



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – November 17, 2022

The November 17, 2022 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Basement Conference Room at the Custer County Courthouse, at 9:03 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Greg Neugebauer, Stuart Adrian, Joel Milos, Faryn Klebe, Patricia Weyrich (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.

Today's agenda was approved after a motion by Paul and a second by Tamarah, motion carried.

The meeting minutes from October 6, 2022 were approved after a motion by Paul and a second by Greg, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representatives: Joel Milos – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - In reference to the Inflation Reduction Act and NRCS funding, there are \$23.75 million in EQIP funds tentatively budgeted for South Dakota in FY2023. Approximately \$12 million of that total is reserved for CIS projects.
 - In reference to Oonagh's email about the Red Canyon Wildlife Habitat Project, Joel will speak to Brad Humbracht about details and if he is working on a new wildlife CIS project. Joel will provide an update during the December board meeting.
- NWTF Forester: Faryn Klebe –
 - Shared her quarterly report in October (see attached).
 - Reviewed the NWTF Riparian Workshop hosted in October. Workshop was viewed as a success.
- Buffalo Gap National Grassland: Julie Wheeler (provided an email update prior to today's meeting) –
 - Currently working on filling a customer service representative position and a wildlife biologist position. The hiring effort in Region 2, which includes the Black Hills and the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands has improved and is ongoing.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$15,163.70,

- Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$35,645.64.
- Bills to pay and/or approve:
 - NACD dues – request by NACD was \$775.00, Board previously agreed to pay \$350.00. Will pay \$350.00.
 - Fall River Conservation District – \$100 for 50 Black Hills spruce trees
 - Paid credit card (\$430.55) from previously approved expenses (hotel at convention, poster, DSAF registration)
- A motion by Greg to approve financial report as presented, seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Request by SDACD for proposals for tree research funds:
 - \$8,000 available for tree research. Proposals due November 30.
- Bipartisan Bill introduced to Improve Livestock Disaster Assistance:
 - Senators Thune (SD) & Luján (NM) introduced a bill to improve and expedite aid to producers affected by extreme weather events.
 - Paul will draft a letter to Thune's office that expresses the District's support of this bill. Mike will add a letterhead to Paul's draft and will send it to Thune's office.
- Notices for 2023 speech, poster, and creative writing contests
 - Information on contests included in upcoming CCCD newsletter and on webpage.
- Effort to increase funding to SD Conservation Grants Fund:
 - SDACD is seeking restoration of \$700,000 of unclaimed off highway use gas tax refunds to the conservation grants fund.
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) grant announcement for the 2023 Friends of NACD District Grants Program:
 - Call for proposals, will fund 8 grants up to \$2,500 each to conduct new activities or test novel approaches to their operations.
- Notice of Intent – continued mining at Baker Ranch DBA Badlands Sand & Gravel, Inc:
 - Mine located 2 miles up Ghost Canyon Rd from Hwy 36. Five year extension to anticipated completion date, new date is 4/15/2028.
 - Mike will send follow up letter to the company with comments.
- SciencEx Forests webinar series by USFS – Nov. 14-18, 12:00-1:00 PM MST each day.
- Preparing Trees for Winter webinar by Dr. Ball – Nov. 16, 12:00-1:00 PM MST.
- NRCS announces EQIP sign-up, Nov. 4 – Dec. 9:
 - General EQIP sign-up. Topic discussed by Joel during his report.
- US Census – Survey of Local Government Finances:
 - FY2021 finances report, due in December. Mike will complete.
- Outreach request to 2023 Legislators:
 - SDACD request to write to legislators in district. Board agreed to Angela's request. Mike will send a letter to each legislator in the district.
- EnCore Energy flyer on Dewey-Burdock project – proposed uranium mining project.

Old Business:

- Review of Dakotas Society of American Foresters (DSAF) conference:
 - Oonagh and her ranch manager, Brad Grill, spoke on multiagency forest stewardship at the Wood Ranch.
 - Dave and Mike spoke during the field trip on the second day of the conference. They spoke on fire history, partner collaborations, and CCCD cost-share grants.
 - Dave was honored by the Dakotas Society of American Foresters and the National Society of American Foresters with the 2022 Fellow Award. The Fellow Award is a prestigious award that recognizes a Society of American Foresters member for long-standing service to forestry at the local, state, and national levels.
- Review of NWTF Riparian Workshop:
 - Review of workshop provided by Faryn during her report. Mike gave a presentation at the workshop and spoke about South Dakota Conservation Districts and the various projects that Custer CCD is involved with.

New Business:

- Tree order for 2023 Arbor Day:
 - Mike has ordered 50 Black Hills spruce, but Board needs to determine the species and quantity of the other 50 trees needed for Arbor Day celebration.
 - Board prefers hardwood species and asked Mike to choose the species and place the order.
- 2023 budget planning:
 - Mike asked the Board to think about the scholarship amount for 2023.
 - Mike will schedule a budget planning meeting with Oonagh and then share a draft budget to the Board.
- Fall/Winter Newsletter:
 - A draft of the newsletter was shared with the Board prior to today's meeting. Mike asked for a preference for publishing newsletter – using a print shop or printing in-house. Board preferred that Mike use a local print shop.
- Landowner meeting in 2023:
 - Board agreed that we should host a landowner workshop in 2023. Hermosa was discussed as a possible meeting location. No specific details were decided. Board will table discussion for today and will discuss topic ideas and meeting location at the December board meeting.

