

July 28th, 2026

Chaffee County Common Ground Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: 200 Steele Drive, Buena Vista, 81211

Attendance:

Committee: Joe Stone (Virtual), Dani Cook (Virtual), Aaron Kindle (Virtual), Caroline Matthews, Nancy Anderson

Chaffee County: Miles Cottom, Gabe Hobson

CCCF: Betsy Dittenber, Anna Hendricks

Guests: Suzanne Copping

13:07 – Meeting commences.

13:08 – Suzanne Copping introduces herself as the manager of the Hands for Lands program for Central Colorado Conservancy and will be presenting on the program later in the meeting.

Consent Agenda

13:09 – Caroline M asks for some clarification on the assigned fund balance. Betsy D provides an overview of the spreadsheet and answers questions. Some questions remained for clarification with the Chaffee County Finance Department.

13:19 – The committee approves the consent agenda unanimously.

Multi-Year Grant Disbursement Consideration

13:20 – The committee considers recommending the disbursement of year 3 of 4 of the National Forest Foundation's Sawatch Range Restoration Project. NFF has submitted their latest progress report and showed the need for the disbursement as they have planned expenditures to make progress on the project.

C Matthews notes she has been having issues seeing reports and CCCF will work with her to correct access issues.

13:25 – Joe S asks if the committee should recommend disbursing less than the full amount and disbursing the rest at a later date. CCCF and County Staff insist that it is too administratively burdensome to make a partial disbursement.

13:28 – The committee votes unanimously to recommend the disbursement of \$150,000 to NFF.

Multi-Year Grant Presentations – Central Colorado Conservancy Hands for Lands

13:30 – Suzanne C discusses the Hands for Lands Program which organizes volunteer conservation events on private property across the county including irrigation ditch maintenance, partner with other organizations on restoration projects, and provide public education. This program is in year 3 of 3 of their grant.

In 2025 there were 6 events totaling 150 volunteer hours and cleaning 14 miles of ditches. In 2026 they have so far had 3 event totaling 114 volunteer hours and cleaning 8 miles if ditches. More events are expected tot take place in 2026 and 2027.

County Staff Updates

Chaffee County Councils

13:45 - Gabe H shares that the Rec Council has been having coordination meetings for trainings and grants. Stakeholders are working on collaborating on a grant to fund paid trail crews in the County. He has created a shared form which allows stakeholders to identify what trainings are a common need and work together to provide trainings to their staff and volunteers.

The Forest Health Council has met to discuss the update to the CWPP. The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute presented on updated modeling that may be able to be included in the update, including updated PODS which provide smaller areas of delineation. There is discussion of shifting the deadline for the update to spring of 2027 to accommodate the timeline of land managers that are busy managing wildfires.

13:49 – Caroline M asks if the Upper Arkansas Conservation District (UACD) will host Ag Council. Gabe H explains that they are tasked with exploring the viability of an Ag Council through their Working Lands Resilience Coordinator.

CAC Vacancies

13:53 – The CAC currently has 5 members and 2 vacancies. After two rounds of requests for letters of interest with no responses. the County will wait until late in the year to issue another request since they are moving into grant reviews soon and as long as the committee has 4 members it can still function.

Grant Process Updates

13:56 – Anna H gives an update on competitive grant process, which is accepting applications. CCCF has done extensive outreach and has been getting a lot of questions. They are working with UACD to host a technical support session for ag producers on August 10th. The budget template has been updated to simplify it.

Meeting Planning

14:00 – The August meeting has been moved to virtual only.

Public Comment

14:00 – No public comment

14:00 – Meeting adjourns.