Custer County Conservation District
Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2024

The December 12, 2024 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Custer County Courthouse, at 9:00 AM by Paul Nettinga.

Board members in attendance were Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Oonagh Wood, Greg Neugebauer (call-in), and Stuart Adrian (advisor). Others in attendance were Paige Uher (NRCS), Mike Linde (Custer County Commission), Julie Wheeler (USFS), Nate Anderson (call-in; SD DANR-WPP), Micheal Bordelon (call-in; SD DANR-RCF), and Mike Baldwin (District Manager).

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

Request by Mike to move '2025 budget planning' to end of meeting. No other additions or changes made. Motion to approve modified agenda and to approve the meeting minutes from November 14, 2024, was made by Oonagh, seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- County Commission: Mike Linde –
  - Noted that work is starting on the Custer West Dam project.
  - County Courthouse needs a new heating/cooling system.
- NRCS: Paige Uher –
  - Pennington CD District Manager is resigning. Their board is currently looking for a replacement.
  - South Dakota NRCS cost-share totals for state are similar to last year's totals. Will have a few more IRA dollars.
- US Forest Service general: Julie Wheeler, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland –
  - Ongoing drought is ongoing concern.
  - Record of Decision made on the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands Undesirable Plant Management Project. New plan allows for more flexibility for control methods.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
  - Main Checking = $11,679.76, Grant Checking = $1,490.91,
  - Savings = $35, 968.87 (November interest = $11.43).
- Bills to pay and/or approve:
  - Credit card purchases:
    - Vector Print = $433.88 – newsletter printing and postage

- Bills:
  - 2024 annual vouchers as follows: Dave - $697.28, Oonagh - $501.67, Paul - $733.27, Tamarah - $628.54, Greg - $408.30, Stuart - $510.71, Mike - $912.96.
- Motion by Tamarah to approve financial report, second by Oonagh, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- SD DANR seeking nominations for South Dakota Natural Resource Conservation Award. Nominations due to district due by January 1st, and due to State Conservation Commission by April 1.
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) soliciting proposals to conserve and restore grasslands and wildlife species in the Northern Great Plains. Full proposals due by February 19.
- National Wild Turkey Federation - 2025 Waterways for Wildlife Request for Proposals. Application due by February 7. Board asked Mike to check with Kylie to see if aware of anyone looking for partners.

Old Business:

- Partner meeting on coordinating vegetation treatments in the county:
  - Meeting was well attended with 16 in attendance from USFS, NRCS, SD DANR-RCF, SD Wildland Fire, Custer State Park, Custer Co. (Emergency Mgmt. & Planning Depts.), Custer Conservation District, and Black Hills Forest Resource Association.
  - Partners shared reports and maps of thinning/fuels projects completed or ongoing over the past five years and also for future projects.
  - Plans for creation of new priority areas and create a media release through NRCS.

New Business:

- Thinning grants:
  - State Commission grant:
    - 2025-2027 Grant - Waiting on begin work letter for new grant. Expecting start date of January 1.
    - 2022-2025 Grant – Board discussed reallocation of funding from landowner backing out of program. Options considered including awarding additional acres to interested landowner and increasing cost-share payment rates (grant was initially awarded under old docket, but district received approval to use new, higher docket rates). After discussion, motion by Greg to approve additional 45 acres to Sheldon Rasmussen and if no new applications are received, increase cost-share rate for still active thinning projects. Second by Tamarah, motion carried.
  - Forest Health grants:
    - Papcke project completed, waiting on signed documentation from landowner.
- 2025 budget planning:

- Oonagh and Mike prepared draft budget prior to today's meeting and shared plan with the board. Incorporating mileage increase to $0.66/mile and $40 meeting pay, expenses totaled $11,805.00. Any overages would be covered by funds in the savings account. Next summer, board will discuss requesting an increase in funding received from the County.
- Motion by Tamarah to approve budget plan as presented, second by Oonagh, motion carried.

Other Business:

- 2025 Annual Work Plan:
  - Mike reminded board to think about goals for the January meeting.
- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
  - Recent newsletter was released.
  - Virtually attended Black Hills Resilient Forest Partnership meeting. Significant topic of interest is funding concerns within USFS.
  - Virtually attended Black Hill National Forest Plan Cooperative Agency meeting.
  - Dave and Mike attended meeting to discuss City of Custer Community Forestry Plan.
- Appreciation award:
  - The Board presented Mike with a letter of commendation for work performed this past year. Motion made by Tamarah and second by Oonagh to award Mike with a $350 check, motion carried.

Next meeting: Thursday, January 9 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse.

Public Comment:

Critique:

Adjournment: Regular meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.