with a CCCD representative. Mike has a Weed & Pest Board meeting on the 13th at 1:00 PM so probably will not be available. Julie received a message that NWTF was meeting with USFS during the morning. Mike will coordinate with the Board on the schedule.
- RAC grant: Resilient Forest Landscapes –
 - Mike and Dave have been in communication with USFS staff to work out project details including use of laid off USFS seasonal firefighters that reside in the area versus USFS private contractors. A meeting with USFS staff will occur in the coming weeks to discuss this topic and location of thinning work. A project plan for FY22 needs to be communicated to USFS by August for their budgetary planning purposes.
- Black Hills National Forest Rapid Stakeholder Assessment:
 - Dave had previously notified the Board of the USFS process to revise the Forest Plan, which will occur over the next 2-3 years. Dave has signed up to participate during the revision efforts.

Other Business:

- CIS Rangeland and Riparian Health proposal:
 - The CCCD proposal was selected for funding in the amount of \$700,000. These funds will be very helpful to producers within the project area. A NRCS news release is available at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/sd/newsroom/releases/?cid=NR_CSEPRD1795638.

- 2020-21 thinning grant:
 - The final report and reimbursement requests are almost ready to be submitted to the State. We are still waiting on paperwork from one landowner. Additional information about the grant are included in Matt's report (see attached).

Next meeting: Thursday September 9th 2:00-4:00 PM – Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building (Note: we will not meet in August).

Adjournment: 3:05 PM



July 8, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018 – 2021: 7 Active Contracts
 - Field Season
- 2022: Always accepting applications, workload tool – CIS applications first

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2015 - 2020: 19 Active Contracts
 - Field Season
- 2021 Classic
 - 1 application in progress of contract obligation
- 2022 Renewals
 - Look at applications in Fall

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

- Drought in June, over 40 applications (W. Pennington), 1 application Custer

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- Hiring Soil Conservationist in Rapid City
- COVID-19: 50% staffing, will look to start re-staffing offices October 1st
 - Travel is still limited to Mission Essential
- CIS 2020 (Resilient Forest Landscapes)
 - Reviewing applications
 - Fieldwork
- CIS 2021 (Rangeland & Riparian Health in the Eastern Grasslands of Custer County)
 - Set application deadline
- CIS 2021 (Jasper Fire Area)
 - Set application deadline

/S/

Justine Reid
District Conservationist



**DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
and NATURAL RESOURCES**

2202 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
HOT SPRINGS, SD 57747
danr.sd.gov

RCF Report for Custer County Conservation District

July 8th, 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:
 - The deadline has passed. All projects but Guggisberg's were completed. For a total of 74.5 ac of pre-commercial thinning completed
 - Guggisberg's was only certified for 1.75 ac of work.
 - 2021
 - 72 ac left to fill
 - Currently working with 2 landowners for a total of roughly 30ac that should be ready for approval by the next meeting
 - Would the board be interested in an extension for this grant? We should be able to get one and we can get a 1 year extension to avoid the time crunch problems of the last grant.
- That shouldn't be a problem. The district will just need to write a letter to the commission asking for the extension (include grant name/number, current end date, requested end date, and reason for the request) . It also doesn't hurt to include the current grant status, if they've used any money yet, etc. The commission would act on it at their next meeting, which as of right now will be in September at the SDACD Convention. We would need the request 2 weeks before the meeting. The district can wait until the November meeting too or even later if they want. They have plenty of time before the grant expires.
- FSP
 - Working on finishing 1 up. All the data collected just in the process of the actual writing.
- **Oonagh Wood is Tree Farmer of the year!**

Matt Walsh

Service Forester