Custer County Weed and Pest Board
Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2024

The April 9, 2024 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:00 PM by Rittberger.

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

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes/Agenda:

- Meeting minutes from the February 13 meeting was approved with a motion from Smith and a second by Patterson.

New Business:

- Funding available through invasive plant grants from the SD Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Recourse Conservation and Forestry Division (SD DANR-RCF):
    - Federal dollars dedicated towards prevention and suppression of potentially damaging weeds on land adjacent to National Grasslands or National Forest lands. Requires 1:1 local match.
    - Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds – $35,064.36 available to 12 counties with USFS land within county boundaries.
        - Baldwin submitted $6,000 application for chemical cost-share support for landowners adjacent to USFS land. Last year Baldwin received $5,000 for this purpose.
    - Invasive Species funds – $15,000 available to 12 counties for same purpose as the BIL funds.
        - Baldwin asked Board for input on a proposal ideas. In 2023, Baldwin received $580 to support newsletter costs for residents next to USFS land.
        - Board asked Baldwin to apply for funding to support newsletter again.
- Meeting with USDA FSA County Committee Meeting – Custer & Fall River:
    - Baldwin and Nina Steinmetz (Fall River Weed & Pest Supervisor) were invited by Kari Sanders, FSA County Executive Director, to attend board meeting on March 21. Discussed weed issues and concerns in the two counties and possibility of working with FSA to address non-compliance issues for landowners enrolled in FSA programs (e.g., CRP, Grassland CRP). FSA can assess penalty for non-compliance. Probably not applicable to many residents of Custer county due to low enrollment in FSA programs in the county.
- Noxious weed poster for South Dakota:
    - Baldwin received funding to print the SD Noxious Weed poster that he created. Funded by the Association of South Dakota Weed & Pest Boards. They paid for 500 copies which will be distributed to all counties in the state.

- Invasive species newspaper flyer:
    - Nina Steinmetz was asked by the Association of South Dakota Weed & Pest Boards to resurrect the old "Invader" newspaper flyer – an informational publication distributed across the state. The new publication will be ~12 pages and will include District highlights, info on noxious weeds, calibration of spray equipment, obtaining an applicator license, keeping spray records, poster insert, and coming events. Date of publication TBD. Baldwin will try to include insert in the Custer Chronicle.
- Newsletter:
    - Baldwin asked for input from Board on what is included in the upcoming newsletter. Motion by Smith to keep as is, second by Johnston, motion carried.
- No-spray agreements:
    - Baldwin is renewing agreements with landowners. Agreements are for two years and all six active agreements expire in 2024. To date, 3 of 6 have renewed.
- Prairie dog information and new complaints:
    - Fall River Weed & Pest will now cover cost-share for prairie dog control for Custer County landowners that border Fall River. They know Custer W&P does not pay cost-share for prairie dog control and want to help control problems along the county line.
    - New prairie dog complaints:
        - Complaint filed with SD DANR against property owners of 24620 Prairie View Rd, Hermosa. Neighbor claims prairie dogs are encroaching onto property from aforementioned property. Baldwin spoke with landowner and he is currently shooting prairie dogs for control. State recommendation is watch situation until July when poisoned oats can be used again.
        - Complaint filed with SD DANR against property owner of 24644 Prairie View Rd, Hermosa. Neighbor claims prairie dogs are encroaching onto property from aforementioned property. State recommendation is watch situation until July when poisoned oats can be used again.
        - Baldwin attempted to do a prairie dog count of both properties but was interrupted by a neighbor's dogs running in the area and poor weather conditions. Baldwin will reattempt counts soon.
        - Board agreed with State recommendations – will wait until July/August to take action. For now, Baldwin will issue a voluntary compliance letter to both property owners.
    - Baldwin discussed prairie dogs encroaching county right-of-way on Pilger Mountain Rd from adjacent property owner. A certified letter was sent to landowners requesting action. Letter was received, but no response received as of now. Baldwin will treat holes in right-of-way as time permits.
- Seasonal help:
    - Seeking one seasonal sprayer. Two applications received to date.
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands Undesirable Plant Management Project:

    - Custer County Weed & Pest was solicited for input on the draft EIS. Comments are due by May 22. Baldwin will review document, but welcomes comments from the Board as well.
- Chemical cost-share grant form:
    - Discussion on future consideration of indaziflam cost-share if ventenata is discovered in the county. Board agreed to leave form as is (with exclusions), but will change when necessary.
- Work schedule:
    - Commission approved change in schedule for supervisor. Change from salary to hourly at 32 hours per week, but can still work up to 40 hours per week.

Old Business:

- Enforcement properties:
    - Baldwin mailed certified letters to enforcement properties (except on Hard Scratch Ln). Letter requested that the landowner let the department/board know of their plans to control weeds by May 17.
    - Items to monitor: One of the enforcement properties may be foreclosed due to unpaid taxes. Another property owner is attempting to subdivide their property.
- Buffalo Gap National Grassland agreement for 2024:
    - $3,000 approved by County Commission and signed by the Chair. Agreement is now active.
- State Weed & Pest Conference, Feb. 21-23, Spearfish:
    - Baldwin and Sellevold attended as two county representatives.
    - Decision made that District meetings will not be held in the future. Information presented at all-day District meetings was repetitive with information provided at State Conference.
    - State Weed & Pest Commission approved our request to add "musk/plumeless thistle" as a new locally noxious weed in Custer County. The state lumps these two species into one category but is applicable to both musk thistle and plumeless thistle.
    - Ventenata was again a topic of discussion/concern.

Other Business:

- Public Notice of Responsibility was published in the Custer Chronicle on March 27 and April 3.
- Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership (BHIPP) meeting to be held on April 10 in Rapid City. Baldwin plans on attending.
- Grasshopper spraying in Meade County in 2023. Baldwin confirmed that over 600,000 acres were treated. Largest known spraying effort in state history.
- Virtual Workshop: Defending and Growing the Core by Breaking the Cycle of Annual Grass Invasion, April 3, 9:00-4:00
    - Baldwin listened to speakers as time permitted. Workshop primarily focused on cheatgrass, but also discussed ventenata and medusahead.
- Black Hills National Forest weed spraying agreement for 2024
    - Baldwin is expecting a $5,000 agreement for noxious weed control on the Forest next to private property.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

Adjournment:

- Motion by O'Connell, seconded by Smith to adjourn meeting at 2:09 PM.