



## **HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES**

### **Montelores HPP Committee**

**Dolores Public Lands Center, Dolores, CO**

**April 23rd, 2019**

**6:30 p.m.**

**HPP Members Present:** John Sheek, Sportsman; Andy Brown, CPW; Tanner Young, Livestock Grower; Eldon Simmons, Livestock Grower; Ivan Messinger, USFS

**Guests:** Bonnie Loving, Travis Custer, MLC; Rick Lee, Landowner

#### **Introductions & Budget Report:**

Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$63,229.32.

#### **New Business:**

1. The committee reviewed a proposal from the Montezuma County for an herbicide cost-share program. This is an annual project to help provide herbicide to landowners with noxious weed infestations. Last year 220 acres of weed control was completed on 11 properties that were in close proximity to public lands, and had big game utilization and damage. The project is expected to have roughly the same scope this year. The project was approved for \$3,846.16.
2. Travis Custer presented a conservation easement proposal from the Montezuma Land Conservancy. The Lee family owns 1100 acres south of Hwy 160 near the fairgrounds, which is located in a migratory corridor and is used as critical deer winter range. Increasing numbers of subdivisions have been constructed in the vicinity, causing fragmented habitat and increased wildlife conflicts. There are several ponds on the property that provide water, and the area is currently used for limited winter grazing. MLC is pursuing other funding from GOCO and CPW. The committee approved \$10,000 for transaction costs, contingent upon the remaining funds being secured from the additional potential partners.
3. Ivan Messinger presented a USFS thinning project for Lake Canyon. The project area is located in important winter and transitional range, although it does experience some

year-round use by elk and deer. The existing habitat is in poor condition with overgrown oakbrush and understory, which does not offer forage for deer and elk. Some of the oakbrush is also too crowded and overgrown to be efficiently used for big game cover. This reduces the amount of time deer and elk spend in the area, resulting in heavier use of nearby private lands and increased conflicts with agricultural operations. The project involves thinning overgrown oakbrush in a mosaic pattern. Opening the understory will allow grasses and forbs to establish, improving the quality and quantity of forage for big game. Larger stands of mature oakbrush will be left to provide cover. Improving habitat quality on public land will help hold big game there longer, reducing the pressure and associated damage to agricultural operations. Thinning will also enable USFS to better implement future burn projects in the area. The project was approved for \$84,000.00.

4. Fertilizer applications were approved as follows: Dan Selver, \$1,050.00 (70 acres).

**Other Business:**

1. The committee DMP is due for revision in FY2020. Meetings in the fall and winter will include work to produce a plan revision.

**Next Meeting: TBD**