



Colorado First Conservation District  
 970-329-3145  
 145 Commerce Street Craig, CO 81625

**Moffat County Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Program Committee**  
**June 10, 2025 · Meeting Minutes**

Roll Call was performed with the following members of the MC GrSG Working Group and grant applicants in attendance:

Colton Murray, CFCD GSG chair  
 Stephen Hinkemeyer, CFCD GSG member  
 Kacey Green, CFCD GSG Administrator  
 Mark Lowrey, CFCD GSG Project Manager  
 Cassie Lamb - CFCD GSG Monitor  
 Randan Vincent - RV Bar Applicant  
 Rebecca Burton - Community member

Nick Charchalis, CFCD GSG member  
 Desa Ausmus – BLM Wildlife Specialist  
 Doug Davis – Landowner Representative  
 Jeff Comstock – Moffat County  
 Adam Tucker – Mountain Spray  
 Gary Visintainer - Applicant

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes were reviewed and discussed. A motion was made by Steve to approve the minutes as written, Desa made the correction that Stacy thought it was a hard sell to HPP. Steve amended the motion. Doug seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Grant Compliance and Financial Review – Kacey Green**

Not many updates on budget. There are three projects that have money allocated to them that have been through the committee and board approval.

	<u>Total Budget</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Remaining</u>
Habitat Restoration	\$2,032,605.11	\$135,326	\$1,897,279.11
Conifer Removal	\$175,000.00	0	\$175,000.00

**Update on NFWF Funds - Jeff Comstock**

Alan, Doug Vilsack, and Kymm Gresset have been in conversation about moving juniper removal and conservation easement money into the Conservation District. They have acknowledged the positive work that CFCD has been doing and would like to see more projects result from more funding. \$2 million dollars was the number thrown out. While no decisions were made, CFCD should eventually make a formal request with project summaries to show the

sage grouse habitat improvement work we have been doing so far. There should be approximately \$27 million in the conservation easement pot.

## **Projects to Review**

### **RV Bar Angus:**

This project is proposed to remove decadent sagebrush in a mosaic pattern. Protecting and restoring grazing landscapes to desired vegetation composition, including shrubs, forbs and grasses and fire fuels reductions benefit both GrSG and domestic and wild ungulates. Including invasive annual grass spray (funded from other sources) to mitigate occurrences in treated areas.

This project was tabled during our last meeting. Additional data collection was requested. 34%-58% sagebrush cover was calculated with four transects. Bulbous bluegrass was observed during data collection and thought Rejuvra application post-sagebrush removal would be beneficial. GrSG funding is only paying for decadent sagebrush removal - ATB and BIL will fund herbicide and application (pending approval). See cost breakdown below:

Project Total Estimate: \$ 208,240.50

Landowner contribution: \$ 21,000 (*time, labor, fuel, maintenance, equipment, etc.*) 10.5%

Other grant funding sources *Pending*: \$33,240.50

**GSG Requested Amount: \$154,000.00**

Sagebrush mowing contractors were difficult to find to tackle a project of this size (500 acres) - most only do projects of 1-2 acres. Based on similar project quotes, \$350/acre is allocated to sage removal. This includes time, labor, fuel, equipment, maintenance, etc. Nick asked Randy if his equipment was suited for this project. Randy has done similar work to this before, but not to this scale. This proposal was sent to Dominic Barrett with NFWF for his review, and he was in full support.

Conversation around how large scale and expensive this project is resulted in the majority agreeing that acres impacted rather than projects approved was acceptable and preferred.

Jeff moved to approve RV Bar project, Doug seconded. Jeff mentioned we are going to be able to justify this project from a sage cover perspective, currently being considered marginal. Motion passes.

### **Kawcak**

This project is proposed to 1.) Install new 4-strand wildlife friendly fence (2.5 miles). 2.) Aerial spray 171 acres for Prickly pear cactus. 3.) Seed with sage grouse preferred forbs. 4.) Provide riverbank stabilization to protect riverside habitat.

