

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ANNUAL WEED & PEST CONTROL COMMISSION MEETING

April 20, 2026 – 10:30 am CT

Matthews Training Center, Foss Bldg., 523 E Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD

Chairman Darwin Kurtenbach called the meeting to order at 10:32 am.

Members Present: Commissioners Darren Bauer, Darwin Kurtenbach, Dennis Feickert, Deb Schultz, Association of SD County Commissioners representative Charles Verhulst; Department of Transportation representative Christina Bennett; Game Fish & Parks representative Ryan Wendinger; and School and Public Lands representative Brock Greenfield. Non-Voting Members - SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources representative Bill Smith; South Dakota State University representative Eric Jones; and Commission Secretary and Plant Industry Program Manager Brenda Sievers.

Ryan Wendinger made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Christina Bennett. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Bennett – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Charles Verhulst, seconded by Dennis Feickert, to approve the minutes from Meeting 1 and Meeting 2 held on February 18. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Bennett – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Activity Reports

Weed & Pest Coordinator's Report – Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Brenda Sievers reported that contractual grant amounts for FY2027 full grant will depend on the Commission's decision for one county's conference attendance, and then agreements will go out to the counties. Phelps and Sievers have both attended some spring annual weed meetings.

District Reports

District reports were given by Dennis Feickert, District 1 – counties are getting equipment ready and they are not sitting too bad for moisture, but the southern areas really need it; Darwin Kurtenbach, District 2 – attended the Douglas and Charles Mix annual meetings, which had good attendance. Some common mullein is showing up in District 2; Darren Bauer, District 3 – reported that Corson County is updating their spray truck to do section lines, and since they recently received an inch of rain, are doing okay for moisture; and Deb Schultz, At Large – reported her area in southern Spink County is dry. She's noticed a lot of soil erosion with dirt blown in the ditches in Hand and Hyde counties due to wind.

Brock Greenfield joined the meeting in person.

Association of SD County Commissioners

Charles Verhulst had nothing to report, except they could use a good rain in Harding County.

Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Bill Smith, Division Director of Resource Conservation & Forestry, reported on federal grant notifications. RBI is wrapping up. They received \$3 million from the legislature, the ARPA funds for RBI has a deadline for this fall. The legislature provided additional funds and had staffing changes. The Conservation Commission Meeting will be held April 30 at noon and it is a grant round meeting.

Department of Game Fish & Parks

Ryan Wendinger reported they are gearing up for summer. There is lots of diversity with wet vs dry as well as north vs south, which is really dry. They are targeting wormwood sage while they have time. Burning might be an option in the north part of the state, but probably not in the south because it is too dry.

Department of Transportation

Christina Bennett reported they have 19 new contracts for regional bid lettings and then spring spraying will start.

School and Public Lands

Commissioner Brock Greenfield reported that they have concluded the lease season. Their AUM rate is \$28.63 so their minimum starting bids are high. Only a few weren't leased. They have had a few requests for weed and pest control. Not all areas are dry.

SDSU

Eric Jones reported that Range and Pasture guides are printed and on campus. They are gearing up for the field season. He is getting an article together for planning for noxious weed control. He is working on greenhouse trials that they hope to apply in the field.

USDA APHIS-PPQ

Mike Stenson reported they have two seasonal employees hired – one in North Dakota and one in South Dakota. They will do a grasshopper survey. They plan to make four emerald ash borer bio control releases in Grant and Codington counties this year. He also reported that they might not be able to mail out as many spongy moth traps as in the past and may have to cut back on the ones sent to Master Gardeners.

Other Reports

Nate Jagim asked about blowing soil. Bill Smith said anyone can file a complaint with their local conservation district and they have 30 days to respond. It involves a site visit and investigative work with the local NRCS office to get a resolution. Bill Smith also answered a timber sale question that was asked.

Old Business

Fall Tour in District 3

Discussion was held on having a fall tour in District 3 following the September Commission Meeting. Several sites and ideas were discussed. Deb Schultz made a motion, seconded by Christina Bennett, to not have a fall tour in District 3. Roll Call: Bauer – no; Bennett – yes; Feickert – no; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – no; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried to not having a fall tour.

There was discussion on zebra mussels and invasive species. Game Fish and Parks offered to show how then inspect boats for those species, suggesting that the Commission could go to the river to view this after the September Commission Meeting.

New Business

Turner County Conference Attendance Medical Exemption Request

A letter from Turner County was received explaining that their weed supervisor was in the hospital during the Weed and Pest Conference and they were unable to get another person to attend the Conference on such short notice. They were asking for an exemption from the Commission to allow them to receive the full contractual grant. A motion was made by Darren Bauer, seconded by Ryan Wendinger, to allow the exemption so Turner County could receive the full contractual grant in FY2028. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Bennett – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Weed & Pest Conference 2026 & 2027

Gary Pribyl reported that there were 171 people registered for the 2026 Conference. There were eight exhibitors and four sponsors. Gary went over financial details from the 2026 Conference. The 2027 Weed and Pest Conference will be held February 24-26 at The Best Western Ramkota in Aberdeen.

Christina Bennett left the meeting.

Long Range Directives

The Long Range Directives were presented. Brenda Sievers explained the changes made to the document from last year. Discussion was held on the document. A motion was made by Brock Greenfield, seconded by Dennis Feickert to approve the Long Range Directives as presented. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Annual Work Plan

The Annual Work Plan was presented. Brenda Sievers went over the changes made, including the new dates on the calendar of events. Discussion was held on the document and possible dates for the September Commission Meeting. The Commission Meeting is scheduled for District 3 on September 15, at 10:30 am at the Matthews Training Center in the Foss Building in Pierre. A motion was made by Dennis Feickert, seconded by Charles Verhulst, to approve the Annual Work Plan as presented, with the corrections to the fall meeting information. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Elections

Chairman Kurtenbach turned the meeting over to Brenda Sievers to conduct elections. Sievers called for nominations for Chairman. Dennis Feickert nominated Darwin Kurtenbach for Chairman. Darren Bauer nominated Dennis Feickert for Chairman. Roll call vote was held. Bauer – Feickert; Feickert – Kurtenbach; Greenfield – Kurtenbach; Schultz – Feickert; Verhulst – Feickert; Wendinger – Kurtenbach; Kurtenbach - Feickert. Dennis Feickert was elected as the Chairman. Motion carried.

Sievers turned the meeting back to Chairman Kurtenbach, who called for nominations for Vice-Chairman position. Darren Bauer nominated Darwin Kurtenbach. A motion was made by Darren Bauer, seconded by Ryan Wendinger, to have nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot for Darwin Kurtenbach for Vice-Chairman. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment Period

Chairman Kurtenbach opened the meeting for public comments. Steve Molengraaf, Codington County Weed Supervisor, asked a few questions about emerald ash borer and firewood being sold via Facebook. Sievers and Smith addressed the questions and requested any posts found be sent to the department so they can follow up on them, since not all sites are accessible to the general public.

Approval of Bills

A motion was made by Ryan Wendinger, seconded by Brock Greenfield, to pay the meeting expenses, salary and per diem for meetings attended. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Brock Greenfield, seconded by Dennis Feickert, to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call: Bauer – yes; Feickert – yes; Greenfield – yes; Schultz – yes; Verhulst – yes; Wendinger – yes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 pm.

Brenda Sievers
Commission Secretary

Dennis Feickert, Commission Chairman
(Approved Minutes)