

# **Custer County Weed and Pest Board**

## **Meeting Minutes – July 11, 2023**

The May 9, 2023 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:00 PM by Rittberger.

In attendance were Jim Lintz, Klinton Rittberger, Marci O'Connell, June Johnston, Bob Smith, Tom Patterson (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 9 meeting were approved with a motion from Lintz and a second by Johnston.

### **Old Business:**

- Enforcement updates:
  - Weed enforcement on Lila Streff property:
    - At the previous meeting, the Board decided that Streff needed to mow areas of leafy spurge by June 15. Baldwin confirmed these areas were mowed on June 9. Area infested with absinth wormwood was not mowed when checked on July 2. Streff has until July 15 to mow this area. Baldwin will continue to monitor the property and will update the Board on its status.
  - Weed enforcement on Sharon Moad property:
    - Baldwin was contacted by Sharon who said she was hiring a commercial applicator to spray the property.
    - Motion by Smith to give landowner until August 1 to take action before Board steps in, second by O'Connell, motion carried.
    - Baldwin will send landowner a certified letter.
- Prairie dog complaint:
  - Complaint made against Hermosa Hills, LLC:
    - Prairie dogs are encroaching onto the property at the end of Marie Street in Hermosa. During Baldwin's first inspection, no active burrows were observed. However, a new burrow was documented by the landowner on June 19 and was later confirmed by Baldwin on June 22. Additional burrowing was reported by the landowner since then.
    - Rittberger spoke with the owner of Hermosa Hills, LLC. Owner said that he would have the prairie dogs treated. Baldwin sent a list of control options to be used by the landowner. To date, no control measures have been implemented.
    - Rittberger will contact landowner next week if no action taken and will let him know that the Board is close to enforcement.

- Motion by Smith to give Hermosa Hills, LLC until August 1 to treat, otherwise property will be considered for enforcement at the August Board meeting, second by Lintz, motion carried.

### **New Business:**

- Spray progress:
  - County right-of-ways:
    - To date, approximately 3/4 of the county roads have been sprayed. Progress is slower than anticipated due to the lack of a second seasonal sprayer (see below).
  - Cooperation with other entities to control weeds:
    - Working with City of Custer to control leafy spurge within city limits
    - Communication with DOT weed spraying contractor about problem areas along highways (e.g., spotted knapweed on Hwy 16A, oxeye daisy on Hwy 385, leafy spurge on DOT right-of-way within Custer city limits). Contractor said that they will spray those areas.
- Seasonal help:
  - Baldwin has been unable to find a second seasonal. He will keep looking, but is not optimistic. Consequently, spraying is behind schedule.
- Chemical cost-share grant status:
  - Landowners to date have submitted receipts totaling \$4,928.61. At 50% costs-share, payout would be \$2,464.31.
  - Baldwin was asked if the Board had ever considered supporting a cost-share for biocontrol. Board has not supported this in the past and wishes to keep the cost-share for chemicals only. The Board expressed concern about the cost of biocontrol and their effectiveness.
- US Forest Service spray agreements:
  - Work has not yet begun on USFS property. Have properties lined up for both agreements; however, we are holding off spraying on USFS land until right-of-way work is complete.
- Updates on SD Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources grants:
  - Newsletter grant: Reimbursement for grant to support newsletter costs was received (\$580). The grant is now complete. Check was given to the County Auditor's office for deposit in the County general fund.
  - BIL grant: Will reimburse up to \$5,000 for cost-share support for chemical purchases by landowners next to USFS property. To date, we have received receipts totaling \$2,884.92.
- Discussion on weed infestation at 25291 Hard Scratch Ln, Custer
  - Property is owned by John Dumire and is infested with Canada thistle. Baldwin, Johnston, and Smith discussed their observations of the problem.
  - Motion by Smith to issue a Declaration of Infestation for the aforementioned property and that the property must be sprayed by August 1 or the Board will have it sprayed, second by Lintz, motion carried.
  - Baldwin will confer with Tracy Kelley, States Attorney, about fee assessment if the weeds are not treated.

**Other Business:**

- Pine looper update:
  - Baldwin attended a landowner meeting yesterday, July 10, that was held to inform area property owners about the likelihood of a second outbreak of pine loopers in the Bowman ridge area. Meeting was organized by Dr. John Ball, SDSU Extension, NRCS, and USFS Black Hills NF. SDSU has been sampling for looper eggs and larvae in the area affected last year and in the surrounding area. Based on these observation, it appears likely there will be another outbreak of the pine loopers. Landowners were provided information about protecting valuable trees. Landowners were encouraged to have trees chemically treated this week or next.
- Black Hills Forest Plan Revision update:
  - Revision is on hold for now. Release of final Assessments has been delayed so that they can undergo review in the Washington DC USFS office. It is not known when the process will start moving again due to staff turnover and other factors.
- General comments:
  - Smith commented that he has received positive feedback on the County Weed & Pest program.

**Next meeting:**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

**Adjournment:**

- Motion by Lintz, seconded by Rittberger to adjourn meeting at 1:58 PM.