



## Custer County Conservation District Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2021

The November 18, 2021 meeting of the Custer County Conservation District was called to order in the Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building, at 9:03 AM by Dave Thom.

In attendance were Dave Thom, Oonagh Wood, Tamarah Caster, Paul Nettinga, Julie Wheeler, and Mike Baldwin.

All motions were approved unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Oath of office for new Board Supervisor will be deferred to next meeting.

Agenda was amended with the addition 2022 budget items under New Business.

The meeting minutes from October 14, 2021 were approved after a motion by Oonagh and a second by Tamarah, motion carried.

### **Partnership/Guest Reports:**

- NRCS Representative: Report attached.
  - Justine Reid was unable to attend but provided a monthly report. Mike reviewed the report with the Board.
- NWTF Forester:
  - Faryn was unable to attend, but after the meeting reported that today, she performed a site visit with a producer for next year's CIS. She is currently working on a management plan for a second producer. Once completed, Faryn will begin working on the management plan for the producer she met today.
- Forest Service general:
  - Julie Wheeler, USFS Buffalo Gap National Grassland:
    - Drought continues on the Grassland causing some water availability issues and high fire danger. Seasonal firefighters (e.g., 13-13 and 18-8 positions) are done for the year.
    - COVID: offices still closed to the public. First quarter of 2022, more people should be returning to the office.
    - Infrastructure Bill: includes funding for firefighting, roads, recreation, but not sure what might be available for this area.
  - Dave proposed a Board trip to the CIS project areas within the National Grassland on 12/9. Board tentatively agreed to a trip on this date. Julie and Mike will work out details and reach out to Justine.

### **Financial Report:**

- Account balances:
  - Main Checking = \$12,252.81,
  - Grant Checking = \$1,633.41,
  - Savings = \$37,103.27.
- Deposits made:
  - \$335.00 for State Convention meetings/workshops
- Bills to pay/approve:
  - Credit card purchases: Vector Design Print & Tech (\$167.03), USPS (\$168.00):
- Motion by Tamarah, second by Oonagh to approve financial report as presented and approve payment of bills, motion carried.

### **Correspondence:**

- John Hartland, SD DANR, provided 2022 USFS pocket planners to the Board.
- SD Urban and Community Forestry Program Challenge Grant notice:
  - Board discussed grant and took no action.

### **Old Business:**

- CIS Updates:
  - Resilient Forest Landscapes:
    - New postcards were printed and mailed to residents within the Elk Mountain, Carroll Creek, and Argyle priority areas. Postcards were similar to previous mailing but included new deadline for applying – Feb. 1, 2022.
  - Rangeland and Riparian Health:
    - NRCS asked for a revised budget for the project since year four funding will need to be reallocated to one or more of the first three years. Board agreed to revise the budget following Justine’s suggestion of FY22=\$150,000, FY23=\$250,000, and FY24=\$300,000.
    - Project factsheet was submitted to NRCS and is publicly available on the NRCS CIS webpage.
    - Mike informed NRCS that the project batching date (i.e., application deadline) will be 4/1/2022.
- 2021-22 State thinning grant:
  - Board deferred action on outstanding application until next meeting.
- RAC project:
  - Work is expected to begin in the fall/winter of 2022-2023. NEPA work has begun, but a silviculturalist prescription is still needed.
  - We are planning a meeting with adjacent landowners in the spring, date to be determined.

### **New Business:**

- Scholarship for 2022:
  - Board discussed revising the application requirements to encourage more applicants. Board agreed to not specify a requirement for specific college major and agreed to shorten essay length. Two \$500.00 awards will be given.

Application deadline will be January 31. Oonagh and Mike will work on revising application.

- Newsletter:
  - Mike made a few minor changes to the newsletter. We received a quote of \$400 to print and mail 200 newsletters. Price includes 80# gloss paper, quarter-fold, tabbed, and addressed. Motion by Oonagh, seconded by Tamarah to go forward with printing the newsletters at the quoted price.
- Tree order for Arbor Day:
  - The Fall River District Manager position is vacant so the Board discussed placing this year's tree order with the Pennington CD. Motion was made by Oonagh, seconded by Tamarah to purchase from Pennington CD the same species mix and quantity as last year (25 Rocky Mountain juniper, 25 ponderosa pine, and 50 Black Hills spruce), motion carried.
- 2022 Budget Items:
  - Oonagh and Mike will draft a 2022 budget for the Board to review.
  - Next review of District finances will be scheduled for one year from now.
  - Meeting rates in 2022: motion made by Paul to increase meeting pay to \$30 for all meetings and mileage will follow county/state standard rate, motion seconded by Tamarah, motion carried.

**Other Business:**

- Ag land assessments:
  - Board discussed issue and draft HB50. Mike contacted SDACD and the SD Grasslands Coalition to see if either had taken up a position on HB50. Neither organization has taken a stance.
- Black Hills NF:
  - Hell Canyon District has a new district ranger – Rob Hoelscher. Julie will invite Rob and Forest Supervisor, Jeff Tomec, to attend the January 13 meeting of the Board.
- Miscellaneous office manager updates:
  - Dave was presented with a plaque of appreciation for his work as Mountain Pine Beetle Coordinator from 2012-2018.
  - Mike provided an annual summary of District activities to SDACDE for the annual Contour Lines publication.
  - Mike volunteered as a judge at the FFA Fall Leadership competition last week in Rapid City.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, December 9 @ 9:00 AM, Pine Room, Custer County Annex Building.

**Adjournment:** 10:41 AM



November 18, 2021

NRCS Field Office Report to the Custer County Conservation District

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 2018 – 2021: 9 Active Contracts
  - Includes CIS contracts
- 2022
  - Batching Deadline: 12/3/21
  - Ranking Deadline: 2/18/22
  - Obligation Deadline: 6/3/22
  - CIS FY 2022 Deadlines

	Resilient Forest Landscapes (CIS 2020)	Jasper Fire (CIS 2021)	Rangeland Health (CIS 2021)
Outreach	12/1/21	N/A	2/1/22
Batching	2/1/22	12/1/21	4/1/22
Ranking	4/1/22	2/1/22	7/1/22
Obligation	7/1/22	4/1/22	8/1/22

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- 2017 - 2021: 23 Active Contracts, additional 2 CSP-GCI
  - Calendar Year (CY) 2021 payments by 11/30/21
- 2022 Renewals: 7 applications (3 high priority)
  - Ranking Deadline: 11/19/21
  - Obligation Deadline: 12/17/21
- 2022 Classic
  - Batching Deadline: 12/3/21
  - Ranking Deadline: 3/18/22
  - Obligation Deadline: 4/29/22

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) [joint NRCS/FSA program]

- Finishing up designs on approved projects

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands [joint NRCS/FSA program]

- 3 accepted offers, will be working to develop full plans (by mid-December) on ones that had interim plans

Meetings / Trainings / Correspondence / Other

- Soil Conservationist, Laura Muse, on maternity leave
- COVID-19: 75% staffing, guidance very fluid right now
- Still working to hire State Conservationist

/S/

Justine Reid  
District Conservationist

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