



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2021

The December 9, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse, at 9:08 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Tamarah Caster, Stuart Adrian, Mike Linde, Greg Neugebauer, Matt Walsh, Oonagh Wood, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Greg took the oath of office as a new Board Supervisor.

The meeting minutes from November 18, 2021 were approved after a motion by Tamarah and a second by Oonagh, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- County Commission: Mike Linde –
 - Nothing to report. Dave asked about the Commission's view on draft bill HB50 - Grassland Tax Relief Bill. Mike stated that the Commission wrote a letter of support for the bill. Dave also asked about any known road issues to be aware of. Mike said that he is not aware of any and that Highway is doing a good job. Dry conditions do limit what work they can do.
- NRCS Representative: Justine Reid –
 - Justine was unable to attend but provided a monthly report after the meeting – see attached.
- SD DANR Forester: Matt Walsh –
 - Currently working on 9 EQIP projects and 6 Forest Stewardship Plans. Most of these are in Fall River.
 - Hosted a workshop for the Fall River CIS project. Attendance was lower than hoped but Matt felt it was still a success.
 - Custer CCD thinning grant:
 - Work has begun on one of the approved projects. Matt has not heard back from the landowner interested in the thinning grant that only had ~1 acre.
 - The SD Wildland Fire cost-share grant (80%) has attracted away some of the landowners interested in thinning. Usually, these landowners would apply to our grant, but have opted for the higher cost-share.
 - Stuart asked about the newsletter, the number of recipients, and how the list was generated. He thinks there is a lot of good information in the newsletter, but it's not reaching a large enough audience. Mike stated the recipient list via mail was 190 and via email was 60. He was not sure how the mail distribution list was

originally generated – it was a list that Angie created. Dave stated names were likely added to the list when they attended meetings/workshops. Mike discussed the cost associated with sending the Weed and Pest newsletter to all county residents, which was too much for the District to afford. Mike plans on uploading the newsletter to the CCCD website and will also post to Facebook.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$11,917.78,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$37,103.60.
- Bills to pay/approve:
 - Credit card purchases: Vector Design Print & Tech (\$383.99).
 - 2021 Supervisor vouchers for meeting attendance, mileage, and miscellaneous expenses. Preliminary costs through November were sent to the Board for approval. Final vouchers to be determined at conclusion of today's meeting.
 - Dave asked about whether it was necessary to maintain the Grant account. Oonagh thinks that this account is a requirement for the State cost-share grants we receive. Mike did not know if it was required, but felt it was useful to keep. Mike/Oonagh can check if a minimum balance is required.
- Motion by Tamarah, second by Oonagh to approve financial report as presented and approve payment of bills, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- SD Soil Health Conference in Aberdeen on Jan.18-19.
- SDACDE Promotional Grant for 2022 – limited to \$250 per district, must spend at least that much, intended for promotional materials. Mike was asked to check if newsletter costs were covered.
- Locally Led Success Stories – for success story video project. Oonagh suggested the school garden in Custer. She will learn more about the project.

Old Business:

- CIS Updates:
 - Resilient Forest Landscapes:
 - No update since Justine was unable to attend.
 - Rangeland and Riparian Health:
 - No update. Board needs to make plans for outreach prior to batching deadline of April 1, 2022.
 - Matt stated that NRCS is backing away from 100% EQIP transition to CIS.
- 2021-22 State thinning grant:
 - Matt has not received any new applications since his last update and has not heard back from the landowner with the thinning application for one acre. Matt will contact the neighbors of this landowner to gauge their interest in participating. Discussion on the potential benefit of approving 1 acre project because it could encourage hesitant neighbors to participate. Matt recommended approving this

project to provide a demonstration. Motion to approve 1-acre application made by Oonagh, seconded by Greg, motion carried.

New Business:

- Proposed 2022 Budget:
 - Mike reviewed the 2022 budget drafted by Oonagh and himself. Board asked to increase dues to NACD by \$100 and to SDACD by \$50. Board also asked that scholarship payments come out of the Savings account.
 - Motion by Oonagh to approve budget as amended, seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

Other Business:

- Field trip to CIS project areas in eastern Custer County was postponed.
 - Trip was rescheduled to February.
- 2022 Annual Work Plan:
 - Dave and Mike will work on plan and present to Board at January meeting.
- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
 - Newsletter – Topic discussed earlier in the meeting. 2021 Fall/Winter Newsletter went out to ~250 individuals (190 via mail, 60 via email) earlier this week.
 - Scholarship – Mike notified Custer High School and Elk Mountain School of the scholarship. The application was posted on CCCD’s website. Oonagh offered to post at the local Post Office(s) as well.
 - Tree order was placed through Pennington CD. Trees are expected to be ready for pickup in the spring. Board suggested tree planting may be needed at the new Hermosa School. Greg has a contact at the school that could be asked about planting there.
 - Prescribed Burning Webinar – Mike sat in on NRCS webinar on controlling eastern red cedar – an invader of grasslands.

Next meeting: Thursday, January 13 @ 9:00 AM. The Board liked meeting in the Commissioner’s room so Mike will try to reserve the room for next meeting.

Adjournment: 10:34 AM



December 9, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018 – 2021: 9 Active Contracts
 - Includes CIS contracts
- 2022
 - Batching Deadline: 12/3/21, will be sending out eligibility letters to applicants
 - Ranking Deadline: 2/18/22
 - Obligation Deadline: 6/3/22
 - CIS FY 2022 Deadlines

	Resilient Forest Landscapes (CIS 2020)	Jasper Fire (CIS 2021)	Rangeland Health (CIS 2021)
Outreach	12/1/21	N/A	2/1/22
Batching	2/1/22	12/1/21	4/1/22
Ranking	4/1/22	2/1/22	7/1/22
Obligation	7/1/22	4/1/22	8/1/22

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2017 - 2021: 23 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
 - Calendar Year (CY) 2021 payments by 11/30/21
- 2022 Renewals: 7 applications (3 high priority)
 - Ranking Deadline: 11/19/21
 - Obligation Deadline: 12/17/21, working to obligate 2 of the high priority
- 2022 Classic
 - Batching Deadline: 12/3/21, getting extended due to changes in "cooling-off" period
 - Ranking Deadline: 3/18/22
 - Obligation Deadline: 4/29/22

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

- Finishing up designs on approved projects

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

- 3 accepted offers, will be working to develop full plans (by mid-December) on ones that had interim plans

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- COVID-19: 75% staffing, guidance very fluid right now
- Still working to hire State Conservationist

/S/
Justine Reid
District Conservationist

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