



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2022

The May 12, 2022 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse, at 9:00 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Greg Neugebauer, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster (call in), and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted. For the purpose of continuity, these minutes are not necessarily in chronological order.

The meeting minutes from April 14, 2022 and today's agenda were approved after a motion by Oonagh and a second by Greg, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representatives:
 - A NRCS representative was unable to attend but Samantha provided a monthly report. Mike reviewed the report with the Board, see attached.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$16,666.38,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$37,105.13.
- Bills to approve:
 - Dakota Greens – \$386.62
 - Arbor Day supplies:
 - Family Dollar – \$7.46
 - Lynn's Dakotamart – \$6.79
- Other:
 - Insurance costs (\$608.33) paid out of funds set aside by the County.
- Motion by Paul, second by Oonagh to approve financial report, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- SD Erosion Control Laws. A recorded video presentation summarizing these laws was sent to the Board for review.
- Rangeland and Soil Days will be held in Murdo, June 14-15. Board suggested speaking with 4-H about possibly supporting a student scholarship to attend the event in the future. The Board will consider costs during 2023 budget planning.
- West River Grazing School will be held in Wall/Quinn area, June 21-23.

Old Business:

- Custer County Fair and outreach supplies:
 - Board discussed whether to have a booth at the County Fair this summer (August 11-14). The booth would not have to be attended all days. Paul volunteered for one day and Oonagh said that she could help too. Paul suggested having a drawing for a free tree or gift certificate for a tree.
 - Booth could have a focused interest (e.g., soil health, CIS projects) as opposed to a bunch of pamphlets/brochures.
 - Motion by Paul, second by Oonagh to set up booth under the grand stands, motion carried. Greg will bring booth rental information to the next meeting.

New Business:

- NRCS Unfunded Cooperative Agreement (UCA):
 - A copy of the UCA was provided to the Board prior to today's meeting. The Board gave approval of the UCA and for the Board Chair to sign the agreement through a motion by Greg and a second by Oonagh, motion carried.
- CIS Proposal for irrigation improvement project – producer outreach:
 - The Board discussed how to best contact producers and gauge their interests and needs in cost-share funds if the grant is awarded. Mike will not have time to organize a landowner meeting prior to the grant application deadline due to Weed and Pest obligations. Board discussed option of sending a letter to irrigation producers as an alternative to a meeting. Mike will work with Justin to get a list of producers to contact.
- National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) Riparian Workshop:
 - Dave, Oonagh, and Mike met with NWTf and NRCS to discuss NWTf's desire to host a riparian workshop for landowners and/or professionals. The workshop will likely occur in the fall on 1 or 2 days. Locations discussed included Custer County and the prairie regions north of the Black Hills. NWTf is trying to schedule a follow-up meeting within the next few weeks.

Other Business:

- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
 - Arbor Day activities:
 - Tree wrapping date – Seedlings were wrapped May 4. The Board was joined by CCCD scholarship recipients Jessica Woodward and Justin Doyle.
 - Custer Elementary School – Event occurred on May 9. Josh Larson, Community Forester with SD-DANR, RCF, provided a tree planting demonstration. One larger tree was planted and bare-root seedlings were given to first grade students and the student council.
 - Hermosa Elementary School – Event occurred on May 11. Two large trees were planted and bare-root seedlings were given to first grade students. Josh Larson also attended and provided a planting demonstration.

- Video project:
 - Project is tentatively planned for late summer or fall. Mike has not received the drone footage of the Wabash Springs fire, but is expecting to have it any day. Mike will share the footage with Blaine Brakke for his thoughts on inclusion in our thinning-focused video.
- BHNH Forest Plan Revision:
 - Mike reviewed recent meetings he attended in reference to the Forest Plan Revision. The County Commissioners named Mike as the county point of contact with the Forest Service during the revision process.
- RAC grant:
 - USFS is planning on writing a letter to area residents adjacent to the planned project area in the Custer Highlands. USFS is waiting to fill the vacant AFMO position that Nick previously held before mailing out the letters.
- Petitions for Supervisor elections:
 - A reminder was given about upcoming elections and that petitions are due in the Auditor's office by July 1.
- Newsletter:
 - A draft of the spring/summer newsletter was provided to the Board. The Board will provide any comments to Mike by next Tuesday.
- Meetings/Training:
 - Mike provided a review of upcoming meetings that he will be attending.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 9 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse

Critique:

- Dave commented on soil health in pastures and overgrazing concerns. Discussed the possibility of discouraging overgrazing by supplementing rancher income via converting to a dude ranch (i.e., visitors pay for the ranching experience). Has success in other states, but can be difficult to manage.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.



May 12, 2022

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018-2021: 8 Active Contracts
 - Includes CIS contracts
 - Planning for field season activities
 - Annual practice reminder letters were sent in February
- 2022
 - Obligation Deadline: 6/3/2022
 - CIS FY 2022 Deadlines

	Resilient Forest Landscapes (CIS 2020)	Jasper Fire (CIS 2021)	Rangeland Health (CIS 2021)
Outreach	12/1/2021	N/A	2/1/2022
Batching	3/1/2022	12/1/2021	4/1/2022
Ranking	5/1/2022	2/1/2022	7/1/2022
Obligation	7/1/2022	4/1/2022	8/1/2022

Forest CIS:

- Prescriptions on the high applications were completed. Myself and the Soil Conservationist in the office will be running through the ranking process on both the applications this Friday. Pre-Approvals are set for 6/1.

Rangeland Health:

- Currently working with applicants on their 1st consultation (what practices they would like to incorporate/resources concerns they are seeing)
 - Ranking deadline set for 7/1

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2018-2022: 12 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
 - Planning for field season activities
 - Annual practice reminder letters were sent in February
- 2022 Classic
 - Ranking Deadline: 3/18/2022
 - Received additional funding (5/3/2022), we were able to fund 1 application
 - Obligation Deadline for those just funded is June
- 2023 Renewal
 - Application Deadline: 4/15/2022
 - Letters went out to eligible participants

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Grassland CRP Signup 204: 4/4/2022 – 5/13/2022

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

- Finishing up designs on approved projects



Meetings/Trainings/Correspondence/Other

- COVID-19:
 - 75% staffing, starting phasing back process this spring (Hot Springs and Rapid City FO's do not have mask requirements right now
 - Cases/hospitalizations will continue to be monitored weekly to determine if any changes need to be made
- State Conservationist, Tony Sunseri (from California) has transitioned to SD
- District Conservationist: Joel Milos, Start Date: 6/6/2022; He has been working for WY NRCS; Acting District Conservationist here till 6/3/2022
- Hot Springs FO
 - Brad Humbracht is on detail with the Forest Service until June
 - Acting DC (Melissa Greenwalt) started in late March
- CIS Proposal Process changed: call for Pre-Proposals 3/4/2022, selection by 4/1/2022, full proposals due 7/1/2022
 - 1 of the requests for full approval is the Custer County Irrigation Project that the office will be working on

/S/

Samantha Ziph

Acting District Conservationist