

Custer County Weed and Pest Board

Meeting Minutes – November 9, 2021

The November 9, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:03 PM by Klint Rittberger.

In attendance were June Johnston, Marci O'Connell, Tom Patterson, Klint Rittberger, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from the September 9 meeting were approved with a motion by Patterson and seconded by Johnston.

Old Business:

- Status of watch list properties for enforcement:
 - TR PEASE OF HES #539 SECTIONS 13/24 T4 R3:
 - Property was sprayed and receipt was submitted to the Weed & Pest Department for the chemical cost-share program.
 - TRACTS 6 & 12 OF LOT 1B OF LOT 1 IN THE MULCAHY SUBDIVISION:
 - The landowner hired a contractor to spray both lots. Baldwin met with the contractor on site and provided site maps to him; however, the contractor never did the work. He apparently tried once or twice but had equipment issues and never returned. The landowner was not notified until it was too late in the year to hire another contractor. The landowner has committed to hiring a new contractor for spraying in the spring.
 - TR PEASE OF HES #539 SECTIONS 13/24 T4 R3:
 - Baldwin was able to contact the new landowners. They did not spray, but plan on building a house on the site next spring and will mow problem areas. The property will continue to be monitored for compliance.
- Prairie dog complaint.
 - This complaint was originally filed with the SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) in July. Baldwin performed an inspection after the complaint was received and found no evidence of prairie dogs colonizing on the property of the person filing the complaint. Voluntary compliance letters were mailed to the two adjacent property owners with the prairie dogs, but no other actions could be taken (SDCL 38-22-23.13). In October, the same landowner contacted Baldwin to say active burrows were now present on the property. Baldwin performed a second inspection and confirmed the presence of the active burrows and performed a 30-minute prairie dog count. However, the original complaint was against only one neighbor. The landowner is now filing a complaint against the second neighbor. Baldwin will perform a follow-up

inspection and a second count after the complaint has been delivered to the second neighbor. Baldwin will keep the Board informed on this situation.

New Business:

- Baldwin notified the Board that Bob White contacted him this morning and announced his resignation from the Board. A new Chair will need to be determined at the next meeting.
- Spray season review by Baldwin:
 - All right of ways along county maintained roads were spot-sprayed twice (1,600 miles total). This includes county roads within Buffalo Gap, Fairburn, and Pringle.
 - Custer County Airport – all areas around runway lights, reflectors, etc. were bare-ground sprayed. Noxious weeds along either side of the runway were also sprayed.
 - Highway shops – bare-ground and noxious weed spraying were completed at all county highway shops.
 - All cattle guards on county maintained roads were bare-ground sprayed.
 - US Forest Service contracts to address weeds on public land adjacent to private land:
 - Black Hills National Forest agreement for 23 acres:
 - All acreage was sprayed and reimbursement was received.
 - Black Hills National Forest RAC grant for 90 acres:
 - 64.5 acres were treated this year. The remaining acreage will be sprayed next season. The grant is active through September 2022.
 - Buffalo Gap National Grassland agreement for 23 acres:
 - All acreage was treated and reimbursement was received. Areas that were treated focused on USFS priority areas due to lack of landowner complaints.
- Chemical cost-share reimbursement:
 - Reimbursement requests for the chemical cost-share program were received from 77 landowners with receipts totaling \$24,805.33. One receipt was over \$2,000, which would exceed the \$1,000 max payout.
 - The Board discussed whether to leave the cost-share at 50% or increase it up to 75%. The Board also discussed whether to keep the \$1,000 cap for payouts. Based on the remaining budget, the Board agreed to raise the cost-share and leave the cap as is. A motion was made by Rittberger to pay a 65% cost-share and keep the \$1,000 cap, seconded by Patterson, motion carried.
 - Baldwin asked the Board whether herbicides used in row crop or small grains operations are covered by the cost-share program. The Board stated that the program does not apply in those instances. A receipt submitted for reimbursement by an operator of such a farm was rejected by the Board based on this premise.
 - Potential prairie dog control cost-share:
 - Prairie dog control is not covered under the current chemical cost-share program. In the January Board meeting, the Board discussed inclusion of these chemicals, but was concerned about the unknown cost for supporting

this addition. The Board asked Baldwin to include an information request in the spring newsletter which asked landowners to share control expenses with the Board. To date, no receipts or information have been received regarding the use of Rozol, Kaput-D, or zinc phosphide baits. One receipt did include fumitoxin tablets. Due to the lack of information, no decision was made. The subject will be revisited at the next Board meeting.

- Locally Noxious Weeds:
 - Baldwin notified the Board that the 5-year designation of yellow toadflax as locally noxious in Custer County will expire at the end of the year. The Board discussed keeping yellow toadflax on the county list. Motion made by O’Connell, second by Johnston to apply for a 5-year extension, and to have Rittberger sign application as acting Board Chair, motion carried.
- Grant request to SD DANR:
 - Baldwin informed the Board that he is applying for a grant through the State to help support the chemical cost-share program next year.
- Requests for no herbicide on county right of way:
 - There are several “no herbicide” signs throughout the county but Baldwin has little to no information about these areas. Additionally, there were two new requests for no herbicide spraying along county right-of-ways.
 - Baldwin spoke with Brenda Sievers, SD DANR Plant Industry Program Manager, about a state-wide no-spray application, but none exists. According to Sievers, no-spray requests are handled on a per county basis. Baldwin will develop a new no-spray application for all new and existing locations and will share with the Board. Sievers encouraged including a requirement for applicants to renew no-spray requests annually.
 - The Board determined that all new no-spray signs must be paid for by the applicant.

Other Business:

- Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership (BHIPP) meeting:
 - Baldwin attended the meeting on 10/21 in Rapid City. Representatives from local, state, and federal agencies attended. The Black Hills National Forest, Mystic District Ranger discussed the projected decrease in timber harvest rates in the Black Hills over the next few years. This could affect the amount of money available to county Weed & Pest Departments through federal grants/agreements since timber harvest dollars help to support these programs. There was discussion about USFS offsetting these declining funds by increasing UTV/ATV permit fees. The next meeting is scheduled for the spring of 2022.
- District 4 meeting:
 - Baldwin attended the South Dakota Weed and Pest District 4 meeting in Rapid City on 10/26. Attendance was required for all weed and pest supervisors to qualify for State grants. In addition, a second county representative is also required. A member of the Custer Conservation District Board attended to fulfill this requirement.
- Surplus ATV from SAR:

- A surplus ATV from Search and Rescue has been transferred to Weed and Pest.
- Salt cedar survey:
 - Baldwin and Jeremiah Phelps, SD DANR Weed and Pest Program Specialist, attempted to do a salt cedar survey on a portion of the Cheyenne River but ran into access issues and bad weather. The State owns an Argo amphibious ATV which would enable easier maneuverability along the river. We hope to make a second attempt soon.
 - Salt cedar is not known to be present on the Cheyenne River within Custer County; however, it is present on the river in Pennington and Fall River Counties so is likely present in Custer County.

Next meeting:

- Motion by O'Connell, second by Rittberger to schedule the next meeting for Tuesday January 11, 2022 at 1:00 PM, motion carried.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Johnston, seconded by O'Connell to adjourn meeting at 2:10 PM; motion carried.