



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

Moffat County Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Program Committee July 14, 2026 · Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM. 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
Mark Lowrey, CFCD GrSG Project Manager
Cassie Lamb - CFCD GrSG Monitor
Nick Charchallis - CFCD GrSG Member
Stephen Hinkemeyer - CFCD GrSG Member
Doug Davis – CFCD GrSG Member
Colton Murray - CPW/CFCD Member
David Stoffle - Applicant
Ramey Hill - Applicant

Jeff Comstock - Moffat County
Rebecca Burton - GrSG Member
Desa Ausmus - BLM Biologist
Kristin Ross - CPW Biologist
Chad Green - Applicant
Mark Doehling - Applicant
Shane & Aftyn Kawcak - Applicant
Gary Ellgen - Applicant

Adoption of the Agenda/Review and Approval of Minutes

Nick made a motion to approve the agenda. Doug seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve noted that the Bekkedahl project financials reflected in the previous meeting minutes do not match the amounts approved by the Board and requested that the minutes be corrected accordingly.

Nick made a motion to adopt the previous meeting minutes with the Bekkedahl financial edit. Desa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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	in process	water	\$50,026.00		
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	\$83,968.00	<i>Chemical \$83,968 pd with BIL</i>
-12	Rescinded	-	-		
3 Springs - 007	in process	83	\$26,912.00		
McFarland - 009	in process	water	\$37,244.00		<i>invoice rcvd - need approval</i>
Charchalis South - 018	in process	2653	\$186,187.00		
K. Kawcak - 024	approved	-	-		<i>Redacted - reapplied, see 039</i>
Bellio - 019	in process	104	\$13,166.00		
Pankey - 020	in process	320	\$87,190.00	\$79,090.00	<i>partially pd</i>
Cole - 015	complete	water - PALS	\$7,964.56	\$484.84	pd
Tallent - 022	in process	water	\$19,864.00		<i>invoice rcvd - need match</i>
Olson - 027	complete	32	\$5,226.90	\$5,226.90	pd
RAD Counts - 005	in process	574	\$23,273.00		<i>partially pd</i>
Camilletti - 026	complete	fence removal	\$13,711.00	\$13,711.00	pd
Chesna - 029	in process	39	\$10,421.60		
Terry - 028	in process	58	\$14,776.00		
Taylor - 030	in process	800	\$66,600.00		
J Kawchack - 031	in process	734	\$61,106.00		
RD Kawchack - 032	in process	57	\$2,736.00		
B. VanMatre - 033	in process	384	\$29,261.00		
J. Cook - 034	approved	40	\$1,920.00		
Duzik - 035	in process	fence removal	\$27,036.00		
G. Williams - 036	in process	72	\$3,456.00		
<i>Ocker - 037</i>	<i>approved</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>approved thru BIL - funding</i>	
Balleck - 038	approved	457	\$24,125.03		
K. Kawcak - 029	approved	681	\$35,949.99		
Bekkedahl - 041	approved	2301	\$160,990.00		
	TOTALS:	18,182	\$1,395,012.51		

Total Acres Impacted: **18,182 acres** (Acres Projected in Grant Language: 12,000)

-Total Allocated to Habitat Restoration: \$1,395,012.51

-Total Remaining for Habitat Restoration: \$1,484,892.60

-Total Remaining for Conifer Removal: \$135,605.00

Kacey noted that several smaller spray projects previously approved through the sage-grouse funding program, including the Ocker project, were reassigned to alternative funding sources. She explained that the current habitat restoration funding balance has been updated to reflect these changes.

Kacey mentioned that the Charchalis South project approved last year has begun, and chemical prices have increased from \$52.48 to \$52.79. She asked the committee if they could increase the project costs to reflect this price increase.

Jeff made a motion to raise the Charchalis South project by approximately \$500 to match the chemical cost increase. Doug seconded. Nick abstained from the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Kacey explained that several of the projects being reviewed during the meeting include BLM acreage, and staff is still uncertain which entity is responsible for funding treatment on those federal lands. She noted that following a meeting with Kymm a few days earlier, there was still confusion regarding financial responsibility for BLM acres included within CFCD projects.

