



## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

### Grand Mesa HPP Committee

611 Main St, Silt CO 81652

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

1:00 p.m.

**Grand Mesa HPP Members Present:** Don Fulton, Livestock Rep; Paul Bernklau, Livestock Rep; Harley Metz, Sportsman; Heidi Plank, BLM; Eric Freels, USFS; Kirk Oldham, CPW

**Guests:** Michael Blanck, CPW; Scott Hoyer, CPW; Travis Bybee, CPW; Marjorie Alessandri, Jay Alessandri, Brit McLin, Drew Hogan, George Gipp, Greg Gipp, Joanne Cooley, Gary Galloway, Kiley Wheeler, Peter Dodd, Jim Toomer, Wayne McCray

**Introduction:** Committee members and guests were introduced. The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$42,470.94.

### **New Business:**

#### **Project Application Proposals and Reviews:**

1. The committee reviewed fertilizer project proposals. The budget for fertilizer projects was \$25,375.00. There were 20 applicants this year for a total of 3109 acres. The price per acre came to \$8.16, and this amount was approved by the committee.
2. Marjorie Alessandri presented an application for weed control. The project area including neighboring properties is infested with thistle and rabbit brush, which takes over forage-producing fields and reduces the quality and quantity of forage available for both livestock and big game. The landowners currently spray three times each growing season to reduce the prevalence and spread of weeds and increase forage production. The proposal includes purchasing 2-4-D and Milestone to assist with weed control. The project was approved for \$320.
3. Peter Dodd presented a fencing project application. The existing fence is old and in severe disrepair, and is constructed with old barbed wire that is hazardous to big game. The fence separates irrigated fields and dry land, with

year-round use by elk and increased pressure during spring and fall migrations. The landowners have already completed 1.25 miles of fence replacement, and the proposal includes removing the old fence and constructing .45 miles of new wildlife-friendly fence that ties into the previously-replaced fencing. The new fence would be wildlife-friendly to HPP specs, including high visibility wire. The project was approved for \$3,000 for materials, and HPP will also provide 2 rolls of high visibility wire.

4. The committee did not receive an application for the Nocks fence project noted on the agenda. The project was tabled for a potential future application.
5. Kirk Oldham reviewed Distribution Management Hunts with the committee. Following the last meeting, Area 7 DWMs successfully implemented management hunts within their districts and did not encounter issues with public perception of game damage hunts. HPP will likely not be asked to become involved in management hunts next winter, although the committee remains open to the idea in the future.
6. Kiley Wheeler informed the committee about a potential seeding project for the next meeting. A seed purchase to increase forage production was approved last fiscal year, however due to drought conditions the project was not implemented. The committee will consider this project at the next meeting.
7. Kirk Oldham presented a potential hydroaxe project for the next meeting. The State Land Board owns a hydroaxe and, in conjunction with CPW, NWTF, and other partners, has been operating the hydroaxe on CPW and SLB properties in the southeast. The hydroaxe will be coming to the Northwest Region in the spring and the SLB is accepting proposals for work. There are currently about 200 acres between the Garfield SWA and the Badlands Tract that need to be treated. The estimated cost for the operator is \$170/acre. CPW will be able to contribute ~\$18,000, and would like to approach HPP for the remaining budget. The committee noted the benefits of big game habitat improvement on public lands, but expressed concerns about the long-term plans for oakbrush retreatment. Future retreatment efforts may include spraying, mowing, or burning, and it was unclear who would be coordinating these projects. The committee will consider this project at the next meeting.

#### **Other Business:**

1. The Distribution Management Plan is due for revision. The current plan was distributed to the committee and DWMs for review in advance of the next meeting.
2. The committee discussed CPW updates, including the 5-year Big Game Season Structure and the new shed hunt closures.
3. The next meeting was originally scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>, however the Parks & Wildlife Commission meeting will take place in Grand Junction on that date. The HPP meeting will be rescheduled.

**Next Meeting: TBD**