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

The July 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 June Johnston, Jim Lintz, Marci O'Connell, Tom Patterson, Klinton Rittberger, and Bob Smith. Also in attendance was Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Approve Minutes/Agenda:

- Motion made by Smith to approve meeting minutes from the June 18 board meeting, seconded by Patterson, motion carried.
- Motion made by Patterson to approve today's agenda, seconded by O'Connell, motion carried.

Old Business:

- Enforcement updates:
    - Property owned by Lila Streff (Parcels 001606 and 001608 on Wind Song Valley Rd):
        - Contractor sprayed wormwood and leafy spurge areas and some of the Canada thistle. Rest of the thistle area was cut with a tractor. Property looks better, but some cleanup areas still need to be treated. Mike will contact landowner about areas around buildings that need attention.
    - Property owned by Anna Evans (Parcel 001958 on US Highway 385):
        - Majority of wormwood was sprayed, but still requires additional spraying. Mike was also monitoring a different parcel owned by Evans with a large Canada thistle patch, but area was just hayed.
        - Board asked Mike to continue monitoring property for now. Will reevaluate at next meeting.
    - Property owned by Lowell Swedlund (Parcel 006004 on Wind Song Valley Rd):
        - Property currently in the foreclosure process. Certified letter was mailed to specify June 21 deadline to treat weed infestation, but letter has not been claimed and no treatment was observed.
        - At June meeting, Board asked that the county to spray the property if not treated by deadline. Mike has not been able to treat property. Mike asked for input from Board on whether to prioritize enforcement sprayings (this property and others) or road-ditch spraying. If the latter, we may need to hire a contractor. Motion was made by Smith to hire a contractor to spray enforcement properties, second by Lintz, motion carried.
    - Property owned by Helga Szameit (Parcels 004199 and 004200 on Hapeka Trail):

        - Certified letter was mailed to specify June 21 deadline to treat weed infestation, but letter has not been claimed and no treatment was observed. Mike will hire a contractor to spray the property.
    - Property owned by Neal and Sharon Moad (Parcels 005400 and 005401 on Hard Scratch Lane):
        - Property was sprayed by a contractor. Mike confirmed the presence of injured plants. No further action at this time.
    - Property formerly owned by John Dumire (Parcels 015894 and 006142 on Hard Scratch Lane:
        - Property was subdivided and new home and driveway were built. Other areas mowed. No weed issues observed. No action at this time.

New Business:

- Spraying progress:
    - Crew has completed first round of spraying on the county right-of-ways and is ~15% through the second round of road spraying. Mike is prioritizing the county roads so that they are complete prior to his seasonal employee leaving for college.
    - Other spraying completed:
        - Airport bareground spraying around runway lights, wind socks, etc.
        - County roads through Pringle, Fairburn, Buffalo Gap
        - County properties: east of Hwy 385 across from airport (1.3 ac), County Housing Commission property east of hospital in Custer (15 ac)
    - Other spraying left to do:
        - Bareground spray county highway properties (Custer, Hermosa, Buffalo Gap)
        - Spot spray:
            - Airport
            - Highway yard
            - County properties: west of airport (10.3 ac), north of Argyle Loop Rd (9.1 ac), Hazelrodt picnic area
            - USFS
- Chemical cost-share status:
    - Receipts received to date total $5,695.99. At 50% cost-share the payout will be $2,848.00. This value is up compared to the previous three years at this date.
    - Four landowners have requested payments now, the rest are waiting until the end of season in case a higher cost-share can be paid.
- Prairie dog updates:
    - South Fork Rd right-of-way –
        - Letter sent to Travis Bies informing him of the October 31 deadline to have prairie dogs treated. No response received as of today.
    - Pilger Mountain Rd right-of-way –
        - Letter sent to Jim Watkins informing him of October 31 deadline to have prairie dogs treated. No response received as of today.
- Weed-watch properties and properties under consideration for enforcement:

