

# **Custer County Weed and Pest Board**

## **Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2022**

The July 12, 2022 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:03 PM by Rittberger.

In attendance were Klinton Rittberger, Marci O'Connell, Tom Patterson, June Johnston, Jim Lintz, Bob Smith (call-in), Shaye Floden, Nvard Mnatsakanyan (call-in), and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

### **Approve Minutes/Agenda:**

- Today's agenda and the meeting minutes from the May 10 meeting were approved with a motion from O'Connell and a second by Johnston.

### **Old Business:**

- Enforcement discussion for property located off of Lower Spring Creek Road (Legal description = E ½ SW ¼ SW ¼ & W ½ SE ¼ SW ¼ Section 35, Township 2S, Range 10E, B.H.M., Custer County, SD).
  - Adjacent landowner, Shaye Floden, spoke about ongoing issues with controlling prairie dogs that are encroaching onto her property from the neighbors. Nvard Mnatsakanyan, co-owner of property with prairie dogs adjacent to Floden, spoke about her attempt to hire a contractor, but the price was too high. She also stated that she requested assistance from the State (SD GF&P), but did not get a response.
  - Board discussed whether to begin enforcement now or give an additional two weeks for landowners to act. Motion was made by Johnston that the owners of the property under discussion must implement prairie dog control measures within two weeks from today; otherwise, the Board will go forward with enforcement. Motion was seconded by Lintz, motion carried. Nvard was asked to contact the contractor by tomorrow to get on their schedule, and then contact Baldwin to let him know that the work has been scheduled.

### **New Business:**

- Spraying progress update from Baldwin:
  - County right of ways:
    - All county roads have been spot sprayed at least once. Some of the roads sprayed early in the season have been covered a second time.
  - Sprayers:
    - One of the seasonal weed sprayers has not been able to work since the last week of June. His personal vehicle was damaged and he is not been able to drive. He suggested looking for a replacement. A hiring notice has been

- placed on the County webpage. Spraying progress will be affected until/if a replacement can be found.
- US Forest Service contracts:
  - Work has not yet begun on USFS property. The loss of a second seasonal sprayer has delayed this work; however, we expect to begin soon.
- Leafy spurge:
  - Spurge is a problem within the Hills, particularly around Custer and properties to the west (along Pleasant Valley, Pass Creek). Baldwin is working with the City to have spurge sprayed within the city limits. Outside of Custer, Baldwin is contacting landowners about spraying their weeds.
- Chemical cost-share grant status:
  - To date, landowners have submitted receipts totaling \$4,528.77 for chemical purchases. At 50% costs-share, payout would be \$2,264.39.
- No-spray agreements updates:
  - There was one new signup since the last Board meeting. There are now 5 total landowners with agreements. All old signs without a new agreement have been removed.
- New prairie dog complaints:
  - A written complaint was filed with SD Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources concerning prairie dogs encroaching from a property east of SD Hwy 79 between Fairburn and Buffalo Gap (Legal description: W ½ E ½ Section 9, Township 5S, Range 7E, B.H.M., Custer County, SD). A copy of the complaint was provided to Baldwin. The landowner that filed the complaint was contacted by Baldwin and a site visit was performed. Baldwin confirmed that prairie dogs are encroaching onto the aforementioned property. A voluntary compliance letter was sent, via certified mail, to the landowner with the source prairie dogs. The letter was not accepted by the recipient and was returned to the Weed & Pest office. Baldwin has been unable to reach them by phone. The Board suggested Baldwin ask the Sheriff's office to deliver the letter.
  - A second written complaint was filed with SD Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources concerning prairie dogs encroaching from a property adjacent to Mineral Dr just east of Custer (Legal description: Tract Rhoades of Harbach Placer, Sections 19/30, Township 3S, Range 5E, B.H.M., Custer County, SD). A copy of the complaint was sent to Baldwin. Baldwin confirmed that the prairie dogs have encroached onto the neighboring property. The State contacted the landowner of the source prairie dogs and discussed the issue. The landowner stated he was not aware that a complaint was filed against him, but would check his mail for a copy of the complaint. The landowner was supposed to get back to the State. Baldwin will follow up on this.

### **Other Business:**

- Black Hills NF – Forest Plan Revision:
  - Public comment period on the draft Assessments is open until August 1. One assessment focuses on invasive species and is titled “Insects, Disease, and



Invasive Species”. Baldwin encouraged Board members to review and comment on the assessment.

- 2023 Budget:
  - All departments will be working on their 2023 budgets in the coming weeks. Weed and Pest will need to plan for higher costs associated with fuel and chemicals; however, budget cuts may be necessary. Funding for the chemical cost-share program may be reduced.
- ATV purchase:
  - Baldwin let the Board know that the ATV on back order has finally arrived.
- Contaminated hay:
  - Smith informed the Board that he was aware of two property owners haying fields contaminated with leafy spurge and then moving the hay offsite. The Board asked Baldwin to look into options available to the Board. Baldwin will contact SD DANR for assistance and will update the Board.

**Adjournment:**

- Motion by Lintz, seconded by O’Connell to set next meeting for September 13, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM.

**Next meeting:**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 1:00 PM.