

Custer County Weed and Pest Board

Meeting Minutes – August 8, 2023

The August 8, 2023 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:03 PM by Rittberger.

In attendance were Jim Lintz, Klinton Rittberger, June Johnston, Marci O'Connell, Bob Smith, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes/Agenda:

- Today's agenda and the meeting minutes from the July 11 meeting were approved with a motion from O'Connell and a second by Smith.

Old Business:

- Enforcement updates:
 - Weed enforcement on Moad property:
 - Property was sprayed by a commercial applicator in July.
 - Weed enforcement on Dumire property:
 - Enforcement documents were mailed; however, no response was received and no action was taken by deadline of August 1. Mike will have the property sprayed as time permits.
 - Weed enforcement on Streff property:
 - Leafy spurge areas were mowed a second time. Landowner attempted to mow the wormwood but was unsuccessful. She has now agreed to hire a commercial applicator to have it sprayed. Contractor was contacted, but date of spraying is not known yet. Mike will continue to monitor.
 - Motion by Smith to give landowner a 2-week deadline from today to spray (deadline of August 22). If spraying not done, Mike will hire a sprayer. Motion seconded by Lintz, motion carried.
- Prairie dog complaint against Hermosa Hills, LLC:
 - Mike spoke with both the owner and an employee of the company. The area was treated (with fumitoxin) in mid-July. A follow up prairie dog count on July 19 did not show a decrease in numbers. Actually, prairie dog numbers were up slightly since Mike's June 22 count.
 - Employee of Hermosa Hills followed up with Mike on August 1 after he had visited the area post treatment. He agreed that it looked like the area was not treated. Employee agreed to treat the area again, hopefully this week.
 - As a note, effected landowner observed 15 prairie dogs in her yard on July 31 and they were digging a new burrow.

New Business:

- Properties under consideration for enforcement due to weed infestations:
 - Landowner #1 with the following parcels:
 - Location: 26204 US Hwy 385, Parcel 001958, Section 24, T5S, R4E (PT OF HES #45 SECS 13/24 T5 R4):
 - Infestation of absinth wormwood and Canada thistle on 51.4 acre tract. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. No response received from landowner. Mike drove by property this morning and did not observe any treatment action.
 - Location: 26176 US Hwy 385, Parcel 001934, Section 13, T5S, R4E (PT OF POINT OF ROCKS PLACER #1113):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle on 135.0 acre tract. Received complaints from neighbors. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner, but no response received. They did cut a large portion of the property after letter was sent; however, as of this morning, there is still a heavy infestation along low lying areas.
 - Location: 26212 SD Hwy 89, Parcel 001959, Section 24, T5S, R4E (TR OLSON PT OF HES #45 IN NE4 (LESS TRACTS/HIWAY):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle on 50.7 acre tract. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner, but no response received. Mike drove by property this morning and did not observe any treatment action.
 - Location: Parcel 009459, Section 24, T5S, R4E (BAL OF TR FIELD SEC 24 T5 R4 12.28 AC (LESS TRACTS & DED R/W)):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle on 12.3 acre tract. Mike received complaints from neighbors. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner, but no response was received. They began cutting the perimeter of the field, but most is uncut as of this morning.
 - Motion by Smith to send landowner a certified letter with a September 1 deadline to take action on all parcels. If not in compliance, Board will move forward with enforcement. Motion seconded by O'Connell, motion carried.
 - Landowner #2 with the following parcels:
 - 24871 Hapeka Trail, Parcel 004199, Section 11, T3S, R3E (FORK Location: CREEK SUBD - TR 3 OF HES #330):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle, black henbane, yellow toadflax and common tansy on 5.1 acre tract. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. No response received from landowner. Letter also sent in 2022 after a neighbor complaint. Mike drove by property this morning and no action had been taken.
 - Location: 24869 Hapeka Trail, Parcel 004200, Section 11/12, T3S, R3E (FORK CREEK SUBD - TR 4 OF HES #330):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle on 5.1 acre tract. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. Letter also sent in 2022. No response was received from landowner. Mike drove by property this morning and no action had been taken.

