

**PENNINGTON COUNTY WEED & PEST BOARD**  
**Pennington County Natural Resources Office**  
**3607 Cambell Street, Rapid City, SD**  
**Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 12:30 pm**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Paul Paulsen, Vice-Chairman  
Jerry Hirschoff  
Bert Jocks  
Ron Rossknecht, County Commissioner Liaison

**Members Absent:**

Mark DiSanto, Chairman

**Others Present:**

Scott Guffey, Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Paulsen called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Additional Items / Approve Agenda**

Motion made by Jocks to approve the agenda, seconded by Rossknecht, motion carried. Motion made by Rossknecht to approve meeting minutes for the March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 meeting, seconded by Jocks, motion carried.

**Budget Report**

Scott Guffey presented Budget Report for Weed & Pest (615) and Natural Resources (616) budgets. Weed & Pest (615) has 49% remaining, Forestry budget (616) is at 46% for the remainder of the year.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Shaded Fuel Break**

The crew has finished up the Twin Springs fuels reduction project and payment request has been submitted in the amount of \$20,710.00. Remaining trees on S. Rochford Rd located in one of the Areas to Project (ATP) have been cut and decked, and hauled to the mill 5 loads worth \$3,745. S. Rochford construction project was awarded to Liuisa out of Sioux Falls they were the low bid at \$23 million, \$6 million over estimate. Extra trees will have to be cut by them that were in the riparian areas, that the state has given authorization to cut. Guffey met with Mystic District Ranger and staff on 4/24 and again on 5/22 to discuss securing future fall/winter projects with the forest service. Looking at another Stewardship agreement with the district. Probably would not be tied to timber sale receipts to offset county cost, like the las Stewardship agreement. Instead it would be direct payment to the county to off-set county expense, a lot funding available for fuels reduction work right now through the infrastructure bill. Looking at a five-year agreement, that could include fuels mitigation work, timber stand improvement, timber sale marking, or just about anything else that would be a 5-year agreement worth \$1 million.

**Black Hills National Forest Plan Revision**

Still not a lot has happened as far as forest plan revision progress since the last meeting. BHNF Forest Supervisor, Jeff Tomac has accepted another position, which has added to the delay on the plan revision. Brian Karchart, was the interim Supervisor and his term is up, now Karl Petrick is the new interim Supervisor until a permeant one has been hired. The assessments release has been delayed for regional and national review. Senate Bill 22 is a cost-share bill to help reimburse SD BH counties for hiring consultants for the plan revision process \$500k is what was allocated.

**2023 Weed Spraying Agreements**

Guffey said they have agreements in place with SD DOT and SD DOT RR, Buffalo Gap National Grasslands, Black Hills National Forest, City of Rapid City.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2024 Budget Planning**

Guffey submitted the 2024 budget proposals he oversees last week. The budget guidelines were to figure a 4% wage increase for employees, 3% health insurance increase for employees on the county health plan, and any increases in operations should be reasonable and conservative. The 101-615 weed & pest budget was submitted at \$449,127 a 5.31% increase (\$22,635) from this year's budget, revenue projections were increased by \$10k to offset some of the budget increase. The 101-616 forestry budget was submitted at \$116,858 a 4.31% (\$4,814) from this year's budget. The potential revenue increase from the proposed Stewardship Agreement with the forest service was not included, since it a proposal at this point. The department's budget hearing is scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Ventenata Discovery in the Black Hills Region**

Ventenata, an annual invasive grass, has been discovered in Crook County, WY and Harding County, SD. It has been on our radar since it has been a problem in the Sheridan and Gillette WY area for a while. It will invade range lands and has little forage value that reduces carry capacity. Both areas that were discovered were treated with herbicide, Rejuvra herbicide has shown the best results. More surveys will be done in western SD for ventenata.

### **Society of Range Science Range Workshop**

This years Society of Range Science Range Workshop will focus on invasive species effects on rangelands. The workshop will be held at the Sawyer Memorial Land Trust property by Brownsville, SD on June 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Crew Update**

Four seasonal employees have returned to work for the summer, have been advertising for 2 additional seasonal help positions for over a month with zero applicants. The starting wage range is \$13.20 - \$15.32, is not a competitive wage for the current work climate. Guffey talked to a past seasonal employee about coming back this summer, he may come back next week. Crew is currently working on Buffalo Gap National Grasslands noxious weed acres.

### **Additional Item**

### **Agency Report**

### **ADJOURN**

Motion made by Jocks to adjourn the meeting at 1:14pm, seconded by Rossknecht, motion carried.

Next meeting will be August 2, 2023.

Submitted by Scott Guffey