

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

April 9, 2025 – 1:00 pm CT

Capitol Lake Visitors Center, 650 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD

Chairman Darwin Kurtenbach called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

Members Present: Commissioners Bruce Helbig, Darwin Kurtenbach, Chuck Anderson, Deb Schultz, Association of SD County Commissioners representative Lynn Deibert; 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 representative Bill Smith; and Commission Secretary and Plant Industry Program Manager Brenda Sievers.

Bruce Helbig made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Brock Greenfield. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Brock Greenfield, seconded by Christina Bennett, to approve the minutes from Meeting 1 and Meeting 2 held on February 19. Motion carried.

Activity Reports

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

Brenda Sievers reported that contractual grant amounts for FY2026 full grant was \$7,600 and the grant agreements have gone out to the counties. Sievers also reported on the CAPS program - funding hasn't been secured yet, the State Survey Coordinator for the CAPS program is still scheduled to begin the first week of June and gave information about the upcoming survey plans. Sievers also explained the purpose for the CAPS work, which is to not only maintain export status by surveying for pests and diseases of export significance, it is also for early detection, should pests be found doing the survey work.

District Reports

District reports were given by Darwin Kurtenbach, District 2 – attended the Union County Annual Meeting; Bruce Helbig, District 3 – gave report on Hyde, Hand and Hughes County Meeting held in Harold; Chuck Anderson, District 4 – reported that they have top soil moisture of 4-6 inches, but rest is dry; and Deb Schultz, At Large – reported her area is dry and they are short of moisture.

Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Bill Smith, Division Director of Resource Conservation & Forestry, reported the State Conservation District met the day prior to this meeting and awarded grants; counties were requesting assistance with plantings since NRCS doesn't have the money; gave an update on Riparian Buffer Initiative Program; ARPA fund report; will be an open meeting law change effective July 1, 2025 that will require publication and review of open meeting laws annually, and it will be on the September agenda for the Weed and Pest Control Commission.

Department of Game Fish & Parks

Ryan Wendinger reported they are getting ready for the spring season and have funds available to do noxious weed control. He also talked about the CREP program on pause.

Department of Transportation

Christina Bennett reported they spent \$875,000 on fall spraying. Bid letting has been taking place and there were 30 spraying contracts across the state issued for just under \$1 million.

School and Public Lands

Commissioner Brock Greenfield reported on the grasshopper spraying program. They get calls and try to keep lands and efforts on the up and up to be a good neighbor.

Association of SD County Commissioners

Lynn Deibert reported that it is dry across the state and fall spraying in his area was too dry. The Western Interstate Meeting of County Commissioners will be held in Rapid City in May.

USDA APHIS-PPQ

Mike Stenson reported on the spongy moth trapping program. They will not be hiring seasonals this year and will prioritize with staff to do grasshopper survey work. The emerald ash borer bio control project was approved for Brookings County, but uncertain if they will have staffing at the rearing facility.

Other Reports

Jeremiah Phelps gave an update on the annual meetings that he attended and presented at. He also talked about the concern in central South Dakota with palmer amaranth.

Old Business

No old business to report.

New Business

Weed & Pest Conference 2025 & 2026

Gary Pribyl reported there were 155 people registered for the 2025 Conference. The 2026 Weed and Pest Conference will be held February 18-20 at The Lodge in Deadwood. Pribyl also reported there may be a change in dates for the 2027 Conference, which may include moving to a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday conference instead of the current Wednesday, Thursday and Friday conference, and possibly moving the conference into April. No decision has been made yet on that.

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 Chuck Anderson, seconded by Bruce Helbig to approve the Long Range Directives as presented. 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. The fall Commission Meeting is scheduled for District 2 on September 10th, with the fall tour September 11th. Discussion was held on the document. A motion was made by Ryan Wendinger, seconded by Christina Bennett, to approve the Annual Work Plan as presented. Motion carried.

Discussion of FY2027 Grant Criteria

As a follow-up to the February meeting, there was discussion about the costs of controlling salt cedar, which can be about \$200 per acre to control, and \$30 to \$35 per acre for herbicide costs. Nathan Jagim of Meade County stated that salt cedar must be sprayed, since other methods do not work. Several commission members spoke on salt cedar funding concerns, the years for funding, and salt cedar acre numbers are down statewide.

A motion was made by Bruce Helbig, seconded by Brock Greenfield, to take a task force out to look at the salt cedar situation. Motion carried.

Those planning to view the salt cedar include Chairman Kurtenbach, Bruce Helbig, Chuck Anderson, and Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources staff.

Elections

Chairman Kurtenbach turned the meeting over to Brenda Sievers to conduct elections. Sievers called for nominations for Chairman. Chuck Anderson nominated Darwin Kurtenbach for Chairman. A motion was made by Chuck Anderson, seconded by Brock Greenfield, to have nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot for Darwin Kurtenbach for Chairman. Motion carried. Sievers turned the meeting back over to Chairman Kurtenbach.

Chairman Kurtenbach called for nominations for Vice-Chairman position. Bruce Helbig nominated Lynn Deibert. A motion was made by Ryan Wendinger, seconded by Christina Bennett, to have nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot for Lynn Deibert for Vice-Chairman. Motion carried.

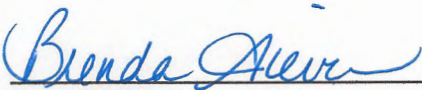
Public Comment Period

Chairman Kurtenbach opened the meeting for public comments. Bruce Helbig brought up that Eric Jones, SDSU Weed Specialist, is a diminishing resource and suggested the Commission draft a letter of support for continued funding. Nathan Jagim talked about the Black Hills Invasive Plant Partnership. Hoary alyssum was found and sprayed, but the Black Hills no longer has a Noxious Weed/Invasive Species Manager. Chuck Anderson talked about the grasslands area near Lemmon. They have a \$260,000 budget for noxious weed control but there are no plans for control in 2025.

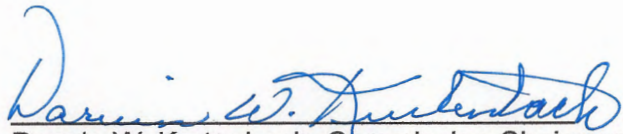
Approval of Bills

A motion was made by Brock Greenfield, seconded by Ryan Wendinger, to pay the meeting expenses, salary and per diem for meetings attended. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Deb Schultz, seconded by Chuck Anderson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.



Brenda Sievers
Commission Secretary



Darwin W. Kurtenbach, Commission Chairman
(Approved Minutes)