Desa stated that, based on Kymm's perspective, CFCD should consider funding smaller BLM parcels when doing so makes geographic and management sense within a project. Kacey asked what would be considered a "small" acreage. Desa was unsure, while Nick suggested that landlocked or boundary BLM parcels should be considered eligible for CFCD funding.

Desa explained that she and Chris Rhyne have previously discussed using BLM Section 8100 and 8200 funding for these situations when the affected BLM acreage is associated with an active grazing allotment. She added that Chris also has remaining funding from another source that may be available. In addition, Desa noted that Chris needs a specific line item included in the county agreement in order to access another grant administered jointly between CFCD and BLM. Because that agreement remains active for one more year, the remaining funds may be available to support eligible sage-grouse projects. She added that for projects CFCD is unable to fully fund, staff could request assistance from Chris through these funding sources when projects meet the applicable requirements.

Steve suggested that the committee proceed by approving projects as though CFCD will fund all eligible BLM acreage and then pursue available BLM funding afterward to offset costs where possible.

Following extensive discussion, the committee agreed to use 100 acres as the threshold for the amount of BLM acreage CFCD would consider funding per project (not per parcel). However, members emphasized that this is intended to serve as a guideline rather than a strict policy. Each project will continue to be evaluated on a case by case basis, allowing the committee to consider the practicality and unique circumstances of individual projects when determining whether to fund BLM acreage.

Kacey asked the committee how they would like to handle the 5% landowner match for projects that include BLM acreage, since BLM does not require a financial contribution from the permittee. Colton recommended maintaining consistency by requiring the landowner to contribute 5% of the total project cost, regardless of the inclusion of BLM acreage.

Doug made a motion to approve 100 acres of BLM per project (not per parcel) to be covered by CFCD sage-grouse funding. Jeff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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, Camilletti_D, Pankey, RAD Counts. Olson, Tallent Ranch, Terry, and Pankey.

Approved/In Process: RV Angus, Swartzell, Three Springs Ranch, Gerber/SBRJWM, Charchalis South, Kawcak_K, Bellio, Grandbouche (6 landowners), Bobcat Ranch, Balleck, Kawcak_K_gsg, Bekkedahl.

For Review: Doehling, Nottingham, Stoffle, Kawcak_Shane, Ellgen, Dry Fork Ranch, Bekkedahl, Counts Kawcak_FR, Vermillion.

Upcoming:

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.

Camilletti - Seeding old agricultural fields into more native vegetation. Have not received an application yet.

Tallent - Two more tank/drain installations. CFCD will fund the drain. Mark recommended he apply for an invasive annual treatment as well. Have not received an application yet.

Cook_Rod - To be determined. Invasive annual grass treatment.

Projects to Review

Doehling

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 1,341 acres on non-irrigated rangeland and non-irrigated grass fields using Rejuvra and Panoramic in combination. The landowner has a verbal agreement allowing another producer to manage and graze cattle on portions of the project area, and that individual is aware of and supports the proposed treatment. This project was tabled during the June meeting to add a seeding component to the project.

Proposed:

Project Total Estimate: \$153,507.00

Landowner contribution: \$7,590.00

GSG Requested Amount: \$145,917.00

Cassie then explained the timeline details of this project. It proposes seeding 280 acres with a native rangeland and alfalfa mix. The restored acreage is intended to provide long term livestock grazing opportunities while also creating valuable habitat and forage resources for greater sage-grouse and other wildlife species. 14 acres will be broadcast seeded with Wyoming big sagebrush. Following successful establishment, the seeded area will be treated for invasive annual grasses approximately 1.5 to 2 years after planting, depending on site conditions and vegetation establishment success. The applicant has agreed to defer grazing on the seeded acreage for 1.5 to 2 growing seasons to allow for adequate plant establishment. Planting is anticipated to occur in fall 2026, subject to weather conditions. Sagebrush seed will be broadcast in early winter (November-December) 2026 on top of snow.

