NATURAL GAS SERVICES GROUP INC Form DEF 14A April 22, 2014

## UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

## SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Filed by the Registrant x

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Check the appropriate box:

- o Preliminary proxy statement
- o Confidential, for use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- ý Definitive Proxy Statement
- o Definitive Additional Materials
- o Soliciting Material Pursuant to Section 240.14a-12
- NATURAL GAS SERVICES GROUP, INC.

(Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

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NATURAL GAS SERVICES GROUP, INC. 508 West Wall Street, Suite 550 Midland, Texas 79701

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Shareholder Meeting to be Held on Tuesday, June 3, 2014

The proxy statement and annual report to shareholders are available at www.proxyvote.com.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS To be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2014

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Natural Gas Services Group, Inc., a Colorado corporation (the "Company"), will be held at the Petroleum Club of Midland, 501 West Wall Street, Midland, Texas 79701 on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 8:30 a.m., Central Time, for the purpose of considering and voting upon proposals:

To elect two Directors to serve until the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held in 2017 or until their successors are elected and qualify;
To ratify the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as the Company's independent registered public accounting firm for 2014;
To consider an advisory vote on the compensation of our named executive officers; To amend the Company's 2009 Restricted Stock\Unit Plan to increase the number of shares authorized for issuance thereunder from 300,000 to 800,000 shares of common stock; and approve performance goal guidelines; and
To transact such other business as may properly be presented at the meeting, or at any adjourment(s) of the meeting.

Only shareholders of record at the close of business on April 4, 2014 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting and at any adjournment(s) of the meeting. On that day, 12,460,955 shares of our common stock were outstanding and entitled to vote.

Our Board of Directors recommends that you vote FOR the (i) election of the two director nominees named in this proxy statement, (ii) the ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for 2014, (iii) approval, on an advisory basis, of the compensation programs of our named executive officers; and (iv) amendment to the 2009 Restricted Stock\Unit Plan.

We cordially invite you to attend the meeting. To ensure your representation at the meeting, please vote promptly even if you plan to attend the meeting. Voting now will not prevent you from voting in person at the meeting if you are a shareholder of record and wish to do so.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

/s/ Stephen C. Taylor

Midland, Texas April 22, 2014

Stephen C. Taylor Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer

## NATURAL GAS SERVICES GROUP, INC.

508 West Wall Street, Suite 550 Midland, Texas 79701

PROXY STATEMENT FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2014

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

We are providing this proxy statement to you as part of a solicitation by the Board of Directors of Natural Gas Services Group, Inc. for use at our 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and at any adjournment or postponement that may take place. We will hold the meeting at the Petroleum Club of Midland, 501 West Wall Street, Midland, Texas 79701 on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 8:30 a.m., Central Time.

We are taking advantage of Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, rules that allow us to deliver our proxy materials to our shareholders on the Internet. Under these rules, we are sending most of our shareholders a two-page notice regarding the Internet availability of proxy materials instead of a full set of proxy materials. If you receive this two-page notice, you will not receive printed copies of the proxy materials unless you specifically request them. Instead, this notice tells you how to access and review on the Internet all of the important information contained in the proxy materials. This notice also tells you how to submit your proxy card on the Internet and how to request to receive a printed copy of our proxy materials.

We expect to mail, or provide notice and electronic delivery of, this proxy statement and accompanying proxy card to shareholders beginning on or about April 23, 2014.

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROXY MATERIALS AND THE MEETING

Q: Why am I receiving these materials?

A: Our Board is providing these proxy materials to you in connection with our 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, which will take place on Tuesday, June 3, 2014. As a shareholder on the record date for the meeting, you are invited to attend the meeting. We also encourage you to vote on the matters described in this proxy statement.

Q: What information is contained in these materials?

A: This proxy statement includes information about the nominees for director and the other matters to be voted on at the meeting. The proxy statement also includes information about the voting process and requirements, the compensation of directors and some of our executive officers, and certain other required information.

Q: What can I vote on at the meeting?

A: There are four matters to be voted on at the meeting:

- 1. To elect two Directors to serve until the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held in 2017, or until their successors are elected and qualified;
- 2. To ratify the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as the Company's independent registered public accounting firm for 2014;
- 3. To consider an advisory vote on the compensation of our named executive officers; and
- 4. To approve an amendment to the 2009 Restricted Stock/Unit Plan.

Q: How does the Board recommend that I vote on each of the matters?

