Custer County Conservation District
Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2025

The January 9, 2025 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 Dave Thom.

Board members in attendance were Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Tamarah Caster, Oonagh Wood, Greg Neugebauer, Stuart Adrian (advisor), and Gladwin Paulsen (advisor). Others in attendance were Mike Linde (Custer County Commission), Micheal Bordelon (SD DANR-RCF), Terri Kester (County Planning), Ben Pucket (SD GF&P), Nate Anderson (call-in; SD DANR-WPP), 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.

Motion to approve agenda and to approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2024, was made by Paul, seconded by Greg, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- County Commission: Mike Linde –
  - Nothing to report.
- NRCS & USFS not present due to day of mourning for President Carter
- SD DANR RCF: Micheal Bordelon –
  - Nothing to report.
- County Planning: Terri Kester –
  - Board asked Terri to attend to discuss development in the county. Paul suggested that a CD board member occasionally attend Planning meetings. Would like to know of potential plat issues.
  - Terri will include Mike on routing emails for items the Planning Board to review and he will forward to Board if he deems it relevant to CCCD issues/concerns. Mike will send first email package from Terri to Board so that they can see what information is involved and then make a judgement on whether to forward future emails.
- SD GF&P: Ben Pucket –
  - Ben attended GF&P meeting December 10-12 in Chamberlain. Only relevant change is cost-share rate for aspen exclosure. Will probably change payments to a by-foot basis. Amount not set yet.
  - Planning for willow planting project on Spring Creek and Willow Creek (Meeker Ranch). Will plant 10,000 willows. Looking for partners to help fund project and for volunteers for planting. Will probably occur in late May or early June.

- Ben will forward information to Mike about volunteering. Mike will then send information to email list.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
  - Main Checking = $7,335.65, Grant Checking = $1,490.91,
  - Savings = $35, 981.48 (December interest = $12.61).
- Bills to pay and/or approve:
  - Nothing to approve.
- Deposits:
  - $832.50 cost-share payment for Mike's attendance at State Conference and taking on-line training.
- Discussion on whether Board should provide financial support to GF&P willow project on Spring Creek and Willow Creek. Motion by Oonagh to donate $2,000 from savings account to project, second by Tamarah. Paul suggested increasing amount to $5,000. Board discussed keeping at $2,000 for now and then reassess in February if additional funds are needed, Paul agreed. Vote held, motion carried. Ben thanked Board for their help.
- Motion by Oonagh to approve financial report, second by Paul, motion carried.

Correspondence:

- Producer and landowner participants needed for SD Grasslands Initiative interviews. Participants asked to share their perspectives on conservation programs, and how they relate to their needs.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Swearing in of newly elected supervisors:
  - Re-elected supervisors (Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Oonagh Wood) completed the oath of office.
- 2025 officer selections:
  - Motion by Greg to retain 2024 officers in their current roles in 2025 (Dave Thom-Chair, Paul Nettinga-Vice-Chair, Oonagh Wood-Treasurer). Second by Tamarah, motion carried.
- Burning beetle learning event, Thursday, Jan. 16 @ 6:30:
  - District is co-sponsor of the event. Mike reviewed the agenda. District will supply coffee and cookies.
- 2025 Annual Work Plan:
  - Board was supplied 2024 plan ahead of today's meeting. Board offered updates for 2025 plan. Mike will take comments, revise document, and send to Board for review at February meeting.
- Landowner forestry meeting:

- Scheduled on Friday, March 28 at Argyle VFD Fire Hall. Board preferred title of Forest Management in Action. Suggested starting talks at 10:30, lunch at 11:30, and field tour after lunch.
- Greg will get some information about a potential caterer. Board asked Mike to have flyer out to public by March 1.

- Thinning grants:
  - Forest Health grants:
    - 2023 grant:
      - Reimbursement request submitted to State for Papcke project. Waiting on payment.
    - 2024 grant:
      - Webster project completed at 17.9 acres. Reimbursement request just submitted to State.
  - State Commission grants:
    - 2022-2025 grant:
      - Reimbursement request submitted to State for Rasmussen project. Waiting on payment.
      - At December meeting, Board approved allocation of additional 45 acres to Rasmussen; however, work was nearly complete when Micheal went to property to work on prescription. Therefore acres were no longer eligible for cost-share.
      - Stuen project – will not be able to complete project. Stated to give funds to another project. May reapply in the future.
      - Reyelts project has not started – still waiting on contractor.
      - Webster is interested in more acres. Board previously stated that he would require a forest stewardship plan before they would grant additional acres. Considering looming June deadline to spend funds, Mike asked if Board would consider granting him more acres. After much discussion about cost-share rates, stewardship plans, and deadline, Greg moved to award Webster up to an additional 17 acres, second by Paul, motion carried.
    - 2025-2027 grant:
      - Potential applicant with 7-8 acres needing treatment in the Argyle area. Applicant is also looking at Wildland Fire grant. Will know more next week.

Other Business:

- Office manager report:
  - Commission Liaison for the District will remain Mike Linde in 2025. Mike Busskohl is the alternate.
  - Commission approved mileage and meal rates for 2025 are $0.66/mile and $0.30/mile, breakfast = $11, lunch = $15, dinner = $25.

- Preparing annual reports to State – activities, financial.
- Preparing financial report and annual activities report to County Commissioners
  - New requirements being put in place by Commission. Will require bank statements and/or paid invoices and cancelled checks, January 31 deadline.
- SAM.gov account for District – requirement to receive federal grants. Completed registration renewal, required annually
- Tax documents prepared for cost-share grants.
- Participated in BH Resilient Forest Partnership meeting on Dec. 18.
- Cancelled BHNF Plan Revision Cooperative Agency meeting on Jan. 8.
- Old-growth across National Forest System – Chief Randy Moore released press release that the NOI to prepare a National Old Growth Amendment environmental impact statement will be withdrawn.
- Plan on attending SDACDE Executive Board meeting as representative from Hills Area. Meeting to discuss career development for conservation district employees. Cost-share grant will cover hotel, mileage, and possibly meals. Originally planned for January, now will be day before Leadership in June.
- SD Grassland Initiative Partner meeting on Monday, Jan. 13 @ 12:00. Mike plans on participating.
- Partner meeting on coordinating vegetation treatments in the county. Still gathering GIS layers of partner projects.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 13 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse.

Public Comment:

- Bordelon let the Board know of a SD Family Forests Association landowner workshop and field tour scheduled tomorrow in Piedmont.
- Gladwin commented on West Dam reconstruction and noted previous input and time spent in past working on the dam. The District should comment on and be recognized for past work. Gladwin stated that dam is a great accomplishment. Dave noted previous comment on reconstruction project and asked for clarification on when input from District was provided. Paul felt that the dam is out of jurisdiction, limiting role of District.

Critique:

Adjournment: Regular meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.