1266 acres of native rangeland would be treated in the fall of 2026 for invasive annual grasses. The remaining 330 acres that are proposed to be drilled in the fall of 2026 would be treated in 2027 or 2028 depending on the success of vegetation establishment, which would highly be dependent on moisture conditions.

Cassie displayed the proposed seed mix on the screen for the committee to review. Cassie explained how there are 14 acres, making up 5% of the total seeding project, of sagebrush seed for Mark Doehling to make sagebrush islands on north facing slopes.

Desa made a motion to approve this project for \$145,917. Rebecca seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Project Total Estimate: \$153,507.00

Landowner contribution: \$7,590.00

GSG Requested Amount: \$145,917.00

Stoffle

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 640 acres of private, non-irrigated rangeland and grass/alfalfa fields.

Proposed:

Project Total Estimate: \$47,212.00

Landowner contribution: \$2,361.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$44,851.00

This project complements the RAD Counts and Bekkedal projects, creating a larger contiguous treated area within the landscape that CFCD has supported through funding.

Nick made a motion to approve the project for \$44,851. Doug seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Project Total Estimate: \$47,212.00

Landowner contribution: \$2,361.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$44,851.00

Shane Kawcak

This project proposes aerial herbicide application to control cheatgrass on 90 acres of private dryland alfalfa fields and native rangeland.

Proposed:

Project Total Estimate: \$6,219.00

Landowner contribution: \$311.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$5,908.00

This project complements several other projects previously funded by CFCD, including the Terry, Chesna, Balleck, Kawcak_K, Grandbouche, and Olson projects, creating a broader network of treated areas across the landscape. Desa got clarification that the majority of the project area consists of grass and alfalfa fields. Doug confirmed that these fields provide important habitat and are regularly utilized by sage-grouse.

Doug made a motion to approve the project for \$5,908. Steve seconded. Steve asked if there was any bulbous bluegrass; Mark noted primarily cheatgrass. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Project Total Estimate: \$6,219.00

Landowner contribution: \$311.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$5,908.00

Bekkedahl

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 2,149 acres of private land, and 152 acres of BLM on non-irrigated rangeland. 2,301 total acres proposed to treat. This project was approved during the June meeting, however it needed committee review due to the BLM acres associated with it.

Approved at the end of the 6/9/26 meeting:

Total Project: \$169,463.64

Landowner: \$8,214.57

CFCD: \$161,249.07

Jeff asked for clarification that the previous motion approved during the meeting established a threshold of 100 BLM acres per project, rather than per individual parcel. Nick noted that this project may require individual consideration and that an exception to the 100 acre guideline may be appropriate due to the landlocked nature of the BLM acreage within the project area. The committee agreed to cover the treatment costs for 152 acres of BLM land associated with this project.

Nick made a motion to approve funding for 152 acres of BLM in addition to the private land totaling \$160,991. Doug seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved (after meeting):

Project Total Estimate: \$169,464

Landowner contribution: \$8,474 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$160,991

Dry Fork Ranch

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 1279 acres of private land and 363 acres of BLM on non-irrigated rangeland. 1642 total acres to be treated. In addition, the project proposes seeding a 53 acre fallowed field with a diverse native rangeland pasture mix to improve forage production, increase plant diversity, and enhance overall habitat quality.

Project Total Estimate: \$146,043.00

Landowner contribution: \$15,239.00 (10%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$130,804.00

Chad Green explained the landscape characteristics of the proposed treatment area, noting that the higher elevation portions of the project contain serviceberry and oakbrush. Due to the presence of these woody species, herbicide application may need to occur after leaf drop to improve ground contact and maximize treatment effectiveness. As a result, portions of the treatment may need to be completed in spring 2027. Chad has been in communication with Adam from Mountain Air Spray, who plans to conduct an aerial review of the area to determine the most effective application approach.

Following discussion of these limitations, the plan is for Adam to treat the areas that can be effectively sprayed and potentially leave some acreage for a later application or exclude it from treatment if conditions are not favorable. Cassie explained that due to the project's location and variability in mixed mountain shrub cover, she and Chad proposed approving more acres than are expected to ultimately be treated. The BLM portion of the project is heavily infested but also contains the greatest amount of

mixed mountain shrub cover. A 5% increase in herbicide costs was included due to the possibility that treatment may occur over multiple years.