A: Our Board recommends that you vote FOR each of the director nominees, FOR the amendment to the 2009 Restricted Stock/Unit Plan and FOR the ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for 2014. With respect to Proposal #3, the Board of Directors recommends that you vote FOR approval, on an advisory basis, of the compensation programs of our named executive officers as disclosed in the Compensation Discussion and Analysis, the compensation tables, and the related disclosure contained in the proxy statement set forth under the caption "Executive Compensation" of this proxy statement.

Q: Why did I receive a two-page notice in the mail regarding the Internet availability of proxy materials this year instead of a full set of proxy materials?

A: We are taking advantage of SEC rules that allow us to deliver proxy materials to our shareholders on the Internet. Under these rules, we are sending most of our shareholders a two-page notice regarding the Internet availability of proxy materials instead of a full set of proxy materials. If you receive this two-page notice, you will not receive printed copies of the proxy materials unless you specifically request them. Instead, this notice tells you how to access and review on the Internet all of the important information contained in the proxy materials. This notice also tells you how to submit your proxy card on the Internet and how to request to receive a printed copy of our proxy materials. Shareholders may also request to receive proxy materials in printed form by mail or electronically by email on an ongoing basis.

Q: Can I receive next year's proxy materials by email?

A: Yes. All shareholders who have active email accounts and Internet access may sign up for email delivery of shareholder materials. To sign up, go to www.proxyvote.com and click on "Electronic Enrollment." If you have multiple registered or beneficial accounts, you need to enroll for each account. If you elect to receive proxy materials by email, we will not mail you any proxy-related materials next year. Your enrollment in the email program will remain in effect as long as your account remains active or until you cancel it.

## Q: Who is entitled to vote at our annual meeting of shareholders?

A: Holders of our outstanding common stock on April 4, 2014, are entitled to one vote per share on each of the items being voted on at the meeting. We refer to this date as the Record Date. On the Record Date, we had 12,460,955 shares of common stock outstanding. We have no other classes of stock outstanding.

Q: What shares can I vote?

A: You can vote all shares you owned on the Record Date. These shares include (1) shares held directly in your name as the shareholder of record and (2) shares held for you as the beneficial owner through a stockbroker, bank or other nominee.

Q: What is the difference between holding shares as a shareholder of record and as a beneficial owner?

A: Most of our shareholders hold their shares through a stockbroker, bank or other nominee rather than directly in their own name. There are some important distinctions between shares held of record and those owned beneficially.

### Shareholder of Record

If your shares are registered in your name with our transfer agent, Computershare, you are the shareholder of record for those shares and are receiving proxy-related materials directly from us. As the shareholder of record, you have the right to grant your voting proxy directly to us or to vote in person at the meeting.

#### **Beneficial Owner**

If your shares are held in a stock brokerage account, by a bank or other nominee (commonly referred to as being held in "street name") you are the beneficial owner of those shares. Your broker, bank or nominee is the shareholder of record and therefore has forwarded proxy-related materials to you as beneficial owner. As the beneficial owner, you have the right to direct your broker, bank or other nominee how to vote your shares and are also invited to attend the meeting. However, since you are not the shareholder of record, you may not vote your shares in person at the meeting unless you obtain a signed proxy from your broker, bank or nominee giving you the right to vote the shares.

Q: How do I vote if I am a shareholder of record (as described in the question and answer above)?

A: You can vote on the Internet or by telephone by following the instructions you received in the mail or by email. If you received a full printed set of our proxy materials in the mail, you can also vote by mail by signing and returning the proxy card provided with those materials. Finally, you can vote in person at the meeting.

Q: How do I vote if I am a beneficial owner (as described in the question and answer above)?

A: You can vote on the Internet or by telephone by following the instructions you received in the mail or by email. If you received a full printed set of our proxy materials in the mail, you can also vote by mail. You can vote in person at the meeting only if you obtain a signed proxy from your broker, bank or nominee giving you this right.

Q: Can I change my vote or revoke my proxy?

A: Yes. You can change your vote or revoke your proxy at any time before the final vote at the meeting. You can do this by casting a later proxy through any of the available methods described in the questions and answers above. If you are a shareholder of record, you can also revoke your proxy by delivering a written notice of your revocation to our

Corporate Secretary at our principal executive office at 508 West Wall Street, Suite 550, Midland, Texas 79701. If you are a beneficial owner, you can revoke your proxy by following the instructions sent to you by your broker, bank or other nominee.

Q: What does it mean if I get more than one set of proxy-related materials?

A: It means you hold shares registered in more than one account. Follow the instructions in each set of proxy-related materials to ensure that all of your shares are voted.

