



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

Moffat County Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Program Committee

June 9, 2026 · Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 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

Jeff Comstock - Moffat County
Rebecca Burton - GrSG Member
Desa Ausmus - BLM Biologist
Mark Doehling - Applicant
Ken Bekkedahl - Applicant
Adam Tucker - Mountain Air Spray

Adoption of the Agenda/Review and Approval of Minutes

Doug made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting and agenda. Steve and Mark clarified we are not going to be voting on Nottingham's project, only discussing it during this meeting. 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	Chemical \$83,968 pd with BIL
12	Rescinded	-	-		
3 Springs - 007	in process	83	\$26,912.00		

McFarland - 009	in process	water	\$37,244.00		invoice rcvd - need approval
Charchalis South - 018	in process	2653	\$186,187.00		
K. Kawcak - 024	approved	-	-		Redacted - reapplied, see 039
Bellio - 019	in process	104	\$13,166.00		
Pankey - 020	in process	320	\$87,190.00	\$79,090.00	partially pd
Cole - 015	complete	water - PALS	\$7,964.56	\$484.84	pd
Tallent - 022	in process	water	\$19,864.00		invoice rcvd - need match
Olson - 027	complete	32	\$5,226.90	\$5,226.90	pd
RAD Counts - 005	in process	574	\$23,273.00		partially pd
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		
Ocker - 037	approved	-		approved thru - BIL funding	
Balleck - 038	approved	457	\$24,125.03		
K. Kawcak - 029	approved	681	\$35,949.99		
	TOTALS:	14,743	\$1,244,414.08		

Total Acres Impacted: **14,743 acres** (Acres Projected in Grant Language: 12,000)

-Total Allocated to Habitat Restoration: \$1,244,414.08

-Total Remaining for Habitat Restoration: \$1,635,491.03

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

Kacey noted that several smaller spray projects previously approved through sage-grouse funding, including the Ocker project, were moved to alternative funding sources. She explained that the current habitat restoration funding balance reflects these adjustments.

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, Terry, Grandbouche (6 landowners), Bobcat Ranch, Balleck, Kawcak_K_gsg.

For Review: Doehling (for review), Bekkedahl (for review), 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.

Nottingham - Invasive annual grass treatment using Rejuvra. Have discussed with the landowner.

Cassie displayed an aerial photograph provided by Adam Tucker showing the results of a three year old Rejuvra treatment targeting invasive annual grasses, primarily cheatgrass. The image showed a clear distinction between treated and untreated areas. Adam recommended using Panoramic (Imazapic) in combination with Rejuvra, noting that it can improve the speed and effectiveness of treatment.

Doug asked whether the ATB representative was aware of any additional funding opportunities for weed treatment projects. Mark clarified that the representative's role focused primarily on data collection and monitoring and would likely not have information regarding additional funding sources.

Steve asked whether there was a plan to utilize the Swartzell seed mix purchased the previous year. Cassie summarized a recent conversation with Brett Grandbouche, who indicated that he knew of a landowner interested in converting agricultural fields back to native rangeland. Brett believed the seed mix would have a greater likelihood of success in that application than its original intended use of interseeding into expired CRP acreage. Cassie stated that she encouraged Brett to have the landowner apply for funding.

The committee discussed the importance of developing a plan to utilize the seed mix before the associated funding timeline expires. Members noted that seed viability and germination rates may decline over time, making it advantageous to use the seed sooner rather than later. Mark added that he anticipates additional seeding project applications being submitted this fall for implementation in 2027.

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.

Project Total Estimate: \$95,748.99

Landowner contribution: \$20,919.60 (22.8%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$74,829.39

Mark Doehling stated that he may want to include an additional field in a future treatment project. He explained that he has managed LuAnn's property since the passing of her husband and is concerned about the increasing infestation of cheatgrass and bulbous bluegrass. However, he noted that he cannot afford the cost of the herbicide, let alone the application costs associated with the proposal. Because CFCD is requesting a \$20,919 landowner match, he suggested splitting the project into two phases, with half completed this year and the remainder in 2027. He also noted that he farms fields owned by Joe Ence, where CFCD previously funded a project through ATB, and that is how he became aware of the herbicide treatment and available funding opportunities.

