Custer County Weed and Pest Board
Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2025

The March 11, 2025 meeting of the Custer County Weed and Pest Board was called to order at 1:00 PM by Rittberger.

Board members in attendance were Klinton Rittberger, June Johnston, Tom Patterson, Marci O'Connell, 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 December 10 board meeting and today's agenda, seconded by Johnston, motion carried.

New Business:

- Election of 2025 officers:
  - Motion by Patterson to retain the same officers from 2024, second by O'Connell, motion carried. Motion by Patterson that nominations cease, second by Johnston, motion carried. Rittberger to remain Chair, Smith to remain Vice-Chair.
- Status of federal and state competitive grants/agreements in 2025:
  - US Forest Service agreements:
    - Due to staffing reductions and financial concerns across entire agency, we are not expecting to receive funding for spraying on the Black Hills National Forest and Buffalo Gap National Grassland (BGNG).
    - Mike met with BGNG and Fall River W&P on Jan. 7 to review new requirements for spraying on Grassland; however, spraying on the Grassland seems unlikely this year.
  - SD DANR RCF invasive species grants:
    - Those grant dollars, which have supported our chemical cost-share program and the newsletter, are in doubt this year. Although grants are awarded by the State, the funding comes from USFS and all federal funds face an uncertain future. In 2024, we received $6,580.
- New licensing requirements for fumigants:
  - Board reviewed the new requirements, which requires a certification in Category 14 in addition to Category 12 for both private and commercial applicators. Applicators must also show proof of certification o purchase fumigants. New requirements pushed down to the states by the EPA.
- State Weed & Pest Conference, February 19-21, Huron:
  - The State Weed & Pest Commission approved our locally noxious requests for houndstongue (new addition) and black henbane (renewal).
  - A brief District meeting was held Thursday morning of conference. Meeting lasted ~30-45 minutes and replaced the fall district meeting. Reviewed items

relevant to the district. Some discussion on new licensing requirements for fumigants, but topic was not discussed during the main conference.
    - The 2026 meeting is to be held in Deadwood at the Lodge.
- Seasonal help:
    - Mike is looking for a seasonal sprayer. Last year's seasonal was invited to return, but it is not certain if he will. Position is currently being advertised.
- Newsletter / booklet:
    - Board discussed production of spring newsletter and whether to produce a weed information booklet similar to Fall River's. Nina, Fall River Weed & Pest, shared with Mike a copy of the booklet and the costs incurred to produce it. Costs per booklet were higher than our newsletter, which would prevent us from producing and mailing both unless to a much smaller distribution list. Board had some discussion on combining Fall River and Custer into one information booklet; however, Nina still has enough copies for this year so if a joint publication was created, it would not be possible until 2026.
    - Board settled on creating booklet and printing 500 copies, but not mail them. Newsletter will also be produced and mailed, but to a reduced number of recipients. Newsletter will include information about the weed booklet and where to find a copy (weed and pest office or at the courthouse). The number of newsletter recipients will be based on estimated costs for booklet and newsletter. Goal is to mail newsletter to landowners with properties between 2 and 40 acres in size. Mike will adjust as necessary based on budget allowance.
    - Motion by Smith to give Mike enabling action to proceed, second by Patterson, motion carried.
    - Noxious weed pamphlet:
        - Mike was asked by the Association of South Dakota County Weed and Pest Boards to update the state noxious weed pamphlet and they will pay for printing costs.
- Watch list and enforcement properties:
    - Board discussed sending noxious weed postcards to all landowners with known weed issues (i.e., landowners that received voluntary compliance letters in 2024 and properties under enforcement) prior to the start of spray season. Motion by Smith to mail reminder postcards, second by Patterson, motion carried.

Old Business:

- Prairie dog complaints:
    - ROW complaints on South Fork Rd:
        - Prairie dog numbers remain low in the area after landowner treatment. Will continue to monitor.
    - ROW complaints on Pilger Mountain Rd:
        - Still half dozen or more prairie dogs in area. Will continue to monitor.
    - Prairie View Rd area:
        - Lyons property was treated by an applicator in January. Morse and Melius properties were treated late in 2024. All properties with complaints have been treated.
    - Verbal complaint about prairie dogs near Buffalo Gap:

- Area between Hwy 79 and town on both sides of Buffalo Gap Jct Rd. Complaint made by resident who does not own land adjacent to prairie dog area.
- Letters were sent to two landowners in December. Received call back from one. They requested a contractor list and said was going to have them treated.

Other Business –

- Miscellaneous updates:
  - The 2025 County Commission Board appointments are unchanged – Lintz is primary, Linde is alternate.
  - Board compensation for 2025 remains at $40 per meeting.
  - 2025 mileage rates were set at $0.66 per mile.
  - The 2024 annual and fiscal reports were submitted to the State in January.
  - 2024 summary report submitted to County Commissioners.
  - Stock Show:
    - Mike helped staff the Weed & Pest booth on Thursday, Feb. 6.
  - BHNF Plan Revision:
    - Staff reductions and funding reductions will likely increase length of revision process.
    - County Commission drafting a resolution against new additions of wilderness areas and scenic rivers in the county and the Black Hills.
  - Buffalo Gap NG Plan Revision
    - Was scheduled to begin early this year but has been postponed due to USFS staff shortages and hiring freeze.
  - Mike is scheduled to meet with Bruce Schroeder, SD DOT, to discuss noxious weed management on DOT right-of-ways.
  - Next meeting of the Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership scheduled on March 27 in Rapid.
  - Mike plans to attend FSA County Committee meeting on April 15 to discuss weed issues in the county.
  - Public Notice or Responsibility to control noxious weeds to be published in the March 12 and March 19 editions of the Custer Chronicle.
  - Enforcement article in paper: motion by Smith to publish article in the Chronicle that explains the enforcement process, second by Johnston, motion carried.

Next meeting & Adjournment:

- Motion by Smith to schedule next meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 1:00 PM and to adjourn today's meeting at 2:02. Second by Johnston, motion carried.