



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2022

The July 14, 2022 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse, at 9:03 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Tamarah Caster, Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Greg Neugebauer, Oonagh Wood, Mike Linde, Julie Wheeler (call-in), Patricia Weyrich, Sam (SD DANR intern), Adam (SD DANR intern), 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 June 9, 2022 and today's agenda were approved after a motion by Greg and a second by Oonagh, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representatives: Joel Milos was unable to attend, but provided a report to Mike which he reviewed with the Board – Report attached
- County Commission: Mike Linde
 - Nothing to report. Dave asked about the frequency the District should report to the Commission. Mike suggested providing a brief update once per year or whenever there is something good to report. His preference was to avoid updating the Commission during budget planning.
- Buffalo Gap National Grassland: Julie Wheeler
 - The Grassland is moving into a drier period. There were a few recent fires in Fall River County, but nothing so far in Custer County.
 - USFS is filling many vacant positions. The prescribed burning program has been paused until at least August due to other fires and folks being pulled to fight fires in other states.
- SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources: Patricia Weyrich
 - Thinning grant updates:
 - We should expect a new applicant for the thinning grant. The landowner would like to thin 70 acres, but is aware that the Board may not fund acreages of that size.
 - The Schnurr and Svenkeson projects should be complete within a month.
 - Staffing: Greg Josten retired as the State Forester. Marcus Warnke, Forester in the Rapid City office, was hired in June as his replacement. The Service Forester position in Hot Springs is still open. It has been difficult to fill due to stiff competition and lack of qualified applicants.
 - Dakota's Society of American Foresters 2022 Fall Conference:

- Forest workshop will be held October 12-13 in Custer. Informational flyer will be sent out soon.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$16,340.51,
 - Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$37,105.76.
- Bills to approve:
 - Credit card bill for Vector Design Print and Tech for newsletter and postage – \$377.49
 - Hills Area dues – \$65.00
 - Southern Hills Publishing for public notice of Supervisor vacancy – \$18.77
 - Scholarships: \$500 to Western Dakota Technical College and \$500 to Eastern Wyoming College
- Motion by Paul, second by Tamarah to approve financial report, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Simon Contractors mining application –
 - A copy of their mining application for a limestone quarry four miles southwest of Pringle was received. CCCD previously commented when Simon Contractors published their notice of intent to mine.
- Pete Lien and Sons, Inc. temporary cessation of mining –
 - Notification that they are temporarily halting mining at their limestone quarry nine miles southwest of Pringle.
- National Conservation Foundation's (NCF) –
 - A copy of their 2021 Annual Report was received and forwarded to the Board.
- SDACD award nominations –
 - A request for nominations was received from Angela. Nominations are due by August 23. Board will discuss potential nominations via email.

Old Business:

- Custer County Fair (August 11-14):
 - Joel Milos (via email) is planning on attending on Friday, Aug. 12. He will bring a large map highlighting our current and future project areas and bullet points on the priorities in those areas. He will share a draft to the Board for comment. He will also try to bring the tabletop rainfall simulator.
 - The Board asked Mike to have Joel work with Greg about booth setup. Others that will help to staff the booth include Oonagh on Friday afternoon (8/12) and Dave on Saturday (8/13). Greg will email the group about the recommended hours to operate the booth, possibly 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Mike will put together a schedule and send to the group. Julie will see if anyone from USFS can help.
 - Oonagh will speak with Dakota Greens about the gift certificate.
- Supervisor elections:

