



Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2023

The April 13, 2023 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Custer County Courthouse, at 9:01 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Oonagh Wood, Greg Neugebauer, Stuart Adrian, Joel Milos, Patricia Weyrich, Gavyn Priest, and Mike Baldwin.

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

Motion to approve today's agenda and the meeting minutes from March 9, 2023 was made by Paul, seconded by Oonagh, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS Representatives: Joel Milos – Report attached
 - Additional notes:
 - CIS applications: none of the Forest CIS applications received in the Rapid City office were within the Elk Mountain priority area. Number of applications received in Hot Springs office is not yet known.
- SD DANR RCF: Patricia Weyrich –
 - Jack is working on a forest prescription for a current thinning grant applicant.
 - Later today, Patricia and Gavin plan to visit with another landowner who applied for the thinning grant.
 - SB-21 funded position is open to applicants.
 - Forester position in Hot Springs should be occupied in late May or early June.
 - Patricia is working on Forest Stewardship Plans. Currently 17 landowners on the waiting list in the southern Black Hills.
 - "Mapping in Forestry" workshop scheduled for April 5 was postponed due to weather. New date is April 21, 9:00-12:00, at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City.
 - "Whole Tree Utilization" workshop planned for April 10 was also postponed. Will now occur on April 25, 1:00-4:00, in the Pringle area. Address is on the flyer.
 - On May 10, 12:00-1:00, DANR will host a virtual workshop on landowner project assistance funding for forestry projects.
 - Hope to have a riparian buffer workshop in the future.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
 - Main Checking = \$17,923.69,

- Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
 - Savings = \$35,704.67 (\$12.13 interest earned).
- Bills to pay and/or approve:
 - Quicken annual license - \$62.57
- Financial review: meeting with Laurie Arthur scheduled on April 25.
- A motion by Oonagh to approve financial report as presented, seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Information packet on the 2023 SD Wildlife Federation Youth Conservation Camp, June 4-10 at Camp Bob Marshall
- Flyer for the Women on the Range workshop hosted by SDSU, June 8-9 in Belle Fourche
- Whole Tree Utilization Workshop near Pringle was delayed to April 25
- Thank you letter from SDSU for \$100 contribution to AgDay
- Information packet from Pheasants & Quail Forever habitat seed program

Old Business:

New Business:

- Scholarship applications for review:
 - Discussion was postponed until the end of today's meeting.
 - At end of the meeting, the topic was reintroduced. Seven applications were received and the Board was impressed with the applicants. After review of the submissions and discussion, a motion was made by Tamarah, seconded by Paul, to award the two \$1,000 scholarships to Weston Woodward and Remington Miklos. A notification letter will be sent to the winners and a thank you letter will be sent to the students not selected.
- SDACD Video Project – Custer CCD thinning program:
 - Board felt the video was well done. Some discussion was had on whether to modify the title and include the term “resilient forest” or some variation of that. Mike's concern was whether the term was forester jargon and might not be understood by the layperson. Mike will talk to Blaine and/or Caitie with SDACD about their thoughts on the title.
 - Mike will also explore the possibility of an alternate video (i.e., secondary cut) for promotional items. Other organizations might have funding to support producing second video, if necessary. Potential organizations to contact include National Wild Turkey Federation, SD Family Forests Association, Dakotas Society of American Foresters, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.
- Planning Arbor Day activities:
 - This year, Arbor Day is April 28. For our purposes, Board agreed to celebrate Arbor Day on May 8, the same day as the City of Custer. Board will meet the morning of May 8 to wrap tree seedlings. Mike will coordinate with Facilities Management for the Custer and Hermosa Elementary Schools on scheduling tree

seedling give away to 1st grade students and the planting of two larger trees. Dave will coordinated with the school principal and City.

- Soil health workshop:
 - Joint workshop with Pennington CD to be held on June 16 at the Walt Taylor building in Rapid City. A flyer is in development. Draft agenda was shared by Joel during his report.
 - Lunch option was discussed – catered or sandwiches. Pennington prefers catered. Board agreed that would likely have a better turnout if the lunch was of higher quality. Lindsay, Pennington CD, is working on getting sponsors to help pay for the meal. She already has one commitment and is asking another for support. Mike asked the Board for sponsorship suggestions, but no ideas were shared.
- Conservation thinning grants:
 - 2021-23 grant update:
 - Thinning grant extension request – the April meeting of the Conservation Commission was delayed to April 27 due to weather. Mike will call-in to the meeting to speak on the request. A formal extension request was submitted in March.
 - Adrian – 11.7 acres are complete and certified by DANR. The 0.5 ac hardwood enhancement is expected to be complete in the next few weeks.
 - Piper – New site visit scheduled by DANR for next week.
 - Clarke will not finish by June. Reyelts will probably not finish either.
 - 2022-24 grant landowner applications:
 - Signed liability statements were received from Reyelts and Wood, have not received Webster's.
 - Landowner applications for consideration:
 - Board reviewed application, prescription, and map for Robert Rosenquist property. He is asking for cost-share funding on 14.6 acres. If approved, total estimated acreage obligated for this grant would be 131.8 ac, and estimated acreage available to other applicants would be 144 ac.
 - Motion made by Oonagh to approve applications as presented, second by Tamarah, motion carried.
 - Other applications received:
 - Three other applications received, but are awaiting review by a DANR Forester. They are in the cue and hope to be ready for the Board to review at the May meeting.
 - Forest Health grant:
 - As discussed at previous meeting, a requirement for this grant is an active registration in SAM.gov. None of the Hills Area Districts have a SAM account; therefore, the application deadline was extended to July 1 to give the Districts time to complete the process. The requirement of an active registration was also modified. Now, the District only needs a Unique Entity ID (UEI) in SAM.gov. We now have a UEI, but am still working on obtaining an active registration.

