

Chaffee Common Ground – Citizens Advisory Committee (CCG-CAC)

Minutes from Meeting on Tuesday April 30, 2024

Meeting Called to order at 10:30 a.m.

CCG-CAC Members present: (all attended virtually) Cindy Williams - Chair, Michael Hannigan – Vice-chair, Sydney Schnurr, Ben Lenth, Jim LaRue, Michael Fischer and Paul Muelle and Greg Felt - BOCC liaison. Also present Ben Doon, Administrative Support and Kim Marquis, Outreach Coordinator.

CCG-CAC Members absent: None

Agenda review

Cindy reviewed the agenda. The main topic is a review of the grant evaluation scores and making funding recommendations.

Approval of consent agenda

The meeting agenda was approved as presented.

Review of Grant Evaluation Scores

Cindy shared a spreadsheet with an overview of the revised ratings based on the conversations from the last meeting. The same three proposals had the highest scores; the National Forest Foundation's (NFF) Sawatch Range Restoration Project, the NFF's Granite Forest Restoration Project and Colorado Open Lands' Multi-Benefit Wetland Restoration Project. The Firecamp Mini-Excavator, SCC Supervisor and Chain Saw Crew Housing Project moved up and is now near the top three. The Kelly Ranch Ag Production Value Conservation Easement Project has the highest standard deviation among the scores.

The Bowen Ditch Silt and Tree Mitigation Project and the Burmac Trailhead Transformation Project scores moved down. Group consensus to reduce the funding amount by \$5k for each project.

The Pridemore Ranch Irrigation Project's score also moved lower. There was group consensus to recommend an \$83,000 partial funding grant to support the irrigation portion of the project, but not to fund the virtual fence collars for the cattle. The request was \$100k.

The Central Colorado Conservancy's Hands for Lands Project still has the lowest score.

The Mycelium Use in Biowaste Production proposal is the only mini-grant that doesn't have unanimous yes votes to support funding. Ben D said the applicant confirmed that partial funding would be helpful to start experimenting with mycelium in this area. Group consensus to support a \$2,500 partial funding grant for this proposal.

The total request for 2024 is \$1,053,700 and available funds is \$900,000, so \$153,700 needs to be cut.

The requested funds by program are: Forest Health - \$577,480; Sustainable Agriculture - \$310,000 and Recreation Impacts - \$166,220.

Cindy said that although the Granite Forest Restoration Project scored very well, she again spoke to the applicant about applying for a COSWAP grant (Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program) to support this project so Common Ground funds could be used to support other projects. The applicant was open to accepting \$100k less for their 2024 ask which was \$345,000.

Ben L said he would like to find a way to provide some support for the Hands for Lands project. Some funds could be useful to keep the volunteer work days going without funding the new Stewardship Coordinator Position. He said staff has supported this event for many years, but he doesn't see it as being 1/3 of an FTE. Jim suggested \$10k a year instead of the \$35k per year request.

The list of reduced grant requests to reach the \$900k in available funds for 2024 grants includes:

Hands for Lands - \$10k instead of \$35k

Burmac Trailhead Transformation - \$35k instead of \$40k

Bowen Ditch - \$45k instead of \$50k

Mycelium Biomass Reduction - \$2,500 instead of \$5k

Pridemore Ranch - \$83k instead of \$100k

Granite Forest Restoration - \$245k instead of \$345k

All other proposals will be recommended for full funding. Every application is recommended for some level of funding.

Motion to recommend this funding recommendations scenario to be taken to the Board of County Commissioners by Michael H. Second Paul. Vote unanimous.

Kim will prepare the write-ups for each proposal to go in a press release and to be presented by Ben D to the Board of County Commissioners at their work session on Monday May 13th. If no concerns are expressed by the Board and no questions raised by the public, the recommendations will be placed on the consent agenda for the regular meeting on May 14th.

Cindy asked to take a look at the multi-year requests and what is being committed and has been committed for 2025 and beyond.

The spreadsheet with the multi-year requests and recommended funding for 2024-2026 is included below.

Michael H asked how much has been committed for future years with this grant cycle.

2025 - \$450,000. 2026 - \$243,000 and 2027 - \$50,000.

Cindy asked for the total of previous commitments from grants and partnerships for 2025 and beyond.

Ben D said there is just over \$1 million in committed funds for about 16 projects for 2025 not including the current grant cycle. Total Common Ground revenue for 2023 was \$1.8 million. With this cycle we are looking at \$1.45 million committed for 2025. With these commitments there could only be about \$400,000 available for new projects in 2025. Potential new partnerships for 2025 with Chaffee Chips and GARNA porta-potties could reduce available funds for the next grant cycle by another \$125k-\$150k.

Total percent of funds by program for all grant cycles including 2024 is 53% to Forest Health, 30% to Sustainable Ag and 16% to Recreation Impacts. This is well within the ballot measure minimums of 25% to Forest Health, 25% to Sustainable Ag and 5% to Recreation Impacts.