Other Business:

- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
 - Thinning grants:
 - Conservation Commission awarded our fall grant application for cost-share funding to support resilient forest projects. Funding total is \$90,000. Some of the funding will come from the Resilient Forest fund (\$15,000) and the rest will come from the Conservation Grant Fund (\$75,000).

Award amount was less than requested, so Mike will need to prepare an adjusted budget spreadsheet and send it to SD DANR.

- Forest Plan Revision related meetings
 - The counties are moving forward with hiring a private consultant who will assist with various tasks during the process. Funding provided by four of the five counties, Custer county did not agree to provide funds.
 - Final assessments are expected to be released to the public in Jan/Feb. Counties had asked for ability to provide a second round of comments. At this time, it does not appear that will occur.
 - The final MOU between Custer County and USFS should be signed at the next Commission meeting.
- Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership meeting – 10/20
 - Meeting included representatives from local, state, and federal agencies. Attendees provided a review of the past spray season and discussed other issues such as UTVs and the first documented occurrence of *Ventenata dubia* in South Dakota.
- Black Hills Resilient Forest Partnership meeting – 11/7
 - Program updates were provided by participants.
 - SD Wildland Fire is considering making modifications to its pile burning snow requirements. Many comments were provided by attendees.
 - Other topics included LiDar and forest mapping, Nieman rail project, and the USFS Forest Plan.
- Virtual meeting with Lori Brown, TNC, to discuss the CIS proposal process
- Discussed modified work schedule. Board approved of schedule.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 8 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner’s Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse.

Critique:

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:06 AM.



November 17th, 2022

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018-2021: 6 Active Contracts
- 2022:
 - Forestry CIS: Funded two contracts for \$17,089 treating 25.1 acres total.
 - Range/Riparian CIS: Funded one contract for \$123,457 treating 3,395 acres.
- **2023: Application Batching Deadline for General EQIP is December 9th, 2022** (applications for general funding such as high tunnels, sage grouse initiative, organic production, Beginning Farmer/Ranch, etc – CIS program dates will be established separately).

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2018-2022: 13 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
 - 4 Contracts are in final year – no renewals.
 - Working towards certifying and paying for enhancements/practices for FY22.
- **FY23 CSP-GCI: Deadline to apply was October 14th, 2022 – none received through Rapid City Field Office.**
- **2023: Application Batching Deadline for CSP is December 9th, 2022**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

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

Meetings/Trainings/Correspondence/Other

- **Inflation Reduction Act: Tentative funding estimates for SD NRCS:**

	2023	2024	2025	2026
EQIP	\$23.75 million	\$61.25 million	\$92.5 million	\$103.75 million
CSP	\$18.05 million	\$24.3 million	\$36.8 million	\$49.3 million

- **November 4th – NRCS attended RCAS' Career Fair (1,100 8th graders attended)**
- **November 16th in Sturgis - NRCS Urban Conservationist met with a group of Hill's Area specialty/urban ag producer's to discuss assistance opportunities**
- **November 18-19th in Sturgis – Joel to attend SD Local Food's Conference**

/S/

Joel Milos
District Conservationist

**NWTF South Dakota Cooperative Forester
Quarterly Report (July-September 2022)
Prepared by: Faryn Klebe**

Landowner Engagement:

Since July four landowners have received technical assistance on forest health and partner programs. I worked with one landowner to get them signed up as a member of the South Dakota Family Forest Association. This translates to roughly 240 acres influenced the last three months.

Deliverables:

One forest stewardship plan and one tree farm inspection for the South Dakota Family Forests Association have been completed. One new member of the American Tree Farm System has been recruited. Three site visits were conducted to find a suitable place for the field portion of the riparian restoration workshop. I completed all the Mineral safety training.

Outreach:

A lot of time these past few months has been spent planning the Riparian Restoration workshop in October. The workshop will be geared towards landowners with one day focused on grasslands and another on forested riparian areas. I attended the South Dakota NWTF State Board meeting. I participated in a video that the South Dakota Conservation Districts were putting together that focuses on why forest management is important in the Black Hills. I spoke about the importance of managing forests for fire and the work I do in the Hills. I informed them about the NWTF, our mission, and the critical role hunters play in conservation. It was in collaboration with NRCS and some landowners as well. The video should be out around December.

Workshops & Trainings

- Abiotic Threats to South Dakota Trees Webinar
- Carbon Markets Webinar
- NRCS
 - Basic Survey & Design Field Training
 - Basic Survey & Design Virtual Training
 - Conservation Planner Training
 - Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series

770 Augusta Road

Edgefield, SC 29824

1.800.THE.NWTF (843.6983)

www.nwtf.org