- Both Greg and Tamarah filed their petitions with the County Auditor's office. No other petitions were received; therefore, Greg and Tamarah will retain their supervisor positions. The new terms will begin January 1, 2023 and will last four years.
- Black Hills NF Forest Plan Revision:
 - Baldwin, Linde, and Rob McWhorter met with USFS personnel on July 5 to review the draft MOU between USFS and Custer County. The MOU will establish the county as a cooperating agency during the Black Hills NF Forest Plan Revision process. Mike has also attended county-led meetings to discuss the draft assessments.
 - Public comment period for the draft assessments is open until August 1.
 - Paul led a discussion on UTV use on the forest and the issues that it has caused. The Board discussed what its response would be.
 - Paul will draft comments on UTV use on the forest and email to Mike.
 - Question arose on whether comments should come from the Conservation District directly or through the County Commission. Linde recommended that any comments from the District should be made independent of the Commission.
- Black Hills NF RAC Grant:
 - Chris Bennett, USFS, is the new District AFMO and will be in charge of the project. He sent an update to Mike, which he shared with the Board. Implementation is expected on or after October 1. A letter to bordering landowners will be coming out within the next month or so to notify them of the project. The completion goal of the first phase of the project is expected by April 1. Other phases, not funded by our RAC grant, will include similar treatments in the project area over the next several years.
- CIS Proposal for irrigation improvement project:
 - The full CIS proposal was submitted to NRCS on July 1. Mike will notify the Board when there is an update on the proposal status.
- National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Riparian Workshop:
 - Mike participated in a virtual meeting on June 21 to discuss the riparian workshop. The workshop is still scheduled for October 13 and 14 in Rapid City at the GF&P Outdoor Campus West. The workshop will be a mix of agency talks (including our District) and field trips. Field trips will focus on riparian restoration in prairie/rangeland on one day and wooded areas in the Hills on the other day.

New Business:

- Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership proposal:
 - Update from Joel Milos via email: Justin Boerboom is working on setting up a meeting with USFS, NRCS, CCCD, and SD-DANR to discuss a potential

proposal. Patricia Weyrich had requested that SD-DANR be included in any potential project. Proposal due date is August 5.

- CCCD Thinning Grant update:
 - The Dickens project is complete. Patricia certified the work and paperwork was sent to the landowner for signature. Mike will seek reimbursement from the State once Dickens has signed the final documentation.
 - Additional thinning updates provided in Patricia's report above.

Other Business:

- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
 - Meetings/Training:
 - Mike attended county-led meetings to discuss the USFS draft assessments for the BHNF Forest Plan Revision.
 - Mike, Paul, and Oonagh, attended the Sedimentation and Erosion Control Training in Rapid City on June 14. Mike and Paul also attended the Hills Area meeting that day. SDACD and various partners provided updates during the meeting.
 - Mike attended the Hills / Northwest Areas employee meeting in Rapid City on June 22.
 - Notice that a Legislative meeting will be held on September 14 from 2:00-4:00 PM in Rapid City. We are encouraged to invite local politicians to attend and speak about their views.
 - The Hills Area will host a booth at the Central States Fair in Rapid City from August 19-27. They are looking for volunteers to staff the booth.

Next meeting: No meeting in August. Next will be Thursday, September 8 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse

Critique:

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:22 AM.



July 14th, 2022

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018-2021: 6 Active Contracts (Including CIS)
 - 2 High Tunnel Contracts Completed (1 in Custer, 1 in Pennington)
- 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:

- 2 Preapproved Applications. Close to signing contracts and obligating funds.

Rangeland Health:

- Prioritization tool set one applicant as high priority between Rapid City and Hot Springs FO's.
 - RC Applicant pursuing cross fences, stockwater development, fencing off portions of creek, stream crossing, fabricated livestock shelters, and prescribed grazing.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2018-2022: 12 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
 - 4 Contracts are in final year – no renewals.
- 2022 Classic
 - Ranking Deadline: 3/18/2022
 - Received additional funding (5/3/2022), working on funding 1 application.

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 & completing initial field visits for new applicants.

Meetings/Trainings/Correspondence/Other

- USDA Seeks Proposals for Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership
 - Proposals from partners are due by August 5th, 2022 for FY23.
 - Justin Boerboom coordinating planning meeting between NRCS, USFS, and CCCD.
 - SD-DANR Forestry has requested to be involved in Joint Chief's planning.
- June 28th-30th, Joel Milos and Laura Muse attended SD Natural Resource Professionals Range Camp in Belle Fourche – focused on low tech/cost riparian restoration practices and assessment.

/S/

Joel Milos

District Conservationist