

PENNINGTON COUNTY WEED & PEST BOARD
Pennington County Natural Resources Office
3607 Cambell Street, Rapid City, SD
Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 12:30 pm
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Paul Paulsen, Chairman
Jerry Hirrschoff
Ron Rossknecht, County Commissioner Liaison

Members Absent:

Casey Knuppe
Bert Jocks
Travis Lasseter, County Commissioner Liaison

Others Present:

Scott Guffey, Director
Sue DeShaw

CALL TO ORDER

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

Additional Items / Approve Agenda

Motion made by Rossknecht to approve the agenda, seconded by Hirrschoff , motion carried. Motion made by Hirrschoff to approve meeting minutes for the February 28, 2024 meeting, seconded by Rossknecht, motion carried.

Budget Report

Scott Guffey presented Budget Report for Weed & Pest (615) and Natural Resources (616) budgets. Weed & Pest (615) has 86% remaining, Forestry budget (616) is at 23% for the remainder of the year.

OLD BUSINESS

Shaded Fuel Break

Guffey submitted a pre-proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for their America the Beautiful grant to vegetation management on the BHNF. He is working with the Mystic Ranger District, the funding would go towards two projects in Pennington County. One would be to masticate oak and pine trees in the Strata Bowl area, to improve Bighorn sheep lamb survival. The other area would be fuels reduction through mastication in the Schroeder Rd area. Both areas included invasive weed treatments after the fuels work was completed. The pre-proposal was \$556,800, if accepted the next step will be to submit a full grant proposal.

Black Hills National Forest Plan Revision

Wyoming & SD counties got together to discuss the assessments for the forest plan revision, other than not much happening.

BLM Prairie Dog Complaint

Ty Eisenbraun & Jordon Kjerstad have both filed formal prairie dog complaints enriching onto their private property from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Guffey sent volunteer compliance letters to the BLM requesting them to control them. BLM response letter said they will not control the prairie dogs, stating Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs are listed as a BLM Sensitive Species. They would like to meet to discuss other management options. The BLM also stated that state and county law must yield to federal law and it would be considered trespassing if the county attempted to control prairie dogs under an enforcement. Guffey visited with Alexa Moeller, Senior Deputy State's Attorney with Pennington County, she said "the US constitution that basically says federal law will always take precedence over state law. The core problem I saw

with enforcement under SCDL 38-22-17.2 is that, if the feds have a law they must follow to preserve these Black Tailed prairie dogs, our enforcement is really moot. We can't really force them to do anything under that clause." Guffey advised the board not to pursue the prairie dog enforcement on the BLM, it would be waste of time and county resources. Instead Guffey said he will work the BLM to come up with some prairie dog management options adjacent to the complaining landowners.

NEW BUSINESS

BH National Forest Supervisor Invasive Weed Funding Meeting

Guffey met with new BHNF Forest Supervisor Sean Cochran concerning invasive weed funding on the BHNF. Guffey is concerned that it is becoming less of priority and security of future funding to control invasive weeds on the BHNF. Cochran and his staff understand the importance of invasive weed funding and are looking at alternative funding sources to help fund the program. Guffey offered to assist in any way possible.

2024 Weed Spraying Agreements

We have signed weed spraying agreements with SD DOT, BHNF, BGNG, City of Rapid City. Waiting on agreements from SD DOT RR and White River Grazing District. Guffey has received grants from the SD Weed & Pest Commission, SD state forestry, and RMEF. Guffey said projected revenue from the grants and agreements will be around \$200,000.

Crew Update

Guffey said they received 8 applicants for the Applicator seasonal position that was advertised. Hired two, one is a college student at SDM&T and the other is a retired firefighter from Cheyenne, WY. They will start May 13th along with two returning seasonal employees. The crew has started bare ground treatments.

Additional Item

Agency Report

ADJOURN

Motion made by Rossknecht to adjourn the meeting at 1:10pm, seconded by Hirrschoff, motion carried.

Next meeting will be June 12, 2024.

Submitted by Scott Guffey