



HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MEETING MINUTES

Grand Mesa HPP Committee

Phone Conference Meeting

May 6th, 2019

8:00 p.m.

Grand Mesa HPP Members Present: Kirk Oldham, CPW; Don Fulton, Livestock Grower; John Walter, Livestock Grower; Harley Metz, Sportsman; Paul Bernklau, Livestock Grower; Eric Freels, USFS

Guests: Travis Bybee, CPW

Introduction: The remaining budget at the start of the meeting was \$39,156.50.

New Business:

1. The committee reviewed Ty Bevan's application for an irrigation improvement on Robert Lapsley's property. The pastures are currently irrigated and managed primarily for wildlife grazing, however the existing ditches are old and degraded by frequent wildlife crossings, which reduces the efficacy of water diversion onto irrigated fields. The proposal includes installing culverts and headgates to more effectively divert water onto the fields, increasing the amount of forage produced for wildlife, and reduce the big game damage to other irrigated fields in the area. Reconstructing these sections of the ditch with culverts will also help prevent future damage from big game crossing. The committee approved the project for \$7,883.00.
2. The committee reviewed applications from West Divide Cattle Growers for pond cleanouts on the West Divide and Alkali Creek allotments. These projects are yearly maintenance work for the Cattle Growers. The projects were approved for \$5,000.00 each for FY2019.
3. The committee reviewed a fence project from Ty Bevan for Susan Nichols' property. The property currently has no interior fencing, which results in highly concentrated grazing on 3 primary pastures by livestock, deer, and elk. The project involves splitting 3 existing irrigated fields into smaller pastures with new division fencing. The

fences will be wildlife-friendly to HPP specs, including high visibility wire. The committee approved the project for \$3,800.00 for materials.

4. The Wheeler weed project was tabled since there was no application.
5. The committee reviewed a pond clean-out project from Joanne Couey. The proposal includes cleaning out 4 existing ponds and constructing 2 new ones. The contractor quote was based on an estimate without a site visit and it seemed high, so the project was tabled until a more firm bid is obtained.
6. Kirk presented a proposal for hydroax work on the Garfield Creek State Wildlife Area. There are two project areas located in seasonal migration corridors and winter range that experience heavy use by deer and elk. The habitat on these project areas primarily consists of overgrown oakbrush and pinion-juniper, which does not offer sufficient forage for big game.

The proposal includes hydroaxing 220 acres in a mosaic pattern to reduce the density and continuity of oakbrush and pinion-juniper. Some stands will be left intact to provide cover for big game, while the treated areas will allow the sagebrush understory and other forage species to regenerate and increase the quantity and quality of forage available to big game. These treatments will increase the overall carrying capacity of the SWA, improve big game distribution across the area, and facilitate proper migration movements of big game from the Badlands onto the SWA food plots. The committee approved the project for \$34,104.00.
7. The committee discussed a solar well project on the Hood ranch. This project was approved by Lower Colorado River HPP before it was found to be within Grand Mesa's committee area. The landowner will pay 100% of the well drilling costs regardless of hitting water or not, and is only asking for HPP to purchase the solar pump and hardware if the well produces water. Lower Colorado will fund the project if Grand Mesa agrees to have the project funded. The committee will allow this project to proceed since it had already been approved by LCRHPP; however future projects will need to be considered by the appropriate committee.
8. The committee reviewed an application from Battlement Mesa Company for a pasture seed mix and irrigation water to plant a 20-acre field. The pasture would provide forage to wintering wildlife and help reduce pressure on neighboring agricultural operations. However, it appears that within the next 1-2 years, the field will be replanted as a hemp operation. The committee denied the project since it would not be a long-term solution for wildlife conflicts.

Next Meeting: TBD