## Q: What is the quorum requirement for the meeting?

A: For a "quorum" to exist at the meeting, shareholders holding a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the shareholders entitled to vote must be present in person or represented by proxy at the meeting. There must be a quorum for any action to be taken at the meeting (other than adjournment or postponement of the meeting). If you submit a properly completed proxy, even if you abstain from voting, then your shares will be counted for purposes of determining the presence of a quorum.

If a broker indicates on a proxy that it lacks discretionary authority as to certain shares to vote on a particular matter, commonly referred to as "broker non-votes," those shares will still be counted for purposes of determining the presence of a quorum at the meeting. Please see the next question and answer for further information about "broker non-votes."

Q: What are broker non-votes and how are broker non-votes and abstentions counted?

A: If you are a beneficial owner and hold your shares in street name and do not provide your broker or other nominee with voting instructions, the broker, bank, or other nominee will determine if it has the discretionary authority to vote on the particular matter. The New York Stock Exchange permits brokers to vote their customers' shares on routine matters when the brokers have not received voting instructions from the customers. The ratification of independent public accountants is an example of a routine matter on which brokers may vote. Brokers may not vote their customers' shares on non-routine matters unless they have received instructions from the customers. Non-voted shares on non-routine matters are referred to as broker non-votes. The ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as our independent public accountants for 2014 (Proposal 2) is a matter considered "routine" under application rules. The election of directors (Proposal 1), the advisory vote to approve named executive officer compensation(Proposal 3) and the proposal to amend the 2009 Restricted Stock\Unit Plan (Proposal 4) are matters considered "non-routine" under applicable rules. A broker or other nominee cannot vote without instructions on non-routine matters. Abstentions and broker non-votes will have no effect on Proposal 1, as the election of Directors is determined by counting the votes actually cast where abstentions and broker non-votes are not treated as votes cast. With respect to the (i) advisory vote to approve the named executive officers compensation programs (Proposal 3) and (ii) amendment to the 2009 Restricted Stock\Unit Plan (Proposal 4), where the vote required is a majority of votes present and entitled to vote, abstentions will be equivalent to a vote cast against the proposals and broker non-votes will have no effect.

Q: What is the voting requirement to approve each of the matters?

A: Directors are elected by a plurality of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting. This means that the nominee for election as Director who receives the greatest number of votes cast in favor of his or her election will be elected to the Board of Directors. The ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as the Company's independent registered public accounting firm, the vote to amend the 2009 Restricted Stock\Unit Plan and the advisory vote on the compensation programs of our named executive officers are approved if the votes cast in favor of the matter exceed the votes cast against the matter. If you are a beneficial owner and do not provide the shareholder of record with voting instructions, your shares may constitute broker non-votes for certain matters (as described in the question and answer immediately above). In tabulating the voting result for a proposal, shares that constitute broker non-votes are not considered as being entitled to vote on that proposal.

Q: How can I vote on each of the matters and how will the votes be counted?

A: In the election of directors, you may vote "FOR," "AGAINST," or "ABSTAIN" with respect to each of the two nominees. If you elect to abstain from the election of directors, the abstention will not have any effect on the election of directors. In tabulating the voting results for the election of directors, only "FOR" and "AGAINST" votes are counted.

For the (i) ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP as our independent auditors, (ii) advisory vote on compensation of our named executive officers advisory vote on compensation of our named executive officers, and (iii) amendment to the 2009 Restricted Stock/Unit Plan, you may vote "FOR," "AGAINST," or "ABSTAIN" with respect to these three proposals. If you elect to abstain from voting on any of these proposals, the abstention will have the same effect as an "AGAINST" vote with respect to such proposal.

If you sign and return your proxy card or voting instruction form without giving specific voting instructions, your shares will be voted as recommended by our Board. If you are a beneficial holder and do not return a voting instruction form, your broker may only vote on the ratification of the appointment of BDO USA, LLP (Proposal 2).

## Q: Who will count the votes?

A: Broadridge, an international investor relations company, is assisting us with the voting of proxies for our meeting. Prior to the meeting, Broadridge will provide us with a tabulation of the votes cast prior to the meeting. We believe that Broadridge will use procedures that are consistent with Colorado law concerning the voting of shares, the determination of the presence of a quorum and the determination of the outcome of each matter submitted for a vote. In addition, we will appoint a voting inspector at the meeting to count and tabulate any votes cast at the meeting.

Q: Who may attend the meeting?

A: All shareholders as of the Record Date may attend. Please bring to the meeting:

proof of ownership such as: a copy of your proxy or voting instruction card; the two-page notice regarding the internet availability of proxy materials you received in the mail; or a copy of a brokerage or bank statement showing your share ownership as of the Record Date; and

proof of identification such as a valid driver's license or passport.

