**Moffat County Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Program Committee**

**February 25, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

Colton Murray, CFCD GSG subcommittee Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

Roll Call was performed with the following members of the MC GSG WG in attendance:

Colton Murray, CFCD GSG chair Steve Raftopolous– Landowner

Nick Charchalis, CFCD GSG member Doug Davis – Landowner

Stephen Hinkemeyer, CFCD GSG member Desa Ausmus – BLM Wildlife Specialist

Kacey Green, CFCD GSG Administrator Hunter Seims – BLM Asst Office Manager

Mark Lowrey, CFCD GSG Project Manager Kymm Gresset - BLM Field Office Manager

Cassie Lamb, CFCD GSG Contractor Brian Holmes – Colorado Parks & Wildlife

Jeff Comstock – Moffat County Natural Resources Rebecca Burton – NRCS

Junior Kawcak – Frontier Station Luke Tucker – Mountain Air Spray

Adam Tucker – Mountain Air Spray

Future emails for this committee will come from **cfcdsagegrouse@gmail.com**

**Kacey Green gave a brief history of the grant and the process that the district went through to obtain it.**

Program overview. Several years in the making. Mitigation for powerlines running through Moffat County. Received $3.26 million. Tasked with getting the money on the ground and making the most use of it. Everyone has a copy of the grant in their packet. There are three Sage grouse management plans to follow, Moffat County, State of Colorado and BLM plans. Kacey will be administrator of grant, Mark Lowrey will be project manager and Cassie Lamb will be a contactor working for the district on this project. Transwest transmission line mitigation funds are not yet allocated so more grants may be forthcoming in the future. There is other grant funding buckets that may be able to fit some projects that may not fit this NFWF grant.

**Grant Outcomes and Activities are as follows.**

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Improve habitat quality on rangelands and create contiguous patches of sagebrush.

Enhance habitat through control of invasives

Reverse juniper/conifer encroachment in sagebrush habitats.

Maintain and improve habitat on grazing lands/rangeland.

**Grant Activities may be:**

Zeedyk structures

Noxious weed treatments in sage grouse habitat

Flaggery on barbed wire fences near sage grouse habitat

Barbed wire fence removal

Planting in key sage grouse habitat

Seeding in key sage grouse habitat

Installing hot wire fencing to protect sage grouse project treatments

Fence/pasture adjustments to protect sage grouse project treatments

PJ removal

**Questions arose about matching funds for the grants/individual projects**

Matching funds were in the original grant request. There were two separate grants from the USFWS, one direct and the other through the Colorado Department of Agriculture, in total $402,737 of match funds.

The committee is going to be flexible on how much match by project. Let’s not put up barriers to improving habitat. We want to make sure people and projects have “skin-in-the-game”. A 5% across the board match was discussed.

On the draft of the application there is a line asking about a match, or in-kind efforts. If the committee feels that is not enough they can ask for more.

**Where do we believe that funds should be applied in NW Colorado?**

Current lands within the range of the grant funds are mostly Moffat County, parts of Rio Blanco County and parts of Routt County. There was a lot of discussion concerning where the funds would be most effectively used, and where grouse management is currently active for committee agencies.

**BLM Involvement with the Committee**

BLM State Office will be the routing point for grant reimbursement. BLM will not ride herd on projects, nor will they direct projects to certain land, nor override. BLM will not vote on projects brought before the committee. Projects may not be reimbursed if they do not meet the requirements of the grant. May be able to tie into existing BLM projects and extend them.

**Size of project lands were discussed.**

Questions were brought about how big an area should be to be eligible for grant funds. Comments were made for including smaller parcels could be the limiting factor for projects, but we need to look harder at smaller acreages. It was thought to see what kind of projects are submitted and then decide. How much is too much priority area as those acres may come with more limitations on access and activities. There may be other non-priority habitat areas that may get lot of sage grouse use that need improvement as well. Core acres that need additional resources may fall into smaller acreage allotments as well.

**A discussion was held on monitoring requirements**

What type or system of monitoring tracking should be utilized for making sure projects are successful. Monitoring can be expensive, or simplistic. Photo sequencing would be great to show progress. BLM Rangeview (or something similar) as a project basis was discussed during grant development. No decision was made during the meeting. Will long term monitoring be done on projects? Five years is all this grant program is running, so long term is really 5 years.

**Absentee Landowners getting grants**

Potentially will deal with them if they have a way to get in contact with them or have representative local that can be contacted.

**A discussion was held about whether applicants would be required to be at meetings to present their projects and answer questions about projects on-going**

A landowner coming to the committee for funding must agree to have CPW or other agencies share at least limited data about the sage grouse on the property and the need to improve the habitat. Some grants and other funding projects should be mentioned, but not in detail. Kacey will add a “permissions” section to the application where landowner can agree to have information shared with CFCD staff, board and committee.

**Comments on Application Form**

Form should have a place to capture what standards this project is addressing. We want to make sure that no one is guessing what standards projects are addressing so that questions concerning reimbursement are kept to a minimum. Check box for share with public for a year on form. Comment on who funded the project, not NFWF but the powerline companies.

**The next meeting of the MCGSG will be Thursday, March 13, 2025, from 2:00 TO 4:00 pm at the NRCS office conference room.**