



## **HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

July 30 & 31 – BLM Conference Room, Kremmling

Attendees: Gary Visintainer, Robbie LeValley, Sheila Lamb, Mick Davis, Greg Jungman, Terry Everhart, Ken Morgan, John Hardwick

Absent: Hunter Seim

HPP Staff: Dean Riggs, Pat Tucker, Teri Polley, Samantha Sorensen, Hanna Cook, Katie Richman

Guests: Tiffany Rubalcaba, North Park HPP Committee Member & BLM Wildlife Biologist  
Robin Sell, BLM State Wildlife Biologist & Past State Council BLM Representative  
Darren Long, Acting Sage Grouse Coordinator for Colorado  
GW Horine, Sportsman's Representative Middle Park Committee  
Lyle Sidener, AWM Representative Middle Park Committee  
Doug Vilsack, DNR Assistant Director for Parks, Wildlife and Lands, DNR Legislative Liaison  
Chris Yuanfarrell, GOCO  
Seth Gallagher, NFWF Rocky Mountain Regional Manager  
Travis Bybee, DWM Rifle South District, Grand Mesa CE project  
Michelle Cowardin, Hwy 9 tour on July 31

### **AGENDA (July 30 1pm – 5pm)**

**Legal Update:** HPP is involved with a criminal case in Montrose with a landowner that filed false fertilizer claims for 5 years. According to the AG's office, if a violation is not directly related to hunting and fishing with a license due to suspension points, there is nothing that restricts a person from continuing to participate in HPP. There are no HPP regulations that address this type of issue. CPW has many programs that have requirements, conditions, and reporting needs. NW Regional Manager, JT Romatzke requested Dean and Pat to write an issue paper proposal for the Wildlife Commission to enact regulations for individuals participating in CPW projects/programs to include the HPP program.

**GOCO Project Update:** A group of interested public and private funders proposed NFWF to establish the Restore Colorado Fund, a pilot program with funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Gates Family Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to complete large-scale restoration and habitat management projects across the state.

Doug Vilsack shared with the council that internally at DNR there are three grant programs (the Habitat Stamp Committee, Watershed Restoration Grant Program and Water Conservation Board) and if you want money from them you have to go through several processes; three groups of people inside the same entity trying to get the same result. Restore Colorado makes sense from an efficiency stance and encouraged the State Council to see how they could engage in the pilot year. The timeline is to have an RFP out in October with a March 2020 award date.

The State Council verbally committed to participate in this project contributing \$250,000 for this pilot year with the understanding they would be carrying this commitment across fiscal years. The Council wants to be involved in the sideboards and have a seat at the review committee, which is true for all funding partners.

**Grand Mesa Application** – This is a 240-acre Conservation Easement project in Garfield Creek. Matthew and Sylvia Ringer own the property and were approved at the local Grand Mesa HPP Committee for up to \$10,000 toward the requested amount of \$85,000 for transaction costs. The landowners are contributing \$18,000.

Although the request was for the State Council to pay the entire remaining balance, the Council approved \$50,000 for this project.

**Conservation Easements** – The State Council continued discussion on conservation easements. Pat was approached about HPP contributing funds for an easement purchase. HPP cannot fund conservation easements and the P/W Commission funds easements but only thru the RFP process.

**Research Projects** – HPP's role in research projects was confirmed by the State Council. HPP is willing to assist getting a research project started but any expenses after that were the responsibility of the applicant. This policy is for both local HPP committees and the State Council to follow. Additionally, research projects involving HPP need to be focused on specific big game populations, movements, habitat and not broader, general research issues.

**Update SWA Fencing & Weed Control** – Due to the short notice and purchasing deadlines, the State Council only spent \$16,000 of the \$50,000 for State Wildlife Area fencing and weed control projects. \$250,000 has been distributed for FY20 - Sept 1st deadline to apply. Pat had been asked about the long term funding of this and the Council felt it was likely but did not make any commitments.

**Budget Updates - FY19 and FY20** – FY19 budget information was briefly discussed but not a final report.

**BLM/FS Large Scale Habitat Project Update** - Robin Sell discussed the BLM's concerns/issues about this proposal. While generally supportive, program funding issues, prioritizing projects, staff capacity and contracting/grants concerns were voiced. In order to participate in this project, the BLM has more work to do. The 'Good Neighbor Authority Agreement' was mentioned as a possibility for making this work.

San Juan National Forest Task Order – San Juan committee budget is \$160,000. A task order for \$150,000 was approved by the committee and since this would take most of their budget, the State Council agreed to fund \$125,000 with the committee funding \$25,000 for the Vallecito-Piedra Burn.

HPP Statutes - Legislative timing – More discussion re: timing of when to ask to go to the legislature for program funding renewal. The Council still prefers to go sooner than 2023 and AD Doug Vilsack said it was better to not wait until the last year. Also, in light of the various budgeting items discussed during the NFWF/GOCO discussion, it makes sense to remedy those issues sooner as well.

State Meeting Discussion – A list of possible speakers was discussed with water conservation as a theme.

Committee brief updates: Committees are working on DMP'S

1. Sam – North Park & Upper Yampa committees are off to a good start for FY20.
2. Hanna – SLV has spent their 2020 budget.
3. Katie – Montelores, North Fork & Grand Mesa all spent their budgets for FY19 and the Gunnison & North Fork committees are off to a good start, spending their FY20 budgets.

No Roundtable

**July 31 - 8am - Field Tour Kremmling South** - Lyle Sidener, AWM guided the State Council to a State Wildlife Area, 2 Private landowner projects, Highway 9 Project