Q: How will voting on any other business be conducted?

A: We do not expect any matters to be presented for a vote at the meeting other than the four matters described in this proxy statement. If you grant a proxy, either of the officers named as proxy holders, Stephen C. Taylor and G. Larry Lawrence, or their nominees or substitutes, will have the discretion to vote your shares on any additional matters that are properly presented for a vote at the meeting and at any adjournment or postponement that may take place. If, for any unforeseen reason, any of our nominees is not available as a candidate for director, the persons named as the proxy holder will vote your proxy for another candidate or other candidates nominated by our Board.

Q: May I propose actions for consideration at next year's meeting of shareholders?

A: Yes. For your proposal to be considered for inclusion in our proxy statement for next year's meeting, we must receive your written proposal no later than December 24, 2014. If we change the date of next year's meeting by more than 30 days from the date of this year's meeting, then the deadline is a reasonable time before we begin to print and send our proxy materials. You should also be aware that your proposal must comply with SEC regulations regarding shareholder proposals.

Similarly, for you to raise a proposal (including a director nomination) from the floor at next year's meeting, we must receive a written notice of the proposal no later than March 9, 2015. If we change the date of next year's meeting by more than 30 days from the date of this year's meeting, then we must receive your written proposal at least 150 days before the date of next year's meeting for the proposal to be timely.

Q: Who is paying for this proxy solicitation?

A: We will pay the cost of soliciting the proxies. In addition, our officers, directors and employees may solicit proxies or votes in person, by telephone or by email. These people will not be paid any additional compensation for these activities. We will send copies of proxy-related materials or additional solicitation materials to brokers, fiduciaries and custodians who will forward these materials to the beneficial owners of our shares. On request, we will reimburse brokers and other persons representing beneficial owners of shares for their reasonable expenses in forwarding these materials to beneficial owners.

# HOUSEHOLDING OF PROXY MATERIALS

In an effort to reduce printing costs and postage fees, we have adopted a practice called "householding." Under this practice, shareholders who have the same address and last name and do not participate in email delivery of proxy-related materials will receive only one set of our proxy statement, annual report or notice of internet availability of proxy-related materials unless one or more of these people notifies us that he or she wishes to continue to receive individual copies.

If you share an address with another shareholder and receive only one set of proxy-related materials and would like to request a separate copy for this year's annual meeting or for any future meetings, please: (1) call our Investor Relations contact at (432) 262-2700; (2) send an email message to alicia.dada@ngsgi.com; or (3) mail your request to Natural Gas Services Group, Inc., 508 West Wall Street, Suite 550, Midland, Texas 79701, Attn: Investor Relations. Similarly, you may also contact us through any of these methods if you receive multiple copies of the materials and would prefer to receive a single copy in the future.

# PROPOSAL 1 - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors is divided into three classes (commonly known as a "staggered" Board), each class to be as nearly equal in number as possible. At each annual meeting of shareholders, members of one of the classes, on a rotating basis, are elected for a three-year term. The authorized number of Directors is currently set at nine. We currently have five directors serving on our Board. Our Board of Directors may fill the vacancies if a qualified candidate is vetted. The following table sets forth, by class, the members of our Board of Directors as of the date of this proxy statement:

| Terms Expiring at the 2014 Annual | Terms Expiring at the |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Meeting                           | 2015 Annual Meeting   |
| Charles G. Curtis                 | William F. Hughes     |
| Stephen C. Taylor                 | David L. Bradshaw     |

Terms Expiring at the 2016 Annual Meeting John W. Chisholm

Shareholders will be electing two Directors at the meeting. The Board is recommending Mr. Curtis and Mr. Taylor for re-election to the Board of Directors to serve three year terms expiring at the annual meeting of shareholders in 2017.

The persons named in the enclosed form of proxy will vote the shares represented by such proxy for the election of the nominees for Director named above unless other instructions are shown on the proxy card. If, at the time of the meeting, either or both of these nominees becomes unavailable for any reason, which is not expected, the persons entitled to vote the proxy will vote for such substitute nominee or nominees, if any, as they determine in their sole discretion, or we may reduce the size of the Board.

Biographical information and qualifications for each person nominated as a Director, and for each person whose term of office as a Director will continue after the 2014 Annual Meeting, is set forth below.

Nominees for Directors for Terms to Expire in 2017

Charles G. Curtis

Charles G. Curtis, 81, has served as a Director of Natural Gas Services Group since April 2001. Since 2002, substantially all of Mr. Curtis' business activities have been devoted to managing personal investments. From 1992 until 2002, Mr. Curtis was the President and Chief Executive Officer of Curtis One, Inc., a manufacturer of aluminum and steel mobile stools and mobile ladders. From 1988 to 1992, Mr. Curtis was the President and Chief Executive Officer of Cramer, Inc., a manufacturer of office furniture. Mr. Curtis has a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Southern California.