Desa noted that Chris Rhyne stated that she would like to review all projects containing BLM acreage before committing funding amounts to individual projects to ensure they align with BLM standards and requirements. Desa also emphasized the need to determine the remaining balances in each applicable BLM funding source. Desa asked Kacey whether any oil and gas funding remained available for potential use. Kacey confirmed that just under \$8,000 remains in that funding pool but noted that eligibility for use would need to be confirmed.

Nick expressed concern about moving too far from the 100-acre BLM funding guideline established earlier in the meeting. He suggested that CFCD consider funding the first 100 acres of BLM treatment and identify alternative funding sources for the remaining 263 acres. Chad reiterated that not all proposed BLM acres may ultimately be treated due to the extent of mixed mountain shrub cover.

Kacey noted that the seed mix for this project has already been purchased (Swartzell seed purchased in 2025) and will be charged to the materials and supplies budget rather than the habitat restoration budget.

Colton suggested reducing the landowner contribution to 5% and having the landowner contribute toward treatment of the remaining 163 acres of BLM land.

Kristin suggested adjusting the treatment boundary on BLM acreage to reduce the amount of BLM land treated while still protecting adjacent private lands. She proposed focusing treatment along BLM fence lines adjacent to private property to help reduce reinfestation pressure. Chad explained that fence lines are less of a concern because he holds the grazing lease on the BLM acreage, but agreed that treatment boundaries could be adjusted where it makes geographic sense.

Colton calculated that the revised landowner contribution would be approximately \$3,953 more than the proposed contribution but would allow for treatment of the entire BLM acreage. He proposed reducing the landowner contribution to 5%, with CFCD funding 100 acres of BLM treatment, BLM funding 100 acres, and the landowner contributing toward the remaining 163 acres. He also proposed that any unused project funds be returned to the landowner first, followed by CFCD.

Nick made a motion to approve the project with a maximum GSG funding amount of \$130,804, with the final landowner contribution to be recalculated based on BLM's funding contribution. He further moved that any unused project funds be returned to the landowner first. Doug seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved (see financial breakdown in proposal):

Project Total Estimate: \$146,043.00

Landowner contribution: \$18,850.00 (13%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$127,193.00 (Including \$16,245 in seed from materials and supplies)

Ellgen

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 2850 acres of private, 96 acres of BLM non-irrigated rangeland. 2946 acres total to be treated. A portion of the project area is subject to a solar lease.

Proposed financials:

Project Total Estimate: \$211,071.00

Landowner contribution: \$10,554.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$200,517.00

Because the project includes 96 acres of BLM land, CFCD will cover both the herbicide and application costs for that portion of the project.

Desa asked for additional information regarding the solar lease associated with the project area. The landowner explained that he does not believe the proposed solar development will move forward because the county denied the required special use permit. Although the property remains under a solar lease, he stated that construction is now considered unlikely. Kacey informed the committee that she had contacted NFWF to determine whether there are any funding restrictions related to projects located on land under a solar lease but had not yet received a response.

The landowner estimated that approximately 770 acres were identified for potential solar panel development. Desa stated that she also believed construction was unlikely, but noted that if a solar facility were ultimately built, the resulting habitat loss would eliminate sage-grouse use of that area. She recommended waiting for guidance from NFWF before making a final decision. The landowner explained that the solar lease is for five years and expires in July 2029, although it could be terminated earlier. Kacey added that existing CFCD funding agreements do not currently prohibit landowners from subsequently entering into solar lease agreements. She noted that while the nearby Round Bottom solar project was denied by the county, it remains unclear whether the lease associated with this project has been officially denied. Desa indicated that she would support the project if it could be confirmed that a solar development would not occur.

Colton proposed that CFCD fund treatment of the entire project area, with the understanding that if the solar development is ultimately constructed, the landowner would reimburse CFCD for the treatment costs associated with the affected acreage, estimated at approximately \$54,000. The landowner stated that he would be willing to agree to those terms. Doug questioned whether such a reimbursement agreement would be acceptable under NFWF funding requirements.

