

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ANNUAL WEED & PEST CONTROL COMMISSION MEETING
September 10, 2024 – 1:00 pm CT
Saints Room, AmericInn, 301 Centennial St S, Aberdeen, SD

Chairman Darwin Kurtenbach called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm, September 10, 2024.

Members Present: Commissioners Dennis Feickert, Bruce Helbig, Darwin Kurtenbach, Chuck Anderson, Deb Schultz, Association of SD County Commissioners Representative Lynn Deibert; Department of Transportation Representative Christina Bennett (remote); Game Fish & Parks representative Ryan Wendinger; and School and Public Lands representative Brock Greenfield. Non-Voting Members - SD Department of Agriculture representative Bill Smith; SDSU Representative Eric Jones (remote); and Commission Secretary and Plant Industry Program Manager Brenda Sievers. (Exhibit #1)

Brock Greenfield made a motion to approve the agenda (Exhibit #2). Seconded by Bruce Dennis Feickert. Motion carried.

Two changes were made to the draft minutes, including striking the “remote” after Brock Greenfield’s name in paragraph 2 on page 1, and on page 2 paragraph 2 – changing it to say “joined the meeting”. A motion was made by Chuck Anderson, seconded by Ryan Wendinger, to approve the minutes from April 11th, after making those changes. Motion carried.

Activity Reports

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

Brenda Sievers reported that the CAPS position is not filled yet but anticipate opening it again soon. Jeremiah Phelps has worked with Sievers to get the survey work done. Other staff have helped pick up traps that remained when the interns were done for the season. Sievers has submitted the FY2025 CAPS proposals. Sievers also reported on the emerald ash borer (EAB) detection that took place in Brookings in July, which that county has now been added as a quarantine area in South Dakota. There was an EAB detection in early September in North Dakota about 60 miles north of Aberdeen at a rest area in a remote area along highway 281. Plans are in place to remove those ash trees.

Weed & Pest Program Specialist Report – Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Jeremiah Phelps reported on enforcement actions taken by counties. There has been a huge increase in prairie dog complaints this year. Phelps has been meeting with new weed supervisors since there are several new ones. Counties have done a good job taking care of complaints.

District Reports

District reports were given by Dennis Feickert, District 1 – moisture has been hit and miss northwest of Aberdeen, saw and increase in yellow toadflax, wormwood sage had a good year as well; Darwin Kurtenbach, District 2 – Canada Thistle seems to be down this year – didn’t see major infestations and phragmites has increased, wormwood sage in his district is being controlled, concern about grasshoppers; Bruce Helbig, District 3 – seed head weevil in sunflowers seems to have acres down considerably, crops are getting sprayed for grasshoppers; Chuck Anderson, District 4 – average moisture in his area early, but in July it shut off and now are dry, talked about issues with enforcement affected by drought, Forest Service received funding for spraying, but haven’t seen much progress, Meade County grasshopper spraying really helped but it was privately funded; he did receive extra colonies of bees since grasshoppers had taken forage; Deb Schultz, At Large – wet areas in April and May, saw lots of Canada Thistle problems, grasshoppers are covering everything.

Association of SD County Commissioners

Lynn Deibert reported lots of people spraying soybeans for grasshoppers. He is also seeing more yellow toadflax to control.

Department of Transportation

Christina Bennett reported about \$950,000 was spent on weed spraying, with \$250,000 of that on interstate highways. She talked about the pollinator habitat areas and they did mowing in May to stimulate the pollinator growth and suppress the smooth brome grass.

Department of Game Fish & Parks

Ryan Wendinger reported they had sprayed 6,000 acres on Game Production Areas and it was a good year to get spraying done. Some water areas filled up and they are mowing and clipping as well. Fall spraying is planned on many sites. Ryan mentioned the Good Bad and Noxious tour – which will be next year, with plans to move it near the Highmore or Sioux Falls area.

School and Public Lands

Brock Greenfield introduced Josh Klumb, who recently started working in the Mitchell area as a Senior Policy Advisor. Josh will attend meetings that Brock is unable to make. School and Public Lands spent about \$66,000 on grasshopper control and utilized cost share with lessees for that control. There are some areas that have concerns with prairie dogs. State lands do get controlled, but there are issues in other areas. BLM areas were also discussed.

SDSU

Eric Jones explained how his position has changed from those who previously held the position, as expectations are different than before. Eric is on a tenured track, and he has research dollars and graduate students. Eric will not abandon his Extension work but is hoping to get graduate students to assist. Also, leadership at SDSU is changing. Dave Vos and Jill Alms are still doing the research plots. Eric is on the committee to hire the position formerly held by Dr. Sharon Clay.

Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Bill Smith, Division Director of Resource Conservation & Forestry, reported on Forest Service weed and pest funds available to those counties with adjoining property. Dr. John Ball investigated a lot of emerald ash borer complaints. Also, street tree inventories in smaller communities were done and a few trees are removed each year.

APHIS

Mike Stenson showed and reported on the adult grasshopper map. The grasshopper treatments really drove the numbers down for the grasshoppers. Some areas were treated privately, but experienced lower per acre costs when many landowners participated together. Mike also updated on the spongy moth program. Of the 500 traps placed, there was one positive in the Black Hills region when the mid-summer check took place. For EAB bio control, they are in year 2 of releases in Brandon. Dakota Dunes area was also new for releases this year, but due to flooding, had to abandon the site for this year. The hope is to start over with releases next year.

Bio Control

Jeremiah Phelps gave an update on the bio control program and the work on yellow toadflax with *Rhinusa pilosa*.

Public Comment Period

Chairman Kurtenbach opened the meeting for public comments. Nathan Mueller said that the Game Fish and Parks works very well with them in the northeastern part of the state. They also assist with the Good Bad and Noxious Tour held each year. Brenda Sievers brought up that the green weed book supply is just about depleted.

Old Business

DakotaFest

Darwin Kurtenbach and Gary Pribyl reported on the booth. With a rainy and delayed start to the show, day one wasn't well attended. The second day was good, but the third day wasn't as well attended. Eric Jones answered the questions that perhaps commodity prices were affecting the attendance at the show.

State Fair

Gary Pribyl reported 574 registrations were taken at the booth. Brenda Sievers, Jeremiah Phelps, and Darwin Kurtenbach reported on booth activity and an abundance of good questions.

Brown County Fair

Jeremiah Phelps stated they received ID questions and Chris Hemen also gave attendance info.

New Business

Grant Criteria for FY2025

The grant criteria for the FY2026 fiscal year was discussed. The Commission has \$500,000 for spending authority. Brenda Sievers gave an overview of the changes presented, including updated dates on the criteria for the upcoming Weed & Pest Conference. Lynn Deibert proposed not having cost share for the grants, and that was discussed at length. A motion was made by Ryan Wendinger, seconded by Dennis Feickert, to allow \$200,000 for competitive grants and \$300,000 for regular/contractual grants. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Chuck Anderson, seconded by Brock Greenfield, to approve the regular/contractual grant criteria as presented, including in the event that a county or counties don't qualify for funding, the remaining funds will be divided equally to the nearest \$100, amongst those remaining counties that have met the requirements, without exceeding spending authority. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Dennis Feickert, seconded by Ryan Wendinger, to change the reimbursement rates for those using their own equipment instead of using it for in kind work on the competitive grant criteria to \$60 per hour for tractor; \$50 per hour for ATV, including 4Wheelers and Rangers; and \$60 per hour for pickup/truck sprayer. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Brock Greenfield, seconded by Dennis Feickert, to approve the competitive grant criteria as it was presented after making the reimbursement rate change. Motion carried.

Chairman Kurtenbach appointed the following to the grant committee to go over the grants and make a recommendation for funding to the full Commission at the February meeting: Darwin Kurtenbach, Dennis Feickert, Brock Greenfield, a SDSU Representative, and a DANR Representative.

Weed & Pest Conference 2025

The 2025 Conference will be held February 19-21, 2025, in Huron at the Crossroads Hotel and Huron Event Center. They will plan a time during the Conference for district meetings to conduct Association of SD County Weed and Pest Boards business, since it was decided to no longer hold fall district weed meetings.

For the contractual/regular grant, Sievers requested a change in the ending date of the grant. There were over 25 counties that requested their funding after May 15, 2023, which made it very difficult to process by the fiscal year end deadline. Sievers requested the dates for the FY2025 contractual/regular grant be set at July 1, 2024 to May 20, 2025, to better allow for processing of reimbursements. A motion was made by Dennis Feickert, seconded by Chuck Anderson, to leave the grant criteria the same as last year except for changes to the dates in the grant/criteria and the amendments suggested by Sievers, including in the event that a county or counties don't qualify for funding, the remaining funds will be divided equally to the nearest \$100, amongst those remaining counties that have met the requirements, without exceeding spending authority. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills

A motion was made by Lynn Deibert, seconded by Bruce Helbig, to pay the meeting expenses, salary and per diem for meetings attended. Motion carried.

Chairman Kurtenbach declared the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Brenda Sievers
Commission Secretary

Darwin W. Kurtenbach, Commission Chairman
(Approved Minutes)