Mr. Curtis has been a long-standing member of the Board since prior to the Company's initial public offering in 2002 and as such he brings a wealth of knowledge regarding the Company's history, growth and industry. Through his manufacturing career and engineering educational background, Mr. Curtis assists the Board and the Company in connection with its compressor manufacturing business. As a past U.S. Naval Officer and U.S. Naval Academy graduate, Mr. Curtis also brings leadership skills to the Board and Company.

Stephen C. Taylor

Stephen C. Taylor, 60, has been President and Chief Executive Officer of Natural Gas Services Group since January 2005. He was elected as a Director of Natural Gas Services Group at the annual meeting of shareholders in June 2005.

Effective January 1, 2006, Mr. Taylor was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors. Immediately prior to joining Natural Gas Services Group, Mr. Taylor held the position of General Manager – US Operations for Trican Production Services, Inc. from 2002 through 2004. Mr. Taylor joined Halliburton Resource Management in 1976, becoming its Vice President – Operations in 1989. Beginning in 1993, he held multiple senior level management positions with Halliburton Energy Services until 2000 when he was elected Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of Enventure Global Technology, LLC, a joint-venture deep water drilling technology company owned by Halliburton Company and Shell Oil Company. Mr. Taylor elected early retirement from Halliburton Company in 2002 to join Trican Production Services, Inc. Mr. Taylor holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Texas Tech University and a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

Mr. Taylor's senior management experience in the natural resources industry provides the Board and our company with significant insight into our business. Mr. Taylor's engineering and advanced business training (MBA) uniquely suits him to provide

leadership, technical expertise and financial acumen to our Board and to the operations of our company in connection with his position as our chief executive officer.

Continuing Directors Whose Terms Expire in 2015

# David L. Bradshaw

David L. Bradshaw, 59, joined our board in December of 2011. Since 2005, Mr. Bradshaw has acted as a consultant in the oil and gas exploration and production sector and has overseen his investments in this area. From August 2007 through November 2009, Mr. Bradshaw served as a Director and Audit Committee Chairman for Triangle Petroleum, a publicly traded company listed on the American Stock Exchange. From November 2007 through November 2008, Mr. Bradshaw served as a Director for Comet Ridge Limited, an Australian company listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. From 1986 to 2005, Mr. Bradshaw worked for Tipperary Corporation, a U.S. public company listed on the American Stock Exchange. During his tenure at Tipperary, the company was involved in oil and gas exploration and production, and natural gas processing and transportation. He held the positions of Chief Executive Officer from 1996 to 2005, Chairman of the Board from 1997 to 2005, Chief Financial Officer from 1990 to 1996 and Chief Operating Officer from 1993 to 1996. Mr. Bradshaw also served as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Tipperary Oil & Gas (Australia) Pty Ltd from 1999 to 2005, a subsidiary of Tipperary, which explored for and produced natural gas in Queensland, Australia. From 1983 to 1986, Mr. Bradshaw was an owner and officer of Bradcorp, Inc. a private exploration and production company. Prior to this, Mr. Bradshaw spent six years in public accounting serving predominantly oil and gas clients. Mr. Bradshaw graduated from Texas A&M University with a BBA in Accounting in 1976 and a MBA in 1977, and is also a Certified Public Accountant.

Mr. Bradshaw's educational and professional training and achievements as a Certified Public Accountant and MBA, along with his past experience as both a Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer of a public company involved in the natural resources industry, provides us with considerable accounting and corporate finance skills. In addition, Mr. Bradshaw's career spanning over thirty years in the oil and gas industry and as a public accountant. His executive management positions in both private and public companies bring us significant leadership, planning and management skills and background.

## William F. Hughes, Jr.

William F. Hughes Jr., 61, has served as a Director since December 2003. Mr. Hughes has over 30 years experience in the engineering and construction industry as a Registered Civil Engineer and licensed building contractor. From 1974 to 1979, he served as an officer in the United States Air Force. From 1979 to 1986, he was a project design engineer for Cushman & Associates. From 1986 to 1996, he served as a Project Manager on a variety of public works and industrial construction projects. Since 1983, Mr. Hughes has been co-owner of The Whole Wheatery, LLC, a natural foods store located in Lancaster, California. Mr. Hughes holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the United States Air Force Academy and a Master of Science in Engineering from the University of California at Los Angeles.