



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2021

The September 9, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building, at 2:00 PM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Justin Boerboom, Laura Muse, Matt Walsh, Faryn Klebe (call-in), Stuart Adrian, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Dave asked to amend the agenda by adding the North Missouri Area Districts' resolution for State Convention to New Business. Motion by Paul to approve amended agenda, seconded by Oonagh, motion carried.

The meeting minutes from July 8, 2021 were approved after a motion by Tamarah and a second by Paul, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representative: Justin Boerboom – Report attached.
 - Additional notes:
 - SD NRCS is still without a State Conservationist.
 - 2 new hires for Soil Conservationist in the area – Laura Muse is the new hire in the Rapid City office.
 - Forestry CIS: two applications to be preapproved out of Hot Springs office and expect both will be active contracts by mid-next week. Acreage includes 70 acres for thinning and 7 acres for fuel breaks. Woody debris management is also included.
 - Need to set tentative batching dates for both CIS projects for FY2022. Rangeland health CIS deadline will be around June. Forestry CIS deadline will be in the spring.
 - Press release for Forestry CIS will be drafted by Justin. Mike will provide a summary of CCCD thinning work through State grants. Justin will combine these stats with the CIS stats. Justin will clear the press release with NRCS Public Relations, then give to the CCCD Board for approval. Oonagh offered to post to Facebook page.
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe –
 - Catching up on field work and will soon begin writing a management plan for property in Custer County.
- SDDA Forester: Matt Walsh – Report attached
 - Additional notes:

- Dave informed the Board that Matt was awarded 2021 Tree Farm Inspector of the Year by South Dakota Family Forests Association (SDFFA).

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$12,899.80,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$37,102.68.
- Deposits & Bills:
 - Grant Checking account:
 - Deposit of \$15,831.25 for thinning grant reimbursement from SD DANR.
 - Five payments were made to thinning grant participants (\$481.25; \$3,500.00; \$3,500.00; \$4,050.00; \$4,125.00).
 - Main Checking account – to pay/approve:
 - Custer Area Chamber of Commerce (\$85.00)
 - Hills Area Conservation Districts 2022 dues (\$65.00)
 - 2021 SDACD Convention contribution (\$150.00)
 - Travel for Baldwin and Thom to attend SDACD Convention in Spearfish, SD on September 19-20. Cost is approximately \$265 + mileage per person.
 - Credit card purchases to approve: none.
- Motion by Oonagh, second by Paul to approve financial report as presented and approve travel costs for Dave and Mike, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- NRCS CIS grant letter:
 - Official notification from NRCS that our CIS grant application titled “Rangeland and Riparian Health in the Eastern Grasslands of Custer County, SD” was selected for funding at \$700,000.
- USFS Freeland Project:
 - USFS thanked CCCD for comments made on the project proposal. USFS has finalized the project and will begin implementation.
- SDANR RCF 2022 speech contest information:
 - Informational packet on next year’s contest was received.
- SD DANR; Black Hills Clean Water Alliance / Dakota Rural Action: Re: PowerTech proposed Uranium mine.
 - Paul updated the Board on several documents addressed to Angie pertaining to the PowerTech Uranium Mining Water Permit Hearings.
 - Mike mailed a written request for the Water Management Board to update CCCD’s contact information from Angie to Mike and to update the CCCD address.
 - A hearing is scheduled on October 6 for the Water Management Board to consider motions and responses to motions. If CCCD wants to participate in the

- hearing, the Board must be represented by legal counsel in accordance with state law. Oonagh suggested Tracy Kelley may be interested in working with us.
 - Black Hills Clean Water Alliance and Dakota Rural Action are hosting a meeting on September 16 for interested intervenors.
 - Laura suggested that if the Board has concerns to submit them to the State.
- Invitation to the Pheasants Forever 2021 Banquet:
 - Board will not attend.
- Notice of Intent to mine: Croell, Inc.; Terry Spring; Simon Contractors:
 - Mike reviewed the four main comments in the CCCD draft response letter. Board agreed with those comments with the addition of verbiage on “reshaping to the natural character of the land” during reclamation. Motion by Paul, second by Tamarah to send response letter, motion carried.
- Raffle for SDACD Convention:
 - Dave reviewed the raffle and asked for interested persons to see Mike or himself after the meeting.

