



ANNUAL BROWN COUNTY WEED & PEST BOARD MINUTES

March 14, 2023

**Brown County Courthouse Community Room ~ 25 Market Street,
Aberdeen, SD**

Present: Duane Jark, Tyler Bierman, Bill Donaldson, Drew Dennert, Jeremiah Phelps (DANR), and Chris Hemen - Weed & Pest Supervisor.

Duane Jark called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and introduced the Weed Board.

The meeting agenda was presented. Owen Elsen made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and Tom Stelily seconded, motion carried.

The 2022 minutes were presented by Duane Jark. Tom Stelily made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Owen Elsen seconded, motion carried.

The new 2023 Weed & Pest Board President/Chairman, Bill Donaldson was appointed, and Troy Knecht was appointed as the Vice President.

Chris Hemen gave the supervisor's report. He presented the fiscal report, inspection summary, and annual reports that he is required to submit to the Dept. of Ag each year. He noted that in the fiscal report, the Weed & Pest Dept. was able to recoup \$26,123.47 in expenses to the budget through private spraying and mosquito control. We were also able to finish the year under budget. Lastly, he gave a summary of 2022 activities in the department. It was noted that Brown County Weed and Pest struggled with dry conditions in the fall. We were able to get a few townships completed but would have liked to do more. We won't know the effectiveness of our spraying until later this spring. For 2023, we plan on trying to do more spring spraying for townships just because we always run out of time in the fall. However, with all the snow we still have, we could have standing water in the ditches and we'll have to wait until those dry up before we can spray.

Diane Bruns asked about salt cedar trees in the area. About 3 or 4 years ago, we had some reported in northern Brown County. We were able to cut down and stump treat 3 plants. Follow up inspections in that area have been difficult due to high water, but we continue to monitor that area on a regular basis. Last year, we found one salt cedar plant growing in the pit next to the fairgrounds. That area has a lot of fill dumped there, so that plant could have come from anywhere. We cut it down and treated the stump, so we will continue to monitor the area. This is a good reminder that no matter how big a weed can get, it can still hide in plain sight if you're not looking for it.

Hemen also mentioned that Brown County has been approved for a \$2,000 competitive grant for the release of *mecinus janthinus* for the control of yellow toadflax. Jeremiah Phelps has been doing releases in the state and early results look promising for getting these biological control agents established.

Bill Donaldson mentioned that in early 2022, he, along with the rest of the Weed & Pest department went to Ordway Prairie in McPherson County for a plant identification tour. Chris Hemen stated that we learned a lot about native plants and how much biodiversity there is in a small area like that.

Chris Hemen then reviewed the chemical costs and labor and equipment rates for the Townships and mosquito accounts for the upcoming 2023 season. The hourly rate will be staying the same for 2023 as it was in 2022. Chemical prices aren't expected to increase much this year (for the chemicals we use on a regular basis). We already have a good-sized stockpile of Tordon and Overdrive, plus we're sitting pretty good on glyphosate. The bid for chemicals is set to be opened in 2 weeks.

Chris Hemen then introduced the Weed & Pest employees, Jerry Lehrkamp and Mike Rorhbach. They will be returning from the Highway Dept. this spring and we all look forward to getting back to spraying weeds. He encouraged anyone to feel free to ask any questions or report any problem areas to any of the Weed & Pest employees. He also thanked Jeremiah Phelps and the Department of Ag and Natural Resources for being a big help to the county. Jeremiah is always available to offer advice and more than willing to come to the area to help with inspections.

Next, Chris gave an update on the budget for 2023. We are budgeting just slightly less than last year, but still hoping to come in well under budget providing we don't have any major repairs or other maintenance issues.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Drew Dennert made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tyler Bierman, meeting adjourned.

After the meeting, Jeremiah Phelps from the Department of Ag and Natural Resources gave presentation on bio-control efforts for yellow toadflax and how *mecinus janthinus* (stem mining weevils) help with control. He also gave an update about *ventenata* (invasive grass species) being found in Western South Dakota.

Respectfully yours,



Chris Hemen
Brown County Weed and Pest