

# **Custer County Weed and Pest Board**

## **Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2023**

The May 9, 2023 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:01 PM by Smith.

In attendance were Tom Patterson, Bob Smith, Marci O'Connell, June Johnston, Jim Lintz, Klinton Rittberger (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 March 28 meeting were approved with a motion from Patterson and a second by Johnston.

### **Old Business:**

- Enforcement updates:
  - Weed enforcement on Lila Streff property:
    - Lila was not able to make today's meeting. She told Mike that she plans on hiring someone to mow the first week of July and maybe again later in the season. She is planning on subdividing the property and does not want to spray. She wants to use no-spray status in advertisement for property sales.
    - Mike spoke to Tracy Kelley, States Attorney, for advice on how to best approach the situation if Lila does not mow or spray. Mike shared her comments with the Board.
    - Mike also conferred with Brenda Sievers, SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), for advice and to see if there was a precedent for a similar situation elsewhere in the state. Brenda was not aware of any precedence, but she said under the law, mowing can qualify as control if done prior to seeding. It may require several mowing attempts per year to comply with the law.
    - Motion was made by Patterson that Lila must mow infested area every 3 weeks for next 120 days, and the Board will evaluate after. The Board has provided an alternative method of control, which she refused. Noncompliance will result in further enforcement action.
      - Motion seconded by Lintz.
      - Discussion: Rittberger suggested if Lila has not done anything by July 15, we hire a contractor. We try to find someone to bush hog, but if unable to, we hire someone to spray.
      - Patterson clarified that his intent was to start June 15 and then every three weeks after. Patterson amended his motion to include a June 15 start date and if Lila does not mow in two consecutive 3-week periods, the Board takes action. Motion carried.

- Spring Newsletter:
  - The newsletter is ready to print, but Mike is waiting on word from SD DANR on whether or not the grant application will be awarded. Printing of the newsletter cannot begin until the grant, if awarded, is finalized. Otherwise, costs incurred will not be reimbursed. Mike was told last week that we should hear something soon.
  - At our last meeting, the Board agreed to reduce the number of newsletters printed in order to save costs. Newsletters will only be sent to landowners with greater than two acres and to those living outside city limits. The one exception is landowners with property adjacent to US Forest Service property. The SD DANR grant, if received, will help cover printing/mailing costs for the landowners adjacent to USFS property.

### **New Business:**

- Prairie dog complaint:
  - New complaint made by Shaye Floden against two neighbors was received on April 11:
    - Mike conducted a prairie dog count on April 24 (count was delayed due to snow and wet field). Mean counts on neighboring properties were 0.9 and 1.9 prairie dogs. These observations equate to a 90-95% decline compared to peaks observed last year.
    - Mike spoke to the State Weed and Pest office about his observations. It was recommended that Mike speak with the landowners and encourage additional control. However, since prairie dog numbers are still quite low due to last year's treatment, it was suggested to not force the issue.
    - One of the neighbors, Melius, stated that he completed control work twice this year.
    - The other neighbor, Morgan, was also treating the holes and wants to get rid of the prairie dogs.
  - New complaint made by Peggy Porch against Hermosa Hills, LLC was received on May 4:
    - Mike still needs to complete inspection to determine if encroachment is occurring.
- Seasonal help:
  - Seasonal from last year is returning with a start date of May 15. Will be interviewing for a second person later this week.

### **Other Business:**

- Review of Invasive Grasses Public Meeting:
  - Public meeting was held on April 27 in Belle Fourche with various agency personnel in attendance. Both Mike and Smith attended. Most of the information focused on Ventenata, but also discussed Medusahead.
  - Ventenata is a serious concern to the area counties. It can become established in both disturbed and undisturbed sites with varying soils. Ventenata can significantly reduce forage availability. The presenters shared an image of a



- clump of Ventenata that was bitten off by a cow, but was immediately dropped onto the ground.
- There are plans to search for Ventenata along the western counties of North and South Dakota this summer – when Ventenata is more easily detected.
  - Wyoming counties have seen some success controlling Ventenata using Rejuvra, a pre-emergent herbicide. However, the chemical is expensive and may negatively affect native annuals and biennials.
  - Spray agreement with US Forest Service, Buffalo Gap National Grassland:
    - Mike is still waiting on final documentation from USFS.
  - SD DANR RCF grant applications:
    - Mike is still waiting on word from SD DANR on the \$5,000 grant application for cost-share support. If awarded, funds will support chemical cost-share for landowners adjacent to the National Forest.
    - As stated previously, Mike is still waiting on a grant to support our newsletter. If awarded, the grant would help cover printing and mailing costs for the newsletters addressed to landowners adjacent to USFS property.
  - Invasive Weed Management Training:
    - Applicator training will be held on May 24 in Rapid City. Mike will send seasonal(s) to the training, and potentially, ATV training that will be held the following day.
  - No spray agreements:
    - One new sign up for a total of six active agreements.
  - General comments:
    - Smith made a suggestion that future newsletters should be posted on the County website and not printed due to cost.

**Next meeting:**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

**Adjournment:**

- Motion by Lintz, seconded by Patterson to adjourn meeting at 1:47 PM.