

Custer County Weed and Pest Board Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2022

The March 8, 2022 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, Bob Smith, Klint Rittberger, Tom Patterson (call in), Marci O'Connell (call in), Nvard Mnatsakanyan (call in), and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes/Agenda:

- The meeting minutes from the January 11 meeting were approved with a motion from Patterson and a second by Johnston.
- Today's agenda was approved with a motion by Johnston and a second by Patterson.

Old Business:

- 2022 State Weed and Pest Conference:
 - Baldwin thanked O'Connell for attending the conference and also reviewed some of the topics covered at the conference.
 - Our request for a 5-year extension of Yellow toadflax as a locally noxious weed in Custer County was approved. The status is valid through December 31, 2026.
 - The Department should expect to receive a new grant from the State for approximately \$4,000.
 - Herbicide costs increased significantly across the country in 2021 and continue into 2022. Supply issues remain an issue for certain chemicals. However, Baldwin stated that we should have enough chemical on hand to get through the upcoming spray season.
- Previous prairie dog complaints and compliance updates:
 - Treatment on the Sires and Melius properties was completed last week by a commercial applicator.
 - Baldwin has been in communication with Lyons, an adjoining landowner, about getting his prairie dogs treated as well. Lyons indicated that he would have them treated.
 - The Kocharyan and Mnatsakanyan property has not been treated. Both landowners were invited to today's meeting to discuss the issue. Mnatsakanyan joined the meeting remotely. Mnatsakanyan and the Board discussed the prairie dog issue on her property.
 - A motion was made by Patterson to offer a 60-day extension for treatment to occur and for the landowners to report back to the Board. Motion was seconded by Johnston. The Board would like to see a reduction in population before the fall. Mnatsakanyan was asked to let the Board know

if she has difficulty getting the area treated within the time allotted. Mnatsakanyan agreed to these terms.

New Business:

- Auxiliary board member position:
 - Bob Smith was invited to today's meeting for consideration for the vacant Board position. Smith has a commercial applicators license and operates his own business with services including weed spraying. Therefore the Board indicated that if Smith was offered and accepted the position, he would have to recuse himself from any decisions that had the potential of benefiting him and/or his business, financial or otherwise. Smith agreed to these terms.
 - Motion was made by Johnston, seconded by Patterson, to approve Smith as auxiliary board member.
- US Forest Service (USFS) spray agreements for 2022:
 - USFS offered a \$3,000 participating agreement to the Weed & Pest Department for noxious weed control on the Black Hills National Forest adjacent to private property. The agreement is identical to the 2021 agreement which enabled the Weed and Pest Department to address landowner complaints about weeds on USFS property spreading only their land. Additionally, USFS, Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands offered a similar agreement of \$3,000 for noxious weed treatments on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland, Fall River District. Funding would be used for addressing landowner complaints about noxious weeds on the National Grassland.
 - A motion was made by Johnston, seconded by O'Connell to approve the USFS agreements.
- ATV purchase:
 - Baldwin informed the Board on the status of purchasing an ATV for the department. The county commissioners provided a one-time supplement of funds towards this purchase. Baldwin has received three price quotes, but due to supply issues, it is unknown when a four-wheeler might become available.

Other Business:

- Black Hills National Forest – Forest Plan revision:
 - USFS has initiated a revision of the Black Hills NF Forest Plan. Baldwin was asked to assist the County Commissioners to stay informed during the revision process. The goal is to ensure that Custer County has a representative during USFS meetings with cooperating agencies so that local concerns are considered.
- Grant reimbursement request to State:
 - Baldwin submitted the reimbursement request to the SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources for the \$4,000 we were awarded in 2021. Payment is expected soon.
- Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership meeting:
 - Baldwin plans on attending this meeting on March 31 in Rapid City. This group includes other county weed and pest supervisors and federal/state agencies with jurisdiction in the Black Hills.

- Baldwin updated the department's "Pesticide Handling and Discharge Response Plan". The last update was in 2012. A copy of the plan was given to Steve Esser, Custer County Emergency Management.
- One no-spray request has been received since the revised document was approved by the Board. Baldwin still needs to contact landowners with old agreements to determine if they want to renew those agreements or if the "no herbicide" signs can be pulled.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 1:00 PM.

Adjournment:

- Motion by O'Connell, seconded by Johnston to adjourn meeting at 2:00 PM; motion carried.