



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

North Fork HPP Committee

Maloney House, Delta County Fairgrounds

September 25th, 2018

6:00 p.m.

North Fork HPP Members Present: Steve Kossler, Livestock Grower; Dennis Garrison, USFS; Ross Allen, Livestock Grower; Jess Campbell, Livestock Grower; Adam Gall, Sportsperson; Cody Purcell, CPW

Guests: Ben Harris, Joey Burns, Stuart Sinclair, CPW; Pat Tucker, CPW; Andrew Taylor, CPW

Introduction: Committee members were introduced and current projects were reviewed. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$24,322.80.

New Business:

1. Ben Harris and Joey Burns presented a revised proposal for seeding on the North Fork Valley Ranch, located on Stevens Gulch Rd north of Paonia. The ranch is located in important winter range for deer and elk, and represents a large refuge area that could help reduce game damage conflicts on nearby landowners in Garvin Mesa. The landowners have been completing habitat improvement projects throughout the property, including 16 pond cleanouts; mastication, and thinning. Reseeding is needed on about 120 acres of these project areas to promote the reestablishment of native forage species and to help prevent the establishment and spread of noxious weeds. Some seeding is planned in spring 2019 for \$29,802.00, with another application in fall of 2019 for \$14,400.00. However there is also an immediate need for seed in the areas around the ponds. The committee supported the project but was also unable to fund the request in its entirety with the remaining budget. The committee approved \$5,000 for purchase of seed, with more funds potentially available in the spring depending on the remaining budget. The committee would also be interested in funding future phases of this project or other habitat improvements on the ranch.
2. The committee reviewed a seeding proposal from Lazy H Ranch. The project area is located in critical winter range for big game and experiences year-round use by deer; and includes irrigated hay fields with adjacent areas of thick oak brush and pinyon juniper. There is very little forage available outside of the fields, and so deer and elk utilize the fields for forage

which severely reduces the amount of hay produced for livestock. 116 acres of PJ and oakbrush have been treated with a fecon head to thin large stands and open the canopy, and the area now needs to be seeded to encourage establishment of native forage species. Increasing the amount of forage available throughout the property should improve big game distribution and reduce big game pressure on the hayfields. The committee noted that reseeding disturbed areas also helps prevent the establishment and spread of weeds. The project was approved for \$5,000.00.

Other Business:

1. The committee discussed the status of the pond cleanout program. Andrew Taylor has issued 12 vouchers, and Stuart Sinclair has issued 1 voucher. Some committee members expressed concern that the requirements to redeem a voucher were too stringent or not in line with the committee's original intent; specifically that requiring a "match pond" might be overly cumbersome for individuals and reduce the number of ponds that would be completed. The committee noted that completing as many ponds as possible this fall was critical to make the most of a drought year before the snow comes in. However, the committee also discussed the value of HPP as a partnership with agricultural producers rather than a sole funding source for completing work on public and private lands. Ultimately the committee decided to keep the "match pond" requirement, such that individual vouchers will still be valued at \$100/hour of labor up to \$500/voucher with two completed ponds required. Pat Tucker contributed an additional \$15,000 of State Council funds to the project budget to assist the committee in getting as many ponds cleaned out as possible.
2. The committee had approved \$1,500 for fertilizer to Bob Remmurde of Ritchie Ranch, which is typically purchased by voucher through Rodman's. However, the landowners would like to apply organic soil enhancers this year instead of traditional fertilizers. The committee agreed that the \$1,500 could be used as a reimbursement to the ranch instead of requiring the landowner to obtain fertilizer from Rodman's.

Next Meeting: TBD