



Colorado First Conservation District
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145 Commerce Street Craig, CO 81625

Moffat County Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Program Committee February 10, 2026 · Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:02PM. Roll call was performed with the following members of the Moffat County GrSG Working Group and grant applicants in attendance:

Kacey Green, CFCD GrSG Administrator	Desa Ausmus – BLM Wildlife Specialist
Mark Lowrey, CFCD GrSG Project Manager	Rebecca Burton - Community Member
Cassie Lamb - CFCD GrSG Monitor	Seth Schwolert - CPW Wildlife Officer
Nick Charchallis - CFCD GrSG Member	Jeff Comstock - Moffat County
Stephen Hinkemeyer - CFCD GrSG Member	Mike Chesna - Applicant/Landowner
Doug Davis – Landowner Representative	Kym Hampton - BLM
Stacy Grey - Applicant/Landowner	

Adoption of the Agenda/Review and Approval of Minutes

Desa made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, Rebecca seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BLM Update - Kymm Hampton

CFCD approved an amendment to the sage-grouse funding to allocate additional funds into the appropriate budget account. Kacey updated the budget to incorporate the White River offices, bringing the total funding amount to approximately \$2.6 million. Kymm reported that she recently met with multiple partner groups and received positive feedback on the updated proposal, which highlighted the types of projects currently being implemented.

Desa explained that BLM is conducting pinyon-juniper (PJ) mastication projects near the northeastern portion of Sand Wash to improve sage-grouse habitat. Another primary focus for BLM moving forward is improving brood-rearing habitat. These efforts may include projects such as Zeedyk structures to enhance mesic meadow conditions and increase habitat quality.

Kacey noted that the amended budget request seeks additional funding to improve habitat connectivity. Much of CFCD's current funding is allocated on private lands or areas adjacent to BLM lands. Moving forward, CFCD plans to coordinate more closely with BLM to identify projects in close proximity to one

another, allowing both entities to implement complementary treatments that expand project scale and improve landscape level connectivity.

Kacey explained that she requested \$1.3 million be allocated directly to habitat restoration funding, with additional funds designated for the administrative budget. Jeff noted that this amount was significantly lower than what the committee had originally proposed to request. Kacey responded that CFCD is currently expending funds at a rate of approximately \$1 million per year and felt BLM would be unlikely to approve a larger request at this time. She added that if additional funding becomes available in future years, CFCD could submit another request.

Jeff asked whether sage-grouse funding was required to be utilized in areas with a nexus to the powerline. Kym assured him that this was not a requirement, explaining that the funding applies to the entire Northwest District rather than solely Moffat County. She noted that the deposit documents do not specify that projects must directly benefit sage-grouse populations near powerlines, only that they provide sage-grouse habitat benefits.

Grant Compliance and Financial Review – Kacey Green

Project	Status	Acres	\$ Approved	Match	Notes
ZC Livestock 20250313_GSG_001	complete	724	\$74,900.00	\$14,000.00	pd
Gerber	approved	water	\$30,026.00		
Nottingham - 010	complete	236	\$29,300.00	\$7,000.00	pd
Raftopoulos - 016	complete	1,500	\$89,750.00	\$10,000.00	pd
RV Angus - 006	in process	500	\$154,000.00	\$308.00	
Visintainer - 014	complete	4,200	\$106,191.00	\$34,108.32	pd
Brosious - 017	complete	1,633	\$42,121.00		<i>Chemical \$83,968 pd with BIL</i>
Swartzell -012	in process	440	\$140,580.00		
3 Springs - 007	in process	83	\$26,912.00		
McFarland - 009	in process	water	\$33,900.00		
Charchalis South - 018	in process	2653	\$186,187.00		
K. Kawcak - 024	in process	200	\$24,125.00		
Bellio - 019	in process	104	\$13,166.00		
Pankey - 020	approved	320	\$87,190.00		
Cole - 015	in process	water - PALS	\$7,964.56		
Tallent	in process	water	\$19,864.00		

Olson	in process	32	\$5,226.90		
RAD Counts	approved	574	\$23,273.00		
Camilletti	approved	fence removal	\$13,711.00	\$1,301.00	
	TOTALS:	12,759	\$967,807.46	\$151,170.16	

- Total Acres Impacted: **12,759 acres** (*Acres Projected in Grant Language: 12,000*)
- Total Allocated to Habitat Restoration: **\$967,807.46**
- Total Remaining for Habitat Restoration: **\$912,097.65**
- Total Remaining for Conifer Removal: **\$175,000.00**

Kacey, Mark, Cassie, Kymm, and Desa are trying to figure out a way to quantify the acres impacted on water projects.

Project Updates

Cassie compiled an up to date handout showing the status of each project, shown below:

Completed: Z/C Livestock, MC/Nottingham, Raftopoulos, Visintainer, McFarland, Cole’s Ranch, Brosious, and Camilletti.

Approved/In Process: RV Angus, Swartzell, Three Springs Ranch, Gerber, Charchalis South, Kawcak_K, Pankey, Bellio, Olson, Tallent Ranch, RAD Counts, Camilletti.

For Review: Terry, Chesna, Wygant, Kawcak_FR, Vermillion.

Upcoming: Parrott, Grandbouche (five applications so far).

Parrott: The Parrott project includes spraying for Scotch thistle, anticipated for spring 2026. Following this treatment, the applicant will use a no-till drill to interseed a native grass mix and a sage grouse preferred forb mix into old agricultural fields to restore them to native range. This work is planned for fall 2026. To ensure the success of the seeding efforts, a rotational grazing system will be implemented using temporary fencing and water developments to create these pasture adjustments. Mark and Cassie are investigating the current well output, and have gathered a seed mix quote.