- 25549 Sidney Park Rd, property owned by Art Petty (Parcels 001620, 001624, 001625, 001626; ~209 acres):
  - Infestation of musk thistle and houndstongue. Certified letter was received and approximately 50% of area was sprayed; however, there is still a large area untreated.
  - Motion by Patterson to continue with enforcement on properties and set an August 1 deadline to spray. If no further spraying by the deadline, county will hire a contractor to spray. Second by O'Connell, motion carried.
- Multiple properties with leafy spurge infestation on Hall Drive, Custer. Two landowners responded to voluntary compliance letter. Two other landowners have not. These properties are:
  - 25072 Sylvan Lake Rd (Parcel 004564, TRACT BUSSKOHL OF LOT 2 OF TRACT E OF HALL PLACER #594 & CLARK PLACER #506 SEC 24 T-3 R-4). Property is owned by Matthew Hespen.
  - 12365 Hall Dr (Parcel 004567, TR E SUBD - LOT H OF TRACT E OF HALL PLACER MS #594 & CLARK PLACER MS #506 IN SE4 SEC 24 T3 R4) and 12367 Hall Dr (Parcel 004566, LOT 3 OF TRACT E OF HALL PLACER #594 SEC 24 T3 R4). Both parcels are owned by Dakota Cable Solutions, Inc.
  - After discussion, motion by Smith to send certified letters to Matthew Hespen and Dakota Cable Solutions, Inc., give them 10 days to comply, if no action taken by deadline, Board will begin enforcement. Seconded by Lintz, motion carried.
- Property owned by Lucas Kretschmar, infestation of Canada thistle:
  - Location: 24830 Sylvan Lake Rd (LOT 6 OF TR A (PT OF HES #164 IN NW4) SEC 12 T-3 R-4).
  - Complaint first received towards end of 2023 season. Letter sent at that time. New complaint received in June. Property visited and confirmed infestation. Letter sent to landowner, who stated he did a small amount of hand spraying, but may consider hiring somebody.
  - After discussion, motion by Smith to send certified letter to Lucas, give him 10 days to comply, if not, Board will begin enforcement. Seconded by Johnston, motion carried.
- Property owned by James Borglum and Hermosa Ranch south of Hwy 36:
  - Complaint received about leafy spurge. Mike drove by property, but did not observe any spurge. He did see a large patch of poison hemlock and a field infested with Canada thistle. Mike sent a voluntary compliance letter to landowner. Canada thistle was sprayed and hemlock patch was yellowing.
  - Motion by Patterson to monitor property for now, second by Johnston, motion carried.
- New letters recently mailed:
  - Property owned by Dakota Greens Nursery on US Hwy 16A – Canada thistle, common tansy.
  - Property owned by Loyce May, adjacent to Dakota Greens Nursery on US Hwy 16A – Canada thistle.

        - Property owned by Stockadia, LLC, 25363 US Hwy 385 – large patch of Canada thistle.
        - Property owned by Jan Gray adjacent to Forest Park Rd – leafy spurge, Canada thistle.
    - Other properties to be contacted:
        - Property owned by Esther Black / Todd Utecht adjacent to US Hwy 16 – leafy spurge & Canada thistle. Mike will send a voluntary control letter to landowner. Patterson will also speak with landowner.
        - Property owned by Jared Webster, adjacent to Wind Song Valley Road – absinth wormwood. Mike will send a voluntary control letter to landowner.

Other Business –

- Smith shared a suggestion that he received from a local realtor to publish an article in the newspaper about the enforcement process. Mike will plan to do so in spring of 2025 and will also include information in the 2025 newsletter.
- Weeds within DOT right-of-way and city limits of Custer:
    - DOT: no weed spraying observed this year until yesterday along Hwy 385. Mike was told that DOT crews were going to do all the spraying this year. However, Mike received new information today that DOT has hired a contractor to do the spraying.
    - Mike will try to meet with DOT in spring of 2025 to discuss plans for next year.
- Mike noted that the ongoing fiber and waterline installations in the county right-of-ways is creating new/larger weed problems.
- Tall Hawkweed detected in Custer County:
    - Mike was notified that the US Forest Service discovered the weed east of Custer near US Highway 16A. Hawkweed is present north and south of the highway near America Center Road on Black Hills NF property. Mike visited site and brought back a sample to share. USFS already treated some of the area and plan to treat the rest.
- Mike was invited to a meeting in Newcastle on August 8 to discuss a potential cheatgrass treatment project on Elk Mountain. Meeting will include various federal, state, and local agencies from Wyoming and South Dakota. The goal is to reduce cheatgrass abundance on both public and private land on Elk Mountain.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 13, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

Adjournment:

- Motion by Lintz, seconded by Smith to adjourn meeting at 2:10 PM.