Nick suggested an alternative approach that he believed may be more favorable to NFWF. He proposed excluding the approximately 770 acres identified for potential solar development from the CFCD funded

project and having the landowner fund treatment of that portion independently. If the solar project is eventually constructed, the landowner could seek reimbursement from the solar company for those treatment costs. Any independently funded treatment on the 770 acres could also count toward the landowner's required project match. If the landowner chose not to treat those acres, his required contribution would instead be 5% of the CFCD funded project cost, estimated at \$7,911. The landowner agreed to contact the solar company to obtain a map showing the proposed solar development footprint if the project moves forward and indicated that he was agreeable to this approach.

Steve made a motion to approve this project of \$158,218 with a 5% match up to \$52,854 of landowner contribution. Desa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Total acreage: 2176 acres

Project total estimate: Up to \$211,072.00 (if landowner independently sprays 770 acres)

Landowner contribution: \$7,911 (5%) up to \$52,854

GSG requested amount: \$158,218.00

Counts

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 1083 acres of private land and 40 acres of BLM, on non-irrigated rangeland. 1123 acres total to be treated.

Proposed:

Project Total Estimate: \$80,471.00

Landowner contribution: \$4,024.00

GSG Requested Amount: \$76,447.00

Steve made a motion to approve this project for \$76,447 of sage grouse funds. Rebecca seconded. Desa asked whether the project area consisted entirely of native rangeland. Mark had not yet visited the site, but Cassie noted that approximately 600–650 acres had previously been enrolled in CRP. Colton recently flew over the project area with Adam and informed the committee that the site appears to provide suitable habitat for greater sage-grouse. There are two large leks in close proximity to this area as well. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved:

Project Total Estimate: \$80,471.00

Landowner contribution: \$4,024.00

GSG Requested Amount: \$76,447.00

Nottingham

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 905 acres of State, 532 BLM, and 1255 acres of private land on non-irrigated rangeland. 2692 total acres proposed to treat.

Project Total Estimate: \$198,265.00

Landowner contribution: \$9,914.00 (5%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$188,351.00

Jerod Smith with the Colorado State Land Board informed the committee that the State Land Board would fund the herbicide costs for the 905 acre State Trust Land portion of the project. CFCD would be responsible for funding the application costs associated with those acres.

Desa reported that BLM has not yet determined what funding may be available for its portion of the project. She confirmed that cheatgrass is a significant issue within the project area and asked for the acreage of each BLM parcel. Mark reported that the west parcel contains 279 acres and the east parcel contains 251 acres.

Nick made a motion to approve treatment of 1,355 acres, consisting of 1,255 acres of private land and 100 acres of BLM land.

The committee discussed the Red Wash and 36 wildfires that affected the project area, noting that the burn primarily occurred within the western BLM parcel. Members agreed that this burn area may be a higher priority for BLM treatment. Desa stated that she would contact Chris Rhyne to determine how much Section 8100 and 8200 funding remains available. She noted that because the area is within an active grazing allotment, it would likely be eligible for those funding sources.

Doug asked how many acres of the western BLM parcel had burned in the fire. Using the mapping tool, Mark estimated that approximately 130 acres were within the burn perimeter. Doug suggested that the landowner could contribute toward treatment of the remaining approximately 149 acres of the western BLM parcel as part of the required project cost share.

Steve made a motion to table the project until additional information could be obtained from the BLM regarding the funding available and the level of financial contribution they would be willing to provide. Doug seconded. There was discussion about whether or not to approve funding private, State Trust Land application, and 100 acres of BLM land to be treated in this project. Ultimately the committee decided to table the project until the next meeting or vote via email once necessary information is received. The motion passed unanimously.

Closing Discussion

There was no closing discussion.

The next meeting of the MCGSG group will be:
Tuesday, August 11, 2026, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm
In the NRCS office conference room.

Adjournment

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Desa seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 4:34 pm.