Custer County Conservation District
Meeting Minutes – September 24, 2026

The September 24, 2026, meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Custer County Courthouse, at 9:03 AM by Dave Thom.

Board members in attendance were Dave Thom, Paul Nettinga, Oonagh Wood, and Tamarah Caster. Others in attendance were Paige Uher (NRCS), Micheal Bordelon (SD DANR-RCF), Matt Lucas (USFS Buffalo Gap NG), Mike Linde (Custer Co. Commission), Sarah Myers (Custer County Library), 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.

Approve Agenda/Minutes:

Request by Dave to add "Burning Beetle Forum" under New Business.
Motion to approve modified agenda and to approve the meeting minutes from July 9, 2026, was made by Paul, seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

Partnership/Guest Reports:

- NRCS: Paige Uher –
  - South Dakota NRCS reorganization paused for now.
  - SD NRCS chosen for a pilot program for awarding funds.
  - Jed Kemmerer is the current acting Resource Unit Conservationist (RUC) after Val's term finished.
  - NWTF forester position listed.
  - RCPP applicants should know in November if selected.
  - Local Working Groups (LWG) still a focus for NRCS.
- SD DANR RCF: Micheal Bordelon –
  - New forester hired in Lead office.
  - EFRP work still in progress. Across the Hills, ~540-550 landowners in the program. ~30 left for initial inspection. Some landowners getting paid, but not sure about rest. Should know about additional funding in 1st or 2nd week in October.
  - Also working on a couple NRCS projects.
- US Forest Service general: Matt Lucas, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland –
  - Matt is now the full-time Ranger on the Fall River District.
  - They are working on range management project – water tanks and pipelines, stock dam work. Also working on fuels project near French Creek Campground. Working on road to agate bed.

    - Dave inquired about pipeline project that Board visited a couple years ago. Matt said that project is complete.
    - They are looking into different partnerships to accomplish more projects.
- County Commission: Mike Linde –
    - No report other than expecting the District's budget request to be approved. Thanked the Board for not asking for a budget increase.

Financial Report:

- Account balances:
    - First Interstate Bank: Business Checking = $10,690.67, Grant Checking = $1,990.91, Savings = $9,306.03 (July interest = $3.16, August interest = $3.16)
    - Black Hills Federal Credit Union (BHFCU): next quarterly statement for CD on September 30. June 30 value was $25,146.63.
- Bills to pay/approve:
    - Deposits:
        - $170.00 – for two remaining rain barrels
        - $778.75 – cost-share for Mike's attendance at Leadership and on-line training
    - Checks:
        - SDACD - $220.00, Bus. Checking – registration fee for Mike to attend State Convention
    - SDACD Convention costs:
        - Hotel = $240.96
        - Gas = $73.38
        - Food = 1 lunch, 1 supper = $44.00, all other food provided
        - Registration = $220
        - Total costs = $578.34
        - Cost-share payment expected = $752.50 (+$174.16)
        - Tamarah asked if Mike drove his own vehicle. He was planning on using county vehicle, but they ended up unavailable (chemical in spray tanks, needed oil change) so drove his own. Tamarah suggested Mike should get standard mileage rate, Board agreed. Mike will deduct fuel expenses and add standard mileage rate.
- Motion by Oonagh to approve account balances and expenses with mileage adjustment for Mike, second by Paul, motion carried.

Old Business:

- Black Hills Resource Advisory Committee:
    - Forest Service announced they were seeking representatives for the committee. Deadline was September 11. Mike passed on the information to Jesse Sorenson, who applied.