- The grant application was submitted on April 5.
- RAC grant update:
 - A status update was provided to Mike by Todd Hoover on March 15.
 - Crew has been working off and on this winter. Estimated to be about 80-90% of cutting complete by April 1. Will cease work at that time due to Ips beetle concerns. Piling will continue after the 1st. Plan to finish work next fall or winter.

Other Business:

- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
 - Newsletter:
 - Mike began working on the spring/summer newsletter and asked the Board for suggestions for topics to include.
 - Student Contests:
 - One entry received from Elk Mountain School for the Arbor Day creative writing contest.
 - No entries received for poster and speech contests.
 - Forest Plan Revision:
 - Meeting held on March 22 in Rapid City.
 - SB-21 update – A portion of the Bill set aside \$500K as cost-share for Black Hills counties. It may be possible for County staff to apply hours spent on the Forest Plan towards the cost-share.
 - Final Assessments to be released in May
 - USFS Region 2 is funding a new LiDAR flight to aid in timber analyses.
 - Bryan Karchut is currently serving as acting Forest Supervisor until June. No word on what will happen after.
 - BHNF – Stewardship Agreements for Partners training. Mike signed up for the training as a potential benefit to the District. Date of training TBD.
 - Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership (BHIPP) meeting:
 - Mike attended meeting on March 23 in Rapid City. There was a significant discussion on Ventenata.
 - Invasive Grasses Public Meeting:
 - Mike plans on attending meeting in Belle Fourche, 12:30-3:30, April 27. Focus of meeting will be on Ventenata, but will also cover Medusahead and Cheatgrass.
 - Pine looper update:
 - Per the Board's request, Mike contacted Dr. Ball with SDSU about if he still plans on sampling for pine looper adults this summer. He confirmed that they would set up traps in May. He also stated they did do a bud check on the trees and they seem to have tolerated the defoliation.
 - NWTF:
 - Faryn is no longer working for NWTF. Their intent is to continue this position and are assessing funding.

- Hills Area meeting:
 - Scheduled for June 13, 2:00 PM at Outdoor Campus in Rapid City.
- Hills Area Employee meeting:
 - Will be same day as Hills Area meeting (6/13), but held at 10:30, at Outdoor Campus in Rapid City.
- SDACDE Leadership Conference grants available:
 - Each district will receive \$280 for attendance and each registrant will receive mileage reimbursement for 1/3 of their mileage to and from Oacoma.

Next meeting: Thursday, May 11 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner’s Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse.

Critique:

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:04 AM.



April 13th, 2023

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2019-2022: 10 Active Contracts
- **2023:**
 - General EQIP: Ranking deadline was March 3rd.
 - EQIP-CIS (Forestry & Rangeland/Riparian):
 - Batching deadline for applications: March 10th
 - **3 applications for Rangeland/Riparian CIS (out of R.C.)**
 - **9 applications for Forestry CIS (out of R.C.)**
 - **Working with Hot Springs FO on prioritizing/ranking**
 - EQIP-IRA:
 - **Batching deadline for applications: March 17th**

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2019-2022: 9 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
- **2023:** Classic CSP, Eligibility/Ranking Deadline – March 17th.
 - **CSP-IRA:**
 - **Batching deadline for applications: March 31st**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

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

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Outreach / Other

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA):
 - May be less \$ for 2023 than anticipated.
 - IRA funds cannot be combined with other EQIP/CSP funds. All IRA funded activities must be a climate smart practice or supporting a climate smart practice.
- **No call for new requests for CIS projects in FY23**
- **April 22nd: Earth Day Expo @ WDTA. Informational table and inflatable soil health tunnel.**
- **April 27th: Invasive Annual Grasses Public Meeting in Belle Fourche. Hosted by BLM.**
- **April 29th: Assisting with Native Plant ID field day with Oglala Lakota College and SDSU.**
- **June 16th: Custer/Pennington Soil Health Meeting (tentative agenda on back)**

/S/

Joel Milos
District Conservationist