

Custer County Weed and Pest Board

Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2023

The September 12, 2023 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:00 PM by Rittberger.

Board members in attendance were Klinton Rittberger, June Johnston, Marci O'Connell, Bob Smith, and Tom Patterson. Others in attendance were Kevin Treloar and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes/Agenda:

- Today's agenda and the minutes from the August 8 meeting were approved with a motion from Johnston and a second by O'Connell.

Old Business:

- Enforcement updates:
 - Weed enforcement on Dumire property:
 - The certified letter sent to the landowner was returned undelivered. Deadline for treatment passed with no action taken to control the weeds. Therefore, property was sprayed on August 31. Fees still need to be charged to the landowner.
 - Weed enforcement on Streff property:
 - Absinth wormwood in the trees and rocky area of property was sprayed by a private contractor. Rest of area to be sprayed this weekend.
- Prairie dog complaint against Hermosa Hills, LLC:
 - Landowner had not retreated as of last week. Baldwin spoke to the landowner and he said would have it taken care of. Neighbor is losing patience with the ongoing prairie dog issues.
 - Motion by Smith to give landowner until September 21 to retreat prairie dogs or the Board will begin enforcement. Seconded by Patterson, motion carried.

New Business:

- Request by County Highway Dept. to control curlycup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*) on county roads.
 - Treloar discussed the issues that gumweed causes with maintaining county roads (e.g., equipment maintenance and road condition after blading). Treloar stated that they also have to mow more frequently to keep it under control.
 - Gumweed is not normally sprayed because it is a native plant and because of the added time and expense to control it.
 - After discussion, the Board asked Baldwin to develop a cost estimate for controlling gumweed in the future. He will report back to the Board with the estimate.

- Properties under consideration for enforcement due to weed infestations:
 - Parcels owned by Anna Evans described below. Two voluntary compliance letters were sent to the landowner. The second was sent via certified mail. Landowner called the office, said that she was doing what she can. Baldwin invited her to today's Board meeting – either in-person or by calling-in. She declined the invitation.
 - 1st parcel under consideration: 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. Only small portion of area was treated (~5% of area).
 - Motion by Patterson to place property under enforcement, send notice via Sheriff's deputy, and give her 15 working days to respond. If no action is taken by deadline, Board will have property sprayed. However, if weather becomes too cold to effectively treat the weeds this year, Board will have property sprayed by June 1 of next year. Motion seconded by O'Connell, motion carried.
 - 2nd parcel under consideration: 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. Area was cut/hayed by landowner. No action taken by Board.
 - 3rd parcel under consideration: 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. Area was cut/hayed by landowner. No action taken by Board.
 - 4th parcel under consideration: 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. Area was cut/hayed by landowner. No action taken by Board.
 - Parcels owned by Helga Szameit described below. Two voluntary compliance letters were sent to the landowner. The second was sent via certified mail. Certified letter was received and signed for, but no response received from landowner. Mike drove by parcels this morning and no action had been taken.
 - 1st parcel under consideration: 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.
 - 2nd parcel under consideration: 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.