New Business:

- Thinning grants: New landowner grant applications for review/approval:
  - Applications received from Dave Busskohl (7.7 acre project) and Charles Kennedy (1.6 acre project). Bordelon completed the prescriptions and maps for both sites. Board had some discussion on Kennedy application due to small size.
  - Motion by Paul to approve both applications with a note that Kennedy be made aware his project was only approved because Board had sufficient funding available. Second by Tamarah, motion carried.
  - Bordelon asked for guidance from Board on a potential applicant that is interested in thinning a pine stand, removing pines out of an aspen stand, and removing aspen encroaching into a pasture. After discussion, Board will go with Bordelon's recommendations – thinning pine stand and possible thinning pines out of aspen stand. Micheal will visit property after today's meeting and write up a prescription to review at the next meeting.
- State Convention, Sept. 20-22 in Oacoma:
  - Mike reviewed meeting with the Board.
- RCPP funding proposal:
  - RCPP grant proposal submitted on August 24 by Justin Krajewski on behalf of the Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership. The proposal requested $1,092,000. Partner contributions leveraged equaled $1,020,000. Expecting NRCS to announce proposal selections in November.
- Landowner/public meeting:
  - Sarah Myers sees an interest/need for water conservation meeting. The library asked participants in their last summer reading program for input and a few mentioned this topic.
  - Dave suggested that the topic could be incorporated into the Beetle Burning Forum in January. Water is a key topic. Dave will present topic idea to the Burning Beetle Committee and then get back to the Board.
  - Locally led could also be incorporated into the Beetle Forum.
- Natural Resources Conservation Awards:
  - Mike received the award signs at the State Conference. Board asked Mike to call awardees to inform them of the award and see if they are interested in receiving award during a County Commission meeting.
- 2027 budget update:
  - Expecting no changes in budget, though commission is trying to make cuts to the County budget.
- Burning Beetle Forum:
  - Discussed under Landowner/public meeting above. District will support Forum again with treats and coffee.

Correspondence:

- Upcoming events:
  - Dakotas SAF 2026 Aspen Workshop, September 9-10
- SDACD call for nominations for various awards
- SDACD State Conference information

- SDACD call for nominations for State Conservation Commission in Area 3 and at-large
- Gunderson Palmer Nelson & Ashmore, LLP – letter concerning withdrawals of applications for water permits and water discharge plan filed by Powertech, USA, Inc.
- SD DANR – Notice of Withdrawal of water permit applications by Powertech, USA, Inc.
- SD DANR-RCF – FY2025 Annual Report
- Update from NACD on recent Executive Actions, 7/6, 7/27, 8/24.
- Request from NRCS for resource concerns priorities for Board members.
- US Forest Service – completed analysis of Roby Forest Management project. Comments are due by 10/5.
- Polly Noser email in regards to proposed development off of North Pole Road.
- 2026 SDFFA Landowner Appreciation Banquet, Oct. 3, (5:00-7:30, Minervas, Rapid City)
- Fall River CD No-till Training Day, Saturday, Nov. 7, 1:30-3:00

Other Business:

- Office manager report:
    - Black Hills NF Plan Revision:
        - Coop. Agency meetings (8/19, 9/9):
            - Desired Forest Conditions working draft released to cooperators.
            - Preliminary Need for Change survey released – submitted responses to questions
        - Species of Conservation Concern Working Group:
            - 3rd meeting, virtual on 8/26, conflict with Commission meeting so did not attend. Meeting was to discuss remaining plant species under review.
            - On 8/31, USFS released proposed list to cooperators. 56 species total (7 birds, 2 fish, 1 insect, 6 mammals, 40 plants)
        - Growth and Yield Working Group
            - No update
        - Wild and Scenic Rivers – USFS provided report on eligibility evaluation. Can provide additional comments, due by October 13
        - Cooperating Agency Symposium: Rooted in Partnership. Nov. 5-6 in Casper. No charge for the event and meals provided.
            - The symposium will bring together local, state, tribal, and U.S. Forest Service officials to discuss emerging issues in forest management, strengthen intergovernmental coordination, and explore opportunities to expand collaboration in planning and project implementation.
            - Mike was invited to attend, but wanted input from the Board since the District would have to cover his travel costs. At this time, Mike is only aware of one person from SD that plans to attend.
            - Board encouraged Mike to attend if his schedule allows.
    - Weed & Pest:
        - Attended theVentenata & Medusahead Workshop in Sheridan, WY.

Public Comment:

- None.

Critique:

- None.

Next meeting: Thursday, October 8, 9:00-11:00 AM. Meeting location undetermined. The Sherrif's office requested use of the Commission Conference room to conduct job interviews. Mike will look into use of the Basement meeting room or his office. Library space is unavailable on that date.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:26 AM.