Cassie discussed the possibility of using a tiered cost share structure, similar to the approach previously approved for the Grandbouche projects, in which landowners would pay a percentage of the application cost. Jeff asked what cost share expectations had been used for past spray projects. Kacey responded that CFCD has typically required landowners to cover application costs while CFCD funds the herbicide. Jeff supported reducing the landowner contribution if financial constraints are limiting participation in large scale projects, emphasizing the importance of getting conservation funding implemented on the ground. Kacey noted that the proposed tiered structure is similar to cost share arrangements used on previous large scale projects.

Doug asked Mark Doehling about his long term goals for the property. Mark explained that he would like to establish vegetation on approximately 1,000 acres that have not been seeded in many years. He noted that cheatgrass competition has made it difficult to establish perennial grasses and that he has historically planted triticale because it has been more successful than grass or alfalfa. Because of this, he

would prefer to focus on seeding efforts and delay treatment of those areas until 2027 to improve establishment success.

Mark suggested treating areas that will not be seeded this year and revisiting the newly seeded areas in future years once vegetation is established. Mark Doehling added that he has considered broadcast seeding within sagebrush stands to increase grass cover in the interspaces. Desa commented that she has successfully seeded on top of snow in the past. She also asked whether Mark was actively haying any of the fields within the project area. He responded that two fields are cut for hay while the remaining acreage is grazed. When asked whether he would be comfortable with increased sagebrush establishment, Mark indicated that he would.

Mark asked Adam whether the fields planned for seeding could be excluded from treatment while the surrounding sagebrush rangeland is sprayed. He emphasized the importance of not applying Rejuvra too soon after seeding, noting that in his experience, herbicide applications made shortly after planting can negatively affect seed establishment.

Kacey suggested a phased approach in which CFCD could approve Rejuvra treatment on the sagebrush and native rangeland portions of the project, complete seeding efforts, and then revisit treatment of the newly seeded acres in 2027 or 2028 after establishment has been confirmed. She noted that the committee could obligate funding now while delaying implementation on the seeded acres until a later date.

Doug asked Mark Doehling whether he had a preferred seed mix in mind. Mark responded that he has been using a pasture mix that has performed well on his property. Doug commented that if a seeding component were incorporated into the project, the required landowner match could potentially be reduced to approximately 5%. Doug then asked how many acres could be treated this fall if the acreage planned for seeding were excluded. Cassie responded that the acreage had not yet been determined and that the project would need to be remapped and the financials revised.

The committee agreed that the project did not need to be approved at this meeting. Jeff asked whether funding could also be used to purchase a sage-grouse friendly seed mix. Kacey felt that incorporating a seeding component would strengthen the proposal from the granting agency's perspective, particularly given the large number of herbicide projects already funded.

Mark Doehling noted that he owns a no till drill and typically seeds at a rate of 35 pounds per acre. He explained that some of his acreage has previously been enrolled in CRP, although he does not believe LuAnn's property has ever been enrolled. Historically, the land has been used for grazing and hay production. Mark Lowrey then displayed photos of the project area for the committee.

Steve asked whether alfalfa was currently present in the fields and suggested that Mark and Cassie develop a seed mix that includes species such as alfalfa that would be both palatable to livestock and beneficial to sage-grouse. Nick cautioned that excessive soil disturbance in areas infested with

cheatgrass and bulbous bluegrass can exacerbate infestations and emphasized the importance of using a no till drill to minimize disturbance. He suggested that seeding in fall 2026 or spring 2027 using a pasture mix that includes a modest amount of alfalfa could be a good approach for the project.

Kacey concluded that tabling the project to incorporate a seeding component, revise the treatment timeline, and develop a multi year implementation strategy would be the best course of action.

Jeff made a motion to table the project to rework the proposal to include a seeding component, revised treatment acreage, and an updated timeline for Rejuvra/Panoramic application. Doug seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bekkedahl

This project is proposed to aerial spray bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 2,149 acres of private land, and 112 acres of BLM, on non-irrigated rangeland. 2,261 total acres proposed to treat.

Project Total: \$166,518.04

Landowner Contribution: \$40,358.85 (24.2%)

GSG Requested Amount: \$126,159.19

After Cassie presented the project location, habitat information, maps, and other proposal details, Ken emphasized the importance of including the approximately 100 acres of BLM land within the treatment area due to its central location among the rest of the proposed acreage. He described the severity of the cheatgrass and bulbous bluegrass infestation and explained how treating the area would benefit both the overall health of the landscape and wildlife habitat, particularly for the sage-grouse and other bird species that utilize the property.

