Custer County Conservation District
Meeting Minutes – June 12, 2025

The June 12, 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 (call-in), and Stuart Adrian (advisor). Others in attendance were Paige Uher (NRCS), Justin Boerboom (NRCS), Mike Linde (Custer County Commission), Patricia Weyrich (call-in), 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 the agenda and to approve the meeting minutes from May 8, 2025, was made by Paul, seconded by Oonagh, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- County Commission: Mike Linde –
  - Nothing to report.
- NRCS:
  - Paige Uher –
    - Working with FSA on producer applications in Custer and Pennington counties for drought assistance through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).
    - Recent meeting with FSA on the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).
    - Still have some EQIP applications coming in. Otherwise working in the field providing technical assistance.
  - Justin Boerboom –
    - Working on a project idea for forestry work funded through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Similar program to CIS.
    - Communicating with power companies about working together.
    - NRCS cannot submit proposal, would have to come from partner.
    - Commission grants can be used as a match
    - Hope to have meeting down the road with power companies, conservation districts, and RCPP coordinator.
    - Fire mitigation key with a focus on transmission lines.
- SD DANR RCF: Patricia Weyrich –
  - Currently insect and disease week.
  - Providing technical assistance and working on various projects

- SD Family Forests Association was told funding was not going to be removed. Expecting ~$1 million/year for five years.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
  - Main Checking = $13, 282.85, Grant Checking = $1,490.91,
  - Savings = $34,040.39 (April interest = $11.58).
- Transfer:
  - $2,000.00 from Savings to business checking
- Deposits:
  - $425.00 into business checking for rain barrels
  - $85 for rain barrel into cash box. New cash box balance = $123.00
  - $2.00 refunds in both checking accounts
- Bills to pay/approve:
- Credit card expenses:
  - Vector Design, Print, and Tech - $438.34, spring/summer newsletter.
  - Home Depot - $338.76, 3-drawer lateral file cabinet
  - Dakota Greens - $229.23 & $219.99, Arbor Day trees
- Motion by Oonagh to approve account balances and bills, second by Tamarah, motion carried.

New Business:

- Thinning grants:
  - Forest Health grants:
    - Working with one participant to get documents submitted for reimbursement for work completed. The other remaining participant is planning on starting work this fall.
  - State Commission grants:
    - 2022-2025 grant:
      - Submitted reimbursement request for Webster project. Contacted Weimer about his project, no response. Will have to return $41,778.25 due to project cancellations by landowners.
    - 2025-2027 grant:
      - New landowner applications for Board consideration –
        - Jackie Wahle, 13.4 acre project, in the Argyle area
        - Board reviewed application and prescription. Motion by Tamarah to approve application, second by Paul, motion carried
      - New landowner application received:
        - One other application received, but board did not consider due to all grant dollars being obligated and prescription not completed.
    - Mike will work on updating/modifying application form in late summer or fall. Could link to SD Family Forests Assoc. cost-share for forest stewardship plans.

- Hills Area meeting:
  - Dakota Conservation Network – website for landowners to find assistance for conservation work. Our district is listed as a partner and there is a webpage with information about our thinning program
  - Black Hills NF Plan Revision – task force to be created to address concerns about plan revision.
  - USDA/EPA funding – Angela asking people to contact legislators about supporting programs potentially on the chopping block.
    - Paul will draft a letter to our congressional representatives and send it to Mike for revision and letterhead. Mike will send to office of Johnson, Thune, and Rounds.

Old Business:

- Arbor Day school events were held:
  - at Custer Elementary, Monday May 12
  - at Hermosa Elementary, Wednesday May
- Rain barrels:
  - Only 2 barrels left
- Willow project:
  - Article featured tree planting event in yesterday's newspaper. Group planted about 6,000 trees. Article mentioned the District a couple times as a supporter of the effort.

Correspondence:

- Invitations to upcoming events:
  - Grazing School in Wall, June 17-19
  - 2025 NACD Northern Plains Region meeting June 23-25, Brookings
  - West River Soil Health School in Caputa, June 25-26
  - Justin informed the board of the upcoming Governor's Ag Summit in Deadwood next week, June 17-18. Additional information available on the DANR's website.
  - Patricia noted:
    - Upcoming Forest Health Virtual Workshop next Wednesday at noon titled "What are we seeing this Spring?"
    - on the 1st Saturday in October of each year, the SD Family Forests Association hosts a landowner appreciation event – this October's event is in the planning stages.
- USFS-BHNF, Notice of Final Frass Forest Health Project - final Environmental Assessment, signed Decision Notice, and Finding of No Significant Impact.
- USFS-Buffalo Gap Nat. Grassland: Cherry Stem Parking Project Scoping, comments due date of May 30.
- USFS-Buffalo Gap Nat. Grassland: Simon Allotment Water Line Project Scoping, comments due date of June 16.
- Updates from NACD on recent Executive Actions.

- SD Farmers Union, day camp for kids (ages 6-12), July 31 in Custer. This year's theme is "renewable resources", speak & interactive activity about renewable resources with the kids, about ½ hour.
    - Board asked Mike to get additional information and share via email.
- Izaak Walton League of America – call for nominations for 2025 Wildlife Habitat Award

Other Business:

- Office manager report:
    - Newsletter:
        - Printed and mailed
    - Attending the SDACDE Leadership Conference, June 25-27
    - BHNF Plan Revision – monthly cooperative agency meeting was cancelled
    - Weed & Pest activities:
        - County weed booklet printed & available
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan:
    - Dave and Mike received requests to complete a stakeholder survey in preparation for an upcoming stakeholder team meeting. They will complete the survey after today's meeting.

Public Comment:

- None

Critique:

- None

Next meeting: Thursday, July 10 @ 9:00 AM – Commissioner's Conference Room, Custer County Courthouse.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:23 AM.