Grandbouche: Currently there are 5 applicants wanting to restore agricultural fields to native vegetation.

Mark shared his screen to display the project polygons he has digitized to date for the Grandbouche project. Brett Grandbouche has historically farmed these fields and has agreed to complete the labor associated with the proposed projects. The landowners have agreed to designate him as their authorized representative.

With the Grandbouche fields proposed for conversion to native rangeland, along with projects on the Brosious, Olson, Terry, and Chesna properties, a substantial contiguous area of habitat will be improved through CFCD sage-grouse funding, promoting landscape level connectivity. Committee members expressed their support for the project.

Projects to Review

Gerber/SBRJWM

There has been some miscommunication regarding funding allocations and the project timeline. As a result, HPP will not be able to provide its full approved funding amount unless an additional \$20,000 is added to complete the match identified in the HPP application.

Originally, HPP understood that CFCD would allocate \$52,026 to the project; however, following committee approval, CFCD allocated \$30,026. After the project remained inactive over the summer, HPP submitted the project to the State Council based on the original \$50,026 match amount, where it received approval. In order for the project to move forward with full funding, Mark requested that the Sage-Grouse Committee consider contributing an additional \$20,000 to fulfill the original commitment.

Colton asked how the additional \$20,000 would be spent. Kacey referred the committee to the financial overview included in their meeting packet and reviewed the full project budget, outlining each funding partner's contribution. Stacy revisited the proposal with X Field Services and obtained an updated quote that included an additional tire tank and drain. The revised financials reflect that CFCD would cover the cost of the tank and drain to support the creation of mesic meadow habitat.

Nick made a motion to approve an additional \$20,000 in funding. Doug seconded the motion. During further discussion, Mark stated that he has implemented a more efficient tracking system to prevent similar funding discrepancies in the future. Seth thanked the committee for working through the issue and honoring the full \$50,026 commitment. Stacy clarified that \$10,000 originated from the local HPP committee and approximately \$50,000 was awarded by the State HPP Council. The motion passed unanimously.

Chesna

Mark stated that he would present the Chesna and Terry projects together, as they are very similar in scope and location. Both projects involve converting former agricultural fields to native vegetation.

Terry requested that no shrub seed be included in his seed mix. In contrast, the Chesna project will include an approximately three acre cover strip along a drainage that contains shrub seed and other grasses and forbs. The seed mix for these projects will be sourced from the Swartzell project, which was previously rescinded.

Mark noted that the Terry project includes two separate seed mixes: one for a 40-acre field that includes alfalfa, and one for an 18 acre field that does not include alfalfa, as alfalfa is already established there. The two mixes are otherwise identical. The mix containing alfalfa will also be used on Chesna's 39 acre field.

Colton asked whether there are proven results supporting the use of Nitros, given its high cost. Mark responded that he has spoken with another landowner who observed benefits from its use, though results have not been consistent across all sites. Doug suggested that Nitros efficacy may depend on temperature and moisture conditions. Mark added that the cost may be more justifiable on smaller scale projects such as these.

Doug asked whether the soils in the project area are alkali. Mark stated that he did not observe alkali conditions, and Nick agreed that alkali soils should not be treated. Desa asked whether sagebrush habitat surrounds the project areas, and Mark confirmed that it does, referencing the map. Colton asked whether horses would interfere with establishment, and Mark confirmed that Terry understands the requirement for a 1.5 grazing season rest following seeding.

Desa made a motion to approve this project for \$10,421.60. Jeff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Terry

Colton reminded the committee that two different seed mixes are proposed for this project. Nick asked whether there are existing weed pressures in the fields in question, and Mark replied that there are not. Jeff suggested lightly plowing a portion of the field and seeding it separately in order to compare establishment success between the plowed area and the interseeded portion.

It was also discussed that the project could include a condition specifying that alfalfa would not be grazed or harvested for 1.5 years following seeding to ensure proper establishment.

Doug made a motion to approve the project for \$14,776. Desa seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Closing Discussion

Grandbouche Project Discussion

Doug noted that it may be beneficial to reach out to landowners farming adjacent to the Brosious property, as it represents one of the last large agricultural fields remaining in that area. He added that Brett Grandbouche also farms this block. Mark agreed that expanding outreach in this area would support the goal of creating contiguous blocks of agricultural fields converted to native rangeland.

Steve expressed concern regarding the landowner contribution. He stated that revenue has likely been generated from winter wheat production on these fields and questioned whether a 5% match is sufficient given that CFCD would be fully rehabilitating the agricultural ground. Mark acknowledged that a 5% match is low and stated that he plans to provide a more detailed financial breakdown, including acreage and cost analysis, in the coming weeks.

Steve asked whether there were updated financials for the Wygant/Bobcat project. Seth replied that he did not have specific numbers at the time but was scheduled to meet with a contractor experienced in similar projects who already works with CPW. Seth indicated that CPW may be able to utilize its track skid steer to complete the project more efficiently and at a lower cost than previously proposed.

Discussion on 5% Match

Mark stated that a 5% match has worked well for many projects, particularly those where a higher contribution might quickly price landowners out of participation. However, he suggested that for lower cost projects where the landowner is contributing cash only, the committee could consider increasing the required percentage. He noted that in-kind labor contributions demonstrate a greater level of investment from the landowner.

Colton stated that he does not object to purchasing seed for agricultural field conversions but expressed concern about using grant funds to pay for drilling costs, particularly if the landowner intends to convert the field out of production regardless of funding assistance.

Kacey had mentioned that she can take the 5% match language off of the website so it is not advertised that way, giving the committee more freedom to adjust the ask on a project by project basis.

**The next meeting of the MCGSG group will be:
Tuesday, March 10, 2026, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm
In the NRCS office conference room.**

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Doug, Nick seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:18 PM.