Ken stated that he would not be able to afford this type of treatment without assistance from funding programs such as those provided by CFCD. Mark noted that portions of the property contain near monocultures of cheatgrass and that invasive annual grasses are present throughout the project area. However, he also explained that the overall native plant community remains in relatively good condition, with a diverse mix of desirable vegetation and healthy sagebrush stands. He stated that without intervention, there is a risk that invasive annual grasses could continue to spread and degrade the existing habitat.

Mark further noted that the property has not been enrolled in CRP and is not located within a highly erodible area. Both Mark and Ken agreed that treating the proposed acreage would not create significant concerns related to bare ground, erosion, or a lack of desirable vegetation available to reestablish following treatment.

Ken also spoke about the importance of maintaining healthy sagebrush habitat for the local economy and culture, particularly for greater sage-grouse and other wildlife species. He reflected on the number of birdwatchers who have traveled from around the world to observe the sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse leks located on his property. He added that he does not disturb sagebrush on his land because it serves as a critical food source for sage-grouse, especially during severe winter conditions.

Committee members asked whether this project would be considered under the new tiered cost share structure previously discussed during review of the Doehling project. Desa also asked whether the BLM acreage was included in the project financials. She was unsure of the status of additional funding available through BLM's habitat restoration program but stated that she would follow up with Chris and Kymm. Nick confirmed that a NEPA analysis would not be required for this type of treatment on BLM land.

The committee also discussed rebate funds associated with previously completed RangeView analyses. Cassie explained that she had made multiple attempts to follow up regarding the rebate funds but had not received a response. Kacey noted that she would be meeting with Derek Sebastian later in the week and planned to discuss the matter with him. Cassie also noted that RangeView analysis had been included in the current project proposal.

Ken asked Desa about the likelihood of BLM funding the 112 acres of BLM land included in the proposal and inquired whether an additional 42 acre adjacent BLM parcel could also be incorporated into the project. Desa agreed to discuss the possibility with Chris Rhyne and report back to the committee.

Doug asked whether the committee needed to approve the proposed tiered cost share structure before voting on Ken's project. Jeff requested clarification on how the tier system would work. Cassie explained that the proposal would reduce the percentage of application costs paid by the landowner on larger projects, similar to the approach used for the Grandbouche projects. Jeff stated that he was less concerned with the specific framework and more interested in reducing the landowner contribution to a level closer to 5%.

Discussion then returned to the Doehling project. Cassie explained that the proposal was originally submitted as a herbicide treatment project focused on cheatgrass and bulbous bluegrass control and that a seeding component was not initially included because Mark Doehling had already been conducting seeding efforts on the property. Doug suggested that future project revisions should incorporate seeding where appropriate. Cassie asked whether the committee should consider the labor, seed costs, and other investments Mark had already contributed toward seeding. Steve responded that those previous efforts should not be included in the project match calculation.

Doug then asked whether the committee preferred to adopt a formal tiered cost share structure or simply require a minimum landowner contribution. Steve reflected on previous projects where some landowners used outside grant funding as part of their contribution and noted that 5% had historically been the minimum match required by CFCD. Cassie displayed a spreadsheet summarizing landowner contribution percentages from previous spray projects. Kacey explained that evaluating contributions as

a percentage of total project cost was more practical than using a per acre basis because herbicide and application costs fluctuate over time.

Cassie suggested either adopting a cost share framework based on a percentage of application costs or simplifying the process by requiring a standard 5% contribution for all spray projects. After considerable discussion, committee members expressed support for landowner contributions generally falling within a 5% to 10% range. Kacey noted that the original tiered structure developed for the Grandbouche projects was intended to address concerns about consistency and fairness between project types. She explained that while spray project landowners historically contributed relatively little, recent requirements for landowners to pay application costs have created financial barriers on larger projects. The purpose of the proposed framework was to establish greater consistency in how project contributions are evaluated. Steve added that a minimum 5% contribution could also be met through seeding efforts or other eligible in-kind contributions associated with the project.