- Motion by Smith to send landowner a certified letter with a September 1 deadline to take action on both parcels. If not in compliance, Board will move forward with enforcement. Motion seconded by Johnston, motion carried.
 - Landowner #3 with the following parcel:
 - Location: Parcel 010868, Section 27, T3S, R4E (BLACK FAMILY TRACT 2 (FORMERLY TR WALT & TR ESTHER) IN S2SW4 SEC 27):
 - Infestation of leafy spurge and Canada thistle on 53.5 acre tract. Received multiple complaints. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. Landowner responded that it would be sprayed and asked for a list of commercial applicators. Eventually, an applicator was hired to spray. Mike confirmed with the applicator and it is expected to be sprayed within a week.
- Enforcement watch list properties:
 - Location: 25543 WIND SONG VALLEY RD, Parcel 006004, Section 17, T4S, R4E (TR A-1 OF HES #49):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle, leafy spurge, black henbane, and absinth wormwood on 5.5 acre tract. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. No response from landowner.
 - Motion made by Smith to send another voluntary compliance letter via certified mail. Give landowner until September 1 to take action. Also ask landowner to respond to letter. Motion seconded by O'Connell, motion carried.
 - Location: 25518 WIND SONG VALLEY RD, Parcel 001634, Section 17, T4S, R4E (SWEDLUND TRACT IN NE4 SEC 17):
 - Infestation of Canada thistle. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. Mike was contacted and told that the weeds would be taken care of. Mike visited property today and it appeared that it was recently sprayed on at least some of the areas. OHV tracks and injured plants were observed.
 - Location: 12648 BEAVER CREEK RD, Parcels 002009 and 014747
 - Infestation of Canada thistle. Voluntary compliance letter sent to the landowner. Mike received a phone message from landowner today, said that neighbor is helping her to control the weeds on her place.
 - Board asked to keep this property on the watch list for now.
- Spray progress:
 - County right-of-ways:
 - All county roads have been sprayed once. However, Mike was unable to find a second seasonal so a full second round of spraying will not be completed by end of season.
- Chemical cost-share grant status:
 - To date, landowners have submitted receipts totaling \$12,274.70. One receipt was greater than the \$1,000 max so the adjusted total is \$11,698.49. At 50% costs-share, payout would be \$5,849.25. For reference, the total number of receipts received in 2022 was \$27,257.53.

- US Forest Service spray agreements:
 - Buffalo Gap National Grassland: approximately 2/3 of the acreage is complete.
 - Black Hills National Forest: approximately 1/3 of the acreage complete. Leafy spurge and Canada thistle work remaining.
- Building Maintenance and Weed Sprayer position:
 - Joe Panza and Mike will seek approval from the County Commission at tomorrow's meeting to create a new position. There is a need in the Maintenance Department for seasonal help (snow removal, cleaning, etc.), but it is not needed year-round. Suggested to combine position with one of the Weed & Pest seasonals and create a full-time position. Duties would be split 60% with Maintenance and 40% with Weed & Pest. Hourly pay is essentially the same as a seasonal, but person would receive benefits. The hope is that this will increase potential pool of candidates for spraying.

Other Business:

- Pine looper update:
 - Mike visited the area and it looks similar to last year's outbreak. Trees are 'browning-out' in the Bowman Ridge area again.
 - SDSU caterpillar counts are high. May see tree mortalities.
- Other:
 - Ventenata survey:
 - Some western South & North Dakota counties were surveyed for Ventenata, but not in Custer County. Scheduling conflicts limited what could be done so focused on areas where they knew Ventenata was present across the state border. There is a possibility that a survey could be conducted next week.
 - Black Hills Forest Plan Revision update:
 - Mike will meet with county/state representatives tomorrow afternoon in Rapid City to discuss current stats of plan revision.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Smith, seconded by Johnston to adjourn meeting at 2:00 PM.