Greg suggested creating a list of the projects that are receiving funding in 2025 that were funded in previous grant cycles and put this out to the public. Michael H said that we are still funding lots of projects and with the next grant cycle we might add 3 or 4 more projects to the fold. Kim suggested presenting the story that we have x amount for this new cycle, here's why and here is what is happening with the \$1.8 million raised in the last year.

Greg suggested a state of the program conversation at a Common Ground Committee in the later fall to include a planning conversation for the year ahead before the new Board of County Commissioners is seated then that info can be presented to the current Board. Set the 2025 expectation with the context of the previous six grant cycles.

Cindy proposed speaking with Matt with the National Forest Foundation about taking \$50k out of the Granite Forest Restoration Project 2025 payment and see if they could add that amount to their COSWAP proposal.

Motion by Michael H to approve the out-year funding for the multi-year projects with the exception of \$50k less for the Granite Forest Restoration Project (new 2025 total for Granite is \$105k) upon the condition that the \$50k less in 2025 is acceptable to the applicant (NFF). Second Paul. Vote unanimous.

Other Business

None.

Next Steps

Ben D will present the Committee recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners at a work session on Monday May 13th.

Next Committee meeting to check-in about the budget and next grant cycle and plan a presentation to the County Commissioners is Tuesday October 8th at 3:00 p.m. Also discuss the policy on properties needing some kind of protection (CE or Community Conservation Connection) to be eligible for an ag enhancement grant.

Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners for about 30 minutes at 11:00 a.m. with a slide show about what's been achieved so far and expectations for the year ahead will be on December 10th.

Suggested revisions to the applications and rubrics for Grant Cycle 7 include adding a box for acre questions to force people to put a number. Ask applicant to give their best estimate of acres impacted. Look at each of the lengthy questions to see if they can be broken-out to better match the rubric. Add a box for an answer regarding priority for treatment area, wildlife habitat, etc. Ask about conservation connection enrolled properties for ag grants and ag questions.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

<u>Organization Name</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Score</u>
National Forest Foundation	Sawatch Range Restoration Project - Rec Impacts	77%
National Forest Foundation	Granite Forest Restoration Project - Forest Health	76%
Colorado Open Lands	CO Open Lands Multi-Benefit Wetland Restoration Projects - Forest Health	76%
Colorado Firecamp	Firecamp mini-excavator, SCC field supervisor, and chainsaw crew housing - Forest Health	74%
Chaffee County Community Foundation	Chaffee Chips 2024 - Forest Health	71%
Williams & Hamm Ditch Co	Williams & Hamm Ditch Company Inlet Enhancement & Bank Stabilization - Sustainable Ag	70%
Kelly Ranch	AG Production Value Conservation Easement - Sustainable Ag	68%
Bowen Ditch Company	Bowen Ditch Silt & Tree Mitigation - Sustainable Ag	64%
Salida Mountain Trails	Burmac Trailhead Transformation - Rec Impacts	64%
Casey and Chelsea Pridemore Ranch	Pridemore Ranch Irrigation Enhancement and Virtual Fencing Project - Sustainable Ag	56%
Central Colorado Conservancy	Hands For Lands Program - Sustainable Ag	51%
	Mini-Grants	
Kelly Ranch	Fire Damaged Irrigated pipe replacement - Sustainable Ag	Yes
Headwater Farms	Main Line Electrical Installation at Headwater Farms - Sustainable Ag	Yes
McMurry Land & Livestock Company	McMurry Land & Livestock Solar Pump Livestock Watering System - Sustainable Ag	Yes
Salida Mountain Trails	Dog waste management on Methodist Mountain - Rec Impacts	Yes
Mushroom Love Co	Mycelium Use In Biowaste Reduction - Forest Health	Partial
	Total Recommended Funding All Years = \$1,616,745	

<u>Organization Name</u>	2024 Recommended Funding	2025 Recommended Funding	2026 Recommended Funding	2027 Recommended Funding
National Forest Foundation	\$125,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$74,999
National Forest Foundation	\$245,000	\$105,000		
Colorado Open Lands	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$12,546	
Colorado Firecamp	\$160,000	\$70,000	\$70,000	
Chaffee County Community Foundation	\$42,480			
Williams & Hamm Ditch Co	\$50,000	\$50,000		
Kelly Ranch	\$60,000			
Bowen Ditch Company	\$45,000			
Salida Mountain Trails	\$35,000			
Casey and Chelsea Pridemore Ranch	\$83,000			
Central Colorado Conservancy	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Kelly Ranch	\$5,000			
Headwater Farms	\$5,000			
McMurry Land & Livestock Company	\$5,000			
Salida Mountain Trails	\$1,220			
Mushroom Love Co	\$2,500			
	\$899,200	\$400,000	\$242,546	\$74,999