This property has a history of livestock trespass from adjacent BLM land. It does not have a good forb component, however it does have a decent existing perennial grass and sagebrush population. This area is connected to a large core habitat area.

The river bank is washing away adjacent to an ag field. It's cutting in and will eventually hinder access across the property. Erosion is occurring on the west side causing the east floodplain to dry and establish sagebrush. The goal is to reenergize the east floodplain to create a mesic habitat and prevent further erosion on the west bank. Mark is proposing to apply sideload dumps of rip rap and rock with no engineering.

Because Colorado is a fenceout state, BLM has said no to helping fund a new fence. It was determined that a new construction permanent fence was most likely not in the funding language. Kacey mentioned she was going to look into putting up temporary fencing in the reseeded area to fence out trespass cows and wild horses to protect treated area.

Steve makes a motion to deny this project. Doug seconds. Nick mentioned temporary fence might be a budget friendly option to fence out livestock, which fits within funding language. Motion passes.

### **Visintainer**

This project is proposed to 1.) Aerial spray approximately 4,200 acres to control invasive annual grasses; 2.) Install two wildlife friendly watering locations with mesic drains to provide point source for mesic development in the Spring Creek drainage. Wells are in place; project would be solar conversion and watering/drain infrastructures.

Multiple active leks within brood areas, production area, and winter range. Surrounded by growth opportunity areas. If we were to approve this, the gap between the project area in question and other treated project areas. Some light sheep grazing has been done this year.

Herbicide application: 4200 acres of Rejuvra to target cheatgrass. In priority habitat. Burned in fire twice around 1996 and again around 2008. Currently a cheatgrass monoculture. Gary has done similar treatments nearby with USFW in 2022-2023, which our treatment will compliment the work he has already done. Mark is going to move the current treatment area polygon to connect with previous treatments done to create a continuous stretch of treated acres.

Well upgrade: Wells are currently there. Need new pumps, solar, and 20-30 feet of pipe. Gary has tanks. The main objective is to overflow the tank to a drainage to create a wet meadow, not necessarily to provide livestock water.

Desa moved, Doug seconds. Discussion: \$106,191.68 haven't spent any BIL money, and Dominic said BIL funding might be going away so it needs to be spent sooner than later. Doug and Nick suggest adjust the polygon/area of interest to connect into previously treated areas. Motion passes.

### **Raftopolous**

This aerial spray project of 1500 acres using Rejuvra is a targeted effort to control the spread of cheatgrass—an invasive species that degrades rangeland and displaces native vegetation. By reducing cheatgrass cover, we are enhancing the health and resilience of native plant communities, which directly supports improved forage quality and biodiversity.

Cassie collected transect data on the area of interest. There was no perennial grass indicators on the data collected, however there were some observed during the site visit. RangeView is going to be used as a monitoring tool; Cassie and Mark are going to meet with Envu/RangeView next week to get quotes and more information.

Project Total Estimate: \$ 99,750.00  
Landowner contribution: \$ 5,000 (5%)  
Other grant funding Source: HPP - \$5,000  
**GSG Requested Amount: \$89,750**

Jeff moved to approve Raftopolous' spray project. Steve seconded. Motion passes.

### **Z/C Livestock Project Update**

Photo points from three different times were passed around the room for all to view. Three transect datasets were collected post-treatment. All information gathered was included in a handout, Cassie highlighted main points. Colton gave a brief history of the project area; Fall of 23 vertical tilled it, basically seeding in with weeks. Sitting fallowed in 2024.

### **Closing Discussion**

Steve asked Kacey to put tabled projects on the agenda to prevent them from getting lost track of.

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**The next meeting of the MCGSG group will be Tuesday, July 8, 2025, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the NRCS office conference room.**

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Desa and seconded by Doug. The motion passed unanimously.