- Motion by Smith to place properties under enforcement and give her 15 working days to respond. If no action is taken by deadline, Board will have property sprayed. However, if weather becomes too cold to effectively treat the weeds this year, Board will have property sprayed by June 1 of next year. Motion seconded by Johnston, motion carried. Landowner lives in Sioux Falls so notice will be sent via certified mail.
 - Property owned by the Walter W and Esther M Black Family Trust:
 - 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.
 - The leafy spurge and some of the Canada thistle were sprayed by a private contractor. Both Patterson and O'Connell spoke with landowner about the situation. All were in agreement that landowner is addressing the problem and no further action by the Board is necessary at this time. Will continue working with landowner and follow progress into next year.
- Enforcement watch list properties:
 - Trustees of Ruth and Lyle Swedlund, 25518 WIND SONG VALLEY RD; Parcel 001634, Swedlund Tract in NE1/4 Section 17, T4S, R4E
 - Spraying completed on some areas after Baldwin sent voluntary compliance letter. However, some areas were missed. Baldwin sent a second letter to landowner asking to spray missed areas. No further action taken by the Board at this time.
 - Lowell Swedlund, 25543 WIND SONG VALLEY RD; Tract A-1 of HES #49, Section 17, T4S, R4E.
 - Two voluntary compliance letters were sent to the landowner. The second was sent via certified mail. Certified letter mailed on August 9 was unclaimed and returned undelivered. Deadline set at the previous Board meeting was September 1. Landowner has not made contact with the office. No action has been taken to control the weeds.
 - Motion by Patterson to place property under enforcement, send notice via Sheriff's deputy, and give landowner 15 working days to respond. If no action is taken by deadline, Board will have property sprayed. However, if weather becomes too cold to effectively treat the weeds this year, Board will have property sprayed by June 1 of next year. Motion seconded by Smith, motion carried.
 - Other weed problem areas to follow:
 - Star Valley Estates:
 - Several lots, right-of-ways infested with Canada thistle. Mixed response to voluntary compliance letters.
 - Several residents along Sidney Park Rd:
 - Mixed response to voluntary compliance letters
 - Several residents along Beaver Creek Rd:
 - Having better luck getting landowners to spray
 - A few properties along/near Hwy 16A east of Custer before Custer State Park:

- Mixed response to voluntary compliance letters
 - Property across from County Highway shop (25368 US Hwy 385). Musk thistle and Canada thistle.
 - No response to voluntary compliance letters. Complaint from neighbor received.
- Spray progress:
 - County right-of-ways:
 - Second round of spraying will be approximately 50 percent complete at end of season. Will not complete second round due to lack of seasonal support.
- Chemical cost-share grant status:
 - Receipts received to date total \$22,197.99. One receipt was greater than the \$1,000 maximum so the adjusted total is \$21,621.78. At 50% cost-share, payout amount equals \$10,810.89. Landowners have until October 31 to submit receipts.
- US Forest Service spray agreements:
 - Agreement for Buffalo Gap National Grassland is complete. Invoice and documentation were submitted, waiting on payment.
 - Black Hills National Forest work is nearly complete. Approximately a day of leafy spurge and Canada thistle work remaining.
- Building Maintenance and Weed Sprayer position:
 - County Commission approved new position, it is being advertised now. Person would work 40 percent of the year with Weed and Pest Department and would replace one of the allotted seasonal positions.
- SD Weed & Pest Control Commission meeting and field tour September 13-14 in Rapid City:
 - State Commission meeting will be held on the 13th at 1:00 PM. The field tour is on the 14th beginning at 7:30 AM. Tour will explore weed infestation areas near Lead, Deadwood, and Sturgis. All Board members are welcome to attend. Baldwin will not be able to attend due to Conservation Board meeting on the 14th.

Other Business:

- Pine looper update:
 - According to Dr. Ball, SDSU, the looper population has collapsed and there are significantly fewer pupae than previous year. Mature larvae are dying at a “remarkably high rate”, likely due to natural enemies (e.g., pathogens & insects).
 - The possibility of the outbreak continuing into a third year is not likely; however, there are a few new small pockets within 4-5 miles of outbreak area. Those areas may continue to have issues next year.
 - Tree mortality is expected. Rough estimate is that around 1/3 of trees in affected area will die.
- Locally noxious weeds:
 - Baldwin discusses the proliferation of musk thistle this year relative to past years, and issues with a couple landowners not controlling musk thistle. Letters sent to the landowners went unanswered and no treatment occurred. Baldwin inquired

whether the Board was interested in adding musk thistle to locally noxious list next year to address this problem.

- After discussion, motion made by Smith to add Musk Thistle to the locally noxious list in 2024, second by Patterson, motion carried.
- Other items:
 - Ventenata:
 - Survey was not attempted in Custer County. Scheduling conflicts limited what could be done so surveyors focused on areas where they knew Ventenata was present across the state border. Ventenata is not known to occur in Weston County, WY.
 - Patterson commented on the abundance of Canada thistle observed on a recent trip to Minnesota and stated that we are doing much better than they are.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Smith, seconded by O'Connell to adjourn meeting at 2:26 PM.