

February 3, 2026

The Natural Resources Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Schott at 6:03 p.m. Members in attendance were Ty Reid, Nick Schott, Chad Boyd, Dave Bohnert, Josh Giles, Lisa Grant, Aaron Johnston, Josey Wilson, Bruce Rickman, and Jesse Svejcar.

Members did the Pledge of Allegiance.

FSA appointment only was stricken from the agenda. Amended agenda was approved by general consensus.

Minutes were approved by general consensus.

Schott was nominated for chair and accepted. Schott was elected chairman by general consent. Grant was nominated vice chair and accepted. Grant was elected vice chair by general consent.

In old business the group discussed Blue Mountain Forest Plan update. Frank expressed some concern over the most current science being used in planning. Johnston asked for examples. Frank highlighted integrating Indigenous fire stewardship and cultural burning, protecting large and old trees and recruit future large-tree structure, and recognize non-forest and open-canopy areas as desired landscape components. Giles state that East Side screens being required to maintain large trees may be counter productive. Frank gave an update on the Grey Wolf status, sharing that letters had been send to federal legislators from the Court and the bill is now in the Senate. Wildlife Services was discussed. Rickman said it might be hard to get money from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Association, Oregon Hunters Association or others, but they might lend political assistance. He suggested possibly designing a flyer that could help with awareness. Reid shared a recent story of critters damaging a dike, highlighting another way the services benefit more than just ranchers. Bohnert suggested maybe looking at a joint venture with Lake and/or Grant County. The Natural Resource coordination was discussed. Giles suggested working locally and identifying tangibles, and would reach out to the forest supervisor. Grant said it needs to be broader than just forest. Boyd highlighted the importance of a person in that position being able to foster relationships. Grant commented on how powerful consistency in agency interactions that outlives political terms would be. Boyd suggested working the problem backwards, and identifying situations that cost the agencies resources because we didn't have these relationships.

In new business, the group discussed the Joint Water Resolution between the four jurisdictions of the county. Voluntary agreements were discussed, and the cost benefit of waiting until contested cases concluded. Bohnert queried the cost of a ditch rider and there was discussion about how local governance of water might give more autonomy to water users.

The Prescribed Burn Association was discussed. The county has authority to facilitate such an association, just not the expertise or resources. The Court recently met with the Fire Defense Board chief, and will stay in the loop until we know what they need from us. Johnston discussed the importance of putting fire on the landscape for ecological benefit, and noted the Fire Defense Board should meet in April. He also noted the importance of having a process that takes ecology and economy into consideration and is efficient and timely. Boyd discussed the need for technical review rather than administrative process, and the differentiation between pile burning and prescribed burns.

ESA listings were discussed. Boyd suggested looking at what factors are leading decline in populations, and specifically looking for references to livestock grazing. He offered to look into the listings on the table.

Unified Fire Service was discussed. Boyd noted that there hasn't been appropriation to fund the agency yet, and that when they tried consolidation with the USBs during the Clinton administration it failed. Johnston discussed the uncertainty moving forward. Giles commented the consolidation could adversely affect response times. Bohnert asserted that we're not the only area faced with the uncertainty, and it will likely take a catastrophe to resolve the issue. Reid questioned if they've looked at the economic impact, citing that \$52 million was spent on the Falls Fire.

Collaborative updates were given. Johnston, with Forest Restoration and Wildfire collaboratives, updated the group on the SOWR3 Wildfire Grant application. PCLs will be implemented in North Harney and Lone Pine RFPAs. PCLs and fuel breaks on Emmigrant Creek and Rattlesnake Creek will be a priority.

Wilson, who represents Wetlands and CCP collaboratives, updated the group on carp traps. She also discussed efforts to bring collaborative information to producers, to meet them where they are. CCP has released 2026 meetings and will focus on increasing landowner participation and use of virtual fences to combat invasive species.

Agency updates were given. Giles informed the group that they have finished solicitation for fencing projects, focusing on interior fences - over 300 miles of fence. Phase 2 for hazard trees is nearing completion and they are starting to plan for phase 3 - sensitive areas. Rickman asked the prioritization rationale for fences; Giles responded fences to get cows on the landscape, particularly in areas more heavily burned. Boundary fences will be contracted by NRCS.

Schott adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Frank