Cassie suggested tabling the project because treatment would not need to occur until mid-July through late September. Adam explained that treatment could occur after September, although hunting season could create scheduling constraints. He noted that if only Rejuvra is used, treatment closer to July is preferable. If Rejuvra is applied in combination with Panoramic, treatment can occur later in the summer or fall. Adam also stated that he prefers to spray when precipitation is forecast in the near future.

Steve suggested tabling the project until BLM could determine whether funding assistance would be available for the federal acreage. Doug proposed an alternative approach, suggesting that the committee approve the project contingent upon BLM funding decisions while establishing a maximum acreage and funding amount. Jeff seconded the motion.

Kacey asked whether the committee had identified a specific acreage for approval. Cassie requested time to recalculate acreage and project costs to ensure accuracy. Following discussion, the committee approved treatment of up to 2,301 acres of invasive annual grasses, including the BLM acreage, even though BLM had not yet committed funding for its portion of the project. Desa stated that if the project receives sage-grouse funding, the BLM acreage would be funded through that source, although she was uncertain about the status of the remaining 8200 funding.

Steve then called for any further discussion on the motion to approve the project with a defined maximum acreage and funding amount. The motion passed unanimously. The updated project financials approved by the committee are shown below. Bekkedahl project financials do not reflect what was approved in the board meeting.

Total Project: \$169,463.64

Landowner: \$8,214.57

CFCD: \$161,249.07

Closing Discussion

Cassie informed the committee that the Mike Nottingham project will be presented at the July meeting, as additional information is still needed to complete the proposal. The project proposes aerial treatment of bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass on 905 acres of State Land Board property, 532 acres of BLM land, and 1,255 acres of private land, totaling 2,692 acres of non-irrigated rangeland. Cassie explained that she is awaiting responses from Jarod Smith with the Colorado State Land Board and BLM representatives regarding potential financial contributions toward treatment of their respective acreage.

Doug proposed that CFCD require only a 5% landowner contribution for herbicide treatment projects when no in-kind contribution opportunities are available. He noted that invasive annual grass treatment projects are generally less complex than other project types funded by CFCD, such as juniper removal, seeding, and rangeland conversion projects. He suggested that project complexity should be considered when determining landowner contributions and recommended developing a financial matrix to guide cost share expectations. Committee members generally expressed support for the concept.

Jeff asked why a similar 5% contribution standard could not be applied to more complex projects such as reseeded and range conversion efforts. Doug and Steve responded that landowners often contribute substantial labor, equipment, and management efforts to those projects and should receive credit for those contributions as part of the required match.

Steve clarified that a minimum 5% contribution of the total project cost would only apply when no other match opportunities are available and the landowner cannot provide an in-kind contribution. Doug stated that he would like the committee to formally recommend this policy to the board. Kacey agreed that the committee should vote on the recommendation before forwarding it to the board.

Doug made a motion that, for all herbicide treatment projects, if no in-kind match opportunities are available, the required landowner contribution shall be a minimum of 5% of the total project cost. Nick clarified that the motion would apply to all chemical treatment projects and would not be limited to Rejuvra applications. Doug confirmed that was his intent. He added that projects may still satisfy the minimum contribution requirement through eligible in-kind contributions when available, citing the Doehling project as a potential example once a seeding component is incorporated. Jeff seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Doug then moved that CFCD develop a cost share matrix for all other project types. He explained that a standardized framework would provide clarity for staff when developing projects and help applicants understand contribution expectations. Steve stated that he supported the concept but felt it would be difficult to develop a matrix without specific project examples to evaluate. The motion did not receive sufficient support and failed.

Steve asked whether project financials could be rounded to the nearest dollar in future presentations. Cassie and Kacey explained that doing so could create accounting issues because project budgets are based directly on contractor quotes, and they preferred not to alter quoted amounts.

Steve expressed concern that the committee is becoming increasingly focused on invasive annual grass treatment projects rather than broader sage-grouse habitat improvement efforts. While he remained supportive of herbicide treatment projects, he felt the committee should ensure that funding continues to be directed toward projects that provide measurable benefits to sage-grouse habitat. Kacey agreed that the committee may need to establish clearer criteria regarding eligible project types and suggested being more selective about funding requests that primarily benefit agricultural production, such as improvements to dryland hay fields.

The next meeting of the MCGSG group will be:
Tuesday, July 14, 2026, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm
In the NRCS office conference room.

Adjournment

There was not a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 4:02pm.