Old Business:

- RAC grant: Resilient Forest Landscapes:
 - Dave and Mike met with USFS staff to work out project details. An 800 acre area near the Custer Highlands was selected as a potential treatment site. Final NEPA approval will be in December or January. Work cannot begin until NEPA review is complete. Thinning is expected to begin in the winter of 2022-23.
 - Mike will organize a meeting with USFS, adjacent private landowners, and potentially a representative of the Highlands Volunteer Fire Department to discuss project plans.
 - Black Hills Resource Advisory Committee point of contact is in flux at this time: District Ranger for Hell Canyon retired and the RAC Coordinator has taken another job. Mike will update the Board when a new RAC Coordinator has been announced.
- Board Supervisor vacancy:
 - Board will continue seeking potential candidates.
- Black Hills National Forest Rapid Stakeholder Assessment:
 - On July 29, Dave & Mike participated in a virtual meeting with USFS personnel to comment on the upcoming Forest Plan Revision for the Black Hills National Forest.

New Business:

- 2020-21 State thinning grant “Thinning for a Healthier Forest 2020-21”:
 - The request for reimbursement and final report were submitted to SD DANR in July. Request was granted and CCCD received a check for \$15,831.25, of which, \$175.00 went to CCCD to cover administrative costs and the remainder (\$15,656.25) was used for cost-share payments to participating landowners. All landowners have been paid.
- 2021-22 State thinning grant:
 - Application approval(s):

- Discussed by Matt in his report. One application has been approved by the Board so far, and there is another application to process and consider at the next Board meeting.
- Extension request:
 - Matt drafted a letter for the Board’s signature which asks for a one-year extension to our grant. All Board members approved of the extension request and signed the letter. The letter will be sent to SD DANR by Mike after today’s meeting. The Conservation Commission will consider our request at the SDACD Convention this month.
- CIS: “Resilient Forest Landscapes” and “Rangeland and Riparian Health” – projects update:
 - Updates were discussed during Justin’s and Matt’s reports.
- Dust Control:
 - Paul discussed his safety concerns (e.g., reduced visibility and heavy traffic on certain roads) associated with dust on gravel roads in the county. He would like the county to be more proactive on dust control measures.
- North Missouri Area Districts resolution for State Convention:
 - Motion of support for the resolution by Tamarah, second by Paul, motion carried.

Other Business:

- None

Next meeting: Thursday, October 14 @ 9:00 AM, Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building.

Adjournment: 3:39 PM



September 9, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018 – 2021: 7 Active Contracts
 - Field Season
 - Got more money and working to obligate 2 high tunnel contracts
- 2022
 - Always accepting general applications
 - Workload tool – CIS applications first

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2015 - 2021: 20 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
 - Letters went out to all contract holders, documentation due by September 17th
 - Will start certifying implemented activities soon and doing modifications as needed
- 2022 Renewals: 6 applications
 - Look at applications after fiscal year change

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) [joint NRCS/FSA program]

- Drought this summer, over 45 applications

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) [joint NRCS/FSA program]

- Drought this summer, emergency haying and grazing plans, 7 plans

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- Soil Conservationist, Laura Muse, started August 30th
- COVID-19: 50% staffing, vaccinations required or testing 2x week for federal and contracted employees
- CIS 2020 (Resilient Forest Landscapes)
 - Hot Springs FO has 2 applications in Elk Mountain/Custer Highlands priority area
 - Will start working on other priority area applications for next year's funding
- 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**

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HOT SPRINGS, SD 57747
danr.sd.gov

RCF Report for Custer County Conservation District

Sept 9th, 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:
 - 2021:
 - 72 ac left to fill
 - Wrote a one-year extension request for board approval.
 - Have been holding off on actively seeking landowners because of the beetles
 - Have 2 filled out applications just need finalize their projects for approval.
- FSP:
 - Finished 2 FSP's in Custer County for a total of ~95 ac
 - Have about 5 more waiting for plans.
- EQIP CIS:
 - Have 2 landowners in the Elk Mountain area who will use up all of the funding for this year.
 - Between them they've applied for about 74 ac of thinning in the elk mountain priority zone.
 - Which leaves about 7 other landowners with applications for the upcoming years I will work on calling some to get them either signed up for the general fund or to possibly have them apply for the Custer grant..

Matt Walsh

Service Forester